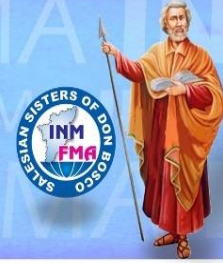




Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
S. Thomas Apostle Province - INM
Madras - India

2020-21



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

INM FMA/Pro.Cir.46

April 2021

Viva Gesù!

"I want to know Christ, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death." - Phil. 3:10.

My Dearest Sisters,

Affectionate greetings to you from Kodambakkam!

The month of April begins with the solemnity of Maundy Thursday, the greatest feast of LOVE when Jesus celebrated his final Passover with His disciples and gave the commandment to them after he had shown them the concrete gesture of love in service by washing their feet. He gave indeed a great commandment of love stating: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another"* (John 13:34).

During the days that follow the Holy Thursday, the Good Friday and Holy Saturday, we are invited to recall the excruciating passion of Jesus leading up to His death by crucifixion and burial which are the tangible expressions of His love for us. Seeing the God of the universe stripped of everything, crowned with thorns instead of glory and experience humiliation and seeing the One who is goodness personified, insulted and beaten, we are amazed at the immense love of Jesus for us. He did it for us, to plumb the depths of our human experience, to draw near to us and not to abandon us in our suffering and our death but to redeem us and to save us. Jesus was lifted high on the Cross to descend to the abyss of our suffering. He experienced our deepest sorrows: failure, loss of everything, betrayal by a friend, even abandonment by God. His love draws close to our frailty; Yet now we know that we are not alone: God is at our side in every affliction, in every fear; no evil, no sin will ever have the final word. God triumphs, but the palm of victory passes through the wood of the cross. For the palm and the cross are inseparable. As we enter into this significant holy triduum, let us pay heed to our Holy Father Pope Francis who exhorts us, *"Let us gaze upon Jesus on the Cross and say to him: 'Lord, how much you love me! How precious I am to you!' Let us be amazed by Jesus so that we can start living again, for the grandeur of life lies not in possessions and asserting oneself, but in realizing that we are loved."*

IN PREPARATION FOR THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

As we are preparing for the FMA India Centenary Celebrations, we continue to *'Journey with Mary in the Course of the Centenary (1922-2022) and Beyond'*, with the objective *"Accept the mandate, I entrust them to you: Reviving the Family Spirit and strengthening Community Communion"*. This month we will reflect on the *family spirit and service of authority*. The impact of the *reciprocal relationship between the Animator and Community Sisters in creating the family spirit*. It seems unavoidable to speak about the role played by the animator and the type of relationships that must be established between her and the Sisters to create a family environment. Indeed, the animator is "a visible sign of unity and communion" and 'she carries out a service of mediation in the search for God's will. The family atmosphere depends very much on the type of relationship that is established between the animator and her Sisters. Article 33 of our Constitutions states, *"Obedience and authority are*

complementary aspects of our participation in Christ's offering" and it implies that the relationship between the animator and Sisters is lived according to the Family Spirit in which ***requests are made with discretion and kindness, and they are carried out spontaneously and joyfully***. It also implies a mutual desire for communion and it becomes a powerful witness of unity in the community. Therefore, between the Sisters and the Animator, there must be a constant disposition of reciprocal acceptance, of respect, esteem and understanding, in an attitude of open, family-like dialogue, of goodwill and true ***sisterly friendship***.

Concerning the **attitudes and qualities expected of the animator**, Constitutions article 52 says that she is "a Sister among her Sisters" who has the specific responsibility for animating and guiding. She will devote herself with particular attention to the personal encounter with her Sisters, and foster genuine, sisterly relationships within the community. Article 114 states, "let her live in an attitude of inner poverty and openness to the Holy Spirit. With a motherly heart, let her seek to express Mary's strong yet tender love, making herself all things to all Sisters". She will also carry out the task of animation and guidance in the spirit of the Preventive System, attentive to the person of each Sister, seeking to create a climate of trust, sincerity and Salesian simplicity. In conclusion, article 164 states, "Let her be available and prudent, capable of speaking the truth in love. She will do her utmost, according to her role, to create in the house that authentic Gospel atmosphere in which all feel that they are part of a family, and willingly collaborate in the community mission". If the animator can carry out the task in this style and with this spirit, the Sisters will recognize her role and correspond wholeheartedly. Another favoured occasion for strengthening communion and discovering God's will, for which the animator needs to make herself available to her Sisters and to be in a position to carry on the process with confidentiality and secrecy is the monthly personal encounter. (C.34)

Creating a family atmosphere in the community is also the **responsibility of every Sister in the community**. First and foremost, the Sisters must recognize the task of the Animator and respond to her cordially. The animator cannot express with a motherly heart the strong and gentle love of Mary if her Sisters do not correspond to her with the heart of daughters. She will not be able to "demonstrate to the Sisters and the young people the love with which God loves them" (C.52). Hence a ***deep spirit of faith*** is required of the Sisters, to recognize and accept the role of the animator, to ***be available and willing to collaborate*** with her and possess the attitude of readiness and zeal of the "***Vado io, faccio io***". Every Sister needs to learn the **attitude of 'docibilitas'**, trust and loyalty, to become responsible and avail the monthly personal encounter with her animator which is a determining factor in the emergence and maintenance of the family spirit. Recently we have reflected in-depth, individually and as a community, on the document "The Personal Encounter" which has paved the way to our recognition of the charismatic value of the personal encounter, the richness of the tradition and spiritual heritage of the founders to deepen the Charism and Salesian Pedagogy and brought about attitudinal change concerning this moment of grace which is a privileged time to strengthen community communion, discover the will of God and deepen the spirit of the Institute.

In the light of the above insights let us reflect and share:

- ✚ Where do I stand regarding the living of article 33 of our Constitutions: "in our institute, this relationship is lived according to the Family Spirit in which *requests are made with discretion and kindness and are carried out spontaneously and joyfully*"?
- ✚ What attitudinal changes have come within me concerning the Personal Encounter with the animator, after reading the document "The Personal Encounter"?
- ✚ What am I going to do to strengthen the relationship with my animator to become co-responsible for creating family spirit in my community?

CELEBRATIONS DURING THE MONTH

- 01 - Maundy Thursday
- 02 - Good Friday
- 03 - Holy Saturday
- 04 - Easter Sunday
- 11 - Divine Mercy Sunday
- 22 - Earth Day
- 25 - World Feast of Gratitude

ALL IN THE FAMILY

ADIEU, DEAR SR JOSEPHINE!

On 09 March 2021, our dear Sr. Arokianathan Mary Josephine, silently, as she had been always in her life, reached the victory line ending the race of suffering and pain all through these long years of her being nailed to the altar of sacrifice. For us, it seems like a dream and it is hard to believe that she is no more with us and we miss very much her powerful, prayerful and calm presence assuring us that she was praying for all the intentions of our Province. She seems to echo the words of St Paul, ***“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”***. We humbly bow to the divine plan of God and bid her ‘farewell’, and offer her life of total surrender to the Lord as a holocaust. We thank God for the sixty-five years of our dear Sr Josephine’s life on earth with forty of them as a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, and all her valuable selfless services to the poor young people. As the eldest daughter in the family and as the sister of four brothers and seven sisters, Sr. Josephine was known for her great sense of responsibility and commitment to whatever work was entrusted to her, sense of discipline, perseverance, sisterly affection and generosity in helping whoever was in need. Brought up in the Salesian environment at home as well as in the school, right from her primary education till the teachers’ training, she breathed the air of Salesian spirituality: Eucharistic and Marian Piety, goodness, optimism, charity and love for the poor. Her filial devotion to our Blessed Mother is evidenced by what she had written convincingly in her biography “Till today Our Lady is guiding me to Life Eternal. Thus, my desire to be an FMA is getting matured day by day. As in the case of Mother Mazzarello, for her too, **‘catechism was catechism’**. She was very regular in her catechism classes. Her catechism lessons were always active and she activated the children too with creativity. In 1984, while in Pallikonda, Sr Josephine was given the ‘Best Catechism Teacher Award’ from the diocese of Vellore. The same can be said of her love, interest and involvement in preparing for the liturgical celebrations.

Sr Josephine was a calm, soft-spoken, serene and reserved person and at the same time knew how to demand from anyone their commitment to duty. She worked relentlessly in various houses in different capacities of Vicar, Councillor, Boarding Sister, in charge of Oratory and Village Visits. As a teacher in Pallikonda, Headmistress and Office Assistant in Vyasarpadi, Kodambakkam, Broadway, Chetpet and Polur, and as an Economer in Tiruvottiyur she rendered commendable services. Our dear Sr Josephine’s life was a silent suffering and a total offering, and she was a constant source of blessings for each of us and the province. We pray for her eternal repose and pray to her to draw down upon our province all the blessings that we need, genuine vocations, commitment in our life of consecration and mission, happy and witnessing communities with a strong passion for the da mihi animas... ***Farewell, dear Sr Josephine! You will always remain in our hearts and minds and lives!***

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Million thanks to Sr Chinnappen Mano Ranjitham and the community of Mornese - Yercaud, for hosting all the three annual retreats, the animation for Animators, and the Provincial council meet during March.

We sincerely appreciate them for their commitment and hard work in creating a conducive atmosphere of silence and reflection for the retreats and doing all that was possible to make Sisters feel happy and healthy.

- ✚ Hearty thanks and congratulations to the retreat preachers Fr. Theophil SDB, Fr. Mariasusai Arockiaraj SDB and Fr. Gandhi Kallarasu SDB for helping the retreatants to grow profound in their spirituality through their effective preaching and creative animations.
- ✚ Thanks to the young Jesuit director Fr. Ahilraj who preached the annual Spiritual Retreat from 8-16 March, for our Sisters, in a Jesuit centre on a beautiful hill Lewella near Kandy, Sri Lanka. He was a student cum missionary in Canada for seven years and returned last year. His talks were based on the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius and the words of Pope Francis.
- ✚ A word of deep appreciation and sincere thanks to Sr Rita Dora Thomas, Provincial INB, for hosting the National Meet of the FMA Historians from 21 to 26 March 2021 at the Provincial House, Bandra and for the warm hospitality rendered to the team. From our province, Sr Devadoss Margaret and Sr Yettukuri Alphonsa participated. Congratulations to Sr D'Souza Philomena the coordinator of the group for her efficient and effective organization.
- ✚ We are grateful to Fr. Amos SDB for animating the Seminar on Preventive System to Animators on 20 March and to Fr. Clement Ignatius Anthony SDB for animating the webinar on the same theme on 30 March for the Sisters.

WORLD FEAST OF GRATITUDE 2021

It is good to praise and thank the Lord for the precious and unique gift of our beloved Mother General as we celebrate joyously though simply, the World Feast of Gratitude. The Feast of Gratitude 2021 will take place in **ROME at the community of “Mother Angela Vespa”**, See of the Pontifical Faculty of Education Sciences “Auxilium” **on Sunday 25 April**. The theme of this great event is “*Networked, for a culture of life*”. As Sr Cazzuola Chiara, the Vicar General writes in her circular, the theme draws on the experience of Don Bosco who by founding his works, in particular the Salesian Congregation and the FMA Institute, gave rise to a worldwide network to create alliances and synergies in an educational mission that had the face of a “great Ecclesial and civil ‘movement’ open to all available energies, ultimately to all people of good...” It also highlights the reality from the point of view of the cultural, formative mission that characterizes *Mary Mother of the Church* Pre-province and is concentrated in the service of the *Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences Auxilium*. Together with the other Institutions of Higher Studies of our Institute (ISS-FMA) that includes the higher education institutions of our Province too, *Auxilium-Rome* works for the university formation of FMA and young people in the awareness of carrying out a task of vital importance for the specific formation of educators and to contribute to developing a “humanizing and evangelizing culture that allows young people to become agents of change”.

The Word of God chosen for reflection is, “*the net was not torn*” (**Jn 21:1-11**) which wants to underline the abundant fish experienced in recent years, thanks to the wise guidance of La Madre, who was able to keep together the 'net' of our Institute, a robust net that was never torn. Gratitude is, therefore 'abundant' and is expressed in a renewed commitment to educational service and co-responsibility in the formation and the mission. Each community is invited to compose a network of gratitude and hope and commitment to a culture of life, and post their messages of gratitude to Mother on the virtual bulletin board: **#GrazieMadreper #educareallaculturadellavita #**. Each ISS will briefly present itself by answering the question: *how do we promote the culture of life?* I request you dear Sisters to read carefully the text sent to you regarding the world feast of Gratitude and be in communion with the entire FMA world raising our gratitude to our Mother General who is a tireless promoter of enterprising, joyful, and creative love.

AMORIS LAETITIA FAMILY YEAR (ALFY)

As we know, Pope Francis has announced the *Amoris Laetitia* Family Year to be celebrated in the universal Church starting from 19 March 2021, the feast of St Joseph and the fifth anniversary of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, and conclude on 26 June 2022, on the occasion of the tenth world meeting of Families in Rome with the Holy Father. ALFY aims to reach every family in the world through several spiritual, pastoral and cultural proposals that can be implemented within parishes, dioceses, universities, ecclesial movements and family associations and hopes that this will be an opportunity for the Church to focus more closely on the content of *Amoris Laetitia* and work concretely for the realisation of the following five goals: 1. Share the content of the Apostolic Exhortation more widely 2. Proclaim that the sacrament of marriage is a gift and contains in itself a transforming power of human love 3. Enable families to become active agents of the family apostolate 4. Make young people aware of the importance of formation in the truth of love and the gift of self 5. Broaden the vision and scope of the family apostolate. ALFY overlaps the Year of St Joseph and, significantly, it is inaugurated on the feast of St Joseph who laboured hard and took care of his family with dedication, tenderness and love. As a community let us strive to actualize the goals of ALFY and enable the kingdom of God to reign on earth.

COURSES

Sr Michael Teresa Rani, Sr Francis Amala and Sr. Arockiasamy Jayanthi Suseela will be participating in the Psycho-Spiritual Integration and Inner Healing programme from 12 April – 23 May 2021 at Dhyana Sadhana, Mysuru. We wish them a very meaningful experience!

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

We rejoice and thank God along with the Sisters of INC province for the gift of Sr Palliparambil Leelamma who has been appointed as its new provincial by Mother General Yvonne Reungoat. As we congratulate Sr Leelamma for her availability and ready 'yes', let us support her with our prayers in her mission of accompaniment of Sisters. We also rejoice at the good news that His Holiness Pope Francis has appointed Mgr Leopoldo Girelli, as the new Apostolic Nuncio to India. He was the Apostolic Nuncio to Israel and Cyprus, and the Apostolic Delegate to Jerusalem and Palestine. Let us pray for our Nuncio in his pastoral mission.

PRAYER REQUEST

Let us intensify our prayers for all our Sisters and our dear ones who are sick, especially for all our sisters and brothers affected by Covid-19.

Let us storm the heavens and offer our sacrifices for the cause of good governance in our motherland India, especially as we are at the threshold of the State elections on 6 April 2021.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Let us continue to pray for all those who lost their lives due to COVID-19. Our loving prayers and condolences to all those who lost their dear ones during the last month:

- ✠ To the Provincial and the confreres of Bangalore Province at the passing away of Fr Mathew Thekkekara SDB (74) on 1 March 2021.
- ✠ To the family of Sr Arokianathan Josephine and Sr Verginia at the passing away of their brother Mr Maria Francis Xavier Raja (55) on 4 March.
- ✠ To Sr Chinnaraj Thangam at the demise of her dear brother Mr Govis (38) on 10 March.
- ✠ To Sr Thomas Rita Dora and the Province of INB, and the Sisters of AES Province at the sudden death of a missionary Sr Sherly Mary Chacko (57) in Zambia on 21 March.
- ✠ To Fr K.M. Jose and the confreres of Chennai Province at the passing away of Fr Gerard Nellyotukonam (81) on 22 March.

- ✠ To Sr Kulandaisamy Lourdummy at the demise of her dear father Mr Kulandaisamy (78) on 22 March.
- ✠ To Sr Chinnanayagam Sheela at the sudden passing away of her niece Joseline Linita (17) on 30 March.
- ✠ To Sr Samuel Gloria Navaneetham at the demise of her dear brother Mr Packiaraj (66) on 31 March.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY: APRIL 2021

- 06 † Sr Antoinette Aloysius (2014)
- 11 † Sr Annie Ward (1976)
- 18 † Sr Alzira Albuquerque (2002)
- 20 † Sr Consiglia Tarricone (1990)
- 26 † Sr Aurelia Bossi (1985) and Sr Margaret D'Souza (1954)
- 28 † Sr Solomon Philomena (2020)

UPCOMING EVENTS- APRIL 2021

- 10 - 11 : Provincial Council
- 12 : Submission of Accounts - Kodambakkam
- 19 - 27 : Annual Retreat II, Kandy, Sri Lanka

During this unprecedented time of global crisis COVID-19 pandemic, we the children of God and people of faith, once again, look to the season of a new spring, Easter, for a renewed hope and life that the Risen Christ offers. The Supreme pontiff, Pope Francis says, "The Church's proclamation echoes throughout the world: ***Jesus Christ is risen.***", ***He has truly risen.***" Like a new flame, this Good News springs up in the night: the night of a world already faced with epochal challenges and now oppressed by a pandemic severely testing our whole human family. On this night, the Church's voice rings out: ***Christ, my hope, is risen!***" This is a different "contagion", a message transmitted from heart to heart, for every human heart awaits this Good News." It is the contagion of hope: "Christ, my hope, is risen!" It is the victory of love over the root of evil, a victory that does not "by-pass" suffering and death, but passes through them, opening a path in the abyss, transforming evil into good: this is the unique hallmark of the power of God. The Risen Lord is also the Crucified One. In his glorious body, he bears indelible wounds: wounds that have become windows of hope. Let us turn our gaze to him that he may heal the wounds of afflicted humanity. It is a privileged time to ban the evil forces and darkness within the hearts of each one of us: indifference, self-centeredness, division, and lack of forgiveness etc. Let us pray that Christ, who has already defeated death and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, dispel the darkness of our hearts and the suffering humanity and lead us into the light of his glorious day, a day that knows no end.

Christ our Hope is Risen indeed, Alleluia... Alleluia!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar

Sr Nirmala Lazar FMA
Provincial

Happy Easter !

