



May 2021

INM FMA/Pro.Cir.47

Viva Gesu'!

"...There was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there." Jn 2:1

My Dearest Sisters,

Affectionate greetings to you from Kodambakkam!

We begin the month of May popularly known as the month of Mary with the feast of St Joseph the worker. As the dreadful second wave of Covid-19 is tossing our world, our country, our State, our communities, families and our neighbourhood, we turn our gaze to our God who is our refuge, shield, and strength. We entrust ourselves to the paternal protection of St Joseph and the maternal care of Mother Mary and implore the mercy and compassion of God on the suffering humanity.

St Joseph the foster father of Jesus and the husband of the Virgin Mary is the patron saint of workers and craftsmen and was declared patron of the universal church by Pope Pius IX in 1870. St Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus learnt the value of work, the dignity and joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's labour. Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* narrates very beautifully the hard, diligent, and dignified work of St Joseph and the salvific role of work under the title "A working father". In 1955 Pope Pius XII established the Feast of St Joseph the Worker on 1 May as a counter-celebration to the communists' May Day. Today, the majority of countries around the world celebrate this day as International Worker's Day or Labour Day.

The crisis of our times can serve as summons for all of us to rediscover the value, the importance and necessity of work for bringing about a new 'normal' from which no one is excluded. Holy Father recommends that the loss of employment as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which affects so many of our brothers and sisters should urge us to review our priorities. At this moment of great anxiety and distress let us place the whole of humanity especially the workers - informal, unorganized and migrants- and millions of unemployed young people to the intercession of St Joseph. ***Let us all stand united with St Joseph the Patron of workers, to dream for and create a post-Covid New World Order.***

IN PREPARATION FOR THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

As we are preparing for 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 theme "***FAMILY SPIRIT OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY***".

The 'family spirit' tends to radiate beyond fraternal communion to penetrate all the relationships within the Institute's mission. We read in article 50 of our Constitutions: "***The spirit of mutual trust and joy thus created in the community will be passed on to the young people and our collaborators***".



Family spirit with the young people: Each one is urged to make her contribution because the ‘genuine educational environment’ is a work not only of those who carry out direct educational action but of everyone. “Let each of us, therefore, no matter what task has been assigned by obedience, live her identity as a Salesian educator in communion with her Sisters, in the spirit of the *da mihi animas*, and the certainty that through different but complementary roles, everyone co-operates in the salvation of young people”. It is an environment in which sharing "our special times of celebration and family life" and “joining in their recreations as a friendly presence inspires affection and trust" (C 66). We can effectively propose and share with them authentic Gospel values. Intimate participation in each other’s life made possible by the family spirit offers to the young people “the possibility of experiencing the liberating power of God’s grace, facilitates the development of sound convictions, and opens them to generous self-giving”.

Family Spirit with the collaborators: Only to the extent to which this is achieved, by encouraging the intimate participation of everyone and the sharing of the same values can we ensure 'unity' and 'continuity' in our formative interventions. This is what Article 68 says when it affirms that the educating community “is authentic if it lives in communion the ideals it proclaims”. This is perhaps the most specific way for us to evangelize the adult world.

Family Spirit with family members: This element appears deeply rooted in Don Bosco and the beginnings of his work. We all remember the intense affection and profound veneration he had always nurtured for his mother and the important role Mamma Margherita played in the Salesian mission. Article 57 which deals with “relationships with our family” affirms that the total giving of ourselves to God does not weaken the bonds of affection for our family; on the contrary, it makes them stronger and more profound. Even with the real demands of inner detachment, we grow in our capacity to share the joys and sorrows of our dear ones by offering our prayers and our daily fidelity to the commitments of our vocation. Let us show special gratitude towards the parents of the Sisters, considering them as Don Bosco did: “the first benefactors of the Institute”.

Family Spirit with those who come into contact with the community: If the FMA community is a communion of persons who live in a profound family spirit, it cannot fail to reverberate in relationship with those who come into contact with it. It is part and parcel of our Salesian Spirit: “Seeing Christ in every person let us welcome everyone with the simple, considerate kindness proper to the Salesian spirit...” (C56).

Requirements of the Family Spirit: Article 53 begins by underlining the fundamental attitude required to make the journey of inner purification possible. It is a question of “constant tending towards love with Salesian optimism”. In this expression, reference to the Preventive System of Don Bosco is evident. It establishes the foundation of his spiritual edifice as “kind and patient charity” that “bears all, hopes all, and endures all” or as Article 7 expresses it, “patient charity that excuses all, trusts all, bears with all, and never loses hope”.

The sources from which to draw the Family Spirit: Eucharist is the source of our life of communion: “By frequent, spontaneous, personal visits” to Jesus present in the Tabernacle “the heart of the house” the FMA can learn the secret of authentic dialogue with our neighbour (C40).

Our Institute belongs entirely to Mary, because “Mary Most Holy inspired our Institute and continues to be its mother and teacher”. “We are aware of Mary’s presence in our lives” (C4). The presence of Mary, “the real Superior”, cannot but echo in the relationships that are created within the community. Mary is a Superior who justifies her mission and her mandate by the fact that she is the Mother of our family and she is the Mistress of that “***strong yet tender love***”, full of Salesian kindness and maternal attention and care, which is the soul of our spirituality and our educational method.

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

- + What are the means to strengthen the Family Spirit in our communities?*
- + How can we live the family spirit with the youth, lay collaborators and family members during this pandemic Covid-19?*
- + How can we benefit from our resources to live the family spirit?*

CELEBRATIONS DURING THE MONTH

- 01 - St Joseph the Worker
- 06 - St Dominic Savio
- 09 - Birthday of St Maria Domenica Mazzarello
- 13 - St Maria Domenica Mazzarello/ Our Lady of Fatima
- 16 - Ascension of the Lord
- 18 - St Leonard Murialdo
- 23 - Pentecost
- 25 - Mary Help of Christians
- 30 - Holy Trinity
- 31 - Visitation of our Lady

ALL IN THE FAMILY

ADIEU, DEAR SISTERS!

Within a month after the departure of our dear Sr Arockianathan Mary Josephine to the Salesian mansion in heaven, from the same community of Auxilium Home - Katpadi, **Sr David Elizabeth** also swiftly winged her flight to heaven on 6 April, that it is so hard to believe that she is no more with us. On Easter Tuesday, while all the Sisters were busy praying for the State Elections and exercising their right to vote, our dear Sr Elizabeth was invited by the Risen Lord to His Father's Kingdom to continue the celebration of Paschal Mysteries in the bliss of Eternity.

Having been brought up in a large and affectionate family, she grew up to be a loving and kind person. All those who know her, the Sisters, priests and laypeople, testify to her kindness and hospitality. Though she was the youngest in the family she learnt to work hard right from her childhood. Her mother's oft-repeated saying of Jesus "Whatever you did to the least of my brothers you did it to me" fostered in her a great love for the poor. We know that from 2001 for reasons of health that necessitated periodic treatment in Christian Medical College Hospital, she was in the community of Auxilium Home Katpadi. As an active member in the house, she carried out various roles as an assistant for the children, catechism teacher, helper in the evening coaching classes, in charge of the house linen and the garden, catering to the needs in the refectory and attending to various activities of the house as much as her health permitted.

Sr Elizabeth was a woman of prayer yearning for a deep God experience in the concrete situations of daily life. She nourished her prayer life with simple short prayers, fervent and frequent visits to the blessed sacrament. Sacramental life was a lived reality in her daily life. She cherished the presence of Mary which guided her all through. She sought to establish loving relationships with the Sisters and young people.

Sr Elizabeth had a good word for everyone she met; an encouraging word for anyone in anxiety; a prayerful assurance for those in difficult moments; an apt suggestion to the one in need of advice; comforting guidance to those in distress. She was also a lover of nature, was proud of her garden and its produce, and wanted to share them with all those around her, be it flowers, fruits, vegetables or seeds.

Dear Sr Elizabeth! We thank you for your life of prayer, simplicity, cheerfulness, friendliness, kindness, compassion, eagerness to help others, and hard work. We thank you for all that you were and will continue to be for each one of us and our communities in the province. Good bye, dear Sr Elizabeth till we meet again in that land of no more pain and sorrow!

Just 10 days after the demise of Sr David Elizabeth, the Lord of Life and Resurrection visited our Province in the early hours of Friday, 16 April 2021 at 2.30 am and chose the beautiful soul of our dear **Sr Sindhuraj Regina** to be with Him in heaven. She was undergoing intense treatment for Covid-19 at St Thomas Hospital, Chennai. We hoped that she would be restored to good health soon and reassume her mission among the women of Beatitudes-Vyasarparadi, but the Lord's plans were different. Sr Regina, the third child among six siblings imbibed rich human and Christian values and the noble characteristics of strong Christian faith, piety, goodness, hard work and great love for God and the poor from her loving parents who were teachers and who lived an exemplary Christian life. After completing her graduation in B.A. (Tamil) in Auxilium College, and later B. Ed., she worked for three years in St Joseph's School at Arni and entered Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi, as an aspirant, on 15 August 1978.

After the juniorate, Sr Regina launched herself into teaching activities as an educator after the heart of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. She began her mission at Arni as a teacher in the school and rendered her services as Animator, Vicar, councillor, Tamil Teacher, boarding assistant, animator of formative groups, past pupils, formator of apostolic school candidates and in charge of Oratory and Women groups, in the various communities of the province: Tirupattur, New Washermenpet in Madras, Tanjore, Madurai, Vadakkupaganoor at Trichy, Kodambakkam and Vyasarparadi. Her days were filled with additional activities like visiting the villages, local delegate of the Salesian Cooperators, Coordinator of Basic Christian Communities, catechetical apostolate in the parish and substations, counselling the married couples and rectification of marriages, preparation for the first communion, prison ministry, vocation promotion and in charge of VIDES. She was available to carry out any work in the community. Her zeal for souls knew no bounds and it is evident by the fact that till the day on which she was hospitalized, she was very active executing her mission of coordinating hundreds of women self-help groups, busy getting orders to sell their products and involving in the parish ministry at Vyasarparadi.

Dear Sr Regina, no one can replace you for the loving hospitality and care you extended to the Sisters visiting the community. Thank you very much for your great love for Jesus, sisterly affection for the Sisters and their family members, filial devotion and loyalty to the Superiors, spirit of hard work, zeal to reach out to the marginalized children, youth, and women till your last breath. Though we miss your physical presence, we will hold you in our heart and mind and will express in our lives all that we learnt from you! Adieu, dear Sr Regina!

Dear Sr Elizabeth and Sr Regina, now that you are enjoying the closer vision of God, speak to Him about us. Ask Him to grant to the province and the Institute many fervent vocations, good health to all our Sisters and dear ones, blessings on all our educating communities, right leaders for our country, speedy freedom for the world from the Covid pandemic!

ANNUAL SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Sincere thanks to Fr Kamal Andrade SJ, who dynamically animated the Psycho-Spiritual retreat for our Sisters in Sri Lanka from 19 to 27 March in the Jesuit Centre, on the beautiful hill 'Lewella' near Kandy, Sri Lanka.

CONGRATULATIONS!

We rejoice and thank God for the gift of our novices, Sr Anthony Samy Mary Abisha, Sr Arockia Samy Ancy Jenifer, Sr Jayaseelan Jasmine, Sr Rayappan Stephina Roy, Sr Tharcus Sancu, and Sr Vincent Priyadharshini of our Province, and Sr Alexander Roselin Preethi, Sr Amalraj Rebecca and Sr Gnanamani Mary of INT who will be making their first profession on 24 May at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manikandam, and for the gift of Sr Sahayaseelan Kajana (Sri Lanka) who will profess on 31 May at St Mary Mazzarello Novitiate, Canlubang, Philippines. Let us pray that their enthusiastic first 'Yes' to God may be a life-long commitment.

INSTALLATION OF NEW PROVINCIAL INB !

Congratulations to dear Sr Meenakshi D'Silva, Provincial Elect of the Mumbai Province! The Installation of the new provincial will be held at 10.30 am on 27 May 2021 at Mazzarello Youth Centre, Wadala. We wish Sr Meena abundance of God's blessings and accompaniment of Mother Mary for her new mission in these challenging times.

I take this opportunity to express my sentiments of gratitude to Sr Thomas Rita Dora, the outgoing provincial of INB, for her sisterly support and collaboration especially for the mission in Sri Lanka. A simple and unassuming person, Sr Dora has conquered the hearts of FMA India with her generous hospitality and affectionate dealings.

NEW CONVOCATION OF GENERAL CHAPTER XXIV

I am happy to communicate to you about the new convocation of GC XXIV by our beloved Mother General. It will begin in Rome in the Generalate with the official opening on **17 September 2021** and is expected to close on 24 October 2021. *La Madre* also confirms once again the choice of the same theme:

"Do whatever He tells you" (Jn 2:5).

Communities that generate life in the heart of contemporaneity.

Circular N.1008, the official convocation of General Chapter XXIV is sent to you. Let us continue to pray earnestly for the fruitfulness of the Chapter.

AN EARNEST APPEAL

Let us continue to intensify our prayers for all our Sisters and our dear ones who are sick, especially those affected by Covid-19. I urge you, dear Sisters, to pray much that the entire world may experience the healing touch of the Merciful Father. I strongly request all the Animators to ensure that our Sisters and those under our care do not travel around these days unless it is strictly necessary but to spend time in the community reading and updating themselves in various subjects useful for our mission. Kindly continue with an hour of adoration and recitation of the four rosaries for this intention as we had decided last year. Let us implore the Lord and our Blessed Mother to protect humankind and the environment from all deadly viruses, dangers, disasters, and natural and man-made calamities.

Let us also storm heaven and offer prayers and sacrifices for the cause of good governance in our motherland India, especially now, that we are awaiting anxiously for the results of State elections on 2 May 2021. Let us beg the Lord of the Universe to give us leaders after His Own Heart.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- ✠ To Sr Antonysamy Pauline at the demise of her elder sister Mrs Paripooranam (55) on 4 April
- ✠ To Sr Arul Josephine at the passing away of her brother-in-law Mr Louis (89) on 9 April
- ✠ To Fr Provincial and the confreres of Salesian Province of New Delhi at the passing away of Fr V. J. Sebastian SDB (74) on 14 April
- ✠ To Sr Santiagu Amirtha Alocis at the demise of her brother-in-law Mr Anthonysamy (62) on 14 April
- ✠ To Sr Thainese Kulandai Theresa at the sudden demise of her dear mother Mrs Jayamary (65) on 16 April
- ✠ To Sr Panakezhathan Annie and to Fr Provincial and the confreres of SDB Bangalore Province at the passing away of Fr Thomas Panakezham SDB (92) on 24 April
- ✠ To Sr Mathew J.Siriapushpam at the demise of her mother Mrs Kuzhandai Theresa (93) on 26 April
- ✠ To Sr Sequeira Regina at the passing away of her brother Mr Roland Sequeira (81) on 26 April
- ✠ To Sr Soosey Philomena Rani at the passing away of her brother Mr Lawrance (66) on 27 April
- ✠ To Fr Provincial and the confreres of Salesian Province of Calcutta at the demise of Fr Agapit Ming SDB on 15 April and Fr Sanju Mukul Kachhap SDB (42) on 29 April
- ✠ To Mrs Prabha (our orphan) at the passing away of her husband Mr Manivannan (55) on 29 April.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY: MAY 2021

- 01 † Sr Colussi Rina (1966) and Sr Merlo Teresa Pierina (1993)
- 02 † Sr Appiano Luigia (1970)
- 05 † Sr Gomes Anna (2000) and Sr Battigelli Genevieve (2014)
- 06 † Sr D’Gama Bertha (2008) and Sr Dias Lydia (2014)
- 07 † Sr Pereira Anne (1996)
- 12 † Sr Mascarenhas Josephine (1988)
- 18 † Sr Cogliolo Clotilde (1939) and Sr Gallina Cesira (1987)
- 19 † Sr De Bernadinis Tullia (1957) and Sr Perez Mary Magdalene (2019)
- 20 † Sr Mathews Maddalena (2015) and, Sr D’Souza Gladys (2017)
- 21 † Sr Susai Pillai Saveria (1996)
- 22 † Sr Vallino Innocenza (1946)
- 29 † Sr De Silva Muriel (1991)

UPCOMING EVENTS - MAY 2021

- 05 : Webinar for Animators
- 19-20 : Provincial Council
- 22 : Recollection-Juniors
- 23 : Renewal of Vows-Juniors

- 24 : First Profession, Manikandam, Trichy
- 29 : Recollection-Juniors, Negombo, Sri Lanka
- 30 : Renewal of Vows-Juniors, Negombo, Sri Lanka
- 31 : First Profession, Philippines

The feast of Mary Help of Christians is a very significant day for us FMA, her beloved daughters. Many of us also keep the anniversary of our first profession. Hearty congratulations to you dear Sisters!

Pope Pius VII was jailed by Napoleon Bonaparte and the Holy Father vowed to God that if he were restored to the Roman See, he would institute a special feast in honour of Mary. The military eventually forced Bonaparte to release the Pope and on 24 May 1814, Pius VII returned in triumph to Rome. Twelve months later the Pope decreed that the feast of Mary Help of Christians be kept on 24 May. The veneration to Mary became popular under this title in Rome where the feast was especially promoted by Saint John Bosco and Saint Vincent Pallotti.

Don Bosco, our father and founder was an ardent promoter of devotion to "Mary, Help of Christians". He not only built a huge basilica in her honour in 1868 but also founded a religious congregation for women under the title of "The Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians". Interpreting the painting he had commissioned inside the basilica, StJohn Bosco referred to it as depicting Mary Mother of the Church. This suggests an identical connection to how popes have addressed Mary as both Mother and Help of the Church.

Vatican II, in the Constitution on the Church (sections 61, 62) cites this title of Mary placing it in the context of Mary's maternal role: "In an utterly singular way, she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason, she is a mother to us in the order of grace...By her maternal charity, Mary cares for the brethren of her Son who still wander through this world amid dangers and difficulties until they are led to the happiness of their heavenly home". Let us be deeply grateful to God for the gift of such a mother who is our sure guide and help in all the moments of our life.

During this month we celebrate with joy the two important Salesian feasts: feast of our little saint Dominic Savio who wanted to keep his eyes pure to be able to see our heavenly mother; the birthday and feast of our mother and co-foundress St Maria Domenica Mazzarello who had a filial devotion to Mother Mary and considered herself only a vicar to her who was the real Superior of the house. Following the footsteps of our Saints, *“let us open our hearts to the joyous humility of her (Mary’s) Magnificat to be helpers like her especially among young people”* (C 4).

*I wish you a very Happy feast of
St Dominic Savio, St Mary D. Mazzarello
and Mary Help of Christians!*

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar

**Sr Nirmala Lazar FMA
Provincial**

