



INM FMA/Pro.Cir.63

October 2022

*“You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth”. (Acts 1:8)*

**My Dearest Sisters,**

*Viva Gesù!*

*Affectionate greetings to you from the Provincial House, Kodambakkam!*

We begin the second term of the academic year with October, the month of the Missions and the Holy Rosary. Holy Father in his message for World Mission Day 2022 beckons us **to be prophets, witnesses and missionaries of the Lord** by the power of the Holy Spirit to the ends of the earth. With great zeal and enthusiasm, he wishes to rekindle the fire of missionary zeal in us through his message on the theme: **“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth”** (Acts 1:8). The Church is missionary by nature and every Christian is called to be a missionary and witness to Christ, the missionary of the Father. His disciples have no other mission than that of bringing the gospel to the entire world by their very life and by their words and deeds. The words “to the ends of the earth” denote the universal character of the disciples’ mission, challenge the disciples of Jesus in every age and impel them to press beyond familiar places in bearing witness to Him.

The Church will continue to ‘go forth’, assures Pope Francis, towards new geographical, social and existential horizons, towards ‘borderline’ places and human situations, to bear witness to Christ and his love to men and women of every people, culture and social status. Let us renew our missionary ardour, particularly during this month to be missionaries of hope and joy and intensify our prayers for the missionaries who spread the good news with zeal and courage. I invite you to write a note of appreciation either individually or as a community to all our missionary Sisters who work in different parts of the world.

### **IN PREPARATION FOR THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**

We have just concluded the splendid Centenary Celebration of FMA Presence in India at the PCI level with joy and profound sentiments of gratitude. Let us continue to **“Journey with Mary in the Course of the Century (1922-2022) and Beyond”**, during this centenary year and the 150<sup>th</sup> year of the foundation of our Institute. I invite you to reflect on the process of **Synodal dialogue** that offers the opportunity to acquire new perspectives and points of view and favours community Communion.

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* no.178, says: "God, in Christ, redeems not only the person but also the social relations existing between them". As members of the Church, making synodal journey our style of life, we have to work for the promotion of the social and economical life of all peoples under the banner of justice, solidarity and peace. Today more than ever we are faced with the threat of authoritarian and technocratic aberrations. They hinder dialogue, fraternal union, peace, justice and the search for truth. In this context, it is an important obligation and criterion for all the social actions of the People of God to hear the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth.

Attention must be drawn urgently to determine society's choices and plans, to the place and the privileged role of the poor, to the universal destination of goods, to the primacy of solidarity and the care for our common home. The criterion according to which **"unity prevails over conflict"** is of particular value in conducting a dialogue, managing different opinions and experiences, and learning "a style of constructing history, a vital field where conflicts, tensions and opposites can reach a pluriform unity, generating new life", making it possible, as *Evangelii Gaudium* no.228 explicates, to **"build communion amid disagreement"**. **Dialogue offers the opportunity to acquire new perspectives and points of view** to shed light on the solution of the matter in question. If we cultivate the art of listening and expand our horizons to a wider dimension, the problems and difficulties become opportunities for growth and communion.

It is a matter of adopting "a relational way of viewing the world which becomes a form of shared knowledge, vision through the eyes of another and a shared vision of all that exists" says Pope Francis in his encyclical letter on Faith, *Lumen Fidei*. According to Pope St Paul VI, true dialogue is spiritual communication which requires specific attitudes of love, respect, trust and prudence. **"Dialogue thrives on friendship, and most especially on service"**. As Pope Benedict XVI emphasized, truth is "lógos which creates *diá-logos* and hence communication and communion". Loving service leads to Christian perfection and holiness in daily life.

Carlo Colli in this regard affirms that for the Salesian, *serving in joy* lies in this: nothing is done by force, but everything is done out of love, spontaneously, willingly (*kindness*); nothing is suffered as an authoritarian imposition but everything is done by conviction, by conscience (*reason, religion*). The fact that all the educators starting from Don Bosco are undertaking the greatest sacrifices, the most tiring work with apparent facility and elegant ease creates an environment that makes the acceptance of the heroic easy, natural, and logical in everyday life.

**An essential attitude in synodal dialogue is humility which inclines each one to be obedient to God's will and obedient to each other in Christ.** The Apostle Paul in his *letter to the Philippians* illustrates what this means and how it works concerning the life of communion: to be **"of a single mind one in love one in heart and one in mind"** (2,2). He homes in on two temptations which undermine the life of the community: The spirits of jealousy and vanity (2,3a). By contrast, one needs to have an attitude of humility either by seeing others as more important than ourselves or by putting the common good and interest first (2, 3b-4). Here Paul recalls Jesus in whom, through faith, we became a community: "Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus" (2,5). The mind of the disciples must be that which we receive from the Father if we are living in Christ. The *kenosis* of Christ (2,7-10) is the radical form of His obedience to the Father and for the disciples, it is the call to feel, think and discern together with humility the will of God in following the Master and Lord. We ought to follow the Lord 'together' with synodal praxis.

Pope Francis teaches that "to walk together is *the constitutive way* of the Church; *the figure* that enables us to interpret reality with the eyes and heart of God; *the condition* for following the Lord Jesus and being servants of life in this wounded time. The breath and pace of the Synod show what we are and the dynamism of communion that animates our decisions; only in this way can we truly renew our pastoral ministry and adapt it to the mission of the Church in today's world; only in this way can we address the complexity of this time, thankful for the journey accomplished thus far, and **determined to continue it with *parrhesia***"(speaking boldly and candidly).

The Supreme Pontiff asserts that what the *parrhesia* of the Spirit requires from the People of God on their synodal journey is the trust, frankness and the courage to **"enter into the expanse of God's horizon"** to "ensure that a **sacrament of unity exists in the world** and that man is therefore not destined for dispersion and confusion". The lived and enduring experience of synodality is, for us, the People of God, a source of the joy promised by Jesus, a catalyst for a new life, and the springboard for a new phase of missionary commitment.

Let us reflect on the following questions and share the insights with one another:

- ✚ How can I promote dialogue, peace, justice and search for truth?
- ✚ How do I follow the synodal journey with the Spirit speaking boldly and candidly to bring about renewal in the pastoral ministry entrusted to me and the community?
- ✚ How I can enter into the expanse of God's horizon with trust, frankness and courage?

## CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

- 01 - St Theresa of Lisieux
- 02 - Guardian Angel
- 04 - St Francis of Assisi
- 05 - Bl Albert Marvelli
- 07 - Our Lady of the Rosary
- 11 - St Pope John XXIII
- 12 - Bl Alessandrina
- 15 - St Teresa of Avila
- 18 - St Luke, the Evangelist
- 22 - St Pope John Paul II
- 23 - World Mission Sunday
- 24 - Bl. Luigi Guanella SDB
- 28 - Ss Simon and Jude, Apostles
- 29 - Bl. Michael Rua SDB

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

### ADIEU DEAR SR PHILOMENA S.T.!

When we were slowly getting back to the normal rhythm of life after the glorious centenary celebrations of the Presence of FMA India, in our Province, we were sadly shocked to receive the news from St Mary's Convent, Vellore, on 13 September 2022, that our dear Sr Sebastian T. Philomena all too quickly said good-bye to the world and went into the embrace of the Lord of Life. Sr S.T., as we used to call her fondly, was born on 13 February 1939 to Mr Sebastian Thangavelu and Mrs Selva Mary at Champion, in Kolar Gold Fields, as the second in the family of nine children with five brothers and three sisters. She worked hard to bring up the family and was a great support to her parents and so when she joined the congregation they were rather shaken up and Philomena too went through a critical period during the initial formation. She attributes her victory over all this to her strong willpower, faith in God, a life of prayer and the accompaniment of her Superiors. Having grown up in a large family she loved everyone and learnt valuable lessons for life especially the art of establishing relationships and living in the community. Philomena joined as an aspirant on 30 January 1968, after completing her T.S.L.C and S.S.L.C, and having worked as a teacher for almost 10 years in Alwarpet and St Anne's School, Broadway, Chennai. Her education in the FMM convent school formed in her the basics of spiritual life. In her home town, a Salesian parish, her Marian piety took strong roots and she imbibed the characteristics of Salesian spirituality.

Sr Philomena worked in many houses of the province as a teacher, headmistress, and boarding assistant teaching and dealing with both boys and girls. After her formal retirement from the teaching service in the schools, she got enthusiastically into other forms of apostolate but was always a teacher. She embraced all types of apostolic services; was in charge of boarding children and needlework teacher to the workroom girls. She rendered her services to the communities also as an economer. Her passion was for prison ministry in which she got involved for more than sixteen years from 2006 to 2022.

Another part of the mission she enjoyed most was the parish animation, visiting families and people in the villages and forming Basic Christian Communities as the launching pads of evangelisation.

She celebrated the golden jubilee of her religious profession last year and now has hurried to heaven to preserve intact the lustre of the Gift of Gold she had offered to her Lord and Master! We praise and thank God for her 83 years of life and 51 years of consecrated life in the Salesian Family, for all her untiring and committed service to the poor and the vulnerable in society. We esteem her ever-cheerful and active presence and her ability to carry out all her responsibilities with commitment and diligence. Her life is an invitation to us for a life of commitment to a cause, of determination to pursue the goals we have set for ourselves, to live through the difficulties of life with a strong faith in the Lord who has called us, and finally to look to him alone to receive the reward for a life of fidelity. Let us pray through her intercession to obtain many vocations for us, for FMA India, and the Institute! ***Rest in peace dear Sr S.T.Philo!***

## NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Sincere appreciation and thanks to Sr Alphonse J.Isabella for conducting the webinar on Artificial Intelligence for VTC students on 23 September 2022.
- ✚ Hearty Congratulations to Sr Cruz Michael INT for the online presentation of the Renewal Programme, “Seed of Salesian Charism sown by Sr Gisbert Raffaella” on 30 September 2022.

## PCI MEET

On the September 13 Morning, we had the meeting of the FMA Provincials of all the 7 Provinces, during which we discussed some of the common issues of FMA India: First Phase of Second Novitiate, Project Mornese for the coming six years, Venue for the English Translation Group (ETG) etc. Our sincere gratitude to Sr D’Silva Meenakshi FMA, the provincial of INB, for the warm hospitality and dear Sr Mascarenhas Rosy Vilanova, the animator and the Sisters of the community at Benaulim, Goa, for their royal welcome to the PCI provincials, along with the teachers and students of the School, and for seeing to every detail of our stay.

## MAJOR SUPERIORS’ MEET

A meeting of the ‘Salesian Family Conference of Major Superiors, South Asia’ was held on 13-14 September in Goa. Our beloved Rector Major, the Regional Councillor for South Asia, Fr Biju Michael, all the SDB and FMA provincials of India, and major superiors of 12 congregations belonging to the Salesian Family were present for this meeting. The focus of the meeting was to enhance the collaboration among the various groups belonging to the Salesian Family in India. Each congregation shared their best practices and how they carry out their apostolate according to the Salesian spirituality. Based on the discussions held at this meeting, it was agreed that we would work jointly in the following areas: evangelization and catechesis, promotion of religious vocations, formation of laity and nation-building. Million thanks to Fr Clive Telles SDB, the Provincial of INP and Fr Jose Mathew SDB, the Secretary of SPCSA, for the efficient organization of the Salesian Family Meet.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Hearty Congratulations to our two aspirants at Negombo, Sri Lanka, W.Jude Ravi Piumika and W.Fernando Anne Nimesha who will be receiving the Postulants’ medal on 7 October 2022. They will make their retreat along with the first-year aspirants from 4 to 6 October preached by Fr Suthes SDB. Let us accompany them with our prayers that their initiation into religious life may help them to make a decisive choice to follow Christ more closely till the end of their life.

I am happy to be in Negombo to don the medals to the Postulants and to welcome the Aspirants into our FMA family. I will be in Sri Lanka from 6 to 12 October to visit our Sisters in Sri Lanka, and Sr Antony Raj Christina, the Provincial Councillor and Academic Coordinator, will be coming along with me, to visit the Schools run by our Sisters in Sri Lanka.

## HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Our loving prayers and condolences to all those who lost their dear ones in September 2022:

- ✠ To Fr Provincial and the Confreres of Bangalore Province at the passing away of Fr Devasia Punnakunnel SDB (90) on 11 September
- ✠ To Sr Pears Alice at the passing away of her Sister-in-law Mrs Rosi (73) on 14 September
- ✠ To Sr George Elizabeth and the Sisters of INS Province at the passing away of our dear Missionary from Mexico, Sr Hilda Barragan (89) on 18 September.
- ✠ To Sr Palliparambil Leelamma and the Sisters of the INC Province at the demise of our dear Sr Philomena Prabalanathan (88), our former Provincial and the daughter of our soil, on 22 September.
- ✠ To Sr Saverimuthu Alexandra at the passing away of her nephew Mr Theodore George (92) on 28 September

## LIVING IN OUR MEMORY- OCTOBER 2022

03	† Sr Gaitano Annetta	(1986)	11	† Sr Gullery Eleanor	(1991)
04	† Sr D'Souza Philomena	(2016)		† Sr Personeni Ancilla	(1999)
05	† Sr Zanetta Carmelina	(1987)	14	† Sr Zonta Maria	(1994)
06	† Sr Marchetti Virginia	(2012)	18	† Sr Nayagam Fatima	(2005)
07	† Sr Ittoop Mercy	(2010)	22	† Sr Antonysamy Regina Mary	(2005)
08	† Sr Rayappan Antonia	(2019)		† Sr Fernando Juliet	(2017)
	† Sr Berta Giulia	(1968)	26	† Sr Savarimuthu Michaela	(2003)
10	† Sr Savarimuthu Lucy	(2013)	28	† Sr Arpudam Mary	(1945)
	† Sr Mezzacasa Maria	(1943)	31	† Sr Marnetto Catherina	(1953)

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS – OCTOBER 2022

- 04-06 – Annual Retreat for Candidates, Sri Lanka
- 07 - Donning of Postulants with the Medals, Sri Lanka
- 09 – Canonization of Bro. Artemides Zatti
- 14 - Submission of Society Accounts, Kodambakkam
- 15-16 – New Economers' Meet, Kodambakkam
- 15 - Training for Boarding Sisters, Online
  - Introduction to ADMA to Candidates, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
- 19 - 22- Leadership Training Programme (Vellore, Aux. Home & Arni), SPM, Mazz. Home
- 20 -30- Ashram Experience to Novices, Mannivakkam
- 21- 22 - Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
- 22 - Media Education for Students and Teachers, Online
- 24 - Animators' Meet Sri Lanka - Colombo
- 29 - Media Animation for Sisters, Online
- 30 - Centenary Renewal Programme

On 7 October we celebrate the feast of our Lady of Rosary known for several centuries by the alternate title of "Our Lady of Victory, ". The feast day takes place in honour of a 16<sup>th</sup> century naval victory which secured Europe against Turkish invasion. Pope St Pius V attributed the victory to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary who was invoked on the day of the battle through a campaign to pray the Rosary throughout Europe. Pope Leo XIII says, "***The Rosary is the most excellent form of prayer and the most efficacious means of attaining eternal life.*** It is the remedy for all our evils, the root of all our blessings. There is no more excellent way of praying." The Holy Rosary has always been one of the most appreciated prayers in the Christian community for its simplicity and profoundness. Although it is distinguished by its Marian character, it is a prayer centred on the whole mystery of Christ. By focusing on each of the mysteries, it concentrates on the profound message of the Gospel, which is like a compendium.

During this month dedicated to the Holy Rosary, the priceless treasure inspired by God and a powerful weapon, let us recite it with great love and devotion, praying for all the needs of our province, communities and our families. Let us also promote this popular devotion to the families in our neighbourhood by praying the Rosary along with them.

***Festal Wishes to Little Flower Convent, Pallikonda, on the first of October and to Holy Rosary Convent, Colombo on the 7 October!***

***I wish you a very Happy feast of Holy Rosary  
and Mission Month!***

*Yours affectionately,*

*Sr. Nirmala Lazar*

**Sr Nirmala Lazar FMA  
Provincial**

