



INM FMA/Pro.Cir.65

December 2022

“The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son, and will call him Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14).

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesu`!

Affectionate greetings to you from the Provincial House, Kodambakkam!

We have reached the last month of this historical year 2022! Our hearts are filled with immense gratitude to God for the innumerable graces and blessings He has bestowed on us and FMA India in this memorable centenary year. In preparation for the feast of Mary Immaculate, this year, in view of the 150th anniversary of its Foundation, our Institute has proposed, special spiritual practices for 12 days that represent the 12 stars to crown the Immaculate Conception. Our preparation for this significant feast is meant to be an expression of thanks to Mary our mother, prolonged in the concreteness of the life of the individual FMA and the communities, and educators around the world. As we reflect on the proposed charismatic sources and journey with Mary to imbibe her virtues, let us become more and more convinced of the one PRESENCE, (the presence of Mary) that accompanies and makes holiness flourish in the heart of every young person, every member of the educating Community and the environment, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Happy Feast to all the houses and persons who bear the name of our Immaculate Mother!

JOURNEY WITH MARY IN THE COURSE OF THE CENTURY AND BEYOND ...

As we complete the first **100 YEARS** of FMA presence in India, I invite you to reflect on the **Eucharistic synaxis**, the source and summit of our prayer life and synodality.

The Church's synodal path is shaped and nourished by the **Eucharist**. It is "the centre of the whole of Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually". The source and summit of synodality are in the celebration of the liturgy and - in a unique way - in our full, conscious and active participation in the **Eucharistic synaxis**. Because of our communion with the Body and Blood of Christ, "we, although there are many of us, are one single body, for we all share in the one loaf" (*1 Corinthians* 10,17). The Eucharist represents and visibly brings about our membership of the Body of Christ, which we share with each other as Christians (*1 Corinthians* 12,12). Local Churches are formed around the table of the Eucharist and gather there in the unity of the one Church. The **Eucharistic synaxis** expresses and brings into being the ecclesial "we" of the *communio sanctorum*, in which the faithful are **made sharers in God's grace** in its many forms.

The liturgical nature of a synodal assembly, as indicated in the church's promulgations of the fourth century, is that it should begin with and be centered on the celebration of the Eucharist and the **proclamation of the Gospel**. The Lord pours out His Spirit in all places and at all times on the People of God, to allow them to share His life, feeding them with the Eucharist and guiding them in **synodal communion**. "Being truly 'synodal', therefore, means moving forward in **harmony, spurred on by the Holy Spirit**".

While synodal procedure and events have a beginning, a process and a conclusion, synodality offers a specific description of the historical development of the Church as such, breathes life into her structures and directs her mission. The Trinitarian, anthropological, Christological, pneumatological and Eucharistic dimensions of God's plan of salvation, which is at work in the mystery of the Church, are the theological horizon which has been the context for the development of synodality across the centuries.

As the disciples, **Pope Francis asserts**, we are called to be true to Jesus' commission and safeguard the universal Catholic spirit of the Church. We have to make the journey yet to bring the people who still live in the spiritual, social, economic, political, geographical and existential peripheries of our world. As FMA we are called to unite ourselves with the offering of Jesus, adorer of the Father and become like Him bread for our sisters and brothers (Constitution Art.40). By the virtue of Baptism and by virtue of religious consecration we are intimately associated with the mystery of Christ. Carlo Colli reiterates, 'since our deepest encounter with Christ, that in which in a sacramental way, we become more intimately partakers of His mystery is the Eucharist, it logically follows that all prayer indeed the **whole life of the FMA** which has a strong **Christocentric orientation** takes on a deeply **Eucharistic dimension**. So as the Council rightly affirms that the Eucharistic sacrifice, the dynamic centre of the whole liturgy, becomes the 'source and apex of the entire Christian life'.

Article 40, in perfect harmony with the Council, with Don Bosco, and with the Spiritual orientation marked by Maria Mazzarello in Mornese, states that "the source and culmination of our prayer is the Eucharist, the paschal sacrifice, from which the whole life of the Church springs." Only in the perspective of **participation in the offering that Christ** makes of Himself and all of us to the Father in the Eucharistic sacrifice, does the **daily and generous sacrifice of the FMA** for the salvation of the young find its **profound meaning, its secret energy and fecundity**. To the extent that we enter into communion with Him and allow ourselves to be penetrated by His Spirit, He inextricably unites us to Himself and among ourselves with the bond of His Love. In this way, it is strongly emphasized that the encounter with Christ is inseparable from the encounter with our sisters and brothers, since we cannot separate the presence of Christ in the Eucharist from His presence in our neighbour. So there emerges the need for **fraternal communion and humble, mutual service, especially in favour of the weak and the vulnerable**.

Therefore, **in the conscious and responsible participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the FMA community finds the strength each day to overcome the tensions and lacerations** produced by each one's limitations and fragility, and the food for building fraternal communion, striving for the good of the young. In fact, from the sacrifice of Christ, which has become the driving centre of community life, apostolic action radiates powerfully and fruitfully. We know how intensely this was felt and lived by Maria Mazzarello and the first Sisters of Mornese.

Let us reflect on the following questions and share the insights:

- ✚ *How can we experience synodality 'in our full, conscious and responsible participation in the Eucharistic synaxis'?*
- ✚ *How can we become like Him "bread" for our brothers and sisters?*
- ✚ *In the Eucharist, do we, as a community, find the strength each day to overcome the tensions and lacerations produced by each one's limitations and fragility?*

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

- 03 - St Francis Xavier
- 05 - Bl. Philip Rinaldi
- 08 - Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- 10 - International Day of Human Rights
- 25 - CHRISTMAS
- 27 - St John the Apostle & Evangelist
- 28 - Holy Innocents

SYMPHONY OF GRATITUDE

Our hearts overwhelm with joy and gratitude to our dear Sr Celine Jacob, the visiting General Councillor, for making the Canonical Visitation to our Province from 7 August to 19 November 2022.

On **7 August**, I was happy to extend a warm welcome, along with the Provincial Economist and Secretary, to Sr Celine Jacob at the Chennai Airport, with shawl and flower bouquet. On arriving at the Provincial House, Kodambakkam, around 9.30 a.m. on that beautiful day, she received a solemn welcome with the array of Sunday Catechesis Children of Fatima Parish and cheering groups of Sisters from Chennai zone, the hostel girls of Chetpet, Children from Nandambakkam and Vyasarpadi. She was honoured with a garland, broach, *Kumba Arathi* and the melodious welcome song of the Fatima Matriculation School students at the entrance of the house.

On **8 August**, there was a solemn Eucharistic celebration by Fr. K.M. Jose SDB, Salesian Provincial of INM, during which we invoked the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the fruitfulness of the Visitation. The majestic statue of St. Thomas the Apostle, the patron of our Province, erected on the portico of the Provincial house was unveiled by Sr Celine Jacob and blessed by Fr. Provincial, while the Animators and Sisters intoned a thanksgiving hymn.

At 9.30 a.m., there was a solemn **inauguration of the canonical visit** in the Golden Jubilee Memorial Auditorium of Fatima Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Kodambakkam. The school band along with the Fatima Guides company holding the flags presented the guard of honour to the distinguished Visiting Councillor. After a significant prayer moment, there was a heart-warming welcome through a rhythmic dance by Our Lady's Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Chetpet. This was followed by a welcome address and felicitation. The Fatima Matriculation Higher Secondary School girls exhibited a grand theme presentation which emphasized the theme of Integral Ecology, the deliberation of General chapter XXIV, presenting creatively some of the seven objectives of Laudato Si. At the End of the theme presentation, Sr Celine Jacob, the visiting Councilor, inaugurated the Canonical Visit and addressed the gathering. She kept forward the aims of the visitation: to reinforce the bond of charity; to promote a constructive and continual rapport between the Provinces and the Superior General and her Council and a valid collaboration among the various province communities. During the initial meeting with the animators at 11.00 a.m. Sr Celine animated them on the theme of Synodality in the Community.

On **9 August** at 9.30 a.m., Sr. Celine Jacob addressed the Provincial team and highlighted the Constitutional expectations of the Team members and thanked them for their valuable contribution to the growth of the Mission. Then, the team members presented their seven years reports of their concerned sectors creatively. In the evening from 3.00 to 5.30 p.m. she met the young Sisters of the Province and animated them on the theme of vocation, presenting a Video on "The Potter and the Clay". On **10 August**, she had a meeting with the Provincial Councillors from 2.30 to 05.00 p.m. She enlightened them on the theme of synodality and listened to their sharing. In the evening, accompanied by the Provincial and some of the councillors, she visited the Little Mount, the holy place of St Thomas the Apostle, entrusting her visit to the Chennai Province to his patronage.

Sr. Celine Jacob left for Sri Lanka on **11 August** at 7.00 a.m. Around 12.30 p.m., she was given a very warm welcome at Auxilium Convent, Negombo, by all the animators of Sri Lanka, Novices, Candidates and Apostolic School Children with a lively band of the young girls in formation, and a bouquet of flowers. From there, she proceeded to visit the communities in Sri Lanka.

She returned to Chennai on **1 September** and participated in the grand centenary celebrations. From **5 September to 9 November**, she visited the communities in Tamil Nadu, meeting every Sister personally, visiting the different sectors of the mission, encouraging and directing them. From **13 to 16 November**, Sr Celine animated the General Assembly and Discernment for two groups of Sisters at Auxilium College, Katpadi and from **17 to 18 November** the animators and Sisters at Kodambakkam. On **19 November** there was a thanksgiving Morning Prayer and Holy Eucharist at the

Province level to express our gratitude to her. She then, held a meeting with the Provincial Councillors and me, giving us her valuable suggestions and proposals.

We had the joy of her presence during the centenary celebration on **24 November 2022**, (the real day of the arrival of pioneering missionaries to our motherland) at Kodambakkam after her visitation. At 11.00 a.m., the Fatima Matriculation Higher Secondary School children shared about the life of Don Bosco, Mother Mazzarello and the six Pioneers and performed a variety of colourful dances, and songs to mark the occasion. Sr. Celine Jacob in her message to the teachers and students present there said that they are the long hands of the Salesian Sisters to carry forward the Salesian Charism handed on to us by the pioneering missionaries hundred years ago. At 7.00 p.m. the solemn eucharistic celebration was presided over by Rev. Fr. Stefano Martoglio SDB, the Vicar General, Rome, and concelebrated by Rev Fr K M Jose SDB, the Provincial INM, the Vice Provincial, the Parish Priest and four other priests. The Sisters of the Community, the representatives from Chennai Communities, other religious Sisters from the neighbourhood, teachers, students, parents, VIDES, Salesian Cooperators, Educating Community members of Fatima Convent and the families of our orphans, participated in the Holy Mass and thanked God for His marvels during the past 100 years through the Salesian Sisters.

We bid farewell to our dear Sr Celine on the **25th morning** as she left for Rome with joy, carrying along with her the beautiful experiences and memories of our Province.

We thank the Lord for the **amazing graces** He has showered on our Province through his chosen mediation, Sr Celine, who being the humble instrument in His hands enlightened and encouraged the communities in the path of renewal and revitalization.

We are grateful for her **gracious presence**, sisterly care and concern, availability and unassuming leadership with which she guided, instructed, inspired and enabled us to collaborate and work together with the communion of hearts, unity and sisterliness during the four months of her visitation to our Province, thus paving the way to make progress in holiness and to flourish in apostolic fruitfulness.

We express our gratitude to dear Sr Celine for filling our hearts with **splendid joy** by her sisterly accompaniment and guidance, sacrificing love and patience, attentive listening, cheerful demeanour and dynamic animations. Certainly, our hearts overflow with noble words of gratitude to our beloved Sr. Celine Jacob. *Grazie mille carissima Sr Celine!*

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS!

I am glad to communicate to you that on 24 November during the centenary celebration at Kodambakkam we had the release of Volume 06 of “Beacon Lights” – Biographies of deceased FMA, compiled by our dear Sr Viagula Putti. It was released by Rev Fr Stefano Martoglio, the Vicar General of the Salesians of Don Bosco, and the first copy was received by Rev Sr Celine Jacob the Visiting Councillor. I am grateful to dear Sr. Viagula for her commitment and efficiency in compiling the lives of Sr Perez Magdalene, Sr Soosai Maria Theresa, Sr James Glorina, Sr Rayappan Antonia and Sr Solomon Philomena. Thanks to each one of you dear Sisters who shared your cherished experiences with these Sisters, to keep their memories alive.

You will be glad to know that many of our Sisters are involved in the research work these years; and during this centenary year, on 25 November, our dear Sr Madalaimuthu Jacintha defended her Ph.D. thesis on the relevant title, “The Salesian contribution to the development of education in North Arcot District – A study (1928-1989 A.D)”. Hearty congratulations to you dear Sr. Jacintha!

May God bless their efforts and reward them for all the hard work and sacrifices they have put in to complete these works!

Sincere appreciation to Sr Lourdusamy Ugini Fatima, the animator and the community, for establishing the ‘Manufacturing units of Sanitary Napkins, Areca Plates and Paper Plates for the Empowerment of Women’ funded by Rotary Club of Arni Fort, Dist.3231, India and Rotary Club of Karachi, Dist 3271, Pakistan on 11 November 2022 at St.Joseph’s Convent, Arni. We wish and pray that their efforts towards women's empowerment bear abundant fruits.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SALESIAN COOPERATORS!

We are grateful to God for having blessed our INM Provinces (SDB and FMA), with 33 new Salesian Cooperators who made their promise as full-fledged members of the Association of the Salesian Cooperators on 20 November 2022 at Mary Help of Christians Parish, Tirupattur. Rev. Fr K.M. Jose SDB, Provincial of Chennai, presided over the solemn concelebrated Holy Eucharist and Mr T. Aseervatham, Provincial Coordinator of the Chennai Salesian Cooperators, received the promises. Sincere thanks to Sr Susai Raj Sheila and Fr Edwin George SDB, the Province delegates, and the delegates of the communities for accompanying them with love and zeal.

Hearty Congratulations to the office bearers of the Association of the Salesian Cooperators who were newly elected on 27 November 2022. Mr.A.Maria John Bosco, the Provincial Coordinator, Mr. K.E.Arockia Arasu, Provincial Secretary, Mr.Santhosh Rajan, the Provincial Administrator, Mr John Victor, Formation in charge, Mrs Jackuline Martin, Mr Moses, Mr John Peter and Mr Vimalan the Councillors. Our deep appreciation and gratitude to Mr T. Aseervatham, the former Provincial Coordinator and his outgoing team for their dedicated service in the past years! Our Prayerful wishes and support to the newly elected Office bearers for an effective animation of the members to be the yeast in today's world giving testimony to the Salesian charism in the lay state of life.

CONSIGNMENT OF ACTS OF GC XXIV

I am happy to communicate to you that the long-awaited Acts of the General Chapter XXIV has arrived in our hands. We thank Rev Sr D'Silva Meenakshi, the INB Provincial and the Province for this great service to PCI. We will be having the zoom meet on the 5 December 2022 evening from 6.30 to 7.30, for the virtual consignment of Acts GC XXIV. Each one of you will receive a copy of this valuable document one of these days. I kindly request you to take up a deeper study of the document in the communities.

XIV NATIONAL BOSCOREE

The XIV National Boscoree, Don Bosco Guides and Scouts, hosted by Assam Don Bosco University will be held from 29 December 2022 to 3 January 2023 on the theme 'Save our planet Home'. From our Province the following Sisters will be participating in it: Sr.Sebastian Amala with 16 students of Fatima Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Kodambakkam, Sr Chinnaraj Thangam with 16 students of St Joseph's Girls Higher Secondary School, Arni, Sr.Arokiadoss Brijit Nirmala with 16 students of Auxilium Higher Secondary School, Katpadi, and Sr AnthonyRaj Christina and Sr Anthonysamy Jacintha with 16 students of Mary Immaculate Higher Secondary School, Tirupattur. We wish the Sisters and students a happy and exciting experience of Guides and Scouts.

ANNUAL SPIRITUAL RETREAT

The student Sisters of our Province and those of other Provinces will be making their Annual Spiritual Retreat from 26 December 2022 to 2 January 2023 at Manikandam, Trichy. We wish them a happy experience of encounter with the Lord.

COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE OF NOVICES AND POSTULANTS

Our three second year novices of Sri Lanka, Sr Fernando Nilmini, Sr James Conar Krishmina and Sr Vasthiyampillai Sulaixana had their Community and apostolic experience in the community of Nochchiyagama from 26 October to 26 November 2022.

The Postulants from Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi will be going for their community experience from 9 to 19 December 2022: Arokia Doss Anish Hema and Jayaseelan Saffron to Mary Immaculate Convent, Tirupattur; Paul Prabhakaran Sweety and Antony Raj Narmada to Pallikonda; Arul Pragasam Febia Cletus and Mariaselvam Susai Mary to Arni. We wish them a fruitful experience of the community and mission among the children and young girls.

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Sincere gratitude to Sr Mariadoss Amala Mary and the community of Auxilium Home, Sr Kunnathu Anna and the community of Auxilium College for hosting and accommodating the teachers during the Counselling Course on 4 and 5 November; our appreciation to Sr Rajendiran Selvarani, the Youth Pastoral Coordinator, for organizing the meet and to Sr Johnson Towle Irine for her generous and efficient animation to the 40 participants.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Fernando Mary Ann, the Delegate of Sri Lanka, for animating the Trimonthly Recollection and animation for the junior sisters from 7 to 9 November 2022; to Sr Arockiasamy Rackel Mary, the Animator and Sisters of the Negombo Auxilium Community, for their hospitality and accommodation.
- ✚ Thanks a million to Sr Kunnathu Anna, the Animator and the Sisters of Auxilium College, for hosting the General Assembly & Discernment I and II on 13 -14 and 15-16 respectively.
- ✚ Hearty thanks to Sr Gaspar Mary Celine, the animator, and the community of Kodambakkam for hosting the trimonthly Recollection of Juniors and some seniors of Chennai communities on 5 November and animation to Juniors on 6 November; General Assembly III & Discernment on 17 to 18 November and the Conclusion of the Canonical visitation on 19 November.
- ✚ A note of thanks to Sr Pichai Mary Saroja and the community of Mannivakkam for hosting the SPM Leadership Training Programme from 26 to 29 November and congratulations to Sr Sebastian Elizabeth, the SPM Coordinator, for animating the 18 students of Chetpet and Kodambakkam.
- ✚ Sincere appreciation to Sr Louis Isabel Sirumalar and Sr Maidan Jeyapriya, the VIDES Coordinators, for animating and encouraging the members of VIDES through an online meeting on 27 November.
- ✚ Expressions of thanks to Sr. Susai Raj Mary Sheila and the community of Our Lady's Centre Chetpet, for hosting the VTC meet on 29 November 2022, sincere gratitude to Sr Rayappan Samala Elisa, the Provincial Councillor and Sr Alphonse J. Isabella, the VTC Coordinator for enlightening and guiding the animators and the Sisters involved in this challenging mission.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- ✚ Sr Antonyraj Mary Josephine is participating in the renewal course "New challenges and skills in formation" at Ishvani Kendra, Pune from 20 November – 17 December 2022.
- ✚ Sr Yettukuri Alphonsa and Sr Samala Amala participated in the FMA India History writing committee meet in Bangalore from 28 to 30 November 2022, coordinated by Sr De Souza Philomena INB.
- ✚ Sr Arulnesan Jenatnayaki and Sr Emmanuvel Camalin will be doing their Intensive Juniorate at the inter-congregational juniorate, Colombo, from January to December 2023.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- ✚ To Fr. Provincial and the confreres of INB at the passing away of Fr Salvador D'Souza (95) on 20 November and Bro Edward Pereira SDB (86) on 23 November
- ✚ To Fr. Provincial and the Confreres of INT at the demise of Fr. Joseph Puthenkalam SDB (94) on 26 November
- ✚ To Sr Ozhukayil Lucy Rose and the Sisters of INK at the sudden and sad demise of Sr. Crescentia D'Almeida (74) on 27 November

✠ To Fr. Provincial and the confreres of INN at the demise of Fr. Joseph Chittattukalam SDB (82) on 27 November 2022.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY- DECEMBER 2022

- 03 †Sr Baptista Giovanna (1982), Sr Griffiths Martha (2008)
- 04 †Sr Berta Sperrfechter (1991)
- 07 †Sr Fernandez Priscilla (2002)
- 08 †Sr Fernandez Helen (2012)
- 11 †Sr Anthony M. Josephine Rani (2004)
- 13 †Sr Lobo Clementina (2002)
- 17 †Sr Bout Mary (1994), Sr Gisbert Rafaela (2006)
- 22 †Sr Maretta Maddalena (1966)
- 27 †Sr Fernandes Beda Maria (1967), Sr Daglio Angela (1996)
- 28 †Sr Arduini Raffaella (1970)
- 30 †Sr Devasahayam Victoria (2017)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – DECEMBER 2022

- 1-15 - Ashram Experience to Aspirants, Mannivakkam
- 3 - Catechetical Animation to Teachers, online
- 5 - Consignment of Acts of GC XXIV, online
- 6 - Webinar: "Catechetical and Evangelizing Identity of the FMA Institute", online
- 16-17 - Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
- 26 – 2 Jan - Annual Spiritual Retreat, Trichy, Manikandam

During this season of advent, we are preparing ourselves earnestly for the great feast of Christmas. On this feast of love, hope, peace and joy, let us renew the joyous proclamation of Bethlehem: “Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace among those whom he favours” (Luke 2:14). Like the shepherds who first went with haste to the stable, let us halt in wonder before the sign that God has given us: “A baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12). In silence, let us fall to our knees and worship and reflect, *‘What does that Child, born for us of the Virgin Mary, have to tell us? What is the universal message of Christmas?’* May the contemplation of the Nativity scene give us a better understanding of God’s loving nature; enable us to grow in sincere relationship with our sisters and brothers, sharing and accepting them as they are, and in fraternity among people with different ideas, temperaments and cultures. May the Baby Jesus bless us, our communities, families and the educating communities and fill us with His everlasting peace and joy!

I wish you a very Happy feast of Immaculate Conception and Holy Christmas!

*Yours affectionately,
Sr. Nirmala Lazar*

**Sr Nirmala Lazar FMA
Provincial**

