



INM FMA/Pro.Cir.66

January 2023

*“May the Lord give you what your heart desires,
and may He fulfil all your plans.” (Ps. 20:4)*

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesu`!

Affectionate New Year greetings to you from the Provincial House, Kodambakkam!

We bid goodbye to the year 2022 with sentiments of immense gratitude and welcome the New Year 2023 with a renewed sense of joy, hope and trust in the providence of God, tenderly accompanied by Mary, the Mother of God and our mother.

In her Christmas Message, dear Mother General Sr Chiara Cazzuola, focuses on the **search of the Magi** for the King of the Jews, **“We saw his star at its rising and have come to adore him”** (Mt 2:2). The star! A sign that comes from heaven to indicate that darkness is vanquished forever. We, like the Magi, know that even on the darkest night a star shines. It is **Jesus** who lights up our life. As we celebrate the feast of the **Epiphany of the Lord on 8 January**, let us raise our hearts in thanksgiving to the Father for his infinite mercy towards us and the world that yearns more and more for hope and peace.

The three kings from the east offered the Christ Child their gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense. We are given **three gifts for this new year** to enlighten our minds, energize our hands and guide our steps: The peace Message of Holy Father Pope Francis, Strenna of the Rector Major 2023, and the UNO theme for 2023.

MESSAGE FOR THE 56thWORLD DAY OF PEACE

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has given us the message for the 56th World Day of Peace which is observed on 1 January 2023 on the theme: **“No one can be saved alone. Combatting Covid-19 together, embarking together on paths of peace”**. It is based on the words of St Paul: “Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you, yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night” (1Thess 5:1-2). He addresses humanity with the comforting words of the Apostle Paul to remain steadfast, our hearts and feet firmly planted and our gaze fixed on the world around us and the events of history. We need to be like sentinels keeping watch and ready to glimpse the first light of dawn. Referring to the negative effects of Covid-19 that plunged us into a night, and the ever-persisting war in Ukraine, Pope Francis recommends us to let our hearts be changed by our experience of the crisis and to let God transform our customary criteria for viewing the world around us. We can no longer think exclusively of carving out space for our personal or national interests; instead, we must think in terms of the common good, recognizing that we belong to a greater community, and open our minds and hearts to the universal human fraternity. The time has come for all of us to endeavour to heal our society and our planet and lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world.

STRENNA 2023

The Strenna given by the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, for 2023 is: "**AS THE YEAST IN TODAY'S HUMAN FAMILY. The lay dimension in the family of Don Bosco**". The Strenna has two target groups: All the groups of the Salesian Family and the "young children, adolescents and older youth wherever Don Bosco's Family is to be found in the world," because, "in the light of what most characterizes our pedagogy and spirituality, we intend to help children, especially adolescents and young people, to discover that each of them can be like the leaven of which Jesus speaks." At the same time, it aims at being a clear and thought-provoking message directed to Don Bosco's Family to discover the lay dimension. Specifically for consecrated members of the Salesian Family, it is an invitation to be "leaven in the dough of the bread of humanity" and "to live alongside one another, allowing ourselves to be enriched by evangelical secularity." Leaven, an element also used metaphorically by Jesus to present the Kingdom of God to the apostles, is "the only living ingredient," the element that is used in small quantities but "has the ability to influence, condition and transform the whole batch of dough," says the Rector Major. This is why, the Strenna 2023 proposes that every member of the Salesian Family and young people should be leaven in the world, spreading the Word and the Kingdom of God just as leaven transforms the dough of bread. ***With great hope and trust, Rector Major invites all of Don Bosco's Family, especially the lay members and all the others who belong to this vast Salesian movement, to respond*** creatively, collaboratively and concretely, in every possible way to be truly ***like the yeast that Jesus our Lord reminds us of in the Gospel.***

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS

The U.N. General Assembly recently adopted a resolution, sponsored by India and supported by more than 70 countries, declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets. The resolution is intended to increase public awareness of the health benefits of millets and their suitability for cultivation under tough conditions marked by climate change. India must take a lead in strongly popularising the theme at the international level through various campaigns as it is a rare occasion to help millet growers, who are mostly poor and marginal farmers from parched areas, and this has the potential to change their fortunes. It is a golden opportunity to add millets to the export basket. But this can happen only if we really evolve a meticulous plan and work accordingly.

We will be having the dissemination of the above themes virtually through a zoom meet on 7 January during the ***Educating Community Meet*** and the discussion on the same in our institutions. I kindly request you to study these contents to undertake a synodal journey along with the Church and Salesian Family.

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

We have just completed the first ***100 YEARS*** of FMA Presence in India and 150 years of the foundation of our Institute. Now, I invite you to reflect on the **Eucharistic synaxis**, that paves the way for communion through **reconciliation with God and our brothers and sisters**.

The Eucharistic synaxis is the source and paradigm of the spirituality of communion. In it are expressed the specific elements of the Christian life. The Eucharistic synaxis paves the way for communion through **reconciliation with God and our brothers and sisters**. The *confession peccati* celebrates the Father's merciful love and expresses the desire to follow, not the way of division caused by sin but, the path to unity: "If you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you..., go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering" (Mt 5, 23-24). Synodal events presume that ***we recognize our frailties and request forgiveness from each other. Reconciliation is the way to live the new evangelization.*** We look for God's grace in the imperfect moments of our actions and those of others, waiting in patient endurance and sure hope that God is serious about loving and ***forgiving*** all of us with mercy and compassion and is ready to welcome us into the embrace of Providence forever. ***The amount we measure out is the amount we will receive, and that is God's promise.***

It is good to reflect on the aspect of forgiveness which is one of the *demands of love* as Art.53 of our Constitutions explicates. Without forgiveness, the hurt we have experienced is perpetuated and passed on to others. *Anger, bitterness, and resentment take root in our hearts and gradually change us from within.* We stay mired in the past and lose our ability to be in the present moment and to be hopeful about the future. We may become bitter and cynical, or we may be tempted to seek revenge, which will lock us into a cycle of violence that will bring on a whole series of disappointments and misfortunes. Withholding forgiveness is not a healthy option.

It is important to rule out the possibility of taking revenge because *“Violence begets violence.”* Even if we feel that revenge is justified, in the end, it will only lead to further misery and guilt and will deepen our resentment, hostility, and anger. We do our best to avoid it at all costs.

Forgiveness has a **threefold** reality. **First**, we **seek the forgiveness of God for our sins** and failures. There is certain hope and grace in knowing that a prodigal God is “slow to anger, rich in mercy and compassion”. God’s forgiveness is just ready even before we ask. **Secondly**, we also seek forgiveness from those whom we offend by word, action, or inaction. *To ask another for forgiveness seems to take more courage than to ask it of God, but such is the cost of humility and the trust that the one we have offended will accept us with mercy and compassion.* The second and equally demanding quality of forgiveness is that in which *we imitate the God of mercy and compassion as we experience offences against ourselves.* We might identify ourselves with Peter, the great questioner, who knew Jesus was very emphatic about our need to forgive, but felt there ought to be limits! How much offence are we expected to take from one another? We know Jesus’ answer only too well. *Without limit, we are called to bear with one another and they with us, in a grace-filled summons to reconciliation.*

Perhaps, one of the ways to think of forgiving another is to allow ourselves to let go of the hurt, the sense of betrayal, and the feelings that tie us in knots. Forgiving is *letting go of the desire for revenge, self-defence*, for closing ourselves off from others. These unforgiving responses limit our freedom to be loving and deny the love we could extend if we were slow to anger and rich in mercy and compassion. We may say “Yes, but that is God’s response! I am only human.” True, but human, made in God’s image, baptized into Christ Jesus, daughters and sons of the Father, led by the Spirit, called and gifted by God’s grace to be a holy people.

The third aspect of *forgiveness is that which we must extend even to ourselves.* We would rather be perfect in our own eyes, with no need for self-forgiveness, but that is not the truth of the matter. *We pray for courage to allow God to transform us through the people and events of daily life.* In that daily life, we live the Paschal Mystery, the dying and rising with Jesus. Only so do we come to the fullness of life.

This is grace, that God acts in us, giving us the kind of peace and freedom which we see in others as reconciliation happens. As the Supreme Pontiff exhorts us, let us live in the certainty that we are accompanied by Mary most Holy, and go forward with enthusiasm on the path that the Spirit suggests to us - the path of reconciliation and peace! With a heart *open to accepting the thrusts of God’s grace*, with an attentive gaze to recognize the needs and urgencies of a world in constant change we look at the change with the heart always in love with the Lord, with the mother’s heart, with compassion and tenderness!

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

- ✚ How can we live the threefold realities of Forgiveness and Reconciliation (with God, others and oneself) in our day-to-day life?
- ✚ What efforts do I need to make to allow God to transform me through the people and events of daily life?

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

- 01 - Mary, Mother of God
- 08 - The Epiphany of the Lord/ Bl. Titus Zeman SDB
- 09 - The Baptism of the Lord
- 14 - St Devasahayam
- 15 - Bl. Louis Variara SDB
- 16 - St Joseph Vaz
- 18-25- Unity Octave
- 22 - Bl. Laura Vicuna
- 24 - St Francis De Sales
- 25 - Conversion of St Paul
- 26 - Republic Day
- 30 - Bl Bronislao Markiewicz SDB
- 31 - St John Bosco

ALL IN THE FAMILY

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS!

We are glad that Our Rector Major Rev Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, the 10th Successor of Don Bosco, on 14 December 2022, nominated Rev. **Fr Don Bosco LOURDUWAMY** as the provincial designate of the Salesian Province of Chennai. Fr Bosco has served the province of Chennai in diverse capacities with a variety of experiences in his Salesian, religious and pastoral life. He will be installed as the 15th provincial of INM, on 4 February 2023. We express our heartiest congratulations and sisterly support as he takes us the leadership of a large and vibrant Province with 415 confreres working in 51 houses in the State of Tamil Nadu, the Union Territory of Pondicherry, the Islands of Andaman and Nicobar in India and the United Arab Emirates.

WEBINAR - GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION

Sr Runita Borja, General Councillor for Youth Ministry, and her team organized a webinar on the theme “Networking in the broad educational alliance proposed by the Global Compact on Education” on 13 December, as per the Acts CG XXIV, Priority choices n. 35.3 IV point. Sr Antony Raj Christina from our Province participated in it.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION

The **FMA PCI National Conference** for Province Coordinators of Education and Principals will be held from 27 to 29 January 2023, at Dum Dum, Kolkata on the theme “*Network to Promote Global Compact on Education*”. From our Province, Sr Antonyraj Josephine, the National Education Co-Ordinator and the organizer of the conference, Sr Antonyraj Christina, the Province Academic Coordinator, Sr De Rose Amala and Sr Joseph Victoria Mary will be participating in it. We wish them an enriching experience at the conference.

VISIT TO SRI LANKA

Sr Puliyan Lucy the Provincial Economer and Sr Rayappan Samala Elisa, the Provincial Councilor will be visiting Sri Lanka from 28 January to 5 February 2023 to check the accounts of the communities and the construction and maintenance of the buildings in Sri Lanka. We wish them a safe journey and a fruitful mission!

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Hearty thanks to Sr Doss Rosalia, the Directress of SEARCH Ashram, Mannivakkam, for animating the Aspirants from 1 to 15 December; and Sr Pichai Mary Saroja, the animator and the Community for their hospitality and accommodation to the Aspirants.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima and Sr Francis Jeyamani, the Catechetical Coordinators of our Province for organizing the online Catechetical Animation to Teachers on 3 December 2022, on the theme “Eco Care and Eco-Spirituality”.
- ✚ Million Thanks to Sr Runita Borja, General Councillor for Youth Ministry and her team for organizing the webinar on “The catechetical and evangelizing identity of the FMA Institute” on 6 December; to Sr Josmy Jose INK from Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences «Auxilium», Rome, for animating it.
- ✚ A note of thanks to Sr Gaspar Mary Celine, the animator, and the community of Kodambakkam for hosting the Provincial Council on 19 and 20 December 2022.
- ✚ Sincere gratitude to Sr Amalanathan Mary Margaret, the Provincial INT for animating the student Sisters of our Province during the Annual Spiritual Retreat from 26 December 2022 to 2 January 2023; to Sr Soosaimuthu Arul Mary, the animator and the community of Auxilium Provincial House, Manikandam, Trichy and Sr Cruz Michael, the Novice Formator and the community for their hospitality.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- ✚ To Sr Nicholas Susheela at the passing away of her Sister-in-law Mrs Christina David (68) on 14 December
- ✚ To Sr Joseph Jackulen Antony at the demise of her younger brother Mr Arockiaraj (45) on 16 December
- ✚ To Fr Provincial and the Confreres of the SDB Province of Shillong at the tragic passing of Cl. Pynshngaiñ Hahshah (19) on 18 December 2022
- ✚ To Sr Pushpa Gracy Theresraj at the demise of her mother Mrs Dorothy Raj (90) on 19 December
- ✚ To Fr K. M. Jose, the Provincial and the confreres of INM, at the passing away of Fr Amalraj Thomas SDB (78) on 20 December
- ✚ To Sr Maindan Jeya Priya at the demise of her mother Mrs Pathmavathy (71) on 26 December
- ✚ To Sr Gomes Dorothy at the passing away of her elder brother Mr Mervyn (84) on 27 December
- ✚ To Sr Irudayam Nirmal Rose at the demise of her elder sister Mrs Pushpa Rani (63) on 30 December.

REST IN PEACE

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, the humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord has returned to the Father’s House at 9.34 am (Italian time) on 31 December 2022, Saturday morning, in his residence at the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery, which the 95-year-old Pope emeritus had chosen as his residence after he resigned from his Petrine ministry in 2013. From 2 January 2023, the body of Pope Emeritus will be in Saint Peter’s Basilica for the faithful to pay their respects. The funeral will be on Thursday, January 5, at 9.30 am (Italian time), in St Peter’s Square. Pope Francis will preside over the Mass. As a very reputed theologian, Ratzinger was convinced that Christianity was not a series of ideas, doctrines and ethical commandments, but the living encounter with the God who freely chose to enter into a relationship of love with every human being.

All his homilies and writings revolved around this simple, but a profoundly spiritual central idea. Let us pray for his eternal repose and offer in suffrage the prayers of the day and offer a Mass in all our communities. *Requiem in Pacem!*

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY- JANUARY 2023

- 03 †Sr Rita Thomas (2013)
- 08 † Sr Appiano Clotilde (1968)
- 14 †Sr Villa Teresa (1989)
- 24 †Sr Mania Caterina (1983)
- ‡Sr Muthusamy Rosary (2018)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – JANUARY 2023

- 04 - Provincial Team Meet, Kodambakkam
- 07 - Educating Community Meet, online and local communities
- 08 - Provincial Team & Councillors' Meet, Kodambakkam
- 07-08 - Salesian Co-operators' Annual Retreat, Ennore & Kattupadi
- 09 - Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
- 09-13 - Eco Fest competitions, Communities
- 11-12 - Submission of House Accounts, Kodambakkam
- 14 - Province Youth Pastoral Coordinators Meet-PCI, online
- 15 - ADMA Day Celebration, Communities
- 21 - Province Community Day, Kodambakkam
- 22 - Animators' and Team Meet, Kodambakkam
- 22 - Silver Jubilee of ARUWYE, Kodambakkam
- 26 - Silver Jubilee of Amala Anjali, Yellagiri Hills
- 27-29 - National Conference on Global Compact on Education, Kolkata
- 29 - Youth Fest, Sri Lanka Communities / VIDES GB Meeting, Vyasarpadi
- 31 - Salesian Co-operators Renewal of the promise, respective centres

The feast of Blessed Laura Vicuña is celebrated on **22 January**. Of Chilean origin, Laura met the Salesian Sisters in Junín de los Andes, Argentina. It was here she lived 'her Paradise' in the School of the FMA and matured her journey of holiness in everyday life, up to the choice of giving herself for the conversion of her mother. This led her to be born into heaven on 22 January 1904, at the age of 13. She was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1988 and was proposed to young people as a model of evangelical coherence up to the gift of one's life. She is a wonderful example and a gift of holiness for all the young people of the world. *May Blessed Laura Vicuña enlighten all of us to be holy educators, and inspire young people to tread the path of love, sacrifice and charity.*

January 24 is the Feast of St Francis de Sales, a priest and bishop of Geneva, the patron of writers and Christian unity. Don Bosco found the roots of the Salesian Spirituality from the splendid figure of St Francis and proposed him as the patron saint of our Institute (C.Art.45) and as a model to Salesian Family. "The charity and kindness of St Francis de Sales will guide me in everything" was one of his resolutions before his priestly ordination. This highlights that he had found in Francis, a model not only for his activities but also for his life. Today, as a family sharing in this spirituality, it is up to us to continue to live the spirituality of the preventive system, especially *loving kindness, gentleness and meekness* which are the essential characteristics needed to accompany young people.

In remembrance of the 400th anniversary of the death of St Francis de Sales (1567-1622), Pope Francis has released on 28 December, the new apostolic letter titled "*Totum Amoris Est*" ("Everything Pertains to Love"). It is a great treasure for us as he is the patron of our Institute.

On 31 January we celebrate with joy the feast of our beloved father and founder **St John Bosco**. He dedicated his whole life to the betterment and education of street children, juvenile delinquents, and other disadvantaged youth. His teaching methods focused on love instead of punishment and placing his boys in surroundings removed from the likelihood of committing sin. Like Don Bosco, the friend of the young, we too are called to be experts today in carrying out the important task of accompanying the young, especially in their search for their vocation and holiness. This is what they are asking of us most urgently, perhaps, and are in need! We still hear the recent echo of the appeal made to the Church during the Synod on young people who ask, among other things, to be *accompanied in the discernment of their vocation*.

Mother Chiara Cazzuola in her circular 1024, summarizes the Strenna 2023 of Rector Major, "Being a leaven in today's world is responding to the call to *be there, to be a presence that generates life*, that accompanies the growth and maturation, especially of young men and women in feeling a living part of society and of the Church, willing to leave the narrow horizons of their lives to discover, in the fabric of daily life, the dimension of ecclesial, political and social commitment".

*I wish each one of you a very happy feast of the Epiphany,
Bl. Laura Vicuna, St Francis De Sales and St John Bosco!*

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar

**Sr Nirmala Lazar FMA
Provincial**

