



INM FMA/Pro.Cir.70

May 2023

“How can I repay the LORD for all His goodness to me?” – Psalm 116:12

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesu`!

Affectionate greetings to you from the Provincial House, Kodambakkam!

We have begun the month of May *dedicated to Mary* our Blessed Mother. For us this month has an added significance as we celebrate *three Salesian saints*: the feast of St Dominic Savio on 06, our little Saint, the Birthday and Feast Day of our Mother and Co-foundress St Mary Domenica Mazzarello on 09 and 13 and the feast of our heavenly Mother, Mary Help of Christians on 24.

The devotion to Our Lady under the title *‘Help of Christians’* clearly exhibits her maternal presence in the events of humanity, of the Church, of the Congregation and each of us. Mary is the Mother who never abandons her children, but follows them and helps with her intercession, especially during the moments of pain, sorrow, struggle and troubles. It is a reminder for us to be aware of Mary’s presence in our lives and entrust ourselves entirely to her (C 4), especially in our educative mission: “to be helpers, like her, especially among young people” (C 4). Let us revive our love for Mary Most Holy, and the various Marian moments and translate them into our life.

On 24 May, as we celebrate with joy the great feast of Mary Help of Christians, many of us are *celebrating the anniversary of our first profession*. Believing in the words of Don Bosco *“It is Mary who guides us”*, let us continue to entrust ourselves to the hands of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, Help of Christians, so that she may help us to be generators of peace, hope and joy. Let us renew our fidelity to the Lord and recommit ourselves to a life of holiness!

SYMPHONY OF GRATITUDE

On 12 June 2017, I began my service of Animation in the Province surrendering myself to God’s loving plan and the accompaniment of Mary our Mother, to lead and guide me and the Province. After 6 years as I look back at the journey traversed, I am simply filled with sentiments of awe and amazement to see that our Lord and Mother Mary have done their part excellently well. And hence, now my lips utter nothing but the same words of Mary: *“My soul proclaims the greatness of God and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour”* (Lk 1:46) for the innumerable blessings and graces I have received and the marvels I have witnessed during the past 6 years.

We have truly seen that great things can happen when God is with His people. I feel proud and happy that as a province we have seen God’s prodigies and we will surely see greater wonders if we keep growing and going according to His plan. I am grateful to our Blessed Mother whose loving protection and care we have experienced individually and as a Province.

“Our Salesian vocation opens us to a universal dimension. Our Institute is a worldwide community called to give witness of communion and universality in the Church” (C 115).

At this instant, I would like to place on record my loving gratitude to **Mother Reungoat Yvonne**, the former Mother General, by whom I was privileged to be installed as Provincial, and whose motherly accompaniment I have always experienced; to **Mother Cazzuola Chiara** for her constant guidance and closeness in my life and mission and to all the general councillors for their creative animation and inspiration, in a special way, to our dear **Sr Jacob Celine** for her generous availability to make the Canonical Visitation in our Province during this academic year; and to all the **FMA Provincials of India** for their sisterly presence, sharing and support in all the initiatives of PCI.

I owe my sincere gratitude to our beloved **Pope Francis** whose blessings I was fortunate to receive twice, to the **Bishops of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka** under whose guidance we carry on our mission; to our dynamic **Rector Major Don Angel Fernandez Artime and the SDB Provincials of Chennai, Tiruchy and Sri Lanka** for their brotherly support in the ‘shared Salesian charism and mission’.

“The Provincial council cooperates with the Provincial in the government and animation of the Province community” (C 150).

My heart overflows with sentiments of gratitude to the good Lord who accompanied me and the journey of the Province in the most wonderful and loving ways. His love was made tangible and His plan was realized through each and every Sister of the Province whose love and support I always felt. In particular, I am very grateful to Sr Stanislaus Mary Dora and Sr Gaspar Mary Celine, the **Vice Provincials**, each for three years, who by their ever-supportive presence, wise suggestions and efficient coordination made a valuable contribution to the growth of the province.

I sincerely acknowledge the Sisterly collaboration and supportive role played by the other **Provincial Councillors** – Sr Anthony Raj Christina, Sr Devadoss Margaret and Sr Samala Rayappan Elisa – to ensure the growth and vitality of the province; and Sr Fernando Mary Ann for accompanying the sisters and the mission in Sri Lanka as **Provincial delegate**.

I am short of words to thank Sr Puliyani Lucy, the **Provincial Economist** and Sr Kanickaraj Mary Tamizharasi, the **Provincial Secretary** who were my closest collaborators and played an irreplaceable role during these six years. We used to begin our day with an hour of Eucharistic adoration during which we entrusted the entire province and the needs of every sister and community at the feet of our Lord and then moved out to carry on our responsibilities. I am grateful for their commitment, spirit of sacrifice, precision, confidentiality, co-responsibility and sense of belonging to the province that facilitated my mission to a greater extent.

“Living and working together in the name of the Lord is an essential element of our vocation” (C 49).

I am certain that the holiness of the province depends very much on the quality of each local community. My sincere and loving thanks to all the dear **Animators of the communities** for accompanying the Sisters and enhancing the mission of each community through their sisterly presence and motherly guidance, and also for journeying with the Province by diligently carrying out the suggestions proposed.

I thank sincerely Sr Alexander Amali and Sr Sebastian Elizabeth, the **General Coordinators**, and the **Provincial Team Members**, for their strenuous efforts to keep alive the various sectors of our life and mission through their dynamic coordination and animation.

I am very grateful to **all the Sisters** who through their availability, hard work and enterprising spirit collaborated in the mission of the Province, by carrying out joyfully, responsibly, with a sense of belonging and love for the Institute the tasks entrusted to them. My special thanks to all the **elderly Sisters** who sustained the province with an hour of adoration every day in front of the Eucharistic Lord.

My thanks at this moment goes also to *the young people* of our institutions for their youthful presence and to the members of the *Salesian Family and the educating community members*, well-wishers, friends and benefactors for their support and encouragement which helped the enhancement of our mission.

May God bless each one of you with His manifold graces and blessings to continue to be builders of God's Kingdom!

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

I invite you this month to reflect on the theme of **Love**, the greatest of the three theological virtues, as we continue the synodal journey in the course of the century and beyond.

Love, as St Paul reminds us, is the greatest of all of the Spirit's gifts because God is Love (1 Cor.13). When we are loved, we experience consolation and, when we love, we are ministers of Christ, the Consoler. This love has the power to overcome all hatred because it refuses to be drawn into the economy of enmity and the power struggles of dominance and subjection. Love seeks only the good of the other and it refuses to accept anything less. ***This gives to such love a strong, generous humility and a fierce commitment to the truth; freedom to speak and to act, to forgive and to reconcile; an audacity to gift another without looking for reward or recognition but only to delight the Holy Spirit who is Gift.***

This way of loving tends not to draw attention to itself, yet we know it is present by the life that it produces and the fruit that it sustains. As it is taught in the school of God's own Triune Love, it will understand the beauty and the grace of diversity; that difference need not be a threat but is itself a gift when it comes to love. It will recognize the openness, reception and vulnerability of the other and claim responsibility for them, for their truth and the work that God has also called them to do. ***In this way, we can begin to discover how this gift of love gives us a new mission, not only with regard to each other but to build up the 'koinonia' – the fellowship – to which Christ calls us in His Church. This must be the experience lived in our communities too.***

Pope Francis says that loving like Christ requires us to put aside other loves offered by the world, like the love of money, success, or power. These deceptive paths distance us from the Lord's love and lead us to become more and more selfish, narcissistic and overbearing. And being overbearing leads to a degeneration of love, to abuse others, to make our loved ones suffer. To love *as* Christ means to put oneself at the service of our brothers and sisters, as He did in washing the feet of the disciples. It means making ourselves available, as we are and with what we have. This means to love not in word but in deed. To love as the Lord loves us means to appreciate the people beside us and to respect their freedom, to love them as they are, gratuitously. It also means ***overcoming the ambition to control others and instead giving ourselves to others.***

If we take these theological virtues faith, hope and love as our starting point, they can also help us with the process of discerning the path of the Holy Spirit that brings life to the community and its work. They are operative all through the criteria sketched in Lumen Gentium § 12 and we can see how they will also be active in the synodal process. An application of the theological virtues as part of the way in which we discern as well as act, can serve to guide us in our thinking and our relations. ***In this way, we may become a Church, a religious community, walking in consolation, even when members experience persecution, suffering and martyrdom.***

By the same token, we can recognize those patterns and forces that bring desolation because they are opposed to faith, hope and love. Often well disguised, nevertheless, they will sow doubt and division, substituting ideology for a faith that humbly searches for an ever-deeper understanding of the mystery of salvation unfolding in history. Wherever we see the presence of suspicion, ready condemnation of the other who differs from us, and all the different mechanisms by which individuals and groups can be socially and spiritually assassinated,

repeating the ancient sin of Cain and Abel, or the constant jockeying for power and influence, the creation of circles of inclusion and exclusion and all the other strategies of control, then we know we are living in a community travelling in desolation, of unhappiness.

With the Spirit's gift of life in faith, hope and love comes the gift of responsibility to resist and overcome those patterns of fear and negativity which do not nourish the Mystical Body of Christ but continue to wound it. When we recognize these sources of desolation, we also recognize our need for healing and forgiveness, and this is the first step in the way of the Spirit.

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

- ✚ Am I capable of loving others and making myself available for the service of others?
- ✚ Do I consider the differences as resources for the fruitfulness of the mission?
- ✚ How can I live a life of faith, hope and love in my daily life?

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

- 01 - St Joseph the Worker
- 06 - St Dominic Savio
- 09 - Birthday of St Mary Domenica Mazzarello
- 13 - St Mary Domenica Mazzarello/ Our Lady of Fatima
- 21 - Ascension of the Lord
- 24 - Mary Help of Christians
- 28 - Pentecost
- 31 - Visitation of our Lady

ALL IN THE FAMILY

CONGRATULATIONS!

Entry into Novitiate & Final Commitment

I am happy to communicate to you that our **Postulants** Anthonyraj Narmadha, Arockia Dass Anish Hema, Arul Pragasam Fabia Cletus, Mariya Selvam Susai Mary along with Paul Prabhakaran Sweety of INT will be entering into the Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manikandam, Trichy on 23 May 2023 after their annual retreat from 16 – 23 May there.

We rejoice and thank the Lord for our **five young Sisters** Sr Amirthanathan Preethi Diana, Sr Arokia Raj Deepika, Sr Chrisdhu Doss Esther Rani, Sr Gabriel Mary Chitra and Sr Joseph Mercy Buella who will be pronouncing their definite 'Yes' to the Lord publicly, with the motto "*In the light of Christ heralds of a new dawn*", on 24 May 2023, their **final commitment** day. The Holy Eucharistic celebration will be presided by Most Rev Dr Lawrance Pius, Bishop of Dharmapuri at 6.00 p.m. in Fatima Parish Church, Kodambakkam.

As we congratulate these our postulants and young sisters, let us offer them our loving prayers that their choice to follow Christ be decisive and commitment to serve Him be irrevocable.

Renewal of Vows

23 Junior Sisters will be participating in the Summer renewal course at Kodambakkam from 13 to 21 May 2023. They will be enriched on FMA Constitutions and various topics by different resource persons. I am grateful to Sr Irudayanathan Agatha for accepting to accompany the young sisters during these days of the course. On 23 May, as they will be renewing their fidelity to the Lord let us accompany them with our prayers that they may continue joyfully their formative journey in our Institute with passion for Christ and His kingdom.

Installation of the New Provincial

Our hearts are overwhelmed with joy that our dear **Sr Devadoss Margaret** will officially assume her mandate as the 16th Provincial of the glorious INM Province on 25 May 2023 at Kodambakkam. She will be installed by Rev Sr Jacob Celine, the Visiting Councillor, during the Holy Eucharistic Celebration presided by Most Rev Dr Anthonisamy Neethinathan, the Bishop of Chengalpet at 10.00 a.m. As we congratulate Sr Margaret for her generous 'Yes' to the Lord we assure her of our prayers and sisterly collaboration.

Blessing of Buildings

We raise our hearts in thanksgiving to the Lord for His goodness we experience in our mission: On 22 April 2023, the convent building at **Columbuthurai – Sri Lanka** was blessed by Rev Fr Melvin SDB and inaugurated in the presence of all the sisters, thanks to Sr Fernando Metilda, the animator of Urumpirai, for completing the construction work; On 3 May 2023, we were happy to inaugurate the Home for women at risk at **Avvai Nagar, Salem Marialaya**, in the presence of the Member of Legislative Assembly, Mayor and Social Work Development Officer of Salem, along with the children of the evening study centres, some of the women and our Sisters. Congratulations and gratitude to Sr Stanislaus Mary Dora, the Animator and the Sisters of the Community at Avvai Nagar for their untiring work to establish the new mission for the least and poorest, networking with the Political leaders, Local Church and the Salesian Family.

Welcome Home!

We warmly welcome our dear **Sr Adaikalasamy Jacintha Jeyarani** back to our Province from Casa Ersilia Canta, Rome-Italy who arrived in Chennai on 3 May 2023. She rendered her efficient service as a nurse in the community for the past five years from 2018 – 2023. The Provincial, the Superior and the Sisters are very much appreciative of her generous contribution to the well-being of the community.

We happily welcome our dear **Sr Theresraj Pushpa Gracy** who has returned to the Province after nearly nine years of leave of absence from the religious community, to take care of her elderly ailing parents and to settle the family issues. Welcome Home dear Sister!

Missionary Ad gentes Course

Sr Nicholas Susheela is participating in the course '*Ongoing formation for Missionaries Ad gentes*' from 7 to 31 May 2023 organized by the Mission ad/inter gentes sector, Rome. We wish her a fruitful experience of Salesian Spirituality.

REST IN PEACE IN HEAVEN DEAR SR. MARIADASS MARY PHILOMENA!

On Saturday, 29 April 2023, we were shocked and saddened by the sudden demise of one of the strong pillars that sustained the Chennai Province, our dear Sr Mariadass Mary Philomena. Through her deep faith and Eucharistic piety, foresight and meticulous planning, sensitivity and delicate dealing, spirit of sacrifice and hard work she had certainly contributed to the development of the Province and the communities in which she exercised the role of an animator, to grow in strength to strength. During these last days she was found weak and suffered shortness of breath but little did we imagine that she would pass away so soon. Sr Kunnathu Anna informed me on 28 April that she had breathing difficulty and immediate medical care was given and she became stable. I rushed to visit her on 29 April but just before I could arrive there she had winged her way to heaven serenely surrounded by the Sisters of the community of Auxilium College, Katpadi, who lovingly accompanied her from May 2020.

Sr Mary Philomena was born in Mylapore, Madras on 13 July 1939, and professed at Katpadi on 05 August 1964. She was the second of five children, to profoundly Christian parents Mr. Susai Maria Dass and Mrs. Arputham Adaikalamary. She was baptized on 31 July in the same month of her birth and was brought up in deep faith being inculcated in Eucharistic Piety and Marian devotion at a tender age by her parents who lived an authentic Christian life. We are grateful to her parents from whom

she imbibed the qualities of kindness and firmness at the same time, living in the loving presence of Jesus always and a great devotion to our Blessed Mother. Sr. Philo Dass rendered a remarkable service for 59 long years in different communities exercising various roles - as assistant of the Candidates, Novices and Juniors, animator of the formation house Sacred Heart Home, of Auxilium College – Katpadi, Thanjavur and Dindigul, Provincial Economer, Vicar, Boarding Sister, Hostel Warden, In charge of linen, costumiere and Chronicles and she carried out all these roles with great perfection, precision and sense of belonging. The candidates and young Sisters for whom she was a formator experienced personally her motherly care and encouraging accompaniment in their vocational journey. As an animator, she showed special attention to the poor and the orphans, helped them to complete their higher education, took utmost care of them and thus reflected the providential and merciful face of God the Father to them.

We are grateful to her for having left behind a strong legacy of a life of fidelity to the Salesian vocation keeping Jesus as the focal point in her spiritual journey. She never compromised, but always upright, straight-forward, ‘Yes for Yes and no for no.’ She had such a strength of character that she was very courageous, daring and unrelenting in whatever was entrusted to her. She was a woman of few words but powerful in action. From her penetrating eyes, nothing escaped, she had a sharp wit combined with sisterly correction; majestic deportment and composure were her unique features.

Dear Sr. Philo, we thank you for your untiring work, commitment, and unassuming and selfless service to the Province, to the poor children, youth and women. We pray that the Lord grant you his eternal reward for your selfless service and may you receive the crown of glory. *Requiem in pacem!*

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Gaspar Mary Celine, the animator, and the community of Kodambakkam for the hospitality extended to the economers for the submission of the Society Account on 13 April, the provincial council on 17 and 18 and the Second Novitiate Sisters from 18 to 23 April.
- ✚ Hearty thanks to Fr Bellarmine SDB, the preacher of retreat III, and the Rector and the community at Kavrapettai for enabling our sisters to experience the Salesian Family Spirit during their retreat from 13 to 20 April.
- ✚ Heartfelt gratitude to Sr. Fernando Mary Ann, the delegate of Sri Lanka for organising a day of thanksgiving on 22 April with all the animators and the sisters of Sri Lanka with a thanksgiving Mass and meaningful cultural programme given by the postulants, novices, juniors, Sisters and the young people of Urumpirai community. Loving thanks to Sr Fernando Metilda the animator of Urumpirai and the community for hosting this gratitude day with great joy and Salesian family spirit.
- ✚ Million thanks to Sr Kunnathu Anna, the animator and the community of Auxilium College, Katpadi for organizing the Special Vocation Camp from 14 to 30 April for the 9 vocationable girls who had completed their XII Board exams.
- ✚ Sincere gratitude to Sr Sagayaraj Sangitha INK, the National Formation Coordinator for organizing the webinar on the spirituality of St Mary Domenica Mazzarello by Sr Mac Donald Edna Mary of SPR Province on 30 April.
- ✚ Loving gratitude to Sr Chinnappan Mano Ranjitham and the community of Yercaud for hosting Annual Retreat IV and animation for retreatants from 2 to 9 May.
- ✚ A note of thanks to Sr Mariadoss Amala, the animator and the community of Auxilium Home, Katpadi for conducting the Vocation camp from 4 to 9 May; special thanks to her collaborators for their dynamic animation of the girls during the camp.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Our loving prayers and heartfelt condolences to all those who lost their dear ones in April 2023:

- ✠ To the Provincial and the Confreres of the Province of Trichy at the passing of Fr Paulraj Selvadurai (46) on 10 April
- ✠ To Provincial and the Confreres of the Province of Chennai at the demise of Fr Jayaprakash Reddy (69) on 11 April
- ✠ To the Provincial and the Confreres of the Province of Guwahati at the death of Fr George Chittappanatt (86) on 11 April
- ✠ To the Provincial and the Confreres of the Province of Bangalore at the passing of Br Joseph Neeliyara (91) on 17 April
- ✠ To the family of Sr Anthony Agnes at the demise of her Carmelite Sister Sr Arokia Mary on 23 April
- ✠ To the Provincial and the Confreres of the Province of Dimapur at the demise of Fr Joseph Nangachiveethil (94) on 28 April
- ✠ To Sr Mora Ruth del Pilar, the general councillor for Mission ad/inter gentes at the passing away of her brother Mr Antonio Francisco on 29 April
- ✠ To the Provincial and the Sisters of Guwahati Province at the passing away of Sr Elizabeth Chinir (38) on 30 April 2023
- ✠ To Sr Emmanuval Camalin Riyalini at the demise of her father Mr Anthonipillai Emmanuel (69) on 5 May 2023.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY- MAY 2023

- 01 † Sr Colussi Rina (1966)
- † 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 Berardinis 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)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – MAY 2023

- 02 – 09 : Annual Retreat IV, Yercaud
- 09 : Animation for Retreatants, Yercaud
- 04 - 09 : Vocation Camp, Auxilium Home, Katpadi
- 11- 12 : Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
- 13- 21 : Juniors’ Summer Meet, Kodambakkam
- 22 : Recollection for Juniors, Kodambakkam

- 23 : Renewal of vows, Kodambakkam
- 24 : Final Commitment, Kodambakkam
- 25 : Installation of Provincial, Kodambakkam
- 30 : Recollection for Juniors, Negombo, Sri Lanka
- 31 : Renewal of vows, Negombo, Sri Lanka
- 1-2 June : Animators' Meet, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Our Mother General Sr. Chiara Cazzuola, in Circular No. 1027 shares a reflection on the presence of Mary in the life of the FMA and the history of the Institute, and on the **charismatic importance of praying the Rosary**: The Marian reference, the precious legacy of the Founders, illuminates our identity as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. With the prayer of the Rosary, each one receives, from the hands of the Mother, the Grace and graces needed to face the journey of life.

Let us Rediscover the great worth of prayer of the Rosary during this month and in praying contemplate the face of Christ with Mary. Mother Chiara expresses her wish for all FMA quoting the expression of Pope Francis ***“I wish each of us could say the same, “The Rosary is the prayer of my heart, the prayer that always accompanies my life””***.

I wish each one of you
a fervent Month of Mary,
Happy Feast of St Dominic Savio,
St Mary Domenica Mazzarello
and Mary Help of Christians!



Thank You *to everyone*
for everything!

Yours affectionately,
Sr. Nirmala Lazar

Sr Nirmala Lazar FMA
 Provincial