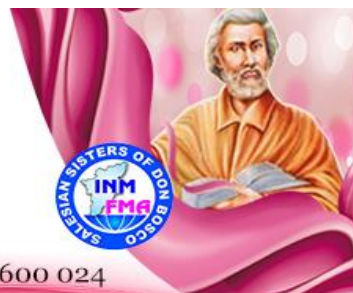




Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
St Thomas the Apostle Province - INM
Madras - India



Provincial Circular

2023 - 2024

Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

INM FMA / Pro.Cir.4

September 2023

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesu`!

Affectionate greetings to you from Kodambakkam!

Mary is the proof of God's presence in our lives. When God, in his salvation plan, determined that the Savior would be born of a woman, He raised the woman to a level not known before. Mary, the Mother of the Redeemer, was given a precise place in the plan of salvation, for "when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. Because you are God's children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:4-6). Through His birth from a woman, God gave us the possibility of experiencing God's life-giving presence.

Mary, as a mirror of God's life-giving presence, generated Jesus, whose life is divine in origin and in destination (Lk 2:11). If the participation of Mary in God's plan for our salvation is seen merely as being the Mother of Jesus, we lose a significant amount of the values that she represents. The importance of Mary as God's life-giving presence can be traced from Genesis, when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike at his heel" (Gen. 3:15) and from the Acts, to the coming of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room, "all these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers (Acts 1:14).

The presence of the Mother of God in our lives is closely connected with the plan for transformation and sanctification that God the Father, in Christ, has consigned with the Holy Spirit to each of us as His disciples (Jn 19:27). From the Annunciation (Lk. 1: 26 - 38) onward, Mary continued to be the tangible presence of God. Mary never retreated in spite of the many hardships and difficulties she endured (Lk. 2:35; Lk. 2:41- 52; Jn 19:26). Mary's mission is to care for us just as she cared for her son. Mary places herself between her Son and humankind in the reality of their wants, needs, and sufferings. As a mother, she also wishes the messianic power of her son to be manifested - his salvific power, meant to help us in our misfortunes and to free us from the evil that, in various forms and degrees, weighs heavily upon our personal and social lives.

The episode at Cana in Galilee offers us a sort of first and evident announcement of Mary's life-giving mediation, wholly oriented towards Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power (Jn 2:1- 11). The description of the Cana event outlines Mary's solicitude for human beings, her presence, intercession, and intervention for them in the wide variety of their wants and needs. To change water into wine is not human; it is divine.

The Mother of Christ presents herself as the spokeswoman of her Son's will, pointing out those things that must be done so that the life-giving power of the Messiah may be manifested. Mary's life-giving maternal task is found in her words to the servants: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5).

Not only did Mary tell the servers at the wedding feast to "do what he tells you," but she reminds us, too, to follow her advice. She knows her son; she knows who he is and what he did for us. She was there. Who better than our spiritual mother can help us experience the life-giving presence of God? Our Mother General, Sr Chiara, in her circular letter 1015, suggests that to be generative like Mary, it is important that every FMA and together as a community verify if God is truly at the centre of the heart, of the choices, and of the entire life and mission. *"When God is at the centre of life, of communities, and of mission, our presence becomes capable of radiating light and joy"*.

Discreet and hidden yet "powerful" is Mary's presence in the Heart of God in the "home" of every believer. This was experienced by the Church from the beginning: Peter and the others at Cana experienced the concern and love of that gaze and those mysterious words (cf. Jn 2, 3-5), between Christ and his Mother; the apostles were aware of that perfect understanding, that space of maternal mediation and never forgot its power. They were both witnesses and guardians of an event that the Church continues to experience through the centuries: Mary's "powerful intercession", her maternal mediation which becomes an unceasing prayer for all our needs, and everything that obtains for us, our authentic conversion, the greatest miracle of our lives and the most pleasing to God!

As at Cana, for this "transforming miracle" to occur in our lives, the presence of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is necessary. The Blessed Virgin Mary intercedes for us as an Advocate of Grace, inviting us to bring our water to Jesus so that He may change it into wine. Through her maternal intervention, the water of our nothingness, our broken humanity, violation of human rights and dignity, environmental degradation...might become the rich wine of God's life multiplied to superabundance.

Another passage from John's Gospel confirms Mary's life-giving presence in the salvific economy of grace: Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. John's description is concise: "Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' And from that hour on, the disciple took her to his own home" (Jn. 19:25 - 27). Mary's maternity for every human person is an essential part of Christianity, which comes from the Heart of the Son, who confirmed it at the apex of the Redemption when nailed to the Cross with his last energy, he cried out from his soul: "Behold your mother", and we, represented by John, are called to reply "Here I am Mother, I am yours".

Undoubtedly, Jesus highlights here a new relationship between mother and son that emerges from the definitive accomplishment of the Redeemer's Paschal Mystery. The Mother of Christ, who stands at the very centre of this mystery - a mystery that embraces each individual and all humanity - is given as mother to every single individual and all humanity. The power of Mary's motherly presence made a difference in Christ's life, and it can make a difference in our lives too. Mary was the first Christian - the first and most perfect follower of Jesus Christ.

Mary, being free from sin and filled to overflowing with God's grace, shows forth the new life that our life is all about. Mary was given to us, to be welcomed into our hearts like the beloved disciple who took her into his home (Cfr. Jn 19, 27b). Without this conscious, personal, and growing presence of the Mother of the Redeemer in our lives, there can be no "miracle of Cana or total conversion to the Lord. Only then can we hear the whisper that illuminates our hearts with Mary's legacy: "Do whatever He tells you to do". The new wine, the best wine, which gives a radically different taste to life, will only come if we accept her intercession and do as Jesus tells us, doing it with Mary, who teaches us to have, as she did, full confidence in his Word.

For Reflection and Application in Life:

1. Like Mary, how can we mirror God's life-giving presence so that we can generate Jesus in our day-to-day lives?
2. Is God truly at the centre of our hearts, our choices, and our life and mission?
3. What would Mother Mary ask us and our communities today when she says, 'Do whatever he tells you'?

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTHS

SEPTEMBER

- 01 Sep - 04 Oct - Season of Creation
- 05 St Teresa of Calcutta / Teachers Day
- 06 Bl. Carmen Moreno, Maria Amparo Carbonell
- 08 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary / Girl Child Day
- 12 Holy Name of Mary
- 14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows
- 21 St Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist, Bl. Carmen Moreno, Bl. Amparo Munoz
- 22 Bl. Joseph Calasanz, Enrico Saizapricio SDB & Co
- 24 Our Lady of Ransom
- 25 World Day of Migrants and Refugees
- 29 Archangels: Michael, Raphael and Gabriel

OCTOBER

- 01 - St Theresa of Lisieux
- 02 - Guardian Angels
- 04 - St Francis of Assisi / Conclusion of the Season of Creation
- 05 - Bl. Albert Marvelli
- 07 - Our Lady of the Rosary

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

THE SEASON OF CREATION

You are well aware that the Season of Creation begins on 1 September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends on 4 October, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. The theme chosen for this year is: “Let Justice and Peace Flow”, inspired by the words of the prophet Amos: “Let justice flow on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” (Amos 5:24). God wants justice to reign; it is as essential to our life as God’s children made in his likeness, as water is essential for our physical survival. This justice must flow forth wherever it is needed, neither remaining hidden deep beneath the ground nor vanishing like water that evaporates before it can bring sustenance. God wants everyone to strive to be just in every situation, to live according to his laws and thus to enable life to flourish.

CLOSING OF THE CENTENARY CELEBRATION

We wish a joyful concluding celebration of the Centennial FMA Presence in India. We express our hearty congratulations and prayerful wishes to Sr Elizabeth George, the Provincial and the Sisters of the Province of Shillong as they celebrate the 110 years of God’s blessings in and through the arrival of the six Pioneers to North East India (1923-2023).

BENVENUTE TO OUR MOTHERLAND INDIA!

Alla Carissima Madre Sr Chiara Cazzuola and Sr Nilsa Fatima Moraes, the General Councillor for Formation, Sr Runita Borja, the General Councillor for Youth Pastoral, Sr Celine Jacob the General Visiting Councillor.

CONGRATULATIONS

We greatly appreciate and congratulate Sr D’Souza Philomena and FMA India History writing Committee members for their strenuous and praiseworthy work. We rejoice with them as the History books will be released by our beloved Mother General in the presence of the Sisters of the General Council, the dignitaries, FMA India and the multitude of Young People. We wish all the Provincials, Sisters and Young People especially those from our Province a wonderful and an enriching experience of the Centennial Celebrations!

TEACHERS’ DAY

Every year on September 5 we celebrate Teachers’ Day, in memory of S. Radhakrishnan, an eminent teacher and scholar in Indian Philosophy. “A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instil a love of learning,” Brad Henry said. Students go to school to learn and then use that learning to create their future, but teachers are the ones who cultivate the seed in the hearts of every student. On this symbolic day, I express a word of appreciation to all of you dear teachers for your unparalleled dedication to the noble task of teaching and enhancing growth in the students in a Salesian style!

EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

Liturgical feast is celebrated on September 14 to honour the Cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified. In the Eastern Churches, the feast dates back to the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (the site of Christ's tomb) in Jerusalem circa 335. It was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church in the 7th century. The universal symbol of the Christian faith, the Cross, represents Christ's victory over death. The feast celebrates the redemptive transformation of a barbaric instrument of torture into a divine "tree of life" that brings hope to humankind.

FEAST OF ARCHANGELS

On 29 September, the Church celebrates the feast of the three archangels who are venerated in the tradition of the Church. Michael (Who is like God?) was the archangel who fought against Satan and all his evil angels, defending all the friends of God. He is the protector of all humanity from the snares of the devil. Gabriel (Strength of God) announced to Zachariah the forthcoming birth of John the Baptist, and to Mary, the birth of Jesus. His greeting to the Virgin, "Hail, full of grace," is one of the most familiar and frequent prayers of the Christian people. Raphael (Medicine of God) is the archangel who took care of Tobias on his journey. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that, "The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls "angels" is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition" (#328).

OCTOBER - DEDICATED TO THE HOLY ROSARY AND THE MISSIONS

Pope Francis has chosen a theme, for the month of Missions, inspired by the story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-35): "Hearts on fire, feet on the move". Pope reflects on the resilience that missionaries demonstrate every day in their life-giving work and their burning passion for God and people which inspires their hearts. Dedicating their lives to others, in partnership with the communities, missionaries aim at creating a positive change through spiritual care and the implementation of grassroots projects, such as healthcare and education. Let us discover how, together in our Mission, we can make a difference in the world, with the synodal style.

Pope John Paul II placed the Rosary at the very centre of Christian spirituality and called it "among the finest and most praiseworthy traditions of Christian contemplation." Pope Pius XI says, "The Rosary is a powerful weapon to put the demons to flight." Following the example of our founders St John Bosco and St Maria Domenica Mazzarello, let us cultivate and spread the Marian devotion and become like her, a presence that generates life!

FEAST OF GUARDIAN ANGELS

In the Catholic Church, on October 2, we keep the memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels. Devotion to the angels is an ancient tradition which the Christian Church inherited from Judaism. It began to develop with the birth of the monastic tradition. The feast was first kept by the Franciscan order in 1500. This feast, like many others, was local before it was placed in the General Roman Calendar in 1607 by Pope Paul V.

Jesus' words in Matthew 18:10 best support this belief: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father." Devotion to the angels is, at its base, an expression of faith in God's enduring love and providential care, extended to each person day in and day out.

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF ROSARY

On October 7, the Church celebrates the yearly feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Known for several centuries by the alternate title of "Our Lady of Victory," the feast day honours a 16th-century naval victory that 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 praying the Rosary throughout Europe. Let our filial devotion to Mary through the recital of the Rosary enable us to resemble her in virtues of faith, hope and charity.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- To Most Rev Mgr Neethinathan, Bishop of Chingleput, and Fr S M Anandraj Vicar Forane, Arakkonam, and his family members at the passing away of his nephew and the elder brother respectively, Fr Vincent Paul Raj CMF, on 10 August 2023.
- To Rev Sr Palliparambil Leelamma, the Provincial and the Sisters of INC, at the demise of Sr Julita Kujur (37), at Dum Dum, on 13 August 2023.
- To Mr Isarel, the husband, and the children, at the demise Mrs Elizabeth (64), the orphan of Sacred Heart Convent, Polur, at Hosur, on 30 August 2023.
- To the children and the family members, at the passing away of Mrs Linda Anthony (90) at Katpadi, on 31 August 2023. She was the orphan of St Joseph's Convent, Arni, and worked in Auxilium College, Katpadi.

May their souls rest in Peace!

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- **Formators Meet:** Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima will participate in the TNPCRI Formators Meet at Poondi Madha Retreat Centre, Poondi, from 5-6 September 2023.
- **Missionary Course:** Sr Mudiappan Nirmala will be participating in the Missionary Course at Shillong from 15 September to 7 October 2023.
- **Seminar on Evangelizing Mission at the Heart of the Salesian Charism:** Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella will participate in the seminar organized by the Salesian Family of South Asia Region from 3 - 6 October 2023 at Don Bosco Institute Guwahati, Assam.

We wish them a fruitful experience!

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Sincere Thanks to Sr Siriapushpam Mathew, the Novice Formator and the Community of Novitiate, Negombo, for hosting the Postulants, Novice and Sisters for their Annual Retreat from 28 July to 4 August and for Sisters from 6 to 13 August; Renewal of the Vows and the Initiation of the Postulants to the Novitiate on 4 August, and the First Profession on 5 August 2023. I sincerely thank Sr Mary Ann, the Delegate of Sri Lanka, for making all the arrangements necessary for the Annual Retreat, Renewal of the Vows and the First Profession.
- ✚ Thanks to the Animators and the Communities of Sacred Heart Home and Our Lady's, Chetpet for arranging the Tri-monthly Recollection for Seniors on 12 August 2023 and - to the Animators and Communities of Mary Immaculate Convent, Tirupattur, and Avvai Nagar, Salem for arranging the Trimonthly Recollection for Seniors.
- ✚ Thanks to Sr Antony Raj Christina and the community of Fatima Convent, Kodambakkam for hosting the Provincial Council Meet on 13 and 14 August 2023.
- ✚ I am grateful to Sr Tharcus Sagaya Mary and Sr Dominic Swetha for the Catechetical animation to the Students from our institutions on 19 August 2023 and I thank Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima for her service as General Coordinator.
- ✚ A word of appreciation to Sr Lourdusamy Kalai and Sr Anthony Cruz Mathalen Mary, the Social Communication Coordinators for organizing the Media Animation for Vellore Zone students at St Mary's Convent, Vellore on 19 August 2023. I thank Sr Rathinaswamy Regina Mary and the community for hosting the meeting.

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS:

- ✚ I express my sincere thanks to **Mgr I John Robert**, the Apostolic Administrator of Vellore Diocese, for having solemnized the Eucharistic Celebration on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Religious Profession of our dear Sisters Malapati Fatima Mary and PuthupallilAnnisa, on 26 August 2023 at St Mary's Convent, Vellore. We experience his constant goodness and paternal pastoral care in our spiritual journey and our educative mission. A word of appreciation to all the Diocesan Priests and the Salesians for their gracious presence and prayerful blessings on our dear Jubilarians on this great occasion.
- ✚ A note of thanks to **Fr A. Sudharsan**, Vellore Diocese, in charge of Madha TV, for having made all the efforts to live stream the Morning Prayer, Eucharistic Celebration and the Cultural Programme of the Golden Jubilee of our beloved Sisters, Sr Malapati Fatima Mary and PuthupallilAnnisa, on 26 August 2023 at St Mary's Convent, Vellore.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Rathinaswamy Regina Mary, the Animator, and the Community of St Mary's, Vellore, for hosting the Golden Jubilee Celebrations on 26 August 2023 and the Animators Meet. May God reward you for your countless sacrifices! I am indebted to thank Sr Antony Raj Christina, the Vice Provincial, for her meticulous planning of the Jubilee Celebrations. Thanks to the Animators and the Communities who in different capacities contributed to the joy of the Celebrations. A word of appreciation to all who shouldered the various responsibilities in big and small ways:

Invitation: Sr Susai Josephine Rani & Sr Arokiaraj Deepika; Morning Prayer: Mangala Geetham, Anmarudai, Cutting the cake and felicitation song: Auxilium College, Katpadi; Backdrop, Guard of honour and Band: St Mary's, Vellore; Liturgy: Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur; Altar and Kneeler decoration: Sacred Heart Convent, Polur; Mass Singing: St Mary's, Vellore; Flower arrangement: Auxilium College, Katpadi; Meals and refreshments: St Mary's, Vellore; Gifts for Jubilarians: Sr Kunnathu Anna and Sr Maria Dass Bridget; Making Jubilee Favours: Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur; Accommodation & Hospitality, Seating Arrangement, Sound & light: St Mary's, Vellore.

Cultural Programme: Prayer Dance: St Joseph's Convent, Arni; Welcome address: Sr Anthony Raj Christina, Vice Provincial; Felicitation Song: Auxilium Home, Katpadi; Life of the Jubilarians, Dance and MC: St Mary's, Vellore; Vote of thanks after cultural programme: Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima; Vote of thanks after Holy Mass: Sr Ambrose Arokia Jayaceli.

- ✦ My gratitude goes to Sr Sebastian Elizabeth and the community at Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur, for hosting and conducting the SPM Training Programme for the Auxilium College Students, from 28 to 31 August 2023.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY- SEPTEMBER 2023

- 04 † Sr Maria Dal Corso (1986)
06 † Sr Elizabeth Gullery (1996)
12 † Sr Giacomina Borrini (1972), Sr Maude Hale (2009)
13 † Sr Judith Aranha (2011)
19 † Sr Stefanina Stefani (1949)
23 † Sr Maddalena Marengo (1978), Sr Margaret Yettukuri (2004)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - SEPTEMBER 2023

- 02 - Inauguration of VTC at Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur
05 - Teachers' Day
09 - 10 - Centenary Celebration - Youth Convention, Shillong
14 - Women Civil Promoters (Chennai & Tiruvanamalai Dt.) Online
18 - 19 - Provincial Council, Mary Immaculate Convent, Tirupattur
20 - 05 Oct - Ashram Experience for Aspirants, Mannivakkam
23 - Webinar on Non - Violent Communication, Online
24 - VIDES Silver Jubilee, Auxilium Home, Katpadi
25 - 28 - SPM, Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur
25 - 26 - Seminar on Psychological Maturity, Yercaud (Prof. Batches 1985 - 1991)
27 - 28 - Seminar on Psychological Maturity, Yercaud (Prof. Batches 1992 - 2001)
29 - 30 - Seminar on Psychological Maturity, Yercaud (Prof. Batches 2002 - 2016)

October

- 03 - 13 - PCI - Provincials Retreat and Meeting with Mother General, Thailand
04 - 06 - Retreat for the Candidates, Negombo, Sri Lanka

On 8 September, we celebrate with joy the Nativity of our Blessed Mother Mary and the feast of Our Lady of Vailankanni, venerated as our Lady of Good Health. Though there is no historical document or record about the reputed apparitions of Mary at Vailankanni, they were implicitly approved by Pope John XXIII's (1962) elevation of the Vailankanni church to the status of minor basilica. The Pope's apostolic brief noted that pilgrims in large numbers had been visiting the shrine for a long period and that it was hailed as the " Lourdes of the East". People of all religions flock to the shrine with great faith and innumerable miracles do happen every day through the powerful intercession of Mother Mary.

Let us also with filial devotion and trust pray earnestly for the humanity that is still afflicted by hatred and violence; let's pray especially for the good health of our Sisters, youth, family members and lay collaborators.

St Augustine described the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary as an event of cosmic and historic significance and an appropriate prelude to the birth of Jesus Christ. "She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley," he said. The fourth-century bishop, whose theology profoundly shaped the Western Church's understanding of sin and human nature, affirmed that "through her birth, the nature inherited from our first parents is changed." As we rejoice in the birth of such a Mother let us be grateful to God for the precious gift of our Blessed Mother and her constant accompaniment in our life journey.

I wish you a very happy birthday of Mother Mary and a happy feast of our Lady of Good Health, Vailankanni!

Special festal wishes to all those who bear the name of Mary!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

**Sr Devadoss Margaret FMA
Provincial**



HAPPY FEAST

Itinerary of the Provincial September - 2023

01-02	Fri-Sat	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
03	Sun	Inauguration of VTC - Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur
04-07	Mon-Thu	Provincial Office -Kodambakkam
08	Fri	Departure to Shillong
09-10	Sat-Sun	Centenary Celebrations - Shillong
14	Thu	General Body Meeting - ACK
15	Fri	Provincial Office - Kodambakkam
16	Sat	Seminar at Citadel
17-18	Sun-Mon	Provincial Council - Mary Immaculate Convent, TPT
19	Tue	Provincial Visit - Amala Anjali, Yellagiri Hills
20	Wed	Provincial Visit - Marialaya, Erode
21	Thu	Provincial Visit - Avvai Nagar, Salem
22	Fri	Provincial Visit - Pethanaickenpalayam, Salem
23	Sat	Provincial Visit - Mornese, Yercaud
24	Sun	VIDES Silver Jubilee, Auxilium Home, Katpadi
25-26	Mon-Tue	Seminar on Psychological Maturity - Mornese, Yercaud
28-30	Thu-Sat	Provincial Office - Kodambakkam

October

01 Oct	Sun	Departure to Thailand
03-13	October	PCI - Provincials Retreat, Meeting La Madre - Thailand

