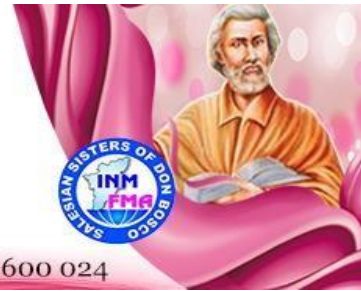




**Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice**  
Salesiane di Don Bosco  
St Thomas the Apostle Province - INM  
Madras - India



## Provincial Circular 2023 - 2024

Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

**INM FMA / Pro.Cir.5**

**October 2023**

**My Dearest Sisters,**

*Viva Gesu`!*

*Affectionate greetings to you from Kodambakkam!*

### **A GOOD AND EFFECTIVE LISTENING PRESENCE**

*“The most basic and powerful way to connect with another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention. When you listen generously to people, they can hear the truth in themselves, often for the first time”.* Rachel Naomi Remen.

This month we are invited to reflect upon a ‘listening presence’- one of the important aspects of a ‘presence’ that generates life (GCXXIV). We hear thousands of voices every day. Family, community, friends, and strangers; students and teachers; parents and laycollaborators; nature-myriads competing for us to listen to them. Swamped with well-planned programs and activities in the mission field, swarmed with unending challenges in personal and community life, fringed by unexpected issues and problems emerging from socio-political contexts, and surrounded by digital distractions from social media, especially smartphones, we’re primed not only to find the shortcut to satisfaction but also to weaken our relationships.

Often, these realities make us decidedly less present and more distant from others, less rooted, and more displace us from the moment, the here and now of life. They disturb our ability to listen to others and to mine out meaning, intent, and emotion from the words people speak and from the lives that they live. The deterioration of our ability to listen degrades our relationships, both professional and personal, and obstructs joy, communion, progress, and success. Most of us have quite capable hearing but fail to arrive at the deeper understanding listening represents. Assimilating others’ experiences, desires, worries, emotions, or worldviews into our own without necessarily agreeing with them is what favours personal, community, and missional growth and, more fundamentally, is what connects us with others and builds relationships.

Listening is a widely valued skill, and it is multi-faceted and tends to encompass mainly three processes: (a) **affective processes**, such as being motivated to attend to others; (b) **behavioural processes**, such as responding with verbal and non-verbal feedback; and (c) **cognitive processes**, such as attending to, understanding, receiving, and interpreting content and relational messages. Listening skills are paramount to effective communication and relationships.

If people feel they are genuinely listened to, they also feel respected and valued, and what they are saying matters, establishing trust. This concept is the backbone of effective listening presence, which in turn builds and maintains personal and social relationships. Effective listening presence is an active process that requires conscious behaviour and an overall presence of mind and heart.

An effective listening presence implies a more active inner stance than hearing. We are present in body, heart, and mind, so we listen with our body, heart, and mind. Ineffective presence, we listen and act from and with the whole of ourselves. Being fully present is the most decisive element of listening, and it's something everyone can get better at. If we pause to listen to people, we create and foster dialogues that have true meaning, solve problems, lead to new ideas, establish and deepen relationships, and much more.

The Bible shows us God speaks in a variety of ways, including in Scripture, the church, and circumstances. God encourages us to cultivate the art of learning to hear and to listen to Him. He is more interested in our regular practice of listening to him than we realize. Listening to God means noticing when He brings truth, understanding, wisdom, guidance, conviction, instruction, or encouragement to our attention. One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to help us listen, perceiving when and why God is speaking to us (Jn 14:26). When the Holy Spirit awakens our attention and opens our ears, listening brings insight, and hearing moves us to action and perks us up with increased understanding and discernment.

Practicing good and effective listening skills makes us better listeners, both with God and others. Though there are some instances in Scripture when God speaks with an audible voice, most often God speaks in less direct ways (Dan 2:22; Job 12:22; Eph 1:9) and teaches us truths about listening to God (Is 50:4-5; Mt 17:5; Lk 10:16; Acts 13:16). We struggle with listening to God, often questioning the reality of His presence when we don't feel like hearing from Him. Jesus is presented as a model of an effective listening presence (Jn 4; Lk 24; Mk 10). We are to listen to Jesus, the Beloved Son of the Father, the way, the truth, and the life; and our hope of eternal salvation (*"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"* (Mk 9:8).

When God encourages us to listen to Jesus, that implies far more than the physical act of hearing; it means to listen and obey, listen and follow, listen and do what he says (Mt 7:24- 27; Jas 1:22-25). Listening to Jesus is life-changing. In John 10:1-18, the relationship between Jesus the Good Shepherd and his sheep depends on listening to and responding to Jesus' voice. Who we listen to Jesus and allow to shape our thinking, attitude, and worldview is crucially important (Mt 21:28-32).

One who can no longer listen to others will soon be no longer listening to God either; they will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too. This is the beginning of the death of the spiritual life. Anyone who thinks that their time is too valuable to spend keeping quiet will eventually have no time for God and their brothers or sisters, but only for themselves and for their own follies. A good listening presence often defuses the emotions that are part of the problem being discussed. Sometimes, releasing these emotions is all that is needed to solve the problem. As Bonhoeffer writes, "We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God."

The charter text for effective Christian listening presence might be James 1:19: "Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." It's simple enough in principle and nearly impossible to live. Too often, we are slow to hear, quick to speak, and swift to anger.

So, learning to be an effective listening presence requires discipline, effort, grace, and good will. A good and effective listening presence requires attentive and patient interaction, externally calm and internally dynamic involvement, open and sincere dialogue, educational and igniting service, and generous and permanent collaboration. When we are people quick to speak, it takes Spirit-powered patience to not only be quick to hear but to keep on hearing, not only to listen, and to keep on being an edifying listening presence.

Listening is one of the easiest things we'll ever do, and one of the hardest too. True, sustained, active listening presence is a great act of faith and a great means of grace, both for us and for others in the fellowship. In actual life situations, listening is a better service to others. While a poor listening presence rejects and diminishes the other person, a good listening presence embraces and invites them to exist and to matter. Good listening goes hand in hand with the mindset of Christ (Phil 2:5). It flows from a humble heart that counts others as more significant than us (Phil 2:3). It looks not only to its own interests but also the interests of others (Phil 2:4). It is patient and kind (1 Cor 13:4). Bonhoeffer writes, "Just as love for God begins with listening to his Word, so the beginning of love for others is learning to listen to them."

A good and effective listening presence is a fundamental requirement that requires disciplined effort and an honest process of introspection in which one has to acknowledge and unlearn unhealthy habits. People with the best listening skills who understand the right questions are often more crucial. If we pause to listen to people, we create and foster dialogues that have true meaning, solve problems, lead to new ideas, establish and deepen relationships, and much more. In the words of Stephen Covey, we are at our best when we "seek first to understand, then to be understood."

A good listening presence can be **people-oriented**, which pays attention to the personal details of the person; **action-oriented**, which pays attention to the physical actions of the other who wants the listener to engage in; **content-oriented**, which pays attention to the meaning and credibility of the other's message; or **time-oriented**, which pays attention to messages that are short and concise as a result of limited attention spans or limited time commitments. However, a listening presence is a powerful means to enhance individuals' experience and commitment at work.

Let us then practice listening, practice being present in listening, and be the listeners. Listening is purposeful; it requires motivation and effort. Listening, at its best, is active, focused, and concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding the meanings expressed by others. A good listening presence is a great means of grace in the dynamic of true Christian and religious discipleship. Not only is it a channel through which God continues to pour his grace into our lives, but it's also his way of using us as his means of grace in the lives of others. It may be one of the hardest things we learn to do, but we will find it worth every ounce of effort.

## POINTS TO PONDER

We need courage and energy not only to overcome the umpteen distractions that keep bombarding us and the events that keep streaming into our consciousness daily but also the many good possibilities that we need to spin out for building healthy and happy relationships. Let us ask,

- Can we just listen without considering and formulating what we will say? Can we just listen without looking for our earliest opportunity to speak or to give our view?
- Can we give the other person space-sound space-to let them speak until they have said what they wish to say?
- Can we just listen from inner silence and inner presence in body, heart, and mind? Can we listen consciously from that inner space that we share with the other person?
- Can we listen to all that happens in and around us? Can we develop the art of being a good and effective listening presence in our community and mission?

## CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTHS

### OCTOBER

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

### NOVEMBER

- 01 - All Saints Day
- 02 - All Souls Day

## HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- To Fr Jesudoss Periyamayagam, Mr Devanesan and family members, at the demise of Mrs Sahaya Mary Rita (61), in Tanjavur, on 13 September. She was our past pupil.
- To Fr Edwin Vasanth, Provincial Economer, at the passing away of his mother Mrs Elizabeth Thomas (84), at Arni, on 13 September 2023.
- To Sr Arokiasamy Rackel Mary, at the passing away of her mother Mrs Saleth Mary (71), in Pondicherry, on 16 September 2023.

- To Sr Chinnappan Mano Ranjitham, at the passing away of her niece Mrs Rosline (70), at Rajapalayam, on 23 September 2023.
- To Sr Pauline Anthonysamy, at the passing away of her beloved mother, Mrs Irudaya Mary (84), at Viruthuvilanginan, on 26 September 2023.
- To Sr Leelamma Palliparampil, the Provincial of INC, at the passing away of her dear mother Mrs Clarakutty (84) on 26 September 2023.

May their souls rest in Peace!

## COURSES AND SEMINARS

- **Meeting on Mission Animation:** Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella will participate in the Meeting at Don Bosco College for Mission Animation, Guwahati, from 3 to 7 October 2023.
- **Financial Administrators Course:** Sr Kunnathu Anna, Sr Nirmala Salvadore, and Sr Anjalan Stella Rani will attend the course for Financial Administrators at Shanti Sadan, Goa, from 9 to 14 October 2023.
- **PCI level Formators Meet:** Sr Susai Josephine Rani, Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima and Sr Wilson Arockia Anitha will participate in the National Formators Meet in Bangalore, from 14 to 16 October 2023.
- **Course on Liturgy:** Sr Arockiam Santhana Mary, Sr Savarimuthu Stella Rani, Sr Asirvatham Anthony Amali and Sr Savarimuthu Mary Emelda will participate in the seminar on Liturgy at TNBCLC, Tindivanam, from 22 to 24 October 2023.
- **Seminar on Legal Awareness for Women Religious:** Sr Mahimainadhan Sathiyavani, Sr Gabriel Chitra, Sr Preethi Diana, Sr Chrisdhu Dass Esther Rani, Sr Susainathan Ayesha Bindhu, Sr Thirukumaran Tamil Selvi, Sr Charles Lowra and Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella will participate in the seminar, at Kodambakkam, on 28 October 2023.

We wish them a fruitful experience!

## NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ My sincere thanks and appreciation to Sr Elizabeth Sebastian, the Animator and the Community of Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur, for the inauguration of VTC on 3 September 2023.
- ✚ Heartfelt thanks to Sr Kanickaraj Mary Tamizharasi, and Sr Elizabeth Sebastian for coordinating and preparing the youth who participated in various competitions in the National Youth Meet, to mark the closing ceremony of the FMA Centenary Celebrations at Shillong. Congratulations to Sr Anthony Raj Christina, Sr Madalaimuthu Lidwin Mary, the Staff and the students of Fatima School, Kodambakkam for winning the award - First Prize - in the Panel discussion at Shillong on 9 September 2023.

- ✚ My gratitude goes to Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella, Social Development Coordinator, for conducting an online programme on Women Civil Promoters, for Chennai and Tiruvannamalai District on 14 September 2023.
- ✚ Thanks to Sr Samala Rayappan Elisa and the Community of Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur for hosting the Provincial Council Meet on 17 and 18 September 2023.
- ✚ I owe my gratitude to Sr Doss Rosalia, the Directress of SEARCH Ashram, Sr Pichai Mary Saroja, the Animator, and the Community of Mannivakkam, for animating the Aspirants from 20 September to 5 October 2023.
- ✚ Thanks to Sr Lourdusamy Solomon Kalai for Coordinating the Webinar on Non-Violent Communication for Teachers, Parents and Students on 23 September 2023.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Kanickaraj Mary Tamizharasi, Sr Maria Louis Isabella, Sr Maindan Jeya Priya and all the local Coordinators for the effective planning and execution of the VIDES Silver Jubilee celebrations. Thanks to Sr Gaspar Celine, the Animator and the Community of Auxilium Home, for hosting the event.
- ✚ Thanks to Sr Chinnappan Philomena Rani, the Animator and the Community of Yercaud for hosting the Sisters of INM and INT of Profession Batches from 1985-2016, from 25 to 30 September 2023.

## LIVING IN OUR MEMORY- OCTOBER 2023

- 03 † Sr Gaidano Annetta (1986)
- 04 † Sr D'Souza Philomena (2016)
- 05 † Sr Zanetta Carmela (1987)
- 06 † Sr Marchetti Virginia (2012)
- 07 † Sr Ittoop Mercy (2010)
- 08 † Sr Berra Giulia (1968)
- † Sr Rayappan Antonia (2019)
- 10 † Sr Mezzacasa Maria (1943)
- † Sr Savarimuthu Lucy (2013)
- 11 † Sr Personeni Ancilla (1999)
- 14 † Sr Zonta Maria (1994)
- 18 † Sr Nayagam Fatima (2005)
- 22 † Sr Antonysamy Regina Mary (2005)
- † Sr Fernando Juliet (2017)
- 26 † Sr Savarimuthu Michaela (2003)
- 28 † Sr Arputha Mary Santiago (1945)
- 31 † Sr Marnetto Caterina (1953)
- † Sr Doyle Cecilia Sarah (1990)

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS - OCTOBER 2023

01	Sun	The Provincial's departure to Thailand
03-13	Tue-Fri	Asian Provincials' Retreat, Meeting with Mother General, Thailand
04-06	Wed-Fri	Retreat for the Candidates, Negombo, Sri Lanka
07	Sat	Media Animation for Sisters, Loyola College, Chennai
13-14	Fri -Sat	Updating Counselling Course for Teachers, Auxilium College, Katpadi
15	Sun	Salesian Cooperators Provincial Council Meet, Chennai Zone, Citadel
16	Mon	Submission of Society Account, Kodambakkam
17	Tue	Animation for Economers, Kodambakkam
20-30	Fri-Mon	Ashram Experience for I year Novices, Mannivakkam
20-21	Fri-Sat	Provincial Council, Dharmapuri
23	Mon	Child Protection Policy (Formal and Nonformal Sectors), Review and Planning - Online, 4 Districts
28	Sat	Animation for SHG on Media and Women, Chennai
		AMRAT - Legal awareness, Capacity Building for Women Religious - Kodambakkam

### **November**

01-04 Wed-Sat      SPM - Animation (St Mary's Vellore, Auxilium Home, Katpadi) at Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur

We are living a grace-filled, fascinating and most important moment in the history of the Church since Vatican II: The celebration of the first session of the Synod on Synodality, which has just commenced. All of us are called to be part of this very vital process and we cannot afford to be indifferent. We need to be open to the Spirit's guidance in prayer and adoration and be committed to a deeper missionary option that is capable of transforming our lifestyle in the Church, in our Communities and in the Mission. It is a deeply prophetic process, a possibility for growth, and a focused look to the future. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, has stated that he dreams of a Church that is not afraid to get its hands dirty by involving itself in the wounds of humanity, a Church that walks in listening to and serving the poor in the peripheries. We are living in a favourable time - Kairos, the opportune and decisive moment of God's visitation - it is a Pentecostal event and the Epiphany of the Holy Spirit in the Church. We are called to walk together with Christ our Way, meet one another as brothers and sisters, free ourselves from prejudices, embrace diversity, listen with the ears of our hearts, recognize the God who lives in us, open ourselves to goodness and tenderness, welcome the greatness in others and live the universal brotherhood and sisterhood with inclusive love.

*Wish you a very happy feast of our Lady of Rosary!*

*Yours affectionately,*

*Sr. Devadoss Margaret*

**Sr Devadoss Margaret FMA  
Provincial**



## Itinerary of the Provincial October - November 2023

### October

01-13	Sun-Fri	Asian Provincials' Retreat, Meeting La Madre - Thailand
15	Sun	Arrival from Thailand
16	Mon	Provincial Office - Kodambakkam
17	Tue	Animation for the Economers - Kodambakkam
18-19	Wed-Thu	Provincial Visit - Polur
20-21	Fri-Sat	Provincial Council - Dharmapuri
22-23	Sun-Mon	Provincial Visit - Dharmapuri
24-25	Tue-Wed	Provincial Visit - Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur
26	Thu	Provincial Visit - Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur
27-28	Fri-Sat	Provincial Visit - Pallikonda
29-30	Sun-Mon	Provincial Visit - St Mary's Convent, Vellore
31-01	Tue-Wed	Provincial Visit - Auxilium Home, Katpadi

### November

02-03	Thu-Fri	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
08-10	Wed-Fri	Refresher Course - Kodambakkam
11	Sat	Trimonthly Recollection for Seniors - Kodambakkam
12-13	Sun-Mon	Provincial Visit - Kingsford
14	Tue	Provincial Visit - Vyasarpadi
16-17	Thu-Fri	Provincial Council – Kodambakkam
18	Sat	Silver Jubilee of Don Bosco Scouts & Guides District Association, St Bede's, Chennai



**20-21 Mon-Tue Provincial Visit - Arni**  
**22 Wed Provincial Visit - Mosavadi**  
**23 Thu Provincial Visit - Michaelpuram**  
**24-27 Fri-Mon Provincial Visit - Auxilium College, Katpadi**  
**28-30 Tue-Thu Provincial Visit - Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi**  
**01 Dec Fri Provincial Visit - Jawadhi Hills**

