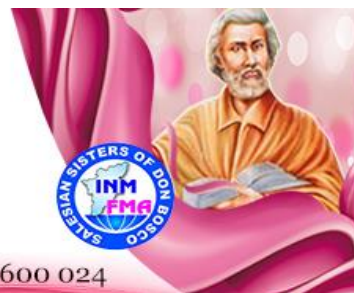




Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
St Thomas the Apostle Province - INM
Madras - India



Provincial Circular 2023 - 2024

Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

INM FMA / Pro.Cir.7

December 2023

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesu`!

Affectionate greetings to each one of you!

INVOLVING PRESENCE: THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT, GIVEN IN CONFIDENCE TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING

“Practice sharing the fullness of your being, your best self, your enthusiasm, your vitality, your spirit, your trust, your openness, and above all, your presence. Share it with yourself, with your family, and with the world.” -**Jon Kabat-Zinn**

This month, we shall reflect on “**Involving Presence.**” Involving presence is the ability and willingness to deeply engage with life, open to a connection with others, the world, and the mystery of life. It’s a way of being present that connects an individual to the vitality and wisdom inherent in who they are and what they have to become. It is a whole-self way of being and an experience that is essential to living a fuller life. It’s being connected with mind, body, and heart in a unified and flowing way. It is being engaged physically, emotionally, cognitively, spiritually, and relationally. It is the process of being an embodied human and open to humanity.

Involving presence requires transparency, trust, clarity, mutuality, intersubjectivity, vulnerability, and compassion. It describes a quality a person has that emanates from their aliveness, consciousness, and courage. A key aspect of involving presence is mutual empathy: “Being with” means “being seen” and “feeling seen” by the other and “seeing the other” and sensing the other “feeling seen,” which is the experience of mutual empathy’. Involving presence builds better relationships, making successful decisions along the way while leading, motivating, and influencing strong and committed actions.

Involving presence cultivates a genuine connection with people, leading with benevolence and authenticity and demonstrating competence and calmness, regardless of the situation. It is the ability to influence others, manage perceptions, inspire trust, and project a vision that others are willing to follow. Involvement also plays a vital role in a successful life. Through positive influence, it fosters collaboration and contributes not just to personal success but also to the overall success and effectiveness of a community, an institute, or an organization. Involving presence is a journey that requires introspection, practice, and patience. The following six key steps can enhance involving presence.

1. Develop communication skills.

Communication skills involve both speaking and listening effectively. While speaking, we need to strive for clarity, succinctness, and persuasiveness. Effective communication requires profound, active, and responsible listening skills. We need to make a concerted effort to really hear what others are saying, showing empathy and understanding. By improving our active listening skills, we can better understand others' needs and perspectives and foster trust and open dialogue.

2. Exude confidence.

Exuding confidence is about having an inner belief in our skills and capacity to handle different situations. Confidence is subtly communicated through our body language, the way we speak, and how we carry ourselves. Real confidence comes from acknowledging our weaknesses as well as our strengths. A confident person isn't afraid to take calculated risks or make decisions, even when things are uncertain. We need to demonstrate our confidence by taking the initiative, owning our decisions, and taking responsibility for the outcomes.

3. Practice emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is about being aware of our own emotions, regulating them effectively, and being able to empathize with others' emotions. It's crucial for managing relationships and leading effectively. To practice emotional intelligence, we need to start by becoming more self-aware, recognizing our emotions as they occur, and understanding their impact on our thoughts and actions. This helps us manage our emotions more effectively and respond rather than react in various situations. We ought to also develop our empathy by putting ourselves in others' shoes. Showing genuine interest in their feelings and perspectives can help us connect on a deeper level (Jn 4:5–30). Remember, emotionally intelligent people are not only respected, but they're also trusted because they treat others with understanding and fairness.

4. Be assertive, not aggressive.

Being assertive involves expressing our thoughts and feelings openly and honestly while respecting the rights and beliefs of others. It's a middle ground between passivity and aggression. To practice assertiveness, we need to state our needs or stand our ground when necessary, but do so in a respectful and considerate manner. At the same time, being assertive also means standing up for our community sisters and young people. We have to protect their interests, give credit where it's due, and advocate for them when necessary. Just remember, assertiveness should not tip over into aggression. It's about mutual respect, not domination.

5. Relate with empathy and authenticity.

Relating with empathy involves understanding and sharing the feelings of others. It's about acknowledging others' perspectives and showing compassion (LK 10:25–37). To relate with empathy, we need to make an effort to understand the experiences and perspectives of others. We have to show genuine interest in their well-being and offer support when they're facing challenges. This helps build strong relationships and fosters a supportive community environment.

Authenticity, on the other hand, involves being genuine and true to our values, beliefs, and personalities. Authentic people are transparent, honest, and consistent in their actions. To relate to authenticity, we need to be open about our thoughts and feelings, admit our mistakes, and align our actions with our values. This not only makes us more relatable but also builds trust with everyone.

6. Seek feedback and continuously improve.

Continuous learning and improvement are critical for developing and maintaining a positive presence. Regularly seeking feedback gives us insights into our strengths and areas for improvement. We need to ask for constructive feedback from our peers, superiors, and community members and view it as an opportunity for growth rather than criticism. Also, reflect on our experiences and learn from our mistakes and successes.

Improvement also involves staying up-to-date with social trends, enhancing our knowledge and skills, and finding ways to add value to our community and educational institutions. We ought to set personal development goals, seek mentorship or training if necessary, and commit to lifelong learning. This shows our dedication to personal growth, community well-being, and professional excellence. This focuses on authenticity and honesty in interactions, developing positive and optimistic relationships, care and confidence, enthusiasm, and creativity. It requires the patience to listen and to meet the intellectual, emotional, and physical demands.

Developing an involved presence can serve as a vital boost to our mission in numerous ways. From fostering recognition and enhancing all-round skills to increasing our overall confidence, the impact of involving presence reaches far and wide. It is the ability to motivate the members of the community, to create a positive work environment, to rally them towards a shared vision or goal, to accelerate personal responsibility, to make sound decisions, and to significantly improve our networking abilities. A strong, involved presence can make us more approachable and memorable, helping us build healthy, happy, and meaningful relationships.

Involvement can improve our ability to handle conflicts and disagreements effectively. We can understand different perspectives, facilitate open dialogue, and guide our community members towards resolution. We can create a harmonious work environment where conflicts are seen as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles, thereby strengthening the future prospects of the mission. During times of crisis or uncertainty, we can provide reassurance and clear direction; we can stay calm and serene, focused and productive, and have a sense of stability and optimism even in the face of challenges.

Involving presence is about revealing the best version of us—a version that communicates, influences, and leads effectively. It helps a person to be warm, personal, sensitive, and sociable too. It empowers and energizes, builds social relationships, and establishes emotional security to promote dialogue and collaboration. It's not an overnight process; it requires time, practice, and self-reflection. So, start today. Let us harness the power of involving presence and pave the way for an enriching and rewarding mission. Each one of us has the potential to inspire, make a difference, and leave an indelible mark on our journey.

Points to Ponder

1. Why is our presence important for our lives today?
2. What does our presence require of us?
3. What are the key steps that can enhance our involvement?

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Process of reviewing and updating the Plan of Formation and the Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the Institute:

Sr María del Rosario García Ribas, Vicar General, sent a communication to update us on the path to implement the deliberations of GCXXIV: Reviewing and updating the Formation Project and the Guidelines of the Educational Mission of the Institute. In view of this, Sr Nilza Fátima de Moraes, General Councilor for Formation, and Sr Runita Galve Borja, General Councilor for Youth Ministry have asked us, representatives of FMA, lay people, and the young people to participate in the online focus group.

Congratulations: Salesian Cooperators' Promise Day!

Thirteen members of INM FMA units of Salesian Cooperators made their Promise on 19 November 2023 at Don Bosco Shrine, Aynavaram, Chennai. It was wonderful to witness the extension of the Salesian charism through the committed life and apostolic work of the Salesian Cooperators. I thank Sr Joseph Jackulen Anthony, the Province Delegate for the Salesian Family and the Local Delegates of FMA units for accompanying the Apsirant Cooperators in their initial formation. Let us revive all the units and encourage lay collaboration and apostolic fruitfulness in all our institutions. Let us encourage our young people to dedicate themselves as promised Cooperators.

Congratulations: Silver Jubilee of Don Bosco Scouts & Guides District Association!

The Don Bosco Scouts & Guides District Association celebrated the Silver Jubilee of its inception on 18 November at St Bede's Anglo-Indian HSS, Santhome, Chennai. Around 1500 Bunnies, Cubs, Bulbuls, Scouts, Guides, Rovers and Rangers from the Salesian Schools in Tamil Nadu participated in the celebration.

Fr M. Thomas, LT(S), District Chief Commissioner of the Association, welcomed the gathering. The Chief Guest Rajkumar Kaushik, Director, Bharat Scouts & Guides, National Headquarters, New Delhi, delivered the Jubilee Message. Honourable Minister P.K. Sekar Babu, Minister of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, Department of Tamil Nadu and Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi, Minister for School Education, Tamil Nadu and the President of Tamil Nadu Bharat Scouts & Guides were the guests of honour.

The celebration had eminent personalities like Dr G. Arivoli, Director of School Education, State Chief Commissioner, Bharat Scouts & Guides, Tamil Nadu and Ms Kalpana Kalahasthi, Associate Project Director, Chandrayaan-3. The Salesian special invitees were Dr (Fr) Don Bosco Lourdasamy, Provincial of Chennai Province, Fr Agilan Sarprasadam, Provincial of Trichy Province, Sr Fernando Majella Provincial, FMA Trichy Province, and Dr (Fr) John Alexander, Vice-Provincial of Chennai Province and the President of the Don Bosco Scouts & Guides District Association. Sr Annarani Cherayath ALT(G) District Training Commissioner(G) proposed the vote of thanks. Rajkumar Kaushik, the chief guest, released the Silver Jubilee souvenir. The Salesian Provincials unveiled the Papal blessing of the Holy Father Pope Francis for the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Don Bosco District.

The students performed various cultural programmes on the occasion. Students of St Mary's, Vellore staged a special choreography for the jubilee anthem. The Leaders/Trainers, including Sr Christina Antony Raj, were honoured with meritorious awards for their long years of valuable service to the association. It was a day filled with pleasant memories and gave a sense of pride and achievement for the Don Bosco Scouts & Guides District Association. I congratulate the Organizing Committee!

CELEBRATIONS - DECEMBER 2023

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

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- To Fr Don Bosco Lourdusamy SDB, the Provincial and the Confreres of INM, at the demise of Fr John Rosario Lourdusamy (55), at Citadel, on 5 November 2023.
- To Fr Maria Arokiam Kanaga INM, at the demise of his mother Mrs Maria (89), in Varadarajanpettai, on 18 November 2023.
- To Sr Alphonsa Kurisingal, the Provincial and the Sisters of ING at the demise of Sr Celine Porinchu at Maligaon, Guwahati on 28 November 2023.

May their souls rest in Peace!

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ My sincere thanks to Sr Pichai Mary Saroja, Sr Doss Rosalia and the Community for offering the Asharam experience to the I Year Novices at Mannivakkam.
- ✚ I express my gratitude to Sr Kanickaraj M. Tamizharasi and the Community, Sr Samala Elisa and the Community, Sr Fernando Amutha and the Community for accompanying the Postulants in their Community and Apostolic Experience from 30 October to 9 November 2023.

- ✚ Thanks to Sr Sebastian Elizabeth and the Community of Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur, for hosting and conducting the SPM Training Programme for the students from Auxilium Home, Katpadi and St Mary's Convent, Vellore from 1 to 4 November 2023.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Fernando Mary Ann, the Delegate of Sri Lanka, for animating the Tri-monthly recollection and animation for the Junior Sisters from 7 to 9 November 2023; to Sr Irudayaraj Lourdu Mary, the Animator and Sisters of the Columbuthurai Auxilium Community, for their hospitality and accommodation.
- ✚ Heartfelt thanks to Sr Anthony Raj Christina, the animator and the Community of Fatima Convent for hosting with kind hospitality and accommodation the Senior Sisters' Refresher Course from 8 to 10 and the Trimonthly Recollection for Senior Sisters of Chennai Communities on 11 November 2023.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella, Social Development Coordinator, for organizing and coordinating the Child Protection Policy for Formal and Non-formal Sectors - Review and Planning - Online meeting on 10 November 2023.
- ✚ My sincere thanks to Sr Paul M. Mary and the Community at Omanthai for hosting the Seniors' Trimonthly Recollection on 11 November 2023.
- ✚ Heartfelt thanks to Sr Stanislaus Mary Dora, the animator and the Community of Salem, Avvai Nagar, Sr Samala Elisa and the Community of Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur, Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima and the Community of Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi for hosting the Trimonthly Recollection for Senior Sisters on 12 November 2023.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Fernando Majella, the Provincial of INT for hosting and animating the Trimonthly Recollection for the Junior Sisters of both INM and INT Provinces and to Sr Soosaimuthu Arul Mary, the Animator and Sisters of the Provincial House Community, for their hospitality and accommodation.
- ✚ My gratitude to Sr Mahimainadhan Sathiyavani, Coordinator for the Young at Risk, for organizing the meeting on: Artificial Intelligence and Mental Health of Children, on 25 November 2023 and to Sr Anthony Raj Christina, the Animator and the Community of Fatima Convent for their hospitality and accommodation.
- ✚ A big thank you to Sr Maria Louis Isabel Sirumalar, Sr Maindan Jeya Priya, the VIDES Coordinators for organizing the VIDES Zonal Meet on 26 November 2023, and to Sr Gaspar Celine, the Animator and the Community of Auxilium Home, Katpadi for hosting this meeting.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY - DECEMBER 2023

- 03 † Sr Giovanna Baptista (1982), Sr Martha Griffiths (2008), Sr Annina Vembenickel (2015)
- 04 † Sr Berta Sperrfechter (1991)
- 07 † Sr Priscilla Fernandes (2002)
- 08 † Sr Helen Fernandes (2012)
- 11 † Sr Mary Josephine Rani Anthony (2004)
- 13 † Sr Clementina Lobo (2002)
- 15 † Sr Terezija Medvesek (2001)

- 17 † Sr Mary Bout (1994), Sr Rafaela Gisbert (2006)
 19 † Sr Amalorpava Mary Asirvatham (2019)
 22 † Sr Maddalena Maretti (1966)
 27 † Sr Beda Maria Fernandes (1967), Sr Angela Daglio (1996)
 28 † Sr Raffaella Arduini (1970)
 30 † Sr Vittoria Devasahayam (2017)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - DECEMBER 2023

- 01 - 03 - Seminar on Spirituality of ‘ Mignificat’ for Sisters, Online.
 17 - 18 - Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
 17 - Salesian Cooperators' Provincial Council Meet, Citadel
 26 - 02 Jan 2024 - Annual Retreat I, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
 27 - 28 - House Girls Retreat, Sacred Heart Convent, Polur

On 8 December we celebrate the great feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, the feast of immense significance in our Salesian family. Mary was saved by Christ, but extraordinarily, because God wanted the mother of His Son not to be touched by the misery of sin from the moment of her conception. Thus, for the entire course of her earthly life, Mary was free from any taint of sin. Just as the angel greeted her, Mary was “full of grace” (Lk 1:28). St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (cf. 1:3-6, 11-12), makes us comprehend that every human being is created by God for that fullness of holiness and for that beauty in which the Virgin Mary was clothed right from the beginning. The goal to which we are called is also God's gift to us. As St Paul the Apostle says, God “chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and innocent before him” (cf. v. 4); He has predestined us also (cf. v. 5) in Christ to be free from sin some day. Let us entrust ourselves to her and say “no” to sin and “yes” to grace daily by treading the path that leads us to holiness.

Our festal wishes to the communities of Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur and Yellagiri Hills who keep their feast!

I wish each one of you a very happy feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mother Mary, a fervent Season of Advent and a Blessed celebration of Christmas!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

**Sr Devadoss Margaret FMA
 Provincial**



Merry Christmas

Itinerary of the Provincial December - 2023

01	Fri	Provincial Visit - Jawadhi Hills
02-03	Sat-Sun	Provincial Visit - Anmarudai
04-07	Mon-Thu	Provincial Visit - Kodambakkam
08-09	Fri-Sat	Provincial Visit - Kingsford
10-11	Sun-Mon	Provincial Visit - Thoraipakkam
12	Tue	Provincial Visit - Mannivakkam
13-15	Wed-Fri	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
16	Sat	Christmas Celebration - CRI - Chennai
17-18	Sun-Mon	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
19-25	Tue-Mon	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
26-02	Tue-Tue	Annual Retreat - 1, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
02 Jan	Tue	Provincial Team Meet, Aux. Home, Katpadi

