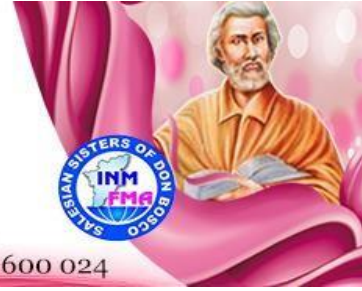




Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
St Thomas the Apostle Province - INM
Madras - India



Provincial Circular

2023 - 2024

Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

INM FMA / Pro.Cir.6

November 2023

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesu`!

Affectionate greetings to each one of you!

ATTENTIVE PRESENCE IS ATTENTIVENESS TO THE RHYTHMS OF GOD'S GRACE AND THE NEEDS OF OTHERS.

“Attentive presence is important because it keeps one engaged with the other in a positive way. It anticipates how to best respond to God and others around me.”

This month we shall focus our reflection on “Attentive Presence,” another aspect of a ‘presence’ that generates life (GCXXIV). The Latin root of attend, *attendere*, is ‘to stretch toward’. Definitions include: ‘to listen or pay close attention to; to accompany; to remain ready to serve’. Presence is defined as a state of alert awareness, receptivity, and connectedness to the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual workings of both the individual and the group in a particular context. Attentive presence is an experience of aliveness that comes with a heightened vitality when one is fully in the moment, in the present. It happens ‘only when the past ceases to trouble and anticipations of the future are not perturbing. It is the capacity to attend to reality with an ‘immense sensibility’.

Attentive presence is a way of ‘being wide awake and alive’, through which one is able to confront and become aware of one’s relation to the surroundings, a manner of conducting oneself with respect to things and other human beings, and the changing perspectives through which the world presents itself to them. It is a plane of consciousness of highest tension, originating in an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. It means to pay attention to “right here, right now” and to invest in the present moment with full awareness and concentration.

Attentive presence as attentiveness to the rhythms of God’s grace opens us up to awe and inquiry to the natural world around us (Ps 8). This reorients us to the beauty, complexity, and interdependence of the created order. It causes us to confront and contemplate the temporal aspects of our existence and the majesty of the Creator, to fall to our knees in worship, and in the process, to reprioritize our desire to be the masters of our universe. Attentive presence in nature helps us understand the nature of **God** as revealed first through his created order and secondly through the revelation of Scripture. If we are attentive to Jesus’ ministry and example of reaching out to the poor, the sick, and those who need healing, we understand how we are to see and respond to others. In a world of hurt, if we seek the Spirit’s leading, we are guided into knowing what to attend to: when to speak, when to remain silent, the words to speak, who to reach out to, and the steps of faith to take next on our journey.

Attentive presence, as attentiveness to the needs of others, is an act of love when given to other **people** and a critical first step in the process of demonstrating empathy. A key aspect of attentive presence comes from the anticipation that we need to regulate our lives around the needs or directions of others. This does not mean we are people-pleasers, but that we anticipate God using us through the day and night to care for the needs of others. It is based on the belief that God uses His love in our lives, and so we regularly anticipate God's work occurring in our daily lives. We won't be surprised if He brings someone with special needs along. Without an attentive presence, we will miss God's cues and ignore the needs of those around us.

'Attentive Presence' is used primarily when people plead with God to be attentive to their own needs (2 Chr 6:40, 7:15; Neh 1:6, 11; Ps 130:2). God's people ask the Lord to be attentive to their needs. "Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications" (Ps 130:2). This dependence upon God is fine, but our focus is not seeking God to be attentive to us but for us to be attentive to Him. We chiefly understand the trait's importance from how Jesus remained attentive to God's wants and the needs of those about Him. Jesus noted that someone in that crowd touched Him (Lk 8:43-48). He paused and sought out what God, His Father, was doing through this woman's suffering. The woman, singled out, admitted her need for healing by touching Jesus' cloak (Mark 5:25-34).

Attentive presence is an approach to life, and it also requires deep hope. It underlies the faith that we need to properly respond to God through the day, whether when learning from His Word or watching how He wants us to carry out His mercy and love to others. It enables us to live proactively, focused on the needs of others (Lk 10:25-37). It requires a beneficial-even life-fulfilling-outward look. We pay attention to the faces and lives of those around us. We pay close attention to God, but we are also attentive to those around us in this world below. If people were made in God's image (Gen 1:26-28), it demands that we love them. Attentive presence is not equivocated with paying close attention merely to those we want to listen to or when it is pleasing to us. It crosses boundaries, welcomes all, and involves taking risks. It is also dialogical, as it requires listening and learning. It practices attentiveness and encourages spaciousness. It requires relationships and opens a new space for attending to the new way of being oneself and approaching one another.

Attentive presence is first and foremost a duty towards others and a way of life in which we are constantly reminded of human diversity. It is grounded in our answer to the question, 'Who is my neighbor? It is more than naming the people of the community where we are and offering them charity; it calls us to listen and learn; to openness and vulnerability; to participation and reciprocity; to relationship and mutuality. God's people, however, look deeper at the needs of others, discerning God's grace to meet those needs. It leads us forward into a fulfilling life, reaching closer to the purposes God has designed us for (Eph 2:10). We were made for good works to glorify God (Col 1:10). When we are not present attentively, we can become reactive, meaning that we are responding to the other person without fully understanding their perspective. This can lead to misunderstandings, arguments, and even resentment. When we are attentively present, however, we are better equipped to respond in a calm and empathetic manner, which can help to diffuse tense situations and foster a sense of closeness and intimacy. God is calling us to be attentive to the person, their context, to welcome them into His story, to see our 'neighbour'. This type of presence helps to create an environment of open communication, trust, and understanding.

Another key aspect of attentive presence is being **present to oneself**. We may wonder if we need to talk about attentiveness to **ourselves**. It is an understanding of how God has made us-what our strengths and talents are, how we might utilize them, what limits us in our growth toward flourishing, how to understand and accept ourselves as image-bearers, and how to gain a sense of where we fit in God's plan for our lives. To be present is to come into relation, into connection, with others and oneself. Attentive presence offers us a moral imperative, a psychological stance, and an intellectual trajectory for the creation of a just and egalitarian society. When we allow ourselves to be present both with and to others, self-awareness as a window to our own self-knowledge is accelerated. Integration, wholeness, reliability, and groundedness in a person all speak to what is required for a person to be able to trust themselves and the actions that are an extension of that self.

The benefits of being present in a relationship are numerous. Firstly, it helps to build trust and intimacy. When we are present, we are able to understand the other person's thoughts and feelings on a deeper level, which in turn helps us feel closer and more connected to them. Secondly, being present helps to foster open communication, as we are better equipped to listen and respond to the other person in a supportive and understanding manner. Another benefit of being present in a relationship is that it can help reduce stress and anxiety. When we are present, we are able to focus on the moment and let go of the distractions and worries of daily life. This helps to bring a sense of calm and peace to the relationship, which in turn can help to reduce feelings of stress and anxiety.

In conclusion, the power of being present in a relationship with God, others, and oneself cannot be underestimated. Attentive presence involves a vigorous, rhythmical flow of relating to another. It is a universal lived experience that is important to health and quality of life. When we are fully engaged and attentive to others, we are better equipped to build trust, intimacy, and open communication. This, in turn, helps to create a stronger, more fulfilling, and more resilient relationship that can stand the test of time. So, let us take the time to be present in our relationship and reap the benefits of a happier and healthier life.

Points to Ponder:

1. How can we be attentive to the rhythms of God's grace in our daily lives?
2. How can our attentiveness to others be an act of love?
3. Why is being present for oneself important today?
4. What are the ways that we can grow in attentiveness towards God and others?

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

ENCOUNTER WITH LA MADRE IN THAILAND!

I am happy to share with you the beautiful enriching experience I had in Thailand, along with the PCI Provincials in the gracious presence of our beloved La Madre, Chiara Cazzuola. She guided us during the retreat, from 3 -10 October 2023, eliciting from the Holiness of Mother Mazzarello and going in-depth into the spirit of the origins. The time of prayer, reflection and contemplation enabled us to drink deeply from the wells of salvation. After the retreat, we had a common encounter with our beloved Mother, where she enlightened us, cleared our queries and showed us the pathways to respond adequately to the challenges of our times regarding the formation, mission and relationships within the community and with our lay collaborators. With immense joy, I bring to you the cordial greetings and blessings of La Madre to each one of you and the entire province-educating community. I remembered each of you in my prayers, especially during the days of my annual retreat in Thailand.

RETREAT FOR THE CANDIDATES, NEGOMBO, SRI LANKA

The annual retreat for the candidates in Sri Lanka was held from 4 to 6 October 2023 in Negombo. Five contact period candidates and two Aspirants made their retreat for the first time in their lives. Fr Dixon Fernando SDB preached the retreat basing his reflections on the theme of the Most Holy Trinity. Their encounter with the Lord during the retreat helped them to get closer to God. The various prayer moments, reflections, and meditation were well animated by Sr Fernando Mary Ann. The retreat preacher touched the lives of the candidates through the daily adoration and the participants spontaneously shared their personal experiences with God. Confession served as a wonderful opportunity to reawaken in them the experience of the compassion and mercy of the Almighty. At the close of the retreat, the candidates thanked everyone, especially the retreat preacher with their melodious song and verbalized their reflections and experiences during the retreat. It was a great incentive for them to rebuild their broken faith, and weak relationship and above all to respond to God's call with greater love and faith.

POSTULANTS' RECEIVING MEDALS, NEGOMBO, SRI LANKA

After the three-day retreat, on 7 October 2023, the feast of our Lady of the Rosary, two Aspirants, Annet Lawranciya and Irudaya Jensala began their postulancy at Auxilium Convent Negombo. The medal receiving celebration began at 10.30 a.m. and the community of Sacred Heart Novitiate joined in this joyful event. Sr Fernando Mary Ann, the Delegate of Sri Lanka distributed medals to the postulants and Sr Arokiasamy Rackel Mary, the animator, with the community Sisters prayed for them and welcomed them into our FMA Family. The joyful moment was solemnised with the cutting of the cake and a delicious meal together with the Sacred Heart Novitiate community.

COMMUNITY AND APOSTOLIC EXPERIENCE:

NOVICES:

We welcome the second-year novices, Sr Fernando W. Shashini Piumika and Sr Fernando W. Ann Nimesha Dulanjalee to Columbuturai, Sri Lanka for their apostolic and community experience from 24 October to 24 November 2023. We wish them wonderful and enriching days of grace and blessing!

POSTULANTS:

We welcome the postulants from Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi to the three different communities for their apostolic and community experience from 31 October to 9 November 2023: Micheal Infancia and Maria Louis Maria Yasmin to St Joseph's Convent, Arni; Lawrence Mary Sujatha and Suresh Chandhar Paul Nancy to Sacred Heart Convent, Polur; Vinoth Kumar Nagomi, Velankanni Amalraj Leema Jenifer and Arockia Samy Reyasna Mercily to Mary Immaculate Convent, Tirupattur. Let us offer them a favourable ambient that enhances their vocational growth.

SECOND NOVITIATE, I PHASE

We are glad to inform you that Sr Amirthasingam Nirosha (SL), Sr Ganesan Rohini (SL), Sr Anthony Cruz Mathalen, Sr Adaikalam Rekha, and Sr Andrews Roseline will make their I phase of the second novitiate from 15 November to 15 December 2023, at Holy Child Auxilium Convent, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi. We thank Sr Rosalia Tirkey, INC, who will be their facilitator during this important moment of prayer and discernment as a preparation for their final commitment. We wish them a fruitful experience!

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

We rejoice with the diocese of Vellore at the honours bestowed on the Apostolic Administrator Mgr I. John Robert with the award of "Doctor of Divinity" by the Global Human Peace University, USA, at Kamban Kalaiarankam Auditorium, Pondicherry on 28 November 2023. We rejoice with him and offer him felicitations and pray the Lord to continue to bless him as he works ardently for the welfare of the flock entrusted to his care.

REQUEST FOR PRAYERS

Let us intensify our prayers for all our sick Sisters and the parents and dear ones of our Sisters. We pray especially for our beloved Sr Arul Josephine, and Sr Santiago May for their speedy recovery.

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

NOVEMBER

- 01 - All Saints Day
- 02 - All Souls Day
- 13 - St Artemide Zatti
- 14 - Children's Day
- 15 - Bl. Maddalena Morano
- 20 - Christ the King
- 24 - Commemoration of the arrival of our Pioneers in India
- 25 - Ven. Occhiena Margherita
- 27 - First Sunday of Advent
- 29 - Novena to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary
- 30 - St Andrew the Apostle

DECEMBER

- 03 - St Francis Xavier
- 05 - Bl. Philip Rinaldi

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

We assure our loving prayers and condolences to all those who lost their dear ones in October 2023. May their souls rest in peace!

- To Sr Soosey Philomena Rani and the family at the loss of her elder cousin brother Fr Louis (Jnanananda), at Pondicherry, on 15 October 2023.

- To Fr Kuruvachira Jose SDB, the provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Dimapur at the demise of Fr Pallissery Sebastian SDB, in Jorhat Christian Medical Centre, Assam, on 15 October 2023.
- To Sr Maria Kottaka and her family, at the passing away of her sister Mrs Baby Vargheese (71), in Kerala, on 28 October 2023.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- Sr Joseph Jackulen Anthony will participate in the meeting **of the Provincial Delegates for the Salesian Family, SDB and FMA**, at Don Bosco, Dimapur, from 1 to 4 November 2023.
- Sr Bridgit Mariadoss, Sr Vedanayagam Usha Catherine Viji, and Sr Jecinta Adaikalasamy will attend the **course for financial administrators** at Shanti Sadan, Goa, from 6 to 11 November 2023.
- Sr Alphonse J. Isabella will attend the **AMRAT general body meeting** in Kolkotta from 24 to 26 November 2023.
- Sr Alphonse J. Isabella, Sr Francis Jeyamani and Sr Francis Amalanayagi will participate in the **NDF Annual Meeting** in Mumbai, from 28 to 30 November 2023.
- Sr Amaladoss Alphonse, Sr Sebastian Amalorpava Mary, and Sr Antonysamy Arul Pragasa Mary will participate in the **International Conference for the Principals and Administrators of Schools (ICONSPA 2023)** at Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati, from 21 to 23 November 2023.

We wish all of them a fruitful experience!

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Arokiasamy Rackel Mary and the community of Auxilium, Negombo, for hosting the candidates' retreat from 4 to 6 October 2023. I sincerely thank Sr Mary Ann Fernando, the Delegate of Sri Lanka, for making all the arrangements necessary for the retreat and the postulants' medal-receiving ceremony.
- ✚ Thanks to Sr Kunnathu Anna and Sr Maria Dass Brigdet for the well-organized economers' meeting for the submission of the society accounts on 16 and 17 October 2023. Thanks to Sr Antony Raj Christina and the community of Fatima Convent, Kodambakkam, for hosting the meeting.
- ✚ Thanks to Sr Antony Raj Josephine, the animator and the community of Auxilium College for hosting the updating counselling course for teachers on 13 and 14 October 2023. I thank Sr Arockiasamy Celine Mary, in charge of Youth Pastoral, Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima, the General Coordinator, and Sr Kanickaraj Mary Tamizharasi the Councillor in charge of Youth Pastoral for organizing it.

- ✚ I thank Sr Sebastian Vimala for organizing the vocation camps in Kodambakkam Fatima Convent for Chennai Zone, in St Mary's Convent for Vellore Zone and in Dharmapuri for Tirupattur Zone on 1, 8 and 15 October 2023. Thanks to the animators of the hosting communities and the Sisters who collaborated for the organisation of the camps.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Pichai Mary Saroja and the community for accompanying the I-year novices during their ashram experience from 20 to 30 October 2023 at Mannivakkam.
- ✚ A million thanks to Sr Mariadoss Amala Mary, the animator and the community of Dharmapuri for hosting the meeting of the provincial council on 20 and 21 October 2023.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella Social Development Coordinator, for organizing and coordinating the meeting on Capacity Building for Women Religious by AMRAT- On Human Trafficking and Legal awareness, at Kodambakkam, on 28 October 2023 and also for conducting an animation program for SHG on Media and Women on 30 October 2023. Thanks to Sr Lourdusamy Salomon Kalai for her animation.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY- NOVEMBER 2023

- 01 † Sr Fonseca Juanita (Novice) (1954)
 06 † Sr Fernando Amala (2004)
 09 † Sr Ghidoni Alma (1980)
 11 † Sr Morris Flida (2016), Sr Viano Nicolina (2020)
 17 † Sr Thonippara Rosamma(2008)
 18 † Sr Murgia Maria (1968)
 20 † Sr Avio Maria (1959)
 21 † Sr Schiapparelli Severina (1980), Sr Pereira Lutgarde (2001)
 24 † Sr Gnavi Virginia (1977), Sr Anthoniappan A. Celine (2021)
 26 † Sr David Arul Mary (1946), Sr Rodrigues Ethelvina (2016)
 27 † Sr Azolini Gina (1998)
 27 † Sr D'Almeida Crescentia (2022)
 28 † Sr D'Cruz Constance (2003)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - NOVEMBER 2023

- | | | |
|-------|---------|--|
| 01-04 | Wed-Sat | SPM Animation, Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur (for Students of St Mary's Convent, Vellore and Auxilium Home, Katpadi) |
| 07-09 | Tue-Thu | Trimonthly Recollection & Animation for Juniors, Columbuthurai, Sri Lanka |
| 08-10 | Wed-Fri | Refreshers Course for Senior Sisters (Profession Batches 1971-1984), Kodambakkam |

10	Fri	Child Protection Policy for Formal and Non-formal Sectors-Review and Planning - Online Meeting
11	Sat	Trimonthly Recollection for Seniors, Kodambakkam
12	Sun	Trimonthly Recollection for Seniors-Sacred Heart Home, Tirupattur, Salem, Omanthai
15 Nov- 15 Dec	Wed-Fri	II Novitiate I Phase, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi
16-17	Thu-Fri	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
18	Sat	Salesian Cooperators Retreat and Preparation for the Aspirants Cooperators of Chennai and Vellore Zone Silver Jubilee of Don Bosco Scouts and Guides District Association, St Bede's, Chennai Youth Day Celebration, Local Communities Workshop on Docibilitas-Online for Teachers and EC Members
18-19	Sat-Sun	Trimonthly Recollection for Juniors, Manikandam, Trichy
19	Sun	Salesian Cooperators Promise Day, Don Bosco Shrine, Aynavaram, Chennai.
21	Tue	Online Meeting on Initial Call by the Mission Ad Gentes Sector to the Aspirants and Postulants, at the PCI level, for all the Provinces.
22	Wed	Online Meeting on Initial Call by the Mission Ad Gentes Sector to the Novices, at the PCI level.
25	Sat	Catechetical Animation for Sisters in Charge, Auxilium College, Katpadi Artificial Intelligence and Mental Health of Children for Marialaya Sisters, at Nandambakkam
26	Sun	VIDES Zonal Meet for the Sisters and Members of VIDES at Auxilium Home, Katpadi

On the first of November, we celebrate with joy the *feast of 'All Saints'*. Saints are the true revolutionaries says Pope Francis. "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Mt 5, 9). We see how Jesus' peace is very different from what we imagine. We all long for peace, but often what we want is not peace, it is *to be at peace*, to be left in peace, to have no problems but rather tranquillity. Jesus, instead, does not call the calm blessed, those who are in peace, but those who make peace and strive to make peace, the builders, the *peacemakers*. Indeed, peace must be built, and like any construction, it requires effort, collaboration, and patience. We would like peace to rain down from above, but instead, the Bible speaks of a "sowing of peace" (Zc. 8:12), because it germinates from the soil of life, from the seed of our heart. It grows in silence, day after day, through works of justice and mercy, as the luminous witnesses we celebrate on All Saints Day! Again, we are led to believe that peace comes by force and power: for Jesus, it is the opposite. His life and that of the saints tell us that, to grow and bear fruit, the seed of peace must first die. Peace is not achieved by conquering or defeating someone, it is never violent, it is never armed. Let us look within and ask ourselves: are we peacemakers? (Ref. Pope Francis Angelus Message on 1 November 2022).

May the Holy Mother of God, Queen of all the saints help us to firmly walk the path that builds peace and holiness.

On 2 November, *All Souls Day*, let us remember with gratitude all our dear departed Sisters, parents and dear ones who have gone before us to enjoy the joy of the Saints, and pray for the eternal repose of all the souls in purgatory. May their souls rest in Him, the source of eternal life and peace!

*I wish you a very happy Feast of All Saints
and Happy Children's Day to all the students who frequent
our institutions!*

A fervent Novena to the feast of Mary Immaculate to everyone!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

**Sr Devadoss Margaret FMA
Provincial**



Itinerary of the Provincial November 2023

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
15	Wed	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
16-17	Thu-Fri	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
18	Sat	Silver Jubilee of Don Bosco Scouts & Guides District Association, St Bede's, Chennai
19	Sun	Salesian Cooperators' Promise Day, Don Bosco, Aynavaram
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

DECEMBER

01	Fri	Provincial Visit - Jawadhi Hills
02-03	Sat-Sun	Provincial Visit – Anmarudai
05-07	Tue-Thu	Provincial Visit – Kodambakkam

