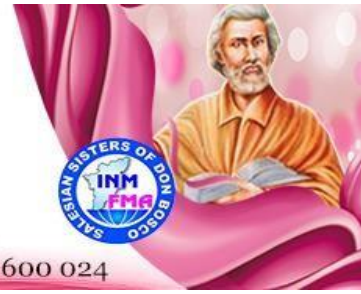




Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
St Thomas the Apostle Province - INM
Madras - India



Provincial Circular

2023 - 2024

Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

INM FMA / Pro.Cir.8

January 2024

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesu`! Affectionate greetings to each one of you!

A Daring Presence in the Journey of Transformation to Make a Meaningful Difference in the World Today

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because God first loved us.” 1 Jn 4:18–19

Introduction

This month we shall reflect on “Daring Presence,” which generates life (GCXXIV). Daring presence can mean different things to different people; simply put, daring presence comes from being authentic, building confidence in others, and inspiring others to take meaningful action. Daring presence, specifically, is a journey of personal transformation of who you are; the kind of person you are; and the kind of person you want to be. The significance of daring presence lies in daring to dare that propels us beyond our comfort zones, empowering us to reach heights that we once deemed impossible and unattainable. The quote, “I believe that the most important single thing beyond discipline and creativity is daring to dare,” encapsulates the essence of what it takes to transcend limitations and achieve greatness in life.

Daring presence focuses on developing the characteristics, skills, and behaviours needed to exhibit reliability in all aspects of life. In the pursuit of the personal and community vision of our mission, we often find ourselves grappling with various aspects and dynamics that contribute to its successful accomplishment. Religious discipline, creative fidelity to the charism of our founders, diligent perseverance in responding to emerging socio-political challenges, and determined synodal journey with the young people are some of the commonly extolled essential attributes for realizing our objectives. The following traits can facilitate our daring presence to make a positive impact, inspire others to improve, and leave a lasting legacy wherever we are and whatever we do.

1. Courage as a Herald of Change

Courage as a herald of change is stepping beyond the boundaries of fear, familiarity, uncertainty, and insecurity. It does not imply the absence of fear; rather, it involves acknowledging fear's presence and choosing to move forward. Fear is a natural human response to the unknown, and often serves as an indicator of something significant lying ahead. By acknowledging fear and reframing it as an opportunity for courage, we can channel its energy into propelling us towards our aspirations rather than holding us back. We have to be willing to be bolder, louder, and all-around more visible.

Daring presence is also about confronting self-imposed limitations and embracing challenges with a spirit of fearlessness. Daring to dare is the catalyst that impels us toward innovation and exceptional accomplishments. It demands a readiness to embrace change and venture into the unknown, make bold decisions and embrace the possibility of failure, all in the pursuit of growth and self-discovery, collective commitment and communion. We cannot be complacent and small. By chasing our dreams, we can change our life path. Because there are people out there who need us, we need to be our authentic selves and be the noteworthy persons we are called to be.

2. Foster Resilience and Adaptability

Daring presence entails resilience and adaptability in the face of difficulties and challenges that may be part of the journey. However, these should not be perceived as a dead end but as a stepping stone toward growth. Embracing failure with a resilient spirit allows us to learn valuable lessons, refine our approaches, and continue moving forward with newfound vision and objectives, modalities and pathways, wisdom and determination. Our resilience, willpower, and knowledge will guide us to pursue paths of action that lead to success in all endeavours. Our premier task is to instil resilience and a winning spirit in everyone.

Resilience and adaptability are essential when accomplishing our common mission as a community. No matter what the challenges are, a strong personal commitment to the common mission and a positive attitude help prevail over any adverse internal and external conditions. We may experience situations where it would seem easier to quit rather than continue and finish the task. During those times, we need an inner source of energy to press on, to complete the mission. When things do not go as we wish, we must draw on our inner reserves to persevere and adapt to new challenges.

Resilient and adaptable people can recover quickly from setbacks, shocks, hurts, adversity and stress while maintaining the focus on the mission. Our resilience and adaptability rest on will, the inner drive that compels us to keep going, even when exhausted.

3. Break Free from Comfort Zones and Unleash Creativity

Daring presence requires breaking free from the comfort zone and embracing discomfort as a sign of growth. Comfort zones, while providing a sense of security and relaxation, can also prevent integral growth and limit our potential. Stepping outside our comfort zones stimulates our creativity as we are forced to think differently and find unique approaches to problems and challenges. It is through venturing into uncharted territories that we uncover hidden resources, strengths, talents, and capabilities that may have remained dormant within us.

The fusion of daring and creativity thrusts us to journey onward, achieving breakthroughs that were once believed unreachable. A daring presence could act as a catalyst for channelling various personal and community qualities and values into revolutionary ideas, innovative initiatives, and well-defined activities. The world doesn't need another carbon copy of someone else. We can give so much to the world just by being who we are and what we are capable of accomplishing. We don't need a mask or a disguise to make people know who we are so that they can be who they are.

4. Seize Opportunities and Embrace Growth

A daring presence opens doors to countless opportunities that would otherwise remain concealed. It drives us toward seizing opportunities that align with our aspirations and values, accelerating personal and community well-being. It requires developing competencies and investing in oneself to empower and expand one's potential. Each time we dare to step into the unknown, we build upon our experiences and talents, urging ourselves further along the path of self-improvement and success, satisfaction, and societal well-being.

Great leaders exhibit humble confidence and credibility, authentic trust and consistency in lifting others. Daring presence also develops leadership in individuals by empowering them to better understand themselves, specifically how to manage themselves and their responses effectively. It influences leadership strategies impacting the personal journey and building the capacity to seek opportunity and stand out among leaders. There is a great deal of self-reflection while building others in a fulfilling way and making a lasting and positive impression on others. Change and a growth mindset happen when we seek to learn, invest in our leadership journey, and open ourselves up to becoming a better version of ourselves.

5. Inspire and Empower Others

Daring presence is not something we are born with but an essential attribute, something we can learn all through our lives. It is not just a matter of showing up; it requires projecting an image. We can exhibit our daring presence through credible actions, words, and how we carry ourselves. Daring presence is not a solitary endeavour. When we lead by example and dare to embrace our aspirations courageously, we inspire others to do the same. This cascading effect creates a culture of fearlessness and empowerment within communities and workplaces.

Daring presence is an investment in one's current and future selves; it is the gift that keeps on giving. When we are present, confident, reflective, and lead with authenticity, our presence becomes a daring presence and empowers others. We need to develop a sense of presence that will inspire people to trust and follow us. We need to ensure that we evolve and develop our own authentic and daring presence to open new doors, new visions, and new lifestyles.

Conclusion

In a world that constantly evolves, our presence, as daring to dare, enhances individuals beyond their limitations, igniting a spark of courage that fuels innovation and growth. Let us embrace the spirit of daring to dare so that we discover the full extent of our capabilities and leave an indelible mark on the world around us. It's often the 'I dare moments' that push us beyond where comfort could keep us and the familiar world would fence us in. Let God's Word-the record of those who went before us, those whom God used to forge the future through acts that were not for the fainthearted-motivate us. The biblical accounts: Moses before Pharaoh; Daniel in the lions' den; the disciples leaving behind all they knew to follow a man called Jesus they had only just met, invite us for a willingness to dare to go beyond the usual to fulfil the plan of God.

Our present faith was shaped by those who dared in the past: our pioneers, missionaries, and the Sisters of our land. Now it is our turn to dare to go farther and shape the future. Perhaps it's time we all get back to the place of daring, a journey that awaits those who, with courage and willingness, take the first steps on an uncharted path. The more we see the God who works for us and in us and through us, the more we will know His steadfast love.

Where challenges and difficulties have closed the doors, we need the daring presence to open our lives to possibilities once more. Where we have held back because of uncertainty, we need to venture out, trust, and step out. Where we have stopped daring because we don't want to face resistance, we need to allow the daring presence to deepen our learning and understanding. The very thing we are seeking could be on the other side of our daring lives.

Let us realize that the leap we most decline may just be the leap we most need today.

Points to Ponder:

1. Why is a daring presence essential for us to live a life of transformation?
2. Why should we consider courage as a herald of change and resilience and adaptability as means to make a difference in our world today?
3. How can we break the comfort zones that fence us in and seize growth opportunities?
4. What are the ways in which we can inspire and empower others?

PEACE MESSAGE 2024: Artificial Intelligence and Peace

Pope Francis's message for the 57 World Day of Peace, emphasizes the positive contributions of science and technology to human progress while cautioning against the potential risks posed by advances in artificial intelligence (AI). He discusses the ethical dimensions of AI, including concerns related to privacy, bias, and the impact on human dignity. The message stresses the need for responsible development, regulation, and oversight of AI technologies, highlighting potential risks in areas such as disinformation, social control, military, education, the workforce and international law. The Pope calls for cross-disciplinary dialogue, the ethical development of algorithms (algo-ethics), and the inclusion of diverse voices in decision-making processes. By reminding us that the measure of true humanity lies in how we treat the least among us, he concludes with a hopeful vision that AI development may contribute to human fraternity and world peace: "For peace is the fruit of relationships that recognise and welcome others in their inalienable dignity and of sincere cooperation and commitment in seeking the integral development of all individuals and peoples".

STRENNA 2024: "The dream that makes you dream." A heart that transforms "wolves" into "lambs".

The Rector Major Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, invites the Salesian Family to "take advantage of this *bicentenary year of the dream to study and deepen the Memoirs of the Oratory and the dream at nine years.*" He does so with profound conviction, aware that "*in this area of Salesianity, of our history, and of the foundations of our charism, we run the risk of concentrating and always stopping only on some very simplified commonplaces, and of repeating a few generic statements.*" Thus, he expresses the need to offer a more consistent reflection "*on the Salesian Family in the world, lay people, young people, boys and girls*".

The Rector Major ends his Strenna by emphasizing the importance of others “*to build ourselves and our dream*” and the need to trust and entrust ourselves, confidently handing ourselves over to the guidance of Mary, who in the dream is defined as “the Teacher”. “*This of course presupposes that there are wise and evangelically inspired leaders on whom we can rely. In this too we have been entrusted with a wonderful task*”.

I urge all of you to read and reflect on the Strenna, individually and as a community, to live it in our daily lives.

UNO Theme: International Year of Camelids (IYC) 2024

The UN has designated 2024 as the International Year of Camelids. Camels are an important source of livelihood for millions of families around the world. The Year is meant to raise the public's and policymakers' awareness of the significant role of camelids in protecting ecosystems, conserving biodiversity, assuring food security and adapting to climate change. The optimization of the many qualities of camelids (meat, milk, fibre, means of transport) would also contribute to guaranteeing food security and nutrition, providing sustainable livelihoods and promoting the inclusion of communities that benefit from these animals. Camelids can help promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) and, therefore, combat desertification, and land degradation and stem the loss of biological diversity. The integrated management of camelid products will promote community inclusivity and help to create sustainable employment as well as promote equality.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

OCTAVE OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY (18-25 Jan. 2024)

"Restoration of unity among Christians is one of the main concerns of the Church... and this task is for all of us. No one can claim exemption from this responsibility. Indeed, everybody can make some contribution, however small it may seem, and all are called to that interior conversion which is the essential condition for ecumenism." Pope St John Paul II, 30 May 1982.

This Octave was first conceived by Father Paul of Graymoor on 30 November 1907. It was given papal blessings by Pope St Pius X on 27 December 1909. Other popes have given it their blessings over the years, including Pope St John XXIII (who urged its observance more widely throughout the world) and Pope St Paul VI (who had promoted it in his archdiocese when he was the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan).

The Octave reflects the unchanging truth that there can be no real unity apart from union with that Rock, established by Christ Himself, which is Peter and his successors. For that reason, St Peter is considered the special Patron of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity.

I urge you, dear Sisters, to pray for Christian Unity and make our young people do the same.

REPUBLIC DAY!

Republic Day is a momentous occasion in India, symbolizing the day when the Constitution of India came into effect. Celebrated on 26 January every year, Republic Day holds immense significance in the hearts of every Indian. It is a day to honour the spirit of India, its unity, diversity and democratic values. It is a day of great pride for every citizen of India. It signifies the country's commitment to democracy, equality, and justice. The Constitution of India, drafted by Dr B.R. Ambedkar and a team of experts, came into effect on 26 January 1950, replacing the Government of India Act (1935). This historic event established India as a democratic nation, with the president as the head of the state.

Let us revive our patriotic spirit and instill in the young the same spirit and do all we can to educate them as good and honest citizens of our beloved country India.

HEARTY WELCOME

- A warm welcome to our dear Sr Periyannayagam Sagaya Selvi who returns to our Province from Rome, on 2 January 2024 due to health reasons. Let us pray for her good health.
- We welcome our dear Sr Standly Andrew Mary Margaret and Sr Joseph Santharaj Christina Jenifer, who have completed their Basic Theological and Formative Course at Lumen Institute, Thindivanam. We wish them a fruitful experience of community life and mission.

SDB - INM PROVINCIAL CHAPTER - 2024

We offer our prayerful wishes to our dear Fr Don Bosco Lourdasamy SDB, Provincial and the Confreres of INM Province, as they have their Provincial Chapter from 14 to 18 January 2024. May the Spirit of the Lord rest upon them, and may the powerful intercession of our Blessed Mother, Help of Christians, St John Bosco, St Maria Domenica Mazzarello, and all our Saints, sustain them during these days of reflection, sharing and discernment.

PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY DAY - 2024

The Provincial Community Day will be celebrated on 20 January 2024, at St Mary's Convent, Vellore. It is a moment of coming together, celebrating the wonders the Lord has accomplished in the Province, in the communities and the mission. May the preparation and celebration strengthen the bonds of communion and make us grow in the sense of belonging to the Province.

ANIMATORS AND TEAM MEET

On 21 January 2024, the Animators and the Provincial Team members will gather in St Mary's Convent, Vellore, to chalk out the Apostolic Plan for the academic year 2024-2025. The animators and the team members are requested to be present for the meeting.

EDUCATING COMMUNITY ZONAL MEET

The Educating Community Meet at the Province level will be held in two zones: Chetpet-Chennai, and St Mary's Convent, Vellore, on 6 January 2024. All the animators, headmistresses, coordinators and members of the Educating Community are requested to participate in their respective zones without fail.

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

- 01 - Mary, Mother of God/ World Day of Peace
- 07 - The Epiphany of the Lord/ Bl. Titus Zeman SDB
- 08 - The Baptism of the Lord
- 12 - National Youth Day
- 14 - St Devasahayam
- 15 - Bl. Luigi Variara SDB
- 16 - St Joseph Vaz
- 17 - St Antony the Abbot
- 18-25 - Unity Octave
- 22 - Bl. Laura Vicuna
- 24 - St Francis De Sales
- 25 - Conversion of St Paul
- 26 - Republic Day/ Sts Timothy & Titus
- 30 - Bl. Bronislao Markiewicz SDB
- 31 - St John Bosco

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Thanks to Sr Sebastian Elizabeth and the community of Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur, for hosting and conducting the SPM Training Programme for the students from St Joseph's Convent, Arni and Marialaya, Dharmapuri from 27 to 30 November 2023.
- ✚ My sincere thanks to Sr Susai Josephine Rani and Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima for organizing and coordinating the Webinar on the Spirituality of Magnificat from 1 to 3 December 2023.
- ✚ Million thanks to Sr Runita Borja, General Councillor for Youth Ministry and her team for organizing the Webinar on "The identity of Catechesis" on 10 December 2023; to Sr Josmy Jose INK from Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences «Auxilium», Rome, for animating it.
- ✚ A note of thanks to Sr Antony Raj Christina, the animator, and the community of Kodambakkam for hosting the Provincial Council on 17 December 2023.
- ✚ Hearty thanks to Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima and the community of Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi, for making all the arrangements to create a prayerful atmosphere for the 56 Sisters of First Annual Retreat of the year, from 26 December 2023 to 2 January 2024.
- ✚ My gratitude goes to Sr Amutha Fernando and the Sisters of Sacred Heart Convent, Polur, for hosting the House Girls Retreat from 27 to 28 December 2023.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- To Sr Amirthanathan Preethi Diana at the demise of her paternal grandmother Mrs Lourdu Mary (95), on 10 December 2023, at Arulambadi.
- To the Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Bombay at the demise of Fr Lawrence D'Souza SDB (77), on 12 December 2023, at Don Bosco, Matunga.
- To Sr Rayappan Leema Rose at the loss of her beloved sister Mrs Anthoniammal (69), on 17 December 2023, at Kodungal.
- To Sr Savarimuthu Mary Emelda, at the demise of her beloved mother Mrs S. Rosali (86), on 21 December 2023, at Kallery.
- To Sr Chinnaraj Thangam, at the passing away of her beloved Father Mr Chinnaraj (78), on 28 December 2023, at Bangalore.
- To Fr Don Bosco Lourdusamy, the Provincial, the Confreres of INM, and the family members at the loss of Fr Mariaselvam Rayappan SDB (85), on 30 December 2023, at Polur.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

- ✚ Hearty congratulations and prayerful wishes to Rev Fr Sebastian Kuricheal SDB who has been appointed as the Provincial Designate of the Province of Mary Help of Christians, Guwahati (ING), on 14 December 2023, by His Eminence Card. Ángel Fernández Artime, the Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco.
- ✚ Congratulations to Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menampampil of Guwahati who received Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam World Peace Award-2023 on the occasion of the United Nations International Human Rights Day. It is truly a proud moment for the Catholic Church and the Salesian Family.
- ✚ We congratulate the 15 young Salesian deacons who were ordained priests, at Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine, Perambur, Chennai on 27 December 2023, by Most Rev. Dr George Antonysamy, Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore. We wish them a fruitful experience of their Priestly ministry!

COURSES AND SEMINARS

Novice Formators' Convention, Rome: Sr Mathew Josephine Siriapushpam will attend the meeting from 7 to 27 February 2024. We wish her all the best.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY- JANUARY 2024

- 03 † Sr Rita Thomas (2013)
- 05 † Sr Giuseppina Efsia Festa (1987)
- 07 † Sr Marie Ranner (2002)
- 08 † Sr Clotilde Appiano (1968)
- 14 † Sr Teresa Villa (1989)
- 18 † Sr Walentyna Czernick (2009)
- 23 † Sr Annie Kottaram (2023)
- 24 † Sr Caterina Mania (1983)
- † Sr Rosary Muthusamy (2018)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - JANUARY 2024

02	Tue	Animation for the Senior Sisters, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
		Animation for the Retreatants, Auxilium College, Katpadi
		Provincial Team Meet, Auxilium Home, Katpadi
06	Sat	Educating Community Meet, St Mary's Convent, Vellore & Chetpet
07-08	Sun-Mon	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
08-12	Mon-Fri	Eco Fest competitions, Local Communities
08-11	Mon-Thu	SPM, for the students of Kodambakkam and Chetpet, Mannivakkam
10-11	Wed-Thu	Submission of House Accounts, Kodambakkam
13	Sat	Career Guidance to Marialaya Children, Chennai
20	Sat	Province Community Day, St Mary's Convent, Vellore
21	Sun	Animators and Team Meet, St Mary's Convent, Vellore
27	Sat	Peace Convention (SPM), Auxilium Home, Katpadi
31	Wed	Salesian Co-operators Renewal of the Promise, in Respective Centres

January is special for the Salesian Family because, we celebrate the feasts of three great giants of holiness: St Francis De Sales, St John Bosco and Bl. Laura Vicuna.

On 22 January we celebrate the feast of **Bl. Laura Vicuna**, a pupil of Maria Auxiliadora in Junin de los Andes from 1900 to 1904, attained sanctity at a tender age. She spent more time praying in the chapel and was very kind and patient to her companions. Laura interiorized the words of Jesus, "No one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends,".

Laura then decided to give her life in exchange for her mother's salvation. She stands as a great model of evangelical courage, sacrifice and genuine love for the young people today. We the educators of young people are invited to inculcate in them a thirst for God and love for sacrifice and make them God-loving persons and honest citizens.

On 24 January we celebrate the feast of **St Francis De Sales**, the patron of our Institute. St Francis De Sales, the holy Bishop of Geneva, became the inspirer of Salesian spirituality and a model shepherd whom Don Bosco looked up to from the very beginning of his work, for his ability to make himself lovable, for his intense apostolic activity, and the desire that everyone would know and meet the God of mercy and forgiveness. Don Bosco chose him as Patron and model of life from his priestly Ordination because the mission to the young required great calm and gentleness - "A drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall."

Let us take on more consciously the spirituality of Saint Francis de Sales, to appreciate it as the foundation of Don Bosco's educational style and Salesian youth spirituality.

On 31 January we joyfully celebrate the **feast of St John Bosco** our father and founder. He realized his holiness through an educative commitment lived with zeal and an apostolic heart and at the same time knew how to propose holiness to young people as a way of life. The originality and boldness of the plan for youthful holiness are intrinsic to the educational art of this great Saint who can rightly be called the master of youth spirituality, affirms St Pope John Paul II. The great prophetic message of St John Bosco the educator, his originality and brilliance is linked with the educational method which he called the *preventive system that represents the quintessence of his pedagogical wisdom*. Don Bosco had a tender and filial devotion to Mary whom he considered as the Mother, Teacher and Foundress of his works. As we celebrate his feast along with our young people, educating the community and Salesian Family, let us assume more and more his spirituality and accompany the young people in their journey towards holiness with a daring spirit.

I wish each one of you a very happy feast of Bl. Laura Vicuna, St Francis De Sales and St John Bosco!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

**Sr Devadoss Margaret FMA
Provincial**



Itinerary of the Provincial JANUARY 2024

03-05	Wed-Fri	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
06	Sat	Educating Community Meet – Chetpet, Chennai
07-08	Sun-Mon	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
09-14	Tue-Sun	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
15	Mon	INM – SDB Provincial Chapter
20	Sat	Provincial Community Day, St Mary’s Convent, Vellore
21	Sun	Animators and Team Meet, St Mary’s Convent, Vellore
22-26	Mon-Fri	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
27	Sat	Peace Convention, SPM, Auxilium Home, Katpadi
28-31	Sun-Wed	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam

