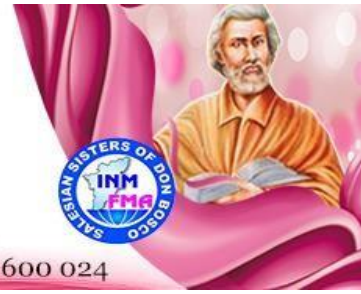




Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
St Thomas the Apostle Province - INM
Madras - India



Provincial Circular

2023 - 2024

Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

INM FMA / Pro.Cir.10

March 2024

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesu`! Affectionate greetings to each one of you from Sri Lanka!

HELPING PRESENCE AS NATURALLY CHARISMATIC AND CONSCIOUSLY DEVELOPED ATTITUDE

INTRODUCTION

The concept of “helping presence” refers to the quality of relationships and the idea that “someone is there for me.” Helping Presence builds personal connections and makes others happy. In some people, helping presence seems to be naturally charismatic and born with it, while in others it has to be developed consciously. However, a helping presence plays a significant role in the development, recovery, or maintenance of one’s interpersonal relationships. It responds to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of another person, impacting the healing of the body and mind. It builds trust and makes one proactive and optimistic. Helping presence manifests the truest, most confident version of oneself, and it enables one to gain the trust of others quickly.

1. Naturally Charismatic and Consciously Developed Helping Presence

Helping presence, as a naturally charismatic attitude, is the foundation for human connection. It helps the person to get to know the other person and their environment deeply and strive to affirm the fundamental dignity of the person (Gen 1:26-27; Ps 8:4-5; Gal 3:28). Others are considered worthy and deserving of attention, and their experience matters (Deut 10:17-19). Parker J. Palmer alludes to helping presence when he explains: “The human soul doesn’t want to be advised, fixed, or saved. It simply wants to be witnessed - to be seen, heard, and accompanied exactly as it is.” When someone can help us without an agenda, there is an implicit acceptance of *who we are*. This acceptance is so nourishing to the soul and in this acceptance, our feelings and even our suffering find release.

Helping presence as a consciously developed attitude awakens and augments pro-social behaviours. While not being problem-focused, this helping presence leads to problem-solving. For instance, during the COVID pandemic, we witnessed humanity filled with acts of goodness, and people helping people, awakening a lot of pro-social behaviour in the fabric of society. People became conscious that they should contribute to the best of their abilities, engage in socially beneficial activities, and utilize their skills and resources for the benefit of others. The following are some of the positive effects of a naturally charismatic and consciously developed helping presence.

- **Being rather than Doing**

Helping presence requires conscious attention and is more about being than doing. It is manifested as a form of unconditional love because when one is truly helpful, there are no egos, judgments, agendas, expectations, or distractions involved; just one soul *being* with another. It doesn't require doing, and it's a matter of being. *Being* simply means to let oneself, others, and life just *be*. Our "beingness," as Eckhart Tolle calls it, is our *presence*. It's the energy of life, peace, and existence itself that emanates from deep within oneself. *It is the truth of who we are*. Doing, accomplishing, and achieving all have their place, but when one is trying to be present and tap into the essence of life, it's all about *being*. It's all about tuning into their energy, their essence, and their hearts and taking in the wholeness that they are. In practical terms, it means truly paying attention to what they're saying, doing, sharing, or asking. It's also about recognizing when someone needs more of our helping presence and then offering it to them wholeheartedly (Luke 10:25-37).

- **Awakens and Augments Pro-Social Behaviour**

Helping presence makes people aware of those around them and helps them rather than the narrow objectives of their tasks (Lk 6:38). They tend to increase their perspective-taking and positive emotions, which enable them to be more pro-social, empathetic, and supportive. Being a helping presence helps the person to be more conscious of their service and social engagement, truly changing the shape of our civilization (Mt 5:16; Amos 5:14-15, 24; 8:5-6). Being conscious of serving others and being helpful always increases pro-social behaviour.

The more one is helpful, the higher the tendency to be pro-social. Being a helpful presence is easier said than done. An authentic helpful presence can be hard to come across, especially in this age of multitasking, productivity, and distractions. Helping presence as a consciously developed attitude can be done with a gentle smile on our face and a loving look in our eyes.

Our loving and peaceful presence can be felt without words, and sometimes it's all that's needed. The world's greatest resource is not its gold, silver, money, or wealth, despite what some people say. The world's, or rather, our, greatest resource is people. The future of our planet requires a commitment to being present, truly seeing, and generously being helpful to the people who cross our paths. The well-being of each person contributes to a sustainable and enjoyable journey of life.

- **Fine-tune Our Values and Ethics**

Helping presence as a consciously developed attitude fine-tunes our values and ethics, so relationships are more important than things. We can change the culture of our home, community, and workplace by leading others with a clear mandate that people matter. We, in effect, become a mirror from which others can more clearly see how their actions affect others. By being fully helpful, we're shining the light on the positive and the negative, so positive behaviour can be encouraged until it becomes the standard.

Each human being deserves the respect of being seen, heard, and helped. Being a helping presence means we all agree to dedicate our full attention to each other. By being helpful whenever possible, we can be instrumental in shaping the future of our world. We need not be afraid of leading ourselves into being fully present and then leading others to that same life-changing place (Isa 1:17; Jam 1:27). When we see how being a helping presence grounds us and engages an inner strength to withstand pressures in life, then it clears our heart's vision to see others and give them the dignity they deserve.

2. Benefits of Practicing Helping Presence

There are numerous beneficial reasons for practising helping presence. More than just simply being aware of our surroundings, being helpful offers us an opportunity to rise above the conflict of the ego to a more neutral place to gain clarity and inspiration for action. Being a helping presence helps us to develop focus because we are dissociating from our ego's chatter (2 Cor 9:6). We will also be taking in a piece of important information that we could have otherwise missed because we could have been playing out an ego scenario in our minds. One of the benefits of helping with presence is connection. There is life energy all around us; we just need to stop and connect with it.

- **The Biggest Benefit: The Gift of Being Present**

The biggest gift we can each give ourselves is being present, engaged with life, connected with others, listening with kindness, staying open-minded, and free from judgment.

The idea of being in the present moment while simultaneously having a goal for the future might seem counterintuitive, but cultivating the skill of becoming more present is imperative when it comes to reaching our goals. Practising helping presence is one of the healthiest habits we can create for ourselves! People want to be seen and heard. Instead of giving others presents, give them our presence (2 Corinthians 9:7). Giving our full attention to another person can be an amazing gift.

Being present means focusing on one thing and feeling whatever emotion we feel when we feel it, even challenging ones. The more we practice being a helpful presence, the more comfortable we'll feel when we experience tough emotions. Helping presence is a quality of our true spiritual identity (Gal 6:2). The benefit of learning how to live in the moment goes far beyond productivity and goals; it allows us to trust ourselves, spend quality time with those we love, and find great joy in all of our experiences. If we can do this, then we will experience an increasing sense of confidence in being at ease with comfort and discomfort, difficulty and joy, pain and consolation, failure and success, rejection and acceptance, disregard and reward.

CONCLUSION

Being a helpful presence means being fully engaged and attentive to others. This means paying attention to what others are saying and actively listening to their thoughts and feelings. This type of presence helps to create an environment of open communication, trust, and understanding. The benefits of helping presence are numerous. Firstly, it helps to build trust and relationships. It helps us understand others' thoughts and feelings on a deeper level, which in turn helps us feel closer and more connected to them. Secondly, it helps to foster open communication and sharing, as we are better equipped to listen and respond to others in a supportive and understanding manner.

Another benefit of being present is that it can help reduce stress and anxiety. When we are helpful, we can focus on the moment and let go of the distractions, worries, and anxieties of daily life. This helps to create a sense of serenity and peace. In conclusion, the power of being a helping presence cannot be underestimated. When we are fully engaged and attentive to others, when we are ready to render help and service without a reward, we are better equipped to build confidence, conviction, relationships, and communion. 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 a naturally charismatic and consciously developed helping presence in our relationships today and reap the benefits of a happier and healthier lifestyle for ourselves and others.

Points to Ponder:

1. Am I a naturally charismatic and consciously helpful person?
2. Is my helping presence manifested in being rather than doing?
3. Does my helping presence awaken and augment pro-social behaviours?
4. What are the benefits of practising helping others today?
5. Is the biggest benefit of helping presence the gift of being present?

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH - MARCH 2024

08 Fri	-	International Women's Day
19 Tue	-	St Joseph
24 Sun	-	Palm Sunday
31 Sun	-	Easter

ALL IN THE FAMILY

FMA PCI 2024: The PCI meeting will be held at Auxilium Provincial House, Dispur, Guwahati from 02 to 03 April 2024. The theme of the meeting is 'Ecological Consciousness for Ecological Justice'. I am happy to communicate to you that from our Province, along with me, Sr Alphonse J Isabella, the Delegate chosen by the Province and Sr Susai Josephine Rani, the Delegate chosen by the Provincial Council will participate in it. I request you to pray for the illumination and guidance of the Holy Spirit and the motherly accompaniment of Mary Help of Christians for this significant meeting.

World Feast of Gratitude: The World Day of Gratitude 2024 will take place in Mozambique, on 26 April 2024 and will be animated by the Mozambican Province *St John Bosco* as indicated in the letter of Vicar General, Sr Maria del Rosario Gracia Ribas. With joy in our hearts, we embrace the preparatory season for the World Feast of Gratitude. Our beloved Mother, Sr Chiara Cazzuola, stands as a priceless gift for every Daughter of Mary Help of Christians and the Educating Communities worldwide, especially to each one of us in our Province. The World Day of Gratitude 2024 will have as its theme: *With Mary, guided by the "dream", we generate peace by taking care of our Common Home*. The Province of Mozambique suggests enhancing our spiritual preparation in March 2024 by incorporating frequent prayers, specifically Psalm 8.

Summer Vocation Camp: The event is scheduled to take place at Mazzarello Home in Tirupattur from April 15 to May 15, 2024. I extend my sincere gratitude to every community that has dedicated significant efforts throughout the year to nurture vocation pastoral in our Province. I earnestly encourage you to persist in prayer and dedication for the continued expansion of our Charism.

A special acknowledgement goes to Sr Sebastian Vimala, who has tirelessly worked to sow the seeds of vocation in young girls and identify those displaying signs of vocation. My heartfelt thanks also to Sr Rayappan Selvi, who gives wholehearted collaboration for vocation promotion. I am deeply indebted to Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima for her unwavering dedication and hard work.

I express my appreciation to the following Sisters who willingly volunteered to assist during the camp. Your support is invaluable in making this event a success.

S.NO.	SISTER'S NAME	DATE
01	Sr Wilson Anitha Arockiam	15 to 20 April
02	Sr Rayappan Selvi	20 to 30 April
03	Sr Antony Sheeba	21 to 27 April
04	Sr Anthony Samy Jecintha Mary	28 to 04 May
05	Sr Savari Fatima	01 to 15 May
06	Sr Periyamayagam Auxilia	05 to 10 May
07	Sr Asirvatham Anthony Amali, Sr Dominic Switha	10 to 15 May

Wishing you the very best as you embark on creating a positive impact in the lives of young girls, guiding them to make the right choices and respond courageously to the call of God.

CONGRATULATIONS

- ✚ The Embassy of the Philippines to the Holy See has conferred on Sr Runita Galve Borja, General Councilor for the Youth Ministry of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, an award for her service to the Church and the Country. We express our hearty Congratulations to our dear Sr Runita Borja and pray the Lord to bless her abundantly so that she may continue her service to the Church and the Institute.

- ✚ Hearty congratulations to all our Sisters who completed successfully their online courses conducted by St Peter's Pontifical Theologate, Bangalore: Sr Periyamayagam John Martina and Sr Rajendiran Selvarani who attended the Course on Biblical Theology and Spirituality; Sr Adaikalasamy Jecintha Jeyarani, Sr Francis Amala Nayagi and Sr Maria Prakasam Kanimozhi on Evangelization and Dialogue; Sr Amala Doss Victoria Selvi, Sr Antony Sheeba and Sr Rayappan Selvi on Canon Law.

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Heartfelt gratitude to Sr Fernando Mary Ann, the Delegate, and Sr Arokiasamy Rackel Mary, the Animator, along with the entire Negombo community for hosting the Tri-monthly Recollection and Animation for Juniors and Animators on 01 & 02 February 2024. Your dedicated efforts and warm hospitality have significantly enriched the experience for all participants.
- ✚ I express my sincere gratitude to Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima, the Animator, and the entire community of Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi, for hosting the Tri-monthly Recollection for Seniors on 03 February 2024.
- ✚ A heartfelt thank you to Sr Stanislaus Mary Dora, the Animator, and the community of Marialaya, Avvai Nagar for hosting the Tri-monthly Recollection for Seniors on 07 February 2024. Your dedication and warm hospitality contributed to a meaningful and enriching experience for all involved.
- ✚ Grateful acknowledgements to Sr Antony Raj Christina, the Animator, and the Kodambakkam community for hosting the Tri-monthly Recollection and Animation for Juniors on 03 & 04 February 2024.
- ✚ A heartfelt expression of gratitude to Sr Rathinaswamy Regina Mary and the community of St Mary's Convent, Vellore, for graciously hosting the Principals and Headmistress Meeting on 04 February 2024. I extend my profound appreciation to Sr Alexandar Amali and Sr Joseph Victoria Mary, the academic coordinators, as well as Sr Antony Raj Christina, for your invaluable contributions to the success of the meeting.
- ✚ Warm appreciation to Sr Rathinaswamy Regina Mary, the Animator and the community of St Mary's Convent, Vellore, for graciously hosting both the Provincial Community Day on 10 February and the Provincial Council from 10 to 12 February 2024. Your hospitality and efforts are truly commendable.

- ✚ I express my sincere gratitude to Sr Antony Raj Christina, the Vice Provincial, for her exceptional planning and coordination of the Province Community Day. I also extend my appreciation to the Councillors, Animators, Team Members, and Sisters from various communities for collaboratively shouldering responsibilities in a synodal style and nurturing a sense of family spirit on 10 February 2024.
- ✚ I appreciate Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella for skillfully coordinating the Orientation Meeting and Drafting Environmental Policy and Stewardship for the Province. Gratitude also to Sr Antony Raj Christina, the Animator, and the Kodambakkam community for their warm hospitality in hosting the meeting on 13 February 2024. Thank you for your thoughtful organization and generosity.
- ✚ Thanks to Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella and the Sisters in charge of Social Ministry for organizing meetings on Election Awareness for the people at various places in the Province.
- ✚ I express profound gratitude to Sr Samala Rayappan Elisa, the Animator and the community of Mary Immaculate Convent, Tirupattur, for graciously hosting the Tri-monthly Recollection for the Seniors on 18 February 2024. Your hospitality and commitment to spiritual enrichment are truly appreciated.
- ✚ I extend sincere appreciation to Sr Maria Louis Isabel Sirumalar for skillfully conducting the VIDES General Body Meeting online on 18 February 2024. Your dedication and leadership are invaluable to the success of our collective endeavours.
- ✚ Thanks to Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima for organizing the Provincial Team Meeting on 25 February 2024 at Kodambakkam. A sincere note of thanks to Sr Anthony Raj Christina and the community for hosting the meeting. I thank all the Team Members for your commitment.

WELCOME HOME

I warmly welcome Sr Rajendran Thimena Celine, who has completed her studies in Rome and returned to our Province on 14 February 2024. We extend our heartfelt wishes for a joyous homecoming and express our great hopes for her mission among the young people in our Province.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- Sr Susai Josephine Rani and Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima will participate in the seminar on *Synodal Formation for Junior Religious Formators*, from 11 to 16 March 2024 at Shanti Sadan, CCBI Secretariat Extension, Benaulim, Goa.
- Sr Alphonse Mary J Isabella and Mrs Diana Jenifer will participate in *A National Level Conference on WASH* (WATER, Sanitation and Hygiene), from 20 to 22 March 2024 at St Joseph Vaz Retreat Centre, Cruz dos Milagres, Old Goa.
- Sr Rathinaswamy Regina Mary, Member of ISS Asia-Africa Commission, will participate in *the IX Encounter of the Commission ISS-FMA of the Higher Institutes of Studies FMA and Guests*, from 04 to 06 April 2024, in Rome. The theme is: "ISS-FMA, at the Heart of Social Responsibility: commitment to people and the planet, promoting and developing a culture of quality and peace."
- Sr Paul M. Mary and Sr Mahimainadhan Sathiyavani will participate in the *Ongoing Missionary Ad Gentes Formation*, from 05 to 30 May 2024 in Rome. The theme is: "With Mary to be a *Presence* that Generates Life" (Acts GC XXIV).

May they encounter a profoundly enriching and rewarding experience!

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Our loving prayers and condolences to all those who lost their dear ones in February 2024:

- Sr Teresa Antony at the passing away of her sister-in-law Mrs Lourdu Mary (83) at Perumanam on 01 February 2024.
- Sr Savari Fatima and Sr Susainathan Ayesha Bindu at the demise of Mrs Poondi Mary (56) in Tirupattur on 05 February 2024.
- Fr Jose Thomas Koyickal and the Salesians of the Province of Bangalore, at the demise of Fr George Cheruvalli SDB (59) in Aluva on 07 February 2024.
- Sr Michael Augustine at the death of her sister-in-law Mrs Maria Selvi (88) at Azhagappa Puram, Tuticorin on 19 February 2024.

- Sr Kurapati Justina Mary at the passing away of her mother Mrs Gali Jojammal (84) at Pannur on 19 February 2024.
- Sr Therese Raj Pushpa Gracy at the death of her aunt Mrs Vijaya Robert (78) in Bangalore on 22 February 2024.
- The family of Sr Periyannayagam Sagaya Selvi at the demise of her mother Mrs Philominal (75) at Kanakkan Kuppam on 24 February 2024.
- Sr Devaraj Clara, at the passing away of her brother-in-law Mr Adaikalam Alexandar (82), in Vellore on 26 February 2024.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY - MARCH 2024

- 02 † Sr Ida Papa (1994)
- 09 † Sr Arokianathan M. Josephine (2021)
- 10 † Sr Marie Dulla Cardozo (2004)
 - † Sr Luigina Miorelli (2004)
- 23 † Sr Amelia Boiani (2004)
- 24 † Sr Giovanna Castelli (1995)
- 26 † Sr Eugenia Cazzuli (1973)
- 28 † Sr Nellie Nunes (1983)
- 29 † Sr Philomena Anthoni (2017)
- 30 † Sr Eugenia Versino (1951)
 - † Sr Gonsalves Dorothy (2019)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - MARCH 2024

08	Fri	Women's Day, Auxilium College, Katpadi
11-16	Mon-Sat	Training Programme for the Formators, Goa
15	Fri	Worker's Retreat, Salem-Avvai Nagar Salesian Family Consulta, The Citadel, Kilpauk
16	Sat	Women's Day, Kodambakkam
17	Sun	Worker's Retreat - Pallikonda, MIC-Tirupattur and Kodambakkam
18-19	Mon-Tue	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
19-20	Tue-Wed	National Level Conference on WASH, Old Goa
20-27	Wed-Wed	Annual Retreat-II (Sisters), Yercaud
22	Fri	World Water Day, Local Communities
27	Wed	Animation for the Retreatants, Yercaud

On 08 March we celebrate **International Women's Day**. Let's celebrate the resilience, achievements, and contributions of women worldwide. Recognizing their roles in diverse fields, let's continue striving for gender equality and empowerment of women, fostering a world where every woman's potential is fully realized. This Women's Day, let's honour the strength that women embody and acknowledge the progress made towards equality. As we reflect, may we renew our commitment to dismantling barriers, championing women's rights, and creating a future where every woman thrives and contributes without limitations.

On 19 March we celebrate the **feast of St Joseph**, Patron of our Congregation and custodian of Spiritual life. Pope Francis puts very beautifully in the Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde*, "Each of us can discover in St Joseph, the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence, an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble". It is interesting to note how at Mornese and then at Nizza, St Joseph was a continuous and constant presence in the daily life of the first communities and how the Sisters had a great devotion to him.

Let us renew our love for this great patron, the icon of tenderness, care, listening, obedience, acceptance, creative courage and protection. Festal greetings to our Sisters and our communities at Arni and Mosavadi that bear the name of this dear Saint! Through his powerful intercession let us pray for all the needs of our Country, State, Province, Communities and Families and in particular entrust to him the forthcoming elections on 19 April 2024.



Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

Sr Devadoss Margaret FMA

Provincial

Itinerary of the Provincial MARCH 2024

28 Feb-02	Wed-Sat	Provincial Visit - Nochchiyagama
02-05	Sat-Tue	Provincial Visit - Thirukovil
05-08	Tue-Fri	Provincial Visit - Colombo
08-10	Fri-Sun	Provincial Visit - Auxilium, Negombo
11-13	Mon-Wed	Provincial Visit - Novitiate, Negombo
14	Thu	Arrival from Sri Lanka
15	Fri	Salesian Family <i>Consulta</i> , The Citadel, Kilpauk
16	Sat	Women's Day Celebrations, Kodambakkam
17	Sun	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
18-19	Mon-Tue	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
20	Wed	Pethanaickenpalayam, Salem
20-27	Wed-Wed	Annual Retreat - II (Sisters), Yercaud
27	Wed	Animation for the Retreatants, Yercaud
28-29	Thu-Fri	Novitiate, Trichy - Manikandam
30-31	Sat-Sun	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam

April 2024

01	Mon	Journey to Guwahati
02-03	Tue-Wed	FMA PCI, Guwahati
04	Thu	Journey to Chennai, Salem - Yercaud
04-10	Thu-Wed	Annual Retreat - III (Animators), Yercaud

