



INM FMA / Pro.Cir.13

June 2024

My Dearest Sisters,

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

Formation: An Indispensable Journey for Religious Life

Introduction

We all know that the present and future of our 'life and mission' depend on the formation we receive and the formation we give. Formation is the key that opens the door toward a meaningful 'life and mission.' Without a suitable response to the demands of today, the risk of repeating ourselves, standing up, and losing the sense of who we are and what we do is more than just a working assumption. The formation is primarily allowing oneself to be transformed into and configured with Jesus the Master, allowing the Spirit to conform us to Him. A fundamental attitude of those in initial and ongoing formation is to be open to the Holy Spirit. Our Constitution Article 79 states, "Above all, formation is the work of the Holy Spirit; as such, it requires listening, docility, and collaboration" (FMA Const. 79).

Formation involves both initial and ongoing formation, a profoundly human formation which at the same time is evangelically demanding. The formation is primarily accomplished in everyday life in situations experienced by the community itself while assuming the usual things such as joy, fatigue, pain, success, and failure as prime moments offered by the Lord to transform our lives. In formation, one must not ignore the most ordinary mediations through which the Lord can be present. Being formed is to embrace life as formation itself so that "every attitude and behaviour manifests the full and joyful belonging to God in the important moments as well as in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life" (VC, 65).

1. A Journey of Maturation

Maturity in religious life is often understood as a consolidating action by which the initial response of the individual to the vocational call through different phases of formation, is further clarified, strengthened, and made constantly mature. As the individual begins to respond to the religious call, he or she becomes aware and begins to understand step by step and stage by stage the deeper implications of that call and the corresponding response, building a constant intimate relationship with the one who called. Thus, there is a gradual deepening and continual growth of that initial response towards the fullness of the imitation of Christ and a slow and steady growth in becoming perfect, just as the heavenly Father is perfect.

Both initial and ongoing formation must be a "formation of the whole person." It takes into account the whole person so that physical, mental, moral, and intellectual qualities may develop harmoniously while being active in social and community life. The formation process is to nourish the whole life, not just one dimension. Therefore, care must be taken of the human, Christian, and charismatic dimensions.

While remaining faithful to the gospel and to one's charism, the formative process should be aware of the uniqueness of the person and the mystery of God inherent in each one. That is why we have to follow a personalized process that is suitable for each person.

Formation means transforming attitudes to better accept the Word of God and letting our lives be more conformed to Christ. It is a dynamic process of growth in which each person opens his or her heart to the gospel in daily life, committing oneself to ongoing conversion to follow Christ with ever greater fidelity to the charism. If this leads one to take a radical life by reproducing and following more closely the life of Jesus, then evangelical radicalism is not optional but an option for life (VC, 109).

2. A Journey of Integration

Integral growth refers to the full maturation of the consecrated person. Different elements make up the consecrated person's life: interior life, apostolic life, affective life, interpersonal relationship, intimacy with God, etc., and in the process of growth and maturity, all these elements should likewise grow. Such integral growth will take place through the continuous assimilation of evangelical values, prayer, the study of the Word of God, and full participation in the sacraments. Without integration, coherence in words and actions is almost impossible. We will never be effective in our mission since our effectiveness is very much linked to a witnessing lifestyle. Lack of such continuous self-formation could therefore have a frustrating effect on the human person, which may reflect on community living as well as the mission at large as various aspects of the person remain unintegrated.

The formation is a journey of integration. It is being converted, transforming the mind and heart according to the mind and heart of Christ. It seeks to assimilate and become one with the attitudes, values, and way of life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Master, as suggested by the *Vita Consecrata*, which describes formation as a "progressive assimilation of the sentiments of Christ." (VC, 65). Formation is a process that brings about a transformation in a person which affects his or her entire mode of existence. It consists of creating human beings who are capable of constantly integrating their lives. This calls for the capacity to reorganize, restructure, and integrate one's life based on various events, happenings, and relationships. In this journey constantly being in touch with one's real self is indispensable. It is a call to grow in the life of the spirit in faith, hope, and charity through following Christ intimately and in the constant conversion of heart.

Taking into account the demands of formation and the situation in which our candidates come to us or in which our fraternities or communities find themselves, the formation must promote an authentic sense of discipline directed toward honest self-understanding, self-control, fraternal life, and apostolic and missionary service. A determining factor and, therefore, key to vocational discernment is, being passionate, passionate for Christ, and passionate for humanity. Being passionate is the hallmark of people in love. The person is called to radical discipleship or passionate discipleship. Being passionate is what dynamizes vocational choice.

Being passionate is what moves all the energies, and places anyone who lives it in a constant attitude "of following more closely" in the footsteps of Christ, embracing the most radical demands of discipleship. Being passionate enables a definitive commitment to life and places one in a constant search for creative fidelity. Being passionate is what leads to living for others, especially the poorest; it is to give oneself gratuitously and live by the logic of the gift. Being passionate is what sustains the sense of belonging to Christ and one's congregation. Being passionate allows us to cross over any type of cultural barrier or geographical distance to restore the gift of the gospel. Such passion requires self-discipline. Without the latter, the former will quickly be extinguished.

3. A Journey of Transformation

Besides the transformational learning process of one's life, consolidating the response through a continuing ongoing formation and integration of various elements of self, the individual in his or her growth in vocation, realizes the need for a constant transformation in the process of the imitation of Christ and in becoming like Jesus.

It is our configuration with Christ which is the purpose of our call. As St Paul puts it, we should put on the attitude of Christ, thus sharing in His total self-giving to the Father and His brothers and sisters. This journey of transformation is an outcome of the above two journeys. It is a cyclic process that helps us attain the maturity that leads to wholeness and holiness.

Formation to a religious life is a journey of transformation. The call of God to religious life and one's consecration to him continues throughout life. It is a call to grow deeply in ways that go beyond our understanding and expectations. Amadeo Cencini states in *La formación permanente* (Ongoing Formation, Madrid 2002, 53-54) that the religious are called to remain novices throughout life. They are to mature more and more in the attitude of the disciple who always listens to the teacher and of the pilgrim who always follows in the right direction. St John Paul II affirms that precisely because of its purpose of transforming the whole person, formation requirements never end. Consecrated persons must be provided the opportunities to grow in their commitment to the charism and mission of their institute (VC, 65).

Religious life is a gift in the church and for the church. The profession of the evangelical counsels belongs indisputably to the life and holiness of the church. It is an expression of the holiness of the church (VC, 29, 32). That is why we cannot think or live if we are not in communion with the church. One cannot contemplate the face of Christ without seeing him shine in his church. To love Christ is to love the church in her people and institutions, as our founders, Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello did. It is this love that will allow religious life to fulfil its prophetic mission at all times by both proclaiming and denouncing as circumstances require.

Finding what is essential is the main and most urgent challenge today for religious life and its formation. Time, routine, the usual, etc. are filling us with accidental things that seem to be essential and indispensable. That is why we have to halt from time to time along the way to discern what is essential, necessary, and indispensable from what is accidental, contingent, and even superfluous in our lives. We must be silent from time to time to identify what constitutes the essence of religious life in its very depths. Today, more than ever, we are being impelled, while transcending the peripheral aspects, to go back to the very heart of our Christian and religious options. It calls for continuous formation and transformation.

Conclusion

The vocation to religious life is a divine call and God's call is permanent. Each one called by God has a special function to perform for the good of humanity. The formation, which implies a process of configuration for Christ, has two major goals: discernment of vocation to religious life and accompaniment of those called to religious life. The formation is for the maturation of the whole person, integration, and transformation of one's life. Ongoing formation is indispensable not only because of the need to renew oneself but also because the very nature of consecrated life requires us to go on training ourselves for our task, to keep abreast of developments in the church and society, to have a ready eye to the signs of the times, and to continue.

Signs of authentic vocation are primarily ardent love for Christ and a desire for the total dedication of one's life to the service of God. Ardent love and passion for Christ and souls are the basic motivations for embracing religious life. Religious life entails perseverance, trust in God's supporting grace, and the hope of obtaining his promise of eternal life for those who persevere in his service. The great task of religious life is to identify the indispensable elements of this project of life. And it is precisely on the indispensable elements that formation has to focus and concentrate both in its initial and ongoing phases.

Religious life is a grace-filled journey that can only be lived well and to the end with God's help. To be fruitful in one's vocation and persevere to the end, one needs the presence of the Holy Spirit and to be close to Jesus (cf. John 15:5). Religious life, as the burning and ardent love for Jesus stimulated by the Holy Spirit, is indispensable to withstand the difficulties and problems that might arise along the journey. As religious people, we need to know how to communicate the beauty of the vocation to which we are called. By our way of life, we must make visible to young people the beauty, attractiveness, and splendour of the Lord who calls and the journey of life to which He calls.

Points for Reflection and Sharing

1. How is our journey of maturation in religious formation?
2. How do we live our journey of religious integration?
3. What efforts do we take to make our religious formation indispensable for transformation?

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

02 Sun	-	Most Precious Body and Blood of Christ
07 Fri	-	Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
08 Sat	-	Immaculate Heart of Mary
		Blessed Stephen Sandor SDB
23 Sun	-	St Joseph Cafasso
24 Mon	-	The Nativity of John the Baptist
29 Sat	-	Ss Peter and Paul

ALL IN THE FAMILY

I am happy to announce the Team Members of our Province who will be animating the different sectors of our mission. I thank them for their generosity in accepting this important role with enthusiasm and commitment.

General Co-ordinator
Formation

Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima
Sr Susai Josephine Rani
Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima
Sr Mathew J. Siriapushpam (SL)

Youth Pastoral

Sr Rajendran Selvarani
Sr Dharmalingam Jeyaseeli
Sr Nguyen Thi Long Phuong Maria (SL)

Catechetics & Mission ad/inter gentes	Sr Tharcius Sagaya Mary Sr Dominic Switha Sr Arulanandu Arockia Mary (SL)
Academic Coordination	Sr Alexander Amali Sr Joseph Victoria Sr Lourdusamy Emily Mary Sr Arockiasamy Celine Mary Sr Alexander Lilly Rose (SL)
Educating Community	Sr Madalaimuthu Lidwin Mary Sr Salas Silviya Sr Anandan Anna Mary Rosintha (SL)
Social Communication & Vibration	Sr Rajendran Thimena Celine Sr Antony Cruz Mathalen Mary Sr Mamani Liendro Maria Susi (SL)
Salesian Cooperators	Sr Joseph Jackulen Anthony Sr Samuel Gloria Navanetham
Past Pupils	Sr Francis Jeyamani Sr Cherayath Annarani
VIDES	Sr Maria Louis Isabel Sirumalar Sr Antony Sheeba
ADMA Human Rights Education	Sr Mathew Alice (SL) Sr Gabriel Mariammal Sr Savari Fathima
Social Development Coordinator	Sr Alphonse Mary J.Isabella Sr Arokiasamy Rackel Mary (SL)
Women Groups, VTC, & Young at Risk & Migrants	Sr Mahimainathan Sathyiavani Sr Susainathan Ayesha Bindhu

CONGRATULATIONS

- ❖ Sr Divyanathan Helen Gracy, Sr Lourdunathan Sujitha Jayaseeli, Sr Sagaya Lourdunathan Akila and Sr Victor Sharmila, the newly professed Sisters of our Province from Divyadhanam Novitiate, Manikandam, have safely reached their communities on 28 May 2024. We heartily welcome them to our Province family and wish them the blessings of God in abundance for a fulfilling FMA life.
- ❖ Hearty congratulations to Sr Arokia Raj Deepika, Sr Adaikalam Rekha, Sr Andrews Roseline and Sr Antony Cruz Mathalen who have solemnly said their YES to the Lord forever. May they live their commitment to the full.

NOTE OF THANKS

- ❖ A heartfelt thanks to Sr Sebastian Elizabeth, the Animator, and the Community of Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur for hosting the Summer Vocation Camp from 15 April to 15 May 2024. 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 go to Sr Rayappan Selvi, who gave wholehearted collaboration for vocation promotion. I thank Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima for her coordination and dedication. I express my appreciation to Sr Wilson Anitha Arockiam, Sr Rayappan Selvi, Sr Anthony Sheeba, Sr Anthony Samy Jecintha Mary, Sr Savari Fatima, Sr Dominic Switha, Sr Amaladoss Victoria Selvi, Sr Paul Ezhilarasi and Sr Elizabeth Cherian who animated the girls during the Vocation Camp. Your support is laudable.

- ❖ Hearty thanks to Sr Chinnappan Philomena Rani and the community of Mornese, Yercaud, for making all the arrangements to create a prayerful atmosphere for the 51 Sisters of the Fourth Annual Retreat of the year, from 02 to 09 May 2024, for hosting the Provincial Council from 10 to 11 May 2024 and for creating a conducive atmosphere for the Junior Sisters to prepare themselves for the renewal of the vows. A note of thanks to Sr Susai Josephine Rani for meticulously making the arrangements and for calling efficient resource persons to animate the Junior Sisters. Thanks to Sr Irudayanathan Helen for assisting and accompanying the young Sisters throughout the course.
- ❖ A heartfelt thanks to Sr Celine Gaspar and the community of Auxilium Home, Katpadi for hosting the Celebrations of the Final Commitment in Sacred Heart Parish, Katpadi on 26 May 2024. A special thanks to Sr Antony Raj Mary Josephine and Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima and the communities of Auxilium College and Sacred Heart Home for making arrangements for the same in various ways. I thank all the communities who carried out different responsibilities with love and dedication.

HEARTY WELCOME

We extend our warm welcome to our Sr Anthony Dass Arockia Marial, Sr Immanuel Celcia; and Sr Arulnesan Mariya Jenatnayaki, Sr Emmauval Camalin Riyalini who made their Intensive Juniorate in Guwahati and Shillong respectively. May the formation received enrich them in their vocational journey!

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- **Course for New Provincials, Rome:** I will be participating in the Course for New Provincials in Rome from 5-23 July 2024. Kindly keep me in your prayers. In my absence, Sr Antony Raj Christina, the Vice Provincial, will be the point of reference.
- **Diploma Course in Fashion Designing:** Sr Lourdunathan Sujitha Jayaseeli will do her studies at Nirmal Jothi, Bangalore for one year, from June 2024 to April 2025.
- **Online Theology Courses at St Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore:** **Biblical Theology and Biblical Spirituality:** Sr Issac Angela Mary, Sr Chinnanayagam Mary Sheela, Sr Perianayagam Auxilia and Sr Cherayath Anna Rani; **Canon Law for Religious:** Sr Maria Louis Isabel Sirumalar, Sr Savariappan Irene Novila Rani, and Sr Lourdusamy Solomon Kalai; **Dialogue and Evangelization:** Sr Peter Ganesan Ragini and Sr Paul Ezhilarasi.

We wish them all a fruitful experience!

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- To Sr Palliparambil Leelamma, the Provincial and the Sisters of INC, at the demise of Sr Teresa Koratiparampil (73) on 02 May 2024 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Ranchi.
- To Sr Anthony Cruz Mathalen Mary, at the demise of her beloved father Mr Anthony Cruz (77) on 07 May 2024 at Viruduvilanginan, Tiruvannamalai.
- To Fr Jose Thomas Koyickal, the Provincial and the Confreres of INK, at the demise of Fr Mathew Maruvathrail SDB (94) on 16 May 2024 at Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore.
- To the Priests, Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of Thanjavur, at the demise of the Bishop Most Rev Dr Devadoss Ambrose (77) on 26 May 2024 at Thanjavur.
- To Sr Rayappan Leema Rose, at the demise of her eldest sister Mrs Rayappan Jeyaseeli (73) on 28 May 2024 at Kodungal.
- To the Priests, Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of Hyderabad and Warangal, at the demise of Most Rev Dr Thumma Bala (80), Archbishop Emeritus of Hyderabad and Bishop Emeritus of Warangal on 30 May 2024 at Warangal.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY

- 03 † Sr Barberi Lina (1986)
† Sr Bagyam Mary (2004)
- 05 † Sr Martina Francesca (1994)
- 07 † Sr Nadar Kitheri (2000)
- 09 † Sr Correa Alice (1996)
- 11 † Sr Drago Mary (2008)
- 13 † Sr Balestra Teresa (1955)
- 15 † Sr Joseph Lumin Priscilla (2010)
- 20 † Sr De Souza Saturnina (2009)
- 21 † Sr Fernandes Eva (1989)
- 25 † Sr Mc Guire Ada (1969)
- 27 † Sr Abramo Teresa (2017)
- 30 † Sr Fassa Cleofe (2001)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

02	Sun	Animators, Economers, HM's & School Office Staff Orientation, ACK, Sri Lanka - Online
10	Mon	New Animators and New Economers Course, Kodambakkam
11 - 12	Tues - Wed	New Economers Course, Kodambakkam
15	Sat	Provincial Councilors & Team Meet, Kodambakkam
16 - 17	Sun - Mon	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
17-19	Mon-Wed	Retreat for the Aspirants & Postulants, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
20	Thu	Postulants Medal Receiving, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
19-20	Wed-Thu	Eco Consciousness - Online Orientation to Students of Eco Club
30	Sun	VIDES Meeting, Auxilium Home

On 2 June, we celebrate the great Solemnity of the **Most Precious Body and Blood of Christ**, also known as Corpus Christi, a very important and core tenet of our Christian faith and beliefs. All of us as Christians believe that the Holy Eucharist, which we celebrate at the Holy Mass or more appropriately, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is none other than the Most Holy and Precious Body and Blood of Our Lord Himself. This is the belief in the Doctrine of the Transubstantiation, one of the core tenets of the Christian faith, that God has given us all His own Most Holy and Precious Body and Blood for our salvation, through the New and Eternal Covenant He had made with us.

On 7 June, the Church celebrates the **Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 478 says: "Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us: "The Son of God ... loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation (Cf. Jn 19:34), "is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that ... love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings" without exception [Pius XII, Enc. *Haurietis Aquas* (1956)].

On 8 June, we commemorate the **Immaculate Heart of Mary**. Mary's heart, as with every human heart, is a symbol of every relational virtue that enables one to love. The Mother of God's human love for her Son was perfect and that is something worth pondering! Let our prayer to her be: Immaculate Heart of Mary, I love you and give praise and thanks to God for the unfathomable graces that were instilled within your heart at the moment of your conception and remain with you today and forever. Please pour down upon me and the whole world the loving mercy of your Son, so that I can more fully become your child and a child of God.

I wish you all a very Happy Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus!

Festal wishes to Sacred Heart SEARCH Ashram, Mannivakkam, Sacred Heart Convent, Polur, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi, Sacred Heart Novitiate, Negombo; and Our Lady's Centre, Chetpet, which has the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the patroness!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

Sr Devadoss Margaret
INM FMA Provincial



**ITINERARY OF THE PROVINCIAL
JUNE 2024**

02	Sun	Orientation for Animators, Economers, HMs & School Office Staff, Auxilium College, Katpadi
07 - 09	Fri - Sun	National CRWI Meet, Mater Dei, Goa
10	Mon	New Animators and New Economers Course, Kodambakkam
11 - 12	Tue - Wed	New Economers' Course, Kodambakkam
15	Sat	Provincial Councilors & Team Meet, Kodambakkam
16 - 17	Sun - Mon	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
18 - 20	Tue - Thu	Postulants Retreat, Medal Receiving, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
21 - 30	Wed - Sun	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
July 01 -27	Mon - Sat	Course for the New Provincials - Rome

