



My Dearest Sisters,

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

Intellectual Maturity is the Key to an Effective Ministry and Holiness of Life

INTRODUCTION

The aim of intellectual maturity is the growth of God-given knowledge and intellect to the greatest extent possible. It is seeking an ever deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries of faith and sharing the truth of Jesus Christ with others, which has an ecclesial and ministerial dimension. Through intellectual maturity, the consecrated persons come to a deeper understanding of the truths of faith and the human person, enriching their relationship with God, their understanding of themselves, their service to others, and their growth in holiness. Intellectual maturity in consecrated persons is a sign of participation in the light of God's mind seeking to acquire wisdom and knowledge to know the truth of God, which has been revealed in Jesus Christ and is passed on by the Church through Sacred Scripture and tradition. This knowledge deepens the love of God and the effective proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to live a unified life and to contribute to the enhancement of the entire creation.

1. Importance of Knowledge and Wisdom

God created humans to be thinking beings. The Bible recognizes the fundamental importance of knowledge and wisdom. It tells us that we are made in the image of the only wise God (Gen. 1:27), an image that, though ruined through the fall beyond our power to repair, is not beyond God's power to regenerate through the work of Christ. In the Bible, wisdom and knowledge of life are decisive. Solomon says, "As [a man/woman] thinketh in his/her heart, so is he/she." And again, "Stone is heavy and sand a burden, but a fool's provocation is heavier than both" (Prov 27:3). Paul exhorts us not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and he gives us the charter for Christian thought/knowledge when he says, "Finally brothers and sisters: whatever is true; whatever is noble; whatever is right; whatever is pure; whatever is lovely; whatever is admirable; if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things." (Phil. 4:8).

God wills the training of the mental faculties. He designs that His children possess more intelligence and clearer discernment than the worldlings, and He is dissatisfied with those who are too careless or too indolent to become efficient and well-informed workers in His vineyard. If we place ourselves under the control of His Spirit, the more thoroughly the intellect is cultivated, the more effectively it can be used in the service of God. Blaise Pascal, certainly one of the most biblical of all the great scientists and philosophers, says in his *Pensées*, "Man is but a reed, the feeblest thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed... Let us endeavour, then, to acquire knowledge and wisdom. One of the great marks of humans' uniqueness is their God-given capacity to think, reason out, dialogue, and discern rightly. Consequently, anything that diminishes our thinking tends to dehumanize us by making us less than what God created us to be.

2. Means to Ministry and Holiness

What is most important for us to understand, concerning intellectual power, is *how we can properly serve God and grow in holiness*. Intellectual growth isn't a threat to spiritual life. There is no advantage to spiritual life from mere ignorance or intellectual dimness. It is, after all, not intellect that is a threat to spirituality, but the *pride* of intellect, a reliance on, trust in, and worship of the intellect. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil" (Prov. 3:5–7).

The intellect is one of the created realms of power. The human world moves upon ideas so far as it depends upon human actions, for actions come from the minds and hearts of humans. It is through the perverted ideational system of humankind that the evil one exercises whatever power it has, as the prince of this world, concerning human affairs. When the evil one came to tempt Eve, he approached her with a question, an intellectual approach: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree? (Gen. 3:1), and then a lie: "You will not certainly die!" (Gen. 3:4), and then a lying attack upon God's character: God does not want you to be like Him (Gen. 3:5).

Romans Chapter 1 explains how humankind, once fallen, refused to glorify God as they knew Him to be (Rom. 1:20–23), and how this led to the declension culminating in the historical reality of human existence that we see around us on all hands, and perhaps not a little, as it afflicts our souls. Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed and evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice, they are gossipers, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance of God and that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them (cf. Rom. 1:29–32).

And all of this rests, essentially, upon the ultimate ideas about human life, false ideas about God and the world, about what we ought to be and can be, which flock in the minds of the ordinary person, and upon which the course of human affairs naturally rests. As children of light, given by grace from the life above by the birth from above, we are called to use our intellect in submission to God, trusting Him to work with us here, as we do in the use of every one of our natural powers for His glory. The active submission of our intellect, to be empowered by His Spirit to achieve for Him what it cannot achieve on its own, is a necessary part of the full stewardship of the love of God, of "occupying" for Him until He comes. In all three Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 22:37, Mk 12:30, Lk 10:27), the phrase "*all of the mind*" is used to indicate how we are to love God: with *all* our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The pursuit of ongoing intellectual growth helps one to grow in both holiness and commitment to loving service. Since faith is always "faith seeking understanding," our mind needs actively to follow our heart and not remain static in knowledge, as we grow closer to God and learn to love more and more like Christ. The purpose of intellectual growth is to enable us to acquire and have a firm foundation for our faith. It can enable us to mature and equip ourselves to proclaim it effectively to the modern world. It helps us to proclaim the Gospel message to the people of our day in a way that is credible and can be understood. It is to enter into fruitful dialogue with the contemporary world and to uphold the truth of the faith in the light of reason, thereby revealing its beauty.

We have to do *whatever* we do from within a framework of discipleship that will constantly hold us in clear dependence upon the interaction of the Holy Spirit with our souls, refusing to depend upon our natural ability and natural relations to the world, social as well as physical, apart from God. To

be prepared to *follow* Jesus in His overall style of life, or to follow Paul, who could say to the Corinthians, Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1), we have to be faithful to the requirement that *every* disciple in *every* vocation must meet. Then we will be perfectly safe, and the intellect will not overbalance the spiritual in our life. This is the requirement of a plan of specific activities for growth in Christlikeness or holiness.

3. Mental Culture for Consecrated Persons

Mental culture is what we as consecrated persons need and what we must have to meet the demands of the time. Poverty, humble origin, and unfavourable surroundings need not prevent the cultivation of the mind. We need to search, study, and pray to face every difficulty powerfully and vigorously. By calling the power of will and the grace of patience to our aid, we can dig more earnestly till the gem of truth lies before us, plain and beautiful, all the more precious because of the difficulties involved in finding it. We will not only secure useful knowledge, but the exercise of the mind will increase our mental power. The key found to unlock one mystery may reveal also other precious gems of knowledge heretofore undiscovered. Let us search the Scriptures diligently and prayerfully, so that we may become giants in the understanding of Biblical doctrines and the practical lessons of Christ. The minds of all should be stored with knowledge of the truths of God’s Word, so that we may be prepared, at any moment when required, to present from the storehouse things new and old.

The work of evangelization demands careful preparation (Matt. 28:20). We cannot enter the Lord’s service without the needed training and expect the highest success. Mechanics, lawyers, merchants, and men and women of all trades and professions are educated for the line of business they hope to enter. It is their policy to make themselves as efficient as possible. Should the followers of Christ show less diligence in preparing for a mission infinitely more important? As consecrated persons, we need to engage ourselves, by faith, with the Holy Spirit to throw back the framework of evil ones and show forth the life that is the light of humanity in all of its cosmic, historical, and eternally redemptive dimensions. We are called today to stand by Paul the Apostle, with weapons not of the flesh but divinely powerful for the destruction of strongholds, destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor 10:4–5).

In carrying out God’s mission, we will have to keep ourselves up to a high level of intelligence. We will have to sharpen up and be armed and equipped to present the truth intelligently and to reach the higher status of life. We have an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, pure, and noble. We will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. Perseverance in the acquisition of knowledge, controlled by the fear and love of God, will give us increased power for good in this life; and those who make the most of their opportunities to reach high attainments will take these attainments with them into the future life.

We need to seek and obtain that which is imperishable. The ability to appreciate the glories ‘what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard’ (1 Cor. 2:9), will be proportionate to the attainments reached. We need to develop our knowledge and understanding both of the human person to whom the Gospel is addressed and of the world or the culture in which it is to be preached and lived. Our postmodern culture teaches us to separate the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral experiences of God and the Church and even to oppose them rather than integrate them into the unity of the desired conformity to Christ the Servant. Intellectual growth can support our human and spiritual life and our ministry as it ought.

CONCLUSION

To become persons of responsibility and influence, by the power of our will, united with divine strength, we earnestly need to engage in the work, exercising the mental powers, and in no case neglect the physical. Let not intellectual slothfulness close up our path to greater knowledge. Learn to reflect as well as to study so that our minds may expand, strengthen, and develop. Never think that we have learned enough and that we may now relax our efforts. The cultivated mind is the measure of the human. Our pursuit of knowledge should continue during our lifetime; every day we should be learning and putting to practical use the knowledge gained. God alone can indeed measure the powers of the human mind. It was not His design that we should be content to remain in the lowlands of ignorance, but that we should secure all the advantages of an enlightened, cultivated intellect. Everyone should feel that there rests upon us an obligation to reach the height of intellectual greatness.

The intellectual life at its highest and best is above all else a Christ-centred life. It means having the mind of the Lord Jesus. It has a goal, the magnificent, lofty goal, as Paul said, of “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Like the high priest of Israel who had written on the mitre over his forehead, “Holiness unto the Lord,” so the consecrated persons must have it written over their minds, “Holiness unto the Lord,” as they seek to ponder and dwell on the truth. Consecrated persons should devote time to reading, studying, meditation, and prayer. They should store the mind with useful knowledge, commit to memorising portions of Scripture, trace out the fulfilment of the prophecies, and learn the lessons that Christ gave His disciples. Let the mind be trained and disciplined to deal with hard problems in the search for divine truth.

Points to Ponder:

1. Why is Intellectual Maturity important today?
2. How does Intellectual Maturity help you advance in ministry and holiness?
3. What is the need for Mental Culture for Consecrated Persons?

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

01 Tue	-	St Theresa of Lisieux
02 Wed	-	Guardian Angel
04 Fri	-	St Francis of Assisi
05 Sat	-	Bl. Albert Marvelli SDB
07 Mon	-	Our Lady of the Rosary
11 Fri	-	St Pope John XXIII
12 Sat	-	Bl. Alessandrina
15 Tue	-	St Teresa of Avila
18 Fri	-	St Luke, the Evangelist
22 Tue	-	St Pope John Paul II
23 Wed	-	World Mission Sunday
24 Thu	-	Bl. Luigi Guanella SDB
28 Mon	-	Ss Simon and Jude, Apostles
29 Tue	-	Bl. Michael Rua SDB

NOTE OF THANKS

- ❖ We express our deepest gratitude to you Sr Palliparambil Leelamma, the Provincial and the Sisters of Kolkata Province for your outstanding hospitality and the warm, familial spirit you extended to us. Your careful organization of accommodations, meals, and logistics were truly remarkable, setting an international standard of excellence. Your dedication and meticulous attention to every detail ensured a seamless and memorable experience for all. Congratulations dear Sisters, for your remarkable family spirit and exemplary service!
- ❖ I owe my gratitude to Sr Doss Rosalia and Sr Pichai Mary Saroja for offering Ashram Experience for the Aspirants from 1 to 15 September 2024 at Mannivakkam. I thank Sr Panakezham Annie and the Community of Mannivakkam for hosting the Aspirants.
- ❖ I express my gratitude to Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella, Sr Mahimainathan Sathiyavani and Sr Susainathan Aysha Bindhu in charge of Women Group, VTC and Young at Risk for conducting the orientation program on CSP-Legal Implications for the Sisters and Teachers of Non-Fomal Sector, to Sr Samala Rayappan Elisa and the Community for the accommodation on 7 September 2024.
- ❖ Hearty thanks to Sr Sebastian R Vimala, the vocation promoter, for conducting the Vocation Camp for Vellore Zone Catholic girls of Class VII to XII on 13 September 2024. Thanks to Sr Alexander Amali and the community of St Mary's for hosting the camp.
- ❖ I express my gratitude to Sr Fernando Amutha and the Community of Polur for hosting the Provincial Council on 28 and 29 September 2024. Congratulations on renovating the Convent building so well.
- ❖ I am grateful to Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella and Sr Mahimainadhan Sathiyavani, the Coordinators for conducting the Orientation Programme on Women Entrepreneurs, for Women and Young Girls in Chennai Zone on 21 September 2024.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- Sr Asirvatham Anthony Amali, Sr Chinnappan Philomena Rani, Sr Packiyathan Mary Rita, Sr Periyayagam Auxilia, Sr Salvadore Gertrude M. Nirmala, Sr Samuel Gloria Navaneetham, Sr Santiagu Amirtha Alocis and Sr Tharcus Sanci are participating in the Alternate Therapy Course being held at Kurseong, Darjeeling from 29 September to 5 October 2024.
- Sr Sebastian Amalorpava Mary will be participating in the Psycho-Spiritual Integration Course at Mysore from 7 to 25 October 2024. We wish all the participants a fruitful and purposeful experience!

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- To Fr Don Bosco Lourdusamy, Provincial and the Salesians of the Province of Chennai, at the demise of Fr Appadan Raphael SDB (84) in Tirupattur on 4 September 2024.
- To Sr Joseph Rosella and Sr Joseph Isabella, at the demise of their sister and to Sr Alphonse Mary J. Isabella of her aunt Sr Marceline SMMI (77) at Kumbakonam on 25 September 2024.
- To Sr Anthony Raj Maria Theresa, at the demise of her brother Mr Arockia Raj (57) in Bangalore on 27 September 2024.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY

03 † Sr Gaidano Annetta (1986)

04 † Sr D'Souza Philomena (2016)

05 † Sr Zanetta Carmela (1987)

06 † Sr Marchetti Virginia (2012)

07 † Sr Ittoop Mercy (2010)

08 † Sr Berra Giulia (1968), Sr Mascarenhas Edith (2014), Sr Rayappan Antonia (2019)

10 † Sr Mezzacasa Maria (1943) , Sr Savarimuthu Lucy (2013)

11 † Sr Personeni Ancilla (1999)

14 † Sr Zonta Maria (1994)

18 † Sr Nayagam Fatima Mary (2005)

22 † Sr Antonysamy Regina Mary (2005), Sr Fernando Juliet (2017)

26 † Sr Savarimuthu Michaelal (2003)

28 † Sr Arputha Mary Santiago (1945)

31 † Sr Marnetto Caterina (1953), Sr Doyle Cecilia Sarah (1990)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

01	Tue	Arrival of Sr Moraes de Nilza Fatima and Sr Miranda Analfreda at Kodambakkam
01 - 04	Tue - Fri	SPM Leadership Training for the students of St Mary's and Auxilium Hr Sec. School, Katpadi at Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur
01 - 10	Tue - Thu	Ashram Experience for the Novices at Mannivakkam
02	Wed	Sr Moraes de Nilza Fatima meeting the Candidates at Sacred Heart Home, Katpati
05	Sat	Orientation on Organic Farming /Grey Water Management for Women Farmers at Salem
05 - 06	Sat - Sun	Sr Moraes de Nilza Fatima meeting the Young Sisters at Auxilium College
07	Mon	Sr Moraes de Nilza Fatima meeting the Animators at Auxilium College
07 - 12	Mon - Sat	Eco Fest week for Sisters, teachers & students in the local communities
12	Sat	Vocation Camp for VII-XII Girls, Chennai Zone at Kingsford, Chennai
17	Thu	Submission of Society Accounts at Kodambakkam
17 - 22	Thu - Thu	3 rd Asian Pascific Congress of the Past Pupils of FMA in the Philippines
18	Fri	Animation for Economers, Kodambakkam
23	Wed	Life in the Virtual (AI) world for young Sisters & Local Media Coordinators, Online, Sri Lanka
25	Fri	Vocation Camp for VII-XII Girls, Tirupattur Zone at MIC, Tirupattur
26	Sat	Life in the Virtual (AI) world for young Sisters & Local Media Coordinators, Auxilium College, Katpadi
26 - 27	Sat - Sun	Provincial Council at Kodambakkam
30	Wed	Ambassadors of Peace Rally - Local communities

The celebration of the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on 7 October has been known for several centuries by the alternate title of “Our Lady of Victory”. The feast day takes place in honour of a 16th-century naval victory which secured Europe against Turkish invasion. Pope St Pius V attributed the victory to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary who was invoked on the day of the battle through a campaign to pray the Rosary throughout Europe. Pope Leo XIII says, "***The Rosary is the most excellent form of prayer and the most efficacious means of attaining eternal life.*** It is the remedy for all our evils, the root of all our blessings. There is no, more excellent way of praying." The Holy Rosary has always been one of the most appreciated prayers in the Christian community for its simplicity and profoundness. Although it is distinguished by its Marian character, it is a prayer centred on the whole mystery of Christ. By focusing on each of the mysteries, it concentrates on the profound message of the Gospel.

During this month dedicated to the Holy Rosary, the priceless treasure inspired by God and a powerful weapon, let us recite it with great love and devotion, praying for all the needs of our province, communities and our families. Let us also promote this popular devotion in the families of our neighbourhood by praying the Rosary along with them.

The celebration of the concluding session of the Synod on Synodality will take place from Wednesday 2 October to Sunday 27 October 2024 on the theme “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission”. All of us are called to be part of this very vital process and we cannot afford to be indifferent. We need to be open to the Spirit’s guidance in prayer and adoration and be committed to a deeper missionary option that is capable of transforming our lifestyle in the Church, in our Communities and the Mission.

Festal Wishes to Little Flower Convent, Pallikonda, on the first of October and to Holy Rosary Convent, Colombo on the 7 October!

Special prays and blessings to all the ‘Little Flowers’ and ‘Rosaries’.

I wish you a very happy feast of Our Lady of Rosary and Missionary Month!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

Sr Devadoss Margaret
INM FMA Provincial





ITINERARY OF THE PROVINCIAL October 2024

01 - 08	Tue – Tue	Visit of Sr Moraes de Nilza Fatima, General Councillor for Formation
09 - 11	Tue - Fri	Provincial Visit, Kingsford
12 - 13	Sat - Sun	Provincial Visit, Thoraipakkam
14 - 15	Mon - Tue	Provincial Visit, Nandambakkam
16	Wed	Formators Meet, Manikandam, Tiruchirapalli
17 – 19	Thu - Sat	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
20 - 21	Sun - Mon	Provincial Visit, Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur
22 - 24	Tue - Thu	Provincial Visit, Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur
24	Thu	Golden Jubilee of Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur
26 - 27	Sat - Sun	Provincial Council, Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur
28 - 29	Mon - Tue	Provincial Visit, Yellagiri Hills
30 - 01	Wed - Fri	Provincial Visit, St Mary’s Convent, Vellore

November 2024

03 - 05	Sun - Tue	Provincial Visit, Pallikonda
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