

Provincial Circular

FMA PROVINCE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOLKATA (INC)

**Provincial Office - The Salesian Sisters
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December 2018

Dear Sisters,

Warm and Loving greetings from the Provincial House for a very fervent season of Advent and Christmas!

Advent

At the beginning of the liturgical year, the Church, good mother that she is, focuses the faithful on a beautiful liturgical season which calls us to live in anticipation of a new beginning, a new coming of the Lord. This season of joyful preparation is also a season of great hope. If we fully enter into its celebration, we will be constantly invited through our liturgical readings and practices, to clear away all that entangles us and open a space in our hearts, our communities, our relationships and our lives, for Love Incarnate to be born again.

Advent is a road, a way of living our life and vocation, here and now, which enters into the eternal mysteries. We now live in that intermediate time between the first and the second comings of Jesus. We are to be changed by the first and called to prepare ourselves - and the world in which we live - for the second. During this process of conversion, He continues to come to all those who make themselves ready. In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us: The Church, celebrating the liturgy of Advent every year, actualizes the expectation of the Messiah: by putting oneself in communion with the long preparation of the first coming of the Savior, the faithful revive their ardent desire of his second coming (CCC, 524).

Celebrating Advent, indeed celebrating all the seasons of the Church year, is continual call back to faith, repentance, conversion and holiness of life, the things that really matter. The liturgical seasons are an extraordinary gift and opportunity. All of us are going to mark time. We will mark it either with the ordinary stuff of ordinary life or we will fill it as well with the things of God, thereby transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Advent is especially a time of preparation that is marked by prayer, prayers of humble devotion and commitment, prayers of submission, prayers for deliverance, prayers from those walking in darkness, to who are awaiting and anticipating a great light (Isa 9)

During Advent, we are asked to prepare ourselves worthily to celebrate the anniversary of the Lord's coming into the world as the incarnate God of love and thus to make us fitting abodes for the Redeemer, coming in Holy Communion and through grace, and thereby make ourselves ready for His final coming as judge, at death and at the end of the world.

Let us celebrate this time of Advent as a *Kairos* (an opportune moment) experience. Every moment, every day of Advent can be experienced as a grace-filled, fulfilled moment. Let us therefore take time to be aware that in the midst of our busy preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is re-born in the 'Bethlehems' of our communities and daily life. In this spirit, I wish you a very happy and holy Advent season to all of you dear Sisters!

Feast of the Immaculate Conception



From all eternity Mary was chosen to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate. It is unthinkable that such a mother should have been defiled by sin for even a moment. The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin consists simply in her having possessed the divine life of grace from the beginning of her existence, a life of grace that was given her by God's enabling grace. Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, full of grace through God was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854. The theological significance of Mary's virginity would seem to lie in her total self-giving to God and her

total fruitfulness as a result of that self-giving. In fact, article 44 of our Constitutions invites us to contemplate in Mary the Immaculate Help of Christians, the fullness of self-giving to God and neighbor.

On the occasion of the Feast of the Immaculate, let us recall to our mind how Mother Mazzarello prepared the Sisters to celebrate this feast in a fitting manner. Writing from Nizza Monferrato on 30 November 1880 she invited her daughters to make the novena of the Immaculate well and with as much fervor as possible, as our Holy Rule exhorts us to do. She invited everyone to commit themselves to practicing true humility and charity, bearing with one another's defects, making the practices of piety better, receiving Holy Communion and saying the prayers with fervor and enthusiasm and practicing the holy vows. If we do this, she said that Our Lady will be pleased with us and will obtain from Jesus all those graces of which we are so much in need in order to become holy.

The feast of the Immaculate is so full of meaning and is a date that was very dear to Don Bosco as it marked the official birth of our charism in the Church – the meeting with Bartholomew Garelli (1841) and the Hail Mary that began that prophetic catechism lesson. On the same 8 December 1885 Don Bosco declared that "We owe everything to Mary" and that "all our greatest enterprises and events began and reached fulfillment on the feast of the Immaculate". And at the end of his traditional conference in the choir

of the Basilica, he added that the congregation was “destined for very great things and we would spread throughout the world, if the Salesians were always faithful to the Rule given them by Mary Most Holy”.

Don Bosco made the Immaculate a lively presence among the boys of Turin, and Mary Mazzarello did this among the girls of Mornese. Mary is felt by the educators and the young as a living, motherly, and powerful presence who gives them security and hope. Mary Immaculate, as the ideal of purity, helps the young people to grow as human beings and in the faith, to be strong and not give into the temptation of being superficial Christian men and women, but to live responsibly and to always seek more and more what is above.

On December 8 at noon, let us join together with the Salesian houses all over the world and pray to the Madonna in order to recall the fruitful ‘seed’ of Don Bosco’s work on that distant day of 1841.

Strenna 2019



The Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, presented the theme of Strenna 2019 to the Salesian Family: **‘So that my joy may be in you’ (Jn 15:11). HOLINESS ALSO FOR YOU.** The Strenna " is the fruit of dialogue at the World Council of the Salesian Family, which gratefully, is in harmony with the ecclesial moment of the Synod, and also with the last appeal on the theme of holiness". The Rector Major says that the presentation of Strenna 2019 "is a magnificent opportunity to be in harmony with the appeal that the Holy Father addresses in the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*, which has much to do

with the Salesian charism. Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello were great guides in this sense, with the ability to inspire and accompany the boys and girls on the paths of daily holiness".

As per tradition, at the end of the year the Rector Major will present the Strenna to our Sisters in Casa Generalizia and from that day it becomes a gift for the whole Salesian Family in every part of the world. Let us look forward to it with great eagerness.

Communications

- ❖ 13th National Boscoree will be held at Don Bosco – Nashik, from 30th December 2018 – 3rd January 2019. The Theme for the Boscoree is: HEALTH - HARMONY - HOLINESS. Auxilium Convent School - Bandel, Auxilium Convent School - Barasat, Auxilium Convent School – New Chumta, Mazzarello Convent School – Ranchi, St. Mary’s School, Geyzing, St. Anthony’s Convent School, Jaigaon and Janta Higher Secondary School, Jumaikela from the Province will be participating in it. The following sisters will be accompanying



the Scouts and Guides respectively Sr. Rejina Joseph, Sr. Mary John, Sr. Basanti Ekka, Sr. Aruna Kispotta, Sr. Lucy Kachira and Sandhya Minj and Sr. Archana Kujur.

- ❖ Sr. Dorothy Torcato and Sr. Aquila Phawa will be participating in the Project Mornese which will be held from 18 February – 17 March 2019.
- ❖ On 14th November 2018, Sr. Clara Saminathan participated in a full day Programme for the National and Provincial Education Coordinators of Religious Congregations at Don Bosco Provincial House, Okhla. It was organized by the national CBCI Education consultation.

Condolences - Let us pray for our dear Departed:

- † Sr. Susanna Korah's cousin sister Ms. Elsamma (62) who passed away on 13 November 2018. She suffered from cancer.
- † Sr. Mary Mampilly from the Province of Guwahati who breathed her last on 21 November 2018 in V.G. Hospital, Dibrugarh.
- † Rev. Fr. Peringalathu Joseph SDB (63) who returned to his heavenly home from the Salesian Province of Dimapur on 29 November 2018
- † My cousin brother Mr. Joseph who went to his eternal abode on 23 November 2018

Dear Sisters, as I come to the end of this circular I take the opportunity to wish each one of a very Happy and Holy Christmas filled with the joy, peace and love of the Infant Jesus born in Bethlehem. Christmas reminds us that Christ entered into our History to raise us to a higher level of life, humanity and godliness. He adopted himself to our situation and proposes ways of living our life in fullness. Let the celebration of the Incarnation of Christ be a strong point to revamp our life grounded on the immense love of God who became Man to show us the way to the Father. Let this Christmas bring us new enthusiasm, new energy, new vigor and new initiatives so as to incarnate Jesus in our mission and in our apostolic works among the young people.



Happy Christmas!

&

A Grace filled New Year 2019!

Yours affectionately in Our Lady,

Sr. Rose Ezarath FMA
(Provincial)