

Provincial Circular

FMA PROVINCE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOLKATA (INC)

Provincial Office - The Salesian Sisters
10 P.K. Guha Road, Dum Dum
Kolkata 700 028



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December 2020

Dearest Sisters,

Loving and prayerful greetings from Provincial House Dum Dum !

We are in the last week of the Advent season and soon will be commencing the Novena in preparation for the feast of Christmas. Advent is a road, a way of living our life and vocation, in the here and now, which enters into the eternal mysteries. Celebrating Advent, indeed celebrating all the seasons of the Liturgical year, is a continual call back to faith, repentance, conversion and holiness of life, the things that really matter. During this season, 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. He continues to come to all those who make themselves ready. It is the opportune time to reorient ourselves towards an understanding and living of the true meaning of Christmas. In the midst of this raging pandemic, with our frailty and helplessness weighing down on us, we get the taste in our concrete life situation, of the experience of the child born in a manger with swaddling clothes to warm Him. Pope Francis in his apostolic letter 'Admirabilis signum' on the meaning and importance of the nativity scene, wonderfully explains how each character and element in the crib reveals the mystery of the Incarnation, and proclaims that good news to humanity. All who came to meet Jesus were filled with joy, and they went out to proclaim that joy. May this Christmas be a time to rediscover the gift of Jesus; a time to reorient our focus towards Him and find the true and lasting joy in our lives and spread that joy to all whom we meet during this season.

Second Year in preparation for the FMA India Centenary

We have already begun the second year in preparation for the FMA India Centenary Celebrations with the theme, '**Journeying with Mary through the Course of the Century (1922-2022) and Beyond**', with the objective "**Accept the mandate: I entrust them to you: Reviving the Family Spirit and strengthening Community Communion**".

According to our Constitutions "The Family Spirit, the creative outpouring of Don Bosco's heart must characterize all our communities and require the commitment of everyone" (art.50). Family spirit lived to an eminent degree strengthens community communion forming one heart and one soul. In our communities, charity takes on the characteristics of the family spirit that is made up of concrete, practical, simple actions, in ordinary everyday situations, and in our interpersonal relationships. Making an effort to collaborate in our communities, accepting those who have a different mentality or tastes, giving our sisters a peaceful word, or showing them a cordial welcoming attitude, to be together in recreation for

peaceful sharing of ideas and relaxation, are some of the ways we can live this very salesian characteristic of our family.

At Valdocco and Mornese they were able to be closely united among themselves. If we re-read our Constitutions and Regulations, from the point of view of community, it will help us to recover various values that are specifically Salesian, and be able to revive the family spirit. I would like to reflect with you some points on how Mother Mazzarello lived the family spirit by promoting the virtue of charity in community. Relationship of simple frankness, transparent sincerity and profound, mutual confidence between Mother Mazzarello and her Sisters, is one of the determining factors of the family spirit that was created at Mornese. To keep the community in the family spirit Mother Mazzarello gave much importance to true charity in community. Once she affirmed: "When the heart finds true charity in the house, between Sisters and Superiors, it does not look elsewhere". There cannot be true charity in community, nor an authentic sisterly communion as long as there are preferences, privileges and discrimination. She told her Sisters that in Our Lady's house there are "Neither poor things, nor poor little ones! We are all Sisters of the same family, daughters of the same Father and equally consecrated to Jesus Christ. And we must all work equally, love each other and be prompt to sacrifice ourselves". Mother Mazzarello turned her charity with greatest solicitude especially to the sick and the infirm. She affirmed: we must sympathize with everybody, especially the sick. It is said that "Mother Mazzarello was all charity and patience, especially with the sick. She showed herself to have a limitless charity, as soon as she realized someone was not well, showering her with the most delicate attentions. She would have gone through any sacrifice, no matter how great, in order to relieve the sick of body or of spirit". In fact, for Mother Mazzarello, "the way sick are treated shows what spirit reigns in the house". Thanks to Mother Mazzarello, the efficacy of her example and her words, everyone at Mornese felt herself a daughter. In fact, each one felt herself loved, esteemed and highly prized. We read in Cronistoria III about the state of the Institute at the death of Mother Mazzarello: "It could be said that almost all of them grew up together; so they knew each other well, and not only by name. They loved each like sisters, so that the sufferings and joys of one belong to everybody. This is why even when they are not all gathered under the same roof, they remain affectionate with each other. And every bit of news about someone who is absent thickens that previous bond which Don Bosco forged as the special distinctive mark of his Sons and Daughters, the family spirit".

Dear Sisters, I recommend you to make a profound study and meditate upon the articles of the Constitutions which speak of "Fraternal Life in Community" and elicit ways and means to live in a concrete manner the attitudes that characterize every community (cf Circ. 1003) so as to strengthen community communion and generate a life of joy lived in the family spirit.

Year of St Joseph

On 08 December 2020 Pope Francis announced a Year of St. Joseph in honour of the 150th anniversary of the Saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church by Pope Pius IX. The year begins on 08 December 2020, and concludes on 08 December 2021, according to a decree authorized by the Pope. The decree (issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary) states that the Pope has established a Year of St Joseph so that "every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfillment of God's will." Pope Francis describes St Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving

father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

In the Apostolic Letter, entitled *Patris Corde* ("With a father's heart"), the Pope also shares some of his personal reflections on St Joseph the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary for us to read and reflect. "My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic," he said, observing that many people had made hidden sacrifices during the crisis in order to protect others. "Each of us can discover in Joseph - the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence - an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble". The Pope has also granted special indulgences to mark the year. He exhorts us to ask St Joseph for the grace of graces: our conversion. He concludes his Apostolic Letter, with the following prayer to St Joseph, which he encourages everyone to pray together:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.

Communications:

Sincere Gratitude and Appreciation!

Celebrating the Memories of our Pioneers: To mark the arrival of the first missionaries to India, and to reawaken the missionary zeal and fervor we have had commenced with various initiatives as we are journeying towards FMA INDIA centenary year. On 21 November 2020, a Prayer moment was coordinated by Sr. Celine D'Cunha of Shillong Province on the theme: Accept the Mandate: "I entrust them to you." reviving the Family Spirit and strengthening Community Communion.

On 22 November and on 08 December 2020 in the evening there was a Zoom Meet to celebrate the Memories of our Pioneers which was organized by Sr. Hilda Braganza of the Mumbai Province and the FMA India Media Team in collaboration with the 7 FMA Provinces. Our appreciation and thanks to all the sisters especially the young ones, who presented the lives of our Pioneers with creativity. Our sincere thanks Sr. Hilda Braganza and the Media Team who coordinated the programme to present the lives of our Pioneers. We raise a hymn of gratitude to God in thanksgiving for the gift of our zealous and enthusiastic missionary sisters who sowed the charism in our Motherland. In our turn let us resolve to take forward the legacy trod by them and continue to sow the seed of our charism given by Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. I extend a special note of appreciation to the communities of Aspirantate for the lively and creative presentation of the life Sr. Clotilde Appiano and the community of Novitiate for honoring Mary Immaculate also to Sr. Celine Alexander for animating the evening prayer.

Animation of the novena to Mary Immaculate: It was a moment of oneness as a Province, days of enrichment and growth, time of love and devotion to our Blessed Mother the days of Novena to Mary Immaculate. I express my words of appreciation and thanks to

Sr. Rosalia Tirkey, the Novice Mistress, sisters and to our dear Novices for their creative and involving animation of all the communities the novena days.

Congratulations! Rector Major has appointed Fr. Jose Koyickal SDB as the 8th Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province of Bangalore. We congratulate him and assure him of our prayers as he takes up his new ministry of animating and governing the Province. The Installation Ceremony will be on 11 February 2021 in Don Bosco Provincial House, Bangalore.

Annual retreat: Please find below the detailed information of the Annual Retreat

S. No	Place of Retreat	Date	Name of the Preacher	No. of Participants	Other Information
1.	Bandel	26 Dec. 2020 - 02 Jan. 2021	Fr. Biji Thomas SDB	29	Catechetical Meeting: 02 Jan from 4.30 - 05 Jan 2021 till lunch
2.	New Chumta	27 Dec. 2020 - 03 Jan. 2021	Fr. Albert Kujur SDB	17	
3.	Ranchi	29 -December - 05 January 2021	Fr. Sheelanand Kerketta SDB	12	
4.	Vasant Vihar - Delhi	28 Dec. 2020 - 04 Jan. 2021	ONLINE	11	

Strenna 2021: Rector Major, Don Angel Artime, has announced Strenna for the year 2021, on the theme **“Moved by hope: See I am making all things new”** (Rev 21: 5). He has brought out the trails of hope in spite of the challenging worldwide phenomenon that challenges us and which we cannot ignore. Let us read, reflect, live and share it in the community and with the educating community so that we may be harbingers of hope wherever we are.



Let us pray for our dear Departed - Condolences to:

- ✠ Fr. Joseph Pauria and the Salesians of Kolkata Province at the passing away of Fr. Sebastian Alancheril SDB (90) on 25 November 2020 at Provincial House, Kolkata due to cardiac respiratory failure and Fr. Varghese kalluvachel (KC) SDB (66) on 26 November 2020 in Caritas Hospital, Kottayam, Kerala due to chronic liver disease.
- ✠ Sr. Kusumum Kunnappillyil's at the demise of her dear mother Mrs. Philomina (95) on 28 November 2020.
- ✠ Sr. Cordula Kullu's at the death of her sister-in-law Mrs. Nirmala (36) 04 December 2020.

Dear sisters,

As we are coming to the close of the year 2020 let us raise our minds and hearts to thank the Lord for the innumerable the graces and blessings we have received during this year in spite of the COVID 19 pandemic that changed our life style in many ways. Now you are striving and finding out different ways and means for realizing the mission of the community. Looking at the situation with the eyes of faith and responding to it in hope and love gives us greater reasons to see and experience the abiding presence of God. We have come closer to God through prayer which transforms our lives and have grown in our sensitivity towards the poor and the helpless reaching out to them in many ways to alleviate their suffering. You are also trying your level best to inculcate these same sentiments in the students and the parents as well. I sincerely thank you dear sisters for all the efforts you are putting in to accomplish many things through online classes, various types projects, panel discussion, webinars, and other co-curricular activities to enrich the students staff and involving the FMA as well. May your effort be blessed by the Almighty to do much good to the young people. Let us not be afraid to seek out alternative ways to reach to our students and those outside our educational set up and renew ourselves to help our young people and the entire educating community to place their trust and hope in God who loves and cares for them. As the year changes from 2020 to 2021, we remember the shortness of our lives, we do not despair but renew our trust and confidence in God and we ask for his blessings that we might make a difference through our life and action in the brief time allotted to us.

I wish each one of you a Joyous Christmas filled with joy, peace and love and a blessed New Year 2021!

Yours affectionately in Our Lady,

Sr. Rose Ezarath FMA
(Provincial)

