

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



Cir/RE/56/01/2021

January 2021

Dearest Sisters,

Loving and prayerful greetings for a grace-filled and holy New Year 2021!

The first day of the calendar year coincides with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. We are blessed to begin the New Year honouring Mary as the Mother of God and our Mother too. It reminds us of the certainty that she will accompany us all our days. Therefore we welcome the new year 2021 with joy for it brings along new hopes, new opportunities, new surprises and many blessings, after having gone through the traumatic experience of an unprecedented year of 2020. I pray that the Lord Jesus and His Mother Mary may enrich our lives during this year with an abundance of Divine blessings. With Mary, the Mother of God let us go ahead reminding ourselves to rely on the powerful intercession of our Heavenly Mother.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

On New Year's Day, the liturgy of the Church places its gaze on Mary from whom the Word took on our human nature. We honour Mary primarily because God honoured her by choosing her to become the mother of Jesus, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, when He took on human flesh and became man. The angel said to Mary: "You are going to be the mother of a Son and you will call him Jesus, and he will be called the Son of the Most High".

As we read in Luke's gospel, Mary is like those believers who produce a hundredfold fruit (Lk 8:15) after hearing the Word, holding it fast in an honest and good heart, go on to "bear fruit with patient endurance" (Lk 8:15). This feast of Mary's motherhood points to the whole Church's mission to be a mother. As members of the Church and as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, we too are called to become 'spiritual mothers' to others by "doing" God's Word. To live by the Word like Mary, we are exhorted by Art. 4 of our Constitutions, "to strive to make her (Mary's) dispositions of faith hope and charity and her perfect union with Christ our own and to open our hearts to the joyous humility of her Magnificat to be helpers (mothers) like her especially among the young people". This requires a great deal of holiness in our life in order to touch the hearts of the young and to lead them to experience God's powerful love for them.

As we have commenced the New Year dear Sisters let us resolve to live our lives in holiness with a deep joy that comes from the Lord. Let Joy characterize all our activities and let it be made visible to our young people. Let us traverse the path of holiness, not alone but together, with and for the young, in the style of Salesian holiness, thus becoming generators of new life. Mary can help us to live the generative power of the charism supported by the



joyful and unwavering certainty that the Holy Spirit effuses and infuses in our communities. Under her guidance we want to journey this path together with her maternal style and gaze placing ourselves in a listening attitude attentive to the educational needs of the young people of today who face the new demands and challenges posed by Covid 19.

Like Don Bosco and Mary Mazzarello, have an ardent desire to let ourselves be transformed by a deep encounter with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and in Him to be women who generate life and radiate joy and hope to the new generation. May all of us as FMA, be bearers of Christ's Light, His peace, and Love in our respective communities, and to all those whose lives we touch. May Mary, the Blessed Mother of God and our loving Mother, continue to accompany us and guide us in our journey towards holiness!

STRENNA 2021

“Moved by hope: “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21: 5) is the thrust given by Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, to the entire Salesian Family for the year 2021. We welcome with joy the message of our Rector Major which underlines and reaffirms that faced with this harsh and painful reality with its heavy consequences, we continue to express the certainty of being moved by hope because God in His Spirit continues to make all things new. The Rector



Major reminds us that our Holy Founder and Father Don Bosco was himself a master in showing us how the path of faith and hope not only illuminate but also gives the necessary strength to change the unfavourable or adverse conditions. In the current situation of our days, we cannot hide the reality we are living and experiencing. Behind the appalling fact of a large number of people being affected by the pandemic and other forms of evil, there is need for human warmth, encouragement and positive responses that bring Hope to the lives of people and the world. Here, then, the Strenna will serve to propose a Salesian reading of the present time in order to learn alternative processes to the dominant culture, capable of achieving a change of values and vision.

The Rector Major reminds us that here lies the challenge for us as Salesian educators- to be signs of hope, to be healers of hurt feelings, to be attentive to the needs of all. In our turn and capacity, let us search for those places to learn, exercise and give Hope to others convinced of the saying of Rector Major who reminds us that even in painful situations we are called to continue to express the certainty of being moved by Hope: because God in his Spirit continues to make all things new. As we move forward to live the invitation of Rector Major through this Strenna 2021, let us reflect and discern together the questions that he poses to us in order that we may be the authentic bearers of Hope in the world today. Let Mary, Mother of God and Star of Hope accompany in our endeavours to bring hope and joy to all those who are entrusted to our care .

HOLINESS IN THE SALESIAN FAMILY

In the month of January, the Church celebrates the holiness of a number of Salesian saints. We are privileged to belong to a congregation which has numerous saints, blessed, venerables and servants of God who were the living reflections of the Gospel lived in the spirit of our holy Founders. Every saint in our Salesian Family tells us that holiness is possible and we recall with gratitude the saints of this month: Bl. Titus Zeman (8), Bl. Louis

Variara (15), Bl. Laura Vicuna (22), St. Francis de Sales (24), Bl. Bronislaus Markiewicz (30), and St. John Bosco (31). I would like to make a short reflection on some of them for our inspiration and emulation.

Bl. Louis Variara



He was a Salesian missionary to the lepers in Agua de Dios, Colombia. When he joined the mission in 1894, the mission numbered 2,000 people, of whom 800 were lepers. As soon as he arrived he became the life and soul of the patients, especially the children. He then developed the Salesian charism of sacrifice and founded the Congregation of the "Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary". Like Don Bosco he was exemplary in obedience. Even in the face of calumny he said nothing.

Bl. Laura Vicuna



Although she was only twelve when she died, Laura Vicuna had grown to a maturity of faith well beyond her years. In an age of sexual licence, when often girls and young women can be at the mercy of sexual predators, the life of Laura Vicuna has something to say in our own day. Laura did not let the sordidness of Mora destroy her innocence, nor did she allow her heart to become embittered. Instead, she prayed for her mother and also for her lover. Laura Vicuña found the secret of her life in Jesus. In the young Laura, loving Jesus became the most authentic and real commitment. Jesus filled her life with meaning and beauty, even as she carried the cross.

The love of God is fundamental to every human love. Where there is love, there is also the capacity to hand oneself over to God and to live sacrifice. The holiness of Laura is a confirmation of the validity of the Salesian educational system when this is lived by the educator who seeks the same holiness walking with the young in fidelity to the Gospel. Laura makes us reflect on the importance of the family in the education of their children, on the right they have to live in a normal family that is the place of reciprocal love and of human and Christian formation. Let us entrust to Laura Vicuna all the families of the world of today.

Feast of St. Francis de Sales



A bishop and Doctor of the Church, his preaching brought thousands of Protestants back to the Catholic fold, and his writings on the spiritual life have proved highly influential. God raised up Francis de Sales for this apostolic ministry of writer, preacher, bishop, spiritual guide, founder of the Visitation. God called him for this ministry against the odds, as it were, given his noble birth and first-born status. But he allowed God's grace to touch his heart and to become God's instrument. We too are chosen by God, called by Him to work diligently in our mission among the young people of today faced with uncertainty and confusion as the consequences of Covid 19. We are called to

reach out to them in the Salesian style, to be signs and bearers of God's love and hope. Don Bosco tells us that he was attracted by two essential aspects of the moral and spiritual characteristics of Francis de Sales: a) his apostolic energy: his zeal for the salvation of souls, his defence of the truth, his fidelity to the Church; and b) the Christ-like gentleness that imbued his zeal: his charming manner, his patience, his extraordinary sensitivity. Let us too emulate his apostolic zeal, and his gentleness and kindness in our community, apostolate and dealings with everyone.

Feast of St. John Bosco



Once again, the feast of St. John Bosco offers us an opportunity to look at our great Father, who was able to unite natural aptitudes and gifts of grace in the service of the young in a great educational work founded on the Preventive System. This feast is always an opportunity for us to rejoice, to express our gratitude to God for the charism that Don Bosco succeeded in passing on. Don Bosco was truly an apostle to the young. If we are to be true to him we need to live more intensely our own vocation as apostles to the young by committing ourselves to the proclamation of the gospel of joy through the pedagogy of kindness. We need to learn to love what the young love and in doing so help them realize that their highest happiness lies in seeking

God's will and doing it with enthusiasm.

Don Bosco is today called the 'saint of JOY' because he taught his boys that 'Holiness consists in being joyful and cheerful'. And he impressed on them that the joy and cheer that endures and that no one can take away is only found in living in God's presence and seeking to do His holy will with exactness and love. On his feast day of our father and founder, I would like to remind myself and you the concluding words of the Rector Major Fr. Pietro Ricaldone at the 10th General Chapter of the FMA in 1934: Don Bosco is holy, therefore, his life is holy; Don Bosco is holy, therefore, your Constitutions are holy; Don Bosco is holy, therefore, his works and his institutions are holy; Don Bosco is holy! You are his Daughters; it is important that you too should be holy! A very Happy Feast of Don Bosco to all!

Communications:



- 🌟 Sincere gratitude and thanks to Sr. Stella Potteparambil and the community of Auxilium, Dum Dum for the creative Christmas Novena which helped to prepare ourselves to welcome the Babe of Bethlehem in a fitting manner and for organizing homely the Christmas gathering on 20 December to come together as Province before the Christmas online. It was moment of oneness, unity and manifestation of love.

🌺 Thanks to all the communities for sending the reflections based on the present context under the 3 nuclei of the GCXXIV Working Document.

A special note of thanks to the sisters who compiled the answers at zonal level:

Kolkata zone - Sr. Teresa Adampakallel, Sr. Rose Kureekattua and Sr. Leelamma Palliparambil

Ranchi Zone - Sr. Lily D' Souza and Sr. Rosalia Tirkey

North Bengal zone - Sr. Elizabeth Valliyil, Sr. Dorothy Torcato and Sr. Innocencia Jojo

Delhi Zone – Sr. Maria Pettayil, Sr. Teresa Pulickathadathil and Sr. Celine Alexander

The final compilation will be done by Sr. Teresa Adampakallel, Sr. Lily Perumpettikunnel and Sr. Stella Potteparambil

❖ 65 sisters have made their annual Spiritual Retreat at various places in the province and ascended their spiritual life.

🌺 From 26 Dec. 2020 – 01 Jan. 2021 retreat was held at Auxilium, Bandel. It was preached by Rev. Fr. Biji Thomas SDB with the theme 'Word of God challenges us and seeks a personal response' and participated by 26 sisters. It was followed by three days of Catechetical meeting from 02 - 05 January 2021 animated by Rev. Fr. Gilbert Choondal SDB which was participated by 30 sisters. I extend my sincere gratitude to Fr. Biji, the retreat preacher, Fr. Gilbert the seminar resource person and to Sr. Lily Perumpettikunnel the seminar organizer.

🌺 A second retreat was held at Auxilium, New Chumta from 27 December 2020 - 03 January 2021. It was preached by Rev. Fr. Albert Kujur SDB & Br. Kenneth Karan Pradhan a member of West Bengal Charismatic movement. There were 14 participants and the theme of the retreat was 'Look to him and be radiant'. This was followed by a meeting on Indian Spirituality for the retreatants on 04 - 05 January 2021 which was animated by Rev. Fr. Solomon Rai SDB and organized by Sr. Dorothy Torcato. A word of appreciation to Fr. Albert Kujur, Br. Kenneth, Fr. Solomon and Sr. Dorothy

🌺 A third retreat was held at Mazzarello Convent Ranchi for 10 sisters. It was preached by Rev. Fr. Sheelanand Kerketta SDB with the theme 'I am beloved of my Father' from 29 December 2020 - 05 January 2021. Thanks to Fr. Sheelanand for his availability.

🌺 I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to Sr. Rosy Veliyan and the community of Bandel, Sr. Elizabeth Valliyil and the community of New Chumta, Sr. Lily D' Souza and the community of Mazzarello, Ranchi for making all the arrangements, offering the retreatants a warm hospitality and providing them with a conducive atmosphere to encounter the Lord. May God bless and reward your sacrifices dear sisters. I would also like to mention the communities of Delhi, UP and Nepal for facilitating the sisters to make the retreat in their respective communities.

Congratulations! Rector Major has appointed Rev. Fr. John Davis Maniparamben, SDB as the fifth Provincial of the Good Shepherd Province of New Delhi. We congratulate him and assure him of our prayers as he takes up his new responsibility of animation and governance of the Province. The installation ceremony will be on Saturday 8th February 2021 in Don Bosco Technical institute, Okhla, New Delhi.

Meeting: PCI Formation Team Meeting- From 25-28 January 2021, there will be an online meeting of the PCI Formation Team. The meeting will deal with the presentation of the contextualized text of the Document “Guidelines for the Formation period of Temporary Vows”. 2 sisters from all the 7 Provinces will take part in the meeting. The participants from our Province are Sr. Teresa Adampakallel and Sr. Leelamma Palliparambil.

Prayer for Christian Unity: The theme for the Week of Unity for Prayer from 18-25 January 2021 is “**Abide in My Love...You Shall Bear Much Fruit**”. The theme reminds Christians worldwide about the importance of praying for closer communion with our brothers and sisters in Christ and greater solidarity with the whole of creation. For the eight days of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021, a journey of prayer is suggested. Let us join with every ecclesial group in this week of prayer, to raise prayers to the Almighty God so that the prayer of Jesus ‘*That they may all be one!*’ may become a reality. (Please see the attach for further details)



Let us pray for our dear Departed - Condolences to:

- † Sr. Juliana Rozario at the passing away of her maternal aunt Mrs. Mary Gomes on 17 December 2020
- † Sr.Sadhana Majumdar at the demise of her uncle Mr.Tapan Majumder (63) due to heart attack and Sr. Alphonsa Kachappilly at the death of her maternal uncle Mr. Thomas on 20 December 2020
- † Provincial Sr. Rita Dora Thomas and Sisters Mumbai Province at demise of Sr. Beatrice Monteiro (82) from Mangalore on 24 December 2020
- † Rev. Fr. Jose Kochamkunnel and the confreres of Salesian Province of Chennai at the demise of Rev. Fr. Felix Koikara SDB (83) on 25 December 2020
- † Sr. Philo Chirammal at the passing away of her sister-in-law Mrs. Saramma (30) December 2020

As I conclude, I wish all of you a very happy feast of all the Salesian saints who tread the path of everyday holiness. May we imitate their exemplary life to become models of holiness who will inspire others.

Yours affectionately in Our Lady,

Sr. Rose Ezarath FMA
(Provincial)