



Cir/LP/40/03/2025

04 March 2025

Dear Loving Sisters,

Loving and prayerful greetings to you!

Lent: Let us journey together in hope

Tomorrow we are stepping into the season of Lent, 40 days of preparation that precedes Easter, the day of Jesus Christ's resurrection. The 40-day duration of Lent symbolizes Israel's 40-year journey through the desert, where they prepared to enter the Promised Land and Jesus' 40-day fast in the wilderness, where He prepared for his public ministry.



Lent is a time for us to renew our faith, seek forgiveness, prepare for Easter and grow spiritually. By observing Lent, we can deepen our relationship with God, cultivate a sense of humility and gratitude, and prepare to celebrate the joy of Easter. During these days we are invited to fast and abstain by giving up certain habits, and to focus on spiritual growth; to pray and reflect by increasing prayer, meditation, and reflection on one's relationship with God and to perform charitable works by engaging in acts of charity, volunteerism, and service to others.

Pope Francis has given us the theme of Lent, **“Let us journey together in hope”**. The Jubilee 2025 theme “Pilgrims of Hope” inspires the Holy Father's Message. In his message, the Holy Father says, the first call to conversion comes from the realisation that all of us are pilgrims in this life. Secondly, the Pope underlines that this journey is made together and explains that “Christians are called to walk at the side of others, and never as lone travellers”, it is necessary “to walk together, to be synodal” because “this is the vocation of the Church”. In conclusion, the Holy Father affirms that it is necessary “to journey together in hope, for we have been given a promise”, in that “hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5). Holy Father encourages us to focus on our Lenten journey towards the victory of Easter. Let us heed his invitation and take every step in our community and in our mission to journey together in hope. (*Attachment: Lenten message of Pope Francis*)

St. Joseph: Salute to a silent saint

In March, we honour St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the patron of the universal church. He is also one of the principal patrons of the Salesian congregation and our Institute. Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph as the patron of the Universal



church on 8 December 1870. John Paul II declared him as the Guardian of the Redeemer. Now he is the patron of the workers and a happy death. Pope Francis has a special relationship with St. Joseph. He says, "I have great love for St. Joseph because he is a man of silence and strength. On my table, I have an image of St. Joseph sleeping. Even when he is asleep, he is taking care of the church! If I have a problem, I write a note to St. Joseph and put it under this statue and now he sleeps on a mattress of notes! That's why I sleep well: it is the grace of God". St. Joseph offers us several valuable lessons such as trust and obedience, humility and silence, faithfulness and loyalty, fatherhood and paternity, work and vocation, prayer and contemplation, selflessness and sacrifice, protection and guardianship and faith in the face of uncertainty. As we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph may we become imitators of his exemplary life and renew our devotion to this great patriarch and saint.

Feast of Annunciation: "yes" to God's invitation



The Feast of the Annunciation is celebrated on 25 March and commemorates the angel Gabriel's announcement to the Virgin Mary that she would bear a son, Jesus Christ. This feast day marks the beginning of Jesus' life on earth and is perceived as a celebration of the Incarnation. The Annunciation celebrates the moment when God became human, emphasizing the profound love and solidarity God has for humanity. Mary's response to the angel Gabriel, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38), teaches us to trust in God's plan and have faith in His promises. It also inspires us to have courage and trust in God's plan, even when faced with challenges and uncertainties. Mary's humility and willingness to obey God's will, despite the challenges and uncertainties, inspire us to cultivate humility and obedience in our own lives. Mary's "yes" to God's invitation changed the

course of human history. This feast reminds us that our own "yes" to God's invitations can have a profound impact on our lives and the world around us. Mary's call to be the Mother of God reminds us that each of us has a unique vocation and purpose. This feast encourages us to discern and respond to God's call in our own lives. The Annunciation highlights the importance of prayer, listening, and being attentive to God's voice in our lives.

World Feast of Gratitude: Light the Gospel of hope

The Vicar General of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Sister María del Rosario García Ribas has communicated the information about World Gratitude Day 2025. The Feast of Gratitude will be celebrated this year in the Vietnamese Province Mary Help of Christians (VTN), on 26 April 2025 with the theme: '**Light the Gospel of hope**' with the following motivation, "*In the sacred climate of the Jubilee Year, which for us coincides with the beginning of preparations for the 150th anniversary of the first FMA missionary departure, we wish to live deeply the words of Saint*



Mary Mazzeo, "It is time to revive the fire", the fire of the Gospel, of mission, of hope, and also the fire of gratitude. In this climate, illuminated by the Word of God, "Christ Jesus our hope" (1 Tim 1:1) we celebrate the Feast of Gratitude 2025". In preparation for the event, the Vietnamese Province proposes a four-week itinerary: Jesus Christ – source of hope; Pilgrims of hope; Witnesses of hope for the world; Light the Gospel of Hope. I invite all of you to read the letter of the Vicar General in the community for detailed information. (Attachment: Letter of Vicar General)

FMA PCI 2025

The FMA PCI 2025 will be held in our Provincial House, Auxilium, Dum Dum from 29-31 March 2025 with the theme "Working of the FMA National Office". The participants of the meeting will be Sr. Celine Jacob, the visiting councillor, the seven provincials of FMA India and the two delegates from each of the provinces. With great joy, we warmly welcome our dear Sr. Celine Jacob, the visiting councillor, the provincials of FMA India and the other participants. I exhort each of you to send prayers ahead to have a productive and enriching experience together during the PCI with meaningful acquaintances, insightful discussions, and collaborative growth. The partakers of the meeting from our province are Sr. Clara Saminathan, the elected delegate of the province and Sr. Shanty Mathew nominated by the Provincial Councilors.

Let us pray for our dear departed - Condolences to:

- † Sr. Emilia Vas at the demise of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Ruth Vaz (80) on 12 February 2025.
- † Sr. Anna Andrews at the passing away of her beloved elder sister Mrs. Margaret on 20 February 2025.
- † Srs. Shanti and Lucy Tirkey at the passing away of their nephew Naveen Tirkey on 25 March 2025.
- † Sr. Philomena Chirammal at the demise of her elder sister Mrs. Teresiama Chirammal

Let us continue to intercede before God for the needs of the province, the communities and the good health of all our sisters and the ailing members of our families.

Dear Sisters,

As I conclude I wish all of you a fruitful Lenten journey and may the spirit of prayer, fasting, and acts of kindness bring us closer to Christ and his teachings. May we emerge with the Risen Lord renewed, revitalized, and more deeply committed to our faith.

May the celebration of the feast of St. Joseph help us to draw inspiration from his exemplary life of faith, humility, and service. May his unwavering trust in God's plan guide us during this Lenten season to fulfill our duties faithfully and trust in God's providence.

Yours affectionately in Our Lady,

Sr. Leelamma Palliparambil FMA
Provincial