



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Salesian Province of St. Joseph, Hyderabad



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"Fratelli tutti" - Fraternity and Social Friendship

The global, deadly and multi-faceted Covid-19 has significantly altered the way we live and act. Even as we continue to be confronted with the spread of the virus leading to the second and the third wave forcing several countries to impose restrictions and lockdowns again, we are trying to find our way out of this labyrinth of disruption, distress, chaos and uncertainty. It has been a long wait stretching over ten months. The humanity has suffered pain, misery and immense devastation. This pandemic has also given rise to a deeper reflection on the way we have been living. It has penetrated to our consciences beckoning us to recognize the need of the other person and reach out to him or her through selfless service. Pope Francis continues to surprise the world through his prophetic life, gestures, exhortations and teachings. Through the new encyclical, 'Fratelli Tutti' which he signed on 3 October 2020 on the tomb of St Francis of Assisi, he invites the entire world to build a more just, peaceful and inclusive post Covid-19 world that reflects greater fraternity and social friendship.

The encyclical, 'Fratelli Tutti' takes its inspiration from the 'Document on Human Fraternity' signed in Abu Dhabi in 2019. We are invited to prepare a more fraternal post-Covid-19 world. In the wake of this pandemic, new forms of poverty, discrimination and inequalities are emerging. How do we weather this storm? There is certainly a silver lining. Pope Francis invites the Church and the world to realize the power of solidarity and fraternity, and offers the establishment of a trajectory on the steps to be taken for common good. Here I would like to present a brief summary of the document. However I invite you to read the entire encyclical. The 287-paragraph encyclical that is divided into eight chapters is a practical itinerary of our journey as humanity. The title of the encyclical is borrowed from St Francis of Assisi's 'Admonitions' that encouraged his brothers and sisters to live a life marked by the flavour of the Gospel. Covid-19 has proved that we are connected intrinsically. No one can live his/her life in isolation. All of us have to dream as a single human family (1).

Chapter One - Dark Clouds Over a Closed World

In the first chapter, Pope Francis draws our attention to the crises and the distortions of our contemporary world. On the one hand we have the deformation of the concepts such as freedom, justice, equality, democracy, human rights and dignity, etc.; on the other hand, we are confronted with a culture of waste, selfishness, racism, extreme poverty, trafficking, modern slavery, etc., (10-24). He explains, "Our own days, however, seem to be showing signs of a certain regression. Ancient conflicts thought long buried are breaking out anew, while instances of a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise. In some countries, a concept of popular and national unity influenced by various ideologies is creating new forms of selfishness and a loss of the social sense under the guise of defending national interests (11). The Pope condemns the divisive politics that have promoted a 'culture of walls'.

Chapter Two - A Stranger on the Road

In the second chapter, Pope Francis offers the parable of the Good Samaritan as a luminous example and a ray of light in the midst of what we are experiencing (56). The Pope encourages us to extend our natural love that we experience in our family and among our family members to reach out to those who are strangers to us. This invitation to care for the stranger is rooted in the Bible. This care needs to be expressed as individuals and as communities. He emphasizes that it is our responsibility to “include, integrate, and lift up the fallen” (77). In a society that turns its back on suffering and caring for the frail and vulnerable, we are all called, just like the Good Samaritan to become neighbours to others (81), overcoming prejudices, personal interests, historic and cultural barriers. Love builds bridges and “we were made for love” (88). We are to recognize Christ in the face of every excluded person (85).

Chapter Three - Envisaging and Engendering an Open World

Pope Francis affirms that all of us have the capacity to love. It is the universal, natural, and essential dimension of life. Love both draws us out of ourselves and draws the ones we love into ourselves. We need to go outside of our self in order to find a fuller existence in another (88). This movement toward solidarity does not eliminate differences, but celebrates the beauty of diversity. Everyone has the right to live with dignity. Rights have no borders. No one can be excluded from these fundamental human rights (121). An authentic human fraternity must be based on the recognition of the inherent dignity of all persons, especially those who are vulnerable, poor, or suffering. In economic terms, human dignity also entails the right to “sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development” (118).

Chapter Four - A Heart Open to the Whole World

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the theme of the migrants. The lives of the migrants are “at stake” (37), fleeing from war, persecution, natural catastrophes, unscrupulous trafficking and ripped from their communities of origin. They are to be welcomed, protected, supported and integrated. The Pope points to several indispensable steps, especially in response to those who are fleeing grave humanitarian crises. There is a need to increase and simplify the granting of visas, to assure lodging, security and essential services; to offer opportunities for employment and training; to favour family reunification; to protect minors; to guarantee religious freedom, etc. Rather than seeing migration as cause for fear or turmoil, we ought to welcome the fruitful exchange that migrants bring to a community. Pope Francis insists on the process of integration and says, “Each particular group becomes part of the fabric of universal communion and there discovers its own beauty. All individuals, whatever their origin, know that they are part of the greater human family, without which they will not be able to understand themselves fully” (149). In matters of migration, there is a need for international collaboration and global governance for long-term planning, going beyond single emergencies, to support the development of all peoples (129-132).

Chapter Five - A Better Kind of Politics

The fifth chapter is dedicated to encourage a better kind of politics. It is one of the most valuable forms of charity because it is placed at the service of the common good. Pope Francis discusses two movements that hinder our ability to see the world as open and having a place for all people: populism and liberalism. Populism distorts the notion of a “people” in a closed and exclusionary way. Liberalism, specifically neoliberalism, exalts the marketplace as the solution to all problems, benefiting only those in power. Citing St. John Paul II, Pope Francis imagines a

nobler politics that puts social love at the forefront rather than economics. We have to sow the seeds of goodness and the fruits will be reaped by others (194-195). The task of politics, moreover, is to find a solution to all that attacks fundamental human rights, such as social exclusion; the marketing of organs, tissues, weapons and drugs; sexual exploitation; slave labour; terrorism and organized crime. The Pope makes an emphatic appeal to definitively eliminate human trafficking, a "source of shame for humanity", and hunger, which is "criminal" because food is "an inalienable right" (188-189).

Chapter Six - Dialogue and Friendship in Society

In the sixth chapter, Pope Francis reiterates the focus of the encyclical. Life is an art of encounter with everyone. Covid-19 gives us an opportunity to create a new culture of fraternity. Our society must be built on authentic dialogue, which involves respecting the other's viewpoint, but not in a relativistic fashion. Rather, "it must respect the truth of our human dignity and submit to that truth" (207). This is lived out in the hard, but joyful work of encountering those who are different from us. For this we can call on the Holy Spirit for the gift of kindness. The Pope refers to it as the miracle of "kindness", an attitude to be recovered because it is a star "shining in the midst of darkness" and "frees us from the cruelty, the anxiety, the frantic flurry of activity" that prevail in the contemporary era (222-224).

Chapter Seven - Paths of Renewed Encounter

In this chapter, Pope Francis focuses on the promotion of lasting peace and unity. He claims that peace is connected to truth, justice and mercy. Unity is often best achieved when people work together to address the problems they share. Peace is an ongoing process. Conflicts will arise but can be resolved through dialogue and honest negotiation (246-247). War and the death penalty are two "false answers" that seem to address certain extreme circumstances. They only give rise to new forms of destruction in the fabric of national and global society" (255). Forgiveness is linked to peace: we must love everyone, without exception. Loving an oppressor means helping him to change and not allowing him to continue oppressing his neighbour (241-242). Forgiveness does not mean impunity, but rather, justice and remembrance, because to forgive does not mean to forget, but to renounce the destructive power of evil and the desire for revenge.

The Pope anguishes that war is "a constant threat" that represents "the negation of all rights", "a failure of politics and of humanity", and "a stinging defeat before the forces of evil". Moreover, due to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons that strike many innocent civilians, today we can no longer think, as in the past, of the possibility of a "just war". The total elimination of nuclear arms is "a moral and humanitarian imperative". Money invested in weapons must be utilized for the elimination of global hunger (255-262). Pope Francis advocates the abolition of death penalty. He says that punishment cannot be viewed as vindictive, but rather as part of a process of healing and of social reintegration. Life is sacred and it has to be respected (283).

Chapter Eight - Religions at the Service of Fraternity in Our World

In this last chapter, Pope Francis asserts that different religions have to promote fraternity in our world. Terrorism is not due to religion but due to erroneous interpretations of religious texts (282-283). A journey of peace among religions is possible. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right (279). Religious formation fortifies our consciences against individualism and materialism, pointing us to the existence of transcendent truth, which is the source of human

dignity. There needs to be a greater collaboration among religions in support of the poor and the common good (282). Religions should promote peace and greater human fraternity. The Church is always committed to the promotion of evangelical principles and the integral human development (276-278).

COVID-19 AND FLOOD RELIEF

We have been living the invitation of Pope Francis' 'Fratelli Tutti' in a small way by reaching out to the most vulnerable and the poor during the past nine month of the pandemic and during the flash floods that further added to the misery of the poor. Like many others, as a Province we have been active in our service to the poor and the needy. All our communities were involved in this process, well coordinated by Fr Bellamkonda Sudhakar, the Executive Director of Bosco Seva Kendra and Fr Parry Rayulu (Sarath), the assistant director of the same. Our Province has so far reached out to over 5,80,000 people over a period of nine months. However, we cannot become content with the fact that we have been sharing what we have with the poor, even if the numbers seem significant. We are invited to continue to grow in a 'culture of encounter', in a 'culture of solidarity', and in a 'culture of empathy' that takes responsibility for our brothers and sisters in need.

CONCLUSION OF THE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL 2020

COLOURS OF LIFE, the short film festival, an initiative of the Province Social Communications Department and DB Pravahini launched an online short film festival on August 24, 2020, inviting participants to become creative agents of change and awareness on the most relevant and urgent issues of the world, namely, combating COVID-19 under the title, LIFE IN COVID and protecting our common home under the title, SAVE NATURE-SAVE FUTURE. The Grand Finale and award ceremony was organized on November 03, 2020 at Don Bosco Provincial House, Hyderabad. Shri Thanikella Bharani the legendry Actor, Writer and Director of and Shri Ramana Gogula, the lyricist, Music Director and Producer of the Telugu Film Industry were the jurists of the short film competition that received as many as 137 short films from across India and abroad. Fr Etukuri Raphael, former Director of Amruthavani and lay collaborators, well-wishers and Don Bosco Youth from Bandlaguda Jagir, Hyderabad were present for the award ceremony. The short film 'Thedel' in Tamil won the first prize while 'Brou Ha Ha' in Marati and 'The Locker' in Malayalam obtained the second and third prize respectively. There were also two prizes under Special Category, namely, 'Ma Tuje Salam' from Andhra Pradesh and 'Light of Darkness' from West Bengal.

I congratulate all the participants and winners of the Short Film Festival on exhibiting such great creativity and positive interest in raising awareness of the most devastating maladies of our present society and of the possible ways of combating them with changes in attitudes and life styles. I thank and congratulate Fr Lingampally Ashok, the Director of Don Bosco Pravahini, the entire team of the Communication department of the Province and the BIRDY community on this wonderful initiative of tapping the latent potential of young people through the means of mass communication.

BLESSED ZATTI AND VOCATIONS TO LAY BROTHERHOOD

Blessed Artemide Zatti was born on 12th October 1880 in Italy and died on 15th March 1951 at Viedma, Argentina. In 1897, when Artemide was 17 years old, his family emigrated from Reggio Emilia, Italy to join Artemide's uncle who had a good job in Bahía Blanca, Argentina. There they found steady work and a livelihood. In his "new life" in Argentina, Artemide worked in a hotel

and then in a brick factory. On Sundays the Zatti family faithfully assisted at Mass and other activities in the parish of the Salesians who in 1890 set up a community in Bahía Blanca. With true apostolic spirit, Artemide used his free time to help the Salesian parish priest in his parish activities and, especially, in visiting the sick. Later, this became his own unique Salesian ministry. As a Salesian religious brother, he served the sick and the poor through the hospital and pharmacy for 40 long years in Viedma, Argentina. As we celebrate the feast of Blessed Artemide Zatti on 13th November, we implore him to intercede for our Salesian world so that our Province and our entire Congregation may be blessed with many more vocations to lay brotherhood.

BIBLE DIARIES FROM OUR PUBLISHING HOUSE

I am pleased to communicate that Don Bosco Publishing House of the Province has prepared Bible Diaries both in Telugu and in English for the year 2021. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to Fr Yerramaneni Balaswamy, the Director of Don Bosco Publishing House and his team for efficiently and meticulously taking forward the ministry of publication in the province. The DB Publishing House has already released many publications, newsletters and magazines. We have been witnessing a steady and qualitative improvement in presenting our publications to our confreres and to the wider public. I thank all the confreres who are actively involved in writing and contributing to our publications. I would also like to encourage the creative thinkers and writers among us to contribute to this apostolate of the press, which was so dear to our founder Don Bosco.

ACCOMPANIMENT OF OUR YOUNG SALESIANS

I would like to express my gratitude to the Rectors and the house council members of various communities for closely following up our young Salesians and for sending the first assessment forms of our brothers and clerics to the provincial office. This year, we have taken a decision to review and discuss every assessment of our young Salesians in the Provincial Council. The assessments were taken up for review and discussion during the Provincial Council Meeting held on 5 and 6 November. We have found this practice to be very enriching and useful. I continue to urge you dear confreres to spend time in guiding and accompanying our young Salesians and in animating them towards greater maturity in their Salesian vocation. They are our treasure. Let us handle with care. The monthly online meetings with brothers and clerics have proved to be very useful and effective in the process of accompaniment. In this connection, I would like to remind you to read and reflect on the two manuals sent to the Communities: 1. Young Salesians and Accompaniment and 2. Animating and Governing the Community: The Ministry of the Salesian Rector.

OUR DEAR DEPARTED

All Souls Day every year shifts our focus on praying for the Faithful Departed throughout November. The need and duty of prayer for the dead has been acknowledged by the Church from the very beginning. It is recommended in the Scriptures of the Old Testament: "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (2 Macc. 12: 46). This duty is expressed in public and private prayers but especially in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the repose of souls.

In this connection, I would like to bring to your kind attention the duty and the privilege that our Constitutions lay upon us in praying for our deceased confreres, their loved ones, especially their parents and for our deceased benefactors. General Regulation No. 76 has this to say that

‘Salesians will express love and gratitude to confreres, relatives and benefactors who have been called by the Father to eternal life, by praying for the repose of their souls both privately and as a community.’ The same regulation further proposes that each year ‘for the deceased parents of the confreres one mass will be celebrated in every house on November 25, anniversary of the death of Mamma Margaret; for the deceased benefactors and members of the Salesian Family, a Mass will be celebrated in each community on November 5.’ Let us fulfill this obligation with faith in the Risen Lord, who has given the legacy of so many faithful souls of our confreres, their loved ones and our benefactors.

MIGRANT MINISTRY TEAM OF THE PROVINCE

The Provincial Council in its meeting held on October 10, 2020 has discussed the launching of the Province Migrant Ministry by forming a Province Migrant Ministry Team in keeping with the directions of the National Migrant Ministry Team under the leadership of the National Forum for Young at Risk. The following confreres have been suggested to be part of this team and I thank each one of them for accepting this responsibility on behalf of the Province so that our collective and concerted efforts to reach out to the migrants will bear the desired fruits, even as the current global pandemic continues to add to their suffering and poverty. Here are the names of the members of the Province Migrant Ministry Team:

Fr Salibindla Balashowry - Coordinator of the Team - YaR Delegate of the Province

Fr Thomas Santiago - Youth Ministry Delegate

Fr Bellamkonda Anthony Sudhakar - PDO / BSK Executive Director

Fr Garlapati Michael Kishore - Salesian Family Delegate

Fr Vattigunta Ignatius - Justice and Peace Delegate

Fr Neelam Ratna - Migrant Desk - Vijayawada, National Migrant Team member

Fr Parry Rayulu (Sarath) - DISHA Director (Job Placement)

I wish them all the strength of the Holy Spirit and the accompaniment of our Blessed Mother as they begin to carry out this ministry so that migrants too can share in the fullness of life and dignity that Jesus our Saviour bestowed on the world.

UPCOMING PROVINCE MEETINGS/EVENTS

Mon, 02 November	WEBINAR - Judging: Green Commandment IV: Recognize that the Abuse of Creation is Ecological Sin," by Rev. Fr Wilson Jose, Rector, Don Bosco Mission, Wyra.
Thu, 05 November	Provincial Council (Online meeting with Technical Commission, ITI Principals and DB Tech)
Fri, 06 November	Provincial Council
Thu, 12 November	WEBINAR - Praxis Orientation: "Waste Management as Re-creation," by Dr Lubna Sarwath (Socio-Political, Environmental and Economic Activist, Co-Convener of NGO - SOUL (Save Our Urban Lakes)
Fri, 20 November	Online Clerics/Brothers' Meet
Mon, 23 November	Online Group 1 Perpetually Professed Confreres' Meet
Tue, 24 November	Online Group 2 Perpetually Professed Confreres' Meet
Wed, 25 November	Online Group 3 Perpetually Professed Confreres' Meet
Thu, 26 November	Online Group 4 Perpetually Professed Confreres' Meet
Fri, 27 November	Online Rectors, In-charges and Parish Priests' Meet
Sat, 28 November	Death Anniversary of Fr John Lens

SALESIAN SANCTITY IN NOVEMBER

13November 2020	Bl. Artemides Zatti, religious
15November 2020	Bl. Madeleine Morano, FMA

CONDOLENCES

We offer our heartfelt condolences:

- To the Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Mumbai at the death of Fr Elias Dias who breathed his last on 30 October 2020 at the age of 78 at St Dominic Savio Boy's Home, Mumbai.

May the Lord of heaven and earth grant him too a share in the Eternal Inheritance prepared for those who loved Him during their life time.

CONCLUSION

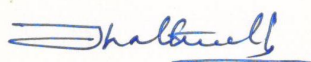
We have celebrated the Solemnity of All Saints on 01 November, and the commemoration of the faithful departed on 02 November. These two occurrences are intimately related to each other, just as the joy and tears find a synthesis in Jesus Christ who is the foundation of our faith and of our hope. On the one hand, the Church, a pilgrim in history, rejoices for the intercession of the Saints that sustain Her in the mission of announcing the Gospel; on the other, She, like Jesus, shares in the tears of those who suffer the departing of a loved one.

In this month dedicated to the commemoration of the souls of the faithful departed, many visit the cemetery which, is the "place of rest", awaiting the final awakening. It is beautiful to think that it will be Jesus who will awaken us. Jesus Himself has revealed that the death of the body is like a time of sleep from which He will awaken us. With this faith we stop - even spiritually - at the graves of our loved ones, of those who have loved us and have done good to us. But this month we are called to remember everyone, even those whom no one remembers. We remember the victims of war and of violence; so many "little ones" in the world crushed by hunger and poverty. We remember the unnamed people who rest in common graves. We remember our brothers and sisters killed for being Christians; and those who sacrificed their lives to serve others. We especially entrust to the Lord those who have left us in the course of this pandemic year.

The tradition of the Church has always exhorted us to pray for the deceased, in particular by offering the Eucharistic Celebration: that is the best spiritual help that we can give for their souls, particularly those abandoned the most. As the Second Vatican Council affirms, "Fully conscious of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the pilgrim Church from the very first ages of the Christian religion has cultivated with great piety the memory of the dead." (Lumen gentium, 50)

The remembrance of the dead, the care for graves and prayers of repose are a witness of the confident hope, rooted in the certainty that death is not the final word on the human fate, since man is destined to a life without limits, which has its roots and its fulfillment in God, in Jesus, who proclaimed himself to be the resurrection and the life.

Yours in the Lord,



Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar,
Provincial

