



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Salesian Province of St. Joseph, Hyderabad



INH/TVB/CIR 21/2021

MAY 2021

The Don Bosco's Way to St Joseph

Dear confreres,

We are in the month of May dedicated to Mary Our Blessed Mother. We are also celebrating the special year dedicated to St Joseph. I am quite sure that Our Blessed Mother wouldn't mind if we reflected more on St Joseph, who also adorns our Province as its Patron. We can trace a trail of a deep and personal devotion that Don Bosco himself cultivated to the foster father of Jesus, through his writings, art and dedication of altars to this Saint of the Universal Church. Though we do not have much literature about Don Bosco's devotion to St Joseph during his early years of life, we can arrive at a simple yet profound Josephology once he began his ministry with the young after his ordination in 1841. In the order of importance, Don Bosco places St Joseph after Mary. In the booklet, *Life of St. Joseph*, he writes, "Must we not believe that among the blessed who are the object of our religious worship, St. Joseph is, after Mary, the most powerful of all with God, and the one who more justly deserves our trust and our homage?"

Don Bosco promoted devotion to St Joseph in the Oratory. He chose him as the patron saint of the Oratory and placed the artisans/trade boys and students under his fatherly protection and care. At the Oratory, the young were trained in different trades and they were moulded into good skilled workers. St Joseph's example as a virtuous worker was certainly a great help to motivate the young lads that came from extremely difficult situations. In Don Bosco's Josephology we don't see Joseph as an old man, weak and fragile, but rather as a young worker who took care of his family by the sweat of his brow as a skilled carpenter of Nazareth and as a man filled with virtues of love, humility, obedience, courage and hard work.

Don Bosco introduced several pious practices in the Oratory in honour of the saint. He encouraged the celebration of March 19th as a solemnity and invited his boys and artisans to refrain from work, even though it was not a holy day in Piedmont at that time. On 7th February 1864 Don Bosco said in the good night talk, "tomorrow we start St. Joseph's month and I want all of you to put yourselves under his protection. If you pray earnestly to him, he will obtain any spiritual or temporal favour you need... I would suggest a *Pater*, *Ave*, and *Gloria* in his honour either before or after your daily visit, I hope to the Blessed Sacrament... And don't forget that he is the patron saint of diligent pupils. Pray for help in your exams." To popularize this devotion, he printed the booklet, *The Seven Sundays of St. Joseph*.

Don Bosco's mission was to save souls. He was always prompted by the '*Da mihi animas*'. Hence he always prepared his boys spiritually. Exercises for happy death were one of the characteristic features of the Oratory. St. Joseph was presented as the patron of happy death. In *Il Giovane Provveduto*, DB writes, "Saint Joseph, having had the enviable fate of dying assisted by Jesus and

Mary, is given as Protector of the dying. During our life let us show devotion to St. Joseph in order to have him help us at the moment of death.”

Through the Papal Encyclical, *Patris Corde*, Pope Francis has declared the year of St Joseph remembering the 150th anniversary of the promulgation of St Joseph as the patron of the Universal Church. There is a Don Bosco connection as he too worked relentlessly to promote and propagate the devotion to St Joseph and wanted the Church to recognize his active presence. A petition to this effect was presented to the 1st Vatican Council signed by 14000 people that was very much supported by Don Bosco himself. He requested a Barnabite to write an article on St Joseph, which was published in the June issue of *Letture Cattoliche* 1870, entitled, “History of St. Joseph’s Cult.” Don Bosco obviously rejoiced at the promulgation of St Joseph as the patron of the Universal Church on 8th December by Pope Pius IX. Marking this great honour, Don Bosco wanted March 19th to be celebrated as a holy day in all the Salesian houses since 1871.

Don Bosco manifested his love for St Joseph through splendid art and through the erection and dedication of altars to St Joseph in the Churches built by him. In the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, there is a magnificent painting by Tommaso Lorenzone. In the painting we see St Joseph along with Mary and Jesus. The painting depicts St Joseph showering graces on Valdocco in the form of roses that are handed over to him by Child Jesus in his arms. Devotion to the saint assures one of abundance of graces. Another remarkable painting of St Joseph was by Giuseppe Rollini at the request of Don Bosco for the Sacred Heart Basilica in Rome. The painting depicts St Joseph protecting the Basilica of St Peter, the mother of all Churches, presented to him by an angel. This was a tribute that Don Bosco pays to St Joseph as the patron of the Universal Church. In his exhortations to the Salesian houses, Don Bosco insisted on devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the Blessed Virgin, St Joseph, St Francis of Sales, St Aloysius Gonzaga who are the special protectors of every house. Let us manifest our filial devotion to St Joseph and receive his fatherly protection, especially in this time of Covid-19 crisis.

LAUDATO SI’ THIS MONTH - MAY

TEN GREEN COMMANDMENTS OF LAUDATO SI’ - Green Commandment X - Cultivate Ecological Virtues

One of the significant contributions of Laudato SI’ is the insistence on the cultivation of ecological virtues from the part of humanity for the responsible care of our common home. We will be able to protect and care for our common home only by learning to adopt radically new lifestyles, what Pope Francis calls “new habits.” However we are aware of how difficult it is to acquire such habits, especially in the context of widespread consumerism and cultural relativism as people feel unable to give up what the market sets before them. We are particularly aware of the challenges that young people face in this regard. They have a new ecological sensitivity and a generous spirit, and some of them are making admirable efforts to protect the environment. At the same time, they have grown up in a milieu of extreme consumerism and affluence which makes it difficult to develop other habits.

According to Pope, laws and regulations are insufficient in this regard and only the cultivation of sound ecological virtues can lead to a selfless ecological commitment. He writes:

The existence of laws and regulations is insufficient in the long run to curb bad conduct, even when effective means of enforcement are present. If the laws are to bring about significant, long-lasting effects, the majority of the members of society

must be adequately motivated to accept them, and personally transformed to respond. Only by cultivating sound virtues will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment.

As Roland Sandler and Philip Cafaro write: “environmental virtues are the proper dispositions or character traits for human beings to have regarding their interactions and relationships with the environment.” According to Mile Hulme: “It is right and good to be virtuous: virtue is indeed the true telos of Man.” As Pope Francis points out, ecologically virtuous actions can indeed bring out the best in human beings and contribute to the safeguarding of our common home, the greatest of all common goods. The ecological virtues are not listed as such in the encyclical, but find repeated mention throughout the text. They are like signposts that indicate the road that we need to travel in caring for our common planetary home. The Pope reminds us that we need to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing. Such a contrast is helpful in order to delineate better the virtuous behavior that we need to adopt today to care for our common home which is in peril. The seven ecological virtues are: praise, gratitude, care, justice, work, sobriety and humility. These virtues will enable us to care in a more loving and responsible manner for our common planetary home.

GRATITUDE FOR THE LIFE OF FR P.C. THOMAS

Fr Thomas Panakezham (P.C. Thomas) died on April 24, at the age of 91, at the hospice of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Bangalore. Fr Panakezham was the first Indian Salesian to be Provincial of Chennai and the first Indian to serve in the General Council of the Salesians of Don Bosco, where he worked for over 18 years, from 1977 to 1996. He lived 71 years of Salesian consecrated life and 61 years of priestly service. His life had a significant impact on all the Provinces of Asia, but also on the first missions in East Africa and Oceania.

Returning to his native India in 1996, after three terms as General Councilor, he spent most of his time in formation houses in Bangalore Province. He also animated various groups of the Salesian Family. With his death, the Congregation lost a great soul, a true son of Don Bosco. His funeral was held on April 26, 2021 in Bangalore. We ask our Heavenly Father to reward this great disciple and missionary of Jesus by receiving him into His Eternal Joy.

TRANSFERS/ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2021-22

I have already released the list of Apostolic Assignments for 2021-22 on the Feast Day of St Joseph, the worker, a model of obedience par excellence. This unconditional obedience was embodied by every saintly founder, including St John Bosco, who has this to say about obedience, “if at times you receive an unpleasant assignment, carry it out just as well, with good will and with the conviction that you will earn the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ and heaven’s eternal reward” (in 1876, BM XII). Don Bosco affirms that obedience must be total, cheerful and prompt. “In taking this vow, we sacrificed our will to Our Lord, and therefore we ought to do whatever our superior may order. Do we like it? That is fine! Does it upset us because it is against our inclinations? So much the better! We acquire greater merit before God. But we should not obey with a sour face, as some people do. We ought to obey willingly and cheerfully accepting our superior’s orders as coming from Our Lord Himself” (BM XII).

As I thank you once again for your availability and generosity in offering your selfless service for the eternal happiness of young people, I provide you with the following directions concerning your new assignments for 2021-22.

1. Confreres with new assignments are expected to arrive at their new places a couple of days before or after May 24, 2021 with mutual understanding with those who will be replacing them.
2. Accounts and cash balances have to be handed over with due signatures to the respective Rectors who will then ensure that they are passed on to the concerned administrators by duly filling up forms and modules prepared and dispatched by Provincial Economist's Office. The signed copies shall be sent to Provincial's Office latest by May 31, 2021.
3. The on-going health crisis being experienced by everyone across the region of our Province makes it impossible for anyone from the Provincial Team to be present for the official handing over of documents including financial accounts. However, kindly contact the Provincial Economist before you hand over financial statements and other documents and follow his directions. I urge the newly appointed Rectors to make arrangements with the outgoing Rectors for official handing over making use of the formats and modules sent by Provincial Economist's Office. The signed copies shall be sent to Provincial's Office latest by May 31, 2021. I would like to further add that henceforth all bills and vouchers submitted by the Administrator of the house shall be countersigned by the Rector/In-charge of the Institute as well.
4. All the communities are encouraged not to organize any extravagant farewell parties or buy expensive gifts or make extraordinary purchases during the transfers in consideration of the ground realities of immense suffering, death and deprivation staring everyone in the face, especially the poorest and the most vulnerable population of our Society.
5. I encourage confreres with new assignments to travel safely following safety precautions and social distancing protocols taking care of your health and protecting the health of others.

SECOND WAVE - TIME TO REACH OUT

During the online meeting held on April 30, 2021 with Rectors, Parish Priests and In-Charges, we have collectively discussed and deliberated upon the course of action that we as a Province could follow to show our solidarity with those most affected by the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in lack of oxygen, lack of hospital beds, lack of medicine and medical attention, lack of food and lack of space. I share here with you those proposals to which we as the animating body of the Province have agreed and which can be implemented across the Province with due attention paid to the ground realities.

1. We as a Province shall set aside 1 hour of sacred time from 7pm to 8pm in order to pray in unison for the control of the pandemic and for normalcy so that every member of our human family can once again enjoy peace, health and prosperity.
2. We shall make efforts at providing dry ration or cooked food to those who are unable to feed themselves, even though they may be under home quarantine. The initiative of DBNJ Vijayawada to carry out free food distribution for positive patients in home isolation could be creatively implemented in other parts of the Province as well.
3. We shall collaborate with local medical agencies and government departments in turning few of our premises, buildings and structures into semi-quarantine centers for those who do not find place elsewhere, ensuring that necessary medical attention is provided for them by the respective local health departments.

4. The Province Development Office BSK, will make efforts at preparing proposals on behalf of the Province for raising funds for dry ration kits, cooked food, nutrition kits, medical kits, educational kits and health and hygiene kits.
5. We shall collaborate with ATRCRI initiative of providing counselling helpline to instill hope, courage and confidence in those who are psychologically distressed and disturbed by the enormity of the health crisis that has been going on for a prolonged period of time.

DIRECTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONS AND RENEWALS

We are once again incapacitated by the on-going health emergency across the Country to come together and celebrate professions and renewals of religious vows coupled with the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, the principal patroness of the Society of St. Francis de Sales on May 24th. In this regard I would like to give you the following directions:

1. First profession of our novices will take place at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad and renewals of profession of clerics/brothers will take place in the respective local communities of the Province while perpetual profession of clerics will take place at Don Bosco Provincial House, Hyderabad on May 24th, 2021. Perpetual Profession will be preceded by a period of proximate preparation from May 6 to 24, 2021. The list of those attending the course is attached along with the Circular. I invite local communities to make necessary arrangements for professions and renewals in keeping with the seriousness of this act of self-offering to the Lord.
2. Adequate spiritual animation/preparation should be provided for all our novices/clerics/brothers before they profess/renew their evangelical councils by way of a week-long retreat animated by the Rector of the community or by anyone whom he delegates. Suitable animation material will be forwarded to all the communities from the Provincial Office.
3. Religious profession is to be accepted by the Rector/In-Charge of the community who will be assisted by two witnesses. Appropriate profession forms will be sent to your communities which will have to be sent back to Provincial/Secretary Office duly signed by the professed member, the Rector and the witnesses.

Perpetual Professions

This year we have seven brothers who will be making their Perpetual Profession. Final Profession is a moment of definitive consecration in a loving and intimate encounter between God who calls and the disciple who responds by offering himself totally to God and to his brothers and sisters. We congratulate these brothers on exhibiting such courage and resolve to enter more deeply into the mystery of their baptismal covenant with the Lord. I wholeheartedly thank the Rectors and communities for lovingly accompanying them especially in their immediate and intense preparation for the perpetual profession.

Name	Place of Profession
Cl Chinthaguntla Prem Kumar	DBPH, HYD
Cl Gollapalle David Sunder Raj	SHILLONG
Cl Kadiyam Prasanna Kumar	DBPH, HYD
Cl Koduru Joseph Thambi	DBPH, HYD
Cl Lima Susanth	DBPH, HYD
Cl Nayak Jameson	DBPH, HYD
Cl Ubbana Sureah	DBPH, HYD

First Professions

Thirteen of our novices have been admitted to their first religious profession. The novices have entered into a formative process to get to know, assimilate and acquire personal convictions as regards the content of Salesian formation during the year-long period of the Novitiate under the spiritual guidance of the Novice Master. As I thank the Novice Master and the Novitiate community for preparing these novices for the first profession, I also welcome them into the family of consecrated/professed members and wish them a rich experience of deeper encounter with Jesus and with Don Bosco as they journey towards their definitive commitment.

Name	Place of Profession
N Akkala Steven	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Anthoti Sandeep	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Battu Suresh Babu	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Bondala Sagar Babu	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Chalapathi Joseph Thamby	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Godugunooru Nithya Pooja	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Jagathap Naveen Kumar	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Jaldi Nivas	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Kommareddy Lourdu Marreddy	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Kothapalli Raju	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Putti Shashi Kiran	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Yannam Kiran Kumar	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
N Yarraballi Prem Chandu	Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad

Renewals

We have as many as 45 clerics/brothers who will be renewing their religious profession this year. These confreres have given themselves to the process of human, Christian and religious formation so as to make themselves ready for full consecration by God in the Salesian Society. I thank their respective Rectors and communities for facilitating this process of formation at different levels and wish our clerics/brothers a continued experience of growth and maturity in their Salesian religious vocation. Please find the list of brothers/clerics renewing their religious profession at various local communities.

	Name	Place of Renewal of Profession
1.	Madugu Prabhakar	DBPH
2.	Topno Ranjit	Narsipatnam
3.	Balaiair Singh Aswin	Mangalagiri
4.	Kodudhula Sunil Kumar	Tirupattur
5.	Mikkili Ravi Kumar	DBPH
6.	Pathuru Swaroop Surya Teja	DBPH
7.	Raito Abosalem	Kondadaba
8.	Raminedi Infant Adithya	DBPH
9.	Rentala Ajay Kumar	DBPH
10.	Somireddy Kranthi Raj	DBPH
11.	Vallamalla David	Nalgonda
12.	Banka Sagar Babu	Narsipatnam
13.	Gatham Sudhakar	Manoharabad

14.	Bro. Susanta Sabar	Kadapa
15.	Ankarla Anthony	Nuzvid
16.	Anup Sabha Nayak	Mariapuram
17.	ChatlaVelangini Raju	Narsipatnam
18.	Doddavandla Anil Kumar	Guntur
19.	Medabalimi Chiranjeevi Uday Teja	Wyra
20.	Pinninti Sagar	Guntur
21.	Sidhant John Surya	Guwahati
22.	Budramgalla Hrudaya Raju	Nalgonda
23.	Dekkala Uday Kumar	DBPH
24.	Narisetti Bala Ashwith	Ramanthapur
25.	Pasala Arogya Naveen	Muniguda
26.	Samuel Baliarsingh	DBPH
27.	Yeruva Joseph Raja	Kadapa
28.	Bogireddy Vijay Kumar	Kurnool
29.	Bilugudi Marianna	Chandur
30.	ChilumalaYesu Babu	Wyra
31.	Dushmant Uthan Singh	Muniguda
32.	Gunturu Raju	Kadapa
33.	Bodset Hrudayaraj	Ramanthapur
34.	Isac Montry	Vizag
35.	Peter Bailar Singh	Nuzvid
36.	Saul Pal	Manoharabad
37.	Alluri Rahul Arun Kumar	DBNJ Vijayawada
38.	GandamallaVinay	DBNJ Vijayawada
39.	Koduri Mariya Dass	Ramanthapur
40.	Moneddu Raja Ratna	Ramanthapur
41.	NerellaYona	Karunapuram
42.	Pabbati Subash	Karunapuram
43.	Pani Philip Kumar	Muniguda
44.	Peddakotla BalaTeja	Nalgonda
45.	Thommandru Atchuth Kumar	DBPH

Pre-novices Admitted to the Novitiate

This year eleven pre-novices have been admitted to the Novitiate. We thank God for the gift of another batch of novices who will be duly initiated into the formation of the Novitiate and thus entrusted to the Novice Master. I thank also Fr John Sebastian, the Director of pre-novices and the Community of Wyra for their active and personal accompaniment of these youngsters who will be beginning their Salesian religious experience in following Christ. I would like to express my deepest condolences at the sudden demise of our pre-novice, Santo Nayak, who was all set to enter the Novitiate in the month of May 2021. He succumbed to complications resulting from a major surgery at Berhampur Hospital, Odisha. We implore the Lord to take his young soul to Himself and grant courage and consolation to the family members.

1. Boddukuri Balu
2. Boddukuri Ratnakar
3. Cherukubilli Joseph

4. Dasari Anthony Raj
5. Kurapati Joshua
6. Madanu Joseph Kumar
7. Maddela Chinna Joseph Thamby
8. Mandangi Subash
9. Mannava Rayanna
10. Nagipogu Nanda Kumar

Let us thank God for showering His preferential love upon our Province through the gift of many vocations to Salesian way of life.

CONVOCAION OF PROVINCIAL CHAPTER - XI

In a letter dated April 05, 2021 addressed to Provincials and Provincial Councils, the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Stefano Martoglio called upon the Provinces to initiate the process of convening Provincial Chapters in the year 2022 and to send all contributions and reflections of the Provincial Chapters by and not beyond February 2023. He has also given certain general guidelines to be followed as part of the entire process of preparing, celebrating and implementing the decisions and deliberations of the Provincial Chapters.

In the light of this call by our Congregation to convene Provincial Chapters, I would like to announce that the 11th Provincial Chapter of our Province will be convened and celebrated in the month of January 2022, however the exact dates of the Provincial Chapter will be fixed in consultation with the participants of the Perpetually Professed Confreres' Meet to be held in June 2021. It may be envisaged that the actual convening of the Provincial Chapter will be preceded by a preparatory period the dates of which will be fixed and communicated to you at a later time. I would also like to announce that Fr Thomas Santiago, our Vice Provincial, will be the moderator of the Provincial Chapter, while the Pre-Capitular Commission consisting of Fr Androth Jose, Fr B. Sudhakar, Fr S. Rajesh, Fr B. Suresh, Fr Matheikal Wilson, Fr Neelam Ratna and Fr T. Sanjay, will assist the Moderator.

Through this Provincial Chapter we are all invited to reflect together on the OPP, Deliberations of GC28, Sustainability Plans of the Province and our Salesian Charismatic Identity, while we are also open to any other matter of importance and urgency affecting the life and mission of the Province. I urge you confreres to start praying for the success of the Provincial Chapter and to render your support and cooperation as we embark upon the process of seeing, judging, reflecting, decision-making and acting so that our mission for the young will be ever relevant and our life as God's consecrated people will be ever meaningful like a light shining brightly for everyone to see.

VOCATION CAMPS

In this situation of uncertainty and the continued spread of the corona virus, we are unable to provide you with dates for the Annual Province Vocation Camps. Fr Parry Sarath, the Province Vocation Promoter is closely following up the situation while maintaining a regular contact with the probable candidates and their families. We are hopeful of coming up with an alternative arrangement by way of short vocation camps through which we should be able to select youngsters for Salesian way of life. You will receive more concrete details from Provincial Office as soon as the current health crisis eases up and we are able to return to our normal lives. Meanwhile I encourage you to continue to pray for vocations to Salesian way of life in our Province.

SALESIAN SANCTITY IN MAY

May 6	Feast - Saint Dominic Savio
May 13	Feast/Solemnity - Saint Maria Domenica Mazzarello
May 16	Memorial - Saint Luigi Orione
May 18	Memorial - Saint Leonard Murialdo
May 24	Solemnity - Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians
May 29	Memorial - Blessed Joseph Kowalski

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 03	WEBINAR - LAUDATO SI' Acting: Green Commandment X: "Cultivate Ecological Virtues," by Rev. Fr Salagala Rajesh, Province Secretary, Don Bosco Provincial House, Hyderabad.
MAY 06-24	Perpetual Profession Course at Provincial House, HYD
MAY 13	WEBINAR - LAUDATO SI' Praxis Orientation: "Grounding <i>Laudato si</i> in the Soil of Asia and Carrying it Forward," by Prof. Dr Felix Wilfred, Emeritus Professor of the State University of Madras, Founder-Director of the Asian Centre for Cross-Cultural Studies (ACCS), President of <i>Concilium</i> , International Theological Journal, Former Member of the Vatican International Theological Commission and Visiting Professor in several International Universities.
MAY 17-23	Online Summer Formation Program
MAY 19-20	Provincial Council Meeting
MAY 20	Death Anniversary of Cl Thuruthel James
MAY 24	Renewals of Religious Profession at local Communities
MAY 24	First and Final Professions

CONDOLENCES

We offer our heartfelt condolences:

- to Fr Provincial and the confreres of the Province of New Delhi at the demise of Fr Sebastian Vadakkethannickal on April 14, 2021;
- to Fr Provincial and the confreres of the Province of Calcutta at the death of of Fr Agapit Minj and Fr Sanju Mukul Kachhap who died on April 15 and April 29, 2021 respectively;
- to Sr Provincial Superior and the sisters of the FMA Province of Madras at the loss of Sr Regina Sindhuraj on April 16, 2021;
- to Fr Provincial and the confreres of the Province of Calcutta at the demise of Bishop Lucas Sirkar, the Archbishop Emeritus of Calcutta, on April 18, 2021;
- to Fr Provincial and the confreres of the Province of Bangalore at the passing away of Fr Thomas Panakezham, our former Regional Superior and General Councillor on April 24, 2021;
- to Sr Provincial Superior and the sisters of the FMA Province of Tiruchirapalli at the death of Sr Bastian Maire on May 01, 2021
- to Fr Provincial and the confreres of the Province of Guwahati at the sad demise of Fr Paulus Guria on May 02, 2021 at Tezpur Medical College Hospital.

CONCLUSION

Mary Busy with Her Children

Mary is a person and moreover, she's personal - as all the saints are. We believe, alongside twenty centuries of Christians, that the saints are given a special grace of interceding for us from before God's throne in heaven. Saints look upon us as a great cloud of witnesses who desire, not to be merely spectators, but to be personally involved in our lives as intercessors and friends. Mary, furthermore, takes a special place in our lives that even exceeds that of all the other saints: she is our intercessor, friend and *mother*.

This tradition of holding Mary to be the spiritual mother of the living has its origin at the cross of Christ. "Behold your mother" said Jesus to John, who stood with Mary before their bloodied Savior (Jn 19:27). This has immediate consequences, for Jesus was about to die and did not have blood brothers of his own to care for His beloved mother; so he chose the "beloved apostle" to take in His mother and care for her. On death's door due to crucifixion-induced asphyxiation every breath is precious and counted; yet our Lord labored to speak these words directly to John. But the words "Behold your mother" spoken by Jesus to John were also, on a deeper level, to all of humanity; and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit (1 Tim 3:15) the Church has maintained this. There at the cross Jesus gives His mother to St. John—and to us too—that we might also be under her protection, guidance and help.

Mary is a person, alive and glorified today. She is our mother, and will be for all of eternity. She loves us more than we could ever comprehend. As Frank Sheed has remarked, you can't love what you don't know. So let us get to know Mary even better! Let us read good books about her. Let us pray the rosary daily and really meditate on the mysteries. Let us see the life of Christ through the eyes of Mary.

And above all, let us speak with her and invite her intercession often through simple, little conversations - just as you do with your earthly mother. Mary is always listening and ready to act. As St. Josemaria Escriva has written: "*Only after the Last Judgment will Mary get any rest; from now until then, she is much too busy with her children.*"

Wishing you a happy feast of Mary Help of Christians,

Yours in the Lord,



Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar SDB,
Provincial

