

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

SALESIAN PROVINCE OF HYDERABAD



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June 2016

Servants after the heart of Jesus

On 24 April 2016 we commenced the Silver Jubilee Year of the birth of our Province. The wonder of Salesian life, which began its tale at Becchi, still continues to be resplendent in the various works and interventions in our Province. As we look back with gratitude and look forward with hope, let the passion of Don Bosco for young people guide our present. We need to be grateful to God for the expansion and development that we have achieved in the past with 32 communities with 63 activities, collapsing the borders of the Telugu states to venture into Odisha significantly after the aftermath of the Kandhamal violence.

This occasion offers us an opportune moment to reflect seriously about our interventions. *Our solidarity with the people, especially the poor and marginalized has to be a true reflection of the diakonia that we have freely chosen to live.* We need to introspect and remind ourselves that *our mission* is not merely to provide service to the poor and needy. It is not even an intellectual doctrine or a moral code, it is *a real and living self communication of God.* “...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28). We have to make a constant pastoral conversion and a paradigm shift, as a province and as individuals, *from being mere service providers or care takers to being servants of the young.*

People around us and those who work with us, generally admire the amount of work we do. We are living witnesses of a workaholic culture rampant in our society. Overwhelmed by the activities and the workaholic culture, sometimes we get worn out, tired and experience a sense of burnout. This happens because, more often than not, we are concerned about the success of our works rather than the meaningfulness and relevance of our mission. We allow the worldly orientation of success and accomplishment to be the parameters for gauging the relevance of our works. Most often we are far more concerned about maintaining and preserving our established structures than the integral wellbeing of the young through intellectual, social and spiritual accompaniment of the young.

Being a servant of the young is an attitude of the heart. Jesus invites, “learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart” (Mt. 11:29). In all humility we have to consciously enter into the world of the young through personal touch and accompaniment, seeking their utmost welfare as Don Bosco did. This can happen only at the level of the heart. What comes from the heart lands on the heart. In our desire to renew and rejuvenate our life and mission at the start of this academic year 2016-17, let us march on with this attitude.

One of the simple indicators of this attitude of being a servant is the number of young people we encounter during the day and the amount of time we spend physically and meaningfully amidst them. Don Bosco while away from Turin, writes in his famous letter from Rome: *“Being away from you and not being able to see or hear you, upsets me more than you can imagine.”* Another yardstick to measure the meaningfulness and fruitfulness of our mission is the number of young people who keep in touch with us even after leaving our institution. Even when they do come back, is it merely for some monetary benefits or earnestly seeking guidance and accompaniment? Let us seek the intercession of Mary Help of Christians and learn from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, gentle, meek and mild, to whom this month is dedicated, to cultivate and nurture the attitude of a servant.

Vision Building - Perpetually Professed Confreres’ Meet and Leaders’ Meet:

Dear confreres, we are glad that we have revived the Perpetually Professed Confreres' Meet. We had the meeting on 1 June 2016. We also had a very fruitful meeting of the Leaders on 3 and 4 June 2016. It was indeed a grace filled time. It was a beautiful expression of our fraternity. I commend and thank you for the warm and serene atmosphere that was created to live these days of planning together. I would like to congratulate and thank each and every one of you for your active participation during these meetings. There was a great openness to discuss issues that challenge us and collectively take necessary steps towards transformation. This is already the first BIG leap towards change. Thank you for your contribution. The deliberations drawn up collectively for actual implementation are attached with this circular.

Jubilee of the Province - Visit of the Rector Major:

We are glad that during this Jubilee year of the birth of our Province, our beloved Rector Major, Fr Angel Fernandez will be visiting us. He will arrive in Hyderabad on 18 November 2016. On the same day, he will interact with young people at Navajeevan, Ramanthapur, and celebrate the Holy Eucharist at St Theresa’s Parish, Sanathnagar. On 19 November, he will

address the clerics and brothers in formation at Don Bosco, Gunadala and celebrate Holy Eucharist at St Michael's, Guntur. On 20 November, he will address the Salesian Family at Hyderabad. After his meeting with the leaders of the communities, he will celebrate the Eucharist at Don Bosco Shrine, Bandlaguda, followed by a felicitation programme.

The following members are the organizing committee for the visit of the Rector Major: Fr Yeruva Joji, Fr Androth Jose, Fr Koonananickal Jose, Fr Bellamkonda Sudhakar, Fr Vatti Rayappa, Fr Chinnabathuni Louis Babu and Fr Pentareddy Jayapaul. I thank them for their readiness to coordinate and organize this important event.

The plans and decisions in view of the Jubilee of the birth of our Province are attached with this letter. One of the deliberations for our Jubilee is to write the history of our Province. The committee that will assist in writing the history of our province comprises of Fr Emprayil Mathew, Fr Pandicherry Joseph, Fr Tharakan John, Fr Medabalimi Balaswamy, and Fr Kuthanapallil Sebastian. I thank these confreres for their availability for this noble task.

Ours is a missionary Province. To celebrate the Jubilee meaningfully, a charismatic team was formed to facilitate and organize retreats and spiritual revival programmes in our parishes. The members of the charismatic team are Fr Chinnabathuni Louis, Fr Thota Mariadas and Fr Guvvala Balaraju. In the name of the Province, I thank them for this initiative.

Regional Coordinators for Tri-monthly Recollections:

I would like to extend my gratitude to the following confreres who have accepted the responsibility of coordinating the Tri-monthly recollections in the various regions of our Province. Fr Pandicherry Joseph - Hyderabad Region, Fr Nali Anthaiah - Rayalaseema Region, Fr Thota Mariadas - Vijayawada Region, Fr Ramedini Balaraju - Guntur Region, Fr Mallavarapu Rayanna - Vizag Region and Fr Garlapati Kishore - Warangal Region.

Summer Camps:

Most communities of our province organized summer camps for the children and youth of the locality and helped them gain proficiency in English, computers and other soft skills. I congratulate each and every confrere of these communities for their commitment and hard work. I appreciate and thank the students of theology and Philosophy who helped out in various communities, which also gave them an opportunity to experience community life and mission.

Summer Formation Programme and Renewal of Vows:

We congratulate fifty one of our confreres in Temporary Profession who renewed their vows this year, manifesting their deep desire to follow the Lord ever more closely in the way of Don Bosco. Our best wishes for these young Salesians as they continue to cherish their Salesian vocation and grow deeper in their commitment. I also take this opportunity to thank the BIRDY community for hosting the Summer Formation Course for our Salesians in practical training and college studies. Huge thanks also to Fr Yeruva Joji, the Vice Provincial for meticulously planning and executing the summer formation programme.

First Profession:

Eight Novices of our Province made their First Profession on May 24 at Manoharabad. We congratulate them wholeheartedly and welcome them into our province as professed members. We assure them of our prayerful and fraternal support. I take this occasion to thank Fr Kannadipara Matthew, the Novice Master and the staff of the Novitiate community for their dedication and commitment in preparing our novices for Salesian life.

Perpetual Profession:

Four of our clerics, Gadesula Naresh, Kasu Lourdu, Narisetty Anup and Palem Jeevan Kumar, made their Perpetual Profession on 24 May 2016 at Don Bosco Shrine, Hyderabad amidst great solemnity and fervour. Our hearty congratulations to them at this bold step as they offer themselves generously and totally to the Lord and to the mission of Don Bosco. While we thank the parents of these clerics, we also accompany them as they continue their journey towards greater sanctity in the Salesian apostolate.

Good results:

Some of our schools and colleges obtained 100 percent results while others are striving to get there. My hearty congratulations to you all. I thank you dear confreres and the staff for your dedication, hard work and commitment. I wish you all the best as you launch into another year with more dreams and aspirations. As said earlier, may our primary goal be to strive to prepare honest and God fearing citizens after the heart and mind of our father Don Bosco.

Provincial Commissions:

I am enclosing along with this letter the list of the members of the Provincial commissions. There are some changes and hence I request all, especially the delegates and the members to take note. I thank all those who extended their services in the past as heads and members of various provincial commissions. I would also like to thank all those who continue to serve and the new members for accepting to fulfill the role of animation in the province. There will be a meeting of the commission / sector / centre heads on 17 June 2016 from 09.30 am at Don Bosco Provincial House, Hyderabad to finalize the SEPP.

Planning and Working Together:

As we commence a new academic year I request all the leaders of the communities to spend sufficient time in planning along with the members of the community. Kindly prepare the local SEPP and community project of life. Please go through and specify the roles and responsibilities of each member of the community. Our Constitutions remind us “To live and work together is for us Salesians a fundamental requirement and a sure way of fulfilling our vocation...” (Const. 49). I urge you to welcome the new members of the community with open heart, leaving aside all prejudices.

Welcome to Swami Vikrant:

The province extends a warm welcome to Swami Vikrant from the Province of Chennai who will join the Salesian community at Karunapuram on 10 June 2016. We wish him a fruitful stay in our province.

Condolences:

We offer our deepest condolences to the Provincial and the confreres of the Province of Shillong at the demise of Fr Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh, aged 95. He passed away in Shillong, on 28 May 2016 after a brief illness. He was an ardent missionary, who dedicated his life to teaching, preaching, writing and healing. Some of our confreres were privileged to be his students while in Shillong. As a mark of respect, the state of Meghalaya had declared May 30, the day of his funeral, a state holiday. May his soul rest in peace!

Salesian Saints of the Month:

Blesseds Joseph Kowalski and companion martyrs: (12 June)

When Poland was occupied by Nazis, the Salesians continued on with their educational activity. This was why the dramatic arrest came about on May 23, 1941. The Gestapo captured Fr Kowalski along with eleven other Salesians working in Krakow. At first, they were taken to the prison in Montelupich in the same city; and from there, on June 26, they were taken to the concentration camp in Auschwitz. He was given number 17.350 in the ledger. Even though in prison he secretly carried on his apostolate: he heard confessions, celebrated Mass, said the Rosary, gave clandestine conferences, also about Don Bosco, strengthening his prison friends with the will to struggle for survival. He underwent suffering and humiliation. When he was discovered with a rosary, he refused to trample on it, thus hastening his martyrdom, which occurred at Auschwitz on July 4, 1942. His body was, at first, thrown into a refuse dump, then was burned in the camp's crematorium. His countrymen began to venerate his memory, maintaining that his sacrifice made vocations in Poland more fruitful. Pope John Paul II was of the same opinion, and became personally interested in the cause of various Polish martyrs. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in Warsaw on June 13, 1999.

Saint Joseph Cafasso: (23 June)

Joseph Cafasso was born at Castelnuovo d'Asti in Piedmont, Italy, of peasant parents. He studied at the seminary in Turin, and was ordained in 1833. He continued his theological studies at the seminary and university in Turin and then, at the Institute of St Francis. Despite a deformed spine, he became a brilliant lecturer in moral theology there. He was a popular teacher, who actively opposed Jansenism, and fought state intrusion into Church affairs. He succeeded Luigi Guala as rector of the Institute in 1848 and made a deep impression on his young priest students with his holiness and insistence on discipline and high standards. He was a sought-after confessor and spiritual adviser, and ministered to prisoners, working to improve their terrible conditions. He met Don Bosco in 1827 and the two became close friends. It was through Joseph's encouragement that Bosco decided his vocation was working with boys. Joseph was his adviser, worked closely with him in his foundations, and convinced others to fund and found religious institutes and charitable organizations. Joseph Cafasso died on June 23 in Turin and was canonized in 1947.

Dear Confreres, we have enough models to emulate; great number of intercessors in heaven above and on earth beneath; numerous opportunities to go about doing good and being holy...

we only have to exert our wills and put in our best. Let us then focus our heart and mind on being servants of the young, while collectively working on the challenges facing us as a province.

Joyfully accompanying you all in our fraternal journey together to further the dream of Don Bosco for our beloved Province and all involved...

Affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr Thathireddy Bhaskar SDB
Provincial

