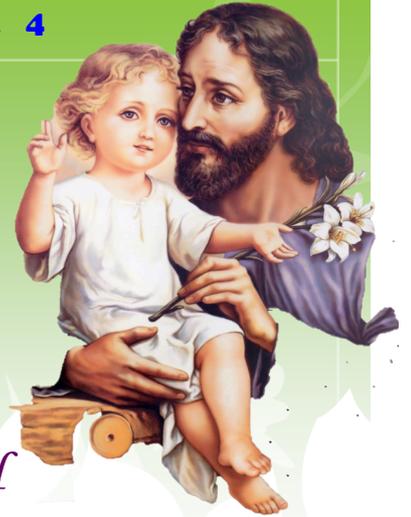


PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

St. Joseph Province of Hyderabad - INH



RB /INH /CIR 56 /2014

December, 2014

Dear Confreres,

Greetings of peace and joy from Don Bosco Provincial House, Hyderabad! In the following reflections we shall reflect on the **'Relatio Synodi'** of the III Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of evangelization. Kindly read this in the communities and make use of it for animation.

Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization

Introduction:

1. The Synod of Bishops, gathered around the Holy Father, turned its thoughts to all the families of the world, each with its joys, difficulties and hopes. In a special way, the Assembly felt a duty to give thanks to the Lord for the generosity and faithfulness of so many Christian families in responding to their vocation and mission, which they fulfill with joy and faith, even when living as a family requires facing obstacles, misunderstandings and suffering. The entire Church and this Synod express to these families our appreciation, gratitude and encouragement. During the prayer vigil held in St Peter's Square on 4 October 2014 in preparation for the Synod on the family, Pope Francis evoked, in a simple yet concrete way, the centrality [of the experience] of the family in everyone's

lives: “Evening falls on our assembly. It is the hour at which one willingly returns home to meet at the same table, in the depth of affection, of the good that has been done and received, of the encounters which warm the heart and make it grow, good wine which hastens the unending feast in the days of man. It is also the weightiest hour for one who finds himself face to face with his own loneliness, in the bitter twilight of shattered dreams and broken plans; how many people trudge through the day in the blind alley of resignation, of abandonment, even resentment: in how many homes the wine of joy has been less plentiful, and therefore, also the zest — the very wisdom — for life [...]. Let us make our prayer heard for one another this evening, a prayer for all.”

2. Within the family are joys and trials, deep love and relationships which, at times, can be wounded. The family is truly the “school of humanity” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 52), which is much needed today. Despite the many signs of crisis in the family institution in various areas of the “global village”, the desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant, especially among young people, and serves as the basis of the Church’s need to proclaim untiringly and with profound conviction the “Gospel of the Family”, entrusted to her together with the revelation of God’s love in Jesus Christ and ceaselessly taught by the Fathers, the masters of spirituality and the Church’s Magisterium. The family is uniquely important to the Church and in these times, when all believers are invited to think of others rather than themselves, the family needs to be rediscovered as the essential agent in the work of evangelization.

3. At the Extraordinary General Assembly of October, 2014, the Bishop of Rome called upon the Synod of Bishops to reflect upon the critical and invaluable reality of the family, a reflection which will then be pursued in greater depth at its Ordinary General Assembly scheduled to take place in October, 2015, as well as during the full year between the two synodal

events. “The ***convener in unum*** around the Bishop of Rome is already an event of grace, in which episcopal collegiality is made manifest in a path of spiritual and pastoral discernment.” These were the words used by Pope Francis in describing the synodal experience and indicating the task at hand: to read both the signs of God and human history, in a twofold yet unique faithfulness which this reading involves.

4. With these words in mind, we have gathered together the results of our reflections and our discussions in the following three parts: ***listening***, looking at the situation of the family today in all its complexities, both lights and shadows; ***looking***, our gaze is fixed on Christ to re-evaluate, with renewed freshness and enthusiasm, what revelation, transmitted in the Church’s faith, tells us about the beauty and dignity of the family; and ***facing the situation***, with an eye on the Lord Jesus, to discern how the Church and society can renew their commitment to the family.

PART I

Listening: the context and challenges of the family

The Socio-Cultural Context

5. Faithful to Christ’s teaching, we look to the reality of the family today in all its complexity, with both its lights and shadows. We turn our thoughts to parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, close and distant relatives and the bonds between two families forged by marriage. Anthropological and cultural changes in our times influence all aspects of life and require an analytic and diversified approach. The positive aspects are first to be highlighted, namely, a greater freedom of expression and a better recognition of the rights of women and children, at least in some parts of the world. On the other hand, equal consideration needs to be given to the growing danger represented by a troubling individualism which deforms family bonds and ends up considering each component of the family as an isolated unit, leading, in some cases, to the idea that a person

is formed according to one's own desires, which are considered absolute. Added to this is the crisis of faith, witnessed among a great many Catholics, which oftentimes underlies the crisis in marriage and the family.

6. One of the poorest aspects of contemporary culture is loneliness, arising from the absence of God in a person's life and the fragility of relationships. There is also a general feeling of powerlessness in the face of socio-cultural realities which oftentimes end in crushing families. Such is the case in increasing instances of poverty and unemployment in the workplace, which at times is a real nightmare or in overwhelming financial difficulties, which discourage the young from marrying. Families often feel abandoned by the disinterest and lack of attention by institutions. The negative impact on the organization of society is clear, as seen in the demographic crisis, in the difficulty of raising children, in a hesitancy to welcome new life and in considering the presence of older persons as a burden. All these can affect a person's emotional balance, which can sometimes lead to violence. The State has the responsibility to pass laws and create work to ensure the future of young people and help them realize their plan of forming a family.

7. Some cultural and religious contexts pose particular challenges. In some places, polygamy is still being practiced and in places with long traditions, the custom of "marriage in stages". In other places, "arranged marriages" is an enduring practice. In countries where Catholicism is the minority, many mixed and interreligious marriages take place, all with their inherent difficulties in terms of jurisprudence, Baptism, the upbringing of children and the mutual respect for each other's religious freedom, not to mention the danger of relativism or indifference. At the same time, such marriages can exhibit great potential in favouring the spirit of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue in a harmonious living of diverse religions in the same place. Even outside Western societies, many places are witnessing an

overall increase in the practice of cohabitation before marriage or simply cohabitating with no intention of a legally binding relationship.

8. Many children are born outside marriage, in great numbers in some countries, many of whom subsequently grow up with just one of their parents or in a blended or reconstituted family. Divorces are increasing, many times taking place solely because of economic reasons. Oftentimes, children are a source of contention between parents and become the real victims of family break-ups. Fathers who are often absent from their families, not simply for economic reasons, need to assume more clearly their responsibility for children and the family. The dignity of women still needs to be defended and promoted. In fact, in many places today, simply being a woman is a source of discrimination and the gift of motherhood is often penalized, rather than esteemed. Not to be overlooked is the increasing violence against women, where they become victims, unfortunately, often within families and as a result of the serious and widespread practice genital mutilation in some cultures. The sexual exploitation of children is still another scandalous and perverse reality in present-day society. Societies characterized by violence due to war, terrorism or the presence of organized crime are witnessing the deterioration of the family, above all in big cities, where, in their peripheral areas, the so-called phenomenon of “street-children” is on the rise. Furthermore, migration is another sign of the times to be faced and understood in terms of its onerous consequences to family life.

The Importance of Affectivity in Life

9. Faced with the afore-mentioned social situation, people in many parts of the world are feeling a great need to take care of themselves, to know themselves better, to live in greater harmony with their feelings and sentiments and to seek to live their affectivity in the best manner possible. These proper aspirations can lead to a desire to put greater effort into

building relationships of self-giving and creative reciprocity, which are empowering and supportive like those within a family. In this case, however, individualism and living only for one's self is a real danger. The challenge for the Church is to assist couples in the maturation and development of their affectivity through fostering dialogue, virtue and trust in the merciful love of God. The full commitment required in marriage can be a strong antidote to the temptation of a selfish individualism.

10. Cultural tendencies in today's world seem to set no limits on a person's affectivity in which every aspect needs to be explored, even those which are highly complex. Indeed, nowadays a person's affectivity is very fragile; a narcissistic, unstable or changeable affectivity does not always allow a person to grow to maturity. Particularly worrisome is the spread of pornography and the commercialization of the body, fostered also by a misuse of the internet and reprehensible situations where people are forced into prostitution. In this context, couples are often uncertain, hesitant and struggling to find ways to grow. Many tend to remain in the early stages of their affective and sexual life. A crisis in a couple's relationship destabilizes the family and may lead, through separation and divorce, to serious consequences for adults, children and society as a whole, weakening its individual and social bonds. The decline in population, due to a mentality against having children and promoted by the world politics of reproductive health, creates not only a situation in which the relationship between generations is no longer ensured but also the danger that, over time, this decline will lead to economic impoverishment and a loss of hope in the future.

Pastoral Challenges

11. In this regard, the Church is conscious of the need to offer a particularly meaningful word of hope, which must be done based on the

conviction that the human person comes from God, and that, consequently, any reconsideration of the great question on the meaning of human existence can be responsive to humanity's most profound expectations. The great values of marriage and the Christian family correspond to the search that characterizes human existence, even in these times of individualism and hedonism. People need to be accepted in the concrete circumstances of life. We need to know how to support them in their searching and to encourage them in their hunger for God and their wish to feel fully part of the Church, also including those who have experienced failure or find themselves in a variety of situations. The Christian message always contains in itself the reality and the dynamic of mercy and truth which meet in Christ.

(.....to be continued....)

Salesian Saint of the Month

Blessed Philip Rinaldi:

Philip Rinaldi was born at Lu, Alessandria, Italy, on 28th May 1856. From his boyhood he had known Don Bosco but he refused his invitation on various occasions, it was only at the age of 21 that he accepted the saint's invitation to become a Salesian. He got ordained in 1882 and was entrusted with the formation of adult aspirants to the priesthood. Intense work as Vicar General, Economer and later as Rector Major did not prevent him from further qualification in the priestly ministry as an eminent spiritual guide. As a Rector Major he dedicated himself especially to the formation of the confreres and to the love of Don Bosco, insisting always on the interior life, union with God, the mission and unlimited trust in Mary Help of Christians.

Rinaldi, from his intimate contact with Don Bosco and from his own personal experience, that the attitude of constant union with God was the secret of the whole active life and spirit of Don Bosco. He wrote to the confreres: "Our holiness is not so much in the practice of the way of life

embraced at our Salesian profession, nor even in the imitation of the virtues of our father, but in ensuring that the Salesian life we embraced, and the imitation of the virtues of our father are animated by the spirit in which Don Bosco himself lived and practiced those virtues”.

He was particularly daring and effective in his work on behalf of the missions and brought about a kind of mobilization for the missions. He personified in himself the spirit of Don Bosco, his fatherhood and holiness, and sought always to pass it on to his spiritual sons.

Two more Saints from India

Six years after the canonization of Sr. Alphonsa as India's first woman saint by the Vatican, two more heroic individuals from our country who moved closer to the sainthood with Pope Francis approving miracles attributed to them. They lived the life of holiness and virtue and left their indelible mark on the local church. The Founder of two indigenous congregations, Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara (1805 – 1871) congregations namely Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) for men and Congregation of Mount Carmel (CMC) for women, and the member of the Congregation of Mount Carmel, Sr. Euphrasia Eluvathingal (1877 – 1952) are canonized on 23 November 2014.

Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara was born on 10th feb 1805 of pious and devout Catholic parents of the Syro-Malabar Church, at Kainakary, Kerla. After his priestly studies he was ordained priest on 29th November 1829. In 1831, co-operating with Fr. Thomas Palackal and Fr. Thomas Porukara, he founded the first indigenous religious congregation for men (CMI). He has written number of books in prose as well as in verse with unique spiritual vision. His counsel to the Christian families given in the form of the “Testament of a loving Father” is applicable and relevant to this day. Essentially a man of prayer and intense charity, he lived in close communion with the Lord amidst his several religious and social activities.

Owing to his deep spirituality that permeated all his actions, he was accepted and referred to as a man of God, from his early years. He distinguished himself as a social reformer and educationist. He was a true son of the Church, a Saint with a universal vision.

Sr. Euphrasia Eluvathingal was born on 17 October 1877 in the village of Kattoor, in the Diocese of Trichur, India. Her mother's deep piety and great devotion to the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, had a strong influence on little Rose from her childhood. She grew with a strong desire to practice the virtues, to suffer for Jesus and to be holy, and to do all this in a quiet, hidden manner. Notwithstanding the strong opposition of her father, who wanted Rose to marry into a rich family, but her intense prayer life, which brought about a change of heart in her father. In fact, her father accompanied her personally to the convent of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel at Koonammavu, the first indigenous congregation of Syro-Malabars.

She practiced the virtues of humility, charity and renunciation and grew in holiness with the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For the periods of grave illness and the trials of the powers of darkness that she endured, she was rewarded by intense spiritual joys. For almost 48 years the convent of St. Mary at Ollur was home to Mother Euphrasia. Observing her life of prayer and holiness, the local people called her "Praying Mother" and her sisters in community referred to her as the "Mobile Tabernacle", because the divine presence she kept within her radiated to all she encountered. This holy virgin who desired to become an unknown saint is raised today to the glory of the altar by the Almighty and the sweet fragrance of her sanctity is spread worldwide. Let us strive to come to know more about the heroic lives they lived, and emulate them in our life and ministry.

Projects to be submitted

Those who are sending projects from different Communities are

requested to send them to the Provincial's office by 10th of every month.

Priestly Ordinations

Our province will be blessed once again with the gift of priesthood. We have four young Salesians from our province, who will be ordained in this month:

- ❖ Dn. Parry Rayulu (Sarath Babu) will be ordained by Most Rev. Msgr. M.D. Prakasam, DD, Bishop of Nellore on 8 December 2014 at Bishop's House, Santhapet Church, Nellore. He will return to the Province of Germany in the month of January for two years of Pastoral Ministry.
- ❖ Dn. Dasari Nireekshana Raju will be ordained by Most. Rev. Msgr. Govindu Joji, Bishop of Nalgonda & Apostolic Administrator of Vijayawada, on 13 December 2014 (10.00 am) at Nirmala High School, Machilipatnam..
- ❖ Dn. Putti Thambi Joseph will be ordained by Most. Rev. Msgr. Udumula Bala, Bishop of Warangal, on 20 December 2014 (10.30 am) at St. Peter's Church, Thimmarapet, Warangal.
- ❖ Dn. Medi Sleevaraju will be ordained by Most. Rev. Msgr. Maipan Paul, Bishop of Khammam, on 27 December 2014 (at Immaculate Heart of Mary, Khammam.

While congratulating them, let us pray that they may find meaning and joy as Salesian priest in the service of the people of God.

Dn. Dasari Nireekshana Raju.....DB PT Parru (From January 4th)

Dn. Putti Thambi Joseph DB Ravulapalem (From January 4th)

Dn.Medi Sleevaraju.St. Theresa's Church, Sanathnagar (From January 13th).

Reminder: Assessment forms

Kindly note that the second assessment of the temporary professed Salesians is to reach the Provincial office by Jan. 15, 2014. The rectors of

the respective houses are exhorted to take the necessary steps in ensuring that these forms are diligently filled in by the community. We do understand that this process is one of the valuable means of accompanying our young Salesians as they mature in their Salesian vocation.

Feast of Immaculate Conception

The feast of the Immaculate Conception brings to our mind the origins of our society, when Don Bosco said, “Yes”, like Mary, by responding to the call of the neglected lad, Bartholomeo Garelli, and allowed God to begin to unfold His mission through his life.

We need to be constantly reminded of her presence in our life and apostolate: Presence of our Lady helps the Salesian to acquire a profound eschatological hope. She accompanies all pilgrims in their journey towards our Father’s home. Daily we say at the end of the meditation “you were Don Bosco’s teacher; show us how to imitate his virtues”. Let her play a key role in our life - then our Salesian life will be meaningful and relevant wherever we are.

The solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mother Mary rejuvenates in us a nostalgic memory of the origins of our charism for the poor and abandoned youth. Don Bosco began his work with a poor lad, Bartholomew Garelli by praying to our Blessed Mother. Don Bosco did his ministry with the help of the Blessed Mother. Mary did it all was his constant saying. Every day at the end of meditation we renew our entrustment to our Blessed Lady under the name of Immaculate-Help of Christians. Blessed Mary, Immaculate-Help of Christians leads us to the fullness of our offering to the Lord and gives us the courage for the service of our brethren. May she teach us to follow Christ unconditionally and to communicate to the young the joy that is to be found in following Jesus.

SPCSA in Sri Lanka – Salient features of the Meeting

The SPCSA Council Meeting was held in Don Bosco Provincial House,

Dungalpitiya, Sri Lanka on 15 and 16 November 2014. The Council was chaired by Fr. Maria Arokiam Kanaga, our Regional Superior. The following are the salient features of this meeting:

- The Council discussed at length on the steps taken to implement the directives of GC 27. All the Provincials shared about the plans they have made in view of the Rector Major's plan for the next six year.
- Boscoree budget was presented and approved.
- Each Province was asked to nominate a reference person for the Youth Expo and the Salesian Family Live-in to be held in Delhi and Kolkota in September 2015. From our Province, Fr. Vice Provincial will be the reference person for the Youth Expo and Fr. Garlapati Michael Kishore will be the reference person for the Salesian Family Live-in. The number of participants was fixed as 100 for the Salesian Family meet and 75 youth (above 17 years) for the Youth Expo.
- Every Province will contribute Rs. 200,000/- as solidarity fund to renovate the Salesian house in Vishakapatnam which was devastated by Hudhud cyclone. Every year the Provinces will contribute 2 Lakhs each towards the emergency fund.

A LOVING TRIBUTE TO FR JOHN LENS SDB

The zealous Missionary of the Province is no more: Fr. John Lens, the only foreign missionary in the Salesian Province of Hyderabad and the senior most confrere of the Province breathed his last on November 28, 2014. He was the confessor in the novitiate at Manoharabad for the last 17 years. He was absent for evening prayer at 7.30pm. The novices went to the room to call him. The novices found him collapsed on the ground and was immediately taken to the hospital where he was declared dead. In his demise, the Province of Hyderabad has lost a veteran holy missionary, an exemplary Salesian.

Father John Lens was born of Mr.Lode and Mrs.Johanna Onzea on 5

October 1921 at Borgerhout, Belgium. He was baptized on 19 October 1921. He grew up in a typically traditional catholic family and environment. It was his early upbringing in a God fearing family that sowed the seed of the priestly vocation in the heart of Fr. John Lens. He responded to the call of Christ and joined the Novitiate in Groot Bijgaarden and made his first profession on 2 September 1947. His final step and the definitive entry into the Salesian Congregation took place on 14 August 1952. For his theological studies he was sent to the Theologate at Mawlai, Shillong and was ordained a priest on 1 August 1953.

After his ordination he was posted at Poonamalle. Having worked also in Kotagiri, Katpadi, Negombo (Sri Lanka), Tirupattur, he reached Andhra Pradesh in 1975. And all along he made India his home ! From 1975 when the Salesians were offered a Parish in the city of Hyderabad (St. Theresa's Church, Sanathnagar) .Fr. Lens John and Fr. Kottekarote Joseph, arrived on 22 August, 1975, at the invitation of Rt. Rev. Arulappa, the Archbishop of Hyderabad, who entrusted permanently to the Salesians the parish of St. Theresa's Sanathnagar, Hyderabad. He is also the founder of Don Boscoboschool at Santhnagr. He also served two separate terms as the rector of the aspirantate in Gunadala (Vijayawada) before retiring to the novitiate as the confessor. He was fatherly at the confessional and his penitents went away with a heart full of joy and serenity.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - December 2014

- ✓ 08 - Ordination of Dn. Sarath
- ✓ 11 - **Fr. John Lens - Memorial Mass at Karunapuram (11am)**
- ✓ 13 - Ordination of Dn. Nireekshan
- ✓ 14 - 15 - Annual Provincial Visitation - DB P.T Paruru
- ✓ 16 - 17 - Annual Provincial Visitation - Guntupalli
- ✓ 20 - Ordination of Dn. Thambi
- ✓ 22 - Provincial Council
- ✓ 27 - Ordination of Dn. Sleevaraj

Conclusion

Dear Confreres! My warm wishes to each one of you for this Holy Season of Christmas. Each Christmas season brings with it great joy and enthusiasm. However, if this spirit is not rooted and centred in Christ, the Saviour, the whole essence of this great feast is lost. May the celebration of Christmas, in this year dedicated to young people enthuse us to open our hearts and lives to Christ, who will evoke in us the passion and zeal like Don Bosco to share His Good News with the young.

As I wish each and every one of you dear Confreres, a Merry Christmas and a bright New Year, I also pray that it may add to the meaning of our own existence as messengers of God's love to the young. Let us make Christ and His Word meaningful by our way of life and thus truly celebrate Christmas.

Dear confreres, let me wish you all a very joyous and meaningful season of Christmas and a very fruitful and peaceful New Year 2014. May we all experience the presence of the Lord every day of the New Year 2015.

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco,

Fr. R. Balaraju



Fr Ramedini Balaraju sdb

Provincial

Wish You Merry Christmas & A Bright New

TRAVELOGUE OF THE PROVINCIAL – December - January 2014

Dec	Community	Jan	Community
08	Ordination of Dn. Sarath, Nellore	03-04	Volunteers meet
11	Fr. John Lens – Memorial Mass at Karunapuram (11am)	05-10	Retreat for general patronage
13	Ordination of Dn. Nireekshan	12-15	DB Philosophate, Karunapuram - APV
14-15	DB PT Parru APV	16-17	Don Bosco Provincial House, APV
16-17	DB School Guntupalli APV	19	Diamond Jubilee of Pezzonipet
20	Ordination of Dn. Thambi	20-21	DB Ravulapalem APV
22	Provincial Council, DBPH, Hyderabad	22-23	St. Paul's regional seminary, Nuzvid APV
27	Ordination of Dn. Sleevaraj	24-25	Youth Expo in Guntupalli, Hyderabad
		27	Provincial Council
		28-29	DB Academy, Nalgonda APV
		31	Feast of Don Bosco – DBPH Hyderabad

TRAVELOGUE OF THE Vice Provincial and Economer -December 2014**Fr. Vice Provincial****Fr. Economer**

Dec	Community	Dec	Community
4	Manoharabad	08	Ordination of Dn. Sarath, Nellore
6	Karunapuram	10-11	DB PT Parru
8	Ordination of Dn. Sarath, Nellore	11-12	Ponnur
9	Ponnur – P.T. Parru	13	Ordination of Dn. Nireekshan
11	Memorial Mass - Karunapuram	13-14	Guntupalli
13	Ordination of Dn. Nireekshan	20	Ordination of Dn. Thambi
14	Guntupally	22	Provincial Council, DBPH, Hyderabad
15	Gunadala - Pezzonipet		
16	Guntur		
17	Mangalagiri, Chiguru		
18	DBNJ Vijayawada		
20	Ordination of Dn. Thambi		
22	Provincial Council, DBPH, Hyderabad		
25	St. Theresa's, Sanathnagar		
27	Ordination of Dn. Sleevaraj		