

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

SALESIAN PROVINCE OF HYDERABAD



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Vocational Fragility

“My worry is not that we are losing the ability to make up our own minds, but that it’s becoming too easy to do so” - David Dunning

Dear Confreres,

On 1 February I have completed one year of service in office. It has been a great journey of faith with rich experiences and challenges as well. We have a great province that is committed to the cause of the poorest of the poor. One of the challenges that we face in our Province is the existence of small communities. Is it because we have expanded too fast as a Province? I think it is not the question of expansion of the communities, but rather that of reduction of the number of confreres. We have lost nearly eighty confreres in the past decade.

Looking back, seemingly ‘rock-solid’ vocations have fallen apart. I think our vocation in the post-modern era is inescapably fragile. Statistics clearly show that, this oft used term ***Vocational Fragility*** is not an alarming misnomer, but a disquieting reality. In the past sesseium Salesian India has lost around 520 Salesians, which is almost 25% of the whole of Salesian India. This phenomenon is noticed not only among Salesians but in many of the major congregations of both men and women. This calls for a reflection and a remedy.

The Individual, has never ever been as frail and vulnerable as in the past decade. Religious Vocations are born from this frail and vulnerable humanity. We have been witnesses of this fragility, time and again, in our own personal lives and in the lives of our confreres. We often succumb to personal weaknesses and inconsistencies. A perpetual commitment seems to be an archaic practice. In the secular world today

many youngsters shy away from permanent commitments like marriage and family life. We see the same phenomenon reflected in the consecrated life as well.

The world runs after ephemeral experiences, fleeting pleasures and superficial relationships rather than deeper and lasting experiences with oneself and with others. Fragility in our vocation stems from a shallow faith and a superficial relationship with God. Christ does not become the *raison d'être* of our lives. It is only a deep faith that can sustain us in the different fragile moments of our Salesian life. Fragility is not conquered once and for all. It is a continuous challenge to which faith is the answer. Often we tend to compromise our personal and community moments of prayer which are supposed to provide daily nourishment to our Salesian vocation.

Our society makes of the individual the absolute and unapologetic author of truth and norm. We consider it as our inalienable right to choose for ourselves our pattern of life, our convictions, which most often are conditioned by our likes and dislikes. Breaking a false sense of this autonomy and self sufficiency, we need to recognize the importance of a spiritual guide/director. Even the best doctor in the world does not do a self diagnosis. Regular and consistent spiritual direction is like a shield against fragility. All of us need to have a spiritual director who accompanies us through our vocational journey.

Congratulations and All the Best

Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal

Archbishop Giambattista Diquattro has been appointed by the Holy See as the new Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal. We congratulate and assure him of our prayers as he takes up his, this ministry as the Apostolic Nuncio. We thank Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio for his services as the Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal from 2010 to 2016 and wish him God's graces for his ministry as the Apostolic Nuncio to Poland.

New Provincials SDB and FMA

Fr. Kochamkunnel Jose (KM) was installed as the 14th Provincial of the Salesian Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, Chennai on 2 February, 2017 and Fr. Antony Joseph was installed as the 4th Provincial of the Salesian Province of Our Lady of Health Velankanni, Tiruchy on 4 February 2017. In the name of all the confreres of our

province, I extend our hearty Congratulations to these our confreres and wish them all the best for the responsibility that they shoulder.

I extend my hearty congratulations to Sr. Celine Jacob FMA, the New Provincial of the Province of Bangalore, Sr Mary Maragaret Amalanathan FMA, the First Provincial of the Province of Tiruchurapalli and Sr Lazar Maria Nirmala FMA, the New Provincial of the Province of Chennai. Let us assure them of our prayers and support as they take up their responsibilities of guiding their respective provinces.

May Mary Help of Christians, St John Bosco, St Mary Mazzarello be their constant guides and inspiration.

Visit of Fr Piotr Gozdalski

Fr Piotr Gozdalski SDB, collaborator of the Economer General Bro. Jean Paul Muller, visited our Province to take stock and understand the economic situation of our Province and of the individual houses from 30 January to 13 February. We thank Fr Peter for his services towards our Province and the Congregation. I also thank all of you for the collaboration and support that you have extended.

New Priest

I wish to congratulate Fr Gorumuchu Christuraj for the gift of the priestly Ordination that he has received on 29 January, 2017. We wish him all the best for his future ministry. Let us also thank his parents for this precious gift to our congregation and Bishop Jayarao for conferring the Holy Ordination on Fr Christuraj. A word of appreciation also for the community of Don Bosco, Ravulapalem, for organizing this ordination.

Fr Kondaveeti Rajanna - Definitive Transfer to INM

Fr Kondaveeti Rajanna who was on temporary transfer to the Chennai Province, is definitively transferred. As of now he is a permanent member of INM. We thank him for the services he rendered in our Province. We wish him all the best for his future ministry and also promise him our prayers for his ailing mother.

Upcoming Events

Team Visit

The South Asia Region will have the Team Visit from 27 February to 4 March 2017. The province of Chennai will be hosting this meeting. The provincial council will be participating in this extraordinary and singular event. I request you, dear confreres, to remember our region in your prayers.

Budget for the Financial Year 2017 - 2018

As part of our planning and budgeting, every community was invited in the Administrators' meeting, to prepare a functional and reasonable budget get it approved by the House Council and forward the same to the Economist's Office. I request you to put in the needed time and effort in creating this culture of planning and budgeting in our Province.

Periodic Assessment and Renewal Applications

I request the Rectors to kindly forward the periodic assessment forms of the temporary professed confreres in your community. Please do remember also their applications for the renewal of vows, which must reach the Provincial's office by 19 March 2017.

Condolences

Fr. Thomas Punchakunnel SDB of Kolkata Province, passed away on 4 January 2017. We extend our condolences to the Provincial and Confreres of the Kolkata Province. Our heartfelt condolences also to the Provincial and the Confreres of Chennai province for the sad demise of Bro. Dennis Cutinha SDB who passed away on 4 January 2017 at Dominic Savio, Triupattur. Fr Chipfukho Salew Thomas SDB (42) of Dimapur province passed away on 10th January 2017. Our heartfelt condolences to the Provincial and confreres of Dimapur. May their souls, through the mercy of God, rest in peace!

Conclusion: Season of Lent

We will begin the season of Lent on 1 March 2017. The term 'Lent' is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *Lencten* meaning 'spring'. We are exhorted during this season to

undertake three penitential practices. They are prayer, almsgiving and fasting in order to prepare ourselves for the experience of the Risen Lord at Easter. Let us remember that Lent is not merely a season for avoiding something but is a season for positively contributing to the material and spiritual growth of those in need.

As regards the penance and mortification, Regulation 73 of our Constitutions reminds us: *'In harmony with the Salesian tradition and the teaching of the Church, Friday is to be for the members a day of community penance. In Lent the community should establish some common practice of mortification, which helps the members to prepare for Easter and opens them to a greater sharing with the poor.'* Kindly forward your Lenten contribution to the Provincial Economer.

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar

Provincial

