



# PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

*Salesian Province of St. Joseph, Hyderabad*



INH/TVB/CIR 02/2020

February, 2020

## **Consecrated Life – seeing what really matters in life**

Dear confreres,

On 2<sup>nd</sup> of February we have celebrated the World Day of the Consecrated Life. It is a theme that is ever fresh and ever challenging. As we are steeped in different activities in our mission, I wish to draw our attention and to focus more on what really matters in life. The worldly ways of thinking and acting have the power to derail us out of our singular goal of consecrated life. Have you taken your focus off what really matters in life? In the year 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for women and men in consecrated life. This celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. This Feast is also known as Candlemass Day - the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples.

Consecrated life is born and reborn of an encounter with Jesus as he is: poor, chaste and obedient. We journey along a double track: on the one hand, God's loving initiative, from which everything starts and to which we must always return; on the other, our own response, which is truly loving when it has no "ifs" or "buts", when it imitates Jesus in his poverty, chastity and obedience. When the life of this world attempts to take hold of us, the consecrated life turns us from fleeting riches to embrace the One who endures forever. The life of this world pursues selfish pleasures and desires; the consecrated life frees our affections of every possession in order fully to love God and other people. Worldly life aims to do whatever we want; consecrated life chooses humble obedience as the greater freedom. And while worldly life soon leaves our hands and hearts empty, life in Jesus fills us with peace to the very end, as in the Gospel, where Simeon and Anna come happily to the sunset of their lives with the Lord in their arms and joy in their hearts. Pope Francis affirms that consecrated women and men are like Anna and Simeon who caught sight of the treasure worth more than any worldly good. He warns us that "seeing things in a worldly way" is a great temptation in religious life, which can lead to a loss of passion, sadness, distrust. Being able to perceive God's grace for us is important in religious life.

“My eyes have seen your salvation” (Lk 2:30), invites us to see/experience and to seek Salvation. Don Bosco was able to see something that others failed to see. It is only through the grace of God and through the inspiration of the Spirit that he was able to see what mattered: centrality of Jesus and the salvation of the young. He was able to dedicate himself totally to the Lord and give new life to millions of young people. Today we are invited to open our eyes to see what really matters. We cannot waste our time in matters that are trivial and petty. Barack Obama, the former president of the United States sums up, “We are reminded that in the fleeting time we have on this Earth, what matters is not wealth or status or power or fame, but rather how well we have Loved and what small part we have played in making the lives of other people better.” Sometimes we are distracted with many things like Martha of the Gospel. We get lost in different activities, at times placing a high premium on external measures of success, the need for recognition and thirst for power.

What really matters is the passion that we have to follow the Lord and bring His love to the young. This encompasses our work, our relationships and helps us live our lives in an intentional way giving us a sharper focus. Let us pray for ourselves and for all those who have made commitments in the consecrated life that we may continue to be inspired by Jesus Christ and respond generously to God's gift of our vocation.

#### **PRAYER FOR FR FRANCESCO MARACCANI SDB**

Fr. Francesco Maraccani SDB, former Secretary General and Procurator General of the Congregation breathed his last on January 24, 2020. Fr Maraccani was born on 30 October 1936 in Pavone Mella (Brescia, Italy). He made his first profession on August 16, 1954, his perpetual profession on August 14, 1960. In 1963, he graduated in Electronic Engineering from the Polytechnic of Milan. He was ordained a priest on March 18, 1967. In June of the same year, he obtained a license in Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

After the priestly ordination, he was Dean of the "Don Bosco" Industrial Technical Institute of Brescia for 12 years, from 1967 to 1979. In 1974, he also became Director of the Salesian community, an office he held until 1979, without neglecting the 25 hours of weekly school and teaching in the evening at the Vocational Training Center. To the Provincial who asked him to reduce school hours, he replied that teaching did not weigh upon him and that it was the way to be close to young people. For him they were the best, most beautiful years, his working with young people. From 1970 to 1979, he was Provincial Councilor in the Lombardo-Emiliana Province. He was Moderator of the provincial Chapters several times. Elected by the Capitular assembly, he participated in the 20th Special General Chapter. With regret, but available to obedience, he left

teaching when he was appointed Provincial. From 29 June 1979 to 23 October 1984, he held the office of Provincial of the "San Zeno" Province, based in Verona.

In October 1984, the Rector Major, Fr Egidio Viganò, entrusted him with the office of Secretary of the General Council, a position he held continuously for 18 years, until 2002. From July 2002 to November 2015, for 13 years, he held the office of Procurator General of the Congregation to the Holy See and spokesman for the Rector Major. He participated in eight General Chapters, from 1971 to 2014. In 1990, he was the Moderator of the 23rd General Chapter. From 2015 until November 2019, despite his advanced age and health problems, he continued to work tirelessly in the Legal Office of the Salesian Congregation. Until the end of his earthly pilgrimage, he led an exemplary religious and priestly life.

Fr Maraccani led a beautiful, transparent, joyful life with many interests - from the liturgy to the history of the Church and the Congregation, to ecclesial events, to science and current affairs. He loved work, the Sacred Heart, Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco and the saints of the Salesian Family. He was a Salesian whose life was characterized above all by his great love for Don Bosco, the Congregation and the young. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the confreres in the Generalate and Salesian Pontifical University of Rome, the family members and friends, at the demise of this wonderful Salesian and pray that he may be granted eternal rest in the bosom of our Heavenly Father.

### **TIME FOR GENERAL CHAPTER 28**

The General Chapter 28 of our Congregation begins on February 16, 2020 at Valdocco, Turin. We have been praying for the fruitful and fraternal celebration of the General Chapter 28, which revolves around the theme: 'What kind of Salesians are we for the youth of today?' We know how relevant this theme is for us Salesians as we resolve to march ahead to address the challenges of today's youth, just as Don Bosco did in his own times. This General Chapter challenges us in terms of our own identity, so as to enable us in making our lives and mission even more relevant for young people who want to see us as men of God, men of fraternity and men of unflagging zeal for saving souls. Let us intensify our prayers for the success of the General Chapter 28. Let us ask the Holy Spirit of God to animate and guide every proceeding of the General Chapter so that it may bear abundant fruits for the future of our beloved Congregation even as the Chapter members make every effort to have an experience of the New Pentecost and of joyful Salesian fraternity. The General Chapter 28 will conclude on April 04, 2020. I will be leaving on February 10, 2020 to attend the General Chapter along with Fr Thumma Vijay Prathap, the Province Delegate for GC 28. During my absence from the Province, Fr Thomas Santiagu, our Vice Provincial will take care

of the ordinary running of the Province. Kindly contact him for any immediate assistance you may require.

### **SILVER BELLS AT SACRED HEART NOVITIATE**

The Sacred Heart Novitiate at Manoharabad celebrated the silver jubilee of its existence on January 11, 2020. It was indeed a fitting celebration with the Holy Mass presided over by Most Rev. Thumma Bala, the Archbishop of Hyderabad, concelebrated by Fr Jose Mathew the delegate for formation for South Asia, Fr John Samala the first Novice Master, Fr K.M. Sebastian and Fr Sebastian John, the former Novice Masters, Fr Noel the 3<sup>rd</sup> Provincial of our Province, other Priests who worked in the Novitiate in different capacities as well as other religious. We have paid special homage to Fr Benjamin Pudota and Fr John Lens who were instrumental in establishing and stabilizing the Novitiate which has now reached a mile-stone in its existence and service to the Province. I thank the Novitiate Community for their hard work and for the preparations made for a meaningful silver jubilee celebration. My special thanks go to our economer, Fr Androth Jose who oversaw the work of renovation of the Novitiate building which was completed well in time for its Silver Jubilee and the confreres of the community, Fr K.P Mathew, Fr Boddu Charan, Fr Pandicherry Joseph and Br Sagar. Let us continue to support the Salesian team of the Novitiate with our humble prayers that they may be constantly guided by the Holy Spirit and by the maternal guidance of our Blessed Mother in forming the young minds and hearts of the novices according to the pastoral heart of Don Bosco, who even now invites us to share in the mission of offering God's love to young people.

### **YOUTH FEST AND YOUTH RETREATS**

The Youth Animation Department of our Province, BIRDY organized a Youth Fest on January 4-5, 2020 at Bandlaguda with the participation of young people from many of your houses, including those who were accompanied by Salesian sisters from their houses. While I thank the BIRDY community for successfully organizing the Youth Fest under the title: Youth in Nation Building, I thank also other communities for taking initiatives in forming youth groups, organizing youth retreats, facilitating sports and recreational activities for youth, etc. in keeping with the priority of the Province for this year. We congratulate the communities of Muniguda and Ongole for successfully organizing the Youth Retreats in collaboration with the diocese of Rayagada and Nellore respectively. I would like to wish the communities of Kondadaba, Narsipatnam, Vizag and Srikakulam. I also would like to encourage all the communities to intensify their efforts in this direction thus making our presence relevant for the youth who give meaning to our life and mission. Kindly send the reports of these events to the provincial office for documentation and publication.

### **PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY DAY**

We have celebrated the Provincial Community Day on January 27, 2020 at Don Bosco Guntupalli. It was a moment of togetherness and fraternal sharing that had certainly strengthened our bonding with one another as a Province. I thank the Community of Don Bosco Guntupalli for all the preparations and arrangements made for the meaningful celebration of the Provincial Community Day. As we appreciate and encourage one another, I invite you all once again to make our living together a rich experience of brotherly love and communion so that having experienced Jesus' presence in our own communion, we may be enabled to offer Him and His unfailing love to the world around us, especially to the poor and abandoned youth entrusted to our pastoral care.

### **PRAYER RREQUEST FOR THE SICK**

We shall continue to pray for the good health and speedy recovery of our sick confreres. The Provincial Community was recently joined by Fr Thottiyil Thomas and Fr Joseph Abraham, whose condition is quite stable at the moment. Fr Joseph Abraham is being treated for a high level of jaundice. Fr Thottiyil Thomas has started taking Ayurvedic Medicine, which is proving to be beneficial for his health. He will soon return to Don Bosco Aluva for further treatment. As you know, Br Dennis' health has improved a lot. He is able to move about with some assistance. We shall continue to support him with our prayers. Fr Thattil Chacko and Fr Yeddanapalli Selvaraj and Fr Therampil Jose are being looked after well at Don Bosco Mothinagar Community. They require constant support and assistance, which is being provided for them by the Community. Let us invoke the Lord to touch them and strengthen them both physically and spiritually in these moments of pain and physical ailment. I invite you to offer special prayers also for the speedy recovery of Fr T D John. Let us continue to remember these and all other sick confreres in our prayers. I also thank the confreres in these communities for their generosity and availability in looking after the sick confreres.

### **SALESIAN SANCTITY IN FEBRUARY**

February 1	Commemoration of deceased Salesians
February 7	Memory of Blessed Pius IX, pope
February 9	Memory of Blessed Eusebia Palomino, virgin (FMA)
February 25	Feast of Saint Luigi Versiglia, and Callisto Caravario: Salesian proto-martyrs (EAO)

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

February 3-5	Salesian Social Forum
February 5-6	Provincial Council
February 7-8	YAR Governing Body Meeting, BIRDY

February 16

GC 28 begins

February 23-24

Volunteers Meet - Vijayawada

February 26

Ash Wednesday

### CONDOLENCES

We offer our prayerful condolences:

- to the Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Calcutta at the demise of Fr Mark Mondol(54) on January 01;
- to the Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Guwahati at the death of Fr Milon Narjary(54) on January 04;
- to the Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Dimapur at the passing away of Fr Mathew Ponnattil(81) on January 30.

May these Salesians receive the eternal reward from the Lord for offering themselves to the service the young in the Lord's vineyard.

### CONCLUSION

*'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,' (Reg 73).*

We are once again at the threshold of the Holy Season of Lent, which begins on February 26, Ash Wednesday, a day of fast and abstinence. During Lent, we are once again reminded that we are called to conversion. Although many people, including some of the great saints, have electric moments of conversion, the Catholic attitude is that conversion, in general, is an ongoing event. That is the reason why great spiritual writers sometimes illustrate the faith journey as stair steps. It can occasionally tire us, this daily climb, but it is the only way to get there. But we trust the outcome is worth it. We trust that God makes all things new, including us, even though we arrive still not perfect. God provides the perfection.

History is full of wondrous moments of conversion. St. Paul provides the classic example, being struck blind on the road to Damascus. Sometimes, we all desire a road-to-Damascus experience, a moment of certainty. Sometimes we receive one. Nevertheless, we are all invited to conversion, even though sometimes we lack fire or direction. Sometimes, we are weary of the journey. The 40-day time frame of Lent is a perfect opportunity for a short course in conversion.

As we resolve to make this journey of conversion in our own personal lives, especially in this holy season of Lent, I invite you to make it a point to come together as communities and discuss the Lenten penance through which we will be enabled to come closer to God, to one another and to the people on the fringes of society.

Wish you all a very meaningful lenten experience of conversion and renewal.

Yours in St. John Bosco,



Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar SDB  
Provincial