



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Salesian Province of St. Joseph, Hyderabad



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The Dream of the Rector Major Rev. Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime

Dear Confreres,

I hope and pray that you are all safe and well protected from the virus that continues to torment the world. In this circular I wish to present to you the first good night talk given by the Rector Major Fr Angel Fernandez Artime after his re-election on 11 March 2020. It succinctly summarizes his sentiments after being re-elected as the Rector Major, the expectations of the Congregation from the Rector Major, the reference to Don Bosco our father and founder, the young as the 'sacrament of our encounter' with God and the five-fold dream that he has for the Congregation.

In this first good night of the new six-year term, I allow myself to share with you, dear brother capitulars, what my heart feels and has felt. Above all, I need to say thank you to God who has guided us until this moment. I believe this, and because I believe that we are living everything that happens to us by faith. I am certain that we are all 'in God', trusting Him and naturally, trusting the human mediations who are all of you, brother capitulars, who have brought me to this YES in the morning. The emotion is great. I continue to feel overwhelmed by the fact that I am one of "Don Bosco's successors" as article 126 of our Constitutions says: "The Rector Major, Superior of the Salesian Society, is the successor of Don Bosco, the father and the center of unity of the Salesian family".

And once more, I remain without words as I read the spiritual testament of Don Bosco that our father left us in writing: "Before leaving for my eternity I must fulfill some duties towards you, and thus satisfy a deep desire of my heart (...) I leave you here on earth, but only for a while (...). Your Rector is dead, but another will be elected who will take care of you and your eternal salvation. Listen to him, love him, obey him, and pray for him, as you did for me". The words of our Beloved Father Don Bosco resound in my mind and heart like balm and fire at the same time. His figure is so great, that I inevitably feel small and unworthy. Only the Grace that comes from the Lord in whom I abandon myself as I said this morning, your help as my Salesian brothers and all the other Salesians in the most diverse places of the Salesian world, and the love that we have for our young people, especially the poorest, give me the necessary Peace and encouragement.

In reference to personal peace, many confreres have asked me how I feel. My answer has always been this: very much in peace and very free. This is how I felt during the whole time of the Chapter and of discernment. This is how I felt yesterday, as I felt today before and after the election. In peace and freedom because I have neither sought nor am seeking this service. I was spiritually prepared to continue (because I feel that the previous six years that we have lived have been years of grace, not without difficulties of course), but they have not worn out or

annulled my hope and desire to be faithful personally and as a Congregation. But I was also prepared to end my service if that was the sentiment of the Assembly in the name of the Lord. And it is with this peace and freedom that I take into my hands, mind and heart what was expressed yesterday in discerning the expectations you have of the Rector Major:

- I will try to the best that am able, to be a true Man of God, with strong charismatic and pastoral identity.

- I will try to be far-sighted, capable of reading reality with faith and hope.

- It is my profound desire to continue as much as possible to be a man capable of fatherhood and fraternal affection, accompaniment, closeness to the confreres.

- I believe that it will demand a lot of my energy into being a man capable of building unity in the Congregation, of involving and accompanying, of creating a common vision, of uniting differences, of building up communion, of working as a team and of delegating.

Finally, I turn my attention to young people. They are the "sacrament" of our encounter with God as Salesians of Don Bosco. They constitute "the burning bush" that we can approach in the name of God. They are the sacred place of our sanctification that God has assigned to us in Don Bosco. The presence in our midst of sixteen young people several days ago has touched our hearts by the emotion and the strength of their youthful words. And the young people have asked us to be with them, not to abandon them, not to leave them to their fate. They have asked us to long for them, to love them as they long for us and love us. They have asked us to accompany them on the path of life. And they have asked us to be men capable of speaking to them of the Love that God has for them. They have not asked us for structures, or constructions, or management programs, or even activities.

Young people have been co-founders with Don Bosco as Pope Francis says in his message to GC28. That is why they and the sound of their voices - the Holy Father tells us - are and must be our best music. For this, we are called to permeate the lives of so many young people who are abandoned, in danger, poor, discarded, who await for a glimpse of hope, who long that the Salesian be a brother, or sometimes a father and always a friend. We cannot but be faithful when we have in front of us children, adolescents, youth and their families. A two-fold fidelity is expected from us: fidelity to the young and docility to the Holy Spirit.

I conclude saying that it is not irrelevant to live our CG28 in Valdocco. The Holy Father himself speaks to us of what he has called "the Valdocco option" and which I translate into dreams that have been realized but which must become even more so, because:

1. I dream like Don Bosco that the Salesian of the 21st century be a man full of hope (as the Pope asked us in his letter to the GC28), passionate for Jesus Christ.

2. I dream with a Congregation in which, with the spirit of Valdocco as created by Don Bosco, every Salesian lives for and with the boys and girls, and the young, loving them truly in the name of the Lord.

3. I dream with a Congregation in which we Salesians live God's fatherhood so strongly that we make young people experience it.

4. I dream with a Congregation where the poorest and most abandoned, the discarded, the excluded, those who have suffered any kind of abuse and violence are our priority, seeking their good and their happiness, as Don Bosco did.

5. I dream that "the Valdocco option" may be in the whole Salesian world and may make our presence among the young our indisputable identity.

If this is so, the Mother Help of Christians will continue to do everything for this Congregation and for this Salesian Family. Dear boys and girls, dear young people, help us to be ever more faithful. Dear confreres, in the words of Pope Francis - Dream and dream big. Dream and make the young dream.

Province Response to Covid-19 continues

I would like to thank each of you for the prayers offered and for the service being rendered even to this day in this time of unprecedented challenges that the world is facing due to Covid-19. I urge all of you to spread the message of hope and salvation in these trying times. Over the past few weeks numerous confreres, volunteers and friends have joined together to provide outreach and support to families affected by this pandemic.

All our communities have been actively involved in helping the poor of our neighbourhood, the migrants, the orphans and the street children. Apart from providing dry ration, health and hygiene kits, our communities have been responding to the needs of the civil society and the government: Guntur and Gunadala communities have opened their doors and grounds for rythu bazar (vegetable markets), Don Bosco Ongole has offered its premises for testing purposes for Covid-19, Don Bosco, Wyra offered the primary school building for 100 migrants stranded in Wyra, Muniguda community is preparing to accommodate about 150 CRPF personnel, DBHRDC Gagillapuram has been accommodating a good number of medical personnel and such similar efforts are being made by other communities too in this time of emergency.

By now, most of us have accepted the reality of this crisis. We need to be serene and grow ever deeper in our trust in Jesus who is the Lord of history. I do hope we are taking full advantage of the situation to grow in areas that we have neglected in our busy life. This lockdown period is a wonderful opportunity to spend more time in prayer and quality time with one another, appreciating one another and accepting our differences.

Apostolic Assignments for 2020-21

As we have completed another academic year I take this opportunity to thank all of you dear confreres for your availability, generosity and collaboration in faithfully fulfilling your duties towards the realization of the common mission of the Province. We know how uncertain and grim the situation continues to be due to the rising number of COVID-19 infections and deaths across the country and how our state and central governments are trying to impose more stringent measures to contain the spread of the virus. Since the lock-down continues to remain in effect, I have decided to withhold the Transfer List 2020-21 till the situation becomes favorable for us to travel safely and take up the new assignments and responsibilities. I request you all to continue to remain in your respective communities and carry on with your duties and ministries as usual. I once again thank you for your passion and creativity in responding to the needs of the Province even in this time of grave crisis. Let us help each other to build up a better Province and a brighter future for our young people.

Re-confirmation of Rectors

I am happy to announce to you that the following Rectors who have completed their first term have been reconfirmed for another 3-year term. As we know the ministry of the Rector is to animate and govern the community. I thank the newly-reinstated Rectors for carrying out this ministry faithfully and wish them God's abundant blessings, the guidance of the Holy Spirit and

the fraternal support of fellow confreres in continuing this ministry in their respective communities.

Don Bosco, Chandur	Fr Ramedini Balaraju - Rector (2020-II)
Don Bosco, Guntupalli	Fr Barigala Arockia Nathan - Rector (2020-II)
Don Bosco, Sanathnagar	Fr Kollamparambil Joseph - Rector (2020-II)
Don Bosco Academy, Nalgonda	Fr Vatti Balashowreddy - Rector (2020-II)

Prayer for our Confreres

Fr Joseph Abraham is in the Provincial House and his health is gradually improving. The condition of Fr Chacko Thattil is stable. Fr T.V. Thomas is undergoing treatment in Aluva and his condition is stable as well. The confreres of these communities are giving the best attention possible to them. Fr T.D. John is residing at St. Joseph's, Katapadi and undergoing treatment in CMC, Vellore. Fr Lourdasamy the Rector of the community and the confreres of St. Joseph's are giving utmost care to Fr T.D. I sincerely thank these communities and wish our confreres speedy recovery.

Fr Pallithanam Thomas has travelled back to India just in the nick of time before the lockdown. He is in PARA community, Ravulapalem at the moment. As the COVID-19 continues across the world, we are getting more and more anxious and concerned about the health and safety of our own confreres who are either serving in foreign missions or studying abroad. I am regularly in touch with them. They are sending me constant updates about their health condition and the medical attention that they have been receiving.

Let us constantly raise our pleas and petitions to our Heavenly Father for their safety and speedy recovery. As we pray for our own, let us not lose sight of the entire suffering humanity, which is desperately waiting for God's healing hand to come upon them, touch them and release them from the clutches of this unprecedented pandemic. Let us intensify our prayers for the whole world especially through the Holy Hour, which by God's providence has become part and parcel of the daily life of most communities during this time of the lockdown. I recommend all the communities to have the Holy Hour and pray for the world.

Directions for Professions/Renewals in the Province

In view of the country-wide lockdown necessitated by COVID-19 and the precarious and volatile situation in which we continue to live, the Provincial Council in a meeting held on April 24-25, 2020 has come up with the following directions to facilitate the profession of religious vows duly held every year on 24th of May, the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, the principal patroness of the Society of St. Francis de Sales. The list of novices/clerics/brothers who have been admitted to religious profession will be sent to you by May 10, 2020.

1. First professions, renewals of profession and perpetual professions of our Salesian novices/clerics/brothers will take place in their respective local communities of the Province and every community is expected to make due arrangements for the same.
2. Adequate spiritual animation/preparation should be provided for all our novices/clerics/brothers before they profess/renew the 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 Provincial Office.

3. Religious profession is to be accepted by the Rector of the community who is then 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 superior/rector and the witnesses.

4. To assist you, the rite of admission to the Novitiate, the rite of first profession, the rite of renewal of profession and the rite of perpetual profession are being sent along with this Circular.

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 certain restrictions are lifted and life returns to normal. Meanwhile I encourage you to continue to pray for vocations in our Province.

Documents from Formation Sector

The documents - Animating and governing the community: The ministry of the Salesian Rector and Young Salesians and accompaniment: Orientations and Guidelines - were officially presented to the members of the General Chapter 28. These two documents, approved by the Rector Major and his Council, are the result of important processes that have involved the 7 Regions and all the Provinces during the last few years. A very large number of confreres, especially younger ones, have contributed in various ways to them. After having integrated some observations that emerged during GC28, the two documents are now available in PDF versions. The two documents are meant for the ongoing formation of all the confreres.

The Formation sector is preparing aids and tools to facilitate the reading and the gradual assimilation of these documents by confreres and communities. Just as soon as these are ready, they will also be made available to us. This year, I would like to invite the communities of the Province to study and reflect on Animating and governing the community: The Ministry of the Salesian Rector, while the formation communities give similar attention to Young Salesians and accompaniment: Orientations and Guidelines. Next year we could proceed in reverse, with the communities focusing on Young Salesians and accompaniment: Orientations and Guidelines and the formation houses on Animating and governing the community: The ministry of the Salesian Rector. Please find the PDF versions of these documents attached to this Circular.

Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Bishop Giuseppe Cognata

Our Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, announces that Pope Francis, in relation to the request presented by the Group of Catholic Jurists, authorizes the opening of the Cause of Beatification of Mons. Giuseppe Cognata, S.D.B., Bishop of Bova and Founder of the Salesian Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Here is the official announcement by the Rector Major.

Cause of Beatification and Canonisation of Bishop Giuseppe Cognata (1885-1972), S.D.B.,
Bishop of Bova, Founder of the Salesian Oblates of the Sacred Heart

The Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, rejoices in announcing, in the exultation of Easter and on the Feast of the Divine Mercy, that the Congregation for

the Causes of Saints has itself announced in a letter dated 15 April 2020 to the Salesian Postulator General (Prot. VAR. 8579/20), Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, and signed by Bishop Marcello Bartolucci, Secretary of the aforesaid Congregation, that: "I am happy to inform you that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in its Letter No. Prot. 911/1935-AS265-74579 on 17 February of this current year has communicated to this Dicastery that the Holy Father 'upon careful and thoughtful examination, has given his august consent to the requests of religious and laity who have petitioned for the opening of the Cause of Beatification of Bishop Giuseppe Cognata, S.D.B., Bishop of Bova' ".

Here I share with you a short biographical note regarding Bishop Giuseppe Cognata (1885-1972), S.D.B., Bishop of Bova and Founder of the Salesian Oblates of the Sacred Heart. Born at Agrigento on 14 October 1885 of Vitale and Rosa Montana, he showed a great wealth of human gifts and talents since childhood. As a twelve-year-old he entered the 'San Basilio' Salesian college in Randazzo (Catania), Don Bosco's first work in Sicily, ready to accept the call to religious and apostolic life among the Salesians; a vocation strongly opposed by his father and grandfather, with its trials and long and painful struggles, but crowned with joyful success. On 5 May 1908, cleric Giuseppe Cognata made his perpetual profession at San Gregorio di Catania, into the hands of the then Rector Major, (and today Blessed) Fr Michael Rua, and the following year, on 29 August 1909, he received his priestly ordination in Acireale. He had graduated brilliantly in both Literature and Philosophy and then went to young people not only as a teacher and assistant, but also as a zealous priest, carrying out his mission at Bronte in Sicily, at Este in Veneto, and at Le Marche in Macerata.

The First World War saw Fr Cognata, the soldier, in Palermo, Trapani, Padua. And it was in Trapani that he laid the first foundations of the Salesian Work which he was called to direct a few years later. He was Rector of a number of works, but even more the director of souls. From Trapani he was called to lead the college at Randazzo (Catania), then the college at Gualdo Tadino in Umbria and finally he became Rector of "Sacro Cuore" (Sacred Heart) in Rome. In the Consistory on 16 March 1933, Pius XI appointed Fr Giuseppe Cognata as Bishop of Bova, a particularly poor and disadvantaged diocese of Calabria. He received his Episcopal ordination on 23 April in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome, from the Salesian Cardinal (today Venerable) Augusto Hlond, Metropolitan Archbishop of Gniezno and Pozna , co-consecrators being the Salesian Bishop of Sutri and Nepi, Luigi Maria Olivares, also Venerable, and Bishop Romolo Genuardi, auxiliary bishop of Palermo. Along steep paths and mule tracks, Bishop Cognata - who had chosen the Pauline expression "Caritas Christi urget nos" as his episcopal motto - sought to visit and comfort not only all the small villages of the diocese, but also groups of poor families scattered here and there in the most remote and inaccessible places.

He gave life to a pious society of generous young women willing to work with courage and joy in the smallest, lost, and most abandoned centers. Thus the Congregation of the Salesian Oblates of the Sacred Heart was born on 8 December 1933. In 1939, an infernal storm raged against the Founder and his Institution. On 20 December 1939, the Congregation of the Holy Office, on the basis of false accusations, unjustly condemned Bishop Cognata to dismissal from his episcopal dignity. He then went far away, living for long years in silence and solitude, separated from his spiritual daughters. He was welcomed into the Salesian houses in Trent and Rovereto until 1952 and then at Castello di Godego (Treviso) until 1972, carrying out an assiduous and appreciated ministry as confessor and spiritual guide.

The Cross is hope, the certainty of resurrection and life. In Easter 1962, Bishop Giuseppe Cognata was reintegrated into the Episcopate by Pope John XXIII. Thus, by the will of Pope Paul VI, he participated in the second, third and fourth sessions of the Second Vatican Council. On 6 August 1963, he was appointed titular bishop of Farsalo. On 29 January 1972, he had the joy of seeing his Institute recognized by the Holy See with the "Decretum Laudis" or "Decree of Praise". He died on 22 July 1972 in Pellaro (Reggio Calabria), the initial headquarters of the missionary activity of the Salesian Oblates. His remains lie at rest in the General House of the Oblate Sisters in Tivoli. As we pray for the success and fruitful outcome of the cause of beatification and canonization of Bishop Giuseppe Cognata, let us commend ourselves to the intercession of this friend of God, who having participated in the death of Christ, now shares in His glory in heaven.

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 05	Provincial Council
May 18-23	Spiritual Animation/Retreat before Professions
May 20	Death Anniversary of CI Thuruthel James
May 24	First Professions at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad
	Final Professions at respective local communities
	Renewals of Religious Profession at respective local communities

Condolences

We offer our heartfelt condolences:

- To the Provincial and the confreres of the Province of Mumbai at the death of Bro Michael Condillac SDB on April 12, 2020 at Mumbai.
- To the Provincial Superior and the sisters of the FMA Province of Chennai at the passing away of Sr. Solomon Philomena FMA on April 28, 2020 at Fatima Convent, Kodambakkam.

We commend their souls and the souls of all our confreres who succumbed to COVID-19 to the mercy of our Father in heaven so that they may be welcomed to join the ranks of saints and angels at the banquet of our Heavenly Father.

Month of May

We are in the month of May, which is the month of Mary. 'Marian Devotion' is a great heritage that Don Bosco left to us his sons and to the entire Salesian Family. Historically we know that it was Pius VII who instituted the Feast of Mary Help of Christians on May 24, in 1815, recalling the victory at Lepanto and commemorating the day of his own release, the year prior, from imprisonment at the hands of Napoleon. Don Bosco championed the devotion to Mary Help of Christians. There was an event that reassured Don Bosco that the choice of devotion to Mary, Help of Christians, was precisely what was needed at his time: an ancient image of Our Lady and the Baby Jesus spoke to a young boy, Federico Cionchi in a little town near Assisi called Spoleto. The entire story of this can be found in the Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco in volume VIII. Essentially, the image was found in a long-forgotten and ruined little chapel in the woods of

Spoletto. Since no one could remember the title of that image of Mary, the Bishop of Spoleto decided that, given the nature of the times and all the attacks against the Church, they would call her "the Help of Christians".

Don Bosco took this as a direct sign from Our Lady that she wanted to be honored under that title as she protected all the faithful from attacks against their faith and their sanctity. His is a devotion to a woman of great strength and courage who defeats the Devil, who defends her children mightily, who keeps her Son's Church safe in the midst of great trials and attacks. Let us continue to have recourse to this devotion to Mary Help of Christians in our troubled and dark times. I strongly recommend to your kind attention the letter of Pope Francis for the month of May, through which he lovingly spurs us on to turn to the power of the Rosary. You can find Holy Father's letter attached to this Circular.

Wishing you a happy feast of Mary Help of Christians,

Yours in St. John Bosco,



Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar SDB
Provincial