



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Salesian Province of St. Joseph, Hyderabad



INH/TVB/CIR 03/2020

March, 2020

Dear Confreres,

Greeting from Valdocco, Turin. I am sure you are all fine and safe from Corona Virus. There is an exponential growth of the number of cases all across the globe. Italy too is badly affected. Let us entrust ourselves to our Lord, the Divine healer through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians. This Corona virus pandemic has brought us on our knees. In spite of all the science and technology, the human person is not absolute. All of us are in need of more of God in our lives. In a dream he had, Don Bosco saw the Church depicted as a ship tossed about on the sea and under fierce attack. However, one of the pillars that kept the ship anchored had “Mary, Help of Christians” standing on top of it. He said “Only two things can save us in such a grave hour: devotion to Mary and frequent Communion.” Let us entrust ourselves to her protection. I recommend that we begin a special prayer every day at the end of lauds and vespers. I suggest the following prayer:

Most holy and Immaculate Virgin, Help of the nations, we place ourselves under your motherly protection. Throughout the Church's history you have helped us in times of trial, temptation and danger. Time and time again, you have proven to be the Refuge of sinners, the Hope of the hopeless, the Consoler of the afflicted, and the Comforter of the dying. We promise to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, your Son, to proclaim His Good News of God's love for all people, and to work for peace and justice in our world. With faith in your intercession, we pray for the young and old, our family and friends, for the poor and abandoned, and for all the dying. Help us to attain good health and the boundless joy of being forever with our Father in heaven. Amen.

(Our Father, three times Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father...)

In this circular I would like to share a reflection offered by Fr Pascual Chavez Villanueva, our former Rector Major. In the light of the theme of the Chapter, “What kind of Salesians for the youth of today?” he has recalled our attention to the letter of Don Bosco written from Rome on 10 May 1884. I would like to share some thoughts from his presentation which I am convinced will

help us to continue to reflect on the theme of the Chapter as individuals and as communities and live our charism with greater significance.

We have a desire to give a charismatic response to the young people of today, especially the poorest and most excluded. For this reason, there is a need for Salesians who are prepared and ready to work with Don Bosco's mind, heart and hands in the Church and in society, and who accompany young people in the world of work, in the digital world, in the defence of creation, etc. (letter of convocation of the General Chapter - AGC427, Turin, 24 May 2018). The letter of Rome is the "gospel of Don Bosco", it breathes the air of the beginnings, which continue to be 'normative' and not simply 'anecdotal', and invites us to conversion: spiritual (to God), pastoral (to the young), structural (making our presences more evangelizing so as to bring the young to Christ and the Church).

The danger of today, as yesterday, for which Don Bosco wrote that famous letter, is the loss of the physical presence of the Salesians among the children and young people which invites us to be with the young in recreation, in free time, in open structures, sharing their lives and taking their dreams seriously, day after day. These elements are all widely developed both in the Final Document of the Synod on Youth and in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Letter *Christus vivit*. All this requires a Salesian in a state of ongoing formation, in a mission shared with the laity.

Don Bosco narrated this milestone dream to Don Lemoyne and then had him write it down and read it, correcting it... Since it concerned especially the members of the Congregation, a new work was necessary so that it could be read in public in the presence of all the young people of the Oratory. This letter was sent on May 10. Read in public by Don Rua, it made a great impression. This was in the Oratory as a sign of reform. The first effect of this dream was that Don Bosco knew the state of many consciences even of some who seemed very good.

Before recovering the most significant elements, it is important to see the *conditions* for rereading the letter today:

First of all, it is obvious that ours cannot be a servile repetition of what Don Bosco did. We must have the courage to do, in the *changed historical conditions of today*, what Don Bosco did in his time. He made education in the service of 'poor, abandoned or young people at risk'. And today, never as before, we are called to do it or renew it, because it is urgent to make a *global compact on education* if we really want to do good to young people and transform the prevailing culture and therefore the social reality.

A second condition is an *educational re-reading* of the current context and condition of young people. Our world knows, and often endures, phenomena that Don Bosco could not even have imagined: the irruption into the life of all the mass media, computers, mobile phones; the swirling acceleration of change and innovation at all levels of private and public existence,

pluralism; the crisis of the systems of meaning and of the agencies of social consensus; the crisis of traditional ethical values and certainties; the growing complexity of individual and social existence; the trend of cultural homogenization to which the international market and consumer needs lead; the depersonalization and extreme subjectivization of individual and social behaviour models; the crushing of thoughts and perspectives on the present with the consequent difficulty for a good memory of the past and for future projects with a long range; the secularization of family and social life; and so on. And many other positive elements that characterize young people today. (Cf. third chapter of the Post-Synodal Exhortation *Christus vivit*).

This requires us to *perceive the novelties of the historical moment in which we are living*, the new problems, the new commitments, the new responsibilities that appeal to the conscience of citizens and to the faith of believers. More specifically, it will mean grasping the historical needs, exigencies, aspirations and disappointed expectations that demand to be fulfilled and not to be further mortified, both in general and in particular in the condition of youth. These have value as indications for being more", for "a bit more of life", for "a bit more of humanity", for "a better quality of life" of each and every one: a good and full life.

At our Salesian level, it requires the *courage to be involved, to live among young people*, that is, without using fragile and false defences dictated by the fear of losing face and dignity; to renew certain educational traditions of dialogue and listening to the voices of the world of youth, as it is today, for better or for worse, with its own characteristics; to keep to the wavelength of the aspirations and problems that young people today express and propose, to study them with seriousness and passion, and to seek with them ways of translating ideas into operational terms.

To start to the future, to the other, to the beyond, to the more. It is necessary to know how to go beyond the surface of reality and reach those deep levels of life where needs arise, aspirations blossom and dreams bloom; where the limits of the present are forced and one ventures into the unpredictability of the future. It involves overcoming passivity and fatalism, seeking the common good, going beyond sayings such as "so does everyone" or "it has always been like this" or "we have the truth".

Significant elements of the letter:

1. Knowing how to use the language of love

"But how can we bring these youngsters to life again, so that we can get back to the liveliness, the happiness, the warmth of the old days?"

"With charity!"

"With love? But don't my boys get enough love?"

"I can see all that and I am well aware of it, but it is not enough; the best thing is missing."

"What is missing then?"

"That the youngsters should not only be loved, but that they themselves should know that they are loved."

So it is not enough to love, it is also necessary to know how to use the language of love, without which there is no valid educational communication. This is certainly the most transparent meaning of the letter, an enunciation of the great principle that we could call the *"visibility of love"*. Today we are in the culture of visibility: what does not appear does not exist; but it is a visibility that hides, if not right away cancels, the being of the person; it is a deadly visibility; there is also a vital and life-giving visibility, which is that of charity; not for nothing, since the texts of the New Testament, love has been associated with light, the irradiation of the Light itself that is God. It is therefore necessary to verify, to learn, to invent the languages of love, so that it may be manifested to the outside world and become a gift, an invitation, a proposal. Certainly, there must be the root in the heart, a pledge of truth and effectiveness. The Salesian must be a passionate lover of the languages of love; a lesson that he learns not only by listening to himself but also by listening to the others: their needs, their sensibilities, their possibilities of expression and their ability to receive.

2. Understanding young people

"No, I repeat: it is not enough."

"Well, what else is needed?"

"By being loved in the things they like, through taking part in their youthful interests, they are led to see love in those things which they find less attractive, such as discipline, study and self-denial, and so learn to do these things too with love."

There is therefore *an element of rationality that must intervene*, that is, a need for knowledge that must take and guide the Salesian educator: and it is *knowing the young, understanding the situations, the questions, the needs to know how to deal with them*. A wide range of scientific and technical knowledge is required in order to interpret the series of values concretely available to and assimilable by young people for a valid growth in the present and in the future. Too many educators insist on the negative, on the problematic, on the irrational, on the morally unacceptable; they so stand on the "no" to be firmly reiterated (often alternating with laxity) rather than on the "yes" to be proposed with intelligence (reason), intuition (love) and courage combined with prudence. Hence enmity, the distance of security, the failure to listen with a growing gap in the natural generational gap; the relationship becomes functional and institutional (when it still exists) or is openly or subtly rejected, with all that heritage of values that the Salesian has in himself and that he would like to (as well as should) transmit, if you want and interpret as an educator.

Understanding youth culture is the basis of our commitment to ongoing formation that makes it possible to eliminate the inevitable distances between us and young people. It is that pedagogical

competence which, matched with sympathy and assiduous attendance, allows us to live in harmony with young people, identifying the ways to penetrate their hearts and conquer life and joy.

3. To have happiness at heart

"Whether I am at home or away I am always thinking of you. I have only one wish, to see you happy both in this world and in the next. It was this idea, this wish of mine that made me write this letter. These words come from someone who loves you very dearly in Christ Jesus, someone who has the duty of speaking to you with the freedom of a father. I seemed to be in the old Oratory at recreation time. It was a scene full of life, full of movement, full of fun".

To truly love one must *never lose sight of the ultimate goal*, the most intimate vocation of each one, which is *the call to happiness symbolically represented by the ideal community dreamed of by Don Bosco*. And for Don Bosco happiness is a privileged way for evangelization (*"to see you happy in time and eternity"*). A recent study entitled *"God and happiness"* helps us to understand this: "In the instant full of a happy moment a superior reality shines suddenly and unexpectedly in the reality of life. A dimension endowed with an unconditional sense breaks into the conduct of man marked by many contingencies. In the moment of this happiness, man knows how to be safe in a good reality that looks at him with benevolence and experiences his life as a good and successful life. Only in this moment does he awaken properly to reality, a reality that has always surpassed what he imagined as happiness and that therefore puts his aspiration to happiness in a new light. It is an experience of transcendence that can be described as a manifestation of good. In this manifestation lies the answer to the question of the source on the basis of which man knows that infinite dimension of reality. Why does he feel touched by a transcendent sphere? When good manifests itself as it does in full moments, this manifestation is a form of encounter with God. God manifests Himself in the happiness of the moment to human consciousness, and this does not remain without consequences.

If for Don Bosco happiness is a road that opens up to God, the Salesian must deal with this reality. He ceases to love who is not in search of his own and others' happiness. And this, today, is a serious problem, given the heavy misunderstanding that culture throws on happiness; given the eclipse of serenity, of the joy of living, of the simplicity that gives the taste for small things; given the spread of depressive syndromes, disorders of relationships, escapes from reality, neurotic compensations; given the obscuring of hope and anxiety about history that generates pessimism, defensive attitudes, refusal to live and enjoy. If he is not in love with happiness, how can the Salesian awaken this latent energy in every young person, educate them and direct them to the very source of happiness that is the God of joy?

4. To be present

"Familiarity with young people, especially in recreation. Without familiarity love is not shown and without this demonstration there can be no confidence. Those who want to be loved must show that they love. Christ made himself small with the little ones and brought our infirmities. Here is the master of familiarity".

Therefore, *attention to needs no less than to the purposes*, becomes *total presence*, emblematically represented by educators as the soul of recreation; we would say the soul of pedagogical coexistence. It is the obvious application of the principle of visibility, not rhetoric, of love. *It is not enough to "be for", it is necessary to "be with" the young.* The distance between us and the young is certainly cultural when it is geographical, that is, when we distance ourselves from them because we are no longer among them. There is the risk coming from the difficulty of understanding and following them in the discontinuity of their tastes and attitudes, from the need to guarantee managerial and organizational roles, age and ailments, from the huge amount of work, from many factors that gradually take away our desire and extinguish the commitment to be with them, in their midst. The basic concept of *Salesian assistance*, understood not so much as an exercise in surveillance but as a cordial and at the same time vigilant and caring-sharing, is in crisis. It creates a bond of familiarity between the educator and the one being educated, allowing for the help and support that are always necessary for a healthy path of growth towards maturity (a function of support proper to any true education). Only from a cultivated interiority come the ability and willingness to dialogue with young people, to distract them from that superficiality that weakens them and invite them to that depth that builds them, precisely thanks to exchange, confrontation, dialogue.

Conclusion

In all our works and institutions, there has to be the 'presence' of life and charismatic energy. Otherwise, the works can continue to proceed with an inertial motion, progressively losing their proactive capacity and significance; they can shine with past glory like stars whose light is still visible, but who have long since exhausted their energy; they can have a great story to tell, but no longer have a word to say in today's social and ecclesial scenario. This is why, in view of being Salesians for the young people of today, we have an absolute need for personal, pastoral and structural conversion.

The Spiritual Testament of our Father is explicit in this regard: "The world will always welcome us as long as our concern is for the under-developed peoples, for poor children, for those members of society most in danger. This is our real wealth, which no one will envy and no one will take from us. Attention to the least, the most deprived, marginalized and excluded, can become a great resource for each confrere to rediscover *"the love of the time of youth"* (cf. Jer 2:2). As for

Don Bosco, young people can become the masters, the custodians, the regenerators of our hearts and return us to a mature and fruitful paternity.

Health Situation of our Confreres

Bro. Dennis continues to remain in ICU at Vijay Marie hospital. His condition is critical. At the moment he is on ventilator, undergoing treatment and receiving dialysis from time to time. His blood pressure and sugar levels are fluctuating and this is unfortunately coupled with high fever, breathlessness and wide spread internal infection. He is being monitored closely by the hospital staff and by our confreres from the Provincial House. I have made a video call to speak to him but he was not in a position to speak. Kindly keep him in your prayers. Fr T.D. John was operated in CMC, Vellore on March 06, 2020. The operation was successful. At the moment he is recuperating in our Salesian House at St. Joseph's, Katpadi. Fr Joseph Abraham has been recently discharged from AIG hospital, Hyderabad. His condition is stable at the moment and he is making a slow and steady progress towards recovery. He is frequenting the same hospital for further treatment and medication. As we support them with our prayers, let us continue to implore the Divine Physician to be their comfort and strength and to grant them complete recovery. And we continue to extend our prayerful support for Fr Thattil Chacko, Fr Yeddanapalli Selvaraj, Fr Thottiyil Thomas.

Salesian Social Forum

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Salesian Community at PARA for successfully organizing the Salesian Social Forum from February 3 to 5, 2020. This meeting was attended by confreres from Chennai and Bangalore Provinces along with five of our Confreres. The participants were engaged in a timely and much needed analysis of the country's current socio-political situation, marked by an erosion of democracy and the emergence of extremist tendencies. The Forum unanimously expressed the need and the desire to speak up and champion the cause of safeguarding democracy and the Constitution. As part of this struggle for democracy and constitutional values, it was asserted by all that we should put pressure on media outlets to bring to light the atrocities perpetrated against those on the peripheries of society. An attempt was made also to analyze as to what extent theory corresponds to practice in our day-to-day Salesian life in terms of the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. I personally congratulate both the organizers and participants on their sincere efforts in making the work of the Salesian Social Forum ever more relevant and fitting for today's context of emerging socio-political challenges.

Youth Retreats

Many communities are continuing to plan and organize youth retreats and such similar programs in keeping with the priority we have taken as a Province. Our communities of Vizag region have

successfully organized a 3-day Catholic Youth Feast from February 7-9, 2020 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows, Kondadaba in collaboration with the priests of Srikakulam Diocese and the Archdiocese of Vishakapatnam. This Youth Fest witnessed the participation and active involvement of almost 500 boys and girls from the rural and urban deaneries of Vishakapatnam and Srikakulam Dioceses. I would like to sincerely congratulate the communities of Kondadaba, Narsipatnam, Vizag and Srikakulam on their meticulous planning and execution of the Youth Fest for the spiritual benefit and renewal of so many young people. I would like continue to encourage all the other communities, who have not done so, to organize at least a day of retreat for the local youth. Let us endeavor to make our youth ministry effective and relevant by availing ourselves of the collaboration and good will of lay people and the diocesan clergy.

Volunteers' Meet

On February 22 and 23, 2020 the second annual meeting of the foreign volunteers was organized at Chiguru, Vijayawada. I thank our Vice Provincial, Fr Thomas Santiago for making all the arrangements for the same and for animating the volunteers. I thank the community of Don Bosco Navajeevan, Vijayawada, who extended their cooperation and assistance in hosting this meeting. I urge the respective communities to continue to accompany and guide these young volunteers who have come for experience and voluntary service.

Indian Martyr for Sainthood

Pope Francis has cleared a martyr from southern India for canonization, making him the first lay Catholic in India to be declared a saint. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints has selected 10 candidates for canonization including Indian martyr Devasahayam Pillai, a Hindu who converted to the Catholic faith three centuries ago. The Vatican approved a miracle attributed to his intercession, clearing the married layman for sainthood on February 23, 2020.

Nilakandan Pillai was his Hindu name. He was born (1712-1752) into a Hindu family in the then Kingdom of Travancore (in the present district of Kanya kumari, in Tamil Nadu) southern India. He was a member of the royal service and was close to King Marthanda Varma, then-ruler of Travancore. He was very much loved by the king and was a good man who was faithful to his duty. However, after several bad harvests, he lost his goods. This devastated him and he wondered: "Who will respect me now that I'm poor?" He shared his worries with a devout Catholic, a Dutch official Benedictus Eustachio De Lannoy who explained to him the meaning of suffering in the light of the Book of Job. Convinced of the truth of the Christian mysteries, Nilakandan asked for Baptism which he received in 1745 from the hands of Father Giovanni Battista Buttari, a Jesuit missionary, after nine months of preparation. He took the name

Devasahayam, the Tamil translation of the biblical name Lazarus, which means “God has helped.” Records show that although religious freedom existed in the kingdom, the king did not tolerate people of his court converting. Palli defied the unwritten rule and became a Catholic in 1745, aged 33. He was shot dead on Jan. 14, 1752, just seven years after his baptism. His body was thrown into a forest but was later buried by Christians.

Devasahayam was declared Blessed on Dec. 2, 2012, 300 years after his birth. Pope Benedict XVI called him a “faithful layman.” Sites linked with Blessed Pillai’s life and martyrdom are in Kottar Diocese in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu state. His tomb at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral of Kottar attracts large numbers of devotees.

Blessed Devasahayam will be the eighth saint from India, with the latest being St. Mariam Theresia, who was canonized last year. The first Indian to become a saint was Gonsalo Garcia, a Franciscan brother and missionary from Mumbai who was martyred in Japan. St. Alphonsa, a native of Kerala, was canonized in 2008. Kerala-born Father Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Sister Euphrasia were canonized in 2014. Goa-born Father Joseph Vaz, a missionary in Sri Lanka, was made a saint in 2015, while Mother Teresa of Kolkata was canonized in 2016. Seven other Indian Catholics are declared as Blessed, placing them on the last step of canonization. At least 11 other Indian Catholics are named venerable, awaiting beatification. The process of canonization is well underway for more than 40 Indians who are listed as Servants of God. May their holy lives constantly challenge us to bear witness to Christ in season and out of season.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ordinations to the Diaconate

On the Solemnity of St. Joseph, the feast day of our Province, March 19, 2020 two of our confreres, Cl. Pale Justin, Cl. Salibindla Praveen will be ordained deacons at Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore. We offer these confreres our compliments and whole-hearted support on this auspicious occasion as they come closer to their ordination to priesthood. I wish them hearty congrats and fruitful diaconate ministry.

Applications for Renewals and Perpetual Profession

I request all the rectors and house council members to send the assessment and application forms (renewals and perpetual professions) of the young Salesians to the provincial office latest by March 31, 2020. Kindly send two admission forms along with the applications of those clerics preparing for perpetual profession. Let us earnestly fulfill the duty of guiding and accompanying our young confreres so that they become more mature in their Salesian way of life and in offering themselves totally to the service of the Lord among the young.

Interim Audit of Our Houses

In the light of the mail that has been sent to you by our Economer, Fr Androth Jose, on February 8, 2020, I would like to invite all the communities to make preparations for the internal audit of our communities as it is being planned from Economer's Office. You are all requested to keep the following documents ready for the same. Kindly extend your cooperation and make necessary arrangements for the smooth execution of this internal audit, which certainly contributes to financial transparency and effective financial management. I sincerely thank Fr Economer and the team for all the efforts towards effective and sustainable financial management of our houses.

1. Accounts till 31/12/2019.
2. Bank statements of all account till 31/12/2019.
3. Printed copy of Cash book till 31/12/2019.
4. All the receipt books of the institution till 31/12/2019.
5. Bank Statement of all FD's till 31/12/2019.
6. Fixed asset register of the community.
7. Details of Donation received both FC and Local.
8. Details of Projects in the community (Budget and proposals)
9. Budget of the community for 2020-2021.
10. Details of FD for gratuity and maintenance of the community.

Summer Apostolate

Our deacons, the students of theology and the students of Philosophy will be sent to different communities of our Province for Summer Ministry. It is our duty to make them feel at home and to accompany them. In this regard I would like to remind the communities in the spirit of the RATIO, that the summer apostolate is a special moment of formation in Salesian Youth Ministry. Hence, all the communities are requested to plan together with them their summer apostolate, evaluate their contribution and active involvement and send a report to the Vice Provincial at the end of their summer apostolate. Summer ministry details of our brothers will be as given below:

SUMMER APOSTOLATE - 2020

S.NO	NAME OF THE COMMUNITY	NAME OF THE BROTHERS	ARRIVAL	DEPARTURE
1	GUNTUR	Cl Gurrala Sunny Deol Cl Bodsest Hrudayaraj	21 March 2 April	3June 4 June
2	DBNJ SECUNDERABAD	Cl Nayak Jameson Cl Narisetti Bala Ashwith Kumar Cl Tekulapally Praveen Cl Saul Pal	2 April 26 April	4 June 25 May

3	KADAPA	Cl Budramgalla Hrudaya Raju Cl Isac Montry	2 April 26 April	24 May 25 May
4	MANGALAGIRI	Cl Pasala Arogya Naveen Cl Gunturu Raju Cl Peter Baliar Sing	26 April 2 April	24 May 4 June
5	MARIAPURAM	Deac. Pale Justin	21 March	3 June
6	MUNIGUDA	Cl Raito Abosalem Cl Bogireddy Vijay Kumar	2 April	3 June
7	NALGONDA	Cl Dasari Johannes Cl Yeruva Joseph Raja Reddy	20 March 2 April	3 June 24 May
8	ONGOLE	Cl Samuel Baliar Singh	26 April	24 May
9	PARA	Cl Chandra Mohan	21 March	3 June
10	PTPARRU	Cl Pradhan Ashish	21 March	3 June
11	PEZZONIPET	Cl Dibbagala Rajasekar Cl Bilugudi Marianna	21 March	3 June
12	DBNJ VISAKHPATNAM	Cl Chilumula Yesu Babu Cl Dushmant Uthan Singh	2 April	4 June
13	WYRA	Deac. Salibindla Praveen	21 March	3 June
14	VOCATION PROMOTION	Cl Vemagiri Rajeev Cl Dekkala Uday Kumar	21 March 2 April	3 June 24 May

Commissions, Sectors and Centre Heads' Meeting

The heads of Commissions, Sectors and Centres are requested to come together for the purpose of preparing SEPP for the year 2020-21. While I thank you for your continued efforts and initiatives in the animation of the Province through commissions, sectors and centres, I would encourage you to extend your collaboration and much needed contribution once again by preparing SEPP for the next academic year and forward the same to our Vice Provincial by April 04, 2020.

Youth Expo 2020

YOUTHEXPO is the national gathering of the members of the Salesian Youth movement (SYM), India. The SPCSA recommends this as a quadrennial programme for young people who are above 18 years of age. It aims to Educate, Evangelize and Engage the participants who come from all over the country, as they collectively live out the Salesian Youth Spirituality during this time. The SPCSA is glad to bring to our notice that the forthcoming YOUTHEXPO will be hosted by the Province of Chennai at Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur on October 2-3, 2020. The host province

will soon initiate the necessary preparations. I invite all the communities to prepare and participate in this inter-provincial Salesian event for the young. Kindly encourage the youth of our communities and neighbourhood, to avail themselves of this opportunity for their enrichment and personal renewal.

Condolences

We offer our sincere condolences:

- To the Provincial and confreres of Dimapur Province at the death of Fr Mathew Punnattil.
- To the Provincial and the confreres of Guwahati Province at the demise of Bro. Aloysius Induwar on February 8, 2020. He was 71 years old.
- To the Provincial and the confreres of Shillong Province at the passing away of Bro. Dominic Induar on February 28, 2020. He was 73 years old.
- To the Provincial and the FMA sisters of Trichy Province at the passing away of Sr Barbon Arokia Jebamani on February 14, 2020.
- To the Provincial and the FMA sisters of Guwahati Province at the demise of Sr Puthempurakel Teresa on February 07, 2020 and Sr Mukalayil Teresa on February 09, 2020.

We commend their souls to the mercy of our Heavenly Father so that they too may be welcomed to join the ranks of saints and angels at the banquet of the Father.

Feast of St Joseph, patron of our Province

On March 19, we celebrate the feast of St Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the foster father of Jesus and the patron of our Province. *When Joseph awoke he did as the angel of the Lord had directed him...* Those are the words that stand out from the Gospel (Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24) on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary. We are invited to imitate this saint who trusted in the plan and providence of God totally.

One of the Christmas songs by Michael Card portrays Joseph's side of the story:

How can it be, this baby in my arms, sleeping now, so peacefully. The son of God, the angel said, how could it be? O Lord I know he's not my own, not of my flesh, not of my bone. Still Father let this baby be the son of my love.

Then Joseph prays:

Father, show me where I fit into this plan of yours. How can a man be father to the son of God? Lord, for all my life I've been a simple carpenter... how can I raise a king? How can I raise a king?

It depicts what Joseph is perfectly: He was a man after God's will. He longed to know God's will and searched to see how he fit into the Father's plan. And just like God had a plan for Joseph, God has a plan for each one of us. The plan does not need to be more than that He wants us to be

upright and righteous. But, just like Joseph, we may feel that we don't have anything to contribute: that we are nothing but simple carpenters...we may feel insignificant, that we have nothing to offer. Still, God has a plan for us. God gives us dreams and speaks to us in our dreams. As we journey through Lent let us ask him to guide us and help us open our hearts to God's plan. That we may be upright and righteous; that we may be men after God's will; that we may be able to pray, "Father show me how I fit into this plan of yours." God has a great plan for everyone. Even for a simple carpenter.

Wish you all a very happy feast of St. Joseph, the Patron of our Province.

Fraternally in St. John Bosco,



Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar SDB
Provincial.