



# PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

*Salesian Province of St. Joseph, Hyderabad*



INH/TVB/CIR 10/2019

October, 2019

## Breathing the Spirit of Don Bosco!

Dear confreres,

I am glad to write this circular from Becchi, the birth-place of Don Bosco. As Salesians it is the birth-place for all of us. Our Rector Major, Fr Angel Fernandez with his council started the genial idea of having a mid-term meeting for Provincials. It is a great opportunity for the provincials to look back at the past three years of service and to re-launch into the next three years with confidence and hope. These days of interaction with the Rector Major and the co-provincials have been profound and enriching.

We had the opportunity of visiting the places of Don Bosco and of the salesian family in and around Turin (Valdocco, Mornese, Chieri and Colle Don Bosco). We have literally followed in the footsteps of Don Bosco right from his early years spent at Becchi, at Chieri (his education and the seminary life), in Turin (early years of his priestly life) and at Valdocco (the founding of the oratory and the expansion of the work). It is a wonderful moment for us all to breathe and taste the Salesian spirit and charism once again. Visiting the places of Don Bosco and reliving His-Story cannot but ignite the fire in one's heart. In one of the homilies, the Rector Major stated, "qui tutto parla" (here everything that we see speaks). Each of these places reveals the story and the passion of Don Bosco. They help us understand the action of God in his life and his personality. His deep desire to offer his life as a gift to young people is evidenced in the preparatory years when he had to overcome all hurdles of extreme poverty, *status quo* and misunderstanding.

We visited a restaurant at Chieri, where the young John Bosco worked. He worked as a waiter at Caffé Pianta to support his education. John Bosco used to work several hours a day and sleep in a tiny room located under the stairs. He suffered extreme poverty. When he joined the seminary in Chieri, the seminarian John Bosco did not have proper clothes

or shoes. When he had to go to the Cathedral of Chieri for Holy Mass, he would borrow the shoes of the receptionist who was his friend, or else he would not be permitted to enter the Church with torn and shabby shoes. This personal poverty, more by choice in the later years, continued till the end of his life. But when it came to his boys, Don Bosco gave only the best. We visited the printing press started by Don Bosco. You find the best machines of his time, which are still in working condition today, but the technological advancement has now left them as museum pieces. It was a state of the art Press, which could proudly compete with the State Press.

Dear Confreres, as a province we have been journeying together to slowly bring in high quality in everything we do. I am glad that we are able to see the fruits of this vision, which has always been the vision of Don Bosco. However, there is also a growing tendency and temptation in some of us of looking after ourselves and seeking our comforts while neglecting the needs of our young people. Let us give our best to our young people and dream a great future for them. Let us engage in personal encounters with young people, spending time with them, offering them guidance, while at the same time respecting and enhancing their dignity.

### **Autobiography of Fr John Lens**

The autobiography of Fr John Lens has been finally published. Fr Lens has handed over the typescript of his autobiography to Fr Medabalimi Balaswamy on whose recommendation he had written the story of his life. Fr John Lens was a great missionary to India and to our Province in particular. He dedicated 65 years of his life in India of which he spent 39 years in the region of our Province. I have presented the Autobiography of Fr Lens to the sisters and relatives of Fr Lens and to the confreres of the Salesian Province of Belgium. I thank Fr Wilfried, the provincial for his invitation and Fr Tulimelli David (he is pursuing his studies in Leuven) for making all the arrangements for the presentation of this book. It is certainly a fitting tribute paid to Fr Lens and also an opportunity to express gratitude to his family and the Belgian Province.

### **Annual Provincial Visitation**

I will be commencing the Annual Provincial Visitation of our communities this month. Visitation is a time for us to take stock of our work and our life, reflect together and find out ways to improve our personal, community and apostolic life. I exhort all in the

community and especially the Rectors to take necessary steps in ensuring that the community plans are collectively discussed and laid out for greater efficacy of our apostolate. You will find below the list of documents you are expected to keep ready for the Visitation. Kindly prepare these documents in order to facilitate the process of animation and assessment as required (Reg.146) during the Provincial Visitation. I count on the collaboration of every community and every confrere to make this Visitation a moment of growth in our province. Let us all implore the Lord and our Blessed Mother to guide us in this process of growth towards becoming more effective agents of transformation in the lives of the young as Salesians of Don Bosco.

- 1) Location and Area of the place where the house is situated
- 2) Population and socio-economic background of the surrounding people
- 3) Brief historical note of the house
- 4) Community project of life
- 5) Educative and Pastoral Plan of the Community (EPP and EPC)
- 6) Community Project of Formation
- 7) Minutes of the House Council
- 8) Minutes of the House Assembly
- 9) Mass Register
- 10) Chronicle of the House
- 11) Annual Financial Statement and Report of the financial situation of the house (including debts and obligations)
- 12) Deeds of purchase and sale, civil and ecclesiastical contracts
- 13) List of the Development Projects implemented and now in implementation in the community.
- 14) Types of apostolate and services offered by the community
- 15) Relevant statistics of the school/parish/oratory in which the community is engaged
- 16) Assessment of the religious life and growth of the community (compiled by the Rector)
- 17) Assessment of the apostolic efficacy of the community (compiled by the Rector and his Council)
- 18) Report of the Groups and Associations animated by the community (e.g. Cooperators, Past-pupils, etc.)
- 19) Report of the Vocation strategy of the community and its efficacy

## **Upcoming Events**

October 07-12	Annual Retreat I (Rectors / In charges)
October 13-14	Volunteers' Meet, Hyderabad
October 24	Provincial Council at DBPH, Hyderabad
October 26	Salesian Family Day, Gunadala
October 27	Headmasters' and Principals' Meet
October 28	Annual Retreat II (for General Patronage) begins

## **Wishing success in studies**

Fr Benny Joseph and Fr Goli Suman have already left for Rome to pursue doctoral studies at the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS). They have joined the community of Don Bosco at UPS. I once again thank Fr Benny for his service as the secretary of the province and Fr Suman for being a formator in the Philosophate. We wish them success in their studies. Let us accompany them with our prayers as they prepare themselves for their future ministry.

## **Condolences**

We offer our sincere condolences:

- To the Provincial and confreres of the Province of Mumbai at the death of Fr Ignas Macwan SDB, who passed away on Monday, September 09, 2019 at Baroda. He was 62 years old and a Salesian for 33 years.
- To the confreres of the Province of Tiruchy at the sudden and unexpected demise of the 4<sup>th</sup> Provincial of the Province, Fr Antony Joseph who breathed his last on September 11, 2019 at Kavery Hospital, Tiruchy. A memorial mass will be celebrated for the repose of the soul of Fr Antony Joseph on October 12, 2019 at Don Bosco Amsam, Tiruchy. We commend our deceased confreres to God's infinite mercy that they too may be admitted to that fullness of life the Lord has promised us.

## **A new saint for India and for the Universal Church**

On October 13, his holiness Pope Francis will declare Sister Mariam Theresia a saint. The Indian nun will be canonized during a Mass along with Cardinal John Henry Newman from England, Italian Josephine Vannini, Swiss Marguerite Bays, and Brazilian Irm Dulce

Pontes. The canonization will take place at St. Peter's Square. Pope Francis on July 1 had formally approved these canonizations.

Sister Mariam Thresia Mankidiyan was born on April 26, 1876 in a Syro-Malabar family in Kerala's Puthenchira village. Sister Mariam founded the Congregation of the Holy Family on May 14, 1914 to impart Christian values to families at Mannuthy, a village near Thrissur town in Kerala state. She died on June 8, 1926, at Kuzhikkattussery.

She was declared a venerable on June 28, 1999, and beatified on April 9, 2000, by Pope St. John Paul II in Rome. Mariam Thresia was the only member when she started the congregation. By the time of her death, the congregation had three new convents, two schools, two hostels, a study house, and an orphanage. She remained devoted to the cause of women's education.

The congregation now has more than 1,500 professed sisters living in 176 houses in seven provinces, most of them in India. They also work in Germany, Italy and Ghana. Celebrations started at the Shrine of Blessed Mariam Thresia at Kuzhikkattussery in Thrissur district after Pope Francis formally approved her canonization. A team from Kerala will attend a special prayer session on the eve of canonization at the Vatican.

Mariam Thresia will be the fourth Catholic from Kerala to be declared saint in the Catholic Church. The first was Sister Alphonsa, a member of the Franciscan Clarist Congregation, in 2008. Pope Francis canonized Father Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Sister Euphrasia in 2014. Let the lives of these new saints inspire us to strive for holiness in the ordinary events of our life.

## **Salesian Sanctity in October**

### ***1. October 05 - Blessed ALBERT MARVELLI***

Albert Marvelli was born at Ferrara on March 21, 1918 into a family which was a true domestic church; he lived and grew up in Rimini, where his family had moved to. He made a constant effort to lead his life according to Christian values. In this he was greatly helped by the Salesian Oratory especially after his father died and the heavy responsibility of caring for his family fell on his shoulders, as he became almost a second father for his brothers and sister.

His diary written between 1933 and 1946 shows us the deepest motivations for his work of evangelization as we can directly enter into his most intimate relationship with God. In fact the diary begins with a profound encounter with the Lord, the result of an unexpected illumination which was to colour his short life: “The way of perfection is difficult, I know, but with the help of Jesus nothing is impossible” (Diary 1935).

Albert was a strong and active man who meditated on how to become holy in the practical circumstances of everyday life. In 1941 he writes: “I want my life to be a continuous act of love (...). Love which is faith, love which is charity, apostolate, sense of duty, the desire to become a saint.” It was the Eucharist that nourished this energy. “My whole being,” he writes in his notes, “is filled with the love of God, in so far as He comes to me with his body, with his soul and makes divine all my body, my thoughts, my actions, my words...”

This intimacy with God, reached precisely through the Eucharist, makes Albert open up to others, recognizing the deep injustices, the sins, the miseries of his own times. His commitment is extraordinary and never ceases. The fervor of his charity is apparent and is seen in the careful attention he gives to peoples’ problems. During the Second World War Marvelli was always the first to help the troops, those in need, the refugees.

He was an active force in the ecclesiastical, social and political life of the city. He served Christ in the poor with fervent love. In his apostolate he was active on many fronts. Knocked down by a military vehicle he died in October 1956. He was beatified by John Paul II on September 5, 2004, at Loreto, on the occasion of a great Congress of Italian Catholic Action.

## **2. October 13 - Blessed ALEXANDRINA MARY DA COSTA**

Born on March 30, 1904 at Balasar, a small place in Portugal, Alexandrina Maria da Costa was brought up in a Christian manner by her mother. At seven years of age she attended elementary school for a year and a half. Lively, cheerful and physically strong she began to work in the fields.

At 14 years of age something happened which would leave its mark for the rest of her life: to escape from the attack of some evil minded men she threw herself from the window. The consequences were terrible, even though not immediate. Until she was 19 she went to Church, but the paralysis continued to advance and the pain became

unbearable. In 1925 she took to her bed never to get up again. Refusing to ask for a miraculous cure she believed that it was her mission “to suffer, to love, to make reparation.”

A great mystical union began with Jesus the “prisoner” in all the tabernacles of the world. In 1935 for the first time she heard Jesus express his wish that the world be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1938, every Friday Alexandrina relived with visible signs, the various stages of the passion of Jesus, while her sufferings increased as did the persecutions of the devil. At this time Fr Mariano Pinho, a Jesuit, her spiritual director, approached Pius XI directly to request the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When the request for the consecration was accepted by Pius XII in 1942, the Friday visible passion stopped and another “sign” took its place: during the last thirteen years of her life, Alexandrina did not take any more food, living solely on the Eucharist.

In 1944, at the invitation of the Salesian Fr Umberto Pasquale, her new spiritual director, she became a Salesian Cooperator. Thousands of visitors from all parts came to ask her advice and prayers. Alexandrina died on October 13, 1955. She was beatified by John Paul II on April 25, 2004.

### **3. 24 October - Blessed LOUIS GUANELLA**

Louis Guanella was born at Campodolcino, Italy, on December 19, 1842, the ninth of thirteen children. He was ordained priest in 1866, and worked for some years as a parish priest, showing a particular love for the poor and solicitude for fostering among the faithful a profoundly Christian life and promoting numerous social initiatives. From 1875 he spent three years with Don Bosco helping him in his work, and then returned to his native diocese of Como in obedience to his Bishop. Various events, trials and difficulties led him towards the poorest of the poor, for whom he opened refuges and schools. He founded the *Servants of Charity* and the *Daughters of Our Lady of Providence*. He died at Como on October 24, 1915 and was beatified by Paul VI on October 25, 1964.

#### **4. 29 October - Blessed MICHAEL RUA**

Michael Rua was born at Turin on June 9, 1837. While still a child he met Don Bosco who with a symbolic gesture foretold that they would 'go halves' together in their future life. In 1855 he made his first vows. While still a sub-deacon he was chosen as spiritual director of the recently founded Congregation.

When he became Don Bosco's successor in 1888 it seemed that he had indeed 'gone halves' with him in everything. He displayed a creative fidelity to the apostolic aspirations and initiatives of the Founder; he reflected the same attractive fatherliness; he developed the Founder's works and continued his apostolic ardour in favour of the young, adapting the works to changing social situations. During the 22 years he was Rector Major he made numerous journeys to support and consolidate the work of the confreres, whom he frequently encouraged by both circular and personal letters which constitute an authoritative interpretation of the spirit of the Founder. He died at Turin on April 6, 1910 and was beatified by Paul VI on October 29, 1972.

#### **Conclusion**

##### **Month of the Holy Rosary**

The month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary. According to an account by fifteenth-century Dominican, Alan de la Roch, Mary appeared to St. Dominic in 1206 after he had been praying and doing severe penances because of his lack of success in combating the Albigensian heresy. Mary praised him for his valiant fight against the heretics and then gave him the Rosary as a mighty weapon, explained its uses and efficacy, and told him to preach it to others. Since the prayers of the Rosary come from such excellent sources – from Our Lord Himself, from inspired Scripture, and from the Church – it is not surprising that the Rosary is so dear to our Blessed Mother and a powerful spiritual weapon that leads us to heaven.

The Rosary is Christo-centric setting forth the entire life of Jesus Christ, the passion, death, resurrection and glory. Of course, the Rosary honors and contemplates Mary too, and rightly so, for the same reason that the Liturgical Year does likewise: "Because of the mission she received from God, her life is most closely linked with the mysteries of Jesus Christ, and there is no one who has followed in the footsteps of the Incarnate Word more closely and with more merit than she" (*Mediator Dei*). Meditation on this cycle of Joyful,

Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous Mysteries makes the Rosary not only "a breviary or summary of the Gospel and of Christian life,"(*Ingravescentibus malis*) but also a compendium of the Liturgical Year. There with the Rosary stands revealed as a dynamic teacher and nurturer of Christian faith, morality, and spiritual perfection, fostering in various ways faith, hope, charity, and the other virtues, and mediating special graces, all to the end that we may become more and more like unto Christ.

Wish you all a very blessed feast of the Holy Rosary.

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar SDB  
Provincial

