

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR



SALESIAN PROVINCE OF HYDERABAD

INH/TVB/CIR 09/2016

September 2016

A Sense of Belonging

In the past few months, we have been reflecting on some of the urgent needs and challenges of our province that emerged during our visioning and planning for this year. In this circular I wish to share with you some reflections on our sense of belonging, another important element of our life and mission.

From our time in the novitiate, we are called to have a deep sense of belonging to our Congregation, Province and community in which we live. What do we actually mean by the word 'belonging?' First and foremost, 'to belong' is to be related to and be part of something in a personal and intimate way. It is primarily the feeling of being 'at home', being contented where I am. In contrast to this is the feeling or craving to be elsewhere; that one would be better off somewhere else. A feeling of being an outsider, isolated or on the margins is also an expression of the latter. Naturally, when one does feel at home, one's commitment is total, creative and passionate. There is a spontaneous and contagious joy that such a person emanates. However, when one does not feel at home, giving one's best is a herculean effort and is hardly efficacious. The main reason for this lacuna is that his heart is not in it. It is elsewhere.

Secondly, the word 'belong' refers to a sense of 'owning something', that something belongs to me. What we consider as ours, we will nurture and build. When we believe that the community where we live is ours, we enthusiastically stake claim in it. We become creators and co-owners of our community, and in turn of our Province and the Congregation at large. We will be deeply involved in the affairs of our community and sincerely strive hard to explore ways and means to make things happen for the benefit of all - most importantly, for young people who are poor and marginalized.

In the jubilee year of the birth of our Province, let us be reminded of our pioneers and many Salesians who have built up our province through their commitment and sacrifices. They owned up our people and the mission. They worked relentlessly and gave their best to build up what we have: a province concerned about the poor and those on the margins, establishing many presences, literally on the margins/peripheries of towns and poor villages. The example of these Salesians should enthuse us to reawaken our sense of belonging today. There seems to be a phase of wandering in some of us who are looking for the 'right place' to be and a waiting for the 'right time' to do. There is also the other temptation and tendency to cater to one's own self or seek the welfare of one's own family and relatives. A lot of time, energy and resources is dissipated for this.

We need to find a deeper sense of purpose in all we do. Belonging is our longing to be present in a total and transparent way to the confreres and to young people. God chose to reclaim our lost dignity through his choice to become one like us. He chose to be born among us. He made his 'home' with us. Incarnation is precisely this - that God chose to be with us as one among us. Jesus says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:10-11). Don Bosco chose to enter the world of the young. He made his home with them. His statement, "For you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life," was not a quote for the walls but a genuine expression of his lived experience of being-at-home with his poor boys. Our constitutions invite us Salesians to give generously of our time, talents and health for the welfare of the young (Art. 14). However, only when we are truly convinced that we belong to God and to His people, especially the poor young, that in their midst is my home, will this invitation be accepted and lived. Only then will we truly revive and rejuvenate our various presences.

Mother Teresa, 'the saint of the gutters', whom we so admire and talk about today, was not an Indian by birth, but by choice. She embraced our poor and made India her 'home'. She identified herself with the poor and abandoned and gave her entire life for their welfare. She faced criticism, obstacles and hardships. But her commitment in love and service never wavered. Mother Teresa was a simple, feeble, frail and small person but one who could challenge the mighty and the powerful with her passionate commitment to the poor. Her Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity continue to live and work as per the vision of Mother Teresa. To live joyfully and work strenuously as per the principles of Mother Teresa demands a total renunciation of the self and a complete owning up of the other - no matter who, what, from where the other is. It is simply being at home where you are, amidst whom you are sent to, making available the little that you own to anyone

in need. It is this single-minded devotion and commitment that has made the Missionaries of Charity credible across the globe - even among atheists or communists. Be it on a street, in a market place, at the airport, or anywhere else, a blue striped white sari always evokes great reverence and respect.

The solemn event of the canonisation of Mother Teresa challenges us, as always, to move from merely admiring her in our thoughts and words to concretely living her values. Merely appreciating someone doing good does not make us credible; living by those values, does. Calling ourselves Christians does not make us Christ-like; living by the Gospel values does. Having the 'SDB' tag does not necessarily make us true sons of Don Bosco, belonging to God and sincerely pouring out our life for the young people in need, will make us worthy of that title. May this jubilee year of our Province help us deepen our sense of belonging, our being-at-home with whom we live, wherever we are, all the while owning up those for whom we made our profession, the poor young.

Upcoming events

Annual Retreat

The first annual retreat for this academic year will be from 12 - 17 September 2016. Fr John Samala sdb is the preacher of this retreat. Let us take this opportunity to pray for one another so that we may continue to grow in faith and zeal both as individuals and as a community. I request all the confreres who are due to make the first retreat to make it without fail.

Salesian Family Delegates' Meet

The Salesian Family Delegates' Meet for Delegates from the Southern Provinces of India will be held from 21 - 23 September 2016 in our Provincial House. It will be a moment of serious reflection on how we could develop networking among the different groups of our Salesian Family.

Annual Provincial Visitation

I will be starting the Annual Provincial Visitation to our communities this month. It is neither a moment of inspection, nor just an obligation, but a moment of grace and an opportunity for renewal for every community. It 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.

Information

Focus Group Discussions (FDGs)

Fr Yeruva Joji, the vice provincial and Fr Joseph Benny have been moving around the communities conducting the focus group discussions, which is part of the SPCSA initiative to envision and evaluate our Salesian apostolate in India. I thank the confreres and the communities who collaborated with this process. We pray that this activity will reap fruits in our interventions on behalf of the young.

Past Pupils' Units

On 13 August 2016, we had the Province Past pupils' congress at Don Bosco Navajeevan, Ramanthapur. It was an initiative taken to revive the past pupils units in our Province in this jubilee year of the birth of our Province. I hereby request every Rector and each community to contact the past pupils of your own community and invite them to register their names and form vibrant units at the local level. We also need to chalk out ways and means of networking these units as part of our apostolate, at the local and province level.

Approval of Provincial Chapter IX documents

Our Rector Major and the General Council have approved the Provincial Chapter IX documents. As follow up of the same, the General Council has suggested a few priorities for our province.

- I. Actualization of GC27**
 - a. Promote vocations to Salesian consecrated life in its two forms: ministerial and lay.
 - b. Promote missionary voluntary service in the Province following the guidelines given by the congregation.
 - c. Create a greater synergy and collaborate with the Salesian Family keeping in mind the common mission.
 - d. Have a clear plan for the youth ministry, social communication and missionary animation dimensions.
 - e. To emphasise on the initial and ongoing formation especially in the area of affective maturity. To ensure transparency, professionalism and solidarity in the use of material goods.

II. Redimensioning the Salesian Presences in the Province

- a. To ensure numerical consistency with four or more confreres in each community before GC28. Create a time frame and modality to achieve this.
- b. Define clearly the vision of every work and create a contingency plan for the future.
- c. Form the laity to collaborate in our mission especially in the matters of administration. Create time frame and modality to achieve this.
- d. Create a comprehensive plan for the qualification of confreres especially in Youth Ministry, Salesian Spirituality, Spiritual Direction and Formation of Formators, preferably at UPS, Rome.
- e. Promote missionary spirit in the province and encourage missionary vocations for the congregation. Create strategies to achieve this.

Visit of the Rector Major

We are very glad to welcome Rev. Fr Angel Artime Fernandez, our Rector Major , who will be visiting our Province from 16 - 19 November 2016. It will be a moment of grace for the Province to welcome the 'living Don Bosco' especially in the year we celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the birth of our Province.

On 17 November he will meet the youth and the Salesian family at Ramanthapur followed by the Eucharistic Celebration, felicitations and a fellowship meal. On 18 November, the Rector Major will meet all the brothers/clerics in temporary vows at Guntupally and from there he will proceed to St Michael's, Guntur where he will celebrate the Eucharist followed by felicitations and fellowship meal.

The Rector Major has expressed his desire to meet all the perpetually professed confreres. Therefore there will be a meeting of all the perpetually professed confreres with the Rector Major on 19 November 2016 at 02.30 pm at Don Bosco Provincial House, Hyderabad. The same evening at 05.00 pm there will a Eucharistic celebration, followed by felicitations, Jubilee celebrations and a fellowship meal. Parents or family members of Salesians are most welcome to join this celebration. Please do invite your dear ones on this occasion. It will be a meaningful sign of fraternity and family spirit.

Transfers

Fr Alex Jayaraju is transferred to Don Bosco Ashram, Ponnur; Fr Boddu Charan is transferred to Don Bosco, Wyra; Fr Godugunuru Chinappa and Fr Kalakoti Ramesh are transferred to Don Bosco, Kollapur. Cl. Bagsingh Pramod is transferred to St Anthony's Kadapa and Cl. Palle Sravan is transferred to Don Bosco Mission, PT Parru. We wish these confreres, fruitful ministry in their new assignments.

Condolences

Fr Romulo Noronha of the Province of St Joseph Vaz (INP), Panjim, peacefully surrendered his soul to the merciful Father on 17 August 2016. God granted him 72 years of life, a great part of which he spent as a Salesian Priest in the service of the young in the Panjim-Konkan Province (INP). He was the first Superior of the Konkan Delegation. We extend our condolences to Fr Felix Fernandez the provincial and the confreres of the Panjim Province at the loss of this veteran Salesian. May his soul rest in the peaceful embrace of the Heavenly Father.

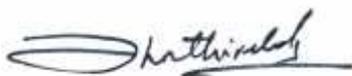
Nativity of Our Lady

The nativity of Our Lady is one of the only three birthdays honoured in the liturgical year. The birth of Mary points us to the special intervention of God in her life right since the beginning. The blessed and glorious ever-virgin Mary, sprung from the royal stock and family of David, born in the city of Nazareth, is our true intercessor in heaven. For this reason Saint Bernard calls out to each one of us, “in dangers, in distress, in doubt, call on Mary, she will not be far ... and that you may obtain her intercession and omit not to imitate her conduct. When you follow her, you will not go astray; when you invoke her, you will no longer be in doubt; when she supports you, you will not fall.”

Celebrating this feast, the faithful seek the intercession of Our Lady for good health. I would like to invite you to pray in a special way for all our confreres and the parents of our confreres who are ill. Through the intercession of Mary our Mother may they enjoy good health and wholeness.

Wish you all a very birthday of our Blessed Virgin Mary,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr. Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar
Provincial

