



# PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

*Salesian Province of St. Joseph, Hyderabad*



INH/TVB/CIR 08/2020

JUNE 2020

LaudatoSi Year - Caring for our Common Home - Towards a 'Total Sustainability'

Dear Confreres,

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have by now accepted several changes in our daily lives as the new normal. Changes can take place by our free choices or by way of our being forced to accept them. The invisible virus has forced humanity all over the world to change several aspects of human life. In some sense, it has given us an opportunity to spend more time in the midst of our loved ones in families or religious communities; it has forced us out of the grip of the spirit of consumerism (even if it is only for a few months); it has helped to reduce pollution that has been choking our planet, etc. In a way we have been forced into this situation. Can we really take credit for these changes in our relationships, simpler lifestyles, cleaner air, greater solidarity, etc?

Human beings are gifted with free will. We are therefore able to bring about the needed change and transformation in our personal lives and in the larger society by our free choices too. George Floyd's death under police custody in the United States of America that has sparked a world-wide uproar and fight for equal rights, justice and security is a case in point. George Floyd was not the first or the only black man to have paid the extreme price of even losing his life on account of racial discrimination in the American society. For decades, people had turned a blind eye to this atrocious attitude. For once, people have chosen to respond. This incident at last has appealed to the consciences of peoples all across the globe culminating into a series of protests demanding equality and justice and "Black Lives Matter" movement. This collective and concerted response will hopefully renew the society and every one's attitude towards the fundamental values of equality and justice.

There is another humongous global crisis that needs immediate attention and action by peoples of all nations: the cry of the Earth, which intrinsically leads to the cry of the poor. Our Common Home is in a precarious state. There is an urgent need for ecological sensitivity and preservation of our planet. Our consciences have to be awakened to this dire cry of the planet and there is a need for a 'mass movement' to take measures to curb further destruction and deterioration of our very existence.

Pope Francis has invited the entire Church and the world to take a pro-active approach to radical societal transformation by announcing the 'Laudato Si Year' that has commenced on 24 May 2020 which will end on 24 May 2021. 'Laudato Si Week' was celebrated from 16-24 May as a forerunner to the Laudato Si year. Pope Francis lamented, "We have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and

lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet." During that intense moment of prayer to invoke an end to the pandemic which has awakened us all to our fragility and helplessness, Pope Francis recalled that we are called "to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing... a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not" (Urbi et Orbi 27 March 2020). We have, in fact, a unique opportunity to transform the present groaning and travail into the birth pangs of a new way of living together, bonded together in love, expressing compassion and solidarity and promoting a more harmonious relationship with the natural world, our common home.

The present global pandemic has made clear how deeply we are all interconnected and interdependent. As we begin to envision a post-COVID world, we need above all an integral approach as 'everything is closely interrelated and today's problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis.' The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is entrusted with this task of coordinating various initiatives towards care and protection of the Mother Nature. The Dicastery hopes that "the anniversary year and the ensuing decade will indeed be a time of grace, a true Kairos experience and 'Jubilee' time for the Earth, and for humanity, and for all God's creatures."

Cardinal Peter Turkson who heads the Integral Human Development Dicastery states that the multiple "cracks in the planet" — melting Arctic ice caps, wildfires in the Amazon and Australia, extreme weather and biodiversity loss — "are too evident and detrimental to be ignored anymore." Fr. Joshtrom Kureethadam is the coordinator of the dicastery's ecology and creation sector. He will be one of the principal persons to take forward this wish of Pope Francis along with his team of experts. Fr Joshtrom has shared that time is running out and in this eleventh hour, we need to take a grassroots approach and encourage action platforms to work towards the vision of integral ecology outlined in Laudato Si.

The dicastery outlined a multi-year "Laudato Si Action Platform" that in gradual stages will invite Catholic dioceses, religious orders, schools and other institutions to publicly commit to a seven-year journey toward ecological conversion and "total sustainability." This year, we need to bring about awareness and begin concrete proposals and processes to promote sustainability of the planet. This movement has to eventually reach a "critical mass" with more and more corners of the church taking part over time. This initiative ensures 'total sustainability' in the coming decade, a path that would include carbon neutrality, simpler lifestyles and divestment from fossil fuels.

#### Seven goals of Laudato Si

The integral approach to Laudato Si invites us to a seven-fold response that promotes sustainability and ecological conversion:

1. Response to the cry of the Earth: Work toward carbon neutrality through greater use of clean renewable energy and reduced fossil fuel use; support efforts to protect and promote biodiversity and guarantee water access for all.
2. Response to the cry of the poor: Defend human life from conception to death and all forms of life on Earth, while giving special attention to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, migrants and children at risk of trafficking and slavery.

3. Ecological economics: Sustainable production, fair trade, ethical consumption and investments, investments in renewable energy, divestment from fossil fuels and limiting any economic activity harmful to the planet or people.
4. Adoption of simple lifestyles: Reduce use of energy and resources, avoid single-use plastics, adopt a more plant-based diet, reduce meat consumption and increase use of public transportation over polluting alternatives.
5. Ecological education: Redesign curricula around integral ecology, create ecological awareness and action, promote ecological vocation with young people and teachers.
6. Ecological spirituality: Recover a religious vision of God's creation, promote creation-centered liturgical celebrations, develop ecological catechesis and prayers and encourage more time in nature.
7. Ecological awareness: Emphasis on community involvement and participatory action around creation care at all levels of society by promoting advocacy and grassroots campaigns.

#### Laudato Si Anniversary Year programs

Several initiatives are planned which span across this entire Laudato Si year. There will be a Season of Creation (Sept.1 - Oct.4), which will feature a series of webinars.

1. There will be a meeting of young economists, originally set for March, is now scheduled for November.
2. The Vatican also expects to hold its third roundtable at the World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland.
3. It is also exploring a gathering of religious leaders in spring 2021.
4. The anniversary year will conclude with a conference in Rome and a public musical performance by composer Julian Revie that combines a children's chorus with excerpts from the encyclical and songbirds recorded in parts of the world experiencing environmental devastation.
5. The Vatican also plans to present Laudato Si Awards that will honor individual and community leaders in living out the encyclical's message. The awards will be presented to educational institutions, parishes, dioceses, religious communities and families, as well as recognize initiatives in advocacy and action, economics, health and communication.
6. Additional projects during this anniversary year include:
  - the production of a Laudato Si documentary;
  - collaborations with the Plastic Bank to fight plastic pollution;
  - the Laudato Si Tree Initiative which is an Africa-based project to plant 1 million trees in the continent's Sahel region;
  - a social media contest around reading the Bible (Bible Quiz).
7. Laudato Si Living Chapel which is an art installation, combining rare plants and discarded metal from cars and oil barrels, to promote the values of peace, creation care and biodiversity.

The dicastery describes its list of initiatives as "open-ended" and encourages communities to devise their own ideas throughout the anniversary year. "We invite everyone to join us," the document states. "The urgency of the situation calls for immediate, holistic and unified responses at all levels — local, regional, national and international. We need, above all, a peoples' movement from below, an alliance of all people of good will."

#### 7-year "Laudato Si" Action Platform

At the conclusion of the 'Laudato Si Anniversary Year', there will be the launch of a 'Laudato Si Action Platform' that will simultaneously address 7 areas of interest for a period of 7 years. These

areas are; families, dioceses, schools, universities, hospitals, businesses and religious orders. They will be asked to make the 7-year journey in the spirit of “Laudato Si” to ultimately become Laudato Si dioceses, schools, or institutions. The first batch of some 500 dioceses or schools will begin the journey in 2021. The following year, 2022, another group of dioceses, schools will be asked to start a 7-year journey. The number will grow exponentially from year to year over the coming decade. From 2021 onwards, the Sector on Ecology and Creation also plans to confer 7 awards, such as Outstanding Laudato Si Leader, Outstanding Laudato Si Local Animator and Outstanding Laudato Si Family.

Protecting our Common Home is the responsibility of each one of us. We have to take concrete decisions to help heal our planet and restore the eco-systems. It begins with our recognition of the limited supply of the earth’s resources. It means staying away from the blind trust represented by the “technocratic paradigm” which Pope Francis affirms taking the lead from Romano Guardini, “has ended up placing technical thought over reality, since the technological mind sees nature as an insensate order, as a cold body of facts, as a mere ‘given’, as an object of utility.” Men and women have always intervened, says the Pope, “but for a long time this meant being in tune with and respecting the possibilities offered by the things themselves. It was a matter of receiving what nature itself allowed, as if from its own hand. Now, by contrast, we are the ones to lay our hands on things, attempting to extract everything possible from them while frequently ignoring or forgetting the reality in front of us” (LS, 106). Let us journey together in this endeavour and create a ‘mass movement’ of like-minded people towards concrete actions to wipe out the tears of the Mother Earth and of the Poor.

Here is the prayer proposed for the Laudato Si Year. I recommend the prayer to be recited every day at the end of our morning prayer.

Loving God,  
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.  
Open our minds and touch our hearts,  
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.  
Be present to those in need in these difficult times,  
especially the poorest and most vulnerable.  
Help us to show creative solidarity  
as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.  
Make us courageous in embracing  
the changes required to seek the common good.  
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.  
Enable us to succeed in listening and responding  
to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.  
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs  
of a more fraternal and sustainable world.  
We pray through Christ our Lord,  
under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians,  
Amen.

#### COVID, POST-COVID MEETINGS, PLANS AND GUIDELINES

We know that the Corona virus is a finite creature and that it is not going to last forever. We may have to deal with the ‘Corona Effect’ for a few years to come. It might take a while for us to be

healed of the scars that the Covid-19 has inflicted upon us. At the outbreak of the virus, we read some messages of people, praying God to reboot the year 2020 as it has this dangerous and deadly virus. The Lord has given us faith, hope, intelligence and creativity to face this pandemic and re-organize our lives. Time has come for us to re-boot our thoughts, our consciences, our value system and concentrate and build our lives on what really matters.

I appreciate and thank all the confreres and communities of our Province along with Bosco Seva Kendra that coordinated our efforts in helping the poor and the needy through countless acts of kindness and heroism. In spite of the spike in the number of cases, life is slowly limping back to normalcy as the respective state governments have been lifting the lockdown in a phased manner. In order to take stock of the present situation and plan for the year ahead, the Provincial council met on 6-7 June in the Provincial House. With this Circular I would like to propose general guidelines and plans for 2020-21.

Calendar 2020-21: We have prepared a tentative calendar for the year 2020-21. The same is attached with this Circular and I recommend the communities to go through the calendar and send in your feedback by 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Meetings: All the physical meetings in the Province will be replaced with online meetings till the month of December 2020. The month of December apparently looks like a distant future. But considering the present situation and the exponential rise in the number of Covid cases and the projected peak months which are ahead, we have made this proposal.

Principals' Meeting (Schools)	8 June 2020	9.30 am
Rectors, In charges and Parish Priests' Meet	15 June 2020	9.30 am
Perpetually Professed Confreres Group 1	16 June 2020	9.30 am
Perpetually Professed Confreres Group 2	17 June 2020	9.30 am
Perpetually Professed Confreres Group 3	18 June 2020	9.30 am
Perpetually Professed Confreres Group 4	19 June 2020	9.30 am
Commissions, sectors, and Centre Heads' Meet	23 June 2020	9.30 am

This being our first meeting and since there are a good number of points in the agenda, please be prepared to have the online meeting also in the afternoon. Kindly find your name in the list that will be sent to you and make arrangements to attend the meeting. The link will be sent to you by the Province Secretary. Kindly come online 10 minutes before the meeting starts as it may involve technical problems. Other online meetings for various groups of confreres are envisaged as listed in the Calendar.

#### Province Retreats and Jubilee of Confreres

Retreat 1: We will be having our first retreat from 11-16, January 2021 (general patronage) in the Don Bosco Provincial House, Hyderabad.

Retreat 2: We will be having the second retreat from 8-13 February, 2021 which will be for the Leaders of the communities in the Provincial House.

Jubilee of Confreres: At the end of the second retreat there will be a simple celebration of the Jubilee of our confreres in the Provincial House.

Retreat 3: The third retreat will be held from 22-27 February 2021 (general patronage).

## Academic Year

Formation Houses: We have commenced the Novitiate on 3<sup>rd</sup> June. There are 13 novices who made it to the Novitiate and one more novice will join them soon. This year we are blessed with 14 novices. All the other formation houses in the province have made plans to start the academic year, respecting the regulations of the governments and at the same time taking necessary precautions to maintain hygiene and safe distance.

Schools, colleges and other institutions: On 8 June we had an online meeting of the principals of our schools. We will be reopening our schools as per the directives of the local governments. Some schools have already initiated the process of online classes for students. In connection with our rural schools, we have suggested to the concerned principals to contact the parents of our students to know how many of them may have to be helped in gaining access to smart phones and internet. In the given situation, we need to be open to creative ways of reaching out to our students so that we can engage them in good learning processes even from home. Online training is being given to our teachers as well especially on skills related to online teaching. We have also discussed the payment of staff salaries and the modalities of payment. I recommend the colleges and other institutions, especially where we have a boarding for students to follow the directions of the respective government departments in finalizing the dates of re-opening.

## Province Priorities

The Provincial Council has discussed and tentatively proposed four priorities for the year 2020-21. Kindly share your thoughts when we have online meetings. We will finalize the priorities of the Province after receiving your suggestions and proposals.

No	Priority	Lines of Action
1	Laudato Si Year	Á Don Bosco Green Alliance Á Solar energy in all our communities Á Plastic free campuses - NO to single use plastics Á One Laudato Si rally in each community to create ecological awareness in our neighbourhood
2	Accompaniment of Youth (post-Covid)	Á Youth counseling Á Formation of youth groups in all our communities Á Training in trauma counseling to young priests
3	Formation	Á Accompaniment of clerics/brothers Á Whole community involvement in the formation of young confreres Á Ongoing formation - online and other regular courses at different centers
4	Post-Covid Interventions	Á Inclusive education - reaching the unreached (the poor and those left out) Á Skill training courses for youth Á Stenghtening job placement wing of DISHA to address rising unemployment



## WELCOME BACK

Provincials and Delegates of GC 28 from South Asia

On May 30, 2020 I have joined for the online meeting of the SPCSA. The provincials who were stranded in Turin, our Regional Fr Biju Michael from Rome and three provincials who made it back to India and the SPCSA secretary, Fr Albert Johnson took part in the meeting. Although staying at Valdocco for over a couple of months after the Chapter was a blessing and a grace-filled time, the stranded provincials and the delegates of GC28 managed to finally travel back to India on June 4, 2020. All of them have landed in Delhi and are in quarantine at a hotel there. After a week of quarantine they will be traveling back to their respective Provinces. We welcome them back and wish them good health and safety as they get back to their Provinces. Our Lady Help of Christians has kept all of them safe under her mantle. Let us continue to keep them in our prayers.

Fr Koshy Thomas

We joyfully welcome back to the Province Fr Koshy Thomas, who having finished his term as the Executive Secretary of Don Bosco National Forum for YaR is returning to take up the responsibility of being the Director of Don Bosco Navajeevan, Ramanthapur. As we welcome him back, we appreciate all the work that he was able to accomplish at the national level being part of the SPCSA team in making the lives of the poor and abandoned youth better even to the extent of bringing about changes in policies and in policy-making for the benefit of the youth at risk. We wish him good health and an enriching and fulfilling experience at DBNJ Ramanthapur of putting his knowledge and expertise at the service of the mission, which has always been dear to him.

## CONGRATULATIONS

To our novices/clerics/brothers

I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to our ten newly professed confreres, who having completed their intensive preparation in the Novitiate under the able guidance of the Novice Master, Fr K.P. Mathew, made their first Salesian religious profession on May 24, 2020 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Manoharabad. I congratulate six of our confreres, who in different communities of the Province and outside the Province, made their final profession by promising a total and generous offering of themselves to the Lord in the service of the young. While CI Pradhan Ashish Kumar and CI Kakarla Chandra Mohan are already doing theology at KJC, other clerics - CI. Konigipogu Yohan, CI. Bedikala Mahesh, CI. Tagaram Ashok, CI. Markapudi Thomas and CI. Palla Velangini Joseph - will join them at KJC for theological studies. I wish them all the best that these years of study of theology may bring them even closer to the person of Jesus, whose emissaries of love and compassion we are called to be among the young. I congratulate all the other brothers/clerics who renewed their religious profession assisted and guided by their respective Rectors and community members. Dear Rectors, I thank you for taking seriously the responsibility of animating our clerics/brothers by way of a spiritual retreat and also by way of making necessary arrangements in line with the directions given from my office. Kindly send all the original documents to the office of the Secretary as and when postal or courier service makes it possible.

To Fr Maria Arokiam Kanaga SDB

Superior of Vice-Province 'Maria Sede della Sapienza' UPS

Fr Maria Arokiam Kanaga is appointed as the new Superior of the Vice-Province "Maria Sede della Sapienza" of the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS) by our Rector Major Fr Ángel Fernández Artime. All of us know Fr Maria Arokiam well as the regional of the Salesians of South Asia till

recently. He made his first religious vows on 24 May 1976 at Yercaud and perpetual vows on the same day in 1982 in Madras. He studied Theology and obtained his doctorate in Philosophy at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome. He was ordained a priest on May 25, 1986 in Rome. He was the Vicar of the Madras Province (1996-2002) and Delegate for Youth Ministry (2006-07). He participated in General Chapters 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28, and was a member of the GC27 Pre-Chapter Commission. General Chapter 26 (2008) elected him Regional Councillor for South Asia and General Chapter 27 (2014) confirmed him in this position for another 6-year term till 2020. As he embarks upon this new path of rendering his services to the Vice Province of UPS, we assure him of our prayers that he may be abundantly blessed with gifts of mind and heart to govern and animate the lives of our confreres entrusted to his loving care.

To Fr Joseph Pauria SDB - Provincial of the Salesian Province of Kolkata

The 17th Provincial of the Salesian Province of Kolkata, Fr Joseph Pauria was installed on 17 May 2020 at the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin during the liturgical ceremony presided over by Fr Guillermo Basanes, former General Councillor for Missions. FrPauria, who until now has been Provincial Vicar, has started his new role taking over from Fr Nirmol Vincent Gomes, the out-going Provincial of the Province. The India-Calcutta Province was erected in 1926, India's first Salesian Province. Now, for the first time, it will have a Provincial of tribal origin. Fr Pauria, in fact, comes from the Santhal tribe. Fr Joseph Pauria was born on January 14, 1965, in Azimganj, in the state of West Bengal. His parents were Thomas and Rita Pauria. His father was the first catechist in the parish of Azimganj. He entered the Siliguri Novitiate in 1984, made his first profession in 1985. After studying Philosophy at the Salesian Institute of Sonada and after his apprenticeship, he joined the College of the Sacred Heart in Shillong, for his studies in Theology. He was ordained priest in 1994 and then received a Master's Degree in Catechetics from "Kristu Jyoti College" in Bangalore. He then completed his research doctorate in "Salesian Missionary Spirituality" at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome in 2009, to then return to Sonada as a formator and professor. In the meantime, he was appointed member of the Provincial Council and, after a brief period as pastor in Berhampore, he was appointed Provincial Vicar in January 2016. In his new role as Provincial, Fr Joseph Pauria brings all his excellent qualities with him. He has extensive and wide-ranging experience as a formator and teacher and knows the Province very well, which therefore, will surely have much to gain from him over the next six years. As we congratulate him, we wish him our constant prayerful support in carrying out this ministry of leadership according to the mind and heart of our Lord Jesus following in the footsteps of St. John Bosco.

#### SALESIAN SANCTITY IN JUNE

June 8	Memorial - Blessed IstvanSándor, Martyr
June 12	Optional Memorial - Blessed Francis Kesy, lay person, and 4 companions, Martyrs
June 23	Memorial - Saint Joseph Cafasso, Priest

#### CONDOLENCES

We offer our heartfelt condolences:

- To Fr Vetacula Ganapragasam SDB and his family members at the death of his dear mother Mrs. Vetacula Lourdhumary, who died on May 16, 2020 at the age of 88
- To the Provincial and the confreres of the Sri Lankan Vice Province at the demise of Fr Karawgodage Shiran SDB, who died on May 23, 2020 at the age of 55



- To the Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Mumbai at the loss of Fr Byron Anthony D'Silva SDB who died on May 27, 2020 at the age of 77
- To the Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Chennai at the death of Fr Stephen Kuncherakatt, who died on June 02, 2020 in Jerusalem at the age of 86.

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.

## CONCLUSION

### Sacred Heart of Jesus

Don Bosco had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart. "In the heart of Jesus," he used to say, "we acquire the real warmth of the love of God, not only for ourselves, but also to be shared with others." On 31st December 1900, Bl. Michael Rua consecrated the Salesian Congregation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On that occasion, Fr. Rua sent to all communities what he called an "instruction" on this devotion. In it he emphasized its importance especially in the houses of formation and asked that novitiates be dedicated to the Sacred Heart. A few days before he died, Fr. Rua asked Fr Francis Cerruti to compose a prayer to the Sacred Heart for vocations. Fr. Cerruti did it in Latin originally. Here is the translation: "O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, deign to send good and worthy vocations to our Pious Salesian Society and keep them faithful to it, we beseech you, hear us O Lord!" Fr. Rua was very pleased with this prayer, recited it daily and asked that a copy of it be placed under his pillow. Don Bosco's devotion to the Sacred Heart was admirable. He showed his love and devotion by undertaking, near the end of his life, and at great cost and sacrifice to himself, the construction of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, next to Rome's Termini station. The foundation for this Church was laid by Pope Pius IX in 1870, but the work was interrupted due to the annexation of Rome by the Italian state. Ten years later, on April 5, 1880 Pope Leo XIII invited Don Bosco to take up the initiative to complete the construction, specifying that he had no funds to offer him. Don Bosco accepted it on one condition: expanding the work to include "a large hostel, where poor young people, extremely numerous, especially in this very neighborhood, can be housed." The project cost Don Bosco an incredible effort and considerable sacrifices. On May 14, 1887, the Church was completed and consecrated. Don Bosco celebrated the Holy Eucharist there for the last time on May 16, 1887, during which he often wept thinking of the wonderful things the Lord and our Blessed Mother had done in his life. In 1921, Pope Benedict XV declared it a minor basilica.

Article 11 of our Constitutions states: "The Salesian Spirit finds its model and source in the very Heart of Christ, Apostle of the Father." To look on the Heart of Christ as a model means to "put on Christ" and make our own St. Paul's claim, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2: 20). To understand the central element of our spirit, we also need to go beyond the person of Don Bosco and reach the source from which he himself drew - the very person of Christ, the Sacred Heart as the full revelation of divine love. Thus, in our mission, we will be able to make our hearts like unto His and bring many more young hearts closer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Yours in the Lord,



Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar, Provincial

