



Mary Help of Christians – Mother, Guide and Inspirer

My dear Confreres,

Greetings from the Provincial House.

We are in the month of May, the month during which Our Blessed Mother is venerated all over the world in a special way. For us Salesians, there is all the more reason to celebrate this month because the Feast of Mary Help of Christians falls on 24th.

Devotion to Mary Help of Christians is an integral part of the Salesian phenomenon in the Church and is a vital aspect of our charism and spirituality. Commenting on the intimate link between Mary and the Salesian mission, Fr. Viganò points out: “Mary is the shepherd girl of the dreams, who plans the exact nature of our mission and indicates those for whom we are to work, handing over to us the field of youth apostolate... It is also her maternal goodness which inspires our pastoral criteria and teaches us a way in which we must approach those for whom we work. Don Bosco never tired of repeating that the work he had undertaken was inspired by Mary, that Mary was its strong support, and that in consequence it need fear nothing from the opposition of its enemies.

There are nine articles in our Constitutions which speak of Mary and her role in our life as Salesians. Here I would like to refer to four of them. The very first article of the Constitution reminds us that it was “through the motherly intervention of Mary, the Holy Spirit raised up Don Bosco...”

Art. 8, tells us: “The Virgin Mary showed Don Bosco his field of labour among the young and was the constant guide and support of his work, especially in the foundation of our Society. We believe that Mary is present among us and continues her mission as Mother of the Church and Help of Christians. We entrust ourselves to her, the humble servant in whom the Lord has done great things, that we may become witnesses to the young of her Son’s boundless love.” This article begins with the solemn affirmation of the presence and the role of Mary in the life and vocation of Don Bosco and at the start of his work. Mary who is the Mother of the young has shown a special concern for them in John Bosco’s dream at the age of nine and repeated more than once in later years. She herself pointed to the young as his field of activity and to kindness as the pastoral method to be used in educating the young.

Art. 84 says: “The Salesian turns with filial trust to Mary, the Immaculate Help of Christians, who helps him to love as Don Bosco did.” And finally, article 98: “With the help of Mary, his Mother and Teacher, he (the Salesian) gradually becomes a pastor and educator of the young.”

As his inspirer and guide she accompanied him with visible signs of benevolence and protection in the foundation and development of the Congregation and the whole Salesian Family. As Mother and Teacher she supported Don Bosco with the thoughtful kindness she had once shown at Cana. We believe with Don Bosco that she is our mother and teacher.

Let us all try to make this month our Mother's Month, by being close to her and seeking her intercession in all our personal and community needs. I wish you all a very Happy Feast of Mary Help of Christians. May she continue to protect, guide and bless us as we are getting ready to start another year of work.

Transfers and the Spirit of Availability

The time of transfers and new appointments are important moments which highlight our supernatural vision of life and the meaning of our life of obedience. Let us remember that the service of authority and the willingness to obey are for the Salesian, as the Constitutions make it clear, "the path to holiness, the source of energy for his work, of joy and peace" (C 65).

Dear confreres, I must here admit that I was deeply touched by the humble and generous 'spirit of availability and sense of responsibility, rich in initiative' (PC 14), manifested by our confreres when I approached them with the transfer proposals. Thank you, my dear confreres and May God bless you all for your docility and availability.

It is often said, we must **bloom where we are planted**. But I am also keenly aware that it is the responsibility of those in authority to plant persons where they can bloom. It is not an easy task, but when we approach these moments in a spirit of faith and openness, God gives us the grace to bloom, even in difficult situations. God bless you!

Rectors who have completed their term

My sincere sentiments of gratitude and appreciation to the following Rectors who have carried the responsibility of leading and guiding the communities with a great sense of commitment and sacrifice and in the spirit of Don Bosco for the past six, three or a few years. We owe a great debt of gratitude to each of them. May the Lord bless them abundantly for their generosity!

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| 1. Fr. Lourdusamy Don Bosco | - | St. Bede's, Santhome |
| 2. Fr. Joe Andrew | - | Lourdes Shrine, Perambur |
| 3. Fr. Alexander John | - | Don Bosco, Egmore |
| 4. Fr. Thamthiruthuvam Irudayam | - | Don Bosco-Mission, Kotagiri |
| 5. Fr. Harris Pakkam | - | Rinaldi Juniorate |
| 6. Fr. Jayaprakash Reddy | - | Karaikal |
| 7. Fr. Swamikannu Stanislaus | - | DBTC, Kavarapettai |
| 8. Fr. Joseph Jeyaraj | - | Ennore |

New Rectors & those confirmed for a second term

I am grateful to these confreres for joyfully and generously accepting to lead the communities. I am sure that through their loving, selfless and Spirit-led leadership, the communities will continue to bear witness to the prodigious charism of Don Bosco, always making themselves visible “signs and bearers of God’s love to the young, especially those who are poor” (C 2).

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| 1. Fr. Maria Susai Adaikalasamy | - | Sagayathottam |
| 2. Fr. Suvikan John Peter | - | Wisdom Town |
| 3. Fr. Stanley Ignatius | - | St. Bede’s |
| 4. Fr. John Christy | - | Rinaldi Juniorate |
| 5. Fr. Selvanathan Benjamin | - | Ennore |
| 6. Fr. Devapragasam Joseph | - | Perambur, Lourdes Shrine |
| 7. Fr. Bellarmine Fernando | - | DBTC, Kavarapettai |
| 8. Fr. Devarajan Gregory | - | Don Bosco, Egmore |
| 9. Fr. Edwin George | - | The Citadel, Provincial House |
| 10. Fr. Seraphin Amalan | - | Kotagiri |
| 11. Fr. Kavilpurayidathil Siby | - | Karaikal |
| 12. Fr. Choorackal Varghese | - | Dharmapuri |
| | | |
| 13. Fr. Lazar Michaelraj | - | Tiruvannamalai |
| 14. Fr. David Francis Xavier | - | Dominic Savio, Tirupattur |
| 15. Fr. Chinnappan Antonyraj | - | SHC, Tirupattur |
| 16. Fr. Viyakulam Michael | - | Don Bosco, Gandhinagar |
| 17. Fr. Susai Lourdusamy | - | St. Joseph’s, Katpadi |
| 18. Fr. Kolandaisamy Sathiaseelan- | - | Thirukazhikundram |
| 19. Fr. Perianayagam Jesudoss | - | Tirupattur Parish |

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

Renewals

This year, the Renewals of profession will be held at 7 a.m. on 24th May 2017 at Don Bosco, Tirupattur. All those who are renewing their vows are requested to be present by 4 p.m. on 23rd May for the evening recollection which will end at 8 p.m. with supper. Fr. Deva Joe SDB, the Vice-Provincial will preside over the Eucharistic celebration and receive the vows on behalf of the Provincial.

First Profession

I am happy to announce that 19 novices will be making their first profession at 11.00 a.m. on 24th May 2017 at Don Bosco *Idaya Deepam* Novitiate, Yellagiri Hills. Eight of them will be for INM and eleven for INT. Two of our novices in Sri Lanka will also be making their first profession a little later.

For Chennai Province

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| 1. Aaservatham Amalraj | 2. Anthonysamy Soosai |
| 3. Arokianathan Anthony Raj | 4. Govindaraj Samson Raj Kumar |
| 5. Marialouis Selva Raj Stalin | 6. Mariya Antony Raj |
| 7. Royappan Ronald Edwin | 8. Xavier Britto Leo |
| 9. Arockiaraj Alexander (in Sri Lanka) | 10. Saktivel Rajkumar (in Sri Lanka) |

For Tiruchy Province

1. Arokiasamy Rex Rolington
2. Arputhasamy Sebastian Adaikalaraj
3. Charles Michael Allwin
4. Christian Iruthaya Pioson
5. John Pious
6. Joseph Georgy Clenten
7. Kamilus George Vijilius
8. Lawrence Livingston
9. Pilavendran Maria Aswin Paulson
10. Rajasekaran Raymond Rabinson
11. Selvaraj Sharon

We congratulate these soon-to-be professed Salesians for their generosity in offering themselves to the Lord in the Salesian Congregation to serve young and the poor. I sincerely thank the Director of Novices and the entire Salesian Novitiate staff for their dedication and commitment in forming these young men.

Perpetual Profession

Nine young Salesians will be making their Perpetual Profession this year. They are:

1. Arockia Anbu
2. Chinnappan Sekar
3. Devaraj Jayaraj
4. Gabriel Paulraj
5. Gabriel Selvakumar
6. Gnana Xavier
7. Sagayaraj Arun
8. Xavier Christopher
9. Amal Anandaraj (INC)

The Perpetual Profession will be held on 24th May 2017 at 5.30 p.m. at Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur. We accompany these young confreres with our prayerful wishes as they make their final commitment to live as faithful sons of Don Bosco in the Salesian vineyard. We thank all those who were instrumental in their formation and we hope and pray that they and their families will be blessed abundantly.

Meeting of Practical Trainees & College Students

All young Salesians in Practical Training and those doing college studies are requested to be present for their annual meeting from 25th May (9 a.m.) to 26th May (4 p.m.) at Don Bosco, Tirupattur. If for any reason one is unable to attend this meeting, he should obtain an explicit permission from the Provincial.

Meeting of Rectors and Leaders

A meeting of all our Rectors and Leaders of communities will be held on Monday May 29th 2017 at The Citadel from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. The agenda of the meeting will be communicated to you soon.

Meeting of Headmasters / Principals

All our school Headmasters & Principals will have a one-day meeting on Saturday, May 27th 2017 at the Citadel from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. The agenda of the meeting will be communicated to you soon.

Meeting of Administrators

All our Administrators will have a one-day meeting on Tuesday, May 30th 2017 at the Citadel from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. The agenda of the meeting will be communicated to you soon.

Meeting of Students of Theology

All students of Theology will be present at The Citadel, Chennai, for a one-day meeting, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on June 2nd 2017.

Youth Pasch 2017

For the 88 youngsters from the Salesian provinces of Chennai and Tiruchy who gathered at the camp site on Yellagiri Hills “Youth Pasch 2017” from Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday (13-16 April), it was an unforgettable mountain-top experience of spiritual rejuvenation and re-commitment to the Lord.

The well-planned programme helped the participants to learn, relish and absorb the deeper biblical, liturgical and pastoral meaning of the solemn liturgy of those most important days in the Catholic year of worship—the days which recall the most important events in the life of Jesus, his passion, death and resurrection.

The group animators were Frs. Barnabas, Selvakumar, Parthiban and Sr. Mary Putti FMA. Fr. Antony Christy SDB explained the various aspects of the liturgy of the four days (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday) with great clarity and creativity, highlighting particularly the historical background and the liturgical and spiritual meaning of the various parts of the solemn services of the holy triduum.

On Good Friday, Fr. Mani Lazar, the chief organizer of the Youth Pasch, took the youngsters on an inward journey with a well thought-out reflection on the “last things” and the importance of the sacrament of reconciliation, using the Ten Commandments as milestones along the journey. This helped the youngsters to approach the sacrament with great spiritual benefit. A team of priests were available for confessions and spiritual direction.

I thank and congratulate Fr. Mani Lazar and our Youth Services Team for organising and making possible this great spiritual experience for our youngsters.

Altar Servers’ Camp at Yellagiri

The altar server occupies a privileged place in all liturgical celebrations. As Pope St. John Paul II told the altar servers some years ago, in the liturgy, they are “much more than simple helpers of the parish priest.” They are “servers of Jesus Christ, of the eternal High Priest.” They are, in a special way, the young friends of Jesus.

This year the Altar Servers’ Camp was held from 25th through 27th April 2017 at Camp Don Bosco, Yellagiri Hills. One hundred and thirty-seven youngsters from 13 Salesian parishes took part in the camp. The aim of the camp was to help the young altar servers appreciate the beauty of serving at the altar, to understand its methodology and to serve the Lord with gladness. It was also to initiate the senior altar servers to be a Lectors, to be active members in Youth Groups and to involve themselves in other pious groups in their own parishes. These young altar servers were accompanied by 15 enthusiastic mentors from their parishes and they also joyfully volunteered to assist the servers in the camp. These Altar servers were animated in depth by Fr. Antony Christy and Fr. Mani Lazar. Dn. Jeyaraj and Bro. Clement were the guardian angels of this camp and coordinated the other moments of the camp.

Sessions on the objective and history of the altar service, qualities of an altar server, liturgical seasons, and instruction on vestments, articles and gestures of the liturgy were dwelt by Fr. Antony Christy and Mani Lazar. A Quiz, creative night events and camp fires were the highlights of the camp in the evenings. The experience of the camp was indeed a convincing proof that “serving at the altar is a real school of learning the faith,” to put it in the words of St. Pope John Paul II.

I thank and congratulate our Youth Services Team led by Fr. Mani Lazar and the other confreres who helped to make this camp a success.

Pay Structure for our Employees

In the current scenario of the Province, various educational institutions of different types differ widely in the pay structure. To rectify this, last year, Fr. Xavier Packiam, our Economist, with the approval of the Provincial and Council, had issued guidelines to be adhered to in this regard. I am attaching a copy of that document for your kind scrutiny. Kindly ensure that these norms are followed diligently, if you have not yet implemented them in the last academic year.

CONDOLENCES:

We offer our heartfelt condolences to:

- The Provincial and the confreres of the province of Hyderabad at the sudden demise of **Fr. Gopu Anand** (50) on 7th April at Nalgonda.
- The Provincial and the confreres of the Province of New Delhi at the passing away of **Bro. Andrew Jojo** (74) on 13th April in Ranchi.
- **Ms. Malar Miranda** (40), the younger sister of Fr. Gerald Miranda passed away on April 9th 2017. The funeral was held on April 10th 2017 at Veerapandianpatnam, Tuticorin.
- **Mrs. I. Arokiammal** (90), mother of Fr. Joe Andrew died on April 10th 2017. The funeral was held on April 11th 2017 at Lourdes Shrine, Perambur.
- **Mrs. Cecelia Sequeira**, mother of Fr. Dolphie Sequeira, (Hong Kong) expired on April 12th 2017. The funeral and burial was held at St. Roque's Church, Chennai on April 13th 2017.
- **Mrs. Lily Xavier** (77), the mother of Fr. Peter Francis SDB, (now working in Sri Lanka) passed away on 24 April 2017 at 1.25 p.m. The Funeral mass was held on Tuesday 25th April at 3.30 p.m. at St. Lazarus Church, R.A. Puram, Chennai, followed by the burial in the Quibble Island Cemetery.

In fraternal solidarity let us continue to pray for the repose of the souls of these dear ones of our confreres.

Conclusion

As we are concluding the academic year it is a time to look back and thank God for all his blessings because of which we have been able to achieve so much in the past one year. And now as we look forward to another year of work and apostolate, let us place it all in the loving hands of the Provident Father so that He may help us to give our best to every task He assigns to us.

God bless you, and keep me in your prayers,

Yours affectionately,

Fr. Jose Kochamkunnel SDB
Provincial