



INM Circular #11

NOVEMBER 2017



The World Day of the Poor is a new celebration on the Catholic calendar, created by Pope Francis at the end of his 2015-16 Jubilee Year for Mercy. In the document concluding the year, *Misericordiae Misera*, the Pope asked that Catholics celebrate the special day every year on the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, which usually falls in November.

Francis' message for the First World Day of the Poor has been given the title "**Let us love, not with words but with deeds**". The title of the message is taken from John's first letter, in which the apostle tells the Christian community of his time: "Let us not love in word or speech, but indeed and in truth" (1Jn 3:18). Pope Francis continues: "If a Christian in these days looks away from the need of the poorest of the poor, then in reality he is not a Christian".

"When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he answered in the words with which the poor speak to our **one Father**, in whom all acknowledge themselves as brothers and sisters," says the pope. "The Our Father is a prayer said in the plural: the bread for which we ask is 'ours,' and that entails sharing, participation and joint responsibility." "In this prayer, all of us recognize our need to overcome every form of selfishness, to enter into the joy of mutual acceptance," he continues. "**Let us not forget that the Our Father is the prayer of the poor,**" he says. "Our asking for bread expresses our entrustment to God for our basic needs in life. Everything that Jesus taught us in this prayer expresses and brings together the cry of all who suffer from life's uncertainties and the lack of what they need."

The Holy Father's message, draws from the life of Saint Francis and he comments that "precisely because he kept his gaze fixed on Christ, Francis was able to see and serve him in the poor. The Pope notes that "if we want to help change history and promote real development, **we need to hear the cry of the poor and commit ourselves to ending their marginalization.**"

Though concrete gestures are highly encouraged and much needed, the pope wrote that it is **important not to underestimate the importance of prayer**, which "expresses and brings together the cry of all who suffer from life's uncertainties and the lack of what they need."

Don Bosco and the Poor

Fatherless from the age of two, little Johnny Bosco had to struggle for an elementary education. As a boy, John lived on a farm with his family doing the only things they knew how, farming. Family finances being what they were, his eldest brother felt he was wasting time, energy and money studying and that it would be better for all if he stopped going to school and instead worked on the farm. But God's plan for him was different! His mother, Margherita, realized the importance of God in their lives and played a strong role in John's formation and personality, and consequently was an early supporter of her son's ideals. John thus identified with the poor from an early age and personally felt the need for fatherly guidance.

Don Bosco reached out to the peripheries of the society in his time to extend the Mercy and Compassion of God the Father to those who were in need, particularly to the children and youth who were orphans and vulnerable and recognized them as God's special children. With their collaboration, he created a society within which all orphans and other vulnerable youth were free from discrimination, lived in dignity and had their full potential to have their rights and aspirations fulfilled.

We Salesians are consecrated, God-centered witnesses as individuals, communities and through our works. We focus on the young especially the poorest of the poor, going beyond structures and institutions. In short, for us Salesians, **ministering to the poorest of the poor is not an option but an obligation.**

Our Province and our Commitment to the Poor

Our Province is grateful to the Lord for enabling us to serve the poor through the exercise of our Salesian Charism and Mission. Year by year in our Province we have been making efforts to reach out to the neediest and the most vulnerable in society. We recognize our call to be visible signs of God's mercy and compassion to them, and our duty to stand by them in their struggle to liberate themselves from the clutches of poverty and oppression and to help them to live with dignity and self-respect. Though the Salesian Congregation has been doing laudable service in reaching out to poor in this region for over 100 years, today the need is ever greater to express our solidarity with the poor and the suffering people in ever newer ways. While the country is making economic progress on the one hand, marginalization of the poor is becoming more and more evident. The poorest and the weakest are being pushed to the peripheries where they are often left alone to struggle. At this juncture our beloved Pope Francis is exhorting the entire Church to go in search of the people at the peripheries to bring God's mercy and compassion to them and redeem their lost humanity and dignity.

Twenty-five years ago, the province proposed a "new vision", a new plan and programme of action that would take us closer to the poor. Let us celebrate its silver jubilee (1992-2017) by recommitting ourselves to the poorest of the poor and making our own their struggles and their aspirations. At the same time, it is important to revisit that "vision" and find out to what extent we have been able to achieve the goals we set

for ourselves twenty-five years ago. While we have taken many positive steps to reach out to more and more poor in our neighbourhoods and launched many new ministries in favour of the marginalized and vulnerable groups such as the tribals, thurumbar, migrant youth, HIV affected children, young prisoners, alcoholics, etc., much remains still to be done. While there is need to strengthen these new ministries, we also need to look at our own lifestyle, both as individuals and as communities, particularly the kind of witness we give of poverty and simplicity of life and solidarity with the poorest and the weakest in our society.

As Salesians, we need to constantly deepen **our personal conviction to be with the poorest of the poor**. We are often reminded that as Prophets, Mystics and Servants we need to move towards the peripheries in order that those whom we find there may also taste the love of God and love of neighbor. We need to constantly re-convince and re-motivate ourselves **to be with the poorest of the poor by personal choice**; it is what we have promised the Lord by our religious profession. Closeness to the poor must become a defining element of our identity as Salesians.

Love For The Poor In Action

Having reflected on the above, let us now remind ourselves on how we can be poor in practice and thus identify ourselves with the poor for whom we are called to work. I have culled out from the recent provincial chapters, the relevant Deliberations at all levels (Province, Community & Individual) which I personally feel are pertinent even today and which can still be implemented.

PC 2010 Deliberations

1. Make the provincial level celebrations, meetings and animations simple and budgeted. The Vice Provincial brings this agenda to the Provincial Council at the beginning of the academic year and they evaluate it after the event.

We will certainly ensure that this is done at the Province level but I think that we can follow this deliberation even at the community level.

PC 2013 Deliberations

1. Let each Salesian contact and accompany a few poor youth from the neighbourhood and find opportune time to share his experience with the community.

Each one of us needs to take the initiative to involve ourselves in some neighbourhood apostolate in order to make the above deliberation a reality. As discussed in the provincial council, each community can adopt 5 poor families in the neighbourhood and focus on educating the children of these families up to the under-graduation level and mentor them.

2. Decent food should be provided to the children in all our Boarding Houses. The Administrator shall maintain separately the accounts of the food expenses of the Salesians and that of the children.

We need to remember the words of Don Bosco: "the money that we have belongs to the poor...woe to us if we do not spend it properly"

PC 2016 Deliberations

1. It is obligatory on every confrere to have, in consultation with the Provincial, a direct mission experience with the rural poor for a period of time for 'Personal and Pastoral Conversion'.

All confreres should be able to accept willingly this experience when offered to them by the Provincial and can even insist that they have this experience as often as possible! We also need to re-start the practice of exposure camps at all levels of formation for young Salesians.

2. At the beginning of every academic year every community in collaboration with EPCC shall prepare a Social Impact Plan (Guidelines shall be given by DBSARC) and insert it into its SEPP for an effective neighbourhood ministry.

I hope those communities who have not yet done this will do so in the forthcoming academic year.

3. The Province shall invest personnel and resources to re-launch our work for the poorest, especially Tribals, Dalits, Thurumbar and other socially marginalized groups in places like Kotagiri, Kadambur, Thalawadi, Jawadhi Hills and other rural presences by June 2017. The Social Commission and DBSARC (Don Bosco Social Action Research Centre) will assist in this task.

We are already working in this direction and the Social Commission together with DBSARC will come out with their proposals early next year. The de-addiction mission which we launched in Jawadhi Hills this year is also a right step forward.

4. The Provincial shall set up a team of Salesians under his guidance to work on a Province Policy for the care of orphans and semi orphans and adopt the same for practice by Dec 2016.

The Policy is almost ready and was taken up for discussion in the Provincial Council this month. It will be released as early as possible.

5. The Provincial and his Council shall appoint a team to evaluate the ministries and institutions started in the past ten years with a view to assess their effectiveness in terms of our service to the poor youth, before June 2017.

This also was discussed in the Provincial Council this month. Hopefully, by March 2018, the team will submit its consolidated report.

6. As an expression of preferential option to the poor students who are intellectually sound and economically poor from our rural presences can be given place in the schools, boarding, and lodging at St. Bede's (VI & XI Std).

You are most welcome to recommend deserving students and I am sure the St. Bede's community will be ever obliging. At the same time, we don't need another Deliberation to remind us that ALL our institutions need to have a preferential option for the poor!

7. In view of the forthcoming Golden Jubilee Celebrations of VEERALUR MISSION, one of the oldest Salesian rural presences of our province, we shall revamp the mission by giving thrust in the four significant areas; Quality Education, Organic Farming, and People-Based Ministry (VIA), and Evangelization. A team comprising of Salesians who served there in various capacities will draft an action plan by the end of February 2016 and submit it to the Provincial. The Province Catechetical center will assist in the re-evangelization of the people in the much-needed Faith formation.
The team has already met and the action plan will be submitted to the Provincial Council by December 2017.

8. The Provincial and his council shall prepare a policy for all the boardings, ensuring a common and better standard of living, food, infrastructure and sufficient personnel for the better formation of boarders.
The Vice Provincial together with the Boarding houses & Hostels Commission will frame this policy which will come into effect from June 2018. Human Rights Education (HRE) to be the hallmark of our institutes during these coming years. The preventive system and the human rights education should be combined in order to empower the poorest of the poor youth in our Province.

My dear confreres, a Church that shows no solidarity with the poor would be a contradiction and a counter witness to the poverty of Christ himself! Therefore, as we gear up to celebrate this First World Day of the Poor, let us personally resolve to reduce



the Culture of Waste in all our houses – wasting food, wasting infrastructure, wasting time, wasting finance, wasting personnel etc. Let us find ways and means to resourcefully use all these in favour of the poor, thus help reduce poverty in our neighbourhood. All our animation programmes and our celebrations this year should focus on creating an awareness of the poor people living around us so that we don't become numb to the misery of others. As Salesians, we need to feel and to be with the poorest of the poor, both in spirit and in fact! Let us not forget the words of Mamma Margaret to

Don Bosco: *My son, you were born poor...live poor...woe to you if you become rich...!*

News from INM

Youth Pastoral Meeting in Sri Lanka – While Fr. Francis Sundar & Fr. Maria Susai attend this meeting in their National level portfolios, Fr. Don Bosco, will be representing our Province at the DBYA Board and Council Meet to be held in Negombo, Sri Lanka from 31st October till 5th November 2017! It is the 10th consecutive year that Fr. Fabio Attard, General Councillor for Youth Ministry will animate the Youth Pastoral team here in South Asia. The theme is “Accompanying the Young with Love”.

BOSCOM National Assembly - Chennai Province is proud to host the BOSCOM National Assembly Meeting at Citadel from 1st to 5th November 2017. We heartily welcome all the members and a special welcome to **Rev. Fr. Filiberto Gonzalez Plasencia**, the General Councillor for Social Communication who will grace the occasion with his august presence.

Golden Jubilee of KJC and the arrival of Rector Major - Golden bells are still ringing for **Kristu Jyoti College** Bangalore!! Started in 1967, KJC, carries on its golden legacy. The conclusion of the Jubilee celebrations will be on 6th November 2017. We congratulate and wish all the Salesians, staff, alumni and well-wishers of this prestigious institution which has rendered and continues to render noble service to Salesian India.

INM Meetings for November 2017

- Higher Education Commission at Citadel on November 11th
- Salesian Cooperators FMA & SDB Local Delegates Meeting on November 11th
- INM Missionary Day 2017 – The Province Missionary Day will be on 26th November 2017 at Don Bosco, Perambur. The details will be sent to you later.
- BIS Correspondents Meeting at Citadel/SIGA on November 26th

Fr. BOUT 100



Special Birthday wishes and prayers to our dear Fr. Cedric Bout who will enter his 100th year on 11th November 2017. The invitation has already been sent to your respective communities. You are most welcome to The Citadel on this day as we wish and felicitate our dear Fr. Bout as he reaches this milestone which is a gift and a grace for our Province as well.

Nedungadu – The children now have a new school building which is very spacious and well-planned. We sincerely thank the APIS group and all others who contributed their mite for their generosity in this venture.

Salesian Parents Day on 25th November

As is the Salesian tradition connected with Mamma Margaret, mother of Don Bosco, all communities are exhorted to invite the parents of the Salesians for a solemn Mass and dinner.

100 years of VDBs - With great joy and gratitude, the Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDBs) are celebrating the first 100 years. We congratulate and assure them of our prayers on this momentous occasion. Blessed Philip Rinaldi is the Founder of the VDBs. The solemn centenary celebration will be held on 17th December 2017. We also take this opportunity to thank our dear VDBs for their constant and enlivened presence with us Salesians through these years as we hope and pray that many more will be inspired by their life and witness in the century ahead.

INM Ordinations 2017 - This year the Province of Chennai will be blest with eight new priests. The ordination ceremony will be **on 27th December at Lourdes Shrine, Perambur, at 5.30 p.m.** His Grace Most Rev. Dr. George Anthonysamy D.D., Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore will ordain these young confreres.

Sick Confreres - Fr. Basil who was in Lourdes Shrine, Perambur, has been shifted to the Citadel where he has a trained male nurse to take care of him 24/7. **Fr. Felix Koikara** in DBTC, Kavaraipettai, is now almost completely confined to his bed and needs our prayers to regain his strength. **Fr. Michael Thomas** underwent an angioplasty earlier this month and is recovering slowly. We pray for these confreres and for others as well who are not in their best of health.

Generalate shifted to Sacro Cuore - As informed by the Rector Major in his letter to the members of the Salesian Family, the Generalate was shifted on 30 September 2017 to *Sacro Cuore* in Rome, near the Termini Railway Station, adjacent to the Sacred Heart Basilica, built by Don Bosco just before his death. The address of the Generalate is *Sede Centrale Salesiana, Via Marsala 42, Roma 00185, Italy.*

REST IN PEACE

Rev. Sr. Fernando Juliet FMA of the Province of Our Lady of Snow Tiruchirapalli (INT) died on 22.10.2017 at St. Isabel's Hospital, Mylapore – Chennai. She was born on 08.09.1939 (Broadway - Chennai) and Professed on 05.08.1967 (Sacred Heart Novitiate, Katpadi - Vellore). The Funeral Mass was held on 23.10.2017 (St. Francis Xavier's Convent – Broadway at 3.30 p.m.) and the burial was in St. Roque's Cemetery Chennai. Our prayerful condolences to our dear Salesian Sisters of Tiruchy Province.

Fr. Dominic Savio Fernandes SDB of Panjim Province died on 08.10.2017. He was born on 07.04.1957, made his First Profession on 24.05.1980 and was ordained 29.12.1990. The Funeral Mass was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 10th October 2017 at Don Bosco, Quepem, Goa, followed by burial at the Salesian cemetery at Don Bosco, Fatorda, Goa. Our heartfelt condolences to the confreres of Panjim Province.

Fr. Steve Rodrigues SDB, aged 70, of Mumbai Province passed away on 18 October 2017 at the Holy Spirit Hospital, Mumbai. The Funeral was held at 4 p.m. on Thursday, 19 October 2017 at the Shrine of Don Bosco's Madonna, Matunga, Mumbai, followed by the burial at the Sewri Cemetery. We commend our dear confrere to the Lord, and offer our condolences to the confreres of Mumbai Province and to the members of the bereaved family.

Conclusion:

The month of November is dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. The Church commemorates all her faithful children who have departed from this life, but have not yet attained the joys of heaven. The Church has always taught us to pray for those who have gone into eternity. Therefore, let us remember our dear departed in all our prayers during this month.



**We must
empty
Purgatory
with our
prayers.**

-St. Padre Pio



*Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon
them. May the souls of the faithful
departed, through the mercy of God,
rest in peace. Amen.*

Fr. K.M. Jose SDB
Provincial