



# PROVINCIAL Circular

Salesian Province of Chennai (INM)



**Circular #12**

**DECEMBER 2017**

My dear Confreres,

Cordial greetings from the Provincial House! We are about to begin the season of Advent, a time to prepare for the incarnation of the Word in our lives. The pre-condition for this to take place can be summed up as “**Integrity of Life**”. Prophet Isaiah’s call to prepare the Way of the Lord, making straight his path, filling up the valleys and levelling the mountains, is nothing but a call to integrity of life. Jeremiah speaks of the “righteous shoot” sprouting from David’s line who will maintain justice and integrity in the land (Jer 33:15). Jeremiah also uses the happy expression “the Lord is our integrity” (Jer 33.16). The call to integrity is loud and clear throughout Advent. This gives us an opportunity to reflect on this all-important hallmark of every Christian, particularly of those who declare themselves to be disciple of Jesus, the embodiment of integrity.

Speaking of integrity, I am always reminded of the play, “*A Man for All Seasons*”, which in 1966 became a multi-Oscar Awards winning movie, based on the life of St. Thomas More who was the Lord Chancellor of England under King Henry VIII in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The play portrays Thomas as a man of principle, envied by rivals and loved by the common people and by his family. In one scene the King tries to coax Thomas to endorse his plan to divorce his wife Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. Thomas asks the King, “Why do you need my support?” Henry VIII replies with words we would all love to hear said about each of us, “Because, Thomas, **you are honest**. And what is more to the point, **you are known to be honest**. There are plenty in the Kingdom who support me, but some do so only out of fear and others only out of what they can get for their support. But you are different. And people know it. That is why I need your support.”

Thomas More refuses and is imprisoned, tried, and eventually beheaded. Throughout the play, Thomas is forthright, witty, contemplative, and honest, and stands out as a man of integrity, who **follows his conscience** all the way to the chopping block.

**Integrity is a virtue that we all admire because we know how difficult it is to live it.** Look around and what do we see in the world, be it the world of politics, corporates, sports, or entertainment? Every day, the media is abuzz with stories of dishonesty, corruption, cheating, match-fixing, ballot-rigging and what not. We even hear of corruption in church and religious institutions. **In this context, the need for integrity has never been greater!**

## What is Integrity?

To understand the meaning of “integrity”, it would be useful to start with the etymology of that word. It derives from two Latin words, “integer” and “*integritas*”. The former means ‘whole’, ‘intact’, ‘unmixed’, ‘pure’, and the latter means, ‘honesty’, ‘uprightness’, ‘integrity’. The English Dictionary describes the word integrity as ‘the quality of being honest and morally upright’. In other words, **it means being true to ourselves and being honest, upright, and decent in our dealings with others.** When we are guided by integrity, our thoughts and words will be in line with each other, and our actions will align with our principles and our conduct will speak for us more eloquently than our words.

People of integrity can be counted on to stand up for what is right, even if it is unpopular, and to behave with honour, even when there is no one around to see. Our integrity leads others to trust us because they know that we value our commitments and seek to live by them. A person of integrity is unimpeachable. He or she stands by principles, no matter what the consequences. **A person of integrity realizes there are moral absolutes even in a world of relative values.** Integrity is built up through the practice of many other virtues and habits like, for example, honesty, sincerity, consistency, moral courage, trustworthiness, a sense of fairness and justice, etc.

## Integrity and Consistency

Integrity implies an inner sense of ‘wholeness’ and consistency of character. When you are ‘whole’ and consistent, there is only one you. You carry that same YOU wherever you are, regardless of the circumstances. **You are YOU all the time!** In other words, no discrepancy exists between your public life and your private life. **People of integrity have nothing to hide and nothing to fear.**

There are people who take pride in being honest in some areas of their lives, but not so in all areas. They are not consistent. The following incident that appeared in a newspaper some years ago is a good illustration of what I mean. A man stopped his car near a KFC store to get some chicken for himself and the young lady with him. Inadvertently the manager of the store handed the man the box in which he had placed the day’s collection. What happened was that he had placed the money in a fried chicken box to send it to the bank. The fellow took his box, went back to the car, and the two of them drove away. When they got to the park and opened the box, they discovered they had a box full of money, instead of the fried chicken. However, realizing the mistake, they got back into the car and returned to the place and gave the money back to the manager. The manager couldn’t believe his eyes. He told the young man, “You are the most honest man in town. Wait a minute, I want to call the newspaper and have them take your picture and get the story published.”

**“Oh, no, don’t do that!”** said the fellow. “Why not?” asked the manager. “Well,” the man said, “You see, I’m married, and the woman I’m with is not my wife.” Apparently even when he was doing something right, it turned out he was also doing something wrong. There was no consistency in his honesty. There was no integrity in his life.

## **Integrity and Honesty**

Honesty and integrity always go together. Oftentimes the two are used interchangeably, though they are distinct realities. **Integrity is more than honesty.** If honesty is telling the truth to others, integrity is telling the truth to yourself. Everyone accepts that 'honesty is the best policy', but how many really live by it! In 1991, authors James Patterson and Peter Kim published a much-talked-about book, based on a wide survey, with the title "The Day America Told the Truth". The authors concluded that 91 per cent of Americans lied regularly and thought nothing about it. That, I think, could very well apply to all countries, not to America alone. Lying has become endemic in our society; we tend to tell lies, small or big, and think nothing about it. And yet every lie we tell erodes our integrity. **Often it is moral cowardice that keeps one from telling the truth.**

We recognize that it is not easy to be in integrity 100% of the time. **The right way is not always the popular and easy way.** Standing up for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character. We aspire to be in integrity but sometimes we mess up. Sometimes, our emotions get the better of us and we are unable to manage our behaviour. Sometimes, we give up on integrity out of fear of what others may think or due to an inability to truly 'integrate' the various parts of ourselves into ONE, complete WHOLE person.

## **Integrity and Sincerity**

To live with integrity, it is necessary to be authentic and sincere. St. Paul tells the Philippians, **"Be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ"** (Phil 1:10). The word 'sincere' is derived from the Latin phrase, "*sine cera*", meaning "without wax." In ancient times, perhaps even in modern times, sculptors and carvers would cover up the defects in the marble or wood they work on by applying wax which would not be easy to detect. It is said that, in ancient Rome, in the marketplaces, one could find artists' booths or showrooms bearing the sign "*sine cera*" or "without wax." In the "*sine cera*" showrooms one could find the real thing, without wax, without flaws or cover-ups. This sincerity is an essential part of integrity. Men and women of integrity are always sincere. They are indeed without wax; they do not have anything to hide; they are authentic and genuine.

## **Integrity in the Bible**

The Bible is full of references to integrity, righteousness, or moral uprightness. In the Patriarch Job we have an excellent example of a man of integrity. After allowing Satan to test Job, the Lord said to Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? **No one on earth is as blameless and upright as he, a man who fears God and avoids evil. He still holds fast to his integrity,** even after you provoked me to ruin him without any reason" (Job 2:3). God praises the steadfast integrity of Job. Neither sickness, nor calamities or misfortunes could shake his integrity. Not even when his wife taunts him, saying: "Do you still hold on to your integrity?"

In Psalm 78 we are told that "With integrity of heart, David shepherded Israel; with skillful hands he led them." Proverbs 10:9 says, **"He who walks in integrity walks securely,** but he who perverts his ways will be found out."

In the Book of Kings, God appears to Solomon after building the Temple in Jerusalem, and says: As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal

throne over Israel forever....” (I Kings 9:4-5). And David not only notes God’s love of integrity several times in his Psalms, but also says in his final public prayer before handing the kingdom over to Solomon, **“I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. It’s not what we profess, but what we practice, that gives us integrity.”**

### **Jesus Model of Integrity**

Jesus is the perfect example of a man of integrity. After He was baptized, He went into the wilderness and fasted for forty days and forty nights, during which time Satan came to Him and tried to corrupt him and to break his integrity. **“Though tempted in every way as we are, He did not sin”** (Heb 4:15) – that, I feel, is the finest definition of integrity. He is the only one who was ever without blemish, perfect, and completely truthful.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-7:28), Jesus praises integrity repeatedly. In Matthew 5:20, He says **“Unless your righteousness (integrity) surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of Heaven.”** He advises eliminating any part of our body that threatens our spiritual integrity: “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it off” and “If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off” (Mt 5:29-30). Jesus’ advice to pluck out our right eye or cut off our right hand if they cause us to sin, shows the high value He placed on integrity. It points to the need to cut ourselves away from persons or things which lead us to sin or which impede our inner freedom and integrity.

We see Him in the Gospels, condemning **hypocrisy—the opposite of integrity**—as the essential vice of the Pharisees. In Matthew 23, He calls the Pharisees and teachers of the law “You hypocrites”, not once, but six times. (see Mat 23:13-29).

### **Christian way to Integrity**

As sinful human beings, **our integrity is flawed, but Jesus’ integrity is perfect.** When we are “in Christ,” we partake of His divine nature, having been given new natures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17), and that new nature is one of integrity.

In Galatians 5:19-23, St Paul gives two checklists to guide Christians in true freedom and integrity – the first list consists of **the “fruits of the flesh” to be avoided**, such as immorality, jealousy, ambition, conceit. The second list consists of **the “fruits of the Spirit” to be cultivated**, such as love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. This indeed is **a call to live a life of the highest integrity**, a life that brings goodness and blessings to all. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-25).

In short, **the Christian call to integrity is a call to both talk and walk in the way of Jesus.** It's a life marked by love, compassion, mercy, justice, and honouring God's call above everything else. It's the life spoken of in 1 Peter: "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. **For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer**, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil" (3:10-12). That definition of integrity calls us to walk in the path of Christ, and to steer clear

of all forms of hypocrisy. St. Paul puts it even more strikingly, when writing to the Philippians, he says, "Finally brothers, fill your minds with whatever is true, whatever is holy, whatever is just, whatever is noble, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable" (Phil 4:8). **The road to integrity is not an easy one but it's the only one that leads to peace and happiness in the long run.**

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### **NEWS FROM INM**

#### **Presentation of the SDB Strenna 2018 - "Sir, give me this water" (Jn 4,15)**

##### **LET US CULTIVATE THE ART OF LISTENING AND OF ACCOMPANIMENT**

The synthetic phrase of the Strenna corresponds to the heartfelt request that the Samaritan woman makes to Jesus at Jacob's well. In her meeting with Him, the woman feels that she has been listened to, respected and appreciated; and so, in her heart she feels impelled to ask for something even more precious: "Sir, give me some of this water" (the water of life to the full that you are offering me). Following the central theme of this gospel passage, we would point out, in the context of the coming Synod of Bishops (*«Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment»*), the importance for all our Salesian Family and for its mission in the world. of cultivating the precious art of listening and of accompaniment, with the conditions that need to be ensured, the demands and the service that is involved in both listening and accompanying, in the process of personal, Christian and vocational development.

The Strenna 2018 will be presented to the Salesian Family members in our Province on the following days:

06.01.2018	-	Vellore Region	-	Don Bosco, Katpadi
13.01.2018	-	Tirupattur Region	-	Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur
21.01.2018	-	Chennai Region	-	The Citadel, Chennai
28.01.2018	-	Pondy Region	-	Don Bosco Boys' Home, Pondy

Kindly participate in any one of the presentations at your convenience.

#### **Congrats to our (soon-to-be) Newly-Ordained**

This year we are fortunate to have eight new Deacons who will be ordained priests by His Lordship George Antonysamy, Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore, on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at Lourdes Shrine, Perambur. The Invitations are attached with this Circular. While we accompany them with our prayers, we offer them our continued support as they exercise their pastoral ministry in the following communities after their ordination:

<b>NAME</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
D Anbu Francis	Polur Sacred Heart
D Arulanand Mariadoss	Gedilam – Maranodai
D John Joseph	Thennangudi
D Sagayaraj Perianayagam	Vyasarpadi
D Sagayaraj Anto	S.M. Nagar, Vyasarpadi
D Williams Paulraj	Veeralur
D Kunaseelan Anto John Jagadish	Basin Bridge
D Masilamani Jayaraj	Lourdes Shrine, Perambur

### **NKSSC Mission**

Dear Confreres, I am writing this to convey an important decision to you. The South India Salesian Society (SISS) entered into a tripartite MOU with the Nikhil Koithara Memorial Charitable Trust (NKMCT), and the Yuvaparivartan Trust (YPT) on 17 August 2016 with the principal objective of working for the empowerment and upliftment of the structurally weak sections of the people of Nilgiris, especially the women and children of the district. In the recent meeting of the Provincial Council (Governing Body) of the SISS, on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017, we have once again evaluated this situation, and after considering all the aspects, we have finally decided to withdraw altogether from the MOU and from the mission at NKSSC. The reason for doing so is that our religious rules demand that there should be at least four members in any Salesian community. Since it is not possible to fulfil this condition in the present circumstances at NKSSC, we are constrained to take this decision. Fr. John Christopher will now be in FX, Broadway as Asst. Parish Priest.

### **Sincere Thanks...**

During the month of November 2017, we have had a few noteworthy events which elicited the active participation of our communities and our confreres. Therefore, I would like to sincerely thank and appreciate all our confreres for the organization and the success of the following:

- World Day of the Poor - All the Rectors and Communities
- AGBM Technical Institutes - The Technical Commission & Team
- BIS Workshop - BIS Team & participants
- Mission Day - Rector & Community of Don Bosco, Perambur
- YAR Day - Rector & Community of DBAI, Chennai & participants
- Youth Awake & Youth Retreat - Fr. Mani Lazar, Fr. Parthiban, the other Salesians who helped as well as the numerous Youth volunteers and participants together with the Rector & Community of Lourdes Shrine, Perambur.

For detailed news of the above and other news from the Province, kindly login to our new INM Province website ([www.donboscochennai.org](http://www.donboscochennai.org)) which is now in beta-mode and give your feedback.

### **SDB Meet in Madrid**

The Youth Ministry and Family Congress 2017 is now underway in Madrid - Spain. Over 300 delegates from 80 countries are present for this Congress. The delegates of the Congress were challenged to open new avenues and propose new strategies for our Salesian Youth Ministry in the future. V. Rev. Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime, our Rector Major, invites us to look at this Congress not just as an 'academic exercise' but as an opportunity for new Educational, Pastoral and Evangelization life in our Youth Ministry: "We cannot leave the Family behind in our ministry with the young!" He invited the delegates to infuse into the Congress the Wisdom of the nations and the richness of varied cultures to make new and relevant educational and pastoral action! We are invited to renew our charism and to build a close relationship between Youth and Family. We are called to be Specialists of the Family!

### **Fr. Rossano Sala, sdb, appointed Special Secretary for Synod on Youth**

Rev. Fr. Rossano Sala, sdb, is one of the two special secretaries appointed for the upcoming Synod on Youth. "This assignment as Special Secretary is a sign of confidence in the Salesian Family," Fr. Sala told ANS. "I am very grateful for the confidence shown to me by the Holy Father, as a Salesian and, above all, as a representative of the Salesian Family, which works with young people" he said. "We are a large family which has an educational-pastoral ministry with young people, a way of being with young people, and a style to accompany them." The Pope's acknowledgment of Don Bosco's style of being with the young should energise us further in our Salesian mission.

### **Volunteers (Missionaries) requested for various Provinces**

As you are aware. the Rector Major has made an urgent Mission Appeal for Refugee Emergency in Uganda. I have also personally received requests from various Provinces in India and the Vice-Province of Sri Lanka. I would like to encourage the Missionary Spirit of our confreres and exhort those attracted to the missionary style of life to contact me as early as possible so that we can discern together what is the best way for you to witness Don Bosco's Spirit and Charism to the young both in our land and abroad.

### **Bon Voyage – Fr. Xavier Packia**

Our Economer Rev. Fr. Xavier Packia will be away from the Province from December 14<sup>th</sup> visiting our Funding Agencies abroad with a hope to strengthen the financial bonds that unite us in our Salesian Mission. We assure him of our prayers and are confident that Divine Providence will not fail us.

**RIP** – Sincere and prayerful condolences to Rev. Fr. John Paulraj who lost his dear mother Mrs. Queen Mary on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017. We accompany the family members in these moments of profound grief and sorrow.

## **Feast of Bl. Philip Rinaldi & INM BROTHERHOOD DAY – 05.12.2017**

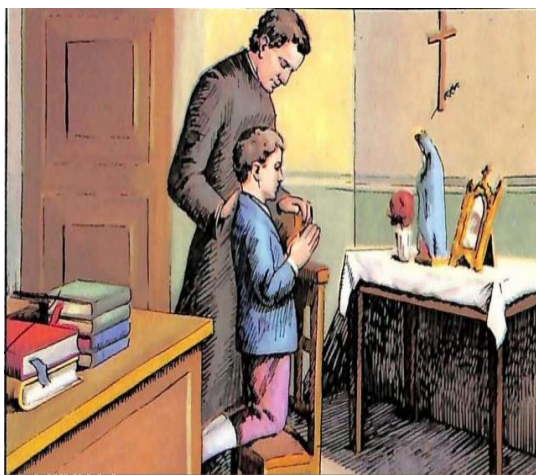
St. Phillip Rinaldi was born on May 28, 1856 in Piedmont, Italy. He met Don Bosco when he was just five years old, and intuitively recognized that he was a man with a great mission. At the age of 22, he entered the Salesian Order at the end of a tremendous vocational struggle, and even before making his vows he was made assistant novice master and was placed in charge of those with late vocations. He was ordained a priest in 1882. He soon became the Salesian provincial superior in Spain, where he opened many new houses and then served as vicar-general of the Salesians before becoming the Rector Major in 1922, Don Bosco's third successor when his gifts as father and the wealth of his initiatives became even more evident. He set up formation centres to offer spiritual and social assistance to young working women, planned printing works and guided and supported the Salesian Sisters through a particularly sensitive period in their history. He gave great encouragement to the Cooperators, and set up the **World Federations of Past-Pupils** (male and female). Working with the '*Zelatrici di Maria Ausiliatrice*', he saw the possibilities for a new form of consecrated life in the world and made it a reality. This group would later become the "**Volunteers of Don Bosco**". He was elected Rector Major in 1922. He took great interest in the missions, sending many young Salesians to learn languages and customs so that evangelisation might be more effective. He died on December 5, 1931 in Turin, and was beatified on April 29, 1990 by Pope John Paul II.

Let us felicitate our Salesian Brothers who celebrate the Salesian Brotherhood Day today. As we fervently pray for more vocations to the Salesian Brotherhood, let us also wish them the fruitfulness and fullness of the Salesian Vocation in their lives. A special liturgical service has been prepared by Deepagam and is attached with this Circular.

## **VDBs Celebration of the Founder's Feast**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of December at 10.30 a.m. in Citadel, the VDBs will be celebrating the 86<sup>th</sup> Feast Day of Bl. Philip Rinaldi in this Centenary Year of the Institute. An invitation for this event is also enclosed with this Circular.

## **Feast of the Immaculate Conception – 08.12.2017**



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Dec. 8, 1841 - Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Everything began with a Hail Mary! From when Don Bosco met Bartholomew Garelli on December 8, 1841, the Feast of the Immaculate became the Birthday of the Oratory for the entire Salesian World. Some providential coincidences led Don Bosco to attribute to Her a special intercession at the beginning of his work. "All of our great initiatives began on the day of the Immaculate," he would state (BM XVII). Mary is felt by the educators and the young as a living, motherly, and powerful presence who gives them security and hope. Let us also continue to be loving sons of the Immaculate Mary, our Queen & Mother.



## **Conclusion**

In the Christmas Story, there was a man at the time of Jesus' birth who is almost always overlooked. The inn keeper! This good man did what he could for the stranded couple for whom there was no room in the inn. He provided safety and shelter, and probably a good deal of privacy from curious neighbours. There is more to living than simply caring for ourselves and our own interests, however important or challenging they may be. There are many challenges to the Christmas mystery, not the least of which is, precisely, to be able to see the many-faced face of God in a piece of bread, a cup of water, and in our own homes and families. As Fr. Ron Rolheiser points out, we no longer need to look for God in extraordinary visions—a sunset will do. Likewise, we don't need to look for people with the stigmata to see the wounds of Christ—the pain in the faces of those we sit down at table with will do. God's wounded body too is everywhere.

The challenge we now face is to bring joy and encouragement to one another. Just as an individual may spiral down into a state of depression, so too, a community can allow itself to be overwhelmed by negativity. Let us be a good Samaritan, this Christmas, and every day of the new year to someone who perhaps may not even remember the good we did for them, just as the forgotten inn keeper!

May the incarnation deeply bless our lives! May God's many-faced face be present, sacramentally, in all of our Christmas celebrations—our food, our drink, our gifts, our family sharings. Likewise, may each of us struggle to give birth to God's many-faced face so as to be more sacrament to those around us.

Wishing you a Grace-Filled Season of Advent and a Very Joyful Christmas!

May the Peace of the new born Baby fill your hearts and your lives!



Affectionately,

**Fr. K.M. Jose SDB**  
Provincial

Date: 01.12.2017

Place: Chennai 600010