



PROVINCIAL Circular

Salesian Province of Chennai (INM)



INM-KMJ-CIR 54/08-2021

FREEDOM TO SERVE

AUGUST 2021

Dear Confreres,

Affectionate greetings to you from Citadel! As we are in the month of August when we recall to mind the **Independence Day** of our country, India, and the solemnity of the **Assumption of Our Blessed Mother** into Heaven, she being also the Patroness of our beloved country, in this Circular, I thought of reflecting with you on the theme of **FREEDOM TO SERVE**. The untimely and sad passing of Fr. Stan Swamy SJ in Mumbai on July 5, 2021, is still fresh in our mind. The 84-year-old Jesuit priest had been hospitalised on May 30 following the directions of the Bombay High Court and was put on ventilator support a day before his death. In this Circular, we will see how **Fr. Stan Swamy SJ**, while he lived, made a conscious choice to serve the tribal people. So too, we, both as individuals and as communities, ought to be able to utilize our freedom to serve the neediest in society.

INTRODUCTION

Gal 5:13 - *For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.* Questions about the ways in which religion may help to alleviate poverty are of concern to a broad interdisciplinary audience that includes theologians, religious studies scholars, and scholars of human development, as well as a wide range of social scientists. Those of us interested in these issues know that answers to such questions are by no means simple. This is the case, at least in part, because the relationship between religion and poverty is often mediated by social structural, political, and cultural factors implicated in the very class-based relationships that religious groups seek to change in order to lift themselves, or those they seek to help, out of poverty.

2 Cor 3:17 - *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Our religious beliefs should influence our response to poverty by fostering an attitude of willingness to practise generosity.* **1 Pet 2:16** - *Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Our religious profession should edify our communities in order for human dignity of all in society to be restored.* Thirdly, as Salesians, just like our Father Don Bosco, all of us can be part of the system that actively encourages and participates in alleviating poverty and social injustice.

God's Initiative

Christian anthropology places value in every individual, because humans are created in the image and likeness of God and Jesus is the human face of God. **Liberation of humans from their wretched situation was the central theme of salvation history initiated by God and even today the Church continues this same mission.** The Lord said, "I have seen the humiliation of my people in Egypt and I have heard their cry against their taskmasters. I am aware of their suffering. I have come down to free them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a beautiful and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey." (Exodus 3:7-8)

Fundamental Tenet of Christianity

The fundamental tenet of Christianity is reconciliation. Reconciliation brings about liberation, freedom from all captivities and leading to form a society in which everyone is free and equal. A Christian cannot hate this world and its people. **Instead, we should feel mercy and kindness towards people who are oppressed, exploited, less privileged and marginalized.** Jesus announced in the synagogue his Mission statement. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and to announce the Lord’s year of mercy.” (Lk 4:18-19)

In the footsteps of Christ

Following Christ, a number of Christians lay and religious work for the emancipation of the oppressed classes. They consider many aspects of human life which needs redemptive intervention ranging from injustice, inequality, oppression of people as well as neglect, misuse and exploitation of natural resources. A significant number of people hail the Church for its services in health and education sector, giving it an institutional face. Church establishes institutions not to increase its wealth and affluence but primarily to serve people in their wholistic wellbeing, education and health being two fundamental aspects.

Vatican II and its impact

In the last two centuries due to industrialization and urbanisation, Church has issued a number of teachings on social justice. **Option for the poor is considered primarily a theological reality** (*Evangelii Gaudium* 198) **and an ethical imperative** (*Laudato Si* 158). Vatican II with its renewal programmes, inspired some particularly in oppressive countries such as Brazil, Peru, El Salvador, Bolivia to make faith as a social liberating force. Theologians such as Jogan Metz, Karl Rahner, Leonardo Boff, Gustavo Gutierrez and Jon Sobrino were the strong proponents of Liberation Theology. This approach was displeasing to those who consider Christianity as an institutional social enterprise.

The revival of this social order is possible only when the least ones of the society get a voice, strength to stand on one’s feet and experience one’s worth. People like Fr. Stan sacrificed their life at the altar of institutional arrogance and legal negligence. People like him prove Jesus’ words: “*There is no greater love than one shed one’s life for the neighbour*”. Christians tread the path of reconciliation and peace for their spiritual perfection and contributes to nation-building through various ministries. **Don Bosco in his times was one clear social activist who integrated the spiritual and the social order.**

Don Bosco’s Call to Serve

Don Bosco had a special place in his heart for young people, especially young people who were



far from home or living on their own. He himself had left home at a young age and moved to Turin in order to go to school. He knew what it meant to have to fend for oneself in the big city. By the time Don Bosco was a priest the industrial revolution had swept northern Italy and people were coming to the cities in droves, looking for employment, including large numbers of young men. **He considered these boys his friends because of their shared experience.** His openness towards these

boys, his willingness to listen to them, his warm invitations to them to come to Mass, soon garnered Don Bosco a small but loyal group of followers. The young men would come to Mass on Sunday

morning and then Don Bosco would take them on day trips, hikes in the mountains, picnics in the countryside, and give them a chance to experience the joy of just being themselves. This method of dealing with young people, as simple and common-sense as it may seem, are the cornerstones of what came to be known as the Preventive System of education. **Give people love, acceptance, and direction, and you will prevent disaster.**

He realized what so few often realize about young, lively, sometimes troublesome boys: **they just need someone to give them something to do, a place where they feel they belong, and above all, love.** The day trips would include a Catechism session, plenty of play time, and end with a talk. Often these talks consisted of Don Bosco giving his boys some "homework" for the week ahead. He would even make the rounds of the factories where they worked, catching them on their breaks, to see how they were doing! Eventually there were so many young men being drawn to Don Bosco that a more formal approach was needed. Don Bosco started centres where these young men could come to spend time, learn how to read properly, learn a skill, and even just kick around a soccer ball with friends. The older boys who had been following Don Bosco longest were groomed to become mentors to the younger boys.

In His Footsteps

Even though many things have changed today since the time of Don Bosco, the questions young people are struggling with are still largely the same as the questions that young people put forward in Don Bosco's day: What am I doing here? What is the purpose of my life? What are my skills and abilities? What do I think is of value? For what projects do I want to work? **As sons of Don Bosco, we need to try to offer young people a place where they can help them to discover answers to these questions.**

Another similarity to Don Bosco's time is that the turbulent political and economic situation hinders young people to develop autonomy and force many to migrate in search for work or a better life. As a result, there are still many young people who are on the margins of society: the homeless, the unemployed, young offenders, migrants and even refugees. All these are young people who do not get the opportunities that others have, or who are looking for meaning in this affluent society. **As Salesian educators, we are called to knowingly, willingly and freely offer our selfless service for this group of young people put in underprivileged positions, in the same way as the Don Bosco himself did.**

God Heard the Cry of the Tribal People of India

The Society of Jesus in India, by and large the Catholic Church in India and even the non-Christians see in Fr. Stan Swamy SJ a man of God and a man for others: he laid down his life for his friends, for the development of the Tribals in India. **The tribals in India number about 105 million people**, an enormous number of people who needed someone to free them from their bondage and oppression. And now we can utter boldly that God sent Fr. Stan Swamy SJ amidst them to work the miracles and show the rulers the liberating power of the God of the masses.



Faith that moved mountains

In **Mt: 17: 20** Jesus promises that if we have a little faith, we can even move the mountains. Fr. Stan



Swamy SJ was a **simple Jesuit priest with modest yet deep faith in God that enabled him to literally move mountains**. Very early in his formation Fr. Stan Swamy seemed to have been touched by the Tribal Values which are Christ like in its pure form and content. Let us see an example. One day Fr. Stan Swamy visited a Tribal family. The children in the family were chatting with the young Jesuit. The parents were looking for ways of feeding and

entertaining him. So, the father of the family called one of his sons and asked him to climb a mango tree in the courtyard of the house and collect the fruits from some of the branches. The boy duly went up the tree and came down with the mangoes in his hand. Fresh mangoes from the tree ripe enough to consume immediately. The young Jesuit notices that there are a few more mangoes ripe but left on one or two branches of the tree. He points it out to the father of the family. The answer Fr. Stan Swamy received swept him completely off his feet. The father answered, *“They are for the birds of the air. We don’t collect all the fruits”*. Jesus tells us that the birds of the air do not sow the seed and do not reap and do not store in barns yet our heavenly Father feeds them all. Here in the tribal heartland of Jharkhand Province, Fr. Stan Swamy experiences the people working in close association with God the Father in feeding his creatures! Thus, eventually when Fr. Stan Swamy encountered a situation where these very people are alienated from their own land which they love, tend and cherish, feeding themselves and everybody around, including even the birds the air, he could not be a mere spectator. **He wouldn’t remain an onlooker**. He had to do something. **The obligation came from the God who had called him to work in his Vineyard**.

A call to Freedom. A call to Serve.

All these empowering activities are nothing but what Fr. Stan Swamy had imbibed from reading the Bible and the Teachings of the Church. And the understanding of the Priesthood he has embraced with love. Fr. Stan Swamy was doing his priestly duties. Blessing the people, teaching them that all of them are children of God, accompanying them in their struggles towards the freedom promised to our forefathers from bondage which is very much applicable to everyone in bondage everywhere and every time. **He was a priest who couldn’t abandon his**



people. The Church teaches that we should learn to work with likeminded people, the people of good will who may belong to different religious beliefs. When he had all the resources, he spent them all for the impoverished tribal people. And even when he had nothing to offer them by means of economic resources, he was still with them, suffering their poverty, without any murmur.

We have heard so many times about the statement attributed to Archbishop Helder Camera: *“When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist.”* This is exactly what happened in the life of Fr. Stan Swamy. **When he raised his voice on behalf of the tribal people who were being removed away from their own ancestral lands**, who were denied their right to life and livelihood guaranteed in the Constitution of India, who were marginalized in their own land, he was labelled a Maoist and a terrorist.

The Ultimate Sacrifice

He bore the cross that was pushed onto his shoulders calmly. He faltered because of his weak health and because of lack of sufficient authoritative support. **But he carried it to his Calvary where he was nailed on it by mere passive onlookers and active lawmakers.** All he did was to challenge the indiscriminate arrest of thousands of young Adivasis and Moolvasis with investigating agencies who had labelled them as Naxals. **He had often expressed that his work involved expressing dissent with several policies of the Government and laws enacted in violation of the Constitution.** He was keenly aware that there were many who were eagerly waiting for him to be out of the way so that they could take away the lands of these Tribal people and deprive them of their constitutional rights. He died while in judicial custody. No charge sheets. No investigation. No bail. Nine months in inhuman conditions. Fr. Stan Swamy's ashes have been taken all over the country. Bishops are receiving the ashes into the Cathedrals. Parishes are receiving the ashes in their churches. **A new enthusiasm has been generated among the young and old, religious and non-religious, to awake from their slumber and to arise to a New Haven of freedom: a Freedom to Serve.**

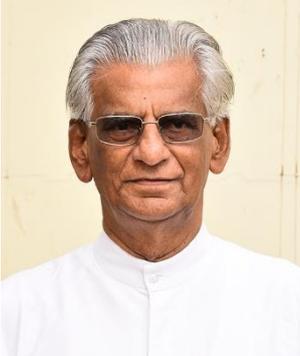
Points for Personal and Community Reflection

1. **Our identity is that of Christ who identified fully with the subaltern groups in order that they too may be identified as children of God.** Just as in his time **Don Bosco made a preferential option for the poor and abandoned youth of Turin**, which eventually became the Salesian Charism. Our recent General Chapter has given us the mandate to redefine our Salesian identity today in respect to the poor and the marginalized. **Therefore, are we able to identify ourselves with the downtrodden and the suffering people around our community, in our neighbourhood?**
2. **Christ always lived amidst the poor.** He said: *The foxes and the birds have their abode. But the Son of Man does not have place to lay down his head.* **Don Bosco, even with his priestly attire was not afraid to be seen on the streets with his young ruffians.** As Salesians, we live and work as a community and we know very well that our mission is entrusted to the community. **Can we sacrifice our comfort zones and move closer to the poor with whom we work?**
3. **We know very well the immense struggles that our Father Don Bosco had to endure in order to make the Oratory a reality.** What about us? **Does our Salesian spirituality make us ready to shoulder the sufferings of our sisters and brothers who are made poor by man-made oppressive social structures?**
4. **Don Bosco's mission from 1841 until his death in 1888, was a path on a road less travelled.** Because of this he had to face numerous challenges and untold hardships. **Our glorious Province of Chennai is known for bold ventures like New Vision and Third Model Approaches for the cause of the poor.** The social imperative led us to the ministry with street children, migrant ministry, ministry to the Tribals, Ministry to the Thurambar community, ministry to alcoholics, ministry to the young released offenders, ministry in several rural presences, Formation of self-help groups, Village Integral Animation centres, Makkal Sanghams, ministry to dyslexia children, Counselling service in all our settings, creation of a youth friendly campus, new youth centres and recently ministry to the Irular community etc. Can we join hands with all our stakeholders to be part of this ministry in some way?

The answers to these questions can trigger us to bold initiatives that will make us reach out to the poorest of the poor.

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

REST IN PEACE dear Fr. Vincent Durairaj SDB **Inspirational Leader and Loyal Son of Don Bosco**



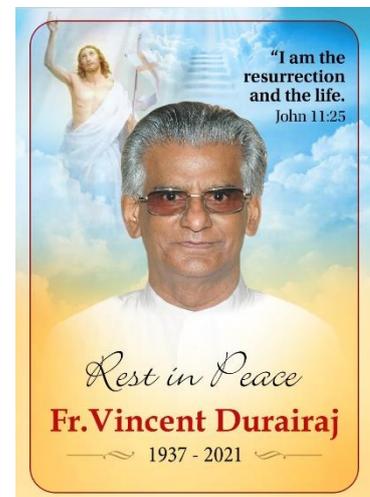
Dear Confreres, **Fr. Vincent Durairaj SDB**, our dear confrere and a former Provincial of INM, returned to the Lord on Saturday, 31st July 2021, in Kaveri Hospital, Chennai, following a severe attack of Covid-19. In his passing, the Province of Chennai has lost a stalwart Salesian, an inspirational leader, a faithful and committed religious, a great lover of Don Bosco, and a zealous and prayerful shepherd of souls. He was 84 years old and had been a Salesian for 63 years and a priest for 53 years. He has left behind an admirable example of Salesian life, lived in joy, lived to the full, lived for God and for the young.

His Last Days

On Monday 5th July, he was admitted in St. Thomas Hospital at St. Thomas Mount for a medical check-up as he was not feeling too well. At the time of admission, he underwent the Covid-19 test and was declared negative. On Friday 9th July, he was discharged from St. Thomas Hospital and returned to his community at St. Bede's. However, by that time, he was feeling extremely weak and on Monday 12th July he was admitted in St. Isabel's Hospital, where he tested positive for Covid-19. As the infection was severe, the next day itself, he was shifted to Kaveri Hospital where they placed him in the ICU. On Saturday, 17th July, he expressed his desire to urgently speak to his Rector, Fr. Stanley Ignatius, which was not easy as he was in the Covid ICU. On a special request by the Vice Provincial Fr. Bosco, the hospital authorities made it possible. While speaking to Fr. Stanley, Fr. Vincent had only one request— namely, *"Take me out from here... Let us go now itself. Take me to Jesus... I want to be with Jesus..."* But of course, he could not be "taken out" in that condition, and the hospital continued with the best of treatment; the next few days, he showed some improvement, but at around 3 a.m. on Saturday, 31st July, he slipped into a coma, and passed away the same day at 10.10 p.m.

Requiem in Chennai

A solemn requiem Mass was celebrated for the repose of his soul at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday 1st August at St. Bede's in which, despite the restrictions imposed by Covid-19, a good number of confreres from Chennai and nearby places, his family members, as well as priests of the archdiocese and members of various religious congregations took part. Fr. Maria Arokiam Kanaga, former Regional of South Asia Region, was also present. Fr. Jose Kochamkunnel, the Provincial, presided over the Eucharist, while Fr. Bellarmine Fernando preached the homily. The homilist highlighted particularly two things in the life of Fr. Vincent: (1) His passion for justice which he evinced all through his life and especially while he was the provincial; and (2) his desire to stir up in people, especially the young Salesians, a longing for Jesus. To this end, he had recently started printing a series of leaflets which he called "Catechesis for Life" focusing on how we need to follow the One who claimed to be the Way, the Truth and the Life. He felt people, and we religious included, are diverting their attention from this all-important goal.



After the Eucharist, a few individuals spoke bidding farewell to Fr. Vincent. Fr. Provincial highlighted the deep spirituality that gave strength and support to Fr. Vincent, and his concern for the 'care of the soul', his own and of others. He said, Fr. Vincent was truly a man of God and a man of prayer who always stood for justice and truth. Fr. Jayapalan Raphael, former provincial, highlighted Fr. Vincent's visionary leadership and tender heartedness. Fr. Stanley, Rector of St. Bede's, narrated the events of the last days of Fr. Vincent and spoke of the very inspiring and encouraging presence of Fr. Vincent in the community. Mr. Dominic, Fr. Vincent's nephew, spoke of his uncle's love and concern for the family, especially after the death of his own father (that is, Fr. Vincent's elder brother) last April, due to Covid-19. Mr. Loyola, the Asst. Headmaster of St. Bede's, spoke on behalf of the staff of the three schools, thanking Fr. Vincent and highlighting the legacy he has left behind.

Funeral Service in Tirupattur

The mortal remains of Fr. Vincent were taken to Don Bosco, Tirupattur, and laid in repose in the chapel for the confreres and the people of the region to pay their respects to him and pray for the repose of his soul. The solemn funeral Mass at Tirupattur was presided over by the Provincial with the participation of a good number of Salesians, the family members of Fr. Vincent, members of the Salesian Family, other religious, and people who had known him and loved him. After the Mass, several persons spoke, bidding farewell to Fr. Vincent. Fr. Agilan, Provincial of Tiruchy, said the death of Fr. Vincent was a great loss to the Province of Tiruchy, where many of the houses were initiated by Fr. Vincent himself when he was provincial. He also recalled how Fr. Vincent had moulded many young Salesians in both the provinces of Tamil Nadu. Fr. Doss Kennedy, the Parish Priest of K-Pudur, Madurai, spoke on behalf of the people of K-Pudur, where Fr. Vincent was the first Salesian parish priest in 1975 when the parish was given to the Salesians. Fr. Kennedy recalled how, besides taking care of the spiritual needs of the parishioners, Fr. Vincent had taken initiatives in their social development too.



After the farewell addresses, Fr. Agilan led the final blessing and obsequies, and the mortal remains were taken in procession to the Salesian cemetery and laid to rest, till that day "*when the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised, never to die again*" (1Cor 15:52).

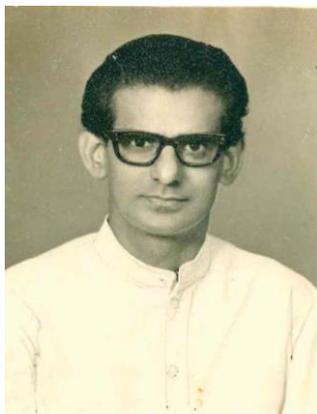
Inspiring Life and Mission

Fr. Vincent was born on 27th March 1937 to Mr. Durairaj and Ms. Rathnavathi in Royapuram, Chennai. After his primary school, he joined the Sacred Heart Aspirantate in Tirupattur in 1951 and completed Matriculation in 1955 and the Intermediate in 1957 at Sacred Heart College. He did his novitiate in 1957-58 at Yercaud and professed as a Salesian on 24th May 1958. He did his philosophical studies at the Retreat, Yercaud, from 1958 to 1961. He did his practical training in Matunga, Mumbai (1961-62) and in Basin Bridge (1962-65). The same year, he also completed his B.A. from Tribhuan University. He made his Perpetual Profession on 24th May 1964 and started his theological studies at Kotagiri (1965-67) and completed it at Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore (1967-68) and was ordained a priest on 21st December 1968 at Don Bosco, Gandhi Nagar, Vellore, by Bishop David Mariyanayagam SDB, DD.

After his priestly ordination, he worked as Asst. Parish Priest at Lourdes Shrine, Perambur (1969-72), and then as Rector at SIGA (1972-75). In 1975, when the Province accepted the parish of K-

Pudur in Madurai, he was chosen as its first parish priest. In 1977, he was sent to the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome where he obtained an M.Th. in Spiritual Theology. Returning to India, he spent one year in Yercaud as Vice Rector, before being made Rector at Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur (1980-82). In 1982, he was appointed Vice Provincial of the Province of Chennai (1982-87) and in July 1987 he was appointed Provincial of the Province of Chennai.

As Provincial, he gave a good thrust to the work for the Young at Risk, which saw Anbu Illams established in Salem in 1988 and Coimbatore in 1991. To offer better facilities to the children in



Anbu Illam, Broadway, land was acquired in Kavrapettai. In 1992, for the first time in the province, an exclusive year of Pre-Novitiate was launched in Pallithamam. It was also during his term, in 1990, that the new building of the Provincial House at the Citadel was constructed. During his tenure as Provincial, in 1988, he got the Rector Major Fr. Viganò to preach a retreat for about 100 Salesians in Tirupattur, the cradle of the Salesians in South India. After completing his term as Provincial, he took a sabbatical (1993-94) to do some studies at the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, USA, obtaining diploma in Spirituality and Spiritual Direction. In 1994-2000, he served as Rector of Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, and in 2000-06, as Rector and Parish Priest of FX, Broadway. From 2006 to

2009 he was Parish Priest of Tagore Nagar, Pondicherry, and from 2009-2012, Rector of Don Bosco Centre, Yellagiri. In 2013-2016, he was Rector and Parish Priest of Mary Help of Christians Parish, Tirupattur. Wherever he was placed, he always worked with a long-term plan keeping in mind future developments.

Thanks

Before concluding this obituary note, I would like to thank, first of all, God Almighty for giving us the gift of Fr. Vincent Durairaj, through whom the Province has been blessed in so many ways. Secondly, a word of thanks to the family of Fr. Vincent Durairaj, for giving us this great man, this wonderful Salesian, who gave his all to the Congregation and for the good of souls. At the same time, I also wish to extend, on my personal behalf and on behalf on the whole Province, our sincere condolences to the bereaved family and promise to keep them all in our prayers. Thirdly, I want to thank the Salesian Community of St. Bede's for taking such good care of Fr. Vincent, particularly during the time of his last illness. Sincere thanks also to the Rector and community of Don Bosco, Tirupattur, for making all the arrangements for the funeral service, which was so well planned and prepared.

Conclusion

And now, we can truly say of our dear Fr. Vincent that "*when the hour came for him to bring his consecrated life to its highest fulfillment*" (C.54), he was fully prepared, and death for him "*was made bright by the hope of entering into the joy of his Lord*" (C.54), and he continues to remain united with us "*in a love that will not pass away*" as Art. 54 of our Constitutions reminds us. Thus, he now, along with our other departed confreres, strengthens the bond of our 'Salesian communion of saints'. Indeed, the memory of him -- his life, his leadership, his achievements, the hardships he faced, his last illness and finally his death -- are for us "*an incentive to continue faithfully in our mission*" (C.94). Adieu dear Fr. Vincent, till we meet at Jesus' feet. Thank you for the good life that you lived and the many lives that you touched. Continue to love and pray for us and the Province you loved so much when you were down here.

INM PC 2022

The tentative dates for the INM Provincial Chapter are from **January 10th to January 15th, 2022: inauguration on Jan.10 evening and conclusion on Jan.15 evening with Provincial Community Day.** The date for the Pre-Chapter will be communicated to you later.

and the Pre-Capitular Commission Members and the sub-themes are given below:

Moderator	–	Fr. Pathiaraj Rayappan
1. Verification of GC 28	–	Fr. Edwin George
2. Evaluation of the Social Ministries & Way Forward	–	Fr. Sebastian Vanathaiyan
3. School Ministry	–	Fr. John Britto Savarinthan
4. Economic Directory	–	Fr. Edwin Vasanthan

I wish the Pre-Capitular Commission members all the best in the preparation for the Chapter and I am sure that all the communities will work together with the Moderator in ensuring that this Provincial Chapter will make all our confreres grow stronger in our Salesian Life and Mission.

Fr. L. Don Bosco – Tamilnadu Minority Commission Member

Honourable Chief Minister of Tamilnadu **Mr. M.K. Stalin** has appointed **Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy**, our Vice Provincial, as a member of the Tamilnadu Minority Commission. We congratulate Fr. Don Bosco and wish him all the best for his service to the Government and to the minorities in Tamilnadu. We are confident that his contribution will enhance the welfare and development of the minorities. We are also very grateful to Honourable Chief Minister for appointing him.

Episcopal Ordination of Fr. Visuvasam Selvaraj

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has appointed **Fr. Visuvasam Selvaraj (55)**, of the Clergy of Port Blair, as Bishop of Port Blair. Fr. Visuvasam Selvaraj was born on 4 January 1966, in Raja Anna Malaipuram, in the Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore. He attended the Diocesan Minor Seminary in Santhome, Madras (1981-1985); he studied Philosophy at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Poonamallee, Chennai (1985-1988); Theology at St. Albert's College, Ranchi (1990-1994). He obtained a Master degree in Canon Law from St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore (2001). He was ordained priest on 8th May 1994, for the Diocese of Port Blair. The Episcopal Ordination will be on the 21st August 2021 at Stella Maris Cathedral, Port Blair at 04.00 pm. He will be ordained by **Most. Rev. Aleixo das Neves Dias, S.F.X.**, the Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Port Blair. We wish him God's choicest blessings upon him as he takes up this shepherding ministry in the Diocese of Port Blair.

National Prayer Service

The Conference of Catholic Bishops India (CCBI) Office Bearers are organizing a one-hour National Prayer Service on Saturday, 7 August 2021, from 8.30 to 9.30 p.m. to pray for the departed souls, express solidarity with the grieving families and communities and pray for the health of the world. The event will be conducted from the tombs of St Thomas, St Francis Xavier and St Teresa of Kolkata and the Marian Basilicas of Bandra (Mumbai), Sardhana (Meerut), Hyderabad, Shivajinagar (Bangalore) and Vailankanni. I request the communities to participate actively in this National Prayer Service. The details of the prayer service are sent to you through email. Let us pray as one family to Our Lord and ask the mediation of Mother Mary and our beloved Saints to help us in this time of pain and suffering.

Formation towards Psychosexual and Celibate Integration: Manual for Formees

We congratulate Fr. Paul Raj Irudayaamalraj for authoring and releasing the book *Formation towards Psychosexual and Celibate Integration: Manual for Formees*. This manual is intended for the formees at the post novitiate formation, for their growth as mature human persons especially in areas of psychosexual maturity and healthy relationships. This book is the fourth volume of the six-volume series produced by the South Asia Formation commission of the Salesians and Salesian Psychological Association.

Mahogany Tree Plantation Project

After knowing the salient features of Mahogany, we in the Province have an agency to fund this project through SURABI, which will be monitored by Fr. Economer and Fr. Alphonse Arulandham, the SURABI Director. The project will be implemented and executed from now on and it will end in September. Fr. Jayaraj SDB (Polur, Agro Tech), Fr. Xavier SDB (Sagayathottam), Fr. Arun Sagayaraj SDB (Sagayathottam) have formed a team for the implementation and execution of this project. They will do pilot study and the implementation of the project in our settings as early as possible. The co-coordinating personnel in our presences are given below.

Fr. Jayaraj	Gedilam-Marondai-Pavunjur-Polur-Pondicherry-Tiruvannamalai-Veeralur-Vellore.
Fr. Xavier	Ennore-Redhills-Kadambur-Karaikal-Kavarapettai-Kotagiri-Pannur-Sagayathottam-Thirukazhukundram-Thennagudi
Fr. Arunsagayaraj	Madhavaram-Mathur-Baglur-Jawadhi Hills-Jolarpettai-Tirupattur-Yellagiri



A video presentation on the significance of mahogany tree plantation in all our settings is attached with this circular. Kindly view this as a community during the evening prayer moment. I really thank and congratulate all the confreres for this much needed initiative to nurture the nature. In the long run, this will be a very profitable venture too.

<https://youtu.be/ii0etkXG4Qc>

Rest in Peace

Fr. Dominic Jyrwa SDB (INS), aged 36, passed away on the 22nd July 2021 at Nazareth Hospital, due to Covid-19.

We offer our heartfelt condolences to Fr. Paul Olphindre SDB, the Provincial and the confreres of Shillong Province.

Fr. George Nadackal (INN), aged 67, passed away on the 02nd August 2021 in AIIMS Hospital Delhi. He had been suffering from cancer and died of covid-19.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Fr. Davis Manipamben SDB, the Provincial and the confreres of Delhi Province.

Mr. Antony Raj, aged 56, eldest brother of Fr. Alexander Thomas SDB, passed away on the 19th July 2021 in Siluvai Palayam.

Mrs. Flora Jancy Rani, aged 69, mother of Fr. Amala Vinodh SDB, passed away on the 20th July 2021 at CMC Hospital, Vellore.

Mr. A. Lazar, aged 86, father of Fr. Michaelraj Lazar SDB, passed away on the 22nd July 2021 in Panikankuppam.

Sr. Selma MSJ, aged 76, elder sister of Fr. Antony Kanichai-KJ SDB, passed away on the 26th July 2021 in Aluva, Kerala.

CONCLUSION

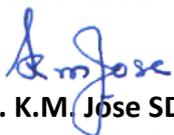
The stress on God as a God primarily of the poor stands out in Mary's hymn of praise. In a world where the rich seem to be getting richer and the poor, poorer, one wonders whether the Magnificat is a hymn that can make sense to the poor, to those of low degree. Yet, **it is important to remember that God's ways are not our ways and so, the poor must, in confidence, sing this song as their song.** The confidence with which Mary sings this song runs through the entire hymn. She uses past tense to denote God's future actions, thus expressing that God will indeed accomplish his will, and the poor will be vindicated. **What is important for the poor to realize is that they, like Mary, need to continue to open themselves to all that God wants to do in them. They need to continue to acknowledge their dependence on God by doing all that is required of them and then, leaving the rest in his capable and strong hands.**

Even as we do celebrate our Independence Day and the solemnity of the Assumption, we need to ask ourselves serious questions both as Indians and Christians. Can we be really free when so many atrocities take place in full public view in many parts of our country? Can we be really free when officials stand by and watch and even participate in these dishonourable acts? Can we be free when we see our neighbour as a liability and burden rather than a blessing? Can we be really free when we are so intent on destroying our natural resources for selfish ends and then have to wonder whether we will have enough rain to see us through the year? Can we call ourselves Christians when we will not do anything about these atrocities and continue with our lives as if it does not concern us? Are we really free? Are we truly Christian?

In the last part of Mary's song of praise, she said that God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. This was indicative of the economic revolution started by Christianity, a revolution hardly begun even today. In today's world each one thinks only of himself or herself, we look for what we can grab, what we can get. The operative slogan is "What's in it for me?" **Moved by Mary's example the Christian needs to move the focus from self to others. Christians cannot be comfortable; they need to be disturbed while anybody else is in dire need.** In celebrating the feast of the Assumption, Mary, the symbol of redeemed humanity has opened a window for us on the radical transformation possible through the power of Jesus. **Mary voices God's opposition to tyranny and his determination to pull down the powers that oppress the needy.** It is hardly surprising then that it is the poor that look up to her most for help. "Never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, sought thy intercession was ever left unaided..."

Wishing you a Very Happy Feast of the Assumption & Happy Independence Day!

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr. K.M. Jose SDB
INM Provincial



Date: 03.08.2021

Place: Chennai - 600010