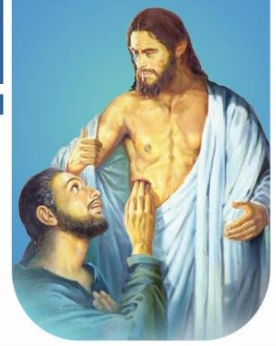




Provincial Circular

SALESIAN PROVINCE OF CHENNAI (INM)



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Salesian Youth Ministry: An Integrated Vision of Salesian Mission for Today's Young People

Dear confreres, the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13–35) in Luke's Gospel present to us one of the most beautiful models of youth accompaniment. The Risen Jesus does not immediately reveal Himself. Instead, He **draws near, walks with the disciples, listens to their story, enlightens their minds through the Scriptures, shares their table, and rekindles hope in their hearts.** Only then do they recognise Him.

The Emmaus journey is also the journey of every Salesian educator. We are called not merely to teach young people but to **walk with them**, patiently accompanying them towards an encounter with Christ.

The twenty-first century presents unprecedented opportunities and challenges for the education and evangelisation of young people. Rapid technological development, globalisation, migration, family instability, consumerism, unemployment, mental health concerns, and the emergence of digital culture have profoundly altered the context in which young people grow and make life choices. Many experience loneliness despite constant online connectivity. Others struggle to discover meaning in an increasingly fragmented world. These realities challenge educators and pastoral workers to rethink how they accompany young people without losing the essential elements of their educational mission.

For us Salesians, youth ministry is not simply one apostolic activity among many. It is the very expression of our identity and vocation. Our Constitutions affirm that the Salesian Congregation was raised up by God to be "signs and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially those who are poor" (Art. 2). This foundational statement defines not merely what Salesians do but who we are.

Don Bosco's Pastoral Vision

Every authentic understanding of Salesian Youth Ministry begins with St. John Bosco himself. His educational mission did not emerge from an abstract pedagogical theory but from concrete encounters with poor and abandoned young people in nineteenth-century Turin.

The symbolic beginning of this mission occurred on 8 December 1841 with the meeting between Don Bosco and the young Bartholomew Garelli. After being chased away by the Sacristan because he could not serve Mass, the frightened boy was invited back by Don Bosco with the simple words: "Come here, my friend."

These words reveal the essence of Salesian pedagogy. Before asking what the young man knew, Don Bosco sought to know who he was. He listened to his story, discovered his family circumstances, learned about his work, and gently invited him to return the following Sunday

with his companions. The Oratory was born not through an elaborate pastoral plan but through an encounter marked by respect, friendship, and genuine concern. This meeting offers us the paradigm of Salesian accompaniment. The encounter, dialogue, support, and gradual accompaniment that characterised Don Bosco's relationship with Bartholomew Garelli became the permanent educational style of the Salesian mission. Education begins not with instruction but with encounter; not with programmes but with presence; not with authority but with friendship.

Throughout his life, Don Bosco remained convinced that young people flourish when they know they are loved. His famous statement, "It is not enough to love the young; they must know that they are loved," summarises the heart of the Preventive System. Love is not merely an interior disposition but becomes visible through presence, dialogue, encouragement, patience, and shared life. This explains why Don Bosco spent countless hours in the playground, workshops, dormitories, and chapel. He believed that education occurred not only during formal instruction but in the ordinary moments of daily life. Recreation, conversation, games, work, prayer, and celebration all became privileged occasions for education and evangelisation.

Salesian Youth Ministry: More Than Activities

A persistent misunderstanding identifies youth ministry with programmes. Camps, youth rallies, retreats, competitions, leadership programmes, and cultural events certainly have educational value, but they do not constitute Salesian Youth Ministry by themselves. The Frame of Reference (*FoR*) rightly insists that Salesian Youth Ministry is "the primary expression of the Salesian mission." This statement has profound theological implications.

First, youth ministry is not confined to a youth centre or parish. Every Salesian work – school, technical institute, hostel, parish, college, social service centre, or youth centre – is called to become an educational and evangelising community. Second, youth ministry is not delegated solely to a youth director. Every Salesian, educator, teacher, volunteer, parent, and collaborator participates in this common mission. Third, youth ministry is not limited to explicitly religious activities. Teaching mathematics honestly, accompanying a struggling student, organising vocational training, protecting vulnerable children, or helping a young person find employment are all authentic expressions of Salesian Youth Ministry when inspired by pastoral charity.

Education and evangelisation are not parallel activities but complementary dimensions of one educational process. For this reason, the Salesian Constitutions affirm that the purpose of the Salesian mission is to form "upright citizens and good Christians" (Art. 31). Salesian Youth Ministry seeks the integral development of every young person – intellectual, emotional, moral, spiritual, social, and vocational.

Many institutions evaluate youth ministry by the number of programmes conducted, participants enrolled, or events organised. While such indicators have their place, Salesian Youth Ministry evaluates success differently. Its primary concern is whether young people are becoming more mature as persons, growing in faith, assuming social responsibility, discerning their vocation, and discovering God's loving presence in their lives.

This holistic vision remains remarkably relevant today. Contemporary society often fragments education into disconnected disciplines and separates faith from daily life. Salesian Youth

Ministry proposes an alternative anthropology in which every aspect of the human person is integrated within God's loving plan. Thus, the educational process becomes a journey of accompaniment.

The Four Dimensions of Salesian Youth Ministry

One of the most significant contributions of the *FoR* is its presentation of Salesian Youth Ministry as an integrated educational and pastoral process. Rather than viewing youth ministry as a collection of independent activities, *FoR* identifies **four interrelated dimensions** that together foster the holistic growth of young people: the **Educational-Cultural Dimension**, the **Education to Faith Dimension**, the **Social Experience Dimension**, and the **Vocational Dimension**. These dimensions are not separate departments competing for attention; they are complementary aspects of one educational journey.

At Valdocco, study, recreation, prayer, work, friendship, and vocational discernment were woven into the ordinary rhythm of daily life. A young person could move naturally from the playground to the chapel, from the classroom to the workshop, from a cheerful conversation with Don Bosco to a moment of spiritual direction. This integration remains the hallmark of authentic Salesian Youth Ministry.

A. The Educational-Cultural Dimension: Forming the Whole Person

The first dimension seeks the integral human development of the young. The Salesian Constitutions state: "As educators, we work together with our young people to bring all their talents and aptitudes to full maturity" (Art. 32). Don Bosco never reduced education to academic instruction. Instead, he sought to form mature, responsible, competent, and socially committed persons capable of contributing positively to society.

We should identify several areas of concern within this dimension: human maturity, intellectual development, critical thinking, social responsibility, cultural engagement, citizenship, human rights, ecology, and digital culture. These concerns demonstrate how Salesian education continues to respond creatively to contemporary realities while remaining faithful to its original inspiration.

In today's context, educational formation cannot be confined to examination results or professional competence alone. Salesian education must cultivate not only knowledge but also discernment. Don Bosco anticipated this holistic approach long before modern educational theories emerged. His oratories combined excellence with moral formation, practical skills, artistic expression, sports, music, theatre, and community life. He believed that every legitimate human talent could become a path toward holiness.

For us Salesians, this dimension raises challenging questions. Are our institutions helping young people interpret contemporary culture through the light of the Gospel? Are they preparing responsible citizens committed to justice, peace, and environmental stewardship? Are they equipping students to engage ethically with digital technologies? These questions remain essential criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of Salesian educational institutions.

B. The Education to Faith Dimension: Leading Young People to Christ

While the Educational-Cultural Dimension emphasises human development, the second dimension brings young people to the deepest source of human fulfilment: an encounter with Jesus Christ. Our Constitutions affirm: “For us too, evangelising and catechising are the fundamental characteristics of our mission. We are called to be educators of the faith at every opportunity” (Art. 34).

This constitutional statement reflects our conviction that education without evangelisation remains incomplete. At the same time, evangelisation without authentic education risks becoming disconnected from life. Salesian Youth Ministry therefore integrates proclamation, catechesis, sacramental life, prayer, and spiritual formation into the ordinary educational process while remaining sensitive to diverse religious settings and promoting universal Gospel values such as truth, compassion, justice, and love.

At Valdocco, there existed an atmosphere in which faith became attractive. The beauty of liturgy, the warmth of family spirit, joyful recreation, personal conversations, and simple acts of kindness prepared young people to encounter Christ naturally. Don Bosco demonstrated that evangelisation begins with relationships before it reaches explicit proclamation. Pope Francis has repeatedly emphasised that evangelisation begins through accompaniment rather than ideological instruction. Walking with young people, listening to their questions, respecting their freedom, and gradually introducing them to the Gospel remains one of the most effective forms of evangelisation in contemporary society.

The reality of today is that many young people participate in religious activities without experiencing a personal relationship with Christ. Consequently, the guiding question while forming SEPP should no longer be simply whether programmes are organised but whether they truly facilitate an encounter with the Lord. Are our young people encountering Christ or merely attending programmes?

C. The Social Experience Dimension: Educating Through Community

Human beings mature within relationships. Don Bosco understood that young people grow best when they belong to communities that encourage responsibility, participation, and mutual support. Accordingly, the third dimension of Salesian Youth Ministry focuses on social experience through participation in groups and associations. The Salesian Constitutions declare: “We introduce the young to the experience of ecclesial life by bringing them into a faith community and helping them to take part in it” (Art. 35).

The Preventive System always fostered participation. Don Bosco established sodalities, youth groups, music bands, theatre groups, sports teams, and apostolic associations because he recognised that leadership develops through active involvement rather than passive observation. One of Don Bosco’s most remarkable achievements was his ability to entrust significant responsibilities to young people. Dominic Savio organised the Company of the Immaculate Conception, whose members quietly encouraged their companions to live virtuous lives. Many former pupils later became educators, priests, missionaries, artisans, and civic leaders because they had already learned leadership within the Oratory.

The same principle remains relevant today. Youth ministry cannot remain clerical or adult-centred. Young people themselves must become active participants in planning, decision-making, service, evangelisation, and social transformation.

In the digital age, this dimension acquires new significance. Social networking has created virtual communities that often substitute for real human relationships. While digital platforms offer valuable opportunities for communication, they cannot replace authentic face-to-face encounters characterised by trust, dialogue, shared service, and prayer. Salesian communities must therefore continue creating spaces where genuine friendship and community life flourish.

D. The Vocational Dimension: Discovering God's Dream

The culmination of the educational journey is vocational discernment. Salesian Youth Ministry understands vocation as the discovery of God's loving plan for every person.

The Salesian Constitutions emphasise that young people are at the age when they make the fundamental decisions that shape both society and the Church (Art. 26). Furthermore, Art. 37 identifies spiritual direction and personal accompaniment as privileged means for helping young people collaborate with God's design for their lives.

This dimension reminds educators that every pastoral activity should ultimately help young people answer three fundamental questions: Who am I? What is God calling me to become? How can I place my gifts at the service of others? Vocational accompaniment, therefore, represents the crown of the entire educational process. Human maturity, faith formation, and community participation all converge toward helping young people discover their life's purpose.

The Unity of the Four Dimensions

Although each dimension possesses its own objectives, they cannot be separated without weakening the educational process. Education without faith risks becoming merely technical. Faith without cultural formation can become disconnected from daily life. Community participation without vocational discernment may lack lasting direction. Vocational promotion without personal growth easily degenerates into recruitment.

This integrated vision remains one of the greatest strengths of Salesian Youth Ministry. The challenge for every Salesian work today is therefore not simply to implement four dimensions independently, but to ensure that every educational initiative contributes simultaneously to human growth, faith formation, community participation, and vocational discernment.

The Sectors of Salesian Youth Ministry: Diverse Expressions of One Mission

The four dimensions of Salesian Youth Ministry become concrete through the various environments in which Salesians live and work. These environments, traditionally referred to as the **sectors** of Salesian Youth Ministry, are not isolated apostolates but complementary expressions of the same mission. Whether in an oratory, school, parish, technical institute, social work, or college, the objective remains unchanged: to accompany young people towards integral human development and an encounter with Christ.

1. The Oratory and Youth Centre: The Original Expression of the Salesian Charism

The Oratory occupies a privileged place in Salesian history because it represents the birthplace of the Congregation. It emerged naturally from Don Bosco's encounter with Bartholomew Garelli on 8 December 1841 and gradually evolved into a vibrant community where poor and abandoned boys found education, friendship, recreation, work, and spiritual formation.

Unlike formal educational institutions, the Oratory welcomed everyone. No entrance examination was required, no fees were collected, and no social distinctions were recognised. It was a place where young people could experience acceptance before achievement. The contemporary Salesian oratory should continue this tradition by creating open and welcoming environments where young people can gather freely. Particularly in urban contexts marked by family breakdown, social fragmentation, and digital isolation, the oratory remains a vital expression of preventive education. It provides spaces for healthy friendships, leadership formation, artistic expression, sports, volunteer service, and faith development.

Perhaps more than any other sector, the oratory reminds Salesians that youth ministry begins not with programmes but with presence. It is the place where educators spend time with young people simply because they value them as persons.

2. The School: Education as Evangelisation

Among the various works, schools constitute one of the most widespread expressions of the Salesian mission. School is not merely an institution for academic excellence but a privileged means of educating the whole person. Excellence in teaching remains essential, but academic achievement alone does not fulfil the Salesian mission. Schools are called to cultivate ethical responsibility, critical thinking, social commitment, leadership, creativity, and spiritual growth.

In today's educational landscape, Salesian schools encounter new challenges. Digital technologies have transformed learning; artificial intelligence is reshaping knowledge acquisition; globalisation has increased cultural diversity; and mental health concerns among students have become more visible than ever before.

These realities require schools to move beyond information transmission towards holistic formation. The classroom must become a place where young people learn not only to think but also to discern, to collaborate, to serve, and to appreciate the dignity of every human person.

3. Technical and Vocational Education: Restoring Human Dignity Through Work

One of Don Bosco's most prophetic contributions to nineteenth-century society was his concern for working-class youth. At a time when many apprentices experienced exploitation and poverty, he established workshops where they could acquire professional skills within a humane and faith-filled environment.

For Don Bosco, work was never simply an economic activity. It was participation in God's creative action and a means of restoring human dignity. Today, the Salesian technical institutes continue this tradition by preparing young people for meaningful employment while simultaneously cultivating integrity, responsibility, collaboration, and professional ethics. Technical education, therefore, becomes an important instrument of social transformation, particularly for

disadvantaged youth who seek opportunities for economic independence and remains one of the most effective responses to unemployment, migration, poverty, and social exclusion.

4. The Parish: A Community of Evangelisation

The Salesian parish occupies a distinctive place within the Church because it seeks to embody the pastoral style of Don Bosco. Unlike conventional parish structures that often focus primarily on sacramental administration, the Salesian parish places young people at the centre of its pastoral priorities. The parish becomes an educational and evangelising community where families, children, adolescents, and young adults encounter Christ through vibrant liturgy, catechesis, youth groups, social outreach, and community participation.

5. Social Works: The Preferential Option for the Poorest

The Salesian Constitutions remind us that the mission is directed “especially to those who are poorest.” This preferential option continues today through a wide range of social works serving children in street situations, migrants, refugees, school dropouts, victims of trafficking, young offenders, and those affected by addiction or family breakdown. These works embody the compassionate face of the Preventive System. They remind the Church that evangelisation cannot ignore the social realities that prevent young people from living with dignity. The effectiveness of these works depends not merely on professional competence but on the capacity to restore hope, trust, and human dignity through loving accompaniment.

6. Higher Education: Forming Leaders for Society and the Church

The growth of Salesian colleges and universities represents one of the most significant developments in contemporary Salesian Youth Ministry. Higher education extends Don Bosco’s educational vision into the intellectual, professional, cultural, and research domains. Higher education institutes are called to form competent professionals who combine academic excellence with ethical leadership and social responsibility.

Higher education institutes also provide opportunities for accompanying young adults during one of the most decisive stages of life. Questions concerning vocation, career, relationships, identity, and purpose often emerge most intensely during university years. Consequently, campus ministry, mentoring programmes, leadership formation, volunteer service, and spiritual accompaniment become indispensable components of the Salesian colleges.

Although the various sectors of Salesian Youth Ministry differ in structure and methodology, they are united by the same educational philosophy and pastoral vision. This unity is sustained by the Oratory Criterion, the interpretative key for all Salesian apostolic activity, through which every Salesian presence is called to become a **home that welcomes**, a **parish that evangelises**, a **school that prepares for life**, and a **playground where young people experience joy, friendship, and community**.

The Educative and Pastoral Community (EPC): The Subject of the Salesian Mission

One of the most significant developments in Salesian Youth Ministry after the Second Vatican Council has been the recognition that the educational and evangelising mission is not entrusted exclusively to the Salesians but to the **Educative and Pastoral Community (EPC)**. The *FoR* identifies the EPC as the fundamental subject of the Salesian mission, bringing together Salesians,

lay collaborators, parents, young people, volunteers, and members of the Salesian Family in a shared responsibility for education and evangelisation.

This understanding marks an important evolution in the way Salesian works are conceived. Traditionally, educational institutions were often identified with the authority and responsibility of the Salesian community alone. While the Salesians remain the charismatic nucleus and guarantors of Don Bosco's spirit, contemporary youth ministry recognises that the richness of the mission is realised through communion and co-responsibility.

This collaboration is not simply functional or administrative. It is theological in nature. Every baptized person shares in the mission of the Church, and therefore every educator who embraces Don Bosco's educational spirit participates in the Salesian mission according to his or her vocation.

a. From Collaboration to Co-responsibility

Many Salesian institutions have successfully involved lay collaborators in teaching, administration, pastoral activities, and social service. However, authentic Salesian Youth Ministry calls for something deeper than collaboration; it calls for **co-responsibility**.

Collaboration often implies that lay people assist the Salesians in carrying out programmes designed by others. Co-responsibility, on the other hand, means that all members of the Educative and Pastoral Community participate in discerning the mission, planning educational initiatives, implementing pastoral strategies, and evaluating their effectiveness.

This participative model reflects Don Bosco's own practice. Although he founded the Congregation, he relied extensively on lay teachers, benefactors, artisans, parents, and former pupils. The Oratory itself functioned as a family in which everyone contributed according to his or her gifts.

Today, the same spirit should characterise every Salesian work. Teachers are not merely employees but educators. Parents are not passive recipients of school services but partners in formation. It is keenly felt that we should, more and more, empower our local lay dimension coordinators (LDCs) to become co-responsible for the Salesian mission. Like Salesians, LDCs too should be offered the opportunities for formation in Salesian charism and preventive system of Don Bosco.

b. Young People as Protagonists

Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of Don Bosco's educational vision was his confidence in young people themselves. He did not merely educate them; he entrusted them with responsibility. Dominic Savio organised the Company of the Immaculate Conception. Michael Rua assisted Don Bosco in organising the Oratory. Young catechists instructed younger children. Older apprentices trained newcomers in the workshops. Music bands, theatre groups, sports clubs, and missionary initiatives were frequently directed by young people themselves.

Long before the Second Vatican Council emphasised the active participation of the laity, Don Bosco had already demonstrated that education becomes most effective when young people become protagonists of their own growth. We should grow in this conviction. Too often, pastoral

programmes are designed *for* young people rather than *with* them. The Educative and Pastoral Community therefore seeks to create structures in which young people participate in discernment process. Participation itself becomes an educational experience.

The Salesian Educative and Pastoral Plan (SEPP): From Vision to Action

If the Educative and Pastoral Community is the subject of the mission, the **Salesian Educative and Pastoral Plan (SEPP)** is its principal instrument. The SEPP is much more than an annual calendar of events. It is a living document. It is a shared pastoral project that translates the Salesian mission into concrete educational objectives, priorities, strategies, and processes. *FoR* describes pastoral planning as a continuous process of discernment rather than merely organizational management.

The purpose of the SEPP is to ensure that every activity contributes to the same educational vision. Without such integration, schools organise programmes independently, youth centres develop unrelated initiatives, parishes conduct isolated activities, and commissions and departments pursue their own objectives. The result is fragmentation.

The SEPP prevents this fragmentation by asking a series of fundamental questions: Who are the young entrusted to us? What are their most urgent needs? What is God asking of our Salesian presence today? Which educational priorities should guide all our activities? How will we evaluate whether our mission is bearing fruit? These questions move pastoral planning beyond event management toward missionary discernment.

Provincial Level Coordination

Salesian Youth Ministry is lived locally but coordinated provincially. Provincial-level coordination ensures that these diverse sectors remain united by a common vision. The Youth Ministry in our Province has an integrated organizational structure in which **dimensions are promoted by provincial level departments, while sectors are animated and supported through specialized commissions.**

This distinction is important. The **dimensions** express the fundamental educational goals of Salesian Youth Ministry. The **sectors** represent the concrete environments in which those goals are realised. Departments ensure that the goals of the dimensions are realized across all sectors, while commissions provide technical expertise, networking, formation, and evaluation within particular apostolates. Such an approach prevents duplication of efforts while fostering collaboration among different ministries.

In our Province, the four dimensions of the Salesian mission are fostered through the coordinated efforts of various specialized departments. The **Educational and Cultural Dimension** is primarily promoted by **Kalvisolai, Niraivagam, and DBICA**, with valuable support from the **Don Bosco Social Action and Research Centre (DBSARC)**, particularly through its educational initiatives that impart Constitutional values. The **Education to Faith Dimension** is animated by **Deepagam, DBICA, and DBYA–Ennore**, which provide opportunities for catechesis, faith formation, spiritual accompaniment, and youth ministry. The **Social Dimension** finds expression through **Don Bosco Empowerment Services, Scouts and Guides, SYM, DBYA–Ennore, and the DBSARC, Tiruvannamalai**, all of which foster youth leadership, civic responsibility, social engagement, and outreach to the poor and vulnerable. The **Vocational Dimension** is promoted by **DB Vazhikaatti**

and the **Vocation Promoter**, who accompany young people in discerning their life choices, nurturing their personal growth, and responding generously to God's call in its various forms.

With a sense of quiet pride, we can affirm that each of these departments is staffed by dedicated full-time personnel and supported by adequate resources to carry out its mission effectively.

In our Province, each sector is supported by one or more commissions that facilitate planning, coordination, animation, and evaluation within its respective field of apostolate. Most sectors have a commission corresponding to their area of responsibility. The **Higher Education Sector** is served by two commissions: one that coordinates the **Arts and Science Colleges** together with the **Agriculture College**, and another dedicated to the **Polytechnic Colleges**. The **Social Service Sector** has several specialized commissions, namely the **YAR (Youth at Risk) Commission**, the **Migrant Services Commission**, and the **Social Ministry Commission**, each addressing a distinct area of the Province's social apostolate.

A healthy and well-structured interaction between the provincial-level departments and the sector-specific commissions is not merely desirable but essential for the effective animation of Salesian Youth Ministry. The formulation of age-specific and sector-specific syllabi for youth animation should emerge from this collaborative process, drawing upon the expertise and experience of both the provincial departments and the respective sectoral commissions. The Provincial Youth Ministry Delegate has the responsibility of facilitating this dialogue, fostering synergy among them, and overseeing the discernment and finalization of the common syllabus to ensure unity of vision while respecting the diversity of pastoral contexts.

It is a moment of pride for all of us that the Dicastery for Youth Ministry in Rome has chosen the Chennai Province to undertake a study on how faith education is carried out within a specific pastoral context. The study will be led by Fr. Stalin Dhanaraj, SDB, the INM Youth Ministry Delegate, with the assistance of Fr. Jesudass, SDB, Director of Deepagam, together with representatives from each sector of the province.

The Role of the Province Youth Ministry Delegate

Within this structure, the Province Youth Ministry Delegate serves not simply as an event coordinator but as the principal animator of the province's educational and pastoral vision.

His responsibilities include: promoting Salesian identity in every work; accompanying local Youth Service Coordinators; facilitating formation programmes for LDCs; coordinating departments and commissions; encouraging collaboration among sectors; helping communities to form EPCC; assisting communities in preparing and implementing their SEPP; evaluating pastoral effectiveness. He shall submit the SEPP of each community to the Provincial and his council for review and approval. The Delegate's leadership is therefore fundamentally pastoral.

Together with the provincial council, he would study the emerging challenges to youth ministry in our province, such as: better recognition and support to LDCs by local communities; allotment of adequate financial resources for implementing the SEPP; making the youth ministry budget an integral part of the annual budget; and seeing to the accountability and regular evaluation of all our pastoral practices.

To strengthen this process, I have entrusted the Province Youth Ministry Delegate, Fr. Stalin Dhanaraj, with the responsibility of visiting our communities to animate the Educative and Pastoral Community Council (EPCC), evaluate the implementation of the Salesian Educative and Pastoral Plan (SEPP), and bring to the attention of the Provincial and his Council the best practices emerging from the various communities.

The Role of the Youth Service Coordinators

The **Youth Service Coordinator** is the guarantor and facilitator of the implementation of the well-discerned Salesian Educative and Pastoral Plan (SEPP) in each sector of the local community. Although the Rector, by virtue of his role in the animation and governance of the community, bears the ultimate responsibility for all youth ministry services, the day-to-day coordination, oversight, and promotion of these services are entrusted to the **Youth Services Coordinator (YSC)**. YSC carries out this responsibility joyfully and in a spirit of communion with the Rector and the heads of the various sectors. In this regard, the Educative and Pastoral Community Council (EPCC) should implement the deliberations of the PC 24 by clearly specifying the responsibilities of the Youth Service Coordinator within the SEPP of each sector. It is the particular responsibility of the Youth Service Coordinator to participate actively in the discernment processes of the EPCC, fostering a pastoral vision that recognises every young person entrusted to our care as a potential “honest citizen and good Christian”. Together with the local Dimension Coordinators, the Youth Services Coordinator ensures the faithful implementation, coordination, and periodic evaluation of the Salesian Educative and Pastoral Plan (SEPP) across all sectors.

The Youth Service Coordinator plays a pivotal role in the formation, animation, and coordination of the Local Dimension Coordinators (LDCs) across all sectors of the Salesian presence.

The Local Dimension-Coordinators

LDCs are our foot soldiers. With pastoral intelligence, they take active part in the discernment and drawing up of the SEPP; they are the close collaborators to Youth Service Coordinators in implementing and periodically evaluating the SEPP.

As the frontline collaborators in carrying forward the Salesian mission, the LDCs deserve continual accompaniment, encouragement, and formation from the Salesian community, particularly from the Youth Service Coordinator. The Province Youth Ministry Delegate would animate these LDCs in Salesian charism.

Conclusion

As we renew our commitment to the young, may every Salesian community become an authentic educative and pastoral community where every young person experiences God’s love through our presence, accompaniment, and service. Entrusting our mission to Mary Help of Christians and inspired by Don Bosco, let us continue to walk together with courage and hope, forming young people into honest citizens and good Christians.

News from the Province

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Fr. Xavier Raj Selvaraj on successfully defending his Ph.D. thesis on 9 June 2026 at Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur. Inspired by his work with the tribal communities of the Yelagiri Hills, his research used Gamification to transform English language learning, empowering shy and slow learners with confidence, communication, and employability skills. We wish him a fruitful and inspiring teaching career with young people.

We also congratulate Fr. Albert Kumar Savarimuthu and Fr. Yesubalan Suresh for successfully completing their Licentiate studies with *summa cum laude*. We welcome them back to the province and wish them all the best for their ministry at DBTC, Kavaraipeetai.

Appreciation for Rectors and Community Leaders

Our sincere thanks to all the Rectors and leaders and community members who generously set aside several evenings to prepare the SCPL, SEPP Planning initiatives and the Realistic Budget for the coming year. Your dedication and collaborative spirit will strengthen our common vision and mission for the poor. We also appreciate your commitment in empowering the Youth Service Coordinators to effectively facilitate the Youth Ministry both at the province and local community levels (**LDC**: Formation of Lay Dimensions Coordinator, **LDMA**: Local Delegate for the Missionary Animation, **MPE**: Mission Poverty Eradication as contact person). Your support will undoubtedly contribute to a more coordinated and fruitful pastoral outreach to young people.

Broadway St. Francis Xavier's Church

The renovated Francis Xavier's Church, which is dedicated to Mary Help of Christians, had its glorious day on the 21st of June 2026. It was blessed by the presence of Archbishop George and many clergy from various corners. The renovation works continue to enhance and preserve the cherished place of worship. It was a moment of witnessing the community's devotion to Our Blessed Mother and its commitment to providing a welcoming and spiritually enriching environment for all the faithful. We extend our special appreciation to Fr. Sundar, the Rector and the Parish Priest, as well as to all community members and the faithful, for carrying out this work with meticulous dedication. We pray that Mary, Help of Christians, will continue to guide and bless all their endeavours.

Gratitude for Missionary Animation

We express our heartfelt thanks to Fr. Sunny, in charge of the Missionary Sector at the national level, and Fr. Anto John, the Coordinator for the Missionary Dimension of the province, for their inspiring animation and guidance of our Youth Service Coordinators. Their dedication to promoting missionary awareness and commitment among young people is greatly appreciated and will continue to bear fruit in the mission of the Church and the Congregation.

Thanks a Million!

Sincere appreciation to the Vice Provincial, the Rector, Administrator, Secretaries and the staff of the Provincial House for wonderfully arranging the meeting and for their hospitality. God may bless your generous heart and your family.

Friendship and Well-Being in the Digital and AI Era among Youth

A national-level conference on "Friendship and Well-Being in the Digital and AI Era among Youth in India: New Models of Youth Accompaniment" is organised on the 1st of July 2026. The conference brings together youth ministry delegates and coordinators from the various Salesian Provinces to reflect on the challenges and opportunities facing young people in the digital age. We congratulate our Province Youth Ministry team and the Vice Provincial for their contribution to this initiative. We warmly welcome Fr. Biju Michael, Regional Councillor for South Asia, along with Fr. P. D. Johny, Rector and Secretary of SPCSA, Fr. Patrick Laptcha, National Secretary of DBYA, Fr. Felix SJ, Vice Chancellor of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, and all the participants. We hope the conference will foster meaningful reflection and strengthen the mission of accompanying and empowering young people in today's changing world.

Province Jubilee Celebration

On July 3, 2026, we will joyfully celebrate the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, the patron saint of our province, together with the 92nd anniversary of our Province's foundation and the Diamond and Golden Jubilee celebrations of our beloved confreres at Don Bosco Perambur. The newly ordained priests will also be felicitated on that day. We warmly exhort all Rectors, Leaders, confreres, Salesian Family members and youth from our various centres to participate in the Solemn Eucharistic celebration and the felicitations without fail. We kindly request that all confreres remain until the end of the celebration. In advance, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Rector and community of Don Bosco Perambur, as well as to the Vice Provincial and the organising team, for their meticulous planning of this special event.

Rectors and Leaders Retreat

A special retreat for the provincial councillors, rectors, and leaders will be held at The Retreat, Yercaud, from the evening of 12 July to 18 July 2026. It will be preached by **Fr. Eric Cachia**, the provincial of the Salesian province of Malta. We welcome him wholeheartedly and pray for God's blessing on him, to guide us in the spirit of Don Bosco, with renewed zeal to serve the people of God. We warmly welcome **Fr. Joseph Forte** and **Fr. Nithiyan** from Malta to our Province.

Team Visits

The team consists of the Provincial, the Vice-Provincial, the Economer, the Councillor for the Youth Ministry and the Councillor in charge of the region, who will visit the communities. The list of communities is found in the monthly programme for July.

From this July onwards, the monthly programme of the Youth Ministry Delegate will be published to coordinate the commissions and dimensions.

Commissions and Dimensions 2026 - 27

The commissions and sector personnel for various departments, ministries and initiatives have been finalised in collaboration with the provincial council. We wholeheartedly thank all the confreres and lay collaborators for willingly offering their minds and hearts to the planning and execution of the province's initiatives, together with the provincial councillors and delegates. We wish everyone God's choicest blessings as you shoulder the important responsibilities. We gratefully remember all the heads, coordinators and members of last year's commissions and dimensions for their leadership and contributions.

Rest in Peace!

The beloved father of Fr. Sagayaraj (Italy), **Mr. L. Periyamayagam**, aged 75, passed away on the 11th of June 2026.

Mr. Felix, the brother of Dn. Johnson Arulappan (currently serving his Diaconate Ministry at St. Francis Xavier's Church, Broadway), died on the 19th June 2026.

Mr G. Mathias (82), the beloved father of Fr. Patrick Mathias (Executive Secretary, Commission for Bible, CCBI Centre, Bangalore), entered heaven on the 21st of June 2026.

Mr D. J. James Isai Arasan (69), the beloved Brother of Fr. Sagayaraj Devadoss (Rector, St. Bede's Community) & Sr. Margaret Devadoss FMA (FMA Provincial), entered eternal rest on the 21st of June 2026.

We offer our continued prayers for the repose of the soul of the deceased and heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Important Dates and Events in July

DATE	Event
01	Conference on Friendship and Well-Being in the Digital and AI Era among Youth
02	Provincial Council
03	St. Thomas Feast / Province Feast / Honouring the Jubilarians & New Priests / Provincial Council
08	All Commissions Meet / Dimension Meet
09	INM Higher Education Meet
10	Strategic Sustainability Consultation Meet @ The Citadel
12 - 18	Rectors & Leaders Retreat @ Yercaud
20	Team Visit – Don Bosco College, Yelagiri
21	Team Visit – Don Bosco, Gandhi Nagar & St. Joseph's, Katpadi
22	Team Visit – Don Bosco Tech, Basin Bridge & Don Bosco – Redhills
24	Team Visit – Don Bosco College, Karaikal & Sacred Heart Parish and School, Thenangudi
25	Team Visit – DBRITE, Cuddalore
29	Employability Skill Centre for Thurambar, Irular and Gypsies Meet

Note: *A special circular in honour of our patron, St. Thomas the Apostle, will be released on 3 July to mark his feast day.*

Yours affectionately,



Fr. Don Bosco SDB
INM Provincial



Date: 01.07.2026

Place: Chennai