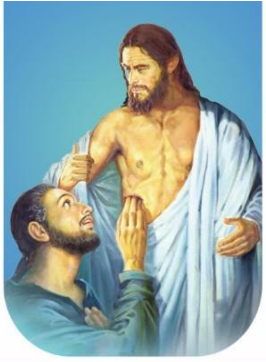
Provincial Circular
SALESIAN PROVINCE OF CHENNAI (INM)



INM-LDB- CIR 89/11-2026 **NOVEMBER 2026**

WITNESSES TO THE RADICAL DEMANDS OF THE GOSPEL

Dear Confreres,

Inspired by St. Peter's exhortation to shepherd the flock of God willingly and wholeheartedly (1 Pet 5:2), and mindful of our call to build up a fraternal provincial community (C 161), I write to you as a brother and fellow pilgrim, journeying with you towards the fullness of life promised by Jesus (Jn 10:10). Sharing the same vocation, struggles, and hopes, I invite you to reflect on a fundamental question: Do our lives bear credible witness to the radical demands of the Gospel? November offers us a fitting opportunity for this reflection. As we celebrate All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, remember our deceased benefactors and members of the Salesian Family on 5 November, and commemorate the 170th death anniversary of Venerable Mamma Margaret on 25 November, we are reminded of our call to holiness and our hope in eternal life. The faith and sacrifices of those who have gone before us challenge us to live our vocation with greater fidelity and conviction. The commemorations mentioned above invite us to pause, examine our lives, and rediscover what is essential to our consecration. Our concern must go beyond what we accomplish to the persons we are becoming and the witness we offer to the young and the Church. The radical demands of the Gospel become credible not merely through our works, but through lives transformed by Christ.

1. Returning to the Heart of Our Vocation

"If we do not live what we believe, then slowly we shall begin to believe what we live." These words of Fulton Sheen challenge us to examine whether our choices, relationships, and apostolic commitments reflect the faith we profess and the consecration we have made. The radical demands of the Gospel call for coherence between what we proclaim and how we live. As a Province, we have much to thank God for: the gift of vocations, our institutions dedicated to the young, our service to those on the peripheries, and the generosity of our confreres. Yet gratitude must be accompanied by honesty. We must guard against self-sufficiency and self-reference, becoming more concerned with achievements than with authentic witness, efficiency than with effectiveness, and numbers than with the depth of our proclamation. We may teach without learning, give without receiving, and speak without listening. Our ministry then risks becoming a duty rather than an expression of love for Christ and the young. In *Evangelii Gaudium* (26-28), Pope Francis calls us to renew our evangelizing mission from within. We are not called merely to maintain structures or accomplish tasks, but to share the joy of the Gospel. This is possible only when that joy is alive in us. Even religious life can be infected by the world's pursuit of achievement, possessions, recognition, and influence. Pope Francis warns against pastoral self-reliance that forgets the primacy of God's grace. A radical Gospel witness begins when Christ, rather than our achievements, becomes the center of our identity and mission.

2. Recovering Our Interior Life

We live in a world increasingly shaped by technology and a technocratic mentality. Digital platforms and artificial intelligence influence our habits, relationships, and decisions, often competing for our attention. Technology is not the enemy; the challenge is to remain inwardly free enough to use it wisely. A consecrated Salesian must be free from whatever weakens his communion with God and his availability to the young. Reports from the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life published in the year 2019 revealed that 1,600 consecrated religious left consecrated life and they had identified three causes for leaving, namely, crises of faith, community life, and affectivity among the significant challenges. These remind us that vocation cannot be sustained by organisation and activity alone. We often justify neglecting prayer by citing demanding apostolates and hectic schedules. While these pressures are real, we must honestly examine whether we have allowed work to displace God from the centre of our lives. Prayer is not an interruption of the mission; it is its source. It renews our vocation, purifies our intentions, and restores our priorities. Without interior freedom and a living relationship with God, even generous service can lose its spiritual depth. The radical demands of the Gospel require us to resist the distractions that fragment our lives and to reclaim the silence, discipline, and prayer that make us available to God and others.

3. Consecrated Life: A Relationship with God

The quality of our faith determines the quality of our consecration (*Lumen Fidei*, 53). Consecrated life is, first and foremost, a life centred on God, received from Him and continually offered back to Him. The Shema Israel (Deut 6:4–5) reminds us that loving God with our whole being must remain our first commitment. This love becomes credible through our love of neighbour (Lev 19:18). Our relationship with Christ, "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6), must transform our relationships with our confreres, the young, and all those entrusted to our care. Through grace, we are called to make St. Paul's words our own: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). We are disciples before we are ministers, and we remain disciples in every aspect of our ministry. Mary of Bethany, sitting at the feet of Jesus (Lk 10:38-42), reminds us to listen before we act. The radical demands of the Gospel call us to belong wholly to Christ so that our service becomes the visible expression of His love. We can lead the young to Christ only if we ourselves remain rooted in Him.

4. Prayer: The Breath of Consecrated Life

In 2018, Pope Francis identified prayer, poverty, and patience as essential pillars of consecrated life. Speaking of prayer, he reminded consecrated men and women that it is a return to the Lord who first called them and invited them to remain close to Him. Prayer renews our first love and reminds us that our work is for the Lord, not merely for personal satisfaction or institutional success. It is, in his words, "the air that calling makes us breathe, renewing that calling." Pope Francis challenges us not to allow busyness to become an excuse for neglecting prayer: "This is more important. Go and pray." He points to Mother Teresa, whose tireless service to the poor was sustained by fidelity to prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Her example reminds us that deep contemplation and generous service belong together. If we are to witness radically to the Gospel, prayer cannot be whatever remains after our work is done; it must shape how we work and why we serve. No apostolate, however demanding, can permanently justify neglecting our relationship with the Lord. We

may need to simplify our activities and re-organise our schedules, but prayer must never become the first casualty of our commitments.

5. Don Bosco: God at the Centre of His Life

Don Bosco's life demonstrates that radical apostolic commitment must flow from an unwavering relationship with God. His tireless work among the young was sustained by deep trust in divine providence. In letters written before the approval of the Congregation and its Constitutions, he insisted that no member was indispensable: God alone must remain the Head and Master of the Society. This conviction shaped his insistence on meditation, prayer, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, examination of conscience, and spiritual reading. Don Bosco teaches us that no person, work, or institution can take the place of God. Our identity and mission depend not simply on our abilities or achievements, but on our union with Him. This is the heart of our Salesian way: to remain deeply united with God while being fully present among the young. Our traditional practices of prayer are not mere obligations; they sustain our consecration and keep our mission rooted in Christ. To witness radically to the Gospel in Don Bosco's spirit is to combine an undivided heart for God with tireless dedication to the young.

6. Mystics, Prophets and Servants

Karl Rahner famously observed: "The Christian of the future will either be a mystic or will not exist at all." Christian life cannot survive on external practices and apostolic activity alone; it requires a living experience of God. Our 27th General Chapter similarly reminds us that we cannot be witnesses to the radical demands of the Gospel without being mystics, prophets, and servants. The 29th General Chapter calls us to be passionate about Jesus Christ. Our Rector Major, in his letter Following Jesus after the Example of Don Bosco the Mystic, highlights the importance of asceticism and mysticism in following Christ: "Asceticism is the inner freedom that opens the door to Jesus, which frees the heart from every useless and toxic dependence. […] Mysticism is the courage to graft our liberated freedom onto the roots of the tree of the cross" (AGC 448). Asceticism frees us from unhealthy attachments, the pursuit of recognition, and the tendency to place personal interests above the common good. Mysticism roots us in Christ and gives us the courage to embrace the cost of discipleship. These are not abstract ideals; they must become visible in simplicity, generosity, patient listening, forgiveness, and fidelity to prayer. Being mystics, prophets, and servants means allowing our communion with God to transform our lives and make the radical demands of the Gospel tangible to the young. They need more than competent educators; they need men whose lives bear witness to a genuine friendship with Jesus.

7. Conversion Begins Today

Dear Confreres, witnessing to the radical demands of the Gospel requires continual conversion. Guided by God's Word, sustained by prayer and the sacraments, and strengthened by community, we can recognize our compromises, overcome complacency, and respond anew to God's grace. Conversion begins when we honestly acknowledge the distance between the Gospel we proclaim and the life we live. Change may be gradual, but our response must begin today. **I therefore invite every confrere to renew his commitment to the essential expressions of our prayer and community life:**

Let us devote time to personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

Let us remain faithful to community prayer, meditation, and daily Eucharist.

Let us be present for community meals, strengthening fraternity through shared life.
Let us make our regular visits to the Blessed Sacrament and prepare our weekly adoration with care.

I encourage every community to examine honestly how these commitments are lived. Do we give prayer its rightful place, or do we accommodate it only when time permits? Have our community celebrations become routine, or do they deepen our communion with God and one another? Let us discuss these questions fraternally, not to judge one another, but to encourage mutual growth and fidelity.

Dear Confreres, I make this appeal because I believe the Lord is inviting our Province to a deeper and more authentic witness. Our credibility will not be measured primarily by the number of works we accomplish, **but by how clearly our lives reveal Christ. The young need our competence and dedication, but above all, they need men of faith and prayer whose joy comes from belonging to Jesus.** May St. John Bosco inspire us to unite deep prayer with tireless service. May Mary, Help of Christians, teach us to listen to God's Word and respond with generous faith. May the Lord grant us the grace to become authentic witnesses to the radical demands of the Gospel, so that our communities may radiate His presence, our mission may flow from prayer, and our lives may proclaim, through word and deed, the joy and transforming power of the Gospel.

News from the Province

Thank You Dear Rectors & Leaders
I would like to sincerely thank all the Rectors and Leaders for coming together twice this month for our meetings. Your presence and participation reflect your deep sense of ownership, commitment and responsibility towards the Province. I deeply appreciate your dedication and fraternal spirit. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation for their active participation in the discussions and reflections on the *Ratio*.

Provincial Visitation
The canonical Provincial Visitation began last month, and we have completed visits to nine communities so far. Confreres feel that their community is a happy community. All those who met said their rector is an able animator, and he sets a good example through his punctuality and presence at all prayer moments. Some of the rectors are extraordinary in caring for their confreres, especially when they are sick and overloaded with responsibilities. Confreres share positive notes about their fellow confreres, expressing brotherly love and concern, and sharing their joys and sorrows. I too have felt that the confreres are actively engaged in their respective ministries, and beneficiaries appreciate how our communities function. Let us remember our call to be men of communion, witnessing to unity and fraternity among ourselves and before the people we serve. Let us remain faithful to our common moments of prayer, meals, and recreation, which strengthen our community life and deepen our Salesian identity.

All Souls' Day – 2 November
On All Souls' Day, we remember in prayer all the faithful departed, especially our deceased confreres, family members, benefactors, and all those who nurtured the seed of our vocation

to religious life. With gratitude, we commend them to God's loving mercy and pray that they may enjoy eternal rest. According to the Church's liturgical provisions, priests have the privilege of celebrating three Masses on this day: one for a particular intention, another for all the faithful departed, and the third for the intentions of the Pope. May this commemoration deepen our hope in the resurrection and strengthen our bonds of communion with those who have gone before us.
The community at Don Bosco, together with the province, is renovating the cemetery on their campus. We thank the Rector and community for shouldering this responsibility.

Welcome Back, Fr. Vice Provincial!
A hearty welcome to **Fr. John Alexander, our Vice Provincial**, on his return from Rome after participating in an intensive course for Vice Provincials. We are confident that the insights and experiences he gained during this programme will enrich his service and strengthen his contribution to the life and mission of our Province. We wish him God's abundant blessings and continued enthusiasm as he accompanies and animates our confreres in their Salesian vocation and mission.

Dissemination of the Ratio and Provincial-Level Meetings
It is essential that the *Ratio* is disseminated throughout the Province, preferably on a regional basis, so that all confreres have the opportunity to understand, reflect on and internalise its contents. The Rectors and Leaders, together with the Formation Team, have already gone through the document. The Vice Provincial, in collaboration with the members concerned, will coordinate further dissemination.

Province Level Meetings
As part of the animation, the province offers our confreres various opportunities for their spiritual and missionary renewal in November and December 2026. Confreres are expected to actively participate in the following meetings organised at the Provincial level:

1. Quinquennial Meeting (November 5-7)
2. Spiritual & Pastoral renewal for Confreres of 40- 50 years of Age (11-13, 18-20 November)
3. Clerics' Meeting
4. Retreat

These gatherings are important opportunities for ongoing formation, reflection and strengthening our shared Salesian identity.

Special Care and Accompaniment of Confreres
We must give special attention, care and personal accompaniment to our beloved confreres who are going through struggles and difficult moments in their lives. They need our understanding, patience, encouragement and fraternal support. Let us make it a point, as discussed and suggested by the rectors and leaders at the recent meeting, to pray daily for individual confreres in the same community and spend quality time with them lovingly. Let no confrere feel isolated or neglected. Through our presence, attentive listening, prayer and genuine fraternal concern, let us assure them that they are valued, loved and never alone in our Salesian community.

Community Auditing

Mission Poverty Eradication (MPE) is a strategic initiative of the Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia (SPCSA), aimed at coordinating the efforts of Don Bosco institutions towards reducing multidimensional poverty in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this regard, the Youth Service Coordinators have been oriented and trained to collaborate with the Provincial Development Office (PDO), under the guidance of Fr. Edwin Vasanthan and Fr. Stalin, Fr. Pathiaraj and Fr. John Christopher, to carry out the community audit. All communities are requested to complete the audit by 14 November 2026. Please reflect carefully on the questions and provide the necessary data. This exercise will help us assess, consolidate and strengthen the services we offer to the poor and marginalised, ensuring that our mission remains responsive to their needs.

Hearty congratulations, Fr. Ratchagadoss Francis

We congratulate Fr. Ratchagadoss Francis on the successful defence of his M.Th. thesis in Biblical Theology at St. Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bengaluru, titled "Ezekiel as a Sentinel: An exegetical study of the prophet Ezekiel in chapters 3 and 33." May God bless him.

Inauguration of the Projects in Vellore

As part of the Centenary Celebration of the Salesian Province of Chennai and the 75th Anniversary of the Diocese of Vellore, three collaborative development projects have been undertaken to empower children, youth and women, particularly in Sri Lankan Tamil settlements within the Diocese of Vellore. Through the generosity of an Italian donor, all three projects have been sanctioned in loving memory of his wife, Mrs Maripina, with the specific commitment that the funds be utilised exclusively for the benefit of the Diocese of Vellore. The three initiatives are:

1. ACCESS MARIPINA: Provides scholarships, academic support and motivational training to children and youth to promote educational achievement and prevent school dropouts.
2. PATHWAYS MARIPINA: Empowers 50 marginalised youth through academic strengthening and competitive examination coaching, particularly for Tamil Nadu Government Group IV examinations. The project will be implemented by SIHARAM, Tiruvannamalai.
3. TRUST MARIPINA: Supports Sri Lankan Tamil refugee families through Child Rights Clubs for children and seed capital for women to establish sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The Beloved Bishop of Vellore, Rev. Dr Ambrose, along with the provincial, confreres, and some lay people, will inaugurate these projects on 25 October at the Bishop's house of Vellore.

Salesian Cooperators' Promise Day

Fifty-six aspirants from fifteen centres in Chennai and Vellore are preparing to make their Apostolic Promise as Salesian Cooperators after two years of formation. This special celebration will take place during the Holy Eucharist at 8.00 a.m. on 22 November 2026, at Mary Help of Christians Church, Basin Bridge, Chennai. This year is particularly significant for the Salesian Family as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the official beginning of the Association of Salesian Cooperators. We thank God for the commitment of these aspirants and pray that their promise will mark the beginning of a fruitful journey of lay participation in

the Salesian mission. May their example inspire many more to collaborate with the Salesians of Don Bosco and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in serving young people, especially the poor and most vulnerable.
I strongly exhort all our delegates or the representatives of the Salesian co-operators in the communities to participate in the event on 22 November.

Salesian Mission Day 2026 – Don Bosco, Tirupattur
The INM Missionary Commission will organise **Salesian Mission Day 2026** on **7–8 November 2026** at Don Bosco Aspirantate, Tirupattur, under the inspiring theme **"Hearts Open, Mission Alive!"** The celebration aims to deepen missionary awareness, foster the missionary spirit of the Congregation, and inspire confreres to embrace their missionary vocation with renewed enthusiasm. Rectors and community leaders are kindly requested to send representatives from their respective communities and encourage active participation in the competitions organised as part of the celebration. May this gathering renew our missionary zeal and strengthen our commitment to proclaiming the Gospel through our service to the young. We express our sincere gratitude to the members of the Missionary Commission and the community of Don Bosco, Tirupattur, for their initiative and dedicated efforts in organising this important event.

Venerable Mamma Margaret – 25 November
On 25 November, we remember **Venerable Mamma Margaret, the beloved mother of St. John Bosco**. More than a devoted mother, she was a woman of great faith who, even during a time of famine, cared lovingly for her family and placed God at the centre of her life. Her deep love for the Lord shaped her into a wise and loving educator who combined gentleness with firmness, trust with vigilance, and affection with discipline. In 1846, when Don Bosco became seriously ill, Margaret came to Turin to care for him and discovered his dedicated service to abandoned boys. Recognising God's will in her son's mission, she willingly joined him at the Oratory, transforming it into a home filled with love, faith, and a family spirit. For ten years, she served as Don Bosco's foremost collaborator, embodying the maternal dimension of the Salesian Preventive System. Through her faith, sacrifice, and loving presence, Mamma Margaret became a foundational figure in the Salesian Family. As we remember her exemplary life, let us ask for her intercession to help us become gentler, more patient, and more loving in our care for the young people entrusted to us. May her example strengthen our resolve to work together as one Salesian Family, educating the young with love, reason, and faith. As discussed in the chapter, 25th November will be celebrated as the day of the Salesian family; let us pray for the Salesian family, and a formal celebration will take place in the province in January 2027.

Rest in Peace!
Fr. Xavier Tete SDB, of the Salesian province of Guwahati, entered his eternal abode on 2 October 2026. We offer our prayers and condolences to the confreres and the provincial of Guwahati.

Fr. Patrick Nongrang SDB (61) of the Salesian Province of Shillong passed away on 16 October 2026. We offer our condolences to the provincial and confreres of INS.

On 20 October 2026, **Fr. Jacob Malayatty SDB,** of the Salesian Province of Bangalore, entered into heaven. We offer prayerful condolences to the INK provincial and confreres.

On 25 October, **Fr. Daniel Pushparayer (47)** of Trichy Province received his eternal reward. We offer heartfelt condolences to the provincial and confreres of Trichy Province.

Sr. Arokiaswamy Celine FMA passed away on 27 October 2026. We offer our prayers and condolences to the Provincial and Sisters of INM FMA.

We continue to pray for the departed soul and offer our condolences to the bereaved family members.

Important dates and events in November 2026

Date	Events
01	PV: Don Bosco Beatitudes, Vyasarpadi / All Saints' Day
02	All Souls' Day
03	PV: Don Bosco, Tirupattur / PV: DB Vazhikaatti
04	Provincial Council @ Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur
05-07	Quinquennium Meeting @ Mount DB, Kotagiri
07	Quinquennium Meeting / INM Mission Day
08	INM Mission Day / PV: Idayadeepam Novitiate
09	PV: Idayadeepam Novitiate
10	PV: Don Bosco, Kadambur
11	PV: Dominic Savio, Tirupattur
11 - 13	Spiritual and Pastoral Renewal Batch 1 @ Mount DB, Koatagiri
15-16	PV: Our Lady of Victories, Jolarpettai
16 - 17	PV: Don Bosco College, Dharmapuri / PV: Don Bosco, Thalavadi
18 - 20	Spiritual and Pastoral Renewal Batch 2 @ Mount DB, Kotagiri
20 - 21	PV: Don Rua, Tirupattur
22	Salesian Cooperators Day / PV: Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur / PV: Francis Xavier's Church, Broadway
23 - 24	PV: Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur / PV: Francis Xavier's Church, Broadway PV: DEEPAGAM
25	Inauguration of Projects in Vellore
26	Curatorium Meeting @ DBTC
27	PV: Don Bosco, Redhills
28 - 29	PV: St. Joseph's, Basin Bridge

Yours in Don Bosco!

Fr. Don Bosco SDB
INM Provincial

Date: 01.11.2026
Place: Chennai - 10