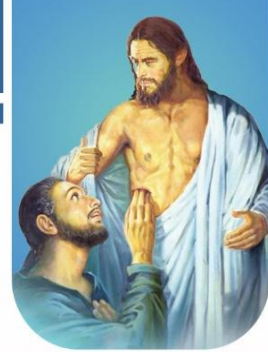




# Provincial Circular

## SALESIAN PROVINCE OF CHENNAI (INM)



INM-DBL-CIR 57/11-2025

NOVEMBER 2025

### **“A Journey of Faith and Service in Holiness: Preparing Our Hearts for Death and Eternal Life through the Mission to the Poor”**

Dear Confreres,

November invites us to journey together in faith and hope. It is a sacred month of remembrance, gratitude, and renewed missionary zeal. We begin on November 1<sup>st</sup>, celebrating All Saints' Day, rejoicing with all who now share in the glory of heaven and inspire us to live lives of holiness and service. We thank God that nine Polish Salesian who were martyred during World War II will be beatified soon for their faithfulness to vocation and mission even to the point of death. On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, we commemorate All Souls' Day and on this day our hearts turn in prayer for all the departed, especially the forgotten, the unborn, and those children who were aborted and for whom the womb became a tomb. We entrust every life, known and unknown, to God's infinite mercy. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, we gratefully remember our deceased benefactors and members of the Salesian Family, whose faith and generosity continue to sustain our mission among the poorest and most vulnerable. November 11<sup>th</sup> then shines as a day of joyful remembrance of the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian missionary expedition to Patagonia. This milestone renews our call to carry St. John Bosco's dream to the ends of the earth, serving the young and the poor with courage and faith. On November 13<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the memory of St. Artemides Zatti, a Salesian coadjutor who dedicated his life totally for the sick and vulnerable. His only desire was that all Salesians lived together and served in the mission together. Finally, on November 25<sup>th</sup>, we commemorate the death anniversary of Venerable Mamma Margaret, mother of St. John Bosco, whose simplicity, faith, and maternal love still nurture our Salesian spirit. She kept dear to her heart a few convictions and instructed others on the same saying: "God sees you", "How good God is" and "Don't mess with God". On this day let us also remember and thank God for the great gift of our own mothers both living and those who have gone to their eternal reward, who were instrumental for our vocation to religious life and priesthood. May this month deepen our holiness, prepare our hearts and lives for eternal life, and renew our mission to serve Christ in the most vulnerable with faith, tenderness, and gratitude.

#### **Holiness and Death**

Sainthood is both a universal calling and a recognition of extraordinary holiness. In Scripture, "saints" (Greek *hagioi*, Latin *sancti*) refers broadly to all the faithful in Christ (1 Thess 1:4; Col 1:12), yet Christian tradition understands it more deeply as those who live in close communion with God, showing heroic virtue, and now dwell with Him. The Catechism explains that canonization "recognizes the power of the Spirit of holiness within [the Church] and sustains the hope of believers" (CCC 828). Sainthood is

not about human perfection but about “cooperation with divine grace,” something every baptized Christian is called to. Formally recognized saints serve as examples whose lives inspire veneration and intercession. The Church’s canonization process investigating life, heroic virtue or martyrdom, miracles, beatification, and canonization, simply affirms what God has already accomplished. Pope Francis reminds us that every believer is chosen “to be holy and blameless before him in love” (Eph 1:4), highlighting that holiness grows through virtue, union with Christ, and faithful witness. The early Latin Fathers, like Augustine and Ambrose, linked holiness to death, showing that the way we live shapes the way we die. Augustine observes that death is good for the righteous, while Ambrose identifies three types of death, namely, death to sin, bodily death, and spiritual death through sin, emphasizing that “death is a good” for those who live rightly. The Greek Fathers, such as Chrysostom, focused on participating in Christ’s death and resurrection, teaching that sainthood is about “living by Christ’s resurrection and transformative grace,” not merely by one’s moral effort. We need to remember that life and death are inseparable in sainthood: life is a journey of virtue, prayer, charity, and self-offering, while death is the culmination of that journey, a passage to eternal life. A saintly or “good death” reflects a life oriented toward grace, reconciliation, and love. “Death is the great, decisive moment of salvation... the final act of our lives”. In this way, saints live in Christ, die in grace, and enter the fullness of eternal life.

### **Life and Death: The Pathway to Glory**

Life and death are intertwined in the journey to sainthood, with death not an end but a passage to eternal life. Daily dying to self, that is, letting go of ego, pride, sin, and comfort and preparing the soul for this ultimate encounter with God. Saints show that a holy death reflects a life of union with God, trust, surrender, and love. To die well is to be reconciled with God, others, and oneself, embracing hope and gratitude. Preparation begins now through sacraments, prayer, virtue, detachment, and acts of charity, shaping a life oriented toward eternity. Key distorted understandings that hinder the journey toward sainthood include perfectionism and paralysis, minimalism or mediocrity, sainthood as performance or status, and neglect of death and the final things. Added to these are isolation, burnout, or lack of community, holiness reduced to external works, and confusing sacrifice with suffering without union in Christ. These misunderstandings distort true holiness by turning it into perfectionism, complacency, self-promotion, or empty activism, rather than a humble, grace-filled participation in Christ’s love, lived in community, prayer, and continual conversion toward a good and holy death. In our modern and postmodern world, several hurdles hinder the journey toward holiness and a good death: the culture of death denial and distraction, consumerism and image-based spirituality, overemphasis on efficiency and results, individualism and isolation, and the secularisation of death and rituals. Added to these are relativism and the loss of transcendence, technological speed and superficiality, and the growing burnout and hyper-activism that detach life from deep union with Christ. These forces together dull spiritual awareness, weaken community, erode prayerful interiority, and make sainthood seem irrelevant in a world obsessed with pleasure, performance, and productivity.

### **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Salesian Missionary Expedition**

Building on the call to holiness and the path of sainthood, the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian missionary expedition is a profound moment to reflect on the Church’s enduring mission: to serve, uplift, and accompany the poorest and most marginalized. For a century and a half, Salesian missionaries have ventured beyond comfort and familiarity, following Christ’s command to love and

serve, bringing the Gospel to the poor and abandoned youth and communities often forgotten or overlooked. This milestone reminds us that sainthood is not only a personal journey but also a communal vocation, living out holiness through service, self-giving, and solidarity with the needy. The Salesian mission is not limited to spreading faith, but extends to a commitment to meet material, emotional, and spiritual needs where they are most pressing. Inspired by St. John Bosco, missionaries translate charity and mercy into action, providing education, healthcare, and support, empowering communities to flourish despite limited resources. The 150-year celebration calls us to gratitude for those who laboured faithfully and inspires renewed dedication to a world still in need. Holiness in action, like the saints we honour, requires courage, compassion, and a firm trust in God. The Salesian journey, like sainthood, reflects a life of service that bears fruit in the here and now, making the presence of God tangible among the poorest. May the Triune God's invitation, Mother Mary's protection and St. John Bosco's guidance to live in holiness through mission to the needy youth, prepare us for life eternal.

## News from the Province

### **Regional Youth Ministry Delegates Convene in Siliguri**

The Salesian Youth Ministry Department, Rome is convening the annual South Asia regional animation gathering from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025, in Siliguri. The meeting will be led by Don Rafael Bejarano SDB, General Councillor for Youth Ministry, accompanied by Fr. Jose Lorbeth Vivo SDB and their team.

On November 1-2, the Dimension and Network Coordinators, as well as Sector Leaders from the SPCSA, will share their work and animation strategies. Representing our province, Fr. John Christy, Youth Ministry Delegate, and I, as SPCSA Provincial Coordinator for Youth Ministry, will attend this important gathering.

We offer our congratulations and prayerful support to Fr. Rafael Bejarano on his recent appointment as General Councillor for Youth Ministry and extend our best wishes to all delegates participating in this forum. May this encounter inspire and empower our Salesian community to serve young people with renewed passion, faithfulness and prophetic vision throughout our region.

### **Celebrating the World Day of the Poor – A Call to Live the Gospel of Charity**

Since 2017, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time has been observed as the World Day of the Poor, inviting the entire Church to reflect on and respond to the cry of the poor. Let us join the universal Church in celebrating this day meaningfully. The poor remain the heart of our Salesian mission and the driving force of our apostolic work.

I kindly request all **Rectors and Leaders** to organize a meaningful celebration of this day in collaboration with our beneficiaries. Please send a brief report with photographs of your celebration to the Provincial Office by the end of November.

### **Social Audit for Mission Transparency and Growth**

We express our sincere gratitude to Fr. Edwin Vasanthan, our Provincial Economist, for conducting training sessions on Social Audit for the Youth Services Coordinators across the Province. I kindly urge everyone to extend full cooperation in the Mission Poverty Eradication initiative and in carrying out the social audit of our beneficiaries and mission activities. This important process will enable us to evaluate our efforts, ensure greater accountability, and strengthen our commitment to serve the poor and marginalized more effectively.

### **“Dilexi te – I Have Loved You”: Pope Leo XIV’s First Apostolic Exhortation**

On 4th October 2025, Pope Leo XIV signed his first Apostolic Exhortation, titled **“Dilexi te – I Have Loved You”** on the occasion of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. This inspiring document continues the pastoral vision of Pope Francis, highlighting the love of God made visible through our love for the poor. The Holy Father reminds us that to encounter the poor is to encounter Christ Himself, and that authentic discipleship is expressed through compassionate service and solidarity with those in need. We warmly encourage all confreres to read this document personally and to use it for spiritual reading and reflection in community gatherings, allowing its message to renew our commitment to live the Gospel of love.

### **Salary and Pension**

Despite repeated reminders, it pains me to note that a few confreres have not yet complied with the Province directives regarding the transfer of government salary and pension. I earnestly appeal to everyone to take this matter seriously.

We must always remember that the money we receive is not our own, but belongs to the mission and the poor whom we are called to serve. The Province continues to sustain several communities and apostolic works through these contributions. Hence, no individual confrere has the right to retain or utilize this money personally.

I sincerely thank the confreres who regularly remit their salary and pension without reminders. At the same time, I strongly urge others to fulfill this responsibility faithfully and punctually, on or before the 5th of every month. Let our obedience and transparency in this matter be a true expression of our Salesian solidarity and evangelical poverty.

### **Celebrating 150 Years of Salesian Missionary Zeal**

This year, our Congregation joyfully commemorates the 150th anniversary of the first missionary expedition, a milestone that continues to inspire our missionary identity and zeal. The Province has received numerous requests for missionaries from various parts of the world, and we are grateful to the confreres who have generously responded to this call, expressing their willingness to serve in foreign lands in the near future. To mark this historic occasion, the Province will organize a two-day celebration at Don Bosco, Tirupattur, on November 8 and 9. Detailed information has already been shared from the Vice Provincial’s desk. We warmly encourage all confreres to participate in this meaningful event of ongoing formation, aimed at reviving the missionary spirit and nurturing new missionary vocations within our Province.

### **Celebrate the ‘Benjamins’ of Our Mission – Cherishing the Gift of Childhood**

Children are the youngest and most precious members of our Salesian Family. To foster togetherness, awareness, and the holistic welfare of children, let us celebrate them with joy and gratitude. As we honour and celebrate our children on 14<sup>th</sup> November, let us also reaffirm our commitment to their safety, security, and joyful learning within every Salesian setting.

I remind all Rectors and Leaders to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is duly signed by everyone engaged in child-related ministries and that these documents are kept safely in the Rector’s/Leader’s office. Furthermore, please verify that the POC SO Committee is properly constituted in accordance with state regulations and the School Directory of our Province.

### **Celebrating the Canonization of St. Maria Troncatti**

The Salesian Family rejoices in the canonization of St. Maria Troncatti, who was raised to the altar on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2025, during a solemn ceremony presided over by Pope Leo XIV. To mark this joyful occasion, the Salesian Sisters of the Chennai Province will hold a Thanksgiving Celebration on November 22 at their Provincial House, Kodambakkam, Chennai. Further details of the event will be communicated to the communities through a circular from the Vice Provincial’s office.

### **Growing Gracefully – The Living Witness of Our Senior Salesians**

It fills my heart with joy to witness the inspiring and edifying lives of our senior confreres, whose quiet example continues to form and encourage the younger members of our Province. Despite age and illness, many of them faithfully participate in community moments, spend long hours in prayer and the recitation of the breviary, and radiate serenity through their kind smiles and welcoming presence. Their life of fidelity and simplicity is indeed a source of grace and strength for our communities and missions. May God bless them abundantly for their silent yet powerful witness.

During my visitation, I was deeply moved to see some of our senior confreres spending time with the boys in our boardings, especially during recreation and informal moments. Such presence not only builds family spirit but also plants the seeds of Salesian vocation in young hearts—something especially vital as we face a decline in new vocations.

In keeping with our cherished Salesian tradition, I warmly encourage all confreres to be present and involved with the boys in our boardings. Our loving presence remains the most effective tool for evangelization and the growth of our mission.

### **Honouring Our Departed Confreres**

Visiting the cemetery is a sacred act of gratitude and remembrance, especially during November, the month dedicated to the Holy Souls. Across our Province lie the resting places of many Salesians who laboured tirelessly for God and the young, and who now enjoy eternal peace in the Lord. Let us make it a point to visit the cemeteries and pray for the deceased Salesians. May their souls rest in the peace of Christ, and may their memory continue to inspire us in our Salesian mission.

### **Salesian Cooperators' Promise Day and Salesian Family Gathering**

After a period of careful formation and accompaniment by the Local Delegates and Local Council Leaders, the Provincial Council of Salesian Cooperators (SDB–FMA), Chennai Province, has approved the applications of 34 Aspirants to make their Promise as Permanent Members of the Association. The Promise Ceremony will take place during a Solemn Concelebrated Holy Mass presided over by Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy, SDB, Provincial of INM, on Sunday, 23 November 2025, at the Don Bosco Shrine, Ayanavaram. Sr. D.J. Margaret, FMA, Provincial of INM-FMA, will felicitate the new members and present them with their certificates. We thank God for blessing our Province with these 34 new Cooperators and express our gratitude to Fr. Maria Louis, the Provincial Delegate, for his dedicated accompaniment and guidance.

The ***Salesian Family Day*** will also be celebrated together with the Promise Day. Following the Holy Eucharist, members of the Salesian Family will gather for a programme in the hall. We sincerely thank Fr. John Britto for coordinating the Salesian Family of our Province.

### **Annual Retreat 2025–2026: A Time of Spiritual Renewal**

The Annual Retreat is a precious opportunity for spiritual renewal, a privileged time to listen to the Word of God, discern His will, and purify our hearts (C. 91). The first Annual Retreat for the academic year 2025–2026 will be held from 24th to 29th November 2025 at Don Bosco Youth Animation Centre, Ennore. This retreat, meant for the scholastics, will be preached by Fr. Kachappilly Joy Joseph, SDB, Guwahati Province.

All retreatants are kindly requested to arrive on the evening of 23rd November for the orientation session. **Please note that the retreat fee for the upcoming annual retreat is ₹5,000.**

***NB: It is obligatory that each confrere should attend any one of the annual retreats organized by the province, even if they have participated in a spiritual retreat in other retreat centres during this academic year.***

### **"With the Scripture - A Journey Within"**

Let's encourage our youth to embark on a spiritual journey of discovery and connection with God through the scriptures. The "With the Scripture - A Journey Within" vigil program at Don Bosco Youth Animation Centre (DBYAC) Ennore is a wonderful opportunity for our young people to deepen their faith and understanding of God's word. This vigil program will be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month starting in November 2025 and concluding in November 2026. Let's encourage our youth to take part in this enriching experience.

### **Renewing Our Spirit and Strengthening Our Commitment to the Poor**

Each of us needs continual spiritual renewal to remain deeply united with God and to strengthen our religious life and self-discipline. Our Province is blessed with several serene and well-equipped centres that provide ideal settings for spiritual rejuvenation such as *Arulodhaya Ashram, Ennore, Yellagiri Camp Site, Kotagiri, Jawadhi, Bagalur, and Thiruvannamalai*. Taking even a two-day break for prayerful stillness and personal reflection can help us rediscover the joy of our vocation.

At the same time, we are gifted with various ministries that serve the poorest and most vulnerable. Every confrere is encouraged to spend a day or two in these centres like *Pope John's Garden, ANAT Farm, Jawadhi Hills, the ministries connected to DBSARC, the Tribal Children mission, and Arulodhaya Ashram*. Such experiences will deepen our solidarity with the poor and renew our Salesian commitment to live our charism with authenticity and passion.

### **Towards Healing and Hope: Rehabilitation Centre for the Young**

Addiction in its various forms has become a serious challenge affecting young people across the world, including here in Tamil Nadu. As Salesians and youth ministers, we are called to respond with compassion and commitment to those struggling with these dependencies. Although government requirements for establishing De-addiction Centres are many and demanding, it is encouraging that several Salesians have come forward with generosity and zeal to engage in this vital ministry. A committee has been formed to conduct a scientific study on the feasibility of launching this much-needed initiative. We invite your prayers and support for the success of this important endeavour.

### **Gathering of Salesian Scholars in the Province**

Our Province is blessed with the highest number of Salesians who have completed or are currently pursuing their doctoral studies in various disciplines. To foster unity, collaboration, and mutual enrichment among our scholars, a one-day meeting is being planned for the month of December. This gathering will be coordinated by Fr. John Alexander, Vice Provincial, together with Fr. Francis Vincent.

### **Bon Voyage – Fr. Sebasthian Vanathian**

At the request of the Vicar General, the Province has agreed to send Fr. Sebasthian Vanathian for an internship programme at Vatican Radio, Rome. The Vatican Radio which is part of the Dicastery for Communication, oversees the Holy See's entire communication network, coordinates and unifies the Vatican's media services to effectively support the Church's mission of evangelization. We extend our prayerful best wishes to Fr. Sebasthian as he embarks on this enriching mission experience. May the Lord bless his efforts and make his time at the Vatican fruitful for the Church and the Congregation.

### **Rest in Peace!**

**Pauline Mary (67)**, the elder sister of Fr. Louis Irudayasamy (Parish Priest - Fujairah), breathed her last on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.

**Mrs. Margaret Mary (80 yrs)**, mother of Fr. John Shankar (Principal, Don Bosco Thalavadi), passed away on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October at Thenkanikotai, Krishnagiri Dt.

**Mr. V.V. Sebastan (84 yrs)**, brother of Frs. V V. George (Lourdes Shrine, Perambur) and V.V. Abraham (Refuge, Broadway) went to the eternal abode on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October.

**Mrs. Susai Mary (aged 98)**, the beloved Mother of Fr. Maria Arokiam, Administrator of St. Joseph's, Katpadi, passed away on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October in Coimbatore.

We assure our prayers for the repose of their soul and the bereaved family members.

## Important Dates and Events in November

Date	Events
1	All Saints Day
2	All Souls Day
03 – 04	Monthly Recollection
06	PV: Pope John's Garden
07	Provincial Council
08 - 09	Mission Day @ DB, Tirupattur
10	PV: Dominic Savio, Tirupattur
11	PV: Don Rua, Tirupattur
12	PV: Don Bosco, Tirupattur
14	PV: Don Bosco Anbu Illam, Parktown / Children's Day
15	BIS Correspondents Meeting
16	PV: Don Bosco Illam, Pervallur
20 - 21	PV: St. Bede's, Santhome
21	INM Centenary Planning Meeting @ St. Bede's Santhome
22	PV: Don Bosco, Ayanavaram / FMA - Kodambakkam
23	Salesian Cooperators' Promise Day / PV: Don Bosco, Ayanavaram / Scholastics Retreat @ Ennore / Salesian Family Day
23 – 30	Scholastics Retreat @ Ennore

Yours affectionately,



**Fr. Don Bosco SDB**  
INM Provincial



Date: 01.11.2025

Place: Chennai – 10