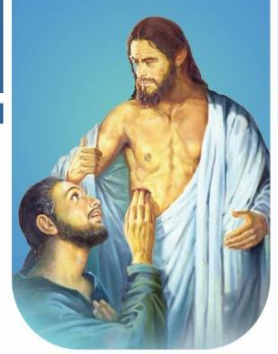




Provincial Circular

SALESIAN PROVINCE OF CHENNAI (INM)



INM-DBL-CIR 55/10-2025

OCTOBER 2025

“Under the Watchful Gaze of the Guardian Angel – A Pathway of Holiness”

Dear Confreres,

There are unseen presences in our lives more faithful than many friends, more constant than our own thoughts: our Guardian Angels. Often unnoticed, yet never absent, they stand beside us from the moment of our birth, illuminating, guarding, guiding, and governing us, as the beloved prayer teaches. “O my Good Angel, whom God has appointed to be my guardian, enlighten and protect, direct and govern me, by the divine mercy” Amen. In the words of St. John Mary Vianney, “how happy is that Guardian Angel who accompanies a soul to Holy Mass!”, a reminder that our angels not only protect us from harm but also lead us toward the sacred. They are not distant or symbolic figures, but personal, loving companions, entrusted with our soul’s journey to God. In her spiritual writings, St. Thérèse of Lisieux tenderly noted, “I have always remained faithful to my Guardian Angel. I have felt his presence continuously.” This sense of holy companionship is not the privilege of the saints alone, it is a promise for each one of us. As Pope Pius XII once affirmed, “beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life.” This is the profound truth we are called to rediscover: that holiness is not walked alone. Our Guardian Angel, ever watchful, walks beside us, urging us forward with divine patience and love, especially in the moments we are weakest. To walk under the gaze of your Guardian Angel is to walk with courage, knowing that heaven is near. It is to see your life not as a random path, but as a sacred pilgrimage accompanied by a heavenly friend who never tires, never sleeps, and never gives up. In this reflection, we are invited to open our hearts again to this quiet presence and to allow our Guardian Angels to do what they were sent to do: lead us, step by step, along the pathway of holiness.

St. John Bosco, a father and guide to the young, had a tender and practical devotion to the Guardian Angels. He often urged his boys to invoke their angels daily, especially in moments of confusion, temptation, or danger. He once said, “your Guardian Angel prays for you, offers your good actions to God, and never leaves you for a single instant.” For Don Bosco, the Guardian Angel was not just a theological truth but a living presence, an educator, protector, and gentle voice leading each soul toward virtue. His own life, marked by prophetic dreams and divine guidance, revealed a profound sensitivity to the nearness of the spiritual world and the silent work of angels in our everyday lives. In the spirit of Don Bosco, we are called to have devotion to our Guardian Angels, who will keep us from sin.”

The Church, from its earliest days, has recognized the role of guardian angels as described in Sacred Scripture: “for he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways”

(Psalm 91:11) and “see that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father” (Matthew 18:10). St. Basil the Great wrote, “Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life.” Echoing this, St. Thomas Aquinas affirmed in the *Summa Theologica* that “from the very moment of his birth, man has an angel, a guardian appointed to him.” The guardian angel, then, is not only a protector from physical harm, but a companion in spiritual growth and mission, a divine presence who gently nudges the soul toward God’s plan.

As we reflect on the Guardian angel, month of October is also surrounded by the luminous witness of saints who lived under this divine guardianship. St. Thérèse of Lisieux reminds us of the childlike trust and hidden strength required to surrender to God’s will. St. Francis of Assisi calls us to simplicity, joy, and reverence for all creation, a trait shared by our guardian angels, who never cease praising God in every moment of their existence. St. Teresa of Avila, a mystic of profound spiritual depth, wrote that “if we only knew how close the angels are to us, we would never feel alone.” St. Luke the Evangelist proclaims the Gospel of compassion and healing, echoing the angel’s role as both messenger and consoler. St. John Paul II, a towering figure of modern holiness, emphasized the need to “entrust ourselves to the angels, especially in difficult moments.” Our Lady of the Rosary, whose feast we celebrate on October 7, reminds us of Mary’s maternal protection, intertwined with the angelic mission that began at the Annunciation. We also draw inspiration from Salesian holiness in St. Artemide Zatti, the compassionate brother of the sick and vulnerable, and Blessed Michael Rua, Don Bosco’s first successor, who lived his vocation with fidelity, humility, and a profound trust in God’s providence. Both prayed the Rosary daily.

The Holy Rosary, like the Guardian Angel, is a quiet yet powerful presence in the life of a believer, a spiritual shield and companion in the daily battle for holiness. Rooted in the mysteries of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, and embraced with the loving intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Rosary becomes a sanctuary of grace where the soul finds protection, clarity, and peace. Just as the Guardian Angel guards our steps and whispers God’s will into our hearts, the Rosary orients us toward the divine through meditative prayer, allowing Mary to lead us gently, as she once led the Apostles in the upper room. With each Hail Mary, we are wrapped in the maternal mantle of the Mother of God, echoing her Fiat and learning to trust as she did. In times of confusion, temptation, or fear, the Rosary acts as a spiritual weapon, not through force, but through the quiet power of contemplation and surrender to God’s plan. In this way, it protects the heart from despair, opens the soul to grace, and, like the Guardian Angel, keeps us walking steadily along the path of light. As Salesians we cannot afford to forget this prayer but, pray it daily, with filial devotion.

In this circular, let us take a look at our consecrated lives and apostolic mission through the lens of the guardian angels’ presence and purpose. The following six reflections are shaped around the key roles of the Guardian angel in our spiritual journey: **A Guiding Presence: The General Chapter as a Guardian Angel in Salesian Life**; as **companions and guides** who walk with us (especially in formation and relationships); as **protectors and healers** who shield us and help us heal emotional and mental wounds; as **messengers of light and hope** who call us to holiness and joyful witness; as **missionaries** who serve God’s saving plan for the world; and as **witnesses of divine love** who

urge us to build communities rooted in trust, empathy, and communion. Let us then enter into these reflections not merely as themes or strategies, but as invitations to reawaken a deeper awareness of God's nearness through His Guardian angels, who, like Don Bosco, accompany us step by step, toward sanctity and joyful service.

1. A GUIDING PRESENCE: GENERAL CHAPTER AS A GUARDIAN ANGEL TO US

The General Chapter of a religious congregation, like our 29th General Chapter, acts as a kind of guardian angel by offering light, direction, and renewed purpose to each confrere striving to live his consecrated life more faithfully. The 29th General Chapter, in particular, serves as a spiritual compass for the Salesian Family over the next six years, guiding hearts and communities toward deeper fidelity to Don Bosco's charism. Its final document is not just a set of decisions or guidelines, it is a shared vision, a reflection of communal discernment, and a heartfelt invitation to live the Constitutions more intentionally. For each confrere, it becomes a companion and reminder that he is not alone in his vocation. Through prayer, community life, and mission, the Chapter's outcomes gently nudge him back to the essentials, Christ at the center, the young as a sacred field of ministry, and the Salesian spirit as his daily way of being. It encourages each one to dream again with Don Bosco, to rekindle zeal, and to walk together in hope. From the Chapter documents, the Rector Major and his Council has identified four priorities for the coming six years. The whole document was published on 24th May 2025 in 445th Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco.

The four priorities are:

1. **Following the example of Don Bosco, we strengthen the centrality of Christ in our lives**
2. **A charismatically updated pastoral proposal** with competence and professionalism
3. **Artificial intelligence and the educational pastoral challenge**
4. **Salesian Pontifical University.** In the coming months we shall be receiving details of what these indicate.

The SPCSA after studying further the General Chapter documents and considering its context, however, has proposed six priorities for the South-Asia Region. They read as follows:

- 1) **Resolutely Renew the Centrality of Jesus Christ**, rediscovering the grace of unity and avoiding spiritual superficiality (cf. GC29, no. 18, RM Priority 1, Team Visit nos. 1, 2, 3).
- 2) **Revitalize Fraternal Life in Communities** as an authentic expression of the Salesian Charism (GC29, no. 28, RM Priority 1, Team Visit nos. 1, 2, 3).
- 3) **Strengthen Service to the Poorest Young People** as an authentic expression of the Salesian Charism (cf. GC29, no. 28, RM Priority 1, Team Visit nos. 9, 10)
- 4) **Renew the Formation Processes** (initial and ongoing), taking care of accompaniment and formation in the mission (cf. GC29, no. 39, RM Priority 1, 4, Team Visit nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8)
- 5) **Joint Formation of Salesians and the Laity/Salesian Family**, sharing spirituality, mission and formation with lay people and members of the Salesian Family in every Educative and Pastoral Community (cf. GC29, no. 51, RM Priority 2, 3, Team Visit nos. 7, 11)

6) Strengthen Accompaniment of Youth especially in the Digital Environment (cf. GC29, no. 69, RM Priority 3) In addition to the above, all confreres and groups of confreres as per their roles and responsibilities are also bound to implement the 23 resolutions of GC29.

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2. THE GUARDIAN ANGEL AS COMPANION AND GUIDE

In every genuine journey of faith and vocation, the need for companionship is not optional but essential. Guardian angels are not merely silent protectors but tender companions, sent by God to walk with us, especially when the path is uncertain or lonely. They are symbols and signs of the divine desire to accompany every human heart personally, attentively, and lovingly. In our Salesian tradition, this echoes the spirit of the oratory itself: a home that welcomes, a school that educates, a parish that evangelizes, and a playground that brings joy. It is in this same spirit that we are called to create living spaces, not just buildings, but environments of welcome, warmth, and presence, where the young can experience the nearness of God, through us, His consecrated companions. St. Gregory the Great reminds us that angels are sent not because God is absent, but because He chooses to be near through them. Likewise, the young in our communities should never feel abandoned; they should feel the closeness of those who carry within them the echo of an angel's care.

In the Book of Ezekiel, God's call is piercing and clear: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me" (Ezekiel 3:17). The image of the sentinel, one who watches, listens, discerns, and warns, is deeply intertwined with the vocation of a guardian angel, and by extension, with those called to spiritual leadership. Theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel once said, "The prophet is not a microphone but a person; not a tool but a partner of God." This prophetic call, echoed in religious life, is not only about speaking truth but about staying awake for the sake of others, watching over hearts, especially the weary and wounded. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book *Life Together*, writes that "the first service one owes to others in the community involves listening to them." This, too, is the work of the sentinel: to stand in spiritual vigilance, not merely over doctrine, but over souls in danger of fading silently into despair. As guardian angels remain ever alert to defend and console, so too we are called to a ministry of presence, prayer, and prophetic attentiveness, to become sentinels for our brothers and sisters who can no longer cry for help.

To be a companion in the Salesian sense is to be one who walks alongside with heart, not just with function as Rector or Vice-Rector, Principal or Vice-Principal or Dean of Studies or Assistant or Confessor or Campus minister or Parish Priest or Asst. Parish Priest or Administrator or youth director etc. It is a call for leaders to become shepherds who know the smell of their sheep, as Pope Francis says: not distant administrators, but visible signs of God's presence. The Holy Rosary, often prayed with those whom we accompany, becomes in this light a powerful tool of companionship: as Mary pondered the mysteries of her Son, she walks with us in ours. St. Teresa of Avila once said, "The Lord walks among the pots and pans," reminding us that God's guidance, and that of His angels, is not reserved for the extraordinary but found in the ordinary rhythms of

life. When we open our doors to young people and prepare the laity to share in our mission, we are not delegating duties, we are inviting others into the sacred rhythm of accompaniment, one that reflects the very heart of the Gospel. St. John Henry Newman believed that “God has created me to do Him some definite service... He has not created me for naught.” This is true not only of us but of every lay person and young person who enters a Salesian set up or a community. If we walk with them, teach them the pedagogy of presence, and form communities that listen, guide, and love, then we truly mirror the angelic mission, and allow our lives to be the quiet but constant voices that whisper, “You are not alone. I am with you.”

3. THE GUARDIAN ANGEL AS PROTECTOR AND HEALER

There are wounds that no medicine can touch, wounds that lodge themselves not in the body but in the soul. These are the places where guardian angels are most needed: in the silent caverns of despair, in the confusion of identity, in the ache of feeling unseen. We often imagine protection as defense from external threats, but in truth, the deeper vocation of the guardian angel is to stand watch over the soul when it is most vulnerable to itself. There is a fierce tenderness in this ministry, a kind of divine therapy that does not scold the broken, but surrounds them with a healing presence. St. Macarius of Egypt once wrote, “The heart is but a small vessel, yet dragons are there... and there is God, and the angels, and the life and the kingdom.” Within each of us exists that mysterious battlefield, and it is often in consecrated life that the dragons are most subtly disguised. The young religious who falls into despair despite proclaiming hope is not a contradiction, he is a mirror. He reminds us that a life not truly accompanied, though surrounded by liturgy, can be spiritually starving.

We must also name the addiction that dare not speak its name: the digital entrapment of the consecrated heart. The cell phone, meant to connect, increasingly isolates; it floods the soul with noise, interrupts the interior life, and silently eats away ‘communion’. In her *Interior Castle*, St. Teresa of Avila described the soul as a beautiful crystal palace, but many of our palaces today flicker not with candlelight and silence, but with the pale blue glow of mobile screens. How can we contemplate when we are always distracted? How can we bless others when we ourselves are disintegrated? The healing we need is not merely psychological, it is spiritual reintegration, a returning to wholeness, to grace, to God. This is why we must reclaim the contemplative and austere life, not as rigid asceticism, but as the only soil in which joy and grace can root deeply. Jean-Claude Larchet, in *The Theology of Illness*, beautifully asserts that “true healing is the restoration of communion.” And this is the calling of every Salesian: to first be healed by the presence of God, and then become a healing presence to others, not through doing more, but through being more: more silent, more aware, more tender, more whole. In this, we imitate our guardian angels: ever vigilant, ever healing, ever pointing us gently back toward the Face of Mercy that saves: Jesus Christ, the Face of Mercy of the Eternal Father.

4. THE GUARDIAN ANGEL AS LIGHT AND MESSENGER OF HOPE

There is a quiet radiance in those who carry God’s light, not loud or showy, but enduring, like the gentle flame of a candle in a dark room. Guardian angels are entrusted with this mission: to bring the light of God’s truth and hope into human hearts, especially when life becomes heavy, confused, or disoriented. This angelic presence calls us to proclaim, not just with words, but with

our lives, that holiness is possible, even in the ordinary. St. Philip Neri, the “saint of joy,” once said, “A joyful heart is more easily made perfect than a downcast one.” In a world where seriousness is often mistaken for sanctity, we must reclaim the truth that joy is the surest sign of the presence of God. Our elderly confreres, who have carried the burdens and blessings of the mission for decades, are living Gospels, sacraments of fidelity, whose stories of suffering, perseverance, and joy can light the way for younger generations. They are not to be forgotten or managed, but to be listened to with reverence, for they, too, are bearers of the angel’s message: “Do not be afraid.”

The Council of Nicaea, in defending the divinity of Christ, affirmed that the light we follow is not abstract truth but a Person, Jesus Christ, true God from true God, Light from Light. Guardian angels, in their own way, guide us back to this center: to Christ, who sends us out as witnesses of forgiveness, joy, and service. Evangelization is not a task for the gifted few, it is the natural overflow of a heart that has encountered mercy. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, though she never left her cloistered convent, became a patron of missions because her heart burned with the desire to bring Christ to others. Forgiveness, likewise, is one of the most radical forms of evangelization. As St. John Chrysostom taught, “to forgive is to resemble God.” Revenge multiplies darkness; forgiveness brings light. And so, we too are called, like the angels, to be messengers of a Gospel that heals, not hardens. When we say, “at thy service,” to the Lord, it must mean being ready to go where the world needs light most: not with banners, but with the brightness of mercy, cheerfulness, and courageous witness. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in *Deus Caritas Est*, “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person.” Guardian angels accompany us to that encounter, and invite us to lead others there, too.

5. THE GUARDIAN ANGEL AS MISSIONARY AND SERVANT OF GOD’S PLAN

To live the missionary spirit of the guardian angels is to live with a heart that is forever turned outward, toward the needs of the world, the pain of the poor, the cry of creation, and the silent hunger of those who seek meaning. Yet in a time when self-preservation is disguised as prudence, and comfort is marketed as success, the great challenge is to keep our consecration from becoming domesticated. How tempting it is to settle into well-furnished lives, managed ministries, and tidy balance sheets! But guardian angels do not settle, they are forever on mission, forever at the service of God’s unfolding dream. So, must we be. The saints did not die for us to live comfortably, they died so that we would live faithfully, even if that means being spent for others. The ongoing struggle against poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation demands more than good intentions, it demands prophetic lives that refuse to be silent or sterile. It demands that we ask: Are we missionaries of the Gospel or caretakers of an institution?

The witness we are called to give is one of sacrificial transparency. How we spend money, how we share resources, how we divide between ourselves and the mission, and these are not private matters. They are acts of witness. Our budgets preach louder than our cassocks. Our choices echo through time. If guardian angels could weep, they might weep at the sight of some of our missions diluted by fear, or communities that once gave everything now holding back. The call is urgent: to live as if the world depends on it, because, for someone, it does. Ecological indifference, financial self-protection, and missionary complacency are not minor failings, they are betrayals of the angelic mission entrusted to us. The guardian angel does not wait to be asked; he goes, he flies to

needy person or to the place that needs him. He does not measure the cost; he gives. He does not serve to be seen; he disappears immediately, behind the glory of God. In his example, we are called not only to admire but to imitate, by giving ourselves completely, creatively, and with courage, to the God who sends us still into the margins of the world.

6. THE GUARDIAN ANGEL AS WITNESS OF GOD'S LOVE AND PRESENCE

If there is one thing the wounded world longs for, it is this: someone to see them, someone to stay. Guardian angels bear witness not with thunder or miracles, but with unceasing presence. And yet, in many of our religious houses today, 'presence' is vanishing, replaced by tasks, appointments, phone calls, meetings, recreating with sophisticated gadgets and the ever-creeping shadow of emotional isolation. The feelings of loneliness, division, meaninglessness and alienation that may incite suicidal thought to a confrere is not just a tragedy; it is an alarm bell. It exposes a wound we would rather ignore: that the most dangerous suffering is often invisible, and the most abandoned can live right among us, well-dressed, well-mannered and "well-formed." The challenge before us is not lack of doctrine or rules or structure, it is the absence of true and authentic communion. Wherever we live, we are surrounded by sacred walls, but too often they shelter silences that no one dares to enter. To witness God's love in such a context is not to preach more, it is to stop, see, sit, and stay. All of us are invited to create communities where vulnerability is not weakness, emotions are not pathologized, and mental health is not spiritualized. As the guardian angel watches with relentless compassion, so must we, not from a distance, but from within the fire.

Leadership, then, is not a matter of function, it is the art of incarnation. As Rectors or Leaders we are called not to organize lives, but to touch the lives of each confrere and everyone who enters the community. And this is not easy, challenging, costing and even terrifying, because it demands everything: empathy, humility, presence, and a deep, prayerful interior life. It demands that we become more than administrators; we must become *wounded shepherds* who lead by love, not fear. The challenge is immense: to form houses so that they become homes, to make time for stories individual confreres or boys or teaching staff or domestic staff, to break down the subtle clericalism within us and among confreres that builds walls instead of bridges. But the calling is clear: to live as witnesses of the tenderness of God. If our people do not feel seen, heard, and loved, then our missions, no matter how efficient, will ring hollow. The guardian angel does not just watch from above; he leans close, whispers hope, and carries the soul through the dark. So, must we as Rectors or Leaders in our own contexts and communities. In a world starved for real presence, we must dare to be what the angels already are: living reminders that God has not forgotten his children, and never will.

CONCLUSION

This circular has led us into the luminous and hidden world of the guardian angels, those celestial companions who walk silently beside us, yet are deeply active in our spiritual journeys. We have contemplated them as Companions and Guides, calling us to deeper presence, formation, and friendship with the young and our collaborators. We have received them as Protectors and Healers, especially in times of mental exhaustion, emotional wounds, and the urgent need to make our communities places of rest and restoration. We have beheld them as Messengers of Light and

Hope, reminding us that holiness is radiant and joyful, and that evangelization begins with cheerful witness and merciful hearts. We have honored them as Missionaries and Servants of God's Plan, urging us to live with generosity, courage, and prophetic commitment to justice and ecology. And finally, we have seen them as Witnesses of God's Love and Presence, inspiring us to foster communion, trust, and spiritual leadership that is tender, listening, and truly Christlike.

In each of these angelic dimensions, we are being invited, not simply to admire, but to imitate. The guardian angel does not draw attention to himself, but to God; does not retreat from the wounded, but remains near; does not protect comfort, but safeguards calling. So too must we live: not as functionaries in a system, but as flames in a world that grows cold. May this reflection be not only a meditation, but a mandate, to awaken, to accompany, to serve, and to shine with the same humility and holiness that defines every angel in the service of the Eternal King. May Mary Help of Christians, the Queen of Angels, and St. John Bosco, the father of angelic kindness and youthful holiness, intercede for us. And may our guardian angels, invisible but vigilant, lead us ever more deeply into the joy of consecrated love and mission.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL REFLECTION

1. **Am I truly a companion to the young and to my confreres, or have I allowed tasks to replace relationships?**
Do I offer presence or just performance?
2. **Have I created a space of healing in my community, or do I unknowingly contribute to the loneliness or pain of others?**
Do I notice the silent cries around me?
3. **Do I live and proclaim the Gospel with joy and courage, or has routine dulled my passion for the mission?**
Does my life radiate holiness that is attractive and contagious?
4. **Am I transparent, generous, and prophetic in my use of resources, or have I become comfortable in a life of subtle self-preservation?**
What does my stewardship say about my consecration?
5. **Do I lead and live as a witness of God's tenderness, or have I reduced my vocation to administration and survival?**
Is there someone near me whose suffering I am called to notice today?

News from the Province

Provincial Visitation 2025-2026

The provincial visitation is blessing and a sacred opportunity for fraternal encounter, discernment and renewal. This year, this essential practice begins on 1st October 2025. Our province is blessed with numerous communities, confreres, and diverse ministries, along with both graces and challenges that require attention. The visitation calls for a compassionate and serene disposition as we listen attentively to our confreres and the people entrusted to our care.

Having completed two years and eight months as Provincial, I recognize that while we excel in animation and accompaniment, there are urgent areas requiring improvement. These include our

lifestyle choices, realistic budget preparation based on available resources, the percentage of funds allocated for our primary beneficiaries the poorest of the poor and embracing a more frugal way of living. During this visitation, we will place particular emphasis on these areas.

The Provincial Economist and Secretary will accompany the Provincial, while the Vice Provincial and other council members will join as and when needed to support particular communities. I request each community to prepare thoughtfully for this encounter. Please review the previous visitation report and in collaboration with your community, the Salesian Family, and lay collaborators, prepare a concise report on the mission and life of your community. Kindly send this report to me by email in advance. Let us approach this visitation with open hearts, ready to share, listen, and grow together in our common mission.

Successful Conclusion of Province Batch Meetings

The province batch meetings concluded successfully on September 26th, 2025, with the gathering of quinquennium priests. These meetings fostered unity among members and deepened mutual understanding through fraternal sharing, strengthening both companionship and religious commitment. Confreres expressed sincere appreciation for the positive spirit within our Province and took the opportunity to clarify doubts while offering valuable suggestions for the development of the province, including ideas for the upcoming Centenary celebration. The suggestions gathered during these sessions have been carefully documented and will guide the smooth operation of our houses and the effective animation of the province.

The Provincial addressed several key themes, including the centrality of Christ in our lives, fraternal community living, accompaniment of the poor, mission self-sufficiency and sustainability, and adherence to the juridical guidelines established by chapter deliberations. While attendance was strong, we encourage those who were unable to participate to connect with their fellow members to learn about the proceedings and discussions.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Fr. John Alexander, our Vice Provincial, for his excellent coordination of the batch meetings, and to the Administrator and staff of Citadel for their exceptional hospitality, which created a memorable and enriching experience for all participants.

Preparation for the Province Centenary Celebration

During the batch meetings, confreres offered various suggestions and recommendations in preparation for the Province's Centenary Celebration in 2034. These valuable inputs have been organized under various thematic areas. A dedicated team will be formed during the October Provincial Council meeting to develop a comprehensive action plan for the next eight years leading up to this milestone celebration.

Formation of Province Self-Sufficiency and Development Team

To ensure the sustainable growth of the Province, the Provincial Council has established a dedicated team to study and implement strategies for achieving self-sufficiency and developing the Province's various houses. This initiative aims to generate sustainable returns on investment

that will support our Salesians, provide care for sick and elderly confreres, sustain our social works, and maintain our formation houses, in keeping with the directives of the 29th General Chapter.

Since the establishment of the Province in 1934, numerous buildings across the Province have deteriorated and are in urgent need of maintenance and renovation. We are blessed with a growing number of senior confreres whose care requires increasing attention and resources each year. Additionally, contemporary lifestyles and dietary habits have led to greater medical needs among our members. We must adequately support our formation houses the theologate, novitiate, and aspirantate as well as maintain our 39 special ministries and rural presences. Meeting these essential expenses requires substantial monthly funding, making financial sustainability a critical priority for our Province's future.

A team has been constituted to assist the Provincial Council in advancing self-sufficiency and developmental processes. ***The members are: Fr. Stanley Ignatius, Fr. Rajan Pushpam, Fr. Maria Alphonse, Fr. Johnson Antonysam, Fr. Arulanand Alphonse, Fr. Paul Mark, Fr. Robert Alphonse, Br. Kuladaiyesu, Fr. Stalin Dnanaraj, Fr. John Borg, Fr. Babu Pushparaj, Fr. James Bernard, Fr. Gerald Majella, Fr. Jayasimmon, Fr. Kirubakaran, Fr. Pushparaj and Fr. Robert Inniyasi.***

The team will identify the available resources and formulate strategies for self-sufficiency and development while continuing to support our missions that directly empower the poor and the needy. **Fr. Edwin Vasanthan, Economist** (In charge of legal, accounting and auditing) **and Fr. Johnson Bashyam, Incharge of Property** will assist the Provincial Council and will be the conveners of this team.

Canonisation of Bl. Maria Troncatti

On Sunday, 19th October 2025 Bl. Maria Troncatti will be canonized a saint by Pope Leo XIV. Bl. Maria Troncatti was born on 16th February 1883 and she entered the Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice in 1905. She made her first profession in 1908 Nizza Monferrato and she served as a missionary in Ecuador from 1922 until her death in a plane crash in 1969. She was declared Venerable in 2008 and was beatified on 4th November 2012. Her canonization was made possible by a miracle through her intercession, which involved the radical healing of a man who had been paralyzed.

She earned the nickname "Madrecita" (little mother) for her role in bringing peace and reconciliation to a Shuar region marked by conflict between indigenous and settler populations. Her spiritual and material motherhood is considered a core aspect of her sanctity. She was a **"Mother, Missionary, Artisan of Peace and Reconciliation."**

Missionary Attitude: A Call to Radical Dedication

The confreres serving in Fujairah and Andaman exemplify true missionary spirit, having embraced significant separation from their families and friends for the sake of the mission. However, this call to dedicated service is not limited to those in distant missions it extends to every confrere throughout the province. Our dedication to the mission entrusted to us is revealed through concrete realities: the number of days we are present in our communities, the frequency and

purpose of our travels, our choice of transportation, our monthly expenditures, our relationship with technology, the time we spend in our rooms versus engaging in mission, and our overall lifestyle choices. These practical indicators speak volumes about our commitment.

The young people of today are searching for authenticity. A radical, counter-cultural lifestyle rooted in simplicity and genuine service will attract vocations far more effectively than comfortable mediocrity. Our religious life must not merely be professed it must be visible and tangible in our daily actions and choices. The mission demands nothing less than our whole-hearted dedication. May our lives be a compelling witness that draws others to follow Christ in service to the young and the poor.

Community Adoration: Finding Unity in the Eucharistic Lord

As tensions and conflicts within our communities' increase, I earnestly invite all confreres to turn our gaze toward the Eucharistic Lord through community adoration, that we may become one in mind and heart. Daily adoration, even for a brief period, will significantly enhance the quality of our Salesian religious life and effectiveness in our mission.

The presence of the Eucharistic Lord has transforming power. Before Him, we can find healing from outbursts of anger, the temptation to speak ill of one another, habitual absence from community life, and the use of harsh or inappropriate language. In His presence, we are renewed and enabled to participate more fully in the Holy Eucharist, to embrace community moments with generosity, and to work together with singular focus and purpose.

Collaboration with the Salesian Family

Our Salesian charism calls us to be co-disciples and co-responsible with the laity for the salvation of souls—our own and those of the young people, especially the poor, whom we serve. It is essential that we evaluate our action plans and strengthen our collaboration with Past Pupils, Cooperators, ADMA, VDBs, CDBs, parish youth, and various pious associations.

The Rector Major wishes to see vibrant cooperation among all members of the Salesian Family strengthened and flourishing before his visit to our province in February 2026. Let us prepare our hearts and communities for this grace-filled occasion.

The Rector as Unifying Factor: A Call to Presence and Service

The batch meetings consistently emphasized that community leaders must be present and available for the daily administration and animation of their communities. This presence enables the Rectors/Leaders to serve as a true unifying factor, drawing the community together in common purpose and fraternal charity. When a community lives an austere, contemplative, and youth-centered life, it generates the spiritual energy needed to attend meaningfully to individual confreres and those we serve. This focused presence is the heart of effective Salesian leadership.

It is troubling to hear reports of Rectors or Leaders who directly handle financial matters, organize extravagant personal birthday celebrations, or prioritize individual agendas over community dimensions. Such actions undermine the nature and unity of community life. Let us remind one

another: the primary responsibility of a Rector or leader is the care and animation of the community. It is true that the Rector/Leader is the overseer of all the activities of the community but he should not involve himself too much in the day to day administration and organizing of the activities which are assigned to various confreres in the community. He should not assume additional responsibilities created by personal initiative that distract from this essential duty.

Confreres in each community should demonstrate the utmost respect toward their Rector/Leader, recognizing that he represents Don Bosco among us. The practice of *rendiconto* with the Rector/Leader provides valuable opportunities to share about our spiritual life, health, ministry, seek clarification on important matters, and identify areas for improvement that benefit both community life and our mission. Confreres should seek permission and communicate important information to the Rector/Leader in person, rather than through WhatsApp, SMS, email or other digital means of communication.

Any confrere who is to be absent from the community for more than three days must inform the Provincial. Likewise, confreres wishing to travel outside the state should obtain prior permission from the Provincial. Those who maintain individual bank accounts for mission-related purposes should notify the Provincial during the visitation. We earnestly request that Rectors and community members provide attentive care to our sick and elderly confreres.

We must all exercise great prudence in our use of community vehicles, as our choices in this regard serve as a witness to those around us. Self-driving for personal errands or using community vehicles for private purposes contradicts our commitment to simplicity and responsible stewardship of resources. We request each community to appoint a dedicated driver for operating community vehicles. Let our lifestyle choices authentically reflect the values we profess and the Gospel witness we are called to give.

Conducting a Comprehensive Social Audit Across the Province

During the Team Visit by the former Rector Major to the South Asia Region from March 1st to 3rd in Hyderabad, one of the key decisions made was to conduct a **Social Audit** across all provinces in the region. In response, the SPCSA has distributed a standardized format to all provinces to facilitate this essential assessment. The Rector Major outlined the following action plan:

"To ensure fidelity to our mission, we propose that over the next year, each province conduct a social audit to examine how its assets—including land, buildings, and investments—are being utilized and who the beneficiaries are. The objective is to evaluate whether the Province's resources are being directed with absolute priority toward the Salesian charism and mission."

All Economers of the various provinces have received a format to compile the necessary information and submit it to the SPCSA office by December 2025. While the format requests detailed information about assets and investments, our Provincial Council has decided to use this opportunity to conduct the social audit in a methodical and scientific manner, as mandated by the Provincial Chapter. We aim to leverage this process to accomplish several mandated provincial objectives:

- Complete the data collection and Mission Audit required for the **Mission Poverty Eradication (MPE)** initiative mandated by the SPCSA.
- Conduct a comprehensive **Need Analysis** of all our provincial presences to strengthen and establish a robust support system for the **Planning and Development Office (PDO – SURABI)**.

Mission Audit for Mission Poverty Eradication (MPE)

Mission Poverty Eradication (MPE) is a strategic initiative launched by the **Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia (SPCSA)**. It seeks to coordinate the efforts of Don Bosco organizations toward reducing multidimensional poverty, in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 1: "End poverty in all its forms everywhere." This initiative embodies the Salesians' global commitment to prioritize the poorest, most abandoned, and most vulnerable individuals. Endorsed by the SPCSA, this five-year project is supported by a dedicated provincial team working under the guidance of a National Coordinator at the SPCSA level. The provincial team members are:

- Fr. Edwin Vasanthan – Economist and Executive Director of PDO
- Fr. John Britto Savarinathan – Provincial Councilor, KalviSolai
- Fr. John Christopher – Provincial Councilor, DBSARC
- Fr. Xavier Sagayaraj – Assistant Director, SURABI (TVET Project)
- Fr. Elanchizhian – Ministry for the Thurumbar
- Fr. Ambrose Daniel – DB Centre and Social Work Department at SHC-TPT
- Fr. Simolin – Migrant Ministry
- Mr. Marshall Magnell

Need Analysis of Salesian Presences in the INM Province

It has been several years since the Planning and Development Office (SURABI) conducted a comprehensive Need Analysis of our Salesian mission in the province. Given the evolving political, social and economic landscape of our state, it is imperative that we develop updated plans and strategies to effectively channel our resources and assets toward the care and empowerment of poor and marginalized youth and children the primary beneficiaries of our Salesian charism.

To accomplish this critical task, the active involvement of Youth Service Coordinators (YS) from our communities is essential. The Economist's office has engaged an expert team to guide and monitor this work through the participation of community YS coordinators. Three regional meetings will be organized to provide training for the YS coordinators, who will then facilitate data collection within their respective communities. The dates of the meetings are as follows:

- 4th October (Saturday)- Sacred Heart College- Tirupattur and Vellore Region
- 7th October (Tuesday) – Citadel- Chennai Region
- 14th October (Tuesday) – Don Bosco Kalvisolai, Pondicherry- Pondy Region

Innovative Approaches to Youth Ministry for Today's Generation

Reaching out to young people in ways that resonate with contemporary needs and challenges is essential for effective youth ministry. I encourage you to consider implementing new forms of

ministry that appeal to today's youth, such as Sports Academies, Eco Academies, Music Academies, Digital Media and Content Creation programs, Coding and Technology workshops, Leadership and Entrepreneurship training, Mental Health and Counselling centers, and Social Service initiatives. These innovative platforms will help us provide integral education that develops the whole person. By introducing and inviting young people to participate in these diverse programs, we can attract and engage them meaningfully, helping them break free from negative social influences and harmful media consumption while fostering their talents and guiding them toward positive development.

The young people of our country are engaged in a profound search for meaning and purpose in life, particularly in their quest to encounter God. More than providing material benefits or other services, our primary duty is to facilitate authentic experiences of God in their lives. Young people must first perceive us as men of God; therefore, our words, actions, and witness should enable them to encounter the divine through our presence and ministry.

Enhancing Our Salesian Libraries: A Call to Utilize Available Resources

Maintaining a library in each house is a cherished Salesian tradition. The provincial office periodically sends carefully curated collections of books to support this practice. I would like to remind you to make full use of these Salesian materials, particularly for your personal reading and spiritual enrichment. Communities that currently lack a dedicated reading room are encouraged to establish one so that these valuable resources can be properly organized and readily accessible to all members.

Sharing the Insights and Outcomes of the 29th General Chapter

We have successfully completed the comprehensive process of disseminating the experiences and deliberations from the 29th General Chapter (GC29). Act 440, which highlights the proceedings of GC29, including various presentations, approved documents, and key deliberations, has been circulated to all communities. I kindly request that you review these materials thoroughly and dedicate a day within your community to share these important insights with members of the Salesian Family, young people, and the relevant members of the Educative and Pastoral Community (EPC). The Vice Provincial will coordinate with Rectors and community leaders to facilitate this dissemination process effectively.

Prioritizing Mental Health: A Call to Action on World Mental Health Day

On World Mental Health Day, October 10th, we are called to reflect on the holistic care we provide to young people in our Salesian institutions. While we excel in nurturing spiritual wellbeing through pastoral care and physical health through sports programs, we must acknowledge the gap in addressing psychological and emotional health. A young person's mental state is fundamental to their academic success, spiritual growth, moral development and overall happiness. In today's challenging cultural environment, students struggling with stress, anxiety, or addiction cannot fully benefit from our programs, making it urgent that we address these critical needs. Niraivagam – Don Bosco Institute of Psychological Services is actively leading this essential mission across the Chennai Province by providing psychological support, counselling, mental health awareness programs and remedial services to all our institutions. Let us fully embrace and support

Niraivagam's work by appointing qualified and dedicated personnel in our communities, recognizing that mental health resources are as vital as academics in nurturing the whole personbody, mind, and spirit. The Lay Dimension Coordinators for Psychological Wellbeing can assist in facilitating these initiatives.

Salesian Mission Day

The Salesian Mission Day is being organised at Don Bosco, Tirupattur on 8th & 9th of November 2025 (Saturday & Sunday). Representatives from the Missionary Groups in our houses and members of the Formation houses will be taking part in this significant event as we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the First Missionary Expedition.

Fr. Biju Michael to Address Rectors and Leaders of INM Province

Fr. Biju Michael, Regional Councillor for South Asia, has been meeting with Rectors and Leaders across the various provinces of the South Asia Region. On October 18th, 2025, he will address the Rectors and Leaders of the Chennai Province. We extend a warm welcome to Fr. Biju Michael and wish him an enriching and fruitful experience during his visit to our Province.

A Warm Welcome to Rev. Fr. Edwin George

We are happy to welcome back Rev. Fr. Edwin George, who returns to the Province following the successful completion of his Licentiate in Mariology. He will serve as Vice Rector and Animator at Don Bosco Kalvisolai in Thattachavady, Puducherry. We extend our heartfelt congratulations on his academic achievement and wish him every success and blessing in his new ministry.

Three New Features Added to the INM App

Dear Confreres, we are pleased to announce that three valuable new features have been added to the INM App:

1. Constitutions and Regulations
2. The Salesian Missal
3. Strengthen Us (Prayer Book)

We encourage you to utilize these resources for both personal and community prayer moments.

Important Reminder: *Confreres who have not yet submitted their updated personal profiles are kindly requested to send them to the Province Secretary on or before October 10th, 2025. Your prompt cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.*

Rest in Peace!

Mr. Edison (31), the immediate younger brother of Fr. Selvakumar Gabrieal (Administrator of Don Bosco College, Karaikal), passed away in a tragic accident near Villupuram on the 18th of September 2025. We offer our prayers for his soul and pray for comfort and strength for the bereaved family.

Important dates and events in October

Date	Event
01	Provincial Visitation (PV): ANAT Farm
03	PV: DBYAC, Ennore
04	Need Analysis for Tirupattur & Vellore Regions @ SHC, Tirupattur
05 - 06	PV: Holy Spirit Church, Tagore Nagar
06 - 07	Monthly Recollection
07	Need Analysis for Chennai Region @ Citadel
07 - 08	PV: Don Bosco, Sagayathottam
09	PV: St. Joseph's Katpadi
10	Provincial Council / SURABI Review Meet
11 - 12	PV: Don Bosco Mission, Pavunjur
13 - 14	PV: Don Bosco, Pannur
14	Need Analysis for Puducherry Region @ DBKS
15	PV: DBRITE, Cuddalore
16	PV: Don Bosco Boys' Home, Jeevandhapuram
18	Rectors & Leaders Meeting
21 - 22	PV: SIGA, Rinaldi Juniorate
23 - 24	PV: Don Bosco, Gandhi Nagar
25 - 26	PV: Sacred Heart Church, Polur
27	PV: Don Bosco Agrotech, Polur
29	PV: Aruloudhayam Ashram, Kattupadi

Yours affectionately,



Fr. Don Bosco SDB
INM Provincial



Date: 01.10.2025

Place: Chennai - 10