

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Salesian Province of Mary Help of Christians, Guwahati, Assam, India

JS – 11/2018

21 January, 2019

My Dear Confreres,

Cordial greetings from the Provincial House, Guwahati!

Through this special Circular, I am happy to update you with some of the very important information in connection with the **preparation for the Centenary year** of the arrival of the Salesians to the North East India in 1922.

The year 2022 is the Centenary year of the arrival of the first Salesians to the North East Missions. It was on 13th January, 1922 that the pioneers under the leadership of Fr Louis Mathias left from Guwahati and arrived at Shillong to kick-start the Salesian life and mission in North East India. Looking back at the years that have gone by, we cannot but bow our heads in deep adoration to God who is the source and origin of everything, who inspired our Superiors at Rome to send missionaries to the North East. The celebration will give us opportunities to recall and count the blessings which are innumerable. To celebrate this event in a very meaningful way, the three SDB Provincials of the North East, along with the respective councils have decided to have some common celebrations, while at the same time, also organize province and community level celebrations and preparations.

In our last Provincial Council meeting at Guwahati, we finalized the provincial, regional and community level celebrations and preparations.

The theme of this year's reflections and celebrations in preparation for the Centenary is **MISSIONARY EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS**. This year, that is, 2019, the common celebrations towards preparations will be animated by the Province of Shillong. 2019 also happens to be the **Diamond Jubilee of our Province (1959-2019)**. We shall integrate the ING Diamond Jubilee celebrations with the preparation for the 2022 Centenary. Kindly have a close look at them and prepare yourselves for the same.

PROVINCIAL LEVEL PREPARATIONS

At the Provincial level, the two spiritual retreats at Siloam in July will be opened to all the Salesians of the Provinces of IND, INS and ING. It will be coordinated by the ING Province (Vice Provincial) and will be on a first come first served basis. The other two provinces will also organize their retreats in a similar manner at different dates but by the same preacher. And so, those of you who wish to attend the retreat either at IND or INS, are free to do so. But all the confreres must make the annual retreat without fail.

At the Provincial level, there will be a Symposium in October on the theme, Missionary Evangelization and Catechesis. The date of the Symposium will be on 16th October, 2019 but the venue will be intimated to you at a later date. The convenor of the Symposium is Fr Biju Michael Pulianmackal, Provincial Councillor. We will encourage as many confreres as possible to attend the symposium which will also be opened to the confreres of other province and members of the Salesian family.

The Provincial and the Council in its last meeting has decided to make the forthcoming 20th Provincial Chapter next month as one of the events of preparation for the Centenary celebrations. It was found to be very closely related to the celebrations, because as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the first arrival of the Salesian Missionaries to the North East India, the General and the Provincial Chapters are asking us to examine and draw up a profile of what kind of Salesians we are to be for the youth and the world today.

At the Provincial level, in order to assist the communities to make a deeper reflection on the theme, the spiritual animation leaflets will be prepared from the Provincial's office and sent to you periodically. It will include some reflections for the homily of the Mass, based on the theme and the Salesian history, prayer services for some important Salesian events and animation materials for *lectio divina* and adoration service. These animation notes will be prepared by Fr Maria Anthuvan, Secretary of the Province, and the Provincial with the collaboration of some confreres.

REGIONAL LEVEL PREPARATIONS

Our Province has five regions:

1. The GARO HILLS region which includes all the communities at Tura, Rongkhon, Garobadha, Mendal, Rongjeng, Shallang, Damra and Gojapara. (All the Salesian houses under the Diocese of Tura, the Salesian houses of Damra and Gojapara under the Archdiocese of Guwahati, and the Salesian house at Shallang under the Diocese of Nongstoin.) Presently its regional coordinator is Fr Charles Ch. Sangma, Provincial Councillor.
2. The BTAD region which includes Kokrajhar, Dotma, Ramfalbil, Bengtol, Barpeta Road, Bongaigaon and Doomni. (All the Salesian houses under the Diocese of Bongaigaon.) Presently its regional coordinator is Fr Damian Basumatary, Provincial Councillor.
3. The GUWAHATI region which includes all the Guwahati communities, Boko and Kumarikata. (All the Salesian houses under the Archdiocese of Guwahati, except Damra and Gojapara.) Its regional coordinator is Fr Sebastian Kuricheal, Provincial Councillor.

4. The ASSAM PLAINS region which includes Tangla, Dimakuchi, Sirajuli and Tezpur. (All the Salesian houses under the Diocese of Tezpur.) The regional coordinator is Fr Marcus Lakra, Provincial Councillor.
5. The KARBI ANGLONG region, comprising the communities of Sojong, Baithalangso, Diphu, Umswai, Umpanai (Amkachi) and Haflong. (All the Salesian houses under the Diocese of Diphu.) The regional coordinator is Fr Joseph Teron, Vice Provincial.

In the last Provincial Council meeting, it was decided that the Regional Coordinators will ensure to convene the meeting of the regional SDBs to chalk out the programmes of preparation and animation. The meeting will be convened within the month of March. It was decided that the Regional meetings will be preceded by a trimonthly recollection and the animation of the recollection will be on the theme of the year of preparation. In all these Regional meetings, the Provincial will be present, and in case, if he is not free, either the Vice Provincial or the Economer will take his place.

COMMUNITY LEVEL PREPARATIONS

At the Community level, the prayer in preparation for the Centenary Celebration could be prayed daily in the community. The prayer this year is prepared by INS Province which will be printed and sent to the communities as early as possible.

The book *Dare and Hope* is to be read for spiritual reading and some parts of it could be used along with the *lectio divina*. The book will be made available to the communities. There is a suggestion to reprint it, if the copies are not enough for the communities, not only for our province but also for other provinces. Fr George Plathottam, Delegate of Social Communications will see to the printing of the book, as early as possible.

All the Communities of the Province, without fail, will organize, activate and animate the Past Pupils Association and the Salesian Cooperators Movement. All the Rectors and leaders of communities must discuss about it in the House council and the assembly of confreres and take appropriate action so as to have these Associations and Movements in the communities before 17th October, 2019, when we will celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Province.

At the community level, the monthly recollection of the clerics and the boys will be animated on the theme of the year, for which the animation notes will be prepared from the Provincial office and sent to you. It may start however only from the month of March.

It will be a good context for us to re-launch our Salesian traditional commemorations every month, if there has been a neglect or decline in this regard—11th: Salesian Missionary Day; 24th: Commemoration of Mary Help of Christians (with the appropriate blessing); last day of the month: Commemoration of Don Bosco. Our

celebrations could boost the regularity of the various community practices too: *lectio divina*, Day of the Community, and community meetings.

CONCLUSION

My dear Confreres, what we are today is due to the hard work, tremendous sacrifices, great focus and commitment of the Salesian missionaries over these years, “the hoping and daring spirit” of the pioneers, their dependence on God and His Providence, and inspite of weaknesses and drawbacks, their great witness value of fidelity to consecrated life, prayer life and community life, and many more. We are standing tall today, due to these giants. No doubt, our present day involvement too is tremendous and to be appreciated.

Hence, let us truly celebrate these years by first of all becoming people of deeper interiority, contemplation, people of God and living our community life well. Let us prepare ourselves and the young to celebrate all these suggested celebrations with greater and professional preparations and carry out the animation in an efficient manner. Celebration is not only about flexes, banners, flags, balloons and decorations. The externals may be certainly needed, but if these celebrations do not touch our personal and community transformation, the celebrations and preparations will all go in vain.

Today the legacy is in our hands and we need to ensure that we pass on to the coming generation, a heritage that is well founded, ensuring fidelity to the beautiful charism that the Lord has passed on to us through St John Bosco. May our Blessed Mother Mary who arrived in North East India ahead of the pioneers be with us and go before us to beckon us right from the front.

A FEW WORDS ON THE FEAST OF ST JOHN BOSCO

On 31st January, we celebrate the feast of our father and founder St John Bosco. It is my great joy and pleasure to wish you a very happy feast of one of the great sons of the Church. We nicknamed him as the DREAMER because he not only dreamed at the age of 9 which convinced him that he could be a missionary for the poor and neglected young people, but also had a vision and ambition to work relentlessly to become someone who contributes to make the world a better place. We are sons of this dreamer. We need to dream big and work relentlessly to realize the vocation to be mystics of God, prophets of fraternity and servants of the young.

As you organize the novenas and Tridiums, please take note of a few important events that are to take place in all of our communities.

31st January will be a day when all the communities will hoist the Centenary flag in the community, as a mark of our commencement of the preparations for the centenary. Soon after the solemn feast day Holy Eucharist, each community will assemble as many

young boys and girls and lay people as possible and have a short but meaningful ceremony of the opening of the year of preparations, with the following suggestions for the programme.

- Brief Introduction and welcome to the assembly
- Hoisting of the Centenary flag (It will be sent to you soon)
- Singing of the Centenary anthem (It will be sent to you soon)
- Planting of a tree sapling (Community needs to prepare for it)
- Praying together of the Centenary prayer, ending with Our Father and Hail Mary. (Prayer will be printed and sent to you soon)
- A Hymn to Don Bosco

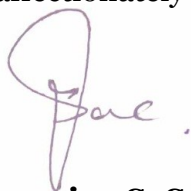
On 31st January, in the Provincial House, at 4.00 pm, the opening ceremony will be attended by some select CFG Children, Snehalaya boys and girls, DBI student representatives, Maligaon FMA Postulants and Candidates, and some youth from St Joseph's Co-Cathedral Parish. The Centenary flag will be hoisted by Fr Januarius S. Sangma, Provincial. The programme, similar to the one cited above will be organised here too with minor adaptations. It will end with tea.

In the evening, at 6.00 pm, the Solemn Eucharistic celebration will be presided over by the Provincial and will be attended by the representatives of different religious congregations and members of the Salesian family. Just before dinner, during the time of the cutting of the cake ceremony a few items will be presented to the invitees like singing the Centenary anthem and a song by FMA Juniors.

I wish you a meaningful preparation and celebration of the twin events of our Diamond Jubilee and the 2022 Centenary.

May God bless all your endeavours!

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr Januarius S. Sangma SDB
Provincial

