

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

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

JS – 12/2018

1 February, 2019

My Dear Confreres,

Cordial greetings from Provincial House, Guwahati!

“*Tempus fugit*” is what we are often wont to exclaim whenever we are surprised at the quick and imperceptible passing of time. Celebrations of Christmas and the New Year seemed but just the other day and we are already in the month of February. It is good however to be aware that it is not because the days or hours in January are shorter that time seems flying but because this month is traditionally the month of prolific spiritual activity in parishes due to the Sobhas. It is wonderful to see an array of spiritual and academic activities that are being organized in many of our parishes both Salesian or otherwise, during this month.

SOBHAS: THE NEED TO BECOME MOMENTS OF ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD FOR OUR PEOPLE

The Sobhas or the Annual Conventions which are taking place these days in most of our parishes in Karbi Anglong, Assam Plains, Bodoland, Khasi Hills and Garo Hills, etc., are wonderful opportunities for us to evangelize and catechise our people in the faith. They have to be planned and executed well, if desired results are to be seen. From my visitations, it is clear that the annual Baptisms are high and the Catholic population is large and on the rise. But when we assess our people’s knowledge of religion, Bible, Sacraments and God etc. there is still lots of room for improvement.

During these conventions, small children get opportunities to prepare themselves for the Sacrament of Confession and receive the first Holy Communion.

The adults flock to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Many couples in irregular situation due to live-in problem get the opportunity to attend the marriage training and rectify their marriages. Then, there are prepared instructions on relevant themes,



Marian and Eucharistic processions, etc. Our people still love to participate in the Sobhas and the host village takes pride in giving hospitality.

Since, the Sobhas are annual events, it is important for us to plan and execute them well. Otherwise, we run the risk of making them a mere social gathering and enjoyment. They might not have become



as such so far but you will agree with me that there is a need for greater discipline among our people during the Sobhas. It should be a time for intense religious instruction and study. They must be invited to have an experience and encounter with God during the Sobhas through the reading of the Word of God and prayer.

VOCATION CAMPS : IT IS THE LORD WHO CALLS

Fr. Joseph Teron, Vice Provincial and the clerics have successfully organised several Vocation camps. I am very grateful to them and to the communities which hosted the camps. This year, the number of boys who attended the camps was nothing short of “plentiful”. For me personally, I feel that the large turnout of boys for camps was due to a collective effort and the outcome of creating awareness regularly among confreres. Let us believe that there are numerous and quality vocations, waiting to be identified,



encouraged and accompanied. If we put our heart and soul into accompanying and praying for them, the Lord of the harvest will bless our efforts with

fruitfulness. Let us keep up this effort throughout the year, visit the formation houses regularly, be generous enough to sponsor deserving candidates and pray daily for their perseverance.

Presently, Bosco Mount is teeming with life, with 122 boys already enrolled. We keep our focus also on the boys who are at Barpeta Road, Sirajuli and Dotma.

DON BOSCO'S FEAST AND LAUNCH OF CENTENARY PREPARATIONS

On the feast day of our Father and founder St. John Bosco, the Province has officially launched the three-year preparation programme for the celebration of the Centenary of the arrival of Salesians in the North east India in 1922.

At 9.00 am, I hoisted the Centenary flag at DBI, Guwahati, overlooking the mighty Brahmaputra. I unfurled it in gratitude to God, to our Blessed Mother, Don Bosco, the Pioneers and innumerable Salesians who “dared and hoped” and planted a small but healthy seed of Salesian Charism in the North East which today has grown into a big tree. The choir sang the Centenary song and prayed the centenary prayer while we paid floral tributes to the Saint of the young. Welcoming me, Fr. PD Johny, Rector explained the launch of Centenary preparations and narrated in detail the arrival and the initial challenges of the eleven under the leadership of Bishop Louis Mathias. In my short exhortation, I encouraged the youth to remain good and grateful and work with the Salesians to keep the flag of Salesian charism fly high.



At 4.00 pm, 300 youth from St. Mary's Maligaon, St. Mary's Guwahati, Holy Child, Snehalaya, CFG, Don Bosco Technical School, Maligaon and Don Bosco Institute assembled in the lawn of the Provincial house for the official launch of the Centenary preparations at the Provincial level. I exhorted the young to appreciate the works of the missionaries particularly the pioneers who came to unknown lands and cultures but “dared and hoped” to accomplish much for the young. Facing patiently the initial challenges, they laid the foundation of Salesian mission which today has grown into a mighty enterprise.

At 6.00 pm, in the Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph, I presided over the feast day Holy Eucharist which was attended by a large gathering of priests and religious and the

members of the Salesian family of the city. I announced to the gathering at the start of the Mass that this year is the Diamond Jubilee of the Province and the inauguration of the three-year preparation for the Centenary of the arrival of Salesians to the North east in 1922.

A few points from the homily that I delivered that evening reads as follows:

- I am personally fascinated by the exhortation of Venerable Joseph Quadrio, a Venerable Salesian priest on the way to Sainthood who said, **“We should say little about Don Bosco, but become a great deal like Don Bosco.”** We need to read, understand and speak of Don Bosco, how he turned **negativity into positivity** and how he converted the challenges that he faced in life into opportunities to refine himself.
- However what Quadrio says “Become a great deal like Don Bosco ” is I feel very important and the need of the hour for us. It should be our lifelong journey and effort. St Paul told the Christians at Corinth, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ”. In the same way, becoming like Don Bosco will make us Christ-like, the Good shepherd, who loved the lost sheep and went in search of them.
- Our constitution 21 reads “Don Bosco lived as one seeing him who is invisible”. Don Bosco lived as if he saw him who is invisible. He saw what others did not see in the young. He consciously made efforts to live always in the presence of God and related with everyone as if he was relating to God.
- “Seeing what is invisible” is to be like Jesus who always looked beyond. Jesus looked at simple fisherman, Peter, saw beyond his present and saw his vicar of earth, the first Pope. He saw in Mary Magdalen, not a rejected sinner but a potential ambassador of the resurrection.
- Today we inaugurated our preparations for Centenary celebrations of the arrival of Salesians to North east in 1922. The eleven pioneers, especially the leader Bp Louis Mathias, it is recorded in history, took time to coin their motto and finally the zeroed in on Dare and hope. Both dare and hope are virtues of holiness because in them, the primary agent is God. In God they dared and in him they hoped and planted the seeds of evangelization, catechesis and holiness that today even in our land, we have luminaries of holiness in Blessed Stephen Ferrando, the Servants of God Orestes Marengo, Vendrame, Convertini etc.
- The Strenna of the year reads “Holiness for you too”. Don Bosco was clear about holiness, right from the start. In 1867 he wrote: “The first aim of our society is the sanctification of its members”

- Like Don Bosco, we can also make a journey towards holiness, one day at a time. A lady journalist once asked Mother Teresa, “Mother, are you holy?” She received the reply, “for us Christians, holiness is normal.” Don Bosco told Dominic Savio that the first thing God wanted of him was a constant moderate cheerfulness... a normal way of life. He advised him to carry out his scholastic and religious duties diligently (just normal) and always to join in the games of his companions at recreation. When Dominic wanted to do penance, he told him that the penance Our Lord asked of him was obedience. “Just obey, and you will be doing enough”.
- Indeed, God’s grace abounds for us too, as it was for Don Bosco - to make perfect our imperfections. **Today’s youth needs us to be another Don Bosco, another Ignatius, John Mary Vianney, Francis of Assisi, Mother Mazzarello, Montfort, Teresa, Francis de Sales etc. The greatest expectation that people have from us today is that we accompany and guide them to happier, nobler and truly fulfilling spiritual lives which Don Bosco did for the young of his oratory.**

The feast day celebrations ended with a sumptuous meal at the sprawling lawn of the Provincial house, with was adorned with beautifully lighted decorations.

CENTENARY PREPARATIONS LAUNCHED IN COMMUNITIES

Reports of launching of Centenary 2022 preparations have come in from various regions and communities of the province. We had requested all the communities to hoist the Centenary flag, play the Centenary song, pray the Centenary prayer and organize a short programme.

We already have chalked out a clear Annual programme of preparation for the province which has been informed to the communities earlier and which will be reminded by and by. In the month of March, all the regions are to assemble in the regions under the animation of one of the Provincial councillors and chalk out the regional level preparation programme.

In the same way, I request all the Rectors and leaders of communities to devote the House council meeting and the assembly of confreres of the month of February to seek suggestions and opinions from the confreres on how best to prepare itself for the meaningful celebration of the Centenary.

DEACON ROBERT BASUMATARY ORDAINED A PRIEST

“You are a priest forever, a priest like Melchizedek of old.” We thank God for the gift of one and the only priest for our province this year in the person of Fr. Robert Basumatary. We congratulate him on reaching this milestone in life which is not the end but rather a beginning of life in the service of God and the young. We wish and pray that



he finds joy, peace and fulfilment in serving the people of God in the manner and style of St. John Bosco.

The Parish Priest and the parishioners of Udalguri need appreciation for the way they organized the ordination ceremony and the first Holy Eucharist. There was an atmosphere of prayer, devotion, joy and happiness around, where thousands gathered to rejoice and pray inside the beautifully constructed pandal. I appreciate the presence of so many SDB confreres especially the Council members for this solemn occasion.

Fr. Robert Basumatary will join the community of Kumarikatta as Asst. Parish priest, warden of the hostel and Asst. Headmaster in the school. On 19th February, at 11.00 am, we

shall celebrate the New Priest day in the Provincial House. As we warmly congratulate him on his ordination, we assure him of our prayers and brotherly support for his priestly and religious journey.

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2019 UPDATES

We are moving closer, day by day, to the great event of the province this year, that is, the 20th Provincial Chapter. In the special issue of the circular, I had informed you that everyone should make this chapter as one of the preparations for the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the province and the Centenary of the arrival of the Salesians in the North East in 1922.

The Working Document is in the process of completion. It has already been drafted and copies of it are made available for Pre-Capitular members for further study and suggestions. I am grateful to all the communities for their contribution towards it.

We will begin our Chapter on 19th February at 5.30 pm with a recollection to be animated by Fr. Jose Varickasseril SDB. However, since we are having the New Priest Day at 11.00 am in the Provincial House, I request all the Chapter members to be present for the New Priest day, which will be a source of great happiness and encouragement to the newly ordained priest Fr. Robert Basumatary.

DON BOSCO BENGTOLESE BAND SHINES IN NEW DELHI

It's been a second year in a row that the all-girls Don Bosco Band, Bengtola was selected by the Government of India to participate in the Republic day parade in New Delhi. It is definitely a great honour and matter of pride for the Province, particularly the community. Their ascent to glory re-emphasises what we have been telling our youth that they are second to none and through hard work, compete at the highest level.

I wish to congratulate the community, particularly Fr. Siby, the teachers and the girls for this achievement. Earlier, the group had performed in the Republic day and Independence day celebrations in Kajalgaon, Bongaigaon and in Guwahati. Every time they performed they had won the admiration of audience.

BLESSING OF DON BOSCO SOCIAL COMMUNICATION OFFICE

In the presence of the Heads of commissions in the province and the youth from DBI, I blessed the newly renovated office of Don Bosco Social communications. Initially Fr. George Plathottam explained the aims and objectives of the centre while Fr. PD Johny, the newly appointed Delegate presented the proposed future course of action. I thank Fr. PD Johny for accepting to shoulder this great responsibility. He assured me that he would make this commission perform and serve the needs of the province and the youth in this field.



REGIONAL MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN MARCH

In the special circular that was written by me and sent to all of you, there was a mention of the different regions of the province with one of the Provincial councillors incharge of the animation of the particular region. In the month of March, all the communities of all the regions will assemble for the regional meeting at the place, designated by the councillor and chalk out the regional programme for the preparations for the Centenary. Fr. Provincial will be present for all these meetings. In his absence, the Vice Provincial or the Economer will be present.

ANTI-SOCIALS IN GARO HILLS ON A RAMPAGE

By now, everyone is familiar with what has happened in St. Dominic Savio Parish, Garobadha. In the morning of that fateful day, I wrote the following:

“With great sadness, I inform you all that there was a robbery and dacoity at St. Dominic Savio Parish, Garobadha, last night (29th January). At about 1.00 am, Fr. Thomas John heard the noise of people opening the doors and cupboards. Since the noise disturbed him, he got up to tell them to reduce the noise, thinking that they were guests or some parishioners. However, no sooner had he opened his door than three men forcefully entered his room, asked him for money and tried to tie him up. When he resisted, they beat him up with sharp iron rod and caused injury to one of his hands. Then they searched his room and ransacked whatever money he had. They dropped one of the earthen pots in his room, meant for collection of money. It woke up Fr. John Mathias. Hearing the noise of his door opening and coming towards Fr. Thomas John’s room, the robbers escaped into the dark. There was no current at that time. There were about 15 of them, who disguised themselves and spoke Garo, Assamese and even English. They searched the offices below and the refectory, after breaking the locks. In the meantime, Fr. Denis slept without any disturbance till the morning. He had gone to sleep late. All these informations, I received from Fr. Denis and Fr. Thomas John, who is, thanks be to God, keeping okay and is being given medical attention. Fr. John Mathias informed the police in the night itself and they came to do the enquiry. FIR will be filed during the day.”

Fr. Thomas John had his medical examination and treatment at the Holy Cross Hospital Tura and is on the way to recovery. In the meantime, Bishop Andrew R Marak has given a press release, asking the Government, especially the Home Department and the police to provide security to the citizens and institutions. Within a span of 20 days in January, four of our Catholic institutions at Dawagre (Williamnagar), Chokpot and Dalu and now Garobadha have been subjected to criminal attacks and robbery by the anti-social elements. In all these places, robberies took place immediately after the annual sobhas.

Fr. Joseph Teron, Vice Provincial and other confreres of Tura visited them and assured them of our prayerful support and solidarity. We continue to pray for the community

and wish Fr. Thomas John a speedy recovery. We entrust ourselves to God and to our Blessed Mother and take all possible measures to defend ourselves from such unjust onslaughts.

ADMISSION RUSH ... AND THE NEW SCHOLASTIC YEAR

Come February and it is a common sight for everybody to see parents frantically searching for schools and boardings for the admission of their children. Our institutions in many places are still preferred destinations for education due to our quality, dedication and follow up. I thank everyone who serve the society in this sector.

At the start of the new scholastic year, I wish to invite everyone in the educational institutions to ask yourself questions like

- whether or not our fees are still affordable for the poorest student
- whether or not we give preference to Catholics for admission in school or hostel especially those who come to us from remote villages
- whether or not the quality in the school is truly a quality or is it declining
- Whether or not there is a catechism and value education classes and the first Friday devotions
- whether or not the teachers are closely supervised and followed up in their teaching
- whether or not the tuition has become a real menace, in the sense that some teachers do not teach student well in the classroom, so as to attract them for tuition in their homes
- Whether or not there is an application of the preventive system and promotion of rights of children and prevent abuse.

HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES

Fr. Joseph Thekadathu SDB of the Province of Bangalore (INK) passed away on 15th January, 2019 in Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore. He was 91. We offer our condolences to the Provincial and confreres of Bangalore. May the soul of the departed rest in peace!

The eldest sister of *Fr. Edward D'Souza*, **Mrs. Mina Fernandes**, 81 years old, passed away on 25th January, 2019 at Mumbai. May God grant her eternal bliss, and may she rest in peace in God's kingdom. We offer our prayers, and condolences to Fr. Eddie and the bereaved family.

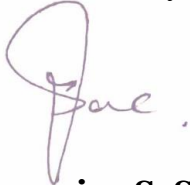
Mr. Thomas Cheeramben (66), the younger brother of *Fr. Francis Cheeramben*, passed away on 1st February, 2019. He had been ailing for some time now. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Fr. Francis and the bereaved family. We pray for the repose of his soul and ask God to grant consolation and comfort to the family.

Br. Mathew Thaiparambil SDB (77) of Kolkata Province (INC) passed away on 1st February, 2019 in Don Bosco Park Circus, Kolkata. We offer our condolences to the Provincial and confreres of Kolkata, and pray for the repose of the soul of the departed. Br Mathew was the founder of the prestigious institution of DBSERI, Mirpara.

CONCLUSION

The Strenna of the year is “Holiness for you too.” The Rector Major takes it for granted that we possess holiness already in some measure. When he says “for you too” he wants to tell the youth that sanctity and holiness are not the monopoly of Salesians, priests and religious but also for the young. As we go about educating the youth in this academic year, may all the programmes that we plan lead them to become good and saintly. May our blessed Mother Mary and St. John Bosco be our model and guide.

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr. Januarius S. Sangma SDB
Provincial



Parents, Family Members, Bishop and Concelebrants at the Priestly Ordination of Fr Robert Basumatary

Province Events

01: Commemoration of Deceased Confreres

16: Birthday of Fr Januarius S. Sangma, Provincial

19: New Priest Day: Fr Robert Basumatary – 11.00 am, Provincial House

19-22: Provincial Chapter 2019, Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati

Birthdays: February

3 Fr Cornelius Myrthong	16 Fr Januarius S. Sangma
Cl Jonas Kujur	17 Cl Jerbasuis Xalxo
5 Fr Raphael Cherukareth	18 Cl Chebath Sangma
6 Br Benedict Sangma	Fr Thomas Vattathara
Fr Abraham Vetticad	19 Cl Kolombiya Rabha
8 Cl John William George	22 Cl Birendra Dung Dung
Cl Amit Tete	Cl Jonathan Dung Dung
9 Fr Sebastian Edathumparambil	23 Cl Anmol Soreng
11 Cl Anthony Mawniuh	24 Fr Saimy Joseph Ezhanikatt
14 Fr Martin R. Marak	25 Fr Ethelbert Minj
Cl Jecky Sangma	27 Fr John Mathias Marak
15 Fr Nicodim Aind	28 Cl Joseph Hais Uilube Npenme



Death Anniversaries: February

Name	Place	Yea	Age	Province
1 Cl Rouiller Andrew	Tirupattur	1944	29	INM, INB
2 Fr Alcide Seeber	Chennai	1996	86	INM, INB, INK
Bro Eulalio Vaz	Fatorda	1997	67	INB, INM, INK, INP
3 Bro Chacko Nettickattil	Kottayam	2010	75	INK, INM, INH
4 Fr Francis Cauwenbergh	Belgium	2005	87	INC, ING
5 Bro Peter Mathew Fernando	Polur	2012	87	INM, INT, AFE
6 Fr Ladislav Klimczyk	Poland	1974	80	INM
Fr Raphael Bara	Jorhat	1992	78	IND, INC, ING
Fr Jose Maria Zubizaretta	Spain	2012	81	INC, ING
7 Fr Fortunato Giacomini	Anisakan	2000	80	INC, MYM
Fr Joseph Pazhekadavan	Guwahati	2018	86	ING
8 Bro Isidorre Fioredda	Kolkata	1978	68	INC, ING, INN

Rest in Peace

Fr Egidius Sola	Chennai	1989	83	INM, INT, LKC
Fr George Kochampazhathumkal	Mannuthy	2004	81	INK, INM, INT
Fr Chacko Thazhoor	AFE	2007	66	INM, ING
10 Fr Ivan Giacomello	Shillong	1990	84	ING, INC, IND
11 Fr Francis Convertini	Krishnagar	1976	78	INC, ING
12 Fr Louis Di Fiore	Australia	1989	75	INM, INB, INT, INK, LKC
Fr Anthony Marak	Guwahati	2018	49	ING
13 Fr Edward Xavier	Chinthanaloka	2017	68	LKC, INT
14 Fr Maria Arulnathan	Tirupattur	2004	87	INM
15 Fr Philip Thayyil	Ernakulam	2003	85	INK, INM
17 Fr Carmel Spitale	Shillong	2000	88	ING, INC, IND
Fr Thomas Pamparel	Tirupattur	2016	85	INM
18 Bro George Viegas	Mumbai	1975	77	INB, INM
Fr Marianus Uguet	Kolkata	1989	91	INC, ING, INN
Fr John Bennet	UK	2012	94	INC, ING
19 Fr Hemenegild Boscardin	Italy	1966	60	INC, ING, IND
Fr John Jocelyn Madden	Australia	1987	52	INC, MYM
Fr Giovanni Premoli	Ethiopia	2010	81	INC
20 Fr Candido Vallogia	Chennai	1988	73	INM
Fr Thomas Pazhayampallil	Bangalore	2005	75	INK, INM, INT
21 Fr Thomas Pudussery	Chingleput	1974	37	INM
22 Fr Joseph Neendicherry	Chennai	2015	83	INM
23 Fr Joseph Murickal	Senapati	1999	45	IND, ING
Fr Thomas Thayil	Trichur	2010	82	INK, INM, INT, AFE
Bro Paul Bikho	Kolkata	2014	76	INC
24 Fr Guido Colussi	Ranchi	1997	85	INC, ING, INN
Fr Leo Heriot	Australia	2012	80	INC, ING
Fr Mathew Narimattom	Dimapur	2018	81	IND
25 Cl Joseph Jayaselvam	Thanjavur	1992	22	INM, INT, LKC
Fr Joachim Kandulna	Dhulapadung	2004	45	ING, INC, IND
27 Fr Valerian Monteiro	Mumbai	2002	75	INB, INM
Fr Philip Spratt	England	2004	84	INM
28 Fr Aloysius Deutsch	Austria	1968	57	INM

MONTHLY CALENDAR – FEBRUARY 2019

PROVINCIAL

1	Fri	Guwahati : MSMHC Provincial House, Borjhar
2	Sat	Visitation : Bosco Reach Out, Ulubari
3	Sun	Guwahati
4	Mon	Visitation : ADBU, Tapesia
5	Tue	Visitation : ADBU, Tapesia
6	Wed	Guwahati : Salesian Family Day, Study of the Strenna 2019
7	Thu	Guwahati
8	Fri	Guwahati > Mendal : Animation of Teachers, VTC and Students
9	Sat	Guwahati : ADBU Board Meeting, Tapesia, 2.00 pm
10	Sun	Guwahati
11	Mon	PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING: TURA
12	Tue	Bosco Mount, Inauguration of the Scholastic year & Celebration of the 1 st Death anniversary of Fr. Anthony Abong B Marak
13	Wed	Don Bosco School Tura > Garobadha > Guwahati
14	Thu	Guwahati : Visit of Fr. Pablo SDB : Social Communications, Rome Meeting with CFG Coordinators
15	Fri	Guwahati : Chapter Preparations
16	Sat	Guwahati : Chapter Preparations
17	Sun	Guwahati : Chapter Preparations
18	Mon	Guwahati : Chapter Preparations
19	Tue	New Priest Day (11.00 am) & Commencement of the Provincial Chapter (4.00 pm)
20	Wed	Provincial Chapter
21	Thu	Provincial Chapter
22	Fri	Provincial Chapter (concludes 8.30 pm)
23	Sat	Guwahati
24	Sun	Dibrugarh : Consecration of the Co-adjutor Bishop Albert Hemrom of Dibrugarh
25	Mon	Dimapur : SPCSA and General Councillors meeting
26	Tue	Dimapur : SPCSA and General Councillors meeting
27	Wed	Dimapur : SPCSA General Assembly
28	Thu	Dimapur : SPCSA General Assembly