

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

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

JS – 22/2019

1 August 2019

My Dear Confreres,

Greetings with love from Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati!

It looks to me that many people in the world today have everything except inner peace, genuine tranquillity and true serenity that come from the encounter and experience of the true and living God. Many today therefore are yearning and becoming more aware about the fruits of deep silence, solitude, deep contemplation and a good connect to the Divine. Lots of physical, mental and spiritual powers have been wrought through silence and solitude during which one could come to terms with one's inner self and get a strong bonding with the Divine. Reading through the lifestyle of Jesus, one could easily identify that He was one who made copious use of these personal growth techniques in an amazing way.

JESUS RETREATED OFTEN FROM MINISTRY AND WAS ALONE WITH THE FATHER

The priority of Jesus' solitude and silence is everywhere in the Gospels.

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” (Lk 5:16)

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” (Mk 1:35)

“After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.” (Mt 14:23)

“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.” (Lk 6: 12)

Jesus withdrew from people, daily life activities, and the demands of his ministry to be alone with the Father and pray. Jesus' solitude and silence are the major theme in the Gospels. Therein we discover the secret of Jesus' peace and power.



It is by withdrawing into solitude, silence and prayer that Jesus began his ministry. Immediately after his baptism, he went into the

desert for forty days and forty nights where he fasted and prayed and was also tempted by the devil. At the completion of these days, he began his public ministry.

It is after prayer, silence and solitude that he made important decisions/choices.

It is how he taught his disciples.

It is how he prepared for important ministry.

It is how he dealt with troubling emotions like grief and sorrow.

It is how he dealt with the constant demands of his ministry.

It is how he prepared for his death on the cross.

Jesus' solitude is how he went deeper in his love-relationship with the God who He knew as ABBA.

Jesus passed on to the twelve the need to retreat from hectic life and be only by themselves. Mark writes clearly that "At that time, the apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while". For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. (Mk 6:30-32)

Retreat refreshes and revitalizes, gives the opportunity for more time spent in prayer and contemplation and rekindles and deepens one's relationship with God. Our Constitutions termed retreats as opportune moments for renewal.

"Our will for conversion is strengthened in the monthly recollection and in the annual retreat. These are occasions of spiritual renewal which Don Bosco considered the fundamental part and the synthesis of all the practices of piety.

"For the community and for every salesian these are privileged moments for listening to the Word of God, discerning his will and purifying our hearts.

"These times of grace restore to our spirit a deep unity in the Lord Jesus and keep alive in us the expectation of his return".

RETREAT AT SILOAM

Appropriately called SILOAM and nestled cosily on the shores of the Umiam lake, indeed the retreat centre offered the retreatants an ideal setting for making a journey into themselves. There were lots of showers (rains) of blessing which filled the lake to the brim and increased its beauty by covering up the protruding islands.

Considered as one of the preparations for the forthcoming Centenary, the theme for reflection was **MISSIONARY EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS**. The preacher, Fr Tom Karthik (IND) animated the two groups with reflections that emanated from his heart, his experiences as a veteran missionary and religious who endeavoured to

live it out with great fidelity. We are grateful to him for his services. We offer our humble gratitude to Fr George Palamattam and his team for their fine hospitality.

As professed religious “seekers of God” the need to spend time searching for God in silence and in prayer should get prime attention not only in well animated monthly and trimonthly recollections but also daily in the community practices of piety. The Rectors and communities should make sure that there is an opportunity for all the confreres for a half day of recollection every month, and a full day of recollection once in three months. Such practices enable us to give sufficient time and space to God, who in turn leads us to be effective and relevant in our mission work.

I must confess that I enjoyed my ministry of listening to the confreres during the retreat. I was able to animate them during the good night talks and the Holy Mass. The retreat atmosphere of silence, recollection, personal prayer, reconciliation and fraternity impressed me greatly. Everyone in the province is to avail themselves this mandatory annual spiritual retreat and hence those of you who have not registered themselves to any one of the retreats in the region, may kindly do so soon.

THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION AND INDEPENDENCE DAY

In the month of August, we celebrate the twin feasts of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother into heaven and the Independence of our country on 15th August. The



Assumption celebrates the doctrine that Mary was assumed into heaven. Assumption means that Mary, on the completion of her earthly life, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven as the fulfilment of her destiny which she achieved by living a life of loving response to God's will. As a young woman she had

her own plans and hopes but God put a different proposition to her when the angel Gabriel saluted her in tones of reverence. She was completely amazed. As a carpenter's wife, quite content with her lot she considered herself unworthy of special treatment. In response to the will of God she meekly said: 'I am the Lord's handmaid. Be it done to me according to your word.'

This feast gives us an opportunity to reflect on Mary who was the great background figure in the life of Christ, always co-operating with her son. It should not be too difficult to apply the message of Mary's life to our own because like us she is not remote from real life. She lived with the same ups and downs as we do every day. Mary knew what suffering was as she stood by the cross with the body of Christ in her arms.

This is a very joyful feast, proclaiming for us the Good News of salvation. It's a reminder that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that like Mary we are destined for glory. In fact, we believe that what happened to Mary will happen to all of us. One day we too shall enjoy the vision of God in heaven as whole people – body and soul.

The Independence Day of our country is a true celebration of our freedom. We have attained political freedom, but have we attained spiritual freedom? Mother Mary points out to the need of living our spiritual freedom as the children of God, ready to obey God's voice. In life and in death we are called to be free children of God.



BIRTHDAY OF ST. JOHN BOSCO

On 16th August, we will be celebrating the Birthday of Don Bosco, our Father and Founder. We learn from him that human life is beautiful, no matter what we go through in life, because God is there for us. He became fatherless at the age of 2 and got inspired to be the father, friend and teacher of many young people who roamed around the city of Turin as sheep without a shepherd. However it was not only God who was accompanying him, but he too did his share of work relentlessly for the salvation of souls of the young.

Don Bosco risked his life on many occasions. There were many dangers his life. His love



for life which is God's greatest gift to anyone, made him take care of his life from all dangers. It enabled him to live his life in the service of so many youth who are fatherless. God also came to his rescue. The story of Grigio is a touching incident of how God accompanied and protected him from the hands of his adversaries.

As we celebrate his birthday, let us thank God for giving us a loving and exemplary father who made his life beautiful because he trusted in the Divine Providence, did everything for God's greater glory and gave his heart and soul for the good of the young. Truly, he was like a grain of wheat which had to fall to the ground in order to bring out multitude of new grains or new lives.

SALESIAN CO-OPERATORS MEET AND THE “PROMISE” OF THE TWO NEW MEMBERS

The Salesian Co-operators of the province assembled at St. Mary's Convent, Guwahati for a two day animation and recollection. Fr Joseph Teron, Vice provincial animated the group on the strenna of the year, HOLINESS FOR YOU TOO. Sr Jacintha Ch Marak took lively sessions on the life and works of the Salesian co-operators. The members took active part in the sessions. On Sunday, I animated them on “Speak Lord, I am listening” basically dwelling on the theme of discerning the voice of God in our lives. It was followed by silent reflection and confessions. I presided over the Eucharistic celebration, during which two aspirants made their promise in front of the FMA Delegate, Sr Bridget Chittapanattu. We warmly welcomed them into the association and wish them all joy and happiness in living this salesian life. The lowering of the association flag took place just before lunch, bringing to a close two beautiful days of togetherness.



NEW PRACTICAL TRAINEES MEET

In order to encourage, enhance and ensure that the clerics are duly motivated to go through the stage of practical training as effectively as possible, the new practical trainee were assembled at the Provincial House on the 5th and 6th July. It is encouraging to see that the communities particularly the Rectors are following up the clerics closely to motivate, encourage and grow in the vocation during this stage of formation. I thank Fr Vice Provincial and his team for organizing the programme. It ended with a monthly recollection.

MISSIONARIES AD GENTES

The Rector Major has selected three of our clerics for Mission ad gentes. They are Cl Patrick Kujur, presently at Don Bosco Boys' Home Tura who will proceed to the Province of Brazil - Manaus (BMA) and work in the Amazon region. Br Christopher Thaimai,

presently at Apostolic school Barpeta Road will go to the Province of Peru (PER) and work in the Amazon region and Cl Petrus Nanwar, presently at Don Bosco Dotma who will go to Venezuela Province (VEN) and also work in the Amazon region. They will all leave for Rome within this month. We wish them God's choicest blessings and pray that they may find joy and fulfilment in their mission.



Brothers who are going for the missions *ad gentes*.

L to R:
Cl Patrick Kujur,
Br Christopher
Thaimai, and
Cl Petrus Nanwar.

DEACONS OF THE PROVINCE 2019

Five Clerics from Sacred Heart Th College, Mawlai Shillong, namely Cl Kishore Mushahary, Cl Francis Xavier Kujur, Cl John Paul Tirkey, Cl Amit Tete and Cl A. Antony Dhason and one Cleric from the Kristu Jyoti college, Bangalore, namely Cl Klisterwel Songthiang were ordained Deacons in their own respective places of formation and study. While the deacons from Sacred Heart Th. College are on their diaconal experience places, Deacon Klisterwel has returned to KJC for completing the remaining part of his study and formation.



We congratulate our dear Deacons on this great step and assure them of our fraternal prayers and support.

FOUNDATION STONE OF MULTIPURPOSE HALL LAID AT SATGAON

The foundation stone for the multipurpose hall was laid in the premises of Mary Help of Christians parish Satgaon on 13th July, 2019 by me. Present on the occasion were Fr Gabriel G Momin, Parish Priest and Fr Francis Xavier Lakra, Principal of Don Bosco School Baithalangso. There were a host of Sisters and lay leaders who graced the special occasion. About 300 ICYM youth who were attending the summer time youth animation programme participated in the ceremony. The youth participated devoutly in the Holy Eucharist, sang the Mass Hymns enthusiastically and also put up a well prepared cultural programme after the Mass.



YaR EXPERIENCE FOR THEOLOGY STUDENTS

Many of our theology students belonging to the Provinces of Guwahati, Shillong and Dimapur from Sacred Heart Th. College, Shillong, had a month-long experience at various Young at Risk (YaR) centres in South India. It was an enriching experience for them all. I thank the YaR Coordinators and the Vice Provincials of the North-Eastern Provinces for taking this initiative to give a first-hand experience to our brothers.

JUNIOR PRIESTS MEET

The Junior Priests Meet of the Provinces of Guwahati and Shillong was held at Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati from 21st to 25th July 2019. Fr James Perunneparampil of Shillong Province was the main animator. A total of 24 priests from the Provinces of

Guwahati and Shillong attended the Meeting. I thank Fr Joseph Teron Langne, our Vice Provincial, for the various efforts in coordinating the Meet.



ADMINISTRATORS MEETING

The Financial Administrators Meeting of our Province was held on 25th and 26th July 2019. The second day was animated by Fr Xavier Packiam SDB, the Provincial Economist of Chennai and Co-ordinator of South Asia Salesian Economers' Network. I am grateful to Fr Benny P. Basil, our Economist, for planning the details and coordinating the event.



SCOUT MASTERS AND GUIDE CAPTAINS CAMP

A Camp for those aspiring to be Scout Masters and Guide Captains was held at Don Bosco School, Boko from 21st to 28th July 2019. Fr P.X. Francis, Fr Solomon Denis, Fr Joseph Paulianmung, and Mr Lazar were the main co-ordinators of the Camp. I thank them and Fr Joy Kachappilly and the community of Boko for hosting this event. May God bless you all for your endeavours for the benefit of the youngsters!



SUMMER TIME ORIENTATION CAMP DAMRA

Gradually making it an annual feature of the Province, the Summer Time Orientation Camp for the prospective candidates took off colourfully in the first week of July at Damra. The camp as usual consists of intense prayer and other spiritual activities coupled coaching classes and training in music, sports and games, public speaking and remedial classes in subjects like Maths, Science and Social Studies. I thank Fr Vice Provincial and the clerics for making it happen professionally and the community of Damra for hosting it annually.

FLOODS IN ASSAM

While some parts of India are experiencing drought, the state of Assam is experiencing floods caused by unprecedented rains. Here is a news report that explains the situation: North India is on its knees: more than 100 people were killed in Assam and Bihar due to the violent monsoon rains that have been falling since the beginning of the month [of July] and nearly 12 million are displaced in the two states. The picture is dramatic: 90% of families in Assam and 50% of those in Bihar have no drinking water and all water resources (wells and manual pumps) are contaminated.

The official numbers speak of 660 deaths and millions of people forced to leave their homes, trying to save everything possible. Caritas India conducted a survey in the area in collaboration with the Christian Aid and Adra NGOs, and with the support of members of the Inter-Agency Group (consortium of national and international humanitarian agencies) and local officials of the governments of the two Indian states. The objective of the evaluation was to identify the primary needs of the affected populations and start the first aid to deal with the emergency.



The scenario that emerged is bleak: 8,246 villages are under water due to the overflow of the Brahmaputra and Ganges rivers, which have broken their banks and flooded 30 districts in Assam and 12 in Bihar; 31% of families in Assam and 11% in Bihar no longer have a home. With regards agriculture, the main sector of employment in the region, in Assam alone 179 thousand hectares of harvest were lost; for the State of Bihar there are no data available on the damage caused by the floods, since different areas are still inaccessible even to state inspectors. What is certain, points out Caritas, is that entire Dalit and Adivasi communities (the indigenous groups that inhabit the territory) have lost the “kharif” (“autumn” in Arabic), typical of the monsoon season. This will have serious consequences for their food security and survival capacity. The educational institutions have suffered considerable damage and almost all the schools have become shelters for displaced persons.

CONDOLENCES

Fr John Parankimalil lost his sister **Mrs Mary Mathew** to a gruesome incident on 3rd July 2019. The Hindu reported, “The body of Mary, 59, was found with a slit throat in the rubber farm near her house on Wednesday morning. The Kuttampuzha police arrested Kunju Mohammed, 63, a rubber-tapping worker employed by the victim’s husband Mathachan, who reportedly confessed to the crime.” We pray for the departed soul, and

also for the bereaved family that they may be able to see this incident in the light of faith, and who have already compared her death to that of Maria Goretti. Fr PD Johny himself writes, “She was murdered on 3rd July 2019, the day on which St. Thomas, the apostle of India was killed. Her burial took place on 6th July, the feast day of St. Maria Goretti, who was killed for preserving her chastity and purity. According to many, she is the Maria Goretti of Kerala, India. How honourable it is to be killed for not committing sin. While murder is a sin, being killed for Christ-sake is a great honour and privilege. Mary stands as a model of holiness and hope in a world where family values are compromised and sin is rampant. Her own parents having heard that she was killed for not committing sin glorified God for their faithful daughter because for her parents it is holiness that matters. Her life is an example for all, especially women and mothers, telling them not just to be good but be holy, resisting evil even at the point of death.”

Mr KP Anthony, the brother of Fr Paul Kuttikadan, passed away on 23rd July 2019. May his soul rest in peace! As we offer our condolences to Fr KP Paul and the family, we pray for them and their intentions.

The mother of Fr Alex Kattakayam **Mrs Mary Kattakayam**, aged 93, passed away on 26th July 2019. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Fr Alex and the family. May the soul of the departed rest in peace!

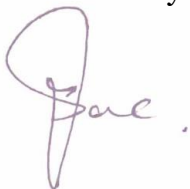
CONCLUSION

Once again, I express my great happiness on seeing the retreatants making a very serious journey towards inner self. I wish you joy and happiness in your hectic ministry. Be a tireless worker but spend daily enough time at the feet of the Master. Remember Mary has chosen the better part!

I wish you all the feast of our Blessed Mother, assumed into heaven and may the celebration of the Independence Day, truly liberate all Indians from all forms of bondage.

Let us celebrate as meaningfully as possible the birthday of our dear Father and founder and may he intercede for us to make something beautiful with our lives.

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr Januarius S. Sangma SDB
Provincial



PROGRAMME OF THE PROVINCIAL TEAM

AUGUST 2019

	Provincial	Vice Provincial	Economer
1 Thu	Chennai: SPCSA Council > Guwahati	Guwahati	Bongaigaon College
2 Fri	Guwahati	Guwahati	Barpetta
3 Sat	Guwahati: FMA Perpetual Professions	Panbazar: Perp Profession of FMAs	Ghy: FMA Perp Professions
4 Sun	Guwahati : Auxilium Snehalaya	Baithalangso: Catechesis	Diphu College
5 Mon	Diphu: Regional Meeting (Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao)	Diphu: Regional Meeting of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao Region	Diphu: Regional Meeting (Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao)
6 Tue	Guwahati	Recollection at Bishop's House	Guwahati
7 Wed	Guwahati : DBI Visitation	Sirajuli	Guwahati
8 Thu	Guwahati : DBI Visitation	Tangla	Bhooteachang
9 Fri	Regional Meeting (Guwahati Metro)	Guwahati : Regional Meeting	Guwahati: Regional Meeting
10 Sat	Provincial Federation of Past Pupils: Election of Office Bearers	Provincial Federation of Past Pupils Mission Commission Meeting	Guwahati
11 Sun	Guwahati	DBI: Social Com Commission	Guwahati
12 Mon	PH: Meeting of all Commission Heads	DBPH: Meeting of all Com Heads / Boardings & Hostels Comm	Meeting of Commission Heads
13 Tue	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
14 Wed	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
15 Thu	Guwahati: Renewal of Vows: Azara	Amguri: Stage Blessing	Guwahati
16 Fri	Guwahati: Birthday of St. John Bosco	Dotma	Bosco Mount
17 Sat	Regional Meeting (Garo Hills region) & Gospel Singout and Exhibition	Tura: Garo Hills Regional Meeting / Gospel Singout	Tura: Regional Meeting- Garo Hills
18 Sun	Guwahati: Animation of the MC Srs	Mendal	Guwahati
19 Mon	Guwahati: Animation of the MC Srs	Guwahati	Baithalangso
20 Tue	Guwahati: Animation of the MC Srs	DBPH: Meeting of YPs	Satgaon -Sojong
21 Wed	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
22 Thu	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
23 Fri	PH: Meeting of Parish Priests	DBPH: Meeting of Parish Priests	PH: Meeting of Parish Priests
24 Sat	Guwahati: Provincial Community Day and Jubilees of Confreres; Fr Ivo Coelho & Team arrive in Guwahati		
25 Sun	Fr Ivo & Team visit Dotma Prenovitate	DBPH Guwahati : ADMA Meeting	Guwahati
26 Mon	Provincial House, Guwahati: South Asia Formation Commission Meeting		Formation Commission Meeting
27 Tue	Provincial House, Guwahati: South Asia Formation Commission Meeting		Guwahati
28 Wed	Provincial House, Guwahati: South Asia Formation Commission Meeting		Guwahati
29 Thu	Provincial House, Guwahati: South Asia Formation Commission Meeting		Guwahati
30 Fri	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
31 Sat	Provincial House, Guwahati: Provincial Council Meeting		