

# Provincial Circular

FMA PROVINCE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOLKATA (INC)

Provincial Office - The Salesian Sisters  
10 P.K. Guha Road, Dum Dum  
Kolkata 700 028



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My dear Sisters,

**Loving and prayerful greetings from the provincial house, Dum Dum**

## *Season of Advent*

We have already entered into the season of Advent, the liturgical time which prepares us for Christmas, inviting us to lift our gaze and open our hearts to welcome Jesus. During Advent we do not just live in anticipation of Christmas; we are also called to rekindle the anticipation of the glorious return of Christ — when he will return at the end of time — preparing ourselves, with consistent and courageous choices, for the final encounter with him.

During these four weeks of Advent we are called to leave behind a resigned and routine way of life and to go forth, nourishing hope, and nourishing dreams for a new future. First of all, Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world. Advent is a favorable time to open our hearts, to ask ourselves concrete questions about how and for whom we spend our lives. The second attitude during this time of waiting for the Lord is that of prayer. Vigilance and prayer are two words for Advent: Because historically the Lord came in Bethlehem; and He will come, at the end of the world and also at the end of our individual lives. But every day, every moment, He comes into our hearts, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. (Homily of Pope Francis)

Advent invites us also to surrender ourselves afresh to God's future. It calls for the humility that willingly confesses that a sense of God's presence is all too easily lost in busy and distracted lives. What we cannot imagine in ourselves the Lord gladly offers in his continuing presence. May this promise renew our strength during the days ahead. In the words of St Paul, "the time has come; our salvation is even nearer than it was when you were converted, it will be daylight soon. Let us give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark. Let us arm ourselves and appear in the light." I wish each one of you a very fruitful and blessed advent season.

## *Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception*

On 8 December the Church celebrated the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception teaches that, by a singular grace of God, the Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin: i.e., from the first instant of her existence she was in the state of sanctifying grace and free from the corrupt nature original sin brings.

In our life as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Immaculate Virgin Mary occupies a very unique place. She is presented to us as model for imitation, and we are invited to contemplate in her the fullness of self-giving to God and neighbor (C.44). We have to strive

to make her dispositions of faith, hope and charity and her perfect union with Christ, our own (C. 4). We are to welcome the Word as Mary did and ponder it in our heart in the silence of our whole being like Mary, the listening virgin (C.39). In order to strengthen the gift of chastity we are asked to entrust ourselves lovingly to Mary the Virgin Mother (C.17). We are also called to cultivate a grateful, trusting love for Mary and commit ourselves to pass this love on to young people (C. 44). Pope Paul VI says: "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is an intrinsic element of Christian worship (MC,56).

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a major feast for all of us, and so it should always be celebrated in a fitting manner in all our houses with due spiritual preparation. We are reminded of it in our Regulations: "Let the Marian devotion proper to our Institute be lived according to the liturgical cycle. The solemnities of the Immaculate Conception and Mary Help of Christians will be prepared for by a novena" (R.30). During this first three-year period in preparation for the centenary of the FMA presence in India and the 150<sup>th</sup> of the foundation of our Institute, together with the FMA world let us "Give Thanks" for the innumerable graces we constantly receive through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, allowing gratitude to emerge for the gift of holiness in the Institute and for the relevance of the Salesian mission in the world.

### *Triennial preparation for the centenary Celebration*

We are already aware of the celebration of Centenary of the presence of the FMA, and - in India. The whole FMA India launched into a three year preparation for the arrival of our 6 missionaries Sr. Teresa Balestra, Sr. Luigina Appiano, Sr. Catherine Marnetto, Sr. Consiglia Tarricone, Sr. Teresa Merlo and Sr. Maria Angeleri in the Indian soil which will be celebrated in 2022. We thank God for these valiant and courageous Sisters who sowed the seed of the Salesian Charism in our land. As we launch into this preparation of these 100 years of bountiful grace, we raise our gratitude to God for the humble beginnings which has now grown into a mighty tree of 7 Provinces. Let us unite in prayers and authentic preparations in this Triduum with the theme and yearly proposals of the FMA PCI.

**THEME: "With Mary through the Course of the Century (1922-2022) and beyond ...**

2019-2020: Give thanks: "Let us truly thank the Lord who gives us many graces" (L 37, 10) Living our FMA Identity with Gratitude: To re-live and transmit the Spirituality of the Preventive System to the younger generations .

2020-2021: Accept the mandate: "I entrust them to you." Reviving the Family Spirit and strengthening Community Communion, building authentic relationships.

2021-2022: Plan the future boldly: "Courage! Let us go ahead with a great and generous heart" (L 47, 12) Prophets and witnesses for a transformed society in the style of Synodality, involving the young people and the laity in our mission and apostolate.

Let us raise our hearts to thank the Good Lord for the marvels wrought in our land and we salute our pioneers for their unwavering faith to keep alive the charism of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello in our land and its people. May this journey we have launched together truly be a spiritual renewal of every FMA in our Province and an opportune moment to

rekindle the missionary impulse of our Institute. I recommend all of you dear sisters to read and deepen our knowledge about the history of the Institute and that of the great missionary work accomplished by our sisters in India (Diamond years Vol. I & II, Ambassadors returned and other books)

### *Adieu Sr. Alice Olickal*

The Lord of life and death, once again visited our province (the fourth time this year) and plucked another beautiful flower from our garden to add to the FMA band in heaven. And this time our dear Sr. Alice Olickal. I was on my way to Sri Lanka to make our Annual Spiritual Retreat when I received the sad news of the demise of our dear Sr. Alice. The previous evening after dinner I had gone to wish her in her room to tell her that I was leaving for Sri Lanka and asked to pray for all the Provincials who will be making their retreat, and she responded in her usual way with a sound which denoted yes and I blessed and wished her good night and went. But little did I think that the Lord was taking her to himself the next morning. Yes, Sr. Alice was ready indeed. Her long suffering of earthly sojourn came to an end. Indeed she was tested in the crucible of suffering which she accepted with resignation, love and patience and offered it for to the Lord for the needs of the Province and sanctity of the Sisters.

Sr. Alice left behind a legacy of authenticity and faithfulness in small and big things, living her consecrated life with conviction focused on her Master and Lord. She was a woman of prayer and relationship. Her smile of calmness, patient endurance and serenity were examples for the sisters to be the same in times of trials and when faced with difficulties. She was truly a sister and a friend to all and knew how to win over Sisters and young people with affection and understanding. Her life of dedication and the good spirit that reigned in the communities she worked will continue to be an inspiration for all of us to follow. I firmly believe that she is already in the company of the angels and saints and beholding the face of Jesus and Mary whom she served so lovingly all through her eighty years of life on earth and fifty five years of consecrated life as FMA. With grateful hearts let us entrust her to the mercy of God and ask her to implore for us many more good and holy vocations of her caliber.

I want to say a special word of thanks to Sr. Teresa Adampakallel and the Sisters of the community of Dum Dum especially to Sr. Luciana Rai and the home nurse Mrs. Archana. They were truly the caring mothers, the loving sisters and a considerate friend to our dear Sr. Alice during her long illness and suffering. May the good Lord reward them all a hundredfold and hear Jesus say: "whatsoever you do to the least of my sisters, you did it to me".

### *Annual Spiritual Retreat of the Provincials*

It had been a unique privilege to have made our Annual Spiritual Retreat at Negombo- Sri Lanka. I am grateful to Sr. Nirmala Lazar the Provincial of INM for her invitation to come to Sri Lanka and made all the arrangement with the community of Negombo. I express my heartfelt thanks to Sr. Mary Ann Fernando and the community for providing us with a very conducive environment to spend our days in the company of Jesus and enter into a deeper encounter with Him.

We had Fr. Joseph Almeida SDB Provincial of Sri Lanka who animated the Retreat with morning talk and the celebration of Holy Mass. He exhorted us to spend the retreat days more in prayer and contemplation and to prepare and make the soul to be liberated from all the messy affections so as to live our consecrated life with commitment and dedication. His talks were all based on our call to holiness. As consecrated persons we are called to live a life deeply rooted in Jesus and His Gospel, totally dedicated to the service of the Kingdom, to be leaven with the energy to transform the world through the values of the Gospel. In fact we are called to society and to the world with a mission summed up in one word Holiness. It was indeed a time of entering into ourselves to discover and make ourselves conscious of what we are and what we live, and to renew our consecrated life and to be authentic FMA who constantly seek God and bring His joy, love and hope to the world and in particular to the world young people.

At the end of the retreat we also had the joy of participating in the blessing and inauguration of the New Novitiate building in the same complex. It is praise worthy of the pioneering sisters to establish the novitiate within the ten years of their missionary expansion. There are already 9 novices; two second year and seven first year. The FMA mission in Sri Lanka is gradually expanding and there is much scope for working with and for the young people leading them to encounter God's love. Let us pray that there will be more vocations from the land itself and other sisters opting to go as missionaries to Sri Lanka. I thank the sisters of the Negombo community for all the care and love, and all the Provincials for the accompaniment and deep sharing which enriched each one of us.

## Communications



### Meetings and seminars

- Srs. Clara Saminathan and Celine Alexander participated in the National Education Consultation meeting organized by CBCI office for Education and Culture on 22 November at Don Bosco Provincial House Okhla.
- The BRBC-CRI-CDPB Bengal – Sikkim Annual Regional meet was held from 4 – 6 November 2019 at at Jeevandhara, Raiganj. Sr. Teresa Adampakallel and Sr. Rosina Thomas in the capacity of Krishnagar diocese CRI secretary took part in it. The theme was “Quality of our Life Witness and Service”. Bishop Vincent Aind of Bagdogra diocese in his key note address dealt on the topic “The quality of our life witness”. He insisted that our vocation is to live like Christ in the short time given to us by doing something beautiful for God.
- The ADMA Convention was held on 09 November 2019 at Nitika, Don Bosco. Sr. Luciana Rai along with ADMA members Mr. Gerald Rozario and Mrs. Isabella Antony from the unit of Dum Dum and Barasat respectively participated in the programme

- The 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the second Novitiate is being held at Manivakkam (INM) from 15 November - 15 December 2019. Srs. Restitula Kharpran, Pranati Sabhasundar, Lemnom Mosang, Rinki Nayak and Namita Sabasundar are part of the programme.
- Srs. Clara Saminathan and Sr. Rejina Joseph attended the 62 Annual Conference organized by ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS FOR THE INDIAN SCHOOL CERTIFICATE from 27 - 29 November, 2019 at Kamarajar Arangam, Teynampet, Chennai
- Sr. Sherely Kalapurayil, Sr. Mary Puthuppallil and Sr. Alma Blung will be partaking in the 16th Annual Meet of FMA-NDF on the theme " Emerging Challenges and FMA Response", to be held in Yercaud, Salem from 12 - 14 December 2019.



### **Sincere Gratitude to:**

- Sr. Mary Ekka and the community of Jumaikela for the Mary Immaculate Novena
- Sr. Dorothy Torcato and the community of Kurseong for the Christmas Novena.



### **Condolences - Let us pray for our dear Departed:**

- † The brother- in - law of Sr. Margaret Barla, Mr. Sathyanand Guria, who passed away on 19 October 2019. He suffered from brain haemorrhage.
- † Sr. Kanchan Karuna Bara's paternal uncle Mr. Rembert Bara who was called to his eternal home on 27 October 2019
- † Second year novice Sr. Anima Kujur's father Mr. Benjamin Kujur who expired on 13 November 2019.
- † Sr. Juniana Rosario's paternal aunt, Mrs. Agnes Rosario who went to receive her eternal reward on 14 November 2019.
- † Sr. Susanna Korah's sister-in-law Mrs. Annakutty who died on 16 November 2019
- † Sr. Lily Perumpettikunnel's uncle Mr. Thomas who left this world on 18 November 2019
- † Sr. Sadhana Majumdar's maternal grandmother Mrs. Agnes Mondol who went to receive her eternal reward on 21 November 2019.
- † Paternal grandmother of Sr. Esther Rani Abraham Ms. Arpudha Mary who went to her heavenly home on 24 November 2019.
- † Entrust to the mercy of God Sr. Aleyamma Ooppoothil (Celine) a missionary from the province of Mumbai, who died suddenly due to massive heart attack in Ethiopia from the Pre-Province of East Africa on 01 December 2019.

## Prayers requested for:

- ❖ For our 54 sisters who will be making their Annual Retreat at Auxilium Bandel from 28 December 2019 – 04 January 2020 and for the preacher Fr. Jose Kuttianimattathil SDB

Dear Sisters, as conclude I take this occasion to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and Grace filled New Year 2020. Christmas is a time of joy ! When Jesus was born the choirs of angels joyfully sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Lk 2:14).

God wants every person to experience the same joy that was experienced by the angels, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the magi on that great and glorious night when Jesus our Savior was born into the world. His light pierced the darkness and a new age has begun on the earth. May Jesus continue to illumine the darkness and prevail His light in our life always! Joy to the world!

Yours affectionately in Our Lady,

Sr. Rose Ezarath FMA  
(Provincial)



**Happy Christmas !**

**Grace filled New Year !**