

Provincial Circular

FMA PROVINCE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOLKATA (INC)

Provincial Office - The Salesian Sisters
10 P.K. Guha Road, Dum Dum
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October 2019

My dear Sisters,

Loving and prayerful greetings from the provincial house, Dum Dum

October is traditionally honored as the Month of the Holy Rosary. Rosary is a simple contemplative prayer, accessible to all, great and small, the educated and those with little education. In the Rosary we turn to the Virgin Mary so that she may guide us to an ever closer union with her Son Jesus to bring us into conformity with him, to have his sentiments and to behave like him. Indeed, in the Rosary while we repeat the Hail Mary we meditate on the Mysteries, on the events of Christ's life, so as to know and love him ever better. So, let us keep in mind that the goal of the Rosary is to become similar to Jesus and Mary. During this month let us draw many blessings and graces for ourselves and for the whole world by praying devoutly and meaningfully our holy Rosary.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the promulgation of Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* (on the propagation of the faith throughout the world), Pope Francis has declared October 2019 to be an Extraordinary Month of Mission (EMM). This special month of prayer and action calls us all to renew our missionary commitment. We are called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all peoples. On declaring the Extraordinary Missionary Month, Pope Francis asked the faithful: "This is also the Month of the Rosary: how much are we praying for the spread of the Gospel and our conversion from omission to mission?". The theme of the Extraordinary Missionary Month is "*Baptized and sent: the Church of Christ on mission in the world.*" Pope Francis stressed that this means that "no one is excluded from the Church's mission." Then he added: "In this month the Lord is also calling you, because you, fathers and mothers of families; you, young people who dream great things; you, who work in a factory, a store, a bank or a restaurant; you who are unemployed; you are in a hospital bed... The Lord is asking you to be a gift wherever you are, and just as you are, with everyone around you". "Can we, who have discovered that we are children of the heavenly Father, keep silent about the joy of being loved, the certainty of being ever precious in God's eyes? That is a message that so many people are waiting to hear. And it is our responsibility," he said. Let us, therefore, spend this month becoming messengers of the good news of Christ wherever we are and in whatever we do.

Sixth Provincial Chapter

The sixth Provincial Chapter was held from 5-8 October 2019 at the provincial house, Dum Dum. The celebration was indeed a wonderful experience for the fifty six participants. They were truly days of enriching experience of the motherly solicitude of Mary as at Cana.

A lot of time was spent on the study, reflection and sharing on the theme of GC 24: ***“Do whatever he tell you”(John 2:5). Communities that generate life in the heart of contemporaneity.*** By proposing this theme Mother General invited us to allow ourselves to be guided by Mary for a regeneration in the Holy Spirit, to make our educating communities generate new life; communities that bring to Jesus the urgencies of humanity and commit themselves to contribute, in the ever new fruitfulness of the charism, to the miracle of the transformation of daily life.

The provincial chapter was preceded by the celebration of the Provincial Community Day on 2 October followed by two full days of retreat animated by Rev. Fr. Albert Johnson sdb from the SPCSA, New Delhi. Fr. Johnson in his simple and masterly style shared his reflections on vocation, formation, challenges and mission. He stressed on witnessing life as the most important factor in evangelization and education.

The sessennial report (2014-2019) of the province that I presented at the beginning of the provincial chapter highlighted the life and journey we made as a Province, in the church, in the Institute and in all our communities. I thanked God for the 142 Sisters of the province spread in the 25 communities, the provincial council and the team, the animators of communities and the sick and the elderly Sisters who support the province with their prayer, sacrifice and daily oblation. We paid my homage and respect to the eight departed Sisters who have gone to their eternal home during the last sessennium, for their selfless and dedicated service and beneficent self-giving.

Some highlights of the Provincial Chapter

Rev. Fr. Gilbert Choondal sdb, the Catechetical Director of Don Bosco Nitika, presided over the inaugural Eucharist. The inaugural opening ceremony and prayer at 9.00 was led by the community of Auxilium and aspirantate, Barasat with a very meaningful entrance procession into the Chapter Hall which awakened in all the members the significance and importance of the moment we are in. The next two days the commissions began to delve deeply into the ‘working document’ prepared by the preparatory commission. The general assembly then voted for the most urgent challenges for our communities, the paths to live the fruitful accompaniment of the young people and the choices that make the communities ‘synodal’ for a prophetic missionary spirit. The laity and the young people in their message to the provincial chapter members urged us to listen to the aspirations and dreams of the young people of the contemporary world. The Chapter also devoted time to evaluate the deliberations and norms for the communities laid down for the past sessennium and the future proposals. Some of the important proposals of the communities to the provincial chapter were taken into consideration and a few decisions were arrived at. After half day of prayer and discernment process conducted by Fr. Jayaraj Veluswamy S.J. the delegate and her substitute were elected for 24th General Chapter to be held in 2020. Sr. Teresa Adampakallel was elected as the delegate and Sr. Stella Potteparambil as substitute. The concluding Eucharist was officiated by Most Rev. Thomas D’Souza, the archbishop of Calcutta. A fitting conclusion of the Chapter was the golden jubilee celebration of Sr. Rosina Thekumkattil on 10 October.

I congratulate and thank Sr. Elizabeth Valliyil the moderator for the hard work that was done in preparation for the Chapter and for the smooth conduct of the proceedings of all the

sessions. A word of thanks also to the members of the pre-chapter commission who consolidated the answers to the questionnaire, the chroniclers Sr. Ashalata Kerketta and the Sr. Rosy Veliyan who compiled the minutes of the day with vivid photographs by Sr. Rejina Adampakallel and Sr. Shanti Tirkey. Thanks to all the coordinators and the secretaries of the commissions and to all the members of the Chapter for their active involvement and contribution to make the chapter event a memorable one. My appreciation and thanks to Sr. Teresa Adampakallel and the community of Dum Dum who took care of every small details thus creating a conducive atmosphere and facilitating the smooth running of the Chapter, provincial community day and the golden jubilee celebrations.

Let us entrust ourselves to Mary so that with her help we can be docile to what Jesus tells us, to transform the water of our daily life into the wine of new vocational fruitfulness. May we continue to 'walk together' as synodal communities bringing joy and hope in the lives of the young people entrusted to our care.

Feast of St. Teresa of Avila

On 15 October we celebrate the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, Doctor of the Church and the Patroness of our Institute. Teresa of Avila was a contemplative who said the proof of good contemplation was shown by a person's deeds. One of her sayings is: "God gave us faculties for our use; each of them will receive its proper reward. Then do not let us try to charm them to sleep, but permit them to do their work until divinely called to something higher." We are called to be people of faith like she was: to reflect on Christ's love and mercy, and to make that love known to all. She said: "Always think of yourself as everyone's servant; look for Christ our Lord in everyone and then have respect and reverence for them all." Her greatest call to action is probably best shown in this poem: Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours, yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion is to look out to the earth, yours are the feet by which He is to go about doing good, and yours are the hands by which He is to bless us now.

What makes Saint Teresa unique, not only in her time but also in our time, is that she wasn't one of those angry reformers whose only interest is to change everybody else. She understood that any institutional reform had to begin with personal conversion. In spite of the basic goodness and holiness of her community, Teresa felt that she had been living her religious life with a degree of half-heartedness, and without the care that would lead her closer to God. She wanted to turn to Christ with all of her being, and that is the real meaning of conversion. To use her own words: "I am yours, you made me. I am yours, you called me. I am yours, you saved me. I am yours, you loved me. I will never leave your presence". Let us pray that we too live in Christ, with Christ and for Christ alone and make of our lives a total self-giving to God and others.

Feast of Bl. Michael Rua

Fr. Michael Rua was among the first few with whom Don Bosco shared the idea of forming the 'Salesian Society'. For 36 years he was Don Bosco's closest collaborator in the development of the Congregation. Don Rua was seen as the 'living Rule' because of his austere fidelity, yet he also displayed a fatherly spirit that was capable of great thoughtfulness, so much so that he was known as 'a king of kindness'. Fr. J.B. Francesia

speaks of Don Rua as a man of deep prayer. Always first at his place in church for the community meditation, he would kneel motionless throughout, with his face resting on the palms of his hands, holding a white handkerchief.

At the explicit request of Don Bosco, in 1884, Pope Leo XIII named him to succeed Don Bosco and he confirmed him as Rector Major in 1888. As the number of members and communities increased he sent Salesians all over the world, showing special care for the missionary expeditions. In the long journeys which he undertook to visit the Salesian works in Europe and in the Middle East he was a constant source of comfort and encouragement, always referring to Don Bosco: "Don Bosco used to say... Don Bosco used to do it this way... Don Bosco wanted..."

Don Rua was beatified in 1972 by Pope Paul VI. When beatifying him, the Pope said: "The Salesian Family owes its origin to Don Bosco, to Fr. Rua its continuation. He developed the Saint's example into a school, his Rule into a spirit, his holiness into a model. He turned the spring into a river". As we commemorate him on 29 October, let us pray for each other that we too following his example, keep alive the spirit of our origins and be signs of God's fatherly love and Mary's motherly solicitude especially among the young people of today.

Communications

Meetings and seminars

- Sr. Shanti Palamoottil will be participating in the Formation of the new Provincial Bursars course in Casa Generalizia - Rome from November 4 - 23, 2019.

Retreats

- ❖ Sisters' Retreat will be held at Auxilium - Bandel from 28 December 2019 - 04 January 2020. It will be preached by Rev. Fr. Jose Kuttianimattathil SDB. Arrival will be on 28 Dec. 2019 and departure on 06 Jan. in the afternoon.
- ❖ Animators' Retreat will be held at Siloam, Shillong from 16 - 23 April 2020. It will be preached by Rev. Fr. Jose Kuttianimattathil SDB. Arrival will be on 16 April and departure on 25 April 2020



Condolences - Let us pray for our dear Departed:

- † Sr. Mary Sarkar's Sister Mrs. Cecilia who passed away on 07 October 2019.
- † Sr. Rayappan Antonia FMA who went to receive her eternal reward on 08 October 2019 from the Province of Chennai.
- † Most Rev. Dominic Jala SDB, DD (68), Archbishop of Shillong who passed away following a car accident at Colusa County, Oakland in California, USA on Thursday 10 October, 2019. The body will be transferred to India and it will arrive on Sunday 20 October, 2019 about 2.45pm at Guwahati airport, Assam. On the way to Shillong the

mortal remains will be taken to Salesian Provincial House Guwahati, Byrnihat Parish, Nongpoh Parish, Umsning Parish and Mawlai Parish. The mortal remains will be kept in his parental home, Mawlai Phudmuri for the night. From 21 October 2019 till the funeral the mortal remains will be in the Cathedral Church for the faithful to pay their homage. The Archbishop had left Shillong for Rome on 17 September 2019 for the Ad Limina visit and from Rome to USA to attend a meeting of the International Commission for English in the Liturgy (ICEL). Archbishop Jala is a priest for 41 years and a Bishop for 19 years. He was the Chairman of the CCBI Commission for Liturgy from 2015 onwards and the member of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). The funeral Holy Mass of Most Rev. Dominic Jala SDB will held at Mary Help of Christians Cathedral, Shillong on Wednesday, 23 October 2019 and the mortal remains will laid rest at the Cathedral campus.

Dear Sisters,

I conclude by inviting you all to live the “Extraordinary” Missionary Month together with the young people and the educating community. Heeding to the invitation of Mother General let us take a missionary journey with courageous, humble, sometimes tiring steps, confident of the presence of Mary who always accompanies us to be “missionaries of hope and joy” as she was.

Yours affectionately in Our Lady,

Sr. Rose Ezarath FMA
(Provincial)