



Province of
St. Francis De Sales

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Salesian Province of Dimapur - IND

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02 September 2018

CIR-IND/JK/03/2018

My dear confreres,

The act of entrustment of persons, communities, institutions, the entire Church and the whole world to the Blessed Virgin Mary is a long-standing tradition in the Church. It is also a practice in the Salesian Family, and Don Bosco himself encouraged it among his spiritual sons and daughters as a sign of their filial devotion to Mary. If I remember well, the last solemn *Act of entrustment of the Salesian Congregation to Mary Help of Christians* was done on 14 January 1984, at the request of Don Egidio Vigano, the then Rector Major.

1. The Solemn Act of Entrustment of the Assam Mission to Mary Help of Christians in 1922

The chronicles of the Salesian house in Shillong (Our Lady's House) states that after the first public Marian procession on 24 May 1922, the eleven Salesian pioneer missionaries to Northeast India gathered in a small room, and kneeling before the statue of Mary Help of Christians, made a solemn act of entrustment of the entire Assam Mission to Mary Help of Christians (ASC F176, *Cronaca Missione Assam*, 40-41).

I am giving below a free translation of the prayer in Italian of the consecration of the Assam Mission to Mary Help of Christians:



O Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, Our tender and powerful Mother and Help of Christians, here we are at your feet, on this day dedicated to your honour, to offer ourselves to you, privately now, and as soon as possible in a solemn manner, this new Mission that you wanted to entrust to us, and to which you desired to precede us. We promise you, above all, O Our Help, to work with all our strength and with all our soul to convert the peoples living in these lands, and to work with all our powers to spread devotion to you, to make you known, bless and love you, together with the fruit of your virgin womb, Jesus.

We implore you to keep us always under the shelter of your mantel so that we may be free from all the snares of Satan, your eternal enemy and our adversary. Be to us a Mother, Help and Succour.

Since you are greatly interested in this Mission of Assam, whose beginning reminds us of your name "Mary Help of Christians", we want it to be yours, all yours, only yours, and we prostrate before you and consecrate its lands, its mountains, its rivers, its peoples, all its inhabitants, those who already know you and love you and those who are still far away from your love and your light. Be for everyone Help and Comfort; be for all Mother and Queen. Receive as yours every tribe, every family and every individual, so that everyone, even if they do not know that they will become your protected ones one day, and through your grace receive the gift of faith and experience your love. Remove all obstacles and increase our number more and more, and make possible that day, which is not distant, when we

will bring to your feet all the various peoples of this extended Mission and begin to sing with them to your glory a hymn, which we will continue to sing under your mantle in paradise. Amen

Shillong, 24 May 1922

2. Renewal of the Solemn act of Entrustment in 1932

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the arrival of the Salesians in Assam (1932) there were great celebrations in Shillong. On that occasion, there was a solemn Eucharistic procession. Before the last blessing by the presiding Archbishop Perier of Calcutta, Fr. Constantine Vendrame read in public the same act of entrustment of the Assam mission to Mary Help of Christians of 1922.

The prayer of the pioneer Salesian missionaries had great efficacy: Mary took charge of what was then called the Assam mission, and began to work. Today in the Salesian annals, the success of the Assam mission is considered the “miracle of Mary Help of Christians”.

3. The Traditional Blessing of Mary Help of Christians

As we know, the traditional blessing of Mary Help of Christians, which we use in our houses on 24th of every month, was composed by Don Bosco himself, and approved by Pope Leo XIII in 1878. Our Founder worked numerous miracles using this blessing.

It is good to recall here the history of this blessing to understand better its context, appreciate its historic value and spiritual importance: On 10 March 1878 Don Bosco wrote to Pope Leo XIII as follows:

Most Holy Father,

In the sadness of the times in which we are living, it seems that God wishes in wondrous ways to glorify his august Mother under the title of Mary Help of Christians. Among the various points to be considered in this connection is the efficacy of the blessings and the invocation of this title which are being given in various places, and especially in the sanctuary in Turin dedicated to her.

But in order that such blessings may be stable and regulated according to the spirit of the Church, Fr. John Bosco, Rector of the above-mentioned sanctuary and the arch-confraternity established there, humbly prays that the enclosed formula be given your kind consideration, examined, modified, and where necessary corrected, so that it may be used to give the so-called Blessing of Mary Help of Christians, especially in the sanctuary dedicated to her here in Turin. There is a continual throng of people here asking for the blessing, and it bears obvious fruit in assisting them in both their spiritual and material needs.

The words of the formula are a collection of ejaculations already in use and approved by the Church in the liturgy. They are gathered here for the greater glory of God and of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Turin, 10 March 1878, Fr. John Bosco. (MB,13,489)

The formula of the blessing was approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on 18 May 1878.

4. Invitation to Make an Act of Entrustment of our Communities to Mary Help of Christians

In keeping with our Salesian tradition, I would like to invite all the confreres of the province to make a prayer of solemn act of entrustment of our communities to Mary Help of Christians on **24 September 2018**, the day traditionally set aside for honouring the Virgin Mary under the title of Help of Christians. It can be carried out in the following manner:

a) Celebration of the special Mass in honour of Mary Help of Christians.

b) Prayer of solemn act of entrustment to Mary Help of Christians after the Gospel reading (*see below the text of the prayer*).

c) Imparting of the blessing of Mary Help Christians at the end of the Mass.

Through these acts of devotion, we would like to place the entire province, all our communities, all our confreres, all those in formation, all the aged and the sick, all our apostolic works, all our collaborators in mission, and all the people entrusted to our care under the mantle of Mary Help of Christians, so that she may guide us in our works, protect us from dangers, and help us to grow in our vocation and in holiness.

Don Bosco assures us that the Salesian vocation cannot be explained either in its birth or in its development without the continual and maternal guidance of Mary. The act of entrustment that we will be making will invite us to renew the Marian dimension of our Salesian vocation. It will provide us with an opportunity to examine our convictions about the Virgin Mary and verify the quality of our devotion to her because without a healthy Marian devotion our spirituality would suffer in its vigour and fruitfulness. But a convinced Marian devotion will give freshness to our Salesian vocation.

*Have true confidence
in our Lady
and you will see
what miracles are.*
- Don Bosco



The act of entrustment will also help our communities to become witnesses to Marian devotion and make our apostolic works more fruitful, producing even “miracles”. We will experience our Lady’s presence in our houses, and we will plan and carry out our various apostolic activities in dialogue with her and under her guidance and protection. In this way Mary will become a person living and acting among us. With her maternal goodness she will teach us a way in which we can best approach those for whom we work.

5. Mary Help of Christians as the “Madonna for Times of Trouble”

The title Help of Christians indicates a Marian dimension that is specifically relevant in difficult times. Don Bosco often spoke of his Madonna as protectress of Christian people, conqueror of the devil, victor over heresy, help of the Church in difficulty, bastion of the Pope and the Bishops tormented by the forces of evil. Once he said to Don Cagliero: “The Madonna wishes us to honour her under the title of Help of Christians; the times are so sad that we have real need of the most holy Virgin’s assistance in preserving and defending the Christian faith.”

Mary Immaculate (ecclesial symbol of the woman crushing the serpent’s head), and Help of Christians (victory over the enemies of the church) is known as “Madonna for Times of Trouble”, “the undefeated and invincible warrior” and “the Virgin responsible for all the victories of the Church”. The present difficulties which the Church in India faces also invite us for a relaunching of the devotion to Mary Help of Christians.

Don Bosco assures us in his Spiritual Testament: “The Blessed Virgin will certainly continue to protect our Congregation and our salesian works if we maintain our trust in her and promote devotion to her.” (“Spiritual Testament”, 270). I invite all the Rectors and those In-charge of houses, and each confrere, to make the act of entrustment to Mary Help of Christians a memorable spiritual event and not just the fulfilment of an obligation. Though it is meant primarily for the all the professed members of the province, novices, pre-novices and aspirants, it will be good if our close collaborators in mission can also be invited to participate in it. However, I leave this to each community to decide.

6. Prayer for the act of entrustment of our communities to Mary Help of Christians

(Adapted from the Prayer for the Solemn Act entrustment of the Salesian Congregation to Mary Help of Christians, 14 January 1984, Invocation to Our Lady composed by Don Bosco and other prayers to Our Lady)

Mary Help of Christians, and Mother of the Church, we, the sons of Don Bosco of this community gathered in front of your holy image, entrust ourselves today to your motherly intercession.

We place in your care our pledge to be faithful to the charism of Don Bosco, and the Constitutions and Regulations. We entrust to you our communities and institutions, our apostolic works on behalf of youth and common people, the challenging task of educating and evangelizing the young, the heavy responsibility of formation, the labour and fatigue of our missionaries and catechists, the sacrifice and dedication of our teachers, the hidden service of the non-teaching staff, volunteers, friends, benefactors, and well-wishers, the immense apostolic field of integral human development, of social communication, of vocational training, and the delicate task of animation of those entrusted to our pastoral care and our collaborators in mission and the Salesian Family.

Keep us O Mother under your mantle, which is a shelter, a refuge and a place of security. Guard and protect us from all dangers, calamities and disasters, conflicts and violence, accidents and misfortunes, and from all the snares of the enemy, physical and moral. Bless and strengthen our every desire to do good; give new life and nourishment to faith; sustain and enlighten hope; awaken and animate charity; and guide us all on the path to holiness.

Accept, we beg you O Help of Christians, this filial Act of Entrustment with the benevolence of a Mother, and intercede for us with your Son.

Mary Help of Christians, pray for us. Amen.

7. Prayer for the Restoration of Health to Fr P. M Joseph

Prayer for the restoration of health is part of the Church's experience in every age. Jesus healed many through miracles so that miraculous healings characterized his public ministry. "Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness" (Mt 9:35). Through this circular letter I am requesting the prayers of all the confreres, all those in formation and all the friends and well-wishers of Fr. Joseph Peringalathu (PM) to pray for his healing through the intercession of Fr. Raphael Paliakara, Fr. Andres Kindo and Bro. Shinu Valliparambil, our three confreres who laid down their lives to save the lives of the novices at Ngarian on 15 May 2001.

As many of you are aware, the health condition of Fr. PM Joseph deteriorated in January 2018 and he was taken to Caritas Hospital, Kottayam, Kerala, for treatment. In March his situation aggravated and the doctors advised him to do dialysis. After the treatment in Kerala, on 10 July Fr. PM Joseph came to Imphal and since then he has been receiving dialysis from the CMC hospital, Imphal. So far he has received 20 dialysis. Medical science has no cure for his illness except dialysis, and in his case, a kidney transplantation is not recommended. Fr. PM Joseph is also suffering from high diabetes.

Fr PM Joseph has been a frontline missionary, parish priest, rector, formator, novice master and provincial council member for many years. He has also done a specialisation in Salesian Spirituality from Rome. Right now he spends his time in prayer in the community of Don Bosco Chingmeirong, Imphal, and is undergoing dialysis twice a week. At this juncture he needs our prayerful support and closeness in a special way. Our prayer for him carried out with great faith in the Lord can grant him the gift of complete healing because nothing is impossible for God: "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with

God" (Mk 10:27). The prayer that we say will also be a sign of our love, affection, appreciation for him and above all an act of great charity.

We are circulating a prayer asking healing from the Lord for Fr. PM Joseph through the intercession of the above said three slain confreres. The prayer is granted ecclesiastical approval by Archbishop Dominic Lumon DD of Imphal, and we are grateful to his grace for his gesture of kindness. I ask all our communities to start reciting this prayer from 2 September 2018 onwards, preferably before the close of the daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. *(The text of the prayer is attached: you may make copies of the same for use in your communities as per need. Eventually we will be printing the prayer for wider circulation).*

8. Teachers' day

5 September is a day set aside to recognize the importance of teachers and appreciate their sacrifice in order to educate the young generation. A good teacher inspires others with his or her life and motivates the students to seek knowledge, live by the truth and strive after virtue. Happy teachers' day to all.

9. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

On 8 September, the Church celebrates the nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the child of Saints Joachim and Anne. The traditional date of the feast, 8 September, falls exactly nine months after the feast of the immaculate conception of Mary. Her birth was also a fitting prelude to the birth of Jesus Christ. I wish all of you a very happy feast of the Nativity of Our Lady.

10. Salesian Commemoration: Spanish Martyrs

On 22 September we remember Blessed Joseph Calasanz Marques, Enrico Saiz Aparicio, priest and 93 companions, martyrs. On 18 July 1936 the civil war broke out in Spain, accompanied at times by religious persecution. Laity, religious and priests were imprisoned and killed for their religious faith; among these 95 members of the Salesian Family were: 39 priests, 22 clerics, 24 brothers, 2 Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, 4 Salesians-Cooperators, 3 Salesian aspirants and one lay helper. All of them gave their lives for their faith in Christ between July 1936 and April 1938. They died giving an example of fidelity to their Christian faith and their Salesian vocation, trusting in God and forgiving their killers. They were beatified on Sunday 28 October 2007.

INFORMATION and UPDATES

Flood Relief

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all our confreres, staff, parishioners, students, boarders, hostellers and all the well-wishers who have generously contributed towards the flood relief activities in South India and particularly in Kerala. I extend my sincere thanks also to everyone who has prayed for the flood victims. May the good Lord bless their generosity and keep them safe from all dangers. I am enclosing a list of the contributors along with this circular. We have collected so far ₹ 15,06,494.00 and the amount has been transferred to BREADS, the developmental agency of the Salesian Province of Bangalore. Those who wish to contribute still can do so and the amount will be transferred to Bangalore Province at a later stage.

New Appointments

I am making a few changes in the portfolios of the confreres at Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre (DBVTC), Dimapur:

Fr. Devasia Rajesh – Rector (DBVTC)

Fr. Maippan Paul – Administrator, In-charge of Welding, Carpentry, Motor Mechanics, Fishery and Farm (DBVTC)

Fr. Thekeparampil Sebastian (TP) – Driving School (DBVTC)

Some new appointments:

Fr. Kamei Jiangamlung Philip – Vocation Promoter and Councillor of Rua Home, Jorhat (Temporary Assignment)

Fr. Kapani Deli David – Assistant Priest of Paglam (Temporary Assignment)

Fr. Kaniyampady Jose – Assistant priest and explore Youth Pastoral Ministry possible at Don Bosco Hijuguri area.

Prayer for the Provincial Chapter and General Chapter

Some of our communities have already begun to say the prayer which was given at the end of the letter convoking the next Provincial Chapter. I am sending to each community the prayer prepared by the Rector Major for the General Chapter, which is to be said also for the Provincial Chapter. You can pray it either during the Morning Prayer or during the Vespers. The prayer card for each confrere is enclosed in the circular letter. We could start praying for the chapter from today and continue till the General Chapter is over in 2020.

New Provincial of FMA ING and INS

Along with all the confreres of the Province, I would like to congratulate Sr. Alphonsa Kurisingal FMA as she takes up the leadership of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians of Guwahati Province as provincial. Two of our provincial councillors, namely, Fr. Kottarathil Mathai (CD) and Fr. Selvaraj Stanislaus were present at her installation in Guwahati. We pray that the Lord may assist and direct the provincial in her new role as the leader and animator of the Province. A word of appreciation and thanks to Sr. Elizabeth George FMA, who has completed her six years of service as provincial. While we thank and appreciate her leadership and the collaboration in our mission, we also wish her God's blessings in carrying out her responsibility as the new provincial of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians of Shillong province.

Recollection of the Practical Trainee Brothers

The recollection and meeting of the brothers in practical training and the student brothers were held at Don Bosco Provincial House, Dimapur on 24-25 August 2018. The recollection talk on the theme of the 28th General Chapter was given by Fr. T.J Francis on 24 August evening, and the following day morning. The rest of the time both Fr. Provincial and Fr. Vice Provincial interacted with the brothers and reminded them of the importance and the necessity of being true Salesian assistants following the spirit of the Preventive System.

Missionary Course

Three of our confreres, namely, Fr. T.P Sebastian, Fr. Jose Palely and Fr. Tinglung Francis will be going for the missionary course in Shillong and the pilgrimage to Holy Land from 1 September to 4 October 2018. We wish them a fruitful and enriching experience of knowing, witnessing and living Jesus, the master and saviour of our religious vocation.

Mission Ad Gentes

Cl. Panmei Anthony has left our Province to join the Central Province of Italy (ICC) as a missionary. We had a short send-off programme for him in the Provincial House on 28 August 2018. We wish him God's abundant blessings.

Provincial Council Meetings

The Provincial Council Meetings are held every month as indicated in the annual planner of the Province as far as possible. Your letters to the Provincial Council must reach much in advance as some of the letters require in depth study. Certain permissions require attentive study of the requests in the management

committee of the School/College/NGO/Parish Council. The request for fee raise must be accompanied by the salary list worked out, the salary scale, the budget of the house. etc. All the requests must come through the house council and the hard copy must reach in time for the discussion in the Provincial Council. In case the letters of request reach me late, then they will be taken up only in the meeting of the following month. Hence please make it a point to make the letters reach me at least three days prior to the meeting.

Spiritual Retreats

This year we have three spiritual retreats preached by Fr. Joe Boenzi SDB. He is an excellent preacher on Salesian themes. As it was decided earlier, this year "Salesianity" will be the theme of the retreats. I would encourage all to participate in any one of the retreats. The rectors and the in-charges are requested to give the names of confreres of each community to the Vice Provincial for the retreat. Let me quote here Art.72 of our Regulations: "...Every year the members will make a retreat for six days in the manner laid down by the provincial chapter, which they will conclude with the renewal of the commitment assumed at religious profession." All are expected to make the retreat!

Forth Coming Programmes

19 Sep to 25 Sept Retreat 1
25 and 26 Provincial Council meeting
26 Sept to 02 Oct Retreat 2
30 Sept Statistics of Degree and PG to reach Fr. Vice Provincial
04 Oct to 10 Oct Retreat 3

PRAYERS REQUESTED

Some of our confreres are sick and under medication. Let us continue to pray for them: Fr. V.M Joseph (in Kerala for treatment and recuperation), Fr P.K Mathew (in Kerala for treatment and recuperation) and Bro. Benarius Topno (in Provincial House undergoing physiotherapy and medication), Fr. Elow Lawrence is recuperating after his operation. There are also the relations of some of our confreres who are not well and request our prayers – the mother of Cl. Johns George is hospitalized and seriously ill.

CONCLUSION

Don Bosco passionately promoted devotion to Mary Help of Christians as his works for youth in Italy and Europe expanded. The Basilica of Mary Help of Christians at Valdocco, Turin, is an example of Don Bosco's filial devotion to Mary Help of Christians. He constructed this magnificent Basilica with just eight pennies in his hand! Don Bosco attributed everything to Our Lady. The reminiscent words of our father reverberate here: "I have put up nothing of my own. Mary has built herself a house. Every stone, every decoration represents a grace."

Art. 92 of our Constitutions invites us to "develop a strong filial devotion to her. We recite the rosary each day and celebrate her feasts to encourage a more convinced and personal imitation". Let us not forget and mitigate our devotion to Our Blessed Mother.

Imploring God's grace and protection on all the confreres and communities,

Yours in Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco,



Fr Jose Kuruvachira SDB
(Provincial)



Programme for the Month of September 2018

Date	Day	Province Programme	Fr. Provincial's	Fr. Vice Provincial's	Fr. Economer's
1	Sat		Siloam Salesian Family meet	Salesian College	Mintong
2	Sun	22 nd Sunday of Ordinary Time	Siloam Salesian Family meet	Salesian College	Doom Dooma
3	Mon		Siloam SPCSA	Salesian College	Dibrugarh> Amguri
4	Tue	+ Fr. Louis Tirkey (2015)	Shillong SHC Curatorium	Salesian College	Jorhat > Golaghat
5	Wed	St. Teresa of Calcutta: International Day of Charity, Teachers' Day	Shillong	Salesian College	Dimapur
6	Thu	+ Fr. Philip Kokkapallil (2005)	Shillong > Guwahati	Salesian College	Dimapur
7	Fri	First Friday	Guwahati	Dimapur	Dimapur
8	Sat	Birthday of the Bl. Virgin Mary	Guwahati CRI regional	Dibrugarh	Shajouba
9	Sun	23 rd Sunday of Ordinary Time	Guwahati CRI regional	Wakro	Mao
10	Mon		Guwahati CRI - Pastoral Conference	Amguri	Kohima
11	Tue	Mission Day	Guwahati Pastoral Conference	Jorhat	Dimapur
12	Wed	Holy Name of Mary	Guwahati Pastoral conference	Sirajuli	Dimapur
13	Thu		Dergaon Don Bosco	Dimapur	Dimapur
14	Fri	Exaltation of the Cross	Golaghat Parish and College	Dimapur	Dimapur
15	Sat	Our Lady of Sorrows	Rangajan	Dimapur	Dimapur
16	Sun	24 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
17	Mon		Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
18	Tue		Dimapur Youth Pastoral Commission meet	Dimapur	Dimapur
19	Wed	Retreat - 1(19-25) by Fr. Joe Boenzi SDB at DBIDL from 6.00 pm	Dimapur retreat 1	Dimapur	Retreat
20	Thu	+ Fr. Devasia Kollenkunnel (2004) Retreat - 1	Dimapur retreat	Dimapur	Retreat
21	Fri	Mathew: Ap and Evangelist - Feast, Retreat - 1	Dimapur retreat	Dimapur	Retreat
22	Sat	Bl. Joseph Calasanz & Martyrs, Retreat - 1	Dimapur retreat	Novitiate	Retreat
23	Sun	25 th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Retreat - 1	Dimapur retreat	Novitiate	Retreat
24	Mon	MHC, Retreat - 1	Dimapur retreat	Novitiate	Retreat
25	Tue	PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING (25-26), Retreat - 1 ends at 8.30 am	Dimapur Council meeting	Dimapur	Council Meeting
26	Wed	PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING, Retreat - 2(26-2) by Fr. Joe Boenzi SDB at DBIDL from 6.00 pm	Dimapur Council meeting, retreat 2	Dimapur	Council Meeting
27	Thu	St. Vincent de Paul, , Retreat - 2	Dimapur retreat	Novitiate	Dimapur
28	Fri	Retreat -2	Dimapur retreat	Novitiate	Dimapur
29	Sat	Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Retreat - 2	Dimapur retreat	Novitiate	Dimapur
30	Sun	26 th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Don Bosco, Statistics of Degree and PG to reach Vice Provincial, Retreat - 2	Dimapur retreat	Novitiate	Dimapur