



Province of
St. Francis De Sales

Provincial Circular

Salesian Province of Dimapur - IND

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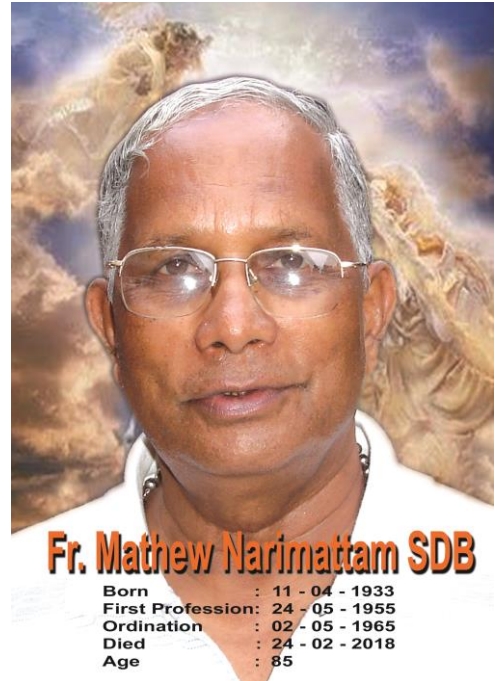


CIR/NG/64/2018

7 March 2018

MY DEAR CONFRERES,

And yet again the Lord has called to Himself another Salesian from our Province! "The LORD has given, and the LORD has taken away! May the name of the LORD be praised" (Job. 1:21). We have now 32 of our confreres with Him. Each time a confrere is called to the Lord, I am reminded very powerfully, of the article 54 of our Constitutions: "Death for the Salesians is made bright by the hope of entering into the joy of the Lord, and when it happens that a Salesian dies working for souls, the Congregation has won a great triumph. The memory of the departed confreres unites, 'in a love that will not pass away', those who are still pilgrims with those who are already resting in Christ." Due to the on-going SPCSA meeting here at Kolkata, I could not present myself for the funeral of Fr. Mathew Narimattam. I knew him to be a zealous missionary who tried every means to evangelize the people of Assam plains. Many, both religious and lay people, admired his audacity in proclaiming Christ to the World. Let us with determination and love for the people, live the same values who are 'still pilgrims' here on earth. I am giving below the funeral oration of Fr. Perianayagam John Bosco, the Vice Provincial and Fr. Chittisery Joseph who spoke on behalf of the Province.



I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE – HOMILY BY FR. VICE PROVINCIAL

Your Lordships Most Rev. Joseph Aind, bishop of Dibrugarh, Most Rev. John Thomas, bishop of Itanagar, dear fathers, sisters, brothers, family members, Salesian co-operators, Don Bosco Alumni, faithful who have come from various parishes, Friends and well-wishers in Jesus Christ, at the outset I extend my condolences to the bereaved family members of Fr. Mathew especially who are present with us today.

As we celebrate this requiem mass for our beloved Fr Narimattam Mathew, who is fondly known as NAMA, we think and reflect on the reality of death, God's mercy and we pray for all the departed Salesians of our province and in particular Fr. Narimattam Mathew who left us for his eternal reward on 24 February 2018. The final pilgrimage of Fr. Mathew here on earth has come to an end.



Dear brothers and sisters, we have gathered today around the mortal remains of Fr. Narimattam Mathew not so much to talk about him but rather to pray for him. We know that prayer is powerful and we believe that we can help the departed by praying for them. The best gift we can now give to Fr. Mathew is to pray for him.

Friends, we are indeed saddened by the fact that God has visited our province once more this year through the death of our beloved Fr. Mathew. It is a known fact that death is a separation of body and soul which is something that human beings do not want to look into or think about. But our Christian faith tells us that faith is all about life and not death. Thus we are made not for death but for life, not to have temporary life, but to live permanently with God. This is what makes us to understand what St. Paul would say, 'we are believing in the living God'. Despite the sadness of death, there is also the promise of future glory. We are made to live with God, to share his glory and divinity. Because of this we believe with all our hearts and mind, death is only a temporary parting. In the preface for the Mass for the dead the church prays: "Indeed for your faithful Lord, life is changed, not ended, and when this earthly dwelling turns to dust, an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven."

Fr. Mathew was born in the family of Mathan Narimattam and Mary Narimattam on 9 April 1933 at **Urulikunnam**, in the diocese of Palai, Kerala. After completing his novitiate in Yercaud, Tamil Nadu, he did his philosophical studies in Sonada, West Bengal and later he made his perpetual profession at Mawlai, Shillong on 20 May 1961.



His theological studies were done at Sacred Heart College Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu. He was ordained a Salesian priest on 2nd May 1965.

When we are faced with the reality of death, especially someone close to us, there are lot of questions but we do not find easy or correct answers or explanations to all our questions regarding Death. Looking at the life of Fr. Narimattam Mathew we could say that he has been an educator and an evangelizer all through his life. As a pastor and educator he has ministered to the people in the following places:

From **1965 to 1969** as an Assistant Parish Priest at Dhekiajuli,
From **1969 to 1975** he was the parish priest of Dibrugarh Cathedral
From **1975 to 1980** he was the parish priest and Rector of Doom Dooma
From **1980 to 1986** he was the Rector of Don Bosco School Dibrugarh
From **1986 to 1989** he was fully dedicated to the Assamese Apostolate
From **1989 to 1992** he was the Assistant parish priest of Margherita
From **1992 to 1995** he was the Parish Priest and Rector of Doom Dooma for the 2nd time
From **1995 to 2005** he was the Headmaster and In-charge of Don Bosco, Dergaon
From **2005 to 2007** he was in-charge of Evening School at Dibrugarh
From **2007 to 2011** he was Asst. PP, Vice Rector and the administrator of DB Harmuttu
From **2011 to 2016** he was the counsellor and teacher in DBHSS Itanagar
For a short while he was shifted to DB Doimukh as an Assistant parish priest
Due to his ill health on **5 August 2016** he was transferred to DBHSS Dimapur.

Out of the 53 years of Salesian Priesthood, for 29 years, he dedicated himself catering to the spiritual needs of the people who were entrusted to his care in various parishes especially in Assam. His profound love for the people made him learn the languages and customs of the people of Assam, write and translate many books, compose songs and hymns in their languages.

As an educator he has been in the school ministry nearly for 24 years. Thousands of people have benefitted from his pastoral and educative ministry. Certainly through his instrumentality they all received abundant blessings of God. His earthly life of 85 years was a long life of faithful service to the Lord with full of resilience and kindness. The priestly ministry of every priest brings him closer to the people. As a pastor, Fr. Mathew must have assisted many people - administering sacraments of baptism, anointing of the sick and sacrament of reconciliation. He has also accompanied men and women in their final moments of physical weakness and then into death. As he accompanied many in their life journey to the Promised Land, today we are here to accompany him in his spiritual journey to eternity.

The raising of Lazarus in today's gospel is the last of Jesus' miracles. This is found only in the Gospel of John and not in the synoptic gospels. It is also the clearest sign of who he is—the Son of God, the Promised Messiah, the Savior of the world.

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead physically in his body. He had been dead for four days. Jesus had previously raised the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:41-42,49-56) and the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17) and in the Old Testament Elijah and Elisha raised people from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:17-37). But nowhere is there an instance of someone being raised from the dead after four days. This is the crowning miracle of Jesus' ministry. In fact, in John's Gospel it becomes the main reason leading to Jesus' death. (John 11:45-53) If Jesus can restore a body that had been in the tomb for four



days and had begun to decompose he can certainly mend the brokenness and wounds of our lives. Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me, even if he dies will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)

Jesus asks the same question to us also, do you believe that I am the resurrection and the life? Do you believe that I can mend all the brokenness and wounds of your life? Do you believe that I not only offer you resurrection in the future but also the fullness of life now in the present?"

Finally, on behalf of Rev. Fr. Nestor Guria, the provincial and the Salesian Province of Dimapur, I would like to thank our beloved bishops: Bishop John Thomas of Itanagar and Bishop Joseph Aind, for their loving concern shown by undertaking strenuous journey to be present for the funeral mass and to pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. Mathew. We thank all the priests (Priests from various dioceses), religious and laity who are present today for their valuable prayers. I also take this occasion to thank all the confreres from our houses, representatives from various religious communities, brothers, sisters, relatives, near and dear ones of Fr. Mathew (Mr. Chako, Mrs. Marykutty, Jose, Suresh and Sr. Deepa Nirmala).

A big thank you to the community of Don Bosco – Dimapur (Fr. Rector and the community members) for the wonderful manner they looked after him for one and half years, and the personal care shown to Fr. Mathew during his illness. We are grateful to them in a special way for making all the arrangements when he was admitted in the zion hospital, and also after his death. We can never forget their generous and brotherly care shown to Fr. Mathew. Thank you dear fathers.

We are also grateful to the sisters of Holy Redeemer hospital for looking after Fr. Mathew during his illness, and the Doctors and nurses of Zion hospital for their special attention shown during his illness. We gratefully acknowledge the Salesian College community members for all the arrangements made for today's funeral mass.

Let us continue our Lenten journey, may Our Lord Jesus Christ, 'who is the resurrection and the Life' bless each one of us and take us up to heaven when our earthly journey is complete.

THE PUREST AND KIND-HEARTED PERSON – THE FUNERAL MESSAGE FROM FR. CHITTISSERY JOSEPH, REPRESENTING THE CONFRERES OF THE PROVINCE OF DIMAPUR

In our province there are 8 confreres over 80. It was 9 with Fr. Narimattam. If we look at each of them, we can see that they were pioneers in the Lord's vineyard of the North East.

A pioneer will have certain traits like:

1. Learning a language
2. Starting a centre
3. Trying out new evangelization methods
4. Evangelizing through literature
5. Entering into the culture of a people

Fr Mathew had these traits. He mastered the Assamese language. He carried out pioneering works in the Dhekiajuli parish in Assam. He saw to the growth of a new Salesian presence in Dergaon from its very inception for 10 years.

He inculturated himself into the ethos of the Assamese people; in fact his autobiography is entitled '*He made Assam his home*'.

He wrote a catechism book. He wrote on the culture of the people: *My People* was on his work with the Adhivasis of Assam; *Valley in Blossom* was on the Assamese people. He taught people how to meditate and compiled a book of various methods of prayer. He entered into the feelings and minds of the people by visiting their homes and their centres of culture.



He has taught the faith, preached the gospel, baptised, heard confessions and reconciled souls with God in the sacrament of confession, fed souls with the Eucharistic food, blessed marriages, toured the villages and run schools.

His zeal and hard work were noticed by the superiors and as a young priest he was sent to Dhekiajuli parish as assistant and then to Dibrugarh cathedral parish as parish priest. In Doom Dooma he enhanced the catholic presence by getting land around the parish to settle the Catholics and called it *Maria Basti*.

He had the courage to try out new ways of reaching the hearts of the people. In Jorhat his idea of starting an ashram was supported by his close friend and batch-mate, archbishop Thomas Menampampil; in Dibrugarh he took to a simple style of transportation - by cycle, to visit homes and maximise contact with people and impart to them '*hanti, puhor, and jivon* - he gave it the name *hapuji* .

My personal acquaintance with him was in Jorhat, Dergaon and Dimapur.

At Jorhat I met him in his ashram where he displayed all his books and cassettes and other Assamese culture based books and articles. There he reached out to the local Assamese people.

It was at Dergaon, I lived with him for a year and saw first-hand his influence over the parents, students and teachers. When I succeeded him as the headmaster, I found I had been gifted with a wonderful school; I had a happy and memorable experience there, primarily due to the solid ground work done by Fr Mathew: the land was all walled up. There was no land dispute to worry about. I found the teaching and non-teaching staff very co-operative, in fact it was like a family - all because of the care and attention Fr Mathew gave to them individually.

One of the teachers writes: *his concern and love made me what I am today.*

Another writes; *he was the one who moulded me to be a teacher. He was a guru and father who always encouraged me to be positive.*

Yet another writes: *he taught me the power of prayer. He is an excellent guide.*

I found that the students there were the easiest to teach, as they had been given a spiritual orientation and they were disciplined. They liked to pray. They were very respectful, and touchingly affectionate. He composed the school anthem that the students sing even today.

One student writes about Fr Mathew: *You were like a second parent to us in our childhood. You nurtured and helped us in every aspect of our life, be it studies, sports, debates and other extra- curricular activities. Your guidance had a profound impact on whatever I am today.*

Another student wrote: *it is heart-breaking to know that Fr Mathew is no more. His death shocked the entire Dergaon town, and especially his students and the teachers of Don Bosco School. Fr Mathew was one of the purest and kind-hearted persons I have met in my early years. He made us take the first steps of our academic life. He guided us to be confident enough to conquer the world.*

Another student wrote: *Fr Mathew is the person who laid the foundation of not only Don Bosco high school Dergaon, but also laid the foundation of the future of hundreds of kids. It was more than a privilege for me and for many others to have had our early education under the shadow of this great man.*

The parents had a great admiration for Fr Mathew. It was well seen when in December of 2004, he was given the farewell at his transfer to Dibrugarh. Well placed parents and leaders of the Assamese community were not abashed to display their tearful emotions and lavishly express their gratitude to him for bringing the gift of the Don Bosco School to their community. In fact several of them accompanied him all the way to Dibrugarh.

Fr Mathew had a spiritual bent in all his ways. He loved squatting and meditating for long time. He easily spoke of God and prayer. He was affectionate in receiving people and extending hospitality to them.

In Dimapur I found him rather quiet. Perhaps he had been missing Assam. It had been the first time in his life that he found himself out of his beloved Assam and placed in Nagaland. Yet there were moments of mirth and laughter. He even sang an Assamese song at a confrere's birthday.



It is our human limitation that our vision of reality and especially of people is often narrow and often also biased. But the Good Lord sees things in its entirety, and no tear shed, no smile bestowed, no kind word uttered, no pains suffered uncomplainingly, no discomfort patiently put up with, no surge of love felt in the heart for Him, is ever overlooked or forgotten. We can be sure that the Lord will forgive the failings of Fr Mathew, and bless him abundantly for his long life of dedication to Him. We can rightly hope that the Good Lord will tell his dear servant, *"Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master."*

We shall keep on praying for Fr Mathew Narimattam, always recalling the good done through him while he was among us.

Adieu Fr Mathew, till we meet at Jesus' feet!

INFORMATION and UPDATES

Ordination to Diaconate: Three of our clerics **Cl. GONMEI Namridinang Henry**, **Cl. RANGLA John Jaitheireng** and **Cl. THAIMEI Meidunlung Johny** will be ordained deacons at Vyasapardi on 18 March 2018. Let us remember them in our prayers as they prepare to take up a new ministry in the Church and the congregation.

Congratulatoins: To **Sr. Rani George CCV**, who has been appointed as the Provincial of Carmelite Sisters of Charity, "Shradhaseri".

Meeting: Fr. Nebu Mathew, the Provincial Economist and Bro. Sunny, the Director of AIDA, will participate in the International Convention for Representatives of Development Offices in Nairobi, Kenya, from 23 April to 28 April, 2018.

REMINDERS

This is yet another reminder to the leaders of the communities and administrators to send the **Annual Budget** for the financial year 2018-2019 to the Provincial Economist by 15 March 2018.

Please send your **Annual Plan** of each house to the Provincial Secretary by 14 March 2018.

Kindly send your **Lenten Contribution** to the Rector Major through the Economist by mid April 2018.

Those applying for renewal of Religious Profession must submit their **applications** to the Provincial through one's Rector on a day fixed by him. The rectors are requested to send the applications along with the result of the house council's voting on the prescribed format to the Provincial Office by 12 April 2018.

As informed earlier the scheduled **meeting of Principals and Headmasters** at DBPH has been postponed.

Those who have not yet returned the filled **bio-data form** kindly send it at the earliest to the Province Secretary.

The Camporee in the province will be organised from 12 to 15 April 2018 at Don Bosco Hr. Sec. School, Dimapur.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY – March

Date	Name	Place	Year	Age	Anniversary
08 March	Fr. BIANCHI Peter	Imphal	2008	86	10 th
14 March	Fr. MUKALA George	Dimapur	2017	85	1 st
15 March	Fr. NEDUMALAL Scaria	Imphal	2012	73	6 th

CONDOLENCES

To Fr. Provincial and confreres of Guwahati Province at the death of **Fr. Joseph Pazhekadavan SDB**, 86 who died in a car accident on 7 February 2018.

To Fr. KS Joseph at the death of **Mr. Chacko KS**, 77, the elder brother of father, who passed away on 12 February 2018. He is the maternal uncle of Fr. Xavier Mattam SDB and paternal uncle of Fr. Roy Mathew SDB.

To Fr. Provincial and confreres of Guwahati Province at the death of **Fr. Anthony Marak (Abong) SDB**, 50 who died on 12 February 2018.

To Fr. Jeremias SDB, at the death of his father, **Mr. Theophil (Deben) Mosahary**, 82, who passed away on 27 February 2018.

Let us remember these departed ones in our prayers that the Good Lord may take them to their eternal reward soon and grant them beatific vision for which they longed for while they lived here on earth.

Conclusion

We are in the month of St. Joseph. Don Bosco had a special devotion to St. Joseph. We shall never know for certain why Don Bosco included St. Joseph among the patrons of the Congregation. We do know that he started 'St. Joseph's Sodality' in his oratories, in every church he built he had an altar dedicated to St. Joseph. So we can conclude that he loved St. Joseph and wanted his followers to do likewise. Don Bosco presented St. Joseph as a model and protector for the artisans and young workers. Let us cultivate this filial devotion to St. Joseph and spread devotion to St. Joseph in all our settings. The feast day of St. Joseph was celebrated in a fitting manner in his oratory. Don Bosco used to tell his boys and confreres: "I want all of you to put yourselves under St. Joseph's protection: if you pray earnestly to him, he will obtain any spiritual or temporal favour you need."

Wish you all a very happy feast of St. Joseph on 19 of this month.

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr. Nestor Guria, SDB
(Provincial)

Programme for the Month of March 2018

March 2018					
Date	Day	Province Programme	Fr. Provincial's	Fr. Vice Provincial's	Fr. Economer's
1	Thu		Kolkata SPCSA Council	Imphal	Dimapur>Kohima
2	Fri	First Friday	Imphal > Lamphel	Imphal	Kohima>Imphal
3	Sat	Manipur Regional Recollection and Meeting at DB Imphal at 9.00 am	Imphal (Regional recollection & meeting)	Imphal	Imphal
4	Sun	Third Sunday of Lent	Sechii Zubza Savio Home	Zubza	Zubza
5	Mon		Sechii Zubza Emmaus	Dimapur	Dimapur
6	Tue	Nagaland Regional Recollection and Meeting at DB Kohima	Kohima (Regional recollection & meeting)	Kohima	Kohima
7	Wed	Houses to submit Annual Plan	Dimapur B. Ed College (Team Visit)	Dimapur	B Ed College
8	Thu	✠ <i>Fr. Peter Bianchi (2008)</i>	Dimapur B. Ed College (Team Visit)	Dimapur	B Ed College
9	Fri	Recollection for PT Brothers at DBPH begins at 5.00 pm (9-10)	Dimapur (Recollection: PT Brothers)	Dimapur	
10	Sat	Recollection for PT Brothers, Last day to submit Annual Budget	Dimapur (Recollection: PT Brothers)	Dimapur	Doom Dooma
11	Sun	Fourth Sunday of Lent, Mission Day	Dimapur	Dimapur	Khobong
12	Mon		Dimapur	Dimapur	Rajanagar
13	Tue	Meeting of Youth Pastoral - Education and Culture, Education to Faith, Vocation and Groups and Movements at DBPH from 9 am	Dimapur	Dimapur	Wakro
14	Wed	✠ <i>Fr. Mukala George (2017)</i>		Guwahati	<i>Bordumsa</i>
15	Thu	✠ <i>Fr. Scaria Nedumala (2012)</i> , Meeting of Salesian Family, Mission, Social Communication and Finance at DBPH from 9 am	Dimapur	International Conference in Chennai	Dimapur
16	Fri		Dimapur	International Conference in Chennai	DBC Golaghat
17	Sat		Dimapur	International Conference in Chennai	
18	Sun	Fifth Sunday of Lent	Dimapur	Guwahati	
19	Mon	ST. JOSEPH , Patronal Feast: Imphal Archdiocese, Congregational Feast of Sisters of Destitute (SD), Institutional Feast : Doom Dooma, Mintong, Rajanagar, Shajouba, Mebo, Parish Feast : Doom Dooma	Dimapur	Dimapur	
20	Tue	Meeting of Youth Pastoral - Formation, Religious Discipline, Prison Ministry and Social Communication from 9.00 am	Dimapur	Kohima (Chrism Mass)	Kohima (Chrism Mass)
21	Wed	PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING (21)	Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
22	Thu		Maram DB College (Team Visit)	Maram	Maram
23	Fri	Meeting of DBTech and YaR from 9.00 am	Maram DB College	Maram	Maram
24	Sat	MHC , Month's mind of Fr. Narimattam Mathew	Dimapur		
25	Sun	Palm Sunday		Dimapur	
26	Mon				
27	Tue			Borduria	Longding
28	Wed			Borduria	Longding
29	Thu	Holy Thursday		Borduria	Longding
30	Fri	Good Friday		Borduria	Longding
31	Sat	Holy Saturday	Vigil Mass at DBIDL 10 pm	Borduria	Longding