



Province of  
St. Francis De Sales

# PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Salesian Province of Dimapur - IND

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**CIR-IND/JK/04/2018**

**My dear confreres,**

In the month of October, the Church contemplates her deepest identity as the Church in mission. The command "Go, proclaim the Gospel" was not given merely to the Apostles but is the responsibility of all who profess to be Christians. Pope Francis says that announcing the Gospel is a common task of all Christians because the call to mission is a call rooted in baptism and addressed to all the baptized. Therefore, every Christian is called to be a missionary through word, deed, prayer, and by working in collaboration with the Holy Spirit who is primary agent of mission. Since the Gospel message must be delivered to the whole world, missionary work is necessary in order that people may hear the Good News and be converted to Christ.

## **1. Missionary Month of October**

Every year the Church observes October as the missionary month. A great portion of humanity still does not know Jesus Christ, and for this reason, missionary evangelisation continues to be most urgent in our world. The purpose of the Missionary Month is to foster increased awareness of our vocation as missionaries and engage more actively in mission *ad gentes* and provide missionary education to the people entrusted to our care in our schools, colleges, parishes, oratories, youth centres, formation houses and other settings where we carry out our apostolic works. October is also a special month of prayer for the missions and missionaries.

This year, on 21 October we celebrate the World Mission Sunday. On 1 October the Church commemorates St. Teresa of the Child Jesus (1873-1897), the patroness of the missions. This young saint, who died at the age of 24, never went out of the convent to preach the Gospel and yet she was declared patron saint of the missions because she lived her life as a cloistered Carmelite nun with an intense apostolic fervour.

## **2. Extraordinary Missionary Month in October 2019**

Next year (2019), as desired by Pope Francis, the entire month of October will be celebrated as the Extraordinary Missionary Month (Francis 22.10.2017). This is because, on 30 November 2019, the Church will celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the promulgation of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV. Through that letter, a century ago, the Pope sought to give new impetus to the missionary task of proclaiming the Gospel. It is hoped that the centenary of the letter *Maximum illud* will revive the missionary spirit of the Church. Pope Francis wishes that the Missionary Month of 2018 should serve as a *preparation* for the Extraordinary Missionary Month of 2019.

## **3. Centenary of the Arrival of the Salesian Missionaries in Northeast India**

The Missionary Month of October is a suitable occasion to introduce the topic of the centenary of the arrival of the Salesian missionaries in Northeast India (1922-2022). The centenary celebrations must become a God-given opportunity for us to be more deeply aware of the importance of missionary work as part of the charismatic identity of our congregation, and flows from the programme of life expressed in the motto of Don Bosco *Da mihi animas, cetera tolle* (C.4).

### **3.1. Arrival of the First Salesian Missionaries in Shillong in 1922**

When Don Paul Albera was the Rector Major (1910-1922), the Holy See was pressing the Salesians to

take up the vast mission of Assam, left uncared for after the departure of the Salvatorian missionaries (Society of the Divine Saviour) due to World War I. On 13 January 1922, the first group of 11 Salesians (6 priests and 5 brothers), with Fr. Louis Mathias as leader, reached Shillong, the then capital of Assam. From that small beginning, the Salesian congregation experienced a phenomenal growth in Northeast India. Today, after 96 years, we have in the region three Salesian provinces (ING in 1959, IND in 1981 and INS in 2012).

### **3.2. Salesian Missionaries from Abroad**

From 1922 until World War II there was a constant flow of Salesian missionaries from abroad, the majority of them from Europe, especially Italy, and also some from Australia and the Americas. However, after the declaration of the independence of India in 1947 it became progressively more difficult for foreign missionaries to enter India, and in 1966 the government put a stop to it altogether. Today practically all the Salesians working in Northeast India are Indians, which is a sign of the inculturation of the Salesian charism in the region.

### **3.3. Centenary Celebrations as a Moment of Gratitude**

The first centenary of the Salesian missions of Northeast India will truly be a gift of God to the Church and the congregation. It is an occasion to express our gratitude to all those who have been instrumental in the wonderful development of the congregation in the region. The vibrant Salesian work in Northeast India is the fruit of the hard work and sacrifice of numerous missionaries. To all of them, of different cultures and nationalities, we need to express our gratitude.

### **3.4. Salesian Mission Strategy**

From the very beginning, missionary strategy adopted by the Salesians was the education of children and young people to arrive at the evangelisation of the local people. For this purpose, they established formal schools, technical schools, agricultural schools, university colleges, boarding houses, hostels, orphanages, daily and festive oratories and youth centres. In the early years of the mission, schools in villages were envisaged as “entry tickets” for mission *ad gentes* in the villages.

The Salesians were actively involved in various forms of integral human developmental programmes for the poor and the marginalised people. Health care was seen as the “fifth gospel” of the missionary. The apostolate of social communication took such forms as translation of the Bible, catechism books, history of the Church, lives of saints, Catholic prayers, hymns, publication of textbooks for schools, bulletins and magazines, use of music, theatre, drama and audio visuals. The missionaries took special care to preserve the local cultures through the development of local languages and inculturation. Through these means the missionaries were able to evangelise and inculturate Christian values in the context of Northeast India.

Over the years, in missionary work, the Salesians were assisted by the different members of the Salesian Family: the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA), the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC), the Sisters of Mary Immaculate (SMI), the Visitation Sisters of Don Bosco (VSDB), the Disciples, the Salesian Co-operators and the Past Pupils.

A special mention must be made of the intrepid groups of lay catechists found all over the missions, even in the most remote villages and those most difficult of access. These humble catechists, though only poorly instructed and often poorly paid, were the extended hands of the missionaries through their work of mission *ad gentes* and simple catechesis.

The role played by children and young boys and girls in the evangelisation of the region was so important that some missionaries called them “small apostles”. Thus our pioneer Salesians have proved that even

children and young people can be missionaries. Here we are reminded of the words of Pope Francis to young people in his message for World Mission Sunday 2018: "You too, young friends, by your baptism have become living members of the Church; together we have received the mission to bring the Gospel to everyone" (Francis, 20.5.2018).

Another characteristic of the missionary work in Northeast India was the formation of missionaries *in loco* where they could begin their novitiate and spend their formative years in the places of their future apostolate, learning the language, customs and traditions of the local people they would have to serve. Combined with this option for young missionaries from abroad, there was also the effort from the outset to find indigenous vocations, which in those days, was a very courageous option, and proved to be a wise and far-sighted vocation strategy.

We Salesians built up our mission in Northeast India on the foundations laid by the Foreign Missionaries of Paris (MEP), Foreign Missionaries of Milan (PIME), Society of the Divine Saviour (Salvatorians), Society of Jesus (SJ), Christian Brothers of Ireland, Sisters of Loreto, Sisters of *Dame di Nostra Signora delle Missioni* and others. Over the years we have received help and co-operation from numerous religious congregations of men and women who came to render their service to the young Church in Northeast India, from the diocesan clergy, bishops of the region, benefactors in India and abroad, civil authorities, political leaders and countless simple people from all walks of life. The celebration of the centenary of the arrival of the Salesian missionaries in Northeast should be for us an occasion to remember all these people with gratitude and appreciation.

### **3.5. The Extraordinary Figure of Mgr. Louis Mathias**

As we are getting ready for the centenary of the Salesian Missions in Northeast India we need to pay homage to a great Salesian and a staunch son of Don Bosco: Fr. (later bishop) Louis Mathias (1887-1965), the leader of the first missionary expedition to Northeast India. His missionary zeal, enthusiasm, intelligence, leadership, administrative skill, vision and resourcefulness were responsible for the planting and development of the Salesian charism in Northeast India. He was the Apostolic Administrator of the Assam mission, the first provincial of Salesian India, and the first bishop of Shillong, and later of Madras.

The Salesian missionaries gave the best of themselves to the Church and the people of Northeast India, especially the youth and ordinary people. They were daring, creative, patient and persevering in their efforts. What made them endearing to the people, in spite of their shortcomings and limitations, was their simplicity of life, humanity, adaptability, love and concern for the poor and the marginalised with a special predilection for the young, and the efforts they made for their integral human development.

### **3.6. Holiness of many Valiant Salesian Missionaries**

A real implanting of charism is the fruit of holiness. Pope John Paul II said in *Redemptoris Missio* that a true missionary is the saint: "A missionary is really such only if he commits himself to the way of holiness" (RM90). In the past hundred years, Northeast India has received a great deal through the valiant missionaries who were men of undoubted holiness. Here I want to recall three Salesians who took seriously their vocation to be missionaries and their calling to holiness. They are venerable Bishop Stephen Ferrando, servant of God Bishop Orestes Marengo, and Servant of God Fr. Constantine Vendrame. I am sure that, in the course of time, many more will be added to this list.

### **3.7. Christ has Still to be Proclaimed**

Mission does not mean simply activities, initiatives, works, material goods and structures. Much has been achieved in the past hundred years because of the missionary zeal of the pioneer Salesians and those who came after them. But it can happen that with the passage of time we can slowly lose the missionary

zeal and get institutionalised. If this happens, it will be very unfortunate for Northeast India and the Salesian congregation. Christ has still to be proclaimed, the Gospel to be preached and the Church and the Salesian charism to be planted in many more places and the hearts of people who are waiting for the Good News! There is still much work to be done! We cannot just rest on the laurels of what others have done in the past and relax. We should take responsibility for the missions and forge ahead. For this, we need to re-ignite in us the flame of missionary zeal, if we have lost it. Without this flame in our hearts, we will be just numbers, lukewarm, given to caprice, vagary and vices, and will miss the aim of our life.

Pope Francis reminds us that we need to respond to Jesus' perennial command to "go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15). Obeying this mandate of the Lord is not an option for a Christian much less for us Salesians for whom proclamation of the Gospel to those who have not yet received it (C.6) is part of our charismatic identity. Pope Francis tells us that renewal in mission requires a pastoral and missionary conversion, renewal of structures, overcoming every form of ecclesial introversion, self-referential retreat into comfort zones, pastoral pessimism and sterile nostalgia for the past (Francis 22.10.2017). All these are very valid reminders to us as we prepare ourselves for the centenary of the Salesian missions in Northeast India.

I hope that, adhering to the call of Pope Francis, all our communities will make the necessary effort to advance along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion and renewal of structures. Once our province was known as a missionary province (to a great extent even now it is so!). However, it appears that we are fast losing this identity. If it is true, it would necessarily call for a re-examination of our apostolic works, community pastoral plan, and formation programme, both initial and on-going. As a province we need to re-launch our missionary option, which in turn should be capable of transforming our personal life, communities and province. Pope John Paul II reminds us that missionary activity renews the Church, revitalises faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others (RM2).

### **3.8. Need to Prepare for the Salesian Centenary 2022**

There will be interprovincial collaboration between the three Salesian provinces of Shillong, Guwahati and Dimapur for the celebration of the centenary of the arrival of the first Salesians in Northeast India. However, as a province we need to have a concrete plan of our own for the celebration of the event. Since the time is short, through this circular letter, *I invite the confreres to make their suggestions as to how we can prepare ourselves well for the centenary celebrations of 2022*. Kindly make your suggestions reach me latest by 20 October 2018.

### **3.9. A Three-year Preparation for the Centenary 2022**

At the interprovincial level we will be having a three-year preparation for the centenary celebrations with three major themes: **Evangelisation and Catechesis** (2019), **Youth Pastoral Ministry and Education** (2020), and **Salesian Consecrated Life, Formation, and Salesian Family** (2021). The centenary celebrations proper will be in 2022, and the details of which will be worked out by the interprovincial centenary commission.

### **3.10. Community Planning for the Centenary 2022**

I will be appointing a commission ("Salesian Centenary Commission") at the province level to assist us in our preparation for the "Salesian Centenary", and the centenary celebration itself in 2022. *Latest by 15 December 2018 all the communities should have their plans ready for the three-year preparation for the centenary. Each community should do some preparation on a daily or weekly or fortnightly or monthly basis, as per your convenience, which should necessarily include also prayer as it is the soul of all missionary*

activity (Francis, 22.10.2017). A copy of the plan should reach Provincial Office latest by 20 December 2018. *The implementation of the same will be verified during my canonical visitation of the houses.*

#### **4. Conclusion**

In whatever plan we make for the celebration of the centenary, the emphasis should be on renewal at the personal, community and province levels, avoiding all forms of triumphalism and unnecessary show and ostentation. We should celebrate the centenary in humility and gratitude to God and all those people who have helped us to be what we are today in Northeast India as a congregation. The celebration should also help us to grow in our missionary zeal.

### **INFORMATION and UPDATES**

#### **Synod of Bishops on Youth**

As you are already aware, the Synod of Bishops on Youth scheduled from 3-28 October 2018 with theme **“Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment”** is of special interest to us Salesians. We shall pray for its success and fruitfulness.

#### **National Convention of Past Pupils of Don Bosco**

The 7<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Past Pupils of Don Bosco (PPDB) will be held at Tadar Taniang Hall, Don Bosco Youth Centre, Vivek Vihar, Itanagar from 15 to 18 November 2018. The Conference will be organized by the Past Pupils of Don Bosco, Dimapur Provincial Federation and hosted by PPDB, Itanagar Unit, under the able guidance of Rev. Fr. C. C. Jose SDB, the Unit Delegate, and Chief Engineer Kago Tabiyo, President of Itanagar Unit. The mega event will witness the participation of about 400 Don Bosco Past Pupils from 11 Provinces of Salesian India to discuss, interact and make resolutions and lines of actions on the theme: **“Past Pupils of Don Bosco Towards Nation Building”**.

#### **SPCSA Council in Dimapur**

The next Salesian Provincials' Conference of South Asia (SPCSA) will be held from 25 February to 1 March 2019 at Dimapur, Nagaland, which will include also SPCSA Assembly in which some 40 delegates are expected to take part.

#### **Rectors Major's Visit**

Our Rector Major Fr. Fernandez Artime Ángel, will visit our province from 10-13 September 2019. His visit will be a time of blessing and grace for all our confreres, communities, the Salesian Family and the vast movement of people who follow Don Bosc's charism. Let us pray for the success of his visit.

#### **Jubilee**

We are going to celebrate the golden jubilee of ordination of Fr. Ponnattil Mathew (PK), golden jubilee of profession of His Lordship Aind Joseph SDB, DD, Bishop of Dibrugarh, silver jubilee of ordination of Fr. Chazhisseril Stephen (AC), Fr. Tinglung Francis, Fr. Puthettupadavil Philip (PC), Fr. Pulinthanathumalayil Cyriac (PC) and Fr. Horo Kamil, and silver jubilee of profession of Fr. Lakra Rajesh and Bro. Vadakkevettuvhiyil Sunny Joseph. This year the jubilee celebrations will be held at Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Dimapur on 24 October 2018.

#### **Flood Relief**

I am giving below the updated list of the houses that contributed towards the Kerala flood relief fund. My sincere thanks to one and all. The Provincial of Bangalore, Fr. Joyce Thonikuzhiyil, was full praise and

gratitude during the SPCSA meeting at Siloam, Shillong for the overwhelming support given to BREADS to carry out humanitarian works in the flood affected areas.

### **New Appointments**

A few changes have been necessitated in the province. I am giving below the two appointments that I have made.

Fr. PADMANABHAN Suresh Innocent – Rector and Principal of Don Bosco College, Kohima

Fr. IRUDAYARAJ Alexis Felix - Liturgical Animator at Rua Home, Jorhat

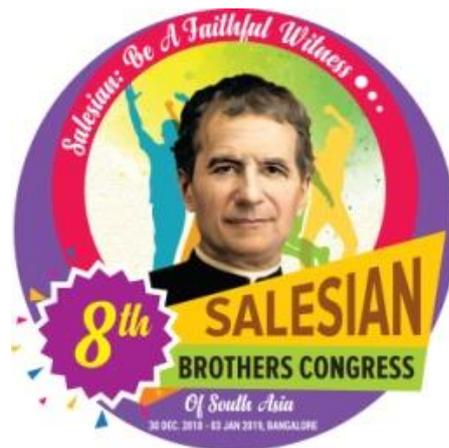
### **8<sup>th</sup> Salesian Brothers' Congress of South Asia**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Salesian Brothers' Congress of South Asia will be celebrated from 30 December 2018 to 3 January 2019 at Don Bosco Skill Mission and DBRC, Bangalore.

The theme of the Congress is "Salesian Be a Faithful Witness". During the days of the congress this theme will be studied and reflected upon by the participants. The theme is divided into three aspects: a) Be a faithful witness to Jesus and the Sacred Scripture, b) Be faithful to Don Bosco and the congregation and c) Be faithful to Youth in modern time.

The following superiors from Rome will be present during the congress: Rev. Bro. Jean Paul Muller, the Economer General; Fr. Ivo Coelho, the General Councillor for Formation and Fr. Kanaga Maria Arokiam, the Regional Councillor for South Asia. In addition, there will be Fr. Roggia Silvio from the formation team, Salesian Provincials of South Asia, Bro. Montejo John Raymond from the Philippines and many other dignitaries.

The expected participants are: all the Salesian Brothers of South Asia (including those in temporary profession), the Rectors of Pre-novitiates, Novice Masters, Rectors of Post-novitiates, Formation Delegates of the provinces and vocation promoters. Let us pray for the success of this event.



### **BOSCOREE**

The 13<sup>th</sup> National Boscoree, an all India gathering of scouts and guides, will be held at Nashik, Maharashtra, from 30 December 2018 to 3 January 2019. Salesian institutions in India have historically celebrated the Boscoree once every four years since 1974. This edition of the Boscoree will be hosted by the Salesian province of Mumbai.

The following ten schools from our province will be participating in the Boscoree: St. Thomas School Shantipur Sadiya (39 Nos), Don Bosco School Mao Gate Senapati (30 Nos), Don Bosco Higher Secondary School Riverbelt Dimapur (30 Nos), St Xavier's Harmutty Assam (37 Nos), Don Bosco Higher Secondary School Chingmeirong Manipur (32 Nos), Don Bosco Higher Secondary School Kohima (27 Nos), Don Bosco Higher Secondary School Mon Nagaland (35 Nos), Don Bosco High School Khoupum Valley (19 Nos), Don Bosco High School Kheti – Khonsa (35 Nos), Christ King Higher Secondary School Kohima (23 Nos). VIVA BADEL POWELL, VIVA DON BOSCO!



### **Forth Coming Programmes**

26 Sept to 02 Oct Retreat 2

04 Oct to 10 Oct Retreat 3

13 Oct West Arunachal Regional Recollection and Meeting at DB College, Itanagar  
22 and 23 Oct Meeting of the Rectors and In-Charges  
24 Oct Jubilee of Confreres at Don Bosco Higher Secondary, Dimapur  
25 and 26 Oct Provincial Council  
27 Oct DBA Provincial Council Meeting

### CONDOLENCES

To Fr. Devassy Palatty who lost his dear father, Mr. PD Ouseph, on 8 September 2018 following a cardiac arrest at St. James Hospital. He was 76 years of age.

To the Provincial and the confreres of New Delhi Province at the passing away of Fr. BRIAN Diamond, 85, on 16 September 2018.

To the Provincial and confreres of Shillong Province at the passing away of Fr. THEKKEKANDOM Thomas SDB, 82, on 17 September 2018.

I wish all the confreres and communities a grace-filled month of the Holy Rosary.

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 October 2018

Date	Day	Province Programme	Fr. Provincial's	Fr. Vice Provincial's	Fr. Economer's
1	Mon	<b>St. Therese of Lisieux</b> , Parish Feast: Golaghat, Retreat - 2	Dimapur, retreat 2	Dimapur	Dimapur
2	Tue	<b>Guardian Angels</b> , Retreat - 2 ends at 8.30 am	Dimapur, retreat 2 AIDA governing board meeting	Dimapur	Dimapur – AIDA meetings
3	Wed		Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur>Mintong
4	Thu	<b>St. Francis of Assisi</b> , Congregational Feast of FCC, Retreat - 3 (04-10) by Fr. Joe Boenzi SDB at DBIDL from 6.00 pm	Dimapur, retreat 3	Retreat	Mintong >Longding
5	Fri	<b>First Friday, Bl. Albert Maravelli</b> , Retreat - 3	Dimapur, retreat 3	Retreat	Borduria
6	Sat	<b>Retreat - 3</b>	Dimapur, retreat 3	Retreat	>Dimapur
7	Sun	<b>27<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Holy Rosary, Parish Feast: Palin</b> , Retreat - 3	Dimapur, retreat 3	Retreat	Dimapur
8	Mon	Retreat - 3	Dimapur, retreat 3	Retreat	
9	Tue	Retreat - 3	Dimapur, retreat 3	Retreat	
10	Wed	Retreat - 3 ends at 8.30 am	Dimapur, retreat 3	Retreat	
11	Thu	<b>Mission Day</b>	Dimapur > Tezpur	Dimapur	
12	Fri		Tezpur >Itanagar college	Harmutty	
13	Sat	<b>Bl. Alexandrina da Costa</b> , West Arunachal Regional Recollection and Meeting at DBCollege, Itanagar starts at 9.00 am	Itanagar school	Itanagar	
14	Sun	<b>28<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time</b>	Itanagar parish and Youth centre	Doimukh	
15	Mon		Doimukh	Itanagar	
16	Tue	<b>Bl. Augustine Thevaraparambil (Kunjachan)</b>	Doimuk > Palin	Tezpur	Dimapur>Maram
17	Wed		Palin > Harmutty	Dimapur	Maram>Dimapur
18	Thu	<b>Luke, Evangelist - Feast</b>	Harmutty >Tezpur	Kohima	Dimapur
19	Fri		Tezpur > Dimapur	Zubza	
20	Sat		Dimapur	Wokha	
21	Sun	<b>29<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time</b>	Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
22	Mon	<b>St. John Paul II, Rectors and In-Charges' Meeting at DBPH starts at 9 am (22-23)</b>	Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
23	Tue	<b>Rectors and In-Charges' Meeting, Provincial Community Day</b>	Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
24	Wed	<b>Bl. Aloysius Guanella, MHC, Jubilee of Confreses at Salesian College at 9.30 am</b>	Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
25	Thu	PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING (25-26)	Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
26	Fri	Provincial Council	Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
27	Sat	DBA Provincial Council Meeting - 3 at 11.00 am <b>Youth Pastoral Commission meeting (afternoon)</b>	Dimapur	Dimapur	Dimapur
28	Sun	<b>30<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, World Mission Day</b>	Dimapur	Guwahati	
29	Mon	<b>Bl. Michael Rua</b> , Institutional Feast: Rua Home and Tamenglong	Dimapur	Sonada	
30	Tue		Dimapur >Tuli	Siliguri	
31	Wed	<b>Don Bosco</b>	Tuli >Mon	Dimapur	