

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Salesian Province of Mary Help of Christians, Guwahati, Assam, India

SM-01/2024

1 June 2024

Dear Confreres,

Greetings from Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all those who were present for my installation on 25th May 2024. In particular I thank Fr Biju Michael, the Regional Councillor for South Asia, for his kind presence to install me in the name of the Rector Major. I also wish to thank Most Rev John Moolachira DD, Archbishop of Guwahati, the Vicar of the MSMHC, Rev. Sr. Mary Thadavanal, Mother General of the VSDBs Sr. Mabel Dhar,



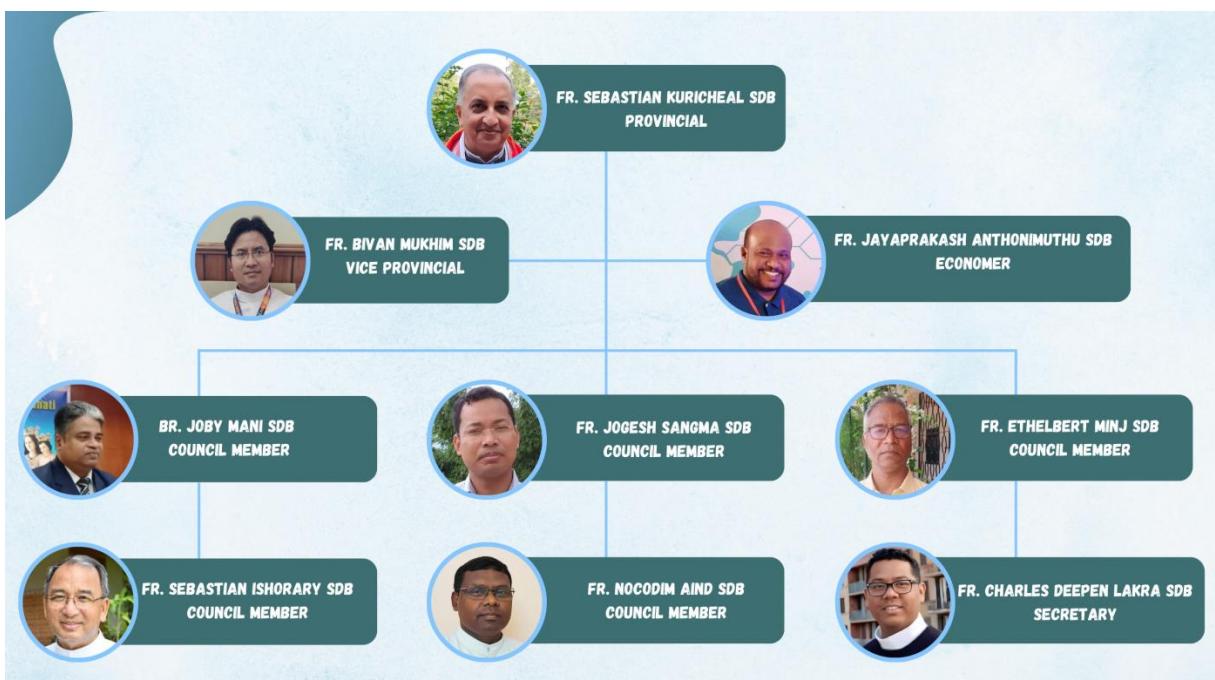
Salesian Provincials Fr. Don Bosco Lourduswamy from Chennai, Fr. Joseph Pauria from Kolkata, Fr. Jose Kuruvachira from Dimapur, Fr. John Zoziama from Shillong, Fr. Francis Silveira the Econmer of Panjim Province, Former Provincials Fr. Joseph Thelekatt, Fr. Philip Barjo, Fr. Joseph Almeida, Fr. George Maliekal, Fr. VM Thomas and other Provincials and Vice Provincials of other religious congregations both men and women who were present. I take this opportunity to thank all the Confreres of the Province and others who expressed their best wishes and assurance of prayers in person and in writing.

I wish to thank Fr. Januarius S. Sangma who during the past six years led our Province with dedication, tireless energy and commitment. We have witnessed the growth of the Province during the last six years in so many different ways.



I also express my thanks on behalf of all the confreres to Fr Joseph Teron, the Vice-Provincial for his dedicated service. We also acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of the Council members who have completed their term of service.

NEW PROVINCIAL TEAM



I thank the new Council members who willingly accepted to work together in the governance and animation of province. **Rev. Fr. Mukhim Bivan Rodrigues, Vice Provincial, Fr. Antonimuthu Jayaprakash, Economer**, Bro. Joby Mani, Fr. Sangma Jogesh, Fr. Minj Ethelbert, Fr. Ishoray Sebastian, Fr. AindNicodim. I thank Fr. Lakra Charles Deepen for his willingness to continue as the Secretary of the Province. The Council is comprising of confreres with experience of being in the Provincial Council before and some others who are new. I thank each of them for their generous acceptance of their responsibility to assist me in the animation and governance of the Province.

THE MONTH OF MARY

We have come to the end of the month of May which for us Salesians is the month of Mary, an important month in our spiritual and pastoral journey, because we honour our Blessed



Mother in a very special way. We celebrated the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, a feast very close to our heart as sons of Don Bosco. Many of us have made our Professions during the month, especially on 24th May. As Marian devotion is integral to our Salesian vocation, let us continue to honour her and seek her intercession in all that we undertake. Our communities and those whom we serve must be encouraged to have filial devotion to Mary as a sure way of persevering in being and doing good. Don Bosco founded his Marian devotion on the sure foundation of Scripture and the teachings of the Church. The Salesians have taken forth this devotion to our Blessed Mother to all mission lands to which they were sent, creating a special Marian ethos in the Salesian apostolate.

We are not only inheritors of such a rich legacy but must in turn continue to be transmitters of a Marian devotion that can draw us closer to Christ and to the Church and to one another. Even after the month of May, let us continue to foster Marian devotions and acts of piety such as the daily recitation of the Holy Rosary, the blessing of Mary Help of Christians on 24th of every month, the commemoration of Mary on Saturdays and on her special feasts.

Our Province is dedicated to Mary Help of Christians, and we can confidently turn to her and seek her intercession at all times, knowing that she is our Mother. As I begin my ministry as Provincial of the Province of Guwahati, I place myself and all our dear confreres under her motherly protection, asking her to continue to bless each one of us. Like her let us magnify God, the Almighty, who has done great things for us (Lk 1,49).

JUNE, THE MONTH OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

As I begin my ministry as Provincial, I am happy that we are also entering the month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is central to our Salesian spirituality and heritage. Don Bosco had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart. He urged the boys to have fervent devotion to the Sacred Heart saying: "In the heart of Jesus, we



acquire the real warmth of the love of God, not only for ourselves, but also to be shared with others.”

Don Bosco and his successors like Blessed Rua insisted on inculcating this devotion in the Salesians and in communities. The beautiful Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which our Father built at the request of Pope Leo XIII cost him much because he had to struggle to raise the funds needed. He fully trusted in Divine Providence and yet had to travel and make much efforts to raise the funds needed to build it. In fact, many say that this monumental work took a heavy toll on his health and even hastened his death. But undeterred by obstacles, he built this beautiful monument of love to the Sacred Heart with great devotion. The Basilica is truly a testimony of his love for Jesus and the Church.

That the Congregation’s Generalate has today come to the precincts of this Basilica must be truly an act of Providence of God. Henceforth it will be from here that the Rector Major and his Council will offer leadership to the whole Congregation and animating and governing it. These thoughts should further serve as an invitation to each of us to renew our fidelity to the Heart of Jesus as Don Bosco desired.

DEEPLY BIBLICAL AND ECCLESIAL

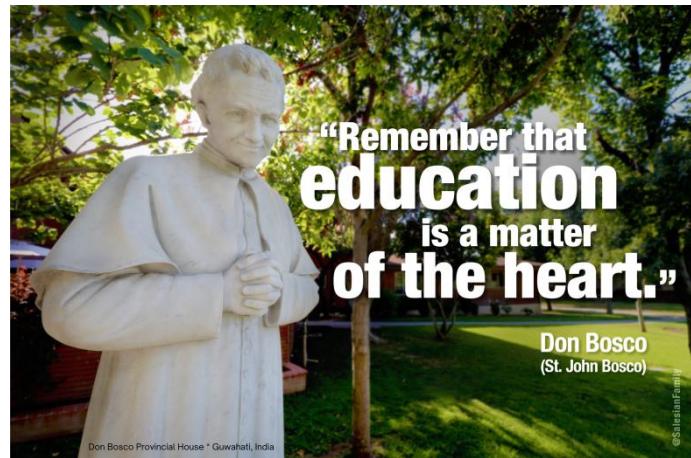
The devotion to the Heart of Christ is deeply rooted in the Scriptures and is deeply ecclesial. On Mount Calvary the Heart of Jesus was pierced with a lance, and blood and water gushed forth. The Church, in fact, was born from the pierced Heart of Christ and from that Heart receives her nourishment. It is in contemplating the mystery of Christ’s passion and death that we continue to experience the infinite love that He has for us.

The heart is associated with love. The image of heart as a symbol of love is indeed a beautiful one acknowledged by people in different religions and cultures. The heart is the seat of affections. Even our very breath and life depends on the heart. The love that emanates from our heart can find expression in our love for God and one another.

In the devotion to the Sacred Heart, we celebrate the divine wellspring of Christ’s love, the source from which flows an abundance of compassion, mercy, and grace. It is the heart that symbolises the core of Christ’s message to love God above all and love your neighbour as yourself. The Scriptures frequently remind us that God is full of compassion and abounding in mercy. We all can turn to God with trust and confidence knowing that his mercy is infinite. For this reason, the devotion to the Sacred Heart continues to be one of the most widely practised and well-known Catholic devotions.

LOVE AS THE FOUNDATION OF SALESIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Don Bosco's educational system has love at its heart. This great apostle of the young knew that the best way to draw young people, who were often deprived of love, to God and lead them to salvation was through drawing them closer to the Heart of Jesus, letting them know how much God loves them, that His love is unconditional. Don Bosco in his educative system and spirituality drew from the rich spiritual heritage of St Francis de Sales to communicate to the young the boundless and passionate love of God for them.



In the Salesian annals, we read how Blessed Michael Rua consecrated the Salesian Congregation to the Sacred Heart on 31 December 1899. On that occasion, he sent to all the houses an "Instruction" about this devotion. He underlined its importance especially for the houses of formation and urged the Salesians to dedicate the novitiates and other formation houses to the Sacred Heart and also to pray for vocations.

A few days before he died Don Rua asked Fr. Francis Cerutti that a prayer to the Sacred Heart for vocations be composed. Cerutti prepared a prayer and presented it to him, which he approved, then recited it and asked that a copy be placed under his pillow. Later music for this prayer was composed. We are all familiar with this hymn and its tune. I quote them here in Latin and English and invite our communities to pray and sing this hymn and raise our minds to God asking the Sacred Heart of Jesus to bless our Province and all our works. Let us also pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to raise up in the Salesian Family zealous and generous young men and women who can answer His call.

*Cor Jesu Sacratissimum,
Ut bonos et dignos operarios
Piae Salesianorum Societati
mittere et in ea conservare digneris.
Te rogamus audinos!*

*Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,
guide into the Salesian Congregation
many good and zealous apostles
and help them to persevere
in their vocation.
We humbly pray.*

SALESIANS IN INDIA AND DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

The Salesian history in India also has chronicled the great devotion which many of our pioneer Salesians inculcated. We remember one of our veteran missionaries, Fr.JosèCarreño, who was truly a great devotee of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As Provincial of the Province of South India, he consecrated the Salesians in India to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Salesians who witnessed that momentous event at Sacred Heart, Tirupattur, on 2ndJuly 1943, on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that year, would recall that event as the most memorable one in their life and in the annals of Salesian history in India.

In our region of Northeast India too, we know how Fr Constantin Vendrame, called the Apostle of the Khasis, inculcated devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He was instrumental in building the beautiful Shrine of Sacred Heart of Jesus adjacent to the Sacred Heart Theological College in Mawlai, the alma mater of many of us. His extraordinary pastoral zeal and the fruitfulness of his missionary work can be understood only in the light of his devotion to the Sacred Heart.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART IN THE CHURCH

This devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus spread greatly and became popular following a series of visions of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French Visitation nun, between 1673-1675. The image of the Sacred Heart that we now venerate is based on the visions of St. Margaret Mary. Though, by the mid-seventeenth century the devotion received widespread recognition in France, it was only in 1856 that the feast of the Sacred Heart was extended to the universal Church.

On June 11, 1899, Pope Leo XIII consecrated the whole humankind to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. A hundred years later Pope John Paul II commemorated that event and called for a renewal of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pope Paul VI and successive Popes too have continued to promote devotion to the Sacred Heart. The picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which we venerate and which adorns most Catholic families and religious communities, is based on the vision of the Sacred Heart that St Margaret Mary had.

FOSTERING DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

As we know there are many devotional practices connected with the Sacred Heart of Jesus which are approved and recommended by the Church. By promoting them and encouraging them in our communities and institutions, especially during this month of June, we can draw our religious and parish communities, particularly the youth, closer to the heart of Jesus. Let us strive to foster devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which we are familiar with:

Personal Consecration: described by Pope Pius XI as “undoubtedly the principal devotional practice used in relation to the Sacred Heart”.

Family/Community Consecration: in which the family and communities are dedicated to Christ so that He might reign in the hearts of all their members.

Recitation of the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: The Church in 1891 approved this Litany, which is biblical in character and to which many indulgences have been attached.

Making Acts of Reparation to the Sacred Heart: a prayer with which the faithful, mindful of the infinite goodness of Christ, implore mercy for the offences committed in so many ways against his Sacred Heart.

Enthronement of the Image of the Sacred Heart: based on the promise of Lord given to St. Margaret Mary: “I will bless every dwelling where an image of My Heart is both exposed and honoured.”

The Observance of the First Fridays: it derives from the "great promises" made by Jesus to St. Margaret Mary. Fridays also reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary and the love he showed by accepting death on a cross.

JESUS BECKONS US TO HIS HEART

Dear Confreres, the pastoral responsibilities we shoulder demand of us much hard work, sacrifice and sometimes tensions and anxieties. It is important that we create a fine balance between work and rest, moments of silence, times of prayer and communion with God. When we are tired and over-burdened, let us remember the gentle beckoning of Jesus to come to him and unburden ourselves and of our concerns, worries and pre-occupations. The Lord tells us: *“Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, for I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls.”* (Matthew 11: 28-29). This infinite love of the Lord becomes the wellspring of our love for God and the people to whom we minister.

Feed My Lamb (John 21,17)

As for my motto as Provincial, I have chosen the words from St John's Gospel, “Feed my lamb”. I consider these words of Jesus to Peter, the last of the post-resurrection discourses, as a program I am called upon to carry out in the Province for the coming six years as Provincial. As people called by God to minister to His people, particularly the young, we all share in this mandate of feeding his lambs and sheep that Jesus has entrusted to Peter. I promise to do my best to remain faithful to this motto as I accompany each of you in this important mission which Christ asks of me in our own times and diverse pastoral contexts. , walking together with Don Bosco, our Father and all the Salesian saints in heaven.

NEWS AND EVENTS

We congratulate and wish God's blessing on the four confreres who made their final commitment on 24th May in St. Joseph's Church, Panbazar. They are Cl. Jonathan Dungdung, Cl. Vincent Rabha, Cl. Santhosh D. Sangma and Bro. Godfrey Ekka.



Nine of our novices made their first profession on 24th May at the Salesian novitiate at Zubza and Sunnyside. I thank the Province of Dimapur and the Province of Shillong for accepting our novices and preparing them to commit themselves in the Salesian society.



Thirty eight brothers made their retreat from 17th May to 23rd May and renewed their vows on 23rd in the Provincial House and some in their respective communities. I am grateful to Fr. Francics Ratchagadoss sdb from Madras Province who preached the retreat and helped the brothers to prepare for the renewal of their vows.



Nine of our Pre-novices began their novitiate at Sunnyside and Zubza. We shall accompany them with our prayers.

CONDOLENCES

We offer our condolences to Fr. Cyriac Vetticathadam who lost his brother on 8th May 2024 due to ailments related to old age.

Cl. Alex Champramary who lost his father on 27th May of cardiac arrest.

APOSTOLIC ASSIGNMENTS

I am grateful to all the confreres who willingly accepted the new apostolic assignments in a spirit of faith and keeping to the evangelical counsel of the vow of obedience. I would like to request all those who are being transferred to hand over the charges to the one who is going to take the place in accordance with laid down principles and guidelines and make the transition smooth for the betterment of the community.

DON BOSCO GLOBAL YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL SEASON 3

The Don Bosco Global Youth Film Festival (DBGYFF) Season 3, organized by the Social Communication Sector, Rome in collaboration with the Youth Pastoral Sector of our congregation, is scheduled for the 17th and 18th of October 2024. This year's theme, "I Have a Dream: Youth and Climate Change - Making Mother **Earth Cleaner and Greener**," aligns with the bicentenary of the Dream of Don Bosco at nine and the Strenna of the Rector Major, highlighting the urgency for the youth to engage in environmental stewardship. Please do encourage and motivate your young people to create stories on the theme, and the **deadline for submissions of short films is 31st July 2024**.

Please do mark the festival dates – **17 & 18 October 2024** in your academic programme so that as many institutions of our province can organize it and benefit our young people. The details will be provided later. This will be a tangible way to showcase our unity at the global level as one Don Bosco family, and echo the name of Don Bosco and the Salesian Mission on those days worldwide. For further details please log on to www.dbgyff.com.

ANNUAL RETREATS ARRANGED IN THE MONTH OF JULY AT SILOAM

The first retreat is from 8-13 July and will be animated by Fr. George Palamattam SDB and the second retreat is from 21-27 July and will be animated by Fr. Devasia Vazayil SDB. There will be another retreat combined with Shillong province in the month of December from 8-14 at Siloam. Kindly contact Fr. Vice Provincial for booking your seat for the retreat. Since the accomdation is limited, it will be on first come first serve basis.

May the Lord bless each one of you and I assure you of my daily remembrance of each one of you in my prayer.

Yours sincerely in Don Bosco,



Fr. Sebastian Mathew SDB
Provincial



JUNE 2024

DATE	DAY	PROVINCIAL'S PROGRAMME	ECONOMER'S PROGRAMME
1	Saturday	Provincial Council GHY - Sashipur	Provincial Council - Sashipur
2	Sunday	Bengtol - Kokrajhar	Bengtol - Kokrajhar
3	Monday	Rongjeng - Boko	Rongjeng - Boko
4	Tuesday	Guwahati	Guwahati
5	Wednesday	Satgaon - Sojong	Satgaon - Sojong
6	Thursday	DBS, Baithalangso- Amkachi	DBS, Baithalangso - Amkachi
7	Friday	Umswai - Guwahati	Umswai - Guwahati
8	Saturday	ASET Social Forum	Guwahati
9	Sunday	Tezpur - Sirajuli	Tezpur - Sirajuli
10	Monday	Bhoteachang -Tangla	Bhoteachang -Tangla
11	Tuesday	Dimakutchi - Kumarikatta	Dimakutchi - Kumarikatta
12	Wednesday	Guwahati	Guwahati
13	Thursday	Don Bosco College Diphu	Don Bosco College Diphu
14	Friday	Haflong	Haflong
15	Saturday	Guwahati	Guwahati
16	Sunday	Rongkhon Aspirantate & Parish	Rongkhon Aspirantate & Parish
17	Monday	Garobada & DBS, Tura	Garobada & DBS, Tura
18	Tuesday	Mendal-Damra	Mendal-Damra
19	Wednesday	Dotma - Ramfalbil	Dotma - Ramfalbil
20	Thursday	DBC Chapaguri	DBC Chapaguri
21	Friday	Barpeta - Doomni	Barpeta - Doomni
22	Saturday	Meeting of various Dimension GHY	Meeting of various Dimension
23	Sunday	Guwahati	Guwahati
24	Monday	ADBU Azara	ADBU Azara
25	Tuesday	Shallang	Shallang
26	Wednesday	Guwahati	Guwahati
27	Thursday	Maligaon	Maligaon
28	Friday	Guwahati	Guwahati
29	Saturday	Council meeting	Council meeting
30	Sunday	Guwahati	Guwahati