



Provincial Circular - INK

*Province of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Bangalore*



XXV/7

December 2017

My dearest Sisters,
Loving greetings from the provincial house Bangalore!

----- CELEBRATIONS -----

SEASON OF ADVENT

Advent is a time to wait, listen and ponder the awesome wonder of God who sent his only son as a baby to save us. It is an appropriate season for us to pause and spend time reflecting on God's gift of love. It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God. That is a process in which we now participate, and the consummation of which we anticipate. Scripture reading for Advent will reflect this emphasis on the Second Advent, including themes of accountability for faithfulness at His coming, judgment on sin, and the hope of eternal life.

FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

The great missionary Francis Xavier was from a Basque noble family, like his mentor St. Ignatius of Loyola. He had a happy childhood until the age of nine when his father passed away. He received his early education from his mother and parish priest and later left home to pursue his studies at the University of Paris. He met Ignatius of Loyola in 1529, who was a roommate and was 15 years elder to him. After several dialogues with Ignatius who had undergone a religious conversion, Xavier became one of the first seven Jesuits to undertake the vows of poverty and chastity, and also pledged his allegiance to the Pope. The friendship between Ignatius and Xavier was the one for a lifetime. In 1541 King John of Portugal asked Ignatius for priests to send to the missions in India. Despite knowing he would never see his beloved companion again, Ignatius chose Francis Xavier for the mission. Francis left for India and arrived at the city of Goa in 1542. After landing in Goa, he started learning the local language. He began preaching, attending to the sick and teaching children. His work was notable and he enjoyed reasonable success, but found hardships while trying to convert the Brahmins. After India, he visited Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan. He then decided to visit China, but fell ill before reaching the mainland and died.

St. Francis Xavier was successful in his missionary endeavour because of his ability to mix easily with persons of various social-classes, races, and beliefs. He understood people. He had a

deep sense of cross-cultural understanding, and appreciated that God's presence was already present in all cultures, peoples, places and things.

BLESSED PHILIP RINALDI

Philip Rinaldi was born at Lu Monferrato, Italy, on 28 May 1856. From His boyhood he had known Don Bosco but it was only at the age of 21 that he accepted the Saint's invitation to become a Salesian. As a priest, he was entrusted with the formation of the aspirants and novices. In 1899, Fr. Rua sent him as Director of the community of Sarriá, Spain and later he became the provincial. In this role, he contributed greatly to the development of Salesian Spain. He developed the Salesian family in all its aspects, and enriched it with the Institute, something new for its time, now known as the *Volunteers of Don Bosco*.

He was elected Rector Major in 1922. "All that is lacking to Fr. Rinaldi is Don Bosco's voice: he has everything else," said Fr. Francesia. He used all his energies in adapting Don Bosco's spirit to the times. He did much to develop Salesian studies and was a master of spiritual life. He worked to renew the spiritual life of the Salesians, had absolute confidence in God and unlimited trust in Mary Our Help. He asked Pius XI to grant the "indulgence for sanctified work." He took great interest in the missions, sending many young Salesians to learn languages and customs so that evangelization might be more effective. May God grant us the grace to acquire the same spirit of Bl. Philip Rinadi and let us also offer our prayers for the volunteers of Don Bosco on their feast day.

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

On the 8th of December the Church celebrates the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. In teaching that Mary was immaculately conceived, the Catholic Church teaches us that from the very moment of her conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary was free from all stain of original sin. This simply means that from the very beginning, she was in a state of grace, sharing in God's own life, and hence she was free from the sinful inclinations which have beset human nature after the fall. God chose Mary the Immaculate Conception to be our "model of holiness" (Preface) in much the same way that DNA plays an integral role in our genetic code: from the inside, not from the outside. At Mary's conception, a new way of being human happens, and we are "chosen, destined" to share it. Adam and Eve were tricked by the serpent's "conception." The yes of Mary at the Annunciation, the culmination of the Immaculate Conception, undoes the disobedience of Eden and makes paradise a possibility once again for us.

On this beautiful feast day agreeing to the suggestion of the CBCI, let us consecrate ourselves and our community to the Lord through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Each community could organize a spiritual programme that befits the celebration.

CHRISTMAS – A SIGN OF GOD'S UNFATHOMABLE LOVE

The true meaning of Christmas is love. John 3:16-17 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." The true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of this incredible act of love.

The real Christmas story is the story of God's becoming a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ. Why did God do such a thing? Because He loves us! Why was Christmas necessary?

Because we needed a Saviour! Why does God love us so much? Because He is love itself (1 John 4:8). The true meaning of Christmas is love. God loved His own and provided a way - the only Way—for us to spend eternity with Him. He gave His only Son to take our punishment for our sins. He paid the price in full, and we are free from condemnation when we accept that free gift of love. We celebrate Christmas with gift-giving because of the “indescribable gift” that God gave to us (2 Corinthians 9:15). We celebrate Christmas by stringing lights because the Light of the world has come to us (John 1:4; Isaiah 9:2). We celebrate Christmas with carols and choirs because they are expressive of joy and follow the examples of Mary and Zacharias and Simeon and the angels, all of whom extolled the Lord in poetry (Luke 1–2). We celebrate Christmas by decorating evergreen trees with stars and angels and tinsel because of the eternal life Jesus brings (John 4:14)—and stars and angels and beauty were all associated with Jesus’ birth. In celebrating Christmas we celebrate the love and condescension of God.

There is no greater joy at Christmas, than entering into a personal relationship with Jesus. We could look forward to Christmas, not dependent on what gifts we receive, but having the peace and joy that comes from having a relationship with God. Instead of just knowing about him, we can know him, personally, and understand what Christmas is all about...“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.”(John 3:16)

Jesus the Saviour of the world chose to be born poor in a stable. During this season of Christmas, let us remember the words of Pope Francis: caring for the poor is our ‘*Passport to Paradise*’ True goodness and strength are shown “*not in closed fists and crossed arms, but in ready hands outstretched to the poor, to the wounded flesh of the Lord*”.

ST. STEPHEN

On the day after Christmas, the liturgy celebrates the feast of St. Stephen, deacon and first martyr. The book of Acts presents him as a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 6.8 to 10, 7.55).

St. Stephen is a model for all those who want to serve the new evangelization. He shows that the novelty of proclamation does not primarily consist in the use of original methods or techniques, which certainly have their uses, but in being filled with the Holy Spirit and allowing ourselves to be guided by Him. The novelty of proclamation lies in immersing ourselves deeply in the mystery of Christ, the assimilation of His Word and of His presence in the Eucharist, so that He Himself, the living Jesus, can act and speak through His envoy. In essence, the evangelizer becomes able to bring Christ to others effectively when he lives of Christ, when the newness of the Gospel manifests itself in his own life. We pray to the Virgin Mary, so that the Church, in this Year of Faith, sees more men and women who, like St. Stephen, know how to give a convinced and courageous witness of the Lord Jesus.

ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE

John is an example of a true disciple who left everything to follow Jesus to bear witness to the Light of the World. He made such a spiritual impact as reflected in the Gospel of John and many other epistles in our Christian Scriptures. He is the evangelist of the divinity of Christ and His fraternal love. With James, his brother, and Simon Peter, he was one of the witnesses of the Transfiguration. St. John was the only one of the Apostles who did not forsake the Saviour in the hour of His Passion and Death. May this beloved disciple of Jesus teach us to love the Lord deeply and to be strong and courageous witnesses at all times.

GOODBYE TO 2017

What thanks O Lord can I render thee for all the gifts thou has showered on me! These are the sentiments that fill our hearts as we come to the close of the year 2017. Innumerable are the blessings the Good Lord has poured over us. Let us count the blessings of God one by one during this month and make a fitting thanksgiving to God Almighty and to Our Blessed Mother on 31st December and prepare our hearts to welcome the New Year 2018.

-----RECALLING EVENTS -----

CONGRATULATIONS

- To the Communities of Puthupally and Bannerghatta for the colourful and meaningful Silver Jubilee celebrations which were held on 25th November and 2nd December respectively. It was indeed a family get together and reminiscing the past members. As we express our gratitude for the good accomplished in the past we implore God's continued blessings for the future endeavours.
- To Sr. Bala Savarimuthu National delegate for Mission ad gentes, for conducting effectively the meeting of Mission Ad gentes in Nandigama from 18-20th November.
I also take this opportunity to thank Sr. Josephine Savarimuthu and community for making all arrangements to carry out this programme. Thank you dear sisters.
- To the deacons of Kristu Jyoti College who will be ordained in the coming months. Let us join our hands in prayer for them that they may always appreciate the gift of priesthood and be faithful to God for ever.

FMA PROVINCIAL'S RETREAT AT VADUVANCHAL

It was a special experience of spiritual renewal on the mountain top of Vaduvanchal. It is needless to say that I remembered each one of you in my prayer. My sincere appreciation and thanks to Sr. Lisy Jose and the community for all the arrangements made in order to make our stay comfortable and fruitful. Thanks a million for your thoughtfulness. I also appreciate and express my gratitude to Fr. Ittira Mondoth for animating us and guiding us with the Word of God. God bless you all!

REQUEST FOR PRAYERS

- ✓ For the speedy and complete recovery of our dear sisters and relatives who are aged and ailing
- ✓ For the elder brother of Sr. Lizy C.D who is sick and is under treatment.

CONDOLENCES

- To Sr. Miriam Vailapadiyanical at the loss of her eldest sister Mrs. Annakutty on 18th November.
- To Fr. Jose Mathew Korappallil, Provincial, and his Confreres of INN Delhi at the passing away of Fr. Padamattumel Varkey 19th November.
- To Sr. Marneni Swarnalatha at the loss of her grandfather on 19th November.
- To Srs. Thresia A. and Josmy at the loss of their cousin Binu Manuel(38) on 21st November.
- To the Superior General and sisters of the Congregation MSMHC at the passing away of their Former Superior General Rev.Mother Elizabeth Pakumala (79) on November 27th 2017

May their souls through the mercy of God rest in peace and may the presence of God console the bereaved families.

Christmas proclaims that God will be with us always. The Christmas gift given to us is Jesus Christ- Gift of love. I wish each one of you an experiential Christmas and a grace filled New Year!

Sr. Celine Jacob

*Sr. Celine Jacob
Provincial.*

