



**XXX/ 08**

**01 January 2023**

**My dearest Sisters,  
Loving & Prayerful Greetings for a hope - filled 2023!**

Here we are, at the beginning of the New Year 2023, along with our new-born Saviour Jesus and Mother Mary! How many who had begun 2022 are no more with us, some left most unexpected, like our dear Sr. Crescentia and some of our dear ones too, but God has given us the privilege of starting the New Year. So, let us welcome it with Joy and Hope.

To begin it well, Our Rector Major Don Angel Fernandez Artime has presented to the Salesian Family his yearly gift: the Strenna for 2023, inviting every member of the Salesian Family to be ‘YEAST’ in the society. The month of January brings us models of those who were true **yeast** in the time and place where God had placed them. The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God ushers us into the New Year. Let us start our journey in her company. The Solemnity of the Epiphany of Our Lord, reminds us of the Star of our vocation which led us to Don Bosco’s Family. What a privilege is ours to belong to this magnificent Congregation! Let us appreciate it and try to be ever worthy of it. Our gratitude to God and to Mary Help of Christians should make us effective ‘Yeast’ that can attract many more young people to the Salesian way of life. The feast of the Baptism of Our Lord while reminding us of the great humility of the Son of God, points out to us the responsibility that this Sacrament places on our shoulders: “to become the salt of the earth” in other words, **Yeast**. The month of January is also marked with beautiful Salesian feasts unfolding to us once again the riches of our Spirituality and our Call to holiness.

**STRENNA – 2023**

**“AS THE YEAST IN TODAY’S HUMAN FAMILY- the lay dimension in the family of Don Bosco”**. Yeast is a leavening agent used for baking bread which makes baked goods rise. The Strenna “is addressed to two target groups: young children, adolescents and older youth wherever Don Bosco’s Family is found around the world. At the same time, it is addressed to all the groups of the Salesian Family who are invited to discover the *lay dimension*”.

“Why two different sets of addressees? The answer is simple. In the light of what is most characteristic of our pedagogy and spirituality, our aim is to help little children, but above all adolescents and older young people to discover that each of them can be like the yeast that Jesus speaks of; like the good yeast that helps the “bread of the human family” grow and become more flavoursome. Each of them can be a true pro-active agent and have a genuine mission alongside Jesus, or as a good believer in the religion they profess”.

**For Don Bosco’s Family** it aims at being a clear and thought-



provoking message directed to discovering the lay dimension in this family that we are all involved in, and where the majority of its members are lay people, women and men from every country, with their lay and Christian life that calls upon them to be true leaven in humankind which is so much in need of this.

**For those of us who are consecrated members in the Salesian Family** we too are invited to be “leaven in the dough of the bread of humanity” and to have the close up experience of letting ourselves be enriched by the evangelical secular dimension of these brothers and sisters of ours. In short, we are called on as a Family to complete each other.

## **FEAST OF BL. LAURA VICUNA**

Argentine Deputies are promoting a declaration project urging Pope Francis to canonize Blessed Laura Vicuña, proposing her as the patron of refugees and women who are subjected to violence. Deputy Giovanni Brügger, who declared himself to be a relative of Laura, is one of the promoters.

The Deputies claimed: “Laura Vicuña with her widowed mother and little sister migrated from Chile to Argentina as political refugees. She was formed by the Salesian Sisters. She and her mother suffered violence within the family in our Country and she gave her life so that her mother would be converted and leave the man who was violent with her. Laura Vicuña is considered the patron of the family and could also be that of the refugees and of women who suffer violence”.



The whole Institute with the educating communities and the young people who are entrusted to us, praise the Blessed Trinity for the holiness of this teenager, great in faith, strong in hope, and heroic in love. In the young Laura, loving Jesus became the most authentic and real commitment. Jesus filled her life with meaning and beauty, even in carrying the cross. Love of God is the foundation of every human love. Where there is love, there is also the capacity of giving self to God and living sacrificially. The holiness of Laura is a confirmation of the validity of the Salesian educational system when this is lived by the educators who seek the same holiness walking with the young in fidelity to the Gospel.

John Paul II, in his Homily on September 3, 1988, said: “The sweet figure of blessed Laura, most pure glory of Argentina and of Chile...teaches everyone that with the help of grace, we can triumph over evil, and that the ideals of innocence and love, though denigrated and offended, can in the end shine forth and illumine hearts”.

“Laura makes us reflect on the importance of the family in the education of their children, on the right they have to live in a normal family that is the place of reciprocal love and of human and Christian formation. This is a reminder for modern society itself to be ever more considerate for the institution of the family and for the education of the young”.

God's love stimulated Laura to love in return. Thus, Laura made herself available to all, helping them in any way she could. She was a leader and everyone's friend. Laura accepted God's love. Laura was fascinated by the ideal of the Sisters and secretly hoped to consecrate herself to God in the service of her brothers and sisters. In the present day context, Laura Vicuña's life and death is very relevant to motivate our young people. As we celebrate her feast together with our young people this year, let us make it a special event for them.

## A GENTLE REFLECTION FOR THE FEAST OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

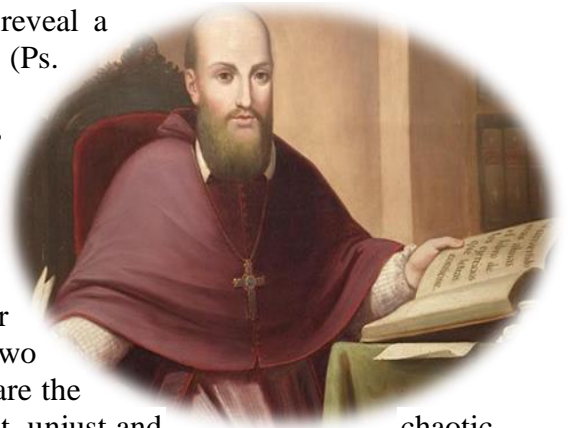
Love, humility, gentleness, patience; these are those fruits that reveal a good tree, planted by the water and bearing its harvest in season (Ps. 1:3):

St. Francis de Sales was renowned for his gentleness. Gentleness and humility are often seen as signs of weakness. But in reality only a person who is very strong can be humble and gentle. For Francis "Nothing is as strong as gentleness, nothing as loving and gentle as strength. Gentleness and humility flow from the inner strength of a person. Francis said, "Were there anything better or fairer on earth than gentleness, Jesus Christ has given us only two lessons to learn of him—meekness and humility of heart." These are the

challenging words which we are called to live. We live in a violent, unjust and chaotic world and we are called to be beacons of gentleness. Being gentle isn't doing 'acts of gentleness'; it is cultivating an 'attitude of gentleness'. Being gentle is part of who we are, it begins in the heart of each one of us and radiates out to all those who meet us. A gentle person is one who is attentive to the strengths and weaknesses of the other. A gentle person treads lightly, listens carefully, looks tenderly and touches with reverence. A gentle person knows that true growth requires nurturing by gentleness and not force. Gentleness is a vivid reminder of God among us.

*Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is at hand. (Phil. 4:5)*

As we celebrate his feast, let us ask him to help us to live the spirituality of Joy, Gentleness and Meekness.



## FEAST OF OUR FATHER AND FOUNDER

Finally, the crowning event of the month is the feast of St. John Bosco our beloved Father and Founder. As we prepare ourselves to celebrate Don Bosco let us reflect on the question of St. Dominic Savio, to St. John Bosco, "how can I become a Saint?" St. Bosco looked at him and smiled. It must have warmed his heart to hear a student so ardently desire to be a saint, just as it warms my heart when I see so many of you truly striving for holiness.

He answered that there were **three things one must do: "Pray devoutly, do your chores exactly, and do everything with great joy"**.

If you and I think about it, doing those three things will truly set us on the path to sanctity, as well.

*How often do we pray devoutly, with all of our hearts, each and every time? For most of us, when we do pray it is easy to a kind of go through the motions; we might pray, but not always with heartfelt devotion.*

**Secondly, do your chores exactly.** It is also easy for us to take short cuts, whether at work or with other things we do. But to do our duties, whatever we are supposed to do, first of all, takes humility to be obedient. Furthermore, we are to accomplish our tasks to the best of our ability.

**Finally, do everything with great joy.** Shouldn't all of us live with a sense of joy to do everything with happiness, satisfaction, and contentment? All of us are children of God that are not supposed to let the pressures, anxieties, and depression of the world get to us. Instead, we should do everything with joy and love, knowing that our lives belong to a God who is bigger and more powerful than the world.



Let us reflect on how well we apply Don Bosco's recipe for holiness, so that we too, can live more saintly lives along with our young people saving many souls for God. Holiness is the best gift we can offer to Don Bosco who was convinced that: "**Education is a matter of the heart, and God alone is its master; we cannot succeed in anything unless God gives us the key to the hearts of the young**"-

I wish you dear Sisters, Staff, children, other members of the Educating Community, Salesian Family and most of all dear Salesians to whom we owe so much for their invaluable spiritual help and animation, a very Happy Feast of our Father and Founder whom the whole world admires and esteems for his multi-faceted personality and above all for the gift of his youth spirituality and educative system.



1 <sup>st</sup>	MARY MOTHER OF GOD
3 <sup>rd</sup>	ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA
6 <sup>th</sup>	EPIPHANY
8 <sup>th</sup>	BAPTISM OF THE LORD
14 <sup>th</sup>	ST. DEVASAHAYAM
15 <sup>th</sup>	BL. LUIGI VARIARA
16 <sup>th</sup>	ST. JOSEPH VAS
18 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup>	UNITY OCTAVE
22 <sup>nd</sup>	BLESSED LAURA VICUÑA
24 <sup>th</sup>	ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
25 <sup>th</sup>	CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL
26 <sup>th</sup>	REPUBLIC DAY
27 <sup>th</sup>	Sts. TIMOTHY AND TITUS
31 <sup>st</sup>	ST. JOHN BOSCO



### **SUBMISSION OF ACCOUNTS & RETREAT**

The local economers will be having the annual closing of the accounts as per the following dates: 6 - 7 January for those of Karnataka region; 8 - 10 January for those of Andhra and Telangana regions and 11- 12 January for those of Kerala region. May the Spirit of the Lord be with you to assist and guide you in this important task!

### **ANNUAL RETREATS 2022 - 23**

Kindly keep aside all your usual commitments and prepare yourselves for this important time of personal and community renewal. The first Annual Retreat begins at 5.30 p.m. on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and concludes on 20<sup>th</sup> morning. All are expected to be in the Provincial house by lunch. May these days be days of deep encounter with the Lord and enable us to become stable in our spiritual journey! Let us accompany them with our prayers.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Preacher</b>
13- 20 January 2023	Fr. Biji Thomas SDB
10 - 17 February 2023	Fr. Biji Thomas SDB
3- 10 May 2023	Fr. Biji Thomas SDB
16 - 23 May 2023	Fr. James Mathew SDB

## ACTS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER XXIV

We express our thanks to FMA INB Province for supporting in the printing of Acts of the General Chapter XXIV. Let us take keen interest in studying and deepening the document as the provincial council decided to make a comprehensive study of it in preparation for the celebration of Provincial Community day.

## CONGRATULATIONS& BEST WISHES

On behalf of all the sisters of INK Bangalore, I congratulate **Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy**, the new Provincial elect of the Salesian Province of St. Thomas the Apostle (INM). We invoke God's abundant blessings upon him as he undertakes the challenging mission of animation and governance of the Province.

To the **Salesian Deacons** who will be ordained as Priests shortly! May they be always faithful followers of Don Bosco and spread the Kingdom of God wherever they carry out their mission with zeal and joy.

## MEETING FOR PROVINCE COORDINATORS OF EDUCATION

Sr. Annie Thoppil, Sr. Mary Jayanthi Boyopati & Sr. Geny Joseph will be attending a meeting for Province Coordinators & Principals for Education at PCI level on the Theme: "Network to Promote Global Compact on Education" 27 to 29 January 2023 at Kolkata – Dum Dum. It will be animated by Sr. Runita Borja and her team.

## WE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR OUR SICK: OUR SISTERS AND DEAR ONES

- For Sr. Annie Kottaram and Sr. Lizy K.V.
- For dear brother of Sr. Elsa Devasia who is hospitalized and brother of Sr. Anita Thomas
- For the dear Mother of Sr. Rosily who is hospitalized.
- For the mother of Sr. Jacqueline Selvi Sagaya who is seriously ill.

## SINCERE ASSURANCE OF PRAYERS

- ✚ To Sr. Seena Devasia at the demise of her paternal uncle Mr. Varghese Antony (64) on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- ✚ To Srs. Mary & Molly Joseph at the passing away of their maternal aunt Mrs. Innamma (93) on 4 December 2022.
- ✚ To Srs. Lourdes & Fatima Antony at the sudden demise of their niece Mrs. Sahayamary (59) on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- ✚ To Sr. Supriya Gittala at the loss of her paternal grandmother Mrs. Anthonamma (73) on 11 December 2022.
- ✚ To Sr. Mary George at the demise of her dear brother Mr. C G John (78) on 15 December 2022.
- ✚ To Sr. Mary V. J. at the loss of her maternal uncle Mr. Mathew (83) on 20 December 2022.
- ✚ To Sr. Annie Joseph at the demise of her dear father Mr. Joseph P.T. (88) on 24 December 2022.
- ✚ To Sr. Swaroopa Rani Velupula at the passing away of her paternal grandfather Mr. Dootha (84) on 27 December 2022.
- ✚ To Sr. Lizzie Abraham at the demise of her brother Mr. Benny Thottupuram (58) on 28 December 2022.
- ✚ To Sr. Carmel Mary Arogya Swamy at the demise of her paternal uncle Mr. Chowriraj (75) on 29 December 2022.

## CONCLUSION

As I conclude, I would remind all of us that "Our entire Salesian Family is called to be a true leaven in today's world, in today's human family." Even our young people are expected to be as yeast in today's world. Let us respond with enthusiasm to this warm invitation, first of all by studying the Strenna in depth in the Community, and then animate every group of persons we are dealing with so that everyone will become "YEAST or LEAVEN in the dough of the bread of humanity".

The parable of the yeast, chosen as the theme for Strenna 2023, is a parable of great evangelical wisdom and pedagogical and educational relevance, expressing the nature of the kingdom of God that Jesus lived and taught. Our choice of interpretation for this year's Strenna is precisely to present yeast as an image of the fruitfulness and growth of the kingdom of God in the hearts of people, which fertilises the richness of the gift of the call to life and of the vocation where God has planted us, directing the mission of the laity and of the entire Family of Don Bosco throughout the world. "A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough" (Gal 5:9). The Lord tells us that the Kingdom of God is like the yeast with which the dough is leavened when making bread. There is something very special about yeast. It is its ability to "positively" influence the mix. Among the ingredients, it is the only living ingredient and because it is alive it has the ability to influence condition and transform the whole batch of dough.

Yeast works silently. Leavening takes place in silence, just like the work of God's kingdom in its inner work. And indeed, who has been able to hear the yeast as it goes to work on the flour and dough it has been mixed in with while it is leavening it all? This makes us understand how God's kingdom acts. The Apostle Paul presents the kingdom from its most intimate aspect when he says: "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17). This is the inner and invisible action of the Spirit; it is yeast placed in the heart. And just like yeast, whose activity takes place through contact, so is the case with the Gospel.

During the Angelus Message on 14 June 2015 Pope Francis spoke these words:

We can say that the kingdom of God is like this: "a humanly small and seemingly irrelevant reality. To become a part of it, one must be poor of heart; not trusting in their own abilities, but in the power of the love of God; not acting to be important in the eyes of the world, but precious in the eyes of God, who prefers the simple and the humble. Certainly God's kingdom requires our cooperation, but it is above all the initiative and gift of the Lord. Our weak effort, seemingly small before the complexity of the problems of the world, fears no difficulty when integrated with God's effort. The victory of the Lord is certain: his love will make every seed of goodness present on the ground sprout and grow. This opens us up to trust and hope, despite the tragedies, the injustices, the sufferings that we encounter. The seed of goodness and peace sprouts and develops, because the merciful love of God makes it ripen".

Each Community could do a little home work asking oneself "How can I be a leaven in the Community and in the neighbourhood"? We could ask each group of the Salesian Family also to do the same.

*Happy Feast of our Indian Saints, Bl. Laura Vicuna, St. Francis De Sales & St. John Bosco!*

**Good wishes and prayerful greetings to all in the Family.**

**Affectionately,**

*Sr. Lucy Rose*

**Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil  
Provincial**

