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01 March 2023

My dearest Sisters,

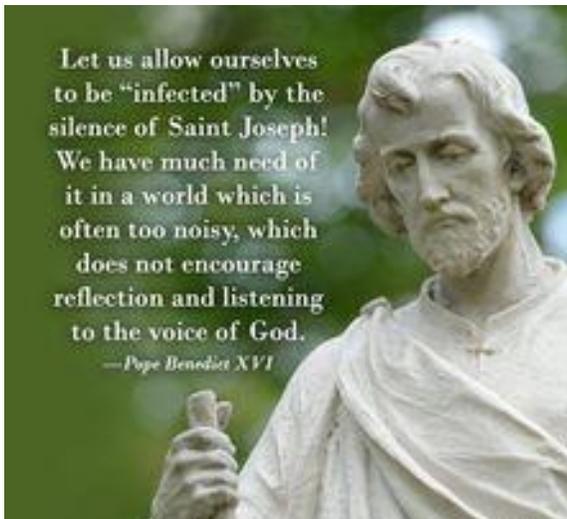
Loving & Prayerful Greetings from Provincial House Bangalore!

March is marching in, with two great Solemnities, in the midst of the Lenten Season. The first is, of our beloved Saint Joseph and the second, of our lovable and loving Mother Mary- the Annunciation of the Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Reflection on these most important figures of our Faith will help us to draw valuable inspiration for our own lives.

SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

THE GREATNESS OF ST. JOSEPH

Saint Joseph was a man who possessed unwavering faith and utmost trust in God's providence. God was the first and foremost, above all, in Saint Joseph's life. In short, he is an upright man of faith and outstanding virtues. As such, he serves as a wonderful role model for us in today's often unruly culture.



What is it that made Saint Joseph so great? He wasn't immaculately conceived as our Blessed Mother was. He was not divine like Jesus. But he was the head of the Holy Family, its guardian and its provider. He became the legal father of the Savior of the World and the spouse of the Mother of God. But Joseph is not great only because he was given such incredible privileges. First and foremost, he was great because of the choices he made in life. The Gospel of St. Mathew refers to him as a "righteous man" and as a man who "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him." **St. Joseph is a man of dreams and a man of action.** Joseph had dreams. God spoke to him in his dreams and he followed his dreams.

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had directed him...

Thus, his greatness is primarily on account of his moral righteousness and obedience to the will of God. Joseph's obedience is especially seen in the fact that he obeyed the voice of God given to him in the four dreams recorded in the Scripture. In his first dream, Joseph is told "do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20–21). In his second dream, Joseph is told, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him" (Matthew 2:13). In his third dream, Joseph is told, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead" (Matthew 2:20). And in his fourth dream, Joseph is warned to go instead to Galilee rather than Judea (Matthew 2:22).

Joseph responded with complete submission and full determination. The commands Joseph received were not insignificant. His obedience required that he and his family travel great distances, take up residence in strange lands, and do so all in faith. It's also clear that Joseph took his vocation seriously. Pope Saint John Paul II gave him the title "Guardian of the Redeemer." Over and over, he showed his unwavering commitment to his role as the guardian of his legal Son, Jesus, and of his wife, Mary. His life was spent providing for them, protecting them and offering them a father's heart.

And just like God had a plan for Joseph, God has a plan for each one of us. The plan does not need to be more than that He wants us to be upright and righteous. He wants us to be what we are called to be. But, just like Joseph, we may feel that we don't have anything to contribute: that we are nothing but simple carpenters...we may feel insignificant, that we have nothing to offer. Still, God has a plan for us.

And also, just like Joseph we may never see the fruit of our labour. St. Joseph may have been a simple carpenter who did not amount to much during his life, but today he is venerated as one of the greatest saints in the Church. There aren't a lot of Saints for whom we have solemnities. The Church has been observing this feast since the 10th century.

Let us listen to God's voice as Joseph did in the silence of our heart, as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the feast of St. Joseph and allow ourselves to follow the glorious witness of Saint Joseph as he responded to our Lord's will with perfect faith and trust.

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD TO THE B.V. MARY

The Annunciation must be one of the most commonly depicted scenes in the history of art. From paintings, to music, to poetry and narrative, the story of Gabriel's message to Mary—infused with doubt and belief, joy and sorrow, fear and comfort—has proved to be remarkably generative for both the life of faith and the creative impulse.

We cannot imagine that Mary didn't have to wrestle through those words of the angel: 'Do not be afraid, Mary'. Mary's response is a resounding 'yes', her refrain the glorious Magnificat, but how many times must the fragmented memory of that angelic meeting replayed in her head with anxiety or fear or worry or doubt alongside the rejoicing?

The story of the Annunciation is a story of uncertainty and belief, sorrow and joy, and everything in between, but it is also a story about radical newness, about openness, about beginnings. Just as Mary must have had her fragmentations of memory, so would she have been able to recall and hear, 'The Lord is with you'; so would she have been able to live her calling again and again: 'Here I am ... let it be according to your word'... The Annunciation is a story ripe for both the rejoicings and the questions and uncertainties that life carries, and it's about opening up and receiving all of it.

This is Mary's story in an irreducible particularity and at the same time the story of each of us, of any of us, met with the perfect love of God in the midst of our fear, our struggle, our poverty and weakness, our insecurity and doubt and hearing the words: 'The Lord is with you, do not be afraid'. And it is an opportunity for each of us to respond, to enter into that risk, that freedom, that openness; to say 'yes' to such a love. And this opportunity is gifted to us because the story is as much or more about God's opening up to us as Mary's opening up to God's plan and salvation. Mary opens up and receives God-among-us, Emmanuel, but God in Christ is also opening up and welcoming human life and experience. At the root of the Annunciation is the new, radical, earthy manifestation of 'The Lord is with you'. The God of the universe opens up entirely to us, entirely to the weakness and beauty of humanity—God in the womb, in the manger, who walks among our streets, holds little children, touches lepers, who die in human flesh.

There is no greater welcome, no wider openness, no fuller embrace, and no invitation more joyful than this.

Mary's 'yes' is the vessel through which God-among-us steps into our world and opens up to us as one of us. Our 'yes' today is not a claim to perfection or a statement of moral superiority. The openness of God's love is unending, so that wherever we find ourselves we are welcomed and embraced. So whatever these strained circumstances and whatever insecurity they may cause, **we are given the assurance, 'the Lord is with you, do not be afraid'.**

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The theme for International Women's Day, 8 March 2023 (IWD 2023) is, "**Digit ALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality**". The United Nations Observance of IWD recognizes and celebrates the women and girls who are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education. IWD 2023 will explore the impact of the digital gender gap on widening economic and social inequalities. The event will also spotlight the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in digital spaces and addressing online and ICT-facilitated gender-based violence.

A gender-responsive approach to innovation, technology and digital education can increase the awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and civic engagement. The need for inclusive and transformative technology and digital education is therefore crucial for a sustainable future.



- 07** **SAINTS PERPETUA AND FELICITY**
- 08** **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**
- 20** **ST. JOSEPH**
- 25** **ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD**



PCI MEETING 2023

The PCI 2023 will be held at Auxilium Provincial House, Manikandam, Trichy from 14 -16 March 2023 with the theme "With Mary reawakening the original freshness of vocational fruitfulness, placing ourselves in a state of ongoing formation". From our Province, Sr. Maria Rajeshwary (National Coordinator for Social Communication) and I will participate as ex-officio members of the PCI Meeting. Sr. Sheela Jacob and Sr. Mary Jayanthi Boyopati will represent the Province as the Province Delegate and the Delegate nominated by the Provincial Council respectively. Let us pray for the fruitfulness and success of this forth coming meeting.

WORLD DAY OF GRATITUDE

The Vicar General Sr. María del Rosario García Ribas of our Institute has communicated that the World Feast of Gratitude 2023 will be celebrated in Bogotá, Colombia and will be animated by the 4 Colombian Provinces.

- "N. S. del Rosario of Chiquinquirá" (CBC)
- "Our Lady of the Snow" Province (CBN)
- "Mary Help of Christians" Province (CMA)
- "Santa Maria Mazzarello" Province (CMM)

The theme proposed to us is illuminated by the Word of Jesus: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt 5:9): **"With Mary we**

generate a culture of peace". The logo of the Festival encloses a profound message which it expresses through the various elements that compose it:

Mary / Outstretched hand: Mary reminds us of our identity as daughters. She continues to walk in this house, the "house" of Colombia, in the life and works of the FMA who, by recognizing the dignity of children, young people and women, generate new opportunities to build a culture of peace. Her outstretched hands are a sign of welcome, the same that the Colombian country will offer to the Mother.

The Orchids: symbolic flower of Colombia, epiphytic plant, that is, which can inhabit a living body without depriving it of nutrients. This characteristic, added to its delicacy and ability to harmonize, reminds us that we are called to build peace, fraternity and synodality.

The Paths: the variety of works and ways through which the FMA Institute generates a culture of Peace on the Planet. The colors are those of the Colombian flag.

Coffee beans: they express the richness of Colombia, the bond with the land and the commitment to care for our Common Home.

It is a charismatic tradition, a significant moment in the family of our Institute, a symbol of love and trustworthiness that we celebrate in an environment of prayer and joy, to express the gratitude and love that unite us to our Mother General, as the center of communion of our Institute.”

The other details of the programme for the preparation will be sent to you later.

VOCATION CAMP

I thank you all for the efforts you have put in as individuals and communities during this academic year to promote vocations. I take this opportunity to thank the Regional Coordinators Sr. Josemary Dunna for AP & TS region, Sr. Ashalatha Pushparaj for Karnataka region & Sr. Rosily Devassy for Kerala region and the other sisters in charge of vocation in the communities who have made a lot of efforts to coordinate and plan for the vocation camps. Let us pray for the success of the camps and request the community to invite the girls in your contact to participate in the camp.

Kerala: April 03 - 05 in Kunnamangalam

Karnataka: April 17 - 19 in Maradiyur

AP & TS: April 22 - 24 in Ongole

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to these communities for all the arrangements made and for their generous availability to welcome the young people to the community



ANNUAL MEETING OF NDF

We will be having the annual meeting of NDF (National Development Forum) from 18 - 22 March 2023. Provincial House Bangalore is privileged to host this meeting. There will be 45 participants from all the provinces of India, including Sr. Rosy Lopez and seven other sisters from our Province.

INTER-NOVITIATE INTERACTION

On 28th February, there was an Online Inter-Novitiate Interaction of the Novitiates of INB, ING and INS. I joined them for some time. Our Novices, Sr. Haseena Kalkolla and Sr. Namsila D. Sangma participated actively in the interaction and the Quiz online. Thanks to Sr. Supriya Noronha, the Novice Mistress and the Novitiate Community of Nashik for organizing the event.

WISHES AND PRAYERS

Best wishes and prayers to all our students who are appearing for Class X and XII as well as our sisters who are appearing & preparing for their public examinations.

VOICE OF GRATITUDE

- 🌸 A million thanks to all the sisters of the province for the wonderful celebration of the provincial community day on 19th February 2023. It was an experience of family get together. The meaningful liturgy, useful gifts, sharing of delicious snacks from all the communities. High tea in Jesus' Park prepared by Sr. Margrat Mathai and the community added the joy and enthusiasm for the celebration. Sr. Annie Thoppil was the brain behind this simple but meaningful celebration. I appreciate her whole - hearted animation and hard work.
- 🌸 I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Sr. Monica Thomas and community for the loving hospitality shown to the 2nd Batch of Annual retreatants, and Team members from 17th – 18th February, the days of the annual evaluation and planning as well as the Provincial Community Day.
- 🌸 Our sincere thanks to Fr. Biji Thomas SDB who preached the retreat for our sisters from 10 - 17th February 2023. It was a wonderful opportunity to grow in holiness by listening to and deepening the Word of God.

REQUEST FOR PRAYERS

- 🌸 Let us pray and offer sacrifices for our suffering brothers and sisters hit by the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey and also for the people of Ukraine who had been undergoing untold sufferings due to the unending war with Russia.

CONDOLENCES AND ASSURANCE OF PRAYERS

- ✚ The Provincial and Confreres of INM at the demise of Rev. Fr. Arampulikal Joseph SDB (91) on 7 February 2023.
- ✚ To dear Sr. Jacintha Lobo at the loss of her cousin brother Mr. Cyril Pereira (71) on 02 February 2023.
- ✚ To dear Sr. Vineetha Williams at the demise of her beloved father Mr. Williams (72) on 03 February 2023.
- ✚ To dear Sr. Lizy Varkey at the passing away of her dear brother Mr. George (68) on 07 February 2023. Sr. Mary George is shifted from Thiruthiparambu to Auxilium Kottiyam.

- ✚ To dear Sr. Rosa Joseph E J at the loss of her paternal aunt Mrs. Thresiamma (85) on 07 February 2023.
- ✚ To dear Sr. Ancy Mathew at the demise of her cousin Fr. Arampulikal Joseph SDB (91) on 07 February 2023.
- ✚ To dear Sr. Annie Joseph at the passing away of her maternal aunt Mrs. Rosamma (98) on 10 February 2023.
- ✚ To dear Sr. Alice Sebastian at the loss of her brother-in-law Mr. K V Thomas (68) on 11 February 2023.
- ✚ To dear Cecilia (aspirant) at the sudden demise of her dear brother Mr. Basumatary Nicolas (18) in a bike accident on 18 February 2023.
- ✚ To dear Sr. Lucy Michael at the passing away of her paternal uncle Mr. Thomas Kuruvila (88) on 28 February 2023.

CONCLUSION

Dear Sisters, as we journey through the Lenten season, preparing the children for the final exams, with the fatigue of the year-long work, and the heat on the increase, let us keep in mind, we are accompanied by Mary and Joseph who also did not have an easy life. Let the frequent meditation on the hard, laborious life of the Holy Family and above all, on the sufferings and death of Jesus, encourage us to follow the words of our dear Mother Mazzarello concerning, poverty, mortification, obedience and humility. "A good Sister is not content with what circumstances bring, but finds the means of doing more for the love of God, of souls and of her own soul. (C. Page 474).

Good wishes and prayerful greetings to all in the Family.

Affectionately,

Sr Lucy Rose

**Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil
Provincial**

