



**XXX/ 12**

**01 May 2023**

### **My dearest Sisters,**

The month of May will bring us an array of Salesian flowers spreading the sweet scent of their sanctity: Feast of St. Dominic Savio the teenage saint (6 May), 9<sup>th</sup> May the Birthday and 13<sup>th</sup> the Solemnity of our Mother Maria Mazzarello, the humble violet of Mornese, and 24<sup>th</sup> the Solemnity of Mary, Help of Christians our tender Mother and guide. In addition, the annual retreats, the sacred ceremony of the forthcoming final commitment and the entrance of postulants into our Novitiate renew our enthusiasm and fill us with joy and hope. Some of you who are transferred will have the experience of leaving the familiar shores and the thrill and challenges of launching out on new mission and new experiences.

### **ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER**

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 refers to him as a "righteous man" and as a man who "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him." Thus, his greatness is primarily on account of his moral righteousness and obedience to the will of God. St. Joseph responded to God 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 St. 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.

Let us imitate Saint Joseph's virtues by protecting the presence of Christ within our own hearts, the hearts of our family and friends and in the world as a whole. Pray to Saint Joseph, asking him to help us to follow his example so that the hidden presence of our Lord in our lives will grow and come to full maturation. As we take up our daily tasks, let us ask for St Joseph's intercession so all that we do can be for the greater glory of God. We pray for those who are looking for job, those who find their work difficult and for fairer pay and safer working conditions.

### **ST. DOMINIC SAVIO**

St. Dominic Savio, who was canonized in 1954, in his short life, taught others, by example, that holiness can be achieved through the practice of simple, non-flashy actions in one's daily life – behaviors such as cheerfulness, fidelity in friendship, helping others, playing games with children and obeying one's elders. Dominic himself once said, "I am not capable of doing big things, but I want to do everything, even the smallest things, for the greater glory of God." He fulfilled in his short life the extraordinary promise that is present in every young person, the promise of God's life - giving grace at work in them while they are young. Though he died when he was just 15 years old, St. Dominic Savio displayed a remarkable depth of humanity and holiness. St. John Bosco, the mentor who outlived St. Dominic Savio and who became

his biographer, described Dominic as someone who found joy and holiness in doing ordinary things and let his love for Jesus guide him in everything he did. For Dominic the critical moment of growth took place six months after his arrival at the Oratory. On hearing the sermon of Don Bosco becoming a saint, Dominic expressed: I have a great desire and an urgent need to become a saint. My life would be a total failure if I did not become a saint - especially now that I know that it is easy and that one can be happy and be a saint too. Let us also follow the great example of this young saint.

### **ST. MARY D. MAZZARELLO**

Many saints have reached the height of sanctity through the path of simplicity. Holiness that emanate from simplicity is associated with childlikeness, plainness, straightforwardness, unfussiness, austerity and cleanness of mind, heart and soul. Though Mary was unschooled and reluctant to assume a leadership role, she was gifted with wisdom, compassion, and a tranquil, joyful spirit, she radiated Christ's love to all. The life of Mary Mazzarello is a reminder that holiness is possible, it is something daily that we can experience and make resplendent around us as we walk in the furrows of faith. We are not born saints, but we become such by responding to God's grace, by listening to those who places in our path and by speaking to God in prayer. She was a woman of great faith who knew how to recognize the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and in the faces of the poor, of her young students, of her sisters, urging them to love everybody not only with words, but with their example and deeds. Mary Domenica led the community in the atmosphere of welcome and the frank humanity of relationships. Don Bosco wrote from Mornese, "Here we enjoy the cool and freshness, despite the great warmth of God's love."

What God did in the short life of Mary Mazzarello, and is doing through the beautiful living monument to Mary Help of Christians is possible because Maria Domenica was open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, offered through her parish priest Don Pestarino and Don Bosco. She became an apostle leading others to Jesus, and because she loved the Eucharist and our Blessed Mother and practiced humility and charity toward her sisters as well as the young. These are virtues all of us can practice in our own reality, and grow in holiness. Let us relive the Spirit of MM as we celebrate her birthday and feast day.

### **SOLEMNITY OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS**

We are at the start of the month of May, the month dedicated to Our Blessed Mother. For us, Salesians, this month is of added significance as we prepare ourselves for the feast of our heavenly Mother, Mary Help of Christians, and as many of us are commemorating the day when we professed our religious consecration. The devotion to Our Lady under the title 'Help of Christians' clearly exhibits her maternal presence in the events of humanity, of the Church, of the Congregation and of each of us. Mary is the Mother who never abandons her children, but follows them and helps with her intercession. The title Help of Christians has always been invoked since 1500 in the Loreto litanies. The devotion to Mary Help of Christians was already known and widespread at the time of St. Pius V and spread widely following the victory of the Christians against the Turks at Lepanto (1571) and in Vienna (1683). Pope Pius VII, after his release from Napoleonic imprisonment (1814), instituted the feast of Mary, Help of Christians, setting the date on May 24<sup>th</sup>. In times particularly difficult for the Church, Don Bosco became an apostle of devotion to Mary, Help of Christians. In 1862 he confided to Don Cagliero, future cardinal: "Our Lady wants us to honour her under the title of Mary, Help of Christians: "times run so sad that we need the most holy Virgin to help us preserve and defend the Christian faith" (MB VII, 334). In 1868 he erected in Turin a beautiful Basilica named after Mary Help of Christians. One can find there the beautiful and majestic painting, conceived by Don Bosco himself, which represents Our Lady Help of Christians, who with the scepter of command and with the Child in her arms, is surrounded by the Apostles and Evangelists and is suspended on a cloud, and in the background below is the Sanctuary and the Oratory as it appeared in 1868, the year of the execution of the work of the painter Tommaso Lorenzone. The meaning of the whole picture is very clear. Just as Mary was present with the apostles in Jerusalem during Pentecost and at the beginning of the Church's activity, so too she stands to protect and guide the Church over the centuries, especially at troubled moments.

I believe it is apt here to quote a few words of Don Bosco on Mary Help of Christians: “Those who trust in Mary will never be disappointed. In Mary, I placed all my trust. Our Lady never leaves things halfway. I recommend that you always invoke the name of Mary, especially with this title: Mary, Help of Christians, pray for us. It is a prayer not so long, but one that proved itself very effective! Our confidence is in Mary, Help of Christians. The Lord and his divine Mother will not allow it to be repeated in vain: “Mary, help of Christians, pray for us!”

### **III & IV ANNUAL RETREATS**

III Batch Annual Retreat for the sisters will begin at 5.30 p.m. on 03 May and conclude with the Mass at 7.00 a.m. on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Rev. Fr. Biji Thomas SDB from Kolkata province will be the preacher and the last retreat will start on 16 May and end on 23<sup>rd</sup> May with the renewal of the temporary professed sisters. The preacher is Fr. James Mathew SDB from INC province.

### **STUDENTS FOR ITALY**

Sr. Nirmala Mary Joseph will attend the two year Course on Salesian Spirituality at Casa Madre Ersilia Canta, Rome. We wish her an enriching experience at the Heart of the Church and of the Institute.

### **JUNIORATE AT GUWAHATI**

Sr. Benny Cheruvally Dixy, Sr. Chiyyadri Baby Rani, Sr. Benny Saniga and Sr. Kasper Litveena will be joining the interprovincial Intensive Juniorate at Guwahati. We wish them a very fruitful and enriching formative experience.

### **TRANSFERS**

I thank each one of you, dear Sisters, who will be asked for a transfer or new appointment. I am sure that you accept it with much faith, availability and in a spirit of Obedience. May your sacrifice bring joy to you and life to all whom you meet in your mission! All the Sisters who are on transfer this year are expected to be in the new communities by 28<sup>th</sup> May. Those who are unable to join your new community by 1<sup>st</sup> June kindly inform me and your Animator the reason for your delay and the date of your arrival there.

### **ARRIVAL OF CONTACT PERIOD CANDIDATES**

Candidates who have expressed their desire to see and experience our way of life in different places and those girls who were in touch with our Sisters will come to Nirmal Jyothi Bannerghatta by 31 May 2023. I kindly request you to follow them and make sure that they reach safely to the destination.

### **CONGRATULATIONS & ASSURANCE OF PRAYERS**

#### **• Entry into Novitiate**

To our Postulants who will begin the period of Novitiate on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023:  
Maria George, Sindhu Priya Kadavakollu & Padma Priya Karupalli of INK,  
Sara Hembrom & Louni Susanna Ramai from ING  
Aitimary Bamon & Altina R Marak from INS.

We congratulate them and pray that they may respond to God’s call with great generosity and immense joy and love. I am grateful to dear Sr. Thresia Augustine and community for accompanying them and preparing them for this great day. I also express my gratitude to dear Sr. Elizabeth George and Sr. Alphonsa Kurisinkal and their councillors for sending the Postulants so that the young people can have an intercultural Novitiate experience.

#### **• Perpetual Profession**

We raise our hearts in thanksgiving to God for the gift of our dear Sr. Mary Jyothi who is committing herself with her final YES making her Perpetual Profession at the Provincial House Chapel on 24<sup>th</sup> May during the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. Alex Kalathikattil, Rector of Visvadeep community T C Palaya. While we congratulate her let us offer our fervent prayers for her fruitful service among the young.

## Renewals

Twenty one temporarily Professed Sisters will be renewing their Vows on 23<sup>rd</sup> May at Sacred Heart Convent Bangalore. Let us accompany them with our prayerful support that they may remain faithful to the call they have received.

## REQUEST FOR PRAYERS

- ❖ For our elderly and sick Sisters.
- ❖ For the brother of Sr. Elsa Devasia who is still seriously ill.
- ❖ For the sister of Sr. Shantha Bandanadam.

## CONDOLENCES AND ASSURANCE OF PRAYERS

- ✚ Fr Provincial and the Confreres of Chennai province (INM) at the demise of Fr. Kodadala Jayaprakash SDB on 11 April 2023
- ✚ The Provincial and Confreres of ING at the demise of Fr. George Chittappannatt SDB (86) on 14 April 2023.
- ✚ The Provincial and Confreres of INT at the sudden death of Fr. Jayaprakash Reddy SDB (69) on 14 April 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Leena Crasta at the loss of her paternal uncle Mr. Henry Crasta (64) 20 April 2023.
- ✚ The Provincial and Confreres of INK at the demise of Br. Joseph Neeliyara SDB (91) on 17 April 2023.
- ✚ The Provincial and Confreres of IND at the death of Fr. Joseph Nangachiveetil SDB (95) on 28 April 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Nirmala Lazar and the Sisters of INM at the demise of Sr. Philomena Mariadoss (83) on 29 April 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Sheeja Jose at the passing away of her maternal aunt Sr. Larence (95) on 29 April 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Alphonsa Kurisinkal and the Sisters of ING at the demise of Sr. Chinir Elizabeth Moyon (38) on 30 April 2023.

## CONCLUSION

I conclude with the words of Mother General in her Circular 1027: “Preparing for the month of May gives me the opportunity of sharing with you a reflection on the presence of Mary in our life and in the history of the Institute. The Marian reference, precious legacy of our Founders, illumines our identity as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. It does not regard a simple devotion, but rather a presence from which derives a clear setting for life in close connection with the education mission: “to be helpers, like her, especially among young people” (C 4). “Let us be aware of Mary’s presence in our lives and entrust ourselves entirely to her.”

We are called to live like Mary, but above all, with her, to prolong in contemporaneity her motherly mission for many, many young people who wait for our help.

The prayer that rhythms our life as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians is based on the daily remembrance of the Virgin’s presence in the various circumstances with grateful and filial love: “the celebration of her liturgical feasts, the traditional cultural devotions, the entrustment prayer, the daily Rosary valued and animated personally and in community, are the signs of a beloved and recognized Presence”. Pope Francis twitters: The Rosary is the prayer of my heart, the prayer that always accompanies my life.” I would like it if each of us could say the same, ‘the Rosary is the prayer of my heart, the prayer that always accompanies my life.’ Let it be so for each one of us dear sisters.

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

**Affectionately,**



Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil  
Provincial