



**XXXI/ 08**

**01 January 2024**

**My dearest Sisters,  
Loving & Prayerful Greetings for a hope - filled 2024!**

The Divine charm of our little Jesus in the Crib warms our hearts with love and affection and dispels the pain we experience at the thought of our suffering people in the war-torn regions of the world... Only with our prayers can we reach out to them to bring them solace and comfort. Let us do so as frequently and as earnestly as possible. In the midst of all these happenings is the New Year 2024! We feel the need to ask: Hello 2024, What are you bringing for us? For Manipur, Israel, the Gaza Strip, Sudan and Ukraine? End of war and dawn of Peace? To the Infant in the Crib: "Though your hands are small, they are omnipotent. With a simple wave of your little hand, you can calm the raging waves of hatred, anger and revenge as You calmed the stormy sea of Galilee with a single word. "Be calm". Let us remind Him of it and offer sacrifices and ardent prayers for peace in the world.

The New Year opens with the celebration of **MARY MOTHER OF GOD**, and it is also the **WORLD DAY OF PEACE** as the Holy Father, Pope Francis, gifts the entire human world his message with the theme "Artificial Intelligence and Peace." Inspired by the papal letters "Pacem in Terris" of St. John XXIII and "Populorum Progressio" of St. Paul VI, Pope Francis recommends that the church play a greater role in our search for world peace.

"If artificial intelligence were used to promote integral human development, it could introduce important innovations in agriculture, education and culture," writes the Pope, adding that "the way we use it to include the least of our brothers and sisters, the vulnerable, and those most in need will be the true measure of our humanity." All must pay attention and choose well if we are to hand down a better, more peaceful world to the generations to follow." The Holy Father further highlights some of the potential risks posed by AI, for example, misinformation and social control, stressing the need for **regulation and monitoring of the development of AI technologies** so that they serve the human family and the protection of our common home.

The Pope concludes with an invitation to all: I hope that the foregoing reflection will encourage efforts to ensure that progress in developing forms of artificial intelligence will ultimately serve the cause of human fraternity and peace. It is not the responsibility of a few, but of the entire human family. Peace is the fruit of relationships that recognize and welcome others in their inalienable dignity and of cooperation and commitment in seeking the integral development of all individuals and peoples.

It is my prayer at the start of the New Year that the rapid development of forms of artificial intelligence will not increase cases of inequality and injustice all too present in today's world, but will help put an end to wars and conflicts and alleviate many forms of suffering that afflict our human family. May Christian believers, followers of various religions, and men and women of good will work together in harmony to embrace the opportunities and confront the challenges posed by the digital revolution and thus hand on to future generations a world of greater solidarity, justice, and peace.



Marking the Bi-centenary year of the dream of Don Bosco, the Rector Major Fr. Agnel Cardinal Fernandez Artime, referring to the visionary dream, which he calls “*A Precious jewel in the charism of Don Bosco’s family,*” he bequeathed the Strenna of the year 2024 to the entire Salesian family. Rector Major, referring to the dream of Don Bosco, said that the Boys were extraordinary, in the dream of Don Bosco, and the boys we met over the last 200 years and will still meet in the future. I would like to highlight a few crucial features among the many that Rector Major emphasises. In the first instance, to look at *the dream itself* with three initial dispositions: *faith, being children of God, and discipleship*

are “essential keys” to understanding and taking on, for ourselves, what Don Bosco has narrated and left us as a spiritual legacy. The second is to “*look*” at the most important part of the dream: “*the Young people.*” We, as the Daughters of Mary, must know how to look like John. When we fail to see the situations experienced by young people, even the most peaceful ones, those who do not seem to have problems but who face every day the difficulty of making their dreams come true, and again when we do not see them for what they are, whether in their most authentic and beautiful form or in their most tragic and painful one. Our age is scarred by deep social wounds, but let’s not have any illusions. It was not so much different in Don Bosco's time; yesterday, poverty drove young people to steal; today, it drives them to deal; yesterday, they wielded knives; today, it's guns. We are faced with this reality, and we need to intervene as Don Bosco did. The third is the verb *learn*, that the teacher in the dream tells us. We must study, try to understand, and learn; in this way, we will become humble, strong, and energetic to face all the difficulties of life. To learn is to be strong, but we are not talking about physical strength; it is a strength that is *resilience*, or, in other words, the ability not to be discouraged, not to let our arms down, as a sign that nothing can be done. To overcome the temptation to easily abandon our call or passively wait for everything to happen, this danger must be warded off with fortitude and disarmed with the humility of those who are aware of their limitations but also know that they can count on God's constant presence. Learning means not only studying the evil of our time but also learning a method to educate, and the method is all in the dream: *goodness, respect, and patience*. The teacher tells us to be patient, give everything time, and give God time. You can, with your choices, direct, guide, and influence, but it is God who does everything. Rector Major concludes his commentary on the Strenna, expressing the many dreams that he holds in his heart for the young people and for us. He greatly desires to continue growing in charismatic fidelity, encouraging us to seek and translate Don Bosco’s dream into a reality in today’s context. Let us wholeheartedly strive for it. *We can and must learn from Don Bosco; like him, we must stand with young people side by side, offering healthy alternatives empowering them to make brave choices.*



### FEAST OF BL. LAURA VICUNA

Blessed Laura Vicuña whose feast we celebrate on January 22, ascended to eternity in the year 1904, at the age of 12. Her life of virtue and sacrifice has been an inspiration to many, and she was beatified by Pope John Paul II on September 3, 1988. Blessed Laura Vicuña is considered a model of purity, piety, and sacrificial love, and she is venerated as a patroness of victims of abuse and those who suffer unjustly. Laura's sanctity unfolded in the subtleties of her daily existence. One evening, after supper, Laura and her companion Merceditas sought permission to interrupt their game for a prayer at the Sacred Heart statue near the entrance. The statue's elevated position thwarted their desire to kiss its feet. How were they to do it?

Twenty-five years later, Sr. Merceditas recalls, "Laura prayed with such fervor and trust that the statue came down to us, giving us the joy of paying it that homage. Naturally such things were told to no one". One more example from her life: repeatedly, a girl harboring jealousy towards Laura engaged in the malicious act of concealing the wood meticulously prepared by Laura for the morning stove in their classroom. The teacher's arrival revealed an extinguished stove bereft of the essential fuel. The prospect of reprimand, no matter how delicately administered by Sr. Azocar, always proves challenging, particularly when unjust. Remarkably, Laura refrained from offering excuses, promptly making her way to the woodshed. Those responsible for the mischievous deed, finding amusement in hiding her wood beneath the desks, taunted her. Undisturbed, Laura responded with calm serenity, remarking, "OK, I have gained an extra merit for heaven. In another instance, a different girl used to provide herself with a bottle of water, and since her place in class was near the stove, she could skillfully pour the water on the fire as soon as it was beginning to light up. Again, another time, "calmly and serenely," even if it cost her, Laura bent over the stove and relit the fire, to the admiration of all the students.

Sr. Piai says: "Laura had a degree of humility unusual for a child of her age; she was jovial, always ready, at the first tinkle of the bell." Yes, one ring was sufficient for her to cut short whatever work she had been doing. Any gesture was enough to lead her to the heights of heroism. She had a high appreciation for precision, a readiness and ease in carrying out her duty - all of which revealed her anxiety about becoming a saint. Laura's unwavering resolve and serene demeanor in the face of adversity revealed her remarkable strength of character and garnered respect from those around her. Let this little Saint of ours inspire us to be concerned to become saints in our daily lives which in turn becomes encouragement for our young people to live a life of values that leads to eternity.

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

When we think of St. Francis de Sales who was renowned for his gentleness and humility a figure of kindhearted personality comes to our mind. Gentleness is a quality characterized by kindness, tenderness, and a calm demeanor. It involves treating others with sensitivity and respect, even in challenging situations. A gentle person approaches interactions with a soft touch, avoiding harshness or aggression. This virtue fosters understanding and compassion, contributing to harmonious relationships. Being gentle doesn't imply weakness; instead, it demonstrates strength in emotional control and the ability to navigate conflicts with grace. Humility is the virtue of recognizing one's

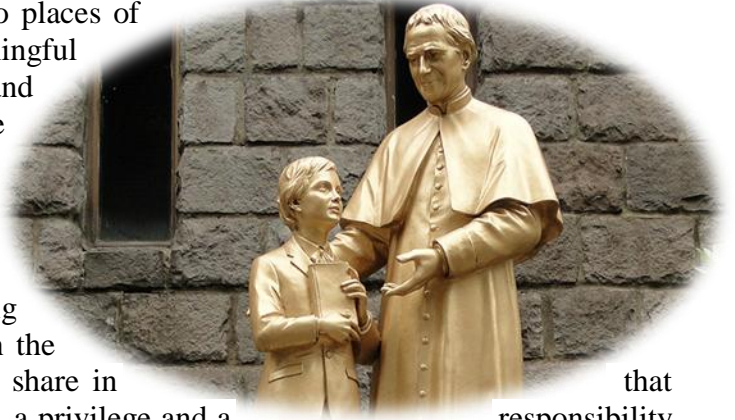


own limitations, acknowledging the contributions of others, and maintaining a modest attitude. It involves a realistic and humble assessment of one's abilities and achievements without arrogance or pride. A humble person is open to learning from others, values teamwork, and doesn't seek to dominate or belittle others. Humility fosters a sense of gratitude, empathy, and a willingness to grow. It is often seen as a key component of genuine wisdom. Gentleness and humility are interconnected virtues that complement each other. A gentle person, in their interactions, often embodies humility by approaching others with recognition of shared humanity and a lack of superiority. Humility, on the other hand, often manifests in gentle behaviour, as a humble person is less likely to be aggressive or domineering. In essence, gentleness and humility are virtues that not only enhance personal character but also contribute to the well-being of communities and societies. Embracing these qualities can lead to more meaningful and fulfilling relationships, personal growth, and a positive impact on the world around us. As we celebrate his feast, let us learn from this Gentle Saint how to be gentle and kind with our young people.



## FEAST OF OUR FATHER AND FOUNDER

The highlight of the month culminates in the celebration of the feast of St. John Bosco, our dearly cherished Father and Founder. As we prepare ourselves to celebrate Don Bosco let us contemplate on the ***Dream of Don Bosco*** and find ways to integrate it into our everyday lives. To the young, the poor and the abandoned of Turin's Industrial revolution, God sent Don Bosco to stir up new flames of hope from the ashes of despair, to breathe transforming dignity into places of shame, and to enkindle a network of meaningful relationships through education, faith formation and responsible social service. Thus, generations were freed from the bleak, dehumanizing cycle of poverty and exploitation... and the ever-expanding Salesian family was born. Just as Mary did for Don Bosco back then, so she does for us today: she helps us to fix our gaze on Jesus, to say YES to his life giving Spirit, so that we may continue the work of God, in the style and spirit of Don Bosco, praising God for our share in that symphony of life that is written in the "key of youth", a privilege and a responsibility which divine providence has entrusted to us as daughters of Don Bosco.



Let's ponder on our implementation of Don Bosco's blueprint for holiness, aspiring to lead lives of sanctity alongside our youth, contributing to the salvation of numerous souls for God. The epitome of holiness is the finest tribute we can present to Don Bosco, who firmly believed 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 extend my heartfelt wishes to you, dear Sisters, Staff, children, members of the Educating Community, Salesian Family, and especially to all our dear Salesians, to whom we are deeply indebted for their invaluable spiritual guidance and animation, a very Happy Feast of our Father and Founder, a figure admired and esteemed worldwide for his multifaceted personality, and, most importantly, for the precious contributions of his youth spirituality and educational principles.

Let's celebrate!

1 <sup>st</sup>	MARY MOTHER OF GOD/WORLD DAY OF PEACE
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 eonomers 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 2023 - 24**

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 2024 and concludes on 20<sup>th</sup> Afternoon. 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. Vallippalam Manuel OCD
09 - 16 February 2023	Fr. Deepak MCBS
3- 10 May 2023	Fr. Deepak MCBS
16 - 23 May 2023	Fr. Biji Thomas SDB

## **CONGRATULATIONS& BEST WISHES**

On behalf of all the sisters of INK Bangalore, I congratulate **Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal and Fr. John Zosiama**, the new Provincials elect of the Salesian Provinces of Mary Help of Christians (ING) and St. John Paul II (INS). We invoke God's abundant blessings upon them as they embark on 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.

## **A HOME FOR THE NEEDY**

We thank God for the gift of a new home to continue the De-Addiction Centre, which was visioned by Sr. Nancy Pereira as a FIDES activity and started as a new activity by Sr. Celine Jacob and the Council under the leadership of Sr. Monica Thomas. I congratulate Sr. Sherly Joseph and the Community of the Provincial House, who dared to inspire and encourage Sr. Sumi Joseph, Sr. Agnes Fernandes and the Staff to find a place to begin this ministry, which is a pressing need of the time. God bless Mr. Antos and Ms. Jhansi, who willingly let us use a Little House with a spacious garden owned by them. The House was blessed on Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>, and inaugurated on December 31<sup>st</sup>, a meaningful way to open the New Year 2024.

## **A LOVING MEMORY OF DEAR SR. ANNIE KOTTARAM**

- On January 17<sup>th</sup>, we remember Sr. Annie Kottaram, who left us a year ago to take her place in eternity. On that day we will have the Holy Mass offered at 10.30 a.m., followed by prayer in the Cemetery and a fraternal meal. We pray for our dear departed Sr. Annie and ask her to intercede for us who continue the earthly pilgrimage.

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

- For the mother of Sr. Bridget Kabilai who is seriously ill.
- For the father of Sr. Sahaya Sangitha Rani who is operated after the fall.
- For the elder brother of Sr. Clara Rayalu who is not well and is admitted in the hospital.

## SINCERE ASSURANCE OF PRAYERS

- ✚ To Sr. Anna Karuvelil at the demise of her cousin Ms. Adhithi Benny (22) on 09 December 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Annakutty and Sr. Teresa Joseph of INB province at the loss of their father Mr. Joseph Theakkumkatil (98) on 10 December 2023.
- ✚ To our Visiting Councilor Sr. Phyllis Neves at the sudden passing away of her sister on 11 December 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Victoria Rani Marsakatla at the passing away of her maternal grandmother Mrs. Rojanamma on 12 December 2023.
- ✚ To the Provincial and Confreres of INB province at the sudden demise of Fr. Lawrence D'Souza (77) on 12 December 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Bridget Jacob at the demise of her maternal uncle Mr. Varghese (74) on 24 December 2023.

## CONCLUSION

As we begin this New Year, let us not only observe the World Day of Peace, but let every day of 2024 be a commitment to the cause of peace that the world hungers for.

### 1. Pray for peace

When nothing else can be done, one can always pray for peace. One can always pray for those who are distressed, in agony, or away from home. A simple prayer for the welfare of those people can make a difference.

### 2. Learn about peace

Without knowing the unrest in the world, the social and political issues in the world, a person would be oblivious to the fact that the world needs peace. Learn about these issues from different sources, and think about how the world can be made better.

### 3. Act for peace

After all your prayers and learning, act. Participate in the endeavour to bring about peace. Teach others about the issues and help the distressed people in your area. Preserve someone from the suffering brought on by societal and political problems. Raise awareness among others in your social circle.

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

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

**Affectionately,**

*Sr. Lucy Rose*

**Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil  
Provincial**



**HAPPY NEW YEAR**