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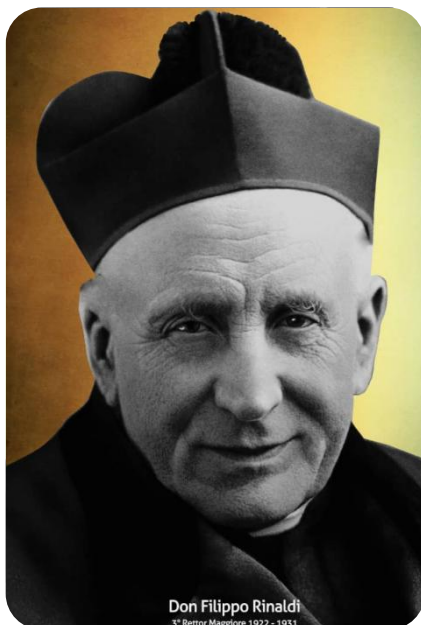
01December 2023

**My dearest Sisters,
Prayerful and affectionate Greetings from the Provincial House Bangalore!**

The revolving wheel of time has brought us all too soon to the year- ending month of December. This too will fly off even faster than all other months. We feel as though it was but yesterday that we celebrated the birth of 2023: an eventful year, of the XVI General Assembly of the Synod on Synodality, the Global Youth Meet in Lisbon, the lingering war between Russia and Ukraine, the eruption of conflict between Israel and Palestine and the one raging in Sudan where two bombs exploded in the very residence of our heroic Sisters: Sr. Miriam and Sr. Teresa from our Province, Sr. Elizabeth Cyril (INM), Sr. Celestina Phawa (INS) and Sr. Teresa Roskowska from Poland. They are sheltering 60 women and their children. Sr. Miriam our missionary says, the Madonna took the bomb on herself to save her daughters and children because, while they were unhurt, the bomb knocked down the beautiful picture of the Ausiliatrice and tore it into pieces!

3 December the First Sunday of Advent marks the new liturgical year bringing us to the happy event of Christmas. With the rumblings of wars in various parts of the world, how 'Happy' this year's 'Christmas' will be! It is unpredictable. May the Prince of Peace bring his peace to this peace hungry world. Let us hold on to Rosary, and ask our Blessed Mother to save the world from self-destruction. May the Advent Season wipe out war clouds and bring the sunshine of peace and joy.

BL. PHILIP RINALDI



Bl. Philip Rinaldi, born in Lu Monferrato on May 28, 1856, was the eighth of nine siblings. He first encountered Don Bosco at the age of five during a walk with the priest. Though not initially saintly in temperament, Don Bosco recognized Rinaldi's potential as an educator. At ten, Rinaldi entered the Salesian house in Mirabello for studies, where he saw Don Bosco twice and felt an immediate connection. Due to mistreatment in the boarding, he returned to his family but received letters from Don Bosco urging him to come back saying "Don Bosco's houses are always open for you". He later confided: "I had no intention of becoming a priest." Don Bosco, however, thinks differently. Don Bosco visits him in 1876. Philip is now twenty years old and with a marriage proposal. Don Bosco definitively wins him over to his cause. Don Rinaldi then confessed: "My choice fell on Don Bosco... he had answered all my objections." Rinaldi, plagued by headaches and a bad left eye, stayed with his family for a year. Don Bosco's last invitation, "Your headache will go away, and you will have enough to study," convinced him to return. Reflecting on past resistances, Rinaldi hoped not to abuse grace in the future. At twenty-one, he embraced his vocation in Sampierdarena, taking perpetual vows in 1880 and being

ordained by Don Bosco on December 23, 1882, expressing his happiness if she (Madonna) kept him with her. Once elected Rector Major he will say: "I assure you that for me it is a great mortification; pray to the Lord so that we may not spoil what Don Bosco and his successors have done". Bl. Rinaldi adapted Don Bosco's spirit to the evolving times, excelling in fatherly qualities and initiating various programs. He emphasized the care for vocations, established spiritual and social assistance centers for young workers, guided the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and provided support for the Salesian Cooperators. His organizational prowess was evident in establishing the World Federations of former students. Recognizing the enduring impact of education, Rinaldi underscored the importance of former students, stating, "We sacrificed ourselves for them, and our sacrifice must not be lost." His work among the zelatrixs of Mary Help of Christians paved the way for a new form of consecrated life—the secular Institute of the "Volunteers of Don Bosco." his multifaceted role, Rinaldi left an indelible mark on the Salesian legacy, blending tradition with innovation to address the evolving needs of society. He passed away peacefully on December 5, 1931. His remains rest in the crypt of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin. Bl. Rinaldi's legacy challenges us to address the ever-changing societal landscape and impels us to actively engage and encourage past-pupils and the youth in joining the Salesian Family, ensuring that the sacrifices invested in their formation are not in vain.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

On the 8th of December, we pay homage to Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception. This designation holds a profound significance in Catholic devotion to Mary, emphasizing her unique role in salvation history and her close connection to the redemptive mission of her son, Jesus Christ. According to the doctrine, the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the very moment of her conception, enjoyed a singular grace and privilege bestowed by Almighty God. Through the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of humanity, she was preserved immune from all stain of original sin. Mary, by the grace of God, remained untainted by any personal sin throughout her entire life. This immaculate state, free from both original and personal sin, defines her unparalleled purity.

For Don Bosco, the Father and Teacher of Youth, Mary perpetually embodies the Madonna. Though the apostle of Mary's devotion transcends titles, a summary of Don Bosco's unwavering love for Mary under various designations might be encapsulated as *"A change of outfit, but the Same Woman."* At different junctures in Don Bosco's personal and pastoral journey, specific Marian devotions took precedence, with the Immaculate Conception holding a special place. Long before Pope Pius IX's 1854 papal bull officially defined the Immaculate Conception as a dogma of faith, Mary in this aspect already played a guiding role in Don Bosco's life and ministry. The Chieri seminary chapel, where Don Bosco received his sacred orders, was dedicated to Mary Immaculate. Her statue adorned the main altar, and her image was venerated in a side chapel. The oratory, launched in 1841, coincided with the feast of the Immaculate Conception, signifying its deep connection to this Marian devotion. Don Bosco's tradition of delivering a conference on December 8, invoking Mary Immaculate's protection on the Oratory's work, started in 1842. Domenic Savio, influenced by Don Bosco, established the Company of the Immaculate Conception, showcasing the enduring impact of this devotion on those under Don Bosco's guidance.

Don Bosco's love for the Madonna encourages us to emulate the virtues of the Immaculate Mother Mary, embracing her as a guiding force in our lives. Following in Don Bosco's footsteps, our devotion to Mary may undergo a change in expression but remains rooted in unwavering love for the Same Woman. In imitating Don Bosco's commitment to Mary, we chart a path marked by grace, compassion, and steadfast faith. May our endeavors, akin to those of Don Bosco, be blessed and sheltered under the watchful gaze of Mary Immaculate, inspiring generations to come. Let us celebrate this feast by contemplating Mary's total dedication to God and neighbor, renewing our commitment to a vowed life of faithfulness to God, to one another in community, and to God's people, especially the poor.



HAPPY FEAST!

FROM THE DIVINE WOMB, HOPE TAKES ITS FIRST BREATH

Christmas, a time of reflection and celebration, invites us to cherish the bonds that enrich our lives. Let the twinkling lights illuminate not just the surroundings, but also the kindness within our hearts. In the midst of the carols and the laughter, may you find moments of peace and gratitude. This holy season, let's extend a hand to those in need and share the spirit of generosity. Embrace the magic of Christmas, where the simple act of giving can light up someone's world. "The Little Drummer Boy" is a popular Christmas carol with a significant and enduring cultural impact. Originally titled "Carol of the Drum", the song was written by Katherine K. Davis in 1941. The song tells the story of a poor young boy who visits the newborn Jesus in Bethlehem. Unlike the wealthy and powerful individuals who bring elaborate gifts, the drummer boy presents a simple gift: the playing of his drum. This



emphasizes the themes of humility and the idea that sincere and heartfelt offerings are valuable, regardless of their material worth. The drummer boy's gift is not a material possession but a musical one. The act of playing the drum becomes a symbol of using one's talents and abilities to bring joy and reverence. This theme reinforces the idea that everyone, regardless of their state in life, has something unique and valuable to offer. The narrative of a young boy as the protagonist in the song resonates with children and adds an element of innocence and simplicity to the Christmas event. The message that even a child's small and sincere offering is appreciated can be particularly touching. As we immerse ourselves in the glad tidings of Christmas Season let it serve as a poignant reminder that the essence of Christmas lies not in grand gestures, but in the sincerity of our hearts. This season, may we, like the humble drummer boy, discover the profound joy that comes from sharing our unique gifts, no matter how simple, and may the spirit of generosity continue to illuminate our lives throughout the year. In the cradle of hope, human dignity is restored. Despite progress, many still endure the deprivation of their humanity, echoing the cold, impoverished, and rejected child Jesus. Our proximity today must comfort the most vulnerable. Let's unite in celebrating salvation, beholding Jesus' open arms—a merciful embrace. The Child's whisper, "Peace," resonates, urging us to embrace the Season, embracing hearts, and releasing grievances.

Let us widen the circle of our prayer to include the whole world, especially our Holy Father Pope Francis, our Superiors, all our Animators, Sisters, parents and dear ones, benefactors, and all the members of our Educating Communities. Let us not forget the war-stricken Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Gaza, Sudan where our Missionaries are still struggling and its suffering population.

Christmas and New Year blessings to all!

Let's celebrate!

- 03** - ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
- 05** - BL. PHILIP RINALDI
- 08** - IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
- 10** - HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

12	- OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
25	- CHRISTMAS
26	- ST. STEPHEN
27	- ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE & EVAGELIST
28	- HOLY INNOCENTS
31	- HOLY FAMILY



WRITE FOR THE GOOD WORKSHOP

- ✚ Sr. Ancy Mathew and Sr. Kalpana Amarlapudi will be participating in a Capacity Building Workshop at Don Bosco Provincial House Hyderabad from 4th – 7th December 2023. This workshop on writing Project Proposals for Fundraising for Community Development programs is organised by Bosco Seva Kendra (BSK) Hyderabad.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

- ✚ Sr. Agnes Fernandez along with a FIDES Staff will be attending a Certificate Program in Social Entrepreneurship with De Addiction Counselling Techniques, Treatment and Management from 4th–9th December 2023 at Chennai. This program is organized by Center for Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Chennai.

CONSULTATIONS

- ✚ Consultations for the appointment of Animators of Communities are already sent to you. Let us accomplish this sacred duty with prayerful preparation and responsible proposals.

MEMORIES OF OUR SISTERS

- ✚ Sr. Alice Chacko, who tries to go around the houses and collect materials to complete the lives of our departed Sisters, has requested you to contribute to the writing of the life stories of our Sisters who have touched our lives and the lives of the people and are now called to eternity. Your valuable recollections of their lives and deeds will go a long way to bring to conclusion the next volume of “*Resonant Memories*”. Therefore, I would like to remind you dear Sisters to add your share in order to bring out a fitting memorial to our Sisters who have gone before us and may their lives continue to inspire us.

SINCERE ASSURANCE OF PRAYERS

- ✚ To Sr. Mary Joseph at the demise of her father Mr. Joseph K. J (90) on 02 November 2023.
- ✚ To Fr. Provincial and the Confreres of Dimapur province on the demise of Fr. Thettayil Joseph (94) on 13 November 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Aliamma Pallipurathukunnel at the passing away of her sister Mrs. Mary Sebastian (90) on 15 November 2022.
- ✚ To Sr. Selvi Lourde Panneer at the sudden demise of her cousin Mr. Thomas Philip (48) on 20 November 2023
- ✚ To Sr. Arogyam Madanu at the demise of her maternal aunt Mrs. Prakashamma (62) on 21 November 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Lissy Jose at the loss of her paternal uncle Mr. Baby Mechery (82) on 24 November 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Elizabeth Kuruvila at the demise of her cousin Mr. K.O. Kuruvila (87) on 24 November 2023.

- ✚ To Sr. Alphonsa Kurisingal, Provincial and the sisters of the Guwahati Province at the passing away of Sr. Celine Porinchu (86) on 28 November 2023.
- ✚ To Sr. Suni Antony at the passing away of her uncle Mr. K.C. Johny (69) on 29 November 2023.

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

- Sr. Helen Thonippara who is going down in health these days.
- For the brother of dear Sr. Nirmala Joseph who is still in the hospital after having undergone the gallbladder operation and is recovering.

CONCLUSION

Mother General's latest Circular 1033 is a beautiful reflection of the Apostolic Exhortation "*Laudate Deum*" (Praise God) by Pope Francis published on October 4, 2023 as a follow up of his Encyclical "*Laudato Si*". The document, which focuses on taking stock of the situation and indicating what to do before it is too late, is strongly action-oriented.

Above the sound and fury of wars and violence, rings loud and clear is the "loudest wake- up call" of Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation "LAUDATE DEUM" with his "10 cries to care for our Common Home". This urgent alarm is because, the Pope has realized that" our responses to the 'Laudato Si' have not been adequate" and he fears that the earth may be "nearing the breaking point". He feels that the climate change has failed to penetrate the moral life of people and the society at large.

Just the same, he asks us to hold on to hope because giving up hope "would be suicidal, for it would mean exposing all humanity, especially the poorest, to the worst impacts of climate change". The 'TEN CRIES' of Pope Francis to the whole world, remind us that 'Climate crisis is real; that world leaders should wake up and realize that climate change is "human error, not a Divine design"; that technological and economic power alone will not succeed to solve this gigantic problem. He calls for "action at all levels" that should be taken without delay; he highlights individual actions, including changes in personal, family and Community habits". The change has to begin with the self. He also insists change at national and international levels. As children of Don Bosco, should we not respond to such an urgent call of the Pope? Consult the Educating Community. Let us prepare adequate action plan at all levels and carry them out without delay.

This is the season of school day celebrations. Let us not forget the fact that our every apostolate is to be an instrument of evangelization. We know that it is not only to pour baptismal water on anyone, but to share the message of Jesus who became man to offer peace to our troubled world. Mother General points out: "*Currently, the world is shaken by wars, violence and the thirst for domination. It is therefore necessary, indeed urgent to educate, and educate ourselves towards a coexistence in which we can experience authentic fraternity, reciprocity, indispensable requirements for building peace together*".

Once again, I wish you, dear Sisters, the members of the Salesian Family and educating community, the Parish Priests and the Salesians who render their invaluable services to us, a joyful Christmas and a peace-filled New Year. Convey my warm and affectionate greetings to your beloved parents and dear ones and assure them of my prayers.

Good wishes and prayerful greetings to all in the Family.

Affectionately,



Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil
Provincial