



XXXII/ 08

01 January 2025

My dearest Sisters,

Loving & Prayerful Greetings for a Grace - filled 2025!

The dawn of a new year is like a blank canvas, awaiting the touch of our creative strokes. Each one of us holds a palette rich with vibrant colours—faith, hope, love, and trust—offered by the Strenna for 2025. With faith as our brush and hope as our guiding light, we are called to co-create a masterpiece alongside the young people entrusted to our care. Let this year be a testament to the beauty we can craft together, rooted in Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

January is a month brimming with cherished Salesian celebrations, inviting us to rediscover the treasures of our spirituality and our call to holiness. It offers us inspiring models—individuals anchored in hope, faithfully responding to God’s call in their time and place.

We begin the New Year with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, stepping forward under her loving guidance. Our gratitude to God and to Mary Help of Christians should inspire us to remain “anchored in hope,” journeying as pilgrims alongside young people, guiding them toward the richness of the Salesian way of life. Together let us live the Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope.

STRENNA - 2025

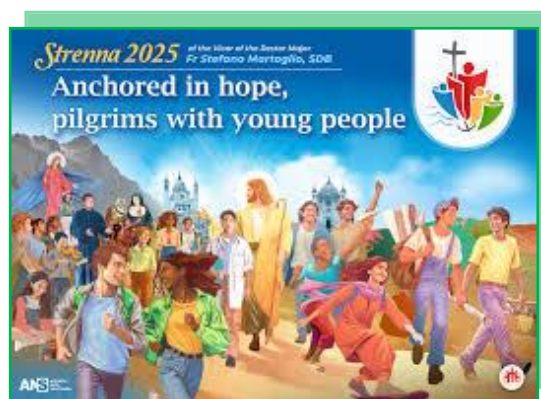
“ANCHORED IN HOPE, PILGRIMS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE”

On December 27, 2024, at the General House of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Fr. Stefano Martoglio, Vicar General of the Salesians of Don Bosco, unveiled the Strenna for 2025: “Anchored in Hope, Pilgrims with Young People.” “This spiritual guide calls us to ground our lives in hope and walk alongside young people as companions on their journey of faith.

Hope, like an anchor, secures us amidst life’s uncertainties, offering stability and courage. As pilgrims, we are reminded that our role is not to impose a path but to accompany young people, helping them discover their unique purpose. Through attentive listening, compassionate dialogue, and steadfast love, we empower them to become agents of transformation within their communities.

Central to this mission are the fruits of Don Bosco’s hope, particularly *joy* and *patience*, which form the bedrock of the Salesian spirit.

Joy, born from the certainty of the “already,” is the hallmark of authentic hope. Don Bosco’s life radiated this joy, creating an atmosphere where young people felt loved and valued. As Dominic Savio expressed, “We make holiness consist in being very cheerful.” This joy is not fleeting or superficial; it is a profound Christian joy rooted in faith and hope, a victorious harmony with God’s promises. In the Salesian spirit, joy becomes a daily expression of faith—a vibrant testimony that overcomes despair and inspires others.



Patience, on the other hand, emerges from the awareness of the “not yet.” It is the quiet strength that sustains us in times of trial, trusting in God’s ultimate plan. Jesus exemplified this during His passion, embracing suffering with hope-filled endurance. Don Bosco echoed this virtue, encouraging his followers to persevere by remembering the eternal reward awaiting them. As he often said, “When patience falters, let hope sustain us!” Mother Mazzarello also embodied this, urging her Sisters to carry daily crosses with trust and purity of intention, knowing that patience shields and nurtures hope.

As we embrace the Strenna for 2025, let us anchor our lives in hope, allowing its fruits to permeate our mission. Let our joy, born of faith, be contagious, drawing young people into the love of Christ. Let our patience, rooted in trust, guide us as we journey alongside them, helping them navigate life’s challenges with courage. Together, as hopeful pilgrims, may we inspire young people to seek and embrace the fullness of life in Christ, radiating the joy and resilience of Don Bosco’s spirit in all we do.

FEAST OF BL. LAURA VICUNA



We celebrate the feast of Blessed Laura Vicuña on January 22, and let us reflect on her life, which radiates a profound love for the Blessed Mother. Laura, who ascended to eternity in 1904 at the tender age of 12, remains an enduring inspiration through her virtues of purity, piety, and sacrificial love. Beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1988, she stands as a patroness of victims of abuse and those who suffer unjustly. Her life invites us to embrace Mary as our mother, protectress, and guide.

Laura’s devotion to Mary was not mere sentiment but a resolute commitment. She often prayed, “O Mary, conceived without sin, I, Laura Vicuna, take you as my protectress, my lady, and my mother. At your feet, I firmly resolve to use all my energy to promote your glory and devotion.” These words encapsulate her resolve to imitate Mary’s angelic purity, perfect obedience, and boundless charity—virtues that became the wellspring of her joy and peace.

Her devotion manifested powerfully even in her final days. At the Salesian college in Junín, Laura’s serene acceptance of suffering left an indelible mark on all who encountered her. Her room became a sanctuary of grace, where visitors left edified, as though stepping out of a holy place. Fr. Felix Ortiz, a cleric present during her last moments, observed how Laura’s unwavering love for Mary gave her strength. Holding a small statue of Our Lady, Laura whispered, “It is Mary who gives me strength in these moments.”

When asked what consoled her most as she faced death, Laura’s response was profound: “What consoles me most in these moments is the fact that I have always been devoted to Mary. Yes, she is my mother...she is my mother.” These words, spoken with her last breath, encapsulate the secret of her life. Her unshakeable trust in Mary nurtured her innocence, serenity, and love for Jesus, enabling her to offer her life as a sacrifice for the salvation of her loved ones.

Laura’s legacy challenges us to make Mary’s virtues our own and to instill this devotion in the lives of those we serve. Her purity inspires us to live with integrity; her obedience calls us to embrace God’s will, and her charity compels us to love selflessly. By fostering a filial relationship with Mary, as Laura did, we too can experience the transformative power of her maternal love and guidance.

Let us, like Laura, entrust ourselves to Mary with complete confidence, resolve to promote her glory, and teach our recipients to walk in her footsteps. In doing so, we honour the memory of Blessed Laura Vicuña and carry forward her mission of love and devotion. Through Mary’s intercession, may we grow in holiness and lead others to the heart of Jesus.

A GENTLE REFLECTION FOR THE FEAST OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Reflecting on the life of St. Francis de Sales, whose virtues and tireless dedication continue to serve as a shining example, we are called to renew our commitment to embody his spirit in our service to those entrusted to our care. Born into a noble family on August 21, 1567, Francis exhibited intelligence, gentleness, and a profound desire to serve God from an early age. His journey, marked by perseverance and deep faith, demonstrates how steadfast devotion can overcome any obstacle.

Despite opposition from his father, Francis embraced his priestly vocation, dedicating himself entirely to God's will. His mission during the Protestant Reformation exemplified his courage and unwavering zeal. Traversing Calvinist territory, he endured rejection, harsh winters, and physical suffering, yet his patience never wavered. Through innovative methods like writing religious tracts and engaging with children, Francis successfully brought thousands back to the Catholic Church. This ingenuity and compassion challenge us to find creative and loving ways to evangelise and nurture faith in those we serve.

Francis' deep spirituality sustained his tireless efforts. He recognised that active work, when united with God, strengthens inner peace rather than diminishing it. His letters, filled with wisdom and patience, guided countless individuals toward holiness, reflecting his belief in the universal call to sanctity. St. Francis taught that holiness is not reserved for clergy or contemplatives but is attainable by every Christian, regardless of their state in life. This conviction aligns beautifully with Don Bosco's vision of forming "good Christians and upright citizens," inspiring us to foster holiness in our recipients, helping them encounter God in their everyday lives.

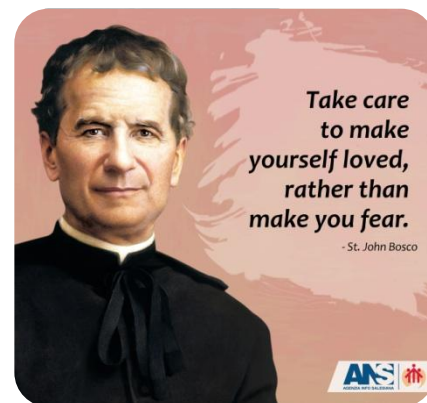
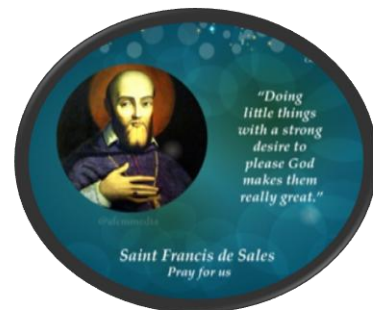
For Francis, Christian charity was inseparable from his mission. Whether catechising a deaf man, engaging with children, or corresponding with individuals seeking spiritual direction, he demonstrated that love is the cornerstone of true service. His life reminds us that our work, no matter how demanding, must flow from a heart centred on God.

In our mission, let us draw inspiration from St. Francis de Sales, embodying his virtues of patience, creativity, and unwavering faith. As Don Bosco encouraged, may we labour tirelessly for the salvation of souls, ensuring that our recipients encounter the love of Christ in our actions. In every encounter, may we, like Francis, radiate holiness and inspire those we serve to strive for sanctity in their own lives.

FEAST OF OUR FATHER AND FOUNDER

Finally, the pinnacle of the month is the feast of St. John Bosco, our beloved Father and Founder. As we approach this joyful celebration, let us recall Don Bosco's words that "holiness consists in being cheerful." His life was a testament to this truth—a life filled with tireless dedication, unwavering faith, and deep joy rooted in his love for God and the young. Reflecting on his legacy, we are invited to embrace his spirit and strive for holiness in our own lives.

Don Bosco's path to holiness was simple yet profound. He believed that ordinary actions done with extraordinary love could transform not only



ourselves but those we serve. His threefold approach to sanctity—reason, religion, and loving-kindness—forms the heart of the Salesian way. These pillars remind us that holiness is not distant or unattainable; rather, it is within our reach when we live with integrity, foster a deep relationship with God, and approach every task with love and compassion.

For Don Bosco, the presence of Mary, Help of Christians, was central to his mission. He trusted her maternal guidance in all his undertakings and urged his collaborators to invoke her intercession. Do we, too, seek Mary's guidance as we navigate the challenges of our mission? Like Don Bosco, let us entrust our work and the young people in our care to her loving protection.

Holiness, Don Bosco taught, begins in our daily lives. It is found in fulfilling our duties faithfully, praying with sincerity, and nurturing joy in our hearts. He often reminded his boys, "Run, jump, shout, but do not sin!" A life of joy, free from sin, is a life that radiates God's love. How often do we take time to ensure that our interactions and actions reflect this joy?

As we celebrate the feast of St. John Bosco, let us examine how well we live out his call to holiness. Are we living with a spirit of joy and trust, even amidst difficulties? Are we forming relationships rooted in love and faith? Are we striving to touch the hearts of the young with kindness and understanding?

Holiness is the greatest gift we can offer to Don Bosco and the young people we serve. May his words echo in our hearts: "God does not look at the greatness of the work, but at the love with which it is performed." Together, let us renew our commitment to walk this path of love and holiness, inspired by our beloved Founder, and strive to bring the light of Christ to all we encounter.

I extend my heartfelt wishes to you, dear Sisters, Staff, children, and all members of our Educating Community, as well as the Salesian Family. A special greeting goes to the beloved Salesians, to whom we owe so much for their profound spiritual guidance and support. On this Feast of our Father and Founder, let us remember and honour him, a man admired and respected by the world for his remarkable character. Above all, we celebrate his gift of youth spirituality and the educational system he created, which continues to inspire and uplift countless lives.



1 st	MARY MOTHER OF GOD/ GLOBAL FAMILY DAY/WORLD DAY OF PEACE
3 rd	HOLY NAME OF JESUS/ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA
5 th	EPIPHANY
8 th	BL. TITUS ZEMAN SDB
12 th	BAPTISM OF THE LORD
14 th	ST. DEVASAHAYAM PILLAI
15 th	BL. LUIGI VARIARA
16 th	ST. JOSEPH VAS
18 th – 24 th	UNITY OCTAVE
22 nd	BLESSED LAURA VICUÑA
24 th	ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
25 th	CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL
26 th	REPUBLIC DAY
27 th	Sts. TIMOTHY AND TITUS
31 st	ST. JOHN BOSCO

HEARTY-WELCOME

The INK Bangalore Province warmly welcomes you, dear Sr. Celine Jacob, as you reach here on the 2nd of January 2025! We are delighted to have you with us for a few days as you prepare important documents related to your work. Sr. Celine Jacob brings with her the richness of her experience and dedication as a visiting councillor from Rome. We are truly blessed by her presence and look forward to her valuable insights and guidance during her short time with us.

SALESIAN YOUTH FEST

Sr. Maria Rajeswary and Sr. Litveena Kasper along with 23 young people are participating in Salesian Youth Fest at Tirupattur from December 29 – 1st January 2025. We wish them an enriching experience of celebrating the Fest with young people from every part of our Country and from Sri Lanka.

SUBMISSION OF ACCOUNTS& RETREAT

The local ecomomers will undertake the annual closing of accounts on the following dates: January 7-8 for the Karnataka region, January 9-10 for Andhra and Telangana regions, and January 11-12 for Kerala region. May the Holy Spirit be with you, offering guidance and wisdom as you carry out this vital responsibility!

ANNUAL RETREATS 2025

Kindly set aside your regular commitments and prepare yourselves for this significant time of personal and communal renewal. The first Annual Retreat will begin at 5:30 p.m. on January 12, 2025, and will conclude on the morning of January 19, followed by administrators' meeting. Everyone is expected to be at the Provincial House by lunch. May these days be a profound opportunity for an encounter with the Lord, strengthening and stabilising our spiritual journey. Let us support them with our prayers throughout this retreat.

Dates	Preacher
12- 19 January 2025	Fr. Jerry V.M SDB
07 - 14 February 2025	Fr. James Mathew SDB
03- 10 May 2025	Fr. Jerry V.M SDB
13 - 20 May 2025	Fr. James Mathew SDB

CONGRATULATIONS& BEST WISHES

To the Salesian Deacons soon to be ordained as Priests, may you always remain steadfast in your commitment to Don Bosco's legacy. May you carry out your mission with unwavering zeal and joy, spreading the Kingdom of God wherever you go.

TRIENNIAL EVALUATION

As you already know, the important event of the Triennial Evaluation at the PCI level will take place at the Provincial House, Manikandam, Trichy from January 24 – 28, 2025. Mother General and three

General Councillors will be present for this significant event. It will be a time of evaluating the journey we have made in the past three years after GC XXIV. It will certainly offer us deeper insights for a renewed commitment in our life and mission. Mother General in her Circular 1043, calls for a renewed commitment to the Salesian mission of education and evangelization fostering joy, generosity and creative fidelity.

Along with me, will participate in the TE Meeting the two FMA Delegates Sr. Alice Chacko and Sr. Dayana Rodriguez, the Lay Collaborator Mrs. Jyothi M. from Auxilium School Bangalore and Youth Representative Miss Albina Manikyam from Bannerghatta. We pray for the fruitfulness of this meeting.

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

HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES AND SINCERE PRAYERS

-  To Sr. Lucy Michael at the passing away of her paternal aunt Mrs. Mary Kurian (85) on 4 December 2024.
-  To the Provincial Sr. Mabel Gothorp and sisters of ING province at the sudden demise of Sr. Anna Thekkanal (63), on 4 December 2024.
-  To the Provincial Sr. Rosa Pyngrope and sisters of INS province at the passing away of Sr. Marinella Hinge (37) on 10 December 2024.
-  To Sr. Haseena Kalukolla at the loss of her beloved father Mr. Rajath Kalukolla (68) on 12 December 2024.
-  To Sr. Bridget Thonippara at the loss of her sister -in-law Mrs. Sosamma Joseph, on 20 December 2024.
-  To Sr. Jigi Paul at the demise of her dear uncle Mr. Augustine Edakkara (68) on 21 December 2022.
-  To Sr. Thresia Augustine and Sr. Josmy Joseph at the loss of their beloved maternal aunt Mrs. Mariamma Joseph (79) who passed away on 26 December 2024. We also offer our deepest sympathies to Sr. Thresia on the passing of her brother-in-law, Mr. Sebastian Abraham (53) on 30 December 2024.
-  To the Provincial Sr. Meenakshi D'Silva and sisters of INB province at the demise of Sr. Phyllis Fernandes (85) on 28 December 2024.
-  To Sr. Mereeta Louramma at the passing away of her paternal aunt Mrs. Kanakamma (70) on 30 December 2024.
-  To Sr. Annamma Joseph at the demise of her beloved father Mr. Joseph Cherian on 31 December 2024.

CONCLUSION

As I conclude, I want to draw attention to Pope Francis' message for the 58th World Day of Peace, which underscores the profound significance of forgiveness. He reminds us of the biblical plea, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Forgiveness is not only a personal spiritual practice but also a key foundation for global peace. By embracing forgiveness, both individuals and nations can break free from cycles of resentment, promoting a culture of reconciliation and mutual respect. Pope Francis also highlights the interconnectedness of global challenges, such as environmental degradation, the plight of migrants, and the devastating effects of war. He calls for collective responsibility, emphasizing that true peace can only be achieved when humanity acknowledges its shared duty toward the well-being of all. His message aligns with the principles of the Jubilee Year, encouraging us to reflect on our actions and pursue justice and peace.

A central aspect of the Pope's message is the call to forgive international debts. Many nations are burdened by debt that prevents their development and perpetuates poverty. By forgiving these debts, the international community can promote justice and solidarity, enabling these nations to invest in sustainable

development and improve the well-being of their citizens. This initiative reflects a commitment to creating a more equitable global financial system.

Furthermore, Pope Francis advocates for the abolition of the death penalty, viewing it as a violation of human dignity and a barrier to peace. He encourages nations to adopt restorative justice practices focused on rehabilitation and reconciliation, not retribution. This is in line with the broader theme of forgiveness and the pursuit of peace through understanding and compassion.

As we step into the New Year 2025, I invite you, dear sisters, to pause and reflect on the powerful gift of forgiveness. It is not only a key to personal peace and well-being but also deeply aligned with the loving teachings of Christ, our Lord and master. I gently encourage each of us to forgive from the heart—letting go of past hurts, grudges, and anger. Forgiveness is a gift we give not only to others but also to ourselves, bringing healing to our minds and bodies. It opens the way for joy and peace, both within us and among us. May we also share this message of forgiveness with those around us, inspiring them to embrace this transformative practice in their own lives.

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**

