

THE SALESIAN PROVINCIAL



Province of Mary Help of Christians, Guwahati, Assam, India

JS – 79/2023

1 November 2023

My dear Confreres,

Greetings from the Provincial House, Guwahati.

On 1 November, the Church celebrates **ALL SAINTS DAY**, reminding everyone of his/her call to holiness and be Saints. We read both in the Old and the New Testaments, God's bidding, "Be holy for I am holy" (Lev 11: 44), "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Is 6:3), "Be perfect as your father is perfect" (Mt 5: 48), "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Pet 2:9), and "Called to be Saints" (1 Cor 1: 2-3), (Rom 1:7). "Salesians, be holy, be Saints" is also what we often have heard from mouth of the Pontiff. Our father, Don Bosco equated cheerfulness and dutifulness as roadmaps to Sainthood. He founded the Society of St Francis de Sales, so that its members, first and foremost, may become Saints.

Often I have questioned myself why after 100 years of miraculous growth in the North east and with the pedagogy of the Preventive system in our hands, we Salesians have not been able to become Saints ourselves or promote sainthood in our institutions. First and foremost, we need to want to be Saints. Like Don Bosco, we need to speak and invite pupils to be Saints. Dominic Savio was inspired to be a Saint after listening to the homily of Don Bosco on becoming Saints. Don Bosco spoke with power and authority. We must create the right atmosphere in all our institutions for our pupils to grow in sanctity. While Venerable Stephan Ferrando, SOG Constantine Vendrame, SOG Orestes Marengo and SOG Francis Convertine are on the way to Sainthood, we must, as Pope Francis had told us, recognise sainthood in many of our ordinary brothers and sisters around us and promote it.

On 2 November, on the **ALL SOULS DAY**, we remember affectionately, gratefully, and with strong nostalgia, our dear confreres, the Salesian family members, and our own family members, who have gone before us. Catholic tradition tells us that the souls in purgatory are united with us through their prayers. We pray for their purification, so that they too may enter and enjoy the bliss of paradise.

As we commemorate our departed brethren, we are reminded of some profound truths about human existence on this earth. Life, in all its complexity, is undeniably so beautiful. It is a wonder that neither humanity nor science can replicate, for the essence of life is a creation of a Divine force. The universe, with its vast expanse, is a testament to the grandeur of existence, while our own planet is a captivating tapestry of diverse cultures,

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religions, and limitless possibilities. It is a world teeming with enchanting wonders waiting to be explored.

At the core of our existence, human beings are inherently social animals. The fullness of life is most profoundly achieved through nurturing our connections, both with the Divine and with our fellow human beings. Our relationship with God provides spiritual nourishment and purpose, and our connection with our neighbors fosters a sense of community and shared humanity.

Very importantly, life is also so fragile. Today we are alive and within a moment, we end our journey on earth. In Matthew 25:13, Jesus tells his listeners, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh". St Paul in his 1 Thessalonians 5:2 taught the early Christians that "You are fully aware that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night". As we pray for those who have gone before us and are in purgatory, we need always to live in the state of grace to be judged worthy to enter heaven.

RECTOR MAJOR CONVOKES THE 29th GENERAL CHAPTER 2025 - TURIN

His Eminence, **Cardinal Angel Fernandez Artime**, who still is the Rector Major of our Congregation, by virtue of special approval from Pope Francis till July 2024, has on 24 September 2023 convoked the 29th General Chapter which will be celebrated in February 2025. I quote his own words of convocation below:

"At this time, with joy and great hope, from this Salesian holy place that is "our" Valdocco and in accordance with Article 150 of our Constitutions, I am convening the 29th General Chapter, which will have what follows as its theme, developed in three core areas (or parts) of particular importance, and which are real challenges for the Congregation.

"PASSIONATE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST, DEDICATED TO YOUNG PEOPLE"

Living our Salesian vocation faithfully and prophetically. *"So they came to him... to be with him and to be sent out to proclaim the message"* (Mk 3,14-15).

Core area 1: Animation and care of the true life of each Salesian.

Core area 2: Salesians, Salesian family and Lay People together "with" and "for" young people.

Core area 3: A courageous review and re-planning of the Congregation's Governance at all levels.

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The General Chapter will begin on 16 February 2025 and end on 12 April 2025, the same day Don Bosco arrived at Valdocco with his boys, 12 April 1846, adapting the shed to become a chapel. The opening celebration of the Chapter will be the Eucharist of the Holy Spirit at 5 pm in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

The venue of the Chapter will be Valdocco - Turin (Italy). Today it has the best possible facilities for excellent reflection, prayer, work, and decision-making. The Rector Major and the General Council have appointed Fr Alphonse Owoudou, the Regional Councillor for Africa and Madagascar to be the Chapter Moderator.

The final words of the Rector Major are affectionate, paternal, and an invitation to put everything into the hands of God and Mary, our Mother. He writes, "Dear confreres, I only lack one thing to ask of you: to prepare ourselves over the next sixteen months in a personal, community, and provincial journey in an attitude of profound prayer. Without prayer, without a heart that continually matures in faith, all we can do are sociological things that will be over almost before they begin. Only in faith does God have the power to make all things new. May our Mother the Help of Christians, Mother of the Church, accompany us as she accompanied Don Bosco throughout his life until the moment when she had him understand that "She had done everything".

CONVOCAATION OF THE 22nd PROVINCIAL CHAPTER OF THE PROVINCE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, GUWAHATI - ASSAM

I firmly believe that God speaks and wants to speak to us - the Congregation and the Province intimately during these moments in the history of the Congregation and the Province, considering the emerging signs and needs of the times, especially of youth.

God speaks through human beings (Pope and Recto Major), events, communities and especially through structured and organised study of ourselves in Synods, Chapters, etc as regards our fidelity to the call to love, holiness, charism, consecration and mission.

He speaks to us through the young who are the gem and the treasure of our life and mission. While the young want to live the plan of God for them fully, they face innumerable hurdles and challenges in life, especially in today's times. They call us to accompany and assist them realistically and fruitfully.

We need to listen and do what the Word of God through the Spirit tells us to do. Together with Samuel, let us say, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening" (1 Sam, 3: 9).

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Hence, it is with great joy and deep commitment to carry out the mandate of the congregation, I convoke the **22nd PROVINCIAL CHAPTER** of the Province to be celebrated in the Province on the theme, **PASSIONATE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST, DEDICATED TO YOUNG PEOPLE**". Living our Salesian vocation faithfully and prophetically. The chapter is in preparation for the 29th General Chapter that the congregation will celebrate in February 2025.

In consultation with the Provincial Council, I am happy to appoint Fr Kachappilly Joy (KJ) as the Moderator of the Chapter. I thank him for his availability. The Chapter will be held at Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati, from 08 to 13 April 2024. I am happy to appoint Br Mani Joby, Fr Alex Mathew Kattakayam, Fr Cletus S Pattamkulam, Fr Charles D Lakra, Fr Saju Kariyil, Fr Nicodim Aind, Fr Aloysius Hemrom, Fr Pojit D Marak and Fr Todik Jimmy T Sangma as members of the Preparatory Commission. I thank them and wish God's choicest blessings on their preparatory work.

I invite confreres and communities to pray and spend much time in study and contemplation on our pledge to be "passionate about Jesus Christ, dedicated to the young people" and live our Salesian vocation faithfully and prophetically.

The first meeting of the Pre-Capitular Commission under the guidance and animation of the Moderator will take place on 15 November 2023 in the Provincial House. During that meeting, the Commission will draw up a clear roadmap, meant to steer the communities initially and later, the Chapter members towards the final days of the Provincial Chapter. Other information and community requirements of the Chapter will be sent to the communities by the Commission at regular intervals.

I request the Rectors and leaders to co-operate and collaborate with the commission and carry out the responsibilities at the community level to their best. I request other members of the communities also to take this task wholeheartedly.

I assure you Fr KJ Joy, Moderator, the Pre-capitular commission and all the communities my prayerful support.

May Jesus, the Good Shepherd and one who worked in synodality during his earthly life, our Blessed Mother Mary, Help of Christians and St John Bosco be with us, before, during and after the Chapter, and may we truly become more passionate about God and the youth.

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PROMOTED WITH A GREAT VISION - A CALL TO BE A SALESIAN BROTHER

On 1 and 2 October, all the Salesian Brothers of our province, except one assembled at the Hubert D’Rosario Missionary Aspirantate, Sirajuli for the study of a document, reflection and deliberation. The aspirants enthusiastically interacted and learned much about the vocation of a Salesian Brother and how the Salesian brothers live out their vocation happily, effectively and to the full. They had the opportunity to know the Salesian brothers personally, pray and play with them. Indeed those two days were fully well spent. In my homily, I spoke to them about St Artemides Zatti and his vow “I promised, I believed and I recovered”.

Don Bosco founded the Salesian Society with the intention of creating a religious community that would address the needs of disadvantaged youth. His decision to include both priests and lay brothers (Co-adjutors) in this society was rooted in several key intentions. Don Bosco recognized that to meet the needs of the young people holistically and effectively, a multi-faceted approach was necessary. Priests could provide spiritual guidance, education, and sacraments, while lay brothers with practical skills and life experiences could offer mentorship, vocational training, and a sense of family. Lay brothers often possessed practical skills in various trades and crafts, making them valuable in providing vocational training to the youth. This approach allowed young people to acquire employable skills and become self-sufficient, breaking the cycle of poverty.

Lay brothers, by living in close proximity to the youth and often sharing similar backgrounds, serve as role models and guardians. Their presence creates a supportive and familial atmosphere within Salesian institutions, which is essential for the holistic development of the young. Including lay brothers enabled the Salesian Society to establish a wider network of institutions and extend its reach to a greater number of young people. Lay brothers could manage schools, workshops, and other facilities, allowing priests to focus on pastoral and sacramental duties.

The Salesian Brothers’ Congress of South Asia region will be hosted by the Province of Kolkata, from 30 December 2023 to 3 January 2024. The theme is ‘The Salesian Brother in the 21st Century: Identity, Fidelity, Leadership’. These three pillars form the foundation upon which the Salesian Brothers build their lives of service, dedication, and impact. Such Congress is held once every six years. These are moments of grace, reflection, and renewal of commitment, preceded by prayer, discernment and much planning. The South Asia region looks forward to this event.

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EVANGELISING MISSION AT THE HEART OF THE SALESIAN CHARISM - A SEMINAR

The Seminar on “Evangelising Mission at the Heart of Salesian Charism” to launch the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian mission expedition on November 11, 1875 was held from 3 to 7 October 2023 at Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati. The event brought together 142 members of the Salesian Family from all over South Asia - Bishops, Provincials, experts in the various fields of the Salesian apostolate, experienced missionaries and people holding responsible positions in the congregations providing a platform for insightful discussions and sharing of experiences.

The seminar commenced with my opening address wherein I briefed the assembly about DBI, Assam, Guwahati and our province. I too emphasized the importance of evangelization as an integral part of Don Bosco's vision. The keynote address, delivered by Most Rev. George Palliparambil SDB, Bishop of Miao, was a wake-up call to the entire Salesian Family to stick to the heart of the entire work of Don Bosco and the Salesian Family which is the salvation of souls.

The Biblical foundation of the intrinsic relation between evangelization and mission as seen in the charisms was elucidated by Fr. George Thannickal and Br. Abraham M. Antony. Fr. Roy Antony highlighted the centrality of evangelising mission in the first seven decades of the Salesian congregation. Fr. Deli Kapani analysed the documents from the General Chapters and the teachings of the Rectors Major to focus on the same. Sr. Dominica Kasho looked at the same for the congregation of the MSMHC. Fr. Ashley Miranda from Mumbai and Fr. Shilanand Kerketta from Delhi proposed ways and means to instill in the young Salesians and the Salesian Family members a greater love for this vital aspect of the charism entrusted to us.

Fr. Patrick Lepcha showcased the need for revisiting the youth work with innovative methods to reach out to young people to transform their lives and make them agents for the salvation of other young people in need. Digital platforms, and reaching out to the public at large with social media and other means were among the strategies discussed as Fr. Ernest Rosario from Chennai and Fr. Michael Makri from Shillong shared their reflections born out of vast experience.

The seminar recognized the importance of interfaith dialogue in contemporary society. Fr. CD Sebastian, MST, from IIT Mumbai and Sr. Teresa Joseph FMA from Mumbai shared their experiences of promoting understanding and co-operation among different religious communities, in diverse cultural and religious contexts. The FMA, MSMHC, SMI, VSDB, SDB and the DISCIPLES analysed the work done in the field of evangelization



giving an idea to the participants about the tremendous amount of effort put in by the entire Salesian Family.

The seminar concluded with a forward-looking discussion on the future of evangelization within the Salesian Charism based on the reflections, which were the fruit of the seminar. Strategies for personal spiritual growth, animation of the young and the laity, re-invigorating of the missionary spirit in the Salesian Family through missionary groups and movements, adapting to changing societal needs and fostering collaboration among Salesian family members to re-focus on the centrality of evangelisation were explored.

DON BOSCO COLLEGE TURA ACCREDITED BY NAAC WITH B GRADE - CONGRATULATIONS

The National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) Bengaluru accredited Don Bosco College Tura with B grade after two and half days of verification and assessment. The team consisted of three members from Bengaluru, Nainital and Nagpur. Earlier the college had uploaded documents and reports, as per NAAC requirements for prior assessment. The province owes a great debt of gratitude and appreciation to Fr Bivan Mukhim and his team for their relentless and meticulous preparations for this exercise and congratulates them on this achievement. I had personally witnessed the NAAC committee of the college working overtime for this evaluation. Today the college is a proud centre of quality learning for the youth of the northeast, having 3000 students in its rolls in the morning, day and evening shifts.

During the interaction with the Governing board, the visiting team emphasized the research mentality of teachers, incentives to motivate teachers towards higher performance, value education, and establishment of a centre for development of the Garo tradition and culture in the campus.

VISIT OF FR STEFANO MARTOGLIO - JUBILEE OF CONFRERES - CONSULTATION FOR THE NEW PROVINCIAL - APPRECIATION FROM FR STEFANO

From 16 to 25 October 2023, Rev Fr Stefano Martoglio, Vicar of the Rector Major was with us in the Province. On 17 October, Fr Martoglio presided over the Jubilee Mass at St Joseph's Co-Cathedral and led the Province and the Salesian family in praying for the jubilarians. This year we celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of profession of Rev Fr Raphael Cherukareth (CV), the Silver Jubilee of profession of Rev Fr Biju Michael Pulianmackal (our Regional), Fr Pius Tharakunnel and Fr Vincent Xalxo and the Silver jubilee of profession of Fr Joseph Dennis Solomon, Fr Martin Louis Bhengra, Fr Zacharias Minj, Fr Abhilash Vadakkekara, Fr Sanjay Aind, Fr Saju Kariyil and Fr Albert D Sangma.

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After the Holy Mass, the jubilarians were felicitated in a formal and very well-prepared programme, consisting of songs, dances, presentation of mementos and speeches, appreciating and congratulating them on reaching the great milestone. The programme organised at Mamma Margarete hall, was well attended by confreres, representatives of the Salesian family and the young. In a special way, I appreciate Fr Pojit D Marak and Fr Joy Kachappily who took pains to prepare a well researched felicitation address and appreciated the jubilarians. The celebration concluded with a festive meal. Fr Martoglio who attended the programme till the end appreciated the way the Province honoured the jubilarians for their missionary life especially their contribution in the mission.

I place on record my deep appreciation to Fr Vice Provincial, Fr Economer, Fr Rector, Fr Fr Administrator, Fr Marcus Lakra, other confreres and the Support Staff of the Provincial for their meticulous planning and execution of the celebrations so well. It was indeed a very happy day for everyone.

The animation and consultation to discern and propose the next Provincial for the province have gone on well. Fr Martoglio was clear and precise in his animation, besides being approachable and close to the young and the confreres. All the confreres attended the animation programme and participated in it in an edifying manner. Fr Martoglio expressed his great edification and satisfaction with the consultation process and felt that the vast majority have already submitted their consultation papers. The confreres who delayed it, will have time till 10 November. The confreres who are outside the province have been sent the necessary instructions and the consultation sheets. The clerics in Shillong, Sonada and Dimapur did the exercise, moderated by Fr Martoglio himself.

I am grateful to Fr Joseph Teron and Mr Andreas Mardi, Driver, for their self-sacrificing work of accompanying Fr Martoglio and Fr Patrick to all the regions of the province and making all necessary arrangements. It was a tough responsibility, as it involved planning and sending information ahead to visit not only the centres of animation but also many other institutions of the province and those of the Salesian family.

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF TURA DIOCESE - "MY SOUL GLORIFIES THE LORD" (Lk 1:46)

It is a proud and happy moment for the three Bishops, the religious and clergy and the faithful in Garo Hills as the Diocese of Tura celebrates the Golden Jubilee of its establishment from 2 to 4 November 2023. The celebration which takes place after a series of preparations gives opportunity for the people of the diocese and beyond, to be grateful to God, to Mary and to valiant missionaries down memory lane and today, for

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the uncountable blessings and progress that the Church in Garo Hills has made over these golden years on behalf of the people of God.

On this occasion, we gratefully remember our own Salesian confreres, especially the pioneers Fr Archimede Pianazzi, Fr Louis Rocca, SOG Orestes Marengo and hosts of others including from the Salesian family whose contributions are in many ways pathbreaking and driven by clear vision. May God continue to bless the diocese especially in the building of His kingdom of love and peace.

INFORMATION AND REMINDERS:

The delegates of all Commissions had an enriching meeting on 28 October, 2023. It is unfortunate that some remained away from it. The details of the deliberations will be shared with the province soon.

Whenever one goes out of the Province, the traditional practice is that one informs first the religious authority. It includes going to INS and IND too. Kindly follow the norm. There are a few who are disregarding it.

I remind all that all Bank accounts, including those allowed for scholarship purposes, be operated by double or triple signatures. It is against religious discipline and smacks of cheating and insincerity to operate any account singly. The Rectors/Administrators need to play a proactive role in this.

It is recommended that payments to the suppliers/publishers of school items be made not later than three months of starting of the sale. The communities need to organise the sale of books systematically and ensure proper accounting.

All the communities of the province are asked by the SPCSA to draw up lines of action based on the report of the Rector Major after the Team visit in Hyderabad. Another line of action needs also to be drawn up by the communities to implement the recommendation of the Rector Major after the extraordinary visitation of the province.

Those who have not attended the annual retreat can kindly enrol your names for the last retreat from 8 to 14 December in the Provincial House. Those who wish to attend the charismatic retreat in Dimapur are permitted to do so. I had shared the details earlier.

CONDOLENCES

To the Province of Dimapur, at the passing away of Fr PO Sebastian.

To Fr Francis Cheeramben at the passing away of his sister-in-law at the age of 67.

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CONCLUSION

As we pray for the souls in purgatory, we endeavour to live our lives daily in a state of grace, as our life, though is beautiful, is also so fragile.

Pope Francis' message for the World Mission Day 2023, "Hearts on fire, feet on the move" (Lk 24:13-35) is simply amazing. We all need to read it with great attention.

My appreciation to communities which organised programmes during the Puja. Satgaon organised a Charismatic retreat, Umswai organised the Karbi Catholic Women's convention, DBSTI animated the past pupils, Bhootechang organised the Career Guidance etc. Other communities too organised some programmes. Puja holidays are the best days for the annual retreat for the youth of the school/college and the parish.

It looks like very few institutions collaborated in the DB International Film Festival. One could imagine how the young could have benefited, had we organised it but alas, we did not.

Finally, I present to you a brainy definition on leadership. "Leadership involves a complex interplay of psychology, behavior, and influence. Great leaders possess self-awareness, emotional intelligence, adaptability, vision, and resilience. They also understand the psychology of influence and persuasion, empower and delegate effectively, handle conflicts and negotiations, prioritize the well-being of their team, and continuously learn and adapt. **Authenticity is a key trait that fosters trust and respect.** By understanding the psychological aspects of leadership, individuals can develop the necessary skills to become effective leaders who make a positive impact".

Assuring you of my prayerful remembrance,
Yours sincerely in Don Bosco,

Fr Januarius Sangma, SDB
Provincial



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NOVEMBER 2023		
Date	Day	PROGRAMME
1	Wed	Guwahati - All Saints' Day
2	Thu	Guwahati - All Souls' Day - Cemetery Mass
3	Fri	Guwahati >> Tura - Golden Jubilee Celebration of Tura Diocese
4	Sat	Tura : Golden Jubilee Celebration of Tura Diocese
5	Sun	Tura : Bosco Mount >> Blessing of a home >>> Garobadha
6	Mon	Garobadha - DB College Tura (NAAC Assessment)
7	Tue	Rongkhon >> Chidekgre & Chandigre
8	Wed	Rongkhon : Wedding Blessing >>> Guwahati
9	Thu	Guwahati >>> Bangalore
10	Fri	Bangalore - Don Bosco Higher Education India Meeting (DBHEI)
11	Sat	Bangalore - DBHEI Meeting
12	Sun	Bangalore - DBHEI Meeting
13	Mon	Guwahati : AGM and Board Meeting, Bosco Reach Out (BRO)
14	Tue	Dotma : Blessing of the School Facade >> Guwahati
15	Wed	Guwahati : Chapter Preparatory Commission Meeting (9.30 am) PH
16	Thu	Guwahati - Provincial House Community Picnic
17	Fri	Guwahati
18	Sat	Guwahati - DB Tech Meeting (9.30 am - 4.30 pm)
19	Sun	Guwahati - Holy Mass in the Co-Cathedral
20	Mon	Guwahati
21	Tue	Guwahati - International Conference for School Administrators' - DBI & Administrators' Meeting, Provincial House
22	Wed	Guwahati >> Administrators' Meeting, PH
23	Thu	Tura : Wedding Blessing - Sacred Heart Shrine
24	Fri	Guwahati
25	Sat	Guwahati - Provincial Council Meeting, Provincial House
26	Sun	Guwahati : Mass at Don Bosco Institute, Kharguli
27	Mon	Guwahati - Meeting the Sisters of Khetri
28	Tue	Bongaigaon – Bengtol
29	Wed	Ramfalbil - Dotma (Meeting the Prenovices)
30	Thu	Kokrajhar

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