

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

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

JS – 53/2021

1 August 2021

My Dear Confreres,

Greetings from the Provincial House, Guwahati!

On 21st July 2021, the three Salesian Provinces of North East India (Guwahati, Dimapur and Shillong) and the Salesian Family celebrated solemnly the historic event of the acceptance of the Assam Missions by the Salesian Congregation on 21st July 1921, touching the 100 years milestone. God providentially gifted the North East with all its ethnic colours and flavours, and especially its natural spiritual orientation towards Christianity to the spiritual family of St John Bosco. On 20th July, the communities organised a memorial adoration and prayer service to prepare ourselves for this auspicious day. The animation material, prepared by the Provincial's office, vividly recounted the historical events that led to the humble yet daring acceptance of the Assam Missions by the Congregation.

About this historic day, our history reads thus: “On 21st July 1921, Rev. Fr Paul Albera, the then Rector Major of the Salesians, acceding to the repeated requests of Propaganda Fide, accepted the Assam Missions, after the Salvatorians left the North East due to World War I. Reiterating Peter's words to Christ, *in verbo autem tuo laxabo rete* (at your words I will let down the net) (Lk 5:5), Fr Albera sent his Salesians to the Assam Missions. It was the beginning of a glorious chapter in the history of the Indian Missions, that is replete with missionary adventures and achievements which deserve to be written in letters of gold.”

GOD'S INITIATIVE AND HUMAN CO-OPERATION

Article 1 of our *Constitutions* says, “With a feeling of humble gratitude we believe that the Society of St Francis de Sales came into being not as a merely human venture but by the initiative of God”. “We believe” that God always takes the first step and inspires human beings to collaborate to fulfill his plan. In the history of human salvation, the Church and the Congregation, God's initiatives abounded. The dogmas of the Immaculate conception and the Assumption show God's initiatives – in the Immaculate Conception to preserve Mary from all stain of original sin from the moment of her conception and in the Assumption to assume her body and soul into the glory of heaven at the end of her earthly sojourn. The angel Gabriel was sent by God to Mary to announce the advent of his Son into the world as the Messiah. God intervened in the life of Johnny Bosco when he was still 9 years old. The Majestic person in the dream gave him a mission to transform the fierce wolves into gentle lambs. When Johnny Bosco was

at a loss on how to execute his mission, he promised to give him a Teacher who in turn told him to make himself humble yet robust.

Later, an orphaned Bartholomew Garelli providentially met Don Bosco in the sacristy, who gave him the first opportunity to initiate a vast movement of persons (Salesian Family) to transform their institutions into homes to the homeless and centres of love and education to those who needed to be loved and educated. From then on, with a preliminary catechesis and a devout “Hail Mary”, Don Bosco and his sons and daughters accompanied innumerable youngsters on their journey from irreligiousness to religiosity, from ignorance to knowledge and from being lonely and unwanted into cherished and valued members of Don Bosco’s family.

Indeed God always took the first step on many historic moments in the annals of human salvation but God’s design saw fulfillment when human beings co-operated. Mary co-operated with Jesus in the work of redemption. Don Bosco, saying “Yes” to Jesus’ invitation to turn “wolves into lambs” emphatically said, “For you, I study, for you I work, for you, I live, for you, I am ready even to give my life” (*Constitutions 14*). Human co-operation is indispensable for anything great to be achieved.

In the decision of Fr Paul Albera, we see the ingredients of an inspired decision. It was not a sudden and impulsive decision. He took time before ultimately saying “Yes” to the Propaganda Fide. Again, it was a decision taken on behalf of the sheep who were without a shepherd. The World War I saw the expulsion of the Salvatorians who basically were of the German origin. They had to abandon their mission in the North East which they had started well and in right earnest. The Church made appeals to many Congregations with no success. The Salesians ultimately came forward, despite serious challenges, in order to shepherd the sheep without a shepherd and using the occasion to assert, “Give me souls, take away the rest”.

THE INDOMITABLE PIONEERS WHO DARED AND HOPED

The Rector Major presented to Rev. Fr Louis Mathias, leader of the group, the list of Salesians who would form the pioneer group to Assam. The first list of Salesian missionaries bound for Assam consisted of six priests. At the request of Fr Louis Mathias, five brothers were added to the group. The following were the members of the pioneering team: Fr Louis Mathias (France), Fr Giovanni Deponi (Italy), Fr Emanuele Bars (Spain), Fr Giuseppe Gil (Spain), Fr Giuseppe Hauber (France), Fr Paolo Bonardi (Italy), Br Pietro Aprile (Italy), Br Mario Calzi (Italy), Br Agostino Conti (San Marino), Br Laureano Santana (Spain) and Br Gumersindo Cid (Spain).

At the solemn ceremony of the departure of the missionaries on 23 October 1921, in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin, Fr Louis Mathias described Assam, the new mission field, in such terms as ‘incomparable,’ ‘our Promised Land’ and ‘New Patagonia.’ Referring to the numerous languages spoken in the Assam region, Fr Louis

Mathias said: “We the Salesians will speak the language of the Lord and will repeat the harvest of the first Pentecost”. On 20 December 1921, the group celebrated Holy Mass in the little room of Don Bosco in Turin and began their long journey to Assam. On 6 January 1922, the ship anchored at Bombay. The next day, the group boarded the train at the Victoria Terminus in Bombay to traverse the mainland of India and reached Kolkata on 9 January 1922. Soon they left Kolkata, and boarded the train to Guwahati.

ARRIVAL OF SALESIANS IN SHILLONG

In the morning hours of 13 January 1922, the pioneering missionaries took the winding road from Guwahati to the *Citta dei fiori* (City of Flowers - Shillong). As they reached Shillong, the headquarters of the Prefecture Apostolic of Assam, they noticed the papal flag fluttering over the Divine Saviour Church. Rev. Fr Van Lambergh SJ, Parish Priest, Rev. Br Brisson CSC and a group of children extended a warm welcome to the new group of missionaries. To their great surprise and joy, they realized that the statue of Our Lady over the side altar of the Church at Shillong was that of Mary Help of Christians. Their Madonna, they felt, had preceded them to the missions! They recalled the words of Don Bosco, “Have faith in Mary Help of Christians, and you will see what miracles are!”



At the arrival of the Salesians, the Prefecture Apostolic of Assam presented the following general scenario. It had a geographical area of 170,000 square kilometres, with a total population of 7,309,800. The Catholics numbered 5176, of which 357 were of European and Anglo-Indian origin. The Protestants in the region, mainly the Baptists and the Presbyterians, counted nearly 33,000. The majority of the people in the Brahmaputra Valley were Hindus. There was also a considerable

number of Muslims. In the Hills, people followed various indigenous tribal religions.

Shillong, the centre of the Prefecture and the civil capital of the region, had a number of Catholic institutions like the residence of the Prefect Apostolic of Assam, the Parish Church of the Divine Saviour, St Anthony’s Middle School (with 300 pupils) and Boys’

Hostel (with nearly 50 boys). St Ann's Work Room, St Mary's School (with nearly 200 girls) and Boarding (with nearly 60 inmates) conducted by the RNDM Sisters, St Edmund's College run by the Irish Christian Brothers, and the Loreto School of the IBVM Sisters.

ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE MISSION

The unexpected turn of events necessitated the immediate dispersal of the flock of eleven missionaries. In the beginning of February 1922, Rev. Fr Grignard SJ, who was looking after the Raliang mission, fell sick and pleaded his inability to continue the work. In the same week of February, Rev. Fr Carbery SJ, who was in charge of the mission at Guwahati, had a road accident and the injury made it impossible for him to carry out the mission work. On 5 February 1922, Fr Louis Mathias gathered the group of eleven and, after assessing the situation, decided to disperse and assume responsibility for the centres. Fr Giuseppe Hauber, Fr Giovanni Deponti, Br Agostino Conti and Br Mario Calzi formed the team to go to Raliang; Fr Giuseppe Gil, together with Br Laureano Santana, would go to Guwahati; Fr Paolo Bonardi was placed in charge of St Anthony's Orphanage; Fr Emanuel Bars and Br Gumersindo Cid were placed at the Industrial School; Br Pietro Aprile had the charge of the sacristy and kitchen at the Divine Saviour Church. On 11 February, the group destined for Raliang took to the road, to realize their missionary goal.

Fr Louis Mathias, knowing that soon he would have to assume the full responsibility for the Prefecture Apostolic, made his maiden visit to different areas of the Prefecture, in the company of Fr Lefebvre. A few days after their arrival in Shillong, Fr Mathias and Fr Lefebvre left for Jowai in order to purchase a plot of land, which was under auction. Jowai, the most important centre in the Jaintia Hills, was a Protestant stronghold.

The first celebration of the feast of Mary Help of Christians, in the new mission land on 24 May 1922, was very significant for the faithful as well as for the missionaries. A solemn Marian procession concluded the celebration. That evening, when all the faithful had left, the small group of Salesians present at Shillong, namely, Fr Mathias, Fr Bars, Fr Bonardi, Br Cid and Br Aprile, entered the church and knelt in front of the statue of Mary Help of Christians and made a solemn consecration of the entire Assam Mission to Mary Help of Christians. In that simple ceremony they pledged: "We consecrate to you this land, its mountains, its rivers, its people [and] all its inhabitants."

THE LABOURERES ARE FEW

After having made known the preliminary statistics of the region, Fr Mathias concluded his letter of 24th January 1922 to the Rector Major with the exclamation: "How few are we in front of such an immense work!" Fr Mathias was quick to realize that in the vast Prefecture, the people of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills were more receptive to the Gospel message. He wrote: "It is the most promising because here among the Khasis there is a

great propensity towards Christianity; still with ancient, simple customs, they present an extraordinarily favourable field to be evangelized.”

One of the important initiatives that Fr Louis Mathias undertook was the beginning of the Salesian Novitiate in Shillong in 1923. Soon philosophy and other degree courses for the clerics were introduced at Our Lady’s House, Shillong. In 1925, Cl. Joseph Foglia and Cl. Iginio Ricaldone began their theological studies at Our Lady’s House. Cl. Peter Tonello joined the group in the following year. The official beginning of the studentate of Theology took place in 1928. The first group of the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) under the leadership of Rev. Sr Innocenza Vallino reached Shillong on 8 December 1923. They began their missionary activity at Guwahati by opening an oratory and a workroom for the girls, making regular visits to the sick at the government hospital, and visiting the families in the nearby villages. In March 1926, they opened the first convent in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills at Jowai. *(to be continued)*

BIRTHDAY OF ST JOHN BOSCO

On 16th August, we celebrate the birthday of Don Bosco. His attitude to life is that human life is precious and beautiful, no matter what we go through in life because God is there for us. Within short span of life, everyone can contribute significantly for God’s glory and enrich the lives of others. He became fatherless at the age of 2 and early in life, got inspired to live his life well by dedicating himself to change wolves into gentle lambs and be a shepherd for the shepherdless sheep. While he experienced the assistance of God and Mary, he too did his share of work relentlessly for the dignity and the salvation of the young.

Don Bosco risked his life on many occasions. There were many dangers to his life. His love for life which is God’s greatest gift, made him take care of his life. God also came to his rescue. The story of Grigio—the mysterious dog—is a touching incident of how God accompanied and protected him from the hands of his adversaries.

As we celebrate his birthday, let us be inspired by his life and cherish our own lives too. Let our life style be healthy and edifying, let us, as professed religious give our life entirely to God, to our people especially the young and the mission, let us protect life in all its forms and promote life and let us live our life in such a way that we are worthy of heaven.

FOUR NEW DEACONS OF THE PROVINCE: YOU ARE A BLESSING TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

On 1st July 2021, Archbishop Victor Lyngdoh, Shillong ordained four of our clerics as Deacons at Sacred Heart Theological College, Mawlai following strict Covid protocol. We offer our hearty congratulations to all of them – Dn Romanus Barwa, Dn Vivek Lakra, Dn Paul Minj and Dn Joseph Bara and assure them of our prayerful support and accompaniment. Cl. Hopna Tudu who contracted Covid-19 recently and was severely

affected by it, is still in need of full recovery. They will complete their studies soon and will return to the Province on 12th August 2021.



Eleven of our clerics (2 in the Kristu Jyoti College Bangalore and 9 in the Sacred Heart Theological College Shillong) are beginning their theological formation this year. The clerics who joined Kristu Jyoti College are already having their offline classes while those who will go to Shillong will move to the Pastoral Centre for a week of quarantine in the first week of August. We wish them good and quality theological formation.

SYMPOSIUM OF THE YEAR: TOGETHER WITH LAY PEOPLE IN THE MISSION AND IN FORMATION

I am happy to announce to you some details about the Centenary Symposium of our Province for this year. The theme will be **Co-Responsibility with Lay People in Building the Church in North East India: Formation and Collaboration**. *Fr Maria Arul Anthuvan Tharsis* will be the convener/organiser and will take place on the 9th and 10th October (Saturday and Sunday) 2021. We shall announce the venue shortly.

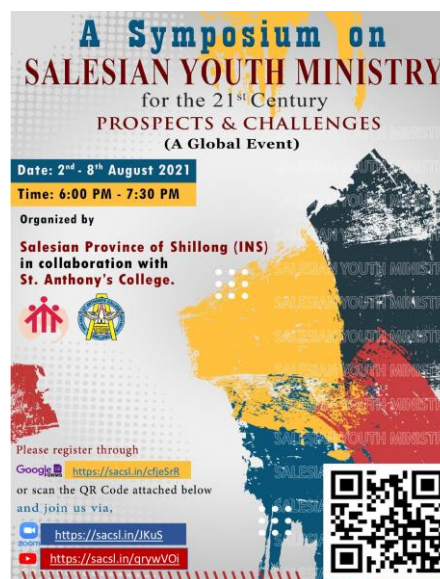
The Participants: Provincial and his Council, Rectors and Leaders of Communities, Salesian Brother Representatives, Representatives of Religious Collaborators & Other Collaborators, Diocesan Fathers (from the six dioceses of Guwahati, Bongaigaon, Tura, Diphu, Tezpur and Nongstoin), Some Religious and Priests of Guwahati, Two lay persons from every centre/parish of Guwahati Province and the Diocesan parishes (in the area of Guwahati Province), Other invited guests and speakers

The Context of the Theme: We as priests and religious are encouraged to welcome lay collaboration in the Church's mission of evangelization and catechesis. We are called to foster the spiritual growth of each of the lay persons who are already involved in our mission in one way or another. They can become partners in our mission, not merely executors of our plans. It is true that the lay people in our parishes and institutions, parents, educators and others are already involved in various responsibilities in building the Church. But we are called to invite all those interested in offering more time and energy from their part to be partners in the one mission of the Church, that they become co-responsible in building the Church with us.

Lay collaboration is not a western concept; it is not an invention of the west to fill in the dearth of apostolic, priestly and religious vocations. The (re)discovery of the vocation and mission of the laity is one of the great frontiers of renewal proposed by the Second Vatican Council. What has been our response to Vatican II's ecclesiology of communion? This Symposium can be a good opportunity to examine ourselves to verify the extent of the journey of the Church in North East in regard to lay co-responsibility. The role of catechists and teachers in the far-flung villages of our region with regard to the Church's pastoral and educative activities is indispensable. We have very good models already, but they could be seen as only one way of approaching the dearth of personnel (priests and religious) in the North East. The Church is not merely a Church of priests and religious. Lay people are companions on the journey, not substitutes or surrogates for the priests and religious: they and we have specific identities and mission-related tasks. We are invited therefore to take further steps to foster greater collaboration among the lay people in building the Church through various means.

AN ONLINE SYMPOSIUM ON THE SALESIAN YOUTH MINISTRY: SHILLONG PROVINCE

The Province of Shillong will organise an online symposium on the theme, "The Salesian Youth Ministry for the 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges (A Global Event)" from 2nd to 8th August 2021 every evening from 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm. Fr Vice Provincial and Fr Marcus Lakra will contact the youth delegates, the youth and others to attend the same. I request the Rectors and the Principals to kindly ensure that such opportunities are gainfully made use of. Besides, the theme is truly relevant to us Salesians and youth apostles. This symposium was planned for the last year but it could not be held due to Covid-19 pandemic.



A FEW REFLECTIONS FROM THE DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH

In the beautiful document of the Church, *Vita Consecrata* of St John Paul II, we read an apt description of our life, “The Consecrated Life, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ the Lord, is a gift of God the Father to his Church through the Holy Spirit. By the profession of the evangelical counsels the characteristic features of Jesus – the chaste, poor and obedient one – are made constantly ‘visible’ in the midst of the world and the eyes of the faithful are directed towards the mystery of the Kingdom of God already at work in history, even as it awaits its full realization in heaven.



In every age there have been men and women who, obedient to the Father’s call and to the prompting of the Spirit, have chosen this special way of following Christ, in order to devote themselves to him with an ‘undivided’ heart (cf. 1 Cor 7:34). Like the Apostles, they too have left everything

behind in order to be with Christ and to put themselves, as he did, at the service of God and their brothers and sisters. In this way, through the many charisms of spiritual and apostolic life bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit, they have helped to make the mystery and mission of the Church shine forth, and in doing so have contributed to the renewal of society”.

In another document, *Christus Vivit*, an apostolic exhortation addressed to young people and to the entire people of God, as a response to the Synod on **Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment**, Pope Francis explains that he let himself be inspired by the wealth of reflections and conversations that emerged from last Synod of Bishops and provides a summary of these proposals.

The title of this exhortation is interesting. While in his previous exhortation, Pope Francis has used the theme of joy as his starting place, in this letter, he gives the reason for our joy: “Christ is alive!” (CV §1). The title of the document, *Christus Vivit* highlights Pope Francis’ desire to have a Christo-centric approach to life. Throughout the exhortation, he constantly invites the young to an



encounter and friendship with Jesus. As the Holy Father, he pastorally states that “No matter how much you live the experiences of these years of your youth, you will never know their deepest and fullest meaning unless you encounter each day your best friend, the friend who is Jesus” (CV §150).

Pope Francis’ artful use of Scripture throughout *Christus Vivit* provides a model of kerygmatic (proclamation of salvation) proclamation. The Pope weaves quotations from Scripture seamlessly into his counsel. These quotations allow the gospel to speak for itself and serve as the message that he desires to share with his audience. They are not a proof text of his argument; rather they serve to accentuate the beauty of the Word of God and its enduring application to the youth of this generation.

In the first two chapters, the Pope presents the witness of youth whom God called throughout salvation history - with Jesus and Mary center-stage - to show how often the Scriptures speak of young people. With this he follows his own advice that “The inexhaustible spiritual riches preserved by the Church in the witness of her saints and the teaching of the great spiritual masters ... we cannot fail to invite young people to drink from these wellsprings of new life. We have no right to deprive them of this great good”. Therefore, throughout the document he brings up the examples of St Sebastian, St Joan of Arc and St Therese of the Child Jesus to encourage an encounter with Christ (CV §229).

Pope Francis uses Chapter 4 of *Christus Vivit* as an opportunity to offer his own proclamation of the kerygma to young people in an exposition of “three great truths”: “God loves you; Christ is your Saviour; He is alive” (CV, §130). In this central chapter, the Holy Father provides a model for “incarnating the kerygma in the language of today’s youth” (CV §211). When describing God’s love for each person, he quotes a homily from World Youth Day in Krakow, where he said, “Trust the memory of God: his memory is not a ‘hard disk’ that ‘saves’ and ‘archives’ all our data. His memory is a heart filled with tender compassion, one that finds joy in ‘deleting’ from us every trace of evil” (CV, §115). Here he uses the language of technology to describe God’s love to digital natives and takes a concept understood by his audience to the deeper and more profound level of the gospel.

In describing the salvation Jesus offers, he points to the beauty of the Christian message, “How valuable must you be, if you were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ! Dear young people, ‘You are priceless! You are not up for sale!’” (CV 122). He then provides concrete imagery to captivate the minds of young people, “Keep your eyes fixed on the outstretched arms of Christ crucified” (CV §123). By presenting this image he aims at “An approach to reality that privileges images over listening and reading,” because it best influences, “the way people learn and the development of their critical sense” (CV §86).

However, the central emphasis of the document is also reflected in its title, “Christ is alive!” (CV §124). The Pope presents with joy the central truth of the Christian faith: Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and offers us eternal life. True to the kerygma proclamation, Pope Francis states, “Every other solution will prove inadequate and temporary ... with Jesus, on the other hand, our hearts experience a security that is firmly rooted and enduring” (CV §128). The encounter and relationship with the risen Lord also becomes the sustaining force of the entire Christian life and the starting point of evangelization. Here, he again relies upon a favourite quotation from his predecessor Pope Benedict XVI, “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (CV §129; *Deus Caritas Est*, §1). This theme of encounter with the risen Lord repeats itself throughout the remainder of this Exhortation.

He closes this chapter with a reflection on the Holy Spirit, who helps us experience the message of the kerygma and live it more fully. With the prompting of the Holy Spirit, we can fall in love with God and this relationship will affect literally everything. “It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning . . . what you read, whom you know ... and what amazes you with joy and gratitude” (CV §132). With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can respond fully to the proclamation of the kerygma and then “can approach everything in life with passion”.

While Pope Francis provides a model for the proclamation of the kerygma in Chapter 4, he also explicitly states his vision for the use of kerygmatic proclamation in Chapter 7, which addresses specifically the pastoral care provided through youth ministry. The Pope says that youth ministry requires two courses of action: outreach and growth (CV §209). When it comes to outreach he describes the language that must be used with young people with what might be his most poetic description of the kerygmatic proclamation, “*We need to use above all the language of closeness, the language of generous, relational and existential love that touches the heart, impacts life, and awakes hope and desires. Young people need to be approached with the grammar of love, not by being preached at.*” (CV §211).

When it comes to growth in the faith, Pope Francis again points to the kerygma. He states that the path for growth includes formation that develops “the kerygma, the foundational experience of encounter with God through Jesus’ death and resurrection” (CV §213). The Pope encourages us to make this formation experiential, rather than a process of indoctrination, “*Rather than being too concerned with communicating a great deal of doctrine, let us first try to awaken and consolidate the great experiences that sustain the Christian life. In the words of Romano Guardini, “when we experience a great love,... everything else becomes a part of it.”*” (CV §212). Therefore, our goal in this process of growth is to proclaim and embody the kerygma to provide powerful

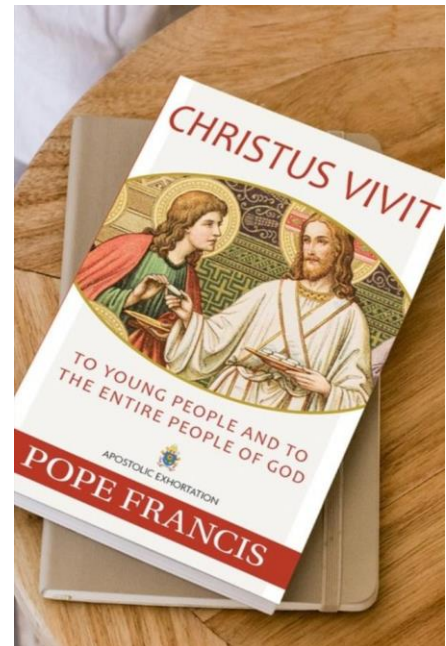
experiences of God that touch the heart, leading to an experience of encounter with God, and the growth of authentic community life.

Pope Francis makes clear his position about the complete integration of the kerygma into the Christian way of life, “This was something I emphasized in *Evangelii Gaudium*, and I consider it worth repeating here. It would be a serious mistake to think that in youth ministry “the kerygma should give way to a supposedly more ‘solid’ formation ... All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma” and incarnating it ever more fully in our lives. Consequently, youth ministry should always include occasions for renewing and deepening our personal experience of the love of God and the living Christ” (CV, §214; cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, §165).

This is not the first time that Francis has returned to this quotation. In *Amoris Laetitia*, he stated that the kerygma should resound in and among families (AL §58) and that a “renewed proclamation of the kerygma” should be given in marriage preparation (AL §207). Pope Francis sees the kerygma as the “joyful experience of encounter with the Lord” (CV §214) that must be the foundation and “centre of all evangelizing activity and all efforts at Church renewal” (EG §164). In other words, if the Church is to grow, the kerygma must be at the centre of our words and our activities.

The Pope has made it abundantly clear that the kerygma must be present throughout our activity as Church, even as part of our missionary outreach at schools and universities. Echoing his statements in *Veritas Gaudium* where he urges, “The most urgent and enduring criterion is that of contemplation and the presentation of a spiritual, intellectual and existential introduction to the heart of the kerygma, namely the ever fresh and attractive good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ” (VG §4), Pope Francis argues in *Christus Vivit* that we need “a fresh experience of the kerygma” with the “ability to integrate the knowledge of head, heart, and hands”.

Throughout *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis not only extols the use of the kerygma in the Church’s ministry to young people, but also demonstrates and models what he preaches. This practice, as we have demonstrated throughout, is not new to this Apostolic Exhortation. However, while the Pope has been consistent throughout his writings, including even his tweets, in employing the kerygmatic model, *Christus Vivit* encourages pastoral ministers to engage young people through the proclamation of the Good News more explicitly. In Pope Francis’s mind, we must give people the reason for their hope and for remaining



Catholic over the noise of the world. To demonstrate this aim he uses the example of Orpheus and makes it clear that we must intone “an even more beautiful melody” than the mythological figure.

CONGRATULATIONS

I take this opportunity to thank and appreciate all the Principals for the good results of their respective Schools in their Class X and Class XII final evaluations / examinations. Congratulations also to all the staff and students! May God bless your sacrifices and hard work! Even as we rejoice in our results, let us continue to encourage and improve on the performance of the weaker students.

A GENTLE REMINDER

It is not as per our norms and is forbidden to accommodate ladies including religious nuns in the rooms within the same building of the Salesian House, especially when a convent of sisters is available nearby. This is an act of imprudence and rightly or wrongly we give opportunities for the people to talk. Aberrations have occurred due to such practices. We need to refrain from it.

CONDOLENCES

Fr Barnabas Mardi sadly lost his brother and mother on two consecutive days. *Mr John Mardi*, his brother, aged 50, passed away on 13 July 2021. He had been sick for the past one year. *Mrs Martha Kisku*, his mother, aged 80, passed away on 14 July 2021. We offer our sincerest and heartfelt condolences to Fr Barnabas and the bereaved family members on this double loss. May the Lord be their strength and consolation! May the good Lord grant eternal rest to the departed!

Fr Dominic Savio Jyrwa, belonging to the Province of Shillong, passed away in Nazareth Hospital, Shillong on 22 July 2021. He was 36. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Fr Paul Lyngkot and the confreres of Shillong Province on the tragic loss of a young confrere. May the Lord grant eternal rest and bliss to Fr Dominic!

Mr Libin Ekka, aged 49, the brother-in-law of Br Nirmal Ekka, passed away on 26 July 2021. He had a fall and was bedridden for a week, before he passed away. We pray for the eternal repose of his soul and also for the bereaved family, as we offer them and Br Nirmal our heartfelt condolences on this tragic loss.

Fr Vincent Durairaj, aged 84, passed away on 31 July 2021 in Chennai. He was the ninth Provincial of Madras (INM), from 1987 to 1993. May God grant him eternal rest and peace. We offer our condolences to the Provincial and confreres of INM.

By oversight, the passing away of the niece of Fr Joseph Teron Langne, Vice Provincial, was left out in the previous Circular. Apologies for the same. *Mrs Fidelia Teronpi* passed

away on 6 June 2021, leaving two kids behind. May God grant her eternal rest in His heavenly kingdom! Our heartfelt condolences to Fr Teron and the bereaved family!

CONCLUSION

I assure you of my prayers on the Feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother. She lived well while here on earth. She will never fail us especially the suffering humanity during these pandemic times. Saints walked the journey of faith not for a year or two but for many years. They never wavered in faith while facing obstacles of life. We pray for our country that it may progress well. May all the decisions and policies be guided by the spirit of the Most High, so that such decisions and policies will be noble, human, all inclusive and promote the dignity and rights of every citizen or child of God. Let the beautiful patriotic song “Into that heaven of freedom, My Father, let my country, awake” and its rich meaning and sentiments flood every nook and corner of our country.

May God bless you!

Yours affectionately in the Lord,



Fr Januarius S Sangma, SDB
Provincial



MONTHLY CALENDAR – AUGUST 2021
PROVINCIAL

1	Sun	Guwahati
2	Mon	Guwahati: Meeting of Conveners, Centenary Video Documentary >> Boko
3	Tue	Boko: Visitation
4	Wed	Guwahati: IUS (Higher Education) Meeting – 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm
5	Thu	Guwahati
6	Fri	Guwahati
7	Sat	Guwahati: Salesian Family Meeting, Provincial House, 10.00 am - 12.00 noon
8	Sun	Guwahati >> Bengtol
9	Mon	Bengtol: Visitation
10	Tue	Bengtol >> Ramfalbil >> Dotma
11	Wed	Dotma: Visitation
12	Thu	Dotma: BTR Regional Meeting
13	Fri	Kokrajhar
14	Sat	Guwahati
15	Sun	Gojapara: Visitation
16	Mon	Gojapara: Birthday of St John Bosco in Don Bosco Shrine
17	Tue	Mendal: Laying the Foundation Stone of HS Science Stream; Garo Hills Regional Meeting
18	Wed	Guwahati
19	Thu	Kamrup Metro Regional Meeting, Guwahati >> Sirajuli
20	Fri	Sirajuli: Visitation
21	Sat	Assam Plains Regional Meeting, Sirajuli
22	Sun	Guwahati
23	Mon	Guwahati >> Haflong
24	Tue	Haflong: Visitation
25	Wed	Haflong >> Guwahati
26	Thu	Guwahati: Snehalaya: Board Meeting - 6.00 pm
27	Fri	Guwahati
28	Sat	Guwahati: Provincial Council Meeting, 9.30 am – 5.30 pm
29	Sun	Guwahati
30	Mon	Karbi Anglong Regional Meeting, Haflong
31	Tue	Guwahati