

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

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

SM-07/2024

1 DECEMBER 2024

Dear Confreres,

Greetings from Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati!

The beginning of December brings us not only to the close of the year, but also to the beautiful season of Christmas - the much loved and sought after feast of the birth of Christ our Lord and Saviour. During this season our hearts are filled with a deep yearning for God. This is expressed in the many symbols of Advent- the colours of the vestments, the weekly candles we light, the scripture readings from Isaiah and the Gospels, the psalms, the antiphons and the wonderful hymns that we sing during Advent. All of these help us to experience at the depth of our hearts the longing for the coming of Christ.

The Incarnation of Christ unfolds a mystery that weaves together many biblical images in our minds of the Messiah who is king, the root of Jesse, the Son of David, Emmanuel, the Son of God. The mystery of Christ's incarnation begins with the annunciation. As we read in the Gospel of Luke, the Angel Gabriel was sent to a Virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the tribe of David (Luke 1:26-38). Mary is surprised and bewildered at the news that she is chosen to become the mother of the Messiah.

To Mary's question "How can this be possible since I've not known a man", Angel Gabriel reveals to her God's plan and the fulfilment of his promise to Israel and the hopes of the nations. Once Mary understands that it is God's plan, her answer is a resolute yes. She conceives by the power of the Holy Spirit so that the child she bears becomes our Redeemer. Her *Fiat* to God's plan of salvation becomes a decisive moment in the mystery of Incarnation. Whenever we pray the Angelus and the Hail Mary, we recall this encounter between her and the angel.

Just like Mary's quiet acceptance of God's will and her quiet waiting for the arrival of the Child Jesus through the days of Advent, may we too rejoice in the light and glory of Christ's coming. We long for the coming of the Incarnate Son of God, our Saviour.

EMMANUEL

The Season of Advent invites to us to contemplate the unfolding of this wonderful mystery at the very heart of which is the Christ Child born in

Bethlehem. He is God's Promise to posterity and the hope of our salvation. Pope Francis wrote in his recent encyclical *Dilexit Nos*: Christ shows that God is closeness, compassion and tender love. (35)

The name Emmanuel immediately evokes God's presence in our midst. Christ is God with us. God comes to dwell among us, becoming our Saviour and Messiah. This is what the patriarchs, prophets, and kings had predicated and longed for. God is not a distant reality, someone who is far away. The eternal, infinite, all-knowing, all-powerful God who holds the cosmos in the palm of his hand becomes a weak, helpless human baby. The mystery of the Incarnation illuminates the character of God, the depths of his love and his grace, the lengths to which he would go to redeem his people and his creation.

The Incarnation marks also God's desire to be with us. In and through Christ, God takes his dwelling among us. He is present in the church, and through the sacraments in each of the faithful. Jesus assures us of his presence with us again in the words- "I will be with you till in the end of the ages" (Matthew 28:20).

A CHRIST-CENTRED CHRISTMAS

We need to focus on a Christ-centred Christmas. It is unfortunate that Christ's birth in Bethlehem is being used today by many as a commercial opportunity for buying and selling, partying and feasting. A Christmas limited to external celebrations, a Christmas without Christ only leads to emptiness and void. Let us ensure that our Christmas celebration has Christ at the centre. Let us strive to discover the true meaning of Christmas by meditating on the mystery of our salvation and let us help others too to welcome Christ into their lives. He alone can fill our hearts with meaning and purpose, peace and contentment. Let us return to the simplicity of the first Christmas and go to the manger to adore the king of kings and Lord of Lords.

SIMPLICITY AND POVERTY OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Christmas is fondly celebrated by everyone. It is a feast that is wrapped in simplicity and poverty. Christ chose to be born poor in the humble surroundings of a manger without the trappings of power, influence or comforts. We too are called to follow Christ in a spirit of simplicity and detachment, through kenosis and self-emptying. We can enrich our own celebration when we are closer to our people, most of whom are poor and lack many of the luxuries of life. We witness how even children who are deprived of many things in their lives find joy and gladness in this wonderful feast.

The poor and simple people are like the humble shepherds of Bethlehem. For them Christ's birth had a special meaning. They were the first to

experience the joy and gladness of Christ's birth. We too can meet Christ in the manger when our hearts are free from sin and unsullied by worldliness, greed and craze for power and material comforts. Let us strive to discover Christ in the poor and those who are at the margins of society.

The story of Christmas reminds us that those who are the privileged ones to receive the gift of Christ are the very humble people – Mary, Joseph, the shepherds on the hillside. Together with them the animals and the stars, all of creation can rejoice and sing with the angels in proclaiming God's glory and his peace to all of goodwill.

WELCOME ADVENT

Let us welcome the season of Advent, a period which increases the anticipation and longing for God. During this season of Advent, let us prepare our communities, our students and faithful, with the fervour and expectation of this holy season. Let us try to make Christ's coming at this Christmas an important milestone in our spiritual journey. When our hearts are open to God, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, we too will be able to see him wrapped in saddling clothes; we too will be able to hear the hymn of the angels, 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace to people of good will on earth'.

Advent is the season of waiting. The hope of Advent helps us to experience the peace of Christ coming anew this Christmas into our world, into our homes, into our hearts. In Advent, we proclaim and celebrate our hope and our trust that our God is faithful: that the Lord will come again to rescue us, to heal us, to console us, to be with us. As Pope Francis said, "our God comes to enrich our personal and collective histories, our dashed hopes and our sterile yearnings."

A SEASON OF HOPE

On the First Sunday of Advent, we also begin a new liturgical year. We will thereafter enter into a new year - the jubilee year of hope. Christmas is the season of hope *par excellence*. It is the season of hope because our God has visited us. He has given himself to us by creating us, and by sending his only begotten Son to us. It is the assurance of his coming again. Pope Francis tells us that hope 'is able to see a tomorrow; hope is the door that opens onto the future.' Hope changes everything.

As we prepare to celebrate the overwhelming gift of love in the Incarnation, we are invited to examine our lives to understand how well prepared we are, not only to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord at Christmas, but also to live the kind of life we are meant to live, loving one another and the whole human race as we are loved by God.

A TIME TO INTENSIFY OUR PRAYER LIFE

The Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent reminds us that the Christian life is rooted in prayer. We are urged to pray at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, so that we can stand with confidence before the Son of Man.

We confront immense challenges and difficulties. Forces hostile to our faith surround us. Yet as Christians we are called to bring the Good News to a world which may resist and reject the values of the Gospel. We are called to bear witness to the glad tidings that God is in our midst, that our redemption is near. This is the gospel of joy we are called to proclaim in word and with our lives.

Advent is a time of prayer and reflection to prepare ourselves spiritually for the challenge of renewal. Our prayer must be, above all, to be open to the Spirit to guide us in our mission as bearers of light and carriers of good news to the people of our time.

In the season of Advent, we unite ourselves with our Blessed Mother Mary, whose own preparation gives us the spirit of hope and faith. Like her let us seek the will of God and surrender ourselves to the unfolding of God's plan in our lives.

During the season of Advent, we will hear the call to rejoice: 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near!' (Phil 4:4-5). The entrance antiphon at Mass on this 'Gaudete or 'rejoicing' Sunday of Advent reminds us that God is very near. The promised Saviour is close, God's kingdom of light and peace, of love and mercy, is at hand.

NOVENA IN PREPARATION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

The nine days of immediate preparation before the Christmas is an opportune moment to help our young people and the faithful to seek Christ with renewed mind and heart and experience the true joy of the celebration of Christmas.

Christmas calls us to welcome Christ who is the Light of the World into our homes, our families and our communities. May we welcome the Prince of Peace into our hearts so that strengthened by his grace, all people, especially those who suffer the ravages of war, hatred and violence may experience peace.

May this Advent and Christmas be for us a blessed and joyous time of God's unending love in Jesus Christ, the light of the world. I wish each of you, my brothers, the grace and deep inner joy of this holy season, and New Year of hope and interior peace of heart. May the great mystery of the Birth of Christ touch our hearts and minds, so that we be more Christ-like, persons

filled with peace and love. I wish each one of you, dear confreres, a blessed and peace-filled Christmas.

NEWS & EVENTS

BLESSING OF ST. PETER'S CHAPEL, RONGKARBI VILLAGE

On November 10, 2024, Rongkarbi village under Sojong Parish, joyfully celebrated the blessing and inauguration of its newly constructed chapel dedicated to St. Peter. Bishop Paul Mattekatt of Diphu blessed and inaugurated the chapel in the presence of a host of priests, sisters, religious, and around 700 faithful who gathered for the event.



The chapel's construction, started by Fr. Siby John, began in mid-June and was completed by Fr. Abraham Kanattu, the Parish Priest on November 8. This beautiful Chapel is a fruit of fervent prayers of the villagers and a result of collective planning and hard work by the community, with the financial support from Salesian Missions, New Rochelle.

The village community is grateful to the Salesian Province of Guwahati, particularly to Rev. Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal, Provincial and Fr. Jayaprakash Anthonimuthu, Economer, for their prompt and generous financial assistance. The event celebrated faith, unity, and the dedication of the local community.

FR. SEBASTIAN KAROTEMPREL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP, 2024

The *Fr. Sebastian Karotemprel Memorial Scholarship* was awarded on November 16, 2024, at Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati. The program, aimed at supporting Poor students facing financial challenges in pursuing higher education, began at 10:30 AM with 73 beneficiaries and their parents in attendance.



The event featured distinguished guests, including Fr. Sebastian Mathew, Provincial of Guwahati Province, Fr. Jayaprakash Anthonimuthu, Economer of the Province, Fr. Philip Barjo, former Provincial, and Fr. Charles D. Lakra, Rector of the Provincial House. The program opened with a prayer led by Fr. Lakra, followed by Fr. Mathew's address on the importance of education and the scholarship's role in empowering youth. Fr. Barjo shared insights into the history of the scholarship before the distribution of awards.



The event concluded with refreshments, leaving beneficiaries motivated and grateful for the opportunity to continue their education.

SALESIAN BROTHERS' MEET AND ANIMATION HELD IN KOKRAJHAR

Don Bosco School, Kokrajhar, hosted the Animation and Meeting of the Salesian Brothers of the Guwahati Province on November 16-17, 2024. The event brought together 14 Salesian Brothers, FMA Sisters, and Salesian Cooperators in the school's Multipurpose Hall.



The program commenced with a warm welcome by Bro. Paul, who set the tone with his introductory remarks. Bro. Firstjoy Sutong proclaimed a Scripture reading from the Gospel of St. John (15:12-17), reflecting on Jesus' commandment of love. Bro. Paul Makri then led the assembly in prayer, followed by a ceremonial lighting of the lamp. The dignitaries performing the lamp-lighting included Bro. Jobi Mani, Fr. Francis Basumatary, Cooperator Monoronjon Basumatary, Sr. Albina Guria FMA, and Bros. Bryce Fernandez and Athanasius Kerketta.

Fr. Rector extended his greetings to the gathering, highlighting the cultural diversity and harmony of Kokrajhar, represented by its Boro, Santhal, Garo, and Adivasi communities. He shared inspiring reflections on the life and works of St. Artemides Zatti, with a special emphasis on the role of Salesian Cooperators in advancing the Salesian mission.

Bro. Jobi Mani spearheaded the animation session, delivering a thought-provoking presentation on the theme *“Lay Religious and Its Challenges in the Present Context.”* He began by paying a heartfelt tribute to the late Bro. Angelus Tete, a valued participant in the previous meeting held in Sirajuli.

The gathering provided a platform for deep reflection, open dialogue, and renewed commitment to the Salesian charism, fostering collaboration and solidarity among the participants.

DEPARTED CONFRERES OF THE PROVINCE REMEMBERED

On November 20, 2024, the Salesian Province of Guwahati remembered and paid tribute to its deceased confreres with a solemn Holy Mass at the Uzanbazar Catholic Cemetery, the final resting place of many Salesians who devoted their lives to the congregation’s mission.



Rev. Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal, SDB, Provincial, presided over the Eucharistic celebration, joined by Salesians from various communities in Guwahati. In his moving homily, Fr. Kuricheal expressed profound

gratitude for the sacrifices of the departed Salesians, whose selfless labour contributed immensely to the growth of the province. He highlighted the Catholic tradition of remembering the deceased at the altar, drawing inspiration from Saint Monica’s request to her son, Saint Augustine, to pray for her at the Lord’s table.



The commemoration concluded with a blessing of the graves, a prayerful gesture of reverence and gratitude for the departed. The event was a poignant reminder of the enduring legacy of the deceased Salesians and their unwavering dedication to the Salesian mission.

BLESSING OF ST. PAUL’S VILLAGE CHAPEL, DEREK RANGADAM

On November 22, 2024, St. Paul’s Village Chapel in Derek Rangadam was blessed and inaugurated in a solemn ceremony. Rt. Rev. John Moolachira, the Archbishop of Guwahati, blessed the chapel, while Rev. Fr. Paul Panachical, former parish priest and pioneer of Gojapara Parish, officially inaugurated it.



The event was graced by Rev. Fr. Crosper Sangma, Chancellor of the Guwahati Archdiocese, along with Rev. Fr. Lucas Ch. Marak, SDB, the current parish priest of Gojapara. Several priests, including Fr. C. A. John, Fr. Francis Kalariparambil, Fr. Tommy, Fr. Benny Mushahary, and other dignitaries, were present, alongside religious sisters and a large number of lay faithful. The occasion celebrated the dedication of a sacred space for the community, symbolizing faith and unity in the parish.

DIPHU DIOCESE YOUTH CONVENTION AT SATGAON NOV.2024

The 26th Youth Convention of Diphu Diocese was held at Mary Help of Christians Church, Satgaon Parish, from November 22-25, 2024. The event was inaugurated by Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal, Provincial of Guwahati, alongside Vice-Provincial Fr. Bivan Mukhim, Vicar General Fr. John Timung, and Youth Director Fr. Nicolas Terang. The opening ceremony showcased colourful and vibrant cultural performances of dance and music.



Fr. Kuricheal encouraged the youth to be agents of change for regional development, while Fr. Timung delivered a keynote address on the theme, *“Those who hope on the Lord will run and not grow weary.”* The convention, which drew a record 939 delegates, featured sessions on faith, including one by Fr. Mukhim on the Sacraments.

A highlight was the Sunday Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Paul Mattekatt on the feast of Christ the King. The Bishop urged the youth to allow Christ to reign in their lives and called for prayers and encouragement for vocations to priesthood and religious life.

The event also included spirited competitions such as choir singing, choreography, volleyball, and tug-of-war. Dokmoka Parish claimed the overall championship, while Satgaon Parish stood out in hosting the diocese’s largest youth gathering with exceptional creativity and enthusiasm.

The convention concluded with the lowering of the ICYM flag and a Thanksgiving Mass celebrated by Fr. Albert Thyrniang, leaving participants spiritually uplifted and motivated.

INAUGURATION AND BLESSING OF BOYS’ HOSTEL, AMGURI

On November 27, 2024, the newly expanded block of Don Bosco Boys’ Hostel, Amguri, was inaugurated and blessed in a grand ceremony. The event marked a significant milestone in the institution's growth and commitment to providing quality facilities for holistic youth development.

The ceremony was officiated by Rev. Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal, SDB, Provincial of the Salesian Province of Guwahati, who praised the expansion as a vital step in supporting the education and welfare of young minds. Dr. Martin Kasper and his team from Germany, whose generous support was instrumental in the expansion



project, graced the occasion.

Students from Don Bosco School, Amguri, added vibrancy to the event with a captivating cultural program, showcasing their talent and enthusiasm. The well-organized ceremony, led by Rev. Fr. Ignatius Gari, SDB, reflected the Salesian commitment to empowering youth and fostering

their growth through education and community support.

DBSTI TEZPUR HOSTS TWO-DAY “YOUTH FAITH FEST”

Don Bosco Socio Technical Institute (DBSTI), Tezpur, hosted an inspiring two-day *Youth Faith Fest* that brought together over 200 enthusiastic young participants from across the region. Held under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Paul Rabha, SDB, and supported by Fr. Thadeus Kujur, SDB, Fr. Solomon Dennis, SDB, Fr. Amit Tete, SDB, and the Sisters, the event combined spiritual enrichment with cultural celebration.



The festival featured dynamic sessions aimed at deepening participants' faith, fostering personal growth, and building a strong sense of community. Local traditions came alive in vibrant cultural performances, adding color and energy to the gathering.

The *Youth Faith Fest* succeeded in creating a joyful and spiritually uplifting environment, leaving participants inspired, united, and renewed in their commitment to faith and community life.

CONDOLENCES

- ❖ Our heartfelt condolences to the Provincial and confreres of Mumbai Province at the sad demise of Rev Fr Vincent Rasquinha on 30 November 2024 at Holy Spirit Hospital, Andheri Mumbai.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feast of the Immaculate conception 8 December

GREAT JUBILEE YEAR 2025

The 2025 Jubilee will officially open on December 24, 2024 at 7pm, with the rite of Opening of the Holy Door of the Papal Basilica of St. Peter by the Holy Father, who will then preside over the celebration of the Night Mass of the Lord's Birth inside the Basilica.

PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS OF OUR DEACONS



SMY FEST – Chennai from 29 December 2024 to 02 January 2025.

VOCATION CAMPS:



Come and See!
Jn 1:39

Salesian Province of Mary Help of Christians, Guwahati
Vocation Camp 2024 ~ 2025
for Boys Class VI Passed and VII Passed

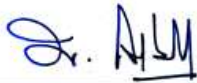
1st Vocation Camp :- 18th - 21st December 2024 : **Bosco Mount, Tura**
2nd Vocation Camp :- 28th - 31st December 2024 : **Don Bosco Tangla**
3rd Vocation Camp :- 07th - 10th January 2025 : **Don Bosco Damra**
4th Vocation Camp :- 11th - 14th January 2025 : **Don Bosco Kokrajhar**
5th Vocation Camp :- 16th - 19th January 2025 : **Don Bosco Baithalangso**

For Detail Contact: Your Parish Priest or Fr. Marcus Lakra SDB (Vocation Promoter) Mobile: +91 8638677838

CONCLUSION

We began the novena on 29th November in preparation for the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a feast which is very dear to all of us. Don Bosco began his work for the young with Bartholomeo Gareli with a simple Hail Mary on the feast of the Immaculate conception. Let us prepare ourselves devoutly to celebrate the feast. May our blessed Mother continue to inspire and help us in continuing the mission of our father and founder, St. John Bosco.

Yours sincerely in Don Bosco,



Fr. Sebastian Mathew SDB
Provincial





- 1 Fr. Francis Cheeramben (CJ)
- 1 Br. Peter Mark
- 2 Cl. Ashish Kongadi
- 5 Fr. Bartholomew Marak
- 7 Fr. Silverius Amsong
- 8 Fr. Jyotish Beck
- 10 Fr. Mackley Augustine Gomes
- 12 Fr. Denis Toju Sangma
- 12 Cl. Nicholas B. Marak



- 13 Fr. Anugrah Tete
- 13 Cl. Arkystar M. Chyne
- 15 Fr. Richard Barla
- 20 Br. Fernandes Bryce (INB)
- 21 Cl. Peter Canisius Sangma
- 23 Fr. John Chellanthara (CA)
- 23 Cl. Tengku M. Sangma
- 24 Cl. Sengwill Sangma
- 26 Fr. Andreas Panna

- 26 Fr. Jonas Toppo
- 26 Fr. Emmanuel Marngar
- 27 Fr. Damian Basumatary
- 29 Fr. Victor Tigga
- 29 Cl. Essak Hereh
- 31 Fr. Denis Solomon Joseph
- 31 Fr. Hubert Uttam Molsom



IN LOVING MEMORY - DECEMBER

Dt	Name of the Confrere	Place	Year	Age	Province
27	P Fedele Cozzi	Italy	1963	60	INDIA, INC, INM, ING
28	P Joseph Divina	Italy	1983	79	INC, ING
29	P John Fergnani	Jerusalem	1932	58	INDIA, INC, ING
31	P John William O'Day	Italy	1978	52	INC, ING, INP, INT
31	P Thomas Kannath	Dibrugarh	1995	48	IND, ING

Salesian Feasts/Commemorations	
5	Blessed Philip Rinaldi, <i>priest, Founder of the Secular Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco</i>
11	Salesian Missionary Day (monthly commemoration)
24	Commemoration of Mary Help of Christians
31	Commemoration of Don Bosco



DECEMBER 2024				
DATE	DAY	PROVINCIAL	VICE PROVINCIAL	ECONOMER
1	Sun	Haflong	Haflong	Dimapur
2	Mon	Haflong	Guwahati	Dimapur
3	Tue	Diphu – Guwahati	Guwahati	Meeting at BRO
4	Wed	Child Aid Meeting – Ghy	Tangla	Child Aid Meeting
5	Thu	GB Meeting-DBC, Chapaguri	Guwahati	GB Meeting-
6	Fri	DBI- Conference	Guwahati	Guwahati
7	Sat	GB ADBU – Tapesia	GB ADBU – Tapesia	GB ADBU – Tapesia
8	Sun	Delhi	Guwahati	Guwahati
9	Mon	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Guwahati	Rongkhon
10	Tue	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Kokrajhar	Bosco Mount
11	Wed	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Amguri	Mendal
12	Thu	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Guwahati	Gojapara
13	Fri	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Guwahati	Boko
14	Sat	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Vocation Com. Meeting-Ghy	Guwahati
15	Sun	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Guwahati	Guwahati
16	Mon	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Youth Com. Meeting – Ghy	Guwahati
17	Tue	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Guwahati	Diphu
18	Wed	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Bosco Mount- Voc. Camp	Sojong
19	Thu	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Bosco Mount	Satgaon
20	Fri	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Bosco Mount	Baithalangso
21	Sat	Provincials’ Course – Rome	Guwahati	Guwahati
22	Sun		Guwahati	Guwahati
23	Mon	Delhi – Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
24	Tue	Christmas – Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
25	Wed	Christmas – Panbazar	Guwahati	Guwahati
26	Thu	Council Meeting – 2.00pm	Council Meeting	Council Meeting
27	Fri	-	SYM FEST - Chennai	Amkachi
28	Sat	-	SYM FEST - Chennai	Umswai
29	Sun	-	SYM FEST - Chennai	Guwahati
30	Mon	-	SYM FEST - Chennai	Guwahati
31	Tue	Guwahati	SYM FEST - Chennai	Guwahati