PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

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

SM-08/2025

1 JANUARY 2024

Dear Confreres,

Prayerful greetings for the New Year 2025.

The year 2025 is very important for us in many ways- in the Church we celebrate the Jubilee of Hope. For us Salesians, it is also a very special year as we celebrate the 29th General Chapter (GC29) on the theme: "Passionate for Jesus Christ, Dedicated to the Young - For a faithful and prophetic lived experience of our Salesian vocation." The GC29 will begin on February 16, 2025, and conclude on April 12, 2025. Let us pray for a fruitful General Chapter.

MISSION AT THE HEART OF THE CHURCH AND THE CONGREGATION

The year is also special for us as it marks the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian missionary expedition sent by Don Bosco. Since then hundreds of missionaries have gone out to many parts of the world, including our own region of Northeast India more than a century ago. It is indeed a historic moment in the life of our Congregation. Another important event is the second Asian Mission Congress organized by the FABC scheduled to be held in Penang, Malaysia, in November 2025. The Synod on Synodality, the Jubilee of Hope, the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian missionary expedition and the Asian Mission Congress are all occasions for us to renew our missionary vocation and re-dedicate ourselves to the proclamation of Christ and his Gospel among our people. We are also preparing for the great jubilee of 2033- two thousand years of the Lord's passion, death and resurrection, which we celebrate in our Eucharist daily and more solemnly on Sundays. The Church in Northeast India held its Pastoral Conference during which we studied and reflected on the document Ecclesia in Asia given by Pope John Paul II twenty-five years ago following the Asian Synod of Bishops.

JUBILEE OF HOPE

Though I have already written about the Jubilee Year we celebrate in 2025, once again, I wish to draw your attention to this important milestone in the life of the Church. The Jubilee Year began with the opening of the Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve, 2024. Pope Francis announcing the Jubilee had said: "We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. He had asked the Church and the faithful to find suitable ways for the Holy Year to be planned and celebrated with deep faith, lively hope and active charity. I am sure you will follow the calendar of events the Church has planned for the Jubilee throughout the year. Let us make every effort to celebrate the Jubilee in suitable ways in our own centres so that we and the people we

serve receive the fruits of this season of grace. As Pope Francis reminded us, the Jubilee is an expression of the shared journey that the Church is called to make, in order to be ever more fully a sign and instrument of unity in harmonious diversity. It is a universal call to responsible participation by enhancing the charisms and ministries that the Holy Spirit bestows on us for the building up of the one Church. The Jubilee will end in the particular Churches throughout the world on 28 December 2025, with the Holy Doors of St John Lateran, St Mary Major, and St Paul's Outside the Walls being closed on that same date. And finally, the Jubilee Year will draw to a close in Rome on the Solemnity of Epiphany, 6 January 2026. Let the various events being held throughout the year to mark the Jubilee of Hope bring us showers of blessings from the Lord.

JUBILEE IN THE BIBLE

The tradition of Jubilee takes us back to the book of Leviticus Chapter 25:8-13, where we read, "You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall be to you forty-nine years. Then you shall sound abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement; you shall send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property, and each of you shall return to his family. You shall keep the fiftieth year as a jubilee; in it you shall neither sow, nor reap what grows of itself, nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat what it yields out of the field. In this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his property". The jubilee was broadcast by blowing a horn. The ram's horn trumpet was called *yobel*. And through the Greek version, of the Old Testament this came into the Latin language as *Jubila-eum*: jubilee.

JUBILEE IN THE CHURCH

The Jubilee has always been an event of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social significance in the life of the Church. Ever since 1300, when Pope Boniface VIII instituted the first Holy Year – initially celebrated every hundred years, then, following its biblical precedent, every fifty years, and finally every twenty-five years – God's holy and faithful people has experienced this celebration as a special gift of grace, characterized by the forgiveness of sins and in particular by the indulgence, which is a full expression of the mercy of God.

The faithful, frequently at the conclusion of a lengthy pilgrimage, draw from the spiritual treasury of the Church by passing through the Holy Door and venerating the relics of the Apostles Peter and Paul preserved in the Roman basilicas. Throughout the centuries millions of pilgrims have journeyed to these sacred places, bearing living witness to the faith professed in every age.

CONVERSION AND MERCY

A word that is closely connected to the jubilee is the word 'Indulgence'. Today many people do not understand the word 'indulgence', but this word and the word 'Mercy' were almost synonyms in the middle ages and from the beginning jubilees were based on the Jubilee Indulgence. The Jubilee Indulgence was a remission or forgiveness of sins, as Pope Boniface VIII stated. The people of Rome wanted the Jubilee and ever since then, the Jubilee Year has been observed as a part of the observations of the institutional Church. Let us keep in mind the spiritual dimension of the Jubilee, which is a call for conversion, a time of reconciliation and renewal.

Pope Francis wrote in his letter announcing the Jubilee: "Now, as the first twenty-five years of the new century draw to a close, we are called to enter into a season of preparation that can enable the Christian people to experience the Holy Year in all its pastoral richness. A significant step on this journey was already taken with the celebration of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, which allowed us to appreciate anew all the power and tenderness of the Father's merciful love, in order to become, in our turn, its witnesses.

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

The motto of the Jubilee, *Pilgrims of Hope* is a call to renew our hope in the face of devastations and wars, the tragic effects of the pandemic that affected the whole world, and the consequences of climate change and migration, poverty and hardships that people face everywhere. As Pope Francis urged, we must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. The Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire.

The jubilee must help us to be more caring and compassionate especially to people who live in great poverty and hardship, those who lack human dignity or are in different ways exploited. The Pope invited everyone to hear the voices of the poor and to ensure they too have access to the fruits of the earth. In planning various events of the Jubilee celebrations, our communities should pay particular attention to the poor and vulnerable people who live in our midst, in our neighbourhoods.

A TIME FOR PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

The Jubilee would be incomplete without devoting our attention to a more intense period of prayer. Prayer is an expression of our desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to him and to adore him. Prayer is a moment to thank God for the many gifts of his love for us and to praise his work in creation. From deep and intense prayer comes charity and sense of solidarity, and the stimulus for all our apostolic endeavours. *Pilgrims of Hope* are people on a journey, and we too join the Pilgrim Church on that

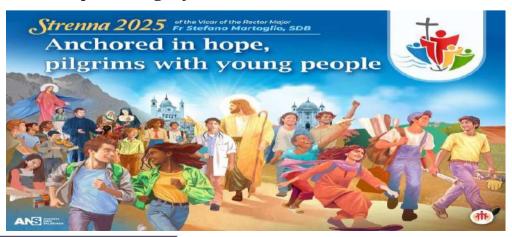
journey. It is a journey in the light of God, tracing our footsteps and turning our gaze solely towards God and his Kingdom.

As Salesians we are called to discover the joy and beauty of our vocation and constantly seek holiness of life as we journey on. When we intensely desire for holiness through a life rooted in prayer and fervent apostolic activity, we will certainly experience the gift of a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Father and Jesus, his Son. Following the example of Don Bosco, let us also turn to our Blessed Mother, Mary Help of Christians, who is our companion on this journey of hope, this pilgrimage to God. Mary continues in the Church the apostolic mission of brining Jesus to the world.

CHRIST IS OUR HOPE

Hope is one of the three theological virtues along with faith and love. But it is perhaps more difficult to speak about hope than the other two virtues because hope is more intangible and appear to be distant. But true hope is rooted in Christ, in fact Christ himself is our hope. It is not a mere idea or a wish. So many people today in our world have lost hope. It is part of our human fragility coming from our fallen human nature. And this fallen human nature is reflected in our politics and governance, social interactions and family relationships. We also come across people who have completely lost hope, who have given up their faith in God and succumb to evils like alcohol, drugs or even the will to live. There is a trust deficit in human relationships and behaviour that is present in our world. We can help build hope when we our own lives are deeply centred on God.

Psalm 20:7 tells us: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" Let us not place our trust in human strengths and abilities, in wealth or material sureties. Hope, to be genuine, must be deeply rooted in God, in Christ. St. Augustine tells us that everybody loves charity. Everybody believes in faith, and everybody hopes; the difference lies in what constitutes the object of our faith, hope and charity. And obviously for Christians Christ is our Hope. Christ is our Hope because he opens the gates of Eternal Life. Our journey is towards that goal. But that doesn't mean that we neglect our responsibilities or earthly existence and concerns that affect our everyday life. Our life here on earth should be lived to the full, with our gaze turned towards heaven; our heart filled with the hope of the glory that is to come.



NEWS & EVENTS

JOINT RETREAT FOR SALESIANS HELD AT SILOAM

The Joint Retreat for the Salesians of the Provinces of Shillong, Dimapur, and Guwahati was held from December 8–14, 2024, at Siloam, Umiam. Led by Rev. Fr. James Mathew of the Kolkata Province, the retreat brought together 48 retreatants (46 priests and 2 brothers) for a spiritually enriching

experience of prayer, reflection, and renewal.



Participants praised the Scripture based retreat in the serene environment of Siloam, which provided an ideal space for spiritual growth and rejuvenation.

NEW PROVINCIALS ORIENTATION AND TRAINING COURSE IN ROME

Together with 15 Provincials from four continents and six Salesian regions, I had the privilege of attending the Orientation and Training Course for newly appointed Provincials, which concluded on Saturday, December 21, 2024, with a half-day of evaluation and sharing. The program, held at Sacro Cuore, the Salesian Generalate in Rome, ran from December 9 to 21.



The course offered invaluable guidance on the essential aspects of animation and governance, emphasizing leadership within the Salesian mission. Fr. Pier Fausto Frisoli and Fr. Guido Garino shared key insights into the legal dimensions of our roles, while Fr. Stefano Martoglio, Vicar of the Rector Major, and various Sector Councillors provided updates on the Congregation's priorities and projects.

Participants gained a deeper understanding of the dynamics of Salesian life

across diverse contexts and engaged in meaningful daily dialogues with the Vicar or Councillors. These sessions fostered open discussions on challenges, opportunities, and strategies for effective governance. Visits to operational bodies such as the Salesian Pontifical University and the Secretariat for the Salesian Family offered practical insights into the global mission of the Congregation.

The programme was enriched by moments of prayer and novena in preparation for Christmas, which deepened the fraternity and Salesian spirit among all participants. This comprehensive training has equipped us with renewed knowledge, inspiration, and zeal to serve our mission effectively.



I extend my sincere gratitude to Fr. Bivan Mukhim for seeing to the day-to-day running of our province during my absence.

VOCATION CAMPS HELD AT BOSCO MOUNT AND DON BOSCO, TANGLA

The Vocation Camps at Bosco Mount and Don Bosco Tangla concluded successfully, with 56 and 36 boys participating respectively. The camps

were held from 18 to 21 December and 28 to 31December 2024. Both camps were conducted with great zeal and effectiveness under the leadership of Fr. Bivan Mukhim,



SDB, Vice Provincial and Formation In-Charge and Fr. Markus Lakra, SDB, Vocation Promoter. Their dedicated efforts were ably supported by Br. Godfrey Ekka and

Cl. Jeniberth Sangma. I thank them sincerely for their tireless efforts and dedication.

I am also particularly grateful to the Rectors and confreres of Bosco Mount and Don Bosco Tangla, whose hospitality and support greatly enriched the experience for all attendees. Let us continue to support and accompany the young, helping them to discern their God-given vocations in life and to live meaningful and purposeful lives.

4TH INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE HELD AT DBI

The 4th International Conference on Education for School Principals and Educational Administrators, themed "Creativity and Innovation in Schools: The Principal's Role," was held from December 6–8, 2024, at Don Bosco Institute, Kharghuli. The event brought together educational leaders to reflect on the transformative role of creativity in education.



The inaugural ceremony featured Prof. Amarjyoti Choudhury, former Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University, as Chief Guest, who highlighted the importance of creativity in leadership and education. Other esteemed guests included Rev. Fr. Bivan Rodrigues Mukhim SDB, Vice Provincial; Rev. Fr.



Jayaprakash Anthonimuttu SDB, Economer; and Rev. Fr. V. M. Thomas SDB, former Provincial of Guwahati. Delegates from Bhutan further enriched the discussions with their perspectives.

Cultural performances, such as the Rongmei Dance and choir by Don Bosco Institute students, added a vibrant touch to the event. The release of a Social Science book authored by Fr. Rayappan was a notable moment, emphasizing intellectual growth.

The conference concluded with an inspiring valedictory address by Shri A. K. Absar Hazarika, IAS (retd.), on the evolving roles of educational leaders.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Fr. Cletus Sebastian SDB, Executive Director of Don Bosco Institute, Fr. John Chandra Rabha, Associate Director, and their team for their meticulous planning and execution of this international conference. Their dedication ensured a seamless and enriching experience for all participants.

VESTITION CEREMONY AT EMMAUS SALESIAN NOVITIATE, ZUBZA

A significant milestone in the vocational journey of 14 novices (4 from ING) was celebrated at Emmaus Salesian Novitiate, Sechü-Zubza, as they

received their cassocks during the Vestition ceremony held on December 9, 2024.

Clerics Emmanuel Mynsong, Samsung Senar, Myrthong Waldius, and Aliver S. Sangma from our Province donned their cassocks, symbolizing their deeper commitment to the Salesian way of life. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Fr. V.A. Thomas.



the Novice Master, and the confreres of Zubza Novitiate for their dedicated guidance and accompaniment of our novices on their journey.

NEW CHAPEL BLESSED AT DON BOSCO PRE-NOVITIATE, DOTMA

On December 27, 2024, with great joy, I blessed the newly constructed chapel at the Don Bosco Pre-Novitiate House, Dotma. Designed to provide a larger and more prayerful space, this chapel I believe will contribute immensely in the spiritual formation of our pre-novices.



The blessing and inauguration ceremony was graced by Fr Jayaprakash Anthonimuthu SDB, the Economer, Fr. Joseph Almeida, SDB, Director of

the Pre-Novices and Fr. Sebastian Edathumparambil, SDB, Rector and Parish Priest of Dotma Parish, along with other Salesians. This sacred space, made possible through the prayers and generosity of many, whom we remember with prayers and great affection. Let us continue to pray for our pre-novices as they progress in their journey of discernment and learning.

SYM FEST UNDERWAY AT SACRED HEART COLLEGE, TIRUPATHUR

The Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) Festival, currently underway at Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupathur, Tamil Nadu in which 101 youth from our province are participating. The event was officially inaugurated on

29th December 2024 and sees the participation of youth from all Salesian Provinces across India and Sri Lanka, along with the youth from the seven FMA provinces.

The youth the province from arrived in Chennai on 27th December 2024, where they are accompanied by Fr. Bivan Mukhim, Vice Provincial, Fr. Cletus Sebastian, Fr. Pradeep Ekka, Fr. Justin Chinapparai, Fr. John



Rabha, , and two FMA Sisters. During their stay in Chennai, they paid a visit to the tomb of St. Thomas, the Marina Beach, and on 28th December 2024, they explored the historic site of Mahabalipuram before heading to Tirupathur for the festival.

The participants from the province actively engaged in various competitions, including Theme Dance, Rangoli, Tableau Presentation, and Painting, showcasing their creativity and vibrant energy. I wish youth from our province all the very best and God's blessings.

INAUGURATION AND BLESSING OF CHAPEL AT SAMKATHA VILLAGE

On the Feast of the Holy Family, December 29, 2024, St. Brendan's Chapel at Samkatha Village, under Doomni Parish, was solemnly inaugurated and

blessed by Bishop Thomas Pulloppillil of the Bongaigaon Diocese. The occasion brought together a significant gathering of Catholic faithful from the parish and surrounding areas.

Fr. Bharkarraj Chinthamalla SDB, the Parish Priest of Doomni, was joined by other priests from the

parish and neighboring parishes for the ceremony.

Bishop Pulloppillil expressed his gratitude to the Parish Priest and the faithful for their dedication and hard work in completing the chapel



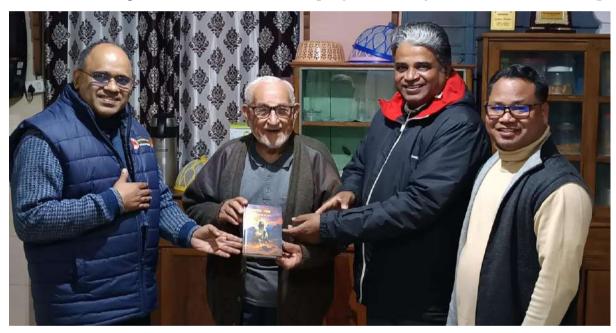
construction. He prayed that the new chapel would serve as a sacred space for the community to grow in faith and encounter God.

I extend my sincere thanks to Bishop Thomas Pulloppillil for personally blessing the Chapel, as well as to the

donors from New Rochelle, Mission Office, USA, and Fr. Bhaskarraj for his tireless efforts in overseeing the construction.

HOROGOR POTH: THIRD EDITION RELEASED IN SHALLANG

On 22nd December 2024, Rev. Fr. Alfred Marzo, SDB, unveiled the third edition of *Horogor Poth*, an Assamese prayer-cum-hymn book in Shallang.



The event was graced by the presence of Fr. Joy Kachappilly, SDB and Bro. Joby Mani, SDB, alongside Bro. Benedict Sangma, who added a vibrant note to the occasion.

CONDOLENCES

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Fr. Cornelius Panna and family on the passing of his younger sister, Mrs. Magdalene Panna (76), who passed away on December 21, 2024, in Dhekiajuli.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ Salesian Family Day and Reflection on Strenna 2025 on 23 January 2025 in all our regions.
- Feast of Don Bosco 31 January.

VOCATION CAMPS AND PRIEST ORDINATIONS 2025



CONCLUSION

My dear confreres, let us make the Jubilee of Hope truly a year of grace. May it help us to focus fully on God, and let us journey as Pilgrims of Hope with Christ and the Church, in the company of Mary and the Saints, to that goal to which God calls us. I wish you all a very Happy New Year and a fruitful Jubilee of Hope- 2025.

Yours sincerely in Don Bosco,



Fr. Sebastian Mathew SDB
Provincial





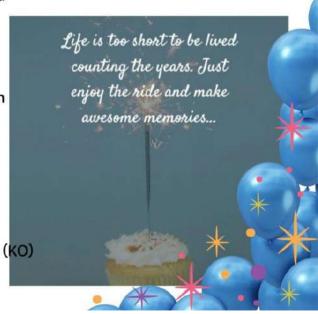
- 1 Fr. Aloysius Hemrom
- 1 Fr. Benny Plathottathil Basil
- 1 Fr. Albert D. Sangma
- 1 Fr. Dominic Mardi
- 2 Fr. Ajay Kumar Xaxa
- 2 Cl. Aseet Minj
- 3 Cl. Anand Toppo
- 4 Cl. Sangma Sajison D.
- 5 Cl. Silbison Borgoyary
- 6 Cl. Sunit Ekka



- 18 Fr. Bhaskar Raj Chinthamalla
- 19 Dn. Kolombiya Rabha
- 23 Fr. Rajib Lakra
- 23 Cl. Emil Jose Surin
- 25 Fr. Alex Mathew Kattakayam
- 25 Cl. Khairus N. Sangma
- 26 Fr. John Chandra Rabha
- 26 Cl. Dominic Soren
- 27 Cl. Timash N. Marak
- 28 Cl. Rupam Kindo
- 29 Fr. Augustine Karottupuram (KO)
- 31 Fr. Saju Kariyil



- 8 Fr. Simplicius Kerketta
- 8 Fr. Daniel S. Sangma
- 9 Fr. James Chacko Molekunnel (INC)
- 11 Cl. Ronaldo S Myrthong (INS)
- 15 Fr. Joseph Paulianmung
- 16 Cl. John K. Ngouning
- 17 Cl. Anand Purti
- 17 Fr. Cyriac Vettickathadam (VA)
- 17 Br. Bajanai Kupar Lating
- 17 Cl. Tengsua D. Marak



IN LOVING MEMORY - JANUARY

Dt	Name of the Confrere	Place	Year	Age	Province
1	P Mathew Kadavunkal	Guwahati	2007	75	ING, INC, INS
3	L Raphael Kerketta	Maligaon	2022	75	ING
3	L Raphael Kerketta	Guwahati	2022	74	ING, INC, INS
4	P Milon Narjary	Guwahati	2020	54	ING, INS
15	P Eligius Cinato	Cherrapunjee	1964	66	ING, INDIA, INC, INM, INS
17	P Douglas Wollaston	Shillong	1979	76	ING, INDIA, INB, INC, IND, INS
18	P Anthony Alessi	Mumbai	1995	89	INB, INDIA, INC, ING, MYM, INS
20	P Peter Tonello	Guwahati	1995	92	ING, INDIA, INC, INS
22	P Henry Frassy	Boko	1997	77	ING, INC, INB
28	P Alexius Sanglura	Haflong	2006	73	ING, INC, IND, INS
30	P Constantine Vendrame	Dibrugarh	1957	64	ING, INDIA, INC, INM, INS

Sales	sian Feasts/Commemorations				
8	Blessed Titus Zeman, priest and martyr				
11	Salesian Missionary Day (monthly commemoration)				
15	Blessed Louis Variara, Founder of the Institute of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary				
22	Blessed Laura Vicuña, youth				
22	Novena in preparation for the feast of Saint John Bosco begins				
24	Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop & Doctor of the Church, Titular and Patron of our Society (Feast)				
24	Commemoration of Mary Help of Christians				
30	Blessed Bronislaus Markiewicz, Founder of the Congregations of Saint Michael the Archangel				
31	Saint John Bosco, priest, our Father and Founder (Solemnity)				



JANUARY 2025								
DATE	DAY	PROVINCIAL	VICE PROVINCIAL	ECONOMER				
1	Wed	Sashipur - Kumarikatta	SYM FEST – Chennai	Guwahati				
2	Thu		Guwahati	Guwahati				
3	Fri		Guwahati	Guwahati				
4	Sat		Guwahati	Guwahati				
5	Sun	Ordination, Dimakuchi	Ordination, Dimakuchi	Dimakuchi				
6	Mon	Bhooteachang – Tangla	Guwahati	Bhooteachang – Tangla				
7	Tue	Guwahati	Damra - Vocation Camp	Guwahati				
8	Wed	Boko	Damra - Vocation Camp	Guwahati				
9	Thu	Mass at Gojapara – Faith Fest	Damra - Vocation Camp	Guwahati				
10	Fri	Mendal – Tura	Damra - Guwahati	Guwahati				
11	Sat	Ordination at Ampati	Kokrajhar - Vocation Camp	Guwahati				
12	Sun	Ordination at Ampati	Kokrajhar - Vocation Camp	Ordination at Ampati				
13	Mon	Rongjeng	Kokrajhar - Vocation Camp	Rongjeng				
14	Tue	Guwahati	Kokrajhar - Guwahati	Guwahati				
15	Wed	Amkachi	Umswai - Baithalangso	Amkachi				
16	Thu	Ordination, Umswai- Sojong	Baithalangso- Vocation Camp	Ordination at Umswai				
17	Fri	Sojong – Guwahati	Baithalangso- Vocation Camp	Sojong - Guwahati				
18	Sat	Sisters at Lemakona	Baithalangso- Vocation Camp	Lemakona				
19	Sun		Baithalangso- Vocation Camp	Guwahati				
20	Mon	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati				
21	Tue	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati				
22	Wed	Guwahati	Sunnyside Novitiate	Guwahati				
23	Thu	Salesian Family	Guwahati	Guwahati				
24	Fri	Visitors – Donors	Guwahati	Guwahati				
25	Sat	Ordination at Majerburi	Ordination at Majerburi	Ordination at Majerburi				
26	Sun	Republic Day	Guwahati	Guwahati				
27	Mon	Visitors – Donors	Guwahati	Visitors – Donors Meet				
28	Tue	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati				
29	Wed	Provincial Council	Provincial Council	Provincial Council Meeting				
30	Thu	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati				
31	Fri	Feast of Don Bosco-DBPH	Feast of Don Bosco-DBPH	Guwahati				