

# PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

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

**SM-15/2025**

**1 AUGUST 2025**

**DEAR CONFRERES,**

## **GREETINGS FROM THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE!**

In this circular I wish to invite you to reflect on our Salesian vow of poverty. On the day of our profession, we have freely and consciously made the vow of poverty to live a life of detachment and renunciation. The Bible not only extols the virtue of poverty but also promises blessedness to the poor. The consecrated persons are drawn to Christ, who chose to be born poor and lived in poverty. They embrace poverty to lead a life that witnesses to the values of the kingdom.

The three vows, called the evangelical counsels, are not three distinct vows, but form part of the one vocation. While poverty draws us closer to Christ, obedience opens our heart to embrace the will of God, and chastity make our hearts free to love God and our neighbour with a whole and undivided heart. The poor person in Scripture is not merely one who lacks material goods, but one who fully trusts in God. The quality of the heart is judged from the “treasures” to which it is attached.

## **GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR**

Evangelical poverty identifies with the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Jesus tells the messengers of John the Baptist about his messianic identity: “The poor have good news brought to them” (Mt 11:5). The same thing happens today: the hope of the poor is reawakened ; they recover their dignity and it becomes clear that the Kingdom is at work. In the mission of Jesus, the poor are explicitly chosen, and it is to them that the gospel is primarily addressed: “He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor” (Lk 4:18).

The poor are not the only ones. The message is offered also to those who have possessions. Jesus cautions against those who are overly attached to wealth: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal"(Mt 6:19). He further asks: " What does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeit his life?"(Mt 8:36). The Gospel leads man to some fundamental questions about his life, his possessions, the meaning of true and lasting happiness. “You cannot serve God and wealth” Mt 6:24). He praises the action of the widow who makes her tiny offering, that of Zacchaeus who promises to give away his wealth to those whom he has defrauded.

The poverty of Christ is expressed in the gift of himself even to the point of his death. The community, which is born of his resurrection, strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit, feels itself called to realize fraternal union among all through the sharing of spiritual and material goods. The example of the early Christian community is a powerful testimony to such a fraternal union. "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and

soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common" (Acts 4:32). This solidarity of "koinonia," this participation and sharing of material goods, was clearly a fruit of love, of the participation in the same Spirit; and all who had a share in that Spirit found unity in the sharing.

The koinonia includes many aspects of life: union of hearts, use of material goods, participation in the Eucharist and prayer, daily living.

## **POVERTY AND THE EVANGELIZING MISSION OF THE CONSECRATED**

The poverty lived out by the consecrated is a challenge to a world that seeks riches as an end in themselves, of greed and endless craving for possessions. Communion is an indispensable element of evangelical poverty and continues to find new and eloquent expressions in the experience and interior call to share everything in common: material goods and spiritual experiences, talents and inspirations, apostolic ideals and charitable service. Poverty directed towards communion produces abundance. The individual possession of riches only reproduces and extends destitution. Overpowering longing for money and the intoxication of the desire for possessions are at the root of the evils that most afflict the modern society, the arrogant exploitation of others, conflicts and wars, injustice and destitution.

Those who follow Christ through consecrated vow of poverty are called to be witnesses to the values of the Kingdom. Interior and exterior detachment, keeping to essentials and renouncing of possessions, do not therefore represent an impoverishment nor a negation of values which are authentically human, but rather their transfiguration; they propose a "spiritual therapy" for humanity, because they reject the idolatry of wealth in favour of worship of the living God.

Poverty is an indispensable characteristic of the evangelizing missionary who puts his trust in the word, in the convincing power of charity, in the promise of life. For a journey he has no need of "staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money – not even an extra tunic" (Lk 9:3). On his side he has the power of Jesus to cast out devils, the joy of proclaiming salvation and of curing men's wounds. He is willing to live by what they offer him. Poverty enables the consecrated person to be free of the tendency for domination and self-affirmation and the seeking for prestige which is so strongly rooted in both individuals and the community. His life and witness become true signs of Christ in the world.

The desire for sharing among the first Christians overcame the boundaries of the restricted community and extended to those who were in need. Vita Consecrata (no 83) remarks: "The option for the poor is inherent in the very structure of love lived in Christ. Those who wish to follow the Lord more closely, imitating his attitudes, cannot but feel involved in a very special way. The sincerity of their response to Christ's love will lead them to live a life of poverty and to embrace the cause of the poor".

One must go beyond a legalistic interpretation to follow Jesus in courageous love, generous sharing, and abandonment to God's mysterious ways. The Religious are called to be credible advocates of the human value of poverty, to denounce by their lifestyle the injustices perpetrated against so many of

God's children and to "commit themselves to the promotion of justice in the society where they work.

In following Christ, we discover the things that are infinitely superior to those which are temporal, though the latter are not without value. This is the first meaning or significance of our poverty. It is like the selling of our fields to buy the treasure of value. When our heart is set on Christ, we too can affirm with St Paul "Everything is loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and the power of his resurrection" (Phil 3:8).

### **DON BOSCO'S OPTION FOR THE POOR**

Though Don Bosco experienced extreme poverty in his childhood, he was never attached to wealth or material possessions. His mother taught him to renounce wealth and ostentatiousness and to love the poor. Recall her advice to her son on the day of his ordination. As a young priest, many opportunities came his way to live comfortably, but Don Bosco was not lured by them. He had his goals set clearly on dedicating his life for the poorest youth.

One instance is worth recalling: In 1846, Marchioness Barolo gave the 31-one year old Don Bosco an ultimatum. She asked him to choose either to remain at the Refuge as chaplain of St Philomena's Hospital and look after the spiritual needs of her institute or leave the Refuge to look after his boys. Don Bosco replied immediately: "My dear Marchioness, I have already thought it over for a long time. You have money and means, and you will have no trouble in finding all the priests you want to direct your institutes. But poor boys have nothing, and that is why I cannot and must not forsake them. If I were to give them up now, the work of several years would be lost... I have dedicated my life wholly to the welfare of these poor boys, and no one will ever make me stray from the path that the Lord has marked out for me (BM II, 358-359).

Don Bosco never strayed from this radical choice. Lots of money went through his hands; he built magnificent churches and basilicas; he had innumerable benefactors who generously supported his work, who knew for sure that they would be used well for his mission. He gave us a shining example of apostolic poverty. He insisted that the Salesians remain truly poor and detached for the service of the poor youth and as witnesses of the poverty of Christ.

The invitation of Jesus to the rich young man "to go, sell what you possess and give to the poor and follow me" (Mt 19:21) is echoed in the words of our Father Don Bosco, who wrote in the Introduction to the Constitutions: "All that is beyond food and clothing is superfluous for us, and contrary to our religious vocation. It is true that at times we shall have to suffer some inconvenience on our journeys, in our work, in times of health and of sickness; we shall sometimes have food, clothing and other things not to our liking, but it is precisely then that we should bear in mind that we have made a profession of poverty, and that if we wish to have its merit and reward, we ought to bear with its consequences".

Our Constitutions reminds us: "We choose to follow the Saviour who was born in poverty, lived deprived of everything and died stripped on the cross. We free ourselves from concern and worry about earthly goods, and trusting in the providence of the Father, we dedicate ourselves to the service of the gospel. The witness of our poverty, lived in a common sharing of our goods, helps the young to overcome their selfish possessive instinct and opens them to the Christian sense of sharing (72-73). Each one of us is responsible for his vow of poverty, daily living out the detachment he has promised. He is careful not to give way gradually to a desire for a comfortable and easy life, which poses a direct threat to fidelity and to apostolic generosity.

Like the first Christians we share our material goods, the fruits of our work, the gifts we receive. We do the same with our talents, energies and experience. In the community as brothers, we share what we have with the other communities of the province as well showing also solidarity with the needs of the entire congregation, of the church and of the world (76). Our communities are called to be sensitive to the conditions of their neighbourhood and bear witness to its poverty by a simple and frugal way of life in unpretentious dwellings (77). Don Bosco used to say: "Remember above all that what we have is not ours; it belongs to the poor. Woe to us if we do not use it well" (79).

### **THE JOY OF BEING POOR**

Wealth or riches are not the measure of a person's happiness. True poverty is not a burden but leads to a spirituality that is joyful and vigorous. Don Bosco used to say: "You cannot practise poverty unless you love it". Many external attitudes not in harmony with the profession of poverty are signs of a lack of internal freedom. Poverty does away with softness. It generates a spiritual vigour and endurance which confers an inward joy and gladness. True poverty increases our apostolic efficacy, enabling us to be more open to the grace of God and help us experience the joy of evangelical poverty. Don Bosco expressed the apparent contradiction in the dream of the pergola of roses. The Salesians walk on rose-petals, Everyone thinks they are "rejoicing", and they are in fact "happy". Although pierced by the thorns they do not lose their joy. This is another place where temperance come in: simplicity, making the best of a situation, no fuss and bother. It is in line with the gospel advice: when you fast, do not look dismal, but anoint your head and wash your face.

We have numerous examples of holy men and women who embraced poverty who also were witnesses of the Joy of the Gospel. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in the Magnificat, recounts not only her personal experience of joy but also provides a vision for the whole human race. She humbly acknowledges the forces that direct her life under the power of the Holy Spirit. We have outstanding saints like Francis of Assisi who joyfully renounced all wealth to embrace "Lady Poverty", Mother Teresa, who found her vocation in serving the destitute and the poorest of the poor, and was a great example of joy, and our own Father Don Bosco who was joyful in the face of privations.

## **SALESIAN POVERTY**

In order to understand Salesian poverty, we have to turn to Don Bosco, our Father and Founder. He not only lived the holiness of poverty but insisted that the Salesian is truly poor in fact and in spirit. He was very sensitive to the aspect of the witness of poverty and would reiterate: "Love the poor... Woe to us if those from whom we hope to receive help begin to say that we are living a more comfortable life than they!"

Speaking of the witness of poverty in our communities and our works our Rule of Life says: "Every community is sensitive to the conditions of its neighbourhood and bears witness to its poverty by a simple and frugal way of life in unpretentious dwellings" (Const. 77). In the Regulations we find this further specified: "Every member lives out his poverty by temperance in the use of food and drink, by simplicity in dress and by moderate use of holidays and amusements" (R 55). Article 18 of our Constitutions exhorts us: "Work and temperance will make the Congregation flourish, whereas seeking of an easy and comfortable life will instead bring about its death. The Salesian gives himself to his mission with tireless energy, taking care to do everything with simplicity and moderation". Don Bosco was accustomed to saying: "Let us accept that what we have is not ours but belongs to the poor; woe to us if we do not use it well!" (MB V). Our poverty becomes credible when we are not only poor in spirit and in deed, but when we let it be seen that we are content to live this way.

## **POVERTY AND THE COMMUNITY**

We share together our material goods: the fruits of our work, the gifts we receive and whatever comes to us from pensions, subsidies and insurance policies. We do the same with our talents, our energies and our experience. In the community the good of each individual becomes the good of all. Poverty becomes visible in the personal love of each member for all the confreres of the religious community, to the point where the two realities become inseparable and interdependent. St Francis de Sales said: "To be poor means living in community". Giving and receiving, showing generosity and gratitude, sharing with everyone gifts and material resources both intellectual and spiritual. Such communion goes beyond the immediate religious community and extends to the needs of the entire Congregation, of the Church and of the world.

Poverty urges us to be one with the poor and to love them in Christ. In them we see the image of Christ who, through his Incarnation, has entered our human condition marked by suffering, privation and want. In them, therefore, the grace of the presence and a meeting with the Lord awaits us. Solidarity with the poor generates attitudes of sharing. The Salesians are making in every continent many courageous and determined efforts to enter into communion with the poor. Our presence among the poor and the sharing of our goods with them are already a witness to evangelical poverty. We initiate projects to evangelize and help people, especially the young, to overcome situations of need, whether they be - financial, affective or spiritual. In the charismatic figure of Don Bosco, we discover that the profession of poverty is an excellent way for realizing our mission to the full.



## **WORK AND TEMPERANCE: HALMARK OF OUR POVERTY**

Unremitting and self-sacrificing work is a characteristic left us by Don Bosco and is the concrete expression of our poverty (C 78). The spirit of poverty leads us to be one with the poor and to love them in Christ. We consider hard work as a mark of our closeness to the working classes, the farmers, and the poor who tirelessly toil for their survival. Don Bosco in his 'Spiritual Testament' cautions: "When the desire for ease and comfort grows up amongst us, our pious Society will have run its course".

Let us examine our style of life in order to avoid, as confreres and communities, the immoderate use of money, expensive personal gadgets, travelling for pleasure, the proprietary attitude towards and use of remunerations for services. We are called to give witness to poverty through tireless work and temperance, but also through austerity, a simple and essential lifestyle, sharing and solidarity and responsible management of our resources. Whoever has chosen to follow Jesus has chosen to live the beatitude of poverty and simplicity of heart, to always be at home with the poor.

Don Bosco's insistence on work and temperance must find expression in the way we live our life of poverty. Our tireless work is made possible and sustained by temperance. In our daily labours we are at one with the poor who live by the sweat of their brow, and we bear witness to the human and Christian value of work. Don Bosco lived it joyfully in faith. Every Salesian is invited therefore to develop and make good use of his talents and use his time fruitfully.

## **WORK - THE FUNDAMENTAL TRAIT OF A SALESIAN**

Work is the fundamental trait of a Salesian. Don Cagliero said it emphatically: "One who does not know how to work is certainly no Salesian!". In December 1887, Don Bosco recommended twice for the Salesians: "work, work!" But for him work is not just any activity, tiring though it may be, but dedication to the mission, full-time and with all one's ability. It includes not only manual work, but intellectual and apostolic activity as well. Workers also are those who write, who hear confessions, who preach and study, who keep the house in order: it is a matter always of working for souls. It is not a matter of mere activity, but of purpose, choice and the wise ordering of our work. The Salesian learns to work with his hands and so is at ease performing "humble" work of a domestic or material kind. This is the kind of work which ends up by moulding a person's spiritual character. Work includes the effort of educative creativity. Don Bosco was imaginative in the matter of work.

The 29th Salesian General Chapter (GC29), held this year, emphasized the Salesian charism of serving the poor and marginalized, particularly in the context of youth ministry and education. The Chapter focused on strengthening the Salesian presence among the poor and migrants, and on fostering a deeper understanding of the Salesian charism, including its roots in spirituality, community, and mission.

## A CALL TO BE RESPONSIBLE

In dealing with money and other resources, I urge you to show extreme care to be responsible. The funds and material goods at our disposal which we administer are not our own. We are stewards entrusted with these for our apostolic mission. We need to avoid lavish spending on the one hand, and niggardly attitude in spending for what is needed for the confreres and the common needs of community and the youth, the employees and those whom we serve, on the other. We should exercise maturity and discretion in spending for food, travel, medical expenses and the needs of the community. The monthly meeting of the House Council, the budget meetings, the Provincial Visitation are occasions to examine our financial situation and the demands of our vow of poverty.

It is important that in our communities we observe the practice of the scrutiny of poverty, "**Scrutinium Paupertatis**" included in the Regulations: "The community, whether local or provincial, should examine at intervals its own state of poverty, both as regards its collective witness and the services it renders, and should study the means to ensure a constant renewal". This practice will lead us to a more authentic Salesian life. Access to resources or availability of money are not the sole criterion that determine our financial conduct. As individuals and communities, we have to examine and set right what is not in keeping with poverty. Our faithfulness is expressed in the way we share and use material resources like money, vehicles and other common goods. Poverty also demands of us a more orderly and proper way of maintaining inventories, books of accounts, buildings, furnishings, land and other resources.

As we are aware today there are many forms of frauds and financial scams, false promises of lucrative returns on investments, fraudulent methods of soliciting help, cybercrimes involving finances. I invite communities and confreres to be vigilant against being prey to such allurements and temptations. Communities should make careful discernment in all matters pertaining to financial decisions. They should also discern how best we can utilise the land and property to augment income to make our apostolate more fruitful. It is important to follow due processes in making appropriate and financial deals and investments, lending and borrowing. We need a transparent administration through a careful recording of expenses, a fraternal and trusting reference to the community and the one responsible for administration, and requests for authorizations foreseen by the Constitutions and Regulations. We ought to see all these within the framework of the vow of poverty we have professed.

In conclusion, let us, like Don Bosco our Father, have complete trust in Divine Providence. This trust must be accompanied by a courageous manner of witnessing, sharing and service. We should be grateful to God for his providence which brings us the necessary means for our mission. It is quite touching to discover how many benefactors across the world follow with love our apostolic labours and make tangible offerings to support the frontiers of our work for the young and the great missionary projects the Salesians render. We must not forget that many of the offerings come from simple people, not always well to do, who regularly and not infrequently with sacrifice contribute generously to encourage and sustain us.

May the Lord who called us to follow him as Salesians and consecrated Religious help us to follow him with greater fidelity, particularly in the area of living the vow of poverty.

### **NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION**

#### **SIX ING CLERICS ORDAINED DEACONS AT SHTC, MAWLAI**

On Tuesday, 1 July 2025, twenty-four clerics—including six from the Salesian Province of Guwahati (ING)—were ordained deacons during a solemn Eucharistic celebration at Sacred Heart Theological College (SHTC), Mawlai. The ordination was presided over by Most Rev. Bernard Laloo, DD, Auxiliary Bishop of Shillong. I had the joy and privilege of being present for this grace-filled occasion.



The six newly ordained deacons from our province have been assigned to the following communities for their diaconate ministry: Dn. Sebastian Basumatary to Garobadha, Dn. Sanjosh Sangma to Dimakuchi, Dn. Vincent Rabha to Bengtol, Dn. Wilson Topno to Amkachi, Dn. Peter Canisius to Sojong, and Dn. John Ngouning to Gojapara.

We offer them our heartiest congratulations and prayerful support. May their ministry as deacons be fruitful and spirit-filled as they continue their journey towards priestly ordination in the service of the Word, the Church, and the People of God.



## REGIONAL MEETING FOR KARBI ANGLONG AND DIMA HASAO HELD

On 5 July 2025, Christ the King Church, Sojong hosted the Regional Meeting for the Salesians of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao. The gathering was marked by fraternal dialogue, reflection, and renewal. The day began with a hymn to the Holy Spirit and prayer led by Fr Cherak M. Sangma, followed by a welcome address from Fr Abraham Kanattu, Rector of Sojong.



In my keynote address, I emphasized the importance of unity, fidelity to Salesian identity, and the call of GC29 to be “passionate for Christ and for the young.” I also underlined the centrality of the Eucharist in our Salesian life and urged all confreres to be authentic witnesses to our vocation and mission.

The first session on GC29 was animated by Fr Joy Kachappilly SDB, PC Moderator, and was followed by a lively discussion and exchange of insights. Fr Ignatius Gari SDB offered a special intervention on the Poverty Eradication Mission of the SPCSA, sharing valuable perspectives and opportunities for regional engagement.

The second session, moderated by Fr Johnson Parackal SDB, focused on the specific realities and concerns of the Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao regions, giving space for open dialogue and suggestions for future pastoral action. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Fr Albert Thyrniang SDB, and a concluding prayer led by Fr Dominic Mardi SDB.

### **REGION-WISE DON BOSCO SCHOOLS' FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT HELD**

The Region-wise Don Bosco Schools' Football Tournament was held on 7 July 2025 at the SAI Playground in Guwahati, bringing together young football talent from four Salesian regions: Tura, Karbi Anglong, BTR (Bodoland Territorial Region), and Assam Plains. Organized by the Province's Sports Academy Commission, the tournament was a brilliant display of youthful energy, skill, and team spirit.



The semi-finals saw Tura narrowly defeat Assam Plains in a tense encounter, while Karbi Anglong secured a solid win over BTR, setting the stage for an exciting final. In the championship match, Tura Region showed excellent coordination and finishing, overcoming Karbi Anglong to lift the



tournament trophy. BTR took third place after a competitive match against Assam Plains.

Fr Kerobin Minj SDB, the tournament convenor, commended all teams for their enthusiasm, discipline, and sportsmanship. He thanked the Principals and staff for their support and highlighted how such events reflect the Salesian values of teamwork, respect, and fair play.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Sports Academy Commission of the Province for this commendable initiative and hope to see many more such events in the future that promote sportsmanship, team spirit, and holistic growth among our young people.

### **SUMMER TIME YOUTH MINISTRY 2025: HELD ACROSS THE PROVINCE**

The Summer Time Youth Ministry (STYM) 2025 was a vivacious and grace-filled celebration of young hearts across the Salesian Province of Guwahati. Held from early to late July, STYM brought together thousands of youth from various parishes to deepen their faith, grow in fellowship, and embrace their identity as *“Pilgrims of Hope.”* The entire initiative was spearheaded by the Province Youth Ministry Commission under the leadership of Fr Bivan Rodrigues Mukhim, Vice Provincial, and Fr Cletus Sebastian, Rector and Director of Don Bosco Institute.

The journey began at **St. John Bosco Parish, Boko** from 4–6 July, where over 70 young people participated in a dynamic programme animated by brothers from Sacred Heart Theological College, Mawlai. The camp was inaugurated by Fr John Chellanthara SDB, Rector and Parish Priest, and included enriching sessions on faith, Christian values, and community life.

At **Don Bosco Tangla**, the camp was launched on 11 July with more than 250 youth from Tangla and Dimakuchi Parishes. Fr Jeremias Tirkey SDB inaugurated the event, which featured sessions on goal setting, Christian identity, prayer, and interactive games. The camp concluded with a moving address by Fr Bivan Rodrigues Mukhim SDB, who called on the youth to lead lives of selfless service.

**Mendal Parish** held its camp from 11–13 July, bringing together 149 youth under the theme *“Let us walk together in faith and unity.”* Sessions emphasized spiritual growth, friendship, and social responsibility. Fr Daniel Ch. Marak, the chief guest, encouraged the youth to be rooted in Christ while actively engaging with the world.

At **Don Bosco Baithalangso**, STYM was inaugurated on 11 July by Rev. Fr Joseph Teron SDB. In his address, he invited the youth to see the camp as a journey of renewal. Salesian brothers led the sessions, games, and prayer moments, all centred on the theme *“Pilgrims of Hope.”*

Simultaneously, **Don Bosco Parish, Gojapara** hosted its STYM from 11–13 July, with more than 150 participants from Gojapara, Hatigopa, Lemakona, and Borbakra. The event began with the hoisting of the STYM flag by Fr Arvind Kailash SDB, followed by an inaugural Mass celebrated by Fr Puma Philemon SDB. Sessions focused on faith, leadership, self-belief, and youth engagement, with dynamic activities and spiritual animation fostering a deep sense of purpose and mission.

**Kumarikata Parish** hosted its camp from 18–20 July under the theme “*Anchored in Hope.*” Around 120 youth participated in sessions on goal setting, Christian identity, human trafficking, and the role of youth in the Church. Cultural programmes and a concluding Eucharist by Fr Amit Chama Lakra added beauty and depth.

Meanwhile, at **Holy Cross Parish, Rongkhon**, over 100 youth took part in the camp held from 18–20 July. The programme combined formation sessions, prayer, cleanliness drives, Bible skits, and cultural competitions, culminating in a thanksgiving Mass led by Fr Bartholomew Marak and Fr Anthony Sangma SDB.

In **Shallang Parish**, the Zone IV Youth Convention (18–20 July) brought together youth from four parishes under the STYM theme. Chief Guest Fr Januarius S. Sangma SDB exhorted the young to be steadfast in hope and faith, while host Fr Markus Lakra SDB warmly welcomed all participants.

**St. Paul’s Parish, Amkachi** held its summer camp from 19–20 July. The presence of the ICYM Diocesan President and team enriched the event. Activities included talks, group dynamics, and cultural performances. Fr Joachim Puma SDB presided over the concluding Eucharist, commending the youth’s enthusiasm.



At **Kokrajarh Parish**, STYM began on 25 July with 120 participants. The opening included Adoration, a vibrant cultural welcome, and the honouring of academic achievers. Sessions focused on leadership, youth identity, and social awareness. The programme concluded on 27 July with a thanksgiving Eucharist.



**St. John Bosco Church, Doomni** hosted its youth programme from 25–27 July. Topics included social media, leadership, and youth involvement in the Church. Resource persons like Br Haisu, Br Raju, and Fr Ignatius Gari SDB animated the sessions, while prayer and cultural events enlivened the camp. The event concluded with a Holy Mass by Fr Bhaskar Raj SDB and a joyful jam session.

**St. Dominic Savio Parish, Garobadha** also held its camp from 25–27 July. A highlight was the presence of Provincial Fr Sebastian Kuricheal SDB. The youth enthusiastically participated in sessions, games, skits, and spiritual activities. The camp closed with a solemn flag-lowering and thanksgiving prayer.

Apart from these, there were also some other parishes and centres where youth camps were held. Across all these parishes and centres, STYM 2025 has been a powerful expression of youthful faith, hope, and missionary zeal. It has rekindled the Salesian spirit among the young and reaffirmed their vital role in the Church and society.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all Rectors, Youth Services Coordinators, confreres, sisters, parish youth leaders, and volunteers for their wholehearted support. A special word of thanks to Fr Bivan Rodrigues Mukhim, Fr Cletus Sebastian, and the Province Youth Ministry Commission for their tireless preparation and coordination. I also acknowledge the dedicated animation of Cl. Anakarla Anthony, Cl. Velankanni Raj, Cl. Banka Sagar, Cl. Aswin Singh (Hyderabad), and our clerics—Jeniberth, Phabian, Jonathan, Dominic, Haisuilube, and Sunit—whose energy and passion helped make STYM 2025 a transformative journey for our youth.

### **ANNUAL SPIRITUAL RETREATS: A TIME OF RENEWAL AND GRACE**

The Province's Annual Spiritual Retreats 2025 were held in two phases at Siloam, Umiam, offering Salesians a grace-filled time of spiritual renewal and fraternal communion.

The first retreat, held from 11 to 17 July, was preached by Fr. Jose Varickasseril, SDB, renowned for his deep scriptural reflections and pastoral wisdom. It began with a welcoming session and Eucharistic Adoration, setting the tone for a week of prayer, meditation, and spiritual conferences. A Penitential Service on 15 July provided a moment of deep reconciliation, and I had the joy of presiding over the concluding Thanksgiving Mass on 17 July.

The second retreat began on 27 July and will conclude on 2 August. It is being animated by Fr. Biji Thomas, SDB, who invited the participants to journey inward and deepen their relationship with the Lord. Fr. Bivan Rodrigues Mukhim, SDB, Vice Provincial, coordinated both retreats, while Fr. Chellanthara John, SDB, serves as Rector of the second phase.

Inspired by the invitation of Jesus in Mark 6:31, both retreats have been a sacred pause—helping confreres to rest in the Lord, rekindle their zeal, and return renewed for the mission. I express heartfelt thanks to both preachers for their insightful and enriching animation, and to Fr. George Palamattam and the Siloam community for their warm hospitality and for providing a prayerful atmosphere conducive to a meaningful retreat experience.



### **SPCSA ASSEMBLY 2025 HELD AT DBSM, BENGALURU**

The SPCSA Assembly and Council 2025 was held from 8 to 11 July at Don Bosco Skill Mission (DBSM), Bengaluru, bringing together provincials, delegates, and network leaders from across South Asia for days of reflection, evaluation, and planning on the Salesian mission in the region.

The gathering began on 8 July with Lauds in the Mother Theresa Hall, animated by the Bangalore Province (INK), followed by the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. Biju Michael SDB, Regional Councillor for South Asia. The



inaugural session at the Kalam Auditorium included a graceful prayer dance by the students of Valsalee Bhavan and a heartfelt welcome by Fr. Jose Koyickal SDB, Provincial of Bangalore. He expressed joy at hosting the

Assembly and reaffirmed the Province's commitment to the shared Salesian mission.

A keynote address was delivered online by Fr. Fabio Attard SDB, the Rector Major. He commended the vibrancy of the South Asia Region and encouraged the participants to continue fostering Don Bosco's charism with renewed zeal. His address was followed by a lively Q&A interaction.

Across the four days, the Assembly included presentations by various commissions and network leaders, evaluating the progress of different sectors: Youth Ministry, Education and Culture, Technical Training, Social Communication, Don Bosco Green Alliance, and Planning and Development. These sessions offered an opportunity for constructive feedback and strategic planning. Group discussions and regional sharing enriched the Assembly, allowing the Provinces to listen to each other's experiences, challenges, and best practices. Time was also given for spiritual reflection, community prayer, and informal fellowship, deepening the sense of unity and shared mission.

Fr. Bivan Rodrigues Mukhim, SDB, Vice Provincial, and I were privileged to represent our Province and contribute insights from the Northeast Region. The Assembly concluded with renewed hope and direction for the Salesian mission in South Asia.

### **COMMISSION HEADS MEET FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING**

On 18 July 2025, the Heads of various Provincial Commissions gathered at the Mario Hall, Provincial House, Guwahati, for a strategic planning meeting aimed at fostering synergy and collaboration as part of the Salesian Plan.



The session began with prayer led by Fr Abhilash V.J., followed by my address wherein I emphasized the importance of a unified vision and urged the commissions to move beyond formality to become dynamic bodies that actively engage in planning and implementation. Fr Bivan Rodrigues Mukhim, Vice Provincial, delivered the keynote on the need for a Salesian Plan rooted in the Charism, General Chapters, and local context. He



stressed that commissions must animate, coordinate, and evaluate ministries while aligning with provincial priorities. He recommended regular meetings, annual programs, and timely reporting. Each commission head briefly presented their annual action plan, encouraging alignment and collaboration. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks from Fr Provincial and a closing prayer by Fr Solomon Denis, SDB.

### **VOCATION COMMISSION HELD AT PROVINCIAL HOUSE**

The Vocation Guidance and Formation Commission of the Province held its meeting on Saturday, 19 July 2025, at the Provincial House, Guwahati. The gathering aimed to review the current vocational landscape and outline strategic plans for the coming year.

The meeting opened with a hymn to the Holy Spirit and a prayer led by Fr. Paul Minj. I then addressed the Commission members, highlighting the vital role of helping young people discern their unique calling—whether to the priesthood, religious life, or



committed lay service. I stressed the need to involve laypeople more actively in our vocational mission and encouraged greater engagement with the families of candidates in formation.

Fr. Bivan Rodrigues Mukhim, SDB, Vice Provincial, reviewed the previous meeting's proceedings and offered a thoughtful analysis of the present vocational context in the Province. He emphasized the importance of creative approaches, personal accompaniment, and broadening the scope of vocational guidance to include all young people discerning their life path.

Fr. John Mathias Marak, Vocation Promoter, shared updates on his ongoing initiatives and activities. This was followed by a session led by Fr. Mackley Gomes, focusing on both the challenges and emerging opportunities in vocation animation. Fr. Ethelbert Minj also provided a comprehensive update on the formation houses, emphasizing the importance of holistic and personalized formation.

The meeting concluded with a collaborative discussion to formulate the Strategic Action Plan for 2025–2026. It ended with a final reflection by the Vice Provincial and a prayer and blessing imparted by Fr. Mackley Gomes.



## FR KLISTERWELL AND FR KISHOR LEAVE FOR ROME

Fr Klisterwell Sohthiang SDB and Fr Kishor Mushahary SDB left Guwahati, on 30 July 2025 to begin their higher studies in Rome. Fr Klisterwell will pursue a licentiate in Salesian Spirituality, while Fr Kishor will specialize in Dogmatic Theology. The Province extends its heartfelt prayers and best wishes for their studies, praying that their time in Rome may be enriching and fruitful.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ **PRACTICAL TRAINEES ANIMATION** on 9 August 2025 at DBPH.
- ❖ **RECTORS/LEADERS MEETING** on 27 August 2025 at DBPH.

## CONDOLENCES:

- ❖ To the Provincial and confreres of the Kolkata Province (INC) on the passing away of **Fr. Fabianus Kujur** on **5 July 2025**. May his soul rest in the peace of Christ whom he lovingly served.
- ❖ To the Provincial and confreres of the Bangalore Province (INK) on the sad demise of **Fr. George Pudussery** (aged 91) on **7 July 2025**. May the Lord reward him for his long and faithful service in the vineyard of the Lord.
- ❖ To the Provincial and confreres of the Shillong Province (INS) on the death of **Fr. Zephyrinus Baxla** on **07 July 2025**. May the Good Shepherd welcome him into eternal joy and grant comfort to all who mourn his loss.

## CONCLUSION

As I conclude these reflections and directives, let us renew our trust in God who called us. May Don Bosco, our Father and Founder, lead us along the path of fidelity and holiness. He reminds us that Mary Help of Christians who is part of our community continues to lead and guide us. She is the Patron of our Province, and we can count on her unfailing help and intercession as we strive to live in communion. With Mary's help, may we overcome all obstacles and difficulties, and experience the richness of the communion which is the fruit of Christ's death and resurrection.

Yours sincerely in Don Bosco,

Handwritten signature of Fr. Sebastian Mathew SDB.

**Fr. Sebastian Mathew SDB**

Provincial



# AUGUST HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 1 Cl. Junas Bara
- 2 Cl. Arpan Tigga
- 4 Fr. Jose Perunneparampil (PJ)
- 5 Fr. Vinod Lugun
- 8 Fr. Jose Palely (IND)
- 8 Cl. Santrius Ekka
- 10 Br. Benjamin Rosant Indwar
- 13 Fr. Francis Basumatary
- 13 Fr. Hopna Tudu
- 13 Cl. Jeevan Chandra Kerketta
- 13 Cl. Rohit Kujur
- 13 Cl. Marshilong Shembalang  
Lyngdoh



- 14 Fr. Vincent Xalxo
- 15 Fr. Peter Pazhayamkottil (PA)
- 15 Cl. Sunit Soren
- 17 Fr. Sachin Kujur
- 17 Fr. Bromio Ch. Marak
- 18 Cl. Albinush Indwar
- 21 Cl. Champramary Profil
- 21 Fr. Thomas Kunnappillil (KJ)
- 21 Card. Ángel Fernández Artime
- 21 Fr. Francis Xavier Kujur
- 23 Br. Sanjit Topno
- 25 Fr. Louis Martin Bhengra
- 26 Dn. Jerbasius Xalxo
- 28 Fr. Charles Ch. Sangma
- 28 Br. Nirmal Ekka





# IN LOVING MEMORY - AUGUST

Dt	Name of the Confrere	Place	Year	Age	Province
1	P Dominic Curto	Philippines	2014	92	INC, ING
1	P Michael Bhengra	Guwahati	2017	58	ING
3	E Louis Mathias	Italy	1965	78	INM, INDIA, INC, ING, INS
1	P Dominic Curto	Philippines	2014	92	INC, ING
1	P Michael Bhengra	Guwahati	2017	58	ING
3	E Louis Mathias	Italy	1965	78	INM, INDIA, INC, ING, INS
4	P Jose Nadackal	Guwahati	2018	68	ING, INS
5	P John Mora	Katpadi	1961	75	INM, INDIA, INT, ING
6	L Pacifico Muscat	Kolkata	1935	26	INC, ING, INS
9	P Dennis Troncana	Italy	1982	82	INDIA, INC, ING, IND, INS
11	P Luigi Jellici	Gayaganga	2009	94	INC, INDIA, ING
13	P Virgil Albera	Shillong	1987	74	ING, INDIA, INC, INS
14	P Luigi Rocca	Italy	1956	56	INDIA, INC, ING
16	P Reginald D'Silva	Liluah	2020	68	INC, IND, ING
20	P John Vadakkekuzhikattil	Shillong	2006	52	ING, INS
20	P Joseph Marchesi	Italy	2012	97	ING, INC, INM, INS
24	P Francis Fossati	Mumbai	1972	75	INB, INDIA, INM, INC, ING, INN
25	P Joseph Kizhakechennadu	Shillong	2019	68	INS, ING
26	S Paul Prando	Shillong	1928	19	INDIA, INC, ING, INS
26	P John Rapati	Holland	1989	75	INC, ING
27	P Joseph Topno	Borgang	2014	94	ING, INC
28	P Rajesh Ekka	Boko	2010	30	ING
28	L Vijay Toppo	Boko	2010	27	ING
29	L Castellino Fernandes	Shillong	1994	65	ING, INM, INB, INS, IND
29	P Dominic Barwa	Dibrugarh	1990	67	IND, ING
30	P Austin Anderson	England	1958	59	INDIA, INM, ING
30	E Hubert D'Rosario	Shillong	1994	75	ING, INM, INK, INB, IND, INS
30	P Joseph Parippil	Mumbai	2013	77	ING, INC, INS
31	L Aloysius Seriola	Sunnyside	1993	81	ING, INC, INN, INS
31	P Iginio Ricaldone	Turin	1963	60	INDIA, INC, ING, INS
31	P Louis Kerketta	Guwahati	1998	86	ING, INC, IND

## Salesian Feasts/Commemorations

2	Blessed Augustus Czartoryski, priest
11	Salesian Missionary Day (monthly commemoration)
16	Birthday of Don Bosco
24	Commemoration of Mary Help of Christians
25	Blessed Maria Troncatti,
26	FMA Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá, lay person
31	Commemoration of Don Bosco



# AUGUST 2025

DATE	DAY	PROVINCIAL	VICE PROVINCIAL	ECONOMER
1	Fri	Retreat Siloam	SAFC, Goa	Guwahati
2	Sat	Retreat Siloam	SAFC, Goa	Guwahati
3	Sun	Rongkhon Chapel Blessing	SAFC, Goa	Guwahati
4	Mon		SAFC, Goa	Guwahati
5	Tue	Meeting at Social Forum	SAFC, Goa	Guwahati
6	Wed	Visit of Fr Silvio Roggia, Councillor for Formation	Ghy, Vocation Comm. Meeting Fr Silvio Roggia	Visit of Fr Silvio Roggia
7	Thu	Doomni: Visitation	Guwahati	Doomni Visitation
8	Fri	DBC Chapaguri: Visitation	Guwahati	DBC Chapaguri - Visitation
9	Sat	Chapaguri: Vistation	Practical Tranees' Meeting	Chapaguri- Vistation
10	Sun	Bengtol: Vistation	Guwahati	Bengtol
11	Mon	Bengtol>Kokrajhar Vistation	Guwahati	Bengtol – Kokrajhar
12	Tue	Kokrajhar: Vistation	Guwahati	Kokrajhar
13	Wed	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
14	Thu	Book Release of Lt Fr Francis Hembrom	Guwahati	Book Release of Lt Fr Francis Hembrom
15	Fri	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
16	Sat	Bosco Mount: Visitation	Dimapur	Bosco Mount: Visitation
17	Sun	Bosco Mount: Visitation	Zubza, Novitiate	Bosco Mount: Visitation
18	Mon	DBS, Tura Visitation	Guwahati	DBS, Tura Visitation
19	Tue	DBS, Tura >DBCL, Tura Visitation	Guwahati	DBS, Tura >DBCL, Tura Visitation
20	Wed	DBCL, Tura: Visitation	Guwahati	DBCL, Tura Visitation
21	Thu	DBC, Tura: Visitation	Guwahati	GB Meeting – DBC, Tura
22	Fri	GB Meeting – DBC, Tura	Guwahati	DBC, Tura - Visitation
23	Sat	DBC, Tura: Visitation	Guwahati	DBC, Tura - Visitation
24	Sun	Rongjeng: Visitation	Guwahati	Rongjeng – Visitation
25	Mon	Rongjeng: Visitation>Ghy	Guwahati	Rongjeng – Visitation>Ghy
26	Tue	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
27	Wed	Rectors' Meeting	Rectors' Meeting	Rectors' Meeting
28	Thu	Provincial Council Meeting	Provincial Council Meeting	Provincial Council Meeting
29	Fri	Guwahati	Diphu	Guwahati
30	Sat	CRI Conference	Haflong	Guwahati
31	Sun	CRI Conference	Guwahati	Guwahati