

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

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

SM-16/2025

1 SEPTEMBER 2025

DEAR CONFRERES,

GREETINGS FROM THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE!

As we celebrate the Teachers' Day in the month of September, I wish to present to you some reflections on our mission as educators and evangelisers of the young. As Salesians we are called and chosen by the Lord with this special vocation following the spirit and charism of our Father and Founder Don Bosco.

OUR VOCATION TO BE EDUCATORS

Our primary vocation is to be educators with the heart of Christ, the Good Shepherd. We look to Jesus who called us to follow him and to Don Bosco who bequeathed to us a precious legacy in the educational method called the Preventive System. Though we have studied much about this system in our years of formation and later, I wish to invite each one of you about the need to renew our understanding of our Father's charism and to re-dedicate ourselves in order to give concrete expression to it in the diverse contexts in which we work today and in keeping with the needs of our time.

Don Bosco's educational system can be traced to the dream he had at the age of nine. In his *Memoirs of the Oratory*, Don Bosco recounts this dream that shaped his work, and the distinct mission to devote his life to transform the young through gentleness and kindness. During a period when education was mostly based on harsh punishments and repressive methods, Don Bosco pioneered a method and practice that showed how genuine change and transformation of the young can be achieved through a pedagogy rooted in the heart.

FRUIT OF A LIVING EXPERIENCE

Don Bosco's educational system is not based merely on theoretical ideas but on an experience evolved over the years in the Oratory and practiced by him and his followers. Don Bosco was reluctant to write a theoretical treatise on the Preventive System, as he wanted his method to be a living experience that the Salesians should inherit in a living environment. Only many years later did he write about the Preventive System, that too briefly. Now more than a century and half later, we can truly vouch for the relevance of his pedagogical methods and its efficacy.

Don Bosco was ahead of his times. He was a charismatic figure and a pioneer. He went beyond legislation and custom. His educational precepts and methods were revolutionary and pathbreaking. His work with some of the most difficult and disadvantaged youth drew the attention and admiration of many of his contemporaries which included governments,

civic leaders, educators and church leaders and others interested in education, social transformation and the welfare of youth.

At the root of Don Bosco's educational system was his vocation. For him, service to the young was a generous response to a call from the Lord. It is the combination of holiness and education, in all that regards his commitments, a spiritual life of sacrifice, an expression of love, that constitute his singular personality. He is a saintly educator and an educator saint. He was urged on by a strong social conscience as well as spirituality. What is required today is no different: responding to the call of God and to the signs of the times.

Don Bosco's commitment stemmed from providing an education directed towards making a contribution to society in a spirit of solidarity and enabling young people discover God. His education and training for a profession were linked to a Christian view of the world, to the formation of conscience and to the building of human relationships. He began from where it was possible, adapted to the condition of the youth and the situation of the educator.

DON BOSCO'S CHARISM AND OUR VOCATION

The Salesians and the Salesian Family members who practice the Preventive System today can testify to the validity and relevance of Don Bosco's educational method in the holistic formation of the young. The Salesians of Don Boco (SDB), who today constitute the largest religious congregation in the Church, and who work in some 138 countries across the world, continue to live and practice this educational method with much fruitfulness. In addition, numerous other members of the Salesian Family and collaborators follow these precepts faithfully. But one cannot be a successful educator using this method unless one is fully dedicated, like Don Bosco, to the integral wellbeing of the youth.

As our Constitutions states: Don Bosco was raised up in the Church through the gift of the Holy Spirit for the salvation of the young (cf. Art 1). This predilection of our saintly founder is clearly stated in his words: "For you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life" (Art 14). He reminded the Salesians to look for the innate goodness of God in the young and make them know that God loves them and the Holy Spirit is present and active in their life. He believed that "in every youngster, even the most unfortunate one, there is a spot accessible to what is good. It is the task of the educator to look for this spot, the sensitive heart string, and draw profit from it". The Salesian is called to recognize the innate positive qualities in the young, while acknowledging their occasional thoughtlessness and lack of experience.

In his *Memoirs of the Oratory*, Don Bosco writes: "The world will always welcome us as long as our concern is for under-privileged peoples, poor children, members of society most in danger. This is our real wealth which no one will envy and nobody will take from us". At the root of all of this is a vocation. For Don Bosco, service to the young was a generous response to a call from the Lord. It is the combination of holiness and education, in all that regards his commitments, a spiritual life of sacrifice, an expression of love, that constitute his singular personality.

Don Bosco had spent his entire life for the education of the young. The results of his work became well known and he became famous in his own times. Years later, a French educator P. Duvallet, in an address to the Salesians said: “You have works, colleges, oratories for the young, but you have only one treasure: the pedagogy of Don Bosco. In a world in which youngsters are betrayed, squeezed dry, crushed, exploited, the Lord has entrusted to you a pedagogy in which respect for the young person, for his greatness and his frailty, for his dignity as a son of God prevail. Preserve it, renew it, rejuvenate it, enrich it with all the latest discoveries, adapt it to the times. But for heaven’s sake, preserve it! Change everything, if necessary, lose all your houses but preserve this treasure, forming in thousands of hearts the way to love and to save the young, which is Don Bosco’s heritage.”

ROOTED IN REASON, RELIGION AND LOVING KINDNESS

Don Bosco is often described as a man ahead of his times. His educational system based on Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness offers a practical method based on common sense, prudence, understanding, naturalness, moderation, truth and goodness. His pedagogy, in keeping with his predominantly Catholic context, laid strong emphasis on religion. He was convinced that religion was essential to offer integral education. He disliked every form of repressive religion imposed from outside. His own experience of the love of God gave rise to his ethical and religious precepts necessary for the salvation of the youth. For him, religion was intended to situate the young in a joyful and spontaneous communion with God who is a father, a guide and friend. Don Bosco was convinced that religion would become attractive to the young when it is presented with reason and spontaneity.

In the Preventive System, Don Bosco manifested a strong creative ability. Its originality, beauty and greatness does not reside so much in its novelty but in a new synthesis which emerged from his pastoral heart and evolved from his personal experience with the young.

Instead of constraint, the Preventive System appeals to the resources of intelligence, love and goodness, and the desire for God which everyone has in the depths of one’s being. It brings together educators and youngsters in a family experience of trust and dialogue. Imitating God’s patience, we encounter the young at their present stage of freedom. We then accompany them, so that they may develop solid convictions and gradually assume the responsibility for the delicate process of their growth. The Preventive System is not a written work but a lived experience of convictions, attitudes, actions, presence, means, methods and structures, which have progressively established a certain personal and community manner of living.

Loving Kindness, which is at the heart of the Preventive System, facilitates the convergence of reason and religion. Loving Kindness, experienced by Don Bosco in his own earlier life, became the distinctive characteristic of the Preventive System. It demands on the part of the educator, a relationship of confidence, love and affection. It was deeply rooted in a love that “is patient and kind, not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude, capable of bearing all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things” (cf 1 Cor 13: 4-7). Don Bosco insisted that the educator’s love for the young needs to

be sincere and devoid of all sentimentality and selfish motives. It is a holy love that seeks the good of the youngsters and their human and spiritual development. It was such a love that made him affirm: “That you are young is enough to make me love you very much”.

FAMILY SPIRIT

Don Bosco was an ardent promoter of educative structures that favoured a family environment. He wanted the young people to feel at home and at ease. His Oratory was a large family, and the young really felt as if they had never left their homes. The family atmosphere made each one acceptable and to share responsibility together. The characteristics of this family environment are ‘mutual affection’, ‘feeling of being welcomed’ and ‘responsibility for the common good’. Authentic family spirit inspires relationships of mutual esteem and trust. Further, the family atmosphere is governed not so much by recourse to rules as by faith and the promptings of the heart. The family spirit was evident in every moment of life in Don Bosco’s houses: work and prayer, meals and recreation, games and music, outings, pilgrimages, meetings and other encounters. The authentic family spirit manifested itself in the spirit of joy and cheerfulness.

A PEDAGOGY OF PRESENCE

Don Bosco insisted on being present with the young. Presence for him meant authentic love. He was always in the midst of young people: “Here in your midst I feel completely at home; for me, living means being here with you”. The practice of the Preventive System demands the presence of the Salesian with the young. A caring and loving presence calls for a pastoral heart, a style that demands an educating and evangelising presence. The Preventive System necessitates an empathy with the young which is a “harmonious relationship with the young, liking what they like but without abandoning our adult role as educators” (GC 21, 13).

Confronted with the easy access to information and online learning, one might begin to question the need of educators today. An educator’s role is not merely to transmit information but to transform a person. This transformation takes place only through the presence and the accompaniment of the educator. Don Bosco was fully convinced of the need for the physical presence of the educator inside and outside the classroom. Being present has a transforming effect on the children. The educator becomes a role model, a friend, a guide, a brother and a father who cares about the growth of the pupils. Don Bosco says, “a teacher who is only seen in the teacher’s chair, is just a teacher and nothing more. If he goes into recreation with the boys he becomes their brother.” The physical presence of the educator establishes a rapport that promotes emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual formation of the students.

EDUCATIVE PASTORAL COMMUNITY

Though Don Bosco did not use the expression “Educative Pastoral Community” (EPC), in practice he gathered collaborators who associated with his mission and contributed with their competences and resources. His Oratory was an educative pastoral community that lived the Preventive

System. The EPC involves young people and adults, parents and educators in a family atmosphere, each one making one's own specific contribution, so that it can become a living manifestation of communion and carry out the educative mission among the young and achieve the desired goals. The Salesian Religious Community (SDBs) has the specific task of becoming the animating nucleus in respect of the educative community as a whole and of the other members of the Salesian Family. Let us do everything possible to animate and form Salesian Family members, educators and parents in the Preventive System.

FAITH DIMENSION

A Salesian today has to educate and evangelise the young. Many young people are exposed to practical atheism, materialism and relativism. But the Salesian educator imbued with the spirit of the Gospel must become a witness to the values of Christ. The Preventive System is founded on religion and faith. It is the relationship with God and faith dimension that give purpose and meaning to one's life. Illumined by the light of the Gospels, a person sees life as a whole, with a purpose destined by God. The faith element gives one the right perspective on learning and life and formation of one's conscience, the practice of virtue and charity.

Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, in whose memory we observe the Teacher's Day, speaks of education as a spiritual enterprise. He believed that an education that cannot develop spiritual feelings in the students is not real. For Don Bosco, education is a spiritual activity leading one to salvation. For Catholic pupils, he insisted on the need for frequent Confession and Communion, daily Mass, Marian devotions, which he believed are the pillars that ought to support an educational edifice.

However, he insisted that there should not be any imposition of religious practices but encourage them to frequent sacraments and prayers, and offer them every opportunity to make good use of them. He urged the Salesians to highlight the beauty, the greatness, the holiness of religion on the occasion of retreats, novenas, homilies and religious instructions. For everyone he proposed such easy methods that are useful to civil society, to peace of heart, to the salvation of one's soul. In this way the young people will become involved spontaneously in these religious practices, with pleasure and with fruit.

In a multi-faith context like that of ours, the Preventive System aims at forming upright citizens and good Christians, one directed to human advancement and the other to education to the divine or transcendent God. It enables the young to discover and increase their ability of opening themselves up to God and to the proposition of faith. The Salesian educator must help them to distinguish what is true and authentic from what is false and deceptive by accompanying them on their path to a meeting of communion with God, using the good elements that already exist in their faith and their desires" (GC 23, 1990, 74). Authentic educative activity ensures that the young have a home that welcomes, a prayer atmosphere that provides God experience, a school that prepares them for life and a playground where friends could meet and celebrate life.

A PEDAGOGY OF THE HEART

Aware of the greatness of our vocation as Salesian educators and the gift we have received from Don Bosco as a “pedagogy of the heart,” let us commit ourselves to give our best for the young. Preventive System is a love that knows how to make itself loved (cf. *Const.* 20). It calls for a *renewed presence among the young*, consisting in affection, closeness, participation, accompaniment, witness and vocational guidance. Our Salesian presence must be rooted in a renewed option for the young who are poor and at risk, seeking out situations of deprivation.

To say that Don Bosco’s heart was given entirely to the young means that everything that was his, intelligence, heart and will, physical strength, his whole being was directed towards what was best for them, fostering the development of their full potential, wanting their eternal salvation. For him, therefore, being a man of the heart meant being totally consecrated to the well-being of his boys and devoting to them all his energies, until the last breath!

Don Bosco insisted that education is a matter of the heart of which God alone is the master. He showed us how to balance authority and kindness, love of God and love for the young. Education, he said must be based on the relationship between the teacher and the pupil. He abolished all forms of ‘imposition’. His system of education is guided by love which is totally other-centred. Don Bosco would say that it is not enough that you love, but the boys should know that they are loved. He recalled the words of St. Francis de Sales: “You can catch more flies with a teaspoon of honey than with a barrel of vinegar.” In short, Don Bosco’s educational system was developed as a product of his own tremendous love for the youth.

He had a word of caution. “If we sometimes see our work as fruitless and all our efforts reaping nothing but thorns and thistles, believe me, my dear friends, the blame must fall upon a defective system of discipline devoid of love.” He encouraged the educators to be close to the young and win them over. Once they are won over, you can have great influence over them”.

To say that his heart was given entirely to the young means directing them towards what was best for them, fostering the development of their full potential, wanting their eternal salvation. For Don Bosco, therefore, being a man of the heart meant being totally consecrated to the well-being of his boys and devoting to them all his energies, until the last breath!” He possessed an innate talent for understanding the young people and gaining their trust, his priestly ministry which gave him a profound knowledge of the human heart, and his experience of the effectiveness of grace in the development of young people.

Prevention allows the majority of young people to be freed from the burden of negative experiences, which put at risk their physical health, their psychological development, the fulfilment of their potential, their eternal happiness. It also allows them to give full rein to their talents, to profit to the utmost from all the educational opportunities afforded them, to recover in the early stages from any possible failings. This was the conclusion Don Bosco came to after his experience with the youngsters in jail, and contact with the young manual labourers of Turin. The personal benefits gained

from education were to be directed towards making a contribution to society in a spirit of solidarity; living honestly with material success in this world had a spiritual, transcendent, Christian dimension. Formation of the mind, of the conscience and of the heart is more necessary today than ever.

DON BOSCO'S WORDS ON PUNISHMENTS

Don Bosco exhorted that where possible, one should refrain from punishments altogether. He says, with the young, what is used as a punishment becomes a punishment. Omission of an act of goodwill or a less-than-loving look can be worse than being struck. According to him punishment should act as a challenge. It should encourage, and never dishearten, praise when something is done well, blame when there is negligence. These are already reward and punishment.

Except in very rare cases, corrections and punishments should never be given in public, but privately, apart from companions, and one should use the greatest prudence and patience to have the student understand his fault through reason and religion. To strike one in any way, to make one kneel in a painful position, to pull any one's ears and similar punishments should be absolutely avoided. The Rector should make the rules well known, along with the rewards and punishments set down in the disciplinary policy, so that no pupil might be able to excuse himself by saying he did not know what was commanded or forbidden. These should be done without resorting either to corporal punishment, nor to other violent punishments.

TASKS FOR OUR COMMITMENT TO DON BOSCO'S EDUCATIONAL MISSION

In conclusion, I wish to propose some specific proposals for our commitment to Don Bosco's educational mission. In the diverse settings of our Province, we need to give greater attention to the proper running of our schools and hostels. Our focus should not be limited to academic goals, but also the formation of character, values and faith. Assistance and presence among the boys in the study hall, during recreation and other times in our houses should be the responsibility of every confrere, and not only of the clerics or the boarding masters. Our educative presence among the young cannot be outsourced. It would be a tragedy Don Bosco feared when the Salesian is busy with many other things than being with the young. We must regularly examine the way our community gives expression to the Preventive System. It is good to examine to see whether we provide for the youth opportunities for frequent reception of sacraments, prayers and devotions, religious instruction, recollections, Good Night talks, personal meeting with the Rector.

Our communities must also examine the way we offer vocational guidance and formation of conscience, practice of virtue and faith. Don Bosco's Oratory produced not only many Salesian vocations, but also saints. We too must strive to encourage vocations and provide settings for the young people to live a life of holiness. Our own life must become a witness to the values that we profess and teach if young people are able to say yes to God's call. In all our efforts at education and evangelisation, we must not neglect the poor, the disadvantaged, the weaker sections of society. We also need to pay

attention to reach out to the immediate neighbourhoods of our communities. Some of our centres have services for the poor and drop outs, such as evening schools, coaching and remedial classes, scholarships etc. Wherever possible let us offer such services in favour of the poor who may be deprived of opportunities for their growth. Our educational services must continue even after the pupils leave our institution. Contacts with them, encouraging them to join the Past Pupils Association, reunion of alumni are the ways to accompany them even after they leave our institutions.

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

RECTORS AND LEADERS MEETING HELD AT DBPH, PANBAZAR

The Province held the Meeting and Animation of Rectors and Leaders of Communities on Wednesday, 27 August 2025, at the Provincial House, Panbazar, under the theme of GC 29: *“Passionate for Jesus Christ, Dedicated to the Young.”*



The day began with an opening prayer led by Fr. Marcus Lakra SDB, followed by the lighting of the lamp by Rev. Fr. Biju Michael SDB, Regional Councillor for South Asia, and others. In my address, I welcomed and congratulated Fr. Biju on his first visit to his home Province after being re-

elected as Regional Councillor at the recently concluded General Chapter 29. On behalf of the confreres, I felicitated him with an Assamese *gamosa* and a bouquet of flowers. Students of Don Bosco School, Panbazar, added joy to the occasion with a congratulatory song.

The first session, led by Fr. Biju Michael, offered rich insights on Salesian life and mission, rooted in the newly formulated Six-Year Plan for the South Asia Region (2025–2031). He underlined the primacy of Christ, fraternal community life, preferential option for the poor, renewal of formation, collaboration with the laity and the Salesian Family, and the accompaniment of youth in the digital era. Key initiatives include poverty eradication programmes, the South Asia Animation Campus at DBRC Bengaluru, and engaging with the challenges and opportunities of artificial intelligence in education and ministry. He urged Rectors and Leaders to renew their commitment to Christ, strengthen fraternal life, and serve the poor and young with dedication in today's changing socio-cultural context.

In the afternoon, business sessions began with a presentation on *Young at Risk (YaR)* by Fr. Joe Prabu SDB, National Coordinator, introduced by Fr. Punit Lakra. He highlighted the urgent need to safeguard vulnerable youth, counter marginalisation, and ensure holistic education and care. This was followed by an update on the Province's financial situation by Fr. Jayaprakash Anthonimuthu SDB, Economist, who stressed transparency, accountability, and creative resource management for sustainable mission works.

I concluded the proceedings by encouraging all Rectors and Leaders to remain faithful to their vocation, animate their communities with zeal, foster unity, and embrace co-responsibility in carrying forward the mission of Don Bosco. The meeting ended with a prayer of thanksgiving led by Fr. Johnson Parackal SDB, followed by tea at 4:05 p.m.

I would like to thank Fr. Bivan Mukhim, Fr. Jayaprakash, Fr. Charles Deepen Lakra, Fr. Benny Alex, and the Provincial House staff for their meticulous planning and arrangements. I am also grateful to Fr. Francis Kalariparampil SDB for ably anchoring the day's programme.

PICTORIAL BOOK ON ST ZATTI RELEASED IN BODO & GARO

On 2 August 2025, during the Annual South Asia Formation Commission (SAFC) Meeting at the Salesian Provincial House, Odxel, Goa, Rev. Fr. Silvio Roggia SDB, General Councillor for Formation, officially released the pictorial book of St Artemide Zatti in Garo and Bodo languages.

The Bodo edition was translated by Rev. Fr. Damian



Basumatary, Fr. Sebastian Ishorarry, Fr. Kishor Moshahary, and Mr. Benedict Narzary. The Garo edition was translated by Fr. Anthony Sangma, Br. Benedict Sangma, Fr. Bromio Marak and Br. Jeniberth Sangma.

This initiative, first proposed at the SPCSA Meeting 2023, aims to spread the inspiring life and legacy of St Artemide Zatti among diverse communities. Gratitude is extended to all involved, especially Fr. Bivan Mukhim, Fr. Joy Kachappilly, Fr. Charles Deepen Lakra, and Fr. Alfred Marzo for their generous support.

CHAPEL BLESSED AT ROMBAGRE, UNDER RONGKHON, PARISH

On 3rd August 2025, the newly built Chapel dedicated to St. John of the Cross at Rombagre village under Rongkhon was solemnly blessed by Most Rev. Andrew R. Marak, Bishop of Tura, and inaugurated by me, fulfilling the long-cherished dream of the faithful for a sacred space dedicated to God's dwelling among them.



The chapel was constructed with the generous support of donors through the Salesian Missions Office, New Rochelle (USA), with the active facilitation of Fr. Amit Lakra, former Parish Priest, and Fr. Bartholomew K. Marak, present Parish Priest of Holy Cross Parish, Rongkhon. The celebration was graced by the presence of Fr. Benjamin Daimari, Rector of Bosco Mount, Rongkhon; Fr. Jogesh Sangma, Provincial Councillor and Rector of Don Bosco Centre for Learning; Assistant Parish Priests Fr. Justin Chinnaparaj and Fr. George William; and Deacon Francis Minj. Also present were the MSMHC Sisters of Rongkhon, catechists, Parish Pastoral Council members, and the faithful. The participation of the local Baptist pastor, villagers, and the *Nokma* (village head) added to the spirit of unity and goodwill.

Following the blessing, Bishop Andrew presided over the Holy Eucharist. In his homily, he recalled his personal bond with the community, noting that in 1974, as a young catechist sent by the late Fr. Busolin Battista SDB, he had spent 60 days catechizing Christian families of Rombagre. From those humble beginnings, the community has now grown to nearly 30 families who can gather and pray in their own sacred space.

After the Holy Mass, a felicitation programme was held during which Bishop Andrew, myself, Fr. Bartholomew, Fr. Jogesh, Fr. Benjamin, the contractor, the Baptist pastor, the *Nokma*, and the other priests were honoured with traditional Garo attire—*Kotip* and *Rigitok*—as a mark of respect and gratitude.

In my address, I described the chapel as a visible sign of God's providence and abiding presence among His people, and a living testimony of the deep faith of the simple people. Fr. Bartholomew Marak expressed gratitude to all who contributed spiritually, materially, and physically to the realization of the chapel and the day's celebration. The youth of the village enriched the occasion with soulful singing, colourful and lively traditional Garo dances, and warm hospitality.

GENERAL COUNCILLOR FOR FORMATION VISITS PROVINCIAL HOUSE

Rev. Fr. Silvio Roggia SDB, General Councillor for Formation, together with Rev. Fr. Jose Kuttianimattathil SDB of the Formation Team in Rome, visited the Provincial House, Guwahati, on 6 August 2025. They were warmly welcomed by the Provincial House community.



In his message, Fr. Roggia appreciated the Province's commitment to nurturing vocations in both initial and ongoing formation and encouraged the confreres to guide candidates with dedication and pastoral sensitivity. His visit, on the eve of inaugurating the Academic Session at Sacred Heart Theological College, Mawlai, served as a source of inspiration and a strong affirmation of the Province's mission in the field of formation.

PRACTICAL TRAINEES' ANIMATION AND MEETING AT DBPH

The Province hosted a two-day animation programme for Brothers in practical trainees on August 9–10, 2025, under the theme *“Walking with the Young: Lessons from the Playground to the Chapel.”*



The event began with prayer, lamp lighting, and a welcome address by Rev. Fr. Charles Deepen Lakra SDB, Province Secretary and Rector, who shared five guiding mantras with the trainees, highlighting personal responsibility in formation, fidelity to prayer, acceptance of community life, being a positive presence, and loving accompaniment of the young.

Sessions were led by various confreres: Fr. Bivan R. Mukhim SDB (Accompaniment of the Young, Practical Training), Fr. Cletus Sebastian SDB (Interpersonal Relationships), Fr. Joy Kachappilly SDB (Digital Discipleship), and Fr. Benny Alex SDB (Financial Management). The day concluded with prayer, adoration, Rosary, and a goodnight talk by Fr. Francis Cheeramben SDB.

On Sunday, the trainees joined the Holy Mass presided by Fr. Bivan R. Mukhim SDB, who stressed the need for both physical and spiritual fitness in readiness for God's Kingdom. After breakfast, the trainees departed for their respective communities. Special thanks to Fr. Bivan R. Mukhim SDB, Vice Provincial, for organizing this much-needed animation and meeting.

POSTHOMOUS BOOK RELEASE OF LATE FR (DR) FRANCIS HEMBROM

On 14 August 2025, the Province paid tribute to the life and legacy of Late Fr (Dr) Francis Hembrom, SDB, with the posthumous release of his book *“The Catechetical Ministry in Northeast India (1890–1962)”* at Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati. Organized by the Social Communication Commission, the programme gathered Salesians, clergy, religious, and friends to celebrate his contribution to catechetical ministry.

The event began with the Eucharist presided over by me, with the homily by Fr Jeevan Kishor Lakra SDB, Vice Provincial of Shillong, who remembered Fr Hembrom as a joyful entertainer, gifted linguist, and keen intellectual. A Prayer of Commendation was led by Fr Philip Barjo, former Provincial, followed by a floral tribute.

After Mass, Fr Joy Kachappilly SDB outlined the journey of the book's publication. The book was introduced by Fr Jose Varickasseril SDB, Professor at SHTC Mawlai, who described it as a challenging and inspiring work, urging readers to live out the missionary zeal it portrays.

BOOK RELEASE OF LT. FR FRANCIS HEMBROM 14 August 2025



The first copies were presented to distinguished guests, including Fr Jeevan Lakra, Fr Philip Barjo, and Fr Daniel Mardi. Heartfelt remembrances were shared by Fr Daniel Mardi and Mr Marcel Hembrom, nephew of Fr Francis. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Fr Bivan Mukhim, acknowledging all who contributed to the memorable occasion.

PSYCHO-SEXUALITY COURSE FOR PRE-NOVICES AT DOTMA

From 19–21 August 2025, the Pre-Novitiate community at Dotma hosted a three-day Psycho-Sexuality course animated by Rev. Fr Joseph Thelekatt, SDB. The programme sought to give Pre-Novices a holistic understanding of human sexuality in its psychological and spiritual dimensions.

Through lectures, PowerPoint presentations, group discussions, questionnaires, and interactive exercises, Fr Thelekatt created an engaging and participatory learning environment. The sessions encouraged openness, dialogue, and reflection, helping the Pre-Novices to address sensitive topics with maturity and clarity.

The participants expressed deep appreciation for the course, acknowledging its importance for their personal growth and vocational discernment. They valued the honesty and simplicity with which complex issues were explained, enabling them to gain greater confidence and understanding.

I extend my sincere thanks to Fr Joseph Thelekatt for offering this vital programme for our Pre-Novices as they discern their vocations, and to Fr Mackley Gomes, the Director, for his thoughtful planning and arrangements.

BRO-JPN JOB FAIR 2025 OPENS OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEZPUR YOUTH

The first-ever public job fair in Tezpur, organized by Bosco Reach Out (BRO) – Don Bosco Job Placement Network (JPN), Guwahati, in collaboration with AIDA, District Employment Exchange–Sonitpur, and DBSTI Tezpur, created a vibrant platform for youth employment and career growth.



Graced by Rt. Rev. Michael Akasius Toppo, Bishop of Tezpur, as Chief Guest, along with other dignitaries, the event drew over 350 registrations, 254 participants, and more than 100 shortlisted candidates. Recruiters included Reliance Jio, SBI Life Insurance, Quess Corp., and others.

Sincere thanks to Rev. Fr. Ignatius Gari SDB (BRO), Rev. Fr. Paul Rabha SDB (DBSTI), and all collaborators for making this initiative a meaningful step towards empowering the youth of Northeast India.

ANIMATION PROGRAMME FOR MEN FOLK OF MENDAL PARISH

A unique one-day animation programme for the men folk of Mendal Parish was held on 8th August 2025, bringing together 120 participants from nearby villages. The initiative aimed to deepen faith, strengthen fellowship, and encourage active involvement in parish life.

The sessions were animated by Rev. Fr. Lucas Marak SDB, Vice Rector and Assistant Parish Priest of Mendal; Fr. Salnes Sangma, Parish Priest of Bajengdoba; and Mr. Joachim Marak, Head Catechist of Bajengdoba. They highlighted the role of Catholic men in building up the Church and presented St. Joseph as a model of devotion, service, and responsibility.

The programme concluded with the solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist, presided over by Rt. Rev. Jose, Auxiliary Bishop of Tura, during which 65 participants were formally inducted into the St. Joseph Sodality. The day was marked by moments of prayer, reflection, and community

bonding, leaving the participants enriched in faith and committed to parish life.

INAUGURATION AND BLESSING OF THE NEW CHAPEL AT MONGCHONG

On 31st August 2025, the Catholic community of Mongchong Village experienced a joyful day of grace and thanksgiving with the blessing and inauguration of their new chapel. The solemn Holy Mass was officiated by Rev. Fr. Januarius S. Sangma, who also blessed the chapel. Rev. Fr. Jayaprakash Anthonimuthu, Province Economist, inaugurated the chapel by cutting the ribbon.



The celebration was also graced by the presence of Rev. Fr. Denis Toju Sangma, former Parish Priest who initiated the construction of the chapel, along with Rev. Fr. Marcus, the present Parish Priest. Also in attendance were Rev. Fr. Hubert Marak and Rev. Fr. Francis Xavier Minj, Assistant Parish Priests of Shallang, together with Rev. Fr. John Paul Tirkey, Rev. Fr. Joseph Bara, Br. Nirmal Ekka, Dn. John Ngouning, and several Brothers and Sisters. A large gathering of the faithful joined the celebration with great devotion and joy, making it a truly historic and memorable occasion for the

village. We are grateful to the benefactors, the New Rochelle Mission Office, and to Rev. Fr. Denis Toju Sangma, Fr Marcus Lakra, along with all those who generously contributed and supported the realization of this sacred project.

BLESSING AND INAUGURATION OF THE NEW CHAPEL AT DHAIGAON

On 31st August 2025, a new chapel was blessed and inaugurated at Dhaigaon village, under the parish of Damra. The solemn Holy Mass was officiated by Rev. Fr. Francis Kalariparampil SDB, Parish Priest, together with Rev. Fr. Francis Lakra, Headmaster of Don Bosco School, Damra.



In his homily, Fr. Francis highlighted that a church is not merely a building but a living community of believers where faith is nurtured and the Gospel is lived out daily. The liturgical celebration, attended by sisters from neighbouring convents, catechists, parish council members, altar servers, choir members, and a large number of faithful from nearby villages, was marked by devotion and joy.

A short cultural programme with dances, songs, and felicitations followed the religious service, adding colour to the occasion. With heartfelt gratitude

to all benefactors and collaborators, the new chapel now stands as a symbol of God's providence and presence for the people of Dhaigaon.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ **ADMINISTRATORS' MEETING-DBPH** on 26 Septmeber 2025 at DBPH.
- ❖ **QUINQUENNIAL SILOAM** from 22 to 24 September 2025.
- ❖ **RETREAT FOR BROTHERS AND CLERICS** from on 28 Sept to 4 Oct 2025 at Joropara.

CONDOLENCES:

- ❖ To the Provincial and confreres of the Panjim Province (INP) on the passing away of **Br Franco Braganca** on **2 August 2025**. May his soul rest in the peace of Christ whom he lovingly served.

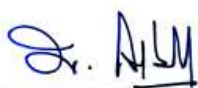
PRAYER REQUEST FOR THE SICK

We earnestly request your prayers for the complete recovery and healing of **Rev. Fr. Thomas John**, who has recently undergone surgery at the Medical Trust Hospital, Ernakulam, Kerala.

CONCLUSION

As we journey through this month of September, let us remain united in prayer and mission, drawing inspiration from Don Bosco's spirit of faith, hope, and loving service. May our communities continue to be places of welcome, growth, and evangelization, especially for the young and the poor. Entrusting ourselves to the maternal care of Mary Help of Christians, I invoke God's blessings upon each one of you, your communities, and your apostolates.

Yours sincerely in Don Bosco,



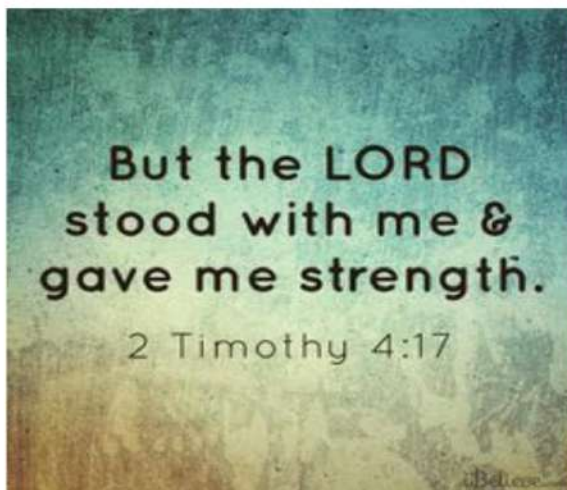
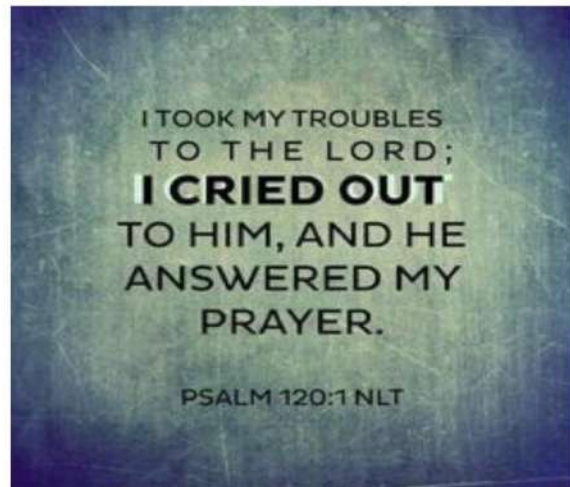
Fr. Sebastian Mathew SDB

Provincial



SEPTEMBER HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 4 Fr. Zacharias Varickasseril
- 4 Br. Michael Kindo
- 4 Br. Firstjoy Felix Sutong
- 5 Fr. Kishor Moshahary
- 10 Fr. Joachim Pumah
- 11 Fr. Threnius N. Sangma
- 12 Fr. Klisterwel Songthiang
- 12 Cl. Rockenjoy Hasda
- 14 Fr. Joseph Teron Langne
- 15 Fr. Johnson Parackal
- 16 Fr. Barnabas Mardi



- 17 Fr. Kerobin Minj
- 18 Cl. Hritik Roshan Lugun
- 19 Fr. Ignatius Gari
- 25 Fr. Jimmy T. Sangma
- 26 Cl. Phabian Baglari
- 30 Cl. Sniawshngain Papang (INS)
- 30 Cl. Bhuyan Jerome



IN LOVING MEMORY - SEPTEMBER

Dt	Name of the Confrere	Place	Year	Age	Province
3	L Ernest Montanaro	Italy	1982	72	INC, ING, INS
3	P George Kariparambil	Kottayam	1999	59	ING, INS
4	P Louis Tirkey	Dibrugarh	2015	64	IND, INC, ING
6	P Philip Kokkapallil	Dimapur	2005	70	IND, INC, ING
9	P Aurelius Maschio	Mumbai	1996	87	INB, INDIA, INC, ING, INM, INS
10	P Leo Piasecki	Dighoi	1957	68	INC, INDIA, ING, IND
11	P Elias Tome	Italy	1966	67	INDIA, INC, ING, INN, INS
11	P Fiori di Benedetto	Turin	1978	82	INDIA, INM, ING, INN
13	L Silvio Vitali	Italy	1984	74	INC, ING, INN, MYM, INS
14	P Mario Botto	Tezpur	1965	65	ING, INDIA, INC, INN
15	P Santosh Minj	Guwahati	2014	55	ING, INS
16	P Patrick Soreng	Sudan	2013	61	AFE, ING
17	P Thomas Thekkekandam	Tripura	2018	81	INS, ING, IND
18	P Benedict Kiro	Guwahati	2002	83	ING, INC
19	L Ignatius Sungmur	Guwahati	1998	77	ING, INC, INS
20	P Devasia Kollenkunnel	Kohima	2004	66	ING, INM
22	L Gumersindo Losada Cid	Shillong	1976	83	ING, INDIA, INC, INN, INS
22	L Charles Castelli	Italy	1992	82	INC, ING
25	P Joseph Foglia	Goa	1970	70	INB, INC, ING, INP, INN, INS
28	P Peter Aloysius Ribaldone	Italy	1966	64	INDIA, INC, ING, INS
30	P Manuel Albizuri	Sonapahar	1982	57	ING, INM, INT, INS

Salesian Feasts/Commemorations

11	Salesian Missionary Day (monthly commemoration)
22	Joseph Calasanz Marqués and Enrico Saiz Aparicio, priests and 93 companions, martyrs
24	Commemoration of Mary Help of Christians
30	Commemoration of Don Bosco



SEPTEMBER 2025

DATE	DAY	PROVINCIAL	VICE PROVINCIAL	ECONOMER
1	Mon	CRI Meeting	Haflong	Guwahati
2	Tue	NEBC	Guwahati	Guwahati
3	Wed	NEBC	Guwahati	Guwahati
4	Thu	NEBC	Guwahati	Guwahati
5	Fri	Teachers' Day – Missionary Course	SMY LAF Dimapur	Missionary Course
6	Sat	Online Meeting	SMY LAF Dimapur	Guwahati
7	Sun	Mumbai	SMY LAF Dimapur	Guwahati
8	Mon	Mumbai	Guwahati	Guwahati
9	Tue	SPCSA	Guwahati	Guwahati
10	Wed	SPCSA	Guwahati	Guwahati
11	Thu	Guwahati	Amkachi	Guwahati
12	Fri	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
13	Sat	Tura – Past Pupils	Guwahati	Guwahati
14	Sun	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
15	Mon	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
16	Tue	Pastoral Conference	ADB U Tapesia	Guwahati
17	Wed	Gojapara – Visitation	Guwahati	Gojapara – Visitation
18	Thu	Damra – Visitation	Guwahati	Damra – Visitation
19	Fri	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
20	Sat	ADB U Convocation	ADB U Convocation	ADB U Convocation
21	Sun	Guwahati	Guwahati	Guwahati
22	Mon	Siloam – Quinquennium	Siloam – Quinquennium	Guwahati
23	Tue	Guwahati	Siloam – Quinquennium	Guwahati
24	Wed	Guwahati	Siloam – Quinquennium	Guwahati
25	Thu	Meeting – HM Sr. Provincial	Siloam – Quinquennium	Guwahati
26	Fri	Administrators' Meeting- DBPH	Administrators' Meeting	Administrators' Meeting-DBPH
27	Sat	Provincial Council	Provincial Council	Provincial Council
28	Sun	Brothers/Clerics Retreat – Joropara	Brothers/Clerics Retreat Joropara	Guwahati
29	Mon	Brothers/Clerics Retreat – Joropara	Brothers/Clerics Retreat – Joropara	Guwahati
30	Tue	Brothers/Clerics Retreat – Joropara	Guwahati	Guwahati