



INB/VII/16/16

October 2016

Loving greetings from Provincial House, Bandra!

Month of the Holy Rosary

We are in the month of the Holy Rosary. Among the numerous titles that Our Lady is known by is, *Our Lady of the Rosary* for giving to humanity a much treasured gift in the string of beads on which we pray to her to intercede with her son, Jesus Christ, on our behalf. Pope Leo said, "*The Rosary is an effective weapon against the evils of an ill society*" There have been many exceedingly great favors obtained through devotion to the Rosary. Pope John Paul II tells us: "*The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at the heart of a Christocentric prayer*". Let us use this powerful weapon to strengthen our faith especially in times of trial, doubt, temptation and persecution.

St. Teresa of Avila

On 15th October we celebrate the feast of our Patron Saint, St. Teresa of Avila. Teresa of Avila was born in 1515 in Gotarrendura, in the province of Ávila, Spain. Her father, Alonso Sánchez de Cepeda and mother Beatriz de Ahumada were especially keen to raise their daughter as a pious Christian. Teresa was fascinated by accounts of the lives of the Saints. When she was 14 her mother died; this resulted in Teresa becoming grief-stricken and prompted her to embrace a deeper devotion to the Virgin Mary as her spiritual mother. She was sent for her education to the Augustinian nuns at Ávila. In the monastery she initially allowed herself to be drawn to a frivolous and comfort seeking life, but as the Catholic distinction between mortal and venial sin became clear to her, she came to understand the awful terror of sin and the inherent nature of original sin. She also became conscious of her own natural impotence in confronting sin, and the necessity of absolute subjection to God. She reformed her own life and the life of the Order of Carmelites. She suffered greatly from illness and during her illness she rose from the lowest stage, "*recollection*", to the "*devotions of silence*" or even to the "*devotions of ecstasy*", which was one of perfect union with God. During this final stage, she said she frequently experienced a rich "*blessing of tears*". Teresa is one of the foremost writers on mental prayer, and her position among writers on mystical

theology is unique. She used a metaphor of mystic prayer as watering a garden throughout her writings.

She died in 1582. Her last words were: "*My Lord, it is time to move on. Well then, may your will be done. O my Lord and my Spouse, the hour that I have longed for has come. It is time to meet one another*" In 1622, forty years after her death, she was canonized by Pope Gregory XV and was conferred with the title of Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI on 27 September 1970.

Salesian Saints

On 5th October we commemorate **Blessed Albert Marvelli**. Albert was born at Ferrara on 21 March 1918, into a family which was a true domestic church. He made a constant effort to live according to Christian values, for which he found great help at the Salesian oratory at Rimini. After the death of his father, the heavy responsibility of caring for his family – brothers and sister fell on him. In his diary he writes "*The way of perfection is difficult, I know, but with the help of Jesus nothing is impossible*" (Diary 1935)

Albert was a strong and active man who meditated on how to become holy in the practical circumstances of every-day life. The fervor of his charity was apparent in his careful attention to people's problems. During the Second World War, Marvelli was always the first to help the troops and the needy refugees. He was an active force in the ecclesiastical, social and political life of the city. He served Christ in the poor with fervent love. Knocked down by a military vehicle, he died in October 1956. He was beatified by John Paul II on 5th September 2004, at Loretto.

We commemorate **Bl. Alexandrina Da Costa** on 13th October. Born on 30th March 1904 at Balasar, a small place in Portugal, Alexandrina Maria da Costa was brought up in a Christian manner by her Mother. At seven years of age she attended elementary school for a year and half. Lively, cheerful and physically strong she began to work in the fields. At 14 years of age something happened, which would leave its mark for the rest of her life: to escape from the attack of some evil minded men, Alexandrina threw herself from the window. The consequences were terrible; she suffered from progressive paralysis which left her bed ridden at the age of 19. Refusing to ask for a miraculous cure, Alexandrina believed that it was her mission "*to suffer, to love, to make reparation*" A great mystical union began with Jesus "*prisoner*" in all the tabernacles of the world. In 1935 for the first time she heard Jesus express his wish, that the world be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1938, every Friday, Alexandrina received with visible signs and movements the various stages of the passion of Jesus. During the last 13 years of her life she did not take any food, living solely on the Eucharist. In 1944, she became a Salesian Cooperator. Thousands of visitors from all parts came to ask her advice and prayers. Alexandrina died on 13th October 1955. She was beatified by John Paul II on 25th April 2004.

We keep the feast of **St. Louis Guanella** on 24th October. Louis was born in Francisco di Campodolcino in Val San Giacomo on 19th December 1842. In 1866 he was ordained priest and soon after, appointed parish priest at Savogno. He dedicated himself zealously to young people busying himself with helping them in their schooling and revitalizing Catholic Action. It was at them time that he entered into contact with Don Bosco, and was fascinated by the Salesian Charism. In 1875 he became a Salesian, but could remain only for three years, since the Bishop gave him orders to look after a hostel for poor elderly people. He founded the Congregation of the Daughters of Holy Mary of Providence, dedicated to the education of poor and marginalized youth. From Don Bosco he not only learned to the young, but also the virtue of obedience and sacrifice in his relationships with his superiors. Like Don Bosco he was obedient to the bishop even when it meant suffering and misunderstanding. He died at Como on 24th October 1925 and was beatified on 25th October 1964.

On 29 October we commemorate **Bl. Michael Rua**. Michael was born in Turin on June 9, 1837 and was the youngest of 9 children. Michael came to the Oratory in 1852. One day Don Bosco told him: *"We will go halves in everything"*. He was among the first group to whom Don Bosco suggested the formation of the Salesian Society. For 36 years he was the closest collaborator of Don Bosco in all stages of the development of the Congregation. He professed in 1855, was the first Spiritual director of the Congregation at 22 and was ordained in 1860. In 1875 he became Director General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Don Bosco confirmed him as Rector Major in 1888. Fr. Rua was seen as the "living rule" because of his austere fidelity, yet he also displayed a fatherly spirit that was capable of great thoughtfulness, so much so that he was known as "a king of kindness". He sent Salesians all over the world, giving special attention to the missionary expeditions. He always consoled the confreres saying *"Don Bosco said.... Don Bosco did.... Don Bosco wanted..."*. He died on 6th April 1910 and was beatified on 29th October 1972.

World Mission Sunday

The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, which the Church is celebrating, casts a distinct light on World Mission Sunday 2016: it invites us to consider the *missio ad gentes* as a great, immense work of mercy, both spiritual and material. On this World Mission Sunday, all of us are invited to "go out" as missionary disciples, each generously offering their talents, creativity, wisdom and experience in order to bring the message of God's tenderness and compassion to the entire human family. By virtue of the missionary mandate, the Church cares for those who do not know the Gospel, because she wants everyone to be saved and to experience the Lord's love. *"The Church is commissioned to announce the Mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel"* (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 12) and to proclaim mercy in every corner of the world, reaching every person, young or old. Let us re-awaken in our own hearts the missionary mandate that our Holy Father reminds us of and become missionaries

of mercy in our deeds. Let our missionary charity begin in the Community and then move out to those in the peripheries.

Receiving the Missionary Crucifix: Our dear Sr. Mary Chacko and Sr. Mary Cherian together with 13 other FMAs, received the missionary crucifix from the hands of the Rector Major Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime on 25 September 2016 in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin, in the presence of our Mother General Sr. Yvonne Reungoat. Let us accompany them with our prayers as they venture into this call within their call and respond with courageous generosity. May God accompany them during this year of preparation for mission Ad Gentes.

Adieu dear Sr. Philo, until we meet again:

Our dear Sr. Philomena D'Souza has winged her flight to heaven. Her life was an example and her death is a Sermon. She lived and worked with great commitment, love and zeal, without compromising on mercy, compassion and gentleness towards others. Let us ask her to pray for us and for the Province and obtain good vocations for the Institute. May her soul rest in peace!

Communications:

- ❖ A National level Workshop on Basic Counselling Skills will be held at Manivakkam, Chennai from 7th-10th October 2016. The participants from our Province are Sr. Smitha Monis, Sr. Vandana Malya, Sr. Nayana Vankar and a lay person - Mr. Pravin Gonsalves.
- ❖ The SDO together with Sr. Hilda Braganza and team will be organizing a training program for Social workers, teachers and sisters, in charge of Non-Formal Education in the Maharashtra region, from 8th- 9th October 2016 at MYC - Wadala. The themes that will be high-lighted are Quality-Education, Applied Child Psychology and Practical sessions on Child – Protection Education.
- ❖ The Youth fest will be organized from 8th – 9th October 2016 at Shirwa for the youth of Karnataka Region and at Dakor from 14th-15th October 2016 for the Youth of Gujarat.
- ❖ Buon Voyage to Sr. Rita D'Souza who will be leaving for Rome on 13th October 2016. We wish her a happy and fruitful stay at the Centre.
- ❖ A workshop in connection with the CPP (*Child Protection Policy*) will be organized from 15th – 16th October 2016 at Dahanu, on the theme "*Creating a Child-Friendly Ambience*". The participants will be the CPO (Child Protection Officer) and one member of the CPC (Child Protection Commission) from each Community of the Gujarat and Maharashtra region.

- ❖ Vocation camp will be Organized by the five Communities of Karnataka from 22nd – 23rd October 2016 at Kasarkod. Let us send prayers ahead for the fruitfulness of the camp and for good vocations to our Province.
- ❖ We warmly welcome Sr. Isabella Alphonse Mary (INM), the National Co-ordinator for Social development, who will be with us from 23-25 October 2016 to evaluate the Projects funded by the NDF.
- ❖ Volunteers are invited to plan and organize the Diwali Dhamaka to be held on 27th October 2016. Those willing to give their service, kindly contact Sr. Moksha Anthonappa.
- ❖ Sr. Rita Mascarenhas, Sr. Magdeline Sequeira and Sr. Sushma Solanki will be participating in the **VIII Annual General Body meeting of AMRAT** which will be held from 7th to 9th November, 2016 at the Renewal Centre, Kochi, Kerala. We wish them a fruitful encounter on behalf of the poor and marginalized women and girls.
- ❖ Sr. Reshma Rosario and Sr. Sunita Shah will be participating in the 1st Phase of inter-provincial Second Novitiate at Yercaud from 15th November – 15 December 2016. We accompany them with our prayers and wish them a fruitful spiritual experience.

Sincere appreciation and thanks to:

- ❖ Sr. Moksha Anthonappa and Sr. Teresa Plathara and their Communities for accommodating the 6 Postulants and offering them the opportunity to be involved in the active Mission of their Centre.
- ❖ Sr. Agatha Dias, Sr. Rita Lobo and Sr. Rita Fernandes who offered a wholistic Community and Apostolic Experience to our 8 Novices and accompanied them on this experiential journey from 16th August to 30th September 2016.
- ❖ The Organizing team and the Communities of Auxilium – Lonavla, Maria Vihar – Nashik and Benaulim – Goa who conducted and hosted the Youth Fest in the month of September.
- ❖ Sr. Agatha Dias and Sr. Elizabeth Coelho who diligently transmitted the draft of the New Education Policy to all the staff and sisters of the Province, to Conscientize them to a pro-active response, in the face of challenges that endanger the entire Education System in the Country.
- ❖ Sr. Hilda Braganza and Community for the arrangements made for the month's mind Mass for Sr. Mary Vaz and for the funeral of Sr. Philomena D'Souza.
- ❖ The SDO for organizing the following Programmes:
 - ✓ **Teen's Gather**, conducted in collaboration with Sr. Sunanda Solanki, Sr. Catherine Pereira and their Communities at Dakor and Bableshwar respectively.

- ✓ **MyQUEST Career Training Programme** conducted in collaboration with Quest Alliance Organization at YMCA Byculla from 20 -23 September 2016.
- ✓ **Training for Social workers, teachers and sisters** involved in non-formal education in Gujarati in collaboration with Sr. Sunanda Solanki and team. The topics included were *Quality Education, applied child psychology, Right to Education to children and parents*

Heartly Congratulations to Sr. Perpertual Ferrao who has successfully completed her Masters degree in Computer Applications (MCA).

Prayers requested for:

- ❖ Sr. Gladys D'Souza who had a fall and developed a hair-line fracture on her leg.
- ❖ Sr. Precilla D'Souza who is recouping after a surgery.
- ❖ The sister of Sr. Celsa Magalhaes who is ailing.
- ❖ The brother of Sr. Maria Achandil who is sick.
- ❖ All our sick and elderly sisters and sick parents and relatives of our sisters.

Heartfelt Condolences to:

- ❖ Sr. Gracy Thomas who lost her brother-in-law, Mr. Sibi Anthony Thomas in a tragic accident on 15th September 2016 in Kerala.
- ❖ Sr. Lucy Rodrigues who lost her beloved mother on 18th September 2016 at Madanthyar.
- ❖ Sr. Elizabeth D'Mello who lost her maternal uncle at Holy Family Hospital on 23rd September 2016.
- ❖ Sr. Reshma Rosario whose first cousin, aged 20, passed away on 20th September 2016.
- ❖ Sr. Rosy Mascarenhas whose beloved mother passed away on 1st October 2016, after a long ailment.
- ❖ To Fr. Jeyapalan the Provincial and the Confreres of Chennai Province (INM) for the loss of Bro. Expedit Lobo (78) who went to receive his eternal reward on 6th September 2016.
- ❖ The Provincial Sr. Margarita and the sisters of the Venezuelan Province, at the demise of Sr. Maria de los Angeles on 5th October 2016.

May the departed enjoy eternal peace and may the bereaved family and dear ones be comforted and strengthened in their faith.

As I prepare myself to leave for the Annual Retreat at Thailand on the 10th October 2016,
I recommend myself and all the Provincials to your prayers.

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sr. Ritha Dora Thomas". The script is cursive and fluid.

Sr. Ritha Dora Thomas
Provincial

Provincial's Itinerary

October 2016

01-09	Provincial Office
07	Provincial Council Meet, Bandra
10	Departure for Thailand
11-23	Annual Retreat / meeting of Provincials (Thailand)
24	Return to Mumbai
25-31	Provincial Office
31-	Dahanu- Annual Retreat Batch – 1

November 2016

01-13	Dahanu- Annual Retreat Batch II
14-16	Provincial Office
17-25	Dahanu –Annual Retreat Batch III / Animation