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INB/VII/18/17

January 2017

New Year Greetings to each one of you!

The month of January ushers in with the Solemnity of **Mary, the Most Holy Mother of God**. In Mary we find a true mother, not only of Jesus, but of every person who comes to her seeking her blessings and intercession. Like Mary we are invited to listen to God's word and live a life of integrity, always available for God's mission. Mary's response to the angel "*Let it be done to me according to your word*", expresses her willingness to *let go* of her plans and projects and *let God* take possession of her will. Mary's Yes was not a "Yes" to privileges alone but also to a battle of faith till the end. Let us step into the New Year with hope and courage with Mary as we strive to imitate her attitudes and virtues and become, like her, true mothers to the children and youngsters entrusted to our care.

The feast of the **Epiphany** of Our Lord recalls the three kings from the East who came to offer gifts to the new born King and to bow in homage and worship of the Saviour of the world. Jesus reveals himself to us as King of the Universe and the three wise men representing all people worship Him. The wise men availed of every heavenly clue and followed the star which they believed would lead them to the Messiah. They set out in search of Jesus, found Him and worshiped Him. God reveals Himself to those who seek him. The arrival of wise men in Bethlehem, laden with gifts and desiring to worship him signals the beginning of the accomplishment of Salvation. Even in our days God continues to reveal himself to those in search of Him. He will manifest himself to us, the more we go to him and surrender not only our gifts, but our very lives as well.

**The Baptism of Jesus** reminds us that we have a God willing to declare that we are his children, provided we are willing to confess our sins and declare our faith in Him. He will be our God if we keep alive, everyday of our lives, the commitment we made on the day of our Baptism – the commitment to desire him and seek him above everything else. From the moment we were baptised, God has considered us his children. We must acknowledge him as our Father and recognise ourselves as His children. For us it is an occasion to revisit our Baptism as well as renew our faith in the Lord who has manifested himself in many ways during this season.

## *Strenna 2017:*

This year the Rector Major Fr. Angel Fernandes, through the Strenna 2017 entitled "***We are a Family: Every Home a School of Life and Love***" leads us to a profound reflection on the theme of the family. He develops significant Salesian contents that find their bases in the two Bishops' Synods on the Family and in the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*. Our Mother General in her **Circular n. 966**, commenting on the Strenna of the Rector Major, calls it a ***Spiritual and Pastoral treasure for everyone***. She says that, today the family is facing a deep crisis due to complex and varied causes and among the concrete steps proposed by our Rector Major she emphasizes ***accompaniment of families*** as a priority service and a challenge to face together. We are all invited to a quiet reading of the Strenna, with open and willing hearts, ready for an encounter and a dialogue with what the documents says, so that it may help us as Salesian Family, discover what it offers.

The Strenna invites us to make our pastoral contribution by being close to families, to help and repair family realities in which complex and difficult situations are often lived and to contribute towards caring for and fostering in families the sense of the joy of loving. Let us help families to become "living spaces" where parents train their children, in freedom, to know and to love God.

## *Unity Octave – 18 – 25 January*

The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity "***Reconciliation – The Love of Christ Compels Us***" (2 Cor 5:14-20) has been chosen in commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the beginnings of the Lutheran Reformation. The theme finds its origins in Pope Francis' 2013 Apostolic Exhortation ***Evangelii Gaudium*** "The Joy of the Gospel" when it used the quote: "*The Love of Christ Compels Us*". The biblical text (2 Cor 5:14-20) emphasizes that reconciliation is a gift from God, intended for the entire creation. "God was reconciling the world (kosmos) to God's self in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (v.19). As a result of God's action, those who have been reconciled in Christ are called in turn to proclaim this reconciliation in word and deed: "*The love of Christ compels us*"

Let us keep up the Week of Prayer for Unity in the Church and pray earnestly for communion among the various Christian denominations.

## *Salesian Saints of the Month*

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of January we commemorate **Bd. Louis Variara** born, to a deeply Christian family in 1875. His father Pietro had heard Don Bosco in 1856, when he came to the village to preach a mission. He decided to take Louis to Valdocco to continue his studies. Louis later became a Salesian and then opted for the mission of Colombia. He cared for the lepers and became the life and soul of all who lived there, especially the children. He developed the

Salesian charism of sacrifice and founded the Congregation of the "Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary," Like Don Bosco, he was exemplary in obedience. He died at the age of 43 in February 1923. Louis was declared Venerable on April 2, 1993 and beatified on April 14 by St. John Paul II.

**Blessed Laura Vicuna** is fondly remembered in all our houses on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January. Born in Santiago, Chile on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1891, Laura belonged to an Aristocratic family, forced into exile by the revolution. The sudden death of her father Joseph Domenico and the helpless situation of poverty and insecurity that the family went through led her mother Mercedes to yield to the lustful desires of a rather pushy rancher Manuel Mora. To keep her daughters away from evil influence, Mercedes decided to admit them to the boarding of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Thus Laura had the good fortune of growing up in a Salesian environment rich in values inspired by the Gospel. It was at the school and the oratory that she discovered the joy of feeling that she was loved by God and cherished her desire to seek the God of love. She also realized the horror of sin and courageously defended herself, when her virtue was threatened by the evil Manuel Mora. She became aware of the sinful life her poor mother was living. Remembering the phrase of Jesus *"No one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends, Laura decided to give her life in exchange for her mother's salvation.* Laura's offering was acceptable to God. Due to the ill-treatment of Manuel Mora her health deteriorated and she died on 22 January 1904. On her death bed Laura had the joy of seeing her mother converted. Today Laura is a model of evangelical coherence, to the point of giving her life for the mission and salvation.

**St. Francis De Sales (24<sup>th</sup> January)** was born in Savoy (France) on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1567 to an aristocratic family. At the age 25 he obtained his doctorate in law at Padua, but in the very next year he gave up the law in order to become a priest. More and more people gradually came to hear his preaching and were converted by his kindness, gentleness and patience. In 1602, Francis De Sales was consecrated, Bishop of Geneva, and dedicated his apostolic activity to bringing back to the catholic faith the people who had accepted the protestant reform. Excellent master of the spirit, a zealous pastor of souls and admirable model, that he was, he engaged in enthusiastic campaigns of evangelization. His diocese became famous throughout Europe for its efficient organization, zealous clergy and well-instructed laity, he had lot of monumental achievements in those days. His motto was, *"He who preaches with love, preaches effectively."* Inspired by his *"apostolic charity"* and by his *"evangelical kindness and patience"*, Don Bosco chose St. Francis de Sales as the model and protector of his own Salesian Mission.

**Bronislaw Mickiewicz** (30 January) was born on July 13, 1842, in Poland. Answering the call of God he gave up the worldly life and chose to become a priest. But soon, a storm of doubts attacked him. He turned with tears to Mary and on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, his worries subsided and henceforth he remained convinced of his call to the priesthood. After few years of his priestly ministry he felt God called him to the Salesian way

of life. He joined the Salesians in 1885. After returning to Poland he dedicated his whole life for the poor and abandoned orphans. He ended his earthly journey in January 1912. Both before and after his death he was considered as an extraordinary man. He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in June 2005.

**St. John Bosco:** 31<sup>st</sup> January marks the feast of our Father and Founder Don Bosco. *“Be joyful, evangelize through education, and offer hope through love and compassion”* that’s what Pope Francis told the Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Turin’s Basilica of Our Lady Help of Christians. Don Bosco is an educator saint who knows how to form young saints integrating deeply in himself and in the young, education and holiness. He made the oratory a fertile and fruitful school of youthful holiness. Human formation, encounter with Christ, discovering one’s own vocation, this was the path proposed by Don Bosco to his youngsters. His Spiritual teaching was profound and radical. Today we are called with greater insistence to be a response of salvation to the profound hopes of youth; to go out to the peripheries, to areas of Physical and moral danger, neighborhoods lacking many material things but above all where love, understanding, tenderness and hope are lost. Let us draw from Don Bosco the inspiration and strength to imitate him in our new social context.

### *Communications:*

- ❖ **CRWI Plenary Assembly 2017:** I will be participating in the 47<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of the Conference of Religious Women in India (CRWI) to be held at Mater Dei - Goa from 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017.
- ❖ **National YAR Seminar:** Sr. Moksha Anthonappa, the National YAR Co-ordinator will be organizing a Seminar for sisters In-charge of YAR Sectors from 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017 at MYC-Wadala. Sisters from all the 6 FMA – Indian Provinces will be participating. The participants from our province are Sr. Smitha Monis, Sr. Sushma Solanki, Sr. Alka Almeida and Sr. Anita Gracias.
- ❖ **Tri-Monthly Meet:** The Temporary Professed Sisters will have their Tri-monthly meet from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 at Auxilium Convent – Pali Hill - Bandra. The Junior sisters are kindly requested to bring along a copy of the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation – Amoris Laetitia. The programme begins at 9.00 a.m. on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 and concludes at 4.00 p.m. on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017.
- ❖ Sr. Caroline D’Souza, Sr. Jyothi Pinto, Sr. Caroline Menezes, Sr. Dolly Rodrigues and Sr. Meena Fernandes will be participating in the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Peace Convention organized by Universal Solidarity Movement at Panjim, Goa from 30<sup>th</sup> January -2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017.
- ❖ A meeting will be organized by Sr. Magdeline Sequeira and Sr. Caroline menezes, for all the CPO and one member of the local CPCs of the Goa – Karnantaka region from 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017. The Main organizers are.

- ❖ There will be a 2 day seminar for all Animators of Communities from 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017, at S.J.T.C - Lonavla. The seminar begins at 9.00 a.m on the 10<sup>th</sup> February and concludes at 4.00 p.m. on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The resource person will be Fr. Joy Pullikunnel SJ.
- ❖ The Auditing of Accounts for the houses belonging to the Maharashtra region will take place from the 9<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at Auxilium Centre – Bandra.
- ❖ The Provincial Gratitude day will be held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at Lonavla. The celebration will include a short vigil service on 11<sup>th</sup> February and a meaningful Eucharistic Sacrifice, followed by lunch on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2017.
- ❖ Sr. Hilda Mascarenhas and Sr. Roseline Pereira will participate in the National Youth Convention from 18<sup>th</sup>- 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017 to be held in St. Joseph's Engineering College – Vamanjoor.
- ❖ Sr. Agatha Dias and Sr. Catherine Fernandes will participate in the Project Jerusalem from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017.
- ❖ Sr. Catherine Fernandes participated in the South Zonal Salesian Family Conference in Kochi - Kerala from 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

### *Heartly Congratulations to*

- ❖ Rev. Fr. Jose Kochamkunnel Sdb on being elected as the 14<sup>th</sup> Provincial of the Salesian Province of St. Thomas the Apostle - Chennai.
- ❖ Rev. Fr. Antony Joseph Sdb on being elected as the 4<sup>th</sup> Provincial of the Salesian Province of Tiruchy.

We wish them God's blessings and a fruitful mission in leading their respective Provinces on the path to Salesian Sanctity.

### *Sincere appreciation and thanks to:*

- ❖ Emeritus Archbishop Rev. Thomas Menamparambil who preached the Annual Retreats for the Community animators and Councillors.
- ❖ Sr. Cecilia Crasta and the Community of SJTC - Lonavla for hosting the Annual Retreat for Animators, the Provincial Council Meeting and the Formators meet.
- ❖ Sr. Josephine Fernandes and community for their warm welcome and for providing accommodation for the retreatants.
- ❖ Sr. Agatha Dias and community for organizing and hosting the summer club work-shop from 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

## *Prayers requested for:*

- ❖ Sr. Agnes who is recouping from a minor surgery.
- ❖ The mother of Sr. Jeena Bandy who is ill.
- ❖ The brother of Sr. Maria Achandil whose condition is serious
- ❖ Sister of Sr. Shaila De Monte who is suffering from Cancer.
- ❖ Sick and elderly Sisters and the relatives of our sisters who are ill.
- ❖ The Sister of Sr. Jaya Pedthala who is suffering from arthritis.
- ❖ The aunt of Sr. Salome D'Souza who was hospitalized.
- ❖ The sister of Sr. Cecilia Crasta who is unwell.

**Let us continue to pray fervently and incessantly for the release and safe return of Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil.**

## *Heartfelt Condolences to:*

- ❖ Sr. Elizabeth George and the Sisters of the Gawahati Province Province at the demise of Sr. Beatrice Gonsalves on 26 December 2016.
- ❖ Sr. Collette Gonsalves at the demise of her brother on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2016.
- ❖ Sr. Mary Cherian at the passing away of her elder sister Annamma on 23 December 2016.
- ❖ Sr. Assumption Gonsalves at the demise of her beloved mother on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2016.
- ❖ Sr. Shaila Jadhav at the passing away of her Paternal grandfather on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2016.
- ❖ Sr. Anita Dushing at the passing away of her Paternal grandmother on 29 December 2016.
- ❖ Sr. Annette Nellianil who lost her brother Mr. Chandy Nellianil on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017.
- ❖ Sr. Marina Fernandes who lost her aunt Miss Louisa Menezes (92) on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 at Kundapura.
- ❖ Sr. Gladys D'Souza at the demise of her sister-in-law on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2017.
- ❖ Fr. Nirmol Vincent Gomes and the Salesians of the Kolkata Province at the demise of Fr. George Alakulam (87), on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016.
- ❖ Fr. V. M Thomas and Salesians of the Guwahati Province at the passing away of Fr. Busolin Battista on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

May the departed encounter the Merciful Father and may God comfort those who suffer the loss of their dear ones.

I wish you all a fruitful month ahead and a Happy Feast of our Founder Don Bosco!

Affectionately,

## Provincial's Itinerary

### JANUARY 2017

1 - 2	Provincial House (New Year)
3- 4-5	Provincial Council Meet
6 – 8 (sun)	Auxilium- Wadala (PV)
9 -10	Provincial House
10	Departure for Goa
11	CRI Goa Unit meet (Goa)
12-13	Auxilium – Caranzalem (PV)
14-15 am	Mornese Vihar – Sulcorna (PV)
15-pm-16(4pm)	Velim (PV)
16pm-18am	Benaulim (PV)
19-22	CRWI Plenary Assembly, Goa
23	Free day
24-25	Carona (PV) (25 - evening departure for oros)
26-27	Oros (PV) (27 <sup>th</sup> night departure for Mumbai)
28-31	Provincial house

### FEBRUARY 2017

1	Provincial Office
2-3	Pali Hill PV
4-5	Meeting of the temporary professed- Pali Hill
6-7-8-9	Provincial Office
10-11	Seminar for Animators
11-12	provincial Gratitude day
13-14	Provincial council meet
15 -16 -17am	Auxilium Lonavla PV
17pm-18	SJTC Lonavla PV
19-20 am	Kune PV
20 pm - 22	Mundhwa PV
22 - 27	Provincial Office

