



Celebrating 140 years since the first Missionary Expedition

INB/ VII/28/17

November 2017

Dear Sisters,

Greetings from Auxilium Bandra!

Finally we are at the threshold of the climax of our celebration of the 140th Anniversary of the First FMA Missionary Expedition to S. America - Uruguay.



*Its shoots extended
beyond the ocean...*

On 14th November 1877, only five years after the foundation of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, a young team of 6 ardent FMA, between 17 to 25 years of age left the port of Genova, for the distant Country of Uruguay in S. America. With daring hearts and missionary zeal they said “Yes” to their Missionary Calling. One can comprehend the mixture of feelings they experienced at that moment. The joy and enthusiasm of taking the Spirit of Mornese to far distant America, the insecurity and uncertainty of leaving the warm nest of their origins at Mornese and the painful thought that they might never again see some of their beloved sisters. Their courage and generosity gave our Institute its first *Missionary* imprint. While we thank God for the Missionary ardor and fervor handed down to us generation after generation let the climate of the first departure ‘reawaken’ in our heart the joy of feeling called by God to spread His love to all peoples, above all the young, with the same simplicity and conviction of the first missionaries. Let 14 November 2017 be lived as a day of *Celebration!*, making joyful memory of this important and significant event in the history of our Institute. Together with this circular you will also receive the practices for the triduum, orientation for the celebration, Vigil Service and logo of the Missionary Expedition which will help us to celebrate this day with the heart and sentiments of Don Bosco, Mother Mazzarello, and the first missionary Sisters. I invite all the Communities to mark this day’s celebration with the Vigil Service around a meaningful Sacred Space created with the logo and other images connected to this event. Communities that are close to each other may have the celebration together.

Arrival of our first six missionaries on Indian Soil

The 22nd of November marks the arrival of our first missionaries on Indian soil. While we are still in the heat of our celebrations of the 140 anniversary of the first Missionary expedition as an Institute, the 22nd of November brings back to us, FMA of the Indian Provinces, the memorable event of the arrival of the FMA in India and fills our hearts with immense gratitude to God. The six pioneers Sr. Teresa Balestra, Sr. Maria Angeleri, Sr. Caterina Marnetto, Sr. Luigina Appiano, Sr. Consiglia Tarricone and Sr. Teresa Merlo set sail from Turin and disembarked at the gateway of India, accompanied by Fr. George Tomatis, on 18 November 1922. They arrived at their destination Tanjore - Tamil Nadu on 22 November 1922.

With missionary zeal and at the cost of many sacrifices they dared to sow the seeds of the Salesian charism on Indian soil. Within a year of their arrival, despite tremendous odds, they were able to launch an array of apostolic initiatives, including a dispensary, an orphanage, an Oratory, a typing centre and established contact with people in numerous villages around Thanjavur. Soon the seeds sprouted, grew and spread rapidly. The following year saw six more sisters arriving in Guwahati to begin their work in the Assam missions. From 1922 to 1929 the FMA presences in India functioned as a ‘Visitatoria’, directly under the General Council. In 1929 the first Indian Province of the FMAs was constituted under the patronage of St. Thomas the Apostle, with its headquarters at Madras (Chennai). Affectionately called the Mother Province, it gave birth to the province of Thailand in 1952, and to the Provinces of Cuore Immacolato di Maria - Shillong and S. Maria Mazzarello - Bombay in 1953 and 1982 respectively. The Province

of the Sacred Heart of Jesus - Bangalore was established in 1993. In the meantime two more Provinces under the patronage of Mater Ecclesiae - Guwahati and Maria Ausiliatrice – Kolkatta were born as off-shoots from the Province of Shillong. The latest shoot from the stump of our Mother Province is the Province of Our Lady of Snows – Trichy erected by Mother General 24th May 2017.

Looking back at the gigantic spread our works in India, carried out by the 7 Indian provinces, one can evidently see the wonders the Lord has done through the instrumentality our missionaries. The tiny seed planted by the pioneers has now grown into a mighty fruit-bearing tree, sheltering, nurturing and nourishing young people in six vibrant provinces in the country. Let us support our Provinces pray for it to continue to spread the Good News with Joy - we eagerly look forward to the celebration of the centenary of the FMA presence in India in 2022.

All Souls Day:

The month of November brings to our mind fond memories of our dear departed brothers and sisters. St. Irenaeus said: *“The glory of God is man truly alive.”* When we live our lives to the fullest, we give glory to God. Living life to the full is living according to God’s plan for us, developing our potentials, and sharing our gifts and blessings with those in need, and this is the best way to prepare for death, lest we forget, that death is not the end of life. Death is just part of life; it is the transition to the eternal life Jesus has won for us. We are destined for life in eternity.

Let us pray for our departed brothers and sisters and rest assured that they also are praying for us. In God’s boundless mercy and love, He will gather us once again in our true home, the House of the Heavenly Father. Pope St. John Paul II once said that when somebody dies, we should not say, “goodbye”; rather say, “till we meet again...in heaven!” During the month of November we pray for all the faithful departed, for our deceased family members and friends, and particularly for the souls in Purgatory. Let us ask Mary, who saw her Son on earth, and who sees him constantly in Heaven, to grant us this grace of eternal life.

Salesian Sanctity

Bl. Artemide Zatti:

On 13 November we commemorate Bl. Artemide Zatti. Artemide Zatti, a Salesian brother, was a simple man of humble origin. The Hospital was the place where he practised virtue day after day to a heroic degree. He went round the city and its suburbs on his bicycle. He saw each of his patients as a “little Jesus” to be cared for with dedication and love. He prayed while cycling and the few hours that remained were devoted to study and spiritual reading. Even when he went to bed he was still always available for any calls that might come. It has been said that his best medicine was himself: his joyful cheerful attitude, the jokes, and his affection for every one of his patients.

He not only administered medicine, but helped his patients to see in their situation a sign of God's will, especially when death was near. He was not only a nurse, but an educator in the faith, in times of trial and sickness – a Good Samaritan in the style of Don Bosco, a sign and bearer of God's love.

Pope Francis is a great devotee of Artemide Zatti. His memory invites us to promote the vocation of the Salesian Brothers.

Bl. Maddalena Morano:

On 15th November we commemorate Bl. Maddalena Morana. Maddalena Catherine Morano (1847-1908) began her apprenticeship as a teacher when she was still young. Her whole life was to be spent teaching, especially after her graduation as an elementary school teacher. Over a period of 30 years, she built up a rich experience in teaching and catechetics. Inspired by Don Bosco, in 1879 she became a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, thereby fulfilling a desire of consecration that dated back to her First Communion. She asked the Lord for the grace "to stay alive until she reached a real level of holiness."

She was sent to Sicily in 1881, and there began a fruitful educational work among the girls and young women of the working classes. With "one eye on the ground and ten on Heaven," she opened schools, youth centres, hostels, and workshops all over the island. Appointed as provincial, she assumed responsibility for the formation of the many new vocations who were attracted by her zeal and the community atmosphere that she created around her. Her widespread apostolate was appreciated and encouraged by the bishops, who entrusted their catechetical ministry to her overall responsibility.

Affected by a tumor, Sr. Madeleine Morano died on March 26, 1908, in Catania. She lived totally consistent with her commitment, always with the aim of "never blocking the action of grace by giving in to personal selfishness."

First World day of the poor:

The 19th November (33rd Sunday of Ordinary time) has been declared, for the first time, as the *World day of the Poor*. The Holy Father in his Message for this occasion beautifully brings out the essence of the Spirit of Poverty and the Church's option for the poor, the needy, the anawim. Here is an excerpt from his message, for our personal and community reflection.

" This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him" (Ps 34:6). The Church has always understood the importance of this cry. We possess an outstanding testimony to this in the very first pages of the Acts of the Apostles, where Peter asks that seven men, "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (6:3) be chosen for the ministry of caring for the poor. The earliest community realized that being a disciple of Jesus meant demonstrating fraternity and solidarity, in obedience to the Master's proclamation that the poor are blessed and heirs to the Kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 5:3).

Let us never forget that, for Christ's disciples, poverty is above all a call to follow Jesus in his own poverty. Poverty means having a humble heart that accepts our creaturely limitations and sinfulness and thus enables us to overcome the temptation to feel omnipotent and immortal. Poverty is an interior attitude that avoids looking upon money, career and luxury as our goal in life and the condition for our happiness.

We are called, then, to draw near to the poor, to encounter them, to meet their gaze, to embrace them and to let them feel the warmth of love that breaks through their solitude. Their outstretched hand is also an invitation to step out of our certainties and comforts, and to acknowledge the value of poverty in itself. This new World Day, therefore, should become a powerful appeal to our consciences as believers, allowing us to grow in the conviction that sharing with the poor enables us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel.

Let us make time to download and read the entire message of our Holy Father, which is indeed very rich and offers much thought for reflection and positive action.

Communications:

- ❖ Sr. Sushma Solanki and Sr. Elphina Rodrigues will take part in the Annual General Body Meeting of AMRAT from 9th- 12th November 2017 at Bangalore.
- ❖ Sr. Santana Pereira, Sr. Collette Gonsalves and Sr. Catherine Pereira will be participating in the Mission Ad Gentes meet organised by the FMA-PCI Coordinator for Mission Ad Gentes, from 17-19 November 2017 at Nadigama, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The Postulants will have their 15 days mission experiences in the communities of Anmol Koparkhairane and Sindhoni from 1st-15th November 2017.
- ❖ 16 Sisters will be participating in a Seminar on Financial Management at Indore from 21 – 24 November 2017.
- ❖ **Provincials' Retreat:** The FMA Provincials of India will have their annual retreat from November 12-17, 2017 at Vaduvanchal (Kerala). I kindly request you to accompany us with your prayers. In my absence you may contact Sr. Dias Agatha, Vice Provincial for any urgent need.
- ❖ **Visit of Rector Major:** Our Rector Major Rev. Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime, SDB, will be visiting the Indian Provinces during this month and will Celebrate the Holy Eucharist at Don Bosco's Shrine - Matunga on 12th November 2017, to mark the 60th anniversary of its Consecration. We pray for him and for the fruitful outcome of his visit to the Indian Provinces.

Forthcoming Events:

- ❖ **Region-wise Faith Fest:** The region-wise Faith Fest will be organized from 3-4 November 2017 at Kasarkod for the youth of the Karnataka region and from the 5-6 November 2017 at Benaulim for the youth of Goa Region. We wish the organizing team all success and an enriching mission.
- ❖ **Region-wise Youth Fest:** The region-wise Youth Fest will be organized as scheduled in the table below.

| Date | State | Venue | Language | communities |
|---|-------------|------------|----------|--|
| 18th-19th Nov. 2017 | Karnataka | Shirwa | Kannnada | Shirva, Nandgad, Kalathur & Kasarkod |
| 18 th -19 th Nov. 2017 | Maharashtra | Ahmednagar | Marathi | Ahmednaagr, Nashik, Uttan, Bableshwar, Koparkhairane, Nirmal, Dahaun, Kehnand and Pune |
| 11 th -12 th Nov. 2017 | Gujarat | Pansora | Gujarati | Pansora and Dakor |
| | | Baroda | English | Baroda |
| Dec/Jan 18 | Goa | Caranzalem | English | Caranzalem, Carona, Oros, Benaulim and Sulcorna |

- ❖ **Seminars and Retreat:** The forthcoming Annual Retreats and Seminars are scheduled as follows:

| Date | Programme | Venue | Resource Person |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| 3 rd -9 th Nov 2017 | Annual Retreat-Batch III | AYC Dahanu | Fr. Isaac Arrackaparambil |
| 20 th - 24 th Nov 2017 | Seminar for senior Sisters (55+years) | SJTC, Lonavla | Fr. Dudely Mendonca SJ |
| 26-29 Nov 2017 | Leadership Seminar for animators | SJTC, Lonavla | Fr. Dudely Mendonca SJ |
| 30 th Nov - 6 Dec 2017 | Annual Retreat- IV | SJTC, Lonavla | Fr. Biji Thomas SDB |

Let us accompany these important events with our prayers .

Sincere appreciation and Thanks to:

- ❖ Sr. Agatha Dias for coordinating the entire programme of the Mid-Term Evaluation 2017 and to her team of collaborators: Sr. Wilma de Souza, Sr. Rita Lobo, Sr. Joanna Lobo and Sr. Lavita Sequeira for the excellent planning and organization of the event.
- ❖ Sr. Mariet and the community of Dahanu for hosting the Mid-Term Evaluation meet and the candidates and sisters for their spirit of availability and service.
- ❖ Fr. Isaac Arrackaparambil for preaching the retreat for the 3 batches of Retreatants, the community of Dahanu for hosting the Retreats and the Sisters and candidates and who helped out during the retreats.
- ❖ Sr. Moksha Anthonappa and Sr. Magdeline Sequeira and her community for organizing the Diwali Dhamaka and the communities of Auxilium – Wadala and MYC – Wadala for their hospitality and assistance.

Prayers requested for:

- ❖ The sister of Sr. Wilma De Souza who is critical in hospital in Bangalore.
- ❖ The mother of Sr. Collette Gonsalves who was ill and is convalescing.
- ❖ The sister of Sr. Natal Rodrigues who underwent a major heart surgery recently.
- ❖ Our sick and elderly sisters and family member who are ailing.

May the Divine healer grant them healing and lead them to complete recovery.

Heartfelt condolences to:

- ❖ Fr. Felix Fernandes and the Salesians of Panjim Province at the passing away of Fr. Domenic Savio Fernandes on 8th October 2017.
- ❖ Fr. Godfrey and the Salesians of Mumbai province at the demise of Fr. Steve Rodrigues on 18th October 2017.
- ❖ Sr. Margaret Amalnathan and the Sisters of Trichy Province at the passing away of Sr. Juliet Fernando on 22nd October 2017.
- ❖ Sr. Smitha Monis and her family at the demise of her brother Walter Monis on 25th October 2017 at Lonavla.
- ❖ Sr. Irene Pinto and her family at the loss of her dear mother on 26th October 2017 at Mangalore.

- ❖ Sr. Luiza Fernandes at the demise of her brother-in law Mr. Mario Colaco on 29th October 2017 in Goa.
- ❖ Sr. Collette Gonsalves and her family at the passing away of her brother-in-law Mr. Ananious Alphonso on 29th October 2017 in Kuwait.
- ❖ Sr. Sunita Moteghar who lost her paternal aunt Mrs. Arsila Patil on 1st November 2017 at Uttan.

Let us pray for our dear departed and may all who mourn their loss be comforted in the hope of our Christian faith.

Yours affectionately,



Sr. Ritha Dora Thomas fma
Provincial

PROVINCIAL'S ITINERARY

NOVEMBER 2017

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|---------|-------------------------------------|
| 3 - 9 | Annual Retreat Batch III |
| 11 | Departure for Calicut, Kerala |
| 12 - 18 | Provincials' retreat |
| 20 – 22 | Provincial Office |
| 23 - 24 | Lonavla- seminar for senior Sisters |
| 26 - 29 | Seminar for animators - Lonavla |
| 30 | Provincial Council Meet |

December 2017

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|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 30 - 6 December | Annual Retreat Batch IV |
| 7 | Provincial council meet |
| 8 - 10 | Provincial Office |
| 11 - 12 | Auxilium, Wadala PV |
| 13 - 15 | MYC Wadala PV |
| 16 -17 | Provincial Office |
| 18 - 20 am | Ahmednagar PV |
| 20 - 21 | Bableshtar PV |
| 22 - 29 | Provincial Office |
| 30 - 31 | Provincial Council meet, Benaulim |