



INB/ VII/30/18

January 2018

Dear Sisters,
Greetings from Auxilium, Bandra!

World Day of Peace Message:

The 51st World day of Peace was celebrated on the 1st January 2018. Pope Francis based his message for this Annual Celebration on the theme **“Migrants and Refugees: Men and Women in Search of Peace.”** In his message Pope Francis urges us to turn a “contemplative gaze” toward our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters, opening our hearts to the gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their houses, in their streets and squares.” He echoes St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, pointing to war, conflict, genocide, ethnic cleansing, poverty, lack of opportunity, and environmental degradation as reasons that families and individuals become refugees and migrants.

Four “mileposts for action” are necessary in order to allow migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and trafficking victims the opportunity to find peace. These include:

- 1) **Welcoming**, which calls for “expanding legal pathways for entry” and better balancing national security and fundamental human rights concerns;
- 2) **Protecting**, or recognizing and defending “the inviolable dignity of those who flee”;
- 3) **Promoting**, which entails “supporting the integral human development of migrants and refugees”;
- 4) **Integrating** by allowing migrants and refugees to “participate fully in the life of society that welcomes them.” Doing so enriches both those arriving and those welcoming.

In various parts of the world, men and women, children, young and elderly people, are searching for somewhere to live in peace. In order to find that peace, they are willing to risk their lives on a journey that is often long and perilous, to endure hardships and suffering, and to encounter fences and walls built to keep them far from their goal. In a spirit of compassion, let us embrace all those fleeing from war and hunger, or forced by discrimination, persecution, poverty and environmental degradation to leave their homelands.

Epiphany - the Divine Manifestation:

Epiphany lifts our eyes from the family celebrations and demands that we include in our vision "*all the ends of the earth.*", like the three wise men we too should follow the light of the star in our journey; that the light of our faith, like that of the wise men, should be so strong that we are able to see and recognize our Lord in an unexpected way. He may present Himself to us; having recognized Him, we bow down and adore Him, offering Him our total loyalty. Jesus leads us to God, and reveals God to us. But we need the Star to lead us on through the year.

Baptism of Our Lord :

It's a feast of transition from Jesus' hidden life to that of His public ministry. It was a manifestation of Himself, as He emerged from the waters, "Heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came from Heaven, '*You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.*' Through His baptism the Father introduced His Son and His Son's mission to the world.

As we prepare to begin the Ordinary Time of the liturgical year, let us reflect, upon these words of the Father at the Baptism of Jesus, hear the Father speak to you about the Divinity of His Son. Let us turn our eyes to Jesus and prepare ourselves to follow Him and to heed every word He speaks. He was sent into this world to draw us to the Father, let us allow Him to fulfil that mission in our own life and keep our gaze on Him during this New Year 2018.

Blessed Laura Vicuna:

On 22nd January we celebrate our young and heroic model of virtue, Blessed Laura Vicuna. We are familiar with the story of Laura's life and of the courageous, self-offering she made of her life to God, in exchange for the conversion of her beloved mother, whose unfortunate situation dragged into a sinful life with a wicked land-owner.

On the night before her death, on 21st January 1904, Laura confided to her mother: "*I offered my life to Him for you, that you might return to God... Mommy, before I die, will you not give me the joy of seeing you repent?*" On the day of Laura's funeral, her mother returned to the Sacraments and began a new life.

We can learn from Laura that praying for the conversion of others is never easy but it is worth. There were times when Blessed Laura Vicuna did feel hopeless, because the more she prayed, the worse her mother became. Although this made her doubt the power of prayer, she never gave up and just continued praying even when there was no hope. She held on to the words of Jesus: There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friend. Let us turn to Laura who at such a young age never grew weary of praying for her mother's conversion even in the midst of deep sorrow.

May we look to Blessed Laura Vicuna for comfort and pray for those family members, relatives, close friends or perhaps our enemies who have gone astray from God's merciful Love. May we offer our constant prayers for them to the Lord with a heart that never grows

weary until He answers our prayers. May Blessed Laura, Brave and constant Soldier of Christ, pray for us.

St. Francis de Sales:

On 24 January the Church celebrates the feast of St. Francis De Sales. St. Francis De Sales became noted for his deep faith and his gentle approach to the religious divisions in his land resulting from the Protestant Reformation. He is known also for his writings on the topic of spiritual direction and spiritual formation, particularly the *Introduction to the Devout Life* and the *Treatise on the Love of God*.

Born in Savoy, France, on 21 August 1567, he was ordained Bishop of Geneva in 1602 and dedicated himself zealously to the apostolic activity of bringing back to the catholic faith the people of the Chablais who had accepted the Protestant reform. Through his many activities he educated the Christian people and showed them that spirituality was attainable in every walk of life. He thus put spiritual life within the reach of the laity and made devotion pleasant and desirable. He made good use of the printed word and promoted work and culture, treating everyone with loving kindness and unpretentious wisdom. He died in December 1622 and was canonised in 1665. John Bosco evidently considered the gentle bishop of Geneva as a model for his own priesthood. Inspired by his "*apostolic charity*" and by his "*evangelical kindness and patience*", St. John Bosco chose him as the model and protector of his own mission among the young.

Unity Octave 18 - 25 January:

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: is an international Christian ecumenical observance kept annually between 18 January and 25 January. It is an observance lasting eight days. The theme for the 2018 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, "*Your Right Hand, O Lord, Glorious in Power,*" is taken from the book of Exodus 15:6.

Throughout the Biblical narrative of salvation, an unmistakable motif is the unrelenting determination of the Lord to form a people whom He could call His own. The formation of such a people, united in a sacred covenant with God, is integral to the Lord's plan of salvation and to the glorification of His name. The prophets repeatedly remind Israel that their covenant demanded that relationships among its various social groups should be characterized by justice, compassion and mercy. Reconciliation often demands repentance, reparation and healing of memories.

As Jesus prepared to seal the new covenant in His own blood, His earnest prayer to the Father was that those given to Him by the Father would be one, just as He and the Father were one. When Christians discover their unity in Jesus, they participate in Christ's glorification in the presence of the Father, with the same glory that He had lived in the Father's presence before the world existed. Therefore, God's covenanted people must always strive to be a reconciled community that serves as an effective sign of how to live in

justice and peace for all the people of the earth. Each one of us as members of the Church, like Israel, is called to be a sign and an active agent of reconciliation.

Conversion of St. Paul:

25 January – “Go into the entire world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15).

Paul’s entire life can be explained in terms of one experience—*his meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus*. In an instant, he saw that all the zeal of his dynamic personality was being wasted, like the strength of a boxer swinging wildly. He had acquired a zealot’s hatred of all Jesus stood for, as he began to harass the Church: “...entering house after house and dragging out men and women, he handed them over for imprisonment” (Acts 8:3b)

One sentence determined his theology: “*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting*” (Acts 9:5b). Jesus was mysteriously identified with people - the loving group of people Saul had been running down like criminals. From then on, His only work was to present everyone perfect in Christ. Paul’s life became a tireless proclaiming and living out of the message of the cross.

Christ's command, which Paul of Tarsus welcomed with a generous heart, has continued to re-echo in the Church, raising up in the course of the centuries bands of apostles ready to face hardship and toil to bring the word of salvation to the nations. The Church today also feels the inner urge of missionary duty. She desires to serve mankind with all her powers: in the preaching of the Gospel to every creature.

This day marks also the closing of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Paul dealt with the problem of disunity already in the primitive Church. Paul's anguished question is still relevant today.

Feast of St. John Bosco:

31st January marks the feast of St. John Bosco our Father and Founder, the great educator. Education is considered as the most effective agent of social Change. Don Bosco had faith in the power of education to transform society. For us Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, we evangelise through Education and Educate through evangelisation and with the aim of bringing about transformation in persons and society. True Education consists of both information and transformation. If education does not lead to transformation, its purpose is not achieved. John Bosco educated the whole person. For Don Bosco, being a Christian was a full-time effort, not a once-a-week, Sunday experience. He worked giving young people dignity and help them find their place in society in such a way as to be able to face up to life successfully. May St. John Bosco help us to make a place in our educational institutions for young people who are living on the peripheries of society.

Let us make our education truly an agent that brings about lasting changes in society in order that human beings may live a dignified life.

Strenna of Rector Major

The strenna of our Rector Major for the year 2018 dwells on the theme «**Sir, give me this water**» (Jn 4,15) **Let us cultivate the art of listening and of accompaniment**. The synthetic phrase of the theme corresponds to the heartfelt request that the Samaritan woman makes to Jesus at Jacob's well. In her meeting with Him, the woman feels that she has been listened to, respected and appreciated; and so in her heart she feels impelled to ask for something even more precious: "Sir, give me some of that water"

Rector Major highlights two elements of vital importance in today's world: **listening and personal accompaniment**, a subject that directly concerns the heart of our charism and that we will try to prepare in the best possible way, sensitising ourselves and making many lay and young people aware of this important event of the ecclesial life and of the need to take part in it. The theme chosen refers to the forthcoming major ecclesial event of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, convened by Pope Francis, which is entitled: "*Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*".

In her circular n. 975, Mother General comments on the Strenna and adds her note of gratitude, for this annual gift that the Rector Major makes to the Salesian Family. Together with our Mother General and Rector Major, I invite you to accept the Strenna with the positive openness of each year and to benefit from what may be useful to you according to the different pastoral situations in which we operate.

Communications:

- ❖ The Triennial Evaluation meet at PCI level will be held from 24-28 January 2018 in Kolkata. The delegates from our province are Sr. Rita Lobo, Sr. Joanna Lobo, Mrs, Unita Patrao and Ms. Esther Anthony. Mother Yvonne together with 4 General Councillors: Sr. Runita Borges, Sr. Maria Helena Moreira, Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil and Sr. Phyllis Neves will participate in the TE Meet. I request you to intensify your prayers for the success and fruitfulness of this important event.
- ❖ Sr. Moksha Antonappa, Collette Gonsalves, Sr.Elphina Rodrigues, Sr. Catherine Pereira, Sr. Vandana Malya, Sr. Macline D'Souza, Sr. Smitha Monis, Sr. Sunita Shah, Sr. Urmila Torane along with 6 social workers will participate in a training programme on Formation of SHG Federation at Dahod, Gujarat from 17th – 19th January organised by Sahayini Social Development Office. We wish them a fruitful learning and wish them well in their social ministry.
- ❖ Sr. Catherine Fernandes will participate in the South Zonal Conference of Salesian Co-operators in Vijayawada from 12 - 14 January 2018.
- ❖ The Temporary professed sisters will have their Tri-monthly Meeting from 2nd – 4th February 2018 at **Auxilium Convent – Pali Bandra**. The temporary professed sisters are requested to be at Pali Hill - Bandra by the evening of 1st February 2018. The meeting concludes only after 8.30 pm on the 4th February 2018.

- ❖ The Mission & Evangelization Sector will be organizing a Two-Day Seminar cum Exposure Meet on the theme ***Missionary – Beloved of the Father***, at AYAC Dahanu from 6th -7th January, 2018. Participants are requested to be present at the venue by Friday evening.

Congratulations

- ❖ Rev Fr. Paul Olphndro Lyngkot Sdb for being elected as the 2nd Provincial of the Salesian Province of St. John Paul II - Shillong.
- ❖ Rev. Fr. Januarius Sanguma Sdb for being elected as the 12th provincial of the Salesian Province of Mary Help of Christians, Guwahati.

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:

- ❖ Sr. Agatha Dias and the Sisters of Benaulim for organising the follow up meeting for the young sisters on Organisation of Summer Club and for hosting the same.
- ❖ Sr. Esperanca D'Sa and Sr. Lorina Bandy for successfully organising the Bala Mela on 25th December 2017 for the first time at Sindoni and to Sr. Moksha Antonappa and the Sisters and Girls of Anmol - Koparkhairane for the support and assistance given to our Sisters by contributing towards the success of this event. Around 400 children participated in the Bal Mela.

Prayers requested for:

- ❖ Sr. Agatha Dias who is recouping from her knee surgery.
- ❖ The Sister of Sr. Bianchi whose health situation is not satisfactory.
- ❖ All our sick sisters and relatives and the sick members of the Salesian family.

Heartfelt condolences to:

- ❖ Sr. Nirmala Lazar and Sisters of Chennai Province at the demise of Sr. Devasahayam Maria Vittoria on 30th December 2017.
- ❖ Sr. Regina Fernandes and Sr. Agatha Fernandes at the loss of their first Cousin.

May our dear departed Rest in Peace. Amen!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Ritha Thomas

Sr. Ritha Dora Thomas fma
Provincial

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JANUARY 2018

1-2	Benaulim- Team Visit/PV
4-6	WRCl,Seminar for Formators at JDV Pune
7	Provincial Office
09-10	Benaulim- Council meet
11	Benaulim- Team /PV visit
12-13	Caranzalem
14	Velim PV
15-16 am	Carona PV
17	Major Superiors meet in Goa
18	Sulcora PV
20 -22	Provincial Office
23	Departure for Kolkata
24-28	Triennial Evaluation – Kolkata
29-31	Provincial House

FEBRUARY 2018

2-3	Madanthyar PV
4-5 am	Shirwa PV
5am-6	Kalathur PV
7-9 pm	Kasarkod PV
10-12	Provincial Office
13-15am	Nandgad PV
16-17-18	Oros PV/ Meeting with Bishop
18-24	Provincial Office
23-25	Provincial Council Meet
26	Arrival of Mother General

