



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

INDIA MUMBAI PROVINCE (INM)



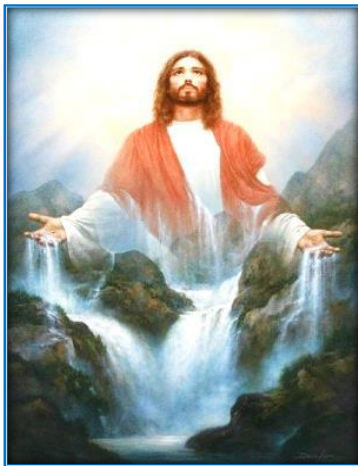
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INM/PC/I64/2021

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June 2021

BACK TO THE WELLSPRING



It is the yearly transfer season. This year INM has a small transfer list. Soon those on transfer will find themselves in their assigned communities. We consider our Society as a corporate body of shared responsibility and interdependence, called by God, to achieve our apostolic goals. It is our responsibility to see to it that our apostolic goals are realized, and whatever we are, and whatever we do, as superiors, individuals and communities contribute to our ultimate purpose. Some of the responses to transfers have made me ponder as to how much we as a province and as individuals have integrated into our personal and community lives the spirit of our Founder and the Society. We must move our hearts towards the wellspring of our rich spirituality and be guided by it.

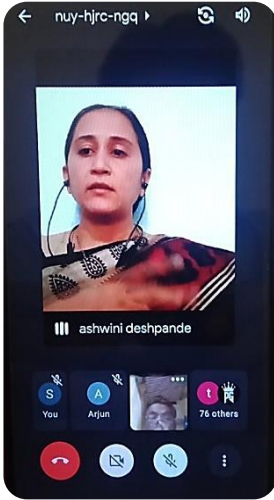
We the members of INM province form an elite group, screened, selected and subjected to prolonged formation. I dare say that though we are religious and priests, our decision-making process needs to become better than that of the average person. Our decisions are often sympathy, loyalty and convenience based rather than issue or mission based. Thus, our arguments, our reasoning and our evaluations are at best mediocre despite our training, our ongoing formation and our commitment to a cause. A process of self-evaluation, a process of self-exploration, time alone with the Lord could remedy this situation. This process however is a difficult one, for it hurts, and again it is a time consuming process. We need time to reflect on ourselves and our actions, to question our motives and to investigate our agendas. In self-exploration we should be prepared to be subjected to critical evaluation by others. If we make ourselves believe that we know everything and nothing whatsoever can penetrate us, often we become like an over ripe apple, good only to be thrown out. Self-evaluation does not end with one act or in one season. It is a lifelong process, by which we are critically assessed, evaluated and consequently purified.

The surging spike of Covid-19 cases all over the world has brought a lot of uncertainty – no one can predict what will happen tomorrow. It is the time to put our mind and heart together and find appropriate solutions for the pressing issues and concerns. We need to give up our arrogance and stubbornness, if we have any, and learn to work together. Yes, ‘together is the only way forward and the time is now’. Therefore, it is time to iron out our differences in order to strive for peace and march ahead in unity to actualize the mission. We should not run away from the real issues. We cannot be blind and deaf to them. We are compelled to stand together and raise our voice against injustice and defeat the evil intents, lest we are destroyed all together. As we begin the new academic year, we thank God for all the blessings we have received through the confreres who are moving out from our communities due to their transfers,

they deserve acknowledgement for all their life enhancing, love generating and mission augmenting contributions. Let us hope that the year ahead will lead us back to the wellspring of grace and life! We need Jesus now, more than ever.

- **INM Leadership Team**

WEBINAR ON 'COVID SAFETY AND VACCINATION' SARVA SEVA SANGH, PUNE



The second wave of Covid-19 pandemic is creating a nationwide mayhem. Due to the higher risk nature of the virus in the second wave the front line workers, volunteers and civil society organizations are also on the back foot. Addressing the situation Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune conducted a few webinars in collaboration with other organizations in April and May 2021.

The first webinar on the topic 'Covid Safety and Vaccination' was held on 21st April 2021. It was held in two sessions - one in English in the morning and the other in Marathi in the afternoon. Ms. Sujata Kodag explained the nature of Covid-19 in the second wave from the perspective of disaster management and the need to be more careful and meticulous in following Covid-19 protocols and appropriate behaviour. She also spoke about the need to take the Covid-19 vaccines to prevent infection. The webinar organised by Sarva Seva Sangh in collaboration with ELF and CYDA was very interactive and informative. The session in English was attended by nearly 50 people while the session in Marathi was attended by over 100 people.

A special virtual session was organised for people living with HIV on Covid-19 vaccination on 8th May 2021 at 3 pm. When the staff of SSS interacted with people living with HIV they came to know that people have a lot of doubts and fears about Covid-19 vaccination. Hence, the session was organised to address their doubts, fears and myths. Dr. Ashwini Deshpande helped the participants to understand the seriousness of Covid-19 infection on people living with HIV and the importance of taking Covid-19 vaccines. Dr. Deshpande cleared the doubts and addressed their fears in a very simple language and people living with HIV freely interacted with Dr. Deshpande. Over hundred people living with HIV benefited from the session.

SVD COVID CARE CENTRE (SCCC) ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S ASHRAM, GOA



SCCC is a joint venture undertaken by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) and SVD Friends Association (SFA) to help those who are found positive for COVID-19. With a surge in cases in Goa, there were many hospitals which lacked facilities to admit the patients as they did not have sufficient beds or oxygen cylinders. There were reports of whole family getting infected, and in some instances one or two members getting infected in a house and left unattended. This was due to lack of rooms or facilities for self-isolation in their houses or vicinity. Keeping this in mind, the SVDs in Raia offered the St. Arnold's Hall as a center to cater to the all those found positive in the surrounding areas of Raia, Rachol, Maina and the neighbouring parishes.

This center is an open hall equipped with 20 beds. It is open for all those found positive and not able to isolate in their houses. The SCCC closely monitors the patients, and if need be admits them to the

hospital by providing the ambulance service. The SCCC also provides oximeter and food to the patients. There are also doctors and nurses, who have volunteered, for any assistance.

On May 15, SCCC was blessed by Fr. Pedro Colaco, the Parish Priest of Raia in the presence of Mr. Reginald, the local MLA, Fr. Joaquim Fernandes and other dignitaries. The centre has received help from Mr. Reginald, Mr. Alex Sequeira (Former MLA), Zilla Panchayat and the Panchayat leaders. We hope that this centre will significantly assist the infected persons and their families to deal with the challenges of Covid-19.

DONATION OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

SARVA VIKAS DEEP, MANGAON



In the backdrop of Covid-19 surge and fatalities; many individuals, groups and civil society organizations have made united efforts to fight the virulent virus in the second wave. Sarva Vikas Deep (SVD), Mangaon, a social wing of the Society of the Divine Word has made an extensive study in the second most tribal populous block Mangaon in Raigad district of Maharashtra state on the spread of the Covid-19. Having done that, the SVD was invited by the government doctors to make a tangible intervention to address the several issues that impinge the government machinery in containing the growing spread of the sickness in semi urban and rural areas. The government doctors and their staff brought to the notice of the SVD staff that the newly erected Covid-19 ward needs to be equipped with a few most important medical equipments. The Society of the Divine Word responded promptly by supporting its sister concern, Sarva Vikas Deep (SVD) to make a study of the medical equipment. Accordingly, the SVD in association with government officials and doctors identified the list of the required medical equipments viz. bed-side I V and medicine trollies and lockers, so that the medical staff and doctors could dispense a disciplined and quality treatment to the Covid-19 patients. The medical equipments were handed over to the Medical Superintendent of the government hospital, Dr. Pradeep Ingavle in the presence of the Raigad Deputy Collector Ms. Prashali Digavkar, hospital doctors, staff and the SVD staff. While lauding the service of the SVD, the government officials expressed deep satisfaction over the SVD interventions in the past years in addressing many overriding social issues and especially working with the government machinery in containing the Covid-19 in the district.

LOCKDOWN TESTIMONY

LIDVINA PEREIRA, ST. THERESA'S CHURCH, BANDRA



Dear friends I am going to share with you, how the Word of God has impacted my life, specifically during the lockdown. Thus far, I have read the Bible twice completely and now I am in the process of reading it a 3rd time. Let me be frank with you that there are many things in the Bible that I didn't understand and still don't understand but have been making efforts to get them clarified. During the lockdown I spent time attending the online Masses. I spent time listening to different priests preaching the homilies. I also listened to the catechesis conducted online by our Archdiocese on "how to read the Bible more meaningfully and how to apply it in our day to day life". I also listened to testimonies of people who got converted from one faith to another or from one church to another. In one testimony a catholic lady who had joined the protestant

church said that she did not have much knowledge of the Bible while in the Catholic Church. She just attended the Mass regularly and said some prayers. She said, it is the Protestants who taught her how to read the Bible. This jolted me, and I realized that it was true that even I attended Sunday Mass, recited the prayers, but didn't know much of the Bible. And we were neither urged nor compelled to read the Bible. This opened my eyes to the fact that I as a Catholic, I should read the Word of God, it is the axis on which our Catholicism revolves and it had to be an intrinsic part of my life.

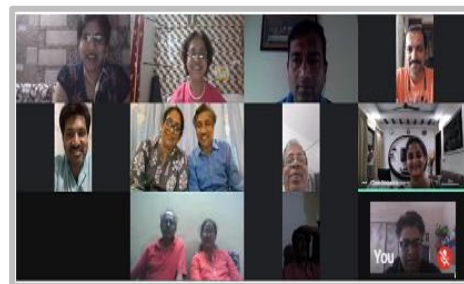
Thus, listening to homilies, catechism and testimonies all these created a thirst in me to read and understand better the Word of God. I began reading the Bible with much faith and underlined all those words, phrases, verses that were important and memorized them. At the end of each book of the Bible, I wrote a summary, especially the 10 commandments which surprisingly I had forgotten, barring a few. I wrote down the gifts of the Spirit, the fruits of the Spirit and of course the beatitudes contained in the 'Sermon on the Mount'. I realized that these are the fundamentals of the Bible on which I have to build my life on. Having done this, I began to introspect on my life, as to how my life deviated from the true path mentioned in the Word of God, and what areas of my life needed change.

My sincere effort to internalize the Word began. I began exercising self-restraint at home, calmness replaced agitation, tolerance replaced intolerance and forgiveness came in. I consciously tried to get rid of negative qualities like pride, ego, anger and jealousy. I learnt there was more joy in giving rather than in receiving. More joy in doing what others wanted rather than what I wanted. I also simultaneously began doing acts of charity, service, kindness and reaching out to others who needed help, financially, sharing what I had with others, feeding the hungry, always keeping in mind the words of St. Vincent Pallotti, "Remember that the Christian life is one of action, not of speech and daydreams. Let there be few words and many deeds and let them be done well." By doing this I experienced peace, joy and satisfaction, and fulfilment in my life.

I began to spend more time in prayer. Earlier I used to be addicted to Turkish serial on MX player and would go on watching them till late night sometimes 1-1.30 am and now I am spending time before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration online. Besides, on regular basis, I recite rosary and read Catechism of the Catholic Church, and listen to apologetics (defenders of faith) Thus, the Word of God has deepened my faith, drawn me closer to Christ and now I can see the fruits of the spirit (joy, peace, self-control) growing in me. Now, I have come to believe the words of St. Jerome, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ!" I end my testimony by quoting Psalm 119:105, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

LENDING A HELPING HAND DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE WORD - PUNE

Just when it looked like we were on the path to recovery from the pandemic, April 2021 recorded a devastating COVID-19 surge in India that impacted lives of many people. With families exhausting their lifetime savings in medical expenses; losing the bread-winner; or income sources – a number of our brothers and sisters were in urgent need for help. Amidst the lockdown, DDW-Pune members conducted a virtual meeting on 16th May 2021 to discuss ideas on how they could reach out to the needy. Under the guidance of our Spiritual Director - Fr. Gregory Arockiam and the leadership of our President - Mrs. Leena Xavier, we decided to partner with Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune in the 'Feed the Hungry' project.



The Sarva Seva Sangh team lead by Fr. Mathew Korattiyil had identified around 150 plus families that are at high risk and were in need of immediate support. DDW-Pune members decided to provide nutrition support to these families in the form of dry-ration food kits which were procured through monetary contributions from DDW members and Sarva Seva Sangh benefactors.

DDW member, Mr. Jimmie Joseph, organized procurement and logistics of the food items. Our members then volunteered to pack the food kits - each kit including items that would meet the requirements for a family of four for at least a month. Due to pandemic restrictions it was not possible for DDW members to physically visit people and hand over the food kits. The Sarva Seva Sangh team coordinated with the beneficiaries to collect the food kits from their premises.



Our sincere thanks to Sarva Seva Sangh benefactors and DDW members for their generosity and their availability to pack the items. Our gratitude and appreciation to the Sarva Seva Sangh team for coordinating the distribution of the kits to beneficiaries and maintaining protocols to ensure the health and safety of all those involved. We also thank God for all his blessing on our members.

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May the heart of Jesus live in our hearts and in the hearts of all people!

INSTALLATION OF NEW PARISH PRIEST ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA CHURCH, MYSURU



Fr. Evan Gomes was installed as the Parish Priest of St. Teresa of Calcutta Church, Rajivnagar, Mysuru on 30 May 2021 by the Chancellor of the Diocese, Fr. James Dominic, in the presence of couple of confreres and the parishioners in a prayerful atmosphere. The hour long installation

ceremony was very solemn even though the parishioners could not be present owing to prevailing Covid protocols. We congratulate Fr. Evan and pray that he continues the good work of his predecessors especially Fr. Mervin Noronha and Fr. Walter Mendonca and strives to make this parish a model SVD parish giving importance to the fourfold characteristics of our mission. Fr. Felix Lobo is expected to join the parish as the Asst. Parish Priest in a few days.

KERALA LCF ONLINE MEETING

The Kerala LCF met unofficially through a zoom meeting on 20 May 2021 at 11 am amidst the uncertainties of Covid-19. The assembly called to mind the deaths of brother of Fr. Kuriakose, sister of Fr. Antony Puthumana and held a special memorial service for them as well as for the departed souls of our confreres these days. After acknowledging the contributions of our deceased confreres, all those present were given the opportunity to share about their ministries. Three of our confreres

who recovered from Covid shared their experiences. The superiors of different communities spoke of the happenings in their communities. The challenges of vocation promotion and migrant ministries were also expressed. Confreres were happy that they all could come together online after a long gap and share about our life and ministry. After being together online for about an hour and a half, the meeting was concluded cautioning one another of the need to be watchful of the dangers of Covid.

CONGRATULATIONS **FR. WILSON WILFRED**



Fr. Wilson Wilfred having successfully completed his Licentiate in Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome has returned to the province on 18 April 2021. After having spent a few weeks on home holidays he has joined the Divine Word Seminary community. Fr. Wilson besides serving as a Moderator will also teach at Jnana Deepa as the institute has assigned a few important courses to utilize his expertise and gain some teaching experience. We congratulate Fr.

Wilson for coming out in flying colours in the licentiate programme and pray for a fulfilling formation and teaching ministry.

PROVINCIAL SECRETARY



We are grateful to Fr. Infant Vinodh Kumar the outgoing Provincial Secretary for the dedicated service of three years rendered to the province. With his availability and commitment he has gained appreciation from the confreres and our collaborators. As he is preparing himself to commence his higher studies, we wish him all the very best and pray that these years of learning will be enriching.



We extend a warm welcome to the new Provincial Secretary, Fr. P. David. We believe as a committed and enthusiastic young person he has the requisite aptitudes and capabilities to uphold the standards set by his predecessors and contribute much for the smooth functioning of the Provincial Secretariat. We pray for God's blessings on his new responsibility and seek your support and cooperation.

APPOINTMENT **FR. BAPTIST PAIS**



Taking into consideration the proposal of the Chairman of the CCBI Commission for Ecumenism, Most Rev. Francis Serrao SJ and in consultation with us, the Executive Committee of the CCBI in its meeting held on 15th May 2021 has appointed Fr. Baptist Pais as the part-time Executive Secretary of the Commission for Ecumenism for a year of probation with effect from 1st June 2021 and at the end of the probation period he will be confirmed upon mutual consent in the same office for a period of three years. Besides attending to this

important assignment he is also entrusted with the responsibility of taking care and development of our property at Solur, Bangalore. We congratulate Fr. Baptist on his appointment and wish him every success in the important responsibilities.

APPOINTMENT

FR. GOPU VINOD REDDY

Last year, we had permitted Fr. Gopu Vinod to do Masters in Multimedia at ICAT Design and Media College, Hyderabad. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and prevailing uncertainties regarding the course, he has requested us to appoint him to one of our communities till the situation becomes conducive for regular studies, and so, he has been assigned to Ishvani Kendra, Pune to be a staff member and help out in the activities of the centre as well as learn some skills and programmes related to his area of study.

COMMUNITY ANIMATION AND EVALUATION

We would like to thank Fr. Gregory Pinto for obliging to animate our communities to motivate each confrere to live joyful community life attending to their person, aligning their purposes to the Vision and Mission of the house/institute and carrying out the mission in coordination and synergy.

Along with the proposed community animation programme, our recently held Provincial Chapter 2021 has recommended conducting the evaluation of all the confreres and communities to enable the confreres and communities to improve the quality of our service. It is further suggested that we conduct the evaluation in a systematic and scientific way and in a spirit of trust and dialogue in order to facilitate a realistic and constructive outcome. Therefore, in the Provincial Council meeting held on 6-7 March 2021 at Divine Word Seminary, Pune we decided to hold these programmes from August 2021. More details will be provided as and when the situation becomes conducive for travel and gatherings.

REMINDERS

CHAPTER DIRECTIVES

COMMUNITY GATHERINGS/MEETINGS

To evolve ourselves into emotionally and spiritually nourishing communities, confreres in the community gather at least once a day for prayer, meals or recreation (INM Chapter 2003, Recommendation # 2).

Superiors organize monthly community/staff meetings with an agenda and document the decisions (INM Chapter 2009, Recommendation # 3).

CLARIFICATION OF ROLES

The Chapter recommends that in the beginning of each academic year, to create an atmosphere of life-giving relationships and team work, the community meets together and considers clarification of roles. The Chapter also recommends that the Provincial, in the course of his regular visits to the communities facilitates community building exercise and resolves conflicts, if any.” (INM Chapter 2018, Recommendation # 1)

SHARING OF INFORMATION

“In order to enhance the community life, the Chapter proposes that the members of the community share the vital and necessary information about their absence and whereabouts to their

superior/community members” (Const. 308.2: Out of a sense of community and according to local regulations, one should have permission or inform the superior before leaving the house.) (INM Chapter 2018, Guideline # 6)

Keeping in mind the adverse consequences, the Chapter recommends that the confreres exercise discretion with regard to sharing the internal matters of our communities and the province with outsiders, and exercise prudence and caution. (INM Chapter 2018, Recommendation # 3)

PREPARATION OF ACTION PLAN

Recommendation No. 4 (INM Chapter 2009) states that in the beginning of the academic year each community prepares an Action Plan with an inbuilt mechanism for its execution, which is reviewed periodically, documented and reported to the Provincial Superior. Hence, I request the Superiors to call for a meeting and re-visit the Vision and Mission and prepare the Action Plan for the community/institute. As you prepare the Action Plan kindly remember to pay due importance to all the four characteristic dimensions of our mission: Biblical Apostolate, Communication, Mission Animation and JPIC.

TENTATIVE INM YEAR PLAN (2021-2022)

DATE	EVENT
24-25 June	Online Council Meeting
August - November	Community Animation and Evaluation by Fr. Gregory Pinto
4 - 5 August	Council Meeting, SVD Shishyalaya, Vasai
16-17 September	Formation Board Meeting, Jharsuguda
18 September	Council Meeting, Jharsuguda
19-20 September	IPF Meeting, Jharsuguda
21 September	Vivat India Board Meeting, Jharsuguda
10 October	Last date for submitting March distribution budget proposals
13-15 November	Council Meeting, SVD Provincial House, Bandra
18-23 November	Province Retreat – Atma Darshan, Andheri Preacher: Fr. Binees Thomas (Dominican, Iagatpuri)
23 November	Province Jubilee Celebrations
16 December	Birth centennial of Fr. Peter Verhaelen, SVD Mission Seminary, Raia
25 December	Christmas

1 January	New Year
January-February	Provincial Visitation
2-3 January	Final Vows and Diaconate, DWS, Pune
7-10 January	Council Meeting, Kerala
12 January	Ordination Dn. Melroy Mascarenhas
15 January	Feast St. Arnold Janssen
22 January	Ordination Dn. Lucas Parkhe
23 January	Sunday of the Word of God
25-30 January	Province Retreat, Divine Call Centre, Mulki Preached by Sub-zonal Biblical Coordinators and Team
29 January	Feast of St. Joseph Freinademetz
2 February	Day of the Consecrated Persons
25 February	India-Subzone Governing Body Meeting, SVD Vidya Bhavan, Bhopal
2 March	Ash Wednesday
5-6 March	Council Meeting, Divine Word Seminary, Pune
10 March	Last date for submitting September distribution budget proposals
9-10 April	Council Meeting, St. Francis Xavier's Ashram, Goa
15 April	Good Friday
16 April	Holy Saturday / Easter Vigil
17 April	Easter

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

24-25 June 2021

Online Meeting

In the Divine Word



**Richard Mathias SVD
Provincial Superior, INM**

'Rooted in the love of the Father and led by the Holy Spirit into the Mission of Christ'

- INM Vision Statement