



# PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

## INDIA MUMBAI PROVINCE (INM)



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### FOCUS ON THE ESSENTIALS OF LIFE



There was a profound conversation between John and God just before the Lenten season. John said, well here I go, its Lent! What I am supposed to do Lord? What I am supposed to give up to bring transformation in my life? God in reply said, Dear John, you seem to be frustrated to enter into the Lenten season! John said, Yes, I am. Because I always give up meat, alcohol, then there comes Easter, I overeat and fall ill. The Lord said to him, oops! This time around, do not think of giving up - just take a positive look at yourself as to who you are! I created human beings because I love them. Can't you see - I make master pieces of human beings? Each individual is sacred and unique. Do you see this? John said, I miss that point of your goodness. I can't imagine - you are the divine mystery living in me. I miss that focus. God told him, that is what exactly I want to bring to your notice during this Lenten season - you need to journey with me and in our journey together, the beauty is all along the journey and not at the end.

The Lord continued telling John that there are so many distractions that surround him each day: mobile phone and technology, music and noise, jealousy and anger, sickness and death, guilt and hurt feelings, shameful acts, wounds of unfaithfulness, unforgiving nature, fears of everyday life etc. The Lord advised John, free your person from these distractions and let me in. John was disturbed because throwing out all these distractions from his life seemed one of the biggest challenges. God continued telling him, clear the clutter and simply be with me during these few weeks. Allow peace to enter into your pores and you will experience the freedom within yourself. In forty days, you will feel that you have given up many things in order to gain some essential things of life.

Many of us try to be more disciplined in Lent and give up somethings that we really like. That's great! Fasting has always been an important component of Lent. This year however, let us also consider giving up the other things that stifle life and joy. Let us give up complaining, focus on gratitude. "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure..." (Phil. 2:14-15). Give up bitterness, turn to forgiveness. "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice" (Eph. 4:31). Give up worry, trust in God. "Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life...who by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" (Mt.6:25). Give up discouragement, be full of hope. "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you: he will never leave you or forsake you.

Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged”. (Deut.31:8). Give up hatred and anger, be more patient. “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment” (Mt. 5:22). Give up gossiping and control your tongue. “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies”. (Ps. 34:13).

Pope Francis in his Lenten messages has often reminded us that Lent is the time to welcome God into our lives and allow him to “make his dwelling” among us (cf. Jn. 14:23). According to him, fasting should free us from all that weighs us down – like consumerism or an excess of information, whether true or false – in order to open the doors of our hearts to the One who comes to us: the Son of God our Saviour. He has reminded us to make room for the Word of God by turning off the television and connecting to the gospel. Time and again, he has urged us “to give up useless words, chatter, rumours, gossip, and talk and to speak directly to the Lord”; and further, he has instructed to stop being cruel to each other online, in response to a world "polluted by too much verbal violence"; and more importantly, he has emphasized the significance of a fasting that enables us to give up the superfluous and move to the essentials of life. Let us then, in this graceful period of preparation for Easter, journey with the Lord focusing on the essentials of life so that His inspiring presence may motivate us to persevere and never “grow tired of doing good.” and thus await for the glorious Easter.

- INM Leadership Team

## SARVA SEVA SANGH IN FULL SWING



After the curbs due to the third wave of Covid-19, February 2022 was a month full of activities for Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune. Besides the regular activities such as counselling children and parents at traffic lights and pavements, mobile doorstep school, additional tuition for street children, home visits, nutrition distribution, cluster meetings of parents, children’s parliament, assistance to obtain documents etc. special activities, namely, network meeting of NGOs working on HIV/AIDS, youth exposure, leadership training for mothers, training for social workers, life skill training, study tour

and public awareness on child beggary and child labour were conducted. Following is a brief narration about some of the special activities.

### **Youth Exposure**

An exposure for a group of nearly 50 youth was organised on 12<sup>th</sup> February to Centre for Youth Development Action (CYDA), an NGO working with vulnerable youth. The purpose of the exposure was to learn from CYDA and exchange idea so that the youth can take up more initiatives and widen their word-view. The youth from Sarva Seva Sangh were happy with the opportunity provided.

### **Training for Social Workers**

A training programme was organised for social workers on Right to Education Act (RTE) by Sarva Seva Sangh on 15<sup>th</sup> February. The training contained the basic understanding of Right to Education Act and recent changes for effective intervention. Mr. Mandar Shinde, the resource person, presented RTE as a wonderful tool in the hands of social workers. A few points of the new education policy too were discussed. The purpose of the training was to build the capacity of social workers in Pune for better intervention for the needy children. Around thirty social workers from fifteen NGOs working with

vulnerable children participated in the workshop which was conducted in the Zeitler Hall, Ishwani Kendra.

### **Life Skill Training**

On Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> February, life skill training was conducted for children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. The themes for life skill trainings were problem solving and stress management. The resource person, Dr. Praveen Pargaonkar, explained the themes with video presentations and games. Fifty five children in two batches attended and benefited from these sessions.

### **Study Tour**

A study tour was arranged for eight boys who stay at SSS and twelve girls placed in hostel on 19<sup>th</sup> February. Children were taken to Malhargad, which is about 30 kilometres away from Pune city, the last fort built by the Marathas in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. On the way back, the children were taken to a nursery of plants and a presentation was made to explain how different plants are grown and taken care under different atmospheres.

### **Public Awareness on Child Beggary and Child Labour**

‘Stop child beggary, Stop child labour; if not you, then who, if not now, when’. In order to put an end to the menace of child beggary and child labour Sarva Seva Sangh organized a week long public awareness from 21<sup>st</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February. The awareness was done at eight different traffic signals in Pune city by using banners and placards containing slogans and information on child beggary and child labour. The awareness campaign made several thousands of people aware that by giving money to begging children we make the children beggars for life. Give to needy children what they need, not money. People were also cautioned and made aware that child labour is a crime as per child labour act and often it is a racket. Many people appreciated the team and took photos of slogans and information. Apart from this campaign public awareness was also made in the city through advertisement on six city buses for a month.

## **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION SACRED HEART CHURCH, ANDHERI**



February 12, 2022 was a special day in the lives of 26 children of Sacred Heart Parish, who received their First Holy Communion. These children had been preparing themselves to receive Jesus under the training of the catechists and the guidance of our Spiritual Director, Fr. Ezekiel Rakesh D’Souza. After the sessions of practise and preparation during the intensive training days, these children received the Sacrament of Reconciliation on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The next day was the big day. The children resembling little angels came to the church for their First Holy Communion mass scheduled at 4:30 pm. Fr. Magimai Sundar was the Main Celebrant. The homily preached by Fr. Sundar had a beautiful message for the children to follow forever. The melodious singing by the Choirmaster, Osmond and the choir filled the church with soulful music. The children sang the hymn of surrender and with open hearts welcomed Jesus into their hearts, lives, and homes to be with them perpetually. Their smiling faces endorsed the joy that had filled their hearts on receiving Jesus and the same was expressed by them as they performed an action song with the flag of joy in their hands. Thereafter, the children were given the Certificates, Rosaries and Scapulars. They returned home with joyful hearts and beautiful memories to cherish. A get together was organised for two of our children along with their families at the community centre to make this a memorable day for them. All praise and thanks to God almighty for blessing all our communicants on this great day of their lives.

## FELICITATION OF BISHOP ANTONY REBELLO ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S ASHRAM, RAIA



SVD Seminary Raia, felicitated His Excellency Most Rev. Antony Pascal Rebello on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2022. It was a proud moment for the seminary as its first ordained seminarian was made Bishop of Francistown, Botswana Africa. Together with the people of Raia, and benefactors, a thanksgiving mass was held with a short felicitation programme. In his thanksgiving address His Lordship thanked the Almighty God, SVD Seminary, the people of Goa, the parishioners of Raia and

Fatorda for their love and care. He remembered late Fr. Peter Verhaeleen, founder of SVD in Goa who inspired him to join the religious life. He also urged the people to promote Divine Mercy and Rosary in their homes.

## UPDATE FROM ST. ARNOLD DEGREE COLLEGE



In order to understand the Indian pluralism, St. Arnold Night Degree College organized the celebration of the Constitution of India on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021. A Power Point competition was put up by students on India's Diverse Religions. The students presented the main fundamental tenants of different religions. To encourage sports, a Rink Football Tournament was organized on November 2021. To develop the personality of our College students, Mr & Ms Arnoldian Pageant Season

was organized on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021. A large number of students participated in the event. The students showed their talents, in diverse fields which gave them confidence leading to their holistic development. The judges for this event were from the film world and from the well-known Dance School. 11<sup>th</sup> December 2021 S.Y.B.Sc students went for a Botanical Field Visit and realized theory and practice go hand in hand. They viewed Flora and Fauna in its natural environment.

Christmas is a season of joy, love, peace and hope. The College was decorated with Christmas pictures and icons. The display on the Notice Board of the Christmas Story reminded the students of the historical event of Jesus' birth. As a part of Christmas celebration the students presented "Christmas Tablo" on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 which was composed and choreographed by Fr. Guru Gyan Prakash SVD, the founder of Gyan Ashram. The College staff sang the Carol "Chup hai Chanda" composed by Dr. Fr. Charles Vaz SVD.

A debate competition was organized on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 on the topic "Traditional Classes are better than Online Classes". It was a heated discussion between two opposing teams. The trophies for the event were sponsored by Mr. Satinderpal Singh Ahluwalia, Vice President, National Council.

Poster Painting cum Caption Writing Competition on the topic "Freedom Struggle @ 75 Against Corruption" was organized on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The student spoke on how to build a corruption free India.

To commemorate the memories of Martyr Mahatma Gandhi, the students took up a voluntary service of cleaning the Juhu beach on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Besides this, many other voluntary works were carried out by our NSS students such as teaching the children of migrant workers; voluntary help during the Covid vaccination drive; preparing paper bags and distributing them to the vegetable vendors nearby.

## **DCC, MULKI RESUMES RESIDENTIAL RETREATS**



Since the onset of the pandemic Divine Call Centre, Mulki has been conducting various programmes like online retreats, daily adorations, daily Eucharist, one day conventions, etc., but regular residential retreats could not be held from April 2020 apart from one retreat in December 2021 as there were government restrictions and prevailing uncertainty. However, we have started our usual residential retreats from February 2022.

One such residential retreat was held in Konkani from 06 to 10 February 2022. This retreat was well attended by the people. There were 35 participants. Though it was only for three short days, people participated wholeheartedly and they benefitted spiritually. Their feedback and personal testimonies were quite enriching and wonderful to hear. We have an English residential retreat from February 27 to March 02, 2022. Thereafter, we have planned two Konkani residential retreats in March 2022. In April we have two special retreats – one in Konkani and the other in English and both are Passion Special Retreats. Apart from these residential retreats, we have taken up retreats for religious sisters in their convents. We also have many Lenten missions as many as fifteen parishes in Mangalore and Udupi dioceses. We count on your prayers. May the darkness of sin and the night of unbelief vanish before the light of the Word and may the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people.

## **BISHOP ANTONY REBELLO'S VISIT SACRED HEART CHURCH**



On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022, we were privileged to have a very special guest to celebrate the 8.45 a.m. Eucharist, his Excellency Bishop Antony Rebello SVD. His homily during the Eucharist left us spellbound. Bishop also celebrated Mass on Ash Wednesday in our parish and said that he will remember this Ash Wednesday as memorable because this was his first as Bishop. He's a man of great spirituality, faith, courage and simplicity. He's the first Goan

SVD Bishop and a zealous missionary. Most Rev. Bishop Antony was born in Nairobi, Kenya on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1950. He spent his childhood in Kenya and at the age of fourteen his family moved to their native land in Goa. After his education in Margao - Goa, he joined the SVD seminary. His pious parents were his source of inspiration. His parents prayed the Rosary daily on their knees and young Antony imitated his parents. His mother encouraged him to go daily for the Holy Eucharist and also visit the Blessed Sacrament Chapel for silent adoration. His mother also put all this spirituality into practice by giving alms to the poor and visiting the sick. These virtues which were instilled in Bishop Antony from his childhood, led him to choose the priestly vocation. He was deeply inspired by Fr. Peter Verhaelen SVD.

Bishop Antony has a long list of missionary activities which adds flair to his profile. After his ordination in May 1977, his first appointment was at the mission station in Nagaland. His next mission was in

Botswana. Thereafter, his mission was in Nairobi, Kenya. Later he moved on to a mission in Antigua in the West Indies. He was then appointed to Angola, where he worked for ten long years during the war. The rebels often threatened to shoot him as he supported the people and this mission according to him was the most challenging one.

He was appointed Bishop of Francistown, Botswana in 2021. Bishop Antony learnt Setswana, the native language of Botswana, so that he can connect well with the people and draw them to Christ. He strived to build a hospice for the people who were suffering and dying of AIDS. He encouraged every parish to have their own Blessed Sacrament chapel. He draws the youth to Christ through the Rosary Rally, where 400 - 500 youth walk about 30-40 kms praying the Rosary. The youth in Botswana have experienced God through the power of the Holy Rosary.

Bishop's advice to deepen our faith:

- To love and celebrate the Holy Eucharist, which is the source and summit of our Christian faith, through which we receive every blessing and healing.
- To love and meditate on the Word of God.
- To pray with devotion the Divine Mercy chaplet through which he has experienced many miracles.
- To pray the Holy Rosary daily.
- To spend quality time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and trusting in God's promises!

### **TRANSFER OF FR. SALVADOR SERRAO**

Fr. Salvador Serrao during our visits as well as during the recent Provincial Visitation had expressed his desire to move to our retirement home, Soverdia House, Andheri, and so, we have transferred him with effect from 29 March 2022. His transfer is necessitated because of his age and health related issues as well as with the intention of providing him with a conducive atmosphere for a comfortable retired life and better medical care. We thank him for his committed service to the SVD House and the formation of our candidates. We thank the Superior, Fr. Maxim Pinto and the community for their fraternal care and support given to him so far and we believe he will be well cared for at Soverdia House under the care and supervision of Fr. Scaria and the community.

### **STUDY COMMITTEE FOR SHIFTING OF PHILOSOPHATE**

SVD India Sub-zone Governing Board on Formation following up on the earlier recommendation has constituted a four member committee comprising of following confreres Fr. Thomas Malipurathu (Formation Board Secretary), Convenor of the Committee, Fr. Ronald Louvis Pereira (INE), Fr. Roy Thomas (INC), and Fr. Lawrence Bose (INH) to study the viability of shifting the SVD Philosophate from Bhopal to Pune. The committee is entrusted with the task of conducting the viability study within a year and present the report to the Governing Board. The study is necessitated mainly because presently our Philosophate in Bhopal is not affiliated to any of the ecclesiastical faculties and Jnana Deepa is soon to make it obligatory for the students seeking a degree in theology to have a degree in philosophy.

### **EVALUATION OF THE FORMATORS**

Following up on the earlier recommendation of the Formation Board it was decided in the recent Governing Board meeting held on 26 February 2022 at SVD Vidya Bhavan, Bhopal to conduct the

evaluation of all the formators during the next academic year (2022-'23). The Formation Secretary, Fr. Thomas Malipurathu is requested to contact the persons in-charge of formation in each Province/Region (co-opting other confreres where needed) and carry out the evaluation with the help of the format given in the Formation Manual.

## **PROVINCE WORKSHOP DISASTER MANAGEMENT, CYBER SECURITY AND CSR FUNDS**

Workshop on Disaster Management, Responsible use of Social Media and Cyber-crimes and safety and CSR Funds and FCRA will be held from 15-17 March 2022 at Atma Darshan. The organizers have invited well-informed experts as Resource Persons. All those who have registered are requested to reach the venue by 14 March evening. Generally, we shall have three one and half hours sessions each day beginning with 9 am besides the other regular spiritual exercises.

Dates	Topics	Organizers and Resource Persons
		Fr. Richard Quadros & Fr. Evan Gomes
15 March 2022	Cyber Crime & Responsible use of Media	Mr. Wilson D'Souza (General Manager - Pelorus Technologies Pvt. Ltd. Andheri)
16 March 2022	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) & Project Proposals and FCRA	Prof. Sanjay Vanani (V M Patel Institute of Management, Ahmedabad)
17 March 2022	Disaster Management & Preparedness	Prof. Jacqueline Joseph (TISS, Mumbai) Prof. Mahesh Kamble (TISS, Mumbai)

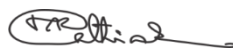
### **MY PROGRAMMES**

12 March 2022	Lenten Retreat Concluding Mass and INM Retreat Ministry website launch, Atma Darshan, Andheri
13 March 2022	Women's Day Celebration, UCDC, Bandra
15-17 March 2022	Province Workshop, Atma Darshan, Andheri

### **NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

09 - 10 April 2022  
St. Francis Xavier's Ashram, Raia

**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**