



# PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

## INDIA MUMBAI PROVINCE (INM)



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### **LET'S BE COMMITTED INDIAN CHRISTIANS**

The month of August is something special for all Indians, and we, the Indian Christians are proud to celebrate the twin grand festivities of the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our country's Independence Day in of the Feast of the Assumption of evidenced by the writings of Christians have believed for assumed into heaven. But it's only defined the Dogma of the teaches that the Virgin Mary earthly life, was assumed body Having lived the "fiat" totally life, Mother Mary has been with body and soul. The Church is the logical conclusion of her lived it. Her divine motherhood is Assumption. In celebrating the reward. Yes, we are still pilgrims, but our mother has gone on ahead and she points to the reward for our hope and faith. She gives us the hope that we too can make it and be with her.



this month. The history of the origin our Lady is an ancient one. As many early Church fathers, centuries that the Blessed Virgin was in 1950; Pope Pius XII officially Assumption. The Catholic Church "having completed the course of her and soul into heavenly glory". with commitment till the end of her rewarded by God to be with Him believes that our Lady's assumption vocation on earth and the way she in perfect harmony with her Feast we are assured of the similar

The other significant event of this month is the celebration of our freedom from foreign rule, our Independence Day. In India, we Catholics are privileged to celebrate our Independence Day on the Feast of the Assumption of our Lady. Independence Day reminds us of the long, hard-fought battle for liberation against foreign rule by our Founding Leaders. India being a land of many cultures, ethnic and linguistic groups and with several religions, it was not so easy to evolve a common vision to initiate and sustain the freedom struggle. All the same dialoguing with the Indian reality and accepting the plurality, the freedom struggle achieved its goal. The vision of India as a free and independent nation has marched on for the past 75 years and this year we are celebrating the Platinum jubilee. Independent India has achieved a lot in every field, economic, social, political and cultural. It is moving ahead as a developing nation in par with many other nations. But true freedom will be achieved only when all citizens of the country enjoy the dignity of life with equality, fraternity and social justice.

A quick survey indicates that we need to work hard to realize true freedom of our country. The present scenario indicates that we need to go a long way in achieving the vision of freedom envisaged in our constitutions. We need to still free ourselves from the enslaving aspects of poverty, illiteracy, corruption,

religious conflicts, gender, ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic discrimination. The recently released World Economic Forum (2022) report states that India ranks 146<sup>th</sup> in health and survival, 143<sup>rd</sup> in economic participation and opportunity, 107<sup>th</sup> in educational attainment and 48<sup>th</sup> in political empowerment. “India ranks 135<sup>th</sup> among a total of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index, 2022. The country is the worst performer in the world in the “health and survival” sub-index in which it ranks 146” (see The Hindu, “India ranks 135 out of 146 in Gender Gap Index”, July 14, 2022, p.1). Apart from the above stated detrimental aspects, we are also experiencing a lot of violence in the name of religion, caste, gender and ethnicity. Hate speech disturbs the peace and harmony. Homogenization of culture,



language and religion breeds fear and uncertainty in the minds of minorities and weaker sections. The rich are becoming richer and the poor are becoming poorer. There is steady decrease of moral values.

As committed Indian Christians, we are striving to build up our nation through our various ministries. Like the salt and light, we need to infuse and enlighten our nation to grow into a just and humane society. This is our vocation in India today. As SVDs reading the signs of the time, we need to witness to the values of the Kingdom by our lives. We need to become alive to the present scenario. We need to recognize, “only a dead fish floats with the current; a living fish swims against the current”. Similarly, we need to be alive to the present realities to go against the current and be counter-cultural to build a better society. This is the biggest contribution we can make as committed Christians and committed Indians. As we celebrate the twin feast of the Assumption of our Lady and the Independence of our country, let us renew our pledge to live like Mother Mary and be committed to the country and faithful to the service. The vision of the founding generations of our country and the vision of Jesus to build the Kingdom of God may inspire us to build our nation in the true spirit of freedom.

**- INM Leadership Team**

## **TERTIATE RENEWAL COURSE**



With the aim of fostering personal renewal as an SVD religious missionary, called to be at the service of the mission of Jesus, the 88<sup>th</sup> SVD Tertiary Renewal Course began on 02 May 2022 at St. Michael's Mission House, Steyl, Netherlands. There are 23 participants (22 SVD confreres and 1 diocesan priest) from 10 countries working in 16 provinces and one diocese. Participants of diverse nationalities, cultures, pastoral backgrounds and age groups provide us

with a superb opportunity to learn from one another and to experience unity in diversity. Our Tertiary Renewal Program is a progressive spiritual journey, involving a number of stages. The initial stage, consisting of three weeks, was at Steyl, the cradle of the Arnoldus Family, focusing on the historical and spiritual aspects of the founding generation coupled with pilgrimage to the significant places related to the life of St. Arnold and Bl. Josepha. Indeed, it was, for everyone, a time of coming personally in touch with the legacy of our Founder never as before. The second stage of our spiritual journey, comparatively very brief, centered on Dachau Concentration camp, Germany where several of our confreres along with thousands of innocent people suffered and died. It was a rare opportunity for us to pay homage to our

martyr confreres, including the one who volunteered to be beheaded to save his brother and his companions, and realize faith matters.



The next phase of our spiritual journey primarily pivoted on reflecting the life of St. Joseph Freinademetz (FU SHENFU) staying at the diocesan seminary, Bressanone (Brixen) where Joseph Freinademetz had undergone most part of his ecclesiastical formation before joining the Steyler Mission at Steyl and visiting many places salient to the life of Joseph including Oies, his birth place. It was certainly an enriching experience to be physically present at the very place that

tells the story of Fu Shenfu, the model of evangelical inculturation in the universal church. The final portion and the lion's share of the renewal program, consisting of two and half months, is presently underway at Centro Ad Gentes, Nemi, Italy with varieties like theological updating, psychological input, small and large group work, Papal audience, guided retreat, interactive session with Generalate Leadership Team, Pilgrimage/visits to holy/historical venues, and of course, italian cuisines.

## TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR THE INTERCESSORS DCC, MULKI



Divine Call Centre organized a training programme for the intercessors on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022. It was led by a couple, Mr. Alwin & Mrs. Berdy Mascarehnas from Valencia, Mangalore. Almost 50 intercessors were present. Divine intercessors come regularly to Divine Call Center and intercede for the needs of the world and humanity especially for the various intentions sent by email, WhatsApp, SMS & phone calls. Many people are blessed because of this intercessory ministry. Their work is similar to our Pink Sisters (SSpSAP) but these Divine Intercessors are part time volunteers who are in the ministry of intercessory prayers.

## SETTING OUR BAR HIGH / BEING A ROLE MODEL

Amidst nature's bath and lush greenery, OB5 gathering was held at SVD Mission Seminary, Raia, Goa on 9-10 July 2022. A total of 10 priests belonging to 6 different batches participated in the meeting. A Solemn Holy Eucharist celebrated by the Provincial of INM Fr. Richard Mathias SVD set the tone for the



OB5 meeting. The meeting began with Fr. Nicolau D'Costa, Young Confreres Coordinator, welcoming the Provincial and Fr. Donald D'Souza who were the resource persons. Instead of another typical meeting with resource persons lecturing and the participants listening, this was a one-off meeting where the young confreres could directly get the information from the horses' mouth. We, at first planned the course of the meeting i.e. Input sessions, sharing and outing. The first

input session was by Fr. Donald, Provincial Treasurer. It was more of an informal meeting where he expressed his concern of priests "Setting the bar low aka being mediocre". He invited all of us to set a high standard with a clear vision. He stressed that INM province gives a lot of impetus on academics and we have to do what God wants us to do rather than doing what one wants to do. He gave us a better

understanding of Trust and Societies which included the Trust Deed, Memorandum of Association, Trust Registration, Trustees, Governing Body and also spoke at length on 12A, PAN, GST, TAN, TDS, 80G and Form 10BD. This was followed by an informative Q and A session where many of our priests spelled out their doubts regarding the above topics.

The second session was by Fr. Richard Mathias who began by asking us to focus on the people we serve and not oneself just as Our Master Jesus did right from his incarnation to his last breath on the cross and even beyond. The Lord amidst suffering and many trials did not focus on himself and his convenience rather always thought about others and kept on doing the good. He then began with the SVD Constitution No. 106 emphasizing the importance of the Word of God to the Divine Word Missionaries, Cons. No. 302 and 402 on the significance of the celebration of the Eucharist daily as being the heart of the community, Cons. No. 303 on praying together as a means of fostering communion in our multi-cultural community, Cons. No. 408 on personal prayer and Cons. No. 409 on daily meditation for at least half an hour to enhance our relationship with God and others. Moving further he elucidated the importance of the INM Manual 2016, explaining chapters A1 and A2 of the manual. After briefing us about the India Sub-zone SVD Common Policies we spent a little time in clarifications.

The third session was of personal sharing where each of the 10 priests shared their experiences both ups and downs of their life, mission and community life. Some of the experiences were really shocking to hear and some needed the attention of the province which was also duly noted by Fr. Nicolau who was the moderator for the group. We then had a delicious dinner set by the Raia Community. The next day was a day of outing and we spent first half of the day at Holy Family Church, Marcela by con-celebrating the Eucharist followed by a visit to Old Goa and Colva beach. We then ended the OB5 gathering with a Eucharist on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> following which we departed to our missions enriched with a resolve to set our bars high.

## **INDIAN CHRISTIAN DAY CELEBRATION BAILHONGAL**

July 03 is observed as St. Thomas Day across the globe. Back in the time, St. Thomas Day was widely celebrated on December 21. Later in 1969, the date was moved to July 3 by the Roman Catholic Church.



Ironically, Thomas was reluctant to accept the existence and subsequent resurrection of Jesus Christ initially. His belief earned him the title of ‘Doubting Thomas’. First, he questioned the tale behind the resurrection of Jesus but eventually became his disciple after he witnessed the crucifixion marks on Jesus’ body. He went on to spread the gospel of Jesus after he had become an ardent believer in his resurrection and reached India as well. It is widely believed that the establishment of the Christian community in the southwestern region of Malabar was done by him. Interestingly, the Christian populace till date calls themselves “Christians of St. Thomas”.

July 3 is observed as Indian Christian Day while the 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christ’s earthly ministry is also being celebrated during 2021-2030. Indian Christians cutting across denominational lines have joined to observe the feast of St. Thomas as a day of Indian Christians in the country. Christian groups jointly began to observe July 3 as *Yeshu Bhakti Divas* or Indian Christian Day

in 2021. Organizers have declared 2021-2030 as a decade of celebration marking the 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christ's earthly ministry.

St. Thomas the Apostle is the patron saint of our Harugoppa sub-station and the feast was celebrated on 03 July 2022. For the past couple of years, we could not celebrate this feast due to the pandemic but this year we celebrated it in a grand manner inviting the neighbouring priests and sisters. For the occasion the sub-station was well decorated with the help of the villagers. A large number of children and elderly joined in the celebration. Rev. Fr. Harry Victor D'Cruz was the main celebrant. He gave an apt homily on the life of St. Thomas the Apostle and inspired the faithful to walk in his footsteps. Fr. Tom Chennakkala SJ from Madwal, Fr. Menino Gonsalves SJ from Deshnur, Fr. Martin Vaz from Nirmal Nagar, Bethany Sisters from Madanbhavi, Apostolic Carmel Sisters from Bailhongal, Jesuit Brother from Nesargi and the parishioners of St. Francis Xavier's Church, Bailhongal were present. Fr. Richard D'Almeida, Parish Priest, thanked all the celebrants, Sisters and the faithful gathered for the feast. Soon after the Mass snacks and tea were served. May the evangelizing mission of St. Thomas the Apostle show right direction in our mission journey.

## **CAREER GUIDANCE SESSION**

### **UCDC, BANDRA**



UCDC in collaboration with Archdiocesan Migrants' Commission organized a Career Guidance session for the migrant students. The resource persons were; Ms. Pallavi V. Xalxo, Assistant Professor in the College of Social Work, and Mr. Praveen Kachhap Ph.D., scholar at TISS. 33 migrant students of 9th to 12th standards actively participated in the session, from the beginning, the students were asked to reflect and figure out what they want from their education and their lives. The resource people used Power Point presentations to explain the wide range of career opportunities available to them. It was an interactive session. The presentation was focused on the methods to guide the individual students to acquire knowledge, information, and skills to identify career options and narrow them down to career decisions. Mr. Praveen explained to the students the varieties of educational streams and helped them choose the correct streams for their further studies. The session ended with thanking the resource persons.

## **HELPING HAND**

### **SARVA VIDYA DEEPA, BAILHONGAL**



T. Washington tells, "Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others." This is the experience of Sarva Vidya Deepa, Bailhongal. Every year we cater some help to the needy children who take real interests in their studies. There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others. Helping hands are often rare yet it is the most compassionate thing anyone could do. Yes, with these sentiments, we at Sarva Vidya Deepa, Bailhongal distributed school note books and stationery to the needy and poor children who deserve it. Horace Mann says, "Doing nothing for others is the undoing of ourselves." In fact, these are very true words of wisdom.

Ralph Waldo Emerson is of the opinion that the purpose of our life is not just to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate and to make some difference in the lives of others and thus to demonstrate that we have lived and lived well". Having sensed the need of the children for support to pursue their basic education we have reached out 32 school going children.

## **HEALTH AWARENESS SESSION AND ANNUAL PLANNING UCDC, BANDRA**



UCDC organized Health Awareness Session for 130 migrant women on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2022. The resource person was Sr. Nisha D'Souza, Health Promotion Trust, Mumbai. Sr. Nisha encouraged the women to broaden their knowledge of holistic health therapies such as Ayurveda and Acupressure, herbal medicines and naturopathy for both the preventive and curative aspects of health care. She explained to them the variety of home remedies. The majority of the medicines can

be found in our kitchen and garden. She explained the objectives and activities of the Health Promotion Trust. It provides expertise and conducts various sessions/training on health-related matters.

In the second part of the session, the women had annual planning for the entire year. UCDC has given the best platform for women where they plan activities for the entire year based on their perceived needs. The program ended with tea and snacks. We are grateful to the personnel at St. Theresa's High School for providing space for the sessions.

## **SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR COLLEGE RESULTS**

We congratulate our confreres and their collaborators who worked assiduously and secured cent percent results in all our educational institutions. We appreciate the efforts of our confreres and encourage them to sustain their commitment to provide quality value based education keeping in mind the good of our students and their parents and society at large.

<b>Institution</b>		<b>Appeared</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
St. Arnold's High School, Andheri		271	271	100%
St. Arnold's Junior College, Andheri	Commerce	83	83	100%
	Science	91	91	100%
St. Theresa's High School, Bandra		206	201	97.57%
St. Arnold's Central School, Mysore		87	87	100%
St. Arnold's Central School, Pune		160	160	100%
St. Arnold's Central School, Aduvassery		23	23	100%

Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune (Street Children) 10 <sup>th</sup> STD	4	4	100%
Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune (HIV/ AIDS affected Children) 10 <sup>th</sup> STD	43	41	93.45%
Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune (HIV/ AIDS affected Children) 12 <sup>th</sup> STD	39	38	97.45%

## **LIVING THE WORD IN THE WORLD**

‘Living the Word in the World’ is a new initiative of the INM Mission office in collaboration with the Gyan Ashram Media Centre in order to digitalize the rich missionary experiences of our confreres and our associates. Hence, Fr. Jolly and Fr. Ronald have planned to interview the persons either in Andheri or in your respective place of ministry. They desire that the confreres share the following aspects of your life stories:

1. Your vocation stories
2. Challenges and inspirations of missionary life as Divine Word Missionaries
3. Your achievements and contributions to the Church and society
4. Your message to the confreres and the people

They wish to interview those in the province, those who returned to INM from other provinces, Missionaries who are in transit for home leave, and young missionaries who are preparing to go to the new Missions.

The main objectives of this noble initiative are:

- Vocation promotion/formation.
- Mission Animation
- Inspirational Testimonies to inspire others
- In preparation for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our SVD foundation and our forthcoming General Chapter.

In order to actualize the above initiative Fr. Jolly and Fr. Ronald are requesting your active involvement, cooperation and availability. Let us support this new initiative with our prayers.

## **VISIT OF FR. PAUL TO KOR REGION**

Even though the Generalate had reappointed Fr. Paul Vattathara as the Special Adviser for South Korean Region for three more years, he could not visit the Region in person for the past two years due to pandemic related travel restrictions but he has been accompanying the Regional Administration and the confreres through online meetings. After 2 years, it has become possible for him to visit the Region and be there for nearly three weeks. Fr. Paul has left the country on 5 August and he will return on 30 August 2022. We wish Fr. Paul a fruitful mission in the Korean Region as the Special Adviser.

## **APPOINTMENT OF FR. MICHAEL TO RCI**

As you are aware, Fr. S. M. Michael has been serving as member of the Resource Committee for Interculturality (RCI) for the past three years. Now once again, through a communique dated 22 July 2022 Generalate has informed us that he has been reappointed for three more years. We thank Fr.

Michael for his valuable service to the Society in the past term and for his availability to serve as a member of this important committee. We wish him the very best in the mission of fostering interculturality.

### MY PROGRAMMES


08-10 August	Provincial Council Meeting, Sarva Vikas Deep, Mangaon
11 August	Disaster Management Think Tank Meeting, Atma Darshan, Andheri
13 August	LCF Meeting and Discussion on General Chapter Guide, SVD House, Bandra
01-02 September	ASPAC Online Extraordinary Assembly
08-09 September	Classes for the Jubilarians, Ishvani Kendra, Pune

### NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

21-22 September 2022  
Shanti Bhavan, Jharsuguda



In the Divine Word

  
Fr. Richard Mathias SVD  
INM Provincial Superior

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

**- INM Vision Statement**