



# PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

## INDIA MUMBAI PROVINCE (INM)



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## FAITH THAT WORKS

Hebrews is one of the incredible books of the Bible. Chapter 11 encourages the Christians to persevere and hold firmly to faith under challenging circumstances, as it will be richly rewarded. The author of the book gives a beautiful definition of faith; he describes it as “confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1). In other words, faith is placing our full hope in God, surrendering all our desires and hopes to Him believing that the impossible is made possible in Christ. The Bible is clear; faith is powerful. The Gospel of Mark confirms this belief by asserting that “all things are possible for the one that believes” (9:23). And again in Mark 11:23 Jesus says, “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this

yourself into the sea,’ and heart but believes that happen, it will be done  
It is much easier to have God or a fellow friend, trustworthy, truthful and well proved His act of faith is what ancestors, set them above



mountain, ‘Go, throw does not doubt in their what they say will for them.”

faith in someone, be it when they are proven faithful! And God has faithfulness to us. The distinguished our the crowd. In the Old

Testament we read how Abraham was faithful to God’s call even to the extent of sacrificing his own son given to him as a gift at his old age and through who he was to have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. But because of his faith, he obeyed and did what God wanted him to do and thus was acclaimed as the Father of faith. When we perceive faith in this way, it helps us to relate with God and others intimately, and see faith as essential and no longer assume it to be a choice but a vital part of our Christian walk with Christ. Like oxygen is for our bodies, faith is for our souls. Faith is a firm foundation which makes life worth living.

This year, on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, Ash Wednesday, we usher in the Lenten season. While Advent is a time of joyful anticipation, Lent is commonly regarded as a period of sober observance. Lent, in the Catholic Church, is a period of penitential preparation for Easter. It provides a 40-day period for prayer, penance, fasting and abstinence; in imitation of Jesus Christ’s fasting in the wilderness before he began his public ministry. Jesus experienced both physical and mental pain during his life and ministry but he could overcome all that because of his strong faith in His Father.

Very often, we are stranded in our spiritual journey because of our shaky and wavering faith. St. Peter reminds us that faith isn’t the result of a rational process, nor merely some heritage that’s been handed down to us. Faith is a gift of God, which if it’s lived to the full, doesn’t leave humans at the mercy of mediocrity. Christian faith isn’t a cold and arrogant possession of truths to be grasped; rather, it is

attained by the revelation that God is love on which we may depend, in spite of such reasons as effort, anxiety, and concern which can sometimes overwhelm us. In the Lenten season, we are invited to contemplate on our faith especially when we are bogged down with our enormous burden of sins. Moreover, we are called upon to submit ourselves to the discipline of the Father in total faith to experience abundant life. God as a loving father disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his divine life and holiness. Yes, no discipline is pleasing, rather it is painful, when it is carried out, but later, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it (cf. Heb. 12:9-11). Let us recognize that one who lives in faith will find himself/herself faithful rather than successful.

A story is told of a town where all the residents are ducks. Every Sunday the ducks waddle out of their houses and waddle down the main street to their church. They waddle into the sanctuary and squat in their proper pews. Then the duck minister comes forward, opens the duck bible and reads: "Ducks! God has given you wings! With wings you can fly! With wings you can mount up and soar like eagles. No walls can confine you! No fences can hold you! God has given you wings, and you can fly!" All the ducks respond, "Amen!" and then majestically waddle back to their home.

As Christians there's no scope for waddling. We need to put our faith to work, and find a faith that works. We need to run with perseverance the race marked out for us imitating the good example of a great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us, and fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Jesus, willingly and gladly endured the cross for the joy set before him and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (cf. Heb.12: 2-3).

- INM Leadership Team

## **SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION ST. ARNOLD'S SCHOOL, ANDHERI**



St. Arnold's High School and Junior College celebrated its Silver Jubilee of blessed and glorious 25 years of service of the Word through the education ministry with the theme, "Unity in Diversity is our Identity". The celebrations began on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 along with the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Day of the school. It was a great honor for the institution to receive MLA Shri Aditya Thackery as the Chief Guest, MLA Shri Ravindra Dattaram Waikar and MLA Shrimati

Rutuja Ramesh Latke as the Spirit Hospital, Primary Headmistress Mrs. Maria Rodrigues and PTA Vice President Mrs. Nikita Shetty Guest of Honor. Their presence and words of encouragement and support added spark to the celebration. The presence of the Provincial, Rev. Fr. Richard Mathias, Manager, Rev. Fr. S.M. Michael, Principal, Rev. Fr. Jossie Fernandes, Treasurer, Rev. Fr. Calisto Gomes, Rev. Sr. Lissy SSpS, Executive Director, Holy Spirit Hospital, added joy to the celebration.



All the SVD priests, Religious Sisters, well-wishers and benefactors, students and their parents were invited for this function. The finale of the Silver Jubilee was held on 15 January 2023 through a Thanksgiving Eucharist presided by His Grace Most Rev. Leo Cornelio SVD, Archbishop Emeritus of Bhopal and concelebrated by His Grace A.A.S. Durairaj SVD, Archbishop of Bhopal, His Excellency, Right Rev. Allwyn D'Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Bombay, and the SVD priests and other guest priests. Archbishop Most Rev. Durairaj SVD

elaborated the educational contributions by the Divine Word Missionaries in Andheri in his meaningful homily. After the Thanksgiving Eucharist, there was a cultural extravaganza ‘Who and the Why of St Arnold’s High School and Junior College’ by the students of the school who won the hearts of the audience followed by a fellowship meal for all the guests. The dignitaries praised the school for its tireless commitment to provide excellent education to children and congratulated the staff and management for their efforts in the development of the school on reaching this milestone. All the staff members and SVD priests who had served the school since its inception and led it to its present glory were felicitated for their invaluable contributions. As the celebrations came to a close, the students and staff were proud over the legacy they were associated with and were determined to take the school to a higher level of excellence.

## **LAYING OF FOUNDATION STONE ST. ARNOLD’S DEGREE COLLEGE, ANDHERI**



The ground breaking and laying of the foundation stone for the college building on January 15, 2023 was a significant milestone in the history of St. Arnold's Degree College, Andheri. The Degree College being SVD’s first higher educational institute in India the event marked a prominent step toward realising the dream of establishing a higher educational institute for educating and empowering the future generations. Fr. Richard Mathias, INM

Provincial and Chairman of All India Soverdia Sangam and St. Arnold’s Educational Trust, presided over a formal ceremony with prayer and blessings to mark the occasion. We were joined by notable personalities such as Archbp. Leo Cornelio, Archbishop Emeritus of Bhopal, Archbishop Durairaj, Archbishop of Bhopal, and many confreres, lay partners, well-wishers, and consultants. Fr. Provincial and those present invoked God's blessings and grace on the proposed venture and was followed by the symbolic ceremony of blessing the construction site by breaking of coconut by significant personalities.

## **SECOND PROVINCE RETREAT**



The second province retreat of India Mumbai Province (INM) was preached by Fr. Alvito Fernandes OCD. The retreat was held from 22-27 January, 2023. There were about 35 participants. This was a special retreat with the focus on interior journey through contemplation to experience the Kingdom of God within oneself and allow its effects to transform us and prepare us for an effective mission. As priests we are called to experience the Love of God and

lead others to experience the same. To this effect, the Retreat Guide placed certain requirements such as regular personal prayer, growth in the virtues like charity, humility and detachment, pure conscience, silence along with reflection on the Word of God and stealing time frequently from our busy schedule to be in the presence of the Eucharistic Lord. While charity is to accept the other person, humility is to accept one's own self. The Guide gave us certain steps to practice charity and also dealt with its dynamics. Dealing with humility he said that the true knowledge of God leads us to have true self-knowledge and self-knowledge brings us to self-acceptance. He also explained the power of the Litany of Humility and asked us to examine ourselves constantly with regard to judging others and humility. Explaining the need for detachment to experience the love of God, he placed before us the six harms of attachments. Attachment can adversely affect the inward journey.



And finally, the guide spoke to us at length about the practical aspects of prayer. He dealt with the active stages of prayer eventually leading us to the passive stages of prayer. While in active stage, we need to be faithful to our prayer life, in the passive stage it is God who takes over our prayer life and blesses us accordingly. He explained to us beautifully about the body, soul and spirit dynamics of the human person. He also dealt with dark night of sensory and spiritual part of the soul, both put together is called dark night of the soul and told us clearly about the initial union as well as the spiritual betrothal and spiritual marriage. All in all, it was a wonderful spiritual journey. We thank God for the person of Fr. Alvito Fernandes OCD for guiding us through the retreat. We are grateful to the Provincial and the team for organising such a wonderful retreat for the province.

### **TRAINING FOR SOCIAL WORKERS SARVA SEVA SANGH, PUNE**



Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune organised a one day training for the social workers from different social outreach organizations on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023 in Zeitler Hall at Ishvani Kendra, Pune. The training was on the topic ‘Child Rights, Child Protection and Effective Intervention’. The resource person, Mrs. Sumitra Ashtikar conducted sessions in an interesting manner using games, songs and power point presentations to explain various aspects. Around 40 social workers from 14 organizations in Pune participated in the training. The participants were very appreciative of the inputs given during the training.

### **YOUTH DAY CELEBRATION SARVA SEVA SANGH, PUNE**

“Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached” is a famous slogan by Swami Vivekananda, the icon of youth in India. Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune, which started working with less privileged youth from the year 2020 celebrated youth day on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2023 in its premises. Fifty young and energetic men and



women gathered from four youth groups in the morning on that day. The celebration began with a short motivational talk by Fr. Mathew Korattiyil, who inspired the youth to keep flying high like kites being connected to the twine of family and values of life. Then the staff of Sarva Seva Sangh conducted a quiz competition which was followed by a street play on addiction by some of the youth. After lunch they played some fun games such as dodge ball, musical chair and bombing the city. After prize distribution they enjoyed dancing together for a while and departed energised. This was the first time Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune organised a youth day celebration for the less privileged youth.

### **YOUTH DAY CELEBRATION SARVA VIKAS DEEP, MANGAON**



Sarva Vikas Deep, Mangaon has always served keeping the well-being of the tribal youth in mind. On 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023, Sarva Vikas Deep, Mangaon organised a cricket match at Bhale Adivasiwadi between the different wadis in the Mangaon Taluka. This was to engage the youth to focus on more positive activities that can lead them to life of virtue and away from a life of crime. By encouraging them to interact with other youth, Sarva Vikas Deep offers to help them with motivation for a positive living and make constructive

choices. A total of 160 youth from 15 teams participated in the cricket match. The first, second and third prizes were awarded to Uttekhoh, Potner and Chandewadi respectively. Apart from these prizes, there were also trophies for the best bowler that was won by Nitin Waghmare, best batsman and man of the match that was won by Ramesh Jadhav.

## **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SARVA VIDYA DEEPA, BAILHONGAL**



Alcoholics Anonymous is the largest and oldest alcoholics' support group. This group is dedicated to helping the members to overcome alcoholism. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), a worldwide organization, through its former members supports those who desire to attain sobriety throughout their recovery journey. Alcoholics Anonymous is a mutual aid fellowship of alcoholics dedicated to abstinence based recovery from alcoholism through its spiritually inclined Twelve Step program. It is a non-professional and non-denominational as well as apolitical and unaffiliated organization. It is learnt that as regards to the effectiveness, AA participation results in higher abstinence rates over other clinical interventions.

In Nirmal Nagar, Belgaum, an Alcoholic Rehabilitation Centre run by St. Charles Borromeo Sisters is becoming popular in and around the surroundings of Belgaum vicinity. The persons are brought to the centre by their own family and friends. First one week of their treatment in the medical base they are provided with various inputs how they need to come out or change their habitual attitude towards alcohol. Our organization, Sarva Vidya Deepa, collaborates and reaches out to the patients. It is a residential rehabilitation centre where the persons are kept and observed for one month. The recovery need to be observed having the follow ups. This is done regularly and systematically. Fr. Richard D'Almeida regularly gives inputs on Prayer, Self-belief, motivational sessions, value based inputs and inputs on various recovery stages. Through this many families are brought back to the main stream.

## **PREVENTION OF CHILD MARRIAGE AMONG KATKARIS SARVA VIKAS DEEP, MANGAON**



Sarva Vikas Deep (SVD) is once again in the limelight for networking with all the stakeholders who work for the welfare of poor tribal children. Prior to Covid-19, SVD had done extensive research in collaboration with the research department of Nirmala Niketan, College of Social Work, Mumbai, on the topic 'Understanding the causes and adverse implications of child marriages in Katkari tribe of Raigad district'. The research in its major findings had noted the correlation between illiteracy, parents and village leaders' apathy, superstitions and child marriages.

As part of its awareness-workshops to all the stakeholders, SVD has started off organizing a one day workshop to government workers starting from ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist). A total of 130 persons are disseminated with the information of the major findings of the research. The workshop was inaugurated by the Health Officer and Block Development Officer (BDO). During the inauguration the officer said that SVD has been working to better the lives of the poor and in nation building. In the coming months a series of workshops will be organized for the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) workers, government and private school teachers, revenue department officers, forest department officers, police, parents, village tribal leaders, village parliament (Gram Sabhas) etc. As part of the

training and workshop, SVD has prepared a handout of the extract of the research report, for quick reference of the stakeholders. The District Collector and the Guardian Minister too are given a research report copy. They too have hailed the idea of training all the stakeholders so that the society is made aware of the causes and adverse implications of child marriages in the tribal society.

## **DISPLAY OF IEC POSTERS ON HIV AND AIDS SARVA SEVA SANGH, PUNE**



Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune in consultation with Maharashtra State AIDS Control Society, Mumbai (IEC and CST Departments) has developed posters for Information Education and Communication (IEC) on HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act 2017 for display at Ante Retroviral Therapy centres in Pune district. The posters were developed in view of World AIDS Day 2022 with the objective of creating awareness among people living with HIV

(PLHIV) and the general society about the HIV Act 2017 and to help PLHIV patients to familiarize with the Act and the benefits the law provides. There are eleven posters which describe the various provisions of the law and the punishments for violations. Sarva Seva Sangh in co-ordination with Maharashtra State AIDS Control Society and District AIDS Program Control Unit, Pune displayed these posters in January 2023 at the following ART Centres: Rajiv Gandhi ICTC and ART Centre at Yerwada, AFMC ART Centre, YCM ART Centre at Pimpri, NARI ART Centre at Bhosari, BJMC ART Centre (Sassoon Hospital), Aundh ICTC and ART Centre, Navale ART Centre and Baramati ART Centre. Since April 2020 Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune has been putting in a lot of efforts to popularise HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act 2017 which came into force on September 10, 2018 and to train people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and various stakeholders in Maharashtra.

## **FAMILY DAY CELEBRATION UCDC, BANDRA**

Mother Teresa believed that faith demonstrated through prayer can help foster love in a family. “Family that prays together stays together”. Family is considered a basic unit of the society. It is the family that teaches us social norms, manners, and the way of life. Urban Community Development Centre (UCDC) through its programmes strives for the overall development of the families. It has been observed that a number of families are broken due to alcoholism, and many other families are badly affected by domestic violence.



On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023 UCDC organized a seminar for the entire family. The participants were more than five hundred. The main objectives for having the event were: to strengthen the family bond, to create a platform to spread awareness on issues of the families and also to allow loved ones to take a respite from their daily routine and spend quality time together. The event began with creating groups for the sessions. The participants were divided in to three groups: parents, students and small children. Sr. Sarla Macwan, Executive Director, St. Elizabeth Hospital, took the first interactive session for the parents. Her topic was “Education to Love”. She said that the corner stone of family life is love. Holy Family is a call to transformation at a personal level, family level and community level. At the same time, Fr. Sundar

Macwan, Executive Director, St. Elizabeth Hospital, took the first interactive session for the parents. Her topic was “Education to Love”. She said that the corner stone of family life is love. Holy Family is a call to transformation at a personal level, family level and community level. At the same time, Fr. Sundar



SVD and Fr. Angelus Ekka, a priest of the arch-diocese of Ranchi took sessions for the students on generation gap, peer groups, freedom, idealism, role of parents and children.

The second session was guided by Dn. Sylvester for parents and students. He mainly concentrated on Biblical aspects of family life. He spoke to the families on two aspects: first, the importance of prayer; and second, how the power of the Word of God can work wonders for them. He stressed on the fact that praying together as a family helps us overcome challenges of various kinds like misunderstanding between spouses, disunity and so on. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist began with a joyful entrance dance. The Mass was presided over by Fr. Jerome, concelebrated by Fr. Cosmos. The Dn. Sylvester Lobo broke the Word of God. Deacon acknowledged the service of SVDs saying, "Congratulations to the SVD Fathers especially Fr. Jerome and Fr. Cosmos for all their efforts to bring together the migrant Catholic tribals and make them feel belonged." After the Mass the participants put up variety of cultural items like singing, dance and skits. At the conclusion, Mr. Vijay, the catechist, prayed before the meals and the event ended with a fellowship meal. UCDC is very grateful to St. Theresa's School administration for providing the space for the benefit of the families.

### **ORDINATION OF FR. CRANSTON**



"The Master is Need of Him", with this theme, Fr. Cranston Vaz SVD was ordained on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023. He is the first SVD priest from our SVD parish Holy Family Church, Marcela, Goa. He was ordained by His Excellency, Bp. Alex Dias SFX, Bishop Emeritus of Port Blair. The whole ceremony was well planned by the Parish Priest, Fr. John Mascarenhas and the Asst. Parish Priest, Fr. Caetano Mascarenhas along with the parishioners. There was great support from SVD Seminary, Raia, Goa and by various confreres. It was a blessed occasion not only for Fr. Cranston and his family, but for the Society of the Divine Word and for the parishioners. Many SVD priests from INM, INC and other religious orders as well as Archdiocese of Goa and Bombay attended the ceremony. It was a grace filled occasion and we thank God for gifting the Society of the Divine Word especially India Mumbai Province with a new member.

### **TRANSFER OF FR. MARK MATHIAS**



The General Council in its meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023 has transferred Fr. Mark Mathias from INC Province to INM Province. On a temporary basis, he is assigned to Divine Call Centre, Mulki. He will join the community from 10 February 2023. We extend a warm welcome to Fr. Mark to INM and pray that he may continue to enrich our mission and province through his presence and ministry.

### **INM SVD MISSION SUNDAY**

**12<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

*(Or any other Sunday in Lent)*

**THEME: "MISSION IN A WOUNDED WORLD"**

"The 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter recommended that every PRM organizes SVD Day or SVD Week or SVD Weekend annually to celebrate our worldwide Mission" (Recommendation 1.2.1). Accordingly, last year, SVD Mission Day was celebrated in the following parishes, institutions, and Lay Mission Partner Groups

and funds were raised for the World Mission. I thank you all for your cooperation and support for the first-ever SVD Mission Sunday.

Sacred Heart Church, Andheri East
St. Theresa's Church, Bandra West
Holy Family Church, Marcela
St. Ann's Church, Nala
Disciples of the Divine Word, Bandra
Disciples of the Divine Word, Pune
St. Arnold's High School and Junior College, Andheri

Total funds collected: Rs. 8,10,640/- (Eight lacs ten thousand six hundred and forty only.)

Funds Disbursed by the Generalate	
Donated to ING Mission for the EIP Programme	Rs. 2,40,000/-
Donated to the Ukraine Refugee Fund	Rs. 1,50,000/-
Total Disbursements	Rs. 3,90,000/- (Three lacs ninety thousand only)

The following activities are suggested to celebrate the SVD MISSION DAY this year:

1. In our Parishes: The theme of SVD MISSION SUNDAY could be part of the liturgy and the homily could highlight the SVD Global Mission.
2. Invite a missionary to share his/her experience.
3. Organize a cultural evening with the aim of some fundraising.
4. Have a day for "Give a little, Share a lot or Joy of Giving". Our schools could encourage the children to make small donations to help the poor children in our rural missions.
5. Other institutions in our province viz., retreat centres could create mission awareness and motivate people to donate a little to the SVD world-wide mission.
6. Distribute the Mission Envelopes to collect funds.

**You may appeal for donations:**  
***To support a village chapel project in SVD Mission, Manipur***

SVD Missionary and Spiritual Confraternity Certificates need to be promoted to collect funds for the World Mission. Each certificate costs Rs. 500/-. You are requested to keep a record of those who buy them.

The envelopes after the collections are to be handed over to the INM Mission Office.

Fr. Jolly M. SVD  
(INM Mission Secretary)



## VIVAT INTERNATIONAL'S VIRTUAL EVENT

VIVAT International, NGO with Special Consultative Status under UN ECOSOC, will host a Virtual Side Event on Friday, 10 February 2023 at 9.45 – 11.00 AM (EST) on the occasion of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN Commission for Social Development.

Theme: “Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Title: Productive Employment, Decent Work, and Reducing Inequalities - Challenges and Nexus: Sharing Sound Policies and Good Practices.

VIVAT International with a membership of more than 25,000 working in 120 countries vigorously promotes the United Nations Agenda by working for sustainable development, gender justice, peace promotion, human rights protection, and equality of all. VIVAT members with a strong presence in India and Indonesia will bring their experiences and insights from their engagement in creating employment and decent work for people in the local communities that impact the reduction of social and economic inequalities among people in their respective societies. Fr. Richard Quadros is one of the Speakers at this event. You can join this event by logging in through the Zoom link provided below.

The Zoom link to register:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvcOqhqiIjGdzLdeGmbWNdFIaSiYN99\\_p8](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvcOqhqiIjGdzLdeGmbWNdFIaSiYN99_p8)

## MY PROGRAMMES

18 February 2023	Silver Jubilee celebration of Fr. John Lugun, SVD Shishyalaya, Vasai
25 February 2023	India-Subzone Governing Body Meeting, SVD Vidya Bhavan, Bhopal

## NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

04 - 05 March 2023

Divine Word Seminary, Pune

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**