



INM FMA / Pro.Cir.21

March 2025

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesu`! Affectionate greetings to each one of you from Sri Lanka!

Profound Dynamics of Family Spirit in Religious Community

INTRODUCTION

Family spirit in a religious community holds a profound significance that extends beyond biological ties. It encompasses the aspects of family life, like relationships and unity, unconditional love and service, a powerful platform of forgiveness and healing, and a God-enlightened and enriched space for growth and manifestation of Christ's law of love. The family spirit is to nurture faith, share love and support, and model God's relationship with one another. It enables one to find solace, interconnectedness, and a sense of belonging, creating a web of energy that uplifts and honours each member, fostering a sense of unity and oneness. These qualities are the pillars upon which the religious life rests. It allows one to delve into the deeper aspects of one's relationships and discover the lessons and blessings they bring to each other.

The dynamics of the family spirit of the FMA religious community is clearly emphasised in article 50 of our Constitutions. It states: "The Family Spirit, the creative outpouring of Don Bosco's heart, must characterise all our communities and requires the commitment of everyone." The dynamics outlined in the same article are the attitude of welcome, respect, esteem, understanding, open and family-like dialogue, goodwill, sisterly friendship, preferring the good of others, choosing the hardest part for oneself, humility, joyful simplicity, sisterly love, mutual trust and joy, valuing each one's contribution, giving one's best for the well-being of the community life and mission, and working for vocation promotion.

1. Unconditional Love and Service

One of the most profound aspects of family spirit that has to reign in our religious community is unconditional love. It is a love that accepts us as we are, with all our flaws and imperfections. This unconditional love provides a safe space for us to grow, learn, and express ourselves authentically. The unconditional love that flows between the members of the community nurtures the soul, **nourishing it with compassion, acceptance, and understanding**. It is a reminder of our interconnectedness and the inherent worthiness of every individual.

Living evangelical discipleship commits one to fulfilling the Lord's "new commandment," to love one another as he has loved us (cf. Jn 13:34). Love led Christ to the gift of self, even to the supreme sacrifice on the Cross. So too, among his disciples, *there can be no true unity without that unconditional mutual love*, which demands a readiness to serve others generously, a willingness to welcome them as they are, without "judging" them (cf. Mt 7:1-2), and an ability to forgive up to "seventy times seven" (Mt 18:22).

Consecrated persons, who become “of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32) through the love poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit (cf. *Rom 5:5*), experience an interior call *to share everything in common*: material goods and spiritual experiences, talents and inspirations, apostolic ideals, and charitable service. In community life, the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone. Each one enjoys the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit but makes it abound by sharing it with others.

God is love because He loves. He calls to love: love of himself and love of neighbour (I Jn. 4:8, 11). The human heart is not at peace unless it opens itself to God and one’s neighbour. The love of our neighbour does not go in search of something for itself. It is other-directed and outgoing, not possessive. It implies caring for the other. This call to love, which is indistinctly addressed to every person, is a call to mission. It is essentially a call to the holiness of life and, ultimately a call to eternal happiness.

2. Powerful Platform of Forgiveness and Healing

Forgiveness can be defined as the conscious decision to let go of resentment towards someone who has caused harm or offence. Forgiveness involves a shift in perspective and an acceptance of the reality of the situation. It fosters a more profound sense of peace and self-awareness. By recognising the significance of forgiving both oneself and others, a transformative journey begins. By embracing forgiveness, individuals often find clarity and strength within themselves to move forward, enhancing their well-being.

Forgiveness is a choice aiming at personal and interpersonal healing, resilience, and personal growth. The act of forgiveness serves not only as a personal relief but also plays a significant role in **building stronger relationships**. When one person forgives another, the foundations of trust and understanding are restored and also strengthened. When one chooses to forgive, one steps into a space of empowerment. Rather than remaining stuck in negative cycles, individuals grow from their experiences. This growth stems from understanding not only the act of forgiving but also the entire process of letting go.

Our relationships in the community also offer a powerful platform for forgiveness and healing. We encounter numerous opportunities to practice forgiveness and experience profound healing. As we navigate the complexities of community life dynamics, conflicts and misunderstandings arise. When we learn to forgive, we open the path to reconciliation and deeper connections with others. Forgiveness fosters empathy and understanding, bridging gaps that conflict can create. It involves acknowledging the wrongdoing while choosing to let go of the resentment it has caused. Forgiveness is not merely an act of letting go; it is a spiritual practice that liberates both the giver and the receiver.

Healings are acts of God’s love. Healing is integral and includes biological, emotional, relational, and spiritual aspects. By forgiving and releasing past grievances, we open ourselves up to the transformative power of healing. Through forgiveness, we transcend the limitations of our ego and embrace the higher spiritual principles of compassion and understanding. As consecrated persons, we need to aim at integral healing of each one in the community. We should be agents of manifesting God’s love and liberating each other from all sorts of evil. As radical followers of Jesus, we are called to be ambassadors of Jesus, who is merciful, compassionate, caring, gentle, and respectful. We need to treat one another with care and concern, compassion, understanding, respect, and mercy.

3. God-enlightened and Enriched Space for Growth

In community life, the family spirit is a God-enlightened space in which to experience the hidden presence of the Risen Lord (cf. Mt 18:20). This comes about through the mutual love of all the members of the community, a love nourished by the word and by the Eucharist, purified in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and sustained by prayer for unity, the special gift of the Spirit to those who obediently listen to the Gospel. It is the Spirit that leads the soul to the experience of communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Jn 1:3), a communion that is the source of fraternal life. It is the Spirit who guides communities of the consecrated life in carrying out their mission of service to the Church and all humanity by their original inspiration.

Consecrated persons bound by the family spirit are sent forth to proclaim, by the witness of their lives, and inspire a self-giving love towards everyone, especially the least of our brothers and sisters. Such communities are places of hope and of the discovery of the Beatitudes, where love, drawing strength from prayer, the wellspring of communion, is called to become a pattern of life and a source of joy. Those who are united by a common commitment to the following of Christ and are inspired by the same Spirit cannot fail to manifest visibly, as branches of the one Vine, the fullness of the Gospel of love. While remaining faithful to the charism of our Institute, we are called to practice the family spirit, which is exemplary and will encourage other members to bear witness to the Gospel.

Within the spiritual realm, unconditional love is seen as a reflection of the divine love that permeates the universe. Recognising and embracing unconditional love within our religious community relationships allows us to cultivate a deeper understanding of the broader spiritual concept of love. Through love, the religious community becomes a sanctuary where individuals can express themselves authentically, free from judgement. This support system provides a solid foundation from which they can explore their spiritual path, knowing that they are unconditionally loved and supported. Recognizing the spiritual significance of community relationships enables us to embrace the transformative power of love, forgiveness, and acceptance. As we navigate the intricate tapestry of our fraternal bonds in consecrated life, we embark on a profound journey of self-discovery and spiritual growth.

4. Manifestation of Christ's Law of Love

The family spirit takes its inspiration from the family spirit manifested by Christ in the law of mutual love and by the fellowship and equality of his disciples (cf. Jn. 20:19-23), in the image of the Trinity (cf. Jn. 17:21-23). The evangelical character of the family spirit can draw its inspiration from various biblical models: the model of Nazareth, the home in Bethany (cf. Lk. 10:38-42), the group of disciples chosen to be with the Master (cf. Mk. 3:13-14), the women disciples who follow and serve him (cf. Lk. 8:1-3), the Last Supper in the Upper Room, the Lord's appearance and presence amid the disciples (cf. Jn. 19:23), or the wait with Mary, the mother of Jesus for the coming of the Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14).

For all of these, family spirit is an ideal and a means to follow. Christ wants his disciples to be configured to this transcendent model of the Trinity reflected in the community. However, it is a taxing journey that requires maturity in both human and evangelical virtues, a sharing in fellowship and friendship in the joys and sorrows of life, solidarity in the apostolic mission, and constant generosity in mutual love to the point of giving up one's life.

Family spirit is the faith by which the many become one heart and mind (cf. Acts 4:32). Faith generates communion in virtue of the central mystery of the Christian faith, the Trinitarian mystery. The confession of the Trinitarian faith recognising God as a "mutual gift" does not

cancel the differences: Communication presupposes distinction. Family spirit is rooted and founded in charity because through charity, the bond of perfection (cf. Col. 3:14), we have passed from death to life. Family spirit in the consecrated life becomes the bearer of the good news of God's liberating love.

CONCLUSION

To become persons of responsibility and influence, by the power of our will, united with divine strength, we earnestly need to engage in the work, exercising the mental powers, and in no case neglect the physical. Let not intellectual slothfulness close up our path to greater knowledge. Learn to reflect as well as to study so that our minds may expand, strengthen, and develop. Never think that we have learned enough and that we may now relax our efforts. The cultivated mind is the measure of the human. Our pursuit of knowledge should continue during our lifetime; every day we should be learning and putting to practical use the knowledge gained. God alone can indeed measure the powers of the human mind. It was not His design that we should be content to remain in the lowlands of ignorance, but that we should secure all the advantages of an enlightened, cultivated intellect. Everyone should feel that there rests upon us an obligation to reach the height of intellectual greatness.

The intellectual life at its highest and best is above all else a Christ-centred life. It means having the mind of the Lord Jesus. It has a goal, the magnificent, lofty goal, as Paul said, of “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Like the high priest of Israel who had written on the mitre over his forehead, “Holiness unto the Lord,” so the consecrated persons must have it written over their minds, “Holiness unto the Lord,” as they seek to ponder and dwell on the truth. Consecrated persons should devote time to reading, studying, meditation, and prayer. They should store the mind with useful knowledge, commit to memorising portions of Scripture, trace out the fulfilment of the prophecies, and learn the lessons that Christ gave His disciples. Let the mind be trained and disciplined to deal with hard problems in the search for divine truth.

Points to Ponder:

1. What are the dynamics of family spirit in religious life, especially according to Art 50 of our Constitution?
2. How can you live the demands of unconditional love and service, forgiveness, and healing in your community?
3. How does the family spirit serve as a God-enlightened and enriched space for growth and manifestation of Christ's law of love for each one in the community and mission?

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

05 Wed	-	Ash Wednesday
07 Fri	-	Sts Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs
08 Sat	-	St John of God
15 Sat	-	St Artemides Zatti
19 Wed	-	St Joseph
25 Mon	-	The Annunciation of the Lord

New Secretaries' Course: Sr Susai Josephine Rani will be participating in the Course for the new Provincial Secretaries from 10 to 23 March 2025 at our Generalate in Rome, organized by the Secretary-General and her Team. She will be leaving for Rome on 9 March 2025 and will return on 24 March 2025. We wish her an enriching experience at the Centre.

Annual Retreats: A Sacred Time for Renewal: The annual spiritual retreats provide a sacred time for renewal, deep reflection, and an intimate encounter with the Lord. They offer a valuable opportunity to immerse ourselves in the Word of God, seek His guidance, purify our hearts, and renew our commitment to Christ and the young. The Annual Retreat II for Sisters is scheduled to take place from 20 to 27 March in Yercaud. It will conclude on 27 March with sessions for the transmission of the Triennial Evaluation 2025.

FMA-PCI 2025 Meeting: The FMA-PCI 2025 meeting is scheduled to take place at Auxilium Provincial House, Dum Dum, Kolkata, from March 29 to 31, 2025. The theme for this event is "**Functioning of the FMA National Office.**" The participants will include Provincials and two delegates from each province, in accordance with the FMA-PCI statutes.

World Feast of Gratitude 2025: The World Day of Gratitude 2025 will be celebrated on 26 April in the Vietnamese Province, "Mary Help of Christians" (VTN), honouring Mother Chiara Cazzuola for her dedicated leadership. This year's theme, "Light the Gospel of Hope," aligns with the Jubilee Year and the 150th anniversary of the first FMA missionary departure,



emphasizing mission, hope, and gratitude. The event's logo features symbolic elements such as the Globe (representing humanity's shared home), the Map of Vietnam (marking the Salesian charism's growth), the Bronze Drum (a cultural and spiritual symbol), Mary Help of Christians (as the Mother of Hope), the Anchor and Cross (signifying faith's foundation), and Fire and Young People (expressing zeal for evangelization). A four-week preparation will guide participants through Lectio Divina, prayer intentions, and reflections on hope. As a gesture of solidarity, a residence for 60 to 80 female university students will be built in Dalat to support education and foster vocations. The Provinces are invited to contribute to this meaningful initiative and share photos that symbolize hope. This year's

event holds special significance as it anticipates the canonization of Blessed Maria Troncatti, inspiring the Institute to renewed holiness, courage, and joy. Let us prepare ourselves to embrace the spirit of this Feast with prayer and a renewed commitment to our mission.

Summer Vocation Camp 2025: The Summer Vocation Camp 2025 will be held in two phases: Group I (1 to 12 April and 22 April to 11 May) and Group II (2 to 8 May) for students from Grade 8 and above. This initiative continues to inspire young minds toward a life of faith and service. The first session will be held from 1 to 10 April 2025 at Sacred Heart Convent, Polur. The subsequent sessions will take place at Auxilium Home, Gandhi Nagar, Katpadi, with Group I running from 22 April to 11 May 2025 and Group II from 2 to 8 May 2025. The camp will be organized by Sr Sebastian Vimala, Province Vocation Promoter, and Sr Maria Prakash Kanimozhi, ensuring a meaningful and enriching experience for all participants.

A heartfelt thank you to all the communities who have worked tirelessly throughout the year, especially during the holidays, to promote and nurture vocations. May your dedication and commitment continue to inspire and guide young minds toward a life of faith, service, and purpose.

Request for prayers:

- Let us implore our Heavenly Father for the speedy recovery of our Holy Father Pope Francis, offering our fervent prayers and sacrifices.
- Let us keep in our prayers all those who are sick, especially our Sisters, Parents, and the dear ones of our Sisters.
- Let us also remember in prayer the students of classes X, XI, and XII as they prepare for their public exams. May God bless them with wisdom, knowledge, and good health.

NOTE OF THANKS

- ❖ Sincere thanks to Sr Antony Raj Christina and the community of Fatima Convent, Kodambakkam for hosting the Trimonthly Recollection and Animation for the Junior Sisters on 1 and 2 February 2025 and Provincial Council on 3 and 4 February 2025.
- ❖ I express my sincere gratitude to Sr Kanickaraj Mary Tamizharasi and the community of St Joseph's Convent, Arni for hosting the VIDES meeting on 2 February 2025.
- ❖ Hearty thanks to Sr Lazar Maria Nirmala, the Delegate of Sri Lanka, Sr Arokiasamy Rackel Mary and the community of Auxilium Convent, Negombo for hosting and arranging for the Tri-Monthly Animation and Recollection for Juniors on 4 and 5 February 2025.
- ❖ We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Sr Anthony Raj Josephine and the community of Auxilium College for their meticulous arrangements for the Blessing and Inauguration of the Auxilium Care Home for Retired Staff Sisters at Auxilium College Campus, Katpadi, on 7 February 2025.
- ❖ Thanks to Sr Susai Raj Mary Sheila and the community of Kingsford, Chennai for arranging Tri-Monthly Recollection for the Senior Sisters on 8 February 2025.
- ❖ Sincere Thanks to Sr Samala Rayappan Elisa and the community of Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur for arranging Tri- Monthly Recollection for Senior Sisters on 9 February 2025.
- ❖ I am grateful to Sr Stanislaus Mary Dora and the Community of Avvai Nagar, Salem, Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima and the community of Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi for hosting the Tri-Monthly Recollection for Senior Sisters on 15 February 2025.
- ❖ I owe my gratitude to Sr Alexander Amali and the Community of St Mary's Convent, Vellore, for hosting the meeting of the Headmistresses on 16 February 2025.
- ❖ Thanks to Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima and the community of Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi for hosting the Provincial Team Meet from 22-23 February 2025. Special thanks to Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima for coordinating it and thanks to the Provincial Councillors and the Team Members for their valuable contribution.

CONGRATULATIONS

- ❖ Congratulations to Sr Jayaseeli Dharmalingam for the successful Viva Voce Examination on 13 February 2025, at Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur. We wish you continued success and God's blessings in your mission among the young.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- Sr Elizabeth Sebastian will participate in the Course on Graphology and Gender Psychology at Anugraha, Dindigul, from 23 February to 3 March 2025. We wish her an enriching experience!

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Our loving prayers and condolences to all those who lost their dear ones in February 2025:

- The family of late Sr James Glorina Rita, at the sudden death of her brother Mr J Martin Ravi (65), on 4 February 2025, at Sankagiri, Salem.
- Bishop of Vellore, Most Rev Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu and the Priests of the Diocese at the passing away of Fr Anthonysamy (73), on 7 February 2025, in Nallur.
- Sr Francis Giovanna and her family on the loss of her beloved brother, Fr Francis Sebastian SDB (65), who passed away on 15 February 2025 at Polur. We also extend our sympathies to Fr Lourdusamy Don Bosco SDB, the Provincial, and the Confreres of the INM Province at this sad time.
- Sr Panekezhham Annie and the family at the demise of her beloved sister Mrs Alice Joseph (83) on 19 February 2025, in Changanacherry, Kerala.
- The family of late Sr Victorina Ganapragasam, at the demise of her elder brother Mr Antonyraj (51), on 23 February 2025, at Tiruvallur.
- Fr Agilan Sarprasadam SDB, the Provincial and the Confreres of INT, at the passing away of Br George Joseph Susaimanickam SDB (86), on 27 February 2025, in Tiruchirappalli. We also extend our sympathies to our dear Sr Josephine Susaimanickam INT, at the demise of her beloved brother.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY

02 † Sr Ida Papa (1994)

09 † Sr Josephine M. Arokianathan (2021)

10 † Sr Marie Dulla Cardozo (2004), Sr Luigina Mioresi (2004)
 23 † Sr Amelia Boiani (2004)
 24 † Sr Giovanna Castelli (1995)
 26 † Sr Eugenia Cazzuli (1973)
 27 † Sr Mary George Uzhunnalil (2020)
 28 † Sr Nellie Nunes (1983)
 29 † Sr Philomena Anthoni (2017)
 30 Sr Eugenia Versino (1951) and Sr Dorothy Gonsalves (2019)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

05	Wed	Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten Season
08	Sat	International Women's Day, Women Achievers, HRDC, Kodambakkam
14	Fri	Women's Day, Anmarudai
15-16	Sat-Sun	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
20-27	Thu-Thu	Annual Retreat II for Sisters, Yercaud
23	Sun	Retreat for Workers - Kingsford, Pallikonda, Mazzarello Home TPT, Salem - Avvai Nagar.

Lent Begins on Ash Wednesday 5 March 2025, marking a sacred time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in preparation for Easter. It is a call to spiritual renewal, inviting us to deepen our faith, seek reconciliation, and embrace acts of charity. As we receive the ashes, may we be reminded of our call to conversion, walking in solidarity with those in need and growing in love and compassion throughout these forty days. May this season strengthen our commitment to God's will and lead us to a joyful celebration of Christ's resurrection. Let us journey together with the members of the educating Community in faith, hope, and love, embracing the true spirit of Lent.

On **8 March**, we celebrate **International Women's Day**, a time to honour the resilience, accomplishments, and invaluable contributions of women across the world. As we recognize their impact in all spheres of life, let us continue advocating for gender equality and empowering women to reach their fullest potential. This Women's Day, we celebrate the strength and perseverance that women embody while acknowledging the progress made toward a more just and equitable society. May this occasion inspire us to renew our commitment to breaking barriers, championing women's rights, and building a future where every woman can thrive and contribute without restrictions.

On 19 March, we celebrate the **Feast of St Joseph**, the humble and faithful guardian of the Holy Family. As a model of righteousness, hard work, and silent trust in God, St Joseph inspires us to live with deep faith and unwavering commitment to our mission. This day invites us to seek his intercession, especially for families, workers, and those in need of strength and protection. May his virtues guide us in our daily lives, helping us to embrace God's will with love and dedication, just as he did.

Festal greetings to our Sisters who celebrate their name day and our communities at Arni and Mosavadi that bear the name of St Joseph.

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

Sr Devadoss Margaret
INM FMA Provincial



ITINERARY OF THE PROVINCIAL

March 2025

01 - 03	Sat - Mon	Provincial Visit, Eppawala, SL
04 - 06	Tue - Thu	Provincial Visit, Colombo, SL
06	Thu	Provincial Visit, Negombo, SL
07	Fri	Departure to India
08	Sat	International Women's Day, HRDC, Kodambakkam
09 - 11	Sun-Tue	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
12	Wed	National CRI Meeting, Bangalore
13	Thu	Provincial Meets the Representatives from Misan Cara at Kodambakkam
14	Fri	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
15 - 16	Sat-Sun	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
17 - 18	Mon - Tue	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
19	Thu	Departure to Yercaud
20 - 27	Thu-Thu	Annual Retreat II, Yercaud
27	Thu	Departure to Chennai
28	Fri	Departure to Kolkata
29 - 31	Sat-Mon	PCI Meet, Kolkata

April 2025

01	Tue	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
02	Wed	Departure to Yercaud
03 - 10	Thu - Thu	Annual Retreat III for Animators, Yercaud
10 - 11	Thu - Fri	Animation for the Animators, Yercaud
12 - 13	Sat - Sun	Provincial Council, Yercaud

