



Instituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
St. Thomas the Apostle Province - INM
Madras - India

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR 2024 - 2025



Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

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My Dearest Sisters,

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

Living and Working in Harmony Builds Community

“Those incapable of living in harmony with others are also incapable of living in harmony with themselves. What they can’t achieve when working with others they won’t achieve for themselves either.” – Delia Steinberg Guzmán

INTRODUCTION

Living harmoniously with others is easier said than done, especially in a world filled with conflict, catastrophes, war, violence, enmity, and differing opinions. We struggle to feel in sync with people close to us in the community and society. Maintaining a harmonious relationship with those we live and work with is becoming an increasingly common challenge in today’s interconnected world. Indeed, the disease that is threatening to tear us apart is precisely separatism, dismemberment, an open struggle between increasingly smaller factions, which inevitably ends in conflicts between individuals. There is rudeness, abruptness, irritability, unscrupulousness, insincerity, and selfishness in our relationships with one another.

The word “unify” comes from the Latin *unus* and *facere*, meaning “to make one”; that is, to bring together several different but coherent parts and combine them to achieve a harmonious and synchronised unity. It is an act of coming together, of connection. Without this movement towards unification, we would live in perpetual chaos, and it would be very difficult to find meaning in life and its changing circumstances. A good dose of unification is what we all need in general and each of us in particular as religious. It would help us to experience once again the sense of being part of that big family, which is humanity, the happiness of friendship, of mutual trust, of the desire to cooperate and collaborate, help and support, of being able to look each other in the eye again and find shining truths instead of fearful shadows. The following are some of the aspects that we need to deepen our life of togetherness as consecrated persons.

1. Learning to Live Together in Harmony

Living in harmony is not passive or permissive. There can be accountability within a harmonious community. To live in harmony means to have a culture of transparency and accountability where our faults and differences don’t disqualify us as someone to love as Jesus would. We can live in harmony when we can love others the way Jesus does. Love your neighbour as you love yourself—Jesus gave us that commandment—it’s a non-negotiable.

Without loving one's neighbour, everything else we do is worth nothing. *"And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace (Col 3:14-17).*

Christ Jesus' simple statement of respect for the lives and dignity of others is the foundation for peaceful and harmonious coexistence. Practicing the golden rule can come effortlessly to us as we consistently maintain the recognition of our reality as the spiritual expression of God (Matt 7:12). To love others is a divine demand; therefore, each one of us can fulfil such a heavenly law. The story of the good Samaritan is a powerful example of what it means to follow the golden rule and love one's neighbours (Lk 10:25-37). Because we are all the children of one Father, divine Spirit, our brotherhood and sisterhood with one another is already established within the reality of this spiritual relation to God. The simple acceptance of this spiritual fact inspires affection, kindness, and brotherly/sisterly love—qualities that are inherent in everyone because we are made in the spiritual likeness of infinite love.

Being generous and caring to our sisters in the community, treating them with respect and gratitude, and giving them daily attention and acknowledgement is a big challenge. We need to find common ground with someone we do not agree with or let go of our pride. Let not the disagreement throw us off balance or into disharmony. We may not agree with everyone, but we can give up a little so that all can be happy. We may not accept everyone, but we may have to agree to disagree with certain people. Just because we do not agree with someone or see eye to eye does not mean we cannot still have compassion and empathy for them. We can still connect with people we do not agree with and find a sense of harmony with them.

2. Positive Relationships and Positive Affirmation

Having positive relationships among us when living together is crucial for several reasons. It fosters a harmonious living environment, reducing stress and conflicts that can arise from close quarters. Communication is essential when living together. This will facilitate any issue being quickly solved peacefully. Additionally, strong bonds can enhance teamwork and collaboration, leading to increased productivity and mission satisfaction. Mutual respect and understanding contribute to a supportive atmosphere where Sisters and laypeople can rely on one another for both professional and personal support.

Positive affirmations can help one to approach one's life and those around with harmony and generosity. When one's lifestyle aligns with one's values and beliefs, one feels more at ease overall. It is an essential formula for finding harmony within ourselves, which in turn will allow us to develop that cherished harmony with others (FMA Const. 54). Positive community relationships and open dialogue are also essential for improving effective engagement and performance-enhancing teamwork and collaboration in our mission. Planning and pre-agreeing on how best to navigate living plus working together with competency are important. There is an urgent need to understand and respect the roles and responsibilities of everyone and regular forums for sharing feedback.

The main purpose of building a positive relationship is to promote a culture of care that reflects mutual respect, dignity, integrity, and cooperation. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the animator or the leader to ensure that everyone is aligned with the community's life and mission with a clear vision, wellness, and well-being, which everyone respects. An open culture for an impartial way to manage any issues has to be maintained by fostering a culture of care that supports well-being activities and healthy lifestyles. This is essential for keeping shared life and mission more positive for the benefit of everyone.

3. Working Together - Harmony is Good Medicine

Harmony is innate and required from and by our body for us to live (FMA Const. 49-50). It is normal for us each to know and be in harmony. Harmony relates to all aspects of the mission—everything we do or say. In Romans 12:16 it tells us, “*Live in harmony with each other.*”. Being a peacemaker is not about being a people pleaser. Like Jesus, being a peacemaker is about choosing the Kingdom over self-righteousness. Peace, or harmony, is the result of neutralising our defects by the strength of our virtues, reducing our negative aspects, and allowing space for the potential of the positive. It is harmony with oneself and with others, a harmonious coexistence, and concord we can obtain every day.

It is not impossible to live in harmony with others. If we are to live together in harmony, we need to know and appreciate everyone and everything and dare to share who we are with everyone around us. Each one holds the keys to living in harmony despite the world or circumstances around us (Jn 16:33). We can be a vehicle for peace and harmony - the kind of harmony that surpasses all understanding. All we need is to change our perspective. To live in harmony, we must let go of our own opinions and preconceived notions. It means that we don't let our opinions and viewpoints interfere with God's commandments for us: to love Him with all our heart, soul, and mind and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Any opinion that gets in the way of love must be surrendered to the One who is love.

A community living in harmony and unity will require having honest conversations, vulnerability, forgiveness, and grace. Living in harmony requires the authentic pouring out of ourselves so that God be glorified and not our desires. The cost of harmony within the religious community is doing what God loves and desires. Our harmonious living is like a beautiful fragrance poured onto God as a sacrifice of worship! Because living in harmony is costly! Once we've committed to a harmonious life, the next step is to prioritise God's truth. This also includes surrendering the hurt that others' opinions have caused us. Jesus experienced being judged, misunderstood, accused, belittled, and wrongly spoken about. Like Jesus,, let us not keep the anger, resentment, hurt, and frustration to ourselves because we think *that* will keep the harmony.

In choosing to look at developing harmonious ways of working together, we need to find that not only our services and the quality of our mission benefit greatly, but also so the quality of our relationships with everyone. We need to learn to speak up and take the time to communicate to clarify one's roles so that we have a shared understanding of what is needed and who is contributing to which aspect. We need to learn to treat 'mistakes' and issues as a learning opportunity for us all to learn more about working together. Openly appreciating one another for the quality we offer with our work and taking stock of what works well when we work together may help us better continue to build on that. We need to realise how much we simply love and enjoy harmony and what it brings to our mission among the young.

4. Work-Life Balance: Finding Harmony Between Work and Life

For us to be effective, we must work together from wherever we are for the greater good of all. Bruce Lipton says, “We as people are cells in the body of a collective organism called humanity.” They significantly impact each other and need to evaluate and change everything that keeps us separate or at odds. Our most incredible power is when we move into oneness as a community. As individuals and groups, we are the reason there is dysfunction and disruption in our community. We are destroying our humanity by standing behind our limited

opinions, not learning or listening, or allowing for differences. On an individual and community level, learning to live and work together in harmony with others involves striving to find consonance despite existing discords and disagreements with others. It calls for not only acknowledging the differences of others but also celebrating those differences, as well as fortifying our common interests, to unite and strengthen the community communion.

We need to find a balance between work and life. If one feels one's work is taking over everything else in one's life, then maybe it's time to make some significant changes. But also, how can one's community life be improved with small or subtle changes by the people one has around one's community or neighbourhood? We need to understand, appreciate, and interconnect with others to build a community that is resilient, faithful, and fruitful and that can find effective solutions to present and future challenges that confront us.

There is a difference between working to live and living to work. Work and life are very different, and we must recognise the distinction. One shouldn't be instead of the other; however, many of us feel as though we have no choice but to choose one or the other. The cost of living and pressures on us demand it. If one is spending all of one's time working, it means that one is not happy. If one does not enjoy one's mission, this will likely affect how hard they work.

On the other hand, if one is exhausted and overworked, then it is likely that this will also affect the quality of work that they do. If people feel like they have no control over their lives, they are more likely to feel depressed and stressed out with no control over their circumstances. We all need to take a step back from our overwork sometimes; otherwise, we run the risk of burning out entirely or feeling resentful towards others. If one has work that is causing anxiety or stress because of its demands on one's time and energy, then maybe it's time for some self-care by finding another position that allows for more balance between work responsibilities and personal obligations.

CONCLUSION

Living together in harmony is all about accepting and appreciating the differences in others; recognising, respecting, and celebrating the diverse perspectives, cultures, and values that together enrich our experiences and contribute to the wellbeing of the community. We need to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding, and solidarity and urge everyone in the community to live and act together, united despite our differences and diversity, to help build a community of peace, solidarity, and harmony for today and tomorrow. The inherent dignity of each human being and the fraternity that binds us together as members of the one human family must undergird the development of our mission.

Together with all walks of life, we need to work collaboratively and cohesively for the greater good of the community. Our differences and diversity should be acknowledged as strengths that enable us to exert collaborative efforts in the service of the community and its mission. Let us make sure that we maintain our sense of harmony, as this will help us feel in sync with others. Participate in and volunteer at community events, connecting with our neighbours and reaching out to people who live around us. By being friendly and sociable with our neighbours, we can build a sense of community in the neighbourhood. When we network with the well-wishers alive and active, not only will we positively increase our bond, but we will also both be physically active and working towards a healthier lifestyle.

Points to Ponder and Share:

1. How can we live and work together in harmony?
2. Why are positive relationships and positive affirmations important for a harmonious life?
3. Why is working together – harmony - good medicine?
4. How can we find harmony between work and life?

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

02 Sun	-	Presentation of the Lord / World Day of Consecrated Life/ Jubilee
03 Mon	-	St Blaise
04 Tue	-	St John de Britto
05 Wed	-	St Agatha
07 Fri	-	Bl. Pius IX
08 Sun	-	St Josephine Bakhita
09 Sun	-	Bl. Eusebia Palomino
11 Tue	-	Our Lady of Lourdes / World Day of the Sick
16 Sun	-	Bl. Sr Maria Troncatti
18 Tue	-	St Kuriakose Elias Chavara
22 Sat	-	Feast of Chair of St Peter, Apostle
25 Tue	-	St Versiglia and St Caravario

ALL IN THE FAMILY

THANKS FOR PROVINCE COMMUNITY DAY, 11 JANUARY 2025: A heartfelt **thanks** to all of you who made the **Province Community Day** a memorable and spiritually enriching event. Special gratitude to Sr Antony Raj Christiana, the Vice Provincial, for her meticulous planning and thoughtful spiritual preparation, which played a key role in the success of the day! Her leadership, alongside the councillors, ensured that every detail was carefully attended to. We also express our deep appreciation to the team members and all the communities who took on various responsibilities, ensuring the smooth execution of the day's events. A word of appreciation to all the Sisters of the Community of Fatima Convent, Kodambakkam for creating a festive and family atmosphere with your sacrifices and involvement!

Our sincere thanks to **Fr Maria Arockiam Kanaga SDB**, the Rector and Correspondent of Don Bosco, Boy's Home, Perembur, who celebrated the Holy Mass. His reflections during the homily on the importance of humility in our lives were deeply inspiring, reminding us to serve others selflessly and follow Christ's example who humbled Himself for our sake. The liturgy, thoughtfully prepared and solemnly celebrated, truly helped to deepen our sense of unity and devotion. The stage program was engaging and meaningful, fostering a spirit of togetherness and reflection among our Province Community members. The family circle in the afternoon was joyful, as it brought all the Sisters together in a warm and welcoming atmosphere, strengthening our bonds as a community. Your collective efforts, dedication, and love made the day a true celebration of our shared mission. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to making this event a success in synodal style!

BLESSING AND INAUGURATION OF THE CARE HOME FOR RETIRED STAFF SISTERS:

I am happy to invite all of you to the Blessing and the Inauguration of the Care Home for Retired Staff Sisters at Auxilium College Campus, Katpadi which will be held on 7 February 2025. We are extremely happy to have the gracious presence of Most Rev Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu, Bishop of Vellore Diocese who will celebrate the Holy Eucharist and bless the new building. Our joy will be doubled because of the presence of our beloved Sr Celine Jacob, the Visiting Councillor. Let us thank God for his immeasurable graces and blessings and above all his accompaniment in all our endeavours.

PCI LEVEL TRIENNIAL EVALUATION: The Triennial Evaluation, held from 24 to 28 January 2025, at the Provincial House in Manikandam, Trichy, provided a significant opportunity for reflection, assessment, and strategic planning. Headed by Mother General Sr Chiara Cazzuola, Vicar General Sr Gracia Ribas Maria del Rosario, Sr Moraes Nilza Fatima, Councillor in charge of Formation, Sr Celine Jacob, Visiting Councillor, all Provincials from the seven Provinces of India, Delegates, and lay collaborators, the meeting fostered meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Participants were deeply inspired by Mother General's talks and reflections during good night talks. The sharing of Sr Moraes Nilza Fatima, Sr Gracia Ribas Maria del Rosario and Sr Celine Jacob was enlightening, offering valuable insights and perspectives.

This platform provided a comprehensive review of the progress made in various initiatives, an evaluation of the outcomes from the past three years across the Provinces, and a collaborative dialogue on areas requiring growth and improvement. The gathering encouraged the sharing of experiences, challenges, and successes, promoting unity and collective learning. Through discussions, feedback sessions and reflections, the evaluation reinforced the participants' commitment to our shared mission.

The PCI gathering was a pivotal moment of collective discernment, strengthening bonds and guiding future directions for the community's mission and service. It ensured continued renewal and adaptation in response to emerging needs and challenges, fostering the spirit of collaboration. During the annual retreat, and on the final day after the retreat, the Triennial Evaluation Transmission will be done.

NOTE OF THANKS

❖ I express my gratitude to the following communities for accompanying the Postulants during their Community and Mission experience from 3 to 13 January 2025:

- Sr Alexander Amali and the community of St Mary's Convent, Vellore, for accompanying Tharsius Raja Auxilia and Jonas Jenova Teresa.
- Sr Fernando Amutha and the community of Sacred Heart Convent, Polur, for accompanying Subbiah Shenbaga Mallika and John David Asha Mary.
- Sr Samala Elisa and the community of Mary Immaculate Convent, Tirupattur, for accompanying Abel Lourdu Mary, Charles Jasmin Jaya, and Rajesh Srinithi.

Thank you for your dedication and support in guiding the Postulants through this experience in the community and the mission.

- ❖ Hearty thanks to Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima, the General Coordinator, for conducting the online Provincial Team Meet for Chennai and Vellore Zone on 5 January 2025.
- ❖ A note of thanks to Sr Anthony Raj Christina and the community of Kodambakkam, for hosting the Economers for House Accounts Submission on 8 and 9 January 2025 and hosting the Provincial Council on 12 and 13 January 2025. My heartfelt thanks to Sr Kunnathu Anna for accompanying the Economers of the Local Communities.
- ❖ My sincere thanks to Sr Alexander Amali and Sr Susairaj Mary Sheila and the communities of St Mary's Convent, Vellore and Our Lady's Centre, Chetpet, for hosting the Educating Community meeting on 18 January 2025. I thank Sr Madalaimuthu Lidwin Mary for her coordination and commitment.
- ❖ My gratitude goes to Sr Alphonse Mary J Isabella and Sr Mahimainadhan Sathiyavani, Coordinators for Social Ministry, for organizing a Seminar on Organic Farming for women - Tiruvallur, Chennai Zone on 20 January 2025.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- **Prayer Experience at Sogathur - Dharmapuri:** Sr Tharcus Sanci, Sr Anthonysamy Dyana Roseline, and Sr Joseph S. Christina Jenifer participated in the prayer experience at Sogathur from 27 to 31 January 2025. Sr Immanuvel Celcia, Sr Vincent Priyadharshini and Sr Standly Andrew Mary Margaret will participate in the same prayer experience at Sogathur from 10 to 14 February 2025.
- **Seminar on Lawful Management of Societies and Properties – Level II:** Organized by the Legal Cell, TNBC, this seminar will be held in Madurai from 31 January to 1 February 2025. Sr Kunnathu Anna and Sr Mariadoss Bridget will participate in it.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

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

- To Sr Chinnappan Philomena Rani at the passing away of her paternal uncle, Mr A Innasimuthu (97) in Nemam on 4 January 2025.
- To Fr Lourdusamy Don Bosco, the Salesian Provincial of Chennai Province at the demise of his beloved father, Mr Lourdusamy (91) on 8 January 2025.
- To Fr Joseph Pauria SDB, Provincial and the Confreres of Kolkota at the demise of Fr Abraham Panackachaly SDB (90), in Kolkota, on 29 January 2025.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY

02 † Sr Joseph Chiriat Mary (1998)

03 † Sr Giuseppina Gaod (2009) and Sr Jeganathan Clara (2019)

05 † Sr Louis Evelyn (2006), Sr Mascarenhas Mary (2013), Sr Barretto Teresina (2013)

08 † Sr Braganza Rose (2000)
 12 † Sr Domingo Frances (2009)
 13 † Sr Watts Matilde (1959)
 14 † Sr Barbon Arokia Jebamani (2020)
 17 † Sr Netto Helen (2024)
 18 † Sr De Santis Rosaria (2018)
 23 † Sr Baretto Nora (2016)
 24 † Sr Bricarello Maria (1925)
 25 † Sr Rossini Maria (1986)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – FEBRUARY 2025

01	Sat	Trimonthly Recollection for Juniors, Kodambakkam
02	Sun	Animation for Juniors, Kodambakkam Jubilee of the Consecrated Life, Madhavaram, Chennai / Sri Lanka
02	Sun	VIDES Meet for VIDES Members, Arni
03-05	Mon-Wed	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
04	Tue	Trimonthly Recollection for Juniors, Negombo, Sri Lanka Trimonthly Recollection for Seniors in their Communities, Sri Lanka
05	Wed	Trimonthly Animation for Juniors, Negombo, Sri Lanka
07	Fri	Blessing and Inauguration of the Care Home for Retired Staff Sisters, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
08	Sat	Observing St Bakhita Day and Anti-Human Trafficking Day for all Sectors, Local Communities
08	Sat	Trimonthly Recollection for Senior Sisters, Kingsford
09	Sun	Trimonthly Recollection for Senior Sisters, Tirupattur
10	Mon	Skill Training on Youth Contribution to Nation Building, HRDC, Kodambakkam, Chennai
15	Sat	Trimonthly Recollection for Seniors, Sacred Heart Home, Avvai Nagar, Salem.
16	Sun	Headmistress Meet, St Mary's Convent, Vellore

On 2 February we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord / World Day of Consecrated: Jubilee of Consecrated Life: It is a special opportunity for us to reflect on the beautiful gift of our vocation and give thanks to God for calling us to live a life of consecration. It is a day to renew our commitment to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and to recognize the grace that has led us to this sacred path.

Let us pause a while and thank God for the privilege of dedicating our lives to Him. We are grateful for the joy of serving others and for the powerful witness of love and faith, we offer to the Church and the world, inspiring and strengthening those around us.

On this day, may we recommit ourselves to our mission, whether in education, healthcare, pastoral work, or any other form of service. Let our life continue to reflect the love and humility of Christ in all that we do. May this day of consecration deepen our gratitude and renew our dedication to live the great mission God has entrusted to us.

February 11th marks the feast day of **Our Lady of Lourdes**, commemorating the day in 1858 when the Virgin Mary appeared to Saint Bernadette Soubirous in a grotto in Lourdes, France. During these apparitions, Mary identified herself as the "Immaculate Conception," affirming the Church's teaching, of her sinless nature. Lourdes is a place of pilgrimage known for its healing waters and spiritual significance. Many people visit seeking healing, and the site reminds us of God's compassion and love. On this day, the Church encourages devotion to Mary and reflection on her role as a powerful intercessor.

Let us also take this opportunity to pray for our sick Sisters and the parents of our Sisters, asking for Mary's intercession and healing grace in their lives. May they experience comfort, strength, and renewal through Mary's maternal care. May Our Lady of Lourdes continue to inspire faith, hope, and prayer across the world.

***I wish each one of you a very Happy Feast of
the Presentation of Our Lord,
Happy Feast of the Jubilee of the Consecrated Life,
and Our Lady of Lourdes!***

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

Sr Devadoss Margaret

INM FMA|Provincial



ITINERARY OF THE PROVINCIAL

February 2025

01	Sat	Trimonthly Recollection for Juniors, Kodambakkam
02	Sun	Trimonthly Animation for Juniors, Kodambakkam Jubilee of the Consecrated Life, Madhavaram, Chennai
03-05	Mon-Wed	Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
06	Thu	Inauguration of the Portico, Sacred Heart Convent, Polur Provincial Visit to Deepam, Jawadhi Hills
07	Fri	Blessing and Inauguration of the Care Home for Retired Staff Sisters, Auxilium College Campus, Katpadi
08	Sat	Departure to Sri Lanka
08 - 10	Sat - Mon	Provincial Visit, Negombo, SL
11 - 13	Tue - Thu	Provincial Visit, Nochchiagama, SL
15 - 17	Sat - Mon	Provincial Visit, Thirukovil, SL
19 - 21	Wed - Fri	Provincial Visit, Omanthai, SL
22 - 24	Sat - Mon	Provincial Visit, Urumpirai, SL
25 - 26	Tue - Wed	Provincial Visit, Columbuthurai, SL
27 - 28	Thu - Fri	Provincial Visit, Jaffna, SL
MARCH		
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

