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Provincial Office, Auxilium - Shillong 793014 - Meghalaya

*Your Presence
is a
Blessing!*

*Thank You
with all
our Hearts*



Celebrating a Century of Service

Sr. Euginia Laloo



As we mark the remarkable milestone of a century of dedication and service, we joyfully celebrate the profound impact of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) in Northeast India. In this centennial celebration, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Province Shillong was blessed with the presence of Mother Chiara Cazzuola, Superior General. Her visit serves as a poignant reminder of the journey embarked upon by the pioneers and successive Sisters, whose legacy of compassion and love has touched countless lives. Furthermore, her invitation to the present generation of FMA,

to become pioneers of the second century, is a clarion call to make the Salesian charism relevant through our educative presences.

This Special Issue of the newsletter highlights the Centenary Celebrations and Visit of Mother Chiara to the Province. As we flip these pages, let us honour the legacy of the pioneers by continuing to support the noble mission they have initiated with greater zeal and audacity.



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Dated 1 September 2023

As FMA PCI, the journey of preparation for the centenary celebrations was led by the guiding theme: "With Mary through the course of a century and beyond...." We have now reached the landmark of a century, a parallel journey of 100 years initiated by our twelve pioneers when the Institute was just 50 years old. We thank the ways of Providence that brought the 6 pioneers to South India in 1922 and another batch of 6 pioneers to North East India in 1923. Their generosity has borne fruit a hundred-fold and today we have 7 provinces with the charism being planted and alive even in the remotest part of the Indian soil. We are the proud inheritors of a rich legacy handed on by these pioneers and others who toiled hard during these hundred years to preserve the freshness of the charism and raise new shoots of vocations. They are indeed the torch bearers who brought the light of faith, education and development through their dedicated service to the people with unmatched

Extract from the Provincial Circular of Sr. Elizabeth George

dynamism and dedication. The marks of their footprints are still visible on the sands of time. The tiny seed that they sowed in the soil of their mission land and watered with the sweat of their brow has grown today into a gigantic tree bearing flowers and fruits...



Now as FMA, blessed to step into next century, we are the architects of a new century in the making. A great and responsible task awaits each one of us as we begin to charter the course of the next century....

Celebrations like this are invitations to imitate the indomitable and extra-ordinary courage they exhibited as we in turn try to respond to the challenges of the new era with new missionary audacity. Let us pledge our creative and dynamic fidelity to be contributors of the growth and vitality in the emerging second century of the FMA Mission.

OUR MOTHER IS IN OUR MIDST



FMA INDIA CONCLUDING THE CELEBRATION OF 100 GLORIOUS YEARS

An eventful and historic occasion, the closing ceremony of the centenary celebration of the FMA presence in India, was held at Auxilium Shillong on 10 September 2023. The holy eucharist was presided over by Most Rev. Victor Lyngdoh of Shillong Archdiocese and concelebrated by Bishop Lumen Monteiro of Tripura Diocese, Bishop Jose Chirackal, the Auxiliary Bishop of Tura Diocese, and 30 concelebrants.

India, the Digital Archive of the Province, the Education Guidelines for the Province, a collection of success stories of over 100 past pupils entitled From Foundations to Heights, felicitations of centenary committees, and above all, a short opera, A Tribute of Love, which showcased the journey and history of the six pioneers in Northeast India. The opera did justice to celebrate the mission, the sacrifice, the joy, and the faith of the pioneers.



At the outset of the Holy Eucharist, Mother Chiara Cazzuola carried a picture of the six pioneers placed on a boat bearing the centenary flag, and Sr. Elizabeth George, Provincial of Shillong, brought a lighted lamp. It symbolises the Sisters' readiness to carry forth the light of the charism for generations to come. In his homily, the archbishop thanked God for the 100 years of the presence of the FMA and described the six Pioneers as women of faith, women of prayer, women of action, women who lived out their lives, bringing others to see and know the face and the love of the Lord Jesus. He thanked all the FMA members for touching countless lives in their mission among the young people. Further, he exhorted the Sisters that the centenary celebration is a call to continue to be agents of God's love and compassion and to ensure that the mission continues and bears fruit for generations to come.

The afternoon programme consisted of the release of the History Books of South and Northern

The chief guest for the occasion was the Superior General of the FMA, Mother Chiara Cazzuola; guest of honour, Mrs. Mazel Ampareen Lyngdoh, Cabinet minister of the state of Meghalaya; three general councillors from Rome; seven provincials of India; two of the CIAO; government officials; civil authorities; Sisters; invitees; Salesian cooperators; past pupils; and over 700 young people. In her message to the huge gathering, Mother General expressed her joy of celebrating in the centenary festivities. She paid tribute to the pioneers who had spent their whole life giving and serving the people. She thanked everyone for the warm and affectionate welcome and said that she felt at home in their midst. Together with Don Bosco, Mother Chiara recognised Mary's presence and concluded saying, "To Mary we entrust the Province. We are confident that She will continue to pray for us and the province".





On the previous day, 9 September 2023, a National Youth Meet commenced at Auxilium Girls' Higher Secondary School, Nongthymmai. Participating in the event were the youth representatives from the seven Indian provinces, numbering over 700. The chief guest for the celebration was Mother Chiara Cazzuola, and the guests of honour were Smt. Isawanda Laloo, Director of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya, and Smt. Rosetta Mary Kurbah, Deputy Commissioner of East Khasi Hills, District of Meghalaya.

The ceremonial lighting of the lamp, the release of six doves, and the centenary flag hoisting marked the inaugural function and gave a fitting start to the days' events. In her message to the gathering, Mother Chiara, emphasising the message of World Youth Day 2023, invited the young people to be helpers like Mother Mary and be ready to help those in need, especially the neglected ones.

Smt. Isawanda Laloo lauded the works of the Salesian Sisters during the past century, particularly in the fields of education and social upliftment. In her capacity as Director of Sports and Youth Affairs for the Government of Meghalaya, she renewed her commitment to equal roles and opportunities for girls and women with like-minded organisations such as



the Salesian Sisters. Similarly, Mrs. Kurbah, the deputy commissioner, acknowledged the educational activities of the Salesian Sisters. The assembly was also enthralled by the welcome song presented by the students of St. Mary Mazzarello, Jowai, the impressive dance movements of the young people from the Mizoram region, and the rendition of the theme song. In a youth Mass presided over by Fr. Paul Olphindro

Lyngkot, Salesian Provincial of Shillong Province, and con-celebrated by 21 other priests. The Choral



Evangelists from Mawlai made the celebration devout and meaningful through their melodious voices. At the entrance

procession, three flags were brought to the altar, namely, the Institute Flag, the Centenary Flag, and the AYM Flag, inviting everyone to enter into the celebration with a deep sense of gratitude.

In his homily, Fr. Paul emphasised Mother Mary's presence in Northeast India, even before the Salesians. He invited everyone to take her as a role model and guide in every endeavour. In the midst of the varied challenges of life, he encouraged the youth to turn to her through prayers, especially praying the Rosary. In turn, he exhorted them to be generous in their services and to imitate her purity and chastity. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist was an opportunity to recall the great mission initiated by the six pioneers.

The youth were engaged in lively competitions like panel discussions, role play, and personalisation of the qualities of the Good Shepherd. They also paid homage to the pioneers with a presentation from the seven provinces through a colourful cultural display. Besides these, the youth were animated in an hour of God experience led by Mr. Kupar Shadap from the Youth United for Christ. During the two-day celebration, the theme song composed for the occasion made a hit and spurred everyone to give thanks to God in song and dance.

The centenary celebration opened last year in Chennai province, and the year-long celebration concluded with the celebration in Shillong, when the FMA in Northern India commemorates the 100 years since the arrival of the pioneers, in 1923.





**NATIONAL YOUTH MEET
9 SEPT. 2023**





Speech at the Inaugural Function of the National Youth Meet

Smt. Isawanda Laloo
Director of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya



Today, we gather here to celebrate a remarkable milestone in the history of the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco. For a century now, your dedication has been a beacon of hope by your tirelessly work to uplift the underprivileged and marginalized in our society. We are gathered here to convey our heartfelt appreciation to the 6 pioneers for their significant contributions, particularly in the fields of education and developmental work.

The Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco, following in the footsteps of their founder, St. John Bosco, have played an instrumental role in transforming the lives of countless individuals, especially the less fortunate. Their commitment to education is nothing short of inspiring. They have established schools and institutions across the country, providing quality education to children who might have otherwise been denied this opportunity. The impact of these schools resonates in the lives of their students, many of whom have gone on to achieve great success and contribute positively to society.

Furthermore, the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco have been at the forefront of developmental work for the underprivileged. Their commitment to community development, vocational training, and women's empowerment has been exemplary. Through various skill development programs, they have equipped individuals with the tools they need to lead self-reliant lives, breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence.

What truly sets the Salesian Sisters apart is their unwavering dedication to those in need, regardless of caste, creed, or religion. They have promoted inclusivity and tolerance, fostering an environment where all are treated with dignity and respect. Their efforts have not only enriched the lives of those they directly serve but have also contributed to the social fabric of our nation, promoting unity and harmony.

As we celebrate this centenary, let us remember that the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco have been the embodiment of compassion, selflessness, and service. Their century-long journey is a testament to the profound impact that a group of determined individuals can have on society. Their legacy inspires us all to contribute to the betterment of our nation and the world.

In conclusion, I express my deepest appreciation for the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco in the words of M Russell Ballard.

"We must be sure that the legacy of faith from the pioneers who came before us is never lost. Let their heroic lives touch our hearts, and especially the hearts of our youth, so the fire of true testimony and unwavering love for the Lord and His Church will blaze brightly within each one of us as it did in our faithful pioneers."

Representatives
of the
FMA India Provinces
at the
Centenary Celebration





Centenary Celebrations
10 September 2023



Centenary Celebrations
10 September 2023

Homily on the occasion of the Centenary Celebrations of the FMA in North East India

Most Rev. Victor Lyngdoh DD
Archbishop of Shillong



them in their prayer life, instilled in them the values of hard work and a sense of leadership and responsibility. All of them joined the congregation and began to work in various capacities and responsibilities. And today as we celebrate this Centenary, we sing with joy, we make joyful noise for the hundred years of blessings God has blessed us through these missionaries.

This morning we come together to Rejoice, to Celebrate, to Give Thanks. To rejoice and celebrate that we are members of God's Family, the God who loves us, the God who calls us, the God who walks with us on a journey, each and every day. The God who revealed himself to us in the person of Jesus, his Son.

The God who is active in the world today, through the ministry of the church, the church to which we all belong, the church in which each day, we are called to live out our calling to be Sons and Daughters, Brothers and Sisters, making the presence of the Lord known in the world by what we do, by who we are, by our actions, by our prayer.

This morning we recall in a special way, six women of Faith, women of Prayer, women of Action, women who lived out their lives, bringing others to see and know the face and the love of the Lord Jesus. Women who lived in another time but who are still very much today - women of our time.

The six pioneers, Sr Innocenza Vallino, Sr. Clotilde Appiano, Sr Giulia Berra, Sr Rosetti Antonietta, Sr Cecilia Da Roit and Sr. Maria Bricarello who are 'filled by the Holy Spirit' obeyed the command of the congregation and like Jesus in today's Gospel they came to our land "to preach good news to the poor. For it was Christ through the congregation who has sent them to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (cfr Lk 4:16-19)

Who would have thought that these six woman, unfamiliar with our culture, traditions and languages 100 years ago would have such an impact on region and the church in particular. But this was all part of God's plan for them, for the Salesian Sisters Congregation, for the Church and for the benefit of our people. This was all part of God's mission for them.

As we read their lives story, all the six sisters were persons of deep faith, a faith that was nurtured by their families and later by the Salesian Congregation, their family that encouraged

We gather here to celebrate a momentous occasion, a centenary that marks not just the passing of time, but also a century of dedication, service, and faithfulness. We commemorate the 100th anniversary of those who tirelessly served the Church and the world.

The Liturgy of the Word we have just read encapsulate the mission of Jesus Christ, the mission of the Church, and indeed, the mission of the FMA Sisters throughout their century of existence. They have taken to heart the message of Christ, dedicating their lives to serve those in need, to bring hope to the downtrodden, and to be a beacon of light in a world sometimes overshadowed by darkness.

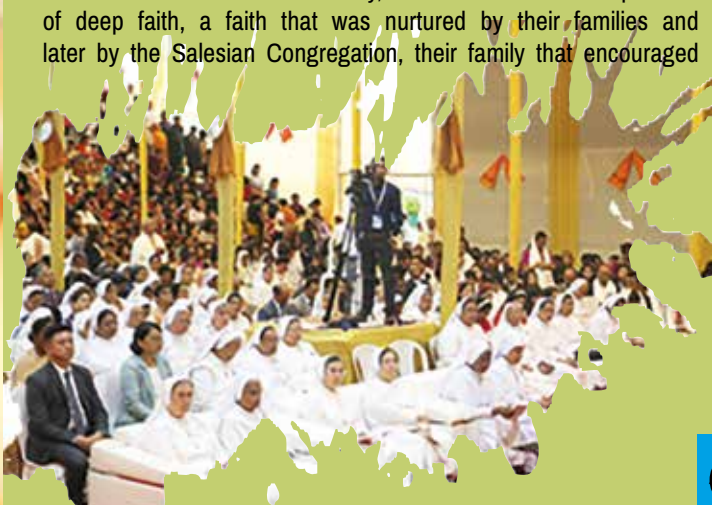
The FMA Sisters have lived out the very essence of the Gospel, following in the footsteps of Jesus, who declared, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." In this centenary celebration, we can confidently say that these words of Jesus continue to be fulfilled through the FMA Sisters, who have become instruments of God's love, mercy, and grace.

Through their tireless work in education, healthcare, social services, and pastoral care, they have embraced the marginalized and the suffering, just as Jesus did. They have been agents of healing, working to bring sight to the spiritually blind and freedom to those ensnared by various forms of bondage. In doing so, they have indeed proclaimed the year of the Lord's favor by showing God's compassion and favor to all they encounter.

But let us not forget that the passage from Luke's Gospel also highlights the initial disbelief and rejection faced by Jesus when he proclaimed his mission. The people of Nazareth questioned his authority and doubted his words. Similarly, throughout their century-long journey, the FMA Sisters have encountered challenges and resistance. Yet, like Jesus, they have persevered, grounded in their faith and unwavering in their commitment to serving others. Like Christ, their mission is manifested in their deep love for humanity touching countless lives and transforming communities.

Today, let us renew our commitment to support and pray for the FMA Sisters as they continue their noble mission. Let us also be inspired by their example to embrace the Gospel message and live it out in our own lives. Like Jesus, may we too be anointed by the Spirit to bring good news, release the captives, give sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free.

My dear people of God, the centenary is not just a celebration of the past but a call to the future. It is an invitation for all of us to continue the work of Christ in our own time, to be agents of God's love and compassion, and to ensure that the mission continues to bear fruit for generations to come. May God bless the FMA Sisters abundantly and guide them as they journey forward in faith, and may we all be inspired by their example to live out the Gospel in our own lives.





Mother Chiara in Shillong Communities



Mother Chiara in Shillong Communities



Visit of Mother Chiara Cazzuola Superior General, to Shillong Province (INS)

The joyous occasion of the conclusion of the centenary celebration in India brought the 10th successor of St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello, Mother Chiara Cazzuola, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Province of Shillong on 8 September 2023. Along with her were Sr. Runita Galve Borja, Councillor for Youth Ministry; Sr. Nilza Fátima de Moraes, Councillor for Formation; and Sr. Celine Jacob, Visiting Councillor.



Mother Chiara was accorded a state guest welcome by the Governor of Meghalaya State and was received by the security personnel and the Sisters at Lokapriya Gopinath International Airport in Guwahati.

On their way to Shillong, the first to receive the revered guests were the Sisters and Aspirants at Auxilium Training Centre, Saiden, joined by



the nearby community of Auxilium Mawtnum. On arriving at Auxilium Campus Shillong,

Mother Chiara Cazzuola and the General Councillors—Sr. Runita Galve Borja, Sr. Nilza Fátima de Moraes, and Sr. Celine Jacob, Visiting Councillor—received a traditional and family welcome. Escorted by the NCC Cadets, the dancers, and the Auxilium School band, they were led to the provincial house in the presence of many Sisters, young people, and past pupils. The young people adorned with the traditional attire waved their Salesian colour flags of blue and pink as a mark of joyful welcome. At the entrance of the Auxilium community, a short felicitation was conducted by Ms. Elena Kharkongor, a teacher and past pupil, and all were presented with a bouquet of flowers, symbols of love and appreciation, and a sign of welcome. To the tune of the song, There shall be showers of blessings, the Auxilium school band led the welcome procession to the new provincial house. Mother Chiara was donned in a khasi traditional dress, and the felicitations of the councillors, the provincials of FMA India, and the two provincials of CIAO, Sr. Alma Castagna, provincial of Timor and CIAO Président, and Sr. Gertrude Ched, provincial of Myanmar and Cambodia, followed.

An official word of welcome was conveyed by Sr. Elizabeth George, the provincial, to Mother Chiara. She in turn





reciprocated the gestures of love and filial expression of the Sisters by saying thank you in the language of the place, Khasi, Khublei Shibun. Mother told the assembly that she loves everyone and was glad to witness the Salesian joy and cheer. After the grand welcome, the Sisters proceeded to the chapel for a short prayer of thanksgiving. Recalling the Salesian charism that was planted 100 years ago and that has taken



root and is flourishing in the region, in a prayer led by Sr. Rosina Susngi, Mother Chiara offered a green plant as a symbolic gesture, offering the future of the congregation in this part of the world to the

hands of the Lord. At the goodnight thought, Mother Chiara invited all present to implore God for the gift of fidelity and creativity in the



next hundred years, which not only belong to the provinces in the nation but to the congregation at large.

On 9 September 2023, Mother Chiara inaugurated the new provincial house adjacent to the old provincial house, and the building was blessed by Most Rev. Victor Lyngdoh, archbishop of Shillong. On that day, Mother encountered the Salesian cooperators and past pupils, who form part of the family. Mr. Anthony Laloo, coordinator of the Association of Salesian Cooperators of Shillong Province, shared briefly the activities of the members in the province. Past pupils, Dr. Valencia Marboh and



Mrs. Marylinda Sun shared the impact of Salesian education on their lives and personalities.



During their stay in Shillong, from 9 to 12 September, Mother General met the Provincial Councillors, Animators, perpetually professed Sisters in four groups, the temporary professed Sisters, novices, and aspirants. To each of the groups, Mother reminded the Sisters of the post-chapter journey and invited everyone to become the pioneers of the second century.



and life generators in the community. To the temporary professed Sisters, Mother Chiara enlightened them on the discernment of the new provincial.



She explained clearly the Article 103 of the Constitutions and exhorted them to express their opinion with absolute liberty, listening to the Lord, and not be persuaded by anyone. While Sr. Nilza met the pre-aspirants, aspirants, novices, the elderly Sisters and the temporary professed Sisters. She encouraged the young candidates in formation to have the centrality of Christ, which fosters the construction of a formative path.



On 12 September



On 12 September



On 12 September



2023, Mother visited the nearby communities in Shillong, namely Bellefonte, FMA Outreach, and Mawlai. In her visit to the Mary Our Help Training Centre, Bellefonte Shillong, Mother Chiara inaugurated



the Library of Bellefonte Community College and released the 100 sewing machines to be distributed to the trainees who have completed their course as a memorial of the centenary celebration. She also visited the Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous



Cultures, or Don Bosco Museum, in Mawlai, where two FMA collaborate in the mission. This was followed by a short felicitation and reception by the Sisters, staff, and students of Sacred Heart Convent Mawlai. On that occasion, Mother Chiara greeted the Salesian provincial and around fifty Salesians from Shillong communities gathered at Sacred Heart Convent Mawlai. She thanked them for the spiritual assistance to the Sisters and the collaborative mission in the spirit of the Salesian Family. In the evening, back at the provincial house, a thanksgiving prayer and adoration was organised for the gifts of Mother General Chiara Cazzuola, Sr. Nilza Fatima Moraes, Councillor for Formation, and Sr. Runita Borja, Councillor for Youth Ministry. A seashell was offered at the altar by Mother Chiara, as a symbol of the



prayerful journey of faith and fidelity. Expressions of thanks in the form of speech and song followed, and Mother, in her message, reminded the Sisters that they are history-makers and urged everyone to promise God their fidelity, generosity, and life of communion. Lastly, she concluded her message by signing off like Mother Mazzarello, from the mother who loves you very much.



On 13 September 2023, enroute to Guwahati, Mother Chiara Cazzuola and the General Councillors visited the Cathedral of



Mary Help of Christians in Shillong and prayed at the tombs of the three Salesian archbishops laid to rest there. She also made a note

in the visitors book at the cathedral.



Meetings of Mother Chiara with different groups



Meetings with Sr. Nilza Fatima de Moraes

General Councillor for Formation



Sr. Runita Galve Borja
General Councillor for Youth Ministry
with the Youth during the National Meet





Blessing of the New Provincial House

9 September 2023



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