



My dear Confreres,

Loving greetings from Don Bosco Provincial House, Shillong.

We are entering the month of May – a month especially dear to us Salesians. It holds particular significance as many of us have made our religious profession on the feast of Mary Help of Christians. This month also includes other important Salesian feasts, such as the feast of St. Dominic Savio on 6th May and St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello on 13th May. In addition, our newly elected Rector Major and his council will hold their first meeting to chart the path forward for our Congregation, following the reflections on the theme of the 29th General Chapter and its deliberations. Let us pray that, through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, this month may be a time of deep spiritual renewal for each of us in a special way in our religious life as consecrated persons.

Having recently witnessed the solemn and grand funeral of Pope Francis on 27th April 2025—fondly remembered as the Pope of Mercy – we hold him in our hearts with deep love and gratitude. His leadership and immense contributions to the Church and the world during our time will not be forgotten. In his memory, I would like to share a few reflections on Pope Francis and his legacy as the Pope of Mercy.

We can say that Pope Francis, who led the Catholic Church from 2013 until his passing in 2025, will be remembered above all as the "Pope of Mercy." His papacy was marked by a radical emphasis on compassion, forgiveness, and love – core tenets of the Gospel that he sought to re-center within the life of the Church. From the moment he stepped onto the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica as the newly elected Pope, choosing the name "Francis" after St. Francis of Assisi, it was clear that mercy and compassion for the needy would be at the heart of his mission.

A Symbolic Start: Washing the Feet of Prisoners

One of the earliest and most powerful gestures of Pope Francis came during his first Holy Thursday as Pope in 2013. In a break from tradition, on Maundy Thursday he celebrated the Mass of the Lord's Supper not in the grand Basilica of St. Peter or of St. John Lateran but at a youth detention center in Rome. There, he washed and kissed the feet of twelve young inmates, including two women and two Muslims. This simple but profound act symbolized his commitment to humility and his deep concern for those on the margins of society. It was an early indication of how he would embody mercy not just in words, but through concrete action.

One Christian journalist commented like this: "I think it should be beyond obvious that Francis' actions allowed God to speak to us, that is, if we have ears to hear.... They are evidence that the Pope succeeded in conveying an aspect of the *Mandatum* rite that had not been highlighted before, at least not by a Pope. His action helped these young prisoners, thousands of miles away, feel closer to God, his action gave them some hope, his action let them know that while the world has rejected them, God has not."

Jubilee Year of Mercy

In 2015, Pope Francis declared an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, inviting the entire Church to focus on forgiveness and reconciliation. “Let us be renewed by God’s mercy,” he proclaimed, opening the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica—traditionally a symbol of forgiveness. During that year, he commissioned priests around the world as “Missionaries of Mercy,” granting them the authority to absolve sins usually reserved to the Holy See. He also encouraged acts of corporal and spiritual mercy—feeding the hungry, comforting the sorrowful, and forgiving offenses.

In his message for the Jubilee Year he said, “Merciful like the Father.’ This is the theme of the Jubilee, but it is also the prayer we make for all of you as we welcome you in the name of Jesus. To be merciful means to grow in a love which is courageous, generous and real. It means to grow physically and spiritually. You are preparing to be Christians capable of making courageous choices and decisions, in order to build daily, even though little things, a world of peace.”

Embracing the Outcast

Time and again, Pope Francis reached out to people who often felt rejected or excluded by the Church. He famously remarked, “Who am I to judge?” in reference to gay individuals seeking God, signaling a more pastoral and less judgmental approach to complex moral issues. He also invited homeless individuals to dine with him and installed showers and a barber service near the Vatican for their use. In 2016, he brought a dozen Syrian refugees back to Rome with him from a trip to Lesbos, further demonstrating his commitment to welcoming the stranger.

In his first Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis urges care for the weakest members of society: “the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned” and migrants, for whom the Pope exhorts “a generous openness.” In 2024 in his message for the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, he wrote, “See in the migrants of our time, as in those of every age, a living image of God’s people on their way to the eternal homeland.”

A Personal Pastoral Approach

Pope Francis emphasized the need for priests and bishops to be “shepherds who smell of their sheep,” urging clergy to live among and accompany their people with empathy and care. From the very beginning of his papacy, he signalled a change in tone and style. Leaving aside the traditional papal apartments, he chose to live in the modest Casa Santa Marta, reflecting his desire for a “poor Church for the poor.” His focus on simplicity and servant leadership has inspired many within and beyond the Catholic community.

His approach to confession also illustrated this pastoral concern. He often described the Church as a “field hospital after battle,” where the primary mission should be healing wounds and warming hearts. His pastoral concern for those who are drifting away from the Church is also vivid in *Evangelii Gaudium* where he said “that our Church doors should always be open” so that those who seek God “will not find a closed door”; “nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason”. He also said that the Eucharist “is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.”

Legacy of Mercy

Pope Francis's legacy as the Pope of Mercy is woven into countless homilies, encyclicals, and pastoral visits. In *Misericordiae Vultus*, the document that opened the Jubilee Year of Mercy, he wrote, "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy." This theological and spiritual truth became the guiding light of his pontificate. He also said, "God is never tired of forgiving us," insisting that we should never be ashamed or tired of going to confession to receive the mercy and forgiveness of God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In a world often fractured by division, judgment, and indifference, Pope Francis reminded us that mercy is not weakness but strength. It is the power that can transform hearts, heal communities, and renew the Church. His life and ministry were a living testament to this belief.

His devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary

A cornerstone of Pope Francis' spiritual life is his deep and personal devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He frequently visits the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome, especially before and after his apostolic journeys, to pray before the icon of *Salus Populi Romani* (Protectress of the Roman People). His entrustment of his pontificate to our blessed Mother Mary reflects the central place she holds in his heart and ministry. Francis often speaks of Mary not only as the Mother of God but also as a mother who walks with her children, comforts them in their struggles, and points them toward Christ. In his teachings, he emphasizes her qualities of humility, obedience, and quiet strength—traits he encourages in the faithful. His Mariology is not abstract, but rooted in a lived faith that highlights Mary's closeness to the people, especially the suffering and the poor.

Pope Francis has left an indelible mark on the Church and the world through his humble leadership, tireless advocacy for the vulnerable, and his vision of a more inclusive and compassionate Church. As the Church and the world bid farewell to Pope Francis, his call remains clear and urgent: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). It is a call that will echo far beyond his time, inspiring future generations to live a Gospel rooted in love, compassion, and mercy.

The Papal Conclave for the election of the 267th Pope will begin on 7th May 2025. The Cardinal electors will remain secluded in Sistine Chapel all through the process of the election. Let us keep the Conclave in our daily prayers.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Adieu dear Bro. Jerome Lyngdoh (RIP)

On 14th April, we bid adieu to our beloved Br. Jerome Lyngdoh who passed away on 12th April 2025. His Grace, Archbishop Victor Lyngdoh DD of Shillong, celebrated the funeral Mass and concelebrated by Bishop Wilbert Marwein DD of Nongstoin and many priests. There were many religious men and women, novices, aspirants and the lay faithful who attended the funeral Mass to thank God for this great Salesian religious who dedicated his whole life in empowering and leading young people to God.

After the Holy Mass, there were heartwarming and emotion-filled messages expressed as the final farewell to Br. Jerome. The message of Fr. Biju Michael SDB, our Regional, was read out. Other messages were from Guwahati province, the community of Don Bosco Technical School, the Past Pupils and the family members of Br. Jerome. I gave the Funeral Oration and the sentiments of gratitude on behalf of the province, the community and on my own behalf. The last rite in the Salesian cemetery at Laitumkhrah was attended by a number of SDBs, Sisters, Novices and many family members. It was indeed a solemn and fitting farewell to this well-deserved son of Don Bosco.

Br. Jerome Lyngdoh was born on 2nd January 1939 in Lyngkhoi Village of Wahlang Parish. He is the 4th among the five children of (L) Mrs. Lidia Lyngdoh Lyngkhoi and (L) Mr. Albinus Marwein; all his siblings, one brother and three sisters, have gone to their eternal home. Br. Jerome was baptized on 8th January 1948 in Lyngkhoi village and received Holy Communion on the same day since he was already 9 years old then. He had the desire to be a religious since his young age; and in 1954 he joined the Aspirantate in Bandel. Br. Jerome did his Novitiate in Sunnyside, Upper Shillong and made his First Profession on 24th April 1959. He was in Sonada from 1959 to 1961 for his Post-novitiate formation; and returned to Shillong for Training in Carpentry in 1961 and 1962 in Don Bosco Technical School, Shillong. His Practical Training was one year in Don Bosco Technical School, Shillong (1962-1963) and two years in Don Bosco Liluah, Calcutta (1963-1965). He was put incharge of the workshops in Don Bosco High School, Guwahati from 1965 to 1969 and continued with the same role in Don Bosco, Maligaon 1967-1979. The superiors sent him for one year Renewal Course in Bangalore 1979-1980. He was sent to serve in Catholic Mission, Bengtol, Assam from 1980 to 1990; and in Mawlai Parish as Warden 1991-1992. He was then appointed as Head of Carpentry Department here in Don Bosco Technical School in 1992 which he served till 2022; from 2023 he began his much-needed rest after long years of hard work and toil.

Bro. Jerome was an **exemplary Salesian Brother**, the kind Don Bosco would have pointed to and said: *"There – there is what I dreamed of."* Faithful in community, fervent in mission, cheerful in service. To us, his Salesian family: Let his life remind us of the power of fidelity in small things. Of hidden holiness. Of the quiet heroism found in daily duty, lived joyfully for the love of God and the good of the young.

Another outstanding character of Br. Jerome is that he was always cheerful. Whenever we talk and chat with him, even in his sick bed, he would share so many stories and real-life anecdotes with joy, enthusiasm and laughter. He was a person of hope who transcends his pain and suffering in order to make the ones around him feel comfortable and engaged.

Br. Jerome was indeed a true Salesian religious who lived a simple and unassuming life-style yet contributed significantly. His exemplary life has inspired and encouraged many people who knew and interacted with him. Though he has gone from our midst, his life and works will continue to remain with us for many years to come. Adieu dear Br. Jerome! As you rest in the peace of Christ, do bless us from heaven.

Congratulations for the excellent Matric results

I extend my hearty congratulations to all our schools for the excellent Matric results. MBOSE declared Matric results early this year. Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) and Tripura Board of School Education (TBSE) have also declared their results; most of our students have done excellently well. I would like to personally acknowledge the hard work of our confreres – the Rectors, Principals, Vice Principals and everyone involved in school education. May we continue to put in our efforts for our young people and the society at large.

Congratulations to Bro. Bosco Ekka

We rejoice with Bro. Bosco Ekka who has completed Ph.D from Silchar University and we offer our big congratulations to him. The topic of his research is “Sustainable Development through Tea Garden Youth Engagement: A Descriptive Study in Cachar District of Assam”. He defended on 4th April 2025; and the VC will be giving the official notification one of these days. Bro. Bosco did a commendable research work while working in Bosco Tech Silchar. We wish him many more success in his academic pursuit.

Trimonthly Recollection for Student and PT Brothers

Trimonthly Recollection for student and practical training brothers of Meghalaya was held on 11th and 12th April 2025 in the Provincial House. There were 45 Brothers attending the programme. Fr. Arul Kumar SDB, a professor of Canon law from SHTC animated the brothers’ Trimonthly Recollection. We thank Fr. Vice Provincial for coordinating the programme and the Provincial House community for all the necessary arrangements.

The new Building of St. Anthony’s LP School

On 19th April 2025 the foundation was laid and blessed for the new building of St. Anthony’s LP School. As we all know, the old building was already decaying and it was risky to continue with it. We thank the Lord for His grace and blessings which have enabled us to overcome the unnecessary hurdle for this new building. I thank the community of Don Bosco Technical School and all the confreres for the prayers and the efforts made to overcome the initial difficulties. We entrust this new construction to the Lord that we may be able to complete well and on time for better service to our young students and the society.

Presentation of Community’s Budget

As per the province policy, every community needs to prepare the yearly budget. Fr. Genesius Wanniang, the Economer, has made efforts to sit down with the respective Administrators, Principals or Parish Priest and look into the Budget 2025-26. I believe the Budget presented to the Economer was duly presented and passed by the House Council. If any community has not prepared the budget of the current year, I urge the Rector or Incharge to call for the House Council and do so immediately. I thank Fr. Vice Provincial who was with the Economer for the budget presentation; I could not be present for it due to the participation in GC29.

Vocation Camp for Post Matric Boys

The Vocation Camp for Post Matric boys was held in Pastoral Centre, Shillong from 22nd to 29th April 2025. There were 32 boys for the Vocation Camp; 21 completed their Matriculation while the rest were Class XII and above. The 21 boys will enter the Aspirantate in Nonglakhiat for the Preparatory Course on 10th May 2025; the others will join Pastoral Centre starting from 2nd June 2025. We thank Fr. Ritonbor Kharkongor, the community of Pastoral Centre and the brothers who helped for the Vocation Camp. Let us pray for these youngsters that they may be able to persevere in their vocation.

Blessing of the New Church and Silver Jubilee Celebration at Lawngtlai

We congratulate the community of Lawngtlai for the solemn Silver Jubilee Celebration and the Blessing of the new Parish Church on 01st May 2025. Bishop Stephen Rotluanga blessed the new church dedicated to St. Francis Xavier and celebrated the Holy Mass with 44 concelebrants. It was a rare occasion for the faithful to see so many priests and religious; that too in a far away place like Lawngtlai. The participation of so many confreres from other parts of the province was truly encouraging. We pray that many more people embrace the Catholic faith in Lawngtlai parish.

I would like to thank and congratulate the confreres of Lawngtlai community – Fr. Nelson Joseph, Fr. PA James and Fr. Robert Makri for their efforts and dedication to build the new church. Special thanks to Fr. Nelson Joseph, the Rector, for the hard work in designing and completing the beautiful church and organising the solemn function. The cooperation and collaboration of everyone was noticeable and appreciated. May the Lord reward each one of you, dear confreres.

Religious Profession and Renewals

26 Novices will be making their First Profession on 24th May 2025 in Sunnyside – 22 for Shillong province and 4 for Guwahati province. The programme will begin with the Holy Mass at 07:00 am. We also have four of our Novices making their First Profession in INB Novitiate, Nashik. On the same day, there will be Perpetual Profession in Sacred Heart Theological College (SHTC), Mawlai at 02:00 pm. The Renewal of vows will take place in the evening of 23rd May 2025 in Pastoral Centre, Shillong.

There will be recollection for the brothers who will be making perpetual profession and renewal of vows in Pastoral Centre starting at 04:00 pm on 22nd May. Let us company the Novices and Brothers during these important events in their lives as Salesian religious.

The Month Dedicated to our Blessed Mother

We are in the month of May which is dedicated to our Blessed Mother. This month of Mother Mary is dear to all of us as we celebrate the solemn Feast of Mary Help of Christians (24th May) and the Visitation of our Lady (31st May); we celebrate also the Feasts of St. Dominic Savio, St. Mary Mazzarello, and other Salesian collaborators.

Most of us commemorate the Anniversary of our Religious Profession on 24th of this month. May we re-dedicate ourselves to God through the intercession of Mother Mary.

Birthdays of Confreres

We express our prayerful wishes to all our confreres who celebrate their birthday this month. We assure them of our prayers; may God bless them and their ministry.

Dates	Names	Dates	Names
02	Fr. Anthony Lendakadavil (LB)	21	Fr. Richard Louis Rapthap
06	Fr. Maitphang Mawrie	23	Cl. Vijay Vishal Tigga
12	Fr. Festus Emmanuel Shadap		Cl. Donbok Hahshah
	Cl. Agustin Pariong	24	Fr. Carmel Myrthong
13	Br. Boneyfast Dkhar		Cl. Gabriel L. K. Kharumnuid
	Cl. Mark Shanbor Thyрниang	25	Br. Alexius Condpan
14	Br. Hooniwan Papang		Fr. Johnny Eapen Kalathoor
15	Cl. Pjun Ingti		Cl. Mebandajied K. Thangkhiew
18	Cl. Celestine Narlong		Cl. Samuel Kungneihthanga
20	Fr. Glorius Syiemlieh	27	Cl. Reniel Banshankhem Synrem
	Fr. Sawlus Kharpran	28	Fr. John D. Sohshang
	Cl. Eimisuk Dhar	31	Cl. Gedion Ramshon

Salesian Feasts and Commemorations

This month of May, as the Salesian Family, we have the following feasts and commemorations:

- 06th May – St. Dominic Savio, the student of Don Bosco.
- 13th May – St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello, the Co-founder of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.
- 16th May – St. Louis Orione, the priest, friend and disciple of Don Bosco.
- 18th May – St. Leonard Morialdo, the priest, friend and collaborator of Don Bosco.
- 24th May – Solemn Feast of Mary Help of Christians
- 29th May – Bl. Joseph Kowalski, the Salesian priest and martyr.
- 31st May – Solemn Feast of the Visitation of our Lady.

Health Updates

Let us keep praying for our confreres who have been hospitalized in the past days:

- Fr. Isaac Mattappillil has been discharged from hospital on 1st May 2025 and recovering at Bosco Home, Herma
- Fr. James Doungel has been in Provincial House and improved a lot. On 4th May 2025, he had gone home along with family members for some days of rest.
- Fr. Anugrah Kerketta who was treated for Laparoscopy in Woodland was discharge on 3rd May 2025; currently recuperating in RRTC, Umran

Death Anniversary of INS Confreres

This month we commemorate the death anniversary of **Fr. Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh** on 28th May (2016). Let us remember him in our prayers especially during the Holy Eucharist. May the Lord grant him eternal rest.

Condolences

We express our heartfelt condolences to:

- Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy, Provincial and all the confreres of Chennai province at the passing away of **Fr. Augustine Nathan (81)** on 7th April 2025 and **Fr. Arul Valan (55)** on 08th April 2025.
- Fr. Kenny Pakma at the passing away of his beloved mother, **Mrs. Theresia Pakma (86)** on 13th April 2025.
- Novice Ambedkar Debbarma at the passing away of his beloved father, **Mr. Swapan Debbarma (46)**, on 2nd May 2025.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you, dear confreres, Happy Feast of Mary Help of Christians! May our beloved Mother who guided and supported Don Bosco continue to guide and intercede for all of us. In this month let us renew our fervent devotion to Mary Help of Christians, the shining star of the Salesian Family and the powerful Mother who continues to guide us on our journey and loving service to the young.

Let us take to heart the exhortation of Don Bosco: "Have devotion to Mary Help of Christians and you will see what miracles are!" In times of difficulty, uncertainty and mission fatigue, Don Bosco always turned to her not with mere words, but with the full confidence of a child in the arms of his Mother, and she never failed. Let us also turn to her everyday with confidence especially in moments of doubts and difficulties. The work we are called to do as religious cannot be accomplished by our strength alone. It requires the maternal presence of our blessed Mother, who intercedes for us, inspires us and walks beside us.

Let us deepen our devotion through the daily recitation of the Rosary and the joyful celebration of her feast days. Let us entrust our young people, our communities, and our missions to her loving care. Let us speak of her with affection, teach love for her with zeal and imitate her virtues with sincerity.

May God bless you all.

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,



Fr. John Zosiama SDB
INS Provincial

