



OUR
LOVE
AND
GRATITUDE
TO OUR
FATHER
AND
LEADER

Very Rev. and Dear Father,

It is with genuine joy and love that we the Salesian Co-operators of the Southern Province of India ~~have~~ rallied round you to accord you a warm welcome, and thereby manifest our filial love and gratitude to you. Today is a red-letter day in the annals of the Salesian Congregation of South India. It is over twelve years since we had the visit of Very Rev. Fr. Ziggiotti to this Province. His smiling countenance, paternal affection and encouraging words are ever before our eyes; and today we deem ourselves privileged to have you in our midst as the representative and sixth successor of St. John Bosco, the saintly founder of the Salesian family. Need I say how happy we are to be around you as children of the great Salesian family, which the world admires and respects?

The Salesian Cooperators all over the world form a formidable army, working for the Church and God's greater glory. They form the third branch of the great Salesian family, the result of an inspired idea of Don Bosco, by which we lay people, though living in the world, share in all the privileges and good works of the Salesians, and at the same time sanctify ourselves through works of charity, especially for the poor and abandoned youth. Our family is complete today since we have you, the living Don Bosco in our midst. We realise what sacrifice it must have cost you to travel so far, putting yourself to so many hardships in your ~~x~~ venerable age. We are also alive to the fact that you, with considerable sacrifice, send us month after month your paternal message through the Salesian Bulletin. It speaks volumes for your paternal love for us, and ^{we} thank you most sincerely for it. In return we wish to express our gratitude to you, and we assure you of our daily prayers for your spiritual and temporal welfare.

Very Rev. and dear Father, you will be happy to learn what we as Salesian Cooperators are doing in our Province. I am pleased to place on record that we have fourteen centres, excluding those of Kerala, with a strength of about four thousand members. We form, so to speak, the power house of parishes, offering ourselves to every kind of social service chalked out by our parish priests. We help them in running oratories, teaching Catechism, organising study clubs, and other parochial activities. We disseminate Catholic literature, and help organise missions, retreats and triduumms. We have also, a special care for the poor and the sick. Lastly, cooperating with Salesian educational institutions, we lend our services to the education of youth, especially the poor and the abandoned.

You will be happy to learn that we keep before our eyes the obligation of working for our personal sanctification. We there-

fore strive as far as possible, to be faithful to the monthly exercise for a happy death and conference. We also celebrate our annual reunion with befitting solemnity. That we have been able to do all this, is largely due to the fatherly solicitude of our beloved Fr. Provincial, and the guidance given by the Provincial Delegate. We would be failing in our duty if we did not thank the Very Rev. Fr. Pianazzi and Very Rev. Fr. Med, for all the help and encouragement given to us while they were in charge of this province.

We have recently finished our great celebrations in connection with the centenary of the Feast of St. Francis of Sales, the patron of the Salesian Society; then again, you have declared this year a year of faith; and now we look forward to the great festivity of the centenary of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians. These events, and especially your visit, will incite us to greater love for Don Bosco and to be better Cooperators. We will according to the expectation of the Holy Father, carry Christ to the world by word and good example.

In fine, we thank you once more for the paternal affection you have lavished on us. As a token of our great love and gratitude, we offer you a tiny gift to serve as a remembrance of your visit to Madras. We pray, that God may grant you long life, and strength, to work for many more years for the greater glory of God and for the good of the Salesian Congregation.

We remain,

Your affectionate children in Don Bosco,
The Salesian Cooperators of South India.

28th February 1968

Madras.