



## CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

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### LETTER FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL TO ALL THE CONFRERES

#### **A: PREVIEW OF THE PREPARATIONS FOR 19<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY GENERAL CHAPTER 2013**

Dear Confreres,

Two months hence the Congregation will celebrate an event of grace and blessing in holding its 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter 2013. It is in the measure that we have walked together the journey of preparation for this event that we will experience renewal and new lease of life. General Chapters are meant to be watersheds, turning points, and rediscoveries. They implore God's grace of re-immersion into core beliefs of our vocation and mission. They are meant to re-anoint us with a new passion for what we have staked our lives. Thank you for your availability whenever a call was addressed to you to get to the essentials of our Congregation and present dispassionately your convictions and aspirations for the family of MSFS that you love. Let us continue to remain open to God's Spirit.

Although immediately the General Chapter is a body of the capitulants as designated by our Constitutions, there is a deep pervasive understanding that the capitulants should sense the urgency of the challenges to the MSFS vocation that the confreres face today. We live in a world where effectivity of religious as religious will depend on the quality of witness and fidelity to what we profess. In fidelity to the original charism as bequeathed to us by our Founder, we are called to creatively respond to the challenges of our vocation and mission today. The work is not easy. It can only be the work of the Holy Spirit at work in the hearts of the members and the capitulants. It is our prayerful communion with God and fraternal esteem and love that ensures that our decisions, and orientations meet the highest standards of the Gospel, the spirituality of St Francis de Sales and the missionary zeal of Fr Mermier.

Through this letter I want to share with you a preview of the Preparation of the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter and its concerns.

#### **A1: CONVOCAION OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY GENERAL CHAPTER, 2013**

The General Chapter 2013 was convoked by the Superior General, two years in advance of the Chapter on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011 with the theme " **I want Mission"- MSFS Mystics of God's love for prophetic ministries today**"

The Working Papers for study and reflection on the theme were :

***Paper 1 : MSFS: Missionaries and "Mystics of God's love"***

***Paper 2: Religious Life as Prophetic Witness***

***Paper 3: Prophetic Mission Today.***

The General Chapter will take place from **1<sup>ST</sup> February 2013 to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at Nirmala Dyana Sadan** , Athavelly ,Medchal 501401, Rangareddy District , Andhra Pradesh, India

## **A2:APPOINTMENT OF THE PRECAPITULAR COMMISSION , THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND DEPUTY TO THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

To prepare for the General Chapter , the Superior General appointed a Pre.capitular Commission consisting of Fr Noel Rebello, Fr George Parampukkattil, Fr Thumma Mariadas, Fr Simon Paicatt, Fr Jose Kumbloickal and Fr A. Edward.

Fr Thumma Mariadas was appointed the General Secretary of the General Chapter.

Fr Y.Rajini was appointed deputy to the General Secretary to assist him in the office work .

## **A3: APPOINTMENT OF AN ADHOC COMMITTEE FOR STUDYING CONCERNS OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND JURIDICAL NATURE (Ref Appendix 4 , will be sent later)**

Our Revised Constitutions and the General Directory came into force in May 2007. Six years of deepening the understanding of these two important documents of our Fransalian way of life and living needed a review. To assist us in this exercise the Superior General appointed an adhoc committee for studying the concerns of Constitutional and juridical nature .The committee consisted of Fr Thomas Kalary ( Convenor), Fr Ignaci Muthu, Fr George Kootinal and Fr A.Jerome .

The Committee submitted its Report to the General Council and the General Council having studied the report will now present the following to the General Chapter:

(i) Minor Corrections of editing and inadvertent grammatical mistakes and errors in the MSFS Constitutions. These will not affect the content of the Constitutions. The General Chapter will decide how to address this concern.

(ii)Based on proposals made by administrations and confreres, Chapter 3 of Part 2 of the General Directory entitled "*Election Procedures* "will be presented for amendments. The Draft of the proposed amended Chapter 3 of Part 2 is being prepared. As soon as it is ready, I will forward it to all the members .Please study the Draft carefully and if you have your own observations to make please write to the General Secretary with your observations, recommendation and your name latest by 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013. (The *document will be sent to you as **Appendix 4** to this letter separately at a later date*)

(iii)There are a number of proposals that the Precapitular commission has received and some of them imply constitutional amendments. These too will be placed before the General Chapter for its further directives. Changes/Amendments to the Constitutions demand a longer process of study of the amendments at the level of the entire Congregation and then followed by the study and decision of the General Chapter and approval by the Holy See. It will be for the General Chapter to give directives on these proposals.

## **A4: SPECIAL INVITEES FOR SPECIFIED SESSIONS OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER**

With the consent of the General Council, the Superior General has invited several confreres from specific geographical areas to present their point of view and perception at sessions dealing with the concerns of that particular area. The Superior General extended the invitation to either the appointed superiors or to confreres nominated by the members.

The List of capitulants also gives you the names of the Special Invitees to the Specified Sessions.

#### **A5: THREE PAPERS FOR REFLECTIONS AND THE COLLATED REPORT (Ref: Appendix 1 )**

To create a climate of reflection and garnering proposals and suggestions from of all the confreres, the General Council with the assistants of some of the confreres had placed before you three Working Papers that would facilitate the better understanding of the theme of the General Chapter 2013.

You were asked to make your contribution in the meetings of the local communities or apostolic communities or individually and send your comprehension of the three papers and concrete proposals to the Pre-Capitular Commission through the Province offices.

This work has been completed and the Collated Report of each of the three Papers is now available for your further understanding of the challenges of our vocation and mission as MSFS. The collated Paper is attached ( **See Appendix 1**) along with a number of proposals.

The Collated Report is a precious and valuable document that reflects what all of us feel and are convinced of. It will be for the General Chapter to give further directives and guidance based on the observations of the members.

#### **A6: CORE ISSUES AND CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY THE PRECAPITULAR COMMISSION ( Ref: Appendix 2)**

In its exercise for the preparation to the General Chapter, the Precapitular Commission from the feedback it has received from various sectors of the Congregation, has identified a series of Core Issues and Concerns of the Congregation that the General Chapter has to address itself. **Appendix 2** gives the List of the Core Issues and Concerns along with few pointers to trigger reflection.

If you have your own perceptions on these concerns , kindly feel free to give the same in writing to the Provincial, or one of the delegates of your province , or the Secretary General of the Chapter and they will take into consideration your viewpoint when these issues are presented in the General Chapter.

These concerns were forwarded to the General administrations, Provincials, Provincials of India Forum , and to other segments of the Congregation or institutions that were concerned directly with the concerns and issues requesting them to give their points of view . The response from all these sectors will be forwarded to the capitulants for their study and for their in-depth and wide understanding of the concerns and issues when they come up for discussion and deliberations during the General Chapter.

#### **A7: REPORTS FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL, ASST. GENERAL, GENERAL BURSAR, GENERAL SECRETARIES OF APOSTOLATES, PROVINCIALS AND OTHER UNITS**

Accountability of responsibility in the exercise of authority in the Congregation will be presented to the General Chapter in the form of Reports by the Superior General, the Assistant General, the General Bursar, and the General Secretaries of the Four Secretariats of Apostolates of the Congregation, the Provincials, Regional Superior and Mission Superior directly under the Superior General

These Reports are meant for the capitulants to facilitate a deeper understanding of the life and mission of the Congregation in specific geographical areas or in its administrative set-up.

## **A8: REPORTS FROM VARIOUS COMMITTEES APPOINTED BY THE SUPERIOR GENERAL ON THE APPROVAL BY THE GENERAL CHAPTER.**

18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter 2007 had approved in principle the proposals of the Superior General to appoint various inter-province committees for the purpose of animation, organization of constitution growth retreats, update-seminars, Salesian recollections, writing of commentary on the MSFS Constitutions, publication of Fransalian International, managing the congregation website, organizing mission procure works.

Each of these committees have submitted the work they have completed during the six years. Each of the Report is a testimony of what confreres can do together through mutual sharing of resources of varied nature.

These Reports will be available to the capitulants for their knowledge and reference.

## **A9:UPDATED LIST OF THE CAPITULANTS , INVITEES AND SPECIAL INVITEES FOR SPECIFIED SESSION ( ref: Appendix 3)**

As Appendix 3 to this Letter you will find the latest Updated List of the Capitulants, Invitees and Special Invitees for Specified Sessions.

## **B: ADDITIONAL MATTERS OTHER THAN PREVIEW OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER**

### **B1: Homage and Prayers to our dear departed Confreres in the Year 2012 :**

As I conclude this special letter to you giving the preview of the preparations for the 19<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Chapter 2013, please join me in prayer and in paying homage to a number of confreres who have left to their eternal home during the last several months .

Fr. Marcel Baechler, 94 years, of Franco-Swiss Province died on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Fr.Thomas Thoomkuzhy, 71 years, of Pune Province died on 6<sup>th</sup> march 2012

Fr Jacob Pathupalalil,85 years , of Visakh Province, died on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Fr.Nicolet Henri Bernard,93 years, of Brazil Province, died on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Fr Chapuis Joseph,93 years, of Brazil Province, died on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Fr Lindsay Hendricks, 60 years, of Brazil Province, died on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012

Fr Valerian Gomes, 56 years, of Nagpur Province, died on 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 2012

Fr. Shijo Paul Mannachmakuzhiyil, 29 years, of North-East Province, died on 26<sup>th</sup> Sept 2012

Fr Devasia Kalapurackal, 62 years, of South-West Province, died on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012

The Provincials have informed you of their contribution to the mission of the Church and to the life of the Congregation. I invite you to join me in paying our prayerful and grateful respects to these confreres who strove to live our vocation as MSFS in the challenges of today's world .They leave traces of struggles, insights, perseverance, generosity and sacrifice and urge us to be faithful to God and to our vocation and mission as MSFS . May God welcome them into His eternal Peace .

### **B2: 175 Years of the Foundation of the Congregation. The Jubilee has commenced**

The 175<sup>th</sup> Jubilee year of the Congregation has already commenced on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012 . It was providential that the six provincials of India and the Provincial of East Africa were present in Pune along with the General administration on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012 to usher in the Jubilee Year with a thanksgiving Mass celebrated at SFS Church, Shaanwadi and presided over by the Bishop of Pune, Most Rev Thomas Dabre. The words of the Bishop and esteem he has for the MSFS and for what they have

achieved in the past is a fresh call to us to build on the legacy of our pioneers and keep burning anew with the flames of missionary dynamism of our Founder, Fr Peter Mary Mermier. A host of activities are planned by each Province and by many Provinces together. May I highlight just a few so that you remain in communion with the entire Fransalian family wherever you are , near or far, but always close and together in the embrace of our Founder, Fr Mermier .

**Tejas Vidyapeetha Bangalore** staged a creative one act- play entitled: **A Soul on Fire**, a dramatic presentation of the life and passion for mission of Fr Mermier and the pioneering missionaries, to commemorate 150<sup>th</sup> year of the death anniversary of our Founder and the commencement of the 175 years of the Foundation of our Congregation at Suvidya College auditorium on 26<sup>th</sup> Sept 2012.

Franco-Swiss Province gathered **all MSFS, the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, religious priests and laity at the Basilica of the Visitation on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2012 on the occasion of 150<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of our Founder** . The highlight of the evening was a meaningful prayer-service conducted at the tomb of Fr Mermier in the crypt .It unfolded to us the spirit of Fr Mermier and his deep and solid salesian and missionary rootedness.

**Jubilee Pilgrimage by the capitulants of the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter** from Hyderabad to Visakhapatnam and Yanam on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2013 . The Thanksgiving Eucharist on the Ross Hill will be followed by presentation of the spirit and the history of the Congregation in Indian dance form by Fr A Jeyaseelan and his party from Mount Chennai. A visit to Yanam where our first missionaries set foot on the mission entrusted to the MSFS will be moments of reminiscences of a small step for our first missionaries that became a giant leap for the Congregation and the Church.

**Conclusion of the Jubilee Year in India** : Suvidya College is in the process of organizing a meaningful closure of the jubilee year on behalf of the Provincials of India on a convenient date in 2013 to be announced in course of time.

The South-West province through its Mission Forum and Apostolic Community of Ettumanoor is planning in January 2013 a **“Mission Sangamam** “ on the occasion of the 25 death anniversary of Fr George Vayalil, the veteran and loved missionary in India ,150<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Fr Mermier and 175 years of the Foundation of the Congregation.

Franco-Swiss Province will organize the **Jubilee Culmination gathering at Annecy at the Basilica of the Visitation** where the mortal remains of our Founder are laid to rest , on a convenient date and programme to be announced in course of time;

The Provincials of Pune and South-East are undertaking visits to Africa as part of the **process of discernment in responding to the call of missions during the Jubilee Year.**

The Province of East Africa celebrates 25 years of the presence of MSFS in Africa in 2013 .The jubilee year was inaugurated at Salvation Hill in Lububu where our first missionaries in Africa began their missionary journey . To mark this event, the Province of East Africa launched its first half-yearly news-bulletin “ Baraka” ( meaning : Blessing )

Fr Mario DSouza , of Pune Province, published a timely, incisive, graphic and informative article on the Congregation and its history in the National Catholic weekly “The Examiner”

The Regional Forum of Education published a special issue of Edu-Times ( Volume 5 ) to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of our Founder.

The Committee to write the **Book on the History of the Congregation** ( recent history) is busy getting the work completed in time before the closure of the Jubilee year .

Each Province has now a DVD on its life and mission. The DVD on the Congregation is getting ready and will be released during the Jubilee Year.

The **handy booklet on the Congregation** edited by Fr Noel Rebello which at a glance and through few pages acquaints a reader about our Congregation , its life and works is in the last phase of its preparation and will be released in the Jubilee Year.

## **CONCLUSION**

This letter, with the important appendices, is an attempt to keep you informed on matters that matter and which affect our common life as MSFS. I am sure you will take time to read carefully through all the pages and experience the energy of fraternal communion and the joy of remaining in link with the entire Congregation . Let us be attentive to listen to God's Spirit at work in our hearts and in our General Chapter .

In God's Peace and Love  
Yours devotedly



Fr Agnelo Agostinho Fernandes, MSFS  
Superior General

**( The Appendices to sgmsfs-2af-21 follow )**

## Appendix 1

### **COLLATED REPORT OF THE RESPONSES FROM THE CONFRERES**

#### **TO WORKING PAPER I**

#### **MSFS: MISSIONARIES AND MYSTICS OF GOD'S LOVE**

1.

***“Parish Missions” are always relevant. Discuss and suggest ways and means to revive this ministry in today’s context?***

“Parish missions” as we know, derived from the foundational inspiration of our venerable Founder. They are always relevant because they directly cater to the spiritual renewal and value-promotion of the faithful – a perennial need!

Some ways to promote parish missions:

- 1) Solid, regular and progressive catechesis in Bible and Catholic doctrine for all age-groups
- 2) Periodical prayer-meetings for all
- 3) Forming local preaching teams to move around parishes and missions
- 4) Regular family visits with focus on family counselling and spiritual direction
- 5) Educating and encouraging popular devotions
- 6) An adequate proficiency in local language
- 7) Seminars on personality development, social conscientisation, career orientation and counselling for youth
- 8) Empowerment programmes and health camps for women
- 9) Different outreach programmes for all age-groups
- 10) Motivational counselling and value-orientation for jail inmates

2. ***What are the reasons for the general decline of missionary fervour in the congregation in recent times?***

- 1) No sufficient missionary thrust and orientation already during formation itself: more secluded and conformist, rather than exposing, integrating and challenging
- 2) More inclined to an institutionalised life-style, seeking comfort-zones
- 3) Lack of fervent zeal and deep commitment to follow gospel values, because they are demanding and risk-prone
- 4) No depth in prayer life and vowed life
- 5) Lack of unity and mutual support in the communities
- 6) Lack of genuine concern and support for the confreres in the missions, but rather a step-motherly treatment, from the part of the administration
- 7) Undue interference of the administration which inhibits the freedom and creativity of the confreres in mission

3. ***What do you think are the reasons for the general trend of “heavy institutionalization” in the Congregation today?***

- 1) Essentially, lack of conviction, deep faith and sincerity
- 2) The lure of ease and comfort, financial security, the name and prestige which the institutions assure
- 3) The unattractive and discouraging situations of deprivation and the scarcity of sustainability of the missions

4. ***What do you think are the reasons for the ever increasing number of confreres opting for “Parochial ministry” rather than taking up pioneering evangelization or preaching parish missions or innovative ministries?***

- 1) Less painstaking and risk-taking, safe and secure to walk the already trodden path
- 2) Pioneering evangelisation or preaching or innovative ministries require particular bent and some special talent, but there are no concerted and committed efforts to identify or train in that direction

- 3) No clear vision and guidance regarding innovative ministries
  - 4) No serious efforts on the part of the administration to evaluate, review and renew the quality and efficacy of the ministries as well as the functioning of the local and apostolic communities
5. ***What do you think are the reasons that prevent us to live a community life proper to our religious vocation while engaged in missionary ventures? Suggest remedies to improve the situation?***
- 1) Individual enterprises overriding the collective concerns
  - 2) Anti-authority and confrontationist attitude
  - 3) No depth in prayer-life and community-concern
  - 4) Lack of proper communication among the confreres
  - 5) Lack of coordination of the works
  - 6) Lack of exemplary life of the superiors
  - 7) Lack of revitalised apostolic communities, due to the noncommittal attitude of the administrations
6. ***How can we prevent situations where confreres are left alone without the support of a community. Give suggestions and proposals?***
- 1) Foster sense of belongingness by taking each confrere into confidence
  - 2) Make conscious efforts to rise above regionalism, casteism and linguistic bias
  - 3) Educate the confreres about the priority of mission and the vision-mission of the community
  - 4) Plan more community-based ministries
  - 5) Make sure that no confrere is made to live alone
7. ***How can we ensure that we take sufficient time to study St. Francis De Sales, in order to be transformed in our life by the love God?***
- 1) Personal reading, studying and meditating on the life of St. Francis de Sales
  - 2) Reading from the works of St. Francis de Sales in the community before each meal
  - 3) Once a week Salesian devotion combined with evening prayer
  - 4) Monthly recollections based on the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales
  - 5) Compulsory study and knowledge of the teachings and life of SFS in formation stages
  - 6) Update programs to be arranged as part of on-going formation
  - 7) Higher studies on St. Francis and his spirituality for the spread of his devotion
8. ***Suggest ways and means to make the "Treatise on the Love God" more accessible to the people we serve?***
- 1) Simplify the language to make it attractive and interesting.
  - 2) Send quotes by e-mails and SMS on TLG to friends, benefactors and well-wishers
  - 3) Conduct recollections and retreat on the TLG in parishes and schools
  - 4) Undertake preaching devoted to the spirituality of SFS.
  - 5) Quote from TLG in our homilies and talks.
  - 6) Write, direct and produce plays and skits and dances and songs etc on SFS and TLG
  - 7) Print articles and handbills on TLG
  - 8) One-liners as 'Food for thought.'
  - 9) Catechism classes can be channels to bring St. Francis de Sales to children.
  - 10) Celebration of the feast of St. Francis de Sales, Novenas etc.
  - 11) Translation of the writings of SFS in vernacular.
  - 12) Display quotations of SFS in parishes and institutes.
  - 13) Conduct competitions on SFS and his writings
  - 14) IDL and TLG be given as mementos in schools.
  - 15) IDL and TLG reading and practicing by each confrere, so that our life itself becomes the greatest advertisement



**9. How can we be more genuinely faithful to the original missionary institution of our Founder in Today's world? Suggest ways and means?**

- 1) Study and live the missionary vision of the Founder
- 2) Conduct awareness meetings on the Founder

**COLLATED REPORT OF RESPONSES FROM THE CONFRERES**

**ON WORKING PAPER 2**

**RELIGIOUS LIFE: A PROPHETIC VISION**

**1. Religious life is 'bloodless martyrdom' lived in being 'liminal persons' in the society. How can we (Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales) live differently our prophetic vocation and mission today as luminal persons with the spirituality of St. Francis De Sales and with the missionary zeal of Father Peter Mermier?**

- Liminal persons are those persons who choose to set themselves apart from the society, a society devoid of values, to live out more intensely the core values for the community.
- Religious life is a call to bloodless martyrdom.
- For us as MSFS, this way of life is rooted in the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales and the missionary zeal of Fr. Peter Mermier

Some steps to help us to live this way of life:

- 1) Being faithful to personal prayer, community prayer, Recollections & Retreats
- 2) Being led by the Constitutions as the Rule of life
- 3) Being rooted in the spirituality of heart (SFS) and mission spirituality (Mermier)
- 4) Growing into men of conviction
- 5) Fostering an atmosphere of warmth and concern within community, specially checking against all traces of indifferences
- 6) Cultivating healthy relationships
- 7) Being sincere to constantly evaluate the gap between the ideal and the real and to bridge the same
- 8) Being wise to distinguish between need and luxury and to live a life of sacrifice
- 9) Being different from the world by a radical practice of vows
- 10) Being true prophets living a life of witness both as individual and as community

**2. What are some of the constraints that systematically block the unfolding of our Fransalian missionary and prophetic identity?**

- There is often a conflict between being in the world but not of the world.
- Consequently 'rootedness in Christ' which is the core and the crux of all our identity and activity, seems to be reduced more to theory, and not of experience and concrete life
- Some factors that block our Fransalian missionary and prophetic identity are:
  - 1) Consumerism and individualism
  - 2) Indiscreet use of media and modern gadgets
  - 3) Compromising Salesian virtues and spiritual values with worldly values
  - 4) Wrongly equating growth and development with huge structures
  - 5) Lack of a unisive pastoral and spiritual plan of our own congregation, but instead a tendency to blindly imitate others
  - 6) Lack of collective will to implement the decisions of Chapters and Congresses
  - 7) Unhealthy competition among the provinces

- 8) Lack of interest and commitment to the forums
- 9) Unnecessary interference of general administration in the affairs of the provinces.

**3. How do we live concretely the prophetic challenges of religious life as a missionary Congregation for the next 6 years (next General Chapter)?**

- 1) Promoting persons with special charisms
- 2) Special focus on minor seminary formation with formators competent, inspiring and guiding
- 3) Standing for social justice and moral values both in private and public life
- 4) Following the directives of Superior General and provincials
- 5) Being transparent and accountable in all community and financial matters
- 6) Preserving our rich missionary heritage
- 7) A paradigm shift, a change of mindset toward a more deepened, and committed religious, missionary and prophetic identity
- 8) Freedom and courage on the part of the provinces to plan and carry out new mission ventures

**COLLATED REPORT OF RESPONSES FROM THE CONFRERES**

**ON WORKING PAPER 3 OF 19<sup>TH</sup> GC  
PROPHETIC MISSION TODAY**

**1. *Discuss how our prophetic identity as individual persons and as communities (Missions, Regions, Provinces and Congregation) ought to be lived in the present times***

- 1) To be deeply conscious of our Christian and religious vocation not as a job or profession, but as a prophetic mission in imitation of Christ
- 2) To have a profound experience of God, rooted in primacy to God
- 3) To discern, interpret and respond to the challenges of time positively and adequately
- 4) To be loyal to the mission of the Church which is the sacrament of Christ's own mission of salvation
- 5) Bearing witness to our prophetic identity in and through our very life and ministries, being passionate to live the Kingdom-values
- 6) Conscious and courageous efforts on the part of the administration to restrain and chastise various abuses regarding power, money, pleasure and self-glory
- 7) Rediscover the centrality of the Word of God in our life and mission
- 8) Being committed to one single goal as St. Francis de Sales did and led, i.e. "Live Jesus"
- 9) To be constantly on the seek out for new and creative ways and ministries in the context of a changing world, ever prepared even to discard what was clung to for long

**2. *In the light of the reflections in this Paper and in the reflections shared in the community, analyse and see how far our ministries are truly prophetic***

- Certainly efforts have been made to make our ministries truly prophetic
- However needs more deepening and fostering through constant awareness, study, prayer and application
- Some ways in which our ministries are prophetic or to be prophetic are:
  - 1) Ensuring faith-education in all our ministries, be it pastoral, education or social
  - 2) Training catechists and teachers for faith-education
  - 3) Training priests for effective parish missions preaching, for retreats and homilies
  - 4) Special focus on the "lost Catholics" so as to bring them back to the fold

- 5) Being committed to a pro-life prophetic ministry against the culture of death with a clear stand against abortion, euthanasia etc.
- 6) Actively involving in activities that promote honesty and justice against greed and sin
- 7) Opening institutions that promote job skills as a remedy against growing unemployment, debt and poverty
- 8) Strengthening marriage and family life through retreats for couples and youth
- 9) Ministering the Word of God as to denounce evil and to announce good and hope
- 10) Being imbued with a deep sense of peace and being agents of reconciliation
- 11) Being engaged specially in ministries that cater to the poor and marginalised

**3. All the “creative and innovative” ministries need not always necessarily be prophetic: share your thoughts on this**

- 1) The divine or spiritual dimension is the core of any prophetic ministry
- 2) Any ministry devoid of this, however creative and innovative they be, would not be prophetic
- 3) A ministry is not prophetic if it is more an individual project excluding any involvement of others
- 4) A ministry is not prophetic if it is without the approval and proper commissioning by the concerned authority
- 5) A ministry is not prophetic if it is not rightly motivated

**4. In the context of this world of rapid advancement of technologies “unnatural growth” (genetic manipulations, eco-unfriendly developments) what are the areas in which Fransalians can exercise effective prophetic ministry?**

- 1) Being aware of our role as “watch-dogs” and to educate the people about the evil-effects of technologies and researches if used without proper check and balance
- 2) By promoting human life in all its forms
- 3) By upholding the ethical and moral teachings of the Church
- 4) Our websites, Face book and such modern and quick media of communications should be used against all degradation of moral and spiritual values
- 5) Being diligent and responsible stewards of God’s creation:
  - (a) Safeguard the environment and promote "green revolution"
  - (b) Plant as many trees as possible
  - (c) We must promote "recycling of plastic and glass" in our institutions and missions
  - (d) We must save energy and take measures in that regard i.e. one TV for community, one vehicle for community etc.

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## **Appendix 2**

### **ISSUES AND CONCERNS FOR THE DELIBERATION IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER 2013.**

(with some pointers )

#### **CORE ISSUES AND CONCERNS Of the 19<sup>th</sup> GC**

##### **1. USA REGION**

- 1) Signs of growth concerning stabilisation, expansion and witnessing
- 2) Certain working policies and concrete steps toward raising the region to a vice-province – What are the manifest objectives and advantages of it?
- 3) A clear frame of interaction and involvement between the other MSFS units and the proposed vice-province of USA?
- 4) Areas of concerns and possible remedies

##### **2. CHILE MISSION**

- 1) What are the struggles and problems of the present Chile mission?
- 2) What are the immediate concerns of Chile Mission?
- 3) What are some remedial measures to address the needs of the Chile Mission?

##### **3. SUVIDYA COLLEGE**

- 1) What is the status of Suvidya College? How to resolve the anomaly between Suvidya staff as a local community with a local superior, but each member directly under their respective provincial as the major superior?
- 2) Is the present system of administration and animation of Suvidya adequate? If not, how to make good for it?
- 3) What is the quality of formation in Suvidya, both intellectual and spiritual? What are the drawbacks? What are the remedial measures?

##### **4. GERMANY-AUSTRIA-HOLLAND (GAH)**

- 1) What are the immediate and pressing needs of the unit of GAH?
- 2) The measures taken especially to safeguard and animate our religious living as Fransalians, and to move toward a more stable juridical presence – are they convincing and adequate?
- 3) What are the ways suggested to improve the situation, especially in the context of apprehension and resistance to the policy of 10 year term, and the increased incline toward exlaustration and subsequent incardination into a diocese?

##### **5. GERMAN SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (GsSW)**

- 1) An assessment about the present situation of MSFS mission in these areas
  - a. Is the pace of development there proportionate to the duration of our presence?
  - b. The intensity of the effect of presence as MSFS?
  - c. The constraints and challenges
  - d. Possible remedies
- 2) Vision for the future
  - a. Reg. The type of ministry
  - b. Reg. The juridical structure of the mission-unit (toward delegation, region etc.)
  - c. Reg. Animation of religious life
  - d. Reg. Rapport between the principal mother province and these units?

## **6. AUSTRALIA**

- 1) An assessment about the present situation of MSFS mission in these areas
  - a. Is the pace of development there proportionate to the duration of our presence?
  - b. The intensity of the effect of presence as MSFS?
  - c. The constraints and challenges
  - d. Possible remedies
- 2) Vision for the future
  - a. Reg. The type of ministry
  - b. Reg. The juridical structure of the mission-unit (toward delegation, region etc.)
  - c. Reg. Animation of religious life
  - d. Reg. Rapport between the principal mother province and these units?

## **7. ITALY**

- 1) An assessment about the present situation of MSFS mission in these areas
  - a. Is the pace of development there proportionate to the duration of our presence?
  - b. The intensity of the effect of presence as MSFS?
  - c. The constraints and challenges
  - d. Possible remedies
- 3) Vision for the future
  - a. Reg. The type of ministry
  - b. Reg. The juridical structure of the mission-unit (toward delegation, region etc.)
  - c. Reg. Animation of religious life
  - d. Reg. Rapport between the principal mother province and these units?

## **8. CANADA**

- 1) An assessment about the present situation of MSFS mission in these areas
  - a. Is the pace of development there proportionate to the duration of our presence?
  - b. The intensity of the effect of presence as MSFS?
  - c. The constraints and challenges
  - d. Possible remedies
- 2) Vision for the future
  - a. Reg. The type of ministry
  - b. Reg. The juridical structure of the mission-unit (toward delegation, region etc.)
  - c. Reg. Animation of religious life
  - d. Reg. Rapport between the principal mother province and these units?

## **9. MSFS VISION – MISSION: STATEMENT AND POLICY GUIDELINES**

(cf. General Directory: Mission Policy, chapter 1)

- 1) Ours is a missionary Congregation. In carrying out the mission of Christ entrusted to us, What are our objectives and ends, such like implantation, consolidation, expansion, temporary pastoral assistance, in responding to the needs of the local Church, and the other?
- 2) How much are we charged with the Charism of our founder, i.e. living the spirit and spirituality of our patron St. Francis de Sales?
- 3) How are we faithful to the founder's threefold mission – renewal of Christian life, Mission overseas and the Education of youth?

- 4) How much awareness, familiarity and enthusiasm to implement are there concerning our Mission policy (cf. GD: Part II, on Mission policy, chapter 1)?
- 5) Are we guided by the principles in our mission policy, such as exploration, selection and training of the personnel, clarity with regard to contracts, evaluation of the undertakings?

#### **10. MSFS MISSION UNITS IN AFRICA AND OTHER POTENTIAL UNITS**

(In reference to East Africa, Chad-Cameroon, Mozambique and Southern Africa Region)

- 1) Is there a clear vision of mission in Africa in these mission units?
- 2) What is the depth and extent of relation and coordination between the main province and their mission units in Africa? (How much sense of belongingness and owning up?)
- 3) Are there serious steps for strengthening these units toward more self-reliant and self-governing units?
- 4) What is the pace of growth and what are the measures taken in these mission units concerning mission, education, vocation promotion, formation and innovative ministries?
- 5) What are certain constraints and pressures?
- 6) What are some of the immediate concerns?

#### **11. LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE, ARUSHA (LCI)**

- 1) What is the extent of the impact of LCI in Africa?
- 2) What are the steps toward a hopeful future of LCI?
- 3) How to foster a more deepened and committed response of the whole Congregation on behalf of LCI?

#### **12. MSFS PROVINCES IN THE WEST – FRANCO-SWISS , BRAZIL & ENGLAND**

- 1) What steps are being taken to address the concrete reality of diminishing numbers in the western provinces?
- 2) Do we positively confront and accept this changing face of the provinces with the reduction of numbers?
- 3) Do we understand that the present policy of supply of confreres from provinces with reasonable numbers to those with less, is grounded in the truth that we as one Congregation are one community of confreres due for mutual help and support?
- 4) What exactly are we aiming at through this sharing of personnel – just temporary survival through sustaining the existing centres, or giving fresh lease of life and energy and reviving the Congregation?
- 5) How much clear and faithful we are with regard to the contracts between the needy provinces and sending provinces, specifying the factors like time, number, competence, maintenance, ministry etc.?
- 6) Is there clarity about the implications for a province with too reduced numbers, such as reduction to a region, delegation, integration into another province, co-opting with another province or twinning with another province? (cf. GD, 282-284)

#### **13. PHILLIPPINES**

- 1) An assessment about the present situation of MSFS mission in these areas
  - a. Is the pace of development there proportionate to the duration of our presence?
  - b. The intensity of the effect of presence as MSFS?
  - c. The constraints and challenges
  - d. Possible remedies

- 2) Vision for the future
  - a. Reg. The type of ministry
  - b. Reg. The juridical structure of the mission-unit (toward region etc.)
  - c. Reg. Animation of religious life
  - d. Reg. Rapport between the principal mother province and these units?

#### **14. PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

- 1) An assessment about the present situation of MSFS mission in these areas
  - a. Is the pace of development there proportionate to the duration of our presence?
  - b. The intensity of the effect of presence as MSFS?
  - c. The constraints and challenges
  - d. Possible remedies
- 2) Vision for the future
  - a. Reg. The type of ministry
  - b. Reg. The juridical structure of the mission-unit (toward delegation, region etc.)
  - c. Reg. Animation of religious life
  - d. Reg. Rapport between the principal mother province and these units?

#### **15. SOUTH-ASIA**

- 1) What are the prospects and plans for exploration into a mission of South-Asia?
- 2) What is the vision for South-Asia?

#### **16. TRINIDAD & SANTA LUCIA**

- 1) An assessment about the present situation of MSFS mission in these areas
  - a. Is the pace of development there proportionate to the duration of our presence?
  - b. The intensity of the effect of presence as MSFS?
  - c. The constraints and challenges
  - d. Possible remedies
- 2) Vision for the future
  - a. Reg. The type of ministry
  - b. Reg. The juridical structure of the mission-unit (toward delegation, region etc.)
  - c. Reg. Animation of religious life
  - d. Reg. Rapport between the principal mother province and these units?

#### **17. MSFS PROVINCES IN INDIA & RANCHI MEDICAL COLLEGE PROJECT**

- 1) What are our concrete efforts to bear witness to our MSFS identity through fidelity to our charism?
- 2) How much are we attentive and responsive to the changing needs of the Church and society?
- 3) In a context of religious pluralism and not-so-conducive-mission-atmosphere, how do we address the factor of expansion and the apparent need for territorial demarcation and division of provinces?
- 4) What are the challenges associated with the project of the Ranchi Medical College?
- 5) In which way the Ranchi project can contribute to the visibility and witnessing of MSFS in Indian Church?

## **18. SHARING OF RESOURCES (Personnel, Finance, the other)**

- 1) Are we convinced of the principle and obligation of sharing of resources in terms of personnel and finance, in the united spirit of mutual collaboration and support?
- 2) What are some main factors that come on the way sharing of resources?
  - a. Lack of personnel to “spare”
  - b. Fear of being “exploited/ overhauled” by the sending provinces
  - c. Fear of uneasy / unsavoury relationships between the sending and receiving provinces
  - d. Overemphasis on provincial autonomy leading to insufficient focus on inter-province collaboration?
  - e. Diminishing financial resources leading to helplessness to help others despite good will

## **19. APOSTOLATE: MISSION**

1. What is the understanding of mission in the present changing times?
2. What are the reasons for a general decline of missionary fervour and for “heavy institutionalisation” in the Congregation today?
3. How do you balance between the apparent polarities like mission – institution, consolidation – expansion, mission at home – mission abroad, mission in developed countries – mission in developing countries?

## **20. APOSTOLATE: EDUCATION**

- 1) What is our outlook toward education? How much education apostolate is seen and lived as a mission of liberation and integration in the light of the MSFS Constitution?
- 2) In the specific situation of West pertaining to the diminishing numbers of the confreres, what can be the changed role and style of functioning of education apostolate?
- 3) In the specific Indian context of increased importance and availability of education, and “commercialisation” of education, how do we address factors like,
  - a. Presenting education as more liberative and integrated
  - b. Stiff competition from the corporate schools
  - c. Growing pressure to evolve an identity of our own, distinct from others
  - d. Questions about the competence and quality of educators
  - e. Education apostolate as a team-work
  - f. Special consideration for the poor

## **21. APOSTOLATE: FORMATION – FORMAL AND ONGOING**

- 1)** Focus: A critical evaluation of the implementation of *Formation Guidelines*
- 2) Special attention to the formators –quality, training, team etc.
- 3) A holistic formation to the formees – Salesian/ missionary/ communitarian/ pastoral/ social
- 4) The kind of vocation promotion – accompanying / screening
- 5) The intensity and effectivity of programmes for on-going formation

## **22. APOSTOLATE: INNOVATIVE MINISTRIES**

- 1) The need to revisit the terminology – providing more clarity, proposing alternative terms and rearticulating (as “diversified ministries”?)
- 2) How to foster an integral perspective of Innovative ministries –
  - a. As integral to the holistic mission of MSFS
  - b. As to blend harmoniously with traditional ministries



- c. As not appendix or contradictory to the pastoral ministry, but as complementary and authenticating
- 3) How to enhance the efficacy of Innovative ministries (bearing in mind factors like selection and identification of ministry, selection of personnel and their due training etc.)?

### **23. STEWARDSHIP**

- 1) Focus: A critical evaluation of financial transparency –accountability in budgeting and auditing, and sharing of resources
- 2) Need for technical, financial training and competence
- 3) What must be our plan of action in a context of increasing manipulations and abuses?
- 4) The need for a Mission-procure for the Congregation and the need to increase efforts for finance mobilisation

### **24. CODE OF ETHICS AND VOWED LIFE**

- 1) The exigency and the need to effect Code of Ethics in a precarious context of aberrations and grave repercussions
- 2) The need and the ways to promote a new mind-set and a new culture – of simplicity and moderation, of integrity and maturity, of obedience and responsibility

### **25. NEW GOVERNANCE**

- 1) Focus: A critical evaluation of New governance
  - a. Its relevance
  - b. Its efficacy
  - c. Its drawbacks
- 2) Structure and Scope of General Administration
  - a. Generalate – (i) Generalate house (ii) functioning (iii) sustainability (iv) Interaction with the provinces and units (v) Affairs with Rome
  - b. Role and functions of Assistant Superior General
  - c. Role and functions of General Bursar
  - d. General Councillors – (i) domain of work (ii) general secretariat house/s (iii) rapport and involvement with the provincial administrations
- 3) Structure and Scope of Provincial Administration
  - a. Provincial – (i) Term of office – four + three years? (ii) Mode of appointment (iii) Mode of functioning – more decentralising and delegating
  - b. Provincial Councillors – (i) Term of office (ii) Mode of election (iii) Range of responsibilities
  - c. Provincial Bursar – (i) Mode of election (being elected **only** from the panel of three names proposed by the provincial council, excluding the possibility of leaving it open also to the choice of the assembly) (ii) Rapport with the provincial (iii) A more significant role in evolving a unified transparent system of financial transaction
  - d. Provincial Vicar – (i) the Need of such a role (to support the provincial in the administrative burdens (ii) Clarity between provincial Vicar – Admonitor
  - e. Province Secretary – for a period of 5 years? so as to provide a link of continuity and stability in the clerical matters of administration
- 4) Role of Local communities and Local superiors
- 5) Provincials of India Forum (PIF) – the constitutionality and the efficacy of it
- 6) Forums of apostolates – the importance and functioning of them

## **26. STUDY OF THE CONSTITUTIONS & AMENDMENTS TO GENERAL DIRECTORY**

- 1) Focus: Familiarity with the Constitutions
- 2) How much reverential and faithful to the Constitution as our Rule of life?
- 3) Focus: Amendments proposed by the Ad-hoc Committee as pointing to the renewal of life in response to the changing times and needs, and as being ever alive and relevant

## **27. SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY**

- 1) Focus: Promotion of Fransalian heritage
- 2) Dissemination of Salesian spirituality, in reference to the Salesian Spirituality Institute, Salesian literature, Salesian retreats and Salesian seminars
- 3) Efforts toward promotion of the Cause of the Founder
- 4) Encouraging and promoting Friends of Fransalians
- 5) Presenting Fransalian Contemplatives as a way of life in fidelity to our mystical – missionary call

## **28. QUALITY OF OUR RELIGIOUS LIFE; AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP**

- 1) Focus: As religious missionaries, how do we live as mystics of God’s love and as prophets in prophetic ministries?
- 2) What are the blocks against community living, a “liminal way of life”, proper to our religious vocation, while being engaged in missionary ventures? What are the remedies?
- 3) What is a Fransalian model of leadership? How do we pursue and promote it?
- 4) What are the areas of criticism and blame and the drawbacks concerning the present authority?
- 5) What are the areas of change?

## **APPENDIX 3: LIST OF CAPITULANTS, AND INVITEES**

### **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fernandes Agnelo	Superior General
Cherukat Thomas	Assistant General
Rebello Noel	General Councillor
Parampukattil George	General Councillor
Thumma Mariadas Reddy	General Councillor
Mangatt Augustine	General Bursar
Bugnon Gilberto	Provincial of Brasil
Kalludukiyil Johnson	Provincial of East Africa
McGrath Terry	Provincial of England
Carron Yves	Provincial of Franco Swiss
Karamakuzhiyil Jacob	Provincial of Nagpur
Thadathil Francis	Provincial of North-East India
S. Vincent Lourduswamy	Provincial of Pune
Antony Dharmaraj	Provincial of South-East India
Vettuvilil Abraham	Provincial of South-West India
Paicatt Simon	Provincial of Visakhapatnam
Tharappel Augustine	Regional Superior of USA Region

### **DELEGATES**

Aerathedathu Thomas  
Vettickal Sunny  
Jean-Patrice Coulon  
Jean Paul Fournier  
Annaikandathil Sebastian  
John Britto Muthusamy  
Pulloppillil Joseph  
Panthanmackel George  
Thazhathukunnel Joseph  
Karondukadavil John  
Paul Sagayam  
S. Jayaseelan  
A. Edward  
Kootinal George  
Ignaci Muthu  
Kalariparambil Thomas  
Kumblolickal Jose  
Parappillil Jose  
Chakkalackal Jolly  
Alappat George  
Sesetty Mariadas

Delegate from Brasil  
Delegate from East Africa  
Delegate from England  
Delegate from Franco-Swiss  
Delegate from Nagpur  
Delegate from Nagpur  
Delegate from Nagpur  
Delegate from North-East India  
Delegate from North-East India  
Delegate from North-East India  
Delegate from Pune  
Delegate from Pune  
Delegate from South-East India  
Delegate from South-East India  
Delegate from South-East India  
Delegate from South-West India  
Delegate from South-West India  
Delegate from South-West India  
Delegate from Visakhapatnam  
Delegate from Visakhapatnam  
Delegate from Visakhapatnam

**INVITEES**

Emile Mayoraz  
Marco Sanhueza,  
Sabukuttan Francis,

Former Superior General  
Superior, Chile Mission  
Delegate of the Superior General in GAH  
(Germany- Austria- Holland)

**SPECIAL INVITEES TO SPECIFIED SESSIONS**

Arackathara Babychan  
Chackalackal Davis  
Gonsalves Paul  
Malana Mani  
Nellikunnel Cyriac Thomas  
  
Nellimalamattam Joshy  
Panthalanickal Shijo  
Pathiyakam Jinu  
  
Perumalil Thomas  
  
-----  
Velicakathu Joy

Regional Superior, Southern Africa Region  
Nominated by the members of USA Region  
Mission Superior, Mozambique Mission  
Nominated by the confreres in Australia  
Coordinator of MSFS in German-speaking  
Switzerland  
Mission Superior, Chad- Cameroon Mission  
Nominated by the confreres in Trinidad  
Delegation Superior from Philippines  
Delegation  
Nominated by the confreres in Papua New  
Guinea  
Santa Lucia  
Nominated by the members of GAH