



Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales
SOUTH WEST INDIA PROVINCE
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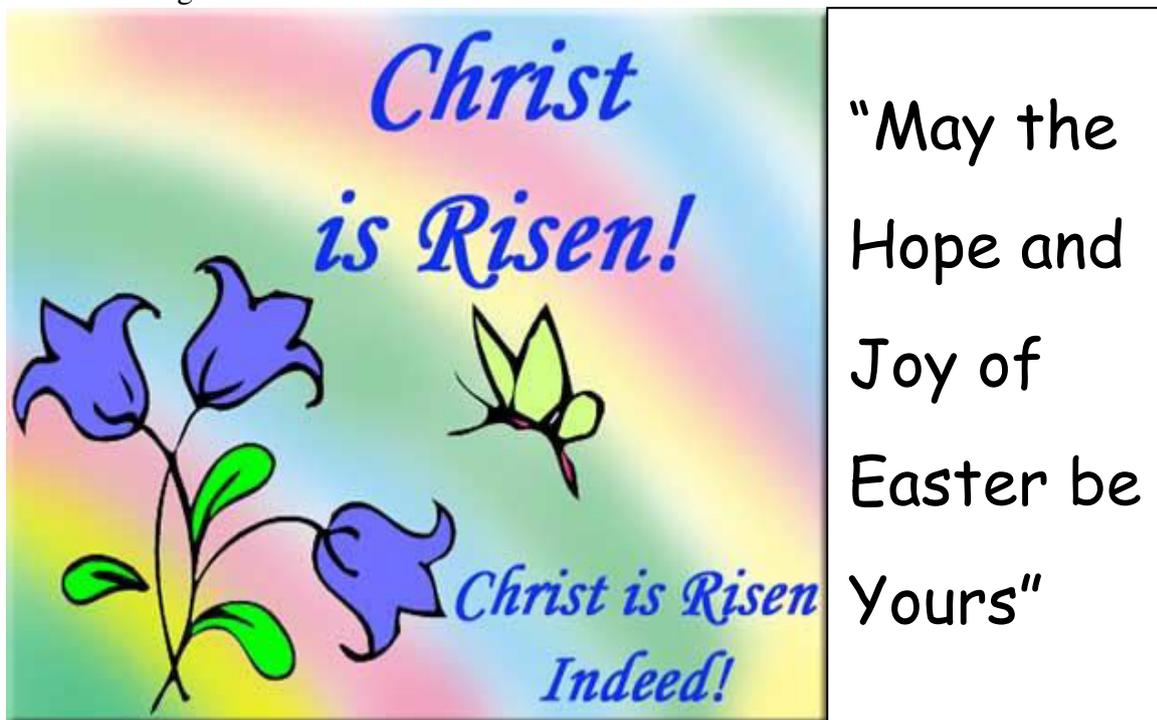
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Circular MK/6

27 March 2007

My dear Confreres,

I wish you a **Happy Easter!** Easter is a celebration of life coming out of death, of hope arising in the face of suffering and struggle. The joy of Easter is having come through the darkness of Good Friday and emptiness of Holy Saturday. It is believing that new life comes from suffering and death.



The Easter mystery of Jesus' resurrection is a celebration of our triumph over fears and disappointments radiating the joy of our hopes and dreams. It is a celebration of our belief that out of death comes life. It is an invitation to explore more deeply the relationship between death and life, an interplay that transforms us and brings us into the reality of truth. To experience Love-with-us is the true miracle of facing and coming through our darkest moments in life. It is to know that God is always with us and that we never alone are transforming. Knowing this truth sets us free. Thomas Merton often said our greatest suffering is that we experience ourselves as separated from God when in fact God is with us. Such realizations come as brilliant stars on our very blackest of nights as the interplay of life and death continues. During the Easter season I wish and pray that each of us experience the presence of the Risen Lord in our life.

Fr. Thomas Mattakarathundiyl

Fr. Thomas Mattakarathundiyl was taken to **Barcelona** for further treatment and rehabilitation. Fr. James Manjackal, together with Dr. Richi Febres Landauro, his wife and his mother did everything possible to get Fr. Thomas across to Spain. It was an arduous task and we believed that Fr. Thomas must get the best treatment and neuro-rehabilitation possible, so that he can meaningfully exercise his priestly ministry.

His address:

Rev. Fr. Thomas Mattakarathundiyl msfs
Instituto Guttmann, Cami de Can Ruti, s/n
08916 Badalona – Barcelona, Spain
Tel. 0034 934 977700

I have no words to thank Fr. Manjackal and Dr. Richi, his wife and his mother Gabi for what they have done for Fr. Thomas and for all of us. That is why I add below the letter Dr. Richi has written to me and all of us, giving us detailed information connected to Fr. Thomas' rehabilitation and treatment.

Letter from Dr. Richi

Praise the Lord! Halleluja!
God bless you, dear Fr. Matthew!

*My cherished brother, we are witnesses of the inextinguishable power of the infinite compassion and love of Our Lord. It is alone through the incredible guidance of His divine fatherly providence **that the joint efforts of the congregation of M.S.F.S. and of a few lovingly dedicated friends, including my mother, my wife and myself,** could fulfil the will of Our Heavenly Father and made it possible for Fr. Thomaskutty to receive the best thinkable treatment in a leading world class institution, the Guttmann Institute of Neurorehabilitation.*

*When we left India Fr. Thomaskutty was feeling weak, he was hardly able to sit, his hands were weak and he spoke very softly, so it was very difficult to hear him, it was impossible for him to accomplish the simplest necessities. The doctors in the Guttmann Institute have confirmed that Fr. Thomaskutty has a spinal lesion at the level of his chest, below this level no movement or sensation is possible, this includes his lower breathing muscles. **During the next months a multiprofessional team will help Fr. Thomaskutty learn how to dress and undress himself, he will be able to get on and off his wheelchair, he will learn how to live independently and do his physical necessities by himself. Furthermore, Fr. Thomaskutty will regain his voice, so he will be able to preach, and he will regain full control and strength in his hands making him able to celebrate mass and fulfil his duties, with a special wheelchair he will even be able to stand for mass and drive a car (a special one)! We were also very happy to know that the Guttmann Institute has the best "Wheelchair-Basketball" team in Spain and that many patients can do several kinds of sports while on a wheelchair! So by the grace of Our Lord, Fr. Thomaskutty will come back to India as a new man and a new priest!***

*I remember the days in which we were contacting each other innumerable times on the phone and by email, organizing, praying and trying to move heaven and earth to bring joy and hope into the life and suffering of one of God's anointed children. **It is true what you said, that only someone who is IN LOVE WITH JESUS can do such a thing, let me tell you that I am***

not the only one. I thank you dear Fr. Mathew, I thank you for your selfless help and unlimited support, I thank you for the encouragement and love with which you kept the flame of compassion alive in our hearts, please receive our gratitude and extend this to the bishop and the authorities involved as well **as to all your confreres in the M.S.F.S** who you so excellently managed and helped us greatly with their prayers and their deeds, specially Fr. Joseph Thayil and Fr. Johny. We alone would have never been able to accomplish such an enterprise successfully. It was with the help of Dr. Helene and Dr. Christoph from Salzburg that we could acquire the necessary equipment to transport Fr. Thomaskutty. My mother Gaby organized many Spanish friends to support this noble cause.

My special gratitude also goes to Fr. James Manjackal not only for his excellent moral support and blessed guidance, but also for his relentless encouragement - his loving words are still in my mind "Surrender to the Lord, never give up my son!" He is contacting sponsors and benefactors who today are ready, willing and eager to share the great blessings that come through such a wonderful deed. Fr. James Manjackal even went as far as compromising his own health and well being (he was suffering under a pneumonia), travelling to India and assailing the last grievous impediments to Fr. Thomaskutty's journey. As you well know we had great problems even to the very last moments, in which you called to receive the news that Qatar Airways didn't want to let us enter the plane. It was then that you lifted your heart to God, as Fr. James called the aprox. 500 people surrounding the ambulance to pray for our cause, at the same time my mother and my wife in Europe were awakened by the Spirit, unable to sleep and praying for us, here I see the great love of and concern of Fr. James for the members of the congregation (I and my family have the privilege of his love ever since we attended his retreat, he has a compassionate and loving heart). I remember the silent smile of Fr. Johny, the prayerful eyes of Fr. Joseph and the folded hands of the relatives and confreres of Fr. Thomaskutty and of all those around us, all I did is what any man would do, I took him into my arms and placed him on a wheelchair, to take him on the longest journey of his life until then. My task was nothing but that of a humble servant, simply to carry him, I did but the least - what kind of man would I be if wouldn't put all my abilities to the service of the One who created me and gave them to me in the first place? This was one of the moments in which the heavens touched the earth; the manager of Qatar Airways said he would only allow us to board the plane if the pilot would come and see the patient, but the pilot said "If a priest and a doctor are with him, then I don't need to see the patient, allow them on board!" and thus we could fly to Spain! We then had a wonderful and very comfortable trip to Barcelona, the stewardesses and ground staff took care of us like angels.

Beloved Fr. Mathew, it is a privilege for all the involved to take part in such a blessed and anointed deed, I thank you once again for believing in us and helping us fight for a better future in the life and ministry of Fr. Thomaskutty, I am sure that beyond our words and feelings of gratitude Our Father in heaven is looking down upon us with wisdom and love filling the measure of glory, blessings and grace we are to receive on the day of His coming. Please be assured that I will do the utmost to be present wherever you may be in Germany when you come in order of having the wonderful honour of meeting you. Please pray for me and my family that we may live an authentic Christian life, and that my youngest son James may receive a religious vocation to be a priest like our Fr. James.

I assure my prayers for you and the congregation,
in the love of Our Lord,

Richi

Let us pray for the departed

Mr. Vareed, 85 years, father of Frs. Jose Karekatt and Raphael Karekatt, expired on 25.02.2007.

Transfers and Appointments

Fr. Johny Kanjirampampil is appointed the Superior of Charis Bhavan Community w.e.from 30 May 2007.

Fr. Joseph Thayil is appointed the Superior of SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor w.e. from 1 June 2007.

Fr. Antony Swamy is appointed the Superior of Mermier Bhavan Community, Hebbagodi, w.e.from 20 May 2007.

Fr. Mathew Kalathungal is appointed the Superior of PSI Sevagram, Kengeri w.e.from 20 May 2007.

Fr. Joshy Nellimalamattam is appointed the mission Superior of Chad- Cameroon Mission.

Fr. Thomas Cherukat is appointed the Interim-Rector of the newly constructed Scholasticate at Ngoya, in Cameroon with immediate effect.

Fr. George Choorapuzha is appointed Rector of SFS Vidyashram, Aluva

Fr. Christopher Crasta is appointed Rector of the Orientation Programme to be started in Saumya Sadan, Mysore from June 2007.

Fr. Sen Vellakada is appointed the Vice-rector of SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor w.e.from 1 June 2007.

Fr. Martin Richard is appointed the Procurator of the Scholasticate at Ngoya, Cameroon with immediate effect.

Fr. Santhosh Kumar is appointed to be on the staff of Suvidya College w.e. from 15 January 2007.

Fr. Jose Kannanaickal is appointed to be on the staff of Suvidya College w.e. from 1 June 2007.

Fr. Vinoy Valachathinakathu is appointed to be on the staff of The Orientation Programme, Mysore w.e. from 1 June 2007.

Fr. Soby Maroor is appointed the Principal of SFS English Medium School (State syllabus), Hebbagodi w.e from 11 April 2007.

Fr. Roy Plathottathil is appointed the Principal of SFS P.U College Hebbagodi w.e.from 23 April 2007.

Fr. Joseph Mannukuzhumpil is appointed the Vice Principal, SFS School, Srinivaspur w. e. from 1 June 2007.

Orientation Course in Saumya Sadan

As part of the Action Plan of Provincial Congress 2006 we will have two centers for Orientation Programme from June 2007; one in SFS Ettumanoor and the other in Saumya Sadan, Mysore. They will not function as Regional Minor Seminaries but rather as two centers for initial training. The candidates can opt to go to either of the seminaries and the vocation promoters have to pay special attention to make them aware of this possibility and positively encourage them to do so. The last General Chapter spoke about the necessity of establishing translingual communities and underlining the transculturality of our Congregation. Let us always keep in mind that although we work locally we are part of an International Congregation.

Visitation to Europe

I am in Europe from 23rd March and will be back in India on 30th April after visiting our confreres in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Spain and meeting some friends and benefactors. Please pray for a safe trip. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil is, as usual, the Provincial Vicar.

My Visitation to Chad-Cameroon Mission

From the 13th of February to the 6th of March I had the privilege of being with the confreres in Chad-Cameroon Mission. It was a very positive and encouraging experience for me to see the confreres committed fully to various ministries entrusted to them. By our commitment to apostolate beyond the boundaries of our own countries and cultures we take seriously the mission mandate of Jesus “Go to the whole world and preach the Gospel to the whole of creation” (Mk.16.15). I deeply felt that in our Chad-Cameroon Mission we are faithfully following the Apostolate Overseas and Pioneering Evangelization as enshrined in the constitution. “We strive to proclaim the Gospel with eagerness and enthusiasm in areas where it is not yet proclaimed and Where the Church is not yet implanted.” (Constitution Art. 32) The continent of Africa is the most fertile field for the Word of God today. We can be proud that as a Province we are also part of this venture of the Universal Church in bringing Gospel to the African Continent. I thank our confreres there along with the Mission Superior, Fr. Thomas Cherukat, for their dedicated service in this mission. **In my next circular I shall give a detailed account of my visit to the Mission and the vision that the confreres have formulated for the Mission in West Africa.**

The Blessing and Inauguration of the Scholasticate at Ngoya

The Blessing and inauguration of the newly constructed Scholasticate, “*La Feuillette*” at Ngoya, near Yaounde will take place on Tuesday, 10th April. Rt. Rev. Msgr. Jerome Owono Mimboe, Bishop of Obala has consented to preside over the celebrations. This is the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream of having a house of our own in the Chad-Cameroon Mission.

Scholastics Scaria, Paul Raj, Periyannayagam, Giridhari, Maria Lawrence and Sandeep were staying with the Sacred Heart Fathers and Manoj, Gijo, Boban, Robin, Kuldeep and our Scholastics from Cameroon, Innocent and Bonaventure were staying in the rented house “Maison Pierre Mermier” at Nkollbisson, Yaoundé. The house at Nkollbisson was known as the “house of Dust” and the confreres were living in unhealthy surroundings. Earlier a few scholastics were staying with the Lazarists. I know that the community will be happy to be together in the newly constructed house.

Fr Thomas Cherukat is temporarily appointed as the Rector and Fr. Martin Richard the Procurator. I would like to thank Fr. Thomas Cherukat for his unreserved commitment and his vision for the Chad-Cameroon Mission. He bought the land, (now getting it registered in the name of the Society,) and constructed a beautiful and spacious house. Surely he had a lot of struggle to get the finances organized, but he has done it in a wonderful way. I make use of this opportunity also to thank Fr. Mayoraz and the Franco-Swiss Province for their generous contribution towards this purpose. Please remember our mission especially on 10th April.

New Books from Fr. Antony Mookenthottam

- a. **Selected Letters and Writings of Fr. Peter-Marie Mermier** (1790 -1862), Edited by Adrien Duval, Translated by Antony Mookenthottam. This is a collection of Letters and Writings of

our saintly Founder Fr. Mermier. Fr. General in his forward to the book writes: “To us who are his sons ... this insightful collection captures the Spirit of our Founder and inspires us to live it in our lives. Mermerian writings unfold those Salesian gems of virtues like gentleness, apostolic zeal, compassion, patience, peace and serenity, conformity to the divine will...” Gems lie hidden, once discovered they shine. Their brightness begins to spread. Such are the Selections from the Writings and letters of Fr. Mermier.

b. Introduction to Indian Spirituality, Vol. I

In this book Fr. Antony has gone back to the original text on which the entire edifice of Hindu Spirituality stands – “an invaluable venture which goes a long way in creating an ethos of dialogic understanding, tolerance and universality, which is the crying need of the time.” (Prof. Ashok Kumar Chatterjee, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University (Rtd.)

I would like to congratulate Fr. Antony for his tireless service in not only making known the writings of St Francis de Sales and Fr. Peter Mermier but also for contributing towards genuine understanding of Indian Spirituality. I request the confreres to buy the books from IIS and add it to the repertoire of their collection and surely read and gain inspiration especially from our Founder.

News from the Province

A great day for SFS TTI, Kolar!

On 12th March 2007, the first fruit of **Paper Craft and Note Book Making Technology Course** was brought to light by Provincial Rev. Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam by handing over the first note book to Fr. Erudayaraja the Councilor in-charge of Education. The event took place amidst the gathering of all the educationists of South West Province. The provincial highlighted the purpose of this new venture. Besides providing books for our schools, TTI gives employment for some rural youth. The profits accruing out of this undertaking will come to a central scholarship fund for poor children and marginalized youth. SFS TTI is sure to produce and supply note books for all our schools in Karnataka, and it is on the way of improvement, and self sustenance with its income.

Besides the existing courses in Electricals, Electronics, and Computer Hardware, TTI has also started **Driving and Automobile Mechanism Course** for the rural youth in Karnataka. The programme began with 5 trainees on 24th March 2007. Training is given in expert driving, basic automobile mechanism, general etiquette, personality development and spoken English. They will be trained to get a driving job in the corporate sector or in religious houses. SFS TTI, Kolar is also in fast pursuit to begin its **Fashion Technology Course** in near future. We dream of activating our carpentry and welding section, starting courses in Printing Technology, Secretarial Training, Diesel Engine Mechanics, and similar courses that will be of use to the rural and marginalized youth.

Kolar Youth Meet -2007

On 25th March,2007 a one day spiritual renewal programme for the youth was conducted in Kolar denary. The programme was conducted in Malayalam at St. Mary’s Church, Kolar. Fr. Varghese from Logos Retreat centre, Bangalore and Bro. Mario from Divine Retreat centre, Chalakudy were the Preachers of the day. Fr. Sathish MSFS celebrated Eucharist at the

conclusion of the programme. Frs. Doraisamy, Sebastian Kulangarathottiyil, Saji Vadakkedath and Biju Palamkunnel were available for counseling and hearing confession. Nearly 200 students were spiritually enriched from the programme.

Reported by Fr. Biju Palamkunnel msfs

Silver Jubilee Celebration of NAAMALP School at Thelpara

Our School at Thelpara celebrated 25 years of its existence on 15 March 2007. Rev. Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam inaugurated the jubilee celebration as hundreds of local people witnessed it. Provincial appreciated the good work of MSFS missionaries and all those are involved in the running of the school. He also praised the generosity of Mr. P.A Thomas Pamputhookkil who handed over the school to the MSFS in 1982. It was indeed a day of joy for all in Thelpara as the school play an important role in the life of every one there. All those who served in the school as its managers and teachers too were present for the function. Amarambalam Panchayath members and parents spoke highly of the service of MSFS in the area. Cultural programme conducted by the students and the former students added colour to the event. This school is a witness for our commitment to the marginalized in this area and we can be sure that it will be a source of blessing for us and for the people in the vicinity of the Vinayakumar Ashram.

General Chapter

The *overview /Synopsis* of the discussions held in apostolic communities in preparation for the General Chapter is attached to the circular. Fr. General wished that it be circulated among the members so that they can give their feedbacks to the delegates of the General Chapter. The General Chapter is scheduled to take place from 19th May to 5th June 2007 at Suvidya College Bangalore.

Yours Sincerely



Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam msfs
Provincial