

MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES – MSFS

SOUTH WEST PROVINCE - INDIA



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Circular MK/17

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My dear Confreres,

First of all I wish all of you a very Happy Christmas

Christmas is a time for fellowship and demonstrating one's love for others. However, we must never forget God was the first to demonstrate His love to us. So the true meaning of Christmas is not about man loving man, human loving human. The true meaning of Christmas is about God loving man. And this has not changed throughout the centuries since His Son's birth; He is still saying "I love you."



We long to know we are loved with an infinite love and that there is hope no matter what we face. The message of Christmas is one of God's personal love given through the life of Jesus Christ. It is a message of extreme favor and unconditional acceptance. The message of Christmas is one of eternal love. It is written personally to you: God loves you, and no one can take His love away from you. Neither sin nor any other force can rob what He has established.

The General Administration meets the Provincials

From 11 – 13 November 2008 the General Administration had its meeting with the Indian Provincials and the Provincial of East Africa. The hallowed Ross Hill in Visakhapatnam was the venue. On this magnificent hill overlooking the Bay of Bengal, we could savour the history and the traditions of our Congregation and think about the daring missionaries who worked in our beloved country. Visakhapatnam is a great piece of history of the MSFS Congregation in India and it is here that once again the General Administration and the Provincials found unanimously a great need to return to the sources and affirm

the missionary spirit and identity of our Congregation. The discussions were very cordial and we could see a new spirit of unity emerging in our Congregation, the unity of hearts transcending barriers of cultures and languages which is to be the hallmark of any MSFS. The divisive forces that seem to tear our country apart and jeopardize our political unity are counter values and cannot be part of the culture of any international congregation. The Gospel of Jesus commits us to values and mindset that go beyond the narrow limits of region, language, culture and mentality paving the way for a new society which Jesus envisaged where all differences fall away and members live as brothers in unity. Then we have the witness potential as a Congregation to embody the deepest values of the Gospel.

There were many other concerns that were points of discussion especially some juridical matters and the new MSFS governance as envisaged in our new Constitutions and General Directory. The Constitutions keep a delicate balance between a sufficient central co-ordinating authority and provinces that enjoy autonomy in making decisions. The emphasis is on team work at all levels and as Fr. General emphasizes “constant communion and communication, interaction and frank appraisal of facts, situations and persons will have to be characteristic of new administrations.” To effectively implement teamwork within the general and provincial administrations the five forums and various commissions have been instituted. The ultimate purpose is good governance and involvement of everyone in determining the course of the history of our beloved Congregation which involves terrific responsibilities on the part of each member. Our story will be a common story and the way we live and the decisions we take today, will shape the life of the Congregation tomorrow. Some choices will be hard to make but the common good is to be upheld.

Experience: Constitution Growth Retreat

The Constitution Growth Retreat was also held on Ross Hill, from 14-18 November 2008 for the General Curia, all the Provincials and Regional Superiors and the members of the Constitution Growth Committee. It was an in-depth experience of the spiritual, theological, religious and administrative significance of our Constitutions. A special word of gratitude to Fr. Jacob Parappally, the chairman and the members of the Committee for the wonderful way they have organized the Constitution Growth Retreat. The same experience will be imparted also to all confreres of the Province by the members of the Committee during the coming years.

The Lumen Christi Institute in Arusha, Tanzania

The MSFS General Chapter 2001 had made a concrete proposal “to establish a Mission Institute”. The General Administration followed it up by appointing a committee followed by other committees to study the proposal in detail. As a result a mega concept of a Fransalian University embodying a bold and expansive vision to train well-motivated and skilled personnel in and for the entire continent of Africa was evolved. The extraordinary General Chapter decided in principle the desirability of implementing the proposed mega concept and the concept of a Fransalian University in Africa was born. The subsequent meeting of the General Council and the Indian and the East African

Provincials endorsed the concept and agreed in principle that the proposed University is the project of the entire Congregation. In November 2005 Fr. Augustine Mangatt was appointed as the Delegate of the Superior General and Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil as the Director of the Institute with effect from 1 Jan. 2006. The Mission Superiors of Africa Forum (MSAF) held at Ngoundere, Cameroon in January 2006 proposed that the University be known as “Lumen Christi University”.

- The institute is initiated, established, governed, administered and maintained under the direct jurisdiction and supervision of the Superior General and his Council.
- All the MSFS Provinces/Regions/Delegations/Missions without any exception are the active participants in the whole project. They collaborate with the Superior General by making available adequate number of personnel and finances toward the project.
- The entire Local Administrative Council and the MSFS resident staff are de-linked from their respective Provinces/Regions/ Delegations/Missions and are placed under the direct jurisdiction of the Superior General for the period of their service to the Institute.

The proposed Institute as a common undertaking of the entire Congregation embodies the missionary heritage of the Congregation with its contributions in educational, developmental and social works in different parts of the world and makes a concrete contribution to the people of Africa in their struggle for dignity and development. 100 acres of land in a wonderful location in Arusha near to the Kilimanjaro Mountains (the highest in Africa) have been obtained and the first building has been constructed. The academic structure will consist of seven faculties with various departments

- Faculty of Social Sciences and Culture
- Faculty of Philosophy and Religion
- Faculty of Education and Human Resource Development
- Faculty of Christian Theology
- Faculty of Mass Communications
- Faculty of Physical Sciences
- Faculty of Food, Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences

The Province of East Africa is fully committed to this vision and we congratulate them and the Superior General for launching into this daring missionary endeavour. We assure the Superior General and His Council and the East African Province our cooperation in realizing this dream.

Implementing the decisions of 18th General Chapter

The 18th General Chapter lies already one and a half year back. We need to implement the decisions of the Chapter and that is also the fervent wish of the Chapter Fathers and the General Administration together with the Provincials. All of you have received the booklet with statement of the Chapter. I request you to read through it individually and in

the community and to imbibe the spirit of the Chapter. One or two things from the Action Plan I would like to bring to your kind notice immediately.

- Study the General directory and implement in the Communities relevant directives. Evaluate its implementation in the regular community meetings.
- Restructure the schedule of communities to give priority to common prayer, Eucharist, meals and common recreation on a daily basis.
- Arrange regular community meetings to reflect on values and concern of community life, on how the apostolic activities reflect our charism and to review monthly expenses.

I would wish very much that the above points of the Action Plan are immediately executed in all the communities. Those in close proximity will be formed into Local Communities very soon.

Provincial Statutes drafting committee

We have now a new Constitution and a new General Directory. Our Provincial Statutes is based on the Old Constitution and Directory. We need to update it and the Provincial Council has constituted a committee to draft the new Provincial Statutes. The members of the Committee are Fr. Jacob Parappally (convener), Fr. Antony Mookenthottam and Fr. Thomas Kalariparambil. We are happy to have these privileged members to draft our new Statutes as they have deep knowledge of our Constitutions and General Directory. Frs. Jacob and Kalary did wonderful service in drafting the Constitutions and Fr. Antony Mookenthottam has made substantial contributions in the drafting of the General Directory. Their insights, clarity in thinking, love for the Congregation and single minded devotion to the apostolates of the Congregation will help us to have Provincial Statutes which could be approved in the next Provincial Congress. They may constitute subcommittees to get the work done but the final drafting will be the work of the Committee. The first draft is to be ready by June 2009 to be sent to the apostolic communities for study and evaluation.

Committee for planning of Professional Courses in Aluva

On 18 June 2007 the commission on SFS Vidyashram submitted their findings to the Provincial and identified two proposals for further study and planning. The two options proposed were:

- Short term courses with the existing structures involving a minimum of investment for the re-organization of the rooms.
- Long term programmes for a full-fledged professional course involving new structures.

The first proposal was immediately taken up for consideration and the rooms are being modified to suit the purpose. We need now to find out the feasibility and viability of starting professional courses as was proposed by the commission. . To give concrete proposals to this effect the Provincial Council decided to appoint another committee with Fr. Jose Parappillil as convener and Frs. Erudayaraj, Wilson Kottam, Binoy Kurakalayil

and Manu Kumbidiamakkal as members. They can submit their findings by June 2009 to keep open the possibility of starting such courses by 2010 or 2011.

Committee to study future possibilities of Sudhirvana

Sudhirvana started as a counseling centre is no more functional since the departure of Fr. Augustine Tharappel to USA at the request of the then Superior General, Fr. Emile Mayoraz. Fr. Augustine had done commendable job in Sudhirvana which served as a centre to help priests and religious in crises and to capacitate them for serving the Church in their full capacity. Tejas Vidya Peetha, our mission oriented theological centre was housed here for more than three years. A prime land in such prime location needs efficient planning and so the Provincial Council decided to appoint a committee to study the possibilities that could emerge in Sudhirvana considering the changing economic and religious scenario of Bengaluru City. The convener of the committee is Fr. Jose Kumblolickal with Frs. Anthony Swamy, Henry Kodikuthiyil, and Santhosh Kumar as members. The committee can submit a report by June 2009.

New Nagpur Administration

The Nagpur Provincial Congress from 27 – 31 October 2008 has elected a new team of Councillors. We congratulate the newly elected Provincial Administration and wish them God's blessings.

Fr. Jacob Karamakuzhiyil (re-elected) Councillor in charge of Education

Fr. Melroy Almeida, Councillor in charge of Mission

Fr. Joseph Plathottam, Councillor in charge of Formation

Fr J.B. Muthuswamy, Councillor in charge of Innovative Ministries

Fr. David Paul, (re-elected) Bursar

At last: Water in the Novitiate

We were tested very much but at last we found water in our novitiate land. Due to scarcity of water we even contemplated to sell off the land. But the Lord and Fr. Mermier do not want us to do that. A number of wells have been bored in the land, but water just escaped our route. Fr. Doraisamy with his brother and a friend of them finally located a spot where we got already a small source at 115 feet and a good source of about two inches at 450 feet, enough water to take care of the cultivation and needs of the community. I thank Fr. Doraiswamy who never gave up insisting that there is water in the novitiate. We are grateful to God and Fr. Peter Mary Mermier who definitely played a role in finding out the best location where we could dig and find water.

Upcoming important events

Counseling Course in Charis Bhavan: Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvilil is conducting a certificate course for the "Basic skills in Counseling" in Charis Bhavan from December 1 – 6, 2008

Vocation Promoters meet: There will be a meeting of all the Vocation Promoters of South West Province in MSFS House, Kuvempunagar, Mysore on 22 December 2008. For further details please contact Fr. Henry Kodikuthiyil, Councilor in charge of Formation, Mob. Ph. +91 9448819733.

Mission Forum: The First Meeting of the Mission Forum of South West Province will be on 6- 7 January 2009 (6, 10.00 a.m – 7, 4.00 p.m) in Charis Bhavan. The Meeting will be animated by Rev. Dr. Jose Navas, Vicar General of Vijayapuram Diocese. His talks will be based on the theme: “Skills for effective Pastoral Ministry”. All the members of the Mission Forum are expected to be present for this meeting. In case you are unable to attend the meeting, please get a prior permission for the same from the Provincial. For further information please contact Fr. Johnny Kanjiramparambil, Councilor in charge of Mission, Mob. Ph. +91 9447910423

Visitation of the Superior General to the Philippines Mission: The Superior General will be making his official visitation to our Philippine mission from 9 – 17 January 2009. We welcome him to our Philippine Mission.

New Priests’ Seminar: All the new priests are invited to come to the Provincial House for a meeting with the Provincial and the Councillors from 20 – 24 January 2009. This group of priests are the first batch from Tejas, our Mission Oriented Theological Centre. We need to evaluate in all honesty, sincerity and openness the merits and demerits of our venture so that based on the feedbacks of our beloved fathers, we can effect valuable change in our concept and execution of the project. We intend also to inform and enlighten the young priests about various aspects of their priestly ministry and consecrated life. On the 21 January 2009 all the Councillors will be present for the meeting.

Formation Forum: The meeting of the Formation Forum of South West Province will take place on 26-27 January (26, 9.00 a.m to 27, 4.00 p.m) in Vinayalaya, Provincial House. All the members of the Formation Forum are expected to attend this meeting. In case you are unable to attend please get a prior permission for the same from the Provincial. For further information please contact Fr. Henry Kodikuthiyil, Councilor in charge of Formation. Ph. +91 9448819733.

Official Blessing and Inauguration of Tejas Vidya Peetha and NEST (Children’s village): On 3 February, 2009 Tejas and Nest will be officially blessed by the Archbishop of Bangalore and inaugurated by Abbot of the Augustinian Monastery in Klosterneuburg, Austria.

On Holidays

A number of our confreres were on holidays during the last months and still some are coming. Frs. Sunny Paul, Y. Mathias and Fr. Augustine Tharappel have already returned to their respective places after holidays. Frs. Thomas Cherukat and Kurian Aranjaniyil from Rome and K.V. Joseph from the Mission in Papua New Guinea are still here. Fr.

Santy is returning on the 3 December 2008. Frs. Joshy Nellimalamattam and Scaria Kannezhath from the African Mission will be here at the end of December. Fr. Tom Pannalakunnel from USA is also expected at the end of December and Fr. Mathew Elayidathumadom in the middle of January 2009.

Visit from German Friends

Rev. Father Francis Xavier Eder, the former Parish Priest of St. Benno's Parish in Munich, Germany where I stayed during my studies came with a group of 18 others to visit our facilities from 12 to 15 November 2008. As I had to be away Fr. Thomas Kalariparambil and Miss Rosamma Thomas, the Project Directress of the Nest took care of them. I could be with them for a day. They were touched by our Salesian Hospitality and the variety of our ministries and apostolates. They were enthusiastic about the NEST and the Boys' Home. We thank them for their friendship and fellowship with us.

Welcome back Home

Fr. Thomas Moongamakkal returned to India after sixteen long years of service in Austria and Germany. He worked as Parish Priest of Weilach for a number of years, built up the community there and ministered to the needs of the parishioners. Fr. Thomas is expecting his appointment.

Fr. Kurian Karickal returned home after years of service in Atlanta especially in the Syro-Malabar Community there. He organized the community, unified them and built a Church dedicated to the honor of St. Alphonsa. Fr. Kurian will be the Superior, Director, and Program Director of Charis Bhavan. We wish both of them all the best.

Appointments

Fr. Johnny Kanjiramparamabil is appointed as the Superior of MSFS House at Sulthan Batherry and Program Director of the same. He is also designated to be appointed by the Bishop of Manthavady as the Parish Priest of Kallumkukku

Fr. Henry Jose Kodikuthiyil is appointed to be on the staff of Tejas Vidya Peeth in Kengeri with effect from April 2009.

Fr. Kurian Karickal is appointed as the Superior, Director and Program Director of Charis Bhavan with effect from 8 December 2008.

Fr. Tomy Pulinthanam is appointed as Program Director of MSFS House which is to function as a Renewal and Spiritual Empowerment Centre with effect from 26. December 2008.

Fr. Dijo Koikkara is appointed as Assistant Director and Assistant Program Director of Charis Bhavan with effect from 8 December 2008

Fr. Arcokijayaraj is appointed as the Procurator of our Seminary in Silang Cavite with effect from 1 January 2009.

Fr. Sunil Ekka is appointed as the Vice Rector of Divya Jyothi Ashram from 10 October 2008 by Rev. Fr. Sebastian Annaikandathil Provincial of Nagpur Province. His Address

is: Fr.Sunil Ekka, Divya Jyoti Ashram, Latapara, Via Bargao, Sahajbhal Rd.,Sundargarh Dt., ORISSA - Pin. 770 016 Ph: 91 9178374043

Fr. Devasia Kalappura

Fr. Devasia was admitted to St. John's again as he was suffering under recurring fever and infection. During his stay he was diagnosed of having three arterial blocks. He underwent angiogram and after a prolonged stay in the hospital is now back in Vinayalaya. Please continue to pray for Fr. Devasia.

Fr. Salvador Fernandes

Fr. Salvador had an accident on 28 November 2008. He had some major injuries on his hand and ear and some minor injuries on the head. He is admitted to KLE Hospital in Belgaum. Please pray for him.

Fr. C. Joseph

Fr. C. Joseph is permitted to make a visit to Australia to take part in a fund-raising program for Gokunte, which is organized by Sunshine Gokunte friends together with Mrs. Judy in Australia. He is due to go there on 9 January 2009 and will be back after a month.

Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam

I am planning to go to Europe for a short trip. I intend also to take part in a convention in which Fr. Manjackal is due to preach in Fatima, Portugal. I will travel on 3 December 2008 and will return to India on 26 December 2008 via Dubai. The Christmas days will be spent in Dubai with friends.

Please pray for the departed

Mr. Walter Glocker, a friend and benefactor of ours who died a month ago in Germany.

Please for our sick

Mr. Scaria Kalariparambil, the father of Fr. Thomas Kalariparambil who was operated for fractures at the hip and the hand.

Your Brother in Christ

Mathew Kozhuppakalam

Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam MSFS

Glimpses from the Life of the Province

Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee Celebration

23 November 2008 was a day set apart by the province to celebrate the Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee of Rev. Fr. Kurian Aranjaniyil. It was a fitting tribute to the man who expanded his sphere of activities beyond the realm of culture, language and nation. The

festive evening began with the Eucharistic celebration by Jubilarian and Concelebrated by Rev. Provincials Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam, South West Province, Fr. Mario D'Souza, Pune Province, Fr. Sebastian Annaikandathil Nagpur Province and confreres from the different part of the world. Rev. Fr. Provincial reminisced his life experience with the Jubilarian as a seminarian and thanked him for all his contributions to the Congregation. The presence of many confreres, religious, well wishers and friends spoke volumes of his life and love. The splendid evening was coloured with cultural programmes and sumptuous meal.

Reported by Sujith Xavier Pallassery

Perpetual Profession

Nine of our brothers from Tejas made their Perpetual Profession on 30 November 2008. The celebration began with the Holy Eucharist presided over by Rev. Fr. Provincial Mathew Kozhuppakalam. Fr. James Manjackal who preached the day's homily exhorted everyone particularly the professed brothers to lead a life of prayer and commitment.

The perpetually professed are:

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|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Chakiath Bijil | 6. Palathadathil Aneesh |
| 2. Ekka Anand | 7. Puthukary Jose |
| 3. Eranyakulathil Tony | 8. Tigga Praful |
| 4. Lakra Thadeus | 9. Thunduparampil Abey |
| 5. Mariaraj George | |

We wish them all the best and God's blessings.

Reported by Riju Vazheparambil

One minute with St. Francis de Sales

“If through Holy Communion, you become more gentle, you will be drawing from it the fruit which is proper to it, and thus you will be advancing. If, on the contrary, you do not become more gentle or more humble, then you deserve to be deprived of the bread for which you do not labor.”

Inspirations from our Founder

“It is uprightness, purity of intentions, faithfulness in all our works that the Lord demands. **Not how much but how well.** Before the supreme judge what matters is the cost of works and not the weight. The world seeks renown – that they may be honoured before men (Mt. 6:2). The true disciple of Jesus Christ seeks to be forgotten, to hide himself from the eyes of the people” (Selected Letter and Writings of Fr. Mermier, Ed. by Adrien Duval, Translated by Antony Mookenthottam, p. 153).