



CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

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SG-AB-05

SUPERIOR GENERAL TO ALL THE MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

My dear Confreres:

I greet you in the joy of the Lord who has called each one of us to live in the spirit of St. Francis de Sales and in the missionary zeal of Father Peter Mermier. Most of you have already attended the Congregational Retreat or you are going to attend it in view of deepening your sense of identity as MSFS and your commitment to the Church through consecrated life. This Retreat is a preparatory step for us to journey in the spirit of the General Chapter 2013. The call of the GC 2013 continues to echo in our Congregation, **'I want Missions': MSFS - Mystics of God's Love for Prophetic Ministries today.** This is the re-statement of religious missionary commitment of our Founder and of the legacy of our pioneering missionaries. We are repeatedly reminded that the only way to fight the evils of consecrated life today – a **heightened individualism, a crisis of identity, and a cooling of fervor** – (as rightly observed by Pope Francis) is through a union with God resulting from our daily personal prayer and community prayer.

Karl Rahner once stated that *'if Western Christianity does not re-discover its mystical foundations and roots, we might close the doors of the Churches'*. It is happening already in some parts of the world. He was right because without a contemplative mind, without being a mystic of God's Love, and without an experience of communion with God at some level, we cannot learn to think as Jesus thought.

- We don't have the power to live our consecrated life and our missionary zeal like that of St. Francis de Sales and Father Mermier except in and through union with God.
- Until confreres have some level of **inner religious experience**, there is no point in asking them to follow the ideals of consecrated life and missionary life
- Without an inner experience of union with God, all our noble desires and attempts to live the ideals and doctrinal affirmation would be a source of anxiety
- Without this inner experience of belongingness to God exclusively and completely as always validated by our Patron, there is no future for consecrated life

- Without this inner experience of communion with God we cannot have compassion for people, a quality of St. Francis de Sales recommended to us by Father Mermier
- A spiritual leader who lacks basic human compassion has almost no power to change other people, because people intuitively know he or she does not represent the Divine Truth
- Such leaders have to rely upon role, laws, and enforcement powers to effect any change in others.

The goal of the Congregational retreat is to strengthen our resolve to carry our charism to the frontiers of the world and to the periphery of the society. All of us in Administration, Leadership, Formation, Education, Mission, and Social Ministry - with our degrees and positions and vast experiences - need to find time to step out into the periphery and frontier missions and see and interpret the world and our charism from the periphery.

We need to re-capture our missionary legacy by leaving our nests and moving into where the Lord is calling us and not where we want to get ourselves invited and settled down. Our vocation as Religious and as MSFS (who are trained philosophers, theologians, psychologists, Educationists, Sociologists, Business Managers, Pastoral care-givers, and Specialists in different disciplines) is to step out and look at the world from the periphery and move toward that direction with our charism as Father Mermier and our pioneers did.

Our decisions in the General and Provincial Council Meetings, policies, formation programs, various institutionalized ministries, and future plans should emerge from staying close to the people at the periphery and not merely looking at the reality from the center of our established zones.

I love this quote from Pope Francis: **‘The priest who seldom goes out of himself ... misses out on the best of our people, on what can stir the depths of his priestly heart. ... This is precisely the reason why some priests grow dissatisfied, lose heart and become in a sense collectors of antiquities or novelties – instead of being shepherds living with ‘the smell of the sheep.’ This is what I am asking you – be shepherds with the smell of sheep’.**

1. 2015 – YEAR FOR MISSION IN THE CONGREGATION

Pope Francis has already declared YEAR 2015 as Year dedicated to those in consecrated life. We add another important facet to the Year for Consecrated Life in our Congregation. The General Council Meeting held in MSFS Provincial House in Morogoro, Tanzania has decided to declare Year 2015 as Year for Mission in the Congregation. We dedicate the whole year for strengthening our rural missions and frontier missions and tapping the

human resources in the Congregation for missionary leadership in rural and frontier missions.

I am glad to declare Year – 2015 as Year for Mission in our Congregation.

General Secretary for Mission, Fr. Agnelo Fernandes, in collaboration with the Provincial Councilor In Charge of Mission and the Provincial Administration of all Provinces through the Mission Forums, is entrusted with the responsibility of working out a road map to channelize our rich missionary energy to the poor, rural and frontier missions of the Congregation. You are welcome to give your valuable suggestions and proposals to make the Year for Mission 2015 a year of blessing and grace for the Congregation and for the people we serve. Please send your suggestions to the Secretary for Mission which will help us in the formulation of guidelines and principles for Mission Year 2015. This is a year for all of us to think congregationally in merging our resources together and promoting our collective visibility as a missionary congregation at a time when we most need missionary dynamism.

2. FRANCIS FACTOR CONTINUED ...

In SG-AB-04, I shared with you two areas of the Question and Answer session with Pope Francis at the Union of Superiors General Meeting in November 2013. Let me complete the Q and A session with the Pope:

Pope Francis was asked to give his guidance to the concrete situation of the present scenario where vocations from Africa and Asia are on the increase which accounts for most of the total number of vocations to religious life. Consequently we are witnessing a profound change in the human geography of the Church and of religious Congregations. This poses a series of challenges like inculturation of the charism, vocational discernment and the selection of candidates, the challenge of inter-religious dialogue, and search for an equitable representation in the governmental organizations of the Congregations, and in the structure of the Church.

- Pope Francis says that he is well aware of the many geographical changes in consecrated life and that “all cultures are able to be called by the Lord that he is free to stir up more vocations in one part of the world than in another”. What does the Lord wish to say by sending us vocations from the youngest Churches? I don’t know. But I ask myself the question. We have to ask it. The Lord’s will is somehow in all this.
- There are Churches who are bearing new fruit. At one time they perhaps were not so fertile, but they are now. This necessitates, of course, rethinking the inculturation of the charism. The charism is one but, as Saint Ignatius used to say; it needs to be lived according to the places, times and persons. **The charism is not a bottle of distilled water. It needs to be lived energetically as well as reinterpreted culturally.**

- But in this way there is the danger of making a mistake, you say, of committing errors. It is risky. Certainly, certainly: we will always make mistakes, no doubt about it. But this should not stop us, because there is the chance of making worse mistakes. **In fact we should always ask for forgiveness and look shamefully upon apostolic failures due to a lack of courage.**
- Inculturating the charism, therefore, is fundamental, and this never means relativizing it. **We must not make the charism rigid or uniform. When we make our cultures uniform we kill the charism,**” the Pontiff concluded decisively, indicating the necessity of “introducing persons of various cultures into the central governance of the Orders and Congregations, who express diverse ways of living the charism.”
- He also spent some time on the vocation of brothers and, more generally, religious who are not priests. He complained that an adequate awareness of this specific vocation has not yet been developed. “I do not actually believe that the vocational crisis among religious who are not priests is a sign of the times telling us that this vocation has ended. **We should rather understand what God is asking us.**” Answering a question concerning religious brothers as superiors in clerical orders, the Pope replied that this was a canonical issue that needs to be dealt with at that level.

Pope was asked about how religious should live together in community as brothers? How can we keep commitment to the mission/apostolate and community life? How can we combat the tendency towards individualism in religious life? How should we act toward confreres in difficulty or who live or create conflict? How can we combine justice and mercy in difficult cases?

- **Community life has an enormous power to call people together. The illnesses (conflicts) of the community, on the other hand, have power that destroys.** The temptation against community life is that which is the most disruptive to progress in consecrated life. Saint John Berchmans used to say that his greatest penance was precisely community life.
- Sometimes living in community is difficult, but if it is not lived it is not productive. Work, even that which is ‘apostolic’ can become an escape from community life. **If a person cannot live in community he cannot live religious life.** “Religious brotherhood” – continued the Pope – “with all its possible diversity, is an experience of love that goes beyond conflicts.
- Community conflicts are inevitable: in a certain sense they need to happen, if the community is truly living sincere and honest relationships. That’s life. It does not make sense to think of living in a community in which there are confreres who are not experiencing difficulties in their lives. Something is missing from communities where there is no conflict. **Reality dictates that there are conflicts in all families and all groups of people. And conflict must be faced head on: it should not be**

ignored. Covering it over just creates a pressure cooker that will eventually explode. A life without conflicts is not life."

(We know that one of the fundamental principles of Pope Francis is that "unity is superior to conflict." His words to religious should be read in light of *Evangelii gaudium* (n. 226-230), where he wonders about "the acceptance of bearing conflict, of resolving it and transforming it into a link that leads to a new process" (227). It is important to recall that for Bergoglio personal fulfillment is never an exclusively individual undertaking, but collective, communitarian. Conflict in this sense can, and even should evolve in a process of maturation).

- In any case conflict must be approached with spiritual counseling: "We should never act like the priest or Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan, who just walked by. But what should we do? **We have to recapture tenderness.** Think of the tenderness that Saint Francis lived, for example. Tenderness helps to overcome conflicts. If this is insufficient, it might be necessary to change communities.
- "It is true," – Pope Francis continued – "sometimes we are very cruel. We all experience the temptation to criticize for personal satisfactions or to gain personal advantage. Sometimes the problems in community life are due to fragile personalities, in which case the help of a professional, a psychologist, should be sought. There is no need to be afraid of this: one need not fear necessarily succumbing to psychologism. **But never, never should we act like managers when dealing with conflicts in the brotherhood. We should involve the heart.**
- Community life is a delicate thing. In the hymn of First Vespers of the Solemnity of Saint Joseph in the Argentine breviary the Saint is asked to take care of the Church with *ternura de eucaristía*, 'Eucharistic tenderness.' **This is how we should treat brothers in the community: with Eucharistic tenderness.** We need to caress conflicts. Tenderness does us good. Eucharistic tenderness does not mask conflict but rather helps us to confront it like people."

Superiors General asked the Pope several questions regarding ministries of religious communities in the context of local Churches and about their relationship with bishops. How can the CHARISM of the Religious Congregations be both respected and promoted for the welfare Church where they live and work?

- Pope Francis answers that the request to review the directive criteria that were promulgated in 1978 by the Congregation for Religious and by the Congregation for Bishops (*Mutuae relationes*) concerning the relations between bishops and religious in the Church. The Pope is of the opinion that the time is ripe now because "that document was useful at the time but is now outdated. **The charisms of the various Institutes need to be respected and fostered because they are needed in dioceses.**
- I know by experience the problems" – he continued – "that can arise between a bishop and religious communities." For example: "if the religious decide one day to withdraw from one of their works due to a lack of manpower the bishop often finds

himself suddenly left with a hot potato in his hand. I myself have had such difficult experiences. I would be informed that a work was being dropped and I did not know what to do. I was once actually told after the fact.

- On the other hand I can also speak about other, positive developments. The fact is: I know the problems, but I also know that the bishops are not always acquainted with the charisms and works of religious. We bishops need to understand that consecrated persons are not functionaries but gifts that enrich dioceses. The involvement of religious communities in dioceses is important.
- **Dialogue between the bishop and religious must be rescued so that, due to a lack of understanding of their charisms, bishops do not view religious simply as useful instruments.**” For this reason the Pope confided to the Congregation for Religious the task of resuming reflection on the document *Mutuae relationes* and to work on a revision. I have shared with you, in summary form, the entire Q and A session of the Superiors General with Pope Francis. Pope has touched upon the various challenges in religious life in response to the Questions.

3. NEWS AND INFORMATION

New Provincials

Fr. Tomson Aerathedathu has assumed his office as the Provincial of Brazil Province on June 11, 2014 and the Provincial Congress is scheduled to take place on July 29 – 30, 2014

Fr. Johnson Kallidukil is appointed Provincial of East Africa Province for a second term with effect from July 15, 2014

Fr. Vincent Lourduswamy is appointed Provincial of Pune Province for a second term with effect from August 10, 2014

Fr. Jacob Karamkuzhyil is appointed Provincial of Nagpur Province for a second term with effect from August 15, 2014

LCI – MSAF – General Curia Meeting in Arusha

The first meeting of the LCI staff, Mission Superiors of Africa Forum, and General Curia after the General Chapter – 2013 was held at Lumen Christi Institute, Arusha on May 20 – 21, 2014. Regional Superior of Southern Africa Region, Delegation Superior of Mozambique, Mission Superior of Chad – Cameroon Mission, Mission Superior of Zambia Mission, Chairman of MSAF and Provincial of East Africa Province, the Staff of LCI, and the members of the General Curia made a thorough study of the reports and evaluations from all the mission units and LCI in Africa. The findings of the reports will be carried over to the PIF –PEA-MSAF-GENERAL CURIA Meeting in Bangalore in the month of November, 2014 for further planning and implementation.

Assistant General, Fr. Thumma Mariadas highlighting the prime concerns of LCI and of our different administrative units in Africa, stressed the prominent role of LCI as a beacon of hope and collective visibility of the MSFS in Africa. MSFS presence in Africa is unyielding and our confreres are firm in their missionary spirit in spite of limiting factors and challenging circumstances. Thanks be to God! We have 165 professed confreres in African soil in a span of 26 years. The second historical exodus of the MSFS Congregation

from India to Africa (first being Annecy to India) is bearing fruits by God's grace. Our confreres expressed their deep sense of pastoral satisfaction in their missionary life in Africa.

Lumen Christi Institute today offers various programs: long and short programs in Catechetical and Pastoral ministry, Retreats for priests and religious, training program for teachers and Formators, health care through a well-furnished dispensary, Three Year Philosophy and Formation Program for MSFS Scholastics, Clinical Pastoral Education for those in ministry, Spoken English classes, Swahili course for beginners, and training programs for personal, spiritual, and professional growth. I thank Fr. Thomas Kocuparampil (Superior), Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel (Director) and Fr. Thomas Kocahlumchuvattiil (Rector and Dean) and the committed staff of LCI for their determination and passion to place our charism at the service of the Church in Africa through LCI.

Visit of the Assistant General to the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, and Australia

Assistant General visited with our confreres in the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, and Australia in March-April with the specific responsibility of animating the Congregational retreats and evaluating the apostolic and religious life of our confreres there. The visit was a great opportunity to experience the pastoral involvement of our confreres in different cultures and challenging situations in the true Fransalians spirit and charism. The reports from the visit to all mission units are shared with the respective Major Superiors and the concerns in these units will be addressed in the PIF - General Curia Meeting.

General Councilors to the Mission Units in Africa for Animation

Fr. Noel Rebello, General Secretary for Formation, and Fr. Jayseelan, General Secretary for Social and Innovative Ministries visited with our confreres in Chad - Cameroon Mission and animated the Congregational retreat for them.

Fr. Agnelo Fernandes, General Secretary for Mission, and Fr. George Parampukattil, General Secretary for Education visited with our confreres in Southern African Region, Mozambique Delegation, and Zambia Mission and animated the Congregational retreat for them.

News from Mission Development Office in Rome

MDO is set up in a small room on the 3rd floor of VDM, Rome. It is well-equipped and quite functional. A common letter was sent to all the Provincials and Mission Superiors informing them about the works done at MDO and the modalities of its functioning. A website is being developed for the MDO in Italian, English, German and French www.amisales.org. Amisalesroma is already on face-book. Advertisements and announcements have been sent to a number of periodicals and magazines in Italy. Some of them have obliged by publishing them free of cost. Two Newsletters in Italian for Christmas and Easter were sent to friends and benefactors in Italy.

Efforts are being made to obtain Mass Intentions for the Missions. Until now the MDO has received over 12 project proposals, all from Africa. Some of them are already submitted to

donor agencies. Others are being processed or being facilitated for submission. "Adoption at Distance Program" started by late Fr. Kurian Aranjanil is being continued on behalf of the South-West Province. The donations received for the purpose are sent to the provincial of SW as per an arrangement made by the previous General Administration. Efforts are being made to develop this program further and extend it to all the provinces and missions.

A project of "subsidy for seminarians" in Cameroon and in Mozambique has been initiated much before the starting of MDO in Rome. It is now being continued under Amisales Onlus. Some donations received by Fr. Jose Karekat for the ITSSCAT project in Trivandrum are being channelled through the Amisales and remitted to the Kerala Fransalian Society. The campaign for used stamps, religious articles etc. started by Fr. Kurian is being continued.

The MDO has introduced the ministry at the Mermier Bal Ashram at Koperkhairane, Navi-Mumbai to some friends and benefactors in Germany. The proposal of constituting a Non-Profit Association in Vienna is being pursued. The Director made a visit to some of the MSFS parishes in Franco-Swiss Province in April 2014 and explored the possibilities of establishing support groups in France. The annual statement of accounts of Amisales Onlus has been audited for the third consecutive year namely 2011, 2012 and 2013. Amisales has been duly registered at the Finance Ministry of Italy to receive potential donations under the scheme *5 per mille*.

Tribute to Fr. Bugnon Gilbert Francis

Rev. Fr. Bugnon MSFS, the formal provincial of Brazil province, left for his eternal reward on the June 29, 2014 at 1:30 pm local time at the cancer institute INCA in Rio de Janeiro. The funeral service was held on July 1, 2014 at 10 AM local time. The Holy Mass was presided over by the Archbishop of Niterói Dom José Francisco and attended by all our confreres and a good number of diocesan clergy and religious with the people of the parish. He had been undergoing treatment for cancer since September 2012. We gratefully acknowledge the services of Father Bugnon, a Swiss MSFS, who came to serve as a member of the Brazil Province soon after his ordination in 1968 and served the Brazil mission for 46 years. He died three months after he laid down his office as the Provincial of Brazil. He endured two months of intense suffering in silence without any complaint and he continued to move around till he was totally in a coma stage. May he rest in peace!

WUGC Meeting in Annecy

Major Superiors of Western Provinces (Franco - Swiss and English), Brazil Province, USA Vice-Province, Delegation Superiors of GAH, and Mission Superior of Chile Mission will meet with the General Curia in Annecy to report and to evaluate the major apostolates in the Provinces and mission units of the Congregation. **The meeting is scheduled for May 12 - 14, 2015.**

Please note the dates of arrival and departure for the participants of various meetings in Annecy:

General Curia Members:

Arrival in Annecy on May 9, 2015 and Departure on May 20, 2014

WUGC members:

Arrival on May 11, 2015 and Departure on May 14, 2015 (any time after lunch)

May 10, 2015: General Curia meets with Confreres of Franco Swiss Province in Major Apostolates

May 11, 2015: Provincial Curia of Franco Swiss Province meets with General Curia

May 12 - 14, 2015: WUGC Meeting

May 15 - 19, 2015: General Curia/Council Meeting

Fr. Mario D'Souza

Father Mario D'Souza of Pune Province is appointed as Episcopal Vicar for the Diocese of Amravati from June 12, 2014. Congratulations and prayerful wishes!

Golden Jubilee of FIVE MSFS PROVINCES in 2015

Year 2015 is an important year for the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. Five of our Provinces (**Franco-Swiss Province, English Province, Brazil Province, Visakhapatnam Province, and Nagpur Province**) are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of their existence as Provinces (1965 - 2015).

Training Program for Provincial Curias and MSAF in Bangalore

Provincial Curias of all the Indian Provinces with the General Curia are gathering together in MSFS Provincial House (Vinayalaya) Bangalore for a two day training program in animation and administration according to the new governance. Please note the date: November 25 - 26, 2014. All Major Superiors of Indian Provinces and East Africa Africa Province, Provincial Councilors, Regional/Delegation Superiors and Mission Superiors from Africa are expected to join this training program.

PIF - PEA - MSAF -LCI - General Curia - Meeting in Bangalore

Provincials of India Forum, Provincial of East Africa, Mission Superiors of Africa Forum and General Curia members will be meeting in Vinayalaya, Bangalore from November 27 - 29, 2014. MSAF and LCI representative are requested to attend the first day's meeting with PIF-PEA and General Curia.

- **General Curia/Council Meeting in Vinayalaya, Bangalore: December 1 - 7, 2014**

Change of Residence and address of the General Secretaries

Fr. Noel Rebello, General Secretary for Formation has moved into the community of Shantinagar, Secunderabad (MSFS STATUS 2014, p. 289) with the office of the Secretariat for Formation attached there.

Fr. George Parampukattil has moved into SFS Bhavan Community in Angamaly (MSFS STATUS 2014, p. 28) with the Education Secretariat office attached there.

Fr. Jayseelan Selvaraj, General Secretary for Social and Innovative Ministries has moved into the MSFS Generalate Community in Rome (Via delle Testuggini, 21) with the office of the Secretariat attached there.

Ranchi Medical College Project

Fr. Biju Kanichery is appointed Director of Medical College Project in Ranchi

Fr. Saji Puthiyakulangara is appointed Administrator of Medical College Project in Ranchi by the Provincial of the North East India Province

MSFS Status:

We will periodically update a soft copy of the STATUS of the Congregation to provide accuracy and current information to all the confreres three times a year (January 31, May 31, and September 30). The updated copies will be sent to the Provincials' Offices. May I request all our Provincials to apprise Fr. Philip Valakodiyil at (frvjphilip@gmail.com) on the changes in the status of the confreres before the prescribed dates? The next appraisal is due on September 30, 2014. I thank Fr. Philip for this great service to the Congregation.

Suvidya College

Fr. Dr. Joseph Thazhathukunnel is appointed on the staff of Suvidya College as Professor and Spiritual Director by the Governing Body of Suvidya College.

Fr. Lawrence Jayaraj is appointed on the staff of Suvidya College as Resident Professor and Formator by the Governing Body.

Prayerful tribute to our departed Confreres:

Fr. Frederic P. MEYNET (90), of Franco-Suisse Province,

Fr. Abraham Chirayil of Visakhapatnam Province (85),

Fr. Joseph Karuppannan of Nagpur Province (88),

Fr. S. M. Peter of Pune Province (49), and

Fr. Paul Iyramana of Visakhapatnam Province (89)

We miss our great missionaries and pray for them.

Book authored by Father James Manjackal

Congratulations to **Fr. James Manjackal** on his new book "I SAW ETERNITY"! After a long break of almost 2 years, due to an unprecedented attack of Guillain Barre Syndrome and consequent paralysis, Fr. James is back into his charismatic preaching ministry on wheel chair. Praise the Lord!

Change of Email id

Please note a change in my personal id to avmsfs@gmail.com and **cancel my old id** abmsfs@yahoo.com. The office email id is superiorgeneralmsfs@gmail.com

4. REPORT ON THE VISITATION OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL TO THE BRAZIL PROVINCE (March 15 – April 02, 2014)

The visitation was thoroughly planned out by Fr. Eldin Singarayan, one of the Provincial Councilors (then Administrator) in consultation with late Fr. Bugnon, then Provincial. Due to severe health problems related to cancer that had affected Father Bugnon for more than a year, he was not able to talk, eat, exercise ministry, and function in his office. He had delegated Fr. Eldin to organize the visitation of the Superior General.

The visitation from March 15, 2014 through April 02, 2014 was scheduled with the itinerary and various programs and meetings in each center. The objectives and dynamics of the visitation were prepared and distributed to each Local Community. We have 20 confreres (including one temporarily professed confrere), one novice, and two seminarians in the Brazil Province in the 6 Local communities established in 5 different States. Geographically they are quite distant from each other and this geographical distance impacts also the personal distance and community life in the Province among confreres.

DYNAMICS OF THE VISITATION

- Personal meeting, community meeting, community prayers, visits and masses at the different centers, arranged meetings with the Bishops of the respective dioceses
- Meeting with the confreres and Local Community was done through an interpreter who translated from English to Portuguese

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VISITATION

- Visited with Father Bugnon, the Provincial, and discussed with him the state of the Province. Father Bugnon expressed his inability to continue in office in the context of his cancer adversely affecting his health and mobility and speech. In my personal meeting with Father Bugnon in the presence of Father Eldin, he communicated his decision to resign from office.
- I had meeting with Provincial and the two Councilors (Father Ladir and Father Eldin) and we discussed certain urgent concerns in the Province that had to be addressed immediately. Father Bugnon suggested Father Eldin to be the Administrator until the new Provincial is appointed. Father Eldin accepted the office of the Administrator with the approval of the General Council until a new Provincial is appointed.

- The consultation process for the election and appointment of the new Provincial was initiated by the Administrator
- At the request of the confreres of the Brazil Province, Administrator requested the General Council to make services of Father Tomson Aerathedathu available to the Province. With the approval of the North East Provincial Administration, the General Administration, and with his own consent, Father Tomson has joined the Brazil Province for the next 10 years with his active and passive voice in the Province
- A program with the roles and functions of the Local Superior and Community, with a time table for community life was prepared and circulated in consultation with the community members for better community living
- We made plans for three new confreres from the South East Province to engage in pastoral ministry and language study
- Our confreres are outstanding in hospitality and personal care of visitors

STRENGTHS OF THE PROVINCE

- Confreres are actively involved in parochial ministry with many outstations to each Parish
- Province has decent accommodation and living facility for all the confreres. The Province is in the process of buying a new house in Londrina for the confreres serving at the parish where proper housing is not available
- Confreres are well-taken care of by the parish community
- We have now 8 confreres from the South East India Province engaged in pastoral ministry in the Brazil Province and they are well accepted and adjusted
- Parishes are huge in number and the pastoral demands are overwhelming
- People are welcoming and appreciative of the ministries of MSFS confreres
- Parishes are well established with planned pastoral programs
- We have one novice and 2 seminarians and a professed confrere doing his theological studies
- Province has property and good infra-structures available for various purposes. Lindsay Francis Hendricks Villa and Farm is being utilized with cultivation and a piggery
- Confreres are active and innovative in their pastoral ministry, in preaching and healing ministry, youth ministry, and pastoral animation
- Father Tomson offers a Radio Program in Portuguese on the Gospel of the day, papal teachings, and Catechism of the Catholic Church (which is broadcasted twice a week)
- Father Agnaldo, the Novice Master, has agreed to translate 'Introduction to the Devout Life' and the Biography of Father Peter Mermier into Portuguese in the Year 2015 when the Province celebrates its Golden Jubilee

PROPOSALS TO THE PROVINCE

- To have at least two Forums in the Province (MF and FF) and one Provincial Councilor take care of the Mission Forum and the other the Formation Forum
- To begin regular community meeting and empower the Local Superiors to animate the Community life in the Province
- On-going Formation for confreres in our MSFS way of life, ministry, and Salesian spirituality
- To bring in a sense of Congregation and religious life in the Province
- To start a Formation program and have regular vocation promotion
- To help confreres think in line with the Congregation and the Province, sharing the vision of the Congregation
- To ensure financial accountability among confreres and Local Community
- To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Province (1965 - 2015)
- To translate the Congregational communication and literature into Portuguese

5. REPORT ON THE VISITATION OF SUPERIOR GENERAL TO EAST AFRICA PROVINCE (April 26 - June 18, 2014)

The visitation focused on an evaluation of Community Life and Religious Life, an evaluation of the Apostolic life of the Local Community with diverse ministries, and meeting of all confreres personally and then as a Local Community. Meetings with the Local Ordinaries of the most of the dioceses were arranged by the respective Local Superiors.

DYNAMICS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- Personal meetings with 45 confreres in ministry and 41 scholastics, Community meetings in FOURTEEN Local Communities with an agenda of deepening community life, an hour of adoration with the members of the Local Communities, Mass and prayers, and meals with the confreres in the communities and in some places in the parishes with parishioners, meeting with other Religious women collaborating with us, visiting the ministry sites, and meeting with Local Ordinaries.
- Provincial was personally present with me and participated in the Local Community meetings. (I look forward to meeting with confreres of East Africa Province, who are away from the territory of the Province due to pastoral commitment and specialized studies, at the time of my visit to respective countries where they are residing)

- Assistant General met with all the confreres in Apostolic Communities with the specific responsibility of animation, evaluation, and monitoring of community life and apostolic life
- Visitation was an opportunity to meet with all the confreres, scholastics, novices, and postulants, in formation houses
- Celebrating the Eucharist with parish communities and breaking the Word with them
- Meeting with the Apostolic Nuncio and the Local Ordinaries of the Dioceses where our confreres are engaged in pastoral care
- Meeting with the young Friends of St. Francis de Sales in the two units of Dar es Salaam and Muanza
- Time spent with the scholastics, regents, novices, and postulants in formation houses
- Connecting and exploring with confreres the possibilities of innovative ministries in different missions
- Listening to the valuable suggestions of confreres based on their vast experience
- The visitation was followed by a joint meeting of the Provincial Curia and the General Curia evaluating religious life, community life, apostolic life and stewardship in the Province

STRENGTHS OF THE PROVINCE

- Sense of belongingness (among confreres) to the Province and to the Congregation, family spirit, and love for and commitment to the mission
- Active, enthusiastic, and enterprising confreres; lots of work as the each mission is vast
- Hospitality, concern, and care of the confreres quite visible and enjoyable
- Unity among confreres and willingness to support each confrere in need and interest in coming together for gatherings and meetings
- Almost everyone expressed his deep satisfaction and fulfilment in being MSFS and in his ministry in East Africa
- Every community except the formation communities is self-sufficient and confreres run the community and missionary developments through writing projects
- Confreres expressed the sense of freedom and trust they experience from the Administration to function in their particular mission
- Apostolic Communities are active and regular in their meetings
- Some confreres expressed their availability for any future pioneering mission of the Congregation
- Most of the Senior Confreres are seen as role models by Junior Confreres
- Fast growth in the Province due to hard work and commitment of the confreres

PROPOSALS TO THE PROVINCE

- To intensify the efforts on vocation promotion both in Africa and in India taking into consideration the needs and possibilities of expansion in the Province
- To evaluate and coordinate the educational institutions ensuring quality and creative education taking into consideration of the talents and gifts of the students
- To give a social and innovative face to the excellent sacramental and spiritual ministry within the existing structure addressing the needs of the marginalized in the parish
- To animate and monitor the Local Community Life with the roles and functions of the Local Superiors and members
- To ensure personal care and attention to the confreres who need support
- To disseminate salesian spirituality through our ministries, parish mission, schools, and through publication
- To provide an MSFS translation of 'Introduction to the Devout Life' in Swahili language for the people in view of renewal of their Christian life
- To prepare Sunday School text books in Swahili language and begin Sunday School classes in MSFS parishes for faith formation

My dear Confreres:

Let me conclude this long circular with my deep appreciation for all what you are and what you do for the service of the Lord's mission and for disseminating the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales and the missionary dynamism of Father Mermier, the special charism of our Congregation. Thank you for your patient reading. Let the words of Father Mermier continue to resound in our ears and hearts: *"My resolve is unshakeable, my longings are the same. I want mission work"*

United with you in prayer,

Live Jesus!



**Father Abraham Vettovelil, MSFS
Superior General**

**Rome
July 09, 2014**