

MSFS - MISSIONARIES OF ST.FRANCIS DE SALES
SOUTH-WEST INDIA PROVINCE



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SWIP Circular BK/28

March 31, 2018

My dear Confreres,

Fraternal greetings to you from Fr. Benny. Journeying through the Holy Week we are now at the zenith of participating in the MYSTERIES of Christ, His PASSION, DEATH and RESURRECTION. I wish and pray, my dear Confreres, that the animation of and participation in these highly spiritual and Christian liturgical celebrations should emulate in us a new sense of purpose and renewed commitment to Jesus, our RISEN LORD.

EASTER: FROM EMPTY TOMB TO THE JOY OF LOVING RELATIONSHIP



My dear Confreres, the Gospel reading on Easter Sunday (Jn 20:1-9) invites us to reflect on the meaning of new life in Christ. This Gospel passage reminds us of three-dimensional philosophy of our Christian journey. They are: a) Discovery of the Empty

Tomb, b) Apostolic Witnessing of the Resurrection and c) Expression of Love and Faith by RUNNING FASTER.

a) Discovery of the Empty Tomb

One of the most important descriptions about the resurrection of Jesus is the description of the EMPTY TOMB. It is the symbol of the resurrection of Jesus, because there is no resurrection without death; in fact, death is confirmed through burial. It is only when

death is confirmed, resurrection can be affirmed. That is why all the evangelists mention about the empty tomb as the final stamping of the resurrection of Jesus.

My dear Confreres, it is necessary that we encounter the empty tomb in order to personally confirm the resurrection of Jesus. Even if the immediate expression of Mary Magdalene was one of desperation, it helped her to realize a fundamental question of her future: **If Jesus is not in the tomb, where is he?** In spite of her human fears, she sought help from Peter and John (two persons whom she considered to be nearer to the heart of Jesus), who in turn through their personal experience give her a convincing answer: **The Lord is Risen**. Later through personal encounter with Jesus Mary Magdalene affirms the conviction she received from the Apostles. As Missionaries we need personal conviction of the resurrection of Jesus. We need to visit the empty tombs of our own interiority and recognize the need to rise with credence to experience the NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.

b) Apostolic Witnessing of the Resurrection

The first ones to be communicated about the resurrection of Jesus were Peter and the other Apostles. Later when Mary Magdalene recognized Jesus, He sends her to proclaim this news first to the apostles (Jn. 20:17). St. Paul in his Letter confirms that apostles were the first ones to know about the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:5). It shows that the authenticity of Christian Faith is founded on its apostolic traditions. As the *Acts of the Apostles* (1:21-22) mention, one who proclaims the resurrection of the Lord should be someone who has personally experienced the Lord: **Someone who has walked with the Lord.**

My dear Confreres, Our witnessing and communication of the resurrection of Jesus is not merely a 'one-man show', instead it should be the collective indorsing of our congregational conviction of this apostolic truth. The failure of one Priest or one MSFS in proclaiming the good news of the Resurrection is the failure of the apostolic responsibility that is entrusted to us and thus collectively we fail the Church and its mission. Let us be combined in our conviction and proclamation of the Resurrection of the Lord.

c) Expression of Love and Faith by Running Easter

Having heard that 'the tomb is empty' there is a hasty response from both Peter and John. They both run to the tomb. But John, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' outran Peter. John the Evangelist names himself as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'. In fact, he shows

here his special attraction towards Jesus. The love for Jesus influenced John so deeply. Even when one loves everyone equally, the response to that love by the recipients of the love is not the same. There are differences in receiving love and responding to that love. **When John calls himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' he means that the love of Jesus influenced him more deeply than anyone else.** Implicitly it explains why he outran Peter. It equally shows that love leads to faith (Jn. 20:8).

My dear Confreres, it is our turn now to be deeply influenced by the love of Jesus and convincingly to proclaim that Jesus loves me more than anyone else. Such experience and conviction will make us to run faster to the tomb of Jesus and proclaim his resurrection. **I wish each of you the personal experience of the Resurrection of Jesus. LIVE JESUS.**

GRATITUDE TO ALL



MY Dear Confreres, I would like to place on record my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all who shared our sorrow at the sad demise of Fr. Thomas Illikattil and supported us physically and spiritually.

- I express my heartfelt gratitude to **Bishop Thomas Tharayil**, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry for officiating the funeral services of Fr. Illikattil and sharing with us his sentiments of deep sorrow and empathy.
- I am very grateful to **Bishop Sebastian Thekethecheril**, Bishop of the diocese of Vijayapuram and **Bishop Mathew Moolakatt**, Bishop of Kottayam for showing their solidarity with us by offering the office of the dead and praying for the deceased.
- I am grateful to **Very Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvelil**, our Superior General for partaking in our sadness and assuring us his prayerful support.
- I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the Provincials, Vice Provincial and Regional Superiors who extended their condolences at the demise of Fr. Illikattil.
- I am thankful to all our Confreres, Priests, Religious and Laity who participated in large number in the Memorial Mass and Funeral rites of Fr. Illikattil.
- My special thanks to all the members of the Community of Vinayalaya for their brotherly accompaniment and support to Fr. Illikattil from the time of his

hospitalization to his death and burial. Dear Confreres, you showed a big heart of Salesian availability and commitment.

- Special thanks to Fr. Joby Mattathil, the Rector, and the community of SFS Seminary Ettumanoor for the meticulous planning and implementation of the funeral rites of Fr. Illikattil.
- I am also grateful to the Siblings and family members, friends and relatives of Fr. Thomas Illikattil, who accompanied him in his final journey.

May the Good Lord grant eternal rest to Fr. Thomas Illikattil.

CHAD-CAMEROON MISSION: RAISED TO DELEGATION

My dear Confreres, I am very happy to inform you that the Superior General, at the request of the Provincial administration, has **decreed to raise Chad-Cameroon Mission into a DELEGATION with all the constitutional rights and responsibilities.** The delegation will officially come into existence, as decreed by the Superior General, on the day the Delegation Superior assumes office. I shall now begin with the process of the election of the Delegation Superior.

Chad-Cameroon Mission is on a constant growth through the hard work and commitment of our missionaries. It is only natural, given the wonderful missionary dynamism shown by our Confreres and the consequent growth the mission has made in terms of parishes, schools, formation houses and Boys' Homes, that the members of the mission unanimously suggested and the authorities decided to elevate the mission into a Delegation. The mission has a steady number of vocations and from 2020 onwards we would have regular local ordinations for the Chad-Cameroon Delegation. I congratulate **Fr. Manoj Arackal**, the Mission Superior and all our Confreres for their total commitment waving of the fears of sickness and poverty and above all unnecessary criticisms and discouraging comments of the onlookers. May God continue to bless Chad-Cameroon Delegation.

ONGOING FORMATION

The Ongoing formation programme for the Confreres belonging to 1990-1999 batches was held from 6th to 8th March 2018 at Vinayalaya, the MSFS Provincial House. There were 32 participants who had a very rewarding and enriching experience. Rev. Fr Mathew Kalathungal, the Superior of the Provincial House welcomed the participants

followed by the inspiring and enlightening interactive sessions on "Priesthood and Priestly Spirituality According to St Francis de Sales" animated by Rev. Fr Benny Kootanal, the Provincial. The afternoon session was led by Prof. Dr. Pushparajan. He highlighted the expectations of the lay people from a priest. Mainly he dealt with three important aspects of priestly vocation i.e., the priests as men of God, men of the church and men in the world. On the second day the morning sessions were animated by Dr. Xavier E. Manavath CMF, Episcopal Vicar for the Religious in the Archdiocese of Bangalore, on the "Importance of Ongoing Formation in the Context of Religious Life."



He focused on the meaning, necessity and importance of certain criteria for On-going formation. He has also discussed on the practical application of it at three levels: Personal, Community and Provincial levels. The afternoon session was on the "Spirit of the New Liturgy and the meaningful involvement of Priests" by Dr Gilbert Choondal SDB. It was an interactive session wherein the participants could clarify a lot of issues concerning the changes in the new liturgy. On the third day Rev. Fr Joe Mathias SJ, Rector of St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, spoke on "Mid-Life Transition-A Call to Launch Out into the Deep." He highlighted the challenges faced by priests in their ministry and consecrated life. In Afternoon session Sr. Dr. Abhaya Rose CHF spoke on "Collaborative ministries and Respectful Relationship between Men and Women Religious." She stressed on the need to accept and appreciate our differences as well as the unique role of both men and women religious so that there can be an effective collaboration and cooperation in our common mission i.e. the mission of Christ. In addition to the input sessions, there were open sessions with the Provincial in the evening. Undoubtedly the very inspiring and enriching sessions, sharing and liturgical celebrations helped all participants to renew and recommit themselves as religious priests with a little more zeal and enthusiasm to continue the mission of Christ in our Province.

SUPERIORS' MEETING

The Superiors' Meeting was conducted on the 21st of March 2018 in Vinayalaya. Thirty Three Superiors of our Local Communities participated in the meeting. The meeting was



animated by the Provincial Fr. Benny Koottanal. The whole animation was centred on the renewed understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Local Superior who enjoys ordinary powers in his functioning. The provincial, referring to the Constitutions and Directory of our Congregation invited the Superiors to be integrated, disciplined and committed in their God-given responsibilities. More than mere in-pu sessions the meeting was innovatively conducted with lots of interactions, sharing of experiences as superiors, hurdles and difficulties that are experienced by the Superiors, and evaluation of the challenges and growth of the South West India Province. All the participants expressed their satisfaction in the rich experiences gained through the meeting.

SECOND EXTRAORDINARY APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY MEETING

My dear Confreres, As per the instruction of the Superior General the second extraordinary Apostolic Community meeting to assess the **Second Study Paper for the General Chapter** has to be taking place in the month of March-April 2018. Those Apostolic Communities which have not conducted the said meeting is expected to conduct it in the month of April and send the collated report by the end of April 2018. There are some trends in certain apostolic communities to have the study done at a stretch with one sitting. I would like to reiterate that the Superior General with his Curia has demanded us to undertake these studies in three sessions and let us obey it. There is a wisdom behind it and let us not overrule the discernments and suggestions of our authorities. I request the Conveners and their secretaries to call the meeting at the earliest and conduct it in time.

ELECTION OF THE NEW CONVENER AND SECRETARIES OF THE APOSTOLIC COMMUNITIES

My dear Confreres, as the new transfer list is coming into effect by the end of April 2018 there emerges the necessity **to elect new Conveners and Secretaries of the Apostolic Communities** in some of the Apostolic communities as a few of the present conveners and secretaries are getting transferred. Therefore I request you to **conduct the election of the Conveners and Secretaries** (wherever it is necessitated) during the second extraordinary apostolic community meeting. Please elect Confreres who are competent and committed to take up the offices of the Convener and Secretary. Please remember: The election of the Convener of the Apostolic Community has to be approved by the Provincial to make the office validly come to effect (Const. 268). Please send the names of the elected Confreres to the Provincial's office for the official ratification and appointment.

MEETING OF THE CONFRERES IN BATCHES

In order to assess the effectiveness of their priesthood and their priestly ministries **Confreres who are ordained during the last five years were met by the provincial in their respective batches**. The meetings were more like live-in experience. The confreres of each batch were gathered together on different days in the provincial house for the supper. It was followed by a short ice break session. Following day they celebrated mass together with the provincial. It was followed by an input session by the provincial with time for interaction and introspection. The provincial took time to meet each confrere personally and assessed with him about the level of satisfaction that he is enjoying in his priesthood. Finally the gathering came to an end with the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. These meetings are intended to orient us more towards the meaningfulness of our religious life and missionary commitments as priests and religious.

RELEASE OF THE FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOUR OF FR. JACOB MSFS

Festschrift is a collection of writings in honour of a scholar. The word *Festschrift* comes from two German words; '*Fest*' which means 'celebration' and '*Schrift*' which means 'writing'. On 3rd March 2018 Tejas Vidya Peetha had the joy of releasing a *Festschrift* with the title **Becoming Human, Becoming Christ** published in honour of Prof. Dr. Jacob Parappally MSFS on the occasion of his 65th birthday. The editor of the book is Dr. Henry Jose Kodikuthiyil MSFS.

Dr. Benny Koottanal MSFS, the provincial of South west India Province, officially released the book and handed over the first copy to Prof. Jacob Parappally as a sign of our appreciation and acknowledgement of his great services in the field of theology and Spirituality and also to Dr. Jim Greenfield, the president of De Sales University, Allentown, USA.



This *Festschrift* contains 25 articles by Fr. Jacob's colleagues, confreres, students, friends and family members, reflecting on diverse subjects such as philosophy, theology, scripture, spirituality and science where his mission and ministry of teaching, preaching and writing had a great impact. The book is divided into three parts namely,

Experiencing Human and Christ, Articulating Christic Experience and Becoming Human and Christ. The principle followed is experience, articulation and action or *Anubhava*, *vichaara* and *aachara* which Prof. Jacob usually follows in his theologizing. Congratulations to Fr. Henry Jose for his initiative and hard work.

ANNUAL RETREAT 2018

My dear Confreres, I would like to remind you about the Annual Retreat 2018. This year it will be a Congregational Retreat in preparation for the General Chapter. **Rev. Frs. Mario D'Souza and Binu Edathumparambil will be the Preachers for our Province.** The first retreat will be conducted from **9th July – 13th July 2018 in Charis Bhavan.** The second retreat will be conducted from **15 October – 19 October in India Institute of Spirituality.** Please do understand the mandatory nature of the Annual Retreats, this year all the more as it is the congregational retreat. **I request the Superiors of each community to register the names of the members of their community latest by the 15th of May 2018.**

HEARTY WELCOME

Fr. Binod Puthenpurackal: After eleven years of pastoral services in the diocese of Eichstaett, Germany, Fr. Binod Puthenpurackal is returning to India for assuming new assignments in the province in India. I thank him for his whole-hearted service to the Church in Germany by being a respected and loved pastor. He also served the province during this time as the Delegation Superior of the German Delegation of the South West

India Province. Fr. Binod, thank you for your integrated ministry and for holding the MSFS flag high through your life. Hearty Welcome back to India.

Fr. Thomas Mekattu: Fr. Thomas too, completed eleven years of pastoral ministry in the diocese of Eichstaett and is now returning to India to take up a new assignment in the province. I express my heartfelt appreciation for his committed services to the German Church through loving, benevolent and integrated pastoral ministry. He also served the province in the capacity of the Administrator of the German Delegation. As I thank you for your ministry in Germany I extend to you, dear Fr. Thomas, hearty welcome back to India and fruitful ministry.

Fr. Prince Cheriyaakavil: Having completed five years of pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Northampton in England and having secured Master's Degree in Contemporary English Literature, Fr. Prince Cheriyaakavil is returning to India to assume new assignment in the Province. The bishop of the diocese as well as the pastors with whom he collaborated in ministry, are of high appreciation for the wonderful religious commitment of Fr. Prince. As I thank Fr. Prince for his commendable religious life and service, I extend to him a hearty welcome back to India.

BON VOYAGE

Fr. Jose Puthukary: Having completed the German language course, Fr. Jose Puthukary will be flying to Germany on the 5th of April 2018 to begin pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Muenster. As he undertakes this new venture we extend to him best wishes and the blessings of the Lord that he assumes this ministry with the sole intention of serving the mission of the Church in Germany and supporting the province through his commitment as MSFS. All the best dear Fr. Jose.

NEW ADDRESS

Fr. Sijo Kovilparambil MSFS
St. John of the Cross Church
Adoor
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Kerala- 691523

Fr. Justin Panachickal MSFS
St Antony's Pilgrim Church
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Kottayam District
Kerala – 686585

Fr. Simil Devasia MSFS
St. Joseph's Forane Church
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via Rajapuram , Kasargod dt. , 671532

Fr. Noby Kottuppallil MSFS
St. Sebastian Church
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Fr. Abhishek Joseph MSFS
Infant Jesus Church
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Fr. Sanoj Plamthottathil MSFS
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Kattappana, Idukky
Kerala-685511

OBITUARY



- **Fr. Pilavendran** of South-East Province, aged 42, died on March 22, 2018.

I request all the Confreres to fulfil the suffrages as prescribed by MSFS Constitutions.

- **Mrs. Annakutty Mathai**, aged 86, elder sister of Fr. Thomas Payattukandathil and aunty of Bro. Jilu Payattukandathil, died on March 31, 2018.

We assure you, dear Confreres, the remembrance of your dear one in our Holy Mass and Prayers.

MY SCHEDULE

My dear Confreres, please do take note of my program schedule. Different from the previous circular, each new circular would bring in additional changes in my programs as per the need. Please do organize the visitation and other common meetings/programs according to the latest communication.

April 2018

April 1	Easter Sunday – Mass at Gauribidanur Mission
April 3-4	Animation Sessions for the Superiors of North East India Province in Guwahati
April 9	Executive Meeting of Vikas Jyothi in Vinayalaya
April 10	Mass for the Catechism Children of Kolar Deanery
April 11	Blessing and Inauguration of DATA – “De Sales Academy for Talent Assistance” at Aluva
April 18	Second Extraordinary Apostolic Community Meeting of the Bangalore North Apostolic Community at IIS

April 20	Council Meeting
April 21-26	Animating Retreat for the RNDM Congregation, Bangalore Province
April 27	Talk and Mass for the participants of Salesian Seminar at IIS
April 29	Chintamani Parish Feast, Blessing & Inauguration of the New Community House in Chintamani

May 2018

May 4-5	Keynote Address and Mass on the occasion of 'MSFS Education Seminar' in Hyderabad
May 6-7	Visitation to Shiralakoppa, Sunday Mass in Thandagunda, Meeting with the Bishop of Shimoga, Meeting Fr. Justin Chirackal, Fr. Abhishek Joseph
May 8-11	Preaching Salesian Retreat at Makkiad
May 12	Officiating the Perpetual Profession Ceremony of the DSFS Sisters
May 13-18	Visitation to Tanzania – Meeting our Novices and Scholastics of the Chad-Cameroon Mission
May 20	Council Meeting
May 26	Inauguration and Blessing of SFS School, Mattannur
May 28	Perpetual Profession at Tejas
May 30	Initiation of the Postulants into the Novitiate at Makkiad
May 31	First Profession of the Novices at Makkiad

June 2018

June 1-10	Visitation to the Philippines *First Profession of the Novices; *Installation of the Delegation Superior; *Meeting the Confreres, Seminarians and the Associates of the Fransalians
June 13	PIF Meeting at Suvidya College
June 14	Inauguration of the new academic year in Suvidya College, Inaugural Mass; *Governing Body Meeting, Meeting with the Staff and Students
June 15-16	Visitation to Tejas Vidya Peetha, NEST
June 17	Council Meeting
June 18-19	Spiritual Orientation for the new batch of students at IIS
June 22-23	Visitation to Sannidhi, MSFS Minor Seminary Mysore
June 23-24	Visitation to MSFS House, Mysore, Sunday Mass at St. Alphonsa's Parish
June 24-25	Soumya Sadan Community, Mysore
June 27-29	Visitation to Hebbagodi: *Mermier Bhavan Community, *Meeting the 10 th Std. Students of all the SFS Schools in the campus *SFS Parish Community, *Prateeksha Boys' Home Community

June 29-30	Recollection – IIS
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July 2018

July 1	Orientation and Recollection for the MTh in IIS
July 6-7	Visitation to SFS Seminary Ettumanoor: Meeting the Staff and Brothers; Visiting SFS School: Meeting with the 10 th Std. Students
July 8	One Day Meeting of the Associates of the Fransalians at Charis Bhavan
July 9-13	1 st Annual Retreat at Charis Bhavan
July 14	Council Meeting at SFS Seminary Ettumanoor
July 15-18	Visitation to Aluva and Pattikad; visiting Frs. Chacko Ottalankal and Paul Aranjanil, Visitation to MSFS House Kattappana, Visiting Fr. Jacob Thudipara
July 19-21	Visitation to Vattiyookavu, ITSCAAT, visiting Frs. Varghese Puthuparambil and Mathew Kavithazhe
July 22	Blessing and Inauguration of the new Church in Adoor
July 25-Aug. 2	Visitation to our Confreres in Adelaide, Australia

August 2018

August 1-2	Visitation to our Confreres in Adelaide, Australia
August 3-4	KRCR Major Superiors' Meeting in Mysore
August 4-5	Recollection for the Diploma Students of IIS
August 6	Visitation to Chintamani, *Meeting with the 10 th Standard Students; *Visitation to Sidlghatta
August 7	Visitation to Kadisanahalli
August 7-8	Visitation to Srinivasapura, Meeting with 10 th Std. Students
August 8-9	Visitation to Community at Tamaka and Kolar Parish
August 9-10	Visitation to MSFS Community at ITI
August 13-18	Classes in IIS
August 19	Council Meeting
August 20	Education Forum Meeting
August 22	Social & Innovative Ministry Forum Meeting
August 24	Mission Forum Meeting
August 26	Formation Forum Meeting
August 27	Meeting of the Superior General with the Major Superior and Staff of Suvidya College
August 28	Stewardship Forum Meeting
August 29	Meeting of the Superior General with the Provincial and the Curia
August 30	Visitation to MSFS Community and school at Anthoninagara

September 2018

September 1	Recollection – IIS
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September 3-4	Visitation to the MSFS Community Malur, *Meeting with the 10 th Std. Students of SFS Malur
September 4-5	Visitation to Gokunte
September 7	Council Meeting
September 9	Institute's Day at IIS
Sept. 11-12	Visitation to the MSFS Community, Koppal, *Meeting with the 10 th Std. Students of SFS Schools
Sept. 12-13	Visitation to the MSFS Community Kuknoor, *Meeting with the 10 th Std. Students
Sept. 13-14	Visitation to the MSFS Community Mundargi, *Meeting with the 10 th Std. Students
Sept. 14-15	Visitation to the MSFS Community, Savanur, *Meeting with the 10 th Std. Students
Sept. 17-20	PIF-PEA-GC Meeting in Hyderabad
Sept. 22-28	Retreat for the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod at Yercaud
September 30	Founder's Day – with the Novices in MSFS Novitiate Makkiad

SALESIAN THOUGHT

“Take two parallel resolutions: One to notice the weeds growing in the garden of our life and the other to have the courage to uproot it.” SFS

Fraternally,



Fr. Benny Koottanal MSFS

Provincial