

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

SOUTH-WEST INDIA PROVINCE (SWIP)

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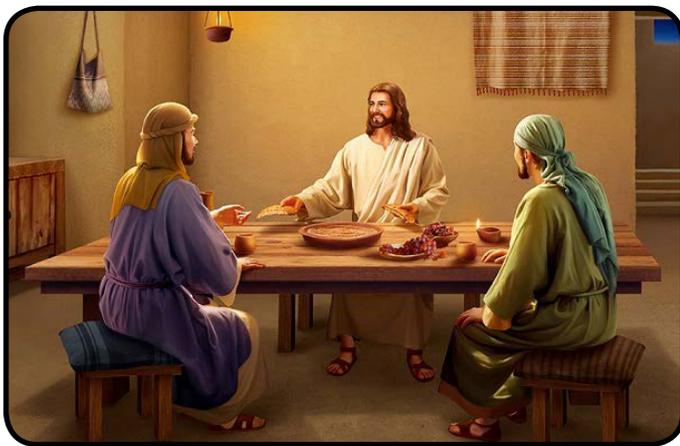
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SWIP Circular BK/61

June 21, 2020

My dear Confreres, Fraternal greetings to you from Fr Benny Koottanal. Although it is time to wish each other wonderful starting of the new academic year, we are still gripped by uncertainties due to Covid-19 pandemic. We are bound to wait for the **appropriate time** of God – IN HIS TIME. At the same time, we are also invited to count certain blessings that come unnoticed on our way during this time of the pandemic. One of those blessings that I count so important is the time that we spend together for the **common meal in our communities**. This time of the lockdown was a time of revelation for us to realize the importance of sharing the meal together.

MEAL: AN EXTENSION OF THE EUCHARISTIC TABLE



The unanimous answer that I have received in the class on Eucharist to the question, whether one would like to have a meal alone or in the company of others was: **I like to eat with the other.** A meal is not something that is to be eaten alone. Think of the number of times you desired, as you returned from the school or work, that your mother should be there to supply you with food! More than stilling the physical hunger, meal has the intrinsic facet of deepening of relationship, sharing, sacrifice and even forgiveness.

This is the reason that our dining halls are the second most important place in our communities after the chapel. Just as we say that ‘a family that prays together stays together’, so also a family/ community that dines together would be empowered to withstand any storm.

Jesus lived in a culture that believed that even God should be tasted. The statement in Psalm 128/3 – your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table– will be heartening even to each one of us. Jesus developed an elevating Good News around this culture that we can sanctify our lives with the meal.

It is very interesting to notice that Jesus never rejected an invitation to a meal. One of the topmost means of evangelization of the ‘Kingdom-values’ by Jesus was through participatory meals. As a result, He was nicknamed by His critics as GLUTTON (Mt 11/19). Yes, Jesus was laughed at because He ate with the

Publicans and Sinners. But the interesting fact is that **no one ever thought or reflected as to what happened to these Publicans and Sinners after the meal.** After such shared meals, they were purified like those that had a fresh bath. The conversion of Mathew, the tax collector is not an isolated story (Mt 9/9-13). **Each one of them left the table after having lifted themselves to the desired dignity in tune with the nobility of the shared meal.** After a meal, no one can be the old self. The meal defines your perspectives.

Sharing the meal together defines our brotherhood and friendship with one another. Among those who share the meal, there is very less chance to disregard each other. But if it so happens, there is nothing more abominable and hurting than that. This is the reason for the statement of Jesus: *He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me, will betray me* (Mt. 26/23; Mk 14/20). Getting up from the meal without finishing it is the most disrespectful sign of a person's callousness and condescension. **Do we share our brotherhood and friendship at the meal and do we stand by that?**

Judas went out of a meal hardhearted in spite of the sincerity of the one who offered it: Why? Judas is presented in the Bible as the **one who went out of the meal.** There is also a statement: **it was dark outside – pitch dark.** This is the caption that awaits all those who go out of the brightness of the table. If you go out of the brotherhood that the shared meal offers you, the place that you left will always remain empty. **There are certain wounds that cannot be healed... those wounds will remain as life-long reminders of your character.**

I always admire the word UPAVAS. Sometimes we misinterpret this word as mere fasting. But upavas means to 'live with' or to 'stay together'. Jesus presents every meal equal to an *upavas* and thus he consecrates every meal to the divine realm. He reminds every partaker to eat it with love and gratitude. He presents a beautiful parable to validate it. This is a wedding feast organized by a humane king for all those who were otherwise considered unworthy to partake in it (Mt 22/11-13). But at the time of the meal, he spotted that there was someone who was not well dressed in accordance with the graciousness of the meal. *The early manuscripts will present the question of the king as 'what happened to your white garment?'* **The white garment is the symbol of the love that encompasses the totality of one's person.** If the white garment is corrupted, then the banquet will satisfy only your body. Even when he is at the table his mind and heart will be affected by anger and hatred.

Every meal has to be eaten with gratitude. Each meal is an extension of the Eucharist into our daily life. *When Jesus took the bread He blessed it* (Mt. 26/26)... *He took the cup and gave thanks* (Mt 26/27). **The meal that is eaten with gratitude invites the presence of God in the midst of those who share it.** During a long and tiring journey, two disciples who never recognized Him as the Christ recognizes His Lordship when He broke the bread with them (Lk 24 30-32). **Yes, the meal opens your heart to see God in the other.**

Jesus was also a good host and feted cook. The Gospel ends with presenting Jesus as preparing breakfast for His disciple (Jn 21/9). **Every meal should be prepared with extreme care and supplied with deep love.** Do our tables represent this extension of the Eucharist wherein the care and concern for the other and the expression of love are shared boundlessly?

Yes, every partaker of the meal becomes, in turn, a MOTHER. It is an invitation to become the meal.

Each time you eat of this bread, you eat me; every time you drink of this cup, you drink my blood...! EVERY CELEBRATION OF THE MEAL SHOULD BE TASTIER THAN THE MEAL ITSELF. **Think of our own Mothers...** within the four walls of the kitchen, they who spent the best part of their lives cooking food for us were offering a *yaga* (sacrifice) for our sake. Destroying their ego they give themselves as food for us. **We need to become mothers in our communities, by giving our possibilities and by sharing the meal of love in togetherness.**

My dear Confreres, I invite you to take some time to reflect and evaluate over the importance of our community meal and to partake in it meaningfully. **It is the most augmenting facet of our religious life after the Holy Eucharist.** One of the most painful statements that I ever heard about community life is still reverberating in my whole being. I request you to ask yourself this question: **Are our communities merely hotels with a Chapel?**

CONGREGATIONAL MATTERS

Prayer Intentions of the Superior General for the Month of July 2020

That each confrere and every MSFS community be more faithful to the consecrated poverty, and thus be sensitive to the needs of the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed, in thoughts and deeds!

Congratulations

In the name of the South-West India Province, we congratulate the newly appointed Provincials of different provinces in India and abroad.

- **Rev. Fr Jaganathan Gnanadurai MSFS** (Brazil Province)
- **Rev. Fr Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS** (East Africa Province)
- **Rev. Fr Jayaseelan Selvaraj MSFS** (Pune Province)
- **Rev. Fr J. B. Muthuswamy MSFS** (Nagpur Province)

We assure each one of them God's abundant blessings in their ministry as the animators of the respective provinces. **Congratulations dear Fathers!**

LIFE IN THE PROVINCE

New Priests – New Blessings

The MSFS Congregation and the South-West India Province in particular are blessed to have two more new priests who are ordained during this summer season. We as a province family congratulate the new priests for their courageous decision to respond to the call of Jesus to consecrate themselves as holy priests in the Congregation of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales and wish them God's abundant blessings upon their priestly and missionary ministries.

Fr Kelvin Olikunnel



Fr Kelvin was born on February 11, 1992 at Kanhangad to Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Treesa. He joined SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor in 2009. He completed his Novitiate at Snehajyothi Ashram, Makkiyad and made his First Profession on May 31, 2012. After completing his philosophical studies at Suvidya College in 2015 he did regency in Vinayakumar Estate, Nilambur from 2015-16. He pursued and successfully completed his Theological studies at Tejas Vidya Peetha, Bengaluru. He made his perpetual profession on May 28, 2018 and was ordained deacon on February 18, 2019 by Most Rev. Dr A. Anthonysamy, Bishop of Chikkamagalure. He was ordained a priest on June 30, 2020 by

Archbishop George Njaralakatt of Thalassery Archdiocese. The ordination took place at MSFS Community, Mattannur as the lockdown restrictions did not permit him to conduct the ceremony in his home parish. Due to Covid 19 the invitees were limited to a permitted number of close relatives and religious and clergy.

Fr Bibin Kelimattathil



Fr Bibin was born on April 24, 1992 at Ulickal to late Mr. Sebastian and Mrs. Jessy. He joined SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor in 2008. He completed his Novitiate at Snehajyothi Ashram, Makkiyad and made his First Profession on May 31, 2012. After completing his philosophical studies at Suvidya College in 2015 he did regency in ITSSCAT, Trivandram from 2015-16. He pursued and successfully completed his Theological studies at Tejas Vidya Peetha, Bengaluru. He made his perpetual profession on May 28, 2018 and was ordained deacon on February 18, 2019 by Most Rev. Dr A. Anthonysamy, Bishop of Chikkamagalure. He was ordained a priest on June 01, 2020 by most Rev.

Jose Pamplany, Auxiliary Bishop of Thalassery Archdiocese. The ordination ceremony took place at St Mary's Church, Mangode, his home parish in Kannur District. Following the lockdown restrictions, a few close relatives and religious and priests attended the ceremony.

Perpetual Profession

In spite of the lockdowns and the difficulties that we face due to the pandemic that is going on, South West India Province had much to rejoice on May 28th, 2020, as four of our Brothers at Tejas Vidya Peetha, namely Arun Cyriac Valliara, Arun Kumar, Bibin Kuriakose Outhuppacherry and John B. Gannot, made their



perpetual profession and were accepted into the Fransalian family as permanent members. Rev. Fr Benny Koottanal, the Provincial Superior of South-West India Province, presided over the ceremony and received their vows in the presence of Fr Henry Jose Kodikuthiyil, the Rector, Fr Binu Edathumparambil, the Councillor in-charge of Formation, and a few other confreres from the neighbouring communities. Along with the four brothers of the South-West India Province, four of their companions belonging to other Provinces, namely Ruben Gilbert (Nagpur), Anbu Stalin, Eugene Ernest Raj, and Mahimai Arokiaraj (South East), also made their Perpetual Profession. The theme chosen for the celebration was *To Live Jesus as Fransalians Forever*. Five of the brothers who are in temporary profession renewed their vows on the same day. After the Holy Communion, **Fr Binu Edathumparambil** took charge as the new Rector and Superior of Tejas Vidya Peetha. Fr Benny Koottanal, the Provincial, congratulated all the brothers who made their final commitment and renewed their vows. He acknowledged and thanked Fr Henry Kodikuthiyil for his dedicated and loving service as the Rector and Superior of Tejas for the past four years. He also congratulated and thanked Fr Binu Edathumparambil for taking charge as the new Rector and Superior of Tejas Vidya Peetha. The celebration ended with a short felicitation and fellowship meal.

Initiation to the Novitiate



On May 30, 2020 eleven brothers were initiated to the Novitiate at Indian Institute of Spirituality. At the wake of Covid 19, IIS was proposed to be the Novitiate and Fr Joe Cherolickal as appointed as the In-Charge of the novices for the month of June. In a concelebrated Mass Rev. Fr Benny Koottanal, the provincial officially initiated the brothers to the Novitiate.

In his homily Fr Benny welcomed the novices to be like St Paul who became small and humble from his status as Saul and remained faithful to the vocation that he received. Frs Binu Edathuparambil, Sibichen Panthanmackal, Martin Richard and the staff of IIS were present for the whole ceremony. The novices were presented with the Constitution of MSFS, Directory, Spiritual Directory, Introduction to the Devout Life and a rosary. All joined for the Agape and wished the young brothers for their bold step of entering into the novitiate.

First Profession

It was indeed a joyful day for the South-West India Province and to the MSFS Congregation as thirteen of our novices, after completing one year of Canonical Novitiate made First Profession. *“By God’s Grace, For His Glory”* was the theme of the first profession which took place at Sneha Jyothy Ash-



ram, Makkiyad on May 31, 2020 on the day of Pentecost. The solemn Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by the delegate of the Provincial Rev. Fr Thomas Chennakattukunnel MSFS in the absence of Rev. Fr Benny Koottanal, the Provincial of the South-West India Province, due to covid-19 lockdown. The candidates were presented to the Provincial delegate by Rev. Fr Timson Parakkottil, the Novice Master. The occasion was blessed with the presence of a few priests due to the restrictions of lockdown.

M. K. Halli – New Mission Center for the MSFS in the Diocese of Mysuru

My dear Confreres, I am very happy to inform you that the Bishop of Mysuru, Rt. Rev. William has kindly entrusted with the MSFS a new mission center at M. K. Halli, the diocesan farm land, near Bogadi, Mysuru. The proposed mission center is situated between our two houses Soumya Sadan and Sannidhi. In a short while this center will be raised as a parish. The patroness of the new center and the would be parish will be St Alphonsa. **Fr Sebastian Conrad** will be installed as the Priest-in-charge by Bishop William on the 5th of July 2020. We thank Bishop William for his goodwill to entrust us with this pastoral ministry and for his personal relationship with the MSFS Fathers. Please keep this new mission of our province in your prayers. We wish Fr Sebastian Conrad God's blessings in his new ministry.

Promoted to Diaconate, Philippines Delegation

Bro. Rominic S. Civico

Promoted to First Profession, Philippines Delegation

1. Bro. Christian Ybanez Exclamado
2. Bro. Marlon Bahalla Quijano
3. Bro. Rustom Atamosa Maglahus

Bon Voyage

After having completed his studies in Theology at Indian Institute of Spirituality, **Fr Jundie Sumagaysay** has returned to the Philippines and is appointed as the Superior of the Barili Mission in Philippines. He left for the Philippines on May 30, 2020. We wish him God's abundant blessings in his new stint of ministries. **Bon Voyage Fr Jundie.**

Best Wishes to Rev. Fr Henry Jose Kodikuthiyil

After having served the province in different capacities, especially as a renowned Formator, **Rev. Fr Henry Jose Kodikuthiyil** is appointed as the dean of Theology at Morning Star Seminary, Kolkata. He left for Kolkata on June 15, 2020. We wish him God's abundant blessings in his new stint of ministries.

Morning Star Seminary is the Regional Seminary newly entrusted to the MSFS Congregation for animation and formation for a term of ten years. **Rev. Fr George Panthanmackel** is the Rector and **Rev. Fr Thumma Mariadas Reddy** is the Dean of Philosophy. We wish our Fathers choicest blessings of God as they serve the Indian Church with Fransalian Charisma.

Congratulations to Fr Thomas Cherukatt

Fr Thomas Cherukatt is appointed by Bishop William of Mysuru as the member of the Conciliatory Committee of the Diocese of Mysuru. We wish Fr Cherukatt all the best in this new stint at the diocesan level. Congratulations and best wishes, dear Fr Chrukatt.

Transfers and Appointments

- **Fr Petrus Kerketta** is appointed to the MSFS Community at Karahalli as Assistant to Fr Benny Marangolil in the management of the Garment Mill with effect from 25th June 2020.
- **Fr Kelvin Olikunnel** is designated to be appointed in the Archdiocese of Thalassery, Kerala, with effect from 27th June 2020.
- **Fr Bibin Kelimattathil** is designated to be appointed to the Diocese of Kanjirappally, Kerala, with effect from 30th June 2020.
- **Fr Simil Devasia** is appointed to the community of Vinayalaya as its member as he prepares to go for the ministry in the Chad-Cameroon Delegation with effect from 10th July 2020.
- **Fr Rakesh Ekka** is appointed to the community of Vinayalaya as its member as he prepares to go for the ministry in the Chad-Cameroon Delegation with effect from 19th June 2020.

My Schedule

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

June 2020

June 7	Visitation to MSFS Community * SFS Schools Koppal
June 8	Visitation to MSFS Community & SFS School Kuknoor
June 8	Visitation to MSFS Community & SFS School Mundargi
June 9	Visitation to MSFS Community & SFS School Savanur
June 10	Visitation to MSFS Community & SFS School Shiralakoppa& the Parish of Thandagunde
June 13	Council Meeting
June 22-23	*Visitation to Mermier Bhavan Community, Hebbagodi, Common Evaluation of the SFS Group of Institutions * Visitation to MSFS Community & SFS Parish Hebbagodi * Visitation to MSFS Community & Prateeksha Boys' Home, Hebbagodi
June 24	Visiting the Novices, celebration of the Eucharist
June 29	Visitation to MSFS Community, Karahalli
June 30	Visitation to MSFS Community, PSI Sevagram, Kengeri

July 2020

July 1	Visitation to MSFS Community & School, Anthoninagara, Chikmagalur
July 4	Inauguration of the Academic Year at Tejas Vidya Peetha, Mass of the Holy Spirit

July 5	Visitation to MSFS Community, De Sales Bhavan, Mysore, Installation of Fr Sebastian Conrad as Priest in charge at MK Halli
July 6	Visitation to MSFS Minor Seminary, Sannidhi, Mysore
July 7	Visitation to MSFS Community, Soumya Sadan, Mysore
July 13-14	Visitation to Tejas Vidya Peetha, MSFS Theologate, Kengeri
July 15	Visitation to MSFS Community & SFS School, NEST, Kengeri
July 18	Council Meeting
July 20	Visitation to MSFS Communities Sidlghatta, Kadisanahalli & Chintamani
July 21	Visitation to MSFS Communities in Srinivaspura, Tamaka & ITI Kolar
July 22	Visitation to MSFS Communities of Malur, Gokunte and St Mary's Parish Kolar

VOICE OF SFS

"Let us never lower our eyes without humbling our hearts."

Fraternally,



Fr Benny Koottanal MSFS
Provincial