

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



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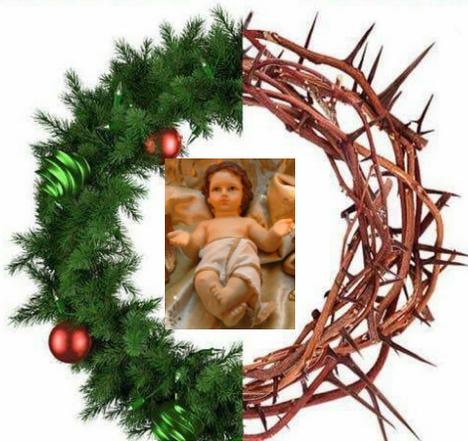
My dear Confreres,

Fraternal greetings to you from Fr. Benny Koottanal. On the eve of Christmas it is my great joy to wish each one of you the blessings of Jesus, our King and Saviour, who is born in Bethlehem. May this Christmas help each one of us to realize the meaning of Christmas in our personal lives and help us to live a Christ-oriented missionary life as MSFS.

CHRISTMAS: JOURNEY FROM THE MANGER TO THE CROSS

**This is the
season**

**This is the
reason**



My dear Confreres, the Eucharistic Theology of the Catholic Church teaches that the essence of the Sacrament of the Eucharist is that it is the vivid expression of the Mystery of Christ – His Life, Passion, Death and Resurrection. **Eucharist is a Life that is won through Death.** When I reflect over the birth of Jesus, the Christmas, I see in it more than the immediate happiness of the birth of Jesus, the **MEANING his birth is bringing into my personal life.**

My dear Confreres, Christmas is not merely about the birth of Christ. Instead, **it is about the MESSAGE of the life of Christ.** When I reflect over Christmas I am bound to reflect

over all that happened before and after the birth of Christ. In fact, one can see only struggles and painful journeys around Christ's birth. The sad and lonely journey of Mary and Joseph towards Bethlehem, the doors being shut against them at the inn, the struggles in giving birth to a child in the manger without any basic facilities of modernity and the heartbreaking experiences of Mary and Joseph looking at the struggles of the child to cope up with the weather and the strangeness around. **What happens after the Christmas?** Again it is bound by the plights of this young couple with the Child: flight to Egypt, lonely life in the strange land, return to Nazareth, the heartbreaking message of Simeon, the loss of Jesus in the temple, the controversies around the person of Jesus during his public ministry and the shameful death of Jesus on the Cross. **Does not Christmas speak of contradictions?**

My dear Confreres, this is my Christmas message for each of you personally: The picture above is a Christmas greeting for you, but it will throw at you certain perspectives of your life. Christmas is the story of a person who tries to vivify the meaning of life not merely through the sparkling greenery of one's life, but through the bruises and wounds that life brings along into our human existence. It teaches us that we will never be able to attain the joy of Christmas without enduring the burden of the pricking thorny crown.

I realise, my dear Confreres, that it is the right time for me to tell you the meaning that I find in my relationship with you. **I thank God for you and for the wonder of your person.** Time and again you have shown through your life that you wish to take the road less travelled and because of that you often struggled with your life to reach the destiny that you have ahead. I have noticed that sometimes desperation and meaninglessness have come on your way due to the sincerity that you show to your choices. There had been instances when you thought that it is better to give up, or to criticise others to escape your own insecurities. It is only natural and reasonable that it is so.

On this Christmas I would like to tell you that I am grateful to you, for the strenuous effort that you take to live your special call with a realistic evaluation of your life and its ups and downs. I see in your life-pursuits your genuine desire to grow in holistic growth despite the struggle to achieve it. But I am sure that you are on the right track. Do not give up your earnestness in searching and struggling to find the Destiny of your life, Jesus Christ.

I WISH YOU THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS, the sparkling experiences of life in your new endeavours in life. **Be the Message and the Messenger of Christmas.** When life begins to depict weariness and loneliness, remember the bloody, thorny crown and the one crowned with it - Jesus Christ, the same Lord, whom you adore at the manger.

MY VISITATION TO CHAD-CAMEROON DELEGATION



My dear Confreres, from the 13th of December 2018 to the 23rd I was on visitation to Chad-Cameroon Delegation. It is my first visitation to the mission after it is erected as a Delegation on the 29th of September 2018. It was an enriching experience to have met with all the Confreres and Scholastics personally. Here is a short statistics of the Chad-

Cameroon Delegation:

Members

Number of Priests	19
Scholastics in Theology	11
Regents	05
Scholastics in Philosophy	14
Novices	06
Minor Seminarians	22

Ministries

Parishes	07(in addition there are sub-stations too)
Formation Houses	02
Retreat and Renewal Centre	01
Schools	02
Boys' Homes	02

Meeting with the Confreres and Scholastics

I had the opportunity to meet with each individual priest belonging to the Delegation. It was a time of personal interaction and evaluation of the effectiveness of their respective ministries, knowing about their concerns and needs, evaluating the struggles and

difficulties as well as the satisfaction they derive from the mission and ministry. I also met with all the Scholastics in Theology and the Regents. Overall these meetings helped me to assess the future of the Delegation with all its possibilities and struggles.

Meeting with each Community

Personal meeting with the Confreres was followed by the meeting with each community together with the Delegation Superior and the Delegation Bursar. It was a time for me to appreciate and critically evaluate with the Confreres regarding the growth as well as the areas in which the community needs to grow in Consecrated Community life, Mission, MSFSness and Salesian Spirituality. The necessity to create annual budget, the importance of the community meeting, tabling of the accounts in the community etc. were insisted in this meeting.

Delegation Colloquium

The personal and community meetings were followed by the Delegation Colloquium conducted within the span of two days in Ngaoundere, in our Minor Seminary. This



meeting was attended by all the Priests of the Delegation. The meeting consisted of the various spectrums of the Delegation's functioning. Through this colloquium we were able to highlight the existence of the Delegation as a constitutional entity, which entitles the Delegation administration to involve in the functioning of the Delegation with more clarity and vision. The colloquium also helped us to address the issues which are very pertinent for its functioning such as writing the history of the Delegation from its inception, creating statistical documents regarding the ministries of each community,

assessing the effectiveness of some of the ministries such as education and management of schools in the context of Africa, the need to plan out the vision and mission plan of each community and so on. As the outcome of the colloquium the Delegation brought out an action plan for the year 2019.

Action plan of Chad-Cameroon Delegation for the Year 2019

1. Make a vision and mission plan for every community.
2. Make a brief history of the origin and development of the community.
3. Send annual budget of every community to the Delegation Bursar before 1st January 2019.
4. Study the possibility of starting a hospital/dispensary in Ngaoundere, Bero and Doba and seek collaborative missionaries.
5. Continue the delegation circular once in four months and ensure every centre sends news materials.
6. Ensure the construction of at least a few class rooms, for the Ngaoundere School before the end of august 2019.
7. Study the possibility of training a few youths in Chad with modern means of agriculture.
8. Continue the construction of Boys' home and SFS School in Doba.
9. Secure our properties and have a master plan for all our lands in the mission.
10. Start a school in Yaoundé at Affanoyo as soon as the land issue is solved.
11. Study the possibilities of buying a piece of land in Binidang to construct a few rooms for the university students.
12. Have a Delegation Corpus fund for emergency needs.
13. Form an internal auditing committee and ensure internal auditing in all the centres of the Delegation.
14. Study the possibilities of adding a few more rooms to the La Feuillette building in Ngoya and approach the funding agencies for the same.
15. Identify and train a few confreres in the field of education, health and formation within next five years.
16. Organise Salesian Seminars and update and renewal programmes once in three years for all the members of the Delegation.

17. Equip the Delegation archives with all the documents of each center (land documents, construction plans, reports on seminarians, contracts with the dioceses and so on).

To the Provincial Administration

1. Strengthen the Delegation by sending more personnel.
2. Ensure the financial stability of the Delegation.
3. Revive the African day in all the education institutions in India.
4. Help to find further sponsors for all professed scholastics.

My Personal Impressions and Assessment of the Delegation

After having met the confreres personally and in community and having critically discussed and evaluated with them in the Colloquium about the present day scenario of the Delegation, I am personally impressed to see the marvellous growth the Delegation has made during the past years.

Appreciations

1. There exists a growing sense of confidence and positivity among the Confreres to work for the Delegation without any compromise.
2. There is an effective and constructive leadership in the Delegation, which motivates all the members to work in harmony.
3. The number of vocations are growing in the Delegation. From the year 2020 onwards every year we will have minimum two ordinations for the Delegation.
4. Confreres are being empowered through various means such as studies at the PhD and Post Graduate Level in Universities abroad, ministries abroad, scholastics are sent for theology studies to Fribourg, Switzerland and so on. All these are intended to equip the Delegation with a strong base to function in the future.
5. As the Action Plan for the coming year depicts, strategic planning and organisations are envisaged for the growth of the Delegation.

Suggestions

1. More systematic planning at various levels such as, finance, personnel, budget, ministries and mission need to be implemented.

2. Constant visit and monitoring of the Delegation Superior to the communities and evaluation of the religious life and ministries of the Confreres need to happen.
3. Proper and studied establishment of the ministries, especially in the field of education and Social and Innovative Ministries are to be initiated.
4. Holistic formation of the Seminarians, emphasising the intellectual, spiritual, physical (games and manual labour) and social levels have to be insisted from the candidacy onwards. All types of moral relativism have to be curbed at the very beginning itself.
5. Proficiency in French and English Languages has to be emphasised for all the Confreres and Seminarians.
6. Ongoing Formation Program for all the Confreres, especially in Salesian Spirituality, has to be implemented.

Meeting with Bishop Emmanuel Abbo, Bishop of Ngaoundere

Together with Frs. Manoj Xavier and Giridhari Lakra I visited Bishop Emmanuel Abbo, the Bishop of Ngaoundere. It was a friendly meeting assessing the effectiveness of our



ministries in the diocese of Ngaoundere. At present we have a university parish and another mission parish in the diocese of Ngaoundere, in addition to the Minor Seminary and school. As we are gifted with nine and half hectares of land where our school and the seminary are situated, we are making a master plan of the ministries

we could start in this particular land. The bishop expressed his extreme happiness regarding the services rendered by our Missionaries and assured his whole-hearted support in our missionary endeavours.

Delegation Council Meeting

The first Delegation Council Meeting was held on the 19th of December in our Minor Seminary in Ngaoundere. It was an effective time with the Delegation Superior, his Advisors and the Delegation Bursar to chalk out plans for the constitutional functioning of the Delegation.

Gratitude

As I conclude my visitation to the Chad-Cameroon Delegation, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Fr. Manoj Xavier Arackal, the Delegation Superior, for the meticulous organization of my visitation. It had been an inspiring experience to go through all the arranged programs and I feel enriched by the Salesian Hospitality extended to me by our Confreres. I thank the Delegation Advisors and Delegation Bursar as well as all the Confreres, Scholastics and Postulants for their love, affection and hospitality. I also thank our Confreres who are working in various parts of the world, who extend financial support to the Chad-Cameroon Delegation through their individual initiatives. They do a lot of sacrifice to extend their commitment to our mission. I remain grateful to them. Let the commitment of our Missionaries bring dividend fruits in the mission land of Chad and Cameroon. God bless Chad-Cameroon Delegation!

REGISTRATION OF THE LAND AT KARAHALLI

On the 18th December 2018 we have registered in the name of Karnataka Fransalian Society 3.33 Acres of land that we have purchased at Karahalli, Nandi Hills Road, Bengaluru. We have also started the construction of the Social service centre at Karahalli and Garment Factory in the premise.

OBITUARY

- **Mrs. Mary Joseph Punnakuzhiyil**, aged 78, Mother of Fr. Sunny Punnakuzhiyil, died on December 18, 2018.
- **Mr. Mr. George (Varkey) Panamattathil**, aged 85, Father of Fr. Gijo Panamattathil, died on December 23, 2018.

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 the need. Please do organize the visitations and other common meetings/programs according to the latest communication.

December 2018

December 25	Christmas
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December 26	Meeting with the Bishop of Shimoga
December 27	Ordination of Dn. Staney Rodrigues , Infant Jesus Church, Prabhat Nagar, Honavar, Karnataka
December 29	One day Seminar for the DSFS Sisters in Bangalore

January 2019

January 1	New Year
January 2	Ordinations of Deacons Tony Munduchalil and Joshu Thumpechirayil , St. Mary's Basilica, Champakulam, Kerala
January 3	Ordination of Dn. Zacharias Peter Cherackal , St. Mary's Basilica, Ernakulam, Kerala
January 5	Ordination of Dn. Antony Selvam , Lourdu Matha Church, Elanthaikulam, Singamparai, Tamil Nadu
January 9	Ordination of Dn. Petrus Kerketta , St. Joseph's Church, Kanchanagar, Balarampur Dt., Chattisgarh
January 11	Ordination of Dn. Rakesh Ekka , St. Joseph's Church, Chiringa, Ambikapur Dt., Chattisgarh
January 13	Meeting with the team of Guests from Germany initiated through Fr. Joseph Mannukuzhumpil
January 15	Council Meeting
January 19	School Annual Day, SFS School Mundargi
January 21	Meeting of all the Principals of the SFS State Syllabus Schools
January 24	Feast of St. Francis De Sales at Vinayalaya, Mass with the Archbishop of Bangalore, Installation of the Provincial
January 25	* First Mass of the New Priests in Vinayalaya * School Annual Day, SFS School Anthoninagara, Chikmagaluru
January 27	Jubilee Celebration of Koppal Mission, Mass with the Bishop
January 29	Meeting the Brothers of South West India in Suvidya College
January 30	Meeting with Fr. Tomy Joseph Puliyanampattayil, the Vice Provincial of USA Vice Province

February 2019

February 1-14	20 th General Chapter of MSFS in Guwahati
February 18	Diaconate Ordination, Tejas

February 19	Council Meeting
February 20	Meeting the third year Seminarians of Sannidhi, Mysore
February 23	Meeting the third year Seminarians of SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor
February 25	One day with Tejas Theologate Community
February 26	* Executive Meeting of the PMP (Parish Mission Preaching Team) * Executive meeting of Vikasjyothi (in the afternoon)
February 27	* Meeting of all the Directors of Prateeksha Boys' Homes * Executive Meeting of PSI (in the afternoon)

March 2019

March 2	Suvidya-Tejas Academic Convocation in Suvidya College
March 4	* Executive Meeting of Fides India * Core-Committee Meeting of the Innovative & Social Ministry Forum (in the afternoon)
March 5	Core-Committee Meeting of the Mission Forum
March 6	Core-Committee Meeting of the Education Forum
March 7	Core-Committee Meeting of the Formation Forum
March 8	* Core-Committee Meeting of the Stewardship Forum * Meeting of the Internal Auditing Team (in the afternoon)
March 11	Core-Committee Meeting of the Associates of the Fransalians
March 12	Council Meeting

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

“May the great, yet small infant of Bethlehem be the delight and love of our hearts. If I contemplate Him upon the knees of His holy Mother or in her arms, with His little mouth like the bud of a rose... I see my God more splendid on this throne than Solomon on his throne rich with gems...! May the great St. Joseph help us to partake in His joy; may the Most Holy Virgin give us His love; may the Child deign to fill and infuse the grace of His merits into our hearts!”

Fraternally,



Fr. Benny Kottanal MSFS
Provincial