

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

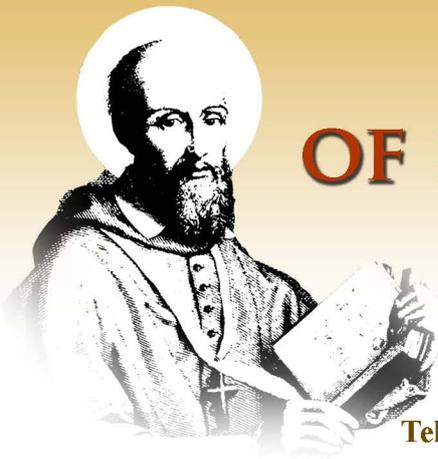
SOUTH-WEST INDIA PROVINCE (SWIP)

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SWIP Circular BK/66

December 24, 2020

My dear Confreres, Fraternal greetings to you from Fr Benny Koottanal. Christmas is at hand, although in a different context of the universal perspective. But still, the ravage sway of the Pandemic Covid-19 has not dwindled the spirit of Christmas. It is a time for us to re-discover the spirit of Christmas in the 'new normal.' Perhaps it is a challenge for us to understand the "New Language" this Christmas is communicating and the need to have an **Emmanuel** experience by spending quality time with our Confreres in the Community.

CHRISTMAS: A NEW LANGUAGE AND A NEW LIFESTYLE



The Gospel of John 1/14 says: *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.* Yes, the Word that was considered to be a distant reality has become a nearby reality, a person who lives with us, who shares his life with us. The Word has become something that creates, something that nourishes and builds up. The important aspect of this Christmas is that *the Word who became Flesh* is a new Language that exterminates confusion and unites those who hear it.

The Bible speaks about two kinds of languages. One is a language that got confused and the other a language that connected one with the other; **Babel Tower** and **Pentecost**. *The Book of Genesis, Chapter 11* speaks about a **language that got confused**. It is said that in the beginning there was only one language in the world. People spoke very few words. As the humans moved from the East to the rest of the world they decided to build a city and a tower in it that reaches up to the heavens. As God understood their evil intentions He confused their language that they were never able to build the city, nor the tower. **The symbolic unfinished tower of Babel stands as a sign of lack of communication between the humankind.**

On the contrary, at the end of the Bible, we have the narration about the **Pentecost experience**. It is all about a fisherman who spoke his dialect, which was not understandable for the crowd that gathered

around him from all the parts of the world. But filled with the Holy Spirit when he uttered the word, all who listened to him understood what he spoke in their own tongues. **Pentecost symbolizes a language that eliminates confusion and unites hearts to understand the other in spirit and truth.**

The WORD that became flesh and now living among us is the ONE who dispels confusion and unites us with one another. Jesus is the **affirmative WORD** that **came to dwell among us**. The language that he spoke healed, gave life and reconciled. **My dear Confreres**, one of the most important aspects of this Christmas is the need to speak in our communities and places of ministries a language that unites and builds. **Do we understand each other in our communities? Do those who collaborate with us in our ministries experience the warmth of the language that we speak? OR are we still living the Babel experience?** Christmas is the time to speak a language of truth even when it is difficult. **MAY THE LANGUAGE OF THE WORD THAT BECAME FLESH UNITE US WITH ONE ANOTHER.**

The second dimension of Christmas is the **EMMANUEL EXPERIENCE – God with us**. One of the most important aspects of human life is the nearness of the other. The greatest expression of God's love for humanity is the creation of the human being. The Book of Genesis 2/7 says that *He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*. When does a breath meet with another breath? It is in the most intimate moment of union with one another. God has established such a vibrant and intimate relationship with us that we are never replaceable for him. **Do we convey this intimacy of relationship with one another? Do we withhold our presence from the other? Are our communities having this Emmanuel Experience?**

There is a beautiful story: One day the class teacher called the parent to the school. As the father of the child came to the office of the teacher, she handed over a paper to him and told him: This is the homework done by your child. The class was told to draw a picture of their home and your daughter has drawn it. The father looking into the picture told: She has done a good job. She has drawn the house well, the plants and pet animals are well depicted and she has even drawn the picture of the maidservant. What is the problem with this picture? The teacher told: There is a problem – she has not drawn your picture in it. **Yes, this is the problem!** Somehow we are not there in the picture drawn by the other! Are you missing out from the picture drawn by your Confrere, your community member?

My dear Confreres, shall we celebrate this Christmas by speaking a language that is understandable for all? Shall we make this Christmas a time of nearness and being with the other? I wish and pray that the **Word made Flesh and dwelt among us** becomes the connectivity for us to rekindle the lost touch of Christmas. **MERRY CHRISTMAS MY DEAR CONFRERES.**

CONGREGATIONAL MATTERS

PRAYER INTENTIONS OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL: DECEMBER 2020

We Pray that those children, who are abused, underprivileged, discriminated, abandoned and that the unborn babies are well protected and nurtured with utmost love and care.

NB. From January 2021 the Prayer intentions of the Superior General are given in the Ordo 2021 at the beginning of every month. Kindly add them in your prayers.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL CHAPTER 2021

My dear Confreres, the Superior General, Very Rev. Fr Abraham Vettuvellil informs the whole Congregation that due to the present scenario of the pandemic Covid-19 the extraordinary General Chapter which was convoked from February 1, 2021 to February 10, 2021 is postponed with the indult from the Holy See to February 1, 2022 to February 10, 2022. Let us continue to pray for the success of the Extraordinary General Chapter that our Congregation, through the whole-hearted commitment of its Confreres, may remain faithful to the spirit of the General Chapter.

NEW PROVINCIAL CURIA OF EAST AFRICA PROVINCE

The East Africa Province has elected a new team of Administration under the leadership of the Provincial **Rev. Fr Mathew Thomas Thazhathukunnel**. They are:

Fr Sheejan Kallarackal (Councillor and Admonitor)

Fr Zachariah Burefero (Councillor)

Fr Soosai Raj Robert (Councillor)

Fr Japhet Kirimi (Councillor)

Fr Reji Pendanath (Provincial Bursar)

We wish the new team of Administration of the East Africa Province all the very- best and blessings of Almighty God in their ministries.

NEW PROVINCIAL CURIA OF PUNE PROVINCE

The Pune Province has elected a new team of Administration under the leadership of the Provincial **Rev. Fr Jayaseelan Selvaraj**. They are:

Fr Tony Prem Anand (PCIC for Formation and Admonitor)

Fr Santow John (PCIC for Education)

Fr Jerard Sahayaraj (PCIC for Social Apostolates and Innovative Ministries)

Fr Juze Fernandes (PCIC for Mission)

Fr Nelson A. (Provincial Bursar)

We wish the new team of Administration of the Pune Province God's abundant blessings in their endeavour to build the edifice of the Church through their committed involvement in the ministries.

NEW PROVINCIAL CURIA OF DIBRUGARH PROVINCE

The Dibrugarh Province has elected a new team of Administration under the leadership of the Provincial **Rev. Fr Emmanuel M.T**. They are:

Fr Tomson Aerathedathu (PCIC for Formation and Admonitor)

Fr George Vadakkepericherimannil (PCIC for Education)

Fr Joseph Bamhingbe (PCIC for Mission)

Fr Milkius Tirkey (PCIC for Social Apostolates and Innovative Ministries)

Fr Peter Parankimalil (Provincial Bursar)

In the name of the South-West India Province, we Congratulate the Administration of Dibrugarh Province God's abundant blessings in their new ministry.

NEW PROVINCIAL CURIA OF GUWAHATI PROVINCE

The Guwahati Province has elected a new team of Administration under the leadership of the Provincial **Rev. Fr Sabu Francis**. They are:

Fr Saji George Puthiyakulangara (Councillor & Admonitor)

Fr George Poovathunkal (Councillor)

Fr Athnas Kerketta (Councillor)

Fr Roy Parayaniyil (Councillor)

Fr Santhosh Chavaranal (Provincial Bursar)

In the name of the South-West India Province, we Congratulate the Administration of Guwahati Province blessings of God in their new ministry.

LIFE IN THE PROVINCE

DIACONATE ORDINATION



November 3, 2020 was a joyful day for our Tejas family and for the Fransalians all over the world as eight more of our brothers were raised to the sacred order of Diaconate. Brothers A. MahimaiArokia Raj, Arun Cyriac Valliara, Bibin Kuriakose Outhuppacherry, F. Eugene Ernest Raj, John B. Gannot, L. Arun

Kumar, R. Anbu Stalin, and Ruben Gilbert were ordained deacons by Most Rev. Dr Peter Machado, the Archbishop of Bangalore. Four of these deacons, Arun Cyriac Valliara, Bibin Kuriakose Outhuppacherry, John B. Gannot, and Arun Kumar belong to the South-West India Province. Rev. Fr Benny Koottanal, the Provincial Superior of South-West India Province, Fr Binu Edathumparambil, the Rector and Councillor in Charge of Formation along with the staff of Tejas, Fr. P. S. Joseph, the Councilor in charge of Formation in South-East India Province, and several other confreres from the neighbouring communities joined the celebration. The theme chosen for the celebration was *To Love and to Serve*. Fr Provincial congratulated all the brothers who were ordained deacons and he acknowledged and thanked the Rector and the staff of Tejas Vidya Peetha for their dedicated and loving service in the formation of our students. The celebration ended with a short felicitation and a sumptuous meal.

MEETING WITH THE BISHOP OF PUNALUR



It was a wonderful experience to have a meeting with Most Rev. Selvister Ponnuthan, the Bishop of Punalur, together with the diocesan authorities. The meeting was held with the intention of evaluating the MSFS presence in the diocese of Punalur as well as to evaluate the impact of the ministries we are doing. The Bishop appreciated very highly our missionaries, who are engaged in effective pastoral ministries in

his diocese. At present we have Frs Baby Elanjimattathil and Abey Thunduparambil in St John of the Cross Parish Adoor, Fr Mathew Kavithazhe in St Mary's Cathedral Church and Fr Sebastian Kulangarathottiyil in the Parish of Edamon. We are almost at the completion of the construction of a beautiful church in Adoor. I thanked the Bishop for his love and concern for our Missionaries as well as for the MSFS Congregation.

PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS

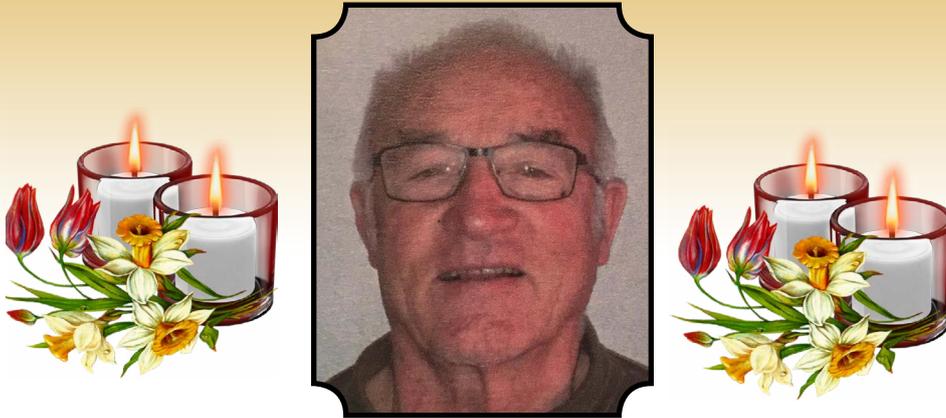
My dear Confreres, as we are aware this season of Christmas and New Year brings along with it eleven New Priests to our Province family. Two of the ordinations are already done and yet another nine more will be ordained in the coming weeks. **I request you to arrange your participation in these ordinations respecting the directives and restrictions given by the government/local civil authorities.** Above all support our deacons with your prayerful accompaniment when physical presence is not expected. Let us celebrate our new priests that their life will be modelled after the newborn babe in the manger.

CONGRATULATIONS AND APPRECIATIONS FOR CONDUCTING THE ANNUAL RETREATS

My dear Confreres, this year we conducted our annual retreats in the apostolic communities. As reported by the animators of the different Apostolic Communities the retreat was a very personal experience of prayer, renewal and above all living together. Most of the Apostolic Communities shared the preaching among themselves. The active participation of every member was very inspiring through the conducting of the preaching, animation of the celebration of the mass, conducting adoration, organizing the choir, arrangements for stay etc. With the exception of a very few, all the Confreres participated in the retreats. I take this opportunity to thank each one of you, especially the Conveners of our Apostolic Communities, for this **special experience of spiritual nourishment and living together. CONGRATULATIONS DEAR CONFRERES.**

OBITUARY

Rev. Fr Jules Seppey (84), of Franco-Swiss Province, expired on November 10, 2020. We thank God for all the good things that He has showered upon our Congregation through the instrumentality of **Fr Jules Seppey**. May God bless him and give him eternal rest.



NB: For a deceased Confrere, who is perpetually professed, each one of us is obliged to celebrate a Holy Mass irrespective of the Province. I request all of you to do the necessary suffrages for the departed Confreres.

- **Mr Eapachan (84)**, Maternal Uncle of Rev. Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, our Superior General, died on November 23, 2020.
- **Mrs Arputha Mary (60)**, Maternal Aunt of Fr Lawrence, died on December 1, 2020.
- **Mrs Thresiamma Alex (86)**, Mother of Fr Kuttivayalil Roji, died on December 13, 2020.

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

MY SCHEDULE

December 2020

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|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| December 25 | Christmas |
| December 27 | Ordination of Dn Justin Thanikkal |
| December 28 | Ordination of Dn Ajish Cheeramban |
| December 29 | Ordination of Dn Albin Puthenveettil |
| December 30 | Ordination of Dn Jibin Paraparambil |

January 2021

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| January 2 | Ordination of Dn Vijin Kottoor |
| January 5 | Ordination of Dn Shince Panackappally |
| January 8 | Ordination of Dns Anil Kiran C. Buddini & David S. Buddini |
| January 10 | Celebration of the Mass for the Diamond & Silver Jubilarians, SMMI, Sanatorium |
| January 12 | Classes in St Peter's Pontifical Institute |
| January 20 | Council Meeting |
| January 24 | Feast of St Francis de Sales |
| January 27-29 | Classes in IIS |

VOICE OF SFS

"Do not allow personal prejudices and aversions to influence your behaviour."

Fraternally,

Fr Benny Koottanal MSFS