

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

SOUTH-WEST INDIA PROVINCE

VINAYALAYA, MSFS Provincial House, P. B. No. 5557, Malleswaram West P. O, Bengaluru 560 055, INDIA
Tel: 080-23348041, Mob: 9797396800

SWIP Circular TK/27

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My dear Confreres,



On October 24, we celebrate the 187th Foundation Day of our beloved Congregation, the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. For us, it is a moment of grace, a time to return to our "first love," to the original spirit that ignited the hearts of Fr. Mermier and his companion missionaries who made their religious vows on that day. It is an occasion to remind ourselves of our core identity as Missionaries and to recommit ourselves to the Lord's mission. We embrace whole-heartedly the "spirituality of the heart" of our Patron rooted in the following principles:

- **Gentleness and Kindness:** St. Francis de Sales taught that love is the highest expression of faith and that devotion should permeate our ordinary lives. Fr. Mermier expected his missionaries to adopt a kindly understanding of sinners and a fatherly tone in their preaching, reflecting "pleasing and kindly charity" in all their relationships.
- **Availability and Self-giving:** The first missionaries to India left their homeland knowing the risks of sickness and hardship. As one of them, Fr. Martin, stated: "Our former motherland is no more our own. Our motherland is now the district of Visakhapatnam. India is our Europe". This radical dispossession and abandonment to divine providence is a hallmark of our missionary vocation.
- **Being "All to All":** Our patron saint's life demonstrated a willingness to "become all things to all," making himself accessible to everyone from princes to the poor. This challenges us to meet people where they are, using "timely and effective means" to address their urgent needs, whether through education, social apostolate, or pastoral care.

The Foundation Day calls us to a collective witness, to vibrant community living marked by fraternal caring and sharing. It is an invitation to deepen our prayer life, simplify our

lifestyles, and ensure that our ministries are community-based, not individual undertakings. Our founder's call to be pioneers—not only in new geographical areas, but in new approaches to ministry and evangelization—is perhaps best echoed in the words our late Pope Francis spoke during his homily at the canonisation of the Franciscan Friar, Juniper Serra: “Go out and proclaim the merciful embrace of the Father. Go out to those who are burdened by pain and failure, who feel that their lives are empty and proclaim the folly of a loving Father who wants to anoint them with the oil of hope, the oil of salvation... go out with the ointment that soothes wounds and heals hearts...mission is always the fruit of a life which knows what it is to be found and healed, encountered and forgiven.”

TOWARDS RAISING CHAD-CAMEROON DELEGATION TO THE JURIDICAL STATUS OF A REGION

The missionary journey of SWI Province to the Chad-Cameroon was initiated in response to an invitation in 1994 by Bishop Michel Russo of the newly formed Diocese of Doba, which was formally accepted by the General Council in 1996 and mandated the South-West India Province to pioneer the venture into Francophone Africa. Following a direct visit of the proposed areas and a favourable report by the team consisting of the Provincial, Fr. Thomas Cherukat, and Fr. Mathew Kozhupakkalam in 1997, a pioneering team was formed in 1998: Fr. Antony Mookenthottam, Fr. Thomas Payattukandathil, and Fr. Jose Puthiaparambil (Jr.). The mission was officially opened in Chad when Frs. Payattukandathil and Puthiaparambil arrived in Doba on November 12, 1999. The pioneers were immediately entrusted with the Maybomby Mission in Doba (1999–2002). Over the past twenty-five years, the mission has experienced unparalleled growth under the leadership of dedicated superiors, including Fr. Thomas Cherukat, Fr. Joshy Nellimalamattam, and Fr. Manoj Arackal. In recognition of this success and stability, the mission was officially raised to the status of a Delegation on September 30, 2018, with Fr. Manoj Arackal serving as the first Delegation Superior. As of today, the Chad-Cameroon delegation has 24 priests, out of which 13 are natives, three perpetually professed, all of whom are deacons, and 42 temporary professed including three in France and two in the Philippines, 8 novices and 24 postulants. The delegation has 8 communities, 6 parishes, 3 schools, 3 boys’ homes, 3 formation houses (1 theologate, 1 novitiate, 1 minor seminary), and 1 retreat house.

During a colloquium of the Delegation, held at the conclusion of the annual retreat on July 11, 2025, the matter of requesting the General Administration to raise the Delegation to the juridical status of a Region was taken up for discussion and decision, and after serious deliberations and upon the realization that such a step would be a great catalyst for further sustained development of our missions in these two countries, it was unanimously decided to go ahead with the request. In its meeting held on September 29, 2025, the provincial council took up the matter of requesting the General Administration for raising the Chad-Cameroon Delegation to the status of a Region in tune with the unanimous request of the members of the Delegation. The Council noted that in fact one

of the earlier provincial chapters had overwhelmingly expressed such a view and that it was due to the apprehensions of the members of the delegation that put off such a move. The council also discussed in detail various aspects of the request and its implications and felt that it is the right time to request the General Administration to raise the delegation to a Region for more effective planning and sustained development. The number of native priests and the local vocations augur well for the future of the delegation. Be it in terms of the number of communities, parishes, institutions, formation houses, etc. one can see that practically every required column is ticked. Of course, financial self-sufficiency is a far-off affair. But then, that is not an essential requirement for being a Region. The province on its part will continue to support in every possible way, especially in matters of finance. **Considering all these aspects, the provincial Council has unanimously decided to endorse the request of the Chad-Cameroon Delegation and forward the request of the Delegation to the General Administration to elevate it to the juridical status of a Region under South-West India Province.**

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF MSFS MISSIONARY JOURNEY IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

An adventurous and daring missionary journey of the missionaries of St. Francis de Sales that took off in 1975 to work under diocesan priests in three of the North-Eastern states is completing 50 glorious years, having created in the process a distinct and marvellous MSFS legacy marked by hard work, loyalty, and untiring and passionate commitment -- all these in the face of an alien culture, unfamiliar languages and dialects, unfriendly climate and unreachable terrains. The impact of the sheer hard work and unflinching commitment of the pioneers and their successors has been such that the very name North-East became identical with our missionary call in India. Since a few decades, the younger generations have learned to grow up in our Congregation with narratives of various accounts of our missions in the North-East India. The rest of the Congregation watched with joy and pride the unparalleled growth of the congregation through this North-Eastern MSFS missions. For all the members of our Congregation all over the world, the missionary legacy of the North-East offers a number of invaluable lessons in missionary work: (i) through their well-integrated and co-ordinated missions, balancing pioneering work, pastoral care, evangelization, and formation of the young with such support systems like children's homes and other social initiatives that are custom made for the north-eastern context; (ii) their focus on sustained promotion of indigenous vocations; (iii) their planning, training and managing personnel resources giving priority to the needs of the mission and in being open to taking up challenging new mission territories and centres, keeping alive the exemplary missionary spirit of our pioneers. The golden jubilee celebration of such an astonishing legacy will be concluded on October 24, 2025. On behalf of all the members of SWI Province, I extend our hearty congratulations to all our confreres there and assure them of our prayers. Fr. George Vattappara, the permanent delegate of the Provincial, will represent our Province in the Golden Jubilee celebrations.

UPDATE ON EDEN NIVAS

As you are well aware of, we had to stop the construction work of Eden Nivas, our home for the retiring confreres due to the non-renewal of our FCRA account of the Kerala Fransalian Educational Society. So far, all our efforts at getting it renewed have proved to be futile. We are still pursuing different options. But the realization that the wait may get inordinately delayed has made us to look for other options to restart the work and complete the project. Due to the kind-heartedness and supreme generosity of Fr. James Manjackal in making some financial adjustments, I am happy to inform you all that we have restarted the work. We are also working on some other options to mobilize the remaining funds and hope to complete the work by the end of January. On behalf of all of you, I express my sincere thanks to Fr. James Manjackal, for, if it was not for his timely sacrificial help, we would have been stuck indefinitely.

There was also a suggestion from different corners to immortalize the pioneering missionary contributions of Fr. George Vayalil by including his name in the title of the priests' home. The Provincial Council has studied the proposal and has found a lot of merit in the suggestion. Therefore, it was decided to name our priests' home under construction as: "**Eden Nivas: Fr. George Vayalil Memorial MSFS Priests' Home.**"

WELCOME BACK

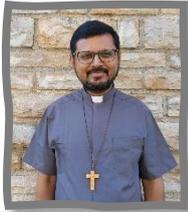
Two of our confreres have returned to the province community in India after pastoral service in Europe. **Fr. Sunil Ekka** has been working in the diocese of Eichstätt for the past 10 years and has returned on September 11, 2025. After some home holidays, he will join the Pratheeksha Boys' Home Community as Asst. Warden. **Fr. Shalbin Marottikudy** has been rendering his service to the English Province for the past 5 years. He too has returned for good to India on August 15, 2025. After some holidays, he has joined for a renewal program at Anugraha Counselling Psychotherapy Research Centre in Dindigul. Upon completion of the course, he will be given an appointment.

ADIOS....

Fr. Giridhari Lakra, after 20 years of selfless service in the Chad–Cameroon Delegation, and **Fr. Noby Varghese**, after three years of committed service at Suvidya College, departed for Austria on August 7, 2025, for pastoral ministry and studies respectively.

We wish them every success and God's abundant blessings in their new endeavours.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION OF FRANCO-SWISS PROVINCE



Rev. Fr. Samuel Devaraj, MSFS, assumed office as the Provincial of the Franco-Swiss Province on August 1, 2025. The Provincial Congress of the Franco-Swiss Province was held from October 7–8, 2025, in Annecy, with the theme “MSFS: Hope in our hearts, Christ in our mission, Charism in our living.”

The newly elected Council members are:

- ◇ Fr. Daniel Bouchet (Admonitor)
- ◇ Fr. Thadeus Lakra
- ◇ Fr. Martin Richard Mariajoseph
- ◇ Fr. John Hepuni (Provincial Bursar)



We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Rev. Fr. Samuel Devaraj, the Provincial, and his Councillors as they assume the leadership of the Province, assuring them of our prayerful support and invoking God’s abundant blessings upon their ministry.

SILVER JUBILEE OF MSFS FORMATION HOUSE, SILANG: PHILIPPINES



Twenty-five years ago, in the year 2000, a new chapter began in the history of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS) in the Philippines. What started as a humble dream — to provide a home for the formation of young men aspiring to live the Fransalian spirit — took concrete shape in Silang, Cavite, with the establishment of the MSFS Formation House. Through the dedication of our pioneering missionaries, especially

Fr. Francis Kizhakkethazhe and Fr. Mathew Kavithazha, and with the generosity of benefactors and the support of the Friends of the Fransalians, the long-awaited vision became a reality. The blessing and inauguration of the Formation House took place on May 7, 2000, officiated by Most Rev. Nestor Cariño, then Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines. Fr. Sunny Punnakuzhiyil was appointed as the first rector of the seminary, with Fr. Tito Puthuparambil serving as a member of the formation team and vocation promoter. On June 15, 2000, the MSFS Formation House officially opened its doors to the first batch of candidates. Since then, the Silang Formation House has remained a cradle of vocation and mission, guiding young men to live the Fransalian virtues of humility, gentleness, and apostolic zeal. So far twelve priests have been formed and ordained from this seminary, now serving God and His people in various parts of the Philippines and beyond. The story of the MSFS Formation House, Silang is more than just the history of a building — it is a living witness of God’s faithfulness, missionary courage, and the enduring spirit of St. Francis de Sales, which continues to inspire generations of Fransalians.

Province Retreats

The Annual Retreat of the Province for 2025 commenced with the first batch gathering at Charis Bhavan Retreat Centre, Athirampuzha, from September 22 to 26, 2025. The retreat was prayerfully guided by Rev. Fr. Tony Thambi C.S.C, whose reflections and sessions enriched the spiritual experience of all present. 61 of our confreres benefited from this grace-filled occasion.

The retreat for the second batch began at Vinayalaya on October 13, 2025, with 72 confreres participating. This ongoing retreat continues to strengthen the spiritual bonds among the members and renew their commitment to the mission of the province.

Those who were unable to attend either of these retreats are required to participate in a retreat and inform the Provincial's office not later than May 31, 2026.

APPOINTMENTS

- **Fr. Adzaba Evang William Favier Henri** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest, Administrator of the Comboni Community, and Comboni School and College.
- **Fr. Nga Modo Engelbert** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest of Bero and Community Procurator.
- **Fr. Nzesseu Chimi Valentin** is appointed Dean of Studies at SFS Seminary, Ngaoundere.
- **Fr. Yibongha David Shiynyuy** is appointed Assistant Parish Priest in Ekoumdoum and House Procurator.
- **Fr. Nguimation Peygres Senghor** is pursuing his master's degree at the Catholic University of Yaoundé, while residing at La Feuillette–Ngoya.
- **Fr. Onomo Ayissi Innocent Parfait** is designated for German studies at the Goethe Institute, residing at La Feuillette–Ngoya.



OBITUARY



- Mr. Job Namperil (90), the maternal uncle of Fr. George Choorapuzha, passed away on June 25, 2025.
- Mr. M. J. Sebastian Mullenkuzhiyil, the beloved brother of Fr. Joseph Mullenkuzhiyil and Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhiyil, died on July 08, 2025.
- Mr. Devassykutty Cheeramban, the paternal uncle of Fr. Ajish Cheeramban, passed away on July 21, 2025.
- Mrs. Kathreenamma (87), the maternal grandmother of Fr. Binod Puthenpurackal, the aunt of Fr. James Manjackal, and the grand-aunt of Frs. Jiji Manjackal and Jijo Manjackal., passed away on August 01, 2025.
- Mrs. Mariakutty (97), the paternal aunt of Fr. Jose Edasseril, passed away on August 03, 2025.
- Mr. Joseph (75), the paternal uncle of Frs. Selvaraj, Joachim, and Dn. Rosario, passed away on August 06, 2025.
- Mr. Aquilino Batohinog, the beloved father of Rev. Fr. Roberto Batohinog, passed away on August 26, 2025.
- Mrs. Arogyamma (Mariyamma), the grandmother of Dn. Anthony Rosario, passed away on August 31, 2025.
- Mrs. Aleyamma Kaariyil (89), the sister-in-law of Fr. Abraham Pندانam, passed away on September 07, 2025.

- Mrs. Monica Scaria (94), the maternal aunt of Fr. Joseph Mullenkuzhiyil, passed away on September 10, 2025.
- Mrs. Mary Kurian the beloved mother of Fr. Saji Vadakkedath, passed away on September 18, 2025.
- Mrs Chinnamma Mani (80), the maternal aunt of Fr Jijo Manjackal, passed away on September 23, 2025.
- Mr. Kuriako Joseph Thadathiparambil (83), the uncle of Fr. Mathew Elayadathamadamthil, passed away on September 26, 2025.
- Mr. M. A. Antony, the maternal uncle of Fr. Saju Vilachirayil, passed away on September 30, 2025.
- Mr. Paul Varapadavil, father of Late Fr. Chacko Varapadavil (North-East Province), and the maternal grandfather of Fr Joe Simon, passed away on October 02, 2025.
- Mr. V. J. Philip Valiyaparambil (96), the maternal uncle of Fr. Shibu Thundathil, passed away on October 05, 2025.

MY SCHEDULE

Oct. 15 to Nov. 5, 2025	Visitation to Adelaide and Philippines
November 7, 2025	Council Meeting
November 10-28, 2025	Classes in Suvidya College
December 2-9, 15-17, 2025	Classes in St. Peters
December 13, 2025	School Day, ICSE Koppal
December 19, 2025	School Day, Ettumanoor
December 26, 2025	DSFS Jubilee Mass

VOICE OF SFS



“Blessed is the heart that loves God
with no other pleasure than that of pleasing God.”

Fraternally,

Fr. Thomas Kalariparambil, MSFS
Provincial Superior