

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



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Circular JK/23

November 28, 2015

My dear Confreres,



Fraternal greetings from Vinayalaya! Our beloved Superior General has concluded his canonical visitation of the South West India Province and also the joint meeting of the General Curia with the Provincial Curia. His evaluation of the visitation to the South West Province is given below and also the Action Plan drawn from the evaluation of the implementation of the General Chapter 2013 Orientations, the

Action plan of the Provincial Congress of South West Province 2013 and the Action Plan for the Year of Mission of our Province. It is the time of renewed commitment and clarifying our focus in the living of our *charism* as MSFS in the South West Province. In the joint meeting of the General Curia with the Provincial Curia all the aspects of the life and mission of our Province were evaluated and the action plan is in the context of this evaluation. This action plan, according to the directives of the Superior General, is to reflect in the coming Provincial Congress/Chapter of the South West Province for continuity and follow-up. One of the observations emerging from the evaluation of the South West Province by the Superior General is the need for strengthening our Local Communities by the diligent and regular animation by the Local Superior. The strength and vitality of the Province is gauged by the strength and dynamism of the Local Communities. One of our action plans for the revitalization of Local Community is the daily **half hour adoration** of the Blessed Sacrament in the Communities and the **regular monthly community meetings** with clear agenda of evaluation of religious life, ministry and financial situation of the community. I hereby request all the local superiors to make it obligatory these two practises in all our local communities, including the Neighbourhood Local Communities (NLC). Wherever confreres are living alone for pastoral reasons, the practise of half our adoration is to be observed faithfully and such confreres should attend the monthly NLC Meetings. I wish and pray that we enter into this season of Advent with renewed hope and desire to be fervent in our religious commitment. I wish all of us a very fruitful season of Advent!

**Follow Up after the Visitation of Superior General to SW India  
Province – September – November 2015**

## 1. Introduction

The canonical visitation of the Superior General to South West India Province is completed as scheduled and planned. After the visitation there was a two day meeting of the General Curia with the Provincial Curia from 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at Vinayalaya, Bangalore. This meeting was in view of evaluating the life and mission of the Province in the light of the visitation of the Superior General. In the joint meeting the Provincial and the Councillor in charge of different forums and the Provincial Bursar presented reports which included the evaluation of their respective fields of responsibility and animation. The sessions were chaired by the Superior General and the General Curia members. At the end of the presentation of each report there was time for clarification and interaction by the General Curia. The evaluation of religious life and ministry in the Province was based on three criteria:

- a. Directives and Orientations of General Chapter 2013
- b. Action Plan of Provincial Congress 2013
- c. Action plan for the Year of Consecrated Life for Mission 2015

## 2. Action Plan after the Evaluation

After the first day's reporting, interaction with General Curia and evaluation of the life and mission of the Province the second day was dedicated for sharing the evaluation of the Superior General after his visitation of the Province. The Provincial met with the Asst. Superior General and the Councillors met with the General Councillor of their respective forum and in the light of the evaluation and orientation from Superior General, some of the action plans from the above three sources of the Directives of the General Chapter, Action Plan of the Provincial Congress 2013 and the Action Plan of the Year of Consecrated Life for Mission were finalized for follow up. This Action Plan is approved by the General Curia for implementation. According to the directives of the Superior General this action plan is mandatory for the Provincial Congress/Chapter to be included in their future plans for follow up. I am giving below the report of the Superior General after his visitation of the South West Province and also the new Action Plan drawn from the Joint Meeting of the General Curia with the SW Provincial Curia on 14-15 November 2015 at Vinayalaya. Let us take the observations and orientations of the Superior General seriously for deepening our religious commitment and for being focused in the ministry entrusted to us.

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# **REPORT ON THE VISITATION OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL TO SOUTHWEST INDIA PROVINCE (in India)**

**(AUGUST 26 – 27, SEPTEMBER 04 -12, AND OCTOBER 17 – NOVEMBER 07)**

The visitation of the Superior General should be so prepared that it becomes an occasion for evaluation, renewal, and re-invigoration of the Province Life and Apostolate (Art. 201/vi).

Canonical Visitation to the South West India Province was completed in three phases.

## **1. PREPARATION**

The Guidelines for the Visitation were given to the Province Community and the Provincial had prepared the itinerary of the visitation to every community. The visitation consisted of personal meeting with confreres, community meetings evaluating community/religious life and apostolic life, and half hour of adoration with the community. Most of the communities planned and prepared themselves for the Visitation where the Local Superiors prepared the community, arranged the programs, and presented the requested evaluation report of the community.

## **2. DYNAMICS**

- ✓ Personal meetings with 124 confreres in ministry, 10 perpetually professed scholastics, the regents, and minor seminarians and novices in groups
- ✓ Community meetings in 20 Local Communities with an agenda of deepening community life and religious life and half hour of adoration with the members of the Local Communities,
- ✓ Mass, prayers, and meals with the confreres in some communities and in some other places mass with parishioners, Introducing Friends/Associates of Fransalians, meeting with Religious women collaborating with us, and visiting the ministry places
- ✓ Provincial was personally present with me and participated in the Local Community meetings

## **3. STRENGTH OF THE PROVINCE**

(Gathered from personal meetings with confreres and personal observation)

- Almost all the confreres expressed their sense of satisfaction and pride in belonging to the Congregation
- Spirituality of St. Francis de sales and the missionary spirit of the Congregation are appreciated by confreres
- Hospitality, concern, and care of the confreres quite visible and enjoyable
- Willingness to support each confrere in need, and interest in coming together for gatherings and meetings, and brotherly concern for confreres are commendable

- Almost 98% expressed their deep satisfaction and fulfilment in being MSFS
- Confreres expressed satisfaction over the freedom and trust placed on them by the Administration to take initiatives
- Apostolic Communities are active and regular in their meetings
- Flexibility and encouragement to enter into different ministries
- Blessed with many young confreres who are competent, resourceful, and responsible
- Unity and fraternity among confreres
- Appreciative of the Forum Meetings and the gatherings of confreres for renewal programs and evaluations
- Educational institutions are getting stabilized and Province has well furnished infrastructure and housing facilities for confreres
- Insistence of Community life and prayer life is appreciated by many confreres
- Hard work, Love for the centre, commitment to the given work, dynamism and the drive to excel in ministry of the confreres are visible in most of the centres
- A few confreres go out of their way to reach out to people through ministries
- Number of confreres are engaged in preaching ministry and they are invited by dioceses, religious congregations and parishes
- Initiatives in Pastoral and renewal ministries through Charis Bhavan reach out to people in all walks of life across the world
- Apostolate of reaching out to the education of the poor and orphaned children through NEST
- Contextual and mission oriented theological formation is a unique venture that helps scholastics to develop interest for mission and pastoral skill development
- Music academy, Home for the elderly, Note book making, tailoring classes for young women, ITSSCAT, Prison ministry, Charis Nikethan for the elderly, Technical education, Delegation in the Philippines, and Chad Cameroon Mission are attempts made to reach out to the people in the periphery
- IIS caters to the formation of priests and religious in the country academically and spiritually in a salesian context
- Province has number of confreres completing their studies in specialized areas

#### **4. CHALLENGES IN THE PROVINCE FOR FURTHER GROWTH**

(Gathered from sharing of the confreres and personal evaluation)

- ❖ Thrust on Local Community Life and on the Role of the Local Superior in animating community life still needs implementation

- ❖ Local Community meetings are to be regularly organized and Local Superiors need to claim their ordinary power entrusted to them for animation of communities in the spirit of Consecrated life according to our Constitution.
- ❖ Community prayers and daily half hour adoration decided for the Year of Consecrated Life for Mission have not become part of several communities
- ❖ Ensure that confreres are clarified about the Local Community they belong to and their Local Superior
- ❖ Religious spirit and spirit of prayer are drastically diminishing in communities;
- ❖ Religious life and Apostolates are mostly taken as a profession devoid of spiritual depth, sense of mission, and spirit of religious life
- ❖ Cultural and linguistic differences give way to formation of groups based on language, State, and region leading to group gatherings and campaigning at the time of elections
- ❖ Money spent on travels, frequent visits to homes, going to resorts and restaurants, modern electronic gadgets, furnishing of rooms and offices, and parties with food and drinks, are commented by many members as scandals that destroy the spirit of consecrated life in the Province

## **MISSION**

- ❖ Need to give more focus on preaching parish missions with a few more confreres involved full time in preaching ministry in the charism of the Congregation
- ❖ Mission centres and ministries to the people in the villages are to be increased in proportion to the institutionalized ministries
- ❖ Thrust on mission is diminishing. Missionary-dynamism is slowly being replaced by education-dynamism
- ❖ Need of the Province today is mission thrust capitalizing on the mission oriented and contextual theological formation of the scholastics
- ❖ Confreres make impact in their assigned apostolates individually but collective identity and community involvement is missing
- ❖ Individual excellence without team work cannot effect growth in the mission of the Province
- ❖ Younger confreres do not find role models in religious life and missionary life
- ❖ Province needs aggressive missionary and pastoral thrust in the coming years
- ❖ Province needs a clear missionary vision for the future; priorities are to be set for expansion of people centered mission and ministries
- ❖ Lack of takers for social apostolates and ministries in villages and social apostolate and more takers for ministry in developed countries
- ❖ Commercial mind has taken over missionary mind

- ❖ Province seems to be more education/institution-centered than people/poor-centered

## **FORMATION**

- ❖ Apostolate of Formation needs to be prioritized right from vocation promotion through screening of candidates
- ❖ Continuity has to be given from first stage of formation to the successive stages of formation; practices introduced in the beginning stages of formation are discarded in the successive years of formation
- ❖ Formation Houses do not have any trained confreres in the apostolate of formation; Prioritize the formation of formation personnel in the coming years
- ❖ Culture of Salesian spirituality should continue to infiltrate intentionally into the life of confreres and communities
- ❖ Salesian corner and salesian spirituality are to be revived in communities
- ❖ Friends of Fransalians are not yet organized and coordinated; need competent personnel to organize it in the Province level
- ❖ Traditional values of weekly and monthly conferences in the formation houses and fidelity to spiritual exercises are to be revived
- ❖ Seminarians do not seem to know 'why they are doing what they are doing' (this calls for personal animation and accompaniment)
- ❖ Frequent supervision and evaluation of the formees by those responsible formation is needed
- ❖ Vocation promotion/formation with a vision for needs of the Province is an area where majority of confreres feel that there is a urgency of consistent and sustained effort
- ❖ Do not compromise on the quality of candidates in the frantic need for more numbers
- ❖ Cultural integration and formation in multi linguistic and multi cultural set up in the formation houses are to be stressed
- ❖ Negative and destructive remarks, spreading rumors, putting down confreres, jealousy, back talking, campaigning during election, no appreciation for others are the human elements that make community life and religious life intolerable
- ❖ Province has competent, talented and hardworking confreres, but confreres do not encourage and promote the gifts and blessings of each other

## **EDUCATION**

- ✓ Good number of well furnished and structured educational institutions but confreres are not sufficiently prepared to handle quality education (most of the confreres do not have a degree in education other than a private B. Ed)
- ✓ Educational Institutions lack service, mission, and pastoral dimension – they are institutions and no more mission oriented ministries

- ✓ Our visibility is only through institutions and there is need for missionary dynamism in educational institutions
- ✓ Educational institutions are more person centred and not community based; Role of the Local Superior and the Local Community is to be ensured in educational ministry
- ✓ Transparency and Accountability are to be ensured in income fetching institutions

## **SOCIAL APOSTOLATE AND INNOVATIVE MINISTRIES**

- ✚ A general feeling that social apostolate and innovative ministries are almost dying out except for the boys home and for the already established centres
- ✚ Need to revive social apostolate and village ministry in the Province
- ✚ Institutionalized ministries are progressing but new ministry to the poor and those in periphery are not taking off
- ✚ Confreres move from school to school, college to college but social apostolate, pastoral ministry, and innovative ministries are not getting competent people

### **5. PROPOSALS AFTER VISITATION**

- **Local community life is to be organized and animated**
- **Local Superiors are to be empowered through monitoring and evaluating community life periodically by the Provincial Administration**
- **Ensure clarity to the Local Superior and members of the Community concerning the demands of community life**
- **Half Hour Adoration as our congregational participation in the Year of Consecrated Life for Mission needs to be emphasized**
- **To revive social apostolate and innovative ministries in the Province with special reference to village ministries**
- **Institutions are getting stabilized; now it is time to focus on mission, parishes, pastoral ministry, preaching ministry, social apostolates, people centered and the poor oriented ministry**
- **Salesian Spirituality:**
  - **Insist on Salesian Corner in every community,**
  - **Disseminate salesian spirituality through our ministries, parish mission, schools, and through publication**
  - **Constituting three units of Friends of Fransalians in the Province in 2015 - 16**
- **Prepare a few confreres for the Apostolate of Formation through specialized formation program**
- **Build up the religious spirit in the PROVINCE beyond linguistic and group divisions and against the consumeristic and individualistic culture**

## **CONCLUSION**

My visitation to the Southwest Province has been a time of blessing and of re-connecting with confreres. I experienced the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit

throughout my stay with confreres, time spent with the people, and during travels within the Province. I am proud of the hard work and initiatives of many of our confreres sharing the missionary fervor of Father Peter Mermier and the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. I thank Father Jose Kumbloickal, the Provincial and his Administration for their leadership and animation, and all my confreres in the Province for their incredible efforts to continue the mission of the Province. I look forward to my visitation to the Philippines Delegation and Chad-Cameroon Mission (two administrative units in the Province) in the coming years

**‘Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervor dies out’(Pope Francis).**

**God Bless Southwest India Province!**

**Live Jesus!**



**Father Abraham Vettuvellil, MSFS**

**Superior General**

**November 14, 2015**

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I am giving below the renewed Action Plan for our South West Province drawn from the joint Meeting of the General Curia with the SW Provincial Curia.

**Missionaries of St Francis de Sales -  
General Curia and South West India Province Provincial Curia Meeting  
Vinayalaya, 14th and 15th November, 2015**

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**Action Plan**

**I. Social and Innovative Ministry Forum**

1. Revive and revitalize social work ministries, of FIDES-India and PSI in Bangalore, Kolar and North Karnataka such as, empowerment of women, upliftment of the children, weak and poor sections of the society through renewed organizational skills and involvement.
2. Improve the quality of our Prateeksha boys’ homes by registering them with Government and through involved and accompanied ministry by our confreres. Train a few confreres in formative skills in guiding the children and skills that would enable them to develop a proper attitude towards the children.

- As a preliminary step all the confreres who are involving in the Ministry of the Prateeksha Boys Home should work one year in the NEST and equip themselves in the ministry.
3. Equip and involve sufficient number of personnel for specialized ministries like publications, music school, prison ministry, agricultural ministry, ministry to the senior citizens, ITTSCAT and so on - so that the continuity of the particular ministry is ensured through encounters with benefactors, channelizing of funds, skills in dealing with children and so on.
  4. Establish/ reconstitute the theological- justice & peace and family commission with a team of qualified persons who shall study and advise the administration and the confreres (when requested by the administration) regarding matters of dogmas, doctrine of the Church and practical applications of it in the context of the congregation, family and society.

## **II. Education Forum**

1. Everyone involved in the education ministry must also involve in sharing other ministries. An additional responsibility of pastoral nature must be given to them by the competent authority.
2. Provide safe environment to Desalites and staff in education institutes. Conduct compulsory orientation / update programme to train Desalites and staff on the existing laws such as child protection act, documents available from the government, crisis management cell, P.R.O etc. Background check of every employee must be done by the management.
3. Every institute must have eco club, encourage eco spirituality. Encourage students for plastic free campus, to have a garden at their homes, organic plantation, clean- green campus. One assembly a month must be dedicated to eco-spirituality.
4. Willingness to teach must be the pivotal thirst of an educator. Newly appointed confreres must be a teacher for at least 3-5 years before being appointed as a principal/ vice-principal.

## **III. Formation Forum**

1. Already established common syllabus for minor seminary and novitiate should be continued in graded form in all stages. Implement the common syllabus at the congregational level through a competent, empowered inter-province commission.
2. From the earliest stages of formation mission consciousness / mission thrust should be fostered through mission exposure accompanied by the team of formators and sharing by missionaries. Visits of / to the families of the formees, friends of Fransalians should be continued.
3. Invite committed and inspiring confreres from different apostolates to interact with the formees to motivate them and streamline their talents in line with the vision of the Province.

4. Provide opportunities for skill and human development to the formators and monitor the same. All formators should attend update programs for formators by 2017.
5. In preparation for the perpetual profession thrust should be given to constitutional, canonical, missionary and pastoral aspects of religious life. Ensure the cooperation of all the provinces under the able guidance of General councilor in charge of formation for the same. Ensure the presence of all the provincials at least a day with the formees during this preparation.

#### **IV. Mission Forum**

1. Continue and improve the steps taken to appoint newly ordained confreres in the mission territories at least for three years, support and enhance their life through regular and continued follow-up programmes.
2. Enhance the Preaching ministry by setting apart more confreres for full time preaching ministry. Identify and involve more young confreres for preaching ministry.
3. In any new missions 'institution' should not take priority, rather '*mission*' itself should be the thrust by building up of Christian community, women empowerment and taking care of the poor and downtrodden.
4. Encourage and motivate confreres especially scholastics who are showing special interest to opt for the Chad-Cameroon Mission. Continue to invite missionaries to give information and inspiration to those in formation
5. Strengthen and animate the existing units of 'Friends of Fransalians' in the Province.

#### **V. Stewardship Forum:**

1. Bring check and control on the trends of expensive batch gatherings, picnics and eat outs by conscientization.
2. Ensure proper documentation and filing system related to accounts and other matters (such as land documents, inventory, house tax, electricity bills, phone bills, bank accounts etc.)
3. Make presentation of the accounts of the community and institutions mandatory in monthly community meetings.
4. Make dependent communities self-reliant. (Awareness should be created in the members of the community)
5. Enhance the accounting and book keeping programme which is already in the curriculum of Tejas (if possible teach Tally programme). Arrange update programmes for finance management.

#### **VI. Animation by Provincial: Concerning animation of Religious Life and Community Life:**

1. *Improve the quality of community life by:*
  - Animation of superiors through local superiors forum meetings, visitation to communities and personal meetings by the provincial

- Implementation of 30 minutes daily adoration in communities
  - Regular monthly community meetings with an agenda that includes sharing and evaluation of religious life, apostolate, placing of accounts by procurator before the community and sending the minutes to the provincial
  - Delegation of duties and responsibilities to community members
  - Coordination of all the ministries in the community by local superior and respecting the office of the local superior by members
2. *Strengthen Chad Cameroon mission by:*
- Continuing the policy of sending two confreres during the coming three years
  - Continuing to send scholastics for formation in Chad and Cameroon
  - Continuing economic support for infrastructures - like minor seminary, schools and boys homes
  - Monitoring the financial management in the Mission by Province & mission bursars
3. *Transparent economic management in the Province by*
- Strict annual budgeting and approval by the Provincial administration
  - Annual internal audit of unit accounts
  - Bank payment of fees and donations in educational institutions
  - Monitoring the asset registers
4. *Implementation of 10 year policy & selection of confreres to be sent abroad*
- Select confreres to be sent abroad on the criterion of their firm loyalty and love for the congregation
  - Strict implementation of 10 year policy by giving personal plan with information to the bishops.

## Conclusion

The canonical visitation of the Superior General is with the purpose of revitalizing the religious life of the confreres and motivating the entire Province to be focused in our vision and mission. Let us embrace the directives of the Superior General with an open heart and with great generosity of will to make earnest efforts to be faithful to the call we have received. The great wealth of our Province is our confreres and let us be united in one mind and heart to march forward to new horizons of growth and stability. I wish you all a very fruitful season of Advent that we are beginning. God bless us all!

## Fraternally in Christ,



**Rev. Fr. Jose Kumblolickal MSFS**  
**Provincial Superior**