MISSIONARIES
OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES
SOUTH-WEST INDIA PROVINCE
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SWIP Circular TK/31 **September 2026**

My dear Confreres,

Fraternal and prayerful greetings to you all from Vinayalaya. September holds a distinctive place in the spiritual memory of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. It is a month that brings together **the Mother who stood beneath the Cross and the Founder who dared to carry the victory of the Cross into the world**. On 15 September, we contemplate Mary, Mother of Compassion, whose sorrow was not passive suffering but a love that remained steadfast at the very heart of humanity's anguish. On 30 September, we remember Servant of God Fr. Peter Mary Mermier, whose death anniversary we celebrate as Founders' Day—a missionary whose heart was moved by the wounds of the Church and the world.

In Mary, compassion became presence; in Mermier, compassion became mission. He did not merely see the needs of his time; he allowed them to disturb his heart and set his feet in motion. His missionary dynamism sprang from a heart formed by the Cross, yet aflame with hope. September, therefore, invites every Fransalian to rediscover a fundamental truth: **our mission begins where compassion becomes movement.** To stand with Mary beneath the Cross is to learn from her how not to be buried in one's suffering, but to be a compassionate presence to those in suffering; to walk in the footsteps of Mermier is to carry that compassionate presence beyond ourselves—to the places where Christ still waits to be encountered, loved and served.

I. ELEVATION OF THE CHAD-CAMEROON DELEGATION TO THE STATUS OF A REGION

It is with profound gratitude to God and great joy that we announce the elevation of the Chad-Cameroon Delegation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS) to the juridical status of a Region, effective from **7 October 2026**.

The MSFS mission in Chad began in 1994, when Bishop Michel Russo of the newly established Diocese of Doba invited the Congregation to serve in his diocese. The General Council formally accepted the invitation in 1996 and entrusted the South-West India Province with pioneering the mission in Francophone Africa, in fidelity to the missionary vision of our Founder, Fr. Peter Mermier. Following the visit and favourable report of Provincial Fr. Thomas Cherukat and Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam in 1997, a pioneering

team comprising Frs. Antony Mookenthottam, Thomas Payattukandathil, and Jose Puthiaparambil Jr. was formed in 1998. After an initial period of preparation in the French language, Frs. Thomas Payattukandathil and Jose Puthiaparambil arrived in Doba on 12 November 1999 and began the Maybombay Mission.

Recognizing the strategic importance of neighbouring Cameroon, Frs. Thomas Cherukat and Antony Mookenthottam initiated contacts there in 2000. The Yaoundé base, *Maison Pierre Mermier*, was inaugurated on 29 June 2001. In July 2001, Fr. Jose Parappillil gave a significant impetus to the mission by sending five newly ordained confreres to strengthen its presence and lay a firm foundation for its future. Successive Provincials continued to give wholehearted support to the growth and consolidation of the mission.

Amid severe hardships and many challenges, the pioneers persevered with courage and missionary zeal, and the mission steadily flourished under the leadership of successive superiors, Frs. Thomas Cherukat, Joshy Nellimalamattam and Manoj Arackal. It was raised to the status of a Delegation on 30 September 2018, with Fr. Manoj Arackal as its first Delegation Superior.

Fr. Manoj Arackal deserves our special appreciation for the diligence, vision and tenacity with which he led the Delegation during this formative period. Through his personal efforts in fostering vocations, mobilizing resources and securing the funds required for its various projects, he contributed significantly to the expansion and consolidation of the MSFS presence in Chad and Cameroon.

Today, the Delegation comprises **25 priests, including 14 indigenous priests; three perpetually professed deacons; 42 temporarily professed members; eight novices; and 24 postulants**. They serve through **eight communities, six parishes, three schools, three boys' homes, three formation houses and a retreat house**—a remarkable testimony to the growth of the mission and to the grace of God at work through the dedication of our confreres and collaborators.

The proposal for the elevation of the Delegation to the status of a Region was unanimously accepted by the Delegation Colloquium held on 11 July 2025, endorsed by the Provincial Council on 29 September 2025, and unanimously approved by the General Council on 22 February 2026. Our Superior General initially decreed the elevation of the Chad-Cameroon Delegation to the status of a Region with effect from **30 September 2026**. At the request of the Provincial, this date was subsequently postponed, by a separate decree, to **7 October 2026**.

As we celebrate this significant moment in the history of our Congregation, we gratefully acknowledge the dedication and sacrifice of every pioneer, missionary, superior, confrere and collaborator who has contributed to this remarkable journey. Their faith, perseverance and missionary commitment have laid the foundations upon which this new Region is being built.

We give thanks to the Lord for His providence and for the abundant blessings bestowed upon the MSFS mission in Chad and Cameroon. With confidence in the continued guidance of Divine Providence and in the missionary spirit of our Founder, we congratulate the entire Chad-Cameroon mission on this significant milestone and entrust to the Lord this new chapter of missionary growth, communion, and responsibility.

II. FORUM MEETINGS 2026-2027

- **Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries Forum**

The Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries (SAIM) Forum met on 25 July 2026 at Vinayalaya, Bengaluru. The Provincial, Rev. Dr. Thomas Kalariparambil, appreciated the members' commitment and called for greater imagination and a renewed mindset in social ministry—moving beyond service provision to interpreting contemporary social realities. Rev. Fr. Arun Luis SJ, Director of Ashirvad Jesuit Centre, addressed the forum on *Christian Missionaries in Today's India*, highlighting legal and regulatory restrictions, social opposition, violence, misinformation, and administrative challenges. He reaffirmed the missionary call to serve the poor and marginalised, promote education, peace and harmony, and respond creatively to emerging social realities. Members subsequently shared the challenges and initiatives of their respective centres.

- **Formation Forum**

The Formation Forum met on 30 July 2026 at Vinayalaya, with the Provincial, the Councillor in charge of Formation, 19 formators, and vocation promoters. The Provincial underlined formation as the foundation of the Province and a responsibility demanding sincere commitment. Rev. Fr. Adrian Mascarenhas, Rector of Bhakti Bhavan, presented the canonical and magisterial foundations of minor-seminary formation, drawing on *Optatam Totius*, the *Code of Canon Law*, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and *Ratio Fundamentalis*. The forum emphasised holistic formation, appropriate selection and accompaniment of candidates, coordination among formation houses, and continued support for formators.

- **Mission Forum**

The Mission Forum was held on 4–5 August 2026, with the General Secretary for Mission, on the theme *Be a Missionary with Effective Missions*. Rev. Fr. Kurian Karickal, Councillor for Missions, welcomed the participants and introduced the theme. Sessions were conducted by Fr. Divya Paul, Rev. Dr. Thomas Kalariparambil and Rev. Fr. Thumma Mariadas, General Secretary for Mission. The forum concluded with renewed reflection on effective missionary engagement.

- **Education Forum**

The Education Forum met on 7 August 2026 at Vinayalaya with 52 participants and the General Secretary for Education. Mr. John K. John led the morning sessions on identifying strengths using the Gallup framework. In the afternoon, the Provincial stressed the need for a systematic, vibrant, and humane approach to education ministry. Rev. Fr. Anthony

Swamy, General Secretary for Education, reviewed the implementation of the Acts of the General Chapter, while Fr. Benny Marangolil, the Councillor in charge of Education, presented a status report on the Province's educational ministry.

- **Stewardship Forum**

The Stewardship Forum met on 8 August 2026, with 43 participants. The Provincial emphasised sincerity, transparency, and responsible stewardship, particularly accurate and timely financial accounting. Mr. Joe James, CA, addressed recent FCRA, TDS, taxation and minimum-wage regulations, and related compliance requirements. The Provincial Bursar further stressed timely submission of monthly accounts and the need to avoid delays that hinder auditing. The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to sound financial administration and statutory compliance.

- **Concluding Perspective**

Taken together, the five forums provided a comprehensive reflection on the life and mission of the Province. While each forum focused on a distinct area—social ministry, formation, mission, education, and stewardship—the discussions converged on a common call for renewal, responsible leadership, professional competence, and faithful commitment. The meetings highlighted the need to respond creatively to changing realities, strengthen collaboration and accountability, and translate the Province's mission into effective and humane service. Collectively, they reaffirmed that sustained formation, purposeful ministry and responsible stewardship are essential for carrying forward the mission of the Province with greater clarity, coordination and commitment.

III. PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS 2026-2027

Following a notification from the CCBI indicating that priestly ordination should take place only after three years of theological studies, followed by the pastoral course and a period of diaconate ministry, thus requiring four complete years of formation, the South-West India Province had decided to schedule priestly ordinations after Easter.

However, since this directive does not have the force of law and has not been implemented uniformly, the Provincial Administration, with the approval of the Superior General, has decided to permit those deacons who so desire to be ordained after Christmas 2026. Accordingly, of the nine deacons this year, six will be ordained after Christmas 2026, while the remaining three will be ordained after Easter 2027.

This policy will be reviewed again, if necessary, in the light of future developments.

IV. VISITATION TO THE UNITED STATES

The Provincial's canonical visitation of the confreres engaged in pastoral ministry in the United States took place from 20 August to 14 September 2026. Fr. Jose Kumblolickal, the Coordinator, planned and organized the visitation meticulously.

Except for one confrere who was away on home leave, I was able to meet all the confreres personally and, with the exception of two, in their respective places of ministry. It was a great opportunity to be with them and to experience firsthand, with a deep sense of joy and pride, the quality of their commitment to their ministry and the wholehearted acceptance and appreciation they enjoy within the communities they serve.

The visitation also provided an opportunity to finalize the personal plans of the confreres, as requested by the General Administration.

V. THE NEW PROVINCIAL CURIA OF THE VISAKHAPATNAM PROVINCE

- Rev. Fr. Jaddu Joseph : Provincial Superior
- Rev. Fr. P. Chinnappa Reddy : Provincial Councillor
- Rev. Fr. Cheriyantharayil Jose : Provincial Councillor
- Rev. Fr. Dola Velangani : Provincial Councillor
- Rev. Fr. Kavunkal Sabin : Provincial Councillor
- Rev. Fr. Alangaden Albert : Provincial Bursar

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Rev. Fr. Jaddu Joseph, 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.

VI. PROVINCE RETREAT

The first province retreat for the current year was held at Charis Bhavan from 14 to 18 September 2026 and was preached by Rev. Fr. Joy Painadath. Deeply rooted in the Scripture and interpreted existentially in the context of the life and ministry of a religious priest today, the preacher succeeded in taking the participants on a self-investigative journey in living their priestly call and intense moments of Christ-experience.

The second retreat will take place from 12 to 16 October 2026 and will be preached by Fr. Juventus Andrade CSSR.

VII. TRANSFERS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. **Fr. Innaci Muthu** is designated to pursue a German course at Max Mueller Bhavan, Pune.
2. **Fr. Majish Vallisserikettil** is appointed the Principal of SFS Public School, Ettumanoor, with effect from October 15, 2026, or on a date mutually convenient.
3. **Fr. Roji Kuttivayalil** is appointed the principal of SFS English Medium State Syllabus School, Hebbagodi, Bangalore, with effect from October 20, 2026, or on a date mutually convenient.
4. **Fr. Roy Plathottathil** will be relieved from his ministry of education and is designated to take up pastoral ministry in the USA for five years. He is scheduled to succeed Fr. Mathew Thottiyil in St. Antony of Padua Parish.

5. **Fr. Thomas Mekkattu** is appointed to the community of De Sales Bhavan, Kuvempunagar, with effect from September 28, 2026.
6. **Fr. Thomas Thekkekarottu** is designated to be at the service of the General Administration. He will join the MSFS community at Via del Mascherino, Rome, to assist the local superior as well as the Director of MDO. He will leave for Rome as soon as his papers are ready.
7. Since there is no Novitiate Programme this year, **Fr. Binoy Kuzhuppil** will assist in the preaching ministry at Charis Bhavan, Athirampuzha, with effect from the first week of October 2026. However, he will continue to hold all his current responsibilities.

VIII. NEW ADDRESSES OF OUR CONFRERES

- **Fr. Vinod Kanattu**
  417 Erin Dr. # 120
  Knoxville, TN 37919, USA
  US Mobile: +1 (865) 800 8009

- **Fr. Tony Thomas Munduchalil**
  Pontifical Collegio Sloveno
  Via al Quarto Miglio, 3, 00178
  Rome.

IX. HEARTY WELCOME

After seventeen years of dedicated and selfless service to the English Province, **Fr. Roji Kuttivayalil** has now returned to India. We warmly welcome him home and assure him of our prayers and best wishes as he begins the next phase of his ministry. **A hearty welcome home, dear Father!**

X. OBITUARY

i) MSFS Confreres



Rev. Bro. C. D. Michael (92)
Died on: 17 July 2026
Visakhapatnam Province



Rev. Fr. Paul Thenet (72)
Died on: 19 July 2026
Visakhapatnam Province



Rev. Fr. Thomas Anikala (96)
Died on: 20 July 2026
Visakhapatnam Province



Rev. Fr. Emile Tirkey (66)
Died on: 26 July 2026
Nagpur Province



Rev. Fr. Silanand Soreng (47)
Died on: 18 August 2026
Guwahati Province

ii) Dear and Near Ones of Our Confreres

- Mr. Joseph Anchanickal (96), the beloved Father of Fr Thomas Anchanickal, passed away on July 07, 2026.
- Very Rev. Fr. A.M. Joseph Ethakuzhy (73), the uncle of Fr. Vinoy Valachathinakathu, passed away on July 11, 2026.
- Mr. Varkey Maruthuvamalayil (87), the brother-in-law of Fr. Joseph Vettukattil, passed away on July 12, 2026.
- Mrs. Eleyamma Thomas (86), the beloved mother of Fr. Joy Kochupoovathummootil, passed away on May 23, 2026.
- Mr. George Joseph Thundathil (86), the paternal uncle of Fr. Shibu Thundathil, passed away on July 24, 2026.
- Mrs. Claramma Joseph (86), the beloved mother of Fr. Jose Puthuckary MSFS, passed away on July 31, 2026.
- Mr. Jose Joseph Kozhuppakalam, the elder brother of Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam, passed away on August 08, 2026.
- Mr. Xavier Varkey (84), the Grandfather of Fr. Jerin Ponmalakunnel, passed away on August 21, 2026.
- Mrs. Lily Josephine (67), the aunt of Fr. A. Jerome, passed away on August 21, 2026.
- Mrs. Thresiamma (98), the aunt of Fr. Roy Plathottathil, passed away on August 25, 2026.
- Mrs. Thresiamma (85), the beloved mother of Fr. Sibichen Kochuveedu, passed away on August 27, 2026.
- Mr. Thomas, the eldest Brother of Fr Jose Karekkat, passed away on September 4, 2026.
- Mr. Joshy James Chirackal (59), the beloved brother of Fr. Justin Chirackal, passed away on September 7, 2026.
- Mrs. Denedoube Eliane (49), the beloved mother of Bro. Alladoumbeye Bienvenu, passed away on September 23, 2026.
- Mr. Lawrence Rodrigues, the brother-in-law of Fr. Salvador Fernandes, passed away on September 25, 2026.

XI. MY PROGRAMME

September 28, 2026	Blessing and Inauguration of Shanthi Dham, Mysore
October 05-12, 2026	Visit to Cameroon, installation of the Regional Superior
October 12-16, 2026	Second Province Retreat
October 24, 2026	Blessing of the newly constructed OLS Syro-Malabar Church, Hebbagodi
October 26 to November 13, 2026	Classes in Suvidya College
November 01, 2026	Provincial Council Meeting
November 14, 2026	Blessing of the Annexure at DATA, Aluva
November 17, 2026	Regional (India) Stewardship Forum with GB in Bangalore
December 05, 2026	Jubilee Celebration, Savanur
December 12, 2026	Blessing of the Renovated SFS Parish Church, Hebbagodi



You will never be able to suffer anything for Christ compared to what he suffered for you.

-IDL, III, Ch.3

Fraternally,

Fr. Thomas Kalariparambil, MSFS
Provincial Superior