

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



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SWIP Circular BK/37

January 23, 2019

My dear Confreres,

Fraternal greetings to you from Fr. Benny Koottanal. On this auspicious day of the Feast of our heavenly Patron, St. Francis de Sales, I come to wish each of you the Spirit and Joy of this celebration which should lead us to imitate him in following Jesus. **Happy Feast to you, my dear Confreres.**

SALESIAN APOSTOLIC ZEAL IN JOYFUL HOLINESS

My dear Confreres, there is a beautiful incident mentioned in the life of St. Francis de



Sales, which would highlight the sense of holiness in him. As the Bishop of Annecy-Geneva, it was a routine practice for Francis de Sales to visit the parishes of his mountainous diocese during every summer. It is said that in one summer he was busily engaged in visiting the parishes of his diocese, meeting the Parish Priest, the faithful, youth and children. He was so engaged in these ministries to that extend that he even did not have time for his personal prayer and timely meal. At the end of his long visitation as he returned to the Bishop's House in Annecy, he went into the bedroom and as he stood before the mirror, it is cited, that he shouted out and said: **Oh, wretched Francis, I pity you!** It is said that the reason for his cry was

because as he saw his own figure in the mirror he could easily recognize the status of

spiritual dryness in which he found himself. This self-realization is the one reason, it is believed, that provoked him to write the **Introduction to the Devout Life**.

My dear Confreres, this cry of Francis is necessary in our times. Unfortunately people outside are crying out against us in this regard. Lay people, irrespective of religious bindings, frequently cite instances of contradictions between what Priests and Religious say and what they actually do. Contemporary Christians, including religious and priests, have a mind-set that generally separates faith from life – dividing up and evaluating our experience according to therapeutic principles of psychological theories. **Very often most of us meanwhile fall prey to MORAL RELATIVISM rejecting the OBJECTIVE TRUTH.**

The reasons behind this trend to reject the 'spiritual' as something unwanted and superfluous could be multifarious. The modernity's promise to bring everything at the fingertips and consequently, the immediate availability of technological gadgets, which has caused humdrums leading to the superfluity of relationships in family life as well as in religious life, is affecting the sense of the Sacred and the reverence to the transcendent.

The question that our Patron asks us today is: Are we joyful in holiness? Or are we replacing it with apostolic efforts? It is to be introspected whether we are looking for **happiness** or **Joy**. Happiness is something that people say that they 'want' and 'crave for'. The source of happiness is achievement, sensual pleasures and the exercise of power. **But 'joy' is the irremovable satisfaction one receives when one's convictions are lived out despite the struggles and pains to attain the target.** Travelling through the life of St. Francis de Sales, we would find that the kern of Francis de Sales' apostolic zeal is the JOYFUL HOLINESS that he nurtured in his life despite the number of dejections and struggles he went through in his missionary, pastoral and leadership roles. **He was convinced – MY GOD SUFFICES.**

My dear Confreres, in the midst of all our overloaded occupations with activities I come to you with an earnest request on this feast day that you should never replace your holy life with your ministerial occupations. **Let us be Disciples First, and then Apostles.** I conclude with the statement of A.W. Tozer, that would amply sound our patron's call to holiness:

“Tell God that it is your desire to be holy at any cost, and then ask Him never to give you more happiness than holiness. When your holiness becomes tarnished, let your joy become dim. And ask him to make you holy whether you are happy or not. Be assured that in the end you will be more joyful as you are holy; but for the time being let your whole ambition be to serve God and be Christ-like. If we dare to take a stand like that we may expect to know a new degree of inward purification. And, God, being who He is, we are more than likely to know a new degree of joy as well, but a joy that springs out of a more intimate fellowship with Him, a joy that is elevated and unselfish and free from the pollutions of the flesh.”
(A.W. Tozer, *Of God and Men*, Christian Publications: 1995, pp. 50-51.)

I wish you, my dear Confreres, very joyful celebration of the Feast of our heavenly Patron, St. Francis de Sales. May He intercede for us to be Holy imitators of him in living the Gospel.

GENERAL CHAPTER 2019: FEBRUARY 1, 2019 - FEBRUARY 13, 2019

My dear Confreres, As we are constantly made aware through the writings of our Superior General and the Provincial Circular, the XXth General Chapter of our Congregation is close at hand. I once again remind all of us to pray specially for the success of this General Chapter in terms of spiritual renewal and missionary zeal in our congregation. During this General Chapter we are dwelling on four basic pillars of our Charism, such as, **Consecrated Life in Community, Mission, MSFSness and Salesian Spirituality.** In the last two circulars we have already dealt with the two themes. This time let us reflect on the concept of MSFSness.

MSFS, Wake up to MSFSness

MSFSness is the Identity of every member of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. According to the Cambridge English Dictionary **Identity** means “who a person is, or the qualities of the person or group that make them different from others.” Therefore, what is our Identity as MSFS? As our Constitution No. 7 describes, **living the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in our mission is the Charism that gives identity to our Congregation and is its distinguishing mark.** This specific Charism unfolds itself in the following manner:

- a) **Study of St. Francis de Sales:** One of the greatest convictions of Fr. Mermier was that the members of the Congregation should never stop growing in the knowledge and imitation of St. Francis de Sales (Ref. A. Duval, *Monsieur Mermier*). The identity of a Congregation can never be imbibed without assimilating the Spirituality of the Founder and the Patron. Personal reading and assimilation, profound appreciation and prompt dissemination of the invaluable treasure of Salesian Literature should become the top priority of every Fransalian.
- b) **Imitate Francis de Sales' Virtues:** MSFS Constitutions in its Number 8 exhorts every Fransalian to imitate at least a few of the virtues of St. Francis de Sales. The call of the 19th ordinary General Chapter invites us to radiate the Salesian virtues of Optimism, Simplicity, Availability, Gentleness and Trust in the Providence of God through our integrated life-style and credible witnessing of Gospel values.
- c) **Make Francis de Sales' Method of Helping People Our Own:** It is not only enough that we live the spirit and spirituality of St Francis de Sales, we have also the equal responsibility of disseminating his spirit through our apostolates.

My dear Confreres, let us realize today that this General Chapter is a wake up call for us to brush up the dignity of our identity. Sadly, one of the trends that we see today is that most of us remain indifferent to understand the depth of our identity as MSFS. If we challenge ourselves we will discover one naked truth that majority of us, MSFS, have not fully read the "Introduction to the Devout Life" and "Treatise on the Love of God" even once. Will it not affect the depth of our identity in the course of time? It would not be an easy task to imitate the virtues of St. Francis de Sales and communicate to others effectively until we know him well. As the adage goes: **The more you know, the better you love.** Therefore, let us ask ourselves these fundamental questions:

- Have I recognized my identity as MSFS by knowing St. Francis de Sales and his qualities?
- Have I read the Spiritual Classics of St. Francis de Sales at least once until now?
- Do I practice at least one virtue that is vividly exemplified in St. Francis de Sales in my daily life?
- Do I remain faithful to the spirit of St. Francis de Sales in exercising my apostolate?

May these reflections help us to become aware of our own MSFSness and thus participate effectively in the General Chapter.

NEW PRIESTS – NEW BLESSINGS

The MSFS Congregation and the South West India Province in particular are blessed to have seven more new priests who are ordained during this Christmas season. We as a province family congratulate the new priests for their courageous decision to respond to the call of Jesus to consecrate themselves as holy priests in the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and wish them God's abundant blessings upon their priestly and missionary ministries.

Fr. Staney Rodrigues was born on 01.03.1985 at Dandeli in Karnataka to Intru and Mrs. Mary. He did one year of probation at MSFS Community Koppal in 2010-2011. He



completed his Novitiate at Sneha Jyothi Ashram, Makkiyad and made his First Profession on June 11, 2012. During his philosophical studies at Suvidya College from 2012 to 2015, he had his community experience at IITSCAT, Mermier Bhavan, Hebbagodi, Srinivasapur and Kuknoor. He pursued and successfully completed his Theological studies at Tejas, Bengaluru from 2015-2018. He made his perpetual profession on May 28, 2017 and was ordained deacon on February 19, 2018 by Most Rev. K. William, Bishop of Mysore. He

was ordained priest on December 27, 2018 at Infant Jesus Church, Prabhat Nagar, Honavar, Karnataka, by Most Rev. Derek Fernandes, Bishop of Karwar Diocese.

Fr. Joshy N. George Thumpechirayil was born on 06-04-1991 at Champakulam in



Kerala to George Varghese and Kunjamma George. He joined SFS Minor Seminary, Ettumanoor in June 2006. He completed his Novitiate at Sannidhi, Mysore and made his First Profession on June 11, 2010. After completing his philosophical studies at Suvidya College, Bangalore and St. Joseph Seminary, Mangalore from 2010 to 2015, he had his community experience at Sannidhi, Mysore and Mundargi. He pursued and successfully completed his Theological studies at Tejas, Bengaluru from 2015-2018. He made his

perpetual profession on May 28, 2017 and was ordained deacon on February 19, 2018

by Most Rev. K. William, Bishop of Mysore. He was ordained priest on January 02, 2019 at St. Mary's Basilica, Champakulam, Kerala, by Most Rev. Thomas Tharayil, Auxiliary Bishop of Changanacherry Archdiocese.

Fr. Tony Thomas Munduchalil was born on 17-11-1990 at Champakulam in Kerala to Mr. Thomas and Late Mrs. Anamma. He entered SFS Minor Seminary, Ettumanoor in



2007. He completed his Novitiate at Sneha Jyothi Ashram, Makkiyad and made his First Profession on June 09, 2011. After completing his philosophical studies at Suvidya College in 2014 he did regency in Sannidhi Minor Seminary, Mysore from 2014-15. He pursued and successfully completed his Theological studies at Tejas Vidya Peetha, Bengaluru. He made his perpetual profession on May 28, 2017 and was ordained deacon on February 19, 2018 by Most Rev. K. William, Bishop of Mysore. He was ordained a priest on

January 02, 2019 at St. Mary's Basilica, Champakulam, Kerala, by Most Rev. Thomas Tharayil, Auxiliary Bishop of Changanacherry Diocese.

Fr. Zacharias Peter Cherackal was born on 17-09-1988 at Piravom in Kerala to Mr. Peter and Mrs. Molly. He entered SFS Minor Seminary, Ettumanoor in 2009. He



completed his Novitiate at Sneha Jyothi Ashram, Makkiyad and made his First Profession on June 09, 2011. After completing his philosophical studies at Suvidya College in 2014 he did regency in SFS Seminary Ettumanoor from 2014-15. He pursued and successfully completed his Theological studies at Tejas Vidya Peetha, Bengaluru. He made his perpetual profession on May 28, 2017 and was ordained deacon on February 19, 2018 by Most Rev. K. William, Bishop of Mysore. He was ordained a priest on January 03, 2019 at St. Mary's Basilica, Ernakulam, Kerala, by

Most Rev. Jose Puthenveetil, Auxiliary Bishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese.

Fr. Antony Selvam was born on 15.01.1987 at Elanthaikulam in Tamil Nadu to Late S.Peter Sebastian and Mrs. Lourduh Mary. He joined Sannidhi Minor Seminary, Mysore



in June 2010. He completed his Novitiate at Sneha Jyothi Ashram, Makkiyad and made his First Profession on June 11, 2012. After completing his philosophical studies at Suvidya College from 2012 to 2015, he had his community experience at Charis Bhavan, Athirampuzha, Sudhirvana and Kadisenahalli. He pursued and successfully completed his Theological studies at Tejas, Bengaluru from 2015-2018. He made his perpetual profession on May 28, 2017 and was ordained deacon on February 19, 2018 by Most Rev. K. William, Bishop of Mysore. He was ordained priest

on January 05, 2019 at Lourdu Matha Church, Elanthaikulam, Singamparai, Tamil Nadu by Most Rev. Jude Paul Raj, Bishop Emeritus of Palayamkottai Diocese

Fr. Petrus Kerketta was born on 25-05-1987 at Baradbandha in Chattisgarh to Mr. Shanti Prakash and Mrs. Ursela. He entered Divya Jyothi Ashram, Latapara in 2008 and



joined SFS Minor Seminary, Ettumanoor in June 2009. He completed his Novitiate at Sneha Jyothi Ashram, Makkiyad and made his First Profession on June 09, 2011. After completing his philosophical studies at Suvidya College in 2014 he did regency in S.F.S School, Chinntamani from 2014-15. He pursued and successfully completed his Theological studies at Tejas Vidya Peetha, Bengaluru. He made his perpetual profession on May 28, 2017 and was ordained deacon on February 19, 2018 by Most Rev. K. William, Bishop of Mysore. He was ordained

priest on January 09, 2019 at St. Joseph's Church, Kanchanagar, Balarampur Dt., Chattisgarh, by Most Rev. Paschal Topno, Bishop Emeritus of Ambikapur Diocese.

Fr. Rakesh Ekka was born on 06.06.1990 at Chiringa in Chattisgarh to Mr. Naihar and



Mrs. Julia. He entered Divya Jyothi Ashram, Latapara in 2008 and joined SFS Minor Seminary, Ettumanoor in June 2009. He completed his Novitiate at Sneha Jyothi Ashram, Makkiyad and made his First Profession on June 09, 2011. After completing his philosophical studies at Suvidya College in 2014 he did regency in S.F.S School, Savanur from 2014-15. He pursued and successfully completed his Theological studies at Tejas Vidya Peetha, Bengaluru. He made his perpetual profession on May 28, 2017 and was ordained deacon on February 19, 2018 by Most Rev. K. William, Bishop of Mysore. He was ordained a priest on January 11, 2019 at St. Joseph's Church, Chiringa, Ambikapur Dt., Chattisgarh by Most Rev. Paschal Topno, Bishop Emeritus of Ambikapur Diocese.

CONGRATULATIONS

Dear Confreres, I am very happy to inform you that **Rev. Fr. Henry Jose Kodikuthiyil MSFS** is recognized as a permanent teaching faculty in St. Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore by the Congregation of Catholic Institute, Rome. On behalf of the entire South West India Province I congratulate Fr. Henry for this meritorious achievement and appreciate him for his outstanding contributions in the field of Theology and Philosophy. **Congratulations, dear Fr. Henry.**

THE PARISH OF KANNADIPARAMBA IN THE DIOCESE OF KANNUR

My dear Confreres, I would like to inform you that the Bishop of Kannur, Rt. Rev. Alex Vadakumthala, in his letter, dated 22 January 2019, has informed me that the diocese would relieve MSFS from pastoral responsibility in the parish of St. Ignatius, Kannadiparamba with effect from 1st of February 2019. The Bishop has expressed his great appreciation for all our Missionaries who have served the parish, especially Fr. Sebastian Vellaramkunnel, the outgoing Parish Priest, for his spiritual and pastoral dynamism in animating the parish community. We thank the Bishop and the clergy of the diocese of Kannur for giving the opportunity to serve the people of God through St. Ignatius parish, Kannadiparamba.

OBITUARY

- **Fr. Joseph Kunnappally** of East Africa Province aged 74 died on January 08, 2019.
- **Mr. M. Jayaraj**, aged 83, uncle of Fr. Anthony Swamy and Fr. Prashanth Kumar, died on January 03, 2019.
- **Mrs. Annamma Thomas Kollarayath**, aged 99, grandmother of Fr. Jaison Kollarayath, died on January 12, 2019.
- **Mr. Joseph Valiyaveettil**, aged 90, father of Fr. Benny Valiyaveettil, died on January 23, 2019.
- **Mrs. Aleykutty Devasia**, aged 90, mother of Fr. Josey Ponnambal, died on January 23, 2019.

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 visitation and other common meetings/programs according to the latest communication.

January 2019

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, Chikmagalur
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 17	Parish Feast of Malur – Festal Mass
February 18	Diaconate Ordination, Tejas
February 19	Council Meeting
February 20	*Meeting the third year Seminarians of Sannidhi, Mysore *Apostolic Community Meeting of Mysore Apostolic Community
February 23	*Meeting the third year Seminarians of SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor

	*Apostolic Community Meeting of Ettumanoor Apostolic Community
February 25	Apostolic Community Meeting of Trivandrum Apostolic Community
February 26	* Executive Meeting of the PMP (Parish Mission Preaching Team) * Executive meeting of Vikas Jyothi (in the afternoon)
February 27	* Meeting of all the Directors of Prateeksha Boys' Homes * Executive Meeting of PSI (in the afternoon)
February 28	Core Committee Meeting of the Formation Forum

March 2019

March 2	Suvidya-Tejas Academic Convocation in Suvidya College
March 4	Core-Committee Meeting of the Associates of the Fransalians
March 5	Core-Committee Meeting of the Mission Forum
March 6	Core-Committee Meeting of the Education Forum
March 7	* Executive Meeting of Fides India * Core-Committee Meeting of the Innovative & Social Ministry Forum (in the afternoon)
March 8	* Core-Committee Meeting of the Stewardship Forum * Meeting of the Internal Auditing Team (in the afternoon)
March 12	Council Meeting
March 14	One day with Tejas Community

VOICE OF SFS

“The essence of discipline is all about knowing when to ‘take hold’ and when to ‘let go’.”

Fraternally,



Fr. Benny Kottanal MSFS

Provincial