

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

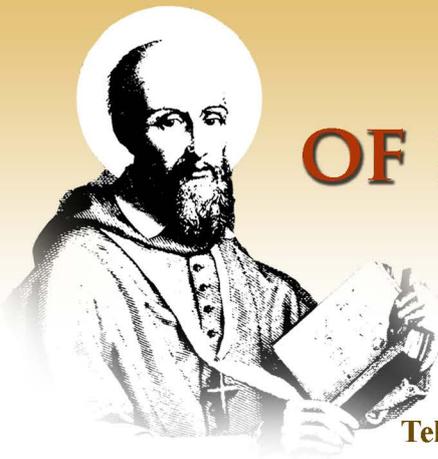
SOUTH-WEST INDIA PROVINCE (SWIP)

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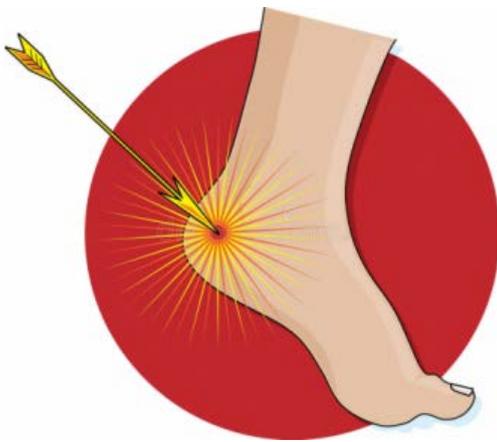
SWIP Circular BK/47

July 31, 2019

My dear Confreres, Fraternal greetings to you from Fr Benny Koottanal. Called to be the bearers of the Gospel, the two events that took place this year, **the General Chapter and the Provincial Chapter**, stand as guiding light for us in engaging ourselves in our Apostolate with more vigor and commitment. Sometimes our apostolates are hampered by our own vulnerabilities. Very often we trust in our own abilities and set traps for our own fall. It is time that we realize that we are clay pots.

CONSECRATED LIFE: TREASURE IN CLAY

When St Paul writes that human beings are **Treasure in Clay** (2 Cor. 4/7), surely he might have meant that there is every possibility that they have an inclined tendency to *fall and break* (You can read the book of **Fulton J. Sheen** – *Treasure in Clay* - as an attachment to it). God, who made humans out of mud (Gen. 2/21-22), certainly realized how **vulnerable** His creation is. Even before the fall of humans, an angel who is named as the *bearer of light* – **LUCIFER** – had fallen. There are sufficient evidences in the BOOK to show how the mighty have fallen. There is a repetition of it in the *Magnificat* of Mary too (Lk. 1/52). It is just like the *snake and ladder* game: **They fall faster than they climb.**



The question of the 'Law of Gravity' remained for a long time very strange and unanswered: **Why do things fall?** I believe that such a question can help one's interior world too. **Why do I fall?** One of the prime reasons for my fall is that I have not recognized my own weakness/es nor challenged it. One need not be very clever to realize that the tree will fall in the direction it is leaning.

Clay pots are Old Testament symbols. It is subtly nuanced through the Hebraic background of a gigantic figure. This figure is made of varieties of metals; but there is one problem – **its feet are made of clay.** The Greek traditions present it as **Achilles Heel.** In the Indian Tradition it is the **Thigh of Duryodana.** The fundamental question for you is: Which is your grunge heel?

To become aware of one's weakness is the most important step in life. Evidently or silently the symptoms of one's weaknesses can be traced from early stage itself. It may not be possible in our ordinary interactions; but the one who sits with closed eyes before the MASTER will surely recognize it. It is

through the Master the words of Genesis become effective in our life: *Sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it*(4/7). For example, think of the fall of Judas at the greed for money! He had been already slanting towards it! Although Jesus tries to correct him, Judas who had been already oblique towards sin couldn't resist it. Peter was a man with so much ego centrism. When the Lord said of the night when the shepherds will be beaten and the sheep will be scattered, Peter says that it will not happen to him. Jesus corrects him too. At the end Peter also stumbles at the block!

Every fall begins with insincerity towards smaller things. It may be a matter of faithfulness in relationship, commitment to one's own vocation, integrity in life-style and so on. Only those who show faithfulness in smaller things will be entrusted with greater things. It is good to remember the old adage that "**Rome was not built within a day**". But it is equally good to remember that "**the decadence and destruction of Rome was also not in a day**." Yes, your fall does not happen in one day's time! To me the greatest fall in the Old Testament is that of Samson. **Bridle-less attachment was his clay feet.** *Even the slightest distraction in tiny matters becomes the cause of mighty falls.* Once fallen from the sky even the 'stars' are mere charcoals.

Those who trust in themselves too much and never give heed to others' views fall more often. In fact God extends his hands to those who are about to fall; but if they reject to hold on to it what can be done! **We can read like a story the incident that happened in the life of Peter (Mt 14/28-31).** At the invitation of the MASTER Peter begins to walk on the Sea and he did walk a few steps. But he began to sink. Until then he was looking at Jesus and walking. The moment he shifted his look to the surroundings he sunk. When he cries aloud HIS hands lift him up. The message is very simple: **That you have not fallen is not your merit; HIS hands are still around you.**

As children how many times we fell before we learned walking? Nobody blamed us for that. But I think that advantage we grown-ups do not get. Always remember: Where there are people to forgive, even a fall becomes a sacrament. **The biggest mistake in the whole world is to attack the one who is fallen.** How treacherous it is to blackmail others for your advantage!

A final thought: **You need to forgive yourself.** There are people who suffer life-long under the burden of the fall they had. Remember the words of the Lord: *Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick* (Mt. 9/12). During every Lent we are reminded through the 'Way of the Cross' that **Jesus fell three times.** What a relief to know that! When he fell, he fell with us; when he rose he lifted us along!

My dear Confreres, it is time that we recognize our ACHILLES HEEL. It is time that we raise our Hands to HIM. It is good to know that we are WEAK and FRAGILE because every fall has an advantage: **It helps us to handle our life realistically with a little more humility.**

CONGREGATIONAL MATTERS



Fr James Panthalany MSFS: New Rector in LCI, Arusha: Our Superior General, Very Rev. Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, has appointed Fr James Panthalany as the new Rector of Lumen Christi Institute, Arusha, Tanzania. He assumes the office on 20th August, 2019. In the name of the South West India Province we Congratulate Fr James Panthalany God's abundant blessings in his new ministry. We specially take this

opportunity to place on record the wonderful service of **Fr Thomas Kochalumchuvattil** as the rector of LCI for the past seven years.

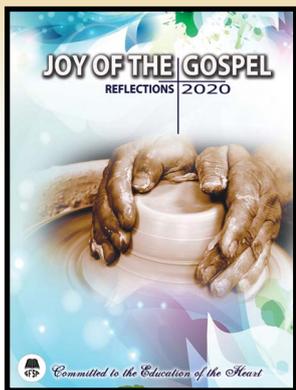


Rev Fr Jean-Yves LE TUÉ: The New Provincial of Franco-Swiss Province: We take this opportunity to Congratulate Rev Fr Jean-Yves Le Tue as he assumes the office of the Provincial in the Franco-Swiss Province. May the good Lord bless him abundantly to lead the Mother Province in the Spirit of St Francis de Sales and Fr Peter Mermier. Congratulations dear Fr Jean-Yves!

Meeting of the Vice Postulators for the Cause of The Founder (CFT): A meeting of the Vice Postulators of all the Provinces for the Cause of the Founder was held in Pune on the 16th and 17th of July 2019. The following points were discussed in this meeting.

- Gathering of the Witnesses for the tribunal session that was discussed about in the last meeting
- The CFT members were made aware of reminding the confreres of their province to recite the prayers for cause of the Founder daily, in communities and parishes.
- It was proposed that September 2019 be celebrated as 'Mermierean month' in order to intensify the devotion to Mermier. Special reflection can be prepared based on the letters of Mermier to Indian Missionaries for each day of September until 21st and for the Nine days of Novena, there could be separately prepared prayers and reflections for the use of the faithful. Fr Issac was assigned with the duty of preparing 21 days of reflections while all the members of CFT will prepare the nine days Novena prayers and reflections. Fr Mario was assigned with the duty of making this proposal to the Superior General and Asst. Superior general for approval.
- The CFT members were given 30th July as the deadline for sending the Novena prayers and Reflections. The format of the Novena was thus drawn as follows: Theme of the Novena, An event from history, demonstrating and justifying his virtuous life, Contextual reflections for: a. Faithful; b. Confreres.
- The parish priests maybe requested to preach about Mermier in their homilies based on the theme of the day, applicable to their context.
- The Founder's Day may be celebrated with greater fervour with selected liturgy of the word and special intercessory prayers.
- To recommend to all the Provincials to install the bust of Mermier in all the communities by September.
- Collaboration with the Holy Cross Sisters be intensified.
- SPA, CFT, Fransalian Associates to come together at least once a year in order to have more intensified spread of the Devotion to Mermier, study and reflection.
- The next meeting of CFT to be held in Guwahati on 15th November 2019. This meeting to have Fr Francis Poovellil MSFS (NE) as the Resource Person.

Release of the Bible Diary “JOY OF THE GOSPEL 2020”: SFS Publications has released the latest Bible Diary for the year 2020 well in advance. **The new Bible Diary with a well-designed Cover Page brings out the daily readings of the liturgical year with very deep reflections by eminent people in the Church both religious, priests and laity.** In addition, mass of the Latin Rite, complete readings of each day, a short write up about the saints of the day and Index to the Readings are special features of this Bible Diary. As it is a congregational venture I request all of you, dear Confreres, to propagate our Bible Diary near and far so that the spirit of the Church defined through the Salesian Spirituality will reach every corner of the earth. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Rev. Fr Joe Cherolickal, the Chief Editor, and his team for this stupendous achievement.



LIFE IN THE PROVINCE

Vocation Promoters' Meet

On 5th July, a meeting of the Vocation Promoters of Both Karnataka and Kerala was held at the MSFS Provincial House, Vinayalaya, in Bangalore. The meeting was convened by the Provincial, Fr Benny Koottanal, and it was assisted by the Councilor in-charge of formation, Fr Binu Edathumparambil. The



discussions focused on the need to begin the vocation promotion at the beginning of June instead of waiting for the last moment. The vocation promoters were asked to recruit students from various parts of the states and to make contacts with High School students early on. It was decided at the meeting that a few more confreres would be

appointed as vocation promoters to assist the present ones and that a meeting of this extended group of vocation promoters would be held soon.

Gathering of the Fransalian Associates in Charis Bhavan

The Fransalian Associates who live around Charis Bhavan, who are also sponsors of MSFS seminarians, came together in Charis Bhavan on 14th July 2019. Around seventy were present for the gathering. Fr Binu Edathumparambil gave a talk on the relevance of Fransalian Spirituality on Family and Married life. After the talk the Eucharist was celebrated in which Fr Kurian Karickal, the chief celebrant, preached on the kind of celibacy married people also are expected, based on the teachings of St Francis de Sales. The meeting was concluded with a fellowship meal at 2.00 pm.

Annual Retreat at Charis Bhavan

The first of the annual retreats of the province this year was held at Charis Bhavan from July 15 to 19. Fr Xavier Terrence, the former Vicar General of the Diocese of Palayamkottai and the contact person of the current administrator of the diocese, animated it. The theme of the retreat was: *Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant*. Fr Terrence, with his wide experience as a formator, professor, administrator, and retreat preacher, presented the participants with deep insights and challenging questions about their priestly life and vocation. He invited the participants to rediscover their identity as priests and live an



authentic Christ-like life. There were 71 Confreres who attended the retreat. At the conclusion of the retreat, the participants honored two of our Silver Jubilarians, Fr George Vattappara and Fr Jose Vechu-vettickal. On behalf of the province, Fr Kurian Karickal thanked and appreciated the two confreres for their dedicated life and service as priests in the congregation. Fr Sujith Pallassery thanked and appreciated the retreat preacher, Fr Terrence for the wonderful retreat and the Charis Bhavan community for making all the arrangements for the retreat. It was a time of prayer, reflection, and renewal for the participants.

Education Forum

The Education forum meeting of the South West India Province for the year 2019-20 was held on 24th July 2019 at Vinayalaya, the MSFS Provincial House. 32 Confreres working in various institutions both from Kerala and Karnataka attended the meeting. Fr Jabamalai the Councilor in-charge of Education welcomed the gathering. Rev. Fr Benny Koottanal, the Provincial Superior and Fr Vinod, the Provincial Bursar addressed the group. Rev. Fr Joshy Thazhathukunnel, the Secretary for the Education forum presented the report of Karnataka Regional Commission for Education. Mr Bipin the member from the province accounting team was present for the second session and spoke about various matters that had to be taken care in maintaining the records and in dispatching the Statutory Payment. The proposed Action Plan of General Chapter and Provincial Chapter was evaluated and discussed. The afternoon session was spent



for discussing various important matters concerning the educational institutions. Rev. Fr Euguene Lobo, the Secretary of KRCE spoke about the New Education Policy. Fr Binoy Kurakalayil thanked everyone for the wonderful and resourceful day spent together.

Stewardship Forum

Stewardship forum meeting of the South West India province for the year 2019-20 was held on 25th July, 2019. Fr Vinod Kanat, the Provincial Bursar welcomed the gathering. Rev. Fr Benny Koottanal, the Provincial, addressed the gathering. He appreciated the yeomen services done by the stewards of our communities. He highlighted the duties of stewards from our constitution. He told us about the importance of personal integrity and religious integrity. He called upon all to present the budget every month in the

community meetings. Fr Provincial reminded the Forum that we as religious are not supposed to have private Vehicle or any other Personal Property.

Fr Vinod Kanat presented the Action Plan of the General and Provincial Chapters. He asked all the stewards to attend the account-keeping program conducted in Belgaum by the Pune Province. Mr Bipin Babu the member of the accounting team addressed the gathering. Many of the Members clarified their doubts in the accounting system.



Fr Vinod asked all the members to follow the proper accounting system and he thanked all the members. Fr Jijo Chemplani thanked the Provincial, the Bursar, Mr Bipin and all the members.

Social Apostolates and Innovative Ministries Forum

Jesus was very innovative in his ministry. He prepared the disciples to go to the fringe. A disciple should be in Galilee, at the periphery of the Society. Fringe experience of the people whom we cater should affect us opined Fr Benny Koottanal, our Provincial. He was speaking at the forum meeting of Social Apostolates and Innovative ministries on 27th July at Vinayalaya. He also stated that this ministry cannot be done without passion. In the earlier days south west India Province was looked up for the vibrant passion for Social and Innovative ministries. He exhorted all the members to be in resurgent mood. He also hailed the members for great movements of social work in the province such as DATA, Garment Unit,



Social work ministries at Shiralakoppa, Vikas Jyothi, PSI, FidesIndia, DeCare and ITSCCAT.

Fr Riju Vazheparambil, the Councilor and the moderator of the whole gathering invited all the members to share the news, concerns, difficulties, achievements of the confreres from their respective centres and in turn all the members shared their views and concerns.

The gathering also suggested the possibility of having a magazine published of the different activities of Social Apostolates and Innovative Ministries of the Province. Fr Binu Edathuparambil, Provincial Admonitor gave valuable inputs making a comparative study of VOX ESTIS LUX MUNDI and the POSCO Act of Government of India.

Formation Forum

Formation Forum Meeting of the South West India Province was held at Vinayalaya on July 28, 2019. Fr Binu Edathuparambil, the Councilor in charge of Formation welcomed the gathering. Rev Fr Benny Koottanal, the Provincial in his address highlighted some of the challenges faced by the Formators. He also spoke about lay persons' expectations of priests and seminarians. He insisted on the importance of teamwork and accompaniment.

The action plans of the General and Provincial chapters were discussed in the first session. In the second session moderated by Fr Henry Jose Kodikuthiyil, the highlights of the Formation Forum Meeting 2018 were presented. It was followed by sharing from all the Formation Houses. The importance of vo-

cation promotion and the criteria for recruitment were also discussed in detail. In the third session moderated by Fr Tom Pannalakunnel, the assessment and evaluation criteria for promotion at all stages of formation were discussed. Fr Binu did a presentation on *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (Vatican



document), POCSO and JJ Act, and explained their significance and implications. The meeting came to an end by 4.30 pm with the vote of thanks proposed by Fr Sudeep Andrews.

Mission Forum

Mission Forum meeting was held on 30 July 2019 at Vinayalaya. This meeting was specifically for those working in Karnataka alone. Twenty two members participated in the meeting. Fr Benny Koottanal, the Provincial, in his inaugural address appreciated the members for the commendable services that they do in different Mission Centres in various capacities. He also cautioned the Confreres regarding the neces-



sity to be watchful about the use of Social Media, which encroaches the private spheres one's life. The Action plan of the 20th General Chapter and of the 3rd Ordinary Provincial Chapter was taken up for discussion and implementation. Concrete plans are arrived at for the better functioning of Parish Mission Preaching (PMP). It is decided that the group of "Fransalian Associates" will be constituted in all our Mission centres. Also plans for the development of Sedam Mission was taken as a priority.

Closure of Saint Alphonsa Parish in Mysore

The small chapel of the MSFS community at the De Sales Bhavan in Kuvempunagar, Mysore has been functioning as a provisional parish church of the Saint Alphonsa Parish at Rajarajeswarinagar for the past 11 years. The Parish was erected in the year 2008. With the very limited facilities available, the MSFS community has been rendering commendable service to the tiny catholic community of around 50 families attached to the new parish.

In spite of best efforts by the congregation and by the diocese the parish was not able to find a suitable piece of land for the construction of a proper church and presbytery. As the prolonged uncertainty has been causing some disquiet and anxiety among the people, the diocese and the congregation mutually agreed to dissolve the parish for the pastoral good of the people. Accordingly Bishop K. A. William of the diocese of Mysore through a decree issued on 23 June 2019 has suppressed the Parish and directed its faithful to be part of St Peter's Parish at Bogadi, their mother parish. The Decree was read out to the parishioners during a solemn Mass presided over by Bishop K. A. William. The Bishop in his homily exhorted the people to accept the situation in total faith and surrender to the plan of God. The Bishop profusely thanked the MSFS Congregation for their dedication and committed service to the people of

God entrusted to their care. On 30 June 2019 the parishioners came together for a concluding Mass and expressed their gratitude to the congregation and all the priests associated with the parish.

As of now the MSFS community at the De Sales Bhavan continues with its existing ministries to migrants and to a miniscule group of lay faithful who frequents the MSFS chapel for daily Mass. The office of Vikasjyothi, the Mission Development Office (MDO) / Mission Procure of the South West India Province continues to operate from De Sales Bhavan. A number of concrete proposals are now under active consideration by the Provincial Administration. Twenty-six years have passed and the MSFS community at Kuvempunagar is now looking forward to start anew with a renewed mission and vision for the future.

Bon Voyage

After having completed the philosophical studies in Suvidya, **Bros. Antony Puthenpurackal** and **Jibin Pathil** are designated to Philippines Delegation for their regency and thereafter theological studies. They would leave for the Philippines on the 4th August 2019. We wish them God's abundant blessings in their endeavours. **Bon Voyage dear Brothers.**

Obituary

- **Mrs. Annakkutty** aged 85, Mother of Fr Thomas Mekkattu, passed away on July 20, 2019.

We assure you, dear Fr Thomas Mekkattu, the remembrance of your beloved mother in our Holy Mass and Prayers.

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.

August 2019

August 12	Meeting with the Staff & Students of Suvidya College
August 13-14	Visitation to MSFS Community Mermier Bhavan, Visitation to MSFS Community & SFS Church, Hebbagodi
August 15	*Independence Day Celebrations with the SFS Institutions in Hebbagodi *Visitation to MSFS Community and Prateeksha Boys' Home, Hebbagodi
August 16	Council Meeting
August 19-30	Visitation to the Philippines Delegation *Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Philippines Delegation
August 31	Visitation to MSFS Community Koppal

September 2019

September 1	Visitation to MSFS Community Kuknoor
September 2	Visitation of MSFS Community & SFS School, Mundargi
September 3	Visitation of MSFS Community & SFS School, Savanur

September 4	Visitation to MSFS Community at Shiralakoppa; Meeting with Frs. D. Robert, Stany and Abhishek *Blessing and Inauguration of SFS School Shiralakoppa
September 7	Inauguration and Blessing of the New Retreat Hall and the renovated Convention Hall at Charis Bhavan
September 8	Institute Day IIS
September 10-18	Visitation to the Confreres in England
September 20	Council Meeting
Sept. 22-23	Visitation to MSFS Novitiate & De Care at Makkiad * Personal meeting with the Novices
September 24	Visitation to MSFS Community and Prateeksha Boys' Home Ulickal
September 25	Visitation to MSFS Community and SFS School Mattannur
September 26	Visitation to MSFS Community & SFS School Kannur * Kannur Apostolic Community Meeting
September 30	Mermier's Day *Installation of the New Rector of Suvidya College

October 2019

October 2	Visitation to MSFS Community Karahalli
October 4	Seminar for the Formators of "Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod", Trichy
October 6	Seminar for the Formators of Sisters of St Joseph of Tarbes, Bangalore
October 7	Visitation to MSFS Community PSI Kengeri
October 8	Visitation to NEST, FidesIndia, SFS School Kengeri
October 9	Moderating the Defence of the Doctoral Thesis of Fr Josephat Bududu
October 10	Visitation to MSFS Community Anthoninagara
October 14-18	2nd Annual Retreat in Indian Institute of Spirituality
October 19-20	Visitation to Sedem Mission in Gulbarga, meeting with the Bishop and Frs. Antony Selvam and Rakesh Ekka
October 23	Council Meeting
October 24	MSFS Foundation Day & Institute Day of Suvidya College
October 26-27	Visitation to ITSSCAT, Sunday Mass at SFS Church Vattiyoorkavu; Meeting with Frs. Joby Pulichumakal & Varghese Puthuparambil
October 27	Inauguration & Blessing of the New Church in Adoor

November 2019

Nov 3-23	Visitation to Germany & Austria, Visiting Fr Jeevan Prasad in Leuven (Belgium), Visiting our Confreres in the Franco-Swiss Province
November 25	Talk for the Formators of DSFS Congregation
November 27	Council Meeting
November 30	School Annual Day – ICSE Hebbagodi

December 2019

December 1	Visitation to IIS: *Holy Eucharist *Meeting with the Students (Diploma & PG) *Meeting with the Associates of Fransalians
December 2-3	*PIF & Governing Body Meeting in Suvidya *Gabriel Memorial Lectures
December 5-23	* Visitation to Chad-Cameroon Delegation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitation to all our Communities and Confreres in Chad-Cameroon Delegation• Delegation Colloquium• Visitation to the Novitiate in Kibaha, Tanzania, Meeting with Fr Prakash Prashant and the Novices• Visitation to the Scholastics in Arusha, Tanzania• Meeting with Fr Mathew Thazhathukunnel, Provincial, East Africa
December 25	Christmas
Dec. 29-30	Meeting with the Confreres in Vinayalaya Community

January 2020

January 1	New Year
January 2-3	Mid-Year evaluation of the Regents at Vinayalaya
January 4-5	Visitation to SFS Seminary Ettumanoor, Meeting the 3rd year Seminararians
January 6	Visitation to Charis Bhavan
January 7	Mission Forum Meeting of the Confreres in Kerala at Charis Bhavan
January 8	Visitation to MSFS Community Kattappana, meeting with Frs. Jacob Thudipara and Tony Mundachalil
January 9-10	Visitation to MSFS Community Aluva, Meeting with Frs. Paul Aranjanil, Zacharias Cherackal & Chacko Ottalankal
January 11	Visitation to Atmajyothi Community Pattikad
January 22	Council Meeting
January 24	Feast of St Francis de Sales – Festal Mass at Vinayalaya
January 25	School Annual Day – SFS CBSE Hebbagodi
Jan. 27-Feb.1	Classes for Diploma Students of IIS

VOICE OF SFS

“The secret of enriching ourselves in a short time and at little expense is to moderate our desires and to imitate the sculptor who does his work by chiselling off little by little, and not like the artist who does his work by constantly adding something.”

Fraternally,



Fr. Benny Kootanal MSFS
Provincial