



## MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES PUNE PROVINCE



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CIRCULAR FROM THE PROVINCIAL

AUGUST 21, 2017

### CONVOCAION OF THE VIII PUNE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

#### THE THEME

**"RECAPTURING OUR MSFS IDENTITY (MSFSness)  
IN AND THROUGH OUR COMMUNITY LIVING, MISSION AND SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY**

My dearest Confreres,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength belong to our God forever and ever! Amen" (Rev 7:12). With the same sense of praise and honour to our Heavenly Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, today, on the 450th Birth Anniversary of our Heavenly Patron St Francis de Sales, I am immensely glad to come to you with my ever first and significant letter, marking the VIII Provincial Congress of Pune Province, India.

#### CONVOCAION OF PUNE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

With the approval of our beloved Superior General Rev Fr Abraham Vettuvellil msfs, and with joy and honour, I convoke the 8<sup>th</sup> Provincial Congress of our Pune Province, entrusting our consecrated missionary life and mission to the loving care and intercession of our Mother of Sorrows, Patroness and St Francis de Sales, our Patron and Fr Peter Marie Mermier, our hallowed Founder, the Servant of God.

#### THE THEME, VENUE AND DATES FOR THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

The theme for the Provincial Congress is *"Recapturing our MSFS Identity (MSFS-NESS) in and through our Community Living, Mission and Salesian Spirituality"*. The venue for the Congress is the Montfort Provincial House, Pune, and the Congress will begin from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October at 3.30 pm to 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2017 at 4 pm.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE CONGRESS**

Our constitutions outline the importance of the Provincial Congress: The Provincial Congress is a symbol of fraternal union and a forum of collective discernment and accountability for the life and mission of the entire Province. The Provincial Congress should be so prepared that it becomes truly an occasion for a thorough evaluation, discovery of greater inner strength, and a joint attempt to find ways and means to make the spiritual life and the mission of the Province more vibrant and effective. In consultation with the Superior General, the Provincial is to initiate adequate measures to involve all the members in the preparation so that it becomes a meaningful event. It is obligatory on the part of every member to participate wholeheartedly in the preparation for it (MSFS Const. 234 & 235).

## **DELEGATE OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL FOR THE CONGRESS**

We are glad that Rev. Fr Agnelo Fernandes, General Councillor and Secretary for Mission and Social Apostolates and Innovative Ministries, is delegated by the Superior General to represent the General Administration at the Provincial Congress for animation and guidance. We thank him for his generous availability and render him a genial welcome.

## **PREPARATION FOR THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS**

Such a significant Event primarily summons for a spiritual preparation at the three fundamental levels, namely, the individual, community and apostolates, concerning our life and mission in the Congregation, as lived in and through the Pune Province. Every member of the Province must have a clarity and commitment individually and collectively to raise our Pune Province to a higher level with the short term and long term goals in tune with the spirit of our Constitution, General Directory, hallowed Heritage and Tradition of our Congregation and the Universal Church.

## **FOCUS AND PROFUNDITY OF THE THEME**

The theme for the Congress is “Recapturing our MSFS Identity (MSFS-Ness) in and through our community living, Mission and Salesian Spirituality”. Our Superior General Rev Fr Abraham Vettuvélil msfs resonates the spirit of our Founder, in his Circular at the convocation of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, that we must wake up to the Basics/Essentials of MSFS life. The Basics/Essentials of MSFS are the four pillars of Consecrated Life - the Community, Mission, MSFS-ness and Salesian Spirituality. These define and orient our very identity and direction. These pillars should enhance the entire structure/system of our MSFS family in the spirit of our Charism handed over to us by Father Peter Mermier.

### **SOME OF THE CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED ARE:**

(Ref. Report of Fr Thumma Mariadas Reddy, the Assistant General, Visitation to the Pune Province)

- 1. Spiritual shallowness:** This means that there is no real depth or fervour in our spiritual concerns. In the name of performance and excellence, the spiritual concerns are simply pushed to the periphery. A life without prayer can contribute to a downfall in the life of a confrere.
- 2. Moral disintegration:** This refers to the scandals, illicit relationships and moral abuses by the clergy. Our consecrated life summons us to be more credible, mature, balanced and integrated in our behaviour and relationships.
- 3. Financial dishonesty:** This means mismanagement, dishonesty, misappropriation, corruption, embezzlements and financial/material favours to others in view of promoting oneself.
- 4. Individualism:** It refers to an attitude of self-centeredness, I-centeredness, self-interests and private projects. It also comprises Tendencies toward monopoly and blow to collectivity on the part of some confreres, in terms of making and running some missions as their petty projects and private agendas, failing to be collectively accountable. Two simple questions to be asked are: Do I contribute sufficiently to my community? Am I a blessing or a curse to my community?
- 5. Groupistic and Divisive Culture:** In the words of our Holy Father Pope, 'division is the weapon the devil employs most to destroy the Church from within'. This refers to the divisive tendencies and acts of groupism, favouritism, nepotism, on the basis of affinities like region, language, culture, rite, status, power, position etc. Consequently at times, the common, larger and higher good is being neglected and forfeited for the sake of this kind of interests.
- 6. Institutionalism:** This does not necessarily mean remaining in an institution; but it refers more to a mind-set that leads to a deficient and defective way of living. This denotes comfort-seeking, avoiding risk for God and good, and a lack of missionary attitude, exposure and fervour.
- 7. Gossips and Negativism:** There is a pervasive atmosphere of gossips, negativity, unconstructive criticism, mistrust, lack of openness and responsible freedom. Pope Francis says that Church unity is threatened by gossip, saying the devil destroys with the tongue, with idle chatter that divides," and that the habit of gossiping is an act of 'terrorism'.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS (Ref. SG-AB-16)

1. How can we purposefully intervene to bring in a systemic paradigmatic change instead of a piecemeal change? (Our Paradigm is Consecrated Life in Community, Mission, MSFS-ness and the Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales)
2. How can we use all our available human and material resources in the Province to strengthen these four thrusts of the Congregation?
3. How can we bring in Paradigm Shift that will help the Province and our confreres reach their potential for the mission of the Church?
4. How can we cultivate and promote a systemic change that will take into account and address the serious challenges (listed above) we face today?

*(Note: A reflective study material will be sent to you soon for study and subsequent proposals for the deliberations in the Congress.)*

## GRATITUDE TO FR VINCENT LOURDUSWAMY MSFS

On this day of joy and gratitude, I would like to place on record our heartfelt gratitude to Rev Fr. Vincent Lourdusamy msfs for his effective animation, efficient administration in guiding the Province after the heart of the Good Shepherd in the footsteps of St. Francis de Sales for the last six years as Provincial. All would certainly agree with me that his unique way of listening to the confreres and motivating them to look beyond the limitations have certainly paved the way for reconciliation and peace. He focused on the priorities of our Salesian way of life and emphasized constantly the importance of community life and mission. His love for the sick and the aged confreres is indeed unparalleled and unequalled. His presence has been a source of joy to all the age-group of confreres and collaborators. His initiatives in pioneering missions and evangelization have certainly helped us to march beyond the horizons. The Province was blessed to have you as our leader, guide and inspiration in the footsteps of St Francis de Sales our Patron and Fr Peter Mermier, our Founder. Thank you dear Father Vincent for your hard work, thank you for remaining focused on your responsibilities up to now as you gracefully handed over the esteemed office. I know that no words will be sufficient to thank you fully but your inspiring leadership itself is the thanksgiving and reward. Dear Father Vincy, continue to guide us, inspire us, lead us by your prayers and support. God bless you!



## FORTHCOMING PROVINCE EVENTS

**Province Retreat – 1<sup>st</sup> Group:** August 24 – 29, 2017 at Harmony, Belgaum

**Council Meeting:** September 11-12, 2017 at Shaanwadi.

**Preparation for the Congress:** September 1-30, 2017

**Conclusion:** The life, writings and the spirituality of St Francis de Sales is a rich and constant source of inspiration for all of us for our effectiveness in consecrated life and mission. Let us continue to affirm our resolve to “study St. Francis de Sales, imitate his virtues and for our method of guiding people on his: full of gentleness to Sinners”. May St Francis de Sales, our heavenly patron continue to pray for us from his heavenly abode and our Founder Fr Peter Mermier continue to intercede for us and guide to Live Jesus, Love Jesus and Give Jesus to all!

Yours in Christ,

Fr Jayaseelan Selvaraj msfs

Provincial Superior

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August 21, 2017

450<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of St Francis de Sales



**ST FRANCIS DE SALES, PRAY FOR US**