

## MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES PUNE PROVINCE



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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCE

JANUARY 24, 2019

### CIRCULAR DEDICATED FOR THE MSFS GENERAL CHAPTER 2019 On the Feast Day of St. Francis de Sales, our Patron

My dear Confreres,

Fraternal greetings to each of you.



Today we, the Fransalian family, celebrate with immense joy and gratitude to God the Feast of St. Francis de Sales our heavenly Patron and the Doctor of the Church. St. Francis de Sales was born on August 21, 1567 at Chateau de Sales, Savoy near Geneva, Switzerland.

Francis never lost his passion for God. He constantly nurtured his vocation in prayer and perseverance. God made his will clear to Francis while he was riding. Francis fell from his horse three times that day. Every time he fell, the sword came out of the scabbard, and every time it came out, the sword and scabbard came to rest on the ground in the shape of the Christian cross.

His zeal for the salvation of souls enabled him to set out on a missionary journey to win over sixty thousand Calvinists to the Catholic Church and had to face indifference, insults and intimidation. Francis' unusual patience kept him working. Initially, no one would listen to him, no one would even open their door. So, Francis found a new way to get under the door. He wrote out little pamphlets to explain true Catholic doctrine and slipped them under the doors. Thus, he won the souls for Christ and continued his missionary journey of love, devotion and gentleness. In the words of Du Perron, one of the friends of the saint: If you want heretics to argue, send them to me; but if you want to persuade them and convert them, send them to the Bishop of Geneva. Such was the power of gentleness and humility of St. Francis de Sales learnt from our Master Jesus Christ.

**May our glorious Patron St. Francis de Sales pray for us to become a committed and zealous missionary by living and loving Jesus our Leader.**

## GENERAL CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

After two years of intense preparations, reflections, discussions and prayers as one Fransalian Family, we are just a week away for the most awaited and historic 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter 2019. Hence I am happy to dedicate this circular for the forthcoming General Chapter 2019.

Our constitutions (191-192) highlight the significance of the General Chapter in the life and activity of our Congregation as the General Chapter is the supreme legislative and teaching authority in the Congregation. Its authority is exercised in an extraordinary and collegial manner. The General Chapter is to preserve the fidelity of the Congregation to its spiritual heritage. It is the forum that collectively reads the signs of the times and discerns the working of the Holy Spirit. It functions as an agent of systematic planning for the effective carrying out of the mission of the Church, in willing obedience to her teachings and in fidelity to the Charism of our Congregation.

Being an authentic representative body of the entire Congregation, it is a true symbol of the underlying unity of the Congregation, of every member's participation in, and concern and love for, the life and activity of the entire Congregation.

## THE SALIENT FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

1. It evaluates thoroughly the life and activities of the Congregation in general and of its constituent units in particular, in the light of the teachings of the Church, the Charism of the Congregation, its Constitutions and Directory, the orientations given by the previous General Chapters, and the demands emerging from concrete life-situations.
2. It invites individuals and communities to a serious reflection on and evaluation of their life and mission, in the light of our religious commitment and apostolate.
3. It draws up necessary measures for the appropriate renewal of the religious life of its members, enacts norms for the orderly and effective planning and carrying out of the mission of the Congregation, reflects and deliberates on the current problems in religious life and apostolate, searches for solutions, and gives specific orientations and guidelines for the future.
4. It alone takes the decision to revise or make amendments to the Constitutions, for which a two-thirds majority of the members present is required. These

revisions and amendments become effective only after the approval of the Holy See. The General Chapter also revises the Directory as and when it is necessary.

5. It establishes new Provinces and Vice-Provinces, as well as restructures, amalgamates, suppresses them or redefines their boundaries. In exceptional cases, some of these decisions may be taken by the Superior General with the consent of his Council as per the norms laid down in the Directory
6. It elects the Superior General, the Assistant General, the General Councillors, and the General Bursar.
7. It formulates norms for the election of delegates to the General Chapter to ensure proportionate representation of the Provinces/Vice-provinces/ Regions.

**THEME OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER 2019**

**“MSFS, WAKE UP TO THE BASICS”**

**DATE: February 01 – February 13, 2019**

**VENUE: MSFS Provincial House, Guwahati, India**

Our Superior General underscores the importance of the forthcoming General Chapter 2019 in the context of the Charism of our Congregation. The Charism of a Religious Congregation is the source of its vitality, inspiration, motivation and its reason for existence. Vatican II called all religious orders to “return to the sources” and to ‘return to those elements in the Congregation modelled on the vision of the Founder’. The call of Vatican II is to be seen in the present context of: how our MSFS way of consecrated life in community and in our apostolate is lived in the spirit of our Constitutions and Charism.

- ✓ Our theme “MSFS, Wake up to the Basics” repeats the call of Vatican Council to all Religious Congregations, to go back to the roots/Charism. A systematic planning, in obedience to the teachings of the Church and in fidelity to the Charism of our Congregation, demands of us a hard look at the present scenario of our Congregation.
- ✓ Our Charism that gives us our identity is: (1) MSFS is a Missionary (2) MSFS lives in a community (3) MSFS lives the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales.
- ✓ A Religious Congregation begins to disintegrate when the members are drawn to develop personal interest without sharing the vision and Charism of the Congregation. Our renewal of religious life, embracing the Charism, invites us to focus on Community Life, Mission, MSFS ness, and Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales without compromise. These FOUR THRUSTS are the four priorities that should impact a systemic change in the Congregation.

- ✓ Renewal of our religious life in fidelity to our Charism will renew our apostolates and will in turn contribute to the renewal of the Church.

Accordingly, we find that the spirit of our beloved Founder Fr. Peter Mermier continues to resonate through the theme, “MSFS to wake up to the Basics”. The Basics/Essentials of MSFS are the four pillars of Consecrated Life - the Community, Mission, MSFS-ness and the Spirituality of St Francis de Sales. These define and orient our very identity and activity. These pillars enhance and empowers the entire structure/system of our MSFS family in the spirit of our Charism handed over to us by Father Peter Mermier. In order to wake ourselves up to the basics and to recapture our MSFS Identity we must seek to answer ourselves the basic questions, as MSFS, what is our identity? What is the purpose of our missionary life? And what are our definite plans of action for the Lord who has called us to bear witness to Him?

Our Founder Fr Peter Mermier, by his religious profession left his cozy and comfort zone of diocesan way of life and embraced the consecrated community life for missions. Community is the fertile soil where our religious vocation and consecration is lived, nurtured and fostered. Community life precedes all the apostolates and activities. There is no mission without community and our community life is lived and expressed through common prayer, common table-fellowship, and sensitivity to the needs of others.

MSFS Identity is a consecrated-communitarian-Missionary Identity. MSFS-ness is not merely bearing the title of MSFS, not a mere matter of allegiance. MSFS-ness comprises and describes the whole of our being, loving and living Christ in our daily life as lived by St. Francis de Sales and our Founder Fr Peter Mermier.

The foundational vision of our Congregation is “preaching the parish missions for the renewal of Christian faith in the footsteps of St. Francis de Sales. To be faithful to his Divine Call, our Founder Fr Peter Mermier sacrificed his successful educational career and formed a religious community to preach the parish missions. As the missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, we are challenged to have the courage to make a daring and fearless evangelizing and renewing pastoral ministry, so that every person and group in the world experience the healing power, love, peace and care of the good Shepherd.

“Our ministry,” says our Founder, “demands that we offer ourselves to the people, to society, like another St. Francis de Sales, totally disinterested, burning with zeal for the salvation of all, full of compassion at the sight of evils which make people suffer, without wasting time in useless oratory, with an authentic mission, irreproachable doctrine and above all a virtuous life.”

Bishop Joseph Rey gives us an insight into how our Charism should unfold itself. He said “Yours is a triple task: study St. Francis de Sales, imitate his virtues, form your

method of guiding people on his: full of gentleness to sinners". Let us once again recommit ourselves to make the mandate of the Bishop Rey into a reality by daily studying St Francis de Sales, imitating his virtues and applying his innovative methods in our missions and ministries. Salesian Spirituality is the vision of living the Gospel of Christ as learnt, lived and shared by St. Francis de Sales. It speaks about the sacredness and dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God. Hence we are called to be holy by constantly in union with God. God seldom requires us to perform great and extraordinary things. God always challenges us to perform everyday actions with extraordinary attention and enthusiasm. The "little virtues" of patience, humility, gentleness, simplicity, honesty, hospitality, modesty etc. are some means to grow in holiness.

As our Superior General exhorts us to listen to the Spirit of God speaking to us in response to the voice of our confreres from their lived experience within the Congregation. As the members of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter we are called:

- To live as a community on a specific mission during the 13 days of our General Chapter with a free day of community picnic.
- To attend to all the responsibilities entrusted to us for a fruitful Chapter.
- To create an atmosphere of communion, intercultural community life, prayer and study, openness, dialogue and living our MSFSness.
- To study deeply and reflectively the issues and concerns placed before us through the documents in the dossier sent by the Secretary General of the General Chapter and be ready for discussion, sharing and deliberations.
- To look at the hard facts of unhealthy trends and patterns that are created, consciously or unconsciously, in our system.
- To set our hearts on the Lord and his mission and to present the Charism of our Congregation at the centre of our every deliberation and Decision.

## LIST OF CAPITULANTS

### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS: A. GENERAL CURIA

1. VETTUVELIL Abraham, Superior General
2. THUMMA Mariadas Reddy, Assistant Superior General
3. FERNANDES Agnelo, General Councillor
4. REBELLO Noel, General Councillor
5. PARAMPUKATTIL George, General Councillor
6. MANGATT Augustine, General Bursar

## B. PROVINCIALS AND VICE PROVINCIAL

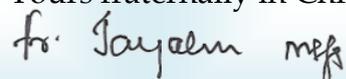
7. AERATHEDATHU Tomson Michael, Provincial of Brazil Province
8. THAZHATHUKUNNEL Mathew, Provincial of East Africa Province
9. YVES Carron, Provincial of France-Suisse Province
10. JOHN BRITTO Muthuswamy, Provincial of Nagpur Province
11. PANTHANMACKEL George, Provincial of North East India Province
12. SELVARAJ Jayaseelan, Provincial of Pune Province
13. K. Ignacimuthu, Provincial of South East India Province
14. KOOTTANAL Benny, Provincial of South West India Province
15. PENTAREDDY Chinnappa Reddy, Provincial of Visakhapatnam Province
16. PULIYANAMPATTAYIL Tomy, Vice Provincial of USA Vice Province

## DELEGATES

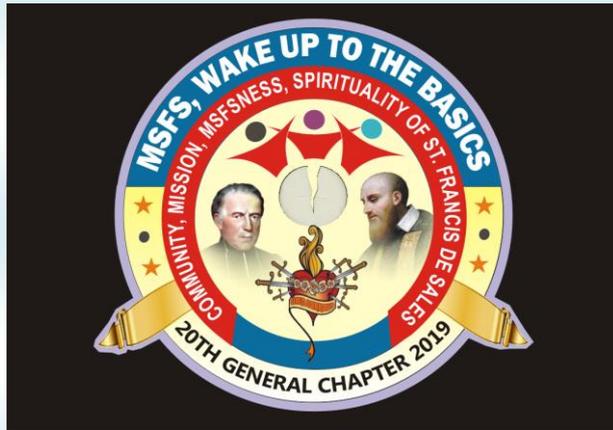
1. ANTHONYSAMY Benedict, Brazil Province
2. KALLIDUKIL Johnson, East Africa Province
3. PANTHALANICKEL James, East Africa Province
4. COULON Jean-Patrice, England Province
5. KANNEZHATH Scaria Joseph, Franco-Swiss Province
6. KARAMAKUZHYIL, Jacob Nagpur Province
7. KURICKAL George, Nagpur Province
8. TIRKEY Manoj, Nagpur Province
9. MAPPILAPARAMBIL Emmanuel, North East India Province
10. MUNDACKAL Baiju Kurian, North East India Province
11. PUTHIYAKULANGARA Saji George, North East India Province
12. DAIY Sebastian, Pune Province
13. GONSALVES Johnson, Pune Province
14. KULANGARATH Sunny Joseph, Pune Province
15. A. Arul Francis, South East India Province
16. D. Kanikkai Nathan, South East India Province
17. J. Stephen, South East India Province
18. CHERUKAT Thomas, South West India Province
19. EDATHUMPARAMBIL Binu, South West India Province
20. KALARIPARAMBIL Thomas, South West India Province
21. CHAKKALAKKAL Jolly Joseph, Visakhapatnam Province
22. BAVIRI Suresh Babu, Visakhapatnam Province
23. DOLA Velangani Rao, Visakhapatnam Province
24. CHACKALECKEL Davis, USA Vice-Province

On behalf of the MSFS Pune Province, we pray for God's blessings for the success of the 20<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Chapter 2019 and for the renewal of our life and ministry.

Yours fraternally in Christ Jesus,



Fr Jayaseelan Selvaraj msfs  
Provincial Superior



**LIVE JESUS! LOVE JESUS AND GIVE JESUS!**

**ST. FRANCIS DE SALES**

**PRAY FOR US!**