



MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

NORTHEAST INDIA PROVINCE, MSFS PROVINCIALATE

GPO Box No. 43, GUWAHATI – 781 001

Tel: 0361 2648507 / Fax 0361 2648510

Website: www.msfsnortheast.com

Email: provincialnortheastmsfs@gmail.com / provincialesecretarynortheast@gmail.com

GPA/35–Circular – March2019

Dear Confreres,

WISH YOU ALL A VERY FRUITFUL SEASON OF LENT!



At the beginning of Lent, the Liturgy sets before us three penitential practices that are very dear to the biblical and Christian tradition: prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Fasting

Indeed, Lent recalls the forty days of our Lord's fasting in the desert, which He undertook before entering into His public ministry. We read in the Gospel: "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry" (Mt 4:1-2). Like Moses, who fasted before receiving the tablets of the Law (Ex 34: 28) and Elijah's fast before meeting the Lord on Mount Horeb (1 Kg 19: 8), Jesus, too,

through prayer and fasting, prepared Himself for the mission marked at the start by a serious battle with the tempter.

The history of salvation has many occasions that invite fasting. In the very first pages of Book of Genesis, the Lord commands man to abstain from partaking of the prohibited fruit: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen 2: 16-17). Since all of us are weighed down by sin and its consequences, fasting is proposed to us as an instrument to restore friendship with God. Such was the case with Ezra, who called upon the assembled people to fast so that "we might humble ourselves before our God" (Ezra 8:21). The Almighty heard their prayer and assured them of His protection. In the same way, the people of Nineveh, responding to Jonah's call to repentance, proclaimed a fast (Jonah 3: 9). In this instance, God saw their works and spared them.

In the New Testament, Jesus brings to light the profound motive for fasting. True fasting, for Jesus, is rather to do the will of the Heavenly Father, who "sees in secret, and will reward you" (Mt 6: 18). He Himself sets the example, answering Satan, at the end of the forty days spent in the desert that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4: 4). The true fast is thus directed to eating the "true food," which is to do the Father's will (Jn 4: 34). If, therefore, Adam disobeyed the Lord's command, the believer, through fasting, intends to submit himself humbly to God.

Voluntary fasting enables us to grow in self-sacrificing spirit. By freely embracing an act of self-sacrifice for the sake of another, we make a statement that our brother or sister in need is not a stranger. Freely chosen detachment from the pleasures of food and other material goods helps the disciple of Christ to control the appetites of comfort and convenience for the sake of others.

Prayer

Prayer nourishes a person because nothing expresses the reality of God in our life better than praying with faith. Two moments of Jesus' earthly existence come to mind. Prayer alone with the Father face to face in the desert; prayer filled with "mortal anguish" in the Garden of Olives. Yet in both these circumstances it is by praying that Christ unmask the wiles of the tempter and defeats him.

Christ's prayer reaches its culmination on the Cross. It is expressed in those last words which the Evangelists have recorded: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27: 46; Mk 15: 34; Ps 22[21]: 1). Christ was actually making his own the invocation of someone beset by enemies with no escape, who has no one other than God to turn to and, over and above any human possibilities, experiences his grace and salvation. So, by praying in this ultimate solitude together with the whole of humanity, Jesus opens the Heart of God to us. Indeed when it is collective, the prayer of the community is a voice of one heart and soul, it is a heart to heart dialogue.

Without the dimension of prayer, the human "I" ends by withdrawing into oneself, and the conscience, which should be an echo of God's voice, risks being reduced to a mirror of the self, so that the inner conversation becomes a monologue, giving rise to self-justifications by the thousands. Therefore, prayer is a guarantee of openness to others: whoever frees himself for God and his needs simultaneously opens himself to the other who knocks at the door of one's heart and asks to be heard, asks for attention, forgiveness, at times correction, but always in fraternal charity. True prayer is never self-centred, it is always centred on the other. As such, it opens the person praying to the "ecstasy" of charity, to the capacity to go out of oneself to draw close to the other in humble, neighbourly service.

Almsgiving

Together with prayer and fasting, almsgiving helps us better realize the Lenten call to conversion. Conversion calls us to turn away from sin, return to God and enjoy the fullness of life with God and all creation. Conversion helps us live this life more fully by becoming more truly who we are—God's beloved, made in his image and likeness.

Our Lenten almsgiving as a community provides some answers. Some of us give our excess clothes to the homeless. Others set time aside to serve the sick and dying in nursing homes and hospitals. These and our many other acts of kindness and care in Lent are good Christian acts. They express Christian charity: we give something to another in need. Indeed, she who is in need is our neighbour, and our care and concern is the way we share with her God's life and love.

Jesus teaches that true almsgiving cannot be about giving out of our surplus or doing a good deed to chalk up points with God. No, it must be, first and foremost, about having genuine love for another in need and acting for her wellbeing. The fullness of Christian love is to be found in the Cross. Christian love is self-sacrificial: Jesus lays down his life for love of God and love of neighbour. He does this freely and selflessly. He does this in obedience to God's Law. And God's law is about loving God totally and loving one's neighbour as oneself.

The Good Samaritan's love for neighbour, as the lawyer identifies, is rooted in mercy. His mercy also manifests itself in self-sacrifice. Though he has a destination to reach, he sacrifices his time, his money and his plans to restore the victim to life. That the Samaritan practices his love for neighbour by sharing his goods challenges us to embrace the cost of almsgiving. To have the self-giving love for others that Jesus had for us, even if it means laying down our lives to liberate the downtrodden from forces that oppress. Self-sacrificing love is how we are to make our almsgiving a true expression of our love for God.

Thus, almsgiving, fasting and prayer invite us to bring about the fullness of God's Kingdom in the places where we live and work.

Fransalian Response

St Francis de Sales: According to St Francis, Lenten fast must be a complete one, involving both body and soul. The body does penance when we mortify our eyes, tongues and ears. The soul does penance when we

mortify our minds by filling them with good thoughts, our memories by recalling our sins and our wills by keeping them submissive to God's will. "First of all, our Lenten fast must be a complete one. Body and soul have each played their part in sin; each must do penance. The body does penance when we mortify our eyes by restraining our curiosity, when we mortify our tongues by avoiding harmful conversation, when we mortify our ears by not listening to useless disturbing talk. The soul does penance when we mortify our minds by our efforts to keep them filled with good thoughts, when we mortify our memories by recalling our sins and the havoc they have wrought, when we mortify our wills by trying to keep them submissive to God's will, holding ourselves in spirit at the foot of the cross" (Vincent Kerns, *Pulpit and Pew: A Study in Salesian Preaching*, Visakhapatnam: SFS Printing School, 1976), p. 267).

Father Mermier: Lent is time to be holy and unstained. The missionaries have to offer themselves to people and society like another St Francis de Sales who was totally disinterested, burning with zeal and compassion, having a legitimate mission with irreproachable doctrine and possessing a good life. "It seems to me that perhaps it is the time, more than ever, to be holy, unstained, separated from sinners, made higher than the heavens. Our ministry demands that we offer ourselves to the people, to the society, like other St Francis de Sales, totally disinterested, burning with zeal for the salvation of people, full of compassion at the sight of the evils which make the people desolate without amusing ourselves to lose our time in useless oratory, with a legitimate mission, an irreproachable doctrine and above all, a good life....I wish you all to spend holily the holy days of Lent" (Fr Mermier's Letter to Father Gaiddon dated February 24, 1849, In: *Selected Letters and Writings of Fr Peter Marie Mermier (1790-1862)*, Edited by Adriel Duval and Translated by Antony Mookenthottam, Bangalore: SFS Publications, 2007, Pp. 29-30).

THE 20TH ORDINARY GENERAL CHAPTER 2019: "MSFS, WAKE UP TO THE BASICS"



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 (cf. Canon 631, §1). It is the forum that collectively reads the signs of the time 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.

We have just concluded the 20th Ordinary General Chapter of the Congregation, which was held at MSFS Provincialate in Guwahati, Assam, India from February 1 to 13, 2019, under the theme, “MSFS, WAKE UP TO THE BASICS.” It was indeed a spiritual and historical event.

First of all, we shall raise our hearts and minds to the Almighty God for his providence, powerful accompaniment for the successful completion of the General Chapter 2019, bringing renewal and a new impetuosity to our religious and community life, ministry, governance and administration. I thank Rev. Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, our beloved Superior General, for his guidance, inspiration, and dynamic leadership. We wish him all the very best and God’s choicest blessings as he begins his second term as the Superior General of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales. I take this opportunity to thank the outgoing General Curia: Frs Thumma Mariadas, Agnelo Fernandes, Noel Rebello, George Parampukattil, Jayaseelan Selvaraj and Augustine Mangatt for their dedication, commitment and immense contribution to our beloved Congregation.

My sincere appreciation to the members of the Steering Committee, under the Chairmanship of Fr Saji George Puthiyakulangara, for their hardwork and dedication, meticulous planning and smooth conducting of the proceedings, and the minutes secretaries for their clear and accurate recordings. I would like to thank all confreres of the Northeast India Province, “My Beloved Community” (in the sense of the words of Josiah Royce – American philosopher), for their unfailing support in hosting the General Chapter in Guwahati; in a special way, I would like to thank all the members of the Provincial Curia, Regional Curia of Dibrugarh Region and the members of the Provincialate Community under the leadership of Fr Jose Thekkel, who worked selflessly, tirelessly and cheerfully for attending to every need of the capitulants. Thanks also to the exemplary cooperation of the entire domestic staff of the Provincial House.

New General Administration



1. Rev. Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, Superior General
2. Rev. Fr Yves Carron, Assistant Superior General
3. Rev. Fr Johnson Kallidukil, General Councillor (Mission)
4. Rev. Fr Jacob Karamakuzhy, General Councillor (Education)
5. Rev. Fr Suresh Babu Baviri, General Councillor (Formation)
6. Rev. Fr J. Stephen, General Councillor (Social Apostolates & Innovative Ministries)
7. Rev. Fr Jose Cheriantharayil, General Bursar

On behalf of Northeast India province, I congratulate the members of the new General Administration and wish them all the best.

The following is the approved text of the “Call of the General Chapter 2019” for all the confreres of the Congregation.

CALL OF GENERAL CHAPTER 2019

We, the members of the 20th Ordinary General Chapter of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS), assembled at MSFS Provincialate in Guwahati, Assam, India, from February 1-13, 2019, greet all our confreres with fraternal love and affection.

The theme of our General Chapter, “MSFS, WAKE UP TO THE BASICS,” invited us to an attentive listening to the voice of the Spirit, a renewed fidelity to Jesus Christ, deeper soul-searching, and a zealous living of the Charism of our Congregation and the spirit of our Founder, Fr. Peter Mary Mermier. The General Chapter, the supreme legislative and teaching authority in the Congregation, reiterates the collective conviction of the confreres that it is a joy to be an MSFS, and firmly resolves to strengthen our community life and existing ministries.

Heeding the call of the Church, especially of the Second Vatican Council and the Exhortations of Pope Francis, we also resolve to continue to read the signs of the times and respond to the needs of the Universal Church in new ways.

To commit ourselves to these resolutions, we hereby present the following Statement, Directives, Decisions, and Implementation Mechanisms to the entire Congregation.

STATEMENT

Gathered as one family by the Triune God, with our unique identity as Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, we firmly believe that we are called to grow in communion with God and with one another, through a life of prayer, participation in the mission of the Church, living the Salesian virtues, and through fraternal love and sharing.

Our Charism calls us to live the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in our community and mission, as envisioned by our Founder, Fr. Peter Mary Mermier. The four basics of our Charism: Community Life, Mission, MSFS-ness, and Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales, are to characterize our daily lives and apostolates. In living these basics, we follow the Holy Trinity as our model and reference point, and strive to live as brothers, united in love, valuing the uniqueness of each member and remaining united as one family. The General Chapter upholds this family spirit and emphatically affirms the need for strengthening our communion with the Lord and with one another.

Jesus Christ being the source and summit of our mission, we re-affirm our commitment to Him by being effectively available for the apostolic activities of the Universal Church through our three foundational Apostolates of the Renewal of Christian Life, Overseas and Pioneering Evangelization, and Education and Formation, especially of the Young. Imbibing the vision and missionary spirit of our Founder and all other confreres, who have gone before us, we resolve to continue the rich legacy of our Congregation in being missionaries, who Live Jesus and thus make a difference in the life of the Church and in the world at large.

DIRECTIVES, DECISIONS, AND IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

OUR CONSECRATED LIFE IN COMMUNITY

1. Our Community being our family and support, we will continue to strengthen our community life by participation in daily community prayer, Eucharistic celebration, Eucharistic adoration, common meal, monthly recollections, and annual retreats. Implementation: Local Superior & Provincial.

2. All communities will form themselves into disciplined and healthy communities, with Local Superiors and the members remaining accountable to each other regarding their duties and responsibilities in the community. Provincials will endeavor to provide orientation and training to all the Local Superiors and all the members in this matter. Implementation: Local Superior & Provincial.
3. Confreres in multi-cultural communities of the Congregation will use a common language for communication. Implementation: Local Superior.
4. Without being extravagant, Local Superiors will organize and facilitate programs and events for the members to promote recreation, personal development, fraternal bonding, manual labor, sports and games, and family spirit. Implementation: Local Superior.
5. Provincials will ensure the establishment of more Local Communities in view of gradually reducing the number of “Neighborhood Local Communities.” Implementation: Provincial.
6. Provincial Secretaries will ensure that all documents coming from the General and Provincial Administrations reach all confreres, either electronically or by regular mail. Implementation: Provincial.
7. All our communities and places of ministry will display, in their respective places, the articulation of our Charism with its Four Basics, our three foundational Apostolates, our Vision, and our Mission. Implementation: Provincial & Local Superior.

MSFSNESS & SPIRITUALITY OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

1. Experiencing a sense of joy and pride in being MSFS, we will continue to strive to be true Fransalians in our presence and conduct, wherever we are, and intensify the effort to disseminate our Congregational values and spirit through our writing, preaching, and animation of groups.
2. All confreres will promote the Cause of our Founder, Fr. Peter Mary Mermier, share in his spirit for missions, and pray for his beatification and canonization. Implementation: Local Superior & Members.
3. While the contributions of confreres need to be duly acknowledged, no living confrere will receive or demand undue prominence in terms of exhibiting their photos, naming projects and institutions in their names, or any other. Implementation: Provincial.
4. Every confrere has a right to privacy and protection of his good name. Therefore, all confreres will honor and promote the good reputation of other confreres. Any violation of it will be subject to the remedial measures laid down in the Code of Ethics. Implementation: Provincial.
5. Provincials will identify confreres who can do research and pursue higher education in theology, philosophy, and other disciplines, with a special focus on St. Francis de Sales, Fr. Peter Mary Mermier, our Constitutions, and the History of our Congregation. Implementation: Provincial.
6. All communities will make efforts to promote the establishment of Fransalian Associates. Implementation: Provincial.
7. Provincials will consider it their bounden duty to promote the Congregational undertakings, such as Salesian Program, Annecy (SPA), De Sales and Mermier Resource and Animation Center (DSM), Bible Diary (Joy of the Gospel), Congregational Retreat, Salesian Retreat, Salesian Seminar, and the Spiritual Directory. Implementation: Provincial.

8. The next revision of the General Directory will include a mention of the Cause of our Founder, Fransalian Associates, DSM, MDO, and JPIC. Implementation: General Administration.
9. Seven Dolours Rosaries and Wooden crosses for Perpetual Profession will be made at the Congregational level and distributed. Implementation: General Administration.

MISSION

1. Remaining ever committed to the mission of Christ, we shall continue to be zealous missionaries, through our lifestyle and apostolates.
2. All formees, at all stages of formation, will be helped to cultivate a missionary spirit and love for the missions by listening to the testimony of missionaries, reading the history of the Congregation, and through exposure to our missions and ministries. Implementation: Rectors.
3. All newly ordained priests will serve in our missions, as part of their pastoral formation, for a minimum of 2 years, and they will be placed under the guidance of a senior confrere. The mission units to which they are assigned could be across Provinces. Implementation: Provincial & PCIC.
4. All the existing and new missionary endeavors of the Congregation are to be treated and envisioned as community-based endeavors, rather than as individual concerns, and Provincials will ensure establishing Local Communities where they are non-existent. Implementation: Provincial.
5. Adequate planning, preparation, and formation of personnel must precede the launching into any pioneering or overseas mission. Implementation: The General and the Provincial Administrations.
6. Heeding to the exhortation of Pope Francis, all Provinces and mission units will initiate more ministries directed to families, and those on the periphery, rural areas, and the economically poor. Implementation: Provincial & PCIC.
7. All Provinces will promote and take advantage of the services of the Parish Mission Preaching (PMP) team. Implementation: Provincial.
8. The General and the Provincial administrations will continue to strengthen our Provinces and communities in Africa, North America, Europe, and Oceania, and will open new missions in Latin America and South-East Asia, in view of implanting the Congregation, with community-based apostolates, and promoting local vocations. Implementation: The General and the Provincial Administrations.

FORMATION

1. Formation being the responsibility of the whole Congregation, we, under the direction of the Provincials, will continue to provide encouragement and support to our formators and formees. Implementation: Provincial.
2. Recognizing the importance of having quality candidates, we will intensify our efforts in identifying and assisting our Vocation Promoters in promoting good Vocations to our Congregation. Implementation: Provincial & Vocation Promoter.
3. All Provinces will implement the newly introduced Graded Integral Formation program, giving special focus to the study of the Word of God, Teachings of the Church, Sacred Liturgy, Life and Works of St. Francis de Sales and Fr. Peter Mary Mermier, the History of the Congregation, and the Constitutions and the General Directory. Implementation: Rector & PCIC.

4. All formees, at all stages of formation, will be provided with opportunities for mission awareness and exposure to the missions and ministries of the Congregation. During Philosophical or Theological formation, this mission exposure could be conceived as a 2-credit course that the formees are required to complete. Implementation: PCIC & Rector.
5. The formation program will specifically focus on inculcating moral consciousness, loyalty to the Congregation, missionary zeal, and accountability. Implementation: PCIC & Rector.
6. A pool of confreres from various ministries will be constituted at the Province level to function as non-resident formation team. Every month, Rectors of seminaries will ensure a presentation or sharing by one of them on their specific ministry. Implementation: PCIC & Rector.
7. All formees, during their Philosophical and Theological formation, will gain proficiency in one mission language of their respective Provinces and a basic knowledge of French and Latin. Implementation: Provincial & Rector.
8. All formators will complete a Formators' training program, including some basic training in Psychology and Counseling, prior to their appointment. This also necessitates identifying and forming suitable candidates to the apostolate of formation. Implementation: Provincial.
9. A background check of the formators will be completed before their appointment to ensure the integrity of the formators. Implementation: Provincial.
10. Provincials will organize 'update and renewal' programs annually for formators. Implementation: Provincial, PCIC, & Rector.
11. Provincials will organize ongoing formation programs for all confreres at least once a year. Implementation: Provincial.
12. Provincials will encourage all confreres to use the Spiritual Directory as part of their ongoing formation. Implementation: Provincial.
13. In the background of declining number of vocations and lack of formation personnel, Provincials will promote inter-province formation houses and pooling of formators. Implementation: Provincials.
14. All Provincials will make effort to strengthen the faculty and staff of Suvidya College and Lumen Christi Institute (LCI) by making available the services of a greater number of competent confreres, especially Spiritual Directors. Implementation: Provincials.

EDUCATION

1. Education of the young being one of the prime apostolates of our Congregation, and considering it as a sacred call for evangelization, we will continue to provide encouragement and support to our confreres who are involved in the apostolate of education. Implementation: Provincial.
2. Recognizing the educational and formational value of our presence as priests and religious, Managers/Correspondents and Principals will make every effort to create a Catholic culture and ambience in our schools and colleges by their conduct and appearance. Implementation: Principals and Managers/Correspondents.

3. Principals of schools and colleges will ensure the display of Biblical verses and quotes from St. Francis de Sales and Fr. Mermier in our educational institutions through banners and wall hangings. Implementation: Principals & PCIC.
4. Only those who have completed a minimum of two years of teaching experience, and a minimum of one year as Vice Principal, will be appointed as Principals of High Schools, Higher Secondary Schools, and Institutions of Higher Education. Implementation: Provincial.
5. To establish a culture of excellence and competence in our educational institutions, Provincials will ensure that those who have obtained degrees through private studies, correspondence courses, and honorary conferral, and do not have professional degrees obtained through regular College programs are not appointed as Principals. Implementation: Provincial.
6. The Provincial and the Councilor in Charge of Education will complete a background check of confreres working in our educational institutions, prior to their appointment, to ensure that confreres with integrity are appointed to minister in our schools and colleges. Implementation: Provincial.
7. The office space of Principals and Vice Principals in our educational institutions will be simple, devoid of luxury and extravagance. Implementation: Provincial Bursar.
8. Academic programs being the main responsibility of Principals, the Office of Principal will be delinked from the management of temporal goods of our schools and colleges. Implementation: Provincial & Provincial Bursar.
9. Managers/Correspondents of schools and colleges will be involved in the functioning of those institutions in a greater way, by way of teaching, spending a day during the week with the school community. Implementation: Provincial & PCIC.
10. Integrating the Christian, Salesian, and Mermierian values and teachings, the Education Forum at the Congregational level will explore the possibility of preparing a Moral Science Book. Implementation: General Secretary for Education & PCICs.
11. Our school and college buildings and other facilities will be used, after the regular working hours, for the education and formation of less privileged children and people in the neighborhood. Implementation: Provincial & Principal.
12. Social awareness programs will be part of our school and college curriculums, and Provincials will ensure an increase in the concessions and scholarships given to poor children in our schools and colleges. Implementation: Provincial & PCIC.
13. All our educational institutions will constitute Crisis Management Teams and Redressal Forums, as per the Education Policy of the Congregation. Implementation: PCIC.
14. All our educational institutions will strengthen the Alumni Associations, as per the Education Policy of the Congregation. Implementation: PCIC.
15. All our educational institutions will establish a student wing of Friends of Fransalians (FoF), as per the Education Policy of the Congregation. Implementation: PCIC & SAIM.
16. The Principals/Head Masters of the established and aided educational institutions are to be given a period of break, after a tenure of 9 years, for mission service. Implementation: Provincial & PCIC.

SOCIAL AND INNOVATIVE MINISTRIES (SAIM)

1. Reading the signs of the time and responding to the needs of the Church in new and creative ways, we will continue to promote social and innovative ministries in our Provinces and mission units, and adequately train confreres for the same. Implementation: Provincial & SAIM.
2. All Provinces and mission units will give adequate attention to specialized ministries, such as Social Work, Media and Communication, and Youth Ministry, and train confreres for the same. Implementation: Provincial & SAIM.
3. The General Administration will establish a Global Media Center under the General Secretariat for SAIM, to assist and enhance the Media and Communication ministries of individual Provinces and mission units. Implementation: General Secretary for SAIM.
4. Provinces will establish Province-level units of the Mission Development Office (MDO), and make use of its services to further our social and innovative ministries. Implementation: Provincial.
5. Wherever necessary, Provinces and mission units will initiate ministries in the area of health care, such as, establishing clinics and hospitals, and train confreres for the same. Implementation: Provincial.
6. Provinces and mission units will initiate ministries for the care of the physically and mentally challenged, especially the special-needs-children. Considering the unique nature of such ministries, those confreres who have an aptitude for, and are involved in such ministries, could be given extended terms of appointment. Implementation: Provincial.
7. Provinces and mission units will strengthen the functioning of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission. Confreres will be trained in Law and other related disciplines to enhance its functioning. Implementation: Provincial.
8. In collaboration with the SFS Publications, Bangalore, India, Provinces and mission units outside India will explore the possibility of printing and distributing the Bible Diary (Joy of the Gospel) in their own countries. Implementation: General Administration & SFS Publications, Bangalore, India.

STEWARDSHIP

1. Aware that we are stewards, and not owners of what God has entrusted to us, we will continue to foster a sense and culture of stewardship, accountability, transparency, and simplicity in our Provinces and mission units. Implementation: Provincial.
2. The formation program in our seminaries will include stage-appropriate training in accounting and finance management, and legal and civil matters of the respective countries. During Philosophical or Theological formation, these programs could be offered as 1 credit course that the formees are required to complete. Implementation: Provincial Bursar & Rectors.
3. Every community will prepare an annual budget and get it approved by the Provincial Administration. Implementation: Provincial, Provincial Bursar, & Local Superior.
4. All our communities will implement the Financial Accountability System for Transparency (FAST) and the presentation of the statement of accounts in monthly community meetings. Implementation: Provincial, Provincial Bursar, & Local Superior.

5. Provincials will ensure that all confreres follow the Provincial Statutes with regard to ownership of vehicles, property, and other matters concerning temporal goods. Implementation: Provincial, Provincial Bursar, & Local Superior.
6. Every Province and mission unit will constitute a Land and Building Committee, with experts in Engineering, Architecture, Accounting, Business Administration, and Law, to oversee all the major projects of the Province, such as purchase and sale of lands, construction of buildings, and concerns regarding Trusts and Registered Societies. Implementation: Provincial & Provincial Bursar.
7. Every Province and mission unit will enhance their resource mobilization efforts in collaboration with local benefactors and local funds. Implementation: Provincial & Provincial Bursar.
8. Provinces will explore the possibility of constituting inter-Province internal auditing teams. The internal auditing team will audit accounts, property documents, and other matters concerning temporal goods. Implementation: Provincial & Provincial Bursar.

ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

USA VICE PROVINCE

1. The General Chapter reaffirms the Congregation's commitment to strengthen the USA Vice-Province, especially with regard to personnel.
2. The USA Vice-Provincial will ensure to establish Local Communities* both among the permanent members and temporary members.
3. The request of the USA Vice Province will specify to the Assistant Superior General certain essential components such as:
 - i. Number of confreres required
 - ii. The type of the ministry for which the personnel are required
 - iii. The type of competence/experience needed
 - iv. The suitable age group
 - v. The type of the training required
 - vi. The duration of the training
 - vii. The expenditure for the training etc.
4. Upon the request of the Vice-Provincial, concerning the needs of the Vice-Province, the concerned provincial will identify confreres to be designated, whether they are from outside USA or from those who are already in ministry in USA.
5. A confrere who is designated for USA Vice Province will go with an initial mandate for a term of 3 years, and he enjoys both active and passive voice in USA Vice Province from the beginning.
6. Following due procedures, within 3 years, the Vice Provincial and the concerned Provincial will complete the process of the designated confrere's full integration into the Vice Province.
7. Regarding the salary of the designated members who join afresh, it will be equally divided (50-50) between the Vice Province and the Province of Origin for the first three years. After that, the Vice Province will pay 10% of the confrere's salary for another five years.
8. The temporary members in USA Vice-Province enjoy both the active and passive voice in their respective Provinces of origin. The "10-year policy" is applicable for the temporary members.

9. The Vice-Provincial curia comprises of confreres only from the permanent members.
10. Two representatives from the short-term members will be elected from amongst them, whom the Vice-Provincial will consult at least twice a year on matters concerning them.

GERMANY, AUSTRIA, & HOLLAND (GAH)

1. General Chapter 2013 mandated the General Administration to constitute Delegations (Neighborhood Local Communities in case of Provinces with insufficient number of confreres for a Delegation) under the Provinces in view of establishing Local Communities*.
2. General Chapter 2019 mandates each province to ensure the establishment of Local Communities consisting of at least 2 confreres through its respective Delegation as early as possible and latest by the next General Chapter.
3. For those who are integrated into these communities, the 10-year policy will not apply. The Provincials are authorized to give a period of three years to those confreres who have completed eight years or more of ministry, in view of integrating them into a Local Community.
4. The Local Communities are to function as per the norms of the Constitutions and according to the specific modalities provided by Provincials' Forum with the approval of the General Administration.
5. Until the Local Communities are established, the existing Neighborhood Local Communities are to be strengthened with measures that foster fraternal communion.
6. Any new confrere sent to GAH is sent in view of integrating into Local Communities.
7. It is mandatory for a confrere who is sent a second time for ministry in GAH to be part of a Local Community.

PROVINCE OF ENGLAND

1. Considering the historical significance and contribution of the English Province, as well as the present crisis that the Province faces, the General Chapter affirms the urgent need to strengthen the Province of England.
2. The General Chapter is convinced that the immediate concern of the English Province is to establish strong leadership and appropriate structure at the earliest possible opportunity.
3. Towards the realization of this end, the Chapter authorizes the General Administration to propose to the members of the Province a list of 4 names, which may be from within or from outside the province, for the consultation and appointment of the Provincial.
4. Therefore, with good leadership, backed up effectively by the General Administration, provinces are asked to send confreres to help. These confreres should be initially vetted to ensure that they have the aptitude to thrive in the context of English Province.

DIVISION OF PROVINCES

1. The General Chapter recognizes and affirms the legitimate right of the Provinces to seek division of the Province in accordance with the norms of the MSFS Constitutions for administrative feasibility and missionary effectiveness.

2. The General Chapter approves the request of the North East India Province for the division of North-East India Province into two Provinces.
 - i. The General Chapter authorizes the General Administration to initiate the process as prescribed by the Constitutions and the General Directory.
 - ii. The General Chapter also authorizes the General Administration to implement the decision as early as possible.

OTHER JURIDICAL MATTERS

1. General Chapter 2019 authorizes the General Administration to appoint an expert commission to study and present the following matters at the Congregational level and bring clear proposals and possibilities to be voted for in the next General Chapter and for eventual amendments in the MSFS Constitutions and/or the General Directory:
 - i. Election of Provincial
 - ii. Election of Provincial Councilors
 - iii. Age & Eligibility for all the above offices
 - iv. The need for the office of Provincial Vicar
 - v. Election of Provincial Bursar
 - vi. Provincial's term of office
 - vii. All Regional Superiors as Ex-Officio members of the General Chapter
 - viii. The choice between Provincial Congress or Chapter, based on the number of confreres in the Province.
 - ix. The active and passive voice of General Councilors.
 - x. Any other matter pertaining to the Constitutions and the General Directory
2. General Chapter 2019 authorizes the General Administration to appoint an expert commission to study the following matters:
 - i. The MSFS Constitutions and the General Directory
 - ii. The Spirit of our Founder
 - iii. Our Charism
 - iv. The History of the Congregation
3. Regarding the extension of the term of office of the Provincial, the General Chapter voted to delete GD 236 i & ii, and retain only GD 236 iii.
4. With regard to cases of low turnout in voting, the General Chapter decided to leave the matter to the General Administration. The General Chapter exhorts the Local Superiors to encourage and enlighten the members on this matter.
5. With regard to the reasons for the removal of Provincial, the General Chapter affirms that there is no need to specify the reasons for the removal of the Provincial.
6. With regard to the appointment of Local Superiors, the General Chapter directs that the appointment needs to be done according to the Norms in the Constitutions.
7. With regard to the substitutes for General Councilors in case of vacancy of office, the General Chapter decided to add a clause in the General Directory regarding the election of two substitutes.
8. With regard to E-Voting, the General Chapter approves it in principle, and authorizes the General Administration to work out its modalities.

DIRECTIVES CONCERNING CONFRERES WORKING OUTSIDE THE PROVINCE TERRITORY SEEKING EXCLAUSTRATION IN VIEW OF INCARDINATION

1. There is no automatic, direct, or immediate approval of application for Exclaustation or Incardination. Confreres are to respect their personnel plans.
2. Anyone who wants to leave the Congregation and join a diocese must return to his Provincialate for an appointment for the discernment process for one year.
3. It is the direction and the mind of the Congregation that any process of discernment be done within the Province or any other territory or situation that is allocated by the Major Superior.
4. The immediacy of the presence and animation of his Major Superior, fraternal communion with the confreres in the province, and being situated within the domain of the ministries of the province can provide better opportunities to discern his vocation or reinforce his religious and apostolic commitment.
5. It is the policy of the Congregation, as reconfirmed by General Chapter 2019, that a non-compliance to this directive from the part of an individual confrere concerned amounts to:
 - i. Failing and defeating the very purpose of the mission outside the Province territory.
 - ii. Disloyalty to the policies of the Congregation in the context of its life and ministry.
 - iii. A breach of the Consecrated Vow of Obedience - Disobedience to the legitimate mandate of the Major Superior who urges him to discern his religious vocation in close vicinity with the confreres and the ministry in his Province.
6. In case of refusal and defiance by the concerned confrere, despite the patient and persistent efforts at persuasion by the Provincial, the Provincial, in all good conscience, can initiate the due process as prescribed in Canon 696, 1 and Const. 284, iii.
7. The Superior General will write a letter to the concerned dioceses regarding these policies of the Congregation.

Live Jesus

Sudden Demise of Reverend Father Stephen Marayikulam MSFS, Junior



Father Stephen Marayikulam msfs, Junior, aged 56 and a priest for 26 years in the Congregation of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales, died on Saturday, February 24, 2019, at 12. 30 am (IST), at Graz-Eggenberg, Styria (Steiermark), Austria. Fr Stephen was engaged in hospital ministry in a hospital run by Brothers of St John of God in the Austrian Province (Barmherzige Brüder). Three factors that caused his sudden death, as per postmortem report, were: 1. Large-scale scars of infarction (area of dead tissue whose blood supply has been obstructed) on the front, behind and chamber sheath wall of the heart; 2. Subsequent illness that caused death immediately: heart failure, an acute failure of the left side of the heart with a complete pumping failure of blood; and 3. Weakened condition of the heart after the implantation of the pacemaker.

As per the information received from Bro. Saji Mullankuzhy OH, Provincial of the Brothers of St John of God, on February 23, 2019, Fr Stephen had gone to Ramsau with friends. During their travel he did not show any sign of ill health or difficulty. He was back in the community by evening and went to rest by 8.00 pm. On February 24, 2018 (Sunday), for the 9:00 O' Clock Mass people were waiting for him. Since he did not come

to Church on time, they went to his room. The room was locked from inside and there was no response from within. They called the Fire Force, and when they opened the room the body was found on the floor and he appeared to have come out of the toilet to his bed.

The internist who was on duty in the hospital was notified immediately and came with a colleague. Both, however, could only find the way Father Stephen was lying down, that any help came too late and death had already occurred. Subsequently, the police initiated all measures provided for such cases. On the basis of the official medical examination, an autopsy was planned and the corpse of Father Stephen was picked up by a funeral home of the city of Graz and taken to the Forensic Medicine for post mortem and other legalities.

Fr Stephen Marayikulam (Jr) was born at Choatty, Kottayam Dt, Kerala, on September 04, 1962, as the eighth child of Antony and Rosa. After his matriculation, he joined SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor, Kerala, in 1980. He made his first religious profession on December 15, 1984. Later, he pursued his philosophical studies at Suvidya College, Bangalore, from 1985 to 1988. Before he joined St Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore, for his theological studies in 1989, he did one year of regency at SFS School, Dhemaaji. He made his perpetual profession on December 08, 1990. He was ordained deacon at Vinayalaya, Bangalore, on July 03, 1992, by Most Rev. Alphonsus Mathias, Archbishop of Bangalore. After the completion of theological studies, he was ordained Priest at St George's Church, Koruthodu, Mundakayam, by most Rev. Mathew Vattakuzhy, Bishop of Kanjirapally, on April 24, 1993.

Father Stephen Marayikulam's assignments were at SFS Church, Jonai, as Associate Priest from 1993-1995; SFS Church, Dhemaaji, as Associate Priest from 1995-1996; Vinaya Bhavan, Thamarassery, as Vocation Promoter from 1996-1997; MSFS Seminary, Umroi, as Rector from 1997-2000; Christ King Church, Gogamukh, as Parish Priest from 2000-2006; St. Mary's Church, Aalo, from 2007-2008; St Joseph's Church, Manikbond, as Parish Priest from 2008-2009; Max Mueller Bhavan, Pune, for German course in 2011; Pastoral ministry in Eisenstadt diocese, Austria, from 2011-2018; Hospital Ministry at Graz-Eggenberg, Styria (Steiermark), Austria, from 2018 to 2019.

Fr Stephen – a cheerful, pleasant, intelligent, efficient, sociable, and service-minded person – has always been an available and loving pastor. In his death, the Northeast India Province has lost a loving confrere. May his soul rest in peace!

Local Superiors Meeting Calls for Authentic Spiritual Leadership

A meeting of the Local Superiors of MSFS Northeast India Province was held on March 1, 2019 at MSFS Provincialate, Narengi, Guwahati. The resource person for the day-long meeting was Fr Thomas Perumalil MSFS, Novice Master of Salesianum, Visakhapatnam, who oriented the superiors towards authentic spiritual leadership.

In his introductory words, Fr Perumalil mentioned that there are spiritual leaders in all religions, like *rishis and maharishis*. He spoke about **shamanism**, a kind of spiritual leadership which existed from 1000 BC onwards. One who wants to become a *shaman* has to undergo 5 stages of journey and formation: 1. Departure from the world in search of solitude, 2. Long period of spiritual discipline, 3. A symbolic encounter with the evil forces, 4. Undergoing a gradual integration (wholeness) process and 5. A reintegration into the society.

In the Bible, we have the example of great spiritual leaders like Moses and others who lived for others, pleaded for the people and followed God's directions. They became spiritual leaders through their life of integrity and intimacy with God. Jesus Christ is our leader and guide. Whatever He did was in conformity with the Father. Our authority is coming from God and we should be accountable to Him.

Fr Thomas also spoke about making **St Francis de Sales** our model. As a spiritual leader SFS always respected his priests, addressed them as confreres and ended his letter with your humble confrere. That does not mean that he was compromising with values and principles, on the other hand he was firm. He then explained four categories of spiritual leaders: 1. Very lenient/indulgent towards others and themselves, 2.

Rigid to others and rigid with oneself, 3. Indulgent to others and rigid with oneself and 4. Rigid with others and indulgent to oneself

The animator, in his exposition of Francis de Sales' teaching on leadership, also spoke about different kinds of obedience: 1. Blind obedience 2. Prompt obedience and 3. Persevering obedience.

The renowned Novice Master then briefed about the **Mermierian** leadership. Fr Mermier was a great leader, who led a very austere life following strict time table. Although austere, he was always cheerful. Fr. Thomas also highlighted the roles and duties of local superiors from the Constitutions, General Directory and General Chapter.

According to **Pope Francis**, every mission has a centre and a face. The Centre is Christ Himself and the face is what people see in us: our life style, dependence on God, simplicity etc. Christ has empowered us and our spiritual power, which is opposite to the worldly power, is from God. This power is power of love, compassion, healing, reconciliation, harmony, justice etc. This power is for service. A spiritual leader is the one who serves. He is like the good shepherd who knows his sheep. Characteristics of good shepherd are: 1. He never turns back, 2. Obedient to the Spirit, 3. He is not the Centre but a servant.

A good superior will not compromise with basic principles and values. The greatest quality of a good superior is his willingness to sacrifice. And he possesses certain qualities: love for his confreres, availability, openness, patience to accept and understand, honesty, sincerity, fairness, transparency, justice, prudence, sensitivity to the needs of others. Like Christ, a good superior would avoid conflicting quarrels. He should be a good communicator who uses constructive words that build up community and avoids anything that destroys community. Egoism and selfishness have no place in his life. Thus, the vocation of every confrere is to become authentic spiritual leader.

The first two sessions of the meeting (09.00 am to 12.30 pm) began with a prayer led by Fr John Barman, Director of Fransalian Youth Ministry. After the prayer Fr Philip Thomas, Admonitor and Provincial Councillor In-charge of Mission, accorded a very cordial welcome to the Local Superior from various mission centres across Northeast India.

Fr George Panthanmackel began his inaugural address by appreciating the person of Fr Thomas Perumalil, the resource person and his own Novice Master, by saying that Fr Thomas is a very gentle, firm, unassuming and a man of integrity – he practices what he preaches. Fr Provincial then exhorted everyone to follow the call of the General Chapter 2019, which re-emphasised the significance of community life and the need to go back to our basics as MSFS. He reminded superiors that every legitimate religious obligation such as attending expected meetings, retreats, etc., is part of the ministry/ work and 'not apart' from them. After the inaugural talk the album of the General Chapter prepared by Fr Jiji Konthanalickal was released by Fr Perumalil and the copy was given to Fr George Panthanmackel, who appreciated Fr Jiji and described him as a person doing things with care and perfection. The morning sessions came to an end with vote thanks proposed by Fr Simon Thaikho, who specially thanked the resource person.

The third session (02.00 to 03.15 pm) consisted of a group study and reflection on the Call of General Chapter 2019. The superiors were divided into three groups. The groups were animated by Fr George Panthanmackel, Fr Philip Thomas and Fr Saji George.

The fourth session (03.15 to 04.20 pm) was chaired by Fr Provincial. At the very outset, Fr Provincial thanked all the superiors for their sincere commitment and dedication, in spite of all the difficulties and inconveniences in their respective missions. He appreciated the hard work of the superiors and mentioned that it was heartening to see the amount of work done at each centre. He also specially thanked the Provincial and Regional Curia.

Fr Provincial then brought to the notice of the superiors the following points:

- 1. Mortal Remains of Fr Stephen M (Jr) :** Since Fr Stephen died in his private room, there were a lot of legal formalities to be followed before the handing over of the body. The post-mortem was done. Frs Sebastian Paredom, ShajuAmbiyil, Johnson Kunnumpurath, D.R. Paul and Fr John Kuttikottayil have been pursuing the procedures and trying to get the formalities done at the earliest for the release

of the body. Fr Provincial reminded the importance of intensifying prayer for the departed soul of Fr Stephen.

2. **Celebration of the Holy Eucharist:** Fr Provincial highlighted the importance of celebrating the Holy Eucharist with due preparation and in a worthy manner. Quoting St Teresa of Kolkata, he said we should offer every Holy Mass ‘as if it is our first Mass, last Mass and only Mass.’
3. **Community Meeting:** The Superiors were reminded of their role as animators of the community and the importance of holding community meeting every month. He also mentioned about the need of presenting the statements of account every month in the community meeting as mandated by the General Chapter 2019 too.
4. **Implementation of the Directives and Decisions of General Chapter (GC) 2019:** The GC is the supreme legislative and teaching authority in the Congregation. The General Chapter is to preserve the fidelity of the Congregation to its spiritual heritage so it is important to implement the directives and decisions of the GC. The various proposals to GC were from the grass root level. Special community meeting should be held at the earliest to study and reflect on the call of GC 2019.
5. **Jericho Prayer:** Fr Provincial requested all to recite the Jericho prayer in the respective communities. It is prayer for the country. Prayer works miracles. It is also recommended by the CBCI and CRI.
6. **Half-Hour daily Adoration in communities:** Fr Provincial exhorted the local superiors to have half-hour adoration, preferable in a simple manner, and daily in every community.
7. **Avoid Taking Holidays during Christmas and Easter:** Avoid taking holidays during Christmas and Easter. Those who are not directly involved in the parish ministry could render their service to other needy parishes missions on such occasions.
8. **Birthday of Confreres:** Make sure the birthdays of the confreres are celebrated in the community. Say a few words about the confrere and appreciate him. Local Superior is the father of the community.
9. **Sick confreres:** Each confrere, especially the superiors, should take special care of those who are sick without being worried about the trouble and cost.
10. **Province Statutes:** Fr Provincial reminded the confreres to follow the Province Statutes and the Action Plans of the Provincial Chapter and Regional Assemblies.
11. **Avoid VIP Syndrome:** The confreres are to avoid ‘VIP Syndrome’ by coming late for prayer, meals and other community activities. Make it a habit to be the first to greet others without waiting for others to greet you.

After the above mentioned reminders and exhortations by Fr Provincial, the forum was open for clarifications and discussion on matters of common concern, and after which the meeting was concluded at 4.20 pm. with a prayer led by Fr Jose Mundoly.

Stewardship Forum Meeting

A meeting of the members of the Stewardship Forum of MSFS Northeast India Province was held on March 2, 2019 at MSFS Provincialate, Narengi. The meeting began with a hymn to the Holy Spirit led by Fr Ashihe Andrew followed by a prayer by Fr Simon Thaikho.

After the prayer Fr Santhosh Chavaranal, the Provincial Bursar, accorded a cordial welcome to all the members and appreciated the local bursars for adhering to FAST and thanked them for preparing the budget. He then invited Fr Provincial to address the local bursars. Fr Provincial, while appreciating all the bursars for maintaining the accounts, exhorted them to cultivate a sense of accountability and efficiency. Complying with the laws of the country it is important that we efficiently manage the finance as it is the need of the hour.

After the inaugural address by Fr Provincial, Fr Santhosh introduced the resources persons of the day, Mr Vamshi and Mr Hari, accountants from RSM Associates. They dealt with the following 4 relevant topics:

1. **Tax Deducted at Source (TDS):** Mr Vamshi clearly explained the TDS Provisions under Income Tax Act, 1961: TDS on contracts – Section 194 C, Fee for Professional and technical charges - Section 194 J, TDS on Rent – Section 194I, TDS on Sale of Immovable property – Section 194A, TDS on Commission – Section 194 H, TDS on Salaries – Section 192. He then highlighted the rules and regulations pertaining to TDS and

penalties on defaulters. 4 important components of TDS are: 1. Deduction 2. Payment 3. Filing of the Return and 4. Issuing of the Certificate. Penalty will be imposed on non-deduction, late payment, late filing and late issuing of certificate. After the first session before the tea break, time was given for interaction and clarifications.

2. Provident Fund (PF): In the second session, Mr Vamshi dealt with Provident Fund and discussed the following: Governing act, applicability, employees covered under PF, PF contributions, PF administration charges, date of payment and return under PF act, deduction under income tax act 1961, and late payment of PF.

3. Employee State Insurance (ESI): The resource person then further enlightened the bursars on ESI and its applicability, employer share and employee share, due date of payment and filing return.

4. Goods and Services Tax (GST): The CA from RSM Auditors spoke about the importance of Mandatory GST registration, types of GST returns and due dates, late payment of GST and penalty, late filing fee for GSTR return etc.

After these informative sessions, clarifications and interactions, Fr Santhosh thanked the resource persons for enlightening the confreres.

Information from Provincial Bursar

Fr Santhosh reminded the Local Bursars of the following:

1. Priest Welfare Fund
2. Health Insurance
3. Education fund
4. Need of joint signatories for all the accounts
5. Opening bank account for the teachers receiving salary above 10,000 rupees
6. Training programme on TDS on Salary at the Educational Forum and for the teachers
7. Call of GC 2019 on Stewardship

(From the Reports of Fr Saji George Puthiyakulangara msfs)

Transfers and Appointments

- Fr Alock Tigga is appointed Associate Priest of St Francis de Sales Church, Kangpokpi, with effect from April 15, 2019.
- Fr Rojin Pullattuvaliyaparambil is appointed Associate Priest of Christ King Church, Gogamukh, with effect from March 15, 2019.
- Fr Sibin Vemballykunnel is appointed Associate Priest of St Francis de Sales Church, Nongalbibra, with effect from June 1, 2019.

Additional Appointment

- Fr Abraham Puthenpurackel is appointed Principal of St Francis de Sales School, Nongalbibra, with effect from February 6, 2019.

Information of / Thanks / Congrats / Appreciation To:

HEARTY CONGRATS TO NEW COADJUTOR BISHOP OF DIBRUGARH

The Episcopal Ordination of the new Coadjutor Bishop, Most Rev. Albert Hemrom, took place on February 24, 2019. The ceremony witnessed the gathering of some 24 Bishops, including Archbishops, about 400 priests and nearly a thousand nuns from across the country. Bishop Albert Hemrom will be the Coadjutor Bishop till the retirement of Bishop Joseph Aind. The new Bishop can be sure of the prayerful support and cooperation of all MSFS confreres working in the diocese and of the entire Northeast India Province of the MSFS.

- Fr Kurian Ovelil and Fr Tom Jose for organizing the parish feast on January 27, 2019. Rev. Fr John Kashipry was the chief celebrant of the Holy Mass.
- Fr Milkius Tirkey and Fr D. Britto for organizing the golden jubilee celebration of the SFS Church, Chabua, and the first annual sabha on February 2 and 3, 2019. Most Rev. Joseph Aind, Bishop of Dibrugarh, presided over the Holy Eucharist on February 3, 2019. The sacraments of confirmation and First Holy Communion were received by several children on the same day.
- Fr Peter Marak and Fr Priyor Khongsit organized annual retreat sobha of St Paul's Church, Panishali, at Upper Thorko village from January 31 to February 3, 2019. Most Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati, celebrated the Holy Eucharist and administered the sacraments of confirmation, baptism and marriage on February 3, 2019. Fr Saji Kaippallil and team from HRRC Tura animated the annual retreat. On the same day Archbishop inaugurated the jubilee year of the parish.
- Fr Biju Kanicherry and Fr Albert Sahayaraj for looking after the construction and organizing the inauguration and blessing of the extension of SFS School, Bahalpur. The newly built building was inaugurated and blessed on February 18, 2019 by Rev. Fr George Panthanmackel, Provincial of MSFS Northeast India Province. Sincere thanks to Fr Sabu Francis Manasrayil and friends of Fransalians from Germany for contributing their share in the construction.
- Fr Panii Paul and Fr Antony Baruah for organizing teacher's orientation programme for the teachers at SFS School, Tening, on February 23, 2019. Fr Roy Parayaniyil MSFS, Principal of All Saints Higher Secondary School, Peren, animated the orientation programme.
- Fr Abraham Puthenpurackal and Fr Sibi Mattappallil for organizing the laying of foundation stone for the village church at Nengkra village under SFS Church, Nongalbibra, on February 24, 2019.
- Fr Mathew Muriankariyil, Fr Clean Areng, staff and students of St Joseph's School, Manikbond, for winning three first prizes, two second prizes and one third prize for the district level drawing, speech and quiz competition. And four students were selected for the state level competition.
- Fr George Vadakkeperincherimannil for successfully defending his doctoral thesis on February 6, 2019. The title of his thesis is "Post-War Jewish American Predicament in Select Works of Philip Roth". He completed his doctoral studies at St Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli, and was awarded doctorate from Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli.
- Fr Joe Varghese Nellissery Chethalan for the achievement of the award for the outstanding performance in the Internship and was selected as the best Intern of the year 2018-2019 from Christ College, Bangalore, as part of his MBA specialisation on Education.
- Fr Babychan Arackathara for the completion of authoring a book titled, "LIGHT THROUGH THE BARS". The book will be released on March 11, 2019. Through this work he prays and hopes that the readers and society in general would treat the offenders as human beings and the public would support the rehabilitation of offenders and ex-offenders.
- Fr Jose Chettaniyil and Fr Jojan Plathottathil for organizing the blessing of Village Church at Sido village under SFS Church, Pasighat, on March 2, 2019. Most Rev. John Thomas Kattrukudiyil, Bishop of Itanagar, blessed the village church in the presence of priests, religious and lay faithful.
- Fr D.R Paul and some MSFS confreres in GA Delegation organized 'Requiem' on March 1, 2019 at Pilgersdorf, Austria, where Fr Stephen Maryikulam (Jr) did pastoral ministry till September 2018. 16 priests and several Fransalian associates attended the Eucharistic Celebration. There will be one more 'Requiem' for Fr Stephen in the same church on coming Friday (March 8) with the VG of Eisenstadt Diocese, Austria, as Main Celebrant. Let us continue to pray for the departed soul of Fr Stephen.

Change of Address and Contact Number

Fr Joshy Mathew MSFS
3108 39th Ave S
Minneapolis
MN 55406
USA
Cell: 0006513523678

Upcoming Programmes to be Specially Noted	
Date	Programme
Mar. 8	Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries Forum Meeting
Mar. 19	Formation Forum Meeting
Mar. 21-23	Education Forum Meeting and MSFS Principals' Training Programme
Mar. 29	Mission Forum Meeting

May I request the Conveners of the Apostolic Communities in Northeast India to contact the respective Bishops and appraise him/them about the dates of the Extended Apostolic Community Meetings (EACM), given in Provincial's Programme. Please invite him for the EACM. If the Bishop is not able to be present for the already scheduled meeting, kindly request him to send his delegate for it.

Please note the change of date
The counselling programme for priests from 21 years and above in priesthood is as scheduled from May 6 to 9, 2019; and the counselling Programme for priests from 11 to 20 years is re-scheduled to be from August 27 to 30, 2019. Please be present for the respective programme without fail.

Promotion of Vocations
May I request every confrere of the Province to encourage worthy candidates to religious life and priesthood. We believe that potential vocations are all around us – in our schools, in our institutions, in our parish families. Let us support with prayers, encouragement, and cooperation that each of us contributes to promote good vocations. Please help the candidates to be in touch with vocation promoters Fr Jacob Mattathil (Mob No: 9946669950) and Fr John Barman (Mob No: 9954706597).

Let us Pray for the Departed:

- Rev. Fr Abraham Puthussery MSFS (74), belonging to South West Province, who passed away on January 29, 2019.
- Rev. Fr Paul Chakunny Pallikunneth (known as P.C. Paul, aged 81), belonging to Nagpur Province, who passed away on February 21, 2019.
- Rev. Fr Felix Abraham (33), nephew of Fr Abraham Puthenpurackal, belonging to the Diocese of Changanassery, who passed away on February 25, 2019.
- Mrs Marykutty Pailo (80), mother of Fr Joseph Kunjaparambil, who passed away on February 2, 2019.
- Frau Erika Neuberger (90), one of our benefactors from Austria, who passed away on February 5, 2019.
- Mrs Margaret Barowa (62), aunt of Fr Carlus Barowa, who passed away on February 12, 2019.

Provincial's Programme

2019

March

Mar. 3-6: Budget scrutiny by Finance Committee

Mar. 6: Ash Wednesday

Mar. 8: Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries Forum Meeting

Mar. 12: Ranchi

Mar. 19: Formation Forum Meeting

Mar. 21-23: Education Forum Meeting and MSFS Principals' Training Programme

Mar. 23: Visit of Bishop of Bagdogara to MSFS Provincialate, Guwahati

Mar. 24-26: Provincial Council Meeting (Budget Approvals and Promotion of Candidates)

Mar. 29: Mission Forum Meeting

April

Apr. 7: Amlarem

Apr. 9: Novitiate, Chabua

Apr. 12: Tato

Apr. 14: Yinkiong

Apr. 21: Easter

Apr. 25: Provincial Council Meeting

Apr. 27: Nagaon

Apr. 29-30: Preparatory Meeting of Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC), Mumbai

May

May 1-3: Southwest India Provincial Chapter

May 8-9: Sneha Jyothi, Makkiyad

May 6-9: Counselling/ Communication Skills (for priests from 21 years and above)

May 10-11: CRI-CBCI Meeting, Bangalore

May 14: EACM of Mizoram and Pastoral meeting with Diocesan Authorities

May 17: EACM of Tripura and Pastoral meeting with Diocesan Authorities

May 20: EACM of Galsi-Ranchi and Pastoral meeting with Diocesan Authorities

May 24: Provincial Council Meeting

May 25: EACM of Nagaland and Pastoral meeting with Diocesan Authorities

May 26: EACM of Manipur and Pastoral meeting with Archdiocesan Authorities

May 28: EACM of Khasi Hills and Pastoral meeting with Archdiocesan and Diocesan Authorities

June

June 1: EACM of Upper Assam and Pastoral meeting with Diocesan Authorities

June 3: EACM of Arunachal Pradesh and Pastoral meeting with Diocesan Authorities

June 6: EACM of Guwahati and Pastoral meeting with Archdiocesan and Diocesan Authorities

June 7: EACM of Lower Assam and Pastoral meeting with Archdiocesan and Diocesan Authorities

June 8: EACM of Garo Hills and Pastoral meeting with Diocesan Authorities

June 11: EACM of Thamaraserry and Pastoral meeting with Diocesan Authorities

June 12-18: Suvidya College

June 19: Oriens Theological College

June 27: Provincial Council Meeting

July

July 1-15: Canonical Visitation to USA

July 15-21: Auditing by Province Auditor Generals

July 22-27: Province Annual Retreat I (From 22nd evening to 27th evening)

July 28: Provincial Council Meeting

August

Aug. 26: Provincial Council Meeting

Aug. 27-30: Counselling Programme (for priests from 11 to 20 years)

Aug. 28-Sept. 2: CRI-Northeastern Pastoral Conference, Guwahati

September

Sept. 3-13: Canonical Visitation to Swaziland, Namibia

Sept 20: Provincial Council Meeting

Sept. 30: Perpetual Profession at MSFS Study House, Shillong

October

Oct. 4-9: Province Annual Retreat II (From 4th evening to 9th evening)

Oct. 23-25: ACPI Annual Meeting, Goa

Oct. 30: Provincial Council Meeting

November

Nov. 4-6: Annual Salesian Seminar at MSFS Provincialate, Guwahati (4th 9 a.m to 6th 4 p.m)

Nov. 8-27: Canonical Visitation to Europe

Nov. 30: Provincial Council Meeting

December

Dec. 20: Provincial Council Meeting

2020

January

Jan. 20: Provincial Council Meeting

Jan. 24: Feast of St Francis de Sales

A Concluding Thought

The 20th General Chapter, through its theme, “**MSFS, Wake up to the Basics,**” has called upon every confrere of the Congregation to a life of accountability, transparency and simplicity in religious missionary commitment and pastoral ministry. “Aware that we are stewards and not owners of what God has entrusted to us, we will continue to foster a sense and culture of stewardship, accountability, transparency, and simplicity in our Provinces and mission units.” Transparency means that our actions, decisions, processes, procedures are intelligible and traceable. Traceability and transparency are inextricably linked. Files, documents, forms, guidelines, lists, procedural rules are handed down from birth. Some confreres may consider this as unnecessary, and not pay further attention to it. It is true that faith cannot be administered. The Spirit of God cannot possibly be captured in a file or folder. God’s love is reflected in specific acts of caring for the people, rather than in administrative documents. Prayer is much stronger than any number of administrative procedures.

However, as confreres we should be aware that transparent administration standardizes procedures and processes, so that it is not necessary to seek, ask and try out how something works every time since it can be traced easily in an efficient and transparent administrative system with adequate recordings. This

conserves resources and uses them sparingly and efficiently for the mission. It documents what has been discussed, agreed and achieved. It prevents forgetfulness and preserves matters beyond the moment, so that reliability and fidelity to the basics of our Congregation are possible. It regulates and sanctions infringements against the common interest, rules and laws. Taken overall, clean and systematic administration, under the supreme direction of the General Chapter, stabilizes cooperation among confreres and discipline among various people in institutions and ensures transparency. For example, if budget is well-prepared and submitted in time, it helps the Provincial Administration to streamline in a transparent manner the financial management of the Province. Hence, a confrere should never neglect matters of administration of parish, school, hostel and other institutions as envisaged by the recent General Chapter. When we neglect matters of administration in religious life and priestly ministry, we breach pastoral care and religious discipline and become agents of corruption in the Congregation and the Church.

Fraternally
Yours in the Lord,



Fr George Panthanmackel MSFS
Provincial of Northeast India Province

WALKING ON THE PATH OF THE PATRON

“Fasting fortifies the spirit, mortifying the flesh and its sensuality; it raises the spirit of God; it fights concupiscence and gives power to conquer and deaden its passions; in short, it disposes the heart to please only God with great purity of heart.” SFS