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BARAKA

ZA FRANSALIANS

Half yearly news bulletin of MSFS in East Africa



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JESUS I TRUST IN YOU

C O N T E N T S

| | |
|---|----|
| Editorial | 4 |
| Message from Provincial | 5 |
| Provincial Congress MSFS East Africa | 6 |
| The Relevance of Salesian Spirituality | 8 |
| Our New Priests 2017..... | 10 |
| St. Francis de Sales College Iyolwa | 13 |
| My Fond Memories of LCI, Tanzania | 15 |
| Laudato Si in African Context | 18 |
| News from Maji ya Chai Parish..... | 23 |
| Mkuza Parish Bifurcated | 24 |
| New Mission in Kalamira Uganda..... | 25 |
| Jubilarian:Rev.Fr.Sunny Mattathil MSFS...26 | |
| Going to the peripheries- Kashishi Missio ...28 | |
| Grotto built by the Novices,..... | 29 |
| My Encounters in Africa | 31 |
| Lumen Christi Dispensary | 33 |
| Fransalian Youth Fest Morogoro, Arusha .34 | |

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From the Editor



On 13th June 2018 Pope Francis in his message titled “This poor man called and the Lord heard him” for the Second World Day of the Poor, which will of course will be celebrated on 18th October 2018, to all bishops, priests, and especially deacons who have received the laying on of hands for the service of the poor (Acts 6: 1-7), as well as religious and all those lay faithful – men and women – who in parishes, associations and ecclesial movements make tangible the Church’s response to the cry of the poor, to experience the world day as a privileged moment of new evangelization.

According to him, the poor evangelize us and help us to discover the beauty of the Gospel every day. For most of us, poverty at times may seem a state of helplessness or a curse from God. But that’s a wrong perception. For God loved the poor so much that when he sent his son Jesus Christ into the world, He sent him as a poor carpenter’s son and by doing so, he blessed the poor. Though He was rich, Jesus made Himself poor for our sake so that we might become rich by His poverty (2 Cor 8:9). Article 58 of MSFS Constitution clearly states how Jesus identified Himself with poor. “He lived in solidarity with the poor, the downtrodden and the marginalized. But, above all, He placed His trust completely in God even in moments of want and desolation (Cf. Mt 4:4)”.

As Christians, we are called not to waste any opportunity to discover the Truth and live it in our lives. In doing so, we have a great responsibility to take care of the less fortunate of the society. All our wealth and richness should be understood as the tool for serving the poor, rather than as one’s achievement for one’s self glory.

On 21st August we celebrated the 450th birth Anniversary of St. Francis de Sales who himself was a friend of the poor and needy. He left everything for the love of God and His people, became poor like his Master to experience His love. As we celebrate God together with our Gentleman Saint, let us imbibe his spirit and live it in our life. This edition of Baraka contains the major events that occurred in our life and ministry from July 2017 to June 2018. Numerous are the blessings God has showered upon us and through us to many people. We thank God for four good vocations for our congregation, for the new Provincial Administration, for the two new Parishes and for the many Confreres and collaborators who came to help us in our missions. May God continue to be glorified through our ministry!

Joyfully Yours,

Fr. Clement Sudhakar MSFS

Message from Provincial

My dear Confreres and Friends of Fransalians,

Fraternal greetings to you all from East Africa!

This year the Catholic Church in Tanzania is celebrating 150 years of Evangelization in the mainland. The first Catholic Missionaries (Holy Ghost Fathers) came to Tanzania in 1868. Since then many more Missionary Congregations have arrived and have actively engaged in evangelizing Tanzania. Today about 30% of Tanzanians are Catholics spread over 36 dioceses. The phenomenal growth of Christianity in East Africa and particularly in Tanzania is due to the hard work and missionary commitment of early missionaries, who overcame all hurdles to sow the seed of faith in Christ and helped it grow.



As we mark the Jubilee Year of the arrival of the first missionaries, it is only appropriate to remember their legacy and to imitate their unflinching love for the Gospel and their determination to preach the Good News to all people. Although the times have changed the message of Christ remains the same. So is the mandate of Christ.

The challenge for us today is to deepen the faith of our people and help them to follow the Gospel in their daily lives. Every diocese and parish has adopted several measures to reach out to the people especially through Basic Christian Communities (BCC). In the recently concluded AMECEA plenary meeting, the newly elected president of AMECEA Bishop Charles Kasonda (Zolwezi/Zambia) told the assembly that “the Bishops of the AMECEA region were at a loss about the apparent paradox in most African societies that profess themselves to be Christian. On the one hand, the African continent is ravaged by endemic ethnic conflicts, yet Sunday Mass attendance in most African countries is at an all-time high..... although Churches are packed, there is still work to do regarding faith issues”. He calls for a re-evangelization to deepen the faith and to overcome the dichotomy that exists between one’s faith and daily life. One of the major challenges that we come across in the continent is the practice of superstitious beliefs and practices even among the Christians.

No doubt the Church in Africa is doing a lot to overcome these “faith issues”; but there is a lot to be done still. Let us continue to be “Missionaries” and not “Settlers”. Let us not be satisfied with merely “running/administering the parishes” but try to live the Gospel and dedicate ourselves for the spiritual renewal of the entire continent. Let us focus on areas like faith formation, catechesis and family apostolate to make the Church in Africa more vibrant.

God bless Africa!

Yours devotedly in Christ Jesus,

Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS
Provincial of East Africa

EIGHTH ORDINARY PROVINCIAL CONGRESS 2017

On taking charge as the provincial superior of East Africa Province on 15th July 2017, Rev. Fr. Mathew Thomas Thazhathukunnel MSFS, in consultation with the Provincial Council held on the same day at Morogoro, and with the due approval from the Superior General, and in accordance with the Constitutions and General Directory of the Congregation officially convoked the 8th Ordinary Provincial Congress of East Africa Province, to be held at Lumen Christi Institute, Maji ya Chai, Arusha, Tanzania from September 22nd 2017.

The theme of the Congress was:

**FRANSALIANS IN EAST
AFRICA: CONSECRATED TO
LIVE JOYFULLY THE MISSION
OF CHRIST, BEING LOYAL
TO THE SPIRITUALITY OF
ST. FRANCIS DE SALES AND
THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT OF
FR. PETER MERMIER**

The Provincial Congress of the Province of East Africa began on 22nd September 2017 with the Holy Mass of the Holy Spirit presided over by Rev. Fr. Thumma



Mariadas Reddy MSFS, the Assistant Superior General. It was followed by a day of recollection preached by Rev. Fr. Terry McGrath MSFS, the former Provincial of the English Province. Rev. Fr. Thumma Mariadas Reddy MSFS delivered an inspiring key note address based on the theme of the Provincial Congress. After four days of meaningful evaluations and intensive deliberations, the assembly drafted a final statement and an action plan, which would guide the members of the Province for the coming three years.

The Provincial Congress came to an end on 26th September with the celebration

of the Holy Eucharist presided over by His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Josephat Lebulu, the Archbishop of Arusha. His Grace was full of praise and appreciation of the Fransalians for the good works done in east Africa. Our sincere thanks and appreciation go to the staff and students of Lumen Christi Institute for hosting the Provincial Congress.

The Provincial Congress elected the following confreres to the Provincial Curia:

Hearty Congratulations to the New Provincial Curia!!!



Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS
Provincial



Fr. Jacob Thekkekara MSFS
Admonitor and PCIC for Education



Fr. Kurian Kollapallil MSFS
PCIC Social and Innovative Ministries



Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil MSFS
PCIC Mission



Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil MSFS
PCIC Formation



Fr. Jose Eriyanickal MSFS
Provincial Bursar

THE RELEVANCE OF THE SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY TODAY

The Church has grown through the teachings of the apostles and has been nourished by the blood of the martyrs. She still continues to advance in holiness through the teachings and examples of the saints who showed us the way to attain union with God and to participate in the redemption brought by Christ through the way of spiritual life they have taught us. The particular way they taught was moulded out of their lived experience of the God whom they loved to the core. The writings of the saints and mystics, their autobiographies and biographies, along with having a descriptive value, also serve as models for the Christians to imitate and to attain perfection.¹ Their lived experience of God which was put in to writing becomes a way of life. And this is called Spirituality of a particular saint. Today we have in the church a number of spiritualities which act as a manual for the Christians to regulate their life towards union with God. All the spiritualities have one aim or one goal; The Union with God. There are many schools of Spirituality in the Church. To name some of them; Franciscan Spirituality, Benedictine Spirituality, Augustinian Spirituality, Carthusian Spirituality, Ignatian Spirituality, Carmelite Spirituality, Salesian Spirituality, etc. They differ only in their mode of expression and living. Just as each culture has different way of cooking and eating the food, but having the same goal, that is, the nourishment of the body and good health. Just as the gifts of the Holy Spirit are different and as they work in a different manner in each person according to the need of the time and place, so too, the different schools of Spirituality which has been in the church through different saints. This reminds us of

the words of St. Paul: "For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Rom 12:4-5).

Salesian Spirituality is a branch of Catholic Christian Spirituality derived from the name Francis de Sales as it indicates. Its main promoters are St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal, who survived the latter 19 years, had been the first to live his spirituality and to inseminate it in the congregation they both founded together 'The Visitation'. So, Salesian spirituality cannot be viewed differently without the active presence of St. Jane de Chantal.

The Leitmotif of Salesian Spirituality is the famous "Vive Jesus" which was at the tip of the tongue of both the saints. 'Live Jesus' is the motto of the Salesian Spirituality. This is present in all their writings. Spirituality in general is aimed at the imitation of Christ. But this imitation of Christ is lived in varied forms according to various spiritualities. The goal of Salesian spirituality is to live the 'Gentle and Humble Jesus' (Mt. 11:19) in the heart of mankind. St. Francis de Sales wrote extensively to promote this purpose of living Jesus in our day to day life. This is the reason his spirituality is based on the virtue of humility. Like the mustard seed, like the little amount of yeast in large quantity of flour, like the offering of the widow, like the five loaves and two fish and like the birth of the Saviour in the manger, the Salesian Spirituality has its humble origin with a great purpose of bringing millions of people the

¹Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology* (London: Continuum, 2006). p. 31.

experience of living Christ in their particular life situation. The famous classical work of St. Francis de Sales, the *Introduction to the Devout Life* is the manifesto of this fundamental conviction of this living Jesus.

To live this imitation of Christ, one does not need to withdraw from the world or the human society like the way monks and religious live. But one is called to live Jesus in the circumstance of one's state of life, whatever it may be. If I put it in his own words in the *Introduction to Devout life*, we read: "My purpose is to instruct those who live in town, within families, or at court, and by their state of life are obliged to live an ordinary life as to outward appearances. Frequently, on the pretext of some supposed impossibility, they will not even think of undertaking a devout life".²

This year we celebrate the 450 years of the birth of our beloved Patron St. Francis de Sales. And it is a time we fitting that we live this Spirituality in a refreshed and renewed manner. Spirituality becomes practical only when it is lived. Otherwise it remains only as mere speculative spirituality. The teachings conveyed through the Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales remain still a great means of attaining Christian perfection. He lived this spirituality before he put in to practice and he continued to struggle to practice it. He writes in the *Introduction*: "Thus through God's infinite goodness I urge on to myself that when lead his beloved flock to the healthful waters of devotion he will make my soul his spouse and put in my ears the golden words of his holy love and in my arms strength to practice them well".³ The authenticity of the Salesian spirituality is certified by the number of saints we have in the Salesian family.

The following are the few of the names of the persons who followed the path of holiness after the Salesian Spirituality: St. Jane de Chantal, St. Don Bosco (Founder of the Society of St. Francis de Sales (Salesians), St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, St. Dominic Savio, St. Mary Mazzarello, Servant of God Fr. Peter Marie Mermier (Founder of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales), Don Carlo Cavina (the Founder of the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales) Mother Claudine Echemier (foundress of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod). And let us hope that we have many more are on the way to the sainthood with the help of Salesian Spirituality.

May the life example of these saints inspire us to continue to live the Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. It is when we live this Spirituality in to our own life situations and according to the God experience we have received and the promptings of the Spirit; we make this particular spirituality our own. Our love for God will make us live this style of spirituality not only for ourselves but it will be extended to others assisting them to experience God in a truly Salesian way. As Fransalians let us be reminded every moment that "Living the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in our mission is the Charism that gives identity to us as Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and it is our distinguishing mark."⁴ Vive Jesus!



Fr. Johnson Pathiyil MSFS

²St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. John K. Ryan (New York: Image Books, 2014). p. 22.

³St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* . p. 26.

⁴*Constitutions of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales* No. 7

NEW PRIESTS IN THIS YEAR 2017

2017 was a year of grace and blessing for the Fransalians in East Africa when five of our deacons, out of whom four are sons the soil, received the ordination to the priesthood. We are grateful to the Almighty God for blessing us with these fruits to our Congregation. Our sincere thanks go to the parents of our new priests who have given their dear ones to the service of God and His people.

Rev. Fr. Jonathan Muema MSFS



Rev. Fr. Jonathan Muema was born on December 11, 1986. He is the son of Mr. Sebastian Mutunga and the late Ruth Ndinda from Wimboo village, Kenya. After completing his Primary and Secondary school studies, he joined Fransalian Aspirancy House at Ndagani, Kenya. He did his Novitiate (2008 – 2009) at Fransalianum Kibaha, Tanzania and made his first profession on 10th July 2009. He did his Regency (Pastoral Year) at Ipuli SFS Children's Home in Tabora (2009 – 2010). He completed his Philosophy course at Lumen Christi Institute, Arusha (2010 – 2013) and his Theology in Jordan University, Morogoro (2013 – 2017). He made his Final Profession on 23rd August, 2016 and was ordained a Deacon by His

Lordship Bishop Telesphore Mkude on 15th October 2016. He was ordained priest on 20th July 2017 by Archbishop Anthony Mueria of Nyeri, Kenya

NEW PRIESTS IN THIS YEAR 2017

Rev. Fr. Amal Paul Neerolickal MSFS



Rev. Fr. Amal Paul Neerolickal MSFS was born on May 04, 1986 at Arakuzha, Ernakulam District, Kerala, India. His parents are Mr. Paul Joseph and Ms Daisy Paul. Having completed his primary and high school education he joined the Carmelite seminary at Karukidam (Carmel Nivas) where he completed his initial formation and his higher secondary from 2002 - 2005. He finished his philosophical studies from Calvary Philosophical College, Thrissur from 2006-2009. He joined the MSFS East Africa Province in 2010 and did one year of probation in SFS Junior Seminary Kihonda, Morogoro from 2010-2011. He did his pre novitiate at Tejas Vidya Peeta and Canonical Novitiate at Sneha Joythi MSFS Ashram Makiyad from 2011-2012. He made his first profession on May 31st 2012. He had his regency at the Fransalian Community in Ipuli, Tabora from 2012-2013 and his Theological studies from Jordan University, Morogoro from 2013-2017. He

made his perpetual profession on August 23, 2016. He was ordained deacon on October 15, 2016 by His Lordship Telesphore Mkude. He was ordained priest on 22nd July in his home Parish by Rt. Rev. George Madathikandathil, the Bishop of Kothamangalam in Inida.

Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ssebowa MSFS

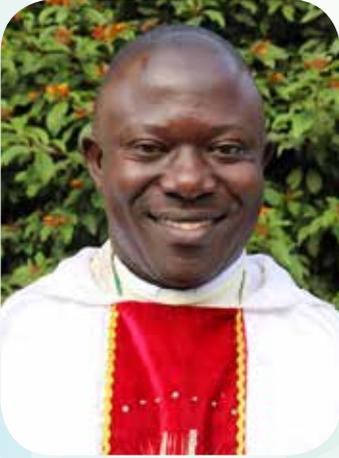


Rev. Fr. Lawrence Sebowa MSFS was born on 24th September 1985 at Kawolo, Buikwe district, Uganda in the family of Mr. and Mrs. Kaddu John. After having completed his Primary and Secondary school studies, he joined the Fransalian seminary at Ndagani, Kenya in 2007. He did his Novitiate from 2008 - 2009 at Fransalianum Kibaha, Tanzania and made his first profession on 10th July 2009. Immediately after his novitiate Rev. Fr. Lawrence did his regency (Pastoral year) at St. Francis de Sales Junior Seminary Morogoro, Tanzania in from 2009 - 2010. After his regency, he studied Philosophy at Lumen Christi Institute, Arusha, Tanzania from 2010 - 2013. He did his Theological studies at Jordan University, Morogoro Tanzania from 2013 - 2017. He made his perpetual profession on 23rd August 2016 at Lumen Christi Institute Maji ya Chai, Arusha. Lawrence Sebowa was ordained deacon

on 15th October 2016 at Jordan University Chapel Morogoro Tanzania by the Rt. Rev. Telesphor Mkude the Bishop of Morogoro. He was ordained priest on 29th July 2017 at Lugazi Mary Queen of Peace Cathedral by the Rt. Rev. Christopher Kakooza the Bishop of Lugazi Diocese in Uganda.

NEW PRIESTS IN THIS YEAR 2017

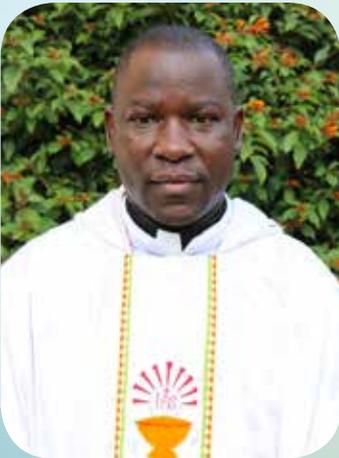
Rev. Fr. Kisegerwa Ibrahim Musajja MSFS



Rev. Fr. Kisegerwa Ibrahim Musajja MSFS was born on September 3, 1977. He is the son of Mr. Kafeero Athanasius and Mrs. Anna Iko Kafeero of Kigasa village, Masaka, Uganda. After his secondary school and Diploma in Building and Civil Engineering, he joined Fransalian Aspirancy house Ndagani (2007 – 2008). He did his Novitiate at Fransalianum-Kibaha (2008 – 2009) and made his First Profession, on 10th July 2010. He did his Regency at the Mother of Compassion Parish Mji Mpyarelini, Dar es Salaam from 12th August 2009 to 13th July 2010. He had his Philosophical studies at Lumen Christi Institute (LCI) Arusha (2010 – 2013) and Theological studies, at (JUCO) Jordan University from 2013–2017. He made his perpetual profession on 23rd August 2016. He was ordained deacon on 15th October 2016 by His

Lordship Rt. Rev. Telesphore Mkude, Bishop of Morogoro and was ordained priest on 5th of August 2017, at Christ the King Cathedral by His Lordship Rt. Rev. John Baptist Kaggwa, the Bishop of Masaka, Uganda.

Rev. Fr. Gerald Mabiriizi MSFS



Rev. Fr. Gerald Mabiriizi MSFS was born on 27th April 1981. His parents are late Joseph-Anthony Ssekalembe and late Restetuta Nabulya in Bukulula, Masaka. After having completed his Diploma in Education, he joined Fransalian Aspirancy house Ndagani, Kenya (2007 -2008). He did his Novitiate at Fransalianum Kibaha Tanzania from 2008-2009 and made his first profession on July 10th 2009. He did his Pastoral year at St. Francis de Sales Integrated Primary School Katani Kenya from 2009–2010. He did his Philosophical Studies at Lumen Christi Institute (2010–2013) and Theological studies at Jordan University Morogoro (2013 – 2017). He made his final Profession on 23rd August 2016. He was ordained deacon on 15th October at Jordan University Chapel by his Lordship

Bishop Telesphore Mkude of Morogoro Diocese. He was ordained priest on 12th of August 2017 by His Grace Most Rev. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, Archbishop of Kampala, Uganda.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES COLLEGE

IYOLWA, TORORO, UGANDA

Situated in Iyolwa county, in the district of Tororo, Uganda, St. Francis De Sales College was founded by Rev. Fr. Thomas Chozhithara, a member of the Congregation of St. Francis De Sales popularly known as the Fransalians. The Foundation Stone for the school was laid on 15th September 2015 by Rev. Fr. Johnson Kalliduckil, the then Provincial Superior of the Fransalians. The school was blessed by his grace Rt. Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Obbo, the Archbishop of the diocese of Tororo and commissioned by Hon. Dr. John C. Musingo, the Minister of State for Higher Education of Uganda on 24th April 2017.



The motto of the school is “Education for Transformation”, based on the saying of the Servant of God, Fr. Peter Mermier, Founder of Fransalians, “Education of the heart is the Heart of Education”. Therefore, great stress is given to the quality of education imparted in this school by employing well qualified personnel. An eco-friendly ambience adds to the overall conducive atmosphere in the learning process.

The school with spacious classrooms, Laboratories, Computer Labs, Libraries etc. sits on a 26 - acre plot with ample space for agricultural farm, Dairy farm, Boarding facilities and a vast play-ground. While the agricultural farms give the students hands on training in the much-needed farming skills, it also provides the inmates with organic food, something that is very scarce these days.

The school started with three streams of Senior I and one stream of Senior II with 250 students on the roll and 16 teachers and 25 non-teaching staff. After the inspection of the campus the Minister of Education, in his inaugural address to the audience said, “St. Francis de Sales College is the best educational infrastructure in Eastern Uganda”. Credit should go to the Fransalian Fraternity for providing for education, too, as part of their apostolic missionary activity.

While classroom learning is very important due care is given to extra-curricular activities for the holistic education of the learners. Facilities for volley ball, football, net ball and an International Standard Athletic Track provide the students with plenty of space to spend their energy in a proper supervision. A basketball court is in the planning process.

Our students exhibited their talents in the recently conducted “First School Annual Day 2017”, in various cultural activities like dance, drama and music. The Guest of Honour, Mr. Yonah Gamusi Doyah, District Education Officer of Tororo, was so taken up with their performance that he declared, “St. Francis De Sales College will one day become a University.”

The weather god is very happy with this part of the world by giving a lovely climate most of the time. We enjoy tropical climate with moder-





ate to average cool weather in the night. Ample rains give the farmers scope for more than one crop of Maize, Tapioca, and other cereals, in a year. Inside the campus we grow our own food consisting of Maize, Bananas, Potatoes and sweet potatoes, Tapioca etc. and an assortment of vegetables.

We are gearing up for a good start in February 2018 by constructing additional class rooms in the existing building. A good, spacious, modern, multipurpose Auditorium is in the pipe line to provide the learners with more facilities to display their skills. It also will be used to hold examinations. All these will remain as dreams unless we get funds for the constructions. Fr. Thomas from the backwaters of Kerala seems to be good in fishing. He is casting his nets far and wide where the fish is plentiful for a good harvest!

Fr. Thomas is ably assisted by Fr. Siljo MSFS and Bro. Leo Cheruvil FSP, the Patrician Brothers, India. Fr. Siljo doubles as the Assistant

Parish Priest in the Iyolwa Parish Church and as the treasurer of St. Francis De Sales College. He is the financial administrator and sees to the needs of the school and the boarding. Bro. Leo is the Deputy Director and is involved in development projects as well as matters of academic and technical nature.



We are assisted by the German Group known as “Engineers Without Borders”. They are involved in the setting up of drinking water facilities and green toilets for the students and staff. At present a group of young enterprising engineering students from Germany are busy finishing a rain water harvesting plant for 100,000 litres with water filtering system in the school.



Bro. Leo FSP



My Fond Memories of Lumen Christi Institute Arusha, Tanzania

Fr. Joseph Puliyilakattu MSFS

In April 2013, I was requested by Rev. Fr Babychan Arackathara, the Regional Superior of the Southern African Region render my services at LCI, Maji ya Chai. Although LCI was very new to me, I joyfully consented to this request. I left Cape Town for Tanzania on 16th September 2013. Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal, the Provincial Bursar came to Dar es Salaam to pick me up when I arrived there.

On 20th September I came to LCI, Maji ya Chai from Morogoro and Fr Gijo Panamattathil was waiting there at the bus stop for me. In the following week I started with my mission of taking classes for the students of philosophy. In the first semester I had only four credits of philosophy classes for the Brothers but I had Spoken English classes for the others from the locality. Some of our domestic staff also attended those classes. It was a very good opportunity

for me to interact with people from different tribes and different walks of life. All the Fathers in the Institute gave me whole hearted support and they encouraged me to do all these things. I was also helping out in the Computer training programme for external students. All these were, in fact, the initiatives of Fr Mathew Thazathukunnel, the Director of the Institute. I cherish the trust that was placed in me by all the Fathers and Brothers in the Institute. Shortly after my arrival in LCI, Fr Agnelo Fernandes, the General Councilor in Charge of the Missions in the Congregation of the MSFS also came to LCI as a member of the community. Fr Mathew, the Director, then arranged Mr Morris, a retired teacher to come and teach us Swahili. It helped us to learn at least to celebrate Holy Mass in Kiswahili. During the time of Christmas that year Fr Mathew took me along when he went to Bukene Mission to help out during the



season. It was my first mission experience in Tanzania and it was very rewarding.

After coming back from that mission experience in Bukene where with the help of Fr Mathew, I celebrated the Holy Mass for the first time in Kiswahili, I made use of all the opportunities that I got to go the parishes of Ngurdotto and Maji ya Chai for the Mass in Kiswahili. It was with Fr Thomas Kochuparampil, the superior of the community that I celebrated Mass in Kiswahili for the children in Ngurdotto. Later on, I started to celebrate Mass in Kiswahili all by myself and the Brothers preached. The encouragement and support of all the Fathers and Brothers helped me to find joy and fulfillment in my life and ministry. Later, when Fr Tomychan Perumanur, the administrator of the LCI was appointed as the parish priest of Maji ya Chai, very often he would entrust me with the celebration of the Mass in the outstation of Kupaliswa Mbinguni ya Bikira Maria or other villages and I was more than happy to assist. Though I had not mastered the language, this gave me opportunities to exercise my priestly ministry and I found it very rewarding to be with the people, celebrating Mass or administering other sacraments for them. I had the opportunity to assist in the parishes of Bukene and Lububu in the archdiocese of Tabora and in the parish of Mji Mpya Relini in the archdiocese of Dar es Salaam.

During my stay in LCI, Maji ya Chai, I enjoyed the ministry in those areas and the hospitality and fraternity of our confreres. The life in LCI was indeed a very unique one. At some time we were ten confreres on the staff, from different provinces. Some of us were meeting each other for the first time especially the junior members of the staff. But it was a very enriching experience and I cherish the community

life we had, overcoming all the province, cultural and linguistic differences. All were supporting one another and spent time together whenever it was possible. Those little loving acts and words build up our communities, as St Francis de Sales, our patron says.

In 2014, Prof. Maria Elisabeth Agner, a friend of Fr Mathew, the Director and the head of the department of Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Psychology in the University of Graz came to LCI at his request to conduct a couple of basis course in Bibliolog to train the facilitators for the programme. Most of the Fathers in the Province of East Africa, the staff of LCI and many other priests and religious took part in them. In the beginning of that first training session, I was a bit skeptical about the whole approach because it looked like a subjective interpretation of the Word of God but later it was clarified and understood that it was not an interpretation but a subjective experience of the character in the given context of the Word. Assessing the performance and participation of all the participants of the programme, the professor selected me to become a trainer myself from the first group and from the next group she identified one Fr Albert SVD from Switzerland, a long time missionary in East Africa. Later in the year, when she came for giving training for the participants of the Formators Programme, she took me with her as a co-trainer of the programme. From among them Sr Bernadette was identified to start with some co-training to become a trainer. In 2015 too I had the opportunity to be a co-trainer with Prof. Maria Elisabeth and had the opportunity to have training in the follow up as well as the advanced Bibliolog training. In 2016, I had two opportunities to conduct the basic Bibliolog training to become facilitators, one for the Brothers with Sr Bernadette as the

co-trainer and another along with Prof Maria Elisabeth for the second batch of Formators. In 2017, along with Fr Albert and Sr Bernadette I was given the opportunity to conduct the same for the third batch of Formators at LCI. In 2017, it was proposed by Prof. Maria Elisabeth that we take part in the International Bibliolog Workshop in Germany in June 2018. She told that they would try to raise fund to meet the expenses for the same so that it does not become a burden for us from Africa.

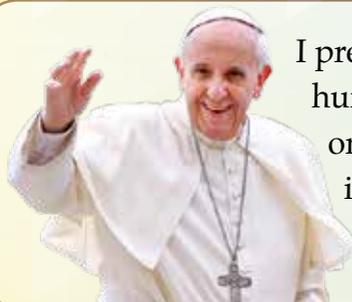
Though the Regional Superior of Southern African Region had told me initially that I was going to LCI for a period of two years, at the request of the Director of the Institute and of the Superior General it was extended to four years. By the end of the fourth year the Regional Superior told me that I have to get back to the Region as there was already a commitment made to take up a new parish. But I continued to stay for the first semester of my fifth academic year at LCI because I had to get my work permit and temporary residence visa for South Africa. Usually it takes six to eight weeks after submission of the application. But to everyone's surprise and by the grace of God I got the visa in three working days after submitting the application. It was something like a miracle. My residence permit was getting over on the 30th of November, 2017 and I bade Goodbye to LCI on the 29th after midnight.

Fr Mathew Thazhathukunnel, the Provincial and Fr Devasia Manalel, the acting Director of LCI reached me to Kilimanjaro International Airport as I bade Goodbye to Tanzania.

As I said earlier, it was a very good and memorable experience for me to be there, living with the Brothers and being part of the formation team, taking classes for the Brothers during the course of their philosophical training and for the Formators in their transformative formation programme. The appreciation and participation of the Brothers and the Formators as well as the support and encouragement of the Fathers helped me to put in the best I could in whatever I did. During the course of my stay in LCI, I had also the opportunity to visit all the communities in the East Africa Province where our confreres are rendering their valuable service. I appreciate and cherish my life at LCI and thank God for all. May the Lord who has called us and chosen us as His ministers bless us all to be faithful to Him.



Fr. Joseph Puliylakattu MSFS



I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.

Pope Francis

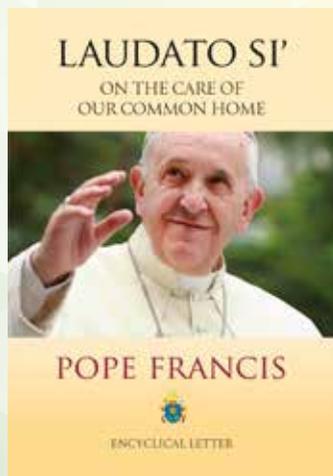
‘LAUDATO SI’ AND CONCERN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN AFRICA AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Bro. Kenneth Maina MSFS



Introduction

From the very onset of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis states that his intention is to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home (LS 3).¹ The title *Laudato Si'*² is inspired by the canticle of St. Francis of Assisi who considers the earth “like a sister with whom we share our life and our beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us” (LS 1). However, the Pope recounts that it is very unfortunate that our relationship with our common home has been tainted by our irresponsible use and abuse of goods with which God has endowed the earth but it is now crying because humanity has harmed her. Therefore, the entire encyclical in a tactful manner speaks largely and openly against the devastating effects of climate change on nature and the environment. We can work out from the encyclical that the problem of disfigurement and damage of creation is not a new phenomenon in the world as numerous scientists, philosophers, theologians, and civic groups also share this concern (LS 7). Thus, individuals and societies are called to care for the environment because climate change is real, urgent and it must be tackled. Pope Francis asks us to remember that climate is “a common good, belonging to all and meant for all (LS 23).”³ As a consequence, the Pope makes an appeal to all humanity to make every effort to “seek a sustainable and integral development” (LS 13) to protect our common home so as to curb the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the underprivileged who often tend to be excluded in the so called ‘better future’. So, the encyclical makes a clarion call for all individuals and societies to care about the environment because failure to do so leads to environmental destruction which in turn leads us to sin against ourselves and against God (LS 8).



Thus, *Laudato Si'* is a wakeup call for the entire humanity to open up its eyes on issues of environment and to put them on the round-table and dialogue about:

¹LS stands for *Laudato Si'*.

²The title of the encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* is translated to ‘On Care for Our Common Home’.

³The notion of the ‘Common Good’ is central in *Laudato Si'*. In simple terms, it refers to the sum total of the conditions in social life which promote the advantage or interests of all members in a society.

- Life and Survival of Society and Nature,
- Models of Development, Production and Consumption.



Since the discussion on relationship between the environment and living organisms can be put into different contexts, I shall make a reinterpretation of *Laudato Si'* in an African context. In the encyclical, the Pope has raised alarm to the critical questions of environmental crisis in our contemporary world and he is inviting us to be active participants in the dialogue on the care of our common home. Thus, I shall exhibit the applicability of *Laudato Si'* in the African context – especially with an emphasis on authentic human development and stewardship of our common home. In this endeavor, I hope that this article shall enable us to undergo a metanoia and make us a people united in one goal of *becoming stewards of our common home*.

Situating Africa

In order to show the relevance of this beautiful encyclical in a contextual setup, I wish to ensure that we have a common understanding about *Africa* because I have come across some people who have stereotyped images of our continent as one that has been castigated, backward and primitive. Others have stereotypical images of anarchy, starving children, poverty and conflict about Africa. Due to this wrong information about Africa, still others go to the extreme of erroneously assuming that Africa is a small and primitive country that is dominated by conflict because its people are intellectually stigmatized.

All such notions about Africa are mistaken.⁴ To this effect, I reiterate Dambisa Moyo's description of Africa thus: "Africa is not one country. It's a continent; a collection of over 50 nations with often vastly different histories, with peoples as disparate as those of North America and South East Asia, varying lingua francas, and very divergent cultures and religious beliefs..."⁵ Taking this definition into consideration, we, nevertheless have to acknowledge that there are common ties that bind African countries together.⁶ So, by the very fact that the encyclical is not only addressed to Catholics but all people of good will; mine is an African reinterpretation of LS in view of Africa's environmental issues. Although the continent has a tremendous diversity, we ought to bear in mind that there are a lot of commonalities across the different African cultures.

⁴Probably, some people have horrendous images about Africa due to the injustices perpetrated by political leaders and warlords who have led their respective countries to statuses of instability and destruction. In fact, today some African nations are affected by the rapid corruption that is fast spreading across the continent. However, this does not justify that stereotyped images about the continent be taken as infallible.

⁵Moyo, *Dead Aid*, XV.

⁶Africa is the second-largest and second-most-populous continent. It has 54 fully recognized sovereign countries, 10 territories and two *de facto* independent states (Sahwari Arab Democratic Republic and Somaliland) which have limited recognition because by structure and government they can be called countries but are not recognized as they do not belong to the AU (African Union). [Online]

An Afro-centric Ecological Concern

The passion for environment is very evident in the life of Africans because the social, political, religious and cultural questions are concretely intertwined with nature. Thus, J. S. Mbiti argues that in traditional African societies, people lived in a religious universe where human beings and nature were partners because nature was filled with religious significance as Africans believed that they were entirely dependent on earth for their existence.⁷ Africans held environment in high esteem as they attached a religious significance to it, therefore, no one could tamper with it as they wish because doing so would provoke divine punishment to befall the entire community. For that reason, the elders in their wisdom invented taboos to ensure that members of the community would not desecrate the environment – a divine gift for the community’s well-being. As a result, there was a good relationship between human beings and nature.

However, in the recent days those taboos have been diluted and this has led to gradual destruction of environment which has now reached a crisis point especially in Africa. The impact of its devastation is felt everywhere – economically, socially and even religiously and it is precisely this alarming issue which the Pope speaks about in the encyclical when he says: “we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.”⁸ As I have already indicated in the previous paragraph that Africans maintained a good relationship with nature, this was mainly manifested by respect for environment especially through the manner in which most African societies related with animals, birds, fish and plants in a religious manner.⁹ The importance of this religiosity is that it is attached with the belief that man is entirely dependent on earth for existence because it is within its parameters that we live and move and have our being. So even though the Africans’ lifestyles varied from community to community, protection of nature was generally respected because each knew how it depended on nature for material sustenance and blessings. For instance, the agrarian communities protected nature as much as the gatherers and fishers did because each community depended on nature in one way or another for food.

Protecting Environment: Taboos and Traditional Practices

The elders tried to protect the environment by inventing taboos which were coupled with some traditional practices which intended to protect the environment. Here I shall cite a few examples from different African communities and show how they enforced different taboos for the benefit of the community and environment. For instance, the Bukusu of Western

⁷Gitau, *The Environment Crisis*, 33

⁸Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 139

⁹Nature was filled with religious significance as Africans believed that they were entirely dependent on earth for their existence. Thus, nature was held in high esteem because Africans’ lifestyles varied from community to community e.g. the agrarian communities protected nature as much as the gatherers and fishers did because each community depended on nature in one way or another for food. Gitau, *The Environment Crisis*, 33

Kenya believed that *Wele* their God forbade them to eat all animals which crawl – snakes, lizards and snails. From the same region we have the Luhya people who despite being very fond of chicken meat, they are forbidden from eating scavenger birds like crows, vultures and hawks. Therefore, it was a taboo for one to eat the aforementioned creatures even in secret because that would be tantamount to flouting a divine command and this would warrant a punishment not only for the one who contravenes but for the society at large. All in all, these beliefs assisted significantly in the preservation of species.

In other communities, totemic beliefs and taboos assisted in the preservation and maintenance of animals and the environment. For example, among the Langi of Northern Uganda and the Nyaturu of North-Central Tanzania – fierce animals like lions, leopards, cheetahs and so on were associated with God's presence.¹⁰ Therefore, these animals were never killed deliberately. In addition to such beliefs and taboos, the Traditional African heritage was also very rich in preserving vegetation as an aspect of nature. In fact, throughout Africa it is quite common for one to come across sacred trees which are mythical and have to be preserved under all circumstances for example, among the Kikuyu of Central Kenya there was the Mugumo tree and usually sacrifices to the creator were made under such trees.¹¹ So, it was a taboo for one to cut down such sacred trees or take shelter under them. Thus the wisdom of viewing particular plant species as sacred assisted greatly in ensuring their survival and subsequent propagation. Since religion was interlaced in the fabric of every institution and aspect of life, the notorious religiousness of the Africans ensured that the relationship between human activity and the entire creation was upheld always in all circumstances.

Analysis of the Contemporary Ecological Problem

Although the traditional African societies tried their best in environmentalism, nowadays things are different because the ecological crisis has threatened the relationship between human activity the entire creation. This has come about due to reasons such as deforestation, over reliance on firewood/charcoal for fuel, and poaching especially elephants for ivory. In the cities the major problem has been garbage and pollution which has led to the pollution of many water sources. Thus, the impact of environmental destruction is grave because it generally affects food production and puts at risk the human food security. However, since LS appeals for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet especially with regard to the environment (LS 14), it is clear that it is also inviting us as Africans to urgently take action before the destruction goes out of controllable proportions.



¹⁰Gitau, *The Environment Crisis*, 34

¹¹Gitau, *The Environment Crisis*, 34-35

Solutions to Environmental Crisis Inspired by *Laudato Si'*

'*Laudato Si'* calls for tackling environmental issues from all sectors, that is, we urgently need to forge strategies that are all-encompassing in order to achieve a more integral and integrating vision. This means that the analysis of environmental problem must not be separated from the analysis of the social, economic and religious contexts because there is an interrelation between the ecosystems and the various spheres of human interaction. As the Pope rightly states, the loss of biodiversity through the extinction of plants and animals is a problem for two reasons: a) resources are being plundered because of "short-sighted approaches to the economy, commerce and production,"¹² and; b) all creation has intrinsic value in itself for each promotes the good functioning of ecosystems by playing a critical role in maintaining the equilibrium of a particular place.¹³

We ought to understand how different creatures relate to one another in making up *ecosystems*. Each creature has its own purpose (LS 84); therefore, each has its own dignity and value independent of human valuation. Each organism, as a creature of God is good and admirable in itself because the interrelation between the ecosystems functions as a system because "we are all linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family" (LS 89). And since everything is related, then the health of society's institutions has consequences for the environment because every violation of solidarity of any kind harms the environment. Therefore, we must respond to this crisis adequately by safeguarding our cultural patrimony so as to undergo an ecological conversion which in turn will bring about lasting change leading to community conversion.

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¹²Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 32

¹³Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 34

BLESSING OF THE NEW PRESBYTERY AT MAJI YA CHAI

August 2, 2017 became a memorable day in the history of St. Stephen's Church at Maji ya Chai as His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Josephat Lebulu, the Archbishop of Arusha, blessed the new Presbytery and administered the sacrament of Confirmation to 88 children on that day. The Holy Eucharistic Celebration commenced with an angelic procession by children to the accompaniment of divine melodies by the choir. His Grace presided over the Holy Eucharist. Through an inspiring homily, he invited all to be witnesses of Christ and in a special way instructed and encouraged the children to live a life sanctity and holiness. A number of Priests and Religious sisters and over 1000 parishioners participated in the celebrations. Fr. Tomychan Perumannor, the Parish Priest, thanked His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Josephat Lebulu and Rev. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS for their presence and constant support and encouragement. He also thanked the parishioners for their hard work and the benefactors, particularly Rev. Fr. Emile Mayoraz, the former Superior General of MSFS for his financial assistance to complete the presbytery. The celebrations came to an end with a sumptuous meal.

Fr. Yesu Doss MSFS



Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset.

St. Francis de Sales





MKUZA PARISH BIFURCATED NEW KONGOWE PARISH IS BORN!

From MSFS to MOC

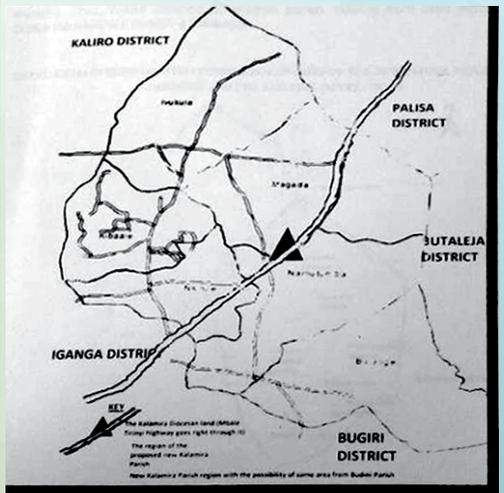
December 17, 2017 was a joyous day for the faithful of Kongowe as it was made into an independent Parish on that day. Kongowe is carved out St. Francis de Sales Parish, Mkuza, Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam. Hearty congratulations to Fr. Pius Kochuparampil, Fr. Sebastian Williams and all our confreres Johnson Pathiyil, Fr. Mathew Chavely, Fr. Josef Geifing, Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal, Fr. Antony George, Fr. Joseph

Vettukattil, who served in Mkuza in the past. Mkuza itself was a sub-station a few years ago. Now they have made it possible to create a new parish within a short span of the existence of Mkuza Parish as well as to construct a new presbytery. The Parish is entrusted to the Missionaries of Compassion by the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam. We wish the new parish team a fruitful ministry in Kongowe.



NEW MISSION AT KALAMIRA, UGANDA

It was 68 years ago that the Mill Hill Missionaries started the Namunyumya Parish in the diocese of Jinja, Uganda, in 1949. This Parish under the patronage of Our Lady of Most Holy Rosary covers a vast area with 64 Sub-Stations grouped under 12 Centres. People speak mainly Lusoga and Luganda and the liturgical services are conducted in these languages. The proposed Kalamira Parish is one of the Sub-stations. Rt. Rev. Charles Wamika, Bishop of Jinja invited us to take up this mission so that adequate pastoral attention can be provided to the faithful. This will be raised into a parish and will be formally erected on 27th January 2018 under the patronage of St. Francis de Sales. The new Parish will consist of 28 Sub-stations grouped under 6 Centres. A presbytery and a new Church building are the immediate needs there. The present church building is old and dilapidated. From 20th November 2017. Fr. Joby Maruthomalayil has been staying with the diocesan priests in Namunyumya parish house. A residence for priests is getting ready in the Namutumba Sub-Station, which is 3 km from Kalamira. We shall accompany Fr. Joby with our prayers as he takes up the new mission at Kalamira.



Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee of Fr. Sunny Mattathil MSFS



The Fransalians in East Africa rejoice with Fr. Sunny Kurian Mattathil MSFS as he thanks God for the Silver years of Grace that he showered on him as a priest.

Fr. Sunny was born on July 25, 1964 at Kidangoor, Kottayam Dist, and Kerala, India - to the parents Mr. M. V. Kurian and Mrs. Mary Mattathil. He has one brother and three sisters. His father was called to eternal life in on March 25, 2012. His mother is now with his brother in India. One of the sisters is a religious sister called Sr. Jolly Kurian S.A.T. (St. Ann's of Trichy). Other two sisters are settled in Australia with their families.

The baby Sunny was baptized on August 2, 1964 and was given the Christian name Sebastian. He received the sacrament of confirmation on April 30, 1974. After completing his secondary school at NSS High School Kidangoor, he joined SFS Seminary Ettumanoor on June 14, 1980. After having completed the orientation for one year and then the pre-university program he was admitted for the pre-noviciate at SFS Institute Philipnagar in Andhra Pradesh in the year 1983. In December the same year he was admitted to the Canonical Noviciate and made his first profession on December 15,

1984. This was followed by six months of the post-noviciate program - giving him a real taste of the mission life in Andhra Pradesh.

From 1985 to 1988 he did his three years of Philosophy formation at Suvidya College, Bangalore and simultaneously obtained the B.A in Anthropology from the Dharward University, Karnataka. It was at this time the Holy Spirit inspired the then Brother Sunny to opt for the then "Tanzanian Mission". His option was accepted and he was one of the first scholastics to reach East Africa on January 1, 1989. After having done four months of Swahili language course at Kipalapala he



continued his regency in Lububu. From July 1989 to May 1993 he did his Theology formation at St. Paul's Major Seminary, Kipalapa, Tabora. He made his final profession on December 8, 1991 in Lububu. He was ordained priest on June 30, 1993 in Holy Cross Forane Church Cherpunkal, in the Diocese of Palai by His Lordship Most Rev. Joseph Pallickaparambil of the Diocese of Palai.

He served first as the Assistant Parish Priest in Our Lady of Grace Parish Lububu, from 1993 to 1996. Then he was appointed as the Parish Priest in the same parish - an assignment which he continued till February 1999 when he was transferred to MSFS Community Itaga and was appointed as the Parish Priest of St. Antony of Padua, Parish Itaga, in the Archdiocese of Tabora. Later in June 2002 he was appointed as the Parish Priest in Kahama-Mbulu Parish in the Diocese of Kahama. In the year 2006 upon the bifurcation of the erstwhile Kahama-Mbulu Parish to three new parishes of KahamaMbulu, Kagongwa and Isaka, the parish of Isaka under the patronage of St. Francis de Sales, was entrusted to the MSFS and Fr. Sunny was appointed as the first parish priest. After having worked there almost two years, he was asked to move from West to the East of East Africa - to the new MSFS Venture in Mji Mpya Relini, Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam in 2008. After seven years of very commendable services in Mji Mpya, he moved out of Tanzania in the year 2015 when he was transferred to Agururu, in the Archdiocese of Tororo, Uganda where he works to this day as the parish priest of St. Bruno Parish, Agururu. He also served as the Provincial Councillor for four terms 1999-2002; 2002-2005, 2008-2011 and 2011-2014.

Everyone who had some experience with Fr. Sunny would notice that he is a Missionary to the core. He is a very unassuming person,

a missionary who does not count the cost. He has no hesitations to go to the periphery. He has just immersed himself into the culture of the place. But he does not make compromises when it comes to the mission. As a person of prayer he trusts in the Providence of God. Everyone enjoys his company and we have all shared many memorable moments of fun and relaxation with him. As a priest and pastor, as a missionary and as a fellow religious we have in the person of Fr. Sunny someone who cares for the folk. Imbued with Salesian hospitality Fr. Sunny is a person who can accommodate anyone in his life. No one is kept outside the network of cordiality. He is a man who forgives and seeks forgiveness. He feels one with the suffering and the needy and looks for means and ways to help them out.

As he completes his jubilee year, we thank God for the gift of his very person, for his beloved parents, siblings, relatives, teachers and formators and everyone who played their role in making what he is today for us, for the Catholic Church and for the society. We wish Fr. Sunny a very grace-filled time in this year of Jubilee.



GOING TO THE PERIPHERIES

On July 2, 2017 one more new parish was erected under the patronage of St. Francis de Sales for the first time, in the Archdiocese of Tabora, in the remote village of Kashishi in Tanzania. Kashishi was one of the outstations of Itaga Parish which the MSFS served from 1990 to 2015. Upon the completion of the term of contract, the parish was entrusted back to the Archdiocese and we moved to one of its outstations 100 km away from Tabora town. The new parish has 26 centres including the substations and prayer centers. Some of the centers were added from Uliyangu Parish.

Archbishop His Grace Most Rev. Paul Ruzoka reached the place on July 1 Saturday and administered the sacrament of confirmation to over 70 faithful. On July 2 Sunday, amidst an exuberant crowd of faithful, in the

presence of many priests and religious, the parish was officially declared to be opened and Fr. Innocent Ngowi MSFS was installed as the first parish priest. The Archbishop in his message, while congratulating the faithful for being given the honour of becoming a parish, also appreciated the MSFS for the bold step of moving to the “peripheries”. He also recalled with gratitude the yeoman services rendered by MSFS in the pastoral works, education and in caring for the needy.

Our sincere appreciation to the faithful of Kashishi village and all the outstations. We also congratulate Fr. Innocent Ngowi MSFS the parish priest and Fr. Joseph Kayanja MSFS the assistant for all the ground-work in making the day a graceful one. May St. Francis de Sales intercede for this new mission given to us by God.





NEW GROTTO OF OUR LADY

Constructed by the Novices accompanied by the Formators

Since 2000 after the construction of the Fransalianum novitiate community, the year 2017 is very special because the Almighty God has blessed our Novitiate with the gift of the Grotto of Our Lady. It is a great monument for both Novitiate community and our congregation.

This Grotto has been built through God's power manifested in the gifts and the talents He has given to us all. It is a fruit of sweat and hard work of the members of Novitiate community. This work took us one month for its completion.

Eighteen novices and two fathers joined their hands to bring out the Grotto of Our Lady, a very special and honorable place in the Fransalianum Novitiate. This Grotto has contributed to the physical, emotional and spiritual growth because of giving us an opportunity to grow through challenging situations during the process of construction. It has enabled us to share our gifts and talents, promoting hardwork and cooperation, teamwork and self confidence, new experiences and learning from one

another and above all giving us an opportunity to contribute something to the church.

On Personal level:

The grotto has enhanced growth in our spiritual life through providing a conducive atmosphere for personal prayer and reflection. Furthermore, through sharing spiritual experiences received at the Grotto since its inauguration, many have been energized spiritually and motivated also to seek the intercessions of our Lady thus visiting the Grotto frequently. It is a place of spiritual experience and inspirations provided a person goes with faith and an intention. It has helped in growth and intimacy with the lord through His Mother.

On the cross at Calvary, Jesus Christ entrusted His mother to our care “..... Woman, behold your son...” (Jn; 19:26ff), we sense the presence of our Mother who cannot deny our requests and therefore we visit her daily at the Grotto fully believing that as she interceded those at the wedding of Cana she can intercede for us as well.

On Community Level:

The Grotto has not only added to the beauty of the Novitiate House appearance, but also gives a very deep sense of spiritual experience through encouraging life of prayer. It gives

directly an indication that Novitiate is a place of prayer even to the visitor just because the Grotto and its surroundings can verify this. Many prayers are offered at the Grotto through holy Masses and personal prayers on behalf of the community, Congregation, Church, individuals and the whole world. Therefore, it is a great place for spiritual growth both at person and community level. Everybody is invited to offer his/ her petitions because our Mother is truly present and waiting to attend to our needs.

MAY GOD BE PRAISED!!!



MY ENCOUNTERS IN AFRICA

MY NEW HOME

My Experience In Africa can be counted to just 9 Months. But The Experience Is good natured and sounds substantial. Africa is the second largest continent consisting of 54 countries. However, I have not travelled to many countries. I just restrict myself to the country called Tanzania. I have experienced some spellbinding facts about Africa which I initially love to present in this article. Whenever Africa is mentioned, most people think of low standard of living and the issue of poor economy, lack of medical facility, transport, wars, terrorism, theft and life of insecurity. I was also not different from this notion until such time of introducing my life in Africa. Though my stay in Africa is quite short still I would say Africa is beyond our prejudices and preconceived ideas. I don't completely deny the fact that there are no challenges but I say challenges are not adventures.



I am well pleased with the environmental condition of Tanzania. The beautiful nature in Africa is the wealth of the country. It is really a healthy environment due to the presence of a good number of trees, mountains, lakes and the presence of fewer factories. I say we cannot overlook the beauty that nature has bestowed on this country.

The weather condition is always pleasant be it any season it remains always moderate not the extreme level. Tanzania is really a land of cultivation as people depend on the agriculture as their main industry generally combined with the cattle raising. The land is very fertile. I would simply define nature as a rich blessing over this country.



It is really heart touching to live my life in Tanzania, Africa. I need to admit the fact that people are so loving and welcoming more particularly to priests and religious. I have encountered at least some people from various continent and countries but people in Africa are quite different from them in the field of hospitality. They volunteer themselves with quite a lot of wishing even to the stranger before beginning a conversation or part of the conversation which depicts their openness to the people of other country and dignified hospitality. As a matter of fact, it encourages the foreigners to get into the healthy relationship as well as avoid the fear of being helpless in a new situation.

If I am not wrong I have never faced or heard of a country like Tanzania for the maintenance of peace. There are no wars, public nuisance, strikes or protest against the government though there exists the freedom of everything. However, Tanzania consists of people from various denomination and religions still there is no shade of religious violence.

With regard to our ministry in Africa, I learn the pastoral experience by going to the substations for the mass along with the fathers. I have witnessed people are very generous and cooperative concerning the church matters. They are very respectful towards the priests and religious. Although the church is very strong in Africa, it faces the sad affair of the lack of priests. It stands as an advantage for various denominations and faiths which is a serious threat and challenge to the church. Evangelization is still in progress. If we are able to work on this particular aspect, there is a greater success in our ministry.

The aspect of the education system is far from our imagination and perception. Years back the country has been under harsh condemnation for its reluctance in the field of education. But at this moment the situation is

different. People are much aware of the immediate need for an education. As I have been experiencing my life in one of the well-doing schools in the country I feel that the education system here is well advanced. The subjects I learned in higher secondary, students learn them in the primary. Kiswahili is one of the official languages in the country. It is commonly spoken and understood by the people of the country. In recent times the government, as well as the private institutions, encourage the school going children to converse in English.

No doubt the country is under the gradual development, peaceful and a safe country to live in yet it faces its challenging matters such as malaria, poverty, lack of hospitals, roads and educational institutions etc. It is evident that the church also collaborates with the government for the development of the country, the welfare of the people. The church is interested in bringing social and ethical awareness among the Christians as well as people of all faiths. We all hope and pray that the purpose of the ministry that we undergo comes true.

I state with true conviction that I am really glad to be a missionary in Africa



LUMEN CHRISTI DISPENSARY

Prayer of the faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise them up (James 5:15)

Lumen Christi Dispensary was started on 14th May 2014. It was a great dream of MSFS fathers especially Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel, the director of Lumen Christi Institute (LCI) and Thomas Kochuparambil, the administrator and Superior of LCI.



The dispensary was started for the people living in the village Majiya Chai and around. The people were suffering to get proper and good medical support. It was very difficult for them to get proper treatment. The

dispensary which they were having was very far and it was not equipped with ample things. People were not given enough medicine for the sickness that they were having. Often they got treatment or pain killer. They were not given adequate advice according to their needs. They find often that the doctors are missing in the dispensary. And even to go to the far dispensary they were not willing because of the transport. Even if they reach to this dispensary they were not given the needed medicine, often they were referred to the other medical stores.

After finding all these difficulties, the MSFS fathers started to think about starting a dispensary for that people and there is the birth of this Lumen Christi dispensary. As soon as this dispensary opened the people started coming for the treatment. And they found that they get good treatment and even the expense is very low than that of other dispensaries. People often getting good medical care and service they started to give information to the people in the other villages. Now people started coming more and more for different treatments and counseling. We also assist them with our prayers and providing them with sacramentals.



The dispensary functions in close collaboration with the local government. So the government is providing things for the pregnant ladies and children less than five years, when they attend the RCH clinic.

The dispensary is run by the MSFS fathers and the CMC sisters are in charge of the dispensary. Now two sisters are rendering their service to the dispensary. Including sisters, there are seven staffs in the dispensary.



The dispensary is giving different services such as:

1. Reproductive and child health (RCH)
2. Outpatient department (OPD)
3. Laboratory services (Lab)
4. Couple counseling
5. Youth counseling.

People from different corners of Arusha and Tanzania come for the treatment

here in the dispensary. The dispensary is keeping and providing all kinds of reports to the local government as per the request of the government. Every now and then they are coming for the inspection. Now we are asked to give all the reports and accounts of the dispensary to the diocese also. So we are giving reports and accounts to the government and diocese.

It works as a blessing to the people and Jesus works through the hands of the staff here in this dispensary.



FRANSALIAN COMMUNICATIONS MOROGORO- YOUTH FEST 2018

For the sixteenth time, Fransalian Communications Morogoro organized successfully the Inter-school cultural competitions which had the following items: Jiving, Igizo/Skit and Ngoma/Cultural Dance and pencil drawing (a newly added activity) and it took place on 17th March 2018, at Fransalian Primary School - Kigurunyembe, Morogoro. A total of six schools participated in the competitions. Comparing to the last years, this year the participation of the schools has come down. However, the spirit of the competition has not. They had done a wonderful job in bringing out the following themes with creativity and enthusiasm:

- Jiving: Artist is the mirror of the society; Moral decadence in the society; deep formation for good behaviors.
- Igizo /skit: Youthfulness is always a challenge; we fail to plan, we don't plan to fail; challenges in the current education system.
- Ngoma/Cultural Dance: Preserve the environment to build up the economy; a friend in need is a friend indeed; promotion of national values for national development.

The best performers have been awarded with certificates, trophies and gifts both as a school and individuals. We are very grateful to all who generously contributed to enabling us to conduct the Inter-School Cultural Competitions 2018.

FRANSALIAN COMMUNICATIONS ARUSHA - YOUTH FEST 2018

Fransalian Youth Fest, held on 10th March 2018, was an auspicious moment and a historical one in the lives of many students who attended it for the first time. A total of nine private and public schools participated in the event from Arumeru, Arusha and Moshi. The event was officially opened around 9:30 am with a prayer.

They competed in Jiving, Ngonjera, Group Song and Ngoma, with the following themes: "fighting poverty through hard work", "fighting corruption", and "the pride of our culture". The students were well organized that they competed in a good spirit of appreciating, supporting and learning from one other. More than 500 people; students, teachers and others guests witnessed this awesome event and were of full of appreciation and praise for the organization and the spirit of Fransalian Communications in educating the youth by helping them expose their talents.

Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvatill, the director of Fransalian communications appreciated the willingness of the teachers to train the students in the abovementioned items and to encourage them to persevere until the end of the event.

The Guest of Honor was Mrs. Neema Pronet, the Assistant Director of Marcas Debtors and Auctioneers Limited Arusha. In her wonderful and inspiring speech, she expressed her gratitude to the Fransalian Communications in uplifting the African culture especially in Tanzania. She went on to say that the zeal and the confidence the students expressed in the performance shows their love for the culture. She urged everyone to take up the responsibility in preserving the culture, which is one of the ways of building the country. The program was ended around 18:00 Hours with rewarding the winners and the national anthem.

Reported by Bro. Joseph Ssendendo MSFS





True JOY
is a matter of
BEING and
not a matter
of HAVING

