



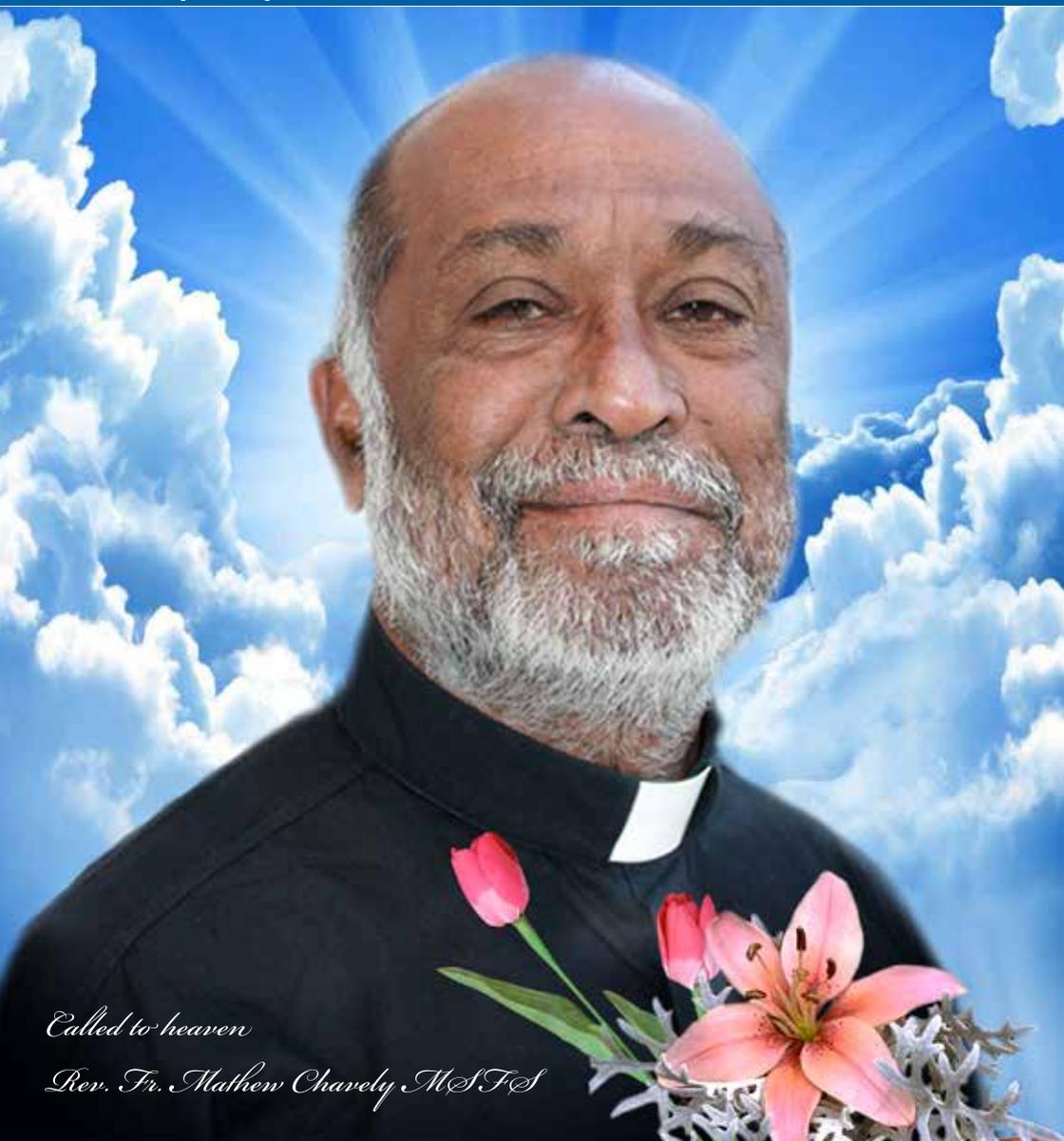
Vol.9 No. 2 Issue 16

July - Dec 2020

BARAKA

ZA FRANSALIANS

Half yearly news bulletin of MSFS in East Africa



Called to heaven

Rev. Fr. Mathew Chavely MSFS

Hearty Congratulations

to the new Provincial Curia of East Africa Province



Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS
(Provincial Superior)



Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal MSFS
(Admonitor and PCIC for Education)



Fr. Zachariah Burefero MSFS
(PCIC for Mission)



Fr. Robert Soosai Raj MSFS
(PCIC for SAIM)



Fr. Japhet Kirimi MSFS
(PCIC for Formation)



Fr. Reji Pendanath MSFS
(Provincial Bursar)

Do you wish to join hand with us?

- A prayer for the Mission
- Offering Mass intentions
- Sponsoring a candidate to priesthood
- Sponsoring an orphan child in his/her studies
- Supporting a development project in a Mission center

Contact Persons:

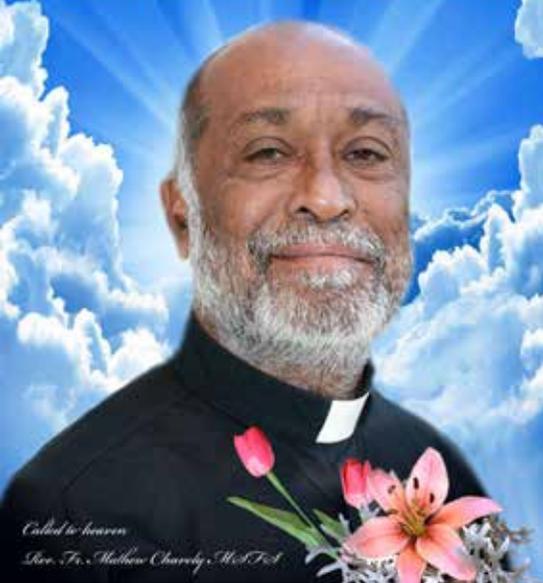
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“God blesses
abundantly a
cheerful giver”



C O N T E N T S



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 Rev. Fr. Mathew Chavely, M.S.F.S.*

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 comments are most welcome.

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Merry Christmas



Editor's Desk



Dear Readers of Baraka,

The 16th issue of Baraka is at hand. In this issue, we mainly focus on Parish Missions. Pope Francis recalls the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To mark the occasion, the Holy Father has proclaimed a "Year of Saint Joseph" from 8 December 2020, to 8 December 2021

In a new Apostolic Letter entitled Patris corde ("With a Father's Heart"), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

The Holy Father wrote Patris corde against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, "the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence," who nonetheless played "an incomparable role in the history of salvation."

In this issue we also pay homage to our Great Missionary who was close to our hearts: Fr. Mathew Chavely MSFS. May he rest in peace!

I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to this edition of Baraka. I wish all the readers of Baraka God's Blessings.

Happy Christmas & Happy New Year

*Yours devotedly in Christ,
Fr. Martin John Pندانath MSFS*





Message from Fr. Provincial

My dear Confres and friends of Fransalians,

Christmas and New Year Greetings to you from East Africa!

This issue of BARAKA focuses on Missions. *In Evangelii Gaudium* quoting from *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope Francis tells us that “there must be no lessening of impetus to preach the Gospel to those who are far from Christ, because this is the first task of the Church. Indeed, today missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the Church and the missionary task must remain foremost” (EG 15).

Ours is a missionary Congregation. Our Founder Fr. Peter Mermier was a zealous missionary who valued missions above everything else saying “I want missions”. The environment in which he grew made him to dedicate his life for the mission of Christ. He and his companions through Parish preaching missions brought about Christian renewal in Savoy and surrounding areas. He was inspired by the teaching and missionary endeavours of St. Francis de Sales. Our patron and our founder constantly inspire us to be missionaries to the core.

Fransalians are spread in 32 countries all over the world. Everywhere they adhere to the commissioning of Jesus our Saviour to proclaim the good news to all people. We are present in 11 countries in the African Continent building up Christian communities through pastoral ministry, education of youth and through various social apostolates. The people are thirsting for the spiritual nourishment which the secular world cannot satisfy. There are several challenges that we experience in fulfilling our missionary mandate such as superstitious beliefs and shallow faith of people. Therefore, there is a constant need for renewal and evangelization in Africa.

Most of our missions in East Africa are frontier missions where primary evangelization and deepening of faith are required. Our priests are overwhelmed by the vastness of parishes, sub-parishes and small Christian communities. One of the major challenges that we face in East Africa is lack of adequate number of priests to cater to the growing number of Catholics. The Church reaches out to the people through the commitment and dedication of both men and women religious and the laity. Catechists and small Christian community leaders play a vital role in spreading the Good News of Christ in Africa.

In this issue, we remember Fr. Mathew Chavely, one of the greatest missionaries we ever had in our Congregation. He worked 11 years in Andhra Pradesh, India and 30 years in East Africa particularly in Tanzania and Uganda. He is a model for all missionaries. May he intercede for our missions in Africa!

As the whole world is grappling with Coronavirus, let us not lose hope but go ahead with trust in God. Let us turn lockdowns, social distancing, travel restrictions etc., as opportunities to encounter God and to spread the message of Christ among our fellow human beings.

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and a grace-filled New Year 2021, I remain.

Yours devotedly in Christ Jesus

**Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS
Provincial, MSFS East Africa**





The MSFS Mission Today:

Doing what we like OR Liking (and doing) what we have to do?

Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS

General Secretary for Mission

Easy way is not always the Right way

Doing what you like and liking what you do. This is the “motivational style” today for most of the people. Here, one’s life and activities are moved by tendencies. Life goes smoothly, and one has the satisfaction of doing something which gives one joy. However, this would not be the right approach to life, especially when it comes to exercise the apostolate in religious life.

One needs to ask the question: *What is it that I have to do, rather than what is it that I like to do?* This is very relevant for every religious today. Every founder or foundress in one’s special call, to found a religious congregation or society, was given by God a specific task to accomplish through the apostolate of the members of that particular Institute. Every Institute is a divine project introduced and entrusted to the members in a specific time in the history.

Servant of God Fr. Peter Marie Mermier, the Founder of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and the Co-founder of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, was a man of firm resolve. He had passion for what he had to do. He was convinced that he should look for the lost sheep.

Patience – A Must for a Missionary

After Bishop Pierre Joseph Rey assumed the office on October 2, 1832, Fr Mermier and some of his companions went to see him and requested his approval for the new Congregation. The Bishop asked them to wait for some time so that he could test them and study their project.

Fr. Mermier was ready to wait, but not his companions. They got discouraged. They had apprehensions about the stand of the new Bishop about the permission to start the Congregation. Some of them were moved by the fear of failure of their new venture. They had uncertainties about the outcome of the Mission Preaching. Besides, they were impatient.



Some of them left the group. Others expressed their plan to go. In such a challenging situation, Fr Mermier remained patient without any outward show of emotion and spoke with firmness that he wanted to continue the mission: and he said, “I want Missions, I am so resolved.” What a great challenge it must have been for Fr. Peter Mermier! Remember! It was only in 1838, the official approval was given to the Congregation. It took six long years. Fr. Mermier was patient.

The Spiritual Pre-requisites for the Missionary

Faith in God. Fr. Mermier grew up in circumstances where faith in God was challenged. But his family set for him an example of deep trust in God. As we know, faith flourished when the believers faced persecution.

Passion for the Mother Church. Throughout his life, Fr. Mermier came across situations in which the Catholic faith was despised

*He that beats the drum for the mad man to dance is no better than the mad manhimself.
- African proverb*





and ridiculed. He knew how much he was deeply convinced of the stand of the Catholic Church.

Heartfelt compassion for the people of God. Fr. Mermier had it. The mother of Fr. Mermier was an inspiration to him. He was genuinely sensitive to situations of the needs of others. Just as Mary and Jesus were very sensitive to the needs of the others, so too was Fr. Mermier.

So, Faith in God; Passion for the Catholic Faith; Compassion for the people of God: these three elements are the basic requirements for a Fransalian or anyone for that matter, to preach the Missions, oriented towards the renewal and rejuvenation of life of faith.

Today if we find ourselves not in the way as our holy founder would have expected us, we need not look for the diagnosis anywhere else. We only need to check and see if we have those three basic qualities or elements that motivated Fr. Mermier to be a mission preacher.

Compassion moves the Heart

Therefore, as God's chosen people, as God's holy ones and as God's beloved ones, clothe yourselves with heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (cf. Col. 3:12)

In this list of virtues, we see compassion as the first one. Compassion is a force within me to feel for the needy situation of the other and motivates me to act.

The real starting point for the miracle of multiplication was neither the hunger of the people nor the scarcity or availability of bread and fish. It was COMPASSION. For various reasons, Jesus felt compassion for the people.

Fr. Mermier felt that “his own” people were getting lost. He felt the pain for their unholy way of life. He was convinced that he needed to act to bring to their notice their wrong doings and to persuade them in love to live a life of true faith and true holiness.

Even if he had faith in God and in the Church, had he no feeling for the other, he would not have bothered about preaching the Missions.

The Virtue of Zeal

Here we find the virtue of zeal of Fr. Mermier. At the time of giving canonical approval for our Congregation, Mgr Ray cited and emphasized the word ZEAL. This zeal was a unique characteristic of St. Francis de Sales. St. Francis, the apostle of Chablais, was zealous missionary because his heart was overflowing with God's love and as he said to himself “zeal is nothing but the ardour of love”.

A Missionary of St. Francis de Sales is someone whose heart is entirely filled with God's love after the example of the heart of St. Francis de Sales. Fr. Mermier too had this zeal. As Fransalians, we learn from our founder that zeal which burns in our hearts, calls for renouncement and generosity and urges us onwards to true missionary activities.

Blessings

May God bless us with the same spirit and the missionary zeal of Mother Mary, who bearing Jesus, went to greet Elizabeth. May the prayers of St. Francis de Sales and Fr. Mermier give every MSFS the zeal to look for the lost ones. May we have the courage to go to the peripheries.



Relevance of Parish Mission Preaching In The Apostolate of Parochial Ministry In Facilitating Spiritual And Faith Renewal In The Context of Highly Secularized And Materialistic World

Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil MSFS

As a consequence of French Revolution the Catholic Church in France went through a turbulent time where the society was highly secularized, the faith of the faithful were disrupted and traditional sacramental ministry was ineffective. The need of the hour was to be creative in the pastoral apostolate. Fr. Peter Mermier and few of his contemporary diocesan priests from the diocese of Chambéry and Annecy rose to the occasion in contemplating deeper into the pastoral situation, committed themselves to renewal of faith of the faithful and laid a solid foundation towards the spiritual renewal of the faithful. They succeeded in clearly formulating a method of preaching 'missions' which is known as 'Parish Mission Preaching' (PMP). PMP is a method of pastoral action which is meticulously prepared with proper guidelines and pastoral actions. There are clear records about the parish missions which Fr. Mermier and his priest's friends preached. It is recorded that between 1832 and 1862 more than 620 missions and retreats were given in 246 parishes. Along with Fr. Mermier and the diocesan priests, other groups of missionaries worked successfully at evangelizing in the dioceses of Chambéry and Annecy, especially the Capuchins, the Jesuits, the Redemptorists, the La Sallette etc.



The primordial apostolate of the MSFS was parish mission preaching (PMP). Fr. Mermier was fascinated by St. Francis de Sales, his spirituality, his approach and method of revival of catholic faith among the people of Chablais. In renewing and reviving the faith of the people of Chablais SFS employed powerful and effective preaching: He combined in himself knowledge and virtue; he employed a persuasive approach motivating people to love God and love one's neighbor; he was effective in preaching. It was as a result of incessant interior preparation, habitual recollectedness, intimate communion with God, study and meditation on sacred writings, and continued vigilance of his own heart and interior affection. Fr. Mermier adapted in his mission preaching the method of preaching and catechesis SFS employed in tackling humanism and secularism in his own time.

In the vision of Fr. Mermier the Parish Mission Preaching aimed at faith renewal and specific catechesis targeting the entire faithful of a particular parish. It involved long preparation and meticulous planning. The following are the salient feature of the module prepared by Fr. Mermier and the

primordial preaching team:

- a. In the vision of Fr. Mermier 'team spirituality, community living and prayer' are essential components of Parish Mission Preaching. The PMP was prepared together, executed together, evaluated together as





a pastoral method to renew the faith of the parishioners. It was the outcome of community living and community missionary's spirituality. The PMP was to be suffused with Salesian spirituality and very human and compassionate understanding and approach to the people. It presupposes the wholesome integrity of the preaching team which is a praying community who journeyed with the people in the journey of renewal.

- b. Usually the parish mission was given over a sufficiently prolonged period of time for 10 to 15 days with sessions in morning and sessions in the afternoon.
- c. One of the essential components of PMP was family visits which ensured personal and incarnational expression of God's visit to the family. Prior to the mission the team ensured few days of their presence in the parish where PMP was to start. They visited the families to gauge the spiritual climate of the parish, the problems and difficulties that the people encountered, and create in them a spirit of expectancy and longing for parish mission experience. Modules of the PMP were creatively prepared to be a lively, living, engaged and participatory experience for the participants.
- d. The PMP was aimed at catechesis of all the various groups of people of the parishes – the children, the young, the married, and the old. The PMP focused on confession, counselling, reconciliation, and forgiveness.
- e. The PMP was to be suffused with Salesian spirituality and very human and compassionate understanding and approach to the people. It presupposes the wholesome integrity

of the preaching team which is a praying community who journeyed with the people in the journey of renewal.

- f. To create the appropriate spiritual climate the PMP programme was intense with prayer, reflection and spiritual exercises.
- g. The mission team needs to be a praying community so that the faithful are inspired to follow their good example. The mission team took part in 'The Comment': short Morning Prayer, meditation, and examination of life.
- h. Morning service: examination of conscience – self-assessment and evaluation; Eucharistic celebration; teaching; communion.
- i. Evening service: teaching catechism; visit to the Blessed Sacrament; teaching.

To be effective in PMP the preaching team took care of the following:

- a. Sermons were prepared taking into consideration the need of the special groups.
- b. Use of ceremonies, demonstrations and devotions to get the faithful involved and active in the spiritual journey.
- c. Counselling, confession and reconciliation – an experience of a significant, hope filled, joyful and transformative experience of the mercies of God.
- d. Revitalizing the confraternities of the parish.
- e. The missionaries served as arbitrators of various disputes.





- f. Respect and centrality of the Word of God.
 - g. Enough space was given for rest and disengagement between parish missions – for physical and spiritual rest, for evaluation and for preparing for the next parish mission.
 - h. Parish mission preaching must be a witness of personal sanctity and a striving for personal integrity and to the spirit and spirituality of SFS.
 - i. Lasting concern for the people whom the missionaries had ministered.
- c. One hour of common study of the Bible, Love of God, and Introduction to devout life.
 - d. Two hours for planning, preparation, evaluation of PMP.
 - e. The leader of the Team prepares the two day time table incorporating among other matters the above exercises.
 - f. At least twice a year meet the Provincial, give a detailed report of the team and its activities and receive guidance and direction from him.

Understanding of PMP Team Spirituality

Spirituality is a way of life that progressively transforms and integrates all aspects of one's life. It is a way of life that helps a person to transcend all that divides and keeps apart and find unity of purpose. It is a way of life that permeates one's personality and makes one an authentic being.

MSFS Congregational Spirituality is the charism of the Congregation. It is a blend of Salesian spirituality, communitarian spirituality and missionary spirituality. The dynamics of growing in PMP team spirituality is through sharing in the vision of PMP of Fr. Mermier; commitment to the same shown in perseverance and conviction of its effectivity in today's world; regular, consistent common exercises to be specified in detail and accepted by the team members.

The exercises proposed to build PMP Team Spirituality are:

- a. Meet for intensive PMP team growth once in two months for two days exclusively for PMP concerns.
- b. One hour of adoration before the

Module of PMP in the context of the pastoral situation in East Africa

The vision of Fr. Mermier was to evolve a method of renewing the faith of the people in the particular context in which the people lived. Thus he prepared a module of 'Parish Mission Preaching' to fit in the context and situation of the people. Today as we are missionaries in East Africa we need to evolve a module of 'Parish Mission Preaching' which would take into consideration the context and situation of the people of East Africa. The following could be a possible module of PMP which could be considered to be used in faith renewal programs in the parochial ministry in East Africa.

1. Forming a community of parish mission preaching team: To be effective it is essential and prerequisite to insist on this community experience before undertaking PMP. It is essential to identify 3 or 4 confreres to undertake this mission, even if it is not full time, to come together and live together for 2 to 3 days to intensively pray, reflects together Word of God, and meticulously plan





for the particular PMP to be conducted in a particular parish. They should be persons convinced of the PMP, having simplicity of life and living a life of witness. It will facilitate 'team spirituality' after the heart of SFS and a smooth working together to conduct the PMP. The whole mark of the team ought to be practice of Salesian virtues – humility, gentleness, compassion, prudence, patience, simplicity, generosity, hospitality, and trust in God.

2. Visitation to the families: Till a proper PMP team is appointed in the Province it is to be worked out how to facilitate the family visits. The PMP team itself to visit the families may not be practical in the present context. It could be worked out with close collaboration with the Parish Priest and other personnel involved in parochial ministry in a particular parish. A detailed report of the situation of the parish/all the 'Small Christian communities' (SCC) highlighting the problems and challenges facing in particular situation of the parish. It would in a great way assist the PMP team adequately prepare the PMP.
3. Duration of the PMP in East Africa, taking into consideration the particular situation in East Africa, could be for 5 days. It should be arranged according to the convenience and availability of the people. The possible time could be from 3pm to 7pm with a flexibility to arrange according to the convenience of the people.
4. Prayer is the foundation of PMP. Adequate time should be set apart for prayer during PMP. Eucharistic adoration, celebration of the Eucharist and evening prayer should be part of the PMP.
5. Adequate time should be set apart for family counseling and sacrament of reconciliation during the PMP.
6. As far as possible the important elements of Mermerian PMP ought to be followed – such as prayer, well prepared homily, well prepared catechesis on varied subjects, interactive teaching, etc. Have enough personnel to teach so that the PMP can take care of the spiritual needs of the entire parish community (children, youth, women, men, elderly, etc.).
7. It is important to have a support team who is well prepared to assist the PMP in singing and dancing, praying together, drama and skits, storytelling, etc.
8. At the end of the PMP the team should be ready with a comprehensive report about the pastoral situation of the parish and present it to the Parish Priest for future follow up. The complete cooperation of the Parish personnel is essential for the success of the PMP.
9. The PMP team should be in regular contact with the Parish Priest with regard to the progress of the spiritual life of the faithful in the parish. If needed a second PMP could be conducted after a period of time to deepen the faith of the people.
10. Periodical report need to be send to the Provincial with regard to the situation of the PMP team and its functioning.
11. Cohesiveness of the PMP team has to be maintained through periodical coming together to spend time in prayer and evaluating the efficacy of the functioning of the PMP team.





MSFS Parishes in East Africa

Name of the Parish	Establishment	MSFS arrival	Population	Sub-stations	Small Christian Communities
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Tanzania

Archdiocese of Arusha					
St. Francis de Sales Catholic Parish, Ngurdoto	2010	2010	3000	6	48
St. Stephen the Martyr Parish, Maji ya Chai	2010	2010	2500	1	33
St. Francis de sales parish, Kikunde	2019	2019	4500	7	45
Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam					
St. Francis de Sales Parish, Mkuza	2004	2004	4500	7	164
Mother of Mercy Parish, Mji Mpya	2008	2008	7654	5	129
Archdiocese of Dodoma					
St. Francis de sales parish, Ibihwa	2019	2018	8000	6	89
Diocese of Morogoro					
St. Francis De Sales Parish, Dumila	2000	1998	6500	9	60
St. Francis De Sales Mission, Lukobe		1992	2000		26
St. Francis De Sales Mission, Mkambrani		2002	800		7
Archdiocese of Tabora					
Our Lady of Grace Parish, Lutubu	1925	1989	8000	26	126
St. Charles Lwanga and his Companions Parish, Bukene	2002	1989	26902	32	95
St. Francis de Sales Parish, Kashishi	2017	1991	7000	31	56

Kenya

Diocese of Machakos					
St. Joseph's Catholic Parish, Mlolongo	2000	1997	3400	5	44
Diocese of Meru					
St. Michael Catholic Parish, Chera	1997	1996	9528	15	65

Uganda

Diocese of Jinja					
St. Francis De Sales Catholic Parish, Kalamira	2018	2018	4500	28	105
Archdiocese of Tororo					
St. Jude Parish, Osia	1972	2002	23000	12	126
St. Bruno Sserunkuma Catholic Parish, Agurunu	1970	2003	2750	4	54
St. Francis De Sales Parish, Iyolwa	2015	2015	12579	8	60





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Date 20th September 2020.....

RE: REV. FR. MATHEW CHAVELY

Fr. Mathew Chavely, was the parish priest of St. Francis De Sales Parish, Mkuza, Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam, from 2008-2014. Fr. Chavely was an exemplary religious missionary priest, with great enthusiasm for serving the people of God.

For sure, we lost a wonderful and holy religious Priest. I knew him as the parish priest of St. Francis De Sales Parish, Mkuza and also as one of the senate members of the Diocese. Many have benefited from his missionary zeal for the salvation of souls, and passionate pastoral commitment. I convey my deepest condolence to all the Fransalian Fathers and their associates.

Indeed, Fr. Mathew will be remembered and cherished for his goodness. And will continue to live in our hearts and memories.

May his soul rest in peace!

With deepest sentiments,

Polycarp Cardinal Pengo
Archbishop Emeritus of Dar es salaam





A Tribute to Rev. Fr. Mathew Chavely MSFS

Fr. Augustine Mangatt MSFS

Fr. Mathew Chavely was born of Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Mary Chavely on January 06, 1949 at

Cherpumkal, Diocese of Pala, Kottayam Dt. Kerala, India. He was baptized on January 11, at Holy Cross Church, Cherpumkal. He leaves behind six sisters. His brother, who was a priest died in 1995. Fr. Mathew had his primary education at Holy Cross School from 1954 - 1961 and his secondary school studies at St. Anthony's High School, Mutholy from 1961 - 1964.

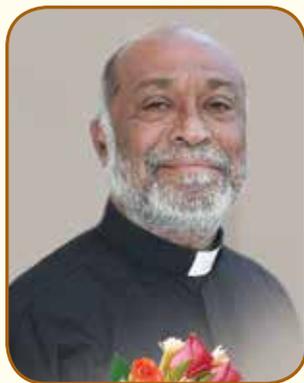
He joined SFS Seminary Ettumanoor in 1968.

For his Philosophical studies, he was sent to JDV Pune from 1970 to 1973. He made his first profession on May 04, 1974. His Regency was at LRG School, Anantapur from 1974 to 1975 after which he returned to JDV, Pune for his Theological studies from 1975 to 1978. He completed his BA studies in Pune University (1976 - 78). Later he obtained a Masters degree in English Literature from Andhra University (1987 - 1989).

He made his final commitment in religious life on January 23, 1978 and was ordained a deacon on the following day. He was ordained a priest on May 30, 1978 at Holy Cross Church, Cherpunkal, by

Rt. Rev. Joseph Pallickaparambil, the then Bishop of Pala.

It was noteworthy that he had a great desire to become a priest from his childhood. But being the eldest of the two boys and seven siblings- six sisters, he knew that it is his responsibility, to be at home to take care of the responsibility of the family. He made him hesitant to join the priesthood, not sure of what to do. With that uncertainty he went to Bangalore to work, staying in the house of his paternal uncle, and passes shorthand and accountancy. While staying there, he had once an intimate talk with his



younger brother, revealing his desire to dedicate his life as a priest but the compulsion of taking the responsibility of helping his father on the house matters, made him go to Bangalore. Then his brother assured him that he will take care of the family and so he would be free go to become priest. The following year, he joined the Minor Seminary, at Ettumanoor. But after one or two years of his priesthood, his brother also joined the Seminary to become a priest. Thus they both left the care of the family to the Lord, who called them both to become his beloved priests. Unfortunately, he lost his brother in an air crash in Canada, where he worked.

Friendship pours out its grace upon all the actions of him/her who is loved, however little ground of favour there may be. ~St. Francis de Sales





His early years of missionary life as a priest was spent in Thanukku and Attili, in Andhra Pradesh. Thanukku was in its initial stage. So with a lot of difficulties but with determination and trust in God, and with hard work, he brought up Attili into a flourishing Parish. His tireless hard work made a victim of diabetes and blood pressure. Despite all these, he decided to volunteer for East African missions. He worked hard for 30 years, in the East African Mission, learned the language, culture, and became one with the people. No doubt, he was a dedicated missionary after the heart of our Founder, with a genuine zeal of our beloved Patron. His death a very great loss for East African Province and to the MSFS Congregation.

From my personal experience, Fr. Mathew was a wonderful, friendly person, humble and simple in his lifestyle. He was always ready to help anyone at any time. He was always available to anyone who needed his help and care. He had a great ability to entertain people who come in to contact with him- with fun and wits. Once

anyone comes in contact with him, he will make a deep impression in that person, winning his heart.

He was a dedicate and committed missionary, a good friend to many, very fatherly and deeply spiritual, with deep insight into upright Christian life. Thus he guided and directed many, who happened to come his way, a real follower of St. Francis de Sale as a spiritual guide.

He had their ability to bring together estranged friends and relationships. With his deep respect for others and his sensitivity to their feelings, he could win the hearts of many and feel one with their struggles. His ability to sympathize with anyone who suffers and with his wits and laughter, he could break any tensed life situation and atmosphere. The congregation and the Church have lost a very committed missionary, a dedicated priest and a good man, for all of who knew him, lost an admirable friend and a great missionary. May God give him the crown of eternal glory.



*"Please",
"thank you",
and "sorry"
are "words that open up the
road to a good family life."*



DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME

Sr. Regina Adam ISM

It is great moment of joy and consolation for me to speak about the life and some of the virtues of Fr. Mathew Chavely. But I will emphasize on five points that is **his simplicity, humility, life of prayer, devotion to Eucharist, love of God and neighbour.**

Humility was his garments which accompanied his vocation and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. His humility concealed the kind of person he was. He was at home with all people, the big and small, the poor and the rich, the educated and less educated. He was never a proud person and lived a simple life. He was generous in his words and actions. His humility made him to love all and to be loved by all. He lived what he believed.

He loved God above all things and taught the people to love God through the devotion to the

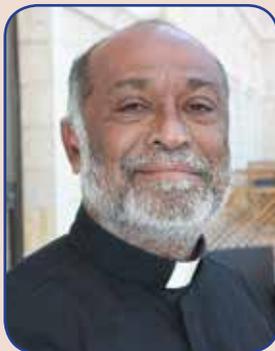
Blessed Virgin Mary and recitation of the Holy Rosary daily. He freely distributed the rosaries and taught people how to recite rosary. Fr. Mathew was always grateful to God and never ceased to pray.

I cannot speak about the prayer life Fr. Mathew without mentioning about his love for Blessed Eucharist. The Blessed Eucharist was his central focus in his apostolate. He celebrated the Holy Eucharist with great love and faith.

These are just a few comments about Fr. Mathew but with all this I here the voice of

Fr. Mathew for each one of us, not to remember him with only words and crying but as Jesus told his disciples **"if you love me do all that I have taught you in remembrance of me"**.

Let us be grateful to god for giving us Fr. Mathew. May he continue to intercede for us.



"All of us are called [by God] to be free, all are called to be sons and daughters, and each, according to his or her own responsibilities, is called to combat modern forms of enslavement"

- Pope Francis

A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal. – Pope Francis, Laudato Si



In memories of Fr. Mathew Chavely

Sr. Daisy Jose CMC



It's my great pleasure to remember Fr. Mathew Chavely who hails from the Parish Cherppunkal, a place where many vocations have blossomed.

I had a close relationship with his family since i worked with his sister in the mission. It was Fr. Mathew whom i met first time in the MSFS Congregation.

I could learn the simplicity of life from the life of Fr. Mathew. Nothing hindered in the life of Fr. Mathew. In his initial stage of life here, he carried a bag and using bicycle to reach to the people. He was a true missionary and was very committed to his call.

He was very faithful to his mission and to his authorities. He had a good relationship with our CMC Congregation, perhaps since his sister was working with us.

When he was serving in Arusha Archdiocese, he found time to visit our

convent. Ones we meet him we could never forget him because of his loving personality and care.

He never bothered about his health. To serve Jesus and to become witness to him, it was his aim in life and he practiced it.

St. Francis De Sales said: Bloom where you are planted. Wherever he worked he fulfilled the words of SFS. The memories of Fr. Mathew will always be there in the minds of every people.

I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. (John 10:11)

He was Shepherd to all the people with whom he came into contact with. A true Shepherd is one who cares for his flock with great love. Through out his life he was caring for the people till his death.

We also remember him in our prayers and Lord may grant him eternal bliss.

May he rest in peace.



When you know how much
GOD IS IN LOVE WITH YOU
then you can only live your life *radiating* that love.
- ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA -





Fr. Mathew Chavely

our best advocate before the LORD JESUS

Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil MSFS

Very often Fr. Mathew Chavely used to say the vocation is so mysterious and we should use all means to preserve these vocations. His mother Mary Joseph knew that the vocation is coming from God. On 40th day of his birth his mother took him to the Church and offered to the Lord without knowing what this offering could mean.

Though Fr. Mathew had gone for the secretarial job in madras city, he realized the inner call to become a good missionary for which he chose the MSFS. Together with me we had the option to join the Diocese of Visakhapatnam or the diocese of Amravati but we all kept this call to the congregation on the feast day of sacred heart in 1968.

He had both ecclesiastical degrees in Philosophy (B.Ph.) as well as in theology (B.Th.) from Pune Seminary. Simultaneously he took BA as well as MA in English Literature without wasting additional time. During his regency at anathapure (1974-1975) he learned from Fr. Devasi Kuzhupil to do the pioneering work outside the territory of Visakhapatnam. As a young priest he proved how to be a true MSFS in Tanuku Mission in India.

When he was in the realm of glory only, he opted for the African mission. The context is that out of 13 priests opted for African mission only 2 turned for the mission. How to ask from the mother to go to Africa was a herculean task. He told the mother from Visakhapatnam it





takes three days journey to reach home but from Africa the same day we can reach home. After coming to Tanzania he had gone to Ugandan mission as well for pioneering work. He encouraged the other missionaries and built up Christian communities. There is no one else who had taken so much trouble for the local vocations. He gave a helping hand to the formation houses by talks, sacraments and spiritual directions. He also encouraged the faithful to make contributions for the formation houses. At. Lububu and Osia he made shrines and pilgrim centres.

After his work at Lububu, the new mission Bukene was made bifurcating from lububu. By the time he finished his work in Kahama-mbulu the parish was divided into three. At Mkuza(Kibaha) he built a beautiful parish church and one outstation was made into a parish. The priests who reached the new parish was so much excited to see the church and presbytery and the good Christian communities. In the near future as the priests available so more new parishes will be created from the outstations.

Fr. Mathew Chavely A man of Prayer

For his prayer, zeal for the souls, and simplicity the patron saint of the priests, cure de ars- St. John Mary Vianey was his model. He found joy in continual prayer and meditation. Everyday he recited the full rosary (mysteries of joy, sorrow glorious as well as luminous). For each mystery he had a special intention – for the missionary vocation, strengthening the families, faithfulness of the priests, to avoid drunkenness etc. he always dressed up like sage (loose pants and a

saffron kurtha). In spite of the diabetics and other ailments very often he fasted and made penances.

He was a great devotee of St. John Paul II. He knew by heart the history of the papacy especially of the popes of the modern time with political, social, and economical background. He knew each one's contribution to the church as well as to the universe. I remember one day both of us went to see the pope in Tabora stadium. Since there was sufficient time both of us decided to visit the Blessed Sacrament in the cathedral. That particular time the pope also entered the cathedral. He wanted to catch hold of the popes' hand like a child. (I was under the impression why to disturb the great people.) Anyhow the pope noted him and gave him a rosary.

He found time to recite the divine mercy rosary and the rosary of mother of sorrows daily. While travelling as far as possible he did not want to drive the car that he could recite as many rosaries as possible. He prepared always for the holy mass and he encountered the risen lord in his prayers.

Fr. Mathew: A priest implemented "I want Missions"

Though our beloved founder Fr. Peter mermier said I Want Missions, some youngsters in India started saying 'I want missions, but you go'. Though it is a joke Fr. Mathew considered it as an insult to the founder. The founder could not physically go to the missions because he had to take the responsibility to encourage vocations, train them and find out finance to support the missions.





I was beneficiary without asking

No one told our blessed mother to visit and to stay with her cousin Elizabeth for three months. Same way without any request he fasted and fed me, observing the food was not sufficient those days. The rector had so much financial crisis for the construction the building of the seminary, and the problem of the bank. In Pune for the theology entrance exam he together with Fr. Gabriel A. gave me the coaching. Seeing the best performance the professors told in public, 'if not this an entrance test. We could give you the degree certificate'. The last help he gave in the seminary was to type out my final B.Th. paper.

In this province hardly any missionary whom he had not given a coaching in Swahili. He made sure how to read and express the language. He initiated the new missionaries to go to village and introduced the local customs.

His prayers were efficacious

The last moment our provincial spoke to Fr. Mathew was to inform that the borehole in his present parish at Kikunde is successful. He thanked God and Fr. Provincial.

There are two important problems in the missions, which solved through prayers. First was at Kahama-mbulu. the missionary associate Fr. Joseph G. gifted a nice car 'landcruiser Hardtop' to this mission. This area being boarding to Rwanda and Burundi the thieves used to steal such cars. One day his assistant (Fr. Jose E.) was coming back after the village apostolate with sisters and catechist. As he was entering the parish compound the car was taken at the gunpoint leaving them on the road.

Fr. Mathew, hearing the news went to the chapel and prayed 'let the thieves take car to the off-road and be stuck in the mud'. Exactly the prayers were heard – they took the car to the off-road and it was stuck in the mud. The police found the car and gave back the car to the mission. Now this car is kept at our kola theology Study house for the future priests to practice driving.

The second incident took place at mkuza after the famous charismatic convention. The lay leaders took the offering money to the parish office that they could count and entrust Fr. Mathew. But at night some thieves got inside the office and stole the full money. Hearing the sound Fr. Mathew went to the chapel and prayed. While hearing whistle of the police the thieves started running through the short cut via cemetery. In that hurry the moneybag was stuck on the crosses of the graveyard. Leaving the money they ran for life. Thus his prayers were heard.

The last day (3rd sept 2020, First Friday)

It was a very busy day for Fr. Mathew Chavely as usual he got up early in the morning said prayers and rosary and went to the parish after the holy Mass he heard so many confessions. After assisting in the parish he started visiting the relations and the others missionaries that next day he could go to our mission house at Angamaly to prepare himself to come back to Tanzania.

One lady, the mother of some of our missionaries advised Fr. Mathew 'now you can remain back at the home parish'. He did not like this comment and as a negative reaction he looked at her side ways. And again in the evening he went





to parish Church for the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and helping out at the parish. After the night prayers he greeted all individually at home in the name of Jesus and went to bed. By 11pm he got up feeling something unusual. While going to the hospital he breathed his last in the Lord.

RIP.

Some highlights

The last few years of Fr. Mathew's health conditions were very poor. I requested Fr. Provincial not to appoint him for the pioneering work in the new mission. But what to do, Fr. Chavely himself was volunteering himself.

His zeal for the mission, simplicity, and life of prayer is a great model not only for the MSFS missionaries but all the Christians. Both in words and actions he kept the virtue of purity. Always he was obedient to the superior and the ecclesiastical authorities. He kept the rules and regulations of the nations. With him the new MSFSess has come and proved in his life all the virtues of St. Francis de sales and the Zeal of Fr. Mermer can be put into practice.

He is a man of great memory all the birthdays of confreres he knew by heart. He knows our needs and weaknesses too. He is interceding for us to Jesus. Already he gave for me some unimaginary favours. Like good health, diabetic under control, the high blood pressure is disappeared and I am able to eat the chicken egg. As we pray for him to intercede for us and pray for the canonization we shall try to implement some of his virtues. May the name of Jesus be glorified.

His body is buried at the place where we started our missionary formation. He can say some jokes with his formators, friends and all the three who have died from East Africa Province. He lives in heaven and no one can wipe out his memory from us.

The congregation insist that every confrere should make half hour adoration before the Blessed Sacrament daily. But Fr. Mathew found time even 2 hours for it. He not only recruited vocations for congregation but also for other congregation. There was one vocation talk about African mission at our Juniorate. Most of them opted for Africa. Unfortunately the superiors cancelled the option and allowed only some to come to Africa. At tanuku mission he encouraged some lady teachers to become missionaries. One among them is the present superior general of DSFS. In our Morogoro primary school even today this congregation is helping us.

Here I shard with you only some thoughts about Fr. Mathew Chavely. Each one will have different stories to share about him but every one forces in one fact that he was a man of God, a convinced and committed Zealous missionary of MSFS. He says with St. Paul 'nothing can separate me from the love Christ' (Rom 8:35-39). Another passage he used in the junior seminary for the speech practice was that of the last judgement ' whatever you did to the least these you did it to me..' (Mt 25:34-46).

We thank the lord of harvest for giving Fr. Mathew to the church, to MSFS, particularly for the East Africa Province. He had influenced many to strengthen their commitment for the church. Let his prayers for us be efficacious.





What I know about Fr. Mathew Chavelil MSFS

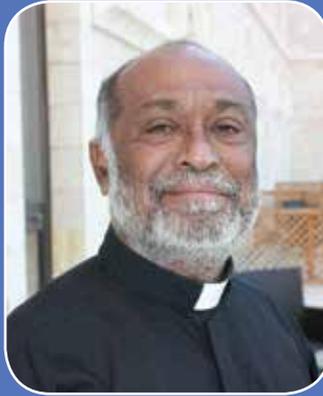
Richard Ojendo-Mkuza Christian

I received with great shock and sadness the news of the passing away of Fr. Mathew Chavelil MSFS. I just said to myself: A prayerful priest, humble, simple and calm who kept his mind focused on the eternal and lived his everyday life for it has gone to where he belongs. I used to look at him as a living saint. He was personally a friend, a friend of my family and above all a friend of all the people he met especially those who needed his help. He was a good news to all the people especially the needy. This would be manifested very often when he visited Mkuza after transfer -The Christians used to cheer and celebrate him and wanted to hear a healing word from him. What a loss in the world but definitely a gain in the heaven.

It is a huge challenge to write about Fr Mathew Chavelil -who lived a pious life- because there is a lot to learn from his life both spiritually and mentally. I will share a few of what I will live to remember him and thank God for giving me the opportunity to meet him during my life:

- **God is everything**

- He relied everything in the power of God and thus he insisted and preached to Christians about the power of prayer to God on everything.



- He manifested a commitment to dedicate his heart, soul and mind to God through his daily life. He always wished to venture and live his missionary life in the countries fiercely hostile to Catholicism and where there were civil wars like Congo and Sudan.

- He always pleaded people he met to pray for him to God and promised to pray for them too so that God could bless them.

Whenever I spoke to him before completing out talks he would tell me to pray for him.

- He disliked violence, losing temper, becoming angry and rushing to judgement or decisions on anything because he believed that everything would be under care of the Lord.

- **The Holy Eucharist**

- He helped to foster Eucharistic Adoration in the Christians life at Mkuza. He preached on the importance of having a time to spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacramental.
- He had processions carrying monstrance with the Eucharistic Host into the homes of the Christians all over the parish to pray with the families in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.





- He said one day that he lived with diabetes and Blood Pressure for a long time because of the Eucharist.

- **The Rosary Prayer**

- Rosary was his favorite prayer. When he arrived at Mkuza he distributed rosaries to Christians asking each to pray 100 rosary prayers for the construction of the church. We managed to construct the church without feeling a burden.
- He had processions in the streets all around the parish carrying the statue of Holy Mary Mother of God and praying with the Christians at prepared stations.

- **Preaching in relation to real life and experiences in life**

- He preached the word of God in relation to real life which helped bring the light of strong faith among the Christians. The number of Christians coming for mass grew day after day and also promoted the willingness by the Christians in monetary contributions for the development of the church.
- He loved to preach about the life history of the saints saying that we Christians could also live a holy life and become saints not necessarily to be announced by the church. Just living a holy life should be our goal not for the sake of being announced.

- **Christians personal life.**

- He touched the lives of many representing the love of Christ especially to the needy.
- He valued and respected every person he would meet regardless of age and status but had a strong passion for children. He was committed in remembering the names of the children and they loved him.
- He would take individual Christians' issues as his and pray for them to resolve. One day he visited my daughter at the college in Arusha by surprise to go and talk to her about life and advised her to be strong in prayers during her studies.
- He shared with me his plans at his new parish to collect funds from his friends including me so that he could assist children from the families that could not afford the school needs. I said I could contribute and I still need to do so I will need a guidance on this.
- He would always look in the positive side of an individual not the negative side.

With those few lines which are not exhaustive of his life, I have no doubt that **Fr Mathew Chavelil MSFS** will be honored in Heaven because in my eyes he lived a holy life and thus he is in heaven praying for us.

My sincere condolences to the congregation of the St Francis des Sales, Mkuza Parish, his family members and where else he served.



Prayer and Perseverance

Fr. Thomas Varghese MSFS,
(Director of MSFS Mission Procura, Rome)

Scripture Reading:

"Jesus told his disciples about a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart"
Luke 18:1

"Pray without ceasing!" 1Thessalonians 5:17

We live in a wounded world. Covid 19 has changed the human history. It brought the world to a terrible stand still; months of inexplicable misery and unsuccessful endeavours to fight it. Human person who took pride in the bombastic developments remains without an answer.

Here we turn to God for an answer. But sometimes we think that God is silent to our cries and insensitive to our misery. Jesus, Our Lord and St. Paul exhort us to persevere in prayer and be firm in our faith in God who has a plan for all of us. Therefore, we shall not lose heart.

Prayer

St. Francis de Sales who guided hundreds of persons in their prayer life, gives a beautiful definition of prayer "Prayer is opening our understanding to God's brightness and light, and exposing our will to the warmth of his love. Nothing else purifies so well our understanding of its ignorance and our will of its sinful attachments. It is a spring of blessings and its waters quench the thirst of the passions of our heart, wash away our imperfections, and make the plants of our good desires grow green and bear flowers."¹ St. Theresa of Child Jesus defines prayer as "communication with God, whom I know loves me".

¹ St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to Devout Life*, translated by Fr. Antony Mookenthottam and others, Bangalore: SFS Publications, 2005,85.

These two definitions show the following aspects of prayer:

- i. Prayer is an expression of a **loving relationship** (intimacy) between a human person and God. It is a relationship of dependence of a creature on the creator. It is the longing of the finite to be united with the infinite.
- ii. In prayer the **whole person** is involved (understanding and will) and therefore it is not merely a thoughtless chattering of repeated words. It is a conscious and intentional activity.
- iii. Authentic prayer **purifies us from our sinful attachments**. In other words, prayer moves us to conversion and transformation.
- iv. Prayer is a lively **communication** between God and human person. It is the breath of the soul and therefore necessary for its survival.

Prayer is possible only when there is **genuine faith**. Faith is theological virtue, i.e., it is something God has infused in our soul. Faith is not just believing. It's believing in what God speaks to us. It's the belief in His very Word (Jesus Christ) and in His very Person.



When you encounter difficulties and contradictions, do not try to break them, but bend them with gentleness and time. – St. Francis de Sales





When I say I believe in Jesus Christ, it means that I love him and therefore I follow what he has commanded and counselled me to do (ref. John 14.15). If I follow him sincerely, I will not walk in darkness and live alone in the light of the Lord (ref. John 8.12). In other words, my life of faith is inseparable from a *life of obedience* to the Word of God.

“Whoever tries to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.”
Luke 17:33

Prayer leads us *to surrender* my will to the will of God. It leads me accept wholeheartedly the plan of God for me and for my family. Basically, if we try to direct our lives and our future by our own effort, things will not work out. By calling us to “lose” our life, Jesus is telling us that we must abandon ourselves to Him. We must allow Him to be the one who directs all things and guides us into His most holy will. This is the only way to save our life. We save it by letting go of our own will and letting God take over.”

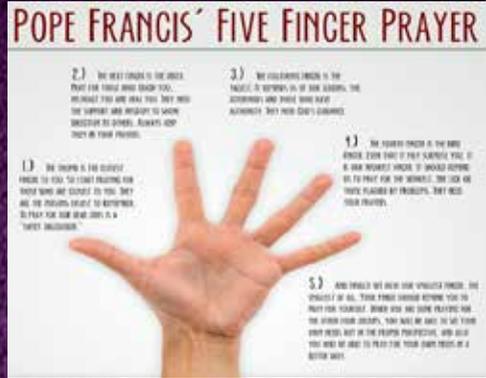
Prayer, as its essence is love of God and loves of neighbour, moves our hearts to love our brothers and sisters in need. Jesus taught us to pray even for our enemies. Pope Francis once said “if you feel to gossip about someone or feel angry of someone, close your eyes and say a prayer for that person, the result will be great”.

Perseverance

“Whoever perseveres to the end will be saved” Mt 10:22

St. Thomas Aquinas defines perseverance as “a virtue which disposes as person to hold steadily to a good purpose, keeping the end steadily in view, despite delays, fatigue, and temptations to indifference.”² Perseverance is part of the cardinal virtue of fortitude that strengthens the soul in moments of difficulties and discouragement. According to St. Francis de Sales, perseverance is the most precious gift of God’s mercy. It is the sum total and

2 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIa IIae, q137.



sequence of the various helps, consolations, and acts of assistance by which we continue in God, it is love up to the end. The most desirable gift we can hope for in this life. He shows us the ways to merit this precious gift: Ask for it by the means God has taught us for obtaining it: *“prayer, fasting, almsgiving, frequenting the sacraments, associating with good companions, hearing and reading sacred scripture.”*³

The virtue of perseverance empowers us to move forward amidst trials and tribulations. God fills our souls with courage and strength that we may not run away from frailties or hardships. The tendency to run away from the hardships associated with our daily lives and responsibilities is a vice against the virtue of perseverance, viz., softness or effeminacy; and another vice opposed to it is pertinacity or stubbornness.

The call to pray continuously and without losing heart is a call to remain in the love of God who created us and who accompanies in our daily lives to the final end. It is an invitation to abandon our lives to the will of God who in His infinite wisdom has a plan for all his children. If we persevere in prayer; “if our prayer is faith filled and earnest, God will give us the wisdom to understand His response”.

3 St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Translated by Antony Mookenthottam and others, Bangalore: SFS Publications, 2012,160.



Introducing our new Priests

October 01, 2020 was a historical day for the Fransalians in Africa as God blessed us with eight Priestly Ordinations. Most Rev. Jude Thaddeus Ruwai'chi OFM Cap., the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam raised to Sacred Order of Priesthood, Dennis Johns Dindi, Francis Indumuli, Gregory Mua Mutisya, Leonard Musembi Ngumbi, Michael Mwangi Mumbi, Patropio Mutangili, Richard Tamaro Gitono, Ssentamu Ruthitical at St. Fancies de Sales church Mkuza. We thank God for our new priests and for the numerous vocations to our Congregation in Africa.

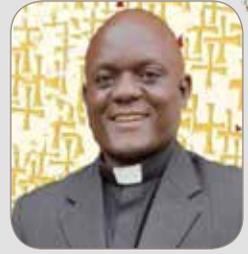
Fr. John Dennis Dindi MSFS was born on 14 February 1989 in the family of Mrs Beatrice Juma Dindi and late Mr David Sivach in Athi-River, Machakos-Kenya. He is the third born of four children. He was baptized on November 16, 1997 and received the First Holy Communion on November 16, 1997 at St. Jude's Catholic Church, Athi-River, Machakos. He was confirmed on November 14, 1999 at St. Jude's Catholic Church, Athi-River. He did his Primary education from 1996 to 2004 in St. Paul's Primary School, Athi-River/Machakos and his Secondary education from the year 2005 to 2006 in St. Augustine Secondary School, Mlolongo, Machakos-Kenya. Then he joined the Aman Bright Future Secondary School, Emali, Machakos-Kenya from 2007 to 2008. From 2009 onward, he worked in St. Christopher Secondary School, Machakos and in Airtel company, Nairobi-Kenya.



Having the desire to become a priest, he joined the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and started formation in Fransalian Seminary Ndagani in September 2010. In the subsequent year, he did the canonical Novitiate and made his First Religious Profession on July 10, 2012. Thereupon, he did his Philosophical Studies at Lumen Christi Institute from 2012-2015. He did his Regency at SFS Primary School, Katani, Machakos-Kenya from 2015-2016. He joined the Fransalian Study House Kola- Morogoro for his Theological Studies at Jordan University College and completed it during 2016 - 2020. He made his Perpetual Profession on August 23, 2019 at Fransalian Study House, Kola- Morogoro. He was ordained Deacon on August 24, 2019 at St. Francis De Sales Parish in Dumila, by His Lordship Telesphore Mkude of the Diocese of Morogoro. He was ordained Priest on October 1, 2020 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Mkuza by Most Rev. Jude Thaddeus Ruwai'chi OFM Cap., the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam. He is appointed as the assistant parish priest at St. Francis de Sales Pariah Kalamira, Uganda.



Fr. Francis Indumuli Aloo MSFS was born on 8th of November 1980 in the family of Mr and Mrs John Aloo Atundo in Mumias, Kenya. He is the second born in a family of four boys and three sisters. He did his primary education at St. Peters Mumias Boys Primary school from 1985 - 1989, and later at St. Charles Lung'anyiro primary school from 1990 - 1995. He joined Munami secondary school from 1996 - 1999. From the year 2000 - 2005, he was employed as a BOG teacher at St. Theresa secondary school Itete, where he taught English. In 2006, he felt the call to become a priest, and on the 15th of June, 2006, he joined the Missionaries of Saint Francis de Sales and started his formation at Ndagani seminary, Chuka. He did his novitiate at Fransalianum, Bungo, Kibaha, Tanzania, and made his first Religious Profession on 10th July, 2008. He did his philosophical studies at the then Salvatorian Institute of Philosophy and Theology, Morogoro, from 2008 - 2011. Upon completion of his philosophical studies, he was sent to St. Charles Lwanga and Companions Parish, Bukene, Tabora, for his regency. After six months of his regency in Bukene, he was transferred to Provincial House, Morogoro to continue his regency. He did his M.Phil studies at Jordan University College (JUCO), Morogoro from 2013 - 2015. In septemeber 2015, he was sent to Yaoundé, Cameroon for his theological studies. After having mastered French language, he did this theological studies at St. Cyprian College of Theology in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 2016 - 2020. He made his perpetual profession on the 9th of February 2017 in Ngaoundere, Cameroon. He was ordained deacon on the 29th of June 2019 at Mary Queen of Apostles Basilica, Yaoundé, Cameroon, by His Lordship Sosthene Leopold Matdjei, bishop of Obala diocese, Cameroon. He was ordained Priest on October 1, 2020 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Mkuza by Most Rev. Jude Thaddeus Ruwai'chi OFM Cap., the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam. He is appointed as the assistant parish priest at Mother of Mercy Parish, Mji Mpya, Tanzania.



Fr. Gregory Mua Mutisya MSFS was born on March 27, 1990 in the family of Mr Dominic Mutisya and Mrs Anastacia Kalusi in Makueni-Kenya. He is the last born of eight children. Deacon Gregory Mua Mutisya was baptized on November 2, 1991 and received the first Holy Communion on March 24, 2002 at St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Mukuyuni. He was confirmed on March 24, 2002 at St Francis of Assisi Parish, Mukuyuni. He did his primary education from 1996 to 2004 and from 2004 to 2005 in Nzukuni and Nzouni Primary School respectively. He did his secondary education from the year 2006 to 2009 in Inyokoni Secondary School. Having had the desire to become a priest, he joined the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales and started formation in Fransalian Seminary Ndagani in September 2010. After completion of the first year of formation, he did his canonical Noviciate and made his First Religious Profession on July 10, 2012. Thereafter, he did his Philosophical Studies at Lumen Christ Institute from 2012-2015. After the completion of Philosophical Studies, he was sent to SFS Community in Tabora for Pastoral year from 2015-2016. After the Pastoral year, he joined the Fransalian Study House Kola-Morogoro for his Theological Studies at Jordan University College from 2016-2020. He made his Perpetual Profession on August 23, 2019. Deacon Gregory Mua was ordained Deacon on August 24, 2019 at Dumila St Francis de Sales Parish by His Lordship Telesphore Mkude, Bishop of Morogoro. He was ordained Priest on October 1, 2020 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Mkuza by Most Rev. Jude Thaddeus Ruwai'chi OFM Cap., the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam. He is appointed as the assistant parish priest at Our Lady of Grace Parish, Lububu, Tanzania.





Fr. Leonard Musembi Ngumbi MSFS was born on December 31, 1989 in Makueni-Kenya. He is the last born of five children of Mr Joseph Ngumbi Mathuva (deceased) and Mrs Regina Mbendwa Ngumbi. He was baptized on March 21, 1999 at Our Lady of Mercy Itumbule Catholic Church and on the same day received his first Communion. He was confirmed on September 13, 2009 at St. Francis of Assisi Mukuyuni Parish-Machakos Diocese. He did his primary education from 1996 -2003 in Nthongoni Primary School and his secondary education from 2004-2007 in Inyokoni Secondary School. He joined the Congregation of the Missionaries of Saint Francis de Sales in September 2010 and began his formation in Fransalian Seminary Ndagani. He did his canonical novitiate in Fransalianum, Kibaha from 2011 to 2012. He made his first profession on July 10, 2012. From 2012-2015, he studied Philosophy in Lumen Christi Institute. He did his pastoral year in Fransalian Seminary Ndagani from 2015-2016. He joined Fransalian Study House Kola-Morogoro for his theological studies in Jordan University College from 2016-2020. His perpetual profession was on August 23, 2019 at Fransalian Study House-Kola. He was ordained a deacon by His Lordship Telesphore Richard Mkude of the Diocese of Morogoro on August 24, 2019. He was ordained Priest on October 1, 2020 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Mkuza by Most Rev. Jude Thaddeus Ruwai'chi OFM Cap., the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam. He is appointed as the assistant parish priest at St. Jude Parish Osia, Uganda.



Fr. Michael Mwangi Mumbi MSFS was born on September 23, 1985 in the family of Mrs Agnes Mumbi Mwangi in Nakuru - Kenya. He is the first born of their two children. He was baptized on January 4, 1987 and received the first Holy Communion on March 30, 1997 at St. John's Catholic Church, Subukia. He was confirmed on December 14, 1997 at St Paul, Subukia. He did his primary education from 1992 to 2000 in Bahati Primary School, Nairobi and his secondary education from the year 2001 to 2005 in Pumwani secondary school. From 2006 to 2009, he studied at Kenya Polytechnic University College and graduated in Information Technology. Having the desire to become a priest, he joined the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and started formation in Fransalian Seminary Ndagani in September 2010. In the subsequent year, he did the canonical Novitiate and made his First Religious Profession on July 10, 2012. Thereupon, he did his Philosophical Studies at the Lumen Christi Institute, from 2012-2015. After the completion of Philosophical studies, he was sent to SFS Junior Seminary, Kihonda for Regency 2015-2016, he joined the Fransalian Study House Kola for his Theological Studies at Jordan University College 2016-2020. He made his Perpetual Profession on August 23, 2019. Michael Mwangi was ordained a Deacon on August 24, 2019 at St. Francis de Sales, Dumila, by His Lordship Telesphore Mkude of the Diocese of Morogoro. He was ordained Priest on October 1, 2020 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Mkuza by Most Rev. Jude Thaddeus Ruwai'chi OFM Cap., the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam. He is appointed as the assistant parish priest at St. Bruno Sserunkuma Parish Agururu, Uganda.





Fr. Richard Tamaro Gitono MSFS was born on December 03, 1986 in the family of Mr. Justus Gitono and Jennifer Kwamboka in Kisii- Kenya. He is the fifth born of the seven children in his family. He was baptized on April, 28, 2001 and received first Holy Communion on the same day at Our Lady Assumption parish Nyamagwa-Kisii. He did his primary education from 1993 to 2001 in Nyamokenye primary school- Kisii and secondary education from the year 2002-2006 at St. Clement Gucha Boys High school- Kisii. From 2007-2009 he served as a teacher of English grammar and literature at Gekongo secondary. Having the desire to become a priest, he joined MSFS seminary at Ndagani in 2009. He did his canonical novitiate at Fransalianum Kibaha from 2010- 2011 and made his first profession on July, 10, 2011. Thereafter he joined Lumen Christi institute- Arusha Tanzania for philosophy from 2011-2014. After successfully completing his philosophical studies, he was sent to Ndagani seminary Kenya for his Regency from 2014-2015. After his Regency he was asked to specialize in French language in Cameroon from 2015-2016. At the end of his French course, he was enrolled at St. Cyprian school of theology in Yaoundé Cameroon from 2016-2020. He made his perpetual vows on 09th February, 2017. He was ordained deacon on 29th June, 2019 at the Basilica of Mary Queen of Apostles- Mvolye Cameroon by His Lordship Leopold Sosthène, the bishop of the Diocese of Obala- Cameroon. He was ordained Priest on October 1, 2020 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Mkuza by Most Rev. Jude Thaddeus Ruwai'chi OFM Cap., the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam. He is appointed as the assistant parish priest at St. Charles Lwanga and his Companions Parish Eukene, Tanzania.



Fr. Patropio Mutangili MSFS was born on 17th June, 1987 in the family of Mr Mathias Malungu Mungala and Mrs Regina Ndinda Mathias in Makueni – Kenya. He is the second born of six children; two girls and four boys. He was baptized on 17th August 1988 and received the first Holy Communion on 12th Aug, 1998 at Kyambeke Catholic Church, Kilungu Parish. He was confirmed on 14th Oct, 1998 at Wautu Catholic Church, Kilungu Parish. He did his primary education from 1996 to 2004 in Ndolo Primary School, Makueni and his secondary education from the year 2005 to 2008 in Ndolo Secondary School. Having the desire to become a priest, he joined the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and started formation in Fransalian Seminary Ndagani in Sept 2010. In the subsequent year, he did the canonical Novitiate and made his First Religious Profession on 12th July, 2012. Thereupon, he did his Philosophical Studies at Lumen Christi Institute, Arusha from 2012-2015. After his completion of Philosophical studies, he was sent to St. Michael's Catholic Church, Chera Parish for Regency from 2015-2016. After his Regency, he joined the Fransalian Study House, Kola for his Theological Studies at Jordan University College 2016-2020. He made his Perpetual Profession on 23rd Aug, 2020. Patropio Mutangili was ordained Deacon on 24th Aug, 2020 at St. Francis de Sales Parish, Dumila by His Lordship Telesphore Mkude of the Diocese of Morogoro. He has opted to work in the Southern African Region of the MSFS. He was ordained Priest on October 1, 2020 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Mkuza by Most Rev. Jude Thaddeus Ruwai'chi OFM Cap., the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam. He is appointed as the assistant parish priest at St. Francis de sales parish Ibihwa, Tanzania.





Fr. Ssentamu Ruthithal MSFS was born on October 27, 1987 in the family of Mr. Mukwaya Charles and Mrs Nnankya Esther in Mityana District - Uganda. He is the first born of eight children. He was baptized on November 29, 1987 and received the first Holy Communion on August 3, 1997 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Busega Parish, Kampala. He was confirmed on October 14 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Busega Parish, Kampala. He did his Primary Education from the year 1996 to 2002 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Primary School Busega, Kampala and his Secondary School at Crescent High School Busega for «O» level from 2003 to 2006 and at St. Marys» High School Lubaga for "A" level from 2008 to 2009. When he finished his Secondary School with the desire to become a priest, he joined the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and commenced his formation at Fransalian Seminary Ndagani, Kenya in September 2010. In the following year, he entered the canonical Novitiate at Fransalianum Novitiate Kibaha and made his First Religious Profession on July 10, 2012. Thereafter, he did his Philosophical Studies at Lumen Christi Institute, Arusha from 2012 to 2015. He did his regency at St. Francis de Sales Parish community Iyolwa, Tororo - Uganda in 2015, and after Six months he was appointed at Mwakata VTC Kahama - Tanzania in 2016 where he completed his Regency. Later, he joined the Fransalian Study House Kola, Morogoro - Tanzania for his theological studies at Jordan University College from 2016 to 2020. He made his Perpetual Profession on August 23, 2019. Ssentamu Ruthithal MSFS was ordained a Deacon on August 24, 2019 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Dumila, Morogoro - Tanzania by His Lordship Telesphore Mkude of the Diocese of Morogoro. He was ordained Priest on October 1, 2020 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Mkuza by Most Rev. Jude Thaddeus Ruwai'chi OFM Cap., the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam. He is appointed as the assistant parish priest at St. Joseph's Catholic Parish Mlolongo, Kenya.



Missionary Experiences and Reflections

This column is dedicated Fransalian Missionaries serving in East Africa Province

Understanding 'Ubuntu' for Better Missionary Engagements

As a missionary, at times, one bewilders to discern, what constitutes an African Theory of right action? Knowing it becomes imperative because, what constitutes or considered to be right in one culture, need not necessarily are so in another culture or environment. The universal truths remain to be so; however, varying interpretations and understanding of the same within the African context enrich the missionary engagements.

There is a term used by the Zulu people of South Africa 'Ubuntu'. It could be roughly translated into humanness, and it denotes a maxim that is 'a person is a person through other persons'.

We can consider this concept as an underlying philosophy that



Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal MSFS





describes one's identity as a human being in and through a community. Within sub-Saharan Africa, excluding the Islamic Arabs in the north, and the white Afrikaans of South Africa, we can say, the concept and elements of Ubuntu are very much present.

Desmond Tutu, the South African Noble prize winner, describes Ubuntu as;

When we want to give high praise to someone we say, “Yu, u nobuntu”; “Hey, so-and-so has ubuntu.” Then you are generous; you are hospitable; you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, “My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up in yours.”¹

Ubuntu interprets being always in relation and participation with the other². The values that Ubuntu represent are found widely across the African continent, from traditional African societies to contemporary African intellectuals. These values often occur in modern African literature on African ethics. Ubuntu might not represent the essence of African culture; nevertheless, it points out the underlying tendencies within these societies.

When engaging in missionary activities, be it preaching the gospel, promoting education or providing social development, the missionaries engage, interact and communicate with the people living in societies with the underplaying tendencies closely connected to Ubuntu. Suppose a missionary is not aware of these underlying principles and trends within the community, in that case, he can bring in certain tendencies and practices that he is comfortable with without evaluating its compatibility and adaptability within the African social context. The result is resistance to the gospel, opposition to the social and developmental initiatives proposed by the missionaries. Understanding Ubuntu might provide a solution to some of the dilemmas and

challenges in the mission land.

Scenario No. 1

Should the missionaries demand a policy decision or should they seek a consensus, when there is dissent?

Often the missionaries find themselves in situations of dissent, and he has to make a decision. To most of the non-African mind, majority decision might be more appealing. However, to African reasoning, majoritarianism is inadequate, and unanimity is preferred. In African communities, the discussion would continue, until a compromise is found and all the parties in the debate agree with the outcome. They don't stop the discussion just because; the majority have agreed or disagreed. The 'winner-take-all system of the US or the majority principled parliamentary system in Europe can not replace it. The Akan people of Ghana practice an African version of democracy based on Ubuntu through 'the non-party-polity'. Here the winning candidate does not represent the party when he/she assumes the office, but rather, represent the public as a whole. The candidate who wins the constituency does not aim to promote the interests of his/her constituency but would share power with other representatives by seeking consensus with them in adapting every government policy.³For the missionary, discussions and dialogue should be a way of arriving at decisions, if he wants to take everybody on board in his missionary engagements.

Scenario No.2

Should the Missionaries seek retribution in administering justice, or should they seek reconciliation?

Where a non-African party would advocate for retribution for a crime, the African perspective

¹ Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Random House, 1999), p. 31

² Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013

³ Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 4.





would often go for reconciliation. African societal focus need not be punishing the offender but respond to it, with some expectation of good from the offender to his/her victim. Such preference for reconciliation over retribution comes from Ubuntu. We have a great example of opting for reconciliation than retribution in the life of Nelson Mandela. Mandela opted for a restorative, rather than a punitive response to apartheid-era political crimes in South Africa. The missionary who promotes and practice reconciliation is more acceptable than a one who tends to go for retribution in administering justice.

Scenario 3

Understanding the Concepts of wealth, work and individual rights in the light of Ubuntu

Missionaries introduce economic models for their flocks for social and economic empowerment. When such initiatives fail, the Missionaries stand to wonder why such empowerment models are not working. Often lack of enthusiasm and hard work from the part of the beneficiaries are sought as reasons for such failures. Nevertheless, knowing the concepts of wealth, work, and individual rights in the light of Ubuntu could help the missionaries to ground the frustrations.

Many traditional African societies own the land in common and undertake labour for the sake of the community. The concept of making a profit, when there is a demand is often foreign in those societies. It is also interesting to know that many work hard, not just to care for one's immediate family but his extended family, the larger clan and the society. Therefore, the economic model that proposes to make wealth on a competitive basis might look good, but may not be very much appealing⁴. It is not because the people are not enthusiastic or are lazy, but simply because accumulating wealth, for its own

sake, fails to motivate adequately. A missionary would find better success with economic models that propose creating wealth on a cooperative basis.

Similarly, individual rights have varying shades under Ubuntu. Many missionaries would share their experience with school children, who would not point the finger at the boy or girl who engaged in undesirable behaviour in a class, even all pupils knew the culprit. Such action demonstrates that even children would prefer to participate in the punishment, resulting from the offence of the other, instead of singling out the offender. The missionary may wonder, and say, that is defending the culprit. But is Ubuntu, running in the vein. Here the individual right to be spared from the retribution is sacrificed willingly for the sake of the community.

The expectation to help others is deeply rooted in African morality. Such an expectation has far-reaching inferences. one such implication is that wealth is distributed not based on individual rights but depending on a need. Therefore, it might not look good for a person to keep the wealth that he had made through his/her efforts to keep it to all to himself/herself. That wealth should be distributed in his/her wider social circle if there is a need. Such concept is resonated in the African saying, "if you have two cows and the milk of the first cow is sufficient for your consumption, Ubuntu expects you to donate the milk of the second cow to your underprivileged brothers and sisters."⁵ Another example of need-based distribution is that in some African societies, taking food without consent does not amount to stealing, in so far as one does not overdo the same. Heidi Verhoef and Claudine Michel (1997), noted in their study of morality within the African context, that such taking would not count as 'stealing' since the person in possession of the item is presumably not its rightful owner in light of the other's need for it. Such moral standing could be a challenge to the missionaries, if taking something without

4. Leo Marquard and T. G. Standing, *The Southern Bantu* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 20–32

5 Water Sisulu, quoted in Broodryk, *Ubuntu* pp. 1, 36–09



owners permission always, equals stealing. Here one may begin to wonder and may fail to find the thin line that separates taking something without permission and stealing. But that is the magic of Ubuntu!

Scenario 3

You can't just ignore others and violate communal norms, instead uphold tradition and partake in rituals.

The inevitable force to follow the communal norms and uphold tradition is part of Ubuntu. Inadequate understanding of the social fabric of African society and its interconnected assumptions may force the missionaries to conclude it as left-overs of paganism that still influence Christianity. But, it need not be so.

A study by Augustine Shutte provides us with insights into the scenario⁶. Shutte's study involved a survey of two groups of nuns at a convent. At the convent, after the obligatory everyday chores and community prayers, the German nuns would engage in knitting or sewing, while the African nuns spent time in conversation. Each group judged the other as morally lacking. The German nuns thought that the African nuns are insufficiently diligent, and the African nuns considered the German nuns as objectionable because they cared more for practical matters than about people. The missionary should be aware that it is common among Africans, to consider that one has some moral obligation to engage with one's fellows and to support the community's way of life. It does not mean that African values do not support individuality, creativity or nonconformity. But, that there is some added weight in moral consideration to think whether one's behaviour upsets communal norms.

Scenario 4

'I am not-opposing, but it does not mean I approve.'

6. Augustine Shutte, *Ubuntu: An Ethic for the New South Africa* (Cape Town: Cluster Publications, 2001), pp. 27-8.

At times, there is a lure for the missionaries to make a wrong conclusion, that when someone does not oppose your ideas or way of doing, to believe that he/she is approving it. Missionaries need to value the policies and programs that they introduce for pastoral care. These should be carefully studied and valued and weighted for and against its consequences. Or else, one might be rushing to falsely believing that the new program or policy is acceptable to all, just because nobody is opposing it.

There could be a myriad of reasons, why one does not oppose an idea, policy or suggestion, even when he/she does not approve it in an African society. Here, being silent does not equal approval. One such reason is respect for the elders or people in authority or position, which is embedded in the African culture. The very fact, the missionary holds a respective place in the society, make the people not to oppose him, even when they do not approve his policies or way of functioning. Again, the democratic principle of the majority-decision, that such policy/program was acceptable to the majority does not hold much water. It only spread further alienation and dissent. The missionary has the best chance when he continues with the discussion and dialogue until a consensus has arrived from all parties involved.

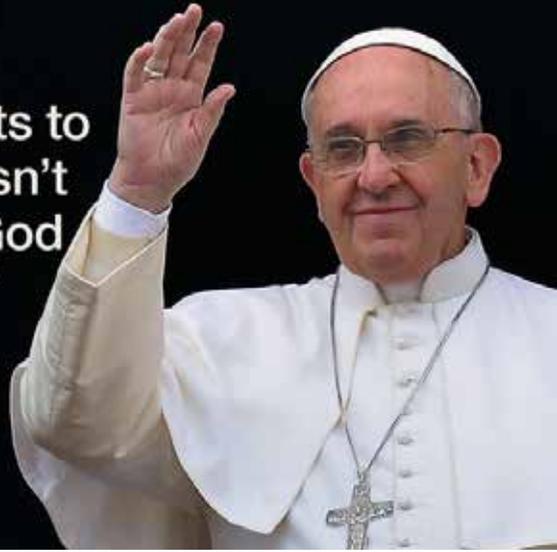
Conclusion

The search for a theory of right action in the missionary context continues. A willingness to learn from the goodness of each other is paramount in all the missionary endeavours. A missionary in Africa does not have to impose his baggage of customs and traditions, but only need to learn the wisdom of Ubuntu, and compliment it with his share of goodness. The key to this process is discussion and dialogue. And always the missionary needs to remember the Kiswahili proverb 'Mtu ni watu'. Concomitantly, in saving a man (mtu), you save many (watu). What is initiated towards a man become something directed towards many.

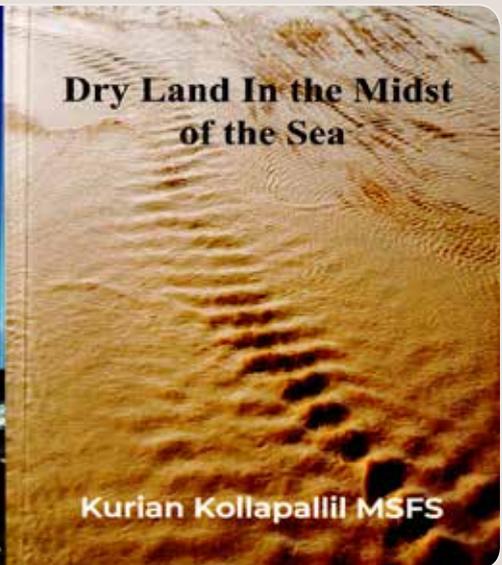
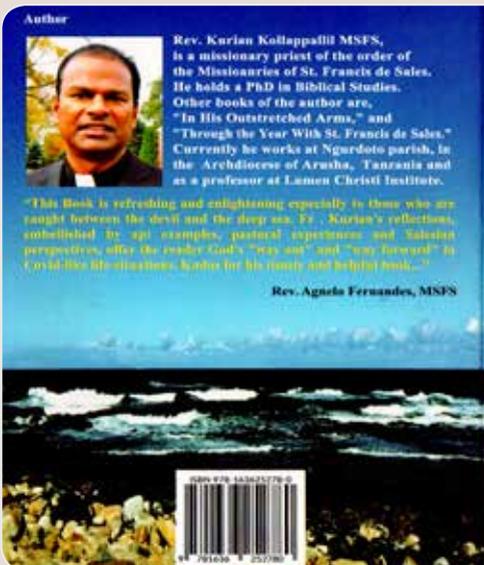


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A person who wants to become Pope doesn't love himself. And God doesn't bless him.”



In this COVID 19 times of uncertainty, when everyone is giving up hope and succumbing to fate, “The Dry Land in the midst of the Sea” by Fr. Kurian Kollappallil MSFS offers clear guidelines for learning to trust in God and to be the people of hope as God is always faithful in His promises. Failures to be turned into stepping stones of success; humble prayer, forgiveness, and an earnest desire to be a transformed person will not be futile when your desire is genuine. There is a fine human being hidden in each one of us. In the course of time, in our growth towards maturity, we all need to abandon and remove certain behaviors and habits and learn to perfect our character to become fine human beings. The curiosity and interest never lose until the end, as the author made it interesting with true-life stories, Pastoral experiences, and stories from diverse cultures and from people of versatile lifestyles.



Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (Fransalians)



Our Patron
St. Francis de Sales



Our Patroness
Mother of Compassion



Our Founder
Servant of God Fr. Peter Mermier

Do you like to join our Congregation?

Qualifications required to be a Fransalian Missionary Priest:

- Catholic young man of deep faith
- Have good morals and sound catholic family background
- A person of good reputation in the local church and society
- Should have finished higher secondary education and eligible for bachelor studies or above in East Africa
- Age not more than 23 years unless you have higher educational qualifications, Capacity to live in community
- A man of self- discipline, good character, and right motivation
- Good health of mind and body, Balanced, sociable, generous nature
- Sincere desire to become a missionary religious priest
- Readiness to work anywhere in the world, even in challenging conditions

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MERRY CHRISTMAS
and Happy New Year



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