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# BARAKA

ZA FRANSALIANS

Half yearly news bulletin of MSFS in East Africa



***Turn your eyes from yourselves, and directs them  
towards God. - St. Francis de Sales***



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## Editor's Desk

Dear readers of Baraka,

The 14th issue of Baraka is at hand. In this issue, we mainly focus on Fransalian way of priestly formation in general. Pope Francis told the participants in the Congress organized by the Congregation for the Clergy on October 7, 2017, "Priestly formation depends firstly on the action of God in our life, and not on our activity." The Pope explained, noting that, "It is a work that requires the courage of letting ourselves be formed by the Lord, to transform our heart and our life."



The Holy Father used the biblical image of clay "in the hands of the potter" from the book of Jeremiah: "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words"

"We must say it firmly: if one does not allow oneself to be formed by the Lord every day, he becomes a spent priest, who drags himself through his ministry out of inertia, with neither enthusiasm for the Gospel nor passion for the people of God" Pope Francis warned. But he affirmed that a priest "who day by day entrusts himself to the wise hands of the Potter, with a capital 'V', conserves over time the enthusiasm of the heart, welcomes with joy the freshness of the Gospel, and speaks with words able to touch the life of the people."

May the Virgin Mary, whom we venerate as Our Lady of the Rosary, help us to walk with joy in apostolic service and make our heart similar to hers: humble and obedient, like clay in the hands of the potter.

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 Pendanath MSFS**





# Message from Fr. Provincial

Dear Friends of Fransalians!

Greetings from Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales/Fransalians!

This issue of BARAKA is dedicated to vocations to religious life and priesthood. Through our baptism, we all share in the priesthood of Christ. The call to religious life and ministerial priesthood is a call within the call as Christians, to dedicate ourselves more closely to Christ and for the continuation of the apostolic ministry, which Christ himself began and entrusted to his apostles.



We are a missionary congregation engaged in primary evangelization, renewal of Christian faith and education. Our Founder Venerable Father Peter Mermier said: I want Missions. The command of Jesus “Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands that I gave you.” (Mt. 28:19-20), is the guiding principle of our missionary endeavour. We, the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales are spread in 28 countries including 11 countries of the African continent. The Province of East Africa, which consists of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, is a vast mission territory. There are 34 dioceses in Tanzania, 26 in Kenya and 20 in Uganda. Almost 150 Million people live in these three countries and 70% of the population of East Africa are Christians of which 35% are Catholics. Every parish has large territories and several sub-stations. There aren't sufficient priests to minister to the faithful.

St. Paul in his letter to Romans writes: ‘How then are they to call on him if they have not come to believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard of him? And how will they hear of him unless there is a preacher for them? And how will there be preachers if they are not sent?’ As Scripture says: How beautiful are the feet of the messenger of Good News. (Rom 10:14-15). We require many more priests and religious both men and women to cater to the spiritual, social, educational and medical needs of the people of Africa.

We need to pray for vocations. Jesus says in Matthew 9:38 “to ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into the vineyard.” We also need to teach the youth to pray. Pope Benedict XVI said that unless we teach our youth how to pray, they will never hear God calling them into a deeper relationship with Him and into the discipleship of Christ in the Church. Let us pray for vocations and encourage the youth to dedicate themselves to consecrated life and priesthood.

**I wish you all peace and joy of Christmas and a blessed New Year 2020.**

Yours devotedly in Christ Jesus,  
**Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS**



# FORMATION FOR MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP: A Glance At MSFS Formation In East Africa Province

During the Angelus Prayer on World Mission Sunday on October 22, 2017, Pope Francis publicly announced to the whole Church his intention to proclaim October 2019 to be an Extraordinary Missionary Month, fittingly marking the occasion of the centenary of Benedict XV's apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*. This most momentous letter, published on November 30 1919, took its inspiration from the command given by the risen Jesus to his disciples: "Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all mankind" (Mark 16:18). And so throughout the history of the Church many brave and selfless men and women have done just that – bringing the Good News and hope to those on the margins of society.

The call by Pope Francis for all of us in the Church to make a special effort to acknowledge, celebrate and share the wonderful story

of the work of missionaries is prophetic and timely. Thus, the Pope encourages Catholics throughout the world to recall

and celebrate the wonderful contribution made by missionaries for many years. Pope Francis invites us to be part of the new evangelisation. He wants us to grow as 'missionary disciples' – people tasked to proclaim the Gospel with renewed energy and commitment wherever they find themselves.

The congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales is known for its missionary legacy, pioneering evangelization and mission overseas after the example of their patron St. Francis De Sales,





the apostle of Chables and their founder venerable Fr. Peter Mary Mermier. The Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales wherever they go are very keen and committed to live as missionary disciples and to form new missionary disciples. It is in this context that the current edition of Baraka focuses on the historical development of the apostolate of formation at its various stages and of different formation houses in the East Africa Province of the Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales.

From the very start of the MSFS missions in East Africa, care was given to nurture and promote local vocations to our religious congregation. All the provincial administrations have taken special interest in establishing various formation houses to cater to the needs of the formees over the past 31 years of our existence as MSFS in East Africa. At the moment we have Ndagani Seminary which takes care of the initial stage of formation (Aspirancy and Postulancy). We hope to construct a new formation house in the near future to separate the stages of Aspirancy from that of Postulancy. MSFS

Novitiate House at Kibaha is the only one Novitiate house in the African continent for the MSFS. It provides canonical novitiate formation not only to the novices of the East Africa province but also to all other students of the MSAF units of the Congregation (MSAF means Mission Superiors' of Africa Forum).

From 2010, with the establishment of Lumen Christi Institute (until then this stage of formation was given in Fransalian House Kola), philosophical studies and formation is given in MSFS Scholasticate, LCI, Arusha. For the stage of Regency the scholastics are sent to different religious communities/institutions of the province for practical experience and community living. The last stage of formation (theological) is given at Fransalian study house, Kola hills, Morogoro.

Formation for missionary discipleship is indeed a formidable task. It has to attend to the human, intellectual, emotional, pastoral, social, spiritual and Salesian dimensions of formation in an integrated manner. As it aims to familiarise the students to the Salesian



way of transformation through love and transformative inner changes, it desires in earnestness to eschew selfishness, egoism and self-centredness in the formees through discipline and ascetical life. Through regulated and guided exposure, reflection and evaluation, the students are prepared progressively to face pastoral situation in Africa with pastoral charity and compassionate heart, under the guidance of the local Ordinary. An active engagement by the student in his personal formation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and supported by the formators, and the community is indeed a collaborative project of far reaching consequences to the life of the Church and the Congregation. We have initiated these praiseworthy moves and we ask God to bless them with lasting changes in our formees.

The initial years of recruiting students from Africa and engaging them in formative process met with a lot of difficulties. Being a new congregation on the African pastoral scene, our Congregation had a few candidates who joined us. Still fewer candidates persevered in their religious call. But through

patience, perseverance and better contacts with the prospective candidates and their families. We have experienced in recent years, an increase in vocations at the different stages of formation that augurs well for the Congregation as well as for the Church in Africa. It is a matter of great joy and thanksgiving to God that we had 14 priestly ordinations in the last four years. With thankfulness to God we look forward to 8 priestly ordinations in the year 2020. Currently, we have 13 Aspirants, 20 Novices, 18 Philosophers, 5 Regents and 12 Theologians for the province of East Africa.

I invite you to read, in this issue of *Baraka*, the short history, the present status and programme of each formation house of the East Africa Province of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales. You will be delighted to see the wonderful “breaking and building” that goes on in young African lives and being transformed into missionary disciples of Jesus at the service of the Church and humanity.

**Fr. Thomas Kochalunchuvattil, MSFS**  
Councilor in-Charge of Formation  
East Africa Province



# HISTORY OF FRANSALIAN SEMINARY- NDAGANI

The Province of East Africa of the Missionaries of St. Francis de sales ever since it came to existence envisioned the need of promoting local vocations from the soil. In view of it, she began to search for a suitable place. The province entrusted this task to Fr. Thomas Olickal Msfs then Parish Priest of St. Michael's Parish Chera, and later Provincial of East Africa.

Fr. Thomas Olickal, went on with the task of procuring the land. At last in September 2002 he made it, by acquiring a beautiful plot of two acres at Ndagani near chuka, which was just two kilometers away from Chuka District Head quarters, in Tharaka Nithi County, in the eastern part of Kenya. As soon as procuring the land he began the construction. On 8<sup>th</sup> October 2002 the foundation stone was laid by Fr. Augustine Mangatt Msfs, then General Councilor. Fr. Thomas tirelessly headed the construction of the building, until it was completed in June 2004.

The first batch which consisted of the ten students who begun the formation on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2004 with the first Rector Fr Thomas Olickal. It was on 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2005 the Fransalian Seminary was officially blessed by most Rev. Salesian Mugambi the Bishop of Meru and was inaugurated by most Rev. Agnelo Fernandez, the then Superior General. The event was marked by the presence of General Curia, Our Conferences, invited guests and faithful.

In the year 2005 when Fr. Thomas Olickal the first Rector was appointed as the second Provincial of East Africa Province, he had to leave the office as Rector of Fransalian Seminary. Then Fr. Sebastian Nirappel was appointed as the second Rector in the year 2005. After two years Fr Sebastian Nirapel was transferred to Uganda as the Parish Priest of Saint Jude Osia in the archdiocese of Tororo in Eastern part of Uganda. Father Reji Pendanath took the mantle as the third Rector of the Seminary in the year 2006 till 2009.





He served the seminary diligently for three good years. After successful service Fr Reji was appointed the Rector of Fransalian Study House Kola in Morogoro Tanzania. Following his transfer Fr Santosh Paul was appointed as the fourth Rector of the Seminary on march 2009 to November 2009, of which he remained in the office for short time due to health reasons. Following his going for further treatment in India, Fr Sebastian Palakudy took the mantle as the fifth Rector of the Seminary from November 2009 till June 2011. After great and successful responsibility in Ndagani as Rector, Father Sebastian was requested to go for higher studies in India. Following his exit, Late Fr. Lawrence Thadathil was appointed as the sixth Rector of Ndagani Seminary from July 2011 to January 2013 when he was called to eternal rest. Following the death of Father Lawrence, Father Stephen Ubadesi was appointed as the seventh Rector of the Seminary from January 2013 till march 2017 serving as the long Rector of the seminary and after his exit as Rector, Father Jomon Joseph was appointed as eighth Rector of the Seminary from March 2017 to June 2019. After the tenure of Father Jomon, Father Charles Linus Ouma was appointed the Rector of the Seminary from June 2018 till to date. Total number of 217 Aspirants has gone through this seminary and thanks to God for all our benefactors and well wishers.

## **Objective of Ndagani Seminary**

“I want mission” said our founder. To continue with the mission of our founder personnel are needed and Ndagani is acting as the seedbed where these personnel are being nurtured and introduced to the Fransalian way of life following the spirituality of Our Patron. . It is also a period wherein the candidates are helped to identify the genuineness of their call. And initiates them into a life of religious discipline and community living.

## **First Fruits of Ndagani Seminary**

The harvest is plentiful, and the laborers are few. [Mathew 9:35-38]. The seminary responded to the call of Jesus in the year 2015 when the first fruits of Ndagani were ordained to priesthood. The first ordination was on 1 July 2015. Big thanks to God and all the formators and Benefactors and confreres.

## **Ndagani Seminary today**

The seminary is made up of one Rector, one Regent and thirteen Aspirants [Six Kenyans, five Tanzanians, one Ugandan and one Mozambican] The aspirants are receiving Human formation, Intellectual formation and Social formation.

**LIVE JESUS**

Fr. Charles Linus Ouma



# A Short History of Fransalianum Novitiate, Tanzania

FRANSALIANUM is the only MSFS Novitiate in the continent of Africa which is situated in the district of Kibaha, Tanzania and ecclesiastically falls in the territory of Mkuza parish in the Archdiocese of Dar-es-Salaam.

The land was acquired in 1993 by the initiative of Fr. Augustine Mangat and the construction of the house was done in 1999 under the leadership of Fr. Thomas Kochuparambil, the then Provincial Superior. On September 8, 2000 the house was blessed by His Eminence Polycarp Cardinal Pengo, the Archbishop of Dar-es-Salaam and opened by Rev. Fr. Emile Mayoraz, the then Superior General of MSFS.

The first batch of novices was initiated into the canonical year of Novitiate on September 7, 2000 with Fr. Pius Kochuparambil as the first Director of Novices followed

by Fr. James Panthalanickal, Fr. A. Sebastian, Fr. Johnson Kallidukil and Fr. Stephen Ubadesi. Every year the novices were admitted to the Novitiate with the exception of years 2001 and 2004 and the present batch of 2019-2020 is the 18<sup>th</sup> one, which has 20 novices. The assistant novice masters of Fransalianum have been Fr. Joby Maruthomalayil, Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel, Fr. Johnson Kallidukil, Fr. Sebastian Nirappel, Fr. X. Vincentraj, Fr. Zachariah Burofero, Fr. Devados Francis, Fr. Kuldeep Kujur, Fr. Santhosh Paul and Fr. Prakash Prashanth Raj.

The novices who pass through Fransalianum hail from different parts of Africa going to work in East Africa province, South Africa Region, Mozambique and Chad – Cameroon delegations. In future we too hope to get the novices for Zambia and Malawi missions.



# FIRST PROFESSION

July 27, 2019 was a joyous day for Fransalians in Africa as 9 Novices (Southern Africa: 01, Tchad-Cameroon: 4 and East Africa: 4) made their First Commitment to the Lord at St. Francis de Sales Church, Mkuza, Kibaha, Tanzania. His Excellency Archbishop Jude Thadeus Ruwaichi, the Coadjutor Archbishop of Dar es Salaam presided over the Eucharistic celebration and Fr. Mathew Thazahthukunnel MSFS, Provincial of East Africa received the vows. A large number of

priests, religious and lay people participated in the celebration. Hearty Congratulations to all our newly professed novices. Hearty welcome to the Fransalian Family.

Sincere thanks and hearty congratulations to Fr. Johnson Kallidukil, Director of Novices and Fr. Prakash Prashanth, Socius, who accompanied our novices during their Novitiate and helped them to discern and grow in their vocation to religious life in the Fransalian Family.





# TEN YEARS OF MSFS SCHOLASTICATE AND PHILOSOPHY FORMATION AT LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE, ARUSHA-TANZANIA

This year Lumen Christi Institute, Arusha completes 10 years of its service to the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and to the church in Africa. The planning, development and evolution of Lumen Christi Institute into what it is today, is a matter of thanksgiving to God. It is an occasion of great joy for all those who are connected with it in one way or the other.

The idea of an Institute like this, although not in its precise details, was mooted in the Extraordinary General Chapter of 2003 and it was approved in principle. The same General Chapter appointed a commission to explore the idea and propose more concrete measures. The ordinary General Chapter in 2007, based partly on the report of the Commission gave the green signal for the project., permitting further modifications as and when needed, following due procedures.

The African Missions of the Congregation spread in 8 countries at that time, were still in the initial stages. But they provided a lot of scope in various fields of development. So it was felt that an institute like the suggested one, if

located in Africa, would give a boost to the work of evangelization. Hence it was decided to start the Institute in East Africa. Accordingly a plot of 40 hectares was purchased on the outskirts of Arusha, Tanzania and Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil was appointed as the person-in-charge of implementing the vision of the project. He started living at the site in 2006 and plunged himself in earnest in building up the necessary infrastructure. Meanwhile, more clarity emerged about the vision of the Institute. In response to a need that had arisen for the African Missions of the Congregation and East Africa Province in particular, it was decided to start a department of philosophy to provide formation to MSFS scholastics after the Novitiate as one of the activities of the Institute.

In September 2010, the proposed Department of Philosophy and MSFS Scholasticate was inaugurated with 12 seminarians and five members on the staff. Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil was the superior and administrator. Fr. Johnson Kallidukkil, who later became the Provincial of the East Africa Province of the MSFS, was the first director of the Institute, Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil took charge as the first Rector of



MSFS Scholasticate and dean of studies of the Institute. Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhy, from the North East India province, joined as a member of the staff. Bro. Ouma Charles Linus joined the community as a regent. From among the 12 seminarians of the first batch, seven are ordained priests and have taken up their assignments in various Missions.

From 2010 the Institute continued to grow in all respects. When Fr. Johnson left to assume his responsibility as the provincial in 2011, Fr. Mathew Thazathukunnel was appointed as the new director. Six years later he had to leave the Institute as he succeeded Fr. Johnson Kallidukkil as the provincial and Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil was appointed as the Director. In 2019, Fr. James Panthalanickel has been appointed as the Rector of MSFS Scholasticate. During the past ten years a few priest-confreres hailing from different provinces

of the Congregation in India have rendered their services and continue to serve as members of the staff. A number of visiting professors, MSFS and others, have also been coming regularly to teach specialised subjects in the Institute. From among them, Paul Cruysberghs from the Catholic University of Leuven and his wife Marijke de Jong have been great benefactors and friends of LCI. The Department of philosophy is affiliated to De Sales University, Center Valley, Allentown PA, USA.

Until 2016, mostly MSFS scholastics from various mission units in Africa were undergoing studies in philosophy and formation at Lumen Christi Institute (LCI). From 2016, LCI began to accept seminarians from other congregations and dioceses. So far 139 seminarians have enrolled for philosophical studies and formation in Lumen Christi Institute, out of which 57 are still undergoing formation in the





current academic year (Third years: 13, Second years: 25 and First years: 19). It is a matter of great joy that 82 seminarians so far completed their formation and philosophical studies at Lumen Christi Institute and many of them are continuing with their theological studies. Some of them have been ordained priests.

Following are some of the important highlights of the formation program followed at MSFS Scholasticate:

**Spiritual Formation:** Since spiritual formation is the deepest core of all aspects of formation, it is given paramount importance in the daily timetable of the scholasticate. Daily spiritual exercises are the most important means of spiritual growth and formation. The exercises include Morning Prayers, Meditation, Holy Mass, Midday prayer and Mid-day Review of Life, Evening Prayers and Night Prayers. To provide variety in the spiritual exercises the following arrangements are made: Evening prayer times on Mondays and Thursdays: Bibliolog/Lectio Divina; on Tuesdays: Spiritual Reading; on Wednesdays: Rosary of The Seven Dolours, on Fridays: An hour of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament; on Saturdays: Rosary,

on Sundays: Benediction. The priest confreres and scholastics takes turns to officiate/animate the different aspects of the daily Eucharist. One day (Saturday) in

a week, all the prayers are recited, and the Eucharist is celebrated, in Kiswahili. This helps the students to become familiar with the Kiswahili texts as these will be useful to them in future. The scholastics by turn give daily reflections and meditation points based on a Gospel passage after the Morning Prayers. Monthly Recollection is important for evaluating the over-all growth, and for refocusing and planning for further progress. The Monthly Recollection is held on every first Friday and Saturday. The Monthly Recollection starts with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on every first Friday evening till the noon of Saturday. On Saturday morning opportunity is given to the scholastics to go for confession. The Recollection ends with Mass at noon on Saturday. The recollection animators and confessors are invited from outside the LCI campus. The Annual Retreat is planned for the beginning of every academic year as it will be a privileged time to evaluate the progress made during the previous year and for determining the future course of action. The retreat is for five full days.

**Spiritual Direction and Spiritual Conference:** The Scholastics choose different spiritual directors from among the priests on the campus. Rarely are the students given permission to go for spiritual direction outside the campus. They are encouraged to go for spiritual

direction frequently. Spiritual conferences are given by the Rector or someone appointed by him according to the need.

**Special Exercises:** The celebrations which have special significance for our Congregation are observed with earnest interior spiritual preparation. They are: a) the Feast of St. Francis de Sales preceded by a novena to personalize his spirit and the virtues recommended in his writings and practised by him. b) The feast of our Lady of Compassion preceded by a novena to cultivate a tender love and devotion to the Mother of Compassion. c) The Founder's day preceded by a novena to know better and to grow in the spirit of the founder, the charism of the Congregation and to pray especially for the canonization of the founder and for the missions of the Congregation.

### **Community Life and Celebrations**

Community spirit is strengthened by "expressions of affection given with moderation and discretion. They become useful and enjoyable to those on whom we bestow them" (SC, p. 64). Accordingly, we have the following community celebrations to foster the spirit of community and family spirit: New Year, Easter, Christmas, special feasts of the Congregation, Institute day, the birthdays of staff members and the birthdays of scholastics are celebrated in the community. The

community of Scholasticate gathers together once a month to evaluate all the programs of the community including academic ones and also to discuss and plan forthcoming programs for the following month. These meetings give an opportunity to the brothers to air their views both positive and negative about the various issues and give them a sense of participation in the decision-making process.

### **Studies and Co-Curricular Activities**

The scholastics follow the programme of studies arranged by the LCI. They follow the Programme of working days and holidays as indicated in LCI Calendar. Since co-curricular activities inculcate discipline, foster initiative, develop talents, enable persons to overcome nervousness and free them from complexes, we have public speaking sessions as well as two weeks of cultural and sports competitions in preparation for the Institute Day. The sports and cultural competitions are celebrated as 'De Sales Olympics.' Besides, we facilitate annual inter-seminary competitions in Football, Volleyball and Basketball. Other co-curricular activities include a day of encounter for the first-year seminarians from the neighboring seminaries and a philosophical symposium for all the neighboring seminarians.

### **Manual Work**

Since manual work is an important



means of service to the community and is of great help for preserving good health and in fostering self-discipline, it is given importance in the programme. Morning daily cleaning/classroom preparation duties are assigned by the beadle to keep the house and the surroundings clean and tidy. There is an hour of work on every working day and general cleaning on every Saturday. Usually one Saturday in a month is set apart for major community work. There are also special days of prolonged hours of work as situation demands (such as during the time of planting and harvesting). During the holidays between the two terms and the annual holidays, the scholastics spend a few extra hours of manual work on the campus.

### **Recreation, Games and other Relaxations**

Relaxation, joy, good health of body and mind, team work, sense of discipline, sportsman spirit are the goals of recreation and games. To realize them the following programmes are included: regular indoor games, daily outdoor games, movie once a month, evening walk on every Sunday, one annual picnic and a lunch-out per semester. After

Dinner the brothers watch the daily news on the TV. This helps them to keep up-to-date with the happenings in the society outside of East Africa.

### **Pastoral and Social Activities**

Since apostolic activity is part of the very nature of our religious vocation the scholastics are given opportunities for pastoral involvement in the weekend such as teaching catechism, animating the children's liturgy, and assisting the priests at the Mass are provided to Brothers who volunteer for such activities. They also organize seminars and programmes for Secondary school Children in Arusha Region under the umbrella of 'Fransalian Communications.'

LCI is proud of its past achievements and looks forward to the future with confidence to continue its service to the Congregation and to the Church in Africa. In this decennial year we thank God for his providential care and express our deep appreciation and thanks to all our major superiors, to all our benefactors and the various funding agencies for their timely, and valuable assistance.

Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil, MSFS  
& Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhy, MSFS



*"A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people"*

# Fransalian Study House-Kola

Fransalian study house-kola is a formation house for those aspiring to become priests in the congregation of the Missionaries of Saint Francis de Sales (MSFS). It is the place in which the last stage of formation is done. The house is situated in Kola B in Morogoro diocese in Tanzania. Formation began in 1995 at Salvatorian Institute of Philosophy and Theology now Jordan University College (JUCO). By then, Jordan University College was a religious seminary, admitting only students of philosophy and theology. The MSFS brothers stayed with the Salvatorians for two years 1995-1997. The dream of having an independent formation house was realized in 1998. The then superior general of the congregation of the MSFS, Fr. Emille Mayoraz MSFS blessed the house and opened it in January

1998. The first batch of nine brothers, who had been accommodated by the Augustinians for few months, entered the house. The house comprised of both philosophical and theological students until 2010 when Lumen Christi Institute-Arusha was began for philosophical students. It is now for theology students only. Members residing in the house are from different countries such as India, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania thus depicting the liveliness of the house.

## The purpose of constructing the formation house

According to Saint John Paul II in his 1992 apostolic exhortation *pastores dabo vobis*, any person to undertake the priestly vocation has to undergo the four essential areas of formation



Remember! There is a state in life without its problems and frustrations. - St. Francis de Sales



commonly known as the four pillars of formation. These pillars are human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. It is in this understanding the congregation saw the need of establishing a house where an integral and holistic formation is realized. At first, it was meant for the members of East Africa province. With time, this has changed and students from other provinces which have taken missions in other African countries are residing here. To realize the exhortation of Saint John Paul II, different programs and activities are being cultivated to equip the seminarians with enough skills for the mission.

Seminarians here are not formed in isolation. Jordan University College is comprised of various religious congregations. The house is neighboring other congregations such as Consolata, Augustinians, Stigmatines, Montfort Brothers etc. This shows how the house is well situated in a very conducive environment for achieving the objectives. They have established a very cordial relationship with the other formation houses. They participate fully in all the necessary functions. The presence of the formation house is a joy to Jordan University College, which as stated earlier began as a religious seminary with the aim of educating seminarians. It was one of the objectives of establishing the house here in order to join JUCO where other formees from other different congregations undergo philosophical and theological/religious formation.

## Programs

Many programs are being undertaken here under the umbrella of Fransalian Communications which started in 1999. Some of the great achievements of Fransalian Communications are highlighted below.

- Several spiritual seminars have been conducted successfully. There is one week December spiritual seminar each year for religious. Participants come from all over the country. Some reside in the formation house while others come and go back to their communities. It has been well received and a good number of participants attend.
- There is a spiritual seminar for the university students. The seminar is conducted thrice per academic year. It is arranged by the community members in collaboration with the leadership of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) chaplaincy. We are looking forward for collaboration with other nearby universities.
- Secondary and primary school seminars on various issues affecting the students are given. The main challenge on these seminars is lack of proper cooperation from the schools. In each year, the surrounding secondary schools are organized for competitions under the name Fransalian Interschool Cultural Competition. The schools have been actively participating.

Awards and certificates of participation are given to the participants.

- The Fransalian bookshop is famous in and outside Morogoro diocese. It deals with religious articles and various types of books.

The above are some of the activities that the Fransalian Study House-Kola dedicates its time in.

### **The 'fruits' of Fransalian Study House.**

Since its beginning, good fruits are being witnessed. The total number of priests who have been formed in the house is fifty. The priests are from Africa and India. Out of this number, sixteen are from Africa. In the year 2019, the congregation has been blessed with eight African deacons who by God's grace expect to be ordained priests in 2020. Seventy two seminarians have had their formation in the house. Those who find difficulties in the Fransalian way of life, have been guided to realize their vocations elsewhere. Since its erection, the total number of formators is nine, that is, seven rectors and two assistants and the total number of formees until present is seventy two. In the year

2014, South African region under North East- India province started sending their formees here and in 2018, South East India province which has a mission in Malawi sent their first batch of formees to Fransalian Study House.

### **The daily routine of the house**

Disorder and disharmony exists where there are no rules and regulations. Fransalian study house is guided by a timetable which binds all the members. Community life is the basis of everything. Common Prayers, manual labor, games and good night gathering each day is the basis of the serene environment witnessed in the house. There are self-generating income projects which the community is fully engaged in. On Saturdays and Sundays, the formees are busy doing their apostolates in their respective places such as SUA, Mazimbu, Lukobe, Mkambarani, Kiwanja cha Ndege etc. At present the community is comprised of two Priests, six deacons and fourteen brothers.

The missionaries of Saint Francis de Sales are known for their hospitality. Anytime you visit Morogoro, pay a visit and enjoy the good climate at Fransalian study house-kola.





# PERPETUAL PROFESSION AND DIACONATE ORDINATION

August 23, 2019 was a joyous day for Fransalians in East Africa as seven of our scholastics made their final commitment to the Lord at Fransalian House, Kola Hills, Morogoro, Tanzania. The event began with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Rev. Fr. Suresh Babu MSFS, the General Councillor in charge of formation. Rev. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS, the Provincial Superior of East Africa province received the vows. Hearty Congratulations to our brothers Dennis Dindi, Fabian Wasonga, Gregory Mutisya, Leonard Ngumbi, Michael Mwangi, Patropio Mungala and Ssentamu Ruthitical.



Dindi, Gregory Mutisya, Leonard Ngumbi, Michael Mwangi, Patropio Mungala and Ssentamu Ruthitical.

On August 24, 2019, six of the brothers were ordained deacons by Bishop Telesphore Mkude, the Bishop of Morogoro Diocese. The diaconate ordination took place at St. Francis de Sales Parish Church, Dumila. Hearty Congratulations to our newly ordained deacons Dennis

Both events were witnessed by a number of priests, religious men and women, parents, relatives and laity. The Final Profession and the Diaconate Ordination were held after a one week long Salesian seminar and a three weeks long Salesian retreat led by Fr. Suresh Babu MSFS, the General Councilor in charge of formation and Fr. Devasia Manael MSFS.



We must live every minute of our lives as if it were our last.

- St. Francis de Sales

# INTRODUCING NEW PRIEST 2019

**Fr. Kenneth Maina Mwangi** was born on August 3, 1984 of the family of Mr Thomas Mwangi and Mrs Anne Wanjiru in Nairobi – Kenya. He is the third born of the four children and is the only son. He was baptized on March 25, 1995 and received the Holy Communion on April 7, 1996 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Jericho. He was confirmed on December 6, 1998 at Our Lady of Visitation Parish, Makadara. He did his primary education from 1990 to 1998 in Uhuru Primary School, Nairobi and his secondary education from the year 1999 to 2002 in Queen of Apostles Seminary. Having the desire to become a priest, he joined the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales and started formation in Fransalian Seminary Ndagani (Meru Diocese) in July 2006. In the subsequent year, he did the canonical Novitiate at Fransalianum in Dar-es-Salaam and made his First Religious Profession on July 10, 2008. Thereupon, he did his Philosophical Studies at the Spiritan Missionary Seminary in Arusha (Affiliated to the Catholic University of Eastern Africa) from 2008-2011. After his completion of Philosophical studies, he was sent to SFS Community in Tabora for Regency 2011-2012, Provincial House and Fransalian Seminary Ndagani 2012-2013. Later, he was sent to India for Higher Studies in 2013-2015 after which he joined the Fransalian Study House in Morogoro for his Theological



Studies at the Jordan University College 2015-2019. He made his Perpetual Profession on March 4, 2017 and was ordained Deacon on October 27, 2018 at JUCO by His Lordship Telesphore Mkude of the Diocese of Morogoro.

He finished his theological studies in June 2019 after which he went to serve at his home parish St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Kalimoni in the Archdiocese of Nairobi. On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2019, he was ordained a priest in his parish at his outstation of Divine Mercy Catholic Church, Muigai by His Lordship Rt. Rev. David Kamau, the Auxiliary Bishop of Nairobi Archdiocese. At the moment, Fr. Kenneth Maina is working as the assistant parish priest of Our Lady of Grace Church, Lububu in the Archdiocese of Tabora.



# Tanzania – Close up: Get to know Africa and do good

Being a tour group of 13 persons we spent a memorable time in Tanzania from October 25th to 1st of November 2019. Reason for our journey was an aid project as well as the thesis of four dedicated students of the Bundeshandelsakademie Oberwart titled „Tanzania – When action meets compassion life changes“. By means of crowdfunding we had been able to raise funds for the equipment for a classroom, such as furniture and laptops, at the „Fransalian Hekima Secondary School“.

Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel, provincial of MSFS East Africa,

introduced us into the life of Northern Tanzania. In this one week we learnt a lot about the people and their living conditions and also about the landscape between the Kilimanjaro and the crater of Ngorongoro.

We stayed at the Lumen Christi Institute's guesthouse in Arusha, which is part of a spacious area also containing a secondary school, a tutoring school, buildings for the study of philosophy and courses for catechism and formator and finally a medical centre. Authentically, we experienced everyday life in this



The crosses that we shape for ourselves are always lighter than the ones laid upon us. - *St. Francis de Sales*



well-organized training center.

Our visit to the “Fransalian Hekima Secondary School” was very touching as it is supported by our project. After the school community had welcomed us with a song and a “Massai Shuka”, a typical Massaian cloth we were introduced to their school life. There are already well-furnished and well-equipped rooms for two forms and the tutoring class. Next school year they will be able to start the third form, which will be furnished and equipped with the money raised by our project.

Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel organized interviews with the manager of the local roses-farm, the manager of the district hospital and the doctor at the outpatient clinic. Furthermore, we had an extensively interview with a female university professor describing the situation of WOMEN in Tanzania. We felt her convinced commitment to improving the lives of the women there.

When we visited “St. Mary’s Girls’ Home”, an orphanage run by the Sisters of Sacred Sciences, we recognized the need for social work of the nuns.

We also experienced the wild North of Tanzania on a safari in the Tarangire National Park and in the crater of Ngorongoro. In this huge

savannah, we actually watched close up almost all African animals such as giraffes, zebras, elephants, gazelles, monkeys, buffalos, warthogs, hyenas, crocodiles, herons, flamingos, storks, hippos, gnus, lions and one rhino.

The selfless and enthusiastic commitment for the education of children, for health care and finally for enabling a more dignified life, this commitment of all MSFS Fathers in East Africa is unforgettable and defining. Every morning they pause to realize the upbringing of humane values, exemplary for their protégés.

We will remember the people forever, and above all the children, who, despite the difficult circumstances of life, always smiling and openly approached us. This journey was a very special adventure that we will often remember in our lives. It certainly shaped us in many ways and we probably evolved in our personality as well. We are very grateful that we have received these opportunities and were allowed to undergo this unique experience.

We took the pausing, reviewing and renewing of our values onto our way ...

The tour group “When action meets compassion life changes”

Oberwart, Burgenland, Austria

## IBIHWA: OUR NEW MISSION

“Bloom where you are planted” has been the motto of all our ventures in East Africa. The new mission at Ibihwa is a visible sign of God’s providence for the people who longed for regular spiritual services. The Province of East Africa took one more step forward in the mission of the Lord by taking up a sub-station raised



to a parish, in a challenging environment in a short time. On August 11, 2019 Ibihwa made history by witnessing the triple events: blessing of the new house, official opening of the new parish, and conferring the Sacrament of confirmation for 246 students. His grace Rt. Rev. Beatus Kinyaiya OFM Cap, the Archbishop of Dodoma was the main celebrant of the Holy Eucharist, Rev. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS, the Provincial Superior, Rev. Chesco CPPS, the Vicar general

of the diocese, a number of priests and religious sisters, District Commissioner, District Executive Director of Bahi district and around 3,500 faithful witnessed the event. The parish at Ibihwa being the first mission of Fransalians in the Archdiocese of Dodoma was named after St. Francis de Sales. It has 6 sub-stations and 7 prayer centres, consisting 60 small Christian communities and a total of 7,000 faithful. It is a very promising parish for evangelisation and renewal of Christian faith. We are very grateful for all the support and contributions made by the Province, benefactors, and well-wishers. Our sincere thanks to Frs. Berin Charles and Jomon Joseph whose share in overcoming the struggles in the beginning of this mission cannot be forgotten. May Almighty God bless our new mission.

# Ground breaking and official opening of the MSFS Community house at Ilbissil\_ Kajiado-Kenya



I will give thanks to the lord with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders (Psalm 9:1). It is another milestone in the province of East Africa to start a new Parish in Kenya and start a new community house in the Diocese of Ngong. Fr. Agustin Mangatt, then the superior of Mlolongo Parish who bought the land and registered in the year 12-02- 2009 for future expansion of our presence in Kenya. The land remained unused for long time. The provincial administration saw a need to start a community house in Ilbissil who can take care of the faith formation of Masai community who live in and around Ilbissil. There is a strong existing Catholic population in Bissil under the Patronage of St. Mathew. This MSFS Community in the future would venture into educational field such as primary and secondary by supporting the Masai children.

The laying of the foundation stone was organized by Fr. Patrick Ngaii the Priest in charge of Kajiado Parish. The people around the area, the Parish council and the leaders of St. Mathew Catholic Main Centre at Il Bissil were present to add color to the vocation. MSFS confreres from Tanzania and MSFS Apostolic community members were present.

The foundation stone for building MSFS house was laid by Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel on May 26<sup>th</sup> 2017. After laying the foundation stone the important guests were invited to speak and all spoke well of the noble cause of the MSFS community and MSFS presence in Ngong Diocese.

The outgoing provincial Fr. Johnson Kallidukil and the provincial elect Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel reassured in their speech and their continual support for materializing the project.



With the grace of God and the generosity of Benefactors the construction work started on 08-01-2018 in the presence of Fr. Chinnappan Arockiasamy. All throughout construction of MSFS House at IL Bissil Fr. C. A. Samy

stayed at Kajiado St. Johns' the Evangelist Catholic parish. Giving service to the parish and overseeing the construction on daily basis.

At last with much difficulties and struggles the construction was



Whenever you feel temptation or despair, turn to the mother of mercy for help. - St. Francis de Sales



completed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2019. The house furniture, Chapel, Fridge, Deep freezer and Kitchen utensils was sponsored by the different people and well-wishers. As we have planned to open the house officially on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2019. We have special invited guests, the Bishop of Ngong Diocese Rt. Rev. John oballa owaa, Mr. George shiners, Brian, Karen prunty. There other invited guests from Katani, Molongo, Sabaki, Kajiado parisheners and the people around Il Bissil area. The opening ceremony was solemnized by Holy Eucharistic celebration followed by Laying foundation stone for the pre-primary school and planting of the trees by the representatives.

**Fr. Chinnappan Arockiasamy MSFS**

# Lububu Hija - 2019

The annual pilgrimage to the Salvation Hill at Lububu, in the Archdiocese of Tabora, was held on 14<sup>th</sup> September during the Feast of the Exultation of the Cross. Being a very significant day in the history of Lububu Parish, the Priests and the entire parish community started their preparations with a nine day novena prior to the material day invoking God's help, protection and guidance. During the pilgrimage day itself, about 1000 pilgrims participated in the procession from the parish to the salvation hill – a four kilometer walk accompanied by recital of prayers and chanting of hymns. There were many pilgrims who came out of the parish to participate in that spiritual event. The presence of many MSFS priests and religious from various congregations added pomp and splendor to the entire event.

Rev. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel, the Provincial of East Africa Province was the main celebrant and he delivered a rich sermon exhorting devotion and tireless

effort of leading a holy life in each one's sphere of life without giving up to any challenges that may seem shake one's faith. The 2019 pilgrimage to the Salvation Hill was a marvelous site and surely a blessing for all who participated in that pilgrimage in one way or another. Heartiest congratulations to Frs. Francis Kallikat and Ibrahim Mussajja who took all the efforts to make the "2019 Hija" a great success and a witness of faith formation within the parish of Lububu and beyond.



# ANNUAL RETREAT



**Rev. Fr. Suresh Babu MSFS** General Secretary for Formation animated two Salesian retreats for our confreres in East Africa (July 15 to 20 and July 29 to August 3). The theme of the retreat was “Growing in Holiness in a Fransalian Way”. Rev. Fr. Suresh Babu who is a renowned Salesian retreat preacher opened the treasures of the Spirituality

of St. Francis de Sales from various perspectives and encouraged everyone to understand the rich heritage that we possess as sons of St. Francis de Sales who made practical and simple methods to imitate Christ and achieve perfection. The Province of East Africa is indebted to Rev. Fr. Suresh Babu for animating the Salesian retreats for our confreres.





# FAMILY RENEWAL PROGRAM

## 1. The goal of the Family Apostolate

*When God created the earth, everything was good. He created man in His own image and likeness (Gen.1: 28). Due to his fall, the original image was wounded. So God sent his only Son so that people may have life and have it in abundance (Jn 10:10). But in the course of time in their lives as they encounter different situations and people and due to human weakness, the redeemed status is again weakened. In the family apostolate ministry we are trying to help out the people to understand the values of a Christian family and regain the redeemed status.*

Therefore, the goals of the family apostolate will be:

- To help married couples understand their call and live their vocation to family life.
- To help couples understand the threats and challenges in marriage and family life (alcohol, drugs, infidelity, misunderstanding, lack of communication, the influence of media, lack of family prayer, etc)
- To enable married couples to live their Christian faith to its fullness in marriage and family
- To create awareness among the youth preparing for marriage to



form new families make them aware of their responsibilities

- To help the addicts and the deviated to return to the mainstream of the parish, social and family life

**Achievements during the last four years**

**Training the trainer program**

Training the trainer program was organized in the Archdiocese of Arusha to train people who will help to animate different courses in different parishes. Participants were lay people from different parishes who were given intensive training on all-important subjects selected and prepared by the core team of the



Archdiocese. Then they are sent to different parishes to give a seminar to adolescents, youth and parents. All the participants stayed together for 8 days. The course was conducted with the help of the *wawata* (Association of Catholic Women in Tanzania) of the Archdiocese of Arusha. They were given certificates.

For the second time, this course was conducted in different deaneries of the diocese. Two hundred and fifty people were trained from the following parishes like UNGA limited. Kijungu, Matui, Sunya, and Kibaya.

Organized couples and family program within the diocese

- Seminar for different pious associations.
- Seminars were conducted for wawata, youth, and walezi wa watoto.
- Seminars for married couples were conducted around 25 parishes within the diocese.

### **Sunday school**

The future of the family depends on the formation we give to the children. We find many families no Christian atmosphere. The way to bring up children in Christian faith is to organize Holy Mass for children alone on Sundays and to teach them catechism. For this purpose,

catechism textbooks are made for children from class I to VII.

- It is expected to have one hour class for all children up to Form IV, immediately after mass on every Sunday at parish and substation level. This can be conducted with the help of teachers who are volunteers from the respective place.
- The same teacher takes care of the same group of children every Sunday.
- Attendance is to be taken every Sunday. At the end of the year, a prize could be given to the children, with the greatest attendance at Sunday school.
- Some competitions and examinations could be conducted annually.
- Sunday school textbooks from class I up to class VII were printed and supplied to different parishes. These books are used as textbooks for teaching religion in many parishes and schools.

### **The family tribunal in the Archdiocese of Arusha**

Be careful about everything you do, but do not be too eager.

- St. Francis de Sales



I had been working in the family tribunal of the Archdiocese of Arusha along with the other two fathers for three years. As tribunal, we used to meet a few times in the year. Marriage cases were brought to the office with the approval of the parish priest. After sufficient investigation cases were heard by the tribunal. More than thirty cases were dealt. Around fifteen cases were given legal annulment permitting to conduct another marriage.

### **Cana international**

Cana international is an organization for strengthening families started in France. In Tanzania, there are more than a hundred couples from different dioceses. I had been rendering spiritual help as a chaplain, for three years. I join with them for Annual meetings and retreats rendering spiritual services.

### **Course for pre-novices and religious**

I have been helping the prenovices of our Congregation and some other religious with the course called psycho-spiritual integration for the last three years. It is to make them aware of their potentialities and to overcome their weaknesses.

### **Radio ministry**

Ever since the beginning of this year, I have been giving a series of talk on the family every Saturday from 4.30 pm to 6.00 pm. in the radio of the diocese of Morogoro called Redeo ukweli. Many people ask for advice about their problems in life.

### **Catechists course**

During the course conducted for the catechists at LCI (Lumen Christi Institute Arusha) for one week they are taught to guide people for marriage.

### **Marriage tribunal and family renewal program in Morogoro diocese**

The administrator of the Diocese of Morogoro Very Rev. Msgr. Lazarus Vitalis Msimbe SDS informed that the Diocese has decided to start marriage tribunal and family apostolate. The diocese core committee decided that I should be part of these offices.

### **To establish a family renewal center**

The future plan is to establish a family renewal center where all people who need services like seminars, retreats, and counseling can be given.

*Fr. Sebastian Palakudy MSFS*

# 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

### **Vocation Director Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales**

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## 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:

Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS  
The Provincial Superior  
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“God blesses  
abundantly a  
cheerful giver”

Fr. Jose Eriyanickal MSFS  
Provincial Brusar  
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*Therefore the lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will  
be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him  
Immanuel. - Isaiah 7:14*



*On the first Christmas eve, Jesus was born  
He is the reason for the season  
Celebration His love for us  
No matter what the cost was  
Have a blessed Christmas and bountiful new year!*