

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Fransalians - Province of East Africa



Provincial Circular JK.4

November 22, 2011

Beloved Confreres!

Greetings of peace! I am very glad to greet you as we are entering yet another new liturgical year beginning with the Advent. The people, who were promised the Redeemer, were waiting generations after generations. This promise was fulfilled by God in the fullness of time with the further possibility of satisfying the thirst of the *waiting ones* by way of the extended ministry of Jesus through the sacred ministers – the priests who live and act in *Persona Christi*. Whenever a person makes a vow, whenever one is ordained a priest, a promise is made - to the people somewhere even unknown to us - to be fulfilled at a particular time and context. **This means the context of the mission of every one of us is planned in all eternity. Hence it implies that there are people who wait for us.** There are specific customers who are entitled to receive *Fransalian Service*. Who are those? Where are those? One needs to look for those ones in whose lives God wants him to work.

Hence my dear fathers and brothers, this Advent reminds us of the people waiting for our ministry as planned by God even before you and they were born on earth. To meet those ones we need to get out of our comfort zones, we need to go beyond our accustomed circle of relationships; we will have to walk the unfamiliar paths; we need to listen to and communicate in languages hitherto unknown to us. My person, vocation, consecration and ministry are the various dimensions of the mechanism employed by Jesus in and through the Church, in order to come to the assistance of the waiting ones.

Am I to determine the target group of my ministry? Have I the right to determine the quality and quantity of the Grace of God dispensed through my ministry? Is my missionary prophetic zeal damped by the attractions of the world and hence not being able to listen to the cry of the waiting ones?

Advent tells: *There is someone waiting for YOU. You are being awaited; Go to the ones to whom God wants you to go.*

Meetings in India

With sincere sentiments of gratitude for your prayers, I like to inform you that I could participate in the training cum meetings of the Leadership Forum and the PIF (Provincials of India Forum) & EA. The meetings as well as living together with confreres from various other Provinces and sharing the news and concerns was very enriching and encouraging. The meetings helped a lot to facilitate global thinking and to focus on the missions in Africa. The meetings were conducted at Stella Maris the Provincial House of the Mother Province of Visakhapatnam.

The nostalgic Vizag

Having got a change to spend a few days in Visakhapatnam, more than 27 years after my novitiate there, I consider a great blessing. It was an exciting experience of visiting the Salesianum the Novitiate house and to celebrate the Eucharist with a vibrant and lively community. Interactions with the elderly veteran missionaries at Stella Maris and other communities were truly enriching experiences. Concerning their work I would sum up and say: **With LESS they did MORE!** I mean although they had less resources, less facilities, less infrastructure, less personnel etc they could do a lot of work of

evangelization. It is a clear indication that the quality and extent of our missionary work does not depend primarily on what we have but on what we are and our good will to do.

Sincere appreciation and thanks to Rev. Fr. Simon Paicatt the Provincial and all the members over there for the warm hospitality, care and concern.

I also express my sincere thanks to Fr. Sunny Mattathil for being the Provincial Vicar during my absence from East Africa.

Visit to Uganda

Although for a very short time, according to the schedule, I was very happy visit our two missions in Uganda, in the Archdiocese of Tororo. Our confreres Fr. Sebastian Nirappel and Fr. Francis Kallikat are doing very well in the apostolate entrusted to them in the parishes of Osia and Agururu respectively. The church construction at Osia is nearing completion. It was my first ever visit to Agururu too. I also had the opportunity to meet **His Grace Denis Lote Kiwanuka**, the Archbishop of Tororo. He was full of appreciation for the services our confreres render and he reminded me of his repeated request to provide more priests and to take up new parishes in his Archdiocese.

New Provincial: English Province

From the communiqué given by Fr. Agnelo Fernandes our Superior General the English province has a new Provincial in the person of **Rev. Fr. Terry McGrath**. Fr Terry McGrath at present is the Retreat Director of Parkside House at Harrogate in North Yorkshire. He will assume charge of his responsibility from January 24, 2012. We wish him every blessing in this new ministry of leadership.

On behalf of East Africa province and very personally I thank **Rev. Fr. Martin Griffin** the outgoing Provincial of English Province. We remember with gratitude his genuine concern and interest for the missions in East Africa. May God bless you.

New Mission Superior Mozambique

Rev. Fr. Paul Camilo Dominic Gonsalves is the new Mission Superior for the Mission of Mozambique for Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales in Mozambique. We wish him every blessing in the new task assigned to him there. I also take this opportunity to thank very sincerely **Rev. Fr. Alex Tigga** the outgoing Mission Superior of Mozambique for his being close to us in prayer and in all our joint efforts.

Welcome to East Africa

Rev. Fr. Joseph Vettukattil MSFS from the South West India province has volunteered to render his services to African Mission initially for a period of three years. He was ordained in the year 1979 and was working mostly in the missions in Kerala and Andhra in South India. He arrived in Dar es Salaam on November 15. Soon he will be attending one month intensive Swahili language course at LCI Arusha. We extend a very hearty welcome to Fr. Joseph Vettukattil and wish him very fruitful and fulfilling ministry in East Africa.

Fransaliam Code of Ethics

You have already received by email the text of the promulgated Code of Ethics for the MSFS. As Rev. Fr. Thomas Cherukat had shared with us during the Provincial Congress, many matters concerning the significance of the same, I request each community to take a print out and study the document personally, in community and Apostolic Community. The purpose of the study is to understand the mind of the document and to realize its serious implications. As members of East Africa Province we need to contextualize the document by inserting matters relevant in our situation and life. Your insights, findings, observations, suggestions etc should reach the office of the Provincial by the end of April 2012.

Jubilee celebrations 175 & 25 Years!

The year 2013 is the Jubilee year! 175 years of MSFS Foundation and 25 years of MSFS presence in East Africa! As we have decided to celebrate it meaningfully we need to do a lot of preparations. We have decided to constitute a preparatory committee who would work out the modalities of the preparations and the celebrations.

The committee consists of:

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| 1. Fr. Zachariah Burofero | 8. Fr. Reji Pendanath (Convener) |
| 2. Fr. Tomy Kattikanayil | 9. Fr. Matthew Chavely |
| 3. Fr. Sunny Vettickal | 10. Fr. Jomet Kollapallil |
| 4. Fr. Stephen Ubadesi | 11. Fr. Johnson Pathiyil |
| 5. Fr. Sheejan Kallarakkal | 12. Fr. Johnson Napoleon |
| 6. Fr. Sebastian Williams | 13. Fr. Johnson Kallidukil (Chair Person) |
| 7. Fr. Sebastian Kuzhuppil | |

The convener is to initiate as early as possible contact with all the members and to exchange ideas even before the formal meeting is held. The first formal meeting of the committee is to be held at least by March 31, 2012. Jubilee year celebration is a time of special blessings for us. Every confrere and every community is an integral part of the celebration and its preparation. Each one is welcomed to share your ideas directly to the Convener.

Revising the Provincial Statutes

The process of revising the provincial statutes is to be resumed. The council has constituted a new committee consisting of following persons for revising the provincial status.

1. Fr. Johnson Pathiyil (convener and chair person)
2. Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil
3. Fr. Zachariah Burofero
4. Fr. Antony Samy Sebastian
5. Fr. Tomy Kattikanayil

The committee is expected to present the first draft of the entire Statutes latest by June 2012.

Transfers and Appointments

Fr. Wilson Packiam is appointed as the coordinator for the MSFS Confreres from East Africa Province in Europe.

Fr. James Nedungatt is freed from the responsibilities of being the Superior at SFS Bhavan Angamaly with effect from January 6, 2012. He is also freed from all the allied responsibilities of being at SFS Bhavan. Together with his home holidays he will be attending some renewal programs till the end of August, 2012

Fr. Jacob Puthiyidathuchalil who was rendering his service to the Fransalian Seminary at Ndagani is transferred from there with effect from December 9, 2011. In consultation with the Provincial Administration of EA, the decision was made in by the Regional Administration of Southern Africa Region.

Fr. Zachariah Burofero is to render his services to Fransalian Seminary Ndagani from December 10 to March 31, 2012.

Fr. Joseph Vettukattil is appointed to the Fransalian Community of Mkuza, with effect from December 24, 2011. He is also designated to be appointed as the Assistant Parish Priest in Mkuza in the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam. He will be also rendering his services to the Novitiate by way of classes and guidance.

Fr. Sebastian Kuzhuppil is appointed as the Superior of the Provincial House Community with effect from November 24, 2011.

Fr. Jose Eriyanickal is appointed as Superior and Bursar to the SFS Bhavan Angamaly with effect from January 6, 2012. He will also hold the allied responsibilities of Vocation Promotion, mission requirements facilitation coordination etc.

Fr. Reji Pendanath is appointed as the Manager of Fransalian Pre & Primary School, Kigurunyembe, Morogoro with effect from December 12, 2011

Gratitude and Appreciation

Fr. Jacob Puthiyidathuchalil: Fr. Jacob from the Southern African Region (North East India Province) was with us in East Africa during the last three years. He worked at Fransalian Seminary Ndagani as the formator and spared no efforts in recruiting the candidates. Our sincere appreciation to Fr. Jacob for his kind services to our mission. We wish him also every blessing in the days to come wherever he is. Fr. Jacob will be leaving Ndagani on December 9, 2011.

Fr. James Nedungatt: Fr. James was at our mission house in Angamaly during the last six years. He was all alone, courageously facing the challenging situations and rendering every necessary assistance for the mission in Africa whenever he was asked for. We appreciate very much the hard work he has done to bring up the farm and to maintain the house. It is very remarkable that Fr. James made himself totally available for pastoral ministry especially for the sacrament of reconciliation in all the parishes and retreat centers around. In the coming days we wish him happy holidays and a rejuvenating time.

Fr. Jose Eriyanickal: Fr. Jose served the province as the Provincial Bursar during the last six years. We have witnessed his selfless dedication to this office along with other responsibilities entrusted to him by the Congregation. He also found ample time for pastoral engagements during this time. As we thank Fr. Jose for his spirit of hard work and service, we also wish him every blessing in the new tasks entrusted to him. Fr. Jose will be leaving for India on December 20, 2011.

Regents' Meet

The annual regents' meet will be on January 27 and 28 at Fransalian House Kola. Fr. Pius Kochuparampil the Councilor in charge of Formation will animate the sessions. I request all the scholastics now doing the regency to contact Fr. Pius for the detailed program.

Our Pledge!

It is now almost two months since we ourselves pledged to live a new way of life according to the inspirations derived from our Provincial Congress. **The Action Plan** of the Provincial Congress was the matter of our pledge. I request each one of you to make the personal study of the action plan to live it especially beginning with those matters at the personal level.

Pilgrimage to Holy Land

Fr. Sebastian Kuzhuppil will be making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from December 20 to 28, 2011. During his home holidays he will be joining a group arranged by Charis Bhavan in India. **Fr. Devadoss Francis** and **Fr. Tomy Kattikanayil** will be visiting the Holy Land and attending a renewal program from January 23 to February 9, 2012. Let us thank God for this opportunity and pray for all those who make this possible. We wish our confreres a graceful time in Holy Land.

New Apostolic community

The MSFS Community at LCI Arusha and the MSFS Community at Ngurdotto will now form the new Arusha Apostolic Community. This decision was made taking into consideration the big geographical distances to the communities in Dar es Salaam. I request and authorize **Fr. Nelson Antony** to hold the first meeting and to conduct the elections not later than the end of December.

Ndagani Seminary Kenya – Re-opened

After many challenging days of troubles and restlessness, the situation at Fransalian Seminary Ndagani is calm now. I thank you very sincerely for the prayers and your genuine concern in those moments of difficulties. I also appreciate the solidarity and genuine concern shown by the **Bishop of Meru Most Rev. Salesius Mugambi** and the local clergy, other religious, the civil authorities, the police force and parish leaders in coming to our rescue and to console and strengthen us. My sincere appreciation for all our confreres in Kenya for the magnanimous courage and deep faith in God, with which they faced the times of trials. The deep sense of solidarity and unity and genuine concern for one another was very well manifested in every step. The seminary was reopened again on November 8, 2011. The police offers the seminary special protection still for some more days. Let us continue to pray that God will keep us safe. We wish the Fathers and Brothers at Ndagani Seminary a new beginning with new confidence.

Installation of Fr. Sony Kochumalayil

On 13th November 2011 in the parish church of Euerdorf, Würzburg, Germany, Fr. Sony Kochumalayil was officially installed as the new **Parish Priest of the Churches, Aura, Euerdorf, Ramsthal, Sulzthal and Wirmsthal**. The festive ceremony and the Eucharist Celebration were led by the Dean, was concelebrated by 11 priests and 2 deacons, accompanied by church chorus, and participated by a church-full of parishnors and guests. Fr. Sabu Francis (Delegate of Rev. Fr. Superior General), Fr. Wilson Packiam (Delegate of Fr. Provincial) congratulated Fr. Sony and greeted the parishnors on behalf of the congregation. The local political representatives and parish council chairman expressed their joy of getting a young Indian Fransalian with an African background as their new Shepherd. In his homily and thanksgiving speech, Fr. Sony insisted on the importance of working together as people of one family experiencing together the merciful love of the Lord. After the Holy Eucharistic Celebration, the participants were led by the local band group to the parish hall for a friendly get together. We congratulate Fr. Sony for being able to shoulder this heavy responsibility and wish him the blessings of God to be a good shepherd for the people of God.

Church Blessing Mji Mpya Dar Es Salaam

The newly constructed parish church in the parish of Mji Mpya in the Arch diocese of Dar es Salaam was blessed and opened by **His Eminence Polycarp Cardinal Pengo** the Archbishop of Dar e Salaam on October 9, 2011. The occasion was attended by more than a thousand of faithful and many MSFS confreres and diocesan priests and religious. The Altar of the Church was consecrated and the relic of St. Alphonsa of Bharanaganam was placed in it. On that day more than 200 children received the first Holy Communion and it added brilliant splendor to the day. Our heartfelt congratulations to Fr. Sunny Mattathil the parish priest, Fr. Stephen Gerald the assistant parish priest, the sisters, catechists leaders

and all the faithful for this splendid achievement. We also remember with sincere gratitude all our benefactors and well wishers.

Let us remember them in our prayers

- ❖ The brother in law of Fr. Stephen Gerald Mr. Kulandhai Raj passed away on October 24, 2011. He was 42 years old. RIP

- ❖ The nephew of Fr. Sunny Vettickal, Thomas by name died on November 12, 2011 due to some complications in the heart. Baby Thomas was just 21 months old. RIP

Our heartfelt condolences to our dear confers and to their beloved family members.

Conclusion

Beloved Confreres!

Beginning of yet another liturgical year and sometime later the calendar year reminds us of the REALITY OF TIME. As we pass each moment we are closer to that moment when our life takes 'U' turn when the earthly part of our journey into eternity, is over. But the journey continues with a new boarding pass at the transfer desk of death. If not today tomorrow we will be at that transfer desk; we will be asked by the author of our lives not only on matters concerning our lives but equally on matters concerning the lives of those for whom your life and mission were meant from all eternity.

The call of Advent is to turn to them who need you according to the plan of God. Just as Jesus turned to us let us also turn to them and be the Good News to them today. I wish you a very holy and peace filled season of Advent.

Yours in the Eucharistic Lord

Fr. Johnson Kallidukil msfs
(Provincial Superior MSFS East Africa Province)

Again, one preparing to sail and about to voyage over raging waves calls upon a piece of wood more fragile than the ship which carries him. For it was desire for gain that planned that vessel, and wisdom was the craftsman who built it; but it is thy providence, O Father, that steers its course, because thou hast given it a path in the sea, and a safe way through the waves, showing that thou canst save from every danger, so that even if a man lacks skill, he may put to sea. It is thy will that works of thy wisdom should not be without effect; therefore men trust their lives even to the smallest piece of wood, and passing through the billows on a raft they come safely to land. (Wisdom 14: 1-5)