

# MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Fransalians - Province of East Africa

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Beloved Confreres,

## Day of Consecrated Life

Once again we are privileged to witness the Day of Consecrated life as we celebrate the Presentation of Our Lord. It was surely with a specific purpose, Blessed Pope John Paul II initiated in 1997 a day set apart for consecrated life. It is today and it is our day. The day reminds us of our noble call and our irreplaceable responsibilities as consecrated persons. When we think of our consecrated life we tend to date it back to the day of our entry into the noviciate or the date of first profession. However let us realize that the consecrated life and the religious life are not one and the same. All religious are expected to be consecrated persons. But not all consecrated persons are religious for there are various forms of consecrated life- religious life being one of them.

The church law teaches us that the religious life begins with the noviciate. And we officially became religious, as members of our religious family with the first profession. However our life as consecrated persons begins much before that. The life of consecration for a person begins from the very moment one makes a decision for God. It can be from the very moment one realises and responds to one's vocation. At a particular moment in the journey of the life of a consecrated person one enters into religious life. Thus religious life becomes an expression of our consecration.

## Religious life: Expression of and means for Consecrated life

Consecrated life is the result of our very consecration and not the result of our religious profession. Being a religious and doing many things as religious need not necessarily imply that we are truly consecrated persons. When one consecrates one's self to God, one assumes the task of living a life exclusively for God. This is a sacred task which implies quality of ones being rather than one's actions. However as religious we cannot be but consecrated persons. Thus, religious life is the expression as well as means of consecrated life.

## Consecrated life implies: Being fully alive in Jesus

This *being set apart for Jesus* indicates that we imbibe the attitude of Jesus, that we live and love as Jesus did, that we are available for service after the example of Jesus himself. Jesus went to the people and made himself available for them. The only time he secluded himself from the people was when he was in prayer with his Father. **Jesus did not set up an office and wait for the people to come to him... He did not announce his office hours!** There was no need to fill application form to get his services done. His consecration made him "filled with power". This was the power of love that was just emanating from his very being. The more he gave out, the more he re-fuelled from the Father who is love. That was why he was never exhausted.

Our Superior General exhorted us (SG-AB 02) *to turn away from a 'tired' Religious Life toward a dynamic response to Religious Life.* The reason for this tiredness in religious life is

nothing but *not really being set apart for God*. When we are not really set apart for God, it logically follows that we dedicate ourselves to some other things or values that are not of God. Our concentration and energies are dispersed, priorities are neglected and we are tired.

### **Consecrated life implies: Being warm hearted and person oriented**

Pope Francis invites us to a new mind-set of life-witness and consecration. He said: " *The ministers of the Gospel must be persons who can warm the hearts of the people, who walk through the dark night with them, how know how to dialogue and to descend themselves into the people's night, into the darkness, but without getting lost. The people of God want pastors, not clergy acting like bureaucrats or government officials*".

Today if we in some cases experience lack of life in our ministry, if we fail to touch the hearts of the people, it is an indicator that one is far from the attitude of Jesus, ie one is far from the consecrated life. **We may find ourselves being set apart for thousand things which may have nothing to do with our vocation and ministry:** things which do not communicate any Gospel value, things that we think are necessary for our pleasure, things that we think will give us a better performance rating and getting appreciation from others: in short being set apart for the things and values of the world!

My dear Confreres, if we are truly consecrated to God, our life will be marked by simplicity, authenticity, humility; we would lead a life that is close to God and close to the truth. We will be full of energy, our hearts filled with love, our time available for the people.

### **Consecrated life implies: Being holy**

Today the best apostolate the consecrated persons can offer to the world, is the apostolate of the presence – a presence that is holy; a presence that is consecrated for God. All our usual traditional apostolates – pastoral, social, educational etc are to emanate from the basic apostolate of our being. **When our being is characterized by true holiness, our other apostolic activities too will bear the fragrance of holiness.**

At times, even though rare, unfortunately we find in our lives behavioral styles that are not radiating the fragrance of sanctity. We need the support of each other to lead the life of holiness. Each of us has the duty to live a life that inspires the other.

### **Consecrated life implies: Being *divinely* merciful and compassionate**

Besides, the day of Consecrated life reminds us consecrated persons of our obligation to do restitution for the sins of the world as well as for the sins among the consecrated persons. **We need to function as agents of divine mercy.** When we pray *have mercy on us and on the whole world*, let us pray for the Fransalian family as a community, as province and as congregation. It is a reminder of our call to do reparations for the many sins of the world, sins of the consecrated persons. When a consecrated person is lost – no matter from which congregation – it is a loss for the entire body of consecrated life which is part of the body of Christ. When one is lost, there is the moral responsibility on the rest of the body ie on each one of us.

### **New Assignments:**

#### *Apostolic Community in Kenya and Uganda*

**Fr. Jacob Thekkekara** is given the task of convening the meeting of the Apostolic Community of Kenya and Uganda – consisting of our confreres in Oisa, Agururu, Mlolongo, Katani, Chera and Ndagani. This meeting is to facilitate the election of new office bearers. The meeting is to be held as early as possible preferably latest by the end of this month.

### *Foster- Educational and Social development Program in Uganda*

**Fr. Thomas Chozhithara MSFS** is now in the final stages of his doctoral studies in Germany. He assigned to initiate and implement the process establishing educational and social development programs in Uganda. The details would be announced later.

### *Province Web site update*

**Fr. Susai David and Fr. Sijo Pendanath** are given the responsibility of facilitating the update of our web site ([www.msfs-eastafrika.com](http://www.msfs-eastafrika.com)). Kindly forward any material, news, write ups, photos etc that would serve as useful materials for the web site to the email id: [webmsfseastafrica@gmail.com](mailto:webmsfseastafrica@gmail.com).

### *Circulation Manager Baraka*

**Fr. Sebastian Nirappel** is assigned with the task as the Circulation Manager of Baraka news bulletin in East Africa. **Fr. Jose Eriyanickal** is assigned the task of being Circulation Manager for all over except East Africa.

### *Committee for Finance Guidelines*

**Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal** (leader), **Fr. Robert Raj**, **Fr. Joseph Poikunnel** and **Fr. Sunny Vettickal** are assigned the task to finalize the draft on finance guidelines. The updated version would be sent to you soon. Kindly study it and give your feedback.

### *Friends of Fransalians*

It was the felt need as the Friends of Fransalians are growing and are spread throughout Tanzania, to have a reference person from our side in the Lake zone. Hence **Fr. Jomon Vellachalil** is assigned with the task of being the assistant coordinator of FSFS in Mwanza and around.

### *Planning the Development for Ilbissil*

**Fr. Jacob Thekkekara** together with **Fr. Chinnappan Arockiasamy** and **Fr. Sunny Vettickal** are given the task of making developmental plans for the land in Ilbissil, in Kenya.

### **On Finance matters**

#### *On Receipt and Payment Vouchers*

I request every institution to print its own receipt vouchers and payment vouchers with duplicate and with the serial numbers. From the finance year 2014 kindly use only the particularly printed ones and not the petty cash vouchers and general receipts from the market. All the parishes also are encouraged to do the same.

#### *Auditing School accounts*

All the heads of educational institutions are requested to get ready with the accounts of 2013 with the supporting documents for the purpose of official internal and external auditing. This is to be made ready by latest the end of this month.

#### *On Preparing the Project applications and requests for Donations*

As it is the good tradition in our Province, individual initiatives are always encouraged in all matters of spiritual renewal and developmental works, generating finance etc. However I would like to remind every member of one's obligation to discuss the matter in the community, keep the community and the Provincial Superior informed of all the project applications that you plan to send and you have sent in the recent times. Kindly keep the record of all such donations and the report of implementations in the files and with a copy

to the Provincial. It applies to all the applications that you are making and all the details of the helps that you get, no matter from an organization, personal benefactor from the family or friends.

### *Bank accounts*

I would like to remind you again that all the bank accounts are to have two signatories with the mode of operation *both to sign* in all the transactions of withdrawals and transfers irrespective of the amount of money involved. This is norm is to be implemented latest by February 15, 2014.

### **Provincial Congress South East India Province**

In order to facilitate better inter provincial collaboration and seeking the possibility of expanding the MSFS missions to other African territories, at the invitation of Fr. Antony Dharmaraj, the Provincial of the South East India Province, I will be participating in the Provincial Congress that would be held from February 24 to 28, 2014 in Trichy, India. Let us earnestly pray for the graceful celebration of the Provincial Congress

### **Blessing and opening of the SFS Secondary School Mlolongo, Kenya**

Although started to function some time back, the official solemn blessing and opening of the St. Francis de Sales Mixed Day Secondary School was celebrated on January 24, 2014. The solemn Eucharistic celebration was officiated by Most Rev Martin Kivuva the Bishop of Machakose Diocese. He also blessed the school and premises. The school building was opened by Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS the Provincial of East Africa Province. The function was attended by the students, parents, teachers, civil leaders and many priests and religious. The bishop in his message recalled the challenging situation in which Fr. Augustine Mangatt pioneered the mission in Mlolongo which was almost uninhabitable 17 years ago. He thanked the Fransalians for their spirit of perseverance and hard work. The school situated in the parish of Mlolongo caters to the needy young ones of the locality. The solid structure of the school stands out as a beacon of hope for many.

*Report from Fr. Sijo Pendanath MSFS*

Our hearty congratulations to Fr. Jacob Thekkekara and community for the great efforts put in order to establish this institution.

### **Spirituality Seminar, Morogoro Tanzania**

Fransalian Communications in Morogoro once again conducted a Spirituality Seminar on the **Spirit and Spirituality of Vatican II**. The Seminar was from December 26 to 31, 2013 with a considerable number of Religious men and women and some lay faithful. The presence of different facilitators from Morogoro and out of Morogoro made the Seminar a successful one. The seminar consisted of input sessions, discussions and enriching spiritual activities. Our dearly loved Fr. Provincial also shared some sessions and presided over the thanksgiving mass on the concluding day. Also he gave away the certificates to all the participants. We earnestly thank him and all who facilitated our Seminar.

*Report from Bro. Thomas Njue MSFS*

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Director of Fransalian Communications Morogoro, Rev. Fr. Sebastian Nirappel and all Fransalian Brothers in Kola for organizing this Seminar. Let us pray for them that they go on with the same Spirit of evangelizing to the people of God through such initiatives.

## New Collaborators in Mlolongo, Kenya

In order to render administrative and academic assistance, we have now **Assisi Sisters of Mary Immaculate** (Green Garden Sisters) collaborating with us in our SFS Secondary School in Mlolongo, Nairobi. We extend to them a very warm welcome and wish them all the blessings they are in need of in this new mission.

## Prayers requested

**Fr. Laurence Kunambi** of Catholic Diocese of Morogoro died on January 15, 2014. He was 86 years and died of old age related illness. Fr. Kunambi was assisting us for many years by way of being available for confession and spiritual direction. Let us thank God for this great pastor and pray for his soul. RIP

## My Programs

### February 2014

- 2 Mlolongo, Kenya
- 3 Travel to Morogoro
- 8 Education Forum Meeting in LCI, Arusha
- 8- 9 Regents' Meeting at LCI Arusha
- 14-16 Canonical Visitation to Bukene Mission
- 18-19 At LCI Arusha: Meeting De Sales University representatives
- 20 In Morogoro
- 21 to 8.3 In India

### March 2014

- 8 – 20 in Uganda

## Concluding words

Beloved Confreres,

I wish you once again a very Happy Feast of the Presentation of our Lord. May each one of us be able to present oneself to the Lord every moment as an offering holy and without blemish.

Yours fraternally in the Lord,



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

**Let those who make profession of the evangelical counsels seek and love above all else God who has first loved us (cf. 1 John 4:10) and let them strive to foster in all circumstances a life hidden with Christ in God (cf. Col. 3:3). This love of God both excites and energizes that love of one's neighbour which contributes to the salvation of the world and the building up of the Church. This love, in addition, quickens and directs the actual practice of the evangelical counsels.**

*From Vat II PC no. 6*