

# MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Fransalians - Province of East Africa

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Beloved Confreres,

Warm greetings from Morogoro, Tanzania. Happy Feast on this solemnity of Annunciation.

## **Annunciation - God's initiative**

Today we rejoice with the Mother Church as we celebrate the solemnity of the Annunciation. Most of the times we reflect on the impact and implication of the event of annunciation on Mother Mary. But today I would like to invite you to look further into the roots and see the great event of annunciation as the sole initiative of God.

Annunciation is the result of God's initiative. Our God is God of initiatives. He always takes the first step towards us in doing anything good. We often think that God gives us his blessings because we take the initiative to pray. However even the inspiration and the good will from our part to pray, is the result of the grace given to us by God as his initiative. Just as the creation was the initiative of God, so too our salvation is an initiative taken by God.

## **Our Call to take Initiatives**

Positive initiative is doing the right thing even without being told. If the world has come so far, it is not because all people observed the laws, but on the other hand, some people took initiatives. Today, if our beloved religious family is present in nine counties in Africa, it is because of the initiatives of some people. Mature adults out of their true discernment and convictions not only make their decisions in accordance with the law but also take initiatives going beyond the law but in accordance with the spirit of the law.

As we go further in the ladder perfection, we need to go beyond the limitations and restrictions of law and be able to live those values aimed at by the law, even when the law is not there, or even when there is no enforcement of law and finally even when we are not under supervision. Sometimes we get used to a system where everything is to be told. Be it in formation, be it in ministry at times we have the tendency to be good doers of what is told. One does things, because one is told to do so and the whole responsibility would rest on the teller of the action than the doer of the action. In doing so one feels very secure. But that is a perverted notion of security.

That is not the right spirit of religious life. As individuals and as a community we need to take initiatives in order to do the right thing at the right time and in the right manner. This is a matter of individual as well as collective discernment. In the context of our religious life, positive initiatives come from a person who has a sense of belongingness to the system/community/congregation. One who lives as an outsider in the community or congregation or one who never appreciates one's own call to be a seminarian or missionary priest can never take any positive initiative. Such persons are likely to be agents of negative motivations.

## **We become Agents of Annunciation**

Thus for us consecrated persons, true initiative implies doing things according to the Gospel values although there is no legal obligation on one's part. If one does something because there is law impelling one to do, one fulfils the obligation and it is not initiative. But when inspired by Gospel values one does things that are beyond the normal purview of the norms, it is a positive initiative.

We need to announce the Good News from God. As missionaries we are agents of the Good News. When we communicate the truth of the Good News the listener - like Mother Mary - may get confused, worried and anxious. Some may feel unhappy and threatened. It is also our duty to give them hope and courage, promise them strength and consolation. If only we are united to God in this mission we can also enable the other to receive the mission from God.

Beloved Father, beloved Brother, let us be persons of positive initiatives, doing all things well, radiating the true joy of commitment in our life and ministry.

### **Visitation from the Superior General and Assistant General**

My dear Confreres, the much awaited visitations from the General Administration are very close. It is a time of grace for us to be united with the entire Fransalian Family as the Superior General as well as the Asst General is symbol of unity for the entire congregation. Please be reminded of the following matters regarding the visit of the Superior General.

**The Superior of the Local Community prepares a reflective Report with an evangelical critique on community life, religious life and Apostolates in the community.**

**Please make sure that every community has a copy of the Mission - Vision Plan**

**Please go through also the seven documents including the time table already sent to you (from the Superior General, Asst General and from me sent to you on Visitation )**

## **Good News from USA - Fr. Thomas Olickal MSFS**

After spending a few months in India as time of recuperation Fr. Thomas Olickal returned to USA for further check up and confirmation on his health condition. On March 24 he wrote from USA:

*I reached here on the 13th of March. It is cold here but pleasant. I had the CAT Scan result today. The Doctor informed me that according to the report I am free from cancer cells now. Praise the Lord. Thank you so much for the prayers. At least and at last medically declared that I am free from Cancer. I am feeling okay now except that I have a problem of Thyroid growth which has to be attended. I will see the Doctor one of these days. .... There is nothing else now Johnson. I take this opportunity once more to thank everybody who shared my concern, empathized with me and prayed for me. I pray that the Lord may continue to bless me to do His work whatever possible way for the remaining part of my life. praying for you and wishing you all the best.*

**Fr. Thomas Olickal MSFS**

My dear friends this is excerpts from his mail- which gives us lot of joy and consolation. Let us firmly believe that there is nothing impossible to God. I also thank each one of you for your genuine concern and prayers. In a very special way I thank **Fr. Augustine Tharappel**

**MSFS** and his team at Wellsprings - who took lot of care for Fr. Thomas in his times of sufferings. We wish Fr. Thomas Olickal fruitful ministry at the service of the Lord.

### **Silver Jubilee: Fr. Pius Kochuparampil MSFS**

It is a great thing to note that soon Fr. Pius Kochuparampil is entering into the silver jubilee year of his priestly ordination on April 19, 2014. He was ordained on April 19, 1990. It is a time set apart as thanksgiving to the Lord. As our beloved Fr. Pius thanks the Lord, let us also thank Fr. Pius and all those who were instrumental in making him what he is to each one of us, to the congregation and to the church in this part of the world. Our hearty congratulations to Fr. Pius. We wish him a very graceful commencing of the jubilee year.

### **Challenging and sad News from Brazil Province**

Currently Fr Superior General is on his Canonical visitation of the Brazil Province. He has communicated to us the sad news that **Rev. Fr. Gilbert Bugnon MSFS** the Provincial Superior of Brazil Province is suffering from cancer and is incapacitated to carry on responsibilities as Provincial of Brazil Province. Due to his deteriorating health condition and treatment program, he has resigned from the Office of the Provincial. Kindly keep him in our prayers.

### **Administrator: Brazil Province**

**Fr. Eldin Singarayan MSFS** is appointed as the Administrator of the Brazil Province with effect from March 19, 2014 until a Provincial is appointed. We accompany the entire Fransalian Family of MSFS in Brazil with our since prayers and good wishes.

### **Visit from Fr. Jacob Karamakuzhyil MSFS**

Rev. Fr. Jacob Karamakuzhyil MSFS the Provincial of Nagpur Province was in East Africa from March 15 to 21. He was on his way back after the visitation in Mozambique. He visited some of our communities and formation houses. Up on his return he has written:

*My Dear Confreres*

*Greetings from Nagpur. I reached safely at the expected time at Mumbai. Although my trip to East Africa was very short, it was indeed very memorable. I am very much grateful to you for the trouble you have taken to accompany me everywhere. In a short time I was able to grasp the gimps of life in Africa very specially your missionary life. You have done much in short period of time. Thanks for giving so much time for me. Our students at Arusha are very happy. I hope they continue to be contended in the life they have chosen for the sake of God's kingdom. Wishing you God's blessings.*

**Fr. Jacob Karamakuzhyil MSFS**

We also thank Fr. Jacob for his keen interest in the missions in Africa and for his regular visitation. *Karibu tena!*

### **Bibliolog Seminar at LCI**

Under the guidance of Dr. Maria Elisabeth Aigner from Karl Franzes University, Graz, Austria, two training sessions on Bibliolog were conducted from Feb 3 to 14, 2014 at Lumen Christi Institute Arusha. *Bibliolog* is a relatively new and unique way of engaging with a text from the Holy Scripture. It is offered by a trained facilitator and helps the participant to understand the explicit as well as implicit implications of biblical texts and contexts in our personal lives. I very happy that many priests and some of the scholastics at

LCI availed themselves of this opportunity to enhance their experience of the Word of God. We also thank LCI for facilitating this.

### **Regents' Meeting**

Four of our scholastics who are doing regency came for the annual common meeting of the regents held at LCI Arusha on February 8 -9, 2014. It was a time of sharing the concerns and drawing new inspirations. I thank LCI community for facilitating this meeting. I also thank Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil and Fr. Innocent Ngowi for the input session and for facilitating the sharing.

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

It was a beautiful opportunity for me to participate in the Provincial Congress of the South East Province held at the Provincial House in Trichi from February 24 to 28. I had several opportunities to share about the MSFS mission in Africa and to convince about the need of SE to venture into Africa. It was also the time to strengthen the collaborative efforts between the South East and East Africa Province. A few confreres have expressed their desire and readiness to work in East Africa. We welcome them whole heartedly and pray that they would be able to arrive as early as possible.

#### ***From the Action Plan of the SE Congress:***

As part of having a *Clear Mission Drive and Mission Culture* the South East Family of MSFS has pledged to *have a committed focus on African Mission*.

Besides as part of Inter Province Collaboration and Congregational Concerns, they have pledged to *strengthen the efforts towards inter province collaboration; to continue more and more generous assistance to the needy provinces and to ensure more and more sensitivity towards the global and congregational concerns*.

It is this new vision of SE Province that gives us true hope that they would make concerted and consistent efforts to support the East Africa Province as well as to venture into new missions in Africa.

I thank all the members of the SE specially all the participants of the Congress for the graceful time in the Congress. Above all I thank Fr. Dharmaraj the Provincial for the invitation and facilitating the sharing on African Mission in the Congress. Let us look forward to more collaborative efforts.

The Provincial Administration South East India Province

1. Fr. C. Sebastian Raj- Admonitor cum Councillor in charge of Education
2. Fr. A. Jeyakumar - Councillor in charge of Social and Innovative Ministries
3. Fr. A. Edward - Councillor in charge of Mission
4. Fr. S. Deivasakayaraj - Councillor in charge of Formation
5. Fr. M. Nicholas - Provincial Bursar

*We thank them and wish them all the blessings in their new mission of leadership.*

### **Education Forum Meeting**

The Province Education Forum meeting was held on February 8, 2014 at LCI Arusha. Most of the confreres who are in the ministry of education participated in the forum meeting. The report of the Forum meeting was sent to you earlier. I thank Fr. Santhosh Prakashbhanan for convening the meeting and all the confreres who took part in it.

## **Seminar for Managers and the Head Teachers: April 26, 2014 Morogoro**

As one of the steps to familiarize oneself with the nuances of the education system and requirements in Tanzania, there would be a seminar organized for all the Managers and Head Teachers (Collaborators) of our schools in Tanzania. This seminar would be held on April 26, 2014 at Fransalian House Kola, Morogoro. The seminar will be focusing on orientation and guidelines for managing and administrating our schools according to the regulations in Tanzania. Please ensure the participation for all Managers and collaborators who are head teachers. The seminar is open to non-MSFS personnel also who are in the field of education. Please contact Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal regarding your participation.

## **Our new Mission in Uganda**

After a long period of more than one decade we now in the process of expanding our mission in Uganda. As informed earlier we have the plan to establish homes for the socially, emotionally and economically disadvantaged children as well as pre & primary and secondary school as part of this project. The location to initiate this project is deemed to be at Iyolwa - which is a substation of the Mulonda parish neighbouring the Osia Parish where we are already present. In our recent meeting with the new Archbishop of Tororo, **His Grace Emmanuel Obbo** we have discussed the idea in length. A suitable plot of land is identified we are working on other formalities. We now await a clear green signal from the ecclesial authorities. I thank our confreres in Uganda Fr. Joby Maruthomalayil and Fr. Joseph Vettukattil along with Fr. Thomas Chozhithara and Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal and local clergy for the united efforts in going giving a footing to the project. I also thank the our confreres in Kenya who also made on the spot study on the feasibility of this project. May I request your continued prayers so that we can implement this project smoothly for the benefit of all.

## **Visits to the homes of scholastics from Uganda**

From March 13 to 19, I visited the homes of our MSFS Scholastics from Uganda. In various stages of formation, we have now 13 professed confreres from Uganda belonging both to the Southern African Region and East Africa Province. It was a very graceful and hearty experience for me to be welcomed at the homes of our brothers. Spending some time with them, praying with them and enjoying their warm hospitality surely has strengthened the spiritual and emotional bond between the families and the Fransalian family. I thank our confreres and the Claretian Fathers in Uganda who assisted me in these visits.

## **Pilgrimage to Holy Land**

Our confreres **Fr. Thomas Chozhithara** and **Fr. James Panthalanickel** made pilgrimage to the Holy Land from January 31 to February 9, 2014. It was a trip organized by the students of KUL during the midterm break. Let us thank God for this wonderful chance given to our confreres.

## **Baraka News Letter**

The latest issue of Baraka - 4 was out last month. This time the focus was on the jubilee celebrations. Hearty Congratulations to Fr. Johnson Pathiyil and team for the publication of the same with quality, content and presentation. The next issue Baraka 5 is dedicated on the Mission / Pastoral engagement of the MSFS in East Africa. You are most welcome to contribute your articles and news items / photos for the same. Please send to [pathyiljohn@gmail.com](mailto:pathyiljohn@gmail.com).

## **Ballots for consultation: Office of the Provincial**

As my term in the office as the Provincial Superior of East Africa Province is due to end on July 14, 2014, at the request of the Superior General I have already initiated the process of consultation as per the demands of our Constitutions. Every effort was taken to make sure that you receive on time the ballot, the accompanying documents and instructions. If anyone has not received them by now, please let me know. Kindly return the ballots to the office of the Provincial or the Superior General as early as possible.

## **Fransalian Youth Fest - 2014 Arusha**

Fransalian Communications –Arusha organised for the third time at LCI, Maji ya Chai, the Inter-School Cultural Competitions for the secondary schools. It was such an auspicious day on March 8, 2014 for us and the students of Arumeru District. There were 227 students and 33 teachers in the Campus from six different secondary schools to participate and to witness the competitions. The program started at 9:15am with the inaugural address by Mrs. Alphoncina Olomi Deputy Managing Director of Banana Investments Ltd-Arusha. Mr. Zakayo P. Mphuru, Internal Auditor Meru community Bank was our chief guest. In his message, Mr. Zakayo appreciated the work and toil of the Fransalians and encouraged the Fransalians to continue lifting up the culture of our dear nation Tanzania through such programmes. The items for the competitions included: Jiving, Ngongera and Ngoma. Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil, the director of Fransalian Communications Arusha together with the Brothers were highly appreciated by the teachers and the students and they suggested that more schools could be invited in the coming year.

***Report by Bro. Vincent Olowo MSFS***

## **Fransalian Youth Fest - 2014 Morogoro**

It is a pleasure to share the news that Fransalian communications Morogoro once again conducted the Inter-School Cultural Competitions-2014 on March 8, 2014. The competitions were held at Fransalian School- Kigurunyembe. The occasion was graced by the presence of different dignitaries. Mr Liganga Austronat, the Director of Peoples Pension Fund (PPF) Morogoro was the Chief Guest, Mr. Kihanga Paschal, chairman Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) Morogoro was the inaugural speaker and Mrs. Wesiwasi Ann, the Manager Exim Bank Morogoro was the guest of honour. A total of nine secondary schools participated in the competitions. Thanks to the Director of Fransalian Communications Fr. Sebastian Nirappel and the Brothers of Fransalian House Kola who worked tirelessly to see that everything move on smoothly.

***Report by Bro. Lawrence Sebowa MSFS***

***Hearty Congratulations to our Scholastics and the formators for such wonderful initiatives !***

## **Blessings after Blessings : St. Joseph Parish Mlolongo, Kenya**

March 23, 2014 was a new dawn for the Catholic community at Mlolongo Parish, Nairobi, Kenya) as it was the day when their dream of having a new parish office, Parish Hall and Marian Grotto was materialized and blessed officially by Rt. Rev. Martin Kivuva Musonde, the Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Machakos. Adding joy to the celebration Rt. Rev. Martin Kivuva Musonde, the Bishop administered the sacrament of confirmation to 106 Catholics during the Holy Eucharistic. Under the supervision of Rev. Fr. Jacob Thekkekara MSFS, the parish priest and parish Committee, a spacious Parish Office and Parish Hall, and also a beautiful Marian Grotto has been constructed in Mlolongo.

The blessing ceremony began at 10.00am, followed by solemn Feast days (Parish patron's day- Saint Joseph) Holy Eucharistic Celebration. The celebration was graced by the presence of Provincial Rev. Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS (Provincial Superior of Fransalians, Province of East Africa), a good number of priests, sisters and about three thousand faithful. After the holy Eucharist, the congregation shared the agape meal. On this great day of rejoicing Rt. Rev. Martin Kivuva Musonde, acknowledged with gratitude and appreciated the selfless services of Fransalians in the areas of Pastoral and Educational works in his Diocese, for leading and guiding God's people in a wonderful manner.

***Report by Fr. Sijo Pendanath MSFS***

### **Initiation to Pre-novitiate Ndagani Kenya**

Although the Pre Novitiate program began in January 2014, the candidates were officially initiated into the pre novitiate with a retreat preached by Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil, MSFS from January 29 to February 2 evening - on the day of Consecrated day. On that day during the Most Holy Eucharist seven candidates were officially initiated into the pre-novitiate by Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil. Later one more candidate from Cameroon joined the group on March 11 and was initiated into the pre-novitiate on March 19, by Fr. Stephen Ubadesi on the feast of St. Joseph, after one day recollection preached by Fr. George CSSR. We wish our young pre-novices all the blessings they need to grow in their call to religious life.

### **Visit from Fr. Joseph Kunnappilly MSFS**

Our dear Fr. Joseph would be visiting East Africa from April 22, 2014. He will be here for a few weeks along with his sister. We wish them safe journey and pleasant stay with us.

### **Prayers requested**

#### ***Called to eternal glory:***

**Fr. Frederic MEYNET MSFS** of France-Suisse Province died on March 10, at Annecy . He was a Religious since last 67 years and a priest for last 65 years. RIP

#### ***Sick and suffering***

- ❖ Rev. Fr. Gilbert Bugnon MSFS the former Provincial Superior of Brazil Province. He is suffering from cancer.
- ❖ Mrs. Reginah Ndinda Mathias the beloved mother of Bro. Patripio MSFS. She is suffering from bladder and uterus related illnesses.
- ❖ Mr. Savarimuthu S. the father of our confrere Fr. Stephen Ubadesi, was again in hospital due to illness of rheumatism and malfunctioning of kidney. Now he is slightly improving.

May the Lord touch them and heal them. May our prayers console and comfort them in their pain and also our confreres in their moments of anxiety.

### **Home Holidays:**

- Fr. Antony George from February 22 to April 10, 2014
- Fr. Nelson Antony from June 10 to July 20, 2014

We wish them a happy and relaxing time with their dear ones at home.

## My Programs

### March 2014

- 10 – 21 in Uganda
- 21 Meeting with the Archbishop of Tororo
- 23 Parish Feast St. Joseph Mlolongo
- 24 LCI Staff Meeting

### April

- 4 Noviciate
- 6 Dumila Parish
- 12- 20 Holy Week in Tabora, Kahama
- 21 back to Morogoro
- 23-24 Council Meeting in Provincial House Morogoro
- 25 Travel to Nairobi
- 26 Travel to Osia, Uganda
- 27 Celebration of the Divine Mercy Sunday in Osia
- 28 Onwards accompanying the Superior General during visitation
- 28 to May 1 in Kenya

### May

- 1 In Kenya
- 2 -5 In Uganda
- 6-10 Dar es Salaam- Morogoro
- 10 Conferring of Ministries - Scholastics Kola
- 11-15 Tabora, Kahama
- 16 Travel to LIC Arusha
- 17 Blessing of the Dispensary LCI, Graduation Philosophy LCI
- 19 Stewardship Forum Meeting with Bursar General at LCI
- 20-21 MSAF Meeting at LCI
- 22 Travel to Dar- Morogoro with the General Curia

## Concluding words

Beloved Confreres,

We are right in the middle of Lent. This season reminds us on the WAY of GOD. The way God planned and made possible our redemption was one that involved pain and suffering; deprivation and rejections, passion and crucifixion. However by tendency we move away from the way of God, the style of God. We are afraid of being rejected for the sake of truth; we are not confident to move forward when we lack things, we tend to avoid all the pains and inconveniences; passion and crucifixion are fine as long as they are not mine.

Lent is a great challenge for us who are consecrated and have promised to follow Jesus in a very intensive manner. Let us accept this challenge in a very personal way. Thanking you and wishing you every blessing you are in need of,

Yours fraternally in the Lord,



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



**Ephesians 3:16-21** New International Version (NIV)

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*