

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES



Fransalians - Province of East Africa

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Provincial Circular MSFS - EAP- JK.29

January 21, 2015

Beloved Confreres,

Greetings of peace to each one of you!

Fr. Paul Samy MSFS - called to eternal glory!

Kifo hapigi hodi! (Death never knocks at your door and ask, *May I come in!* It just comes as it wills, how it wills and when it wills).

It is exactly one month since our beloved Confrere Fr. Paul Samy has gone to the eternal abode. Much has been written and communicated on the person and demise of our beloved Confrere Fr. Paul Samy. However I am convinced that Fr. Paul Samy must find an apt space in the official circular of the Province of East Africa of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. Generations that follow should know that there was a confrere from South East India Province of MSFS, who willingly and joyfully came over to Africa to commit oneself for God and for His people. Five months of his life with us was more than enough to leave behind indelible memories of his very being in our hearts and in the hearts of those who ever interacted with him or listened to him.

Fr. Paul Samy arrived in Tanzania on July 28, 2014. We are aware of the reason for his going away from East Africa and from this world. The Lord called him! Medical Science says: He had a massive heart attack! But what was his primary reason to come to East Africa? I firmly believe that he had a prophetic mission. His mission was primarily for us - we confreres. He came to tell us what *MSFSness* is and how to live our *MSFSness* in our daily lives. Fr. Paul Samy told us clearly that what matters is our being. Performance - anyone can do. The world today abounds with people who are smart at jobs, who perform so well. Through his life that was characterized by simplicity, humility, gentleness, zeal, passion for the mission, detachment from the world and above all deep love for the Eucharistic Lord, he challenges us to be different. A Fransalian missionary does not need anything more than this.

His last days:

After acquiring the basics of Swahili language, he was fully into the mission in Ipuli, Tabora, Tanzania where we have educational institutions and homes for socially and physically disadvantaged children. When it came to opportunities for pastoral assistance, nothing prevented him. He is perhaps the only MSFS confrere who ever had a chance to celebrate a Sunday Mass in the Cathedral Church of Tabora. He really loved the children in our children's homes. From December 9 to 15 he preached the annual retreat for the Sisters of the Holy Cross of Chavanod, in Moshi. I arrived in Ipuli in the afternoon on Dec 20, Saturday and had lunch in the community. Later I had a short personal meeting with him, at 18.00 hrs we prayed the Rosary together with the children. After the dinner we had night prayers in the

community. After the night prayers, I had personal meeting with two candidates who were serving in Ipuli. From 21.45 to 23.00 hrs we had informal community meeting with Fr. Reji Pendanath Fr. Paul Samy. When I went to bed around 23.15 hrs it was Fr. Paul Samy who brought to my room warm water to drink.

On December 21, Sunday morning soon after the breakfast I left for Itaga Parish (20 kms from Ipuli) where we had the installation of Fr. Ngowi Innocent MSFS as the Parish Priest. Fr. Paul Samy and Reji Pendanath too came a bit later and joined us in the Eucharistic celebration and lunch in Itaga. Rev. Fr. Rwechungura Faustine the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Tabora was the one who officiated the installation. At 15.00 hrs Fr. Reji and Fr. Paul Samy left for Itaga. They had evening tea, short usual evening walk etc.

At 19.10 hrs he offered to celebrate the Mass in our MSFS Community Ipuli for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy (collaborators in MSFS Mission in Ipuli), as the Sisters had travelled from Arusha after their annual retreat at LCI. Just at the very beginning of the Mass while giving the introduction he paused for a while, collapsed with making a loud cry. The Sisters tried their best to give First Aid. Immediately Fr. Reji was alerted and as he was seeking medical assistance in less than two minutes Fr. Paul Samy left us.

At 19.15 hrs East Africa Time, our beloved confrere Fr. Paul Samy left for his eternal abode. The last words he spoke to me that afternoon were "Yes Father". It was as he was leaving from Itaga, I reminded him to take care of certain aspects and he responded with a smile in his typical style "Yes Acho" (meaning Yes Father) and he got into the car and went.

The Last words he spoke to us as priest and as our fellow human being was what he shared in the introduction of the Holy Mass. " Let us always do the will of God".

At 18.00 hrs I had the community meeting with the confreres in Itaga and at exactly 19.20 hrs, in Itaga we started our evening prayers and the ceremony of Installation of Fr. Ngowi Innocent MSFS as the Local Superior. Hence we could not attend the phone till 19.50. The news of the death of Fr. Paul Samy was more than shocking. I had nothing but to offer to the Lord the entire situation and tell to Jesus what Fr. Paul Samy told me as his last words. I told in my heart repeatedly "Yes Jesus, Yes Jesus". The next thing from my part was to communicate the news to Rev. Fr. Dharmaraj Antony the Provincial Superior of South East India Province. It was already 22.30 hrs in India. I reached him through the mobile of Fr. Devadoss Francis. Fr. Dharmaraj received the news with great serenity and consoled me, taking away my apprehensions and struggles as to how to console him and to convince him of this unbelievable event.

Soon, from Itaga we reached Ipuli and witnessed the reality. The unexpected, unbelievable and the least desired has happened. The news was communicated to all. I heard confreres and others bursting to tears. Thanks to the cooperation of all concerned, very specially the Sisters of St. Ann of Luzern the body was dressed up and after the initial prayers and blessings, was shifted to the Mortuary of the Military Hospital in Tabora at 22.00 hrs. Meanwhile many priests from the Diocese and religious came had to say "pole" (condolences) and to pray for the departed. Our confreres from Bukene, Lububu and Mwakata too reached around 23.15 hrs. We prayed for our departed confreres and the timely presence of the confreres strengthened one another.

On Monday December 22, at 9.30 hrs we had requiem officiated by the Vicar General of Tabora. Many priests - diocesan and religious - and sisters and the staff participated in the

Mass. At 14.00 hrs I left for Morogoro by road together with Fr. Soosai Robert the bursar who had just come the previous day to Tabora in order to render pastoral assistance in Bukene during the Christmas days. We reached Morogoro at 00.30 hrs on 23.12. On the same day (TUE) at 11.30 hrs we had another requiem Mass officiated by me in our parish of Our Lady of Compassion, Mji Mpya Dar es Salaam. The Mass was attended by many priests and religious around Dar es Salaam and Morogoro. At the end of the Mass, there was sharing from Bro. Sebowa Lawrence MSFS and Sr. Lucy Maliekal the Delegation Superior of the Holy Cross - about their lived experiences with Fr. Paul Samy, although for short time. Those sharings really moved the hearts of all even those who never met Fr. Paul Samy. As in the local custom, the parish leader also expressed their condolences to us and to the dear ones of the departed.

Meanwhile due to the consistent and strenuous efforts of Fr. Kallarackal Sheejan logistics could be arranged to transport the mortal remains of Fr. Paul Samy from Tabora to Dar es Salaam and then to Chennai. Although Tabora has an Airport, there are no passenger flights these days. Hence on Dec 23, TUE at 11.00 hrs the body was taken to Dar es Salaam by a chartered flight from Dar to Tabora and back to Dar. Fr. Kallikattu Francis MSFS and Sr. Shalini S.H.Sp. came by the same flight from Dar es Salaam and accompanied the body to Dar and it arrived in Dar at 13.30 hrs. In Tabora while taking the body from Hospital to the flight it was accompanied by the Vicar General and many priests and sisters. Soon after reaching Dar the body was taken to the mortuary in Aga Khan Hospital. At the same time we got all the documents cleared from the Indian High Commission in Dar es Salaam with the green signal that we can transport the body to India. Around 20.00 hrs the same day the Cargo booking was finalized. Fr. Antonysamy Sebastian and I were to accompany the body and our tickets too were confirmed by 21.00 hrs.

On the following day on December 24, at 11.00 hrs the body was brought to the Cargo Section at Dar es Salaam International Airport in order to finish all the transport formalities. At 18.00 hrs when the whole world was preparing for the birth of our Saviour we boarded the Flight - Qatar Airways - bound to Doha and later to Chennai, India. With total 10 hours of flying time and with 18 hours of long waiting in Doha we landed in Chennai at 01.45 hrs on December 26, 2014. Thus we had our Christmas at Doha Airport - a unique Christmas !

In India

Fr. C. Sebastin Raj, one of the Provincial Councillors of SE India Province and Fr. Francis Devadoss, Fr. Ignazi Muthu and others were there at the airport to receive us. After going through the clearance process at the cargo office for about three hours, we received the body of Fr. Paul Samy and left for Trichy at 05.00 hrs and reached Trichy at 09.30 hrs. Some of the confreres were already there at Child Jesus Hospital, Trichy to receive the body. After due preparations at the hospital body was made ready for the for public presentation. Then it was moved to S.F.S. Minor Seminary, Pudukkottai at 10.45 hrs. A big crowd of our confreres, relatives of Fr. Paul Samy and laity was already waiting at S.F.S. Minor Seminary, Pudukkottai to pay the last homage.

The ambulance with the body, reached the Seminary by 11.45 hrs and amid loud cries and unstoppable tears, the body was shifted from the ambulance to the seminary. At the auditorium of the seminary, the body was kept for prayers and paying the homage. After that it was initially blessed by both the Provincials of the SE India and East-Africa Provinces. A lot of people turned up to pay their homage to the body of Fr. Paul Samy.

At 14.40 hrs the funeral service started with a procession towards the basket-ball court in the Seminary, where the Holy Mass was arranged. Rev. Fr. Anthony Dharmaraj, the Provincial of the SE India Province presided over the Holy Eucharist. With him at the altar were Rev. Frs. Johnson Kallidukil, the Provincial Superior of the East-Africa Province, A. Lawrence, the former Provincial of the SE India Province, George Koottinal, the Rector of S.F.S. Minor Seminary, Pudukkottai, Sebastian Kuzhupil of the East-Africa Province and B. Francis Xavier and N. Arokiaselvam, the batch mates of Fr. Paul Samy. Nearly hundred priests, fifty sisters and six hundred lay people were there participating at the Holy Mass and praying for the Soul of Fr. P. Paul Samy. As members of East Africa Province we were 7 confreres present, including Fr. Johnson Napoleon, Fr. Jose Eriyanickal and Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel.

At the conclusion of the Eucharistic celebration several persons shared their messages apt for the occasion. Fr. Dharmaraj read out also a few messages from among many that he had received from the Confreres and friends. After that, the body was taken in procession and with final prayers said by both the Provincials of the SE and East-Africa Provinces, it was laid to rest in the Seminary Cemetery at 17.30 hrs.

Eternal rest, grant unto him O Lord! & Let perpetual light shine upon him!

MAY HE REST IN PEACE!

Our gratitude

Give thanks to God in all circumstances (Ref. I Thes 5:18). We thank God for what has happened. Surely He knew it before it happened and we know it only after it has happened. It is now for us to discern and to understand why it has happened and what message it gives to us. Perhaps God does not reveal to us and perhaps in the course of time he would tell us. He has surely a purpose in whatever happens. Let us thank God for accompanying us in this time of trials.

We thank His Grace the Most Rev. Paul Ruzoka the Archbishop of Tabora, Fr. Rwechungura Faustine, the Vicar General, the Diocesan Clergy for the great expression of their solidarity in this time of sadness and uncertainty. We do really appreciate the timely and quality helps rendered by the Sisters of St. Ann in Ipuli in medical matters and logistics in taking care of the mortal remains of Fr. Paul Samy. Together with Fr. Reji Pendanath and our candidates, those who witnessed the death of Fr. Paul Samy were the Sisters of St. Joseph. We thank them for handling the situation with serenity and confidence. We deeply appreciate the timely presence of MCBS Fathers and other religious in Tabora. We also thank all those who prayed with us in Tabora, Dar es Salaam and all those who offered the Holy Masses in their respective places. We also thank our confreres in Mji Mpya, Dar es Salaam for organizing the requiem and for the confreres, priests, religious and friends from Dar and Morogoro who participated in the requiem and expressed the "pole". I must express my special thanks to Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal for the very efficient management of the logistics and the connected matters.

Our deep and sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. Dharmaraj Antony MSFS the Provincial Superior of MSFS South East India Province, the Provincial Curia and the entire Province for their being with us in this time of sadness and trials. We are grateful to the SE Province for allowing us to have the taste of such a missionary in the person of Fr. Paul Samy. We thank them for their understanding and concern for us. We thank the beloved family members of Fr. Paul Samy for accepting this event gracefully and in deep faith.

Many expressed their solidarity with us through their messages, calls and prayers. Our

special thanks to Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvelil MSFS our beloved Superior General, the Curia members and other provincials and confreres for the messages and prayers. We also received messages of condolences from the RSAT and RSCK and several religious congregations. Thanks to all for being together in this time when we face challenges.

My beloved Confreres, this event of death has touched every one of us. Again another challenging situation we have faced in our mission in East Africa. Every event of death has its unique nature and challenges. But in resolving this critical situation we were together. At no time, I felt left alone or hopeless. Your presence, prayers and helps in various ways, enabled us to do the best in the most optimal way in the given situation. Let us thank God that despite various challenges - challenges of distances, logistics, being unexpected event - the good God allowed us to give to our departed confrere worthy journey back home and to be laid to rest in the place in the home country.

My dear Fathers and Brothers, I do appreciate your spirit of spontaneity and ready service and your special concern for me in resolving this tough situation. We were together rowing the boat with a sense of purpose and determination through very turbulent seas. *Thank You* for this togetherness. Let us continue to be united in our very life and mission. Let no challenge make our spirit to droop. In deep faith let us believe that every challenge on way - is a preparation for greater challenge.

As individuals and as Province Family the Lord wants us to be closer to him. Not only mere physical closeness. The Lord wants us to be like him. Naturally it involves the process of purification. (Ref. Mica 3:3) The Lord will hit us on the anvil till our faces become smooth to that extend He can see His face being reflected on our faces. He hits us because he loves us and cares for us.

The fire of love that was in the life and person of Fr. Paul Samy may become a guiding force in our days to come. Let us be proud of our confrere about whom our people say with conviction today: Fr. Paul Samy was a man of God - who loved God and who loved us.

The Forums in the Province

The Provincial Administration considers it apt to include every priest confrere in one Forum or another, irrespective of the fact of one's present apostolate. Surely in most cases the person is a member of the Forum depending on the apostolate. Now the priests who are outside East Africa and who are students too are placed in Forums. Due to the distances they may not be able to participate in the meetings. However they are requested to share their concerns in the respective forum and respond to the agenda that would be sent prior to the meeting.

The various Forum meetings of our Province would be held on these days:

FEB 12	THU	Stewardship Forum Meeting, Provincial House, Kihonda
FEB 13	FRI	Education Forum Meeting, Provincial House, Kihonda
MAR 2	MON	Formators Forum Meeting at LCI, Arusha
MAR 11	WED	Social and Innovative Ministry Form Meeting in Ipuli
JUNE 16	TUE	Superiors Forum Meeting at Provincial House, Kihonda
JUNE 17	WED	Pastoral Forum Meeting at Provincial House, Kihonda

Please make sure that we participate in these meetings without fail. The list of the members of the Forum will be made available soon.

Annual Retreat 2015

This year we will have two sessions of retreat as follows:

- May 27 June 1- WED to MON Annual Retreat for Priests (Session 1) In Uganda:
Arrival 27 evening.
 - July 11- 16 SAT to THU Annual Retreat for the Priests (Session 2) in Tanzania:
Arrival 11 evening.

Please enrol your names with me for the retreat so that we can make the necessary arrangements at the venue. The exact venue will be made known after further arrangements are made.

Pilgrimage to Namugongo - Uganda

There is the plan to go for a pilgrimage on May 27 to the Shrine of Ugandan Martyrs, Namugongo. All the participants who come for the retreat in Uganda can make the program in such a way that during the morning hours on May 27 we have the Mass in Shrine and then proceed to the retreat.

New Address

Fr. Perumanoor Tomychan is greeting us from Philippines: His address:

East Asian Pastoral Institute

P. O. Box 221,

UP Campus,

Quezon City 1101 Philippines

Tel +63 9266 373 713

Fransalian Development Board

Provincial Administration has now constituted Fransalian Development Board. It is a consultative body established by the provincial administration with the following functions assigned to it.

The FDB studies the feasibility of the project proposed and submit its report to the provincial administration. This includes but not limited to matters relating to:

- a) Technical aspect (structural designs, size, etc)
 - b) Geographical Aspect (buying the Land, location etc.)
 - c) Logistical aspect (buying vehicle etc.)
 - d) Financial viability
 - e) Social Relevance of the Project
 - f) Sustainability Aspect of the Project
 - g) Resource Mobilization
 - h) Monitors the implementation and development of the project
 - i) Ensuring the timely reporting of the project development to the concerned agencies
 - j) Studies the need and possibilities of acquiring and disposing the capital assets like land, vehicle, machineries, equipments etc.
 - k) Plans, executes and monitors the social development activities under the umbrella of FOSTER in different communities.

The Provincial Administration has constituted the FDB consisting of the following members:

Fr. Provincial: Ex- officio Member- Chair Person

Fr. Provincial Bursar: Ex-Officio Member- Convener

Fr. Thomas Chozhithara Member

Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal Member
Fr. Sebastian Nirappel Member
Fr. Jomat Kollappallil Member

The first meeting will be held on March 10, 2015 at MSFS Community Ipuli.

The Province Finance Committee

The following confreres would be the members of the Province Finance Committee

Fr. Provincial Bursar: Ex-officio Member- Convener
Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil Member
Fr. Sunny Vettikal Member
Fr. Jose Eriyanickal Member
Fr. Jomon Joseph Member
Fr. Sebastian Williams Member

The functions of the finance committee will be defined based on the proposals made by the Stewardship Forum Meeting.

The new mode of Administration of institutions.

As communicated to you on October 20, 2014, the Provincial Administration envisages changes administrative structures of our institutions

The new Governance and the General Chapter 2013 call upon us to focus on the communitarian aspect of our ministries. It was emphasized again in our provincial congress articulating specifically in our Statement and action Plan. For implementing the spirit of this new direction we shall have the offices of the Manager and the Administrator established in all our institutions. They work in close collaboration with the Provincial Superior and the PCIC in their respective apostolate.

The office of Manager

- a) Manager represents the Provincial Superior in the local place.
- b) He manages the institution in terms of guidance, directions and interventions for the welfare of the mission.
- c) He acts as link between the Provincial Administration and the institution in official matters.
- d) The manager signs all the legal documents together with the administrator.
- e) Manager supervises together with the Administrator in consultation with LGB the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our institutions and its developments.

The office of Administrator

- a) Administrator takes care of the daily running of the Institution effectively.
- b) He plans the developmental activities of the institution together with the Manager.
- c) It is the duty of the Administrator to do the budgeting, book keeping and accounting.
- d) He plans the daily activities/academic activities etc of the institution.
- e) The administrator will be representing the institution in the respective forum meetings, ecclesiastical and civil offices.

Board of Governance

Where applicable and when not contrary to the government regulations the Manager will be the Chair person and the Administrator will be the Secretary respectively of the board of the institution.

This new structure is generally effective from this date of the promulgation. However it comes to force in individual cases with official writing from the office of the Provincial. Until then the status quo remains with regard to the functions assigned to each office.

Home Holidays

Fr. Thazhathukunnel Mathew from December 14, 2014 to February 3, 2015

Fr. Chozhithara Thomas from January 20 to February 6, 2015

Fr. Gerald Stephen from February 16 to March 14, 2015

We wish them a good time with their dear and near ones.

Pilgrimage to Holy Land

- Fr. Mattathil Sunny and Fr. Sebastian Williams from January 19 to February 7, 2015 by the Pontifical Institute of Notre Dame of Jerusalem Centre.
- Fr. Eriyanickal Jose will be going to Holy Land with a pilgrimage group from February 9 to 19 from Kerala, India.

We thank God for this beautiful opportunities for our confreres and pray for them and for those who made this possible for us.

New Mission of Iyolwa

The Mission of Iyolwa will be declared as a Parish entrusted to us on February 8, 2015. As informed earlier I would appreciate if you could be present for the same.

Circular from the Superior General

Circular SG/AB 7 was sent to you yesterday. Please go through the content and the message for us very specially as we are in the year of the Consecrated Life and in the Year of Mission.

Mission Development Office Rome

Fr. Cherukatt Thomas the Director of MDO is offering us great opportunities to help the needy situations in our mission in all the aspects. I appeal to you my dear confreres to prepare the necessary documents and profiles and send to the office of the Provincial Bursar. The project will be preliminary studied from the province by the Fransalian Development office and will be coordinated and forwarded to the MDO in Rome. Once your Documents are complete there will be no delay at all in submitting them to the MDO.

Jubilee Celebrations - Fr. Kochuparampil Pius

On February 14, 2015 there will be at the Province level the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Priestly Ordination of Fr. Kochuparampil Pius. It is an occasion for us to join the jubilee priest to thank the good God for the blessings given to him and given to us through the person and call of Fr. Pius. The Celebration will be Fransalian House Kola in the morning hours.

Our Confreres in GAH

During these days I could visit our Confreres in Germany, Belgium and Austria and spend some time with them. Although the life and the mission has many challenges they are doing well. This time I did not go to Rome to meet our confreres in Rome.

Fr. Augustine Stephen Gerald MSFS

After completing the basics of German language course in India, Fr. Gerald arrived in Austria on October 24, 2013. From November 2013 to August 2014 he was in Wien learning the language and assisting in the parishes of Marz and Rohrbach where Fr. Josef Giefing is the parish priest.

From the beginning of September 2014 he is in a new place called Gattendorf, in the Diocese of Eissenstadt, Austria. Together there are five parishes, and they are two priests who are in charge for these five parishes in the circumference of around 16 kms. The Parish priest is Rev. Fr. Roman Schwarz an Austrian priest and Fr. Gerald is assistant to him. Fr. Gerald stays alone in the presbytery in Gattendorf.

The pastoral activities consist in daily Masses, Bible sharing, visit the sick in the Hospital, Birthday visits to the elderly people, taking communion and ministering the Sacrament of Anointing to the sick and elderly people, preparation for the sacraments etc.

It was a joy for me to note that within the short period of time, Fr. Gerald could win the appreciation of all in the parishes. He has picked up the language well and he can now address any situation with confidence. Sure, he is still learning the language. Today I had meetings with the former Bishop Most Rev. Paul Iby, the present Vicar General Rev. Msgr. Martin Korpitsch, and the present Bishop Most Rev. Dr. Ägidius J. Zsifkovics. They are very appreciative of the good collaboration that we have with the Diocese and look forward to getting more missionaries into the Diocese.

Fr. James Panthalanickal MSFS

Up on completion of his M.Phil, in the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, Fr. James was admitted to the Ph.D Program in Biblical Studies in September 2013. Evidently, he is now in the second year of his doctoral studies. The entire program runs for a period of four academic years. He spends the weekdays in the library engaging in the most crucial task of writing the doctoral dissertation. He resides at the American College in Leuven following the request of the Faculty of Theology to shoulder the responsibility of animating the Mater Dei Community of International Priests housed there. Besides, he is appointed by the Diocese of Brussels-Mechelen as a part-time pastor in a Dutch-Speaking parish called Sint-Servaas, Wemmel. There are six parishes clubbed together under the Federation of Wemmel. Presently, he assists the parish priest on weekends by celebrating one Holy Mass on Saturdays and three on Sundays with homily preached in Dutch. He follows a Dutch Course at the Language Institute in Leuven since working for a Dutch-speaking parish community demands a fair knowledge of Dutch. Occasionally on Tuesdays, he celebrate a Dutch Mass with a Prayer Group in Leuven which regularly prays for vocation to Religious and Priestly life and supports missionary activities. I too had the opportunity to celebrate Holy Mass with such a prayer group.

Despite the hectic and very demanding program of studies, Fr. James has taken the initiative of pastoral works and getting support for his life and studies. Through this keen interest we have some people of good will who support the cause of our formation. It was very much encouraging to see how the people appreciate his deep spirituality and seek him for spiritual assistance.

Fr. Packiam Wilson MSFS

Fr. Wilson is working in the Archdiocese of Bamberg, Germany. Since September 2011 Fr. Wilson is in Seinsheim. There he has three parishes and three substations, the last parishes of Bamberg diocese, bordering with Wuerzburg diocese. There are about 1200 Catholics. He is

the parish priest of three independent parishes together with three substations. The three parishes are: Seinsheim, Tiefenstockheim, Huettenheim and the three Substations are: Iffigheim, Bullenheim, Waessendorf.

The activities include, Holy Masses and visit to the sick and elderly and preparing the children and parents for the sacraments. The priest has lot of administrative tasks. He needs to work in close collaboration with lay people who have also qualified themselves in Theology and Catechesis.

The pastoral administrative structure and way of functioning is different from that we are used to in Africa. The lay people are to be taken seriously and a co-operative style of functioning is very much demanded. The priest does not have absolute power like in some other parts of the world. Group activities and liturgical preparations with new ideas are needed to attract people.

There also the Protestant parish council together with Catholic parish council come together once in a year and discuss various themes and also organize senior citizens afternoons and have some programmes for them.

Due to various allergies and illnesses Fr. Wilson does not enjoy good health. However with the help of intense medical facilities he manages the life and works. I also had meeting with the personnel Director of the Diozese *Domkapitular* Rev. Msgr. Hans Schieber who appreciated the work done by MSFS in the Archdiocese.

Fr. Kochumalayil Sony MSFS

Fr. Sony is working in the Diocese of Wuerzburg, Germany. He had passed the necessary exams to hold the posts of the parish priest and since three years he is working in the Parishes of: St. John the Baptist Church, Euerdorf, St. John the Baptist Church, Wirmsthal (Filialchurch of Euerdorf), St. Vitus Church, Ramsthal, St. Laurentius Church, Aura a. d. Saale and Mary Assumption Church, Sulzthal. Each of these has its administrative structure all these Parishes together have an approx. number of 3540 Catholics. I had meeting also with the personnel Director of the Diocese Rev. Msgr Dietrich Seidel who really appreciated the efforts by MSFS to assist in the pastoral works of the Diocese.

The pastoral activities of Fr. Sony include: teaching Religion in the School, Preparing the children for the first holy communion, animating and guiding of the various Parish Councils and Finance Committees. Services to the old age home, visiting the sick and the aged, etc. Various Parish activities include: Parish Feasts, Women's Forums, various activities for the altar boys and girls, Sternsinger, Holy Communion, Confirmation and other liturgical activities.

He along with others face these challenges such as deterioration of the sense of sacred and modern concepts of religion, new theological thinking which sometimes does not go in line with the teachings the Church. He experiences lack of time for direct pastoral services due to the various organizational and administrative activities. Challenges again include, poor health condition due to chronic illnesses, lack of response from the part of the faithful to the various liturgical activities, lack of a sense of belongingness of the faithful to the community.

Perhaps the following statistics from his work would give a more picture of the pastoral situation of the parishes in General in Germany. During the year 2014 there were 19

Baptisms; 14 Marriages; 24 First Holy Communion; 30 Confirmation; 49 Burials and 10 people left the church!

Fr. S.L Paul - Called to eternal glory

Fr. Paul Sankoorickal (Fr. S. L. Paul), aged 80 years and a priest for 55 years, died on December 19, 2014 in USA. Fr. S. L Paul was a MSFS priest until 1992 when he was incardinated to the diocese of La Crosse. He continued to help our missions in Africa and India until his last days in a big way and we are grateful to him for his love for missions. We commend him to the Lord with hope in the resurrection. RIP

Conclusion - Feast of St. Francis de Sales - Reflections

Beloved Confreres!

Festal Greetings of the Feast of our patron St. Francis de Sales! Soon as we celebrate his feast, we remind ourselves of the great spiritual heritage that we have in the person of Francis de Sales.

Our patron Francis de Sales brought in the new notion of the quality of life and spirituality as one's ability to love – to give love and to receive love. It is love that gives us the mark as the child of God for God is love. It is the quality of love that makes us to live our BEST to give our BEST, to do our best and thus to BE AT OUR BEST. When our patron exhorted us saying to be at our best, it was a call to be filled with love for nothing is better than true love.

This implies leading a life according to certain basic Christian values, being guided by evangelical wisdom and submitting ourselves to the will of God as manifested through the legitimate authorities in the church and the congregation. In other words: When St. Francis de Sales did his best, God was at work in him. If we want to do our best God must be at work in us. Sometimes out of pride and false convictions I may think I do my best - but when God is not with me - then I can be sure it is the evil and negative forces that are at work in me and in my community that stands by me being enslaved by the evil powers.

May St. Francis de Sales whom we proclaim as patron of love, help us to be LOVE in BEING.

United with you in the Eucharistic Lord,

Yours in the Eucharistic Lord

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

*Only one thing is necessary:
that our hearts remain united with God, resigned to serve with equal commitment
whether we find ourselves in the comfort of fragrant roses
or in the turmoil of bed of thorns.*

St. Francis de Sales.