

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Fransalians - Province of East Africa

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Provincial Circular MSFS - EAP- JK.31

March 25, 2015

Beloved Confreres, I wish you all a very Happy Feast of Annunciation.

The Solemnity of Annunciation: From THE LEAST TO THE BEST - the way of God

God seeks the least ones for his great plans! Contrary to the expectations of the Israelites who wished for powerful liberator and saviour, God reveals his plan in a very unique manner. The people of the Old Testament thought that a saviour would come. But the manner in which God brought it to actualization was different. He sought out the least and brought out the most. The LEAST here is the young Mary; the MOST is the Saviour of the world - the Son of God.

From the LEAST TO THE BEST is a principle that runs in the Christian spirituality.

- We have several examples in the history of salvation. From Mary the maid to the Mother of God; from 12 illiterate men - the Apostles - to the well established reality of Catholic Church; from the weak and sinful men and women to the glorious saints etc. David was never considered as candidate to be anointed as King! Yet he was chosen. Joseph was seen as the least among all his brothers. Yet he was chosen to be the one who provided food for them.
- This principle is evident in the teachings of Jesus and in the examples used. He said: "The Kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches". (Mk. 13:19). "Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me" (Mt.25:45).
- Besides, we see the same principle employed by Jesus in his miracles too. From the five loaves and two fish he is able to feed thousands. The ordinary water he turns into wine. By using spittle and mud he restores the sight.

These examples from his teachings, actions and methodology tell us that there is nothing that is insignificant in the eyes of God. All that is under the sun has a worth as the creation of God. We human beings have the enhanced worth as the children of God. In so far as this worth of ours as the child of God is concerned, we are all equal. The CEO in the office chair and the servant who cleans the office room share the same dignity as the child of God.

However, do we not sometimes consider the other as insignificant? There is no one insignificant before God. Annunciation teaches us that God's perspectives are different. To be pleasing in the eyes of God is more important than to be pleasing in the eyes of the world. There is a natural inclination in us to be appreciated and recognized. Often we measure our worth and goodness based on the acceptance and appreciation we get from the others. But the eyes of God reach to the things beyond.

Even in our own very lives we consider perhaps certain things as insignificant and useless. But remember, God did not create anything insignificant and useless. Not knowing the usefulness of a thing, does not make it useless. The other person being unknown to you does not mean that he or she is irrelevant to you. Let us remember: If God can do such things in and through Mary, let us believe that He is capable of doing many things through you and me. One

thing is needed: Our availability and our readiness saying: *Behold here I am. Do unto me as you wish.*

Fr. Olickal Thomas - Returns from USA

Due to the need for rest and further treatment Fr. Olickal Thomas has returned to India for good from USA on March 6, 2015. He is now attached to the MSFS Community in Angamaly. Fr. Thomas needs our constant prayerful support. We wish him a pleasant and healthy stay in India.

Transfers and Appointments

Fr. Olickal Thomas is appointed as the Superior of the MSFS Community SFS Bhavan Angamaly with effect from April 4, 2015.

Fr. Poikunnel Joseph is transferred from SFS Junior Seminary Community and is designated to be appointed as the Parish Priest of Dumila with effect from April 12, 2015. While staying in Dumila he will be a member of MSFS Provincial House Community.

Fr. Kattikanayil Tomy is freed from his responsibilities in Dumila from April 12, 2015 and is designated for pastoral ministry in USA. However with immediate effect he is appointed to MSFS Community in Ipuli to render administrative assistance.

Fr. Vijayakumar Nelson is transferred from Maji ya Chai and Ngurdotto and is appointed to the MSFS Community Junior Seminary as the Local Bursar of the Community with effect from May 18, 2015. He will be also Priest in-charge of the Lukobe Mission.

Fr. Kochuparampil Pius is designated to be appointed as the Parish Priest of St. Francis de Sales Parish Mkuza with effect from May 31, 2015. He is also appointed as the Superior of the MSFS Community Mkuza.

Fr. Chavely Mathew is transferred from MSFS Community Mkuza and is designated to be appointed as Parish Priest of St. Stephen the Martyr Parish Maji ya Chai with effect from May 16, 2015 and as the Parish Priest in the Parish of St. Francis de Sales Parish Ngurdotto with effect from May 17, 2015.

Fr. Eriyanickal Jose is transferred from MSFS Community in Angamaly and is appointed to the MSFS Community Mlolongo-Katani. He is appointed as the Superior of the Community and Manager of St Joseph VTC and SFS Secondary School. He is designated to be appointed as the Parish Priest of St. Joseph Parish Mlolongo with effect from June 14, 2015.

Fr. Thekkekara Jacob is transferred from MSFS Community Mlolongo and is designated to be appointed as the Parish Priest of Mji Mpya Relini. He is appointed as the Superior of the MSFS Community Mji Mpya Relini with effect from August 23, 2015.

Fr. Mattathil Sunny is transferred from MSFS Community Mji Mpya and is appointed to the MSFS Community Osia-Agururu with effect from October 25, 2015 and designated to be appointed as the parish priest of St. Bruno Parish Agururu, Uganda.

We remember with sincere thanks each one of you, our dear fathers for your dedicated service in the places of ministry wherever you are. May the Lord continue to bless you and your mission in the new place.

Other Assignments

Translation of *Introduction to the Devout Life*

Fr. Ngowi Innocent MSFS is entrusted with the task of translating the *Introduction to the Devout Life* by our Patron St. Francis de Sales, into Swahili. He would pilot this project with the help of the scholastics, and experts in Swahili language and Christian spirituality. I thank Fr.

Innocent for accepting this challenging task and wish the team all the blessings.

May dear confreres, let us ardently pray for the successful completion of this project which we hope to take to press in January 2017. You are most welcome to share your suggestions and contributions to Fr. Innocent (innocentmsfs@gmail.com).

LCI gets Affiliation to De Sales University, USA.

Thanks to strenuous efforts of our confreres in LCI and with the blessings of our Superior General we have now our Philosophy Program at LCI affiliated to De Sales University in USA. The Memorandum of Agreement was signed on March 3, 2015 at LCI. This MOA is already approved by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), the accrediting body. With this development the qualified students of 2016 graduation will be awarded a Degree in Philosophy from the De Sales University. Let us thank God for this great recognition given to us and make every effort to meet all the demands of academic and organizational excellence. Sincere congratulations to LCI Staff and the Students!

Fr. Kuzhupil Sebastian MSFS - honoured

In recognition of the unique work done by Fr. Kuzhupil Sebastian over the last two decades in providing holistic healing and allied health services, the Ministry of Health and Community Development of the United Republic of Tanzania, has conferred on him a certificate of honour. Along with it he is also given a permanent licence to practice medicine. Sincere congratulations to Fr. Sebastian on this achievement. May God continue to bless your hands to give the healing touch of the Lord for many. (Fr. Kuzhupil Sebastian is the founder of Mermier Holistic Healing Centre Morogoro. It serves every year a few thousands of people who need medical and spiritual assistance)

Prayers Requested:

For the departed:

Mr. Nkolo Nlo Dieudonné, the uncle of Bro. Philip Roland MSFS (in LCI from Chad Cameroon), died on February 18, 2015. He was 55 years old.

Mrs. Anastasia Okech, the beloved Mother of Bro Paul Onyago MSFS, died on March 9, 2015 due to Cancer. She was 54 years old.

(Representing the Congregation, Fr. Sunny Vettickal and I could participate in the requiem and the funeral that was held on March 19 in the home parish of Nyarongi, in Homa Bay, Kenya)

May the Souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace!

Inter-School Cultural Competitions - Organized by Scholastics in Arusha and Morogoro.

ISCC -2015 - Arusha

Fransalian Communications- Arusha organized for the fourth time, the Inter-School Cultural Competitions on Saturday March 14, 2015, at Lumen Christi Institute. There were 345 students and 24 teachers in the Campus from nine secondary schools to participate and to witness the competitions. The program began at 09.00 hrs with the opening prayer, the patriotic song and the inaugural address by Mrs. Experither Tibangayuka The chief guest of the day was Mr. Kabesy Kabeja the Regional Academic Officer of Arusha Region. In his message, Mr. Kabesy Kabeja emphasized on the value of the African culture, and he appreciated and congratulated the efforts of Fransalian Communications in inculcating the cultural values to the youth, through these competitions. The competitions comprised three different items namely; Jiving, Ngonjera and Ngoma. The programmes ended at 16.00 hrs with the National Anthem.

ISCC - 2015 - Morogoro

For the thirteenth time the Fransalian Communications Morogoro organized and conducted the Inter-School Cultural Competitions 2015 which took place on March 14, at Fransalian Primary School, Morogoro. The event was inaugurated by Prof. Elizabeth Faty, Senior Lecturer at Mzumbe University and the Chief Guest was Mr. Stephen Ditenya the Officer in charge of Culture at Morogoro Municipality. The Competitions was attended by a total number of ten schools. The items for the competitions included Jiving, Ngoma and Igizo (skit) on various themes such as: Ebola epidemic, Road accidents, General Election, Corruption, Inter-religious dialogue, Ujamaa, and Terrorism among others.

Our sincere congratulations to our Scholastics in Arusha and Morogoro, together with their formators for this wonderful initiative in order to foster the indigenous culture and traditions in Tanzania and in bringing out the talents of the young students.

Annual Retreat 2015: Reminder and request for registration

As announced earlier we have this year two retreats for the priests confreres.

Retreat A. In Uganda

Date: : May 27 to June 2
Arrival : May 27, Wednesday latest by 18.00 hrs
Departure : June 2, Tuesday 08.00 hrs
Venue: : Benedictine Retreat Centre, Tororo, Uganda.
Retreat Guide: Rev. Fr. George Mathew CSsR

Retreat B. In Tanzania

Date : July 11 to July 17
Arrival : July 11 Saturday latest by 18.00 hrs
Departure : July 17 Friday 08.00 hrs
Venue : Precious Blood Sisters (CPS) Centre, Kifungilo, Lushoto, Tanzania.
Retreat Guide: Rev. Fr. Devasia Manalel MSFS

Please register your name for the retreat, at the earliest so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

Scholastics to the communities

If you need the presence and assistance of our scholastics in the communities and in the apostolate during their holidays (May to September), please contact at the earliest Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil the PCIC of Formation. (thomas1956arusha@gmail.com).

MSFS Environment Day

As we have decided in our Provincial Congress, we need to take concrete steps to contribute our mite to the protection of environment and the sustenance of the of nature as God's precious gift to us and for the generations to come. As suggested in the recent forum meetings, the Provincial Council has decided that we should observe MSFS Environment Day in each Apostolic community. Two days need to be set apart in order to celebrate this day both in the parishes and in educational institutions. I request you to discuss the matter in the community meetings and apostolic community meetings and to share the concrete things that you would do in this regard. Our activities should also include the faithful in the parishes, the our school children and their families.

Home Holidays

The following confreres are on home holidays:

Fr. Antonysamy Sebastian	March 20 to May 20, 2015
Fr. Antonysamy Robert	April 27 to June 27, 2015
Fr. Kochuparampil Pius	April 7 to May 16, 2015
Fr. Kochuparampil Thomas	April 7 to May 16, 2015
Fr. Puliyilakatt Joseph (in LCI)	March 22 to May 22, 2015

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

True Easter Joy is born out of Pain

My dear Confreres,

At one time or other, we have experienced soul-ripping grief at the death of a loved one. In such a situation you would agree that time seems to stop. Nights are endless, days drag slowly. Saying goodbye gives birth to unutterable pain, but the days between death and funeral ceremony seem longer than usual. At one moment we wish if this ordeal be over!

Do I feel such emotional drain during the Holy Week? Do I really feel the struggle and death of a dear one in the person of Jesus?

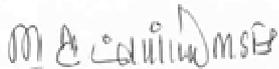
The last days of Jesus' physical life here on earth! Do they mean something to me? Am I any time inspired to wrap a rough towel around my waist and serve others in humility as Jesus did at the washing of feet or similar things? What joy do I experience in my preparations for a sumptuous Easter Sunday Celebration! While some of us may not like much to contemplate the meaning of the last supper and the disposition of Jesus. Do we try to understand the pain of Mother Mary at the foot of the cross, and while holding the dead body of her beloved son in her lap?

I am certain that our Easter would be much more meaningful and Easter joy would be a real one, if we first took the time and concerted effort to walk thoughtfully through Jesus' last days and if we asked God to let us more deeply glimpse his agony of relinquishment in Gethsemane. Do we ever hear the human cry of Jesus "I am thirsty."?

As the preparations are on for the "Easter Joy", let us not ignore the feeble voice of someone near to us - who cries, "I am thirsty". If we take time and look around we would find someone thirsting for real love, human dignity, recognition, understanding, forgiveness, justice and compassion. That someone is not far from us. Perhaps that person is in our community! If we can quench the thirst of that brother or sister of ours, we would be walking the way of Jesus and our Easter Joy is there already at the time of quenching the thirst of someone who is really in need of that drink of love and compassion. Then we would realize that the real Easter Joy would be the joy emanating from the passion and suffering and not from the sumptuous celebrations of Easter.

Wishing you all a graceful celebration of the Easter,

Yours in the Lord our Saviour,



Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS (Provincial MSFS East Africa)

***"For God has not given us a spirit of fear,
but of power and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Tim 1:7***