

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Fransalians - Province of East Africa

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Provincial Circular MSFS - EAP- JK.39

February 14, 2016

Beloved Confreres,

Warm Greetings of peace and joy. Together with the entire Church, we are in Lent, a time of special grace, and particularly in this jubilee year of Mercy. When the Holy Father, gifted us with this year of Mercy, he has the special intention of providing us a unique chance of being merciful like the Father. The motto of the year of Mercy should teach us clearly how merciful our Father is and how merciful we are to be. Let us realise that:

- 1) Merciful Father forgives unconditionally.
- 2) He does not keep a record of our wrongs.
- 3) He does not speak ill of his children.
- 4) He does not want that we speak ill of any other person- for everyone is his child.
- 5) He does not brood over evil things.
- 6) He does not prevent the growth of the other.
- 7) He does not demand any reward for the forgiveness he offers.
- 8) He facilitates our growth and gently cares for us.
- 9) He loves and cares for everyone in a unique manner.
- 10) He is able to rejoice over the repentant sinner.

When we read and reflect over the motto of the Jubilee Year, I think these thoughts should come to us. The year placed before us and very specially this time of Lent is not merely praying those special prayers and making some acts of mortifications. This is a call for us to be Merciful and compassionate like the Father.

Sometimes human being can go to that extend of hating and revenging that one does not resemble at all a child of God. The secular world calls them terrorists. In addressing the consecrated persons on the day of consecrated life, Pope Francis shared that there are also terrorists in religious life. *Gossip is the bomb that they place in the communities and go. They never lack ideas and words to speak ill of their own brothers and sisters in the community or neighbours. But when it comes to recognizing the good of the other or speaking well of the other they lack vocabulary.* I feel that this observation from the Holy Father is very true at times in our lives. On the one hand we have myriad of God given blessings. But those blessings are often obscured by man-made problems.

Hence, the slogan - **Be Merciful like the Father** - asks to live what God lives. I ask you to take those ten characteristics mentioned above (we can add many more) and apply to our very lives. Is it not possible for each one of us to live those ideals? Do we become "less" or defeated when we forgive? Do we put conditions for the forgiveness we give? This Year of Mercy becomes the real year of Mercy only when we live a life worthy of the merciful Father.

Promoted to Priestly Ordination

Deacon Siljo Auppaden MSFS is promoted to be ordained priest. God willing he will be ordained priest on April 2, 2016 by his Beatitude Cardinal Maran Mar George Alenchery, the current Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church and the Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Major Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly. The ordination and the First Mass will take place on the same day at St. Joseph Church Mampra, the home parish of Deacon Siljo. We express our hearty congratulations to him and accompany him with our sincere prayers. Deacon Siljo will be leaving for India on February 15, 2016.

We have new Deacons! Congratulations

By the grace of God the following scholastics were ordained deacons on January 3, 2016 at St. Francis de Sales Parish Dumila, Tanzania.

1. Danda Aristedes Timothy MSFS
2. Karottukampadathil Jobin MSFS
3. Mathembo Stephen Mutisya MSFS
4. Njue Thomas Njeru MSFS

They were ordained by His Lordship Telesphore Mkude, the Bishop of Morogoro. Hearty Congratulations to dear young Deacons and we wish them the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this unique time of preparations for the priestly ordination. Let us accompany these brothers of ours with our sincere prayers. Our Sincere thanks also to the Dumila Community and the parishioners for all the wonderful arrangements made.

My visit to Europe

I thank you sincerely for the prayers, for the visit to Europe went on well. One of the joyous moments was the time spent with Rev. Fr. Emile Mayoraz MSFS and other members of the Franco Swiss Province who are so much connected to our missions in east Africa. Being my first visit to France, I could see and experience with delight the places connected to St. Francis de Sales and Fr. Mermier. My special thanks and appreciation to Fr. Viju Kunnathottil MSFS and other confreres who arranged the travels and meetings in France and in Switzerland very wonderfully.

The annual retreat together with confreres in Rome was another good experience. Our Confreres from EA Fr. Johnson Pathiyil, Fr. Zachariah Burofero and Fr. Augustine Mangatt also participated in the retreat. I could also join the confreres working in Germany and Austria (Fr. Wilson Packiam, Fr. Sony Kochumalayil and Fr. Stephen Gerald) in their Community meeting held in Seinsheim, Germany. Besides meeting some of our mission friends and Benefactors, I could also celebrate Holy Mass one week-end in the parishes in Wuerzburg where I was working during my studies in Germany.

Another touching experience was meeting with some of the elderly missionaries of the Misericordia Sisters from Italy who were so much associated with our missions here and now they are in the home for the aged in Verona, Italy. I visited them with Fr. Johnson Pathiyil and it was time of recalling with gratitude the blessings of God and listen to their experiences of being missionaries in Tanzania for three to four decades.

The climate was not so friendly as for many days it was snowing and with minus temperatures. At this time of the year, one cannot expect the sun to appear every day. As a whole it was a time of grace for I was safe and healthy and things went on as planned. Once again, I sincerely thank you for the prayers.

Greetings from our Confreres studying in Rome.

Fr. Zachariah Burofero shares:

My dear Fathers and Brothers,

*I take this chance to thank all of you for the opportunity given to me to pursue higher studies here in Rome. For all the years I have spent here in Rome, the only words that come to my mind is: Clap Hands in God's presence, Shout to God with the voice of triumph, Victories belong to him. It is the Lord that has brought us this far!! It is the Lord who has fought for us and provided blessings! **1 Samuel 7: 3-14) "Thus Far the Lord has Helped us" !!!***

I am here in Rome since June 2012. Soon after completing the Italian language course for three months, I started the studies at the Salesian University. Within 2 years and half, I completed the Licentiate with Magna Cum laude 28/30. I have registered for the Doctorate (February 2015) and the topic is already approved and have started to write the work. Normally, Doctorate is three years. I hope to defend my work either by June next year or by September according to university regulations.

As you may know here the life here has its own challenges. Together with studies we also work in parishes when possible during weekends and during the holidays, in order to support the financial requirements. I remember all of you and pray for you. Thanking you for everything and wishing you all, good preparations for the Easter,

Fr. Zachariah Burofero MSFS

Fr. Johnson Pathiyil shares:

My dear Fathers and Brothers,

It is now one year and five months since I came to Rome for my Licentiate studies. I am doing the Licentiate in Spiritual Theology in the University of St. Thomas Aquinas known as Angelicum, which is situated in the older part of Rome near to the Colloseum and the remnants of the Old Imperial Rome. I have begun the second year of my licentiate and hope to finish the same by the end of June 2016. As I am asked to continue with the Doctorate, I will be continuing with the doctoral studies if I am promoted by the University.

Together with Fr. Zachariah, I am staying in a seminary run by the Episcopal conference of Czech Republic. There are priests and brothers from different continents. But we are 5 MSFS fathers here but we are attached to the MSFS Procura House which is close to the Vatican. And Fr. Augustine Mangatt is our local superior. I do go for some pastoral works whenever it is available in order to gain more experience as well as learning the Italian language. I thank all my confreres for their prayerful support and care. If God willing I will finish the Doctoral studies within three years of time and wish to be to East Africa as early as possible. I request your valuable prayers.

Fr. Johnson Pathiyil MSFS

We wish our dear confreres Fr. Zachariah Burofero and Fr. Johnson Pathiyil the continued blessings in the tasks entrusted to them.

Annual Retreats 2016

As announced earlier we have the Province Annual Retreats in two sessions.

Retreat A:

Place: Retreat Centre of Precious Blood Sisters, Lushoto, Tanzania

Date: May 31 Tuesday evening to June 6, Monday morning.

Guide: Rev. Fr. Josaphat Bududu (Archdiocese of Tabora)

Retreat B:

Place: Subiaco Retreat centre of the Benedictine sisters, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya

Date: June 22 Wednesday evening to June 28, Tuesday morning

Guide: Rev. Fr. Sahaya G. Selvam SDB

As we know the participation in the Province retreat is mandatory. Those who need exception for valid reasons, are to get explicit permission. You can choose one of these retreats. Kindly register your names before March 15. Since both venues may have limitations to accommodate beyond a particular number we need to distribute more or less equally.

Annual retreats are special times in the life of the individual and of the Province. It is a time of being together with the Lord and with one another in an intensive manner. Let us already begin to pray for the blessings of God up on our retreats. Let us also pray for our guides who consented to guide us during this time of retreat.

Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal - Doctoral Studies

Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal has obtained admission for Doctoral Studies in the University of Cape Town, South Africa. It is a distant learning program with a few direct sessions and presentations every year, at the University. On February 8 he left for Cape Town for the registrations and other initial processes and he will be back on February 19. The area of his research will be on the functioning of the Non Governmental, Faith based and Charity Organizations. We wish him all the best in his studies. We also thank sincerely Fr. Babychan Arackathara MSFS and other confreres in Southern Africa Region for the arrangements they have made.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Our Confreres **Fr. Joseph Poikunnel MSFS** and **Fr. Santhosh Prakashbhavan MSFS** had the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to do the three weeks renewal programs from Jan 16, 2016 to February 6, 2016 organized by the Notre Dame Centre, Jerusalem. We thank God for this opportunity and those who made this experience possible.

Initiation into Postulancy

On January 20, 2016, seven aspirants (3 for Mozambique & 4 for East Africa) were initiated to Postulancy, at Fransalian Seminary, Ndagani. As an immediate preparation for the initiation into Postulancy they attended a Charismatic Retreat from January 3 to 7 in Vincentian Retreat House at Thika, Kenya. The aspirants were accompanied by Bro. Leonard Musembi MSFS and Bro. Patro Pio MSFS the regents of Ndagani and Chera who also attended the retreat. The ceremony of initiation was officiated by Fr. David Susai MSFS, who presided over the Eucharist. The event was graced by the presence of the Sisters of Our Lady of Kilimanjaro, Chera. We wish our young brothers a graceful time of Postulancy as it is a time of intensive preparation for the Novitiate and laying strong foundation for religious life.

Formation Forum meeting

The Province Formation Forum meeting was held on February 3, 2016 at Provincial House. The outcome of the meeting will be made known when the report is ready. I thank Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil the PCIC Formation for convening and chairing the meeting.

Reminder: Other Forum Meetings 2016 (already announced on October 15, 2015)

March 2 WED Stewardship Forum
March 3 THU Education Forum
March 4 FRI Social and Innovative Ministry Forum
JUNE 7 TUE Pastoral Forum
JUNE 8 WED Superiors Forum

I kindly request all those in respective ministries to make themselves available for the meeting. All the meetings will be held in Provincial House.

News Snippets

- Fr. Robert Raj MSFS the Provincial Bursar is visiting the communities / Institutions in Tabora and Kahama from February 12 to 20.
- Fr. Antony George left for India on February 12, 2016 for home holidays and to attend some refresher courses. His number in India is: +91 893 926 8270.
- Fr. Tomy Kattikanayil MSFS is at present, in Ngurdotto rendering pastoral service before he goes for the home holidays in March.
- The annual regents' Meeting and Evaluation was held on January 12, 2016 at LCI. It was organized by Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil PCIC Formation and animated by Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil.
- His Grace Archbishop Paul Ruzoka is in India for treatment. At present he is in our community in Angamaly.
- Fr. Jose Parambukattil MSFS (Nagpur Province) is now staying in our community in Angamaly, as he is taking a course of Ayurvedic treatment. As many of us know in the beginning stages of our mission here he was working in Lububu and Kahama Mbulu.
- Fr. Sebastian Annaikandathil MSFS from Nagpur Province is designated to join us in May this year. He would be rendering his service at SFS Junior Seminary, Morogoro.
- Franciscan Clarist Sisters (FCC) Delhi Province has agreed to work with us in SFS Junior Seminary. They are expected to join by July this year.
- Fr James Pattarkalayil MSFS, North East India Province is appointed Dean of Studies of Suvidya College with effect from December 27, 2015. Congrats to Fr. James.
- MSFS is soon entering into the 10th country in Africa, when our confreres from Southern Africa Region begin the mission in the **Kingdom of Swaziland** shortly. Congratulations and good wishes.
- Fransalian Communications - Morogoro will be organizing the inter-school cultural competitions on March 12. Best wishes!
- Fransalian Communications - LCI Arusha will be organizing the inter-school cultural competitions on March 5. Best wishes!
- Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS, Director LCI will be going to Europe from February 28 to March 30. He will be presenting a Paper in different seminars at the

University of Lueven on *Education & Culture in East Africa*.
<https://www.kuleuven.be/apps/mailtemplates/previews/3622-56b8914e4ea0a.html> During the Holy Week he will be assisting Fr. Josef Giefing in Austria. We wish Fr. Mathew safe journey and all the best.

Important Congregational Meetings to be hosted in East Africa

In the month of May this year, we would be hosting some very important congregational meetings. There would be the meetings Mission Superiors Africa Forum (MSAF); Provincials of India and East Africa (PIF-PEA); The Triennial Mandatory Meeting (TMM) and General Curia (GC). Some of the meetings would be with the Local Administrative Council (LAC) and Staff of LCI. All the meetings will be held at LCI. The general time frame of the meetings is from May 9 to 25, 2016. The detailed plan will be made known later. It is for the first time TMM and PIF-PEA meetings are held in Africa.

More than all the other preparations, we need to pray for the success of all these meetings. We extend to all the participants a warm welcome to Africa. Some of them would be visiting our communities and missions in Kenya and Tanzania. ***Karibuni sana!***

Provincial Chapter South West India Province

Rev. Fr. Benny Koottanal MSFS the newly appointed Provincial of SWI Province, has convoked the Provincial Chapter from April 11 to 16, 2016. Theme: FORMING COMMITTED MSFS ROOTED IN COMMUNITY LIFE FOR PROPHETIC MINISTRIES TODAY. Let us keep them in our prayers.

Regional Assembly of the New Region of North East India

Fr. Emmanuel Mappilaparampil MSFS the first Regional Superior of the new region in North East Province has convoked the Regional Assembly from April 13 to 15, 2016. The theme is: "Frontier Fransalians in Northeast India: Formed in Compassion, United in Mission". Let us pray for the blessings up on this Assembly and the entire Region and the Province.

Prayers Requested

For sick and suffering

Fr. Devasia Manalel MSFS who is now in India taking treatments related to prostate glands.

Mrs. Leontina Ireterera, the beloved mother of Bro. Ventino Mutume. She is critically ill.

For the departed

Mrs. Zitta Nejjesa, the beloved mother of Novice Ivan Mubbo from Tororo, was called to eternal life on January 13, 2016. She was 65 years old.

Renewal Program for the University Students by FC Morogoro

Being one of the regular features of Fransalian Communications, this year the first Seminar for the University students was held on January 9. The students from SUA and Mazimbu compasses participated in the one day seminar. The theme of the day was: "Eucharist and

the Blessed Sacrament". The resource person was Rev Fr Gervas Teti from the Diocese of Morogoro. The seminar had three input sessions attended by more than 330 students in which the resource person encouraged the students to be in touch with the Eucharistic Lord in whatever they do. He also reminded the students to discern their vocation. There were also possibilities of confession and adoration. Most of the students availed this opportunity to receive the sacraments.

The seminar was concluded by a Holy Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Teti. After the mass students expressed their heart-felt gratitude to the director of Fransalian Communications and the Fransalian community for this kind of initiative. The director of Fransalian Communications Rev. Fr. Thomas Kochuparampil also congratulated the students for attending the seminar in such a big number and encouraged them to continue with the same spirit. The seminar ended around 18.45 hrs with some refreshments.

My tentative programme

February 2016

22 - 27 Giving Retreat for OCD Fathers in Morogoro

March 2016

- 2 Stewardship Forum Meeting
- 3 Education Forum Meeting
- 4 Social and Innovative Ministry Forum Meeting
- 5 Council Meeting
- 6 Travel to Arusha
- 7-19 Classes for the Formators at LCI
- 20 Palm Sunday in Ngurdotto
- 23-27 Holy Week Mlolongo - Katani
- 28-29 Orientations for the First Provincial Chapter SABS Sisters - Otiende, Nairobi
- 30- - 1 April - Chera, Ndagani

April 2016

- 2 Adoration Sisters - East Africa Province Opening ceremony Nairobi
- 3 Divine Mercy Sunday, Osia Parish
- 4-11 Uganda (to be planned in detail)

Conclusion

On this first Sunday of Lent we learn from Jesus who fasted and prayed, who resisted the temptations with deep convictions, who did not compromise with the evil, who did not care for the easy ways of life, who was not bothered about the name and fame and who did not find the security in the material wealth in this world. In his life we do not hear the words of scorn, we do not hear words of condemnation, but only words of love, of mercy, which are an invitation to conversation. *Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again* (Jn.8:11).

Beloved Confreres and Friends, God's face is the face of a merciful father who is always patient. Have we thought about God's patience, the patience He has with each one of us? That is His mercy. He always has patience, patience with us, He understands us, He waits for us, He does not tire of forgiving us if we are able to return to Him with a contrite heart. *Great is the kindness and mercy of God for us.* (Ps.117:2) .

God's attitude is striking. I invite you again to scan our lives, in the light of those ten features (which I have placed at the beginning of this circular) of the Merciful Father.

Being merciful is possible only where there is firmness of conviction.

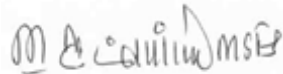
Jesus could exercise mercy and compassion to such an extent for he was absolutely convinced of the fact that he is the Son of the Merciful Father. If we cannot and do not exercise mercy and compassion, it is an expression of lack of convictions from our part.

Convictions that we are children of God;

Convictions that we are Priests and Consecrated ones called to be offered as sacrifice;

Convictions that face of the Father of Mercy is to be manifested in our faces.

Entrusting each one of you to the merciful love of the Father,
United with you in prayers,



Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS

(Provincial Superior MSFS East Africa Province)

Let your mercy be upon us, O Lord as we place our hope in you.

Ps. 33:22