

**MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES**

**Fransalians - Province of East Africa**

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**Provincial Circular EAP – MT.04** **Feb. 14, 2018**

**My dear Confreres,**

Greetings of peace and joy in the name of Lord Jesus!

Today, we begin the season of Lent. Lent is one of the best times of the year for spiritual renewal. In some ways it can be considered as a forty day retreat lived each year in the context of our daily life. Socrates, the Greek Philosopher, says; “An unexamined life is not worth living.” This is valid in our modern times too. We live in a hyperactive world, where we have no time to think, reflect and examine our life. We are working so hard to achieve our noble dreams, that we sometimes forget our prayer life. We are often driven by the goal of success solely, and want to brand and promote ourselves. The modern gadgets around us give us the confidence that we are in control of everything; and live in a virtual world and ignore those around us. There exist also tendencies of indifference and apathy that prevent us from being true religious. Lent is a time for introspection, when we are asked to become aware of what is happening deep down in our minds, hearts and spiritual life. It is a “the favourable time of grace and salvation” (2Cor. 6:1). We are challenged to stop, look into our lives with eyes of faith, discern properly our values, set our priorities right and make radical choices and decisions that are in harmony with our Christian faith and deepen our relationship with God and with our fellow brothers and sisters.



Pope Francis in his Lenten message titled: “Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold” (Mt. 24:12), tells us that “God offers us each year the season of Lent as a “sacramental sign” of our conversion,” and therefore we are summoned to—and enabled to—come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and in every aspect of our life.” He warns us of false prophets and a cold heart. To overcome falsehood, negative tendencies and a cold heart, he encourages us to take up the Lenten journey with enthusiasm and sustained by almsgiving, fasting and prayer. He wants us to be guided by the Easter fire, the light of Christ, who dispels the darkness of our hearts and minds.

May this season of Lent be a season of personal and community renewal, guided by the life and message of Christ, who died and rose for our salvation.

## 2018 YEAR OF LOCAL COMMUNITY

Our beloved Superior General has declared 2018 as 'the year of the Local community.' The theme of the year is **REVITALISING MY LOCAL COMMUNITY: SPACE FOR COMMUNION AND MISSION**. The Superiors' Forum has decided to celebrate the year in the following manner:

- Monthly recollections based on the theme of the Year of Local Community.
- Daily half hour of adoration.
- Minimum half an hour of personal prayer.
- Conscientious efforts to practice Salesian Virtues particularly gentleness, cheerful availability and hospitality.
- Regular reading of our Constitutions and General Directory in common.
- Regular reading of Salesian literature, particularly books on the Little Virtues.
- Monthly Community meeting and submission of monthly financial statements.
- Avoid the use of mobile phones during common meals and common recreation.
- Conclusion of the year with a Holy Mass in every Apostolic community presided over by Fr. Provincial or one of the Councillors (December 2018 – January 2019).

### CONGREGATIONAL RETREAT

June 6th evening (18hrs) to June 11th evening	<b>Retreat I:</b> (preached by Fr. Mario D'Souza)
July 23rd evening (18 hrs) to July 28th evening	<b>Retreat II:</b> (Preached by Fr. Binu Edathumpampil)
<b>CONGREGATIONAL RETREAT FOR SCHOLASTICS</b>	
August 6th evening to August 11th evening	<b>Retreat III:</b> (Preached by Fr. Binu Edathumpampil)

Please register your names for the retreat by the Provincial Secretary

### ON-GOING FORMATION PROGRAMMES

February 22 <sup>nd</sup> to March 2 <sup>nd</sup> (Day of arrival: February 21 <sup>st</sup> before 18hrs)	<b>On-going Formation I</b> (for priests ordained from 2013 to 2017) <b>Theme: NLP, Enneagram and Inner child. (Sr. Celine UMI)</b>
March 6th to 8th (Day of Arrival: March 5th before 18.00 hrs)	<b>On-going Formation II</b> (For priests ordained from 2000 to 2012) <b>Theme: Journey to Wholeness and Holiness (Sr. Celine UMI)</b>
July 30 <sup>th</sup> – August 3 <sup>rd</sup> (Day of Arrival: 29 <sup>th</sup> before 19hrs.	<b>On-going Formation III</b> (For priests ordained from 1977 to 1999) <b>Theme: Skills in Pastoral Counselling (Fr. Binu Edathumpampil)</b>

## FORUM MEETINGS 2018

Dates	Forums
09.03.2018	Mission Forum: (Day of Arrival: 08th March before 19.00 hrs)
10.03.2018	Formators' Forum: (Day of Arrival: 09 <sup>th</sup> March before 19.00 hrs)
15.05.2018	Stewardship Forum with General Bursar: (Day of Arrival: 14 <sup>th</sup> May before 19.00 hrs)
16.05.2018	Social and Innovative Ministry Forum: (Day of Arrival: 15 <sup>th</sup> May before 19.00 hrs)
12.06.2018	Education Forum: (Day of Arrival: 11 <sup>th</sup> June before 19.00 hrs)

NB: All the meetings will take place at LCI.

## SUPERIOR'S FORUM MEETING

The Superiors' Forum meeting was held on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2018. On 16<sup>th</sup> evening, Fr. Agnelo Fernandes gave an inspiring talk on Local community. He invited the members of the Forum to imitate Fr. Peter Mermier who said: "I want missions through the community." He said that only a joyous community can make a joyous mission. He insisted that every community should be a communion of respect, love, mutuality, transparency and indwelling. He also said that every community should come around four tables daily: Table of the Eucharist, Table of Fellowship, Table of Recreation and Table of Work. He also said that our vocation and identity as MSFS should be found in our community living.

We were indeed privileged to have the presence of Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil, our beloved Superior General during the forum meeting. He addressed the members and spoke at length regarding the Local Community, the role of the superior and each member. He said that there are some non-negotiable community exercises such as fidelity to personal and common prayer, Eucharistic celebration, common meals, recreation, community meeting, financial accountability etc. He also said that every mission is of the community and therefore the need for team work and collegiality in all our apostolates.

The Forum discussed and evaluated the community life in the Province and various apostolates. The Forum also evaluated the Action Plan of the Provincial Congress 2017. Fr. Provincial invited the Superiors to implement the Action Plan in every community. The minutes of the meeting of the Superiors' Forum will be sent by email to all.

## KALAMIRA PARISH

The 27<sup>th</sup> of January was a historical day for the people of Kalamira in the diocese of Jinja and for the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. Kalamira was officially declared a parish and Fr. Joby Maruthamalayil was installed as the first parish priest of Kalamira. The joyous event began with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist presided over by his Lordship Rt. Rev. Martin Wamika, the Bishop of Jinja. The Bishop expressed his joy and gratitude to the Fransalians for coming forward to take up Kalamira parish with 28 of its sub-parishes. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel, the Provincial thanked Bishop for inviting the Fransalians to Jinja and sought the cooperation of the diocese and the faithful of Kalamira for the over-all development of the parish. He also thanked Fr. Peter, the parish priest of Namunyumya parish who facilitated the establishment of the new parish. There was also a Harambe/Fundraising for the construction of a Presbytery. The event was witnessed by a large number of the faithful, government officials, priests and Religious.



## VISIT OF SOUTH EAST PROVINCIAL AND TEAM



Fr. Innaci Muthu, the Provincial of the MSFS South East India Province, Fr. Kanikkai Nathan, the Councillor In-charge of the Missions, Fr. S. Soosai Raj and Bro. Winner came to Tanzania on 28<sup>th</sup> of December 2017. They visited our missions in Tanzania and Kenya to have first-hand knowledge of the African Missions of the MSFS in view of taking up missions in Malawi later. Fr. Soosai and Bro. Winner have opted to work in Africa. Fr. Soosai will remain in Tanzania to gain pastoral experience until the Province takes up one or more missions in Malawi. Bro. Winner will do regency and thereafter

Theology in Tanzania. We appreciate the good will and missionary dynamism of the South East India Province and for coming forward to take up missions in Malawi (Karonga Diocese), which is in need of missionaries. Fr. Provincial and Fr. Kanikkai will be visiting Malawi in the first week of March. Hearty welcome dear Fathers to Tanzania and Malawi! We assure the South East Province our whole hearted support for the establishment of new missions in Malawi.

## VISIT TO CAMEROON

After attending the meeting of Missio Network Pastoral Africa in Ghana, I made a short trip to Cameroon to visit our confreres particularly Bros. Francis Indumuli and Richard Tamaro, who are doing their second year of Theology at Yaounde. There are eight MSFS scholastics who are doing Theology St. Cyprian College. I also administered the ministries of Lector and Acolyte to our Scholastics. Our Brothers have mastered French and are doing well in their studies. I sincerely thank Tchad-Cameroon Mission for providing this opportunity for our confreres from East



Africa. I would like also to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to Fr. Manoj Arackal, the Delegation Superior and Fr. Sen Vellakada, the Rector of the Seminary for taking good care of our Brothers.

## YOUTH MINISTRY AT AGURURU



The youth in the parish of Agururu, Uganda under the leadership of Fr. R.P.V Prasad is engaged in a number of activities to enhance the active participation of youth in the parish. Prior to Christmas the youth visited every family in the parish singing Carols. Several youth seminars were organized to foster leadership qualities among the youth. The youth takes part actively in every event of the parish. They visited the poor and the sick on the World

Day of the Sick (11<sup>th</sup> February). On behalf of the Province, I congratulate and appreciate Fr. Prasad for making tremendous efforts to organize the youth in Agururu parish.

## SPIRITUAL RENEWAL SEMINAR KOLA

It was a great occasion for the community of Fransalian House Kola, when they organized the Biblical Spiritual Seminar towards the end of the year 2017. The seminar was for religious men and women. Fifty four participants from different Congregations in and around Morogoro and also other parts of the country attended the seminar. The theme of the Seminar was; **“Enkindling hope in our hearts: proclaiming the Gospel in a wounded world and the Prophetic character of Religious life today”**. The four day seminar began with the inaugural mass by Fr. Vivian OCD, who also gave the keynote address. The highlight of the first day of the seminar was a presentation on the “Challenges of the Religious life in our time.” The second day focused on “Being authentic witnesses of the Gospel.” On the third day, the reflection was about “An exodus out of our own selves” and the reflections on the concluding day were based on “Mary as the perfect model and example for Religious life.”



The seminar came to a conclusion with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Mathew Thomas Thazhathukunnel MSFS, the Provincial of East Africa Province. The participants were awarded with certificates during the Mass.

(Reported by Bro. Ssentamu Ruthitical MSFS)

## FRANSALIAN ASSOCIATES

A gathering of Fransalian Associates was held on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Mwanza, Tanzania. Fr. Francis Kallikatt organized the meeting and introduced the new Directory of Fransalian Associates and their Spiritual Directory. The members felt the need to expand the Fransalian Associates to disseminate the Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales.

## MEETING OF ALUMNI – MKUZA SCHOOL

A meeting of the alumni of Fransalian Mission School, Mkuza was held on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2017. About 100 students attended the meeting, which began with a Holy Mass presided over by Fr. Sebastian Williams, the Manager of the School. The chief guest of the meeting was Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel, the Provincial of East Africa. The guest of honour gave a very encouraging speech to the pupils exhorting them to focus on their studies and their dreams. He spoke to them about character development, morals, self-discipline and integrity. He reminded the pupils to grow into responsible citizens since they are the parents and leaders of tomorrow. Fr. Sebastian Williams, Sr. Rosbin, the Head Teacher and the staff organized several programmes for the Alumni. The meeting came to an end with a sumptuous meal.

(Reported by Teacher Calistus)

## APPOINTMENTS AND TRANSFERS

**Fr. Kurian Kollapallil** is appointed as the Mission Coordinator of Kenya

**Fr. S. Robert Raj** is appointed as the Mission Coordinator of Uganda

**Fr. Sebastian Soosai Raj** from South East India Province is appointed to the Fransalian Community at Ngurdoto for pastoral experience.

**Fr. Francis Devadoss** is appointed to the Fransalian Community, Kola Hills, Morogoro.

**Bro. Level Winner Raj** a scholastic from South East India Province is appointed for Regency at Fransalian Community, Ipuli.

**Bro. Victor Mutuku** is transferred from Fransalian Community at Katani and is appointed at Fransalian Community, Mwakata.

## OBITUARY

**Mr. Varghese Annaikandathil** (90), the brother of Fr. Sebastian Annaikandathil, passed away on 06.12.2017.

**Mrs. Elykutty Paulose** (78), the maternal aunt of Fr. Johnson Kallidukil, passed away on 30.12.2017.

**Rev. Fr. O.V. Zacharias** (92) of South West India Province passed away on 06.01.2018.

**Rev. Fr. Andreas Kieffer** (95) of Franco-Swiss Province passed away on 08.01.2018.

**Mr. K. J. Punnoose Kozhuppakalam**, the uncle of Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam, passed away on 14.01.2018.

**Mr. Paul Kottaram**, the brother in law of Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam, passed away on 14, 2018

**Rev. Fr. George Edappady** (74) of the diocese of Srikkakulam (India) passed away on 10.02.2018.

Please fulfil the suffrages for our deceased confreres as prescribed by MSFS Constitutions and pray for the departed souls of relatives and friends of our confreres.

## MY TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Date	Programme
14 – 17 February	Morogoro
18 – 22	LCI/ On-going Formation Programme
23 – 25	Morogoro
26 – 28	LCI
02 – 05 March	Visit to Masai Kusini
06 -08	LCI/ On-going Formation Programme
09	Mission Forum Meetings
10	Formation Forum Meeting
11 – 13	Ndagani and Chera
14 – 17	LCI
18	Novitiate
19 - 21	Morogoro
22 March to 30 April	Ministry and Visitation in Europe
02 – 05 May	Council Meeting
12	LCI Graduation

My dear confreres, wishing you all a grace-filled season of Lent, I remain.

Yours devotedly in Christ Jesus,



Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS  
Provincial - East Africa Province

### Salesian Thought

“Imperfect love desires and asks for him; penitence seeks and finds him; perfect love holds and claps him.” (Love of God, Chapter XX)

St. Francis de Sales

