

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Fransalians - Province of East Africa

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My dear Confreres!

I wish you all a happy feast of our heavenly patron St. Francis de Sales! May the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales continue to guide our Congregation and each one of us.

LIVE JESUS

“Live Jesus” was the holy and sacred motto in the life of St. Francis de Sales. Thus “Live Jesus” becomes the central theme in Salesian Spirituality. The person of Jesus, his life, teachings and example are central to Christian life and holiness. Indeed, his relationship to the Father and submission to the divine will become the master paradigm for all Christian praxis. It is for this reason that the expression, “Live Jesus” represents a master paradigm in Salesian Spirituality as well. St. Francis de Sales writes in the Introduction to the Devout Life:



Philothea, I cannot approve the methods of those who try to reform someone by beginning with outward things....For this reason, dear Philothea, I have wished above all else to engrave and inscribe on your heart this holy and sacred motto, “Live, Jesus!” ...As our beloved Jesus lives in your heart, so too he will soon live in all your conduct and he will be revealed by your eyes, your mouth, your hands, yes even the hair on your head. With St. Paul you can say these holy words, “It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me. In short, whoever wins a person’s heart has won the whole person. (Part III, chapter 23)

What does it mean for us to live Jesus? We can understand the meaning of “Live Jesus” only in the context of dying for Jesus. In the Gospels, Jesus tells his disciples to take up daily their cross and follow in his steps (Luke 9:23). He himself carried the cross and died for us; and his resurrection gives meaning for our life. He promises us that shouldering the daily cross of Christian discipleship will lead to both death and to new life in us, to a daily dying to self that is, at the same time, a daily rising to new life in God.

It is in Baptism that we are first immersed into the dying and rising of Jesus. Throughout the rest of our lives every day and every passing moment gives us opportunities to die for Christ and to live for him. The classical New Testament passage that describes the Christian’s dying and rising with Jesus: “I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me.” (Gal. 2:19-20) is both the spiritual biography of St. Paul as well as the pattern for all Christian discipleship. It is the favourite passage of the Jesus-centered spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. It describes Christian discipleship as being crucified with Christ so that He might come alive in us and live and act in our world through us.

How do we understand daily dying in Salesian spirituality? In the early Christianity, martyrdom was a clear sign of dying for Christ. Later on ascetical practices of monks or mendicants were considered as dying for Christ. In the Salesian tradition, our dying for Jesus - which is, at the same time, a new life in him-- is brought about through what St. Francis de Sales calls the “death of the will.” “The will that is dead to itself, so as to live in God’s will, is without any particular desire, and remains not only in conformity and submission but is totally annihilated in itself and is converted into God’s will” (Love of God, Bk. 9, Ch. 13). By the “death of our will”, our will completely become one with the will of God. He further explains: “We simply let ourselves be carried by his divine good pleasure, just as a little child is carried in its mother’s arms, by a certain kind of admirable consent which may be called the union, or rather unity of our will with that of God” (Love of God, Book 9, chapter 14).

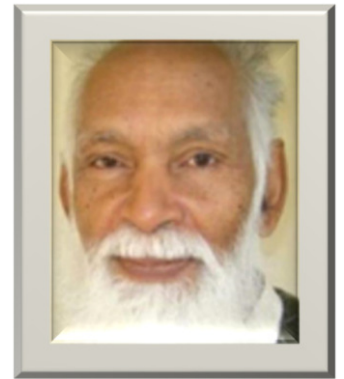
In practice, our will has now ceased to function independently of God’s will. Like Jesus, we now do only what God wills for us. The Biblical foundations for his teaching on the death of the will are: “I have been crucified with Christ and the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me” (Galatians 2: 19-20). “After all you have died! Your life is now hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). With the death of the will, the old Adam has died in us. With that death, we have made room within us for the new Adam. Jesus’ way of living is now our way of living: “I do always the will of the One who sent me” (Jn. 6:38). His intimate and loving union with the Father is now our own experience as well: “The Father and I are one.” (Jn. 10:30). The third petition of the Lord’s Prayer, “May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” is fully realized through the “death of our will”.

Through the “death of our will”, we daily follow Christ and die for him. But our dying is simultaneously also our rising, and the losing of our false selves is at the same time the discovery of our true selves. For as Jesus said: “Whoever finds his life, will lose it. And whoever has lost his life because of me, shall find it.” (Mt. 10:39). It is in Jesus, we have our real life. And with the birth of Jesus within us we truly begin to live Jesus.

To live Jesus is a daily invitation for us. It is an invitation to cease to do our will and to do the will of God. To live Jesus is the death of our will and that is our daily martyrdom. When we practice this holy and sacred motto of St. Francis de Sales in our daily life, our community life and our missionary endeavors become more meaningful for us, as our will is dead and is united with the will of God. Let us die to ourselves and in our will in order to “Live Jesus”.

A TRIBUTE TO SPIRITUAL EXCELLENCE

The life and ministry of Rev. Father Antony Mookenthottam can be summed up in the above-mentioned caption. Father Antony was a person who embodied Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. His vast knowledge in Salesian literature and his unassuming way of practicing Salesian spirituality in his personal life had been an inspiration for all. Father Antony was a spiritual guide for numerous people and he had a unique way of manifesting God to all, who came to him for guidance.



He experienced the love of God in his personal life, which was indeed the strength of his spiritual life. He was a dignified, courteous, humble, holy and kind priest, who is a model priest for the contemporary world. His spiritual excellence was based on his self-discipline and intimate union with Christ in prayer. He was an epitome of missionary endeavours both in India and Tchad. He was both a theologian and a philosopher who excellently blended both Eastern and Western traditions in his teaching. We have lost a true Fransalian in the person of Father Antony. I am sure that his legacy will continue to influence our Fransalian way of life.

Father Antony was born on February 28, 1931. After completing his secondary school studies, he joined MSFS Congregation. He made his first profession on May 27, 1953 and was ordained a priest on April 27, 1957. He served as a missionary in Vizag mission, was General Councillor, Provincial of Vizag and served the Congregation in various other capacities. He was a prolific writer, who authored several books and articles in Salesian spirituality, Indian Philosophy and Spirituality. His death on January 03, 2020 has created a vacuum in our Congregation. May his life and ministry continue to lighten our path to imitate Christ through the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales.

May his soul through the mercy of God rest in peace.

BUDGET APPROVAL FOR 2020

The Provincial council meeting held on December 17 and 18, 2019, discussed in detail the budgets presented from our communities of East Africa. The Provincial administration expresses its gratitude to every confrere for taking care of the property of the Congregation/Diocese. The provincial administration would like to remind the need to maintain transparency and accountability with regards to financial matters in the Province.

General Remarks / Informations:

- FAST format to be followed for budget making/Accounts.
- Income from the schools/institutions should include School fees, hostel fees, income from stationary, books, food, uniform and other collections such as for picnic, graduation, exam fee etc. These collections should be mentioned separately, not under School fees.
- School fees chart for each class and other fee collections should be presented at the earliest to Provincial Bursar.
- The number of students in each class also should be presented.
- The children, who are being helped in the school (partially/fully) should be also mentioned. It should also mention the amount that we are giving in charity.
- All the communities/institutions/parishes/Family Apostolate/other ministries have to send Budget as well as income and expenditure to the Provincial Bursar.
- Confreres working outside the province have to submit their income and expenditure to the Provincial Bursar.
- All the communities/parishes which have not yet submitted the budget, should submit to the Provincial Bursar at the earliest.
- All extra-ordinary budgets have to be discussed in LGB and a report is to be submitted to the Provincial Administration.
- All the bank accounts should have double signatories and both have to sign.
- Charitable status of the society in Tanzania has to be urgently followed up.
- A Corpus fund will be created to meet emergency needs of the Province.
- Internal Auditing will be continued.
- Half yearly accounts should be submitted with bank statements on time.

TRANSFERS AND APPOINTMENTS

Fr. Sony Kochumalayil is appointed as the Superior Germany-Austria community of East Africa Province with effect from 01.01.2020.

Fr. Chinnappan Arockiasamy is designated to be appointed as the assistant parish priest of Kashishi parish with effect from 07.02.2020. He will be in-charge of the construction of the presbytery at Kashishi.

Fr. Aristides Danda is appointed as a member of Fransalian Community, Bissil with effect from 07.02.2020.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

Fr. Dhaman Kumar Karanam is appointed by the Superior General as the Coordinator of Delegation Superiors of MSFS in GAH (Germany, Austria and Holland) with effect from January 24, 2020.

Fr. Philip Thomas is appointed as the new Rector of Suvidya College, Bangalore, India with effect from 20.01.2020.

We wish Frs. Dhaman and Philip God's blessing as you assume your new responsibilities in the Congregation.

HOLIDAYS

Fr. Jose Eriyanickal:	January 12 – March 01
Fr. Kurian Kollapallil:	January 13 – February 13
Fr. Stephen Ubadesi:	February 10 – March 10
Fr. Francis Kallikattu:	February 16 – March 16
Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel:	February 20 – March 01

OBITUARY

Fr. Antony Mookenthottam (89), of South West India Province passed away on 03.01.2020.

Mr. Nanalo Jeremiah George (62), paternal uncle of Bro. Godwin Nanalo (Regent in SFS Junior Seminary, Kihonda), passed away on 10.01.2020.

May they rest in peace!



MY TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Date	Programme
January 24 - 29	Visitation in Europe
January 30	Morogoro
February 02	Lukobe Sub-Parish
February 04 - 06	Visit to Archdiocese of Mombasa
February 07	Chera/Ndagani
February 08	Katani
February 10 – 13	Uganda Apostolic Community
February 15 – 16	LCI
February 18	Meeting with Archbishop of Dar es Salaam
February 20 – March 01	India
March 06 & 07	Council Meeting in LCI
March 08 to April 08	Visitation of Superior General

My dear Confreres,

I wish you all once again a happy feast of our heavenly patron.

Yours devotedly in Christ Jesus



Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS,
Provincial - East Africa Province

Salesian Thought

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