

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Fransalians - Province of East Africa
 Provincial House P. O. Box 12 Morogoro Tanzania
 Tel: +255 689 882 711; +255 624 027 880
www.msfs-eastafrika.com
 e-mail: provincialeastafricamsfs@gmail.com





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My dear Confreres,

I wish you all a blessed Easter! May the Risen Lord bless us to treasure the life that he has won for us through his passion, death and resurrection!

STAY AT HOME WITH JESUS, STAY SAFE, HE IS ALIVE

The Easter message of peace, joy and hope is overshadowed by the unprecedented crisis of Covid-19. Easter is the feast of life, but we are confronted with death and disillusionment due to Coronavirus, which has spread across the globe. The sense of grief and loss associated with Coronavirus has social, economic, psychological and spiritual consequences beyond our comprehension as it affects the lives of everyone one way or other. The virus has upset even the age-old liturgical traditions of the Church. It has proven the inability of mighty governments and the inadequacy of superb healthcare systems of the world in combating its onslaught. It has exposed human frailty and vulnerability.



What does Covid-19 teach us during this Easter? Three years ago, on Palm Sunday Pope Francis had invited Christians to contemplate the face of Jesus "not only on paintings, or photographs, not only on video depictions" but "on the faces of many of our brothers and sisters . . . who are suffering." "Jesus is in them, in each of them with a disfigured face, with a broken voice, He asks to be looked at, to be recognized, to be loved." In fact, these days of LOCK DOWN, we are invited to LOOK UPON our brothers and sisters with the love of the Risen Lord who consoles us and gives us hope amidst uncertainty and insecurity of this world where we live. We see the suffering and helplessness of Jesus on the way to Calvary, in our brothers and sisters who are affected by the pandemic. However Calvary was not the end of the story. His Resurrection on the third day after his death gives us hope that God who suffered and died to redeem us would protect us. "Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive! He is in you, he is with you and he never abandons you." (Christus Vivit 1).

Coronavirus has suddenly taught us that we should not take life for granted. Life is to be treasured as intended by the Creator. We have time and again watered down God-given life in the name of various “isms” and as a result ignored the One who created us in his own image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). Let us value the gift of life and allow Gospel values - love, justice, truth and peace – to reign our lives, which would help us to lead a meaningful life here on earth and at the end, lead us to eternal life. We can find strength and ultimate hope in Christ, who has conquered death through his resurrection and assured us eternal life.



A beneficiary of this unexpected crisis is the earth, our common home, which we have exploited beyond description. We experience tremendous changes in nature during these days of total SHUT DOWN. Satellite images show dramatic reduction in pollution, people see nearby mountains clearly, and water is cleaner etc. Some extreme environmentalists would say “Corona is the cure and humans are the disease.” Whatever it may be, Covid-19 is inviting us to do justice to the earth and conserve the environment and wildlife as these are all vital to the eco system. Easter means new life. The present crisis provides us an opportunity to give the earth, which was suffering due to our selfishness, a new lease of life and invites us to preserve a healthy environment so that the present as well as the generations to come can enjoy a fuller life.

The Risen Lord is inviting us to be an epitome of love, justice, truth, peace and be responsible stewards of our planet. He exhorts us to be more human so that we can find the divine in our fellow human beings and in nature. Let these days of “social distancing” do not dishearten us but enable us to treasure one another. Let us STAY AT HOME with JESUS, who invites us to STAY SAFE by practising GOSPEL VALUES because He IS ALIVE, he gives us eternal life. May the Risen Lord fill our hearts with peace, courage and hope to overcome Covid-19 pandemic.

VISITATION OF SUPERIOR GENERAL

The Canonical Visitation of our beloved Superior General Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil to the Province of East Africa began on March 07, 2020. Fr. General could visit only communities and confreres in Tanzania as the borders of Kenya and Uganda were closed due to Covid-19. We are very grateful to Fr. General for visiting our Province amidst the fear of Coronavirus. He met every confrere personally, prayed together and animated every community with his



orientations to revamp religious life, community life as well as various apostolates absorbing the spirit of General Chapter 2019. Please see below the highlights of his animation in the communities:

1. Charism of our Congregation: He exhorted us to live the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in our communities for the mission of Christ. All our apostolates should be guided by our Charism.

2. Community life: He invited confreres to live our consecrated life as envisaged in our hallowed Constitutions. He emphasised on essential ingredients of community life such as common prayer, common Eucharistic celebration, minimum of half hour adoration daily, common meal, annual retreat and community meeting. He insisted that community meeting should take place once every month in every community. It should evaluate the religious life and various apostolates of the community. The bursar of each community should present the statement of accounts of the previous month. He also exhorted every confrere to lead a disciplined community life animated by the superior. There should be regular and punctual attendance in every community exercise.

3. Mission: He reminded that the essence of Fransalian way of life is the missionary dimension of our Charism as taught by our patron and the founder. In order to strengthen our missionary presence in East Africa Parish Mission Preaching (PMP), which is the primordial apostolate of the Congregation, has to be promoted. He insisted to form Fransalian Associates to spread the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. He invited every confrere to promote the cause of our Founder Fr. Mermier.

4. Daily Prayers should include the following too: Prayer for the Cause of Fr. Peter Mermier, Prayer for the deceased confreres (MSFS Obituary), Monthly intention of the Superior General and Prayer in preparation for the extra-ordinary General Chapter.

POSTPONEMENT OF PROGRAMMES DUE TO COVID-19

The following programmes are postponed:

- The Visitation of Superior General to our communities in Kenya and Uganda.
- All the Forum meetings with General Curia in May 2020 at LCI.
- PMP Seminar at Osia (May 27 &28).

New dates for these programmes will be announced later.

CONSULTATIVE PROCESS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE PROVINCIAL

Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil, our Superior General has requested me to initiate the process of the consultation for the appointment of the Provincial of East Africa in his letter dated 08.03.2020. The consultation will be done through eVoting/Online Voting as approved by the General Chapter 2019. The voting period will be from April 20 to May 10, 2020. The last day to cast vote will be on May 10, 2020. Fr. J. Stephen, General Councillor for SAIM is responsible for the preparation of eVoting. He will directly contact every eligible voter via email through which every confrere can register his vote. He will also explain the modalities of eVoting.

As per our Constitutions (Article 177) all the perpetually professed confreres of the Province are eligible to vote. As per article 179, to be a Provincial, one should have completed 30 years of age and 5 years in perpetual profession (on April 20, 2020). We have 72 perpetually professed confreres in East Africa. Fr. Johnson Kallidukil being a General Councillor has only passive voice and has no active voice in the consultation process. There are 71 confreres who can vote and 51 confreres, who can be voted for.

NEW WEBSITE OF THE PROVINCE

Handelsakademie (HAK: Business School) Oberwart, Austria has created a new website for the Province of East Africa with new features. The website domain remains the same: www.msfs-eastafrica.com. Our Province website was created by Prof. Jutta Schneller and her students of HAK in 2011 and she is maintaining the website since 2011. As the programmes of the website were outdated, it was necessary to update it. We are very grateful to Prof. Schneller and her student Miss Ines Brunner for their patience and dedication to create a new website for our Province.



HAK students (Anja Brandstätter, Ines Brunner, Jana Kalischnig, Amélie Sitar und Carina Zingl) as part of their thesis for Diploma, visited Lumen Christi Institute together with their professors (Jutta Schneller, Iris Portschy and Brigitte Kropf) to learn more about Economy/Fair Trade, Educational system, Health Care System and Women empowerment in Tanzania. As part of their social commitment under the motto: When action meets compassion, life changes, they raised funds (€13.705) to establish a computer class room for Fransalian Hekima Secondary School at Maji ya Chai.

We sincerely thank Director of HAK Prof. Andreas Lonyai, staff, students and well-wishers of HAK for helping us to establish a computer classroom at Fransalian Hekima school.

BLESSING OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE BLOCK OF SFS SECONDARY SCHOOL, IPULI

On March 14, 2020 Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil, our Superior General blessed and opened the new Administrative Block of SFS Secondary School, Ipuli Tabora, Tanzania. The new administrative block was named after the late Fr. Paulsamy MSFS, who had worked at the school. The new wing consists of various school offices, staff room, library, computer class rooms and a spacious multi-purpose hall. Hearty congratulations to Fr. Reji Pendanath, Fr. Francis Kyule and Fr. Japhet Kiriimi for their hard work and dedication to realize the long cherished dream of the staff and students of SFS Secondary school.



FRANSALIAN ASSOCIATES

Fr. Thumma Mariadas Reddy gave a seminar on Fransalian Associates for MSFS Coordinators of Fransalian Associates in East Africa on 30.03.2020 at Mlolongo. The Coordinators are requested by the Provincial administration to give further orientation on Fransalian Associates in every Apostolic Community in order to establish Fransalian Associates, wherever we are engaged in ministry.

APPOINTMENT

Fr. Augustine Mangatt is appointed as the Mission Coordinator of Kenya with effect from 13.04.2020.

NEW PROVINCIAL CURIA OF SOUTH EAST INDIA PROVINCE

The Provincial Chapter of South East India Province elected the following confreres to Provincial Curia:

1. Fr. C. Sebastianraj: Councillor in charge of Mission and Admonitor
2. Fr. A. Luckas: Councillor in charge of Education
3. Fr. P. S. Joseph: Councillor in charge of Formation
4. Fr. K. Joseph Xavier: Councillor in charge of SAIM
5. Sahaya Wilson: Provincial Bursar

On behalf of the Province of East Africa, I congratulate Rev. Fr. Ignaci Muthu, the Provincial and his new Curia

PROMOTION OF SCHOLASTICS

The following scholastics are promoted to the respective next stages of their formation as well as to the renewal of vows:

Promotion to Priestly Ordination

1. Dn. Dennis Dindi
2. Dn. Francis Indumuli
3. Dn. Gregory Mua Mutisya
4. Dn. Leonard Musembi Ngumbi
5. Dn. Michael Mwangi
6. Dn. Richard Tamaro
7. Dn. Ssentamu Ruthital

Promoted to fourth year of theology and renewal of vows

1. Bro. Brian Wasswa
2. Bro. Gonzaga Lubega
3. Bro. Joseph Ambongo

Promoted to third Year Theology, Ministry of Acolyte and Renewal of Vows

1. Bro. Avil Viegas
2. Bro. Edward Mgagi

Promoted to Second Year Theology, Ministry of Lector and Renewal of Vows

1. Bro. Okoth Moses

Promoted to First year of Theology and Renewal of vows

1. Bro. Collins Barasa Simiyu
2. Bro. Fred Bwoba
3. Bro. Godwin Nanalo
4. Bro. Joseph Mwasu
5. Bro. Peter Ngatia Githungo

Promoted for Regency and Renewal of Vows

1. Bro. Albert Momanyi Ombati
2. Bro. Dennis William Minja
3. Bro. Linto Varghese
4. Bro. Nyamweya Eric Nyabuga

Promoted to Third Year Philosophy and Renewal of Vows

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| 1. Bro. Eboyu Peter | 7. Bro. Orikiriza Darius |
| 2. Bro. Ikachuli Dismas | 8. Bro. Wakoba John |
| 3. Bro. Lobong Moses | 9. Bro. Wamakale Abraham |
| 4. Bro. Masereka Richard | 10. Bro. Wangi Pascal |
| 5. Bro. Mnuka N. Lazaro | 11. Bro. Wanjala Justine |
| 6. Bro. Nimusiima Xavier | |

Promoted to Second Year Philosophy and Renewal of Vows

1. Issac Mangoye
2. Kenneth Kamau
3. Lawrence Ssekayi

OBITUARY

Fr. Daniel Alphonso MSFS (58), of Pune Province, died in a road accident on 15.03.2020.

Mr. Joseph Odhiambo Dindi, the maternal uncle of Dn. Dennis Dindi, died in a road accident on 20.03.2020.

Mrs. Mary Joseph Palliyodil (96), maternal Grandmother of Fr. Santhosh Paul Prakshbhavan, passed away on 30.03.2020.

May they rest in peace!



MY TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Date	Programme
April 11 & 12	SFS Parish, Kikunde
April 15 & 16	Fransalian Scholasticate, Kola
May 01	Minor Orders at JUCO
May 13	Provincial Curia Meeting with Fr. General at LCI
May 19	Renewal of Vows at Kola

My dear confreres, I wish you all once again the peace and joy of Easter.

Yours devotedly in Christ Jesus,

Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS,
Provincial - East Africa Province

Salesian Thought

Our life is no longer ours but belongs to the one who gained it for us by his death.

We should live no longer for ourselves but to him: not in ourselves, but in him:
nor for ourselves but for him. (TLG, VII.8)

