

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 grace-filled season of Lent! May the Spirit of the Lord guide us throughout this season in our reflections on the great mysteries of passion, death and the resurrection of Jesus, our Saviour!



Lent: A season of Grace

People often don't look forward to Lent. Childhood memories of giving up chocolates, fasting or kneeling down for weekly Stations of the Cross come immediately to mind. Words like "sacrifice," "discipline," and "self-denial" are often used in ways that suggest that Lent is something to be endured rather than a time of grace and spiritual growth.

Pope Francis in his Lenten message for 2021 describes Lent as a season of grace to renew our faith, hope and charity. It is a time to put into practice more intensely the Theological virtues in our personal life. Pope says: In this Lenten season, accepting and living the truth revealed in Christ means, first of all, opening our hearts to God's word, which the Church passes on from generation to generation. Lent is a time for believing, for welcoming God into our lives and allowing him to "make his dwelling" among us (Jn. 14:23). During this time of Covid 19 Pandemic, Lent offers us hope-hope in the divine interventions in our personal history and in the creation. In Lent, may we be increasingly concerned with "speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement, and not words that demean, sadden, anger or show scorn" (Fratelli Tutti, 223). The salvation achieved by Christ through his death and resurrection is the ultimate hope for humanity. Pope Francis continues that love is the highest expression of our faith and hope. Love rejoices in seeing others grow. Hence it suffers when others are anguished, lonely, sick, homeless, despised or in need. Love is a leap of the heart; it brings us out of ourselves and creates bonds of sharing and communion.

Lent is a spiritual journey towards God as well as our neighbours. We cannot make good with God without making good with neighbours; our offenses against them are offenses against God. Jesus taught repeatedly (in Mark 11:25 and Matthew 6:14-15, not to mention the Lord's Prayer) that forgiveness from God calls for recognition of our own sinfulness. Genuine repentance opens our heart to the wrong we do to others and the self-righteousness with which we bind them. Lent is a season of reconciliation and it looks forward for a genuine "metanoia" that fills our hearts with genuine love for God and fellow brethren.

Lent at its heart is a season for embraces. It is a privileged time to reflect on God's loving embrace of each of his children, from the dutiful son who never leaves his father's side to the prodigal one returning home after squandering his inheritance. God's redeeming embrace comes to each one of us through the season of Lent. Therefore, let us make use of this season of grace to grow in faith, hope and charity which would ultimately lead us to union with God.

VISITATION OF SUPERIOR GENERAL

Due to Covid 19 travel restrictions, our beloved Superior General could not make his Canonical Visitation to Kenya and Uganda last year. He is planning to make his visitation to Kenya tentatively from March 24 to 31 and to Uganda from May 15 to 23. As the Covid cases are on the increase, the final decision regarding his visitation will be made known by the end of this month.

CALL OF GENERAL CHAPTER 2019 AND ACTION PLAN OF PROVINCIAL CONGRESS 2020

I kindly request every confrere to review the implementation of the Call of General Chapter and Action plan of Provincial Congress in our communities. During the month of February and March, let us concentrate on the theme of Consecrated life in the communities. Please review our consecrated life in communities, based on both the Call of the General Chapter and the Action Plan of our Provincial Congress.

Call of General Chapter: Our Consecrated Life in Community

1. Our Community being our family and support, we will continue to strengthen our community life by participation in daily community prayers, common Eucharistic celebration, Eucharistic adoration, common meal, monthly recollections, and annual retreats. *Implementation: Local Superior & Provincial.*
2. All communities will form themselves into disciplined and healthy communities with Local Superiors and the members remaining accountable to each other regarding their duties and responsibilities to the community. Provincials will ensure providing orientation and training regarding the same to the Local Superiors and members. *Implementation: Local Superior & Provincial.*

3. Confreres in multi-cultural communities in the Congregation will use a common language for communication. *Implementation: Local Superior.*
4. Without being extravagant, Local Superiors will organize and facilitate programs and events for the members to promote recreation, personal development, fraternal bonding, manual labour, sports and games, and family spirit. *Implementation: Local Superior.*
5. Provincials will ensure the establishment of more Local Communities in view of gradually reducing “Neighbourhood Local Communities.” *Implementation: Provincial.*
6. Provincial Secretaries will ensure that all documents coming from the General and Provincial Administration reach all confreres either electronically or by regular mail. *Implementation: Provincial.*
7. All our communities and places of ministry will display in their respective places the articulation of our Charism with its four Basics, our three foundational Apostolates, our Vision, and our Mission. *Implementation: Provincial & Local Superior.*

Action Plan of Provincial Congress: Our Consecrated Life in Community

- ❖ Empower the local superior to animate the community through teamwork and collaboration. *Implementation: Provincial Administration & Local Superior.*
- ❖ Facilitate transcultural and disciplined community living through common prayers, monthly community meeting in the prescribed form, common language, food and recreation. *Implementation: Local Superior and Members*
- ❖ Facilitate clarity of roles and responsibilities for every member of the community and monitor the effectiveness. *Implementation: Provincial Administration & Local Superior.*
- ❖ Strengthen LGBs and establish three-member communities wherever possible. *Implementation: Provincial Administration & Local Superior.*
- ❖ Active animation and leadership by Provincial Councilors in their respective secretariats following the new governance. *Implementation: Provincial Administration.*
- ❖ Limit the term of office of the local superior to two terms wherever possible. *Implementation: Provincial Administration.*
- ❖ Submit in six months the final draft of the Province Statutes passed by the Congress to Rev. Fr. Superior General for his approval. *Implementation: Drafting Committee and Provincial Administration.*



NEW PROVINCIAL CURIA OF NAGPUR PROVINCE

Nagpur Province has successfully conducted their Provincial Chapter and elected the following conferes to the Provincial Curia:

Fr. Benedict DeSouza (PCIC for Formation and Admonitor)

Fr. Lajarus Soreng (PCIC for SAIM)

Fr. Domy Vallomkunnel (PCIC for Mission)

Fr. Ignathi Kshirsagar (PCIC for Education)

Fr. Selbestar Xalxo (Provincial Bursar)

Hearty Congratulations!

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

I request the Superiors of Communities to kindly hold community meetings once a month and send the minutes of these meetings to the office of the Provincial.

COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN EAST AFRICA

A second wave of Coronavirus is fast spreading all over East Africa particularly in Tanzania. As there is no lockdown or other restrictions, it is our responsibility to protect ourselves and those who are entrusted to our care. Please make sure that in our schools and parishes, proper measures are taken to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

Fr. Johnson Pathiyil has successfully completed his doctoral studies in Salesian Spirituality from the University of Angelicum in Rome. His doctoral thesis was on “St. Francis de Sales and New Evangelization: Witness through Devotion and Practice of Virtues in the Introduction to the Devout Life”. Hearty Congratulations!

Fr. Sebastian Palakudiyil has written and published a book on **Malezi katika Familia** (Formation in the Family). It is a book based on Family Apostolate. Hearty Congratulations!



HOSTEL AT KAGONGWA SCHOOL

SFS English Medium Primary School at Kagongwa made a milestone in its history with the completion of hostels for both boys and girls. Our beloved Superior General Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil laid the foundation stone on March 10, 2020 for the construction of hostels at Kagongwa. The hostels were inaugurated and blessed by Rev. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel, Provincial of East Africa, on February 01, 2021.



The hostel facilities include rooms for matrons, infirmary, box rooms, toilets and bathrooms. The hostels can accommodate over 180 students. We thank Living Waters International and the Provincial administration for the support offered up to the completion of the whole project. Special thanks to Fr. Sijo John who coordinated the construction.

Reported by Fr. Lawrence Ssebowa MSFS

DEPARTURE FROM THE CONGREGATION

Kenneth Kamau and Louis Muyambi have left the Congregation for good. We wish them all the best for their future life.

HOLIDAYS

Fr. Thomas Njue:	December 20 – January 05
Fr. Charles Ouma:	January 04 – January 26
Fr. Wilson Packiam:	January 12 – February 12
Fr. Kurian Kollapallil:	January 28 – February 28
Fr. Jomet Kollapallil :	February 05 – March 04

OBITUARY

Mr. S. Packiam (73), father of Fr. Wilson Packiam, passed away on 29.12.2020.

Bro. Raphael Xalxo MSFS (85) of Nagpur Province, passed away on 04.01.2021.

Mrs. Baby Jose (73), mother of Sr. Priya CMC (LCI), passed away on 10.01.2021.

Fr. Alwyn Zothanzanga MSFS (38) of Southern African Region, passed away on 22.01.2021.

Mrs. Annymary Nambozi (41), sister of Bro. Fred (Kola), passed away on 09.02.2021.

May God grant them eternal life!

MY TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Date	Programme
17.02.2021	Bissil
18.02.2021	Mlolongo/Katani
19.02.2021	Ndagani
20.02.2021	Chera
21 – 25.02.2021	Uganda
02.03.2021	Kikunde
04.03.2021	Mji Mpya
05.03.2021	Mkuza
06 – 07.03.2021	Novitiate

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

Do everything calmly and peacefully. Do as much as you can and as well as you can. Strive to see God in all things without exception, and consent to His Will joyously. Do everything for God, uniting yourself to him in word and deed. Walk very simply with the Cross of the Lord and be at peace with yourself.