

	
Provincial Circular EAP – MT.31	Dec 22, 2021

My dear Confreres,

I wish you all a blessed Christmas and a grace-filled New Year 2022! May the peace and joy of Child Jesus echo in our ministry and life in the coming year!

The Mystery of Incarnation: A Call to Kenosis

Christmas is about the Incarnation of Jesus. Strip away the season’s hustle and bustle, Santa Claus, cribs, stars, trees, cakes, gifts and get-together, what remains is the story of a humble birth and a reality that is stunning — the Incarnation of the eternal Son of God. This incarnation, God himself assuming our lowly body and becoming human, is a glorious fact that is too often neglected or forgotten, amidst extravagances in the name of Christmas. The night of Christmas unfolds the mystery of the Creator becoming subject to his own creation – God becoming part of the vulnerable world of life and death, in this mortal and messy world of ours.



The kenotic view (from kenosis which is a Greek word meaning 'to empty') of Incarnation is portrayed in the Christological hymn: "...though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death..." (Philippians 2: 6–8). The New Testament does not use the actual noun kenosis but the verb form "kenoo" which means to empty out. The meaning of self-emptying is that Christ, who through all eternity is in the form of God, took another nature in the fullness of time. By becoming a human person, he gave up all the privileges of the divinity and Godhead. He not only emptied himself but also became a servant or a bonded slave. Jesus demonstrated the life of sacrificial Servanthood. He said that "the Son of Man came not be served but to serve" (Mt.20:28). The highest honour lies in humble service to others. In his masterpiece on the Trinity, St. Augustine says that the pride of man "can be confuted and healed through such great humility of God" shown in the Incarnation. Again, in the words of Karl Barth, "Jesus transformed worldly notions of power through his example of leadership (power) through the self-emptying love of a servant of others."

When we look at Jesus' life and ministry, we can distinguish three moments or dimensions of this kenosis: the kenosis of incarnation (identification and solidarity with human reality), the kenosis of way (being on the move, reaching out to all people, especially the most abandoned in the society), and the kenosis of the cross (faithfulness in assuming even the ultimate consequences of his mission however painful they are). Kenosis is the means by which Christ became part of the mission entrusted to him by God. The Kingdom that Jesus announced and inaugurated is founded on and maintained by the self-emptying love for all.

In Christian theology, kenosis is the concept of 'self-emptying' of one's own will and becoming entirely receptive to God and his divine will. Christmas becomes meaningful only when we imitate Christ who emptied himself to become a human being, who suffered and died for our redemption and who rose from the dead to give us eternal life. Religious life and Priesthood as a special way of discipleship "for the sake of the Kingdom" (Mt. 19:12) invite us to imitate the Master who emptied himself for the sake of humanity. A life of "kenosis" is to be the hallmark of our apostolates and relationships with others. Kenosis is an integral aspect of our mission, proof of its authenticity and the test of our discipleship and missionary commitment. A life of kenosis will help us to get rid of our understanding of ministerial priesthood as "royal priesthood, clericalism, searching for power and comfort zones" and "self-centred life & pride". The life of kenosis will help us to be humble servants to the people of God and enhance our missionary commitment as Religious and priests.



Self-emptying, therefore, is the essence of incarnation and it indicates the true nature of Jesus. Following this way of kenosis is definitely not an easy task, but it is the one that gives meaning to our life as Christians and disciples of Jesus. It is a call for greater intimacy and identification with the Lord, the ultimate goal of discipleship. "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and for the slave like the master." (Mt. 10: 24-25). Let the mystery of Incarnation help us to empty ourselves to become true disciples of Christ.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL CHAPTER

The celebration of the Extraordinary General Chapter 2022, announced to be held from February 01-07, 2022 at Fransalian Seminary, Pune, Maharashtra, will not take place as scheduled, due to uncertainties regarding international travel and gatherings in the wake of the new variant (Omicron) of COVID 19.

A NEW PROVINCIAL FOR THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE IN INDIA

Fr. Thomas Kalariparambil is appointed as the new Provincial of South West India Province. The Province of East Africa assures him prayers and support as he assumes the office on January 24, 2022. Hearty congratulations and best wishes!

GRATITUDE

The Province of East Africa expresses its deep gratitude to Fr. Benny Kootanal, the outgoing Provincial of South West India Province for his generous cooperation and support for our Province for the last six years. May God bless his future undertakings!

FORUM MEETINGS

The various Forum meetings of the Province were held between August and December, 2021. The following are the highlights from these Forum meetings:

The meeting of the **Superiors' Forum** was held on October 20, 2021. The members of the forum felt that it should be made obligatory for all Superiors to participate in the Forum. The Action-Plans of the General Chapter and of the Provincial Congress regarding Religious life and their implementation in our communities were discussed and evaluated. The forum once again emphasized the need to conduct monthly community meetings with an evaluation of religious and spiritual life of the community, evaluation of various apostolates of the community and the presentation of financial report of the community. It also felt that the community time table has to be followed by all the members of the respective communities strictly. It was felt that we need to follow meticulously the Province Statutes concerning religious and community life. The members of the forum were of the opinion that once the transfer is announced; there should not be any major undertaking or expenditure in the community until the new appointee takes over. Land at the disposal of the communities should be well utilized. Any new developmental plan of the community need to be discussed in LGB and a report of the LGB meeting has to be sent to the Provincial administration for the approval of the project. It was suggested that our confreres should participate in the programmes of the respective dioceses without fail.

The meeting of the **Formation Forum** was held on August 19, 2021. Fr. Agnelo Fernandes MSFS gave an input session based on Graded Formation. He emphasized the need for spiritual and human formation in our seminaries. The action plans on Formation of the General Chapter and the Provincial Congress were discussed and their implementation in our Formation houses were evaluated. Fransalian Formation should be based on the spirituality of our patron and founder. Our formation should emphasize on community life and mission. The forum felt that Vocation promotion has to be done diligently in all three East African countries. There was a suggestion to organize On-going Formation programmes for all priests.

The meeting of the **Mission Forum** was held on October 21, 2021. Reports from every Parish were presented. The forum members shared various activities in parishes particularly in the context of the Year of St. Joseph and the Year of Missions. There was a suggestion to implement PMP in all our parishes and to focus more on Family Apostolate. A lot of efforts have to be made for the renewal of faith as many people are under the influence of superstitious beliefs and practices. In many places, parish activities were suspended due to Covid pandemic. Pilgrimages and devotional practices have to be resumed as life is limping back to normalcy. The forum also suggested to raise funds from our parishes to support the Formation Programme of the Province. The Action plans on Mission of the General Chapter and Provincial Congress were discussed and their implementation in our parishes were evaluated.

The meeting of the **Education Forum** was held on September 17, 2021. A report from every educational institute was presented. The Action plans on education of the General Chapter and the Provincial Congress were discussed and their implementation in our schools were evaluated. The forum emphasized the need to focus on quality education. The Child protection policy has to be implemented strictly in all our schools. The forum also suggested to have an Education committee to evaluate the level of quality and the measures taken to assure quality in our schools.

The meeting of the **Social and Innovative Ministry Forum** was held on December 15, 2021. Reports from all the centres were presented. It was suggested that the centres should abide by the original plan and purpose of starting of the centre. SAIM faces various challenges at the Provincial level such as lack of adequately trained personnel and funds. The action plans on SAIM of the General Chapter and the Provincial Congress were discussed and their implementation in our centres were evaluated.

The meeting of the **Stewardship Forum** was held on December 16, 2021. Our Auditor gave an input session on book-keeping and present laws and regulations regarding accounting. He emphasized the need to keep documentary evidences of income and expenses. The members of the Forum were told about recent problems with revenue authorities due to our negligence and ignorance regarding proper book- keeping. All were cautioned to adhere to the new heads of accounts in book keeping. The action plans on Stewardship of the General Chapter and the Provincial Congress were discussed and their implementation in our communities were evaluated.

BUDGET FOR 2022

The budget presentation for the year 2022 was held on December 16, 2022. All our institutions and formation houses presented their budgets. Some communities and parishes also presented the budgets. However, a few communities and parishes did not present their budget. I request those communities and parishes to kindly send their budgets to the Provincial Bursar latest by December 30, 2021.

The Provincial council has approved the ordinary budget of every community/institute. The extraordinary budget is referred to LGB and respective committees for further study and consultation. Provincial Bursar will send a letter to all communities/institutes regarding the decisions of the Provincial Council.

NEW PRESBYTERY AT BOMBA MBILI

December 12, 2021 was a joyous day for the Faithful of Mji Mpya Parish and Our Lady of Holy Rosary Sub-Parish, Bomba Mbili as Bishop Stephano Musomba OSA, the Auxiliary Bishop of Dar es Salaam blessed the new presbytery of Bomba Mbili Sub-Parish. The Presbytery was built mostly with the contributions from the faithful of Bomba Mbili. We appreciate and congratulate our confreres and the faithful of Bomba Mbili for making tireless efforts to complete the presbytery and compound wall in a record time. May God bless all our benefactors and well-wishers who have contributed towards the construction of the presbytery!



FRIENDS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES



The annual general body meeting of Friends of St. Francis de Sales, an alumni association of former students of Aspirancy house at Lububu and SFS Junior Seminary, Kihonda, Morogoro, was held from November 25th to 27th, 2021 at Singida.

It was attended by 21 members of the Association including four priests. Fr. Zachariah Buroferro MSFS, the Rector of SFS Junior Seminary, gave an input session based on the Spirituality of St.

Francis de Sales. The meeting discussed various matters concerning the association and decided to contact former students of SFS junior seminary to enlarge the association so as to cover entire Tanzania. Fr. Pius Kochuprambil MSFS blessed the marriage of Mr. Peter Idelya, one of the former students of SFS Junior Seminary at Singida Cathedral on 27th November.

PRAY ALWAYS 2022

Pray Always is a booklet consisting of weekly and monthly intentions of the Province, birthdays of Confreres, their ordination anniversaries, obituary, monthly intentions of Pope and Superior General and few Fransalian prayers. I appreciate and thank Dn. Level Winner for preparing the booklet. Please use the booklet during the daily prayers.

BOOK ON FORMATION

A new book on Formation was published by Lumen Christi Institute. Hearty congratulations to editors of the book, Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil and Fr. Devasia Manalel for their initiative to bring out a new book on Formation.

HEARTY WELCOME

Mr. Peter Jirak, Director of Augustinium Secondary School, Graz, Austria and Ms. Isabelle Jonveaux from Caritas-Graz visited Kenya and Tanzania from November 2nd to 12th. They were visiting the volunteers from Austria who are serving in SFS Integrated School, Katani and SFS School, Bukene. Augustinium and Fransalian Hekima School are planning to take up ways of mutual collaboration and exchange programmes. We sincerely thank them for their visit to our communities.!

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The newly constituted Education Committee consists of the following confreres:

Fr. Sheejan Kallarackal (Chairman)
Fr. Gerald Mabriizi
Fr. Kenneth Maina
Fr. Ssebowa Lawrence
Fr. Ssethamu Ruthital

TRANSFERS AND APPOINTMENTS

Fr. Francis Kallikattu is appointed as the Superior of the MSFS Community, Chera and is designated to be appointed as the parish priest of St. Michael's Parish, Chera, Diocese of Meru, with effect from 14th December, 2021.

Fr. Michael Mwangi Mumbi is appointed to the MSFS Community, Chera, and is designated to be appointed as the assistant parish priest of St. Michael's Parish, Chera, Diocese of Meru, with effect from 4th January, 2022.

Fr. George Antony is temporarily appointed as a member of MSFS Community, Bissil, Diocese of Ngong, with effect from 15th December, 2021.

Fr. Simon Peter Nabende is appointed to the MSFS Community, Lukobe and is designated to be appointed as the assistant parish priest of St. Francis de Sales Parish, Lukobe, Diocese of Morogoro, with effect from 15th February, 2022.

DEPARTURE FROM THE CONGREGATION

Isaac Mangoye, a third year student at Lumen Christi Institute, has left the Congregation for good. We wish him all the best and prayers for his future life.

HOLIDAYS

Fr. Charles Ouma:	December 3 to January 3
Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil:	December 19 to February 6
Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil:	December 21 to January 23
Fr. Thomas Njue:	December 15 to January 10
Fr. Simon Nabende:	December 15 to February 15
Fr. C. Arockiasamy:	December 28 to March 30
Fr. Tomy Kattikanayil:	January 9 to 23
Fr. Wilson Packiam:	January 11 to February 11

OBITUARY

Fr. Augustine Olickal MSFS (80), of Visakhapatnam Province, passed away on 27.11.2021.

Bro. Michael Olickal MSFS (86), of Visakhapatnam Province, passed away on 12.12. 2021.

Mrs. Mary Kurian (87), mother of Fr. Joseph Kuzhupil (USA Vice-Province) and Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil (Guwahati Province), and the aunt of Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil (East Africa), passed away on 14.12.2021.

May God grant them eternal life!

MY TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Date	Programme
24. – 26. December	Kikunde Parish
29. December	Meeting of Regents, LCI
5. January	Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee, Kola
10. – 15. January	Classes in LCI

My dear confreres, once again wishing you all a blessed Christmas and a grace filled New Year 2022, I remain.



Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS,
Provincial - East Africa Province

Salesian Thought

In the Incarnation, He has made us see that which otherwise the human mind could hardly have imagined or understood, that is, that God was man and man God: the immortal, mortal, the one incapable of suffering, suffering.

