

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-eastfrica.com
 e-mail: provincialeastafricamsfs@gmail.com

Provincial Circular EAP – MT.40
Dec 24, 2022

My dear Confreres,

I wish you all a blessed Christmas and a peaceful year of 2023! May the honour that we give to the Babe of Bethlehem be that which we extend to one another! May we go often to the Bethlehem of our hearts and visit the One who offers us love, peace, hope and joy and may we in turn disseminate them to the entire world!

**GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,
AND ON EARTH PEACE TO PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL.**



As we celebrate Christmas this year, peace is the deepest yearning in the hearts of humanity. We are confronted with the aftermath of the war in Ukraine and violence in many parts of the world. The war has affected the entire humanity in one way or other. It is our earnest desire and prayer that peace reigns all over the world and that we gift each other peace, love, friendship, hope and joy which are more precious than any other gifts that

one can share. It is peace that Jesus shared with his disciples – a peace the world cannot give.

Jesus came to bring a more expansive and inclusive peace. His mission was to establish the shalom of God. This God of peace and justice calls each one of us to have ‘the feet of the messenger who announces peace and brings good news’ (Isaiah 52:7) and ‘guides our feet into the way of peace’ (Lk 1:78-79). May the familiar words of ‘Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with you’ resound in our Christmas giving and receiving.

We become instruments of peace when Christ is born within us. Thomas Merton speaks of a three-fold understanding of the Incarnation of Christ. First of all, Logos became incarnated in this world **ad homines**, that is, in order to redeem humankind. Merton notes that, the virgin Mary's role in the incarnation is central, since it was in and through her humanity that God chose to enter our world. Like Mary, we also need to be attuned to the inspirations of God to be instruments of salvation.

Secondly, the Logos incarnated in the world **in homines**, which means that, through grace, God takes up residence within a person. Merton comments: "Christ comes to us, really gives Himself to us, so that we already possess our heaven in hope." During this Christmas time, we are invited to create a sanctuary in our hearts for the Word of God; to grow in humility and make every effort to use our energies to do God's will.

Finally, the Logos will be incarnated in the world **contra homines**, that is, when he will return to earth to judge the living and the deceased. Christmas is an invitation to live the Kingdom values in our personal life so that we can attain eternal life.

In his work entitled **The Nativity Kerygma**, Merton states that the nativity of Jesus proclaims not only his initial historical presence but also his continued epiphany in the now moment. In each Christmas, Christ is born in new ways to be the Light and Life in believers' lives. Jesus' ardent desire is that his light shine in and through His followers' works of love for others. In this way, he is able to incarnate continually in the lives of multitudes of people. He further writes: The Child that lies in the manger, helpless and abandoned to the love of his creatures, dependent entirely upon them to be fed, clothed, and sustained, remains the Creator and Ruler of the universe. ... He wills to be helpless that we may take him into our care. He has embraced our poverty ... in order to give us his riches."

As we stand before the Christmas crib, let us promise to enhance the Kingdom values - love, peace, truth, justice and joy- in our lives and gift them to people who are around us. May the stillness and the peace of that first Christmas day be ours and may Christ's peace reign in our world.



400TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Death Anniversary: We commemorate the 400th death anniversary of St. Francis de Sales on December 28, 2022. On this day together with the Global Fransalian Family, let us come together as communities/apostolic communities for Holy Mass or for a prayer session in honour of St. Francis de Sales. Please follow the instructions of the Superior General with regards to the commemoration of the 400th death anniversary of St. Francis de Sales.

Monthly Programmes in the Schools: In order to honour St. Francis de Sales in our schools every month there will be programmes based on the life and teachings of St. Francis de Sales. The text for these programmes will be sent to you at the earliest.

Relics of St. Francis de Sales: Starting from 28th December 2022, we plan to begin the celebration of the veneration of the relics of St. Francis de Sales in every community, parish/substations and institute/school in East Africa with special prayers in honour of St. Francis de Sales in connection with the 400th death anniversary of St. Francis de Sales and the Year of St. Francis de Sales. The celebrations will be concluded on April 16, 2023 the Divine Mercy Sunday. The following is the timetable for veneration of the relics of St. Francis de Sales:

Uganda

Date	Community/Parish/School/Institute
28.12.2022 – 13.01.2023	Agururu
14.01.2023 – 31.01.2023	Iyolwa Parish & SFS School, Iyolwa
01.02.2023 – 22.02.2023	Osia Parish
23.02.2023 – 15.03.2023	Kalamira
16.03.2023 – 31.03.2023	Kalagala
01.04.2023 – 16.04.2023	SFS Seminary, Buwooya

Kenya

Date	Community/Parish/School/Institute
28.12.2022 – 14.01.2023	Bissil
15.01.2023 – 31.01.2023	Ndagani
01.02.2023 – 28.02.2023	Chera
01.03.2023 – 31.03.2023	Mlolongo
01.02.2023 – 16.04.2023	Katani

Tanzania

Date	Community/Parish/School/Institute
28.12.2022 – 04.01.2023	Bombambili
05.01.2023 – 10.01.2023	Mji Mpya
11.01.2023 – 15.01.2023	Mkuza
16.01.2023 – 20.01.2023	Novitiate
21.01.2023 – 25.01.2023	Kola, Kigurunyembe, Mkambrani
26.01.2023 – 27.01.2023	Junior Seminary, Kihonda
28.01.2023 – 31.01.2023	Lukobe
01.02.2023 – 06.02.2023	Dumila
07.02.2023 – 13.02.2023	Kikunde
14.02.2023 – 19.02.2023	Ibihwa
20.02.2023 – 23.02.2023	Ipuli
24.02.2023 – 27.02.2023	Kashishi
28.02.2023 – 03.03.2023	Mwakata, Isaka, Kagongwa
04.03.2023 – 08.03.2023	Lububu
09.03.2023 – 13.03.2023	Bukene
14.03.2023 – 20.03.2023	Ngurdoto
21.03.2023 – 27.03.2023	Maji ya Chai
28.03.2023 – 11.04.2023	LCI
12.04.2023 – 16.04.2023	Provincial House

DSM DIGITAL PLATFORM

DSM (De Sales and Mermier Resource and Animation Centre, Hyderabad) has created a new website (www.dsmhyderabad.com). The website provides ample resources on the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales, Father Mermier, MSFS, and Spirituality and Religious Life. Kindly make use of the website and share the same with those interested in SFS spirituality.

THE NEW PROVINCIAL CURIA OF DIBRUGARH PROVINCE

Fr. Tomson Aerathedathu (Provincial Superior)

Fr. James Pattarakalayil (Provincial Councillor & Admonitor)

Fr. Carlus Barowa (Provincial Councillor)

Fr. Varghese Paul Manickathan (Provincial Councillor)

Fr. Mhonchumo Philip Ovung (Provincial Councillor)

Fr. Peter Parankimalil (Provincial Bursar)

We wish them, all the best wishes and God's blessings for their new ministry.

UPCOMING PROGRAMMES IN THE PROVINCE

Date	Programme	Place
07.01.2023	Silver Jubilee of MSFS Presence in Kenya and Chera Parish	Chera
07.01.2023	Inauguration of Fransalian Pastoral Centre at Ndagani	Ndagani
24.01.2023	Blessing SFS Church, Iyolwa	Iyolwa
01.02.2023	Superiors Forum Meeting & Mission Forum Meeting	LCI
02.02.2023	Education Forum Meeting & Formation Forum Meeting	LCI

I request you to kindly participate in these upcoming programmes especially in the Forum meetings.



BUDGET PRESENTATION AND STEWARDSHIP FORUM MEETINGS

The presentation of annual budgets and the meeting of Stewardship forum took place on 14th and 15th of December 2022. The decision of the Provincial council with regards to the budget will be communicated to the respective communities by the Provincial Bursar at the earliest.

During the Stewardship Forum meeting, our auditor enlightened us on the new regulations of revenue authority and chart of accounts. He emphasized the need for a financial manual for the province. The forum also discussed the action plans of the Provincial Congress 2020, suggestions from General Curia and Provincial Curia and also the priorities of the province for the coming year and the urgent need to implement them in the communities/institutions for financial transparency. The forum also discussed creating an operating account in the schools to have better management of the finance. Provincial Bursar will send more details of the functioning of this account.

SAIM FORUM MEETING

SAIM forum meeting was held on December 15, 2022. The members of the forum explained about the social and innovative ministries in their respective communities and also shared the various challenges with regard to the SAIM apostolate. The forum discussed the action plan of the Provincial Congress 2020 and suggestions from the General Curia and Provincial Curia. The forum also discussed various means and ways to implant Fransalian Associates in our province.

BLESSING OF OLD AGE HOME AT ANGAMALY

December 03, 2022 was a joyous day for Fransalians as we blessed and opened the Old age home at Angamaly, India for priests and laity. The day was blessed with the gracious presence of Very Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil MSFS, our beloved Superior General, Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS, Provincial of East Africa, Fr. Iganci Muthu MSFS, Provincial of South East India, Mr. Reji Mathew, Municipal Chairman of Angamaly Municipality, several priests, sisters, neighbours and well-wishers.



Very Rev. Fr. Superior General opened and blessed the house and the Municipal Chairman unveiled the plaque. The solemn Holy Eucharist was presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Superior General. In his homily he emphasized the dignity of every human person especially the old and the sick. The architect, engineer and contractor were felicitated with mementoes. Fr. Thomas Olickal who supervised the work with total commitment and dedication was honoured and felicitated by Very Rev. Fr. Superior

General. We thank Fr. Olickal for his tireless effort to complete the work in a short time despite several challenges. Hearty Congratulations dear Fr. Thomas Olickal!

PARISH MISSION PREACHING AT LUKOBE

The first ever PMP session in the province was conducted at SFS Parish, Lukobe, Morogoro from December 15 to 21, 2022 after two months of preparation at the parish level. Fr. Zachariah Burofero, the Councillor in charge of Missions inaugurated the session on December 15. Fr. Innocent Ngowi, the coordinator of PMP in the Province and Fr. Sebastian Palakudy, the Director of the Family Apostolate were the main preachers. In the morning hours, the priests visited families in Small Christian Communities and in the evening, there was instructions and adoration of the blessed Sacrament. Hearty congratulations to the PMP team for the successful completion of first session of PMP. Hearty congratulations to Fr. Sunny Mattathil, the Parish Priest and Fr. Simon Nabende, the Assistant Parish Priest and the leaders of the parish for facilitating and preparing the people for PMP.



(Report by Fr. Sunny Mattathil MSFS)

ADVENT RETREAT AT KIKUNDE

St. Francis de sales Parish, Kikunde was indeed blessed as it welcomed Emeritus Archbishop Josephat Lebulu on December 10, 2022. He preached one week advent retreat for the parishioners. Throughout the week, he powerfully preached and gave a lot of insights on different themes such as our call to be human and Christians, the love of God, Christ the redeemer who



saves us from sin and fear of death, witchcraft and power of the evil, thanksgiving among others. He also beautifully preached about the role and place of Mary in the Church. Throughout the week, there were music and songs of praising, adoration and thanksgiving and many people including non-



Catholics flocked to the parish for healing, blessings and graces. Everyday special time was given to people who wished to receive guidance and counselling and many people received the sacrament of reconciliation. A number of people experienced and

testified the hand of God at work in their lives. The retreat ended with a thanksgiving Eucharistic celebration on December 18, 2022. It was a graceful week for the parishioners of Kikunde as they are eagerly waiting and preparing for the birth of the Messiah. We thank his Grace Archbishop Josephat Lebulu for preaching the retreat in Kikunde Parish.



(Report by Fr. Gonzega Lubega)

APPOINTMENT

Fr. Ssentamu Ruthitical is appointed as the Vocation Promoter of the Province as well as coordinator of vocation promotion in Uganda with effect from 01.01.2023.

DEPARTURE FROM THE CONGREGATION

Darius Orikiriza (Regent at Agururu) left the Congregation on his own. We wish him all the best in his future life!

HOLIDAYS

Fr. Kenneth Maina:	December 18 - January 03
Fr. Tomy Kattikanayil:	January 03 - 23
Fr. Siljo Auppadan:	January 05 - 30
Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil:	January 22 - 31
Fr. Reji Pendanathu:	January 27 - February 28
Fr. Sijo Pendanthu:	January 27 - February 28
Fr. Martin Pendanathu:	January 27 - February 28

OBITUARY

Ms. Faith Zizi (22), the niece of Bro. Collins Simiyu, passed away on 30.11.2022.

Fr. Noel Rebello MSFS (79) of Pune Province passed away on 02.12.2022.

May God grant them eternal life!

Once again wishing you all a blessed Christmas and a happy new year 2023, I remain.

Yours devotedly in Christ Jesus,

Father Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS,
Provincial - East Africa Province



Salesian Thought

Christmas is a mystery of love. The Word of God becomes one of us in order to save us...the child that is born for us has not come to rest and to relax, nor to have comforts whether spiritual or material – but to combat and to mortify and to die.