

# MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

## *Fransalians - Province of East Africa*

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Provincial Circular EAP - JP 1

July 20, 2023

My dear confreres,

Fraternal greetings to all of you!

Pope Francis has recently convoked a synod of bishops on “synodality” emphasizing our **communion** as Christians, ensuring the **participation** of all in the decision making process and thus helping us to fulfill our **mission** to evangelize in the world. As you know, the synod is due to take place in two sessions - October 4 to 29, 2023 and in October 2024. Every ‘synod’ is to be a journey of discernment rooted in the Holy Spirit. In the same way, every MSFS is called to make this journey together with his confreres and live this synodality in his daily life and activities. We are also called to live as a community our religious life in accordance with the charism proper to our congregation and reflect that charism in our apostolates. Therefore, let us live as true Fransalians together in our communities and bear witness to the abiding presence of God through our very lives!

### Thanks to Rev. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel, the outgoing Provincial



Fransalians in East Africa deeply appreciate and thank Rev. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS, who has just completed six years (2017 – 2023) as the Provincial superior. We thank Fr. Mathew for the dedication and love with which he animated the Province during the past six years through his exemplary religious life and through his able leadership. He put his heart and soul into his work and rendered his selfless service for the development of the province and her various ministries. He was able to bring about a lot of stability and growth as well as motivate the confreres and mobilize funds for the development of the missions. We thank him for his administrative skills and his vision for the entire Province. His deep trust in God, courage to make decisions and to implement them without fear or favour have led the province to new heights. As we express our gratitude, we wish him all the best in his future ministry at the service of the Province family.

## Installation of the new Provincial

Upon the sound accomplishment of his term of office and the tireless services of Rev. Dr Mathew Thazhathukunnel, Msfs to the Province as the provincial superior of East Africa for six years, Very Rev. Dr Abraham Vettuveilil, Msfs superior General appointed Rev. Dr James Panthalanickel Msfs, as the new Provincial superior of the



Province of East Africa.

On July 15, 2023, we witnessed his installation as the Provincial Superior. The event took place in St. Francis de Sales Junior Seminary, Kihonda Morogoro.

Rev. Fr.

Mathew Thazhathukunnel and Rev. Fr. James Panthalanickel, were welcomed with a band by the Scout team of the Junior Seminary. After receiving the welcome, the Fathers went in procession to the pavilion to vest for Mass. The procession began at 11:00 am and headed towards the Junior Seminary chapel where the Eucharistic Celebration and the installation ceremony took place. Rev. Dr. Burofero Zacharia, the Rector of St. Francis de Sales Junior Seminary, Kihonda, welcomed everyone who was present for the ceremony.

In his Homily, Fr. James emphasized the difference between secular leadership and Christian leadership. The most essential requirement for Christian leadership was the love of Christ as laid down in Jn 21.15-19. After his homily, Fr. Johnson Pathiyil Msfs, the MC invited Fr. Simon Nabende the Parish Priest of Lukobe to read the articles in the MSFS Constitution highlighting the qualities and functions of a Provincial. Fr. Richard, the Asst. Parish Priest of Dumila read the biography and CV of the Provincial elect. Rev. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel read the appointment letter from the Superior General. Then, he invited Fr. James to make the profession of faith. After professing his faith he signed the document containing the formula of profession along with two witnesses, namely, Rev. Fr. Thomas Kochuparambil and Rev. Fr. Japhet Kirimi. Rev. Fr. Mathew read a prayer for the new provincial. Then, the MC invited representatives from various congregations present to felicitate the new Provincial Superior. With this event, Rev. Dr. James Panthalanickel assumed the office of the Major Superior of the Province of East Africa of the MSFS. The Mass continued as usual and during the

consecration Rev. Fr. Provincial, taking the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, invited all to remember the good works and developments that God has brought to the Province from its beginning to date through different personalities.

At the end of the Mass, Fr. Thomas Kochuparambil. representing all the confreres of East Africa Province, was invited to congratulate Rev. Fr. James, the new Provincial for accepting the new office and wished him all the best. Also Rev. Fr. Praveen the provincial superior of OCD was present and he thanked Fr. Mathew for the services and his love and friendship to him. Fr. Lawrence Sebowa thanked Rev. Fr. Mathew the former provincial for his tireless service and for different developments he brought to the Province. He also thanked all who organized the day's program.

The clergy and the religious were invited to the agape meal in the Provincial House and the others had their meal in the Junior Seminary. The event was witnessed by a number of Priests, Religious Men and women and lay faithful. The event came to an end at 3:00pm.

*Reported by Bro. Godwin Nanalo Msfs*

I express my sincere gratitude to Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel, Provincial Curia, Provincial House Community, the entire Junior Seminary and the Fransalian House Community in Kola for contributing their time and energy in organizing the event extremely well. I thank all those who came from near and far to witness the ceremony. Your presence was very encouraging. Thank you for your support and prayers!

### **Convocation of the 10<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Provincial Congress**

In consultation with the Superior General (Con. 228) and the Provincial Council (GD 261), I convoke the 10th Ordinary Provincial Congress of East Africa Province, to be held at St. Carolus Retreat Centre, Tengeru, Arusha from September 02 to September 06, 2023. The theme of the Congress is:

#### ***Walking Together as Fransalian Missionaries***

#### ***to Live our Charism in East Africa Today***

While approving the theme of the Congress, the Superior General wrote the following: *"The theme gives a thrust to the charism of the Congregation with a special focus on synodality in the synodal year, the community spirit, and the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in the context of East Africa Province."* Provincial Congress is an extraordinary time of grace and blessing for each one of us. Let us make adequate preparations for the Provincial Congress so that it turns out to be a spiritual event for the growth of our mission and for the personal growth of each one of us.

## Preparation for the Provincial Congress

The Superior General in the same letter insisted on preparing well for the Congress intensively stating that, *“The Provincial Congress ‘should be so prepared that it becomes truly an occasion for a thorough evaluation, the discovery of greater inner strength, and a joint attempt to find ways and means to make the spiritual life and the mission of the Province more vibrant and effective’. ... The Provincial is to initiate adequate measures to involve all the members in the preparation so that it becomes a meaningful event... MSFS Const. 235).“*

## Steering Committee for the Provincial Congress

The following are the members of the steering committee duly constituted for the purpose of preparing for the Congress:

Fr. Johnson Pathiyil (Convenor),  
Fr. Richard Tamaro  
Fr. Kenneth Maina  
Fr. Martin Pandanath  
Fr. James Panthalanickel (Chairman)

The first meeting of the steering committee was held on July 17/07/2023 at 18.00 hrs at the Provincial House, Morogoro.

The convenor of the Steering Committee will organize the finalization of the Paper on the theme of the Congress.

Papers on Mission, Formation, Education and Innovative Ministries will be prepared by the respective provincial Councillors. The Paper on Stewardship will be prepared by the Provincial Bursar. In preparing these Papers, the councillors and the bursar will seek the assistance of other confreres as and when required.

The finalized Papers will be sent by the convenor of the Steering Committee to every confrere for study and reflection. After this, these Papers are studied together in the Apostolic Communities. After the study by the Apostolic Communities the reports are sent to the convenor of the Steering Committee who collates all the reports.

## Time Schedule for the Finalization of Papers

The Steering Committee is assigned the task of preparing the Working Paper on the theme of the Congress. Those members of the Steering Committee who are assigned the task of preparing the Paper will submit a draft of it to Fr. Johnson Pathiyil latest by July 25, 2023 so that he is able to get the Paper ready by July 30, 2023 to be dispatched to the individual confreres on July 31, 2023. This Paper has to be discussed together in the Apostolic communities.

The preliminary Papers prepared by the councillors should be submitted to the convenor of the Steering Committee and a copy of it sent to the Provincial latest by

July 30, 2023 so that it can be dispatched to the individual confreres on July 31, 2023, the following day. These Papers have to be discussed together in the Apostolic communities. There are only two weeks at hand for the Apostolic Community to arrange the meetings and study the Papers (both the Paper on the theme and the Papers on various apostolates). The convenor of the Apostolic communities will have to send the report together with the feedbacks to the convenor of the Steering Committee latest by 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2023. A copy each of the Papers is to be sent to the Provincial as well. The Convenor dispatches the Papers on the apostolates together with the feedbacks (on August 15, 2023) to the respective councillors/bursar who finalize the Papers. The councillors/bursars send the finalized Paper to the convenor of the Steering Committee latest by August 24, 2023. The Paper on the theme is finalized by the convenor of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will meet again on August 28, 2023.

### **Prayer in Preparation for Provincial Congress**

Since we are saying a prayer in preparation for the General Chapter 2025, I request you to use the same prayer and add the intention of the success of the Provincial Congress 2023. Wherever in the prayer **XXI<sup>st</sup> General Chapter** occurs please add **and the X<sup>th</sup> Provincial Congress of East Africa**. Please start praying for the Provincial Congress starting from 21/07/2023.

### **Visitation of Communities**

I would like to visit every confrere and community in the coming days prior to the Provincial Congress. I have made a schedule for visiting the confreres in Kenya and Uganda. You will find the schedule here below. Please make yourself available. I hope to visit the confreres in Tanzania in the month of August, 2023. For my visitation in Tanzania, I will send you a separate schedule, as soon as it is ready.

### **Results of the First Ballot of the Election of Delegates to the General Chapter**

The results of the first ballot are already sent to you. A Second ballot is necessitated since nobody has received an absolute majority in the first. As soon as you receive the link for the second ballot, please complete the e-voting process.

### **Ordination of Deacon Moses Okoth**

As you know, Deacon Moses Okoth MSFS will be ordained priest by his Lordship Christopher Kakooza, the bishop of Lugazi, Uganda on 29/07/2023 at 10.00 am in Lugazi Cathedral. Please keep him, his near and dear ones in your prayers.

## My Tentative Program

Date	Day	Programs
21/07/23	Friday	Travel to Bisil
22/07/23	Saturday	Blessing of the Hall in Bisil Visitation of Confreres in Bisil
23/07/23	Sunday	Visitation of Confreres in Katani Visitation of Confreres in Ndagani
24/07/23	Monday Morning	Visitation of Confreres in Chera
25/07/23	Tuesday	Travel to Osia
26/7/23	Wednesday	Visitation of Confreres in Osia Visitation of Confreres in Agururu
27/07/23	Thursday	Visitation of Confreres in Iyolwa Visitation of Confreres in Kalamira
28/7/23	Friday	Visitation of Confreres in Buwooya Meeting with the seminarians Visitation of confreres in Kalagala
29/07/23	Saturday	Ordination of Dn. Moses Okoth
30/07/23	Sunday	Return to Tanzania

## Conclusion

Dear friends, I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for placing your trust in me. Let us be united in serving the missions and the confreres of our province. May the compassionate mother of Jesus intercede for us so that we walk together as Fransalians and give bold witness to the love of God as St. Francis de Sales and Fr. Peter Mermier did.

United in prayers,

Father James Panthalanickel MSFS

Provincial - East Africa Province

“Salt and sugar are both excellent things,  
but too much of either spoils the dish.”