

MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

DIBRUGARH PROVINCE

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EMT/01 Circular – February 13, 2020

My dear Confreres,

Fraternal Greetings of Peace and Joy!

We thank God for the gift of our two new Provinces: Guwahati and Dibrugarh, especially in this 175th year of the arrival of the MSFS to India and the 45th year of our arrival to Northeast India. The establishment of the two new Provinces from the erstwhile Northeast India Province is a sign of our missionary dynamism and growth of our Congregation. We thank the General Administration, following the directives of the General Chapter 2019, for taking this bold step of establishing these new Provinces for the purpose of strengthening the religious commitment of the confreres, facilitating effective animation and administration, as well as consolidating and expanding the missionary activities in Northeast India.

Trusting in God and counting on the cooperation of all of you, I have humbly assumed the responsibility to be the 1st Provincial of the newly erected Dibrugarh Province, beginning on January 24, 2020. Although it was very hard for me to give consent to this appointment due to my personal human reasons, it is in obedience and with a deep sense of humility that I accept this holy office, because as a MSFS, I do realize that it is also my responsibility to be attentive to God who, guides me and the Congregation, and expects us to do His will at this particular juncture of our history. I would like to thank Rev. Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, the Superior General and his Council for their trust in me. I also thank all of you, the confreres of Dibrugarh Province for your confidence in me, to exercise this ministry of leadership in the new Province, in accordance with the Constitutions of our Congregation. I count solely on God for His guidance and strength, and on you my confreres, your generosity and cooperation. We shall strive together to seek His will and be instrumental in unfolding God's plan for us as a new Province.

We have reached so far because of you... Thank you for walking together...

An African Saying goes like this: "If you want to walk quickly, walk alone; but if you want to walk far, walk together." If we have come so far, – to the establishment of two Provinces from the erstwhile Northeast India Province – we had been walking together with many people: our superiors, pioneers, confreres, people for whom we are called to serve, collaborators, benefactors and well-wishers. At this historic moment of our Congregation, I remain deeply grateful to all the pioneering Fathers and Superiors. I gratefully remember all the former Provincials of our erstwhile Province: Late Fr. Jose Thenganakunnel of happy memory, Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhy, Fr. George Parambukattil, Fr. Francis Thadathil and now Fr. George Panthanmackel, who built up our Northeast India Province with the cooperation of all our confreres. Under their leadership, our confreres, especially our pioneering Fathers, have worked hard, and together we have reached to the present status of our Congregation in Northeast India. We also acknowledge the collaboration and support that we have experienced from our Southern African Region, Northeast India Delegation in Germany-Austria and our Confreres working/studying in Switzerland, Italy, England and United States of America. We have come so far, dear confreres, since we have 'walked together', and we thank you for your commitment as MSFS!

Thank you dear Fr. George Panthanmackel and your Teams!

For the last six years Fr. George Panthanmackel has served us as the Provincial Superior. In no few words can we express our gratitude for his leadership and service. He is known for his efficient animation and

administration, commitment and love for the Province, and a true Fransalian with qualities of both heart and head. When I think of him, I simply marvel at him as a spiritual person, an academician with vast knowledge, an accomplished teacher and a person who is very optimistic, compassionate and who sees only the positive strengths in all his confreres. His trust in God and trust in his confreres helped him to partner with many initiatives like St. Clement College Nagaon, Constant Lievens Academy of Health Sciences and Hospital (Medical College) Ranchi, etc., which gave our Province some regional and national level visibility. It is during his administration concrete steps were taken to initiate an administrative unit (Dibrugarh Region) to aid better animation and administration of the Province. Now the present Dibrugarh Province is happily having the same geographical territory of the erstwhile Dibrugarh Region. On behalf of the members of Dibrugarh Province, I convey our appreciation and sincere gratitude to you dear Fr. George and your teams (Councilors and Bursars) for your committed service in the ministry of leadership in the erstwhile Northeast India Province.



Congratulations to you dear Fr. Sabu Francis Manasrayil!



On behalf of all the confreres of Dibrugarh Province, I extend my heartiest Congratulations and prayerful wishes to Fr. Sabu Francis Manasrayil, the first Provincial of Guwahati Province, and all the confreres of Guwahati Province. I am really happy that Fr. Sabu, who is one of my batch mates, is appointed to this great and challenging task of leading the new Province of Guwahati. With his spiritual, social, intellectual and administrative qualities Fr. Sabu is a gift of God to the new Province. The birth of Guwahati and Dibrugarh Provinces from the erstwhile Northeast India Province is like the birth of twins. I, together with all the confreres of Dibrugarh Province assure you of our wholehearted cooperation and support for the development and growth of our twin Provinces. The coming years of fraternal communion and team work are crucial for both

the Provinces. Therefore we entrust ourselves into the Hands of God and we look forward to greater collaboration and support of each other that we may bear witness to our core identity as MSFS and be fruitful in the mission of the Lord/the Church in Northeast India.

The Ceremony of Installation & Gratitude

The Provincial Administration of erstwhile Northeast India Province, along with the Provincialate community Guwahati, arranged the installations of the first Provincial Superiors of both Guwahati and Dibrugarh Provinces on the 24th of January 2020 in an ambience of other meaningful celebrations such as the Feast of our Patron St Francis de Sales and the official inauguration of the new Provinces of Guwahati and Dibrugarh. I thank Most Rev. John Moolachira, the Archbishop of Guwahati, Most Rev. Thomas Menampambal, Archbishop Emeritus of Guwahati, Most Rev. James Thoppil, Bishop of Kohima, Most Rev. Theodore Mascarenes, Auxiliary Bishop of Ranchi for their gracious presence and prayers. I thank Rev. Fr. Jacob Karamakuzhiyil, MSFS General Councillor for Education and Delegate of Superior General, who has installed us as the new Provincials and who monitored the whole handing over ceremony from the previous Administration to the new Provincials. The presence of the members of the present and former Provincial Administrations, Pioneer MSFS confreres to Northeast, MSFS confreres, several Major Superiors, Priests, Religious, Lay People was a great source of encouragement for us to go ahead courageously and be at the service of the mission of the Lord. I express my gratitude to all, especially to the erstwhile Provincial Administration as well as the Provincialate community, who did all the arrangements for an inspiring installation ceremony of the new Provincials and made the event a memorable one.

Convocation of the 1st Ordinary Provincial Congress of Dibrugarh Province 2020

In accordance with the Constitutions of the Congregation (*Con. 234ff and GD. 261ff*), with the prior approval of the Superior General, Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil (SG-AB2 20-19), and with the consent of the Provincial Council (given to me by the Superior General), I am glad to convoke the **1st Ordinary Provincial Congress of the MSFS Dibrugarh Province**, which is to be held at **MSFS Provincial House, SFS Campus, Silapathar, Assam** from **April 14 (at 09.00 a.m.) to 17 (at 04.00 p.m.), 2020**. The theme of the Provincial Congress is: **“MSFS Dibrugarh Province: Rooted and Formed in Charism, Committed to Mission”**. All the members of MSFS Dibrugarh Province with active voice are convoked to take part in the Congress (*Cf. GD 277*). If anyone is unable to take part in the Provincial Congress due to unavoidable circumstances, except those who are abroad, kindly take permission for absence from the Provincial at the earliest, latest by the 29th of February, 2020.

Constitution of a Steering Committee

After having consulted with the confreres of Dibrugarh Province personally and the Provincial Council given to me by the Superior General, I have also constituted a Steering Committee for the preparation and organisation of the Provincial Congress 2020. The members are the following:

1) Fr. Jose Karipadathu (Convenor), 2) Fr. Philip Mhonchumo, 3) Fr. Vintu Augustine Avittapallil, 4) Fr. George Vadakkepericherimannil, 5) Fr. Varghese Paul Manickathan, 6) Fr. Carlus Barowa and 7) Fr. Sunny Panthanazhivadakkethil

Preparation for the Provincial Congress 2020

The Steering Committee had a meeting on 28th January and they have already done a commendable job by coming out with various plans for the effective conduct of the Provincial Congress. In order to facilitate a better involvement of the confreres of the whole Province in the preparation of the Congress (*Con. 235*), it has also drawn up a few questions (core issues) to be studied upon by all the members, especially in their respective Apostolic Communities. In the Provincial Congress we need to approve and adopt the new Province Statutes (Art 242) of Dibrugarh Province, which is a customized version of our existing Province Statutes of erstwhile NEI Province. Please go through the draft of the Provincial Statutes and give your valuable observations, suggestions as well as propose additions/deletions, which only be taken up for the further discussion in the Congress. The Steering Committee will contact you with all the details for an effective preparation individually and as a community at different levels. The Conveners of the Apostolic Communities in the Province are to hold the meeting before the 24th February 2020 and to send their reports to the Convener of the Steering Committee Fr. Jose Karipadathu (jokari654321@gmail.com), latest by the 29th of February, 2020. Those members, who have no access to any Community or Apostolic Community Meetings due to their present situation, may study the matter individually and send in their reports personally to the Convener (jokari654321@gmail.com). Your reports and suggestions will facilitate fruitful discussions during the Provincial Congress.

Logo of the 1st Ordinary Provincial Congress 2020, Dibrugarh Province



Prayer in Preparation for the 1st Ordinary Provincial Congress 2020
MSFS Dibrugarh Province
(14 – 17 April, 2020)

Loving and merciful God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we thank you and praise you for your infinite and gracious love, through which you have called us to be your missionaries in the Congregation of the MSFS and now to be the members of the newly established Dibrugarh Province.

Jesus, you are our Savior, Master and Guide. As we prepare ourselves for our forthcoming Provincial Congress with the theme: "MSFS Dibrugarh Province: Rooted and Formed in Charism, Committed to Mission", we seek your blessings. Fill us with the spirit of our Founder and Patron, that following in their footsteps, remaining rooted in our charism, we may recommit ourselves to it in our daily lives and apostolates, and thus remain committed to our Mission as true MSFS.

Holy Spirit Lord, fill us with your spirit, that we may discern your plan for our Province and strengthen us to be committed, creative, effective and innovative missionaries by being 'gentle' as St. Francis de Sales, and 'zealous' as Fr. Peter Mermier.

We make this prayer through the intercession of our Patrons, St. Francis de Sales and Mother of Compassion, and through the prayers of your Servant Fr. Peter Mermier, our holy Founder. We surrender ourselves to your Holy Will, through Christ our Lord. Amen

Mary, Mother of Compassion - Pray for us!

St. Francis De Sales - Pray for us!

Servant of God Fr. Peter Mary Mermier - Intercede for us!

I humbly request all the Superiors of the Communities to make available a copy of this prayer for everyone in the community and pray this prayer daily at some time of the community prayers in the Province. In the course of time I shall make available a prayer card with both this prayer and the prayer in preparation for the Extraordinary General Chapter 2021.

Special Invitees for the Provincial Congress:

Rev. Fr. Jacob Karamakuzhiyil, General Councillor and Delegate of Superior General

Rev. Fr. Sabu Francis Manasrayil, Provincial of Guwahati Province

Rev. Fr. Chinnappa Reddy, Provincial of Visakhapatnam Province

Rev. Fr. John Britto Muthuswamy, Provincial of Nagpur Province

Rev. Fr. Benny Koottanal, Provincial of South West India Province

Rev. Fr. Jayaseelan Selvaraj, Provincial of Pune Province

Rev. Fr. Ignaci Muthu, Provincial of South East India Province

Rev. Fr. Tomson Aerathedathu, Provincial of Brazil Province and Member of the Province

Rev. Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhy, Former Provincial of erstwhile Northeast India Province

Rev. Fr. George Parampukattil, Former Provincial of NEIP and Rector SFS Seminary, Medziphema

Rev. Fr. Francis Thadathil, Former Provincial of erstwhile Northeast India Province

Rev. Fr. George Panthanmackal, Former Provincial of erstwhile Northeast India Province

Rev. Fr. Philip Thomas, Former Provincial Councillor of erstwhile NEIP and Rector of Suvidya College

Rev. Fr. George Vettukattil, Former Provincial Councillor of erstwhile NEIP

Rev. Fr. George Poovathunkal, Former Provincial Councillor of erstwhile NEIP

Rev. Fr. Saji Puthiyakulangara, Former Provincial Councillor of erstwhile NEIP & Director FAsCE India

Rev. Fr. Santhosh Chavarnal, Former Provincial Bursar of erstwhile NEIP

Rev. Fr. Baiju Mundackal, Regional Superior, Southern African Region of erstwhile NEIP
Rev. Fr. Sebastian Paredom, Delegation Superior of erstwhile NEIP GA
Rev. Fr. Athnas Kerketta, Rector, MSFS Study House, Shillong
Rev. Fr. Francis Poovelil, Novice Master, MSFS Novitiate, Chabua
Rev. Fr. Joseph Kannamangalath, Rector, Vinaya Bhavan Seminary, Thamarassery
Rev. Fr. John Barman, Director of Fransalian Youth Mission

Representatives of Scholastics for the Provincial Congress:

One Representative of Scholastics in Theology
One Representative of Scholastics in Philosophy & Regency

Celebration of the Gift of the new Dibrugarh Province

Respecting the request of many confreres for a public celebration of the gift of the new Province in its geographical area, the Steering Committee has suggested to have it on the final day of the Provincial Congress, the concluding mass as the Thanksgiving Mass for the gift of the new Dibrugarh Province with the Bishops of the Region, Major Superiors and Communities of our Religious Collaborators, and nearby Religious and Diocesan Authorities of Tezpur and Dibrugarh Dioceses. We are glad that almost all the Bishops of the region, in whose Dioceses we work, have already agreed to come for the mass on Congress days or for the final Thanksgiving Mass. Let us look forward to this spiritual event of the Province with adequate preparation and prayer.

CONGREGATIONAL MATTERS

Prayer Intention of the Superior General for the Month of March 2020

“That all our formees in the formation houses may nurture their God-given call to religious life in the missionary courage of Father Peter Mermier and the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales.”

Inter Secretariat Newsletter January 2020

On 22nd January 2020 I had forwarded to you all, the Inter Secretariat Newsletter, giving an overview of the works done and the plans ahead of the General Curia. Fr. Superior General, wishing all of us the Feast of our Patron St. Francis de Sales also exhorted us to live a life of holiness and inspired us to go forward by looking back to our roots and waking up to the basics of the MSFS way of life. We shall collaborate with the General Curia in their new initiatives to wake us up to the call of General Chapter 2019.

Convocation of the Extraordinary General Chapter 2021

Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvelil MSFS, our beloved Superior General, on the 24th of January 2020, on the Feast of our Patron St. Francis de Sales, has convoked the Extraordinary General Chapter of our Congregation 2021 to be held in MSFS Provincial House, Pune from 01-07 February, 2021, with the theme: “MSFS, Wake Up to the Basics” (continued) by his circular SG-AB2-03. The Provincial Office has already circulated this important circular to all of you and I invite you to have a reflective reading of the same, understanding the rationale of it and prepare for it by praying the formulated prayer sent to you along with the prayer card in preparation for our 1st Ordinary Provincial Congress 2020. This prayer shall be recited in every community until the end of the Extraordinary General Chapter 2021. I thank you dear confreres for your cooperation.

Year 2020 as the Year of Fransalian Associates

In the same circular our Superior General has also announced the YEAR 2020 (January 24, 2020 - January 24, 2021) as the YEAR of FFRANSALIAN ASSOCIATES (FA). He requests all the Provinces to organize the

formation program for the FA as well as the Province level conference during the year of the Fransalian Associates. As a new born Province, we need to start from the scratch with regard to this matter and I hope that our forthcoming Provincial Congress will give due attention to it.

175th Anniversary of the Arrival of the MSFS in India

As I mentioned in the introduction, the year 2020 marks the 175th year of the arrival of the first MSFS in India. The first missionaries were: Fr. Jacques Martin, Fr. Joseph Lavorel, Fr. Jean-Marie Tissot, Fr. Jean Thevernet, Brother Pierre Carton, and Brother Sulpice Fontanel. Now the General Administration proposes: to celebrate this arrival of the first MSFS in India as a milestone in the history of the Church as well as our Congregation by recognizing our missionary heritage; to acknowledge the outstanding missionary efforts and contributions of our six pioneering and daring missionaries, sent by Fr. Peter Mermier, to India; also to honour them by retelling their stories of missionary life to our present generation as recorded in history.

So our Superior General invites us to have Province level meaningful celebration of this historical event in all the Provinces on September 08, 2020 (or any convenient date close to this date). The General Administration also proposes to have the 175th anniversary celebration at the National/International level in Visakhapatnam, India on October 23– 24, 2020. They have also constituted a committee for the organisation of the same:

Rev. Fr. P. Chinnappa Reddy, the Provincial of Visakhapatnam (Convener)

Rev. Fr. John Britto Muthuswamy, the Provincial of Nagpur,

Rev. Fr. K. Ignaci Muthu, the Provincial of Southeast India, and

Rev. Fr. Johnson Kallidukil, General Secretary for Mission

The organizing committee will plan out this event in detail and will communicate the information in advance to us, for the worthy celebration of this historical event of our Congregation and the Church.

Global Media Centre

As per the Call of General Chapter 2019 (SAIM, no. 3), the General Administration has initiated the establishment of a Global Media Centre under the General Secretariat for SAIM to assist and enhance the Media and Communication ministries of individual Provinces and Mission Units. Accordingly efforts are made to set up a Film and Media Academy (De SIFMA: De Sales International Film & Media Academy) aimed at offering media-related courses in film making and allied visual media in Chennai, India. It will also address the needs of the Congregation in the media productions and also look into the possibility of designing and developing Management Software for various ministries. The General Administration is also requesting the support of all the Provinces for the initial investments so that the materialization of this Project could be a fitting souvenir of the 175th anniversary of the arrival of the MSFS in the Indian soil.

Provincial Congress 2020

- Rev. Fr. Ignaci Muthu, the Provincial of South East India Province has convoked the 5th Ordinary Provincial Congress from 9th to 12th March 2020 at Retreat Centre, Poondi with the theme: “Being rooted in the Basics of the MSFS, we witness Christ through our Apostolates and Ministries”.
- Rev. Fr. Sabu Francis, the Provincial of Guwahati Province has convoked the 1st Ordinary Provincial Congress from 30th March to 3rd April 2020 at MSFS Provincialate, Guwahati with the theme: “Kairos: An Acceptable Time to redefine and relive our Charism in our Missionary Context”.

We shall accompany them with our prayers, especially during the days of their Provincial Congress.

PROVINCE MATTERS

Annual Retreat 2020

Two retreats that are already arranged common for both Guwahati and Dibrugarh Provinces are:

- Retreat 01: from July 20th evening to 25th evening 2020 at MSFS Study House, Shillong
- Retreat 02: from October 22nd evening to 27th evening 2020, at MSFS Provincialate, Guwahati

I am also looking into the possibility of arranging the 2nd retreat at MSFS Provincial House, Silapathar in October 2020. I shall let you know the details, as soon as they are available. Meanwhile you can make up your mind for the annual retreat, which is mandatory and an essential part of our Fransalian way of life.

Vocation Promotion

At this time of the year let me remind you all of our bounden duty (Con. 131 & GD 103) and the necessity of promoting good vocations to our Congregation. "All of us are called to promote vocations through our prayer and by being witnesses of a genuine religious life lived in joy and in fidelity to the Lord according to the spirit of St. Francis de Sales" (Con. 131). Added to this witnessing Fransalian way of living, (which can inspire young men to opt for our way of life), genuine efforts are to be made at parish, regional and province levels in collaboration with the Coordinator (Fr. John Barman) and the Team of Vocation Promoters. I appeal to every confrere of the Province to exercise this bounden duty seriously, especially in the context of the division of our erstwhile NEI Province and the dwindling of the vocations to Priesthood and Religious Life.

At the suggestion of the Formation Forum, let me propose the following confreres as the Regional Vocation Promoters:

- Arunachal Pradesh: Fr. Stephen Pou;
- Manipur: Fr. Joseph Bamhingbe and Fr. Napoleon Mark;
- Nagaland: Fr. Kurian Pattimackel;
- Upper Assam: Fr. Milkus Tirkey

and to get into action with strategies proper to each respective area. I thank everyone for your genuine efforts, especially Fr. John Barman, our Coordinator and the Team of Vocation Promoters for their hard work and innovative ways of promoting vocations.

Information

- Fr. Varghese Chettupuzhakaren has taken his provisional residence in SFS Seminary Medziphema, Nagaland from 3rd February, 2020 till the forthcoming Provincial Congress 2020.
- Fr. Mathew Puthumana is attending an update programme in USM Indore, Madhya Pradesh from 5th February, 2020 till the forthcoming Provincial Congress 2020.
- Fr. Napoleon Mark is appointed to the MSFS Community, Basar, Arunachal Pradesh for a period of three months with effect from 7th February, 2020 in view of learning the local language and familiarizing himself with the pastoral situations of the people he is called to serve.

New Addresses and Email IDs of the new Provinces

Dibrugarh Province

Fr Emmanuel Mappilaparambil MSFS
(Provincial, MSFS Dibrugarh Province)
MSFS Provincial House

SFS Campus, Likabali Road
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Email ID of Provincial: provincialdibrugarhmsfs@gmail.com

Mob No: +91 7086046455/+91 9436301324

Email ID of Provincial Secretary: provincialsecretarydibrugarh@gmail.com

Email ID of Provincial Bursar: provincialbursardibrugarh@gmail.com

Guwahati Province

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Mob No: +91 87877 31785/+91 6366632076

Email ID of Provincial Secretary: provincialsecretaryguwahati@gmail.com

Email ID of Provincial Bursar: provincialbursarguwahati@gmail.com

My Tentative Programme

After having convoked and initiated the necessary preparations for our Provincial Congress, I would like to meet you dear confreres, as far as possible, at your respective ministry places, before the Provincial Congress, scheduled for 14th to 17th April, 2020. I shall personally contact you, dear confreres to chalk out my visitation programme to you.

Conclusion

At this time, my thoughts can be summarised in the following story:

A river wanted to flow to the sea, through a vast desert. But seeing the vast dry sand, it got afraid. Fearful thoughts crept into its mind: "The desert may gulp up all my water... the hot breath of the sun will surely dry me up... and I will be reduced to a mere stinking swamp!" Then it heard a mysterious voice, "Trust the Desert". But the river retorted, "But then, will I ever be the same? Will I not lose my identity?" The voice once again thundered, "There is no way to remain the same!" So the river, with trust in the desert, began to flow through it. The simmering heat of the sun turned her into vapor. The wind carried her over, as clouds, over the hot expanse of the desert. She was formed into rain! And out of the clouds, came down a newer, fresher and much more splendid river, on the other side of the desert.

I wish that all of us trust in God immensely and make the radical decision to pass through the desert, taking that risk of losing many of the 'things' we hold precious to ourselves and thus experience the newness in life, and experience true joy in the Lord, so that we can commit ourselves entirely in the service of God and God's people.

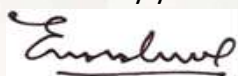
The exhortation of our Patron St. Francis de Sales is very encouraging for us: *"Go courageously to do whatever you are called to do. If you have fears, say to your soul: 'The Lord will provide for us'. If your weakness troubles you, cast yourselves on God, and trust in him. The apostles were mostly unlearned*

fishermen, but God gave them learning enough for the work they had to do. Trust in him, depend on his providence; fear nothing” (St. Francis de Sales).

Let us also go forward courageously as we embark on this new journey. As members of the new Province, I count on each of you to join me to make this journey for the greater glory of God and the people whom we are blessed to serve. May God bless all of us! Live Jesus!

Thanking you all and wishing every one of you a grace-filled and fruitful Season of Lent,

Fraternally yours in the Lord,



Fr Emmanuel Mappilaparambil MSFS
(Provincial, MSFS Dibrugarh Province)

TREADING THE PATH OF OUR PATRON SFS...

Where there is less of our will there is more of God's will. Simple and absolute acceptance of God's will renders the suffering extremely pure

(IDL, Part III, Ch. 16)