

# MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

## DIBRUGARH PROVINCE

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### My dear Confreres,

I wish you all a blessings-filled Christmas and a grace-filled New Year 2021! We are celebrating Christmas at a time when the whole world continues to be held under the spell of the Covid-19 pandemic. Its social, economic and religious impact on the whole world and mankind, is beyond description. Even after ten months or more, we do not have any concrete solutions and antidote to arrest the spread of this pandemic. Now, there is even the threat of a new variant of the deadly virus with greater increase of transmission. It is in this context of crisis that we reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.



Christmas is a feast of joyful hope, for God has become one with us in the person of his Son, true God and true man. He showed his love for us by becoming part of our world, with all its conflicts, its suffering and its poverty. Jesus is truly Emmanuel: God with us. This is the great “gift” which He brings: a divine love which heals and transforms our hearts, overcoming all uncertainty and pessimism. Our joyful contemplation of the mystery of Christmas should make us realize that, as God has become one of us, we too are called to become like God: humble, close to others, especially to the poor, and ever attentive to their needs. In the *Urbi et Orbi* Blessing and prayer service on March 27, 2020 in a deserted St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis noted that the coronavirus “has exposed our vulnerability and uncovered those false and superfluous certainties” and “uncovered once more “our belonging to one another as brothers and sisters”. This is also stressed in *Fratelli tutti*, his Encyclical devoted to the theme of fraternity and social friendship (see, FT 32). This Christmas, let us ask Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, to help us see in our neighbour the face of Jesus, God made man. May we be in this world a ray of that light which shone forth from Bethlehem, bringing the joy and peace to the hearts of all men and women!

### The First Ordinary Provincial Congress of Dibrugarh Province 2020

The First Ordinary Provincial Congress of the MSFS Dibrugarh Province, took place from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 at *Christashram* (Diocesan Pastoral Centre), Dibrugarh, Assam, with the theme “**MSFS Dibrugarh Province: Rooted and Formed in Charism, Committed to Mission**”. The orientations of the Provincial Congress reminded us that united as a family in Triune God and rooted in the Charism of our Founder, we are called to live as community of brothers and Missionaries of Christ. In all, 62 confreres (54 Members of the Province, 1 Delegate of the Superior General, 7 Special Invitees)



participated in the historic spiritual event of the newly established Province despite the fears of Covid-19. May God be praised for all His blessings!

## **Sincere Gratitude**

At this juncture, we raise our hearts and minds to God in gratitude for the successful completion of our Provincial Congress, also through the instrumentality of a number of persons. We are grateful to our beloved Superior General, Very Reverend Fr Abraham Vettuvilil for his constant guidance and encouragement to the newly established Dibrugarh Province. We thank him for sending his Delegate Rev. Fr. Jacob Karamakuzhyil, General Councillor and General Secretary for Education, who animated us with an inspiring recollection talk and monitored the handing over of the charge by the Provincial Councillors and Bursar of the erstwhile Northeast India Province to the newly elected Provincial Councillors and Bursar of Dibrugarh Province. We are grateful to Fr. Jacob also for animating the new Provincial Curia of Dibrugarh Province.

A special word of thanks to our Superior General, for sending his message to the Provincial Congress, giving us the needed orientation and exhorting us to renew our call to be missionaries with the specific Charism of our Congregation and keep it at the centre of our Provincial Congress and the decisions we make. He reminded us that any decision to be grounded and formed in the Charism of our Founder called us to stay focused on the spirit and vision of the Founder in founding our Congregation. And he further enunciated that living a Community Life, being a missionary with availability to be sent to any mission of the Congregation, and living the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales are the essential components of MSFS Charism. He also wished that we elected a strong leadership that could establish an appropriate structure in the Province that could present the Charism of the Congregation to the Local Church and motivate confreres to live it in our communities.

We are also grateful to our Assistant General, Provincials, Vice-Provincial and Former Provincials, who sent us their inspiring and encouraging messages for our Provincial Congress as well as assured us of their prayer support for this great historic spiritual event of our new Province. In a special way we thank Rev. Fr. Sabu Francis Mansrayil, the first Provincial of Guwahati Province for his valuable presence in our Provincial Congress and his assurance of greater mutual collaboration and support that we might bear witness to our MSFS Charism and missionary commitment in Northeast India. Most Reverend Albert Hemrom, the Coadjutor Bishop of Dibrugarh Diocese, presided over the Inaugural Mass of the Provincial Congress. In his homily, Bishop Albert appreciated the missionary zeal of the MSFS and exhorted everyone to follow the path of Fr. Peter Mary Mermier and St. Francis de Sales in being committed to the missionary Charism entrusted to MSFS Congregation. We place on record our gratitude to Bishop Albert for his valuable appreciation and incisive exhortation.

During the Inaugural Session, Fr. Tomson Aerathedathu, the former Provincial of MSFS Brazil Province, delivered the Keynote Address on our Congress theme: "MSFS Dibrugarh Province: Rooted and Formed in Charism, Committed to Mission". We are grateful to Fr. Tomson for his readiness to share his thoughts on the theme and setting a tone for discussions and deliberations of the Congress. We were assisted to reflect further through the presentation of many Position Papers by the members of the erstwhile Provincial Curia of Northeast India Province. We the members of Dibrugarh Province express our appreciation and sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. George Panthamackel and his team - Fr. Philip Kizhakkumpurath, Fr. George Vettukattil, Fr. George Poovathunkal, Fr. Saji Puthiyakulangara and Fr. Santhosh Chavaranal - for their committed service in the ministry of leadership in the erstwhile Northeast India Province and presenting Position Papers on their respective Forums and facilitating



our Congress in responsible discussions, deliberations and spirit-inspired discernments, which would define the very destiny of our new Province.

I place on record my gratefulness to Fr. Kurian Pattimackel, Fr. Augustine Thundathil, Fr. Philip Mhonchumo and Fr. Peter Parankimalil for assisting me as Regional Councillors and Bursar for three years, and for 10 months, as Provincial Councillors and Bursar, for the animation and administration of the Region as well as the Province. We thank them for their committed service in their ministry of leadership in the Region and in the Province. At this historic moment of our Province, we also gratefully remember all the former Provincials of the erstwhile Northeast India Province: Late Fr. Jose Thengnakunnel of happy memory, Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhy, Fr. George Parampukattil, Fr. Francis Thadathil and Fr. George Panthanmackel, who were the very architects of our Northeast India Province. We are grateful to all the Rectors and Novice Master of our common Formation Houses and Fr. John Barman, the Director of Fransalian Youth Mission in the erstwhile Northeast India Province for their presence and their lively interventions in the Congress, especially in their respective fields.

Being the first Provincial Congress, we also spent qualitative time for discussing and deliberating on many administrative as well as specific concerns. The consensus reached on many issues was a sign of mature deliberation and responsible discernment. Finally, the Congress drew up the Vision Statement and an Action Plan for the Province for next three years. We thank Fr. Vipin Edakazhickal, Fr. Rojin P and Fr. Antony Baruah the Secretaries of the Provincial Congress; Fr. Vintu Augustine Avittapallil and Fr. James Pattarakalayil, the members of the Final Statement Committee; Fr. Tomson Aerathedathu and Fr. Carlus Barowa, the members of the Action Plan Committee; Fr. Napoleon Mark and Bro. James Kachiipoumai, the Tellers of the Congress, for their generosity and service to the Congress. We remain grateful to *Christashram* Community – Director, Fr. Timothy Saldahna and the staff for the venue offered, and all the arrangements made for the food and accommodation of the participants of this Provincial Congress.



**Participants of the Provincial Congress 2020**

If the Provincial Congress had come to a successful conclusion, it is also due to the Steering Committee, which played a valuable role through its meticulous planning and efficient execution. We express our heartfelt gratitude to the members of the Steering Committee: Fr. Jose Karipadathu (Convenor), Fr. Philip Mhonchumo, Fr. Vintu Augustine Avittapallil, Fr. George Vadakkeperincherimannil, Fr. Varghese Paul Manickathan, Fr. Carlus Barowa and Fr. Sunny Panthanazhivadakkethil - for their hard work and dedication. Hearty congratulations and sincere appreciation to you dear confreres for the successful conduct of the Provincial Congress!



And finally, to you dear members of the Province and the participants of the Provincial Congress, I thank you very sincerely for your preparation, prayer, presence and participation at this historic spiritual event. I am grateful to you for setting aside all the works in your centres and taking the trouble to travel long distances in this challenging time of Covid-19 pandemic and making yourselves free for our Provincial Congress. Together, we have engaged in common prayer, reflection, and discussion. We have also made our discerned deliberations for taking the Province to greater heights more through our committed lives and faithful ministry. Now it is our time of action! And together, trusting in God, we shall continue the walk to that path we have commonly chosen.

I am grateful to you also for giving me a very good team of Councillors and Bursar: Fr. Tomson Aerathedathu, Fr. George Vadakeperincherimannil, Fr. Joseph Bamhingbe, Fr. Milkus Turkey (Councillors) and Fr. Peter Parankimalil (Bursar). I hope that with their rich experience in ministry and their dynamism, the Provincial Administration would lead the new Province to new levels of growth. Let us continue to remain open to the Spirit of God so that we become agents for unfolding God's plan for our new Province.

### **Approval of the Acts of the Provincial Congress 2020 with Province Statutes**

I am happy to inform you that Rev. Fr. Superior General, with the consent of General Council, by his letter (SG-AB2 20-217) dated on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020, has approved the Acts of our Provincial Congress with the adopted Province Statutes. These should remain a road map for us to live our religious consecration and to engage in apostolates in the spirit of our Charism and MSFS Constitutions. I have already sent to you the orientations (Vision Statement and Action Plan) of our Provincial Congress for our faithful implementation.

### **Congratulations to the New Provincial Curia of Dibrugarh Province!**

Congratulations and prayerful best wishes to the new Provincial Curia of Dibrugarh Province:

- Fr Tomson Aerathedathu (Admonitor & Provincial Councillor for Formation)
- Fr Joseph Bamhingbe (Provincial Councillor for Mission)
- Fr George Vadakeperincherimannil (Provincial Councillor for Education)
- Fr Milkus Turkey (Provincial Councillor for of Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries)
- Fr Peter Parankimalil (Provincial Bursar)

We express our gratitude to them for saying 'Yes' to the new ministry of leadership in the Province and assuring them our support and cooperation, we invoke God's blessings on them.



## CONGREGATIONAL MATTERS

### Prayer Intention of the Superior General for January 2021

“God our Father, please send your Holy Spirit on the participants to the Extraordinary General Chapter, to guide them, to sustain them, and to help them to fulfil their task at the service of the Congregation”, we pray: R/ Lord graciously hear us

### Extraordinary General Chapter 2021 Rescheduled

With the approval and indult from the Congregation for the Institute of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life and with the consent of the General Council, Rev. Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, the Superior General, has rescheduled the Extraordinary General Chapter 2021, announced to be held from 01-07 February, 2021, to 01-07 February, 2022, due to Covid-19 pandemic. However, we are asked to continue to pray for the Extra Ordinary General Chapter with the same prayer given, but without the mention of the year.

### DSM Spiritual Insights: Next Webinar on 20 January 2021

Webinar Series, known as ‘DSM Spiritual Insights’ aim at to enlighten and educate ourselves on matters concerning our life as MSFS as well as to disseminate the Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales beyond the boundaries. It is organized by the DSM Resource and Animation Center Hyderabad in collaboration with the General Secretaries of Formation and SAIM. The next Webinar scheduled is on January 20, 2021, at 7.00 pm on the theme: “St Francis de Sales: A Saint So Human”. It will be available to you in the YouTube Channel: DSM MSFS. I exhort all of you to attend this talk in preparation for the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, our Patron, on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.

### New Provincial Curiae

The following Provinces have successfully conducted their Provincial Chapter/Congress and elected new Provincial Curia:

- **Pune Province**
  - ❖ Fr. Tony Prem Anand (Admonitor and PCIC for Formation)
  - ❖ Fr. Santow John (PCIC for Education)
  - ❖ Fr. Jerard Sahayaraj (PCIC for SAIM)
  - ❖ Fr. Juze Fernandes (PCIC for Mission)
  - ❖ Fr. Nelson A. (Provincial Bursar)
  
- **Guwahati Province**
  - ❖ Fr. Saji George Puthiyakulangara (Admonitor and PCIC for SAIM)
  - ❖ Fr. Roy Parayaniyil (PCIC for Mission)
  - ❖ Fr. George Poovathunkal (PCIC for Education)
  - ❖ Fr. Athnas Kerketta (PCIC for Formation)
  - ❖ Fr. Santhosh Chavaranal (Provincial Bursar)

We, the members of MSFS Dibrugarh Province, congratulate them and invoke God’s abundant blessings on them in their ministry of leadership in their respective Province!

## PROVINCE MATTERS

### Priestly Ordination of our Deacons

We are happy that we are blessed with four (4) Deacons to be ordained Priests in their respective home parish/dioceses. Please do attend their ordinations, wherever possible and accompany them with your prayers during this challenging time of Covid-19 pandemic.



- **29 December 2020:** Dn. Standfort Stephen Souba & Dn. Gaichungdai Anthony Kameih at St. Joseph Cathedral Imphal, Manipur
- **06 January 2021:** Dn. Jimal Johny Painapally at Christ the King Church, Muthukad, Kerala
- **16 January 2021:** Dn. Andreas Syngkli at Mary Help of Christians Cathedral, Shillong, Meghalaya

## Inauguration and Blessing of Village Churches under Sacred Heart Parish, Likabali



On 29 November 2020 two newly constructed village churches were inaugurated and blessed under the Sacred Heart Parish Likabali. Most Rev. John Thomas, the Bishop of Itanagar blessed both the village churches, namely, at Nyijirkoche and Dipa Villages. Fr. Emmanuel Mappilaparambil, the Provincial of MSFS Dibrugarh Province inaugurated Nyijirkoche Church and thereafter Bishop blessed the Church and presided over the Holy Eucharist. It was followed by a fellowship meal with the faithful. Immediately after the programme at Nyijirkoche the Bishop and Fr. Provincial along with the other Fathers proceeded to

Dipa Village for the blessing. Fr. John Barman, the Director of Fransalian Youth Mission of Guwahati Province inaugurated the newly constructed village Church at Dipa after which the Bishop blessed the Church. Sacred Heart Parish Community Likabali is grateful to all the Benefactors whose contribution made it possible to construct these two new churches and thanks to Fr. Peter Parankimalil, the Provincial Bursar of Dibrugarh Province, who supervised the construction of these village churches. (Reported by Fr. Peter Peuhausiding)

## Covid-19 Relief: MSFS Pioneers' Survival Kit

MSFS Dibrugarh Province celebrated the Foundation Day of the Congregation and 175<sup>th</sup> Jubilee year of the arrival of the first MSFS Missionaries in India on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Our heroic pioneers had ventured into our motherland and survived all the odds of the time trusting in God with their limited resources. Following the footsteps of our holy Founder Fr. Peter Mermier and the six pioneering missionaries, our missionary endeavors have been always an expression of our option for the poor and the disadvantaged.



To mark the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of our pioneers in India, MSFS Dibrugarh Province conceived and implemented a project namely "COVID-19 RELIEF: MSFS PIONEERS' SURVIVAL KIT" in honour of our six pioneers. Hence the project aimed at reaching out to 60 families each in every Mission centre who are in distress, with a survival kit worth Rupees 600. The project was welcomed and implemented by all the confreres by distributing blankets, electric steamers and provision kits to the neediest and vulnerable of the society. The significance of the kit was explained to the beneficiaries at the time of distribution. The project reached out to a total number of **1435 families** who are the beneficiaries of the same.

All our confreres and our Fransalian Associates deserve laudable applause in implementing this project with missionary spirit and compassion. The Project was a mark of our union with the lives of our pioneers by upholding their missionary zeal and commitment to the poor and the disadvantaged. May God be praised for the great things done! (Reported by Fr Sunny Panthanazhivadakethil)

## Information/Requests from Provincial Bursar's Office

- The centers which have not given the Priest Welfare Fund and Health Care Fund of the previous years and of this financial year should do it latest by the end of January 2021. You may either transfer the amount to the Local Account of St. Francis de Sales Society (Silapathar) or give check in the name of St. Francis De Sales Society (Silapathar).
- The Half Yearly Internal Audit of our centers is going on as per the schedule announces to you. So please keep the bills, vouchers, receipts, registers and data ready for the same to avoid delay.
- Kind request to all the centers to submit a copy of the Annual General Audit report/ statement of the financial year 2019-2020 to the Provincial Bursar.
- Request all the communities to prepare the Annual Budget Proposal 2021-2022 in the FAST Software as usual and send the data at the earliest. The last date to submit the prepared budget proposal is 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021. (Since there is no other updating needed for the FAST Software from our side, you may kindly use the same software for preparation. However, you need to CHANGE THE FINANCIAL YEAR TO THE NEXT. If you need any assistance kindly call me or our accountants in Guwahati).

## Constitution of Land Committee for Provincial House

As a follow up to the Orientations of Provincial Congress 2020 (Action Plan, Varia, No.1), with the consent of the Provincial Council, I have constituted the following members as a Land Committee to look for a suitable and viable plot of land for establishing the Provincial House in Dibrugarh:

- Fr. Peter Parankimalil (Convenor)
- Fr. Mathew Puthumana
- Fr. Francis Poovelil
- Fr. Sunny Panthanazhivadakkethil
- Fr. Augustine Thundathil
- Fr. Milkus Tirkey

## Procurement of Necessary Identity Documents

In order to fulfil all the legal requirements for the administration of temporal goods in the Province, it is necessary that we have Adhaar Card and PAN Card (Permanent Account Number). So, I would like to request all the confreres, who do not possess these Identity Documents, to initiate the procurement of them as soon as possible. If you need any assistance or advice, please do not hesitate to contact Fr Peter Parankimalil, the Provincial Bursar.

## Obituary

- † **Fr. Jules Seppey** (86), belonging to MSFS Franco-Swiss Province, died on 10.11.2020.
- † **Mrs. Catharina** (86), the Mother of Fr. Jacob Mattathil, died on 15.11.2020.
- † **Mr. Epen Abraham**, the Maternal Uncle of Rev. Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, died on 23.11.2020.
- † **Mr. Thomas** (74), the eldest Brother-in-law of Fr Jacob Mattathil, died on 01.12.2020.
- † **Mr. Chandi Panakuzhiyil** (94) the Maternal Uncle of Fr Emmanuel Mappilaparambil and Fr Jose Mamalasseril, died on 16.12.2020



**May they rest in peace!**

## Pope Francis proclaims 'Year of St Joseph'

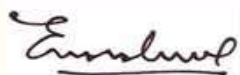
With the Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* (With a Father's Heart), Pope Francis recalls the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To mark the occasion, the Holy Father has proclaimed a 'Year of Saint Joseph' from 8 December 2020, to 8 December 2021. Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows. The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of 'ordinary' people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, "the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence", who nonetheless played "an incomparable role in the history of salvation."

## Tentative Schedule

Date	Programme
December 24, 2020	Sacred Heart Parish, Likabali
December 25	SFS Parish, Silapathar
December 27 - 28	Guwahati - Imphal
December 29	Ordination of Dn. Standfort Stephen Souba & Dn. Gaichungdai Anthony Kameih at St. Joseph Cathedral Imphal, Manipur
December 30 - 31	Guwahati - Silapathar
January 02 - 03, 2021	Guwahati - Thamarassery
January 06	Ordination of Dn. Jimal Johny Painapally at Christ the King Church, Muthukad, Kerala
January 09 - 10	Guwahati - Silapathar
January 16	Ordination of Dn. Andreas Syngkli at Mary Help of Christians Cathedral, Shillong, Meghalaya
January 17	Golden Jubilee of SFS Parish, Silapathar
January 18	Provincial Council Meeting
January 24	Feast of St. Francis de Sales

My dear confreres, once again I wish you all the joy and peace of Christmas and a grace-filled New Year 2021!

Fraternally yours in Christ Jesus,



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

