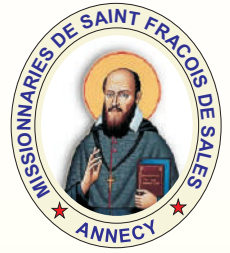


CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES



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SG-AB-12

MAY 1, 2016

SUPERIOR GENERAL TO ALL THE MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

My dear Confreres:

Fraternal greetings to each of you in this busy time of the Year!

'Make courageous and prophetic choices! Do not be afraid of getting your hands dirty and of walking the geographical and existential peripheries of mankind today' (Pope Francis) This is our call in the MSFS Year of Formation for Mission of Mercy and Compassion.

1. RIVER HAS FLOWED INTO SEA

The 'RIVER' of Consecrated Life (2015) has flowed into the 'SEA' of Mercy (2016) that we are experiencing in this Year of Mercy. Pope Francis reminds us that 'mercy is Jesus' most important message'. Jubilee Year of Mercy is a gift of grace for us to re-discover the infinite mercy of the Father who welcomes and who goes out to encounter each of us. "God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy" (Joy of the Gospel).

2. URBI ET ORBI

Pope Francis delivered the traditional *Urbi et Orbi* blessing on Easter Sunday 2016 and remembered the suffering people of Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen. He invites us not to forget those men and women (migrants and refugees including many children) fleeing from war, hunger, poverty, and social injustice, seeking a better future. I invite every confrere and every ministry to make efforts to listen and respond to human cry for mercy and compassion in the compassionate spirit of St. Francis de Sales.

3. AMORIS LAETITIA

In his ground-breaking new document, Pope Francis offers the vision of a pastoral and merciful church that encourages people to experience 'Joy of Love'. In this document we find:

- Traditional teachings on marriage are affirmed, but the Church should not burden people with unrealistic expectations.
- Pastors need to stop the judgmental attitude of 'sitting on a chair of Moses' and applying moral laws, as if they were 'stones to throw at person's life' (305).
- The goal of the Post-synodal document is to help families experience God's love and know that they are welcome members of the Church.

4. YEAR OF FORMATION FOR MISSION OF MERCY AND COMPASSION 2016

Let us remind ourselves that we can heal our/others' wounds only with kindness and compassion, not with judgment and condemnation. Jesus treated sinners with mercy and compassion, such as the woman caught in adultery (John 8: 1 -11). The sinner is actually one who does not love himself/herself (Teresa of Avila). We do not see and admire the whole self. We split and try to love the good self and reject the bad self. But Jesus told us to let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest lest we destroy the wheat by trying to pull up the weeds (Mt. 13: 24 – 30).

We need to embrace our shadow side (weed) that carries our sin and shame. We come to experience God's Mercy through our sin, shame, and hypocrisy. We will then be compassionate and merciful to others. *'Our misery is the throne of God's Mercy' (SFS).*

5. TMM 2015

Triennial Mandatory Meeting 2016 (TMM) is a mid term evaluation of the State of the Congregation after the General Chapter. All the members of the General Curia and Major Superiors in the Congregation gather in LCI, Arusha from May 14 – 18, 2016. We will re-visit the implementation of the Call of the General Chapter 2013 and review our response to the call of Pope Francis to wake up with prophetic ministries to the geographical and existential peripheries of the world.

Our theme for TMM is: **“MISSIONARY RESPONSE TO HUMAN CRY FOR COMPASSION AND MERCY”**

6. THRUST OF TMM 2016

We will review the current state of the Congregation based on the FOUR THRUSTS of the General Chapter: MISSION, COMMUNITY LIFE, MSFS-ness, and SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY. We will base our five-day study and reflection on:

- **The Foundational Charism of our Congregation**
 - o To live salesian spirituality
 - o Life in Local Community under the guidance of a Local Superior
 - o Commitment to our apostolate through the community

- **The Apostolic Charism of the Congregation**
 - o Renewal of Faith through Salesian spirituality
 - o Education of Youth
 - o Overseas Mission

7. REPORTS FROM MAJOR SUPERIORS AND GENERAL CURIA MEMBERS AT TMM 2016

All the Major Superiors and General Curia Members present a report on the FOUR THRUSTS of the General Chapter 2013 as lived in their respective Provinces and Secretariats. These reports of the Major Superiors will also reflect the shared thoughts of the confreres in the Province that will illustrate the following thrusts:

Focus on Mission

1. Initiatives taken in the Province for Pioneering and Frontier missions
2. Appointment for the new priests in the mission during the first three years as part of continued formation
3. Renewal and Spirituality Centre in the Province
4. Parish Mission Preaching: Team/s identified in the Province and how they function?
5. Share the impact of the Year of Consecrated Life and the Year of Mission: Initiatives undertaken in the Province

Focus on MSFS-ness

1. The awareness among the confreres regarding the **Profile of a MSFS: Core Identity of a Fransalian in Ministry** in various apostolates
2. What are the ways in which MSFS-ness is manifested in the lifestyle and ministry of the confreres?

Focus on Community & Religious Life

1. Efforts made to establish Local Communities: any confrere left out?
2. The manner of functioning and the quality of life in the Local Communities
3. Animation of the Local Communities by Major Superior and Local Superior

Focus on Salesian Spirituality

1. Share and evaluate the efforts made for the cause of Beatification of Servant of God Fr. Peter Mary Mermier
2. Share the efforts made to disseminate the Salesian Spirituality to the people (Friends of Fransalians)
3. How are the confreres prepared to grow in Salesian Spirituality?
4. Parish Mission-Preaching Team to be constituted
5. Share the impact of the Year of Consecrated Life for Mission/ Initiatives undertaken in the Province

8. SOUTHWEST INDIA PROVINCIAL CURIA

The Provincial Chapter of Southwest India Province, on the theme **“Forming Committed MSFS Rooted in Community Life for Prophetic ministries Today’** elected the following confreres:

Fr. R. Santhosh Kumar: Admonitor and PCIC of Formation),

Fr. A Jerome: PCIC of Mission,

Fr. Joy Vazhappillil: PCIC of Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries,

Fr. Roy Plathottathil: PCIC of Education, and

Fr. Vinod Kanattu: Provincial Bursar

9. NEW REGION NAMED 'DIBRUGARH REGION'

The first Regional Assembly, on the theme “Frontier Fransalians in Northeast India: Formed in Compassion, United in Mission”, elected

Fr Kurian Pattimackel, (Regional Councilor)

Fr Augustine Thundathil, (Regional Councilor)

Fr Philip Mhunchumo, (Regional Councilor), **and**

Fr Peter Parankimalil (Regional Bursar).

10. LCISCHOLASTICS RECEIVE DEGREE FROM DE SALES UNIVERSITY

Third year Scholastics in Lumen Christi Institute will receive their B. A. Degree from Rev. Fr. Bernard O'Connor OSFS, the President on De Sales University, USA, the first batch of students (May 14, 2016), after its affiliation to DSU. The first batch of Diploma students in Formation and Spirituality will receive their Diploma on the same day.

11. TRIBUTE TO GREAT MSFS OF OUR TIME

Fr. Panthalany Varkey, (88) died on February 22, 2016

Fr. Chempalakunnel Kurian, (78) died on March 16, 2016

Fr. William John D'Silva, (63) died on March 21, 2016

Fr. Joseph T. P. Thalachirakuzhiyil, (69) died on April 03, 2016

May they rest in peace!

12. MSFS CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2016

- Programs in Formation Houses for the Year of Formation
- Appointment of newly ordained Priests in the missions for the first three years as part of pastoral formation
- Update and On-going Formation Programs in the Provinces
- Short term Courses and Input sessions for Formation Personnel
- Preparation of Module and Training of Confreres for Parish Mission Preaching
- Releasing the Spiritual Directory of St. Francis de Sales for our use
- Publishing guidelines for MSFS Culture of Province Annual Retreat
- Guidelines for Friends/Lay Associates of Fransalians
- Salesian Spirituality Centers and Retreat/Prayer centers in the Province and Congregation level
- De Sales – Mermier Research and Resource Center in Hyderabad
- Renewed efforts to the Cause of the Founder
- Ensuring a Local Community and a Local Superior for every confrere in every unit of the Congregation
- Province Annual Retreat (2016-2017) with focus on Mercy and Compassion, and Forgiveness and Healing of strained relations in communities

I thank you for your understanding and collaboration in implementing these important steps in this Year of Formation for Mission of Mercy and Compassion. I conclude with a thought from our Patron:

St. Francis de Sales writes:

Saint Pachomius told him, "My son, it is better to live in obedience and to die everyday by living a life of continual mortification of self and one's passions than to suffer martyrdom in your imagination. Anyone who mortifies himself dies a martyr's death as far as needs be. (Conf. 12. 146)

Fraternally in Christ,



Father Abraham Vettuvellil, MSFS

Superior General

Feast of St. Joseph, the worker

May 1, 2016