

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES



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October 24, 2018

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

GENERAL CHAPTER XX

(FEBRUARY 01 – 13, 2019)



100 DAYS TO GO

**at MSFS PROVINCIAL HOUSE,
GUWAHATI, INDIA**

My dear Confreres,

Grace and Peace of the Lord be with you!

I wish you a Happy Foundation Day! We celebrate 180th birthday of our Congregation today. May the good Lord continue to bless us!

Our 20th General Chapter 2019 is 100 DAYS away. Preparations for the GC, at the Congregational level, are on. I invite us all to continue to reflect on the theme and pray for this spiritual event.

Let me share with you my continued reflection on the theme of our General Chapter:

1. “MSFS, WAKE UP TO THE BASICS”

In this General Chapter 2019, we look closely and critically at the whole Congregation in the context of our CHARISM. The only reason for a religious congregation to exist in the Church is its CHARISM. A religious family comes into existence and remains in existence because of its Founder/Foundress. A deep understanding of the CHARISM, a renewed study of Scripture, and a keen sensitivity to the signs of the times provide an impetus for revitalizing our religious family and identity.

We see that every human institution is prone to set its own ways, to establish its own external forms, and thereby to create a system for its smooth and practical functioning. Fast changing circumstances coupled with a desire for passing novelties can sometimes put pressure on religious communities to compromise on the founding CHARISM of the Congregation. It is therefore necessary and important to periodically renew the system with its interior driving force. This interior driving force is the CHARISM of our religious family.

Fidelity to this interior dynamic force or the evangelical intention of the Founder is the touchstone of authenticity in religious life. Without the spirit and vision of Fr. Mermier guiding us, the external forms of development, together with a system that we have created in the Congregation/Provinces, can become a burden.

Reflection: How can we organize our thinking on “MSFS, Wake up to the Basics” from the vantage point of our CHARISM?

2. FIDELITY TO CHARISM HELPS US THRIVE AND NOT JUST SURVIVE

Collective infidelity to the CHARISM dissipates the prophetic vigour of the confreres in the Congregation, opening its way to its decadence and extinction. Collective fidelity, on the other hand, helps the congregation to thrive amidst challenges from within and without.

The Second Vatican Council calls the Religious Institutes for a 'renewal of religious life', which means, “return to sources”. Renewal according to the Council is not doing away with the past and starting all over again, but having GOSPEL - BASED and CHARISM BASED principles to which adaptation to the needs of modern world can be made. It implies, in many cases, a re-founding of the community by recovering its' unique identity and, in our case, rediscovering what Fr. Mermier first conceived his religious family to be.

Lose the spirit and CHARISM of the Founder and we lose all the wisdom that our Congregation needs not only to survive, but also to thrive in different places with new confreres who enter our religious family.

What is our CHARISM? MSFS CHARISM that gives us our identity is:

- **MSFS is a Missionary**
- **MSFS lives in a community**
- **MSFS lives the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales**

Reflection: What are the areas in which we need to renew our Congregation today on the grounds that first brought us into a corporate being?

3. OUR RESPONSE TO FOUNDER'S CHARISM AND VISION

Fr. Mermier was chosen by the Holy Spirit to gift a particular CHARISM to the Church. His life of sanctity was a living witness of the gift he received. The same Holy Spirit calls individual persons to live this founding CHARISM and form a religious family in the Church. ***“CHARISM is the spirit and aims of each founder (which) should be faithfully accepted and detained” (Perfectae Caritatis, 2).***

There is no religious congregation existing *by itself* upon which a particular CHARISM is grafted or attached. Consecrated life blossoms in the CHARISM of the Congregation. A congregation is as healthy and prophetic as the religious vitality and fidelity of its members to its CHARISM.

Saint John Paul (John Paul II) spoke of faithful responses to 'CHARISM of the Founder and to SOUND TRADITIONS of the Congregation' as one of the essential elements of religious life. ***'Show me a community that cherishes the founder's memory, talks about him, reads about him, invokes him, and I will show you a community that has a promising future. Show me the opposite and I can tell you, that community's days are numbered'***

All our apostolates and undertakings are expected to be our responses to our founding CHARISM. Whenever we take up a concern of any nature in the Province or any unit in the Congregation, we evaluate them in the context of the whole Congregation and its CHARISM.

Q. How satisfied are we in responding to the signs of the times based on our founding CHARISM and sound Traditions?

4. CHARISM-DRIVEN OR ISSUE-DRIVEN?

'Wake up to the Basics' is waking up to the CHARISM of the Congregation expressed through the four pillars of **Mission Thrust, Community Life, MSFS – ness, Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales.** Congregations do their best when they focus on their CHARISM, vision, and directives of the Founder.

In the coming General Chapter, we look at our Congregation through the prism of our CHARISM, not to diagnose the sickness but to understand the symptoms that weaken us. When we understand what makes a Congregation function in both healthy and unhealthy ways, we are in a position to bring renewal to our MSFS family. A Congregation functions in a healthy way when the spirit and CHARISM of the founder drives and motivates the members and their apostolates. Loyalty to the CHARISM and TRADITION does not mean that we literally retain everything from the past. Our loyalty to the CHARISM and TRADITION or HERITAGE must ensure that we remain humbly submissive to the vision of those who have gone before us. There is wisdom with age. There is wisdom in experience. It takes humility and simplicity to respect the wisdom in the CHARISM and HERITAGE and to build on the past.

Q. What are the healthy and unhealthy ways (both) that we can identify in our functioning as a Congregation?

DECISIONS, NEWS, AND EVENTS

1. MEMBERS OF PRECAPITULAR COMMISSION (PCC)

Fr. SAJI GEORGE
Fr. J. STEPHEN
Fr. SURESH BABU
Fr. MANOJ TIRKEY
Fr. GEORGE PANTHANMACKEL (Representing the Province in whose area the General Chapter will take place), and
Fr. GEORGE PARAMPUKATTIL (Representing the General Curia)

2. SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER (SGGC)

Fr. SAJI GEORGE

3. LIST OF CAPITULANTS TO THE GENERAL CHAPTER XX

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

1. VETTUVELIL Abraham	Superior General
2. THUMMA Mariadas Reddy	Assistant General
3. FERNADES Agnelo	General Councillor
4. REBELLO Noel	General Councillor
5. PARAMPUKATTIL George	General Councillor
6. MANGATTU Augustine	General Bursar
7. KOOTTANAL Benny	Provincial of South West India
8. YVES Carron	Provincial of France-Suisse
9. JAYASEELAN Selvaraj	Provincial of Pune
10. JOHN BRITTO Muthuswamy	Provincial of Nagpur
11. K. Ignacimuthu	Provincial of South East India
12. THAZHATHUKUNNEL Mathew	Provincial of East Africa
13. PENTAREDDY Chinappa Reddy	Provincial of Visakhapatnam
14. AERATHEDATHU Tomson Michael	Provincial of Brazil
15. PANTHANMACKEL George	Provincial of North East India
16. PULIYINAMPATTAYIL Tomy	Vice-Provincial of USA

DELEGATES

1. MAPPILAPARAMBIL Emmanuel	Delegate North East India
2. PUTHIYAKULANGARA Saji George	Delegate North East India
3. MUNDACKAL Baiju Kurian	Delegate North East India
4. PANTHALANICKAL James	Delegate from East Africa
5. KALLIDUKIL Johnson	Delegate from East Africa
6. DAIY Sebastian	Delegate from Pune
7. GONSALVES Johnson	Delegate from Pune
8. KULANGARATH Sunny	Delegate from Pune
9. TIRKEY Manoj	Delegate from Nagpur
10. KARAMAKUZHYIL Jacob	Delegate from Nagpur
11. KURICKAL George	Delegate from Nagpur
12. SURESH BABU Bavri	Delegate from Visakhapatnam
13. VELANGANI RAO Dola	Delegate from Visakhapatnam
14. CHAKKALAKKAL Jolly	Delegate from Visakhapatnam

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| 15. ARUL Francis | Delegate from South East India |
| 16. J. STEPHEN | Delegate from South East India |
| 17. D. KANIKKAI NATHAN | Delegate from South East India |
| 18. ANTHONYSAMY Benedict | Delegate from Brazil |
| 19. KANNEZHATH Scaria | Delegate from Franco-Swiss |
| 20. JP COULON | Delegate from England |
| 21. KALARIPARAMBIL Thomas | Delegate from South West India |
| 22. CHERUKAT THOMAS | Delegate from South West India |
| 23. EDATHUMPARAMBIL BINU | Delegate from South West India |
| 24. THARAPEL AUGUSTINE | Delegate from USA |

4. SPECIAL INVITEES TO THE GENERAL CHAPTER

With the consent of the General Council, I am glad to invite the special invitees who will participate in the General Chapter during the second phase of the General Chapter from February 04 – February 08, 2019. These invitees are confreres working at the grass root level in the missions and also confreres representing the international and intercultural character of the Congregation. The special invitees to the General Chapter are:

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| 1. ARACKAL Manoj | Delegation Superior, Chad-Cameroon |
| 2. KUMBLOLICKAL Jose | Delegation Superior, the Philippines |
| 3. JOSEPH Amalraj A | Coordinator, GAH Delegation |
| 4. KULLU Petrus | Delegation Superior, Mozambique |
| 5. JUDE Thadeus | Zambia Mission Superior |
| 6. BURROFERO Zachariah | East Africa Province |
| 7. KERKETTA Bijay | Nagpur Province |
| 8. VETTUKATTIL Abraham | Vishakhapatnam Province |
| 9. AROKIANATHAN A.C. | South West India Province |
| 10. PATTIMACKEL Kurian | North East India Province |
| 11. THAIKHO Simon | North East India Province |
| 12. CHRISTOPHE Bertrand A | Chad-Cameroon Mission |
| 13. SUMAGAYSAY Jundie | The Philippine Delegation |

5. NEW PROVINCIAL CURIA OF VISAKHAPATNAM PROVINCE

1. Fr. SESETTI MARIA DAS, COUNCILOR AND ADMONITOR
2. Fr. DOLA VELANGANI RAO, COUNCILOR
3. Fr. MANOJ PATHIPPALIL, COUNCILOR
4. Fr. G. SANDEEP REDDY, COUNCILOR
5. Fr. BELLAMKONDAANIL BOSCO, BURSAR

Congratulations to the new Provincial Curia!

6. 'MAKERS OF A MISSION HISTORY: The Missionary Movement of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (FRANSALIANS)'

The first copy of the above mentioned book will be released on October 24, 2018 in Suvidya College on the Institute Day and the MSFS Foundaiton Day by Fr. Agnelo Fernandes, the General Secretary for Mission and for Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries. I take this opportunity to congratulate all the contributors from different Provinces to this spectacular historical work. On behalf of the entire Congregation, I thank and appreciate the efforts of the Editors of the historical work, 'MAKERS OF MISSION HISTORY' – Fr. K. Henry Jose, Fr. Joseph Pulloppillil, and Fr. George Panthanmackel – for their contribution to the Congregation and to the Church.

7. PARISH MISSION MANUAL OF THE MSFS

A module for Parish Mission Preaching, based on Fr. Mermier's method but adapted to our times, is ready to be released on October 24th 2018 in Suvidya College, Bangalore. The book "Parish Mission Manual of the MSFS" is an earnest effort to revive our primordial apostolate and to give a clear expression to the legacy of our Founder and the rich tradition of our Congregation. I thank the Committee consisting of **Fr. Agnelo Fernandes, Fr. Jeal Paul Fournier, Fr. Jose Parappillil, Fr. Reji K. Mani, and Fr. A. Jeyakumar** for the remarkable legendary work in publishing the book. This is a great contribution to renew the faith of Christians and deepening of catechesis and Christian life of adults, youth, and children.

I wish you all a Happy Foundation day and Community day! United with you in prayers and in the spirit of St. Francis de Sales and Father Mermier!

Live Jesus!

Fraternally in Christ,



Father Abraham Vettuvellil, MSFS
Superior General

