MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Fransalians - Province of East Africa

Provincial House P. O. Box 12 Morogoro Tanzania

Tel: +255 787 766 555; +255 754 652 166 www.msfs-eastafrica.com

E-mail: johnsonmsfs@gmail.com; provincialeastafricamsfs@gmail.com

Provincial Circular EAP- JK.19

December 1, 2013

Beloved Confreres,

Yet another Advent is close at hand! We are now in the last month of the calendar year at the same time in the first month of the liturgical year! The month is one and the same, the duration is same, the activities are same... yet from one perspective it is the last and from another it is the first! In our lives too there are many *firsts* and *lasts*. There are many openings and closings, many introductions and conclusions. This is when we see life as mere parts. But in reality, the so called last is the starting point for the first; every closing leading to new openings and every conclusion paves the way for new introductions. In this scenario, where is the end and where is the beginning? We are only beings in the BEING, conceived from all eternity, moving and living in him, no matter born or still unborn, living or dead. Here there is no beginning, there is no first and last. We are all in the ring of life and we are the ring of life which has no starting point or ending point.

Advent - the life giver and energizer

In this process of being in the BEING, the special season of Advent comes to us with new hope and energy. There are times when one tends to be tired of this movement; when one stops this movement; when one drifts away from the ring; when one even moves against the eternal movement which is the will of God; and worse still, there are times one consider oneself as the master of this movement.

In this background the Mother Church invites us in this season to behold the Saviour who provides us new direction, hope and energy. It is a special time of re-fuelling as *asking the way* - a time of gaining more confidence whereby one can say: Now I feel better, secure, I feel can I go ahead – in spite of the journey into the unknown. The journey is never stopped but it continues. *And I wish you a very graceful time of Advent!*

Jubilee Celebrations in East Africa

The Year of Faith was simultaneously a unique year of multiple jubilees for us MSFS in East Africa. The Jubilee year was opened on September 14, 2012 at Salvation Hill Lububu Tabora and Jubilee year was concluded on October 26, 2013 in Morogoro. We have really celebrated the year of jubilees – immersing ourselves in the will of God – receiving from him both good times and hard times, pleasant times unpleasant times, moments of confidence and times of uncertainties. Our jubilee motto, I can do all things in him who strengthens me (Phil.4:13), has given us also added conviction that: the safest place in our life is the will of God; God does not make mistakes.

My dear confreres I thank you for being part of this jubilee. Thank you for the various activities and programs, prayers, celebrations and works of charity etc that we have organized during the jubilee year. We thank everyone who was instrumental in various ways for the celebration of the jubilee through the Jubilee Year. Be blessed!

The Concluding Jubilee Celebrations in East Africa

The concluding ceremony of the Jubilee year was held on October 26, 2013 at St. Francis de Sales Junior Seminary Morogoro. The Jubilee year was concluded with a solemn thanksgiving Eucharist presided over by His Lordship Most Rev. Telesphore Mkude, the Bishop of Morogoro. Honourable Mr. Joel Bendera the Regional Commissioner of Morogoro blessed the gathering with his gracious presence and inspiring message. The Bishop in his message recalled the hard times in the past and appreciated the works done by the MSFS in East Africa. Expressing their concern, love and solidarity with us, many priests, religious and people, representing our parishes and institutions generously made themselves available joining in our thanksgiving. The presence of Rev. Fr. Babychan Arackathara MSFS the Regional Superior of the Southern African Region of MSFS and Rev. Fr. Petrus Kullu MSFS the new Delegation Superior of the MSFS Mozambique Delegation also added colour to the occasion.

May I thank each of you my dear father brother especially those who headed various committees, for your whole – hearted efforts in making our jubilee celebrations a very gracious one.

New Local Community in GAH

In accordance with the decision of the General Chapter 2013, and in continuation of the deliberations of the Provincials of India Forum and the Provincial of East Africa (PIF-PEA), and according to the decision made in the Provincial Council of East Africa we have decided to establish a new Local Community of the confreres from East Africa Province in *GAH*, with effect from December 1, 2013.

Accordingly the members of the community are:

- 1. Fr. James Panthalanickal MSFS
- 2. Fr. Sony Kochumalayil MSFS
- 3. Fr. Stephen Gerald MSFS
- 4. Fr. Thomas Chozhithara MSFS
- 5. Fr. Wilson Packiam MSFS

Fr. Wilson Packiam MSFS is appointed as the Local Superior of this community from the same date of the establishment of this community.

The Community will be known as MSFS Local Community East Africa in Germany, Austria, Belgium. (MSFS-EAP- GAB) The Superior of this community will be the member of the Forum of the Delegation/ Local Superiors and will exercise his functions in accordance with the norms of Constitutions and General Directory and taking into consideration the particular situation of GAH.

Our sincere congratulations to the Fr. Packiam Wilson and all the members of this community. Let us function in such a way that it would serve the purpose of strengthening our Fransalian bond of fraternity and to deepen our religious commitment.

Training sessions on Bibliolog at Lumen Christi Institute Arusha

As an opportunity for ongoing formation, LCI Arusha is organizing a training program on Bibliolog. *Bibliolog* is a relatively new and unique way of engaging with a text from the Holy Scripture. It is offered by a trained facilitator and helps the participant to understand the explicit as well as implicit implications of biblical texts and contexts in our personal lives. This training would also enhance our capacity to communicate the message of the Bible to those whom we communicate the Gospel in our various apostolates.

There are two sessions offered as given below:

- ➤ 2014 February 3 Evening to February 7 evening (Monday to Friday)
- ➤ 2014 February 10 Evening to 14 evening (Monday to Friday)

The resource person is **Dr. Maria Elisabeth Aigner** Professor at the Karl Franzes University, Graz, Austria.

<u>Please register</u> with Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS the Director of LCI regarding your participation before December 23, 2013. (mtkunnel@gmail.com)

I earnestly request you to make use of this unique chance for our own personal nourishment as well as for the benefit of the people we serve.

New Optical centre Ngurdotto, Arusha

Thanks to strenuous efforts of Mr. Thomas Sauer and Rotary Friends from Rotary Club Karlstadt-Arnstein, Germany we have one more unit of Optical Centre in Ngurdotto, Arusha, the first one being in Morogoro – the Mermier Optical Centre directed by Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil MSFS. The new optical centre is installed in the new building of dispensary in Ngurdotto. The technicians who would be working with modern optometric got their intensive training from the Mermier Optical Centre in Morogoro. Congratulations to the Rotarians, Fr. Nelson the Parish Priest of Ngurdotto and all our confreres at LCI who spared no efforts in the establishment of this new Centre which would be very beneficial for the poor villagers in and around Ngurdotto. The centre was blessed on November 9, 2013 by Fr. Nelson Antony MSFS the Parish Priest of Ngurdotto in the presence of the staff, parishioners, our mission friends and confreres. We thank all our friends who made big contribution through their labour and material and above all their dedication for the realization of this project.

Blessings of the Church in Mwamala Mission Centre, Lububu, Tabora

With great jubilation and sense of gratitude to God, the newly extended and renovated church of St. Jude Thaddeus Mwamala outstation in Lububu, Tabora was blessed on November 20, 2013 by his Grace Paul Ruzoka the Archbishop of Tabora. The event was witnessed by many priests, religious and lay faithful from the substation as well as from the rest of parish. There was table fellowship organized by the people of the place in which all the participants were invited to join.

The extended church now in the shape of a cross, with a seating capacity of almost 600 persons was the result of the united efforts of the faithful of Mwamala over the past few years.

Mwamala – a fast developing agricultural trade hub - is one of the six Centres of Lububu parish and is located kms. 6.5 away from Lububu parish and direction towards Kahama District. It has above four hundred faithful and most of them are regular in church activities.

And above all, in all these, we see the grace and protection of God flowing on each one of us who are working in the Mission of Lububu. May God Bless the faithful of Mwamala, faithful of Lububu parish and our missions in Africa at large.

Reported by Fr. Sebastian Williams MSFS

Renewal Program for Secondary School Students at LCI, Arusha

Fransalian Communications-Arusha conducted yet another Spiritual Renewal Programme for the Secondary School students at LCI campus on $16^{\rm th}$ November, 2013. Students from

nine secondary schools, totalling two hundred and seventy two students and eleven teachers participated in the spiritual renewal programme. The program commenced at 9.00 am with a prayer and welcome address by Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil, the director of Fransalian Communications. The animator of the programme was Rev. Fr. Hendricks Mambwe who spoke on the theme "Self-Actualization." In his presentation of the theme he highlighted the responsibilities of the students to form themselves as responsible youth and citizens to mould their future on solid spiritual and moral values. He also explained about sexuality, friendship and some of the major challenges faced by students from home and the school. Apart from the input sessions, students were provided with the opportunity to go for the sacrament of reconciliation, personal guidance and counselling. There were five priests and fourteen sisters from various religious congregations availed their services for the sacrament of reconciliation, guidance and counselling. The spiritual renewal program was concluded with a healing Mass presided over by the animator.

Reported by Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil MSFS

Life Orientation Seminar for University students at Fransalian House, Kola

Fransalian Communications organized a seminar on November 16, 2013 for the University students with the theme "The Sacrament of Marriage and Family Life" and the other issues related to it. The moderator for this seminar was Rev. Dr. Hippolitus Marandu IMC. There was a spontaneous response from the students' community for our invitation and the result was that there were more than 270 participants for the seminar and they were fully involved it throughout the whole day. In the background of particular Marriage and family life issues of our times, this seminar has shed light in the hearts of the students who are the pillars of the future Catholic Community.

Fransalian Communications - an initiative of the MSFS Scholastics in Morogoro, organizes Every year Biblical and Spirituality seminars for the Religious, lay faithful and renewal programs for Secondary school students and University Students.

Reported by Deacon S. Clement Sudhakar MSFS

Graduation of from SFS Junior Seminary Morogoro

On November 16, 2013 St. Francis de Sales Junior Seminary, Kihonda, held the graduation of 27 seminarians who successfully finished their "O' level studies in the seminary. This occasion was blessed with the Presence of Rev. Fr. Johnson Kallidukil, the provincial superior of East Africa Province, who was also the Chief Guest of the Day. The celebrations began with the solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Rev. Fr. Provincial. During his Sermon, Fr. Provincial emphasized the importance of education which is accompanied by wisdom. On this day we also gave farewell to Fr. Johnson Peter Napoleon, the Vice Rector who is being transferred to SFS VTC Mwakata. There was a short felicitation held soon after the Holy Mass in which the outgoing Form IV students were awarded with the certificates. There was also prize distribution for the winners of the competitions held during the Mermier Fest 2013. All the best-performing students were also awarded for their hard work and commitment. The occasion was graced by the presence of so many parents and invited guests from our neighbouring communities and institutions. We wish Fr. Johnson Peter Napoleon and the outgoing Form IV batch all the best and God's blessing.

Reported by Fr. Johnson Pathiyil MSFS

Training Program for the Formators at LCI

Lumen Christi Institute organized a seminar from November 18 to 22, 2013 for formators under the title "To be guided properly in order to be the proper guide". Rev. Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS was the resource person. There were 18 participants from 14 congregations (2 brothers, 8 sisters and 8 priests). The Seminar dealt with the relevance of formation in the African context, the challenges of formation at different stages, on the concept of spiritual intelligence, on the quality presence of formators, on quality community life, Formator as a spiritual leader, on the art of personal meetings, on human sexuality in formation and the challenges of formation in the international and intercultural communities. There were 25 sessions, several group discussions, and sharing from brothers and a religious sister in formation. The course was well appreciated by all the participants.

Reported by Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel MSFS

MSAF Meeting

The 10th Ordinary Meeting of the Mission Superiors Africa Forum was held on October 28, 2013 at LCI. MSAF has now five units in Africa with nine countries. The meeting was a very good opportunity to share the concerns with one another and to seek measures to intensify collaboration among the units especially in matters of formation.

New Provincial: North East India Province

Fr George Panthanmakkal MSFS: is appointed the Provincial of the North East India Province for a term of three years with effect from January 24, 2014.

Renewed Mandate: South East India Province

Fr Antony Dharmaraj MSFS is re-appointed the Provincial of South East India Province for a second term of three years with effect from January 24, 2014.

New Provincial Administration of Franco-Swiss Province

Fr. Yves Carron: Provincial Superior, **Fr. Jean Paul Fournier** (Provincial Councilor and Admonitor), **Fr. Binoy Kidangathukarot** (Provincial Councilor), **Fr. Daniel Bouchet** (Provincial Councilor), and **Fr. Jean-Paul LE TUE** (Provincial Bursar)

We thank God for the wonderful gift of these confreres and wish them all the blessings in their ministry of servant leadership. Hearty Congratulations!

Update on the Confreres pursuing higher studies

- ❖ **Bro. Francis Indumuli Aloo** started his MA Philosophy Program at JUCO/ SAUT Morogoro. He will be also rendering teaching service at Fransalian School Morogoro from the coming school year.
- ❖ Bro. Kenneth Maina has very successfully completed his first semester of MA Phil and L. Ph studies at Christ College and DVK Bangalore respectively and is now in the second semester progressing in his studies well.
- ❖ **Fr. Antony George** has registered with Dar es Salaam Open University, Tanzania for his MBA studies. He is now in the first semester.

- ❖ Fr. Francis Devadoss has started his B. Ed one year program at in Alangayam, Tamil Nadu India. As part of that now he is teaching on one of the government schools.
- ❖ Fr. James Panthalanickal, after completing his pre-doctoral program i.e. Initial Master's (2011-2012) and Advanced Master's (2012-2013) at the Faculty of Theology, KU Leuven, now he is admitted to the Ph.D. program. Soon he will also begin part time pastoral works in the Diocese of Brussels-Mechelen.
- ❖ Fr. Joseph Poikunnel has secured admission at JUCO / SAUT Morogoro for MA in Education and is attending the regular classes along with his other assignments.
- ❖ Fr. Kurian Kollapallil, along with his pastoral ministry, is doing his Doctor of Theology (Th.D.) in Biblical Theology from "Master's Theological Research institute" Indiana, USA.
- ❖ Fr. Sebastian Palakudy is doing well in his MA in Family Counselling studies at John Paul II Pontifical Institute in Changanassery, India. He is scheduled to complete the studies in May 2014
- ❖ Fr. Sebastian Nirappel has very successfully completed his MA in Developmental Studies from the Ugandan Martyr's University, Kampala.
- ❖ Fr. Sebastian Williams is in now in the second year of his studies MA Education from Indira Gandhi National Open University, Nairobi.
- ❖ Fr. Susai David has started his studies of MA in Education at the Indira Gandhi National Open University: Nairobi. He is now in the first semester.
- ❖ Fr. Thomas Chozhithara is in the final stages of his thesis work as part of his doctoral studies at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. He is scheduled to complete his studies in June 2014
- ❖ Fr. Zachariah Burofero having the acquired language proficiency in Italian rendered pastoral services during the summer holidays in some of the parishes in Cecilia, Italy has started well the second year of his post graduate studies on Catechesis and Youth Ministry at Salesian University in Rome.

Congratulations: Fr. Sebastian Nirappel MSFS

I am very glad to inform you that Fr. Sebastian Nirappel has successfully completed his *Masters in Developmental Studies* from Ugandan Martyr's University, Kampala. His research was based on the challenges of certain traditional practices affecting the stability of families specially referring to the Tororo area. Our sincere Congratulations to Fr. Sebastian for this remarkable achievement especially for having undertaken this study along with his responsibilities in the ministry. This is the result of positive initiative, persevering efforts and firm determination. Be blessed!

Other news items

Fr. Thomas Olickal is already in India for further treatment and recuperation. He can be reached +91 828 983 5962. Let us continue to pray for him.

Fr. Stephen Gerald landed in Austria on October 24, 2013. He was received by Fr. Josef Giefing. Soon he will be attending an intensive language and pastoral orientation program in Vienna.

Fr. Antonysamy Sebastian is visiting Europe from November 4 to December 3, 2013. This was made possible through the good will of Mr. Johann Rotter and his famiy and the Missio Austria which supported Fr. Sebastian in the formation. Our sincere appreaction to our respected staff of Missio Austria and Mr. Johann Rotter and his famiy for their kindness.

Fr Devadoss Francis could not secure admission for the media studies for this year. He has now begun with the BA in Education and is staying at our MSFS Community in Alangayam Tamil Nadu, India: He can be reached in: +91 99 44 526920

Congratulations: New Book: by Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel

The Doctoral thesis of Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel was published with the title: *Inter-religious dialogue at grass root level: A pastoral Theological approach to Christian Muslim Dialogue in Tanzania.* Hearty Congratulation to Fr. Mathew for the same. We also thank Indian Institute of Spirituality for taking up the task of publishing in a very quality manner. The book was officially released on the occasion of the great jubilee celebration in Bangalore on September 23, 2013.

Preparation of the History book of MSFS East Africa

In order to complete and fine tune the work done on the history of the MSFS in East Africa, the Provincial administration has appointed a committee consisting of three persons: Fr. Sunny Vettickal (leader) and Fr. Santhosh Prakashbhavan and Fr. Jomon Vellachalil as members. We expect that the committee prepares the final draft of the history and present it in the Provincial Congress 2014. I also request every member and community to be cooperative in this attempt by providing the necessary data, photos etc.

Renewed efforts for the cause of the Beatification of our Holy Founder Fr. Peter Mermier

In order to intensify the efforts of promoting the cause of the beatification of our holy Founder Servant of God, Fr. Peter Mermier, the provincial administration has prepared a supporting team to assist Fr. Mathew Chavely who is already functioning as the Vice Promoter from East Africa. The team consists of Fr. Pius Kochuparampil, Fr. Joby Maruthomalayil and Fr. Stephen Ubadesi.

New Educational Project in Dumila

Thanks to the consistent efforts of Fr. Tomy Kattikanayil the registration process of our land in Dumila is almost completed. The Provincial Administration has entrusted Fr. Tomy Kattikanayil now with the task of initiating the process of establishing a Primary School in Dumila. Our sincere thanks to Fr. Tomy and prayerful good wishes for the new tasks.

Visits

- Fr. Jose Eriyanickal was with us from October 25 to November 9 for the jubilee celebrations and visiting our missions.
- Fr. Thomas Chozhithara along with some of our mission friends were with us from October 14 to October 29 for the jubilee celebrations and visiting our missions.
- Fr. James Panthalanickal will be visiting East Africa from December 14 to December 30. We extend to him a warm welcome and wish him safe journey and an enriching time in our missions.
- Fr. Lukose Perumannikalayil, from Southern Africa Region was with for the Jubilee and visiting our missions and formation houses from October 20 to November 5, 2013.

- Fr. Petrus Kullu from Mozambique Delegation was with us from October 24 to November 2, 2013 for the Jubilee, visitation to the formation houses as well as for the MSAF Meeting.
- Fr. Babychan Arackathara from Southern Africa Region was with us from October 20 to November 5, 2013 for the Jubilee, visitation to the formation houses as well as for the MSAF Meeting.

We thank them for their visit and encouraging presence with us.

Home Holidays

The following confreres will be going for home leave

Fr. Mathew Chavely from Dec 31, 2013 to March 30, 2014
Fr. Tomychan Perumanoor from Dec 28, 2013 to Feb 28, 2014
Fr. Sunny Mattathil from Dec 28, 2013 to Feb 28, 2014
Fr. Kuldeep Kujur from Dec 18, 2013 to March 7, 2014
Fr. Babu Kudakachirakunnel from Dec 22, 2013 to Feb 28, 2014

We wish them a relaxing time with their dear and near ones.

Change of places of regency

Due to certain urgent needs of the communities, there is a change of the places of appointment of regents as following:

Bro. Musyimi Patrick Titus is appointed to Fransalian community Ipuli, Tabora.

Bro. Martin Pendanath is appointed to Provincial House community Morogoro.

Prayers Requested:

For the Sick and suffering:

Mr Antony the father of Fr. Joby Maruthomalayil who is suffering from old age related illnesses

For the departed ones

- Fr. Ignatius Puthur MSFS (Vishakapatanam Province) passed away at Mermier Bhavan, Vadakumcherry on October 2, 2013 at the age of 69.
- > **Fr. Prabhudas Kujur MSFS** of Nagpur Province/ Mozambique Delegation passed away on September 30, 2013 at the age of 50.
- Fr. Joseph Thayil MSFS of South West India Province passed away on October 25, 2013 at the age of 77.
- o **Mr. Francis Bahati Ngowi** the paternal uncle of Fr. Innocent Ngowi, was called to eternal life on 16, 2013. He was 45 years old.
- o **Mrs. Annamma** the beloved mother of Fr. Sebastian Palakudy, was called to eternal life on November 4, 2013 She was 70 years and died of heart attack.

My Tentative Programs:

November 2013

- 7-10 Closing of the Year of Faith at National level, Bagamoyo
- 14 Meeting with Major Superior: Franciscan Sisters of the Kingdom of Christ from D R Congo
- 16 Graduation at SFS Junior Seminary, Kihonda
- 17 22 Animating the Seminar for the Formators, LCI Arusha
- 23 Jubilee Celebrations, Holy Cross Sisters Community, Kihonda
- 24 Solemnity Christ the King: Mass in Dumila Parish
- 27 Meeting with the Major Superior: Franciscan Clarist Sisters, from Noida, India

December 2014

- 4 Meeting with the Major Superior: Assisi Sisters Mary Immaculate, from India
- 10 Spiritual Conference to Scholastics: at Fransalian Study House, Kola
- 14 Harambee Mkuza/ Fundraising Program for the Parish Church Construction
- 15 Mkuza Parish
- 17-21 Tabora Kahama
- 22 Spiritual Conference for Scholastics: LCI
- 24 25 Mji Mpya Relini, Dar es Salaam
- 31 Spirituality Seminar at Fransalian House, Kola

January 2014

- 4 Memorial Mass for the departed confreres, at Ndagani Seminary, Kenya
- 5 Chera Mission, Kenya
- 6-7 Mlolongo Katani
- 10 Stewardship forum meeting in Provincial House, Morogoro
- 11 Formation forum Meeting in Fransalian Study House, Kola
- 13 Social Forum Meeting in Provincial House, Morogoro
- 24 Blessing of the Secondary School Mlolongo
- 25 Council meeting in Mlolongo, Nairobi

February 2014

- 8 Education Forum Meeting in LCI, Arusha
- 14-16 Canonical Visitation to Bukene Mission
- 17-20 At LCI Arusha
- 22-23 Canonical Visitation to Lububu Mission
- 24 Visit to Itaga
- 25-26 Canonical Visitation to Ipuli Mission
- 27-28 Canonical Visitation to Mwakata Mission

Concluding words: The Four "C"s of Advent

Beloved Confreres,

On last Sunday we have received from our beloved Holy Father Pope Francis the new Encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium* – the Joy of the Gospel – exhorting the faith community to be a community of love and harmony, characterized by compassion and deep respect for the other.

Yesterday we have received from our beloved Superior General Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvelil MSFS a circular with lot of inspirations, challenges, exhortations and practical guidelines as to how to live our consecrated life in the most effective way.

The essence of these two documents is: *Being Connected to Christ*.

The core of the salvation history is *God getting connected to humanity*. God did it through Jesus Christ. Now it is the turn of human beings *to get connected to God* the Father in and through Jesus Christ.

In order that we live our vocation as true sons of God and hence our call as brothers to each other in the Fransalian family in East Africa and wherever we are, it is our sublime obligation to be firmly connected to Christ. This being connected to Christ is not merely an attempt from our side. Nor is it a by-product of our apostolic activities. On the other hand, from each one of us there must be a Conscious Commitment to be Connected to Christ. Let these four "C"s be the four advent Candles that we light in the advent wreath in this advent. The fifth "C" that would emerge from this condition is the true Consecration.

Besides, let us remember that without this commitment to Christ, our commitment to apostolate and ministry – even consecrated life – will be baseless and mostly useless and never harmless!

Hence our priorities should not be for preserving the structures that would give us a sense of security, on the other hand, what keeps us together should be the bond of sincere love for God – for in God we are sons and hence brothers to each other.

With prayerful wishes for a holy and tranquil Advent,

Yours fraternally in the Lord,

Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS

M A CHILLIAMSB

(Provincial Superior MSFS East Africa Province)

May God who gives us peace make you completely his and keep your whole being, spirit, soul and body, free from all faults at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you will do it, for his is faithful. 1 Thess. 5:23-24