



CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

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

My dear Confreres,

I greet you in the joy of the Lord as we are approaching the end of Year 2014 with lots of graces and blessings to thank the Lord for. I had the opportunity to visit the Provinces of Brazil, East Africa, North East India and Nagpur during this year. I see the New Governance of our Congregation gaining clarity and implementation wherever I visited. There is lot of enthusiasm among our confreres to live MSFS charism in their respective places of ministry. The words of our Father Mermier, "I want Missions", continue to resonate in our Congregation together with a deep sense of the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. Six of our MSFS Provinces have witnessed new Provincial Curia emerging from the Provincial Congress/Chapter and all of them re-echoed the voice of our Founder during this year at the time of the Chapter/Congress.

Currently, I am on visitation in Nagpur Province where after we have meeting of the Provincial Curia of Nagpur with the General Curia. The Assistant General is also in the Nagpur Province animating the Apostolic Communities. The General Secretaries and Bursar are animating the Regional Forums of various Secretariats in India. We will then have a training session in the new Governance for all Indian Provincial Curias with the General Curia, meeting of the Provincials of India Forum (PIF) and Provincial of East Africa (PEA) and Mission Superiors of Africa Forum (MSAF) with the General Curia in Bangalore, followed by the General Curia Meeting (November 25th through December 07th, 2014).

I request your prayers for the success of the meetings.

1. WE REMEMBER ...

We are in the month of November and Holy Mother the Church reminds us how important it is to offer prayers for those who have died but have not reached the full glory of heaven. Transitioning from earthly life into full union with God in heaven is not instantaneous. We cannot take our sinfulness to heaven. We must be purged in the cleansing fire. When we die, we come into full contact with the Infinite love of God; suddenly we realize how unlike God we really are. When we are aware how unloving we were in our sinful habits, we long and long to be purified so that we can be in full love. We burn with this desire to be purified. St. John Paul II said: '**Purgatory is a place of joy, not punishment. Purgatory is a place of mercy**'. The cleansing and purifying fire of purgatory

is our deepest regret over how imperfectly we have loved God. Purgatory is our deepest yearning to be purified and to live eternally in his holy Love. During this month we shall be specially united with our confreres and our near and dear ones who have gone before us so that they can be in full communion with God. We pay our tribute to our dear Confreres who have left us for their eternal reward:

Rev. Fr. Frederic Meynet of Franco – Swiss province

Rev. Fr. Francois Mercier of Franco-Swiss Province

Rev. Fr. Varkey Joseph Koovackal of Vizag Province

Rev. Fr. Clement Mendonca of Pune Province

Rev. Fr. S.M. Peter of Pune Province

Rev. K. Joseph of Nagpur Province

Rev. Fr. Abraham Chirayil, of Vizag Province, and

Rev. Fr. Raison Kaduvakuzhy of S. W. India Province

2. CYCLONE HUDHUD

Cyclone Hudhud (October 2014) had a devastating effect on the cities of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, and Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, India. It is unfortunate that about 50 people have lost their lives and thousands of people have been rendered homeless. We join them in their sufferings with our prayers and concern.

Reports from our Confreres in Vizakh state that the Province has experienced extensive damage to infrastructure and properties. The impact of winds of almost 200 kmph tore away roofs, infrastructure, and properties in many of our historical heritages. It has also darkened the minds and shattered the hearts of our confreres in Vizakh Province. All the MSFS establishments like ITI Autonagar, SFS School Gajuwaka, Ross Hill Shrine, Old Workshop, St. Aloysius School, SFS School Seethammadhara, Salesianum Novitiate, and Stella Maris Provincial House are badly affected and partially destroyed. The cost of repair of damage is estimated to be a little above Indian Rs. 1 crore (\$200,000).

It is a sad situation, a dire situation and a tragic situation; a time to support, to pray, and to comfort, and above all a time to express solidarity with the 'Mother Province' to many other Provinces. In the Congregational level I have made an earnest appeal to all the Provinces and the MSFS Generalate to pool our resources in support of Visakh Province in order to re-build the damaged establishments that are vital for the mission of the Province. I thank you for your support and understanding in this hour of need.

3. ASSISTANT GENERAL SPEAKS ...

Rev. Fr. Thumma Mariadas, our Assistant Superior General, after his visits to the different Provinces and his meetings with various Apostolic Communities, shares with us a few observations and indicators for our reflection. These reflections are invitations to critique our present day religious life and missionary life as Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. The following indicators will throw light on our New Governance and its challenges to implementation:

4. A CHARTER OF CONSECRATION AND MISSION –A CALL TO CLARIFY AND PRIORITISE

1. Very good and needed to acknowledge and highlight the Positive, BUT not healthy to resent and to be aggressively annoyed about any negative

This is one of the oft-found tendencies. In many meetings, it may happen that either of the two inclinations might dominate and direct the whole deliberations. Either there is an over-zealous enthusiasm to glorify the positive, the merits, the achievements, to the extent of totally neglecting the failures and drawbacks, and sometimes even to become impatiently intolerant toward any voice or mention about the negative. Or, there is a vehement cynicism which pictures the whole reality very dark, lamenting, blaming and judging the state of affairs, to the extent of discarding the whole positive and the measures and signs of growth.

Both the tendencies are not right.

It is in this context, a balanced culture of Critique must be fostered. That is, legitimately and humbly rejoicing in the positive and the accomplished, but at the same time, being honest and courageous to recognise, accept, confront and march against the defects and the constraints.

2. May be true that many times Documentation does not lead to Implementation, BUT that cannot throw away all the documents and meetings

Often it is very unfortunate that many decisions, even the best and enlightened, remain limited only to nice documentation and office-purpose. There is no consistent and committed follow-up and implementation. Consequently one easily gets discouraged and even cynical, that all this is just a waste of time, paper and resources. Thus, creeps in and develops a kind of 'disenchantment' with any meeting as mere paper-work and futile exercise.

We find thus often a not-so encouraging attendance to common meetings.

In this context, we need to bear in mind, while there is certainly this incongruence between theory and practice, between documentation and implementation, Yet we must not grow pessimistic. Life is a constant process, change is gradual, and we must continue in hope and sustained efforts in our journey of animation and evaluation, toward a more steady and effective implementation.

3. Administration is certainly very exigent, that which deals with issues and tackles the real problems. BUT Animation is more crucial

No seldom, those in administration especially the Major Superiors feel that most of their time and energies are invested and consumed over matters of administration, the running of the affairs, rather than focusing on the concerns of animating religious life, prayer life, community life, vowed life, mission etc.

While administration is of great importance, because it ensures order and streamlining, and thus contributes to better results, yet at the same time, it must be borne in mind, that safeguarding religious spirit and missionary concerns, is a greater priority than the former. In fact, administration and animation are not two counter-poles, rather they must go together, both effecting a more deepened and committed governance of life and mission.

4. Money and monetary concerns are important, BUT religious spirit and consecrated living are more important

A good number of times, it appears that compromises are made, the desirable and right decisions are not pursued and executed, but the wrong and deviated values and modes of doing are tolerated, just because of money concerns and monetary gains. Thus, it happens sometimes, wrong decisions are taken, corrections and confrontations are not in place, and remedial measures are not applied.

Consequently, religious spirit and life takes a back seat and suffers.

Certainly, money is a great need and concern for the promotion of our mission. But we should be deeply conscious that monetary concerns cannot be the overriding factor, and cannot be the deciding norm with regard to our approach toward decisions or persons. Nothing can undermine the primacy of fidelity to consecrated living.

5. Specialisation, to be aptly/ sufficiently equipped is very important, BUT unconsciously falling into careerism/ career-promotion is dangerous

Times are changing, challenges are increasing. Needs are becoming divergent and complex. Therefore, to have a good will alone is not enough. Acquiring a skill, enlarging the scope of skill and technique is good.

In this context, specialisations in various fields, are very important, since it can contribute toward a more relevant and adequate response to the exigent demands. But, it can also happen that these “special equipments” can become at times unconsciously synonymous with careerism and career-promotion, which more deeply are platforms and launching pads for ego-projection and ego-promotion.

6. To be active, to be ever zealous, is very important, BUT activism is pernicious

Our mission demands dynamism and zeal. There is no time to while away. We are on a mission and it is urgent. We belong to a God who is ever active, and follow a Master who relentlessly worked: Do you not know that I must be busy with my Father’s affairs? There is so much to do. Therefore there is no place for passivity and lethargy.

But, we must constantly guard against the all-too-prevalent viral fever of activism.

This is typical of the modern society and its life, which also affects many a priest and religious. Such a trend and culture in simple is: Action without spirit. It is a shallow chain

of activities devoid of real depth and interiority of spirituality, over-engaged to the neglect and detriment of prayer life.

7. To be involved, to be sociable, and to get immersed into the people's realities is really good, BUT to be over-involved is endangering

As priests, we are from the people and FOR the people. Our priesthood, the value and the fulfilment of it lies in the extent our life is more and more people-oriented. Thus, to be involved with them, to get deeply immersed into their life-situations, to be passionately committed to their animation and renewal, is praiseworthy. In this sense, to be isolated or insulated from the people, does not go well either with our priestly charism, or missionary charism.

But one should be on alert, whether his involvement with the people, is leading him to be over-attached, and imbalanced and off-the-track relationships.

8. To be concerned about numbers is good, BUT to compromise for the sake of numbers is harmful

This is concerning vocation promotion. As there is an all-present reality of the decline of vocations due to various reasons, in all possibility we may be guided by a genuine anxiety and concern for as many numbers as available. The danger in this preoccupation is, neglecting the quality for the sake of quantity.

We need numbers, so that we can spread more or work more intensely and effectively or cater to more needs. Yet, we should be clear about the quality.

Rightness of motivation, orientation and capacity for consecrated-community-missionary life, are to be more valued and checked for, rather than over-focus on increase of numbers or intelligence and talent.

9. To feel solidly with one's group, to have a certain group-affinity, may be natural and understandable, BUT to slip into groupism is irreligious

To belong to a group, to crave and nurture a group-identity, to feel affinity to some in a crowd, may be a natural tendency and trait in human psychology. Thus, one may feel more at home and in solidarity with a group, based on affinities like caste, region, language, culture etc.

However utmost care should be taken that such a group-feeling should not become exclusive, degenerating into divisions and discriminations, promoting a negative and irreligious culture of groupism, nepotism, favouritism, group-politics etc.

10. To respect the majority is good, BUT to take the majority always as normative for the right is defective

This is precisely concerning our electoral process. As is the practice, our various elections / appointments in the administration, both on the provincial and general levels, are done on the basis of majority.

Certainly majority is a key-factor, it is to be respected, since it evidently reflects the confidence of the majority, and in all the normal circumstances and understanding, majority-confidence is almost the most valid and substantial criterion for an election or nomination.

BUT the issue here is: the very motivation and orientation of the electoral groups. What is the guarantee that the majority is rightly motivated to elect a “worthy”, right leader?

What is the guarantee that the majority is not conditioned by the excessive affinity to its own group, and thus very much confined to the group alone in its choice?

How can one ever expect a leader to enjoy majority from a non-majority group?

Still some would say: Okay, but the one from the majority-group may be worthy and deserving.

But, what if there is someone more worthy and deserving from a non-majority group?

The vital issue here is: not majority or minority as contrapositions.

But, everyone must rise above these ‘barricades’ and look for a leader from God and for all.

11. Valuing the talent and resourcefulness of persons, is very much needed, BUT to respect, honour and treat people only on the basis of what they have or do, is wrong

Talent, skill, resourcefulness are really commendable. We need them, because they heighten the efficiency and quality of our life and mission. All may not be equally endowed with talent or skill.

So, those who have more skill and talent become more resourceful and contributive, and thus they will legitimately enjoy more edge over others, and thus there tends to be more weightage for them.

However, such a valuing and respecting the talented and resourceful should not go to the extent of disparities and unfairness in regard and treatment of the confreres.

While entrusting of responsibilities, distribution of roles and functions, takes into account the level of competence and capabilities, still every confrere should be treated with respect and dignity, irrespective of what he has or does, because everyone has his own due honour and worth.

A person is more than what he has or does.

12. Constant reflection and discernment about vocation is a good sign of sincere growth, BUT to interpret every change of vocation as a discernment, is spurious

This is concerning vocation crisis, and the fidelity to one’s own accepted vocation or discontinuity from it. Life and its situations are becoming more and more complex and perplexing. The changing conditions of one’s life and ministry influence a lot his conviction about his vocation, rootedness in it and the joy of living it.

Thus, we must constantly reflect about vocation, discern it and deepen our fidelity to it. In this process of struggle and growth, a process of discernment is valid.

BUT to interpret any disloyalty to one's originally accepted vocation as a fruit of discernment, to conveniently justify a "switching over from a religious to a diocesan or laicised vocation" as a call of God as the need of the hour, is really dishonest! One must honestly check and see what are the real factors behind such a "sudden realisation" of a changed vocation – be it money, undue craving for liberty, being attuned to comfort and convenience, or a failure to live up to chastity – all in simple, a lack of love for an authentic religious life.

13. Individual freedom and initiative are very creditable, BUT team-spirit, team-work, community-commitment are much more credible

Every individual is unique with his own worth and ability. Therefore individual freedom and initiative must be respected and duly nourished. Most of the great pioneering and successful missions and projects are owing to the special energy and bent of great individuals. So in the name of uniformity or conformity or tradition, individual freedom and creative initiative should not be crushed or suppressed.

Individual should be allowed a sufficient scope of freedom, and individual initiative should be encouraged and groomed.

However the test for the authenticity of any healthy individual freedom and initiative is that they operate always within a frame of team-spirit, team-work and commitment to community. An authentic individual initiative will make sure that it is community-based and community-supported. An individual initiative may have a difference from the community-mission, but it is never in conflict or contradiction with it.

14. Having one's own way of thinking, one's own set principles, one's own modes of acting, and thus having one's likings, preferences and sense of being right and fair – is understandable, BUT becoming confrontative, resistant, defiant, non-compliant and adamant – is not in the religious spirit

As individuals, certainly everyone has his own specific direction and range of thought-patterns, convictions and preferences. Thinking and acting differently should not be a matter of threat.

However being a religious, individuality cannot become individualism.

In the name of individuality and uniqueness, an individual confrere cannot assume an attitude and life-style which are defiant and non-compliant. No individual can pretend or presume to be above and beyond the authentic religious spirit and common principles. The inadequacy of those who frame or regulate the principles does not reduce the adequacy or normativeness of them!

15. An amount of self-recognition, a sense of feeling at home and fulfilment, are very important, BUT getting tuned to only a particular style and standard of life, and feeling threatened of any 'displacement' needs serious and sincere check-up

In everyone, there is a legitimate craving for self-acceptance, self-esteem, homeliness, appreciation and job-satisfaction. Thus all the places and works may not give equal happiness or sense of security. Some places, some types of placements, some surroundings and environment, will be more preferred to others.

BUT such leanings, such joys of places and placements, such tunings to a way of life, should not hamper one on his way of “displacement”. Displacement is essential to a religious-missionary, because it is a concrete sign and expression of detachment.

16. Continuity and stability are important, BUT sense of indispensability is not healthy

We need continuity and stability of our mission, because some times mission can suffer because of so much discontinuity and instability on account of too frequent appointments and transfers. A certain mission or ministry begins to prosper, thanks to the particular individuals, but suddenly that particular individual is removed from there, and there is a set-back.

Thus, it is a fact that the continuity of an individual in a particular ministry can ensure scope for better efficacy and effectivity, in virtue of the established familiarity and gained expertise over years.

However, continuity of a confrere in a particular ministry, in the name of avoiding destabilisation and providing stability, should not lead to the unhealthy trend of “indispensability” of individuals. In consequence, what is concretely witnessed is – some are conferred with the ‘special royalty’ of “perpetuity” – perpetual superiors, principals, formators etc. No one is indispensable except God and His grace!

17. Flexibility, timely and relevant attentiveness and thus constant adaptability in the changing situations and needs, is very needed, BUT no foresight, no envisioning, no planning, will be unproductive

Change is sign of growth. We are constantly urged to “read the signs of the times”, to keep pace with the changing times”. Our mission ever alive and active, demands that we remain flexible, adaptable and thus relevant. Thus, stagnancy which is not responsive to the changes is insipid and counter-productive.

However, lack of foresight, vision and planning should not be equated with flexibility and spontaneity.

Vision and mission are crucial, because they provide clarity, path of direction, preparedness and tools for implementation. They ensure continuity and stability of our common mission, irrespective of the individuals.

18. Celebrations are important because they are events which celebrate life itself and the accomplishments and persons themselves, and are also the Indicators of the Joy of life, BUT extravagance, un-prioritised spending, are not in the right spirit

Life is a gift and persons are value. Our religious life becomes a constant celebration. In celebrating certain occasions and events, we not only celebrate those moments, but much more the worth and giftedness of persons, and the significant role of such a moment and happening. Celebration is a concrete expression of appreciation and confirmation of something positive, and a renewed dedication to it.

However, we must be judicious and cautious, concerning the mode as well as the extent of our spending.

Lavishness, a pompous show without any future-oriented benefits, without any path-setting policy-decisions or plans of action, without any renovation of life – are lamentable.

19. Having a broader and comprehensive idea of Mission is very appreciable, BUT stretching the idea too much to the extent of reducing its focus and sharpness, and of diluting the very essence of mission, is not in the right missionary spirit

There has been so much talk about mission. Mission is becoming more and more comprehensive, enlarging its scope far and wide. Thus, mission is amplified from its traditional connotation of villages, remote areas, undeveloped and un-evangelised zones, to any domain, activity or ministry that is carried out by the members. Thus, working in a school, in a seminary, in a dispensary, in a social work office, in a legal office, in an administrative set up etc. are all different facets of mission.

This is very good, because it can imbue one with deep sense of mission and commitment wherever one works. It can endow mission with an all-pervasive purview.

However we must always be on guard that “amplification” does not amount to “over-simplification” or minimisation or relativisation of the essence and the crux of mission, reducing mission to nothing concrete, specific and tangible.

While the primordial essence and content of mission is fidelity to God’s will and His mission of liberation and wholeness, nevertheless, the first and irreducible contents of mission are, working in poor, under-developed and simple villages or areas. Thus, primarily mission ought to focus on pioneering, frontier missions with evangelisation and spiritual renewal as its primary objectives.

A missionary congregation without this essential mission-thrust is not faithful to its charism!

20. Structures / Institutions may be needed, because they can provide for better efficiency, effectivity and visibility, BUT over-emphasis on the external structures and institutions, to the neglect of interior restructuration, is harmful and deviating

We live in a world of visuals and visibility. We see huge structures and immediately make an impression on us. There is an unconscious link between greatness of a structure and the greatness of its effect. Thus, we see huge educational institutions, hospitals, churches,

companies, houses, buildings etc. We need some big structures for easy and better facilitation, convenience and pressing visibility.

However, more than seldom, there seems to be an exaggerated enthusiasm to build huge structures, without much thinking either of its purpose and durable utility, or neglecting other urgent priorities. Interior construction is more vital!

5. REPORT ON THE VISITATION OF SUPERIOR GENERAL TO THE NORTH EAST INDIA PROVINCE (SEPTEMBER 16 - OCTOBER 24, 2014)

ARRIVAL IN GALSI (West Bengal) ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

DEPARTURE FROM VINAYA BHAVAN, THAMARASSERY (Kerala) ON OCTOBER 24

(i) OBJECTIVE

The visitation focused on an evaluation of Community Life, Religious Life, and of the Apostolic life of the Local Communities with diverse ministries, and on meeting all confreres personally and then as a Local Community. Evaluation was based on the directives of the General Chapter 2013, Action Plan of the Provincial Congress 2014, Constitutions, and General Directory.

(ii) PREPARATION

With the same objectives in mind, Provincial had planned the itinerary almost 3 months before the visitation and had communicated to the confreres in the community. A few of the Local Superiors had prepared written reflective report on the religious life, community life, and apostolic life of the communities as per the request while others shared their evaluation casually and spontaneously. Provincial was personally present with me and participated in the Local Community meetings and Adoration. I look forward to meeting with confreres of North East India Province, who are away from the territory of the Province due to pastoral commitment and specialized studies, in their respective countries of residence

(iii) HIGHLIGHTS

- Personal meetings with 129 confreres in ministry in India and USA, thirty one scholastics in theology, conferences to the Candidates in the Minor Seminary, Meeting with the Novices, Community meetings in 23 Local Communities with an agenda of deepening community life and religious life
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with the Local Communities, Mass, Prayers, and meals with the confreres in the communities and in some places mass in the parishes with parishioners, meeting with Religious women collaborating with our Confreres, visiting the ministry sites, and meeting with Local Ordinaries in two dioceses
- Meeting with confreres in the Local Communities with the Provincial and evaluating the community life and apostolates of the Local Community
- Animation of Local Communities in the spirit of the Constitutions and General Chapter 2013
- Time of Eucharistic adoration with confreres in the Local community

- Officiated at the final profession of 4 confreres in the Formation house in Shillong
- Sharing with the confreres on the thrust of General Chapter 2013 and the need for disseminating the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales and the spirit of Fr. Mermier
- Listening to the lived experiences of MSFS life and to their valuable suggestions for improvement based on their vast experience

(iv) STRENGTH OF THE PROVINCE

(Gathered from personal meetings with confreres and personal observation)

- Almost 90% of Confreres expressed their sense of belongingness to the Province and to the Congregation, their family spirit, and love for and commitment to the mission, and a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction in MSFS way of life
- Confreres expressed their major strength as missionary spirit and sense of sacrifice in spite of the challenges and problems from outside and inside
- Active, enthusiastic, and enterprising confreres engaged in distant missions with less convenience of transportation and communication
- Hospitality and care received from confreres was outstanding and enjoyable
- Willingness of confreres to support each other in need and interest in coming together for gatherings and Apostolic Community meetings
- Confreres expressed their sense of fulfilment as there is enough work in the mission mostly consisting of parish, school, and village touring
- Apostolic Communities are active and regular in their meetings in most of the regions
- Senior Confreres have laid a solid foundation and trend for missionary life and they continue to remain in the mission as role models for many young confreres. Some of the junior confreres remarked that they enjoy the fruits of the labor by Seniors
- Growth and expansion of the Province due to hard work and commitment of the confreres in the remote missions
- MSFS enjoy a good reputation in the North East India for daring and committed missionary work with hospitality and availability to the people
- Willingness to accept challenges and a good number of confreres are ready to launch into difficult and distant mission in spite of challenges especially in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram
- Apostolate of education and Preaching ministry play a vital role in the work of evangelization in the North East India
- The new governance in the Congregation is received well by majority of the Confreres

(v) CHALLENGES IN THE PROVINCE FOR FURTHER GROWTH

(Gathered from sharing of the confreres and from their personal evaluation)

- Materialistic tendencies like seeking position, money, power, acquiring degrees, careerism, and professionalism seem to cool off the missionary dynamism
- **M (Missionaries) is beginning to disappear from MSFS and SFS seems to be the attraction (SFS Institutions).**

- Focus of the Province seems to be changing from Mission Centers to schools and institutions that bring money and profit
- Apostolate of Formation needs to focus on vocation promotion with due emphasis on quality and family background of the candidates
- Culture of Salesian spirituality and of MSFS Charism needs to break into the life of confreres and communities and ministries.
- Groupies: The tendency among some confreres to organize themselves into groups to seek importance, power and position and even engage in lobbying and campaigning for influencing the Administration
- These tendencies are seen as emerging from lack of spiritual animation
- The Province seems to be losing its one time strength of unity and community spirit
- A strong need expressed by Confreres for creating administrative units in the Province at least a Region to cater to religious life and effective service in the mission
- Cultural integration is a must to live in Local Communities in the context of confreres from different ethnic groups
- Confreres need to appreciate and encourage each other even in the midst of challenges and failures instead of putting others down with negative and judgmental remarks
- Apprehension among confreres that present Provincial Administration is new to the job; it lacks touch with mission and with the ground realities of the missions in the Province which affects the decision-making , appointments and transfers
- Expectations of confreres from PCICs for visit to the respective sites and offer animation, guidance, encouragement, and support

(vi) PROPOSALS

(My proposals after Visitation)

- **To intensify efforts on Community life through community prayers, regular Community meetings, empowering Local Superiors for animating community life and apostolates, monitoring of financial transactions, insistence on transparency and presentation of monthly financial statement in the community meeting (Monitoring of these exercises by the Major Superior)**
- **Re-capture the missionary spirit of the Founder and the Province and bring the focus back to mission and renewal of Christian Faith through touring and parish mission preaching**
- **Develop a mechanism to monitor the implementation the Province Statutes, Action Plan of the Provincial Congress, and Directives of the General Chapter 2013 by the Provincial Administration**
- **Encourage more confreres to join Parish preaching mission (in the model of Fr. Peter Mermier) as preaching ministry is received with great enthusiasm in the North East India Catholic Communities**

- Need for pastoral, missionary, and Salesian formation at all stages of formation as per the Formation policy; ensure the quality of candidates who join us through background check of families, interview, and monitoring by the vocation promoters with Provincial Administration
- Province needs animation from Administration and Local Superiors, with emphasis of MSFS identity and salesian spirituality at different levels: apostolic life, religious life, and community life
- To disseminate salesian spirituality through our ministries, parish mission, schools, and through publication
- Consistent efforts from the PCICs to visit periodically the different mission sites entrusted to their animation and familiarize with different centers and accompany confreres in their apostolates

Visitation was concluded with evaluation and animation sessions by the General Curia with the Provincial Curia

(vii) Conclusion

North East India Province can be called a Mission Province in the traditional understanding of the term mission. The Province consists of hundreds of villages open to Christ and Christian Faith. The people are generally friendly and open to the Missionaries. People need Christ to lead them from darkness to light. Contribution of the MSFS to the North Eastern People and to the Church is incredibly rich and visible. We have number of ordained confreres from the North East India which is a record number among the different Religious Congregations. Our Senior Confreres have played a vital role in doing the ground work for our missionary venture in the North East India.

‘We are losing our missionary spirit and our msfs-spirit’ - is the pain expressed by majority of the confreres during my visitation. How do we re-capture the missionary spirit? - is the challenge before the Province. I wish the new Provincial Curia of the North East India Province all the best in their challenging task of leadership and in their efforts ‘to be the change they wish to see’ in the Province. **God Bless North East India Province!**

Salesian Thought: “Do not be disheartened by your imperfections, but always rise up with fresh courage” (St. Francis de Sales)

Live Jesus!



Father Abraham Vettuvellil, MSFS

Superior General

Vinay Sadan, Delhi, India

November 11, 2014