

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Casa Generalizia



MISSIONARI DI S. FRANCESCO DI SALES,
Via delle Testuggini 21, 00143 Roma, Italia.

Tel: (06) 99 70 91 47
Fax: (06) 99 70 69 57
superiorgeneralmsfs@gmail.com



SG-AB2-01

March 16, 2019

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

My dear Confreres:

Fraternal greetings and prayerful wishes to you during our Lenten journey!

1. LENTEN JOURNEY

On Ash Wednesday, we voiced our need for mercy. We invited God's grace and mercy to break into our hearts that stay burdened by sin, shame, frustrations, and regrets. The season of Lent continues to remind us of the plain and simple Gospel truth: 'Our sins do not define us. Our past does not decide our future. Even when we struggle with our weaknesses and addictions, God remains the same'. 'For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness' (Joel 2: 13). St. Francis de Sales, known for his teachings on holiness, gently reminds us that we can sanctify every moment of our lives. It is never too late to be holy. Every moment in our lives is the right time. Every moment gives us a new opportunity to recognize, receive, and bask in the mercy of Jesus. We listen to our Patron and his inspirations to make our Lenten journey fruitful:

- Each moment of each day comes from the hand of a loving God and is graced for our salvation
- The only time we have is each present moment. Don't live in the past; don't dwell on the future
- The "little virtues" of patience, humility, gentleness, simplicity, honesty, and hospitality are powerful means of growing holy

II. GENERAL CHAPTER 2019

The 20th General Chapter that took place from February 01 – 13, 2019 has ended after prayerful reflections, studies, sharing, and deliberations on the theme "MSFS Wake up to the Basics". The Chapter has re-affirmed that fidelity to our Charism is basic to our consecrated life. Our Charism is the soul of our Congregation. Charism is the scale that measures the quality of our consecrated life and apostolates. We need to use the template of our missionary Charism to continue the mission of Christ in the Church.

Call of the General Chapter states:

- Our Charism calls us to live **the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in our community and mission** as envisioned by our Founder, Fr. Peter Mary Mermier
- The four basics of our Charism - **Community life, Mission, MSS-ness and Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales** – are to characterize our daily lives and apostolates.

III. “MSFS, LIVE UP TO THE BASICS”

“The Call of the General Chapter 2019” articulates what we are to live in the next 6 years. The 40 Capitulants of the General Chapter together with the special invitees prayed, studied and reflected on our Charism at length and contributed to preparing the document on the Call of the Chapter. The 13 days of the General Chapter 2019 were days of blessings, fraternity, and communion characterized by an attitude of humbly listening and bravely speaking for an effective living of our Charism.

The approved and voted document in the form of “Call of the General Chapter 2019” invites us to journey from “Return to the Basics” to “MSFS, Live up to the Basics”. Instead of thinking ourselves into a new of living, the Chapter exhorts us to live ourselves into a new way of thinking. 'How we live our Charism' in the coming years is the focus of the document. The person of Christ and the mission of Christ will always remain at the center of our life as Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. We live the basics of our Charism to think in a new way as envisioned by our Founder. To summarize the thrust of the General Chapter:

- *Our consecrated life envisioned by Father Peter Mermier is more about how we live the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in our community and mission on a daily basis than holding on to projects, rules, and policies*
- *General Chapter 2019 calls us to look closely at our Charism until we see our apostolates through the prism of our Charism. Too often, we have substituted our charism for apostolate and personal fulfillment. As a result, we spend a lot of time on administrative measures with rules and regulations in order to set things right*
- *Our obsession with individual approaches to apostolates sometimes becomes a pious substitute for actually following what Jesus taught and what Father Mermier envisioned. General Chapter, therefore, calls us to place our charism at the center of our apostolates*
- *The call of the General Chapter is to live: the basics of a disciplined Community Life in a Local Community with a Local Superior, the Missionary dynamism that takes us to geographical and existential peripheries, and the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales that bears fruits of MSFS ness and a deeper communion with the Lord*

IV. APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE

Let me place before the entire Congregation the valuable services of the outgoing Administration in the persons of **Fr. Thumma Mariadas Reddy** (the Assistant General), **Fr. Noel Rebello** (General Secretary for Formation) **Fr. Agnelo Fernandes** (General Secretary for Formation and Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries), **Fr. George Parampukattil** (General Secretary for Education), **Fr. S. Jayaseelan** (General Secretary for Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries), and **Fr. Augustine Mangatt** (General Bursar). We owe a great deal of gratitude, appreciation, and respect to our confreres who played a vital role in orienting the Congregation as per the new governance while remaining faithful to the missionary charism and heritage of our Congregation. Their treasured contribution will remain a part of the history of the Congregation. The twelve years of teamwork brought abundant blessings and introduced new perspectives to our life as a Congregation. It was a great learning experience and blessing for me to work with these stalwarts who always placed the growth of the Congregation and well-being of the confreres as the priority. On behalf of each one of us, I thank them for their unwavering commitment to the administration and animation of the Congregation. God bless them in their future ministries!

V. NEW GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

I am humbled and honored to be re-elected the Superior General for a second term. I consider it another God-given opportunity to be at the service of our dear Congregation in living the Charism given to us by Fr. Mermier. I acknowledge the trust and confidence that the Congregation has placed in me. I am glad that we have a young and vibrant team of General Curia who is competent and gifted to administer and animate the Congregation for the next 6 years. I humbly request your valuable prayers and understanding for our effective functioning in obedience to our Constitutions and General Directory. May God be praised!

I am glad to acknowledge and honor once again the new team of the General Curia and their Secretariats:

Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil: Superior General

Fr. Yves Carron: Assistant Superior General

Fr. Johnson Kallidukil: General Secretary for Mission

Fr. Suresh Babu: General Secretary for Formation

Fr. Jacob Karamakuzhyil: General Secretary for Education

Fr. J. Stephen: General Secretary for Social Apostolate and Innovative Ministries

Fr. Jose Cheriyanthara: General Bursar

I thank the new team for their readiness and availability to be at the service of the Congregation. We hope and pray that we give our best to discharge our responsibilities for the mission of the Congregation.

VI. A BIG THANKS TO THE NORTHEAST INDIA PROVINCE

The 20th General Chapter 2019 took place in the MSFS Provincial House in Guwahati, India. All the participants of the Chapter have acknowledged the ideal ambiance and facilities provided by the Northeast India Province. The hospitality of the Provincial House Community, the personal care and attention is given to the Capitulars and Invitees, the Salesian simplicity and availability of the confreres were incredible experiences for all and will continue to warm our hearts with joyful memories. I thank **Fr. George Panthanmackel, the Provincial**, and his team for the detailed planning and execution of the organization of the General Chapter.

A special thanks to the members of the Pre-Capitular Commission and the Steering Committee, **Fr. Saji George (Secretary General), Fr. Suresh Babu, Fr. J. Stephen, and Fr. Manoj Tirkey** for their detailed planning and efficient management in the preparation and organization of the General Chapter.

We were privileged to have three Minutes Secretaries from outside the General Chapter to prepare the minutes. **Fr. K. Thomas, Fr. Vintu Avittappallil, and Fr. Carlus Barowa** for their tireless work in providing accurate minutes of the entire Chapter on time.

I thank each one of you, dear confreres, for your prayers and accompaniment before and during this spiritual event. The Spirit of the Lord has guided us and will live in our hearts to live the spirit of the Chapter.

DECISIONS, NEWS, AND EVENTS

1. ADMINISTRATOR OF FRANCO-SWISS PROVINCE

Fr. Jean-Yves LE TUE is appointed as the Administrator of Franco-Swiss Province from March 04, 2019 until the New Provincial assumes office.

2. CAUSE OF FATHER PETER MERMIER

The opening session of the diocesan tribunal for the cause of Fr. Mermier took place on February 23, 2019. The censor theologian has been extremely positive and much impressed by our Founder's faith, hope, and charity. This is another major step toward the beatification process.

3. CALL OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER 2019

Provincials, through their circulars, have already disseminated the spirit and thrust of the General Chapter. Major Superiors and Superiors of the Units will ensure that there is also a presentation on the General Chapter by one of the Capitulars for the benefit of all our confreres. A booklet will be released on the Call of the General Chapter at the earliest and made available to all for reference.

4. 'LIVE UP TO THE BASICS'

The General Chapter has given us clear directives as to how to live our Charism. Two years of preparations have gone into the Chapter with a call to “wake up to the basics”. Now the response to the call is, “MSFS Live up to the Basics” in fidelity to our Charism.

5. SALESIAN PROGRAM IN ANNECY (SPA)

SPA 2019 will take place in Annecy, France in the months of September-October. The program is open to 8 participants this year. **Fr. Yves Carron, the Director, and Fr. Samuel Devaraj, the Vice Director** will coordinate the Program. Three confreres have already registered for the program. I request the Provincials to contact SPA office and do the registration at the earliest.

6. BOOKS RELEASED DURING THE GENERAL CHAPTER

I. OBITUARY: MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES (1838 – 2018)

- Collated and compiled by Pune Province

ii. MSFS PARISH MISSION PREACHING MANUAL

- by MSFS PMP Core Committee

iii. MSFS CHARISM AND MISSION: A COMPENDIUM OF ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF FATHER EMILE MAYORAZ MSFS

- Chief Editor Fr. K. Thomas

iv. GROWING IN HOLINESS: Guiding Ordinary People to Extraordinary Holiness through the Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales

- By Fr. Suresh Babu

v. REFERENCE BOOK OF GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS (RBGP)

- By the General Administration

7. PRAYERFUL TRIBUTE TO OUR MISSIONARIES

- **Fr. Abraham Puthussery** of Southwest India Province (74 years) died on January 29, 2019
- **Fr. P.C. Paul** of Nagpur Province (81 years) died on February 24, 2019
- **Fr. Stephen Marayikulam (Jr.)** of Northeast India Province (56 years) died on March 06, 2019
- **Fr. Joseph Vichatt** of Visakhapatnam Province (77 years) died on March 06, 2019
(Please offer one mass for every departed confrere)

8. EXCLAUSTRATION AND DEPARTURES FROM CONGREGATION

This is for our information to know the names of confreres who are exclaustrated or left the Congregation in the past six years.

8.1. CONFRERES WHO SERVE EXCLAUSTRATION (2013 – 2019)

Fr. Clifford D'Souza	Fr. Cyriac Nellikunnel
Fr. Kinalia D'Souza	Fr. John Karondukadavil
Fr. Cyril George	Fr. Peter D'Souza

8.2. CONFRERES WHO CEASE TO BE MSFS (2013 – 2019)

Augustine Shingare	Mathew Ubale
Roberto Salazar	Raphael Mercier
Hector Valdes	Nicholas Gantala
Joachim Gorantla	Balaswamy Chintapally
Marshal Anthony, Andrezej MarsZewski, and Kuldeep Kiro	
Fr. James Anandraj	Fr. Mathew Ottappally
Fr. Suresh Kumar	Fr. Mariadas Kalluri
Fr. Philip Baptiste	Fr. Austin Pookkattuchalil
Fr. Saji Neendoor	Fr. Hubert Miranda

We pray for our confreres and their well being in their decisions and new life.

St. Francis de Sales writes: “If you find that you have wandered away from the shelter of God, lead your heart back to Him quietly and simply”

Pope Francis on Ash Wednesday: “Lent is the time to rediscover the direction of life. Because in life's journey, as in every journey, what really matters is not to lose sight of the goal. The Lord is the goal of our journey in this world. The direction must lead to him”.

Wishing you a blessed season of Lent and united with you in St. Francis de Sales and Father Mermier,

Fraternally in Christ,



Father Abraham Vettuvellil, MSFS
Superior General