

OCTOBER 2020 | SG AB2 05

MSFS

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES



HAPPY FOUNDATION DAY

175th anniversary of the First MSFS
landing in India.

**SUPERIOR GENERAL TO ALL THE MEMBERS
OF THE CONGREGATION**

Father Abraham Vettuvellil msfs

My dear Confreres, Grace and Peace of Christ Jesus, Our Lord! I wish you a Happy Foundation day on October 24 and a blessed 175th anniversary of the First MSFS landing in India. Let us celebrate our Congregation's gifts and the first Missionaries who implanted the Congregation in India with grateful hearts.

Casa
Generalizia

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POPE FRANCIS ENCYCLICAL LETTER

FRATELLI TUTTI

DO NOT JUST READ IT, PRAY IT

OCT 2020 // TAKEAWAYS FOR THE MSFS

Fratelli Tutti

The eight-chapter, 45,000 - word – social Encyclical of Pope Francis, signed on the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi on October 03, 2020, is said to be a landmark in the social teaching of the Church. Inspired mainly by St. Francis of Assisi and by Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi, and Blessed Charles de Foucauld, Pope presents a way of living in our Common Home recognizing the fundamental values of our common humanity. In the coming days, weeks, months, and years, this rich document will undoubtedly be unpacked to bring out the wisdom and challenge present in it.

It is not an abstract document. It is meant to be applied and put into practice by Christians and non-Christians alike. It is addressed to all people of goodwill to unite their different voices to 'create a melody of sublime nobility' to navigate the complexities of our times. As we read through the Encyclical, we get a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will not remain on the level of words. Pope Francis wants us to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. It is to be read and prayed because it is all about a way to re-read and live the Gospel for our times.



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Where we are
TODAY

SEE – JUDGE – ACT METHODOLOGY OF THE ENCYCLICAL

Pope Francis follows the 'See-Judge-Act method,' which helps us step out from the current situation, observe it, and then reflect on it before we jump in and take action. He starts the Encyclical with an assessment of our present situation but then digs beneath the problem through in-depth discussions of Scripture, theology, anthropology, ethics, and politics. He then decides what can be and should be done to implement the social principles. In *Fratelli Tutti*, he looks at the global issues that are contributing to systemic human degradation. All human beings are our brothers and sisters. If this conviction is to find concrete embodiment, we are forced to see things in a new light and develop a new response. We are given a new direction and a paradigmatic shift.

SEE

The first Chapter, 'Dark Clouds over a Closed World', serves as a key to the SEE - part of the document. He SEES the dark clouds – of the manipulations of concepts like democracy, freedom, justice, the loss of the meaning of the social community and history, selfishness and indifference toward the common good, the prevalence of

market-logic based on profit and culture of waste, unemployment, racism, poverty, the disparity of rights and its aberrations such as slavery, trafficking, women subjugated and then forced to abort, and organ trafficking - threatening our world as 'equivalent to a third world war fought piecemeal.

JUDGE

The parable of the good Samaritan serves as a key to a profound theological reflection and the JUDGE - part of the document. Holy Father asks, "Which of these persons (in the parable) do you identify with? This question, blunt as it is, is direct and incisive. Which of these characters do you resemble? We need to acknowledge that we are constantly tempted to ignore others, especially the weak. Let us admit that, for all the progress we have made, we are still "illiterate" when it comes to accompanying, caring for, and supporting the most frail and vulnerable members of our developed societies. We have become accustomed to looking the other way, passing by, and ignoring situations until they directly affect us (64). In a society that is illiterate in caring for the frail and

vulnerable, we are called to become neighbors to others. The decision to include those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social, and religious project (69).

ACT

The Pope emphasizes LOVE as the necessary ground for building a 'culture of encounter' in the ACT - part. As a people, we should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, and planning a project that includes everyone (216). Globalized society makes us neighbors, but it does not make us brothers and sisters. What ACTION works in favor of universal fraternity?

Welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants and all those in the margins

Becoming more aware that either we are all saved together, or no one is saved

Forging a global, juridical, political, and economic order that favors the development of all people in solidarity

We welcome and promote a culture of encounter where we can learn from others, where no one is useless, and no one is expendable. 'If I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life.'



The main TAKEAWAYS for the MSFS

I am convinced that we are living at a time when the world and the Church certainly need Fratelli Tutti of Pope Francis. As Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, living as a community of brothers and working among different cultures, nations, languages, races, castes, regions, and tribes in 32 countries, the Encyclical indeed gives us hope amid dark clouds. It calls us to have a new vision and a new way of living together as brothers and sisters and sharing a body to the Pope's dream of a universal fraternity and social love. How can Fratelli Tutti help us?

Let me highlight FOUR takeaways for our action:

(i) Fratelli Tutti asks us a penetrating question: Which of the characters or persons in the parable of the good Samaritan the MSFS today resemble or identify with? Perhaps, it is here all our labels and masks fall away. This question is a moment of truth. Will we bend down to touch and heal the wounds of others?



(ii) People today are ready to receive messages of fraternity, compassion, love, and forgiveness. But they are deeply disappointed when we are merely priests with our religious robes and vestments who reflect current cultural values, upward mobility, institutionalism, and clericalism more than the Gospel.

(iii) 'The spiritual stature of a person's life is measured by love. This love must extend beyond family, tribe, and nation to strangers, migrants, and all people into a social friendship where the worth of every person is acknowledged.'

(iv) For a missionary, TIME IS LIFE ITSELF. Time is not money for a missionary. Time is life itself when we want to give our lives away freely as Jesus, St. Francis de Sales, and Father Mermier. When time is money, we have time for everything that generates cash and no time for living the ideals and values of religious life and the Gospel.

'The Pope has done his part. It is up to us not to let the dream be just a dream but instead the fundamental principle of a new way of living together, as brothers and sisters plus nature, in the same Common Home' (Leonardo Boff).

DECISIONS – NEWS – EVENTS

PROVINCIAL CURIA OF BRAZIL PROVINCE

Fr. Agnaldo COSTA Junior (Councillor and Admonitor), Fr. Stephendass JOSEPH (Councilor for Mission), and Fr. Jose Devasahayam SAVIOUR PITCAHI (Provincial Bursar). Congratulations and prayerful wishes to the new team!

PROVINCIAL CURIA OF EAST AFRICA PROVINCE

Fr. Sheejan KALLARACKAL (Councillor and Admonitor), Fr. Zachariah BUREFERO (Councillor), Fr. Soosai Raj ROBERT (Councillor), Fr. Japhet KIRIMI (Councillor), and Fr. Reji PENDANATH (Provincial Bursar). Congratulations and prayerful wishes to the new team!

LATEST NEWS ON THE CAUSE OF THE FOUNDER

Diocesan Tribunal for the Cause of Beatification of Fr. Pierre-Marie MERMIER

The third session of the Diocesan Tribunal was held at Annecy on September 19, 2020. At this stage (diocesan inquiry, or diocesan stage), the Congregation for the Causes of Saints wants to know whether the Servant of God is known in his home place. Do the local people know him, learn about his life and apostolate, rely on his intercession? What about his virtues and spiritual life? Would the Beatification/Canonization of the Servant of God help the local Church for the people?, and so on.

So, witnesses are needed to answer these questions. In the case of Fr. Mermier, of course, there are no more direct witnesses. We had to find out people who, at least, have a basic knowledge of his story and a close relationship with him. 10 people came to give their testimony, a blend of different vocations, ages, and life conditions: lay people (married or singles), diocesan priest, Holy Cross Sisters and MSFS. Added to this, three testimonies were given in writing. All these materials are very rich and will certainly speed up the Process. I take this opportunity to thank the Provincial of Franco-Swiss, the Vice-Promoter Fr. Samuel, and Bro. Robert Sotomil and Fr. K. Thomas for their technical assistance.

I also take this opportunity **to remind all the Vice-Promoters in India, Africa, and South America that they are also expected to find such witnesses at the earliest** (cf. my letter of August 07). We need testimonies to form different parts of the world before closing this first stage of the Process.

- Fr. Yves Carron, Assistant General and Postulator of the Cause



Please Note:

The current pandemic situation that has engulfed the entire world has adversely affected all of us. We are compelled to cancel or re-schedule our programs especially in various meetings. I regret to inform you that we will not hold the following scheduled programs announced in the Six Year Coordination Plan of the General Curia with the Provincial Curia for the year 2020. We will re-schedule the following programs to a later date:

1. Province Forum Meetings with the General Administration
2. Visitation of Superior General to MSFS community in Sicily
3. Visitation of Superior General to the Southeast India Province
4. Visitation of Assistant General to Pune Province and Suvidya College
5. Southeast India Provincial Curia meeting with the General Curia in Trichy
6. Training Program for the Indian Provinces' Provincial Curia in Trichy
7. PIF-PEA – General Curia meeting in Trichy
8. Post-SPA meeting in Trichy
9. Regional (India) Stewardship Forum meeting with General Bursar
10. PMP Assembly in Poondi

Extraordinary General Chapter 2021 will hopefully be shifted to February 2022. We are waiting for an Indult from the Holy See for the same. I shall keep you posted at the earliest.

OCTOBER 24 FOUNDATION DAY

We will be celebrating the 182nd anniversary of the foundation of our Congregation. Let us thank the Lord for our Congregation and for all that we have been able to do for the mission of Christ through our beloved Congregation. We consecrate our Congregation and us to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the Foundation day. Let us plant SIX trees to honor the SIX Missionaries who landed in India.

STATUS-2021 will be ready for our use from January 2021.

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MDO

On a Relentless Fight Against the Pandemic

The Mission Development Offices of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales situated in different Provinces and mission units were quick to respond to this emergency to help those left without necessities. We identified the families & groups who are adversely affected by the lockdown, especially the tribal indigenous people, migrant workers, parentless children, and reaching out to them by conducting health and awareness camps, distributing medical kits, and sharing with them the provisions (rice, dal, oil, vegetables, and other provisions) which can support for their livelihood during these days of social distancing, thus, giving hundreds of families a ray of hope. Most of these families are deprived of Government aid during this difficult time. We succeeded in reaching out to more than 90,000 families in 11 countries (India, Kenya, Uganda, Indonesia, Philippines, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, and Ecuador) on three continents. MDO Rome has supported different units engaged in the Corporal works of Mercy in different countries. Fratelli Tutti! We appreciate the dynamic leadership of Directors of the Province MDOs. (Reporting from MDO in Rome).



PRAYERFUL TRIBUTE TO OUR BELOVED CONFRERES

Gentle Reminder:

We are almost 1120 ordained MSFS in the Congregation. Every confrere will be blessed to have nearly 1120 masses celebrated for him immediately after his death (only if everyone fulfills the suffrages for the departed confrere). Please be advised to remember:

1. We offer one Mass for every departed confrere
2. Provincial or a designated confrere celebrates Mass for all the departed members of the Province/Vice Province/Region/Delegation/ during the annual Retreat
3. The obituary is to be read in our communities
4. Each one is to remember the departed confreres and seek their intercession (General Directory No. 98).

Fr. Martin GRIFFIN (83), of the Province of England, died on August 18, 2020

Fr. Mathew CHAVELY (71) of the East Africa Province died on September 05, 2020.

Fr. Thomas VADKUMPADAM (74) of the Nagpur Province died on October 06, 2020.

Fr. Julian KODIGANDALA (57) of the Visakh Province died on October 09, 2020.

Fr. Pakki Devadas (62) of the Visakh Province died on October 17, 2020

We pray for our dear confreres, and may they rest in peace through the mercy of God!

I wish you a Happy Foundation day! Live JESUS!

"Why are we anxious? Just because we let ourselves be led by curiosity and ambition and we forget the real goal of our life"
(St. Francis de Sales)

Fraternally in Christ,

Father Abraham VETTUVELIL, MSFS
Superior General