



MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

GUWAHATI PROVINCE

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May 13, 2020

Dear Confreres,

Greetings from Guwahati!

I hope that all of you are fine. I am glad to hear from many of the centres that all are healthy and are doing well. I write a few lines now to encourage you to continue to fight COVID 19, to thank you for helping the poor in this Lockdown period and to request you to observe 14th May as a day of prayer and fasting as wished by the Holy Father.

This is probably the first time in the near history that we are all tied down to our homes for such a long period of time. What is more surprising is that it does not seem to have an end in sight. We are unsure as to how to act and often undermined by fear how to plan things. Schools and parishes are affected most. We do not know how to go about. Our fathers in formation houses, and the brothers in seminaries are having a tough time. Those who are going to take make their first profession, those who are going to enter into the novitiate, those who are supposed to start their regency, are all stunned by current predicament. We have seen and heard and read about people behaving irresponsibly panic movements to reach home, crazy buying, ignoring social distancing and not caring about sanitization guidelines etc. Some even over spiritualize and attribute a divine hand punishing humankind with COVID 19. The God revealed by Jesus to all of us, is a God, ABBA, who does not punish but only blesses. "For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt 5:45).

Let us accept the present predicament and live in the present reality. We have our fears: Will I be a COVID 19 patient, will I overcome the sickness, will my dear and near ones be affected, what about the people entrusted to my care etc. Let us face and address the fear with courage and not shy away from the current phenomenon. Getting ourselves focused on God and keeping ourselves in balance will surely lead us to take good decisions in the actual times. There can be for some a tendency to behave in a selfish or irrational way, where emotions can often override good decision making. Let us take care of ourselves!

Let us fight COVID 19 together!

The outbreak of COVID-19 has created an unprecedented situation around the world. Our fight against Coronavirus is just began and not ended. Experts tell us that June-July will be the peak time of COVID 19 in Northeast. Your alliance to the ecclesiastical authorities and cooperation with the civil authorities in fighting COVID 19 is commendable. I appreciate that very much. Please continue to fight COVID 19! Please be a model! Let us not do anything which is not permissible by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in our Schools and in our Churches in the Lockdown period. Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose. We will win the fight because Jesus is with us. If He is with us who can be against us (Rom 8:31).

Serve the Poor

I am extremely happy to hear the good works of CHARITY you do for the poor in your region in this difficult time. My heartfelt appreciation and congratulations for every effort you take to alleviate the hunger of the poor

in this Lockdown period. We can be proud of FAsCE India, under the guidance of Fr. Saji Puthiyakulangara, for leading the province in our fight against Coronavirus and in our endeavour to help the poor and the needy. I thank all the confreres for actively participating in helping the poor. I thank all our benefactors, particularly our Confreres working abroad for their authentic efforts and interest to raise fund for helping the poor.

Provincial Councillors and Bursar: The term of office extended

Our Beloved Father Superior General, in his letter, dated on 20th April 2020 extended the mandate of the Province Councillors and Bursar until the next celebration of the Provincial Congress. They will serve as Provincial Councillors in Charge of their respective apostolates.

Fr. Philip Thomas: Provincial Councillor for Missions & Admonitor
Fr. George Vettukattil: Provincial Councillor in charge of Formation
Fr. George Thomas Poovathunkal: Provincial Councillor in charge of Education
Fr. Saji George Puthiyakulangara: Provincial Councillor, SAIM
Fr. Santhosh Chavaranal: Provincial Bursar

I thank them sincerely for accepting and lending their hand to run the provincial administration. Thank you, dear Fathers!!!

14th May, 2020: A Day of Fasting and Prayer

Pope Francis writes in Twitter “I would like to remind you that on 14 May, believers of every religion are invited to unite themselves spiritually in a day of prayer, fasting and works of charity, to implore God to help humanity overcome the coronavirus.” Dear Confreres let us observe 14th May 2020 as a day of Fasting, Prayer and works of Mercy in all our communities. Please organize 14th May in your own way, however little it is, to be part of the universal Church. Let us be united with the Holy Father in prayer!

Media Communication

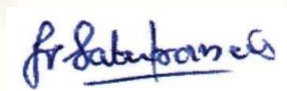
I have heard from some of the confreres that they have used the media well during the last few weeks. Offering online live streaming of Holy Mass, Adoration, Rosary, Retreat, giving online classes for the school children etc. We are lagging behind in mass media communication in Northeast because of the poor internet connectivity. But still I am very glad to hear that many are making good use of the media communications. Please continue to make use of media and internet wherever it is possible and available.

Conclusion

How do we respond as Disciples of Jesus, as a Christian, as a religious and as a Fransalian in this challenging times? Francis de Sales tells us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Jesus shows us that we have a loving God who is with us always and He has a good plan for our future. Our HOPE and TRUST is in Him and stay focused on HIM, Him alone!!

Wishing you best of everything!

Yours in Christ,



Fr. Sabu Francis MSFS
Provincial, Guwahati Province