

Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS)

South - East India Province

February

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Salesian Thought

"When God's will is shown clearly to us through divine ordinances and commandments, there is nothing further to deliberate on for we must simply do what has been ordained."

Straight from the heart of Fr. Peter Marie Mermier

"I hope that it will be so for the greater glory of God, for reparation of my past and improvement in the future, if it pleasing to Jesus, Mary and St. Francis de Sales".
34 [Personal notes, 18-08-1859]



Fr. Patrick Jayaraj ANTONY, MSFS
Provincial, South - East India Province



My dear Confreres,

On the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord and the Day for Consecrated Life, I greet you with the peace and joy of Jesus, our Lord. We are reminded of the immense grace of our vocation to live a consecrated life in the way of Jesus. His grace is sufficient for us, for power is made perfect in weakness (cf. 2 Cor 12:9). This day calls us for a total surrender to the Lord, while remaining joyful. It invites us to reconsecrate ourselves to the Lord, renew our commitment to him, and reaffirm our belongingness to him which would pave way for reconciliation with one another.

As we are in the Year of St Francis de Sales, the celebration of the Feast of SFS in 2023 has had a great relevance. St. Francis de Sales has shown God to us as the God of the human heart, so compassionate and merciful. Pope Francis writes of our Patron in *Totum Amoris Est*, "St. Francis de Sales felt that there was no better place to find God, and to help others to find him, than in the hearts of the women and men of his time." This conviction of our Patron motivates us to relate with everyone with fraternal love and sincere compassion. May the spirit and spirituality of Saint Francis de Sales encompass us and lead us to be ever close to Jesus, a friend of the broken-hearted and a missionary of love. South-East India Province with its missionary dimension has been spreading the fragrance of love for the past 18 years. This fragrance has evoked a sense of togetherness, sacrifice, benevolence, respect for one another and above all Mission. We have witnessed as a Province the collective responsibility in stretching out our wings to the Malawi mission. We have taken flight and are destined to fly higher. I am sure that with your unhindered co-operation, support and commitment, our province-family will scale greater heights.

1. SEASON OF LENT – SEASON OF GRACE:

LENT

A Season of Renewal



We stand at the door of Lent. Lent announces a time of prayer, fasting, penance and almsgiving. There is no better time to reconnect oneself with God, deepen our faith and reconcile with one another. It can be an incredibly rewarding time for reconciliation, if observed with apt disposition. It calls for a determined resolution to overcome temptations for wealth, position and glorification of the self. Our Lord has shown us how we can successfully handle them (Mt 4:1-11). Jesus was rooted in the love of the Father and remained focused in his mission. These two elements enabled him to send the evil forces away from him. Our closeness to God through intense prayers, filial love towards others and resilience amidst adversities and temptations will help us move in the way of the Lord. Before beginning the public ministry, Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness. For us too, it is necessary to go into the wilderness in order to have all those experiences which the wilderness can offer to us: thirst, heat, deadly silence, anxiety and loss of hope. Then, there would be a longing for water, shade, reconciliation, confidence and hope. The lent facilitates these through Jesus who is life, way and the truth (Jn 14:6). He would offer us inner peace, courage and motivation, so as to begin to experience his redemption here and now.

2. WORDS OF GRATITUDE:

It's indeed a wonderful occasion, on behalf of the Province, to thank Rev. Fr. K. Ignacimuthu, my predecessor. For the past 6 years, he had gained our respect and love as the leader of the Province; and now, after successfully completing his term, he has gained the gratitude of the entire province. As a leader, he was selfless and was truly committed to the growth of the Province. He took upon himself the challenge thrown at him to expand the mission to the African Continent, by taking up the Malawi Mission and strengthening it with sufficient personnel. He appropriated the vision of Father Peter Mary Mermier, our beloved Founder, "I want Missions" in his tenure. His personal accompaniment and constant visits have kept the mission alive and active. He has strengthened the Province with Salesian optimism and Mermierian missionary thrust. His concern for the confreres, his presence at the loss of the loved ones of the confreres, his commitment to the administrative tasks and his availability to those in need have set him apart as a special leader with Salesian touch. He has instilled a sense of duty and responsibility in the Province. He worked for the growth of the province and for the personal development and enrichment of the confreres. He made efforts to infuse renewal in community and religious life on a daily basis. He had his own challenges and difficulties to deal with but none of them could ever subdue his spirit of trust and confidence in God or hinder his commitment to the Province.



I, on behalf of the Province and my own personal behalf, extend my gratitude to Rev. Fr. K. Ignacimuthu. Dear father, your contributions in terms of being a unique leader has further enhanced the growth of the Province and has given a new orientation. As we look back at the past 6 years, we admire at what God was able to achieve through your guidance. We are proud of your achievements and hope to continue your legacy of uncompromised commitment and excellence. Thank you dear Fr. K. Ignacimuthu. I am sure with your expertise and vast experience; you will be available when needed to assist the administration.

3. MONTHLY INTENTIONS OF THE GENERAL – FEBRUARY

All those Fransalian Associates in formation be inspired by the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales and live the Salesian virtues in their daily lives, we pray.

4. INSTALLATION OF THE NEW PROVINCIAL

On the Feast of our Heavenly Patron Saint Francis de Sales the South-East India Province was blessed with a new provincial. Rev. Fr. A. Patrick Jayaraj was installed as the 4th Provincial of South-East India Province. The event began with the Holy Eucharistic Celebration in the MSFS Provincialate on 24th January 2023 at 9.45 am. The historical event was witnessed by a number of priests both from Trichy and Thanjavur dioceses, Religious both men and women, guests, benefactors and well-wishers and a good number of MSFS Priests. Rev. Fr. K. Ignacimuthu, the outgoing Provincial, presided over the Eucharistic celebration and offered Mass for the intention of Fr. A. Patrick and for the Province. In his homily, Rev. Fr. George Panthammackal, the Rector of the Morning Star Regional Seminary, Kolkata, emphasized the aspect of Agape, the unconditional love as the foundation of Christian life. He brought out the nuances of this unconditional love citing incidents from the life of Saint Francis de Sales and from his writings, in order to encourage the participants to remain in God's unconditional love and share a loving relationship with each other. He also appreciated the two leaders, Fr. K. Ignacimuthu and Fr. A. Patrick and highlighted their contribution and commitment to their responsibilities.

After the homily, Fr. C. Sebastin Raj, the Admonitor read the appointment letter of Rev. Fr. A. Patrick Jayaraj from the Superior General. Seeking then the assistance of the Holy Spirit, Rev. Fr. A. Patrick, placing his hands on the Holy Bible, recited the Creed and assumed his new responsibility. Then Rev. Fr. K. Ignacimuthu, handed over his responsibilities in a symbolic way by handing over a copy of the Constitutions, the General Directory, the Statutes of the Province, Treatise on the Love of God and the Introduction to the Devout Life to Rev. Fr. A. Patrick Jayaraj. After the Eucharistic celebration, there was a short felicitation program for the new and the outgoing Provincials. Fr. C. Sebastin Raj, the admonitor recalled the achievements of Rev. Fr. Ignacimuthu and thanked him for his tremendous will-power and total commitment to the Province for the past 6 years. He also narrated his leadership qualities and thanked God for empowering him to animate the Province. Then Rev. Fr. K. Ignacimuthu thanked everyone for their contribution to his successful completion of the tenure as the Provincial of South-East India Province. He also congratulated the new Provincial and assured him and the Province of his constant accompaniment and commitment.





As part of the occasion, being in the Year of Saint Francis de Sales, two books were released. One was written by Fr. K. Rajashekar, titled as “Punidha Francis Salesiaar: Vaazhvum Varalaarum” which contains the biography of Saint Francis de Sales and translation of the Apotolic Letter of Pope Francis *Totum Amoris Est* and the other book titled as “Thiruthiya Salesiyar, thirundhiya Aanmaakkal” was written by Fr. M. John Fernandes, containing the adventurous and life-defining efforts of the saint in the mission of Chablais. The books were released by Very Rev. Fr. A. Patrick Jayaraj and Fr. A. Luckas and the first copies were given to Fr. K. Ignacimuthu, the former Provincial and Fr. Lawrence, the VF respectively.

Finally, in his acknowledgment, the new Provincial Rev. Fr. A. Patrick Jayaraj thanked the outgoing Provincial for his service and explicated his orientation for the Province. He looked back at the past 18 years and appreciated the able but unique leadership of the three provincials, while also pointing out that we have progressed from being infants to becoming young adults. He personally felt the endearing bond that exists in the Province which was visible with the assurance from most of the confreres of their prayer and accompaniment. Having traversed through 18 years, our Province has become more aware of the needs of the Church and God’s people. This calls us to respond collectively as a family. He then exhorted the confreres with the following words, “let us continue to strengthen our religious and community living, making it more vibrant; let us continue to equip ourselves qualitatively, focus on the quality of the future generation and set a stage for a strong future, stress on the visibility of our presence in Tamilnadu and outside, on unity and solidarity with one another in a synodal way.” The program was then followed by fellowship meal.

5. CONVOCAION OF THE 6TH ORDINARY PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

After seeking the formal approval of our Superior General with the consent of the Provincial Administration, I hereby convoke the 6th Ordinary Provincial Congress of our South-East India Province as per the Constitutions and the General Directory, to be held from 17th April – 20th April 2023. The theme of the Provincial Congress will be: “Living fully the Fransalian way: A Call for renewal, unity and synodality.” The theme incorporates various dimensions. Life in fullness is the gift of God through our baptism and profession in the person of Jesus. Fullness calls all of us to shun our mediocrity and give our total and whole-hearted commitment to being Fransalians. So it comprises a call to renew our religious commitment, our maturity in overcoming the diversities and being united and striving after the same mission in and through the Fransalian way. Certainly, it challenges us and calls us to venture anew. The Provincial Congress, as a spiritual event in the life of the Province invites us to intense personal and community preparations. Let us prepare ourselves for this process of discernment and decision making and renewal and rejuvenating our beloved Province as family united in mind and heart.

6. PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

1. Fr. D. Kanikkai Nathan (Convener)
2. Fr. C. John Britto
3. Fr. A. Edward
4. Fr. S. Sahaya Jerald Abin
5. Fr. S. Prem Kumar
6. Fr. S. Santhanam

7. REPORT ON THE FEAST DAY CELEBRATION: MALAWI



24th January was a festive day for our Fransalian Family of Malawi Mission, as we all congregated under one roof in St. Francis de Sales Parish, Edingeni in the Diocese of Mzuzu. Our gathering was marked by the celebration of three occasions. The Feast of St. Francis de Sales, our beloved Patron, the Birthday and the tenth anniversary of the priesthood of Fr. Anand Raj and the Salesiar Pongal Celebration. We had a solemn Eucharistic celebration officiated by Fr. Anand Raj, participated by a good number of Catholics. At the beginning of the Mass, Fr. Soosai Raj, the Parish Priest of Edingeni hospitably invited everyone to be part of the celebration. During the homily, Fr. Maria Arockiam crystallized his thoughts on the importance of all the three occasions. It was a meaningful gathering as we had travelled from far and wide of Malawi to celebrate the feast of our Patron as well as appreciate and encourage one another in our ministry.

8. FEAST AND MIDDAY MEAL BUILDING INAUGURATION: ADANUR



“This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it”
(Ps:118:24)

As the Lord has blessed the day, we, the parishioners, the teachers and students of St. Paul's R.C. Middle School, Adanur were glad and joyful on the occasion of the blessing of the new building for midday meals in our school. The building was blessed by our beloved Provincial Rev. Fr. Patrick Jayaraj Msfs and the building was inaugurated by cutting ribbon by Madame Maud Richoux, Belgium, the sponsor of the project. The event took place amidst the huge presence of Pondy- Cuddalore Archdiocesan priests and our MSFS family priests from the nearby communities namely Perumbakkam school, Kodungal parish and Kanankadu parish community fathers. After the grand opening we had the felicitation programme that was arranged by the students of the school during which the provincial congratulated the great effort taken by Fr. Nicholas for the growth of the school and the parish and gave special thanks to the donors. The students gave colourful programmes which mesmerised the minds of the participants. Finally, Fr. Nicholas thanked Fr. Provincial, Monsieur Richoux Family, all the fathers, teachers, the parishioners and all the students for availing their presence. In a special way, he thanked Mr. A. Jeganathan the facilitator of the project. He also thanked Mr. Balaji, the Engineer and his team for their tremendous work in executing the plan.

9. SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION: MSFS PROVINCIALATE, TRICHY

The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy (Psalm 126:3)

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10) is the verse of St. Paul that came true as we, the members of the South - East India Province rejoiced in celebrating the sacerdotal silver Jubilee of Eight confreres of our Province- Frs. A. John Peter, P. Johnson Jeyabal, J.B. John Thadews, Jeyaseela Rajan, P. Maria Pushpam, X. Vincent, P Stephen and G. Visuvasam on 29-01-2023 at MSFS Provincialate, Trichy. The latter two could not join the celebrations. Fr. Packiam Wilson from the province of East Africa, also a silver jubilarian, joined us on this occasion.



There was a solemn Thanksgiving Eucharistic celebration by the Jubilarians, joined by Very Rev. Fr. A. Patrick Jayaraj, the provincial and a good number of Fransalians. The mass was presided over by Fr. A. John Peter and the homily was preached by Fr. X. Vincent who highlighted the blessedness of being chosen by God and being guided by the grace of God for the past twenty five years. Some of the family members of the jubilarians were present to thank the Lord for his marvelous love towards them in leading them to be effective instruments through various apostolates in the past 25 years as priests. We also prayed for Rev. Fr. S. Arockiasamy who belonged to the batch of the jubilarians and is called to eternal rewards. May his soul rest in Peace. After the mass, there was a short felicitation programme for the jubilarians. At the end, Fr. J.B. John Thadews thanked all those who were involved in arranging the programme and all who helped in their lives as Fransalian priests, primarily God the Almighty and the congregation of MSFS. The mass, the programme and the fellowship meal were all arranged pretty good by the Provincialate community.

Fr. C. Prem Kumar

10. SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION IN SFS MINOR SEMINARY



The jubilarians were invited for a thanksgiving mass in the Seminary on 28th January. The Jubilarians, Frs. Mariya Pushpam, John Peter, Vincent, Johnson Jeyabal, and Jayaseela Rajan along with the Seminary staff celebrated the holy Eucharist at 11:00 am in the auditorium. During his homily, Fr. Jayaseela Rajan shared his experience and how God continues to take care of His priests. The brothers arranged and took part actively in the celebration of the liturgy. After the mass, there was a felicitation, which was organized by Fr. Jerry, and the jubilarians shared with the brothers of their ministry experiences and difficulties as priests. Thanks to Fr. John Britto, the rector and superior, the staff and the brothers of the Seminary.

Bro. Augustus

11. SEPARATION FROM THE CONGREGATION - FR.M. DARLINE JOSEPH AND FR. X. GEORGE NAVIN

It is declared that Fr.M. Darline Joseph and Fr. X. George Navin of our province cease to be the members of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales. As such, they also cease to be the members of our South-East India province.

12. PROMOTIONS OF SCHOLASTICS

Promoted for the Diaconate Ordination

Bro. R. Renold Regan

Bro. A. Arockia Renold Anand

13. TRANSFERS AND APPOINTMENTS

The provincial Council, in its meeting held on 24th January, 2023 at MSFS Provincialate has made the following transfers and appointments:

| Name | Designation | Place |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Fr. M. Nicholas | Treasurer | Morning Star Regional Seminary, Kolkata |
| Fr. A. Mahimai Arokiaraj | Provincial Secretary | MSFS Provincialate, Trichy |
| Dn. T. Anto Prabin | Diaconate Ministry | RS Nagar, Chennai |

14. MONTH OF FEBRUARY

BIRTHDAYS OF OUR CONFRERES

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
| Fr. S. Arockia Charles | 03 | Fr. S. Joseph | 16 |
| Fr. A. Dharmaraj | 08 | Fr. C. Britto Clinton | 20 |
| Fr. J. Stephen | 09 | Fr. P. Aloysius | 22 |
| Fr. A. Mahimai Arokiaraj | 13 | Fr. Maria John Franklin | 27 |
| Fr. M. Rayappan | 14 | | |

We wish them Happy Birthday and God's Abundant Blessings upon them

15. ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY OF OUR CONFRERES

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Fr. D. Amirtha Rajan | 04 |
| Fr. G. Jagannathan | 19 |

We congratulate and pray for them

LET US REMEMBER AND PRAY FOR THE DEAD

16. MSFS OBITUARY – FEBRUARY

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 01 | Bro. John Mary Prayraud | 12 | Fr. Regis Maniouloux |
| 02 | Bro. Emile Maillard | 13 | Bro. Ignatius D'Souza |
| | Fr. Francois Dougoud | 14 | Fr. Francois Sage |
| 03 | Bro. Michel Beauquis | | Fr. Henri Jules Comerson |
| 04 | Bro. Lucio Borges | 15 | Fr. Jean Thvenet |
| 07 | Fr. Crispin D'souza | | Fr. Francois Couturier |
| 08 | Fr. Patrick Wall | 16 | Fr. Henri Fournier |
| | Bro. Raphael Schneider | | Fr. John Kurandiarkunnel |
| | Bro. Eugene Oppold | | Bro. Louis Brunier |
| 09 | Fr. Joseph Ducrest | 18 | Bro. Alexandre Druz |
| 11 | Fr. Joseph Currat | | Bro. Innaiah Gali |
| | Fr. Francis Hamilton | 19 | Fr. Francois Longerey |

Fr. Emile Chautemps
Fr. Anselme Rey
20 Fr. Louis Valluet
Bro. Eugene Debons
Fr. James H. Lahiff
Fr. Adophe Duval
Fr. Earnest Lavorel
21 Bro. Joseph Sebastin Devaraj

24 Fr. Jean Anthonioz
Fr. Joseph Charriere
25 Fr. Ferdinand Million
Fr. Alexis Marroliat
Fr. Francois Gay
26 Fr. Joseph Meynet

Let us Continue to Pray for the Deceased Members of our Congregation

17. LET US PRAY FOR THE DEPARTED

1. Fr. Reddy Joseph, aged 83, belonging to Vizag Province, expired on 25th January, 2023.
2. Mr. Adaikalasamy, aged 85, the paternal uncle of Fr. K. Ignacimuthu, expired on 23rd January, 2023.

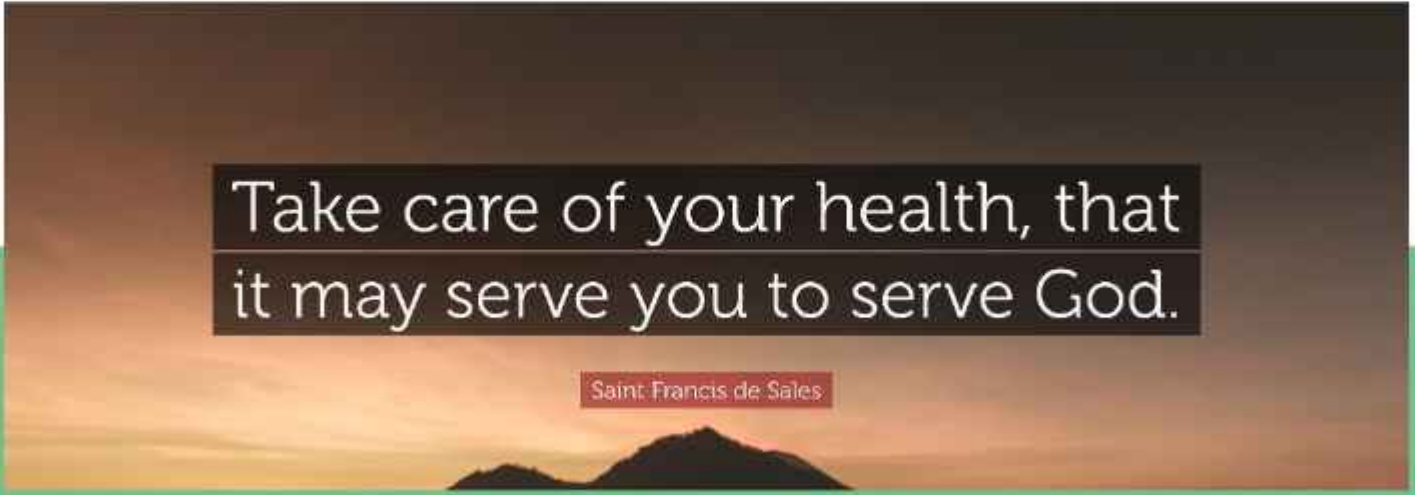
May I request those who have not fulfilled the suffrages to do the same at the earliest (Const. No.118; General Directory No.98).

May their souls rest in peace!

Yours Fraternally in Christ,



Rev. Fr. A. Patrick Jayaraj, Msfs
Provincial Superior



Take care of your health, that
it may serve you to serve God.

Saint Francis de Sales



Reflection of Pope Francis

“[A] good way to grow in friendship with Christ is by listening to his word. The Lord speaks to us in the depths of our conscience, he speaks to us through Sacred Scripture, he speaks to us in prayer. Learn to stay before him in silence, to read and meditate on the Bible, especially the Gospels, to converse with him every day in order to feel his presence of friendship and love.”

BIBLE QUOTE

Joel 2: 12-14

“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God.”

A Thought from Great Poet Thiruvalluvar

தெய்வத்தான் ஆகா தெனினும் முயற்சிதன்
மெய்வருத்தக் கூலி தரும்.

English Explanation

Even though God be against, Effort is bound to pay
the wages of labour.

Transliteration

Theyvaththaan Aagaa Theninum Muyarchidhan
Meyvaruththa Kooli Tharum