

# SEIP

## News Letter - 04



**St. Lucia**



**USA**





## Visitation to the Confreres in the USA & St. Lucia

The divine power of Jesus has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence (2 Pet 1:3). Jesus has called and empowered us to take his Word all over the world. We can be proud that we are present in far off nations, catering to the spiritual and social needs of the people of God. My maiden visit to the Confreres in the United States and St. Lucia was pleasant and lovely. Meeting the confreres in their own places of ministry is enriching. I'm happy to note that most of our fathers keep a prayer room in the rectory. I had the opportunity to pray with some of them. In all the parishes, I could celebrate the mass with our confreres and the parishioners. A few of our fathers have displayed the Charism of the Congregation in the residence and office. I had the joy of having a personal meeting with all our confreres during which we could share the concerns of the individual confreres, life and mission in the United States and St. Lucia, and the life of Province. The life of a religious missionary, even in an affluent country, has its own challenges. But it is satisfying to know that our fathers are handling the situation very efficiently. Here are some details about their places of ministry and my visit.

## Presence of Our Confreres in USA







## Fr. A. John Peter at St. Bernard, Benton Harbor, Kalamazoo

Nestled in Berrien County (district), on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, lies Benton Harbor, part of the "Twin Cities" with St. Joseph. It is two hours away from Chicago. This city Benton Harbor, the birthplace of Whirlpool appliances, boasts of a rich history. The Catholic faith arrived in Southwest Michigan with French Jesuit missionaries in the late 1600s. St. Joseph



began as a Mission in 1690 and became a Parish in 1720. Catholics in Benton Harbor attended services there until 1891, when St. John's was founded as a Mission. It became an independent parish in 1895. Just three miles away, St. Bernard Parish was established in 1961. In 1996, both these parishes were merged to form Ss. John and

Bernard Parish. With a combined history spanning centuries, the parish now serves around 500 families. Fr. A. John Peter who serves this parish as their Pastor for three years now, is the first Indian priest at this parish. On the weekends he has 4 Masses including the Mass in Spanish. Besides administering sacraments, he is engaged in taking communion to nursing homes, and animating various committees, etc.

For more information visit the website: [www.ssjohnandbernard.org](http://www.ssjohnandbernard.org)

I was very happy to meet the MSFS Fathers from the neighbourhood at the residence of Fr. John Peter. On 20<sup>th</sup> June, I had the opportunity to celebrate the Holy Mass with the parishioners and take part in the Eucharistic adoration. I could also meet the staff in the parish



office. I could feel the positive vibration that Fr. John Peter has created in this place. I thank him for receiving me at the airport and taking care of me in the initial days of my stay in the States, and for supporting the Province with financial contributions.







### **Fr. L. Arul Sundaram at Holy Maternity of Mary, Dowagiac, Kalamazoo**

Fr. Arul Sundaram rendered his service as the Administrator of the Collaborative of Holy Maternity of Mary, Dowagiac; Holy Family Parish, Decatur; and Sacred Heart of Mary, Silver Creek for the past three years. He also celebrates Mass in Spanish as a large Spanish community is present here. Previously, he was the School Chaplain and Parochial Vicar at St. Joseph Catholic Church. Fr. Arul Sundaram is loved by the people for his lively presence and sociable approach. My sincere thanks are due to him for accompanying me on my long journey from Chennai to Chicago and for his contribution to the Province. I visited his parish on 19<sup>th</sup> June. From July 2025, he is appointed as the pastor at the Church of Immaculate Conception at Three Rivers where Fr. Mathias was the pastor. We wish him all the best for his ministry in the new parish.



### **Fr. Basker at St. Mary of the Lake, New Buffalo, Kalamazoo**



Fr. Basker is currently doing his ministry as the Pastor of the Parishes of St. Mary of the Lake, New Buffalo, St. Mary of the Assumption, Three Oaks, and St. Agnes, Sawyer in the Diocese of Kalamazoo in the State of Michigan, USA. He was assigned to these parishes in July 2021. St. Mary of the Lake has 250 registered families and a history of 93 years; St. Mary of

the Assumption has 105 registered families and a history of 145 years; and St. Agnes has 110 registered families and a history of 100 years. These parishes are located close to the beautiful Lake Michigan, and as such, these are small tourist towns, and they get lots of visitors in summer. Most of the parishioners in all three parishes are retired. Fr. Basker very happily caters to the spiritual needs of all his three parishes.







I visited Fr. Basker on 21<sup>st</sup> June. The celebration of the Sunday mass on its eve in the churches of St. Mary of the Lake, New Buffalo and St. Mary of Assumption, Three Oaks was a good experience. I appreciate Fr. Basker for the commendable ministry he is doing in this parish and for the financial assistance to the Province.

### **Fr. R. Mathias at Immaculate Conception, Three Rivers, Kalamazoo**

Fr. R. Mathias MSFS, landed in Texas, USA in the year 2012. He moved to Michigan, USA in September 2017 and was appointed as the associate Pastor in Coldwater Collaborative, where he also taught in the school for a year. In July 2019, he was appointed as the Pastor of Immaculate Conception Collaborative (3 Churches) Three Rivers, Michigan. He served as the pastor of 3 churches for 5 years (Immaculate Conception Church, Three Rivers, St Clare Church, Centreville, and St Barbara Church, Colon). Due to lack of time between the masses and driving 30 / 15 miles between masses, he gave up one mission (St Barbara Church to Coldwater Collaborative) in September, 2024.

From then on, he has been taking care of two Churches consisting of 215 Catholic families. Three Masses are offered on weekends. Besides nurturing the parishioners with regular sacraments, Fr. Mathias was appreciated for bringing communion to the elderly in 3 Homes for the Aged besides several homebound elderly. He had been doing prison ministry in the past, which was discontinued due to the effects of Covid. On 22<sup>nd</sup> June, on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, I celebrated the Mass in the beautiful Church at Three Rivers and Fr. Mathias preached an inspiring homily.



Fr. Mathias hosted the gathering of MSFS Fathers in Michigan on 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> June in Three Rivers. In coming together of the confreres, we could experience deeply the Fransalian fraternity and hospitality. I express my profound thanks to Fr. Mathias for making the itinerary for my visit in America, booking the local tickets, contacting the fathers, and above all keeping an eye on my safety and wellbeing throughout my stay over there. Fr. Mathias also served as the Provincial's Contact Person in USA. I thank him for discharging his ministries with a lot of responsibility, discipline and commitment.







### **Fr. A. Santhiyagu at St. Mary and St. Joseph Church, Durand, Lansing**

St. Mary's Church in Durand was started in 1901 (now 124 years old), and St. Joseph's Church in Gaines was established as a parish in 1871 (now 153 old). Durand is a small railroad town, and Gaines is a small village. Both places existed as independent parishes till they were merged as one parish 10 years ago. Now it is one parish family and there are around 400 families who are very actively involved in the parish activities cooperating with the pastor.



On 22<sup>nd</sup> June, Sunday evening, I reached the Parish of St. Mary and St. Joseph on. We spent the evening in conversation. On the next day, I celebrated the Mass at St. Joseph's Church, Gaines, and Fr. Santhiyagu preached a meaningful homily. I could also interact with some of the parishioners who are touched by the simplicity and dedicated ministry of their pastor. My sincere gratitude to Fr. Santhiyagu for taking our spirituality to this place and for his initiatives to support our institute Thedal.

### **Fr. N. Arockia Selvam at St Ephrem the Syrian, Sterling Heights, Detroit**

Since July 2020, Fr. Arockia Selvam (known as Fr. Aro in the diocese) is the Administrator of St. Ephrem, the Syrian Church, Sterling Heights in the Archdiocese of Detroit. St. Ephrem was established as a parish in 1964 with just 450 members. Since then, it has grown into a well-established parish community with around 850 families today. Fr. Arockia Selvam is the fifth priest to serve this parish since its founding. Three Masses are offered each weekend, along with daily Masses throughout the week with a good attendance. Special needs program is tailored to children requiring additional support. In addition to meeting the spiritual needs of the faithful, the parish is actively involved in charitable outreach programs. This includes a weekly food pantry that provides essential groceries to those in need, as well as a monthly Community Supper welcoming over 100 people from the wider community. On October 24, 2022, to commemorate the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MSFS presence in India and our Foundation Day, MSFS Fathers planted a sapling in front of the church.







During my visit, we had the joy of taking a group photo at that spot to mark the occasion.

Fr. Santhiyagu and I reached Sterling Heights, the Parish of Fr. Arockia Selvam on 23<sup>rd</sup> June at noon. I had the joy of meeting some confreres from other Provinces too at lunch. I felt encouraged to see our Charism displayed in the office and the living room. It is also wonderful to see Fr Selvam taking care of the squirrels and birds, and feeding them regularly, living the spirituality of nature, a witness to the people. We prayed together the vespers at the chapel in his rectory. I



celebrated the Mass in the Parish Church, attended by a lively participating community on 24<sup>th</sup> June, the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. It is heartening to hear very many positive things from the people about Fr. Arockia Selvam. I thank him for his unflinching commitment to pastoral ministry, warm hospitality and taking up a few projects in the Province.

The Archbishop of Detroit has recently appointed Fr. Arockia Selvam as the moderator of the Saints Among the Saints Family of Parishes, a cluster of four parishes. As the moderator, Fr. Arockia Selvam has to direct the joint actions of the priests *In Solidum* and act as the legal representatives of the juridical persons of these parishes. We congratulate him and wish him all success.

### **Fr. Rajasekar at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Tallahassee**

From July 2025 onwards Fr. K. Rajasekar is the Parochial Vicar of Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Tallahassee. It is the largest Catholic community in the diocese of Pensacola – Tallahassee. It has a very active faith community offering a whole array of ministries. Earlier he rendered his service at St.



Rita Church in Santa Rosa Beach in the same diocese for about two years, after he had concluded his pastoral service in the diocese of Houma–Thibodaux. Fr Rajasekar came





to Sterling Heights on 25<sup>th</sup> June to meet me. We had a fruitful discussion about the life and ministry in different places. I thank Fr. Rajasekar for making an impact in the places of ministry.

### **Fr. C. Britto at St. John Neumann, Canton, Detroit**

It has been a grace-filled journey of ministry for Fr. Britto as he is back to USA for a second term after serving the Province for seven years after the first term. Earlier he had served the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Fr. C. John Britto is presently serving at St. John Neumann Parish in Canton, Michigan, which is one of the larger parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit. He joyfully assists Rev. Fr. Paul Ballien, a kind and gentle shepherd, in the pastoral care and administration of the parish. Both of them share the same rectory.

The pastoral engagement of Fr. Britto here is vibrant and varied: helping sacramental preparations, supporting youth groups, and engaged with both men's and women's organizations. He is also actively involved in the religious education program for children, visiting the sick and celebrating the Mass regularly at assisted living and nursing homes. The faithful here are deeply appreciative of the presence and service of Fr. C. Britto. I thank Fr. C. Britto for his simple way of disseminating Fransalian spirituality and support to the Province.



### **Fr. I. S. Jesuraj at the Ascension Saint Thomas Health System, Nashville**



I visited Fr. I. S. Jesuraj at Nashville. He is residing with the pastor of St. Ann Catholic Church, the local parish and is engaged in hospital ministry for the last three years in the Ascension Saint Thomas Health System, which provides spiritually centred holistic care, integrating







spiritual well-being into the overall healing process. We had the opportunity to greet Rev. Fr. Michael Fye, the newly appointed VG of Nashville. Fr. Jesuraj through his ministry for the hospitalized patients gives them inner healing and hope. Amidst this challenging ministry at three hospitals, Fr. Jesuraj has undertaken to equip himself with appropriate studies Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) to be a chaplain of the hospital. I do appreciate Fr. Jesuraj for this wonderful ministry to the suffering and his contribution to the Province.



### **Fr. F. Emmanuel at St. Louise de Marillac, Los Angeles**

St. Louise de Marillac Roman Catholic is in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, California, USA. It is located in the city of Covina. The biography of St. Louise is of great interest to us. Louise was fortunate to have a wise and sympathetic counsellor, Francis de Sales, and then his friend, the bishop of Belley, France. Both men were available to her only periodically. But from an interior illumination, she understood that she was to do a great job under the guidance of another person she had not yet met. This was the holy priest Monsieur Vincent, later to be known as Saint Vincent de Paul.



St. Louise de Marillac parish is a vibrant Roman Catholic community that welcomes individuals seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ. With a diverse congregation of approximately 4,600 households, the parish is committed to living out the traditions and teachings of the Catholic faith. Through a variety of ministries, religious programs, and service opportunities, the parish offers a warm and inclusive environment for worship, fellowship, and spiritual growth. The parish provides a range of activities and events that cater to different cultures and languages, fostering unity and a sense of belonging. Whether attending Mass, participating in sacraments, or engaging in community outreach programs, St. Louise







De Marillac offers a welcoming space for individuals to deepen their faith and become active members of the parish family. Fr. Emmanuel is serving this parish for the last six years as the associate pastor.

On 29<sup>th</sup> June, by evening, I reached the place of Fr. Emmanuel. My joy was doubled as I could also meet Fr. Benedict of Brazil Province. On the next morning, I celebrated the mass together with Fr. Emmanuel and Fr. Benedict. I could interact with a good number of parishioners and later with the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Richard who are highly appreciative of the work and skills of Fr. Emmanuel. I express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Fr. Emmanuel for his immense love and interest for Malawi Mission. Through his painstaking initiatives, like food fest, a lot of projects are being carried out in Malawi and in Tamilnadu. I thank Fr. Emmanuel, Fr. Richard and the parishioners for being good collaborators with us in our missionary endeavours.

### **Fr Arul Francis at St. Andrew, Pleasanton, San Antonio**

St. Andrew's Church at Pleasanton, San Antonio, which has its origin of over a hundred years as a mission Church, has grown into an active parish due to the increase in the number of settlers. It is now the leading Church in the Pleasanton deanery and now has a mission church of its own, Sacred Heart in Campbellton. St. Andrew is a vivacious community full of fun and exciting ministries and events for everyone in the



family. Since July 1, 2024, Fr. Arul Francis is the Administrator of St. Andrew Catholic Church at Pleasanton & Sacred Heart Catholic Church at Campbellton. Previously, he served as the Parochial Vicar of St. Anthony Mary Claret Catholic Church in San Antonio, and then at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church also in San Antonio. At present, as the Administrator, he organizes several spiritual programs for the parishioners with a focus on bringing more and more young people to the Church. He organizes food and personal hygiene

products for the needy. On Weekends, Fr. Arul celebrates five Masses in two Churches including the Mass in Spanish.







On 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Fr Ebin drove me to Pleasanton to meet Fr. Arul Francis. He hosted a Mexican dinner for the Fransalians in the Archdiocese. It was my joy to meet the confreres in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. In the evening, we prayed at the parish Church and then visited the Church at Campbellton. I appreciate Fr. Arul Francis for the dedication with which he carries out his responsibility, winning the confidence of the parishioners and for the support to the Province.



### **Fr. Ebin Christopher at Prince of Peace, Houston**



Fr. Ebin Christopher serves the Prince of Peace Catholic Community in Houston, Texas as Parochial Vicar. It is a vibrant multicultural parish community that serves over 9,000 families through its many ministries, including liturgy, catechesis and outreach programs. Its mission statement is "Love God. Love Others. Make Disciples. Send Apostles." The Church, rectory and

community centre are completed on five acres of land in 1974. Masses in both English and Spanish are celebrated in the main Church and Mary's Chapel. Eucharistic Adoration is conducted every day.

On July 2, 2025, I made my visit to this parish. I had a meaningful conversation with the pastor, Rev. Fr. Tom Ponzini. During this interaction, Fr. Tom Ponzini expressed his appreciation for the dedicated pastoral ministry, linguistic gifts and joyful presence of Fr. Ebin, who continues to serve the parish with great commitment and missionary spirit while also being in the second year of his PhD studies at the University of St. Thomas. Fr. Ebin introduced some of the





benefactors of the Province, who show a great interest in the project of SFS Animation Centre in Manakudy, and also our missions in Malawi. I had the opportunity to celebrate the Holy Mass at Prince of Peace Parish. The faithful who attended the Mass expressed deep admiration for Fr. Ebin's presence in the parish, highlighting his spiritual depth, availability to the people, and uplifting preaching. I thank Fr. Ebin for his love for pastoral ministry and admirable commitment to the Province initiatives.

I express my gratitude to the MSFS community at Sugar Land, Houston for the Fransalian hospitality offered to me by Fr. Joseph Pottemel, Fr. Jaison and Fr. Joseph Arul. I was delighted to meet the other members of the apostolic community as well.

### **Fr. A. Dharmaraj at St. Rita, Alexandria**

Fr. A. Dharmaraj is the pastor at St. Rita's Church, Alexandria. He had previously served in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux in Louisiana before returning



to India. There are six Masses on the weekend, which Fr. Dharmaraj shares with his associate pastor Fr. Joshua. Fr. Raj is known for his jovial nature, availability and dedication, and the warmth he brings to the St. Rita community.

On 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> July, I stayed with Fr. Dharmaraj in Alexandria. The opportunity to celebrate the weekend Masses helped me get to know some of the parishioners. The liturgical celebration in the beautiful Church of St. Rita with the enthusiastic faithful was enriching. In the evening, Rt. Rev. Robert Marshall visited us on the invitation of Fr. Dharmaraj. We had a friendly chat. I could also meet a few Indian priests from the diocese. I thank Fr. Dharmaraj for his dedication at pastoral ministry and his contribution to the Province.





## In St. Lucia, West Indies

 **Mission in the Past**  
 **Mission At Present**



St. Lucia is predominantly a catholic country. The Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales have served for the past 27 years in twelve parishes with the help of seventeen priests up to this day. On 8<sup>th</sup> July, I left for St. Lucia and was received there by Fr. John Wilson and Fr G. Arockia Samy. The presence of MSFS and their mission in Saint Lucia since 1998 has left a huge impact in the culturally rich and faith-filled people in this

beautiful Island, Saint Lucia “Helen of the West Indies.” During my visit, I could visit some of the parishes where our priests had been working. Noteworthy to mention is Our Lady of Lourdes Parish at Choiseul, where Fr. Thomas Perumalil, Fr. Joseph Henry and Fr. Arulanantham served as parish priests and Fr. Ananda Prasad, Fr. A. John Peter (Sr), Fr. Amalraj and Fr. G. Arockiasamy served as Assistant Parish Priests. Our priests have done yeoman service in this parish as elsewhere.





The presbytery was built in view of accommodating a community of MSFS priests. It would be great if we can revitalize our presence in this beautiful Island.



### **Fr. John Wilson Fernando at St. Peter's, Dennery, Castries**

Since arriving in the Archdiocese of Castries in 2017, Fr. Wilson has been serving diverse communities of faith, encountering resilient and devoted parishioners, journeying alongside them in the daily unfolding of faith, culture, and community life. Upon his arrival in Saint Lucia, he was appointed by His Grace Most Rev. Robert Rivas OP as an Associate Pastor to the twin parishes of Bexon and Jacmel. During that time, he resided and ministered from St. Benedict Parish, sharing community life and mission in a deeply fraternal and spiritual environment with Fr. Vincent Sahayaraj.



In 2022, His Grace Most Rev. Gabriel Malzaire appointed Fr. Wilson as the Parish Priest of St. Peter's Parish in Dennery a picturesque fishing village along the east coast of Saint Lucia. The Church of St. Peter was built in 1908 and had its centenary

celebration in 2008. Dennery has proven to be a spiritually rich and dynamic community. Despite challenges faced by fishing families, economic constraints, and youth participation, the parish remains committed to faith formation, community life, and service to the poor.

**Challenges Faced:** Changing values and decreased regular Mass attendance among some families, and difficulty in sustaining youth involvement due to emigration and distractions from secular culture.

**Achievements and Milestones:** In spite of financial limitations, the parish was able to construct a new and a beautiful presbytery in 2023. Successful parish feast celebrations and cultural events promote unity. Increased participation in the







liturgical services and lay ministries strengthen the parish community. Catechetical teams and their commitment increase the sacramental preparation in the parish.

I stayed with Fr. Wilson for two days and celebrated Mass on both the days with an enthusiastically participatory faithful. On 9<sup>th</sup> July, Fr. Wilson organized a small get-together after the Mass, wherein we shared the food brought by the people. It was an enriching experience of unity and fraternity. The way people recognize the priests and collaborate with them is amazing. I do appreciate and thank Fr. John Wilson for the zeal with which he is serving the mission in St. Lucia upholding our missionary legacy.

### **Fr. G. Arockia Samy at Our Lady of Assumption, Soufriere**



Soufriere an attractive town, named after the volcanic sulphur springs was the original capital of St. Lucia under the French. Soufrière, which has both hill and sand beaches is one of the island's most memorable spots. Fr. G. Arockiasamy is the parish priest of Our Lady of Assumption, Soufriere and Ss. Philip and James, Fond St. Jacques since November 24, 2022. Ministry in Soufriere and Fond St. Jacques consists in constant availability and administration of Sacraments to the people of God. The youth are vulnerable in this era due to

new generation trend, as Soufriere is the centre of tourism in St. Lucia. The Pitons (two mountain peaks) as land mark and world heritage site, the active Sulphur springs, Waterfalls and Botanical Garden attract international tourists. Young people seek jobs and future related to the life of the tourists. In this context, accompanying them in spiritual life, catechizing them and preparing them for the sacraments of initiation pose a great challenge.

Communion to the sick and home bound, visiting the schools and spending time with the elderly are being carried out regularly. Such ministries give a lot satisfaction and





soothe the heart. The appreciation from the people and their care for him keep him motivated. I stayed with Fr. G. Arockiasamy two days during which I could spend time with the parish council over a dinner and the parishioners after the Mass. The heartfelt praise from our parishioners for Fr. G. Arockiasamy fills us with immense satisfaction, affirming how our presence has made a profound difference in this tiny island community. I thank and appreciate Fr. Samy for being a passionate missionary in St. Lucia, learning everything concerning the Island and living as a loved priest in the diocese.

## Meeting with the Bishops

### Bishop of Kalamazoo

On 26<sup>th</sup> June, we had a fruitful meeting with Rt. Rev. Edward Lohse, the Bishop of Kalamazoo. Our discussion revolved around our presence, contribution to the diocese of Kalamazoo and the possibility of making our religious life more enriching. He expressed his happiness over the presence and ministry of the MSFS in his diocese.

### Archbishop of Castries, St. Lucia.

We met the Archbishop of Castries Most Rev. Gabriel Malzaire on 10<sup>th</sup> July at his office. We had a friendly conversation about our congregation and our mission. He is highly appreciative of and grateful for our contribution to the Church in St. Lucia.



He spoke of the possible expansion of our mission and invites more MSFS priests. There are 22 parishes in this Archdiocese which has only 5 native priests. 6 parishes are still vacant and are covered by the neighbouring parish priests. The Archbishop also hosted us a St. Lucian lunch on the same day of our meeting. We were touched by his simplicity and hospitality.







## Gratitude

Visiting our confreres in the United States and St. Lucia gave me immense joy, a direct knowledge about the ministry they are carrying out, the challenges they are facing and the opportunities present there. I do appreciate all our fathers in these two territories, catering to the spiritual needs of the people in a Fransalian way. I thank all of them for the care with which they looked after me. It is God's accompanying grace and the friendship of our confreres which kept me moving in spite of long and frequent traveling. In particular, I thank Rev. Fr. R. Mathias, who coordinated the entire program and kept watch over my safety all through my journey. I express my sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. Bonela Anthony, the Provincial of USA Vice Province for the unforgettable hospitality and conversation. I am greatly indebted to the MSFS community at Sugar Land, Houston and the fathers from other Provinces who visited me at different place and expressed solidarity and fraternal love.

**Live Jesus!**

**Yours Fraternally in Christ,**

**Fr. A. Patrick Jayaraj, MSFS**

**Provincial Superior**



**HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY**  
**&**  
**HAPPY FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION**  
**OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

