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Editorial

“The heart has its own reasons which the reason does not understand,” wrote the French philosopher Blaise Pascal. This saying perhaps answers, paradoxically, the question why Jesus was born and why he is the one in whom the love of God became incarnate. Love is the essence of God and, as John put it, “God is love,” and that anyone who loves, walks in light. God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die, but have eternal life (Jn 3: 16). The greatest gift God could offer to this world for the salvation of humankind is nothing but His only Son. This Son, through whom the world was created, preferred to be born not in the palace of King Herod but in a manger. The Son who is the Saviour of the humankind desired not to be the friends of rich and the powerful, but of the marginalized people of the society. He did not aspire for power and prestige but was pleased to serve. The feast of Christmas reminds us that God, in the person of Jesus Christ, has given Himself to us. Christmas is the gift of God to us. A story by Walter B. Knight beautifully expresses the meaning of Christmas:

“Long ago there ruled in Persia a wise and good king. He loved his people. He wanted to know how they lived. He wanted to know about the hardships they suffered. Often he dressed in the clothes of a working man or a beggar and went to the homes of the poor. No one he visited thought he was their ruler. One day he visited a very poor man who lived in a cave. He ate the coarse food the poor man ate. He spoke kind, cheerful words to him. Then he left. Later he visited the poor man again and told him clearly. “I am your King”. The poor man was very surprised to hear this. The king thought that the man would surely ask for some gift or a favour. But he did not. Instead, he said: “You left your palace and your glory to visit me in this dark, dreary place. You ate the coarse food I ate. You brought gladness to my heart. To others you have given your rich gifts. To me you have given yourself”. Certainly, this poor man sums it all up: “To me you have given yourself.” There is no greater gift than the gift of oneself. Christmas- Emmanuel- God with us- is God’s gift to us at Christmas, God giving Himself to us. In return what can we give God except the gift of our life, pleasing and acceptable to Him?”

Christmas is also a family feast. Not only of family life as made by blood ties and marriage, but also of family life as made new in the Birth of Christ, a family life that stretches to meet the lives (needs) of the lonely, as well as of the good friends, the best friends, the people we like to have around. It is not that we ignore these people during the rest of the year, but at Christmas, the act of sharing, of gift-giving, takes on a special meaning, as we rush here and there, trying to find that special gift, the gift that speaks beyond its material value, the gift that speaks of our love. By these acts of generosity, we become friends again, brothers and sisters in the Lord. In this ultra- modern and wealth conscious society, we must remind one another that giving is infinitely more rewarding than receiving. In the greater global context, we also acknowledge that none of humanity’s ills will be cured by the taking, but only by the sharing. The disintegration of family life inevitably leaves some people isolated and abandoned. The homeless, the addicted, the old and forsaken are around us everywhere, from one end of the corridors of life to the other. We cannot ignore the needs of anyone, for in Christ the entire human family has become our family. Let this family feast bring us together and keep us together. What needs to be lived in our communities and families is the love of Christmas and what needs to be shared among one and all, irrespective of the difference of caste or creed, rich or poor, is the joy of Christmas. In this season of Christmas we are reminded once again that God is with us, that He has given Himself to us and that He continues to live with us.



Fransalian International wishes you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and grace-filled New Year 2019.

-Dr K. Henry Jose MSFS
Chief Editor

Saint Francis de Sales A Saint So Human

Insight: How do we deal with Anger- 2

Saint Francis de Sales advised Philothea: "... Do not become angry at all if that is possible". Our human tendency is to get angry at the least provocation. So is it possible "never to become angry"? When I thought of it, a lesson in geography which I learned years ago came to my mind. The river Amazon brings so much fresh water into the sea that for miles and miles there is no salt water in the sea, but only fresh water. Similarly, if gentleness increases

and becomes like a sea, then it will not be possible for anger to overwhelm a person. The sea of gentleness will calm the movements of anger. Gentleness will reign.



– Fr Antony Mookenthottam, msfs

Mermier Bytes



As we come to the close of 2018, let us examine *how* we have spent this "MSFS year of Local Community", and, on the threshold of 2019, year of the XX General Chapter, let us resolve to mend our ways and conform our attitudes and practices to the Call of the Chapter – MSFS: Wake up to the BASICS (the interior driving force of our religious family).

Let us draw inspiration and encouragement from the following 'quotes' of Fr. Mermier that express *how* he bore witness to the MSFS Charism – living the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales as a Missionary in Community – in the pursuit of his vocation and exercise of his mission; and invited his MSFS confreres to do likewise.

Let us begin, then, with ourselves. Let us not be satisfied with knowing. Let us do : saying and doing do not go hand in hand. To be ignorant without one's fault is neither good nor bad. But to know and not to do is evil. Here is disorder; here is sin. How do we stand ? Being so proud, thinking ourselves learned, having so little humility, so few virtues ! Let us be abashed. Let us say with more humility than ever : Forgive us our sins, etc. ... [FAMILY ANNALS, I, p. 259-262, 20 September 1859]

... "the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales," is coming into existence in Savoy. Because this undertaking, offers tribute and pays homage to the virtue of a man who was the greatest friend of his people and most responsive to their distress. [(quote p. 27 Memoir of 1939, title VIII)] ... May the members of our Congregation obtain from the perfect model, the Holy Apostle of the Chablais, a little of that zeal and gentleness which will make us die to ourselves in order to live only for God and for the welfare of the people, like other St. Francis de Sales. [Circular to confrères in India, 17-04-1852]

I make use of it (time in Rome spent in the study of Geography, while awaiting the Missionary mandate from the Papal

authorities) to inflame my zeal towards so many unfortunate countries buried in darkness and ignorance, in misery and sin. It has convinced me more than ever of the need to have *missionaries* who are filled with the spirit of God, who pray, who study, who mortify themselves, who love their brethren and also the women religious who love our Lord and his holy Cross." [Jean REY, 1960, p. 73]

"You will remain perfectly united, at all times showing a warm and cordial regard for one another, like brothers who love each other and possess the true zeal of Jesus Christ and of Saint Francis de Sales, our glorious and illustrious patron, and who wish to seek nothing else but the greater glory of God, the salvation of souls as well as their own salvation." [Letter to MSFS of La Feuillette, 20-09-1842] ... We have to go on offering our prayers to the ONE who keeps us united in charity. Distance has not destroyed this love, it admits neither separation nor division". [let to Fr. NEYRET, 30-07-1842]

"Keep the four great precepts of charity, according to the precept of the prince of the Apostles : *Before everything else having charity towards one another among yourselves*, that is to say, : esteem one another, to respect one another, to love one another, to assist one another in mutual love, obliging one another, bearing with one another in such a way that no one ever may perceive the least difference among you. [Counsels given on 19 June 1848]

Community is where the religious spirit should reign, where all the members are so many brothers, where we tend towards the same goal, where we employ the same means, where perfect harmony reigns, where the prayer of the Divine Saviour is accomplished "*That they may be one like us*" [Let. to Fr. Jean THEVENET, 14-06-1848]

And finally, the call to perseverance: We entered the Congregation only because we love it and we prefer it above all others. We take shelter under its protection like little chicks under the wings of their mother. [Circular to confrères in India, 03-07-1852]

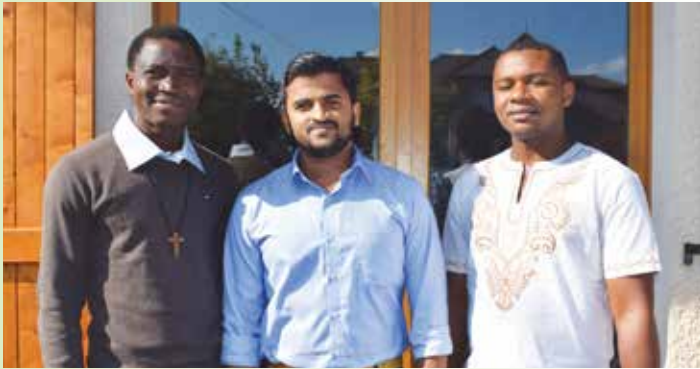
– Fr Noel Rebello, msfs



Revival of the Scholasticate at Bonlieu (Suisse)

The community of Bonlieu is a formation house of Franco-Swiss province, composed of four priests and three brothers who do their studies in Theology at the University of Fribourg, Suisse. In their new academic year 2018-19, the community of Bonlieu is well revived with two new scholastics from Chad and Cameroon, thus it becomes an inter-continental. « A noble goal made possible, thanks to Fr Jean Paul Fournier, the rector and animator of the scholastics and the mobilization of Fr Yves Carron, the provincial, and the administration of Franco-Swiss province and the associating Indian provinces ».

The scholastics, Bro. Aneesh Devassykutty, belonging to the province of Nagpur, is doing his second year theology and Bro. Chiabi Titus and Bro. M'Toudjiel Abba, belonging to the



province of South-West India Province, set apart for the region of Chad-Cameroon.

The classes begin in the university at 8.15 am to 12 and there is also regular classes in the afternoon; sometimes in the evening too. In the community, the day begins and ends with prayer. Regular adorations and confessions, monthly recollection and community meeting, spiritual guidance etc., are integral part of the formation at Bonlieu.

Since two weeks, Fr. Emile Mayoraz is admitted definitively to an old age home and it is not very far from Bonlieu. He is very optimistic about his new place, food and the personnel. Bonlieu misses one veteran missionary and charismatic leader, who inspired a good number of scholastics and missionaries in the congregation: Fr. Mayoraz.



– Fr Antony Valiaparampil, msfs

New Mission for Fr Freddy



Fr. Freddy, Chilian origin, came to Franco-Swiss province in the year 2015. He is known as ever smiling and dynamic missionary. After having completed his basic French course at Besançon, he was appointed to the community of Allinges where he actively involved in the pastoral activities of the parish at Allinges (France).

His desire is always to work among Spanish speaking people; therefore he expressed his wish to the general administration and the provincial administration. Responding positively to his dream, general administration, in consultation with the

Franco-Swiss province, has agreed to send him to the vice province of America. He is happy and content to accept the new mission in America which is not very far from his motherland. A few months back his compatriot Fr Patricio returned definitively to Chile due to some health reason. Franco-Swiss province wishes Fr Freddy God's choicest blessings and prays that he will find fulfillment in his ministry among his own people. He is scheduled to leave France on 19th December.



– Fr Antony Valiaparampil, msfs



Taking up Pioneering Mission in Malawi - Journey to Karonga Diocese

After the arrival of Fr Ignacimuthu, the Provincial and Fr Nicholas, the bursar on 13th of October, 2018, in the provincial house, Morogoro, immediate preparations to go to Malawi were undertaken. On 15th of October, 2018, we (Frs. Soosai Raj, Anantharaj and Nelson Arockiasamy) had a meeting with our provincial and bursar and thereafter there was a common meeting in which, Fr Mathew Thazhathukunnel enlightened us on certain things.

As scheduled, on 16th October, 2018, six of us, (both the provincials, the bursar and we the pioneering team) began our journey from MSFS provincial house Morogoro to Karonga diocese after, the celebration of the Holy Eucharistic at 5.30 am by Fr Mathew, the Provincial of East-Africa province. In the evening around 7.30 pm, we reached OCD Novitiate at Mbeya, for the night stay. On 17th morning, we began our journey after the mass celebrated by Fr Ignacimuthu. At 10.15 am, we reached the border and we had to spend sometime at the border for the formalities to be completed. At 1.30 pm (Malawi time), we reached St. Mary's parish, in the diocese of Karonga. The Bishop Rt. Rev. Martin Mtumbuka, all the priests of Karonga diocese, people from St. Mary's parish and people from Livingstonia parish, which will be entrusted to MSFS, came to welcome us. After our lunch, Provincials and the bursar had a meeting with the Bishop.



On 18th October, 2018, we visited Livingstonia. The people welcomed us warmly and we had a meeting with the elders and the people. We also visited the land, where the Parish church is to be constructed and also we planted some pine trees. In the evening, the Bishop of Karonga arranged dinner in the new bishop's house to honor and welcome us into his diocese. All the priests, religious and others, working in the diocese participated.

From 19th to 22nd of October, 2018, all of us went to the neighboring dioceses of Mzuzu and Lilongwe to meet some of the religious congregations, like Capuchins, Missionaries of Africa, Carmelites, and DMI. We also had a meeting with the Bishop of Mzuzu. On 22nd of October, 2018, we had another meeting with the bishop of Karonga in the Cathedral parish and discussed about our stay, learning the language and individual experiences and other matters concerning taking up the Livingstonia mission in the month of March, 2019. After lunch, Frs. Mathew, Ignacimuthu and Nicholas wished us and bade us goodbye and started their journey back to Morogoro. Right now, we are staying in the Diocese of Karonga and are learning the language. We are looking forward to the month of March, 2019 to take up Livingstonia mission.

– Fr D. Nelson, msfs

Venturing into Ecuador Mission

The harvest is full but the labourers are few. Hence, prompted by the Holy Spirit, with the inspiration and blessings of our Superior General, Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil MSFS, and his Administration, the first team of MSFS confreres consisting of Fr Melky Fernandes MSFS, Fr John Kennedy MSFS, and Fr Jayaseelan Selvaraj MSFS the Provincial, under the guidance of Fr Joseph Mullakkara MSFS (USA Vice Province), embarked on a historic missionary journey to Ecuador, in South America, on Sunday, 22 July

2018. People in Ecuador are primarily Roman Catholics, a religion that was introduced into the country when the Spanish took over. About 94% of the Ecuadorian population can be considered Roman Catholic.

On 24 July 2018, along with Most Rev. Eugenio Arellano Fernández, the Bishop of Apostolic Vicariate of Esmeraldas and Rev. Fr. Silvino Mina, the Vicar General, we had our interactive meeting on the needs and expectations of our missionary presence and community based service to the



mission. The Bishop thanked us, the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, for being faithful to our missionary call and commitment to the people at the periphery. He invited us with an open heart and expressed that the whole Diocese is looking forward joyfully to our missionary and pastoral collaboration. On behalf of the Diocese, he has assured us of his wholehearted support and assistance in all our initiatives.

On behalf of the Province, I thank our beloved Superior General, Rev. Fr Abraham Vettuvellil msfs, and his administration, Fr Agnelo Fernandes MSFS, our guide and animator to initiate the Ecuador mission, Fr Joseph Mullakkara MSFS who accompanied us on our missionary journey. We thank Most Rev. Eugenio Arellano Fernández and the the Vicar General for their loving care and assistance in Ecuador. We entrust Fr.Melky Fernandes, Fr John Kennedy and Fr.Adaikala Rajan, the daring missionaries



and the pioneers of the mission Ecuador to the care and guidance of the Holy Spirit and to the intercession of our Mother of Compassion. They will embark on their journey on 8th January, 2019. We wish them all the best as they set their foot in Ecuador. May God be praised.

– Fr S. Jayaseelan, msfs

Inauguration of Kindergarten in Bela-Vista, Mozambique

The 5th Death Anniversary of Fr. Prabhudas, 29th of September 2018, is a day which will be inscribed in the archives of the MSFS Delegation of Mozambique, especially in the history of St. Francis de Sales Church, Bela-Vista. All the Fransalians in Mozambique gathered together with the benefactors, well-wishers and the faithful, for the inauguration of the newly constructed Kindergarten in memory of Fr. Prabhudas Kujur. It is a great way to thank



God for the marvelous work done by late Fr. Prabhudas in Mozambique, especially in the district of Matutuine. Fr. Francis Venmenikattiyil had come all the way from Switzerland to Mozambique to enhance our joy.

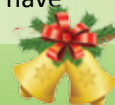
The day began with a requiem mass, presided over by the Delegation Superior, Rev. Fr. Petrus Kullu. Soon after the mass, all gathered in the Kindergarten premises for the blessing and inauguration. It was blessed by Rev. Fr. Petrus Kullu and Rev. Fr. Francis Venmenikattayil. Then a short and colourful cultural program was put up by various groups. This was followed by sharing of a delicious meal prepared for all. Jesus said, “Whatever you did to the least of these little ones, you did it unto me.” We are grateful to one and all for their love, support and collaboration. We sincerely thank Holy Redeemer Church, Fr. Cyriac and Fr. Francis Venmenikattayil msfs, Chur, Switzerland for financing this Pre -school project.

– Fr Ashok Minj, msfs

Blessing and Inauguration of MSFS Community and Formation Program in Barili, Cebu, Philippines

South West India Province had a historic moment on 22nd August 2018 when the Philippines Delegation inaugurated and blessed its first community in the Regions of Visayas, in the Province of Cebu, in the Municipality of Barili. The Delegation is in the process of constructing

the minor seminary in this place and to facilitate the construction, the Delegation has purchased a house near to the location of the land for the Seminary. This house was blessed and the Orientation program for this year was inaugurated in the new house with three aspirants we have





in the Delegation this year. Fr. Praful Tigga is the Rector and Superior of the Community and Fr. Nathaniel Masendo is the Procurator and formator. We have three candidates as aspirants from Mindano Regions – Brothers Ornette, Rey Ian and Janel. We had the joy of the presence of the Delegation Administration on this occasion and also Fr. Jinu Pathiyakam, the former Delegation Superior, who initiated the process of starting the Seminary in Barili, Cebu. This is our first community outside the Luzon Regions and in the Archdiocese of Cebu, in the Philippines.

– Fr Benny Koottanal, msfs

Chad-Cameroon Mission

29th September 2018, on the eve of our Founder’s day, was a great day in the history of MSFs Congregation, as the Chad-Cameroon Mission was raised into a delegation and the first Delegation Superior, Fr Manoj Arackal msfs, was officially installed. The day called for a multiple celebration, as two of our brothers, namely Br John Joseph and Br Ajish Antony Cheeramban committed themselves to become the permanent members of our Congregation through the perpetual profession, the Newly Ordained Priests, namely Fr Jose Simon and Fr Boris Nixon, were welcomed to the Delegation and Fr Emile Amougou was bid adieu by the community, as he was leaving Chad Cameroon delegation for his doctoral studies in Rome. Since the day was quite remarkable, we anticipated the founder’s day and had a grand celebration. Various religious, from different communities, were present. Fr Binu the representative of the Provincial and Fr Sen were the witnesses for the events. Fr Manoj pronounced his oath after the letters from the Superior General and the Provincial were read out by Fr



Binu. He promised to serve the congregation, particularly, the Delegation, in the best way possible by placing his hands on the Holy Bible. The Brothers John Joseph and Ajish Antony pronounced their vows before Fr Manoj and the whole community congratulated Fr Manoj and the Brothers. After the Eucharistic celebration, a solemn agape dinner was offered to all.

– Fr Benny Koottanal, msfs

Gandhi Jayanthi as Prisoner’s Welfare day at Visakhapatnam Central Jail

Mahatma Gandhi Jayanthi was celebrated as Prisoner’s Welfare day at Visakhapatnam central jail by the Archdiocese of Vizag PMI – Unit. In the first part of the programme many civil authorities were present and the chief guest was Sri Mahesh Chandra Laddha, IPS, Commissioner of Police, Visakhapatnam. After paying homage to the Father of the Nation, many officials spoke about the contributions of Mahatma to the nation. In the second



part of the programme the students of Visakha Vimala Vidyalaya, Steel Plant put up a nice cultural programme, guided by the management of the school. Students performed a skit depicting the entire life of Mahatma and his role in the Indian freedom struggle. Special thanks to Sr. Robel, Principal and the community members and staff and students for their co-operation.

The co-ordinator of Vizag PMI unit, Fr. Francis Stephen, thanked the superintendent of the central prison Sri Rahul for

giving us permission to celebrate the event and also thanked all the prison authorities who helped for the success of the day and in particular Most Rev. Dr. Mallavarapu Prakash garu, the Archbishop of Vizag and very Rev. Fr. P. Chinnappa Reddy MSFS, The Provincial Superior for their constant encouragement and support. Thanks also to PMI members and Sr. Mary James and Mr. Seshu, the Secretary. With the National Anthem the programme came to an end.

– Fr Francis Stephen, msfs

National Fransalian Education Seminar 2018

Fransalian Regional Forum of Education (FEFR) organised an Education seminar for our Fathers in the apostolate of Education, from the 4th to the 7th of May 2018, at Hyderabad. In all , 80 of our confreres participated in the seminar from all the Indian Provinces and one confrere from East Africa Province . The seminar was an update and animation for our confreres in the latest trends in teaching- learning in education and the challenges it poses. The seminar dwelt with topics such as educational leadership, Prevention of Children from Sexual



Offence(POCSO), Guidelines to deal with sexual harassment at workplace etc. Thanks fo Visakhapatnam province for the meticulous planning and organising the seminar.

– Fr George Parampukattil, msfs

Street Theatre on Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking

Fransalian Agency of Social Care and Education in India (FASCE India) has organised an awareness programme and street theatre on Domestic Violence against Women, on November 3, 2018, at Patharquary junction in Guwahati. The street play, enacted by the MSW interns from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, portrayed the evil effects

of domestic violence, human trafficking, dowry, non-acceptance of girl child in the family leading to suicide. Around 100 onlookers and passerby witnessed the play. At the end of the theatre, the onlookers expressed in unison that Domestic Violence against women need to be stopped. Addressing the gathering Fr. Saji George MSFS, Executive

Director of FASCE India, urged the people to help to spread the message “To Stop Violence against Women and Human Trafficking” and exhorted them to respect human life and work for peace and well-being of the society.

– Fr Saji George, msfs



The Gaja Cyclone, Tamil Nadu

In the early hours of 16th of November, 2018, the cyclone 'Gaja' hit seven districts of Tamilnadu. Many of us personally witnessed the cyclone and its fury. It wreaked havoc in several districts, including Nagapatnam, Thiruvarur, Thanjavur and Pudukkottai. It also affected some parts of Trichy and Dindigul.



All the tiled houses, sheet houses and huts have been totally destroyed. A major catastrophe is the destruction caused to the livelihood of the people. Almost all the trees have been uprooted. All the

cultivations have been destroyed. In the coastal areas, fishing boats and nets have been damaged. The province itself suffered heavy damages in some of our institutions and parishes. As the catastrophe unfolded, the people had no access to food, transport, electricity, water, communication etc.



– Fr K. Ignacimuthu, msfs

Makers of a Mission History



The book, *Makers of a Mission History, The Missionary Movement of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (Fransalians)* is a three volume work that was released on 24th October 2018 at Suvitya College. The book presents the story and history of the congregation. We appreciate the untiring spirit and sense of commitment of Fr. Henry Jose Kodikuthiyil MSFS, Fr. P M Joseph MSFS and Fr. George Panthanmackel MSFS. They brought into reality the long cherished desire of the congregation of having the history written down black and white. The congregation is proud of you Fathers Henry, PM Joseph and George, for bringing into light that MSFS are makers of history.

– Bro. Albin P. Mathew, msfs

CONGRATULATIONS



Fr Benny Kootanal, msfs
Provincial, South-West India Province

NEW PRIESTS

EAST AFRICA PROVINCE



Francis Kyule



Martin Pendanath

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Fr Philip Parackal



Fr Reddy Joseph



Patrick Musyimi



Simon Nabende

NAGPUR PROVINCE



Vinayanand Katru

SILVER JUBILEE



Fr Mathew Mamala