

MSFS

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES



*Happy
Feast!*

SUPERIOR GENERAL TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

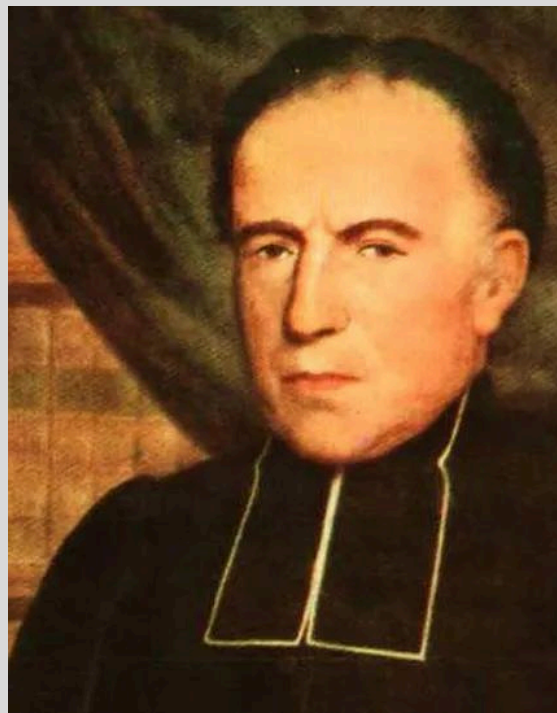
My dear Confreres,

SEPTEMBER is a month that we hold close to our hearts. We celebrate the feast of Mother of Compassion, our Patroness, and our Founder's Day. Mary freely accepted her calling to be the Mother of God and our Mother. She bore the sorrows that followed her 'Yes' to God's plan, with faith, strength, and tears. Let us say to her: Dearest Mother, thank you for accepting to be the mother of God when the angel told you, and thank you for accepting to be our mother when Jesus told you.

September 11, 2024 | SG AB2 16

**CASA GENERALIZIA
MISSIONARI DI S. FRANCESCO DI SALES,
VIA DELLE TESTUGGINI-21, 00134, ROMA, ITALY
TEL: (06) 65 00 51 50, FAX: (06) 99 70 69 57
superiorgeneralmsfs@gmail.com**

Father Peter Mermier, Servant of God, is our model missionary, the pearl of our religious family. He accomplished extraordinary things for God and His Church at a crucial time in history. He founded a religious community of men and of women with a clear vision. His vision was that “we (MSFS) offer ourselves to the people, to society, like another St. Francis de Sales...”.



1. XXI GENERAL CHAPTER 2025

We are **four months and twenty days** away from our General Chapter. Our Constitution reminds us that ‘the General Chapter is to preserve the fidelity of the Congregation to its spiritual heritage’. Canon 631/1 says:

- The General Chapter (GC) possesses supreme authority in an institute according to the Constitutions and it should represent the whole institute, as a true sign of its unity and charity
- The principal function of the GC is to protect the patrimony of the institute and to foster appropriate renewal in line with the patrimony
- The GC elects the supreme Moderator and his Curia
- The GC deals with the more important matters of the Institute
- The GC issues norms that all are bound to obey

We welcome and pray for XXI General Chapter to fulfill its purposes.

Happy Mermier's Day!



2. A SYNODAL CHAPTER

SYNODALITY is the dynamic for the celebration of our XXI General Chapter (GC). With a synodal spirit and openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, we promise to listen to each other and share the joys and sorrows of our confreres around the world. The spirit of the GC (MSFS, LIVE YOUR CHARISM) calls us to plug into the origins of our Congregation by studying our sources and deepening our knowledge of the Founder and his charism. Thus, our community spirit and missionary identity could echo a vital expression of our charism. GC-2025 is a time of community discernment to examine, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to what extent we have been faithful to our charism, what the Spirit asks us to change, and how the Spirit urges us to move forward.



COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION,
MISSION

3. PREPARATION FOR OUR SYNODAL GENERAL CHAPTER 2025

The preparation for this 'supreme legislative and teaching authority in the Congregation' (Const. Art. 191) is underway with Fr. Dola VELANGANI as the Secretary General of the Chapter. To ensure active participation of the entire Congregation:

- We have the Ex-officio members, Delegates, Participants, and Special Invitees.
- We have made Four Study Papers available for our reading, reflection, and responses with questions and proposals awaited from Local or Apostolic Communities.
- We are participating in 12 monthly recollections and presentation on the FOUR study papers to reflect on the spirit of the General Chapter and to prepare for this spiritual event in the Congregation.
- We have invited each confrere to send his observations/ proposals/ concerns to the Secretary General to be presented in the General Chapter.

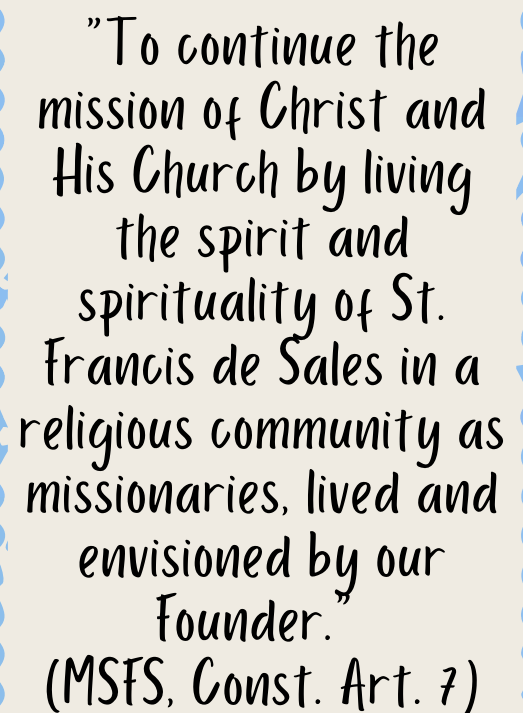
Thus, we make SYNODALITY the dynamic for the celebration of our XXI General Chapter.

4. OUR SPIRITUALITY AND CHARISM

Father Mermier gave us also a spirituality to live the FOUR pillars of our charism. These pillars – missionary life, the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales, Community life, and MSFS-ness or the little virtues of SFS – are the eyeglasses through which we see, experience, and respond to our world and God’s presence in the world. Our spirituality reflects our charism and our charism reflects our spirituality. Salient features of our spirituality are:

- The spirituality of SFS is a **spirituality of the heart**. We must experience things from the inside out instead of the outside in. Our Patron used to ask one question to his spiritual sons and daughters: Where is your heart? What/who is holding your heart? He meant to indicate that what goes on in your heart tells you who or what possesses your heart. Is your heart possessed by God? Or, is your heart possessed by anything other than what God wants. What is your mind occupied with? Who is your mind occupied with? SFS believed that whatever consumed your heart would control your life and behavior. “Since the heart is the source of actions, ... I have wished above all else to engrave and inscribe on your heart this only sacred maxim, LIVE JESUS”

- In an overstimulated culture in which so many of us live, we tend to let others (or the externals) define us instead of our deepest instinct or appetite for divine union. SFS plainly and powerfully teaches us that in every human heart, there is an inescapable natural appetite/ tendency/ instinct that God has planted. Our spiritual and natural appetite cannot be satisfied by anything on earth except God. **The goal of SFS’ spirituality is to help us die before we die.** It is to die to our passing self or our external stimulations and anything other than what God wants so that we can discover our Big Self in our union with God.

A quote in a decorative box with a light blue background and a white scalloped border. The text is in a black, handwritten-style font.

”To continue the mission of Christ and His Church by living the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in a religious community as missionaries, lived and envisioned by our Founder.”
(MSFS, Const. Art. 7)

- For SFS, the keys to growth in spiritual life are **the virtues of self-abandonment and holy indifference**. Indifference does not mean an ‘I don’t care attitude’. It means I care about God more and I abandon myself to what God wants/wills. **‘When we enter the stage of holy indifference we do not, and need not, give up our human affections and feelings, but they are perfected’ (Letter to St. Jane de Chantal)**. It is in this stage of indifference and self-abandonment that we have the peace that the world cannot give (John 14:27).

- SFS blends well spiritual growth and psychological growth. In growing psychologically, a person moves towards independence, self-fulfillment, comfort zones, and individualism. **In growing spiritually, a person realizes how powerless and miserable s/he is without God’s grace and mercy.** We are today affected by a revolution where self-importance and subjectivity have become the reference point for our behavior and decisions. We breathe this air of individualism and craving for self-fulfillment. The subjective self is sometimes treated as the objective truth.

- But SFS calls us to detach our self-image and live in God’s image of us. He advocates that our total dependence on God and the virtue of humility are the pathways to self-knowledge and self-understanding. Our spiritual and psychological growth requires self-knowledge and self-acceptance and self-identity. SFS teaches us not to confuse our mistakes with our value as a human being. **‘You are a perfectly valuable, creative, and worthwhile person simply because you exist. And no amount of triumphs and tribulations can ever change that’ (SFS)**. He upheld the psychological principle that unconditional self-acceptance is the core of a peaceful soul. In the end, everything would be alright because human nature is good and because God is Love.



NEWS – EVENTS – DECISIONS

- 1. Fr. Sabukuttan Francis** Provincial of Guwahati Province, Assam, INDIA is reappointed as chairperson of the governing body and major superior of Suvidya College, Bangalore on January 29, 2024.
- 2. Fr. Tomson Aerathedathu** is appointed as the Major Superior of the MSFS confreres in Morning Star College, Kolkata with effect from March 12, 2024.
- 3. Fr Karnam Dhaman Kumar**, belonging to the Visakhapatnam Province, is appointed as the Bishop of Nalgonda Diocese by His Holiness Pope Francis on February 17, 2024. He was consecrated as the Bishop of Nalgonda Diocese on April 30, 2024. Hearty Congratulations and best wishes to Rt. Rev. Bp. Karnam Dhaman Kumar!
- 4. Fr. Thomas Vanderkunnel** is appointed as the Regional Superior of the Southern African Region for a term of five years with effect from May 02, 2024. Congratulations and best wishes to Fr. Thomas Vanderkunnel MSFS!
- 5. Congratulations** to newly the elected **Regional Councillors** and **Bursar** of the Southern African Region **Fr. Thalayinakandathil Saju Joseph** (Regional Councillor) **Fr. Nakathingal Noble Jose** (Regional Councillor) and **Fr. Lukose Perumannikala** (Regional Bursar).
- 6. Fr. Naveen Nirmal** is appointed as the Director of De Sales & Mermier Resource Center and administrator and local bursar of the general secretariat community of the Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales in Hyderabad, India for a term of 3 years with effect from June 01, 2024.
- 7. Fr. Wilson Abraham** is appointed as the Associate Director of De Sales & Mermier Resource Center of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales for a term of 3 years with effect from June 01, 2024.
- 8. Fr. Jnanamnai Simon** is appointed as the Program Coordinator of De Sales International Film and Media Academy for two years with effect from July 01, 2024.

9. NEW MSFS NOVITIATE IN MAWI: The Chad-Cameroon Delegation of the Southwest India Province has begun a Novitiate Program in the newly erected Novitiate in MAWI in the Diocese of NGAOUNDERE, CAMEROON with effect from July 15, 2024.

10. PMP NATIONAL GATHERING and prayer days are scheduled at MSFS Provincial House, Silapathar, Assam from October 28 through November 01, 2024.

11. PMP TRAINING PROGRAM is scheduled at Harmony, UCHGAON, Belgaum from November 25 through 30, 2024.

12. SPIRITUALY PROGRAM ANNECY (SPA) 2024 will begin from September 28 through November 08, 2024, in Annecy, France.

13. EDUCATION SECRETARIAT is preparing the second edition of our Moral Science books, '**A Spoonful of Honey**'. The Moral Science Books are well appreciated and used by more than 150 Schools in India in the current academic year.

14. NATIONAL LEVEL QUIZ COMPETITION FOR SFS SCHOOL STUDENTS is being planned at the Province level first and then the finals at the National level. The finals is scheduled to take place at SFS GUWAHATI on November 09, 2024.

15. ONGOING FORMATION PROGRAM: The General Secretariat of Formation, in collaboration with the Southeast India Province, is organizing an Ongoing Formation Program at the Congregational level on the topic: "Ongoing Formation: A Call to Transformation". The Program is conducted for confreres ordained from 2014 through 2016 (in the SEVEN Provinces) in India at the Provincial House of the Cluny Sisters in Trichy from November 18 through November 22, 2024. (Arrival on 18th and Departure on 22nd). Details will be communicated through the PCIC of Formation.

16. MORNING STAR COLLEGE, Kolkata: MSFS confreres working and studying in Morning Star College are constituted into an Inter-provincial MSFS LOCAL COMMUNITY on July 22, 2024, with **Fr. George Panthamackel** as the Local Superior.

17. Fr. Antony Rajesh is appointed as the RECTOR of MSFS Scholasticate, Lumen Christi Institute, Maji Ya Chai, Arusha, Tanzania, for a term of three years with effect from August 01, 2024.

18. Fr Johnson Pathiyil is appointed as the ANIMATOR of the Formators' Course in Lumen Christi Institute, Maji Ya Chai, Arusha, Tanzania, for a term of three years with effect from August 01, 2024.

19. Fr. K. Thomas is appointed as the VICAR FOR RELIGIOUS in the diocese of Clifton, U.K. on 14th August 2024 by the Bishop of Clifton. Congratulations and best wishes to Fr. K. Thomas MSFS!

20. Fr Vincent Lourdeswamy: We thank you for taking up the responsibility for updating the MSFS Obituary 2025

21. Fr. Agnelo Fernandes, Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhy, and Fr. Devasia Manalel: We thank you for rendering valuable service at Lumen Christi Institute, Arusha in Tanzania for many years.

22. Tribute to our Beloved Confreres:

Fr Joseph PEDNEKAR, aged 94, Pune Province, died on February 15, 2024.

Fr. Jose PUTHIYAPARAMPIL, aged 76, Southwest India Province, died on May 2, 2024

Bro. Thomas MALAPURAM aged 93, Visakhapatnam Province, died on June 23, 2024.

Fr Joseph KALLACHERIL, age 85, Southwest Province, died on July 10, 2024.

May the souls of our departed confreres, through the mercy of God, rest in peace, Amen! *Those who have not fulfilled the suffrages to do the same at the earliest (MSFS Const. No. 118; Gen. Directory No. 98).*

In union with Mother of Compassion and Father Peter Mermier,

Live JESUS!



Father Abraham VETTUVELIL, MSFS
Superior General

"It is right that you should begin again every day. There is no better way to complete the spiritual life than to be ever beginning it over again."

- St. Francis de Sales