

MISSIONARIES OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

HISTORY, LEGACY, CHARISM, APOSTOLATES, AND CONSTITUTIONS AND GENERAL DIRECTORY

MSFS SOURCEBOOK

The Extraordinary General Chapter 2022 (EGC 2022) studied carefully the Four Papers, that the Commission, appointed by the Superior General, had prepared. The Papers were also studied by all the members of the Congregation and their comments, and observations were given to the EGC. Taking all these aspects into consideration, the EGC 2022 appointed a Committee consisting of Fr Thumma Mariadas Reddy, Fr Binu Edathumparambil, and Fr Agnelo Fernandes to prepare an MSFS Source Book on the MSFS History, Legacy, Charism, Apostolates, and Constitutions and General Directory, taking into consideration the observations and comments of the confreres and of the Extraordinary General Chapter. The General Councillor in Charge of Formation, Fr Saji George Puthiyakulangara, was the liaison between the Committee and the General administration.

The Committee is pleased to present the Draft of the MSFS Source Book. It consists of Four Chapters. Chapter One is on MSFS History; Chapter Two on the Legacy of the Spirit of the Founder and the Legacy of Devotions; Chapter Three is on the Charism and the Foundational Apostolates; and Chapter Four on the MSFS Constitutions and General Directory.

Chapter One presents us briefly with the early history of our Congregation when the Congregation was founded. It also traces the various missionary movements of the Congregation from the time the first missionaries came to India in 1845 till date in 2023. The initial history is interwoven with the life of our Founder. The Chapter presents twelve Core Experiences of our Founder through which the initial history unfolds itself. The later part of the Chapter presents to us the missionary movements of the Congregation through which it spread far and wide into the whole world.

Chapter Two deals with the Legacy of the Founder's Spirit and its Twelve visible expressions. It also indicates Twelve Devotions of the Congregation which also form part of the Legacy of the Congregation. These devotions nurture and strengthen the vocation of the MSFS.

Chapter Three explains with clarity and simplicity what our charism is as formulated by the EGC 2022, that is, "To continue the mission of Christ and His Church by living the spirit and spirituality of St Francis de Sales in a religious community of missionaries, as lived and envisioned by our Founder" (MSFS Const. Art.7, EGC 2022). The three Apostolates of our Congregation are: Renewal of Christian Life, Overseas and Pioneering Evangelization, and Education and Formation, especially of the Young (MSFS Const. Prologue d & Art. 22).

All other forms or expressions of our apostolates can be included in one of the above broad categories of the three Apostolates. Parish Mission Preaching is one of the powerful expressions of the Apostolate of Renewal of Faith. The Various Forums in our Congregation have to be understood as administrative arrangements to give detailed attention to a particular apostolate, which it would not receive, if it were to be under the umbrella of the three general apostolates as mentioned in our Constitutions.

The Chapter takes pain to underline the fact that the apostolates have to give expression to our charism. Without the charism embedded in our apostolates, the apostolates are like that of any other religious Congregation. The Chapter outlines the challenges we face in integrating our personal charisms with the charism of the Congregation and offers specific ways to integrate them. The Chapter also gives some clarity about the difference between Charism and Apostolates on one side and Vision and Mission on the other.

Chapter Four is a profound attempt to fathom the riches of MSFS vocation and inspire members to know, love, and practice the magna carta of every MSFS. The MSFS Constitutions is not only a rule book for reference and authentication of identity and mission of MSFS in the Congregation but also a way of life that fosters communion and trust among the members. Chapter Four is divided into two parts. The first Part explains briefly the meaning of MSFS Constitutions, its history, and the dynamics of the entire Constitutions focused on Consecration for Mission. It also briefly educates the confreres on the relationship between the MSFS Constitutions and the MSFS General Directory.

With detailed reference to the Articles of the Constitutions, the first part of the Fourth Chapter unfolds the meaning of the vision and mission of Jesus; the vision and mission of the Church; the vision and mission of the Congregation; its charism; its apostolates; vows; community life; authority, and formation as the integral and integrating dynamics of consecration for the mission. This part of the Chapter is indeed a profound theological meditation on MSFS Vocation.

Part Two of the Chapter highlights a list of challenges that MSFS face in being transparently faithful to the Constitutions and suggests ways of responding to those challenges.

The Committee wishes that once this Source Book is read and studied by all the members of the Congregation and with the approval of XXI General Chapter, it will indeed be a ready-at-hand Source Book for all the members of our Congregation and anyone who wishes to learn about us. May this Sourcebook inspire the confreres in the footsteps of St Francis de Sales, our Patron and Fr Mermier, our Founder.

The Members of the Committee:

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