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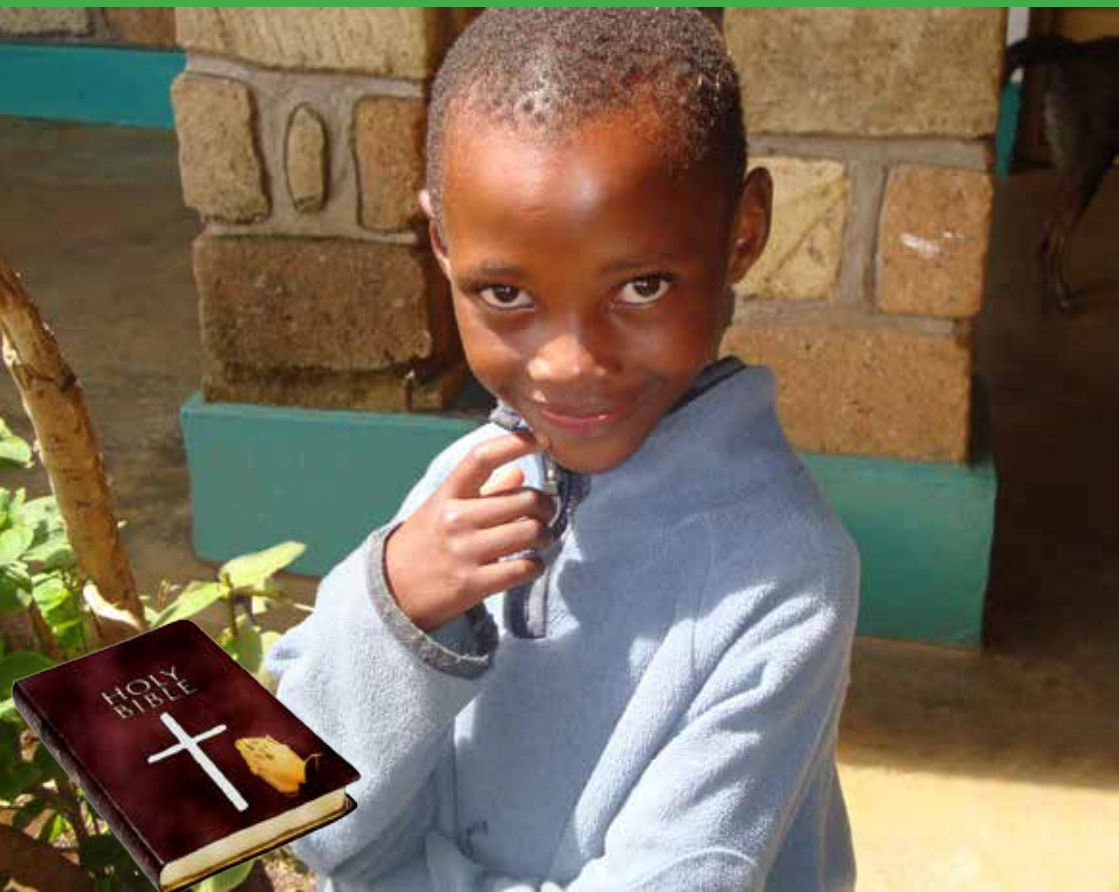
June 2020



MISSIONS



MISSIONARY INSPIRATIONS, ASPIRATIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FRANSALIANS



**GIVE ME THE WORD OF GOD
AND I WILL LIVE AS A CHILD OF GOD**

Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales – Global Mission Bulletin

Dear Respected Reader,

Thank you for blessing this mission magazine

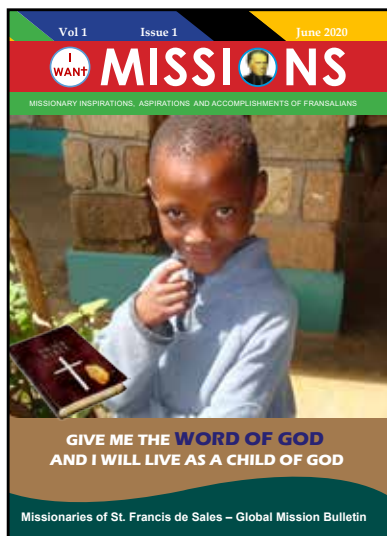
I WANT MISSIONS

by holding it in your hands, for reading it and sharing it with others



A missionary needs the joy of the Gospel: without this one cannot be on a mission, one does not proclaim a Gospel that does not attract. This attraction is the heart of the mission because it is only Christ who attracts. ~ Pope Francis

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Our God has POWER over CORONA Virus....

So let us pray.....

Almighty God, we know that everything is in your sovereign control. We ask that you keep the Coronavirus from continuing to spread. Father, we seek your wisdom and accompaniment every moment of our lives. Be with people making decisions that affect the lives and future of our families, communities and nations. We pray that they communicate clearly, truthfully, and calmly. Bring your protection upon those in health care profession, as they work with patients. Take away the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give them a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease.

Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Editorial

The matter that matters!

Everything matters. But the matter that really matters is the MATTER. Thus, the MATTER for the life and activity of a missionary is the GOOD NEWS of Jesus. It is the good news of the possibilities of the rectifications of the past, renewal of the present and the hope for the future. This Good News is given to us in the form of the Word of God, in the Sacraments and the communion of faith.



Through the powerful instrumentality of His holy servant Fr. Peter Marie Mermier, God initiated the divine project of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. Fr. Mermier committed himself to preach the Missions by focussing on the renewal of Christian faith which was torn apart by the erroneous teachings in his times. This divine project, entrusted to the MSFS congregation in the year 1838, is being carried out to this day, by the members of the congregation serving in all the continents in the world.

It was the felt need to share the good news of the myriad of the missionary activities undertaken and implemented by the MSFS Congregation in different parts of the world. The sole purpose of this MSFS Global Mission Magazine is to make known the blessings of the Almighty in our missionary ventures and to let it serve as an inspiration for the young generation.

We have christened this magazine with the telling, affirmative statement from Fr. Peter Marie Mermier, - *I want Missions*. He emphatically declared this at the very beginning days of initiating the missionary activities, sharing his deep conviction to go ahead with the work of renewal of Catholic faith. The world today needs missions. Only through the works of renewal of faith, even the other apostolates of pastoral works, social work, education and formation can be fully effective. With this wish, I am very happy to present this first issue of *I WANT MISSIONS*.

God bless this venture!

God bless every missionary!

Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS

General Secretary for MSFS Global Mission



Message from the Superior General of the MSFS



I am glad to know that the 'MSFS Secretariat for Mission' is publishing its very first Global Mission Bulletin – 2020, 'I WANT MISSIONS', featuring the missionary inspirations, aspirations, and accomplishments of FRANSALIANS in all the continents.

The slogan, 'I want Missions', that expressed the resolve of a passionate missionary in the person of our beloved founder, Fr. Peter Mermier, continues to resonate in the entire congregation even after 182 years after the foundation of the Congregation. Father Mermier wanted FRANSALIANS to be *MISSIONARIES WHO LIVE THE SPIRIT AND SPIRITUALITY OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES IN THE MISSION AND IN THE COMMUNITY.*

The missionary identity of the MSFS Congregation draws its force from the missionary identity of the Church. The Church is missionary as God is missionary. The Church exists for mission. The Church is not to be seen as a sending body that sends missionaries for the benefit of its members. The Church is to be seen as people *called and sent* by God to participate in the redemptive mission of the world.

Popes and Theologians have asserted the missionary identity of the Church for the past 50 years. Religious life that is not centered on the mission of Christ and the mission of the Church is without focus, without passion, and without purpose. The mission of the Church remains at the center of our consecrated life as MSFS.

A fascinating missionary journey lies ahead of us in the coming years. We are called to present our Charism to the Church and the world. We are called to revive our foundational apostolate of Parish Mission Preaching for the renewal of Christian faith.

We have to renew our hearts, apostolates, local communities, and congregation, lest we become a museum (Pope Francis). I appreciate and encourage this new media initiative of the Mission Secretariat as a great opportunity to renew our missionary commitment in the Church.

I sincerely thank Fr. Johnson Kallidukil, the General Secretary for Mission, for this venture to renew our missionary awareness focusing on our aspirations, inspirations, and accomplishments.

God Bless our missionary efforts,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abraham'.

Father Abraham VETTUVÉLIL, MSFS

Superior General

April 12, 2020

The day of the Risen Lord

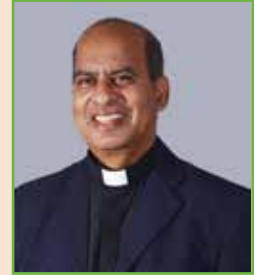
IS PARISH MISSION PREACHING (PMP) OF FR PETER MERMIER A RELEVANT APOSTOLATE TODAY?

I had the joy of being part of a team in the Congregation that was entrusted with the work of studying the apostolate of parish mission preaching according to Fr Mermier and bring forth an outline of a adapted module for our times. It was a challenging process for the team to come with one viable module that would suit all pastoral situations in the world. It was not possible nor practical. And so, we focused on two contexts ie of European, and that of India, where majority of our provinces are present, leaving other pastoral contexts in the world to bring up their own adapted versions for their context. Interacting with confreres engaged in the ministry of preaching in workshops for 3 years, we were of the unanimous view that parish mission preaching in adapted form will be the apt response for MSFS in today's world.

What is mermerian parish mission preaching?

It is a faith renewal ministry conducted over an extended period of time and which intends to fan into all the sectors of the parish community. The programme includes visit to families by the members of the team, preaching that is inspirational, motivational, catechetical, moral, biblical; celebration of the Eucharist; a well-prepared sacramental exercise

of penance and reconciliation; an approach immersed in the spirituality of St Francis de Sales. The objective of Parish Mission Preaching was the renewal and vibrancy of faith of the parish community



Fr. Agnelo Fernandes MSFS

Fr Mermier who in the company of his confreres preached a great number of parish missions was very effective as the programme of parish mission preaching was the right response to the secularized situation of France in the post-French Revolution period. With its attack on the clergy and the Church, parish communities were left pastor-less; deprived of knowledge and experience of their faith and Word of God. An intense programme like that of Parish Mission Preaching made a tremendous impact on the renewal of the local church.

Is mermerian parish mission preaching still relevant today?

To answer the question "*Is mermerian parish mission preaching still relevant today?*", we need to note the undercurrents of the present scenario of the world.

The **western world** has suffered from the onslaught of **secularism, relativism and materialism** for a few generations and therefore the people today are as ignorant of their faith, doctrine, and deprived of spiritual experiences as much as were the people at the time of Fr Mermier. In fact, we can say, the present situation is grimmer than that at the time of Fr Mermier. There is boredom, a sense of disappointment and delusion, and depression. There is a new search for meaning and spirituality, not knowing what it is or what it should be.

Therefore, many look for all sorts of spiritual and esoteric experiences in other religions, traditions and create for themselves a sort of syncretic spirituality to the extent that it gives them temporary respite from their boredom and disillusionment.

Therefore, to respond to such a situation PMP would be a very right reflex, but highly challenging one as it would need a compassionate and truthful adaptation of the PMP module of Fr Mermier to the times. Besides, to launch PMP in such situation will demand **PMP teams that are visibly, obviously and transparently rooted in God, blessed with spiritual persuasive personal charisms, ability to be compassionate, empathic and at the same time have the ability to confront them with the demands of the Gospel and of Christ.**

There is **another world** where secularism and materialism will not make visible external inroads into the psyche of the people, as in **Africa or Asia** steeped in religiosity and belief in spirits. However, there is a big danger of secularism invading the inner self of the same people forcing them to live dichotomous lives, within guided by the modern forces but continuing to practice external rituals and prayers as before.

Here in this situation of Africa and Asia, PMP will be a relevant response and it will be welcomed. But the adaptation will have to be such that it helps the people to shun the dichotomy and embrace harmony and transparency through a module that aims at such a integrity of life.

There is a **third world** where **Christian communities are vibrant** and wish to grow in their life of faith, be it in the west, east, north or south. Preaching Parish Missions to these groups will be a great boon to raise their maturity and growth in faith so that they, in turn become a powerful leaven in the dough of the church and society.

Success of PMP in all the above-mentioned pastoral contexts will depend on the quality and texture of authentic spiritual life that the team members live and their sensitivity and compassion to frame a module specific to that particular group. In different

Many look for all sorts of spiritual and esoteric experiences in other religions, traditions and create for themselves a sort of syncretic spirituality to the extent that it gives them temporary respite from their boredom and disillusionment.

situations a totally new module could emerge inspired by Mermerian module and claiming no similarities but its essential components, and very much true to the objectives of any PMP mission, namely renewal and vibrancy of faith of the group.

Gradual and Progressive Formation and Training for Parish Mission Preaching

The best way to rediscover our foundational apostolate charism of PMP today will be to identify in every batch of formees after the novitiate individuals that show inclination to preaching accompanied by potential skills of preaching and spiritual communication; to guide them, expose them to PMP situations; to help them to respond by experimental modules; and to follow them right up to their

priestly ordination and thereafter during the first three years of their ministry. Such an accompaniment and formation in PMP will definitely shape teams that will provide adequate and effective response to different pastoral situations in the Church.

**PARISH MISSION
PREACHING
and renewal of
Christian life
is the Core task
of every MSFS**

Conclusion

Hearts filled with the spirit of Fr Mermier and his missionary zeal should enable MSFS today to rediscover and practice the primordial apostolate

of parish mission preaching. It will be our congregational availability to the Church for re-evangelization. It should enable us to be rooted in our foundational identity, a sure way for renewal of the community of the MSFS Congregation.

Missionaries can often feel as though they've sown much with a little harvest. Pray for their strength and endurance to run the race — that the Lord would remind them He is working deep in hearts even when it seems like nothing is happening.

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” – Isaiah 40:31

St. Francis de Sales Parish Livingstonia, Karonga, Malawi For the MSFS a New Chablais Challenge!

Fr. Ananth Raj MSFS

The courageous missionary in the person of Francis de Sales, voluntarily found himself in a very challenging yet possible mission of Chablais, France. That was the mission entrusted to him by the Mother Church in order to bring back to the Catholic faith, the thousands who had deviated from Catholicism to different protestant movements. It was the task of working among people who despised you and ignored you. Yet with firm hope and realistic optimism Francis de Sales proved to be very effective in his mission, through his innovate missionary approaches, based on his deep faith, convincing over 70,000 people to come back to the Catholic faith.

Similar is the scenario of the new mission entrusted to the MSFS in the Catholic Diocese of Karonga, Malawi, Africa. The newly erected parish of **Livingstonia** is predominantly non-Catholic area. Livingstonia is a town located in the Northern Region district of Rumphi in

Malawi. It is 440 kms north of the capital, Lilongwe, and connected by tarred road to Chitimba on the shore Lake Malawi.



Fr. Ananth Raj MSFS

Livingstonia was founded in 1894 by missionaries from the Free Church of Scotland. The missionaries had first established a mission in 1875 at Cape Maclear, which they named Livingstonia after David Livingstone. He was a Scottish missionary, and physician known for his explorations of Africa,



We are very delighted to have the visit of our confreres from Tanzania.



Bishop Martin Mtumbuka, Fr. Abraham Vettuvolil the Superior General, Fr. Ignaci Muthu the Provincial with other confreres on the day of the opening of the SFS Parish Livingstonia

having crossed the continent during the mid-19th century. He was one of the most popular British heroes of the late 19th-century Victorian era. His death in 1873 due to Malaria, had rekindled British support for missions in Eastern Africa.

Livingstonia Catholic Parish is in the Catholic Diocese of Karonga.

Karonga Catholic Diocese was established on July 21, 2010 with **Most Rev. Bishop Martin Anwel**

Mtumbuka as its Local Ordinary. In the year 2012 the then Provincial of East Africa Province Fr. Johnson Kallidukil started the initial contact with the Bishop in view of spreading the MSFS presence to Malawi. Since then several instances of communication

and planning were there from the part of the Diocese and the MSFS Congregation.

By the grace of God on October 17, 2018, the first team of the pioneers of MSFS Malawi Mission stepped into the Malawi

The country Malawi is nicknamed **"The Warm Heart of Africa"** because of the friendliness of the people

soil and reached Livingstonia, travelling by road from Tanzania, crossing the Songwe Border Post, covering a total distance of 1,100 km one way. The pioneering team consisted of Fr. Susai Raj MSFS, Fr. Aanantha Raj, and Fr. Nelson Arockiasamy MSFS. After staying in the parishes with diocesan priests for a few months and having learnt the language and the culture of the people we ventured into the apostolate.

Later other fathers also joined the Malawi Mission. As of now we are six priests and seven scholastics who have left the home land India and are in Africa. The scholastics are in Tanzania, learning Theology and doing pastoral year, in view of preparing themselves to be missionaries in Malawi. We are fully into the pastoral and missionary activities of the diocese. The motto of the diocese is **'We shall go to them'** This motto is

literally lived through the presence of priests, catechists and other missionaries visiting the people even in very remote villages.

Our pastoral activities include but not limited to, going to the villages for Mass, visiting and blessing the houses, praying over the sick, etc. Tumbuka is the common language in this part of Malawi and we have learned it rather well. We experience great cooperation and support from the diocesan authorities as well as the diocesan clergy. We are also recognized by the diocese as we are given opportunities to involve in the management of the diocese in our capacity as resource person for seminars, being appointed as the youth chaplain and one of us being a member of the College of Consultants.

St. Francis de Sales Parish Livingstonia comprises of 7

God's own time

The first ever correspondence from Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS to the Bishop of Karonga was on January 26, 2012. The first batch of MSFS pioneers to Malawi arrived on October 17, 2018. Therefore, it took 6 years, 8 months and 22 days for the Malawi Mission of the MSFS to be a reality.

We have not delayed. We have followed God's own time!

outstations, 14 substations and 27 small Christian communities. Some of the stations are reachable only by boat as they are settlements on the shores of the Lake Malawi. We celebrate Eucharist regularly in the parish and villages and administer Sacraments. We actively involve in the spiritual activities and administrative works of the parish. We render service to the youths in the University and Hospitals as chaplains.

AS of now, we have 1370 children in our parish and 30% of the parishioners are below 30 years of age. We need to concentrate on their growth. Therefore, primary education could be given importance. Children, youth and women welfare programs have to

be encouraged, provided we are ready to assist financially such initiatives in our parishes. Small scale business for women could be encouraged.

In Malawi we are in a society which is really rich in positive cultural values. However, there are several social evils too. Besides, the belief in the traditional religions and the very profligate practice of witchcraft are working as direct challenges to the works of evangelization. It is the herculean task of missionary to combat with such evils. So, in our apostolate, we need to concentrate more in the spiritual aspects. We have already taken steps to promote pious association, lay movements. Yet we need to focus more on these



Malawi – A country abounding in life

aspects. Eucharistic adoration and Marian devotion are promoted very seriously.

There is great scope of expanding our mission to other dioceses. At present we are serving in two parishes in Karonga diocese. Therefore, we have to seriously take steps to expand mission to other dioceses. We have already made efforts to take up mission in the neighboring diocese of Mzuzu.

Relying on the providence of God we have taken up steps to implant our Congregation and

share the Good News of salvation in the land of Malawi. It is truly heartwarming to work with the people, because we eventually work for the Lord and for His glory. This new mission is the child of our congregation. We are happy to serve the mission responsibly to make it grow to greater heights by our sincere commitment. We request your valuable prayers and blessings for the Mission-Malawi.

Yewo Chomene

Thank you in Tumbuka language



Sure, we wear stylish shoes and suits, Yet in the mud, we are ready to sit, for the joy of having our MSFS priests.

From India to Indonesia



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Mt. 28:19)

Indonesia, a Southeast Asian nation made up of thousands of volcanic islands, is home to hundreds of ethnic groups speaking many different languages. It's known for beaches, volcanoes, Komodo dragons and jungles sheltering elephants, orangutans and tigers. It is the world's largest island country, with more than seventeen thousand islands and the 14th largest by land area and 7th in the combined sea and land area. With over 261 million people, it is the world's 4th most populous country as well as the most populous Muslim-majority country.

These were the basic facts and pieces of information we could collect from the Internet and other sources before reaching the Indonesian soil. Most of the time we could receive only frightening news about the land of Indonesia especially of its earthquake that happens time and again. But after our arrival, we were wonderstruck by the magnificent panorama of islands and the warm reception by the local people.

Currently Indonesia is one of the countries in the world with lot of growing vocations to the religious life both men and women.



Fr Mathew Praveen MSFS

The Visakhapatnam Province, the mother province in India was ever eager and enthusiastic to carry out the Mission of Christ faithfully. At the request of Very Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil, our Superior General and his Council, the Visakhapatnam Province accepted to start a new Mission in Indonesia under the able leadership of Very Rev. Fr. Chinnappa Reddy, Provincial Superior. The initial visit to Indonesia was made



Pristine beauty of Indonesia

With over 261 million people, Indonesia is the world's 4th most populous country as well as the most populous Muslim-majority country in the world.

by the then General councillor Fr. George Parambukattil MSFS. Later in the month of November 2018, Fr. Chinnapa Ready, the Provincial of Visakhapatnam along with Fr. Thomas Perumalil and Fr. Ananda Prasad visited the diocese of Larantuka. Larantuka is a district capital of East Flores Regency, on the eastern end of Flores Island, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Like much of the region, Larantuka has a strong a colonial Portuguese influence. This is overwhelmingly a Roman Catholic area, 95.4 % of its inhabitants are catholic. The Diocese is spread around in 4 islands. The Bishop Msgr. Franciskus Konpg Kung was extremely happy to receive the MSFS missionaries to his diocese. The team was happy to take up the mission in the diocese of Larantuka.

The First batch of our Missionaries who volunteered to be Pioneers of this Overseas Mission consists of – Rev. Frs. Maddineri Anand Prasad, Anthony Bhaskar Jayaseelan, Bandi Sagar Santhosh, Swarna Anil Kumar, Thondickal Praveen Mathew and Boilla Ravi Kumar. On 28th May 2019, they spent in Recollection as part of their spiritual preparation for mission preached by Fr. Dola Velangani Rao, the Cuncilor in-charge of Mission, at Visakhapuri Mary Matha Shrine, Ross Hill.

On May 29, 2019, the first batch started their journey to Indonesia



It is a joy to work among loving and caring people

accompanied by Fr. Dola Velangani Rao, the Councilor in-charge of the Mission. On May 31, on the day of Solemnity of the Visitation of Blessed Virgin Mary, they landed on the Indonesian soil at LARANTUKA at 9.30 am (local time). Rev. Fr. Thomas, the Diocesan Education In-charge of the Diocese of Larantuka, was present at the airport to receive them. Bishop Franciscus was already waiting for them and he welcomed them warmly in his parlour and expressed his gratitude to the Provincial Superior and the Superior General for accepting the Mission in Indonesia.

The initial month, the team stayed together in Bishop's house and was offered the very basic language and culture course by a diocesan priest himself. During this time, we also made use of the opportunity to visit nearby parishes and always we received a warm welcome from the people. After completing one month as per the directions of Bishop we were sent to different parishes to

On January 24, 2020, in Pada, Lembata Island the first ever Catholic parish dedicated to St. Francis de Sales was established in Indonesia, and was entrusted to the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales



The contract being signed between the Diocese and the Congregation

reside and to continue our learning of language and culture.

On Sunday September 15, 2019 on the feast of mother of compassion, the patroness of our congregation, Rev. Fr. Chinnappa Reddy MSFS our beloved Provincial landed in Larantuka for his visit. It was a moment of great joy for all of us to receive and welcome our provincial to our newest mission overseas. Fr. Provincial stayed with us for almost eight days; during his visit he also visited our mission stations. The official agreement between the Diocese of Larantuka and MSFS Visakhapatnam Province was signed during his visit.

The much-awaited moment of joy and celebration arrived for the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales in Indonesia on Saturday, October 26, 2019. It was indeed a historical event in the chronicles of the Congregation. It was on this day that the Parish of St. Kornelius, *Pohan Bao, Larantuka* bifurcated from the Cathedral Parish, Mary Queen of Rosary, was officially entrusted to the care of MSFS congregation. Fr. Anand Prasad MSFS was appointed as the first Parish Priest (Pastor Paroki) and Fr. Praveen Mathew MSFS as Assistant Priest. It is a thriving Parish with 370 families.

The feast of our patron St. Francis de

Sales on January 24, 2020, remains not just feast alone for the MSFS, but it is on this day that the first parish in Indonesia dedicated to St. Francis de Sales. Our second mission community was officially inaugurated on this day in *Pada* in another Island called Lembata (one-hour journey by speed boat from Larantuka). Fr. Antony Bskar Jayasheelan is appointed as parish priest assisted by Fr. Swarna Anil and Fr. Boilla Ravi. *Pada* our mission is an independent parish now bifurcated from Waikomo Parish. SFS parish *Pada* consist of seven substations. Most of the substations remain on mountains.

The Indonesian Mission remains as a promised land for the congregation of MSFS. It is so incredible that our confreres were so passionate that they could master the local language and take up the parishes within the short span of five months. We do look forward that Indonesia could provide great number of vocations for our congregations in the future. We do hope and pray that Mission in Indonesia will flourish according to God's plan and become another jewel mission in the mission crown of the congregation. So may God help us!

On February 20, 21, 22 Our Beloved Assistant General Rev. Fr. Yves Carron MSFS, visited us in Indonesia, the newest mission of the Congregation. His visitation was an assurance and affirmation of our dedication to the mission of Christ and of the congregation.

We request your valuable prayers and blessings for the new missions in Indonesia. May God bless us all.

MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES IN ECUADOR, South America



Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, took yet another giant leap in our missionary endeavour with the starting of our new MSFS Mission at Limones, Esmeraldas in Ecuador, Spanish world, South America.

VISION AND MISSION: Creating a dignified, Compassionate and Self-sustainable Community through in-depth Catholic Faith Formation and Family Renewal, Health Care and Holistic Healing Facilities, Educational and Socio-economic Development Opportunities.

HISTORY OF THE MISSION

The seeds of MSFS Mission Ecuador were sown by Most Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil MSFS, the Superior General who made the first visit to Limones Island, Esmeraldas, Ecuador along with Fr. Joseph Mullakkara MSFS Vice-Province of USA from 27th -30th, November 2017. It is by the inventiveness and the mastermind of Most Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil MSFS, our beloved Superior General by trusting and entrusting us with this Mission that the MSFS presence is here in this Spanish speaking world.

Responding to the clarion call of the Superior General, the MSFS Pune Province, under the guidance and

a n i m a t i o n of Fr. Agnelo Fernandes MSFS then General Councillor for Mission, the first study team consisting of Fr. Jayaseelan MSFS the Provincial Pune, Fr. John Kennedy MSFS and Fr. Melky Fernandes msfs reached Esmeraldas, Ecuador on July 22, 2018.



Fr. John Kennedy MSFS

Our dear Provincial Rev. Fr. Jayaseelan illumined us and our Mission through his inspiration, support, love, brotherly care and concern. His every dedication towards this mission pushes us to move forward.

THE FIRST PIONEERING MISSIONARIES (MSFS):

The first pioneering missionaries, namely, Fr. John Kennedy MSFS, Fr. Melky Fernandes MSFS and Fr. Adaikkala

Rajan MSFS were commissioned with a mission mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ ***“Go to the whole world to proclaim the Gospel”*** and commenced our missionary journey from Mumbai Airport on January 08, 2019 and arrived Quito, Ecuador on January 08, 2019 and we were wholeheartedly received by the Vicar General Rev. Fr. Silvino Mina in Quito, the capital city of Ecuador on behalf of the Bishop Most Rev.





The MSFS in Ecuador Mission

Eugenio Arenllano, Vicariate Diocese of Esmeraldas.

Diocese of Esmeraldas, Ecuador.

On January 15, 2019 all most all the people, children and the youth of the Limones Island filled the streets of Limones along with Rev. Fr. Silvino Mina the V.G to welcome the pioneering missionaries and embraced us solemnly with flower pedals and beating of the drums as a sign of joy and acceptance of the newly come missionary shepherds and later in June Fr. Jijo John and Fr. Maria Anand along with two seminarians Bro. George Bush and Bro. Dino joined the Mission. Now at present all together five priests and two seminarians are working in the vicariate

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PROVINCE OF ESMERALDAS: The first officially acknowledged arrival of African people who arrived in Costa Rica came with the Spanish conquistadors. Slave trade was common in all the countries conquered by Spain, and in Costa Rica the first Africans seem to have come from specific sources in Africa- Equatorial and Western regions. The people from these areas were thought of as ideal slaves because they had a reputation for being more robust, affable and hard-working than other Africans.

Ecuador was the first country to officially recognize the rights of nature. Rather than treating nature as property, Ecuador recognizes that nature has constitutional rights and has the “right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles.



The first ever Christmas Carols in the history of Limones

The enslaved were from what is now the Gambia (Wolof), Guinea (Malinké), Ghanaian (Ashanti), Benin (specifically Ije / Ararás) and Sudan (Puras). Many of the enslaved were also Minas (i.e. communities from parts of the region extending from Ivory Coast to the Slave Coast), Popo (be imported tribes as Ana and Baribas), Yorubas and Congas (perhaps from Kongasso, Ivory Coast). Enslaved Africans also came from other places, such as neighboring Panama. Throughout the centuries, but especially after the emancipation of the slaves in 1824, the black population mixed with other ethnic groups, notably the Indigenes, and became part of the mainstream culture and ethnicity.

THE NEED OF THE HOUR: At present we are working in two parishes of the same Vicariate namely Limones and Rioverde. All most, all the people of the Limones Island and Rioverde (about 21,000) are of Afro-Ecuadorians from North Western corner of Ecuador and cultures come together amidst land, jungle, river, and sea.

Most of the people in Limones and Rioverde are living below the poverty

line and are facing many problems, viz., lack of food, shelter, health care, education and un-employment and thus the people live in utter poverty. Poverty has always been recognized as the major cause of death and disability. Poverty brings on lack of safe Drinking Water, inadequate food, poor health care and poor education. All these will have effect on health.

The families that are living in huts of Limones are daily wagers. They are living in utter poverty. They are unable to fetch their square meal a day. Some of the parents admitting their children in the schools, but they are unable to continue the education of their children because they are not able to pay the fees in the school. That's reason the children are being dropped from the school.

The poverty situations in Limones and Rioverde context, reflects in the Province of Esmeraldas. Poverty has always been recognized as the major cause of disease, death, and disability. Large families in Limones and Rioverde often face these problems and the earning members of the family unable to cope-up with the situations and survival becomes difficult. The relief often comes in the form of death leaving the children as orphans and destitute. These people starve without shelter, food and clothing and roam along the streets.

Since the majority of the people are Afro-Ecuadorians and very poor, many youth and people are into the business of Drugs and Smugglings because of which the families are affected very badly and urgently they need helping

hands in different areas where we can review their life differently. Since the parents are involved in these activities the children and youth too are affected very badly.

Some of the children and youth are physically and sexually abused and there is no one to hear their silent cries. For the last one year, field work studies were done and the ***Need of the Hours*** are: Identify such child and youth victims and organize them into smaller groups and empower them through educational, recreational and child and youth counselling opportunities, provide them with basic needs such food, study materials, uniforms and organize child friendly activities.

So, we the missionaries of St. Francis de Sales involve directly to strengthen and renew their faith and to uplift them in the society by providing them all the possible and necessary things like Education for the poor children, clothes, food, different programs for the youth and married men and women both young and old, conducting various self-orientation Programs, De-addiction, Seminars, counselling, conducting retreat, etc.

SPIRITUAL LIFE AND CHALLENGES IN THE MISSION: There used to be hardly any Masses celebrated in the sub-centres and even in the main Church. Some of the sub-centres did not have mass for years together. Earlier, since the priests were not interested to work among these people, they were not interested to visit and celebrate Masses in the Sub-stations. At present there are so many sects, other groups of Faith and Denominations, many number of people have gone away from the



One of the substations Rioverde

Catholic faith and many do not practice any of the faiths.

Due to the lack of pastoral care, the people were left like sheep without shepherds. One of the practical difficulties for us in our Mission is traveling to different Mass centres by boat and we are often affected by low tides and high tides in the sea. Most of the times we don't get the public transports in time and at times we have to walk several miles which make us very tired. Sometimes even without proper food and water we have to reach the centres for the Mass. But we are not discouraged but we are enthused and energized more with full of care, concern and love for the Mission.

MSFS PRESENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

In the beginning when we entered this mission, we had to face lots of challenges among such a situation such as the culture, language, food, lack of faith and indifferences of the people etc. It was almost like the Chablais experience of our beloved patron St. Francis de Sales. When we entered this mission, the people were indifferent, not even minding us, looking at us with suspicious eyes and sometimes or the



Seminar for Youth in Lemones

other we had been challenged by many people stating that you are all outsiders and how can we trust you all and were not accepted by many, which really discouraged us very badly and even we felt that we have made a wrong choice to enter this mission.

But only one thing was going back of our minds that, ***it is not we have chosen to come to this Mission rather the Spirit of the Lord has chosen us to reach to these rejected and unwanted people.*** Trusting and believing in the providence of God, Our Beloved Mother, Our beloved patron and Founder, we decided to approach the people differently and spiritually. Saying the fact none of the diocesan priests like to work in this mission.

As a commitment to the Mission entrusted to us, we started to have two hours of adoration in the church. An hour of community adoration and morning prayers in the church for the community fathers and in the evening an hour of adoration, rosary and Holy Mass with the people every day, which brought an impact among the people. People started to trust us slowly, even went to the extreme saying that we have seen many religious priests working here but these priests are something unique and different. None of the priests used to pray together but these priests spend hours together in prayer as a community, which is something new, and it has reached the other priests and parishes too that we are praying together as a community.



Mass with indigenous people

Another method that we handled over to approach the people was the regular family visit, which was very new for the people that the priests are visiting and praying in their houses. Because earlier, none of the priests had visited all the families. Today the situation has undoubtedly changed somewhat, but there is still lot to do in this Mission. Now with our presence we hope and trust in God that we can bring them back to the Catholic Faith. This is the Main Goal and Purpose that we are focusing upon and working towards.

Administration of the Sacraments in presents of MSFS:

- ❖ **Baptism- 685 baptized and 178 soon to be baptized**
- ❖ **First holy communion- 208**
- ❖ **Confirmation- 164**
- ❖ **Regular Sacrament of Reconciliation**
- ❖ **Last sacrament and funeral Mass as per the need.**

❖ **Many people come for Adoration, Rosary and Mass daily and on Sundays.**

CONCLUSION: As the Holy Scripture says that *“The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few”*, in reality it is a long awaited opportunity for us msfs to launch into this Mission to have an experience of our Patron and our Beloved founder. As the clarion call of our beloved founder Father Peter Mary Mermier **“I WANT MISSIONS”** as a community we trust that this is what our beloved founder exactly wanted us to do.

We the confreres namely Fr. John Kennedy MSFS, Fr. Melky Fernandes MSFS and Fr. Adaikkala Rajan MSFS, Fr. Jijo John msfs and Fr. Maria Anand MSFS, Bro. George Bush MSFS and Bro. Dino msfs are glad and proud to be the Fransalians working together in this Mission. It is because of prayers and co-operation as a community, every efforts that we are able to make even impossible things possible and move forward. We need many more msfs to enter into this Mission now and in the future. Continue to keep all the seven confreres and our mission in your valuable prayers.

“EVERYONE CAN’T DO EVERYTHING BUT EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING”.

LOVE & LIVE JESUS.

*Fr. John Kennedy MSFS,
Mission Superior, Ecuador*

Love endures everything. (1Cor .13:7)

Towards the Beatification of the Servant of God

Fr. Peter Marie MERMIER

What is done so far and what is yet to be done.....

On October 7, 1990, an official function was held at the Basilica of the Visitation, Annecy, France, to mark the Second Centenary of the Birth of Fr. Mermier. On that occasion, Mgr. Hubert BARBIER, the then Bishop of Annecy, favorably responded to the request of Fr. Emile MAYORAZ, Superior General, to initiate at the level of the diocese, the steps prescribed by the Church, to officially confirm the sanctity of Fr. Mermier. On this basis it was decided to initiate the Beatification Process (cf. Lettre aux Amis, No. 238, Dec. 1990, article by Fr. Claude Morel MSFS).

According to this, a Postulator was appointed, and a Tribunal constituted. Strict juridical norms have to be followed, as the Church wants to make sure that the person proposed to be recognized as a Saint can really be an example of holiness to the whole people of God. Unfortunately, some of



the appointed people were not sufficiently available for this task; except for the historical committee and one of the two theological censors, the results were very poor. Meanwhile however, Fr. Mermier was made known all over the world, and especially in India, as the Founder of MSFS.



Fr. Yves Carron MSFS

Frs. Emile Mayoraz, till 2001, and Fr. Agnelo Fernandes during his two terms of office as Superior General, struggled to start the Cause anew. In June 2007, the mortal remains of Fr. Mermier were shifted from MSFS House, Proupeine, to the crypt of Visitation Basilica. Let's be grateful to the Visitandines community for hosting our Founder right under Sts Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal's tombs!

On the same year, Rome published a new document, "Sanctorum Mater", pertaining to the steps to be taken for the Beatification/Canonization processes. So, it was necessary to adjust with some new norms and rules.

Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil, new Superior General from 2013, went on with the Cause and wanted it to be opened again (or re activated). Fr. Thumma Mariadas (from 2007 onwards as a General councillor, and then as Assistant General) did not spare his time and energy to go ahead with the Cause. After the approval given by Rome in 2016 to move ahead, Fr. Yves Carron Provincial of Franco-Swiss Province was appointed as the new Postulator, with Fr. K. Thomas MSFS as the Vice-postulator. Meanwhile, Fr. Thomas had obtained doctorate in Canon Law and did further studies in the matters of the process of Canonization.

On the January 24, 2017, Mgr Yves BOIVINEAU Bishop of Annecy

presided over the solemn Eucharist of St Francis de Sales, at the beginning of which he declared that the process of the Cause of beatification of Servant of God Peter MERMIER has been opened again. A new Tribunal was appointed by the Bishop of Annecy. In the first session (February 23, 2019) all the actors of the Cause -and the Bishop himself- took the solemn oath. An inquiry was made to find out all MSFS institutions bearing the name of Fr. Mermier.

It was then necessary to find another Theological censor, to have a connection with the Holy Cross Sisters of Chavanod, also founded by Fr. Mermier, and to get witnesses from Fr. Mermier's parish. All these people, the diocesan Chancellor, the diocesan Archivist and the Promoter of Justice, along with a Notary, gathered for the second session on October 19, 2019. **Very positive reports were given on the virtues of Fr. Mermier, especially his deep humility, and on his spirit of faith and total surrender to the**

Chaumont, the village and the parish of Fr. Mermier





Fr. Vincent & Fr. Patricio in front of Fr. Mermier's family farm, Vovray, S'agit

will of God.

However, we are in the process of gathering more witnesses, and will be organizing another tribunal hearing session when the witnesses are ready. The process would not be complete, unless we have heard these new witnesses from across wherever the MSFS is spread. **We definitely need at least 20 witnesses from India (of which 4/5 of them could be our own confreres).** We also need a few witnesses from

other parts of the world where the MSFS confreres / Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, are present.

The witnesses don't necessarily need to have a very deep knowledge of the founder. If they have, well and good. What they need to share in the tribunal is at least

- 1) a basic knowledge of Fr. Mermier,
- 2) his reputation of sanctity and virtuous life and
- 3) to share the experience of the intercessory power of Fr Mermier. All these constitute the Diocesan phase of the Cause. A new tribunal hearing session is the last thing we need to do before we can prepare to submit the documents to the Holy See. And then only the Roman phase would begin. Let us earnestly pray for the same and spread the great missionary spirit and spirituality of Fr. Peter Mermier.

Fr. Yves Carron MSFS, Postulator



Opening tribunal meeting on February 23, 2019

Thirst for the Word in the world of abundance!



Fr. James Manjackal MSFS

It is true that poor people are on increase in affluent countries than in poor countries! The poverty or thirst and hunger that I write here is not for bread made of wheat or barley or for drinking water. But their hunger and thirst is for the Living Bread, Jesus that came from heaven, and for the living water, the Holy Spirit that flows from the broken heart of Jesus, the only savior of the world. It was already foretold by prophet Amos, "*Yes, days are coming, says the Lord God, when I will send famine upon the land: not a famine of bread, or thirst for water, but for hearing the word of the Lord*" (Amos 8:11) It is that Word that became flesh and lived amidst us! (Jn 1:4) And it is He who said, *For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink*" (Jn 6:55)

The Psalmist wrote about our innate thirst and hunger for God in his prayer, "*O, God, you are my God for you I long. For you my body years, for you my soul thirsts. Like a land parched, lifeless and without water. So, I look to you in the sanctuary to see your power*

and glory. For your love is better than life, my lips offer you worship" (Ps 63:1-4) To quench the hunger and thirst of mankind, God sent Jesus, the word made flesh to the house of bread, Bethlehem. During His life He said, "*I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst*" (Jn 6:35). The people in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and elsewhere went to Jesus to hear His word and to be healed and liberated from all their spiritual, material and physical problems by the power of the Spirit that was flowing from Him; thus, their hunger and thirst was quenched.

When I was in the S. F. S. Seminary, Ettumanur, Kerala, India in the early 80s with my 'white color comfortable job' as a professor and vocation promoter, I could never think of going around the world as a vagabond preaching the Gospel and enduring various kinds of trials and sufferings for the sake of gathering people to the kingdom of God. In my baptism in the Holy Spirit, when the anointing of



the Word of God came to me saying strongly, ' Go and preach the Gospel and lay hands on the sick', I was hesitant to accept the mandate and I brought various excuses like my stage-fear, inferiority complex, lack of eloquence etc. to the Lord. The call to go and to preach was a threat to my then secure and comfortable priestly profession that I had always looked forward ever since I joined the seminary as a boy! I was well and happy in the seminary as a professor with a good room, delicious food, enough money and motorcycle or car to move about among friends and dear ones, as I liked. But when He said again very powerfully, ' GO', a word that weighed a thousand kilogram indeed, literally I fell under that Word and launched out to preach the Gospel not knowing what to preach and where to go. Until now none of my superiors ever gave me any direction or plan about my evangelization itinerary! It was indeed a jumping in to the unknown but clinging on to the known and personally I experienced power of the Holy Spirit! He was always my constant companion guiding me always and showing me the way taking me to places where I was wanted, and giving me the necessary grace to do the works of Jesus! Ever since I began my ministry of preaching the Gospel, always I hear in my heart two verses from the Bible. One is from the Gospel of John, "*I thirst*" (Jn 19:28) and the other from the prophet Hosea, "*My people perish for want of knowledge*"(Hos 4:6)

All those who venture out to preach the Word of God must have the thirst of Christ for souls! They must see how people die in their sins for want of knowledge of Christ and the church. When thirst of God and thirst of man encounter, there is salvation! All those



who preach the Gospel, should feel the compassion of Jesus for the people of God who die in their sins not knowing Christ the Savior or the church His body (ref. Mt 9:36). They must be able to say like prophet Elijah, "*I have been most zealous for the Lord*" (1 Kg 19:9).

In Europe where I preach mainly, the many Catholics have no sufficient knowledge about Christ or the church from the teaching of the Bible or Catechism. They have not inherited any knowledge of faith and salvation from their parents either! In their classes of religion in schools, they learn that there are many gods and Christ is one of them, and the church is the biggest social institution in the world to cater charitable works! Most of them never had any chance to know that Jesus is the only Savior of the world and the Church is the body of Christ where salvation of Christ is catered. Thus people perish in their ignorance! Here I see the need of evangelization.

From the year 1998 when Jesus set me apart for 'world evangelization' especially to gather the lost sheep of the church in Europe, I see hundreds and thousands of people gathering in my retreats and conventions to hear the Word of God and to renew and revive their Christian life through the Holy Spirit. When the powerful Word of God is proclaimed effectively, and

when we pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Word would become flesh in the heart of those who repent and believe, leading them to become authentic Christians. Preaching of the Word of God and calling upon the Holy Spirit are powerful weapons for evangelization. In the past 22 years of my ministry in Europe, I see conversions of thousands of those who had left faith and the Catholic church to live in apostasy, a-religion, atheism, communism, and Nazism etc. In every retreat there would be a queue of hundreds who had not made confessions for many years; and some who have not turned to a confessional or a priest after the first communion! I have testimonies of those who had believed in other Denominational and Pentecostal churches returned to the Catholic faith.

By the grace of God, I preached in 104 countries in all continents not knowing their language or culture. When I left India to preach my first program in Germany in the year 1998, my superiors warned that I would be a complete failure in my ministry of preaching without knowing the local language. But Jesus the Lord, to whom I gave myself unreservedly, used me everywhere to bring His sheep back to the fold. I preach in countries that speak German, French, Creole, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian,

Hungarian, Russian, and Arabic etc. Although I have translations of talks in all these countries, the Holy Spirit has given me the gift to celebrate the Holy Mass in the language of the country I preach! Even now unmindful of my old age and illness, travelling and preaching sitting on wheel chair with various kinds of pains on the body, I find the joy and thrill for evangelization. When I had preached to the Muslims for twenty years in the Arabian Gulf countries bringing hundreds of them to salvation by baptism, I had risks of my life; five times I was imprisoned, two times canded, several days without food and drink listening to their insults and abuses. But when I passed through all these odious and ignominious treatment, the joy of the Spirit was always my strength. (Neh 8:10)

Never I am sad or depressed; never I am tired or weak! I have deleted the words " depression, weak, tired etc." from my life -dictionary when I started preaching the Gospel. Looking at the videos of my ministry, no one, even my siblings, would say that I am a disabled and sick person; only my doctors and those who are close to me know my real health condition. I know that it is not I who work in me to preach the Gospel but it is the Spirit of Jesus! I am just a donkey to carry Jesus on my shoulder to take Him to the hearts of people so that they might meet Him and find salvation. He preaches, he heals and he

.....five times I was imprisoned, two times canded, several days without food and drink listening to their insults and abuses. But when I passed through all these odious and ignominious treatment, the joy of the Spirit was always my strength.

gives salvation.

In the wake of growing secularization, materialism, relativism in the world and a cold indifferent attitude towards evangelization in the church where missionary work is interpreted as proselytism, and the diabolic attempt of certain clerics to make Christendom part of one 'global religion', it is very hard to proclaim the uniqueness of Jesus and Christianity! Here again I see the urgent need of evangelization, of course one must be ready to swim against the current and to winnow against the wind! We must realize that we have the most powerful weapon in our quiver, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus that makes us other Christ to do His work and to be conquerors to win souls for the kingdom of God. *"...the one who is in you greater than the one who is in the world" (1 Jn 4:4)*

As people in the whole world especially in Europe are in panic and fear about the corona virus, I see a great chance for evangelization; the harvest is getting prepared but the laborers are few! In the beginning of the 'lock down', I went to the streets of Germany and Austria on wheel chair to bless the people against corona with the Holy Eucharist in hand with the family where I stay now. Many people liked it and dared to give homage to Jesus in the Eucharist. Several of them approached me directly and through telephone

to have a confession or a prayer. Although churches and cathedrals everywhere are closed for the daily liturgy and the priests are scared to sit for confession, hundreds of people come to my visiting room to meet this missionary of mercy! Neither they nor I have the fear to be infected with corona by contact in the administration of a sacrament where we believe the blood of Christ protects! In all evenings of passion and holy weeks, there are many telephone calls from people of various countries for receiving absolution and forgiveness. After they repent and confess their sins directly to Jesus, when they call and say that they are ready, I give them absolution and a penance with the condition to make known those sins to the priest in the next confession. Now I have thousands of demands from people mostly of the European countries, Australia and USA asking for my next retreats. Most of them are people who had never seen me or attended a retreat previously. It is a good sign. I am very optimistic that Jesus would turn everything for good and gather a people for Himself and His kingdom when this pestilence come to an end.

It is sad that recent times even congregations that are founded only for missionary work and evangelization even are neglecting their duty of powerful and effective preaching of the Word of God and engage themselves

**When thirst of God and thirst of man
encounter, there is **salvation!****

in humanitarian and secular works! A Christian, much more a priest and religious committed themselves to Jesus' kingdom should never forget the command of the Lord to preach the Gospel to all (Mk 16:15). They should recall what St. Paul the apostle had said, *"If I preach the Gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it"* (1 Cor 9:16). I think this woe is on many religious congregations to day! That is why they decrease in number and quality by lack of vocations, defections and increase of deaths!

I pray that the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS) manifest the 'msfsness' by engaging more in evangelization in order to quench the thirst of God for man and thirst of man for the real Living Bread, by

being faithful and honest to the spirit of the Patron and Founder which is the spirit of Jesus Himself!

Rev. Fr. James Manjackal MSFS hails from Kerala, India. He was born in the year 1946 and was ordained a priest in the year 1973 in the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales M.S.F.S). He was one of the pioneers of the Charismatic movement in India. In 1989 he founded "Charis Bhavan" the well-known Charismatic retreat centre in Kerala, where he remained as its director and superior for six years. Now since 22 years, he is based in Germany, giving retreats mainly in Europe. He has also authored many books.

www.jmanjackal.net

The Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, was founded in the year 1838 in Annecy, France. In the year 1845, the first team of MSFS consisting of six confreres came as missionaries to India.

From 1845 till 1954 a total of 163 Confreres from Europe came to India and worked as missionaries.

Many of them are laid to eternal rest in Indian soil. Most of them were from France. But there were also missionaries from Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Ireland. The last one to be called to eternal rest in India was Rev. Fr. Francis Moget MSFS who died in the year 2005.

Fransalians invited to **MYANMAR** POSSIBILITIES AND PROPOSALS

Fr. George Parambukattil MSFS & Fr. Suresh Babu MSFS

Rev. Fr. Suresh Babu MSFS one of the General Councillors and Rev. Fr. George Parambukattil MSFS one of the former General Councillors had made mission exploration trip Myanmar particularly to the diocese of Kalay on February 18, 2020. Here is an extract from the report they have submitted to the General Administration.

Background

Diocese of Kalay, a suffragan of the diocese of Mandalay, bifurcated from the diocese of Hakha on 22/05/2010, is one of the 16 dioceses in Myanmar. Catholics are just 6 % of the total population of Myanmar. Buddhists form the majority population of

80%. Kalay diocese has a catholic population of 62,000.

Bishop Felix Lian Khen Thang is the Bishop and Fr. Raphael is the Diocesan Procurator. There are 58 diocesan priests in the diocese. Salesians of Don Bosco, Congregation of Missions (CM) and MEP priests are also working in the diocese.

There is a minor seminary of 72 students for both the dioceses of Kalay and diocese of Hakha, studying in classes 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. There are only two resident priests in the seminary.

Meeting with Bishop



The first exploration team : Fr George and Fr. Suresh with Mgr. Felix Lian Khen Thang, Bishop of Kalay and Rev Fr Raphael, Diocesan Procurator



Fr. Suresh gives a copy of the Joy of the Gospel to Mgr. Felix Lian Khen Thang, Bishop of Kalay

On 19th after a Holy Mass in the private chapel of the Bishop, the scheduled meeting with the Bishop in his official visitors' room for about an hour took place. After introducing ourselves and presenting him a shawl and a MSFS Bible diary, we enquired from him many things about the diocese, the works and the needs of the diocese. Bishop is very simple and very soft spoken. The majority priests are very young, simple and enthusiastic.

Bishop is welcoming us and offering us a plot of land in Chin state, 30 minutes away from Bishop's house in the outskirts of the city of Kalay, measuring about 1.5 acres, to start a centre. The city has a total population of 5,00,000, (although does not appear to be so). The land has already electricity connection. It is a sloppy land with teak plantation. On one side of the proposed land, there is a road

running through the length of the land. The Bishop has offered us this land to start an **animation centre for priests and religious**. He also wants us to **help him in formation**.

Possibilities - Our Take

1. We can start an animation centre for priests and Religious with some qualified confreres. The infrastructure has to be put up by us, although construction is costly.
2. We can send a team of three confreres, who will have to learn the local language because people do not know English.
3. We can also minister to the University students as the university is not far away from our proposed land provided, we put up infrastructure. We can also explore the possibility of campus ministry in the university campus. (MSMHC sisters from NE are running a hostel for the girls of the university)
4. We can assist the diocese in the formation programme in the seminary and in the process, we also may get/promote some candidates for MSFS although vocation in Myanmar is dwindling.
5. If we send charismatic preachers we can think of organising charismatic retreats for the laity as the diocese has sufficient and large infrastructure for retreats and animation which are remaining under-utilized.
6. There may be possibility of offering English language courses for the people and even for religious.

7. The Bishop and the diocesan clergy are happy to have us and welcoming us. Reading the signs of the times, this may be the right time to launch into this area. The team to be chosen for the new mission should be chosen from confreres who are loyal to the congregation, with experience, quality, community living, missionary zeal and enthusiasm, who are ready to put up with inconveniences and challenges. If possible, the team could be of people from North East, looking like any one of them (tribals)

8. Enquiring about the possibility of a second house for MSFS in Myanmar, Bishop was not very eager.

Besides the aerial route, Kalay can be reached through the land route via Imphal, the capital of Manipur. From Imphal, one can reach Moreh the international border between India and Myanmar and after crossing the international boarder one can reach Kalay city, after a drive of 4 hours.

May God guide us in our process of discernment to take up the Myanmar Mission



The Church of Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear Reader,
We will be honoured to receive your critique
on this news bulletin

Please write to:
iwantmissions@gmail.com

Every baptized person has a missionary mandate to preach the Gospel, to teach, to heal and to cast out demons (cf. Lk. 16: 15-20). Preaching the Mission and thereby bringing about healing, is one of the primordial apostolates of the MSFS Congregation. Now, based on my missionary exposure in Africa and the experience of being actively involved in the healing ministry in Africa for than three decades, I am happy to share with you, these convictions of mine.

The basic point that we need to keep in mind in the pastoral ministry is that *We cannot give what we do not have!* We need to have all the virtues required for the healing ministry. In my humble observations and with deep convictions I like to share these as key elements in our pastoral ministry which involves caring and healing:

1. We as missionaries, need to love, live and use the **Word of God** more and more. Although Bible is a very easily available resource in many languages, with lots of commentaries and interpretations, we are not making of the Bible as we ought to use, in our normal daily ministry. The use of the Word of God is limited to liturgical celebrations. When we analyse our sermons, we can notice that we use very little element of the Word of God in our preaching.
2. We need to be more convinced that **Holy Sacraments** in the Catholic faith are great treasures entrusted to us. Although Mother Church



Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil MSFS

teaches that the validity and gracefulness of the sacraments does not depend on any human being, we need to administer them and live them by the grace of God and merely depending on the human ability.

3. Every missionary needs to know the basic notions on the **teaching of the Mother Church** on the matters of healing and update one's knowledge of the healing and its various dimensions.
4. We have to **love and appreciate** the basic goodness God has invested in the people, nature and in all the created things. God himself appreciated the creation (ref. Gen. 1:31)
5. We should be open to the new social, political, cultural and economic realities of the times and we should be **more available to the people**.
6. We should be understandable for

the people. It is not theology and theories of salvation that draw people closer to God, but as St. Francis lived, **we need a heart of love and compassion.**

7. **Time** is one of the best gifts given to us by God, every moment and we should use it to the maximum. Do we not see a tendency today to waste one's time with frivolous things?

8. **The grace of healing is present in the nature, people and things.**

When coordinated well and when we cooperate with the grace of God, healing takes place, and everything will turn out for the glory of God and for the benefits of the people.

9. We need to **increase our faith** in the Lord and bring others to the Lord. Secularism is forcing itself into religious life today and expression of faith is confined to merely liturgical ceremonies.

10. Enabled by the Spirit, we should **intensify the healing ministry** by the power of the Word, Sacrament and by the power of priesthood invested in us.

11. We need to live a **life of discipline** knowing- *what, how, when and how much* - to eat and drink.

12. **Be happy and make others happy** and lead others to heaven along with our own journey towards heaven.

I am quite optimistic that those who assimilate these points will turn to

be better instruments and be more efficient agents of healing in the hands of the Lord.

The basic point that we need to keep in mind in the pastoral ministry is that

We cannot give what we do not have.

It is my prayer that the good Lord bless you, as you read these humble reflections. May he give you sufficient grace to put into practice what the Lord wants you to do.

Rev. Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil MSFS hails from India. He is one of the MSFS pioneers in Africa as the first team of the missionaries arrived in Tanzania in the year 1987. Since then he is engaged in the healing ministry, bringing hope, healing and consolation to thousands, through his prayers and through the natural medicines. Mermier Holistic Healing Centre was established in Morogoro, Tanzania in the year 1997 and ever since he is fully set apart for the healing ministry. Fr. Sebastian is the Director of Mermier Holistic Healing Centre. Email. skuzhupil@gmail.com



MSFS Missions in Arunachal Pradesh, India A Glimpse

The unexplored land

Arunachal Pradesh, “The Land of the Rising Sun” experienced the light of the Gospel very late comparing to the rest of India. It was only late 1980s the Catholic faith started to spread in this state of India. It was a forbidden land for the Christianity which the local people call as foreign religion (Nippak Dharam).

Arunachal Pradesh, the most Eastern part of India bordering China is inhabited primarily by tribes and sub tribes on the mountainous area. The major tribes are Adi, Apatani, Nyishi, Galo, Tagins, Miri (Abotani Group) and Momba, Memba, Khamba, Koro, Mishmi, Sherdukpen, Miji Khamti, Nocte, Wancho etc.. The Abotani Group still follow the worship of Donyipoloism (Renewed Indigenous Faith).

The Gospel, Christianity, and the Missionaries were welcomed by the



villagers with all enthusiasm and interests, but the government and the government machineries were watching every movement of missionaries. The Christians and the missionaries had to face lots of persecutions and oppositions. The acceptance of the religion and the reception of Baptism got accelerated due to the very many healing that were taking place and it is same even now.



Fr. Lukose Kavungal MSFS

An Instant healing

One day when we reached Daporijo few people brought a child, who was suffering from diarrhea and vomiting, for prayer. They straight away came for healing prayer, from the hospital where the child was being treated. We prayed for the child and the child was healed instantly. After knowing that the child was healed, the parents took away the child to home without any permission and information from the hospital authorities. This infuriated the doctor who warned us and not to come anymore to the hospital



Risky Missionary journeys

and to the district. But this news of healing spread very fast in the town and the following day many received baptism. Such instances of healing and deliverance from evil spirits were very common which attracted many to receive the faith.

Arunachal Pradesh, the forbidden land is no more forbidden for Missionaries even though the rule is not yet revoked. Thus half of its population have accepted the faith and is a flourishing field for Christianity. There are many Christian denominations carrying out Missionary activities. The main ones are Catholics, Baptists and revivalists. The fasting and healing programs attract many to faith. The advent and the continuation of the faith are done, mainly by the lay faithful than the Priests and the religious.

The Presence of MSFS in Arunachal Pradesh

The MSFS started to work among the Adi tribes of erstwhile West Siang and East Siang districts of Arunachal Pradesh by taking the children to hostels in Silapathar, Jonai, Telam,

Dhemaji and Gogamukh missions. But it had not helped desired results in evangelization until Bro. Prem Bhai (a lay missionary) discovered the hidden Catholics who received Baptism from Fr. Job SDB of Naharkatia. When it was known that some Catholics exists at Kaying the Fathers at Silapathar got interested and began to visit these areas in spite of the restriction by the Government. It was from 1989 we began the contacts of the villages.

We the MSFS began the missionary work from the borders of Assam and started the Mission at Pasighat and Kaying in the year 1997 and 1998 respectively. The vast areas of West Siang and East Siang and Upper Subensiri districts of Arunachal Pradesh came under MSFS congregation. This gave impetus to us to make visits to far-flung villages by fathers and brothers from seminaries to help the fathers working in the centers especially during Christmas and Easter. The concerted effort of all, helped us to to have focus on evangelization of Arunachal. The result of this focus is the erecting



*Though living in tough terrains we are
HAPPY*



Thank you the Missionaries...

of many parishes like Tato, Basar, Yinkiong, and Aalo and later at Likabali. Now all these are developed centers with necessary infrastructures. Tuting, Menchuka, Manigong and Boleng are the new parishes carved out from these parishes and are given to other congregations. The growth of Christianity is enviously looked at by the government and other social groups.

God bless Arunachal Missions.

Fr. Lukose Kavungal
worked in Arunachal for more than 15 years

*In the coming issue of **I want Missions** in
December 2020*

Fr. Santosh Salve MSFS will present to us

JAQUIER BABA

(Fr. Guerin Jaquier MSFS)

(1867-1947)

Of Mali-Ghogargaon, Maharashtra, India.

An inspiring story of a French missionary

who is laid to rest in Maharashtra, India and about the popular devotion towards him.

M D O

Mission Development Office

The MDO is the “Mission Procure of the MSFS Congregation” based in Rome directly under the supervision of the Superior General.

Mission Development Office functions as a mediator between those who are able to support the missions and those who are in need in the missions.

The needy ones can be:

- ⊙ A person who is in any spiritual need
- ⊙ A child who needs support for education
- ⊙ A teenager who needs guidance
- ⊙ An adult who needs employment
- ⊙ A village that needs solar power and drinking water
- ⊙ A mission station that needs a worthy structure to pray
- ⊙ A catechist who needs bikes for transport
- ⊙ A dry land that needs to be made fresh with more trees
- ⊙ A sick person who needs basic medicines
- ⊙ A seminarian who needs support in the formation
- ⊙ A school that needs a library and lab
- ⊙ A physically challenged person who needs equipment
- ⊙ A family that needs acceptance and recognition
- ⊙ A refugee who seeks solace

If you wish to support our missions, please contact us:

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email: iwantmissions@gmail.com

Message from Holy Father

Dear Missionary,

God is asking you not simply to go through life, but to give life; Not to complain about life, but to share in the tears of all who suffer.

The Lord expects great things from you.

He is also expecting some of you to have the courage to set out and to go wherever dignity and hope are most lacking, as there are still many people living without the joy of the Gospel.

Pope Francis

On the occasion of the opening of the Extraordinary Missionary Month
October 2019



When you encounter difficulties and contradictions, do not try to break them, but bend them with gentleness and time.

~Saint Francis de Sales