

Vol 3

No. 2

Issue 6

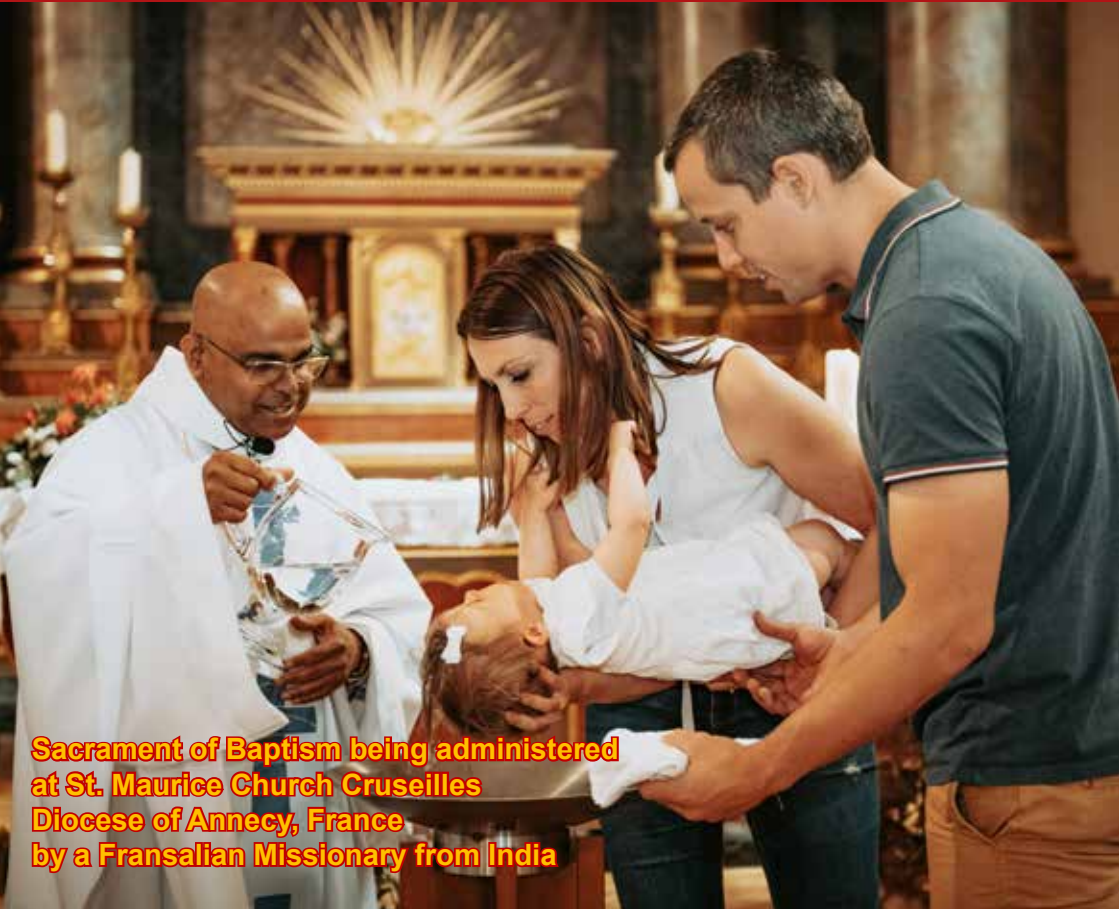
December 2022



MISSIONS



MISSIONARY INSPIRATIONS, ASPIRATIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FRANSALIANS



**Sacrament of Baptism being administered
at St. Maurice Church Cruseilles
Diocese of Annecy, France
by a Fransalian Missionary from India**

See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.

Is. 49:16

Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales – Global Mission Bulletin

Let us Celebrate the Missions

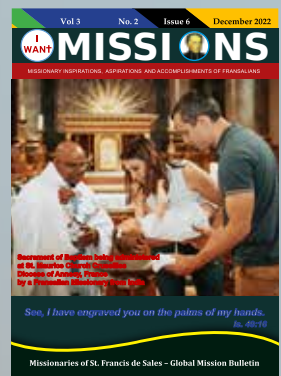


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The fact that we are not in this world by our own choice makes us sense that there is an initiative that precedes us and makes us exist. Each one of us is called to reflect on this fact: **“I am a mission on this Earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world”** (Evangelii Gaudium, 273).

Editorial...



breathe on me

Breath of God

Mission: The Breath of God



Be it in the field of education, pastoral works or social and health care services, which were to a great extent traditionally carried out by the religious and missionaries, we find today lay persons or corporates doing better jobs in all these fields. In this context what difference can I make when I do the same or similar works? The difference is possible if my work becomes an apostolate.

What makes a human work an apostolate? A work becomes an apostolate, when I do it in the name of God who mandated me to do it; when I do it in the way God wants me to do it. Mission is nothing but an extension of the being of God in action. When the life-giving breath of God warms the work, it becomes an apostolate.

In doing so, I am focussed not only on my work, but also on the one who mandated me to do the work. In the exercise of the apostolate, throughout I need to maintain the connectivity with the one in whose name I work. I need to place myself close to the nostril of God that the breath of his spirit of love and warmth gives meaning to what I do in his name. When the connectivity with the Divine is terminated, my work becomes like any other work and I am not able to give the flavour of divinity in my work. The beginning, the end and the means of the work would be revolving around myself. The colleagues with whom I work, and the beneficiaries or the clients in my works do not see anything of the divine in me. Here I do not function as an agent of God and my work remains a mere work and does not have the grace of apostolate. Work is get-oriented, whereas apostolate is give-oriented. Work is self-mandated whereas apostolate is God-mandated.

May God breathe on you with his life-giving breath turning all your works in to effective apostolate giving hope, joy and consolation to many.

Now I invite you to read and rejuvenate yourself with the news and nuances of the missionary endeavours of the Fransalians.

Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS
General Secretary for the Mission of the MSFS Congregation

Through the APOSTOLIC LETTER dated December 28, 2022,

TOTUM AMORIS EST

HOLY FATHER Pope FRANCIS

ON THE FOURTH CENTENARY OF THE DEATH

OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, based on the life, mission and writings of the saint teaches us that:



EVERYTHING PERTAINS TO LOVE

.... Saint Francis de Sales felt that there was no better place to find God, and to help others to find him, than in the hearts of the women and men of his time. He had learned this, from his earliest years, by developing a keen insight both into himself and into the human heart.

My beloved confreres and readers of this Mission Magazine,

- 1. Do we find God in the hearts of our fellow human beings or in the magnificent structures we make?**
- 2. Is our God confined to Catholic Dogmas or do we experience him as Spirit of love prevailing the universe?**
- 3. Do we understand our Christian vocation as a capacity to love rather than an obligation to observe the laws.?**



DIOCESE OF MUTARE

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diomutare@gmail.com

22 December, 2022

V. Rev. Fr. Johnson Kallidukil, MSFS
Asst Superior General and the General Secretary for the Mission
Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales
Lumen Christi, Maji ya Chai
Post Box 1187 Arusha
Tanzania

Re: Post

Bishop Most Rev. Paul Horan appeals to MSFS

At present we have 30 Missions/ parishes... 56 schools and 12 health care facilities. We have four men religious congregations and eight women religious congregations. Due to lack of sufficient number of good shepherds many of our Catholics have shifted to Pentecostal churches. Our immediate need is to establish a prayer/ retreat center where people can come and pray, receive counselling and sacraments and get healing and rejuvenation. Majority are in need of healing amidst their brokenness. When we fail to address their needs, they go to other denominations and to witch doctors.

If you have the preference to come and take over one of the missions, and use that location to use your own special methods of evangelization, that is also possible. We are very much open to dialogue in this matter for the sake of building up the Kingdom of God in Africa.

...and use that location to ... is also possible. We are very much ... building up the Kingdom of God in Africa.
... you and all the brothers a very happy Christmas and a joyous new year. ... to pursuing your interest in coming to Zimbabwe in the new year. May Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Francis De Sales and all the saints assist us with their prayers to bring this project to a good conclusion.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+Paul Horan, O. Carm
Bishop of the Diocese of Mutare

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MUTARE
THE BISHOP'S HOUSE
AD UNUM CUM MARIA
22 DEC 2022
P.O BOX 47, MUTARE
ZIMBABWE
TEL: +263 0202-62347

ZIMBABWE



**Then I heard the voice of the
Lord saying,**

Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?

**And I said,
“Here am I.
Send me!”**

**Is the Lord calling us
to take up new
mission in Zimbabwe?
Are you ready?**



Our Doctor Departs....



Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil MSFS

(1951 - 2022)

35 Years of Healing Ministry in Africa

Father Sebastian Kuzhupil MSFS (72) was a native of Athirampuzha, Kerala India. He was one of the four pioneers from India to land in African soil on December 31, 1987. He was a confrere with unique personal charism and mission. From the very beginning of the missionary work in Tanzania, he realized the importance of healing ministry. In the beginning along with the pastoral works in the archdiocese of Tabora, Tanzania he exercised the healing ministry through prayer and the use of alternative healing methods. Later in order to facilitate better access to the people, he moved to Morogoro in the year 1997 and the **Mermier Holistic Healing Centre** was established. Later in the year 2005 he had short training in optometry in Germany and through the assistance of the Rotary Club in Karlstadt-Arnstein, put up the **Mermier Optical Centre**. Later, after 10 years of service, this had to be closed due to certain technical reasons. However, the Mermier Holistic Healing Centre served the public for the last 25 years. Yes, the year of his departure was the Silver Jubilee year of the centre. He was called to eternal life on June 26, 2022.



Wisdom

from Father Sebastian Kuzhupil

- Everything under the sun has both healing and sickening effects.
- Healing takes place when we use anything in the right measure, right manner, at the right time and with the right intention.
- Our body organs are not our employees but our partners. Respect and appreciate every part of your body.
- Disrespect to the creation is disrespect to the creator.
- If God has allowed a natural disease in a geographical area, he also deposits the cure in the same place. Only thing we need to find it.
- As a priest you share in the power of creation of God. Have faith and miracles will happen.
- Deeper the faith, fewer the words in prayer.
- Everyone has the power to heal. But only some activate it and exercise it.

Our Tribute to Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil MSFS

"He gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness" Mt. 10:1.

Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil MSFS, the anointed of the Lord, being a holy priest had received a special mission mandate from the Lord to be a *divine healer*. This was the secret of the Kingdom to him, while no one else would fathom his functioning as a physician. "The secret of the Kingdom of God is given to you" (Mt. 13:11). Thousands of sick people with incurable diseases have had the taste of the divine healing touch through Fr. Sebastian Kuzhupil. He had

received a *unique charism* from the Lord with grace and truth; and this was revealed through his healing ministry.



Sr. Denis Parackel SAL

All those people who came to him were also drawn to a deeper God-experience and became better believers, no matter what religion or denomination they



belonged to. All his clients tasted the unconditional love and mercy of God. At the Mermier Holistic Healing Centre, Morogoro by the side of the waiting room there was a small chapel with Blessed Sacrament exposed throughout the day.

His untiring compassionate service bore much fruits in the lives of the desperate, poor, sick people who were abandoned by other physicians and people. He was so convinced with the special charisma that he had received from the Lord besides administering the Holy Sacraments and so was very passionate in healing people. He believed that it was the Lord's Mission and trusted the Lord so deeply. He could just say a few words that 'you will be alright, Jesus is powerful' and that would happen. This has been proved in the lives of thousands, I being one of them.

Fr. Sebastian was one of the most needed persons in Morogoro Region of Tanzania. He was protected and safeguarded from thieves and other pick pocketers by their own kind in the market places and streets. We have a few examples. One of them to be mentioned; once when his phone was pickpocketed in the market, from among the onlookers, a young man who seemed to be a member of the same gang promised Father that he would get it back without delay. The youth not only got back the phone but also instructed and converted the other youth too from stealing to earning through hard work. They organized and started transporting the sick to Fr. Sebastian's center.

Those who sought medical help from Fr. Sebastian included people from the least and last to those highly educated dignitaries from both ecclesiastical





and civil ranks. Indeed, the Lord used Fr. Sebastian in curing people from physical and mental ailments in order to strengthen the souls. Thus, some people having received the healing from incurable diseases desired to be changed to Catholic faith. That is a clear sign from above that Fr. Sebastian's love for the people of all kinds was a genuine love for the Lord. Jesus asked St. Peter only one question before he was entrusted with the ministry of shepherding (cf. Jn. 21:1517). That question was, *Do you love me?* Fr. Sabastian was motivated by this love for the Lord. He loved Jesus and therefore he cared for the people of God.

Father Sebastian manifested extraordinary energy and spirit of endurance in his ministry. He would be sitting down to listen to the broken-hearted, wearied, anxious and grief-

stricken people at one stretch of 10-12 hours which surprised us several times. On enquiry, he would answer "these people are coming from far". Fr. Sebastian was committed to his mission without rest and leisure. He worked in such a way that it appeared 'that day and that hour was the last' for him. Even if he was tired, he would tell others "be happy".

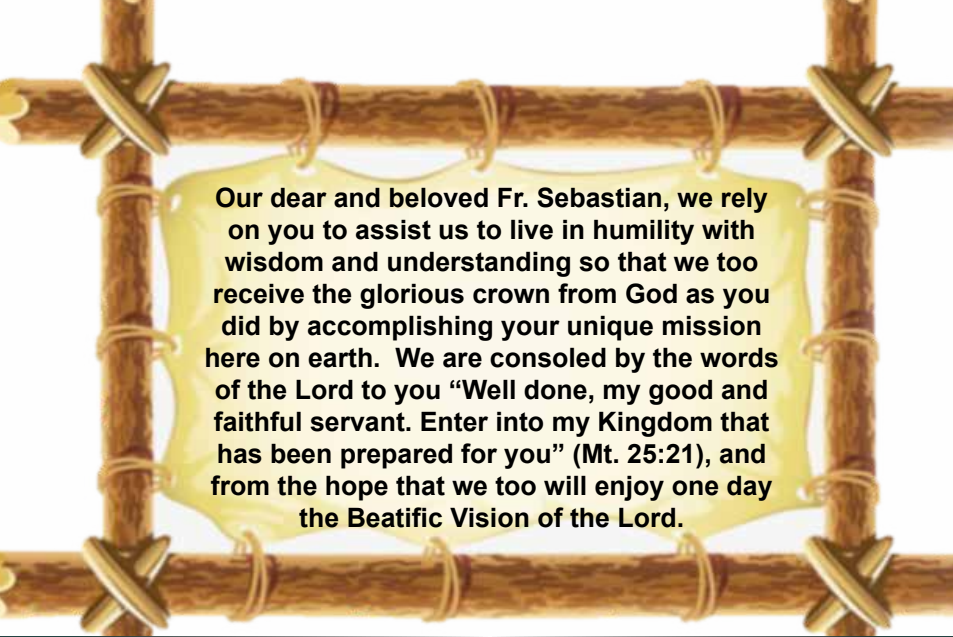
Amazingly it was noted that Fr. Sebastian bore several physical illnesses on himself while he administered to the thousands. The dictum "experience is the best teacher", was echoing in his healing ministry. All those people who came to him received words of wisdom and comfort besides medicines for their physical ailments. The Divine energy flowed through his hands, as he touched and blessed the broken hearted.

The accomplishment of his mission was done in the most perfect manner till the last moment of his active life, until he was forced to be taken for a medical checkup. This was the opportunity God used to prepare Fr. Sebastian for the eternal reward. Thirty days of his silent life confined to the bed in the ICU were for sure, great moments when he interceded for the sick in the world. I would say the day of his departure from this world was indeed a 'world healing day'.

Through his committed healing ministry, Fr. Sebastian teaches us that every one of us has a unique Charism from God. This charism is to be identified, responded and accomplished in faith and trust. The fulfilment of this unique Charism is by the Lord Himself, as St. Paul speaks to the Thessalonians "The one who calls you is faithful, and He will also accomplish it" (1Thess. 5:25). God accomplished and established a deep relationship with His people through Fr. Sebastian in his time and this will ever be remembered.

Sr. Denis Parackel SAL is the present Provincial Superior of the East Africa Province of the Sisters of St. Ann Luzern. Throughout her three decades of ministry in East Africa she was very closely Associated with **Fr. Sebastian**

On behalf of all the beneficiaries of his ministry, may I now pay homage to our beloved Fr. Sebastian with profound gratitude for his selfless service. His physical departure from this world has left an indelible impression in the hearts of each one of us and we will ever cherish his memories.



Our dear and beloved Fr. Sebastian, we rely on you to assist us to live in humility with wisdom and understanding so that we too receive the glorious crown from God as you did by accomplishing your unique mission here on earth. We are consoled by the words of the Lord to you "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Enter into my Kingdom that has been prepared for you" (Mt. 25:21), and from the hope that we too will enjoy one day the Beatific Vision of the Lord.

Know Our Missions

MSFS Mission in *Béro* Chad



The Republic of Chad is a land locked country in North Central Africa. The Country got its name from Lake Chad. Chad achieved independence in 1960 but has had decades of civil war, resulting in political instability and a slow economic development.



The Capital, N'Djamena, is 1,600 km by road from the western African coastal ports. Although it is the fifth largest country on the continent, Chad—much of the northern part of which lies in the Sahara—has a population density of only about 8 persons per square km. Most of the population lives by agriculture; cotton is grown in the south, and cattle are raised in the central region. Although very rich in natural resources of oil, it does not contribute to the common folk.

It has been 23 years since Fransalians from India took up the challenging missions in Chad and Cameroon. We are incredibly proud of both where we began and where we now stand. The growth of Chad Cameroon mission is a miracle, a God's miracle for His people. We do believe our success can be uniquely attributed to the blessings of God and the full support of the MSFS congregation, the total commitment of our confreres who devote themselves





*entirely to our beloved mission. Chad-Cameroon Mission is an icon of pride and of missionary dynamism of MSFS Congregation. It affirms our commitment to our missionary tradition and legacy. In this issue we would like to introduce you to one of the most challenging MSFS missions in Chad-Cameroun Delegation, Namely **Saint Josephine Bakhita's Parish Béro**, in the diocese of Doba, Chad.*

Saint Josephine Bakhita's Parish Béro

As a response to the invitation of Bishop of Doba, His grace Michel Russo of

happy memories the first MSFS from India arrived in Chad in 1999. In 2003 the Saint Josephine Bakhita's Béro parish was erected and was placed under the spiritual care of the MSFS fathers. It was bifurcated from the Saint Francis of Assisi parish Komé situated around 30 kilometres away from Béro, formerly it was a substation of Komé Parish.

Saint Josephine Bakhita's parish Béro is situated in the south-eastern part of Chad in the diocese of Doba. It is the southern part of the Sahara Desert where the temperature is above 45°C in summer. Chad is one of the poorest countries in the world with high rate of infant mortality and low rate of literacy. The official languages of the country are French and Arabic. The United Nations' Human Development Index ranks Chad as one of the poorest countries in the world, with 80% of the population living below the poverty line.



Over 80% of Chad's population relies on subsistence farming and livestock raising for its livelihood.

The population of Béro faces serious difficulties of infrastructure; only 58% of residents have access to potable water and only 12% to basic sanitation. Though Béro is the part of Doba oilfields in all the 40 villages of the parish there is no electricity. To make potable water available to the local population MSFS fathers financed for digging of more than 30 wells. Still there are many who lack easy access to potable water.

The Saint Josephine Bakhita Béro parish is situated 30 kilometres away from Doba. It consists of 6 sectors and 40 villages with 4000 Catholics, the furthest village is 45 kilometres away from the Catholic Mission Center. The people of this area belong to a tribe called Ngambay and the local Language also is called Ngambay. Liturgy is celebrated in the local language. Most of the villagers are farmers and herdsman. The people



are generally poor due to unscientific way of cultivation, lack of rainfall and poor health condition.

Not even 15% of our parishioners are literate. **St. Francis de Sales School** is an icon of hope for the local people. Taking into account the great need of quality education MSFS fathers started SFS school in 2009 in Béro. Due to poor financial situation many families are not able to send their children to the school. Many students are malnourished to address this issue MSFS fathers are offering **free midday meal** to the students. When we started the mission, it was very difficult to find someone who could assure the readings of the Mass. SFS school and the alphabetization organized by MSFS created many literate people in the parish.



Fransalians are running the **SFS boys' home** since 2009. We are able to give quality education and lodging to 40 boys every year mainly from the help we received from different sources. Most of these boys are from the poor families. Every year we receive more than fifty applications but we are able to admit only a few due to lack of infrastructure and finance.

Chad can be placed in the list of the lands with first phase of Evangelization because the history of the Christianity in Chad does not have hundred years. Every year at Easter we have more than 200 adult baptisms. At present Fr. Jose Simon (Parish priest), Fr. John Joseph (Assist. Parish Priest and Director Boys Home) and Bro. Stanly (Regent) are rendering their service in the MSFS Mission in Béro. At least once a month we have Eucharistic Celebration in every Sector and in a year minimum of two Eucharistic Celebration in all the communities. We

have around 50 catechists rendering their service for the catechism classes and announce of the word of God. Many of our communities do not have Chapels. Hence often Eucharistic celebrations are under the mango trees. Though we are very young in faith we have already a few candidates in formation for priesthood. Thanks to all the confreres worked in the Béro Mission. Thanks also to the local ecclesiastical and civil authorities who support us and facilitate our missionary presence.

Some Chadian Challenges

“Close to 63% of Chadians live in poverty, with most of this poverty concentrated in rural areas, where 87% of the country’s population lives. According to UNICEF, only 43% of the population has access to basic drinking water services, while just 10% have access to proper sanitation facilities.”

“Despite significant fossil fuel resources and abundant sunshine, Chad has one of the lowest electricity access rates in the world at 6.4%, compared to the average of 48% in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

A bird's eye view of the Béro mission

1. Full name of the parish : St. Josephine Bakitha's Parish, Béro, Doba
2. Name of the diocese: Diocese of Doba. Chad
3. Country : Chad
4. Area of the parish : 45 Kms Radius
5. Population of the area : Bero Canton . Population 7000
6. Number of Catholics : 4028
7. Number of substations : 40
8. Number of centers : 6
9. Distance to the farthest substation from parish center: 45kms
10. Distance to the nearest MSFS community: 30 kms
11. Distance from Diocesan center to Parish 30kms
12. Local language spoken in the area: Ngambay
13. Other Languages French, Arabic
14. Number of baptisms during last one year: 211
15. Number of marriages during last one year: 25
16. Number of Priests serving in this parish: 2
17. Number of Catechists in this parish: 6 Main ones
18. Number of Schools: 1
19. Number of boys' home: 1

MSFS Presence in Canada



Canada is now considered to be the safe haven for the migrants from the developing nations. The country is promoting academic pursuit and lucrative job possibilities for young non-Canadians, due to the paucity of native population and the consequent saturation of economic growth. The cities of Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Niagara etc are familiar names to us. Like many other first world nations, Canada is a synonym for prosperity and new possibilities. However, there is another side to this reality of charming Canadian.

There are other parts of Canada, where normally no one would wish to go and get settled due to the unfriendly climatic conditions and non-viable geographical location. It is one

such large area where we the MSFS Confreres are working in Canada.

The Archdiocese of Keewatin Le-Pas



Fr. Subhash Joseph MSFS

Keewatin Le- Pas in Canada is a Missionary Diocese covering a land

In one of the parishes where we serve, the farthest outstation is 450 kms from the priest's residence. A visit to the outstation and returning home would mean a travel of 900 kms!





wind Blowing. His Grace Most Rev. Murray Chatelain is the Archbishop of the Diocese.

MSFS PRESENCE IN THE MISSION:

On June 12, 2012, our confreres Frs. Guna Shekar and Manjappallil Subhash Joseph were sent to Canada,

mass of around 430,000 square kilometres in Northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It is 2,800 km away from the Capital city, Ottawa. The Metis, First Nation of Cree, Oji-Cree, Dene, and Non-Natives make up the richness of a mixed culture.



For a tropical human body (made in India) how it would look like to experience minus 45?

marking the beginning of the MSFS missionary presence in Canada. They were appointed to St. Lawrence Parish, Thompson, Manitoba with seven other mission stations attached to it. These mission stations are pretty far

The territory west of James Bay was called "Keewatin" meaning North





from Thompson the main residence. The farthest situated outstation would be in one direction 450 km and the closest would be 75 kilometres from the residence of the priests.

Using the winter roads would mean, driving over the frozen lake.

The MSFS in Canada mostly serves the indigenous people of Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. June 12, 2022, marked the completion of 10 years of our MSFS Presence in the Archdiocese of Keewatin Le-Pas. And at the moment the local MSFS Community in Canada consists of 6 members namely; Frs. Francis Reddy Mondeddu, Dhana Raju Amarlapudi, Gandamalla Shantha, Guna Shekar Pothula, Jangam Ravi, and Manjappallil Subhash Joseph serving 17 mission parishes.

As the Archdiocese of Keewatin Le-Pas is a missionary Diocese, it is a great

There are times, when our confreres use small aircrafts for their missionary travels

Recently Fr. Subhash Joseph was appointed as the Vicar General of the Archdiocese and Fr. Shantha Kumar as the Chancellor and Rector of the Cathedral. In addition to that, Fr. Gunashekar Pothula is a Senate Member and Fr. Dhanaraj is the Vocation Director in the Archdiocese. This is nothing but an expression of the recognition of the missionary commitment of our confreres.

privilege and blessing for the MSFS to be here serving the indigenous people, though it has many challenges. Some of the challenges are the climate and the long driving that is involved in the ministry and for the personal or congregational needs. Most of the roads that we travel are of gravel and they get icy in the winter which lasts for about 8 months. Sometimes it is bitterly severe as the temperature would drop down to minus 45! At this time, we use the winter roads as well. When I say, winter road, it would mean driving over the frozen lake. Amidst all these cultural and climatical challenges, we sincerely try to make our missionary life as best as possible through our community gatherings, sharing, and supporting one another.

As readers of this mission magazine, may we request your valuable prayers for us and for all the missionaries all over the world.

On behalf of the MSFS Confreres in Canada

Fr. Subhash Joseph MSFS

Our Confreres experience

extreme **heat** and and extreme **cold**

Chad



Plus
+ 45 °C

Canada



Minus
- 45 °C

Parish Mission Preaching (PMP) in India



Annual National Prayer Days and Gathering

The MSFS confreres engaged in the Parish Mission Preaching and the Retreat Preaching Ministry had the national annual gathering and prayer days from October 8 to 13, 2022.

The venue for the event was the *Poondi Matha* Shrine Conference facilities. There were 26 participants from the seven Indian Provinces. The event consisted of common celebrations of the Most Holy Eucharist, devotional practices, input sessions, discussions, interactions and a pilgrimage to Velankanni Shrine. The pilgrimage was optional.

Fr. Johnson Kallidukil the General Secretary for the Mission, welcomed all the participants and explained the modalities and the dynamics of the PMP Gathering 2022. He said that it is like an active retreat at the same time, it is not a replacement of the annual retreat. He exhorted the members to be interact

with one another as much as possible and to make our time being together as a Fransalian community gathered in prayer and celebration as a community envisaged by Fr. Peter Mermier. The sessions, then began with introducing each participant and informing the group about one's current ministry and also experiences in the ministry of preaching. Fr. Jayakumar Alphonse the chief organizer of the event, communicated to the members all the organizational and logistic requirements.

As the first input session we had very inspiring Message from **Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvilil MSFS the Superior General**. The message was read out by Fr. Peter Dominic. Fr. Superior General expounded the vision of our holy founder Servant of God Fr. Peter Marie Mermier in starting the apostolate of Mission Preaching and in founding the Congregations. He also insisted on the



need to revitalize the apostolate of parish mission preaching after the example of Father Mermier and St. Francis de Sales. In his message the Superior General reminded us that *“Father Mermier has bequeathed to us our foundational charism, which is “Renewal of Christian Faith using the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales” in parish mission preaching. This is a gift of the Spirit integrated into the body of Christ. The very purpose of PMP for MSFS is to place our foundational charism at the heart of the Gospel and make it ecclesial.”*

This was a session of basic orientation in the preaching ministry given by **Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS, the General Secretary for the Mission**. He talked on the connectivity of *Compassion-Passion-Mission*. Compassion is the triggering force and the passion is the driving force in any mission. The life and mission of Father Mermier and St. Francis de Sales were characterized by these elements.

The following input sessions were given by these resource persons.

Fr. Austin Joy MSFS

The preacher and the power and dignity of priesthood

Fr. Christ Raj MSFS

Mother Mary in the life of a priest and missionary

Fr. Ajimon Cherian MSFS

Eucharist in preaching ministry

Fr. Melroy Almeida MSFS

St. Francis de Sales: Our inspiration to

be good preachers

Fr. Reji K Mani MSFS

Challenges in families today and our response

Brother Johnson (Santhom Ministry Chennai)

Gift of faith as the foundation of prayer and ministry

Fr. Jude Poovakkulathu MSFS

Preaching and Ministry of Exorcism

The three sessions of meetings were chaired by Fr. Alexander Singarayan, Fr. K V Joseph and Fr. Bijil Chackiath. During the meeting, Fr Johnson also presented the findings of the previous PMP meeting in 2019.

The meeting facilitated the sharing from all the confreres regarding the various aspects of the parish mission preaching and the retreat preaching ministry. The participants reminded themselves of the great vocation to be missionaries who have the mandate to share the good news of salvation as members of the Fransalian family. After sharing some of the concerns, the members also share some proposals for the better implementation of the PMP activities. The members reiterated their commitment to the preaching of the missions to be true to the primordial charism of our congregation after the admirable example of the servant of God Father Peter Marie Mermier and St. Francis de Sales

Father Peter Mermier,

a leader par excellence!



It was yesterday evening that I received the sad news that was sent from India; Fr. Jacques Martin is no more in this world! He is no longer at the head of his group of volunteers! He has left them orphans! He has preceded them! He beckons to us: Courage, follow me! Sovereign God, good and just give eternal rest to your servant who has not only persevered in faith, but who has left all for the salvation of his brethren, in order to establish our Congregation in these far away regions.

Fr. Mermier after receiving the news of the death of Fr. Martin, one of the pioneers in Indian Mission

A very crucial moment for the early missionaries in India was the sudden demise of their Superior & Leader Fr. Martin on 5th May 1846 at Yanam due to sun-stroke within four months of their arrival in India.

Call To grow in Holiness with MSFS @ Pune

The evolvement of the Fransalian Associates



Mrs Angelin Peters

The idea of “Fransalian Associates” was sown in the midst of a casual after mass conversation with Rev. Fr. Jayaseelan Selvaraj, Provincial Superior (Pune Province) on September 25, 2020. However, this idea took shape after lengthy deliberation, consideration was formalized at SFS Shaanwadi Parish, Pune – after an entire year – on September, 23, 2021.

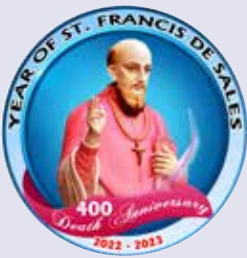
Thus, we were invited 25 of us. “Friends of Fransalians” of SFS Shaanwadi Parish as well as neighboring Parishes who have been actively and enthusiastically partnering / supporting / participating in various MSFS ministry and activities with the SFS Parish Team over the years.

Preliminary Meeting

A formal meeting with the Provincial Superior - Fr. Jayaseelan Selvaraj was held on 29 September 29, 2021 wherein we were explained that the purpose of formalizing the “Fransalian Associates” was to encourage, enable and involve lay people with the life, mission and communities of the MSFS Priests and religious, enabling the lay people to grow in the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in and through the vocations to which each has been called. It was shared that this movement of was already taking shape in other parts of the world.

The treasure trove of literature pertaining to :

- Fransalian Associates Guidelines
- Walking with St. Francis de Sales
- Father Peter Mermier by Jean Rey





That we received has helped us cement our desire to associate more deeply in order to truly appreciate our Patron and Founder, the SFS spirituality and the call for Missions by Fr. Peter Mermier the founder of the MSFS Congregation.

Monthly Recollection Meeting

Was held on 23rd October 2021, animated by Fr. Mathew Rodrigues MSFS inviting us to

- grow in faith by personal intimacy with Jesus in prayer.
- Through ejaculatory prayers, remain in constant prayerful intimacy with God, in the midst of daily mundane activities.
- Increased devotion to The Rosary of 7 Dolores within the Family.
- Prayers offered through the intercession of Fr. Peter Marie Mermier seeking “specific mission to which we (Fransalian Associates) have been called.

Activities of Fransalian Associates

On October 24, 12 saplings were planted by the MSFS Team and Fransalian Associates representing 12 Provinces of the MSFS to symbolically

connect to the provinces and we were given the task to tend to those sapling while accompanying the provinces through our prayers.

After the formal oath and formation of the “Fransalian Associates” on October 24, 2021, we as the Fransalian Associates, have been meeting together on various occasions, being actively involved in animating the Liturgy during the Feast Celebrations in honor of our Patron, Patroness as well as our Founder and celebrating with the MSFS with meals, fun and games along with our families.

We have leveraged every occasion to share and increase devotion to the Rosary of 7 Dolores in our family as well as “Small Christian Communities” within our neighborhood. Besides, the Fransalian Associates come together every Saturday morning for adoration hour and pray the Rosary of Seven Dolores - earnestly interceding for the intentions of the MSFS, for glorification of Fr. Peter Mermier, for all departed MSFS Confreres, Benefactors and all of the MSFS family and for vocations.

Our spiritual gathering is focused on:

1. Increased devotion and Veneration of Our Lady of Sorrows



2. Call to grow in holiness and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales.
3. Call to grow in service and compassion for neighbors through prayers and personal relationship with God.
4. Special dedication towards our Patron – St. Francis de Sales and growing in his virtues of gentleness, simplicity, humility, chastity, patience, service and hospitality.
5. Emulation of our Founder – Seervant of God Fr. Peter Marie Mermier- who said “I want Missions”

Through the “Fransalian Associates WhatsApp Group”, the MSFS Fathers, keep us updated with suitable links to the YouTube “Salesian Spirituality” – 5minutes with SFS, various events, news, updates on new mission territories etc. Such sharing keeps us well connected and encourages us with ideas and ways in which to be able to partner in the MSFS journey.

Our most recent treasured experience and involvement with the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales happened between 8th to 14th November 2022

during the “Extra Ordinary General Chapter of MSFS” hosted by the Pune Province at Fransalian Seminary, Pune. The Fransalian Associates were given the great opportunity of extending our services as reinforcement to the kitchen Staff in order to cater to the meal and daily arrangements for the Extra Ordinary General Chapter of MSFS in progress. This provided us with the opportunity to dish out our best dishes that is unique to various parts of India thus make it mutually satisfying through the appreciation of all who enjoyed the daily meal platter.

It was a wonderful week of time, efforts and energy well spent and well appreciated, learning about each other, sharing our knowledge and skills, filled with vigour and vitality in ensuring everything worked smoothly. Such coming together has increased our bonding and respect for each other, nurturing and leveraging the talents and strength of each individual with a sense of joy and pride. We have experienced an increased sense of peace, unity, motivation, involvement, spiritual enrichment among ourselves.

We had the privilege and honour to meet, connect and spend precious time with our Superior General – Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil MSFS

and other respected MSFS Confreres and missionaries from different parts of the world. We are both inspired, enriched as well as humbled with the interaction and sharing on these occasions.

We, as Fransalian Associates, feel grateful and thankful for this privilege to “Bloom where we are planted” in responding to the Fransalian Call “to be who we are and be that well”. We are spiritually motivated to work in association with our wonderful team of MSFS Priests and Religious, as we acknowledge that in spite of their daily struggles and hardships, their invincible faith in the Lord and dedicated missionary zeal, show us the path of a life well lived in complete harmony, brotherhood, respect and love for each other as well as the larger community, following in the footsteps of our heavenly Patron – St. Francis de Sales by imitating his virtues of gentleness, simplicity, humility, chastity, patience, service and hospitality in and through their Ministry.

We acknowledge that our journey of associating with the MSFS has just begun, however, we are zealous for giving our very best in the service of the Lord while praying earnestly that we continue to emulate the MSFS by partnering with them and thus growing in the virtues of SFS in our own family, friends and neighborhood, which will definitely help us make our own life and for those around us a better. “Fransalian Associates” we believe, will strengthen and reinforce our Catholic Faith and the Church in walking the Fransalian talk. For we are but “Angels with one wing, and we can only fly, holding each other” and what better example than that of our Lord and Saviour



Jesus Christ – whose life on Earth was focused completely on giving of Himself entirely for uplifting the least, the last and the lost.

As “Fransalian Associates” we are revitalized to render the best of our time, treasure and talent that each has been blessed with and make the best of both worlds – being in the world, yet called and set apart. It helps sanctify us in order to consciously live our Catholic Faith, to reveal Christ in our lives and grow in the Salesian virtues to make this world a better place in and through our small acts of mission accomplished with spirit of service, charity and compassion.

We pray with thankfulness and gratitude for our very vibrant, enthusiastic, experienced, young and dynamic Shepherds of our souls – the MSFS Confreres who are much appreciated and loved by people of all generations, language and background, that led by the Holy Spirit, in the footsteps of our Patron, St. Francis de Sales. We ardently pray that these missionaries will continue to guide us on the path of growing in holiness, service and mission to “Live Jesus and Give Jesus”. Amen!

Let us be generous to the coming generation



If not we, our children and
grandchildren will enjoy the fruits of
this tree !

(Children in St. Michael's Parish
MSFS Mission in Chera, Kenya)

*Mission sans honneur to the
creation is negation of the
author of creation.*

Requirements and Qualities for a Missionary

Inspiration from St. Francis de Sales (4)

A missionary: Called to be a Man of Prayer



The great multitude of saints whom we honour daily in the Church either through the liturgical celebrations or through various personal devotions had their share of promoting the value and importance of prayer. They all lived their lives to fulness because they were led by the power of prayer. Besides, diverse types of spiritualities were born in the Church due to the living experience of these great men and women. Despite the enormous heroic virtues they possessed, they would have been still counted as nothing, if they were not able to unite their heroic actions with Christ in prayer. Prayer gave them power and the power from the prayer kept them stable and strong to overcome all the difficulties and hurdles in life. Nevertheless, their actions never overshadowed their prayer life but the power of prayer permeated all their actions.

Fr. Johnson Pathiyil MSFS



Fr. Johnson Pathiyil MSFS

Francis de Sales, our beloved Patron, is a beacon and model of prayer for all of us. He is truly a model for all those who are busy with various activities to the point that we feel we have no time to spend in prayer. To be a zealous missionary, one has to base his life on the firm foundation of prayer. For Francis de Sales, the personal reformation was an important factor to be followed. It was something always possible. He believed the fact

that to be a leader to lead with good examples. And he believed it to be an unavoidable duty of a leader to be exemplary to others.

Francis de Sales was convinced of the fact that only a holy priesthood could make a historically holy Church. The vocation to the Priesthood is a vocation within the call to be a Christian. For Francis de Sales, Priests are called, more than ordinary Christians to be visible as another Christ (*Alter Christus*). The origin of priestly sanctity is in the Lord, but visibly seen through the life and ministry of the priests. So, priests are mediums of expressing the sanctity of Christ.

The primary motive of a priest is to be in union with Christ. "Before being all things to all men, and the better to do so, Francis de Sales belonged to God: a primacy of value and intention, not of time."¹

Francis de Sales was very attentive in making his actions and ministry to be a blessing for all. According to

him, a missionary's actions have to be sanctifying only on the condition that they are sanctified first at the source from which they originate, i.e., the heart. And the heart is a place where God dwells absolutely. This absolute dwelling of God is made possible and can sustain only through prayer and meditation. Grounded on this fact, Francis de Sales never wasted any moment in his life. Whenever he had time to himself, he made use of it to study, for meditation and for prayer.

According to St. Francis de Sales, prayer is something that gives life and growth to our good desires and actions. He compares prayer to a stream of holy water flowing forth.² According to him, this stream of holy water makes the plants of our good desires grow green and flourish. Besides being the source of growth and flourishing, prayer is also a means to quench the passions within our hearts.³ Prayer has the power to eliminate and make the inordinate desires of our

1 E.J. Lajeunie, *Saint Francis de Sales: The Man, the Thinker, His Influence*, trans. Rory O.S.F.S O'Sullivan, vol. 1 (Bangalore: S. F. S. Publications, 1987). 152.

2 St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. John K. Ryan (New York: Image Books, 2014).70.

3 Ibid.

Faith is like a bright ray of sun light. It enables us to see God in all things as well as all things in God.

St. Francis de Sales

hearts powerless because they are detrimental to our spiritual growth.

'Prayer at any prize' was the motto of St. Francis de Sales. he



based his life and ministry on the firm foundation of prayer. Today in the world, we have a lot of challenges awaiting us, especially in our ministry and religious life. As ordinary persons, and with our limited human capacities, we are not able to overcome them. We need this divine assistance which is only granted through the life of prayer.

As missionaries, we don't have to look anywhere else for a role model for prayer except our beloved patron St. Francis de Sales. If a great and learned soul like St. Francis de Sales depended greatly on prayer for the success of his life and ministry, how much more we who are fragile and weak should depend on prayer! To make our life and ministry a living example of Christ with whom we are called to be constantly united, we need to imitate our patron and his ways of prayer and meditation.

Live Jesus!



Half an hour's meditation each day is essential, except when you are busy. Then a full hour is needed.

St. Francis de Sales

TAPASYA

PMP Seminar, in Mangalore, India

The PMP Program in the South West India Province is christened as Tapasya. Tapasya is a Sanskrit word that literally means “generation of heat and energy.” It is a practical spiritual discipline that involves deep meditation, austerity/moderation, self-discipline, and efforts to reach Self-realization. In Ancient eastern religions, Tapasya is practised for spiritual liberation. Through the PMP activities, Tapasya focusses to facilitate renewal and rejuvenation in matters of faith and Christian life.

A PMP Seminar was conducted at Sandesha, Mangalore on December 6 - 7, 2022. There were 11 confrères who participated in the program under the animation of Fr. Thomas Cherukatt and Fr. Sebastian Conrad being the Convener and Fr. Sudeep Paul being the secretary.

The themes dealt with in the input sessions included but were not limited to:

- The Dynamics of the adapted PMP Module based on Fr. Mermier’s Module
- Understanding the module used by Fr. Mermier during his time
- Salient Features of Parish Mission Preaching
- The evolvement of the present PMP in South-west Province -



Tapasya

- Orientations for Preaching, Do’s and Don’ts of Family Visits
- Tapasya - Module for different durations
- Love of God, Human Brokenness, Growing in Faith, Sacramental Life
- Holiness and Salesian Virtues, Life in the Holy Spirit, Called to Witness and Evangelise
- Christian Prayer – Deeper meaning, Person and Personality of Jesus,
- Mary, Mother of Compassion in the Fransalian mission of preaching

The meeting also planned the PMP programs for the coming months and constituted teams for the same.

May all our efforts bear abundant fruits...

God bless you dear Confrères for these initiatives and commitment.

MSFS **back to YANAM**

Thallarevu, a new MSFS Mission, offshoot of Yanam, Andhra Pradesh, India

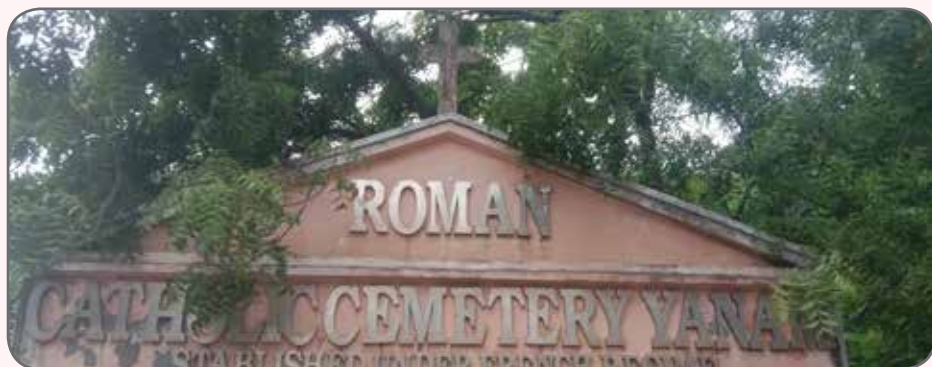
Yanam was a French enclave during the colonial times, and they built an indigo factory there in 1750. Priests coming from Goa were visiting Yanam. The first group of Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales France came via Pondicherry to Yanam at the end of January 1846. The Superior and leader of the team Fr. Jacques Martin stayed there while others proceeded to Visakhapatnam. But Fr. Martin died of sunstroke after 3 months. Although it was a big blow to the new venture Father Peter Mermier the founder, never gave up. He made sure that there were resident priests always in Yanam. The church at Yanam was constructed in 1848 when there were a number of Frenchmen there, chiefly indigo planters. In 1859 the French government built the present Church. Once the French people left, the number of Catholics went down and Yanam remained almost a desert for Christian Faith.

Many Fathers tried to sow the seed of Faith, but all in vain, when the last French priest Fr. A Gangloff died in 1957 after living at Yanam for over 36 years, the catholic population of the parish was only 30. The Indian



Fr. Chimmappa Reddy MSFS

Priest sent to Yanam to succeed Fr. Gangloff was Fr. Mathai Mappilakunnel, a zealous young missionary. Bishop Baud sent him there purposely to do work among the non-believers. He went about on his motor-cycle far and wide contacting many towns and villages of East Godavari District. Wherever he went people asked "who are you? One knows Lutherans, Baptists, Pentecost preachers, Seventh Day Adventists etc., but we never



heard about Catholics.” Fr. Mathai explained, made friends, At the end of the first year there were 247 Catholics and 150 catechumens. The work he started progressed and in the past 25 years Mandapeta, Draksharam, Gangavaram were erected as independent parishes bifurcating from Yanam.

The Grotto in Yanam has its own history. In 1943 an American ship ‘William Bogden’ went aground near Sacramento light house near here. All the efforts for one year to float it were of no use. The engineer E H Sweeney made a vow and recited rosary. Soon the ship sailed back. So as a gratitude, in memory of his wife E H Alberta Landry Sweeney of New Orleans, he built the Grotto.

With the transfer Fr. Mathai Mathew to Kakinada in 1979, the Mass conversions ended and individual conversions began, mostly women. At the same time there is a gradual drifting away of old Catholics. In 1993 the Lourdu Matha Shoping complex was built. On 28.8.94 bishop Mariadas blessed the renovated presbytery and blessed new the chapel at Kolanka Village chapels were built in number of places .

November 6, 1996 was a horrible day for the people of East Godavari. Severe cyclone hit the East Coast killing many people and cattle, uprooting thousands of poles, trees, and damaging thousands of houses. During those days of horror and hopelessness, it was the Catholic Church through its institutions and



various entities came to the rescue of the people.

Tallarevu is a town and Mandal Head Quarters in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. The population of Tallarevu is approximately 30,000. The name Tallarevu (Talla means- ropes which are useful for shipping activities & Revu means- Port which is suitable for Transport) itself indicating the previous history of the town. In ancient days, Tallarevu is famous Ship building Yard (Telugu Odalu). Now, Tallarevu is very important place for Aquaculture activities in coastal Andhra Pradesh and is also rapidly developing industrial area with Reliance and ONGC like petrochemical industries.

Tallarevu sub- station was bifurcated from Yanam parish and erected in to parish on 25th August 2021 and is entrusted with the MSFS Congregation, Visakhapatnam province with Fr. P. Chinnappa Reddy MSFS as its first parish priest. The parish has one sub- station Manjeru. As of now there are 189 Catholic families in the new born parish. They are daily labourers, depending on agriculture and rope making. They are active and are committed to the development of this new parish.

May this new mission help the young generation of MSFS today to get connected to the missionary enthusiasm of the pioneers and their spirit of sacrifice and the courage to trust in the providence of God.



50sia



Osia turns Gold

Golden Jubilee celebration of St. Jude Catholic Parish Osia, Uganda

St. Jude Catholic Parish Osia celebrated its golden jubilee on 13th of November 2022. Though the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales began to work in Osia only in 2002, the parish was established in 1972 and the Mill Hill Missionaries were rendering their service in the parish. Osia as a sub parish of Achillet parish was established in 1942. But the presence of Christianity in Osia can be traced back to the beginning years of 20th century. In 1922 the first sub parish was established in Mella, under Nagongera parish. Thus, we can rightly say that people of



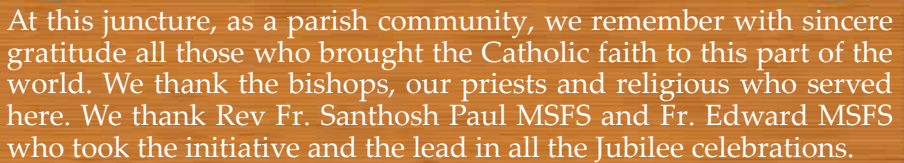
Osia received Catholic faith as soon as the missionaries brought Catholic faith to Uganda.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the parish, various programs were organized. Prior to the jubilee celebration all faithful were prepared spiritually by visiting their families. A Jubilee Cross was blessed on 28th of August and was taken to each Catholic family within

Of the 25,000 Catholics in this parish, 70% are below the age of 30. Imagine the youthfulness of the community.

the parish. Before the jubilee day all the families were blessed with the jubilee cross – approximately 4,300 families above 25,000 Catholics. Thanks to the commitment of catechists and leaders together with the priests who made this possible.

On the day of jubilee, the entire parish joined together with the invited guests for a long procession and the Holy Mass began at 11.00 am, which was presided over by the Archbishop Most Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Obbo A J – the Archbishop of Tororo Archdiocese. The archbishop also Confirmed 895 candidates and blessed one marriage during the solemn Eucharistic celebration. Many members of Parliament, the King of Ateso Tribe, the representative of the King of Adhola were among the many dignitaries who were present for the celebration. A good number of non-Catholics and many pastors of different churches also added joy to the celebration. The jubilee celebration ended in the evening with an Agape which was shared by all.



At this juncture, as a parish community, we remember with sincere gratitude all those who brought the Catholic faith to this part of the world. We thank the bishops, our priests and religious who served here. We thank Rev Fr. Santhosh Paul MSFS and Fr. Edward MSFS who took the initiative and the lead in all the Jubilee celebrations.



MSFS Mission <<Paroisse Sainte Croix au Pays de Cruseilles>>, in the diocese of Annecy, France.

Adieu Papa Benedict



Eternal life will be like “immersing yourself in the ocean of infinite love where time -a before and an after - no longer exists. Fullness of life and joy: This is what we hope for and expect from our being with Christ.”

Pope Benedict XVI