

# Fransalian

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Missionari di San Francesco di Sales



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**COVER PHOTO:** Chapel dedicated to St Francis de Sales on top of the ruins of Chateaux des Allinges (Castles of Allinges), where he stayed during his mission to reconvert the Chablais region to Catholicism. The place is of great historical significance to the MSFS as we had our second community there.

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“LET GOD’S STYLE BE OUR STYLE”

I am glad to present the Christmas edition of Fransalian International 2023 with the latest news and views from the MSFS Missions around the world. I wish all our friends, benefactors, Fransalian Associates, and well-wishers, a Merry Christmas and a Joyful 2024.

In this Year of Fransalian Youth, FRANSALIANS around the world celebrate the gifts of our youth in our missions, parishes, and places of ministry. We are committed to satisfying youth's thirst for the truth by exposing them to Christ and the depth of Catholic teaching. The Year focuses on youth evangelization by providing them with resources and faith experiences that help young men and women come closer to Christ. I appreciate the efforts made in all our Provinces and mission units to celebrate the Year of Youth.

'Fransalian simplicity' is the theme of the current issue of Fransalian International. The Son of God assumed human nature in the incarnation. The absolute divine simplicity is manifested in the manger in Bethlehem. The Word became flesh; God took human face and skin; God became human. Jesus, the King of the Universe, never sat on a throne. He was born in a stable, laid in a manger, and finally died on a cross and was laid in the tomb. This shows 'God's style' of simplicity. Our Lord came to us with the sole aim of drawing us to the Father.

For Francis de Sales, simplicity is nothing else than having only one aim and one end in life. Our soul is simple when the soul has only one aim, which is to please God, to love God and to be loved by God, to know God, and to be known by God. In all that we do or desire, there is only one interest and that is to please God.

Francis states that Our Lord came down from Heaven and lived a life of simplicity and humility. Fransalian simplicity is incarnational and relational. The essence of St. Francis's teaching is that none of us are called to do great things for the love of God and our neighbor. We can all do little things each day with great fidelity and love. Fransalian simplicity flows from doing little things for the love of God and neighbor with great fidelity and love.

In a letter to St. Jane de Chantal, Francis wrote that he preferred “a hundred times to see the dear little Child in the manger, rather than all the kings on their thrones.” Let God's style be our style!

Merry Christmas and a Joyful New Year 2024!  
Live JESUS!

**Father Abraham VETTUVELIL, MSFS**  
**Superior General**



## Holistic Spirituality of SFS – the Inevitable Inspiration



As we continue to travel through the ‘Year of Youth’ in the Congregation, accompanying the young entrusted to our care in enhanced ways and by enriched means, we draw the inevitable inspiration from our patron, St Francis de Sales, who preached and practised the spirituality of simplicity, humility and gentleness all through.

He was a spiritual champion of kind-heartedness and friendship, rooted in the Love of God that manifests itself in human tenderness and fondness. It is this holistic spirituality of SFS that we train the young into and inspire them to follow through our ‘youth conventions and conferences’, brief reports and photos of a few of which find a space in this issue of Fransalian International.

In the above-mentioned endeavour, we should be remindful that SFS was, to a great extent, countering the rigid, scrupulous, and harsh prevailing spirituality of the time through the preaching and practise of gentleness and kindness. In that sense, our children and adolescents need to be trained into this path of holiness much more than ever, given the extreme, intolerant and violent interpretations of modern ideologies.

It is precisely towards this that our Superior General invites us in asking us to imbibe God’s style as our style (*Message, pg. 03*). Further, the invitation of the Archbishop Most Rev Hartmayer (*Interview, pg. 08*), Mrs. Büchel (*Narrative, pg. 09*) and the write-ups on SFS and Fr Mermier (*pgs. 10 & 11*) are all inherently the same.

May Child Jesus born in the manger inspire our intellect and strengthen our ministry. Wish you a Merry Christmas and a Joyful Newyear – 2024. Happy Reading!

**Fr Vintu Augustine, MSFS**  
Chief Editor  
Fransalian International



## PMP Training for the Confreres Conducted

By Fr Johnson Kallidukil, MSFS

The primordial apostolate of the MSFS is Mission Preaching as envisioned and initiated by the Founder Fr Peter Mermier. In answer to the felt-need in the Congregation to revive and rejuvenate the same, the first phase of the training for Parish Mission Preaching (PMP) was held through Nov 18 – 28, 2023, at Charis Bhavan, Athirampuzha, India.

Thirty-one young confreres from the seven Indian Provinces participated in the program. The key resource person was Fr James Manjackal MSFS and others who shared their wisdom and experiences included Fr Austin Joy, Fr Justin Panachickal, Fr Kurian Karickal, and Fr T C Jose.

The focus of the first phase was on the quality of the preacher, the matter being preached and the general

guidelines for preaching ministry. The program included input sessions, interactions, homiletics, common celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, Eucharistic Adorations, sessions of inner healing, infilling of the Holy Spirit, and endowing the confreres with the renewed mandate to preach the word and to work for the salvation of the souls.

The participants visited the MSFS cemetery at SFS Minor Seminary, Ettumanoor, on Nov 23, as the day was observed to be ‘Memorial Day’ of the departed confreres in the Congregation. They paid homage to the departed confreres and remembered especially the late Fr George Vayalil MSFS, with whom began a new chapter in the missionary movements from Kerala.





**'Memorial Day' –  
A Day for the Departed**



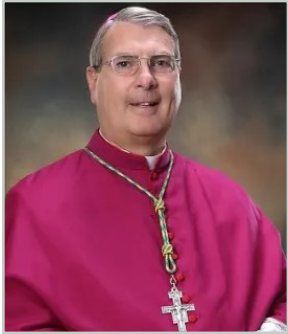
The MSFS all over the world gathered one in heart and mind praying for the departed confreres and family members on Nov 23, 2023 – the 'Memorial Day' set apart in the Congregation in remembrance of all the diseased members.

Confreres across the provinces observed the day especially for the departed members of the Congregation, family members, collaborators, and benefactors by visiting the cemeteries and tombs, praying the Office of the Dead, offering the Mass for the dead, etc. They held special prayers for the departed souls in the evening hours through praying of the Rosary and Eucharistic adorations. The event marked a meaningful tribute to the departed, creating a sombre yet spiritually enriching atmosphere.





INTERVIEW



**‘Be the Apostles of Love and Gentleness!’**

**M**ost Rev Gregory John Hartmayer OFM, the Archbishop of Atlanta, Georgia, USA, shared his thoughts with Fr Tomy Joseph Puliyan, a member of the USA Vice Province, in a personal interview. Here are the excerpts;

**How much are you familiar with the Fransalians, dear Archbishop?**

I have been here as the 7th Archbishop of Atlanta for only over three years. I have been in this Archdiocese as a religious priest long ago before being appointed the Bishop of Savannah, Georgia. To some extent, I knew some of the Fransalian priests who worked in St Patrick and St Lawrence parishes. However, celebrating the Holy Mass on the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, the Patroness of the Fransalians, on Sept 15, 2021, along with Fransalian priests in the Archdiocese, Fransalian Associates and Fransalian Friends, was an opportunity to get to know more about the MSFS and the ministry you do.

**Can you share something about the Fransalian pastoral contribution to the Archdiocese of Atlanta and the Catholic Church in the United States?**

I know that the MSFS took up St Patrick Parish in 1972 and provided outstanding pastoral service until 2001. You took up the pastoral care of St Lawrence Parish in 1974 and kept it up until 1994. Both of these parishes have enormously grown under the pastoral care of the Fransalians. Again, St Marguerite d’Youville Parish was entrusted to the MSFS in 2017, where you are currently serving as the Pastor for six years. St John Neuman Parish was entrusted to the MSFS in the year 2022. I know there are six Fransalian priests currently working and residing in the Archdiocese. Your pastoral presence in 27 Arch/Dioceses spread out over 15 states is an excellent sign of your missionary commitment. I am personally thankful to the Fransalian Priests for their presence and ministry in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

**What is your message for the Fransalians?**

You are a missionary Congregation with a focus on evangelization. The Western world, especially countries like the United States, needs re-evangelization with innovative skills and methods. We already have a deposit of faith in people’s lives, but it is dormant due to several reasons, such as secularism and materialism. As missionaries, you may do all possible to ignite the fire of faith in people’s lives. St Francis de Sales, your Patron saint, is a gentleman saint and an Apostle of Love who wrote the famous “Treatise on the Love of God” and the “Introduction to the Devout Life.” Like SFS, be the apostles of love and gentleness!

NARRATIVE



**‘Helping the Other – An Enriching Experience’**

By Mrs Inge Büchel

**I**n 1989, inadvertently, I accepted the invitation of a friend who introduced me to Fr Agnelo Fernandes from India. With my 20 words of English, we talked about our recently founded Liechtenstein Welfare Society (Hilfswerk Liechtenstein) of which I was the first president. My friend saw in the Welfare Society, the possibilities to help India. Through Fr Agnelo, I then got to know Maria Denier. Mama Mitzi, as she was known in India, inculcated in me a passion for India in the course of time. She infected me with an Indian virus which, although not fatal, struck a chord inside me, the sound of which I could only calm by working on various projects.

Several visits throughout India made me grow fond of the people. After each visit to India, my children got new “brothers and sisters” in the form of sponsorships. Two priest sponsorships, Fr Marshal Jadav, and Fr Cyriac Nellikunnel, enriched my life. Both of them passed away far too early this year. I was able to visit Fr Cyriac shortly before his death. During his farewell visit, I was given a lasting experience that will accompany me in my hospice work in the future.

Fr. Cyriac blessed two of my children’s marriages and one of my granddaughters. Five of my grandchildren were baptized by him. He was a part of our family. I met many Fransalians during my visits to India. I can never forget Fr Francis Moget. He inspired me with his vision in various conversations. The Snehalaya Institute for Persons with Disabilities in Wagholi-Pune was only in its early stages when he took me to the construction site in 1995.

For many years now, the institute has been one of our parish projects, which is supported by the carol singers with a large amount of money. (‘Sternsinger’— children collect donations for children in need). At the age of 73, I stayed in Snehalaya for three months and helped as a “Granny” in caring for the children. It was a wonderful and heart-warming time. In 2017, I travelled to India with the current president of Hilfswerk Liechtenstein to hand over various projects. Her enthusiasm for continuing old projects and launching new ones fills me with great gratitude. Bloom where you are planted – How true!

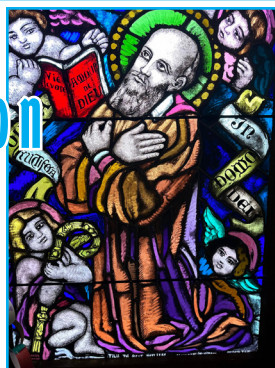
(Mrs Inge Büchel has been a Fransalian Associate for over 25 years. She lives in Liechtenstein. She has helped Pune Province with several projects and visited India many times. The above narrative, originally written in German, was translated by Fr Maria Prakash, MSFS.)



## Insights from the Patron

### Refining Our Intentions and Aligning Ourselves to God

By Fr Lijohn Kachappilly, MSFS



The value of simplicity is frequently overlooked or misinterpreted in the present world. Many think that being simple equates to being uneducated, unsophisticated, or inexperienced. People who are multitalented, creative, and efficient are honoured. By honing our talents, we hope to succeed in the real world. Nonetheless, we are encouraged to inculcate the virtue of simplicity in our lives as adherents of the Salesian lifestyle, modeling St Francis de Sales.

#### Simplicity vs Complexity

St. Francis de Sales asserts that simplicity is the antithesis of complication. He did not, however, mean complexity in the sense of skill or intelligence, but rather complexity in the sense of intention or motivation. According to him, simplicity is an act of unadulterated, innocent love for God, with the sole purpose being to win His love and satisfy Him. This implies that our conduct will be simple if our motive is focused or single-minded. Our intention for every activity should be love for God and neighbour, and this should guide our decisions and deeds in every area of our existence.

#### Motivation and Intention

While doing any action individuals often have additional motivations, such as self-love, material love, love of power, etc. It is impossible to expect anyone to fully overcome their conflicting motivations as self-care comes naturally to most of us. A healthy spiritual simplicity, on the other hand, focuses on refining our intentions and aligning them more closely to the love of God and neighbour. One should frequently ask himself or herself, “Why am I doing what I am doing?” Knowing the intention enables us to achieve positive outcomes. One of the tools that St Francis de Sales used to practice simplicity was the examination of conscience. He said, “Examine your conscience every evening, not only about your sins but also about your affections and inclinations. See whether they are pure and simple, tending only to God and His glory.”

#### Clarity and Wisdom

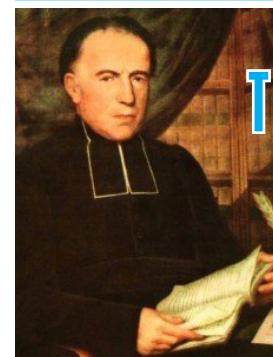
The immense gift of simplicity is the clarity, with which one sees life. While making decisions, simple people base their decisions firmly on their faith, “Do I by this action demonstrate my love for God and neighbour?” This question aids in their ability to discern what is necessary and important. By doing this, they demonstrate the potential impact even in small acts.

Being simple is a sign of maturity and wisdom. It is a strength, freedom, and a virtue rather than a flaw or a weakness.

## Thoughts from the Founder's Heart

### 'SIMPLICITY - A THOUGHT FOR GOD IN EVERYTHING'

By Fr Dr Jeevan Prasad Dandavathi, MSFS



Servant of God, Fr Pierre Marie Mermier (1790 – 1862), our founder, remained faithful to the inspiration derived from St Francis de Sales (1567 – 1622), our patron. Fr Mermier inherited the legacy of SFS, who considered simplicity and charity to be the same and inseparable. For SFS, “Simplicity is nothing but pure and simple act of charity which has only one end in view, and that is to obtain the love of God. Our heart is simple when we have no other aim in all that we do or desire.” In God, “there is only one most simple, infinite perfection.” At the same time, this perfection is “a single act, purely simple and simply pure.”

**Single-minded Attention:** The lesson we draw is to realize God as one and eternally simple. To sum up, simplicity is “an attitude of mind and heart centred on God with singular attention. From a Salesian perspective, simplicity is often explained as a single-minded devotion or commitment. It is contrary to a distracted mind.

**Constant Self-Offering:** Simplicity, for Mermier, stands as a basic disposition or an inner attitude with ‘a thought for God’ in all and everything. It is an approach to one’s life and reality with a thought for God which is a continuous process of ‘offering and being offered’. Towards this end, Mermier yearned to devote himself entirely to mission work. To achieve this single-minded aim, he made things easier for all around him.

It is noted that in the house at La Roche where Mermier and the first members stayed, ‘happiness and simplicity reigned’. The same continued when they moved to La Feuillette. Admiring this special dimension of Mermier, Fr Petit Jean expressed, “He (Mermier) put everyone at ease. Strict towards himself, he was most accommodating towards others.” The cheerful and friendly nature among Mermier and the first members was marked by simplicity which was the hallmark for understanding the interior life and spiritual advancement.

**Personal and Mission Growth:** Mermier knew that simplicity greatly contributed to the mission’s growth. For him, simplicity of life stood as a detachment from self-love and self-interest, particularly ambitions that desired brilliance in place of ‘simplicity and the modesty of Jesus Christ’. Such an approach by Mermier was an outcome of his love for the spiritual legacy of the Apostle of Chablais whose answer to the Church’s illness was through proclaiming the Gospel of God’s love in a simple and approachable style. In life and preaching, Mermier’s oratorical style remained ‘direct, simple, and popular’. Hence, Mermier’s approach to simplicity of life for personal and mission growth is a way forward.



## St Joseph's Ambapani Celebrates Silver Jubilee

By Dn Abin Baby, MSFS



The presence of several dignitaries and a schedule of events aplenty marked the Silver Jubilee celebration of St Joseph's Parish, Ambapani, Odisha, on Oct 29, 2023. Rt Rev Kishore Kumar Kujur DD, the Bishop of Rourkela, presided over the Holy Eucharist and preached a meaningful homily. Fr Manoj Tirkey, the Provincial of Nagpur, many MSFS confreres and priests, and religious from the diocese joined the parish community in thanking the Lord.

The occasion witnessed the blessing of the newly-built Marian Grotto. Bp Kishore Kumar blessed and Fr Manoj inaugurated the

grotto. After the eucharistic celebration, the nine villages and other associations of the parish performed an exuberant cultural programme. MSFS priests who rendered their service in the parish, priests and nuns from the parish, as well as those who gave the land to the church, were honoured during the programme.

The celebration proved yet again Jubilee as an occasion for recalling God's graciousness amidst us and the cooperation of people in God's plan of salvation.

## Silver Jubilee Celebrated

By Fr I Jone Gragori

Mary Help of Christians Parish, Vaniyambadi, Tamilnadu, India, celebrated its silver jubilee along with the parish feast on May 24, 2023. Fr A Patrick Jayaraj, the provincial of Southeast India, officiated the Holy Mass and Fr I Clement Antony SDB, the Tirupattur Forane Vicar, preached the homily.

Several MSFS, SDB and diocesan priests and sisters joined the celebration. The renovated ground floor of the Altar and newly installed statues of St Francis de Sales and St Antony were blessed before the Mass. 17 children received the First Holy Communion during the Eucharist.



## Golden Jubilee of English Mass at Aldona

By Fr Rawson Fernandes, MSFS

As the parishioners were enthralled in joy celebrating the 50 golden years of Sunday English Mass at St Thomas Church Aldona, Goa, Fr Johnson Gonsalves MSFS, the provincial of Pune, presided over the jubilee Mass along with Fr John Robert, Fr Winston Barbosa, and Fr Rawson Fernandes on Oct 01, 2023.

It was in October 1973 that Fr Raymond Carvalho MSFS, then principal of St Thomas Boys' High School and Superior of Fransalian Home, celebrated English Mass for the first time at Aldona. It all started in a rare moment of grace because of the youth of Aldona Parish along with Fr Raymond, Sr Mariyola AC, and the parish team of 1973.



The MLA of Aldona Constituency, Mr Carlos Ferrera, graced the occasion. The Parish Priest Fr Thomas Lobo thanked the MSFS fathers for continuing the tradition of celebrating Sunday English Mass every week. Mr Antonio V Francisco gave a brief history and importance of the day.

## SFS Guwahati Celebrated Silver Jubilee

St Francis de Sales Sr Sec School, Guwahati, concluded its Silver Jubilee year with a grand cultural fiesta held on Nov 18, 2023, in the school premises.

The closing ceremony of the Silver Jubilee celebrations started with the graceful prayer dance followed by the lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries; namely, Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, Superior General of the MSFS, Most Rev John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati, Fr Sabu Francis, Guwahati Provincial, Fr George Thomas, principal of SFS Guwahati, and Sr Provincial of Venerini Sisters.

The cultural fest showcased the diverse talents of SFS students. Dance, music, drama, and art performances captivated the audience and demonstrated the rich cultural tapestry that SFS Guwahati has nurtured over the years.





## MSFS Completes Ten Years in Zambia

By Fr Peter Alphonse, MSFS



**M**SFs in Zambia, Africa, gathered together at Ndeke, Lusaka, on Aug 20, 2023, celebrating the decennial jubilee of the establishment of the mission there. Fr Vincent Lourdasamy, the former Provincial of Pune, during whose tenure the Zambia Mission began, presided over the Eucharistic celebration in the presence of several other fathers, sisters, and the faithful.

Thanking God for his blessings, Fr Vincent appreciated the commitment and selfless service of the pioneers under the leadership of Fr Jude, the former Mission Superior. Fr Britto, the newly appointed Mission Superior, shared his inspiring and enriching mission experience with the people. Representatives from St Francis De Sales Parish, Liteta, Kabwe Diocese, and St Gabriel Parish, Ndeke Mean wood, Lusaka Archdiocese, where the MSFS serve, expressed their gratitude to the Fransalians for their presence and service in the parishes, enabling them to create an incredible mark in their respective dioceses in a short time.

## Inauguration of the Academic Year - 2023

By Bro Arijji Joji Babu

**S**uvidya College, Bangalore, the Sinter-province philosophate of the MSFS, held the inauguration of the 40th academic year on June 15, 2023. Fr Dr. Jim Greenfield OSFS, President of the De Sales University, Pennsylvania, USA, and Fr Dr. Kevin Nadolski OSFS, Vice-President of the University, graced the occasion with their presence and expertise. Fr Nadolski presided over the Holy Spirit Mass as the main celebrant and delivered the inaugural address in the homily exhorting everyone in the words of St Paul to allow the light of the Lord to shine in one's heart and to seek the knowledge of the Lord to radiate Jesus Christ in one's face and life like Moses did. After the Holy Eucharist, Fr Dr. Philip Kizhakumpurath MSFS, Rector



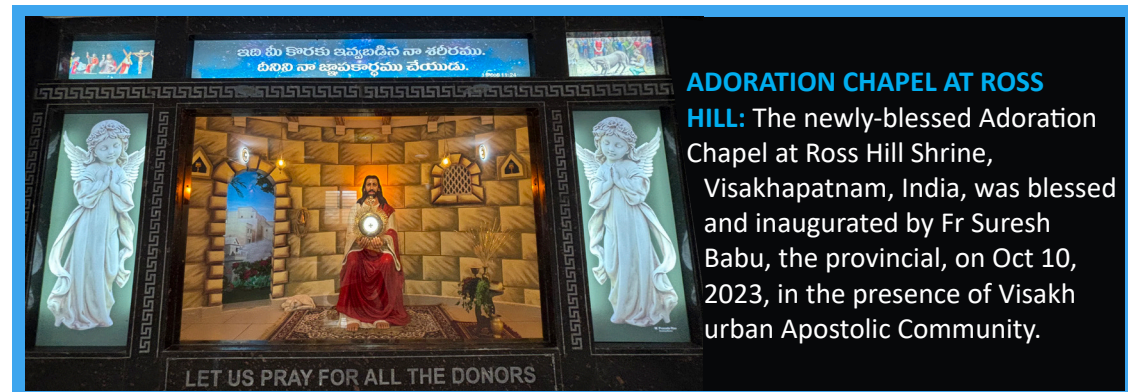
and President of Suvidya College, initiated the inaugural function by welcoming the gathering and honouring the guests. Dr Greenfield delivered the Lectio Brevis, on the theme, 'Avanti: the way of Pope Francis and St Francis de Sales', highlighting the practical wisdom of SFS. Fr Dr. Sabu Manasrayil MSFS, the Chairman of the Governing body of Suvidya College and Provincial of Guwahati Province, declared open the academic year 2023 - 24.

## Seminary Anew for Philippine Delegation

**T**he Philippine delegation of the MSFS has conceived wings afresh to its vision of growth and expansion by beginning a new seminary in nurturing indigenous vocations. Fr Thomas Kalariparambil MSFS, the provincial of Southwest India, blessed and inaugurated the seminary at Cebu, Philippines, on Oct 13, 2023. He presided over the Eucharist after blessing.

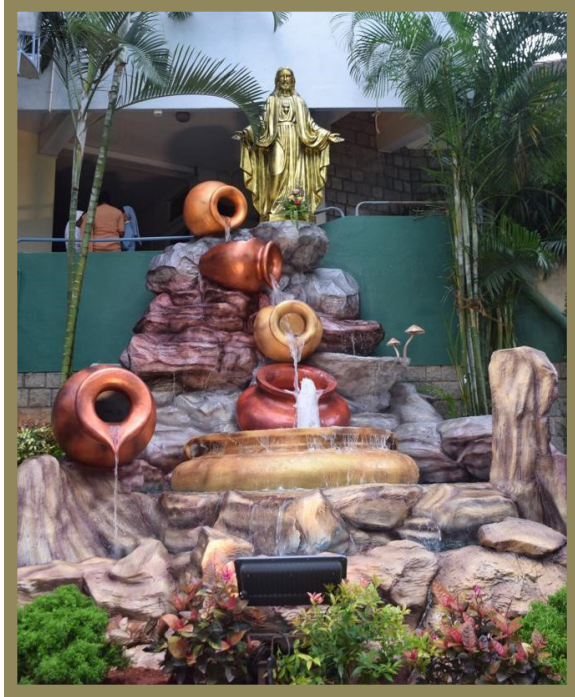


Several fathers of the delegation, priests from Cebu and friends of Fransalians from Manila, Cavite, and Cebu attended the event. Around 300 people took part in the blessing and Holy Mass. The Provincial emphasized the importance of holiness in the place saying, "This place is made holy by your presence."



**ADORATION CHAPEL AT ROSS HILL:** The newly-blessed Adoration Chapel at Ross Hill Shrine, Visakhapatnam, India, was blessed and inaugurated by Fr Suresh Babu, the provincial, on Oct 10, 2023, in the presence of Visakh urban Apostolic Community.





**BRIDGING THE GAP:** The newly-constructed grotto within the premises of the Indian Institute of Spirituality (IIS), Bangalore, was blessed by Fr Thomas Kalariparambil, the provincial of South West India Province, on July 09, 2023. The well-conceived structure symbolizes bridging the gap between divine providence and human brokenness, inviting all visitors to encounter Jesus the healer.

## Institute's Day Celebrated at Suvidya College

*By Bro Ariji Joji Babu*

Suvidya College, Bangalore, the inter-province philosophate of the MSFS, celebrated the Institute's Day on Oct 24, 2023. Rt Rev Sebastian Adayantharath, Bishop of Mandya, presided over the Holy Eucharist at 5 pm. Fr Dr Philp Kizhakumpurath, the rector and president of Suvidya College, introduced the bishop and welcomed the gathering.

Bp Sebastian preached an inspiring homily, enumerating the importance of 'balancing' everything in life; joys and sorrows, success and failure, forgiveness and anger.

After the Eucharistic celebration, the grand cultural extravaganza was held in the auditorium, in which students of different study houses performed. MSFS brothers acted out a skit named "Synod in Heaven," scripted by Fr Jacob Parappally and directed by Fr Philp Kizhakumpurath and Fr Joy Velickakathu, which was well appreciated and cherished by all.

The Suvidya journal of 2023 titled, 'Self: A Multi-Perspective Study', containing articles written by philosophy students, and the new book 'Thus Spoke My Guru' by Fr Jacob Parappally were released by the bishop.



## Minor Seminary Inaugurated in Indonesia



Visakhapatnam Province of the MSFS has opened a minor seminary in Indonesia, its five-year-old mission unit, to nurture native vocations. Fr Suresh Babu, the provincial, blessed and inaugurated the seminary in Pada Village – a parish entrusted to MSFS – on Oct 24, 2023, during the Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Rt Rev Bp Fransiskus Koppung Kung, the local ordinary.

Several diocesan and religious priests, sisters, parishioners, dignitaries and friends, along with Fr Bhasker Jayaseelan, the mission coordinator and parish priest, and Fr Swarna Anil Kumar, the new rector and administrator of the seminary, graced the occasion.



**SFS SEMINARY NGAOUNDÉRE:** Nestled amidst the picturesque landscape of Djalingo, a village in the outskirts of Ngaoundéré, a city in Northern Cameroon, stands St Francis de Sales Minor Seminary, a beacon of hope and inspiration and a sanctuary of spiritual and academic growth for aspiring priests. There are currently 26 students comprising of 11 pre-novices and 15 postulants in the Seminary.

## Annual Fransalian Bible Quiz Conducted

The Annual Fransalian Bible Quiz Competition of the year was conducted at SFS Study House, Janampeta, Andra Pradesh, on Aug 17, 2023. Fr Louis, OFM Conventuals, the CRI President, Eluru Diocese, presided over as the chief guest and 11 teams participated in the event.

Sisters of St Lucy bagged the first prize, Vianney College the Second prize, and the Holy Spirit Brothers the third prize, who were awarded cash prizes. MSFS community under the guidance of Fr Dola Velangani Rao, the rector, organized the event.





## New Parish in Mozambique – Recognition of Missionary Commitment

*Fr Henry Clemant Nedumkallel, MSFS*

St Peter Claver Parish, Dómuè, in the Diocese of Tete, Mozambique, under the pastoral care of the Fransalians since 2017, commemorated the 50th anniversary of its establishment on Sept 09, 2023. Rt Rev Diamantino Guapo Antunes IMC, the Bishop of Tete, presided over the Eucharistic celebration. The day was marked with prayer, music, dance, and social interactions, drawing the participation of thousands of devoted faithful and various civil authorities from the district of



Angónia.

The Dómuè Mission, established in 1973, covered an area of 2,000 kms, approximately 20 kms away from the Lifidzi Mission, from which it was bifurcated. The first parish priest, Fr Domingos José da Silva, a



Jesuit, moved his residence to Dómuè on Oct 02, 1973. The Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny collaborated in the mission until 1985, when they had to withdraw due to the civil war. Fr Domingos Silva and Bro Adelino Rodrigues were kidnapped by “RENAMO” On June 19, 1985, leaving the Mission without missionaries. It sparked widespread chaos, prompting the population to flee from Domué to Malawi and other destinations. Gradually, with the easing of the situation and the return of the population in 1994, the Jesuits resumed assisting the parish from Lifidzi Mission. In 2017, MSFS assumed the Parish of St Peter Claver on a mission to revive the dormant faith in the area, restore dilapidated churches and initiate social projects for the community.

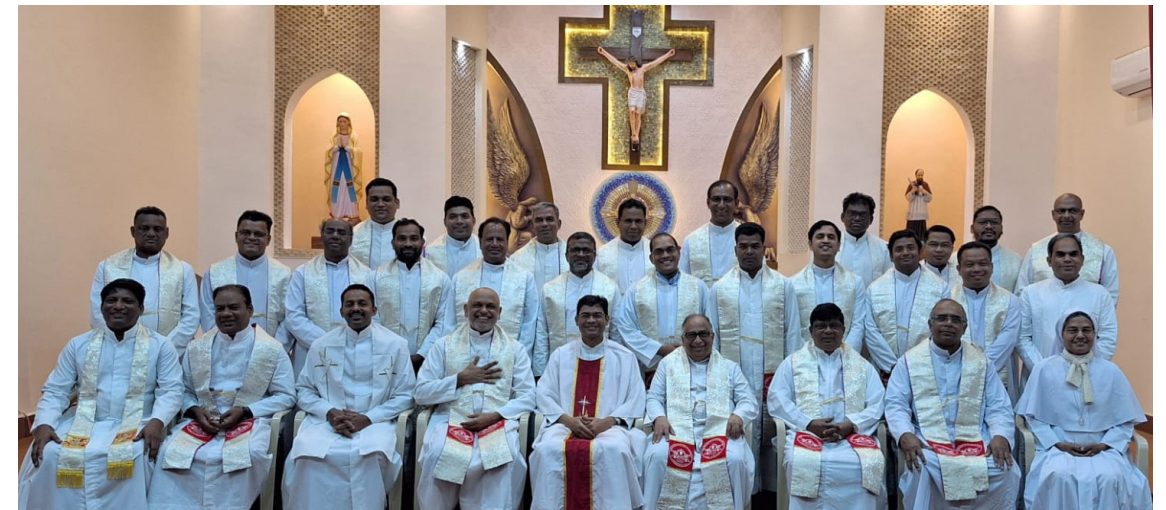
The newly-formed St Francis de Sales Parish Chipondu, bifurcated from St Peter Claver, Dómuè, following its 50th anniversary, is entrusted to the care of Fransalians by Bp Diamantino. In decreeing the creation of the parish, the Bishop emphasized that the creation of the parish was necessitated by the rapid growth registered ever since the Fransalians assumed the pastoral care of Domue. In recent years, it was Domue that administered the largest number of sacraments in the diocese. Fr Linus Joseph MSFS was installed in the same celebration as the first parish priest of the new parish, which has 67 out-stations.

## National Conference of Parish Mission Preachers

The MSFS confreres engaged in Parish Mission Preaching (PMP) and Retreat Preaching Ministry in India had the National annual gathering and prayer meet through Oct 23 – 26, 2023, at MSFS Provincial House, Nagpur, India.

Twenty-eight MSFS priests from the seven Indian provinces participated actively in the event which consisted of common celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, Morning Prayer and meditation, Prayer of Divine Mercy, Eucharistic Adoration, and different input sessions and interaction with the resource person.

The First session of the gathering began with words of welcome by Fr Manoj Tirkey, the Provincial of Nagpur Province. Fr Johnson Kallidukil, the Assistant General and the General councillor in charge of the Mission,



welcomed the gathering and presented the message sent by Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, the Superior General.

Sr Elsis Mathew MSMI, the resource person, exhorted the participants to be spirit-filled, highlighting the five-fold ministries of proclamation, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead and casting out demons. Inviting the community to be faithful to the call, she reminded them about the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The focus of the sessions was on the Charisms of the Holy Spirit and a few practical sessions were conducted for the same.

At the end, the members shared about PMP activities in their respective provinces. Fr Johnson reminded the members about the main aim of PMP; i.e., to search after the lost sheep. He said that a Parish Mission Preacher is a lover of the soul and not merely a preacher. He insisted on the importance of training the young confreres in PMP activities. He suggested everyone be rich in potential, well-equipped with tools and be anointed with the Holy Spirit.



## Blessing of Church in Kupalizwa, Maji ya Chai

By Fr Jacob Thekkekara, MSFS (Parish Priest)



The faithful of Kupalizwa Bikira Maria, Maji ya Chai, an outstation under St Stephen's Parish in the Archdiocese of Arusha, exulted in joy as Prosper Baltazar Lyimo, the Auxiliary Bishop, blessed and opened the newly-built church on Aug 13, 2023.

Many priests, religious brothers and sisters, government dignitaries, and parishioners gathered to be part of the occasion and experience God's blessings. The Bishop thanked the MSFS for undaunted commitment to the missions in the Archdiocese.

The church was a long-cherished dream of the faithful in the outstation and they worked hard towards the realization of the dream through their generous contribution and co-operation. The blessing ceremony was followed by a short cultural entertainment by children in the church premises and a common meal.

## Feast of Esmeraldas Celebrated

Fr Adaikkalarajan, MSFS

The community at Limones, Esmeraldas, Ecuador, celebrated the feast of St Martin de Porres – the feast of the Esmeraldas Islands – on Nov 03, 2023. Rt Rev Antonio Cramer, the bishop of the vicariate of apostolic Esmeraldas, presided over the Holy Eucharist on the feast day. The festival, dedicated to San Martín de Porres, took place in the

Canchimalero area of the Limones parish. The origin of the feast goes back to forty years ago, when a ship wrecked in the place. One of the survivors attributed his salvation to St Martin de Porres and decided to donate an image of the Saint to the community. An aquatic pilgrimage is organized from then on, wherein devotees from more than twenty Afro-descendant communities arrive with offerings to the small island of Canchimalero.



The preparation for the feast included a nine-day novena, inviting all the people of different islands. Around 5000 people participated in the feast. The mass was followed by a procession on the island carrying the statue of the Saint and a meal served to all the invited authorities.

**GROTTO AT POCHAMPALLI:** The newly-constructed grotto at Pochampalli Parish, Tamilnadu, was blessed by Rt Rev Dr Lawrence Pious DD, the Bishop of Dharmapuri, and inaugurated by Fr. Patrick Jayaraj, the Provincial on Oct 08, 2023.



## Outstation Church in Malawi Blessed

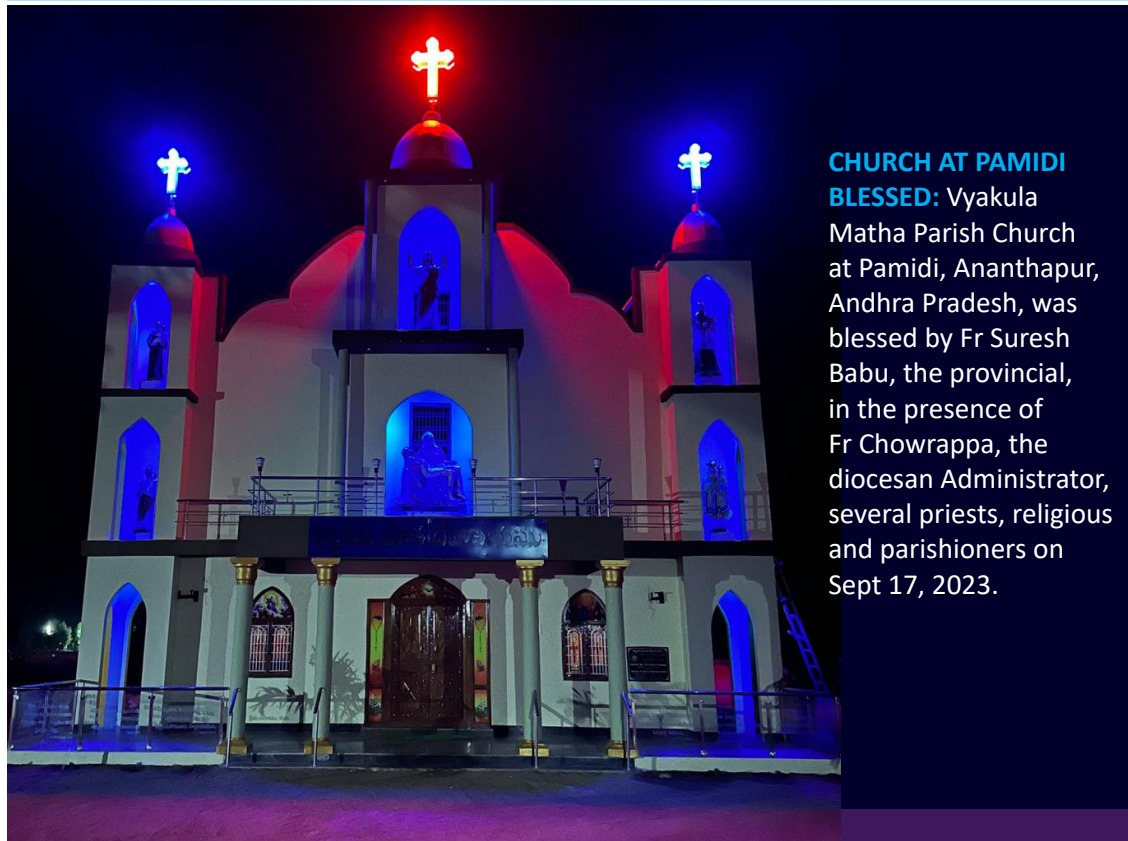
By Fr D Nelson, MSFS



The Church of St Nicholas at Mwakasangila, a substation under St Martin de Porres Parish, Malawi, was blessed and inaugurated by Rt Rev Martin Anwel Mtumbuka, the Bishop of Karonga Diocese, on Aug 25, 2023.

The new church was built by the Catholics of the substation, with the support of the Mission Development Office (MDO) of the MSFS, Rome. Witnessing the enthusiasm of the faithful and their strength, the Bishop raised the substation to the status of an outstation.





**CHURCH AT PAMIDI BLESSED:** Vyakula Matha Parish Church at Pamidi, Ananthapur, Andhra Pradesh, was blessed by Fr Suresh Babu, the provincial, in the presence of Fr Chowrappa, the diocesan Administrator, several priests, religious and parishioners on Sept 17, 2023.

### *Rioverde – Ecuador Celebrated Parish Feast* Fr Adaikkalarajan, MSFS

**R**ioverde Parish, the second mission of the MSFS in Ecuador, celebrated the parish feast of Our Lady of Mercy on Sept 24, 2023. Rt Rev Antonio Cramer, the bishop of the vicariate of apostolic Esmeraldas, presided over the Holy Mass and 17 adults received the sacrament of Confirmation.

The parish was ecclesiastically established by Bishop Antonio Cramer and entrusted to the pastoral care of the MSFS in February 2022. Rioverde Parish has 45 Holy Mass centres and the two priests of the Mission often visit the centres to celebrate the sacraments, teach catechism and engage in social services for poor children. The MSFS have inaugurated four new chapels in 2023.

### SFS College, Kolar, Inaugurated

**S**t Francis de Sales College, Tamaka, Kolar, Karnataka, was inaugurated by Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, the Superior General, on Sept 25, 2023, in the presence of Dr Dominic D, the Registrar and controller of examination, Bangalore North University (BNU). Affiliated to BNU, the college offers 4-year undergraduate courses like BCA and B Com. The presence of fathers from the Kolar Apostolic Community, staff and students added colour to the occasion. The hard work and astute planning of Fr Vinod Kanattu, the Manager, and Fr Joseph Thoppil, the Principal, has begun to bear fruits for the dream project of Southwest India Province of the MSFS.



### SFS Student Tops Class X Board Exams



**M**aster Lakshya Chaturvedi of St Francis de Sales School, Hindoun City, Rajasthan, emerged as the State Topper in the recently declared Class X State Board Exam results. Happiness over success doubles as he belongs to the first batch of students who appeared in Class X board exams from the school.

#### *In the Words of Lakshya*

As I scored 99.50% in RBSE Exams in the 2022 – 23 academic session, I feel honoured. The journey in SFS School, Kanchroli, for seven years had been a smooth one. The school not only provided me with the best academic education but also helped in my overall development.

I thank Fr Michael Prem, the principal, the school management and the staff for patiently paving the way for me to score first rank in the state. I studied each and every topic carefully until it was crystal clear. With teachers' guidance and support, there was inner confidence that I could do it. My dream is to become an IAS officer and serve the country.

### *Intra – Province School Competitions*

**T**he Education Forum of the Guwahati Province organized the annual 'DeSalite Fiesta' – Inter School Cultural and Literary Competitions – on Nov 01, 2023, at SFS Sr Sec School, Guwahati.

Students from different schools in the province participated in different events like quizzes, solo singing, solo dance, pencil drawing, elocution, group dance, etc.

Aimed at engaging students in recreational aspects and providing them a platform to nurture their skills, each competition was organized in different categories.





## 'Fransalian Associates' Celebrate the Days of Significance

Louis Zurzolo (Regional Coordinator, Fransalian Associates, USA)



Fransalian Associates of Georgia, USA, held the dual celebration of the Patroness' Day and Founder's Day – Our Lady of Compassion and Fr Peter Marie Mermier – at St John Neumann Parish, Georgia, USA, on Sept 27, 2023. The Fransalian Associates' Unit of St John Neumann hosted the event under the leadership of Paul Scibona, the local coordinator, and his team, including

their spiritual animator Fr Sunny Punnakuzhiyil MSFS. Fransalian Associates from St Lawrence and St Marguerite, the two other Fransalian parishes in Georgia, joined the celebration at the invitation of the hosts.

The event commenced with a special talk by Fr Anthony Bonela MSFS, the Provincial, followed by a concelebrated Holy Mass and reception. Fr Anthony spoke about the significance of devotion to Our Lady of Compassion and the reason for the congregation to choose her as patroness. He also presented a brief history of the life of Fr Peter Mermier and his call to found the MSFS.

Around 65 Fransalian friends, including the confreres and fellow associates, attended the program. The gathering strengthened the bond among the Fransalian Associates of Georgia. The presence of Fr Tomy Puliyan MSFS, the former Vice Provincial and the one who initiated the formation of Fransalian Associates in the USA, and other priests enhanced the joy.

## Salesian Programme of Annecy - 2023

Fr Samuvel Devaraj, MSFS

The sixth edition of the Salesian Programme of Annecy (SPA) was conducted from Oct 01 – Nov 10, 2023, in Annecy, France. Eight Fransalians from eight different provinces, namely; Fr Amal Paul (East Africa), Fr Francis Belo (Dibrugarh), Fr Joshi Kavuluri (Visakhapatnam), Fr Lalji George (Nagpur), Fr Mathew Rodrigues (Pune), Fr Richard Arulandu (South East India), Fr Roshan Kanjirathinkal (Guwahati) And Fr Sudeep Andrews (South West India), participated in the programme.

The Programme began with the Salesian guided retreat, animated by Fr Samuvel Devaraj Thomas, the director of SPA, and Fr Avilhou Metha, held at Chavanod (Maison du Grand Pré), the mother house of the Sisters of the Holy Cross of Chavanod, through Oct 01 – 08. After the retreat, the participants moved to Maison du Diocese in Annecy and attended several classes and sessions.



As a part of the programme, the participants were accompanied to make pilgrimages to various places and visit several galleries connected with SFS and Mermier. Fr John Hepuni, the assistant director of SPA, Fr Martin Richard and Mr Guy Rouat rendered their selfless service in accompanying and guiding the participants throughout the pilgrimages. SPA – 2023 concluded with the convocation on Nov 10 and the participants setting out on a pilgrimage to Rome.

## Respite amidst Ethnic Clashes – Solidarity with Manipur

The Mission Development Office (MDO) of the MSFS, Rome, in collaboration with Dibrugarh Province, reached out to a section of people displaced by the recent ethnic violence in Manipur, India, by providing necessities of life on.

The solidarity project benefitted 637 families with blankets, household utensils, water filters, and solar lamps and 90 children with educational support in terms of books, uniforms, and hostel facilities. It includes also health awareness programmes and medical camps, some already conducted



and others in the pipeline, along with helping families who lost houses to rebuild.

The relief act, executed by FAST (Fransalian Association for Social Transformation), the social service wing of Dibrugarh Province of the MSFS, provided some respite and solace to a section of people affected by the turmoil through kits that contained requirements of daily sustenance and medical necessities.

Families, grappling with the trauma of displacement, expressed gratitude for the tangible support they received. The provision of necessities has not only addressed the immediate concerns of the affected people but also offered a glimmer of hope in the face of adversity. The MSFS continues to accompany in solidarity with the people of Manipur as they strive to re-equip themselves amidst adversity.



## Salesian Seminar Conducted



The MSFS of Guwahati Province conducted a one-day seminar on the theme, “Salesian Humanism: Its Relevance and Influence in the Modern World” on Nov 25,



2023, at MSFS Provincialate, Narengi Guwahati. Around 60 participants, comprising Fathers, Sisters and Brothers from various congregations, attended the seminar. Fr. Dr. Thomas Kalariparambil MSFS, the provincial of Southwest India, delivered the Key Note Address on the theme “Devout Humanism of St Francis De Sales: Its Origin, Impact and Relevance”. Fr. Dr. Santhiagu MSFS, Fr. Yesuraja MSFS, Fr. Dr. Alexander Pocetto OSFS and Sr Jaisy Varickamthotty presented their papers on various topics, highlighting Salesian Humanism. The participants were enriched by the thought-provoking and enlightening paper presentations and discussions.

## Fransalian Youth Conference at Nagpur

By Fr Jnanamani Simon, MSFS

Nagpur Province of the MSFS held the three-day Fransalian Youth Conference at MSFS Provincialate, Nagpur, through Nov 22 – 25, 2023, on the theme ‘Live Jesus! Give Jesus!’, marking the ‘Year of Fransalian Youth’ at the Congregational level.



Around 100 youth from eight parishes of the province actively participated in the seminar, animated by Fr Carlus Barowa, the National Youth Director of the MSFS, and Ms Shilpa Ekka, Indian Youth Congress Spokesperson.

Most Rev Elias Gonsalves, the Archbishop of Nagpur, presided over the inaugural Mass. Oriented at upskilling the youth in leadership and animation, the conference focussed on the same through talks and activities. Office-bearers of Fransalian Youth Mission, Nagpur Province, were elected during the event. The Conference concluded with a Thanksgiving Mass, followed by an evaluation of the conference and felicitation ceremony. Fr Manoj Tirkey, the provincial, chaired the programme.

## Fransalian Youth Convention Held

Visakhapatnam Province of the MSFS organised a two-day convention of the members of Fransalian Youth Mission (FYM) on Sept 09 & 10, 2023, at Ross Hill Shrine. 120 youths from different parishes of the MSFS in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana participated in the first-ever programme of FYM held by the province. Fr Suresh Babu, the provincial, inaugurated the youth mission in the province, presiding over the Eucharist. Fr Justin SDB, Mrs. June

Gallyot Rodrigues and Sr Arul Sheela SCC, under the guidance and direction of Fr Jaddu Joseph Reddy, the director of FYM, Vizakh Province and Fr Sagar, the youth director of Andra Pradesh.

The Youth Executive Committee was formed with two delegates from each of the Apostolic Communities and they in turn elected the office bearers of FYM for both the States of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.



LIVE JESUS



YEAR OF 2023-'24

Fransalian Youth



## Catechetical Training at LCI, Arusha

By Fr Moses Okoth, MSFS



Forty-two catechists graduated from Lumen Christi Institute (LCI), Arusha, Tanzania, on Nov 17, 2023, after three months of intensive catechetical training course. Rev Fr Benedict Kashe, the delegate of the Archbishop of Arusha, presided over the Eucharistic Celebration.

The staff members of LCI and guests from around attended the ceremony. The catechists were awarded certificates of completion of the course and commissioned officially for the ministry. The bishop-delegate appreciated the MSFS for the unique ministry of training catechists for the Church of Tanzania and Kenya by equipping them highly resourceful for evangelization at the grassroots level in the parishes.

The catechists, hailing from different dioceses in Tanzania and Kenya, were appreciative of the course and thankful for the learning they had.

## Fransalian Youth Meet at SFS Chabua



Dibrugarh Diocese.

Focused on spiritual growth, leadership development and personal empowerment of the youths, experts from various fields and community leaders enlightened them with practical wisdom. The event featured worship sessions and cultural performances as well.

The convention concluded with a call to action, encouraging the youth to be vibrant witnesses of their faith. Fr Kusumkant Toppo, the parish priest and Fr Alock Tigga, the assistant, meticulously planned and organized the event.

## Update Programme for the Confreres of SA Region

By Fr Libin Pallattutharayil, MSFS

Southern African Region of the MSFS organised a three-day update programme for the confreres through Nov 07 –10, 2023, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Retreat Centre, Benoni, Johannesburg, South Africa. 16 confreres working in the Region attended the programme.

Intended to update the confreres on the Code of Canon Law, the resource persons Rt Rev John Masilo Selemela, the Auxiliary Bishop of Pretoria, and Fr John Paul Mathebula shared insights that enriched participants' comprehension of the broader implications of canonical principles.

The sessions enhanced the participants' understanding of the evolving legal concepts within the canonical domain, with particular reference to marriage issues. The programme involved a practical understanding of how Canon Law is applied in real-world scenarios, enabling the participants to navigate complex legal issues more effectively.

Cardinal Stephen Brislin, the Archbishop of Cape Town, visited the MSFS Priests attending the programme on Nov 08, which provided the confreres with the



opportunity to congratulate him on being newly elevated to the status of Cardinal. The joy was shared by cutting the cake and singing a congratulatory song; and on behalf of the confreres, Fr Baiju Mundackal, the Regional Superior, expressed the sentiments of gladness and gratitude for his enormous support to the MSFS.

Bishop John inaugurated and blessed the new Repository Store at Shalom Centre, Austin View, Midrand, in the presence of all the participants of the update programme, on Nov 09. The bishop emphasized the importance of the Repository Store as a hub for spiritual resources with religious articles and sacramentals. Fr Jijesh Palatty accomplished the task of shipping the items of the Repository from India.







### Chad-Cameroon MSFS Gets the Romero Prize 2023

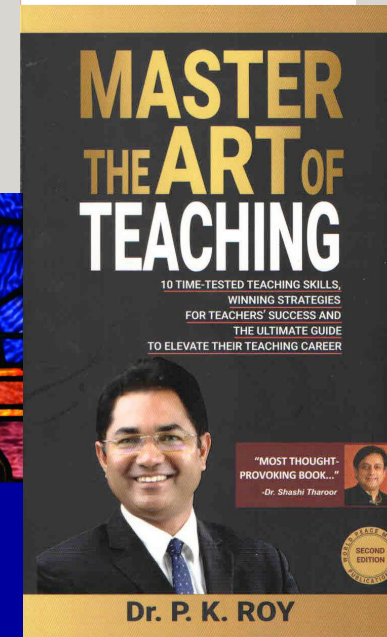
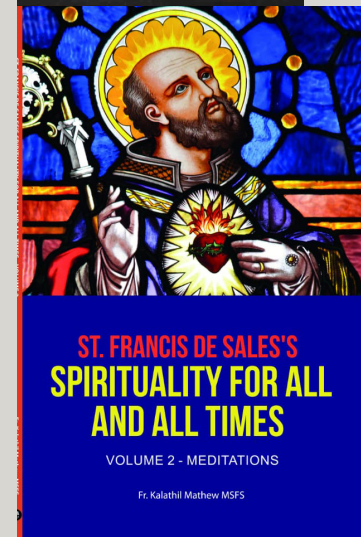
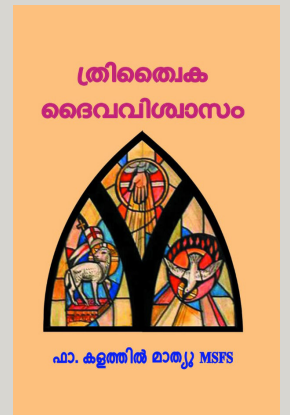
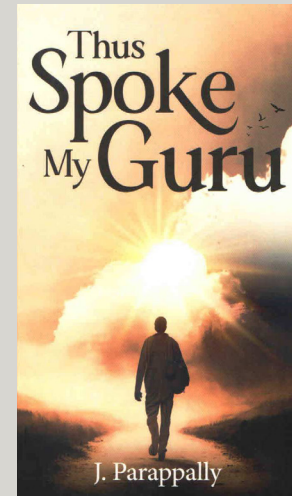
The Romero Prize, instituted by the Austrian Catholic Church for human rights promotion, developmental activities and missionary engagement was awarded to Fr Dr Sen Vellakada MSFS, on Nov 24, 2023, at Klosterneuburg, Austria. The award carries a cash award of 10.000 Euros, a citation and a statuette of St Oscar Romero. This is the first time that an Indian has been awarded the prestigious award named after the famous martyr St Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador.

Fr Sen has been working in the Central African Delegation (Chad-Cameroon) since 2017 as Rector, Bursar and project coordinator. He has been awarded for his 'work in the field of education among the marginalized children in Chad and Cameroon', stated the organizers, handing over the prize.

Fr Sen is also the founder of Agape Austria, an NGO that works to promote education and human rights in Chad and Cameroon. After visiting the projects of Fr Sen in Chad, the organizers and Agape Austria agreed to further strengthen the partnership with the Chad-Cameroon Delegation of the MSFS for the benefit of the poor people.



## BOOKS BY MSFS



### இறையன்பு – Tamil Translation of the 'Treatise on the Love of God'

The first volume of the Tamil translation of 'Treatise on the Love of God' was released by Fr Abraham Vettuvellil, the Superior General, and the first copy was handed over to Fr A Patrick Jayaraj, the provincial of Southeast India, on Nov 03, 2023, at MSFS Provincialate, Trichy, Tamilnadu. The book, "இறையன்பு- Iraiyanbu", is the fruit of the hard work of Fr Edward, who did the whole translation. The first volume contains books 1-7 of the Spiritual classic, 'Treatise on the Love of God,' written by St Francis de Sales. The second volume is expected to be released on Jan 24, 2024, the feast of SFS.



# NEWLY ORDAINED



SOUTH WEST



Fr Antony Kezhakenthottam



Fr Nyamsi Panteun Yves Cyrille



Fr Robin Joy Karumathy



Fr Ndeialdongar Toussaint

EAST AFRICA



Fr Moses Okoth

SOUTHEAST  
(MALAWI MISSION)



Fr S Vimal Raj



Fr M Adaikala Arul Raj



Fr A John Britto



Fr P Arokia Marcel



Fr C Arun Raj

# SILVER JUBILEE

DIBRUGARH



Fr Milkus Tirkey



Fr Cherian Marottickathadathil

SOUTH WEST



Fr Y Mathias

VIZAKH



Fr Naidu Prakash

EAST AFRICA



Fr Sebastian Nirappel



Fr Sebastian Palakudy



Fr Thomas Kochalumchuvattil

33 FRANSALIAN INTERNATIONAL

GUWAHATI



Fr Tomichan Moonanappillil





# GOLDEN JUBILEE



Fr Daniel Bouchet



# DIAMOND JUBILEE



Fr Abraham Mullenkuzhy



Fr Joe Mendes

# CONGRATULATIONS



**Fr Johnson Gonsalves**  
(Provincial, Pune Province)



**Fr Manoj Tirkey**  
(Provincial, Nagpur Province)



Fr Joseph Pulickal



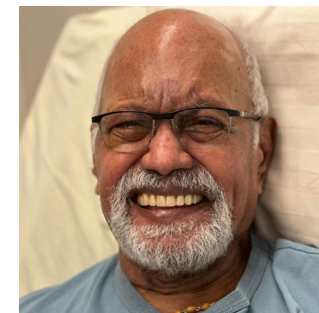
Fr Lucien Gurliat



Fr Narisetty Francis Xavier



Fr Saji Tharayil



Fr Peregrino Da Silva



**Ambassadors  
of**

**Christ**



**National Fransalian  
Youth Conference  
11-13 January 2024.**

**SFS School, Seethammadhara,  
Visakhapatnam**

**FRANSALIAN INTERNATIONAL** is a biannual newsletter published by the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, highlighting the activities and initiatives of the Fransalians from across the globe and serving as a link among confreres, friends and benefactors. Reports of events and happenings in the missions may be sent to [fransalianinternational@gmail.com](mailto:fransalianinternational@gmail.com) / [vintuaugustine@gmail.com](mailto:vintuaugustine@gmail.com)