



CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

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SUPERIOR GENERAL TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

28 Feb, 2025

My beloved Confreres,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Shalom!

I hope this circular finds you in the peace and joy that only Christ can bring. I am writing this to you to introduce and present the outcome of the XXI General Chapter. As members of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, we are a family united by our shared vocation, the charism of our congregation, and the mission entrusted to us. Following the recently concluded Chapter, I am here with deep gratitude and a renewed sense of purpose, placing the CALL of the CHAPTER before you.

The directives and decisions made during the General Chapter reflect the inspiration and guidance we have received from the Holy Spirit. These decisions are not merely administrative measures but a call to renew and strengthen our commitment to the Church's mission and to live our Charism more fully. As we move forward, all members must embrace and implement these directives and decisions with fidelity, prayer, and commitment.

The Dynamics of the Chapter

As we reflect on the outcomes of our recent General Chapter, it is important to recognise all the preparations that preceded the Chapter and orient ourselves from there. The General Chapter took place not merely during the time frame of February 1 to 14, 2025. From the very convocation of the Chapter on January 24, 2023, to this day, we can say that we are in the Chapter. We have been in the phases of remote preparations, immediate preparations for the Chapter, and the celebration of the Chapter. Now, we begin the final phase of living the Chapter like an overhauled, refuelled machine working more efficiently and steadfastly.

The efforts of the Pre-Capitular Commission were integral to the success of the Chapter, and the manner in which they organised the recollections and compiled the responses to the study papers was truly a testament to their commitment and collaboration. The Commission played a pivotal role in laying the groundwork for the Chapter. Through their thoughtful coordination and leadership, they ensured that all members of the congregation had an opportunity to engage meaningfully with the themes and issues, sharing insights, challenges, and aspirations. Thus, all members had the chance to contribute to the future of the MSFS Family.

The four Study Papers, which now serve as our sourcebook (**MSFS -Missionary Roots and Wings**), were not merely academic exercises. They were reflective and practical tools that

encouraged deep contemplation on the essential aspects of our lives as Fransalian Missionaries. Discussing and sharing these papers enabled every member to participate actively in the discernment process.

Once the responses to the study papers were submitted, the commission undertook the crucial task of collating and synthesizing the wealth of ideas and reflections gathered from the members of the congregation. This process was no small feat, as it required not only careful attention to detail but also a deep understanding of the spiritual and apostolic life of the congregation.

They worked diligently to categorize the responses, identify common themes, and present them in a manner that highlighted the areas needing collective discernment and action. This process was conducted with great care and transparency, reflecting the genuine spirit of collaboration and unity within the congregation.

As they compiled the responses, they were not merely gathering opinions but seeking the voice of the Holy Spirit within the congregation's responses. They approached the task with humility, recognizing that the discernment process was not about individual preferences or ideas but about aligning the community with God's will to help us live our charism more meaningfully.

In this sense, the commission's work became a sacred task—an exercise in communal discernment where each member's voice contributed to the larger vision for the congregation. Through this process, the Pre-Capitular Commission helped us all see the bigger picture and recognize how each of us, as part of the Fransalian family, play a vital role in the life and mission of the Church. By providing a clear and concise presentation of the responses, the Pre-Capitular Commission enabled the Chapter members to engage more deeply with the issues at hand, facilitating rich discussions that led to decisions shaping the future of the MSFS congregation.

The Guiding Principles and Values: The Ten-fold Commitments

Before I present to you the CALL OF THE CHAPTER, I would like to highlight a few key principles that guided us in our discussions and deliberations based on the Gospel and the spirit of our hallowed Constitutions. This is important because only the Chapter members know what transpired in the Chapter and the rationale behind these directives and decisions. The responses/questions we received following the discussions of the four study papers from the communities, apostolic communities, provinces, the outgoing general administration and the individual confreres, reflected the state, the quality and challenges of our consecrated life and apostolate.

During these days after the conclusion of the General Chapter, I reflected on the entire Chapter celebration. I tried to relate all deliberations, discussions, directives, and decisions to the following ten principles that are vital to us.

- 1. Commitment to Personal Sanctity:** The General Chapter reaffirmed our calling to be men of prayer, sacrifice, and service. We are urged to deepen our personal relationship with God through daily prayer, regular participation in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and faithful observance of our religious vows. The commitment to

personal prayer was non-negotiable for St. Francis de Sales, our Patron and Servant of God, Father Peter Mary Mermier.

2. **Life of Self-Discipline:** As religious men, we are called to be witnesses of God's love, peace, and joy to all we encounter. This mission is carried out through a life of deep commitment rooted in self-discipline. The journey of self-discipline is one of continual growth, where personal sacrifice and steadfast dedication to Christ become the foundation of a missionary's life. It is not simply an outward show of obedience but a profound internal transformation that guides our actions and shapes our very being. In the recent past we have seen an increasing number of aberrations happening in our religious circles.
3. **Community Life as Non-negotiable:** The General Chapter emphasised the importance of living our religious community life authentically, in fraternal charity and mutual support. We uphold that community life is non-negotiable in terms of religious life. Although many of our confreres unfortunately live alone due to pastoral reasons, that should not be seen as normal. We are called to embody the Salesian spirit within our communities, fostering an environment of trust, encouragement, and accountability. While acknowledging with sincere gratitude and recognising the works and contributions of our confreres sent to developed countries, the Congregation also recognises its obligation to take care of their right to live in communities.
4. **Strengthening of Missionary Outreach:** Our primary mission remains evangelising, particularly through the example of St. Francis de Sales and the Servant of God Father Peter Mary Mermier. The Chapter stressed the need for all of us to actively engage in the mission of spreading the Gospel, especially in areas where the Church requires a strong pastoral and missionary presence. We are called to be agents of reconciliation, peace, and joy in the world. We must develop a true missionary culture emerging from our personal relationship with the Lord.
5. **Initial and Ongoing Formation:** The General Chapter also highlighted the need for relevant and continuous formation for all members. We are especially encouraged to lead by example, mentoring younger members and providing spiritual and academic guidance. The discussions focused a lot on the proper training for the formators. One of the key aspects of human formation is learning to live and work in healthy, harmonious relationships within the community. Through human formation, we learn the importance of respect, patience, listening, and empathy in our relationships. We must have the emotional maturity to effectively navigate the complexities of ministry. Emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, is vital for anyone who works closely with people in pastoral and educational settings. The Chapter reflected our formation system and found that we need to revise and update our formation program, focusing on our quality.
6. **Education of the Heart as Integral to our Mission:** The call to educate the heart is a sacred obligation for every MSFS missionary, embedded in our charism and our commitment to the Church. As men consecrated to God's service, we are entrusted with transforming hearts through the power of the Gospel. This means that our educational efforts must never be merely academic or doctrinal; they must be directed

toward forming individuals who know Christ and love Him with their entire being. Whether teaching children in schools, offering spiritual direction, or working in parishes or missions, our ministry must always strive to form the heart. We are not simply transmitters of knowledge but mediators of God's love, striving to awaken in others a deep love for the Lord and a generous response to His call.

- 7. Service to the Poor and Marginalized:** In alignment with the mission of St. Francis de Sales and Servant of God Father Peter Mary Mermier, we are reminded of the importance of serving the poor, the sick, the marginalised, and the oppressed. This service should be an integral part of our pastoral work, reminding us that we are instruments of God's love and mercy in the world. SAIM must find still focused and concrete expressions in our daily life. No matter in which country we work, we have hungry sisters and brothers who are not far from our doorsteps. The Chapter urges us to lead a simple lifestyle.
- 8. Commitment to Financial Discipline:** To be frank, we currently manage our finances mostly based on trust rather than a professional centralized system. Today we encounter an increasing number of embezzlement cases; personal, community, and institutional celebrations of extravagance leading to spending habits that are not morally acceptable; the acceptance of private commissions in cash and kind for business transactions in the apostolate; ownership of private vehicles; unrestricted access to congregational/parish/social funds; and secretive handling of unaccounted money are just a few examples. This situation demands strict financial discipline at all levels. Implementing a fully secure finance management system is vital in strengthening our Congregation's mission and ensuring the responsible use of resources entrusted to us. As we advance with our mission, we must be diligent stewards of the funds and assets God has given us. This system will not only ensure financial integrity but will also help us remain focused on our true mission: to be instruments of God's love, peace, and joy to all people.
- 9. Our Heritage and Legacy:** The protection and preservation of heritage sites are immensely important to our MSFS Family, as they serve as tangible connections to our rich history and spiritual legacy. By familiarizing ourselves with the history of these sacred sites, we gain a deeper understanding of the sacrifices, faith, and dedication of those who have shaped our congregation. Visiting these heritage sites, both in Europe and India, is not only an opportunity to honour our past but also to renew our commitment to the values and mission that have been handed down to us. Engaging with these sites strengthens our bond with our pioneers, deepens our spirituality, and inspires us to continue the work they began, ensuring that their legacy lives on in our own lives and ministry.
- 10. MSFS As One Global Family:** To truly embody the spirit of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, we must grow as one global family, united by our shared mission, values, and charism, transcending the administrative boundaries of our provinces. This global unity enables us to see beyond the differences of our nationalities, regions, tribes, and castes, creating a collective strength that empowers our work as missionaries across the world. While administrative structures are necessary for effective management, our shared identity as MSFS should rise above these divisions.

By fostering greater communication, collaboration, and mutual support among all provinces, we can create a more cohesive and dynamic congregation, allowing us to serve the universal Church and broader humanity with renewed zeal and a deep sense of global solidarity. In this context, it is time for us to determine the best ways to utilize our resources, both material and personnel.

As members of this great congregation, I urge each of you to embrace these directives and decisions with hearts full of zeal and dedication. Let us remember that our adherence to these directives and obedience to these decisions is not a burden but an invitation to deepen our commitment to God and to our brothers and sisters in Christ as one MSFS Family. We are called to be signs of hope, joy, and love in the world, just as our patron, St. Francis de Sales, and our founder Servant of God, Father Peter Mary Mermier exemplified throughout their lives.

May we continue to draw inspiration from their lives and teachings, finding in them a model for our own lives as we work together to build a community that is faithful to the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. I encourage all of us to reflect prayerfully on the Statements, Directives and Decisions and discern how they can be lived out in our daily ministry. Let us walk this path together, trusting in the Holy Spirit's guidance every step of the way.

With these introductory words, it is my honour to place before the entire congregation the outcome of the General Chapter - **The Call of the General Chapter 2025 in the form of statement, directives and the action plans:**



THE CALL OF THE CHAPTER 2025

Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales STATEMENT OF XXI ORDINARY GENERAL CHAPTER 2025

We, the members of the XXI Ordinary General Chapter of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales (MSFS), assembled at Stella Maris, MSFS Provincialate in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India, from February 1-14, 2025, prayerfully and fraternally revisited our life and mission under the theme, “...I chose you (Jn 15: 16). MSFS, Live your Charism.”

After a synodal process of discernment, we evolved the following Statement:

- We have reawakened within ourselves the sense of our identity as MSFS, being chosen to live our Charism by living the spirit and spirituality of our heavenly Patron, St Francis de Sales, as bequeathed to us by our Founder, Servant of God, Father Peter Mary Mermier.
- We are determined to prioritise and live a life of prayer and spirituality and uphold our community living as non-negotiable and deeply fraternal.
- We renew our religious consecration in and through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. Thus, we strive to grow as men of self-emptying love, integrity and docility to God’s will.
- We recommit ourselves to continue the mission of Christ and the Church, ablaze with an undaunted missionary fervour. We rekindle within ourselves zeal for parish mission preaching as a powerful and relevant means to renew Christian life.
- We are committed to fostering authentic, human and holistic Fransalian formation that perfects a Christ-centered journey of holiness.
- We reassert our apostolate of education as "education of the heart," which is human, integral and liberating.
- We resolve to be sensitive to the needs and challenges of our mission, explore new avenues, and intensify our efforts for social change, emancipation and empowerment.
- We reaffirm our sacred duty as stewards, guided by transparency and accountability in managing all our temporal goods.

Responding to the clarion call of the Church, we re-espouse ourselves as "pilgrims of hope on the path of peace," built on solid faith and aflame with ardent love. We resolve to journey ahead with our "missionary roots and wings" ignited by the fire of our Charism.

We commend all our resolutions in the hands of Mary, Mother of Sorrows, our Heavenly Patroness, St Francis de Sales, our Patron and Servant of God Fr Peter Mary Mermier, our holy Founder.

Live Jesus!

DIRECTIVES & DECISIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

OUR CONSECRATED LIFE: COMMUNITY AND WITNESS

Our religious consecration lived and nurtured in a community of fraternal love is a symbol of the Trinitarian communion as well as of the Kingdom of God proclaimed by our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

DIRECTIVES:

1. We set our MSFS Charism as the highest priority of our life and give utmost importance to community life, Salesian spirituality, mission, and all our apostolates (AC).
2. We commit to growing in personal holiness and strengthening our community life through the non-negotiable pillars of the community: personal and community prayer, daily celebration of the Eucharist, Eucharistic adoration, common meals, community recreation, and monthly meetings with the tabling of financial accounts, monthly recollections, and annual retreats (PS, LS, AC).
3. We strive to grow personally and collectively through ongoing formation and spiritual enrichment and seek ways and means for regular update and renewal programmes (AC).
4. We strive to be persons of self-discipline by mutual accountability, transparency, and fraternal corrections and conscientiously guard one another against a destructive culture of slander and divisiveness (AC).
5. We cultivate a balance between individual gifts and common good, and place all our gifts at the service of the community (PC, LS, AC).
6. We promote “digital detox” initiatives in our communities encouraging disciplined use of gadgets and technology. We also cultivate a sense of silence (LS, AC).
7. We celebrate meaningfully and promote the following MSFS legacies of Devotions and practices in our daily life, communities and apostolates (LS, PP, AC).
 - 1) *Making Personal Meditation, Annual Retreats and Monthly Recollection*
 - 2) *Devotion to Mother of Sorrows*
 - 3) *Devotion to the Passion of the Lord*
 - 4) *Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament*
 - 5) *Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*
 - 6) *Devotion to the Holy Spirit*
 - 7) *Celebration of Feast of Mother of Sorrows*
 - 8) *Celebration of Feast of St. Francis de Sales*
 - 9) *Celebration of the Founder’s Day*
 - 10) *Celebration of the Foundation Day of the Congregation*
 - 11) *Legacy of the Devotional Renewal of Vows of the perpetually professed members*
 - 12) *Legacy of reading the obituary and praying for the departed confreres.*

*"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." **Romans 12:1***

**CHARISM, HISTORY, HERITAGE,
ST. FRANCIS DE SALES & MERMIER SPIRITUALITY**

Our Charism is to continue the mission of Christ and His Church by living the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales in religious community of missionaries, as lived and envisioned by our Founder.

DIRECTIVES:

1. We will deepen our awareness that our mission has its origin in Christ and therefore our every undertaking must be in accordance with the Gospel values *(AC)*.
2. We will consciously live and promote the Spirit and Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales and Our Founder, Servant of God, Fr. Peter Mary Mermier, remaining faithful to the core Fransalian virtues of Humility, Gentleness, Compassion, Cheerful Availability, Hospitality, etc. *(AC)*.
3. The General and Provincial Administrations will make sincere efforts to preserve and promote historical sites, monuments, shrines, mission centres, etc. *(GC, PC)*.
4. The General and Provincial Administrations will identify, research, document, and create archives of all historical facts and heritage sites linked to the congregation both in our jurisdiction and those we have relinquished to others *(GC, PC)*.
5. The General Administration, in collaboration with the Provincial Administrations, will develop standardised study materials for initial and ongoing formation and organize annual workshops, seminars, recollections, retreats, publications and video documentaries to highlight the History of the Congregation and the contributions of early missionaries, fostering a culture of fidelity and appreciation *(GSF, PCICF)*.
6. We will further intensify our existing means of disseminating the Spiritual legacy of our Congregation with modern means of communication *(AC)*.
7. The DSM will encourage confreres to publish books, articles, and magazines focused on Fransalian spirituality, the life of Fr. Peter Mary Mermier, and the history and the legacy of the congregation *(DSM)*.
8. We will promote DSM website with rich digital content on various topics including Fransalian Spirituality as effective means of disseminating Fransalian Spirituality *(AC, DSM, PSEC)*.
9. We will continue to promote the efforts in translating the Fransalian Literature into many local - regional languages *(AC)*.
10. The General Administration in consultation with the Franco-Swiss Province shall increase the number of confreres participating in the Salesian Program Annecy (SPA) and De sales and Mermier Heritage Retreat. Veteran Missionaries will be given priority for the Heritage Retreat to Annecy *(GC)*.
11. The PIF will work out the logistics of a Heritage Retreat in India to educate the Confreres regarding sites of historical importance for the Congregation *(PIF)*.
12. We shall actively support the cause of Fr. Gurien Jacquier of Ghogargaon MSFS, (popularly known as Jacquier Baba) by involving at least three MSFS confreres in the diocesan team and collaborating with the Bishop of Aurangabad *(PC)*.
13. The Provincials will study the possibility of taking up new missions in areas where our early missionaries have done pioneering evangelisation particularly within the jurisdiction of the Nagpur and Vishakhapatnam Provinces *(PIF)*.

14. DSM will offer online animation programs on Fransalian Spirituality and documentaries on the inspiring life stories of Pioneering Missionaries while expanding these initiatives to include other Salesian Congregations and Fransalian Associates (*DSM*).
15. We will install statues of St. Francis De Sales in our Churches and institutions, busts/ statues of our Founder, Servant of God, Fr. Peter Mary Mermier in our communities and institutions (*AC*).

DECISIONS:

- a. We will display the Charism of our Congregation in all our communities and places of ministry (*PC, AC*).
- b. We will establish archives and Heritage museums at Visakhapatnam and Nagpur to preserve and share the history and legacy of MSFS (PCs of Visakhapatnam and Nagpur Provinces).
- c. We will name our institutions after our Patron, Patroness, Founder, Pioneering Confreres and Early Missionaries (*PC, AC*).
- d. We will initiate the process of establishing a DSM centre in Africa (*GC, DSM*).

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." Romans 12:6-8

MISSION: PIONEERING EVANGELIZATION, RENEWAL PROGRAMS AND PASTORAL MINISTRIES

Faithful to the spirit of our Founder, Servant of God, Fr. Peter Mary Mermier, we recommit ourselves to pioneering evangelization and renewal of Christian faith, life, and families and thus building the kingdom of God in the footsteps of our Patron, St. Francis de Sales.

DIRECTIVES:

1. We shall be deeply convinced of our missionary identity and live this out in our apostolates through the religious community in the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, marked by gentleness, humility, joyful optimism, and unwavering mission commitment (*AC*).
2. The Provincial Administration shall prepare and implement appropriate policies for the frontier missions with adequate planning for the personnel and finance in the overall province planning (*PC, MS*).
3. We foster a culture of appreciation and motivation for mission and missionary life by regularly highlighting missionary achievements in the provincial circulars and mission magazines and publishing mission field reports (*PS, GSM, DSM*).

DECISIONS:

- a. Each parish priest incorporates and promotes Fransalian devotional practices in the parish by establishing a Fransalian Devotional Calendar (*PP, PCICM*).
- b. Ensure a mandatory pastoral exposure of a minimum of two years for all the newly ordained priests, who shall be duly guided and monitored (*PC*).
- c. All Provinces will establish at least one team for Parish Mission Preaching (PMP) and ensure that it is conducted regularly (*PCICM*).

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Mt. 28: 19-20

FORMATION

Our formation both initial and on-going aims to journey together interprovincially, deepen our understanding of the MSFS charism reflecting the spirit of our Patron and Founder, grow in our religious and missionary vocation, and cultivate little virtues.

DIRECTIVES:

1. Our Formation program will align with the MSFS charism, ensuring holistic formation—human, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and practical—rooted in the Spirit and Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales, fidelity to the Church, and commitment to the Congregation's history and legacy (*GSF, PCICF*).
2. The Primary task of Formation is to prepare candidates for Religious and Community living and for Mission. Therefore, formators ensure these ideals are sufficiently infused into them right from initial stages of formation (*FT*).
3. Formators are encouraged to give special attention to providing life skills, nurturing a sense of love for nature, manual labour, games and physical activities; fostering growth in emotional intelligence, psycho-sexual maturity and above all a strong prayer life (*FT*).
4. As part of both initial and on-going formation, we will commit to deepening our fidelity by studying and reflecting on the Salesian literature, the history and legacy of the Congregation, the MSFS Personal Spiritual Directory, the source book – 'MSFS: Missionary Roots and Wings', Sacred Scripture and Church teachings (*AC*).
5. All Missions, Delegations and Regions abroad will strive to promote vocations and start their own formation houses (*PC, PCICF, GSF, MS, DS, RS*).
6. In the light of dwindling vocations and limited competent personnel for the ministry of formation, the General Chapter proposes and empowers the PIF to study the possibilities of merging formation houses in India to ensure effective integral formation, optimal use of human and material resources (*GSF, PIF*).
7. The General Chapter recommends the Provincial Administrations to strengthen the Formation Apostolate by encouraging inter-province collaboration (*GSF, PC*).
8. The Provincials will implement the two-plus-three-year program in Suvidya College as decided in the PIF at the recommendation of the Extraordinary General Chapter 2022.

The Provincials may allow certain candidates to specialize in other disciplines as per Province needs (*PIF*).

9. The General Chapter authorizes the PIF to study the possibility of SFS College Bengaluru offering a three-year Philosophy program, ensuring compliance with the University requirements and also the integration of courses mandatory for priestly formation. A special committee under the leadership of the Rector of Suvidya College and the Principal of SFS College, Bengaluru, can study the possibilities and submit the report to the General Administration and the PIF. Until then it is recommended to carry on with the present arrangement (*GSF, PIF*).
10. We highly recommend that MSAF gradually promotes its own staff from its units, minimizing dependency on other provinces; and further intensify the efforts to make LCI a recognized and autonomous university (*ASG, MSAF, DLCI*).
11. We shall work out the possibility of reintroducing the Salesian Seminar before Salesian Retreat in preparation for the Final Profession (*GSF, PCICF*).
12. We shall work out the possibility of organizing Salesian and heritage programs at LCI for the Scholastics and for confreres (*ASG, DLCI, MSAF*).
13. We shall explore alternative schedules for scholastics from Guwahati and Dibrugarh provinces to participate in the Salesian Retreat before the Final Profession (*PA, PCICF, GSF*).
14. The General Administration will establish a committee to study the possibility of starting a theologate in India and Africa (*GC*).

DECISIONS:

- a. The General Administration will appoint a team to conduct a Charism Retreat before the midterm General Chapter (*GC*).
- b. We will strengthen Vocation Promotion by appointing full-time vocation promoters. In this effort, we will promote inter-state and inter-province collaboration, organizing camps and follow-ups and leveraging modern media for visibility (*GSF, PC*).
- c. The Vocation Promoters with minor seminary formation team will do a thorough screening and background checks while recruiting (*PC, FT, VP*).
- d. Set up an ad-hoc Committee to revise the present syllabus for initial formation with priority for basic faith formation, basic knowledge in life sciences, mathematics, and the Bible (*GSF, PCICF*).
- e. We shall reprint the Salesian Retreat Manual, "Ever flowing Streams of Love" (*GSF, DSM*).
- f. The Provincial Administration shall ensure to appoint well-qualified and trained formators in all formation houses (*PC*).
- g. The General Administration will establish within one year, a team to train formators and offer regular update programs twice a year (*GC, GSF, PC*).
- h. The PIF and PEA will strengthen Lumen Christi Institute (LCI) by supplying qualified personnel through formal commitments, particularly from Indian Provinces and MSAF members (*ASG, PIF, PEA*).

"He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." Col.1:28

EDUCATION

MSFS Constitutions Art. No.36 states: In our apostolate of education and ministry to the young we share the ministry of the Church to proclaim the Good News of liberation from ignorance and orient those under our care to seek truth about themselves, God and the world. Given these directions and exhortations of our constitutions and building on the resolutions of the previous General Chapters concerning our apostolate of education, we resolve the following:

DIRECTIVES:

1. Following the Fransalian Philosophy of Education as enshrined in the saying of our Venerable Founder, Servant of God, Fr. Peter Mary Mermier, "The heart of education is the education of the heart," we will make our educational institutions centers of excellence and transformation (*AC*).
2. We are committed to protecting and safeguarding the rights of the children and the vulnerable in our society (*AC*).
3. Provincials/Regional/Delegation/Mission Superiors will ensure that the confreres appointed to our educational institutions are men of character and competence and demonstrate our congregational charism (*PC*).
4. The faculty and staff working in our educational institutions should be women and men of quality and character and share in our Fransalian spirit. The management should invest in professional development and inculcate the Fransalian spirit in the staff (*PC, PCICE, SM*).
5. We will make conscious efforts to build a Friends of Fransalians group in all our units and conduct relevant programs to further strengthen the bonds (*SM*).
6. Resolving to be synodal in our approach, there must be efforts made to involve lay persons, especially Catholics, in the administration of our educational institutions, bringing professional expertise to improve the quality of education (*SM*).
7. Our educational institutions must promote exchange programs between our institutions, creating valuable opportunities for confreres and students to broaden their horizons, share knowledge, and experience the larger Fransalian family (*PCICE, SM*).
8. To contribute to higher education at the national and international level, provinces must make efforts to establish colleges (Higher Education Institutions) and as a collective body, Fransalians must aim at establishing a university in India and Africa in the next fifteen years. Collaboration and exchange programs between these Higher Education Institutions are to be promoted (*GC, PC*).
9. Our educational institutions must teach morals, values and Salesian virtues required for public life and actively promote students, especially Catholics, to go into politics, government and public service, and bureaucratic positions. We must make provision to support such students financially, and continue to accompany them through Alumni Association and gatherings (*PCICE, SM*).
10. Continuing to draw inspiration from the encyclical, *Laudato Si*, of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, and joining hands with those who care for our Mother Earth and God's creation, we shall make our educational campuses green and environment-friendly (*SM*).

11. All our educational institutions must have social outreach programs and other ways to connect with the society around them. There must be efforts made to utilise the school facilities for special classes and tuition after-hours for the benefit of the less privileged children and others. Meritorious students from these categories must be identified and given scholarship (*PCICE, SM*).

DECISIONS:

- a. We will maintain a balance between professionalism and religious values and ensure that all the stakeholders in our apostolate of education – the staff, students, parents, public officials, and others – are familiar with our Fransalian vision of education. This will be done by displaying our charism and Salesian and Mermierian quotes, inculcating in them Salesian virtues, celebrating the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, Founder's Day, etc. (*PCICE, SM*).
- b. Confreres working in our educational institutions must be well equipped and professionally qualified for the positions they hold by obtaining specialized higher education and attending conferences and leadership development programs (*PS, PCICE, AC*).
- c. Regular studies must be insisted upon and correspondence courses, distance education, and honorary degrees must be discouraged (*PS, PCICE, AC*).
- d. Our educational institutions must be integrated with the pastoral work and social apostolate by including parish priests, managers, and others associated with pastoral work on the teaching staff of the school or college and vice versa (*PC, PP, SM*).
- e. There must be a periodic quality assessment of our educational institutions by external experts and agencies to identify areas for improvement and enhance the overall quality (*PC, SM, GSE*).
- f. Reflecting the Congregation's commitment to the preferential option for the poor, the provincial administration ensures to adopt/support our needy schools and also set apart a certain percentage of financial resources as scholarship to poor students, especially Christian/Catholic students (*SM, PB, GSE*).
- g. The Fransalian contribution to the education ministry and the overall development of the society at the national and international level must be highlighted by maintaining the data and projecting our collective contribution at the national and international level (*GSE*).
- h. Financial decisions pertaining to the community or apostolate are not to be made by administrators or individual members alone but by the local community and Provincial administration or any other body authorized by the province (*PC, ACC*).
- i. Provision must be made in our educational institutions for Holy Mass and catechism on First Fridays for Catholic students and for grouping them as Catholic Students' Forum in view of having them as Fransalian youth and prospective candidates for priesthood and religious life (*SM*).
- j. To promote common ventures, our educational institutions shall use the moral science books and software prepared by the Congregation (*PC, SM*).

"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Deut. 6:6-7

SOCIAL APOSTOLATE AND INNOVATIVE MINISTRIES (SAIM)

Our missionary commitment to renewing the Christian community includes inspiring and supporting our brothers and sisters to become authentic followers of Christ. We will collaborate with all humans to build a society based on justice, love, peace, and reconciliation without any distinction of class, caste, creed, race, tribe, gender, or language.

DIRECTIVES:

1. We become passionate builders of the Kingdom of God by choosing to prioritize the poor, the marginalized, and the vulnerable in our missions and society (*AC*).
2. Provinces and mission units will consider the possibility of initiating health care ministries, such as clinics and hospitals, and provide training for confreres to serve in these areas (*GSS, PC*).
3. Strengthen SAIM's role as a visible representative of MSFS globally to spread the congregation's social transformative initiatives and values (*GSS, PCICS*).
4. We actively promote, utilize, and contribute to developing the congregation's website, mobile app, print media, AI and digital media platforms, DSM for information sharing and digital evangelization (*AC, DSM, GSS*).
5. Integrate SAIM into all other apostolates, ensuring that each apostolate adopts a social action initiative for the underprivileged in society (*GSS, PCICS*).
6. Train and empower the youth and confreres through DeSIFMA in media education, equipping them to engage effectively in evangelization and social transformation (*GSS, DeSIFMA*).
7. Strengthen the network of our social and innovative ministries at both national and international levels, and promote Fransalian social actions and achievements for greater global visibility and social impact (*GC, PC*).
8. We will expand MDO's prospectus to include a broader range of Mission and Ministry areas, including evangelization, housing, health, and primary and higher education. Additionally, we will promote national-level collaborations to enhance visibility and impact (*MDO, PC, GSS*).
9. To attract more funding opportunities, we will develop large-scale, collaborative, common projects across all provinces. The Congregational MDO will guide the Province MDOs in project writing and fund mobilization (*MDO, PC, GSS*).

DECISIONS:

- a. Appoint competent confreres under the guidance of the General Secretary for SAIM to revitalize the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission in all provinces within two years (*GSS, PCICS*).
- b. Ensure that missions and projects initiated by the individual charism of the confreres should gradually evolve to be more community-based apostolates for improved sustainability and continuity (*PC, IC*).

"Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow." Is. 1:17

STEWARDSHIP

To live our charism, to continue the Mission of Christ and His Church effectively, we recognize that we have to be authentic stewards of the talents and temporal goods we are blessed with ensuring integrity, responsibility, and a commitment to serving God who has called us to serve him and his people. This we undertake by strictly adhering to the following:

DIRECTIVES:

1. We will ensure financial transparency at all levels, all administrative units and among all members and follow a zero-tolerance policy against deviations and corruption (*AC*).
2. The Provincial Administration will establish an efficient internal auditing system to promote accountability and legal compliance. Further, the administration shall also appoint lay professionals to ensure competency and consistency of the property and Financial Administration in the Province [unaffected by the change in Provincial Administration] (*GB, PA*).
3. The Provincial administration will implement proper corrective measures when there are deviations and such confreres should not be appointed to key offices handling finance and property (*PA*).
4. We will ensure account-to-account payments, minimising cash transactions. Any unavoidable cash transactions in institutions, schools, parishes, and other entities must be properly documented and reported, with all cash collected being banked and total income per individual entry verified through receipts and verifying the same against bank statements (*AC*).
5. No individual shall receive private commissions, concessions or any other privileges in cash or kind from publishers, suppliers, or any third parties. All funds received at every level must be transparently recorded, verified by the auditing team (*AC, PB*).
6. Our Commitment to the Vow of Poverty necessitates we do not own private vehicles, properties, jewels and other investments. When gifted by our family, relatives and friends, such gifts, must be surrendered to the Province and must be at the service of the Province (*AC, PB, PS*).

DECISIONS:

- a. A competent team of confreres and professionals appointed by the General Administration will scrutinise the Financial and property records of the General Administration (*GC*).
- b. A team consisting of General Bursar, competent professionals and confreres from other provinces will scrutinise the Financial and property records of the Provincial Administrations (*GB*).
- c. The Provincial Administrations will appoint a Province-level Finance and Property Committee, including qualified and trained lay individuals. This committee must be sufficiently empowered to exercise their duty of assessment and redressal (*PC*).
- d. All society or institute accounts shall be operated only jointly by at least two confreres who hold offices that concern the respective account. All confreres shall operate either a personal or survivor account of which the other official joint account holder shall preferably be the Provincial Bursar (*PB, GB, AC*).

- e. The General Bursar on behalf of the General Administration and the Provincial Bursar on behalf of the Provincial Administration, present a report during midterm assembly/ Chapter in addition to regular curia meetings on property matters and all financial transactions in cash or kind (*GB, PB*).
- f. Financial and Accounting system for Transparency (FAST) should be strictly adhered to. The internal auditors scrutinise the income and expenses against the budget presented with reference to FAST, seek necessary clarifications and provide necessary directives (*GB, PB*).
- g. Financial literacy programs should be regularly conducted to educate all members including the finally professed Scholastics (*GB, PB*).
- h. We will implement congregation-wide FAST software across schools, parishes, and institutions to ensure all transactions including cash are systematically recorded, reported to relevant authorities, and effectively monitored to maintain financial integrity (*PC, GB, PB*).

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" Lk.16:10-11

ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE OF DIFFERENT UNITS

GERMANY, AUSTRIA, GERMAN SPEAKING SWITZERLAND, CANADA, ITALY, AUSTRALIA,

DIRECTIVES:

1. Provincials will take measures individually and collectively to strengthen and animate local communities and delegations to ensure effective pastoral ministry and community living in these said territories (*PC*).
2. To promote better community living, the Superior General in consultation with the Provincials, will constitute local communities consisting of confreres from different provinces (*GC, PC*).
3. Confreres working in these territories will strive to deepen their knowledge of language and culture and look for opportunities to be part of the administrative bodies in the local church (*ACC*).

DECISION:

- a. At least two Provincials whose members are working or studying in Germany and Austria shall be present at the retreat organized for GA members annually (*PS*).

FRANCO-SWISS PROVINCE

DIRECTIVE:

1. All Provincials will consider lending certain number of confreres to Franco-Swiss Province to sustain and preserve the existing heritage centers such as Notre-Dame de la Gorge and Les Allinges as well as to take up parishes and centers associated with our history and heritage (*PS, FS*).

ENGLISH PROVINCE

DIRECTIVES:

1. Indian and African Provinces will help the English Province by promoting vocations and training them in their seminaries (*PIF, PEA*).
2. All the temporary members in the English Province will follow the memorandum of understanding signed between the English Provincial and the respective Provincials of those members (*PS, ACC*).

USA VICE PROVINCE

DIRECTIVE:

1. Clear frameworks for confreres working in the USA Vice-Province are already laid out in the Call of the General Chapter of 2019 and the approved comprehensive guidelines for confreres in short term ministry in the USA (*PS, USA-VP*).

DECISIONS:

- a. For all spiritual, administrative, and legal matters, the Vice Provincial of USA Vice Province will be the direct contact person for all the confreres working in USA. He will represent all the other Provincials in all correspondences with the legal and ecclesiastical authorities. However, transfers and appointments of temporary members within USA shall be only with the consent of the concerned provincials (*PS, USA-VP*).
- b. The Vice Provincial of USA is authorized to constitute local and apostolic communities consisting of permanent and temporary members, and other Provincials shall leave such matters to the discretion of the Vice Provincial of USA and his curia (*PS, USA-VP*).

BRAZIL PROVINCE

DIRECTIVES:

1. Indian and African Provinces will help the Brazil Province by promoting vocations and training them in their seminaries (*PS, BP*).
2. All the temporary members in the Brazil Province will follow the memorandum of understanding signed between the Brazil Provincial and the respective Provincials of those members (*PS, BP, ACC*).

GENERAL NORMS

DIRECTIVES:

1. The Congregation values the ministries and contributions of all the confreres and is committed to strengthening and revitalising the MSFS presence in all the centres and countries (*AC*).
2. The General Administration with the assistance of the respective Provincials/PIF and all units will ensure personnel planning for congregational ventures such as Suvidya College, LCI, DeSIFMA, DSM, Schlanders community, Morning Star College and others (*GC, PS*).
3. When revoking decisions made by successive provincial administrations on serious matters, the matter must be referred to the Superior General (*PC, GC*).
4. The criteria for raising units - such as Missions, Delegations, Regions, and Vice Provinces - to a higher status: collective will of the confreres in the unit, local vocations, the number of confreres, financial independence, diverse ministries, and the existence of the formation houses (*GC, PC*).
5. The Superior General and Provincial Administrations will create a professional forum to tackle divisive and anti-Church or anti-Congregation activities, including anonymous letters, the dissemination of fake news and rumours on social media, and negative campaigning (*GC, PC*).
6. The General Administration is authorized to explore and execute the feasibility of establishing a new Generalate in Rome, ensuring sufficient space, accommodation facilities, and improved global visibility (*GC*).

DECISIONS:

- a. Confreres who are sent for studies or other specific purposes by their respective Provincials need to fulfil those objectives and return to the Province as per the personal plan (*PS, PCICF, ASG*).
- b. The 10-year policy is applicable for those members pastorally engaged in the developed countries and living outside a local community. The Provincials will work out a personal plan for each confrere in dialogue with them, and their period of stay cannot exceed 15 years. A strict personal plan should also be worked out for those who have already exceeded 15 years, and approval for it should be obtained from the Superior General (*ACC, PS, ASG*).
- c. All the confreres will follow the norms laid down in the General Directory and other policy statements with regard to naturalization. Any such requests will be based on the requirements of the mission. As for those who have already naturalised themselves unconstitutionally, the General Administration in consultation with the Provincial administration will work out the modalities of handling such cases (*ACC, PC, GC*).
- d. The General Administration will appoint a five-member Legal Cell at the Congregational level to address juridical legal cases related to violations of evangelical counsels and other deviations in consecrated life within the provinces. This Legal Cell operates independently from the Province Commission for Professional Standards (*PCPS*), which handles such cases at the preliminary level (*GC, PC*).

- e. The General Chapter endorses the decision of the General Curia to build and shift the General Secretariat to new facilities on the designated plot acquired in Hyderabad (GC).
- f. The General Chapter has unanimously authorized the Superior General to convoke a Mid-term General Chapter after four years to evaluate the implementation of the directives and decisions of GC 2025. The capitulants of the Mid-term General Chapter will remain the same (SG, GC).
- g. The General Chapter acknowledges the urgency of revising and updating the General Directory of the Congregation and recommends that the General Administration appoint an expert committee to prepare it. The Mid-term General Chapter will review and approve the MSFS General Directory (SG, GC).

“For lack of guidance, a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.” Proverbs 11:14

ABBREVIATIONS

AC	All Confreres
ACC	All Confreres Concerned
ASG	Assistant Superior General
BP	Brazil Province
DeSIFMA	De Sales International Film and Media Academy
DLCI	Director, Lumen Christi Institute
DS	Delegation Superior
DSM	De Sales Mermier Research Centre
EP	English Province
FS	Franco-Swiss Province
FT	Formation Team
GB	General Bursar
GC	General Curia
GSE	General Secretary for Education
GSF	General Secretary for Formation
GSM	General Secretary for Mission
GSS	General Secretary for SAIM
IC	Individual Confrere
LS	Local Superior
MDO	Mission Development Office
MS	Mission Superiors
MSAF	Mission Superiors Africa Forum
PB	Provincial Bursar
PC	Provincial Curia
PCICE	Provincial Councillor in charge of Education
PCICF	Provincial Councillor in charge of Formation
PCICM	Provincial Councillor in charge of Missions
PCICS	Provincial Councillor in charge of SAIM
PIF	Provincials of India Forum
PP	Parish Priest

PS	Provincial Superior
PSEC	Provincial Secretaries
RS	Regional Superior
SG	Superior General
SM	School Management
VP	Vocation Promoter

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALL OF THE CHAPTER 2025

Beloved Confreres,

The Statement, Directives, and Decisions of the General Chapter of our Congregation have a binding nature on all of us. In Canon Law, the concept of the binding nature of decisions made by the General Chapter refers to the authority and obligation of members of that religious community to adhere to the decisions made during the Chapter (cf. CIC. 631. p.1).

What is stated above in **the Call of the Chapter 2025** is an extension of the Code of Canon Law and our Constitutions. The decisions made during the Chapters typically pertain to governance, discipline, and apostolic direction within our MSFS Congregation. The binding nature of these decisions is rooted in the legislative authority of the Chapter as a decision-making body.

Let us remember that the General Chapter possesses legislative power over the members of the Congregation, as granted by our constitutions, subject to the authority of the Holy See. Its decisions are binding on us, especially those concerning the life and discipline of the community, as long as they are in accordance with the law of the Church.

Thus, dear Confreres, what **the Call of the Chapter** conveys is not simply our good wishes and ornate exhortations. When the General Chapter makes decisions, these choices embody the collective will of the Congregation, and all of us, the members, are expected to adhere to them.

Please note that at the end of every Directive and Decision, some abbreviations are given, indicating the key agents of implementing **the Call General Chapter**. In fact, it is the task of each one of us to be part of the implementation of the Chapter. As MSFS, let us own up the Chapter and live our Charism fully.

May Mother of Sorrows, our beloved Patroness, St. Francis de Sales, our Patron, and Servant of God Fr Peter Mary Mermier, Our Founder intercede for us. Let us continue to pray for each other as we carry forward **the CALL of the CHAPTER 2025**, confident that the Holy Spirit will guide us as we seek to fulfil our mission as Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales.

Fraternally yours in Christ,



Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS
Superior General
Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales

28 February, 2025