



Congregazione dei Missionari di San Francesco di Sales

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**SUPERIOR GENERAL
TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

**A Circular from the Superior General
Dedicated to the Cause of the Founder
Servant of God Father Peter Mary Mermier**



My beloved Confreres,

Greetings of peace and fraternal love to each one of you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and under the paternal protection of our Founder, the Servant of God Fr Peter Mary Mermier.

1. A Moment of Grace in the Journey of Our Founder's Cause

It is with a deep sense of joy, gratitude, and ecclesial responsibility that I write to you at this significant moment in the history of our Congregation. As we continue to journey in fidelity to the missionary vision and apostolic zeal of our beloved Founder, I am delighted to share with you the latest developments concerning the Cause for the Beatification and Canonisation of the Servant of God Fr Peter Mary Mermier. It was exactly one month ago on May 6, 2025, that we officially and juridically concluded the diocesan phase of the Cause of the Founder through a juridical and prayerful ceremony held at the Diocesan centre La Puya, Annecy, France.

We speak of a journey that began in 1987, now nearing forty years. This journey has been marked by moments of grace and seasons of challenge, by quiet perseverance and unexpected blessings. The path has not always been smooth for various reasons, but through it all, the flame of hope has never been extinguished. It was deeply moving to witness that moment: the closing session of the diocesan phase, a milestone that brings with it a sense of fulfilment, gratitude, and renewed purpose as we now prepare to move the cause to the Roman Phase.

We stand today at a privileged threshold, witnessing how God, in His own time and providence, is unveiling the sanctity and heroic virtues of our Founder through the journey of the Church's discernment. The recent years and months have seen notable progress in the Cause, the fruits of tireless labour, prayer, and collaboration, which have brought renewed life to our collective memory of Fr Mermier's holiness and missionary spirit.

Please find below some important information and instructions regarding the Cause of the Founder. Most of the following text has been prepared by Fr. Kulandaisamy Thomas, the Postulator, and I am very grateful to him.

2. A Brief History and Specific Details of those Involved in the Process

It is important to recognise that not only is the Cause historical and ancient, but the process itself is as well, as it spans nearly forty years. More details can be found in the documents included in the acts of the process, which trace the many significant stages of the Cause of Father Pierre-Marie Mermier.

First Phase

It has passed through mainly three major phases between 1987 and today. At each stage, different people were appointed to lead the process, and the required commissions were established to assist them. However, it must be acknowledged that some of these commissions, particularly those formed and individuals appointed before the publication of *Sanctorum Mater* in 2007, may not have fulfilled all canonical requirements perfectly, although they always remained faithful to the essence of their mission. One particularly noteworthy point is that there has always been great enthusiasm and undeniable zeal to advance the Cause. However, progress has not been consistent: there were periods of great effort and advancement, but also moments when everything slowed down for various reasons.

The first phase began in 1987 under the direction of Father Émile MAYORAZ (of revered memory), who served as Superior General for 24 years. In 1988, he was officially appointed Postulator. The process truly began with the appointment of theological censors in 1990 to examine Father Mermier's writings. In 1991, a historical commission was created to study his life and work. After due consultation with the bishops of ecclesiastical province of Lyon, under which comes the diocese of Annecy, and after proper scrutiny at the Vatican, the Holy See granted the *nihil obstat* in 1993, granting the [Prot N. 1907-I/93](#), thus allowing the Cause to proceed. However, after these initial successes, progress slowed in the years that followed.

Second Phase

The second phase began in 2001, when Mr Michel Galliker was appointed president of the diocesan tribunal to move the Cause forward. In 2002, Father Mayoraz was reappointed as Postulator, and the tribunal began collecting evidence. A renewed momentum was felt, and it seemed that the process was regaining pace. However, once again, various circumstances led to delays.

In 2008, the tribunal suffered another setback with the death of Sister Patricia Burns, a key member of the commission. She was replaced by Sister Marie-Chantal. At the same time, Father Agnelo Fernandes, successor to Father Mayoraz, proposed the appointment of Father Claude Morel as the new Postulator to revitalise the Cause. Despite these sincere and renewed efforts, the process continued to face obstacles and had still not reached completion, despite the goodwill and dedication of those involved.

The first volume of the acts of the process recounts the history of the Cause, the hard work of many individuals, and the challenges encountered. One of the main reasons for the delays lies in the complexity of the required canonical procedures, which some commissions did not fully master or appreciate. Additionally, frequent changes in personnel contributed to slowing the advancement of Father Mermier's Cause.

Third Phase

In 2016, a new attempt was made to move the process forward by the then Superior General, Father Abraham Vettuvélil, and his council. Father Yves Carron was appointed Postulator, while Father Thomas Kulandaisamy served as Vice-Postulator. Father Thomas played a key role in advancing the Cause, drawing on his expertise, having earned a doctorate in Canon Law from the Lateran University in Rome, as well as a diploma from the *Studium* on the Causes of Saints offered by the Dicastery. However, when Yves Carron was no longer serving as postulator, it introduced another layer of difficulty. Subsequently, in 2023, Father Thomas Kulandaisamy was appointed Postulator, and Father Samuel Thomas, MSFS, local Superior of the MSFS community in Annecy and Provincial Bursar, was appointed as Vice-Postulator.

Monsignor Yves Le Saux, the present bishop of the Diocese of Annecy, and his predecessors did everything they could to support and accompany the Cause over the years. Since taking office in 2022, Bishop Yves Le Saux has familiarised himself with the history and personally followed its development. It's a joy to see that we have now formally concluded the diocesan phase.

3. Reasons for the Delay in the Canonisation Process of Fr Peter Mary MERMIER

A. Historical Reasons

- a) The members of the Congregation were very few in number during its first century of existence. Of these few, some of the more enterprising were sent to India. They were fully engaged in the work of evangelisation (covering nearly a third of that vast country), separated from one another by enormous distances. Means of communication were limited, as were transport options (bullock carts for long distances). The difficulties of this kind prevented them from focusing on initiating the Beatification process of their Founder.
- b) The successor of Fr MERMIER, Fr GAIDDON, died very shortly after only two years as Superior General (1862–1864).
- c) The situation of the Congregation—both in Europe and in India—was too precarious for a project so costly in time and money to be considered. Priority was given to mission preaching (in Europe) and the mission of first evangelisation (in India).
- d) During the tenure of Fr Joseph TISSOT, as the Fourth Superior General between 1880–1894, tensions arose between the Bishop of Annecy and the Congregation. These serious tensions affected the relationship between the diocese and the two Congregations founded by Fr MERMIER: the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales and the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod. This certainly played a role in delaying the process.
- e) Added to these reasons is the expulsion of religious Congregations, ordered by the French government in 1903. It had negative consequences: financial problems and a weakening of the Congregation's structure (due to exile, for example, in neighbouring Switzerland and northern Italy).
- f) A final major reason: the outbreak of the two World Wars in 1914 and then in 1939. The Congregation paid a heavy price in both lives and finances. From then on, initiating the Beatification project was out of the question.

B. Why was there no Spontaneous Veneration?

- a) This absence of spontaneous veneration was partly due to the reasons mentioned above, and partly due to the fact that veneration could sometimes become an obstacle on the road to Beatification. In the 19th century—and even until three-quarters of the 20th century—veneration could be misunderstood as worship.
- b) It would have been difficult to prevent the faithful from engaging in exaggerated attitudes, which could have hindered the cause of Beatification.

C. Writings about Fr MERMIER

- a) The first Missionaries were French-speaking; thus, there were no writings in English about Fr MERMIER for a very long time, even as the Congregation was rapidly growing in India (and in England). This slowed the spread of knowledge—and therefore devotion—towards him.
- b) It was only after the work of Fr Adrien DUVAL, once he retired from his post as Superior General (in 1977), that the transcription of Fr MERMIER's writings made them more accessible in French. The typewritten version dates from 1987. Fr DUVAL also wrote a new biography of the Founder, published in 1982; it remains the standard reference and most authentic biography. It is entitled « *Pierre-Marie MERMIER 1790-1862, un disciple de St François de Sales, pionnier de la « mission pastorale » en Savoie* » (Gardet, Annecy). English translation was published by SFS Publications in 1985.

D. Opening of the Cause in 1990 and Further Delay

- a) The diocesan process to examine Fr MERMIER's cause was initiated in the Diocese of Annecy during the bicentenary of his birth in 1990. Bishop Hubert BARBIER responded to a request from Fr Emile MAYORAZ, Superior General at the time. Postulators from the Franco-Swiss Province were appointed. The bishop established a diocesan commission comprising theological censors and historical subcommittees.
- b) This tribunal met very rarely and did not complete its work. Nonetheless, we have inherited a good portion of the work it did accomplish: the report of the historical commission, for which certain updates were necessary (statistics for the two Congregations, institutions bearing Fr MERMIER's name, list of Superiors General of the Missionaries, etc.) and the theological report by Fr Théodule REY-MERMET. Due to the difficulties in how the diocesan Commission functioned, it was not possible for the bishop to issue the official decree required to conclude the process and move to the next stage at the "Roman Phase".
- c) Furthermore, the recognition of Fr Mermier's holiness did not meet with popular support in the area where he had lived and worked. There were few concrete efforts on the part of the Congregation in the Franco-Swiss Province to disseminate information about the holiness of Fr MERMIER and encourage people to pray through his intercession.
- d) Elsewhere in the Congregation, devotion to the holiness of Fr MERMIER and prayer through his intercession remained limited (restricted to within the Congregation and to local and provincial communities). People scarcely knew Fr MERMIER and his holiness, and did not pray through his intercession.
- e) Over the past twenty years, things have changed. The transfer of the mortal remains of Fr MERMIER (and of Bishop Pierre-Joseph REY) to the crypt of the Visitation in June 2007 brought new visibility to the Servant of God.

- f) In addition, one must mention the various efforts undertaken by Mrs Joëlle GHIGOMERMIER- the fourth generation niece of Fr Mermier, in connection with a few of her family members and the parish of Chaumont, to make the surroundings of Fr MERMIER's birthplace a place of remembrance, conducive to prayer and reflection.
- g) There is a "missionary fraternity," a group for sharing the Word of God within the local community of Chaumont, which has been named after Fr MERMIER. The website of the Diocese of Annecy also includes a section on Fr MERMIER, as does the website of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod. This allows for the periodic publication of some of the Servant of God's writings.

4. Report of the Closing Session for the Cause of Fr Mermier

On this sixth day of May in the Year of Our Lord 2025, Reverend Charles Bouvard, Episcopal Delegate, convened the tribunal and all the officials related to the cause of Fr. Mermier at 10.30 hours in the presence of the Bishop of Annecy, His Excellency Mgr Yves Le Saux, and Reverend Alain Fournier-Bidoz, duly appointed Promoter of Justice, for the Closing Session of the Diocesan Inquiry into the life, virtues, and holiness of Fr Mermier. Also present were Mrs Gisèle Ruph, Notary and Mme Claude BONNARDOT, Diocesan chancellor.

Also present were Fr Johnson KALLIDUKIL, the Superior General of the MSFS, Fr Jean Yves LE TUE MSFS, Provincial Superior of the Franco-Swiss Province, Fr John HEPUNI and Fr Scaria JOSEPH, Provincial Councilors of Franco Swiss province of the MSFS, Sr. Maryline DARBELLAY, Assistant Superior General of the Sisters of the cross of Chavanod, Sr. Maria D'MELLO SCC, Sr Jessy SEBASTIAN SCC, Provincial Superior of France Province of the sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, Sr. Medeleine MAYINGA, the Provincial Councilor of France Province, as well as other MSFS confreres and friends and guests from the diocese, and neighbouring parishes.

Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy MSFS, postulator of the diocesan phase, Fr Samuel Thomas, MSFS, vice-postulator, and Fr. Melkie Sadhek Selvaraj MSFS, copyist appointed for the Cause, were also present.

The session opened with a prayerful hymn. Fr Samuel Thomas MSFS, vice-postulator, formally welcomed the assembly, and led the session being the master of ceremony. All the aforementioned officials were then invited to take the oath, affirming that they had faithfully fulfilled their responsibilities, which was duly recorded by the notary.

Message of the Dignitaries

Bishop Yves Le Saux of Annecy then gave his message. The Bishop expressed his deep joy at the successful conclusion of this long and detailed work, bringing the diocesan phase to a close. He thanked the Congregation for their missionary presence in the diocese, recognising it as part of its spiritual heritage. He spoke of the great spiritual significance of such a process towards possible beatification. It is, he said, a call for the Congregation to delve more deeply into the charism of our Founder and return to the source of our vocation. Warning against the risk of losing its "first love," he emphasised that this process is not only historical but deeply spiritual. In a time of major societal shifts, similar to those experienced by St Francis de Sales, he noted how Fr. Mermier's life offers a powerful and timely model of missionary response to today's needs.

After this, Fr Johnson Kallidukil, Superior General of the MSFS, delivered his message. He said that the closing of the diocesan phase of the cause marked a profoundly meaningful milestone in a journey that began in 1988. He thanked God for His guidance throughout this

process and expressed gratitude to the Bishop of Annecy and his predecessors, the diocesan authorities, the Franco-Swiss Province, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, the postulator and vice-postulator, and all who contributed to the cause. He highlighted the enduring inspiration of Fr Mermier's life and apostolic zeal, affirming the full commitment and fervent support of the Congregation as the cause now enters its Roman phase.

Following this, Fr Jean Yves Le Tue gave his address. The Provincial Superior said that the closing session was a moment of great joy for the Franco-Swiss Province, the entire Congregation, and the local Church. He acknowledged the length and demands of the path that led to this memorable day, and offered thanks to all who had worked with dedication and love for the cause. He expressed hope that the heroic life of Fr Mermier may be recognised, bear fruit for the Church, awaken new vocations, and touch the hearts of the faithful.

Juridical Acts of Closing of the Diocesan Phase

Having heard the declaration of the Promoter of Justice that he had no objection to either the original acts or the copies of the process, Reverend Charles Bouvard, Episcopal Delegate, confirmed the integrity and authenticity of both the originals and the copies. He ordered that the original documents be deposited in the archives of the Diocese of Annecy and that the copies be sent to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints by the postulator, Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy, entrusted with the responsibility of being the Porter.

Fr Charles Bouvard, Episcopal Delegate, further ordered that three signed and sealed copies of the minutes of this session — signed by himself and the Promoter of Justice — be added to the original acts, and that their transcription and public copy be submitted to the Holy See, with their authenticity attested by the notary's signature and seal.

He also instructed that the signed and sealed minutes be preserved in the diocesan archives and not opened without the Bishop's express permission. Additionally, he directed that two authentic copies of the process, signed and sealed on the outer cover by the notary, be handed over to Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy, together with the envelope containing the accompanying letters.

At the invitation of the assembly, the postulator of the cause, Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy, pronounced the words of the oath, committing himself to faithfully carry out the responsibility as carrier and to deliver the dossier to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in Rome.

After the prayer for the glorification of Fr Mermier, the session formally concluded with a final hymn.

A Voluminous Work

What has been accomplished so far is nothing short of monumental. The original documents—the *Archetypes*—numbered ten full volumes, some of which contained numerous subdivisions. From these, the first authenticated copies, known as *Transcriptum*, were prepared. From the *Transcriptum*, a public copy was then made.

In total, 6,694 original pages were produced. When we consider the replication of these documents into three separate sets, the scale becomes 20,082 pages.

What Comes Next?

The next stage of the cause sees these boxes travelling to Rome, entrusted to the care of the Postulator. A Roman Postulator will then be officially appointed—a process that itself may take three to four months, as the Dicastery must first review and confirm the appointment submitted by the Superior General.

Once the Roman Postulator is in place, the process of validating the juridical elements begins. From there, work on the *Positio*, the single most significant document in this process, will commence, in collaboration with the Relator appointed for our cause. This will be presented to the Cardinals in *Congresso*, and ultimately, it will be the Holy Father who, upon recognising Fr Mermier's heroic virtues, may bestow upon him the title *Venerable*.

We deeply thank all who have walked with us thus far, and we now humbly ask your continued prayers for the team taking this cause forward, and for the grace to carry it to completion, for the glory of God and the honour of His servant, Fr Mermier.

Our Sincere Thanks

Our grateful thanks to Fr. Johnson Kallidukil for his gracious presence at the concluding session and for his deeply moving message, which reminded us once again of the spiritual depth and significance of this cause.

Our thanks also go to our former Superiors General—Fr. Abraham Vettuvélil MSFS, Fr. Agnelo Fernandes MSFS, and Fr. Emile Mayoraz MSFS (of revered memory)—whose conviction, dedication, and untiring efforts gave vital momentum to the cause during their respective terms.

Our thanks to the Bishop of Annecy and to his predecessors for their brotherly accompaniment and pastoral support over the years.

We are especially indebted to the Franco-Swiss Province for their support, particularly in financial matters, without which much of this work would not have seen the light of the day. A special word of thanks goes to Fr Jean-Yves Le Tue, whose constant, fatherly and fraternal accompaniment has been a true source of strength. To Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy, who has painstakingly, enduringly and patiently worked on the cause from the year 2016, To Fr Samuel Devaraj, Vice-Postulator, we owe a deep debt of gratitude. Fr Samuel's tireless dedication, leaving no stone unturned, made sure that every possible form of help and support was secured for the advancement of the cause.

We also gratefully acknowledge Fr Melky, whose role as copyist cannot be overstated. He worked day and night with great care over the past 6 months, photocopying, printing, checking, double-checking, stamping, and verifying 20,082 pages with such care and attention.

We wish to remember with deep appreciation all the officials who have laboured on this cause since its beginning in the 1990s. Much of their work has been meticulous, hidden, and often sacrificial—known perhaps only to God.

We owe deep gratitude to Mr Guy Rouat for his generous help and support in working through the French translations, a silent but truly significant contribution to the cause. Our grateful thanks to Bro Che Bertrand Ching MSFS for not only capturing the moments with his trusty photographic lens and sharp eye, but also for being our all-round fixer on the day—tripod in one hand, toolbox in the other!

(Report prepared by Fr. Thomas Kulandaisamy MSFS)

In summary, here is what transpired officially during the concluding ceremony

- 1) Monsignor Yves Le Saux, Bishop of Diocese of Annecy, took the oath of having faithfully carried out his duty.
- 2) Father Charles Bouvard took the oath of having faithfully carried out his duties as Episcopal Delegate.
- 3) Father Alain Fournier-Bidoz took the oath of having faithfully carried out his duties as Promoter of Justice.
- 4) Mrs Gisèle Ruph took the oath of having faithfully carried out her duty as Notary
- 5) Fr Thomas took the oath of having faithfully carried his duty as the Postulator.
- 6) Fr Samuel took the oath of having faithfully carried out his duty as the Vice-postulator.
- 7) Fr Samuel took the oath of having formally fulfilled his duties as Vice-Postulator.
- 8) Fr Melkie took the oath of having faithfully carried out his duty as copyist.
- 9) Monsignor Yves Le Saux, Bishop of the Diocese of Annecy, delivered his message.
- 10) Fr. Johnson Kallidukil MSFS, the Superior General, delivered his message.
- 11) Episcopal Delegate formally ordered the sealing of the boxes.
- 12) Fr Charles Bouvard, the Episcopal Delegate, signed the document of closure.
- 13) Fr K. Thomas signed to assume formally responsibility for the transfer of the dossier to Rome.
- 14) Fr Thomas, Fr Samuel and Fr Melkie closed the boxes before sealing them formally.
- 15) Monsignor Yves Le Saux, Bishop of the Diocese of Annecy, formally sealed the boxes.



All the officials of the Cause: From left to right: Fr Samuel Devaraj MSFS (Vice-Postulator), Fr Thomas K MSFS(Postulator), Fr Johnson Kallidukil MSFS (Superior General), Mrs Claude BONNARDOT (Diocesan chancellor), Mrs Gisèle Ruph (Notary), Monsignor Yves Le Saux (Bishop of Diocese of Annecy), Fr Jean Yves Le Tue (Provincial of Franco-Swiss Province), Father Alain Fournier-Bidoz, (Promoter of Justice), Fr Charles Bouvard (Episcopal Delegate), Fr Yobu Melkie Sadhek Selvaraj MSFS (Copyist).



All the officials, guests and friends who participated in the concluding session. The sealed Boxes contain the documents to be submitted to the Vatican.

5. The New Postulator in Rome

With effect from JUNE 1, 2025, the new Postulator for the Roman Phase is **Rev. Fr. William Antony Samy MSFS**. He is currently completing his doctoral studies in Canon Law at the Lateran University in Rome and pursuing a diploma from the *Studium* on the Causes of Saints, offered by the Dicastery. We wish him all the blessings and the spirit of perseverance in this sacred task.

Hereafter, **Fr. Kulandaisamy Thomas MSFS**, will serve as one of the external collaborators.

6. Guidelines for this Stage of the Cause: Certain Dos and Don'ts

A. What we can do and what we are encouraged to do:

- a) **Private Devotion:** You're warmly encouraged to pray the official Prayer for the Glorification of Fr Mermier and to share it with others. It's a wonderful way to ask for his intercession and to spread awareness of his life and mission.
- b) **Learning and Sharing:** Organising talks, discussions, seminars, or newsletter features about Fr Mermier's life and virtues is a great way to deepen our connection with him, and spread knowledge about him. We especially encourage everyone to read the book, 'Monsieur Mermier'—the most reliable biography available, written by Fr Adrien Duval, our former Superior General from 1965–1977 (cf. Adrien Duval, Monsieur Mermier, Founder of Two Religious Congregations, (Bangalore: SFS Publications, 1985).

Fr Mermier's letters are also rich in inspiration and ideal for spiritual reflection and sharing. You can explore a wealth of material on the website of the DeSales and Mermier Resource and Animation Centre: <https://www.dsmhyderabad.com/>

- c) **Sharing Testimonies and Graces Received:** If you or someone you know has received a grace or favour through the intercession of Fr Mermier—especially something that could be considered a radical or lasting miracle—please do get in touch with our Postulators:

Fr William Antony Samy (williamjoexavier@gmail.com / +917598 371 102)

Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy (thomaskmsfs@gmail.com/ +447593011710)

We are currently seeking such a miracle that could eventually help move Fr Mermier's cause forward to the next stage, towards being declared Blessed. While the official process for recognising a miracle can only begin after he is declared Venerable, there is no harm in gathering accounts in advance, especially as these valuable testimonies could easily be lost over time.

- d) **Display of Images with care and discretion:** It is fine to display photos, images, or icons of Fr Mermier in community rooms, corridors, libraries, or other public spaces outside of chapels or churches.
- e) **Intercessory Prayers:** Prayers asking for Fr Mermier's intercession can be included in private prayer settings and may also be gently included in the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass or during the Liturgy of the Hours, provided they are not styled as formal liturgical texts or specific feasts.

B. We Need to Refrain From:

- a) **Liturgical Celebrations in His Honour:** While the desire to honour Fr Mermier in the celebration of Mass or the Liturgy of the Hours is completely understandable, it's important to note that these liturgical celebrations are reserved for those who have been beatified or canonised. Any official liturgical texts—such as Collects, Prefaces, or specific Mass formularies—must be approved by the *Dicasterium de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum*, following a rigorous process of study, screening and scrutiny, which only takes place at the appropriate stage of the cause. Therefore, we kindly ask that Masses not be celebrated *in honour of Fr Mermier* and that specially composed prayers not be included in the liturgy at this time. (cf. *Sanctorum Mater*, Article 117 §1).
- b) **Inclusion in the Litany of the Saints:** Until beatification, Servants of God like Fr Mermier should not be included by name in the Litany of the Saints during liturgical celebrations. (cf. *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, paragraphs 244).
- c) **Public Veneration in Churches or Chapels:** Please refrain from placing statues or images or icons of Fr Mermier in chapels or churches for public veneration. This would constitute a formal ecclesiastical cult, which is only permitted after beatification. That said, this does not restrict private devotion or the natural spread of his reputation for holiness. (cf. *Sanctorum Mater*, Article 117 §2).
- d) **Public Liturgical Events in His Honour:** Organising special public liturgical services in his honour, such as Holy Hours or Vespers explicitly dedicated to him, should be postponed until his beatification.
- e) **Use of Titles like “Blessed” or “Saint”:** Until the Church officially declares him beatified, Fr Mermier should simply be referred to as ‘Servant of God.’ The next step would be the title Venerable, when heroic virtue is officially recognised.
- f) **Beautifying is deformation!:** Please do not use AI-generated images, digitally or manually manipulated photographs, or artificially enhanced representations of Fr Mermier in any context, whether for display in schools, places of apostolate, or in any of our communities. Avoid stylised reconstructions, speculative portrayals, or modern

reinterpretations that deviate from the historically recognised and traditionally accepted photographs and images of Fr Mermier.”

7. Our Expression of Sincere Gratitude

At this juncture, on behalf of the entire MSFS Family, I deem it most appropriate and indeed a sacred duty to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who have played key roles in this spiritual and historical mission.

We express our sincere and profound gratitude to **His Lordship, the Bishop of Annecy, Yves Le Saux**, and his predecessors for their steadfast support, spiritual leadership, and fatherly guidance throughout this process.

We also thank all diocesan officials whose meticulous work and dedication have made this phase fruitful and complete. Their openness and pastoral commitment have reaffirmed the deep bonds that unite us with the Church in the land of our Founder’s birth and early ministry. We are particularly grateful for their readiness to assist in the juridical and canonical processes at the diocesan level, and for their fraternal encouragement.

We owe a great deal to the **Franco-Swiss Province**. We could not have come this far without their genuine interest and support, both spiritually and materially. Thank you, dear brothers, for your unwavering encouragement and collaboration.

Our heartfelt thanks extend to the **Holy Cross Sisters**, whose partnership and prayerful presence have been a source of grace and solidarity. Their support has reflected the spirit of communion and shared mission that Father Mermier so deeply cherished. As you may recall, in recent years, we undertook two joint projects to disseminate the life and spirituality of our holy founder in collaboration with the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod.

Seven minutes with the Servant of God (video presentations – Reflections of the Word of God and the Life of Father Mermier, September 1 to 30, 2021)

and *Meditations with Father Mermier* (video presentations – Reflections on the life and teachings of Father Mermier, September 1 to 30, 2024).

Likewise, we are deeply grateful to the **Sisters of the Visitation in Annecy**, who continue to preserve the spiritual atmosphere of prayer and contemplation so cherished by St. Francis de Sales and inherited by Fr. Mermier. Their prayerful presence and generous hospitality have been a silent yet powerful force supporting the spiritual journey of this cause.

Now I come to some key persons whose decisions and policies were very crucial for the benefits we enjoy.

We remember with sincere gratitude the former Superiors Generals of recent times, namely **Very Rev. Father Emile Mayoraz MSFS** of happy memories, **Very Rev. Fr. Agnelo Fernandes MSFS**, and **Very Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil MSFS**. Despite the various challenges, they have manifested a great sense of purpose and spirit of perseverance in this matter.

I would like to express deep appreciation to **Rev. Fr. Kulandaisamy Thomas MSFS**, the Postulator of the Cause. With his commendable dedication and theological insight, Fr. Thomas has been consistently involved in the historical and theological aspects of the Cause. His scholarly contributions and patient perseverance in coordinating the documentation process

have been invaluable. Besides, his commitment to accuracy, ecclesial fidelity, and theological depth has helped greatly in shaping the dossier with clarity and conviction.

My sincere thanks also go to **Rev. Fr. Samuel Davaraj MSFS**, whose pastoral expertise and practical wisdom have been instrumental in navigating the procedural requirements laid down by the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints. His personal love and devotion to Father Mermier and the passion for the task given him, as the Vice Postulator, have been a source of inspiration and dedication, significantly contributing to the cause and deepening the Congregation's spiritual heritage.

I must also record our heartfelt appreciation for **Fr. Melkie Sadhek SELVARAJ MSFS** who, in his humble yet meticulous role as the copyist, ensured that every required document, report, and archival record was faithfully reproduced and preserved with utmost precision. His silent yet vital contribution reflects the spirit of hidden service, so dear to our Founder.

Dear Confreres, these developments in the Cause of our beloved Founder are not merely procedural milestones but opportunities for renewal. They call us to a deeper appreciation of our heritage and to a renewed commitment to live out the missionary spirit of Fr. Mermier with courage, humility, and zeal.

May this moment reawaken in us the burning desire of our Founder: *"I want Missions."* Let us continue to pray fervently for the successful advancement of his Cause and to live lives worthy of the great legacy we have received. May St. Francis de Sales, who was the inspiration, for Father Mermier continue to inspire and intercede for us. May Mary, the Mother of Sorrows, who accompanied our Founder in his most difficult moments, continue to accompany us every moment of our life and ministry.

With fraternal affection and gratitude,
Yours in Christ Jesus,



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

Rome, June 6, 2025

"We must always move forward with renewed confidence, knowing that we are doing God's work and that He will sustain it."

- Father Peter Mary Memier, Family Annals, April 27, 1855