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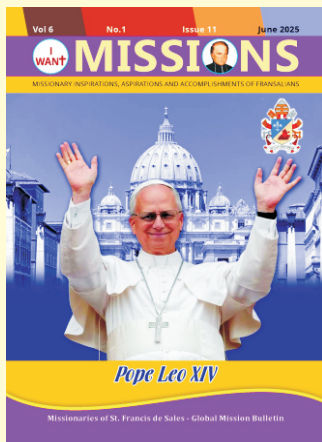
MISSIONARY INSPIRATIONS, ASPIRATIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FRANSALIANS



Pope Leo XIV

Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales - Global Mission Bulletin

TABLE OF CONTENTS



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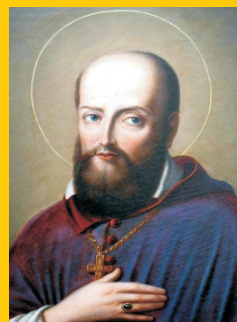
**"Real joy is never
without thorns and
without sacrifices."**

- Fr. Peter Marie Mermier

Page No.

Editorial	03
Message from the Superior General	04
A Farewell Tribute to Pope Francis	06
A Welcome Tribute to the New Pope	09
Cause of the Founder: A Journey of Incisive Phases	11
Mission beyond Boundaries	17
A Mission Revived and Restored	19
Mission that continues to Bloom and Blossom	22
Mission in Consolidation	26
Building a community of faith and upliftment	28
Called to Bloom where we are Planted	29
A 2000 Jubilee Gift	33
A shining Mission Rapture	35
Mission Young and Eager to Grow	37
Embracing the MSFS Charism and its Legacy	38
Youngest but Dynamic!	39
Tough but Grace is Enough!	40
A Powerhouse of Renewal	41
Mission with a Human Face on the Divine Race	43
The Power and Ignition	45
Mission : Diverse and Diversified	46

***"Have patience with all things,
But, first of all with yourself"
- St Francis de Sales***



Editorial...

Mission is our Lofty Legacy

My loving confreres and respectable readers,

Love and peace of the Lord!

This is the 11th issue of “I Want Missions” - the Bi-annual Global Mission Magazine, given birth in 2020, due to the gracious vision and dedication of the then general secretary for missions (now, the superior general), Rev Fr Johnson Kallidukil MSFS. The intent of the magazine was made very clear: “It is not merely placing news or information. It should communicate our charisma and charism.” It is not to glorify or sing laurels to any particular province as such. Rather, let the missions be known and glorified. Let God be glorified to the extent mission is glorified.

The runners may change but the race continues. The general secretary for missions got changed but the mission of torch-bearing continues. Thus we are once again determined and rededicated to continue this bi-annual mission magazine, in June and December respectively.

Obviously, the immediate purpose is to draw more attention and recognition for the missions, and thus become more familiar with our missions and missionary legacy. The eventual purpose is to rekindle fervour for missions. While at this stage, as a novice to monitor this mission magazine, I am not in a position to prescribe or lay down a certain criteria that determine the composition of the articles in this magazine, however, some broader parameters can be laid bare:

- a. These write ups will not be mere history or chronology of activities
- b. Rather, they will indicate the vision - mission plan of each mission
- c. The different ministries/activities that are operative and how they adhere and are faithful to our charism and legacy
- d. What are the challenges and constraints?
- e. What are the possible remedies and plans of action?

I am immensely grateful to Rev Fr Johnson Kallidukil, the Superior General, for his unbounded and magnanimous direction and encouragement, right from the beginning of this continued venture. Like a true father towards his child who is uncertain and unclear, he stood me strong and clear, with a commendable spirit of gentleness, patience and persuasion.

I am also personally thankful to all the provincial councillors for missions, who painstakingly took time and trouble to gather the mission write ups from their respective mission avenues. I should specially thank the Delegation superiors of both Chad Cameroon and Mozambique for their special contributions from their missions.

To each of the authors of the different articles that show a touch of clarity with enlightening ingredients and pleasant readability, I acclaim my profound appreciation.

May our small efforts, done with big hearts, become pleasing in God’s sight and bear abundant fruits of good works and God’s blessings!



Fr Thumma Mariadas Reddy MSFS
General Secretary for Missions

Message from the Superior General

The Missionary Legacy of Pope Francis

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Peace and grace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!



I greet you through the pages of "*I Want Missions*" with profound joy and renewed missionary zeal. This magazine is

more than a publication—it is a sacred echo of Christ's mandate, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). In this spirit, we find ourselves inspired and guided by the legacy of Pope Francis, a missionary disciple whose papacy has rekindled the Church's call to go forth.

From the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has urged us to move beyond the walls of comfort and familiarity. "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets," he wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security." These words challenge each of us to embody the mission with courage and compassion, embracing the peripheries—geographical, social, and existential.

In this light, "I Want Missions" becomes a vital instrument for formation and inspiration. It fosters a missionary culture that reflects the values Pope

Francis holds dear: proximity, mercy, inclusivity, and joy.

One of the striking features of Pope Francis's mission legacy is his insistence on synodality—a journey together. He encourages us to discern, dialogue, and walk with others, especially the young, indigenous peoples, migrants, and those at society's margins. As a missionary Church, we do not impose, but accompany; we do not conquer, but witness; we do not divide, but build bridges.

As we look forward, we must ask ourselves: What kind of missionaries are we called to be in today's world? Are we willing to be sent, even when the destination is unclear? Are we open to the Spirit's surprises, willing to speak new languages of love, inclusion, and healing?

With deep gratitude for all missionaries—lay and religious, young and old—who give their lives for the Kingdom, I offer my prayers and blessing. May "**I Want Missions**" continue to be a voice that calls, a light that guides, and a witness that encourages. My sincere thanks appreciation for **Fr Thumma Mariadas Reddy MSFS** the General Secretary for Missions and his team for bringing out this issue no. 11 of the magazine.

In Christ the first Missionary and the Leader of every mission...

Felicitations to the New Pope in the voice of the Superior General!

Most Holy Father, With deep filial affection and profound joy, I write on behalf of the 1,600 confreres of our congregation, present in 31 countries and serving in 211 dioceses around the world, to offer our heartfelt congratulations on your election as the Successor of St. Peter and the Vicar of Christ on earth. Thank you for accepting this sacred office.

We are very pleased to learn about your missionary background and extensive pastoral experience. Your life of service inspires us. We assure Your Holiness of our unwavering fidelity to the Holy See and our commitment to live and serve in full communion with the Church.

In the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, whose gentle strength, pastoral charity, and deep spiritual wisdom continue to guide our way of life, we renew our dedication to the Church's mission under your leadership. We also pledge to remain faithful to the missionary spirit of our Holy Founder, the Servant of God Father Peter Mary Mermier, whose zeal for souls and love for the Church continue to animate our apostolic endeavours.

Holy Father, please be assured of our continued prayers for you. May the Lord sustain you with the gifts of wisdom, courage, and peace as you shepherd the People of God in these challenging times. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, and our holy patrons always intercede for you. With filial devotion and deepest respect, I remain,

Very Rev Fr Johnson Kallidukil MSFS
Superior General



A Farewell Tribute to Pope Francis - Darling of the Masses!

- Fr Vincent Lourdu Swamy MSFS

This is a humble tribute to Pope Francis, a miracle, a magic and a memory to the Church.

It was a very memorable day and so still much fresh and alive in me. It was the Day of Canonisation of Mother Teresa of Kolkata on September 4, 2016.

What a joyful and serene feeling, to have this simple woman canonised as SAINT MOTHER TERESA OF KOLKATA. Yes, we had the Saint who lived among us in flesh and blood, in India, especially among the vulnerable, trying to give them a new human identity and dignity. I was among the priests to distribute communion at the celebration of the Eucharist. It was at that memorable event that I had the **'ah' and Wah'** experience, in my encounter with Pope Francis.

After the mass, I was just wondering if I would be able to meet and shake hand and take a picture with the Pope!. To my delightful surprise I saw him coming back with a bright and graceful smile, which is still fresh in me even today, towards the priests after removing the chasuble. I jumped and crossed over the chairs and tried to reach him

amidst the crowd of priests waiting eagerly to wish him and seek his blessing. Somehow, I managed to reach out my hand and clasped and squeezed his hand in excitement and then he cried **'ah'**, as he expressed pain due to the papal ring on his finger, which I had pressed by mistake. I sensed an odd feeling and at the same time a **Wah!** and a delightful experience in me.

I cherish that moment still, ever fresh and memorable one. His death reminded me of that beautiful experience of him, who was pleasantly smiling even with that pain of my touch.

Pope Francis has been Universally:

- A** Father Figure
- A** Religious par excellence
- An** All Embracing
- A** Noble Pope at Heart
- A** Cosmo centric
- An** Icon of Christ to the World, and
- A** Super Human by Life of Beatitudes

1. A Father Figure:

Jesus says 'Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect' (Mt.5:48). Though it appears to be a very impossible task and unimaginable dream to attain, Jesus throws open the possibility and the feasibility of becoming one, as perfect as himself, if not, at least we can set on the journey, as he says to the young man 'you are not far from the kingdom of God'(Mk.12:24). Pope Francis in his lifestyle showed us the way to be on the pilgrim journey of perfection. He was the Pope of the Peripheries, raising the dust to the state of cloud of rains, giving a new face and phase to those who lived in peripheries in all strata of life, and taking risks, at the cost of systems and giving a new thrust. 'New wine and New wine skins', making poorer into richer, as if he undertook the mission of Jesus as stated in his mission agenda "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, to give good news to the poor, to give liberty to the captives..." He became the father of the poor, for the poor and with the poor.

2. A Religious par excellence

A religious who found in everyone and in everything the face of God. His every encounter was a transforming experience to the other and to himself as well. There was an embrace of Joy he shared with everyone, young and old, sick and suffering, believer or non-believer, abled or differently abled. He

emanated wherever he went the sense and fragrance of Joy, of which he spoke to the religious 'wherever there are men and women religious, there is joy. In his Apostolic Exhortation 'Evangelii Gaudium' he speaks that all are called to be Easter people, alleluia people, filled with the Joy of Jesus Christ. Wherever he went he radiated joy, with his compassionate smile and laughter.

3. An All-Embracing:

He embraced everyone in his actions, thoughts, prayers, irrespective of religions, poor and rich. He was a universal phenomenon, who cared for every being in the universe. He was able to tolerate even the sinful, in the eyes of common man, following the personality of Jesus who said 'I have come for the sinners, not for the righteous.'

4. A Noble Pope at Heart:

His magnanimity of heart had no ill feelings for any. He invited the rich countries to open their hearts and doors to the millions of migrants and refugees who were forced to flee their homelands. He saw the misery of the people as a duty to reach out to them even at the cost of the possible discomforts. He pleaded for mercy to be shown to the people distraught, distressed, displaced, destroyed and disrespected. For him every human face was a divine face.

5. A Cosmo centric:

His heart went out for nature, animals and human beings, following his personal and papal patron and spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi. He regarded everything as God's special and unique creation of wonder and beauty. In his various encyclicals he expresses his special concern for cosmic ecology,

6. An Icon of Christ to the World :

The presence of world leaders, from all nations is a powerful witness that he had resembled his Master Jesus Christ, by his words and deeds. Very specially his concern for the poor was the spirituality of Jesus which he exercised in his travels and encounters with the marginalised. His love for the children was the epitome of Christ's love as expressed 'let the children come to me for theirs is the kingdom of God'.

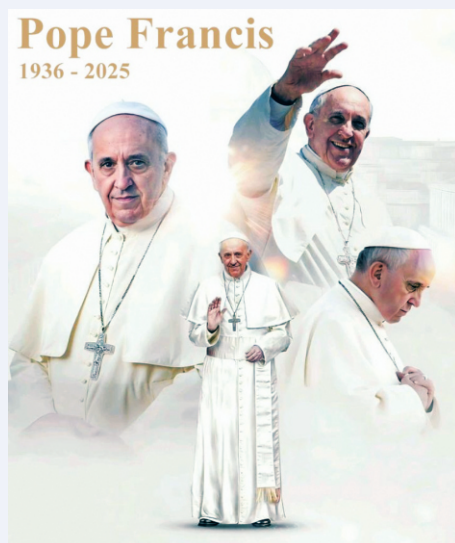
7. A Superhuman by Life of Beatitudes :

Pope Francis was a Pope of Beatitudes as he lived them all in all its richness. He was blessed among the poor by the simple life he lived and the way he received the poor everywhere. He mourned with those who mourned, very specially with people affected by wars and violence of all natures, which affected human lives. In his approach he was gentle towards even those who were bitter about him and he preached equal justice for all and expressed his painful concern when and where

justice was denied to people and even to other living beings. He was merciful, praying for forgiveness of the sins committed and showing mercy to people deprived of human dignity, punished and condemned. He had the purity of the heart of little and innocent children, loving all, accepting all, without any preference and discrimination. He was a beacon and messenger of hope and peace wherever he went. He carried the peace of the Risen Lord to all and everywhere 'PEACE BE WITH YOU'.

Pope Francis will remain as A Miracle, A Magic and A Memory to the Church and to the World.

May the Faithful (Francis) Rest Always In Creator, Jesus and Spirit.



A Welcome Tribute to the New Pope

In the One, We Are One : A Welcome Homage to Pope Leo XIV

– Fr Sudeep Paul MSFS

With hearts filled with joy and deep spiritual fervour, we, the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, extend a warm and reverent welcome to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, the newly elected Shepherd of the Universal Church. His election marks not only a specific moment of ecclesial history, but a turning point in the global missionary impulse of the Church—an impulse that resonates profoundly with the spirit of our Founder, Fr Peter Mermier, and the charism we carry forward each day: "I want missions."

As MSFS missionaries, committed to bringing God's love with humility, gentleness, and zeal, we recognize in Pope Leo XIV a leader who embodies these very qualities. His papacy, beginning with the humble motto "In the One, we are one," reflects a powerful ecclesiology of unity—not as uniformity, but as communion in diversity. His vision echoes our own: that the mission of the Church is not abstract doctrine, but incarnate love made visible in

community, compassion, and credible witness.

A Missionary Pope for a Missionary Church

Pope Leo XIV's journey to the papacy is itself a parable of proximity. He emerges not from behind ecclesiastical prestige, but from the margins—a servant who walked the flooded lanes of Peru, sharing meals with the hungry, listening to the broken, lifting the poor not from platforms, but from within their pain. His muddy boots and rolled-up sleeves have become the icon of his theology: one rooted in presence, proximity, and prophetic witness.

In his life, we see not only a pontiff but a missionary companion—a shepherd who does not lead from afar, but walks among his people. It is this authenticity that makes the Gospel credible again in a world often deaf to words but receptive to witness.

The Legacy of Leo XIII, Reimagined

By choosing the name Leo, the Holy



Father aligns himself with Pope Leo XIII, whose 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* became the foundation of modern Catholic Social Teaching. Pope Leo XIV now speaks into a new era of complexity—AI, climate change, economic disparity, cultural fragmentation—and offers the Church's wisdom as balm and beacon. Where Leo XIII defended the rights of workers with ink and intellect, Leo XIV defends human dignity through presence and touch, compassion and action. He does not merely quote tradition—he incarnates it. His vision is the Gospel with sandals on.

A Mirror to Our Missionary Identity

For the MSFS Congregation, Pope Leo XIV's life and leadership are not only inspirational but deeply affirming. His vision of Church—joyful, missionary, and incarnational—mirrors the call given to us by Fr Peter Mermier in post-revolutionary France: to rekindle faith, restore hope, and remain close to the people. Our missionaries, like Pope Leo XIV, serve in the margins—bringing Christ to those who have never heard His name, and witnessing through education, health care, interreligious dialogue, youth animation, and presence. In tribal villages, remote parishes, migrant communities, and urban slums, our confreres preach not just through homilies, but through lives shaped by simplicity, availability, and deep listening. We echo Pope Leo's

conviction that mission begins with encounter—not in conquest, but in communion.

Proclaiming the Gospel Through Presence

Across continents, MSFS priests serve in parochial ministry, offering pastoral care that touches daily life. Like Pope Leo XIV, they accompany people through joy and sorrow, celebration and silence—making the sacraments a space not of ritual alone, but of relational healing. Our mission preaching apostolate, too, is experiencing a renewed call. In an age wounded by secularism and disconnection, our parish missions, retreats, and spiritual renewal programs offer a return to God—not through pressure, but through gentle persuasion in the Salesian spirit. Like the Holy Father, we believe the Church must not only speak—but listen; not only correct—but embrace; not only send—but go.

Hope for a Church That Walks Together

In Pope Leo XIV, the Church finds not just a leader, but a bridge-builder—a pontifex in the truest sense. He does not shout reform, but lives it quietly, through proximity, mercy, and courageous humility. He reminds us that the world is not hungry for slogans—it is hungry for solidarity. As sons of St Francis de Sales, we find in Pope Leo XIV a soul companion in mission. He models what we are called

to become: missionaries who are first human, then holy; first present, then proclaiming. His life is a Gospel lived gently, radically, and joyfully.

A Pledge of Missionary Communion

As Pope Leo XIV begins his sacred ministry, we, the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales, offer our heartfelt homage and pledge. We commit to stand with him in building a

missionary Church that listens, walks, and witnesses, especially among the poor and the forgotten. His papacy is not just a new chapter—it is a missionary impulse for our time.

Holy Father, we welcome you with open hearts.

In your passion for mission, we see the path we were born to walk.

In the One, we are one.

Cause of the Founder : A Journey of Incisive Phases A Strenuous Project that persists

Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy MSFS, JCD

Postulator for the Cause of Fr Mermier, Diocesan Phase

REASONS FOR DELAY¹

In the pages that follow, we take a closer look at why the beatification process for Fr Peter Mermier took so long to get off the ground. There's no single reason, it was a mix of historical circumstances, practical limitations, and shifting priorities within the Congregation. These notes walk us through those challenges: from the early missionary days in India, to wars and misunderstandings, to the lack of wider devotion or awareness outside the Congregation. But they also point to signs of hope, recent efforts, both local and inter-national, that are helping to rekindle interest in Fr Mermier's life and holiness.

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



¹ Reasons for delay are all compiled from the acts of the dossier submitted to Rome, themselves transmitted to us through Fr Antony Mookenthottam, Fr Claude Morel, Fr Émile Mayoraz, Fr Yves Carron, and Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy.

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 question.

Why was there no spontaneous veneration?

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. It would have been difficult to prevent the faithful from engaging in exaggerated attitudes, which could have

hindered the cause of Beatification.

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 is the green book, published by SFS Publications in 1985.

Opening of the Cause in 1990 and Further Delay

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 set up a diocesan commission made up of theological censors and historical sub-committees.

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".

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.

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.

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.

In addition, one must mention the various efforts undertaken by Mrs Joëlle GHIGO-MERMIER- 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.

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.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROCESS

These pages offer a concise overview of the long and complex journey of the Cause of Father Pierre-Marie Mermier. It is important to recognise that not only is the Cause historical and ancient, but the process itself as well, as it spans to nearly 35 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 Mermier.

Three Major Phases

The Cause 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.

First Phase

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.²

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

2 The first volume of the acts of the process recount 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.

over the years. Since taking office in 2022, Bishop Yves Le Saux familiarised himself with its history and personally followed its development. It's a joy to see that we are now close to concluding the diocesan phase.

CONCLUDING SESSION AT THE DIOCESAN PHASE

6th May 2025 saw the light of day with the closing session of the diocesan phase, after perhaps wandering in the canonical wilderness for forty years. On this joyful and solemn occasion in Annecy, Reverend Charles Bouvard, Episcopal Delegate, presided over the final session in the presence of Bishop Yves Le Saux, with tribunal officials, MSFS priests, Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, and guests from the diocese and neighbouring parishes. Messages of gratitude, reflection, and encouragement were shared by the Bishop, the Superior General, and the Provincial Superior, each recognising the spiritual and historical depth of the process. The formal juridical acts were carried out with due solemnity, the integrity of the acts and copies was confirmed, and the sealed documents were entrusted to the postulator, Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy, who took the oath to deliver them to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in Rome. The session concluded with a hymn and prayer, marking a milestone filled with both reverence and rejoicing on the journey toward Fr Mermier's possible beatification.

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 sub-

divisions. 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 Congress, 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 Grateful Thanks

Our grateful thanks to Fr Johnson Kalidukil for his gracious presence at the concluding session, and for his deeply moving message that reminded us once

again of the spiritual depth and significance of this cause.

Our thanks go also to our former Superiors Generals—Fr Abraham Vettuvellil 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.

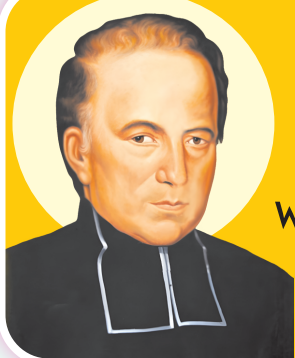
We are especially indebted to the Franco-Swiss Province for their support, particularly in financial matters, without which much of this work would not have seen the light of the day. A special word of thanks goes to Fr Jean-Yves Le Tue, whose constant, fatherly and fraternal accompaniment has been a 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 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 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 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!



**"Fear is the beginning of wisdom.
Happy is the servant
who lives constantly in fear of God."**

- Fr. Peter Marie Mermier

Mission beyond Boundaries

Saint Daniel Comboni Parish, Chad

- Fr Madjita Tanibe Anniversaire Joseph MSFS



The Republic of Chad is a land locked country in North Central Africa. The Country got its name from Lake Chad. Chad achieved independence in 1960 but has had decades of civil war, resulting in political instability and a slow economic development. It has been 25 years since South West- India province took up the challenging missions in Chad and Cameroon. We are incredibly proud of both where we began and where we now stand. The growth of Chad Cameroon mission is a miracle, a God's miracle for His people. We do believe our success can be uniquely attributed to the blessings of God and the full support of the MSFS congregation, the total commitment of our confreres who devote themselves entirely to our beloved mission. Chad-Cameroon Mission is an icon of pride and of missionary dynamism of MSFS Congregation. It affirms our commitment to our missionary tradition and legacy.

In this issue we would like to introduce you to one of the most challenging MSFS missions in Chad-Cameroon Delegation, Namely Saint Daniel Comboni Parish Doba, in the diocese of Doba, Chad.

The Saint Daniel Comboni parish is located in the diocese of Doba in the southern part of Chad, stands as a significant spiritual beacon in the region, welcoming countless worshippers and nurturing a deep sense of faith among the local community. Primary evangelization was done by Combonian

Missionaries. This church is named after Saint Daniel Comboni, founder of Combonian missionaries a prominent missionary and bishop who dedicated his life to the evangelization of Africa. His moto was evangelization of Africa by Africans. His vision was to bring the message of the Gospel to Africa through education, healthcare, and the establishment of local Christian communities. This parish serves not only as a place of worship but also as a vital centre for community activities, spiritual growth, and outreach programs.

The parish took its roots around 1997 and includes 6 basics ecclesial communities in the city and 2 sectors on the Doba - Koumra axis. Parish has 68 catechists who are helping the communities. The statistics are approximate, especially with regard to the number of Christians, but gives us an idea of the place of catholic Christians in the city and in the sectors growing well. Every year we registered more than 200 baptisms during Easter celebration.

This parish was entrusted to MSFS in 2009. Frs Scaria Joseph, Robin Mathew and Sandeep Tirkey rendered service in this parish as parish priests. Frs Giridhari Lakra, Boban Jose, Parfait Ayissi, Francis Ekka, Boris Nixon and Abba Chrysostom rendered service as assistant parish priest.

During the tenure of Fr. Scaria, a college was built and it has become one of the leading educational institutes in Doba

district. Fr. Robin Mathew worked hard for the construction of a mighty multipurpose hall which has a capacity for 4000 people. Every Sunday the Holy Eucharist is celebrated in this hall and around 2000 faithful participate for the most holy Eucharist. At present MSFS fathers MADJITA TANIBE Anniversaire Joseph (Parish Priest), and Robin Joy (Assistant Parish Priest) are rendering their service in this parish.

The Saint Daniel Comboni Parish Church is not just a physical structure; it is a vibrant community. People gather regularly for Mass, everyday adoration, prayer meetings, baptisms, weddings, and other sacraments are regularly administered. The church plays a crucial role in providing education, spiritual nourishment and creating a sense of belonging among the parishioners. We have the support of the congregation of the auxiliaries' sisters.

With contribution of the faithful and benefactors, the parish experienced an infrastructure, human and spiritual boom. Today, Saint Daniel Comboni parish represents an important pillar of the faith in the diocese.

As a conclusion Missionaries of Saint Francis de Sales, we have done a lot but we have to do more specially to deepen the faith in the life of the young and small. They have to value more for Christian family and live it among the various challenges like tribal customs, from the false doctrine of many sects and the attractions of the modern materialistic society. We have to make them proud about their Christian identity through self-sufficiency in all the aspects of their life, in education, social work etc.

- **Location:** Doba, southern Chad, within the Diocese of Doba
- **Founded:** Around 1997
- **Mission:** Spiritual growth, community activities, and outreach programs
- **Named after:** Saint Daniel Comboni, a prominent missionary and bishop who dedicated his life to evangelizing Africa
- **Structure:** 6 basic ecclesial communities in the city and 2 sectors on the Doba-Koumra axis
- **Catechists:** 68

Saint Daniel Comboni's Legacy

- Dedicated his life to evangelizing Africa
- Focus on education, healthcare, and establishing local Christian communities.

A bird's eye view of the Comboni mission:

1. Full name of the parish: St Daniel Comboni Parish, Doba
2. Name of the diocese: diocese of Doba, Chad
3. Country: Chad
4. Area of the parish: in the town
5. Total population of the area: 98568
6. Number of Catholics: 3747
7. Number of substations: 12 there are villages
8. Number of Centers: Two (2)
9. Distance of the farthest substation from parish center: 15 kms
10. Distance to the nearest MSFS community 30 kms from Bero and 3 kms from Gaki
11. Distance from diocesan center to parish 1 km

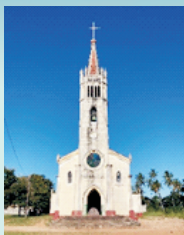
12. Local language spoken in the area: Ngambay and Mongo
13. Number of baptisms during last one year: 232
14. Number of marriages during last one year: 9
15. Number of priests serving in this parish: 3
16. Number of catechists in this parish: we have catechism teachers in every community. There are 68 catechists
17. Number of Schools: 2, ECA Comboni and lycée collège Comboni
18. Number of boys' home: 0.

A MISSION REVIVED AND RESTORED

Saint Anthony's Mission: Mavila Mozambique

- Fr Henry Nedumkallel MSFS, Delegation Superior

A Wounded History



Nestled among the gentle hills of Inhambane province, the Mission of Saint Anthony in Mavila is one of the oldest Catholic mission stations in the diocese of

Inhambane, Mozambique, founded on 20th May 1939. Once a flourishing pastoral and educational center under the Franciscans, the Mission's spiritual and physical infrastructure bore the deep scars of the civil war. The missionaries had to flee, the residence was mined and abandoned, and the once-vibrant mission plunged into decades of neglect. Government and military occupation of mission structures led to further deterioration.



Though the mission was once abandoned for nearly 30 years during and after the civil war, the re-entry of missionaries - especially the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS) since 2007 - has marked a period of re-evangelization and holistic renewal.

Bells of Revival

At the heart of Mavila's revival lies a clear and compelling missionary vision: to restore the faith and dignity of human life in communities that have suffered the wounds of civil war, poverty, and religious fragmentation. The Fransalian mission plan is anchored in pastoral proximity, liturgical vibrancy, formation of laity, and integration of social and educational services into the evangelizing mission of the Church. It is a mission that seeks not only to rebuild buildings and institutions but to renew people and restore a sense of community rooted in the Gospel.

A Testimony to our Missionary Commitment



One of the defining features of the Mavila Mission today is its commitment to a multi-dimensional pastoral ministry. The missionaries have focused their energy on re-evangelizing a scattered and weakened Catholic population, many of whom had drifted into other denominations or become religiously indifferent after decades of

unrest and the deep influence of communism, fruit of the independence and civil war. The mission is now divided into four pastoral zones, comprising twenty-five sub-stations. Each sub-station is led by local animators, local council and catechists formed by the missionaries. Eucharistic celebrations are held regularly in each community, along with catechism classes, family visits, marriage preparation, youth animation, and community gatherings.

Building Lay Leadership



The emphasis is on building strong grassroots leadership and encouraging lay leadership of the faith. Formation of the laity is central to Mavila's approach. Catechists are

carefully prepared to accompany the faithful in their Christian journey, and young people are mentored to become future leaders of their communities. Christian marriage, which is still not widely embraced, is promoted with pastoral patience, catechesis, and personal accompaniment. Retreats, family counselling, and youth encounters are organized to foster deeper understanding of the sacraments, moral values, and Christian discipleship. The missionaries are not merely administrators—they are shepherds who walk with the people in their daily struggles and joys.

A Base for Initial Formation

Mavila has also distinguished itself as a centre of formation for future missionaries. In 2017, a seminary was established to house aspirants who enter religious life at the initial stage. The formative program here focuses on the integral development of the candidate—spiritually, intellectually, psychologically, and communally. Special

attention is given to the basics: English language, grammar, phonetics, personal discipline, and the fundamentals of Salesian Spirituality. The goal is not merely to educate but to form humble, competent, and committed missionaries who embody the charism of St. Francis de Sales.

Mission with a Social Face

The mission also integrates social apostolate into its pastoral vision. A kindergarten has been set up to provide basic education and nutrition to children in the area. A small health centre and maternity service adjacent to the church offer basic healthcare to local families, complementing the mission's efforts in human dignity and care for life. Borewells have been dug in various villages to provide clean water, addressing one of the community's most pressing needs. The mission is also home to community outreach programs for women, including spiritual accompaniment, literacy support, micro saving system to help kids and families to save money to help academic expenditure and teach kids to save and training families in livelihood skills.

However not without Struggles and Challenges



But Mavila has not been without its challenges and trials. Security has been a serious concern. The missionaries were once violently attacked and robbed in their own residence—a traumatic event that could have led many to abandon the mission. Yet the Fathers remained, since then, security has remained a concern.

Fear of attacks often restricts the movement of the fathers after sunset. The region remains prone to malaria. The geographical conditions further complicate mission work. Most of the roads leading to the sub-stations are unpaved and extremely sandy, making them almost inaccessible. The lack of reliable transportation severely limits mobility and delays pastoral outreach. Despite these logistical and safety challenges, the missionaries continue with steadfast dedication, choosing to remain with the people through adversity. Many chapels in the sub-stations are still built from reeds or are dilapidated, demanding reconstruction. Societal attitudes towards marriage, catechetical discipline, and sacramental commitment continue to pose obstacles to full ecclesial life.

But with Hope that never Relents



Despite these obstacles, the mission's outlook is filled with hope. Plans are in place to build permanent chapels in sub-stations, intensify catechetical instruction across all age groups, and introduce regular

adult faith formation programs. The missionaries are working toward increasing the number of civil and sacramental marriages and deepening the understanding of the Eucharist and family life among the faithful. The new church built in Zandamela was blessed in 2024 and is being considered for future bifurcation of the parish. This same zone was declared a diocesan pilgrimage center under the title of Our Lady of Graces and Travelers, with annual pilgrimages held in May, drawing people from various parts of the diocese.

Looking to the future, concrete steps have already been taken toward long-term



growth and sustainability. Land has been secured for the construction of a novitiate. Adjacent to this, space has also been designated for a common Fransalían

cemetery. Furthermore, plans are already underway for the construction of a new kindergarten at the Mavila market area. A plot has already been acquired for this. The work of registering various church lands and construction of new chapels and integrated kindergarten in two more sub-stations are underway. In collaboration with the local district government a local fruit acquiring plant and marketing facility is in the planning level, to ease the farmers around to help sell the oranges, mangoes, coconuts etc., to form and function as a co-operative society which will be centered on the local community and trained and managed by themselves. Thus, empowering the local community in community building, harnessing their better future, to stop the exodus of youth in search of better conditions.

A Missionary Frontier fully Alive!

All these initiatives reflect a mission that is alive, growing, and ever responsive to the pastoral and social needs of the people. What defines Mavila today is not merely its historical legacy but its current witness—a missionary presence that brings together the Gospel, human dignity, community leadership, and deep-rooted hope. In every baptized child, every reconciled family, every trained catechist, and every aspirant discerning his vocation, the fruits of the mission are made visible. Mavila is no longer an abandoned outpost of the past. It is a prophetic sign of the future. A missionary frontier where the Church is alive, where vocations are born, and where God's grace is tangibly at work through the hands and hearts of His servants.

MISSION THAT CONTINUES TO BLOOM AND BLOSSOM

Kadgaon - Gauthan Mission, Sindhurg Diocese

- Fr Nazareth D'Silva MSFS

A mission history in evolution

The Milagris Parish was spread out in three Talukas of Kolhapur District, i.e Bhudargad, Kagal and Radhanagri, in radius of about 80 kms. The Milagris Parish was known as "**Saat Vaddeanchi Igroz**" (the Parish of seven Villages). The History tells us that the Catholics of Milagris Parish were migrated from Bardez, i.e the northern part of Goa, around 350 years ago. In the early times the Priests came from Goa once in a year to fulfil the pastoral needs of the faithful of Milagris Parish. In spite of being deprived of regular pastoral needs, the people of Milagris Parish kept their Catholic faith alive by recitation of prayers in the Family. They were used to **Konkani Liturgy** before they migrated to this place. Till today they have kept the Liturgy of the Holy Mass and Prayers in Konkani, although the official Language of the place is **Marathi** in Kolhapur District. Many years later, the Diocese of Poona looked after the pastoral needs of these people. The Priests began to reside in **Gauthan Mass-Centre** and catered to the Pastoral needs of other Mass-Centres. Finally, the Milagris Parish was officially established as a full-fledged Parish of the Diocese of

Poona in 1950 and the Chapel of Gauthan was declared as the main Church for the seven Mass Centres, i.e **Gauthan, Kadgaon, Tambale, Donwade, Shengaoon, Murgud and Bachani**.

A Historic Moment: Entrustment to the Missionaries

In 1992 the Milagris Parish, with it's seven sub-centres was entrusted to the pastoral care of **Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales of Pune Province**. With the arrival of MSFS Missionaries in Milagris Parish, people were given regular Sunday Mass and other pastoral needs. The Main Mass-Centre, Gauthan was not convenient for all the Parishioners to reach out to the Parish office easily. With the arrival of MSFS Missionaries, the Parish office was shifted from Gauthan to Kadgaon, while Gauthan remained as main Church. The Parish Priest began to reside in Kadgaon, since the Parish office was shifted to Kadgaon. Till today the Parish office of Milagris Parish remains in Kadgaon and Parish Priest also resides in Kadgaon. From the very arrival of MSFS Missionaries in Milagris Parish, equal importance was given to the Pastoral needs of the people as well as Social work in all the Sub-Centres. Besides the Pastoral

care of the Catholics, Confreres are involved in social work among the Catholics and Non-Christians.

A Reallocation

In the year 2003, the Bishop of Poona took away two Mass-Centres from Milagris Parish - ***Murgud and Bachani*** - due to the vast distance from Kadgaon-Gauthan. Since then till today the MSFS Confreres continue to work in Five Mass-Centres, i.e Gauthan, Kadgaon, Tambale, Donwade and Shengaon. In the year 2014 Gauthan and Kadgaon were made two separate MSFS Communities. Milagris Parish continues to be undivided with Five Mass-Centres but the ***Priest-in-charge*** is appointed for Gauthan Mass-Centre to take care of Gauthan, Adsolwadi and Halechiwadi. The Parish Team continues to reside in Kadgaon and takes care of the remaining sub-Centres. Today, when we speak about ***Kadgaon-Gauthan Mission*** - it includes along with Gauthan other Sub-Centres- i.e ***Tambale, Kadgaon, Donwade, Karadwadi, Shengaon and Gargotti.*** Our MSFS Confreres from Gauthan are involved with Social and Pastoral activities, whereas Kadgaon Community is entrusted with two-fold Apostolates - Pastoral and Educational.

Pastoral Apostolate

MSFS Community Gauthan takes

care of Pastoral needs of Gauthan, Adsolwadi and Halechewadi Sub-Centers, while MSFS Community Kadgaon takes care of the Pastoral needs of sub-centres - Tambale, Kadgaon, Donwade, Karadwadi, Shengaon and Gargotti. The community members celebrate regular Sunday Masses in all the Mass- Centres and regular weekday Masses in Gauthan and Kadgaon.

Kadarwadi and Gargoti Centres do not have a Chapel. In these two Centres Holy Mass is celebrated in private houses. Besides catering to the Pastoral needs of the people, the community members visit the Families and join with them in their family events.

Monthly Retreats in Kadgaon-Gauthan Mission

Besides regular pastoral activities in Kadgaon-Gauthan Mission, both the Mass Centres have begun Monthly Retreats in Gauthan and Shengaon Centres, for the spiritual renewal of the faithful. A number of faithful from Kadgaon-Gauthan Mission attend regular monthly Retreats in Gauthan as well as in Shengaon.

Social Apostolate

Gauthan Community is officially involved in social activities like Medical Camps for the poor villagers. VSSS Social Trust under the leadership of Gauthan Community is doing social work.

In July 2019 our Shengoaon Parishioners had to face natural calamity-Flood.

In the Flood Waters 11 Catholic Houses from Shengoaon Mass-centre were destroyed. Under the Pastoral care of MSFS Community Kadgaon, with the help of the Province, Diocese and individual contacts, MSFS Community Kadgaon, was able to help these Parishioners with House-Building Materials. Some Houses are still under construction. From March 2020, due to Lock-down in Covid 19, many of our Parish people who were working in Mumbai- Pune- Goa, Kolhapur City and Abroad have come back home. They have lost their jobs. On Parish level, with the help of Province and other well wishers, MSFS Community Kadgaon distributed grains to poor families in the Parish. We are trying our best to help the poor Families in their needs as and when it is possible for us.

Education Apostolate

The Milagris Parish Gauthan celebrated it's Golden Jubilee in May 2000. As a Golden Jubilee commitment, the MSFS Missionaries of Pune Province started an English Medium School in Kadgaon sub-centre in the year 2005. MSFS Community Kadgaon is entrusted with Education Apostolate. The community members take care of St. Francis De Sales School, Tirwade. This

School is mainly run for the poor. Thanks to the dedicated services of the teaching and non-teaching Staff of SFS School, Tirwade. Sincere thanks to the Province Administration of that time for taking an important decision to start the School in Kadgaon Mission. This was the dream of the people of Milagris Parish from many years. MSFS Missionaries were able to fulfill this dream of the people. The Students - irrespective of cast and religion - come to study in this school. From the very beginning of the 1st Batch of SSC, the School has achieved 100% SSC Results and it is continued till today.

Presence of Holy Family Sisters in Kadgaon-Gauthan Mission

To mark the occasion of the Golden Jubilee, in the year 2001 the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth were invited by Bishop Alwyn Barreto, the Emeritus Bishop of the Diocese of Sindudurg, to work in Kadgaon-Gauthan Mission. They reside in Tambale and give their Pastoral services to the sub-centres of Kadgaon-Gauthan Mission. Last 24 years the Holy Family Sisters are involved in pastoral activities in all the sub-centres. As source of their livelihood, they are teaching in St. Francis De Sales School, Tirwade, in Preprimary and Secondary section. All these years they were residing in

Parish House Tambale. Now they have built a home for them- HOLY FAMILY CONVENT, TAMBALE.

Our Vision

To help the Catholic community of this Mission area, to build a Society of compassionate human-beings, with a special identity and Chrism of MSFS, spiritually enlightened and committed to follow Jesus, based on the values, lived and taught, by Jesus Christ, the King of the Universal Church.

Our Mission

To provide spiritual assistance in order to strengthen and motivate those entrusted to our care. To foster the love of God and the love of Neighbors through various activities. To imbibe the virtues of gentleness, compassion, optimism and Leadership. To provide faith formation of all. To provide opportunity to the Youth to develop God-given Talents and thus make an healthy community of faithful.

New Initiatives undertaken

Through Family Visits the people are motivated to attend daily Mass or at least Sunday Mass, Youth being organized to come together and do the Church work. Women take weekly turns to clean the Church. People are given the sense of belonging to the Centre by involving them in parish activities, sending the

youth for youth Programmers, when organized on the Diocesan or Deanery level.

Future Plans and proposals

- ◆ To start Pre-Primary Section in Shengaon/ Gargoti as it is already running in Tambale.
- ◆ To start Primary Section or CBSE School in Gargoti.
- ◆ To start Std XIth and XIIth in Kadgaon/Gargoti.
- ◆ To build New Church in Tambale.
- ◆ To renovate the Chapels in Donwade and Shengaon.
- ◆ To build prayer Halls in Karadwadi and Gargoti.
- ◆ To protect the properties at Tambale, Kadgaon and Gargoti.
- ◆ A number of Priests and brothers have worked in Milagris parish.

Present members:

MSFS Community Kadgaon - Fr. Nazareth D'Silva, Fr. Pradeep Kumar T., Fr. Rajkishore Kindo.

MSFS Community Gauthan - Fr. Vicky Mendes, Fr. Joseph Malayil, Deacon Nelson.



*"There is nothing
small in the service of
God."*

- St. Francis de Sales

MISSION IN CONSOLIDATION

Bara Durgapur Mission, Nagpur Province

- Fr Vinsent Minj, Parish Priest

Mission in its Historical process

Bara Durgapur Mission was part of the Immaculate Conception Church, Mundli of Dumka Diocese, Jharkhand. Fr Peter Souvari constructed a building to cater to the pastoral needs of Catholics. Later it became St Teresa Mass Centre and St Teresa School. For a few years the centre was entrusted to the Sisters of Don Bosco. Jesuit priests from Mundli used to come to Bara Durgapur to celebrate mass once a month.

Mission undertaken by the MSFS

In 2014 at the request of Bishop Julius Marandi of Dumka Diocese, the Provincial Administration of Nagpur Province decided to take over the mission in 2015. The first MSFS were Fr Selbester Xalxo and Fr Henry Peter. They stayed for six months in Mundli. Later, they lived in a rented house which was close to St Teresa Middle School, Bara Durgapur. They built the present priests' residence in the school campus. In the beginning the liturgical services were conducted under a tree which is still on the school ground. They started catering to the pastoral, liturgical and educational needs of the people in five sub-centres and twenty villages. After the transfer of Fr Henry Peter, Fr Rakesh joined Fr Selbester Xalxo. They were followed by Fr Cyprian Dungdung, Fr Anto Thomas and Deacon Lalji. Hostel

facilities for boys were made available for those who came from far. The Santhals are very poor and so the students who come here to study are not able to contribute for their studies and other expenses.

Mission growing from strength to strength!

Fr. Joseph Kailamangalam was appointed to the mission in 2017. He had a clear plan for the mission. He invited the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity, Ghaziabad Province (CSC) to collaborate in our mission. Three sisters joined the mission in 2017 to take care of the girls in the school, the hostel and to assist in the pastoral works. Fr Joseph changed the name of the school to St Francis de Sales School. By his untiring hard work Fr Joseph was able to increase the number of students in the school. He built a new school building and girls' hostel cum convent. He also raised the school to class 10th. The school has yet to obtain recognition from the local Education Department. The locals feel happy and proud as our school insists on discipline, proper care of students, a high standard of teaching and promotion of human values and Salesian virtues.

During his long tenure, Fr Joseph was assisted by Fr Arul Raj, Fr Vinayanand, Fr Roshan Tigga, Fr Deepak Baa, Fr Sanjay Lakra, Br Ruben, and Br Bimal Tirkey.

Missionary ignition continues!

Fr Vinsent Minj took charge of the mission from 1st October 2024. He is assisted by Fr Sanaj Lakra, Fr Viraj Minj and Br Prasant Barla.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the MSFS confreres distributed ration kits to the people in twenty villages. It was indeed a great humanitarian service rendered to the needy. Though for a few months the spiritual activities and classes were not possible on account of Government restrictions, we maintained a good rapport with the students and the Catholics, and encouraged them in all ways possible. Later education of the students was held under the trees in their own villages, under guidance of some teachers; bags and books were freely distributed.

The Eucharist, Adoration, Rosary and other liturgical activities, meetings, celebrations and cultural activities were conducted in the school hall till the new church was constructed. Daily the spiritual activities of the hostellers are well taken care of. Feasts like the New Crop, Christ the King, Christmas and Easter are celebrated in a grand manner.

At last, a new Church!

On 31st November 2024 Our Lady of Compassion Church, a long-standing need, was inaugurated by Bishop Julius Marandi. On the same day he laid the foundation stone of the new school building. Since the Catholic population has been increasing, moral standards

are picking up and many marriages have been rectified and people are being strengthened in the faith.

Challenges to the Mission

1. Lack of infrastructural facilities in the main centre as well as in the mass centres
2. Overcoming poverty by meeting the basic needs of the students
3. Building up the grasping ability of the students
4. Helping students to develop creative skills
5. Mastering of the Santhal language is a big difficulty faced by the priests
6. Faith formation of the Santhals is a very tedious job
7. Tremendous difficulties in reaching the mass centres that are in the forests and on the mountains

Strategies for effective Mission

1. Visiting of families
2. Conducting catechism classes in groups
3. Teaching of prayers and hymns
4. Teaching of correct liturgical practices
5. Motivational classes for the youth
6. Teaching of the importance of the bond of marriage to eradicate single parenthood
7. Conducting celebrations in the parish to bring about unity and family spirit

We solicit your valuable prayers and your partnership in contribution to help us build up the lives of the people we serve.



*"God commands you to pray,
but He forbids you to worry"*

- St. Francis de Sales

Building a Community of faith and upliftment

Ambad Mission, Nagpur Province

- Fr John Ruptake MSFS, Priest in charge

Something New, going from the old

Every mission starts in a humble and unimpressive way and gradually progresses. In the process new developments are envisioned and so the progress goes on. Old structures collapse and new structures have to be erected. This happened to our mission in Ambad.

The old church had developed cracks and had become dangerous for use. So it has been decided to demolish it and construct a community hall in its place. This hall will serve as a multi-purpose hall, which will be used for celebration of mass, prayer services and other developmental/social service activities like tuition classes, supervised studies, tailoring, etc. Besides this, a living room with a facility of a toilet for the priest will also be built. The financial support for these works is given by the Nagpur Provincial Administration.

Ministry at Ambad

We nurture the faith of those who are believers and who were deprived of a ministry and guidance of a priest for a long time. We do not claim to do extraordinary things, but whatever we do, do them with great love for God and the people.

Spiritual:

For the spiritual growth of the people, regular catechism classes are conducted, especially for the youngsters. Five candidates are being prepared to receive first Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Educational:

Every day tuition classes are held in two

batches – juniors and seniors. At present two girls are writing the 10th Board exams and two girls are writing the 12th Board exams.

The mission extends financial help to two girls to do the General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM) course. They are progressing well in their studies. One boy is studying ITI at FTI, Aurangabad. This year three boys are getting ready to do the ITI next year.

Future Plans

There is a plan to start some social service activities like tailoring courses for girls and boys, as well as some short training courses with the help of experts in various fields. For e.g. goat farming and poultry.

We are getting good cooperation from the locals as well as Government officials as they see that the activities we are conducting are for the benefit of the students and the financial stability of the villagers.

Challenges and Pressures

We have not faced any major obstacles while carrying out the ministry. However, poverty and lack of education and opportunities for higher education and skill education are some of the great challenges we face here.

Here are some of my concrete challenges and how they are addressed.

Interference from Local Politicians:

As usual in the villages some local politicians create a few problems, especially at the time of construction. Through dialogue, patience and respect

we try to remove the hurdles that they place in the way of our work.

Competition from Protestant Pastors:

Many times it is very difficult to tackle the Protestant Pastors as they come for ministry in groups of four to five; but by the grace of God we managed to deal with them. "If God is with us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:13).

No Proper Residence:

Presently priest's residence is a small house with minimum facilities. There is water scarcity and during the rainy season the house leaks in many places. Currently construction of the new residence is in progress; that is, a multi-purpose hall and a self-contained room for the priest.

Transport Facility:

A motorbike helps the priest to move from place to place; but the advancing

age, the heavy rains, the intense winter cold, the burning summer heat and the bad roads make it difficult to carry on the ministry. A four wheeler soon will be very beneficial for the ministry as well as to take the people to hospital or for other Church related programs held in the Diocese.

Conclusion

Problems abound especially in every new venture that we undertake; but despite all these inconveniences we are still happy to continue the mission. We feel highly motivated to do something for these poor people and we look forward to gradually build them into a community of faith and love. It's a matter of great joy that we get good support from the members of the MSFS Jalna religious community and from other benefactors. We believe that God helps those who trust Him, especially when in need.

Called to Bloom where we are Planted Pabura Mission, Nagpur Province

- Fr Bijay Kerketta MSFS, Parish Priest

Humble Beginings

The Missionaries of St Francis de Sales, Nagpur Province were invited by Rt Rev Vincent Barwa, Bishop of Simdega in the year 2015 to his Diocese and were entrusted the Pabura Mission. The two pioneers, Fr Hilarus Tirkey and Fr Richard Tirkey initially stayed in the house of Fr Christopher Kerketta SVD on rental basis and began their pastoral work. With financial assistance from NFC Nagpur they renovated the existing

village church at Pabura. On 20th February 2021, Bishop Vincent Barwa entrusted Pabura mission to the MSFS. It has seven sub-stations which are being taken care of by the MSFS confreres.

After much reflection and prayer later they shifted to Bano which is 6 km from Pabura and carried on the work of evangelization. Bano is located on the Eastern belt, 56 kms away from Simdega, the district headquarters and 74 kms from

Ranchi, the state capital. On 1st May 2023, Bano-Sora Mission was declared as 39th Territorial Parish of Simdega Diocese. Later on one more sub-centre from the parish of Banki was joined to the newly erected Parish Bano. At present there are 156 Catholic families, a total of 687 parishioners.

Challenges faced in the Mission and Possible measures to address

Concern : Poverty and Limited Resources:-

Many of the rural families are struggling with poverty which affects their contribution to the material and financial support to the mission, its infrastructures and pastoral programs. People exclusively depend on the monsoon rains for water for cultivation. Majority of them are under Below Poverty Line (BPL) category. Due to poverty, most of the youngsters go to work in metros to support their elderly parents and family members. Due to ignorance many of them face human trafficking. Most of the people sell local drinks, vegetables and forest products for their livelihood.

Solution : There is need to implement self-sustaining income projects, get help from outsiders for Church activities and provide social service, education and healthcare. Twenty-five students are given financial support for studies and for quality education. Tuition centres

have been started in two places to give a strong foundation to the students.

Concern: Cultural and Traditional Beliefs:

Bano is dominated by the Munda tribes. They have their own dialect. Some of their traditional practices conflict with Christian teachings, such as polygamy, witchcraft and ancestral worship.

Solution : Need to engage in Inculturation; show respect to the local traditions at the same time teach the Christian values in a non-confrontational way.

Concern: Youth and Vocational Crisis:

Most of the youth are without jobs. The majority migrate at an early age to cities to support their families. Most of the youth stay together as live in partners at an early age. They become burden to the families and they lack interest in joining the seminaries or convents.

Solution : Need to organize youth empowerment programs, bible quiz competitions, seminars and motivational talks in order to empower them socially, intellectually and spiritually, and keep them on the right path.

Concern : Health Challenges and Lack of Basic Medical Services:

There are no good hospitals in the nearby town. People have to go at least 100 km away to reach some good hospital. Majority of the people

go to the hospitals only when they become seriously ill. There is limited access to healthcare, with rampant spread of diseases like malaria; there are no proper sanitation facilities and people suffer from malnutrition. The majority of the people, including women, youth and even school going boys and girls are addicted to alcohol. Many accidents take place on the main road and there are many widows in the villages due to the early death of their husbands.

Solution : Need to encourage them to attend various social and spiritual renewal programs conducted by the Diocese and Deaneries annually for each group. Need to establish healthcare outreach programs, collaborate with NGOs and advocate for better public services.

Concern: Evangelization and Inter-Faith Relationships:

There are nine Christian denominations existing in Bano town. The presence of other faiths, including traditional religions and growing Pentecostal movements create a lot of tension and competition. Many Protestant girls marry Catholic boys and join the Catholic Church just before their marriage.

Solution: Need to promote ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue, emphasizing unity and service to the community. We have regular classes for the Catholic faithful and especially for the new Catholic

members.

Concern: Low Literacy and Catechetical Gaps:

A very low education level hinders their faith formation and understanding of Church teachings. Most of the elders are uneducated due to which they are not able to support and encourage their children to ensure quality education. Many children study in Government schools where Catechism is not taught. They are ignorant of many religious matters.

Solution: Need to develop simple culturally related relevant catechetical themes using oral traditions, stories and visual materials. A group has been formed called Sunday Catechism Teachers who take catechism classes.

Concern: Experience of Loneliness among Missionaries:

As the mission stations are in remote areas, and communication and transportation are a problem, there is a tendency for priests and pastoral workers to feel isolated, overworked or unsupported.

Solution: Need to create peer support networks, organize retreats and have regular pastoral visits to encourage and sustain them. Need to adapt strategies to the local context, by using lay leaders and fostering community involvement, thus the Church can overcome these

challenges and continue its mission in rural and remote areas.

Missionary Strategies that work

Tuition Classes : With the help of NFC Nagpur and the whole-hearted co-operation of MDO, Nagpur Province, the Parish team has started tuition classes in two places.

Sponsorship for Studies : Financial help received from MDO, Nagpur Province is given to twenty-five students, that is, Nursery, Primary, High School, Higher Secondary and Nursing students.

Financial Empowerment : A person who is physically challenged has been given financial assistance to put up and run a small shop with essential items which helps him to take care of his family.

Spiritual Renewal Programs : To spiritually, socially and emotionally empower the children, youth, men and women, we have been organizing pilgrimages, encouraging

them to attend seminars and spiritual renewal programs, organizing sports and Bible competitions, etc.

Catechism Classes : To motivate and encourage our catechists and Sunday school teachers to assist our parish children we have started catechism classes and we encourage them to attend seminars and retreats.

Spoken English Classes : To improve the level of spoken English, classes for 10th, 12th and for other students are regularly held.

Build-up Faith: To build-up their budding faith, the parish team with the help from NFC Nagpur, have planned to organize many renewal programs - Charismatic Renewal Programs, Bible Quiz Competitions, Catechism Classes, Sports, Picnics, etc.

We welcome partnership in the mission of Bano in whatever way you can and help us to take our poor people and our mission forward.



*"Kiss your crosses,
do not bite them.
When you kiss them,
they bring healing."*

- Fr. Peter Marie Mermier

A 2000 JUBILEE GIFT

St Peter's Church, Gangapur City, Pune Province

- Fr Michael Prem MSFS

Rajasthan: Some Important Facts and Details

Rajasthan is located in the northwestern part of India. It is bordered to the west and northwest by Pakistan, to the north and northeast by Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh, to the east and southeast by Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, and to the southwest by Gujarat. The name "*Rajasthan*" means "*Abode of Rajas*." It was in the 1950s that the Rajput princes surrendered their power to the central government, and Rajasthan became an integral part of India. The state is dominated by the Aravalli Hills. The northwestern portion is mostly sandy and unproductive, as it includes the Thar Desert, also known as the Great Indian Desert. In contrast, the southernmost region is more fertile. The Chambal River is the only large and perennial river in the state. Sambhar Lake, the largest Salt Lake in India, is located here. Rajasthan has a wide range of climatic conditions, from extremely hot and dry to humid. Summer temperatures can rise up to 48°C, while winter temperatures range between 17°C to 20°C. The population consists of various aboriginal tribal groups such as the Minas, Meos, Banjaras, and Bhils. Although the principal language is Rajasthani, Hindi is widely spoken and also used as the liturgical language of the diocese.

Historical background of St Peter's Church: St Peter's Church is located in the Railway Colony of Gangapurcity, Rajasthan. Gangapurcity, located about 140 km east of Jaipur and 76 km from Sawai Madhopur, is a key urban center with excellent connectivity via the Delhi-Mumbai railway route. The church was established in 1921 during the British colonial era. This historic church, now 104

years old, serves the religious and spiritual needs of both the local Christian community and visiting faithful. Known for its peaceful atmosphere and architectural beauty, the church has become an integral part of the community. It supports social welfare and charity work, responding to the needs of the people.

Presence of the MSFS at St Peter's Church :

In response to an invitation by Rt Rev Ignatius Menezes, Bishop of Ajmer, and the decision of the MSFS Pune Province Congress held on 3rd November 1999, the MSFS began exploring the possibility of starting a new mission in Rajasthan. Rev Frs Joseph Malayil and Mario D'Souza were assigned this task. By the grace of God, in the year 2000, the MSFS Pune Province was officially entrusted with St Peter's Church, Gangapurcity, to cater to the pastoral, educational, and social needs of the people. The pioneering missionaries, Fr Alphonse Irudaiyaraj msfs and Fr Johnson Gonsalves msfs, arrived on 1st June 2000.

Light through Education: From the beginning, it was clear that addressing the spiritual needs of the people must go hand in hand with promoting education. On 16th July 2001, Fr Alphonse courageously started a school named St Anselm's, a popular name in the Ajmer Diocese at that time. The school began with 30 students in nursery and kindergarten. In 2002, Grades I and II were added. Over time, the school experienced rapid growth and today educates 880 students up to the senior secondary level. The parish mission relies heavily on the school's income for its sustainability, as the parish is not self-sufficient. Initially run in rented houses, the school was later renamed St Francis de Sales School.

Our Collaborators : The Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph, with their headquarters in Chennai, joined the mission in 2001. They assist in pastoral, social, and educational ministries.

St Peter's Parish, Gangapur city : St Peter's Church serves as the headquarters of the mission and is home to 32 Catholic families, mostly railway employees, government nurses, and a few school staff. Each family has a unique story, and their faith journey is an inspiration. The liturgical language of the parish is Hindi. While some families actively participate in Sunday Mass and church activities, others are less regular. To foster unity and spiritual growth, Parish Priest Fr Michael Prem A. has taken the initiative to visit each family personally, offering encouragement and guidance.

A Spiritual Stream of faith formation : The parish offers daily and Sunday Masses, as well as special services on important feast days. Devotion is fostered through novenas, especially in honor of Our Lady of Vailankanni. Major liturgical celebrations like Christmas, Easter, and the feast of St Francis de Sales are celebrated vibrantly. Regular catechism classes for children, Bible studies for adults, and devotional programs during Rosary Month in October enrich the faith life of the parish. Activities also include Lenten reflections, the Way of the Cross, Advent preparations, intercessory prayers, family visits, and blessings for the sick, elderly, and children. Pious associations and prayer groups meet regularly to foster fellowship and spiritual renewal.

Youth and Women, groomed in leadership and empowerment : Youth are engaged through leadership training, moral formation, and involvement in social outreach. The FSJ Sisters lead women's empowerment programs that focus on health, skills training, and self-reliance.

Educational aid is provided to underprivileged students, and environmental awareness is promoted through cleanliness drives and campaigns.

Thus, the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS) and the Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph (FSJ) have been playing a pivotal role in this mission. Through initiatives such as educational support for underprivileged children and medical aid for the sick and elderly, especially through the FSJ Sisters' social work, the church continues to be a centre of compassion and service.

Strengths of the Mission : Reaching out to parishioners in need and uniting for essential community activities such as common prayers, recollections, and shared meals.

Caring for the sick and elderly through monthly visits, personal interaction, and prayers.

Steady support from MSFS confreres and the Provincial Administration.

Weaknesses of the Mission : The migration of families following retirement from government services like railways and healthcare.

A gradual decline in the number of parish families.

Limited local support from the broader community, especially from the other non-Christian community.

Conclusion : St. Peter's Church in Gangapur City remains a shining symbol of Christian faith, unity, and service. Its rich history, architectural beauty, and compassionate outreach have made it a spiritual home for many. By continuing to promote peace, faith, and active service, the church not only serves its Catholic faithful but reaches out to people of all backgrounds and goodwill in the region.

A SHINING MISSION RAPTURE

Fransalianum Catechetical, Retreat, and Renewal Centre

Midrand, Pretoria

*- Fr Thomas Joseph Vanderkunnel MSFS
Regional Superior, Southern African Region*

A New Blessing to continue to bless!

It was a joy to witness the blessing of the Fransalianum Centre for Catechesis, Retreat, and Renewal on 28 April 2025. This momentous occasion filled our hearts with gratitude and hope, as we celebrated a significant milestone for the Fransalianum and honoured the dedicated service of our five beloved priests: Frs Baiju Kurian Mundakal, Saju Joseph Thalayina-kandathil, Thomas Joseph Vanderkunnel, James Panthalanical, and Joseph Poikunnel, who celebrated their silver jubilee year. They have devoted their lives to ministry, embodying compassion, leadership, and unwavering faith. Their journey has been one of perseverance and love, profoundly impacting the hearts and lives of many.



We were immensely honored by the presence of Archbishop Dabula Mpako, the Archbishop of Pretoria; Bishop John Massilo, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Pretoria; Bishop Graham Rose, the Bishop of the Dundee Diocese; Fr Amose Massemula, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Pretoria; Chris Townsend, the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Pretoria; Fr James

Panthalanical MSFS, the Provincial of the East Africa Province; Fr Hugh O'Connor, the Secretary General of the Bishops' Conference of Southern Africa; and other esteemed members of the clergy, religious community, Parish Council members, Fransalian associates, friends, well-wishers, and dear MSFS confreres.



A Presence Formidable

The Missionaries of St Francis de Sales (MSFS) have been devotedly serving Southern Africa for over 27 years. Through dedication and perseverance, we have established a strong presence in Namibia and South Africa, ministering to the Catholic community, particularly in the Diocese of Keimoes-Upington, the Archdiocese of Cape Town, the Archdiocese of Windhoek, Keetmanshoop, and the Archdiocese of Pretoria.

A Sacred space to Rekindle

It is a society where poverty, crime, and substance abuse cast a heavy shadow over daily life, even the Christian community risks losing its true essence, gradually becoming Christian only in name. Once a beacon of faith, love, and service, it now struggles with spiritual



apathy, where rituals replace heartfelt devotion, and churches stand as mere physical structures rather than vibrant expressions of Christ's love.

As worldly distractions take precedence over prayer, the fire of faith fades, and the call to holiness is drowned out by complacency and compromise. While a faithful few remain steadfast, striving to keep the Gospel alive through acts of mercy and justice, many have grown indifferent and inured to the physical, emotional, and spiritual deprivation and hunger around them—forgetting that Christianity is more than a label; it is a calling that demands courage, sacrifice, and unwavering love for Christ and neighbor.

Yet, even in this decline, the Spirit of God continues to whisper, calling His people back to authentic discipleship and urging them to reignite their faith.

In response to this pressing spiritual need, the newly blessed Fransalium at 27 Dane Road, Austin View, Midrand, Johannesburg (in the Archdiocese of Pretoria), South Africa, serves as a sacred space to rekindle faith, hope, and love, foster community, and stand as a living testimony of God's enduring love.

A Radiant Beacon of Hope

The Fransalium Centre will enable us to:

- ❖ Offer a permanent and reverent space for Eucharistic celebrations and sacraments.
- ❖ Provide catechetical instruction to children, youth, and adults.
- ❖ Establish a central location for pastoral care and community activities.
- ❖ Strengthen the bonds of unity and faith within our Catholic community.
- ❖ Conduct retreats for those wishing to rekindle their faith.



The primary beneficiaries will be the Catholic faithful in the Archdiocese of Pretoria and the Archdiocese of Johannesburg, including families, children, youth, and adults. Additionally, priests and religious staff serving the archdiocese and neighboring dioceses will have a dedicated space for facilitating pastoral activities, retreats, recollections, and seminars, thereby enhancing the quality of their ministry. This chapel will provide an essential and sacred space for the community, serving as a centre for religious services, personal reflection, and various community events. The project emphasizes sustainability, modern design, and a deep respect for the spiritual needs of its future users. The goal is to create a lasting, harmonious space that enriches the lives of all who visit it.

Mission, Young and Eager to Grow

Amarpur Parish, Guwhati Province

- Fr Lijeesh Mathew MSFS

Overview:

Amarpur Parish, under the care of the Missionaries of St Francis De Sales and within the Diocese of Agartala, is a vibrant and developing parish comprising 15 substations. Originally bifurcated from two neighboring parishes, it initially consisted of 12 villages and, in 2024, welcomed three more villages through the tireless pastoral efforts of the priests, catechists, and local leaders. These new additions brought in a few more Catholic families—an achievement that reflects the challenging nature of mission work in this region, where the growth of faith communities is slow due to a range of socio-cultural and economic factors.

Demographic and Cultural Context:

The parish community is predominantly tribal, representing various ethnic groups such as the Jamatia, Debbarma, Reang, and Molsom. Language remains a significant barrier, as most people communicate exclusively in their native dialects. This linguistic diversity presents challenges in catechesis and general pastoral work.

Faith and Formation:

The Catholic faith in Amarpur is relatively young and remains shallow in depth. Since its erection in late 2014, the parish has struggled with a shortage of priests, which hampered initial efforts to establish a strong pastoral foundation. However, in recent years, catechism classes and training programs have been introduced to foster faith formation and develop lay leadership. Despite this progress, there remains a strong need for continuous training and spiritual guidance to deepen the faith life of the people.

Economic and Infrastructural Challenges:

The parishioners are economically marginalized and live in poverty. As a result, parish contributions are minimal. Many villages still lack proper church buildings and essential infrastructure. Despite these limitations, the parish continues to support educational initiatives, striving to offer the best possible education with the limited resources available.

Missionary Commitment and the Way Forward:

The parish leadership is committed to developing a systematic and sustainable pastoral structure. The success of this mission hinges on the continued presence and commitment of missionaries who embody a true missionary spirit. Without consistent and dedicated service, the spiritual and developmental gains achieved in the community risk being lost.

Conclusion:

Amarpur Parish, though young and faced with many challenges, is steadily growing through the dedication of its missionaries and lay leaders. The ongoing work in pastoral care, catechesis, and education must be nurtured with perseverance and faith. Continuity of missionary zeal and commitment will ensure that the seeds of faith planted today will bear lasting fruit for generations to come.



Embracing the MSFS Charism and its Legacy

Sacred Heart Parish, Palasa, Visakhapatnam Province

Our Parish Endeavours

To embody the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales, fostering a community rooted in Gospel values, our Key initiatives include:

- Visiting remote areas to promote faith and provide support
- Preaching the Gospel and encouraging Catholic values
- Uplifting family standards through guidance and prayer
- Celebrating special masses and feast days with devotion
- Challenges in Parish Mission
- Despite our efforts, we face challenges such as:
- Socio-economic constraints and poverty
- Changing demographics and societal values
- Effectively sharing the Gospel in a diverse society

- Addressing complex social and moral issues

- Ensuring financial sustainability

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

To address these challenges, we propose the following remedies:

- ❖ Providing financial aid and support to needy families
- ❖ Promoting social awareness and values through education and outreach
- ❖ Embracing local culture and lifestyle to foster deeper connections
- ❖ Involving local communities in pastoral ministry and catechesis
- ❖ Offering special support and schemes for marginalized groups, including backward classes and tribals

By implementing these strategies, we aim to strengthen our parish community, promote faith, and serve the needs of our people.



YOUNGEST BUT DYNAMIC!

Satywada (Tanuku), Visakhapatnam Province

- Fr G Bala Manoj Kumar MSFS

MSFS Mission at Satywada, Eluru diocese, catering to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the vibrant and growing community of Satywada, was bifurcated from Tanuku mission, our erstwhile mission citadel, and was raised to the status of Parish on 8th September 2024. Named as Arogya Matha Parish, this new mission parish has following Substations Vadluru, Duvva, Mandapaka, Chilakapadu, Kondayapalem, Pasalapudi. Fr G Bala Manoj Kumar is its first parish priest.

The mission is known for its vibrancy and spiritual fidelity. The people are known for their simplicity and depth of faith. They are marked by a deep sense of reverence towards the priests and religious and an authentic adherence to the traditions and teachings of the church. The erection as a new and independent parish promises bundles of hope for further growth and deepening of faith.



*Everything
for the glory of God,
in the shadow
of the Cross.*

- Fr. Peter Marie Mermier

Tough but Grace is Enough!

Mandadi Parish, Visakhapatnam Province

- Fr Ratna Raj, Parish priest

The Challenges in the Mission

The Parish of Mandadi belongs to the Diocese of Guntur, where the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales (MSFS), Visakhapatnam Province rendering their pastoral services. Mandadi Missoon is situated in a remote area in the Diocese of Guntur. The faithful of the locality are not so soft to deal and handle with. Though they are Catholics they don't have proper catholic faith formation. They have to be formed in the Catholic Faith. Thus faith formation is one great challenge.

In the village substations also, cooperation is not always an easy job, even from the catechists at times. But with the spirit of conviction and fransalian persuasion, we withstand all annoying and unfavourable situations and move ahead.

There is also a lot of opposition from other faiths on account of the Gospel. To work in the Parish like Mandadi is a very challenging task. It involves sacrifices, hardships and adversities. However, there is no giving up or going back. Perseverance and dedication are the hallmarks of our MSFS mission and very particularly the very priced quality of Visakhapatnam province.

Our Founder Peter Mary Mermier himself always desired missions and manfully went through all odds with a heart of steel through the crucible of suffering and disappointment. In fact, working patiently and faithfully in the mission, is a concrete and tangible proof of our love for the congregation and fidelity to the mission entrusted to us.



A POWERHOUSE OF RENEWAL

HOLY REDEEMER RENEWAL CENTRE, UMROI, GUWHATI PROVINCE

- Fr Joby Kurilamkattu MSFS, Provincial Councillor for Missions

A Nest of Spiritual Solace!

Nestled in the serene hills near Shillong, Meghalaya, the Holy Redeemer Renewal Centre in Umroi stands as a beacon of spiritual transformation and renewal in Northeast India. Founded in the year 2000 as an initiative of the erstwhile Northeast India Province of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales (MSFS), this Centre was the fruit of the vision and missionary zeal of Fr Chacko Varapadavil, a gifted and much-loved charismatic preacher of happy memory. What began as a humble initiative in a quiet corner of Meghalaya has, over the past 25 years, blossomed into a vibrant centre of grace, healing, and profound spiritual renewal.

A Spiritual Fecundity of Silver Jubilee

As the Centre marks its Silver Jubilee, it carries with it a rich legacy of having touched and transformed the lives of thousands. Through retreats, spiritual guidance, healing ministries, and a deep commitment to the Word of God, the Holy Redeemer Renewal Centre has become a sanctuary for seekers from all walks of life, both within India and beyond. Its journey from modest beginnings to becoming an internationally recognized hub of charismatic renewal is a testament to divine providence, faithful stewardship, and the unwavering dedication of all those who have served its mission over the years.

At the heart of the Holy Redeemer Renewal Centre's mission are its diverse and deeply impactful spiritual ministries, which have made it a

cherished destination for those seeking healing, renewal, and a deeper encounter with God.

Inner Healing Retreat and Deliverance Retreat

Among the many programs offered, the Inner Healing Retreat and the Deliverance Retreat stand out as the most powerful and transformative. These retreats have profoundly touched the lives of countless participants, bringing emotional restoration, spiritual freedom, and renewed purpose to those burdened by past wounds, inner struggles, and spiritual bondage.

Other Spiritual Powers

In addition to these core retreats, the Centre also offers opportunities for more intensive spiritual renewal and formation. The 40-Day Guided Retreat and the One-Month Healing and Deliverance Training Program provide a structured and immersive environment for deeper healing and spiritual growth. The Centre also conducts sessions on Christian mysticism, particularly designed for priests and religious, fostering personal holiness and a more intimate relationship with God. Known widely for its ministry of healing and liberation, the Centre continues to serve as a place where people experience freedom from the power of evil, reclaiming the peace and joy of the Gospel through the power of Christ.

Live Testimonies and Living Inspirations

Over the years, the Holy Redeemer Renewal Centre has also witnessed extraordinary and deeply moving

interventions of God, confirming its sacred purpose as a place of divine encounter and grace. Among the most remarkable are the spiritual experiences of two young women from the Diocese of Shillong who, driven by a sincere thirst for holiness, came to the Centre seeking deeper union with God. Under the spiritual guidance of the MSFS fathers, they began to experience profound manifestations of God's presence.

One such case is that of Miss Teresa Lawai, who spent a year in prayerful discernment and spiritual formation at the Centre. On December 26, 2022, she began to experience the mystical gift of the stigmata, physically participating in the suffering of Christ. From that day onwards, she has been uniting herself daily to the Passion of Jesus, offering her sufferings for the conversion of humanity, becoming a visible sign of redemptive love in today's world.

The second is Miss Jingsngur Khongkhlad, also from the Shillong Diocese, who encountered a rare and supernatural intervention through the Holy Eucharist. On the Feast of Corpus Christi in June 2023, she received the Eucharistic host during Mass, which miraculously remained intact on her tongue — without melting, dissolving, or being swallowed — for a full year until the next Corpus Christi in June 2024. Throughout this period, she consumed no food or drink, sustained solely by the power of the Eucharistic Lord. During her time in Eucharistic adoration, she hears the voice of Jesus speaking through the Eucharist, delivering urgent messages to prepare humanity for His Second Coming. With the permission of the local bishop, these messages have been published in two volumes titled

“The Last Hour of Mercy.” First published in English, now this book is translated into Hindi, Khasi, Garo, Malayalam, and translation for other languages are going on.

These extraordinary events serve as a testament to the Centre's sacred role as a conduit of divine grace, calling the faithful to deeper conversion, devotion, and readiness for the Lord's return.

Ever Grateful, Powerful and Faithful!

As the Holy Redeemer Renewal Centre in Umroi celebrates its Silver Jubilee, it stands as a living testament to the transforming power of God's grace poured out through humble beginnings, faithful ministry, and divine favour. Over the past 25 years, the Centre has not only been a place of healing and spiritual renewal for thousands, but also a sacred ground where heaven touches earth in extraordinary ways. From the life-changing retreats and training programs to the astonishing spiritual phenomena experienced by individuals like Miss Teresa Lawai and Miss Jingsngur Khongkhlad, the Centre continues to echo God's invitation to holiness, healing, and deeper communion with Him.

With a heart full of gratitude for the past and eyes fixed on the future, the Holy Redeemer Renewal Centre moves forward in its mission—ever more committed to evangelization, inner healing, deliverance, and preparing hearts for the return of Christ. As it opens its doors to the nations, this Centre remains a spiritual lighthouse in Northeast India, drawing souls from across the world to encounter the mercy, power, and love of the Redeemer.

Mission with a Human Face on the Divine Race

The Missionary Face and Culture of the MSFS in the Telugu States

- Fr Kurella Vijayasekhar MSFS
Provincial Councillor for Missions

The Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS), a congregation born from the missionary heartbeat of Fr Peter Mermier and deeply imbued with the spiritual elegance of St. Francis de Sales, have carved a luminous path in the ecclesial and cultural fabric of the Telugu-speaking regions. Their missionary visage here is not merely organizational or structural—it is profoundly incarnational, breathing the Gospel into the very soul of the land.

Mission with a Human Face

The missionary face of the MSFS in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana is marked by a rare blend of pastoral tenderness and evangelical fervour. With hearts aflame and feet firm on the dusty roads of villages and tribal hamlets, these missionaries have incarnated Christ's compassion among the people. They arrived not as strangers, but as brothers; not to dominate, but to dialogue; not to impose, but to invite. Their presence has been like leaven—quietly transforming communities with the warmth of presence, the fragrance of virtue, and the power of service.

Where others may have seen isolation and poverty, the MSFS saw

opportunity for grace. Their missions in remote corners of Visakhapatnam, Eluru, Warangal, and Adilabad became sacred spaces where the Gospel was not just proclaimed, but lived—amidst cattle sheds, bamboo huts, and under the shade of neem trees.

The Pen of Education and the Pulpit of Formation

One of the most striking expressions of the MSFS charism in the Telugu region is their unparalleled contribution to education. Their schools are not mere centres of instruction but are sanctuaries of transformation—where the intellect is sharpened, the heart is formed, and the soul is nourished.

Their educational mission is not elitist but inclusive, with a preferential option for the marginalized. Children from backward castes, Dalit hamlets, and tribal belts have found dignity and destiny within the walls of MSFS institutions. Their emphasis on holistic education - blending academics with discipline, moral values, and faith—has left an indelible mark on generations. Truly, the MSFS have not only educated minds but ignited souls.

Inculturated Evangelization: Gospel Dressed in Telugu Attire

The genius of the MSFS lies in their ability to present the Gospel in a culturally resonant manner. In the Telugu states, they did not transplant a European Christianity; rather, they sowed seeds of faith that blossomed in native soil. Their fluency in the Telugu language, participation in local festivals, sensitivity to regional customs, and ability to preach in culturally engaging ways have made them true sons of the soil.

Liturgies celebrated in rustic village chapels, hymns composed in melodious Telugu ragas, and catechism taught with folk idioms—these have made the faith both familiar and beautiful to the local faithful. Their missionary face is thus deeply aesthetic, echoing St. Francis de Sales' vision of spirituality that is gentle, attractive, and humane.

Community Spirit and Apostolic Fraternity

The strength behind their missionary endurance is undeniably their vibrant community life. Rooted in prayer, fraternal support, and shared vision, the MSFS communities radiate simplicity and serenity. Whether it is morning lauds echoing through mission houses or brothers sharing their joys and sorrows at the supper

table, their internal communion becomes the fountain of their external mission.

In a fragmented world, this witness of joyful fraternity itself becomes a powerful homily. Moreover, their openness to collaborate with diocesan clergy, religious sisters, and lay leaders highlights a missionary culture that is inclusive and ecclesial, not isolated or clerical.

Challenges and Prophetic Opportunities

Yet, the vineyard is not without its weeds. The Telugu Church today is facing the tides of secularism, consumerism, and cultural erosion. Young people are being drawn to urban dreams and virtual illusions. In this context, the MSFS are called to be creative prophets—to explore digital mission frontiers, engage in ecological spirituality, and rekindle youth animation ministries.

Returning to the primordial fire of Fr Mermier's passionate cry, "I want missions," they must not merely maintain institutions, but venture boldly into new peripheries—among the broken, the disillusioned, the unheard. Their missionary face must shine not only in the villages but also in the digital streets and psychological deserts of modern Telugu society.

Conclusion: A Legacy that Inspires and a Future that Beckons

In the Telugu lands, the MSFS have not simply established missions - they have composed a symphony of grace, harmony, and hope. Their missionary face is not a mask but a mirror reflecting Christ's own face—gentle yet courageous, simple yet profound, local yet universal.

As a priest who has witnessed their work firsthand, I am both humbled and inspired. Their culture of humble audacity, spiritual elegance, and incarnate love offers a radiant model for mission in our times. May the MSFS continue to be torchbearers of faith, sowers of peace, and artisans of the Kingdom in the sacred soil of the Telugu Church.

THE POWER AND IGNITION THE SPREE OF PARISH MISSION PREACHING (PMP)

- Fr Kondala Joseph MSFS



Parish Mission Preaching (PMP) is integral to the foundational Charism of our Congregation. During the Lenten season, the entire team members of Visakhapatnam Province, headed by Fr Kondala Joseph have gone to different Parishes helping the Parish Priests in organising Parish Mission Preaching at different levels. We have covered almost all the Parishes, wherever we are called for. Parish Mission Preaching is our core identity and we have put our focus on Lenten themes alone. Our team members are namely, Frs P. Dilip, B. Solomonraj, K. Kiran, G. Harish, S. Satish and many

others joined us in the Lenten programme giving the PMP model. We thank all the Parish Priests who had given us this wonderful opportunity. At Ross Hill also we have conducted Easter Convention with the collaboration of our PMP members. We had ventured into many other Parishes like Tekkalipatnam, Rajupalem, Khammam, Ibrahimpatnam, Agiripalli, Tanuku, Parvatipuram, Chinna Waltair (English and Telugu). We are grateful to the Parish Priests. We had a unique and rich experience.



The PMP team also had specially organized Lenten missions in various

missions such as Ballepalli (Khammam Diocese), Bellampalli (Adilabad diocese), Pithapuram (Visakhapatnam diocese), Prathipadu (Visakhapatnam), Tanuku (Eluru diocese), and Ghatkesar (Hyderabad). These Lenten missions were marked by specific thematic reflections, holy confession, adoration, and also special counselling and blessing. These were vibrating experiences, where the Holy Spirit was very powerful and the visible effects of renewal were seen and felt.



Mission: Diverse and Diversified Mission Australia

- Fr Vincent Lourduzamy MSFS

The Down-Under, Australia, is a country graced by scenic beauty, with mountains, trees, flowers and seacoast lands all around it. It is a huge island, three times the size of India, surrounded by the blue waters. While Australia was discovered in 1770, it became a sovereign nation only in 1901. The church and faith of Australia is just young as it is. The country did not need evangelization as it was colonized by the Britishers.

What was and is indeed needed is re-evangelization as elsewhere in the world. The laity play a very significant and active role in the administration of the church, properties and lay ministries. The people, young and old,

are well taken care by the govt policies. Schools of the church are run and managed by the laity. The role of the clergy is to perform the sacraments and spiritual care to the sick and elderly, mostly in the nursing homes and hospitals. The people generally are healthy, giving importance to health conscious activities, being independent as much as and as long as possible. The cars/vehicles seem to outnumber the population of the adults. People are supportive and generous towards social concerned activities, like to help the poor, homeless, addicts, aged etc. Nursing homes become one's final home once one is incapacitated, that is when one is incapable of driving any longer and

when sick. Cancer seems to be a common sickness all over!

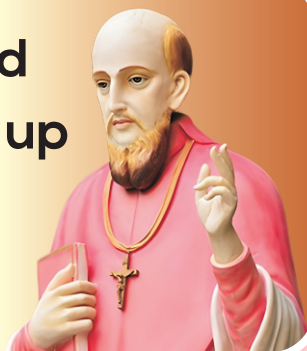
The spiritual activities in the church are regularly animated, children are trained and seen in the churches till their first communion and afterwards it's up to their parents or their freedom. Seniors (70+) are very active in the church and so youngsters have less chances to participate in the ministries of the church in the parishes. Covid-2019 has played a vital role in affecting the spirituality of the

people, as elsewhere. However the youth have their own activities.

The presence of MSFS is about 20+ years. We are working in 6 different dioceses in three states / provinces of Australia, from 3 MSFS provinces in India. There are various priests from India and other Asian and African countries rendering services in dioceses. Religious nuns are a very rare sight to see, as there are hardly anyone choosing the religious life today. God bless Australia!

"If we walk steadily and faithfully...God will lift us up to greater things."

- St. Francis de Sales



"Real joy is never without thorns and without sacrifices."

- Fr. Peter Marie Mermier



Fransalians marching forward
as Pilgrims of Hope



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