



## MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES USA VICE PROVINCE

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VPUSA-AT-12

June 3, 2016

Dear Confreres:

I am writing this, my last circular, as Vice Provincial of USA Vice Province on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Tomorrow, we celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We have just celebrated the great seasons of Easter and Pentecost as well as the great feasts of The Most Holy Trinity and Corpus Christi. After all these great, exciting and joyful celebrations, we now resume "Ordinary Time of the Year" in the Liturgical tradition of the Church. "Ordinary" does not mean insignificant or routine or dull or boring or non-exciting time in the Church's life of prayer and worship. They are called "Ordinary" because they are ordered, numbered. Ordinary Time challenges us to live the mysteries we celebrated during the great seasons in extraordinary ways. We are called to concentrate on growing in our own intimacy with Christ in order to live the message of the Gospels in down to earth, practical ways wherever we may be. Let us strive to grow in our experience of God in all things, events and people and walk faithfully and joyfully.

Next Sunday, June 5, 2016 is the first Sunday after the great feasts that we just celebrated. It happens to be the tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time. The Scripture readings of this Sunday offer us a very special way of making this "Ordinary Time" extraordinary during this Year of Mercy. The first reading tells us the story of the death of the child of a poor widow (1 Kings 17:17-24). She interpreted this untimely death of her child as a punishment for her sins. The common belief of her time was that suffering and death were punishment for sin. She saw a connection between the presence of a prophet, a holy man in her house and the death of her child and interpreted it as the sign of the anger of God for her sins. The ensuing miracle confirmed the mercy of God and His loving kindness and called all believers to trust God as a God of compassion and mercy rather a god of anger and vengeance like the gods of the pagan world that surrounded them.

The Gospel reading of Sunday, June 6, also tells us the story of Jesus meeting a funeral procession of the only son of a mother as he came into the town of Nain (Luke 7:11-17). Moved with compassion, Jesus restored the boy back to life and gave him to the grieving mother. Jesus claimed life for a boy who was marked for burial. This is one of those events in the life of Jesus that helps us understand what he meant when he said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Mt. 5:4). The Word "mourn", as used here (in Greek), means a passionate lament for the one who was loved. It is the kind of grief, which a person cannot hide. It is sorrow that brings "ache to the heart and tears to the eyes". This is what Jesus encountered when he came to Nain.

There are certain things only the rain can produce and certain experiences only sorrow can bring. Sorrow can reveal the kindness, comfort and compassion of God and of other human persons. Sorrow can also help a person discover deeper things of life, a new power and a new strength.

Sorrow can help a person discover his brothers/sisters and His God as He never did before. The Native Americans describe spirituality as having a 'moist heart,' perhaps because native wisdom knows the soil of the human heart is necessarily watered with tears, and that tears keep the ground soft. From such ground new life is born.

In this year of mercy, we are called to be kind and compassionate to those we serve, especially to those who are burdened with misconceptions, misunderstanding and wrong understanding about God and God's ways. Mercy reaches out to those who are ignorant, unenlightened, uneducated and confused and eases up their burden. The gift of mercy makes the ordinary extraordinary. Let us strive to make this "Ordinary Time of the Year" extraordinary by contemplating the mystery of mercy and giving effective witness to the mercy of God. In *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis states: "We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it." He also says, "I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church; a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective". This is an "Extraordinary Jubilee year of Mercy". Let us strive to bring mercy into the ordinary, everyday life and activities as we go about doing our daily chores and fulfilling our duties and responsibilities. .

## Thank you

My term as Vice Provincial of Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales, USA Vice Province, will come to an end on July 3, 2016 and a new Provincial will assume the office. First, I thank you for choosing a new animator and leader for the Vice Province. It was long overdue. I thank God for inspiring you to make this nomination and the Superior General and his council for making the appointment of a new Vice Provincial. God has been good to the Vice Province in giving Father Tomy Puliyanampattayil as the new Vice Provincial. God has been especially good to me by freeing me from the responsibility that I have been carrying for a very long time.

I have been in USA for 30 years – the first ten years as a student and the last twenty years in ministry. Twenty years ago, Fr. Emile Mayoraz, then Superior General, met me in Bangalore and asked me to come to USA to establish a ministry of our congregation in USA in view of raising the then American Mission to a Region of our Congregation. At that time, there were only five confreres in ministry in USA. I accepted to come to explore the possibility.

Many things happened since then, including the arrival of many confreres for ministry in USA from several Provinces. In about two years after my arrival, Wellspring was established as a Spirituality Center of the Congregation in USA as part of the then American Mission and the confreres in ministry were organized into a community in USA. During the following years, I served as Coordinator of Fransalians in USA for seven years, helped raise the then American Mission to USA Region and served as Regional Superior for six years. Then I helped raise the Region to the status of a Vice Province and served as Vice Provincial for three year.

With great joy, now, I welcome Fr. Tomy Joseph Puliyanampattayil to assume this awesome responsibility. I am confident that he will do very well as our Vice Provincial. I assure him of my ongoing support. I thank him for accepting this responsibility and pray for God's blessing on him as he discerns the direction that God has planned for him.

## New Vice Provincial for USA

Our Superior General, Fr. Abraham Vettuvelil has appointed Fr. Tomy Joseph Puliyanampattayil as the new Vice Provincial for USA Vice Province of the Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales. On behalf of all confreres in ministry in USA, I congratulate Fr. Tomy and wish him God's abundant blessings as he assumes this new and awesome responsibility. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will guide him and grant him all the necessary graces.

**More about the new Vice Provincial will be sent to you in a couple of days.**

## New Assignments:

**Fr. Biju Mathew Palamkunnel** is appointed as parochial vicar at Prince of Peace parish in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, beginning June 21, 2016. I thank Fr. Biju for his service to Wellspring during the past year. I am especially grateful to him for his help with the Mission Appeals. May God bless him as he begins his ministry in Houston!

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**Fr. Joshy Mathew Kulungara is appointed** Chaplain at Saint Joseph Hospital in Chippewa Falls, with residence at Sacred Heart-Saint Patrick Parish in Eau Claire, effective May 23, 2016. Congratulations and prayerful wishes to Fr. Joshy. May God bless him with a fulfilling ministry!

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2661 Co Hwy I,  
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## Return to province:

**Fr. Mathew Thottiyil has** returned to his Province, South West India Province, after his term of ministry in USA. He is assigned to the staff at SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor.

**Fr. George Vattappara** has completed his term of service in USA. He is granted a Sabbatical for a much deserved rest and renewal.

**Fr. Tom Thomas Pannalakunnel,** will soon be returning to his Province, South West India Province, after his term of ministry in USA.

**Let us keep these confreres in our prayer for safe travels to their provinces. May God bless them with fulfilling and meaningful ministries in their provinces!**

## Triennial Mandatory Meeting (TMM)

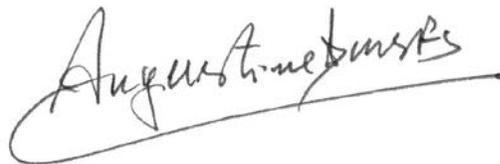
Triennial Mandatory Meeting was held from May 14 – 18, 2016 at Lumen Christi Institute in Arusha. As I was unable to attend, Fr. Joseph Pottemmel attended the meeting at my request. He presented the report of the USA Vice Province in light of the major thrusts of General Chapter 2013 as was expected. I have attached a report of this meeting prepared by Fr. Joseph Pottemmel. Thanks to Fr. Joe for participating in this meeting and for preparing this report.

## Conclusion:

Dear confreres, this is my last circular as Vice Provincial. Please accept my sincere thanks and appreciation for your support during the past many years. I thank you for the many ways that you touched my life and for the encouragement and support as well as the challenges that you offered me. I thank you for every experience that I have shared with you. It has been a great journey of faith and I am grateful to God for making this journey possible.

Be courageous and learn to walk faithfully and joyfully! We are Fransalian Missionaries. We must learn to live a lifestyle that is uniquely Fransalian, different from that of the world around us. The only measure of our faith is how we live, not what we profess! Let us walk faithfully, for faithfulness is the mark of a man of God. Be faithful to your calling! All you do may not be successful in your eyes or in the eyes of others. The real success lies in your fidelity to who you are and what you have come to know as your calling. Just be faithful and be joyful!

You are in my daily prayer. God bless you and all you do for God's people and keep you safe in the center of His Love.



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**“Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself.  
Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections,  
but instantly set about remedying them,  
every day begin the task anew.”  
St. Francis De Sales**