



MISSIONARIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES USA VICE PROVINCE

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VPUSA-AT-9

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Dear Confreres:

This circular is long overdue. Please accept my apologies for the delay. Many factors, especially time, caused this delay. Attending to the various needs of the province, of Wellspring and of the parish has been a challenge. I trust that you will understand!

I am writing this circular on the feast of the Ascension of the Lord. In another week, we will celebrate Pentecost. The Gospel according to Mark tells us the story of Jesus taking his disciples “to task for their disbelief and their stubbornness since they had not put faith in those who had seen him after he had been raised”.

Jesus rose from the dead and first appeared to Mary Magdalene, but the followers of Jesus refused to believe her testimony. Neither did they believe the two disciples, who had an experience of the risen Jesus, while they were on the road to Emmaus. Finally, Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples and rebuked them for their disbelief (Mark 16:9-15). The disciples did not expect Jesus to be visiting Mary of Magdala after his resurrection. After all, her past was not great and she was not one of the specially chosen apostles....she did not fit the common criteria for a visit from the world beyond!

Let us learn to be open! The Lord has his own way of surprising us! He comes to us through the most unexpected people, events, places and situations! Jesus surprised them again by sending them with his message to fulfill his mission. Then he sent them with the mission: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation”.

Men of weak faith, .men who could not see beyond their disappointment, men who did not grasp all that Jesus said to them about his death and resurrection while he was among them, were sent to proclaim the good news of the resurrection! (Mark 16:15-20). Jesus trusted these men with all their “disbelief and stubbornness” and sent them with his mission of bringing good news to the world. It is amazing to remember that Jesus called and trusted his men with all their “disbelief and stubbornness” to be his witnesses and sent them with his mission of bringing good news to the world. Today, we, with all our limitations and inconsistencies, are trusted with this good news and sent to bring this good news of Jesus to the world.

Don't wait and don't hesitate to share and announce the good news of God's love till you have fully matured in faith! We cannot wait to preach and teach till we have become perfect. If we did, we may never preach or teach!

The story of the ascension of the Lord is the story of the Church being called, sent and empowered to continue what Jesus began. It is the story of Jesus asking the disciples to become more fully involved. It is the story of the disciples being empowered to live and to share the good news of Jesus. The feast of Ascension calls us to wait and remain open to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and be empowered to continue to fulfill the mission of Jesus.

The meaning of Christ's Ascension,' writes Pope Benedict VI, 'expresses our belief that in Christ the humanity that we all share has entered into the inner life of God in a new and hitherto unheard of way. It means that man has found an everlasting place in God.' It would be a mistake to interpret the Ascension as 'the temporary absence of Christ from the world.' Rather, 'we go to heaven to the extent that we go to Jesus Christ and enter into him.' Heaven is a person: 'Jesus himself is what we call "heaven."

Let us make this thought our meditation as we prepare for the feast of Pentecost: Heaven is a person: 'Jesus himself is what we call "heaven."

Holy Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has proclaimed a Year of Mercy to begin on December 8, 2015. The following statements are excerpts from "Misericordiae Vultus", the apostolic letter of Pope Francis proclaiming an extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy....."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.....The Holy Year will open on 8 December 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.....will close with the liturgical Solemnity of Christ the King on 20 November 2016..... On that day, as we seal the Holy Door, we shall be filled, above all, with a sense of gratitude and thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity for having granted us an extraordinary time of grace.

Please let me know if you have any ideas, recommendations or suggestions on how we, as Fransalians in USA, might observe this Jubilee year. Your input will be much appreciated.

Retreat 2015 on Consecrated Life and Mission

Retreat 2015 on Consecrated Life and Mission will be held from Monday evening, September 14, 2015 to Friday noon, September 18, 2015 at Montserrat Retreat Center in Dallas.

Fr. Jose Kumbloickal, Provincial of South West India Province will direct our retreat. Many thanks to Fr. Jose for accept my request to preach the retreat.

Please register for this retreat as soon as possible. I need to reserve your rooms.

Vocation and Formation Council:

Vocation and Formation Council has been constituted with Fr. Tomy Joseph Puliyanampattayil as director and Frs. John Peter Arul, John Peter Ambrose, Jacob Dio, Jaison Thomas, Sunny Punnakuzhiyil and George Thayilkuzhithottill as memebrs. The Vice Provincial will be ex-officio

member of this council and Fr. Joseph Mullakkara will serve as councilor in charge of Formation. It is my hope that this council will become a source of inspiration and strength for our Vice Province.

The newly formed Vocation and Formation Council will have its first meeting from the evening of Monday May 18th to the evening of Wednesday, May 20th at Fr. Tomy's parish, St. Joseph's Church, Madison, TN. Please keep the council in your prayers as they enter into a process of discernment regarding the process and program of formation for our Vice Province.

As you know, Vocation promotion and Formation are the most important processes in any religious congregation. We need to focus on promoting local vocations and providing quality education and a formation that is uniquely Fransalian. It is urgent that we begin without delay. We need to develop a process as well as a program for the promotion of local vocations. We also need to develop a process and a program of Formation consistent with the norms of Formation approved by the congregation while being sensitive to the needs of our local candidates.

I realize that, at this point in time, there is lack of clarity about the function of this council. It will become clearer as we work together and evolve a dynamic and meaningful process and a program to meet the needs of the Vice province. Please send your ideas and suggestions to me or to Fr. Tomy, the director of the council or to any of the members of the council. Your input will be much appreciated.

Search for new property:

Fr. Joseph Pottemmel, Bursar of the Vice Province and Fr. Joseph Mullakkara, Councilor of the Vice Province are diligently searching for a property in Atlanta for the expansion of the Vice Provincial Offices and for our ministry in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. This search is a follow up on the decision made at the Vice Provincial Congress in 2013 to establish adequate facilities and offices for the Vice Province. I am grateful to Fr. Pottemmel and Fr. Mullakkara for their ongoing search.

North American Salesian Network (NASN)

North American Salesian Network (NASN) was formed at the 2013 meeting of the "Salesian Initiatives". USA Vice Province has participated in the meetings of the Salesian Initiatives in 2012 and 2013 and became a member of this organization when it was formed in 2013. Fr. Tomy Joseph Puliyanampattayil represented USA Vice Province at the 2015 meeting of NASA, held at the Don Bosco Retreat Center at Stony Point, New York. The following is the report of the meeting sent by Fr. Tomy.

"The fourth annual meeting of the North American Salesian Network (NASN) was held at the Don Bosco Retreat Center from Monday April 13 through Wednesday April 15 at Stony Point, New York. There were 18 members representing different religious entities that consisted of priests, sisters and lay members. It was a wonderful experience of being together with men and women who chose to follow the same path for their spiritual journey. Everyone was happy with the

organization and the direction it is heading. NASN had made remarkable journey within a short span of 4 years as a spiritual organization and everyone was content and happy about the progress.

The meeting began on Monday evening with supper followed by an introduction and a recap of last year's events and activities. The major topics discussed in different sessions were: NASN involvement in the 2022 West Coast Catechetical Conference, Encyclical or apostolic letter for the 2022 commemoration, an inspirational book reflecting current implications of Salesian Spirituality, A common syllabus for Salesian formation, closer involvement of De Sales University tied in with its 50th anniversary celebration, formation of NASN website, Face book, videos on Treatise on the love of God, vocation fair, Live event at De Sales University, year of mercy, and "Live Jesus"-template for other areas in the country. The final session was on Wednesday morning where the members made an evaluation of accomplishments along with action plan for the future of the North American Salesian Network. All the sessions were coordinated by Fr. Don Heet, OSFS."

This Report was prepared by Fr. Tomy Joseph Puliyanampattayil. I am grateful to Fr. Tomy for accepting my request to represent me at this meeting as well as for sending this report.

Meeting of WUG in France

WUG stand for Western Provinces, USA and GAH (Germany, Austria and Holland). A meeting of the major superiors and coordinators of WUG with the General Curia was held from May 11-16, 2015 in Annecy. The purpose of this meeting was to review and share the many activities and accomplishments of each of the groups represented as well as the vision for the future. The following were the participants:

Provincial of Franco – Swiss Province
Provincial of Brazil Province
Administrator of the English Province
Vice Provincial of USA Vice Province
Coordinator of the Delegation Superiors of GAH
General Curia Members

As I was unable to attend this meeting, I requested Fr. Luke Kalarickal, Councilor and admonitor to represent me at this meeting. I am grateful to him for accepting my request. He presented the report of the Vice Province since its establishment and shared our vision with the group in Annecy. I will share with you a report of the meeting when Fr. Luke returns after the meeting.

Collaboration with South West India province:

Details and terms of collaboration between USA Vice Province and South Wrest India Province are in the offing. Dialogue between the provincials is in progress. Good progress in this regard has already been made. Details will be shared with you as soon as the concerned provincials and councils have clarity and definite direction and agreement on details and terms of collaboration.

In the recent meeting between USA Vice-Provincial and South West India Provincial and Council on February 4, 2015, at Vinayalaya, Bangalore, the following points were discussed. This meeting was a follow up of the discussion between the two provincials during the visit of the Provincial of the South West India Province to USA.

1. Possibility of a Joint Retirement Home for the Confreres of SW India Province and U.S.A Vice Province
2. Sponsorship for confreres from SW India Province for ministry in USA
3. Policy regarding Transfer and Appointment of the Short-Term members in the U.S. Vice Province
4. Medical Insurance of the Short-Term members of SW in the Vice Province
5. Annual second collection for specific mission projects in the parishes where the
6. Short Term members are working
7. Collaboration in pastoral ministries in USA.
8. Quarterly financial report of the fund of the Province maintained by the Vice Province
9. Possibility of having a contact person of SW Province in the U.S Vice Province
10. Retirement fund of the short-term members
11. Sponsorship of seminarians by the Vice Province

We will discuss these matters further and in details at our next council meeting. If any of you have an opinion about any of the above matters, please let me know.

I am deeply appreciative of the openness of the provincial of the South West India Province, Fr. Jose Kumbloickal and his council and their readiness to collaborate with the Vice Province in pastoral ministry in USA. It is my hope that our collaborative efforts will strengthen our mission and give stability to our presence in USA and will benefit the mission of the South West India province.

New Arrivals:

Fr. Aneesh Thomas Parappanattu and Fr. Kola Prakash Rao from Visakhapatnam India Province are in pastoral ministry in the diocese of Dodge City, Kansas.

Fr. Aneesh Thomas Parappanattu
St. John the Baptist Church
100 S Main St. PO Box 187
Spearville, KS 67876
620-385-2212
aneeshthomasfs@gmail.com

Fr. Kola Prakash Rao (VZP)
St. Joseph Church
514 Main Street
P. O Box 577, Ashland, KS 67831
620-789-1200
620-635-2338
kolaprakash01@gmail.com

Fr. George Valliamthadathil from South West India Province is serving De Sales University in Center Valley, PA.

Fr. George Valliamthadathil
Assumption BVM Church
4101 Old Bethlehem Pike
Bethlehem, PA 18015-9097
484-274-2712 (Cell)
georgevmsfs@yahoo.com

Fr. Biju (Daniel) Chennala from North East India Province is serving as chaplain at Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire, WI.

Fr. Biju Chennala
Sacred Heart of Jesus & St. Patrick's Parish
322 Fulton Street
Eau Claire, WI 54703
715-832-0925 (Parish Office)
danielchennala@gmail.com

Fr. Biju Mathew Palamkunnel from South West India province is in ministry at Wellspring, Fransalian Center for Spirituality in Whitehouse, Texas.

Fr. Biju Mathew
Wellspring
P.O. Box 440
Whitehouse, Texas 75791
Phone: 903-521-1495
Email: bijupalamkunnel@gmail.com

We are now 55 in ministry in USA. Updated list of confreres in ministry in USA is attached.

Change of address:

Fr. Tom Thomas Pannalakunnel has begun his ministry of counselling at Shalom Center in Splendora, Texas. Congratulations and prayerful wishes to Fr. Tom as he begins his new ministry.

Fr. Tom Thomas Pannalakunnel
1101 Parthanon Place,
New Caney, Texas. 77357
847-217-8614 (Cell)
tommsfs@gmail.com

Return to province:

Fr. Thomas Olickal has returned to East Africa Province after two and a half years of pastoral ministry in USA and will soon receive a new assignment. We wish him God's blessings in his ministry,

Fr. Binoy John Kurakalayil has returned to South West India province after completing his studies. He will soon receive a new assignment. We wish him God's blessings in his ministry,

New House for the General Secretariat

The General Administration has purchased a plot of land with a two storied building at Malkajgiri, Hyderabad for establishing the General Secretariat in India. Congratulations and prayerful wishes to the General Administration!

New Provincial:

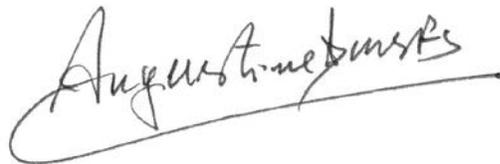
Fr. Pentareddy Chinnappa Reddy is appointed the new Provincial of Visakhapatnam India Province. Let us pray for him as he assumes this new responsibility. Hearty congratulations and prayerful wishes to Fr. Chinnappa from all the confreres in USA Vice Province. .

Conclusion:

Dear confreres, thank you for your ongoing support. 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.



Augustine Tharappel, msfs
Vice Provincial,
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Where there is less of our will, there is more of God's will. (SFS)

