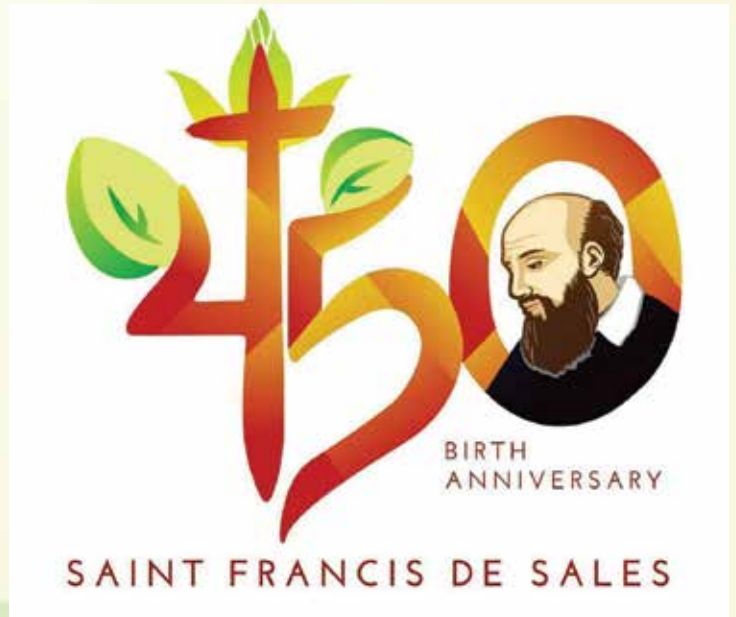




Editorial

As the year 2017 marks the 450th birth anniversary of St Francis de Sales, it is befitting to re-read and reflect on the teachings of this great master of spiritual life who is popularly known as the 'gentleman saint'. For Francis de Sales "nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength." We, the Fransalians, are privileged to live the spirit and spirituality of St Francis de Sales who continues to inspire millions of faithful even today. Francis de Sales was a person ahead of his time and his spirituality is relevant to people of all ages. As Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, rightly attests: "Saint Francis de Sales (...) after a powerful experience of God's liberating love in his youth, became a priest and then Bishop of Geneva, at that time a stronghold of Calvinism. His fine education, his personal gifts of charity, serenity and openness to dialogue, together with his brilliance as a spiritual guide, made Francis a leading figure of his age. His spiritual writings include the celebrated *Introduction to the Devout Life*, which insists that all Christians are called to perfection in their proper state of life, foreshadowing the insistence of the Second Vatican Council on the universal call to holiness. His *Treatise on the Love of God* develops this teaching, stressing that we find ourselves and our true freedom in the love of God. The Christian humanism of Saint Francis de Sales has lost none of its relevance today." (Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, Wednesday, March 2, 2011).



In today's postmodern and globalised world, a missionary is called to equip himself to face the challenges from various domains such as political, economic, social, religious and so on. Hence, he needs to be well informed about the various dimensions of mission and ministry so as to be an effective missionary priest. As regards the importance of knowledge for a priest, Francis de Sales admonishes: "Priests who occupy themselves with works that hinder them from study are like men who refuse their stomach the food it needs for nourishment... Ignorance in a priest is more to be feared than sin, because it does not merely lead him to ruin, but dishonors and degrades the sacerdotal character. For the priest, knowledge is the eighth sacrament of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; and the church's greatest misfortunes have come from this that the ark of knowledge has passed from the Levites into the keeping of others. If Geneva has wrought such terrible havoc among us, it is because, in our idleness, we did no more than read our breviaries without any care to make ourselves more learned" (André Jean Marie Hamon, *Vie de Saint François de Sales* I, p. 499).

On this auspicious occasion of 450th birth anniversary of St Francis de Sales, once again we are reminded that our religious and priestly vocation is to become all things to all people following in the footsteps of our beloved patron, and practicing the little virtues of gentleness, humility, patience, simplicity, cheerfulness, hospitality etc. May St Francis de Sales guide us in the pursuit of holiness, true knowledge and wisdom and help us to find our real joy and fulfillment in our journey of life.

-Dr K. Henry Jose MSFS
Chief Editor

Saint Francis de Sales A Saint so Human

Insight: Conversation

Conversation is natural to humans. No one likes to remain silent for a very long time. God wants us to speak to one another. Conversation may be a source of blessings, encouragement and recreation. It can also become a source of harm, discouragement and destruction. So, we must pay great attention to conversation. All the same we should never be artificial, and tensed but natural, simple and spontaneous. Little things can do miracles. Once I wrote a word of encouragement on a slip of paper and gave it to a person in distress. Within few days I received a letter from him: "you have saved me from killing myself." Saint Francis de Sales has something beautiful to say about Conversation. "In your speech be gentle, free, sincere, straightforward, simple and truthful. Be

on your guard against duplicity, cunning and pretence. Although it is not good to say always all kinds of truths yet it is never allowed to go against truth. Accustom yourself never to tell a lie deliberately either by way of excuse or for any other reason. Remember that God is the God of truth (Ps31:5). If you happen to tell a lie inadvertently and you can correct it on the spot, by some explanation or alteration, do so. A genuine excuse has much more grace and strength as an apology than a lie."

-Fr Antony Mookenthottam, msfs



2017 has been declared the MSFS year of EDUCATION and SOCIAL APOSTOLATE with the focus on SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT. The purpose is to promote justice, to counter injustices and to protect human rights, with the required knowledge, skills and values, so that all people can live with dignity, free from oppression (Superior General's Message, MSFS Inter-secretariat Newsletter Jan 2017).

Mermierian Charism: The seeds of such vision and commitment were sown at the very beginning of Fr. Mermier's priestly life as curate-teacher at Magland. (Here he devoted himself "tirelessly teaching children during the day, and spending part of the night to the study of theology". His subsequent Pastoral assignments were as warden-professor at Melan College, Parish priest in the de-Christianized village of Chatelard, and as Spiritual Director in the diocesan seminary of Annecy.

His pastoral zeal led him initially to personally address the problem of illiteracy among children, by engaging the services of a private tutor teaching from the Presbytery. The wide impact of this social evil on families, church and society as a whole led him to envision a more broad and more permanent, lasting means to address the issue.

Unfolding of the Charism: Mermierian Initiatives:

(1) To redress the scourge of illiteracy, especially among girls in rural Savoy, and its consequences on family and social life, Fr. Mermier promoted the training (academic and spiritual) of lay women who would serve as teachers and catechists. This initiative culminated in the founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod.

(2) To promote revival of the faith and minister to the needs of his flock, Fr. Mermier assembled fellow priests into a "Band of Missioners", living as a community devoted to *itinerant* parish mission preaching. This kind of preaching focused on faith formation, family apostolate, catechism of children, education of youth. This "Band" blossomed into the Congregation of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales – popularly known as Fransalians.

Mermier Bytes

Discernment, Focus and Guiding Principles: Divine Providence opened numerous avenues to Fr. Mermier to respond to the demands of the Apostolate, specifically in the Ministry of Education. After prayerful discernment with the Bishop, confreres and stake-holders, namely, government agencies, diocesan priests and laity, our Founder decided to take up the Colleges of Evian and Melan.

The factors that militated against taking up of the College of Evian, among others were the following: (a) lack of qualified personnel among the existing MSFS confreres; (b) involvement here, in spite of financial gain, would dampen the parish mission preaching in Savoy and availability of confreres for Overseas Missions – the apostolic charism of MSFS, and (c) the perception that such Institutions of the State rarely served to turn out *better Christians* - Fr. Mermier's main concern. However, the factors that weighed in favour of taking up the project were, firstly obedience to the expressed desire of the Bishop, when no one else wanted to run an institution that was on the downslide. This was the typical sensitivity of Fr Mermier springing from his passion for renewal of faith. Secondly, his perception that this would provide the required skills for confreres preparing for Apostolate in the Overseas Missions.

The College of Melan, in spite of financial liabilities, was taken up as an obligation, again at the request of the Bishop, due to the departure of the Jesuits and in the absence of other takers. Positively, Fr. Mermier's favourable response, (besides the fact that Melan was his Alma Mater) was because this college (Minor Seminary) could turn out to be a *seed-ground* for vocations.

Return to our Roots: The challenge for the MSFS today is to ensure a judicious approach in vision and practice with regard to the initiatives undertaken in the Apostolate of Education and Social Service. We need to ensure that the resources – personnel, technical, financial – invested in the projects and institutions are at the service of mission. We need to remain focused on the Foundational and Apostolic Charism of our Founder and keep close to the heart of Fr. Mermier in fidelity to his missionary ideal.

-Fr Noel Rebello, msfs

Solemn Feast of St Francis de Sales

On the afternoon of the 24th January 2017, Msgr Yves BOIVINEAU, Bishop of Annecy, presided over the solemn Eucharist of St Francis de Sales, at the beginning of which he declared that the process of the Cause of beatification of Servant of God Peter MERMIER has been opened again.

Mass was attended by a large group of faithful, among them many Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod (along with their Provincial, Sister Maryline DARBELLAY), many Sisters of St Joseph of Annecy and some parishioners of St James' parish, comprising Chaumont, the birth place of Fr. MERMIER. Fr. Eric TRABOULGA, the parish priest of St James, was among the concelebrants.

After communion, Fr. Yves CARRON MSFS, Provincial, gave a vote of thanks to the Bishop for re-opening the Cause, and to the Visitation community who generously permitted that the mortal remains of Fr. MERMIER be buried in the crypt, (along with the remains of Bishop P.J. REY). The transfer of the relics took place exactly 10 years ago.

-Fr Yves Carron, msfs



Tomb of Fr Mermier



Diaconate Ordination in Switzerland

It was a great day of blessings and joy for the Franco-Swiss Province, on 28th January 2017, as 3 of the Indian scholastics, (Johnson Panthalanickal and Joanness Penumaka, from the province of Visakhapatnam and Jose Simon Thuruthipallil, from the province of South-West) were ordained deacons, by the imposition of hands, by Msgr. Alain de Remy, the auxiliary bishop of Geneva-Lausanne-Fribourg.

The solemnity of the ceremony was enhanced with the presence of many of our confreres, working in the province as well as in different dioceses in Switzerland, religious, friends and well-wishers, and also with many of those who made their presence through their prayers. It was a day of blessing for each one of us, as we were cared for and loved by the confreres of Franco-Swiss Province. The celebration ended with a sumptuous fraternal meal.

-Dn Johnson Panthalanickal, msfs

First Profession at Fransalianum Novitiate, Kibaha, Tanzania

July 10, 2017 was a memorable day for the Chad- Cameroon Mission of our Province as 6 of our novices made the first profession. The holy Mass was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Petrus Kullu msfs, the superior of Mozambique delegation, who also received the vows of the 13 novices. Let us rejoice before God for the blessing of these brothers and continue to support them with prayers and care. We congratulate the newly professed and sincerely thank the Director of the Novices, Fr. Antonysamu Sebastian, and the Socius Fr. Prakashbhavan Santhosh Paul.

-Fr Benny G Kootanal, msfs



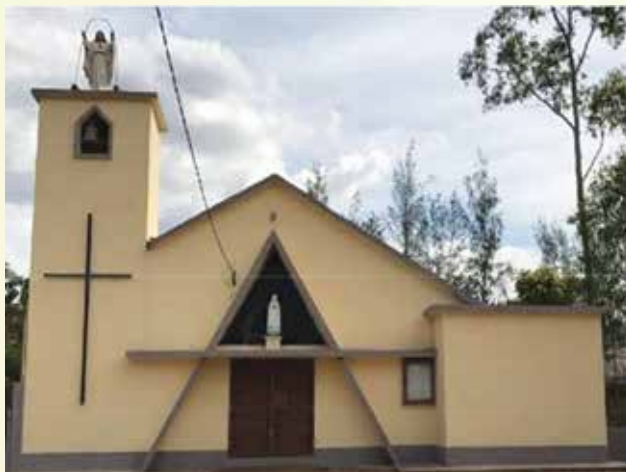
Annual Salesian Seminar 2017

The 34th Salesian Seminar, organized by the Indian Institute of Spirituality, was inaugurated on the 23rd of April 2017, by Rev. Fr. Thumma Mariadas, the Assistant Superior General with the solemn Eucharistic celebration. The keynote address given by Rev. Fr. Thumma highlighted the relevance and application of the theme and the spiritual classic 'Love of God' today for all those who follow the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales. The whole seminar was filled with talks on the various themes, which are dealt with in the 'Treatise on the Love of God.' The programme was attended by Fathers and Brothers from MSFS and OSFS, Sisters from DSFS, SSS and SMMI. The resource persons, comprising of Salesian experts and Scholars from various fields of ministry, were thorough with the matter and excellent communicators. The participants were richly rewarded with Salesian spirituality pertaining to the 'Treatise on the Love of God.' The concluding day (28th April 2017) was



animated by Fr. Benny G. Koottanal, the Provincial, South West India Province. He exhorted the participants, through the talk and Eucharistic celebration, to become aware of the richness of this particular spirituality, which can concretely enrich, empower and authenticate each one of us, in our daily Salesian way of Living.

-Fr Philip Valakodiyil, msfs



The Delegation Administration selected Domwe Parish in the diocese of Tete, which is about 278 kilometres away from the city of Tete and 47 kilometres away from the township of Angonia and 120 kilometres away from the capital city of Malawi and two days' journey from Maputo. Public transport is available till Angonia township. The parishioners are poor farmers. The main church has a presbytery which needs renovation as only walls and foundation works are intact. Ever since the civil war broke out, there was no resident priest. There are uninhabited buildings in the church land which can be made use of when renovation is done. Except the wall of the rooms, all

New Mission Venture at Domwe in the Diocese of Tete in Central North Mozambique

other works like flooring, electrical wiring, plumbing, fixing of windows and doors must be done. There are 103 sub-centres in this Parish which makes it a very vast territory to be covered for ministry. The Parish Church at Domwe is named after St. Peter Claver. Delegation Superior and Fr. Paul had visited the place and met the Bishop of Tete, followed by Fr. Aajo who stayed with the nearest Jesuit Community and explored the place and presented this new mission very beautifully with the help of video clippings during the Colloquium. Everyone felt the need to take the MSFS Mission to Central North Mozambique as most vocations come from that place. Insertion of the MSFS into a larger catholic area is paramount to our future growth. The mute question was from where will the resources come to meet the immediate expenses. In an optimistic frame of mind, it was felt that we cannot keep the needed funds before us and start missions. Let us respond to the urgent need of 103 sub-centres and the main parish community. We need to take it as a challenge, trusting in the providence of God to allay the fears of insecurity. Funds will come in course of time, if we work for it. The members said that the Province should take responsibility and get directly involved in stabilizing this mission to instil confidence among the young province missionaries. The Provincial gave all assurances for the same.

-Fr Jacob Karamakuzhyil, msfs

Free Medical Camp at Garla Mission

Faithful of Garla experienced in Fr. Sebastian msfs, a compassionate father who feels and responds to the poor and sick. He organised a free medical camp, in collaboration with the Bishop of Khammam, which helped many faithful suffering from various illnesses. It is decided to organise such camps every month.

-Fr. Putti Manohar, msfs



Workshop cum Seminar on Child Protection Policy, Guwahati, Assam

A two-day workshop cum seminar on Prevention of Child Abuse and Child Protection Policy for the Fathers and Sisters was organized by FAsCE India from 1st to 2nd April, 2017, at MSFS Provincialate, Guwahati. The goal of this workshop was to conscientise fathers and sisters working in our mission centres on prevention of child abuse, the rights of children and the neglectful violation and to create awareness and offer timely intervention in cases of violations of Child Rights.

The workshop took off with short inaugural function. At the very outset, Fr. Saji George MSFS, Executive Director of FAsCE India, accorded a very hearty welcome to the guest invitees and the participants. Rev. Fr. George Panthanmackel, Provincial of MSFS Northeast India, delivered the keynote address highlighting the importance of the programme in the present scenario. As a symbolic gesture of inauguration, the ceremonial lamp was lit by Rev Fr. Provincial, Fr. S. Christu Das, the resource person, Fr. Kurian Pattimackel, msfs and Sr. Margaret MPV, delegates from the participants. 18 priests and 40 sisters from various centres and schools of Northeast region participated in the programme.

The workshop concluded with an evaluation and valedictory function, during which a certificate of participation was distributed to the participants by Fr. S. Christu Das, Director of Social Initiatives for Growth and Networking, Ranchi, Jharkhand. The vote of thanks was proposed by Fr. Clean Areng, Associate Director of FAsCE India.

-Fr Praveen Johny, msfs



Seminar cum Update Program for MSFS Formators

A total of twenty two MSFS formators from across India, belonging to five different provinces, participated in the Congregational level three day seminar cum update program held at SFS Seminary, Medziphema, Nagaland, from April 4-7, 2017. Fr. Noel Rebello, General Councillor in charge of formation and Fr. George Panthankackel, Provincial of North-East India Province were also present.

Dr (Fr) Philip Thomas, MSFS, from NVSC Pune, animated the sessions on the theme, "Integral formation in the third millennium." He enlightened the participants on various aspects of formation of young candidates

to priesthood and religious life through interactive sessions and group discussions.

-Fr Praveen Johny, msfs



National Seminar on Refugee Issues

The Political Science Department of St. Francis De Sales College, Aalo, organised a National Seminar on "Refugee Issues in Arunachal Pradesh" at the College Auditorium on March 11, 2017.

Dr (Fr) Emmanuel Uppamthadthil, MSFS, was the Chief Guest and the Moderator of the seminar



while Sh. MarliKamki, Secy. Seminar and Symposium, AAPSU, was the Special Guest of the day. Among others, Adv Bineesh Kumar K.S, Amity University, Delhi, introduced the participants to “The Rights of Refugees in India” and the need of legislation to protect human beings across the world. Several resourceful

intellectual researchers came from various places to present their papers and share their findings and views. The students and the staff members listened attentively to the whole seminar and the entire Auditorium was packed with participants till the very end.

-Fr Praveen Johny, msfs

My First Date!!! with S.F.S. CBSE School, Seethammadhara

7th July was a great day for the newly born infant CBSE, S.F.S.School, as it celebrated its first gathering with the parent community with the theme “My First Date”. The President of the day, Rev. Fr P. Chinnappa Reddy, the provincial superior, unveiled the new “Logo” of the school and ALMANAC (School Diary) for the year 2017-18. The day was made colourful by the spectacular cultural events performed by the kids. With a grateful heart, a big thanks was rendered to the community at Seethammadhara, Fr Reddy Joseph, Fr Inna Reddy and Fr M. Anand Prakash for their fraternal support and a word of appreciation for all the teaching and non-teaching staff for their commitment and tireless effort.

-Fr Vijay Chitikila, msfs



Catechists' Training Sessions

Fransalian Sevakendra, in collaboration with Rev. Fr. M. Jojaiah, the Councillor-in-charge of the Missions, organized two days of training sessions, from 12th to 13th July 2017, at Ross Hill, Visakhapatnam, for all the catechists working in our parishes. The sessions started with the Lighting of the Lamp. The main resource person was Rev. Fr. R.B. Victor, the Director of the Pastoral Centre, Nellore Diocese. The topics that were covered were the uniqueness of the Church and its spiritual richness, symbolism in the liturgy, catechism of the Catholic Church, Tradition of the Church, different devotions, duties and responsibilities of the catechists, etc. The

total number of the catechists who attended the meeting was 90. Rev. Fr. Provincial in his message exhorted all the catechists to cooperate with the parish priests in their ministry. Fr. Provincial also distributed the Bibles and the book “Satyanveshana” to all the catechists. Special thanks to Rev. Fr. D. Velangani, the Director of Ross Hill Shrine, and to Rev. Fr. Francis Stephen, the Director of the White House, for their cooperation in arranging the accommodation and other facilities needed for the catechists. We thank all the Parish Priests for encouraging and sending their catechists to these training sessions.

-Fr K.V.S. Prasad, msfs



Blessing of the Parish House at Nachiarkoil, Tamil Nadu



How lovely is your dwelling place o lord, what peace and joy to feel close to you (Ps 84:2)

The blessing of the newly built Parish House at Nachiarkoil was held on 19th March 2017. Most Rev. F. Anthony Samy, the Bishop of Kumbakonam, in the presence of Rev. Fr Agnelo Fernandes, the General Councillor in-charge for mission, Rev. Fr K. Ignacimuthu, the Provincial Superior of South-East India Province, Rev. Fr Amirtha Swamy V.G. of Kumbakonam, and many MSFS confreres, Diocesan priests, religious sisters and the parishioners, blessed the Parish House. The blessing was followed by the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, presided over by Bishop. A great number of faithful took part in both the events. At the end of the Holy Mass, Fr P. Anantha Raj, the parish priest, thanked the dignitaries as well as all the faithful gathered.

-P. Anantharaj, msfs



Blessing and Inauguration of the New SFS School, Anthoni Nagara

It is a dream come true for the province to have the first SFS School in Anthoni Nagara, in the diocese of Chikmagalur. On May 15, 2017, in the presence of a large number of MSFS confreres, Most Rev. Anthony Swamy, Bishop of Chikmagalur, blessed the newly built school. The school was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Benny Koottanal, the Provincial. He extended his heartfelt thanks to Fr. Maria George for his extreme sense of commitment and hard work to attain this great feat of completing the work of the school building in record time, in spite of the many hurdles he had to cross. Let this new community of our province be a shining example for the religious commitment of our Missionaries for the uplift of the poor. May God bless SFS Anthoni Nagara.

-Fr Benny G Koottanal, msfs



Inauguration of the newly constructed Church at Valpoi, Goa

February 11th 2017 was a memorable and joyful day for the parishioners of Valpoi and Bironдем, as the newly built church of Our Lady of Lourdes was dedicated by his Grace, Most Rev. Filipe Neri Ferrao, Archbishop-Patriarch of Goa and Daman, in the esteemed presence of Rev. Fr Vincent Lourduswamy MSFS, Provincial of Pune Province, Fr. Thomas Fernandes MSFS, main benefactor, Fr. Daniel Afonso MSFS, Parish Priest, Fr. Placido Pereira MSFS, local Superior, Fr. Felix Mendes MSFS, former Parish Priest, along with many priests, religious and large multitude of faithful.

-Fr Vincent Lourduswamy, msfs



Platinum Jubilee of SFS Institute Minor Seminary, Bastora, Goa

It was indeed a great and joyful occasion for the entire Pune Province to have celebrated the 75 years of the S.F.S Institute. The occasion was graced by the esteemed presence of his Grace, Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferao and the loving presence of the Assistant Superior General, Rev. Fr Thumma Mariadas. We were also blessed by the supportive presence of our Provincial, Rev. Fr. Vincent, Rev. Fr. Noel Rebello, the General Councillor of Formation, the confreres from far and wide, other priests belonging to the archdiocese of Goa, religious and our caring benefactors and friends.

-Fr Vincent Lourduswamy, msfs



Congratulations



Rev. Fr Jayaseelan Selvaraj
Provincial of Pune Province



Rev. Fr John Britto Muthuswamy
Provincial of Nagpur Province



Rev. Fr Mathew Thazhathukunnel
Provincial of East Africa Province



Rev. Fr Tomson Aerathedathu
Provincial of Brazil Province

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR JUBILIARIANS

DIAMOND



Bro. Michael Olickal, msfs



Bro. Michael Chalapat, msfs



Fr O.V. Zacharias, msfs



Fr Antony Mookenthottam, msfs



Fr Thomas Anikala, msfs



Fr Thomas Manalil, msfs

GOLDEN



Fr Mathew Thayil, msfs



Fr Cyriac Velikkettel, msfs



Fr Paul Pallikunneth, msfs

SILVER



Fr David Paul, msfs



Fr Erudaya Raja, msfs



Fr Jimmy Mathirampuzha, msfs



Fr Jose Karekatt, msfs



Fr Jose Kumbloly, msfs



Fr Jose Mamalasseril, msfs



Fr Joseph Chettaniyil, msfs



Fr Joshy Thazhathukunnel, msfs



Fr Lukose Perumanikalayil, msfs



Fr Mathew Kodamullil, msfs



Fr P. Chinnappa Reddy, msfs



Fr Sebastian Vellaramkunnel, msfs



Fr Sesetty Mariadas, msfs



Fr Stephen Marayikulam, msfs



Fr Xalxo Barnabas, msfs



Fr N. Francis Xavier, msfs

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW PRIESTS

EAST AFRICA PROVINCE



Fr Lawrence Sebowa



Fr Jonathan Muema



Fr Ibrahim Kisegerwa



Fr Amal Neerolickal

NAGPUR PROVINCE



Anto Thomas



Jnanamani Simon



Ranjit Lakra



Yobu Melkie Sadhek

NORTH EAST PROVINCE



Fr Daimary Ajit



Fr Kharumnuid Wanlambor



Fr Puthuppaliyil Bibin



Fr Riawed War Marcellinus



Fr Thadathil Jaimon

PUNE PROVINCE



Fr George Fernandes



Fr Jerome



Fr Rawson



Fr Sahayaraj A

SOUTH EAST PROVINCE



Fr A. Ashir Johnson



Fr A. Jerome



Fr D. Jaya Kumar



Fr L. John Peter



Fr M. Joseph Anish Kumar



Fr S. Antony Raj



Fr S. Arockiam

SOUTH WEST PROVINCE



Fr Anishmon K.



Fr Joby Pulichumackal



Fr Nathaniel Masendo



Fr Prakash Prashanth



Fr Sudeep Andrews

VIZAG PROVINCE



Fr Balam Murali



Fr B. Sagar Santhosh



Fr Putti Manohar

OBITUARY



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Fr Anthony Lopez, msfs



Fr Ephrem Velamparambil, msfs



Fr George Nellikunnel, msfs



Fr M. Zacharias, msfs



Fr Sijo Olickal, msfs



Fr Theodore Vannay, msfs



Fr Camille Meynet, msfs



Fr Simon Rodrigues, msfs

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