

**ASSISTANT GENERAL'S REPORT OF COLLATION AND OBSERVATIONS, AFTER MEETING WITH THE
APOSTOLIC COMMUNITIES IN VISAKHAPATNAM PROVINCE,
31 JANUARY - 12 FEBRUARY 2018**

PART I

I. Action that happened:-

1. ASG had 7 meetings with 7 apostolic communities
2. They were namely: Vadakkencherry (Kerala), Shanti Nagar (Hyderabad), Anantapur (Rayalaseema), Parchur (Nellore diocese), Nunna (Vijayawada), Tanuku (Godavari districts), Seethammadhara (Vizag)
3. On the final day, after the apostolic community meetings, ASG sat with the provincial and his curia, presenting to them a Report of assessment and re-orientation, which comprises a collation and observations
4. There was interaction which included clarifications, and re-affirmed commitment to all the enormous good being lived and accomplished, and to work upon certain areas for further growth and heights

II. Note of Gratitude and Appreciation:-

1. In the first place profound and immense thanks and appreciation to Fr. Chinnappa Reddy, the Vizag provincial superior, for his personal attention and execution
2. I sincerely acknowledge and appreciate his clear focus and resolve, with untiring and joyful availability and dedication, soaked in humble devotion and genuine fraternity
God bless you Fr. Chinnappa for your humble and selfless leadership!
3. My sincere thanks and appreciation to the whole provincial curia, being involved in some way or the other, in this event of animation in the province; a special word of affectionate appreciation to Fr. Sandeep Reddy and Fr. Bala Sundar Rao, two provincial councilors, who accompanied me all through, setting aside their straining tasks
4. My gratitude and compliments to all the conveners of the apostolic communities and superiors of the host communities, for their kind and generous trouble, in organising and moderating the meetings, and to all the secretaries, for their prompt attentiveness in recording the minutes of the deliberations
5. My special note of thankfulness to Fr. Ravi Kumar, the superior, Fr. Justin, the provincial secretary, and the whole provincialate community for attending on me, with cordiality and care
6. My abundant thanks to all the members of the province, who spared their valuable time, in attending the meetings, in active and productive sharing, marked by trust, openness and sincere enthusiasm for good and betterment
7. What I wish to personally note is: I felt so deeply touched and overwhelmed by the genuine sense of respect and cordiality with which every community received me. Indeed I felt so much "at home"!

God bless and reward you all for your continued confidence and commitment!

III. Mode and Dynamics of ASG meeting with the Apostolic communities

1. On the scheduled day, generally in the noon till supper, ASG met with the concerned apostolic community for almost 5 hours
2. It usually began with an half-hour adoration, followed by 45 minutes orientation talk by ASG, 2 hours of discussion primarily on the draft of pointers already circulated, and then concluding with the holy Eucharistic celebration

3. The Orientation sharing by ASG had mainly three aspects: a tone of concern and appreciation, re-stating the purpose and objectives of these meetings, and then summoning to strive for a new culture

1) **A tone of concern and appreciation** -

- (a) Personally happy to be together as a family of brothers, a short live-in experience of our deep fraternal belonging, bonding and working together
- (b) Appreciate you personally as members of the hallowed Vizag province, on two levels - first, as persons referring to your life as religious, for your constant joy of living and sense of accomplishing; and on the second level, as missionaries referring to your ministries as ministers, for the spirit of commitment, excellence and effectiveness.
- (c) Some of the commendable features of this noble mother province are:
 - i) A great legacy, ii) a renowned missionary tradition, marked by love for mission, love for people and selfless commitment, iii) anywhere and everywhere, an unfailing pastoral setting and approach, iv) an abiding rural and pro-poor face, v) a high degree of mutual acceptance and gracious sharing of responsibilities, vi) a special and unique blending of the old and new, old and young, and the tradition and the modern

2) **A fourfold purpose of the meeting** -

- (a) As a pointer and occasion for unity: ASG as a symbol of unity, symbolizes and brings together the confreres along with the administration
- (b) As an immediate preparation and orientation to General Chapter 2019
- (c) As an occasion of evaluation of the life and mission of the Province and for further orientation
- (d) Finally all aimed at an authentic renewal, both individually and collectively

3) **Summoned to foster a new Culture** -

This comprises certain significant components, like the following:

- (a) A new culture of spiritual priority, profundity and fecundity,
Sincerely struggle to maintain a balance between
Core identity and role identity,
Quality of life and quantity of activities,
Authentic being and frantic doing
- (b) A new culture of consecrated fidelity
Against financial unaccountability, a life of poverty, marked by simplicity, moderation and honesty
Against moral deviations, a life of chastity, marked by maturity and balance, both emotional and relational
Against spirit of resistance and defiance, a life of obedience, marked by humble surrender and adherence to God's will and plans
- (c) A new culture of missionary thrust and fervor, in a context of institutionalization, which is
A mindset of comfort-seeking, risk avoiding, resenting any sacrifice, deprivation or adjustment, craze toward only institutions, and the possible securities and autonomies, and a craving toward affluent countries, with its possible scope for more individual freedom and access to money
- (d) A new culture of fraternal communion, against individualism, discrimination and disintegration
With dent on genuine sense of unity and belongingness, mutual respect, acceptance, appreciation, encouragement, loyalty and collective responsibility and commitment.
There is no real piety to God or fidelity to mission, without fraternity toward confreres in the community
- (e) A new culture of shepherd leadership, in humility, surrender and generosity,
Against all abuse of talent and power, testify that all authority and talent is for care and service!

PART II

A COLLATION AND FORWARD-ORIENTATION

I. GROWTH AND MERIT FACTORS:-

1) It is worth reproducing my note of appreciation from the Orientation sharing. Appreciate you personally as members of the hallowed Vizag province, on two levels - first, as persons referring to your life as religious, for your constant joy of living and sense of accomplishing; and on the second level, as missionaries referring to your ministries as ministers, for the spirit of commitment, excellence and effectiveness.

2) Some of the commendable features of this noble mother province are:

(a) A great legacy, (b) a renowned missionary tradition, marked by love for mission, love for people and selfless commitment, (c) anywhere and everywhere, an unflinching pastoral setting and approach, (d) an abiding rural and pro-poor face, (e) a high degree of mutual acceptance and gracious sharing of responsibilities, (f) a special and unique blending of the old and new, old and young, and the tradition and the modern

- + More regular and frequent interaction and relationship with confreres, of provincial personally and collectively as provincial administration
- + More spirit of listening and dialogue
- + More personal attention, attentive to individual aptitudes, encouraging and promoting growth
- + More openness and freedom to individual caliber and initiatives
- + More stabilizing and encouraging various communities
- + Province community growing as a well-integrated family, irrespective of the distinct groups
- + A considerable, overall and balanced growth and developmental works in all the apostolates
- + Increased importance to ongoing formation by a steady animation, update and renewal, through regular meetings, programmes, and also qualitative monthly provincial circulars
- + Clear focus on spiritual priority and animation
- + More adherence to daily Spiritual concerns, like half-hour adoration, morning prayers, holy rosary etc., and a high percentage of attendance and quality participation at the annual retreats
- + More regularity to community exercises, and joy of community living, through more involvement and participation
- + More vibrancy in the functioning of community living and activities, both as local communities and as apostolic communities
- + More sense of belongingness and cordiality, against a sense of being isolated
- + More openness, understanding and positive acceptance toward province policies, like internal auditing etc.
- + More spirit of cooperation with the administration
- + Increased level of transparency and trust quotient
- + Increased inter-community interaction and support
- + More care to the senior and sick confreres
- + Sincere striving to do the level best, intense commitment, to excel, both individually and collectively, in all the apostolates
- + More ordering, structuring and orientation of the life and mission of the province
- + More structural developments, extensions, renovations, completions, etc.
- + Increased Mission thrust through more mission priority:
 - (a) 3 new missions, in Nellore, Nalgonda and Warangal dioceses
 - (b) Furnishing each mission / parish / community, with the required adequate facilities
 - (c) Ensuring every mission with a four-wheeler for mission work
 - (d) Rural missions, more cared and supported
 - (e) Ensuring the appointment of every new priest in the missions
 - (f) New constructions / renovations - Churches, chapels, presbyteries etc.
- + A clear preference and help for the Poor, through
 - (a) Occasional and timely help to the poor aged and widows
 - (b) Providing uniforms to the deserving students in each mission
 - (c) Providing a considerable percentage of concession to the poor students in our schools

- (d) Monthly hike of support to the catechists
- (e) Parish-wise Annual economic benefits and scholarships to the school children, and also to the degree, post-graduation and professional course students
- + More focus on social apostolate, through the activation of Seva Kendra
- + A heightened level of performance and commitment of our educational institutions, as a ministry to the poor, value-orientation, overall development, more financial streamlining and accountability
- + Upgrading some educational institutions, viz. a junior college at Nidadavole, two CBSE schools in Rajupalem and Seethammadhara
- + More focus on the deepening and dissemination of SFS spirituality
- + Increased financial accountability, with special reference to the implementation of FAST
- + More steps toward better usage of infrastructures
- + Beneficial land purchases (26 acres in Nalgonda) and look out for some more
- + Forming of student wings of Fransalian Associates
- + Forming of Ex-students associations
- + Better cordial relations and contribution to the local church, through supply of personnel, availability for spiritual and formative animation, etc.
- + Increased participation and active interaction in the Forum meetings
- + More attention and strengthening of mission units, like PNG, Canada and Trinidad
- + More inter-province participation and collaboration, in reference to Franco Swiss province, English province and Arusha in East Africa province

II. CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS TOWARD FURTHER ORIENTATION: AREAS FOR CONTINUED GREATER ATTENTION FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

1. Stability and continuity of Vision - mission plan

This guards against too frequent change of priorities and policies with every new administration, in reference to administration, formation and appointing / sending personnel

2. Human resource management / Personnel planning

- 1) More human resourcefulness to man the increasing institutions or activities or ministries; thus, the challenge of sustainability and management, and not only starting various programs or institutions
- 2) Adequate training and equipping our personnel
- 3) Suitable personnel for any ministries
- 4) Preparing personnel, not only for philosophy or theology, but also for other specialisations for other ministries
- 5) Right placement of confreres - specialized in something, but not placed somewhere else
- 6) Proper utilisation of confreres - specialized in some area, and also sufficiently utilized in that direction
- 7) Talented and specialized confreres, exposed or availed on the regional or national level
- 8) Confreres - specialized, with a clear planning or vision
- 9) More specialisations, so as to ensure more scope, flexibility and quality among the various apostolates
- 10) As a policy, every year at least two confreres can be sent for higher studies
- 11) More interchange of confreres among the different apostolates
- 12) Regular Replacement of confreres abroad with some others, which can guard against possible 'attachment' and can ensure more possibilities for more

3. A Decentralised Governance

- 1) Decentralisation of governance, with distribution of roles and responsibilities and delegation of powers
- 2) Creating due space and time for provincial councilors, to do maximum justice to their role as councilors, so that they do not fail to be answerable to their specific duties, proper to councillorship, in their excessive commitment to their more particular functions like being a parish priest, principal etc.

- 3) In this direction, what is highly desirable is, that a provincial councilor is not burdened with major responsibilities like principal, parish priest, rector, director etc.
- 4) In this direction, what is important is also Effective functioning and monitoring of the Forums - ensuring the “to and fro” process, i.e. each provincial councilor takes the concerns and proposals of the concerned forum, to the provincial council meeting, presents them in the meeting, deliberates on them, discerns and decides upon what is feasible and what is not for valid reasons, and then gets back to the respective forum, with the feedback

4. An authentic, credible governance

- 1) Guarding against tendencies and possibilities of favouritism and partiality
- 2) Ensuring parity in implementing policies
- 3) Ensuring a sense of trust and confidentiality in the confreres

5. Fostering a culture of parity and fairness

- 1) Ensuring a fair treatment of confreres, with regard to
 - (a) Transfers and appointments
 - (b) Selection for ministry abroad
 - (c) Selection for specialisations
 - (d) Allocation of funds or projects
- 2) Creating a feeling of worth and appreciation for each confrere, as a blessing
- 3) Change of ministries can also help to break the chain of ‘perpetuity’ or ‘indispensability’, and also can help to safeguard the core identity
- 4) Policies are applied equally to all the confreres irrespectively; if any genuine exception is to be made and can be made with the due procedure, explanation is to be provided to the general knowledge of the confreres, so as to avoid unnecessary speculations

6. Fostering a culture of integration

- 1) Right from the time of vocation promotion, in the selection of the candidates
- 2) Already fostering spirit of integration, from the early formation stages
- 3) Ensuring that criteria for assessment and report shall be but the spiritual density, community propensity, personal authenticity and missionary vibrancy
- 4) Working toward inter-province formation houses and formators
- 5) Ensuring that appointments and responsibilities in the communities are oriented to giving space to everyone, building confidence, tapping talent, and equipping adequately with some skill or competence

7. Safeguarding and enhancing the quality of community living

- 1) Fostering a sense of belongingness and unity
- 2) Ensuring fidelity to common exercises like common prayer, holy Eucharist, common meal, recreation etc.
- 3) Ensuring monthly local community recollection and meeting with an agenda, where there is sharing and evaluation of life and ministries, tabling of the accounts, recording and sending the minutes to the provincial
- 4) Ensuring our communities to be prayer-centred and Eucharist-centred
- 5) Giving space to each member
- 6) Ensuring mutual respect, acceptance, appreciation, concern and support
- 7) A sense of collective responsibility, each contributing to the well-being of community
- 8) Team work, collaboration and coordination
- 9) Different roles and functions, seen not as isolated or independent duties or roles, but as belonging to and issuing from one religious community, under one local superior
- 10) Just and equitable distribution and sharing of responsibilities in the community, so that some are not over-loaded, and others feel unconsidered or unvalued

8. Promoting a clear Mission-thrust and mission- culture

- 1) Ensuring pastoral ministries with family thrust, either as a specialized ministry or as integrated into all our ministries
- 2) Ensuring without any fail, to appoint every new priest in mission, at least for the first three years
- 3) Ensuring a prior mission experience before assuming any leadership administrative office
- 4) Ensuring rather that the qualified also can be appointed in the missions
- 5) Ensuring that those in the missions, also can be qualified
- 6) Also ensuring a special caution against abuse and addiction with regard to the use of gadgets, media, communication and transportation, and consciously working on a restrained and responsible owning or using of them

9. Renewed thrust to a quality Formation

- 1) More focus to quality vocation promotion, avoiding projecting wrong motivations or allurements
- 2) More regular and extended vocation promotion, which embraces many states and cultures; let the vocation promotion not be confined to one or two states; let there be one common province vocation promoter who is the overall coordinator, whom another 2, 3 sub-promoters will assist; let the chief vocation coordinator be relatively free for doing adequate justice to his duty
- 3) Certain criteria in regard to the formators, to be borne in mind are: aptitude, training, team spirit, understanding and patience, stable presence, love for the formees, passion and commitment to the sacred duty of formation
- 4) A team of formators to be worked upon, making a blend of both the seniors and youngsters, thus a blend of experience, maturity and competence
- 5) To give a more collective face to formation, as a collective responsibility and fidelity
- 6) Emphasis not only on intellectual formation, but also communitarian and equipping, enabling one to become a community man, and efficient and effective, “help to become someone to exercise effectively his future priestly ministry”
- 7) This implies a formation, that is personal, future-oriented, aptitude and talent- identifying
- 8) A consistent progressive spiritual / personal guidance, ensuring the presence of a professional counsellor in each formation house, at least the availability of his services
- 9) Concerted and concentrated focus on minor seminary formation
- 10) A patient consistent accompaniment and a fair screening of the formees
- 11) Awareness of two pertinent problems of the present generation of formees, namely lack of motivation and lack of essentials
- 12) More care and judiciousness in the selection of the formators, especially for the beginning stages
- 13) Adequate staff for the minor seminary
- 14) Effective presence of spiritual direction
- 15) Regular monitoring by the provincial and follow up by the formation councilor
- 16) In particular reference to the location and mode of functioning of the present minor seminary, highly recommended are a couple of factors, like the change of location of the present dormitory to the old halls, a total bifurcation and separation of the cycles of the minor seminary and the junior college, whereby the seminarians no more do their intermediate studies as daily regular students; while they enroll themselves as regular college students and appear for the final exams, fulfilling the other basic minimum formal requirements, they shall be taught privately in the seminary classrooms itself, either by our own staff confreres or also by some lecturers from the college; it is felt by and large that it is not wise to expose the minor seminarians who are in their adolescence to such a high risk of immature emotional and relational interactions, leading them to disorientation and vocation crisis; thankfully, the provincial administration is also in the direction of separating the formation of the minor seminary from the education of the college, from the coming academic year
- 17) Thinking in the direction of inter-province formation houses, formators and mission-exposures

10. An intensified Drive toward Renewal Ministry, and Revitalisation

- 1) Frankly speaking, much is desired in this direction
- 2) We need to ensure prompt and intense efforts concerning -
 - (a) Team of preachers, (b) Centre for retreat, renewal and animation - be it Ross Hill or Jaggampet or Pamidi, or any other place (the present White house / Dhyanaashram, Vizag, is not at all suitable for a retreat house), (c) Contents of the preaching, with special grounding and adherence to the Church traditions, liturgy etc., (d) Monitoring of the team by the Administration, (e) Stability of the team members, (f) Furnishing the preachers with some requirements like a vehicle, media facilities
- 3) The modalities how this team can work, can be worked out -
 - (a) Wherever and whenever possible, they can operate as a single or two teams, depending on the number of the members
 - (b) The team also can operate as different sub-teams, each with one confrere as the head, assisted by few lay helpers
 - (c) Initially they can concentrate on and start with our own missions and parishes

11. Value-oriented and supportive Education

- 1) To constantly check and see whether we are conscious and loyal to the very purpose of education, as a value-promoting and transformative mission, and not merely directed to money and career
- 2) Constantly questioning ourselves - what are our priorities? What are we striving for? What are we promoting? Whom are we serving? How much are we pro-rural and pro-poor?
- 3) Constantly checking upon, whether there is some over-glamorisation of education ministry, which may be reflected in the - selection of the venue of the meetings, in the level of living, in the means of transportation, in the possession of things or facilities etc.
- 4) Taking care not only of the addition of class-rooms or infrastructure, but much more of the all-round development of the students
- 5) To be sincerely checked against is, any scope for self-profit or dishonesty, especially with regard to the sale of books or uniform, that we do not lay unnecessary financial burden on the parents
- 6) The real issue is not so much to do away completely with the schools, but to improve upon their quality
- 7) This implies, that we concentrate, not so much on multiplying new schools, but more on strengthening and bettering the existing ones, by providing better amenities, facilities, equipments,
- 8) Along with improving the quality of the working conditions, we need to work upon quality teachers, the quality of headmaster, and also evolving a beneficial vision and long-standing planning
- 9) Some important questions to bear in mind are: whether we should involve more and more the women religious into our schools, handing over administration and discipline? Whether we can give more encouragement to the local people and local religious? Whether we can avoid the practice of perpetual educators, with more scope to send them to missions as well? Whether we can search for more possibilities of serving the rural masses, etc.
- 10) Also every educational institution shall ensure the forming and functioning of ex-alumni association, and also a student wing of Fransalian Associates

12. Innovative Ministries

- 1) Serious reflection and efforts must be there with regard to promoting creative and relevant ministries, such as faith renewal, family counselling, youth animation, educative preaching, catechetical training, social empowerment, legal aid, faith and value orientation through literature etc.
- 2) It is in this context, we must remember that the changing times summon us, not to be content with mere parochial sacramental ministry, but to explore new avenues, with diversified ministries, to make a tangible and visible impact on the local church, marking a different contribution as MSFS

- 3) Some of the innovative ways of ministering are: radio station, a province website, a more collaborated province magazine, a pastoral / catechetical centre, etc.

13. **Aging with dignity and gracefully**

- 1) We can never forget the fact that our pioneers and senior confreres have spent their entire life in sacrifice and commitment for the mission, and therefore they deserve a dignified treatment
- 2) Thus, as many as the elderly confreres can be absorbed into different communities, to enrich those communities with their mature and experienced presence, depending on the feasibility of access to health care, as well as the disposal of those communities
- 3) However, we can also ensure special care-homes, be they province-wise or inter-province-wise, leaving the choice to the elderly confreres, with the provision of stable health care and attendance