

LUMEN CHRISTI INSTITUTE

Fransaliam Centre for Philosophy, Pastoral Administration and Social Work
Maji ya Chai, P.O Box 1187, Arusha, Tanzania



Table of Contents

- Christmas Message from the Director of LCI
- News from LCI Scholasticate
- News and Events From the Department of Philosophy
- Formators Training Institute
- Graduation of the Catechists
- A Journey Towards our Goal
- Lumen Christi Dispensary
- MSFS Foundation Day at LCI 2023
- Sacerdotal Diamond jubilee Celebration of Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhiyil MSFS

Christmas Message from the Director of LCI

In every advent season leading to Christmas, we hear this name 'Emmanuel', that is, 'God with us'. During Advent we anticipate the Lord's coming with hope - hope that keeps us from despair and the darkness of sin. It is a hope that urges us to be kind, loving and compassionate towards one another. It is a hope that encourages our faith in a merciful God who continues to pour His grace upon us. It was 2024 years ago, when Angel Gabriel told a young virgin of Nazareth Mary that "you shall bear a child and shall call Him Emmanuel." What was her response and what is ours?



God who fashioned the universe, dares to be born in time, born of a virgin, born in human flesh, coming in the weakness and dependence of a new-born child. Jesus is born to those with humility and wisdom to receive his love beyond all telling, as a defenseless child. As a humble and defenseless child, he is not the angry, arrogant, and judgmental God, but the one who challenges us to be there for all who are vulnerable, wounded, burdened, troubled and alone. Just as God the father once said to Mary, in Nazareth, will you give my son a human nature, He asks each of us today, will you allow the Word to take flesh in your life? Will you in what you say, in what you do, in how you live, give a human nature to my son? When you and I say, 'yes', the incarnation continues. In those moments you have incarnated Christ in your own unique way. When we birth Christ on the pile of our human brokenness, into our existential situation, He becomes Emmanuel.

This Advent, let us also look in the most unlikely places: look in the war-torn places, in the streets where the homeless sleep, in the refugee camps, in the hospitals and the nursing homes, at the newborn babies and the senior citizens. Let us remember that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

I express my sincere thanks and gratitude to you dear fathers, brothers, sisters, friends, benefactors, and all those who are connected to LCI one way or the other for your love, constant support, and encouragement for the last 13 years. Your prayers, support and encouragement mean a lot to us. With deep appreciation for all that you do for our Institute I wish to present this volume of the newsletter and I hope you will enjoy reading it! Once again Merry Christmas and Grace filled New Year 2024!

Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil, MSFS
Director, Lumen Christi Institute



News from LCI Scholasticate

Fr. Johnson Pathiyil, MSFS
Rector

Lumen Christi Scholasticate has once again come alive with the energy of young lives as we ushered in the new academic year on September 1, 2023. Before the academic sessions commenced, the brothers participated in their annual retreat, skillfully guided by Fr. Ssentamu Rutithical, which was warmly received by all in attendance.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to Rev. Fr. James Panthalanickel for his exceptional service as the Rector of Lumen Christi Scholasticate over the past four years. We extend our congratulations to him on his appointment as the Provincial of East Africa Province and wish him every success in his future role in leading and inspiring the province of East Africa.

We are privileged to have a diverse group of 62 Brothers (36 MSFS, 1 Franciscan Missionary of Charity, and 25 Diocesans) representing seven countries, currently engaged in the study of philosophy at Lumen Christi Institute. With grateful hearts, we welcome new additions to our esteemed faculty, namely Fr. Johnson Pathiyil (Rector) and Fr. Augusto Antonio (Registrar and Librarian).

In celebration of significant milestones, we marked the Sacerdotal Diamond Jubilee of Rev. Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhiyil MSFS (Vice Rector) on September 21, 2023. On the same day, we inaugurated the newly constructed football court for the scholasticate. September 30th saw a dual celebration, combining Founder's Day festivities with Freshers' Day.

As we approach the Christmas season and the dawn of the New Year in 2024, we extend our warmest wishes to everyone for a joyous and blessed celebration.





NEWS AND EVENTS FROM DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The commencement of the 14th academic year, 2023-2024, marked a significant milestone in the history of Lumen Christi Institute. The day was graced by the distinguished presence of Rev. Fr. Jim Greenfield OSFS, the President of De Sales University, Allentown, and Fr. Kevin Nadolski OSFS, the Vice-president of Mission at De Sales University. The auspicious day commenced with a solemn Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Kevin and concelebrated by several other priests.

Following the Mass, the institute community gathered in the auditorium where students from various academic years presented songs for the audience. Fr. Jim Greenfield delivered a thought-provoking *Lectio Divina* on the theme 'Avanti: The way of Pope Francis and St. Francis de Sales.' Emphasizing the significance of unity, he spoke about LCI's mission to cultivate social poets—men and women prepared to serve society. The *Lectio Divina* was succeeded by an interactive session, featuring questions and discussions on diverse topics encompassing both life and academics.

Fr. Ajish C. Antony MSFS, the Dean of Studies, presented an insightful report on the academic progress of the institute, highlighting various courses and developmental initiatives. In his inaugural speech, Fr. Thomas Kochalumchuvattil MSFS, the director of the institute, extended a warm welcome to the incoming first-year students and officially declared the academic year open. The event was further honored by the presence of Rev. Fr. James Panthalanickel MSFS, the Provincial Superior of East Africa Province, and other esteemed dignitaries.

In his concluding remarks, President Fr. Jim Greenfield expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and thanked the students for their active participation. He also acknowledged the institute's administration for their dedicated work, assuring them of cooperation in achieving the mission and goals of Lumen Christi. The guests reciprocated the warm welcome, appreciating the cordial atmosphere during their stay at the institute.

With the official commencement of the academic year, the student body, comprising formators, catechists, and scholastics, eagerly embarked on their educational journey.

Fr. Ajish MSFS
Dean of Studies

The ninth batch of the Formators Training at the Lumen Christi Institute commenced its journey on the 1st of September 2023, comprising nineteen dedicated individuals, with three fathers and sixteen sisters. Our hearts overflow with gratitude to God for granting us the privilege of being integral members of the LCI community. In this nurturing environment, we receive spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and psychological nourishment that enriches our beings. The ongoing formation program, woven flawlessly into our daily lives, encompasses a spectrum of activities—retreat, classes, meditation, recollections, eucharistic celebrations, reflection, lectio Divina, and daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. These elements collectively contribute to our spiritual renewal, as our religious lives undergo a profound transformation through the valuable insights imparted by various facilitators.



The rich tapestry of our intercultural living profoundly influences our path toward unity and fellowship. Our community is a vibrant mosaic, bringing together members from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and India, representing seventeen congregations and one diocese. This diversity dynamically enhances our capacity to collaborate seamlessly in both academic endeavors and communal activities, cultivating within us a deep and meaningful sense of belonging to the esteemed LCI fraternity. We extend our heartfelt contentment and appreciation for the exceptional services provided to us, including accommodation, nourishing meals, Wi-Fi access, and more. Our sincere thanks go to the administration and our Animator, Fr. Devasia Manalel, for their unwavering support and constant accompaniment on this transformative journey.

Sr. Epiphania Joseph Kimaro, UMI



The Graduation of Catechists

On the 17th of November 2023, a batch of forty-two catechists successfully completed an intensive catechetical training program at the Lumen Christi Institute. The graduation ceremony commenced with a solemn Eucharistic Celebration, led by Reverend Father Benedict Kashe from the Archdiocese of Arusha, accompanied by the entire LCI staff.

During the ceremony, the catechists were presented with certificates, acknowledging the successful completion of their rigorous course. Reverend Father Benedict Kashe, serving as the main celebrant, officially blessed and commissioned the catechists for their future ministry. He expressed gratitude on behalf of the Archbishop for the Institute's commendable efforts in organizing the comprehensive catechetical training.

Hailing from various dioceses in Tanzania and Kenya, the catechists conveyed their appreciation and satisfaction with the three-month course, vowing to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in their service. Many of them expressed a desire for the Institute to introduce a diploma program in catechetical training, envisioning enhanced effectiveness in their ministry.

The celebration reached its conclusion with a heartfelt expression of gratitude by Father Moses Okoth, who spoke on behalf of the LCI community. The event marked not only the culmination of an educational journey for the catechists but also the beginning of a renewed commitment to their vital role in spreading the teachings of the faith.

Fr. Moses Okoth MSFS

A Journey Towards Our Goal



Events From The

Fransalian Hekima Seminary



Embracing the dictum of the esteemed saint, St. Francis de Sales, who advocated for accomplishing little things with great love, marked the inception of the Fransalian Hekima Seminary Secondary School (FHSSS).

FHSSS, a thriving institution, proudly stands as one of the premier schools established and overseen by the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS) in Maji Ya Chai, Arusha. Renowned for academic excellence, the school takes pride in the outstanding performance of its students. A moment of prestige and celebration unfolded when the District of Meru declared Fransalian Hekima one of the best schools in Arusha in 2022, an achievement celebrated by the entire school community, including the management, staff, and students.

As Fransalians, our commitment is dedicated to fostering the integral growth and development of young, energetic minds through the impartation of value-based education. FHSSS creates an environment of prayer, intellectual pursuit, and self-disciplined character formation, blending continuous learning and co-curricular activities to enhance energy and concentration. The

dedicated and industrious teachers instill in students the vital life skills, enabling them to become capable, efficient, and responsible citizens of Tanzania. The eco-friendly surroundings further provide a conducive atmosphere for the blossoming of young scholars in every aspect of their potential. The school's motto, "KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM," guides their pursuit of knowledge, encouraging constant self-improvement and restructuring.

The elevated stature of this institution is attributed to the blessings of the Almighty God, the aspirations of the School Management, the dedication of both teaching and non-teaching staff, and the unwavering support of parents and goal-oriented students. Together, these components have propelled FHSSS to commendable heights in its journey towards the overarching goal of holistic education and character development.

Sr. Divya, FCC,
The Headmistress of FHSSS

One profound aspect of Jesus's public ministry is centered around healing. The Gospels not only recount instances of Jesus curing various diseases (cf Mt 8:2-3; Lk 17:12-19; Mt 12:13; Mk 1:31; Mt 15:28; Mt 20:34), but also emphasize His commission to His disciples to extend this healing ministry. In Luke 9:1-2, Jesus empowers the Twelve Disciples to heal the sick and cast out demons, commissioning them to spread the Good News of the Kingdom of God and provide healing (Mt 10:1.8).

Recognizing the needs of the people, the Lumen Christi Institute actively participates in the Healing Ministry of Jesus through its Dispensary. Collaborating with the Franciscan Clarist Sisters (FCC), the Institute strives to offer solace and healing to those who seek assistance at the Dispensary. The doors are open to all, especially the poor and needy, creating an environment where visitors consistently feel comforted, cared for, and loved.

Lumen Christi Dispensary



Embracing
the Healing Ministry of Christ
with Love

The dedicated staff at the Dispensary approaches their work with a commitment to serving the community in the best possible manner. Visitors from approximately nine to ten villages express their faith and trust by seeking care at the Dispensary. Aligning with Pope Francis's message on the World Day of the Sick, the Dispensary becomes an integral part of the Church's mission, bringing the tenderness of God to the suffering humanity in the Maji ya Chai area.

Every month, around 650 patients receive utmost care and tender services. The Dispensary extends its services beyond its walls, reaching out to children in different schools and residents of remote villages, providing vaccinations and other essential medications.

Operated with the support and guidance of the District Hospital, the Dispensary undergoes timely inspections and receives medications, vaccinations, injections, and mosquito nets, which are freely distributed to patients. Gratitude is extended to LCI and MSFS fathers for their unwavering support and collaboration with the sisters and staff in the Dispensary.



Sr. Ramya, FCC,
Manager



The LCI community joyously commemorated the 185th year of the existence of the Missionaries of Saint Francis de Sales (MSFS) with a day filled with vibrant yet measured celebrations. The day commenced with morning spiritual activities, featuring special prayers dedicated to the entire Fransalian Family. Subsequently, the routine activities of the Institute unfolded.

In response to the Superior General's appeal, the LCI community, encompassing its five units—the Scholasticate, Formators, Catechists, Dispensary, and School—united for the ceremonial “Planting of 185 Trees” at the SFS Garden. The event took place at 4:00 p.m. and was attended by LCI staff members, scholastics, formators, catechists, and FCC Sisters.

MSFS FOUNDATION-DAY AT LCI, 2023

Fr. Antony Kolenchery, MSFS, the Founder of the Sisters of Sacred Sciences (SSS), and Fr. Innocent Ngowi, the Councillor of the East Africa Province for Innovative Ministry, graced the occasion. Following a brief message from the Superior of the LCI Community, Fr. Thomas Kochallumchuvatil, MSFS, all participants planted, eco-friendly, the trees with enthusiasm.

The pinnacle of the celebration occurred at 6:45 p.m. with the Holy Mass presided over by the Local Superior, Fr. Thomas Kochallumchuvatil, and con-celebrated by all the community members, including the Brothers and Formators. The festivities concluded with an ‘Agape Meal,’ immediately following the Mass, at the Scholasticate Dining Hall.



Fr. Augusto Antonio, MSFS



Memories of Foundation Day at LCI





Sacerdotal Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhiyil, MSFS

Rev. Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhiyil, MSFS, stands as one of our most esteemed confreres, dedicating a lifetime to making profound contributions to our Congregation. Throughout his illustrious journey as a religious figure, priest, formator, educator, and administrator, he has left an indelible mark. In grateful recognition of the precious gift that is the Diamond Jubilarian, the LCI community gathered in joy and celebrated his sacerdotal Diamond Jubilee on the 21st of September 2023. Various dignitaries graced the occasion, totaling more than 200 including invitees, residents of the Institute: the brothers, catechists, and formators and staff. The day commenced with a solemn morning prayer. At 10:00 am, a spirited football match took place among the seminarians in tribute to Fr. Abraham.

The jubilant festivities commenced with a concelebrated Holy Eucharist in the Seminary Chapel at 5:30 pm, attended by numerous confreres from Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda was presided over by the jubilarian. In the homily, Fr. Devasia Manalel articulated the significance of commemorating the jubilee. He fondly reminisced about Fr. Abraham, highlighting his compassionate approach to life's challenges. Fr. Manalel also shared personal anecdotes from their working together in the Northeast India Province, offering a heartfelt glimpse into their shared experiences.





The felicitations that ensued were marked by the presence of key figures, including Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvellil, Superior General, Rev. Fr. Johnson Kallidukkil, Assistant Superior General, and Rev. Fr. Agnelo Fernandes, Former Superior General, who joined online to express their immense joy and satisfaction. Rev. Fr. James Panthalanickel, the Provincial of the East Africa Province, and Rev. Fr. Mathew Thazhathukunnel, the former Provincial of the East Africa Province, also participated in this meaningful celebration. Following the felicitations program, the community, along with the esteemed guests, proceeded to the exquisitely decorated and illuminated Refectory for a delightful dinner. The atmosphere resonated with gratitude and admiration for the remarkable journey and contributions of Rev. Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhiyil.

Expressing our gratitude for his inspirational presence in the LCI, we earnestly pray that the Almighty continues to shower Rev. Fr. Abraham Mullenkuzhiyil with blessings of robust health in body, mind, and spirit. May he be granted many more fruitful years to selflessly serve both the community and the congregation.

Fr. Ajish Cheeramban, MSFS
Fr. Devasia Manalel, MSFS

Lumen Christi Institute



*Wish You Happy Christmas
&
Prosperous New Year 2024*