

A Tribute to
FR. FRANCIS KHARJIA sdb
From fisher-man to fisher-of-men
1952 - 2015

Fr. Francis - A Man of God and a Man for Others



A year seems to have passed away so quickly and it reminds us that our dear and beloved confrere, Fr. Francis Kharjia, has just gone away from us.

The death of a priest is unlike the death of any other: we feel it differently, deeply. We sense that in losing him, we have lost not only the man but also his unique way of manifesting God. The voice that spoke of God has been silenced; hands that once blessed are impotent. Since a priest is one who takes on the person of Christ, his leave of us is somewhat of a loss in our very communication with the Lord. No one will ever again exemplify Christ for us in the singular way that Fr. Francis Kharjia has done.

Our Lord Himself indicated that special relationship He enjoyed with His priests when, at the Last Supper, He poured out from His Sacred Heart His own priestly prayer: "Father, I pray for those you have given Me; keep them in Your name; they are not of the world; sanctify them in truth; may the love with which You loved Me be in them, and I in them" (cf. John 17).

It was this union with Christ that guided and shaped the life of Father Francis. In his case this was so much so that it would be difficult to define his personality, even to conceive of his life, apart from the priesthood. Always dignified, courteous, humble and kind, he seemed to inhabit a different world from ours—certainly different from the godless one that inspires ambition, greed, lust and all the capital vices to which so many have succumbed in our day.

Father Francis stood out as a man of God and a Man for others. Everything he did was first taken to the Lord in prayer at the wee hours of the morning. In all his assignments as Rector of communities, or Novice Master or Director, he always had a burning passion for God and a compassion for humanity.

We thank God for giving us the opportunity of living with Fr. Francis Kharjia and we pray that like him we too may be filled with the zeal and passion that he had, for God and for humanity.

**Fr. Godfrey D'Souza sdb
Provincial**



Born: 29 Nov 1952 Uttan,
near Mumbai



Joined Don Bosco's Lonavala,
1966

Profession of 1st vows
24 May 1973



Ordination 7 Dec 1983

Don Bosco Kuwait 2011 to 2015
Died: 17 June 2015

From fisher-man to fisher-of-men

SALESIAN LIFE- CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD

YEAR	HOUSE	RESPONSIBILITY
1972 - 1973	The Retreat, Yercaud	Novice
1973 - 1975	The Retreat, Yercaud	Student of Philosophy
1975 - 1976	D. B. Y. C., Pune	College Student
1976 - 1978	Don Bosco, Lonavla	Practical Training
1978 - 1980	D. B. Y. C., Pune	College Studies (B. A. Marathi)
1980 - 1984	KJC, Bangalore	Student of Theology
1984 - 1986	S. H. Parish, Yerwada	Administrator & APP
1986 - 1887	St. John's, Ahmednagar	B. Ed. Student & APP
1987 - 1989	St. John's, Ahmednagar	M. A. (Marathi) Student
1989 - 1994	Fatima Church, Jaitala	In-Charge, PP & Principal
1995 (Jan to June)	Generalate, Rome	Attended: Missiology Course
1995 June - 1996	Fatima Church, Jaitala	In-Charge, PP & Principal
1996 - 1997	St. Ann's, Ahmednagar	In-Charge & Parish priest
1997 - 1999	Don Bosco, Lonavla	Rector of the Aspirantate
2000 (Jan to June)	UPS, Rome	Attended: Course for Formators
2000 - 2001	Don Bosco, Naigaon	Assistant Parish Priest
2001 - 2007	STI, Nashik	Novice Master & Rector
2007 - 2011	S. H. Parish, Yerwada	Rector & Parish Priest
2011 - 2015	IEAS, Salmiya, Kuwait	Director of the School

1. *Francis "dada" - The Early Years*



Fr. Francis was born in Uttan, a small fishing hamlet, just north of Mumbai, India, on 29th November 1952 to Veronica and Sebastian Kharjia, a fishing family. The eldest of eleven children, Francis assumed the role of "dada" (big brother) from an early age. He was a sickly child. But due to financial constraints they couldn't afford the constant medical care he needed.

Once there was no money for medicines so mother took small Francis and placed him at the altar and said "Mother Mary give good health to my child. I offer him to you". From then on Francis' health improved. It's no wonder that Francis always had a great devotion to Mother Mary!

Francis' early schooling was at St. Joseph's in Uttan. He was already playing a little apostle collecting children, playing with them, teaching prayers & singing together. He went for daily Mass & received Communion.

Fr. John Rumao the Principal observed Francis and felt he would make a good priest and sent him to Don Bosco's Lonavala. Being the eldest, our parents objected as they wanted him to take up the responsibility for the family. But Francis said, "God will look after us". He did not eat for two days and so our parents gave in to his wishes.

Francis joined Lonavala and within a year picked up English and other religious disciplines. After a year when he visited the family for the holidays he helped our parents in the household work and especially our dad in mending the nets. He not only kept the house clean but also the neighbouring areas much to the delight of others in our little community. Our parents' generosity especially towards the poor had a deep impact on Francis and influenced his helping attitude.

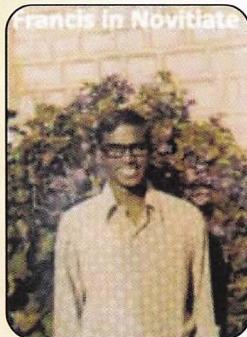
"Dada" was always called upon, when family decisions had to be taken. They all respected him, as he listened to them and gave them his loving advice.



**Sr. Ivy Kharjia
(Sister of Fr. Francis)**

2. Dominic Savio - The Formative Years

Fr. Francis - our Dominic Savio



A year after Fr. Francis joined, circa 1968, Fr. Rumao chose another group of about 6 boys from the Uttan school to join Don Bosco Lonavala. Among them were Fr. Bonnie, Fr. Diego, Br. Vincent Nigel and Fr Reggi, who are still Salesians.

Francis was just like Dominic Savio and took care of us. We didn't know English but he guided us very gently and lovingly. He was a living example for us and just by watching him we learned how to adjust into boarding school life.

Whenever we did not understand Francis patiently explained things to us. He never laughed at our mistakes. We admired his piety. During the holidays Francis organized outings for us sometimes better than the school did. We never missed Prayers or Rosary during our outing.

As brothers, Fr. Francis and I organized about 22 leadership and vocation camps in the Marathi speaking areas like Vasai, Uttan and Nagar. Some of the boys who joined are still Salesians. After a heavy day's work Francis always made me say the Rosary. He was the last to go to bed and first to get up. He kept his daily diary. It was like a chronicle.

In Nagpur when Fr. Francis was Principal he slapped a boy and could not forgive himself. In the afternoon he did not come for lunch. The Salesians went in search of him. Francis was there in the church with his hands extended maybe repenting for his mistake. He said sorry to that boy.

By Fr. Diego Nunes sdb



Original Br. Francis Kharja



3. Memories

Fr. Francis - A Man of Sincerity



I remember Francis, from the days when he was in initial formation, as a person who was always deeply pastoral. We used to be students together in Pune, and Francis was deeply involved in pastoral work in our parish in Yerwada.

As novice master, he was rather strict, and I expected that his novices would be somewhat distant from him. Instead, I have met many who appreciated him deeply - and he had novices not only from our province but also from Trichy. I think it was his basic sincerity, and his lack of partiality, that got across to people.

It is hard to understand how he, who never had any particular health problems, went off so soon and so suddenly. But perhaps he was ready, and so was called. "Whom the gods love, die young," the Romans here like to say. I thank God for his life and service, and I am sure he is praying for all of us, for our young people, and for the many people with whom and for whom we work, most especially for Kuwait.

Fr. Ivo Coelho sdb
Councillor for Formation

Fr. Francis - Unfazed and Cool

I have very pleasant and fond memories of Rev. Fr. Francis Kharjia, which go back several years. I remember him as a young brother at Don Bosco Youth Centre, Koregaon Park, Pune, when he, together with Fr. Diego Nunes, at that time also a brother, were helping Fr. P. D. Thomas, the then parish priest of Yerwada. They were literally the right and left hand of Fr. Thomas, and were much loved and appreciated by the parishioners and the children. At that time already I noticed his zealous apostolic spirit, sustained by a sincere piety and self-sacrifice, and manifested in a cheerful simplicity and availability to all.

Several years later, when he was parish priest in Nagpur, I had occasion to pay him a visit in his mission station. I was travelling by the night train from Mumbai to Nagpur, and was carrying along a heavy parcel of wall calendars for the community, the school and the parish. Kharjia came to pick me up at the





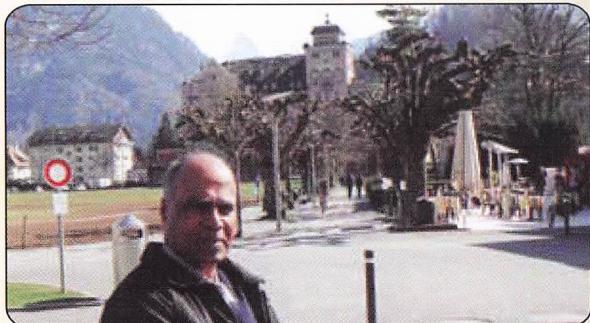
railway station with a small scooter – the only vehicle the community possessed. I got on the bike as a pillion rider, and with my luggage and the parcel sitting on top of each thigh, we set off at a cheerful pace. It was a cold December morning, I recollect, but I did not mind the cold, for I was trying to hold on for dear life on the bumpy road, balancing the two pieces on my thighs, and preventing them from falling off. Kharjia was blissfully unaware of my plight, busy as he was trying to keep the scooter steady, and peering into the semi-darkness at the road ahead. Then suddenly, the scooter sputtered, muttered a few more groans, and came to a complete halt. Nothing that Kharjia did thereafter could coax the scooter to get into action again. We were still a couple of miles away from our residence and on a lonely stretch of road. There

was no one in sight, and in those days, there were no mobile phones. The only thing left to do was to push the scooter all the way to the house. Which we did, puffing and hawing all the way home. In this memorable morning misadventure, I realized how unfazed and cool Kharjia was. He did not get upset, nor did he complain or make excuses. He simply took this predicament in his stride, as part of his mission experience, and went about what was needed to be done. That is Kharjia for you – a man straightforward and solid, doing what he should be doing, and doing it as best he could.

He brought these sterling qualities of heart and mind to every responsibility he was entrusted with, and that is why he did so much good wherever he went. That is why too, he was so much loved by all who knew him, and so much missed when the Lord took him away. May the Lord grant him the eternal reward he has prepared for his good and faithful servant.

Kharjia, we thank you for the wonderful witness of your life, which has enriched our lives in more ways than one. Your presence with us was a blessing, your passing away a painful parting, the memory of you a cherished gift.

Fr. Joaquim D'souza sdb
Former Regional Councillor, South Asia



Fr. Francis - Epitome of Modesty



Francis Kharjia did his preparatory course in English and then joined 'the batch' in the 8th std at Don Bosco, Lonavla...that quiet, shy and unassuming boy was synonymous with saintliness. If some mischief was being planned or perpetrated, Kharjia was not part of it.

He never raised his voice, and did not quarrel with anyone, 'What men!' was his signature tag line. He could never say a negative word to/about anybody, and he did not use the play-ground to air out his grievances and disappointments.

He was the epitome of modesty and I believe he tried to imitate Dominic Savio in this regard. I know of companions who would try to unnerve him by saying or doing silly things, but he kept his cool and composure, even though one could see him squirm.

He loved travelling and every such journey would be filled with experiences and anecdotes, which were hilarious and unbelievable... seemed like "it-only-happens-with-Kharjia".

We always called him and knew him as Kharjia, then one fine day he was asking all to address him as Francis. I believe, he blossomed and grew with this shift of name, just like he did when he stopped wearing his wig. He was brimming with confidence and looked unbelievably smart and handsome.

He was a people's priest, available every day, on time, without fail. His soft voice and calm tone put many a penitent at ease and a troubled soul at rest.

He was a community person, loved his community and found joy in doing things with the community. His last hours were spent in the company of his confreres, chatting, fooling, and recalling old times. He was happy, very happy.

As part of 'the batch' – we miss him, we always will.

Ordination Silver Jubilee Retreat at Amravati by Bp. Lourdes Daniel



Fr. Elson Barreto sdb
Economer, Mumbai Province

Fr. Francis - A Cheerful Salesian



As the First Death Anniversary approaches, edifying memories of Fr. Francis Kharjia crowd my mind. I had known him since 1971, as an aspirant in Don Bosco Lonavla; as a cleric in his formation period and through the years of his priestly ministry in the province of Mumbai. I remember Fr. Francis to this day as a Salesian - a Priest faithful to God and a pastor with a deep consistent spirituality.

Fr. Francis' unexpected demise was a painful shock to his beloved family and a great loss to our provincial community. We held him in high esteem for his simple life, friendly dealings and unassuming commitment to his Priestly vocation and Salesian Charism.

Personally, I found in him a very saintly and obedient Salesian, cheerful and selflessly obliging. His social skills and pastoral zeal endeared him to his confreres, the children and people he worked for in several parishes and schools.

Sent by God's providence, his apostolate on the Arab sands of Kuwait, is his last eloquent sermon on Salesian missionary, generosity and fidelity even unto death. I believe Fr. Francis, our own "Francis Xavier" patron of our missions, is already interceding for peace in the Arab world and invoking God's protection and blessings on the Salesian pastoral presence in a world that challenges our church ministry and youth apostolate.

May Our merciful Lord through the intercession of our dear Fr. Francis Kharjia, inspire us to emulate his example and to offer our lives as educators in the Arab world.

Fr. Tony D'souza sdb
Former Provincial, Mumbai Province
Former Director, IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

Fr. Francis - Epitome of Sweetness



The first time I met Fr Francis was way back in 1988. I was sent to St John's Bhingar to organize the summer club. Fr Francis was then studying for his MA in Marathi literature. He struck me as a man devoted to his studies, prayer and to the community moments of togetherness.

I was privileged to know him more closely in Kuwait. He has been a real blessing to me. We were transferred to Kuwait at the same time. I was carrying a backlog of some painful memories. The transfer to Kuwait was not easy for me. To assuage my pain and anxiety, I would go to the school and meet Fr Francis very often just to bare my heart. He would keep aside his work and would make time for me by listening to me very patiently. I thank him for this sweet gesture which enabled me to overcome my painful memories.

Here in Kuwait, he was the Director of our Don Bosco school and actively involved in our parish ministries. His kind and gentle spirit were very endearing and comforting, so teachers and parishioners often opened up to him very easily. His charming smile warmed the hearts of many.

Fr. Francis embodied the Don Bosco charism and could always be seen among the children especially during the school breaks. He had a great concern for the poor and economically disadvantaged, often waiving their school fees so the children didn't miss out on their education.

He had a great interest in vocations and held monthly meetings with those inclined, regaling them with tales of Don Bosco. He would visit their homes regularly thus encouraging and guiding them and their families.



Pastorally, Fr. Francis was a very dedicated priest. His sermons were always well prepared. He was always obliging with the sacraments of confession and Mass. He never complained nor grumbled about any hardship, but took everything in his stride. He loved singing and enjoyed singing the psalms for the morning and evening prayers.



Punctuality was his middle name – he always arrived two minutes before time. You could adjust your clock by his time keeping!

Fr. Francis was dearly loved by all. When he passed away people were streaming in all evening and past midnight to pay their last respects. Even little children flocked to his residence to catch a glimpse of their dear Fr. Francis. His passing has left a void in our parish and in our school. It took me a long time to get over his demise. I miss him and especially miss his warm smile and melodious singing voice.

The wonderful quote from St. Francis de Sales was also evident in our dear Fr Francis - 'You can catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a barrel of vinegar.' He was truly an epitome of gentleness and sweetness.

Fr. Blany Pinto sdb
Rector, Don Bosco Kuwait

Fr. Francis - Personification of Humility & Poverty



If there was something that I will always remember throughout my life, it will be this... It was 6.33 p.m. and I got a call from the Parish Priest awaiting the arrival of Fr. Francis to celebrate Holy Mass. With my mobile in hand and calling on the name of Fr. Francis I opened the door ... there he was sitting on the chair with his mouth open looking up to the heavens as if in total surrender to his Creator. He was no more. This moment left me speechless for a while; and till today, I can never ever forget that image before me. I truly miss him now as I had grown fond of his presence.

A MAN MEEK AND MILD. Fr. Francis was physically thick skinned coming from the shores of Uttan, a fishing colony. But his heart was as soft as butter and as sweet as honey. He could never hurt even an ant. He was always found to be affable and lovable. He spoke gently to everyone around him and would never raise his voice. Even if he had to chide someone he would do so very softly but firmly. Then he would come to my office and tell me that he felt very bad for having spoken harshly. He would feel terribly guilty about the same. Such was this meek priest in our midst.

A MAN WHO LOVED POVERTY. After the funeral which took place in Mumbai, I went with my Rector, Fr. Blany, to find out if there were any articles of value in his room but we could find none. All presents gifted him were still in gift-wrapping papers. There were a few clothes and just two cassocks. He had many new clothes but they were just lying there. He limited himself to the minimum. Although he lived frugally, he wanted the community members to have the best. He never liked wastage of any sort be it water, food or clothes, etc. He was a man of few needs. In fact we had to force him to accept certain things that we as a community would receive on certain occasions.



A MAN DEEPLY IN UNION WITH GOD. One look at Fr. Francis would tell you that he was a man deeply in union with God. He would often be found praying in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. He was punctual for all community spiritual practices. Every time the community would go out in a vehicle, we would start the Holy Rosary. He would remind us of the various feasts and other Liturgical events coming up. His opening prayer as Director at various school meetings and functions was always a deeply inspired personal prayer coming from his heart. He never missed his Moral Science classes. He would take great care to prepare his sermons and was ready to say Mass or go out to hospitals and visit the homes of those who needed his services, any time, any day.

A MAN FOR THE YOUNG. If there is one common and lasting memory in the minds of our teachers and students it would be this... Fr. Francis in their midst every morning before class, every single break and after school. He would excuse himself from every meeting and religiously move out with the students during recess time. Any time we called on him to be with the young he would willingly come and participate. The past pupils who come in every now and then, unfailingly inquire about Fr. Francis and invariably would say how they cherished those moments he spent with them during recreation.

May Fr. Francis be in our midst always. May his soul rest in peace!

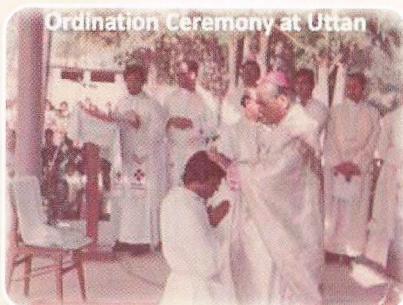
Fr. Lionel Braganza sdb
Principal, IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

Fr. Francis - A Man with A Pastoral Heart

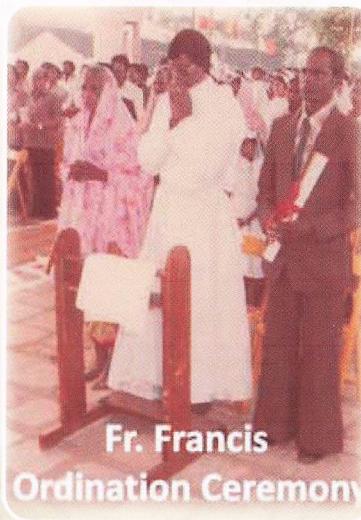
I was fortunate to work with Kharjia in 1993 when I had come to Jaitala for my summer apostolate. Even though there was no proper accommodation available for three clerics he made us feel very much at home. He was encouraging and gave the necessary support for the club. He is one of the priests who is well remembered by the people.

He spent seven years in Jaitala, what we see today at Jaitala is the fruit of Francis' hard work. He also encouraged many boys to join the priesthood but unfortunately none did. At that time the relationship between the fathers and sisters was excellent. Due to this, the pastoral and educational work was very effective. The unity of the fathers and sisters sent a very good message to the people. He was quite systematic and used to plan things well. His command over the Marathi language was good and therefore it was well appreciated by the people of the parish as well as the school.

Fr. Manuel Murzello sdb



Ordination Ceremony at Uttan



Fr. Francis
Ordination Ceremony



Fr. Francis Celebrating Mass
at St. Therese, Kuwait

Fr. Francis - The Potter



As an aspirant in his care, I felt like I was the clay and he was the potter who helped shape my life. Coming from a vernacular background myself, Fr. Francis took me under his wing, patiently teaching me the English prayers as we burned the midnight oil together.

He had a personal interest in all the aspirants - strict, firm and demanding with a heart like Don Bosco. Whenever my family visited me in the seminary, he would always speak well of me despite my shenanigans. When I asked him why he didn't complain about me to my family he said, "See Ajay! Your people visit you once in a while. They are so happy to see you. If I fill their ears with complaints of you, they will feel hurt and be worried over it.

So why should we make them sad?" His words of wisdom ring in my ears whenever I am harsh to someone.

Br. Ajay Sheske sdb

Fr. Francis was always there in the school quadrangle, talking to everyone. The children would play a game with him and ask him, "What's my name Father?" and Father would guess it.

Shreshtha Sunil, Student Grade 6 – IEAS (Don Bosco) School Kuwait

I remember the first time you walked into Don Bosco school. Your soft voice and simple smile gave happiness to our hearts. We were blown away by your spirit and strength.

Violet, Helper & Philomena, School Nurse – IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

One of the few incidents I remember is when I would enter his office and ask him, "Do you have two minutes father?" and he would say, "Yes I have five minutes"!

Lilly Mascarenhas, KG Teacher – IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

Fr. Francis - Esteemed By Many

O God! Thy sea is so great, and my boat is so small!

Dear Fr. Francis, I am grateful to God for the wonderful gift he gave us in your person. From the beginning I loved you and appreciated your simplicity, humility and prayerfulness.

You are the first Salesian in Mumbai Province

- To be a priest from the fisherman community.
- To be the Principal of the Marathi medium high school in Nagpur
- To venture into the Archdiocese of Nagpur (as a pioneer) where I had the privilege to be with you in Jaitala.

There was a time when The District Collector of Ahmednagar came to visit you

There was a time when Archbishop Leobard of Nagpur came to visit you.

You do live in so many people's lives because you encouraged the aspirants in Lonavala to follow Jesus, you formed the novices in Nashik, you built up the faith of parishioners in Pune, you uplifted the villagers of Ahmednagar mission and educated hundreds of students in Nagpur. We fondly remember you. Do pray for us in Heaven

Fr. Thomas D'costa sdb

Fr. Francis - A Tenderhearted Person

A day it was, like any other
When we moved out, no worry, no care:
Little knowing that it would be
The very last we saw of thee.

The news like daggers pierced us so
We didn't know which way to go,
Adults and children all alike
Stood still, unwilling to believe our plight.

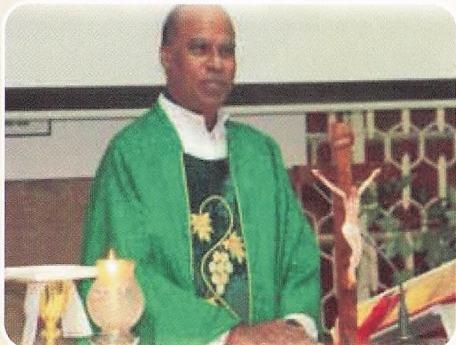
A man of courage, a man of sight
You stood steadfast for what was right
You loved us all the big and small
Your smile lit up the Salesian Hall.

For this and more you will be remembered,
In that you led us with a heart so tender
And so we say goodbye, Farewell!
We'll strive to walk the road you led.

Teacher Grace Desouza
IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait



Fr. Francis - A Holy, Sensitive Soul



Fr. Francis Kharjia in my humble opinion was a very spiritual Salesian. As Novice Master of the province of Mumbai he was a model who inspired a whole generation of novices to live a simple and holy religious life. His discipline of life coupled with his spirituality was to be admired and imitated.

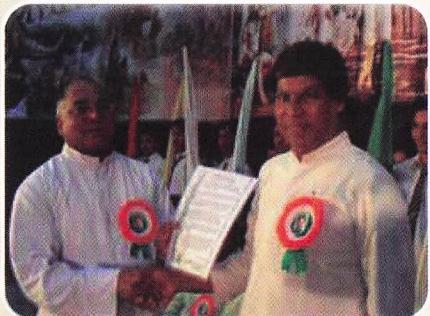
My experience of Fr. Francis was of a man who was simple and saintly. His was not a saintliness that imposed itself upon others, but his was a saintliness that was shared, through being in his presence and by experiencing the person. Where other people 'talk' about their saintliness or holiness, Fr. Francis had no need to do so, because his holiness was from within. Where other people in his position had to 'talk' about achievements, his simplicity of life and holiness spoke for itself.

Fr Francis was special because of who he was and who he worked for. It was evident to all who encountered him that he had dedicated his life to the Lord Jesus Christ, and living religious life the Don Bosco way. The centrality of Christ in his life was witnessed to in the religious discipline of life and in his living of the vows. His sense of planning and his discipline of life was as meticulous as his living the vows, especially the vow of poverty.

I thank the good Lord for having allowed me to come into contact with such a wonderful person and such a holy and sensitive soul. May you rest in the peace of our Lord dear Fr. Francis. Thank you for the wonderful memories.

Fr. Savio D'souza sub
Parish Priest of St. Dominic Savio, Wadala

Fr. Francis - A Faithful Priest



I always admire Fr. Francis with pride. He treated me as his own brother during the 4 years I worked with him. I was his constant companion in all his work. We were always in contact and shared our joys and sorrows likewise. To all his jobs he brought his characteristic diligence, simplicity and friendliness. His wisdom and holiness consisted of his simple, child-like trust in God and fellow confreres.

He left behind sweet memories of his kindness, love and joyful presence and simplicity of life. He will be remembered as a faithful priest who observed decorum and dignity of all religious and liturgical services.

Fr. Francis thank you for your selfless work for the Salesian Society. Pray for us and the whole Salesian Society.

Fr. Donald Fernandez sdb
Former Principal, IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

Fr. Francis - A Great Counsellor

Fr. Francis had a very good memory. Once we asked him the secret of his memory. He said it was because he ate almonds every morning. So I too started eating almonds.

Simran Jagtiani, Student Grade 10 – IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

Many children like me would visit Fr. Francis just to say “hi”. He always advised us to be good children and God-fearing too.

Alyannah Turbanos, Student Grade 6 –IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

Fr. Francis - A Good Shepherd

There was once a flock
That was lost and afraid
It wandered around
Without direction for days.

But the Lord looked down
With compassion from above
And sent a shepherd Fr. Francis
To lead them with love.

The shepherd was kind
Loving and wise
And he cherished his whole flock
No matter the color or size.

Though the shepherd was quiet
Humble and meek
Every ear listened
Whenever he would speak.

He showed them the way
To walk in the light
And he prayed everyday
For God to give them true sight.

His flock was so thankful
To the Lord up above
For sending a wise leader
Who was so full of love.

He led them with
Strong yet gentle hands
And said goodbye to the flock
To go to God's promised land.

Maggie & Rajesh D'sa
IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

Seven Traits of a Truly Humble Person

Fr. Francis Kharjia, who lived an accomplished, fulfilled and happy life

1. Focused energy on others
2. Conscientious and humble
3. Moral compass guided his decision making
4. Respect for moral values
5. Happiness as a journey
6. Excelled as a leader
7. Strong relationships

Joan Correa, KG Coordinator
IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait



Fr. Francis always came to talk to us. He would sometimes visit our class and make us all laugh. I remember during last year's summer club, Fr. Francis would greet all the children as they entered school and waved us goodbye with a smile.

Shania Sequeira, Student Grade 3 – IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

We love you so much
We miss you from our heart
We want to keep in touch
Wherever thou art.

By your death
We are very sad
You are the best Father
We really ever had.

We would love
To joke and talk
Or even join you
For a simple walk.

Now that you are with God
In Heaven above
We just want to give you
Our thanks and our love.

Support Staff
IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

We remember you Fr. Francis
each and everyday
We feel your presence
in a very special way
We miss your gentle ways
and your smile
It took our breath away.

You never said, “I’m leaving”,
You never said Goodbye
You were gone before we knew it
And only God knows why.

You will always be in our heart
Most loved and cherished
You are never afar
Fr. Francis
You will always be our shining star!

Teacher Grace
IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

Fr. Francis - A Man of Values

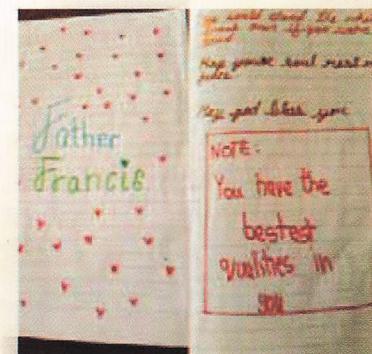
I remember sharing school trips, summer clubs, picnics, sports days and of course school matters. He was the type of person who always had a smile on his face and a pleasant gesture no matter how good or bad his day was going. I remember the day I walked to his office with support staff trying to give a makeover to the place. How happy he was trying to help us clear out unwanted stuff. That was just 2 days before we lost him.

Values like punctuality, being systematic, humility, God – fearing attitude etc., learned from Fr. Francis, will be treasured and talked about always.

Ms. Arlette D'Souza, Vice Principal, Primary section,
IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

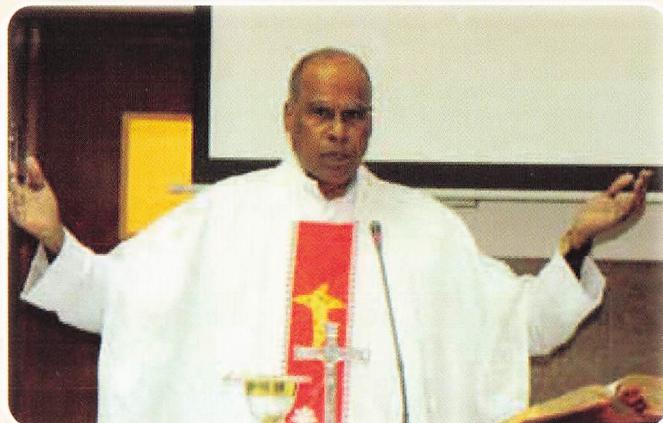
♡ Thank you for being with us ♡
♡ have fun with God ♡

Ali Sofail, Student, Grade 4 - IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait



Eeman Khan, Student Grade 5
IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait

The Singing, Smiling Priest

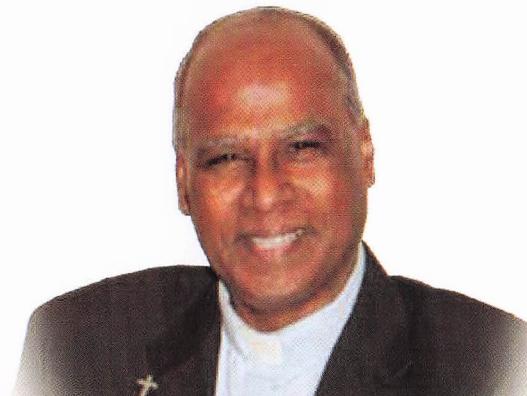


My memories of Fr. Francis Kharjia are so intense that I do not know where to begin or what to say as my heart is so full. He was my guide and guru.

The most important thing that I like about him and would proudly say is that he was a SINGING PRIEST. I belong to the International Community Choir and he was often assigned to say the Holy Mass for us. The minute he came to the Altar he would sing most parts of the Mass. He had a very tender and melodious voice. He would not say the Holy Mass but sing it all the time. What I can never forget is the smile on his face. Whenever you saw him outside the church he would always have a smile. When you talked to him he was always smiling. You never saw him with a grumpy or sad face or an angry look. A smile was always on his lips. You could call him THE SMILING PRIEST.

Ms. Marina Dsouza
St. Therese of the child Jesus, Kuwait

*Fr. Francis is lovingly remembered
by the teachers and students of IEAS (Don Bosco) School, Kuwait*



Loving heart

Simple

Gentle

Role model

Loved by
children

Confident

Humble

Loved Jesus
very much

Special place
in our heart

Punctual

Patient

Inspirational

Patient

Man of few
words

Made us laugh

Generous

Good listener

Never raised
his voice

Singing Priest

Good Memory
specially for names

Kind Hearted

Wonderful
mentor

Much loved

Gave us chocolates
and blessings

Always smiling



Fr. Savio Silveira, the vice-provincial of the Mumbai province and Fr. Elson Barreto, the economer of the Mumbai province had just arrived from Mumbai on 15 June 2015 to be with our community. On 16 June, the house council, along with the visiting Salesians, spent the entire morning discussing a few issues related to the school. The same afternoon, Fr. Savio Silveira preached the monthly recollection to our community. In the

evening, Fr. Elson celebrated the Holy Mass and Fr. Savio and the community members concelebrated. We then went to a mall, along with the visitors, to spend the evening together and for a meal.

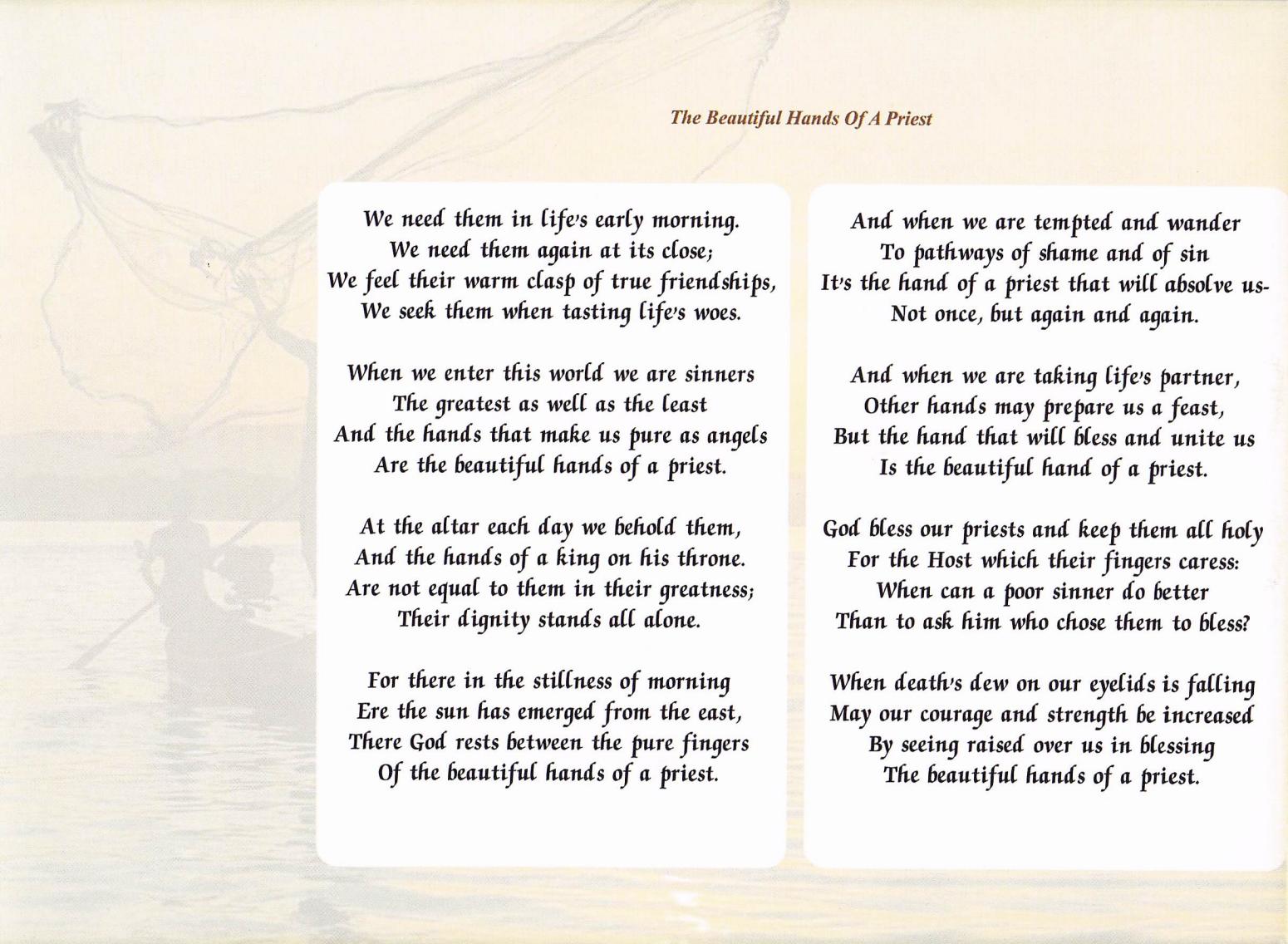
Fr. Francis was a community man. God bestowed on him a special grace of being with the community, the entire day, before he passed away. The next day, 17 June 2015, Fr. Francis was no longer with us. The news of his unexpected death left us shocked and grief stricken.

I want to thank Frs. William Falcao sdb, Diego Nunes sdb and Donald Fernandez sdb for helping me gather material on the life of Fr. Francis Kharjia.

I express my gratitude to the Salesian community at Kuwait (Frs. Lionel Braganza, Derrick Misquitta, Francisco Pereira and Johnson Nedumpurath) for their support and guidance.

My heartfelt thanks to Amira Peter, Myra D'souza, Tara Anto and Rowena Alvares for the assistance offered in collating and editing this booklet.

Fr. Blany Pinto Sdb
Rector.
Don Bosco, Kuwait.



The Beautiful Hands Of A Priest

We need them in life's early morning.
We need them again at its close;
We feel their warm clasp of true friendships,
We seek them when tasting life's woes.

When we enter this world we are sinners
The greatest as well as the least
And the hands that make us pure as angels
Are the beautiful hands of a priest.

At the altar each day we behold them,
And the hands of a king on his throne.
Are not equal to them in their greatness;
Their dignity stands all alone.

For there in the stillness of morning
Ere the sun has emerged from the east,
There God rests between the pure fingers
Of the beautiful hands of a priest.

And when we are tempted and wander
To pathways of shame and of sin
It's the hand of a priest that will absolve us.
Not once, but again and again.

And when we are taking life's partner,
Other hands may prepare us a feast,
But the hand that will bless and unite us
Is the beautiful hand of a priest.

God bless our priests and keep them all holy
For the Host which their fingers caress:
When can a poor sinner do better
Than to ask him who chose them to bless?

When death's dew on our eyelids is falling
May our courage and strength be increased
By seeing raised over us in blessing
The beautiful hands of a priest.

