

17 August 2005

Dear Confreres,

This is just a brief update on what has been happening in the Province.

1) Fr. Damian is planning on making a formal visit to the Mthatha Province early next year. According to his present plan, he would like to start with a visit to our confreres in Kenya beginning on Jan. 28th till Feb. 12th. He would then come here to us in Mthatha, SouthAfrica from Feb. 12th to the end of Feb. , hopefully joining us for our Provincial Chapter which will be at Mariannahill, beginning on the evening of the 27th and ending in the afternoon of the 28th of Feb.

2) Our new deacon, Frt. Thomas Wao, was ordained deacon in our small chapel at Abbot Francis and is being officially assigned to Engcobo by Bishop Oswald Hirmer to help Fr. Michael Riedener. He has applied for permission to be ordained a priest for the congregation of Mariannahill. If all goes well, he will be ordained here in South Africa and then return home for a home leave to celebrate with his family and the confreres in his native Kenya, and will then return to work here with us in Mthatha.

3) Fr. Mandla Siegfried Jwara has been officially transferred to the Mthatha Province. He will be finishing his course in England and returning to South Africa at the end of this month (August 2005). We will discuss with him, and, if necessary, with the Bishop, what he would like to be assigned to when he gets here.

4) Br. Teboho Lehasa has decided to ask for a dispensation from his temporary vows. He was attending the course prepared for those who were preparing for their final vows at Mariannahill and, as a result of what was presented there, he says that he felt that he was not able to live the committed life that those vows would demand. His request was already granted. We are still waiting for the official letter to arrive from Rome which he must sign for the dispensation to take effect.

5) Fr. Guy has sent to all of you a plea for material that you feel should be discussed at the Provincial Chapter. He will then collate the suggestions that come in and his team (Fr. Robert Abulala and Frt. Francis Ngadi) will draw up the proposed agenda for the chapter. Once it is finalised, it will be sent to you all so that you can come prepared. Hopefully, those who are to give reports, like myself, will have those reports ready before the meeting so that they can be read and digested ahead of time, not wasting time or coming blank to the meeting.

6) I just remind you that Fr. Ignatius Heer will be coming to us here in Mthatha to give us our annual CMM retreat. It will begin on Monday evening, Sept. 26th and will close on Thursday morning, Sept. 29th, 2005, after breakfast. Prior to the beginning of the retreat (that is in the afternoon), there will be a pre-election meeting preparing for the provincial council and the elections which will be part of the PC.

7) Br. John Mpambe will be finishing his course at the Catholic Bible School in Johannesburg at the end of November, 2005 and will be returning to Mthatha hoping to be accepted at Dondashe Accountants to do his articles, if he succeeds in his interview. He is presently taking some extra courses at UNISA to help him to be more competent as an accountant.

8) Frt. Tobias P'Onok will be returning to Cape Town for a final CPE course which will take place from the beginning of September till the end of November. He would like to devote himself to the healing ministry as a kind of hospital chaplain but also use his skills for counselling. He recently returned from his home leave where his first task was to bury his 18 year old sister who passed away just days after his arrival at home. He also became seriously ill and spent most of his time at home recuperating. We keep his sister in our prayers and are happy to see him back in good health once more

9) Our students at Cedara will be given their annual retreat by Sr. Hermenigild, CPS. It will take place at Red Acres, which is just down the road from Merrivale and is very conveniently located and a very quiet and restful place, conducive to deep reflection and prayer. It will begin on the evening of Thursday, Dec. 1st and will end on the morning of Tuesday Dec. 6th. Shortly after that Frts. Bernard Gathu, Francis Ojok, Francis Ngadi, Daniel Msuyo, Roland Maytoyi, and Raphael Arop will be taking their home leaves in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda respectively. They will only return in time for the renewal of vows on Feb. 1st, 2006.

10) By the time you receive this we will have two new priests in our Province. Fr. Patrick Oduor has agreed to accept the invitation of Fr. Alain Rodrigue to work with the mission animation team in the USA/Canada province for the next few years. I understand that he has already begun to renew his knowledge of French in anticipation.

11) Fr. Robert Abulala will help Fr. Robert Kaiza in his parish at Juja Farm, just outside Nairobi till the end of the year and then will take up his new assignment at Mariazell Mission near the Drakensburg Mountains in January, 2006. There is plenty of "mission" work to do there as there is a big high school at the mission and the parish with all its needs, especially with youth, is more than one person can handle. Fr. Robert's penchant for Justice and Peace will also offer scope for practical projects in the Maluti deanery.

12) Fr. Chrisantus Muteshi, who has been working since his ordination last July, in Nairobi, helping Br. Yvon with the formation of the postulants as well as in various pastoral commitments in nearby parishes, including working closely with an HIV/AIDS group, has accepted an invitation to work with our Bishop Paul Khumalo in the Witbank Diocese here in South Africa. He will begin his new assignment, like Fr. "Abu" in January of 2006.

13) Br. Bonga Getyangana, who is one of the few "local" brothers, has decided to answer the challenge of Br. Pierre Ferland and work as a brother in the Communications Ministry. Br. Pierre, as most of you already know, after many years of working as the Vocation Director of our Province and as the Administrator of Abbot Francis Home, here in Mthatha, has now been able to devote himself more or less full time to serving the Religious community here in the Mthatha Province by servicing their computer needs. There are very few competent people in this field in our area and he has found a full time ministry in keeping the computers of all the religious communities in the Province (Holy Cross, Ursulines, Assumption, CPS sisters---all the CMM's---many parishes of the Diocese of Mthatha---the Bishop of Kokstad---Ikwezi Lokusa school, Zingisa High School, St. Joseph's School, Qumbu's Little Flower School, Mariazell High School, Abbot Francis House in Merrivale in Natal, etc.) We have all come to depend more and more on computer communication and the need for servicing, updating, cleaning up of viruses, etc. has become a must for our work and he has tried to meet that need but the work is overwhelming. Bonga has offered to go into

training for this work as well as helping Fr. Mafu Ponya in his parish work as Bonga has experience with and is gifted in the area of working with youth, conducting priestless services, etc. As he is still very new in the religious life, we here at Abbot Francis Home will do our best to help him to grow and deepen his understanding of and commitment to the religious life in our Mariannahill community.

14) Fr. Mafu Ponya, one of our provincial councillors is presently in Kenya taking my place as my official representative at the ordination of Frs. Patrick Oduor and Robert Abulala. He is also taking advantage of this time to familiarize himself with the affairs of the Mthatha community there in Kenya.

15) Br. Yvon and Fr. Robert Deshaies and Fr. Philip Voorn are preparing themselves for the new school year at Tangaza and other educational facilities there in Nairobi and the demands the new influence of Mariannahill students for both the priesthood and brotherhood, will make on them.

16) Br. Rudy, at the request of the Mariazell community, has gotten the OK from his province of Mariannahill, to join the community at Mariazell to give Br. George a hand with a lot of the maintenance work that has to be done especially with the High School buildings. If he likes it and if Br. George decides to retire (he is coming up for his 80th birthday next month), he may decide to stick around for a while.

17) Br. Jacob Soko, who has been working with the Catholic Development Center here in Mthatha for the past year will soon be starting his studies for his Master's in Project Management there in Nairobi. If he has the time, he will also be giving Br. Yvon a hand with the postulants there at Christ the Prophet Community.

18) It was decided to give the name Christ the Prophet Community to the Mthatha Mariannahill house on the property where the postulancy is also located, emphasizing our prophetic role as missionaries in the challenging world of today. What is the interprovincial house of studies, originally meant for our brothers in training, was given the name "Br. Nivard House" in honor of the great work the Mariannahill brothers have done to firmly establish God's kingdom here in South Africa and hoping that that same spirit will imbue those who take up the role of missionary brothers where those others have left off, some of whom are long gone and others of whom are now ageing.

19) Frs. Francis Jank and Winfried Egler will be returning from their home leaves at the beginning of September and Fr. Stephan Mandl will not be far behind them. We hope that they will come back refreshed and ready to dive back into their various pastoral duties.

20) Br. Othmar should be coming back to Mater Dolorosa soon. He seems to have recovered well and since we haven't heard from him in some time now, we imagine that he is enjoying the home leave that he waited so long to cash in on.

21) I was commissioned to ask Fr. Albert Nolan, OP if he would be able to give us a retreat this year. When I contacted him early in the year he made it clear that he was unable to accept this year as he is finishing a book, the sequel to "Christ Before Christianity". But, after many follow-ups, I was able to catch up with him in his busy schedule and he agreed to accept the invitation to give

us our retreat next year in 2006. The tentative dates chosen were Monday, October 23rd, evening, to Friday, Oct. 27th, 2006, after breakfast, here at Abbot Francis Home.

22) The government has cancelled their contract with us for the use of the postulancy at Bedford and has agreed to pay for its usage for April, May, June and July, at the rate of R8500.00 a month. However, we are still trying to get them to pay up. Never give up! In the meantime, Dr. McConnachie, the Medical Superintendent of Bedford Orthopaedic Hospital, has begged to be given the use of the premises to house the nurses who work at the hospital as most of them come from far and have no accommodation in the area. He is only able to offer R4000.00 a month, but, because of his work and dedication, we have agreed to rent it out to him via his mission board, the African Medical Mission board.

For those of us whose names are not mentioned, life goes on and there is nothing special to report. We miss the noise and hustle and bustle of the students here at Abbot Francis Home, now that they have returned to school and we pray that they will do well this last semester of 2005.

I forgot to mention that I received a phone call from Sr. Martin at Cedara announcing that Robert Abulala was granted his degree from Urbaniana with a grade of 86.5, Cum Laude and Thomas Wao also received his degree with a grade of 83.5, also Cum Laude, and Tobias P'Onok also received his degree with a grade of 69.46 Probatus. Congratulations to the three of them, the result of lots of hard work.

If I have forgotten someone or something, please forgive me. I hope that this catches you all up on what is happening in our province. As our young confreres finish their studies for either priesthood or brotherhood, we can envision that there will be some alternative ministries in the making before too long as new challenges open up new possibilities.

God bless you all and for all those working in God's vineyard, may the words of Paul in his epistle to the Romans be an encouragement---"Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God which has been made visible in Christ Jesus the Lord!"

Love and Peace, Fr. Cas. Paulsen, cmm

Provincial Superior

P.S. We appreciate the newsletters that come to us from our confreres in the other provinces--- Mariannahill, PNG, Zambia, even Germany and Austria, though we can't all follow and can't follow all since we are not up to date on our German.

P.P.S. We can't leave without acknowledging the support of our CPS sisters, in helping to promote vocations to the Congregation of Mariannahill especially in Kenya and Tanzania, and also for supporting us in many other ways, including providing retreat mistresses for our young confreres. This support is truly appreciated.