

Dear confreres,

- **Introduction**

Compliments of the New Year 2020! This year did not begin well for us as a result of the passing on of **Fr. Leonhard Ndabenhle Mncwabe CMM** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2020. We are thankful to God for the fitting send-off that we witnessed on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at the mother House. Thank you to all who assisted to make the funeral an occasion for witnessing of a good short life which was well-lived with humility and respect. We felt very comforted by the presence of our Superior General Fr. Thulani Mbuyisa CMM.

Although the actual funeral went well but behind the scenes I had to deal with very nasty and challenging experiences. It is the second time we had to bury a young confrere during my tenure as a Provincial Superior. More than ever before, from my personal experience of preparing for these funerals and the unfolding of events afterwards, I am convinced that we need to come up with clear guidelines of how to handle the death, funeral, burial and assets of our confreres especially with regards to their families. We have made a decision as the council to encourage the Zones to discuss this topic so that we can have a common policy or a Will that shall be legally and canonically binding to the confrere. Other Units like Germany have such a document. We shall share it with you through your Zone Chairperson as a sample for discussion once we have received it and translated it.

- **Congregational activities in the Province**

This year will be a very busy year for our Province as we shall be hosting quite a few major Congregational events.

- From the 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 the Monastery will host a Workshop on **Europe for all Newly Professed Confreres**, except those going to Cedara. Frs. Regis Mushunje CMM from Germany and Fr. Anselmo Alfandega CMM will conduct the course.
- From the 4<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> October 2020 the Retreat House and Mariannahill Coolock will host the Council of the Congregation (COC), a meeting attended by all Unit Superiors and the General Government.
- On the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020 the Monastery Church will host the close of the Jubilee year of the 110 death anniversary of Abbot Francis Pfanner the Servant of God. Bishops of the SACBC and CPS will attend.
- From the 19<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> October 2020 the Retreat House will host the individual meetings between Unit Superiors and the General Government.

We sincerely ask for your prayers for the success of all these meetings of spiritual renewal and deepening of our communion.

- **Transfers and new assignments**

- **Konrad Diethei CMM** has been transferred back to Germany his sending Province. This is a big loss for our Province and for the Monastery in particular. We had no authority to stop the transfer but we view it as untimely and not so compassionate to

- our Unit. We sincerely thank Bro. Konrad for many years of presence and of hard and faithful labour for the community. We wish him God's richest blessings in his new assignment in Germany. He will be leaving during the second week of February 2020.
- **Lindelwa Dlamini CMM** has been assigned assistant Parish Priest in Queensburg/Bellair parish.
- **Deacon Gino Bembele CMM** will begin the honours degree in Prison Ministry at UKZN - Pietermaritzburg Campus in February 2020. He will reside at Raisethorpe Parish and serve as assistant Deacon to Fr. Basilio Chilequene CMM.
- **Carlos de Albertina CMM** is going back to Abbot Francis House to complete his development studies course at St. Joseph's Theological Institute.
- **Novices Mutisya G. Maundu from East Africa and Fewdays Chansa** from Zambia have been transferred to Mariannahill with effect from 01 February 2020 after their profession.
- **Novice Nhlanhla Ziqubu** has been transferred from Mariannahill to Mthatha. Transfer takes effect immediately after first profession.
- **Admissions and departures**
- Hearty congratulations to **Sphelele Phewa CMM and Palavra Luambano CMM** who will make Perpetual Profession in the Monastery Church on the 01<sup>st</sup> February 2020 at 09:30am.
- **Postulants Ntokozo Ndhlovu and Thembelani Mzizi** will be received into the canonical novitiate on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

**NB:** *All the temporarily professed brothers will renew their religious profession during the vespers on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and not on the 01<sup>st</sup> February 2020 during Laudes as previously indicated in the last circular letter.*

- **Candidates Njabulo Ngwane and Nhlakanipho Sabela** were advised to leave due to poor academic results. We wish them well in their future endeavours.

The vocations team is finalizing the applications of the new aspirants, and their names will be duly communicated to you during the next circular letter. I wish to thank Archbishop Emeritus Paul Khumalo CMM, Frs. Vincent Mdabe CMM, Sbusiso Mkhize CMM and Mathew Kim CMM for directing the retreats for our candidates, fraters, novices and postulants respectively. God bless you.

- **Jubilarians in the Province in 2020**

Hearty congratulations to our three jubilarians this year who will celebrate their jubilees on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at Mariannahill Monastery:

**Bro. Crispin Grahama CMM: 50 years of profession**

**Fr. Raphael Phiri CMM: 25 years of profession**

**Fr. Henry Kanjo CMM: 25 years of profession**

Please remember them in your prayers. Thank you confreres for your perseverance and faithfulness.

- **Graduation ceremony of our confreres**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020 our confreres and novices will graduate at St. Joseph's Theological Institute:

- **Deacons John Omalla CMM: Bachelor of Theology**
- **Gino Bembele CMM: Bachelor of Theology**
- **Novices Ntokozo Ndlovu: Bachelor of Philosophy**
- **Thembelani Mzizi: Bachelor of Philosophy**
  
- **Novena for Blessed Fr. Engelmar Unzeitig CMM**

On the 02<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 we celebrate the feast of Blessed Fr. Engelmar Uzeitig CMM. This year we celebrate 75 years of his death anniversary. We urge all the communities and individual confreres to begin praying the novena of Blessed Fr. Engelmar on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February until the feast. We would wish that he is canonized during our life time.

- **African Unit superiors meeting in Zambia**

From the 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> March the African Unit Superiors have a meeting in Makeni Zambia in preparation for the CoC 2020. If you have any issues that you want to propose for discussion in this meeting please send them to the Provincial's office before the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

- **Annual Retreat**

The annual Provincial retreat will take place at Mariannahill Coolock from the 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2020. We encourage confreres to participate in these important activities of spiritual renewal. We have noted that the same confreres attend this retreat while others do not make sufficient efforts. While we understand that some of you attend retreats in the dioceses where you work, but we urge you to prioritize our community spiritual gatherings.

- **Termination of contract with Deacon Keeble Mackenzie**

After a year of experience of the community life at the Monastery and discernment of his vocation as a lay CMM Associate, Deacon Keeble Mackenzie has decided to terminate his contract with the community and return to his home in Pietermaritzburg. We thank him for his contribution to the community and we wish him God's blessings in his future endeavours. He will leave on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

- **Mariannahill Monastery Link**

For the past few months Deacon Keeble Mackenzie started producing their internal newsletter for the Monastery called *Mariannahill Monastery Link*. It aims at updating the faithful on what is happening at the Monastery and it gives different contact details for the different departments, times for Holy Masses, contacts for making appointments for tours, counselling and confessions. It also informs on the projects of the Monastery. The copy of the Link is attached. From now on Fr. Lawrence Mota CMM will be sending it directly to you confreres so that you are also informed about the Mother House.

- **110 years death anniversary Jubilee Cross and Candle**

Fr. Thamsanqa Njijela CMM and Sr. Ulrica Zondi CPS continue to spearhead the novenas in various parishes. The programme for the parishes that have been visited and those to be visited is attached to this circular letter. During the last day of the Novena we always have the whole night revival or Imvuselelo preaching on the virtues of Abbot Francis Pfanner, the Servant of God. I ask confreres to avail themselves for these important events so that we can all participate in promoting the virtues of the Founder of Mariannahill. I sincerely thank all those parishes who have hosted the Jubilee Cross and Candle. It has been a wonderful experience for the faithful.

On the 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> March 2020 there will be an overnight Lenten pilgrimage to Emaus arranged by the promotion team. Kindly extend the invitation to all the faithful that you work with.

To mark the celebration of the jubilee of 110 death anniversary of Abbot Francis Pfanner, we have tasked the promotion team to arrange the Trappist Trail pilgrimage/walk for both CPS and CMM communities in July shortly before the feast. So many people, come from abroad and not even catholic, have walked the Trails. We need to lead the pack in walking in the footsteps of the Founder visiting the parishes that he founded. We shall update you as soon as concrete information is available.

- **Conclusion**

From the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> January the Southern African Bishops Conference held their bi-annual plenary session at St. John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria. On Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the bishops launched the New SACBC Pastoral Plan entitled “An evangelizing community serving God, humanity and all creation”. The plan focuses on eight important areas namely:

- **Evangelization of all people,**
- **Laity formation and empowerment,**
- **Life and ministry of priests and deacons,**
- **Marriage and family,**
- **Youth accompaniment,**
- **Justice, peace and non- violence,**
- **Healing and reconciliation and**
- **Care for creation and the environment.**

This pastoral plan presents us with plenty of opportunities for new ministries of accompanying and empowering the local church instead of focusing solely on parish pastoral work. We need to reflect on the role that we shall play in assisting dioceses to implement this wonderful and inspiring pastoral plan. During the plenary session the Bishops announced the Mini World Youth Day that will take place in Pretoria from the 09<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> December 2020 in preparation for the 2022 World Youth Day celebrations in Portugal. We wish Fr. Mthembeni Dlamini CMM and his team God's guidance as they prepare for this major event. Let us show him support especially through our Province youth ministry desk. The bishops have asked that each diocese must bring minimum of 250 youth.

I entrust you and your ministry to the guidance and intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Church and the Mother of Mariannahill.

Yours faithfully

**Fr. Bheki Shabalala CMM**

**Provincial Superior**