



CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF MARIANHILL•

MTHATHA REGION•

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EASTERN- CAPE PROVINCE• SOUTH AFRICA•

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26<sup>th</sup> March 2023

*“What separates privilege from entitlement is gratitude” (Brene Brown).*

Dear Confreres

We are in the fifth week of Lent and towards the end of the third month (March) into year 2023. The year has started on a busy note with so many events to organise and celebrate. After a successful Regional Chapter on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 we had a beautiful celebration of the Principal Feast of the Congregation in which three (3) of our Confreres made their perpetual vows and four renewed their vows. Frt Reuben who was home in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and could not travel back to South Africa in time due to visa challenges renewed his vows before Fr Didier Sampungi CMM at the CPS Convent in Kinshasa. Deacon Jackson Mandela Likabo CMM was ordained a Priest on 11<sup>th</sup> March at his home Parish in Kenya and Deacon Joel Bokoyo Mpembe CMM was ordained a Priest on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 at Mariazell Mission. I wish to congratulate our Confreres who made their perpetual vows and the two newly ordained Priests and in the words of an unknown author, “May your troubles be less and your blessings be more, and nothing but happiness come through your door”. Confreres, notwithstanding the challenges we might be encountering as individuals or community, we have so much to be grateful for and thank God, the Congregation and all those who support us in our vocation to religious and missionary life. We should never make the mistake of taking this support for granted because even the very air that we breathe in, is in fact a privilege! I take this opportunity to thank Fr Thomas Wao CMM who represented us at the ordination of Fr Jackson Mandela CMM and also welcome him back.

Dear Confreres, as a reminder and for the benefit of those who did not attend the Regional Chapter, the following is the new Leadership Team of our Region:

Fr Gideon Sibanda CMM – Regional Superior

Fr Mandla Mchunu CMM- Regional Vicar

Fr Thomas Wao CMM – Councillor

Fr Dijo Matsoso – Councillor

Fr Thabo Benjamini Malapane –Councillor

My dear Confreres, the leadership team that we have is the result of a democratic process which afforded all of us the right to participate and choose our preferred candidate or to choose not to participate. However, there are no losers and winners but one community that is united in its diversity of views. It is imperative therefore, that we all stand in solidarity with our leadership team and collaborate in its endeavour to serve the community. I promise you that we will welcome your input and constructive criticism as long as these are presented to us.

As you are well aware, there are various committees which assist the Leadership Team in facilitating the smooth and effective functioning of the Region. To this end, the table below presents Confreres who have been appointed to serve in the aforementioned committees:

<b>Finance Committee</b>	<b>Justice, Peace &amp; Development</b>	<b>Initial Formation</b>	<b>On-going Formation</b>	<b>CMM Associates</b>
Fr Mandla M. Fr Francis Ojok Fr Pinji K. Fr Gideon S.	Fr Stephen C. Fr Malapane T. Fr Taele L.	Fr Dijo Matsoso Fr Faustin M. Bro Isanda B.	Fr Thomas Wao Fr Stephen C. Fr Joel Bokoyo	Fr Mafu Ponya Fr Taele Litlotlo

The number of Confreres serving in some of the committees will be increased depending on the need and availability of Confreres to serve. In addition, the following appointments have also been made:

Fr Francis Ojok – Regional Bursar

Fr Mandla Mchunu – Vice Regional Bursar

Fr Faustin Mapwer – Regional Secretary

Bro Bernard Isanda – Project Manager

These committees are pivotal in assisting the leadership of our Unit to animate the various aspects of our community and ministries. It is important that each of the committees functions well and plans its activities accordingly. In addition, the committees will play a paramount role in the implementation of the Acts of the General Chapter 2022. To this end, I wish to encourage members of the respective Committees to study and analyse the relevant sections of the booklet that contains the Acts of the General Chapter 2022 and together, find innovative ways to implement them in our context. This means that the Regional Superior and his Council will not act alone but together with the various committees. In this regard, let us heed the words of Socrates who wrote, “Strong minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events and weak minds discuss people”.

**Zones:** they also play an important role in the life of our Unit. Therefore, I appeal to all the zones to elect their new leadership in the form of Chairpersons and Secretaries. It is the task of the Chairperson to ensure that his zone is active and keeps in contact with the Unit

leadership. Let me reiterate that, zones should not only meet when there are issues or problems to be discussed but should also serve to bring Confreres together to socialize, celebrate important events such as feast days, birthdays and provide support in times of need or difficulties.

**Appointments of the newly ordained Priests:** In the previous circular letter I communicated that Fr Jackson Mandela CMM would be inducted into formation work and also assist Fr Mandla Mchunu at Ascension Parish while residing at Abbot Francis Home. As an update to this communication, I wish to inform you that Fr Jackson Mandela CMM will remain in the Region of East Africa for the time being. Fr Joel Bokoyo Mpembe CMM has been appointed assistant Priest of Marizell Mission. We wish both Confreres a fruitful and happy ministry in the vineyard of the Lord.

**Graduations:** I wish to congratulate Frs Joel Bokoyo Mpembe and Jackson Mandela who graduated with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Theology and Frts Pius Mwangi and Nhlanhla Bright Ziqubu who graduated with a BA degree in Theology. Congratulations to all of you Confreres, continue being open to growth and further development.

**Warm welcome to:** Frts Alphonse Rutayuga, a Tanzanian from the Unit of East Africa, Roland Mazarura, a Zimbabwean, from the Unit of Zimbabwe and Aberu Phiri, a Mozambiquan, from the Unit of Mariannahill who were transferred to the Unit of Mthatha after their first profession. These Confreres have joined others at Abbot Francis House-Merrivale to continue with their formation in religious and missionary life and studies in Theology at St Joseph's Theological Institute. At the same time I wish Frt Serge Kuka, a Congolese from our Unit who was transferred to the Unit of Mariannahill well and God's guidance as he also continues with his formation in religious and missionary life and theological studies.

**Home-leave:** Fr Bernard Gathu CMM is currently at home in Kenya for a short home-leave. He was prompted to take this leave by the health condition of his sister who is not well and would like to spend some time with her. Let us keep Fr Bernard's sister and her family in our prayers.


I wish to inform you that I will be also going for home-leave from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April until 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Fr Mandla Mchunu CMM will take full charge of the Region during my absence. His email address is: [mindlosp@yahoo.com](mailto:mindlosp@yahoo.com) and his cell number is: 0630731361. However, I will be reachable via email and Whatsapp.

**Praying for our elderly and sick Confreres:** Let us keep in our prayers Fr Cas Paulsen CMM who is at Mater Dolorosa Home in Mariannahill and is not so well. If you happen to visit Mariannahill Monastery, please do pay him a visit together with other Confreres there, I am sure they will appreciate it. Let us also keep in our prayers Bro Alexander Lizani CMM who has not been well and is scheduled to undergo an operation at Nelson Mandela General Hospital on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

As we move towards Palm Sunday (2<sup>nd</sup> April) and Holy Week thereafter, I wish each one of you God's abundant blessings and joyful Easter celebrations. Once again, let us be grateful to God and those who are charitable to us. Together we can!

*“When you see something beautiful in someone, tell them. It may take you a second to say it, but for them it could last a life time” (unknown author).*

Yours in the Lord,

  
Fr. Dr. Gideon Sibanda CMM

Regional Superior-Mthatha Unit.