

“The Future Setting Assembly”

By: Br. Chaka Molapo scj

On the 13th and 14th of May 2021 the South African province held its 32nd provincial assembly in Aliwal North. The members arrived a day before and were accommodated in the Monastery house where all other community events such as prayers, meals, recreation etc took place while the assembly sessions took place in the Guesthouse. The reception was very good and from the arrival the ambience was very fraternal. All the priests presently in South Africa were present while the scholastics in temporary vows couldn't all attend due to preparation for examination thus they sent only one representative.

The assembly began with a call from Rome from the Vicar General, Fr Stephen Huffstetter scj who encouraged and strengthened the members of the assembly to make fruitful deliberations for the life of the Province and the congregation. Fr Stephen emphasized that 'it is good to look into the documents of the province but it is more important to live the values contained in those documents.' After that the assembly members had some time for fraternal personal sharing about their welfare in their various places.

This was followed by reports from different communities and offices where it became evident that there is progress as offices are functional in the province. One inspiring moment was the announcement of 13 aspirants who are in touch with the Vocation's director who will soon be called for a vocation's workshop. Having such a number for the tiny province is something we receive with joy and thank God for.

Among many issues, the assembly had a task to set straight the formation program for the province. Due to lack of vocations the old program was dysfunctional and many alterations were made with current students. However, given the fact that vocations are gradually increasing as there are numerous aspirants knocking at our doors annually, it was worthwhile to normalize and define the steps of the formation program in the province. Setting of the program from pre-novitiate until priesthood ordination was crucial and this became one of the successes of the assembly.

Preparation for the 2023 centenary of the SCJ presence in South Africa was also an important task. One could simply say that this assembly was the future setting assembly. Future prospects of the province were the centre of discussions and we hope that the Holy Spirit shall guide us through as the future unfolds as we get near this milestone of 100 years.