

Iindaba Express
South African Province



Information Bulletin, January 17, 2003/no1 (12)

- ☛ Iindaba undergoes a difficult period and apologizes for being quiet for 4 months. The paper, however, is confident that the AM Province soon will succeed in making new arrangements to improve functioning of the bulletin.
- ☛ A pre-novice D. Filies decided to go back home to Cape Town on 4 September 2002 thus leaving our formation house in Bethulie empty.
- ☛ Life of Fr. Paul Koscielny was hanging in a balance again. After a day of simple medical testing in a Bloemfontein hospital he was discharged and brought to Aliwal North for a period of rest. On the second day he suddenly developed severe pain and bleeding in the bladder. The local doctor rushed him back to the same hospital (200 km in thick fog!) at 3 am Saturday 7 September. Fr. Paul spent 24 hours in the intensive care unit and came back to Aliwal North just after a few days. In 2 weeks time he resumed his pastoral duties in De Aar. Well, is this what we call testing?
- ☛ Bishop Baaij celebrated his 60 years as a religious, on 08 September in Port Elizabeth. Frs. Strittmatter and Maslowski were among the friends and clergy who congratulated Bishop that day during the ...“caravan lunch.”
- ☛ Fr. Lemahieu once more celebrated 50th anniversary of his priesthood, this time in Aliwal North, on 23 September The celebration began with Eucharist in the local cathedral presided by Bishop F. Lobinger. Then the participants gathered in the cathedral hall for a reception. There Fr Lemahieu received particular thanks and wishes from a group of children of the primary school run by the Holy Cross Sister. In conclusion almost 60 friends and confreres joined Fr. Andries at a festive meal.
- ☛ On 24 – 25 September the SCJ community gathered in Aliwal North for its Provincial Assembly that focused on the forthcoming provincial chapter.
- ☛ Eight or so of our candidates participated in the vocation workshop organized together with the Aliwal Diocese, in Indwe on 1-3 October. Deacon I. Mabheka who presently acts as the Provincial Vocation Director represented the SCJ-side.

☛ Fr. Ofenloch was one of the 25 participants of the meeting organized by the SCJ General Justice and Peace Commission, on 1-10 October in Montreal, Canada. The gathering had a formative profile.

☛ A half of our confreres participated in the annual retreats organized, as usual, with the Dioceses of Aliwal and De Aar, on 29-25 October in Palloti Farm. Fr. J. Wilson, MSC, from Pretoria was the retreat master.

☛ The AM Province held its Second Provincial Chapter, on 4-9 November 2002 in Aliwal North. Seventeen participants were joined by Fr. Mpambani from Rome as well as by Bishop Potocnak, SCJ, from De Aar. Thanks to the professional facilitation of Sr. Alma Kohler, HC, the agenda was finally exhausted by 4pm on Saturday – to the relief of all.

☛ By the end of October our students finished their exams and took some rest. Br. Abram Tsikanyane went home to Sprigfontein but did not rest much since he was helping out in building the new house of his family. Br. T. Bambatha was resting in Venterstaat and Brothers from Cameroon were (touring a little) getting acquainted to South Africa by visiting Teresa Mission, Bethulie, De Aar, Middelburg and Graaff-Reinet. On return to Merrivale the CM confreres will start their battle for driving licenses: Good luck!

☛ Teresa Mission was the place of the presbyterate ordination of our three confreres. During the out-door Mass on 7 December Deacons Sompane, Mabheka and Mutanyu received the holy orders from Bishop F. Lobinger. The ordination of these SCJs – first since 1987 – to a great extent was prepared by the Teresa Mission Parish where Fr. Sompane worked as a deacon. In the Eucharist and the following meal the faithful were joined by 45 priests, among whom was the SCJ Bishop Potocnak from De Aar and the SCJ confreres from Rome, Cameroon, Madagascar, DR of Congo and Mozambique. Frs. Mabheka and Mutanyu come from Zimbabwe and Fr. Sompane from South African Ficksburg. Congratulations!

☛ The SCJ leaders from CM, MAD, CO and MOZ visited briefly South Africa from 4 to 15 December. They attended the Teresa Mission ordinations (07.12), met with the AM Provincial Administration (Aliwal North, 08.12) and constituted 70% of the participants of the meeting that dealt with the project of the Inter-provincial SCJ Formation House in South Africa (Merrivale, 10-12.12) in which also Fr. Z. Mpambani participated.



During the meeting in Aliwal North the following were noted:

- Mozambique and Portugal are planning to start working in Angola soon; North Italy being their “mother province” will be naturally involved in the project. Brazil has been invited.
- Formation: Mozambique is pulling out its students of theology from Cameroon; they would like them to come to South Africa.
- Other areas of possible co-operation between the SCJ in Africa: in the matter of Aids, in working upon the African (- ization of) spirituality – including the SCJ spirituality/chrism.
- Other matters of the meeting: Justice and Peace, linguistic barrier, Secretary of the Missions. And somebody said: “Do not be afraid to spend money on formation, even in a form of ‘tourism with a purpose.’”

And the highlights of the Merrivale gathering:

- All African SCJ leaders confirmed commitment of their provinces / regions to finalize the establishment of the common formation house in South Africa.
 - Mozambique wants to have its students study theology here and is ready to send a formator in 2004.
 - The meeting agreed to acquire a new, bigger property to house the common project and drafted a letter to the General Administration for financial assistance.
 - The meeting reflected upon the experiences of the Merrivale Formation House as well as of the local community in the first year of their international set-up.
- ☛ Our neo-presbyters celebrated their very first masses in different places: Fr. Sompane in Teresa Mission, Fr. Mabheka in Aliwal Cathedral, Fr. Mutanyu in Bethulie.
 - ☛ Fr. Mutanyu left for Zimbabwe on 12 December. He visits his family and takes the necessary steps for obtaining work permit.
 - ☛ Brother Bona left for Merrivale on the same day to rest for a month. He gave a lift to Sr. Teresa, MSSH who runs kitchen and laundry in our Monastery. Fr. Ofenloch offered himself to carry out the burden of Sunday cooking during Sister’s absence.

☛ On 15 December Fr. Sompane celebrated his first home-parish Eucharist in Ficksburg of which he is the first black priest. Fr. Provincial represented the Province. In the parish hall Fr. Sompane was presented an unusual gift: a second-hand Opel Astra...

☛ Admission Board met on 18 December in Aliwal North and recommended for admission all 6 candidates presented (3 South Africans and 3 from Lesotho).

☛ Fr. Michel Ciemiega sends greetings from very cold Poland. He is fine and busy attending various courses in Krakow. At this stage he did not decide about his next step. His e-mail: kgotsofalang@op.pl

☛ On 23 December Fr. Provincial decided to cancel the planned trip to Zimbabwe because of severe shortage of petrol in that country. Fr. Provincial, who was to take part in celebration of the first Mass of Frs. Mabheka and Mutanyu, acted on advise of one of the local Bishops as well as of the H. Cross Sisters. This last minute change forced Fr. Mabheka to rearrange his trip home. His only remaining option was rather pleasant: “a virgin air flight” from Johannesburg to Harare on 28 December.

☛ At 90 years of age Fr. Notermans finally decided to stop driving, on 01 January 2003

☛ Do you remember 2 young French going around the world tourists that stayed for a few days in Aliwal? Well, they conquered Africa and then...split. Gaetan is continuing and should be now in the Caribbean's. The second dreamer planned to go back to France. Pity, isn't it?

☛ Our confreres from Germany financed a second hand car to be used by the Bethulie “Good shepherd” hospice.

☛ Fr. Mpambani left South Africa for Rome, on 05 January 2003. Fr. Provincial says that he left, however, some luggage in Aliwal North: what could it ... mean?

☛ Fr. M. Ntaka lost another of his sisters. She was buried in Danger's Hoek on 4 December. Fr. Mpambani took part in the funeral. Iindaba offers condolences to Fr. Ntaka.

☛ And the last minute news also about Fr. Ntaka whose doctors confirm that he suffers from mouth cancer. From 16 January 2003 Fr. Ntaka will start to undergo a serious medical treatment in one of Bloemfontein hospitals. Let us particularly remember Fr. Matthias in these difficult moments.



Provincial

Fr. Provincial's account (excerpts):

11-15. 08	- Merrivale, with Fr. Notermans
18. 08	- Molteno
22-25. 08	- Petrusville
28-29. 08	- Teresa Mission
01. 09	- Mt. Carmel
3-4; 7-9; 19. 09	- Bloemfontein
4-6; 17-18; 29. 09	- Graaff-Reinet
01. 10	- Port Elizabeth
6-7. 10	- Welcome
13. 10	- Bloemfontein
15. 10	- Teresa Mission
25-26. 11	- De Aar
9-15. 12	- Merrivale
15. 12	- Ficksburg
27-29. 12	- Johannesburg with Fr. Mabheka

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

The Council met on 21.08, 30.10, 20.11, 03.12, 17.12 & 07.01.2003. During these meetings the Council:

- ✓ worked on the application of the S. Heart Sisters to the German SCJ Province for financial help.
- ✓ prepared the September 2002 Provincial Assembly.
- ✓ planned the 23 September Golden Jubilee of priesthood of Fr. Lemahieu.
- ✓ planned the 07 December 2002 ordinations.
- ✓ admitted Deacons Sompane, Mabheka and Mutanyu for priestly ordinations.
- ✓ thoroughly evaluated, discussed and finally approved the 1999-2002 Provincial Financial Statements as well as the 2001-2002 Provincial Budget.
- ✓ admitted Brs. Tsikanyane and Bambatha to the renewal of vows (on 02.02. 2003)
- ✓ decided that: Fr. Sompane will remain in Teresa Mission; Fr. Mabheka will be transferred to Bethulie as a pastoral worker; Fr. Mutanyu will be transferred to Aliwal North. All the above confreres will be given formal assignments and descriptions of their responsibilities at the beginning of February 2003
- ✓ asked Fr. Grzelak to remain in Teresa Mission.

✓decided about relocation of the province's cars, viz. that Toyota Venture goes to Bethulie; Toyota Corolla be back to Merrivale as the students' vehicle; Polo from Bethulie be based in Aliwal North. Future of Opel Astra donated by the Ficksburg Parish to Fr. Sompane has not yet determined due to pending technical evaluation.

✓ in regard to the probable acquisition of a property for the International Formation House in Natal: to make available cash equal to the value of our present property in Merrivale which is approximately R 400.000-00

✓ determined the dates of the provincial events in 2003:

1. Provincial Council Meetings:

- 01 January
- 24-28 February (4 day study session)
- 10 March
- 07 April
- 05 May
- 04 June
- 05 August
- 09 September
- 08 October
- 10 November
- 10 December

2. Provincial Assemblies: March 11-12 and November 11-12.

3. Feast of the S. Heart: 26-27 June; Annual Retreats: 19-24 October.

Aliwal North

? The Youth Day was organized at Aliwal North SPA, on 27-28 September 2002

? The Bishop was rushed to one of Bloemfontein hospitals, on 18 October. Severe pain indicated gold bladder stones. The Bishop was treated in a state of art way so that the next day he came back home!

? After a month of a dramatic delay Fr. Jabulani successfully entered the UK and joined a course at St. Anselm's Institute as part of his sabbatical.

? Two priests from DRC finally arrived, on 20 December 2002. After some linguistic preparation these 40 years olds will join the diocesan pastoral team.

? Over 20 priests and sisters gathered on 06 January 2003 in Sterkspruit to say "good bye" to Fr. W. Mattis who goes back to Switzerland. He worked in the diocese for the last 7 years.



SCJs IN THE WORLD

✍ On 21 August, at the age of 81 died Fr. O.G. Girardi, SCJ, to whom the Congregation owes the advancement of the cause of our “saints”: Fr. Dehon, Fr. Prevot and Blessed Juan de la Cruz. He was a tireless and competent canonist and a sharply defined personality. Fr. General asked every SCJ community to offer “at least one Mass for his intention.”

✍ A three IN (Indonesia) confreres completed their first year of pastoral work in the Indonesian part of Papua.

✍ Br. A. Yema of the CO Province has been ordained deacon in Halles Corners (US) on 18 September 2002. The CO Province these days has 28 philosophy students in Kisangani, 5 confreres who lately took final vows as well as around 10 novices.

✍ Two more confreres from South Brazil (BM) joined the SCJ in Congo (CO), in October 2002

✍ The Justice & Peace SCJ Conference took place in Montreal, Canada, on 01-10 October 2002. It had a formative profile. Among the 25 participants was Fr. Ofenloch who represented the AM Province.

✍ In November fighting again resumed in the eastern DRC. The CO Provincial said: “I have never seen anything like this in 33 years in Africa: Mambasa was plundered, everyone lost everything”. There were again thousands of hopeless refugees on the roads, including a few SCJs that had to leave their mission.

✍ In November 2002 the PHI confreres accepted 7 of their young seminarians as postulants. Three of them come from Vietnam and 4 from the Philippines. Seven other admitted last year postulants would begin their novitiate in March 2003

✍ Do you know that the South Italian SCJ province owns and operates a TV station called “Tele Dehon”? To know more about it go to its web-site: www.teledehon.it

✍ At the meeting of the Union of General Religious Superiors in Rome Fr. Bressanelli gave a talk on the experience that the SCJ community has gone through in restructuring its governmental model. He was one of the six key-speakers.

✍ From 07 December the MOZ Province has 4 novices and 8 temporary professed confreres.

✍ Fr. Pitcavage sends greetings. Lately he underwent a “little” surgery operation. He continues ministering in 2 parishes and in one Indian school in South Dakota.

