

Iindaba Express
South African Province



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HOME UPDATE

☛ Mr. Gabriel Sturman (42), the man who worked with Br. Bonna Schmedes, SCJ, for the last 12 or so years, as well as his wife, died suddenly in Aliwal North, both after a short illness, at the end of October 2003. The couple orphaned three children. A month earlier the Aliwal SCJ Community decided to build a house for the Sturmans and bought a plot.

☛ After experiencing in October a bit of a health decline Fr Notermans (92) decided to stay permanently in the SCJ Monastery in Aliwal North. It was agreed that he has to “take the transitional period easy” so he spends still much time in his much loved Mount Carmel.

☛ In November 6 MZ confreres (5 scholastics and a priest) have joined the 2 newly arrived CM confreres in learning English in South Africa. The whole group was split into two and studied very seriously for almost a month in Bethulie and Aliwal North. The MZ confreres travelled from Maputo to Aliwal (and back) by an SCJ minibus; 2 trips of a bigger vehicle allowed that also 3 lay missionaries from Mozambique paid us a short visit. The three women belong to the *Compania Missionaria*, which was established in Italy and is closely associated with the SCJ.

☛ Fr. Mpambani sends Christmas greetings from Toronto, Canada, and Fr. Chwaja from Warsaw, Poland. Both are fine and satisfied with their sabbatical programs. They pledge to come back to S. Africa sometime in May 2004. Also Bp. Baaij, SCJ, who had a very good year in Port Elizabeth, sends his regards through Fr. Provincial who visited him on 17 December.

☛ The AM Province held a Provincial Assembly, on 25 –26 November 2003 in Aliwal North. It was also an assembly for electing a new provincial administration. Besides the main topic the assembly dealt with the following:

- report of Fr. Provincial from the 21 General Chapter
- report from the meeting of the SCJ formators in Madagascar
- development of the Inter-provincial Formation House in Merrivale/Hilton
- formation and vocation pastoral work in the AM Province in 2004

☛ On 05 December 2003 in Rome Fr. General and his Council have confirmed the validity of the Provincial Election Procedures held in Aliwal North on 26 November 2003. Thus from 02 February 2004 the new AM Provincial Administration will be as follows: Fr. Przybys (Provincial), Fr. Mpambani (1st Councillor), Fr. Strittmatter (2nd Councillor), Fr. Hansel (3rd Councillor), Fr. Chwaja (4th Councillor).

☛ Remember Gaetan - and a friend - from France who set on travelling around the world and stayed for a few days with the SCJ in Aliwal North? Well, his friend dropped out but he continued! After conquering Africa he reached L. America and crossed it from north to south.

On 22 November he was somewhere in Chilean Patagonia from where he dropped us an e-mail. His family decided to see him in Chile – after 2 years. So, Gaetan's dream seems to come through! Do you have ... a dream?

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL (1)

The Provincial Council met on 05th November 2003 in Aliwal North and dealt with the following matters:

- ✓ Two year pre-novitiate: The Council looked at different scenarios and possibilities for the future activities of the AM prenovitiate. It seemed almost certain that the second year pre-novices in 2004 will be based in Bethulie.
- ✓ Request of Fr. Grzelak to continue his post graduate studies: The Council will take the final decision on the matter in December.
- ✓ Resignation from the position of the Chairperson of the Spirituality and Apostolate Commission by Fr. Lemahieu: The resignation was accepted.
- ✓ Appointment of the new Chairperson of the above mentioned Commission: Fr. Grzelak was appointed the chairperson.
- ✓ The program and agenda of the forthcoming Provincial Assembly: It was decided to combine the Provincial Elections with some other matters of the Province.

- ✓ The state of the Last Comfort funeral enterprise in Middelburg: too little progress has been noticed besides the recent efforts. If the situation of the business (particularly the management) does not improve in the next three months the Council will have to decide whether the Province should continue to participate in the project.
- ✓ Finances: The treasurer reported that the CM Province had paid for its students in South Africa and that the GE Province had sent money for future vehicles of the Study House.
- ✓ Personal Update: a) Fr. Notermans got sick in October and after three weeks of hospitalization in "Fatima" he started to settle in the Monastery. He is aware that his presence in Mount Carmel cannot continue. b) Fr. Mpambani and Fr. Chwaja will most probably come back to South Africa at the beginning of May 2004. c) Fr. Ofenloch has applied for termination of his services to the Diocese of Aliwal as Administrator of the Cathedral as from the 1st Sunday of Lent 2004
- ✓ Perpetual Profession of the CM SCJ students in South Africa: This will take place in Cameroon on 28 December 2003. The Council decided that the representatives of the Province should participate in the event. Fr. Przybys and Fr. Koscielny will be going.
- ✓ The Constitutions of the Sacred Heart Auto League: The Council members will study the draft prepared by Fr. Lemahieu.
- ✓ The letter of Bishop Potocnak upon the needs of the De Aar Diocese and the possible involvement of the SCJs in the future works of the Diocese.
- ✓ Arrangements for six confreres from Mozambique who come to South Africa to study English in November 2003 as well as for two new CM SCJ students who have just arrived to our country.



PROVINCIAL COUNCIL (2)

The Provincial Council met also on 12 December 2003 in Aliwal North and dealt with the following:

- ✓ The request of Fr. Grzelak to continue his theological studies on doctoral level while being a member of Merrivale community: the request was granted.

✓ Application for the 3rd renewal of vows of Br. Abram Tapelo Tsikanyane: the request was granted.

✓ Request of Br. Tsikelelo Bambatha for a break in studies: decision is to be taken in January 2004

✓ Cars to be used in the Province in 2004. It has been decided:

- to transfer the Toyota Venture from the noviciate to Merrivale
- to buy one new and one second-hand passenger car for Merrivale
- to transfer the Polo from the provincialate to the noviciate
- to purchase a new vehicle for the provincialate

It has also been confirmed that the Opel Astra donated to Fr. Sompane by his home parish and so far used by him had an accident and was subsequently scrapped by our insurance company.

✓ Other issues:

-Problems of the Middelburg “Last Comfort” funeral project.

-Forthcoming official visit of Fr. General in South Africa that is – provisionally – to take place in the first 2 weeks of June 2004



Aliwal North

¶ Bp Lobinger ordained to the presbyterate Deacon Evarestus Mojalefa Makoa, on 13 December 2003 in Aliwal North. Mojalefa (30) is the only black diocesan priest who comes originally from the Aliwal Diocese. He is to work in Sterkspruit – uMlamli.

¶ Fr. Jabulani Khumalo (42) has asked to work in another diocese for some time. Bp Lobinger accepted his request and made arrangement with the Archbishop of Cape Town for Fr. Jabulani to work there for two years.

¶ 11 Holy Cross Sisters will be celebrating the golden jubilee of their religious profession, on 07 January 2004. The celebration will take place in the Aliwal Cathedral at 10.00am.

De Aar

¶ Bp. Potocnak, SCJ, ordained to the presbyterate Deacon John Chitembo Sumaili, on 16 December 2003 in De Aar. Fr Sumaili (29) comes originally from Zambia where lives most of his large family.

¶ "Diocesan Days" were held in Hopetown, on 15-16 November 2003. Over 200 representatives from all the parishes in the diocese participated. The meeting aimed at deepening the catholic identity of the faithful in a very multi-denominational context.

¶ Parishioners of Petrusville decided to wait actively for the Lord this Advent. And so they collected 400 bags of rubbish spread evenly through their township of Thembinkosi. The collectors - mostly the unemployed – were paid R3.00 per bag. The action was coordinated by Fr. Maslowski, SCJ and sponsored by one of the Petrusville's businessmen.



News for Iindaba

After returning from a holiday, Fr. Chris Grzelak expressed his gratitude to Father Provincial and His Council for a positive answer to his application for "ongoing formation" and financial support. He took a thirty-day retreat of St. Ignatius of Loyola in the Jesuit Formation Center and stayed another 30 days with the hermits (Camaldoleses) in Poland.

He writes: "Both the Jesuits' retreat of St. Ignatius of Loyola and the quiet time in the contemplative Order allowed me to look closer into my spiritual life, my vocation, and mission work in South Africa. Spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius had helped me to reflect deeper on my priestly commitment to the Lord and the religious family. I feel renewed and strengthened. Being led by an experienced spiritual director, I was also able to make discernment concerning my life and work in the South African SCJ Province.

My staying with the Camaldoleses, on the other hand, had helped me to rebuild my prayer life. Recitation of psalms, hours of lectio divina, and omnipresent silence had positively influenced my spirit. Paradoxically, staying with the hermits I had discovered the beauty of my own SCJ's charism and spirituality. I have realized that being a fulfilled religious or a priest in the contemporary world is more a matter of

attitude than a place in which we live, more a matter of being in touch with God and oneself than the work we do. It is not that I didn't know it before but that it has recently appeared to me in a new and different way. I am aware that this sharing might sound like a preaching. Obviously daily life will prove how much of the above is authentic. Yet through sharing my experiences I want to emphasize how profitable it might be for anybody to renew oneself spiritually from time to time. For this reason I thank Fr. Provincial and His Council for their understanding and support which contributed to my present spiritual well-being.”

SCJs IN THE WORLD

✍ Three confreres made the first profession of vows and one the perpetual profession in Milevane (MZ), on 08 December 2003. Very sadly one of the newly professed, Br. Moises Armando Tomo, died in a car accident on 21 December. “Iindaba” extends sincere condolences to all the confreres in Mozambique.

✍ Fr. General appointed Fr. L. Mostarda (CU from IS) to the office of the General Curia Communications which includes the press office. Fr. Mostarda has already asked to forward him any information that would be of interest and meaning to the SCJ Institute. His e-mail address: luigimost@email.it

✍ The Commission of the Theologians of the Cause for Saints accepted the miracle that happened in Brazil in 1956 as a miracle through the intercessions of Fr. Dehon. It is another – and important – step towards his beatification.

✍ The General Administration appointed new General Finance Commission. Thus the General Treasurer Fr. Aquilino Mielgo Dominguez (CU from HI) may now reckon on wisdom of the following: Fr. Brian McCullough (US), Fr. Heinrich Westendorf (GE), Fr. Javier Larrea Pascal (HI) and Fr. Jose Hemkemeier (BC). The Commission met for the first time on 19-21 Nov. 2003 in Rome.

Text: Przybys & Layout: Maslowski

