

# DIOCESE OF MARIANHILL

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**CIRCULAR LETTER** *from the bishop*

22 June 2018

## **CL NO.1 2018**

Dear Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and People of God,

### **OUR CELEBRATIONS OF THE BI-CENTENNIAL YEAR.**

This circular letter comes to you during this exciting year 2018, when we are celebrating the bi-centennial since the advent of the great missionary work in Southern Africa. Therefore, this is an opportunity for all of us to read and listen to the history of the foundation of faith in this part of Africa. Let us allow ourselves during this time to be struck with wonder, praise and thanksgiving to God for so great a gift of faith to our continent and South Africa in particular.

Herewith enclosed please find copies of a short history of the plantation of faith in Southern Africa by missionaries from various religious congregations. Uppermost in our minds and hearts is the incomparable missionary work by Abbot Francis Pfanner and his Trappist Order throughout the length and breadth of KwaZulu Natal landscape covering the dioceses of Mariannhill, Umzimkhulu, Mthatha and as far as Dundee (Maria Ratschitz). There is an English version of this document with pictures, as well as the Zulu translation. (Thanks to Fr. Sizwe Nxasana).

### **ORDINATION CEREMONY ON 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2018**

Once more this year the Diocese of Mariannhill has been blessed by God with three clerical ordinations to take place at St. Joseph's Cathedral. Rev. Deacon Richard Sibusiso Mkhize will be ordained as priest, while two seminarians will be ordained as deacons: viz., Sibongasonke Percy Gcwabaza and Samukelisiwe Sydney Mnguni.

Kindly remember them in your prayers that they may hold firmly to God's gift of vocation for dear life. That is a lifelong commitment to

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serving God and the spiritual needs of the Christian faithful with genuine love. As John expresses it in his Gospel when the Risen Lord confronted Peter in the midst of other disciples with the question, “Do you love me...?” and a plea, “Feed and look after my lambs/sheep...!” (Jn. 21:15-17).

## POPE FRANCIS’ CALL FOR SYNOD ON YOUTH

He dedicated the 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome which is to take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018, to focus on Young People throughout the Catholic World. The synod shall dwell on the theme: “Faith and Vocational Discernment.” The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference will be represented in the synod by Rt. Rev. Bishop Stanley Dziuba and Rt. Rev. Bishop Siegfried Mandla Jwara.


It is necessary that in our pastoral ministry in the diocese we pay a special attention to the various needs of our young people: such as listening to their views and feelings, and accompanying them on their journey of life. While we have to be firm on ethical and traditional principles and on the necessity of hard work for a better future, yet they should be given a chance to learn and make responsible decisions about their own lives and the lives of others. We should also give them sufficient room for meaningful participation in our liturgical services and opportunities for leadership roles in our parish/mission lives. At no time should we ever give up on or lose faith in them.

## SEMINARIANS WITH OUR MOTHER MARY AT KEVELAER

During the winter holidays 2018, all our seminarians will be gathered at Kevelaer for days of recollection with Mary Our Lady of Affliction. This will take place on 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

This will give them a chance for prayer and liturgical worship together, which is a vitally important exercise because they are trained in three different seminaries. The priests who will accompany them will deliver spiritual talks, and give them individual spiritual interviews.

Let us pray for our seminarians that they may learn to develop a warm and meaningful relationship with Our Lady who is the Mother of priestly vocations.

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Right Rev. Bishop Mlungisi Pius Dlungwane  
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# The Catholic Church in South Africa

## A Short but Glorious History

June 2017 marked the countdown to the Bicentennial celebration of the establishment of the Catholic Church in South Africa. The tone was set for the approaching commemoration date with a serious ceremony, presided by Archbishop Steven Brislin in St Mary's Cathedral, Cape Town. Specially made "Bicentennial" candles - earmarked for every diocese in June 2018 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Catholic Church in SA - were ceremoniously lit.

In a sense, the epic journey of Bartholomeu Diaz in his famous "Caravel" to Southern Africa in 1487, marks the real beginnings of the Catholic Church "touching our shores". With this early Catholic "introduction", one is tempted to conjecture on what may have been our nation's destiny had those intrepid Catholic navigators made home here rather than the 1652 Calvinists! While food for thought, the reality is quite different and only in the Final Judgement shall we know why the "inscrutable" designs of God guided us on a different path.

Diaz arrived at Walvis Bay on 8th December 1487. He appropriately called it the Gulf of "Holy Mary of the Conception". Raising a Cross there, he continued on round the coast, finally landing, albeit only briefly, at St. Blaise Bay (today's Mossel Bay), on the 3rd of February, 1488. The first Mass, celebrated

perhaps in late December 1487 or early January 1488, was said on the island of the Holy Cross (named as such by Diaz), just off Port Elizabeth. He did not go much further, but on the return trip stopped at the Cape of Good Hope, where he erected his last "Padrao" (large stone Cross), near Cape Point. Ten years later Vasco da Gama, on his way to India, would, on Christmas day, sight the land to which he gave the name "Terra de Natal". While these ships carried missionaries with them, there is inexplicably no evidence of any missionary work. What is certain though is that many "holy and heroic" souls perished in these turbulent waters off our southern coast. We can also only imagine what hopes and aspirations they nurtured as they sailed by the daunting sub-continent.

With the establishment of the Dutch Calvinists at the Cape in 1652, any fervent hopes of "Catholicising" this corner of the world were firmly quelled by the prohibition of the Church. In 1802 a measure of toleration was accepted by the Dutch, but later forbidden again by the English who appeared to be more emphatic in their anti-Catholic bigotry than the Dutch!

Due to this latent persecution, the Catholic Church was forced into a late start in South Africa, but wasted no time in catching up. Only in 1818, were conditions sufficiently favourable to mark a turning point when Pope Pius VII appointed

the Benedictine, Dom Edward Bede Slater, as the first Vicar Apostolic of the "Vicariate Apostolic of the Cape of Good Hope and Adjacent Territories". But he was prohibited from setting foot on South African soil. He consequently went to Mauritius where he was also the first Vicar Apostolic. Likewise, his successor, Dom William Placid Morris resided too in Mauritius, never putting foot on South African soil. On 6 June 1837, Pope Gregory XVI constituted the Cape of Good Hope (i.e. the entire region of Southern Africa) a Separate Vicariate and appointed Bishop Patrick Raymond Griffith OP as the first resident Vicar Apostolic. With this appointment the history of the Catholic Church as a visible institution began. It was he who purchased the land on which St Mary's Cathedral stands and oversaw its development. He can be rightly considered the "Founder" of the Catholic Church of South Africa.

Bishop Griffith chose as Patroness of his new Vicariate, Our Lady of the Flight into Egypt, to denote both the struggle of the Catholic people and the African dimension to his mission.

In 1847, the Vicariate of the Cape of Good Hope was divided into the Vicariates of the Western District and the Eastern District of the Cape of Good Hope. Fr Aidan Devereux became the first Vicar Apostolic of the latter. It was he who in 1849, invited the first group of

religious sisters to South Africa.

Then, in 1852, the first missionaries of the newly-founded

Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), arrived. In 1861, after many obstacles in founding missions, Bishop Jean-Francois Allard travelled to Lesotho where he obtained a mission from King Moshoe-shoe, the founder of the Basotho nation.

This mission, which bore enormous fruit under the incredible apostolic zeal of Fr Joseph Gerard (now Blessed), was to become one of the strongest Catholic communities in Africa.

The history of the Church in our country is obviously too extensive to do any justice to in these brief lines. It is built with blood, sweat and tears on the backs of countless holy priests and bishops and a great number of selfless, dedicated nuns and brothers - all of whom laboured, often anonymously, to build the Holy Church and save souls. Their sacrifices, if not recorded in Church annals are engraved in the Book of Life, never to be erased.

One Bishop whose apostolate was so immense and the scope of his activities so far-reaching, was Bishop Charles-Constant

Jolivet OMI, Vicar Apostolic of Natal. He can justly be considered a foundation stone of the early Church - having left his stamp as far afield as Kimberley, Pretoria and Mthatha. To him we owe a great debt of gratitude for his sagacity and tireless zeal for the souls entrusted to his care.

Another zealous and indefatigable "warrior", worthy of singling out is the incomparable Abbot Franz Pfanner. Suffice it to say that the epithet "Apostle to the Zulus" is a somewhat fitting description of his legacy! Disposing of great charisma and a fine grasp of human psychology, he moved with lightning speed, opening countless mission stations, replete with schools, convents, boarding houses and the like. Before his untimely exit from public life, a large number of missions graced the interior of Kwa-Zulu Natal bearing mute testimony to his apostolic endeavours. Indeed, these lovely Missions with their characteristic churches form a veritable "Mission Route" through Kwa-Zulu Natal, encouraging deep reflection, wonder and gratitude for this servant of God, whose Cause for Beatification is currently being scrutinized.

Despite its late coming on the missionary scene, the Southern African Catholic Church has shown remarkable signs of growth throughout the 20th century, relying as it does

on a history of two millennia, a full claim on the Truth and the protection and grace of the Holy Spirit and Our Lady. We constitute today some 7-8% of the South African population, placing Catholicism amongst the top denominations demographically. In 1952, South Africa was gloriously placed under the special protection of Our Lady with the Proclamation of Our Lady of the Assumption as Principal Patroness of our dear land.

This 2018 edition of our *South Africa Needs Our Lady* Marian calendar features some of the more historic, "ancient" and picturesque churches, with brief commentaries. It features as well some of the early personalities; pioneering souls - whose toils would mark the trajectory of the Church into the future. There is the odd anecdote and interesting aside, but it is not and cannot be exhaustive and, therefore, some of the more classic and beautiful recent manifestations of Catholic life in our country like Ngome and the heroic Benedict Daswa have been left to a future occasion. The calendar is dedicated to all those holy and heroic souls, some known and recorded, others unsung and anonymous heroes - known only to God - whose labours, prayers and sighs constitute the legacy of Holy Mother Church in our country. It is due to them and their sacrifices that we today can "have life and have it abundantly"...

*Our Lady of the Assumption, Pray for us.*

## **IBANDLA ELIKHATHOLIKA ENINGIZIMU AFRIKA UMLANDO OMFISHANE KODWA ONODUMO**

Inyanga kaJune ngonyaka ka2017 yaphawula ukuqala kokubalwa kwezinsuku kubhekwe emgubhweni weminyaka engu 200 iBandla eliKhatholika lasungulwa eNingizimu Afrika. Umuzwa walomgubho ozayo waqalwa ngomcimbi obalulekile owawunganyelwe uArchbishop Steven Brisin eSt. Mary's Cathedral, eKapa. Amakhandlela akhethekile okugubha leminyaka ewu200 ayilesi naleso sifundaBhishobhi abekwa eceleni ebekelwa uJune 2018 ukugubha isikhumbuzo seminyaka ewu200 yeBandla eliKhatholika eNingizimu Afrika – akhanyiswa kulenkonzongokukhethekile.

Uhambo oluyinqayizivele lukaBartholomeu Diaz ehamba ngomkhumbi wakhe odumile i-"Caravel" eze eNingizimu Afrika ngonyaka ka1487, iphawula ukuqala ngempela kweBandla eliKhatholika "ukufika osebeni". Ngaloku kuqala kobuKhatholika, umuntu ufikelwa umuzwa wokuthi acabange ukuthi ngabe yayizoba njani impilo yesizwe sethu ukuba laba bazungezi bamazwe abanesibindi ababengamaKhatholika benza ikhaya labo lapha kunokuba kube ngabalandeli bakaCalvin abafika ngo1652. Sithi sicabanga ngalokhu kodwa siyazi ukuthi okwenzekile kuhluka kakhulu futhi koba sekwahlulelweni kokugcina la sokwazi ukuthi lemfihlakalo yecebo likaNkulunkulu yindaba lasiholela kulendlela ehluke.

UDiaz wafika eWalvis Bay ngomhlaka 8 kuDecember ngo1487. Kuyingakho ngendlela ekhethekile ayiqamba lendawo ngokuthi ichweba lika "Maria Ocwebileyo wokuthatshathwa okungenasici". Wagxumeka isiphambano lapho, waseqhubeka nohambo egudla ugu, wafika wahlala noma kwaba isikhashana echwebeni iSt. Blaise (esiyaziwa manje ngeMossel Bay) ngomhlaka 3 kuFebruary ngonyaka ka 1488. Imisa lokuqala lagujwa hlampe ngokuphela kukaDecember ngonyaka ka 1487 noma ekuqaleni kukaJanuary ngo1488, ligujwa esiqhingini sesiPhambano esiyiNgcwele (saqanjwa kanjalo nguDiaz), ngaphandle nje kwePort Elizabeth. Akazange aqhubeka kakhulu kodwa ohambweni lwakhe lwesibili wama eCape of Good Hope, lapho amisa isiphambano esikhulu setshe "Padrao" eduze neCape Point. Emva kweminyaka eyishumi uVasco da Gama endleleni yakhe eya kwelaseNdiya ngosuku lukaKhisimusi wabona umhlaba awetha ngegama elithi "Terra de Natal". Nakuba lemikhumbi yayihamba namaMissionary kuyo akukho nobuncane ubufakazi bokuthi kwabakhona ukushunyayelwa kwevangeli (missionary work). Kodwa okumiyo ukuthi miningi imiphefumulo "yabangcwele namaqhawe" eyalahleka kulamadlambi ogwini lezwe lethu. Singaphinda futhi sicabange nje ngamaphupho nezifiso ababenazo ngezwe lethu bedlula ngemikhumbi kulendawo.

Ngokusungulwa kwamaDutch Calvinists eKapa ngo 1652, onke amaphupho okuphendula lelikhona lomhlaba ukuba libe amaKhatholika lashabalala ikakhulu lapho iBandla eliKhatholika livalwa ukuba lisebenze. Ngo-1802 kodwa amaDutch abanako ukulamukela iBandla kodwa kamuva amaNgisi aphinde alivala, bona kwakusobala ukuthi babe nesankahlo ekungalifunini iBandla eliKhatholika kunamaDutch.

Ngenxa yaloku kuhlukunyezwa buthule, iBandla eliKhatholika laphoqeleka ukuba lisunguleke kamuva eNingizimu Afrika, kodwa akuthathanga sikhathi ukuba lidlondlobale lifice lawa amanye amahlelo. Kwakungu-1818 lapho izimo zasezivuma

kwaqala ushintsho lapho uPhapha uPius VII ajuba amaBenedictine, ngaphansi kuka-Dom Edward Bede Slater, njengo Vicar Apostolic we-“Vicariate Apostolic yase Cape of Good Hope kanye nezindawo eziseduze”. Kodwa wayengavunyelwe ukuba abeke unyawo lwakhe emhlabathini waseNingizimu Afrika. Ngakho-ke wahamba waya eMauritius lapho afika waba futhi nguVicar Apostolic wokuqala. Kanjalo futhi owamlandela, uDom William Placid Morris wayehlala eMauritius, naye akazange walubeka unyawo lwakhe emhlabathini waseNingizimu Afrika. Ngomhlaka 6 kuJune 1837, uPhapha uGregory XVI wamisa iCape of Good Hope (izwe lonke laseNingizimu neAfrika) ukuba libe iVicariate ezimele waseqoka uBishop Patrick Raymond Griffith ukuba abe nguVicar Apostolic ohlala kuyo lendawo. Ngaloku kuqokwa kwaqala ngokusobala umlando weBandla eliKhatholika njengesikhungo esibonakalayo. Nguye owathenga umhlaba lapho iSt. Mary’s Cathedral yakhiwe khona waphinda wangamela ukuthuthuka kwayo. Ngakho-ke angathathwa njengo-“Msunguli” weBandla eliKhatholika eNingizimu Afrika.

UMbhishobhi uGriffith wakhetha njengommeli weVicariate entsha, uMame wokubalekela eGibhithe, ukuqhakambisa ukuhlukumezeka kwamaKhatholika kanye nomsebenzi wakhe kubantu base-Afrika.

Ngo-1847, iVicariate yeCape of Good Hope yahlukaniswa kwaba amaVicariate ase Western District kanye neEastern District yeCape of Good Hope. U-Fr. Aidan Devereux waba nguVicar Apostolic wokuqala wesifunda lesi sesibili. Nguye okwathi ngo-1849 wamema ithimba lokuqala lezindela zesifazane (amasistela) ukuba eze eNingizimu Afrika.

Kwathi ngo-1852, amaMissionary okuqala omhlangano owawusanda kusungulwa amaOblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) afika kulelizwe. Ngo 1861, emva kwezihibe eziningi ekusunguleni izi-Mission, uMbhishobhi Jean-Francois Allard waya eLesotho la athola khona i-mission kwiNkosi uMoshoe-shoe, umsunguli wesizwe saBesuthu. Le-mission, yathela izithelo eziningi ngaphansi kobuholi nogqozi luka Fr Joseph Gerard (manje ongoBusisiweyo) yaba enye yezinamandla emphakathini wamaKhatholika eAfrika yonkana.

Umlando weBandla ezweni lakithi mukhulu kakhulu angeke senza ubulungiswa kuwo ngemigqa nje embalwa. Wakhiwe ngegazi, umjuluko kanye nezinyembezi phezukwemiqolo yabapriste abangebalwe abaBhishobhi kanye nenqwaba yamabhulata namasistela azidela futhi ababezinikele – bonke abasebenza iningi lingaziwa ukwakha iBandla nokusindisa imiphefumulo. Ukuzidela kwabo nakuba kungabhaliwe emabhukwini omlando kepha kubhaliwe eNcwadini yokuphila, akusoze kwasuleka.

Omunye uMbhishobhi umsebenzi wakhe owabamkhulu futhi owenza nemisebenzi eminingi eyahlekahlukene uBishop Charles-Constant Jolivet OMI, uVicar Apostolic waseNatal. Angathathwa njengetshe eliyinhloko okwasekelwa kulo iBandla lisafufusa – washiya umaka nasezindaweni ezikude ukuyofinyelela koKimberley, Pretoria kanye naseMthatha. Kuyena sikweleta ukubonga okukhulu ngobuhlakani kanye nogqozi olungapheli ngemiphefumulo eyayibekwe kuye ukuba ayinakekele.

Elinye iqhawe elalinomfutho lingapheli mandla, okubalulekile ukuba kesikhulume ngaye ongenakuqhathaniswa namuntu uAbbot Franz Pfanner. Kwanele ukuba sisho

ukuthi isidlaliso (igama lokumteketisa) sokuthi nguMpostoli wamaZulu (Apostle to the Zulus) sichaza konke ngomsebenzi wakhe. Waye ngumuntu owayethandeka futhi eqonda abantu ngendlela ejulile, ehamba kuhle konyazi, evula inqwaba yeziMission ezinezikole, izigodlo, izindawo zokuhlala abafundi kanye nokunye. Ngaphambi kokusuka kwakhe emehlweni abantu okwakungalindelekile inqwaba yeziMission ezikhona kwaZulu-Natal zingubufakazi bemizamo yakhe. Ngempela lezi ziMission ezinhle kangaka zakha indlela ebonakalayo ebizwa nge"Mission Route" edabula phakathi KwaZulu-Natal ekhuthaza ukuba uzindle kanzulu, umangale, futhi ubonge uNkulunkulu ngalesisikhonzi ondlela yaso eya ekucwetshisweni iyabhekisiswa kumanje.

Nakuba lafika kamuva ekushunyayelweni kweVangeli, iBandla eliKatholika eniNgizimu Afrika liveze izinkomba ezinkulu zokukhula kwiminyaka yama1900, lokhu kudlondlobala kuncike kakhulu kumlando walo weminyaka ewu 200 labakhona, kanye naseqinisweni nokuvikelwa negrasiya likaMoya Ocwebileyo kanye noMame wethu. Namhlanje isibalo sethu sithi asibe amaphesenti angu 7-8 (%) wabantu bonke abaseniNgizimu Afrika okwenza ukuba umphakathi wamaKatholika ube ngomunye omkhulu uma kuqhathaniswa namanye amahlelo. Ngo-1952 iNingizimu Afrika yabekwa ngodumo ngokukhethekile ngaphansi komvikeli uMame wethu ngaphansi kwesihloko - uMame owenyuselwa ezulwini - njengo yena yena mmeli wezwe lakithi.

Ikhalenda lethu lika-Maria la2018 le-South Africa Needs our Lady liveza amanye amasonto amadala ozakhiwo zawo zihlukile futhi kuwo okukhona imifanekiso nemidwebo emihle, kanye nomlando omfishane ngawo. Liqukethe futhi abanye babantu bokuqala ababalulekile ekusungulweni kweBandla – ukuzikhandla kwabo kohlala njalo kuyizinkomba endleleni yeBandla njengoba libheke phambili. Kunenye indaba kanye nesayidi kodwa ngeke sakwazi ukuba sikhulume ngako konke ngakho-ke ezinye zezambulo ezikhethekile nezinhle zesikhathi samanje zempilo yobuKatholika ezweni lakithi njengeNgome kanye nobuqhawe buka Benedict Daswa kubekelwe umkhosi ozayo. Ikhalenda libungaza bonke labo abacwebileyo nemiphefumulo yamaqhawe labo okubhaliwe ngabo nalabo abangaziwa, abababazwayo nabangadumile – abaziwa nguNkulunkulu kuphela – imisebenzi, imithandazo nokubongoza kwabo kwakha ifa leBandla lethu elingcwele elinguMame ezweni lethu. Kuyingabo nokuzidela kwabo namhlanje thina sithi "sinokuphila, futhi kuyachichima"...