

PAX ET BONUM

Mtendere, Khotso, Peace, Kagiso, Vrede, Rugare, Nxolo, Asomdwe, Kuthula, Ukuthula, Mulalo

No. 01..... 2023

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER PROVINCIAL BRO. BONGINKOSI BUTHELEZI, TSSF



My dear brothers and sisters, prayerful wishes and warm greetings in 2023 from the Office of the MP. It's a New Year, and a new beginning especially with regards to our newsletter. As Franciscans, we can find hope and strength in knowing that God is with us in all things, including the new beginning we face this year. In Isaiah 43:19, the Lord says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you perceive it?" God is constantly at work in our lives, creating new opportunities and possibilities for us.

Our Seraphic Father Francis composed a psalm for his Office of the Passion which he recited every day during the Easter season: "Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wondrous things. The Lord has made his salvation known. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Office of the Passion, Psalm 9). What strikes me about this prayer is that St. Francis is calling himself and us to sing a new song in the midst of a liturgical season that marks a journey to the cross. It is even more proper to sing a new song at the beginning of the New Year – MMXXIII Anno Domini.

My message to you brothers and sisters in the Lord is to apply the **chaos theory** in your life this year.

There's a thing called the butterfly effect where small changes (like a butterfly flapping its wings) can result in much larger effects, like a great and strong wind or an earthquake or a fire (1 Kings 19:11-13). But I know it's a little more complicated than that, but you get the point. All I am saying is for us to make a small difference in our area of influence i.e. at home, at work, or in your Local Group even if our efforts won't save the planet from ecological crisis or save the Church from the real threat of secularisation. But we must be the change we want to see in the world.

This first volume of newsletter is a product of a bunch of butterflies (a kaleidoscope of butterflies, if you will) that fuel our Pax et Bonum newsletter: everyone who has shared the highlights of their stories from their regions resulting in its publication. These people are the embodiment of what the butterfly effect means. It's because of them and our Editor that you can continue to read news of what is happening in our Province after a long break and we are greatly indebted to them.

Bro. Bonginkosi Buthelezi tssf

10 January 2023, Durban, South Africa

Pax et Bonum

A WAY TO LIVE FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

The more you give, the more you get.

The more you laugh, the less you'll fret.

The more you do unselfishly, the more you'll live abundantly.

The more of everything you share, the more you'll always have to spare.

The more you love, the more you'll find that life is good and friends are kind.

For only what we give away, enriches us from day to day.

INTIMACY WITH GOD

A morning prayer by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

O God, early in the morning I cry to you –
Help me to pray;
And to concentrate my thoughts on you;
I cannot do this alone;
In me there is darkness; but with you there is light;
I am lonely but you do not leave me;
I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help;
I am restless, but with you there is peace.
In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;
I do not understand your ways, but you know the way for me.
Restore me to liberty and enable me so to live now
That I may answer before you and before me.

Lord, whatever this day may bring,
Your name be praised!



SOMETHING TO PONDER ON

My (Franciscan) homeless parish 26 April
2022

By Revd Jane Cowen tssf

During the “hard lockdown” of 2020, 102 homeless people were forced to live in Walmer Town Hall for what would be 4 long months. When I witnessed the trauma this policed confinement caused, I elected to use my permit to join them each day and do whatever I could.

The unavailability of health workers, limited social workers and municipal officials, meant there were

many needs: first aid, washing the frail, counselling, haircuts, prayer, reassurance, finding reading material and calling police to break up fights etc.

Many homeless residents asked for church services, so I conducted services every Sunday on the grass outside the Hall. We observed Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Pentecost using whatever props were available. I used the Anglican liturgy for Sunday services as this resonated too with the Catholics, and other denominations. The good weather allowed for social distancing outside.

Sermons were kept relevant to my parish of 102 : At one of our weekly outdoor divine services I shared with my homeless congregants that Jesus knows exactly how they feel as homeless people because Jesus was himself a homeless man who had “nowhere to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20) save for the hospitality of strangers and friends. To homeless refugees from a neighbouring country, I added that as a young child Jesus had been the son of refugee parents when they were forced to flee to Egypt (Matthew 2:14 -15). By the end of the 4 months, six of the residents had been reconciled with estranged family in Port Elizabeth, Durban and Johannesburg. Five people got car guarding jobs, and two men rejoined fishing boats.

One gentleman died and I was eventually able to trace his family who could then claim him and bury him with dignity.

Still the work continues. I meet the homeless wherever they are to be found: on the street; in parks and at traffic lights.

They suffer terribly from rejection by society, alienation and depression. The shock and bruises of many people taken by police van to the lockdown shelter revealed to me a sad lack of understanding. For many homeless people, these compassionless acts reinforced their belief that “no one cares”. Many homeless people have been hurt by “Christians” who have made them feel unwelcome in churches. Trust rebuilding has taken months and

continues slowly. I am always working to rebuild their belief in their **created** value in God's eyes.

Many homeless men and women die while still young. Many suffer chronically from HIV Aids, septacemia, boils, or have been weakened by TB. A young man recently died of TB in the spine.

I have formed a relationship with a staff member at AVBOB.

This company has an arrangement with Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality to handle bodies that will need a pauper's burial.

If I am alerted when a homeless man or woman dies - unclaimed by family, I offer to anoint the body and pray for the soul of the deceased. The street people are often deeply religious and they often witness to, and encourage one another. Some have given me their handwritten Last Will and Testament so they can be sure of prayers at their passing.

As Franciscans it is easy for us to know what to do because Jesus showed us by his living loving example: Matthew (15: 29 -39) records how when faced with thousands of hungry people, Jesus had "compassion" on them. Jesus felt compassion – Jesus felt compelled to ACT. Yes, Jesus' brand of love shows up in solidarity, it does not distance or delegate or outsource responsibility for the human need that stares it in the face. May the Holy Spirit continue to open our eyes, our ears, our hearts and our hands to live in the way of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

JANE+ tssf

Some reflections on God's work in Masite- Lesotho, Southern Africa

Masite as a spiritual and Social Change powerbase: The 'galilee' of the people of God. "When the right time finally came" (Galatians 4:4), the first Bishop of the diocese of Lesotho, Bishop John Maund, invited the Society of the Precious Blood (SPB), a United Kingdom based religious community, to establish a home in Lesotho. This was among the many of the Masite's firsts. Like Galilee of Old, Masite is a place

of significant key events that laid a foundation for a special ministry among God's people.

Masite among the many housed Fr John Osmas around the 1970s when there was political instability in both Lesotho and South Africa. He arrived from the Anglican Church in New Zealand to serve in the Diocese of Lesotho under Bishop John Maund, and he became an oblate of the community. Masite became a galilee from which Bishop John Osmers began his mission. Among the many community based activities that he did while in Lesotho was to establish the Holy Trinity Parish, Quthing.

Both SPB and Bishop John Osmers have taught us the love in its demanding form is the key to the ordering of things in life. The best gift we can give to the SPB and Bishop John Osmers is true sacrificial prayer and service to others, as well as willingness to forgive unconditionally those who have wronged us.

Bishop Phillip Mokuku, tssf.

LESOTHO GROUP and MASITE

The Lesotho tssf group regular visits to Masite, hold retreats etc. They also take care of the SPB member sister Theresia Mary SPB who remained behind when covenant was closed in 2014. She has been a long standing companion of the tssf Lesotho group.

Below is a picture taken on the 11/12/2022 during Lesotho group, tssf visit when Bishop Phillip Mokuku was giving blessing to sister Theresia Mary SPB on her 87th birthday.

It is sad to announce that she passed on the 13/02/2023. May soul rest in peace, amen.



SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION CHAPTER 2022

The Region Chapter took place from Friday 14th October to Sunday 16th October 2022 at Padre pio Retreat and Conference Centre, Pretoria, Johannesburg.

The outcome for chapter of the Franciscan Third Order for the Province of Africa and for the Southern Region (South Africa and Lesotho), among others was the election of the committee and related positions in tssf, as follows:

- The Bishop Protector for all of Franciscan Tertiaries in Africa - the Rt Rev Vicentia
- Liason Bishop for Southern Region (SA and Lesotho) - the Rt Rev Joshua
- Regional Guardian (taking care of the Franciscan Tertiaries in SA and Lesotho)-Ms. Natasha Fry, tssf



REFLECTIONS ON CHAPTER 2022

Celebrating the Rule (1223-2023)



"The Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel. And I had this written down simply and in a few words and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me."
(Testament 14-15, FF 116)

Our Facebook address is "Third Order of St Francis African Province". Website: www.tssf.org.za

Finally, please pray for more people to be called to join our society. We need to pray that when someone hears the call we will be ready to welcome them, to be loving and attractive as a group and as a way of following our Lord.

We need to keep the way of St Francis by our reading of the daily obedience, by praying and by keeping in touch.

+++++

God bless Africa. Protect our children. Transform our leaders. Heal our communities. Restore our dignity and give us peace.

For Jesus Christ's sake.

Amen

