

MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

NEWSLETTER No. 29

24th July 2013

Dear Aspirants,

Sorry for last month! I just was very busy and when I noticed I had passed the date due for publishing the *Newsletter*, it was too late! But here is a new one! Here are a few of the events since the last *Newsletter*.



Singing with some of the children

On Saturday June 8th, I gave a retreat to – imagine! – fifty four (yes, 54!) children of the Xaveri Movement in the Archdiocese of Pretoria! I survived the day, thanks to the help of a few adults, to their singing and to the stories I told them. I deplore the fact that there was too much disparity of ages in the group: from five to fourteen years old! But on the whole, it was good, and I think they will remember something positive, especially that we are like a pencil in the hand of God, and that at times we need a painful sharpening to help us grow! We hope and pray that some of those children will grow into responsible adults and live the vocation to which God is calling them.

On Saturday, 22nd, I conducted a retreat for fourteen youths (14 to 20 years old) who are preparing themselves for their Sacrament of Confirmation. Quite a different experience from the children's retreat! I was very impressed by their responsible participation and their serious attitude. The discussions and reflections were very frank and honest. Their prayers were also expressed in a very deep and committed way. They were really full of enthusiasm in their resolve to build a better world. One young man is interested to become a priest and to use his talents in audio-visuals to spread the Gospel message. God is surely at work in these young people! They were all serious about their vocation. But I was a bit surprised when one said to a girl: "You want to become a teacher? But it does not pay enough!"

On June 26th, we had a beautiful Vocation Day at the Cathedral. In fact, we joined the sixty plus youth from the deanery comprehending the parishes around the Cathedral. It was a very good celebration of youthfulness with a very lively mass. Many also expressed their eagerness to know their vocation in order to serve God better and help build a better world.

On July 2nd Patrick arrived from Malawi after completing his first year of philosophy. On Sunday, 7th, we had a youth meeting together in his home parish, Holy Family, Turffontein. The youth were very interested to hear from him, especially that they know him as an altar server for many years. From 13th to 17th we travelled together: first to Merrivale where we have a seminary for theology; on Sunday 14th, we had a Vocation Meeting in Henley Parish with forty youths very keen to know more about their vocation. There were also two Sisters who talked to the girls. On Monday, we travelled to Bethlehem in the Free State, where we met with an aspirant who is now in grade 12. After the night spent at the Bishop's house (Bishop DeGroef is a M.Afr.), on Tuesday, we travelled to Maseru in Lesotho, where Patrick's father and sister are working in a hospital. On Wednesday afternoon, I drove back to Johannesburg.



With Patrick and his nephew Bright

Do not forget: VOCATION MEETING this coming Sunday at the Cathedral from 10am to 3pm (including Mass)!

I really hope to see you there. Patrick and two more students (from Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast) coming for their pastoral experience in SA, will be there, as well as one of our young Missionary priests from Zambia. SEE YOU THERE! God bless you!

Fr. Michel.

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