

MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

NEWSLETTER No. 48

25th February 2015

My dear Friends,

Greetings! Yes, Lent is upon us again and we have started on our way with Jesus toward His Passion and Resurrection!

I hope you all went to the Ash Wednesday Mass, opening this “favourable time” (as the liturgy tells us).

In a certain North American Indian tribe, when someone has committed a social sin, he goes to the common kitchen in the centre of the village, where all the women cook, and he smears himself with ashes; and sitting in cool ashes, he spends a few days –as long as he needs – in silence to examine his conscience and repent. The women, quietly and in silence, bring him water and a little food every day. When his time of purification is over, he stands up, goes to wash himself and he is re-integrated into the tribal community. This is a good example to help us understand how to **prepare** for these forty days of purification on our way to Easter, and why we start with Ash Wednesday. What have you chosen to do as penance in order to please the Lord more? (**fast**). Do you also pray more? (**pray**). Do you give (of your goods or of your time) to those in need? (**give**). It’s not too late to start! You could also give it a missionary twist: **fast** and **pray** for missionaries in difficult situations, and for your vocation discernment; **give** to a missionary project abroad...



On 7th February, we had a wonderful celebration for the Day of Consecrated Life. Around four hundred people came to the Johannesburg Cathedral, mostly priests, brothers and sisters. But among them, there were also about 100 youths who participated well. A very special mention goes to the youth choir of the near-east deanery (about thirty of them!) who sang very well! Congratulations to six of the Sisters who were celebrating their jubilees: two 25 years, two 50 years and two 60 years of consecrated life! (calculate: how many years all together?!). Of course, this was without counting the many other Sisters, Brothers and Priests who have already lived for so many years their consecration to the Lord, devoting their lives to God and to his people (to you!). Some younger Sisters danced for the offertory, bringing to the altar the Bible, some seeds, some soil and a pot of flowers – symbols of the word of God sown in good soil, which has produced something beautiful in South Africa, through the consecrated people who brought God’s Good News.

After Mass, we went to the hall to eat lunch and listen to some talks by different religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests. Then there was a panel discussion and questions from the floor. At the end of the day (around 3 pm), some youths from the near east deanery addressed the religious and threw challenges at them: “your life style is often too rich for you who profess the vow of poverty”; “you are not close enough to us, the youths”; “you should play sports with us”; “you should visit us in our homes and schools”; “you should open your houses and invite us to visit you”. These some of the remarks from the youths to the consecrated people. It was surely good to say what they had in mind! On the whole, it was a very successful day! We hope and pray that this is only the beginning of more celebrations and challenges during this Year of Consecrated Life.

I am writing this *Newsletter* from Merrivale (near Cedara), at our House of Formation where we have now 22 theology students from many countries of Africa, from Poland and Mexico. We are holding our quarterly meeting of the South Africa Sector of the M.Afr., evaluating the past and planning for the future. We pray for you all!

Wishing you a very fruitful Lenten Season! God bless you all!

Fr. Michael

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*Be apostles,
nothing but apostles!*

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