

MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

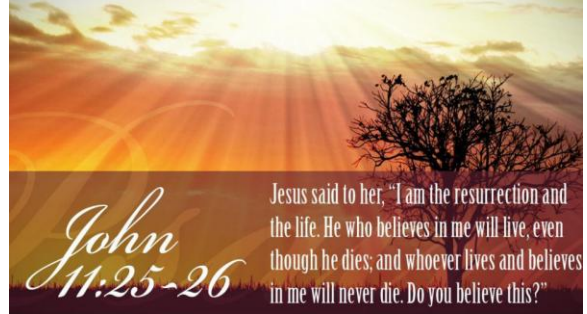
SOUTH AFRICA

NEWSLETTER No. 61

28th March 2016

My dear Friends,

Greetings and Joy in the Risen Christ! I hope you had a wonderful Lenten journey. Yes, today, we celebrate Easter, the very core of our Christian life. *"If Christ is not risen, then our faith is useless"* (1 Cor. 15: 14). Therefore, it must show in our lives by the way we smile, help others, behave well, speak well of others, etc. Joy is contagious and can change our world for the better.



On 28th February, about fifteen youths gather for the day at the Johannesburg Cathedral for a vocation discernment day. Many of them have very good intentions, but the difficult part is to take the plunge! To resolve to give one's life totally to God is a difficult decision to make for most of them. It is much easier to follow the stream of ordinary life with all its worldly attractions than to devote one's life to become an apostle. In a letter to young people participating at the 2015 European Meeting of Youth (August 2015), Pope Francis encouraged *them "not to conform themselves to a mediocre¹ life without aspirations."* One day, a missionary priest was asked why he had chosen this vocation; he simply answered *"to comfort the disturbed and to disturb the comfortable"*. And for this, he had left the comfort of a good family and many friends, and the possibility of having a very good profession and raising his own family. Most importantly, he always reflected the joy of the Gospel!

This month, most priests have been busy with the sacrament of reconciliation in many parishes around. We feel that there is a return of people to receive this beautiful sacrament of the mercy of God. Most people come with a real and sincere desire to improve their lives as regards their relationship with God and their neighbours. For us, priests, it is a very enriching experience allowing us to enter the hearts of our Christians. We really fall in admiration in front of the humility and honesty of the penitents. Each person is sacred and bears the image of God implanted in their inner self.

On Wednesday 16th March, Fr. Christophe and I have the pleasure to receive a new member in our community in the person of Fr. George Okwi, M.Afr. Fr. George, a Ugandan, comes with a vast experience of different countries of Africa and Europe where he also did some studies. Welcome, Fr. George, we are happy to have you in Edenglen to help us share the work!

The Easter Season is here, and I would like to wish you all a very **HAPPY EASTER!** Surely, it is a time of renewal in the Risen Lord, a time to feel more and more how much he is with us and wants to transform our lives so we may bear his image in us and be a source of inspiration for others. Let us ask Mary – who surely was the first to receive her son's visit after his resurrection – to inspire us in living as "resurrected people". Let us *"ask the Virgin Mary, the silent witness to the death and resurrection of Her Son, to make the joy of Easter grow in us."* (Pope Francis' message, Easter 2015)

The Holy Week was surely marred by acts of terrorism in many places in Europe and Africa, and violent demonstrations and crimes in South Africa; on the other hand, this month, there were five elections and referendums in different countries of Africa; this is a clear sign of hope: democracy is growing.

Jesus came to destroy death and bring new Life. Let us be signs of this new Life of our Risen Lord in each one of us.

God bless you!

Fr. Michael

Let us not forget: VOCATION SUNDAY: 17th April, at the Cathedral in Johannesburg. In other dioceses, you can enquire about this most important Sunday!

Find this Newsletter on <https://goo.gl/inY30D>

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*Be apostles,
nothing but apostles!*

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¹ "of only average quality" (Oxford Dictionary)