



CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF MARIANHILL•

MTHATHA REGION•

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EASTERN- CAPE PROVINCE• SOUTH AFRICA•

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Dear Confreres

Fraternal greetings to all of you confreres, hoping that you are keeping well in both body and spirit. It is my prayer that you all closed year 2022 well and have entered year 2023 energised and on a good footing. I wish to express my sincere condolences to all the confreres who lost their loved ones during the year 2022. May the Lord heal the wounds and console you. As we have begun the New Year 2023, let us be grateful to God for the gift of life and let us pray for good health for all of us and also ask the Lord to bless our work and programmes for the year 2023.

Dear Confreres, I wish to communicate to you the following;

### **Pre-elections for the Regional Superior**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, after consulting the GG, I explained to those who attended the retreat the procedure of the pre-election process for the Regional Superior. Ballot papers were given to the chairpersons of the Zones to ensure that, each Confrere receives a ballot paper from the chairperson and submit to the chairperson after nominating and filling in three names of his preferred candidates for the Regional Superior. The young Confreres from Merrivale also received the ballot papers except for those who had already left for their home-leave (2 had left already). The submitted ballot papers were counted at the Regional Council meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022, and the results were published. Again, ballot papers were sent out through the chairpersons of the Zones and the deadline for submission was clearly given as the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2023. On the same day (16<sup>th</sup> January 2023), the Regional Council met and received in total 23 sealed envelopes which were packaged and entrusted to 2 Councillors to send by courier direct to the Superior General in Mariannhill. A few students who had not returned from home-leave will submit their ballots in person to the

Superior General at Mariannahill on the 25<sup>th</sup> January on their way to the retreat. Please note that, this process is only a consultative vote. The final decision will be made by the Superior General and his Council, based not only on the outcome of the second ballot but on their discretion. Therefore, you can expect the announcement of the new Regional Superior before the end of January 2023.

### **Election of Regional Councillors**

At the Regional Chapter to be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023, we will have the opportunity to elect four (4) Regional Councillors who will, together with the new Regional Superior, constitute the Leadership Team of our Region of Mthatha.

### **Agenda of the Regional Chapter**

At the Regional Council meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023, the leadership team agreed to a proposal to limit the items of the agenda of the day to two key issues namely; election of Councillors and presentations of the three delegates on the General Chapter 2022. The election of Councillors will be a process of reflection and discernment, and will be done in stages. In this regard, 2 Councillors will be elected in the morning (before lunch) and the other 2 in the afternoon. The three delegates will present on different ACTS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER 2022 and there will be time for clarifications, comments and discussions. These two key issues are of a serious nature to last us the whole day. To this end, there will be another Regional Assembly later during the year (around June or July) where other outstanding issues, including reports etc will be presented and discussed.

### **Priestly ordinations**

It is my pleasure to announce to you that:

Rev. Deacon Jackson Mandela Likabo CMM will be ordained a Priest on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at his home Parish of Eregi by his Lordship, Bishop Joseph Obanyi Sagwe of the Diocese of Kakamega. Fr Thomas Wao CMM will represent our Region of Mthatha at the ordination. Deacon Mandela is currently on home-leave which he is spending doing some pastoral work at his Parish. We are grateful to the Region of East Africa for all the support they are giving to Deacon Mandela as he prepares for his ordination. On his return, Deacon Mandela will work as an assistant Priest to Fr Mandla Mchunu CMM while residing at Abbot

Francis Home. Our plan is that, he will slowly be initiated into formation ministry and later take charge of the candidacy and postulant programmes.

Rev, Deacon Joel Bokoyo Mpembe CMM will be ordained a Priest on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at Mariazell Mission by His Lordship, Bishop Sithembele Sipuka of the Catholic Diocese of Mthatha. Deacon Joel is currently at Mariazell Mission and will remain there after his ordination to be part of the CMM team and community at Mariazell. Let us keep our Confreres in prayer and give them the necessary support as they prepare for their special day of ordination.

### **New arrivals**

We welcome Bro Dismas Ayogo CMM who has been transferred from the Region of East Africa to the Region of Mthatha. Bro Dismas will join the community of Abbot Francis Home and will be fully involved in the Youth Empowerment Programmes at Bro Stephen Frommelt's Youth Development Centre. He will join us as soon as his work visa is granted. You are most welcome Bro Dismas.

We also welcome Frt Oscar Alexander Garcia CMM who has been transferred to the Region of Mthatha from Colombia for a period of 2 years for missionary experience. Frt Oscar will join the community of Mariazell and later, also join the Abbot Francis Home community to work with the youth. He will join us as soon as he obtains his visa. You are most welcome Frt Oscar.

### **Home-leave**

Fr Francis Ojok is currently in Uganda for his home-leave. He is expected to return on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023. We hope he is enjoying his holidays with family and friends, and also getting some rest.

Frt Pius Thabo Ncube went to Zimbabwe for home-leave when schools closed in November 2022. He has returned and is at Mariannahill waiting to join others for the retreat at Mariannahill Coolock.

Frt Ruben Munsebi CMM went to the DR Congo for home-leave in November 2022. He was expected to return on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023 but encountered some complications with his visa at the airport in Kinshasa. The South African Embassy in Kinshasa instructed him to return to

them on Thursday this week. We pray and hope that, they will assist him and rectify the error, whatever it is.

### **Feast of the Presentation of the Lord**

Confreres, we all know that the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord is also the Principal Feast of our Congregation. For our Unit and others, it is indeed a special day on which we final profession, renewal of vows and first profession are celebrated. This year, we have 3 young confreres (Frts Chika Kingsley, Pius Mwangi and Nhlanhla Bright Ziqubu) who will be making their perpetual profession and five will be renewing their religious vows. One novice (Serge Kuka) will be making his first profession. Let us demonstrate our unity and support for our young Confreres by celebrating this great Feast of our Congregation together and also renew our own commitment to the Congregation and the Lord.

### **Admission to the Novitiate 2023**

Two of our postulants namely: Ernest Kuthlwano from Bloemfontein in the Free State Province of South Africa and Fortunat Batuzayako from DR Congo were admitted to the Novitiate 2023. They are already in Mariannahill preparing for the retreat.

### **Congratulations to Fr Mandla Mchunu CMM**

For the past three years Fr Mandla has been quietly pursuing studies in BCom in law and has successfully completed the programme. Congratulations Macingwane, and well done! We await the graduation party.

Confreres, I wish you all God's richest blessings. Together We Can!

Fr. Dr. Gideon Sibanda, CMM

Regional Superior