

Rundbrief aus Mthatha – April 2020

13th April 2020

Dear Confreres

As the leadership of our Region we greet you all Confreres in the name of the Risen Lord and we wish you a Happy and Blessed Easter. Indeed, these are the most unusual and challenging times in the history of humanity. That the coronavirus pandemic has interfered with our most solemn and significant celebration in our liturgical calendar is more traumatic. The world is experiencing a season of disorientation and is crying out in lamentation because of the darkness and brokenness caused by Covid-19. The coronavirus does not discriminate between people on any ground, this means that we are all vulnerable and can be infected by it. According to the City Press Newspaper (12 April 2020), there are currently 1 721353 cases of Covid-19 globally, and so far international deaths stand at 104 800. These figures are increasing on daily basis with the USA, Italy and Spain amongst others recording the highest cases of infection and deaths. Let us support all our confreres in the USA/Canada, Colombia and Europe with our prayers. Let us ask the Risen Lord to protect, strengthen and grant them the graces they need to continue witnessing and ministering to his people with love. It has been stated that the most vulnerable are the elderly, children or people with other health conditions whose immune system has been compromised. To this end, let us pray and entrust our elderly confreres in Reimlingen-Germany Province to the intercession of Blessed Engelmar and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Prayer is the best support we can offer them and each other in this times of the coronavirus pandemic.

The whole world is in crisis and jittering. In response, Governments across the globe have been compelled to declare states of emergency and lockdowns to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. Here in South Africa the lockdown has been extended by two more weeks until the end of April. Although the lockdown seems to be the only option at the moment, its social and economic consequences will be disastrous to the economy in general and, on the poor and the unemployed who are already crying to the government for assistance otherwise they will die of hunger. Dear Confreres, we are all aware that our society at large and the Church have been greatly affected by the restrictive measures and ban on public gatherings of any kind with the exception of funerals. As we have stated, for many of the faithful this Easter has been strange and traumatic. Yet we have to stand tall and proclaim that Jesus Has Risen; we have to preach the resurrection with the greatest of conviction and faith, and give people hope and encouragement. Wherever you are, please do the best you can under the present circumstances!

Dear Confreres, as we wish all of you a Blessed Easter we also want to draw your attention to the following updates and information;

- **Zones**

At both the general meeting which was held in January and the Regional Conference at the end of January 2020, a concern was raised about the dysfunctionality of the zones. We recognise that zones are important for information sharing, discussion of matters in small groups and community building at grass-root level. They can also be utilised for spiritual development in small groups, for example, recollections can be arranged at the level of zones.

In addition, they can provide a support structure for confreres within the zone. It is our desire as leadership to get the zones functioning again. Therefore, I appeal to the chairpersons of the respective zones to convene zone meetings urgently to elect new chairpersons and secretaries. Please do organise the meeting in consultation with the Regional Superior so that he can avail himself to attend. For your convenience, the zones and members for each zone are listed in the table below.

Table of Zones and their members

East London Zone	Maluti Zone
Fr Thomas Wao	Fr Bernard Gathu
Fr Dijo Matsoso	Fr Pinji Gondwane
Fr Francis Ngadi	Fr Mafu Ponya
Fr Nicholas Leaka	

Central Zone	Merrivale Zone
Fr Stephan Mandl	Frt Joel Bokoyo
Fr Mandla Mchunu	Frt Jackson Mandela
Fr Faustin Mapwar	Frt Bright Nhlanhla Ziqubu
Fr Ojok Francis	Frt Pius Mwangi Mugi
Fr Winfried Egler	
Bro Alexander Lizani	
Bro Bernard Isanda	
Deacon Taele Litlotlo	

Various Portfolios:

Formation and Vocation Promotion

After evaluating the work of the team, the Regional Superior with the consent of his Councillors re-appointed Fr Faustin Mapwar, Deacon Taele Litlotlo and Bro Bernard Isanda to the Formation and Vocation Promotion portfolio. We thank them for their commitment and hard work, and wish them God's guidance as they continue serving the community in this ministry. Their job description is delineated in our Provincial/Regional Directory (2).

Projects and Development Committee

The Regional Superior with the consent of his Council appointed Bro Alexander Lizani and Bro Bernard Isanda to be members of the Projects and Development Committee. The Regional Superior is ex officio member of the same committee.

Finance Committee

The Regional Superior with the consent of his Council appointed Fr Pinji Gondwane, Fr Mandla Mchunu and Fr Ojok Francis to the Finance Committee of the Regional. We thank Fr Bernard Gathu who served in the previous Finance Committees with dedication and made immense contribution. Enkosi kakhulu Bawo!

CMM Lay Associates

Deacon Taelle and Fr Mafu have been re-appointed to continue working on establishing CMM Lay Associates in our Region. They have successfully worked on the translation of the Constitutions from English into isiXhosa and will soon finalise the translation of the Sesotho version. These confreres have done some good ground work in terms of recruitment and the Lay Associates will be officially launched once the isiXhosa and Sesotho versions of the Constitution have been printed. We thank Deacon Taelle and Ntate Mafu for their work.

Regional Retreat

This year we are supposed to have our own annual retreat separate from the Dioceses in which we work. The coronavirus has created unprecedented uncertainty which makes it difficult to make any concrete plans. Having said that, we still hope to have our retreat in September 2020 and the dates will be announced once things are clear. We shall monitor the situation and keep you updated. In the meantime, kindly set aside time for this retreat and prioritise it in your diary.

Superior of Abbot Francis Home

With the consent of his Council and in consultation with the General Government, the Regional Superior appointed Fr Stephan Mandl House Superior of Abbot Francis Home for a period of one year. We thank Fr Stephan for availing himself for this important ministry despite his age. We also thank him for the time he has served the community in the same ministry in the past. Rea leboga Ntate Stephan.

Fr Emmanuel Nkofo CMM

We welcome Fr Emmanuel Nkofo back after successfully completing his studies in Rome. He is currently on holiday at home with his family. After his holiday he will go to Mariannahill Monastery to commence his new assignment as Assistant Director of Novices. Welcome back Bawo.

Fr John Chikadi CMM

Fr John Chikadi is currently on home leave in Nigeria. He is expected back in the first week of May 2020. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic most countries including Nigeria and South Africa have imposed lockdowns, and this has resulted in the cancellation of many flights. We hope the situation will improve soon. On his return, Fr Chikadi will remain in the Region until the GG has finalised his new assignment.

Once again, Happy Ester to all of you Confreres, and may the Risen Lord guide and protect all of us during these difficult times.

Yours in the Risen Lord
Fr Gideon Sibanda, CMM
Regional Superior