

CIRCULAR LETTER 02/2019

Dear Confreres,

Greetings of Peace and Love!

Indeed it's been long overdue that some official word was shared with you from this desk. We can only thank God for the graces so far received and wish each one of you God's abundant blessings.

In this year when the Church calls each one of us to refocus our attention on the call to Holiness, we are invited to "Rejoice and be Glad" (Mt. 5: 12) no matter how frail, discouraged or demotivated we may feel at times in our ministry and vocation.

"Do not be afraid therefore to set your sights higher, to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God. Do not be afraid to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit. Holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God's grace." Pope Francis - Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate.

Dear Confreres, kindly allow me to officially communicate with you the following developments in our Unit.

1. NEW REGIONAL COUNCILLOR

We would like to congratulate Fr. Ivor Chaebwa who was duly elected as the Regional Councillor during the Regional Conference that took place on the 24.05.2019 in Makeni. He replaced Fr. Gershom Mwansa who at the time was bound for the Novitiate as Assistant Director of Novices. We cordially welcome you to the to the Unit leadership team Confrere. God bless you.

2. PREPARATION PROGRAM FOR PERPETUAL PROFESSION (PPPP) - 2019

We would like to thank the General Government – Formation Portfolio, for accompanying our dear Confrere, Frt. Sylvester Luciano Mwatibu during the PPPP 2019 that took place from the 23rd June to the 24th July.

3. GRADUATION CEREMONY

Our three Candidates - Banda Steven, Mubukwanu Raphael and Musonda Damian graduated with a BA Degree in Philosophy at St. Bonaventure University on the 17th May 2019. The forth one – Patrick Magoma will only do so after obtaining all the conditions needed for such. The four Candidates have since commenced their Postulancy program on 1st July 2019 at Kasembo Farms. Congratulations and wish them well.

4. FINAL VOWS

We would like to extend our humble words of gratitude to all who contributed direct or indirectly towards the celebration of the perpetual profession of our Confreres – Frt. Gende Alois (PNG), Mwango Abraham (Zambia) and Sampungi Didier (DRC) that took place on the 26th May 2019 at St. Stephen's Chunga Parish.

Words of gratitude also go to the Parish Community that hosted us and made it possible that this ceremony was fruitful.

Congratulations to our Confreres for taking such a bold step in life. We wish you steadfastness in your religious journey.

5. DEACONATE ORDINATION

In the similar way, we would like to extend our sincere words of gratitude to you all Confreres for the support and fervent prayers that you render to us before and during the ordination of our Confrere Frt. Wilfred Salhun, who was ordained deacon at St. Dominic's on the 18th May 2019. We equally say heart congratulations to Deacon Wilfred and wish him well as he exercises his ministry in Chunga Parish.

6. SCHOOL BREAK APOSTOLATE

We would like to sincerely thank our dear Confreres and communities that accompanied our Candidates (those studying philosophy at St. Bonaventure University) during their six weeks apostolate program that took place from the 5th July 2019 to 14th August 2019. Our candidates were assigned in various communities as indicated below:

1. Valentine Kantanga and Victor Mpundu- St. Nicholas Chambishi Parish - Kitwe
2. Moses Moyo and Geoffrey Sikwesa - St. Charles Lwanga Ukwimi Parish - Petauke
3. Remy Matipa and Cletus Mwela – St. Kizito Kapata Sub Parish - Kasama
4. Adam Mbwana and Peter Phiri– St. Francis Nseluka Parish – Kasama

We also thank our candidates for their boldness and availability in taking up this challenge. It was indeed a great opportunity for most of them especially that it was their first time to visit some of these communities and even stay and work with our Confreres in their particular communities.

7. PASTORAL PLACEMENTS

On the other side, may I also take this opportunity to officially inform you that after finishing their Theological Studies at St. Dominic's Major Seminary, our Confreres below have been assigned to work in the following Parishes:

1. Frt. Alois Gende – St. Margaret Mungwi Parish - Kasama
2. Frt. Sylvester Luciano Mwatibu – St. Francis Nseluka Parish - Kasama
3. Frt. Didier Nzim Sampungi – St. Kizito Kapata Sub-Parish - Kasama
4. Dc. Wilfred Salhun – St. Stephen Chunga Parish – Lusaka

8. ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/2020

a. St. Dominic's Major Seminary

We would like to thank and congratulate Frt. Didier and Sylvester, who have completed their Theological studies at St. Dominic's Major Seminary this year.

That means, this academic year, we have only one Confrere (Fr. Abraham Mwangi) doing his fourth and last year of Theology at the same seminary. As classes commence on the 2nd of September 2019, Fr. Abraham will move and reside at St. Dominic's during week days and only report back to our (Makeni) community on weekends.

b. St. Bonaventure University

This academic year, we have only eight candidates at St. Bonaventure – four in the second year and four in the third year of Philosophy. We wish them all the best and God's abundant blessings. We did not admit any new members (first years) to Blessed Engelmar Formation House this August until they go through the six months of aspirancy that commences at Kasembo in January 2020. That means they will only join Blessed Engelmar Formation House and start philosophy at St. Bonaventure in August 2020.

9. ASPIRANCY AND POSTULANCY PROGRAMS

In accordance with what was discussed and resolved at the Regional Conference 2019 regarding our formation program, it has thus been decided that Aspirancy and Postulancy programs be conducted at Kasembo Farms from January to June and July to December respectively. Postulancy program has already commenced (with four postulants) in the first week of July 2019, while the first group of aspirants will report in the first week of January 2020. Fr. John Chishimba has been appointed as the Formator at Kasembo Farms with immediate effect. Thank you very much Fr. John for accepting this challenge.

10. "COME AND SEE" PROGRAM

We would like to extend our words of gratitude to all Confreres who assisted with various inputs during the 'Come and See Program' that took place at Blessed Engelmar House of Formation from the 5th to the 13th July 2019. During this program, we had received and accompanied eight aspirants from various dioceses. We thank them too for their availability and wish them God's abundant blessings.

11. Fr. GERSHOM MWANSA

Following the withdrawal of his appointment as Assistant Novice Director and after engaging all the parties involved, the Regional Council has transferred Fr. Gershom Mwansa from St. Kizito - Kapata Sub Parish to St. Margaret - Mungwi Parish where he will assist Fr. Matthew Mwamba effective September 2019.

12. FORMATORS AT BLESSED ENGELMAR HOF

Following some adjustments in the formation structures of the Unit, the Regional Council has appointed Fr. Felix Nsama as the New Formator and Superior of Blessed Engelmar House of Formation assisted by Fr. Dennis Aurah who will also be the bursar of the House. Fr. Nsama is expected to report to Makeni at the beginning of September 2019 whilst Fr. Denis will report at the end of September 2019 after his home holidays.

13. Fr. CHARLES MALAMBA

After serving for so many years as a Formator and Superior of the House, Fr. Charles Malamba has since been transferred to assist Fr. Lewis Watuka in Chungu Parish effective

August 2019. We would like to sincerely thank Fr. Charles for his availability and dedication he demonstrated as formator and Superior of the House. We also would like to wish him well and success in his new ministry.

14. Fr. GASPARD PARENT

After his transfer back to his home province, Fr. Gaspard left Zambia on the 10th June 2019. We would like in a special way to extend our humble gratitude to Fr. Gaspard Parent for his time and service in this Unit. Up until now, he was the longest serving formator in our Unit, the longest serving lecturer at both St. Dominic's Major Seminary and St. Bonaventure University where our students and Confreres go for their respective studies.

15. Fr. CHRISTOPHER KAFULA

Fr. Christopher Kafula has not been doing so well for some time now and he has been moved from Chunga Parish back to the Regional House in Makeni as he receives medical attention from the Doctors at the University Teaching Hospital(UTH). We kindly request for your fervent spiritual and moral support as our Confrere recovers slowly.

16. JUBILEE CELEBRATION

We would like to congratulate Fr. Isaac Mwansa for his first profession Silver Jubilee celebration. In the same vain, we would like to remember and posthumously congratulate Fr. Dick John Nthenga who 25 years ago did his first profession. We also include in our prayers all of our Confreres who, in a special way, celebrated their (first profession or priestly) anniversaries. May God bless you all Confreres for who you are and what you are doing in serving God through this Congregation in your particular ministries.

17. CONDOLENCES

We would like to express our heartfelt condolences to all our Confreres who during the course of the year have lost their families members. We pray that your beloved deceased friends and relatives may rest in God's eternal peace.

18. MAKENI FLATS

We would like to cordially inform all Confreres that the construction of the third flat in Makeni has been concluded and has since been occupied. The two tenets of the third flat occupied it at the beginning of August 2019. There are now three semidetached flats providing accommodation to six families on our plot. We thank you all for the support (moral, spiritual and monetary) offered to us during the completion of these flats.

I wish you God's richest blessing, joy and peace in your journey/ call to Holiness.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Kabwe Abidon Katai CMM

Regional Superior - Zambia