



# ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF PRETORIA

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South Africa

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Registration No. : 191-349 NPO

## DITABA 32 – 01 JUNE 2018

1. This morning, 1<sup>st</sup> June, we celebrated the **140<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Loreto School** at Skinner Street. Three young Sisters came from Ireland with Bishop Jolivet by wagon cart from Pietermaritzburg on a journey which took them 24 days. When they arrived, they found a hut in a small village called Pretoria. The hut had no windows or furniture as they had been a war preventing transportation in Natal. Within ten days these Loreto Sisters established the 1<sup>st</sup> Catholic School and soon attracted 100 pupils

Their courageous outreach was in response to the mission which Jesus gave His church and which was animated by the Holy Spirit. They were not always welcomed here as they were seen as part of the Roman danger. Their commitment to the people, the excellence of their service, their response to all manner of needs convinced even President Kruger that they were a treasure.

In the following years many other religious groups like the Mercy Sisters, the Christian Brothers, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Redemptorists, the Dominicans, all came to build-up the Church and to impart Gospel values to the new society. Loreto Convent was nine years old already when Johannesburg was founded. On 10<sup>th</sup> June at Medunsa Great Hall this year, we will close the BiCentenary year and express profound gratitude to God and to all who have been witnesses of faith here. We also remember all the parents who made great sacrifices to build-up our institutions and who nourished the Catholic faith of their children. We give thanks also that through its mission the Catholic Church was able to serve all citizens of whatever background.

2. It was very gratifying on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> May, so many Priests and Deacons were present for the AGM. Our theme was **“DUC in ALTUM/put out into the deep water (Luke 5:4)”**. While we thank God for the fine parish congregations we see in our Parishes, we also realized that we have a great challenge to deepen our own faith and the faith of our people. In his opening address, the Bishop invited us to think and respond imaginatively so as to deepen our people’s experience of faith. Beautiful and expressive liturgies will have a profound impact on a people surrounded by banality and ugliness. The presence of prayer groups, bible study groups, workshops on the faith can be easily created and have a deep impression. By having adoration and vigils, blessing of individuals, healing of the sick we can respond to the many needs around us. Giving personal and spiritual depth to hearing confessions, to preparations for confirmation and to preaching with preparation will enrich the faith life around us.

Reports were received from the **Catechetical Department**, from our Youth, from the Marriage Desk, and from Justice and Peace. Mr Tloubatla of the Justice and Peace Department challenge



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us to offer more guidance in presenting the social teachings of the church. As the Holy Father points out, service of our communities along with worship and preaching is also an essential part of our ministry. He also needed clearer teaching from us on the foundation of the pastoral ministry of the Laity. He promised all Parishes that Justice and Peace officials would come around on the last Sunday of each month, if invited, to animate our Parishes. They are also beginning to study *Laudato Si*. “We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses...all Christians, their Pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world.” (183 *The Joy of the Gospel*)

The **Finance Department** assisted by Fr Chris Townsend presented the alarming situation of our precarious financial position. It was agreed that it is absolutely essential that quarterly returns be made to the Finance Office in the Chancery. Many are failing to pay assessment, insurance, and medical care. A template/form will be sent out in which we can easily register our quarterly financial returns.

Marie McCrea introduced us to **Caritas**. In origin, this is a Papal Worldwide Development umbrella. Each Diocese should have its own Caritas. A committee has been established here with Mrs. Maureen Mabena as Chairperson. Caritas Pretoria would act as an umbrella for all the development and welfare projects. It would not interfere in any way in the structure of these projects. But it would assist in training personnel and setting ethical standards. It is not as such a funding agency but would deal with motivation and the basing of our values on the Gospel and Catholic social teachings.

Fr Thabiso Ledwaba and the Archdiocesan Council of Priests proposed that we reactivate the **Diocesan Synod of 2005**. The conclusion of that Synod is contained in a booklet of six chapters dealing with co-responsibility and participation; social transformation; deeper and holistic evangelization; moral generation; nurturing vocation; and dealing with social ills of our time. At the meeting, each of the six deaneries was requested to take and debate each of these findings. One time at the Clergy meeting in St John Vianney seminary in December we should use these findings to give a unified vision to the work of the Archdiocese.

3. The presence of the **NeoCatechumenate** movement was introduced by the Archbishop and Fr Boulos. There are already a number of Catechumenate groups in a number of Parishes. The NeoCatechumen is a worldwide movement which is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> years of its activity in the church. It has been promoted and approved by all recent Popes. It has over a hundred seminaries throughout the world. Its aim is the deepening of Christian conversion and commitment by forming communities, traveling through the Bible together. Its aim is to follow the journey of the early church as outlined in general by the RCIA. The NeoCatechumenate has offered a number of seminarians to Pretoria. They are living at Oliventhoutbos with Fr Boulos and now studying English and Tshwane. They will work with our own seminarians and serve our Diocese in the future. If they are appointed to Parishes, they will be completely guided by Statutes of the Diocese and its practice. Special liturgies which they sometimes conducted will be voluntary vis-à-vis the Parish. It is hoped that the impact of the



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NeoCatechumenate will be felt specially in the deepening of our people in the knowledge of Scripture and love for the Church. It is hoped that in a special way they will work in lay communities already in existence and seek to keep the post confirmation Christians align with the Church. We are losing post confirmation people too easily.

4. At the recent meeting of the **Archdiocesan Marriage and Family Desk** on 28<sup>th</sup> April, Parish Teams were mandated to see that there is a family policy in each Parish. Mr & Mrs Mathe are at the Desk. Mr and Mrs Motiang from Mabopane are on the National Team and will be travelling to Dublin for the World Family Day in August. In general, we do have marriage preparation courses as a rule of our Diocese. It is in the early years after marriage that a lot of married couples need assistance. If the Parish coordinating person were simply to organize a few opportunities for reflection and input each year, it would solve a lot of difficulties. There are quite a number of people who can be called upon in the area of marriage and family. For example, we have the Couples for Christ in the Chancery and when their programs allow, they would be happy to offer a half-day workshop in the Parish to allow people to communicate each other.
5. The **Archdiocesan Feast in honor of the Sacred Heart** will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> June at Medunsa and will start at 9:00 AM. We encourage as many as possible to attend though Priest will endeavor to offer mass in the Parishes early in the morning. During the ceremony, we will also celebrate the BiCentennial Year. The motivation for our celebrations will appear in the brochure published for the occasion.
6. On **3<sup>rd</sup> June at the Cathedral at 2:00 PM**, the Bishop will appoint the extra ordinary ministers for the coming year. It is very important for each Parish Priest to both train and motivate these ministers in this crucial ministry.
7. We have just now heard the sad news of the passing of **Sr Gabriel Sibande** in a motor accident. She was in the Community of the Immaculate Heart staying at Bronkhorstspuit. Let us pray for her soul and for her community.

**Bro Christopher Kiernan OFM** who served the Diocese for many years as a Franciscan Brother Sacristan and MC passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> March and the Diocese wishes also to express sympathy to Jacques for the death of his sister.

8. **Properties.** We had the joy of dedicating the new church of St Ambrose on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April. Congratulations to Fr Evans and the excellent community that are labored to produce a beautiful new church. We congratulate Fr Evantus, not only in taking over Deepsloot, but in transforming the property at Oliventhoutbos into an excellent church center. We now await the immediate completion of the new church at Kwa Mhlanga. Also completed just now is the Convent of the Sisters at Dennilton. We have begun work at the Priest house in Kwaggafontein and hope to soon have the means to provide a proper Priest house at Lethlabile. However, we also have lost a church, the church of the Good Shepherd at Winterveldt which collapsed totally and utterly on Holy Saturday afternoon just before the congregation gathered.



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The Diocese will have to consider the roof of the Cathedral which has deteriorated and must now be repaired.

9. We celebrated with mass and lunch the retirement of our two Priests, **Fr Simon Molefe** after 43 years of service and **Fr Ngwenya**. Another celebration was for **Fr Hyacinth Ennis OFM** who celebrated 50 years of priesthood. We also congratulate **Msgr Marc de Muelenaere** on Jubilee of Priesthood, 75 years of age and reception of Honorary Doctors for excellent service to the church and society. On the 19<sup>th</sup> May **Fr Ambrose Magebo** celebrated his silver jubilee
  10. The Archbishop who has responsibility with SACBC for specialized ministry held a workshop at the Comboni Center in Lynnwood for our Chaplains on 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> of March. This Center has now been sold.
  11. Our excellent nurse and matron, **Mrs Kekana**, continues her ministry in the area of non-communicable diseases. She simply awaits invitation from Priests and Parishes to come and offer medical assistance in these areas for those who come to her.
  12. The Archbishop called a meeting of the Bishops of the Metropolitan Area. It was noted with gratitude that AGROP had a very successful meeting for young priests ordained over the last five years. The next meeting will be in 2019 at Francistown. Fr Sefiri is involved in the organization of this meeting.
- Sr. Tshefiwe has taken over the desk for the promotion for the canonization of Blessed Benedict Daswa. There has been a noted improvement in the response of the Christians to the Cause. Many buses from Pretoria went to his shrine of Martyrdom. Sister is seeking promoters for the cause in the different parishes. We have sent out her letter to this effect to people.
- The issue of re-adjusting the Diocesan boundaries is being considered by the Bishops of SACBC. We seemed to be slow in the Pastoral language district in producing new liturgical text. Fr Sefiri gave an excellent workshop to the Bishops on the New Decrees of Pope Francis regarding marriage annulment.
13. The Priests seem to be very happy with the Holy Week ceremonies and the participation of the Faithful this year.
  14. The Youth had a very lively weekend of prayer at Bethesda in March. Their next field day will be on 16 June at the Christian Brothers School in Pretoria. They have produced an excellent program for youth on the danger of drugs. As you know, the World Youth Day will take place in Panama. A few have indicated that they will go. The Panamean Ambassador is assuring us of visas, the journey will cost 40,000 Rands. If interested, contact Melese or Fr Benedict Mkatha.
  15. Sr Teresa Marie has an office at the Chancery for **SPRED**. This is a catechetical program for people with special needs. She's keen to visit Parishes.



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16. We are in the process of reorganizing our **Laity Council**. Mrs Kuki Mbatha is on the National Laity Council and will be contacting representatives of all the Sodalities and the departments in the Archdiocese. From these representatives, a Laity Council will be formed. As you know, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council is very active and played a major part in organizing the Archdiocesan celebration at Medunsa. The Chairperson is Mr Patrick Rakau of Pretoria North.
17. Fr Geoffrey has set out the year plan for Catechetics in his calendar for the Archdiocese. Please have a copy and work with your coordinator so that all Catechists received as much help as possible.  
  
**Echoing the Word** course of Mrs Renée d'Oliveira has once more attracted an enormous crowd. It provides not only a grounding in basic theology but a methodology to communicate this with others.
18. The **Knights** had their meeting at Lynnwood on the 12<sup>th</sup> May, over eighty spent the day planning their program for the future. The Archdiocese is very proud also with the **Men in Christ** who have ongoing programs during the year attracting a great number of men - with their sons. Every Saturday morning at 5:30 a lot of these men go to church to pray together for the country and for their families.
19. **Fr Anthony Mdhluli** now heads the **Deacon and Ministry Program**. As he is working with Fr Vincent Sello to reformulate this program, he has not taken any new candidates this year 2018. However, in 2019, the program will be back again.
20. **Sr Marian** is the **Secretary of the Ecumenical** meetings which takes place at the Bishop's house which involves ministers from a number of different churches. She has been deeply involved in the issue of homelessness in the City and in organizing the week of Christian Unity. This year we joined in prayer services at the Dutch Reform Church at the Anglican Cathedral.
21. **Fr Manuel Graca** is our **Chaplain at the University** and conducts an excellent ministry with the many Catholic University students. We must make Catholic students aware of **ACTS** which is the Catholic Students Movement at Universities. Linked also with the university students is this SAN EGIDEO movement which is very active in praying together and providing meals for the poor right throughout the year.
22. It is Winter time and many of our Parishes and Sodalities are engaged in providing food, welfare, clothing, and blankets to the needy. Congratulations to Lynnwood Parish, which recently collected 30,000 Rands blankets for the poor.
23. Our collections are down this year specially our **Lenten collection**. If Parishes still have money or could take another one Sunday collection, it would augment our final amount.



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24. I would like to insist especially with the Priests that they all acquire the recent documents from Pope Francis: The Joy of the Gospel; Laudato Si; Amores Laetitia; and Gaudete Et Exultate.
25. 13<sup>th</sup> May was a special Sunday this year. It was the Feast of the Ascension, it was also a Feast of our Lady of Fatima, as well as it is being Mother's Day. In the evening after confirmation I participated with the large Portuguese communities.
26. Our **Chiro** held a weekend workshop on the 27<sup>th</sup> April. The Chaplain was Fr Sefiri and it is in 14 Parishes.
27. **Fr Herman Mole** is the **New Vocation Director**. We must all assist him with prayers and promotion. He is also the Spiritual Director of the Altar Servers of the Archdiocese.
28. Continue in remembering in your prayers Fr Vincent Hill who is in Nazareth House in Johannesburg. If possible, visit him. Fr Vincent is over 60 years a Diocesan Priest of this Diocese. At the moment he is having medical treatment. We pray that everything will be fine.
29. Let me bring to the attention of parents, parish councils, and Priests the need to bond our children with the church from the beginning. We have two growing Sodalities viz Masole and Masolenyana. There is also Chiro and other children's groups like PMS. Why I emphasize this is that because 99% of our children are not in Catholic Schools and they are easily overlooked in our Parish activities. They need more than catechetics, they need a sense of belonging, an opportunity to form groups and to bond. The children can beautify our Liturgies with imaginative participation. It is excellent when they are brought together for sports and social events. They can also be engaged in simple and beautiful apostolic activities. This, of course, is the work of the parents. Parents must insist on passing on the greatest gift of all which they possess – their FAITH. School teachers tell us of the trouble caused by cellphones and social media to children. Our first gift is faith not a cellphone.

## 30. FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

01st June	Mass at the Cathedral for 140 Years of Loreto School, Skinner Street
2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Meeting of Masole Al-Masolenyana at Jolivet House
3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Confirmation at St Peter Winterveldt at 9:30 AM
	Installation of Extra Ordinary Ministers at Cathedral at 14:00 Hours
	Confirmation for French Communities at Cathedral at 16:30 Hours
5 <sup>th</sup> June	Monthly Priests Meeting at Sta Sophia
7 <sup>th</sup> June	Gala Dinner for Loreto School 140 years
9 <sup>th</sup> June	Deacon's Day at Sta Sophia
10 <sup>th</sup> June	Celebration of the Diocesan Feast of the Sacred Heart
12 <sup>th</sup> June	Ordination of Three Stigmatine candidates to Diaconate at Pretoria North
	Meeting of Security Services
13 <sup>th</sup> June	Building Committee Meeting



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14 <sup>th</sup> June	Board Meeting of Radio Veritas
16 <sup>th</sup> June	Youth Day at CBC
17 <sup>th</sup> June	Confirmation Marapyane
20 <sup>th</sup> June	World Refugee Day
22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Mass of St Jose Maria of Opus Dei
23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Workshop of Catechetical Coordinators and Confirmation Teachers
24 <sup>th</sup> June	BiCentenary closing of ceremonies at Cape Town
25 <sup>th</sup> June	Winter School Lecture at Queenswood at 18:30 Hours. Fr Massingale, SJ
28 <sup>th</sup> June	Mass in honor of the Holy Father at the Cathedral at 9:00 AM
29 <sup>th</sup> June	Awarding of Certificates in Prisons
30 <sup>th</sup> June	Parish Family Day at Laudium
01 <sup>st</sup> July	Confirmation at Moya and St Mathew
2 <sup>nd</sup> July	Profession of Novitiate at Rietvlei of Franciscan
7 <sup>th</sup> July	Catechetical Commission
8 <sup>th</sup> July	Confirmation at Cathedral
10 <sup>th</sup> July	Visitation of the General of the Sisters of Vincent de Paul
14 <sup>th</sup> July	Laity Council Election
15 <sup>th</sup> July	Confirmation St Mary's Mamelodi
17 <sup>th</sup> July	Ecumenical Meeting
	Caritas Meeting at Bishop's House at 15:00 Hours
21 <sup>st</sup> July	Mass of the Secular Franciscan from all Africa
22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Feast Day of the Western Deanery
28 <sup>th</sup> July	Meeting of Parents of Candidates at Pretoria North
	Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Meeting
29 <sup>th</sup> July	Confirmation Ivory Park and Emmanuel
31 <sup>st</sup> July – 7 <sup>th</sup> July	SACBC Plenary at Mariannahill
9 <sup>th</sup> August	Mass for Youth at Goodland States
11 <sup>th</sup> August	Deacon's Council Meeting and Election
12 <sup>th</sup> August	Confirmation St Vincent
14 <sup>th</sup> August	Deanery at St Anne
15 <sup>th</sup> August	Mass at Assumption School Pretoria North
	Handmaids of Christ the Priest Meeting at Hammanskraal
19 <sup>th</sup> August	Pilgrimage to Jonathan
25 <sup>th</sup> August	Marriage Enrichment Program (MEP) at Southern Deanery
26 <sup>th</sup> August	Confirmation at St Raphael
	Confirmation at St Augustine
28 <sup>th</sup> August	Ecumenical Meeting

*+William Slattery OFM*

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Archbishop of Pretoria  
01 June 2018