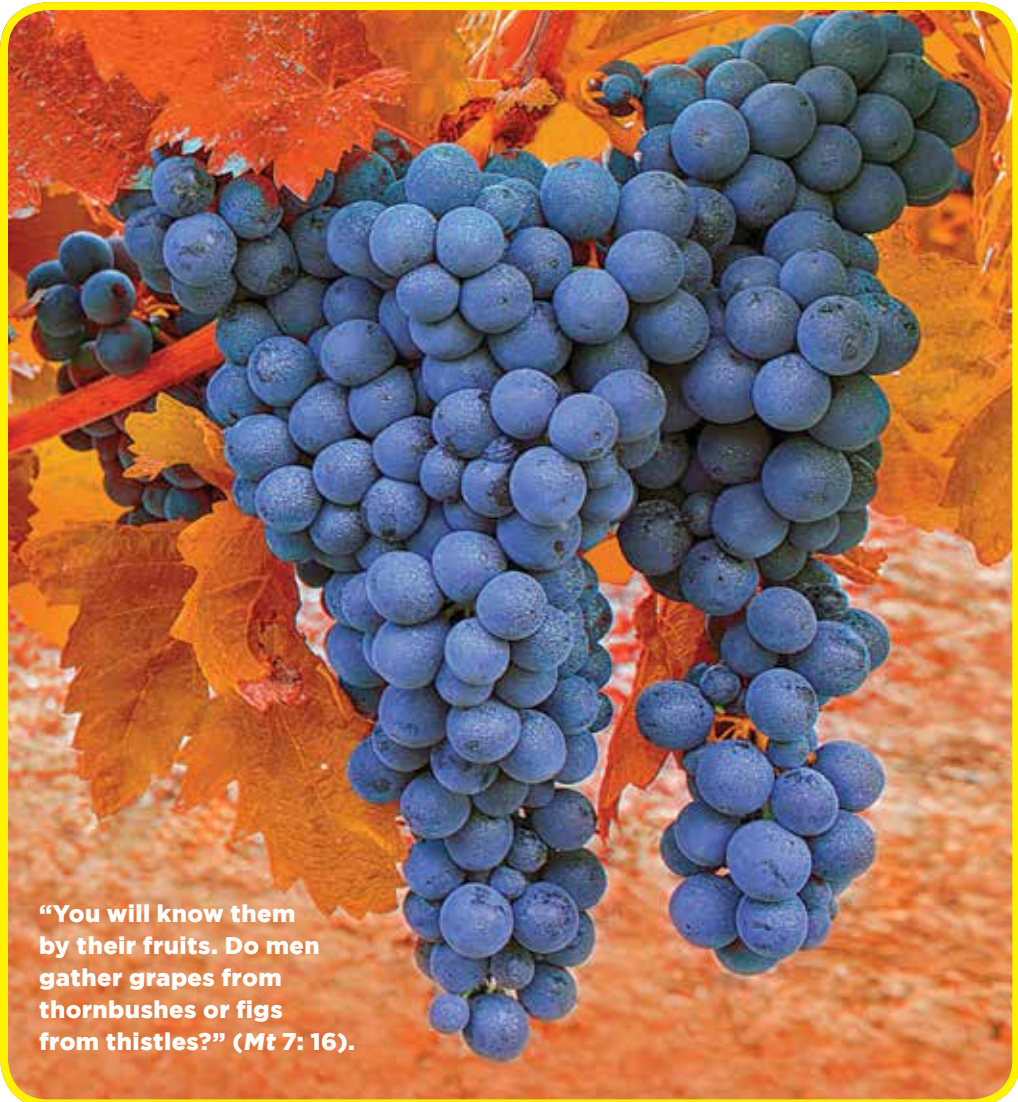


# MISSION AT ANY COST

History of the Comboni presence in South Africa

BY FR KONRAD NEFZGER | COMBONI MISSIONARY



**“You will know them  
by their fruits. Do men  
gather grapes from  
thornbushes or figs  
from thistles?” (Mt 7: 16).**



Fr Konrad Nefzger  
Comboni Missionary

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**MISSION AT ANY COST.**  
History of the Comboni presence  
in South Africa  
(1924-2014)



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## FOREWORD

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# GO AND PREACH THE GOSPEL

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BY FR JEREMIAS DOS SANTOS MARTINS | PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR  
OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA



Pastoral Centre of Maria Trost, Lydenburg, the first Comboni Mission in South Africa.

**AS I WRITE** this short foreword to *Mission at any cost*, I am in Maria Trost, Lydenburg, where the Comboni Missionaries started their presence in South Africa. Maria Trost is also the last home for many of the Comboni Missionaries who worked in this land. More than 50 of them are buried here. The first was Bro. Sendker Heinrich, from Germany, in 1931. The last one was Fr George Nok Adiang Kur, from the Sudan, in 2006. The youngest Comboni Missionary to die on South African soil was Fr Franz Engelhardt, who passed on when he was 30 and the oldest is Bro. Cygan Alexander who was 98 years old. Young and old remain here to give witness to the word of the Gospel written under the big cross at the centre of this holy ground: “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains



Cemetery at Maria Trost, Lydenburg.

just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (*John 12: 24*).

These men are part of the history of the Comboni Missionaries in South Africa. Others came after them with the same enthusiasm and love for the mission—love rooted in God and expressed in their dedication to the people. Altogether there were more than 100 missionaries who embarked on the project of God, that all may know Him and the one He has sent, Jesus, His Son (cf. *John 17: 3*).

They are neither heroes nor special people. They were ordinary people who responded to God’s call with simplicity and left behind their country, their loved ones and their culture. They made themselves available to come to South

Africa realising the dream of Jesus: “As the Father sent Me, so I send you.” May their lives inspire the people of South Africa and direct them to the Heart of the Good Shepherd. May they encourage, especially the young, to be generous co-workers of Jesus in bringing the Gospel of joy and love to the ends of the earth, inside and outside South Africa.

Among the current Comboni Missionaries, seven are South Africans. Some work outside their own country, in Kenya, Zambia and Chad. Others offered their dedicated service in Malawi, Colombia, Ecuador and the Philippines. They realised, in a particular way, the dream of St Daniel Comboni: “Save Africa with Africa.”

This book, the second edition written by Fr Konrad Nefzger, is a tribute to all of them. We dedicate it to the people of South Africa who journeyed with the Comboni Missionaries throughout these 90 years in different parts of the country, from Mpumalanga to the Eastern Cape, from Gauteng to Kwazulu-Natal. We dedicate it also to the bishops, priests and people who support the Comboni Missionaries. Among all those, special mention goes to the Comboni Friends and subscribers to the *Worldwide* magazine, who share the same mission through their friendship, their prayers, their financial help and selfless love.

We thank Fr Konrad for his hard work and dedicated service in writing this book which keeps alive the memory of the pioneers and strengthens the present missionaries, so as not to spoil the dreams of the pioneers.

We thank especially the Lord of the Harvest for keeping the dream of Comboni alive through ordinary people. Only through his grace and continuous assistance were they able to be co-workers in God’s Mission.

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## PREFACE

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### DEAR READER,

You have in your hands the second edition of the History of the Comboni Missionaries in South Africa. A few new things were added, I hope they will be of interest. The first book was published in 1995. During these last years, quite a good number of young confrères, who are not very familiar with the history and development of this region, came to the Province. It will be good for them and for the people of the Diocese of Witbank to read how our forefathers worked and how they helped to develop the Local Church of Witbank and how we moved to other places. Those who are more familiar with our past his-

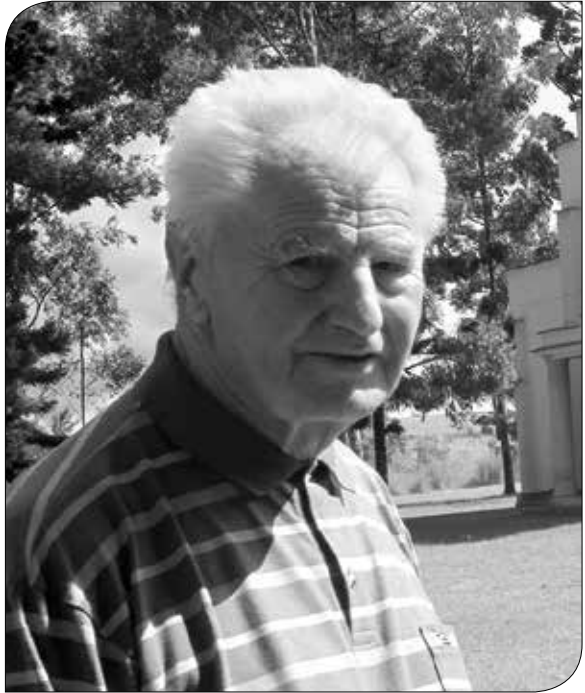
tory and developments should also find it interesting to refresh their memory, and perhaps, discover new facts or even mistakes.

My sources were the different diaries of Fr Zorn, Fr Angerer, Fr Roth, Bishop Reiterer and others. One big handicap is the non-existence of a diocesan archive. For sure, there were files, but they no longer exist. My sources relating to the Prefects Apostolic were found in the Provincial Archives in Ellwangen, Germany.

Special thanks to the communities who sent in their contributions for updating. Hopefully this little contribution will help us appreciate the work of those who worked here before us. Through hard work and prayer, they gave generously their love to lay the foundation for the local Church.

### THE AUTHOR

Maria Trost, August 2014



Fr Konrad Nefzger, the author of the book.

## WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE WE ARRIVED

THE WHOLE area was in the care of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), and belonged to the Natal Vicariate. In 1852, the Sandriver Convention gave Transvaal its independence and the Catholic Church was forbidden in the new Republic. Only in 1871, was freedom of religion granted following a trade agreement with the Governor of Mozambique. When he came to the Transvaal to sign this agreement and could not attend Holy Mass, he protested and the law was changed soon after. The Catholic population had also increased because of the gold diggers. A pattern developed: priests and Sisters followed the diamond diggers and gold prospectors of Pilgrim's Rest, Barberton and Johannesburg.



Msgr Aloysius Schoch OMI (1853–1898).



Fr L. Trabaud OMI (1856–1937).



The Church followed the gold prospectors to Pilgrim's Rest and Barberton.





Bishop Charles Cox OMI (1914–1924).



Bishop Charles Jolivet OMI (1874–1886).

In 1882, gold was discovered in the De Kaap Valley. Two years later, Barber's Reef looked more promising. Graham Barber and his cousins, Harry and Fred, were prospecting. Fortune hunters arrived from all over South Africa, especially for the diamond fields. The Kruger government sent a commissioner to supervise the operations. The first one fled for his life; the second, David M. Wilson, wrote: "Law and regulations did not exist. Murders were frequent occurrences. Many crimes were unreported and nearly all were provoked by the lust for gold."

The same commissioner wrote to Bishop Jolivet on 1 May 1885, as follows: "Rev. Sir, I would like to bring to your notice that we have on these gold fields about 500 Roman Catholics, and that the presence of a priest is greatly required. The place is not poor and therefore there should be no fear that he would not be supported. I do not belong to your Church, but still, from experience gained on the Cape Colonies Railway Extensions, know that the presence of a priest would be the means of assisting greatly in reducing the drunkenness and crime, that takes place on those fields." The commissioner offered help with building and added that a strong healthy person would be required because of Malaria and bad roads.



Loreto Convent, Lydenburg, in 1924.

When Bishop Jolivet arrived in Barberton in 1886, many fortune hunters had already left for the Reef. Of the 500 Catholics spoken about, Jolivet found only about 60. He blessed the first church in Barberton in 1886. Msgr Schoch invited the Ursuline Sisters from Sittard, Holland, to open a school and convent in Barberton. Six of them arrived in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, on 31 December 1895. The good Sisters made it by train and donkey to Barberton and were welcomed by a Jewish lady, because Father was not at home. In February 1896, the Sisters started teaching, and the number of students grew from 30 to 80. Everything looked promising. But in 1897, Barberton was struck by Rinder pest and Malaria and to top it all, the Sisters' house

was blown away by a storm. Because of the epidemic, the governor was forced to close the schools and many people moved away to the Reef and Msgr Schoch, who had invited the Sisters, died in Zanzibar on 12 April 1897. He was on his way to the General Chapter in Paris. The Sisters saw no future in Barberton. Msgr De Lacy invited them to Johannesburg. During the Anglo-Boer War, they looked after the wounded. After the war, they went back to Holland.



St Theresa's, Lydenburg, blessed in 1932.

The first Baptismal records in Barberton started in 1886. Very few baptisms of “natives” or Indians are recorded. Bishop Jolivet stated that he had no money and no personnel for mission work. We find quite a few names of priests in the baptismal register up to 1924 and one that stood out was Fr Edward Kelly, an Irishman. He was full of energy and loved by all the diggers, being always available for everybody. A spontaneous collection brought in enough money for a little church and a priest’s house. When many of the diggers had left for the “Reef”, Barberton was visited only occasionally by “travelling priests”, hence the different names in the baptismal register.

Church history had started already a few years earlier in Pilgrim’s Rest. Fr Walsh was sent by Bishop Jolivet to Pilgrim’s Rest in 1875. Sixty gold diggers had sent a petition to the Bishop, asking for a priest. When he arrived he found only 15. The others were already fortune hunting in Barberton. He built a little *rondavel* church, but no trace of it remains. The gold hunters left and Fr Walsh moved to Lydenburg in 1879 to look after some prospectors and the Catholic soldiers who were stationed there. In 1881, the soldiers left and Father did too. He became the first parish priest of Pretoria. Three years later, the Loreto Sisters opened their convent and school in Lydenburg. They left Pretoria in 1893 and arrived in Lydenburg six weeks later, travelling by ox wagon.



View of Lydenburg, in 1927.

*Die Burgers* (the local white population) did not like the arrival of the Sisters. The same year, they sent a petition to the government demanding the closure of the convent. They wrote: “The Roman Catholic Church is making rapid strides and advancing altogether too quickly for the comfort of the Lydenburg Protestants, who are convinced that much ungodliness is practiced in Roman Catholic churches. The Memorialists pray that the Raad instruct the government to appoint a commission to inspect and lay bare all the unholy evils rampant in the cloisters. These scandalous things are not to be tolerated in a godly land and the Catholics should be compelled to throw open their cloisters for inspection.” There was no reaction from the

government. Because of the presence of the Loreto Sisters in Lydenburg, our pioneers, who arrived in 1924, found one residing priest in Lydenburg, Fr A. van Hecke. He looked after the Sisters and the local Catholics. From time to time, he also visited Catholics who were scattered around.

### THE FIRST WORLD WAR – CONSEQUENCES

In 1918, after the First World War (1914–1918), the mission work of the Church was in turmoil. German and Austrian missionaries were no longer welcome in English colonies. New places had to be found. South Africa was one of the places where they were still welcome. The Holy Ghost Fathers, of German origin, landed in Bethlehem; the Benedictines, from further north, made Inkamana their new home; the Sons of the Sacred Heart, who were known as Missionaries Sons of the Sacred Heart, occupied the Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga). Not only had they had to leave the Sudan, but they were also forced out of their original congregation. Internationality had to give way to “Realpolitik”.



The First World War was a tragic conflict which also affected mission work.

The Church became clearer in defining her mission policy. In his encyclical *Maximum Illud*, Pope Benedict XV stressed that the missionary is an ambassador of Christ and not of his government, and that local vocations were to be fostered. The newly appointed Apostolic Delegate, B. G. Gijswijk (from 1922 to 1944), tried to implement the new policy.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate were in charge of far too big an area. In 1922, other Mission Societies were called in and subdivisions were made. The Apostolic Prefecture of Lydenburg was erected by Propaganda Fide on 12 June 1923. Our first Apostolic Prefect, Daniel Kauczor, presented his let-

ter of appointment to the Bishop of Johannesburg and took over the Eastern Transvaal, known as the Apostolic Prefecture of Lydenburg. The newcomers inherited the structure of the “Settler Church”. Many places were visited by travelling priests. Following the white settlers, some churches had already been built. Three fixed points were in our area: Lydenburg with the Loreto Convent, Witbank and Barberton. The newcomers had to find their own feet in new surroundings, new languages, and new cultures. Mission work was not done up to this point. Mariannahill had already started mission work: they already had a Zulu Catechism. Quite a few of our confrères started in Mariannahill, learning Zulu and to see how they worked.

### THE LYDENBURG PREFECTURE

Our pioneers arrived in South Africa in February 1924. All of them had already experienced missionary life—its joys as well as the consequences of being on the wrong side. For example, Fr Angerer had arrived in Khartoum in 1914; in 1916, he had to change his place, being moved to a camp in Alexandria, because he belonged to the enemy. When he was released in 1919, he looked forward to taking up his mission amongst the Shilluks, in the Su-



The pioneers of the Prefecture (standing above, from left): Bro. Karl Schmid, 41, German; Bro. Raphael Kolenc, 42, Yugoslavian; Bro. Karl Klodt, 58, German; Fr Stephan Berger, 30, Austrian; Fr Hugo Ille, 29, Czechoslovakian; Bro. Joseph Huber, 43, Austrian; Bro. Alexander Cygan, 60, German-Polish. Seated from left: Fr Joseph Angerer, 35, Austrian; Fr Bernhard Zorn, 57, German; Fr Joseph Klassert, 34, German; Msgr Daniel Kauczor, 36, German-Polish (Prefect Apostolic); Fr Alois Ipfelkofer, 38, German; Fr Karl Fischer, 37, Czechoslovakian; and Fr Joseph Musar, 33, Yugoslavian.

dan, only to find out that he was not welcomed by the authorities and not even by some of his confrères: “They treat us like guests,” he commented. The uncertainty continued until 1923 when it was decided by Rome that the Austrian Germans should form their own congregation and take over the Eastern Transvaal. They even got a new name, Missionaries Sons of the Sacred Heart, to distinguish them from one another. Apparently, Rome didn’t take it too seriously that “the missionary is an ambassador of Christ and not of his government” and the Sons of the Sacred Heart also forgot the charism of their founder Daniel Comboni, who wanted international communities to be an example of living in harmony.

In April 1922, Propaganda Fide wanted the names of 10 missionaries who would be prepared to go to South Africa. They settled the immigration formalities with the South African government. In January 1923, the new congregation was a reality. In August of the same year, Fr Lehr was appointed its first General; Fr Wilfling and Fr Mohn were councillors. Fr Mohn, who was at that time in Sudan, had to return to Europe. On 12 August 1923, Fr Daniel Kauzcor was appointed first Prefect Apostolic of Lydenburg. The following day, he ordered his ‘troops’ to leave Khartoum and assemble in Cairo. The new Prefecture had been erected a month earlier, on 12 June 1923. It was only on 7 December 1923 that they left Cairo on an Italian boat, Favigna. During their time in Cairo, they had had to pay board and lodging to their former confrères. On 11 February 1924, the group arrived in Lourenço Marques. Msgr Kauzcor, Fr Klassert and Fr Ipfelkofer travelled by train to Johannesburg to show their credentials to Bishop Cox of Johannesburg and so take over the Lydenburg Prefecture. The rest went on to Durban and they were welcomed by the Mariannahill Fathers with whom our pioneers enjoyed “real butter” after a long time. Fr Angerer and Fr Zorn remained in Mariannahill to learn Zulu whilst the rest reached their final destination, Lydenburg, on 20 March 1924.

## FIRST BEGINNINGS

When our pioneers arrived, they found one resident priest in their new home, Fr Van Hecke. He was stationed in Lydenburg, looking after the Sisters in the Loreto Convent. The Sisters had started in Lydenburg already in 1893. Fr Van Hecke also looked after the local Catholics and, from time to time, he tried to visit the Catholics scattered all over the Eastern



St Theresa, Lydenburg, on 17 January 1932.



Bishop Hugh Boyle of Johannesburg blesses St Peter Claver, Weltevreden, on 26 July 1961.

Transvaal. He did not do any mission work.

Msgr Daniel Kauczor made Lydenburg his home. Fr Ipfelkofer was appointed as the first parish priest. Fr Klassert was sent to Witbank: he was the first religious Superior. Fr Ille went there to be a travelling priest, Bro. Schmid Karl and Bro. Hüber Otto also found a place. The Dominican Sisters of King William's Town arrived in Witbank the same

year. In Witbank, a church and accommodation for a priest was found which had been built by Bishop Cox of Johannesburg. Fr Berger moved to Barberton where he found a little church and a priest's house dating from the diggers' time (1886). Bro. Cygan and Bro. Kolenc went with him. The others made their first steps as travelling priests, visiting the Catholics in Pilgrim's Rest, Machadodorp, Ermelo and as far as Wakkerstroom.

The first difficulty they encountered was the fact that Catholics were not welcome. It was difficult to open places: the usual route to overcome such obstacles was to buy a farm. Money was always short and funds were also needed in Europe to get the new Congregation on its feet. Another difficulty was the issue of language, because not all of them knew English and none knew Zulu or Sotho or Tsonga. It was only when Fr Zorn and Fr Angerer came from Mariannhill, in the beginning of 1925, that real mission work could be started. From the beginning, there were differences between the Prefect Apostolic and some of his confrères. Those differences led to the resignation of Msgr Daniel Kauczor in 1926.

### **LYDENBURG (1924, 1879)**

Fr Walsh OMI, settled in Lydenburg in 1879. There were some Catholics amongst the English soldiers stationed in Lydenburg. Two years later, the soldiers left and the remaining Catholics could not support the priest, so he also left again. In 1890, extensive grounds were bought in Lydenburg by Msgr Schoch OMI, and Fr Serriere OMI took over. He stayed at stand 97-98 in Church Street. In 1893, the Loreto Sisters opened their convent in Lydenburg, and they also built a convent on new premises. Msgr Kauczor sold the old priest's house to Mr Plack on 23 July 1924. The new Presbytery and residence of the Prefect Apostolic was built on stand 55 in 1924-1925.

The history of the Catholic Church in Lydenburg is closely interwoven with the Loreto Convent. Before 1886, the whole of Transvaal was under

the jurisdiction of the Oblates of the Natal Vicariate. Because of distance and bad roads only occasional visits by travelling priests were possible in those days. In 1886, Transvaal became an independent Prefecture. In Lydenburg, there were some prominent Catholic families and after some urgent appeals, Bishop Charles Monginoux OMI, the Bishop of the Transvaal, asked the Loreto Sisters of Pretoria to establish a convent and school in Lydenburg. The first five nuns were Mother Mary Theresa Golohan (Superior), Mother Evangelist, Mother Mary Ignatius, Mother Mary Berchmans and Sister Aloysius. They were escorted by three Oblate Fathers. They left Pretoria for Lydenburg by ox wagon on 11 February 1893.

The story of their journey, as contained in an old diary, reads like the story of the former *Voortrekkers*: “The journey was full of peril for heavy rain flooded the rivers and carried destruction all round. When the Crocodile River was reached, a hundred wagons were found out spanned on its banks, waiting for the waters to subside. After some days, a crossing was effected in the following manner: the wagons were unloaded and their contents placed on punts, and then dragged to the opposite bank by means of ropes. The empty wagons followed drawn by swimming oxen. The approach to the bridge had been washed away; ladders of sandbags were constructed by the natives; the passengers climbed over these and finally reached the opposite bank though not without danger. Much of the remaining journey was made on foot, ankle deep in mud, for it was thought wiser not to trust the uncertain movements of the 16 oxen on a bad road.”

Early in March, the party reached Lydenburg and the weary nuns received a warm welcome from the Catholics of the town. These good folk—the McGees, the Donovans and the Quinlans, to mention but a few—rejoiced now in the prospect of being able to practise their faith fully and

give their children the blessing of a Catholic education. From their midst, five years later, came a recruit to Loreto’s ranks in the person of Mother Philomena Quinlan.

On the day of their arrival in March 1893, a small thatched cottage was the only residence available for the little band of nuns. Within a month, however, they were able to move into a larger house—the present Monica



Father General, Jakob Lehr, with students from the Loreto Convent in 1927.





Church of St Peter Claver in Weltevreden.

High School Hostel—which served as a convent and school until the present convent was erected in 1898.

Soon after the arrival of the nuns, Lydenburg also got its resident priest. But he was away often, because he also had to look after the scattered Catholics in the Eastern Transvaal. In 1918, the Convent church was built and blessed by Bishop Cox of Johannesburg. After a few weeks, Fr Van Hecke OMI had left and they were on their own. Msgr Kauczor took up residence in Lydenburg and Fr Ipfelkofer was appointed parish

priest. He could enjoy his new parish for only two years, because he had to go back to Europe after he was elected to the General Council in 1926. Fr Berger filled the vacancy till Fr Stadtmüller took over in 1930. An elderly Lydenburger remembered him as a strict catechism teacher and they nicknamed him—in line with the time—“Hitler”. In 1936, Stadtmüller was called to Witbank and Fr Lechner settled in Lydenburg. He looked after the parish till 1942 when he was transferred to White Waters (Bockberg). His successor in Lydenburg was Fr Zeifang till 1950 when Fr Zeifang moved to Friedenheim. Fr Stadtmüller came back again to Lydenburg and, in 1959, Fr Howlett, a diocesan priest, took over. In 1969, the Loreto Convent closed because of the shortage of Sisters and Lydenburg parish shrank to a handful. In 1967, Fr Howlett moved to Barberton and his place was taken by Fr Wim Erkens. When he got sick, Fr Arsenault took over in 1969. He built the new St Theresa Church but in 1973, he had a stroke and never recovered. Fr Stanley Botha followed, but he decided to move back to Cape Town, his home diocese. Fr Lechner came to Lydenburg again in 1977. Currently, Lydenburg is looked after from Maria Trost.

Only a few outstations belonged to Lydenburg, because Lydenburg was regarded a white parish. But from 1939 to 1941, Fr Angerer was appointed to do mission work around town, Spekboom included. He worked in Spekboom, Natalshoep and Potloodspruit, as far as his motorbike would make it. He also worked



Interior of St Peter Claver church in Weltevreden.



Mary Immaculate Conception church, blessed on 12 July 1925.

in the location. Apparently, no provision had been made for such a post, because Fr Angerer had to stay in the guestroom, meals for the priest and Monsignor being provided by the Convent (“I just joined them at table.”).

Next to the old cemetery in Lydenburg, one will find old St Theresa’s, built by the brothers and funds provided by Fr Stadtmüller. Church and school were blessed on 17 January 1932. The church was suitable for black and white, especially when Apartheid was more and more enforced. First the white Catholics went to the Convent chapel, later holy Mass was celebrated on Sundays only in St Theresa’s, one Sunday in English, one Sunday in Zulu. When Fr Arsenault built the new St Theresa’s next to the priest’s house, old St Theresa’s was sold.

Some 40 km east of Lydenburg, one can find a little church in the forest. Mr Harwood started a plantation in Weltevreden and he also built a little church for himself and his workers. The church was dedicated to St Peter Claver and blessed by Bishop Boyle of Johannesburg on 26 July 1961. Mr Harwood’s son sold the forest plantation lock, stock and barrel to Sappi in 1990 and we were lucky to save the little church bell and the benches for the church of Christ the King in Majika. The place had to close because all the people were removed and only the trees and a few workshops survived.

A similar fate awaited Natalshoop, a valley outside Lydenburg. The place was always on temporary lease, because the whole valley was prospector territory. Eventually, that nice little community also disappeared: there was no work and all that remained was a few hardened prospectors and lots of baboons.

Lydenburg was for a long time the centre of the Prefecture, after all, the Prefect Apostolic had his residence in town. But the Lydenburg Prefecture changed its name to Diocese of Lydenburg–Witbank and then to Diocese of Witbank. Although Lydenburg is in the geographical centre the successors of Fr Mohn decided to move to Witbank for two reasons: 1) There was not much develop-

ment in town whereas Witbank developed as a mining centre; 2) They wanted to be nearer to the government offices in Pretoria.

In 1969, the Convent closed because of a shortage of Sisters. It was transformed into an institution for handicapped people. The Convent chapel became a bar.

### **MARIA TROST – BEGINNINGS (1924)**

“By Divine Providence and through the assistance of the Rev. Mother Superior of the Loreto Nuns, we found a suitable farm bordering on the town lands, called Frischgewaagd. The wife of the owner of this farm requested the Rev. Mother Superior to speak to the Prefect Apostolic to ask him if he would be prepared to pay cash for the farm, otherwise she would have sold it by auction, because her husband had deserted her.” The farm was bought immediately and registered under the name “Catholic Mission Maria Trost”, named after the famous shrine of Our Lady in Austria. Fr K. Fischer wrote down the whole deal in one of his reports: “By the end of July 1924, Frischgewaagd was bought by Msgr Kauczor for 2 200 pounds. On 10 September 1924, Fr Karl Fischer, Bro. Karl Klodt and Bro. Karl Schmid could move to the farm. Bro. Schmid started with the farm, Bro. Klodt tried to get his carpentry going, the farm house was the only good building on the place—it had been built in 1920—but had to be cleared of weeds. The rest was dilapidated and needed reconstruction.



Sisters' Convent and dining room in Maria Trost (1 December 1934).

Much help came from the local Catholics. McGhee provided transport (12 oxen with a wagon) and Donovan transported the missionaries from town to the farm by car. Even non-Catholics donated chairs and tables to make the beginning easier. McGhee also donated three donkeys. Bro. Klodt built a small wagon, so our pioneers had their own transport. Later on, the same McGhee sent 12 oxen with a plough, so that farming could start. The first year, they harvested 80 bags of maize. Another great friend was the neighbour, Mr Boshoff. He helped to find the missing ox which was included in the deal, but he was found dead



Carpentry workshop, in 1927.

in the mud. He also advised on how to preserve meat, after all in those days there were no fridges. Mr Boshoff remained our friend over all those years, especially with the Brothers.

Fr Raffener, rector, arrived from overseas, together with Fr Zorn, who was in Mariannhill to learn Zulu. They arrived at the end of January 1925 and Fr Zorn immediately had plans for a church and a school. A week after moving in, he levelled the ground and started working; his helpers received one shilling a day. Fr Raffener had a doctorate in Philosophy and Theology, but he made no effort to learn either English or another language. Fr Fischer also settled in Maria Trost and built his *rondavel* next to the priests' house. Bro. Klodt started his carpentry workshop and Bro. Huber the new



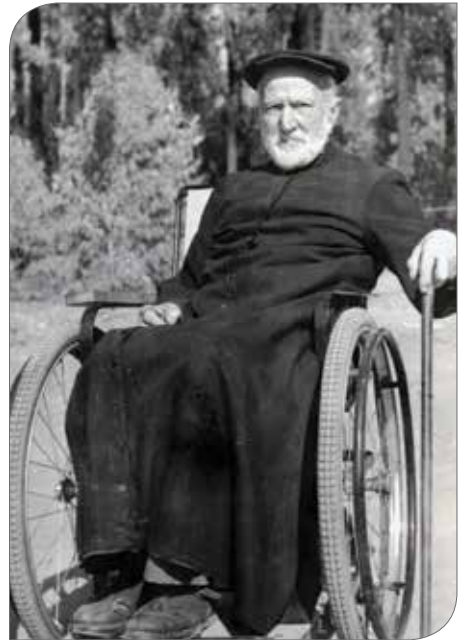
Bro. Klodt and Abel, a well-known helper.



Bro. Andreas Kley in his tailoring workshop.

maize shed and the “Fischer house”. The garden became a workplace and home for Bro. Kolenc. Fr Zorn made his first attempts to convert the heathens. Fr Raffeiner supervised everything and everybody as Fr Rector and he was supervised by the Prefect who, shortly before his resignation in December 1925, took everything under his wing. The other priests, Musar and Fischer, tried to keep themselves busy as travelling priests. Bro. Cygan was the official cook, after all, those missionaries also had to eat.

The first memorable date in Maria Trost was the 12 July 1925. The church was completed and blessed by Msgr Kauczor, and the following day the school opened using the same building. The sanctuary was closed off by a curtain during the day and



Bro. Alexander Cygan, the “Forester”.



The chain saw had not yet been invented!

the classroom was ready. The same year, Fr Zorn started the real school, the casing of the picture of Kaiser Franz Josef, who was their protector in the Sudan, had to serve as a support for the walls. The method was simple and efficient: put down the form, fill with stones and *daga*, add water and stamp it. *Baba Zulu*, the nickname of Fr Zorn, supervised from the top. Whatever was thrown down and reached the ground without touching anything, was proof that the wall was straight. The walls are still standing and there are no cracks after eighty years!

### FARM AND WORKSHOPS

The farmers in Maria Trost had to work hard from the very beginning. Bro. Karl Schmid till 1929 and after him, Bro. Anton Kurz, had to plough with oxen. Whatever was produced was swallowed by hungry confrères and boarders. In 1940, Bro. Kurz and Bro. Brand swapped places: Kurz to Glen Cowie and Brand to Maria



Bro. Karl Schmid, farmer.



Father General, J. Deisenbeck, with Bro. Kley (1951).



Bro. Anton Rieger, farmer, in 1966.

Trost. Bro. Brand toiled till 1955 when he moved again to Glen Cowie, this time permanently. For the next five years, it was the turn of Bro. Egger who handed over to Bro. Rieger in 1960. During his time, the new big upper dam was built. The day the dam was completed heaven opened up with one of those rare cloud bursts and the dam wall had a big hole in it afterwards. And to crown it all, the mishap occurred on Christmas Eve. When Bro. Rieger moved back to Europe, Bro. Sailer carried on and made improvements especially to the dairy projects on the farm. That happened between 1970 and 1985. Under Bro. Niederbrunner farming was scaled down drastically and the farm was hired out.

The carpentry in Maria Trost was well known. Bro. Klodt was the first carpenter. The workshop was built in 1925 and is still standing. The machines were driven first by a steam engine and later by a diesel engine. Belts emerged in all directions from the old transmission, built by Bro. Vogel who followed Bro. Klodt. During the time of Bro. Pfeifer (1963–1985), the carpentry had the biggest turnover—tables, benches, cupboards, shelves, whatever was needed by people and confrères, was ordered and manufactured in Maria Trost. The work could not continue, because there were no new carpenters. Carpentry work still continues, but no longer under the Comboni brothers.



Bro. Ignaz Pezzei, gardener, in 1977.



Bro. Josef Pfeifer, carpenter.

Another icon, closely connected to Maria Trost, was Bro. Kley, a tailor and charcoal manufacturer, responsible for shrubs and flowers and lawnmowers. He welcomed guests and confrères and made us presentable again when we came with torn trousers. He also was our handyman and the tailor shop very often looked more like a General Dealer shop. He arrived in Maria Trost in 1930. For two years, he stayed in town with Msgr Mohn; afterwards, Maria Trost became his home till his death in 1987, only interrupted by six years (1965–1971) in Highover (a house near White River, bought to accommodate elder confrères).

### **PRECIOUS BLOOD SISTERS**

The development of Maria Trost was closely connected to Sisters. First, the Precious Blood Sisters of Mariannahill came. The acting Apostolic Prefect,



Fr Berger, succeeded in 1926, in bringing three of them to Maria Trost. They looked after the first boarders, taught in school, developed the clinic and looked after the Fathers and brothers. The first beginnings were primitive, to say the least, but on 1 December 1934, they could move into the new Sisters' house and could feel a bit more comfortable. They were called back to Mariannahill because they were needed there and they also felt far from home.



The Sisters worked in Maria Trost from 1928 to 1939.

### FRANCISCAN SISTERS

The Franciscan Sisters of Eggenberg came to the rescue. Because of Hitler and his annexation of Austria, they were expelled from their work in 1938. Fr Riegler was a delegate to the General Chapter. Mother General of the Franciscan Sisters was willing to send Sisters to South Africa. Twenty Sisters had volunteered, but



Bro. Franz Xaver Vogel with Franciscan Sisters which came to Maria Trost in 1939.



The gardeners' home, in 1927.

there was only enough money for ten. In April 1939, they arrived with Fr Steidle. The captain had baptised them his “penguins”. On the train, they were booked as “mission girls”. In Maria Trost, they found three Sisters from Mariannahill, Sr Radegunde, Sr Venantia and Sr Longina. After a few weeks of introduction, they left the Franciscan Sisters on their own, and went back to Mariannahill (leaving behind the grave of Sr Laurentina who had died in 1934).

Sr Ambrosia was the first Superior and she had to do the laundry. Sr Leona tried her best in the clinic and extracted teeth, Sr Euphrosina started cooking, Sr Constantia and Sr Aquina had to teach needle work and keep the boarders under control. Two were needed in Middelburg in the hostel which was in those days known as the “rat hole”, whilst two Sisters went to Glen Cowie to learn English with the Loreto Sisters.

Very soon, the Sisters felt at home, after all another Austrian, Fr Riegler, was rector, and his successors, Fr Baumgart and Fr Lechner were held in high esteem by the Sisters. They were really poor Franciscans, working for a small allowance and they also quickly learnt how to work and live with the Maria Trost community. For sure, sometimes these handmaids of the Lord felt like handmaids of the “lords”!

Maria Trost was also the place where the Franciscan Sisters opened their Novitiate. Sr Maristella was the first novice; she started her Novitiate under the direction of Sr Nives on 9 May 1964.

In 1967, the Secondary School had to be transferred to Glen Cowie because the government could not tolerate this “black spot in a white area”; Sr Cecilia and Sr Severina moved to Nelspruit. Their last commitment was the Pastoral Centre. Sr Marianne Graf was involved from the very beginning, working un-



Sr Severina imparting cooking lessons.

der different directors and also being director and administrator on her own. She was transferred to her home Province and since 2012 there are no more Franciscan Sisters in Maria Trost.

#### **MARIA TROST – FR RIEGLER**

Msgr Mohn received new personnel from overseas—Fr Riegler and Fr Brandmayer, also called “Seppel” (diminutive of Joseph given because of his small stature). Fr Riegler, who was nicknamed Fr Mahlakhanipane (the clever one), arrived on 13 September 1927. He studied Zulu at St Michael’s, with the Marianhill Missionaries. In 1928, he came to Maria Trost. Till 1930, Fr Riegler was under the wing of Fr Zorn, nicknamed “Baba Zulu”; then Fr Zorn moved to Barberton to get things going there and Fr Riegler took over in Maria Trost. He introduced St Anne’s sodality in 1930; schools were opened in Spekboom, Witklip and Klipfontein. In 1934, the new Sisters’ house could be occupied. He came as



Fr Riegler introduced the Sodality of St Anne in Maria Trost.

far as Tonteldoos where a little church was blessed and on the opposite side as far as Elandshoek near Nelspruit, where he opened a school. The boarders also increased and boarding houses for the boys were built. Today, these buildings house Sizo Primary School. He was already recognised as a leader and Zulu speaker and in 1932 the confrères sent him as their delegate to the General Chapter. He was appointed to supervise religious instruction in our schools. In 1938, he was proposed to take the place of Msgr Mohn as Prefect Apostolic. He was appointed in 1939. Lydenburg should have been a Vicariate by then, but some of the confrères muttered their opposition to Riegler when the Apostolic Delegate visited Maria Trost on his return from the Episcopal Ordination of the Vicar Apostolic of Bremersdorp. So, Lydenburg had to wait another ten years before Fr Riegler was consecrated bishop.



Fr Anton Baumgart, in Maria Trost (1939–1949).

#### **MARIA TROST – FR BAUMGART**

Fr Riegler's place was taken by Fr Baumgart, nicknamed Fr Bhekapansi (the one who looks down!). He looked after Maria Trost during the Second World War, when no funds and no personnel came from Europe. Here, the work was also very limited, and there was restriction of movement, according to a government decision of 22 February 1941. So that non-South Africans were not allowed to work in "native" areas; petrol was restricted. Many of our missionaries had to go to camps, some for a shorter time, others till the end of the war. But Maria Trost grew during those war years. The 24 January 1941 saw an invasion of school inspectors in Maria Trost: Jager and Liebenberg, the local inspectors, and Eiselen, the minister,

came for the blessing and opening of the new boarding house for girls in Maria Trost. The brothers built it; Fr Baumgart collected lime and cement; the local Indians were his great friends. A year later, on 22 August 1942 was the day of the blessing of the new church of the Immaculate Conception and in 1945 the hospital was built and occupied. In October 1945, the telephone rang for the first time in Maria Trost after ten years of waiting. In 1949, Fr Baumgart had to leave Maria Trost because he was elected to the General Council. He was known for being absent during the day, visiting outstations. When he came home, there

was “*die ewige Anbetung*” (“perpetual adoration”), as the brothers described the queue of people waiting for him to buy their little goodies in his store. And when the others were asleep, one could still find him in church. Before he left, he experienced the joy of the ordination of Bishop Riegler in Maria Trost. Fr Baumgart, eventually, retired in Ellwangen and died on 1 February 1998.

### **MARIA TROST – FR LECHNER**

Fr Lechner took over from Fr Baumgart. The locals very soon called him Fr Mazinyo (for having visible teeth). He was respected in the community and by the people. During his time, the Secondary School developed, one of the few places where the blacks could get a higher education. From the minutes of the Bishop’s Council meeting of November 1951, we understand that Fr Tremmel mentioned the need for such a school. Glen Cowie was mentioned as a suitable place. Financial considerations resulted in the idea being shelved. The proposal was made to build in Probeeren and invite the Salesians to take over this project: the Salesian Fathers School and boarding for boys, the Salesian Sisters School and boarding for girls. But they declined and in 1954 a start was made in Maria Trost. Fr Bourhill was the first principal, supported by Fr Kerr and the Franciscan Sisters, Sr Severina and Sr Cecilia. Fr Kerr gives a vivid description of Maria Trost and the Secondary School: “Listen to this for a list of daily and weekly chores: carpentry, tailoring, farming, gardening, charcoal, beehive industry, dairy produce, looking after poultry and cattle and milling mealies. The Sisters made altar breads, did and taught dressmaking, domestic economy, taught religion and attended to endless Church needs. There was also a clinic dispensary and Sr Leona held the ‘chair of dentistry’—the ‘pliers’ in one hand, some makeshift anaesthetic in the other hand.” Over 250 boarders in the Primary and Secondary School had to be catered for. Fr Lechner was sought as a confessor and known as a good preacher. He organised everything in June 1951 to make the Silver Jubilee of Bishop Riegler a memorable occasion. In October 1951, the church in Burgersfort could be blessed: the building was financed and



Boarding House for boys, now Sizo Primary School.



The band's instruments came from Germany, when Fr Ipfelkofer came as Apostolic Visitor.

directed by Fr Lechner. In March 1952, the lights came on in Maria Trost. Mr Schaftenaar, an old friend, helped with the installation. On 16 December 1952, Fr Lephaka was ordained a priest in Maria Trost. When Fr Lechner began to like the place, he had to move on: he was elected Fr General in 1955. Maria Trost was by now the important focus of our work, a centre for priests' meetings and retreats, the Secondary School and the workshops. In 1926, Fr Angerer wrote in his diary that he had opened the first mission station in the Prefecture; Maria Trost was mentioned as a farm. Luckily for him that Fr Zorn did not read this remark! Maria Trost also produced important people: Fr Riegler became the first Bishop of Lydenburg; Fr Baumgart was elected to the General Council and was appointed Novice Master; Fr Lechner had the honourable burden of Fr General; and Fr Brosig awaited the same lot. He had to bridge the gap when Fr Nagler was killed in a car accident on Mount Anderson.

### **MARIA TROST – AFTER 1955**

The Secondary School was established and running but eventually it was decided to close the boarding for boys in 1960. "Bantu Education" made progress and, in 1967, the "black spot" in a white area was closed down and the school was transferred to Glen Cowie. Only the Primary School could continue as a farm school. It survived Apartheid and continues today as Sizo School. After Fr Lechner, the parish and the place were looked after first by Fr Sieberer, but he had to move because of ill health. Fr Engelhardt held the 'fort' till 1962, when Fr Nagler came. He built the Lourdes Grotto near the carpentry. Just when he settled down, he was killed in a car accident. He had been called to Sabie to give Mr Bhengu the last sacraments when the accident happened. Fr Brosig, who had

just settled in Burgersfort, had to fill the gap till 1965. He moved away from Maria Trost as Religious Superior, first to Pilgrim's Rest and then to Highover. During the time of Fr Brosig, the new church of the Sacred Heart, in Mashishing was completed, the blessing of Sacred Heart was done by Bishop Reiterer on 23 February 1964. From then on, the number of people in church on Sunday in Maria Trost declined. The parish shifted more and more to Mashishing. Bro. Stang built the hall there in 1967 and in 1993 the church was enlarged to double its size by Lucas Carrim. The successor of Fr Brosig as Religious Superior, Fr Koch, moved back again to Maria Trost in 1971 and he looked after the parish as well. So did Fr Nefzger, Fr Eder and Fr G. Schmid. The Pastoral Centre had grown in the meantime and the directors of the Centre also looked after the parish. In 1990, when Sr Marianne Graf found herself alone in the Centre, Fr Nefzger came back again to Maria Trost to be the parish priest of Lydenburg.

#### **MARIA TROST – PASTORAL CENTRE**

From the beginning, Maria Trost as the geographical centre of the Prefecture offered itself as place for meetings and religious functions. Priests' meetings,



Fr Andreas Nagler in Maria Trost (1960-1962).



Fr Karl Fischer and Fr Albert Pfanner (1961).



Pastoral Centre, built in 1947, by Stephen Sepobe.

retreats, ordinations, *Corpus Christi* processions and now pilgrimages, are part of life in Maria Trost. For various reasons, the development of the parish changed and shifted. There were flourishing outstations in Noitgedacht and in Spekboom. In Noitgedacht, people had to leave as late as 1962 because of the “Group Areas Act”. When politics changed, people moved away from the farms to towns to find better employment. All the old places shrank and most of them had to close. Maria Trost itself was no exception: only those in the cemetery remained. A new purpose for Maria Trost was found in the Pastoral Centre. Many meetings and conferences had to be held to become familiar with the changes which came from the Second Vatican Council. Training of leaders was done through workshops offered. Many groups look for a place to meet and Maria Trost is well known for retreats, one of the cheapest places and in quiet surroundings.

The first part of the Centre was built in 1974 by Stephan Sepobe, who had his training with old Bro. Huber. The boarding house for the girls had to give way to the new foundations. In 1979, Fr Graf extended the Centre and up to a hundred people can be accommodated. Fr Graf, Fr Sandri, Fr Knapp, Fr Converset and Fr Farrel did their best to work as directors of the



Fr Lephaka was ordained priest on 16.12.1952.



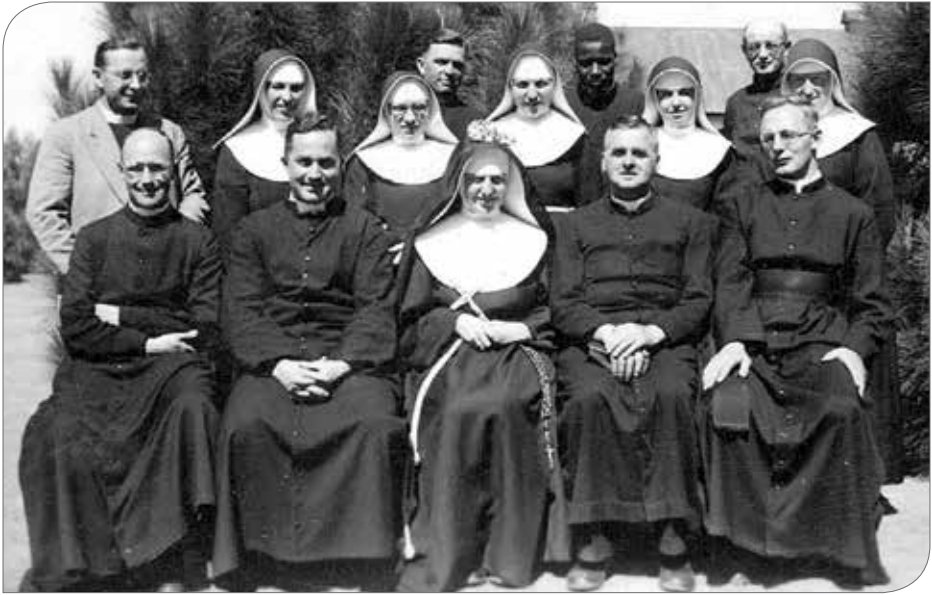
Centre, all of them were supported by Sr Marianne Graf who looked after the kitchen and the maintenance of the place with the help of her staff. From 1990 onwards, Sr Marianne was left alone to keep the Centre going. Since 2009, the Sisters Servants of Mary from the Democratic Republic of the Congo started working in the Centre. Sr Marianne introduced them and in 2012 she returned to Austria. In 2011, the Combonis again provided a Director for the Centre, Fr Fabio Baldan. He has been making a meaningful contribution to the local Church, offering workshops at the Centre, in the parishes and even getting more involved in Lumko. His work is an essential part of our charism, to train local leaders.

### **THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

The Congregation originated from a group of young teachers who were members of the Third Order of St Francis. They taught in Graz, Austria, and Antonia Lampel was their animator. She had the inspiration to start a new religious community, with the intention of being and working right amongst the people. The new Congregation received papal approval in 1843. Their field of work included: education, administration, domestic services, nursing, care for the aged and pastoral work. If Sisters wanted to work in the Mission, the Superiors could also send them out.



Final Vows of Sr Floriana (28 August 1951). Seated: Fr Lechner, Sr Floriana, Fr Stadmüller, Sr Ambrosia, Sr Michaela. Middle: Sr Euphrosina, Sr Annastasia, Sr Martina, Sr Nives, Sr Anna, Sr Konstantia. Back: Fr Rauch, Fr Engelhardt, Fr Demel, Fr Beck and Fr Stempfle.



Final Vows of Sr Bernarda on 29 August 1953. Seated: Fr Engelhardt, Fr Bourhill, Sr Bernarda, Fr Stadtmüller, Fr Lechner. Standing: Fr Stempfle, Sr Ambrosia, Sr Michaela, Sr Anna, Sr Annastasia and Sr Konstantia. Back: Fr Beck, Fr Lephaka and Bro. Kley.

Fr Zorn noted in his diary in 1925: “We need Sisters.” Msgr Mohn succeeded, in 1926, through Fr Berger, to bring the Precious Blood Sisters of Mariannhill to the Prefecture. They came, they did good work, but they felt that they were far from home. Again, Msgr Mohn succeeded through Fr Riegler in 1938 to bring the Franciscan Sisters to South Africa. He was a delegate to the Chapter in 1938. Because of Hitler, the Franciscan Sisters could not continue with their work in Austria and they accepted the invitation. Thirty Sisters volunteered, but only 10 could come, because there was not enough money for the fares. On 9 March 1939, the ten Sisters embarked in Hamburg with Fr Steidle accompanying them. Because of their habit the captain of the “Ubena” called them “the penguins”. They arrived in Durban on 13 April and booked as “10 mission girls”, they travelled by train to Lydenburg. On 16 April 1939, they arrived and were welcomed by Msgr Mohn, Fr Reiterer, the parish priest and the Loreto Sisters. The Precious Blood Sisters introduced them for a short few weeks and then they were on their own in totally new territory.

Msgr Riegler, who followed Msgr Mohn, tried to establish centres hoping to reach out to the hinterland from there. There were the Loreto Sisters in Glen Cowie, so he wanted the Franciscan Sisters in Maria Trost, in White Waters, in Middelburg and later in Barberton. The Sisters started working in the kitchen, teaching in school, looking after the boarders, attending to the sick in the clinics and keeping the Fathers and Brothers clean and their clothing in good order.

In Maria Trost, the Sisters were needed in the little hospital. They looked after the boarders, they took over the kitchen, the laundry and the household. They also helped to establish and to develop the Secondary School.

On 22 November 1939, Sr Anastasia and Sr Leona started real pioneer work in White Waters. Sr Leona worked in the small clinic and Sr Annastasia kept the place clean. Sr Ambrosia and Sr Michaela followed later. In White Waters, the Sisters also cared for three of our dying priests, Fr Zorn, Fr Hoefer and Msgr Mohn. The place was closed in 1951. From 1951 to 1960, the Franciscan Sisters were in Barberton, at St John's. They helped to establish the new place: Sr Ambrosia and Sr Constantia were the first ones. Others followed: Sr Annastasia, Sr Vita, Sr Magdalene and Sr Euphrosina.

When the Sisters received their first local vocations, they started their Novitiate in Maria Trost. Later the Novitiate was moved to Bongani, then back again to Maria Trost and now the young vocations are introduced to religious life in Middelburg.

When Bishop Riegler moved to Witbank, the Sisters agreed to take care of his household, first Sr Constantia and then Sr Martina. The household is now taken care of by others, but Sr Marianne Tieber carried on as secretary in the Diocesan Office under Bishop Nkhumishe and Bishop Khumalo. Sr Michaela and Sr Marietta took care of the St Anthony hostel in Pretoria, from 1959 to 1969.

The Sisters also carried out catechetical work. From 1976 to 1981, Sr Augusta and Sr Othilda worked in Aasvoelboom; from 1978 to 1982, Sr Elizabeth and Sr Mary did catechetical work in Ekulindeni. Sr Mary did parish work in Waterval since 1985. Sr Thandi Moyo got involved in youth work for the Diocese of Witbank and is now stationed in Lumko, giving workshops and training local lead-



Sr Emily (left), on the day of renewing her Vows, with Sr Christophera and Bishop Anton Reiterer.



Sr Marianne Graf, Sr Margaret Zehale and Sr Mariluise, on the day of their Final Profession.



Sr Marianne Graf with *gogo* Nyathi.

ers. Right from the beginning, two Sisters worked in the hostel in Middelburg. In those days, it was called “the rat hole”, as we can read in the Diary of Fr Zorn. The rats were coming from the neighbour’s donkeys stable, who was the provider of the town’s “taxi service”. They remained in Middelburg where they first looked after the boys; then, Sr Floriana and Sr Michaela cared for the old people. Sr Floriana also looked after Bishop Reiterer who retired to Middelburg. Middelburg is now the residence of their Provincial and Sr Margaret is in charge of formation of the young candidates.

Like the Brothers, the Sisters were willing to help wherever possible and wherever needed. They

worked for a small reward, the time of the war also made it difficult to be more generous. They had to adjust and they had to stand their ground, especially with the Brothers, but they soon learned to handle all kinds of situations. With



Bro. Andreas Kley, Bro. Alois Stang, Bro. Ludwig Brand and Bro. Alois Häring, in 1977.



Mrs Mbatha (right) conducting a vocation workshop at the Pastoral Centre of Maria Trost.

their help, it was possible to build up the structures of the Prefecture and to bring homeliness to places.

The Sisters also had to think of their own future both, financially and of recruiting new members to their ranks. In 1957, they started their own Pre-school in Nelspruit and later the Primary School. They built up their own convent and the *Lowveld* capital became their home. Later on, it also served as home for their older members. In 1961, their work was recognised by their Mother House in Graz: they were promoted to a Vicariate and later on they became their own Region with their own Mother Provincial.

During all these years the Franciscan Sisters worked closely with the Combonis. They got to know them, sometimes better than the “insiders”. They shared joys and pains with us. They established their firm place in the Local Church. We thank them and may God bless their work.

## MARIA TROST: PERSONNEL

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1924	Musar and Fischer	Cygan, Schmid K., Klodt and Kolenc
1925	Raffeiner, Zorn and Musar	Cygan, Schmid, Kolenc, Klodt, Huber and Cagol
1926	Raffeiner, Zorn, Berger, Musar and Ille	Cygan, Schmid, Kolenc, Huber, Schwingshackl and Klodt
1927	Raffeiner, Zorn, Berger and Schoepf	Cygan, Schmid, Kolenc, Huber, Schwingshackl, Sendker and Klodt
1928	Raffeiner, Zorn, Musar and Riegler	Cygan, Schmid, Kolenc, Huber and Klodt, Schwingshackl, Sendker, Brand and Hintermayr
1929	Riegler, Schoepf, Zorn, Musar and Weiller	Brand, Schmid, Kolenc, Klodt, Huber, Schwingshackl, Sendker and Hintermayr
1930	Riegler, Schoepf, Fischer K., Weiller, Musar, Brandlmayr and Stadtmüller	Kolenc, Huber, Brand, Lesnjak, Sendker, Hintermayr and Klodt
1931	Riegler, Schoepf, Weiller, Fischer K., Musar, Ille and Stadtmüller	Cygan, Huber, Kolenc, Dorn, Kurz, Vogel, Sendker(+3.12.1931), Lesnjak, Klodt
1932	Riegler, Schoepf, Musar and Stadtmüller	Cygan, Kurz, Kolenc, Kley, Vogel, Steurer, Rainer and Klodt
1933	Riegler, Bieg and Stadtmüller	Cygan, Huber, Kolenc, Stang, Vogel, Haering, Kurz, Kley, Schmid, Rainer and Klodt
1934	Riegler, Raffeiner, Bieg, Jungnickl, Zorn and Stadtmüller	Cygan, Huber, Kolenc, Stang, Vogel, Haering, Kurz, Kley, Schmid, Meier, Rainer and Klodt
1935	Riegler, Zorn, Schoepf, Lechner, Jungnickl and Stadtmüller	Cygan, Huber, Kolenc, Stang, Vogel, Schmid, Kurz, Gruber, Kley, Meier, Rainer and Klodt
1936	Riegler, Zorn, Lechner and Jungnickl	Cygan, Huber, Kolenc, Stang, Vogel, Schmid, Kurz, Kley, Poellabauer, Gruber, Meier, Schickhofer, Lesnjak, Rainer and Klodt
1937	Riegler, Zorn, Lechner and Zeifang,	Cygan, Huber, Vogel, Stang, Schmid, Kurz, Kley, Meier, Poellabauer, Schickhofer, Gruber, Lesnjak, Rainer and Klodt
1938	Riegler, Zorn, Schoepf, Baumgart, Weiller and Angerer,	Cygan, Huber, Stang, Kley, Vogel, Schmid, Kurz, Gruber, Poellabauer, Zeifang, Eigner, Lesnjak, Schickhofer, Hirschlein and Klodt
1939	Baumgart, Schoepf, Zorn, Bieg, Riegler, Weiller, Zeifang and Tremmel	Cygan, Huber, Stang, Kley, Vogel, Schmid, Kurz, Gruber, Brand, Eigner, Poellabauer, Oberstaller, Schickhofer, Hirschlein and Klodt
1940	Baumgart, Schoepf, Weiller, Tremmel and Brandlmayr	Cygan, Huber, Stang, Kley, Vogel, Schmid, Dorn, Gruber, Brand, Poellabauer, Hirschlein, Eigner and Klodt

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1941	Baumgart, Tremmel and Brandlmayr	Cygan, Huber, Stang, Kley, Vogel, Schmid, Dorn, Gruber, Brand, Pöllabauer, Klodt, Hirschlein, Eigner
1942	Baumgart, Brandlmayr and Tremmel	Cygan, Hüber, Stang, Kley, Pöllabauer, Eigner, Vogel, Gruber and Brand
1943	Baumgart, Brandlmayr and Tremmel	Cygan, Hüber, Stang, Kley, Brand, Vogel Pöllabauer, Gruber and Eigner
1944	Baumgart, Brandlmayr and Tremmel	Cygan, Hüber, Stang, Kley, Brand, Vogel Eigner, Gruber and Lamprecht
1945	Baumgart, Brandlmayr and Tremmel	Cygan, Hüber, Stang, Kley, Brand, Vogel, Eigner, Gruber and Lamprecht
1946	Baumgart, Brandlmayr, Tremmel and Schöpf	Cygan, Hüber, Stang, Kley, Brand, Vogel, Eigner, Gruber, Lamprecht and Schmid
1947	Baumgart, Brandlmayr and Schöpf	Cygan, Hüber, Vogel, Kley, Brand, Eigner, Schmid, Gruber and Lamprecht
1948	Baumgart, Brandlmayr, Schöpf and Demel	Cygan, Hüber, Vogel, Kley, Brand, Eigner, Schmid and Lamprecht
1949	Baumgart, Lechner, Demel, Schöpf, Engelhardt and Brandlmayr	Cygan, Hüber, Vogel, Kley, Brand, Eigner, Schmid, Hirschlein and Lamprecht
1950	Lechner, Brandlmayr, Schöpf, Demel, Sieberer and Engelhardt	Cygan, Hüber, Stang, Kley, Brand, Vogel, Eigner, Schmid, Hirschlein and Lamprecht
1951	Lechner, Brandlmayr and Engelhardt	Cygan, Hüber, Vogel, Kley, Brand, Eigner, Schmid, Hirschlein, Lamprecht, Pezzei and Stang
1952	Lechner, Brandlmayr, Engelhardt and Bourhill	Cygan, Hüber, Vogel, Kley, Brand, Pezzei, Schmid, Häring, Stang and Hirschlein
1953	Lechner, Brandlmayr, Engelhardt and Bourhill	Cygan, Hüber, Vogel, Kley, Brand, Pezzei, Schmid and Stang
1954	Lechner, Brandlmayr, Engelhardt and Kuehner,	Cygan, Hüber, Vogel, Kley, Brand, Pezzei and Stang
1955	Lechner, Brandlmayr, Sieberer and Bourhill	Cygan, Brand, Vogel, Kley, Pezzei, Stang and Egger
1956	Sieberer, Brandlmayr and Bourhill	Cygan, Vogel, Kley, Stang, Hirschlein, Pezzei and Egger
1957	Engelhardt, Brandlmayr and Bourhill	Cygan, Vogel, Kley, Stang, Hirschlein, Pezzei and Egger
1958	Engelhardt, Brandlmayr, Brosig and Fischer K.	Cygan, Vogel, Kley, Stang, Kurz, Pezzei and Egger
1959	Engelhardt, Brandlmayr, Nagler and Fischer K.	Cygan, Vogel, Kley, Stang, Egger and Pezzei
1960	Nagler, Engelhardt and Fischer K.	Cygan, Vogel, Kley, Stang, Pezzei and Rieger
1961	Engelhardt Ludwig and Fischer K.	Cygan, Vogel, Kley, Stang, Pezzei and Rieger
1962	Nagler, Brosig and Fischer K.	Cygan, Vogel, Kley, Stang, Pezzei and Rieger
1963	Brosig, Fischer K. and Rechenmacher	Cygan, Kley, Stang, Vogel, Pezzei and Rieger

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1964	Brosig, Fischer K. and Benno Singer	Kley, Rieger, Stang, Pfeifer, Pezzei
1965	Brosig, Nefzger and Fischer K	Cagol, Dorn, Kley, Rieger, Pezzei, Pfeifer and Niederbacher
1966	Nefzger, Engelhardt Franz and Fischer K.	Cagol, Dorn, Rieger, Pezzei, Pfeifer, Lamprecht, Niederbacher
1967	Nefzger, Engelhardt F. and Fischer K.	Rieger, Pfeifer, Dorn, Pezzei and Niederbacher
1968	Rossmannith and Heller	Sailer, Niederbacher, Pezzei, Pfeifer
1969	Rossmannith and Nefzger	Seibold, Pfeifer and Pezzei
1970	Nefzger	Seibold, Sailer, Pfeifer, Pezzei and Schnitzer
1971	Koch and Engelhardt L.	Sailer, Pezzei, Kley, Schnitzer and Pfeifer,
1972	Koch	Sailer, Pezzei, Kley and Pfeifer
1973	Koch	Sailer, Pezzei, Kley and Pfeifer
1974	Nefzger and Temmel	Sailer, Pezzei, Kley, Pfeifer and Fischnaller
1975	Nefzger and Tremmel	Sailer, Pezzei, Kley, Pfeifer and Fischnaller
1976	Nefzger, Tremmel and Graf	Sailer, Pezzei, Kley and Fischnaller
1977	Nefzger, Graf, Tremmel and Eder	Sailer, Pezzei, Kley and Pfeifer
1978	Eder, Graf and Tremmel	Sailer, Pezzei and Kley
1979	Eder, Graf and Tremmel	Sailer, Pezzei and Kley
1980	Schmid G., Graf, Tremmel and Converset	Sailer, Pezzei and Kley
1981	Schmid G., Sandri, Tremmel and Converset	Sailer, Pezzei, Kley and Pfeifer
1982	Schmid G. Sandri, Tremmel and Converset	Sailer, Pezzei, Kley and Pfeifer
1983	Schmid G. Sandri, Tremmel and Kuehner	Sailer, Pfeifer, Kley and Kurz
1984	Schmid G., Sandri, Tremmel and Kuehner	Sailer, Pfeifer, Kley and Kurz
1985	Schmid G., Sandri, Tremmel and Kuehner	Sailer, Pfeifer, Kley and Frey
1986	Schmid G., Knapp, Tremmel, König and Kuehner	Pfeifer, Niederbrunner, Kley and Frey
1987	Schmid G., Knapp, Tremmel and Espinoza	Pfeifer, Niederbrunner, Kley and Frey
1988	Espinoza and Knapp	Niederbrunner
1989	Knapp	Niederbrunner
1990	Nefzger	Hueber O.
1993	Nefzger	Seibold
1995 2010	Nefzger	
2011	Nefzger and Baldan	
2012	Nefzger and Baldan	Engelhardt Hermann



## MARIA TROST: IMPORTANT DATES

11.2.1924	The “Sudanese” arrive
Sept. 1924	Frischgewaagd 82 is bought from Mrs Feldmann
31.1.1925	Fr Raffeiner and Fr Zorn arrive, Fr Raffeiner Rector, Fr Zorn as Parish Priest
24.6.1925	First priests’ meeting in Maria Trost
12.7.1925	Blessing of the church and start of the Primary School.
31.12.1925	Msgr Kauczorz resigns and Fr Berger is appointed by him as acting Prefect Apostolic
1926	The Precious Blood Sisters from Mariannahill arrive
5.6.1927	First confirmations: 49 are confirmed by Msgr Mohn
16.6.1927	First <i>Corpus Christi</i> procession
21.7.1927	Building of boys’ boarding begins; girls’ boarding already since April
14.8.1927	Fr Raffeiner and Fr Zorn celebrate their Silver Jubilee; Kesseling, the home parish of Fr Zorn, donates the church bell
1927	Schools are built in Boomplaas and in Sterkspruit
29.9.1927	The Apostolic Delegate visits Maria Trost
14.11.1927	Fr General Lehr comes to Maria Trost
1928	St Theresa’s Noitgedacht opens
1929	School in Mosterhoek
1930	Schools are built in Spekboom and Witklip
1930	Fr Riegler introduces the St Anne sodality in Maria Trost
1932	Church in Tondeldoos and school in Elandshoek
17.1.1932	Blessing of St Theresa’s in Lydenburg. Altkrautheim, the home parish of Fr Stadtmüller, donated the bells.
10.3.1933	The beautiful Monstrance is donated by Gottfried Hermann, Gleisdorf, Steyermark
4.12.1933	Everybody in Maria Trost chases locusts
1.12.1934	The new Sisters’ house is occupied
1.6.1936	The school in Enkeldooren opens
27.9.1936	The school in Klipfontein, St John’s, opens
16.4.1939	The Franciscan Sisters from Eggenberg arrive
2.5.1939	The Apostolic Delegate visits Maria Trost
24.1.1941	The new boarding house for girls opens; Eiselen is present
22.8.1942	The new church of Mary Immaculate Conception is blessed
Oct.1945	The telephone reaches Maria Trost after a ten-year-wait

## MARIA TROST: IMPORTANT DATES

1945	The new hospital in Maria Trost is completed
13.5.1946	The Apostolic Delegate, Martin Lucas, visits Maria Trost
1.12.1948	Arrival of the first missionaries after the war: eight priests and three brothers
23.1.1949	Msgr Riegler is ordained Bishop in Maria Trost by the Apostolic Delegate
29.6.1951	Bishop Riegler celebrates his Silver Jubilee
July 1951	Fr General Deisenbeck is in Maria Trost
March 1952	The lights go on in Maria Trost
16.12.1952	Fr J. Lephaka is ordained in Maria Trost
8.1.1955	The "Daughters" arrive in Maria Trost, Sr Lucy and Sr Frances.
12.4.1957	Fr Peyton in Maria Trost for the Rosary Crusade
26.11.1957	Fr General Lechner visits Maria Trost
6.6.1959.	Blessing of the Lourdes Grotto
Jan. 1961	Boarding for boys is closed
8.9.1962	Fr Nagler is killed in a car accident on Mt Anderson
9.5.1966	Sr Maristella takes her First Religious Vows
1966	The Religious Superior moves to Highover, with him Bro. Kley and Bro. Cagol
1967	The Secondary School closes and is transferred to Glen Cowie
1971	The Religious Superior, Fr Koch, moves back to Maria Trost, with him Bro. Kley
1974	The first part of the Pastoral Centre is built
1979	The Pastoral Centre is extended
1987	The Religious Superior moves to Bronkhorstspuit
30.10.1990	The Combonis return to Maria Trost
1993	Sacred Heart, Mashishing, is enlarged and classrooms are built
29.11.2003	Vusi Magagula is ordained a priest, the first from Mashishing Parish
2009	The first Sisters Servants of Mary from Congo arrive at the Centre
2011	The Combonis take over the running of the Pastoral Centre
2012	Sr Marianne Graf leaves the Pastoral Centre after more than 30 years

## WITBANK, CHRIST THE KING

Bishop Charles Cox OMI, of Johannesburg, laid the foundation stone for the first church in Witbank on 31 August 1921. On 18 December 1921, he blessed the new church in honour of the Immaculate Conception. The Catholic presence in Witbank started in 1904 when the Barry family arrived. No permanent priest was available for Witbank; travelling priests from Pretoria looked after the few Catholic families. They came together for holy Mass usually in the Carlton Hotel. In 1924, the first Comboni priest, Fr Klassert, settled in Witbank. There was a small priest's house near the church; Bro. Huber and later on Bro. Cagol stayed a bit nearer to the Lord, in the sacristy. Fr Klassert also worked as a travelling priest for Middelburg, Belfast, Waterval Boven and Ermelo. The first year, holy Mass was for Whites at 8 o'clock and for the rest at 10 o'clock. Fr Angerer had arrived, after learning Zulu in Mariannhill. When Fr Angerer had the school going, the 10 o'clock Mass shifted to the new place. The accommodation for priests and Brothers was too small. On 11 June 1925, the "old priest's house" was bought for 1 350 pounds. The bank gave the loan, payable over 8 years, at an interest of 8.5%.



Cathedral Christ the King, blessed by Bishop Riegler, on 31 January 1954, and consecrated by Bishop Reiterer on 30 October 1966.



First church in Witbank, blessed by Bishop Charles Cox OMI, in 1922.

In 1935, Fr Klassert moved to Ermelo and Fr Stadtmüller took over as parish priest. He looked after Witbank till 1949 when Fr Reiterer became the new parish priest. During his time, the new Cathedral of Christ the King could be built. On 31 January 1954, the new church was blessed by Bishop Riegler and on 30 October 1966, the cathedral of Christ the King was consecrated by Bishop Reiterer. Bishop Riegler was also the first Bishop of Witbank to be buried in the Cathedral. When Fr Reiterer became the new Bishop in 1955, Fr Franz Demel was appointed new parish priest. From 1964 to 1979 Fr Gebhard Schmid carried on in Witbank. During his time, the new presbytery was built.

Fr Gebhard was elected Provincial and moved to Maria Trost. Fr Wannier carried on in Witbank. The last Combonis in Witbank were Fr Plankensteiner and Fr Chico de Medeiros. Bishop Nkhumishe invited the Franciscans to the diocese and they took over in 1992.



Fr Franz Demel (1955–1962).



Fr Gebhard Schmid (1964–1979) and Fr Josef König (1983–1984).



Fr Alois Plankensteiner (1987–1992).

## WITBANK, CHRIST THE KING

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1924	Klassert and Ille	Schmid and Hüber
1925	Klassert and Ille	Cagol and Hüber
1926-35	Klassert	Cagol and Niederbacher
1936-49	Stadtmüller	Cagol (1939)
1950-55	Reiterer	
1955-62	Demel	
1962-63	Schöpf	
1964-79	Schmid G.	
1980-82	Wanner	
1983	König	
1984-86	Barrette M. (Dioc.)	
1987-92	Plankensteiner and Chico de Medeiros	

## DOMINICAN SISTERS OF KING WILLIAM'S TOWN

The Dominican Sisters of King William's Town came to Witbank in 1924. Msgr Kauczor asked Mother Lucy Kaltenstadler to open a school, which they did and St Thomas Aquinas became well known in the whole area. Several other institutes had already declined, because of other commitments. Mother Lucy and Sr Liguori Connellan came from Johannesburg to view the site, offered by Witbank Colliery. After an hour of inspecting and praying, Mother Lucy decided that the Sisters would come to Witbank.

Sr Lioba Koch was the first Mother Superior and on 15 June 1924, the Governor General was handed a gilded key with which he unlocked the door at the main entrance and declared St Thomas Aquinas Convent opened. This was the first Secondary School in town. It offered the first Commercial Courses in the Eastern Transvaal as well as the Joint Matriculation Board and the College of Preceptors Examinations.

St Thomas was planned only for day scholars, but very soon the Sisters realised that they also had to provide for boarders. Academically, the convent proved itself capable of holding its own with any other school in the district. Its examination results have been gratifying every year. Music and singing lessons were introduced. From the earliest days, Sr Ancilla Mayer, and her able successor, Sr Cletus Lampka, set the high standard which has been faithfully upheld through the years the Convent pupils have taken top honours in the music examinations.

On 21 September 1932, Msgr Mohn blessed the foundation stone for the new chapel. Building of more classrooms went on till 1948. In 1966, a fine hall was erected where the pupils could entertain their parents and friends with delightful concerts for which the school has gained quite a reputation. With the help of generous friends a modern science block could be provided in 1970.



St Thomas Aquinas High School, opposite the Cathedral Christ the King.



Msgr Alois Mohn with students of St Thomas Aquinas'.

A few years back, the boarding had to close, the number of Sisters declined and they moved into a smaller house next to the convent.

The Sisters played an important role in the development of the parish: they looked after the priests, the church and the church music. From the beginning, they supported Fr Angerer to establish Sacred Heart School in Driefontein. They helped with funding and also with the teaching. Sr Bernard Rinkes and others walked all the way to Driefontein to teach in the school. The wish of Msgr Kauczor that the Sisters should run the school remained a wish.

## **WITBANK, SACRED HEART – DRIEFONTEIN (1925–1992)**

Fr Angerer arrived in Witbank on 5 February 1925. He had studied Zulu in Mariannhill and started working in Witbank among the black people. He was accommodated in the sacristy till the new priest's house was bought in June the same year. T. and D.B. Mine donated grounds for a school on 1 May 1925 and Fr Angerer started the "first mission station" in the Prefecture. He used to call Maria Trost only the "farm". The occasion was quite solemn and important, looking at the inspection team: Fr Klassert, parish priest and Religious Superior, Mr J. McKenna from the T.a.D.B. Mine, Mother Prioress, Sr Lucy and her assistant from the Dominican Convent, Mr Horsfall, a lifelong benefactor, and Fr Angerer. Mr McKenna and Mr Horsfall donated the fencing material and Bro. Cagol was the fencer. A start was made: the first school was opened and catechism began to be taught. The same year, Fr Angerer started an evening school for adults to learn how to read and write and for instructions. In January 1926, a school in Uitspan was opened and the workload increased. From the very beginning, the Dominican Sisters were involved in the school at T.a.D.B. Msgr Kauczor apparently was under the impression that the Dominican Sisters would build and run the school, but to his disappointment, he had to settle for much less, a subsidy for the building fund and two Sisters teaching English and needle work. For the other subjects, teachers were "imported" from Mariannhill, not only for Witbank but for Maria Trost as well. The most famous one in Witbank was Domitilla Dlamini. On 15 May 1927, Sunday Mass shifted from town to T.a.D.B. One reason was the distance but other reasons are not mentioned. In those days, the "white sheep" enjoyed preference,



Sacred Heart, Driefontein, blessed on 24 June 1934.





Fr Walter Klemm with members of St Anne's Sodality, in 1944.

not only the sheep but also the shepherds. Fr Angerer started collecting funds for his Sacred Heart church in Driefontein. The 24 June 1934 was the date for the blessing of the church. Msgr Mohn officiated and preached in English. Fr Riegler preached in Zulu and Fr Tremmel in Pedi. The Maria Trost Band made a good impression. The costs amounted to 465 pounds. The money came from different sources—blacks' contributions: 68 pounds; Fr Klassert: 32 pounds; Fr Riegler: 10 Shilling; Fr Bieg and Stadtmüller: 10 pounds; Dominican Convent of Witbank: 25 pounds; Witbank parish: six pounds; St Peter Claver Sodality: 188 pounds; Msgr Mohn: 139 pounds.

Fr Angerer used to cycle to work and later on acquired a motorbike. Other schools were opened and had to close again: T.a.D.B. and Uitspan (1926); Kromdraai (1930); Blesboklaagte (1931); and Klippan (1935). Fr Angerer was also responsible for the black Catholics in Middelburg; Fr Klassert for the white Catholics in Middelburg. On 24 May 1926, we find an interesting entry in his Diary. Fr Berger asked that Fr Angerer should visit the black Catholics in Wakkerstroom. He only could do it now instead of two weeks ago, because he had no money for travelling. On the 28, he returns to Witbank and "Fr Ille is just leaving to make the same trip to visit the white Catholics". Fr Angerer worked in Witbank till 1938. From 1932 to 1938, he was also Religious Superior and in 1938, he was in Europe for the General Chapter. When he visited the relatives of one of the Dominican Sisters in Austria, he was left standing outside—his experience of the Third Reich and Hitler.

Quite extensive ground was given by T.a.D.B. Mine, Driefontein, as it was also known, had the size of a small farm. Now only two stands remain in Ackerville and Schoengezicht.

When Bishop Reiterer was consecrated in 1956, the town dignitaries, F. N. Viljoen, the Mayor, R. Hektor, the town engineer, Conway and Theron the Councillors, also graced the occasion. The Mayor conveyed the good wishes of the citizens of Witbank, but four weeks later the new Bishop was informed that Driefontein would be expropriated: the compensation would be R14 000. They would take everything and the mission had to close. The Bishop was convinced that he would lose the place. On 2 September 1956, on the occasion of confirmation, he noted in his Diary: “Most probably the last one.”

Now was the time when each and every official of the “Department of Bantu Affairs” felt like a king and behaved like God Almighty. Apartheid was implemented and they planned for a long time to come.

On 15 October, the Diocese received official notice of expropriation. Mr Jones, a lawyer from Pretoria, supported the Bishop in his fight with the Town Council. In a meeting with the Council on 27 March 1961, the plan was modified, but not to the satisfaction of the Bishop. Unexpected help came from Mr Mostert, MP for Witbank, who was shocked when the Bishop informed him of the things happening. He gave his support to the Bishop. At the next meeting, they changed their position and their new proposal left room for mission and school. At the meeting on 24 April 1967, things were finalised between Town Council, Provincial Administration and the Diocese. Schoongezicht was taken over on 24 January 1968, only a church stand remained. And to add insult to injury, in 1974, the Sisters’ House and the garden were also swallowed.



Old and new Sacred Heart churches in Driefontein.



Fr Franz Rauch.



Fr Anton Maier.



Fr Benno Singer.

The “Bantu Administration Board Highveld Area” also tried by all means to stop us getting a church site in Ogies. “Papers did not arrive, come again, apply again...” were the answers the Bishop had to hear. The Mashaba family made their garage available for Church services in the meantime. After two years of fighting, we eventually were granted a site literally in the mud. The church had to be built at double the cost.

The rapid development of Witbank demanded a bigger church. On 6 April 1968, Bishop Reiterer could bless the new Sacred Heart; funds came from the Diocese of Rottenburg. The old church served as parish hall. In 1986, the hall was burnt down because the Trade Unions used it as a meeting place. Compensation for it was received after 1994 and a big hall and a new priests’ house could be built. The old priests’ house built under Fr Stadtmüller, when he served at the Cathedral, had the nice name of “sand castle”: it was built with lots of sand and little cement; the roof resembled a castle; and if there was a heavy downpour there were not enough buckets to catch the rain drops.

The growth of Ackerville increased steadily, one extension after the other. In 1990, the Missionaries of Africa started the new parish St Joseph Mukasa in KwaGuqa. At the same time, the Loreto Sisters started a little convent in the neighbourhood and got involved in social work. Their work is highly appreciated.

After Fr Angerer (nicknamed *Njengelitshe elikhulu*, “like a big stone”, an expression he would repeat often) many other Combonis helped to build up the Church in Driefontein, Lynnville, Ackerville: Fr Klemm (Fr Omuhle), Fr Tremmel, Fr Morscher, Fr Bourhill, Fr Nefzger, Fr Maier, Fr Rossmannith, Fr Singer, Fr Ellinger, Fr Tresoldi, Fr Medeiros, Fr Manana. Now the big parish is looked after by diocesan priests.



Fr Konrad, with St Anne's choir, and the trophy won at a Diocesan Choir Competition, in 1969.



Fr Lephaka celebrating his Silver Jubilee in Glen Cowie. He is flanked on his right by Fr Bourhill and Fr Friedl on his left; Bishop Reiterer follows behind.



Fr Francis Manana.

## WITBANK, SACRED HEART

Year	Fathers
1925–38	Angerer
1939–46	Klemm
1946–50	Tremmel (after 1950, they moved to Driefontein)
1950–55	Morscher, Heinrich and Rauch
1955–60	Klemm
1958–67	Bourhill
1969–72	Maier and Wanner
1974–77	Rossmannith and Ellinger
1978–80	Singer
1981–83	Singer and Tresoldi
1984–86	Maier and Ellinger
1987	Ellinger
1988	Francisco de Medeiros and Redaelli
1989–90	Medeiros and Manana
1991–92	Maneschg and Manana



Maloma School Choir, in 1969.

## MISSIONARIES IN THE “WITBANK WAR ZONE”

BY FR FRANCISCO DE MEDEIROS

If he was alive today, Fr Anton Maier would be the right person to share the Comboni Missionaries’ involvement on the side of the people during the last years of apartheid—even though we all were committed to the poor and oppressed in the different places where we worked. I want to give my modest testimony about our work at KwaGuqa, the township of Witbank.



Fr Chico de Medeiros.

I went to the Sacred Heart Parish to fill in for Fr Enrico Redaelli who had replaced Fr Maier when he was elected provincial. Fr Enrico found

it difficult to cope with the political pressure and violence of the moment. It was at the end of the apartheid era, and the drive against the government was considerable everywhere; reprisals were tough. To make things even more explosive, the old church of Sacred Heart, used as a hall, was burnt down by the police to stop COSATU and the youth of ANCYL from meeting there. For instance, the decision to disrupt the township schools, a strike that went on for more than a year under the slogan “Liberation now, Education later!”, had been taken there. Threats by phone and visits from disguised policemen were regular. On one occasion, after the police had killed an ANC leader in Schoongezicht, I received calls saying the same would happen to me. I was often told in those calls: “Remember! You are a foreigner!” One night, I was attacked by strange assailants who were looking for guns but stole nothing. After locking me in the room of a priest who was staying with me, they threatened me with knives—pointing them at my throat and back, and cutting my pyjamas. Well, nothing bad happened, apart from the tremendous fear I experienced. Later on, I came to the conclusion that they were disguised policemen who meant only to scare me.

In those years (1988–1989), it was tough living in the townships. After a national call to silence the local ‘puppet’ municipalities, people refused to pay municipal rents, water and electricity. As a reprisal, the white municipalities cut all services. For some eight months, KwaGuqa suffered a great deal with the streets blocked with rubbish, the terrible stench, rats everywhere and transport to town disrupted. During that time, there were some “peace marches” to express the complaints of the population. I joined in and was strongly



The hall burnt down by the security forces.

criticised by some members of the white community. The result, however, was worth it: the rent strike in the township ended after representatives of the ANC and COSATU, and myself included, met the white Witbank Municipality and convinced them to accept a symbolic payment to restore the water and electricity supplies. As Comboni Missionaries, we made a substantial financial contribution to resolve the stalemate. We did a lot to support the studies of young people, as well as help families whose members were jailed for political reasons and to soften the dire situation in the township.

The political tension reached a climax when some Inkatha followers, workers in the coal mines and living in the hostels of the township, clashed with locals. Some 16 men were 'necklaced' and many houses were burned. Since our church building was also in danger, I asked for police protection, but I trusted the "comrades" more. For three or four days, the situation was very tense. Because our church was not safe as a place of refuge, people found shelter in the cathedral in town. The police were very active jailing and injuring people. More than 400 people received treatment in hospital for wounds they sustained, mainly the result of rubber bullets. I took one ANCYL leader, who had some 20 bullet wounds and was wanted by the police, to Johannesburg. Near to our church, the police killed an eight-month-baby carried on his mother's back. In one of those days, a Johannesburg-based newspaper, *The Star*, had as a banner: "Witbank war zone".

Our attitude was meant to denounce the situation and to share with the local people the several kinds of hardships that they were suffering—by being close to them and helping them as we could. Many times, we sheltered local ANC and trade union leaders, one of them even had an attempt on his life while hiding in our residence. As pastors, we simply could not ignore or be indifferent to what was happening under our eyes. None of us were heroes—just missionaries.

The priests who were with me at Sacred Heart, kwaGuqa, were, first, Fr Solly Mokwena, and, afterwards, Fr Francis Manana and Fr John Maneschg. I left when Nelson Mandela was released from prison foreseeing a new beginning for South Africa.

## ERMELO (1924–1949)

The Redemptorist Fathers from Pretoria were the first ones to visit Ermelo. They came twice a year and holy Mass was celebrated in different halls and private homes. Mary Cooke of Ermelo entered the Dominican Order of King William's Town in 1922 and her mother wished that the Sisters should open a convent in Ermelo. In 1927, the wish became reality and the Dominicans opened their convent in Ermelo. In 1924, Fr Musar tried to stay in Ermelo, but he was needed in Maria Trost. From 1927 onwards, Fr Ille was the first permanent priest in Ermelo. The priest's house was a little cottage in the convent grounds and in the beginning it was also the place for holy Mass. Fr Steidle succeeded Fr Ille and he raised the funds for the new parish church dedicated to the Sacred Heart. On 12 August 1934, Msgr Mohn could bless the new church. Fr Klassert, who came after Fr Steidle, opened the first mission station in New Ermelo, a first in the Ermelo district. He also undertook to build a presbytery, which was ready for occupation in 1949. The Comboni Missionaries were in Ermelo till 1949, when the area was separated from the Lydenburg Vicariate and was looked after by the Franciscans. Ermelo is now part of Dundee Diocese. In 1974, the Sisters left Ermelo due to shortage of personnel.

### ERMELO

Year	Fathers
1924	Musar
1927–31	Ille
1928–29	Brandlmayr
1930	Ille, Weiller and Tremmel
1931	Ille, Weiller and Berger
1932	Morscher and Berger
1933–34	Steidle
1935–36	Baumgart and Jungnickl
1937–49	Klassert, Hoefer and Jungnickl
1940–41	Klassert, Mohn and Weiller
1945–49	Klassert and Jungnickl



Sacred Heart church, blessed by Msgr Mohn, on 12 August 1934.



## BARBERTON, ST ANTHONY'S (1924)

Barberton had a little church and presbytery when our pioneers arrived in 1924. Fr Berger, Bro. Cygan and Bro. Huber made up the first Comboni community there and carried on where the OMI's had left. Barberton claims to have the oldest church in the Transvaal, opened by Bishop Jolivet in 1886. Pilgrim's Rest is said to have had a little *rondavel* church, but its existence could never be traced. The first Combonis mainly looked after the small white community. To reach out to others was difficult because of language problems. Fr Zorn arrived in Barberton in 1929. He had learned Zulu in Natal and had practiced it in Maria Trost. He started building schools in Tonetti, Noord Kaap, Moodies and even in Nelspruit which he named St Bernhard, after his patron saint. Building was possible, because he had Bro. Vogel at his side. In 1935, he wrote in his Diary: "Building had to stop, because the Brother was transferred." Fr Zorn was transferred to Maria Trost and Fr Bieg and after him Fr Steidle carried on in Barberton. Fr Steidle was particularly well accepted in Barberton. He visited everybody in hospital and he also was able to collect enough funds to build



Barberton, in 1924.



Fr Albert Pfanner and Bishop Reiterer.



Fr Karl August Steidle and Fr Anton Reiterer.



St Anthony, blessed on 27 August 1944.

the new St Anthony's in Barberton. During the war, as a German, he was part-time military chaplain to the soldiers, stationed in Barberton. When he died in 1950, the nurses formed a guard of honour and he was buried in Barberton; all the other confrères are buried either in Maria Trost or in Glen Cowie.

The 27 August 1944 was the date for the blessing of the church. Msgr Riegler was assisted by Fr Stadtmüller and Fr Jungnickl. Fr Lechner was Master of Ceremonies, Fr Klassert functioned as Archdeacon. Fr Charles, the parish priest, conducted the choir. The Town Councillors were treated as guests of honour. The building of the church cost 3 000 pounds. This date also meant that, from now on, the non-whites had to contend with the old church which got a new coat of paint. A memorable day for Barberton was the 17 December 1951, when Denis Bourhill was ordained the first priest for the Diocese by Bishop Riegler. He later joined the Combonis and was also the first member of the Congregation from South Africa.

After Fr Steidle came Fr Segeritz till 1958 and then Fr Zeifang till 1966. Fr Pfanner took over in 1984. He wanted to settle there, but in 1985, he died and St Anthony's was taken over by Diocesan priests.



Celebration of St Francis of Assisi, on 4 October 1955.

### BARBERTON: ST ANTHONY'S

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1924	Berger	
1925–26	Fischer and Musar	Cygan
1927	Musar and Weiller	Cygan
1928	Weiller	Cygan
1929	Zorn and Weiller	Cygan and Schmid
1930–34	Zorn	Schmid
1934–38	Bieg	
1938–39	Bieg and Lechner	
1939	Steidle and Lechner	
1940	Steidle and Jungnickl	
1939–50	Steidle	
1950–58	Segeritz	
1958–66	Zeifang	
1966–67	Schöpf	
1984–85	Pfanner A.	

## **BARBERTON, ST JOHN'S (1945)**

In 1941, Fr Angerer was transferred to Barberton to look after the “Mission”. Fr Jungnickl had to move to Lydenburg. On 28 January 1945, Msgr Riegler bought the Key Farm, Portion 2, on the Queen’s River for 1 500 pounds—lock, stock and barrel. Bro. Oberstaller was brought in to get the farm going; Bro. Stang had to adjust the buildings and do repair work; and Bro. Schmid had to put food on the table. On 20 March, Monsignor brought the tabernacle, made by Bro. Vogel in Maria Trost; the inside was decorated by the Sisters in Maria Trost.

On 26 April, Fr Angerer was ordered by Monsignor to move to the farm and St John’s was started. Fr Lechner was the first to be approached, but he declined. So, Fr Angerer had to do pioneer work again. Msgr Riegler took a keen interest in St John’s. He also involved the Franciscan Sisters to take over the household and boarding. The official opening was on 1 January 1946. Fr Angerer was relieved of his duties at the end of the year and moved to White Waters. Fr Klemm continued in St John’s together with Bro. Oberstaller and, in 1952, Bro. Eigner settled in the “Mission”. In 1951, Fr Stempfle took over and he developed the boarding for “coloureds”. They went to the Indian School, travelling by bus. Fr König carried on in 1980. Then, the shortage of personnel made it necessary to entrust St John’s to Winston Donachie, the permanent Deacon in Barberton.

The School Sisters of St Francis from Pittsburg, USA, came to St John’s at the beginning of 1990. They continued with the boarding centre and improved it. But they saw that their work was much more needed among the many AIDS sufferers.



St John’s, blessed on 26 November 1961.

St John's now has a totally new meaning for all who are touched by this sickness. Bishop Riegler would certainly have approved of this new development.



Priests' house, at St John's.



Building of the mission.



Fr Josef Angerer going to the outstations.



Chapel in the farmhouse, on 15 January 1949.

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1945-46	Angerer	Oberstaller and Stang
1946-50	Klemm	Oberstaller
1951	Stempfle and Tremmel	Oberstaller and Egger
1952-54	Stempfle and Hornauer	Oberstaller and Eigner
1955-56	Stempfle and Fischer	Eigner
1958-59	Stempfle	Eigner and Rieger
1960-63	Stempfle	Eigner
1964-65	Stempfle	Eigner and Cagol
1966	Stempfle	Eigner
1967-70	Stempfle and Pfanner	Eigner
1971-72	Stempfle and Engelhardt	Eigner and Rieger
1973-76	Stempfle	Rieger
1976-78	Stempfle	Rieger and Seibold
1979-80	Stempfle	
1980-82	König	
1983	Roth	

## MISSION BEGINS WITH LEARNING A LANGUAGE

BY FR ANTON ELLINGER



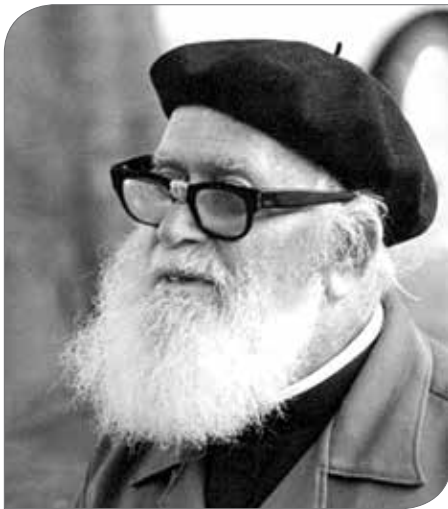
Fr Anton Ellinger introduced many Comboni Missionaries to the local languages.

“If after our arrival in South Africa, we had gone to Mariannhill to learn an African language to become familiar with the methodology of mission in this country, we would be missionaries today,” said Msgr Daniel Kauczor, the first Prefect Apostolic of Lydenburg, in the Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga). He was speaking at the first General Priests’ Meeting on the difficulties faced by the Comboni Missionaries when they arrived in this country. Our confrères came from the mission in Sudan and had some knowledge of English and Arabic. In South Africa, the Catholics were mainly of Irish origin (English-speaking) or of Lebanese descent (Arabic-speaking), so our first contacts were relatively easy. What about

contact with the great majority of people, the Africans? There were very few—if any—Catholics among them, but it was for them the Combonis had come. The ability to learn and speak an African language, therefore, would be the main way of making contact with them. This, however, was largely left to individuals; working with whites seemed more promising—and perhaps easier. So an attitude developed similar to the one of civil society which would later become known as Apartheid.

As time passed, the situation improved, but this was due mainly to the initiative of individuals; the Congregation showed little involvement. Sure, there were some individuals keen to get familiar with the

language—one had to think, for example, of Fr Francis Tremmel—but there was no official planning. Only much later, after a meeting of the Vatican Council, did the Church of South Africa begin tackling the problem: we think of the Lumku language courses, but these were left to individual initiative. One example: in 1973, the General Chapter of the then Missionaries Sons of the Sacred Heart (MFSC) decided officially that half a year be set aside for newcomers to learn local languages. The Provincial Superior (then called simply “Superior”) had been at the Chapter, but on the arrival of a new member (the author of these lines), he seemed absent. The then bishop of Lydenburg, Msgr Reiterer, said simply: “You will learn Zulu”, but about the “where” and “how” nothing was said. A new Lumku course was to start at the end of November and continue in December and although some confrères knew this, they were not



Fr Franz Tremmel, a polyglot and linguist.

part of the decision-making. Those who were part did not seem to know the details. A new Provincial decided some months later that the newcomers should take part in the last weeks of the course.

Another way of studying African languages was the University of South Africa (UNISA) courses: some confrères took part in them, but also here there was no encouragement from above. Another question was the learning of a second or even a third African language. Also this was completely left to the private initiative, though knowing a second language would make changes of personnel and transfers much easier. In the diocese of Witbank, three local languages are spoken. Knowing only one means that there are many places to which one cannot be assigned. Especially when ‘rotation’ became popular and affected many confrères, it would seem to be a loss of time to learn a second language, as rotation would take place in a couple of years, and so one should quickly start working. It seems obvious that the knowledge of a language is necessary if one wants to work. But knowledge of a language is more than just a tool; it is a sign of respect towards the people, their way of life and their culture. When a Provincial (Fr Anton Maier) approached me asking to give to the newcomers some kind of introduction into an African language, he saw it as a way of bringing the people to them, to make them love the people, and here the missionary work begins. Besides other things such as knowledge of the country, culture, history, social situations and the like, we show our love and respect for the people very much through the knowledge of the local languages; and through it, we give witness of our faith.

### **GLEN COWIE (1929–2011)**

Mr Kuhlmann owned the farm Morgenzon. One third of the area, about 850 morgens, was named Glen Cowie after his wife. As more missionaries arrived from Europe, we were able to look for new undertakings. Sekhukhuneland was totally untouched by Catholic influence. Mr Donavan, Mr McGee and Fr Berger did the negotiations and Msgr Mohn bought the place for 5 000 pounds. On 10 April 1929, Fr Raffainer as rector, Fr Joseph Brandmaier, “the Apostle of Sekhukhuneland” and the Brothers Schwingshackl, Hilmer and Dorn, settled in Glen Cowie. Three weeks later they were joined by the Loreto Sisters—Rita, Rosario and Consiglio. The Sisters moved into the *rondavels*: the biggest served as chapel and first church.

We were not the first missionaries to arrive in Sekhukhuneland. The Berlin Mission had started already in 1860. Merensky had started under Chief Sekwati, but Sekhukhune I expelled him in 1864. Pastor Winter resumed work again in 1880. He went his own way and, in 1892, he started the Bapedi Lutheran Church. Lobethal became the centre of the new Church. In 1907, the Wesleyans came to Sekhukhuneland and, in 1921, the Anglicans opened Jane Furse Hospital. In 1927, the Dutch Reformed Church settled in Mooiplaats.



The first dwelling of the missionaries, in 1929.

At the end of 1930, Bro. Brand came as the farmer. Bro. Vogel started to build the new church and Bro. Cagol was also part of the team. On 31 May 1931, Mary Queen of the Rosary church was blessed by Fr Berger as acting Prefect Apostolic while Msgr Mohn was in Europe. Fr Brandmaier, due to his short stature, standing on an empty crate, preached in Pedi. Glen Cowie in this manner gained publicity.

The year 1931 saw a change in superiors at Glen Cowie. Fr Raffainer was one of those who had signed the vote of “No Confidence” against Msgr Mohn. He





Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary, blessed on 31 May 1931, by the acting Apostolic Prefect Berger.

was demoted to financial administrator and Fr Ille succeeded him as rector, in October 1931. In 1933, Fr Ille was called back to Europe. Fr Schöpf in the meantime had recovered his good standing and took his place. Bro. Brand also experienced tough times on the farm. In October 1931, he had to fight a fire on the farm: the trees were burnt. In November 1933, they chased locusts which devoured nearly everything green; what was left was destroyed by hail in January 1934. But life went on.

The Sisters started to visit the sick; their transport was a donkey cart, “Peter” and “Paul” being the donkeys. They were a well-known sight in those days. The beginning of St Rita’s Hospital came around this time. In February 1934, a clinic opened in Glen Cowie with four rooms and Dr Aymard from

Jane Furse Hospital made regular monthly visits to the clinic. Sr Rita looked after the sick; she had to be ‘doctor’ and nurse. Sr Consiglio could teach her little ones “under a roof” from the 9 April 1934 onwards. Before that time, her classroom was under a tree.



Bro. Ludwig Brand.



View of the mission from the church's tower.

## **ST RITA'S HOSPITAL, HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

In autumn 1929, three Loreto Sisters arrived in Glen Cowie, Sister Consiglio, Sister Rita and Sister Rosario. The Sisters started to visit the surrounding villages, first on foot and later by donkey cart. Soon, Sister Consiglio turned to teaching; and Sister Rita, an untrained Spanish nun, commenced treating the sick. The hospital is named after her patron saint. Sister Rita was assisted by Elizabeth Talane and Elizabeth Phatlane, young girls who nursed, cleaned and cooked as the necessity arose.

In 1935, an eight-bed clinic was erected, with Sister Rita in charge. Dr Bernstein from Lydenburg paid a monthly visit. During this period, Sister Rita's fame as a dentist was established. Some of the girls attending the mission school were assigned after hour jobs in the hospital. One of these was Anastasia Mokalapa (now Bapela), who later trained as a nurse and was put in charge of the T.B. section.

In 1942, a sixty-bed general hospital was opened, with Sister Rita as the first matron, assisted by Sister Joseph Anne and two untrained local girls, Ella Mkhabela and Esther Mothogoane. These two also later trained and continued nursing. Twice weekly, the hospital was visited by a District Surgeon from Jane Furse. In 1947, Sister Rita left Glen Cowie for health reasons and Sister Joseph Anne took over.

In 1948, the first resident doctor, Dr Ugo Giunchi, came to St Rita's Hospital. Sister J. Baptist became matron and at an advanced age continued to help in the C.S.U. every day. In 1955, a General Wing, Maternity wing, Paediatric wing, X-Ray Department and Theatre Block were erected. The existing sixty-bed hospital was expanded for use as a T.B. and Isolation Block. During this year, the Auxiliary and Midwifery training school was established, with Appolonia Kgoroba, Amelia Maake and Midah Dikgale as the first students.

In 1960, Sister Martin of the Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (DIHM) Convent at Glen Cowie joined the staff as a nurse. In 1962, a new isolation block was

built, catering for patients with T.B. and other communicable diseases. The total number of beds was brought to 325. In 1963, Sister Veronica Mashifane, joined the staff as a sister, having already served in the hospital since 1959. In 1967, the new nurses' home was completed, providing accommodation for 120 nurses. Sister Deirdre Harman took over as matron. In 1968, the training of Registered General Nurses commenced. Sister Eugenia Modiselle and Sister Elizabeth Masemola were in the first group and remained in service afterwards. In 1969, the nurses' training school was expanded with Sister Jacinta as tutor. In 1972, the Central Sterilising Unit and a new Out-Patients' section were erected. Part of the funds were donated by the people working in the health ward. In 1977, St Rita's Hospital was handed over to the Lebowa Government. (Reported by Sr Deirdre and compiled on 1 March 1977, in Glen Cowie).

The 22 September 1934 was a special day in Glen Cowie. The Governor General, Earl of Clarendon, paid a one-hour visit to Msgr Mohn. There were speeches followed by a graceful reply from the Governor and then there was no school for the rest of the day. The Brothers were not amused: they had worked for days to prepare the place and Bro. Schwingshackl mumbled too loudly. Msgr Mohn heard him and poor Brother had to go into exile for a while to Barberton. He was allowed back, and died the same year on 13 November 1934, when he was only 39 years old. While he was working on the farm, he came by chance between a cow and her calf. The cow went wild and although Bro. Brand chased her with a big stick, she injured Bro. Schwingshackl so badly that he landed in hospital in Jane Furse. After a few days, he returned to Glen Cowie but the pain would not cease. He was brought to Lydenburg Hospital and after a few days he died from his internal injuries.

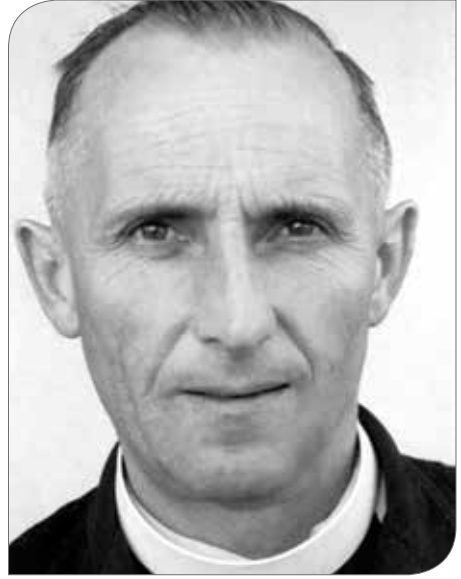
The year 1934 saw the arrival of Fr Habicher on 27 November and a first prize in sewing at a school exhibition in Nebo. During 1935, two schools were opened, one was in Tweefontein on 3 January. Chief Takudi Malaka gave permission. The other one was opened in Wingfontein on the 13 May. The Superior General, Fr Musar, visited Glen Cowie in April 1935 and, in May, Fr Bratina was appointed Fr Rector.



The *Three Rondavels*, where the first clinic and chapel were housed.



Fr Matthias Raffener.



Fr Richard Habicher.



Fr Hugo Ille.

Fr Habicher preached in Sepedi for the first time, and then he stayed with the Marist Brothers in Johannesburg till the end of the year to improve his English. When he came back, he was appointed second-in-command—his Christmas present for the year.

Fr Bratina wanted to build a school at Fort Weber. Together with the Native Commissioner, he met with the local people on 25 February 1936. An agreement was reached and Bro. Valentine had everything under roof by the 24 November 1936. The official opening was on 25 April 1937. Present were Chief Sekwati, Fathers and Brothers from Glen Cowie and the school children from Glen Cowie, Wingfontein and Tweefontein. The people of Mapoto turned down the offer of the “Roomse” and voted for the Lutherans. “Rome” answered with sanctions: no fields,



Fr Josef Brandmaier.

no medicine, no post, but Mapoto remained Lutheran.

The 30 May 1937 saw the first *Corpus Christi* procession in Glen Cowie. The Brothers did not consider the sermon necessary and the “*Böller*” (the traditional 21 gun salute to which they were accustomed in Tyrol) was missing. On 26 July 1937, Fr Bratina was called back to Europe to work in Laibach, Yugoslavia, and Fr Habicher took over as rector. The year had a dramatic ending when Bro. Valentine was attacked by wild bees while he was sitting, defenceless, on the rooftop. Luckily he survived unharmed.



Fr Franz Bratina.

To open a school, permission of the local chief for registration and grants were needed. The permission of the school inspector was also needed. Mr De Jager was the local inspector. He visited Glen Cowie officially for the first time on 10 January 1938. He was impressed and promised help and registration. But Pastor Hagens from Lobethal was influential and opposed the registration. However, the Chief Inspector, Eiselen, who was the son of a Lutheran missionary, granted the certification after he had visited the school on 15 September 1938. On 5 January 1940, Glen Cowie School was officially opened and received Standard 6 pupils. Glen Cowie village



Tweefontein School, opened on 3 January 1935, in the presence of Fr General, Musar.

also grew during 1938. The dining room was built; the church was enlarged and was soon too small again.

The year 1939 started on a difficult note. On 27 February, Fr Schöpf and Bro. Brand survived an accident with the new lorry on the old Nelspruit road at the Crocodile River, since that time known as “*Schlickersteig*”. Fr Schöpf was bruised, Bro. Brand landed in hospital in Johannesburg and the new lorry was transformed into a scotch car, and continued to be used at Maria Trost. The new dining room in Glen Cowie had to be opened without Bro. Brand, on 6 March 1939. The next mishap was connected to Bro. Valentine. He went hunting tarantaals, better known as guinea fowls. He only managed to shoot himself in the foot. Bro. Häring helped him at home and in Lydenburg hospital the doctors cut off what was left of his toe. On 28 May, Msgr Mohn celebrated his last pontifical high Mass in Glen Cowie. In July, Fr Riegler was appointed new Apostolic Prefect.

World War II was also felt at Glen Cowie. Bro. Feil and Fr Koch as German citizens were ‘transferred’ to a camp in Andalusia (now in North-West Province): they were regarded as dangerous. Fr Koch used this ‘opportunity’



Fr Koch and Fr Peyton, on 11 April 1955.



The “White Elephant”, on 22 October 1960. Its first ‘guests’ were Fr Stadtmüller and Bro. Schmid.

to learn Afrikaans. In 1940, hail destroyed maize and bean crops. Bro. Hüber arrived in Glen Cowie and started with the building of the new hospital. On 29 September, St Rita’s Hospital was opened by Msgr Riegler and the magistrate of Groblersdal. Paramount Chief Sekwati expressed the wish that St Rita’s Hospital should have a permanent doctor. The hospital was in the care of Sr Rita; it was visited monthly by a doctor from Jane Furse. On 18 March 1947, Sr Rita retired in Pretoria and Dr Huebner took over the hospital. In 1948, on 24 March, Dr Huebner left for further studies. Dr Ugo Giunchi and his wife carried on. Dr Huebner came back to Glen

Cowie in 1953 and worked there till 1962. He was a special friend of Fr Koch and he also diagnosed the sickness of Bishop Riegler. Another doctor closely connected to the hospital and the Combonis was Dr Bob Moffett (1960–1975). He also met his wife during his time in Glen Cowie. After he left Glen Cowie, he moved to Mariannhill.

Soon the hospital was too small again. When Fr Koch took over in Glen Cowie on 14 May 1949, he started collecting funds for the new St Rita’s. Five thousand pounds were promised by the Governor General’s National War Fund. Black soldiers who had served during the war, also needed care. Aachen



Fr Hubert Heller.



The activity and movement at the Roller Mills was always intense.

promised 11 000 German mark, for instruments. Bishop Riegler travelled to America to look for funds. Building commenced on 2 August 1953; Mr Bosch, from Middeburg, was the builder. By the 26 November 1954, the last workers left the new hospital and on 2 February 1955, the director of public hospitals opened the new St Rita's Hospital. In August 1966, the hospital was recognised as a training school for nurses. In 1977, the government took over everything. A new hospital replaced the old one. The Sisters were offered the post of matron.

The mill in Glen Cowie was started by a pensioner from Pietersburg, Mr Farncornier. The diocese did not have the money. The need was felt to start this project as it was a long way to the next mill. On 16 July 1942, Msgr Riegler bought the mill from Mr Farncornier. In 1946, Glen Cowie had the money to buy the mill from the Bishop, this time for 1 050 pounds. The income from the mill helped to finance projects in Glen Cowie—churches, schools and even gave funds to the diocese. Bishop Nkhumishe thought it best that such a project should be run by the people themselves. Bro. Engelhardt, the last miller from our side, handed over in 1993 and moved to the Kokstad Diocese. None of the projects started by the Brothers survived, the carpentry lingered on, the garden became overgrown and the mill came to a stand still.

Telephone lines reached Glen Cowie on 27 November 1944. Bro. Valentine built a small church in Schoonoord and on 10 May 1945, Msgr Riegler blessed the little church. Soon another little church could be opened and blessed by Msgr Riegler, namely St Joseph in Gareagopola. The church was built by the locals themselves and was blessed on 22 September 1946.



The 24 July 1949 was special for Glen Cowie. Fr Brandmaier celebrated his Silver Jubilee as a priest. From the beginning, he had visited the people on horseback and laid the foundation for Catholic communities which developed into outstations and parishes. His name appears regularly in the baptism books round Easter and Christmas. On 1 October 1954, he was appointed first Postmaster of Glen Cowie. He was regarded by many of our pioneers as the “Apostle of Sekhukhune land”.

In August 1950, the Convent was built by Bro. Stang and Bro. Hüber. They could not stay for the opening because they were needed in Maria Trost. Bro. Stang carried on building the showers for the boys and a cross was erected on “Calvaria”. Many took part in a procession on 26 March up the hill for the blessing of the Cross. On 31 July 1950, the first holy Mass was celebrated at Pokwane. The year closed with the return of Fr Bratina from overseas, on 7 December 1950. He had had to go to Laibach just before the war and what was intended as a promising undertaking turned out to be a nightmare for him, experiencing the war and communism first hand.

In 1951, Bro. Valentine’s advice was asked by Chieftainess M. Phaahla. She wanted to paint her house. Fr Koch, Fr Bratina and Bros. Valentine, Bascht, Egger and Cagol formed the party to make a GOOD impression. It turned out that the important thing for her was to let them wait and wait. Then, she wanted a photo session; not even Fr Koch managed to get a reaction from her side when he sang her praises. A long day, little success: the Chieftainess did not want a church in her domain to avoid discord among her people.



Parish church, dedicated to Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary, blessed on 31 August 1958.



Guardian Angels Boarding School, on 19 June 1967.

By 1950, Glen Cowie looked after places such as Schoonoord, Gareagopola, Fort Weber, Wingfontein, Platklip, Klipspruit, Tweefontein and Roodeport. In 1951, Bro. Merz came to Glen Cowie. Fr General Deisenbeck visited the confrères now that travelling was possible again and J. Lephaka was ordained sub-deacon on 30 December 1951.

1952 saw the opening of the Nurses' Home. Mrs Searle, Directress of Nursing did the honours. A new school was opened in Buffelsfontein in August. Fr Habicher settled in Eensgevonden and a school was started in Probeeren. The year closed with the first holy Mass of Fr Lephaka: he was welcomed on Saturday evening, the 16 December, by the parish. On Sunday morning, the heavens opened and gave their blessing with pouring rain. The festivities that were planned for outside had to be transferred into the little church, 150 people could be squeezed in, the rest were left in the rain. Fr Habicher preached the homily. By midday, the sun came out and everybody enjoyed the great occasion.

In 1955, Bro. Brand returned to Glen Cowie. Bishop Riegler had died in October, and two months earlier Bro. Mirbeth had died in Badplaas. One of the first undertakings of Bishop Reiterer was the opening of the Catechetical School in Glen Cowie. Fr Stadtmüller was appointed its first director. He started with the first group of eight future catechists on 6 November 1956. Fr Chisté took over from Fr Stadtmüller, but a change in diocesan policy, mainly forced by financial considerations, stopped the undertaking.

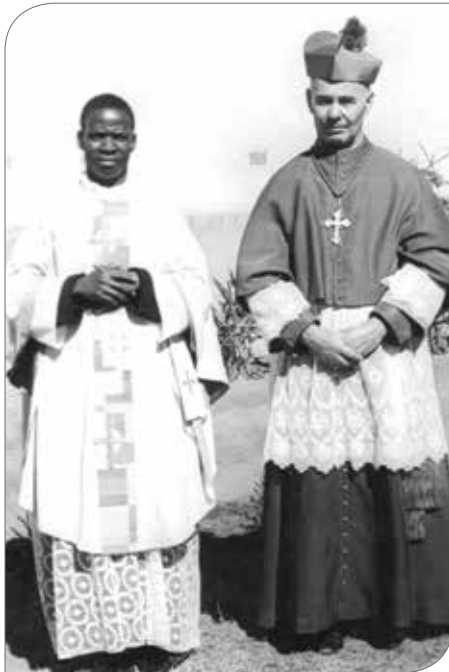
Fr Koch asked Mr Tonetti to make plans for the new church in Glen Cowie. In 1957, the church in Probeeren was built by Mr Bosch. At the same time, Bro. Valentine started the construction of the presbytery. By the 15 May 1958, Fr Brosig and with him Bro. Cagol, who was 80 by then, moved to Probeeren, Mashabela, to transform that place from an outstation of Glen Cowie to St Michael's Parish.

Another milestone was reached in Glen Cowie on 31 August 1958. Bishop Reiterer blessed the new church, Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary. Fr Habicher had the

honour to preach. The finishing off took a bit longer: on 21 November, Mr Klotz from Pretoria installed the clock in the church tower. By the 25 March 1964, three steel bells hung in the towers and rang for the first time, the hanging being done by Mr Lamprecht from Springs. The old church bell was demoted to call the faithful in Burgersfort. Klotz and Schuck electrified the bell ringing on 3 April 1965. At the end of 1959, the Stations of the Cross were blessed by Fr Stadtmüller. They were the work of Francesco Mersa of Brixen. According to reliable rumours, the plans for the new church had to be changed a bit, to be one meter shorter, so that the Cathedral would remain the biggest church in the diocese.

By mid 1959, Mr Smith from Middelburg started to build the Novitiate of the DIHM. The Fatima Convent was opened and blessed by Bishop Reiterer on 22 May 1960. On 22 October, Fr Stadtmüller and Bro. Karl Schmid moved into the so-called “White Elephant” as first occupants. Mr Spearman from Middelburg installed the new cool room in November and the year closed with the blessing of the new church dedicated to St Joseph, in Gareagopola.

During 1961, Glen Cowie had a few celebrations. On 19 January, Bro. Karl celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. On 29 June, Fr Fischer celebrated his Golden Jubilee and Fr Hornauer his Silver Jubilee. But 1961 was a taxing year for the Loreto Sisters. On 29 August, Mother Philomena and Mother Chantal were injured in a car accident



Fr Mmela with Bishop Reiterer.



St Joseph in Gareagopola.



Fr Anton Graf and Fr Rudolf Friedl who was rector between 1982 and 1987 and between 1999 and 2000.

near Vleesboom. On 4 October, eight Sisters were victims of another accident in the Steelpoort Valley. Three landed in hospital in Jane Furse and five in Glen Cowie. On 19 November, six girls drowned in the garden dam.

In 1962, Glen Cowie received 30 000 German mark for farm equipment. On 16 March, Glen Cowie was connected to Eskom—the local electricity supplier didn't have enough capacity. The problem of power failure was not solved yet, and in 2004, a standby plant was installed: this time Guardian Angels' College took the initiative. On 18 July 1962, the rector, Fr Koch, celebrated his Silver Jubilee together with Fr Zeifang. They celebrated in Bongani where Fr Angerer could look back on his fifty years of priesthood.

The year 1964 started with a bang when four heads of cattle were killed by lightning near the farm dam. The hospital at last got a mortuary. On 16 June, Mr Geysers from Bantu Affairs gave a more central site for a new church in Schoonoord; the first little church needed repairs. Sr Rita, who was on holiday in Glen Cowie, died on 6 October. Her wish to be buried in Glen Cowie was fulfilled. Bro. Häring also had to see his lorry being washed away during a cloud burst when he got stuck on a bridge.

In May 1965, the church in Mooifontein was blessed by Bishop Reiterer; the Glen Cowie band played for the first time in public. Buffelsfontein School was taken over by the school board and they immediately received five grants due to the work

of teacher Mr Phashe. In October, Fr Koch and Dr Nelemans saw Mr Potgieter in Pretoria to enquire about the government's hospital policy. They were told that the government would only help in the future, if everything was handed over to them.

At the beginning of the new school year 1966, 600 lined up for Sub A and 210 came as boarders. The new church in Schoonoord was blessed on 20 February. The 25 and 26 June saw the ordination and first holy Mass of Fr Mmela. All were happy, especially Cecilia, his mother, who was a Sister in Fr Blais's Institute. On 15 August 1966, the hospital was registered as a Training School for Nurses. On 10 October, the old church was re-opened as a hall and on 7 November Mr Smith from Middelburg started with the new Secondary School, called Guardian Angels.

Maria Trost had to close down because no "black spot" could be allowed in a "white area". Permission was given to transfer the school into a "black area". Mother Veronica was the first principal of the school and teaching started in January 1967. The official opening was on 10 June, this time Cardinal Doepfner had the honour. Fr General of the "Verona Fathers" was in Glen Cowie on 8 August and Fr Brosig was elected Fr General in Germany. The rector of Glen Cowie, Fr Koch, was also promoted and moved to Maria Trost as Fr Superior. His place was taken by Fr Denis Bourhill in January 1968. He found himself in a rather strange situation because he grew up in Swazi surroundings and suddenly he heard only Pedi. He was assisted by Fr Hornauer and Fr Mmela. In Pokwane, the new church, John the Baptist, was blessed. The Bantu Commissioner and his wife were present. Two old timers of Glen Cowie died in 1968: Bro. Vogel died on 24 November in Pretoria; he is buried



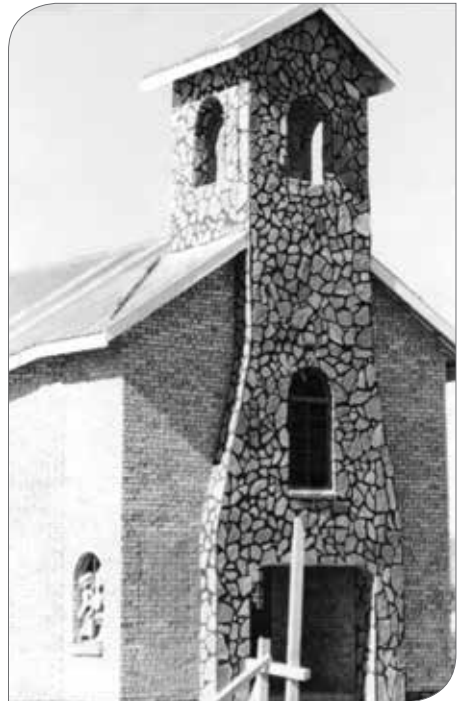
Celebration of Fr Lephaka's Silver Jubilee, on 19 December 1977.



Frs Lambas, Rebelo and Calvera on the day of the inauguration of the church of Mohlarekoma.

in Maria Trost. On 2 December, Bro. Karl Schmid died in Glen Cowie, after suffering patiently for many years. Bro. Xaver Dorn who was a pioneer in Glen Cowie in 1929, died on 6 March 1969.

In 1972, Fr Heller took over from Fr Denis. He looked forward to a long stay in Glen Cowie, but on 7 September 1976, he was killed in a car accident. Another car wanted to overtake a lorry on the Groblersdal dust road. He collided with that car head on and was killed instantly. He was 40 years old. Fr Knapp was persuaded to take the place of Fr Heller. He eventually agreed, but only together with two young Brothers, Fischnaller and Engelhardt. In 1982, Fr Friedl came in because Fr Knapp wanted to attend classes at Gaba Institute in Kenya. In 1987, Fr Friedl felt attracted to a city parish and moved to St Peter Claver in Mamelodi. His successor was Fr J. Calvera Pi. Like so many of our young



Church of Mamone.



Church of Mohlarekoma built by Bro. Erich Fischnaller and blessed at the beginning of 1992.

confrères, Fr Calvera was called in 1994 to work in Spain, his home province. Fr Joseph Rebelo who had been in Glen Cowie since the beginning of 1992, became priest-in-charge. The same lot awaited him—rotation to the home province—two years later. Fr Ibercio Rojas, who was the assistant under Fr Rebelo, was appointed parish priest, Fr Albin Adot Oryem assisting him. In 1999, Fr Friedl returned to Glen Cowie after three years in Germany. At a deanery meeting, on 12 June 2000 in Schoonoord, he had a heart attack and died, sitting in his chair. Fr Adot had to take his place. Fr Manuel Roman moved to Acornhoek and Fr Andrew Thumbi Wanjohi was appointed parish priest. Before Fr Manuel could move to his new place, he had to fight with the local Chief who allowed his people to invade mission property. He successfully prevented the invasion after much unpleasant wrangling. Fr Andrew was assisted by old Fr Brosig, who despite his 80 years, still carried on. On 7 October 2004, we were invited to celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. In February 2005, Fr Rafael Guitron Torres joined Glen Cowie



Fr Ibercio (standing) and Bro. Carlos Barron.



Fr Brosig celebrated his Priestly Golden Jubilee in March 2002, in the presence of Bishop Khumalo.

and found himself as rector of the community. Fr Michael Zeitz was there to learn Sepedi and keep control of the finances. Fr Andrew had to move to Silverton to be formator and Fr Jérôme Anakese took his place. Fr Vincent Mkhabela strengthened the community in 2008 but not for long, because he moved to the Study House, to be in charge of the Secretariate for Mission Promotion and Vocations. His place was taken by Fr Manuel Casillas. At the beginning of January 2011, the parish of Glen Cowie was handed over to the diocese that entrusted it to the Apostles of Jesus.



Mr and Mrs Chego with Fr Miguel Lambas.

The last Combonis, Fr Jérôme Anakese and Fr Manuel Casillas moved, respectively, to Pretoria and to Waterval.

## THE BROTHERS

Photos of Glen Cowie from 1928 show a small farm house and two *rondavels*. Today, one sees many buildings: the hospital, the nurses' home, convents, houses for doctors, schools, farm buildings, the mill, workshops and the monastery of the sisters, DIHM. This development was the work of the Brothers.



Glen Cowie was bought as a farm. Bro. Schwingshackl and Bro. Dorn were the first farmers. In 1930, Bro. Ludwig Brand, a tailor by profession, had his first experience as a farmer. In 1939, he had to move to Maria Trost. Bros. Häring, Stang and Mirbeth continued. Bro. Brand returned to Glen Cowie in 1955 to continue as farmer, blacksmith, welder, plumber and whatever was needed. He could tell you many stories of disagreements with rectors, of locusts and hail and bad harvests, of stolen pigs and stolen potatoes. When he was angry, he could be heard from afar, but anybody who was in need—be it fire wood, a broken machine or a break down—could count on him. Bro. Brand retired in Glen Cowie and died there in 1998. Farming stopped and most of the old farm became a built up area.

Another Brother, closely connected to Glen Cowie was Bro. Poznic Valentine. Many buildings were his work: sometimes they needed a bit of reinforcement, but most of them survived. He had his own way of simplifying matters or giving an explanation. Already in Mellatz, he explained to Fr Rector why the brandy bottle was empty: *“Haben Father so lange studiert und wissen nicht, dass Schnaps gehen in Luft.”* (Father, you studied for such a long time and you don’t know that alcohol evaporates?!) He came to Glen Cowie in 1931 and became a permanent resident until his death in 1987. He liked to go hunting on the farm. But on 11 November 1939, he managed to shoot himself in the foot. Bro. Häring applied first aid and helped him home. He landed in hospital in Lydenburg where the doctors cut off what was left



Bro. Ludwig Brand and Bro. Anton Kurz. Both worked as farmers in Glen Cowie.

of his toe. He was born in Yugoslavia and therefore his German was sometimes a bit peculiar. When the Brothers went for an outing and it happened that there was still some wine left, his comment was to the point: “*Besser Bauch gehen kaputt als Wein nach Hause tragen.*” (It is better to get stomach trouble than to carry the wine back home). The children of Glen Cowie loved him because of the little goodies he had for them. Things which had disappeared somewhere reappeared again out of his pockets.

Another Brother who left his mark there was Bro. Alois Häring. As a newcomer, he started in Maria Trost, Bockberg and Friedenheim, places which were not to his liking. But when he was put in charge of driving a lorry in Glen Cowie, he could be found on all the roads of the old Transvaal and even Natal, shopping for Glen Cowie, for the diocese and for other places. When he was at home, he was in the mill and in his chicken yard. He did not get lost on the road, but the “forest” in Maria Trost was too much for him; a Sister found him and showed him the way home. And he



Bro. Karl Schmid.



Bro. Alois Häring.



Bro. Valentin Poznic and Fr Albin Kladnik, with a Yugoslavian friend.



Bro. Erich Fischnaller, Fr Anton Graf and Bro. Hans Frey.

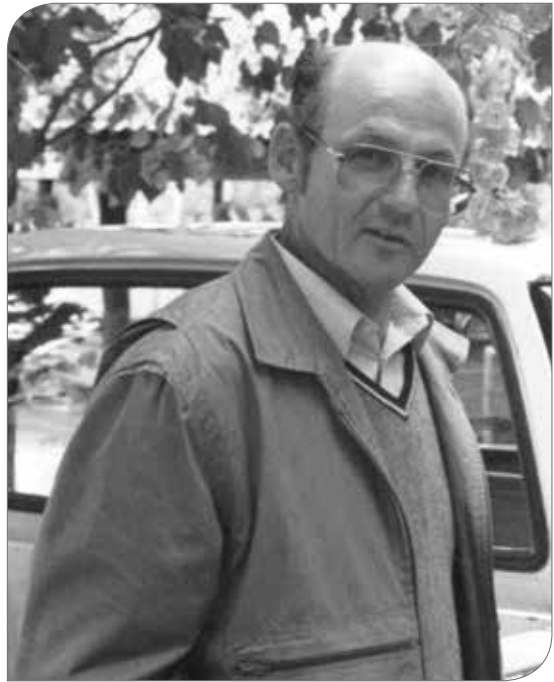
also lost “his” lorry during a cloud burst. He got stuck on a bridge, the water came, the lorry drifted away and Brother was left without it. While he waited for help to come, he dozed off and was relieved of his shoes! Bro. Häring died in Glen Cowie in 1988. The garden in Glen Cowie provided vegetables for the kitchen and also for the people. Bro. Franz Xaver Feil, Bro. Georg Eigner, Bro. Hermann Engelhardt and Bro. Carlos Barron Escandon were the gardeners. Now the garden is in the hands of local people.

The carpentry in Glen Cowie had its first humble beginnings under Bro. Franz Xaver Vogel. But Brother was also needed in many other places, building schools and erecting roofs. Bro. Erich Fischnaller came in 1977 and, with him, two carpenters who were trained in Maria Trost under Bro. Pfeifer, Lazarus Mgiba and Frans Mabuza. In no time, the carpentry had to fulfil many wishes and orders. Bro. Erich started quite a few development projects, built kindergardens and churches, namely Mamone, Mohlarekoma, Apel, Malaka, Ngababa and Mashabela. In 1993, he moved to the Transkei, starting over again with the same enthusiasm. Since 2004, he kept himself busy further North in the Sudan building a school there. Hopefully, he will remember his South African connections.

Bro. Hermann Engelhardt settled in Glen Cowie in 1976. He started as a gardener, taking over from Bro. Feil. Eventually, he had to replace the old timers who had been at Glen Cowie when he arrived. So, he found himself to be gardener, local bursar and miller. When the mill and the garden and other projects were handed over to the local people during the time of Bishop Nkhumishe, Bro. Engelhardt followed Bro. Fischnaller

and moved to the Kokstad Diocese. Bro. Carlos Barron took the place of Bro. Hermann at Glen Cowie. He took interest in the garden project and he also tried to keep the books balanced as local bursar. By the end of 2004, he was recalled to his home province and joined the long list of rotators. Glen Cowie was now without a Brother; indeed he was the last Comboni Brother in Glen Cowie.

From small beginnings in 1929, Glen Cowie developed into a well-known Catholic centre in Sekhukhuneland. The Brothers developed the structures and provided food and finances for all the projects. The priests established Christian communities through regular visits and organising catechism classes. The Sisters made Glen Cowie attractive through their social work in the hospital and in the schools. Three new parishes have their origin in Glen Cowie; Schoonoord, Luckau and Mashabela. In January 2011, the parish of Glen Cowie was handed over to the diocese.



Bro. Hermann Engelhardt.

## GLEN COWIE

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1929	Raffener and Brandmaier	Schwingshackl, Dorn and Hilmer
1930	Raffener and Brandmaier	Schwingshackl, Dorn, Hilmer and Brand
1931	Raffener, Brandmaier, Ille and Berger	Schwingshackl, Dorn, Cagol, Brand, Hilmer, Poznic and Lesnjak
1932	Raffener, Brandmaier, Ille and Schöpf	Schwingshackl, Brand, Hilmer and Lesnjak
1933	Raffener, Brandmaier, Ille and Schöpf	Schwingshackl, Brand, Hilmer and Lesnjak
1934	Raffener, Brandmaier, Schöpf, Bratina and Habicher	Schwingshackl, Brand, Lesnjak and Schickhofer

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fathers</b>	<b>Brothers</b>
1935	Schöpf, Brandmaier, Bratina Habicher and Reiterer	Brand, Schickhofer, Oberstaller, Lesnjak and Häring
1936	Bratina, Reiterer and Habicher	Brand, Schickhofer, Häring, Eigner and Lesnjak
1937	Bratina, Reiterer, Habicher, Weiller and Koch	Brand, Oberstaller, Feil, Eigner and Häring
1938	Habicher, Brandmaier, Koch, Schöpf and Reiterer	Brand, Oberstaller, Feil, Eigner and Häring
1939	Habicher, Mohn, Koch and Brandmaier	Brand, Kurz, Feil and Häring
1940	Habicher, Koch and Brandmaier	Kurz, Häring and Feil
1941	Habicher and Brandmaier	Kurz and Häring
1942	Habicher and Brandmaier	Kurz, Häring and Poznic
1943	Habicher and Brandmaier	Kurz, Häring, Poznic and Hirschlein
1944	Habicher and Brandmaier	Häring, Hirschlein and Poznic
1945	Habicher and Brandmaier	Häring, Hirschlein and Poznic
1946	Habicher and Brandmaier	Häring, Hirschlein and Poznic
1947	Habicher and Brandmaier	Häring, Hirschlein, Poznic and Feil
1948	Habicher and Brandmaier	Häring, Hirschlein, Poznic and Feil
1949	Habicher, Koch, Rauch, Brandmaier and Hornauer	Häring, Poznic, Feil, Stang and Mirbeth
1950	Koch, Brandmaier, Hornauer and Bratina	Häring, Poznic, Feil, Stang and Mirbeth
1951	Koch, Brandmaier, Hornauer and Bratina	Feil, Mirbeth, Merz, Cagol and Poznic
1952	Koch, Brandmaier, Hornauer and Bratina	Feil, Mirbeth, Poznic, Merz and Cagol
1953	Koch, Brandmaier, Brosig and Bratina	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Merz and Mirbeth
1954	Koch, Brandmaier, Brosig and Bratina	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Merz and Mirbeth
1955	Koch, Brandmaier, Brosig and Bratina	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Merz and Mirbeth
1956	Koch, Brandmaier, Brosig Bratina and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand and Merz
1957	Koch, Brandmaier, Bratina and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand and Merz

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fathers</b>	<b>Brothers</b>
1958	Koch, Brandmaier, Bratina and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Merz and Häring
1959	Koch, Brandmaier, Bratina and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Merz and Häring
1960	Koch, Brandmaier, Bratina and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Merz and Häring
1961	Koch, Brandmaier, Grohe, Bratina and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Merz and Häring
1962	Koch, Brandmaier, Grohe and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Merz and Häring
1963	Koch, Brandmaier, Grohe, Graf and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Merz, Häring and Vogel
1964	Koch, Brandmaier, Grohe, Graf and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Merz, Häring and Vogel
1965	Koch, Brandmaier, Grohe, Graf and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring and Vogel
1966	Koch, Brandmaier, Grohe, Graf and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring, Vogel and Niederbacher
1967	Koch, Brandmaier, Grohe and Stadtmüller	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring, Vogel and Niederbacher
1968	Bourhill, Brandmaier, Stadtmüller and Hornauer	Schmid, Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring and Vogel
1969	Bourhill, Brandmaier, Fischer K., Stadtmüller and Hornauer	Poznic, Feil, Brand and Häring
1970	Bourhill, Brandmaier, Fischer K., Stadtmüller and Hornauer	Poznic, Feil, Brand and Häring
1971	Bourhill, Brandmaier, Fischer K., Stadtmüller and Hornauer	Poznic, Feil, Brand and Häring
1972	Heller, Brandmaier, Fischer K. and Chistè	Poznic, Feil, Brand and Häring
1973	Heller, Brandmaier and Chistè	Poznic, Feil, Brand and Häring
1974	Heller and Brandmaier	Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring and Seibold
1975	Heller, Brandmaier, Brosig and Chistè	Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring and Seibold
1976	Heller, Knapp, Brosig and Chistè	Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring and Engelhardt

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fathers</b>	<b>Brothers</b>
1977	Knapp, Brosig and Chistè	Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1978	Knapp, Brosig and Chistè	Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1979	Knapp, Brosig and Chistè	Poznic, Feil, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1980	Knapp, Grohe and Pramstrahler	Poznic, Feil , Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1981	Friedl, Serale and Pramstrahler	Poznic, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1982	Friedl, Serale, Pramstrahler, Casillas and Carranza	Poznic, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1983	Friedl and Serale	Poznic, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1984	Friedl and Serale	Poznic, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1985	Friedl, Serale, Bratina and Schmid Peter	Poznic, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1986	Friedl, Schmid P. and Bratina	Poznic, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1987	Friedl, Calvera Jaime, Lambas Miguel and Bratina	Poznic, Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1988	Calvera, Lambas and Bratina	Brand, Häring, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1989	Calvera, Lambas and Bratina	Brand, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1990	Calvera, Lambas and Bratina	Brand, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1991	Calvera, Lambas and Cervantes Aurelio	Brand, Engelhardt and Fischnaller
1992	Calvera, Lambas,Cervantes and Joseph Rebelo	Engelhardt, Fischnaller and Brand
1993	Calvera, Cervantes, Rebelo and Ibercio Rojas	Brand, Engelhardt and Carlos Barron
1994	Calvera, Rebelo and Rojas	Brand and Engelhardt
1995	Rebelo, Rojas and Brosig	Engelhardt

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1996	Rebello, Rojas, Brosig and Adot Oryem Albin	Engelhardt
1997	Rojas, Adot and Brosig	Engelhardt
1998	Rojas, Adot and Brosig	Engelhardt
1999	Friedl, Adot and Brosig	Carlos Barron
2000	Adot, Brosig and Friedl (till June)	Barron
2001	Manuel Roman Munoz, Andrew Thumbi Wanjohi and Brosig	Barron
2002	Roman, Wanjohi and Brosig	Barron
2003	Roman, Wanjohi and Brosig	Barron
2004	Wanjohi, Brosig and Rafael Guitron Torres	Barron
2005	Wanjohi, Guitron, Brosig and M. Zeitz	
2006	Jérôme Anakese and Brosig	
2007	Anakese, Brosig and Vincent Mkhabela	
2008	Guitron, Anakese and Mkhabela	
2009–10	Anakese and Manuel Casillas	
2011	2 January: the parish was handed over to the Apostles of Jesus	



## CATECHISTS SCHOOL AND BIBLE SOCIETY

BY FR ALDO CHISTÈ



I arrived at the Durban port in South Africa in May 1967 with Bro. Mario Adani aboard the ship Asia. While staying at the Bongani Mission, Msgr Anton Reiterer took us to Waterval, a 45-morgen farm he had bought from Mr Franz Hugo, who had moved away his sawmill to Nyaka. Bro. Otto and Bro. Mario Adani started building the first house in Waterval, which was called the Holy Family Mission. In January 1968, we applied to the Commissioner of Bushbuckridge for permission to do pastoral work among the black people. A permit was granted for six months only. When we reapplied in July 1968 permission was refused and we had to stay at home.

During the six months of confinement at Waterval Mission, I took a chance to study the Tsonga language as best I could, helped by some teachers. Within two years, I had co-ordinated the translation into Tsonga of the *People of God Series* (five booklets for catechism from standard one to five), the Liturgy of Holy Week (from Palm Sunday to the Easter Vigil), and other books for catechesis and sacraments, including Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage. At the time, I became a member of the Tsonga Bible Translation Committee representing

the Catholic Church in the translation of the New Testament, until it was printed. The main co-ordinator was Rev. Theo Schneider who belonged to the Tsonga Presbyterian Church. Many Churches co-operated but Rev. Marivate, also a minister of the same Church, was the main translator. It was obvious that it had to be someone whose mother language was the same as that of the translation.

On 10 December 1971, Fr Adolf Stadtmüller, who was the Principal of the Catechists School, died in Glen Cowie and Fr Noverino Canonici took over from him. It was a period of great activity. The catechists at the end of two years of training were very well prepared and were very much appreciated by the priests of the diocese. By the end of November 1973, I was requested by Bishop Anton Reiterer to take over the Catechists School of Glen Cowie from Fr Canonici. There were six Sisters and seven catechists at the Catechists School. I enjoyed teaching both Sisters and catechists as they were very committed and very active in the villages. Fr Stanley Botha was helping in teaching the Bible. Missio of Aachen (Germany) and the Sisters of St Peter Claver in Rome were very generous with us and supportive of the Catechists School, supplying us with money to give the catechists a salary. Being fully committed to the Catechists School, I had to resign from the Tsonga Translation Committee, now busy in translating the Old Testament. Fr Joseph Sandri, now bishop of Witbank, took over from me representing the Catholic Church in the committee. Unfortunately, at the end of 1978, the Catechists School closed due to various reasons, mainly financial. With a view to the future, the diocese of Witbank decided to start recruiting *volunteer* catechists.



Loreto Convent, in Glen Cowie.

### THE LORETO SISTERS IN GLEN COWIE

In 2003, the Loreto Sisters celebrated 125 years in South Africa. They had come from Navan-Ireland. Bishop Jolivet invited them to South Africa. They arrived in 1887, five of them, among them his own sister, Sr Margaret Mary. The intention was to open a school in Pretoria, which in those days consisted of few houses and lots of grass. Their journey from Pietermaritzburg to Pretoria took them three and a half weeks. The Bishop accompanied them and he had to hide the Sisters when they travelled through town, otherwise he would have been under suspicion.

On 11 February 1893, a group of the Loretos travelled to Lydenburg to open a convent and a school. They were warmly welcomed by the local Catholics, but not by others, who sent a petition to Pretoria to close that undertaking. There was no reply and the Loreto Convent in Lydenburg could continue till 1969, when they had to close because of a shortage of Sisters.

In 1929, three Sisters from Lydenburg set out, this time by car, to make a new start in Glen Cowie. Sr Rita, Sr Rosario and Sr Consiglio began their ministry on foot, later “Peter” and “Paul”, their faithful donkeys, made life a bit easier for them. Sr Consiglio began to teach the little ones under a wild fig tree, later the Primary School developed and in 1967 they were also willing to take over the Secondary School, which had to be transferred from Maria Trost to Glen Cowie, because of the Group Areas Act. From the humble beginnings of a four roomed clinic, St Rita’s Hospital developed and the Sisters were involved till they were forced out by the government.



Loreto Sisters, on 24 April 1971.

When Bishop Riegler started the diocesan congregation of the Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Loreto Sisters, Sr Consiglio and Sr Deirdre, were instrumental in training and guiding the new Congregation from 1949 to 1970. In 1991, the Loreto Sisters left Glen Cowie and started a new undertaking in KwaGuqa, to live and to work among the people. We have to admire those Sisters who could handle the rectors and Brothers of Glen Cowie, as they had a more gentle approach to life, and they were a very good example of an international community.

### **DAUGHTERS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY (DIHM)**

In Bishop's Riegler diary, under the heading of 2 February 1949, one reads: "The feast of Our Lady's Purification in 1949 will always be an outstanding day in the history of the Lydenburg Vicariate. This is the day for which I, and the religious of the Vicariate, have prayed for many years—the founding of the Sisterhood for the native Community. It is the express wish of the Holy Father that the religious state should be fostered and opened in all missionary countries. Vocations to the religious and ecclesiastic states always show the strength and stability of our faith."

Speaking at the inauguration of the Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Glen Cowie, the Rt Rev. Bishop Riegler depicted the two sides of religious life: "You are the brides of Christ, called by Him to be His own, but religious life is also one of self-immolation. You will burn brightly before your God and at the same time spending yourselves for Him."

Mother Consiglio IBVM agreed to introduce the first candidates to religious life and to the charism of the new diocesan Congregation. The Patronal Feast would be the Queenship of Mary, on 22 August. On this day, the first candidates, Ambrosia Mkhatsywa and Elizabeth Mkhonto, received the religious habit. Bishop Riegler, the founder of the Congregation, appeared at this occasion for the first time as new Bishop of the Vicariate.

In 1982, at their General Chapter, the Daughters elected their first Mother General, Sr Conception. The Sisters give their services to the diocese in schools, in nursing, in catechetical work. They overcame a crisis in the early nineties, some left, but those remaining appear to be more unified and strengthened.



Sr Conception (left), the first Mother General, with Sr Michael, in 1982.

## DEVELOPMENT TRAILBLAZERS

BY FR JOSEPH REBELO



Bro. Erich Fischnaller with a helper.

The Comboni Brothers had a prominent role in the missionary work. They were involved in a great diversity of workmanship—as builders and handymen, as farmers and gardeners, as carpenters and millers, as administrators and youth workers. At the example of St Joseph, their patron saint, they always worked humbly and silently without much recognition.

The first challenge they faced was to cultivate the fields—and have enough food to eat and feed the children in the boarding schools. In the words of Fr Konrad Nefzger, author of the book on the history of the Comboni presence,

“the brothers had to work for nothing with nothing.” He explains how they started their agrarian endeavours from scratch: “In Maria Trost, the only thing they found on the farm was a dead ox stuck in the mud; no plough, no oxen, nothing. They were supported by local people, local Catholics who gave them 12 oxen to start ploughing the fields.”

In a place where the Church was hardly present, the brothers were called to put up some structures where the missionaries could reside and where pastoral activities and liturgical celebrations could be held. The bricks-and-mortar brothers did their job. Next step was to furnish the buildings. The first carpentry workshop in Maria Trost started, as everything else, from scratch. Bro. Huber Klodt and Bro. Vogel laid the foundations. The first source of energy, according to Fr Konrad, was a steam engine. Vogel constructed the transmission which worked till 1968. Under Bro. Pfeifer, the carpentry shop was famous throughout the region.

As far as possible, every mission station erected structures for its affirmation and development—and the promotion of jobs and skills. A vegetable garden, a workshop for repairs and a boarding school were common features. As the years passed, other enterprises came up: carpentries, weaving centres, candle making workshops and other development projects.

After Maria Trost, Glen Cowie became a model mission. When I arrived in South Africa in 1991, it was a regional centre of development. There was an efficient mechanical mill and four huge—yet inadequate—silos where more than 2 000 families kept their mealie supplies out of reach of rats: in some periods of the year

the mill would run more than one shift to cater for peoples' needs; a carpentry workshop which made very handy, strong and affordable furniture; a mechanical workshop for all sorts of repairs; a vegetable garden whose products were sold around; a pig sty with a population close to 100 animals; and in collaboration with Operation Hunger, high breed seed and fertiliser were introduced (subsidised the first two years) and sold. Though the weather didn't help, and the region had a poor sandy soil, production increased greatly and was a boost for many people.

Bro. Hermann Engelhardt, with the help of retired Bro. Ludwig Brand, Mr Albert Mashifane and the employees were running the various diocesan enterprises and both caring for and serving the people who continuously flocked there. Besides providing a great service, these enterprises were profitable: gains were a source of income for Witbank Diocese. The priests contributed to development by putting up a computer school in 1995 which was closed two years later.

Bro. Erich Fischnaller, apart from helping Bro. Hermann, was busy building kindergartens, schools and churches (the *ex-libris* were those of Mamone and Mohlarekoma) around Glen Cowie. The constructions were paid in part by his activities of selling imported second-hand clothes.

Two years later, he was assigned to Mount Frère, in Kokstad Diocese, where he became the great diocesan builder—of churches, crèches, classrooms, clinics and religious articles, as a hobby—until he moved to poorer South Sudan where he felt even more useful.

Bro. Hermann left Glen Cowie in 1999, after 23 years, and joined him in Mount Frère, where



Drilling a borehole.

he continued being involved in gardening. Besides making the garden of the mission, he provided seedlings to people and helped them to make their own gardens. His work which enjoyed the full the support of Bishop William Slattery (he told him, “the entire diocese is your garden”) was an answer to a real need: more than 100 people, depending on the season, would come daily to buy seedlings (cheaper than they would get from nurseries) and ask for help. “It was a very fulfilling time,” Bro. Hermann recalls. When the Combonis ceased their presence in Kokstad, Bro. Hermann was assigned to Maria Trost where he made the Pastoral Centre’s garden flourish again.

## EENSGEFONDEN, LUCKAU (1952–1991)

In 1952, Bishop Riegler could buy two plots, Eensgefonden, 2 morgen, and Luckau, 10 morgen. The place was bought from Mr Visagie, who sold because of old age. Fr Habicher, the old rector of Glen Cowie, settled in Eensgefonden on 1 May 1952. Later on, he was joined by Bro. Cagol. Fr Richard 'inherited' a General Dealer store in Eensgefonden, and a small mill in Luckau.



Church of Christ the Priest, built by Bro. Johann Lamprecht and blessed on 28 July 1963.

In 1959, Fr Blais OMI, started a seminary in Luckau. He started his institute, Christ the King, and opened his novitiate for Sisters. Luckau was intended and served as a Minor Seminary for the Transvaal Bishops. Because of legal restrictions Bishop Reiterer had to buy the whole farm from Mr Visagie. He was permitted to start a school from Standard 5 to matric. The seminary was now legal. Soon there were over 100 seminarians from many different places.



Church of Tafelkop blessed on 18 March 1973.



Church of Motetema, blessed on 7 May 1975.

In 1962, Bro. Lamprecht moved to Luckau to erect one building after the other. A highlight was the blessing of the church, Christ the King, the 28 July 1963. By the end of 1963, Fr Blais wanted to go his own way and the Combonis agreed to take over the seminary. At the beginning of 1964, Fr Blais moved to Izingolweni and took along most of the boys and his Sisters. The Sisters from Glen Cowie filled the void and sent three Sisters to join the staff. Fr Grohe was appointed rector of the seminary and Fr Roth became Novice Master of the new Comboni Novitiate, Bursar and Spiritual Director. In January 1966, Fr Roth handed over Belfast to Fr Kuppelwieser and moved to Luckau. He found one candidate waiting, Elias Hlatshwayo. Under the 13 of February 1966, it is noted in his diary: "Elias, the first candidate has disappeared overnight." Bro. Kley, who three days later, brought the habit for Elias, had to take it home again.

The second candidate, Fr Denis Bourhill, persevered. He was ordained a diocesan priest on 16 December 1951, but wanted to join us. He started his Novitiate on 23 February 1966. He was also welcomed as a teacher at the High School. In August 1966, the new mill was operational. Bro. Merz was the new miller and soon the mill was an attraction in the nearby surroundings. In 1978, Bro. Merz handed it over to Bro. Seibold and in 1986, Bro. Niederbrunner carried on and eventually the mill was handed over to the community as their own project.



Clothing of Bro. Linus Cibane, on 1 May 1967. From left: Fr Grohe, Bro. Merz, Fr Roth, Rev. Fr General Brosig, Bro. Linus and Fr Stempfle.

One big problem was the water supply. Funds came from Germany and the drilling could start. Many dowzers predicted and pointed out sources of water, but the results were usually elusive: lots to pay and little water.

Meanwhile, the Bishop needed Fr Denis in Witbank, at Sacred Heart, so the novitiate was shortened. On 27 March 1967, Fr Denis made his first profession and, on 14 April, he moved back to his old parish. Fr Roth carried on with the only candidate left, Linus Cibane from Natal. In June 1967, Fr Graf took over and Fr Grohe went on holiday. In 1968, Bro. Linus decided to go back to Natal—another disappointment. Ignatius Made chose the same path and when Fr Roth returned from his holiday on 1 October 1968, he found the novitiate empty. By the end of the year, Fr Grohe moved to Mashabela and Fr Heller and Fr Roth took charge of the seminary. In 1971, Fr Knapp took care of the seminary, supported by Fr Friedl. Then, the seminary was taken care of by diocesan staff: Fr Barrette took over. He succeeded in bringing the Holy Family Sisters to Luckau to join the staff. When the bishops decided to try other ways in the formation of the seminarians, Christ the King seminary was transformed into St Paul's High School. Fr Friedl took over the parish. After him, the parish was looked after by Frs Grohe, Knapp, Carranza and Casillas. When the Kiltegan Missionaries came to the diocese, they were asked to look after Luckau parish as one of their commitments. The Combonis left Luckau-Eensgefonden in 1991.

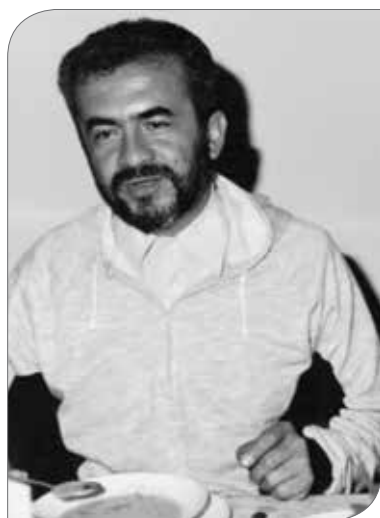


Fr Denis Bourhill, in the Novitiate in Luckau.





Visitors from Glen Cowie: Sr Theresa, Sr Deirdre, Bro. Lamprecht, Fr Roth and Bro. Vogel.



Fr Luis Carranza.



Church of Christ the Priest.

During all these years, Fr Habicher developed the parish, residing in Eensgefonden. On 7 May 1970, the Holy Redeemer church in Motetema was opened, and Holy Cross church in Sterkfontein was blessed on 3 September 1972. St Peter's in Seriting was completed on 24 February 1973. Joe Maibelo was the artist of the painting above the altar. Next in line was St Andrew's in Tafelkop, blessed on 18 March 1973. In

Sephako, the church Mary Mother of Christ, was completed on 25 May 1974. On 3 December 1978, it was the turn of Dikgalakeng and in Matilo they had the opening of the church of St Paul on 17 October 1981. Father Habicher's stores and his petrol station were not only a good source of income, but also a big attraction for thieves and burglars. When one night he was robbed, shot and nearly killed, he decided to go back to Europe. He moved to Brixen and died there on 16 December 1982.

## LUCKAU

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1952	Habicher	
1962	Bratina	Lamprecht
1962-1965	Blais	Lamprecht and Merz
1967	Graf, Grohe and Friedl	Merz and Niederbacher
1968	Grohe and Bratina	Merz
1969	Roth, Heller and Bratina	Merz
1970	Roth, Heller and Knapp	Merz
1971	Heller, Knapp and Schmid P.	Merz
1972-1974	Knapp and Friedl	Merz
1974-1980	Friedl	Merz and Seibold
1981	Grohe and Fierro Felipe	Seibold
1982	Grohe	Seibold
1983-1985	Knapp	Seibold
1983	Carranza	Seibold
1986	Casillas	Niederbrunner
1987-1989	Carranza	

**PROBEEREN, MASHABELA (1950–1991)**

On 5 September 1950, the Vicar General, Fr Stadtmüller, bought 457 morgen from Mr Rose in Probeeren. The locals regretted the deal because the Native Commissioner had already promised that the place would be tribal ground, but Mr Rose was not sure whether the money was coming, so we could seal the deal. In 1951, a school was approved by Chief Mashabela and it opened at the end of 1952. Bro. Valentine from Glen Cowie was the builder. In August 1957, a water pump was installed and in November Brother started to build the presbitery. On 15 May 1958, the house and the little church were blessed by Bishop Reiterer. The same day, Fr Brosig and Bro. Cagol moved to Mashabela and began to stand on their own feet, now sepa-



Fr Vitus Grohe (1969–1979).



Church of St Michael's, blessed on 10 October 1969.



Fr Günter Brosig (1958–1961, 1983–1991) and Fr Franz Bratina (1969–1984).



Bro. August Cagol.



Bro. Adolf Seibold.

rated from Glen Cowie, the mother parish. On 10 October 1969, the new church of St Michael was blessed. The 'farm' was developed by Bro. Stang. He managed to pump the water from the river and soon Mashabela was the place to go to during the orange season, where oranges were sweet and cheap. The last Brother in Mashabela was Bro. Seibold, from 1989 to 1991.



Bro. Stang at the village's well.

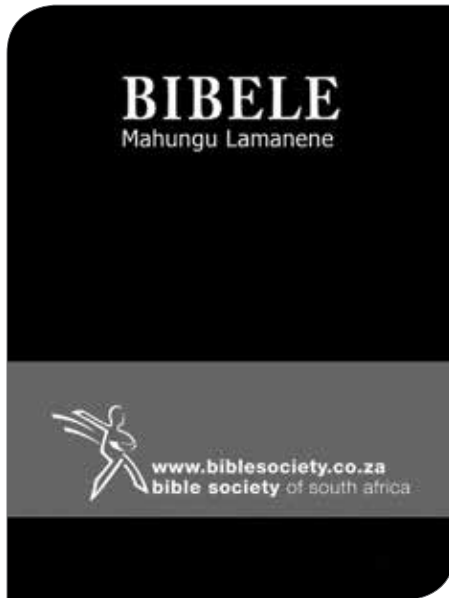
In 1961, Fr Brosig moved to Burgersfort and Fr Tremmel carried on in his place, joined by Bro. Stang in 1964. In 1969, Fr Grohe settled in Mashabela, assisted by Fr Bratina. When Fr Grohe had to go to Luckau to take charge of the seminary in 1979, Fr Bratina carried on till he was re-enforced by Fr Brosig again in 1983. Fr Brosig remained in Mashabela till 1991 when the Kiltegan Fathers took over the parish. Mashabela is a lonely place; the priests and Brothers kept contact with Glen Cowie. Slowly the parish developed. In Voelstruiskoppie, the church of Charles Lwanga was opened on 8 December 1974 and, on 13 May 1979, the Good Shepherd church in Coetzedraai was blessed. Regular visits to the different places and regular catechism classes laid the foundation.

## MASHABELA

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1958-1961	Brosig	Cagol
1962-1968	Tremmel	Stang
1969-1979	Grohe and Bratina	Stang
1980-1982	Bratina	Stang
1983-1984	Brosig and Bratina	
1985-1991	Brosig	
1989-1991	Brosig	Seibold

## THE TSONGA BIBLE TRANSLATION

BY MSGR GIUSEPPE (JOE) SANDRI MCCJ  
BISHOP OF WITBANK



Cover of the Tsonga Bible.

The first Tsonga Bible was translated and published by the missionaries of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (formerly known as Tsonga Presbyterian Church) in 1907. This Church was established by Swiss missionaries in 1875 among the Tsonga people in Valdezia, Limpopo. A revision of the 1907 Bible was produced and published under the auspices of the same missionaries in 1929. This Bible is still being published by the Bible Society of South Africa. A new version of the Tsonga Bible “Bibele—Mahungu Lamanene” was published in 1989 after more than 20 years of work under the direction of Rev. Theo Schneider,

a pastor of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church. Under the sponsorship of the Bible Society of South Africa, he assembled a small ecumenical editorial team (based at Giyani, Limpopo), some stylists and typists, a number of translators from different Churches, and around 90 consultants, mostly Tsonga speakers, also from different churches in South Africa and Mozambique. Some consultants were not Tsonga speakers, but were Bible scholars. The work started in 1967.

During the translation project, the editorial team assigned books of the Bible to be translated by individual translators. Once the first translation was drafted from the English text of the Revised Standard Version, it was revised by the editorial team, the Tsonga stylists and some Biblical scholars. The original Hebrew texts were consulted for the Old Testament and the Greek text of the time of the Apostles for the New Testament. This second draft was sent out to the consultants in South Africa and Mozambique where Tsonga speaking people live.

The consultants had to send in their observations, comments, suggestions and corrections within a fixed date. These contributions were checked and studied by the editorial team and included as far as possible into the drafted text. Members of the editorial team, translators, stylists, typists, consultants and, at time, representatives of the Bibles Society of South Africa had a three-day-meeting every year, once in South Africa and once in Mozambique, to discuss controversial translated passages, expressions and words. These days were shared in an amazing ecumenical spirit that resulted, after free and at times hot discussions in shared agreements. In 1975, The Bible Society of South Africa published a new version of the New Testament in Tsonga called “Mahungu Lamanene”. This version was revised

during subsequent years and was included in the New Tsonga Bible (Bibele—Mahungu Lamanene) published in 1989 and launched at well-attended and meaningful ecumenical ceremonies first at Giyani and then at Maputo (Mozambique). Since then, this Bible has been reprinted several times.

Fr Aldo Chistè MCCJ became one of the Catholic consultants in this project in 1968 and continued until 1973. Fr Aldo, during his years at Waterval Catholic Mission, also translated prayers and parts of the Missal into Tsonga with the help of Tsonga catechists and teachers. Fr Francis Tremmel MCCJ was actually the first Catholic missionary to start translating certain prayers and liturgical texts into Tsonga after he moved to Acornhoek in 1954. He also published a Tsonga song book used for many years in the area. I, then, Fr Giuseppe Sandri MCCJ, joined as a consultant to the Tsonga Bible Translation Project in 1973 as I started my missionary work at Waterval Catholic Mission. I continued as consultant until the publication of the new Tsonga Bible in 1989. Over a number of years, I was also involved with the translation and printing of different prayers, catechetical and hymn books in Tsonga. It was in 1989 that Rev. Theo Schneider encouraged me to tackle the translation of the Deuterocanonical/Apocrypha Books. With his help, I assembled an ecumenical editorial team and a number of translators, stylists and consultants. I followed the same process of translation as the one mentioned above, even though limited to South Africa. We were not able to get any cooperation from Mozambique due mainly to the civil war taking place there at the time. But a couple of Mozambican refugees who settled near Acornhoek contributed to this translation project. The translation continued to be based on the English text of the Revised

Standard Version of the Bible with reference to the Greek original. The books we translated were: *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Esther* (only the additional Greek texts), *Wisdom*, *Sirach*, *The Letter of Jeremiah*, *The Prayer of Azariah* and *The Song of the Three Young Men*, *Susanna*, *Bel and the Dragon*, *1 Maccabees* and *2 Maccabees*. As agreed with the Bible Society of South Africa, these books were inserted between the Old Testament of the so called “Protestant Bible” and the New Testament.

I am very grateful to the Bible Society of South Africa who allowed us to use the text of the *Bibele—Mahungu Lamanene* and add the Deuterocanonical/Apocrypha books to it. The first printing of 10 000 copies of the “Bibele—Mahungu Lamanene ni Tibuku ta Xitatiso xa Testamente ya Khale (Dyuterokanonika/Apokrififa)” was done in cooperation with the Bible Society of South Africa in 1996 and launched the same year in a beautiful ecumenical liturgy at Acornhoek. It was the first ‘Catholic Bible’ in a local language to be published in South Africa. Under my supervision and with the expert advice of Rev. Theo Schneider and always in co-operation with the Bible Society of South Africa a second and revised printing of 10 000 copies was done in 2009. These Bibles are sold to Tsonga speakers, mainly to Catholics but also to members of other Churches, in South Africa and Mozambique. I feel the need to express my wholehearted appreciation to all those committed people who contributed to the translation and printing of the Tsonga Bibles: *Bibele—Mahungu Lamanene* and *Bibele—Mahungu Lamanene ni Tibuku ta Xitatiso xa Testamente ya Khale (Dyuterokanonika/Apokrififa)*. I am especially thankful to Rev. Theo Schneider and the Bible Society of South Africa.

## SCHOONOORD (1964)

The parish was an old outstation of Glen Cowie. The first little church was built in 1945 by Bro. Valentine Poznik. Fr Lephaka was the first parish priest, but when he moved to Steelpoort, the place became part of Glen Cowie parish. In 1988, Fr Graf settled in Schoonoord. He built the new priest's house and a parish centre for meetings and workshops, which were run by Comboni Lay Missionaries. The funding came from his many friends and benefactors from home and from Germany, where he spent the preceding years as part of his rotation. When Fr Graf left Schoonoord at the end of 2000 and went for his sabbatical, the parish was taken over by diocesan priests. The new church of the Martyrs of Uganda was completed in 1966.



Fr J. Lephaka, the first parish priest (1952).



Fr Anton Graf (1988–2000).





Old Mission of Burgersfort, in 1954.



Fr Josef Hornauer.



Fr Franz Andreas Engelhardt.



Fr Karl Kuppelwieser.

### **BURGERSFORT (1954 [1951]–2006)**

In 1954, Fr Hornauer moved to Burgersfort as the first parish priest. The beginnings of the parish go back to Maria Trost. When the Fathers became 'mobile', first by motorbike and after by car, they regularly visited Penge, Steelpoort and Burgersfort. On 21 October 1951, St Anthony's was opened, built by Fr Lechner from Maria Trost. Bro. Vogel and Bro. Hirschlein were the builders. Mr De Souza had donated the land and he also contributed 500 pounds towards the building. Bro. Gruber tried to keep the place clean and productive, but water shortage was a permanent problem. This problem was only solved in the nineties when, St Paul's was connected to the town water supply.



Fr Karl Kuppelwieser, Fr Josef Knapp and Fr Rudolf Friedl.



Fr Vitus Grohe handing out a rosary.

In 1962, Fr Brosig took over from Fr Hornauer, but he had to move to Maria Trost the same year after the sudden death of Fr Nagler on Mount Anderson. Fr Bratina held the 'fort' till 1967 when Fr Kuppelwieser made Burgersfort his home. He was supported by Fr Friedl. Fr Charles started his building activity and felt hindered by the Bishop and the Superior and decided to go his own way. In 1972, Fr Singer took over, helped by Fr Knapp. In 1982, Fr Grohe continued in Burgersfort. In 1991, he was joined by Fr Brosig. In 1995, Fr Grohe moved to Acornhoek and Burgersfort was the new place of Fr Serale. Fr Rafael Perez



Fr 'Pepelu' and Fr Rafael Perez.

joined Fr Bruno and Fr Brosig moved to Glen Cowie. Fr Grohe came back to Burgersfort in 1997 and at last we had a community with three members, but not for long. On 28 July 1997, Fr Serale and Fr Grohe were killed in a car accident near Middelburg, together with their parish helper, Mrs Mbatha. Fr Rafael was left alone with Bro. Artur Pinto who came to Burgersfort in 1997. In 1998, Fr Manuel Casillas came to help; Fr Rafael had to go back to Spain because of ill health. Fr Manolo joined Fr Manuel in 1999. In 2001, Fr Manolo left to be parish priest in Glen Cowie, Fr Casillas was called to be part of the team of the



Fr Albino Adot Oryem.

Comboni Year of Ongoing Formation (CYOF) and Fr George Nok and Fr Albino Adot had to look after Burgersfort. Fr George was needed in the Study House and Fr Albino Adot carried on with a diocesan priest. On 8 October 2006, the parish was handed over to the diocese.

Fr Kuppelwieser was instrumental in building up the parish structure, the new priests' house, the new St Paul's church and many churches in the parish. He also started the weaving centre to help in social development. Later on, those projects of Burgersfort and Acornhoek were directed by Bro. Hans Frey. Sr Cassiane from Mariannahill made the weavers of Burgersfort famous, the designs and quality were highly appreciated.

## BURGERSFORT

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1954-56	Hornauer	
1957	Hornauer and Brosig	
1958-61	Hornauer	Gruber
1962	Brosig and Lipp	Gruber
1963-64	Bratina and Engelhardt	
1965-66	Bratina and Rechenmacher	
1967	Bratina and Kuppelwieser	
1968-72	Kuppelwieser and Friedl	
1973-74	Singer and Tremmel	
1975-76	Singer and Knapp	
1976-77	Singer	Frey
1978-80	Riegel	Frey
1981-82	Knapp	Frey
1983	Grohe	Frey
1984-86	Grohe and Carranza Cervantes Luis	
1987-91	Grohe	
1991-94	Grohe and Brosig	
1995-97	Serale and Perez Moreno Rafael	
1997	Serale, Perez and Grohe	
1998	Casillas Hernandez Manuel	Artur Pinto
1999-01	Casillas	Pinto
2002	George Nok and Albino Adot Oryem	
2005-6	Adot	

## PILGRIM'S REST, SABIE ([1875] 1924–1977)

Because of the gold rush, Pilgrim's Rest is the oldest Catholic settlement in our area. Fr Walsh OMI came to Pilgrim's Rest in 1875. He built the first church, a little *rondavel*, but as it can not be traced, Barberton claims to be the first. In those days, travelling between Pilgrim's Rest and Durban took a long time. When Fr Walsh arrived, he found that many of the diggers had already left for Barberton, which seemed to hold out more for "striking it rich". Fr Walsh moved to Lydenburg and then back to Pretoria from where he originally came.

When we started in 1924, Pilgrim's Rest was a place for our travelling priests. In the diaries of White Waters, it is regularly mentioned that Msgr Riegler stayed over on Saturdays, coming from Barberton, to say holy Mass on Sunday in Pilgrim's Rest, on his way back to Lydenburg. In



Fr Josef Steger with Frs Klose and Alfred Ziegler.



Church of the Sacred Heart in Pilgrim's Rest, built in 1928.

1928, Msgr Mohn built the church of the Sacred Heart. He was well supported by the local mine and the Catholics, mainly of Italian origin. The place was looked after from Lydenburg. As Sabie and Graskop developed, it was decided to open a parish. Fr Arsenault, a diocesan priest, was the first one to settle in Pilgrim's Rest. He was also the only one who could handle the bioscope machinery on weekends for the little town. In 1965, Fr Engelhardt moved in, lucky for him, he had the same surname as the rich Engelhardts in Sabie. They donated the money for a new church in Sabie, called St Luke's, as well as a brand new priests' house and a new church in Simile called Charles Borromeo. It was opened on 12 January 1975 and Fr Lechner was the parish priest. In 1977, Fr Lechner moved to Lydenburg and the parish was looked after by Fr Dora, a diocesan priest. Because of shortage of priests, the parish was divided up: Sabie being cared for from Bongani and Pilgrim's Rest and Graskop belonging to Waterval.



The church of Sabie, dedicated to St Charles Borromeo and inaugurated on 26 January 1975.



**Reunion:** Fr Tarcisio Agostoni, Superior General of the FSCJ, and Fr Georg Klose, Superior General of the MFSC, celebrate the merging of the two Comboni Institutes in Rome, in 1979.



**Holy See, Rome:** Fr Tarcisio Agostoni (†2012), on behalf of the members of the General Councils of the two Institutes, talks to Pope Paul VI.

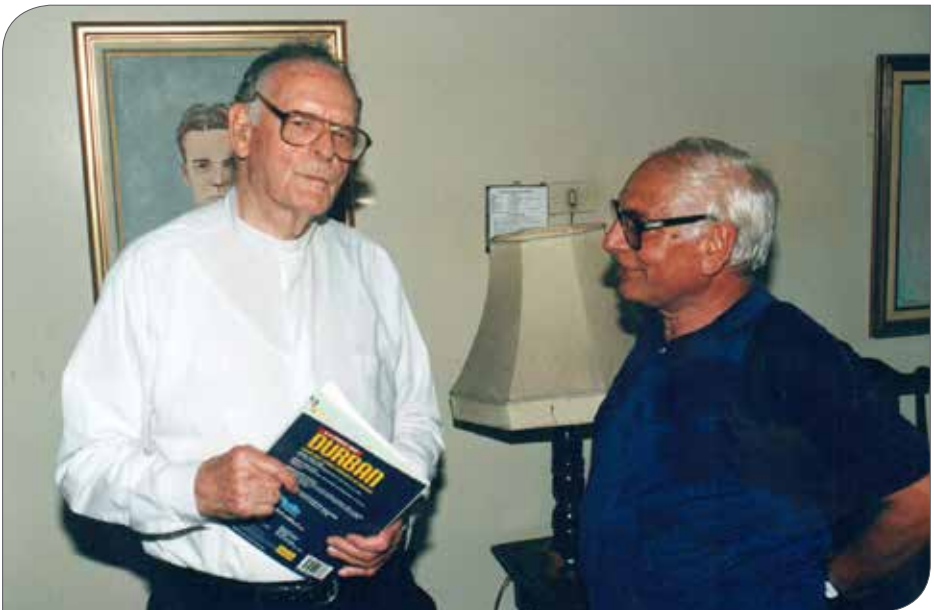


**Maria Trost, Lydenburg:** A group of the 'working force' of Witbank Diocese in 1979, pose for a photo with Bishop Anton Reiterer.





**Towards a Local Church:** Episcopal ordination of Mogale Paul Nkhumishe (†2012), on 14 February 1982. He was Bishop of Witbank until 2000, when he became Bishop of Polokwane.



**Durban:** Archbishop Dennis Hurley (†2004) during a meeting with Fr Giovambattista Antonini (†2017), the Comboni Missionary responsible for the Comboni Press in Rome.



**Glen Cowie, Limpopo:** Apostolic Delegate to Southern Africa, Archbishop Ambrose De Paoli (†2007), greets people during the feast of the parish in 1996.



**Witbank:** Diocesan Bishop Mogale Paul Nkhumishe blesses his new house in the presence of many missionaries, local priests, religious and lay people.



**1994 Elections:** Fr James Calvera, an electoral observer, with Bro. Ludwig Brand [†1998].



**Cook:** Fr Rafael Perez prepares a Spanish *Paella* under the supervision of Bro. Brand.



**Glen Cowie:** Two General Assistants (Bro. Guillermo Casas and Fr Giuseppe Filippi), on a visit to the Comboni Mission and community of Glen Cowie, in 1985.



**Comboni Media Centre:** Fr Anton Pramstrahler (†2016), the founder of *Worldwide*, was succeeded as editor of the magazine by Fr Fabio Baldan (1998-2001) and by Fr Efrem Tresoldi (2004-2012).



**Maria Trost:** Fr Alois Plankensteiner (†2012) (Bro. Erich Fischnaller in the background).



**Meeting:** Fr Konrad Nefzger (†2019) and Fr Richard Lechner (†1979), Superior General of the MFSC.



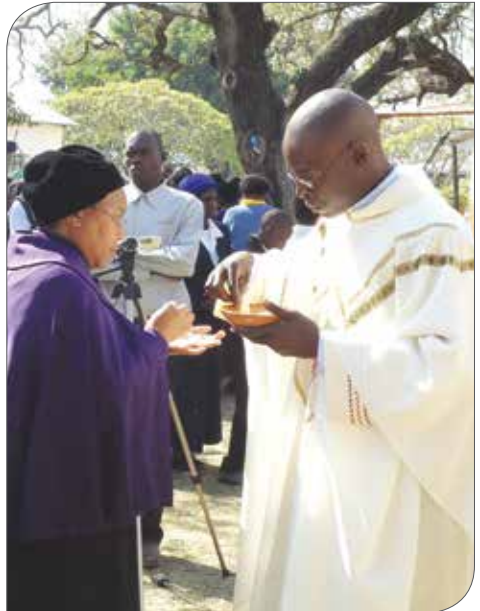
**Soweto:** The Archbishop of Johannesburg, His Grace Buti Tlhagale, during a celebration in Phiri. Fr Francis Manana was its parish priest between 2008 and 2014.



**Friendship:** Fr Jude Burgers after the celebration of his Silver Jubilee, with Fr Peter-John Pearson, Vicar General of Cape Town and director of the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office.



**Colombia:** Fr Gordon Rees worked for nine years in the Latin American country.



**Acornhoek:** Priestly ordination of Anthony Mkhari who was assigned to work in Malawi-Zambia.



**Philippines:** Fr Vincent Mkhabela with a community of the archipelago of more than 7 000 islands, in which he worked as vocation promotor.



**Molepane:** Priestly ordination of Kgomotso Sebopela, by Bishop Joe Sandri of Witbank.



**Chad:** Fr Donald Magoma has been working in Chad since his ordination.



**Veteran:** Fr Aldo Chisté celebrated his priestly Golden Jubilee in 2008.



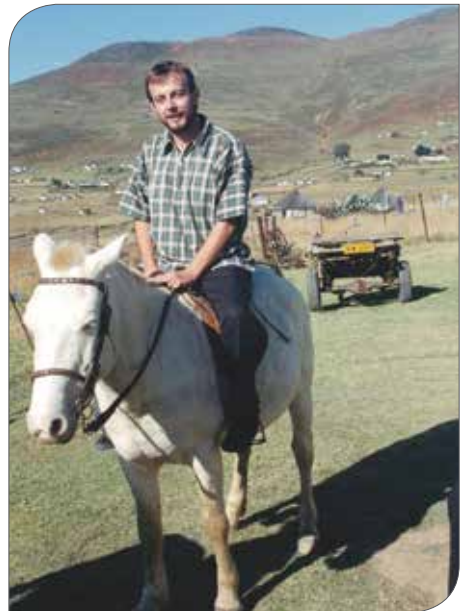
**Vatican City:** Bro. Francis Padovan with Pope John Paul II, after the morning Mass, at the private chapel of the Pontiff.



**Fallen workers:** Fr Bruno Serale, Fr Vitus Grohe and Mrs Mbatha died in a car crash near Middelburg, Mpumalanga. Several other confrères also met their death on South African roads.



**Justice & Peace:** After leaving the RSA, Fr Anton Maier (†2005) worked at the UN, in New York.

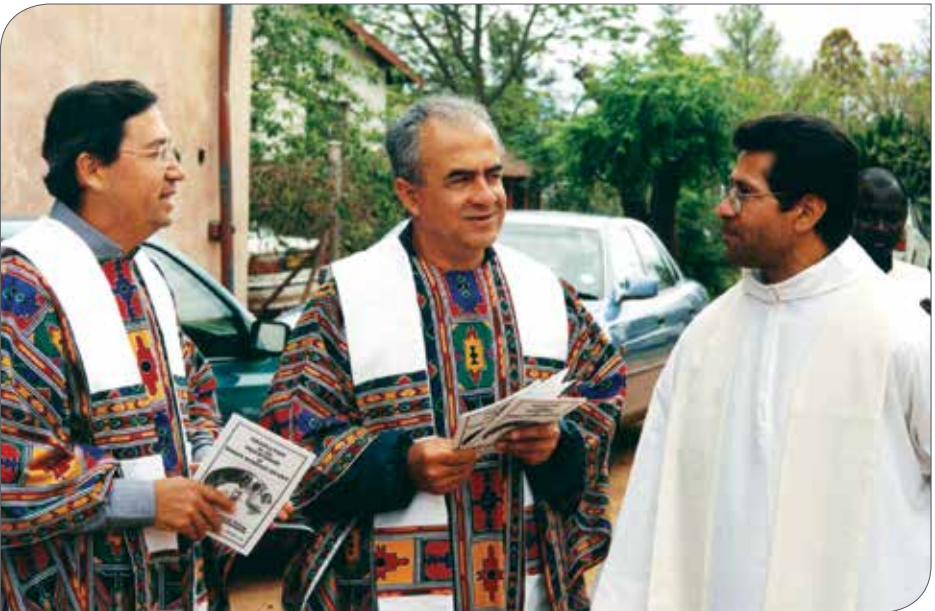


**Evangelisation:** Fr Giorgio Stefani (†2005) during the years he spent in Kokstad Diocese.





**Golden priest:** Fr Günther Brosig celebrated his 50 years of priesthood in Glen Cowie. The Bishop of Witbank, Paul Mandla Khumalo CMM, is waited upon by the Comboni Provincial, Fr Fabio Baldan.



**Mexican confrères:** Fr Manuel Casillas, Fr Luis Carranza and 'boxing coach' Fr José Manuel Baeza share a light moment before a liturgical celebration in Glen Cowie.



**Aggiornamento:** From 1997 to 2009, South Africa welcomed, every two years, the Comboni Year of Ongoing Formation, first at the Lumko Institute and then at the Comboni Centre in Pretoria.



**Mamelodi:** Celebration of the first anniversary of the canonisation of St Daniel Comboni, in St Peter Claver Parish, with Father General, Teresino Serra.



**Gugulethu:** Blessing by Bishop Nkhumishe of the new frail care wing of the Old Age Home, in September 1993. Also present were: Fr M. Roth, Fr A. Matordes, Alan McGinty and Fr A. Medina.



**Recreation:** Former Bishop of Witbank, Anton Reiterer (†2000), with Bro. Alois Adolf Sailer (†1999), Fr Josef Knapp (†2019) and Fr Matthias Roth (†1999), while being served refreshments by Sr Marianne Graf.



**Acornhoek Mission:** Fr Chico de Medeiros at Mapusha Weaving Centre, a development project started by Fr Anton Graf.



**Witbank:** Inauguration of the monument to St Daniel Comboni with Fr Patrick Gallagher SPS, Bishop Paul Nkhumalo CMM, Mrs Ingrid Baggeroehr and Fr Benno Singer, Provincial Superior at the time.



**Mahube Valley:** Fr Chico de Medeiros supervising the building of the toilets near the hall that functions as church (the parish house and catechism rooms were built later).



**Parish of St Daniel Comboni:** Fr James Calvera was the first parish priest of the newly established parish of Mahube Valley, Mamelodi. He replaced its caretaker, Fr Chico de Medeiros.



**Builder:** Bro. Anton Otto Hüber (†1991) served in various missions.



**Developer:** Bro. Erich Fischnaller worked in Glen Cowie and in Mount Frère.



**Gardener:** Bro. Hermann Engelhardt (†2019) taking care of the garden in Maria Trost.



**DPC meeting, 1983:** Fr Ted Howlett, Deacon Vic Pereira, Bro. A. Kurz, Benedict Maphanga, Fr Efreem Tresoldi, Deacon Donahue from Barberton, Bishop Reiterer, Sr Cecilia and Fr Rudy.



**Eastern Cape:** Fr Mariano Perez conducting a prayer service outside a chapel which was being restored in Mount Frère.



**Provincial Assembly.** Family photo of the Comboni Missionaries working in South Africa, after their annual general meeting in Maria Trost, in 2008.



**Pastoral care:** Fr Jérôme Soku Missay has been working in Acomhoek Mission since 2010, while he was still a deacon.



**Mahube Valley:** Fr Andrew Bwalya proclaims the gospel. He worked and studied journalism in South Africa, before being appointed editor of the Nairobi-based *New People* magazine.





**Waterval mission:** Fr Aldrin Janito Palacios and Fr Rafael Armada visiting some of their neighbours, in 2008.



**Provincial House:** Ms Anna Mohoni and Ms Norah Phiri with Fr John Maneschg, in Johannesburg.



**Pretoria:** Fr John Maneschg and Fr Antonio Benetti.



**Tea break:** Fr Alan McGinty (†2005), Fr Manuel Gutierrez (†2009) and Fr Aurelio Cervantes Fajardo relax between meetings at Maria Trost.



**Acornhoek:** Fr Jean Philippe Lokpo with some parishioners.



**Malelane:** Newly ordained Fr Francis Manana with his parish priest, Fr Francis Morscher.



**Mercy House:** The Comboni Missionaries have been supporting the shelter for refugees in Johannesburg, under the care of Diane Beamish, for a number of years.



**Unconventional Mass:** Fr Janito Aldrin celebrating a house Mass in an outstation of Waterval Mission.



**Farwell:** Sister Marianne Graf, accompanied by her brother, Fr Anton (†2019), and Bishop Joe Sandri of Witbank, retired from the Pastoral Centre of Maria Trost, after 32 years of selfless service.



**Acomhoek:** Father General, Enrique Sánchez, and General Assistant, Fr Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie, on a visit to the community of Acomhoek, Mpumalanga, in 2011.



**Pietermaritzburg:** Fr José Luis Román and Fr Jeremias dos Santos Martins (formators of the students) with Fr Bernhard Riegel (parish priest of St Joan of Arc and St Martin the Porres).



**Comrades Marathon:** Fr Andrew Wanjohi, Parish Priest of Silverton, showed his Kenyan stamina, and entered the grueling competition to raise funds for the parish, in 2009.



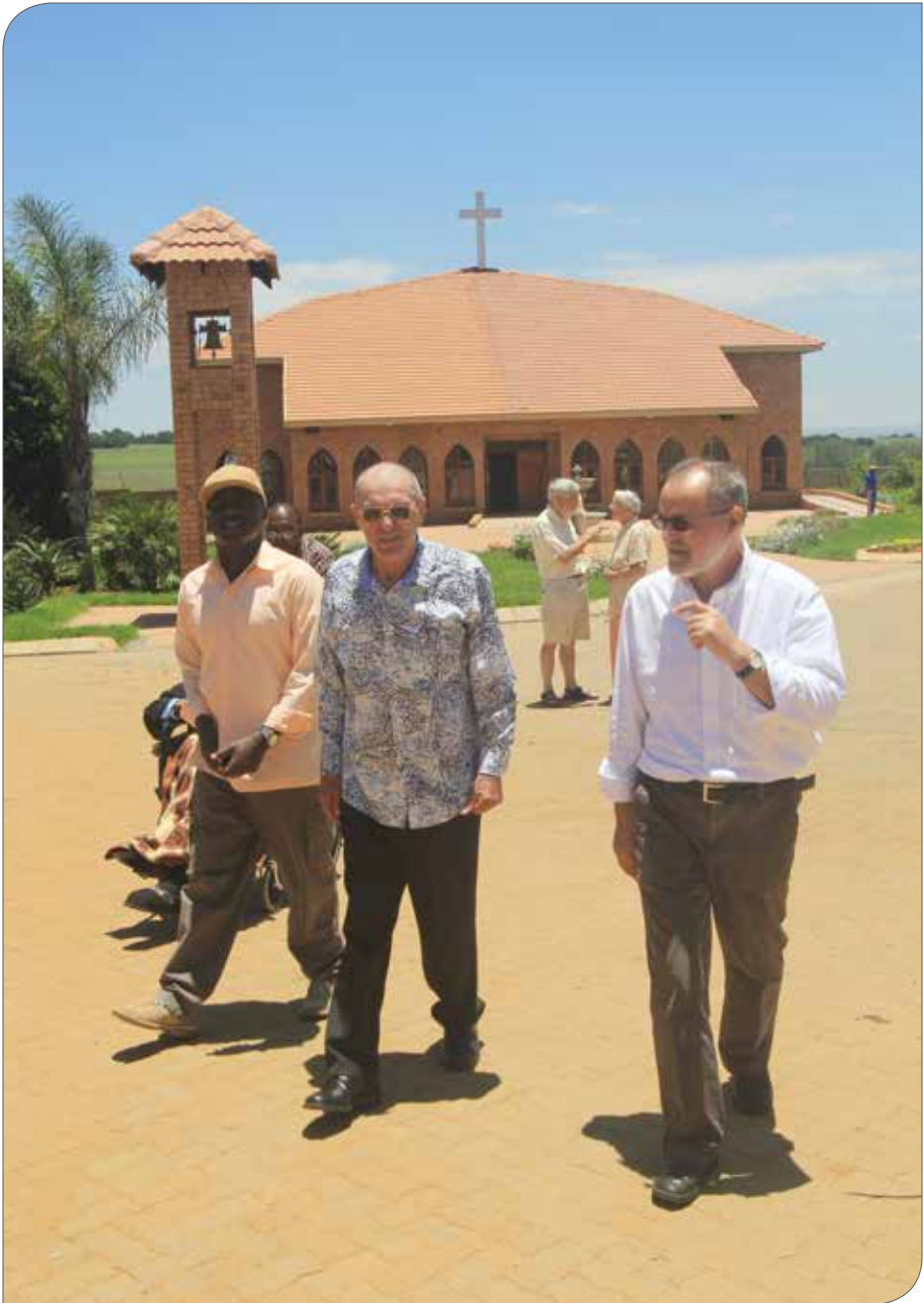
**Pietermaritzburg:** Fr Paul Kambo 'increasing' the Church. The Parish of St Joan of Arc has been served by the Comboni Missionaries since January 2002, when the scholasticate was opened.



**Courtesy visit:** Fr General Enrique Sánchez with Card. Wilfried Napier, Fr Jeremias dos Santos and Fr Jude Burgers.



**Professor:** Fr Vincent Reig at Cedara Theological Institute.



**Phumula:** Fr Charles Kuppelwieser (†2015) built Phumula Old Age Village, after building Sizanani, a multi-purpose village, near Bronkhorstspuit. Here with Fr Jeremias dos Santos and Robert Ndung'u.

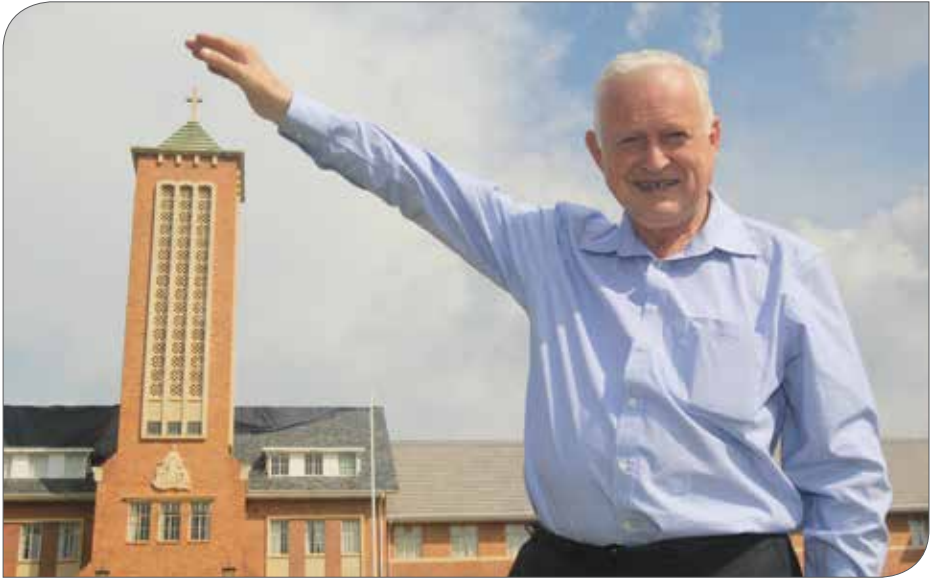


**Scholasticate, 2014:** Provincial Superior, Fr Jeremias dos Santos, celebrates the Eucharist in which the theology students renewed their religious vows of chastity, obedience and poverty.



**Soweto:** Fr Benno Singer preaching in Zondi. The Comboni Missionaries left the parishes in Soweto – Phiri, Zola and Zondi – at the end of 2014, to take care of the parish of Orange Farm.





**National Seminary:** Biblical scholar, Fr John Maneschg, taught in the seminaries of Hammanskraal and St John Vianney (pictured) for almost 30 years.



**Papal honour.** Fr John was one of the four lecturers of St John Vianney distinguished with the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*, on 6 November 2013, for their life-long dedication to the formation of the clergy.



**Silverton, Pretoria:** Closure of the celebration of the 90 years of the Comboni presence in South Africa and of the 150 years of St Daniel Comboni's *Plan for the regeneration of Africa*.



“It would be very easy and sweet to sacrifice my blood and my life to co-operate in the accomplishment of this holy Work.”  
 (Daniel Comboni, 23 January 1861)

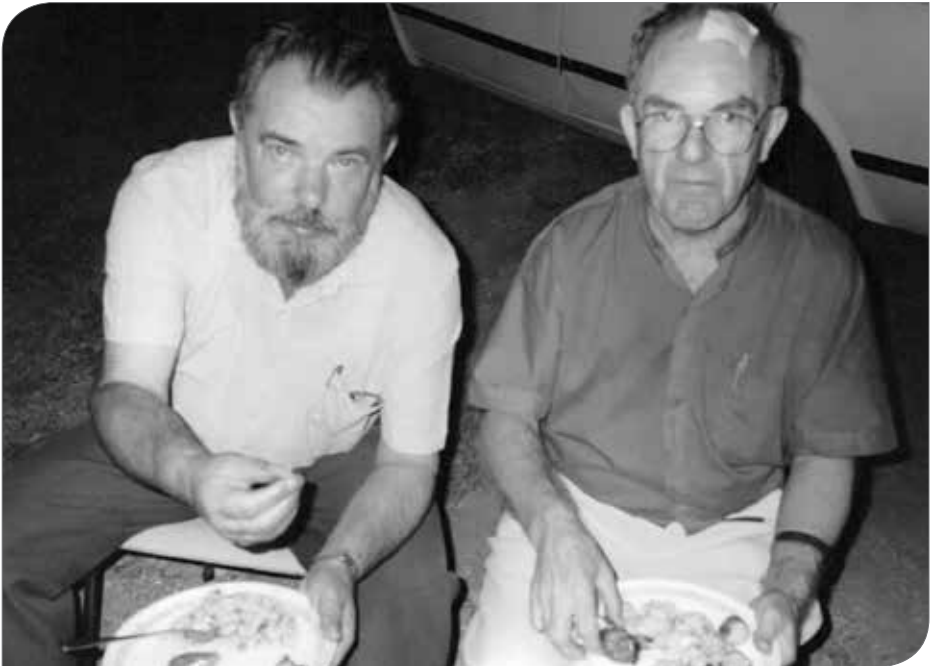
“I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”  
 (Nelson Mandela, 20 April 1964)

**Mandela capture site.** Fr Manuel Casillas and Scholastic Mina Alber at Howick, where Madiba was arrested on 5 August 1962, after being on the run from the apartheid government for 17 months.

## STEELPORT (1969)

The beginnings of our presence in Steelport go back to the time when it was an outstation of Maria Trost. The small St Dominic's school was the place to look for. When Burgersfort was separated from Maria Trost as an independent parish, Steelport became part of Burgersfort. In 1969, Bishop Reiterer bought a farm from Mrs Walker. The idea was an investment for the diocese, because there were already rumours that a chrome factory would be started in the area.

Bro. Huber and Bro. Olbort, later Bro. Niederbacher as well and their house chaplain, Fr Tremmel, had other ideas and started to develop the farm, although the bishop told them otherwise. In 1975, the farm was bought by the chrome mine and a portion of the place was left for the church with free water and electricity. The Combonis were caretakers for those years, the diocesan priests followed to develop the new parish. Fr Lephaka and after him Fr Stahuber, diocesan priests, started the pastoral work in that vast area, cut out from the parish of Burgersfort. Fr Stahüber made use of his building talent and erected one structure after the other. He had good sources to support him and therefore his place was also an attraction for thieves and robbers. In one incident, he was nearly killed. He had to give up his work when he suffered a stroke and became a resident of St Joseph's Home in Middelburg.



Fr Anton Graf and Fr Ludwig Stahuber, celebrating one of his birthdays. Fr Stahuber had been attacked by robbers who left him badly injured. The deanery organized a *braai* to show him solidarity.

## MIDDELBURG (1935–1990)

In 1924, Middelburg was a small place. Fr Klassert, from Witbank, looked after the few white Catholics. Fr Angerer had to make the same trip to look after the black Catholics. In October 1935, a house in Middelburg was up for sale and Msgr Mohn together with his advisers bought the place with the intention of opening a hostel. Fr Steidle was appointed first director and he moved in on 11 December 1935. In 1931, Fr Klassert had built St Joseph's near the railway line. After the purchase of the hostel, the stable was transformed into the new church, the old one was bought later by the Apostolic Church. Fr Steidle was supported by Fr Reiterer, later by Klebing and Bieg. In 1939, Fr Steidle moved to Barberton and Fr Riegler was appointed to Middelburg. Not for long, because he was appointed Prefect Apostolic and Fr Reiterer settled in Middelburg. He was famous for his "Ticky evenings" to raise funds and he was able to build a new St Joseph's during the war years with the help of the Brothers and the Italian prisoners of war.

In 1950, Fr Reiterer was transferred to the cathedral and Fr Roth carried on in the hostel. He was replaced by Fr Neher in 1961, only to come back again, when Fr Neher left in 1970. In 1976, the hostel had to close because Middelburg closed the English section of the High School and Fr Plankensteiner carried on as parish priest. In 1977, Fr Nefzger had to look after Middelburg and, when he was transferred to Bongani in 1987, Fr Ellinger carried on till 1990 when the Franciscans took over this big parish. When the hostel had to close, the Bishop decided that it become St Joseph's Home for the Aged. The parish was always identified with the hostel. In 1980, the new priest's house and parish centre were built and home and parish became independent.



St Joseph's, opened and blessed by the Apostolic Delegate M. Lukas, on 30 May 1946.



The old hostel bought in 1935 and known as the 'Rat Hole'.

As Middelburg developed, so the parish had to develop. The outstations remained small; schools were built at Rondebosch, Keerom, Moiplaas, Blesbok and Eikeboom and closed later on. The mines and power stations were always an uncertainty, because of the fluctuating population. But Mhluzi grew. In 1950, the first church was built called Maria de Fatima. In 1970, Fr Rossmanith built the new Maria de Fatima church. The old church became the parish hall. By 1980, classrooms had to be built to provide for catechism classes and a gallery had to accommodate the growing congregation. By 2000, a new church was built in Mhluzi to care for the increasing numbers.

The Franciscan Sisters have a long standing connection to Middelburg. First, the Sisters tried to be mother to



Fr Konrad Nefzger and Fr Richard Lechner.



J. Deiner, Fr Joseph Okelo and D. Costello.

the “lost boarders”. When the hostel was transformed into the Home for the Aged, the Sisters helped in the kitchen and Sr Floriana was asked to be Matron. They bought the neighbouring house and it became their place for formation. In 2011, the Sisters moved into their new house and the old residence is now part of St Joseph’s Home.



Frs W. Wanner, Plankensteiner and Nefzger.

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1935	Steidle	
1936-37	Steidle and Reiterer	Oberstaller and Dorn
1938	Steidle, Klebing and Bieg	Hüber and Dorn
1939	Riegler, Reiterer and Klebing	Dorn
1940	Reiterer and Klebing	Lamprecht
1941-44	Reiterer	Lamprecht and Dorn
1945-49	Reiterer and Koch	Dorn
1950	Roth	Dorn and Cagol
1951	Roth and Rauch	
1952-55	Roth and Beck	
1956-57	Roth and Fischer J.	
1958	Roth, Fischer, Neher and Nagler	
1959-60	Roth and Neher	
1961-64	Neher and Kuppelwieser	
1965	Neher, Singer, Steger and Maier	
1966-69	Neher and Maier	
1970-73	Roth and Rossmannith	
1974-75	Roth, Eder, Plankensteiner and Wanner	
1976-77	Eder, Plankensteiner and Wanner	
1977-78	Nefzger and Wanner	
1978-86	Nefzger	
1987-90	Ellinger	
25.2.83	Bishop Reiterer retires in Middelburg	

### **BELFAST (1942–1990)**

In 1942, Mr O’Sullivan donated his farm, Foxhills, to the church. In those days, the whole area of Belfast, Watterval Boven and Machadadorp was looked after by travelling priests. In Tonteldoos, the O’Gradys had built a little church and from the time of Fr Riegler they had services on a regular basis. World War II made it impossible to send a priest to Belfast; movement was restricted; some were in the “camp” and no supplies from outside could come in. Bro. Schmid was the first to settle at Foxhills and, a year later, Bro. Kurz came. He also started “priestless celebrations”; he knew the Zulu hymns by heart. The first permanent priest was Fr Demel (1951–1956); before him there was a coming and going—Fr Schöpf, Fr Habicher, Fr Koch



Fr Kladnik in front of the church of Foxhills.



The church of Foxhills, financed by Fr Kladnik and built by Bro. Dorn, was blessed on 26 August 1962.



Fr Albert Pfanner (1973–1983).



Bro. J. Gruber (1947–1951, 1967–1969, 1974–1975).

and Fr Kladnik. When Fr Demel took over the cathedral in Witbank in 1956, Fr Sieberer moved to Belfast. He had difficulties adjusting to the climate and went to the *Lowveld* to be the first parish priest of Malelane. His place was taken by Fr Kladnik, from 1959 to 1963. With the help of his Yugoslavian friends, Fr Kladnik built the church on the farm. When Fr Kladnik started in White River in 1964, he was replaced by Fr Roth. In 1968, Fr Singer settled in Belfast and in 1973 Fr Pfanner. In 1983, Fr Roth moved back to Belfast, but in 1990, he was not able to continue because his eye sight deteriorated rapidly. The Franciscans from Kokstad carried on. It was part of the exchange agreement between the Franciscans of Kokstad and the Combonis. It was also the end of our presence in Belfast.

Belfast was always a point of reference and stop over for people going to the *Lowveld* and up to Witbank and in the direction of the Reef. First the priests stayed at Foxhills. When the farm was let to outsiders, the priest moved to town. It was also nearer to the people who had been forced to leave their old homes and were resettled on the Stoffberg Road. The house and the little church in Belfast were sold and the new parish centre was established in Siyathuthuka. The church, built by Fr Kladnik on the farm, is the sole reminder of where it all began.

Foxhills was well suited to cattle farming. The Brothers made Belfast their home. In the beginning, Bro. Schmid did pioneer work. He had started in Maria Trost, organised White Waters and settled in Belfast in 1942.





Church of Machadodorp, blessed on 21 December 1960.

Bro. Gruber, Bro. Kurz, Bro. Hirschlein and Bro. Häring were all farmers at Foxhills. Their work and efforts provided food for the table and support to the mission. The last farmer in Belfast was Bro. Seibold. A school was built on the farm and the children came from the nearby township. The number fell dramatically when people were chased from their old homes, but the children nearby still came to Umeli Primary School.

**DEVELOPMENT OF BELFAST PARISH, TONTELDOOS:** the O’Grady family were the only Catholics in the area. They built a little church. The priests from Maria Trost came there to celebrate holy Mass monthly.

St Christopher’s in Waterval was built in 1958 and blessed by Bishop Reiterer on 11 January 1959. The Stations of the Cross are a creation of Pat Skileter, a local artist. The different Stations were donated and paid for by individuals, Catholic and non-Catholic.

**MACHADADORP:** Bro. Dorn built the church, Fr Kladnik provided the finances and Bishop Reiterer blessed the church on 21 December 1960.

**WATERVAL—LOCATION:** On 11 May 1961, Bishop Reiterer blessed the church, Bro. Dorn was the builder and Fr Kladnik raised the funds.

**FOXHILLS:** The farm was donated in 1942. Twenty years later the beautiful church



Church of St Christopher, in Waterval Boven, blessed on 11 January 1959.

was blessed by Bishop Reiterer. Bro. Dorn and Fr Kladnik and his friends made it possible. It was on 26 August 1962. Since 1990, the church is a strange reminder of times past: people had to move, the farm is hired out and the church serves as a farm building.

**ST ANNE'S:** Belfast had an English medium High School and boarding facilities. To provide for the Catholic students, St Anne's was built in town and blessed on 16 December 1963.

## BELFAST

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1942		Schmid
1943		Schmid and Kurz
1944		Schmid and Kurz
1945		Schmid and Kurz
1946		Schmid and Kurz
1947	Schöpf	Kurz and Gruber
1948	Schöpf	Gruber
1949	Stempfle	Gruber
1950	Kladnik	Gruber and Hirschlein
1951	Demel	Gruber and Hirschlein
1952	Demel	Oberstaller
1953	Demel	Kurz
1954–1956	Demel and Engelhardt	Kurz
1957–1958	Sieberer	Hirschlein
1959–1963	Kladnik	Kurz and Hirschlein
1964–1968	Roth	Hirschlein and Gruber
1968–1972	Singer	Seibold
1973–1983	Pfanner	Gruber
1983–1990	Roth	



Bro. Anton Kurz and Bro. Franz Xaver Dorn in front of the parish house in Foxhills.

**ST ANNE'S, SIYATHUTHUKA:** On 12 September 1982, the new St Anne's church, in Siyathuthuka, was blessed. The building was supervised by Fr Pfanner. The property in town was sold and the new parish centre developed in Siyathuthuka. Fr Roth built the hall and under Bishop Khumalo the new priests' house was built. The parish is scattered, not many people live in that farming area.

#### **JAGDLUST, CAROLINA, ELUKWATHINI (1949–2004)**

Only a few Catholics lived in the Carolina area. Fr Klassert and Fr Ille visited the people on a regular basis as travelling priests. From 1932 onwards, Fr Morscher passed there five times a year. Msgr Riegler bought Jagdlust, a place between Carolina and Badplaas and Fr Rauch and Fr Jungnickl kept vigil in that lonely place. They even started a small school, but there were not many children and there was no future. In 1951, extensive grounds were bought in Carolina and Fr Kladnik was the first parish priest of Carolina. He stayed at that time in Jagdlust but on 30 January 1952, he moved to Carolina and Jagdlust



Fr Albin Kladnik.



Blessing of the church in Carolina, by Bishop Reiterer.



Bp Reiterer with Fr Kuppelwieser.



Church in Badplaas, blessed on 3.2.1963.



Holy Trinity, in Kromdraai, blessed on 23.7.1978.

was sold. With the help of his Yugoslavian friends, he built the church which was blessed by Bishop Reiterer—his first church blessing—on 31 May 1956. Fr Beck was in Carolina from 1959 to 1963 and was followed by Fr Arsenault who built the church in the township. Holy Trinity was opened on 7 April 1969.

In 1975, Fr Kuppelwieser moved to Carolina, just in time to build up the structures for the new parish. Carolina did not develop and remained a small town, surrounded by farms. But in nearby KaNgwane, people were dumped into the homeland and big communities came out of nowhere. Fr Charles collected the funds and built churches, pre-schools and even a home for the aged. He also had the charm to win over the Holy Rosary Sisters to run the clinic in Badplaas, the Benedictine Sisters of St Alban to take over the Home for the Aged in Gugulethu and the Daughters to teach catechism and to run the pre-school. Fr Charles wanted to move to Nhlazatshe, but in 1989, he was in disagreement with the diocesan bishop and moved to Bronkhorstspuit.

The new parish priest, Fr Alfonso Medina made his home in Nhlazatshe, supported by Fr Mariano Perez as assistant, and Carolina is now an outstation. Fr Mariano helped till 1992, then he was needed in Nelspruit. In 1995, he returned to Nhlazatshe

as parish priest and, in 1996, he could share the work with Fr Joseph Okelo. Gugulethu needed a handyman and Bro. Sailer was willing to help. He successfully started development projects, did the shopping, glued broken chairs and fixed leaking pipes and taps. When Fr Roth was no longer able to carry on in Belfast he 'retired' to Gugulethu. He was a friend to the residents and chaplain to the Sisters. After Fr Alfonso, Fr Okelo worked in Nhlazatshe with Fr Singer. When Fr Singer was elected Provincial, Fr Okelo had to carry on, but not for long, because he was transferred from Nhlazatshe to the Sudan: rotation was in motion again. By 2004, the parish was taken care of by diocesan priests.

### JAGDLUST

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1949	Jungnickl	
1950	Jungnickl and Rauch	
1951	Kladnik and Rauch	Gruber

### CAROLINA

Year	Priests	Brothers
1952	Kladnik	Gruber
1953–58	Kladnik	Oberstaller
1959–63	Beck	Oberstaller
1975–89	Kuppelwieser	Pfeifer (1978–80)



Church in Carolina, blessed by Bishop Reiterer, on 31 May 1956.

## ST BENEDICT, GUGULETHU

Fr Charles was looking for Sisters to run the Home for the Aged in Gugulethu. He invited the Benedictine Sisters of St Alban, who were working at Eshowe. The first three Sisters, Sr Gertrude Morgan, Sr Conradine Fraunhofer and Sr Raphaela Raunft, arrived in August 1984 to start work in Gugulethu. In September 1984, the first aged people were admitted to the home and very quickly it was full to capacity. The buildings only were completed in February 1985. The home was registered with the Department of Health and Welfare in 1987 and is now subsidised by the government. Because of a delay in registration and political unrest, the official opening and blessing was only possible on 16 July 1988, by Bishop Nkhumishe.

The big church at Gugulethu serves also as parish church for Elukwathini. Fr Charles came twice a week



Fr Matthias Roth.

## BIBLE'S TEACHING MINISTRY

BY FR HANS MANESCHG

On 28 January 1974, I, a missionary aged 32, arrived by boat on the shores of South Africa. After a few hours stopover in Durban, I headed for the Mother House of the Missionaries of Mariannhill where, for a few days, I enjoyed their hospitality. This great mission was established by Abbot Franz Pfanner where, as far back as 1924, a number of our first missionaries were welcomed to learn the Zulu language and culture.

After a night trip by train, I reached Pretoria the next day, where a seminarian took me to my destination: St Peter's Seminary in Hammanskraal. From the moment of my arrival in South Africa, the signs of full-fledged Apartheid were visible everywhere. St Peter's itself—in conformity with the Group Areas Act—was a seminary for non-whites, while white seminarians studied at St John Vianney in the white area of Waterkloof. Looking back, I am grateful that I asked to be engaged as a teacher

and missionary at St Peter's which, far from being an island, was as a conference centre a rallying point of the Black Consciousness Movement and of other anti-apartheid activities. Small Christian communities in the rural areas around the seminary offered ample opportunities to meet ordinary people while celebrating Christian faith with them at weekends. As racial tension and Apartheid repression was increasing daily, this could not but affect the seminary community as well. The climax was reached with the students' revolt in Soweto in June 1976. This spilled over to other townships throughout South Africa.

In 1977, I was recalled to Europe to assist as formator at our international scholasticate community in Innsbruck. The five years of sharing life in a community of young confrères was for me a precious school of learning. Oppression continued more viciously in South Africa and elsewhere. In Latin America, Archbishop Oscar Romero became, like many in our country, the victim of brutal killers on the 24 March 1980. When I returned to South Africa at the beginning

from Carolina to celebrate holy Mass with the Sisters, the residents of the Home and the community of Elukwathini. In 1986, Fr Vim Erkens came to Gugulethu and for two years the home had a 'permanent priest'. Also in 1986, Bro. Seibold and Bro. Sailer made their home in Gugulethu. They were welcome as handymen and they started garden projects. Bro. Seibold moved to Maria Trost and Bro. Sailer continued till his death in 1993. When Fr Roth could not continue in Belfast because of his poor eyesight, he came to the home in 1991. In 1999, when he became blind, he moved to Germany and, after a few months, he died in Ellwangen, on 17 December 1999.



Bro. Adolf Sailer.



Fr Hans Maneschg lecturing at St John Vianney.

of 1984, I returned to the ministry of teaching Scripture—but now at racially integrated seminaries: St Peter's in Hammanskraal and later in Garsfontein for philosophy students and St John Vianney for theology students. These were in the years preceding the release of Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1991, years of escalating violence and repression, of conflict between the Apartheid State and its opponents, particularly the South African Council of Churches which embarked on a prophetic confrontation with the State ideology as witnessed in the well-

known *Kairos Document* (1985). Engagement in pastoral ministry throughout these 40 years (on a full time basis in KwaGuqa in 1991-92 and later 2002 in Pietermaritzburg) brought to greater maturity my interest in the Bible as a voice of prophecy. It had—I believe—an impact in extending my engagement beyond the seminaries to St Augustine College since 2000 and the Catholic Bible College. Scripture classes at both Institutes were attended by lay people who, while continuing their jobs, embarked on biblical training in view of better serving the community.

One basic conviction (apart from a vivid awareness of my limitations and failures) occupies my mind as I look back and forth: it is the outreach to others, the empathy with those who suffer, and the sympathy with those who search that is the seedbed of knowing better the Redeemer God who speaks to us through Scripture. But then I might be asked one day: "John, did you really live by what you believed in?"

In June 1989, there was the farewell celebration for Fr Charles, the founder of the Home. The residents of the Home, the Administration Board and the parish thanked him for his generosity. Gugulethu (meaning “Our treasure”), had become a haven for the aged and a centre for parish functions. In September 1993, Bishop Nkhumishe opened and blessed a new extension to the home, the wing for the care of the frail. Twelve patients could be accommodated in this new house.

The Benedictine Sisters of St Alban built their own convent and are now well established in the Diocese of Witbank. The convent will be their headquarters in the future and their presence is a blessing for Nhlazatshe and the old people they take care of.



Fr Alfonso Medina with youth.

## NHLASATSHE, GUGULETHU

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1986-88		Seibold and Sailer
1989	Medina Alfonso and Cervantes Aurelio	Sailer
1990	Medina, Cervantes and Roth	Sailer
1991	Medina, Perez Mariano and Roth	Sailer
1992	Medina, Perez and Roth	Sailer
1993	Medina, Roth and Alan McGinty	Sailer
1995	Perez, Gutierrez Manuel	
1996	Perez, Gutierrez and Okelo Joseph	
1997	Gutierrez and Okelo	
1998	Okelo	
1999	Okelo and Singer	
2003-04	Okelo	



## WHITE WATERS (1934)

White Waters, Bokberg, Himmelfahrtsberg, Kalvarienberg: these are all names for the same place. Our pioneers were on the look out for a place in the *Lowveld*. The idea was to establish a centre from which to reach out to Nelspruit, White River, the Game Reserve and other places towards Bushbuckridge. The Swedish Mission sold White Waters, because they were too far away from the people. We bought it. Fr Stadtmüller and Fr Morscher went there as “Mr Smith” and “Mr Brown”; as “Mr Father” they would have had no chance.

On 25 January 1934, Fr Tremmel, Bro. Häring and Bro. Schmid moved in. By the end of 1939, the Franciscan Sisters followed. A small clinic and a boarding school were opened. They soon found out that their water supply was always on the stingy side and furthermore, it originated on the neighbour’s farm. He could have left them stranded high and dry at any time. But they settled in and, from White Waters, the church in Nelspruit was built, schools in White River, in Legogote and in Avalon. Bro. Hüber, Bro. Stengl and Bro. Hirschlein were the builders. Fr Baumgart started his mission life in White Waters and Fr Höfer followed him. Fr Baumgart moved to Maria Trost in 1939. After his early death in 1942, Fr Lechner became ‘ruler’ of the *Lowveld*, but in 1947, a more suitable place was found in Friedenheim, between Nelspruit and White River. White Waters became a retirement place; Fr Lechner provided transport in the beginning, because nobody had a driving license in White Waters; Fr Angerer became the caretaker of the Sisters.

The neighbours of White Waters, the Bedingfield family, were great benefactors of the place. They virtually financed the little church which was blessed on 30 June 1940. But they also had the ‘privilege’ of special holy Mass for ‘Europe-



Old mission of White Waters also known as Bokberg, Himmelfahrtsberg or Kalvarienberg, in 1940.

ans'. Another special guest was Miss Tindall from Barberton. She had been a pillar of the church in Barberton and, in her old age, the Sisters looked after her in White Waters.

Three of our confrères were buried at White Waters. First, Fr Zorn who was stung by bees: he went to hunt rabbits and stepped on a bee hive in the ground. They did not like such an intrusion and went after him in their thousands. It happened on Good Friday 1942. Fr Schöpf wrote in his diary: "Fr Schöpf went to White River and Plaston to call a doctor to Fr Zorn, but could not get a doctor. In the morning of 4 April, Dr De Cotten arrived and found Fr Zorn in a bad condition. At 2 p.m., Fr Zorn received the last sacraments. By 5 April, the doctor gave very little hope that Fr Zorn's kidneys would function again. On 6 April, Fr Zorn had improved a little. On 7 April, the doctor gave the order to transfer Fr Zorn to the hospital at Barberton. On 8 April, Fr Steidle phoned to say that the doctor had given up hope of saving Fr Zorn. Monsignor arrived and left for Barberton after a few hours. On 11 April, Fr Zorn died at Barberton at 10 o'clock p.m."

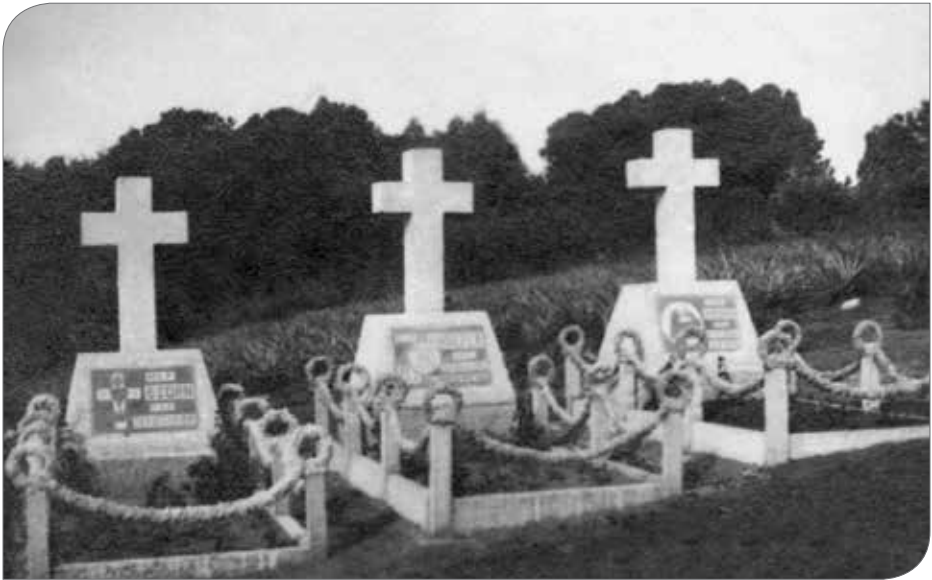
Fr Angerer was in Barberton when things happened in White Waters. He wrote in his diary: "5 April: Easter Sunday, in the afternoon Fr Superior came from White Waters by car. He fetched me to help, because Fr Zorn was seriously ill, having been stung by bees. The doctor of White River, Dr De Cotton took the matter very seriously. She said that he had only 48 hours to live. But he improved thanks to his



Msgr Mohn and Fr General, Musar.



Fr Lechner, at the grave of his friend, Fr Höfer.



Graves of Fr Zorn, Msgr Mohn and Fr Höfer, which were transferred to Maria Trost in 1963.

strong constitution. Fr Schöpf considered it no longer necessary to bring him immediately to hospital, although it would have been the best. The doctor and Mr and Mrs Beddingfield visited Father often and cared for him in all possible ways. Sister looked after him and somebody was with him all the time. The kidneys were affected and eventually the doctor ordered that Father had to be transferred to hospital.”

Dr De Cottens from White River wanted him in hospital in Barberton. An Ambulance Service existed already, but Fr Superior thought that *Baba Zulu* had a strong constitution and it was only after five days that the doctor gave the order that Fr Zorn should go to hospital. He died in Barberton the next day of kidney failure. Fr Zorn was the first priest who died in the Prefecture. It is said that at Fr Zorn’s funeral, Fr Höfer slipped when the coffin was lowered and Fr Höfer mumbled: “*Baba Zulu*, you pull me down.” A few weeks later, on 5 May 1942, Fr Höfer died of a rare blood disease which was never fully diagnosed. He was buried next to Fr Zorn.

The third grave had to be dug for Msgr Mohn who died on 5 June 1945. After his resignation in 1937, Msgr Mohn had to carry on as caretaker till Fr Riegler was appointed new Prefect Apostolic in July 1939. He first went to Glen Cowie, later to Natal and eventually he lived his last years in White Waters. He was always sickly (dropsy), but he kept his dry sense of humour. When he had a turn for the worse during his last days and miraculously recovered, his comment was: “*Diesmal waere es beinahe schief gegangen*” (This time it was a close miss).

When Fr Lechner moved to Friedenheim, White Waters was without transport. Fr Lechner helped from Friedenheim, but a better solution had to be found. Sr Ambrosia was the first to try: she did well, but when she drove into the garage she suddenly saw daylight again; the mud wall didn't stop her! Sr Leona very soon knew how to tame a lorry and took the transport under her wing. Fr Lechner bought a new lorry for Friedenheim and the old one was donated to White Waters.

Friedenheim was now the centre and the Bokberg carried on for a few more years, wonderful scenery and fresh air and little human disturbance. Then, we read in the diaries that in 1951, St Joseph's in Bongani was bought and White Waters was sold.

## WHITE WATERS

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1934-36	Tremmel	Schmid and Häring
1936-38	Tremmel and Baumgart	Hirschlein
1938	Baumgart, Klemm, Höfer and Zeifang	Oberstaller, Hüber, Hirschlein and Lamprecht
1939	Höfer, Zorn and Zeifang	Oberstaller, Hüber and Lamprecht
1940	Höfer, Zorn, Schöpf and Bieg	Hüber and Lamprecht
1941	Höfer, Zorn and Schöpf	
1942	Höfer, Zorn and Schöpf	
1943	Lechner, Schöpf	Feil
1944-45	Lechner, Schöpf and Mohn	Feil
1946-47	Lechner and Schöpf	Feil
1948-51	Angerer	

### WHITE RIVER (1958 [1934])

When we moved to White Waters, White River was an outstation, because very few people lived there; the same was true for Nelspruit. Malaria was still a real possibility in those days and these places were avoided. In the nineteen forties a place was bought in White River for a church. Fr Lechner was instrumental in the purchase. In 1958, the first parish priest moved



St Paul's first church.

into White River permanently, it was Fr Segeritz. St Paul's church was blessed the same year, on 19 October 1958. Fr Sieberer stayed in the place in 1962–63. Fr Kladnik made White River his home until 1980, when he had to leave because of ill health. The place was attractive and Fr Howlett, a diocesan priest, took over. The Combonis left White River at that time.



The new St Paul's, built as a hall and blessed as church on 19 October 1958.



Church of St Mark, in Kabokweni, blessed on 30 June 1974.

Fr Kladnik built the new priests' house and also St Mark's in KaBokweni. The blessing of St Mark's took place on 30 June 1974. Another honour also belongs to White River: the parish housed our Religious Superior from 1965–1972. Fr Brosig moved to Highover (near White River) and Fr Koch moved back to Maria Trost. Bro. Kley moved from Maria Trost to Highover and from Highover to Maria Trost again.

## WHITE RIVER

Year	Fathers
1958–60	Segeritz
1962	Sieberer
1963	Lipp
1964–80	Kladnik



## FRIEDENHEIM (1947)

There was no future for White Waters, and Friedenheim, between Nelspruit and White River, looked more promising. Three farms were for sale: Monsignor and his Councilors worked overtime; eventually, Friedenheim was bought for 6 750 pounds. On 4 May 1947, Monsignor reported the following transfers: Fr Lechner and Bro. Feil to Friedenheim. Bro. Feil, who had slaved in White Waters, pleaded to be spared, but he had to go. On 23 May, Bro. Kurz came and took charge of Friedenheim, a good introduction to Bongani, a few years later. On 5 May, they moved in and the first surprise was that there was no water in the house. Mr Human, the previous owner, had taken the piping, he had to refund it, but that evening Monsignor, Fr Lechner and Bro. Feil looked for water in the yet unknown dark. On 1 June, Fr Lechner handed over the reins of White Waters to Fr Angerer. He still had to provide transport and supplies and he did not let them down.

But Fr Lechner's main worry was Spelinyane. For over two years, he had tried to establish a foothold in the area, but every time he was torpedoed by either the



Bro. Merz, Bro. Kurz, Bro. Kley and Bro. Egger.



Friedenheim farmhouse (1947).



Building of the church in Spelinyane, by Fr Lechner. It was finished on Easter of 1948.

inspector or the Chief or another ‘friendly’ *Umfundisi*. The new solution was that he got a church site and the government would build a school. At last, building started with Bro. Hüber as builder and Fr Lechner as planner. The 7 November 1948 saw the grand opening, the first foothold in the *Lowveld* among the people.

At the priests’ meeting on 24 August 1947, it was decided that Friedenheim should have boarding for coloureds and blacks, and White Waters should be offered to the Congregation for elderly and for recreation. Well and good, but the authorities did not keep their promises and Friedenheim turned out to be a farm, not a mission. Fr Stempfle took care of the coloureds in Barberton and Friedenheim was sold.

## FRIEDENHEIM

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1947–48	Lechner	Kurz and Feil
1949	Zeifang, Roth and Lechner	Kurz, Egger and Merz
1950	Zeifang, Klemm and Stempfle	Kurz
1951	Zeifang, Klemm and Klassert	Kurz and Hüber
1952	Zeifang, Klemm, Angerer and Schöpf	Kurz, Hüber and Häring
1953	Zeifang and Angerer	Kurz, Hüber, Häring and Gruber
1954	Zeifang and Angerer	Kurz, Hüber, Häring and Gruber
1955	Zeifang and Angerer	Häring and Gruber
1956	Zeifang and Angerer	Häring and Gruber
1957	Zeifang and Angerer	Häring, Gruber and Rieger
1958	Zeifang and Angerer	Häring



## **BONGANI, ST JOSEPH'S (1951–1990)**

Fr Roth writes: “The old Bokberg mission was sold on account of the small population. Instead, 70 morgen were bought at the Sand River, with a small shop on it. Fr Klemm was the first rector and Bro. Egger had to find a way through the bush. In the beginning, everything was managed from Friedenheim by Fr Zeifang and Bro. Kurz.”

Three *rondavels* were built to house the missionaries, a simple hall served as church and a school was opened. Bro. Kurz cleared the bush and Bro. Hüber Ottl started building—a presbytery, clinic, convent, doctor’s house, hospital, church, etc. In 1956, Sr Floriana came to start a little clinic, the beginning of Bongani Hospital. She was supported by two Sisters from Glen Cowie. On Easter Monday 1958, Bishop Reiterer blessed Bongani Hospital in the presence of Fr General, R. Lechner, who got some satisfaction after having tried so hard a few years earlier to establish it. The priests’ house was built in 1959. Fr Rauch laid the foundation stone and “then he went home.”

St Joseph’s parish in Bongani started to develop. In 1962, the church, built by Fr Pfanner in Mariti, was blessed. He also built the Holy Family church in Jerusalem, in 1964. Then came the first steps towards re-union of the two Comboni branches, the German-speaking (MFSC) and the Italian branch (FSCJ). Fr De Maldè and Bro. Mario Adani who belonged to the latter came to Bongani and started to build the Holy Family church in Waterval. In 1967, the Franciscan Sisters moved their Novitiate from Maria Trost to Bongani and in 1968 the dam



Church of St Joseph, built by Fr Rechenmacher, and blessed on 16 December 1969.

was built to solve the water problems. Fr Rechenmacher and Fr Lipp built the new church around the old and small, the first one in 1969. Fr Riegel and Bro. Rieger built the church in Nyongane, in 1972. The other places—Makoko, Mahushu, Phola, Malekuthu and Ndlankomo—had to be satisfied with the not-so-expensive “R500” churches: floor, poles and everything closed in with corrugated iron. The structures of the parish emerged and the Church took root because all places were visited regularly and catechism classes were given by the priests, the catechist and the Sisters. In 1977, the government took over the hospital. Bro. Hüber, the builder, was demoted to handyman. They wanted to swallow up the whole place, but eventu-



Fr Zeifang, Fr Angerer and Fr Koch.



Celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Fr Angerer and the Silver Jubilee of Frs Zeifang and Fr Koch, on 29.6.1962. From left: Fr Brosig, Fr Zeifang, Fr Angerer, Bishop Reiterer, Fr Koch and Fr Engelhardt.

ally, they settled for a compromise: half of the buildings were in a “white area”, the rest in a “black area”; the only thing missing were border posts!

In 1987, the Franciscan Sisters opened a Sewing School, Bro. Mario built it and Sr Maristella took charge of it. In 1988, St Francis’, near the Numbi Gate, was built for Numbi Salubindi. Majika wanted a pre-school for the little ones, they formed a committee and the work was done. In 1989, St Martin in Legogote had to be built, because the old chapel was suddenly cut off from the rest of the village: the place was simply given by the local *Induna* and was not legally registered. The people of Majika complained that the distance to Bongani was too far, and in 1990, they could move into their new church of Christ the King. Next



Bro. Otto Hüber (1976-1990).



Sr Anthony, matron of Bongani Hospital with Sr Josephina, parish Sister in Bongani.

on the list was Ephameni. The plans were nearly complete, but the diocese wanted the parish to be cared for by the diocesan clergy. The Combonis handed it over in October 1990. Fr Munelli took charge of Bongani parish which had started in 1934 up on the Bokberg, moving down to Friedenheim and at last settling in Bongani. Fr Nefzger and Bro. Ottl Hüber moved to Maria Trost on 30 October 1990.



Youth of Bongani (1988).

## BONGANI

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1951–54	Klemm	Egger
1955	Klemm and Rauch	Hüber
1956–57	Rauch	Hüber and Kurz
1958–60	Rauch and Angerer	Hüber and Hirschlein
1961	Rauch, Angerer and Nagler	Hüber and Hirschlein
1962	Engelhardt and Angerer	Hüber and Hirschlein
1963–65	Pfanner and Angerer	Hüber and Kurz
1965–67	Pfanner, Angerer and Steger	Hüber and Kurz
1967	Pfanner, Angerer, Steger and Rechenmacher	Hüber and Kurz
1968–69	Rechenmacher, Angerer, Lipp and Engelhardt F.	Hüber and Kurz
1970	Rechenmacher, Angerer, Lipp, Engelhardt, Tremmel and Riegel	Kurz and Rieger
1971–72	Riegel, Angerer, Tremmel and Lipp	Kurz and Rieger
1972	Bourhill, Riegel, Lipp and Tremmel	Kurz and Rieger
1973–75	Bourhill and Lipp	Kurz
1975–80	Roth and Lipp	Kurz, Hüber and Gruber
1981	Roth and Tresoldi	Kurz, Hüber and Gruber
1982	Roth and Pinkman	Kurz, Hüber and Gruber
1983	Plankensteiner	Kurz, Hüber and Gruber
1984–86	Plankensteiner	Hüber and Gruber
1987–90	Nefzger	Hüber and Gruber

### NELSPRUIT (1936–1994)

St Peter's church in Nelspruit was built in 1936. Operations were directed from White Waters. On 7 May 1940, Fr Höfer was appointed first parish priest of Nelspruit. Before that time, the whole area was under White Waters. Everybody was wary of settling in Nelspruit, because of Malaria. The first school and mission station in Nelspruit was built from Barberton by Fr Zorn and Bro. Vogel. It was called St Bernard's and was used as a church and school. Fr Höfer could not enjoy his appointment for long: in 1942, he was buried in White Waters. His successor, Fr Lechner, operated again from White Waters. In 1947, Fr Lechner moved to Friedenheim and everything—Nelspruit, White River, White Waters and



Fr Karl Sieberer and Fr Franz Rauch.



New church, purchased from the Anglican Church, and opened on 4 December 1977.



Fr Alois Eder.



Fr Leonhard Rossmanith.



Fr Antonio Benetti.

the whole Game Reserve—was under his wing. In 1950, Fr Sieberer, one of the post-war generation, moved to Nelspruit. When he had to move to Maria Trost in 1955, because Fr Lechner was elected Fr General, Fr Morscher settled in Nelspruit. In 1962, Fr Morscher moved to Malelane and Fr Sieberer came back to Nelspruit. The parish



St Peter's Convent, belonging to the Franciscan Sisters.



Fr Philip Hinchcliffe.



Fr Enrico Redaelli.



Fr Florian Espinoza.

had grown and Nelspruit rapidly developed into the centre of the *Lowveld*. He was now supported by assistants: the first was Fr Len Rossmanith. In 1968, it was Fr Sieberer's turn to move to Europe as General Assistant and Fr Lechner came back to Nelspruit, now assisted by Fr Steger and later by Fr Riegel. Fr Riegel also helped Fr Eder, who followed Fr Lechner in 1975. In 1977, Fr Eder moved to Maria Trost as the first Provincial of the re-united Congregation and Fr Plankensteiner settled in Nelspruit. Fr Len helped him as well as Fr Hinchcliffe and Fr Pinkman. After a short "interregnum" of Fr Josef König, Fr Antonio Benetti took over in 1985 supported by Fr Hinchcliffe. Fr Benetti was needed in the Study House and later in London, rotation was in, and Fr Redaelli carried on in Nelspruit, helped by Fr Florian Espinoza and Fr Mariano Perez. The last one of the Combonis in Nelspruit was Fr Plankensteiner; Redaelli was promoted to rector in the Provincialate in Johannesburg and Provincial Secretary. The provincial assembly decided to hand over Nelspruit due to the fact that it was a self-reliant parish. Bishop Nkhumishe succeeded in bringing the OMI's into his diocese: they took over in 1997. The official handing over took place on 26 October.

During all these years, the parish structures took shape. The most striking developments happened on the way to Barberton. In 1957, the Franciscan Sisters opened their pre-school and St Peter's school. In 1964, the Sisters moved into their new premises, providing school and boarding. Bishop Reiterer had endless battles with the Government departments to get the necessary permits. In the 80s, the Sisters were in the forefront in opening their facilities to all: they had to pay quite a price for that.

On 16 October 1964, a little church was blessed at Matafin, during the time of Fr Sieberer. Holy Cross church was opened in Kanyamazane on 31 March 1974; Fr Lech-



St Bernard School, built by Bro. Vogel and Fr Zorn.

ner and Fr Riegel completed the project. On 6 July 1975, Bishop Reiterer blessed the new chapel at St Peter's. In 1977, the Dutch Reformed church next to our property was bought and the church was re-dedicated for "Roman use", on 4 December 1977. The old presbytery was replaced by a new building and Fr Benetti and Fr Hinchcliffe were very pleased. It was also meant as a welcoming centre for confrères in the *Lowveld* and others who were *en route* to the game reserve or to the shops.

## NELSPRUIT

Year	Fathers
1940-42	Höfer
1942-49	Lechner
1950-55	Sieberer
1955-62	Morscher
1962-67	Sieberer
1966-67	Sieberer and Rosmanith
1968-71	Lechner and Steger
1972-74	Lechner and Riegel
1975-76	Eder and Riegel
1977-83	Plankensteiner and Rosmanith
1983	Plankensteiner, Rosmanith, Pinkman and Hinchcliffe
1984	König, Rosmanith, Pinkman and Hinchcliffe
1985-88	Benetti and Hinchcliffe
1988-89	Redaelli and Hinchcliffe
1990-92	Redaelli and Espinoza
1992-93	Redaelli and Mariano
1994-97	Plankensteiner and Gutierrez (1994)



## MALELANE (1958)

In 1957, Mr Paira promised two morgen for a church and a priests' house. He withdrew his offer and the grounds were given by Mr Dias. On 27 April 1958, Bishop Reiterer, assisted by Fr Zeifang and Fr Segeritz, blessed the church and the presbytery. Fr Demel and his choir came all the way from Witbank to add to the solemnity. Sr Ambrosia and Sr Leona prepared all the vestments and Fr Sieberer was introduced to the people as the first parish priest. He took up the new assignment in December, after his holidays overseas. The new church, dedicated to St Philomena, was blessed on 17 December 1961. In 1962, Fr Morscher settled in Malelane and remained there until his retirement in the nineties. When the Missionaries of Africa took over Malelane, Fr Morscher carried on as chaplain of the Portuguese community. When he died, he was buried in Malelane.

On 27 June 1976, the church in Driekoppies was opened. It had been a special project of Fr Morscher, but he had to follow the festivities from the hospital in Nelspruit. Fr Morscher had not agreed to the re-union of the MFSC and the FSCJ, and he was incardinated into the Witbank Diocese. In the mean time, the population of the area increased tremendously. The centre is now in Lebombo and many new small communities have appeared. Later on, the parish was taken care of by the Missionaries of Africa, known as "White Fathers". They first came into the *Lowveld* to look after the many refugees who were running away from the Mozambican civil war; since the nineties, they have been supported in the huge area by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.



St Philomena, blessed on 17 December 1961.



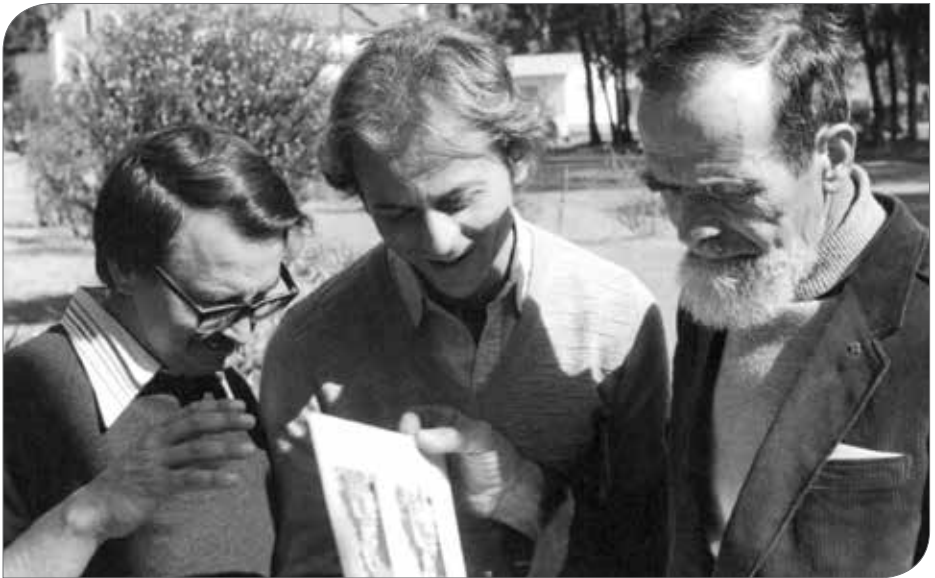
Interior of the church.

## WATERVAL, HOLY FAMILY

On 29 May 1960, Bishop Reiterer bought part of the Waterval farm from the Hugo family. On 27 April 1966, Fr Aldo Chistè and Bro. Mario Adani settled in Bongani and, from there, they started building up Holy Family parish at Waterval. In March 1967, Fr De Maldè joined them at Waterval. They looked forward to taking up their assignments, but in August 1968, they had to learn that their applications to work in the “homelands” were turned down. When Bro. Francesco Padovan arrived in November 1968, there were still no permits. “Bantu Affairs” at Pietersburg said that the Bishop should train local staff and fall in line with government policy. Eventually, after many trips between many offices, Fr De Maldè and Fr Chistè received their permit on 4 February 1969. On 2 February 1970, Fr Matordes arrived at Waterval. Fr Charles Walter was the parish priest at Waterval from 1971 to mid-1973. Fr John Converset was his assistant from mid-1972, and then the parish priest from 1973 until early 1977.



Holy Family church, blessed on 1 August 1976.



Fr Joe Sandri, Fr Efreem Tresoldi and Bro. Mario Adani, the designer and builder of the church.



Fr Joe Sandri (standing), Fr Antonio Calvera and Fr Angelo Matordes.

The Comboni Missionary Community [FSCJ] in Waterval started as a “trial run” to prepare on the ground for the re-union between the two congregations [i.e. FSCJ and MFSC] that had separated in 1923. Apparently, the move was successful. At last, the “missing link” between Bongani and Acornhoek had been found. Since the opening of White Waters, there had been attempts to open a mission parish in that area. The name Rolle was mentioned again and again, but for one reason or another, the project never materialised. Now, one will find many new names of places in the Catholic Directory that were started and developed from Waterval. Bro. Mario Adani deserves special mention. He made Waterval a family home, did the building and was also the planner and builder of many churches, schools and other buildings in the Witbank Diocese. The cross in the cemetery at Maria Trost is also one of his many creations.

The structures of the parish grew steadily. On 25 October 1970, the Bishop blessed and opened St Michael’s church in Mayeleti. On 8 October 1972, it was the turn of St Paul’s church in Madras. A few months later, on 21 January 1973, the church of St John the Apostle in Kildare was completed as well. In April of the same year, St Francis’ church in Croquet Lawn was blessed and on 1 August 1976, Holy Family church at Waterval was completed and blessed.

Some of our confrères remember Waterval as a place of introduction, to learn Sepedi or Tsonga; for others, like Fr Angelo Matordes and Bro. Mario Adani, the planner and builder, it was a place for ongoing building. Fr Joe Sandri will remember Waterval, not only as a parish, but also as a place of many meetings to finalise the Tsonga translation of the Bible, a project which he completed with his friends and helpers in 1997. Fr Antonio Calvera was appointed parish priest in 1998, after Fr Fabio Baldan left to be editor of *Worldwide* magazine. A little parish centre developed to help to bring the people of the widespread parish together for meetings and celebrations. Fr Rafael Armada, who came to Waterval in 2002, had to look after the finances and also had to get used to a new rector and parish priest, Fr Luis Carranza. Fr Antonio Calvera had to move back to his home province, and from 2005, Fr Carranza made his home in Waterval. Fr Carranza decided to move back to his home province in Mexico. Fr Manuel Román Muñoz joined Fr Rafael for a short time before he left to take part in the Comboni Year of Ongoing Formation. In 2013, Waterval was looked after by Fr Manuel Casillas, Fr Clement Kazaku and Fr Aldrin Janito.



Perpetual Religious Vows of Bro. Carlos Barron, surrounded by his Mexican confrères: Fr Manuel Casillas and Fr Manuel Baeza (left); Fr José Manuel Román and Fr Andrés Garcia (right).

## WATERVAL

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1967	De Maldè and Chistè	Adani
1968	De Maldè and Chistè	Adani and Padovan
1969	De Maldè, Chistè and Canonici	Adani and Padovan
1970–71	Chistè, Canonici and Walter	Adani and Padovan
1972	Chistè, Walter and Converset	Adani and Padovan
1973–77	Sandri and Converset	Adani and Padovan
1978–82	Ellinger and Schmid P.	Adani
1983–84	Schmid P.	Adani
1987–92	Matordes and Sandri	Adani
1993–94	Medeiros, Baldan and Calvera A.	
1995–97	Baldan and Calvera A.	
1998–01	Calvera A. and Baeza Manuel	
2002–04	Calvera A. and Rafael Armada	
2005–06	Armada, Luis Carranza and Edgardo Vizcarra (from April 2006)	
2007	Armada, Vizcarra and Carranza	
2008	Armada, Vizcarra and Janito Joseph Aldrin Palacios	
2009	Armada, Aldrin and Vizcarra (until May)	
2010	Aldrin and Clement Kazaku Bosh Bebe	
2011	Aldrin, Kazaku and Manuel Casillas	
2012	Aldrin, Kazaku, Casillas and Scholastic Kgomotso Sebopela Ronnie (in missionary service)	
2013	Aldrin (until June), Kazaku, Sch. Kgomotso, José Jaime Garcia Lomas and Kifle Kintamo Kirba	
2014	Kazaku, Lomas, Kifle and Sch. Kgomotso	

## OUR CONTRIBUTION TO JUSTICE AND PEACE

BY FR EFREM TRESOLDI

After the 1976 uprising that spread from Soweto throughout the country, the Catholic Church became more vocal on social issues. In this context, Bishop Paul Mogale Nkhumishe, named bishop of Witbank in 1981, asked me to take charge of the diocesan commission of Justice and Peace. I started by convening a small group of lay people with the intention of raising awareness. The group visited parish communities, distributed pamphlets, books and other literature published by the Bishops' Conference that denounced the injustices and violence perpetrated by the Apartheid regime against the black population. The removal of over one million people from the so-called 'black spots' who were dumped in the so-called "homelands"; the arbitrary arrests and torture of political dissidents; the involvement of South African army in atrocities against civilians in the war in neighbouring Namibia (then called South West Africa): the white government had passed draconian laws that silenced press freedom. There was a real need of disseminating the information about what was happening. One of the obstacles that the commission met was the resistance of the majority of white Catholics who were against its work, which was seen as an undue interference of the Church in political matters. Generally speaking, even our priests and religious expatriates did not support the work of the commission fearing that the denunciation of the iniquities of the

government could result in their expulsion from the country.

In 1998, when I returned to South Africa after 12 years, I was asked to join the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) of the South Africa Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) in Pretoria. My first task was the setting up of an environmental justice desk. I was asked by the bishops' secretariat to draft a pastoral letter on the issue of environmental degradation and pollution in the country. There was an urgent need to address the problems related to the pollution of land, water and air caused especially by the industries and the mining sectors. I started a small consulting group, which included theologians and environmental activists, who helped me with their insights and knowledge in drafting the pastoral letter.

After a few months of collective work, the letter was ready. Translated in nine of the official South African languages, it was read out in parishes and used for workshops in schools and in meetings with groups and associations to raise the awareness around the destruction of the environment. The letter also suggested concrete ways in which ordinary citizens could make a difference in preserving the integrity of natural resources. The JPC was actively involved in the training of diocesan justice and peace commissions. Together with members of the SACBC commission, I took part in workshops and seminars throughout South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland. It was not uncommon to hear from the people who felt that since the victory over Apartheid had been achieved, the Church had nothing more to say or to do in the field of justice and peace. New issues such as lack of



Fr Efreim Tresoldi, flanked by Fr Luis Carranza, receiving the gifts, during a Mass in Mamelodi.

delivery of basic social services, corruption, incompetence in managing public positions, poor schooling and health assistance, were calling for renewed commitment and social mobilization. The work of the SACBC commission in those years was helping to raise awareness about these issues by applying in a special way the 'pastoral circle' method based on see-judge-act.

In 2003, and for the next three years, I was put in charge of the Press office of the SACBC. In the capacity of an information officer, I was in the delicate position of being the interface between the bishops and the public. Quite often, I was called by the media

to explain the position of the Church on a variety of social and moral issues. I took part regularly in the plenary sessions of the bishops that were held twice a year. During those sessions, I prepared and submitted to the bishops a few draft statements on social and political problems both in South Africa and in other African countries. Immediately after the end of sessions, a press conference was held where some bishops were invited to express publicly their view on some crucial and contentious issues. Their stance was appreciated as part of the service that the Church was called to render to a more just and peaceful society.

### ACORNHOEK (1954)

Mr Wittingstall gave 10 morgen for a mission. Fr Tremmel and Bro. Hüber started working there in 1955. First they built up Eglington, Dingaleni, where they stayed in an old camper. In 1958, Mr Jones tried to register the property but he was told that the government had the right to expropriate at any time because Acornhoek was a “Black Area”. It was also policy of the government to hand over the area to black ministers of religion and, therefore, the Catholic Church should train black bishops to work there. In 1962, Fr Hornauer took



Fr Franz Seraph Tremmel.

over: he was supported by Fr Lipp and later by Fr Sonnenburger. The Maria Assumpta church in Acornhoek was opened and blessed on 29 February 1963.

In 1968, Fr Graf moved to Acornhoek: he was involved in development work. During his time, weaving was introduced with the Mapusha project, still healthy to this day. This project was later continued by Bro. Frey, directed from Burgersfort, where Fr Charles Kuppelwieser had started the same project earlier. In 1969, Fr Graf moved to Maria Trost to be director of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre and Fr Matordes settled in Acornhoek. Besides his many building activities, due to the



St John's, in Ludlow, blessed on 8 July 1979.



Christ the King, in Shatale, blessed on 30 July 1978.

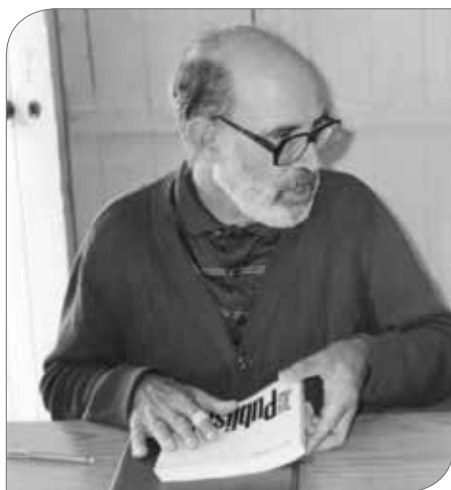




Church of Maria Assumpta, blessed on 29 February 1963.

civil war in Mozambique (1976–1992), he became more and more involved with the refugees from Mozambique, organising and channelling the relief work. In 1975, Fr Bourhill came to Acornhoek, but in 1979, he died of a heart attack. Fr Chistè took his place till 1983, when Fr Ellinger moved to Acornhoek together with Fr Casillas. In the meantime, Bro. Padovan had arrived and got involved in youth work in the parish.

In 1984, the region saw the arrival of more than 30 000 Mozambican refugees who escaped the country's civil war fought by RENAMO and FRELIMO. Many of



Fr Aldo Chistè (1980–1983, 1989–1998).



Fr Joe Sandri (1987–1991).



Frs Bruno Serale and Efrem Tresoldi.



Bro. Francis Padovan and Francis Manana.

them crossed the Kruger National Park, with the great danger of being eaten by wild animals or being shot by the police patrolling the borders. Those who managed to cross the border, were given a place to build their huts in South Africa. Many villages sprang up in the areas entrusted to the missions of Acornhoek and Waterval.

Fr Angelo Matordes and Bro. Francis Padovan were asked by the Diocese of Witbank to be in charge of the food distribution. Their appointment was approved by the SA Council of Churches. Two trucks were bought for the purpose. Every available room in Acornhoek Mission was packed with food. A new shed, where food could be properly stored, was built. Other Churches were collaborating in the distribution, but the co-ordinators were Fr Matordes and



Bro. Artur Pinto supervising the work of opening the foundations for the construction of a church.

Bro. Padovan. They were assisted by Sr Agnes and Mr Maurice and Mrs Maureen Floods, a couple who came from the USA to assist in catering for the refugees. The whole team did a wonderful job in assisting the refugees.

In 1986, Fr Sandri and Fr Serale kept life going in Acornhoek. In 1988, Fr Serale left and Fr Chisté moved back to Aconhoek. In 1991, Fr Chisté took charge and was supported by Fr Luís Filipe Dias and Fr José Luis Roman Medina. Bro. Artur Pinto, who had taken the place of Bro. Francis Padovan to continue the youth work, left the country and Fr Sandri moved to Waterval to tackle the Tsonga Bible project. In 1995, Fr Chisté moved to Mamelodi and Fr Grohe took his place in Acornhoek, supported by Fr Miguel Zubizarreta. In 1996, Fr Grohe moved to Burgersfort and Fr Matordes returned to Acornhoek. In 1997, Fr José Luis Roman moved to the Study House, after five years in Acornhoek, and Fr Carranza filled the post. Bro. Artur Pinto, who had just returned from his home country, was assigned to Burgersfort. Fr Carranza was now parish priest, assisted by Fr Miguel and Fr Andrés García. Fr Chisté and Fr Carranza swapped places in 1998. Fr Andrés moved to Silverton, Pretoria in 1999. His place was taken by Fr Antonio Delgado. In 2003, Fr Miguel was appointed parish priest of Acornhoek. When Fr Miguel left, Fr Antonio had to face opposition in the parish and it took quite a while till things calmed down. Fr Antonio returned to his home province and Fr Francisco “Chico” de Medeiros slowly brought things back to normal. Since 2011, Acornhoek, Lydenburg and Waterval are the only parishes in Witbank Dioceses entrusted to the Comboni Missionaries.

During all these years, building activities never stopped: chapels and churches, pre-schools, improvements, repairs. Acornhoek parish is spread out over a wide area, bordering Waterval and, theoretically, Burgersfort at the Strydom Tunnel. In recent years, Acornhoek welcomed various Comboni priests: Fr Ivan Paucar, José de la Cruz, Jérôme Soku and Jean Philippe Lokpo.



Fr Angelo Matordes and Fr Luís Filipe Dias.



Fr José Luís Roman Medina (“Pepelu”).



Fr Miguel Zubizarreta, Fr Manuel Baeza, Sr Elsie Moyo and Fr Pepelu.

## ACORNHOEK

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1955–61	Tremmel	Hüber
1962–65	Hornauer	Gruber
1964–65	Hornauer and Lipp	Gruber
1965–68	Hornauer and Sonnenburger	Gruber
1968	Graf and Sonnenburger	
1969–71	Graf, Sonnenburger and Matordes	
1972–74	Graf and Matordes	
1975–79	Bourhill and Matordes	
1980–82	Matordes and Chistè	Padovan
1983	Chistè, Casillas and Ellinger	Padovan
1985	Ellinger	Padovan
1986	Ellinger and Serale	Padovan
1987–88	Sandri and Serale	Padovan
1988–90	Sandri and Chistè	Pinto
1991–94	Chistè, Filipe Dias and Roman Medina	Pinto (till 1991)
1995	Grohe, Miguel Angel Zubizarreta and Medina	
1996	Matordes and Zubizarreta	
1997	Carranza, Zubizarreta and Andrés Garcia	
1998	Chistè and Zubizarreta	
1999–2003	Chistè, Zubizarreta and Antonio Delgado	
2004	Zubizarreta, Delgado and José Manuel Román Muñoz	
2005	Zubizarreta, Delgado, Román Muñoz and Edgardo Vizcarra	
2006	Delgado	
2007	Medeiros	
2008	Medeiros and Sergio Ivan Paucar Simbaña	
2009	Medeiros, Ivan Paucar and José de la Cruz Hinojosa	
2010	Medeiros, José de la Cruz and Ivan Paucar	
2011	Medeiros, José de la Cruz, Ivan Paucar and Sch. Jérôme Soku Neryo	
2012	José de la Cruz, Soku and Jean Philippe Lopko	
2013	José de la Cruz, Soku and Lopko	
2014	José de la Cruz, Soku and Lopko	

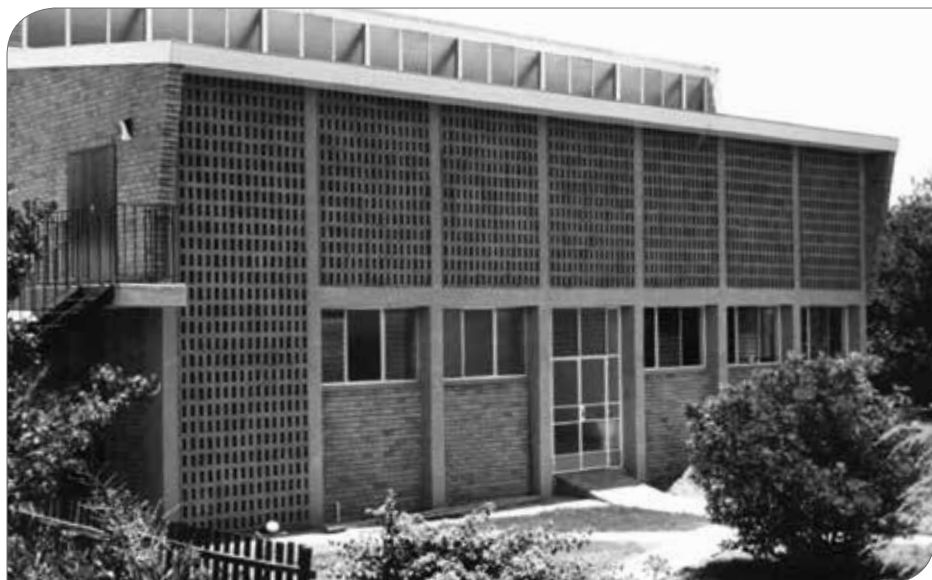
## PRETORIA, SILVERTON, MAMELODI

Bishop Reiterer wanted a hostel in Pretoria, catering for Catholic boys who wanted to go for higher education. After many meetings with the board and the City Council, the project eventually took shape and on 8 February 1959, the Apostolic Delegate Damiani blessed and opened the hostel. The Franciscan Sisters took over the kitchen, Sr Michael was the first. Fr McNulty was the first rector, but he died suddenly in America on 23 November 1960, and Fr Roth was willing to fill the void. In 1965, Fr Hügel took over.

The University of Pretoria needed ground and they bought the whole neighbourhood. When the Christian Brothers sold to the University and moved out of town, the hostel had lost its purpose and the Bishop sold it as well. Fr Koch, the religious Superior, saw the advantage of having a place in Pretoria. He made an agreement with Archbishop Garner and took over St Augustine's church in Silverton. In 1969, Fr Hügel moved to Silverton. The grounds belong to the Archdiocese and the buildings to the Comboni Missionaries. In 1980, Fr Hügel died and Fr Galeotti took over, supported by Fr Kladnik. From 1983 to 1987, Fr Pramstrahler was the parish priest. From 1988 till 1991, it was Fr Friedl who looked after the parish, followed by Fr Plankensteiner. After Fr Plankensteiner, Fr Redaelli and Fr Rafael Moreno were the parish priests. Fr Andrés García took over in 2002. On 23 January 2005, Fr Giorgio Stefani became the priest-in-charge. His life was cut short when he died after being attacked by bees. After the death of Fr Giorgio, Fr Efreem Tresoldi took over the parish while Bro. Francis Padovan helped with the formation work. In



Fr Hügel with students of St Anthony's Hostel.



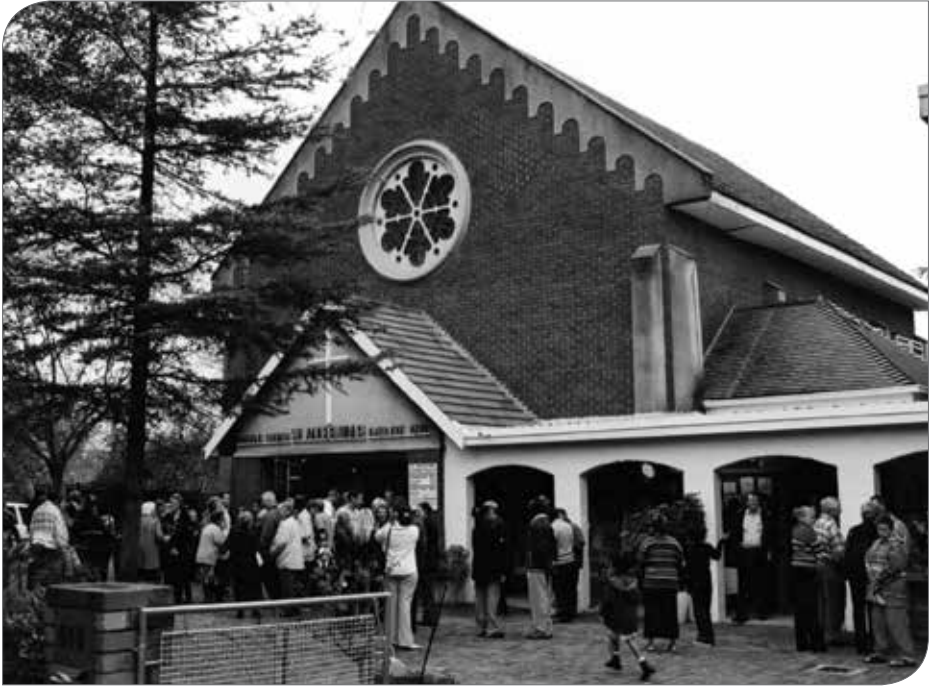
St Anthony's Hostel, opened on 8 February 1959.

July 2007, Fr Andrew Wanjohi arrived in the community of Silverton and was installed as parish priest and he also took the responsibility of the formation programme of the Postulancy. Long-standing plans to enlarge the church were fulfilled in 2010, and the extended new church was blessed on 23 January 2011 by Archbishop Emeritus of Pretoria, George Daniel. At the same time, there was also a farewell for Fr Andrew who left for Kenya. Fr Jérôme Anakese should have taken the place of Fr Andrew as parish priest and formator, but he was called for formation work in his home province. His place was taken by Fr Guillermo Medina. He was replaced by Fr Edgardo Vizcarra in October 2014.

St Augustine's was initially a little 'white parish'. In 1969, Fr Hügel even used Afrikaans in his parish newsletter. Today, the parish family is made up of



Blessing of St Augustine's Parish House, by Archbishop Garner, on 7 December 1969.



Church of St Augustine which was extended in 2009-2010.



'Pillars' of St Augustine. Clockwise: Mrs Lynne Pruneau, Mrs Bianca Berg-Mathiessen, Mrs Tony Aspinal, Mrs Theresa Sharp, Mr Desmond Schubart and Mrs Andre Whitlock.



all colours found in the rainbow nation. The Comboni Media Centre is also housed in Silverton and adds to the importance of the place. One of our local vocations comes from Silverton: Fr Gordon Rees. He was ordained priest by Archbishop Daniel on 17 August 2002, which was also a great blessing for the parish as a whole. Since 2005, the Postulancy moved to Silverton, the formators seeing better possibilities in a parish environment.

## PRETORIA

Year	Fathers
1961	Roth and Nagler
1962-64	Roth
1964-68	Hügel
1969-80	Hügel (Silverton)
1980-82	Kladnik
1983	Kladnik and Pramstrahler
1984-87	Pramstrahler and Maneschg
1988-89	Friedl and Pramstrahler
1990-91	Friedl and Ward
1992-93	Plankensteiner
1993-98	Pramstrahler and Maneschg
1998	Pramstrahler
1999	Perez Moreno Rafael
2000-01	Enrico Redaelli
2001-04	García Andrés
2005	Efrem Tresoldi, Stefani Giorgio (died on 20.10.2005) and Aldo Chistè (Soshanguve)
2006	Tresoldi, Andrew Wanjohi and Chistè (Soshanguve)
2007	Tresoldi, Wanjohi and Chistè (Soshanguve)
2008	Tresoldi, Wanjohi and Chistè (Soshanguve)
2009	Tresoldi, Wanjohi and Chistè (Soshanguve)
2010	Tresoldi, Wanjohi and Chistè (Soshanguve)
2011	Tresoldi and Jérôme Anakese
2012	Tresoldi, Robert Ochola and Guillermo Medina
2013	Ochola, Medina and José António M. Rebelo
2014	Ochola, Medina, Rebelo and Edgardo Vizcarra (from March)

**MAMELODI: ST PETER CLAVER (1971);  
MAHUBE VALLEY (2005)**

It was felt that as a missionary congregation, we should not only be involved in a 'white parish'. So, we started taking care of Peter Claver parish which had been founded by Fr Reginald Webber in 1966. Before that time, holy Mass had been celebrated in private houses. Fr Peter Schmid moved to Mamelodi in 1971 and took over the parish. In 1976, Fr Schmid left and Fr Maneschg was there for a while. Fr Brosig helped from 1980 to 1982. During those two years, the new church was built and blessed by Archbishop George Daniel on 2 August



Fr Peter Schmid and Fr Plankensteiner.



Celebration in St Peter Claver: Parishioner, Fr Nick Villaluz, Fr Luis Carranza and Fr Efreem Tresoldi.

1981. Bro. Mario designed the altar and the Baptismal Font. Bro. Fischnaller made the church benches and Bro. Frey, from the weaving centre in Burgersfort, contributed with two tapestries, one portraying the Sacred Heart and the other, St Peter Claver. Fr Pramstrahler looked after both parishes from 1982 to 1987. From 1988 to 1994, Fr Friedl was parish priest of Peter Claver. In 1992, he moved into the new parish house and since that time Silverton and Mamelodi have been independent. Fr Chistè followed Fr Friedl in Mamelodi and in 1999 Fr Carranza carried on, supported by Fr Tresoldi. Fr Tresoldi moved to the Silverton Community and started working in the Department of the SACBC for Justice and Peace. Fr Villaluz Nick took his place.

Many people moved to Mamelodi and a site was bought to build a new church which would develop into a new parish. The Church bought the site, people occupied the place, but by 2005 these occupiers were willing to move and the project slowly took shape. When Fr Carranza left in 2002, Fr Chico joined Fr Nick and Fr Riegel. Fr Anton Maier was appointed parish priest in the beginning of 2003, but a year later he had to leave because of ill health. He died on 1 May 2005 in Germany.

Fr Chico carried on implementing the construction plan for Mahube Valley and developed the place from the well-established parish St Peter Claver. The first contractor had to leave, because he was not accepted by the community. Eventually, the hall where the community started meeting was built. A presbytery was needed so that we could move to Mahube Valley. Fr Chico was replaced by Fr James Calvera at the end



Fr Chico de Medeiros in 'Lusaka', Mahube Valley.

of 2006 and sent to Acornhoek. The new parish of St Daniel Comboni was erected on 1 January 2007. Fr Calvera started collecting funds. He went to Spain with the choir to get financial help. He even got an assistant in Fr Michael Zeitz, both were working from the Study House from 2007 onwards. On 10 October 2010, Archbishop Emeritus of Pretoria, George Daniel, blessed the new parish house and the parish centre Izwi leThemba. A week later, Fr Calvera and Fr Andrew Bwalya took up residence in the new premises. Fr Zeitz went back to Germany. In 2011, Fr Calvera and Fr Bwalya were joined by Fr Evans Kotoku in Mahube Valley.



Church of St Peter Claver.

## MAMELODI

Year	Fathers
1972-76	Schmid P.
1977-80	Hügel
1981-86	Maneschg
1987-94	Friedl
1994	Friedl and Ellinger
1995-98	Chistè
1998-00	Carranza Luis
2000-01	Carranza and Nicanor Villaluz
2002	Riegel, Chico de Medeiros and Villaluz
2003	Maier, Medeiros and Villaluz
2004	Medeiros and Villaluz
2005	Medeiros and Villaluz
2006	Medeiros (till 31 January)
Mahube Valley	- St Daniel Comboni
2007-10	James Calvera and Andrew Bwalya (living in the Study Centre until 2010)
2011	Calvera, Bwalya and Evans Kotoku
2012	Calvera, Bwalya and Kotoku
2013-2014	Kotoku, Harold Gomanjira and Edgardo Vizcarra (until March 2014)

## BIRTH OF A NEW PARISH

BY FR JAMES CALVERA

The pastoral project of Mahube Valley in Mamelodi, part of the Archdiocese of Pretoria, came into being around the year 2000. The Comboni Missionaries, present in the Mamelodi parish of St Peter Claver since 1967, seeing the impressive growth of the township towards the east, decided to start there a new pastoral presence. The late Fr Anton Maier was a pioneer together with Fr Luis Carranza and Fr Chico de Medeiros. They bought the land, built the fence around the property and, later on, a big hall. In 2006, the Comboni Missionaries and the Archbishop of Pretoria, Msgr George Francis Daniel, agreed to leave the parish of St Peter Claver to start a new parish; one that came into being in 2007 and would be dedicated to Saint Daniel Comboni. I was the first parish priest and although I was staying with the Comboni community of the Comboni Study Centre in Equestria, I went to Mahube every day to attend to my parish duties. The usual procedures followed—and an unusual success. The choir Izwi Lethemba played a very special role, especially at liturgical level. Very soon, it became well known at diocesan level. A very important moment came when 30 of its members were invited to perform in Barcelona (Spain) for three weeks towards the end of 2008. I accompanied them and, while in Spain, we raised funds for the construction of three classrooms.

We started building the parish house in June 2009. It was officially opened on 10 October 2010 and was blessed as the “10-10-10”. The Archbishop Emeritus of Pretoria,



Fr James Calvera, the first Parish Priest of St Daniel Comboni Parish, in Mahube Valley.

George Daniel, presided over the solemn inauguration. The first Comboni community to occupy the new house was made up of Frs Andrew Bwalya, Evans Kotoku and James Calvera. That same year, the Comboni Missionary Sisters settled in a house near the parish and since then have been part of the community of St Daniel Comboni. As the years went by, the priests of the parish shared the responsibilities of the pastoral activities. High among those activities has been the care for the eight Small Christian Communities (SCC); the training and supervision of the adult catechumenate and the catechesis of children; the training of the youth; the promotion of a self-supporting parish; the creation of a support group for people living with HIV/AIDS; and care for the members of the Izwi Lethemba choir.

## COMBONI STUDY CENTRE / “STUDY HOUSE” (1988)

When it was decided to concentrate more on encouraging local vocations, structures had to be set up. The Comboni Study Centre opened in 1988. Fr Benetti was the first director, supported by Bro. Padovan. Many visits were done and many workshops organised, hard work with little visible success.

During the years many different people, visitors, confrères and candidates came to the Study House. To provide better accommodation some change had to be made to the building. In 1994, a new chapel, with thatched roof, was blessed by the Archbishop of Pretoria. Seven rooms and a hall for meetings were added. Further changes had to be made to accommodate the Comboni Year of Ongoing formation (CYOF). Then, the Postulants moved to Silverton; only the secretariat for vocations remained on the premises over the years.



Fr Antonio Benetti, the first formator.



Renewed Comboni Study Centre.

## COMBONI STUDY CENTRE

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1988–89	Antonio Benetti and Francis Manana	
1989	Benetti and Manana	Padovan
1990–93	Benetti	
1994	Perez Mariano and Anton Ellinger	Padovan
1995	Perez and Cervantes Aurelio	Padovan
1996–97	Perez and McGinty Alan	Padovan
1998–99	McGinty, John Maneschg and José Luis Roman Medina	
2000	García, Medina and John Converset	
2001	Giorgio Stefani, Converset and Chico de Medeiros	Erich Stöferle
2002	Stefani and Baeza Gama José Manuel	Stöferle
2003	Stefani, Baeza, Maneschg and Anton Graf	Stöferle
2004	Stefani, Maneschg and Baeza	Stöferle
2005	Maneschg, Nok Adiang George (died on 15.8.2006) and A.Graf (in Mokopane)	Stöferle
2007	Maneschg, Zeitz Michael and Graf (Mokopane)	Padovan
2008	Maneschg, Calvera Jaime, Zeitz and Graf (Mokopane)	Padovan
2009	Maneschg, Calvera, Andrew Bwalya and Vincent Mkhabela	Padovan
2010	Maneschg, Calvera, Bwalya and Mkhabela	Padovan
2011	Maneschg, Ibercio Rojas and Mkhabela	Padovan
2012	Mkhabela, Gordon Rees, Ivan Paucar, and Aldo Chisté	Padovan
2013	Rees, Paucar, Chisté and Bwalya	Stöferle
2014	Rees, Chisté and Günther	Padovan and Stöferle



Celebration in the chapel, led by Fr Benno Singer.

## WORLDWIDE – COMBONI MEDIA CENTRE

Quite a bit of money and personnel was invested to get our magazine *Worldwide* off the ground. Fr Pramstrahler was its first editor in 1989. He worked from the Study House. On 15 March 1994, he occupied the new premises in Silverton. Fr Medeiros enthusiastically tried to promote the magazine, but when he left the number of subscriptions decreased and remained low over the years. The whole endeavour had to be subsidised even though, the Liturgical Calendar, one of its sources of income, started selling well. Besides the magazine and the calendar, the Media Centre also publishes a Newsletter for the Comboni friends. The main purpose of the magazine and the *Comboni Friends Newsletter* is to in-

form people about our work, create missionary awareness and get local support. The Liturgical Calendar, prayer booklets and missionary books are also published by the Centre in view of missionary animation.

Fr Pramstrahler was followed by Fr Fabio Baldan. When he was called to the General Council, Fr Deogratias took over. In 2005, Fr Tresoldi became its editor. He was, for a short while, assisted by Fr Rigoberto Zamora. When Fr Tresoldi left the Province in 2012, Fr Andrew Bwalya, who was studying journalism, availed himself to assist in the work of the magazine for one year. For various years, the promotion of the magazine was done by the administrator, Bro. Francis Padovan, assisted mainly by Bro. Stöferle, with great effort. At the beginning of 2013, Fr José Rebelo became the editor of *Worldwide* and has been promoting it regularly with the help of students and confrères. The magazine increased in pages and gained a new outlook. Since then, the number of subscriptions increased and, judging from the feedback, the magazine is greatly appreciated.

The *Worldwide* Liturgical Calendar is a big hit. In 2012, 2013 and 2014, 40 000 copies were printed; in 2015, we reached 60 000. The calendar is sold in South Africa and surrounding countries.

The *Worldwide* Media Centre has recently been renamed Comboni Media Centre in line with the legal registration of the company.



Fr Anton Pramstrahler, the founder and first editor of *Worldwide* magazine.



## PIETERMARITZBURG

After the XV General Chapter, the Congregation planned to establish another Scholasticate in the southern hemisphere. The place they were looking for should be in a country with a certain stability, close to some of our missions and should also give a good academic input. The Chapter also expressed the wish that the new structures should be in an environment that would encourage a spirit of moderation, simplicity and service, as a missionary vocation demands. Mission should be in the centre of all future preparation, lifestyle, studies, community life and pastoral activities.

Considering everything, the General Administration and the Province of South Africa found a suitable place in Pietermaritzburg, in the Archdiocese of Durban. It was thought that the multi-cultural society of South Africa and the variety of world religions present in KwaZulu-Natal would help to form missionaries for the future: convinced that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of humankind, open to dialogue with other religions, because the seed of the Word has been planted there by the Spirit before the intervention of any of the Apostles. The Comboni Missionaries took over the parishes of St Joan of Arc and St Martin de Porres, previously looked after by the Capuchin Friars. The students are accommodated at St Joan of Arc. They are near to the people, within a parish context and there is easy access to St Joseph's Institute, Cedara, and the University of Natal. The students also find English teachers in town, whenever necessary.

The community of Pietermaritzburg takes care of the formation of the scholastics and of two small parishes. One of them, made up of Zulu-speaking parishioners, is St Joan of Arc, founded in 1892 by the OMI's. During Apartheid, it was the only black parish within the town boundaries. St Martin's is a recent



Fr Tomas Herreros Baroja (left), the first formator, with his students, in November 2003.



Fr Reig, Kgomotso and Fr Tesfaye, in Cedara.

foundation: it opened in 1977. The two parishes are quite well-established, and a challenge to the evangelising activity of the Comboni Missionaries, because they are surrounded by a belt of informal settlements, suffering the consequences of poverty and lack of evangelisation. Through their presence, the Comboni Missionaries hoped to contribute to the missionary awareness of the Local Church, which had begun with the Missionaries of Mariannhill and the Oblates.

With this new foundation, the Comboni Missionaries hope to prepare their future priests for missionary work, characterised by being close to the people, especially those who are forgotten by the rest of the world and bring them the Good News. At the



The Comboni Theologate is located on the grounds of the Parish of St Joan of Arc.

same time, the students receive a quality theological education, provided by Cedara Institute, affiliated with the Urbanian University (Rome) and later on with the University of Natal. Cedara Institute is run mostly by the Oblates, offering studies and degrees in philosophy and theology to more than 15 religious congregations; it is located 20 km outside Pietermaritzburg.

The first Comboni Missionary to go to the parishes of St Joan of Arc and St Martin was Fr Maneschg. After six months, he was joined by six students, coming from Eritrea, Congo, Mexico and Ecuador, together with Fr Tomas Herreros Baroja, a Spaniard with ample African experience in Kenya. Fr Maneschg moved to Pretoria and his place was taken by Fr Bernhard Riegel. In 2005, Fr Jeremias dos Santos Martins came to Pietermaritzburg as formator and Fr Tomas moved to Kenya. The same year, Fr Jeremias was joined by Fr José Luis Roman Medina. In 2008, Fr Riegel moved to Germany and the parish of St Martin de Porres was handed over to the Consolata Missionaries, who had a formation house near Cedara. Another change came in 2010, when Fr Jeremias became Provincial and Fr Jude Burgers joined the community as formator. When Fr Jude left, his place was taken by Fr Manuel Casillas. Every year, new students arrive in Pietermaritzburg to complete their final preparation to become Comboni Missionaries. A plot near the Cedara Institute was bought, in case there should be a need for extensions.



Celebration of the Renewal of the Religious Vows, presided by Fr Jeremias dos Santos.

## MOUNT FRÈRE (1990)

The “Mandatum” was abolished after the Second Vatican Council. The diocesan priests of Witbank found our presence too powerful and overwhelming. Fr Schmid and Fr Maier took up the challenge of calling in other agents. An exchange was made between the Comboni Missionaries and the Franciscans from the Kokstad Diocese. We took over Mount Frère and the Franciscans would take over Witbank and Middelburg.

In 1990, Fr Riegel and Fr Ellinger settled in Mount Frère. In 1992, they were joined by Fr Arturo Velazquez. After a while, Fr Ellinger moved to Johannesburg. In 1993, Bro. Fischnaller came to start development projects: he had handed over in Glen Cowie to local staff. Bishop Nkhumishe also

wanted the mill and garden managed by the local people, so Bro. Engelhardt handed over and joined Bro. Erich in Mount Frère. Bro. Erich Fischnaller started



Fr Arturo Velazquez (1992–1998).



Visit of the Provincial Council to Mount Frère, in 1990.

small projects to help the people to find some income. He also started building churches in some outstations. In 2004, he left and went to Sudan to build schools there, after the long civil war. Bro. Hermann Engelhardt remained as gardener and supplied many with seedlings and helped people to develop gardens. In 1995, Fr Riegel moved to Mount Ayliff. On 9 January 2001, the Comboni Missionaries in Mount Frère were strengthened with the arrival of Fr Antonio Benetti. He took over as parish priest.

In September 2012, the Congregation ended the commitment in Mount Frère and in the Eastern Cape.



Parish buildings, in Mount Frère.

## MOUNT FRÈRE

Year	Fathers	Brothers
1990-91	Riegel and Ellinger	
1992-98	Riegel and Velazquez Gonzalez Arturo	Fischnaller
1998	Stefani, Gutiérrez Manuel and Hofmann	Fischnaller
1999-00	Stefani, Gutiérrez and Hofmann	Fischnaller and Engelhardt
2001-03	Benetti, Espinoza Huaman Florian, Hofmann and Chico de Medeiros	Fischnaller and Engelhardt
2004	Benetti, Rigoberto Zamora and Hofmann	Engelhardt
2005	Benetti, Zamora and Melese Tumato Shulla	Engelhardt
2006	Mariano and Melese	Engelhardt
2007	Mariano	Engelhardt
2007-12	Mariano and Robert Ochola	Engelhardt

## MOUNT AYLIFF AND TABANKULU

In February 1995, the parishes of Mount Ayliff and Tabankulu were entrusted to the Comboni Missionaries. Fr Bernhard Riegel and Fr Giorgio Stefani were the two first Combonis appointed to Mount Ayliff community. When Fr Riegel was elected Provincial Superior, Fr Stefani took his place as parish priest, supported by Fr Günther Hofmann, who arrived in Mount Ayliff in 1998. In 2001, Fr Stefani had to leave Mount Ayliff to start his new assignment in the Study House and Fr Florian Espinoza came to Mount Ayliff. He went on home leave after Easter 2003 and stayed in Peru because of ill health. On 3 April 2004, Fr Rigoberto was assigned to



Fr Bernhard Riegel (1990–1998).



Fr Giorgio Stefani, in a house celebration, in Mount Ayliff.

the community. In 2005, Fr Hofmann went back to his province of origin and Fr Rigoberto was joined by Fr Melese Tumato Shulla. When Fr Rigoberto left in 2006, Fr Melese was helped for a while by Fr Guillermo de Jesus Medina Martinez, but in 2010, Fr “Memo” moved to the Provincialate to take up his new assignment as Provincial Secretary. Fr Paul Kambo replaced Fr Memo for two and a half years until both parishes were handed over in April 2012.



Bishop William Slattery and Fr Rigoberto Zamora.

## MOUNT AYLIF AND TABANKULU

Year	Fathers
1995-98	Riegel and Velazquez
1998	Stefani and Hofmann
1999-01	Stefani and Hofmann
2001-03	Hofmann and Rigoberto Zamora
2004	Hofmann and Zamora
2005	Hofmann, Zamora and Melese Tumato Shulla
2006	Zamora and Melese
2007	Melese
2008-09	Melese and Guillermo Medina
2009	Melese and Medina
2010-12	Melese and Paul Kambo



Fr Günther Hofmann with youth of Tabankulu.

## OUR COMMITMENT IN THE DIOCESE OF KOKSTAD

BY FR BERNHARD RIEGEL

The Bishop of Witbank, Paul Mogale Nkhumishe, as well as some of his priests, felt that the presence of the Comboni Missionaries in the diocese of Witbank was overwhelming. So, he asked for a possible exchange with another religious congregation who might want to send priests to the diocese. The Franciscans of the diocese of Kokstad seemed to be the only order interested in such a move. Most of our confrères were not in favour of moving so far away (800 km). Fr Anton Ellinger and I appeared to be the only ones ready to accept the call to Kokstad. It was envisaged that we Comboni Missionaries would go to Bizana and the Franciscans would go to Middelburg near Witbank. Bizana had been established as an outstation by the Mariannahill Missionaries flowing from the flourishing Lourdes Mission in the 1880s. When I moved to the Eastern Cape, I started learning Xhosa with material from the Lumko Institute, so that I could settle in the new parish at the end of September 1990. Bishop Wilfred Napier and the Franciscans welcomed me. After three weeks, the Franciscans told me they no longer wanted to leave Bizana. They proposed we should rather take over Mount Frère, as this was still a mission parish with a low percentage of Catholics.

Our Provincial Council agreed. But the parish priest of Mount Frère, Fr Gerry O'Reilly, was on home leave in Ireland, attending several courses. His return was scheduled for May 1991. To change over during his absence was



Fr Hofmann, Memo and Melese with friends.



Fr Günther Hofmann baptizing in Ncumbe.

not proper; Bishop Napier then arranged with Fr Gerry that, after his return from his “holidays”, he would leave Mt Frère and go to Middelburg. Mount Frère could then be handed over to the Comboni Missionaries.

I joined Fr Peter Wilson OFM and he both introduced me to the people of the parish and filled me in on the diocesan pastoral policy. Fr Anton Ellinger was to come to Mt Frère as soon as the first Franciscan priest arrived in Middelburg. Fr Anton arrived at Mt Frère in February 1991. The Catholics were astonished to meet two priests who did not



wear a brown habit with a white cincture (unlike the Franciscans) and as well astonished that our home language was neither English nor Irish. Bishop Napier came to Mount Frère to celebrate the Easter Vigil and to introduce the Comboni Missionaries to the community. From then on, we were well-accepted in Mount Frère. Fr Anton Ellinger and I took turns in visiting the outstations.

In 1990, when we moved to Mount Frère, the Transkei was still an independent state, one of the poorest in the world. The infrastructure was about to collapse: for years, no government school buildings had been repaired nor extended. The same applied to the clinics in the villages and the hospital in town. Most of the roads were in a terrible state and could not be used when raining. The parish was quite extensive: It was 70 km to the furthest outstations; about 20 outstations were visited regularly by a priest. In those outstations, there were groups of Catholics and the church and the faith was alive. In going to the outstations, we passed through villages where there were no Catholics. If there were a few, they would ask for a lift to go with us to the nearest outstation. In 1992, Bro. Erich Fischnaller arrived in Mt Frère. He started building a place as a carpentry workshop for storing and selling second-hand clothes. Working together with the men of the villages, he also started repairing and extending school buildings, clinics, crèches and our church buildings. So, the Catholic Church had an important influence and outreach into many villages and was well-known and accepted through helping the development of the area.

The Precious Blood Sisters lived next to the Catholic Church. Sister Rita helped as

parish Sister. She accompanied me to the outstations but she had had no training so we asked the Sisters of Mariannahill for a fully trained parish Sister. Sr Dionys Ngoboko, now the Provincial Superior of the Precious Blood Sisters in Mthatha, was sent to Mount Frère. She worked in the parish for seven years and played a vital role in the development of parish life. Fr Arturo Velazquez asked Sr Ambrose, who was working as a senior nurse in the local hospital, to go with him to the outstations. She reached out particularly to the women of the parish and to people affected by the AIDS epidemic. The following priorities were set: the establishment of a parish pastoral council; starting with a local council in Mount Frère; providing training for the Catholic men and to give them a visible part in public as members of the Church, like the Women of St Anne; to work with the women of St Anne and to help them towards spiritual renewal. The Franciscans had started visiting and blessing the houses of the Catholics in the villages. We continued this pastoral practice. Many new ministries were introduced to the villages and, among the opportunities of training, there were visits to the sick, the leading of community services, catechism teaching, and also work in the protection against AIDS and the youth ministry. The construction of the parish hall was completed in 1991. It was used for different training courses, for parish feasts and social gatherings. Fr Mawethu PotoIwane OFM from Ncunbe celebrated his First Mass in Mt Frère. In February 1995, Fr Giorgio Stefani and I moved to Mt Ayliff. We took over the parishes of Mount Ayliff and Tabankulu from the Franciscans. Sr Marwiga OSF had moved to Tabankulu a few months earlier.

## PROVINCIALATE

Our pioneers of 1924 only had a Religious Superior. He had no fixed residence, but from the very beginning, one could sense tensions between the Superior and the Prefect Apostolic. The Superior wanted religious communities; the Prefect wanted mission stations. The Superior was backed by Fr General in Europe, who also had a say over the finances. The Apostolic Prefect was tied down, because no new personnel arrived in the first years and those who came, were not able or willing to learn languages. But after some time, things changed: the Apostolic Prefect made the decisions and the Religious Superior was meant to look after religious discipline. One entry reads: "The Brothers are not allowed to leave the church during the sermon to have a smoke." Fr Klassert, the first Superior, stayed in Witbank. Fr Schöpf had his home in Witbank, Glen Cowie, White Waters and Maria Trost. Fr Angerer was in Witbank and Barberton. In his diaries, we read that he usually heard of transfers after they had happened. Fr Roth was Superior and acted from Middelburg. Fr Brosig was the first Religious Superior who moved into the residence of the Superior in 1966, it was at Highover, near White River. But his successor, Fr Koch moved back again to Maria Trost.

By now, the *Mandatum* was abolished. The Congregation was reunited and the Superior was promoted to Fr Provincial. Local Churches developed and episcopal and religious authority found a way of mutual respect. Fr Maier moved to Bronkhorstspuit, together with Bro. Frey as Provincial Bursar and Fr Manana as



Blessing of the Provincial House, by the Auxiliary Bishop of Johannesburg, Bishop Zithulele Mvemve.



Fr Anton Maier leads Bishop Mvemve around the house during the blessing, on 16 March 1992.



Meeting of the old and the new Provincial Councils, on 14 December 1992.

vocation animator. Fr Kuppelwieser, who had to leave Witbank Diocese, joined them as parish priest of Bronkhorstspuit. Many felt that we should be nearer to the government offices and the airport and, in 1991, the Provincialate settled in Johannesburg. The move was apparently the right one: the early dissenting voices are no longer heard and the place is frequented by visitors from all over Africa and confrères coming or going to and from the airport or just popping in for a visit.

With the mounting obligations of the Provincialate, the community also increased. The first local Superior was Fr Hinchcliffe, up to 1994. Fr Ellinger offered his services from 1992 to 1995: he helped especially the



Fr Gebhard Schmid.



Fr Anton Maier.

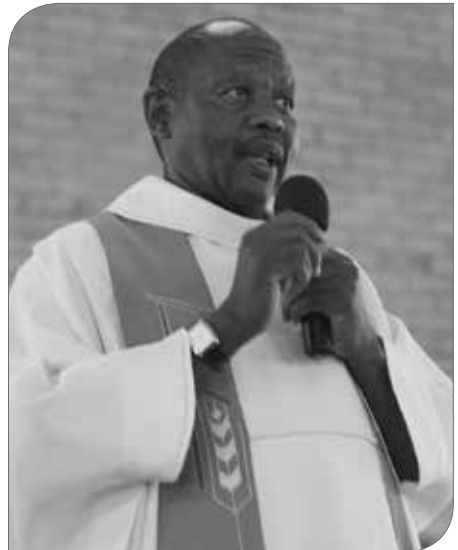
newcomers to wrestle with culture and language. From 1994 to 2000, Fr Redaelli was superior and provincial secretary. In 2001, Fr Converset became the provincial secretary and was involved in ongoing formation and retreats. In 2005, the community was made up of Fr Singer, Provincial, Fr Converset, Fr Manana and Bro. Peter Niederbrunner as Provincial Bursar. Bro. Peter had to move to Germany and Bro. Erich Stöferle had to balance the books. Fr Joe Sandri was elected Provincial in 2008, but he had hardly settled down when he was appointed Bishop of Witbank Diocese. Fr Jeremias dos Santos Martins first served out Fr Sandri's term till 2010, then he was elected twice for the job. Fr Converset was called back to his province of origin. His place as secretary was taken by Fr Guillermo ("Memo") Medina. In the meantime, Fr Memo was appointed parish priest of St Augustine's in Silverton and Fr Provincial remained without a secretary.

## PROVINCIAL SUPERIORS

Year	Superior
1923-29	Klassert
1929-31	Schöpf
1931-32	Musar
1932-38	Angerer
1939-46	Schöpf
1946-49	Baumgart
1949-55	Reiterer
1955-61	Roth
1961-68	Brosig
1968-73	Koch
1974-77	Nefzger
1978-80	Alois Eder
1980-86	Schmid G.
1987-92	Maier A.
1993-98	Giuseppe Sandri
1999-01	Bernhard Riegel
2002-04	Baldan F.
2005-08	Benno Singer
2008-09	Giuseppe Sandri
2010-	Fr Jeremias dos Santos Martins

## SOWETO: PHIRI, ZOLA AND ZONDI (2008)

After the Provincialate was established in Johannesburg, it was felt that we should also take on a pastoral commitment in the Archdiocese. Fr Francis Manana had been working in Johannesburg, counselling and helping in parishes in Soweto, since 2006. Archbishop Buti Tlagale requested in 2007 that the Combonis should look after the parishes of Phiri, Zola and Zondi. On 1 October 2008, Fr Francis Manana and Fr Benno Singer moved to Phiri. On 8 October 2009, Fr Aldo Chisté joined the new community: he stayed in Zola. Fr Manana was appointed parish priest and, since 2010, he was also Dean of Soweto Deanery. Fr Singer and Fr Chisté helped to look after the three parishes.



Fr Francis Manana. On the left: Church of Phiri. Below: Fr Ibercio Rojas, in Zola (left) and Fr Benno Singer, in Phiri (right).



## ON THE WAY TO ORANGE FARM

BY FR JEREMIAS DOS SANTOS



Sisters involved in the parish.



Parish celebration.

In 2008, the Comboni Missionaries asked the Archbishop of Johannesburg a permanent pastoral commitment in the Archdiocese. We had a commitment before in Actonville in Benoni, outskirts of JHB, but it was for a short time. Taking into account that Fr Francis Manana was already assisting the parish of Holy Rosary in Phiri, Soweto, the Archbishop

entrusted to us the parish of Phiri together with Zondi, St Therese of the Child Jesus, and Zola, dedicated to the Holy Cross. A community was established in Zola with two priests, Fr Francis Manana and Fr Benno Singer who had just finished his service as provincial superior. Fr Francis was appointed priest-in-charge of the three parishes and Fr Benno assistant parish priest. But being on the move is a part of missionary life: In 2010, the community changed its residence to Phiri, where a new residence was built for the priests. However, the two Combonis continued assisting the three parishes and later on also a settlement called Lufareng, near Phiri.

The same year, Fr Aldo Chistè was assigned to the community, and was living in Zola. Later on, Fr Ibercio Rojas joined the community of Phiri and Fr Aldo left to live in Pretoria. In 2013, Fr Manana was assigned to Kenya as a missionary and Fr Melese Tumato took over the parish of Phiri. And there we go again: in the provincial assembly held in April 2014, in line with the six-year plan of the Province of South Africa, the Comboni Missionaries decided to leave Soweto answering the request of Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, to take over the parish of Orange Farm, in the Vaal Deanery, South East of Johannesburg. Fr Benno Singer, Fr Ibercio Rojas and Fr Job Plinga, who had arrived the previous year from Togo, were appointed to form the new community.

The parish had started in 1997 by the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), who had to leave due to the lack of personnel. During the years of their presence, they did a wonderful work of evangelisation and human promotion. Some of the projects they started while running the parish are: crèches, skill centre school with



Orange Farm community: Fr Job Plinga, Fr Benno Singer and Fr Ibercio Rojas.

300 youth, AIDS support group and counselling and home care base (inkanyezi). The parish is made up of eight Christian communities, in a range of 25 Kms from the Centre of the parish: St Charles Lwanga—the main parish church, near the community residence—St Clare, St Thomas, Blessed Joseph Gerard, St Augustine, St Mathias Mulumba, St Louis, and St Kizito. All the communities have their own chapels and are properly organised striving to become more and more self-sufficient, self-evangelising and self-ministering. A community of Sisters of St Francis of Assisi made up of three sisters is working in the parish getting involved in the different pastoral activities.

Orange Farm is a settlement that is rapidly growing and welcomes people from different areas of the country such as the Free State Province and the nearby Lesotho, but mainly from Soweto, which is now overcrowded. It has an estimated population of 350 000 inhabitants who speak mainly Sotho and Zulu.

In general, the people are poor and the social problems are many with an outstanding record of violence, social uprising and unemployment. There are many young people who look ahead for a better life and trust the Church in order to find guidance and encouragement.

The commitment in Orange Farm is fruit of reflection and prolonged discernment, listening to the signs of the times, involving the whole province and especially the community of Soweto, more directly affected by the change. Our presence there is seen as a blessing and a call to be more coherent with our missionary charism. It is also a response to the cry of the people who are searching for God and who are constantly bombarded by the “Prosperity Churches” that create unfulfilled expectations in the lives of the poor. The challenges are many, but we believe that this is a fertile field for first evangelisation and the Lord will accompany this new mission with His presence and strength.

## PASTORAL POLICIES NEW BEGINNINGS – NEW ENVIRONMENT

01. Our pioneers landed in new surroundings, new cultures and new languages. The only language they could use was English. Among themselves, they used German; the circulars of Fr Superior up to the fifties and sixties were often in German.

02. The only Catholic element which they found was the “Settler Church”. The whole area was visited occasionally by travelling priests, either from Pretoria or Johannesburg. Only one permanent priest was stationed in Lydenburg to look after the Sisters of the Loreto Convent. Mission work was not done.

03. The arrival of our missionaries often met with suspicion, the famous slogan was the “*Roomse Gevaar*” (Roman threat). They landed in a protestant country. The other Churches were here earlier, like the Lutherans. Together with the Anglicans and the Dutch Reformed Church were the recognised/official Churches. To buy a farm was one way to overcome this obstacle. Maria Trost started as a farm, so did Glen Cowie, White Waters, Barberton, Belfast, Luckau and Mashabela-Probeeran.

04. This was made possible, because the Brothers were available to manage the farms. Our pioneers were ill-equipped for the new work. Only Fr Angerer and Fr Zorn made an effort to learn Zulu, the others thought they could do without. This situation led to frustration and to divisions and infighting.



Fr Bernhard Zorn, in Barberton (1929–1934).



### **DIVIDED OPINIONS: MSGR D. KAUCZOR (1924–1926)**

When Msgr Kauczor bought Maria Trost farm, his councillors did not agree; they wanted to buy property in Ermelo. Kauczor wanted Maria Trost to be a mission centre, Fr General and the religious Superior wanted a monastery set up. Partly, they got their way: in 1925, Fr Raffener came to Maria Trost as rector and he did not find it necessary to learn a language; German was enough for his work. Maria Trost had a fixed timetable and Fr Zorn was allowed to do mission work. In his diary, we find this nice entry: “He has nothing to say down here” and he added: “And they have nothing to say up here.” The remark of Fr Angerer in his diary, when he started in Witbank, Driefontein says it all: “I started the first mission.” Kauczor had plans to get stuck into mission work but he was tied down: he only had two missionaries, the others could not be used for mission work, because they did not know the necessary language. Soon, Kauczor was tired of all the fighting and resigned.



Msgr Daniel Kauczor.

Both parties, the Congregation and the Prefect Apostolic, had to find their way. The Congregation was new and Fr General wanted the *Rule of Life* implemented and adhered to. He appointed the rectors. The Prefect had to implement mission policy but depended on the Congregation for personnel and finances.

### **SLOW START AND MORE OPPOSITION UNDER MSGR MOHN (1926–1938)**



Msgr Alois Mohn.

Msgr Mohn was appointed successor of Kauczor. He had a strong character and he had opponents from the very beginning. The climax was a vote of ‘no confidence’ in 1932. But, unlike Kauczor, Mohn had new people to work with. Mission work could be done by Fr Joseph Brandmaier in Glen Cowie, Fr Angerer in Witbank, Fr Zorn in Barberton, Fr Riegler in Maria Trost and Fr Tremmel in White Waters. The ‘rebels’ also did not have the support of Fr General. Instead of another resignation, Fr Ipfelkofer came for an Apostolic Visitation. Some were demoted and others were transferred. Slowly, the influence of the new missionaries grew and the “white parish priests” could not stop the development. Furthermore, the Prefects Apostolic were strongly backed by the Apostolic Delegate. He implemented the decisions of the Kimberley conference to stress more mission work. Glen Cowie was the first major move to get a foothold in



Celebration of Msgr Alois Mohn's Silver Jubilee, in December 1929.

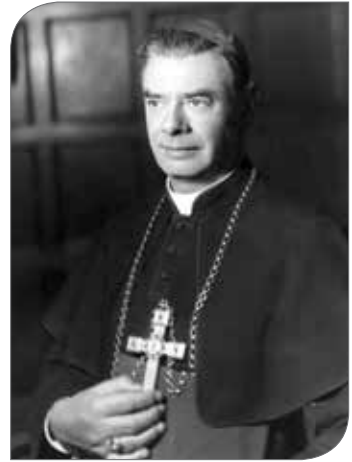


Msgr Alois Mohn and his FORD limousine.

Sekhukhuneland. In 1929, part of a farm was bought and mission work could start. The Loreto Sisters supported the endeavour and started social work and schooling. With the purchase of White Waters, Msgr Mohn succeeded in covering most of the area, entrusted to the Comboni Missionaries. White Waters was also the place where Msgr Mohn spent his last years.

## BISHOP RIEGLER (1939–1955)

Bishop Riegler was accepted by all, had a talent for languages and made full use of it. He also became a leading figure in the emerging Bishops' Conference, especially with his involvement in the school policy. The mission schools were one pillar of mission work. Each mission station tried to open schools. It was possible because Catholic teachers came from the Teachers' Training College in Mariannhill and the schools were supported by the government through grants. The schools played an important role in the education and social development of black children. Many of the first government officials had gone through Catholic schools. For the parents, the schools were attractive and for the missionaries the schools were important for their efforts. The tenacity of Bishop Riegler, supported especially by Fr Lechner, made it possible to start a Secondary School in Maria Trost, a well-known institution during the Apartheid era. When the school had to close in 1967, because it was "a black spot in a white area", Bishop Rei-



Bishop Johann Riegler.



Msgr Riegler and his missionaries, in 1947. Front: Fr Bandmaier, Fr Habicher, Fr Baumgart, Msgr Riegler, Fr Stadmüller, Fr. K. Fischer and Fr Angerer. Back: Fr Klemm, Fr Zeifang, Fr Koch, Fr Tremmel, Fr Steidle, Fr Schöpf, Fr Morscher, Fr Lechner and Fr Jungnickl.



Bishop Riegler is visited by his priests in 1955, during his convalescence.

terer managed to have the school transferred to Glen Cowie.

Another pillar of mission policy was social involvement, carried out mainly by the Sisters. Small clinics in Maria Trost and White Waters, hospitals in Glen Cowie and Bongani which soon made a name for themselves in their neighbourhood. Under Bishop Riegler, the mission policy can be summarised as: Mission Schools, Hospitals and regular visits and instructions by the missionaries. He was mainly supported in his efforts by Fr Habicher and Fr Koch in Glen Cowie, by Fr Baumgart in Maria Trost and by Fr Lechner in White Waters. They all knew the language and



Bro. Kley and P. Sihlangu looked after him.

slowly the tension between “white parish priests” and missionaries eased. During the time of Bishop Riegler, the Associations were introduced, like the St Anne’s, Sacred Heart, Teachers’ Association—the beginning of lay involvement in the work of evangelisation. These Associations had an important role in the development of Catholic life and are now the backbone of parish life and parish activities.

Despite all the limitations because of World War II—no finances and no personnel came from outside—churches were built in Middelburg, Barberton and Maria Trost. Glen Cowie built St Rita's Hospital and the future Cathedral in Witbank was completed in 1954. New places were opened in Belfast, Jagdlust moved to Carolina, where extensive land was bought. In Sekhukhuneland, Luckau and Probeeren were opened. In the *Lowveld*, Acornhoek could be opened, White Waters moved to Friedenheim and eventually to Bongani and, in Barberton, we saw the opening of St John's.

Relief came on 1 December 1948. Msgr Riegler could fetch eight priests and three Brothers in Bulawayo, the first arrivals after World War II. For most of them, it was too difficult to adjust after army life and war experience and the majority of them went back to Europe. Bishop Riegler also had to deal with the implementation of Apartheid. The school grants were terminated and he was in charge of the mission schools. First the teachers could be paid through raising funds, but they dried up and the Church was forced to hand over or to close the schools. The Catholic Teachers' Training Colleges were no longer recognised and, towards 1965, the Catholic mission schools were history. A few survived as Farm Schools, but one important pillar of mission work had gone.

### **BISHOP REITERER (1956–1983)**

Bishop Reiterer succeeded Bishop Riegler in 1956. Quite a few new missionaries arrived from Europe. They fitted in with the existing policies, schools, and, where possible, regular visits and instructions. Many outstations also saw decent churches being built; the newcomers had benefactors and they had more financial support. Bishop Reiterer tried to continue in the line of Bishop Riegler, but he had to deal with a hostile government. When he was ordained Bishop, the dignitaries of Witbank were present, enjoyed the hospitality and had only nice things to say, but two weeks later he received notice that Driefontein (Ackerville) would be taken away. He had to spend a lot of time, running from one government office to the next, applying for permits and for church sites. Sometimes, he succeeded, but he could not prevent the handing over of our two hospitals, St Rita and Bongani.

A totally new challenge came when the number of vocations declined. The



Bishop Anton Reiterer.



Bishop Reiterer and Superior, Fr Roth, pose with the Brothers, in 1956. Front: Bro. Cygan, Bishop Reiterer, Fr Roth and Bro. Cagol. Middle: Bros. Gruber, Kley, Egger, Merz, Lamprecht, Häring, Kurz and Oberstaller. Back: Brand, Hirschlein, Pezzei, Feil, Vogel and Dorn.

training for Catechists was started in Glen Cowie. The regional minor seminary in Luckau was opened and the whole issue became the major concern of the Bishops' Conference. The Second Vatican Council opened the door for new ministries; Lumko Institute provided training and material; and we also saw the start of Maria Trost Pastoral Centre. Slowly, the Pastoral Plan developed—a "Community serving Humanity". More and more the people were made aware of the importance of the inculturation of the Church and the faith. Parish Councils started playing an important role in parish life, parish policies and parish finances. Pastoral policies were defined by the Bishops' Conference.

### **THE UNSUNG HEROES**

During those years, the Brothers and Sisters were of invaluable value. The Brothers built up the infrastructure, be it a presbytery, a school, a church or a clinic. The carpenters produced furniture, which is still admired today. The farmers eased the financial burden under what were very trying circumstances. There were flourishing vegetable gardens and clean and hospitable mission stations. The Sisters were in our schools, in the hospitals, in the kitchen and in the laundry. The Brothers and Sisters were usually also the first ones in church in the morning and after a long day again in the evening. They prayed, worked for nearly nothing and contributed to the establishment of the Local Church. Very often, they were taken for granted; they



Feast of the Sacred Heart and Bishop Reiterer's Silver Jubilee as bishop, in Maria Trost, in 1981.

had not much to say in policy-making. There was a demanding religious discipline: some did not persevere and left; the others made our founder proud—carrying their cross and waiting patiently for the fruit to ripen. One quote, said after the funeral of a brother, sums it up: “First you have to die before they say, “Thank you.””

### **SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS**

Our pioneers took over the established places, Lydenburg, Witbank and Barberton; the rest of the Prefecture was covered by travelling priests. The first centre was Maria Trost. School and church were opened on the same day, the 12 July 1925. The first boarders were taken and soon Maria Trost was a lively place, the carpentry was running, the farm produced food for missionaries and boarders and the first outstations were opened, starting with a school. The first transport was a horse, later on a motorbike and a car. When the Sisters from Mariannahill arrived, a clinic was opened.

In 1929, we see the same pattern in Glen Cowie—farm, schools, clinic, hospital and workshops. Likewise in 1935, in White Waters: a farm and a school with boarding. There the plans had to be changed, because the people were too far away. So we saw the move to Friedenheim and after the broken promises of the government there was the move to Bongani and to St John's, Barberton. From these centres, outstations were opened to reach the outlying areas. It was also hoped that, through the children, parents would get involved, and that eventually new parishes could develop: from Maria Trost, Belfast, Carolina, Sabie, Pilgrim's Rest, Burgersfort and Steelpoort; Bongani, White River, Nelspruit, Waterval, from White Waters; Mashabela, Luckau, Schoonoord, from Glen Cowie. This method



Sr Luitagarda with the first boarders, in Maria Trost, in 1928.

was successful, because there were Brothers who built and maintained the structures and there were the Sisters who were involved in social development, in the schools and in the hospitals. The schools could be run, because there were government grants and there was the Teachers' Training College in Mariannahill. Our first teachers for our mission schools were imported from Mariannahill: a well-known teacher was Domitilla Dlamini in Witbank, who became the right hand of Fr Angerer.

In general, our mission schools were regarded as far better than the government schools. Despite the hardships of World War II, this method was successful till the mid-fifties. When Apartheid was enforced on all levels, everything started crumbling. First, it was the schools: the government stopped the grants. Bishop Riegler was in charge of collecting money nationwide to support the mission schools. For some time, the teachers carried on for lower pay than in the government schools, but the funds dried up quickly and the teachers needed more money. With no more grants, the money ran out and one mission school after the other was taken over by the "Bantu Education". The Teachers' Training College in Mariannahill was no longer recognised and the Catholic teachers dried up.

The next blow was aimed at the hospitals: no more subsidies and funding. Our hospitals were loved by the people, because of the love the patients received there. The Bishops were looking continually for funds and doctors, but in the long run they had to hand over: the final result was that Bongani and St Rita's became government hospitals.



Another blow came from inside: the decline in vocations in Europe. Up to the mid sixties, every year new people came in, despite all the difficulties on the part of the government. In Maria Trost, only one Comboni was left. The farm, the boarding centre and the workshops had to be closed. Local vocations were few and many missions had to be abandoned.

Our schools and hospitals made us known and accepted by the people and soon the faith was planted. Regular religious instruction in all places and regular visits to all the outstations were done everywhere, on horse or bicycle or bike or car. For special feasts, like First Holy Communion, Confirmation or *Corpus Christi*, all came together and celebrated. One can easily find negative points and criticise what was wrong and what should have been done differently. But we should not forget that God uses human beings to establish His Kingdom and He writes straight through crooked lines. The fact is that the Local Church was established during those years, the structures were created and the faith is alive. All our younger confrères, the local priests and religious and lay people can continue and carry on the work of those pioneers, who started from nothing or with very little.



Msrgr Alois Mohn, in Sterkspruit, looking for a school site.

## APOSTOLIC DELEGATES

In 1922, the first Apostolic Delegate arrived in South Africa. It was Archbishop Gijlswijk. He resided in Bloemfontein and decided the mission policy of the Church. Pope Benedict XV and Pius XI wanted the gospel to be brought to all, so that the Local Church could be established with its own vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The Apostolic Delegates felt responsible for implementing these policies. In July 1924, the Apostolic Delegate called a meeting in Kimberley. He spoke about the advancement of the African missions, training of indigenous clergy and catechists and improvement of mission schools. New ecclesial territories were erected, the Prefecture of Lydenburg, the Pallottine Fathers took over Queenstown, the Spiritans moved into the Free State. Apostolic Prefectures were erected in Windhoek, Umtata, Mount Currie, Oudtshoorn and Queenstown. Archbishop Gijlswijk really got involved: he backed the Prefects wherever possible, visited nearly all the mission stations and also established good relationships with the hostile government. His knowledge of Afrikaans helped a lot. Archbishop Gijlswijk died in 1944 and was succeeded by Martin Lucas, who was Apostolic Delegate till 1952. He pushed the training of lo-



Msgr B. J. Gijlswijk.



The Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Martin Lucas, in Maria Trost, in 1947.



Apostolic Delegate, Msgr M. Lucas blesses the church of St Joseph, in Middelburg.

cal clergy and was responsible for the establishment of the hierarchy in South Africa in 1951. In 1946, he moved to Pretoria, the country's political capital.

Training of local vocations to the priesthood had started in Roma (Lesotho) and in Ixopo in 1922. The religious congregations sent their white vocations overseas. At the Bishops' Conference in Mariannhill, things were taken more seriously. In 1948, St John Vianney opened with the well-known John Ferguson as rector. Hammanskraal was for African vocations. In 1950, the Bishops

could not agree on amalgamation, even though the struggle gained momentum and did not stop at the doors of the seminaries. The whole situation moved to the other extreme with the dismissal of white staff and some unrest. The consequence was a new seminary in Cape Town with no more white candidates in St John Vianney. With the political situation more or less solved, the seminaries would return to their original purpose. At present, two minor seminaries, in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, prepare the candidates to priesthood to study Philosophy and Theology at St John Vianney National Major Seminary.



Seminary of St John Vianney.

During the time of Martin Lucas, the SACBC was established and started taking shape. Today, it is a well-organised institution, defining pastoral policies and representing the local Church. We, as Combonis, are challenged to align our special charism with the pastoral policy of the Local Church. Cardinal Cassidy played a leading role in appointing local Bishops and, over the last 20 years, one can notice that the Local Church is taking shape, the responsibility is seen and the challenges are taken up. The faith has to take root, seen now as God's offer of salvation and not as a stepping stone for something else.

Since 5 March 1994, full diplomatic relations were established between the Vatican and South Africa and the Apostolic Delegate was promoted to Apostolic Nuncio.

### **TOWARDS A LOCAL CHURCH**

When our pioneers arrived in 1924, they found the “settler Church” and in other parts, like Mariannhill, the “mission Church”. In the settler Church, there were white parishes and flourishing white schools; in the missions, it was a different story: poor conditions wherever one looked. Those conditions were accepted as a norm and a distinction between parish priest and missionary lingered on for quite some time. It was only in the sixties that one could notice that the parish priests no longer felt comfortable with that label. The change came over a long period of time.



Bishop Paul Mogale Nkhumishe, with parents, after his consecration, on 14 February 1982.



Msgr Mohn, with the group of those who received the Sacrament of Confirmation, in Maria Trost.

It came about through the resistance of the black population. First, the whites were accepted as the colonial power. Under English rule, Apartheid was a fact without law and under nationalist rule Apartheid was legalised. It was only when resistance grew that things started changing and slowly developed into the freedom struggle, which eventually brought the change. The structures are still standing and it will take some time before things sort themselves out.

Two real difficulties should be seen. The one is the separate structures—the legacy of Apartheid—and the other is the language problem, and with it the different ways in celebrating the liturgy. The Combonis were caught in the middle of it all. Some accepted the situation as it was, others saw the wrongs, but felt helpless to do much about it. The general approach was to persevere, let the people know that we are on their side and hope and pray for the best. During the time of the struggle none of us was harmed and we could do our work, none left because he felt no longer welcome. A leading role towards a Local Church was and still is played by lay faithful involved in the different Movements and Associations—St Anne’s, Sacred Heart, Children of Mary, St Joseph, the Catechists, the church choirs and the youth groups. Sometimes they were seen as a burden, but they developed into the backbone of parish life and are also indispensable for the implementation of the Bishops’ Pastoral Plan: to be a “Community serving Humanity”.

Another sign that the Church is becoming local is the financial contribution of the faithful. In the beginning, everything was expected from “Father”. The missionaries were also shy to ask for financial support. The minutes of the Bishop’s Council meeting from the 28 September 1953 stipulate: those earning over 100



Priestly ordination of Fr Mmela, on 25 June 1966.

pounds a year should contribute 10 shilling a year; school children, 6 pence a year; male workers in rural area, 2.6 shilling a year; women, 1.6 shilling. In urban area, they should contribute 5 and 2.6 shilling, respectively. A Baptism Certificate should be one shilling.” Now, the financial contribution of the faithful is substantial. They take more responsibility for “their” Church.

## AFTER VATICAN II

Major changes came after Vatican II. First came the introduction of the vernacular. The introduction was generally accepted although for some time one could hear nostalgic voices advocating to bring back Latin. A much bigger challenge came from the decline of missionary vocations, many of the structures disappeared because there were no more Brothers and Sisters to maintain them or they were no longer seen as necessary. The abolishment of the *Mandatum*, which shifted the whole responsibility on to the local Church, softened the blow. About the same time, we were re-united and we had many confrères coming who had no special connection with “our” mission. Furthermore, local leadership took over and had to



Bishop Reiterer with the Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

establish itself. In Witbank Diocese, the Comboni presence was for some too overwhelming. As a consequence, we embarked on new commitments in other dioceses, especially Kokstad and Johannesburg. In Witbank Diocese, we see new names, the Kiltegens, the Missionaries of Africa, the OMs, the Holy Family Sisters, the Benedictine Sisters of St Alban, the School Sisters of St Francis, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and the newest arrivals, the Sisters of Servants of St Vincent de Paul. The Franciscans from the Kokstad Diocese, who initially swapped with the Comboni Missionaries, are no longer in Witbank Diocese.

The first reaction of the Local Church to the new challenges was to train more catechists, but lack of funds led to the dismissal of the *paid* catechists and the training of *volunteer* catechists; eventually, the parish community was told that they were responsible for teaching the faith. The final outcome was the Pastoral Plan with the heading “Community serving Humanity” published in 1989. The emphasis is on the role of the lay people and lay ministries. The leading role was played by the Lumko Institute. Since the Second Vatican Council, the definition of Church has developed. The Church as the people of God is seen more clearly, namely, the responsibility of all to live and to hand on the faith. The lay people have their own role in the Church and the Priest is not the Church. Lay movements already existed and they are still strong, but things have shifted to the whole parish, parish pastoral and financial councils and Small Christian Communities. One challenge in the parish is to motivate the different associations to work together with the whole parish.



Tyrolean visit Bishop Reterer, in 1993. Front: Fr Plankensteiner, and Fr Graf. Back: Fr Kuppelwieser, Fr Maneschg, Bro. Niederbrunner, Bro. Fischnaller, Fr Knapp and Sr Marianne Graf.

## “SAVING AFRICA THROUGH AFRICA”

Each Community needs leaders and leaders have to be trained. St Daniel Comboni already saw the need of the involvement of locals in his work. Most of our places started with the opening of a “Mission School”. The parents were eager to send their children to our schools, they saw the advantage. The Apartheid government saw the danger and wanted to limit black education to Standard 2. Bishop Riegler and Fr Lechner succeeded in opening Maria Trost Secondary School. For many government officials, Maria Trost was their



Priestly ordination of Fr Solly Mokoena.

## THE CHOICE FOR A SIMPLE LIFESTYLE

BY FR JEREMIAS DOS SANTOS

The vocational geography changed towards the end of the millennium. Europe, once fertile soil for missionary vocations, little by little became very arid and dry. Instead, the vocations to the Comboni Institute started coming mainly from Africa and Latin America. As a consequence, the Institute decided to change the location of its formation houses, at the level of the novitiate and scholasticate—from the northern hemisphere (Paris, London, Rome, Chicago, Innsbruck [Austria]), to the South, in Africa and Latin America, from where the majority of the vocations were coming. In Africa, the following noviciates were opened: Namugongo, Uganda, in 1990; Lusaka, in 2001; Kinshasa, in 1997 later closed (2006); Sahr, Tchad, in 2010; the noviciate of Lomé was transferred to Cotonou in 2005. At the level of scholasticates, Kampala-Nairobi was opened in 1988/1989, Kinshasa in

1996, Pietermaritzburg in 2002, and finally Cape Coast, in Ghana, in 2009. The scholasticate of Pietermaritzburg was opened with a more personalised formative journey in mind and as a presence in the midst of people. It was decided the number of students should be small so that they could be properly accompanied. The house should be simple and the lifestyle sober in solidarity with those who lived nearby. The students would go to the St Joseph Theological Institute, run by and property of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI).

When the time came to choose a place for the scholasticate, there were two options: to build near the Theological Institute at Cedara, quite isolated from the people and without a parish context, or to have a house in town, taking over a parish. The Comboni Missionaries decided on the second option. They took over



chance to get a higher education. Many bursaries were given to help many students who could not afford the school fees.

The training of local leaders in the Church started in earnest in Glen Cowie. Fr Stadtmüller opened the Catechist School, Fr Chisté continued the work. In Maria Trost, the Pastoral Centre was built and is the platform for meetings, conferences and workshops. Fr Graf was the first director; Fr Knapp, Fr Sandri and Fr Converset were able successors. Fr Baldan is in charge at the moment. At present, three of our confrères are involved in forming the local clergy. In 1974, Fr John Maneschg started teaching Holy Scripture in Hammanskraal, then in St John Vianney Seminary and St Augustine College. His commitment over many years was recognised when he received the Papal Honour, “Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice” in 2013. “I never met a man of such graciousness”, were the words of Bishop Graham Rose at the handing over ceremony. Fr Ibercio Rojas is also teaching at St John Vianney and Fr Vicente Reig is a member of the staff at Cedara, teaching Missiology and Sacramental Theology. All this amounts to a meaningful contribution to forming local leaders in the Church.



Mission requires the use of poor means.

the parish of St Joan of Arc and the buildings were adapted to the needs of the small group of scholastics—six at the beginning, plus the formator. The parish and the scholasticate are in the same compound, bordering on the industrial area of Pietermaritzburg, near one of the informal settlements on the outskirts of town. As the number of vocations was growing in many African countries, we were obliged to extend the buildings to receive more scholastics. The number went up to 15.

The choice of living in a poor context with a simple lifestyle is a constant challenge in a consumerist society that bombards us daily with the novelties of the market. It is important to remain daily aware of our vulnerability and the inner desire of possessing and having more and more. The thirst for more is always there thrashing us and many times taking over our personal and independent will. In spite of all the efforts to be near the people and at their level, it is impossible to live like the poor, taking into account the demands of the theological preparation of the future priests in response to the challenges of today’s society.

More important is the formation in the values of the Gospel. The choice for a simple lifestyle cannot be imposed on anybody. It has to be a free choice, rooted in the Gospel and lived in freedom by those who voluntarily made that choice. It is important especially that the formators and those who are perpetually professed adopt this kind of life leading the young generations by example.



First holy Mass of Fr Gordon Rees (18.8.2002).



The two Generals in Ellwangen after the reunion.

## PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

The challenges for the Comboni Missionaries in South Africa are many. We need to be attentive and open to the *signs of the times* in order to be a meaningful presence in the Church and Society at large.

We are called to share in a special way the richness of our Founder and our missionary charism with the Local Church. The means to achieve this goal is our commitment as members of the Local Church, our involvement in Missionary Promotion and special services in the Church and society, according to our Charism.

An imperative that we cannot overlook is a serious commitment in the promotion and formation of new missionaries, religious and priests for the Institute and the Church.

Another challenge is to find a balance between our pastoral commitments and the administration services of the Comboni Province.

Special attention needs to be paid to the building of Christian Communities that are self-ministering, self-evangelising and financially self-sufficient, in line with the inspiration of the founder, “save Africa with Africa”.

## THE INSTITUTES' REUNION

In 1923, the separation of the MFSC (Missionaries Sons of the Sacred Heart), the German-speaking branch, from the FSCJ (Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus), the Italian branch, was a fact. The reasons given for this will depend on one's 'glasses'. One thing is for sure, the separation was not part of our Comboni charism that is to live and work as international communities. The wish to reunite never died down. The first rubbing of shoulders happened in Rome among the students, studying together at the same universities. After the Vatican Council, when we were reminded to go back to our founder, things developed quickly. In 1973, at the General Chapter

of the MFSC a general consensus was reached for reunion under certain conditions, which were spelled out under the “Special Agreement”. In 1975, the FSCJ at their Chapter agreed and a special Chapter was called and both Congregations decided to reunite. The first Chapter among the two branches took place in 1979 and a new Constitution was approved.

In South Africa, the first attempt to live and work together was made in 1966. Fr Andrea De Maldè arrived in SA at the end of 1966 with a tourist VISA and received a stay permit of 15 days. Msgr Watkins, the Secretary General of the SACBC, managed to get a three-month temporary permit. That permit was renewed later on to six months. Bro. Mario Adani and Fr Aldo Chistè arrived in Durban with the ship *Africa* on 27 April 1967 and joined Fr De Maldè in Bongani Mission.

At the beginning of May, Bishop Anton Reiterer went with the three FSCJ to Waterval, about 12 km from Bushbuckridge, where they chose the name for the mission, Holy Family Mission, and decided where to build the house. Bro. O. Huber was put in charge of building the house helped by Bro. Adani. Fr De Maldè was their driver from Bongani.

Meanwhile, Fr Chistè went to Acornhoek to study Tsonga. He was welcomed by Fr J. Hornhauer and Fr A. Sonnenburger. When Fr. Chistè came back to Bongani, where people speak Swazi, it was Fr De Maldè's turn to go to Acornhoek for three months to be initiated in the Tsonga language.

By Christmas, the house was almost finished and the three FSCJ moved to Waterval Mission. On 20 January 1968, Bishop Reiterer convened a meeting to set



Ellwangen, 1975. Fr Georg Klose and Fr Tarcisio Agostoni carrying the tree of unity.

the boundaries of the new mission, in which Fr A. Graf—the newly appointed Parish Priest of Acornhoek—Fr De Maldè, Bro. Adani and Fr Chistè took part. It was decided that the communities of Bushbuckridge, Versailles, Cuning Moore A, Cuning Moore B, Kildarie, Aerea, Sommerset (Kunya Mahembe, which means, *Roll up your sleeves*), Rondolsy, Belfast, Cork, Justicia and Agin Court would change from Acornhoek to Waterval Mission. The communities of Marite A, Marite B, Teka Mahala (which means, *Take the bride without paying lobola*), Oakley and Madras would change from Bongani to Waterval Mission. Both Acornhoek and Bongani still had a great number of locations to minister to.

A second mission was planned, Rolle Mission. Three more missionaries came to initiate it. In August 1968, Fr Charles Walter arrived and, on 20 November of the same year, Bro. Francesco Padovan and Fr Noverino Canonici arrived.

In the meantime, Fr De Maldè and Fr Chistè found it difficult to get permission to go to the locations. They applied for permission in January 1968 and received permission for 6 months. When they asked again to have their entry permit renewed to go among the black people at the beginning of July 1968, the magistrate of Bushbuckridge denied the permit and they had to stay at home. The magistrate asked Fr Chistè if they were replacing old people or if the permit was for new personnel. When he said that they were opening a new mission, he refused to renew their



Workshop in Maria Trost. The three Combonis in the picture (from right) are: Fr Felipe Fierro, Fr John Converset and Fr Anton Graf.



Fr Tremmel with Catholic men.

permit. In January 1969, they re-applied for a permit to go to the locations and the permit was granted. Someone must have recommended them. From that time, they had to re-apply every year for a permit to go among the black people. Sometimes, they found it difficult to get a permit, but in general it was granted. However, they had to give up the project of opening a new mission in Rolle—a few kilometres from Thulamahashe Township—where there was already a church and a water pump, as a kick start planned by Bishop Reiterer for the new mission.

Reunion worked and the rest is history. It brought some changes. The *Kreis* (region) became a Province. The position of the Provincial is now different from that of the former Religious Superior. Provincial structures were created with their different Secretariats. Personnel were now needed for different tasks, not only pastoral work.

The Province of South Africa is established, the structures are standing and the number of local vocations is increasing slowly. We have become more and more an international and intercontinental community. This implies a stronger sense of belonging to the Institute, to the Province and to one another and a growing passion for Christ and for the Mission entrusted to us.

It is important to conclude that we have a vocation, not a job. People look at us and want to see who we are, witnesses to what we say.

## AMUSING STORIES

### NEIGHBOUR HELPS NEIGHBOUR

In the thirties, the police were on friendly terms with the Brothers in Maria Trost, especially Bro. Kolenc, the gardener, because he had home-made wine. The Brothers also had a good relationship with our neighbour, old Mr Boshoff. One day, he was reported to be distilling alcohol illegally and the police were on their way to put things right, not on motorbike but with a horse cart. They stopped at Maria Trost to say hello to the brother and he offered them a taste of his newest vintage. The Brother also found out what they were up to and sent a messenger to Mr Boshoff to warn him that the police were on the way. Eventually, duty called and the police continued their journey. But they only managed to get as far as the dam and they drove into the water. Why? Nobody knew, but they turned around and went home to dry out. Mission accomplished!

### OLD HABITS DIE HARD

Bro. Dorn at last had his first holidays at home after the war, when travelling was possible again. He enjoyed it and also did some shopping. After he had chosen his goodies, he paid for them, left them on the counter and left the shop. Luckily for him, he was attended to by an honest shopkeeper who shouted after him: "Hey, don't you want to take your things along?" "Oh, thank you!" the Brother replied, "I thought the boy would bring them."

### FR RECTORS' DIVINE AUTHORITY

Fr Engelhardt was in charge of Maria Trost after Fr Lechner was elected Fr General and had to leave Maria Trost. One of the Father's "virtues" was that he was always in a hurry! One day, he drove in speeding creating a cloud of dust nearly colliding with oncoming traffic, right at the corner where the nicest and tallest cedar tree grew, lovingly nurtured by the love of the Brothers. The poor tree got the blame and

the order to cut the tree down came promptly. The Brothers did not 'understand' and did nothing. The following Sunday, it was a sunny day with one cloud in the sky. Divine intervention came to the help of Fr Rector: there were only two bolts of lightning but one hit the accursed tree and it lay flat at the feet of the Brothers!



Bro. Pezzei, Bro. Vogel and Bro. Kley.

### THE LIONS' DEN

There was a special relationship between Fr Engelhardt and the Brothers.



Recreation in Glen Cowie. From left: Bro. Valentin, Bro. Feil, Bro. Vogel, Bro. Brand, Fr Stadtmüller and Fr Bandmaier.

Fr Lechner was the rector in Maria Trost and Fr Engelhardt his young assistant. In those days, the Fathers and the Brothers still took their recreation separately. One day, the Brothers had brought Fr Engelhardt near the boiling point once again and he decided to tell them a thing or two during recreation time. He went in, but after a few minutes, he emerged again, but this time irritated and angry. He went straight to Fr Rector to report and to complain. The answer and advice came in the form of a question: “Why did you go into the lions’ den?”

### **WELCOMING FRIGHT**

Maria Trost was the starting place for many who tried to learn Zulu. A generator provided light and served as the alarm clock. At five in the morning, the light came on, and it was time to get up. One of the newcomers did exactly that. He woke up and started to put on his slippers. He took them off even faster. Something had moved in and it could only be a snake; after all, Africa and snakes went together in the mind of the uninitiated. With the necessary caution father did a more careful inspection. Surprise, surprise, a little frog jumped out, most probably also frightened, and greeted father: Welcome to Maria Trost!



Bro. Alois Häring with workers in Glen Cowie.

### **SPECIAL COLLECTION**

There was an old tradition at Maria Trost that after lunch the Fathers and Brothers would pay a short visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament before recreation. One day, as they were on their way to church, the sacristy door opened and the little collection bag appeared, together with a long stick, and eventually Sr Anastasia appeared, holding the bag with a firm grip. “Now what?” was their first reaction, because neither the Fathers nor the Brothers were used to putting something into the collection, not even on Sundays and certainly not during the week. But, as it turned out, Sister had already taken the collection. And now, she emptied the bag, but out of it came, not money, but a frog, followed by a stern command: “*Hamba, wena!*”

### **BULL'S EYE**

Bro. Valentine liked to go hunting and was especially keen to shoot those evasive tarantaals [i. e. guinea fowls]. But it so happened that by accident, he mistook his big toe for one of those birds. Luckily for him, Bro. Häring was nearby and took him home to Glen Cowie. But Glen Cowie was not up to such an operation. He had to go to Lydenburg Hospital where the doctors took off what was left of his big toe. He made no comment.

### **A SUITABLE NICKNAME**

The Franciscan Sisters arrived in Maria Trost in 1939. After they had settled in, they also adventured to explore the farm. But Sunday afternoon was also the time when the Brothers inspected the farm to see what was still there, what was gone. The Sisters spotted the Brothers in the distance and did not recognise them. They made a U-turn and hurried back towards the mission. Mother Superior walked



in front and from time to time looked back to see if the men were closing the distance between them. The inevitable happened; while looking back she ran into a barbed-wire fence and, of course, from then on she was known to the Brothers as “Our Mother of Sorrows”.

### **KIDNAPPED BY BABOONS**

Bro. Otto and Bro. Stang were busy building in Spelinyane. One Sunday, they decided to visit the Game Reserve on foot. It was no problem in those days, because there were no fences and Spelinyane was very near the Reserve. Off they went and, after some time, they came across a troop of baboons. One of the Brothers was foolish enough to throw a stone at them.

The counterattack came immediately. Luckily for the Brothers, they were able to retreat into a cave and in this way shortened the line of defence. The baboons besieged them, sitting in a circle and watching the two captives from a distance. The two had ample time to talk and to think while they waited for sunset. At last, the baboons decided to call it a victory and retreated. The prisoners were free to go, a bit wiser after the experience.

### **MONKEY BUSINESS**

Fr Demel tried to convert Belfast. The Brother was kept busy on the farm at Foxhills. Father felt a bit lonely and took in a little blue monkey as a pet. At first, it was a little darling; then it grew into a big darling; then, it was the pest of the house and eventually the boss of the house. Brother decided that enough was enough. When Father was out on mission, Brother got rid of the boss. It just disappeared; nobody knew what happened and Father never found out.

### **SEVEN WITH ONE SHOT**

Brother's dog started barking fiercely on the farm at four o'clock in the morning. Suspecting some shenanigan, Brother came out with his shotgun and found the intruder, a porcupine. Brother took aim and fired. The porcupine was hit and so were seven window panes in the Sisters' dining room. When the Sisters discovered the mess in the morning, they were happy that nothing had been stolen by the thieves. And Brother soothed the pain by helping to replace the broken glass. If they had only known!



Bro. Otto and Bro. Stang spent a Sunday under the siege of a troop of baboons in a cave of Spelinyane.

## GOOD INTENTIONS

Fr Engelhardt wanted to do mission work but his van would not start. Fr Hornauer offered his help, and connected a rope to his van to bring him to Lydenburg. In those days, Burgersfort was only known to the locals; Lydenburg was still the centre for shopping and repairs. Everything went according to plan. Fr Hornauer arrived at the garage, jumped out and told the foreman to attend to the problem. But poor Fr Engelhardt and his van were still at the point of departure: the rope had snapped and Fr Hornauer drove the whole way, never looking in the mirror to see, whether he was towing the confrère's van or not. Fortunately, in those days petrol was still cheap.

## BROTHERLY LOVE

Father Zorn, nicknamed *Baba Zulu* kept birds as one of his hobbies. He was also known for his many friendly and not so friendly encounters with the Brothers. He had angered the Brothers and they decided that it was pay-back time. *Baba Zulu* suspected something because the Brothers had become too friendly. Before he could figure out their change of heart, he was baffled because nothing hatched in his bird cage despite his loving care for his feathered friends. Even the Brothers showed concern and gave him good advice, baffling him all the more. If he had known that they were the cause of all those non-hatchlings, because they “marked” the eggs, war would surely have been declared.



Fr Zorn, in Maria Trost, with his birds.

## BABY JESUS

Sr Anastasia had prepared the crib for Christmas with love. Even the baby Jesus was already in the manger. Great was the excitement when at the start of midnight Mass it was discovered that little Jesus was missing. Where could he be? Who could have stolen him, committing such a crime? The puzzle was solved when Fr Tremmel appeared with little Jesus, informing the theologically ignorant that Jesus was born at midnight and not before.



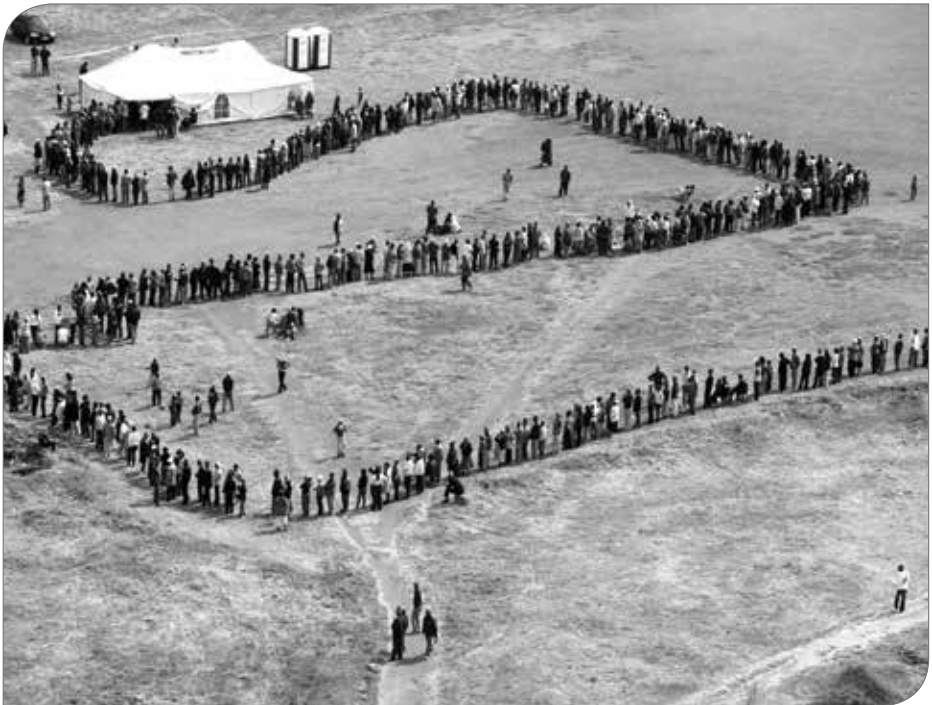
Msgr Alois Mohn and Fr Riegler, after their accident, on the Bugersfort Road.

## HISTORICAL EVENTS

<b>1652</b>	Jan van Riebeeck of the Dutch East India Company arrived at the Cape of Good Hope to establish a supply station there
<b>1675</b>	Slaves imported from Angola, Madagascar, Ceylon and Malaya. First farms established.
<b>1688</b>	French Huguenots arrive; Dutch farmers trek
<b>1795</b>	France invades the Netherlands; Britain annexes the Cape
<b>1833</b>	Slavery is abolished in the British Empire: cheap labour gone. The anti-slavery convention at Brussels only took place in 1889 (cf. Cardinal Lavigerie)
<b>1837</b>	Great trek: 6 000 Afrikaner moved away from the Brits
<b>1852</b>	Sandriver Convention: no Catholics, no London Mission
<b>1864</b>	Hoenderfanger ordered out
<b>1871</b>	Freedom of religion
<b>1875</b>	Pilgrim's Rest: Fr Walsh found only 15 Catholics left, out of 80 who went there in the 1873 gold rush; the rest moved to Barberton
<b>1886</b>	Gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand
<b>1899</b>	Anglo-Boer War
<b>1910</b>	The Union of South Africa was established
<b>1912</b>	Foundation of the ANC
<b>1913 and 1936</b>	Native Land Act
<b>1948</b>	Malan and the National Party win the election
<b>1949</b>	Mixed Marriages Act
<b>1950</b>	Immorality Act
<b>1959</b>	Black homelands were established
<b>1963</b>	General Law amendment (detention without trial for 90 days)
<b>1969</b>	Boss: Bureau of State Security established
<b>1970</b>	Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act
<b>1990</b>	De Klerk brings about changes; banning orders are lifted and Nelson Mandela is released
<b>1994</b>	The first free general elections. Nelson Mandela is elected as the first South African black president
<b>1999</b>	Thabo Mbeki replaces Nelson Mandela as president of the country
<b>2009</b>	Jacob Zuma replaces president Thabo Mbeki. He was re-elected in May 2014



Nelson Mandela was released from prison, on 11 February 1990, after having spent 27 years on Robben Island, in Pollsmoor and Victor Verster Prisons.



The first multiracial elections in South Africa were held on 27 April 1994.



Crucifix of the church of the Pastotal Centre of Maria Trost, carved by Bro. Peter Niederbrunner.

## DECEASED CONFRÈRES

<b>Sendker Heinrich</b>	02.12.1931	Lydenburg	63 years
<b>Schwingshackl A.</b>	13.11.1934	Lydenburg	39 years
<b>Klodt Karl</b>	22.05.1941	Lydenburg	76 years
<b>Zorn Bernhard</b>	11.04.1942	White Waters	69 years
<b>Höfer Alois</b>	05.05.1842	White Waters	29 years
<b>Mohn Alois, Msgr</b>	05.06.1945	White Waters	64 years
<b>Weiller Josef</b>	18.01.1946	Witbank	83 years
<b>Ipfelkofer Alois</b>	25.03.1948	Pozuzo (Peru)	62 years
<b>Steidle Karl</b>	06.05.1950	Barberton	41 years
<b>Klassert Josef</b>	06.06.1951	Friedenheim	63 Years
<b>Lesnjak Michael</b>	25.11.1951	Brixen	60 years
<b>Hüber Josef</b>	10.09.1954	Lydenburg	74 years
<b>Mirbeth Peter</b>	22.07.1955	Glen Cowie	36 years
<b>Riegler Johann, Bishop</b>	07.10.1955	Witbank	53 years
<b>Brandlmayr Franz</b>	17.02.1959	Lydenburg	78 years
<b>Ille Hugo</b>	20.11.1960	Mellatz	66 years
<b>Oberstaller Gottfried</b>	31.08.1962	Badplaas	65 years

<b>Nagler Andreas</b>	08.09.1962	Mt Anderson	
<b>Cygan Alexander</b>	30.04.1963	Lydenburg	
<b>Kolenc Raphael</b>	29.05.1965	Jugoslavia	
<b>Hirschlein Adolf</b>	02.05.1965	Belfast	
<b>Vogel Franz Xaver</b>	24.11.1968	Pretoria	
<b>Schmid Karl</b>	02.12.1968	Glen Cowie	
<b>Dorn Franz Xaver</b>	06.03.1969	Pretoria	
<b>Engelhardt Franz</b>	20.04.1970	Nelspruit	
<b>Angerer Josef</b>	02.02.1971	Bongani	
<b>Stadtmüller Adolf</b>	10.12.1971	Glen Cowie	
<b>Hornauer Josef</b>	19.06.1972	Glen Cowie	
<b>Fischer Karl</b>	28.11.1972	Lydenburg	
<b>Sieberer Karl</b>	25.03.1973	Premstaetten	
<b>Musar Josef</b>	29.03.1973	Ljubliana (Slovenia)	
<b>Raffener Mathias</b>	16.06.1973	Brixen	
<b>Berger Stefan</b>	28.12.1973	Lima, Peru	
<b>Koch Franz</b>	10.06.1974	Bongani	
<b>Brandmaier Josef</b>	28.03.1975	Glen Cowie	
<b>Schöpf Anton</b>	15.10.1975	Bongani	
<b>Heller Hubert</b>	07.09.1976	Glen Cowie	
<b>Cagol August</b>	21.02.1977	Ellwangen	
<b>Lechner Richard</b>	03.07.1979	Pretoria	
<b>Fischer Josef</b>	27.11.1979	Mellatz	
<b>Bourhill Denis</b>	02.01.1980	Belfast	
<b>Hügel Alois</b>	12.01.1980	Pretoria	
<b>Stempfle Josef</b>	05.06.1980	Wuerzburg	
<b>Feil Franz Xaver</b>	18.08.1980	Glen Cowie	
<b>Stang Alois</b>	26.12.1981	Glen Cowie	
<b>Pezzei Ignaz</b>	01.05.1982	Lydenburg	

<b>Habicher Richard</b>	01.05.1982	Brixen	75 years
<b>Zeifang Pius</b>	16.12.1982	Mergentheim	70 years
<b>Kladnik Albin</b>	23.08.1983	Pretoria	69 years
<b>Klemm Walter</b>	29.10.1983	Graz	74 years
<b>Kurz Anton</b>	06.12.1983	Lydenburg	83 years
<b>Pinkman John</b>	28.08.1984	Pretoria	48 years
<b>Lamprecht Johann</b>	29.08.1984	Ellwangen	72 years
<b>Pfanner Albert</b>	15.03.1985	Pretoria	54 years
<b>Merz Johann</b>	13.04.1985	Ellwangen	71 years
<b>Jungnickl Christoph</b>	12.06.1985	Bamberg	78 years
<b>Kley Andreas</b>	30.09.1986	Lydenburg	85 years
<b>Poznic Valentine</b>	25.04.1987	Middelburg	88 years
<b>Tremmel Franz Seraf</b>	01.12.1987	Lydenburg	88 years
<b>Häring Alois</b>	21.08.1988	Glen Cowie	76 years
<b>Gruber Josef</b>	08.09.1988	Bongani	84 years
<b>Bratina Franz</b>	01.01.1990	Middelburg	84 years
<b>Hüber Otto</b>	16.10.1990	Lydenburg	81 years
<b>De Maldè Andrea</b>	17.07.1991	Zibello (Italy)	68 years
<b>Beck Josef</b>	02.11.1991	Mellatz	76 years
<b>Eigner Georg</b>	15.04.1992	Ellwangen	82 years
<b>Schmid Gebhard</b>	14.03.1995	Ellwangen	67 years
<b>Rossmann Leonhard</b>	12.03.1996	Bamberg	58 years
<b>Engelhardt Ludwig</b>	21.05.1996	Ellwangen	79 years
<b>Grohe Vitus</b>	29.05.1996	Middelburg	65 years
<b>Serale Bruno</b>	28.07.1997	Middelburg	45 years
<b>Baumgart Anton</b>	28.07.1997	Ellwangen	88 years
<b>Brand Ludwig</b>	02.02.1998	Glen Cowie	94 years
<b>Sailer Alois</b>	19.07.1998	Elukwatini	60 years
<b>Roth Matthias</b>	06.08.1999	Ellwangen	83 years



<b>Reiterer Anton, Bishop</b>	20.02.2000	Middelburg	91 years
<b>Adani Mario</b>	10.05.2000	Milano	90 years
<b>Friedl Rudolf</b>	12.06.2000	Sekhukhune	60 years
<b>Matordes Angelo</b>	16.03.2001	Witbank	79 years
<b>Kuehner Wilhelm</b>	15.05.2001	Ellwangen	87 years
<b>McGinty Alan</b>	11.04.2001	Glasgow	35 years
<b>Walter Charles</b>	07.05.2003	Chicago	63 years
<b>Maier Anton</b>	01.05.2005	Wuerzburg	65 years
<b>Stefani Giorgio</b>	20.10.2005	Pretoria	40 years
<b>Schmid Peter</b>	21.09.2006	Ellwangen	73 years
<b>Brosig Günther</b>	16.05.2006	Polokwane	81 years
<b>Nok Adiang Kur Geeorge</b>	15.08.2006	Pietersburg	44 years
<b>Rieger Anton</b>	12.07.2007	Ellwangen	75 years
<b>Kurz Eugen</b>	8.02.2008	Ursberg	77 years
<b>Plankensteiner Alois</b>	01.11.2012	Ellwangen	80 years

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