**JOHANNESBURG ARCHDIOCESE MISSIONARY CONGRESS**

**HELD AT ST. BENEDICT’S COLLEGE, BEDFORDVIEW, JOHANNESBURG**

**25 – 26 OCTOBER 2014**

**AIMS:**

* **to explore ways for us / Church to fulfil our vocation to proclaim the Gospel / Mission**
* **to move from maintenance to being on mission (enlarge our tent)**
* **to celebrate our baptismal call together**
* **to take back to our parishes motivation to move forward on mission**

**SATURDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2014**

**INTRODUCTION**

Members of the Maranatha group from Acornhoek parish, Nelspruit, that had composed the Missionary Congress hymn, sang the hymn for the gathered participants.

1. **WELCOME**

Sr. Shelagh Mary Waspe welcomed all to the congress.

Fr. Duncan Tsoke (Vicar General of the Johannesburg Archdiocese) extended a warm welcome to all who had come on this day to join in the Archdiocese’s first Missionary Congress. On behalf of Archbishop Buti Tlhagale he wished to extend the welcome to all.

Fr. Duncan referred to goals of congress especially to Pope Francis’s “I dream of a missionary church”.

The pastoral programme of the SACBC, phase 3, states that to belong to Christ means to be committed to mission, open to other cultures and other peoples.

Fr. Duncan thanked the organizing committee that had prepared for the Congress, and to all who had made themselves available to reflection on the various topics presented for preparation. He wished all participants a joyful and fruit-filled experience.

1. **PRACTICAL ASPECTS – Mr. Tony Romans**

The Knights of da Gama were responsible for the logistics of the congress and their spokesperson, Tony Romans, passed on information about practicalities.

1. **OPENING OF MISSIONARY CONGRESS (Fr. Sakhi Mofokeng and Sr. Laura Lepori [Comboni Missionary Sister] – Missionary Congress liturgy group)**

Fr Sakhi and Sr. Laura led the opening prayer

Hymn *“We are gathering unto him”*

Opening Prayer: Prayer for the Missionary Congress.

Reading: Lk 4:16 – 21

A selection of hymns was sung in English and Zulu, interspersed with selections from the Gospel reading and with short prayers.

1. **AIMS: See above**

Sr. Shelagh Mary introduced the aims of the congress emphasising the importance of engagement, relationship, and belonging to Christ; that ALL baptized Christians are called to mission. We are called to move from maintaining our tent – move from maintenance - to being on mission.

She invited all participants to “Get to know a few other people in the archdiocese” by sharing responses to the following:

*“I am …”.*

*“I am from …… parish”*

*In preparing for this congress, what, for you, was the most important thing you picked up from the Missionary Congress booklet?*

Some responses: The state of church in the parish and internationally – there is room for improvement.

As a baptised person I’m given authority to be a missionary. I must not be stagnant.

The words of Pope Francis are inspiring (the Joy of Gospel). We are set free from sin, sorrow and loneliness.

1. **OPENING TALK BY ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM SLATTERY (c.f. SATURDAY, Addendum 1. Pg 1)**

**“Enlarge the space of your tent” - Belonging to Christ, committed for mission.**

Fr. Michel Meunier introduced Archbishop Slattery. Fr. Michel pointed out that Archbishop Slattery had been a missionary in different parts of Africa and South Africa, and rector of St. John Vianney seminary before becoming Archbishop of Pretoria.

Archbishop Slattery based his talk on the theme of the congress, taken from **Isaiah 54:2 - “Enlarge the space of your tent” - Belonging to Christ, committed for mission.** He congratulated those who had prepared the congress for the awareness they had evidenced to respond to the call to mission.

Texts he drew from were *“The Joy of the Gospel”, “The Church in Africa” and Scripture*.

Sr. Shelagh Mary thanked Archbishop Slattery for his words that came from his experience of being a witness and a missionary in Africa and South Africa. “You taught us by your life”.

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Following the Archbishop’s talk, Sr. Shelagh Mary asked the assembly to reflect on the following:

**How are you feeling about what the Archbishop said - deeper than knowing and understanding. Let it surface into your consciousness. What is God moving within us?**

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1. **2ND SPEAKER – FR. BARNEY MC ALEER (c.f. SATURDAY Addendum 1, pg. 3 )**

**“I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark on a new chapter of evangelization” (Evangelii Gaudium, 1)**

Fr. Barney, in his own inimitable, lively way, briefly traced the history of the term “new evangelization” and took up some of the themes again, raised by Archbishop Slattery: evangelization is “not about knowing, but about something in your heart”. People should be drawn to Jesus by the way they live their lives of faith.

He affirmed that this Congress was one way to move people into a new chapter of evangelization and mentioned other local means that had already been established, such as Alpha and Life in the Spirit seminars. Individual spiritual journeys needed to be community-based – the Church is a community. People need to encourage one another on the journey – parishes and PPCs.

He suggested that parishes bring missionaries in to help them put evangelization into practice.

“May thy will be done”, sums up work of church.

Sr. Shelagh Mary expressed appreciation for Fr. Barney’s input, spirit and long years of missionary work in South Africa.

1. **3rd SPEAKER – SR. THANDI MOYO (c.f. SATURDAY Addendum 1, pg.4)**

***“Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea but an encounter with an event, a person which gives a new horizon and a decisive direction” (EG 7).***

One of the focuses of Sr. Thandi’s talk was our faith journey as human beings. She highlighted points relating to Pope Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium”* and the General Directory for Catechism This journey is one of a covenant with God, a deep relationship with our Creator. He invites each and every person to this relationship with him.

Sr. Shelagh Mary thanked Sr. Thandi.

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**GROUP DISCUSSION**

Sr. Shelagh Mary then requested the audience to move into groups of 5 or 6 to discuss the following questions:

**What challenges are we picking up from what the 3 speakers have shared?**

**How does impact on you in your parish/ diocese?**

**A challenge has been put - to move from a maintenance church to a live, passionate, loving church… to be evangelizers.**

**Some Responses:**

* Even with sodalities and organizations in parishes, there are people who are hurting badly and quietly. There are not enough people who are doing anything about it – not caring for people in big trouble.
* **On the subject of youth:**
* There are young people with a strong desire to do something beautiful for God, but “when they open their mouths” [to say anything] it is immediately assumed that they are indicating that they want to become priests or Sisters. The implication is that the role of lay people’s contribution to the parish or the Church is not taken seriously or appreciated.
* Students at university are met with challenges such as many religions and Satanists. “What is happening to university chaplains?”
* There is nothing for the youth in the church. They need to be given more Involvement, e.g. in the liturgy, in witnessing and evangelizing in their own parish, work place, prisons and hospitals. “Introduce different groups in the church, e.g. prayer groups, Couples for Christ, Youth for Christ”.
* There has been mention of ‘structure of the Church’, ‘evangelization’ and ‘being proud of being a Catholic’. Yet people do not know what the rosary means.
* In many parishes, a parish project takes over from evangelization. “Go to sodalities, evangelization is absent”, and the focus is on other things such as administration and buildings.
* “You can’t give what you don’t have”. A family may have a Catholic parent, but he/she does not practise. There is ‘superficial love’. It is not genuine because people do not know the hurts. “The Church should be a community of belonging and warmth. People are so busy. They attend Mass and kneel next to people on the pews, but there isn’t a sense of welcome”
* The question was asked from the floor: **How was this “event” promoted and advertised in the Diocese? Many parishioners heard nothing about it in their parishes!”**
* One view was expressed that before evangelization could take place and enlarging the space of one’s tent, hurting families, spouses and children needed to be supported and helped. Such things as peace, love unity, care, compassion, forgiveness, respect, generosity, encouragement and intimacy needed to be established in the family before evangelization could take place.

**INFORMATION SHARING**

Sr. Maria de Lurdes shared the good news of the beatification on this day of Mother Assunta Marchetti who had co-founded the Scalabrinian Missionaries in 1895 to minister in S. America to the migrants from Italy. “Her faith and love were expressed in her work with migrants. God exists and God provides”.

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1. **4th TALK – FR. SAKHI MOFOKENG (c.f. SATURDAY Addendum 1, Pg. 8)**

**“Goodness always tends to spread” (EG 9)**

1. **5TH TALK – SR. EVA MARIA THUPATSOGONG (c.f. SATURDAY Addendum 1, Pg. 9)**

***“The church, in her maternal concern, tries to help them experience a conversion which will restore the joy of faith to their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel” (EG 15)***

1. **6TH TALK – FR. JEREMIAS DOS SANTOS MARTINS (c.f. SATURDAY Addendum 1, Pg. 11)**

***We need to move from a pastoral ministry of mere conservatism to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry: (EG 15)***

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**REFLECTION**

Sr. Shelagh Mary asked the assembly to reflect on a question as they thought over what they had heard during this first day of the Congress

1. **How has this day challenged you in your own journey of faith? Get in touch with own faith journey.**
2. **Look at the day. What moved you? What resonated with you?**
3. **CONCLUSION**

The day concluded with the singing of theMissionary Congress Hymn, led by the Acornhoek group which had composed it.

The Concluding Prayer wassaid by Fr. Terry Nash.

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**SUNDAY 26TH OCTOBER 2014**

**INTRODUCTION**

Sr. Shelagh Mary did a short review of the previous day’s input, highlighting the Congress AIMS, to brief those who had not been present the previous day. Most of the emphasis for the day was going to be:

1. To listen to testimonies of people who had been involved in missionary activity and
2. To take back to our parishes motivation to move forward on mission.

I am a mission

I am a mission on this earth

That is the reason why I am here in this world

***Evangelii Gaudium 273***

**What is your main feeling about being an evangelizer?**

1. **OPENING PRAYER WITH EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

Some time was spent in reflection and song before the Blessed Sacrament that was brought to the assembly hall for adoration.

Mr. Dillon Naicker with a small band of instrumentalists led the prayer and singing. He invited all into the depths of their hearts.

The Blessed Sacrament was then taken back to the chapel.

The Missionary Congress hymn was then sung in conclusion.

Fr. Michel gave a short message of good wishes from Carmelite Sisters, Benoni. They themselves were going to pray throughout the day in their own chapel while associates of theirs would pray in the school chapel.

Fr. Michel also let the assembly know that the Carmelite nuns had published their first CD which was on sale at the kiosk**.**

1. **1ST TALK – FR. BARNEY MC ALEER – (c.f. , SUNDAY Addendum 1, Pg. 13)**

**Topic: “The History of the Diocese of Johannesburg”**

Fr. Barney began by referring to Archbishop Slattery’s statement the previous day that Catholics need to know their identity. Who are spiritual parents who have built up the church’s identity?

The challenge is: How is the next generation going to take the Church forward?

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1. **2ND TESTIMONY – SR. MARIA DE LURDES (c.f. pdf file, attached)**

**Immigrants and Refugees in South Africa**

Sr. Maria de Lurdes gave a brief history of the origins and work of the Scalabrinian Missionary Sisters with special focus on their work in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg. This was presented in the form of slides.

The Scalabrinians minister particularly to migrants and refugees. Jesus was a refugee.

The Scalabrinian’s mission is to integrate women in need; to promote a spirit of bringing people together from many different nationalities, languages, ethnic origins and traditions. It is to assist them to gain a sense of belonging and welcome. They come with very little. They need to be protected. They want to feel respected.

Sr. Maria de Lurdes introduced a lay woman who is the Sisters’ associate and works in their project, *“Bien Venu”*, Mrs. Adilia de Sousa, who shared briefly about her call from God and how she responded to it as a woman, mother and granny. She answers the call by welcoming women in need, listening to them, accompanying them through difficult times, sharing the word of God with them. All are welcomed as persons.

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**REFLECTION AND SHARING**

Sr. Shelagh Mary invited people to reflect on the following statement

**Think of your intimacy with Christ. Called to intimacy happens in small moments. Think of when you felt really intimate with Christ and became aware of the call.**

**What happened and how did you respond?**

She invited people to take that moment, to find someone with whom to share and chat gently about the call.

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1. **3rd TESTIMONY – MRS BEATRICE NKUNA – ORPHANS, HIV/AIDS (c.f. SUNDAY, Addendum 1, Pg. 15)**

Beatrice Nkuna looks after children with special needs. Having given birth to a child with special needs, she felt called to open her home to abandoned and needy children. But, at the time of her call, she occupied an executive position as marketing manager in the business world. She made a choice, after careful discernment, to leave the business world and dedicate her life to the care of special needs children.

She told her story, and then introduced to the assembly some of the children from her home.

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1. **4th TALK – MR. DILLON NAICKER – COUPLES FOR CHRIST (c.f. SUNDAY Addendum 1, Pg. 17)**

Dillon described briefly how he had moved from his dream of being a star in the entertainment world, perhaps even get to Hollywood, to giving his life to God. He had had a ‘Paul moment’ when a light shone in him. He got to be in love with Jesus Christ. A missionary was born and he gave himself to God. He has got involved full-time in Couples for Christ and its Family Ministries.

He posed the questions: How do we as Catholics receive Christ? What stops the next step of passing the good news on? Where is the illness in South Africa that is preventing this from happening?

He praised God for this congress and expressed hopes that it would be the start of something new.

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1. **SOUTH SUDAN**
2. **5TH TALK – FR. SEAN O’LEARY (c.f. SUNDAY Addendum 1, Pg. 19)**

**History – Sudan-South Sudan**

Fr Sean has been part of the peace initiative in S. Sudan together with the SACBC that is helping to establish a Bishops conference in S. Sudan. Fr. Sean gave a short input on the history of conflict in the whole Sudanese area.

1. **The Marpudit Project**

Following Fr. Sean’s talk, Fr. Jeremias briefly addressed the assembly on the Mapourdit Project in S. Sudan. This project has been established as a result of a call from the bishops in S. Sudan to help with badly needed medical personnel, medical supplies and improved medical facilities. He explained that this Missionary Congress was supporting the Project : the building of a hospital in Marpourdit where a Comboni Brother-Doctor (Bro Rosario) is ministering in make-shift wards.

1. **Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS)**

Sr. Shelagh Mary introduced Fr. Gordon Rees. He is the South African Representative for Pontifical Mission Society**.**

Fr. Gordon has been a missionary where he worked in one place for 8 years. Some of the slides showed the places and the people where he had ministered.

Fr. Gordon Rees made an appeal for funds on behalf of the Pontifical Mission Societies which incorporates 4 societies

* Society for the Propagation of Faith
* Society of Peter the Apostle – training of young priests, brothers and sisters
* Missionary Childhood Society – children’s projects, and
* Missionary Union of Priests and Religious – to promote awareness of the missions and to promote support for the missions throughout the world.

Fr. Gordon encouraged people to pray for the PMS and to become members by contributing financial aid ***(EG 49)***. He also suggested that people “put their money where their mouth is”.

Fr. Gordon gave his email address - [**pms.dirsa@gmail.com**](mailto:pms.dirsa@gmail.com) and requested all those who would make contributions to give particular information: namely their name, surname and cell number.

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1. **PROPOSALS FROM PARISH GROUPS**

Shelagh Mary asked people to get into their parish groups.

Each group was given an A4 paper divided into two

**How will you as parish representatives share this weekend experience in the life of your parish?**

1. **Write name of parish**
2. **write a practical, possible, concrete proposal.**

Patrick from St. Theresa’s parish, Rosebank, invited Missionary Congress participants to an Alpha training course starting on 15th Nov 09h00. Alpha was one way in which to evangelize people – what the Missionary Congress was promoting.

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1. **CONCLUDING LITURGY – EUCHARIST.**

Bishop Jan de Groef (Bethlehem Diocese) was main celebrant with Bishop Joe Sandri (Witbank) and 8 concelebrating priests (Frs. Jeremias, Sakhi, Tony Nunes, Michel Munier, Gordon Rees, Barney, Jerome Soku, Terry Nash, Fr. Michael) Deacon Michael Nolan and three altar servers assisted.

A very lively Eucharist, led by the choir from St. Anthony’s parish, Duduza, was celebrated as a fitting conclusion to an inspirational Congress.

**Bishop de Groef’s Homily – (c.f. Sunday ADDENDUM 1, Pg. 20)**

**Presentation of the Gifts**

At the Presentation of the Gifts, various symbols were brought up in procession to the altar. Mr. Dillon Naicker read out a commentary and a prayer for each symbol:

* Bible
* Small tent
* Globe
* Candle
* Bread and Wine

1. **THANKS**

* Appreciation was expressed to all who had helped in the organization of the Congress, and presentations were made to speakers, secretaries and main ‘movers’ of the Congress’s planning and execution committee, Fr. Jeremias and Mr. Tony Romans.

Appreciation went to:

* Bishop de Groef, Dept. of Evangelization at SACBC
* Fr. Sakhi, Dept. of Evangelization, at Khanya House
* The Knights of da Gama (‘frontman’ Mr. Tony Romans) who had been responsible for the logistics
* staff of St. Benedict’s College who had rendered invaluable service
* Fr. Tony Nunes
* Fr. Gordon Rees
* The *“Maranatha Group”*  from Acornhoek parish.
* The choir of St. Anthony from Duduza
* The Carmelite associates who had prayed before the Blessed Sacrament during the Congress
* All participants for the sacrifices they had made to attend the Congress.

Special thanks were extended to the Parish of Rosebank that had supported the Missionary congress Project. Members of the parish were asked to convey thanks to the parishioners.

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**ALL ADDENDA ARE ATTACHED AS SEPARATE DOCUMENTS**

**ADDENDUM 1**

**TALKS AND TESTIMONIES (See separate attachment)**

**ADDENDUM 2**

**REGISTER OF PARTICIPATING PARISHES (See separate attachment)**

**ADDENDUM 3**

**COLLATION OF COMMITMENTS FROM PARISHES (See separate attachment)**

**ADDENDUM 4**

**An example of the responses to the questions one parish group prepared for the Congress. (From Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Phiri, Soweto). (See separate attachment)**