

*Dear Confreres, relatives and Benefactors,*

Dear Friends Habemus Abbatem. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of February the Monks of Inkamana Abbey came together to elect the new leader who was to succeed Prior administrator John Paul who had been commissioned by the Chapter members through an official election in 2015 to lead our Community for 3 years. When this time expired in Feb 2018, elections were held by the Chapter members and Fr John Paul Mwaniki OSB was elected the 3<sup>rd</sup> Abbot of Inkamana after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Abbot Godfrey Sieber's retirement in 2015. After accepting the office Abbot John Paul chose for himself the motto "*CONCORDIA ET PAX*". Simply put it means "*Harmony and Peace*", however in its deep meaning, the word Concordia properly translated means "*With One Heart*". By choosing this motto, Abbot John Paul clearly marked the line in which he wants to journey with his monks. His Abbacy will be one that, at least according to his intention, marked by sign of unity, harmony and modelled in peace that Christ gave to his disciples. Abbot John Paul does not only want to live with his monks both with one hearth and in peace but also in one Mind so that his goals are also shared by the monks of our Community. This motto is anchored on The Rule of St Benedict and the Scriptures.

RB chapter 2 exhorts the Abbot to lead his monks to true harmony in the following words: "Therefore the Abbot should never teach or ordain or command anything which is against the Lord's precepts; on the contrary, his orders and teaching should be infused into the minds of his disciples like the leaven of divine justice" RB 2:1-4. That which he believes, the Abbot must teach and that which he teaches must be according to the exhortations by the Gospel. In John 17, Jesus prays for the unity, in Abbot John Paul's case, harmony, not just among the disciples, but with God the Father through his Son our Lord, Jesus himself. Therefor the oneness that Abbot John Paul promulgates in his motto originates from the life and love that is shared between the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit. This love is manifested in the disciples by their lives together as a community of believer and so it should be with us.

Harmony is the ability to be in peace with others. Thus for Abbot John Paul, the superior and leader of an Abbey with 7 distinct nationalities, and four different races, i.e. Blacks, Indians, Coloured (politically correct in South Africa) or also known as mixed race (not acceptable in South Africa) and the whites, Community means living together as one family with a leader who is responsible for bringing together all the different nationalities, races and cultures and forge for one thriving community in the spirit of the Gospel and the Rule. Differences for him are not an obstacle but an opportunity to create a harmonious whole that is built upon talents possessed by each member of our community. Like a big cake made of different ingredients, our community though made up of individuals with individual dreams are invited by our Abbot to use our talents to build one community with one objective, to hold and pull together towards the same direction where our faith as monks is best realised. Warren W. Wiersbe asserts that "a Christian who walks with the Lord and keeps constant communion with Him will see many reason for rejoicing and thanksgiving all day long". Abbot John Paul is that man, he wants to ensure that the communion among the Christians of our community, i.e. the monks of Inkamana, there exist a solid base of harmony and peace leading to Christ unwaveringly.

Our Community wishes to pass its sincere gratitude to following individuals and communities for their support on 21 April 2018, at the abbatial blessing. Thank you for all the material as well as spiritual support. First of all we thank God almighty, our loving Father for giving us the gift of our vocation both as individual monks and as the community. We thank God unceasingly for Abbot John Paul and for all his talents. Secondly we would like to thank Bishop TX Kumalo, our guest of honour, for availing himself to bless our new abbot. We thank him for the good relationship that the Inkamana Abbey enjoys with his Diocese of Eshowe. Thirdly we would like to thank Bishop Pius of Marianhill diocese, Bishop Graham Rose of Dundee Diocese and Bishop Sigfried Mandla Jwara of the Vicariate Apostolic of Ingwavuma for their valuable presence on the day of abbatial blessing. Our sincere thanks to Arch-Abbot Wolfgang, the Arch Abbot of Benedictine Congregation of Sankt Ottilien and all other Abbots from our different abbeys, Abbot Joel Macul, Christ the King Priory, Schuyler. In a very special manner we would like to thank our brother, the Abbots, both current and retired, of the African Region and all other representatives of our Congregation from the region. We wish to thank Abbot John Paul's parish priest Fr Archangel Gabriel Kinoti parishners of St Benedict Parish, Nairobi Kenya who graced us with their presence during the blessing. Our sincere gratitude to all our Diocesan priests both local and beyond, the religious communities within and outside our diocese. We the community of Inkamana thank our local and political leaders who took part in this historical celebration. In Particular we would like to thank our district Mayor Rev. TD Buthelezi, his Deputy Ms M Kunene, the speaker of Abaqulusi Municipality Mr Khumalo, our ward councillor Mr Mbatha and his fellow councillors. Thanks to the traditional leadership of Othaka. Finally we like to thank our friends and benefactors from around our Monastery, neighbouring parishes, friends and relatives of Abbot John Paul and monks of Inkamana, 'siyabonga' for your prayers and support. *Danke schön, Asante, Dankie, Ke a leboha, Zikomo, Obrigado, Tangi unene, Gracias, Merci Beaucoup, Grazie, Dhanyavaad!*

**Community engagements and work:** on Sunday 25 February to 03 March Abbot John Paul was in Pretoria for a 5 day directed retreat in preparation for the abbatial blessing planned for 21 April 2018. On Friday 02 March we had our monthly recollection led by Fr. Sibichan CMI, a Carmelite priest from Kerala, India, who was in South Africa for a short break. On the following day he met all our students and talked to them about Gifts of the Holy Spirit. On Monday 05 March Abbot John Paul attended the Senate Meeting at Eshowe Diocese. On Tuesday 06 March all the priests from Inkamana Abbey and all the priests in our diocese participated at the General priests' meeting at Eshowe Diocese. On Monday 12 March Abbot John Paul attended LCCL AGM at Emseni Christian Centre and returned to the abbey on Friday 16 March. We were happy to welcome Bro. Bernard back from Germany after his Hip replacement Wednesday 14 March. On Wednesday 21 March we celebrated the Passing of our Holy Father Benedict and celebrated 60 years of mission assignment of Bro. Bernard and 50 years of mission assignment of both Abbot Emeritus Godfrey and Fr. Pius. On Saturday 24 March Fr. Dominic travelled to Glenmore Pastoral centre, Durban to attend Religious Education Teachers short course. On Monday 26 March Fr. Gerard returned to Blessed Gerard centre from Hungary. On Wednesday 28 March all the priests from our abbey attended Chrism mass at Eshowe Cathedral Church. On Thursday 29 of March Fr. Boniface went to St. Lucia retreat centre to conduct Easter Triduum reflections and came back on 02 of April. On Monday 02 April we had a community picnic at our Dam and had braai there. From 06 to 08 April Fr. Dominic conducted retreat for confirmation candidates of St. Thomas Moore Parish at St. Lucia Retreat centre. On Sunday 08 April Fr. Gerard flew to Europe for his fundraising tour. On Saturday 14 April Abbot Emeritus Denis Ndomba arrived at Inkamana Abbey to prepare for taking a chaplain responsibility for Twasana Sisters. On Sunday 15 April Fr. Dominic and a Grade 10 student of Inkamana High School Siyamthanda flew to Rome to participate in a convocation to mark the 125<sup>th</sup> foundation by Pope Leo XII of our international university in Rome, Collegio Sant Anselmo and came back on 23 April. On Friday 20 April Fr. Boniface

travelled to Johannesburg to officiate a wedding of one of our Inkamana Alumni Mr. Sandile Khumalo. On Friday 20 April Fr. Max, Bro. Gabriel and 2 candidates arrived from our community at Waldfrieden in Namibia to attend the abbatial blessing. On Sunday 22 April there was a farewell concert in honour of Sr. Edith, a Franciscan Nardini sister, in the Abbey church. On Sunday 22 April Fr. Victor flew to Namibia to conduct a retreat for Sisters Tutzing and he came back on Friday 11 May. On Tuesday 24 April Abbot Emeritus Godfrey flew back to Windhoek after abbatial blessing. On Friday 04 May Fr. Jude Mwangi, the cousin of Abbot John Paul who had attended the abbatial blessing, flew back to Kenya. On Sunday 20 May our two brothers Francis Kutondokwa and Adrian Bisika arrived from Langata study house for their annual holiday. Both of them are doing their theological studies. On Tuesday 22 May, Fr. Pius flew to Germany for his home-leave and we wish him happy and blessed holiday.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Inkamana High School Alumni Gala Dinner:** Inkamana High School Alumni held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Gala Dinner. This time the dinner coincided with the 95<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of Inkamana High School. It took place at Inkamana on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2018. Around 190 former students participated in this special occasion. The purpose of the Alumni Gala dinner is to raise money for the school and its needs. The past Gala dinners took place in Johannesburg and Durban respectively. Every year alumni gather together at a convenient place and do fundraising activities to help the school. This year they offered to erect an entrance gate with school and Abbey name and address detailed thereon and also they will look at providing each and every student a tablet for their studies and exam preparation. We Inkamana Community would like to express our gratitude to all Alumni members and especially for the organizers. The Gala dinner started at 7pm with Prayer and short reflection by Fr. Dominic Michael OSB, our school chaplain. After a short prayer he read from *Acts 4: 32-37 after which he gave them a short reflection.* After congratulating the Alumnae for their efforts in supporting the school, the Principal, Mrs I Steenkamp, spoke about the present situation and the needs of the Inkamana High. In his address of our old boys and girls, Abbot John Paul spoke about the Benedictine roots – in conjunction with the school theme for 2018, i.e. *'forward in our Benedictine roots'*. After the speeches the participants enjoyed the meals prepared for the evening. The dinner was concluded with a prayer

**Death News:** On Saturday 17 March, Our brother Maurus Khumalo lost his mother, Dominic Khumalo; she was 91 years old when she was called to eternal life. She was a very devoted Catholic mother and raised all of her 11 children in the Catholic faith. The Inkamana community prayed and offered holy mass for Bro Maurus' departed mother. She was buried on Saturday 24 March and some conferrers attended.

On Monday 23 April Mr John Gregory, former Mathematics and Physical Science Teacher of Inkamana High School died. He started at Inkamana High School in January 1998 and as long as he was a teacher at Inkamana high taught Maths to Gr 8 - 12 and Physical Science Gr 10 – 12 and General Science Gr 9, English Gr 9 as well as Class Music Grade 8 - 12. Mr. Gregory was a devoted choir master at Inkamana since 1991. On Saturday 28 April he was buried in our Abbey cemetery at his family's request. May the souls of Mrs Khumalo and Mr Gregory rest in peace!

**Dear Confreres, relatives and Benefactors,** May the month of June 2018 bring to you Peace, Joy, Love, Kindness, blessings, wealth, good health and breakthrough from all Angles. Happy New Month. May God Bless you all

With kind regards and wishes from Inkamana Abbey, Fr. Dominic Michael Onasseril OSB