



St Paul's Church, Rondebosch

Parish Newsletter

CARITAS

After all the drama of Christ's Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, his friends and followers were absolutely stunned. At first they just met, chatted and prayed, but they had to tell other people about it all. Mission was in their hearts and this compelled them into doing things, i.e.

The ACTS of the apostles.

Of course people who do things together usually choose leaders, develop a system, and work out their goals. There will always be differences of opinion and different priorities - certainly there was no blueprint of directions for the first Christians. They tried to work it out by themselves, without much success – it took literally took the wind and fire of the Holy Spirit to inspire them. And us!

Each of us has, in one way or another, at some time, been touched or moved, or grasped and shaken, by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. If we had not been “zapped” we would not be coming to church at all. We dare not deny this calling even if it means turning our lives into a completely different direction - like Philip who turned right out of his way at God's call and met that important man from Ethiopia. The important thing for each of us is to listen for God's call. What is He saying to me? Is there an “Act” which He wants me to do? It is easy to make excuses “They also serve who only stand and wait” or “Not today, Lord” or “I am too stupid” or “I don't have the time”.

Our first task is Mission – to be sent out! Angela and her friends are showing us what they can do and we look forward to getting her report. Enid and her wonderful team show us what the breakfasts and other events can do. Rev Reeva is constantly visiting people, especially the sick and those who cannot get to church. But the real “mission field” is among the people who live in Rondebosch. There are a couple of stories in this Caritas about people who have responded to the Mission call.

St Paul's is like an island set among innumerable blocks of flats. Once inside those flats people live separate lives, often quite lonely and “we” as the church are not able to visit them and befriend them because those lodgings are firmly secured to prevent casual callers. Anyone of our congregation who lives in such a hostel has a real mission to fulfil, whether you are 81 or 18! - any introduction which you or your friends can give will be greatly welcomed by St Paul's. Please help us to make contact. Give us the introductions or, better still, make a visit yourself.

Meanwhile there is plenty of work at the church. What can you offer? From cleaning brasses to painting pillars, from counting wafers to fixing up the garden and ... (add your own ideas!)

Michael Bester

is to be ordained priest on Sunday 27th May at 3.30 p.m. at St Paul's Church, Bree Street, Cape Town, where he has been appointed Rector. Michael first came to St Paul's Church in Rondebosch as a student in 1989, already with a sense of calling from his school days at St John's College in Johannesburg, and he has travelled a long road to reach this point.

Planning is perhaps his *forte*. He has a postgraduate degree in Architecture from UCT and his knowledge and expertise has already proved valuable to the Diocese of Cape Town. But now he has added a Diploma in Theology (TVE College) and is working on a Master's degree (Nottingham University) for which he has already submitted four papers. The subject of his present work is "The Anglican Mission to lepers on Robben Island" – how interesting!

Studies, competencies and degrees are still just adjuncts to Michael – the important thing is his calling, his vocation, and that is why he is an Oblate at Mirfield. The Practice of the Presence of God is central to Michael's life.

We pray for Michael, we are proud of him, we love him and some of us will be there for him when he is ordained. He will celebrate his first Eucharist on Thursday 31st May at 7.30 p.m.

The Rohingya in Bangladesh

The Rohingya refugees are Muslims forced from their homes by persecution from Buddhist Myanmar. One of the greatest humanitarian crises of recent times, a million people in temporary shelters along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border are in a desperate situation, and are now threatened by monsoons. Having fled from unspeakable levels of violence and systematic abuse, including the murder of entire villages by the Myanmar military, the Rohingya are often described as "the world's most persecuted minority".

The initial emergency response of building and supplying the refugee camps has passed. Clinics have been built, child-friendly spaces created and basic services supplied. Despite the pain and trauma that is around this crisis, with every new pipe laid, road planned, shelter fixed, medical treatment and child comforted there is hope, love and the power of human kindness. Most of the helpers work 12-14 hour days, with hundreds of emails, phone calls at all hours and the sense that the work will never be finished. Yet people make time to have morning coffee in the hotels around Cox's Bazaar, and join social events like pub quizzes and football on Friday. Helpers must make life sustainable here and find ways to switch off from work.

Huge engineering work has been done to prepare the camp and the people for the season of cyclones and monsoon rains. Great dykes and channels have been built, the engineers working deep into the night to make retaining walls and platforms. What will happen when the rains fall? Will the crumbling soil hold? For those working and living in the camps there is desperation in their plans to prepare and plan how to move people as quickly as possible. Eventually the weather will take control and the humanitarians and the world will have to wait until it passes before going back in to clear the mess.

They do as much as is humanly possible. “Even so we still won’t be able to beat it? We talk to colleagues or friends and family about it, looking for distraction and escape. We have to be prepared both physically and emotionally. There will be all kinds of trauma, high burnout rates, high staff turnover, low morale, internal conflict, a huge increase in levels of stress.”

This information came from Damon. He did not know what to do with his life. Most of his boyhood had been spent being very active with a football and often a nuisance! He decided to study Disaster Management – which his family thought entirely appropriate!! He is now a qualified engineer. He and his wife were “called by God” to help with refugee work. They were in the Sudan and now they are in Bangladesh. Both are under 30 years old.

Pray for all those who have devoted years of their lives to working in emergencies like this and elsewhere – in the service of Jesus Christ, their Master.

Nearer home

there was a discussion meeting at UCT this week, led by Dr Jino Mwaka who is Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Sacred Heart in Uganda. The subject was

Child soldiers of the Western Cape - about 10 000 children.

Even a child of 6 years old may be given a gun. Children love to “belong” to a group especially if this brings in some money. If their parents don’t want the money, there are plenty of druggies out there who do. A whole culture of drugs, violence and mayhem is growing fast. Hanover Park, Lavender Hill, Delft ... those were just the beginning. Gangs are spreading to Langa and Guguletu now.

There was a lot of talk about “causes”, chiefly the destruction of family life by apartheid. The unmarried mother who is also a breadwinner cannot rely upon granny or other carers for her children. There are very few fathers in the families, and many are not working anyway. Drugs are everywhere. Unemployment brings hunger and the search for money, legal or illegal, to get food for the table.

What was clear was the **absence of occupation for children in townships**. They do not have safe and attractive parks with working equipment. Where are the Scout troops and Girl Guide companies to which we belonged in our youth? The Church Boys’ Brigade? The bands? The choirs? Where are the Art centres and the Sports centres? The table-tennis tables and badminton courts? Most important of all, WHERE ARE THE SPORTS FIELDS? How can a good game of football be played on the grass at the side of the N2?

If you were a child in Hanover Park, what would you do for fun? Where would you belong? Obviously TO A GANG!! For there you would find rules, and duties, and company, and some kind of hierarchy, and purpose (however nefarious) and even reward (however illegal).

Here is an area of work which cries out for voluntary workers. Does the City Council help with playing fields and parks?

Community facilities are desperately needed even if they do require 24 hour protection from human predators. The tiny overcrowded flats of Hanover Park and similar townships cannot contain the ebullience of teenagers.

SHAWCO please take note. This is an emergency situation. No longer do the poor of Cape Town need medical clinics and schools because these are all well provided for. What they need are workshops, hobby centres, sporting clubs, teams of all kinds – for the children!! There is a really good idea for someone to act upon.

The Student Service

It is not easy to find the right time which will suit student worship. The evenings in winter can be dark and a bit dangerous for people to be in the streets so the 7 o'clock service has been abandoned for the time being. A mid-morning service has been tried but does not seem to suit people well. The obvious answer is to include student worship in the regular 8 and 9.30 Eucharists on Sunday – but then we might face difficulty in the choice of hymns – whether conventional, or African modern or choruses. Pray for Fr Isais as he develops his ministry.

There are many students who already attend the regular Sunday Eucharists, and those of us who are “old and grey” really welcome them like a breath of fresh air.

Is there any way of hearing from you what you think and what you would like to see in this church? Some kind of discussion perhaps? A chance to talk about the sermon? A forum to discuss problems? Or just a place where students can meet informally?

Have you been called?

And did you listen? It may be a still small voice, but deserves a reply. What does God want you to do with the life He has given you? Are you looking for money and career, or His service?

Please do not forget

THE BOOK SALE Saturday 26th May

Come and browse and buy!! Good prices!

If you have books which you do not want any more, one of us will be happy to collect them. Thank you in advance. Tel Margaret 072 998 1588 or Gay 021 689 5260

Rector: Revd Reeva Mulder 072 398 7483

St Paul's office: Ph 021 689 4720 email: stpauls@netdial.co.za

Contributions received with thanks at the A/C St Paul's, Standard Bank, Rondebosch, 71488928