

Pope Francis gave us the following theme "Together with young people, let us bring the gospel to all" to Celebrate Mission Sunday 2018. We, as the Diocese of Oudtshoorn, are blessed with Religious Orders, Societies and Congregations who were gifted by men and women, who were inspired by the gospel at a young age. We can rightly ask: "What can these saintly people offer us as we contemplate the theme: "Together with young people, let us bring the gospel to all".

Blessed Sr. Rani Maria, who was a member of the Sisters of Franciscan Clarist Congregation, like our Sisters in Dysseisdorp, was taught by her pious mother Eliswa, to pronounce the name of Jesus, which she invoked in her final moments of agony. She was murdered at the age of 41 in Indore, India, when she came to the aid of the poor who were indebted to loan sharks.

St. Norbert, at 35, experienced the same type of conversion as St. Paul. He fell from his horse and cried to God, "Lord, what can I do for you?" To which his inner person replied, "Turn away from evil, and do good: seek after peace, and pursue it." The Norbertines do have a rich history in our Diocese and are still labouring for the sake of the Gospel.

St. Philip Neri was a man of many godly sayings. One of his Gospel saying is: "Nothing helps a man more than prayer". The Congregation of the Oratory in Oudtshoorn remains in prayer for all of us.

On the lips of Saint Leonie Aviat, at the age of 27, were the following inspired Gospel words: "Forget myself entirely." Today her daughters, the Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales, service our Diocese in Ceres and Mossel Bay.

The Society of the Catholic Apostolate: Pallottine Fathers and Brothers bring to our Diocese the Gospel gift of St. Vincent Pallotti whose mother witnessed him at the age of 4, kneeling in front of a statue of the Blessed Virgin and praying: "Dear Mother, make me a good boy!"

St. Claire, whose daughters live at the Poor Clare Capuchin Nuns of Perpetual Adoration Convent in Swellendam, heard St. Francis preached at the age of 18 and asked him to help her to live after the manner of the Gospel.

St. Luigi Scrossoppi, who prepared for the priesthood at the age of twelve, founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence, died with the Gospel words on his mouth: "Charity! Charity! This is the spirit of your religious family: to save souls and to save them with Charity" May God always bless our beloved Sisters of Providence in Oudtshoorn with the chrism of Charity.

Matthew 23:39 is my gospel verse: Jesus says: "I tell you; you will not see me until the time when you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' Look out for these words during Holy Mass and ask Jesus Christ to make it meaningful unto you.

May I ask you to share your Gospel words with your family, your friends, and with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Make known to the whole world the Holy Word Christ's planted in your heart. And therefore, let us commit ourselves by saying: "together with young people, let us bring the gospel to all."

Our Mission Sunday Collection of last year came to R20 339,55. Thanks and thanks again for your generosity. How can we bring the gospel to all people without your open-handedness? Let us continue to display the Gospel truth of freely we have received and freely we will give. Be blessed.

In God we trust,

Rev. Fr. John Atkinson
Diocesan Administrator