

## SVD BOTSWANA PROVINCE

### General Situation

The SVD Botswana Province embraces Zambia, Botswana and South Africa.

**Botswana** is a rather rich country with income from diamonds, cattle and tourism. The country enjoys good governance with credible political leadership. Botswana is the least corrupt country in Africa. Botswana is guided by her four national principles of democracy, development, self reliance and unity, and a fifth has been added recently, that of *botho*, or humane behavior, drawn from Botswana's cultural heritage. With these principles guiding Botswana, the country has set a long term vision called Vision 2016. In 2016 Botswana will be celebrating her fiftieth anniversary of independence. They envision by 2016 a Prosperous Productive and Innovative Society, a Just and Caring Society, an Educated, Informed Society, an Open Democratic and Accountable Society and a Moral, Ethical and Tolerant Society. It is well supported by achievable strategies.

**South Africa** is known as the rainbow nation. It is a nation of diverse ethnicities and races with first world sophistication and appalling situations of human suffering and violence. In 2009 five catholic priests were killed by armed robbers in different times. South Africa is one of the countries with the highest differences between the rich and the poor in the world. There is an air of optimism and expectation gaining momentum daily in South Africa as the country fast approaches the first World Cup tournament ever to be played on African soil. The moral voices in Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu still hold the country together. Ubuntu is seen as one of the founding principles of the new Republic of South Africa. Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu explained *Ubuntu as the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality - Ubuntu - you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.*

**Zambia** is blessed with a bounty of natural resources but more so untapped human resources. As Zambia approached the end of 2009, two issues were prominent on the socio-economic scene: the rising poverty levels and annual inflation rate. Gross mismanagement and lack of political will are big obstacles on its path to provide basic amenities to people. The key sectors are high cost of living, lack of accessibility to quality healthcare and education, and rising environmental

degradation. Approximately 16 - 20% of Zambians are infected by HIV/ AIDS, but 100% are affected. The rapid spread of the diseases is closely linked to the fact that more than 80% of the people live below the poverty line. The literacy rate of women is much lower than that of men, and girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys.

### **SVD Presence and Ministries**

In Botswana majority of the confreres are involved in pastoral ministries. In most cases, pastoral ministry is carried out in the context of parishes administered by SVDs. We are in pastoral ministry among communities living in towns and villages. We have two confreres fully involved in the church managed government aided school in the Vicariate of Francistown, and two confreres administer the SVD owned only primary catholic school in the country. It is our service to provide quality value education in the formative elementary school years. We also render our services in managing the Vicariate farm, HIV/AIDS hospice and pastoral services for refugees. One confrere has produced various DVDs on various social issues, music and cultural dances of San People from the Kalahari.

In 2011 SVD presence in Zambia turns 25 years! Our confreres are actively engaged in four parishes in two linguistic areas. Apart from parish ministry we have confreres serving as chaplain for all institutions of higher learning in Livingstone, teaching in Youth Community Training Center for the orphans and vulnerable youth, prison apostolate, and teaching apostolate in two major seminaries. There are two formation houses in the province staffed by five confreres. It includes the pre-philosophy and philosophy stages of formation. Zimbabwe mission sends their students to Zambia for those two stages of formation. A confrere administers the Mosi O Tunya Radio station of Livingstone Diocese in a team comprising religious and the laity.

SVD involvement in South Africa has relatively a brief history. In 2009 we signed the contract for taking over Lumko Pastoral Institute with the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC). At the moment there are three resident SVDs with one more confrere to join the core team as soon as he has his work permit. Recently the SACBC purchased a retreat center of a religious congregation of nuns as the future premise for LUMKO. Two confreres manage the Mater Dei Pastoral Center of Polokwane Diocese in South Africa. Our presence here has enabled us to reach many people through various catechetical and Bible programs. Confreres working in our two parishes in Tzaneen Diocese administer various pastoral programs for the marginalized especially the refugees and people infected and affected HIV/AIDS.

**Steps taken for Financial Self Reliance:** Catholic Safaris ([www.catholicsafaris.com](http://www.catholicsafaris.com), [www.bonasafari.com](http://www.bonasafari.com), [www.birdingbotswana.com](http://www.birdingbotswana.com)) is a unique venture initiated by the Province to explore the opportunities in safari business. At the moment the project operates on a commission basis in partnership with another Safari Company. Fr. Marek Marciniak, our vice provincial, has managed to acquire a tour operating license and a mobile safari license. St. Arnold's English Medium Catholic Primary school is another humble project pioneered by Fr. Thomas Nelluvely a couple of years ago. It is slowly beginning to expand and grow. We are still very much dependent on subsidies from the society for the running our apostolate and some parishes. Financial self reliance in parishes is a priority and some parishes are moving in this direction.

**Celebration Year of the Priest:** Considering the small number of priests in all dioceses where we live and work we thought it would be a good thing to join various diocesan planned programs. Programs are organized according to four different areas: Pastoral, Human, Intellectual and Spiritual. Some places even had a 'Fun Day' together with games and entertainments.

**Follow-Up of Assembly of SVD Brothers:** Final document of the Assembly on Brother Vocation and Prophetic Dialogue will be taken up by the three districts in the province to discuss matters of concern that directly pertain to us as a province. One district has already distributed the document to all confreres for in-depth reading.

#### **Future Plans for 2010-11**

1. Opening one more mission station in the Kalahari, the north-west region of Botswana to reach out to San People
2. Staffing St. Arnold's Primary School with two more SVD confreres
3. Taking over a parish in Phalaborwa near Kruger National Park, S.Africa after Easter 2010
4. Conducting a preliminary study on exploring the standing invitation from Kokstad Diocese near Durban in S. Africa to open new parishes
5. Opening a parish in 2010 in Lusaka to enable our seminarians for more pastoral involvement

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