

# THE BISHOPS FOUNDATION

## *Newsletter*



### December Newsletter 2019

Never a dull month in the Church's calendar. October was Mission Month, November was Holy Souls and now in December we have Advent the run up to Christmas and New Year. If you are getting old like me (82) you'll feel time is passing too quickly. Apart from the liturgy and Church celebrations, here in the Foundation we are closing off another year.

2019 has been a good year. We added a good number of new members to our lists of donors. We made a very successful trip to Bloemfontein as well as to other parishes locally in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The final one for the year was a visit to Rivonia and Maryvale in Johannesburg. The response in Rivonia was outstanding.

The work of the Foundation is to reach out and support charitable projects scattered throughout South Africa, especially in the rural areas. The large urban centers, Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg are well serviced with schools, hospitals and relief services of different kind in comparison to the rural communities who also struggle with refugees, abandoned children, poverty and lack of basic facilities.

The Foundation cannot alleviate all problems but it can make a contribution. And the contribution in solidarity is possible only because you get involved. This is your outreach, your involvement in these projects. As I often say, you don't know any of the beneficiaries personally, their names, their problems or where they live. They don't know any of you. But as part of one body, one believing faith community, they are family, our brothers and sisters and we reach out to them in love and faith. The whole Christian ethic, the work of the Church is to share what we have and what we can with others. It is part of our Catholic DNA. Every parish has its local outreach like St. Vincent de Paul but the Foundation gives us an opportunity to "travel" far beyond the parish boundaries and touch the lives of so many other "strangers".

If you recall, in the June Newsletter I referred to the possibility of mentioning the Foundation in your Will as a way of ensuring that your contribution to the work of the Foundation continues long after you have joined your ancestors. It is worth thinking about.

Another reminder. The Foundation will give you a Section 18A certificate for SARS when you are doing your financial returns.

At this time of the year, many receive a thirteenth cheque or a bonus. Well-earned I have no doubt but with a little extra in the pocket think of the work of the Foundation. So, a word or two about the coming festive season.

If you are traveling, be sensible. We are all too aware of the terrible road accidents which occur during this holiday period.

The message of Christmas, peace and hope, gets drowned out in the hubbub and rush of the holiday celebrations. Try to let yourself be touched by the spiritual enrichment of the Christmas services, especially the midnight mass (whatever time it is celebrated). Stay relaxed and comfortable especially during family get togethers. For some it will be the first Christmas without loved ones who died during the year. Be there for each other.

**Human Trafficking. This is one of the projects we supported last year.**

Human Trafficking has become a major scourge in South Africa. Poor women in search of a living are sourced in neighbouring countries and fooled into believing they are being offered employment in South Africa. Once here they are exploited for cheap labour or are forced into the sex trade.

Sr. Melanie of the Human Trafficking desk at the Bishops' Conference does a lot of awareness raising around the country, liaises with the police and also runs a skills training program for women who have been trafficked from such places as Malawi. These women are rescued from the traffickers and given some skills so that on being returned to Malawi they are able to earn a living. The skills involve learning to sew and each one is sent home with her own sewing machine.



From the desk of Father Barney McAleer