



July 2024 (2)

Dear friends

A little bit of history did no one any harm. It is good to remember the many people who have crossed our paths over the years and as members the Foundation there are many we can call to mind.

### **Happy Birthday - 100 Years**

**Bishop Daniel Alphonse Omer Verstraete**, O.M.I. (born 31 July 1924). He was born in the Flemish Region of Belgium on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1924. As a young man joined the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He was ordained a priest on 19 February 1950, after completed his philosophical and theological studies. Bishop Verstraete worked as a missionary in South Africa and was appointed the first Prefect Apostolic of the newly created Prefecture Apostolic of Western Transvaal on 9 November 1965. In this time he participated in the Fourth



session of the Second Vatican Council as a Council Father in 1965. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 1978 the Prefecture Apostolic was elevated in the rank of a Diocese and Mons. Verstraete was appointed as the first bishop of the Diocese of Klerksdorp. He was ordained a Bishop on 14 May 1978, in Klerksdorp. The principal consecrator was Archbishop Peter Buthelezi, OMI of Bloemfontein along with other Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. Bishop Verstraete served the Dioceses of Klerksdorp as Bishop until his resignation due to ill health on 26 March 1994



The Diocese of Klerksdorp was originally part of the Diocese of Johannesburg, the diocese is bounded on the East by Johannesburg Archdiocese, on the South by the Kroonstad Diocese and Bloemfontein Archdiocese, on the West by the Kimberley Diocese and on the North by the Diocese of Rustenburg. The Diocese comprises the following civil

Districts: Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp, Hartbeesfontein, Wolmaransstad, Bloemhof, Christiana, Schweizer- Reneke, Delareyville, Lichtenburg, Coligny and Ventersdorp.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**



It is little known that not all the Vatican II Council Fathers were bishops. One of these exceptions is Daniel Alphonse Omer Verstraete.. In 1965, he became Prefect Apostolic of the Western Transvaal, just in time to attend the fourth and final session of the Council. Pope Benedict was an advisor to the Council, not one of the Fathers.



## ***A picture that holds a thousand tales***



This picture was taken in Killarney in Ireland during the year 1961.

**Left:** Br Wilfred Napier later becoming Wilfred Cardinal Napier. He was bishop of Kokstad, Archbishop of Durban and now the Administrator of the Dioceses of Eshowe

**Middle:** Br Karel Schoeman. He was with the Franciscans briefly but later worked as an archivist at the National Research Library. Karel Schoeman was a South African novelist, historian, translator and man of letters. Author of twenty novels and numerous works of history, he was one of South Africa's most honoured writers. Schoeman wrote primarily in Afrikaans, although several of his non-fiction books were originally written in English.

**Right:** Fr Bonaventure Hinwood who devoted many years of his life to the education of Seminarians at St John Vianney Seminary. He published several books and is remembered as a writer, poet and committed educator.

## ***Saint Sharbel Makhlouf – 24 July***

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of July the Church celebrated the life and story of Saint Sharbel. Although this saint never traveled far from the Lebanese village of Beka-Kafra where he was born, his influence has spread widely.

Joseph Zaroun Maklouf was raised by an uncle because his father, a mule driver, died when Joseph was only three. At the age of 23, Joseph joined the Monastery of St. Maron at Annaya, Lebanon, and took the name Sharbel in honor of a second-century martyr. He professed his final vows in 1853, and was ordained six years later.

Following the example of the fifth-century Saint Maron, Sharbel lived as a hermit from 1875, until his death. His reputation for holiness prompted people to seek him to receive a blessing and to be remembered in his prayers. He followed a strict fast and was very devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. When his superiors occasionally asked him to administer the sacraments to nearby villages, Sharbel did so gladly.

He died in the late afternoon on Christmas Eve. Christians and non-Christians soon made his tomb a place of pilgrimage and of cures. Pope Paul VI beatified Sharbel in 1965, and canonized him 12 years later.

***Prayer to ask for St. Sharbel's intercession.*** He is well known as a miracle worker.

God, infinitely holy and glorified in your saints, You who inspired the holy monk and hermit Charbel to live and die in perfect likeness to Jesus, granting him the strength to detach himself from the world in order to make the heroism of the monastic virtues triumph in his hermitage: poverty, obedience, and chastity, we beg you to grant us the grace to love and serve you following his example. Almighty Lord, who manifested the power of St. Charbel's intercession through numerous miracles and favours, grant us the grace (...) that we implore through his intercession.

*Pope St John XXIII said, :Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do.* We could add what we can do as the Foundation

*Blessings Fr Hugh* ([BishopsFoundation@sacbc.org.za](mailto:BishopsFoundation@sacbc.org.za))

