



Christmas in July



The Franciscan

Michaelmas September 2013
St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter

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Foreword

This edition is thinner than usual, but contains many photos. Thanks are once again due to Dave Tweedley for printing our newsletters in colour free of charge so that those without access to the Web can enjoy the full effect. However, if you do have access to the electronic version, look at it as well because the photos are larger than they are in the print version.

Various themes are introduced in this edition, but all are connected: condemnation of violence to women, outreach, Madiba, celebration...

I already have photos of Wellness Sunday – how about sending me an article on this event to accompany the photos? – and at least one article, as well as the promise of others. The next edition is not far off (deadline end of November), so do get writing soon.

Jill Daugherty

From the Rector's Desk

My dear Parishioners,



On National Women's Day, I asked Deacon Nontle to give the sermon. Because 9 August was a Friday this year, many people had taken a long weekend, so the congregation was not large. We gathered together in the chancel and Nontle's address to the women – and even fewer men – who were present in this intimate space, had all the more impact. It seemed a pity that so many parishioners had missed it, so I asked her to submit her text to the *Franciscan*, where it merits pride of place as the editorial.

May you be blessed as you ponder and act on her message.

Fr Timothy

Sermon for National Women's Day 2013

Readings for 9 August: 2 Samuel 12: 1-14; Matthew 16: 24-28

2013 is the 19th year of our independence in the New South Africa. I would like to believe that National Women's Day was meant to honour and respect the women of South Africa. Has that really happened? Many will answer 'yes and no'. While we have seen a small improvement in the status of women, we have also seen an increase in the abuse of women and children.

While watching *Morning Live* yesterday morning, I realized that the problem is huge and multifaceted, and that the remedy has to be multi-pronged as well. I also saw, as I have always known, that there are many good men out there. Sometimes the magnitude of the problem can freak us out into distorting the reality of the situation. I would like to acknowledge the majority of men who love and respect their families. As women, we salute you.

However, there is a growing minority of men that is bent on giving menfolk a bad name through their abuse of women and children. Like HIV, the abusive behaviour touches all levels of society, knowing no colour, race or religion, but affecting the poor even more. The Church is not spared. Most South Africans are Christian. We have abusers and the abused everywhere. We have a part to play to remedy the situation.

In the OT Reading today, we hear of King David in one of his escapades with women. I personally love David because he was so human, just like me and you. He sinned often, but truly repented. God loved him, warts and all. Israel was a patriarchal society. The men called the shots. Women, children and slaves were looked down upon as not worthy of human rights as we know them today. If you had three daughters and one son, like I do, you were regarded as having one child, as girls did not count for much.

The background in the OT story is this: David saw Bathsheba, wife of Uriah, and lusted after her. She was duly fetched and probably raped. Her consent was irrelevant. When she fell pregnant, David made a plan to get Uriah killed at the war front. This sin was easy for David. He was the man, and the king 'nogal'! Nathan, the prophet whose name means "God has given" (Mpho, Neo, Siphon, Nyiko, in some of our languages), confronts David about his sin and tells him the consequences that will come, even though he is forgiven by God. Nathan was a necessary gift for David. David is cut to the heart with remorse and he repents. Even so there is turmoil in his household.

South Africa is also a patriarchal society. There is a growing abuse of women and children. There is turmoil in many aspects of life, in spite of our shining Constitution and Christian background. Patriarchy opens the door to abuse of those perceived to be weak and unimportant. It tends to co-exist with domestic violence. Women and children are bullied. As Christians in a patriarchal society, we have to strive to see the image of God in all people.

Israel had the Law of God for guidance, but they went astray. We have strayed from our Christian values of love for God, for others and for ourselves. The consequences are what we see today. Buy the *Daily Sun* for

a week and you will want to emigrate or be on tranquilisers. The abuse of women and children is huge and worse than before. Women are abused verbally, emotionally and physically, and are even killed by men. It is said that 59% of abuse happens in our homes from those whom we love. What is happening? Who do we blame? In a vicious cycle, where do you put the fault?

The answer is that we are all in the thick of it. One sin spreads in a ripple effect to hurt and damage many other people. Even little babies are raped and killed. Parental fighting in front of children is another form of child abuse. Those abused early in life continue the cycle of angry maltreatment of others. The problem is complex and it needs a concerted effort by all stakeholders, including the Church.

Women are not always blameless. There are women who abuse their spouses. Sometimes, sisters, we betray one another or gang up against abused sisters. We sometimes provoke our spouses deliberately, just because we can. This is equally wrong. We have to look at ourselves too. The teaching on love and respect applies to all of us. We all have to take responsibility for the situation, and all must do their part to clear the turmoil in our country. It starts with you and me. We are all responsible for having allowed the situation to continue in our country.

As people called by Christ to be the salt in our communities, we must make a difference for God. It starts in our homes. We have to give special attention to the way we socialize the boy child in particular, if this cycle of abuse is to be broken. We have to:

A) Teach and bring up our children with love and respect so they can learn about the human rights that are deserved by all created in God's image.

B) Encourage and teach the law of love in our families as Christ taught us. If you say you love God, whom you have never seen, and you hate your spouse, whom you live with every day, the truth is not in you. When we have accepted Christ, we cannot remain the same year after year. We have to change. (See: Col. 3:1-22.)

C) Live and teach the golden rule in our homes: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." If you teach this, you yourself as a parent, have to live and let live. We have to teach by example, so that our children can value all life. Children copy what we do more than what we say. Some of it is stored in the subconscious and the scars of bad memories come alive later in life. When we fight in front of children we surely breed a new generation of abusers. As stewards of God's gifts, we have a responsibility to look after our children well. Let us walk the talk. We can contribute to a better life for our children if we truly apply the law of love for God, for others and for ourselves.

D) We have to support all people in adversity and not judge them. Support may mean encouraging the abused person to take action or to leave the abuser. Not easy at all. Prayer is needed for God to guide. Our silence, as we watch the abuse, is tantamount to collusion. Our prayerful involvement can help our family relationships to be sources of strength and not to become systems of dysfunction.

E) Anti-abuse programmes for Sunday schools, confirmation classes, youth groups and premarital counselling for those preparing for marriage should be mandatory. Schools can do likewise.

F) Our churches can train counsellors and have a solid healing ministry to help in these situations in a significant way. This can impact our communities positively, bringing the necessary healing of Christ for the abused. The priest cannot do all the above alone. We need to get interested in what is happening around us and help. Our communities are hurting.

G) We can support safe havens for abused women and orphanages as Christ would surely have done. I am aware that this church does a lot of outreach. The harvest is big. More is expected of us according to our blessings. (See Cor. 8: 9-10.)

H) The options are numerous, but we are challenged to make a difference. If we fail to be outward looking as a church, the consequences will touch all of us and our children in any case. We shall be no different from David

who failed to act in his family or who did wrong in front of his children. The failure to act, as individuals or as a church, will be as sinful as what the abusers have done to the women of South Africa.

As a result of David's sin with Bathsheba, God said that murder would be a constant threat in his family and his family would rebel. This is what happened. Nathan confronted David with his sin and we, the Church, need to pray for skill and tact to season our words with wisdom as we deal with the plight of women in our country. The Church needs to come to the party. We are not immune. We are not without sin, even in our pews and at our altars. Let us be Nathans to one another and not ignore abuse of women when we see it.

Those who suffer need to know that God is LOVE. God cares. Abuse is never his will. Salvation will come from Him through his Church. God always gives a way out, even when we suffer the consequences of our actions. He is gracious and merciful. The good news is that, when we repent from sin, God forgives us. While God forgave David he did not negate the consequences. David did not dwell in sin. He returned to God. Read about his remorse for his sin in Psalm 51.

When we return to God, accept his forgiveness and change our ways, He gives us a fresh start. God's blessings far outweigh Life's difficulties. Let us evaluate our lifestyle from an eternal perspective so that we also can be transformed. Amen.

Nontle Ndlovu

From the Parish Registers

Baptisms

Date	Child	Date of Birth	Parents
4 Aug	Luke Joshua Jenkins	9 Jan 2013	Ivan & Mickaele
8 Sept	Hlombe Petros	21 June 2012	Unathi Petros & Siqhamo Majokweni
8 Sept	Keenan Smith	5 March 2013	Meyndert & Angela
8 Sept	Megan McNeill	26 April 2013	Gareth & Roelien

Faithful departed

Date of Death	Name
23 June 2013	Peter Mulders
5 Aug 2013	John Lundie
30 Aug 2013	Thato Mothibe
30 Aug 2013	Kamogelo Mothibe
17 Sept 2013	June Nicholls

Confirmed

Date of Confirmation	Name
15 September 2013	Liam Burgess
15 September 2013	Lisa-Ashley Christowitz
15 September 2013	Harry Davies
15 September 2013	Devin Hollier
15 September 2013	Zanele Mabaso
15 September 2013	Nokwanda Mabaso
15 September 2013	Joseph Miruni
15 September 2013	Khutso Mlangeni
15 September 2013	Danielle Mouton
15 September 2013	Mari-Jo September
15 September 2013	Bassie Tsuene
15 September 2013	Sharon-Ruth Wamwayi

Confirmation Candidates 2013 – What Confirmation means

Below are testimonies from some of the young people who were confirmed on Sunday 15 September 2013 by Bishop Jo Seoka.

Danielle Moulton

To describe Confirmation in minimal words is very difficult. However, incredible and life changing is somewhere to start. The long journey we embarked on has allowed every one of us to learn more about ourselves and of course about God. Understanding that we cannot learn everything there is to know has encouraged me to keep learning and growing in my faith. To Jon and Father Tim, thank you for the endless questions you answered and the hours you gave up on a Wednesday night. To say I appreciate everything is an understatement. I feel extremely blessed to be able to carry on with my journey with the support of my friends, Church and of course my family behind me. I am excited to experience all that God has in store!

Mari-Jo September

Confirmation is a vital part of someone's life and is dear to me. The Church has played an important role in my life and my journey with God. The last two years with Jon-Reece and friends in St. Francis have taught me a lot of valuable lessons and helped me not to stray from God's path. This has brought me closer to God, helping me understand Him further and making things that I was unsure of clear. It has helped me understand that nothing is ever easy, but with God's help it can be done. Being a Christian and believing in God has made it a lot easier to go through life as I know that I'm not traveling my road and facing my troubles alone, but with the help of God.

Liam Burgess

What Confirmation meant to me was learning about the road I will take with God and my relationship with Him. I have made new friends and enjoyed fun times with them every Wednesday. I always looked forward to Wednesday, as I knew that Confirmation class was this day. I always learned interesting things about Christianity at the class and enjoyed it a lot. I'll miss it very much; it seems like yesterday that I was just starting. I'll miss the food we ate and the Bible "clips" we watched.

Devin Hollier

Confirmation has allowed me to get to know for myself the God I serve... to get closer to Him and learn all about His Kingdom, with the aid of Father Timothy of course. This Confirmation has reignited the relationship between God and myself after quite a while apart. I have learned to get closer to Him again and now finally I can fully join His Church and praise Him through my music in this Parish, understanding what worship really means. This is what my confirmation journey has meant to me, and it will continue to grow as I grow in God.

Harry Davies

Confirmation to me means a journey in the Church. I found that I had lost touch with the Church and it helped me to reaffirm my beliefs as well as introduce me to the Youth Group and to start coming on Sunday mornings. I see it as a lesson on God, the Church and the Bible and it has helped to open my eyes to these things. I am very glad that I did the Confirmation course and enjoyed every minute of it. As well as this, it has also shown me that I needed to incorporate my beliefs into my everyday life and it has taught me not to treat people differently just because they are unpopular at school. I have also learnt that I should not do things just because my friends do them.

Lisa-Ashley Christowitz

When I started the confirmation course it was because my mum wanted me to do it. As I continued with it, my faith and my love for God became stronger. Due to Youth, I already had an understanding of the Trinity, and Confirmation has given me the understanding needed to absorb this knowledge. Confirmation has become a part of my Faith and has helped me to try and be a better person by allowing me to improve my relationship with God. I have become a part of the Church and closer to the people involved with Youth and the Confirmation group. It has been a fantastic experience and I'm glad I did it.



Confirmands in the front rows before the service

**A PASTORAL LETTER:
FROM RELIGIOUS LEADERS
TO THE PEOPLE OF KWAZULU – NATAL**

(Published by Bishop Rubin Philip, in a recent *iZindaba* newsletter)

As the nation holds its breath regarding the health situation of former President Nelson Mandela, we, the faith leaders of Kwazulu-Natal, wish to express our thoughts to our constituencies, who have in many ways taken the lead in guiding the focus of various communities at this critical time for our nation.

Prayer support

The collective experience of prayer which has been offered since the news of his most recent hospitalisation [...] has been welcomed by the family and has been acknowledged as fitting testimony to the incredible influence this one man has had on our collective identity and psyche as a nation. We commend these prayers, and encourage you to continue with them on an individual as well as a corporate level wherever and whenever these occur.

Realism and moral support

We need to be realistic, and accept that beyond the prayers for healing and peace for Nelson Mandela, there will be collective grief as the inevitable occurs and he dies. It is here that the influence of the faith communities can and should be felt by the nation, as we hold onto and bear witness to the hope that all of us carry. The grief should not overwhelm us or our nation and we ought to take the lead in pointing the way to the future.

The Legacy

We believe that the lasting legacy of Nelson Mandela to our nation lies in the values he espoused during his life and leadership among us. We ought to be able to model these values in the manner in which we relate to one another and to the world around us.

The Values

- i. Mandela stood for forgiveness and reconciliation. It is imperative to accept one another and seek to continue to be at peace with ourselves and the nation;
- ii. Mandela stood for equality for all;
- iii. Mandela stood for the rule of law;
- iv. Mandela stood for liberation of all people in South Africa, black and white, men and women;
- v. Mandela stood for human dignity, human freedom (speech, association, movement, expression and choice and human development);
- vi. Mandela stood for transparency, accountability, integrity and respect among the peoples.

The Future

There will, inevitably, be sadness. But beyond the sadness is hope and a new future, and we encourage you to model that new future in the values that have been lived out in Nelson Mandela, and have won him the respect of world leaders. Our nation could earn that respect too, if we ensured that the values for which he stood for are an integral part of our life together.

Submitted by Harry Savage

**67 MINUTES FOR MADIBA ON 18 JULY 2013:
A VISIT TO MISSION PROJECTS IN THE RUSTENBERG ARCHDEACONRY**

A group of parishioners from St Francis and from Trinity Lynnwood met early on the morning of 18 July 2013. We made our way to the meeting point at Holy Trinity Rustenburg (Fr Alan O' Brien's church) where we had a little 'padkos' and admired the interior of Holy Trinity church, while waiting for parishioners from St Mary's Pretoria North, St Martin's Irene and the lead vehicle from Tumelong.

Our first port of call was the **Rustenburg Child and Youth Care Centre** (Secure Care Programme), officially opened on 11 March 2011 by the North West MEC for Social Development, Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities, the Hon. Mosetsanagape Mokomele-Mothibi. We were impressed by this newly constructed facility with all it had to offer, but felt that it was completely under-utilised. The Centre is managed by the Bosasa group, with a staff of 30. There is room for 60 juvenile offenders under the age of 18 years. However, at the time of our visit, only thirteen young people (one young lady aged 11 and twelve young men) were in the Centre for various crimes. The Krugersdorp facility (also run by Bosasa) is overcrowded, but because that belongs to Gauteng, they cannot move inmates to Rustenburg in North West! The Director of the Centre, Mr Solly Mphofela, addressed us and indicated that once offenders return to their communities there are no repeat offences.

The Rustenburg facility includes a courtroom, classrooms, separate quarters for boys and girls, and a modern clinic. The inmates receive counselling, schooling in literacy and numeracy (none are sufficiently advanced to do normal grade work) and practical classes in woodwork, computer literacy, art, etc.

***Fr Timothy admires the woodwork room,
but finds no proof of students' work.***



No photos of inmates were allowed.



To celebrate Madiba's birthday, the young people had written him letters, which they had attached to the wall of their Assembly area. The resident lady pastor prayed and Father Tim followed this with a meaningful short talk on the value of such an institution, advising the young people to use the chance they

had been given to change their lives and go out and make a difference as Madiba had done. Then the youngsters joyfully sang some choruses before launching into 'Happy birthday dear Madiba' and 'Happy birthday dear Diana'. (Yes, this is my one claim to fame – sharing a birthday with this icon of our time!) Lucas Mthembu of Tumelong could interact with most of the inmates whom he knew by name, having led a Siyafundisa programme (HIV and Aids prevention) at the facility. Tumelong had brought them gifts of T-shirts and a tree, which was duly planted. We were given tea/coffee and some very interesting sandwiches as well! The staff and inmates enjoyed a big birthday cake donated by Diana.

From here, our convoy of vehicles snaked our way to **Kgatontle Agricultural Co-operative**. This was founded in 1998 – the first phase sponsored by the Dept. of Agriculture and the second by the Bojanala District Platinum Municipality. The land belongs to the Royal Bofakeng Nation. We met two staff members, Julia Mafatshe and a male colleague. The director, Rosina Maboja, was not present as she had been invited to



attend Dept. of Agriculture celebrations for Madiba Day. There is much potential at the co-op, but the buildings are in a state of disrepair, having been vandalized after Eskom cut the electricity to the facility. Tumelong is hoping to source funds to repair the

damage, and thus be able to employ better security, so that the land can be successfully farmed once more and the chicken runs repaired and restocked. Standing In front of the damaged and empty chicken runs, Lorraine Maseko of Tumelong explained what had been there previously and how they hoped to restore and improve matters in the near future.

Finally we made our way back to Rustenburg, where we had a quick stop to see **St Andrew's Church** in Tlhabane, which is under major reconstruction. The parishioners have raised an incredible sum of money for this project. The Ven. Fr. Joseph Dhladhla, rector of St Andrew's and Archdeacon of Rustenburg, was with us throughout our visit to Rustenburg. He has promised to send us an invitation to the inauguration of the new church.

Still in Tlhabane, we went on to the **Rakatane Place of Safety**, which is in a large house that used to belong to Lucas Mangope. Mama Tiny Rakatane now owns this home. She fosters 10 well cared for children ranging in age from 3–14, two boys and eight girls. Due to bureaucratic red tape, she does not get all the child grants she should receive, but is assisted during the week by helpers from a Community Work Programme (restoring dignity through opportunities) sponsored by Cooperative Governance. The volunteers do the housework, cook meals, and do the laundry, so that Tiny can concentrate on looking after her children. Even though the home is quite large, all 10 children and Tiny sleep in one bedroom, top to tail!

Tumelong took them food parcels and we donated various non-perishable foods, blankets (from Trinity), and a birthday cake. Our lunch was kindly

provided by the ladies of St Andrew's and Tumelong provided the drinks. We were not the only visitors bearing gifts. When we arrived, there was a group of women from Anglo American Platinum – Women in Mining, who had given a food/lucky box to every child, and were busy painting the bedroom wall.



Elizabeth Bojé had fun adding her hand print to the wall, while Terry Brauer enjoyed getting down on the floor to interact with the kids. Tiny Rakatane is seated behind Terry in the photo.



As we left Rakatane, the next group of women from yet another platinum mine arrived to join in the fun of Madiba Day – proof that everyone loves a well-run facility.

This was a really fun day – we spent time together, learning about what goes on in a community not too far away (1½ hour drive) and hopefully spreading cheer and hope to the youngsters whose lives we touched in some small way.



In this group photo, Diana is with Tumelong staff members, a volunteer worker (in orange) and Tiny's little ones.

Diana Higgs & Jill Daugherty

NELSON MANDELA WEEK AT TATENI: 15th to 27th JULY 2013



The parishioners of St Francis responded positively to the call to reach out to the vulnerable and poor in Mamelodi during this year's *67 Minutes for Mandela Day*. (See the 2013 Trinity edition of the *Franciscan*.)

Graeme Hearn put his team to work in painting the Board Room walls. They ended up painting the whole inside of the building, which was sorely needed!

The Black Sheep House Group contributed financially to the 'Breaking the Cycle of Poverty' Programme, which targets selected youngsters who need to be given a better chance in life. Similar donations have also been received from individuals. This money goes to buying school stationery and uniforms and supporting counselling, career guidance and extra science and maths programmes initiated by Tateni.

Diana Higgs was touched by the call to assist school girls by donating basic toiletries and sanitary towels. This support is greatly needed and appreciated.

The HEAL Group for recovering addicts visited a group of youngsters at Meetse A Bophelo School who have been involved in knife fighting, truancy and substance abuse. During the visit they played soccer with the youngsters and shared experiences. This has developed into an on-going programme of support by HEAL to troubled youngsters at the School.

Thanks to all who assisted!

Erik Buiten

Feast of the Clowns 2013

The Annual Feast of the Clowns hosted by Tshwane Leadership Foundation took place from 19 to 24 August and proved to be a huge success with over 2000 people attending the main festival on Saturday.

The event started on Monday (19 August) with Social Justice Workshops that raised awareness of this year's theme entitled: ***It's up to us... to end violence against women and children.*** The workshops focused on issues around women and child abuse, protecting the rights of the child, eradicating homelessness and greening our city. The workshops that took place on Monday and Tuesday proved to be a success primarily because they were open. This was done by not asking entrance fees, therefore also allowing marginalized communities, such as the homeless, to access information and services that they would often be excluded from.

Other activities during the week included a Peace Meal at Unisa, which saw academics and homeless men sharing a meal together, while discussing issues around homelessness and the everyday struggles experienced by the homeless. Thursday and Friday concentrated on Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Workshops, which offered space for deep listening to practitioners/academics working in these fields. The week's events, coupled with the main event, which took place on Saturday, managed to propel the main idea and message behind the theme, which is that any individual, regardless of age, race, gender, or social status, can do something to help end violence against women and children.

Saturday's event, which combined celebration, arts and social awareness, provided a whimsical manner in which to raise awareness of the theme. The parade provided a variety of entertaining and colourful clowns (symbolising both fun and sorrow) and over 1000 residents, from different regions of Pretoria, participating in the march. The huge group of people paraded through the streets of Pretoria Central, promoting the main event as well as the issue of the day – ***an end to violence.***

We as TLF have certainly made a huge impact on educating those who are marginalized and have less access to information. The Feast has proved to be a huge success in assisting TLF with its biggest mandate, which is transforming the city.

Tshepang, TLF Communications & Resource Development Officer

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Photo TLF



Photos Mark Napier

Feast of the clowns – Sunnyside

Sunnyside is a name which evokes memories of times past when newly arrived families moved in to ultra-modern 1950's multi-storey flats with all the mod-cons. It was a wonder to have treed parks and sparkling public swimming pools, with freeway links to Johannesburg!

Sunnyside was synonymous with Hillbrow in Joburg and Albert Park in Durban. Sunnyside remains a place to arrive at, a place to stay when starting off in government posts, and a place for people on the move. From the late 1990s, a number of churches and community groups active in the inner city decided to group together to work towards urban transformation. This was referred to as Pretoria Community Ministries and from 2003 they established the Tshwane Leadership Forum.

The group I was more familiar with was Yeast City Housing which was (and still is) devoted to building social housing in the inner city. I had visited some of their housing projects around Burger's Park, near the central station. I had heard that each year they held a Feast of the Clowns event where everyone got together in Burger's Park. This had been going on since 2000.

According to the website "it started as a small street festival, but has now established itself as the only annual festival in the inner city combining celebration and social justice". So in late August we went down town and witnessed the start of the Feast for ourselves. This involved a procession of youth associations parading through the streets of Sunnyside and the CBD and then meeting back in Burger's park for a huge party.

Mark Napier

Editor's Note: According to the home page of the TLF website (see www.tlf.org.za), **Yeast City Housing** is an affiliate of the Tshwane Leadership Foundation.

Christmas in July

Christmas trees and lights suddenly appeared in Long Street, although it was not December, but July. Helen Pretorius and Doriene Falkson drew up a dinner menu, requested donations, assigned tasks. Tickets were sold, doubts about whether enough people would be interested evaporated as more and more tables had to be ordered to meet the demand. On the Friday, the tables were arranged and laid, the centre piece of every table adding a touch of individuality to the decorations. Then on Saturday night, everyone got dressed up for the special occasion, red being the dominant colour as all got into the Christmas spirit.

There were three honorary guests: Colin Carte, resplendent in his scout uniform, received a framed painting of Lord Baden Powell, the founder of the Scout movement; Bishop Jo Seoka, who was content to enjoy the meal among his many friends at St Francis, while his wife Timeya received the customary bouquet (as did Nina Lowes); and Paulina Thlaka, Tumelong Director, who accepted 114 gaily wrapped



Christmas gifts on behalf of the children of Tumelong's early childhood development and after-school care centres. The children will have to wait until December to open them, however, as Paulina has decided keep them for their end-of-year party.



The photos taken by Yorke Rodda captured the enjoyment of all who attended this event that brought Christmas cheer into a cold July evening.

Jill Daugherty



Paulina and Deacon Joan get to know each other, while their hubbies are content to listen and Fr Robin enjoys his dessert.

Bishop Jo and Father June propose a toast to Helen and Dorienne.



The Youth played a sterling role, serving food and removing empty plates from tables.



Fr Tim put on oven gloves to give them a hand, much to Bishop Jo's amusement.



The different centre pieces were admired by all



Rob and Heatherlyn donned Christmas hats, while the ladies at Joey's table voted it the best party ever!



Santa Carl hands out gifts and later shares a joke with Paula Pretorius

BEST POEM IN THE WORLD

I was shocked, confused, bewildered
As I entered Heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of it all,
Nor the lights or its decor. ...

But it was the folks in Heaven
Who made me sputter and gasp—
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbor
Who never said anything nice.

Bob, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal?
I would love to hear Your take.
How'd all these sinners get up here?
God must've made a mistake.

'And why is everyone so quiet,
So somber - give me a clue.'
'Hush, child,' He said,
'they're all in shock.
No one thought they'd be seeing you.'

Submitted by Rob Lewis