



# WINDHOEK PRIORY NEWSLETTER

St. Benedict Priory

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## The Light has dawned upon us!

It is Christmas Time, a time to wish you a peaceful and grace-filled Christ's Birth for this year. Let us shout for joy for we can see our Lord directly before our eyes; He is the Word dwelling with us in the world, flesh among us. Our Midnight Mass on December 24, 2011 was our jubilant expression of the completion of our Advent, when we were waiting for His coming to us in the Four Weeks of preparation in silence and prayer. We had also been participating in the preparation of the 12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter by electing our Delegates, group meeting and reflecting on the Monthly Prayer Reflections for the General Chapter and also interceding for the forthcoming General Chapter during the Divine Office. Christmas Day was a happy Day of greeting each other and those who came to our Chapel and giving joy to the children who attended Mass with us by sharing with them cookies and sweets. This Christmas Octave shows our Community getting less in number since many of our Sisters are gone for homeleave and/or holiday. However, the quiet atmosphere in the Priory House brings us back to the Crib and to commune with the Baby Jesus in the Manger. **The light has dawned upon us!** This does not mean that our darkness is over for we need Jesus' light everyday anew to lighten our hurts, sicknesses, pains and worries that are hovering around us. Despite the darkness, the light of Jesus' Birth shines upon the whole earth these days and throughout the coming year. This is also a good time for us to greet you a happy and blessed New Year 2012. May this coming New Year of our 12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter bring us all together to co-operate with the Holy Spirit to walk on the Path where it is leading our Congregation to. May all of you have a Grace-filled, Prosperous New Year 2012!

### ***Recalling the RB Intensive Course 2011***

By Sr. Marianne Shilengifa, OSB

I left Namibia to attend the RB Intensive Course in Tagaytay, Philippines on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2011. Having arrived in Manila, I stayed at the Priory House until we left for Tagaytay on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2011. Our RB Course officially began on 18 July 2011. We were forty participants from different Benedictine Congregations from the Philippines, Namibia, Argentina and Australia. We, Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing, were the biggest in number. We spent the mornings of the course with the exegesis of the RB chapters. The afternoons were for personal reflection or group work. Sr. Aquinata encouraged us to present Chapter 4: The Tools of Good Works. We did this in a more creative way such as singing and dramatizing the text.

This was mostly done in small groups. Sr. Aquinata led us through many chapters of the Rule.

Let me say briefly about Chapter 53 on the Reception of Guests, which is my favorite chapter. It gives St. Benedict's teaching on hospitality. His opening words on this chapter are: "All guests who come are to be received as Christ." The Abbot and the whole community offer a service of love. Personally speaking, I experienced that real hospitality and kindness during my short visits to the Communities in Manila, Tagaytay, Westgrove, in Marikina during the Golden Jubilee of St. Scholastica's Academy and Tanay farm. The Liturgy in the Manila Priory House is a good example to follow. In Tagaytay, everything was well-prepared and organized. Nobody complained about hunger. I enjoyed the delicious fried "dilis" with rice for breakfast, "halo-halo", fruits

and the festive meals. I also enjoyed the cultural presentations at CCP in Manila and the story of the late Ninoy Aquino, performed in St. Scholastica's St. Cecilia's Hall. The young people in the cast of characters were very knowledgeable. Mother Pia Lansang's birthday celebration on 13 July greeted me with a sumptuous supper and it was a good time to meet the Sisters. Before leaving the Philippines, Mother Pia's feastday on 21 August was a big outing and an opportunity to say "Goodbye and Thank you" to all. I put on weight upon returning to Namibia and my habit didn't fit me.



At the end of the RB Course was a big group discussion on

the person of St. Benedict. I have learned that St. Benedict was a man of order, discipline, and courage, with a big ear, head, and eyes to see, listen and accept, big feet to walk to see different places and big hands to serve. My deepest gratitude and appreciation go to Mother Maria Ignatius, OSB for allowing me to join the RB course. Thanks to Sr. Aquinata, OSB and to Mother Mary John Mananzan, OSB and the Manila Priory; special thanks to Mother Irene, OSB, Mother Pia, OSB and all the Sisters who assisted me.

"That in all things God may be glorified,"

### **Every Child's Future lies in the Early Education**

By Aspirant Reginalda Kamari and  
Aspirant Hendelina Musungu

As the year comes to an end, many of our students in the Kindergarten Apostolate are also enjoying the harvest of their hard work through the year. Most of all, our Sisters, teachers and staff together with the parents, experienced the joy of preparing and celebrating the children's graduation. They have been looking forward to this Graduation Day. Below are the articles on some of our Kindergarten Graduation Ceremonies this year.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2011, **St. Benedict Kindergarten in Nubuamis – Priory House** hosted a graduation ceremony for the pre-school children who qualified for Grade 1 in 2012. Officially, the ceremony began with a prayer by Fr. Abbot Justin, OSB. All the children dressed modestly to honor the day. Every child was represented by his or her family to witness the first graduation in their life. Among the witnesses were our Sisters of the Priory House. These can't be the words to describe it, but the ceremony was really entertaining, informative and encouraging to the parents to continue entrusting their children to the care of St. Benedict's Kindergarten.

The children proved that, although they are physically small, they are mentally full of knowledge and wisdom. They proved that coming to school was not a wasting of time and energy, for they gained a lot throughout the year. They learned how to sing, read, write and behave well.

The children's certificates were handed out by



Sr. Maria Ignatius Glaser, OSB, assisted by Sr. Irene Iita, OSB, and Sr. Marianne Shilengifa, OSB - the Principal. The parents received school material gifts for their

children to start Grade 1. The gifts were contributed by the Priory House.

Sr. Klara Nambwandja, OSB - teacher, concluded the graduation ceremony with words of thanks to the children for their cooperation and to the parents for their support and trust to the parents. To Sr. Marianne, Sr. Klara, Postulant Filomina Kandjimbi and Aspirant Beauty Kambazembi, we say Congratulations for their service in our St. Benedict's Kindergarten.

## The Graduation of Sr. Hildegard Kindergarten

By Aspirant Hendelina Musungu



16<sup>th</sup> of November 2011 was the graduation day of St. Hildegard Kindergarten in Windhoek. The St. Mary's Parish Hall was filled with parents, families, relatives and guests of the children. Fr. Abbot Justin, OSB said the opening prayer. I was very happy to see the children performing. Having been touched by the Damara dance, I came to know that the Sisters and staff are not only teaching Basic Education but also cultural activities. The kids were well-prepared. One of the parents was the Master of Ceremony; he was very good at entertaining and everyone was enjoying his stories. I laughed at his intermission story about a Professor who was regularly going with his driver to give his lectures. The driver would sit at the back of the class while the professor was lecturing. One day, the driver said to his Professor, "Sir, please give me this lesson for today so that I will present something." So the Professor did not hesitate to give him a chance to teach. While he was lecturing, one student stood up and asked the driver, as he was the professor now, a very tough question that he could not answer. Then the driver pointing to his boss, the real professor who was seated at the back, said, "Well, a very easy question even my driver at the back can answer it". The story was so interesting that everyone kept on laughing. Nevertheless, the Graduation and the programme numbers went smoothly until the end. Fr. Abbot Justin, OSB assisted by the teachers gave out the certificates to the children. Congratulations and well done to Sr. Dagmar Romanov, OSB – the Principal, Sr. Matilde Shikongo, OSB, all the teachers and Staff!

## Graduation Day of Fr. Andreas Amrhein's Kindergarten at Oshifo-Ruacana

By Sr. Klotilde Nepembe, OSB

Saturday, 26, November 2011 was a big event for our children, School Board Members, parents and teachers as we closed our Kindergarten with the Graduation Ceremony. This year was a blessing for us to have 62 children – boys and girls. Among them, 22 Pre-School children graduated on the above date.

It took us three weeks and some few days to prepare our children for that day. The children were so excited and they waited



patiently for the day to come. Many parents came, and also some children from nearby schools, to witness the ceremony. Our children performed their songs and dances well and played different dramas done in three languages such as English, Oshiwambo and Portuguese.

After all the performances were over, our dear Sr. Gertrud Akundungila, OSB, the Superior of the Sisters' community, came forward to hand-over the certificates to the children wearing their black and red togas. As their names were called to receive their certificates, the excited parents came on stage, too, to offer flowers and gifts to their graduating children. This was followed by refreshment for all; the programme was very short and simple but everyone went home happy and pleased.

We, teachers of Fr. Andreas Amrhein's Kindergarten wish to thank our School Board for their great help and the parents for their co-operation and contribution to make the day wonderful for all. One of the parents donated a big goat, valued at N\$1,000.00, as a gift. We would like also to give our gratitude to all our Sisters for their prayerful support and help. We ask God to bless us all forever.

## God has thousands of ways to make Him known and loved

By Aspirant Amalia Kaweyenge



It was on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2011, when the Holy Spirit finally came down upon me. I was confirmed by Most Reverent Archbishop Liborius Ndumbukuti Nashenda, OMI in our Holy Redeemer Parish Church, at Katutura. We were a total of 78 Confirmands. This day of my Confirmation has become the best and admirable Day in my whole life, a day that I have longed for since I started the preparation in Tondoro in 2007, and it only came to its completion in 2011. All these years when I have been waiting, I was always feeling that something was lacking in me; therefore, I made effort to achieve that what was lacking and with the grace of God, I found it on the above date.

The celebration of the Eucharist started at 9h00 with the entrance procession. We, the Candidates of Confirmation were singing a Tswana song “Tembalikue” which may be summarized as, “I give my whole being to you, my God; I surrender all to you, my Lord.” This song touched me so much because it is so meaningful to me at this moment in my life that was, beyond doubt, fitting for the day. The Theme for our Confirmation Day was “Practice in the light of truth rather than in the light of showing off!” which prepared me well to participate in the Eucharist with a different disposition than I usually do.

“It is the duty for the Church to proclaim the Gospel always and everywhere”, these were the first words of the Archbishop in his homily. During the homily, I kept praying that my memory may be renewed so that when asked a question, I may remember all that I have studied and so I did. The Archbishop continued to say that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we, as Christians, are able to maintain and face

challenges and/or even persecutions victoriously.

After the homily, I felt that the time has certainly come for me to at last receive the Holy Spirit. When I renewed my baptismal promises, I felt something in my heart which I could not fully put into words and when the Archbishop prayed over me for the Holy Spirit to come down upon me, the more I felt that God is truly alive. During the laying of hands on our heads, I was singing inside me “May the Spirit of the Lord come down” and I felt my head very heavy that led me say to myself, “I am now full of the Holy Spirit”. When I was anointed with the Holy Oil of Chrism I told myself that “Now, I am a full member of the Catholic Church and I must allow the Spirit of God to work in me”; immediately, all the fears that I had before Holy Mass disappeared.

I was also touched by the final words of encouragement by the Archbishop when he said that we, as young people must listen to the elders for they have wisdom and again we need to prepare ourselves to rise to the highest act of self-sacrifice to enter religious life. From there, I came to understand that, as I am aspiring to enter Religious Life, I am somehow a step further to sacrifice myself to God. All I need now is to be ready for all the trials that come on the way of all Christ’s followers.

After the Holy Mass, we congratulated each other and on my part, I was lucky to join the Religious Sisters for festive lunch with the Archbishop in the Priests’ house. I really thank God for arranging such a Day in my life and revealing Himself to me in superb way. I thank God for giving our Mother Maria Ignatius, OSB the good idea to request the Archbishop to confirm me. I thank all the Sisters and fellow Formandeas for all their prayers and efforts just to make this Day a memorable Day in my life. I continue to ask them all not to get tired nor give up in their wonderful work of serving God’s people for their “reward will be great in heaven”. Please, keep remembering me always in your prayers that I may succeed in my desire to answer my religious vocation so that in all things, God may be glorified!



### **INITIATION INTO THE NOVITIATE**

Our three Senior Postulants were initiated into the Novitiate at the beginning of October, 2011. Here are their reflections on this event:

*Although our postulancy probation was over, it was still a surprise for me to hear that on 01<sup>st</sup> of October, my fellow postulants and I will be initiated into the Novitiate. I regarded the day as a blessing for the three of us because it was the Feast of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, one of the Patron Saints of the Mission. I was touched most by the conference of Mother Prioress Maria Ignatius, OSB that preceded the initiation rite. I kept asking myself and praying hard to be converted as I start this period of intimacy with the Lord. We received our white veils that symbolize our resolution to belong to Christ and His followers. We also received our Congregation Constitutions to further learn the spirit, life, rules and regulations of the Community we intended to follow. We offer our days ahead with God's help and protection as well as the community support for us to be true and good missionaries in the Lord's vineyard.*

*by Novice Emma Aindongo*

*It was on the 01<sup>st</sup> of October 2011, when we were admitted into the Novitiate by Mother Maria Ignatius Glaser, OSB. I could imagine how lucky we were starting from the first day of our recollection with Sr. Oranna Franke, OSB which was for me wonderful and meaningful, indeed. I hope my companions felt likewise, too. Since it was then the Feast of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, I believe it was a very fitting Day for us to be given such a Great Saint to begin our Monastic Journey as Novices. We hope to take a good example of simplicity from the Little*

*Flower and may she intercede for our Vocation. Apart from the Feast of St. Therese, our Day was also the beginning of our Monthly Statio Day which helped us to increase our time for silence after our 5-day Retreat. This gave me a chance to reflect more upon my Vocation and my life on that Statio Sunday.*

*by Novice Letisia Kakweno*

*On 26 September to 01<sup>st</sup> October, I was given my time of prayer, quiet reflections on God's Word and discernment to prepare myself to enter into my new stage which is the Novitiate. This was a good time for me and I haven't slept the way I used to during those days. It was not easy to explain my experiences fully during my quiet time. My whole being was present and prior to the Retreat, I had an unquenchable thirst and hunger for the Word. It was then a wonderful experience for me to be with the Lord for 5 days. I learnt how to speak to Him and listen to the Holy Spirit with open hands and closed eyes and just let the Holy Spirit penetrate in my heart as it came to the apostles. As I opened my mind, I could see and hear the hidden things of God within me. Sr. Oranna Franke, OSB, our Retreat facilitator, gave us examples of prayerful men and women who underwent a personal conversion and also how to come closer to Jesus Christ in a way that one is truly changed from inside. The point is that Jesus can come into action and shine through me more and more in my words, gestures and in my deeds.*

*On the day we were initiated into the Novitiate, Mother Maria Ignatius Glaser, OSB gave a talk on Conversatio Morum which is the way of changing our lives as we follow Christ in Religious Community under the guidance of the Gospel that leads us to our daily repentance. Mother Prioress made it easier for us to understand her talk by using the General Chapter image of a stream of water - RIVER. "The stream gives life as the water flows". This was really a good day for me to thank each one of the Sisters who prayed and keep praying for me.*

*by Novice Marina Gabriel*

**Bazaar at Fr. Andreas Amrhein's  
Kindergarten, Ruacana**

By Sr. Anna Jacob, OSB

On the 01<sup>st</sup> of October 2011, our dream to have a Bazaar in our Kindergarten came true. It took us one full month to put everything in the right place; for example, to know what kind of items we needed to sell to the people, what kind of invitation we will send out and to whom we will send and how to let the people understand what a Bazaar is, in the first place.

We were blessed by the cooperation of our School Board members to whom our gratitude is extended for being so courageous to do the job with love and care. Some of them offered goats while many parents played a big role by donating many things like rice, macaroni sweets, knickknacks, potatoes, onions, drinks and many more others in order to bring the day to reality. As the day came nearer, each child in the school brought a chicken. The contribution of everyone gave us more courage to go on with our plan. As a consequence, the outcome of the Bazaar gave us more courage to continue with a Bazaar every year, if God wills it. We have hope that we will get more than what we got this time because we learned a lot on what we will need next time and what to improve, for one learns to do better next time.

For the gifts that we got, we would like to give praise to God Almighty who has been with us and guiding us in everything. We likewise thank our dear Mother Prioress Maria Ignatius, OSB and Sr. Irene, OSB for the help they offered us and their encouragement in order to go on with our Bazaar. The people of Ruacana liked so much the materials we had in the Bazaar.

**The Blessed Month for our dear Sr. Godwina  
Himmelsbach, OSB**

By Novice Susanna Petrus

This year, the month of October seems to be a blessed one for our Sr. Godwina. On 26 October 2011, she celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Monastic Profession in her advanced age; two days later she celebrated her Nameday. We, as a community joined her with prayers and songs of thanksgiving in both days praising God for His goodness to her.

The commemoration of her 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary started with the Eucharistic celebration presided by our Fr. Abbot Justin, OSB. The Holy Mass was well-prepared for the event. The Novices danced gracefully with full force just to make our Sister happy on her special Day. This was a good day for us in Formation to reflect on how this great Missionary managed to live her monastic life up to this day. She is our role model that helps us to persevere in our vocation.

After the Holy Mass, the community continued singing and dancing for our Sr. Godwina during a common breakfast. Sr. Godwina was very happy and when the Community finished singing she said in a loud voice and with a smile: "Vielen



Dank" We congratulate our dear Sr. Godwina and we continue to pray that the God of compassion may guide and strengthen her always.

**Solemn Profession  
and Golden Jubilee of Profession**

The Five-day retreat with Fr. Devasia, MSFS paved the way to a deeper communion with the Bridegroom for Sr. Mary Clemens Hamukoto, OSB, Sr. Theophilia lipumbu, OSB and Sr. Maria Sikindo, OSB, who would pronounce their Perpetual Vows and Sr. Mechtilde Shikongo, OSB, who would celebrate her Golden Jubilee of Profession. On the Eve of December 10, 2011, the most touching Mandatum inspired by the talk of Mother Maria Ignatius, OSB on our loving service and acceptance of one another in Community, the Vigil Meditation and bringing the brides, carrying their Vigil Lights to their rooms, were manifestations of love and unity among our Sisters who were ready to give their full service to the Brides and Jubilarian for the

coming day of Solemn Profession and Renewal of Vows. The awakening call on December 10



was God's voice to awaken the Brides and Jubilarian in order to assure them that this beautiful celebration of their Final Commitment and Renewal of Vows would be accompanied by God's graces. The families and relatives of the Brides and the Jubilarian, coming from far, were united with the Sisters and all those who attended the celebration in thanking and praising God for this day of Final commitment and of faithfulness in Religious Life for 50 Years.

The Holy Mass was celebrated by His Grace, Archbishop Liborius Nashenda, OMI and several Priests who came to concelebrate. The Liturgy was well-prepared and the Archbishop's homily encouraged all of us to remain faithful to our Christian calling and continue to serve God through our Monastic and Missionary Vocation.



He also praised and thanked the families of the Brides and the Jubilarian for offering them to God all these years. At the end of the Mass, the Brides thanked all the people who had helped them through the years

and invited the guests and families for lunch in St. Mary's Hall in the Priory House. The programme numbers were prepared by the Formandeas plus the special performance of the Shambyu Mission Choir. The families of the Brides and the Jubilarian also entertained everyone. It was a Day to remember for all of

us, and we thank God that our Sr. Mary Clemens, Sr. Theophilia and Sr. Maria had reached their Final Commitment and Sr. Mechtilde had celebrated 50 Years of her Religious Profession.

### **The Time has come – Half of my Advent has ended**

By Sr. Mary Clemens Hamukoto, OSB

In my culture, Advent-a time to wait, is very significant. It is often reflected in many names that parents give to their children, which shows how they patiently waited for a certain event to happen, which also tells how ready they were as they wait. Names like Teeleleni (Please, wait patiently), Ndateelela (I am patiently waiting), Twateelela (we are waiting patiently), Tashiya (it will surely come), Sheya (it has finally come) and many more others are some names that are given to children whose parents were waiting for something important to come or happen in their lives.

In my case, I, too, have been patiently waiting for the day I will pronounce my Perpetual Vows. The prolongation of time until my perpetual profession was worth it, since I was then studying and have now gained more experiences which prepared me to serve better. This long waiting has also helped me understand Advent better as an opportunity for me to further my love for Religious Life and our Congregation and it also made me understand better the Advent of which Our Blessed Mother underwent than I did before. After the Angel left her and never returned, Mary was left on her own all the days of her life. Then she waited patiently for the Baby to be born, she waited to present her Son in the temple, she waited for what the Child would become and even waited for the sword to pierce her heart. Similarly, unless we pattern our waiting to that of Our Blessed Mother, if not, our waiting will be a burdensome for "God's ways are not our ways". One might be waiting for a call to foreign missions but what comes is another way and the response to that will depend on how much reflection is given to Advent and its meaning. One might be waiting to serve according to the needs of the Priory and/or the Congregation and not what one may seem ready to do or

well-prepared for; and in order to accept to do whatever and wherever she is needed the most, the response will surely depend on how much understanding of Advent would mean to oneself.

If St. Benedict says “The life of a monk ought to be a continuous Lent” (RB. 49:1), I have now learnt that a life of a Missionary Benedictine Sister is a MEDITATIVE ANTICIPATION - ADVENT where one waits patiently for what may happen and yet readily and happily accept the outcome of that Advent with eagerness.

My First Advent has ended on December 10, 2011, and I have now begun the second one which I will run through with Archbishop Liborius’ words in his homily during the Eucharistic Celebration of our Profession Day “-DHC – Determination, Hope and Courage”. In order to reach the top of the Mountain and capture my Precious Stone – which is Jesus, I should have the DHC. But I am fully aware that climbing a mountain is not an easy thing to do, I need what Archbishop Liborius emphasised in the homily to struggle, sweat, and continue climbing up; I need to have a spirit of perseverance especially in prayer and I need to sacrifice my emotions as well as my desires; I need to hold others’ hands in the persons of my Sisters in Community, for as Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said “Together, we can do something beautiful for God”, we all need each other’s hands in order to reach the TOP. In the Advent of my life I say with Our Blessed Mother, “I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me”. I say **Yes** to what God has in store for me with open and yet empty hands. I thank everyone who made my most recent Advent possible. May the Lord show the same courtesy I have received to all!

### **Reflections on my Final Profession**

By Sr. Theophilia Iipumbu, OSB

My Final Profession Day brought me to reflect on the following essentials:

- On discernment which is the capacity to distinguish what is creative from what is destructive in my life. It is only

through freedom I can direct myself towards goodness.

- On the goodness and love of God for me, for choosing me among many. The prayer of Jesus becomes my prayer reflecting on Jesus praising the Father, Lord of heaven and earth because “you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children” (Mt. 11:25-30). God desires my happiness and delight of joy.
- On the Mission of Christ; when a man came to Him saying, “I want to follow you”, and then He told him that foxes have their holes and the birds have their nest, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. It means that I have to be prepared and be ready for whatever is coming.
- On surrendering myself totally to God, like Mother Mary, who says **Yes** to the Angel. I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your Word. It became my praise song for everyday, thanking God for what he has done to me. Not to do my own will but the will of God. What God promised never fails.

*Our sincere thanks and appreciation to our contributors this year 2011. We wish that our Sisters in our Mission Stations will contribute more articles next year.*

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