

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS

Caring for the community, caring for the environment

November 2014



OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS St Martin's has made a concerted effort to broaden and strengthen our outreach projects.

We are blessed at St Martin's to benefit from having the amazing God-inspired-and-sustaining Fill-a-Bag independent NPO feeding scheme based at St Martin's. This ministry collects and donates on average 146 food parcels per month which are distributed to needy families in Klipgat; Siyanqoba feeding scheme in Olievenhoutbosch; TB patients at the Lyttelton Clinic and the Olievenhoutbos Clinic and families in Phomolong informal settlement.

We have a winter soup kitchen. We provide financial support to Irene Homes and to Tumelong Mission, which is the social development wing of the Diocese. We care for a family with a child who has a particular special need. We collect and give generously to needy causes.

Nearly a year ago, we were prompted to stretch ourselves beyond crisis giving and care and to think about how we could bring about real, lasting change in vulnerable communities. How could we lift a person or family out of their circumstance to realise a better life where they are independent, earn a living, can buy their own food - every day.

We prayerfully reflected the questions . what would it mean to adopt a family? And where would we find such a family?

The reply to the question took us together with St Bernard's the Martyr, our sister Parish in Atteridgeville, and our friends from Tumelong Mission to the Phomolong informal settlement in Atteridgeville. There we discovered the Phuthaditshaba afterschool care and drop in centre -an extremely well run but severely under-resourced centre caring for children from desperately poor homes.

St Martin's adopted five families. We committed to each other, to ourselves and even more seriously to God to do what we would for our own . to provide food, clothing, education, a vision of a better life and help along the way.

The first step would be to have regular basic needs met . food, hygiene and clothes. This is what St Martin's has helped to do for the past year.

In addition to the monthly food parcels for each family, St Martin's also provides each family with a dignity pack for basic hygiene needs, and donates 50kg of mielie meal, a case of pilchards, boxes of soya mince and packet soup to the drop-in centre. And we have provided the families with clothing, school jerseys and blankets.

As we near our first anniversary with our adopted families, we will again prayerfully reflect, review and consider the next step in our journey together.

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AS THE AFRICAN EARTH SHOOK ON 5 AUGUST, we were reminded of the power of God's creation. Pope Francis sternly reminds us

"A proper respect for nature means that you can't pollute the air, poison the rivers and chop down the forests indiscriminately without suffering greatly. I suspect that a huge amount of the anxiety and suffering that we see around can be closely traced to our wanton misuse of our resources. Just look at any garbage dump and see what is wasted. In a sense, we've wasted our souls." (Reported via CNN International; Jay Parini 5 August 2014)

St Martin's approach to caring for the environment aims to encourage our members and their families and colleagues to become more resource conscious, to **reuse and recycle** so we are not wasteful and do not add to the garbage dump. We do not want to waste our souls.

We pray regularly and sincerely for environmental concerns, wise use of resources and the long term wellbeing and provision for our children, their children and their children.

Together with our Outreach Ministry we will collect and redistribute household goods . either for reuse by our Phomolong families, or other beneficiaries.

Some items we will be happy to dispose of appropriately and safely . such as batteries, electronic equipment.

Educating ourselves, sharing our knowledge about handy environmental tips will help us all become more resourceful and less wasteful.

Keep an eye on the weekly pew leaflet for items for monthly collections, handy tips and prayer prompts.

November and December: toys and Christmas decorations

January: school essentials such as crayons, sharpeners, rulers, pencil bags

February: a special collection of 500g packs of hand washing powder and cakes of sunlight soap