



Abbot Francis Pfanner

Apostle of the Zulus - Founder - Missionary

+ 24 May 2019

110th Death Anniversary



The Indisputable Founder of Mariannhill and Father of the Red Sisters

Sharing on Abbot Francis 110th Death Anniversary

Imagine being in a foreign place where no one knows you and you do not know anyone. There unexpectedly you hear someone calling you by your childhood nickname. It can feel like an inversion of your personal space. You may feel shocked and even unsafe.

But when a similar incident happens when you are at your original home area the sound of your childhood name is warming and grounds you.

In my language we say *it is the ancestral memory-It is where your cord is buried*. (Pardon my midwifery orientation) A short explanation of cord disposal ritual.

My Ancestral Memory (Where my Spiritual cord is Buried)

We did not choose our spiritual Father just as we did not choose our biological parents.

For this reason, the ancestral memory humbles and grounds us by linking us to the core of who we are and what we are meant to be.

Mt 1:20: In a dream to Joseph, God dispelled doubt and fear about his bride to be by calling him into his ancestral memory, *Joseph son of David*. Joseph recognized his lineage

and knew who his was and what he was meant to be even without understanding how it could be.

The story of each one's spiritual love affair is similar.

There is a chemistry in the Gift of a Charism that is stronger than the genetic DNA. The inner link of our **Mariannhill Missionary Charism** that originated from a seemingly undiscerned compulsive commitment 'If nobody goes, I will go.'

Our co-foundress Mother Paula (Emunds), nursed and nurtured the link between the Founder Abbot Francis and the Sisters, ensuring that it is never broken.

We do not just passively come together every year to celebrate a ritual memorial. **It is the mysterious founding gift of our ancestral memory - the Missionary Charism of the Founder of Mariannhill that makes us brothers and sisters.**

I think we take each other for granted, instead of pondering deeper, why is he / she my brother and my sister. **Why does Mariannhill make us a family?** How can the last century controversial old man still inspire our generation, to total self-gift and response to the grace of a missionary vocation?

Abbot Francis never expected from others what he was not prepared to do himself.

He inspires me to use my maternal instinct to love everyone into their personal need for God. He said to our pioneers, *You are meant for the missions*. This clear statement of purpose is a sacred Heritage that makes us part of the salvation plan for many people we will never know.

Thank you and happy memorial of our spiritual missionary cord that grounds us to the genesis of our congregations:

The indisputable Founder of Mariannhill and Father of the Red Sisters whose life we celebrate with joy and pride.

HAVE A GOOD DAY.

Rome, May 25, 2019

*Sr. Monica Mary Ncube CPS
Superior General*