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**UPDATE**

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**August 2021**

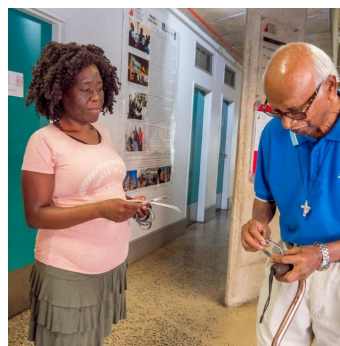
**Visit by the new Archbishop of Durban**  
**Homeless vaccinated at the DHC**  
**Celebrating Paddy Kearney**  
**Loss of a noble woman in Women's Month**



**City Health  
vaccinating at  
the DHC**



**Fr Michael  
Lapsley's  
lecture**



**Sad loss of  
Thandeka  
Makhanya**

**WE WELCOME OUR NEW ARCHBISHOP**

The DHC was honoured that, within his first three weeks in post, Most Rev Mandla Jwara the new Archbishop of Durban found time to come and visit us. He admitted that, though he had been reading our monthly newsletters, it was only through walking around the building and meeting staff, volunteers and beneficiaries that the work of the DHC really came to life.

Archbishop Jwara appreciated the chance to hear first-hand from Eric Makalo, one of our booksellers, about how his life had been transformed by the Street Lit programme. He saw the work of the clinic and watched as lunch was prepared by Tracy and the kitchen team. He heard how we have volunteers coming from many parishes in the Archdiocese, as well as from other faith organisations. He said he would love to come back and help serve the meals himself at a later date.

He also heard from Zama Mthimkhulu, our social work auxiliary, about how we work with homeless drug users and prepare them to go to Newlands Park Rehab and, in some cases, on to the residential Napier Centre 4 Healing; later that week he attended a board meeting of NC4H and so learned more about our sister organisation. He also spent time with the Archdiocesan Refugee Pastoral Care programme which is housed at the DHC.

An unexpected bonus was that he was here on the same day that a team from City Health came to offer COVID vaccines to the homeless. Archbishop Jwara could thus see for himself one example of how, when we can, we try to work with different parts of Government to serve our community.

At a meeting with the DHC Management Team he commended us for the work that we did and said that such hands-on pastoral work is very close to his heart. We were pleased to gift him a copy of the biography of +Hurley, 'The Guardian of the Light'. We made no apologies for it being second-hand since it was the one that Paddy Kearney had given to the late Mgr Paul Nadal. In receiving this, +Mandla was connected with the historic roots of the social justice work of the DHC and of the wider Archdiocese of Durban.

*Archbishop Jwara pictured with the management team:  
the 6th bishop of Durban is standing in front of a room named after the 5th,  
in the building named after the 4th, on land bought by the 2nd!  
For more pictures see our Facebook page.*



## **VACCINATION OF (SOME OF) THE HOMELESS BEGINS**

City Health has been working with the Municipality to provide vaccines at the three Safe Sleeping Sites that the Safer Cities department have continued to run since the end of the hard lockdown. We were pleased that they also agreed to include the DHC on their timetable.

On the first day about 50 homeless people were vaccinated at our site – 20% of those who came for meals. But sadly homeless people reflect the same problem of vaccine hesitancy that has beset the programme nationwide – polls regularly show that 50% of South Africans are uncertain about the vaccine. Despite the huge numbers of deaths from COVID, and the 5 billion vaccines administered worldwide, homeless people have fallen prey to the same misinformation and unscientific attitudes as some other South Africans.

We have been trying to educate the homeless and our other patients but it is clear that much more work needs to be done. But we do now have the advantage that those homeless who have been vaccinated can provide good information and reassurance to their peers.



Previous obstacles such as SMS pre-registration and being able to show an ID have been removed. But one key obstacle is still in place which is that people need to know their ID numbers: and that meant that there were many homeless keen to be vaccinated who lost out. Despite months and months of discussion with the Department of Home Affairs, almost no progress has been made on securing replacement ID's. But we have been reassured by the national head of the vaccine programme that there will be a solution for undocumented people and that this will help homeless people and also some foreign nationals.

Those who were vaccinated were surprised at how quick and painless the whole exercise was – and how well they were treated by City Health staff. We were able to reassure people that being a drug-user, or being on HIV or TB medication, were no obstacles to being vaccinated. By using the Johnson & Johnson one-shot vaccine, the need to return for a second dose was avoided. Every person vaccinated received a smart new mask, generously donated by local clothing company, Best Value Dollar.

The one-day pop-up vaccination – situated outside to make it as healthy and accessible as possible – also meant that young people working in our building or attending events could get vaccinated which added another 20 to the total. In fact, City Health are considering using our site more regularly so that they can provide fast and accessible vaccines to the thousands of people shopping in our area.

*Nhlonipho Mqadi is receiving his J&J vaccine from Bongwiwe Mlotshwu while Kwanele Zwane processes the data. (Photo: Ila Thompson)  
For more pictures and press coverage see our Facebook page.*



## **CELEBRATING AND REMEMBERING PADDY KEARNEY**

28 August would have been the 79th birthday of our dear departed founder and this was marked with two very different events.

The Gandhi Development Trust, of which he was also Chair, ran their 3rd annual Kearney Memorial lecture in collaboration with DUT. The speaker (*pictured at the top*) was the renowned Fr Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest who (like +Hurley and Paddy) drew on his Christian principles to fight against Apartheid. Since liberation, he has devoted his time and considerable energies to the 'Institute for Healing of Memories' which works in South Africa and around the world to contribute to 'lasting individual and collective healing that makes possible a more peaceful and just future'.

He took as his subject Gender Based Violence and in particular the need for men to be challenged, and given space, to reflect on how they might unwittingly contribute. In this he was taking a bold and prophetic position which we feel sure Paddy would have



supported. Fr Michael recalled meeting Paddy when he first came to South Africa in the mid '70s and remembered him as a man 'short in stature; but a moral giant'!

The event was introduced by Dr Vasu Gounden and Prof Sibusiso Moyo from DUT, and included a poem on GBV, the SABC video of Paddy talking about his faith, and a walk-around the Denis Hurley Centre; the whole programme can be viewed [via this link](#). The lecture itself, with an introduction by our Director, runs from 0:44:30 to 1:16:48; the text of the lecture is attached.

A very different occasion, with 30 staff members and interns from the Denis Hurley Centre, was our Founder's Day event in the Botanic Gardens. To begin with, some of the older members of the team shared their memories of Paddy; we are conscious that as each year goes by we have more people at the DHC who know him only as a portrait on the wall.

Since Paddy loved the outdoors and also was very knowledgeable about the history of Durban, we then challenged the team to a treasure hunt. For an hour, they ran round the garden in teams of three looking for answers to some quite challenging questions. The winning team – with 17 ½ points out of 20 – won Checkers gift cards as well as the admiration and envy of their peers. We then settled down to a picnic of bunny chows and cakes.

*A good-humoured group of DHC staff and interns enjoying the Durban Botanic Gardens on Founder's Day.*



## **WOMEN'S MONTH IN SOUTH AFRICA BRINGS SOME SAD NEWS**

Fr Michael's lecture theme was in part inspired by the fact that August in South Africa is marked as Women's Month. He focused on the violence perpetrated against women; but we were also reminded that too many women are victims also of the violence of poverty.

Thandeka Makhanya first came to our attention in the run up to the 2019 National Elections. She was among the group of homeless men and women who were part of our political mobilising team – learning more about the electoral process so they could encourage other homeless people to register and to vote. She had the courage to speak in front of dozens of homeless people and challenge the four political leaders who came to our 'Town Hall' meeting. And she was really looking forward to voting. (All of these activities are ones that we plan to repeat for the Municipal elections, though it is still unclear if they will be in October or next February).

A few days before that election, the police raided the place near the harbour where she was sleeping and took all her belongings. She pleaded with them to at least leave her ID

so she could vote and they laughed in her face. In tears of sadness and anger, Thandeka told us the story; nevertheless, she spent election day with us since she 'still wanted to do her bit' even if it just meant pouring cups of tea for the IEC officials.

Later that week she told her story on national radio, on SAFM: what happened with the election but also how she had qualified as a book-keeper before losing her way because of addiction. Thandeka's personal strength, and her willingness to speak the truth about life on the streets, was further seen by a wider audience when she attended the 2019 National Conversation about Homelessness in Bloemfontein as part of the Durban delegation.

Sadly, we heard last week that Thandeka had passed away aged 30. The circumstances are unclear but she was pregnant and, it seems, lost her own life and the life of her child in a miscarriage. Her death adds to the already shocking rates of maternal mortality in South Africa – 10 to 20 times worse than in Europe. In the latter part of 2020, in part because of COVID's impact on wider health provision, the maternal mortality rate worsened by 30%. That means that last year over 800 South African women died while giving birth.

Such shocking and un-necessary deaths are a reminder to us of the importance of the work of our clinic. And yet even we cannot reach all the vulnerable men and women on our streets. We offer our prayers and condolences to all who mourn the death of Thandeka and other women who die through poverty and violence in South Africa.

*Thandeka addressing the crowd and the politicians prior to the 2019 General Elections at the 'Town Hall' meeting at the DHC. (Photo:Niamh Walsh-Vorster)*



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If you wish to support our work, you can donate by EFT:  
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