

Maronite Catholic Church



Tribute to the Late
Father Lionel Sham

Lebanese Family Club



Apostles Publications

2009

**Condolences of Most Rev. Fr. Elie MADI
At the Funeral of Rev. Fr. Lionel SHAM**

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Dear Excellency Archbishop , Ordinary of
Johannesburg
Dear Excellencies,
Dear Brother Priests,
Dear Family of Fr. Lionel,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is with great sadness that I received the news of the martyrdom of Father Lionel. This constitutes a sad moment in the life of our Lebanese Community in South Africa that has offered the General Community a beautiful vocation to serve and to love the less fortunate. Our Community can never be exactly the same again. An anger rages within each and everyone of us. An area of life – a familiar voice, a footstep, a shared memory – has suddenly disappeared, and cannot ever be recreated.

In our different ways we came to know and love Fr. Lionel. He played a part in our lives and helped many

He was one of Jesus' friends and although early, he is now being ushered along the way to his place with God. In his lifetime, he was a gift to many of us in so many ways. We have shared in his faith, we have been lifted up by his enthusiasm, cheered by his smile, warmed by his friendship.

Now God's gift is returning to him martyred... As hard and difficult to us to accept it, the friend whose death we mourn is at home, at rest, at peace.

We pray for him in great confidence because he was God's friend as well as ours and friends cannot be kept apart from each other for long.

With all my religious Community, the Lebanese Maronites Missionaries, throughout the world, we pray for everyone who has been saddened by his death, that in the desert of their sorrow, a deeper love and hope may flower.

Dear brothers and sisters, his true life has just begun and may he rest in peace.

Fr. Elie MADI, m.l.
Superior General

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THANK YOU for being part of my life and journey as a priest – in my joys and struggles. I hope I have been for you what you have been for me. I have enjoyed my priesthood and I WOULD DO IT ALL AGAIN. Thank you for the support, love and care you have shown me.



ALL OF YOU
HAVE BEEN GIFTS TO ME,
GIFTS FROM A LOVING GOD.



ADDRESS BY BISHOP STEPHEN BRISLIN

GIVEN ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2007

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF FR LIONEL JOHN SHAM
(WESTONARIA SPORTS COMPLEX)

When some of the Priests in Kroonstad Diocese heard that I would be attending your anniversary celebration and that I was asked to say a few words, they made me promise that I would only “say nice things about Lionel, because he deserves it”. I also bring you greetings from many people and especially Fr Harry Penninx, Fr John Versantvoort and Janet.

While thinking of what to say, I thought about the many responsibilities and roles you have played over the years: Boys’ Town, Episcopal Vicar for Youth, Vocations Director, Vicar General of Johannesburg Diocese (now the Archdiocese), lecturer at a Seminary, and later Rector of a Seminary, Parish Priest, Friend to Bishop Reggie Orsmond and a friend to many people. It all sounds like a bit of a litany, but it is an indication that over the last 40 years, in all these different ways, you have shown an enormous amount of perseverance and dedication.

This is certainly a lesson for many people, especially in the modern world where so many people find it difficult to commit themselves to anything. You, and people like you who have persevered in their priesthood and marriages, despite the difficulties, and have given a great witness of dedication.

Today, not only are many marriages breaking down, but many young people find it difficult to commit themselves to marriage, preferring rather to shack up and see how things go. The number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life is also dropping and one of the reasons certainly is the fear to commit oneself to anything, perhaps because of a perceived “loss of freedom” and that, if one commits oneself to any particular thing, one is closing the door to other possible roads of life and one might some day regret that decision.

Your perseverance and the many good things you have done over these years, shows the abundant fruit that is borne for the good of others, by committing one’s self.

You are a “people’s person” and so you have been a friend and counselor

to many people, and you never regard anyone as a “lost cause”. This is because, no matter what mistakes a person may have made, or whatever weaknesses one may have, you always see the good in that person and the potential that he or she has to change and to become a better person. And you try to bring out that goodness in people and to encourage them, especially by your acceptance of them and the love you show them. You are a people’s person, and this is shown as well by the important role family has always played in your life. To be part of, and to care for family, has always been very important to you. In her frailty, you cared for your mother for many years, with love, patience and humour. This is another great lesson for the rest of us, as many people these days abandon their parents, have little patience or respect for the elderly and in some cases abuse the elderly.

Your “sense of celebration” also shows your love of people. A meal, or party or function organised by Fr Lionel is always well-worth attending because you always include people and have that personal touch that makes all feel that we are important to you. You also have the remarkable ability to remember people birthdays and important aspects of their lives.

When you became Rector of St Paul’s Seminary in Welkom, I wondered whether you would be a bit “soft” to run a Seminary. But I soon learnt that the “teddy bear” image is only part of you, and that you are well able to make difficult decisions. But you do so in the nicest possible way, and you lead people through those decisions so that they are able to come to an acceptance of them. Bishops are still amazed that you were able to run the Seminary in such a cost-effective way and clearly you have great pecuniary skills as well. I would like to thank you, Lionel, for the time you spent in our Diocese. You brought a certain “freshness” to the Diocese by your, and the other staff members’, participation in the life of the Diocese. You did not confine yourself to the Seminary but participated in the Diocesan events and became involved in different ways. Many people have happy memories of your stay with us.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you many blessings and graces for the future. Whatever the Lord has in store for you, and there will be challenges that lie ahead, may God give you the strength and perseverance to meet these challenges and may you continue to bear much fruit for the good of others.

BISHOP STEPHEN BRISLIN

FATHER LIONEL SHAM'S BIOGRAPHY

Date of Birth	:	23 May 1943	Date of Ordination	:	9 September 1967
Place of Birth	:	Johannesburg			
Date of Baptism	:	26 June 1943	Family:		
Place of Baptism	:	Fordsburg			First born of a family of four,
Date of Confirmation	:	2 October 1950			has a sister, Vicky
Place of Confirmation	:	Holy Angels			and two brothers, Peter and Reggie.

In 1959, at the age of 15, Father Lionel went to the Minor Seminary in Boksburg (it was called the Sacred Heart Minor Seminary) because he felt the Call to be a Diocesan Priest. He spent two years there and completed his matric at Christian Brothers College in Boksburg.

In 1961 he went to the Major Seminary to begin studies for the Priesthood. He spent seven wonderful and challenging years at the course always asking himself the question of whether he wished to be a priest in the Maronite Rite or in the Western Rite. Father Sham says, "It was a battle that went on for a long time within me and after much discussion and prayer I had to be dispensed from the Maronite Rite to be able to receive Orders in the Roman / Latin / Western Rite. It was a painful time. However, it happened."

Fr Lionel was ordained a Priest on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of his home parish – "Holy Angels", Bez Valley- on 9th September 1967. "This was a very special day for me and my family. The very next day I officiated at the marriage of my cousin, Carol Sadie to Cedric Khoury, at Our Lady of Lebanon in Fordsburg.

"I completed my studies at the end of 1967 and then in February 1968 I received my first appointment at "The CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE KING." I spent four very happy years there. While I was there, I also celebrated Mass very often in Fordsburg. I would help Father Michael Chebli whenever I could. I was and still am a child of the Maronite Family."

During his stay at the Cathedral, Fr Lionel also started studies through UNISA. He completed a BA in Social Science in 1973. By then he was

transferred to BOYS' TOWN in Magaliesburg by Bishop Boyle in February 1972 to assist Fr Orsmond (later Bishop Reginald Orsmond) in his work. Fr Lionel was truly fulfilled in the ministry, being a Spiritual Director, social worker, vice-principal, principal, assistant director and of course just friend to the lads. He was also involved in the Magaliesburg parish – St. James and its outstation in Hekpoort, and in the establishment of the additional Boys' Towns over his next fifteen years.

During Father Lionel's time in Magaliesburg he completed his Honours in Social work through WITS. He also did various courses in Child Care through the Child Care Workers in Phillippi in the Cape through the University of Cape Town.

During this period he also was a member, secretary and later chairperson of the Southern African Council for Catholic Social Services. He served on this committee with the late Dr Emile Jammine. "I was also secretary and treasurer of the Southern African Council of Priests at its beginning stages and also served on the World Lebanese Cultural Union and was privileged to visit Lebanon with members of the Union, when we went to try and re-establish diplomatic relationships between South Africa and Lebanon. This was a great honour and privilege for me."

Whilst still at Boys' Town, the Bishop appointed Father Sham as Vocation Director for the Diocese of Johannesburg. So in December 1986, he left Boys' Town and moved back to the Cathedral where he lived for the next 14 years. During this period he was appointed as the Vocation Director for the Diocese and to do full-time Youth Ministry. These ministries, which included youth and school retreats, enabled Fr Lionel to get a true insight into the workings of the Diocese and the heart of its people, especially the youth of the Diocese.

During this period he lived at the Cathedral. Later he helped out at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Kempton Park for eighteen months after the death of late Fr. Lloyd. He celebrated his Silver Jubilee as a priest while there in addition to celebrations in the Cathedral, Fordsburg and Cedar Park.

In October 1993 the Bishop appointed him as Administrator of the Cathedral of Christ the King. He remained on as Vocations Director and continued with the responsibility of the care of the Diocesan Seminarians as well. Then in January 1998 the Bishop also appointed him as the Second Vicar General of the Diocese of Johannesburg.

He carried out his many various responsibilities until appointed as the first Rector of the new ORIENTATION SEMINARY- ST PAUL'S in Welkom in 2000.

“It was a special gift for the beginning of the Jubilee Year 2000. This was a great honour for me – at the same time I was nervous. However I did not let that get to me – I faced the new challenges. I had been involved in Vocations Ministry as Vocations Director since 1986 – so this was continuing this ministry in another way. It was a humbling and growing experience to welcome the first group of Seminarians and to give them the necessary formation and challenges to face and discern their call to priesthood and to prepare them to continue the journey towards priesthood. So in 2000, 2001 and 2002 I was at St Paul's in Welkom.

“In April 2001, I was granted the special privileges of receiving “bination faculties”. This means I am also able to celebrate Mass and the Sacraments in the Maronite Rite. It was a unique moment when I was able to do this for the first time, on my own, at Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon.”

Fr Lionel continues his story: “ The Southern African Bishops Conference during 2002 decided to, once again, have one Orientation Seminary for the whole Country – this Seminary was to be at Oakford Priory in Verulam, KZN. I was appointed as the First Rector of this new Orientation Seminary – St Kizito. Sadly we had to close St Paul's which had become home for three wonderful years. We had to say good-bye to many friends we had made. So at the end of 2002 we had to move. With the help of my family, Seminarians of 2002 and friends we moved to St Kizito Seminary, in Oakford Priory, KZN.

“We were ready for the first group of students in February 2003 – and

so the journey continued. Making new friends in the area, getting involved in the Archdiocese of Durban, were all part of the new experiences and challenges. I was immediately at home with the sisters that remained at Oakford – I had known most of them from there and my involvement at Boys' Towns Magaliesburg and Tongaat.

“I spent six wonderful, meaningful and growth-filled years of ministry in the Seminary – forming and helping young men discern their vocation to the Diocesan Priesthood. I was honoured to be part of this ministry for the life of the Church in our Country. I was sad to leave St Kizito at the beginning of 2006.

“My Bishop wanted me to return to the Diocese and had a new challenge for me. I was to care for four Parishes in the West Rand – Bekkersdal, Mohlakeng, Toekomsrus and Westonaria. Two priests were given this new challenge.

“My mother was meant to come back with me to the Diocese. We were to leave KZN on the 30 January 2006, but were concerned about how she would handle the long journey. Mom and God decided to take over and on the 15 January 2006, Mom was called to her eternal home with the Lord. It was a very sad time for me, but I knew that mom would be with me in the move, on the journey and meet me at our new home in Westonaria.

“So I have enjoyed eighteen months of ministry at these four wonderful parishes. New challenges and new opportunities for ministry have emerged. I enjoy the challenge.

“I have also become chaplain to the Knights of da Gama in the area. I am also the Dean of the West Rand Region. I enjoy my different ministries. Please pray that I do and give of my best to all the different challenges entrusted to me.”

Father Lionel Sham concludes: “Most important of all to me is the loving support I have received from so many people in the course of my priestly journey. I would not have survived without that loving care that I have received at all times.”

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

Dear Father Lionel

We are very blessed to have you, our Maronite-Lebanese, Roman-Catholic Priest in our community and of our community. Our Church in Johannesburg is very blessed to have such a wonderful, caring priest - a model of fatherhood. Your words reflect your kind, tender heart and your loud laughter expresses your great love and sincerity.

How blessed is a priest's 40th anniversary for 40 is a number of great religious significance:

- Noah's life was transformed by 40 days of rain.
- Moses was transformed in 40 days on Mount Sinai.
- The Jews wandered 40 years through the desert.
- Elijah was transformed when God gave him 40 days of strength from one meal.
- The entire city of Nineveh was transformed when God gave the people 40 days to change
- Jesus was empowered in 40 days in the wilderness.
- The disciples were transformed in 40 days with Jesus after His resurrection.

Wondrous things have been done in your life, not within 40 days, but within 40 years. Within your 40 years of service, how many lives have been transformed by you, through your blessings and prayers, through the thousands of masses (estimated at over 14,600!) you have celebrated, and the hundreds of baptisms, weddings and sacramental services you have performed?

Thank you Father for these 40 years of love and sacrifice! And wishing you another joyfilled, fruitful 40 years to come!

God bless you.

FATHER NADIM ABOU ZEID - M.L.M.

FAMILY CLUB

On behalf of all the Maronite Lebanese Missionaries in South Africa we wish you, Fr Lionel, God's richest blessings on this unique occasion
- Fr Badaoui Habib (Superior), Fr Maurice Chidiac (Vice-Superior),
Fr Nadim Abou Zeid, Fr Abdo Skayem, Fr George Kairuz & Fr Charbel Habchi

MY LIFE AS A PRIEST

It is hard to believe that 40 years have past in my life as a Priest. A life that I have enjoyed to the full. Like all life situations it has its ups and downs – but just as God has been with me in the up periods God has also been with me in the down moments. I know that God has been with me throughout this period. I have fond memories of my priesthood and would choose it again, if I were to start all over. I want to thank so many people who have been part of my life as a priest - people I have laughed with, cried with, argued with, ministered to, been ministered by... all have had a place in my heart. Each one has become part of the fabric of my life.

I want to adapt the words of St Paul in remembering all the many people who have been part of my life's journey as a priest:

"I thank God whenever I think of you; and every time I pray for you, I pray with joy, remembering your special role in my life as a Priest from the day you entered into my story until this present time. I am quite certain of this, that the One who began this wonderful work in us and with us will surely see that it is brought to completion. It is only natural that I should feel like this about you, since you have shared so meaningfully in my life over the years, and the privileges, which have been ours – the joys and the pains. You have a special and permanent place in my heart and God knows how much I love you, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that our love will continue to grow and increase more and more and that we never stop improving and growing in our love and knowledge of God and grow also in our love and friendship.

All this so that we can always recognise what is best for us and what God's Will is for us. This will help us to become pure, blameless and be filled with zeal and enthusiasm in bringing about God's Kingdom in and through our life. Let us never ever admit defeat, but always have the courage to stand firm in doing what God asks of us, whether we are together or not. Let us remain firm in our friendship in Jesus and try always to follow Christ Jesus in our mind, our heart and our actions. This should be our constant prayer for each other. This will bring us JOY."

DEAR LIONEL

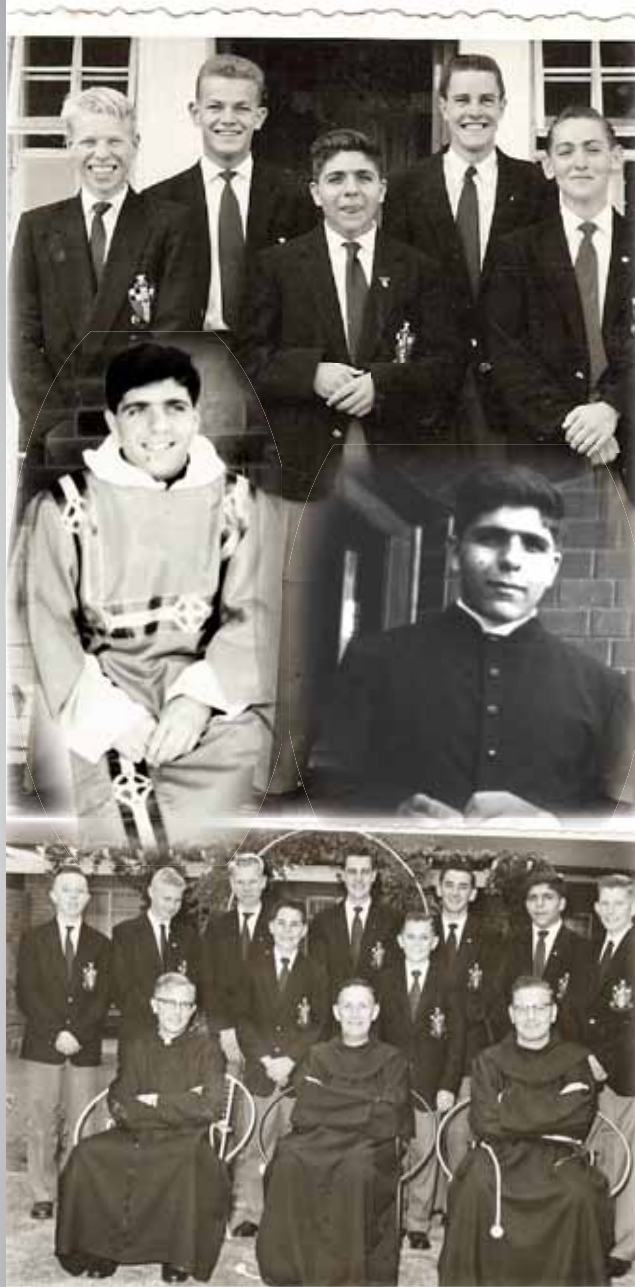
We wouldn't
change a thing
about YOU.

We love you
very much
just the way
you are.

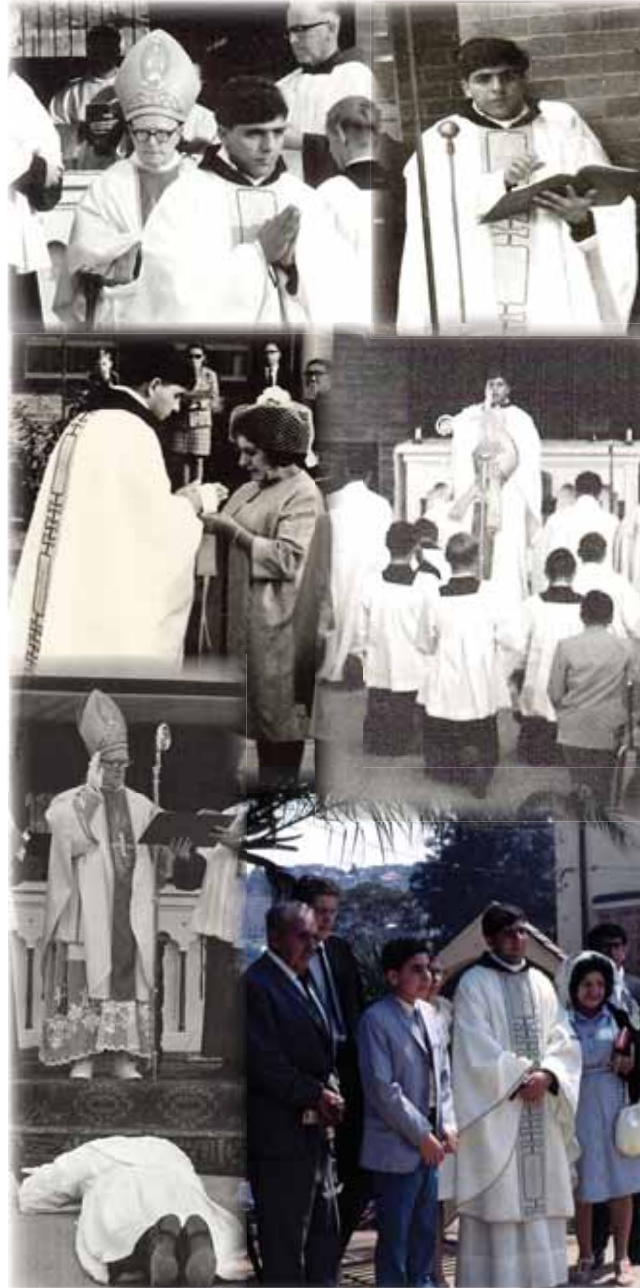
And as long
as each one
remembers you
- we remember
loving you.

Love's first name
for US
is YOU.

Thank you
for
showing
us
God's
LOVE.



LIONEL THE YOUNG SEMINARIAN,
AT THE SACRED HEART MINOR SEMINARY, BOKSBURG



FR LIONEL'S ORDINATION
9 SEPTEMBER 1967, BEZ VALLEY

We
learn
to have
a heart
when
with you.

The music
of your life
makes a
"home"
for us.

There is
"magic"
in your
smile
and
laughter
that makes
difficult and
bad things
seem
okay
and
bearable.

Forgiveness
in your eyes
is your way.

We will
never take
for granted
the blessings
you have
been to us:
as we
celebrate
your
"LIFE
OF
LOVE"
- a gift
that God
has sent.

To a world
so in need
of love
you've touched
so many,
many
lives
"with LOVE".



FR LIONEL'S FIRST MASS
10 SEPTEMBER 1967



FR LIONEL AT SAINT PAUL'S SEMINARY,
WELKOM: 2000 - 2002

And
through
life's
trying
times
we've
watched
you
- you
have been
an inspiration
and
made
us
strong.

You have
witnessed
joy
and
courage;
you
have
always
shown
the
way.

Our love
for you
grows
deeper
every day.

We will
never take
for granted
how much
you mean
to us.

And we are
grateful
for the part
of you
that's deep
inside
each one
of us.

You have
touched us
through the years;
you have
touched our lives
"with LOVE".



**FR LIONEL AT SAINT KIZITO'S SEMINARY,
OAKFORD, KZN: 2003 - 2005**



FR LIONEL'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS
PRIESTHOOD CELEBRATIONS

So we
wouldn't
change
a thing
about YOU.

Our love
for you
will never
change
except
grow
deeper.

THANK YOU
FOR
BEING
YOU
AND
FOR
YOUR
LOVE.

ADAPTED FROM THE
WORDS OF A SONG
CALLED "YOU" BY
KATHY SHERMAN C.S.J.

THE THREE P's Person - Pastor - Priest

Your Grace, My Lord Bishop, Reverend Father and friends

It is my privilege and honour to be the one who is to say a few words. I think you must all agree with me that the numbers of people here today speak for themselves. Father Lionel you make it very easy to have things to say but not so easy to make it short, however, I will try. I would like to use three Ps in saying a few words - Person - Pastor - Priest.

Father Lionel you have endeared yourself to one and all in a very short time. It is just 18 months since you came to the West Rand. When you came you told us that you were known as the HUGGING priest and not a few eyes were raised and people wondered about a hugging priest. We very soon learned what a large hearted, kind and generous person you are. You are friendly and approachable, very caring and always thoughtful. Your joy and cheerfulness is infectious. So as a person you are very dear to each one of us.

As our Pastor you are always available perhaps almost to a fault giving of yourself and always ready to listen but perhaps not always being kind to yourself. How we value this availability in times of need and stress. Your prayerfulness and courage at all times is an example which encourages us to try to follow. We find that we have in you a good model of priesthood, and trust that your commitment will rub off on those whom the Lord will call to be future pastors.

How greatly we value your ministry as an ordained Priest. We have had the privilege of only 18 months of your 40 years as a priest. In this time you have shown us the value of good Liturgies and the importance of the celebration of the Eucharist. We are so grateful for the beautiful way in which you celebrate and share the Eucharist with us all. Your homilies are always an inspiration which is gospel based and down to earth. Giving us the support we need to try to be true followers of Christ and always setting an example which we can try to follow. I think in the area of promoting vocation, your life shows the way so you are a model to all young people whom may be called to the priesthood. Commitment to the Diocese must be a joy to our Archbishop.

We thank you for all you do but specially for who you are and we wish you every blessing and much joy in the future. We appreciate you as a Person, as a Pastor and as an ordained Priest.

SR MARGARET SND



BACK: LIONEL, DAD, PETER, FRONT: REGGIE, MOM, VICKY
AT THEIR HOME IN JUDITH PAARL

To LIONEL

Someone in our life who
is like
AN ANGEL to us.

Real-life angels are so
wonderful. And we know
that you are one because
you do all the things
real-life angels do.
For instance - they go a
million miles out of their
way to help

- YOU DO THAT!

They are warmhearted
and self-giving. They
chase away the clouds of
life and let a little more
sun to shine on the life
one is living

- YOU DO THAT!

Real-life angels know
when they are needed.
They don't keep a record
to see who owes whom;
they just do the best they
can and when they can.
They bring knowledge
and reassurance to
others. They take you by
the hand. They work
hard to acquire wisdom
and then they give it all
away. They know that the
rest will take care of itself
if there is happiness in
the day

- YOU DO THAT!

Real-life angels are there
for you.



LIONEL & MOM



LIONEL, SIBLINGS & MOM

When things are overwhelming they understand.

They give you space. They give you the faith to find your smile again.

They know the meaning of the word "unconditional", and they're the definition of the word

"Friend".

YOU DO THAT!!!

Real-life angels are cared about, thought of and sought after. They do all the things they do "with genuine love".

They balance out what your yesterdays know with what tomorrow will bring.

They add HOPE to your vocabulary and THANKFULNESS to and for everything. They add WARMTH to your smiles and they sweeten your serenity.

AND

You are the one person in our life who is like an angel... to ALL OF US.

WE ALL LOVE YOU.

From: Family Members
(Adapted from the words of Emilia Larson)



Mass with Patriarch Sfeir at Our Lady of Cedars- May 2008

Back: Bishop Mvemve, Fr. Lionel Sham, Bishop James Patrick Green (Apostolic Nuncio), Fr. Nadim Abou Zeid, His Beatitude and Eminence Patriarch Sfeir, His Grace Archbishop Roland Abou Jaoude, Fr. Maurice Chidiac, Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, Fr. Elie Madi. Front: Fr. Marwan Tabet, Fr Badaoui Habib, Fr. George Kairouz, Fr. Charbel Habib.

MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

My family have always played a very special role in my life and my priesthood. They have always been there for me. I appreciate that very much. I would not have managed without them...

I thank God for my gentle and loving father – DAD. I enjoyed being with him and going to work with him. He taught me how to value my Lebanese culture and practice it in our land of birth South Africa. He taught us what to cherish and what to discard. He also allowed us to cry and be ourselves. God, what a wonderful Father you gave us.

I especially enjoyed his humour in his last few years of life: when losing his memory and living with me in Magaliesburg, at the age of 80 years. Family would visit and ask, “Who am I? Uncle Kay?”

Dad would answer “Well if you don’t know who you are, how must I.”

I also remember his words bellowing through the corridors of the hospital, the day before he died, “Jesus, my Friend, my True Friend, help me to love you more and more”. These words often ring with gratitude in my mind and my heart. Thank you God for Dad.

Thank you also for such a wonderful, dear and loving mother. We couldn’t have asked for better. A firm, strong, caring and loving mother. She knew how to love us and discipline us. Dad left all the discipline to Mom. It was wonderful, as we grew older, how we could laugh with her about this and tease her. I thank God for my mother – she was everything a mother could and should be. I couldn’t have wished for anyone better.

Over the years Mom was not only my mother, but a very dear and good close FRIEND. I loved sharing things with her, being with her and just loving her. Alongside Mom and Dad, we learnt about God, about the church, about prayer and about deep Christian values. It was around the table of the family that we learnt about the Family of God. We learnt that “the family that prays together, stays together”. We prayed together,

especially the Rosary – through this we learnt so much about prayer, especially about family prayer. We were through Mom and Dad a true Christian Lebanese Family. I am reassured by this fact very much.

I was blessed to have Mom and Dad stay with me at Magaliesburg, where Dad died and rests in peace in the cemetery at Boys' Town (St James' Mission). The last 6 years of Momm's life was with me as well. I was very blessed to have her with me. I grew to love her very much and to care for her. In the last year or so as she got weaker and weaker, I was able to give her what she gave me as a child – tender loving care. I thank God and my sister and brothers for that privilege. I hope that, on behalf of my sister and brothers, I was able to give Mom what she gave us, lots and lots of care and love. I miss saying to Mom, personally, many many times during the day: "I LOVE YOU". I still say it to her.

My Sister (Vicky) and my Brothers (Peter and Reggie) are also very special to me. Our growing years were filled with fun, play, fighting with each other, laughter and love. We did most things together and enjoyed just "being brothers and sister". We enjoyed each others friends and supported each others interests.

Vicky, Peter and Reggie were so supportive to me when I was studying and continue to be such a wonderful support. I love them very much. Of course this relationship has grown into being part of their families as well.

So even though I don't have my own family, I am privileged to be part of one of three families: Vicky/Arthur and their blessed family of children and grandchildren; Peter/Beattie and their blessed family of children and grandchildren and as well as Reggie/Bernie and their blessed family of children and grandchildren.

I feel and am at home with all of them.

What a privilege for me to have three large and large-hearted families as part of my life. They are all special to me and I love them very much. Thank you to each of you for being such wonderful family and friends to me.

My other family members aunts, uncles, cousins etc. are also all special

to me. I know how important it is to have family support. I have received support, strength and encouragement from all of you MY FAMILY – near and far.

It is truly a sacred experience to be part of such a loving and supportive family. You, my family have kept me balanced and happy in my priesthood. THANK YOU.

I have enjoyed and appreciated the sacred moments we have shared and still share together. Sacred moments of meals together, time together, Baptisms, First Communions, Marriages, Sickness, Deaths and Funerals.

We have shared sacred moments of joy and sadness together. I could not have chosen better or more special family members than all of you. I LOVE YOU ALL VERY MUCH.

What about the other SPECIAL people in my life: MY FRIENDS. What a meaningful group of Friends I have. Each one of you have helped me and supported me in my priesthood. I have often said “It is through my family and friends that I am still a priest today”.

You have all helped me so much – you have helped me to listen, hopefully to be a good priest, to grow, TO BE, to accept myself and others, forget my problems, to be supported in my struggles and problems, to feel LOVED and TO LOVE.

Through you MY FRIENDS I have felt a real sense of BELONGING and being LOVED. Thank you for this and be assured of my real and genuine LOVE for each one of you MY DEAR FRIENDS.

“ALL OF YOU,
FAMILY AND FRIENDS,
ARE GIFTS TO ME
GIFTS FROM A LOVING GOD”

FR LIONEL SHAM

FR LIONEL'S LEBANESE DESCENDANTS ORIGINATE FROM LEBANON, SEBHEL
- A TYPICAL LEBANESE FAMILY



Youssef Boles - Lionel's
Grandfather on Mom's side



Dahoud el Arab & Wardah Sham,
Grandparents on Dad's Side



Painting: Lionel's Great- Grandfather; Front: Lionel's Father - Keralla (Kay)
Sham, Lionels' Grandfather - Dahoud el Arab Sham & Aunt Rosie



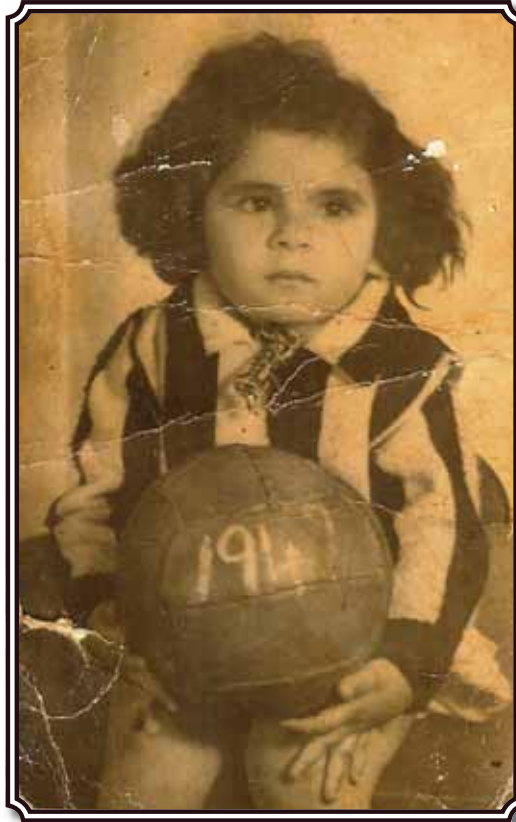
Dad, Lionel (little boy), Mom's parents
- Youssef & Kattar Boles - and friends



Mom & Dad



Dad, Lionel, Vicky, Peter, Mom & Reggie



Mascot for the Lebanese Soccer Club



Vicky & Lionel



Cowboy Lionel



Vicky (standing), Ronnie, Lionel & Peter



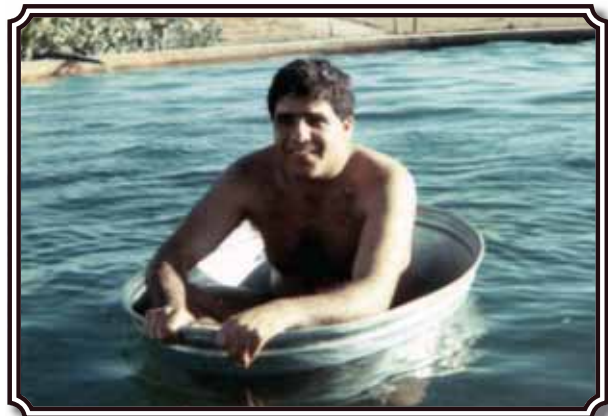
Lionel, Reggie & Vicky meet Fr. Christmas



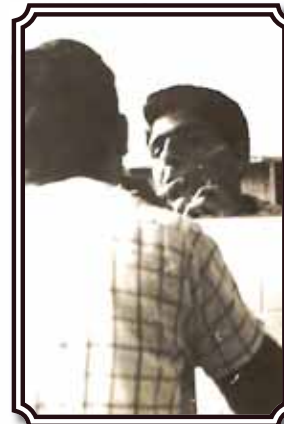
Tennis Superstar



Lionel, Peter & Vicky dress up



Lionel playing in the dam



Handsome Lionel

THE FAMILY TREE OF FR LIONEL

- 1 Keralla (Kay) Sham b: 22.5.1902 in Standerton d: 26.5.1983
in Johannesburg
+ Victoria Boles b: 28.2.1915 in Johannesburg d: 14.2.1941 in
Johannesburg
*2nd Wife of Keralla-David Sham:
+ Janie Boles b: 17.11.1910 in Johannesburg d:15.1.2006 in KZN
- 2 Lionel-John Sham b: 23.5.1943 in Johannesburg
- 2 Victoria Theresa Sham b: 25.9.1944 in Johannesburg
+ Arthur Gobey b: 16.2.1948 in Durban
- 3 Alison Jude Gobey b: 13.5.1969 in Johannesburg
+ Francois Mostert b: 8.1.1969 in Durban
- 4 Byron Wesley Mostert b: 29.11.2000 in Durban
- 3 Dominique Jude Gobey b: 29.6 .1970 in Johannesburg
+ Simon St John Lake b. 7.7.1962 in Rhodesia
- 4 Sarah Monique Lake b. 30.7.1990 in Cape Town
*2nd Husband of Dominique Gobey:
+ Leon Strachan b. 25.1.1972 in Johannesburg
- 4 Dylan Strachan b. 26.3.1993 in Johannesburg
- 3 Uri Gobey b: 16.2 .1978 in Durban
- 2 Peter Kay Sham b: 12.2.1946 in Johannesburg
+ Beatrice Maria de Swardt b.25.9.1950 in Zambia
- 3 Monica Angeline Sham b: 11.8.1970 in Pretoria
+Julian Douglas Duguid b: 7.6.1963 in Cape Town
- 4 Grace Duguid b: 2.1.2006 in Cape Town
- 3 Rhona Michelle Sham b: 28.9.1971 in Johannesburg
+ Edward Meier b: 17.6.1964 in America

- 4 Tiffany Ann Meier b: 2.10.1998 in America
- 4 Kurt Francis Meier b: 3.12.1999 in America
- 4 Cameron Lee Meier b: 20.6.2001 in America
- 4 Kirstey Lynn Meier b: 11.11.2004 in America
- 3 Angelique Marilyn Sham b: 8.1.1975 in Johannesburg
+ Anthony Michael Kritzingler b: 20.4.1964 in Cape Town
- 4 Carmen Angeline Kritzingler b: 29.5.1994 in Cape Town
- 4 Gareth Kritzingler b: 7.7.1997 in Cape Town
- 4 Kaylin Kritzingler b: 9.1.2001 in Cape Town
- 3 Cindy Ann Sham b: 28.2.1977 in Johannesburg
- 2 Reginald Martin Sham b: 17.10.1953 in Johannesburg
+Bernadette Apollonia Maria Hillage b: 23.3.1955 in Johannesburg
- 3 Veronique Melonie Sham b: 6.11.1975 in Johannesburg
+ Patrick William Wilde b: 11.4.1976 in Australia
- 4 Liesle Ashleigh Wilde b: 25.11.1998 in Australia
- 4 Kyle Bailey Wilde b: 25.1.2001 in Australia
- 4 Declan James Wilde b: 15.11.2005 in Australia
- 3 Leonie Melonie Sham b: 18.9.1977 in Johannesburg
+ Anthony Grieco b: in Australia
- 4 Anika Jade Grieco b: 5.7.2005 in Australia
- 3 Matthew Jonathon Keralla Sham b: 29.12.1983 in Johannesburg
+ Laura b: in Australia
- 3 Gabrielle Melonie Sham b: 29.1.1986 in Johannesburg



LIONEL, VICKY & FAMILY LEFT PIC: DOMINIQUE, LIONEL, LEON, VICKY, SARAH, DYLAN & MOM.
CENTRE PIC: LEON, MATTHEW, DOMINIQUE, DYLAN, SARAH & LIONEL. RIGHT PIC: ALLISON, URI & DOMINIQUE & LIONEL.



LIONEL, PETER & FAMILY, KOMMERTJIE - BACK: URI, CINDY, RHONA, MONICA, ANGIE & MATTHEW
FRONT: PETER, TIFFANY, LIONEL, KAYLIN, MOM, VICKY, REGGIE, KURT, GARETH, CARMEN & CAMERON



LIONEL, REGGIE & FAMILY

LEONIE, ANIKA, REGGIE, BERNIE, NICKY, LIONEL, PATRICK, DECLAN, MATTHEW, LAURA, GABI, KYLE & LIESLE

SPECIAL MEMORIES - WORKING IN BOYS' TOWN

I have special memories of my time at Boys' Town - it was 15 years of meaningful and challenging ministry. I learnt so much about myself while striving to help the young boys discover themselves and their potential. Father Reg Orsmond and I became good friends – a friendship that I have treasured over the years. The peer-group system that Fr Orsmond developed at Boys' Town has remained with me always and his saying: "there is no such thing as a bad boy – it is our duty and responsibility to find the streak of fundamental goodness within each boy".

When Bishop Orsmond died I lost a "good friend". He continues to remain in my heart and prayers.





FR. LIONEL AND THE SPECIAL KIDS WHO TOUCHED HIS HEART
FROM BOYS' TOWN

SPECIAL MEMORIES - MEETING MOTHER THERESA

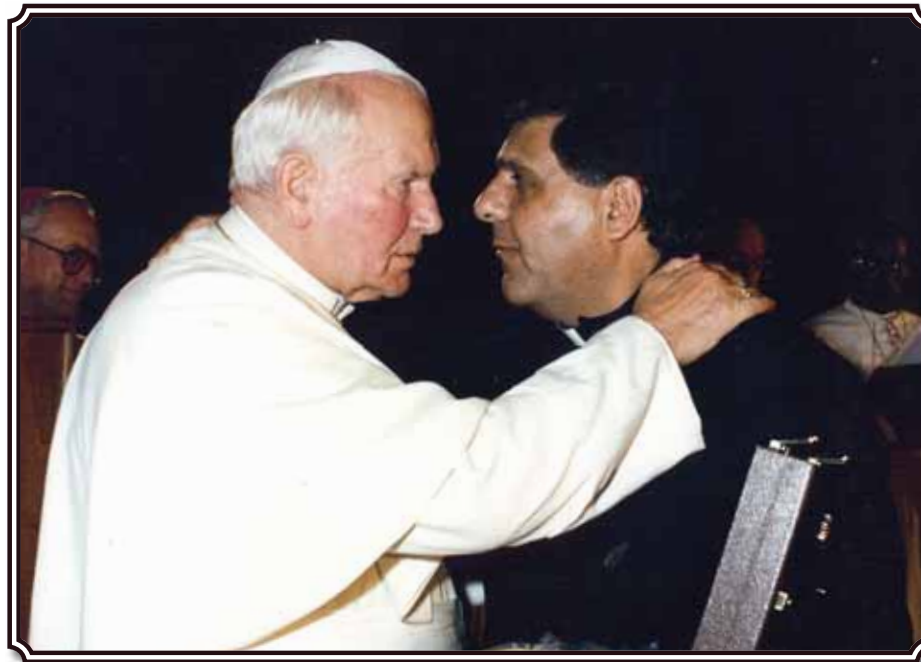
Whilst at the Cathedral I was privileged to meet with Mother Theresa – what a humbling experience that was. I have never forgotten that meeting until this day. I really felt that I had met and touched a SAINT.

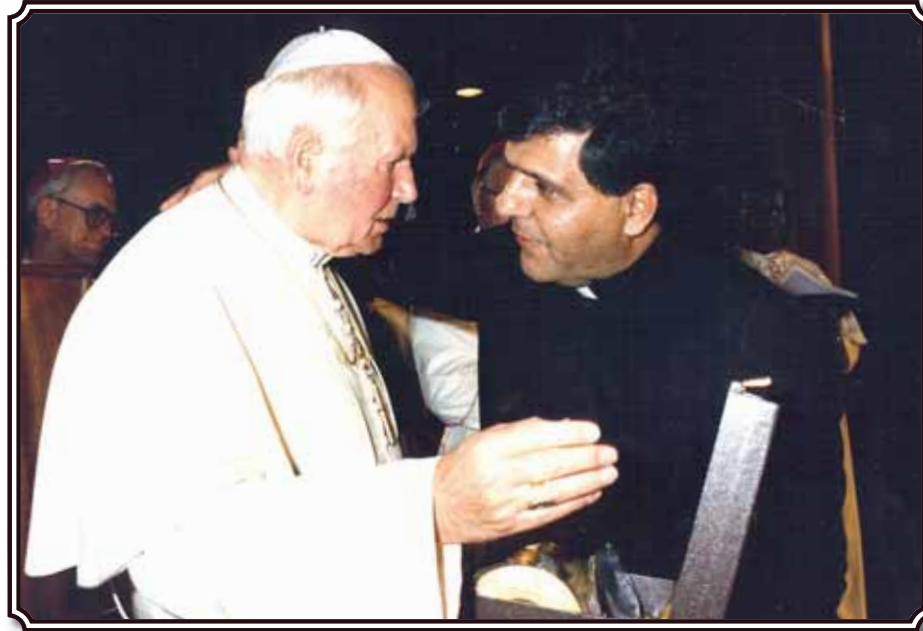


SPECIAL MEMORIES - MEETING POPE JOHN PAUL II

Another wonderful experience was also at the Cathedral in Johannesburg. As Administrator of the Cathedral I was honoured to have been the host and to welcome Pope John Paul II to the Cathedral. I served him at lunch, escorted him to the presbytery, he rested in my room and in the evening I welcomed him and all the other dignitaries to the Diocese and the Cathedral.

I was blessed to receive from the Holy Father for the Cathedral Parish a Chalice. I gave him a "big hug". What an experience this was. I treasure these moments in my heart. I felt so blessed. A little later after the Service in the Cathedral, the Holy Father came back into the presbytery. My mother who had attended the Service was in the presbytery – I introduced the Holy Father to her. He immediately after greeting her said "you are Lebanese" I felt so happy and proud. Our Consul was also present.





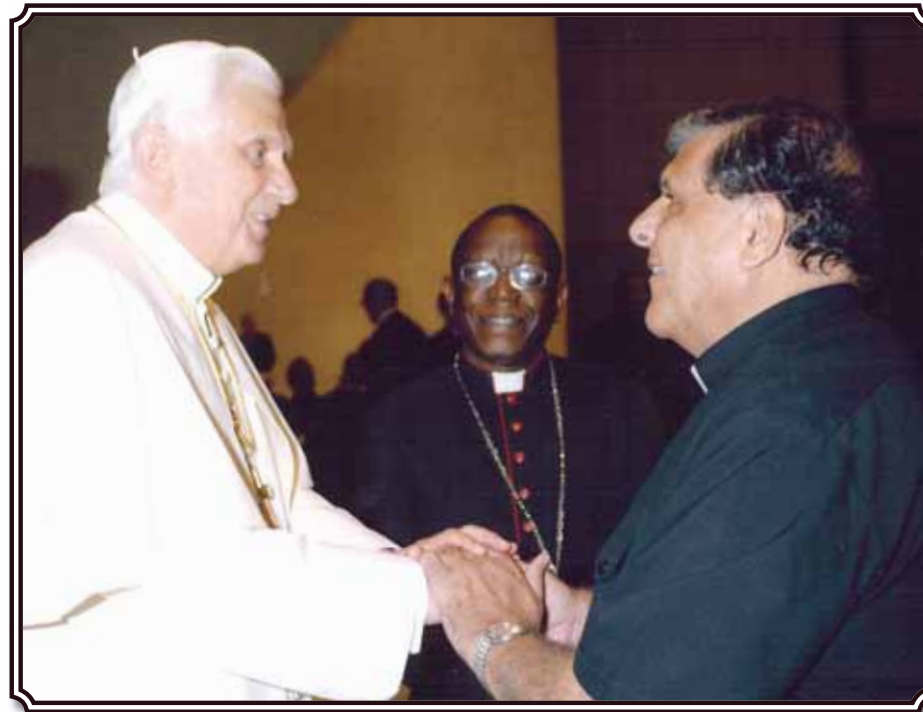
POPE JOHN PAUL II BESTOWS TO FR LIONEL A CHALICE FOR THE CATHEDRAL



FR. LIONEL INTRODUCES HIS MOM AND THE LEBANESE AMBASSADOR, HIS EXCELLENCY, MR CHARBEL STEPHEN, TO HIS HOLINESS, POPE JOHN PAUL II.

SPECIAL MEMORIES - MEETING POPE BENEDICT XIV

Another special and sacred moment was on the 30 June 2007, I had accompanied our Archbishop – Buti Tlhagale OMI to Rome to receive his Pallium – since our Diocese was raised to the status of ARCHDIOCESE. As a gift for my 40 years as a priest I was given this privilege of going with the Bishop to Rome. I felt so blessed. During the visit to Rome – the day after the Archbishop received his Pallium, all the new Archbishops from all over the World, and their guests met with the Holy Father – Pope Benedict XVI. Each Archbishop was allowed to introduce two of his guests to the Holy Father, What another blessing and privilege it was for me to be one of the two guests introduced by Archbishop Buti. What a gift this was for my 40th Anniversary as a Priest. The Holy Father congratulated me and wished me God's blessings for the years ahead.





WILFRED CARDINAL
NAPIER - OFM



APOSTOLIC NUNCIO
ARCHBISHOP BLASCO



MARONITE PATRIARCH
CARDINAL NSRALLAH



Sr. DIETHARDE OP

There are special moments for each of us , special moments everyday, moments we take for granted.

Let us see that EACH DAY IS A SPECIAL DAY FOR EACH ONE OF US. LET US SEE EACH DAY AS A GIFT, A GIFT FROM A LOVING GOD.



Sr. ANNA ROSA OP



Sr LORNA HRS



Sr MADGE FS



LEBANESE AMBASSADOR MR
CHARBEL STEPHEN

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