



First Religious Profession of Bros. Luka, Felix and Ronald

MBARARA, Uganda – On the 6th of August 2022, the three brothers Luka MAGARETA, Felix NIMANYA and Ronald MMORA made their first profession in the Company of Mary. This momentous event took place at the Montfort Missionaries novitiate house in Mbarara, Uganda.

It is the first celebration of this kind in ten years since the novitiate had been moved to the Philippines. The brothers, before embracing their religious vows, had a moment of grace with Fr. Mario BELOTTI, SMM, the Provincial Superior of Italian Province, who accompanied them for thirty-three days (*Totus Tuus Journey*). On the eve of profession, the three brothers totally consecrated themselves to Jesus Christ through the hands of Mary. In his homily, Fr. Mario emphasized the significance of Baptism.

"I believe we understand better Montfort's concern and invitation: let's take Baptism very seriously both at the beginning and throughout our life and ministry," he said.

Expounding further, Fr. Mario emphasized that Montfort's desire is that we keep our Baptism alive in the most perfect way. That's why he recommends that the renewal of our baptismal promises or consecration to Jesus be done through the hands of Mary, the "mould of God" and the "perfect way" to reproduce Jesus in our life.

Fr. Paul Lonely MASHONGA, SMM, the Delegate Superior of Africa Anglophone General Delegation presided over as well as received the vows of the three brothers representing the Superior General, Fr. Luiz Augusto STEFANI, SMM. The three brothers received the religious habit consisting of a cassock, cord and the Holy Rosary. They were also each given a copy of the Constitution – the fundamental rule of Missionaries of the Company of Mary.

During the homily, Fr. Mario, SMM strongly emphasized on our constant need to focus on Jesus. *"This is what Felix, Luka and Ronald wish to tell us today by professing their religious vows in the presence of the Church. They wish to tell us that to know Christ is what matters most in their life, as St. Louis de Montfort says: "To know Christ-Wisdom is to know everything".* Explaining the motivation of embracing the religious vows, Fr. Mario stated that the three brothers are not professing poverty, chastity, and obedience for a conditional, functional, instrumental and developmental purposes. The real motivation for vowing poverty, chastity and obedience is found within. The clear choice made from within, Fr. Mario explained that it will help one freely say; *"Not only is this who I am; this is how I am going to be; this is the way I will relate and be intimate with others, as someone poor, chaste and obedient".* Again, it will be a driving force to resist temptation: *"If I am tempted to break my vows for something or someone, I will not say, 'I can't, for my vow doesn't allow it', or 'I can't for I might get caught', or 'it's against my promises'; but I will say, 'no, this is not who I am. I'd be misleading myself or you if I did anything but what I know I have chosen to do to remain who I am and to respect who you are.'"*

On behalf of the newly professed brothers, Bro. Felix NIMANYA expressed their gratitude to all who have supported them. He admitted that *"it takes the whole village to raise up a child"* (an African proverb); and thanked their parents, guardians, teachers, formators, superiors, and all who took part in their novitiate formation process.

The three brothers were exhorted to live according to their commitment. The novice master, Fr. Ernest AKHONYA, SMM expressed his gratitude for the presence of the religious men and women, the Lay Montfortian Associates. He also thanked the parents, the relatives and friends of the newly professed brothers for making the day a memorable event. The celebration ended with a meal shared by the SMM community in Uganda and the friends and relatives present.

*Chancy Mterera
Novice*