



Sacred Fire

SAINT LAURENT-SUR-SÈVRE, France - Palm Sunday, April 14, 2019, was the official opening day of the Montfortian International Formation (MIF) session in Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre. The details of the 24 participants in this session are as follows:

There are 7 participants sent by the Daughters of Wisdom namely: Sr. Imelda Wa'u, Sr. Lilly Jayasree Boyapati, Sr. Jean Enad, Sr. Ireen Vitto, Sr. Siobhan Boyle, Sr. Maria Teresa Pignoloni and Mr. Robert Likome (Friend of Wisdom). They come from PNG, India, Philippines, Malawi, Great Britain & Ireland and Italy.

From the Montfort Brothers of Saint Gabriel, 8 participants are present. They are Bro. Sunil Kr. Ekka, Bro. Paul Raju B., Bro. Philip Surin, Bro. John Xavier I., Bro. Antony Sunil A., Bro. Linto Emmanuel, Bro. Francis Chua and Mr. Bosco (lay collaborator). They come from India-Delhi, India-Hyderabad, India-Ranchi, India-Trichy, India-Yercaud, India-Pune and Malaysia.

Moreover, there are also 9 participants sent by the Montfort Missionaries. They are Fr. Melkior Jelalu, Fr. Egidius Sumarno, Fr. Francis Showri Bulipe, Fr. Johnson James, Fr. Anthony Daniel Chilolo, Fr. Norwyn Baydo, Fr. Federick Yumang, Fr. Lorensius Ola and Mrs. Brenice Eno (a member of the Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts). They come from Indonesia, India, Malawi, Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

With regard to the diversity of the participants' countries, Sister Antonella PRESTIA, the General Councillor of the Daughters of Wisdom said, "Within this 6-week period, you will have time getting to know each other and enjoy a rich experience of walking in the footsteps of Montfort and Marie-Louise... As written in the orientation of our General Chapter 2018, I invite you to "choose" to live this interculturality, joyfully proclaiming the Reign of God, and sharing your faith and gifts, your values and vulnerabilities. As you are called to live in interdependence, you will rediscover and bring together in harmony the richness of your differences".

This English session is ongoing with the help of an animation team composed of Sr. Diane THIBODEAU, Bro. Christian BIZON, Bro. Maurice HERAULT and Fr. Arnold SUHARDI. The resource speakers of this session are: Fr. Jos VAN DEN BERGH (To Know Oneself), Fr. Olivier MAIRE (To Know Oneself from Montfort's stand and To Know Mary), Sr. Marie-Reine GAUTHIER (To Know Jesus-Wisdom). This session will end with a retreat to be preached by Father Mario BELOTTI. As scheduled, this training session will end on May 26, 2019 and on this day, the presence of Father Luiz Augusto Stefani, the Superior General of the Montfort Missionaries, is expected.

Fr. Arnold Suhardi, who spoke on behalf of the three Superior Generals at the official opening of this session, mentioned three ways on how "a resource person is trained in the field of Montfortian Spirituality".

He said, "Firstly, you must read Montfort's writings or biographies in a continuous and repeated manner. In relation to this, I would like you to refer specifically to the experience of Pope John Paul II, a very important promoter of Montfortian Spirituality whose influence is still felt today.

Secondly, start sharing with others. This is an important factor and even the best way to explore or deepen our Montfortian spirituality. By sharing the little that we have, we are stimulated to explore further.

Thirdly, if you want to spread Montfortian Spirituality, the starting point must be the testimony of your own life. From that point, you will be able to do it with confidence, passion and full of enthusiasm. The spread of Montfortian Spirituality should not be considered a job or a burden. It must not come from an external influence. It should not be done as asked by your superiors or other people. It is not even an obligation for you to preach and spread it. Since Montfortian Spirituality is an integral part of your Christian life, it must come from your heart! "Woe to me if I do not do it" (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:16). The urgent need of the Montfortian family is not to have members who are able to speak or write brilliantly, but to live according to Montfortian Spirituality."

One of the participants in this session expressed his expectations in words and he sounded like: "I came here to capture the sacred fire that was burning in the heart of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, the sacred fire that made him an indefatigable missionary to revive the Christian spirit among the Christians of his time".

The term "Sacred Fire" comes from the final document of the General Chapter of the Brothers of St. Gabriel, April 2018 that states, "We understand the "Sacred Fire" as a Divine-Human energy emanating from within as a result of our encounter with God in Jesus Christ... We, the Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel, are inheritors of the inner fire experienced by Montfort, as expressed in his ardent love for Jesus, the Incarnate Wisdom, in his tender and true devotion to Mary, and in his passionate love of the Cross".

In this connection, Fr. Arnold told the participants, "This session will be a success when you return to your country with a heart burning with Montfortian passion. This feeling will encourage you to deepen further your knowledge from the materials you received and to know more by making personal discoveries, reflections and research".

Fr. Arnold Suhardi, SMM