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Lay Volunteers take part in the Project for the Revalorization of the Archives in Rome

ROME - The Montfort Missionaries is blessed to have some lay people working quietly to keep some projects of the congregation going smoothly. Denise Delvaux, a Belgian volunteer, and a now retired library employee of the University of Leuven, is one of those who dedicated their time and resources in serving the congregation. Since she met the Montfort Fathers in Belgium about 35 years ago, she became a volunteer and has been doing a lot for the congregation. She used her expertise of working more than 40 years in the university library to keep in order the books in the Montfortian Library in Leuven. Now, she extends her help to the General House in Rome.

For the past weeks, Denise spent some time with us to help organize the Library in the General House. Before leaving, we asked her about the progress of the work that she has done here.

To-day is the last day of my second working stay of three weeks in Rome in view of making an inventory of the books in the historic library in the house of the Generalate here.

The first visit was in September and now our November-stay is finishing already.

In fact, the inventory of the historic library is the last part of the project for the disclosure of the Montfortian archives concluded with KADOC and on which Noortje Lambrichts is working

now. But Fr. Santino and the steering committee preferred not to wait till the end of the project to start with the task for the library. As I am working since long in the Montfort Library in Leuven, Jan De Maeyer, manager of the project, asked if I was willing to come to Rome, and so I decided to try and to change my working field a little while from Leuven to Rome.

The project for the revalorization of the archives (and books) is the contribution of the congregation to commemorate the Tercentenary, the 300th death anniversary of St-Louis-Marie and is to be meant as a milestone in history for the congregation.

The inventory itself is made in a simple Access database on the basis of the elementary data of the book: author, title, publisher, date, etc. The content and the condition of the book are almost not taken into account. When the book is really damaged much or missing elementary pages such as the title page it can not be recorded in the inventory.

Here's the composition of the file till now:

- lot of "Jesuitica"
- lot of books on canon law
- books out of the fund of father Eijckeler around topics of spirituality and studies he made such as slavery and the spirit of the age of Montfort. Pierre Eijckeler was the first Montfort Father with the degree of doctor from the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands
- little gifts and free copies
- large series on moral theology and theologians Thomas à Kempis, Suarez
- some books out of Montfort houses and/or edited by the Montfort Fathers, as from *Les éditions montfortaines* in Montréal, Montfort College Romsey, SMM *Scolasticat Sti Joannis* in Ottawa ... a testimony of the past
- periodicals

The last will be another focus for the congregation. Who shall do the work of bringing together these collections? Complete collections present in other countries and places. Who shall continue the Montfort Library in Rome?

At this moment 2350 items are inserted in the inventory. The first period I could close with 1450 items. This time, in this part of the library, the books were sometimes really too difficult for me as I do not know Latin nor even feel in Italian language. But this week my sister and brother in law came to Rome to visit me. They were surprised to see the richness of the collection and the scope of work. Next year they are willing to come and help me with the work, for one day at least to correct my work, as they said.

With that promise we are leaving Rome and deal the Advent and a new working era soon.