



Fr Paul Mashonga to pursue studies in spirituality and religious life

Balaka, Malawi - *“Let Him increase and I decrease”* were the words Rev. Fr Paul Lonely Mashonga,smm said during a farewell party on 4th March 2015 at ICI, Montfort Postulancy Community in Balaka Malawi. During the farewell party members from other communities were present - namely from Balaka parish, Montfort Media, Discalced Carmelites, Comboni Missionaries, Holy Ghost Fathers, Missionaries of Africa. We all wished Fr Mashonga a safe journey to the Philippines. Fr. Paul Mashonga will be part of the Novitiate community in Manila and will pursue studies in spirituality and religious life.

The community and all invited guests had mixed feelings: feelings of sorrow for the departure of Fr Mashonga and feelings of hope. We did not know whether to be sad for his departure or happy for him since he was taking a step further in his life as a Montfortian.

In his speech the Dean of Students Montfort Fusamtima expressed his gratitude to Fr. Paul. “It was good to have Fr. Mashonga as a formator and lecturer. It is painful for us to lose him. But it is also something to be accepted with both hands for it is a good thing to the congregation for him to go for further studies”. And then addressing himself to Fr Mashonga he added on behalf of all the postulants: “You were like a father to us and also a good friend who was always there to help and support us. We shall follow you Father in Philippines.” Father Andrew Kaufa, smm, in his speech wished Father Paul a nice trip and urged him to trust in the Lord always.

Fr. Jailos Mpina, smm added some very touching words. "It will be difficult to fill in the gap your departure is creating, because of you being a servant and because of your leadership: a leadership that was visionary, transformative, serving, caring, empowering, community-centered and Montfortian. You were a servant to each of us here both at community and at ICI level. We wish you a safe trip and all the best for your studies; we will be in touch", said Fr. Mpina,

In his final remarks, Fr. Paul thanked all the people who came to the celebration, for they showed that they were indeed good friends. He thanked his confreres for being supportive. To the postulants he only told one thing which was very touching and strong. “What you want to become – said Fr Paul - start living it now not in future.” He also thanked the Lord almighty for being with him during his stay at I.C.I Montfort community. “Let Him increase and I decrease” said Fr Paul concluding his speech.

The party was spiced with gifts, a delicious meal, some dances and jokes. The community also celebrated the belated birthdays of Fr. Andrew Kaufa, Cosmas Nthalika and Andrew Mungu.

-Atanzio Chivunga, Postulant