



Opening of the Initial Formation Year in Kisangani

KISANGANI, D.R. Congo - Saturday, September 23, 2023 marked the opening day of the initial formation year 2023-2024 for the Montfortian Postulate of Kisangani in D.R. Congo (Providence House-Deo Soli). It was preceded by a 6-day spiritual retreat and the facilitator was Father Jean Trésor BAFENGO, SMM, the parish priest of the Saint Paul Apostle/Kibibi parish. During the retreat, the postulants and the pre-postulants took time to meditate, pray and reflect on the theme: *“If the vision of Ezekiel were realized in my life as a Montfortian missionary”*, cfr the Prayer for Missionaries n°21 of Father de Montfort.

The facilitator underlined 4 characteristics that a Montfortian must have according to Montfort:

1. The humanity of man to be charitable. To be human according to Montfort is to be there to help others and especially those who need us.
2. The courage of the lion. The retreat preacher developed this second characteristic by illustrating several courageous people in the Bible, including David, Esther, Moses and Jesus Christ himself. All of them were confident in the face of risks. Courage is therefore a value that enables us to undertake difficult things by overcoming fear, suffering, fatigue and danger.
3. The strength of the ox for their apostolic work with the aspect of strength that gives perseverance in trials to Christians or Montfort missionaries. This strength is the antidote to laziness and discouragement. As Pope Francis emphasized: *“To combat laziness and discouragement, we must ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit”*. God is the source of our strength. His strength is a gift, an invitation to trust Him, for it is He who has called us (Eph 18:6).
4. And finally, to have the agility of the eagle. In Father de Montfort's vision, agility refers to availability. An available Montfortian missionary is flexible because flexibility means alertness, speed and mobility. This being the case, the speaker invited the participants to

manifest the strength of the eagle's vision by pursuing their objective. Their competence, hope, fidelity and love are the criteria of the eagle's vision.

At the end of the spiritual exercise, Reverend Father Jean Trésor concluded the retreat by exhorting the Montfortian postulants and pre-postulants, saying: *"If we are together, we must be in communion with each other, we must participate and have a desire for the mission"*.

On Saturday, 23 September 2023, the Holy Mass was presided by Father Eric MANIRAKIZA, SMM at the Montfort Chapel, on the occasion of the opening of the 2023-2024 initial formation year, the solemn entry of the pre-postulants into the Postulancy, and the renewal of the religious vows of three Montfortians, namely Brothers Armand KIRISHAMBA, SMM, Emmanuel KWASIA, SMM and Simon FIMBO, SMM. In his homily, Father Claude DISA invited the formators and the postulants to have a just eye like that of Jesus, because Jesus calls us to the justice of mercy. Finally, Father Claude welcomed the 7 pre-postulants into the Postulancy, received the vows of his confreres and declared open the initial formation year 2023-2024.

May the Virgin Mary accompany them during this new year of formation.

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