



## Opening of the New Novitiate in the Francophone Africa Delegation

**KINSHASA, RD Congo** - On 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022, on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we received a grace, a gift from heaven. It was the opening of the new novitiate in the Company of Mary. A new stage of formation for us from the General Delegation of Francophone Africa, 89 years after the arrival of the first missionary pioneers in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This opening of the new novitiate took place in Kinshasa, Community of Mont-Ngafula/Kimbondolo in the Diocese of Kisantu. It was during the Mass presided over by Father Louis-Guelord ASEME, SMM, the Delegation Superior. The new house was dedicated to the maternal protection of Mary, Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, in reference to the fundamental intuition and the importance always given to the Rosary by Montfort as a missionary and spiritual master. For Father de Montfort, the Marian Rosary has always been a school of formation, a school of faith, a school of conversion. Not only did he experience it, but he was also able to read in the very history of this Marian prayer, the fruits of evangelical life and holiness that it produced in the faithful (cf. The Secret of the Holy Rosary, 1).

At number 193 of *the Love of Eternal Wisdom* and which corresponds to number 9 of *the Secret of the Holy Rosary* (SR), Saint Louis-Marie recalls that the Rosary "*enlightens the spirit, inflames the heart and enables the soul to listen to the voice of Wisdom, to taste its sweetness and to possess its treasures*" and adds: "*For me, I find nothing more powerful to attract the Kingdom of God, Eternal Wisdom, within us, than to join vocal prayer and mental prayer by reciting the Holy Rosary and meditating on the 15 mysteries it contains*". In proposing that our novitiate has Mary as patron, our ardent desire is to "*put ourselves in the school of Mary, to allow ourselves to be introduced to the contemplation of the beauty of the face of Christ and to the experience of the depth of his love*". (cf. Rosarium Virginis Mariae, 2).

Mary, paraphrases Frédéric Ozanam, is a type that we must strive to realize: as she herself realized the divine type which is Christ; it is a life that must be continued: just as the Lord wanted Mary to bring Him who brings everything into the world, this same Lord wants us today to join our brothers/sisters in humanity (cf. Living the Eucharist with Mary, in Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *Le Livre d'or*, Edition 2021, p.375); a heart to which one must warm one's heart; an intelligence where one must look for lights; a model on earth and a protector in heaven who deserves a double cult: that of imitation and invocation. Our choice of name can be summed up in this great invitation from our Holy Founder, "*Cœpit Jesus facere et docere (Acts 1,1). Let us imitate Jesus Christ, who began by doing what he taught*" (SR, 2) and we will become free, able to say each day, "*Lord, where do you want me to serve you?*"

The opening ceremony had two significant moments: the installation of Father David GIAPUNDA, SMM, as Novice Master, followed by his profession of faith and the entry into the novitiate of the 9 postulants: Vincent, Yannick, Floribert, Jofred, Guellord, Adolphe, Justin and Tresor. In his homily, in the light of texts of the day, Father Louis-Guelord invited us to be hopeful, not to give in to any temptation like the Virgin Mary "*God is stronger than the dragon because, his power crushes all the forces of evil. The dragon despite its strength, its power did not succeed in putting an end to God's project; did not succeed in interrupting or being an obstacle to the plan of God manifested and realized through Mary*".

The Mass had a great participation from the Montfortian family: the novices of Daughters of Wisdom were present, who animated the Mass; Brother Ruphin, Provincial of the Montfortian Brothers of Saint Gabriel with other Brothers, Fathers Frédéric SMM and Jean-Paul, SMM, various Congregations and the faithful residing on the plateau of Kimbondo.

Before the final blessing, we followed two important messages: greetings and support from the Superior General, Father Luiz Augusto STEFANI, SMM, and the Assistant General in charge of Africa-Madagascar, Father Felix Mabvuto PHIRI, SMM. We ended with the fraternal meal, well presented by Father Jean-Louis WENZA, SMM, Socius and Bursar of the novitiate. Thank you, we recommend ourselves to your prayers and we pray for each one of you!

*Novitiate Team*