

## The New Provincial Secretary of France comes from afar



**SAINT-LAURENT-SUR-SEVRE, France** – *Since January 2023, Fr. Olivier Nantenaina RAMAHENINTSOA, SMM is sent to France as a missionary. Like other confreres before him, he signed an agreement for international collaboration between entities under the mediation of the General Administration, which supports the project to relaunch the Montfortian mission in France. On June 25, Fr. Olivier was appointed as the secretary of the Vice-Province of France and a collaborator of the parish in Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre. Here is a self-introduction of the confrere.*

My name is Olivier Nantenaina RAMAHENINTSOA. I was born on January 30, 1990 in Antsirabe, Madagascar. I made my first religious vows on October 18, 2015 in Montfort-sur-Meu, France while my perpetual vows was on December 12, 2021 in Toamasina, Madagascar. I was ordained a priest on November 6, 2022 also in Toamasina, Madagascar.

First in a family of 5 children composed of 3 sons and 2 daughters, I lived my childhood in a flourishing city by its very fertile volcanic lands and by its dry and cold climate in May until September but hot and wet in October until April. My father was the librarian of the Major Seminary of Philosophy in Antsirabe and my mother is responsible for a literacy center founded by a French priest from the congregation of the missionaries of Notre Dame de la Salette.

If there is a qualifier for the family from which I come, it is "Christian". Baptized three days after my birth, I was educated in the Catholic faith, both at home and at school. Still a teenager, I already knew the Company of Mary. Thanks to a certain Bro. Nirina REGNIER, SMM, who is a great friend of my father. After three years of university studies and trial and error, I entered the Montfortian formation house in 2010. Two things attracted me to the Montfortians "Little Company" and "Missionary". I have seen that the Montfortians are a small group but their missions are bearing fruit effectively. From then on, I let myself be seized by this adventure. Well, Providence has now led me to France since January 27, 2023.

By locating myself on the map, on GPS coordinates (on the internet), I see that 8853.14 km separate Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre and Antsirabe, my hometown. Without a doubt, Father de Montfort was close to me and thanks to the Montfort Missionaries who came to Madagascar. But now, it is closer than ever, if only in terms of geographical distance, especially since the place where I am now is a high place of Montfortian spirituality and the village where I now reside is the village where Father de Montfort died.

The words of the Letter to the Ephesians resound in me: "you who were once far away have become near through the blood of Christ". A proximity that will translate into "belonging" or rather "filiation"! Legal term, one is vis-à-vis the Vice-province of France, and the other, which suggests that there is a family, is vis-à-vis the founder. In any case, I no longer feel like an outsider in my community. To Jesus through Mary.