



### **“DARE TO TAKE RISKS”**

**ROME, Italy** - On Tuesday, May 9, 2023, when Father Dwi was elected 23<sup>rd</sup> Superior General of the Company of Mary, St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, the founder of this Congregation, probably awoke from his “sleep” in a state of surprise, and with him, all the members of this Company who have “fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection”. St. Louis-Marie may have searched a Google map for exactly where Indonesia was and tried to pronounce the full name of Father Yoseph Putra Dwi Darma WATUN, SMM who is now his successor in the animation of the Congregation he founded in 1705 in Poitiers.

It is truly inconceivable the movement of the Holy Spirit in the process of electing the Superior General of this missionary Company. Father Luiz Augusto STEFANI, SMM is about to complete his first six-year term. He was the first Superior General from Latin America. To be precise, he comes from Brazil, a country that has only 4 Brazilian Montfortians, plus some five missionaries who come from other countries. When Father Luizinho was elected in 2017, he said that the face of the Congregation at that time changed. He said this to affirm that the Superior General of this Company was no longer from Europe, nor from North America as was the case until then. Now, after six years, the Holy Spirit seems to want to show immediately that the face of this Congregation is also shaped by a great continent, from which Fr. Dwi comes: Asia. This continent has witnessed the missionary audacity of the Montfortians in their adventures to proclaim the Good News.

The Montfortians from the Netherlands landed in Indonesia in 1939. There was a time when the presence of these Dutch missionaries was reinforced by Montfort Missionaries from the United States. The mentoring of new local candidates gave real results in 1995 when Fr. Ignatius Widodo was ordained a priest. He is the first fruit of a formation carried out in Indonesia. Now, according to *Echo Montfortain*, no. 554, 2023, Indonesia has 74 priests, 7

brothers in perpetual and temporary vows, 67 scholastics in perpetual and temporary vows. Currently, 18 Indonesian missionaries are working outside their home country, and several are preparing to leave for Portugal, the Netherlands, France, Canada and Colombia respectively, not to mention a missionary who is already in Vietnam to learn the language of the country. It is to work there if the mission in this socialist Republic deigns to open up.

The Montfortians in Indonesia serve in the administration of the Province, accept to be spiritual directors for various ecclesiastical organizations, become formators in two diocesan minor seminaries, but also formators in the community of aspirants, the community of postulants-novices, the community of the scholastics. There are a good number of confreres who work in the parish. There are also those who belong to two categorical missionary communities “à la Montfort”. There are also quite a few confreres who are attentive to sharing spirituality through the Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts, whose members currently number more than 300 people.

In such a situation, was this entity ready to provide a Superior General to guide this Company of Mary? Ready or not, reality has spoken, and this is what fills us with hope: how can the “capitulants” trust Fr. Dwi and how can Fr. Dwi have the courage to say YES to accept this difficult task. It appears that all the capitulants and Father Dwi himself are in line with the spirit of this chapter which is taking place according to the theme: “Dare to take risks for God and for humanity, our creative fidelity”.

The task of the new Superior General and his council in the future could be this: to accompany the Montfort Missionaries so that, in contact with the present world and all its challenges, they drink at the source of their charismatic identity in order that they may be faithful and creative, as Montfortians of today capable of bringing down the “deluge of fire of pure love which the Lord must ignite” in the Church and in the world. These words of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort in his Prayer for Missionaries, no. 17, were quoted by Mgr. Rui Manuel SOUSA VALÉRIO, SMM, Military Bishop of Portugal, in his homily when he presided over the “Mass of the Holy Spirit” which launched the process of electing the new Superior General of the Company of Mary. For this, Fr. Dwi and his team within the General Council must ensure that the whole Congregation has the courage to make bold choices for the future.

Thanks to the Montfort Missionaries of the Netherlands. Thanks to the Montfort Missionaries of the United States. Thank you, Father Luizinho for your dedication so far, thank you Father Dwi for your willingness to continue this service. With Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort and Blessed Marie-Louise, we pray: “Ah! Lord: *Congrega nos de nationibus!* Gather us together, unite us, so that all the glory may be given to Your holy and mighty Name” (PM 18).

*Dolaa DHANUSH*