



## **Inauguration of the Parish of Saint Montfort of Monterado in West Kalimantan, Indonesia**

**WEST KALIMANTAN, Indonesia** - New history was created in the pilgrimage of the Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of Pontianak and also of the Montfort Missionaries of the Province of Indonesia. On July 20, 2021, a new parish was formed in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, precisely in the District of Monterado, Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan Province. Present in this celebration were the Regent of Bengkayang, the Chairman of the Bengkayang House of Representatives, the Provincial of SMM Indonesia, and the Archbishop of Pontianak as well as hundreds of parishioners of St. Montfort, Monterado.

### **A Brief History**

St. Montfort Parish, Monterado was formerly known as the St. Mikael, Monterado, whose parent is the parish of St. Yosef, Samalantan. Before the arrival of the Montfortians, the pastoral care of this station was entirely handled by the priests who work in the parish of St. Yosef, Samalantan. The Montfortians entered and worked in the Pontianak Archdiocese at the request of Mgr. Augustine Agus, Archbishop of Pontianak. The Society responded and answered the request which was marked by the sending of Father Stefanus Seli, SMM to St. Yosef Parish, Samalantan on January 18, 2020. He was assigned as a fellow pastor and lives in Samalantan with Fr. Indra Lubis and Fr. Surip.

To strengthen and facilitate pastoral work, SMM Indonesia sent Brother David Rabim, SMM in mid-August 2020 to undergo a year of Pastoral Orientation at St. Yosef Parish, Samalantan. Fr. Stefanus Seli, SMM and Brother David Rabim, SMM moved from Samalantan to Monterado on January 01, 2021. That date marked the beginning of the separation of the missionary work and the pastoral care between Samalantan and Monterado. The Montfortians who are pioneers of the missionary work in Monterado are fully responsible for

the sustainability of all pastoral services in all areas in the district of Monterado. In addition, they were tasked in preparing for the transition of St. Mikael, Monterado from a Quasi parish to a Parish.

On February 7, 2021, St. Mikael, Monterado changed her status to Quasi Parish. The Archbishop of Pontianak, Mgr. Agustinus Agus was present at the celebration and the name of the patron was changed from St. Mikael to St. Montfort. Thus, the name of this new mission site is the Quasi Parish of St. Montfort, Monterado. During the celebration, Mgr. Agus officially appointed Fr. Stefanus Seli, SMM as the head priest. The bishop asked for a suitable date for the inauguration of the quasi-parish. At that time, Fr. Stef, SMM chose July 20, 2021 as the right time for the inauguration. The choice of date was based on the historical events of the Montfort Missionaries. It was on July 20, 1947, that the Founding Father, Saint Montfort was canonized by Pope Pius XII. The Monterado pastoral team received a new member after the Provincial administration sent Deacon Hironimus Edison, SMM as part of the Monterado pastoral team. Deacon Hiro arrived in Monterado on June 15, 2021.

### **Inauguration Ceremony**

The sky of Monterado today looks full of clouds. The bright morning sun from the eastern horizon stung directly to the skin and made everyone drench in sweat. People from the stations in the parish of Monterado as well as the invited guests began to arrive one by one to the Church. All gathered inside the church building and at the churchyard while waiting for the arrival of the Bengkayang Regent, the Bengkayang DPRD and West Kalimantan Province delegation, the Pontianak Archbishop, the SMM Provincial Superior, and the pastor of the Monterado Parish who was getting ready at the Village Office. The Eucharistic celebration started at 9:00 AM.

The Mass presided by Mgr. Agustinus Agus went smoothly and solemnly. Dozens of priests from the diocese and neighboring parishes, as well as the Montfortians from Sintang, were also present to enliven the celebration of the Eucharist. The choir also rendered melodious songs, accompanied by lively music and dances. The celebration of the Eucharist ended at 12:00 noon. This celebration was also marked by the inauguration of the Pastoral Council of St. Montfort Parish of Monterado for the period 2021-2024. A series of remarks took place during the Eucharistic Celebration. The chairman of the inauguration committee, the Provincial Superior of SMM Indonesia, the Bishop, and the Bengkayang Regent gave remarks based on their respective positions. The four of them emphasized the same thing, namely, hopefully with the inauguration of Monterado as a new parish, the faith, social and moral life of the people will truly be formed and will be increasingly directed towards the identity of the baptism that has been received. The Provincial Father specifically linked today's events to the moment of the canonization of St. Montfort, patron of the parish of Monterado. The holiness of St. Montfort is an example for all parishioners to follow. St. Montfort Parish, Monterado has 18 stations and all of them are in the administrative area of the district of Monterado, that is, one parish serves one sub-district area.

The series of events was followed by a joint reception which took place in the church compound and rectory. The casual chat lasted until 04:00 PM. Sharing fun together, singing, and casual talk went smoothly with the friendly atmosphere of the Monterado sky. Finally, congratulations to all the people in Monterado and congratulations to the Montfortians who are part of the pastoral team in this new parish.

*Deacon Hironimus Edison, SMM*