



## **Marian Seminar with Father Rafael Lepen, SMM**

**Monterado, March 24-25, 2022**

**MONTERADO, Indonesia** - One of the agenda of St. Montfort Parish in filling the Asia-Oceanian Year of Mission is to introduce Our Lady in the Work of Salvation to the parishioners of Monterado. The background for choosing this theme was actually born from the request of the people themselves. They often complain to us about the classic question from the brethren of the separate churches about why Catholics should honor the Virgin Mary and say the Rosary. Thanks to Divine Providence, the answer to the people's complaints was answered at the opening of the mission year at the Deo Soli Mission House on January 31, 2022. When the mission animation team asked what activities could be done at the Monterado Parish to fill the year of the Asia-Oceania Mission, the Monterado pastoral team offered to talk about Our Lady in the system of salvation and the date chosen was March 25 to coincide with the Solemnity of the Annunciation. In choosing a speaker, I contacted the Parish Priest via Whatapp, and at that moment he asked Father Rafael Lepen, SMM to be the speaker. It is important to remember that this activity carried out by the Parish of Monterado fulfils one of the important points of this mission year, namely: "Promoting True Devotion to Mary".

## **Seminar with Young Catholics Organization (OMK)**

Father Rafael with Br. Niko arrived at the Monterado rectory on March 23. There is no special custom pick-up. They were greeted by community members, Father Stef and Father Hiro, with a group lunch. The next day, on March 24, a seminar with OMK (young catholic organization) was held starting at 18.00 WIB. The theme proposed by Father Rafael as the speaker was, "The Virgin Mary: An Example of Young Leaders". Four main points were proposed by the speaker to OMK of Monterado in imitating Mary, namely: At a young age she surrendered herself to God, Mary accepted extraordinary challenges, Mary was not selfish and not big-headed, and Mary conveyed the right message.

OMK attended with great enthusiasm the seminar process. That was seen in the dynamics of the seminar which was very interactive. The members of young catholic who attended gave extraordinary questions in response to the material given by Father Rafael. There were 60 participants who were present. The seminar ended at 20.30 WIB. The activity was followed by dinner. An evaluation of the implementation of the Youth Eucharist which was held on February 28 was also held on the material day. The atmosphere of brotherhood and kinship was very visible in OMK during seminars and hospitality activities.

## **Seminar with the People**

In accordance with the schedule that had been made, on March 25, a seminar was held with the parishioners. Father Rafael proposed the theme "Mary and Consecration according to Montfort" to the Monterado parishioners who participated actively. He was extraordinary in discussing thoroughly the theme, specifically regarding Mary as seen from the point of view of Mary in the Scriptures, Mary's relationship with the Trinity, Mary's relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit, and her dedication to Jesus through Mary according to the teachings of St. Montfort.

There were nearly 200 parishioners who attended this event. They were very enthusiastic and enjoyed the continuity of the seminar process. Their participation in asking questions and building an atmosphere of dialogue with the presenters made the dynamics of the seminar very lively. It was interesting to see that the people who attended the seminar were attentive and curious. Apart from being motivated by their struggles as mentioned in the background of choosing the theme, their high concentration was also born from the way the speaker presented the material very well and interestingly. The Marian seminar was concluded at 18.55 WIB. The activity continued with the Mass of the Annunciation and dinner together. The Mass was led directly by Fr. Rafael as the main celebrant with Fr. Stef as the concelebrant.

Pastoral Team of Monterado Parish is grateful to Father Rafael and Brother Niko. One of the people's struggles was answered during the seminar. The reason is that there will be many interlocutors in explaining and answering the problems they face in relation to the importance of praying the rosary and the position and role of the Virgin Mary in the order and plan of God's salvation.

*Fr. Stefanus LEBA, SMM*