



"The Parish Priest" **Documentary on Fr. John van OSS, SMM**

NETHERLANDS - Directed by Gabrielle Provaas, camera Pim Hawinkels, sound Sander den Broeder, production company Tomtit Film and EO. With support from Limburg Film Office and the Dutch Film Fund. Broadcast date: spring 2023. The synopsis states:

"John van Oss (1937), the long-time parish priest of Schimmert, has been alone for decades at the head of the parishes of Schimmert and Genhout, small church villages in southern Limburg (the Netherlands). He is starting to become a little bit forgetful and can no longer manage alone. Two young Indonesian priests, Stefan Musanai (1983) and Charles Leta (1986) arrive at the rectory to help him. Cheerful and eager to learn, they move into the small convent on the periphery of the village, where a few old confreres still live. They have to learn the Dutch language, but that is not easy and the texts they recite in church are really difficult. The pastor finds it hard to hand over tasks. After all, he knows all the people in the village and some only speak dialect. The two new priests are eager to help him, but it is tough to succeed in doing so. To make matters worse, all of a sudden there is a worldwide "illness", bringing church life to standstill and delaying the pastor's farewell. When can he let go with peace of mind?"

The story of Gabrielle Provaas. Mid-September, I had an interview with Gabrielle. In which she told me:

"I was born (1969) in Schimmert as the eldest in a family of four children. My family owned a farm. I could learn well and moved to Nijmegen to study art history. Modern art especially fascinated me. When that discipline stopped in Nijmegen, I switched to film. I consider that one of the modern art forms of our time. I study Film and Television Studies and Psychology in Amsterdam.

When I notice that because of sexual abuse, all those associated with the church are presented in a negative way, I feel called to put some nuance to the matter. I know Pastor John van Oss from my home village and I don't think it's fair that he should suffer because of it. I do feel like talking to him about this, or perhaps following him on film in all he does, but I don't dare ask him. Then I hear from my parents that two young confreres from Indonesia have come to Schimmert. That makes me curious and I approach Pastor John and chaplains Stefan and Charles with my request. That is the beginning of the whole process.

The start of the shoot for the film went well. Then came Covid-19 and everything came to a stop. Fortunately, we were then able to resume filming, despite some difficulties. When I look back on the whole process now, it strikes me that we managed to overcome every setback. There were also very few filming days, but that doesn't show in the final result. I am proud of it!"

Fr. Peter DENNEMAN, SMM