



## Sharing of Three Novices from Papua New Guinea

### Teaching Basic Catechism to Small Christian Communities, Families, and Children



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA** - In the novitiate, we are privileged to do our apostolate every Sunday in various needs to the pastoral care. One of the many needs that we have in our mission area is the lack of basic catechism to know the faith and some of the practices in the church. Fortunately, we have been given many chances to preach basic catechism and some of the teachings of the Church to the people. It was done about half an hour before the celebration of the Holy Eucharist began. The outcome was very good and the participants appreciated it by saying *“This is necessary and brothers have to continue doing this. Some of us are faithful Catholics but the teaching seems new and very good to us that we love our Catholic Church”*.

During the pastoral visit to the families in the Small Christian Community (SCC), we invited the children of those families to come on Saturdays, twice a month, in the novitiate house (Liberos House) for the basic catechism lesson. When they came, we did some light works for them about an hour and a half,

then we let them play and enjoy the company of each other, having a bath and sharing the food together during the lunch hour.

After all the activities, we then proceeded to our main catechism classes for two hours and we ended up praying the Rosary. The Catechism classes are on the basic devotion such as the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the sacraments especially the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. With the children, the teaching is all on the beauty of those devotions and the Eucharist, with the practical things to do such as memorizing the mysteries of the Rosary and the parts of the Mass. The children loved it and to keep their interest, there were quizzes, and we gave candies as rewards. Some of them memorized it by heart and practiced it in their family. Those in the ministry of the Altar servers were also privileged as we came to name the sacred vessels and linen that are used during the Holy Mass.

In following some pastoral strategies used by Saint Montfort, the children served as “gateway” to enter into their families. I found out that some parents who were not really active were now going back to the church when I followed their children to their house. I felt blessed when I saw this.

*Anselmus WAHINJAUSE*  
*Novice*

### **The Formation of the Montfort Associates**



Our Montfort Associates here in Kiunga are composed of parishioners from St. Gerard Parish and St. Brigid Parish. Initially, the Associates started last year with Fr. Aloï, SMM with only few members. However, their numbers increased to more than thirty members this year. Besides, a good number of them are from various spiritual groups in these two parishes, especially from the Legion of Mary. Following the schedule, they would come together on Saturdays, every two weeks for the sessions and prayer meetings. The sessions were facilitated mostly by Fr. Roy, SMM and sometimes, Fr. Aloï, SMM would join for some encouragement.

Towards the final phase of their meetings, Fr. Roy invited the novitiate to join them. It was really a grace from God that many of them were expressing gratitude to the Fathers for helping them to understand the Spirituality of the Montfortians. Many of them who did not know Mary in the Montfortian Spirituality were happy about learning the truth. Others who were not members of any spiritual group in the parish were committed to come for the sessions and prayer meetings. In fact, a lady from the other denomination joined the meeting several times and finally decided to be baptized, confirmed, and received Holy Communion. Now, she is happy to be a member of the Montfort Associates. It was a blessing for the congregation and precisely, for us in the novitiate house (Liberos).

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, the Montfort Associates had their closing celebration for this year. The venue chosen for this program was in Liberios where we are currently staying. We helped them in making the program and the liturgy. We began our program with the Holy Mass presided over by Fr. Roy and Fr. Aloï. After the Mass, we had supper and it was followed by fun games and secret friend for exchanging gifts in the spirit of Christmas.

This early celebration happened since many of the members are going for holiday as the school year is over. It was really a wonderful program that everyone really enjoyed. While in the program, Mr. Raphael shared his experience as a leader of the Montfort Associates. He was really amazed and happy to see the progress of the Montfort Associates in this short period of time. He also recognized the effort of Fr. Roy's accompaniment and inspiration through different sessions. In the end, he commended everyone's commitment, initiative, and creativity of making the program alive and fruitful.

Moreover, Fr. Aloï, the delegation superior, encouraged all the associates to keep the spirit of working together. He further encouraged them to feel at home with the Liberios community as they were on the path to becoming full members of the Associates. Since it is the initial formation of these Montfort Associates, both Fr. Aloï and Fr. Roy encouraged them not to give up but stay committed and faithful to the group. In addition, they even highlighted to them the plans and objectives that need to be achieved in the coming months and in the following year 2024.

*Godwin Dalle*  
*Novice*

## **Family and Hospital Visitation**



What a Cross without a Cross! Pastoral experience is one of the many programs of the novitiate every Sunday. It is a great moment of entering into the life of many people, especially the poor. We were blessed indeed by encountering them in their homes.

During family visitation, though not easy at times due to many cultural differences, some encounters were indeed emotional as family members, especially mothers, find our presence something worthy of trust to share their stories. We heard many social issues that confront our communities, such as drug addictions, unwanted pregnancies, lack of basic social services, polygamy among Catholics and other Christian denominations, lack of education and fear of witchcraft. Adjusting to the modern way of living is still not easy as well to our culture. It confuses a lot of our traditional values including the family set up. For example, traditionally arranged marriage is the common practice. Now with the internet, marriages or living together can take place even without the consent of families and clans. This issue leads to many disconnected relationships that disturb peace and harmony among families, clans, and tribes.

In general, family visitation includes listening to their life situations, encouraging them to take their faith seriously and to be more active in parish activities. If there is a possibility, we invite them to join some spiritual groups in the parish or to the Montfort associates. We normally end up with sharing the Gospel and praying the Rosary together. Finishing one community is concluded with a meal together, often called bring and share in which families bring their own food together to a designated venue with some talks of encouragement, prayer and a little program.

After families, we then moved to the hospital visitation. There, we have encountered different kinds of patients with their own conditions. Facing various degrees of brokenness, we are reminded of the life of St. Montfort at the hospital in Poitiers. Moreover, these people are not just ordinary human beings but also the image and likeness of God. Patients were in different situations. It was like seeing Jesus in different form: Jesus from his normal appearance to a deformed and ugly face. Some experiences are hard to imagine the amount of pain and miseries. Some conditions are almost unbearable, but I am holding on to trust, knowing that God is in charge of everything. It gives me assurance and confidence. This also gives me encouragement to stand firm with my vocation and future mission. However, looking at patients' progress is a source of great joy in my heart, which leads me to a moment of thanksgiving to the Lord in our community prayers. In general, being with them, listening and praying with them is like, to some degree, feeling their sickness and being part of their family.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Congregation for giving us this opportunity to do this pastoral work. Through this, we learned not only some skills in this type of ministry but also, we were encouraged to push forward to reach our dream.

*Tresi Simon*  
*Novice*