



### **The How and the Why of our Vocation**

**KISANGANI, RDC** - On Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021, his Excellency Marcel Utembi Tapa, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kisangani / DR Congo, presided over the Holy Mass at Saint Paul Apostle Parish (in Kisangani). During the Eucharistic Celebration, there was the diaconal ordination of the three brothers: Robert Natutwande, Elisée Kambale and Ignace Messinou. All of them are Montfort Missionaries of the Company of Mary and members of the General Delegation of Francophone Africa / GDFA. The first two are Congolese, while the third is a Togolese (the very first time to have a Togolese deacon in our Entity).

In his homily, the Archbishop insisted on the deacon's vocation in the Church, specifying the need to be of service to the bishop, the priest and to the sick. Apart from that, he exhorted them to preach not only by word, but also by living, that is, the testimony of life. Deacon's work is not ours; on the other hand, it is the work of God, and we are only servants.

From the greatness of this event, I am extending, more or less, this invitation of our Archbishop on the witness of life with a particular focus on both the 'how and why of our vocation'. It should

be admitted that all our actions can be explained from this double interrogative crucible: the how and the why of our vocation. As Christians, men or women religious, deacons or priests, our whole life is supposed to search for faithfulness to God or better still, the perpetual quest to answer this question excellently. In fact, all initial formation, evangelical counsels, ordinations and also the ongoing formation are all parts of the 'how' of our vocation. Whereas the 'why' lies in the intimate and perpetual relationship with the One who calls us, the Lord, our God. He is the Author and the Owner of our vocation, to whom we must report daily.

As the Archbishop underlined it, in his homily, the deacon's work is not ours, but that of God. We therefore have an interest in revisiting, on one hand, our formation, both initial and ongoing (the how of our vocation); and on the other, to work in order to remain faithful to our Lord who calls us every day. Indeed, the how and the why of our vocation must always be considered very jointly, never one without the other. This is why the meditation on this double interrogative crucible is a consideration that preaching and praying is good, but it must be supplemented by the way of living, testimony of our life. Remember that there is no small or great appointment; there is no small or great parish. On the other hand, there are only men to evangelize. Losing the flavor of the how and the why of his vocation would be synonymous to entering a drought, the place of the devil.

In conclusion, I thank God for the gift of our three deacons. Through the prayer of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort and the intercession of the Virgin Mary, may God remain our plinth so that we preach and witness to His presence at the very heart of the Church and of the world.

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