



Self-dedication Ceremony, Renewal of Vows, and Perpetual Profession

MALANG, Indonesia - Hello, greetings once again from us, the Pondok Kebijakan Seminary in Malang, which serves as the nurturing ground for young Montfortians to become strong and ready to respond to the call of the Church, the world, and society. On this occasion, we will share the series of activities that have coloured our community in the past few weeks.

Self-dedication Ceremony

Before the Self-dedication Ceremony, the candidates for perpetual profession were given the opportunity to briefly step away from the hustle and bustle of daily life to ascend with Mary towards Divine Wisdom. The moment is significant for them as it strengthens their commitment to become Montfortian religious who dedicate themselves entirely to the service of God and His Church. For one week, the candidates underwent a retreat in Salatiga. During the retreat, they become more resolute and steadfast in their journey to the altar, where they will dedicate their lives to serving God and His Church. However, before reaching that joyful day, the candidates first made their vow of self-dedication to Jesus Christ through Mary, following the Montfortian tradition of Self-dedication.

A day before the Self-dedication Ceremony, the parents of the candidates arrived from Flores to Java for the first time. Their presence signified their support, prayers, and willingness to offer their beloved sons to God through His Church. Their arrival was an honor to the community, and, as such, the community conducted a simple ceremony to welcome them through the customary *Manggarai* tradition of "*Kepok Reis*". The "*Kepok Reis*" tradition

symbolizes the meeting of the groom's family (the son's side) who have come to discuss the marriage of their son with the bride's family, represented by the entire Ponsa community. That was how Father Goris described it in his address as the rector of the Ponsa community, where the aspiring professed members are preparing themselves to become the brides of Christ.

August 14, 2023

The Self-dedication Ceremony commenced at 4:30 PM, led by Father Antonius TENSi, SMM, and attended by the entire community and the families of the aspiring professed members. The festive Self-dedication Tradition before making the first and Perpetual vows in the Montfortian Society of Mary is not merely an additional celebration or formality; it is, in fact, the genuine Montfortian vow, while the upcoming celebration marks its ecclesial legality. In his homily, Father Anton emphasized that through our vows, we pledge to dedicate ourselves entirely, to become the property of Jesus:

According to Montfort, the devotion that perfects our self-dedication to Jesus is Devotion to Mary. True devotion to the Virgin Mary is what perfects us and makes us resemble Jesus Christ. Through Self-dedication, we offer ourselves entirely to the Immaculate Virgin, so that we may wholly belong to Jesus Christ through her (True Devotion, 120-121). Father Anton also underscored the reasons for the importance of True Devotion to Mary (True Devotion, 135-182): First, the spirit of Self-dedication is about giving ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ, who has already given Himself to us. And vows are our personal response, "I," to the God who has already given Himself entirely to us.

Second, through Self-dedication, we imitate Jesus, who relied on Mary, just as we rely on the help of Mother Mary to guide us on our journey towards the fullness of Jesus Christ's maturity. Third, Mary gives herself entirely to those who give themselves to her. Therefore, Montfort states that where there is someone who possesses the spirit and soul of Mary, the Holy Spirit will quickly run to meet them and dwell within them.

Fourth, this devotion increases the glory of God. Fifth, it is the easiest, shortest, most perfect, and safest means to obtain Divine Wisdom. Sixth, this devotion produces great spiritual freedom, and only those who are free can be fully used by God to serve His Church. Seventh, Mary's fidelity serves as an example for us to dedicate ourselves to Jesus Christ. If Mary supports you, you will not fall; if Mary protects you, you will not fear anything; you will not tire, and you will reach the port of salvation.

After the Self-dedication Ceremony, the jubilarians took photos with their families and confreres, followed by a dinner together. Following the Self-dedication Ceremony, the confreres continued with the remaining tasks to prepare for the next day, which included the renewal of vows and perpetual profession.

Renewal of Vows

August 15, 2023

Thanks be to God, through the Society, the friars and brothers have renewed their vows. Coinciding with the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the friars and brothers who wished to renew their temporary vows were directly received by Father Dwi, SMM, the Superior General of the SMM. However, before renewing their religious vows, the friars and brothers were given the opportunity to revisit God's love, the love that called them, and to reflect on how deeply they had lived these vows in their daily lives and service within the

community and wherever they were. Together with Father Murdani, CM, the friars and brothers were guided to seek and find God in meditation and contemplation, and to see how God works and empowers them to remain faithful to the life commitment they have chosen and lived.

Furthermore, he emphasized how the three religious vows are interconnected and inseparable. At 8:00 AM, the joyous hymn of the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was sung, and with that, the friars and brothers, confidently and without hesitation, renewed their religious vows for a period of one year. In his brief homily, Father General, emphasized that a life of devotion is a unique vocation and way of life that recalls the way Jesus lived in His relationship with God and others. As such, the friars and brothers were invited to enter into the same experience of encountering God. This is possible when we become people of true freedom.

Father General left a message for the friars and brothers who renewed their vows, urging them to remain faithful to the life commitment they have chosen. Even if they stumble and fall, they must stand up again, for Mary will always accompany their journey, he said as he concluded his homily. After the renewal of vows, the friars and brothers took photos together in the Seminary Ponsa courtyard and then continued with the preparations for the Mass of the Perpetual profession to be taken by the five friars and one brother.

On this occasion, the Ponsa community made efforts to provide their own food for the celebration, without involving external parties as in previous years. Each section of the community organized their contributions efficiently. Amidst these busy preparations, Father Goris and Father Megi monitored the progress of each section.

Equally important, today marks the 25th anniversary of Montfortian devotion for Father Goris. Therefore, the community surprised him with a tumpeng cutting ceremony during lunch. The atmosphere of family warmth was further enhanced by the presence of all confreres and the families of the candidates to make Final vows.

Mass of Perpetual Profession

The Mass of the perpetual profession was presided over by Father DWI SMM, the Superior General, accompanied by several Montfortian priests, and joined by a priest from the families of the aspiring professed members. The Mass proceeded solemnly and joyfully, with the choir made up of the friars and Young Montfortians (OMM). The ceremony for the perpetual profession took place with reverence. The five friars and one brother boldly pronounced their vows to Almighty God, for His glory alone and in service to the Church: the vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity, to be kept for all eternity, in the presence of the Superior General.

In his homily, Father General, emphasized the important values conveyed by Pope Francis during his audience when he was elected as the Superior General of the SMM. He highlighted that every individual should possess gentleness, humility like Mary, openness, and avoid exclusivity. The Eucharistic celebration proceeded smoothly and concluded with greetings from representatives of the professed, the parents of the professed, and the SMM provincial. In his address, Bro. Embit, SMM expressed gratitude to everyone who participated in the successful celebration of the eternal vows and requested prayers for their continued fidelity and dedication to the Church and the Society.

A note of thanks was also extended by the family representative, Bro. Lambert, who thanked the provincial and his council for accepting their sons to serve the Church and society. In conclusion he said, *"We have given, and we will not take them back. Wear your robes, singles, and rosaries until you reach the port of salvation with Mary."* Father Anton, SMM, made final remarks by urging the professed to remain faithful and humble in their service. The Society needs them, so they must prepare themselves for the tasks entrusted to them. Congratulations also to Brother Lambert, who has reached the final stage of this long journey today, alongside the five friars, as they take their perpetual profession.

After the Eucharistic celebration, the professed, priests, and families took photos together and greeted the congregation. This was followed by a communal reception in the S1 unit courtyard, with a feast prepared by the loving hands of the friars and brothers, along with the staff. Everyone enjoyed the meal, accompanied by beautiful songs from the friars, brothers, and OMM, as they shared their dinner. Unlike previous years, the Ponsa community did not hold a communal dance (*Joget*) this year. The event concluded at 9:00 PM, followed by a collective cleanup effort, restoring the community to its usual setting.

Bro. Herdi MAKING, SMM