



Awakening of Missionary Spirit The Montfortian Family of Flores Region welcomes the Continental Mission Year of Asia and Oceania 2022

RUTENG, Indonesia - The series of activities for the opening of the Continental Mission Year (CMY) of Asia and Oceania 2022 was held lively in Ruteng, Flores Island, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. All events were held at the Novitiate of Montfort Missionaries in Ruteng for two days, January 25-26, 2022.

The hundreds of participants who took part in the opening of the mission year, whose theme is "Rise and Shine, Montfort in Asia and Oceania", consisted of priests of the Company of Mary who worked in Flores Island and several missionaries serving in Papua New Guinea and Nicaragua who happened to be on vacation; Montfortian aspirants, postulants and novices; Daughters of Wisdom, members of the Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts (AMQAH) and Montfort Youth.

On the first day, Tuesday, January 25, 2022, there was a talk show about the mission in the Catholic Church. The first speaker was Fr. Rafael LEPEN, SMM who explained about "*Mission in the Catholic Church Before and After the Second Vatican Council*". The second speaker was Fr. Arnold SUHARDI, SMM who presented about "*Mary's place in the missionary work of the Montfort Missionaries in the Flores region*". Both agreed that Consecration to Jesus through Mary is an art of missionary life.

The first day's activity was ended with the Evening Service for the Launching of the Continental Mission Year of Asia and Oceania, which received a warm welcome when the theme song "Rise and Shine" was sung with great enthusiasm. The service was led by Fr. Antonius TENSI, SMM, the Provincial of SMM Indonesia, accompanied by Fr. Kristianus Jumi NGAMPU, SMM, the Coordinator of the Committee of Animation for the CMY of Asia and Oceania in the Flores Region.

On the second day, Wednesday, January 26, 2022, a festive Eucharistic Celebration was held in Ruteng City as the city was experiencing heavy rains. The Mass was presided over by Fr.

Arnold SUHARDI, SMM, Assistant General, accompanied by Fr. Antonius TENSI, SMM. Also present during the celebration were a number of representatives from other religious communities living around the Montfortian Novitiate. In this celebration, all members of the Montfortian Family wore traditional clothes from their respective regions. The priests wore traditional hats with various attractive colors and motifs.

In his homily, Fr. Arnold said: *"What triggers a young man to decide to enter the Aspirancy, Postulancy and Novitiate and become a religious? What prompts a prospective nun to apply to become a religious sister? Or what drives someone to consecrate himself or herself and joins AMQAH, were it not for in the depths of their hearts, there is a light shining, a light that guides us all like the shining star that led the three kings to come to Jesus?"* He then invited the people to learn from the moths, that whenever they see the light, they often come in swarms, flocking around the light of the lamp. When we are in the light of Jesus, then we too will be a light and become useful to others, as Jesus commanded: "You are the light of the world".

In his closing remarks, Fr. Anton emphasized that this year of mission needs to be seen as a special invitation from God throughout this year so that we can rise up and be a light: *"Please welcome this invitation personally so that all the activities of this CMY are carried out not because of an external impetus, but as a fruit of personal awareness to rise up as a missionary of Christ"*.

During the days of his visit to Ruteng, Father Arnold had also the opportunity to visit Mbeling parish and Poco parish where several Montfortians work. In these two parishes, people are busy and enthusiastically renovating several out-station churches in mutual cooperation.

Finally, in the Flores region, a number of programs to fill the CMY of Asia and Oceania 2022 have been well prepared and the implementation of such programs will involve the members of AMQAH and the Montfort Youth. Hopefully, all these activities go well. Thanks to God's grace. Rise and Shine!

*Jimmy Carvallo
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