



Montfort EurHope: Two Indonesians on Mission in the Netherlands

VROENHOF, Netherlands - Since November 2018, two confreres from Indonesia have been sent on mission to the Netherlands. After his ordination in 2014, Father Charles LETA, 33 years old, was assigned for three years at the minor seminary and a year at the scholasticate of Indonesia. In 2017, he was appointed as director of Montfortian lay associates in Malang. Father Stefanus MUSANAI, on the other hand was appointed as parochial vicar after his ordination in 2013 and was in France for 2 years since 2016. He is 36 years of age.

Father Stefanus shares with us the first months of their new adventure.

Our integration in the Netherlands.

We have been in the Netherlands for almost 11 months now. Upon arrival, we spent a lot of time learning the language. Sometimes we feel tired with the new language and the new culture. But with lots of encouragement coming from the community, we became more patient. Mastery of the language is an important aspect of our integration and our mission. We will do our best here because it is our mission now and our future. We will do this with all our hearts.

Meanwhile, Charles and I have done a lot of things. After attending language classes at the Regina Coeli Institute, we still take private lessons with two teachers who come regularly twice a week since May. After Easter, we also started attending driving lessons. It is very disappointing on our part because we have repeated it 12 times so far. We really need time and patience.

To better integrate in the culture, the council of the Province asked us to leave the community twice a month. By train or by bus, we visit cities, villages, churches and the like. For what? This is to know better the situation of the church, the Dutch culture and also to meet people in the city or villages. I believe it's a good idea. We have to know the world, the cultures, the habits and also the things that we do not find in the community. I think the purpose of this program is to discover and appreciate the beauty of this country. In just few months, we are slowly learning the Dutch habits. We also visit some confreres who live alone in nursing homes. It's very interesting on our part to finally meet them.

"Half time for the parish and half time for the congregation".

We are sent for the mission and we are open to the proposal of the Province of the Netherlands. In this regard, the Province tells us that we do not work only for the parish but also for the congregation. Hence, we devote half of our time for the parish and the other half for the congregation.

In mission for the congregation.

Because of this decision that we are working part-time for the congregation, the Father Provincial of the Netherlands encourages us to maintain good relations with the confreres of Belgium and Germany and also with the young confreres of other entities in Europe. This is why after Easter, we had the first meeting with the new Montfortian Missionaries from Belgium and Germany in Leuven. In this small group, we had a sharing on the future of the Montfortians in Europe particularly on what we can do for the mission of our entities. The second meeting will take place in the Netherlands in October. Our hope is to extend this meeting to young confreres to the rest of Europe including Portugal, France, Italy, England, Croatia and Poland.

We also participated in the Marian Symposium at Tilburg University. Father Wiel LOGISTER, SMM spoke of the Canticle of Father Montfort dedicated to Mary. Father Peter DENNEMAN, SMM, with a group of singers presented new hymns of Mary. According to Father Peter, they do a conference on Mary every year. It was well organized. I find this initiative very significant and hopefully it will continue in the future.

In mission for the parish.

Since our arrival, we often go to the parish, not only for Sunday Masses but also for other things like the internments of our confreres (last year), the Mass before Lent and the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. We also attend the meetings of the pastoral council. It is a great opportunity to meet the parishioners and gradually learn the habits of the parish.

In May, we met Mgr. Harrie Smeets, the bishop of the Diocese of Roermond, one afternoon at home. We talked about our identity and our mission before, now and in the future. He was happy to meet us.

For me, meeting our bishop is very important to get to know each other before beginning the mission in this diocese. After meeting the bishop, the councillors of the parish invited us twice to participate in their meeting. In the meeting, the Father Provincial explained our "half-time" commitment. According to him, we can begin the pastoral work in September (every weekend) and from October, we will live and work regularly in the parish with the confreres of the community of Schimert. From October to December, we will be engaged in the pastoral care for foreigners and integrate in the pastoral program of the Dutch church.

Currently, we are celebrating Mass with the Indonesian group. Father Piet DERCK, SMM, a former missionary in Indonesia, has already started this initiative.

Conclusion

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the General Administration for sending us to this mission. I also thank the councils of the Netherlands and Indonesia for trusting us in this mission. It is a great opportunity for us to live in this mission together. Let us go in prayer with our Blessed Mother Mary and Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort together with Marie Louise to go forward and seek the right path in the Netherlands.

Fr. Stefanus Musanai, SMM