



## **The Closing Celebrations of the Continental Mission Year 2022**

**PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG)** – Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort (1673-1716), originally from France and having lived in the era of absolute monarchism under the Sun King, was certainly unfamiliar with PNG. The existence of this nation with a population of 9,362,780 is located in the southwest Pacific and began to be known from the 19th century. Here, however, this «apostolic missionary», of Breton origin, is now known, at least in the parish of St. Martin de Porres, located in Morata, a district of Port Moresby, the national capital which hosted the closing celebrations of the Continental Mission Year of the Montfort Missionaries in Asia and Oceania, on the 4th Sunday of Advent, December 18, 2022.

The CMY Closing Mass celebration was presided over by the Archbishop of Port Moresby, Cardinal John RIBAT MSC, with preaching by Msgr. Rozario MENEZES, SMM, Bishop of the Diocese of Lae. The concelebrants were Msgr. Justin Ain SOONGIE, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Wabag, Father Luiz Augusto STEFANI, SMM, the Superior General of the Montfort Missionaries with his three assistants from Rome, the superiors of the Montfortian entities of India, Indonesia and the Philippines, as well as all the Montfort Missionaries working in PNG.

During this Holy Mass in Pidgin English, the parishioners led by their parish priest, Fr. Martinus WIDYATMOKO, SMM, showed their cultural richness in the form of variations on the traditional attire and dances performed during the procession of entrance, during the Bible procession and the procession of the offerings as well. During this Eucharistic celebration animated by joyful choir, seven Montfortian Associates consecrated themselves to Jesus through Mary for the first time.

In connection with the day's readings, Bishop Rozario said that, during his life, Saint Montfort was in harmony with what the angel said to Saint Joseph: "Do not be afraid..." (Mt 1, 20). The same thing was inspired by Saint Montfort to the Missionaries of the Company of Mary (n° 1) and to the Church of today which has recognized itself in the Gospel of Luke 12, 32: «Do not be afraid, little herd! For your Father was pleased to give you the Kingdom». Then the bishop, who was pastor of the parish of Morata for 6 years, mentioned several very relevant points for the Church today: the renewal of baptism, the importance of the Eucharist, the carrying of the cross on the path of every disciple, the place of Mary in the mystery of Christ and of the Church. All this means that the whole Church lives in an atmosphere of revival and can be «light» for others, even in Asia and Oceania!

After this very lively celebration, each group of parishioners - from various provinces of this country - presented various interesting cultural attractions in the courtyard of the Church to express joy and gratitude for the inspiration of Saint Montfort now visible in this piece of land. With his intercession from heaven, he continues to encourage the work of evangelization of the Church today.

*Dolaa DHANUSH*