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## **The General Administration of Our Congregation is With Us in Nicaragua**

**NICARAGUA** - As part of the 2019 Continental Montfortian Missionary Year, we, the Montfortians in Nicaragua, have the joy and privilege of having with us, from March 12 to April 1, 2019, Father Wismick Jean-Charles, Assistant General who is in charge of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Father Luiz Augusto Stefani, the Superior General of our Congregation.

This fraternal mission of proximity in Nicaragua is a way for Father General and his vicar to live with us, to know our places of mission with their challenges and opportunities and to encourage us in the mission, as Montfortians on journey.

During these twenty days of physical and useful presence, Fathers Luizinho and Wismick have not only lived with us in our Montfortian communities of Santo Tomas and la Gateada, but they have also celebrated with the Christian communities of the parishes Santiago Apóstol of Santo Tomas, where Father Harry Antonio M. Flores is the pastor, assisted by Father Zakarias Beong, and Maria Reina de todos los Corazones of la Gateada, whose pastor is Father Alonso Antonio Orozco Lazo. They have visited and celebrated Eucharist in some of our rural chapels such as Sagrado Corazón of Oropèndola, Maria Auxiliadora of Santa Fe, Santa Cruz of Jicarito, Guadalupe of Hojachigual and San José of Chilamate.

While Father Wismick was holding individual interviews to all of us regarding our health status, our joys and difficulties in our mission as well as the situation of our Montfort missionary life, etc., the Superior General, on his part, either met with our lay associates or visited the social ministries of our missions.

On Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> of March, Fr. Luizinho led the meeting with the Montfort Associates of Maria Reina de todos los Corazones Parish. He also presided the Mass of the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord on March 25 for our Montfortian family here. Both of them conducted as well, an information session on our spirituality for the Montfort associates of the Parish of Santiago Apóstol on Thursday, March 28.

During this mission of proximity of the General Administration to the Montfortians of Nicaragua, Fr. Luizinho had the joy of discovering the "Centro Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza" of Maria Reina de todos los Corazones Parish of la Gateada that provides food, twice a week, to vulnerable children and abandoned elderly people of the community. He also had the opportunity of visiting and conversing with the children of the preschool section and the young people of Christ the King College of Santo Tomas, founded by Father Peter D'Abele. This educational institution, that welcomes 553 students, has offered this year 170 full scholarships to very poor children of the region who, thanks to the Montfortians, currently has free access to quality education.

This presence of the General Administration among us, which is more than a canonical visit, has offered the Superior General and his council, the opportunity to help us continue the dynamic of "Returning to our roots" according to the Acts of the General Chapter. In this perspective of deepening our spirituality, Fr. Wismick also conducted a day of recollection for our confreres on Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, on the theme of wisdom which is the "cornerstone" of our spirituality.

Our Montfortian mission in Nicaragua has been blessed with great missionaries. This is an opportunity to remember the first missionaries of the United States Vice-Province, especially Fathers Frank Setzer, Theodore Murphy and Everett Brown, who are the pioneers of this mission and also to thank the other confreres of our US Vice-province, namely Fr. James Brady and Fr. Thomas Poth, our current Vice Provincial, who have worked for some years in this mission.

Finally, we express our gratitude to our Superior General, Father Luiz Augusto Stefani and to Father Wismick Jean-Charles, for their fraternal and joyful presence among us.

*Fr. Timoteus Jefro Daman, SMM*