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Training of Montfortian Formators in Africa

NAIROBI, Kenya - On 2nd July 2023, formators from all stages of formation, namely pre-postulancy, postulancy, novitiate as well as the scholasticate coming from Anglophone Africa, Francophone Africa and Madagascar, gathered in Nairobi to undergo a month-long training that has been organized by the General Council of the Montfort Missionaries with an aim of allowing formators to share their experiences, and in the process, acquire some necessary tools and skills in formation. Among the participants for this training process include Fr. Ignace MESSINOU, SMM, Fr. Ephrem KULONDWA, SMM, Fr. Charles KIPUTSU, SMM and Fr. Henri ALOTEREMBI, SMM from Francophone Africa; Fr. Paul KUMWENDA, SMM, Fr. Joseph KUDZALA, SMM, Fr. Ronald MUSINGUZI, SMM, Fr. Francis MUHANGI, SMM, Fr. Innocent MWANOKA, SMM and Fr. Laurent JUMA, SMM from Anglophone Africa; Fr. Lanto RAMIANDRISOA, SMM, Fr. Jean Joel RANDRIANARIVOMANANA, SMM, Fr. Henri Samuel NILAINA, SMM, and Fr. Clement RAANDRINIAINA, SMM from Madagascar.

This training began with an opening Mass on Sunday, 2nd July 2023 which was presided over by Fr. Wismick JEAN- CHARLES, SMM, one of the three facilitators for this month-long workshop. In his homily, Fr. Wismick emphasized on the need for hospitality basing on the Gospel of the day whereby he invited the formators from these three entities to be open enough to welcome the presence and working of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, so as to be led and guided in the noble task of forming future Montfortians.

From Monday, 3rd July to Friday, 7th July, we were guided by Fr. Wismick on the crucial topic dealing with the “Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults”. The facilitator helped us understand the seriousness of this global problem and challenged us never to shun away nor fear to talk about sexual abuse issues in formation.

He presented us the guidelines and the procedures that are being used in dealing with this reality within the Church. Some of which are drawing insights from various Church documents. In this regard, Fr. Wismick examined with us some Motu Proprio of Pope Francis like: *As a loving Mother, Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, and the *Vademecum revised* version 2.0, etc. We have also studied the section of the New SMM *Ratio II* which shades light on the formation on protection of minors and vulnerable adults. In the course, the facilitator urged us formators, to be vigilant and follow the measures in reporting and treating sexual abuse within the Company of Mary. To prevent sexual abuse in the church and within the SMM, Fr. Wismick put emphasis on some preventive measures such as in-depth and rigorous screening, ongoing assessment, setting healthy boundaries in formation, creating safe environment in our houses of formation, and making sure that formees really embrace healthy celibate life during the stages of formation.

Besides, the facilitator shared with us the tools for rigorous screening and on-going assessment, and the methods for measuring progress to determine if the formee can move to the next stage. Through the sessions, Fr. Wismick also reminded us about our important role of holding the future of the Congregation in our hands.

We pray for all of us formators who are participating in this month-long training that we may acquire valuable tools to continue to serve better our Congregation in the field of formation.

Fr. Laurent JUMA, SMM
A participant of Anglophone Africa