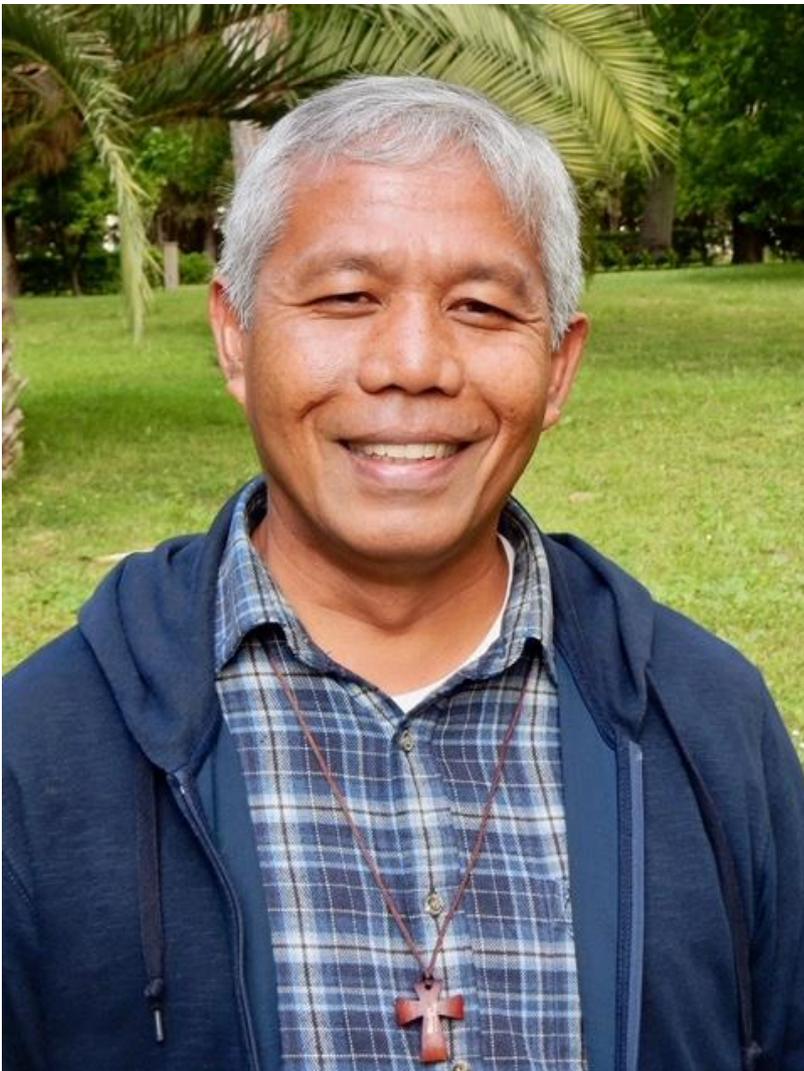


## First interview with Fr. Dwi, Superior General SMM

***What are the feelings that inhabit your heart the days after your election as 23rd successor of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort?***

When my name started appearing on the ballots, I felt fear inside me, because I was not expecting it at all. But at the same time, I felt encouragement and hope rising within me. The prayer that Jesus addressed to his Father in Gethsemane resonated in me: "Not my will but yours" and that intimidated me. But I was also touched by the theme of our Chapter: "Dare to take risks for God and humanity" by wondering what it could mean for me. With these feelings in my heart, I put everything in God's hands, because it was not my will. I am convinced that with all my limitations, God will allow me to do his will and will walk with me by making me a good shepherd, who helps the confreres in an approach of equality and "acting together".



Father Yoseph Putra Dwi Darma WATUN, SMM

***Your predecessor had made communication one of his strengths. What place do you intend to give to communication in your animation and government service?***

I consider myself above all a "man of closeness" who likes to be with others. I remember that when I was general councilor, I did not like to make quick visits, but I did everything to stay as long as possible with the confreres. I wanted to take the time to talk to each of them so that I could get to know them and listen to them. I recognize that this is one of my strengths, but now, with this new responsibility, the time has come to use the media more. During his mandate, Father Luizinho always maintained contact with everyone, with the laity, with young people, responding very quickly to everyone. Since those early days, therefore, I have tried to respond immediately to all the messages I receive. I see that I have to learn and I encourage myself to respond to

everyone: therefore, continuing to have face-to-face meetings, but also using the means of communication.

***You are at the head of the Congregation at a historic moment when the credibility of the Church is questioned on synodality and the protection of vulnerable people. What do you feel like promising your confreres and the people of God that the Congregation is called to serve?***

One of the characteristics of consecrated persons is to be prophets attentive to the signs of the times and to the cry of the people. I think that the synodality so much emphasized by Pope Francis is not something totally new. Rather, it brings us back to the experience of the first Christian communities, where everyone was “one heart and one soul” in a spirit of sharing. I feel motivated to bear witness to this spirit and to invite all my confreres to enter into the same witness of who we are as Montfortians through our lives, through our way of serving others: not people who sit all the time behind a desk, but who walk with people, meeting them, embracing them, as Pope Francis often repeats. So, the closeness with God and the closeness between us as the Montfortian Family, but also the closeness with the people of God, recalling that our Congregation was born in the Church, for the Church and for humanity. This is my dream for my ministry as shepherd of the Congregation.

Therefore, speaking of the protection of minors and vulnerable people, I am convinced that abuse is linked to the question of authority: we must be humble and aware of who we are. Our Montfortian identity is a vocation, not a professional activity or even a career. It is God who called us and who wants us to be servants. In recent days, I have been struck by the words of the prayer of consecration during Mass where it is said that Jesus “took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to the disciples”. This is what I want and what I would like to pass on to my confreres.

***During the Chapter and in its preparation, you take care, among other things, of the messages of the laity. What contribution do they bring to this 38th SMM General Chapter?***

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to our lay brothers and sisters, who collaborate with us and who walk with us in many parts of the world, praying for us and sending us gathered in Chapter many messages. Their messages that we read every day are an inspiration to me. Since the beginning of the General Chapter, the laity have invited us to come out of our "Ego" and come together in a family spirit, so this atmosphere of fraternity has become the spirit of our Chapter. We must continue in this spirit by collaborating with the laity and considering them as people who walk with us and help us to have this new spirit as Montfortians.

***Among the messages received after your election, is there one that particularly touched you?***

More than by a particular message, I am touched by the closeness and the affection that I received through the many messages. The fact that even people I don't know yet say to me: “I am with you and I pray for you”, creates in me a climate of trust. The awareness that around me and in many parts of the world there are so many people who care about me and promise to walk with me and pray for me has particularly touched me.

*General House - Communications Office*