



Montfort Youth Camp in Indonesia

FLORES, Indonesia - The desire to inflame young people's 'First Love' for Jesus through the love for Mary, His Mother, has enkindled the heart of the Montfort Missionaries to hold the 2023 Montfort Youth Camp recently in Indonesia.

This activity was attended by Montfort youth in Flores Region who came from four different places where the Montfort Fathers are present, namely Labuan Bajo, Ruteng, Poco, and Mbeling. This camp was attended by a total of 127 young people, and it was animated by 5 lay people, 2 brothers, 2 deacons and 6 priests. These young people came with immense joy and enthusiasm even though they had to travel for 4-8 hours to reach the camp area at the SMM Aspirant community in Labuan Bajo. This camp was also supported by Catholic families around the convent, who, in their kindest ways, prepared meals, provided a sound system and ensured that all events run successfully.

The event which was held on 2-5 July 2023 was the first Montfort Youth Camp in Flores region. "I love Jesus, I love Mary" was the chosen theme of this camp with a concept that is fun and full of challenges. These youth participated in different events like welcome dance and liturgical services. Others rendered songs and acted as prayer leaders before the session.

Sessions were presented on three very interesting topics. First is the "I Love Jesus" which made the young people aware of why they need to love God, simply because God loved them first. Second is the "I Love Mary" session which explained that God loves Mary so much because Mary is a special woman who also deserves to be loved by Christians. The third and final topic is the "I

Love Catholic Church” which displayed the privilege and beauty of the Catholic Church, the wealth of the tradition and culture that evokes the pride of Montfort youth as Catholic youth.

In addition, the Montfort youth were also invited to realize the importance of sharing with others by paying attention to the cleanliness of the environment. They dedicated themselves for two hours to render community service by cleaning the area, both within the SMM community and the surrounding public facilities. This initiative was welcomed by the local community who appreciated the Montfort Youth’s effort in taking concrete actions in loving God, Mary, and the Catholic Church.

Likewise, the participants had the privilege to visit Labuan Bajo which is one of the best tourist attractions in Indonesia. The committee did not miss the opportunity as they invited all Montfort Youth Camp’s participants to travel to the beach to enjoy and be grateful for God’s creation. This tour created a stronger bond and happiness among the participants. They also enjoyed the outdoor activities that united them in carrying out group missions in any given game. Furthermore, a talent show in the evening showcased the creativity of each group. Some of the activities that they enjoyed much were the daily Eucharist, Adoration, Taize and the Rosary prayer.

The closing ceremony of the Montfort Youth Camp was a very emotional moment. Many participants hugged each other. Some even cried because they had to return to their respective areas. They also asked that this activity be held once a year.

Although they were tired, the entire committee was extremely happy. Seeing the light of joy in the eyes of the participants made all the hard work worthwhile. With the belief in their hearts that ‘love at first’ was born, and with the future activities to come, everyone hopes and prays that all the participants will become more mature human beings and grow spiritually in loving Jesus through Mary.

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