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### **Stories from the Netherlands: “Dieu Seul”**

**NETHERLANDS** - The celebration of the death of Saint Montfort this year was quite special in the Vice-Province of the Netherlands. This time, almost all the confreres were present and celebrated the Eucharist together. In fact, the presence of Fr. Pierre ROBERTZ, SMM who is the oldest confrere in this Vice-Province was well appreciated. He currently lives in the far north of the Netherlands, and it was quite difficult for him to travel all the way south (Limburg). Moreover, since the Covid pandemic, he never came to see his fellow confreres in Limburg. Instead, several confreres visited him regularly at his residence.

Because these moments of togetherness rarely happen, all the confreres who were present were invited for a group photo in front of the monastery in *Vroenhof*. Besides, the Vice-Province doesn't have too many members, but when they come together, they become strong. Brotherhood, prayer and work together/teamwork are all there.

#### **“Dieu Seul”**

The celebration of the death of Saint Montfort started with a Mass as they sang the beautiful hymns of Saint Montfort together. It is a great pride that these hymns have been translated into Dutch and combined with Dutch musicality. The feeling of belonging to the hymns (beauty) of Montfort today becomes real.

During this great celebration, the reflection on Montfort's teaching on “Dieu Seul” was truly remarkable. Fr. Peter DENNEMAN, SMM, the Vice Provincial superior, in his sermon, linked “Dieu Seul” to Peter's call (Luke 5:1-11). Peter tried several times to catch fish but was unsuccessful. The net remains empty... Where are the fish? Where is the Church? Because everyone lives only in the

shallows? Or because all are too busy with the outside world, with church organizations and congregations?

On this 308<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Montfort's death, Fr. Peter DENNEMAN invited everyone to think explicitly about his 'Dieu seul', 'God Alone'. In Montfort's eyes, nothing begins without God. In this secular world, everything begins from worldly causes. For Montfort, nothing happens without or apart from God. He didn't want to do anything if it wasn't God's will or intention. He just wanted to rely on God's care. He appears to be a tightrope walker, who thus maintains his balance through his trust in God. All humans are pencils in God's hand. He uses everyone as His pencil to realize His mission of salvation in the world. If everybody is the pencil, then what is painted in the world is His work, not by anybody else.

At the end of his sermon, Fr. Peter quoted a prayer made by Wiel Logister during the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Montfort's canonization:

*“O Lord, you are the only one, who cannot be named, too great for us in your divinity, too great in your humanity, to you we pray, longing for your presence. I'm also worried that you're getting too close to us, and it puts us on a path we thought we couldn't go down. But following in the footsteps of Montfort, our father, we dare, even if your fire could burn us, burn and hurt us. We thank you that Montfort has crossed the path of our lives, that he keeps us awake, amazed us with his courage and commitment, his love for people...”*

After the Holy Mass, the confreres and some of the staff/team workers enjoyed drinks and food. May this spirit of joy and brotherhood be maintained among the confreres and for all Montfortians and their families wherever they are. “Dieu Seul”.

*Fr. Stefan MUSANAI, SMM*