



Father Leonardus Gerardus (Leo) BRINKMAN
(1933 - 2013)

*Died 5 October 2013, in Valkenburg LB (Netherlands)
aged 80, with 59 years of Religious Profession.*

Leonardus Gerardus Brinkman was born on March 7th 1933 in Limbricht. In 1947 he entered the minor seminary in Schimmert. He became a Montfortian on September 8th 1954, when he made his first vows in Meerssen. His study at the major seminary in Oirschot was (nearly) finished with his ordination on March 27th 1960 by Mgr. Bekkers. His first assignment was to become a teacher at the seminary in Fatima. After studying Portuguese he left for Fatima. He taught until 1985, interrupted by five years assisting in the Olival Basto parish. Till 1993 he was superior, assistant and parish-priest in Castro Verde. Back in Fatima he became assistant-superior of the seminarists till 1999 when he was appointed to Ourique. After two years he returned to Castro Verde. In his final years he assisted in Fatima in the Sanctuary and other places. In August 2010 he returned to the Netherlands and found a home with the community of Vroenhof, where he died on October 5th 2013.

From his years as a young boy Leo wanted to become a priest or rather a missionary. It was no surprise, then, for those around him that he went to the minor seminary, aged twelve. Leo enjoyed his years of study, when he was able to develop his talent for music. Although he was a bright student, he didn't want to take government examinations. He tried to avoid becoming a teacher! But this did not help him, as after his ordination he was sent to Portugal to become a teacher at the minor seminary in Fatima. He taught English, French, Latin, Greek, music and religion. Leo was a thoughtful teacher, the students could count on him any time. As a priest he was also loved. He was open and friendly to parishioners and shared everyone's joy or grief. As well as his pastoral care he was active as a builder. He restored the basilica of Castro Verde inside and outside, with help from the communist mayor!

Leo didn't really live as a member of a community until he came to Vroenhof. In Fatima he had so many contacts. As a guest he was very grateful. His family visited him often in Fatima, because he was a much-appreciated host. Returning to the Netherlands was difficult for him. He was always telling stories about Portugal. His health was never strong. Especially his eyesight got worse and worse. He never complained, not even when the cancer took hold of him. At the end of August Leo received the last sacraments among his confreres in the chapel of Vroenhof: an impressive celebration, which ended with the Fatima hymn. Leo was slowly becoming less and less to be seen in his wheelchair and finally he did not have the energy to get out of bed.

Surrounded by his nephew Henk, other family members and his confreres, his last days passed by until he died quietly and peacefully on October 5th. In Leo we have lost a respected and believing confrere. A true follower of our Founder. We are grateful for the work of Leo in Portugal and for his interest in our province. Leo, live on with our Lord, who is your support and shield over the boundary of death.