



L'Écho Montfortain

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LETTER FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Dear Confreres,

I want to speak with each one of you personally to share some sentiments, feelings, and reflections which have remained with me in a strong way since my first visits to some entities of our religious family for the celebrations of provincial chapters or assemblies.

I have had the opportunity to be close to the fruits of the missionary work of so many confreres, who, as worthy disciples of our Founder, have lived their MONTFORTIAN CONSECRATION by translating it into a passion FOR THE MONTFORTIAN MISSION OF EVANGELIZATION.

I am in the midst of writing these reflections in Litchfield (in the United States), in front of the faithful reproduction of the famous Grotto of Lourdes. It is an achievement due to the creativity and hard work of some Religious Brothers, who have incarnated in their lives the same fidelity and profound collaboration which Brother Mathurin had for the mission of evangelization at the side of Father de Montfort.

I have been equally struck by the testimony of a Bishop who, while celebrating the centennial of the missionary presence of the Montfortians in the "llanos of Colombia," emphasized as the first characteristic of these pioneers "to have been men of God."

"OPEN TO JESUS CHRIST"

"You have seduced me, O Lord, and I have let myself be seduced" (Jer 20, 7).

Having these experiences and many others which I do not have space to recall here, brings me back to the Letter which the General Chapter of 1999 addressed to the entire Congregation: "Open to Jesus Christ." I invite you all to pick it up again and make it the subject of your meditations. Another valuable point of reference is the Instruction of 2002, "Starting Afresh from Christ," in which we are told "to allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit to a constantly renewed discovery of God and of his Word, to a burning love for God and for humanity and to a new understanding of the charism which has been given. It calls for a concentration on an intense spirituality in the strongest sense of the word, that is *life according to the Spirit*."

Consecrated life today needs a spiritual rebirth which will help to concretely bring about the spiritual and evangelical meaning of baptismal consecration and of its *new and special consecration*" (cf. 20). John Paul II said in *Vita Consecrata*: "The spiritual life must therefore have first place in the programme of Families of consecrated life, in such a way that every Institute and community will be a school of true evangelical spirituality" (cf. 93). But let us go above all to our "Sources," to remember how Montfort dreamed, desired and prayed for us: *The Prayer for Missionaries* and the features of the Apostles of the last times from *True Devotion* (TD 55-59).

We are invited to rediscover each day that our fidelity to our vocation is in relation to our daily conversion to the presence of the Lord within us. Only an experience and a living, nourishing presence of the One who has called us allows us to rediscover that apostolic and wisdom spirituality which has been lived by so many confreres who have gone before us in the 300 years of the life of the Congregation.

It seems to me important to share fraternally with each of you and with our entire religious family some personal convictions.

- Without a **profound experience of God** our fidelity and our creativity withers away. The traps of mediocrity, of becoming bourgeois, of consumerism, present themselves. We lose our coherence and our credibility: *the quality of our personal life dwindles.*
- Without the **fabric of community life** sustained by sharing our experience of God, by community celebrations of faith and life, our being together loses significance and the differences which ought to be riches on our journey become instead obstacles which distance us from one another: and *the quality of our living together is diminished.*
- Without a **clear and coherent choice to announce the presence of the Kingdom** following the example of Christ, we lose the savour of salt and our role as leaven, and we are no longer significant for the world of today, which needs instead a presence which goes against the current to proclaim the Good News by questioning the false values of a comfort society: *the quality of our mission fades.*

MONTFORTIAN CONSECRATION”

“O Mary, in your hands I renew today the vows of my baptism ... and I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ, Incarnate Wisdom”

For Montfort, what is the consecration to Jesus Wisdom through the hands of Mary, if not a daily and profound conversion to the Lord who transforms our life?

On my journeys during these months, in Belgium, in England, in Italy, I have met with lay people who live spontaneously and enthusiastically this consecration to Jesus through Mary. This is an incentive for us, reminding us to take up again our consecration and to spread this path of holiness by our life and our words.

It is a spirituality which places us in the hands of Mary to be able in every circumstance and in each moment to act for “the greater glory of God and for the salvation of the world.” And, like Mary who met Jesus on the road to Calvary, we will have a great power to illuminate every day, in the midst of our sisters and brothers and above all the least ones, the path of hope and salvation which the Lord wants us to realize today.

And here are some other reflections on which we can stop and pray:

- Only by **living the charism of consecrated life** will we have in us the image of Christ to be able to proclaim him to the world, by having, like Him, a heart “which is moved” by our people, and then we will be able to share their pains and their suffering to ... “teach them many things” (Mk 6, 34)
- Only by **being seduced by the Lord** will we be able to empty ourselves of so many things to which we are often attached and which hinder our availability, clarity, courage, flexibility, and creativity for building the Reign of God through Mary.
- Only a **true passion for God** will allow us to make the choice for human persons with as much passion and to go where the Lord calls us to bring the proclamation of fraternity, freedom, and consciousness of dignity for which everyone yearns.

300 YEARS OF THE CONGREGATION... HOW TO RECEIVE THIS HERITAGE?

“Liberos...”. “The priests who enter must be called by God to preach missions in the steps of the Apostles who were poor” (MR, 2).

To give life in love: this is the message which was proposed to us in the liturgical season of Lent which we lived. Being in deep communion with the Lord, we too will be able to give our life in love, just as Father de Montfort and so many of his disciples have witnessed for us. To have celebrated the 300 years of the Congregation makes sense only if it has helped to awaken in us the same passion of so many Montfortians before us who have given their lives to proclaim the Gospel.

In the heart of Mary, we will be transformed as her true sons in the image of the Son, and thus we will be able to have the same sentiments and attitudes as his, the same desire for the fullness of life which he had during his earthly pilgrimage.

This light of life and hope must shine forth from our faces, in our everyday deeds, for the people whom we evangelize, in the same way we have discovered the love God has for us in the face and the deeds of Jesus.

Brother Mathurin’s fidelity in the Montfortian mission is for us the “living testimony” which today should illuminate our fidelity, our passion, our consecration in order to live with a strong SPIRITUALITY the MONTFORTIAN MISSION.



S. M. M.

Fr. Santino BREMBILLA, S.M.M.,
Superior General

OFFICIAL NEWS ITEMS

First Professions:

31/12/2005	Ñaña (Peru)	MARÇAL DOS SANTOS Anézio Lopes
31/12/2005	Ñaña (Peru)	RODRIGUES Mauri Sebastião
31/12/2005	Ñaña (Peru)	GRANADOS AYAPI Roberto Carlos

Perpetual Professions:

15/08/2005	Malang, East Java (Indonesia)	NGATAM Emanuel Bonaventura
10/12/2005	Balaka (Africa)	PHIRI Felix Mabvuto
25/03/2006	Roma (Italy)	RAKOTONDRAVAO Jean-Marie Helpa

Ordinations to the diaconate:

27/04/2005	Guru Mandir, Mysore (India)	PETER RAJ Sebastian Raj
27/04/2005	Guru Mandir, Mysore (India)	SANJEEVAPPA Mohan Vincent

27/04/2005	Guru Mandir, Mysore (India)	SUSAI MUTHU Maria Salath
16/08/2005	Malang, East Java (Indonesia)	NGATAM Emanuel Bonaventura
21/01/2006	Balaka (Africa)	PHIRI Felix Mabvuto
25/01/2006	Ozone Park (USA)	GILLESPIE Hugh
25/03/2006	Huaycán (Peru)	TÁVARA VÉLIZ Edwin Willer

Ordinations to the priesthood:

27/12/2005	Lokutu (Congo RD)	BOKUMU ALASO Jean de Dieu
15/01/2006	Port au Prince (Haiti)	SAINT JEAN Zacharie
22/01/2006	Bangalore (India)	PETER RAJ Sebastian Raj
22/01/2006	Bangalore (India)	SANJEEVAPPA Mohan Vincent
22/01/2006	Bangalore (India)	SUSAI MUTHU Maria Salath
22/01/2006	Bangalore (India)	BULIPE Francis Showri (Francis)

VARIOUS NOTICES

NEW ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVINCIAL DELEGATION OF PERU-BRAZIL

On 17 September 2005, the Provincial Superior of Italy, with the accord of his Council, has appointed **Father Luciano ANDREOL** Superior Delegate of the Provincial Delegation of Peru-Brazil, starting from 1st January 2006.

The Councillors are: Father Giovanni BIGONI, Father Carlos HUDTWALCKER MORÁN, Father José Ángel JULCAHUANCA PARIATÓN, Father Jesús Leopoldo CUCHO PUCHURI.

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NEW PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN FRANCE

On 16 November 2005 the Chapter of the French Province has elected **Father Pierre BONHOMMEAU** as Provincial Superior.

The Councillors are: Father Pierre GROSPERRIN, Provincial Vicar and Provincial Bursar (up to 31 December 2006); Brother Daniel BUSNEL, service in the provincial bursar's office and Communications; Father René PAUL, service of Old Age Confreres and Internationality; Father André LAUNAY, Mission Procurator.

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NEW PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN BELGIUM

On 29 November 2005, the Chapter of the Belgian Vice-Province has re-elected **Father Jo GELISSEN** as Vice Provincial Superior for a second mandate of three years.

The Councillors are: Father Jef MARTENS, Father Frans FABRY, Father Jos VAN DEN BERGH.

NEW PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN HAITI

On 11 January 2006, the Chapter of the Province of Haiti has elected **Father Laurent Emilien PIERRE** as Provincial Superior.

The Councillors are: Father Wilner DONÉCIA, Vicar provincial, Father Syriaque CINÉ, Secretary, Father Rams LAPOMMERAY, Father Jean Jacques SAINT-LOUIS.

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NEW PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN COLOMBIA

On 22 January 2006, the Chapter of the Province of Colombia has elected **Father Miguel PATIÑO HORMAZA** as Provincial Superior.

The Councillors are: Father José Luis SANDOVAL, Father Orlando CASTRO GONZÁLEZ, Father Gabriel Antonio RIVEROS PRIETO, Father Ricaurte MOTTA BLANCO.

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NEW PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN ITALY

On 6 January 2006, the Chapter of the Italian Province has elected **Father Luciano NEMBRINI** as Provincial Superior.

The Councillors are: Father Aldo BOLIS, Father Angelo EPIS, Father Marcello BARALDO, Father Adriano DALLE PEZZE.

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NEW PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN USA

On 9 February 2006, the Chapter of the Province of USA has elected **Father Matthew CONSIDINE** as Provincial Superior.

The Councillors are: Father William CONSIDINE, Father Thomas POTH, Father George WERNER.

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NEW ADMINISTRATION OF THE GENERAL DELEGATION OF PORTUGAL

On 22 February 2006, the General Superior, with the accord of his Council, has appointed **Father Manuel PEIXOTO GONÇALVES** Superior Delegate of the General Delegation of Portugal.

The Councillors are: Father Rui Manuel VALÉRIO SOUSA and Father Carlos A. FERNANDES MANSO.

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NEW ADMINISTRATION OF THE GENERAL DELEGATION OF MADAGASCAR

On 8 March 2006, the General Superior, with the accord of his Council, has appointed **Father Orazio ROSSI** Superior Delegate of the General Delegation of Madagascar.

The Councillors are: Father Alexandre RANDRIAMIHARISOA, Father Pierino LIMONTA, Father Didier Célestin RASATAMADINIVOLA, Brother Armand RANAIVOSON.

NEW ADMINISTRATION OF THE GENERAL DELEGATION OF INDIA

On 25 March 2006, the General Superior, with the accord of his Council,
has appointed **Father Peter MASCARENHAS**
Superior Delegate of the General Delegation of India for a second mandate of three years.

The Councillors are: Father Anthony PEREIRA,
Father Joseph JOSEPH, and Father Michael Sagayaraj JAMES.

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NEW ADMINISTRATION OF THE GENERAL DELEGATION OF PHILIPPINES

On 7 April 2006, the General Superior, with the accord of his Council,
has named **Father Richard MAGARARU**
Superior Delegate of the General Delegation of Philippines, for a second mandate.

The Councillors are: Father Ramon PEDROZA M. and Father Nelson M. CABAÑERO.

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NEW PROCURATOR GENERAL

The 22 February 2006, the Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter Apostle,
Fr. Santino BREMBILLA,
Superior General of the Company of Mary,
with the agreement of his Council,

has named as Procurator General of the Congregation,
Father Battista CORTINOVIS,

with the mission fostering the knowledge and appreciation
of our Montfortian spiritual patrimony in the Church,
by serving as the official contact with the Dicasteries of the Holy See,
by maintaining a presence at significant moments in the life of the Church,
and by using various means of communication.

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E.G.C.

This E.G.C. will take place in Rome, from 3 to 11 October 2006.

Place: Casa Generalizia dei Fratelli di San Gabriele

After the E.G.C. there will be two meetings:

- 1) **From 12 to 14 October**, the Provincial Superiors of Colombia, Haiti, USA, France, Italy, and the Delegation Superior of Peru-Brazil will have a meeting about **Latin America**.
- 2) **From 12 to 14 October**, the Delegation Superior of Africa, Madagascar, India, Indonesia and the Philippines will have a meeting about **African-Asian collaboration**.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF MISSION – SPIRITUALITY – COMMUNITY

“...to form [confreres] in an apostolic spirit” (MR 12)

The General Chapter of 2005 stressed the importance of our solidarity as an international community who share a common spirituality and a common mission. One of the specific orientations of the Chapter is to create opportunities for an increased number of confreres to have an international experience of spirituality, mission and community:

We find it important to organize missionary stages for young Montfortians (priests and brothers) in international communities. (Orientations of the General Chapter 2005, N. 61)

These “missionary stages” will benefit not only those young Montfortians who take part in them, but also the other confreres with whom they will share these experiences, e.g. those confreres with whom they will live and work in these international communities.

We are in the process of searching for ways these projects can be realized, for those who can participate as experienced confreres and resource persons, as well as for the young Montfortians who will take part in the first of these experiences. There may be possibilities in the future for short term experiences, but for now we have in mind some programs that would last for two or three years. Three possible locations have been identified for these experiences: Pontchâteau in France, the General House in Rome, and a location within the United States.

These experiences will provide opportunities for confreres to deepen their knowledge and appropriation of Montfortian spirituality, and to live and work together in an international community which is engaged in the mission of the Congregation.

Since we are in the beginning stages of planning for these experiences, we want to set out their objectives and the criteria proposed for selecting participants in these programs.

Objectives of the Experience

- to provide an experience of community – spirituality – mission
- to provide an international experience of mission and ministry
- to provide an opportunity for younger Montfortians to work together with a confrere who will act as a resource person to guide and animate the experience, and to work together as a team with other confreres
- to reinforce the promotion of Montfortian Spirituality within the entity hosting the experience and / or in other locations
- to promote a sharing of experience and the Montfortian heritage between younger confreres and more experienced confreres

Criteria for Selection of Participants

- an openness for an international experience: an ability to learn other languages, and a sense of openness and respect for other cultures
- some years of pastoral experience after final vows / ordination
- a capacity to work with others on a team
- a certain enthusiasm for Montfortian spirituality

Outcome

After these experiences, participants will return to their entities with a greater ability to help in the mission of the Congregation and in the promotion of Montfortian Spirituality. They will have experience in working together. Consequently, these experiences will benefit the confreres who participate, their home entities, and the entities in which the programs take place.

BROTHERS IN OUR MIDST



I'M "JUST" A BROTHER FOR OTHERS

I would like to share my experience as a person who consecrated my life to be a brother in the Company of Mary. I have found both good and bad experiences living in community together with priests, brothers, and postulants. I know that there isn't a perfect community, but there is always an opportunity to struggle to make community better. Different conditions in the community are part of my journey as a religious. These dynamics make me grow emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and so become a mature person. I'm aware that we struggle as one family, with one spirit, one goal, one mission as Montfortians, although there are many differences among us. I never think, "I'm *just* a brother while the others are priests," because what we are doing together in making a contribution to our mission and community is deeper than the individual roles that we play.

I am doing ministry as part of the Pastoral Category Team (PCT). This team has been built as a project inspired by the General Chapter of 1993. The Delegation of Indonesia is trying to make real the four aspects of our Montfortian Mission: Mary, Evangelization, Availability, and Working Together in Communion, through this team and other teams which are working in parishes. Our activities as members of the PCT include giving days of recollection, retreats, and some courses, as well as forming groups of youth and local religious leaders. Fr. Piet Derckx, who was the Delegation Superior of Indonesia at that time, gave me, together with Fr. Arifin Dwirahmanto, Fr. M. Widyatmoko, and Fr. Yoep van Lier, the opportunity to build an itinerant team that would do ministry in the Bangsal Sebeji (a small place/aula in Sintang) and then offer our programs to parishes in the area. The Team also serves as facilitators and coordinators for our young Montfortian brothers and priests in Kalimantan, who gather every two months to reflect upon and evaluate our journey and mission as Montfortians. We prepare discussion materials on various issues and situations that we want to treat. The topics include Scripture, spirituality, management, leadership, etc.

After four years of working in Sintang, Fr. Ignatius Widodo, the present Delegation Superior, send me to build a new team in the new community of *Deo Soli* in Putussibau, together with Fr. Masjohn Kennedy, Fr. Markus Golo, Bro. Frans, Fr. Borgias, and Fr. Herman. In Putussibau we carried on a ministry like the one in Sintang. After four years in *Deo Soli*, my superior asked me to move to Bandung to work in the major seminary there. But for the last few years, I have been back working in Sintang again. (Maybe they just wanted to get rid of me at the major seminary!! ... Just kidding!)

From what I described of the different kinds of my activity, I just want to say that as a brother, I really want to be a friend and brother to others in the community and in the mission. I have a dream that I could share my life with other confreres and with people without fear and shame. I want to support others during the mission, just as I also need support from them. I wish to help the local community become a home for everyone, so that everyone can feel happy, secure, free and at home in the community. I believe that this condition will help us to live our consecrated life as Montfortians, through the hands of Mary in the Company of Mary.

Brother Yusup Gunarto, S.M.M.
General Delegation of Indonesia

SAY IT WITH A JOKE

I have known Bro Gunarto/Goen since 1999. When I followed a pastoral orientation year in Benua Martinus, West Borneo, Kalimantan, he gave us recollection sessions. Several years after that, we were preparing for perpetual vows. The first plan was to go to India for the Preparation for Perpetual Profession, but because we didn't receive visas to go to India, we had to change the place for the program. Instead, Putussibau was designated the alternative place for the Preparation for Perpetual Profession, so I met Brother Goen again over there. He became our tutor. Our time of preparation was six months, and, soon after, I was ordained a priest. After my ordination, I lived in the same community with Brother Goen for as long as three years in Putussibau. And now we live together in the same community here in Sintang.

After living with Goen for several years, I have learned a lot from him. For example, there are many ways to build togetherness in community – including joking, sharing ideas, planning together, and other methods as well. There are also many ways to express or say something. We can express an experience, an intention, an attitude or an idea by words. But in many situations our communication of all these things is going to fresh and alive if we package them with joke. A good sense of humor is very helpful in community life. Say something with a joke; it makes you fresh and alive. This sentence is suitable for our big brother, Goen. Every body knows who he is.

Joking and a great sense of humor have become part of Goen's life. He can always find a way to express or say something with a joke. It is common knowledge that everybody who meets him is going to end up laughing and smiling. He is a person who is always happy to solve some problems, although he can often approach situations with a joke. His sense of humor is an expression of joy, and it shows that he does not take himself too seriously.

When we ask him to help us, he just says, "there isn't a way to say no to help you men." It's like the song of Goen's life and his deepest motivation – to help others. It's a song of willingness to cooperate with others and to fulfill our spirituality by helping or supporting one another.

Now, there is a lot of work and planning to be done as we meet the future. As a community, let's walk together. We can learn from Goen's joy of living and sense of humor.

Happy Birthday, Goen! Keep your song of life! We can walk together as a community and at times we can improve our communication and our joyful living by saying something with a joke. Keep your jokes coming!

Father Herman Nuwa Nupa, S.M.M.

A MISSIONARY IN EUROPE

Saint Louis Marie de Montfort was a very well known and tireless apostolic missionary for his whole life. Today it is up to us, his spiritual sons in the Congregation who are in the process of continuing everything he has done. This spurs me on to tell you about my personal experience as a Montfort Missionary.

I am Jean Désiré, a Malgache Montfort Brother. I am working now at the general house. There are twelve brothers and sisters in my family, and I am the oldest. Even though I am the oldest, I was equally blessed by my parents after telling them of my choice to become a religious. The tale of my vocation is very long, and I cannot tell it all because that's another story. I would like to express just my experiences as a Montfort Missionary.

At the beginning of my formation in the novitiate, from September 8, 1998 to September 8, 1999, I already desired to go out on mission outside my country of Madagascar, since I had seen many foreign missionaries who were in the midst of working with enthusiasm, generosity, and joy, while giving themselves entirely to Jesus Christ according to the evangelical counsels. Many Malgache people have received abundant spiritual riches – and even intellectual and material ones through their presence and their marvelous works. When I shared my desire to be a missionary outside of Madagascar with those responsible, after a long reflection on their part, I received an answer in November 2003. This positive response came three months after my final vows. Even so, I was very concerned when I heard that the place for my mission was the General House. It wasn't at all what I thought it would be, but it's true that the Lord offers things we have not considered, as it says in Psalm 138, 17: "For me, how difficult are your thoughts O God."

Anyway, I don't want to give the impression of repaying the European countries that have sent missionaries to my country or to my delegation, but only of giving myself to the Lord by working like all the other missionaries. I wasn't thinking at all about going on mission to Europe. I accepted with joy because for me this is God's will. At the beginning, my duties were not quite defined or specific. From this perspective, I noticed the need for a brother with versatile skills in a general house, to provide numerous services. I can say that this reality has helped me a lot in my ongoing formation which I see is extremely useful in the world today. And, little by little, I have been entrusted with the care of the garden, to make the surroundings of the house beautiful. It's a simple job, but one which really demands much initiative and creativity, even if it's a matter of the simple care of plants. I spend my time with the maintenance of the house and I also help the bursar of the house.

I am happy with the collaboration that exists among us for different tasks, and also the collaboration between me and the house staff (the women who work here helping us). There is a lot of work for me when someone is away, for example during the cook's vacation. For various little tasks, I am really convinced that the Brothers are really necessary and indispensable. There! I'm telling you that I am very happy.

In a few words, I am happy with our community life here in the General House. As an international Congregation, the community experience in the sense of sharing fraternal life is something important for me, and the presence of confreres who come from different countries of the world also brings me joy and gives me some spiritual richness. Even if I have only been here in Rome for two years, I can say that I have already received many spiritual riches, thanks to the experience of community life with my priest confreres. I am beginning to find a way to do catechesis with young people in the parish, since I was asked to do this a few months after my arrival, when I've succeeded in expressing myself in Italian. I feel good in this pastoral service because it gives me the chance to deepen my faith more, and at the same time it helps me to live our Montfortian spirituality. Brother Hervé (French) has helped me a lot in the use of tools and all the procedures for work. He really has experience, and at the same time he knows how to share his talents with others. I am very grateful to him.

I wish you all the grace of God, and to all those who live with me – **peace** ...

Brother Jean Désiré Rakotonandrasana, S.M.M.

SERVICE WITH A SONG IN HIS HEART

I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Mt 25, 35

If you hear singing in the General House, it's probably Brother Jean Désiré, who often goes about his daily tasks humming or singing a tune. Désiré (or Dézy, as some of us call him) came to the General House from Madagascar two years ago to work with Brother Hervé in the care and upkeep of the house and gardens. You could call him a *factotum*, since he does so many things.

You can see him caring for the plants in the garden, preparing the tables for meals, getting the food from the kitchen to the dining room, looking after the cars, preparing the altar for Mass. A talented cook himself, Désiré also pitches in at times when our regular cook, Luisa, cannot be present. In addition to these physical tasks, he takes his turn leading our community prayer.

Désiré has also made an impact beyond the walls of our Generalate. He is involved in catechetical sessions in the parish of San Luigi de Monfort here on Monte Mario, and he also joins in the prayers and activities of the sizeable Malgache community here in Rome.

Even more impressive than the many tasks Brother Jean Désiré carries out is the way he fulfils his mission here. His song, his smile and his easy laughter contribute to the spirit of welcome and hospitality in the General House. This is a vital aspect of the community here. The challenges of an international community, the many guests who come to stay here, the comings and goings of the superior general and his assistants all call for a certain atmosphere of welcome to be maintained. A fraternal spirit of warmth and joy is even more important in the General House than the technologies which help us get our work done. This atmosphere provides a context for meetings and for the work of coordination and administration that take place here. In a sense, the General House belongs to everyone in the Congregation. Désiré helps to make this reality a lived experience for those who live here and for those who visit. He is a valuable presence in the General House. For this we are very grateful, and we give thanks to God for Désiré's ministry and his song among us. We hope we can continue to give him reasons to sing songs of joy.

Don LaSalle, S.M.M.

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL HOUSE

As Father General and the Assistants General have been travelling to provincial chapters and delegation assemblies for the past several months, the local community at the Generalate has kept the home fires burning. Fr. Ivo, Fr. Battista, Fr. Francesco and Brother Jean Désiré, along with the house staff, have continued to welcome guests, to see to the daily operations in the house, and to maintain communication with the Congregation. Brother Hervé has been enjoying an extended visit in France, and he will return to the General House shortly.

We have welcomed a new member of the General House Community. Father Luiz Stefani from the Delegation of Peru-Brazil, has arrived to be a part of the international mission experience here at the Generalate. He will work together with Fr. Battista Cortinovis and other confreres who will come in the next few months. They will follow a program of ongoing formation in Montfortian spirituality and help in the General Secretariat and Communications Office. He has been busy getting settled and polishing his Italian.

Among the guests at the Generalate in recent months have been Fr. John Breslin, S.M.M., here to celebrate his 50th anniversary of ordination; Archbishop Paul Bakyenga of Mbarara and Bishop Thomas Msusa S.M.M. of Zomba stayed here for a few days after a conference for Bishops by the Comunità di Sant'Egidio; Bishop Camille Lembi of Isangi paid a courtesy visit after the *Ad Limina* visit of the Congolese Bishops to the Pope; Bishop Thomas Msusa, S.M.M. came again to Rome to represent the Bishops' Conference of Malawi for the episcopal ordination of the new papal nuncio to Malawi and Zambia.

OUR DECEASED BRETHREN

Father Paul VERSCHRAEGEN (1929 – 2005)

Father Paulus Franciscus Verschraegen was born the 15 of January 1929 at Lokeren. He made his first profession at Meerssen (NL) the 18 of October 1951, and made his perpetual vows in 1956 at Oirschot. He was ordained priest the 31 of March 1957 by Bishop Mutsaerts.

After a pastoral year, he prepared for the Congo. As a missionary he worked at the mission posts of Bondamba and Wenge. He developed a good reputation as a professor of French at the teachers' training school at Lokutu. Gentle and kind by nature, he could not endure the rebellion (of 1964 in the Congo), and he remained in Belgium. After working a little at the *Oeuvres Mariales*, he spent 12 years as a professor of religion at Brakel. During this time, he continued to accompany pilgrimages. In 1979 he became parish priest of the parish of Notre-Dame Médiatrice at Leuven as well as the superior of the local community. His last assignment was at Genk, where he was retired since 2001.

Paul was a jovial confrere with a heart of gold. Once he started with his stories, it was difficult for him to stop. He spent all his time on his confreres and his parishioners. He had a calm and tranquil disposition, and he followed his own rhythm. Nevertheless, he had more depth than we realized: he did book reviews for the Dominican periodical *La Vie Intérieure*. A great lover of music, wherever he was, one could hear this heavenly music: in church, in his room.

Paul did not always have an easy life, especially in the last years of his illness. He held on to life while he was out of breath; up until the moment when the breath of God came to call him on Christmas Day 2005. He is now able to contemplate the great light which had been promised to us during the time of Advent. May his soul rest in peace.

Brother FELIPE (Porfirio ROA OLMOS) (1927 – 2006)

Born the 31 of March 1927 in Garagoa, in the department of Boyacá, to a very humble family, the son of Abelardo Roa and Roselina Olmos. There were seven boys in the family, of whom he was the oldest.

Simple and humble in character, he felt a calling to religious life from a very early age, entering the Montfort Community with eight other brothers who also made profession but who later left. He made his first profession in San Juanito 15 August 1951.

He served the province in many different communities, moving to the Prefecture of the Vichada, houses of formation, parishes, etc. In general he was in good health, but then had serious cardiac problems, and, in his last years, a neurological infirmity which caused him much suffering after it prevented him from being able to speak and to eat. He died on 31 January in Bogotá and was buried 1 February in Choachí.

He was a kind and diligent religious, very dedicated to his religious practices, especially to the holy rosary, with a special devotion to the Most Holy Virgin. He carried a small image of her, which he kissed with much love during his last days.

We could say further, that he was a brother “without equal and always equal.” Good and faithful servant, go in peace and enter into the joy of your Lord.

Father Pietro RUGGERI (1925 – 2006)

Pietro Ruggeri was born the 24 of July 1925 in Villongo S. Alessandro (Bergamo). At the age of nineteen, after meeting Father Giusti in July of 1944, he entered the Minor Seminary in Redona di Bergamo. Two sisters followed him into the Montfortian Family, becoming Daughters of Wisdom: Sr. Angela and Sr. Nazzarena. Young, with an impulsive and fiery character, he maintained his missionary ideal from his first steps on the road toward Montfortian life. He entered the novitiate of Castiglione (Turin) in September 1949, and he made his first vows on 8 September 1950. He completed his studies in philosophy and theology at the scholasticate of Loreto. He was ordained a priest with eight other confreres on 25 February 1956 in the basilica of the Holy House.

Father Pietro's first field of priestly activity was in Ginosa (Taranto) where the Pontificia Opera Assistenza (POA – The Pontifical Welfare Agency) entrusted to the Montforts the ministry of pastoral welfare for the people of the countryside. With a chapel on wheels, he reached people on the farms, spoke with them, catechized them, and celebrated the sacraments. In 1963 the community of Treviglio (Bergamo) welcomed Father for parish missions and for preaching in various forms. He took on the pastoral care of 'Fornasotto', a section of Pontirolo Nuovo (Bergamo) in the diocese of Milan. It was here that he confirmed his reputation as a tireless animator of multiple initiatives, and outstanding among them was the construction of a new church.

During this time he was the spiritual animator of our pilgrimages to Lourdes on numerous occasions. Montfort students who were having pastoral experiences far from the scholasticate found in him a welcome, a willingness to share and to be available for consultation and discernment. In 1981 he was at the scholasticate in Rome for the pastoral formation of the students. He became first the vicar and then the parish priest of the parish of St. Massimiliano Kolbe, which emerged in a zone of unauthorized building in Ponte di Nona. The construction of the parish church was an unrealized dream from this period. He helped to collect iron and paper to finance the project.

Due to health problems in 1998, he went first to Arbizzano, where he was still available for preaching and confessions, and then in 2001 to Villa Montfort. P. Pietro knew how to pour out his strong character in preaching, in contact with people, and in love for the priestly ministry. He produced three books, the fruit of reflection and preaching: "Santità di Maria, santità della Chiesa" (The Holiness of Mary, The Holiness of the Church); "Vivendo Maria, donna di Nazaret" (Living Mary, the Lady of Nazareth) and " Preti..." (Priests...). He ended his earthly pilgrimage on 7 March 2006, a few days after the celebration of his golden jubilee of priesthood.

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STATISTICS OF THE COMPANY OF MARY (31-12-2005)

By "Juridical Entity"

	Priests	Brothers	Scholastics	Total
Belgium	27	5	0	32
Canada	42	14	1	57
Colombia	49	5	7	61
France	99	31	1	131
GB&I	22	5	0	27
Generalate	115	12	93	220
Germany	19	1	1	21
Haiti	42	1	13	56
Italy	167	15	9	191
Netherlands	77	18	0	95
United-States	24	3	3	30
	683	110	128	921

By "Entity governing the work"

	Priests	Brothers	Scholastics	Total
Africa	20	2	6	28
Argentina	4	1	0	5
Belgium	32	5	0	37
Canada	39	14	1	54
Colombia	50	5	8	63
Congo RD	1	2	0	3
France	79	26	0	105
GB&I	19	5	0	24
General House	8	2	0	10
Germany	21	1	1	23
Haiti	45	2	13	60
India	34	0	37	71
Indonesia	28	4	39	71
Italy	119	9	2	130
Madagascar	19	5	3	27
Malawi	17	3	0	20
Netherlands	60	15	0	75
Nicaragua	3	0	3	6
Papua	8	0	0	8
Peru-Brazil	26	3	7	36
Philippines	11	0	8	19
Portugal	15	1	0	16
Spain-Equateur	5	2	0	7
United-States	20	3	0	23
	683	110	128	921

By "Country of work"

	Priests	Brothers	Scholastics	Total
Argentina	4	1	0	5
Australia	1	0	0	1
Bahamas	2	0	0	2
Belgium	30	5	0	35
Brazil	9	1	3	13
Canada	39	14	0	53
Colombia	49	5	8	62
Congo RD	7	3	0	10
Croatia	4	0	0	4
England	16	4	0	20
Equateur	4	1	0	5
F.- Réunion	4	0	0	4
France	74	26	0	100
Germany	25	1	1	27
Haiti	37	2	13	52
India	33	0	37	70
Indonesia	27	4	39	70
Island	1	0	0	1
Italy	118	9	7	134
Kenya	2	0	5	7
Madagascar	19	5	2	26
Malawi	25	4	1	30
Mexico	2	0	0	2
Mozambique	1	0	0	1
Netherlands	51	13	0	64
Nicaragua	3	0	0	3
Papua	7	0	0	7
Peru	20	3	4	27
Philippines	12	0	8	20
Portugal	15	1	0	16
R. Dominican	1	0	0	1
Rome	8	2	0	10
Scotland	2	1	0	3
Spain	2	1	0	3
Uganda	2	0	0	2
United-States	25	3	0	28
Zambia	2	1	0	3
	683	110	128	921