



# L'Écho montfortain

IN THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER...

November 2009 - N° 11

## OUR DECEASED CONFRERES



**Father Gerardus (Gerard) VAN DER HEIJDEN, S.M.M.**  
**(1933 – 2009)**

Died on 2 August 2009, in Eindhoven (The Netherlands).  
Aged 75 with 52 years of Religious Profession.

Gerard van der Heijden was born on 9 August 1933 in Spoorдонк (municipality of Oirschot). He joined the Montfortians in D'Hoppe (Belgium) in 1955 and made his first vows on 8 September 1956. On 1 April 1962, Bishop Bluysen ordained him a priest in Oirschot. His first appointment was for the mission of Nangololo in Mozambique. One year later he moved to Bomela. From 1965 till 1968 he worked in Malawi, first in Ngabu and later in Muona/Chiromo. In 1968 he studied in Uganda at the Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, after that year he returned to Nchalo in Malawi. In 1974 he was again appointed for Mozambique, at first in Balama till 1976, as rector of the major seminary in Pemba and later as priest of the cathedral there.

From 1979 until 1981 he followed a mission-course in Nijmegen, after which Gerard got an appointment for Australia, in Woodridge as parish priest. Because of a poor heart condition he returned to the Netherlands, to the community of Oirschot. From 1984 till 2000 he functioned as secretary of the provincial administration.

Gerard, whose confreres called him 'Teun', was a priest with all his heart, a shepherd for all those who walked with him, even in Africa. When he celebrated his fortieth anniversary of ordination he said: "It was a time of planting and harvesting. Our Sweet Lord blessed our work in an extraordinary way. We were able to baptize many long lines of grown-ups and children so they could become members of the Church. So many people we could support and help with the authorities." Often and enthusiastically Gerard told stories about his African years.

Less often he talked about his heart attack. This was more or less the turning point in his life. Because of the successful open-heart-surgery he regained his trust in life, although he stayed anxious. Luckily he regained enough energy to lead pilgrimages, especially to Lourdes. Last spring he was there, as a pilgrim, to say 'thank you' to Mary for the support and protection he experienced from her during his entire life.

For more than sixteen years Gerard was secretary of the provincial administration. He was admired for his accuracy with the reports and his punctual archiving. We still benefit from his work.

The most of his life Gerard was a member of the community of Oirschot. He called it “the most beautiful place to be a Montfortian and to work.” It helps of course, that he lived close to his family and his roots. He was a beloved reverend uncle, faithful in remembering birthdays and jubilees. We only have to think of the many marriages and baptisms he was asked to celebrate. He was the family-priest.

Gerard was a devoted person. Every morning after breakfast he went to the chapel to “talk to Our Sweet Lord and his routine for the day”, as he called his meditation. Often he went to visit the chapel of “Our Lady of the Holy Oak”. He lighted a candle and took one home to light it in front of the statue of Mary in the convent chapel.

The last three weeks in hospital were difficult for Gerard. At first he kept up hope and trust that he could return to his community. The last week his strength diminished more and more. It became clear that he had to surrender himself. Saturday night he received the Holy Sacrament of the sick, surrounded by his family and confreres. In their midst he died Sunday-afternoon. Now he is in God’s hands. We thank God for Gerard as a brother, a reverend uncle, a friend, a confrere, for whom he was a priest with all his heart.



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**Brother Guénolé (Joseph GUENNOC), S.M.M.**  
**(1911 – 2009)**

Died on 6 August 2009, in Saint Laurent s/S (France).  
Aged 98 with 81 years of Religious Profession.

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6 August, Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord: what a beautiful day to go to Him! “Let us go, dear friends! Let us go to Paradise! Whatever we might gain here below, Paradise is worth all the more!”

Already for a long time our dear Brother Guénolé had given his accord, in the depths of his heart, to this last Hymn of St. Louis-Marie, even if he lived nearly two and a half times longer than expected: 98 years as opposed to 43... And thus today even our dear Brother has come to the end of his long voyage on earth! We can imagine what a welcome he must have already received: from the Lord, the Virgin Mary, St. Louis-Marie, and so many confreres and friends, beginning with Brother Mathurin Rangeard, the first of this line of which our Brother was so worthy an inheritor, even by means of rather different tasks!

He was born April 18, 1911, a few steps from the chapel of Our Lady of Kroazou, in the village of the same name in the commune of Kerlouan – North Finistère, France. Since they did not let things drag on then, he was baptized the same day! He parents were farmers, and he was the last surviving of eight brothers and sisters. His file contains practically nothing about his youth and adolescence. But in this

atmosphere of family and his native region, he was attentive at a very young age to the call of the Lord. Novitiate at Saint-Laurent, and first religious profession March 19, 1928. He was called Joseph, a name predestined! But at his profession they gave him the name of Guénolé, the very popular founder of the monastery of Landevennec. “Gwen-oll-é”, he is all white! In effect, a beautiful symbol of our Brother!

He was not yet 17 years of age! Not in the least diminished intellectually, he could have pursued studies beyond primary school, but at that time it was not the custom for the Brothers. So much so that just six years later (they did not drag things on then!) he was sent to England, to the Apostolic School at Romsey, where he remained for four years in various domestic services of the Seminary. Then he was sent to undertake the same services at La Gardiolle: four years again till 1936. He was 25 years old then... and he was transferred to Notre Dame du Chene, near Ornans in the Doubs, where he served the Shrine and the community until 1961 –for 25 years! Then he received a new mission: Spain (Madrid and Loeches); this was June 1961. He remained there for 17 years, admired by all for his service to the community and his closeness to the young people in formation in this new Minor Seminary! He set about learning Spanish, without a problem, and spoke it correctly! In 1978 he returned to his dear Bretagne: Le Rody. But his last word was not yet spoken, because at the request of the Provincial, and without it being truly an “obedience”, in 1988 he accepted to become a “Parisian”, welcoming confreres at our two houses, until 1994. Then the community of La Chartreuse was delighted to welcome him. Brother became more and more blind, and for medical reasons joined our community at Saint-Laurent in November 2004, already well past 93 years old!

Without wanting to rival the *Fioretti* of St. Francis of Assisi, whose eight hundredth anniversary we celebrate, what lovely sprays of flowers one could put together in memory of our Brother Guénolé! He had the habit, each evening, at the end of a day already almost too filled, and at an hour already quite late, to remain for a long time before the Blessed Sacrament, in principle for his third rosary... But just as habitually, he fell asleep –of course with the “sleep of the just”! “You’d do much better to go and sleep in your own bed!” his superior said to him one night... And he answered, in all candour and simplicity: “Here I’m like the old dog, who sleeps at the feet of his master”...

Dear Brother Guénolé, far beyond all these *fioretti* tales which were scattered across your path, is it not your life itself which was, in reality, a bouquet of flowers, completely simple and completely beautiful?

Your beautiful life is now placed in the hollow of the hands of the Lord: Magnificat! And we enter into the celebration of your Easter, entrusting ourselves to your fraternal prayer.



**Father Joseph (Jo) VAN DEN ASDONK, S.M.M.  
(1925 – 2009)**

Died on 16 August 2009, in Maastricht (The Netherlands).  
Aged 83 with 59 years of Religious Profession.

Joseph Hubert Maria (Jo) van den Asdonk was born 25 October 1925 in Meijel. He joined the Montfortians in 1948 and made his first vows in Meerssen on September 8th 1949. March 20th 1955 he was ordained priest in Oirschot by bishop Mutsaerts.

After his ordination Father v.d. Asdonk was appointed to be a teacher in the Mission trade school in Bunde and later on in Zevenaar. In 1968 he became curate in the Montfortian parish of Leenhof and also teacher of religion. From 1971 until 1976 he was assistant in Nieuwenhagerheide and at the same time moderator of the Eikenhagen college. The last 25 years of his active life he was parish-priest in the parish of St. Walburga in Maastricht (Amby). He died after a short illness in the nursing home of De Zeven Bronnen in Amby.

The image of the good Shepherd was for Jo the source of inspiration for his life. He gave the best he had to offer.

When, after his ordination, he started to work in the Montfortian mission trade school in Bunde and Zevenaar, he participated for more than thirteen years in the formation of young Montfortian Brothers. He was convinced, that this was a good mission. The inspiration of Montfort had to be spread.

As a vocation-propagandist he travelled around to look for new candidates. He visited schools, parishes and families all over the country, to interest young people for the congregation.

As teacher of religion he tried to encourage young people to search for the secret of Creation, the meaning of life, and the place of God and Jesus Christ in their lives. It was his great joy to help them by providing enough luggage for life.

Being appointed as parish-priest was no doubt the best that ever happened to him. It was his biggest wish. He worked as a priest in Nieuwenhagerheide, Leenhof and in Amby. Almost 25 years he was a priest in the parish of St. Walburga. When he arrived in the parish he noticed that the church and parish had not much character. With great enthusiasm and talent for organisation he started and managed to create a proper atmosphere. He succeeded in involving many people in all the work of the parish. With his unlimited devotion and inspiring presence he took care of a turn for the best.

His special force was a well taken care of liturgy, catechesis was for him fundamental. In teaching and leading his parishioners in the faith, service to one's neighbour had his priority. In the spirit of Montfort he paid attention for anyone in need. He also got inspiration from the heritage of the patron saint of the parish: Saint Walburga: he tried the Christian atmosphere she tried to create in the midst of her people, to copy in the parish-community in Amby. Every day he prayed for the intercession of St. Walburga: "Help us all to realize your task to be a missionary in our time, as you did in Bavaria."

He was so involved in the well-being of his parishioners that his family more than once complained: “Jo exists only for the parish”.

The first of March 2000 Jo became emeritus, but he stayed on in his beloved Amby. He had now more time left for other matters and stayed involved in the well-being of the community.

His health diminished slowly. While he was in hospital in Maastricht (30 July) he told me: “Hopefully I will recover so I can return to my little home.” But it didn’t work out like that. On Sunday 16 August - late in the evening - Jo came face to face with the frontiers of life, with his and our God. Now his life is fulfilled. We sincerely hope that he will be happy in a new and different life.

Jo, thank you for the person you were and the meaning of your life. All the best for you. We especially thank those who were intensely involved with Jo. They shared a lot with him and stood next to him with their care.



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**Father Francis CHEVALIER, S.M.M.**

**(1922 – 2009)**

Died on 21 September 2009, in Port-au-Prince (Haiti).

Aged 86 with 67 years of Religious Profession.

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One would not dare to speak about him in his presence while he was alive, knowing well that he did not like that! He would be saved all that very quickly! Now that he can understand and endure all things, this would not disturb him!

The witnesses are unanimous: everyone underlines the humility and self-effacement of this simple and discrete missionary, friend of all, avoiding conflict and noise. He had to remain always the vicar, hidden in the shadow of his pastor, keeping his soul “steady and silent” (cf. Ps 131,2), equally available to every obedience that he received and to all the pastoral services asked of him. He took care not to bother anything or anyone. A clear gaze and a discrete smile – his pastor remembered when he gave the eulogy at his funeral – which made everyone always feel respected and never judged by him. There was a special respect for his confrere, Fr. Prophy Phophète, smm, pastor of the parish of Chansolme, his companion for some ten years, who knew how to surround him with all the attention and care that he might need at his advanced age! A special respect also for his sister-in-law in Liesle, who knew how to welcome him every two or three years for the months of his regular vacations. He found his roots again there and was surrounded by the affection of his family and the families of childhood friends.

Francis loved to walk, to live with nature – he wrote a book of poetry: “Quand il fait bleu” – he even used to dive while staying at the parish of Mole St. Nicholas... His passion for literature made him devour books, whose company never bored him. He stayed faithful to friends and families in need, whom the Lord confided to his charge through “providential” chance encounters, in the different parishes where he resided; he accompanied them as much as he could and as long as necessary.

Francis “suffered” through ceremonies that were a bit too long for his taste, and avoided them if he could. At Port-au-Prince he was given a long and grandiose funeral liturgy, presided by Mgr. François Gayot, smm, archbishop emeritus of Cap Haitien, preached by Mgr Frantz Colimon, smm, bishop emeritus of Port-de-Paix, in the course of a Eucharist concelebrated by 22 of his Montfortian confreres, before a numerous crowd, composed among others by some 30 religious women, principally the Daughters of Wisdom, some 20 of our Montfortian scholastics, and delegations of the faithful come from St. Louis du Nord and Chansolme, the two parishes that he served for 30 years. He never wanted to disturb a soul; all willingly let themselves be disturbed that day.

Nearly 60 years of mission in Haiti! It was his first obedience, the land where he rests, at the Foyer de Charité Ste. Marie where we have our family vault.

Francis carried his age happily; he was 86 years old. Born in Liesle in eastern France on November 9, 1922, he moved quite naturally from Liesle to Pelousey (the Minor Seminary), and from Pelousey to Montfort sur Meu (the scholasticate), then to his novitiate at Chézelles where he made his first profession on September 8, 1942; he was ordained priest at Montfort sur Meu on February 20, 1949. The same year he was sent to Haiti, where he was to spend his entire missionary life, as an assistant pastor or as a replacement when a confrere was momentarily absent or indisposed. It was thus that he traveled through all of the northwest of Haiti, the Diocese of Port-dePaix, whose foundation had, at its beginning, been confided to the Montfortians. He remained 5 or 6 years in each of his posts as assistant: Bassin Bleu, Port-de-Paix, La Tortue, and an average of one year as a replacement: Bombardopolis, Jean-Rabel, and La Mole St. Nicolas. He resided at La Tortue from 1977 till 1981, then his last stays in parishes were longer: 20 years in St. Louis du Nord and nearly 10 years in Chansolme.

With the resources that came to him from his parish sector of Quingey, he knew how to help the pastoral and social activities that were tied to him; one remembers particularly the Cyclones of these past years and the generosity which these extreme situations brought forth. Thus the discretion and self-effacement of our confrere not only did not hinder the efficacy of his apostolate, but rather favoured it, which is absolutely gospel-like. One can only hear Christ tell us today what he said to his first apostles, taking Francis and placing him in the midst of us: “Behold the one who is great in the Kingdom of heaven!”



## **Father Henri-Marie GUINDON, S.M.M.**

**(1908 – 2009)**

Died on 8 October 2009, in Vanier (Ottawa), (Canada).  
Aged 101 with 83 years of Religious Profession.

Father Henri-Marie Guindon was born January 23, 1908 in Plaisance, in the parish of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was the son of Mr. Josaphat Guindon and Mrs. Éva Deschamps. Three other brothers and three sisters made up the rest of the family. Marguerite became a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Hermas became a canon of the Archdiocese of Ottawa and chaplain to the Governor General of Canada.

Our confrere pronounced his perpetual vows in the Company of Mary on August 15, 1931 in the chapel of the orphanage in Montfort in the Laurentians, He was ordained priest on February 7, 1932 in the chapel of the scholasticate of St. Jean, Eastview, which is Vanier, Ottawa today, by Mgr. Joseph Hermann Brunault, the bishop of Nicolet.

From 1932 to 1939, Father Guindon was professor and bursar at Montfort Seminary, Papineauville. He then became superior and retreat director at Villa du Rosaire in Nicolet from 1939 to 1947. He returned to Montfort Seminary as superior from 1947 to 1950.

From 1950 to 1957, his activities took place in South America, first in Bogota, Colombia, as professor of Mariology at Alban, our Montfortian scholasticate. He later gave a series of courses on the Virgin Mary in Santiago, Chile; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Montevideo, Uruguay.

From 1957 to 1982 he was professor, preacher, and chaplain in different places in Quebec and Ontario. During this period of time (1957-1958) he spent a year in Rome as secretary to “Documentation montfortaine” and also as a preacher.

From 1982 to 1994, he was secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio (Ottawa) and chaplain to the Visitandine Sisters until 1996.

Since that time he stayed in Vanier at the home of Madame Jacqueline Nadeau who took very good care of our confrere.

Father Guindon leaves a memory of a great Marian apostle, a renowned preacher, a sought after lecturer and a prolific writer.

Some of the books he wrote include « Virgo praedicanda » « Marie de Vatican II » « J’ai cru, c’est pourquoi, j’ai chanté » « Une âme mariale : Marie Sœur Cécile de Rome »

It is interesting to read on the back of each volume this biographical note: “Henri-Marie Guindon is a Doctor of Theology, a regular member of the Pontifical Marian Academy (Rome), former president of the Canadian Society of Marian Studies, author of many works and presentations at international Marian congresses, and a regular collaborator with *Laval théologique et philosophique*.”

Montfort's Hymn on the faithful servant of the Virgin applies well to our confrere.

Sing out my soul! Make known  
To the glory of my Savior,  
Mary's great mercy  
Toward her poor servant.

...

The happiest people on this earth  
Are those who serve her best.

*(St Louis-Marie de Montfort, Hymn 77, 1,2)*

May Our Lady of the Rosary, whose feast we just celebrated, present him to her divine Son!



**Brother Vincent (Gerardus VAN RULO), S.M.M.  
(1933 – 2009)**

Died on 7 November 2009, in Valkenburg (The Netherlands).  
Aged 76 with 59 years of Religious Profession.

Gerardus Cornelis Wilhelmus van Rulo was born on 31 May 1933 in Oirschot, close to the convent of Bijsterveld. He joined the Montfortians in 1949 in Meerssen. He made his first vows on 7 October 1950 and got the name Vincentius. His final vows he made on 7 October 1955 in Kontich, Belgium.

His first two years he worked in household and bakery in Schimmert. From 1952 till 1955 he baked the bread for the scholasticate in Oirschot and worked there on the farm. He also followed a course in fruit growing. From 1955 till 1970 he stayed in Kontich in the household, interrupted by one year in which he replaced in Oirschot. In 1970 he came to Vroenhof-Valkenburg. He was sacristan, took care of the park and worked as volunteer in the nursing home. He died after a short illness in the nursing home Vroenhof.

In his last years Vincent often sat in the bay-window across the dining room of Vroenhof, looking at what and who passed by. If I addressed him there, it looked as if he knew he himself would pass by soon - not from Valkenburg to Meerssen, but from the earthly home to the forecourt of the Lord. He would never have formulated it in this way. Complicated language and erudition weren't his style. He used a more practical form of intelligence. He noticed more than some suspected and could surprise with a sharp remark. He noticed when someone pretended being someone else. He was able to let such a person easily pass by. In one of his letters he wrote: "I would rather help than being helped". And a great helper he was!

All the years he worked as a volunteer he pushed the residents in the nursing home in their wheelchairs wherever they wanted to go. In spite of that he knew very well that he was no saint. He insisted on his freedom and his privacy. He went his own

way and what came into his head, stayed there. We saw it in his last hours, when he resolutely refused to go to hospital. It was good!

His religious life existed specially in his faithful assistance during Holy Mass and in fulfilling practical assignments. He did not like theories. He held on to the remark of one of his superiors: “you have to earn heaven by doing good work”. In his report, under the section “faithful helpfulness” he will get a “more than enough-mark”.

In Vroenhof Vincent will be missed. In his inimitable way he was a pillar in the daily activities. He will not be seen in his too short alb, that he wore during Mass and when he distributed the Holy Communion. We pray that the angels push his wheelchair till before the Throne of the Lamb.

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**Father Hubertus (Hub) SOMERS, S.M.M.**

**(1927 – 2009)**

Died on 22 November 2009, in Heerlen (The Netherlands).

Aged 82 with 61 years of Religious Profession.

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## FROM THE MONTFORTIAN FAMILY

### BROTHERS OF SAINT GABRIEL

<b>September 2009</b>			<u>age</u>	<u>Profession</u>
14	Br. Jozef Panis	Liedekerke (Belgium)	87	70
28	Br. Salvador Del Hoyo Alegre	Burgos (Spain)	75	58
<b>October 2009</b>				
04	Br. Maurice Charrier	Thouaré sur Loire (France)	85	57
<b>November 2009</b>				
12	Br. Jan Scheepers	Alost (Belgium)	88	71

### DAUGHTERS OF WISDOM

<b>July 2009</b>			<u>age</u>	<u>Profession</u>
06	Sr. Johanna Laetitia van de Goddelijke Wijsheid (Francisca Maria Langvèr)	Wijchen (Netherlands)	84	55
16	Sr. Adrienne de l'Immaculée (Gabrielle Michaud)	Frenchville – Maine (USA)	87	69
22	Sr. Thérèse de Sainte Anne (Anne-Marie Evano)	La Chartreuse – Auray (France)	88	67
28	Sr. Candida de l'Enfant Jésus (Maria Castorina)	Valperga (Italy)	93	71
<b>August 2009</b>				
02	Sr. Myriam de l'Enfant Jésus (Léa Van Hoeck)	Tournai (Belgium)	81	53
03	Sr. Dominique-Marie de Jésus (Jeannine Leclerc)	Montréal (Canada)	75	53
10	Sr. Wilfrid de Marie (Éliane Nadeau)	Ottawa (Canada)	94	71
16	Sr. Emilia du St-Esprit (Françoise Villeneuve)	Ottawa (Canada)	85	65
19	Sr. Marie-Barthélémy (Anna Even)	St Laurent (France)	87	65
24	Sr. Antoinette Christiana (Gertruda E. L. Sniekers)	Wijchen (Netherlands)	90	63

## September 2009

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06	Sr. Anthony of Carmel (Kathleen Mary Close)	London (England)	78	54
08	Sr. Françoise du St-Sacrement (Françoise Fogarty)	Montréal (Canada)	79	60
27	Sr. Marie Noëlle du Divin Coeur (Simone Bertrand)	Larnay – Cté des Oblates (France)	77	47
30	Sr. Agnes van Jezus (Petronella Albertina Van Gisteren)	Wijchen (Netherlands)	86	65

## October 2009

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02	Sr. Joan of the Divine Love (Joan Leavey)	Port Jefferson, NY (USA)	81	61
06	Sr. Françoise du Saint Esprit (Thérèse Pauwels)	Lille (France)	83	61
10	Sr. Lucille de Marie (Helen Campbell)	Brentwood, NY (USA)	92	71
11	Sr. Eugénie de Saint Luis (Marie-Annette Calvarin)	St Laurent (France)	99	80
22	Sr. Marthe du Calvaire (Marthe Hardy)	St Laurent (France)	91	67
25	Sr. Jean-Marie du Bon Secours (Marie Ballieu)	Tournai (Belgium)	100	74

## November 2009

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03	Sr. Yves-Marie de Montfort (Marie Collet)	St Laurent (France)	89	62
08	Sr. Alessandra dell'Assunzione (Adelina Leidi)	Clusone (Italy)	84	60
11	Sr. Yvonne Germaine (Odile Dumont)	Brentwood, NY (USA)	88	69
14	Sr. Marie-Noëlle du Rosaire (Yvonne Le Roux)	St Laurent (France)	86	61
17	Sr. Henriette de l'Ange Gardien (Marie-Henriette Boidron)	St Laurent (France)	95	66
29	Sr. Rosa di Gesù Crocifisso (Giuliva Cabrini)	Clusone (Italy)	90	66



« ... I am not ashamed,  
for I know him in whom I have believed  
and am confident that he is able  
to guard what has been entrusted to me  
until that day. »  
(2 Tm 1, 12)

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