

NEWSLETTER GENERAL EXECUTIVE

CONGREGATION BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

Number 68, March 2022

BROTHERS IN OOSTAKKER MEET THEIR BISHOP

Bishop Lode Van Hecke, installed as bishop of Ghent on February 23, 2020, visited the brothers and residents of Residential Care Centre Glorieux in Oostakker two years later on March 3, 2022, to meet the brothers and the residents. The bishop – a former abbot of the trappist abbey of Orval – is often invited to lead in liturgical celebrations shown on TV. He is an approachable man and clearly interested in the people he meets. During a conversation with the brothers, the general superior explained the history of the origin of the congregation, paying special attention to the charism of the congregation, the many problems the Founder had with some of the predecessors of bishop Lode, and the presence of the congregation in the world. A wish for a proper cooperation between diocese and congregation was emphatically mentioned, including a prayer for the bishop.



Br. Staf Verhoeven told the story of the presence of the brothers in Oostakker, and, except for the meeting with everyone who wanted that, those responsible for the Foyer gave the bishop a glimpse of the advanced plans for the new construction of the Residential Care-Centre Campus Glorieux. It was a short but pleasant visit.

BRAZIL

Br. Danilso Carlos Estevão has completed his theology studies. His knowledge comes in handy when helping candidates preparing to become a brother, but also in the parish where he takes care of preparing the ministers for the Word/or Eucharistic service. Many lay persons in Brazil lead Word and Communion services, for which they need preparatory instructions and shared moments of reflection. These ministers are appointed by the bishop, and may be women as well as men.

At the end of February, three postulants were accepted in Brazil.



Br. Danilso in his graduation outfit.



The postulants between the brothers Vando (I) and Heládio.

br. Ton Houdé

THE NETHERLANDS

VESSEM

In Vessem at the Pilgrims Hostel *Cafarnaum*, one of the outbuildings has been torn down; the contractor has started with the new construction. In the latter, there will be room for a bike storage, a toilet for invalids, facilities for elementary school pupils who pay a one-day pilgrim's visit, storage areas for, among others, garden tools, and a small workplace for upkeep.



Vessem: the new construction starts with pouring a solid foundation.



Brother Jan Klein Overmeen (m) together with the brothers Ton Houdé (l), Jan van der Steen and his successor, Theo van den Boer (r).

A THANKFUL FAREWELL FOR BR. JAN KLEIN OVERMEEN

On Friday, February 11, the brothers celebrated the feastday of Our Lady of Lourdes. The Eindhoven community (Depoorter) celebrated this day together with the brothers who live elsewhere, and with the staff and some volunteers. The Eucharistic Celebration and the dinner that followed were two highpoints of this feastday.

This occasion was used to thank br. Jan Klein Overmeen for his service during some eight years as provincial superior. He was also the final provincial superior, since the Dutch Province has become a District, with br. Theo van den Boer as District Superior.

BELGIUM

DIFFERENT USE

The building that formerly was used by the provincial executive, is now used for part-time education of the school community *Edugo* since January 10, 2022,

In the future, the entire building will become part of a groundlease of the school community with the Belgian District. For the time being, some rooms are set aside for the District executive of the Belgian brothers.



ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, the violent problems in the North of the country, the Tigray district, have not yet been resolved. In fact, the civil war is still on-going there, resulting in casualties. Right now, it seems that the danger for the capital Addis Ababa has been averted. Much news regarding the fight in the North is not available.

The preparation for the arrival of two Indonesian brothers has been resumed.

GENERAL CHAPTER



The general executive is quite busy preparing for the 2022 general chapter. This chapter will take place from August 16 to August 26 inclusive, in Denekamp, The Netherlands, at the home of the “Zusters Franciscanessen van Denekamp” (a community of sisters).

The main theme is: *Dedication to Good Works* (picture), which is related to the charism of the congregation and our ties with Vincent and the Vincentian Family. In addition, many other topics will be dealt with, like the partial adaptation of the Way of Life and General Guidelines, a reflection on the future of church and religious life in general, and on our congregation in particular. Furthermore topics like finances and their organization, the situation in the different parts of the congregation, the synodal path, the election of a general executive for the next period of governance. As happens at every chapter, there will be a review of the past period of governance, and a looking ahead to the next period of governance.

During the next several months, in all parts of the congregation one or more members for the general executive will be chosen.

GENERAL EXECUTIVE

In December 2019, the general executive met for the last time with all four members physically present. Since that time, many online meetings took place. The last meeting in which br. Nico Simanjuntak took part, was on August 10, 2021. He passed away totally unexpected in Pangururan, Sumatra, on August 14, 2021.

We now are trying to meet in Belgium and The Netherlands at the end of March, with all members present, Anyway, we will continue with the online sessions.



INDONESIA

The Indonesian province lets us know that in Lawang there are two novices in training. In Klepu, one postulant is getting thoroughly acquainted with the congregation and religious life. Three aspirants are also actively involved in the work of the brothers, to get a good idea of what the life of a brother entails and demands. This is hopeful news!

At the time when this newsletter was going to press, we heard that the volcano Merapi (near Yogyakarta, Java), is active once again, and is ejecting volcanic material. For the time being, there are no reports about victims, but the nearby residents are being evacuated. Last week, West Sumatra was already hit by a

powerful earthquake, causing the death of seven persons. None of the brothers nearby have been affected by these events.

A FINAL WORD AND AN EASTER WISH

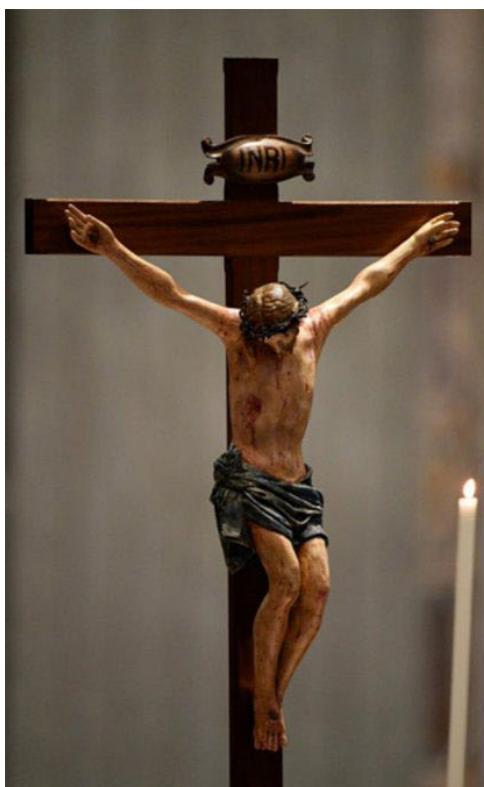


On February 11, we celebrated Our Lady of Lourdes, patron saint of the congregation. This day has gained more meaning since it is also the world-day of the sick. We are glad about the fact that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are abating, but it is really sad that the war in the Ukraine is now at the centre of attention, and has made many victims, with many more innocent victims to come.

Finally, we call for your prayers for and solidarity with the Ukraine, following the example of Pope Francis. Take care of the peace in your own environment, in your family and among family members, your community, the residential community, and church community.

May the time of lent, Easter and Pentecost help us to grow closer to doing the will of God.

br. Ton Houdé



Every war leaves our world worse than it was before.
War is a failure of politics and of humanity,
a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil.

Fratelli tutti (261)

Franciscus

#PrayTogether #Ukraine

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