

# NEWSLETTER GENERAL EXECUTIVE

## CONGREGATION BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

number 70, July 2022

### INDONESIA: 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY DESA PUTERA

A big party at Desa Putera (Boys Town) on Thursday, June 16, 2022. Reason: The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the orphanage. A lot has changed over the years, but the task remains the same: shelter some 100 boys who otherwise will most likely be left alone. The approach has also evolved: parenting methods have been professionalized, emphasis and points of concern have shifted. One constant, however, remains: the brothers past and present, who, along with their employees and collaborators, are committed to giving children a future. Let us take a stroll down memory lane ....



As a result of and in the turbulent months after the Second World War, there were thousands of children in Jakarta who had lost their parents or were looking for their family. They roam, trying to survive by begging and petty theft. Half clothed, sometimes full of wounds and malnourished, they can be found under bridges or on verandahs of houses. The Dutch colonial government took to heart the plight of these homeless people and tried to give them a place to live in several homes for orphans. The numbers soon became too high so more homes had to be found. This caused the Congregation to accept the task of managing an orphanage on behalf of (what today is) the Archdiocese of Jakarta and the Saint Vincent Foundation.

A site with a warehouse was converted into a house and was named Desa Putera. On June 17, 1947, army trucks arrived with 100 emaciated children. Other trucks followed, full of clothes, blankets, rice, etc. It was hard work, even though some brothers from Jakarta were there to help. By evening, every boy was wearing

pants and his stomach was full. For weeks, girls from a nearby village cut and ruffled old clothes donated by the Red Cross to make pants.

At the solemn opening on June 30, 250 children (about 50 had already fled with blankets and clothes) were neatly dressed in shorts.

Since the 1960's, Desa Putera gradually began to form. It grew from a post-war homeless shelter to an orphanage with around 100 residents. The brothers tried in every possible way to create the necessary framework so that the children would not only have shelter and food, but could also acquire the skills necessary to go on independently in later life.



There is a vegetable garden, an orchard with coconut trees, a dairy farm, an elementary school which is also open to local children, a bicycle repair shop, and also a simple motorbike maintenance shop. In 1968 the printing press from Maria-Oord Juvenile in Vught (Netherlands) was dismantled and sent to Desa Putera. Additional help came from Bro. Martin Dol who has experience and training in graphic engineering. From a humble printing press shop, this initiative evolved into a state-recognized technical training course that is now one of the most renowned graphic schools in Indonesia. After the departure of Br. Martin (who is still active in Indonesia!) several expertly trained Indonesian brothers have been assigned to lead, assisted by lay colleagues who specialize in various aspects of modern computer-assisted graphic techniques.

Currently there are 72 children (orphans). Half come from disturbed families, some from families lacking the resources to raise their own children. The orphanage aims to provide these children with a childhood as normal as possible. After high school they normally leave and start a life on their own. Thirty colleagues and two brothers, notably Tarcisius Kasino and Vincentius Jemino, are making up the staff of Desa Putera Orphanage.

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated with great joy: the Mass was presided over by the

Archbishop of Jakarta Ignatius Cardinal Suharyo Hardjoatmodjo together with Pastor FX. Sutarno and Anastasius Agung Setyawan. Then the cardinal blessed the statue of Saint Vincent de Paul accompanied by Bro. Tarcisius Kasino, the current director of the orphanage, as well as the provincial superior Bro. Januarius Sukirdi, and brothers from the nearby communities in Bogor and Gunung Sahari and guests.

## GENERAL CHAPTER

Ecclesiastical regulations require superiors and democratically elected representatives of religiously organized communities to meet regularly (e.g. every six years). Depending on whether it concerns a province, ... or the entire congregation, one speaks of the provincial, ... or the general chapter.

The chapter is an important moment for the province, ... and the congregation as it evaluates the term of office that has just passed and look ahead to how it wishes to develop further.

Such general chapter tasks are always twofold. Care must be taken to check whether the Congregation has been heading in the right direction in the past and whether those in charge (superiors and council members) have done what they accepted as the duties of the previous chapter. Furthermore, new policy guidelines and options should be formulated for the coming period which the newly elected executive members must adhere to. That is the task of a chapter: identifying policy options that the executive must realize and elaborate. How about the preparations now?

Recently, chapter members received nine documents via email. Among other things

- A formal invitation letter that also states who next to the chapter members will attend, permanently or occasionally. Moderators, secretary and translators are obviously permanently present.
- Guest speakers only attend sessions devoted to their topic.
- Agenda for the chapter. The agenda must be approved by the chapter and must be continuously updated.
- Proposed changes in the Way of Life and General Guidelines.
- Suggestions regarding the location of the seat of the General Executive and everything related to it.
- Practical guidelines regarding the report making to be done by the various regions and the contributions of chapter members to the prayer services and celebrations of the Eucharist.

The speakers are still preparing their presentations. They will talk about the charism of the congregation, the situation of the church, society and religious life in the various parts of where the congregation is located, the finances and the seat of the congregation.

The General Executive report for the previous period is still in progress.

The fact that four languages are spoken in the Congregation requires a lot of translation work: before, during and after the chapter.

Travel from Indonesia, Brazil and Ethiopia must be prepared, visas must be applied for, efforts must be made to find out if there are special requirements when entering Europe related to corona. Before and after the chapter, the brothers from Indonesia will stay at the so-called Kafarnaum pilgrim farm in Vessem, the brothers from Brazil and Ethiopia will be lodged at the residence in Oostakker. Transport should be arranged to go back and forth to the airport as well as to Denekamp where the chapter is being held on the premises of the Franciscan Sisters of Denekamp. And again, to show our foreign brothers places in relation to the founder, the congregation in Belgium or the Netherlands, etc.

We hope there are no problems on arrival and departure at the airport, etc.

The rest of the brothers had been as well informed as possible about the topics discussed at the chapter. If any of the brothers want to know more about certain parts of the chapter, they can contact a chapter member or the general superior.

Undoubtedly, you will see that organizing a chapter on that scale is very demanding. We ask for your involvement and your prayers for its success.

On the website [www.brothers-olv-lourdes.org](http://www.brothers-olv-lourdes.org) you will find a specific prayer for God's blessing over this chapter.

*Bro. Ton Houdé*

## BACK TO WILLIBRORD IN HEILOO



One of the core activities of the congregation was and still is nursing. In the Netherlands, the brothers have given this particular interpretation with the establishment and management of the Sint-Willibrord Center in Heiloo (North Holland).

A group of twenty-five brothers and staff members recently visited this former stronghold of the congregation to look at traces of the past and learn about the current developments and changes at the site. They were warmly welcomed.

They also took the opportunity to leave a rose on the graves of the brothers buried there – sixteen in fact – in sign of remembrance.

*article taken from Alert no.361, NL . digital news*

## TWO BUSY BROTHERS

Brother Maximus Boi and Bro. Antonius Berek have been made available by the Indonesian province since this year to join and work alongside their fellow brothers in Ethiopia. They took up this task with great enthusiasm and had their first stay in Addis Ababa, where they became acquainted with the community and the works of the congregation.

The international agreement on document recognition forced them to return to Indonesia for some time to have documents stamped by three ministries. The thought that the Indonesian Embassy in Addis Ababa could affix the missing stamp turned out to be a futile hope. So back to Indonesia to finish it there. Now the documents have been extensively stamped and the two brothers are now issued with new visas for Ethiopia. They hope to return to Addis Ababa around 20 of July. They know that the brothers there will be more than happy to have them back!

## BRAZIL

Four postulants in Brazil have been in the village of Jordânia for several weeks, where they are doing an internship at Lar Glorieux, home for those in need who cannot be cared for by their families. Here you have some pictures showing the postulants in action.



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