

NEWSLETTER GENERAL EXECUTIVE

CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

number 72, January 2023

A PROMINENT PLACE FOR VINCENTIUS

The congregation was founded in 1830 and Vincentian spirituality was one of the most important sources from which the Founder drew. This spirituality has remained fundamentally present in the Congregation in many ways. In the first Rule of the Congregation (1835), Vincent is mentioned as one of the Patrons of the Congregation. This remains the case until 1969. During the Renewal Chapter of that year, after the Second Vatican Council, an experimental Rule was born. Vincentius then disappears from the Rule and does not return. Yet he is emphatically mentioned as a patron in various general chapters (e.g. 2010).

In the past fifty years, Vincentius had also faded somewhat into the background. This can partly be explained by the increased interest from 1970 onwards to discover the Congregation's own spirituality from original source material, preferably in the words of the Founder himself. Brothers and sisters ultimately put a lot of time and energy into this, and with results. Ironically enough, it appears that the charism and spirituality of the founder, and therefore also that of the Congregation, rely very strongly on and are indebted to Vincent's example, practice and ideas. It can be said hand on heart that the Brothers of Our Lady of Lourdes are Brothers of Good Works in the spirit of Saint Vincent.



*Photo: facade in Ronse of the Glorieux Institute (Dutch and French banners)
with a typical representation of Vincentius as father of the poor.*

The general chapter of 2022 has therefore decided to emphatically reconfirm Saint Vincent as one of the patrons of the Congregation (alongside Mary). The general executive has applied for and obtained membership of the international Family of Vincentian religious organizations (FAMVIN) on behalf of the same chapter. The general chapter has also urged each and every part to pursue membership of the national Vincentian Family where possible.

The Vincentian Family is a movement made up of more than 160 institutions and counting some four million people who follow Jesus Christ and serve the poor, just like Vincent, Louise de Marillac and many other believers who have embraced the Vincentian charism over the past four centuries. have enriched. This family works in many countries and continues to draw attention to Vincent's spirituality.

Vincentius and the Vincentian charism can broaden our view and send natural allies on our path in order to assist the person in need more effectively. Connected with others we can do more!

TOGETHER AT THE MEETING TABLE

The new general executive met for the first time on 25 August in Denenkamp, elected just a few hours ago, to get to know each other and make some practical arrangements. A next meeting was planned for December, this time in the administrative house (generalate) in Oostakker. For several days we discussed the first months, which mainly had to do with the chapters and the newly elected executives (*infra*), budgets, and matters in which the general executive plays an active role, or where there is a shared burden and /or responsibility.



The opportunity was used to take an official photo of the executive.

The three Indonesian members of the executive have become closely acquainted with the Belgian (Oostakker) and Dutch (Eindhoven) brothers. After all, it is the intention that the Indonesian province will eventually play a more important role in governing the congregation.

As a Congregation bestowed with a Papal Decree of Praise, the Superior General informed the Holy See and reported on the General Chapter and its outcome. The initial reaction was favorable and there was visible satisfaction with the course set by the general chapter. The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life has meanwhile announced that it is considering the amendments to the Rule of Life adopted by the General Chapter. It is waiting for an answer!



No tropical temperatures in Eindhoven: brothers Hugo Fahik and Albert Komang (left), and brothers Theo Bekkers and Fons van der Laan with brother Herman Yosef Gultom brave the first winter offensive.

NEW EXECUTIVES

In the wake of the general chapter (August 2022), all national executives were renewed. The Dutch District is an exception: due to the transformation, a new term of office has already started in 2021.

INDONESIA

The Indonesian Province held its chapter from 13 to 20 October in the guest house of the Ursuline Sisters in Sukabumi (West Java). After mature deliberation, the chapter members elected the next executive for the period 2022-2025. Provincial superior is Bro. Gregorius Suwardi (5) and substitute Bro. Benedictus Suyatmo (4). Council members: Bro. Gerardus Majella Manik (2), brother Fransiskus Sirait (1) and Bro. Ivan Sigalingging (3).



BELGIUM

The current council members were re-elected at a meeting on 2 December. The composition of the district executive is as follows: district superior remains Bro. Etienne Colman, flanked by (substitute) Bro. Paul Daemen and (council member) Bro. Jan Clyncke.



Br. Etienne



Br. Paul



Br. Jan

BRAZIL

In Betim, the pro-provincial chapter met in October. Br. Ton Houdé was present at this occasion. Chosen: Bro. Heládio Firmino Rodrigues pro-provincial superior (c.), Bro. Vando Rosa de Mendonça (l.) deputy and Bro. Antônio Carlos de Amorim (r.) councillor.



ETHIOPIA

In Addis Ababa, it was decided in joint consultation with the superior general to put together this executive: district superior remains Bro. Wossen Kefale, substitute is Bro. Abebe Leykun Bogale and Bro. Maximus Boi becomes council member.



Br. Wossen



Br. Abebe



Br. Maksi

SHORT MESSAGES

VOWS FOR LIFE IN INDONESIA AND MEETING OF GENERAL SUPERIORS IN ROME

Br. Hilarius Bria Bere took his vows for life at Bogor Cathedral on November 25, 2022. Bro. Herman Yosef Gultom has taken on the task of the general superior: he was staying in Rome at that time because of other congregational obligations. As always, the turnout for such an event was large, especially since that day was also celebrated as Founder's Day.

In November, the Superior General took part in the Annual Assembly of the Superiors General of Male Congregations of Pontifical Right in Rome. A meeting with the Pope was scheduled. Pope Francis responded to questions from the assembly.



*Br. Hilarius between his parents
in traditional festive attire.*



Pope Francis spoke to all the superiors.

LOOKING AHEAD

After two years, travel is finally possible again: most restrictions imposed by the government in response to the Covid pandemic have been lifted. Br. Ton Houdé, the superior general, visited the brothers in Brazil and Ethiopia in the autumn and attended the respective chapters. This year (2023) it will be Indonesia's turn and our fellow brothers in Ethiopia and Brazil can expect another visit from the general executive. During the visit to Indonesia, the entire general executive will also gather in meeting. We would like to keep you informed through this newsletter!

OUR LADY OF LOURDES



February 11th is the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. She is the patroness of our congregation, but World Sick Day is also celebrated on her feast day. This feast was instituted by Pope John Paul II on May 13, 1992. Many sick people who visited Lourdes found inspiration, comfort, strength and encouragement to cope with their illness. The solidarity of young and old with the sick was and is a great stimulus for the sick and healthy to give hands and feet to the Gospel in everyday life.

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