

NEWSLETTER GENERAL EXECUTIVE

CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

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VISIT TO INDONESIA

Bro. Franklin and I (Bro. Ton Houdé) spent the entire month of August in Indonesia. Our last visit goes back as far as 2019. Covid and commitments elsewhere made it impossible to visit earlier. This time we took the opportunity to go to all the communities in Java. Most brothers live on Java and there are seven communities. 38 brothers, three novices and six postulants live there.

Our “permanent” address was the community of the provincialate in Gunung Sahari (Jakarta), where we were warmly welcomed. In addition to the communities discussed in this newsletter, we also visited those of Bogor, Jumapolo and Gentan.

ANNIVERSARIES

On Monday, August 28, the 60th anniversary of the profession of brothers Martin Dol, Paulus Adi Soemarno, Kanisius Purwoatmodjo and the 40th anniversary of Bro. Konrad Huar Kelala were celebrated. Bro. Ton Houdé was added to the party with his 60th anniversary celebration.

Bro. Martin Dol is the last brother of Indonesian nationality who is of Dutch descent. He has made great contributions to the printing company and he currently has a project involving the production of mealworms.

Bro. Kanisius was the first Indonesian brother to become provincial superior of Indonesia. He has also been a novice master for many years. In short, someone with great merit for the Indonesian province. Bro. Paul is dependent on care. He hears poorly, sees virtually nothing, and needs a wheelchair. Bro. Konrad heads two clinics in a mainly Islamic region. He has won the trust of the people through his availability to the common man.

There was a beautiful, very well-organized Eucharist celebration that was graced by a children's/youth choir. The singing was excellent,

and the congregational hymn also came out beautifully. In general, the Eucharist celebrations in Indonesia are very well organized and well attended. After the service, several hundred people came to congratulate and there was a festive gathering in the large multifunctional room of the Desa Putera orphanage. Song, dance and a snack were the ingredients.



In the spotlight: from left to right provincial superior Gregorius Suwardi, Bro. Kanisius, Bro. Martin, the priest, Bro. Benedictus and Bro. Paulus in the wheelchair.

SPIRITUALITY

The brothers of Indonesia and the many schools (about thirty) that are part of the school foundation Budi Mulia (name of the congregation in Indonesia) have been drawing attention to the spirituality of the congregation and its founder for a number of years.



The Desa Putera community.

The congregation has drawn up books for the teachers and 34 teachers from nursery education, primary schools, junior and senior high schools, and vocational training have drawn up textbooks for the pupils and students of all these schools. Lessons are included for students in all grades. We were guests during one of those classes. We were also able to see the works of mercy on display in a large multifunctional space. They are replicas of a work of art by Brother Nico Jacobs. At various schools we saw scenes from Glorieux's life. Undoubtedly more attention

will also be paid to the figure of St. Vincent now that he has been reinstated as patron of the congregation. Contacts with Vincentian congregations have received a powerful boost.

Bro. Januarius Sukirdi too has made a significant contribution to the description of spirituality.

FORMATION HOUSES

We spent quite some time in the novitiate in Lawang and the postulant house in Klepu near Yogyakarta. The journey from Jakarta to Lawang (East Java) took a whole day. It is about 850 km and nowadays almost entirely toll road. That is clear progress compared to a few years ago. Roads, railway and metro lines are expanding quickly in Indonesia.

The novitiate has three novices and a community of three brothers. That's not much for a big house. The recent Covid period has reduced the number of candidates. It seems that there is more interest again, though that interest remains modest.

In both the novitiate and the postulantate, many lessons are given to novices or postulants



from different congregations together. It is then easier to attract expert teachers. This certainly applies to Jogjakarta, where there are two important Catholic universities. There is extensive participation from sister congregations.

From Lawang we met the coordinator for Indonesia of the Vincentian family. He had led the annual retreat for the Indonesian brothers. It was dedicated to Vincentius and Vincentian spirituality.

Close to Klepu we visited the new generalate of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph and their house for the deaf, blind and otherwise disabled. In the Netherlands this congregation goes by the name of the Sisters of the Choorstraat.



The postulant house in Klepu had undergone a metamorphosis. That was not an unnecessary luxury. Now the house looks nice again! Six young people and a community of four brothers are taking care of producing the right atmosphere. Much attention was paid to singing, sports, prayer, work in the garden and at home. In the meantime, classes have started and that brings everybody in a different rhythm. Three days a week there are intercongregational classes until noon. The lessons also involve some homework.

DESA PUTERA

In Desa Putera we were able to see for ourselves that the brother house has been demolished. This is part of a reorganization plan in which there will be a new construction for the large chapel, the brotherhouse and the clinic. A new, large chapel intended for the parish will be built on the site of the demolished brotherhouse. The old chapel will be located near the orphanage. The brothers have rooms in different parts of the site or in Gunung Sahari. There is a suitable space for a refectory and recreation room in a new part of the orphanage.

The new brotherhouse must be built on a part of the site where the clinic now stands. The clinic itself is gradually being demolished to the ground and moved further back. Both the brotherhouse and the clinic need new construction.

All parties involved are primarily responsible for their own building: the archdiocese for the church, the congregation for the brotherhouse, the Yayasan for the clinic Budi Mulia Lourdes.

MEETINGS

A lot of consultation took place during this visit. The general executive spoke extensively with the provincial superior, Brother Gregorius and with the entire provincial executive of Indonesia and with representatives of the boards of the various foundations (Yayasans): the school foundation, which is also responsible for two clinics, the Bina Mandiri foundation which is responsible for the finances of the orphanage in Kefamenanu (West Timor), the board of the company that runs the printing plant in Desa Putera. We were informed about the activities of a foundation that manages two clinics in the interior of which Bro. Konrad is in charge, next to the responsibility for a project with mealworms that is being managed by br. Martin Dol.

The general executive met in full on different days. Some ideas require further consultation. When there is more certainty about this, they will first be brought forward within the congregation.

IN BRIEF

An intensive visit, in a good and pleasant atmosphere, from which we hope to harvest the benefits in the near future.



Education is still one of the main works in the Indonesian province.

ETHIOPIA: PROFESSION, RENEWAL OF VOWS, ENTRY INTO NOVITIATE

Brothers Albert Komang and Ton Houdé will leave for the brothers in Ethiopia on September 12.

On September 19, Bro. Wandimu Daka Kena (photo) takes vows for the first time. Brothers Dawit and Duressa renew their vows and postulants Zerhun and Mamo begin their novitiate. Brothers Yacob and Temesgen do not renew their vows. In addition to individual conversations with the brothers, consultation takes place about the situation of the congregation and the three projects in which the congregation contributes. Of course, those projects are also visited.



Bro. Ton hopes to be back in Oostakker on September 27. Also brother Albert will be back in Indonesia by then.

Brother Ton Houdé

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