

NEWSLETTER GENERAL EXECUTIVE

CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

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BRAZIL: FIRST WEEKEND OF REFLECTION 2024



Brothers and Sister Inês gathered in the renovated chapel, in the midst of the works of mercy designed by Bro. Nico Jacobs.

On April 20 and 21, the first weekend of reflection in 2024 of the Pro-Province of Brazil took place. The meeting place was the Nossa Senhora Aparecida community, in Betim. The theme: *synodality and our mission as consecrated persons*.

Sister Maria Inês Ribeiro of the Congregation of Sisters Messengers of Divine Love, a congregation founded in Brazil, was the facilitator. Sister Maria Inês was Superior General of her Congregation and later for a long time president of the Conference of Religious of Brazil. She has a good knowledge of the reality of consecrated life in Brazil, among other places. Reflection was stimulated with a focus on the following words: *seeking * listening * discerning*. After each reflection, there was a moment of personal reflection and group exchange. In our evaluation, the participants indicated what a rich and opportune moment it was for our growth as consecrated brothers.

The evening of the 20th we celebrated the birthday of our facilitator, who would have had her birthday on April 21st. Some members of her family travelled many miles to congratulate her. Our postulant, Francisco Alves de Souza, participated in all the formative moments. During this period, we received a possible new candidate, Éric Jesus. It's a kind of introductory visit.

On April 21, on Sunday afternoon, the provincial executive accounted for the business aspects of the Glorieux Association in the year 2023. The Glorieux Association is the legal representative of the Congregation in Brazil.

Bro. Heládio Firmino Rodrigues

A NEW CLINIC IN DESA PUTERA (INDONESIA)

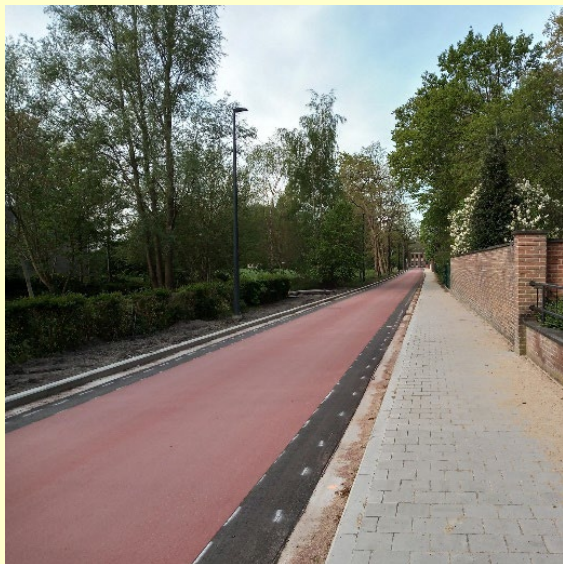


A classic construction, but with the latest medical equipment and air conditioning.

In previous newsletters we reported on demolition works and the laying of the foundation stone on the grounds of the complex "Desa Putera" (orphanage, graphic school, clinic, brotherhouse, a house of worship). In the meantime, we have moved a little further in time and the brothers in Indonesia have not been idle. On the site of the demolished brotherhouse now stands a brand new clinic that will open its doors to the public in a few months.

Bro. Herman Yosef Gultom

NEWS FROM BELGIUM



*The old roadway was totally worn out.
Now everything is nice and new.*



*An image that could soon be a thing of the past
(background: former novitiate).*

Do we hear a sigh of relief there? Believe me: not unjustly! The works on the Sint-Jozefstraat in Oostakker have been completed. On 19 March, all traffic was prohibited: the contractor applied the top layer and in the meantime a specialised company has sprayed the characteristic red colour, indicating that bicycle-users

have priority, i.e. that cars and the like are not allowed to overtake them. We don't know if there's going to be a ceremonial opening. It goes without saying that residents and passers-by are now only too happy to use the new road without restrictions.

The intention to start a residential care centre on the grounds of the monastery on Sint-Jozefstraat has been in place for more than ten years. The process is not going smoothly, we freely admit it. The proposals have been adjusted several times. Recently, a specialized company took soil samples to see how this soil is composed, what the groundwater is like, what the conclusions are for stability and what the possibilities are (underground parking spaces and basement spaces) in connection with a new building to be constructed.

NEWS FROM ETHIOPIA

In the second half of April, the Superior General, Bro. Ton Houdé, together with the general executive members the brothers Albert Komang and Hugo Fahik visited the brothers in Ethiopia. The last two came from Indonesia and the first from Belgium. The respective airlines made life a bit more complicated: the flight home of Bro. Ton was brought forward by one day, while brothers Albert and Hugo could only leave two days later. Obviously, one has to be flexible in such matters !

The purpose of the visit was to see how the two candidates, the two novices, the three brothers of temporary vows and the two brothers of vows for life are doing. To this end, we stayed in the formation community of Gulele and in the community of the St. Gabriel Health Center, talked to everyone, had discussions with the executive of the district of Ethiopia and met several times with everyone who could. Overall, these were pleasant days. It was important for the district executive to have a sounding board, and that may have been true for everyone. We also paid our respects to the Cardinal of Addis Ababa and had an enjoyable meeting.



*Cardinal Berhaneyesus receives three members of the general executive and two of the district executive.
Brother Wossen took the picture.*

There are three fairly large social projects that have a close connection with the general executive. For the leaders of these projects, these visits are certainly important because the survival of these projects depends largely on the congregation. Fortunately, there are many sponsors outside the congregation who make a large or small contribution to keep the projects going.

The **Women Empowerment Centre** focuses mainly on women, children and families in difficult circumstances. For example, you can think of single mothers, or mothers with disabled children without sufficient income. The situation of each of these persons is examined and together a course is mapped out that provides insight into better perspectives. The mothers for example receive training to start a small business in order to generate income. Employees regularly check the health of the women and children, and disabled children receive tailor-made education. After completing their trajectory, the participating women are once again resilient in their daily lives.



Pictured together in Addis Ababa: all the brothers side by side.

In the **Elderly Project**, elderly people with insufficient financial means are given the opportunity to enjoy a hot meal six days a week, to enjoy company and conversation, to do the laundry, to take a shower, to have their health checked, etc. It is a very nice project for people who really need it. As part of this project, some houses in the slums will be refurbished and group toilets will be built to improve the hygienic situation. It gives a little more dignity to people who often have to live in miserable conditions.

Finally, there is **St. Gabriel's Catholic Health Centre**. An accessible health centre with maternity care, vaccination options, TB control, care for HIV patients, follow-up of high blood pressure and diabetes, etc. Dental care and a modest eye clinic are now also included in the offer. There are many patients and it is very important for the ordinary man and woman in particular, because those who cannot afford it are still treated.

If you want to know more about these projects, you can visit the website of the Good Works Foundation Glorieux. Through this foundation, which enjoys ANBI status, you can also make a one-off or fixed contribution, and you will also be rewarded for it fiscally. You can find all the information on <https://www.goedewerkenglorieux.nl>

The visit to Ethiopia was intensively demanding, but also rewarding. Being confronted with so much misery makes us aware of our privileged situation.

Bro. Ton Houdé

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