

NEWSLETTER GENERAL EXECUTIVE

CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

Issue 81, December 2024

FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATED IN BETIM



The pastor and the brothers and co-workers. On the far left, behind the portrait of the Founder, is Brother Bonifasius Taolin, who has recently flown in from Indonesia. In the foreground our postulant Francisco.

On November 25, Founders' Day was celebrated *all over the world*. In Brazil in the community of Betim this happened with our Indonesian brother Bonifasius (*see below, article mission*) who has been part of the Brazilian brother community since November 16.

In the chapel the Founder, the works of mercy, their meaning and the interpretation that we, as brothers of an active congregation, give to them every day were considered. Opening their eyes to misery. Thinking and meditating on what that means for a brother. Taking action and seeing what can be done for and with the poor to achieve a dignified existence. The family's feast was then celebrated in the Centro Social Glorieux.

MISSION OF INDONESIAN BROTHERS TO BRAZIL AND EUROPE

Four Indonesian brothers have deliberately accepted a mission abroad. They will move to Brazil and the Netherlands in early 2025, and this for a longer period of time. They join and strengthen the existing brother communities. An explanation.

Two brothers are moving to Brazil, and you may have already read it: one brother is already there (*see above, article 25 November*). Bro. Bonifasius Taolin left Jakarta on November 15 and the next day he was picked up at the airport of Belo Horizonte and taken to the community of Betim. After an integration process, he will probably assist in the Centro Social Glorieux of the congregation in Betim. After all, he has followed a formation in software and hardware (computer), and these skills are in great demand among students and employers these days.

Brother Hugo Fahik, a member of the general executive and a certified nurse, goes to the remote town of Jordânia in the valley of the Jequitinhonha (Minas Gerais). Anyone who follows the congregation news a little knows that the Congregation and Jordânia have long been linked by all kinds of good works. One of them is the Lar Glorieux, a home for old age for people who are not financially self-reliant and who need care. In Jordânia Bro. Hugo will follow as a



brother, in the footsteps of Glorieux and several brothers from Belgium and the Netherlands. The concrete tasks of the Brothers Boni and Hugo will ultimately be determined in consultation with the executive of the pro-province of Brazil.

In the Netherlands, the brothers of the Depoorter community in Eindhoven will in turn welcome Bro. *Albert Komang Alit* and Bro. *Ivan Sigalingging* into their midst. If everything goes according to plan, this will happen at the beginning of February. Brother Albert is a member of the general executive, and he is not new to staying abroad. He lived and worked in Ethiopia for a period as a medical assistant at the Saint Gabriel Catholic Health Center. Bro. Albert was loved there, and it was with regret in their hearts that his fellow Ethiopian brothers, friends and colleagues saw him leave. Bro. Ivan Sigalingging has worked in education and has studied economics. The intention is that he will gain insight into the financial working methods of the Congregation in the Netherlands and Belgium.

The most important thing now is learning Portuguese for the brothers who go to Brazil and learning Dutch for the brothers who come to the Netherlands. At the same time, they will familiarize themselves with the reality of the Congregation in the Netherlands, Belgium and Brazil. It is not uncommon for brothers from Indonesia to commit themselves to staying in another country for a longer period of time. In the past, the brothers in Brazil could already count on brothers from Indonesia, who then participated in the formation process of young candidates. The same goes for Ethiopia, by the way. For the brothers Albert and Hugo, this is also an additional step in the process of gaining (administrative) experience as members of an international congregation that is present on four continents.

It goes without saying, moving demands a lot from everyone involved. The missionaries leave their familiar world behind and settle in an environment that they will have to make their own. Language, manners, mores

and customs, ... The communities, for their part, were informed and asked to make an effort and to welcome the brothers warmly into their midst. And we already know it: they will be very happy to do this!

Boa sorte ! Veel succes ! Good luck !

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

A new Jubilee year with the theme *Pilgrims of Hope* will run from January 1, 2025 to January 6, 2026. It is also the theme of the Congregation's Christmas and New Year's wishes.

When Francis was still searching, he went as a pilgrim to the tomb of the apostle Peter in Rome. On that occasion, he changed his clothes and tried out what it feels like to be poor and a beggar. The Jubilee is presented as a journey of hope, with elements of pilgrimage and spiritual renewal. In a strange place, in a place of pilgrimage, a reflection on one's own life may be easier, stripped of the burdens and worries of the outside world.

Pilgrimage as well as spiritual renewal have always had a place in our Congregation. Our Founder – nicknamed Father of the Poor – saw his vocation and that of the brothers as a pilgrimage. In the community of brothers in Astorga (Spain) hundreds of pilgrims were received. In the Dutch village of Vessem, the brothers helped to establish the pilgrimage house Capharnaum. Several brothers have gone as pilgrims to Santiago, for example, in search of inspiration and hope. And let us not forget the countless pilgrimages that have been and are being undertaken, alone or in groups, to places where Our Lady of Lourdes is asked for support, inspiration and intercession. Who did not come back strengthened and with renewed hope?

HAVING A HEART FOR EACH OTHER

On Thursday, October 24, Pope Francis published an encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Titled "Dilexit nos" (He Has Loved Us), this is Pope Francis' fourth circular letter.

This letter appears in a context of global challenges. After all, today's world is marked by war, social and economic imbalances, unbridled consumerism and technologies that threaten to undermine human nature. Pope Francis calls for a change of perspective. He urges humanity to rediscover the most essential thing: the heart. The full title is *He has loved us. Encyclical on the human and divine love of the Heart of Jesus Christ*. The text is an invitation to reflect on aspects of the Lord's love that illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal and that resonate meaningfully with "a world that seems to have lost its heart".



Together with the Foundation Good Works Glorieux, we have a heart for each other in the Elderly People Support Project in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

BEING A BROTHER WITH A HEART

Despite the fact that many close their hearts and believe that they should think first of themselves or of the prosperity of their own small or large country, there are also many who do something. Also in our midst we see that another way is possible. A path that Christ, Glorieux, Vincent, sisters and brothers and many "ordinary Christians" have shown us and that we are still following with conviction.

Let us continue to show our hearts to others, to assist our fellow man in need, hospitably and in a Christian spirit. It's the right time for it!

GENERAL EXECUTIVE

In December, the entire general executive – except for Brother Albert – met in Oostakker for the annual consultation with each other and with the executives of Belgium and the Netherlands. In addition, contact was made with the Panti Asuhan Foundation, an organization in the Netherlands that supports social projects in Indonesia, and has already worked with brothers of the Congregation in the past. In 2024, they helped renovate the orphanage in Kefamenanu (Indonesian Timor).



It was also a warm reunion with the brothers and sisters in Belgium and the Netherlands (photo).

Finally, we wish Bro. Ton Houdé, the Superior General, a speedy recovery after the minor medical operation on the right hip, which he will have to undergo on December 16.

BACK TO THE CONGO

Brother Eric Claeys, who has been in Belgium since July 6 (holidays and doctor's visits), has been declared healthy and well and left for Congo on December 7. All that time he lived with his fellow brothers in the monastery in Oostakker or with his family. In Congo, they are of course happy with his return to Bukavu, where the school community has missed him all this time. Those who want to can read the extensive interview from the previous newsletter again on the website of the Congregation.

BEST WISHES FROM THE EDITORS



Joseph and Mary and the Child Jesus
fleeing to Egypt
as pilgrims of hope. (*Mattheus 2, 13-23*)

How many refugees
are doing the same now
and long for a hopeful future.

Painting: Fra Angelico

**Merry Christmas
and
a Happy New Year!**

the editors

GENERALAAT
SINT-JOZEFSTRAAT 1
9041 OOSTAKKER (BELGIUM)

GENERALAAT.FNDL@TELENET.BE
[HTTPS://WWW.BROEDERS-OLV-LOURDES.ORG/](https://www.broeders-olv-lourdes.org/)
(+32) 09 251 01 85