

NEWSLETTER GENERAL EXECUTIVE

CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

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VISIT TO ETHIOPIA



From left to right: Br. Mamo, Br. Zerihun , Br. Dawit.

From September 13th to 24th (including travel), Mrs. Martine Stoppelenburg and Brother Ton Houdé visited Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. Mrs. Martine Stoppelenburg is responsible for fundraising for congregational projects, primarily in Ethiopia. Mrs. Corin van Poppel did this in previous years but had to step down for health reasons. Corin has made a significant contribution to the projects. This was Martine's first visit to Ethiopia.

During this visit the brothers Mamo Haile and Zerihun Worku took their first vows, and Brother Dawit Abebe took his vows for life. This took place in the parish church of St. Gabriel, in the presence of the general superior, Brother Ton Houdé. Bishop Milkyas, along with a congregation of priests, presided over the Eucharistic celebration. Several family members of the brothers, religious from other congregations, colleagues from work, and friends attended the well-organized service. The hymns sung by the choir were primarily in Amharic . Neither the lyrics nor the music were familiar to Martine or me, but fortunately, this was not the case for most of those present, who enthusiastically joined in. The Liturgy of the Word was in English, which is not spoken by the common people. There are many languages in Ethiopia, but a unified language is lacking.

After the service, all participants were invited to a meal in the parish hall.

During the week, individual conversations were held with each brother, as well as various group discussions on congregational matters in Ethiopia. The group of brothers is small, nine people, and everyone is relatively

young. All are Ethiopian. Four still need to start vocational training. The atmosphere is good; the youngest brothers not only study but also volunteer in our senior project and with the Sisters of Mother Theresa.

On the last evening of our stay, Brother Wondimu renewed his temporary vows in the chapel. That evening, it was possible to sit outside—provided you were dressed appropriately—where sheep meat was roasted over a fire.

Addis Ababa may be located in the tropics, but due to the high altitude, you don't notice much of that. The brotherhouse where we stayed is at an altitude of about 2,500 meters. During the day it can be pleasant, but in the evenings and at night the temperature drops sharply and it's simply cold, especially since the houses aren't heated. We were still in the late rainy season, so heavy rain and thunderstorms were common. The second community we have in Addis is located lower, and the temperature there is much more pleasant.



Besides the focus on the brothers, there was also attention for the three projects. This was Martine's primary focus, but since the congregation bears a significant responsibility for the projects, they also demanded Brother Ton's attention.

On the first day, a visit was paid to cardinal Berhanyesus. The cardinal appreciates such visits, takes his time, and is a pleasant host. He also visited the projects himself. Catholicism is a small minority in Ethiopia, but it is important when it comes to social projects.

Over the next few days, the Elderly Project, the Women Empowerment Project, and the Saint Gabriel Catholic Health Centre were visited. They spoke with the managers, Martine was given the opportunity to introduce herself, the activities were visited, and the long-term functioning of the centers was a top priority. Particular attention was also paid to how the centers could generate more income to become less dependent on outside assistance. For now, outside assistance remains vital, but the partial self-sufficiency of projects and individuals requires significant effort.

The *Elderly Project* welcomes nearly one hundred elderly people six days a week. These are people who lack their own shelter, or who live in basic housing and have little or no income of their own. At the center, they receive a hot meal, have access to a toilet or shower. A nurse (*Br. Wossen, photo left*) monitors each person's health and can refer them for further treatment. There are daytime activities for some people, and if possible, they learn how to earn some extra money, provide a warm blanket or shoes, and find temporary accommodation for some. Recreational opportunities and social and religious support are available. Sometimes housing improvements are made, or toilets are built for groups.

The *Women Empowerment Centre* (WEC) aims to help women facing significant social challenges achieve a better and more



independent life. These women are often single mothers who have poor housing, insufficient income for a decent life, suffer from illnesses themselves, or have children with disabilities.



Training is often provided to help children set up their own small business, gradually becoming self-sufficient. For children with a (mental or physical) disability, a treatment plan is developed, and there are opportunities for physiotherapy, etc.

The results are sometimes astonishing and self-esteem can increase enormously.

The *Saint Gabriel Catholic Health Centre* is a clinic where people with health issues from one or more neighborhoods can come. These are primarily peripheral neighborhoods. People are welcomed, diagnosed, and treated if the clinic can accommodate them. If not, they are referred to a more comprehensive health center. The maternity clinic and pre- and postpartum checkups for mothers and children are also important.



Vaccinations are also given, laboratory tests are carried out, tuberculosis treatments are performed, HIV patients are checked, dental treatments are done, eye diseases are examined, factory workers receive medical assistance, etc. Those who can pay for the treatment in part do so. Those who lack resources receive free assistance. Some vaccinations or treatments are provided by the government. The center attracts many patients.

Three brothers work there: two nurses and one lab technician. The brothers have a house on the grounds. They often step in at night or on weekends, for example, when the ambulance needs to be dispatched.

This is a small and incomplete overview of the activities in the centers. Everything is focused on people who have little or nothing, and an effort is made to help them live with dignity.

That's worth it. That's how Glorieux did it, that's how Vincentius did it, and that's how we try to do it in our time. If anyone wants to help, the best way to do so is through the Glorieux Good Works Foundation. The website is: www.goedewerkenglorieux.nl

SHORT MESSAGES

INDONESIA

In Indonesia, a provincial chapter takes place in October. A number of elected brothers meet and discuss the situation of the province, brothers, houses, and projects, and ultimately elect a new provincial executive for the next three years. Current members of the executive can also be re-elected.

BRAZIL

Brother Ton Houdé, Superior General, will visit the brothers in Brazil from October 7 to 18. He will also attend the Brazilian chapter there.

BELGIUM

A photographic look at Stefaan Modest Glorieux. An original perspective on the founder of our congregation. What's it about ?

Two hundred years ago, Stefaan Modest Glorieux founded his first school in Ronse. Today, Campus Glorieux High School looks back on that remarkable beginning and explores the man behind the mission: its founder and inspiration.

Together with experienced photographers from Fotoclub Ronse, students set out to capture contemporary images that reflect Glorieux's educational story. The results can be seen in the captivating photo exhibition #wijzijnglorieux at the Hoge Mote.

This exhibition in Ronse is the heart of a series of festive activities to mark the school's 200th anniversary.



Taken from:

<https://www.ontdekronse.be/nl/nieuws/wijzijnglorieux-eeen-fotografische-blik-op-stefaan-modest-glorieux>

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