

# NEWSLETTER GENERAL EXECUTIVE

## CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

Number 52, June 2017

### FIFTY YEARS CONGREGATIONAL PRESENCE IN BRAZIL

On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, brother Ton Houdé (general superior) went to Brazil. The reason: 50 years of congregational presence in Brazil. The “big day” was May 6<sup>th</sup>, celebrated with a special Eucharistic celebration, during which the brothers and the general public paid tribute to and gave thanks for the past, also with an eye on the future. The following is a brief report.

### MAIN CELEBRATION IN BETIM

The first Belgian and Dutch brothers arrived in Brazil in the beginning of January 1967. There were eight of them. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, the 50 years of congregational presence in Brazil was solemnly remembered. This took place in the community center of the brothers in Betim.

The solemn but particularly festive and inspiring celebration of the Holy Eucharist started at 10 o'clock, led by Dom Otacilio Ferreira, one of the auxiliary bishops of the Belo Horizonte archdiocese; he was assisted by 4 priests, br. Herbert de Gier among them. The bishop had clearly understood that Glorieux wasn't satisfied with only celebrating the Eucharist, but that something more was needed to rescue people from the misery in which they found themselves.

The charism of the congregation was clearly emphasized by the actual presence of the works of mercy as painted by br. Nico Jacobs. Moreover, it wasn't difficult to see a link with the recently ended Year of Mercy.

It was a joint celebration with beautiful singing, prayers offered by brothers, aspirants and postulants, the dedication to Our Lady of Lourdes, and the singing of the congregational hymn.

During this celebration, the year for congregational vocations in Brazil was officially opened. The vocation to a life of a brother is receiving extra attention in places where the brothers are present, as well as elsewhere. At the same time, vocations in general will receive attention, because every vocation is of importance for the church.

At the end of the celebration, and during the get-together and the meal afterwards, various persons, among them the general superior br. Ton Houdé, had something to say. Words of thanks were addressed to all present and past brothers or candidates: nine from Belgium, twelve from The Netherlands, two from Indonesia, sixty-six from Brazil. The people who left, those too, have made their contribution, and for that the congregation is grateful.



There is a sign of hope, since at present there are four aspirants and two postulants, as well as interested candidates for next year. Formation and the provincial leadership are completely in the hands of Brazilian brothers.

Brother Piet Goossens (see photo, second from left) received special attention, since he is the only brother who has lived in Brazil for 50 years. He resided in Juiz de Fora, Rondonia, Joaima, Almenara and Jordania.

During the first part of August, the brothers Antônio de Amorim and Danilso Carlos Estevão, accompanied by br. Piet Goossens, will visit Belgium and The Netherlands, to involve the brothers and the Sisters of Mercy in those two countries in the celebration of this jubilee, and to visit the places that were important in the life of the Founder and of the two congregations.



*br. Ton Houdé – more to see on the facebook page Congregação Dos Irmãos De Nossa Senhora De Lourdes*

## INDONESIA

### THE ORPHANAGE “DESA PUTERA”, CELEBRATING ITS 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



Desa Putera (childrens’ village, in the Indonesian language) was started on June 16, 1947 in Lenteng Agung. The orphanage saw its beginning during the politically turbulent time at the end of the Japanese occupation of Dutch-Indonesia. Many orphans roamed about: they had lost their parents; some were looking for relatives. They tried to stay alive by means of begging and some thieving. The Dutch administration got concerned about these drifters, and tried to find them room in some residences for orphans. Since the existing facilities weren’t sufficient, new institutes were planned. This is where the congregation got involved. The orphanage itself belongs to the Vincentian Society (Perhimpunan Vincentius).

On June 16, 2017, the Desa Putera orphanage will celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, together with its current director br. Tarcisius Kasino, who is in charge of the festivities.

*MG – thanks to Panti Asuhan Desa Putera (see Facebook)*

### BOGOR: A NEW HOUSE FOR THE BROTHERS

The brothers in Bogor have moved from their familiar residence (Jalan Kapten Muslihat 20) to a brand-new building at the same address. The municipality had designated the old house as a historical building. To honor the wishes of the city administration, it was decided to move the nearby clinic (Klinik Melania Bruderan) into the old building, requiring some necessary adaptations, of course. The solemn blessing of the house of the brothers and of the clinic will be on July 29, 2017.

*MG – with thanks to the Executive of the Indonesian Province*

## PLEASED TO MEET YOU.....

*The period of time that the general executive was exclusively the domain of Belgian and Dutch brothers, has passed. Since brothers from other countries now carry the main executive responsibilities, the executive members have been asked to introduce themselves. Br. Ton Houde opens the batting.*

Since my election by the general chapter on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, to the position of general superior, I now live in Oostakker, the head-quarters of the general executive. Prior to this, I lived in Holland for 40 years, followed by periods of 16 years each in Spain and Brazil. In 2010, the general chapter elected me as a member of the general executive, which allowed me to meet directly with the Indonesian and Ethiopian brothers.

As a member of the congregation, I worked throughout the years with many people: youths and teachers in vocational training, persons with mental or physical handicaps, persons who tried to free themselves from an addiction, refugees from everywhere, youths and adults from the periphery of big cities. These meetings weren't only enriching, but often also challenging ..... They often made you still ..... I was allowed to see how God in different ways plays a role in people's lives, especially in the lives of the little, simple person without much standing.

Today, the challenges are more diverse than ever. Together with the other members of the executive, I am trying to shape the future of the congregation in order to remain faithful to her vocation in helping the little person in need, but at the same time taking into account the different developments in those countries where the congregation is present.

Respecting everyone, supporting one another rather than breaking him/her down, having an eye for the little person, believing in what is good in the other person ..... even if we don't always understand him/her: these are values that make life worthwhile for me. Cooperating in the fullness of creation, even if this fullness seems so far away yet: this is cooperating with God's plan for you, for me and for the congregation.



## BELGIUM

### CARE-CAMPUS GLORIEUX

Circumstances have prompted those responsible for policy matters, to transform the Glorieux Residence (Oostakker), in collaboration with some partners, into a proper residence and care-center. This is a process that has been going on for some time, and that probably will take some more years to complete. Part of his process was to prevent vacancy in the brothers' residence by making it available for people from outside. At the moment, all rooms are occupied, solving the vacancy problem.



In the beginning of the year, management and daily leadership were taken over by vzw Residence and Care Centers "De Foyer", an organization that has its beginning at the time of the First World War. "De Foyer" invests a lot in quality care for the elderly. Until some years ago, "De Foyer" was called "Le Foyer de la Femme". The logo reminds us of this previous name by means of a double "F".

The brothers living in this building, live among the other fellow residents. Within this community, they constitute a religious community, complete with a superior. Since March 18, br. Norbert Van Hyfte has transferred his leadership over to br. Staf Verhoeven, who has had this task before in the past. Unfortunately, shortly after the March 18 date, br. Staf suffered a traffic accident. After a few weeks in a hospital, he has now returned to his community.

MG

## SHORT NOTICES

### THE OPENING OF THE INSPIRATION GARDEN IN GLORIEUXPARK, EINDHOVEN



On May 24<sup>th</sup>, the *Inspiration Garden* was dedicated in a festive manner. In this garden, the spiritual inspiration of the Sisters of Mercy has been given shape. The garden consists of a labyrinth, including art objects by Jeannette Claessen and Carla van Olst, various texts from world religions, and a permanent spot for a world-peace flame. All this is meant as an invitation for reflection and a site for inspiration. The *Inspiration Garden* is a bequest from the Sisters of Mercy to the current residents of Glorieuxpark, and to all who will live here in the future and receive care.

*with thanks to br. Henk Gal*

## CONGREGATIONAL MATTERS

### BELGIUM

Brother Norbert Van Hyfte moved from Care-Campus Glorieux (Sint-Jozefstraat 1a) to the General House (Sint-Jozefstraat 1, Oostakker 9041, Belgium).

### INDONESIA

All of the 8 postulants have been accepted as novices. They will move from Klepu to Lawang, starting their novitiate on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Br. Hieronimus Tua Sinaga will make his first vows on July 31<sup>st</sup> in Lawang.

### ETHIOPIA

In July, the house of formation in Addis Ababa will welcome 5 candidates.

## A FINAL WORD

The newsletter from the general executive will appear in a different format from now on. This also applies to the website, which will be kept up to date in a climate of a continually changing landscape of social media. Among others, the reader will find information, etc., regarding brothers who passed away.

*[translation: br. Henk Gal]*

***Wishing you all happy holidays!***

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