



Dutch Province Annual Retreat 2019

MAASTRICHT, Netherlands – The Dutch Province just held their annual retreat 2019 a week ago. The theme of the retreat was "I was called once" and what this calling means today.

Looking back on their own lives, it can be noticed that a lot has changed. Some aspects have broken down and some have broken up. Surprisingly, they no longer experience what was once valuable to them and what is still precious is often not recognized by others.

Hence, life is not a road of triumph. Instead, it is a road of trial and error; of success and disappointment; and of great joy and deep abandonment. Sometimes, they may find themselves asking on: how do they look back on that road; what have disappeared and what have remained; what aspect do they feel liberated; and what still weighs in like a burden. Reflecting on these views, is the experience of God during their younger years still the same today? In every conference, there was an image on which a 'reflective step' is based in pursuing the path of their chosen life.

The facilitator was theologian Franck Ploum (1968). He works as a pastor and inspirator of the 'Ekklesia' Breda and the biblical learning house 'Zinsverband'. Franck is also a board member of the Congregation of the Brothers of Huijbergen (MTB). He preaches the bible and liturgy in relation to social issues. He conducts retreats for religious institutions regularly.

Their experiences during the days in Maastricht, in the convent of the Sisters of Carolus Borromeus, were taken as an inspiration for everyone present. Singing, praying and talking together about their calling made all of them relive the path they are on. One of the songs rendered was "*He who has spoken*" from Huub Oosterhuis. Below are the beautiful verses of the song.

He who wanted us in his ministry,
who dared to ask for our hand,
who lifted us out of fear and doom
and has carried us in his hands.

He who awakens desire, silences desire.
Do not fear, He goes with us, a road of days.
This world is yours, this time.
You have made your voice heard until today.

Your Name is passion for justice,
your word a source from which we want to drink.
You who are our future so far;
that we do not fall into despair.

Marian Claeren