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Marian Walk: A Special Tribute to Mary in the Month of May

HOEGAARDEN, Belgium - Every year during the month of May in the pastoral unit of Saint Catharina Hoegaarden, several associations such as Okra, Samana, Celishof, Brouwketel, Femma, and others together known as *de Gezonde Buurt* ("Healthy Neighbourhood") organize a walk entitled *"With and for Mother Mary."*

This association carries out a truly noble initiative by organizing this Marian walk for the elderly residents of the nursing home. Among the forty elderly people, around fifteen of them are immobile and require assistance. The volunteers lovingly accompany them, pushing their wheelchairs as they walk together to the parish church or to the convent chapel. These elderly people need care and support, and the associations

joyfully dedicate themselves to organizing this Marian Walk during the month of May. This year they organized the Marian Walk from the home for the aged to the convent chapel.

Knowing that I am a Mariologist and that I also compose Marian hymns, they invited me during the past two years to give a Marian message and sing a few Marian hymns. This year too, I was invited to share a Marian reflection and sing Marian hymns. After speaking about the recent liturgical and sacramental celebrations, such as First Holy Communion and Confirmation in our pastoral unit, I shared the following message:

"No matter how old a child becomes, for a mother, the child always remains a child. A mother continues to care for and love her child until the end of her life. We call Mary our Mother because she is always with us as her children. She comforts us with her motherly care and guides us through her loving intercession. As we prepare to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, let us remember the gifts that the Holy Spirit showers upon us. The Holy Spirit is the source of new life and youthfulness because the Spirit keeps us constantly renewed and alive. Our Blessed Mother is truly and uniquely blessed among all because she received the Holy Spirit in a preeminent way on at least two occasions, and therefore she remains ever young in her care for us, even as we continue to grow old." I continued:

"Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort had a deep devotion to our Blessed Mother from his childhood onward. He even encouraged his little sister to pray the Rosary by saying: 'If you pray the Rosary, you will become more beautiful later in life.'"

I then sang two Marian hymns. After the message and hymns, I greeted each elderly person personally and wished them the peace of Christ. The leader of the association expressed appreciation for the Marian walk and the melodious Marian hymns.

Fr. Nepolean JAMES RAJ, SMM