



### **The more I am staying here, the better - Fr. Fortune, a missionary in Italy**

**BIANCO, Italy** - For the first time, the Province of Italy received two confreres from Africa Anglophone Delegation for the “mission” in Italy. Fr. Oscar SANGWANTI, SMM and Fr. Fortune Partison GONDWE, SMM arrived in Rome on 22 March 2022 and began their Italian language study at Dante Alighieri school while staying at the Scholasticate International Community in Via Romagna. They were officially welcomed in Bianco International Community on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022 as members of the community and pastors of *Tutti i Santi* (All Saints) Parish in the Diocese of Locri-Gerace in Calabria. Fr. Jailos MPINA, SMM had an interview with Fr. Fortune. Excerpt:

#### **Briefly share with us your Montfortian background.**

I am a Malawian, born on 12 September 1989 from Saint Denis Parish in the Diocese of Mzuzu and I did my novitiate in the Philippines from 31 July 2013 to 1 August 2014, the day I made my first profession. I did my final vows on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018 in Malawi in the Diocese of Mangochi at Saint Louis Montfort Parish and I was ordained on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 in Zomba Diocese.

#### **How did you react when you were told by your Superior Delegate that you will serve in Italian Province?**

I was surprised when my Superior Delegate asked me to come and offer my services here in Italy. I did not expect this considering the fact that I had not yet finished my mandate where I was. On one

hand, knowing that it is not easy to do mission in a new cultural environment and the fact that I did not have much experience of serving as a missionary priest, I was anxious. On the other hand, after reflecting, I was happy to come as it had been my desire to serve as a missionary and I believe in the spirit of availability.

**How is the mission in Bianco community? And are you happy with the Montfortian community and pastoral engagement with the people in Bianco?**

The mission in Bianco is going well. Our community is really committed in teaching people our faith in order for them to know more about Jesus Christ the incarnate wisdom and encounter Him through the sacraments. I like the fact that all my community members have served for many years as missionaries. I take this as a very good opportunity to learn from their experiences. In fact, I have seen that the more I am staying here, the better I am able to understand the people in their cultural context. I like the fact that the people here are so welcoming and this gives me an opportunity to carry out my pastoral activities well.

**What is the agreement between the Italian Province and the Africa Anglophone Delegation? Is there a contract or MoU?**

The agreement between the Italian Province and the African Anglophone Delegation is that we will serve here for a period of six years. After that, evaluations will be done and a decision will be made whether we may continue to serve for another period.

**What are the challenges you are experiencing?**

I regard challenges as moments for growth. These are some of the challenges. Firstly, we are doing mission in a context where many young people are not interested to come for Mass and other spiritual activities and we are doing our best to help them to understand the importance of prayer in their lives. The other challenge is that of adapting to the new culture. Language in this case has been a barrier in order to understand better the Customs and social norms of the people. However, we are doing our best to immerse in the local culture by relating with the locals.

**Back in your entity, there is a need for confreres in the missions, for example, Mulot shrine in Kenya, Mphangwe Prayer Center in Zambia, etc, in your opinion should this arrangement between the Africa Anglophone Delegation and the Italian Province continue?**

I understand the fact that back at home, there is a need for more confreres in the mission. However, I see that it is not so comprehensive and urgent as compared with the situation in the Italian province. It is better then to continue with this mission while doing our best to have more vocations in our entities.

*Montfort Communications*