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Called to Listen and be Compassionate

KESSEL-LO, Belgium - In early September 2024, the confreres from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands held a regular meeting, as is done 2-3 times a year. This time we held the meeting in Kessel-Lo, Belgium.

In previous meetings we discussed the theme of our spirituality and how we live it in our pastoral experience in our entities. This meeting was a little different. We agreed to discuss the theme of secularisation, and the speakers came from outside the Congregation of Montfortians. So, we invited Hans Geybels to help us explore the above theme together. He is a lecturer at the theological faculty at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. The theme he offered was '**Mission in de context of secularisation**'. He said that the secularisation that is occurring in the Church is actually not only caused by the development of human thought and mentality today but also because the Church itself is currently moving away from the roots of faith. The Church (in Europe in particular) is too free and tends not to want to be bound by anyone or anything.

In terms of liturgy, for example. A liturgy that has strict rules seems stiff and uninteresting. This is very different from devotion, which is more relaxed, praying according to personal needs, sentimental and touching. In this context, we as pastoral workers are called to act. The need for creativity in pastoral care but not to the point of losing identity. Make choices but carefully. He also invited us to explore inspiration from the Synodal process that was carried out some time ago in the Church. **We are called to have ears that listen and hearts that forgive.** Ears that listen and hearts that forgive enable us to understand the pastoral complexities that occur and find solutions there together; of course, in the light of the Holy Spirit.

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