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## **Embracing Humility and Dialogue**

**COLOGNE, Germany** - From Sunday, February 16 to Tuesday afternoon, February 18, 2025, confreres from Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany gathered at Marianheide for a meaningful regular meeting. In addition to sharing pastoral experiences from our respective regions, we had the opportunity to hear an inspiring talk by Father Xavier ALANGARAM, SVD, on the theme: “Changes to and Challenges of Religious Missionary Life in Europe.”

Although this theme was not new to us, as we had discussed it before, Father Xavier's approach reignited our spirit to rediscover and renew our Montfortian missionary spirit in our respective missions. As he said, we often think we know everything. However, this mindset can be a dangerous trap for a missionary. We must remain humble and always be ready to learn and grow, even after years of ministry.

Father Xavier reminded us of "Vita Consecrata", the call to live as religious who not only transmit the values of faith but also experience "transfiguration", a profound inner transformation. The biggest challenge we face is secularization. In Europe, many people reject the existence of a transcendent God while accepting what is immanent—what is visible and

tangible. This has led to relativism, where everything is considered "okay." This is the moment for us, as missionaries, to offer prophetic dialogue, not just to speak, but to invite others to think deeply and grow together in goodness.

After the meeting, Father Francis took us to the magnificent Cologne (Koln) Cathedral. Being there, witnessing the grandeur of the architecture, and experiencing the peacefulness of the place, we felt as though we had gained new strength. Like the sturdy cathedral, our mission must stand firm, even as the world around us keeps changing. The spirit we gained from this meeting encourages us to continually renew ourselves and the mission we undertake. Laughing, sharing joy, and engaging in dialogue filled with love are ways for us to bring the light of Christ into a world increasingly darkened by secularization.

In this meeting, we rediscovered the Montfortian missionary spirit, which is not only focused on ourselves but dares to invite others to grow together in the light of God. May this spirit not only remain alive in meetings like this but continue to flow in every step we take in ministry. Thus, our mission as Montfortian missionaries will bring more light into the ever-changing world.

On behalf of the confreres from Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany

*Stefan MUSANAI, SMM.*