



Community Schimmert 2.0

SCHIMMERT, Netherlands - Three young Indonesian confreres are creating a new community in Schimmert, a historic site of the Montfortian presence in the Netherlands. In the newsletter "Wijtzer," they gave this interview about the first steps of the new community they love to call "Schimmert 2.0."

Learning to Grow (by Sintus Depa SMM)

I must be honest, I don't have much experience living in a small community. During my formation, I lived in large communities, such as the novitiate and the major seminary. I was born into a large family and am used to living with many people.

The smaller the community, the greater the challenge. It's like a small ship navigating in the middle of the ocean. It's not easy for a small ship to face strong currents, high winds, and changing weather. To do this, a strong team is needed. A team that is communicative and knows how to collaborate to keep the ship balanced. I believe these are the values needed to build a community. And we must recognize that it is not easy. Why? Because each person has different characteristics and personalities. These traits will emerge when the storm comes. A person will reveal their authenticity when challenges and problems arise. But for me, this is something to be grateful for, because in that moment, I get to know the person who is with me on the boat. Recognizing this means a lot to me because it affects how I talk to and approach people. At the same time, I realize that I must let go of my ego and personal pleasures and remind myself of the purpose of living in community.

Once, a spiritual director told me: "If you are not ready to live in community, do not try to be a Montfortian." In fact, he is reminding me that the communal aspect of life takes priority, not the personal one. This is what Montfort meant when he prayed for God to send free missionaries. Being free doesn't only mean leaving behind family and special relationships. Rather, being free means being an open person. A person who does not play with their own thoughts and feelings but dares to enter community for a common purpose. I believe that family life also involves a shared commitment in this sense. Families will divide if they are selfish. The same applies to community life. I realize that these things are a challenge for me. There is no perfect community. If I were asked if I am growing in community life, I would answer: yes, I am growing. For me, everything that happens in the community shows growth and change. What are these growths and changes? First of all, I have learned to be independent and responsible in daily decisions. Secondly, I have become more creative. Thirdly, I have gotten to know my confreres better. Fourthly, I have learned to respond well to problems and handle them while also showing who I am and what my life principles are. So far, I am happy with my life choices. Becoming a priest has been my dream since childhood, and becoming a Montfortian is a choice I made consciously.

The Pleasant Tension (by Charles Leta SMM)

In addition to parish ministry, we have received an important task from the Congregation: to continue the Montfortian missionary work. This must remain primarily inspired by the spirituality and guidelines of the General Chapter while also responding to the needs of the Church and the local community. In this way, the presence of the Montfortians in the Netherlands remains relevant. This was once again confirmed during our conversation with the General Council during their visit last July. I must be honest, the execution of this task is not easy and will remain difficult, as we have to search for and find new forms of missionary work ourselves, trying and trying again. We are faced with a secularized society in which faith is no longer taken for granted. At the same time, secularization also presents an opportunity, where we are increasingly challenged to be creative and continuously look for new ways to bring faith to people today. I enjoy the thinking, searching, planning, executing, and evaluating. It seems like there is a pleasant tension between uncertainty and trust, even though it is not easy. This makes it increasingly clear that this is not my personal work, nor that of the Congregation alone, but the work of God Himself.

The relocation of the older confreres marked the beginning of a gradual fulfillment of this task. In addition to using the Schimmert convent as a residence, we have also made it available for

various activities. New initiatives, such as the youth group, thematic meetings, "The Path to Easter," and the Taizé celebration, have already taken place there several times. We are also very happy to increasingly collaborate with non-Montfortians who support us, both in terms of content and implementation. Unfortunately, these activities have been temporarily suspended due to necessary building adjustments. We hope to restart them this year.

Faith Also Has a Sense of Spontaneity (by Stefan Musanai SMM)

Faith is more than just rules and rituals. It is a living encounter with God, coming from the heart. Spontaneity in faith means living with God in an authentic, free, and joyful way. It is a faith that adapts to daily life and is not bound by rigid structures. It is a dynamic faith that grows and lives with the challenge's life presents.

In Limburg, spontaneous faith can be seen, for example, during the Carnival Mass. At that time, people from different cultures come together to celebrate the Eucharist with great joy. The essence of the Eucharist remains the same, but there is room for spontaneity. People wear colorful clothes, there is music, dancing, and even spontaneous prayers. This celebration is lively and shows that faith is more than just rituals. It reminds us that faith is not only about rules but also about celebrating Christ's love and salvation, close to our daily lives. Christ is present in every moment of our life, even in the most joyful celebrations. The Church is often strongly connected to fixed structures, but today it is important to make room for spontaneous expressions of faith. The world is changing, and the Church must evolve. Believers long for a lively faith that is meaningful to their daily lives and gives them space to express faith in their own way. The Church should not remain stuck in "old habits" but should be open to new ways of believing. This does not mean abandoning tradition or doctrine but celebrating faith in ways that are relevant today. Believers should have the freedom to express their faith authentically. Spontaneity allows us to celebrate our personal relationship with God in a freer and more authentic way. It shows the joy and freedom that faith gives us.

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