

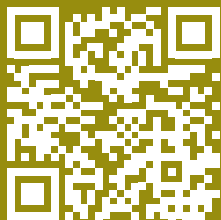


BROTHERS CMM

MAGAZINE

1/20

| IMAGES OF APOSTOLATE: THE SCHOOL IN GLENO |
| IN DE SPOTLIGHT: STILL LIVES OF BROTHER VINCENZO |
| "SINGING IS PRAYING TWICE" | BROTHERHOOD AT
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| FORMATION HOUSE IN TIMOR-LESTE



Take a look at
the website
www.cmmbrothers.org

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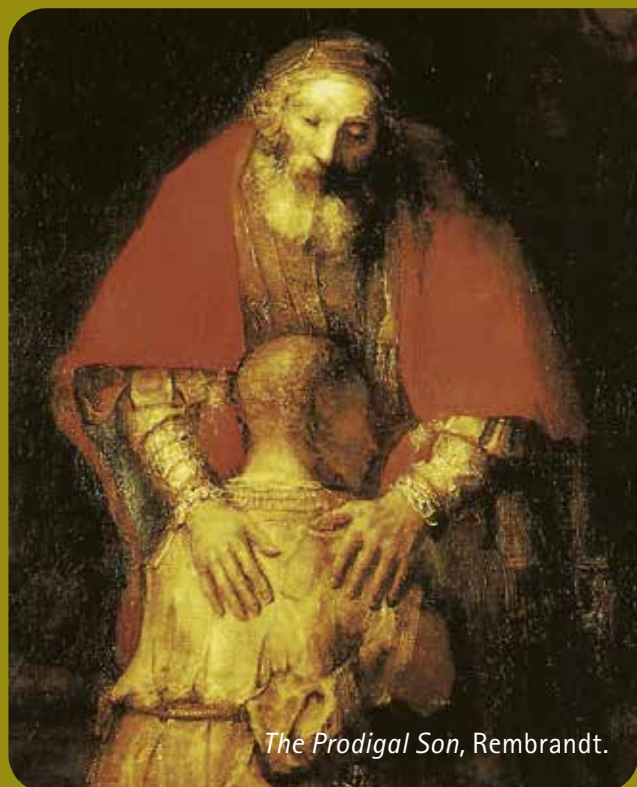
Mercy belongs to all times and places.

Mercy is at the centre of all world religions:
Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and
Islam.

The movement of mercy has left traces
throughout history.

The various forms in which mercy appears,
are expressions of the society in which it arose,
and of the spirituality that carries it.

The Congregation of the Brothers of Our Lady,
Mother of Mercy, is rooted in Christian mercy.



The Prodigal Son, Rembrandt.



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COLOPHON

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Photograph front cover: Brother Elijah Agilo and
students of St. Vincent de Paul School in Mosoch (Kenya)
in the studio (p. 10-11).

Photograph back cover: Door of the Santa Maria degli
Angeli e dei Martiri in Rome. Photo: Brother Ad de Kok.



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FROM THE EDITORIALBOARD

The year 2020 is for the brothers a significant year. From 18 May to 7 June the General Chapter was scheduled to take place in the Generalate in Tilburg. Due to Covid-19 regulations it has been postponed. The General Chapter is the meeting of the legitimate representatives of the Congregation worldwide. Their tasks include: conservation of the congregational heritage, promotion of appropriate renewal, and to determine policies for the next term of office.

The 'ordinary' work of the brothers does not lie still. One is working hard everywhere to achieve the charism of the brothers – mercy and brotherhood – shaping the reality of the everyday life. Like in Timor-Leste, where at a school in Gleno young people are being prepared to help build their country. Recently in Timor-Leste a new formation house opened for young brothers. In Kenya, Brother Elijah Agilo took his pupils to a professional studio to record a gospel album. After all, "singing is praying twice." Mercy and brotherhood in Kenya are also to be found on the football field, like you can read on page 12. In the Netherlands the brothers seek cooperation with other organizations, which like the Congregation are working on a contemporary form of Church building. The VNB Foundation is one of those organizations. For art lovers we present some still lifes of Brother Vincenzo de Kok (1911-1997), and for the readers who are interested in the history of the Congregation, there is again a contribution to the section 'Concerning Joannes Zwijsen'.



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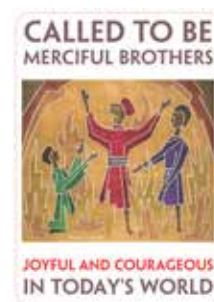
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CONVERSATION

WITH THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

In January 2020 Brother Lawrence Obiko was in Rome to attend a meeting of Vincentian Family leaders. The theme of this event was: "Vincentian Family Moving forward".

Moving forward implies a movement from past to present to future. As brothers, we are mostly well aware of our past: our roots. From these roots in the past, we inherited 'tools' such as inspiration, the charism of our founder and of our Congregation, and wise words of fellow brothers who preceded us. The present time is also known to us: it is the world in which we live now. We do not know the future yet, but we do have a dream for the future. In this dream, the world is a place where all people have the same opportunities to live a good and dignified life. If we want the future to be different from today, we must take our responsibility serious. Only if we act now, we can make that positive change happen.

There are some features that can help us achieve this goal. We need to be bold and yet prudent: bold because it takes courage to change things, and prudent because we don't want to hurt people on the way. We also need solid collaboration: we become stronger when we work together. We can work together within this Congregation, as brothers, as provinces and regions, as boards. However, we can also collaborate with other religious, for example other branches of the Vincentian Family. We are also part of the world Church, and as such we need to work

together with other members of this Church. Last but not least: we are part of the society we live in. In fact, most people you meet will have the same dream for the future. Why not moving forward towards it together?

Good cooperation needs good communication. Good communication implies not only sharing your own ideas, but also asking what's going on in the world of others and listening carefully to what they have to say.

If we want to continue our mission, it is important to consider our vocation and formation policy. The future need responsible brothers, who are bold yet prudent, who can work together in a team, who see the need of others and who are able to communicate clearly and joyfully the message of their mission. We are privileged with the possibilities the modern technology offers us. Let us make use of these means to share our mission (our charism) and make it available and accessible for others.

Brother Lawrence Obiko
in an interview with Nathalie Bastiaansen



Girls playing soccer at the schoolyard.

ETVC-MM: A SCHOOL IN GLENO

Worldwide the Congregation is being confronted with all sorts of material and spiritual needs. The brothers, together with others, are trying to alleviate these. In the fourteenth episode of this feature we present our school in Gleno, Timor-Leste.

Challenges and opportunities in Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste has suffered heavily from the struggle for independence. The country faces major challenges in rebuilding its infrastructure and building its economy. However, Timor-Leste is also a country with opportunities, for example in the field of ecotourism, and it has a rich cultural history.

The school

Since 2008 the brothers in Gleno run a school called ETVC-MM: the Catholic Secondary School for Vocational Education 'Mother of Mercy'. The school has two specializations, namely IT and tourism. The school is located in a rural area where there are few

institutions of higher education. There are many young people in this area who cannot afford to attend a good school in the more distant big cities. The school in Gleno offers these young people a chance to get good education, and even to continue their studies elsewhere. Several students from the school in Gleno were already eligible for scholarships at universities in Europe and other countries. This shows that the education at this school of the brothers is of high quality and bears good fruit.



In the classroom.

Future

Currently there is a considerable shortage of computers and teaching materials, especially for practical classes. By improving and supplementing these facilities, even more pupils will have the opportunity to shape their future at this school. It is not only the young people themselves who benefit from this: these students are the future generation that hopes to contribute to the building of Timor-Leste. With the school in Gleno the brothers hope to make a small contribution to the building up of this beautiful country.

Will you join us? Your donation is more than welcome on IBAN: NL60ABNA 0522439055 in the name of 'Fraters CMM Missieprocurer', P.O. Box 90105, 5000 LA, Tilburg, the Netherlands (BIC: ABNANL2A), mentioning 'School in Gleno'.



The tourism teacher explains.



Students visiting the museum Chega! in Dili.



Students working on an assignment.



Brother Peter Narwadan, one of the teachers.



The school bell, creative recycling of an old car wheel.



Orientation days. The new students caring for a clean and neat school compound.

STILL LIFE PAINTINGS OF BROTHER VINCENZO

In the past, as well as today, there are quite some brothers with creative skills. They make paintings, drawings, sculptures, or beautiful craftwork. It gives a different, sometimes unknown insight into the makers. This feature puts a selection from this work in the spotlight. Part 7 in this series highlights the work of Brother Vincenzo [Jac] de Kok (1911–1997). His work was also on display and for sale during the jubilee exposition 'Brothers in Art' in the Generalate in 2019.

Brother Vincenzo enjoyed music, drawing and painting. He was always busy making drawings or paintings or portraits, using either oil paint, aquarelles, etching needles or pencils. His artistic works were spread all over the country and also abroad. Brother Vincenzo was a lover of nature. He enjoyed being outdoors and often went out with his drawing materials and field easel. He lovingly captured the beauty of nature in his work. He also made many still life paintings, of which we show a small selection here. Sometimes he chose a very ordinary object, such as a hat or cap. Sometimes his work is very touching: you can almost feel the endearment and melancholy that Brother Vincenzo must have experienced when seeing those little dead birds.



Hat in the grass, 1991, oil paint on panel.



Still life at a window, 1986, oil painting on canvas.



Still life with lemons, 1964, oil paint on panel.



Still life with leeks and bananas, 1988, oil paint on canvas.



Still life with sunflowers, 1987, oil paint on panel.



Still life with a pair of shoes, 1981, water color.



Dead birds, 1982, water color.



Two fish, 1994, water color.



“SINGING IS PRAYING TWICE”

Evangelization takes many forms depending on the talents one is endowed with. One of the ways in which people express their faith is through music, and quoting St. Augustine: “Singing is praying twice”. The choir of the St. Vincent de Paul School, an elementary school for boys of the Brothers CMM in Mosoch, entered the studio in October 2019 to record a gospel album. It is their third album; earlier albums were released in 2015 and 2017.



Brother Elijah Agilo and pupils of St. Vincent de Paul School in Mosoch, in the recording studio.

The first album was a thanksgiving to God for his goodness to our Congregation. The second one was recorded to commemorate the Year of Mercy, in line with our charism, the spirituality of brotherhood and mercy. The latest album is a prayer to God, to strengthen us all in our vocations in the Church. This third album came at a time when our Congregation of the Brothers CMM was celebrating its 175 years' jubilee. Consequently, one of the songs was dedicated to this particular jubilee. It is sung in the Kiswahili language and with the accompaniment of sweet sounding instruments, as a beautiful tribute to the Congregation.

There's something for everyone

To ensure a variety of songs in our album, we recorded 11 songs, composed by six different composers from both Kenya and Tanzania. Eight of the songs were composed in the Swahili language, while three others are in English. Video shooting was then done at different scenes and the album was launched on 11 January 2020, during the School Education Day, in Mosoch. Such activities are organized by the school administration, in conjunction with the liturgical committee, that is currently chaired by Brother Albert Nyantika.



The DVD cover and the DVD of album no. 3.

Sing along!

The aim of this initiative is to enable our learners to understand that music can be a strong tool for evangelization both in Church and world. Music is catchy, and it can encourage others to start exploring their own talents. If we put all talents together in a choir, we get a beautiful singing together. If we do the same in society, a beautiful society is created.

Educational

Music activities are not 'just for fun': they will enhance the pupils' interpersonal communication skills. Especially as they interact with their counterparts from other areas of the country, especially during the Kenya National Music Festivals, in which they have participated the last five years. I have witnessed a tremendous change in them.

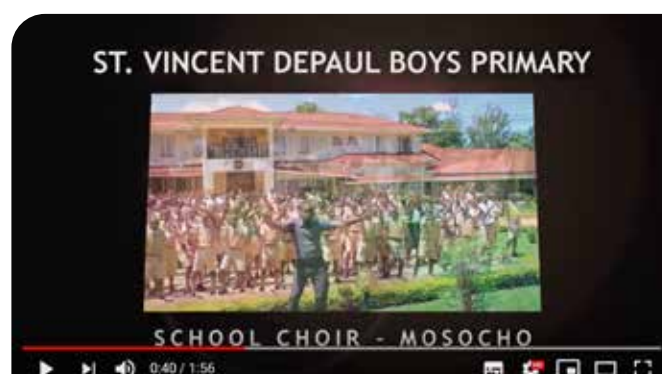
Gift

The participants were so delighted to be at the music recording studio, as some of them were there for the first time. How precious it is to use our God-given talents 'to serve and enlighten, to speak a redeeming word, to offer a helping hand'. Just try it, and you will never regret it.

Brother Elijah Agilo CMM (Kenya)



Besides the album also a videoclip was made, which can be seen on YouTube. Scan the QR code or go to <https://youtu.be/nSJCzwh-394>.



Snapshots from the videoclip.





The brothers' team (red shirts) and the team of pupils (yellow shirts).

BROTHERHOOD AT THE SOCCER FIELD

Many people in Kenya – and in many other countries as well – love soccer. We enjoy watching our favourite teams play with the hope that they win. However, we often forget to look at the spiritual aspect of this game, through the lens of the charism of mercy and brotherhood.

Whenever brotherhood is mentioned, mercy is never absent. The two are compatible and inseparable. Brother Wim Verschuren states that: 'Working towards a more merciful and just world is done in many ways'. This sounds quite interesting and is at the same time encouraging.

Teamwork

I remember that in the year 2017, our fellow brothers from the Western part of Kenya (Mosocho, Oyugis and Sikri) formed a soccer team to play against the pupils of St. Vincent de Paul Boys' Primary School in Mosocho. The tournament was named after the Venerable Servant of God, Brother Andreas van den Boer. Its objectives were to create awareness to the learners about the life of Brother Andreas, and also to teach them the importance of teamwork. The friendliness of this tournament clearly portrayed the spirit of mercy in action.

Everyone is a winner

At the end of the tournament both teams emerged winners, even though the young boys defeated our brothers' team with 3 goals against 0. Nevertheless, our objectives were achieved. The winners were awarded a trophy known as the Brother Andreas Trophy. The boys were amazed by the fact that the brothers were so delighted at the victory of their

opponents; little did they understand the lesson behind it; sometimes in life you have to accept a loss. Also, that is mercy.

One pupil asked me why we are called the brothers of mercy. I referred him back to the match which had just ended, and asked him some of the observations he made during the game. He mentioned the friendliness of the opponents; seeing brothers praying before and after the match; joyfully hugging each other, despite the defeat; and finally congratulating the boys' team for their victory. Now I had something to tell him about his question, why we are called brothers of mercy.

Play and be merciful

We are all invited to make use of every opportunity we get to exercise mercy. It is quite a noble spirituality even though not always easy to put into practice. That is why our founder Bishop Zwijsen was right to implore the Spirit of the Lord to animate his Congregation thoroughly. As Brothers of Mercy we can exercise mercy among the poor, but also among teachers, in our communities, as well as at the soccer field. This happens to be one of the more joyful exercises. After all, it does not always have to be difficult.

Brother Elijah Agilo CMM (Kenya)

CONCERNING JOANNES ZWIJSEN

THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP



*Zwijsen monument, by Toon Dupuis (1933).
It was moved to the church 't Heike in Tilburg in 1972.
Photo: Ronald Peeters.*

Zwijsen was a talented man. He had a great organizational talent, could quickly analyze complicated situations and could clearly lead. He also had a keen insight into people and was strong in communication. But there was another talent that was important to his mission: the gift of friendship. In one way or another, Zwijsen quickly made friends with people. Ingredients of those friendships were invariably his personal charm, a lively conversation and usually also a common interest. Zwijsen did not actually have any friendships that were not directly or indirectly in the service of 'the good cause'.

Zwijsen liked to pour his friends a good glass of wine. In the presbytery or at the diocese he received friendly clergymen, businessmen and officers and in the course of the evening they did business. He continued his friendships with an extensive correspondence. Zwijsen did not need to see friends so often, for the distances were great and the agenda full. But friendship could remain cordial and meaningful for years.

Zwijsen's most famous friends were of course the king and the pope. It is well known that Zwijsen and William II had a cordial relationship. The relationship with Pius IX was very lively: they had the same vision of Church and society and a similar, powerful style of government. They had intense conversations and according to witnesses they made many jokes.

The well-known saying, that you can only realize your dreams in cooperation with others, becomes visible in Zwijsen's many friendships. It is also visible in the Zwijsen monument in Tilburg, against the side-wall of the church of 't Heike. The archbishop sits there among four supporters, three of whom can be counted among his best friends.

First, the priest-journalist Judocus Smits (1813-1872). Smits was founder of the Catholic newspaper *De Tijd* and rector of Zwijsen's Sisters of Charity in Amsterdam. It is difficult to say who benefited most from the friendship: the bishop who was quickly informed about everything through the journalist, or the journalist who developed his newspaper with ecclesiastical support.

There was also the lawyer of 's-Hertogenbosch, Jan-Baptist van Son (1804-1875), a tireless defender of Catholic interests and for some time minister of religious affairs. His foster child went to study with the brothers and later became rector of Ruwenberg.

The Tilburg judge and politician Jacobus Arnoldus Mutsaers (1805-1880) was also minister of Roman Catholic Religion and had a son who trained as a priest with the brothers. Together they were Zwijsen's principal advisors in legal and political matters.

Zwijsen was the oldest of this group of friends and their driving force. As 'old boys' they have been together for a long time; coincidentally they died shortly after each other.

Charles van Leeuwen



CMM AND VNB MOVE ALONG

Since 1 November 2019 the Generalate of the brothers has a few new 'occupants'. Starting on that day the VNB Foundation rents office space in the brother house on the Gasthuisring. The paths of CMM and VNB already crossed in 2006. At that time the brothers were in the process of sending an international group of 120 young people from 6 different countries to Sydney to visit the World Youth Days. VNB organized the travel initiatives for the dioceses in the Netherlands and they were also willing to support the brothers in the complicated logistics needed for this trip. During the official opening of the VNB office in the Generalate on 11 January 2020, Brother Niek Hanckmann spoke about the similarities and synergy between CMM and VNB.

The Brothers CMM were founded in 1844 by Bishop Joannes Zwijsen. Earlier he founded a congregation of sisters, the Sisters of Charity of Tilburg. The sisters were concerned with the care of the sick, the elderly, orphans and with education. Especially with orphans and education there was a need for men who could take care of the older orphans and boys' schools. That was the concrete need from which the Congregation originated.

The Catholic Church flourished

That second half of the 19th century was the time in which the Catholic Church flourished again in the Netherlands. For almost 300 years, Catholics were severely restricted in their expression of faith by the mainly Calvinistic government. In the 19th century this began to change and Joannes Zwijsen played an important role in this. The brothers were used by their founder to contribute to the building up of the Church. This happened in the parishes, but also through the development of good and Catholic education. Through

their communal life and a vow of poverty they were able to do so 'pro bono'. It was not until 1920 that the government took its responsibility and Catholic education was also paid for by the state. It is safe to say that many of the 19th century congregations stood at the cradle of the excellent education and care system in the Netherlands.

A Church for everyone

As the freedom of faith increased, the Catholic Church could become a Church for everyone again. The brothers were involved in brotherhoods, youth groups, associations of Mary and societies in the parishes. They organized processions, prayer groups and popular devotions. The VNB is also a fruit of that blossoming Church in the Netherlands. The VNB organized pilgrimages, bringing people together around faith and tradition. In this way both organizations helped to give Catholic culture a new face.

Among other things, VNB organizes pilgrimages to Lourdes. Photo©VNB.





Bishop Woorts, bishop-referent for pilgrimages, blesses the offices of VNB.

Secularization

By now we are more than a hundred years further on and we have experienced how the rich Roman Catholic life also disappeared in the Netherlands. This time not by oppression from the outside, but by secularization from the inside. More and more people no longer feel so connected to the classical Church institutes. At the same time, the demand for meaning has only grown.

New demand, new supply

The brothers and the VNB move along. Not by moving along in the process of secularization, but by creating new programs for society. The brothers in the Netherlands have started to focus on reflection and spirituality and on social projects. In Vught, for example, they realized the 'Klooster ZIN in Werk', where companies and institutions can reflect on the meaning of their work. There is an Elim community with a varied reflection programme. But also, together with the parish and the sisters, a walk-in lunch is organized there twice a week. Until recently the brothers in Udenhout gave shelter to refugees. Because of the ageing of the community they unfortunately had to stop this. In other countries, where secularization is less strong, the brothers are still fully involved in education and pastoral activities.

New destinations

VNB has also broadened its horizons. The pilgrimages are much more than devotional journeys. It is about inspiration and personal experience. But also, about solidarity, helping each other to make such a journey. We are looking for new destinations, not just traditional places of pilgrimage, but journeys that

meet people's need for reflection, spirituality and deepening..

A contemporary form of Church building

VNB and CMM have not resigned themselves to secularization in the Netherlands. They moved the beacons and remained true to their tradition. Nevertheless, they have both experienced that it has consequences for their organization. The number of brothers in the Netherlands has declined sharply and the organization of VNB has also shrunk. They wanted to go to a smaller location. But perhaps even more important was that it would be a location with a clearly Catholic background and where there was room for more related organizations to strengthen and support each other. It is not good that all these smaller organizations want to do everything themselves. By the brothers that idea was taken from the bottom of their heart. There were already a few other organizations that rent parts of the Generalate. Their activities are in line with the spirituality of paying attention to the weaker ones. VNB has that as well, but it also strengthens the ecclesiastical dimension of the house.

We hope that the presence of various organizations in the building may lead to more cooperation and to a contemporary form of Church building. In this way we can remain faithful to the intentions of the very beginning, translated to this day and age.

Brother Niek Hanckmann CMM
(The Netherlands)



FORMATION HOUSE IN TIMOR-LESTE

The new formation house in Hera, Timor-Leste was opened on 27 September 2019. In this house the postulants of the Congregation in Timor-Leste will receive their training. Previously the postulants were housed in the regional house in Dili. The novices still receive their formation in Indonesia, but the house is built in such way that in the future the novices could also live here. The building of this formation house in the CMM region Timor-Leste could be realized through a big inheritance favouring the Congregation.

With their own formation house, another step has been taken in the development of the Congregation in Timor-Leste. The presence of the brothers (and other religious) with their schools and other institutions is of great importance for the development of this country.



Interior garden.



Blessing of the house by Archbishop Virgilio do Carmo da Silva DDB of Dili.



The chapel.



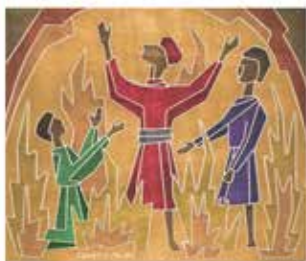
The living and dining room.



GENERAL CHAPTER 2020

In the General Chapter, superiors and delegates from all the countries where the brothers are present come together to define the policy for the next six years. During this meeting the new general board will be elected for the next board period 2020–2026. The General Chapter was scheduled for May/June 2020, but due to Covid-19 regulations it has been postponed. We hope to give more information in the next issue of Brothers CMM Magazine.

CALLED TO BE MERCIFUL BROTHERS



JOYFUL AND COURAGEOUS
IN TODAY'S WORLD

Picture and motto
of the 2020 General
Chapter.

mercy brotherhood

simplicity trust in God

Are you being called?
We welcome new brothers
and others who want to join us.

 join-us@
cmmbrothers.nl



BROTHER

WILLEM BESLAR

Willem Beslar was born in Tomohon on North Sulawesi, Indonesia on 31 March 1956. On 8 December 1976 he entered the Congregation of the Brothers of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, in Tomohon. He made his profession for life in the same city on 27 September 1983. He died on the morning of 3 February 2020 in the Gunung Mary Hospital in Tomohon. After a liturgical celebration he was taken to his final resting place among his deceased fellow brothers at the cemetery of the brothers in Tomohon.

At the age of 20, Willem entered the noviciate in Tomohon. Quickly it became evident that he was deeply moved by the plight of the poor. In the new community in Langgur on Little Kei he dedicated himself with great commitment to the simple and poorly educated local people. He made sure that the sick were taken care off, that people could start their own businesses and that the young received an education. Willem was a gentle man, but was fierce when he saw injustice, especially when the more vulnerable were victimized, he would bluntly and forthrightly speak the truth; status and position were of no consequence. Willem was a man of action. He worked in many places in Indonesia and was asked to start a new community in Gleno, Timor-Leste. From all these places he wrote letters about his experiences to the leadership in the Netherlands. In 2010 he returned to the community of his birthplace, Tomohon. Slowly his health deteriorated. After some time in hospital, he left us on 3 February 2020. May he now rest in well-deserved peace with our Merciful Father.



BROTHER

JAN (J.E.M.G.) KOPPENS

Jan was born in Zeelst, the Netherlands, on 15 March 1943 and entered the Congregation of the Brothers of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy in Tilburg, the Netherlands, on 29 August 1962. He made his profession for life on 10 August 1968. He passed away on 4 December 2019 at Saint Elisabeth Hospital in Tilburg and was buried on 11 December at the brothers' cemetery at the Estate Steenwijk in Vught, the Netherlands.

After a few years as student in elementary school, Jan went to the boarding school De Ruwenberg in Sint-Michielsgestel, the Netherlands, which was run by the brothers. There he decided to become a brother. He earned several teaching credentials and started to teach in Cuijck and Goirle in the Netherlands. In 1968 he was sent to Indonesia where he stayed for more than 26 years. He often said: "The Netherlands is my fatherland, but Indonesia is my motherland". He felt connected, heart and soul, to the people there. He became regional and provincial superior, which helped him grow as a religious brother. Jan was chosen to become member of the General Board of the brothers and moved to Tilburg. His tasks included taking on the responsibility for the missionary work of the brothers. Again and again he knew how to find sponsors and supporters for many projects. He became provincial superior for the brothers in the Netherlands in 2008. Brother Jan showed concern for people. Many recognized in him the brother of mercy. The neighbors of the Elim community in Tilburg saw him as a good friend. He opened the house for the walk-in lunch, which, for more than ten years now, has provided for many the opportunity to meet people. Jan's death came totally unexpected. We miss him intensely but we may trust Jan to be comforted in God who is the Merciful One.



BROTHER

GUILLAUME (G.J.M.) CAUBERGH

Guillaume was born 18 May 1934, at Lanaken, Belgium. On 29 August 1952 he began his novitiate with the Brothers of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, in Tilburg. He died 23 January 2020 in Virga Jesse Hospital-Hasselt. After the liturgical funeral service, he was buried with his deceased fellow brothers at the cemetery of Zonhoven-Centrum.

The life of Brother Guillaume was characterized by his enormous commitment to the development of youth. At an early stage he went to Congo where he remained some 17 years. He became a school principal and taught Mathematics at the École de Moniteur at Makalayi, Nguema and Tshikapa. Due to political developments in Congo all the Brothers had to repatriate in 1975. Back in Belgium he studied religious sciences. In 1978 he was sent to Suriname. There he worked in the boarding school 'Taman Putro'. He was very active for the Kennedy Foundation for deaf and hearing-impaired children and he was director of the Diocesan Catechetical Centre. In 2002 he repatriated to Belgium. Brother Guillaume meant a great deal to the community of the brothers. For many years he worked in internal administrative functions and served the Congregation in various places. The few free moments he had he would spend with his brother and sister-in-law, in Lanaken. In recent years for reasons of health he had to cut down his activities. It hurt him when he could do less and less for others, pay less attention to his family and fellow brothers. A year ago, he explicitly asked to receive the Sacrament of the Sick. Now he has placed his life in the hands of his Creator. We know that Brother Guillaume is safely home now with the Merciful God.

MY HOME: JESUS OUR MERCIFUL BROTHER

Mercy and brotherhood are two key concepts in the charism of the Brothers CMM. Beautiful words. But what happens in the reality of the everyday life of the brothers? That's what is highlighted in this feature 'See my People'. Brother Leo van de Weijer tells about his journey through life as a brother.

Our Founder Bishop Zwijsen has given me a new home through the charism that he had received from God: the charism of Mercy and Brotherhood. In 1959, on 29 August, when I entered the novitiate, I started my way of mercy and brotherhood.

Vocation

Ten years later, in March 1969, I received another gift from God through my contact with the Focolare Movement. 1969 was a special year for all humanity, when astronauts landed on the moon. That same year I landed on another moon, a new home: universal brotherhood. I have discovered in the Focolare Movement a new light that made my vocation as a brother more clear.

Following Jesus, the merciful brother

Chiara Lubich, the Foundress of Focolare, gave a new vision on all the charisms in the Church. She sees every charism as an expression of Jesus' life here on earth: Jesus as healer, Jesus as worker, Jesus as teacher, Jesus as care-taker, Jesus as merciful brother, Jesus as leader, Jesus as sufferer. For me it became clear that I should be a follower of Jesus the merciful brother.



Prayer service at OIP in Oyugis.



Brother Leo at the tailoring department of OIP in Oyugis, Kenya.

In the past 60 years I have tried to follow in Jesus' footsteps by caring for others as a merciful brother: in forming young people to become brothers, in caring for people who are suffering from Aids, and in helping fellow brothers to live in harmony with God and with each other..

Prayer

On my remembrance card for the religious profession for life, I had put a sentence that still helps me to be a merciful brother. It was a saying of Cardinal Newman who was declared a saint on the 13 October 2019. It was this prayer: "Lord, take me as I am, and make me as you want me to be".

I pray that prayer still every day after I receive Jesus in the Eucharist. He is more and more my home and I am happy with the motto of our Jubilee Year, which says: "Do what Jesus did: to serve and enlighten, to speak a redeeming word, to be a helping hand."

Brother Leo van de Weijer CMM (Kenya)



IN THE EUCHARIST WE COMMEMORATE
JESUS' LOVE UNTO DEATH
AND CONFESS THE ACTIVE PRESENCE OF CHRIST
WHO IS CLOSE TO EACH ONE OF US.

(from the Rule of Life of the Brothers CMM)

