



MAGAZINE

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**The Departed Brothers  
of the year - 2021**

**Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel**

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## **Introduction**

**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**

**2 Timothy 4:7**

The Biographies of 20 Brothers are presented in this SG Magazine, which would give us a glimpse of their well-fought race. Reading through their biographies one will find how unique each one is, their family background, the vocation to brotherhood, formation, contribution to the mission. You will find a poet, educationalist, agriculturalist, missionary, musician, catechist and coach. They have left a legacy behind, which is inspirational. Some of them saw the finish line ribbon yet others did not expect it. They have navigated their life through the rough sea, they suffered in silence at the hour of distresses holding their faith in God through the intercession of Mary. God had called them to serve and they did it faithfully and they were called back unto Himself.

We gratefully remember all those who have assisted our departed Brothers when they become dependent and all those who helped them to pass from death to a new life.

I thank all those who have been part of this SG Magazine 2022, those who have written the biographies and the testimonies, the translators Bro. Georges Le Vern and Bro. Marcel Chapeleau who were ever available, Bro. René Delorme, Bro. Georges Le Vern, and Bro. Michel Mendy for doing the proofreading.

**Bro. Louis Anthony Samy**

# **Brother Henri Biram Ndong**

**December 25, 1961 - January 09, 2021**



Brother Henri Biram Ndong, discreetly, passed away on Saturday January 09, 2021 as he had wished: "I do not want to disturbing anybody when I die". He, thus, joined the Father's Abode after a beautiful life.

## **From Eternal student to Timeless Master**

Born on December 25, 1961 in Fayil, in a little village near Fatick, Senegal. He first went to school in his native village, so dear to him, before entering Collège du Sine, a Lower Secondary School run by the Brothers. It was there that he met the Brothers of St. Gabriel, who opened widely their doors to him for his formation journey with the support of his uncle Théophane Sène, the first Gabrielite Religious Brother from Fayil. After Fatick, he went to the Juniorate and St. Gabriel's Higher Secondary School in Thiès, from 1975 to 1979.

He entered the Novitiate, in Nianing, on September 22, 1979. He took his First Vows on August 16, 1981 in Fayil, and his Final Vows on January 17, 1988, along with Bro. Jean François Ethiarta Bonang, at St. Ann's Cathedral in Thiès, during a Holy Eucharist presided over by Bishop Mgr. Jacques Sarr.

After a few years as a teacher, at St. Gabriel's High School, in Thiès as a French teacher. He went to UCO (Catholic University of West) in Angers, France for a Master's Degree in French Language and Literature. Once he had passed his degree in June 1991, he went

back to Senegal and resumed his post as a French teacher at St. Gabriel's High School in Thiès. He was appointed Principal of the Institution in 1994 and held the post till 2009 when he was appointed Director of the Catholic Education of the diocese of Kaolack. He held the post until September 30, 2018. He was then granted a Sabbatical Year in Canada to regain physical and spiritual strengths. When he came back to Senegal, he was entrusted, on October 01, 2019 with the management of College du Sine Lower Secondary School in Fatick where he remained till January 09, 2021.

His passion for Modern Literature led him in the meantime to prepare a PHD thesis on Léopold Sédar Senghor<sup>1</sup>. He became a Doctor of Literature in June 2000 at the University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar. His passion for Senghor imbued him so strongly that he spent a large part of his free time studying his favourite Author. You could often see him "working Senghor" at his Principal's desk.

## A Man Devoted to Education

Bro. Henri Biram was a man with a passion for education, convinced that Emmanuel Kant's rightly affirmed: "Man can become man through education only"<sup>2</sup>. His generous commitment to St. Gabriel's High School in Thiès to Cheikh Anta Diop University and to the DIDEC (Diocesan Management of Catholic Education) in Kaolack, clearly shows it.

Bro. Henri Biram, no doubt about it, had an unwavering zeal for education. The Students of Collège du Sine were the last ones to benefit from his passion. With accountability and foresight,

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<sup>1</sup> A famous writer, poet and first President of the Republic of Senegal

<sup>2</sup> *Reflections on Education* (1776-1787)

determination, constancy and promptness, he had set up efficient mechanisms to ensure that education be guaranteed to children and youth. He did not hesitate to use solidarity in the educational community to guarantee access to private education for pupils from modest families. Despite reluctances, he considerably participated in raising monthly school fees, thus allowing the wealthier to support the poor.

He never shied away from obstacles when it came to education, rightly making his own the exhortation of Father Jules Chevalier: "Obstacles are the means that God chooses to accomplish his work."<sup>3</sup> How could it be different for a Gabrielite Religious Brother whose predilection for children and young people, and concern for their education are characteristics of the Montfortian charism? By dedicating himself soul and body to education for forty years, Bro. Henri Biram has shaped the minds and hearts of several generations, reminding us that the value of educational practices is measured by the capacity to touch the hearts of children and young people according to the Gospel and universal values. Bro. Henri Biram, thus, made fruitful the legacies of St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, Fr. Gabriel Deshayes, Brother Eugène-Marie, Brother Macaire, and so many other predecessors, all promoters of Montfortian Gabrielite School as a places of holistic education for the individual.

## **Passion for Excellence**

As far as excellence is concerned, Biram, as one used to say, would heat up the students. Very often, during Monday morning Assemblies, the word “excellence” was stressed upon. It was certainly the right time for that. It was the right time to showcase

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<sup>3</sup> “When God wants a work, hurdles are just means for him” 1870

the best results, both in sports and other school subjects. This emphasis on excellence sometimes gave the impression that the Headmaster paid less attention to the struggles of weaker students, who also wished to be recognised, and that their intellectual poverty to be taken into account on an equal footing with their material poverty.

The passion for excellence was also extended to the teachers. In order to stimulate them and supervise their work, each one had to take into account a schedule for HomeWorks, because the only way of assessing the acquisition of knowledge provided orally is to check it with a test. For this, Biram relied upon Assistant principals for each level of classes. They were entrusted with large autonomy, even in the staff meetings. This helped him to spare time for public relations, as he obviously and rightly wanted the excellence of his Institution to be known and recognized. The introduction of the school uniform was another step in the same direction.

The quest of excellence also meant providing students ways and means to achieve the purpose: library, brochures, Information Technology (IT). Biram never failed to provide his students with all these tools.

## **A Cheerful Man**

Joy was a unique note in the polyphony of Bro. Henri Biram Ndong's life. Or, to use an idiom closer to his native language, "joy was like the wake of a canoe splitting on water. However, we have to go further. Bro. Biram was particularly inspired by Jesus' words: "By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13,35). May his memory remind us that joy is the expression of love.

How many people has Bro. Henri Biram brightened up? If we had to choose something emblematic of this mood, we could without hesitation recall his Mardi Gras costumes. On that afternoon, the Principal would become a very elegant "Headmistress" to the amazement of anyone entering his office! It was also common knowledge that during the gatherings of the Brothers and their Collaborators, the Diocesan Youth Days, the World Days of Consecrated Life, Bro. Henri Biram could hardly avoid playing the role of MC (Master of ceremonies). By his special sense of humour and his generous personality, he gained great popularity among his audience, and he has left his mark on provincial, diocesan or national gatherings. We cannot fail to notice the special sense of humour with which he gave his last education lesson, a hygiene of life (sleep, tobacco, alcohol) addressed to all generations, like those great Greek tragedy writers encountered in the corridors of the universities. May the departure of Bro. Henri Biram Ndong, a messenger of joy, always remind us of Pope Francis' urgent appeal: "Christian life is characterized by joy, the joy of the heart" or, "the ID of the Christian is joy".

### **A Generous Man**

Bro. Henri Biram was well-known as an approachable man. He was very close to people, always ready to share what he had. All those who knew him can evoke, with a lot of emotion, his great kindness, his openness of mind and his exemplary generosity! Anything that passed between his hands could be immediately redistributed within minutes. He suffered when he saw somebody in need. By the way, Bro. Henri Biram Ndong lived out Jesus' teaching conveyed to us by St. Luke: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). Therefore, a man with such a large heart

showed us that it is possible, with discernment, to help, to give and to alleviate others' misery with little diversified means.

## A Great Soul

All those who came to know Bro. Henri Biram Ndong must acknowledge his attachment to the “Coeurs-Vaillants Ames Vaillantes” Movement<sup>4</sup>. This Movement of Catholic action, attentive to the environment of the children's lives and channel of Christian education, was also a privileged field of commitment for our late Brother who liked to repeat: "To a Valiant Heart nothing is impossible, success is the goal". He was an Ambassador of the Movement, some would say its “flavour”, convincing many of his colleagues to happily join the group. It was his way of reminding his young Confreres that Jesus loved the little ones so much and welcomed them with open arms, giving them as an example to his disciples: “The kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” (Mk 10:14).

## A communication expert

Broadcasting was an essential vehicle for bringing Jesus Christ to the world. How many masses broadcast live from the Cathedral of Thiès or Kaolack, as well as the National Pilgrimage to the Marian Shrine of Popenguine? Director, Producer, Speaker, Bro. Henri Biram thus created strong relationship with those who listened to him. All the more so as he handled Molière's language with rare ease, warm voice, (some would say: “velvety”), he was appreciated by many.

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<sup>4</sup> “Valiant Hearts - Valiant Souls” was a well-known Catholic Movement, founded in 1936, and replaced by the Children's Catholic Action Movement in the 1960s. (Translator's note).

But where did Bro. Henri Biram get so much vitality from? No doubt that his parents François and Martine were instrumental in God's hands to shape their son's personality by taking their responsibility to prepare little Henri, to guide him, to help him to be happy and to enable him to fulfil his potential in society.

## **A Pious Brother**

As a Gabrielite Religious Brother, Henri Biram drew his strength from the Eucharist, a sacrament to which he vowed great fidelity, considering it as the main driving force in his life. He subscribed to the mystical experience of St. Augustine who affirmed: "Become what you receive, become the Body of Christ. Become what you receive, you are the Body of Christ"<sup>5</sup>. The Eucharist transforms the faithful.

As a worthy son of Montfort, Bro. Henri Biram always had a rosary in his pocket. He loved the Virgin Mary. It should be recalled, for example, that he wrote an article on the African woman in the image of Mary, standing at the foot of the Cross. A way for Bro. Henri to pay homage to women's courage and perseverance, but above all to give a vibrant testimony to the Virgin Mary, Protector of Humanity.

Bro. Henri Biram, a Confrere predicted that you would end up joining the Charismatic Renewal Movement. Now that you are reborn in Jesus' resurrection. Do not forget to pray for your natural and religious families, your colleagues, the students and youngsters whose sake you consumed your life for.

Bro. Henri Biram, an Apostle of Christian Joy.

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<sup>5</sup> St. Augustine (354-430), Bishop of Hippo (North Africa) and Doctor of the Church. Homely on Eucharist for the newly baptized.

Bro. Henri Biram, a Missionary in Education.

Bro. Henri Biram, a Drum Major of Senghorian Pen.

Bro. Henri Biram, you ran in the Tanns<sup>6</sup> of Fayil as Bro. Bernard Guesdon sang so well to you during your Final Vows celebration. You have fought the good fight; you have finished the race (2 Tim 4, 7-8). Take rest now in the peace of the Risen Lord. May the land of Thiès be light to you!

Bro. Jean Marie Thior, SG

Generalate - Rome.

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<sup>6</sup> Area of salty grounds (Translator's note)

# **Brother Peter Ekka**

**July 07, 1950 - January 01, 2021**



## **Birth and Birth Place**

Bro. Peter Ekka was born on 22-07-1950 at Barhitoli of Ranchi town. Late Theophil Ekka and late Benedicta Tirkey were his parents. He was baptized on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1950. His full name was Peter Emilius Ekka. He received the sacrament of confirmation on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1956. He had four brothers and four sisters. So, in total they were nine brothers and sisters. Two of his brothers are no more. All his sisters are alive. One of them is a religious nun.

## **Religious Vocation**

While studying in the middle school Bro. Peter was short in stature but active as deer. Seeing his activities late Bro. Varkey Elemethuruthy (Bro. Frederick) got inspirations to recruit him for juniorate. Those days juniorate was at Konbir-Noatoli. He recruited him for the juniorate. So, Bro Peter joined the juniorate on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1963 along with other boys from Ranchi and other places. He completed his studies in St. Joseph's High School Konbir-Noatoli and passed his Matric Board Examination successfully. He entered Eachinkadu Novitiate as postulant on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1967. He became Novice on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1967 and pronounced his first vows on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1969. After six years he took his Final Vows on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1975 in Bangalore.

## **Education**

He studied up to class VII in St. Aloysius' Middle School Ranchi. He attended high school at St. Joseph's High School Konbir-Noatoli. He passed Matric Board examination in the year 1967. He passed Intermediate Examination in the year 1973. He completed his graduation in the year 1976. He obtained a Master's Degree in English from Sambalpur University. He took his Bachelor in Education from Jabalpur University in the year 1981. He underwent training on Hindustani Music at Panchmari for three years.

## **Apostolate Chart**

His apostolate chart is given below:

S.N.	Name of the Institution	Worked as	Year
1	St. Aloysius High School Ranchi	Asst. Teacher	1972 - 1973
2	St. Joseph's High School Konbir-Noatoli	Asst. Teacher	1973 - 1977
3	St. Gabriel Hr. sec. School Jabalpur	Asst. Teacher	1977 - 1982
4	Montfort School Complex Kansbahal	Asst Teacher	1982 - 1985
5	Montfort School Complex Kansbahal	Principal	1985 - 1990
6	St. John's High School Nawatnur	Asst. Teacher	1990 - 1991
7	Montfort Sec. School Rujewa, Tanzania	Asst. Headmaster	1992 - 1993
8	Mwembeni Sec. School Musoma, Tanzania	Academic Master	1994 - 2000
9	Montfort Sec. school Rujewa, Tanzania	Headmaster	2001 - 2011

10	St. Montfort Sec. School Njombe, Tanzania	Asst. H.M.	2012 - 2018
11	St. Gabriel's High School, Dhawaiya, India	Asst Teacher	2018 - 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2021

His working places were India and Tanzania. In India, he worked in many places as good religious Brother. Greatest achievement of his religious life was to be missionary in Tanzania. He was missionary there for 26 years. He inspired there many young boys and young girls to live religiously. He was proud of our Ranchi Province. He was gifted with music that made him hero everywhere. Seeing him and his lifestyle our present Provincial, Bro. Herman B. Lakra got inspiration to become Montfort Brother. Bro. Peter Ekka was his hero. He was very eager to touch his cloth from behind. He expressed it when he delivered the funeral speech. When children and people are inspired by your life then your life is successful and meaningful and that was Bro. Peter's life. As a good religious Brother, he was always balanced person. He taught music to the students composed songs and especially the religious songs. Some of them are in GANGEET SAGAR and NAYA GAAN. Thus, he handed over his talents to others. He lived humble and simple life. We observed that he didn't want give trouble to others. He did not want put his family member too in tension that is why he used to tell us not to inform them. He proved this till his last moment. During his last moments he had great pain but suffered quietly and did not disturb the other patients in the ward.

## **Last Days of Life**

His loss of blood caused by a severe rectorrhagia made him lose his taste of food. He used to take little food. His hemoglobin used to come down low. He never told this to anybody, but kept it secret. Due to this, Brother Peter he was feeling sickly sick and weak. On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021 he felt weak. Bro. Manoj, the Local Superior brought him to Ranchi for treatment. It was late and being Saturday, we could not admit him in the hospital. Next day, he was admitted in Mandar Hospital. Immediately four units of blood was arranged and slowly infused to him. After few days he recovered. The Doctors referred him to Samford Hospital Ranchi to diagnose the real cause. There, he was diagnosed with bowel cancer. Having known this Bro. Provincial and Bro. Pratap took him to Curie Cancer Hospital Ranchi. There biopsy was done. The Doctor wanted to start treatment after getting the biopsy report. So, we kept him in our Provincial House. He was very cheerful and happy. On 17<sup>th</sup> January he vomited blood at about 1.00 p.m. and showed the symptom of weakness. We rushed him to Samford Hospital. In the evening he required blood. With the help of his family members, we arranged. Meantime he suffered massive heart attack. The Doctor and nurses tried to revive him but while doing that the cancerous part got burst. He vomited blood and that was the end. He was put in the ventilator. In the morning at 5.00 a.m. the Doctor declared him dead. His body was kept in St. Aloysius School Ranchi on 18<sup>th</sup> January for paying the last respect. His house is very near to our school so people of the locality and paid him their last respect. He was laid to rest at Konbir-Noatoli at our cemetery on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

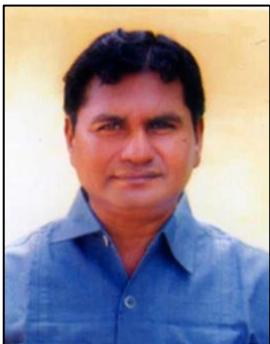
I studied with him in the high school at Konbir-Noatoli. I joined the congregation one year later, so he was one year senior to me in Religious Profession. As I observed I found he lived good religious life. He lived exemplary and inspirational life. He lived for others.

May God grant his soul Eternal Peace!

Bro. Frederick Soreng, SG

## **Brother Timotheyu**

**January 23, 1953 - January 21, 2021**



**“The Foolish Fear death as the greatest of evils, the wise desire it as a rest after labours and the end of ills”**

**- St. Ambrose.**

‘A smiling face is always beautiful, Rev. Bro. Timotheyu, a Brother, an embodiment of loving care, gentleness, kind hearted pure love for each and every one of us.

### **Life of Bro. Timotheyu**

Brother Timotheyu’s life journey on this earth began on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1953 in Michaelpattinam to the devout couple of Mr. Antony and Mrs. Theresa. He was baptized as Timotheyu in the very next day 24<sup>th</sup> January 1953. He grew as a studious young gentleman who excelled in studies. He was recruited to be a Brother by his own elder brother Bro. Irudhaya Michael in 1968. After two years of pre-postulancy & postulancy he entered the Novitiate in 1970 at Eachinkadu. He made his First Vows on 28.04.1972 at Tindivanam and his Perpetual Vows on 28.04.1978 at Eachinkadu.

He graduated from Loyola as Tamil Pandit in 1977 and was immediately appointed as Tamil Teacher at St. James HSS, Palakurichy. From then on, he continued his teaching mission at All Saints’, Muttom, St. Joseph’s Chengalput and as P. G. Assistant in St. James, Palakurichy for 9 years.

In 1993, he took charge of St. Antony’s High School, Manjampatty as Headmaster and Local Superior. After 5 years of service he was

transferred to R.C.Susai High School, Kalugumalai as Headmaster and Local Superior. Having felt the need of the locality and for the welfare of the poor and rural children, he upgraded the School into Higher Secondary in the year 2000.



He was appointed Headmaster of St. James HSS, Palakurichy in the year 2002. He also served as Headmaster of Montfort HS, Alandur and he came back to R.C Susai HSS, in 2008 and officially retired from service in 2010. After his retirement, he served in St. John's ITI, Manjampatty, Montfort School, Ariyalur, Montfort School, Tindivanam and took up the responsibility as the Local Superior of Villa Montfort, the Provincial House in 2014, a mission he faithfully accomplished his departure.

Bro.Timotheyu, a smiling Angel who lived amidst us, had many facets to his life.

## **He was a Brother par excellence**

Brother's exemplary Life and fraternal love endeared everyone. He was gentle and kind hearted, he refused to judge anyone and warmly accepted his Brothers as they are with openness. Hard talk was not possible for him, his words and deeds were always gentle and caring. He spoke little and smiled much, that brought joy and solace to everyone around him. Yes, he lived, St. Francis Assissi's dictum, "Preach Gospel always, when necessary, use words."

## **He was an excellent Teacher**

His students loved and enjoyed his classes; he had the ability to carry across smoothly even the tough concepts with humor and apt examples. As Tamil Pandit, he loved teaching Tamil in a very charismatic manner. His endearing love made the children call him "Anna". True to the title given by the children, he proved to be an elder brother in guiding, mentoring and inspiring the youth who came into his life.

## **Great Lover of Nature**

He loved nature and cared for it. Whichever institutions he served, he spent substantial time in gardening, planting trees and carrying them. He was also interested in agriculture, poultry and cattle farming.

## **He was a creative thinker**

His contemplative attitude gave birth to creative thinking. He made sure his experiences and thoughts were put in the form of Poems and Books, his poetic presentation on the passion of the Lord "Kalvari Nayagan" was much inspiring and appreciated. To his credit, he has authored and published 9 books on various themes

particularly useful to the youth. And the tenth one is in the press getting ready to be published.

Bro. Thimotheyu leaves behind a Challenging legacy to all of us, as a person who lived his life to its fullness in all aspects. As David who said in the Psalm 35, “With the harp, I will solve all my problems,” so also Our Brother solved all his problems with a smile.

He appreciated generously and honestly any little achievement of any Brother. He had the ability to embrace all unconditionally. He would say that he is forgetful but regarding the issues that matter he was alert and vigilant, particularly when it concerns the wellbeing of Brothers. He had warm heart and endearing hospitality, Brothers young and old loved his company. On occasions such as birthdays and Jubilees, he never hesitated to offer generous and sincere appreciation to the Brothers' concerned.

### **A Disciplined Person**

He was disciplined but never imposed his convictions on others and respected the Brothers for what they were. He was faithful to his duties as head of the Community and meticulously carried out the instructions from his Superiors.

### **A Caring Person**

Brother Timotheyu was a very fraternal confrere. He loved being in the presence of the Brothers. He would attend in all the special events in the neighboring communities and would be on time for any programme. Not that he was a foodie, but he wanted to honour his brothers with his fraternal presence and give them the best he could. His hospitality was appreciated by all. He had a tendency to forget things but of matters of importance he would not. At times he would tell two or three persons in the Community to remind him and make sure the work is accomplished without fail.

## **A Silent Person**

He could be confided with issues and happenings that were confidential. As Provincial I had enjoyed the grace of his camaraderie. At times I needed someone to listen me, he would be there lending his attentive ears non-judgmentally. Most often no solution, suggestion, counsel, advice, guidance, instruction will ever emerge from him but you can be sure of a simple smile. Not that he was not informed or had no knowledge of the issues but he had the wisdom to perceive the need to remain silent. But most of us would be itching to jump in to give out our unsolicited comments.

## **He was a Poet**

On special occasions in the province, he would give vent to his poetic talents and composed an appropriate sonnet which he declaimed in a most outstanding way. He has also written a remarkable poetic recital of the Lord's Passion used in many parishes during Lent season. To date, he has had nine books published and a tenth is due to be released. His books were very simple, mostly meant for students. Once he decides to bring out a book, he will be fully focused at it. His books were released normally in one of the Province functions like Jubilees of Brothers or final vows celebrations. He would never make a fuss about the event; he would need only a few minutes of the stage to introduce his book and thank all concerned. He didn't want to make it a big event focused on himself.

## An Integrated Personality



If he is convinced of a thing, he will do it. But he would not easily get convinced. He needed to see and experience things for himself. He never gave himself to gossips, rumours, loose talks, etc. He hesitated to confront anyone. He would accommodate everyone in his domain but he enjoyed the inner freedom to stand single. No wonder all liked him and celebrated him. He looked to be diffident speaking about it, but he surprised all how he battled cancer with serenity and cheer. But the way he battled cancer with serenity surprised all.

**For if life is a journey, it must be completed.**

**If life is a battle, it must be finished.**

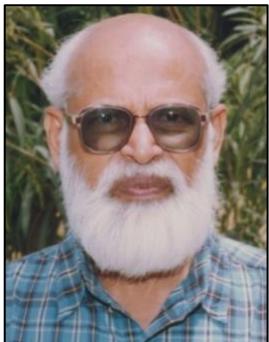
**If life is a pilgrimage, it must be concluded.**

**And if life is a race, it must be won.**

- **The War Cry.**

## **Brother Mathias**

**January 13, 1935 - March 22, 2021**



Dear Rev. Francis Kalist, Bishop of Meerut Diocese, Fr. Bhalerian Pinto, Vicar General, Father Sasin Babu, the Parish Priest, Basilica of Our Lady of Graces, Major Superiors, Sisters, Fathers, Brothers, friends, and sympathisers of our dear Bro. Mathias, my deepest condolences to one and all.

We have gathered here to say goodbye to our loved Brother Mathias for the last time. For us Montfort Brothers, it is a moment of sadness as well as a moment of celebration. A moment of sadness because Bro. Mathias will no more be with us, at least in the way we used to be present to one another, namely, the physical presence. And it is a moment of celebration, as well, because he has just begun his new life - the real life – the life for which he became a Montfort Brother - a life in union with Christ, he had decided to follow leaving everything he had. He has reached the goal of his life; he has merged in the joy of his heavenly Father. That is the reason enough for us Brothers to celebrate the faithful and successful journey of our Brother's Religious Life.

We read in St. John 11:25-26, “Jesus said to Martha, “*I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, though he dies; yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.*”

Yes, we believe, that Brother Mathias, who believed and followed Jesus Christ throughout his life, by being a Religious Brother of the

Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel, by placing Jesus Christ as the center of his life, by seeking and fulfilling the will of God all through his life, by faithfully carrying out God's mission till the last moment of his earthly life, began his new life in Christ in the company of Angels in Heaven at 5 a.m. on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021.

Brother Mathias was born on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1935 to late Mr. Joseph and late Mrs. Thresiamma. He had two brothers and two sisters as his siblings. He joined the Juniorate in 1949 and made his First Vows on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1955 in Eachinkadu, Tamil Nadu. He did his schooling from St. Antony's High School, Coonoor, Plus Two from Meerut University N.A.S. College, BTC from Secunderabad and Graduation from Karnataka open University. He completed his Diploma in Agriculture from Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

### **His Missionary Journey**

His Mission journey as professed Brother started at All Saints, Hyderabad, as a teacher. From there, he moved to St. Patrick's School, Secunderabad and later on to St. Vianney, School, Lachragarh. He served as a Headmaster in St. Aloysius, Ranchi, St. Paul's Hyderabad, Mahanagar Boy's Inter College, Lucknow, and St. Charles' Inter College, Sardhana. As director in charge of St. Charles' Inter College, Sardhana, he inspired and motivated a great number of poor children of the boarding school. He had an opportunity to admire the bounty of God's creation while working as farm in-charge at Manapparai and Tindivanam in Tamil Nadu and St. Charles Inter College.

Bro. Mathias made a significant contribution in the training of the formees of our Congregation as an efficient, loving and caring guide in St. Joseph's Noatoli and St. Gabriel's Novitiate, Sitagarha, in Jharkhand, and Montfort School, Yercaud, Tamil Nadu. Following Jesus as His Master through the footsteps of Montfort,

our Founder, Brother Mathias made an effort to enrich the lives of the poor and the marginalised by effectively organising the literacy program and other related projects in Sardhana for the past 16 years.

### **A Brother of Implicit Goodness**

A good personality stems from the inner beauty of a person. It is consistent and pleases others. Bro. Mathias chose to spend his life in the service of the Lord. He was a brother with deep faith in God. He never possessed much: no big degrees, no big positions. He knew it was more pleasing to God to live in humility and simplicity. He spent time in prayer, in devoted dedication to Mother Mary by reciting the Rosary as often as he could. He spent most of his life with ordinary people, particularly in Sardhana. He was a great lover of the poor and he strove to put that noble spirit into our young minds.

### **A Person of the Heart**

Bro Mathias was a man of the heart, an innocent heart that was warm and tender. He was an affectionate, kind and gentle person. Of him we can say, he was a brother; there was no guile in him (Jn 1; 47). Dear Brother, you inspired us with your sensitive concern and fraternal care.

### **To Serve rather than to be Served**

The words of our Divine Master "*I have come to serve and not to be served*" (Mk 10: 45) are well reflected in the life and mission of Bro. Mathias. Positions of power did not dominate him. In our religious hierarchy, Bro. Mathias did not occupy many glamorous positions of power or glory. He was a man of availability and action wherever needed, or whenever called upon. Every assignment call was important for him, and he discharged them with religious

devotion and sincerity. His life of humble service and gospel servanthood is the legacy that has been bequeathed to us. We can rejoice and be grateful for this powerful evangelical witness among us.

### **A Brother of Simplicity**

Brother Mathias, was a person of simple tastes. He was unostentatious in his dress, simple in his habits, understanding in his dealings with the Brothers and others, and ardent in his prayers. He was soberly dressed, maintained good relations with his brothers and others and was assiduous to prayer.

His simplicity and sincerity could never be doubted as he was authentic and transparent. In character, in manner, in word, in all things, he was simplicity personified. For Bro. Mathias, simplicity was not a way; it was a state of harmony. The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that only the necessary remains. Our joy comes from living our own lives simply – never from demanding that others live simply or from ever making any demands whatsoever upon others.

### **Health concerns**

God gives his crosses to his beloved ones. Brother Mathias got them in abundance. He seemed to take his multiple ailments as the will of God, for he never made much of his sufferings. For many years, Brother Mathias had health problems but calm and smile never left his face. He knew the value of suffering and made the best of his own suffering. Without complaining, he had learned to accept all sufferings that came in his way as coming from God. He had gained the spiritual strength learned to cope up with all ailments, and thereby always remained calm, happy, cheerful and contented.

He was jovial and pleasant and his devotion and dedication to the duty were something remarkable. The quality of his life and legacy that he has left behind will always remain with us always. He was a warm person and loved the company of Brothers. By his concern and love for others, he earned respect and love from others, and was a beloved person for all.

Bro Mathias was a joyful Religious Brother, being a faithful listener and doer of the will of Abba our Father, of Jesus our Brother and of Mary our Mother. As a Montfortian disciple of Jesus and his gospel, he lived a relational spirituality and accomplished fruitful missions for the kingdom of God.

This is the Brother whom we loved, and with whom we lived and carried out God's given mission. It is his entry into heaven that we have come to celebrate with the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Bro. Mathias lived his life to the full, always keeping the wellbeing of the less privileged as his priority. We can be proud that we had a Brother who lived this way the Montfortian Charism until his last breath. Beloved Bro. Mathias will always be remembered as a Brother who spread the radiant of peace and joy. We thank the Lord for all that he had been to us, to the Church, to the society, to the Congregation and to the Province of Delhi during these 65 years as a guide, a tower of strength and a channel of grace and blessings.

On Behalf of the Province, I express my heartfelt gratitude to your grace Francis Kalist, the Bishop of Meerut Diocese, for being with us at this hour of grief and loss, and leading us all in prayer through this Eucharistic Celebration. Heartfelt gratitude to the Sisters and Nurses of Our Lady of Graces hospital, Sardhana, to the Sisters, Doctors and Nurses of St. Joseph's Hospital, Mariam Nagar, all Priests and Religious, dear friends and sympathisers. Special gratitude to Sr. Dr. Liza for her timely care extended to Bro.

Mathias. The Parish Priest, Basilica of Our Lady of Graces, Priests from St. John Seminary and IMS Gurukul, Sardhana, Sisters of Jesus and Mary, Sardhana, Brothers of St. Charles', Sardhana, Brothers from Montfort Roorkee, Brothers from Montfort Delhi and Brothers and candidates of Montfort Bhavan for their support and accompaniment. Very special gratitude and big thanks to Mr. Johnson who lovingly took care of Bro. Mathias till his last day.

Thank you one and all.

Fraternally Yours

Bro. James Ekka

Provincial

## **Brother Leonard Mary Yut Satissarat**

**January 26, 1936 - April 07, 2021**



Bro. Yut Satissarat was born on 26 January 1936 in the area of Trok-Chan, Yannawa District, Bangkok. He was baptized on 30 January 1936 at Assumption Cathedral, Bangkok, and was bestowed the name of St. Jude the Apostle as his patron saint. He was the only boy among six children born to Mr. Charas and Mrs. Mary Satissarat. His youngest sister, Sister Wantana Satissarat, is a Ursuline nun who also serves God in the Order of Saint Ursula, Province of Thailand.

Since his childhood, Bro. Yut was so close and devoted to the Montfort Brothers of Saint Gabriel. He received his primary education at Assumption College, Bangkok, and upon finishing his secondary education, Bro. Clement Albert Bernt, who at that time was in charge of teaching catechism in the school, saw in this young Yut Satissarat piety, goodwill, diligent in study and good conduct, encouraged him to join the congregation. It was a great sacrifice by his family, as he was the only son. Nonetheless, by the grace of God and his family's faith and piety, they willingly allowed him to join religious life.

Bro. Yut was sent to make his novitiate at Eachinkadu, Salem District, in the state of Tamilnadu, south India, where he was received as a novice in March 1957. He pronounced his first vows in the Congregation of Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel on 8 December 1959, with religious name as Leonard Mary. He was sent to Kazipet in the central region of India for another year for

his post-novitiate program to deepen his religious foundation in the sacred scripture, theology, sacraments and pastoral training. He came back to Thailand at the end of 1960 where he worked in various schools of the Brothers of Saint Gabriel, Province of Thailand.

Bro. Yut did not consider himself a clever person or an intelligent academic in any discipline. He humbly admitted that he could not further his study. Knowing this, his superiors did not overly press him to attain higher degrees. Nonetheless, even though he had only a basic teaching certificate as required by the government, he was always diligent in acquiring knowledge of English and became proficient enough to teach English, both grammar and literature. Thus, no matter where he was sent, whether it be Assumption College Sriracha, Saint Louis School Chachoengsao, St. Gabriel's College, Assumption College Thonburi or Assumption College Bangkok, Bro. Yut was always assigned to teach English at all levels from primary to secondary. Another ministry he never missed wherever he was posted, was to teach catechism and to animate Catholic students preparing for Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation.

As for the other duties Bro. Yut was assigned to, he always carried them out diligently, earnestly and meticulously. Anyone could experience his honesty, punctuality and service-mindedness in his work as the community bursar or stationery master of the school, overseeing sales of textbooks and stationery and other educational materials for students and teaching-staff. He was trusted and appreciated by all.

Among his various assignments, Bro. Yut had the opportunity to work at Assumption College Sriracha several times from 1960-1963, 1965-1970 and 1980-1988. He came back to this school for

his last assignment from 1990-1998. Due to health problems, his concerns of being unable to develop any necessary technological skills as well as new methods of teaching English to a new generation of students, he was allowed to officially retire from teaching ministry in 1998. After his retirement from teaching, he stayed on at Assumption College Sriracha where he quietly spent his time as caretaker of the residence of the Brothers and tending to the garden. He also devoutly participated in Catholic religious activities in the area, visited families of retired teachers and parishioners whom he knew and was so familiar with.

Those who know Bro. Yut well will attest to the fact that although he was not highly educated and did not hold high degrees or positions, in every assignment and responsibility he was given, he always rendered his best effort and ability. He was strict with himself, frugal, humble and detailed in all matters. He conducted himself as a model of piety and faithfulness to religious life. He was at times impatient, but he was forceful and quick. Although he did not consider himself a sportsman, he took care of his health and enjoyed playing badminton, a sport he excelled at.

Bro. Yut was of an older generation of Brothers who periodically renewed his religious commitment by participating in various renewal programs and pilgrimages such as following in the footsteps of Saint Louis de Montfort in France and Italy, receiving training in pastoral care in the Philippines in 1988, and other trips abroad as permitted by the authority. His demonstration of his faith and love for God and filial devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary, his loyalty to the Congregation and strict observance to religious obligation and spiritual exercises are manifested to all.

Due to his deteriorating health and increasing frailty, Bro. Yut requested to move and reside with the Gabrielite Provincial Center

in Bangkok in 2017 in order to receive proper medical care at the nearby Camillian Hospital. The following year, he permanently moved to the geriatric care facility of the hospital. He peacefully passed away on 7 April 2021 at 16.45 hrs. at the age of 85 years old. The ceremony was conducted in a simple manner to honor this veteran Brother under the strict regulation to cope with the COVID-19 situation with presence of Brothers and few family members on 10 April 2021 at the Brothers' Cemetery, Sriracha.

# **Brother George Lourdu Raj L**

**February 17, 1996 - April 10, 2021**



*Funeral Oration*

*11<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 at Montfort, Tindivanam*

Brother George Lourduraj a young Montfortian with a brief and significant spell...

Rev. Brother Johnson, Provincial Superior of the Province of Yercaud, Reverend Fathers, Bro. David Selvaraj, Local

Superior of the community, Brothers of the Provinces of Yercaud, Trichy, Bengaluru and Pune, the Sisters and the member of the family of Br. George,

We were all stunned to hear the news of our beloved little Brother George Lourduraj not being with us anymore on the 10th of April. George joined the Brothers of St. Gabriel at the age of 20 at St. Gabriel's Kazipet in the year 2015. Three years later he became a professed Brother. At the first community at Kadappa, he was a Brother to all. For students, he was a role model because he was a good dancer and gave a lot of energy to the group, he taught them sports, games and took care of their physical needs. Bro Joseph Amalrajan, the Superior of the community who is here, will agree with me that this active ever willing young Brother was a support to him. From there, he went to All Saints' High School, Hyderabad to complete his studies in Bachelors in Social Work. We all looked up to him as a potential candidate to do the Lord's good work. Probably God had other plans. Brother George told me that his mother was ailing. His mother's surgery called him home and he

was in his house from 19th of March and he was to return to his community after casting his ballot. He started off on the 7th of April. On the way he changed his course and went to the Shrine of Velankani. His patron saint St. George was a fighter, but this George was not a fighter. He was such a pleasant, obedient and amiable person that these two characters don't match that way. He had a pious leaning, this way he was a soldier who laid his armor at the abode of Our Lady. Is that the reason why he offered his hair at the shrine? We really do not know what actually happened there but we are here now. I was thinking all along why the good Lord had to take the life of this religious of two years so early. I see a message, message for families, message for us Religious. From the family, he was moving towards his community. And all along he was in contact with his family members, his Local Superior and other Brothers saying that he was on the way. He mentioned that because of the turmoil at Tiruvannamalai he could not proceed immediately. That is possibly where the diversion took place. Though he was to move from home to his religious community, he moved towards Velankini. That is probably to say that his life was directing the family and the religious to our Lady. Brother George has a second name Lourduraj. It may be by coincidence that the Brothers arranged this service in front of the grotto of Our Lady, a replica of the grotto at Lourdes. He was a devotee of mother Mary and remained so till the end.

What we have witnessed is the collaboration between the family and the Brothers all along.

With the coordination of Brother Irudayam the Provincial Superior of the Province of Trichy, Brother Johnson the Provincial Superior of the Province of Yercaud, Brothers Mairannan and Dominic, Brothers were keeping in constant touch with the family. This incident brought forth the connect between the family and the

religious. God is calling us to continue that fine relationship by taking ourselves to our Mother to learn from her life.

Yet another coincidence is that we are here on Divine Mercy Sunday. We need the mercy of our lord. And as we stand here praying together for the soul of George, let us hope that his two-year religious life unites family members and brothers.

The way the Brothers of four different Provinces have come together these few days is tremendous. I called the Brothers and the prompt response that I got was like true Brothers. This is something that I learnt: that we are Brothers truly. The moment I called some of the Brothers of our Province and made a request, they all said, “yes, we are there” not even thinking of the difficulties they were likely to face because of the COVID related restrictions. While planning to come over we did not know Brother George was no more.

The Brothers of the Province of Pune came together, Brothers of the Provinces came together and now the church is here together-family, religious and the clergy. We are here pledging together before our Mother that we need her intercession to receive Divine Mercy. We are really stunned; we have that loss in our hearts: the family their dear one and we Brothers a potential missionary who could have made a lot of difference. We are here accepting God’s will. I should say ‘thank you’ for being with us supporting us and making all the arrangements though we Brothers of Pune Province could not reach here in time. I heard that the Fathers readily responded for the holy Eucharist. Thank you, Fathers, for your generosity.

For us Brothers, it is home coming to our origin literally and figuratively - To Tindivanam the first community of Brothers in India and to the original spirit and charism. To the Provincial

Superiors and the Brothers of the three Provinces of the South who have taken the initiative, Brother David Lourduswamy and the community for all the arrangements and the members of the family and all the well-wishers for their presence in large numbers, I should say on behalf of the Brothers of Province of Pune: a big ‘Thank You’. We have received messages from all over the World starting from Reverent Brother Superior General expressing his prayers and unity of the Congregation with us. We have received personal notes of grief from the Assistant Generals and Provincial Superiors in India and abroad. Many Brothers young and old have sent their greetings of solidarity saying that they are all together with us sharing the grief. Let us continue to pray for the soul and also take a lesson from this that we cannot be what we were yesterday, we have to be focused and we shall be together with one commitment. That is what we pledge before our Mother, saying that we would want her to take us to her son Jesus.

Thank you once again!

Bro. Jaico Gervasis

Provincial Superior

# **Brother Georges Croteau**

**(Bro. Maxime-Joseph)**

**May 09, 1934 - April 19, 2021**



On April 19, 2021, the Lord welcomed our confrere Georges Croteau in his Eternal Abode. Born on May 9, 1934, in Saint-Nicolas de Lévis, he was the son of Alphonse Croteau, a mechanic, and Adélaïde Verrier.

He entered the Juniorate of Saint-Bruno on April 14, 1950. On July 29, he went to Pierrefonds to begin his Postulancy. He took the Religious Habit, on February 2, 1951. His Novitiate came to an end on August 15, 1952, when Georges took his First Vows. He made his Perpetual Profession on July 16, 1958.

Called to fill the gap, urgently, in one of our schools, he could only benefit from a one-year Scholasticate as an immediate preparation for his teaching profession. Studying part-time, over the years, he passed the higher teaching certificate, the baccalaureate, a bachelor's degree in pedagogy. He crowned his studies with a doctorate in philosophy of education from the University St. Paul of Ottawa and a master's degree in theology from the University of Toronto.

His career unfolded in meticulously prepared fields. From 1953 to 1983, he taught at Primary, Secondary and College levels. From 1980 to 1983, he was a Professor at the University of Trois-Rivières and, from 1983 to 1989, Provincial Superior of the Province of Champlain. Afterwards, he worked for many years in

the Father's mission as a teacher and a pastoral agent at the University of Quebec at Trois-Rivières.

A former student of the Brothers of St. Gabriel, in Saint-Romuald, he followed the example of his models, Bros Paulin and Émile-Henri, and devoted the first 15 years of his Religious Life to teaching in several schools in the Mauricie Region.

He was keen on the holistic formation of his students by following a rigorous methodology. His former students remember his demonstrations on the blackboard as well as his tests of comprehension. Attentive to their success in life, he knew how to guide them towards a bright future thanks to his advice. Twice a day, a prayer opened the work sessions. He was demanding and had a great concern for order. An excellent educationalist educator and first-class teacher, he had the growth of his students at heart and demanded more from the most talented.

One of the places where Bro. Georges demonstrated his high pedagogical competence was, undoubtedly, Montfort Higher Secondary School, in Shawinigan-Sud, where he instilled an innovative current by adapting a part-time educational and sports programme, the implementation of an educational philosophy based on the quality of the relations between teachers and students and developing the child's personal potential. Religious and lay teachers who followed him in this process enjoyed a brilliant career in the wake of such a Director.

As a Councillor, a Bursar, an Assistant Provincial and Provincial Superior, he knew how to take advantage of his talents to be a rallying point, a communicator, a Superior of large and small Communities. No doubt, he was able to adapt to the many changes that took place at that time, both in Religious Life and in Society. Witness to this, the welcoming of lay students who resided with the

Brothers, the sharing of their leisure time, the organization of holidays, pilgrimages, family meetings, numerous improvements in the living environments where he stayed, the modernization of places of relaxation... He also had the gift of leading young people in his wake. Therefore, his students at the University of Trois-Rivières followed in their Professor's footsteps, directing their donations to those in greatest need, in a spirit of fraternity and ecumenism.

His care to the study of the Bible, the Papal Encyclicals, the Council Decrees, and the Apostolic Letters, has always maintained his spirituality at a high standard. He never contented himself with giving information, but he shared the Word of life through prayer, compassion, brotherhood, leisure, and hospitality. therefore, no one was surprised to see him attracted to Priesthood.

All those who knew him in his apostolate, especially at the Pastoral Centre of the University of Trois-Rivières, at Assuétude (Addiction), in Shawinigan, or in various parishes of Mauricie are unanimous in recognizing the benefits of their meetings with Bro. Georges.

Bro. Guy St-Onge, by the bishop's delegation, conferred on him the Ministries of Lector and Acolyte. Then, Bro. Georges received the Priestly Ordination from bishop Martin Veillette, of Trois-Rivières, in St. Jean-de-Brebeuf Parish, on October 5, 1991. Afterwards, the character of the Gabrielite-Priest marked all his activities. He eagerly followed the Seminars of the French School of Spirituality. He actively participated in the Seminar for Formators in Bangalore (India) in February 1993 as Guest Speaker and Representative of the Province. He was very much interested in our mission in Rwanda and visited our Communities, in Haiti, between 1983 and 2000. During his six years as the Leader of the

Gabrielite Province of Champlain, he demonstrated for his confreres, during his visits and communications, a constant zeal for their spiritual and intellectual growth and an adequate preparation for their task.

Bro. Georges was a man of prayer, very faithful to Community's exercises and assiduous in reciting the Breviary. On the Pastoral level, in addition to his work at the University as a Professor and a Chaplain, he participated in the pastoral activities of the diocese. In 1975, he accepted a mandate from bishop Georges-Léon Pelletier, of Trois-Rivières, to be a Member of the Beaumier's Commission on the study of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre; then, at the invitation of the Bishop of Nicolet, to be a Member of a Commission to study the project a School of Faith. In 1979, he was appointed by the Canadian Religious Conference - Quebec Division – as a Member of the Catholic Committee of the Council for Education. In 1982, he was appointed Chairman of the Higher Secondary School for General and Vocational Education of Shawinigan by the Minister of Education.

The organization and accompaniment of groups of youngsters for the World Youth Days, in several countries, would make it possible to designate our Brother, in Montfort's words, "*as a man according to the heart of God*".

At the Community level, he was meticulous and a bit perfectionist. He was active in various Gabrielite Committees. He enjoyed speaking in public and did so with ease and enthusiasm. He also had a good sense of organization.

Bro. Georges was very proud of his family and kept strong links with it, especially with his mother, still active and an excellent card player at the age of 96. Her son had inherited this gift. He himself was a formidable card player and a "master" at bridge and 500.

Experiencing serious health problems, Bro. Georges was hospitalized in Trois-Rivières at the beginning of April. His health conditions deteriorated greatly and rapidly. He passed away on April 19, morning.

The funeral of our Brother Georges Croteau took place later and the body was buried in the Sainte-Marie-Madeleine cemetery, in Trois-Rivières.

+ Bro. Adélard Faubert, s.g.

Bro. Hubert Forest, s.g.

Bro. Guy St-Onge, s.g.



**Brother Georges Croteau  
returned to the Father's House,  
On April 19, 2021,  
at the age of 86.**

Let us give glory and praise to God for all the good he accomplished in our Brother and through him, in society and in the Church, during his life.

Let us pray together that he be admitted to full communion in the life of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

May his death stimulate us to carry out, in love, the will of the Father, as disciples of Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort.

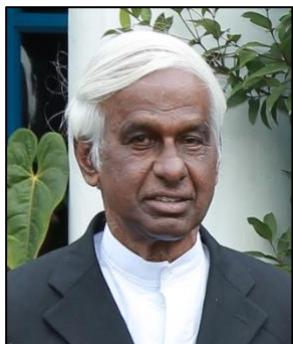
On behalf of the Superior General,

Bro. René Delorme, s.g.

Provincial Superior

# **Brother Jacob Ezhanikatt**

**June 04, 1941 - April 24, 2021**



## ***Funeral Oration***

I stand here to present before you the funeral message of Bro. Johnson, the Provincial Superior of Yercaud.

A guiding light has been put off, to shine brighter in the abode of his Master Jesus Christ.

Dear Brothers, Sisters, Fathers, Relatives of Bro. Jacob Ezhanikatt, Friends, and Benefactors,

As we are gathered here to bid a final farewell to Bro. Jacob, I am aware that delivering a funeral speech can be a painful task especially for me at this moment. Quite apart from the challenge of speaking, for Rev. Bro. Jacob who was my Novice Master, in a highly charged emotional state like today, the task of actually giving the funeral oration can be overwhelming, especially when we are in a state of shock from the grief of losing our loved one Bro. Jacob Ezhanikatt.

We are gathered here today to say goodbye to Bro. Jacob Ezhanikatt, known to us in the Congregation as Bro. Jacob Mary. He was my mentor, my friend and an inspiration. I would like to say a few words about him today as my personal tribute and as the Provincial of the Province of Yercaud.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would deliver a funeral oration for my Novice Master whom I loved much. And it

is in Eachinkadu in 1979 that I met Bro. Jacob. He made me what I am today by his constant guidance and support.

*“The Montfort Brothers are good teachers and run best schools in India.”* That’s a popular statement established by parents. I can agree with that. But Bro. Jacob went further and touched the hearts of many. He took to counselling people, a great ministry of liberating people from sadness and pain. He didn’t just counsel people, but had combined spirituality and counselling successfully. I am sure all of us here have interacted with him, in one way or another, in his counselling mode. He actually has got that in his genes.

There is so much I can say about Bro. Jacob as a person, but today, I choose to remember him as the mentor he was to me. I was with him during the last few months, taking him to the hospital, spending time with him and talking to him. He never, ever complained. Always he kept reminding me of the importance of God’s role in our life and doing the best in life, because you may never really get to know the actual impact you have on people. He told me that everyone matters, so instead of just leaving a mark on them, leave a great mark on them.

He did live by his words because we all remember how Bro. Jacob contributed to the life of many people. *“People have feelings.”* That was his constant reminder and he kept on living by his words until his dying day. Allow me now to share with you the wisdom Bro. Jacob left with all of us.

He once told me that when it comes to being a religious, it has nothing to do with administration, but don’t be heartless. *“It doesn’t matter how good you are at your skill... never lose your humanity.”* *“Even if you are going to make a great leader, but never lose your humanity.”* He actually repeated that many times. And in

our life as Brothers, that reminder means a lot. He was a great human and compassionate brother to all.

We really miss you Bro. Jacob. Thank you for what you have been to all of us.

I also remember how Bro. Jacob emphasized on the value of Poverty and Obedience. He demonstrated that by always being obedient to the Superiors, by being simple and honest. He was a person who brought many to live together in joy, and to love together and even support one another. Everyone agrees, Bro. Jacob was larger than life. He encouraged us to move forward in life courageously. He was a real comforter, counselor and a friend to all of us.

Our heart are heavy and eyes are filled with tears at your loss; but then we find comfort in the words of Christ: *“Do not weep; for I am going to my father to prepare a place for you”*. Dear Bro. Jacob, we thank you for having been a real Brother to all of us; we thank you for having been a teacher, a counselor, a friend, a guide, a Novice Master and a formator and above all, a loving pastor.

As we mourn your loss, we wish to request you to intercede for us to our Blessed Mother to whom you were much attached. You promoted a tender devotion to her; you constantly sought her intercession and during your life on this earth, you considered her as your real mother. We wish to promise you that we will live by what you have taught us.

Bro. Jacob came to Montfort Community in June 2019. From the beginning he was not keeping good health. Later he developed kidney problem that led to dialysis. And he had to go to Salem twice a week for dialysis. In July 2020, he had an attack and with the advice of doctors a stent was fixed. He was also affected by

COVID-19, and he was in the hospital for more than 25 days. From March 2021, onwards, he started to lose his memory and developed different complications. End of March he had a fall and suffered a fracture on the hip. He was taken to hospital immediately for the treatment. For the last few days, he was in the ICU because his blood pressure and heart beat was not stable. And last night, around 10.15 p.m., a doctor informed me that his blood-pressure and heartbeat were coming down rapidly. At 10.30 p.m., the doctor declared that he is no more.

Rest in peace Bro. Jacob and pray for us in heaven.

Bro. Johnson,  
Provincial Superior,  
Province of Yercaud

## **Brother Emile BULTEAU**

**October 28, 1936 - April 29, 2021**



*On March 27, 2020, alone, in an empty St Peter's Square, Pope Francis declared: "Like the Disciples of the Gospel, we were caught off guard by an unexpected and furious storm, in the same boat, all fragile and disoriented, but, at the same time, all important and necessary, all called to row together, all needing to comfort one another."*

We all find ourselves today, in such a boat..., with Bro. Emile who, on Thursday, April 29, passed away, so suddenly, because of the deadly wave of a global and relentless pandemic that, to date, has made three million victims around the world.

To bring back memories of Bro. Émile's life, let us listen to what he said:

*"When I look back at way that I have travelled since October 28, 1936, I am impressed by my journey as a child, my journey with my Brothers of St. Gabriel, my journey of commitment, my journey of active life and my journey as a retiree still as active as ever... The age of a man is truly something moving: it sums up his whole life. The age of a man represents such a tremendous load of experiences and memories! Despite traps, chaos, pitfalls, I went forward, with difficulty at times, like those good tip-up carts I saw during my childhood in the countryside. And now, when it pleases God, my good dump truck will carry further to Heaven its load of fond memories."*

Emile was born at Apremont, Vendée, in a devout Christian family of farmers. He lived happily with his parents and his elder brother René. He said that he had inherited a simple and deep faith from his parents who were blameless, honest, and hardworking. He attended the Catholic School of Apremont and, at the age of 10, he met, for the first time, a Brother with a blue rabat who came to his school to present the Brothers of St. Gabriel. At the end of his presentation, the visitor distributed papers on which the young Émile ticked the “YES” box without too much thought. This is what happened next, according to him, *“In the evening I told my parents about what had happened. They were surprised, astounded, and kept silent. My mother was quite proud of me but my father, after a few days of reflexion, declared bluntly: 'OK! I agree. But don't change your mind! Never!”* “At the end of August 1947, he entered the Juniorate of La Tremblaie near Cholet, and a few years later, he went to the vast St. Gabriel's Boarding School, in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, with its strict discipline. He confides: *“I do not deny anything of this rigid formation, even if, at times, I felt upset. I was able to grow, little by little, and move forward, over the years, towards more maturity and self-confidence because I was rather shy.”* A two-year Novitiate followed, at Boistissandeau. It was a time of discovery and deepening, among others, of the Marian Devotion which would be so important for him because, as he liked to repeat, *“The Blessed Virgin Mary has never abandoned me either in my joys or in my sorrows”*. On September 8, 1955, he took his First Vows before going to the Scholasticate of La Mothe-Achard for two years of studies.

He started his teaching career at Saint-Varent, in Deux-Sèvres, a boarding school, where day and night you had to be with the students. These six years were interrupted by military service, first in Nantes, then in Algeria as a non-commissioned officer

supervising the Algerian army after the Bilateral Agreement of Evian. In 1966, he was appointed to Pinier-Neuf School, at Beaupréau, Maine-et-Loire, as a teacher for slow learners. He appreciated it according to what he has written: "*During these years the workload was heavy but, how exciting it was to see each one of my students, with their own difficulties, improve their skills, at their own pace, then returning to the so-called normal stream*".

Then, in 1971, a new transfer sent him to Auvergne, to St. Joseph's Lower Secondary and Boarding School, in Tauves, as a teacher and a supervisor for 21 years. His former students still remember him, more than 30 years later: "*Bro. Émile initiated a good number of students to Shakespeare's language and shared his passion for literature, poetry and music, which he loved so much. As early as 1984, he equipped a computer lab with Apple-1. What touched us most was his desire to lead each one of his students on the path to success*"

The last stage of his teaching career was lived at St. Gabriel's Lower Secondary School of La Bourrelière, Haute-Goulaine, where he taught for four years before retiring in 1996. His retirement life was quite active: he coordinated catechesis for about 200 students. A former Headmaster of the School testifies, "*Bro. Émile brought a lot in the field of Biblical and Christian culture to the students of St. Gabriel's. He gave meaning to what he taught, and he was able to unite many catechists for the preparation of the sacraments in connection with the parish. He was able to transmit his knowledge through a specific pedagogy, proper to him, but solid, which reassured us when dealing with students' questions concerns. His passion for audio-visual made him a precursor of this innovative means of communication among the Brothers and allowed him to make numerous videos and audio-visual reports*".

Another commitment that kept him busy was the Association "*Brin de causette*" (*Let's have a little chat*), which took care of the poorest, living in the streets of Nantes and its suburbs.

But his commitment to the poor went on until the last day of his life, as the treasurer of the Association "*Munay Wasi*" (*the house that loves you*) supporting peasants and the most indigent children of the Andes Cordillera, in Peru, by building schools and canteens in remote villages, sponsoring and welcoming volunteers from France and other countries, etc. Bro. Émile travelled seven times to Peru, responding to the Lord's call to get involved with needy people.

Since 2003, Bro. Émile lived a Community life with the Brothers settled in Frère Louis' Street, very close to St. Jacques' parish church. He gained his place in the parish choir thanks to his warm and beautiful voice. He was a member of the Liturgy team and would prepare celebrations' animation.

After receiving the news of his death, several people testified: *"Bro. Emile was a humble and available servant, and above all, by the testimony of his way of living, an accurate transmitter of the Gabrielite Motto: Service, Simplicity, Family Spirit. He was a man who pondered his words imbued with wisdom. Through his very presence, his words, and his manner, he instilled calm and peace. Without being theatrical, Brother Émile was well heeded and respected. He was the embodiment of benevolence and empathy."*

As we come to the conclusion, let us be touched by these words from Bro. Emile's heart:

*"In my life, as a Brother, I have greatly appreciated Community Life, family spirit, supporting one another, asking for advice and accepting the inevitable tensions of a life in common. I loved my*

*life as an educator. What a joy! What a happiness! To be with youngsters, to live with them all day long with their concerns, their expectations and to give them support and comfort! Praise be to You, Lord, for the poor, the neglected and marginalized that you put along my way through ‘Brin de Causette’ and ‘Munay’. Yes, Lord, the poor have always evangelized. Be praised through the Blessed Virgin Mary who was at my side every day of my life... How many knots untied thanks to her!"*

A few days before Ascension Feast Day, we welcomed Jesus' words: “*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am*”. Jn 14,3.

Dear Émile, our Brother, the Lord has called you. You have finally reached the goal: Heaven. We'll meet again over there!

Bro. Christian BIZON

## **Brother Gabriel Jodet**

**January 26, 1935 - June 09, 2021**



A valiant missionary coupled with an authentic Religious has just left us!

Gabriel was born on January 26, 1935 at La Garnache, on the edge of the Vendean Marsh, in this village that still remembers of the passage of Father de Montfort. He was son of a farmer and the eldest of three siblings. His younger brother, Archange, died in a car accident in 1972.

The family lived on a small farm, in Froidfond, where Gabriel received his first education at St Joan's of Arc Primary School. This is what he recounted, with the humour we have always known of him

*“One day, in 1947, a visitor in a black cassock and blue rabat came to the school. It was Bro André Corsini. He invited all the boys in my class to think about what their future, when they get older. At the end of his talk, he handed out some little pieces of white paper. At the next break, everyone was eager to know what the other ones had written! A few months later a little black Simca car arrived in the farmyard and Bro. André explained to my parents what the Juniorate was. And then, Mom shed a few tears while preparing my clothes and Dad took me as far as La Tremblaie”* (the Juniorate). A novice at Boitissandeau from 1952 to 1954, he made his First Profession on September 8, 1954, then his Scholasticate at La Mothe-Achard. He held his first teaching post at Mouchamps, for 10 years (1955-1965). In 1966 he was appointed to Fontenay-Le-Comte, for one year, until the school closed and then to

Chambretaud (1966-1970).

In September 1970, at the request of the Provincial Superior, he left France to go to the Minor Seminary of Ngazobil in Senegal where he taught for four years. Then he joined Saint-Pierre Lower Secondary School, in Dakar. After his Second Novitiate in Rome in 1975 and a period of formation at La Garde (Avrillé-France), at the beginning of June 1977, he went back to Senegal, to Collège du Sine, a middle school in Fatick, to be in charge of the Minor Juniorate. Then, in 1991, he left for Thiès to be in charge of the Major Juniorate. At the end of 1994, after a few months in the Scholasticate of Brazzaville (Congo) where the political situation was chaotic, he had to be evacuated with the Novices and returned to Thiès as Bursar of the Novitiate. Unfortunately, a serious health problem forced him to go back to France for good. He was welcomed in Montfort's Community, at La Hillière where, for 12 years, he rendered many services with a truly fraternal heart: in the dining-hall, taking care of the linen, transporting Brothers for medical appointments, shopping, etc... "A really charming Confrere, who was fond of driving and could never say no when asked for a service! » declared a brother.

A month ago, on May 10, his health condition started deteriorating and he was admitted to Maison Saint-Gabriel, the Infirmary.

He wrote: "Needless to say that my heart has remained in Senegal. This country has become my second homeland! "

In fact, since the announcement of his death, dozens of testimonies have arrived from Senegal. There, we gave him nicknames that conveyed our affection for him: Bro. Gaby, Bro. Pater, Bro. Thalès...

Hereafter, you can find some excerpts of these messages:

- "As a Juniorist, Bro. Gaby appeared to me as a benevolent and omnipotent father. He provided for all our needs and smiled at our little whims ... and sometimes we took advantage of his generosity, of his patience. "
- "Thank you so much Bro. Gaby. You played your score so well on what we have become today. He was very skillful at electricity and carpentry. Many of the desks, cabinets, shelves, benches, stools and sofas in our Communities are the work of his hands. He leaves this world taking with him a good part of the history of the Province of Senegal. "
- "He has always impressed me with his kindness, availability and dedication. At any time of the day or night he was ready to help, whether it be for medical care, for driving someone, for troubleshooting, for running errands. And he did everything with a smile. Always."

And, do you know, Bro. Gaby, what a Senegalese Brother wrote to us? At the very time of your departure to the Father's Abode, on Wednesday 9th, at 6.30 am, the first heavy rain fell on the Sine at the start of the rainy season. Your gift from heaven which is the perfect time to start growing crops!

To conclude, Bro. Gabriel, welcome these few lines written by one of your former confreres in Senegal:

"For me, Bro. Gabriel, is PURE KINDNESS, kindness in the native state, in the raw state, which includes benevolence, availability, calm, gift of his time, of his talents, and even of his health, for his Brothers and his dear and near ones. The visible and sensitive face of our GOOD GOD, GOD the FATHER, and also, sometimes, the face of GOD, the GRANDFATHER. That says everything. It would be possible to add anecdotes, but would it be really useful?

It would reduce Gaby to human gestures, to human situations, to fix him in his carnal condition. I prefer to keep, for his eternity and mine, this face of the GOODNESS of God.”

Farewell Bro. Gaby!



Bro. Christian BIZON

## Testimonies

From 1986 to 1995 I lived with Bro. Gabriel in the Community of Fatick. Despite his busy schedule, he rarely missed the community meetings, always present at services and meals and on time. He knew how to create a good community atmosphere, and he always remained calm and serene. He knew how to relax his Juniorists on weekends and holidays, with his films or slide shows, not to mention a library with a good number of books, available for young people. He had also a real concern for vocations. He had to make a lot of trips across the country, especially during summer holidays, to meet families of the Juniorists, Aspirants and Candidates. Bro. Gaby, as he was affectionately called, was truly a model in Religious Life. May he receive the eternal reward of a good and faithful servant!

*Frère Robert THIAW, Thiès, Sénégal*

Blessed you Brother Gaby! Some people have been shaped in such a way that nothing can change them, neither in their intentions, or



in their words, or in their actions. Bro. Gaby was one of these people He has just left us. He was a man who was unanimous appreciated. We keep of him the good memory of a man of God and of the men he leaves behind. Gaby, you the teacher of Mathematics, the Director of the Juniorate, the person in charge of vocations for which you went to the villages till the far end of Casamance, in the rainy season. You the foster Brother (Bursar) inventor of Banapaye and Manguine, the carpenter, the nurse, the cantor, etc. I envy you because of the reward that Jesus Christ now gives you because you loved him and served him in his brothers, through Mary. I have no doubt about that.

Bro. Gaby, it was hard not to love you. You were sensitive to the needs of others, especially those in need. I can imagine the grief of Maïmouna and her children and so many other vendors in the central market of Thiès when they have heard about your death. You loved people and people loved you. You were part of the landscape. Thank you very much, Gaby, for your beautiful life, and pray for us who are still on the way.

*N. B.: Bro. Gabriel JODET was against any waste and was keen on recycling ("Laudato Si'" before the hour): fruits, cheese, medicines, boxes of all kinds, etc. "Bana-paye" is a mixture of bananas and moderately damaged papaya, which Bro. Gaby recycled into stewed fruit. The same for Manguine which comes from the mango.*

*Bro. Jean-Paul MBENGUE, Assistant General, Rome*

Brother Gabriel JODET was very attentive **and** very close to me, I met him first at the Juniorate of Fatick, where he taught Natural Science; I do not forget either his multiple services, which he rendered to the community when I was at the Novitiate. He loved Senegal and devoted himself totally to the mission in the land of Teranga. The handyman, the lover of animals, impressed me a lot, he did not like waste; my moments of meeting with him were always fraternal and filled with memories. He liked to tidy up and put everything in order, showed us many educational films. He was a man of prayers. I thank God for seeing him again and having been able to speak to him more than once, during my training in France. Thank you for your presence in my life, thank you for the services rendered in perfect availability. Rest in peace valiant and faithful missionary, who did quite a lot for the poor who came to you.



*Bro. Augustin DIOUF, Thiès, Senegal*

Praise the Lord for this peaceful, helpful, patient, tolerant man. From my first years as a Religious, he taught me to deal with the youngsters at the Juniorate of Fatick. With Gaby, Community Life was a family life where it was good to live. Discussions with his young colleagues were always lively and cordial. I keep very good memories of Bro. Gaby and the Community. Maybe we have to ask him to forgive us. Sometimes we took advantage of his generosity and patience.

*Bro. Jean-François BONANG, Montréal*

On January 19, 2021, he wrote these words to me: “*Thank you for all the news from Senegal. I devoured them greedily but I'm a little lazy to answer. I am very busy with nothing to do, the most used tool in my office is the chair*”. I have known Gaby quite well in Thiès in 1993. He was a charming confrere who could not say no when asked for help. In Thiès, he was the Bursar of the Community. He liked to drive out every day and stock up and run errands and buy what he was requested to. Gaby did not know how to say no. You were always served if you had the patience to wait, because Gaby was never in a hurry. Everyone remembers the Camemberts he unearthed at the supermarket counter and which perfumed the surroundings. They were a treat for those who could not read the expiry dates.

A cat-transmitted disease by led him to a clinic in Thiès (8 days) then to the main hospital in Dakar (5 days) before being medically evacuated to France.

He didn't remember any of it. He would have liked to go back to Senegal but the Superiors were kind enough to make him understand that he would be better treated in France.

*Bro. Michel MANCEAU, Thiès, Senegal*

Brother Gabriel JODET, after his Scholasticate, spent 10 years in Mouchamps, from 1955 to 1965. I knew him very well and I appreciated him quite much. He taught my two young brothers Robert and Jean-Paul.... I still remember several characteristics which impressed me: he was calm, smiling, very approachable. A genuine Brother. He was gifted for manual work: he knew how to bind together, at the end of the year, the issues of the Magazine "Cœurs Vaillants", so that we

could enjoy follow the adventures of Tintin, Jo and Zette...!

He had created a plywood workshop to teach the students how to cut this material and thus obtain sugar boxes, animals, flowers, etc. On Sundays, after lunch and before Vespers, he showed filmstrips with the adventures of Tintin or Jo and Zette, etc. He had the gift to mimic the voices of the heroes!



We met again in Senegal, as professors at Ngazobil Seminary from 1971 to 1974: The teaching staff was made of 3 priests (including the future Cardinal Adrien Sarr, and the future bishop of Thiès, Mgr. Jacques Sarr), two brothers and 3 nuns from different Congregations. Bro. Gabriel was appreciated by all for his simplicity, his legendary calm, his availability, his gifts for DIY... He taught Mathematics and Sciences. Seminarists appreciated Bro. Gaby! I saw him again in Thiès, especially in the years 1993 to 2000, when he was a member of the Community of the Novitiate. He was as a fraternal Bursar, at the service of the Brothers, Postulants and Novices who came from all horizons and continents. This responsible stewardship was important for the well-being of people coming from all walks of life. Thank you, Bro. Gabriel. You were a genuine Gabrielite.

*Bro. Bernard GUESDON, Rome*



**Bros. Jean PLOUX, Gérard DUPONT, Philippe DACOSTA, Gabriel JODET**

Brother Gaby, Brother "Thales", Brother "Pater" is no more!

I was really shocked to learn about the birth into heaven of "Pater" or "Thales" in other words that our dear Brother Gabriel JODET had passed away. When the sad news of his departure to the Lord's was spread, these names which we affectionately pronounced as youngsters in Fatick and Thiès resonated beautifully in my heart. Yes, I am sure that these memories and this grief are shared by all my friends of the Juniorate of Fatick. These few words cannot give an account of what was the life of Bro. Gaby among us, young students at Collège du Sine. In fact, I remember Bro. Gaby as a man always available, a man full of talents (teacher, carpenter, electrician...), a rigorous man who wanted the work to be well done. To this, we can add that he was a man who was able to relax the atmosphere by his jovial mood. Many of my companions at the Juniorate will certainly remember, too, this famous sentence of Bro. Gaby: "*Passage from the green booklet, page X to Y to be copied*". Indeed, this was how "Pater" reminded us that breaking

the Law, especially the article which stated: "*Silence was required during the hours of study and rest*"! was an act against brotherhood. Today we are reaping the sweet fruits of what we once considered as a "punishment".

In addition, on February 25, 2021, I met Bro. Gaby at Hillière-Montfort after many years. Our last meeting? No, my answer would be categorical, this meeting would not be the last. Alas, the Master of life, time and history has decided otherwise! May his name be blessed! This visit enabled me to rediscover a serene man. Despite the weight of years and the illness inherent to this period of life, nothing altered Bro. Gaby's "inner being". He showed a great serenity, the joy of living and an unmatched vitality, signs of his attachment to Christ whom he loved so much and served so well in Senegal. It is true, Bro. Gaby knew Senegal, Bro. Gaby could recognize himself in every young Senegalese student. Therefore, there is no wonder that Bro. Gaby could write these wonderful words: "*Needless to say that my heart has remained in Senegal. This country has become my second homeland!*" There is no surprise therein for me or for those who knew and loved him.

Isn't bearing fruit the underlying purpose of the gift of the Son of God? Called to bear fruit, "*Pater*" did not shy away from it. Yes, I'm sure! And I firmly profess: the seeds that "*Pater*", as a missionary, sowed in the land of Teranga have bearded fruit.

"One percent, one hundred percent". Thus, there is no risk to conclude this testimony by this thought of Seneca, in his letters to Lucilius:

"To complain that a man is dead is to complain that he was a man." What link will I make between this passage and the life of Bro. Gaby?



Indeed, "Pater" received the gift of being from God! In our eyes, Bro. Gabriel JODET was fully man, he accomplished his "Religious Being". What makes a man a son in the image of God was evident in "Pater".

For us, Bro. Gaby's departure to the Father's is an opportunity to thank for this gift from the Lord. We dare, without shuddering and without illusions, testify to our conviction: yes, we are crying for Bro. Gaby! We mourn our Brother! However, we will not complain, Bro. Gaby has joined the huge crowd of Saints and Angels who cheer the Lamb: Bro. Gaby lives in the "City where God is all in all". May the name of the Lord be blessed forever! Amen!

*F. Nicephore TINE, Angers-Desjardins Community.*

## **Brother Felix (Paul) LEFORT**

**March 16, 1927 – June 11, 2021**



On Friday June 11, early in the morning, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the heart of our Brother Felix stopped beating. His heart, which had beaten for 94 years at the same rhythm as the one of the God of Love, could finally rest in peace.

Paul was born in Frossay, on March 16, 1927. He was the seventh child in a family of 11. His mother, Bernadette, was the visible Guardian Angel of the household. She wrote short poems that were found after her death. One of them goes like this: "*I raised a lot of girls and a lot of boys. How many worries because of all these little ones! But, finally, by a hug, each one of them paid us back. Children are a treasure that deserves our love!*" Her husband was a bricklayer. In the 1940s, there was a shortage of everything, and customers needed to be granted credit.

*"We were poor. That is true! But we were so happy, expecting nothing more than what we were given. When I was young, I saw my parents praying. I saw Mom, silent for long moments, kneeling on the stone by the fireplace, and Dad, at the foot of his bed. How could this man, this leader, make himself so small, so humble and so silent? "*

Felix entered the Juniorate of Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre on April 20, 1939, with Gabriel, his brother, one year his senior. They wanted to be "School Masters" as secular Brothers of Saint-Gabriel were called in those days. Entering the Novitiate at Boistissandeau, in

March 1943, he received the religious habit on September 8, and heard the celebrant tell him: "*Paul Lefort, henceforth you will be called Brother Felix*". In 1969, he obtained from the Superior General authorization to keep his name as a religious. He explained his decision: "*My fidelity to this name, which I will keep till the end of my life, is a symbol of my fidelity to Jesus Christ and a call to holiness. I am Felix and I am happy with it!*" Upon his arrival at the Scholasticate of La Mothe-Achard, after his first vows taken on September 8, 1944, Felix got trained for to become a Deaf teacher.

He taught deaf children for 22 years (1945 to 1967) in Poitiers and then for 4 years at St Jean-de-la-Ruelle in Orléans. He affirmed: "*Following one's vocation, «is not entering a Congregation the way one would register in a Fishing Society or a Sports Club. Being a Religious is a lifetime matter. It is a state of life!*"

An event marked Bro. Felix's life: The death of his elder brother, Bro. Gabriel, on May 17, 1969, at the age of 43, at Sangmélima, Cameroon.

On September 6, 1972, Felix left France and volunteered to get involved in what was then the Gabon-Congo-Cameroon District in order to replace his elder brother. "*If I have to stay there too, I will be happy to rest on African soil, like my brother*" he said.

The rest is related by Bro. Camille Lucas, the District in charge, at that time: "*Bro. Felix did not replace his brother in Cameroon, but he was appointed, to Brazzaville, Congo, where Bros. Lucien Allard and Maurice Nicolet had started the Institute for Young Deaf, in rented buildings. Bro. Felix worked there for 14 years,—as Director and Manager of the new Institution which was built on a vast land granted by the Congolese Government, somewhat proud of this concrete socialism which, miraculously, was growing in its territory. Bro. Felix supervised the constructions, trained teachers*

*for deaf students, set up workshops, organized educational and social life of a beautiful complex that, till today, welcomes 320 deaf students under the direction of two Congolese Brothers. First, it was necessary to recognize the deafness of these children who were more or less hidden by their families, to facilitate their movement, to practice on old speech therapy and demutation devices that were no longer used in France. Man of character, Bro. Felix hardly supported the countless visits of Politics to whom, the Government wanted their achievements in the 'People's Republic of the Congo'. The settlements on the Brothers' property, and most of all the transfers of his best qualified teachers who were suddenly appointed for the account of the country's Ministry of Social Affairs, tested his saintly patience to the limit.*

After a final argument with the Direction of Social Affairs of Congo, Bro. Felix was dismissed by a Ministerial Decree and left the management of the Institute in June 1982. He remained 3 years more in Brazzaville as a Formator at the Novitiate, and returned to France for good in 1985. He was then posted in La Peyrouse where he stayed for 8 years, working as a parish catechist. In July 1993, he left Dordogne for Parthenay and then Frossay, in order to be close to his 95-year-old mother. She died in February 1996. His elder brother Louis, a single man, had always lived with their mother and was now in need of support. Bro. Felix **dedicated** himself totally **to** his service. In December 2002, he was appointed to the Community of Loctudy before the final stage, in 2009, to Maison Saint-Gabriel at La Hillière (Infirmary) where he actively lived for 12 years at the service of his sick and old Brothers.



Let us now give the floor to Bro. Félix, who gives us his own rereading of all this apostolic life: *"I would like that, when I pass away, it would be said loud and clear that during my professional life, my first concern was catechism. Anything else is worthless*

*for me. It would be better not to say anything at all. One will talk about my commitment to deaf children and especially at the Institute for Young Deaf students in Brazzaville. But to me, all this is very little. Through all what I have undertaken, I first wanted to be a catechist and I put all my heart into it. From my first year in Poitiers, I cared about the religious education of my little deaf students. With a very simple vocabulary and very meaningful drawings, I wanted to relate them to God, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I tried to teach them how to direct their minds and how to pray. In Brazzaville, after having introduced young deaf people to the initiation to sacraments, I set up a team of older people to be catechists of their little brothers. I set up the "Sunday School": nearly 300 talks over 9 years for the "Shepherds" of Charismatic Groups in Brazzaville. When I came back in France, at La Peyrouse, I accompanied the children for Mass in the parishes. In charge of the catechists of the sector, I committed myself in their formation. Thus, for 48 years, I wanted to teach catechism to all the children entrusted to me!"*

The whole life of Brother Félix was thus one of great religious simplicity: he was dedicated and never hesitated before duty. He was totally devoted to the poor, particularly to his favourites, the

deaf children. Felix was nourished by faithful prayer and by the Word of God, which one could feel in his daily life.

Brother Felix, let us end this evocation of your life with this prayer by Cardinal Merry del Val that you liked to repeatedly recite:

*"O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, hear me,  
From the desire to be admired, deliver me  
From the desire to be honoured, deliver me,  
From the desire to be preferred, deliver me,  
From the fear of being forgotten, deliver me  
O Mary, Mother of the humble, pray for me!"*

Goodbye Brother Felix!

Enter into the joy of a merciful God who always walks along with you.

Bro. Christian Bizon

#### ***Brother Felix Lefort in his Native Land.***

In 1996, when Mrs. Bernadette Lefort died at the age of 97, Brother Felix returned to Frossay to take care of his brother Louis 71, 2 years his senior. Louis, was a single man, has always lived with his mother. As his strengths were declining, he needed to be helped, so Brother Felix totally committed himself to his service. He decided to sell his parents' house, too big for two people, and buy a smaller one in the centre of Frossay. For 6 years, Felix went back and forth between their new house and Montfort Primary School, about 300 meters away, where the Brothers' Community is situated, He was always present with his Brothers for morning and evening prayers and for Community meetings. When, in 2002, a room became

available at *Les Églantines* Care Home of Frossay, Bro. Felix placed his brother Louis there. He joined the Community of Loctudy, in Brittany in 2003. From there, he regularly visited his brother who peacefully passed away on May 13, 2012.

***Brother Felix, a Man of Deep Faith.*** In the Community, located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Montfort Primary School, 5, rue de la Paix, in Frossay, the Brothers have the immense privilege of having an oratory with the Real Presence. Fr. Sébastien, the parish priest, comes and celebrate the Eucharist once in two months. This oratory was the privileged meeting-point of Bro. Felix with the Lord, every time he entered the house. Several times a day, he prayed there, recharged his batteries, interceded, gave thanks: early in the morning for a prolonged period of meditation, followed by the song of Lauds, at noon, the Midday Prayer, in the evening, time of adoration then the song of Vespers and finally the Compline before bedtime.

Bro. Felix lived constantly in the presence of the Lord.

*"It is God's wish that this consecration of your intimate self should be lived in a special communion with His Son"* (RL 21)

*"You cannot live without listening to Him, speaking to Him... He demands part of your time for Himself alone"* (RL 65.)

*"Christ invites you to pray to the Father in the solitude of your heart"* (RL 75).

***A very picturesque anecdote:*** During an interview with young pupils, who come to school by bicycle, car or school bus, a child asked: "And you Brother, in your time, around 1935, how did you get to school? Brother Felix, full of humor and a bit mischievous, replied: "It's up to you to guess how I went to school. The answers

burst out: on a bicycle? On horseback? In a horse cart? on a donkey's back? in a wheelbarrow? on someone's back? etc. ... After a long wait, as the children were impatient to know the answer, Felix just said to them: "*Walking on my hands!*" He was good at sports! The distance between his house and the school was about 80 meters.

*Bro. Jo ALLAIN, Frossay*

I was a student of Brother Felix, and I was educated by him in 1950-1951. He was a good teacher and helped me a lot.

I made my first communion in Poitiers on June 17, 1955, on the Feast Day of the Sacred Heart!

I convey my condolences to the Province and to the whole Lefort family. I am united to you in thoughts and prayers.

*François THÉBAUT, Home for deafblind people in La Peyrouse.*

*N. B.: François T. is a deafblind man himself.*



We, the former Students, and the Management of the Institute for Young Deaf people in Brazzaville, learned with dismay of the death of Brother Felix LEFORT on Friday, June 11, 2021, in France. He was one of the pioneers of the first Institution for the rehabilitation of deaf and dumb children in Central Africa. He was the Director of our Institution from 1972 to 1982. Bro. Maurice NICOLET underlines in his writings that Brother Felix "*brought all his know-how, his dynamism and his spirit of initiative to the management of the Centre*". It is to him that the Institute owes its development. His former students still have fond memories of their Principal who shaped part of their life.

We offer our sincere condolences to the Province of France and to his biological family.

*Bro. Maixent Rock KOUBA, Director of the Institute*



## **Prayer of Thanksgiving and intercession**

(During Bro. Felix's Funeral Celebration)

**fi** Bountiful Father, you showed your love to Brother Felix throughout his life and You accompanied him in trials as in joys. Blessed are You Lord! Welcome into your House, your servant who loved you with his weaknesses and his talents. We pray to You, O Lord.

**fi** God, Source of life, for the large family in which Paul grew up: Blessed are You Lord! Stay with those who continue their journey on earth, his sister, his sister-in-law, his nephews, his nieces and welcome into Your Abode, all the deceased members of his family, especially the Consecrated ones: his brother Gabriel and his sister Juliette, the Visitation Nun. We pray to You, O Lord.

**fi** For his many commitments in Catechesis that Brother Felix liked to recall. Blessed are You Lord! Look at the many expectations and needs of our world. May your love be known; may ardent responses arise and bear witness to your faithfulness. We pray to You, O Lord.

**fi** Brother Felix dedicated himself to the sensory impaired in France and in Congo. For all his commitments, blessed are You Lord! For all the marginalized and the suffering of our society and those who give their life and their strengths to support them, especially the staff of Saint-Gabriel Rest Home. We pray to You, O Lord.

**fi** You gave Your Spirit to Brother Felix who courageously devoted himself to the service of his Brothers, ardent in meetings and eager to share. Blessed are you Lord! In front of discriminatory situations, hear our calls and change the hearts of men into the hearts of compassionate and benevolent brothers.

# **Brother Charles Mary Loechai Lavasut**

**August 26, 1942 - July 7, 2021**



Brother Loechai Lavasut was born on August 26, 1942 at Bangrak District of Bangkok. He was the fourth child among five siblings born to Mr. Loesin and Mrs. Dussanee Lavasut. devout members of the parish of Assumption Cathedral Bangkok. He was baptized on September 10, 1942 and christened Charles Borromeo after St. Charles Barromeo, an Italian cardinal saint in the 16th century, as his patron.

Brother Loechai was the flesh and blood of the St. Gabriel Brothers. He received his primary education from Assumption College and continued his study at Assumption College Sriracha as a juniorate. He was recruited by Brother Ildefonso Maria, a former Spanish missionary of the St. Gabriel Brothers in Thailand, as his class-teacher and mentor. He later attended St. Gabriel's College where he completed his higher secondary education in 1960.

Brother Loechai had a deep faith in God which was born out of his family's background of strong Catholic faith. Since his youth, he was always pious, well-behaved, intelligent and successful in his studies. With these good characteristics and sense of strong determination, he had decided to join the Brothers of St. Gabriel. He was sent to Eachinkindu Novitiate, Yercaud, in Tamil Nadu, south of India and took his first vows as a Brother of St. Gabriel on April 7, 1963 as Brother Charles Mary. Afterwards, he was sent to Tindivanam where he furthered his continued formation in

religious study and pastoral training for an additional year.

Brother Loechai was assigned to stay on in India to complete his Bachelor Degree at Loyola University in Madras where he majored in physics. He graduated with excellent marks in June, 1968 and returned to Thailand and was given the responsibility to work at Assumption College Nakornrajasima, north-east of Thailand, as his first assignment. He was there for eight years as a class-teacher, English teacher, principal and superior of the school respectively. During this period, he committed himself to God forever in the Congregation of Brothers of St. Gabriel by taking his final vows on April 6, 1969 at Assumption College Sriracha. He asked permission to attend his second novitiate in Bangalore in 1972, for a short break and for his spiritual renewal.

Bro. Loechai was an intelligent individual, scholarly, intellectually-curious and a lifelong learner. He always sought out new experiences from various sources in order to develop his own expertise of administration and teaching, to professionally encourage and develop the quality education and life experiences of his staff and collaborators and his students. He completed his master-degree study at Saint Mary's College in California in 1981 and his doctorate from De La Salle University in the Philippines in 1990 in Educational Administration. Along with these degrees, he also had many occasions to develop himself professionally and academically through educational trips and participation in academic seminars East Asia, the Australian continent, Europe and America. He also had occasions to renew his religious life through various programs and activities related to the Church and to the Congregation both in Thailand and abroad according to the traditional practice. He also had the opportunity to attend the

Montfortian pilgrimage in the footsteps of St. Louis Marie de Montfort quite a few times. These activities served to strengthen his knowledge, spiritual experience and professionalism and made him successful in developing and improving the schools he was assigned to in line with the identity of the Montfortian and Gabrielite tradition.

Brother Loechai was in turn a department head, principal, school licensee, school director and superior at Assumption College Bangkok, Assumption Commercial College, Assumption College Ubonratchathani, and Assumption College Thonburi. He was also Vice-President of Student Affairs at Assumption University. His final assignment was as Vice-Director of Assumption College Sriracha since 2004 till his retirement and death.

No matter what responsibility he was appointed to, wherever he was assigned, Brother Loechai always devoted himself wholeheartedly and tirelessly with all his ability and effort, bringing all his experiences to the mission assigned to him. His kindness, calmness, perseverance, empathy and religious spirit all served to help him administer and develop the schools he was responsible for not only in academics, but also in pastoral care for students, sports events, community volunteer projects and scouting activities in line with the Catholic tradition and Montfortian charism. For his long outstanding work with the youth boy scouts, he was appointed as the Chairman of the Ratanakosin Scout Association of Thailand, for many mandates.

At the start of 2013, Brother Loechai retired from all various positions due to health concerns. However, he still acted as an advisor to the director of Assumption College Sriracha and lived peacefully in this community. Though his strong faith in God and

his filial devotion did not waver in all his 58 years as a Brother of St. Gabriel, he was unable to deny the consequences to his health as a result of cancer, even though he had been in remission for several years. This, along with kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and cardiac arrhythmia leading up to heart failure caused him to return to the embrace of God on July 7, 2021 at 9:50 hrs. at the age of 79 years old.

## **Brother Swaminathan**

**August 20, 1966 - July 31, 2021**



Most Rev. Dr. A. Neethinathan, Bishop of Chengalpattu Diocese, Bro. Johnson, Provincial Superior, Province of Yercaud, Bro. Irudayam, Provincial Superior, Province of Trichy, Bro. Varghese Mandapathil, Provincial Superior, Province of North East, Brothers, Fathers, Sisters, family members of late Bro. Swaminathan, teachers, former students

and well-wishers,

Romans Chapter 14 verses 7 and 8 explain for whom we live or die:

“None of us lives for himself, nor dies for himself. If we live, we live for the Lord and if we die, we die for the Lord. Either in life or in death, we belong to the Lord”

Today, we have gathered at this grotto to celebrate the life of late Bro. Swaminathan who lived for the Lord and died for the Lord thus bearing testimony to the above-mentioned Bible Verses.

Bro. Swaminathan (55) passed away at 11.15 am, PST, on 31.7. 2021 at the Panay Hospital, Kalibo, Philippines. You are all aware of the circumstances under which he passed away. Hence, I do not wish to recall them once again.

After 22 years of Government Service as a teacher and Headmaster in different schools in Tamil Nadu, Bro. Swaminathan renounced his positions and power and took voluntary retirement in 2016 and joined the Philippines Mission. Before leaving India for the

Philippines, he handed over the Passbook of his Pension Account along with 24 signed blank cheque leaves to the LS at Kalugumalai so that the Province could withdraw his pension every month for the next two years of his absence from India. This is an unusual but typical demonstration of genuine spirituality, detachment and missionary dynamism on the part of Bro. Swaminathan. He was passionate about Vocation Promotion and Formation in the Philippines and worked with 100% sincerity, honesty and dedication for the growth of our Philippines Mission.

Since he was keen to make a positive contribution in the field of Formation, he attended several Formators' Courses with the aim of equipping himself with additional knowledge and skills. After completing each course, he would voluntarily send me copies of all the resource materials he received.



His zeal, commitment and hard work as a Vocation Promotor and Formator in the Philippines instantly began yielding fruits. Three candidates are already in the Pre-Novitiate in Burundi while 6 others will be ready to follow suit over the next two years.

Bro. Swaminathan was a man of simplicity and piety. He was a 'Fatherly Figure' for all the Brothers in the mission. The Brothers loved to converse with him. He was a friendly, sociable and a happy Religious. Anyone could approach him at any time and get his advice. He genuinely cared for everyone in the Community and

looked into most of the Spiritual needs of the Community. The Brothers would often call him “OK LANG BROTHER”, which was his typical expression that made all the Brothers feel at home in his company.

Bro. Swaminathan was a devoted Religious who balanced his work and prayer perfectly well. He was very systematic and committed to forming the candidates in the right way, and his total time and energy was devoted to that single mission. He was very excited about orienting the mission with many Filipino Brothers.

During my visit to the Philippines two years ago, I was very edified by his enthusiasm to recruit and form local candidates. There was no need to push him to perform his duties. He was self-driven. All what he needed was freedom to follow his passion. Whenever he found obstacles which were beyond his capacity to surmount on the way to achieving his goals, he would call me to seek assistance. At each of such occasions, one thing was very clear to me: Bro. Swaminathan was passionate about Vocation Promotion and Formation in the Philippines.



Whenever Bro. Swaminathan talked to the Brothers about his mission for the deaf and the blind at Adyar, they could see great happiness and joy radiating from

his face. He had a lot of fans in India and in the Philippines who

admired his simplicity. His former students and the teachers who worked with him loved him very much because of his magnetic smile and kind heartedness and for the difference he had made in their lives.

He had big dreams to develop the Philippines Mission by recruiting and forming local candidates. I was betting on him to successfully execute the Strategic Development Plan of the Province- to send 2 Filipino candidates each, every year to the Pre-Novitiate for the next 10 years. However, God had other plans for him. He wanted Bro. Swaminathan to be with Him from today onwards. Having taken the Vow of Obedience, let us all surrender our wills to that of God's Will. Psalm 127:1–2 proclaims the vanity of attempting to live apart from God's help: Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

The untimely demise of Bro. Swaminathan is surely a great loss for the Province of Bengaluru in general and for the Philippines Mission in particular. His contribution to the Congregation and to the Philippines Mission is very significant and immeasurable. My heartfelt condolences to all the Brothers in the Philippines Sector as well as in the District of South East Asia. I also express my condolences to all his bereaved family members, friends, former students and teachers who worked with him. May the inspiring life of Bro. Swaminathan, rekindle the Montfortian Missionary Dynamism in all of us.

I also take this opportunity to thank the following people:

1. Bro. Arul Amail Soosaiah, the Sector Superior, Philippines Mission for doing his very best to give the best of medical treatment and fraternal care during the last 10 days of Bro.

Swaminathan and for doing everything required for the cremation as well as to reach the ashes to Chennai.

2. Bro. James Bellarmin and all other Brothers in the Philippines for their supportive role in this most trying time of our mission
3. His Lordship Bishop Jose Corazon T., Bishop of the Diocese of Kalibo; Fr. Luke, Montfort Sisters and Montfort Fathers, staff members of Montfort Institutions in Kalibo and Romblon, Romblon for the solidarity expressed
4. His Lordship Bishop Neethinathan who cancelled another scheduled event just to be with us and to celebrate the Holy Mass for Bro. Swaminathan
5. Bro. K.K. Thomas and the members of Formation Commission for collecting the ashes from the airlines and for arranging the Holy Mass,
6. The Local Superior and Community of Adyar for organizing a Mass with a melodious choir this morning.
7. Bro. David Selvaraj for arranging the Funeral Mass at Tindivanam and for hosting lunch for all the visitors,
8. The Provincial Superior of Yercaud and Trichy Province, Brothers, teachers, and well wishes for joining us for the Eucharistic Celebration
9. While expressing our condolences to the bereaved family members of Bro. Swaminathan, I also thank them for their presence and prayers
10. The FMM Sisters of St. Thomas Mount for the affection shown to Bro. Swaminathan

The Lord gave Bro. Swaminathan to the Montfort Brothers. And the Lord has taken him back. Blessed be the Name of the Lord. And May his soul Rest in Peace.

## **Brother Richard KIMPERE**

**December 31, 1959 - August 30, 2021**



Brother Richard was born on December 31, 1959, in Pindi. His parents' names were Kimpere Mimbo and Nankwala Asiluyungu Jeanne.

A rather puny child and unable to go far from his home, he was enrolled in the primary school of the village "Ambura". Six years later, he passed the selective examination and obtained his Primary School Certificate. He went to Lusanga and enrolled at Bukiombo Institute. After two years, he left Lusanga and moved to Kikwit where he attended Pemba Institute.

Having failed his state diploma, he trained as a teacher and obtained his Certificate of Pedagogical Aptitude (C. P. A) in 1982. He was equipped to start teaching. He was appointed to Kingungi Catholic Mission and taught at Beti Primary School in Kiese from 1983 to 1984. At the end of the year, he left this school and came reached Kinshasa expecting to find a better life. In Kinshasa, he managed to find a teaching post at Dibwe dia Ditumba School Complex where he remained from 1984 to 1987. It should be noted that Bro. Richard passed his State Diploma (Baccalaureate) in 1998, presenting himself as a free candidate.

In the meantime, young Richard was well involved in his parish St. Frederic Pascal, located in route de Mokali. He felt that the desire to commit in Religious Life was becoming stronger and stronger. Other young people like him, in search of a vocation, were supervised by some Passionist Scholastics. At that time, the parish

of Saint-Frederic was served by the Passionist Fathers of Saint-Marc. Then, in 1986, Richard met Brother Maurice Nicolet, a Brother of St. Gabriel, who had come from Brazzaville to visit his candidates in Saint-Marc.

In August 1987, Richard participated in the Vocational Camp organized by Bro. Maurice in Brazzaville. At the end of this Camp, he passed psychological test, and he was admitted to the Pre-Novitiate that started in September 1987, with some other young men like André Mbuyamba and Gaston Nzoloko. At the end of his Postulancy, he was admitted to Notre-Dame d'Afrique Novitiate at Kinsoundi, Brazzaville, where he made his canonical entry on September 15, 1988.



**Bros. Henri Magadur, Nicaise Muzinga, José Lopez, Gaston Nzoloko,  
Camille Lucas, Marcelle Bonhommeau et Richard**



**Bros. Richard, Théophile Mbemba, Thierry Mupwala et Barthélémy Nkounkou**

At the end of his two years of formation, he took his first vows in the Institute of the Brothers of St. Gabriel, on July 8, 1990, at the parish of Saint-Marc of Kingasani, in the

hands of Brother Camille Lucas, Provincial Superior. In September, he returned to Brazzaville for one year of Scholasticate. Back in Kinshasa, he was appointed to Kikwit, in August 1991. It was the beginning of the involvement of the brothers of St. Gabriel in the diocese of Kikwit. With Brother Marcel Bonhommeau, they took over the management of "Bo Ta Mona" School for Blind People. From 1991 to 1992, Bro. Richard followed the training programme to teach the blind, initiated by Bro. Marcel. After his training he became a specialist in Braille, he took over a class and taught from 1993 to 1996. He was well appreciated by Bro. Marcel Bonhommeau for his competence. From 1996 to 1998 he was a teacher supervisor for the blind at Bo Ta Mona.



**Bros. Maurice Mbulu, Richard et Bienvenu Kinzambi à Isangi**

In September 1998, he left for Senegal to take part in a year of preparation for Final Profession (YPFP). Afterwards, he went to Rome to follow a formation programme and then to France on Montfort's footsteps.

Back in Kinshasa, he took his Final Vows on September 8, 1996, in the parish of Saint-Félix, Mombele.

In 1999, keen on improving his teaching skills, he enrolled at National Pedagogical Institute (IPN) where he obtained, in 2001, his degree in Educational and Vocational Guidance (EVG). At the beginning of the academic year 2001-2002, he was transferred to Port-Gentil, Gabon, where he was entrusted the task of Guidance Counsellor at the famous Higher Secondary School Raponda Walker. The experience was short-lived. He returned to Kinshasa and enrolled again at IPN for his Second Cycle. In 2005, he obtained his license in Educational and Professional Guidance (OSP).

In August 2005, he was appointed as local Superior of Maurice Nicolet Community at Isangi. In agreement with the late Archbishop Camille Lembi Zaneli, he was appointed Educational Advisor for the coordination of the Catholic Schools of the diocese of Isangi. A man of the grass-root level, and despite his precarious health, he managed to visit all the schools of the diocese, dotted in the dense equatorial forest, without roads nor tracks. Sr Pierrette Bwamba, a Daughter of Wisdom, acknowledges Bro. Richard's courage: *"He was on his little moped which often broke down ... I remember well his courage to face issues"*.



Back to Kinshasa in 2010, he was appointed Local Superior of the Community of the Provincial House. He worked at St. Alphonsus Higher Secondary School as a Guidance Counsellor and Director of Studies. In September 2012, he left the Provincial House to go to Laurent Bosmans Community at Limete. Between August 2015 and August 2017, he was transferred to Kinsagani as Local Superior of “Brother Raf Fouquet” Community and Director of Saint-Paul’s Lower Secondary School, at Kibibi. For health reasons, he had to go back to Kinshasa in September 2017 and worked as an Advisor and then Director of Saint-Montfort Higher Secondary School at Limete.

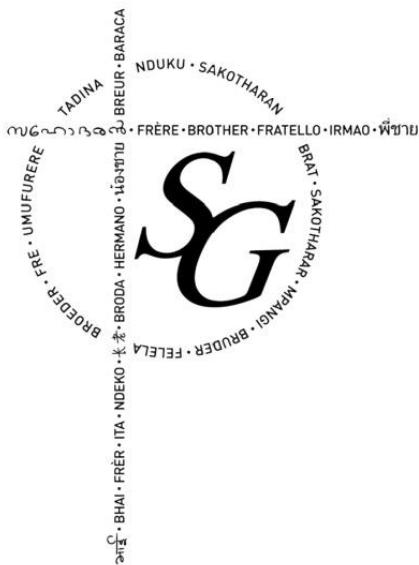
We all knew that Bro. Richard was diabetic. On several occasions he suffered acute attacks which sometimes led to a comatic state. He was concerned about the Congregation, but he always recognized its unwavering support in his life.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, when a loved one leaves us, life seems less beautiful and rather cruel. Yet in the dark night of the striking death hides a secret, a glimmer. A soft light that you have to know how to detect. A light full of hope. A light that shows us that our late loved ones live today in a more beautiful world, in the paradise of origins.

Our dear late Brother Richard, elected by God and Mary, is living his new life in a wonderful world. From heaven, he knows that the

farewell of his dear and near ones is only a "goodbye". His greatest happiness today is to be received by his Master, the very one who gave him life and called him to the service of his brothers and sisters, in full incarnation.

Bro. Richard's death cannot erase all our wonderful memories and beautiful thoughts. We will remember the friendship we shared in St. Gabriel. You, Bro. Richard, will remain in our hearts forever. Thank you for the moments of life we shared together.



## Brother Pierre DUFIEF

May 2, 1931 - September 6, 2021



At the end of 2019, Brother Pierre had taken a decision, carefully thought out, after having spoken about it and having sought advice from wise persons. He decided not to undergo a major surgical intervention that doctors suggested him. When his decision was made, he clearly informed those who were accompanying him. It was a sort of second commitment for lifetime, which could be compared to his Religious one. He vowed to remain faithful to his choice, to go on doing everything as usual, to continue his services to the Community and to his Brothers until the end, because he felt that it was his mission here on earth.



His care to the land, his love for this land, his joy of gardening to produce good vegetables, fruit, his joy of participating in giving contentment to others, to help make the place clean and attractive to the passer-by or the visitor, all this nourished his very deep prayer life. He prayed in silence to obtain God's mercy for what in his life may or may not have been a counter-witness to his life as a Religious. He prayed to Mary and he would have liked to take part, this year, once more, in the Montfortian Pilgrimage to Lourdes which unfortunately had to be postponed to September.

Since last July or August, he had announced to those who visited

him and were close to him that he had very short time to live. When he would no longer make it to the garden and the greenhouse, it would be a matter of a few days for him.



What a sense of serenity before an impending and well-accepted death! What a peaceful appearance in the face of what he had feared because of his desire for perfection! He was aware of his weaknesses, which he considered serious breaches of his religious commitment!

Pierre was born on 2 May 1931 in Saint Urbain, Vendée, to a family that already had two children: a girl Simone and a boy and a boy called Marcel.

After Pierre's birth, the family welcomed another boy Emile and a girl, Monique. Pierre attended Primary School at Ste Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus in the neighbouring town of Le Perrier.

The family lived by the Christian faith and was opened to the calls of the Church. His elder sister Simone had already entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Mormaison when Brother André Corsini, the Vocation Promoter, came to the school of St Urbain. Pierre then heard the call to give his life to follow Christ.

In 1944, therefore, he entered the Minor Juniorate, at La Tremblaie, then in 1948 he continued his path towards Religious Life with the Postulancy and then with the Novitiate at Boistissandeau and it was there that he took his First Vows on September 8, 1950.

He was not supposed to be a teacher. Therefore, he was sent to Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre at the Mother House as an "Serving

Brother". He lived there and learnt about the various aspects of the services to be rendered by these brothers who were called "Serving Brothers." After his military service in Pontoise in 1953, he went back to Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre but this time, at Saint-Gabriel Boarding School where, for 5 years, he worked in the shoe workshop while following training courses in factories, in Cholet Region. He passed the Certificate of Professional Capacity (CPC) as a Shoes machinist.

From 1958 to 1964, he served in important houses of the Congregation: La Mothe-Achard for 4 years, La Garde in Avrillé for one year, La Tremblaie for one year, as well. Then, he was in Chantonnay for 4 years, after the renewal period of the Second Novitiate, in Rome, he was transferred to La Peyrouse and again to the Mother House.

In 1970 he went to La Mothe-Achard to work on the farm and in the orchard. It is there that, for 22 years, he lived in full communion with the earth and totally dedicated himself to the service of the Congregation through the work of his hands. He used to go to the MNI (National Interest Market) in Nantes once or twice a week depending on the season to sell the products of the manor Notre-Dame de la Forêt. He worked tirelessly with his confreres to help the Province finance its works and major projects. At that time, the brothers who worked as "serving brothers" certainly deserved more consideration as they had little time for rest and holidays. Due to unfavorable weather conditions, climate variations and uncertain production, these working brothers had to constantly adapt to the situation.

From 1992 to 2010, he was a member of Bois-Bernard Community, at La Chapelle Basse-Mer where Pierre lived a totally dedicated life. It was a total change of environment and insertion in the

middle of a market garden. Bro. Pierre enjoyed the place: he was in charge of housekeeping and of the environment of the Community and soon he made several new friends of the earth. The Community was well integrated in this environment of market gardeners. The Brothers were fully recognized and welcomed a lot of visitors.

In 2010, when the Community was closed, Pierre was transferred to Community Montfort at La Hillière. Bro. Pierre received a hearty welcome there. Nature was largely present with a vegetable garden, fruit trees, a greenhouse. Other retired Brothers were involved in the outdoor work, so Bro. Pierre found an extraordinary field of action to share with his confreres. He quickly set to work providing his friends, his Brothers as well as a charity with products of the earth. With his former friends, *gardeners* from La Chapelle Basse-Mer, he could speak about their crops and share nice words.

For 11 years, he continued his meticulous work. When he felt his strengths decreasing, he began to about reducing his crops and works, but he could not help taking a walk in the garden and then, the call of the earth was too strong, he went on working hard. How many times was he told: "*Bro. Pierre, you stop when you want. You must think about your health. You know that the Community will provide for the needs of the Brothers even if they can no longer cultivate the garden. We are all united because we are all Brothers*". He would inevitably reply: "*I know! But I can't bear seeing the garden with*



*weeds, abandoned crops. I just do what I can. And I need it too. "What to do? What to say? This, maybe: "Bro. Pierre you have no explanation to give when you stop but if you want, and can continue, and it is beneficial for your health, please go on!"*

He, then, mentioned the main issue: the course of his cancer and the end of his life that was approaching. He was fully aware of his situation and spoke about it with a disconcerting serenity that masked an anxiety linked to the moral pressure he felt when time had come to meet with his God. He needed the forgiveness of his Superior, the support of his Brothers. He sought for encouragements and to be reassured about the faithfulness of life in the Communities where he had lived.

A few days before September 8, the anniversary of his First Profession, he joined all those who have left us. He can now sing with them to the Virgin Mary who intercedes with her Son for each of her beloved children. Bro. Pierre was one of those simple and caring children.

May the Lord welcome him as Bro. Pierre knew how to welcome us and may he find peace in the Lord to whom we entrust him today.

Bro. Claude Marsaud

## **TRIBUTES**

During my last visit to the Community of La Hillière Montfort, (August 20-22), I could meet Bro. Pierre for quite some time. He still mentioned some plans to visit his family, being aware that this might not be possible anymore. Aware of his health condition, however, he made a choice not to follow treatments that could have

improved his condition for a while. A choice he made, I think, until his last physical resources.

What I will remember about our Bro. Pierre is his spirit of service, with his temperament, in humble work, especially those in the vegetable garden. It was an important and rewarding way for him to "nurture the Community."

Another important point was his faithfulness in his relationship with his former neighbors of Bois Bernard.

Let us give thanks to the Lord for all that he has achieved in the service of his Brothers, working the land to earn his daily bread.

*Bro. Maurice HÉRAULT*

The group of 44 Brothers who took their First Vows on September 8, 1950, had chosen as motto of commitment: "SERVING!"



"If someone in this group has fully and humbly put into practice the motto, it is you, Bro. Pierre. For you, serving was obvious, it went without saying, it was the goal of your life, of your relationship with God, with your Brothers, with those of your environment: an instinctive service, always joyful, which manifested the kindness of your heart and the joy of making others happy..."

Your life you have lived it, with simplicity, to the full in various places during your life. How can we forget, among other things, your shortened nights, these long journeys, in the dark, from La Mothe-Achard, to be present at the opening of the MIN (Central Market), in Nantes, to sell the fruits of the estate of Notre Dame de la Forêt? The trip was done every week and twice a week, in high season ... You did not listen to your fatigue; you were only happy to fulfill the task that was requested from you ...



Later on, at Bois-Bernard, you were the one who knew how to give his time, always available for the service of the others, to help out, to give a hand..., Father Hubert, SMM, your great friend, your neighbors, the market gardeners, your Community, the Brothers who visited you, all of us have benefited from your fraternal welcome, from your

communicative joy, you enjoyed pleasing your visitors. When you left the place, you left a number of friends as well. You did not forget them. You have maintained these relationships, through visits, meetings, card games. Your simplicity had conquered those who lived around you. A strong testimony to a given Religious Life. A testimony that you have given until the end, beyond your strengths, for the service of your Brothers, at La Hillière, anxious to offer them the best products from your garden ...

For you, as for Marthe Robin, from whom I borrow the formula:  
"To follow Jesus, to carry his cross, does not mean to put millstones  
at one's feet, but wings at one's hearts"

Heartfelt thanks, Bro. Pierre.

*Brother Jean FOUCHER*

Bro. Pierre was a great worker, a man of service. His stay at the farm of La Mothe-Achard had been very positive for him, as well as his presence in the Community of La Chapelle Basse-Mer which gave him enough freedom to flourish and meet people. Pierre did not have his tongue in his pocket. When he disagreed, he knew how to say it loud and clear... At La Hillière, he had found a certain "joie de vivre". He has spent 11 years there which proves it if need be. In the garden, he had men of peace around him and he could put into practice the experience acquired in the orchards of the estate of La Mothe-Achard. It has been, for him, a happy and blessed period in his life.

I met him, by chance, during my last visit to La Hillière on July 8, 2021. I was on my way to the cemetery for a last visit, when in one of the alleys, I met Bro. Pierre who was taking his evening walk. He looked healthy and in good shape, as I had always known him. As he liked to talk, we began sharing some news. But quickly, he came to speak about his health condition. He told me plainly: "In three month-time from now on, I will be in the cemetery." Taken aback by his words, I thought that it was not possible. Pierre didn't look like a sick person. He then explained to me that he had refused the treatment offered to him because he had seen someone in his family suffer martyrdom after having undergone such an intervention. Pierre had made the decision to let the disease take its course rather than suffer dreadfully. He spoke with detachment

about his death. He had made a choice and he fully assumed it. Humanly, it was unimaginable and incomprehensible to look death in the face like that, coldly! We all know we are going to die someday. Pierre knew that for him that day was near. I was deeply touched by what he told me. Such an attitude can only be explained by a great inner strength. Pierre did not express himself much about his spiritual life. He was a man of action rather than an abstract thinker. But I cannot imagine such a lucidity without an inner light and strength which at this critical moment in his life enabled him to live, at least apparently, in peace and surrender to the will of God. What a conversion for this man who did not change his mind so easily! The peace that comes from faith in an “unmistakable Father”.

May our Brother Pierre rest in the peace of the Lord, he has served to the best of his ability throughout his life.

*Bro. Georges Le Vern*



Pierre was a friend of mine. His greeting was warm when I went to meet him in his garden. It was there that he was fully himself. Without any vanity, he was rightly proud of what he produced, and he appreciated the visits, that we spent time with him, to chat, to share the day-to-day news. His vegetables went to his Community, of course, but he also delivered them to an Association in Nantes, that helped the poorest among the poor. It was his discreet "good deed".

I had met Pierre at the Chapelle-Basse-Mer at the Community of Bois-Bernard, where I went quite frequently. If Pierre was in the garden, he would invite me to come and see him before leaving the place. He would then prepare a basket of vegetables or fruit, delicious cherries which he was very happy to offer to the Brothers of the Provincial House. His smile was the icing on the cake!

It was a blessing that he could work in his dear garden almost to the end without suffering the limits of old age. May he find some flowerbeds to cultivate in gardeners' paradise.

*Bro. Bernard MOREAU*

I got to know Bro. Pierre quite well, because we were of the same batch at the Novitiate. He was a kind and helpful Brother, always ready to joke. I came to France on vacation in Pornic and he kindly accompanied me on a tour of the countryside around Nantes. He explained everything to me with great culture and precision. I have sweet and fraternal memories of him.

Bro. Pierre, rest in peace.

*Bro. Franco CARATELLI*

My name is Audrey. I am a member of the staff of "Saint-Gabriel Rest Home", La Hillière. After the death of my great friend Bro. Pierre Le Floc'h, I used to go and pray at the cemetery. In no time, Bro. Pierre Dufief and I got to know each other. I remembered that he told me: "My name is Pierre!" What a coincidence! I loved the man: nervous, talkative, absent-minded, kind, always smiling, and ready to help. Despite his health condition, Bro. Pierre was courageous. he loved to take care of the vegetable garden. He gave me a big pumpkin and other vegetables! I was not comfortable because these products were normally for the Brothers! In return, I gave him cakes, brioches ... Pierre spoke to me about the role and

the way the Brothers of St Gabriel are organized! He told me about his best memories! He explained to me the difference between "First Vows" and "Perpetual Vows". Quite interesting! Jokingly, I told him that I was going to register to become a "Brother"!

We talked about our projects. We were planning to go to Lourdes along with some other Brothers. But, because of Covid Virus and the successive lockdowns... everything had to be cancelled! We were disappointed! I saw him, for last time, last July. We were happy to meet again! But, Bro. Pierre made me sad when he told me that before the winter, he would no longer be on earth!

Pierre, your spirit has gone to the other side of the earth! My biggest regret is that I couldn't say goodbye and thank you while you were alive.

Rest in peace Brother Pierre!

*Audrey LEMARQUAND*

## THE FAMILY'S TRIBUTES

Confronted with the death of our "Uncle Pierre", we have various and very deep feelings.



Feeling of deep sympathy for your Congregation that sees one of its members disappear. We are feeling sad because of the departure of a family member. We feel helpless in front of the distress of a brother and a sister-in-law. We have a feeling of deep calm knowing quite well that where you are, Uncle, there is no more suffering.

Pierre, "Uncle Pierre", as we all used to call you, you leave behind great and sweet memories of our

family meetings, for example, when you turned 60 at La Mothe-Achard. You put the small dishes in the large ones and added a lot of attention: A flower for each mother present on Mother's Day, a plate of freshly picked strawberries for your grand-nieces. What an unforgettable day we had! You were always present to share the important moments of our lives: baptisms, communions, wedding anniversaries and so many other events. Benevolent spectator of our fantasies during these events, we will remember your bright smile. We will always remember him as a kind uncle.

Have a nice journey!

*Your nephews, nieces, grand-nephews and grand-nieces*

Brother Pierre's life, 90 years on earth!

Pierre was born in Saint-Urbain in Vendée, on a farm called Joselin. In this farm lived the two brothers, Jean and Marcel, their wives and their children: thirteen people in all, living a community life! But the children grew up, so the family had to split. Marcel decided to build a house at Le Perrier. It was barely finished when he moved therein, in September 1932. Pierre was one and a half year old when his father, Marcel, a very courageous man, caught a cold and died on December 4, 1932, at the age of 36. Pierre was too young. He did not know his father, but he grew up with his mother, his brothers, and his sisters. At the age of 7, Pierre went to Sainte Thérèse School, at Le Perrier, with his wooden shoes. For four years, he had to walk 2.3 km in the morning and the same distance in the evening to get to school. At the age of 11, he left for Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, in Vendée.

Armed with his qualifications, he trained his students in the shoe-making trade. Then, he was appointed to the farm of the Brothers

at La Mothe-Achard, where he raised a breed of cows called "Blondes d'Aquitaine". He cultivated several hectares of apples with 2 other Brothers. Pierre was in charge of plucking the fruits and to keep them in cold storage rooms in order to be able to sell apples all year round. Pierre also had a passion for bees. He loved collecting honey. Pierre turned into a mobile fruit trader. With his truck, he went to various places to sell the apples he had harvested. Pierre also had the touch of a very beautiful writing.

Pierre retired at the age of 60. He was appointed to Bois Bernard Community, with an environment of market gardeners. There he learned a lot and enriched the number of his friends. He had friends everywhere. After spending several years at Bois Bernard, he returned to La Hillière near Nantes where he could take care of the gardens and the lawns. A few years later, Pierre, exhausted by old age, fell ill and ended his life at the Brétécé clinic in Nantes.

The family is grateful to all those who have known Bro. Pierre and those who are accompanying him today: Brother Armand, Superior of the Community, Brother Christian and all the others, ...

*Mr. Emile DUFIEF (brother of Bro. Pierre)*



*«After acceptance  
It's the abandonment  
Which is my daily concern:  
May your will be done Lord!»*

Bro. Pierre Dufief

## **Brother Pierre GUIMARD**

**August 29, 1927 - September 11, 2021**



Born in 1927 in Frossay, Pierre was the eldest of a family of 7 children. His father, a farmer was involved in the agricultural community and in his parish. Very pious, the mother was attentive to the education of her children.

In 1927, the Frossay Primary School run by the Brothers provided Saint-Gabriel with 4 pupils including Paul Lefort, Gabriel Foucher, Jean Caillaud and Pierre Guimard. Two others joined the Seminary.

From 1939 to 1944, war was raging. In Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, even if the family was far away and life in a hostel was demanding, Pierre was happy because his group was lively and the atmosphere religious. In 1944, he joined the Novitiate, at Le Boistissandeau, in Ardelay, not far from Les Herbiers. News from his family were very rare, between September 1944 and May 1945, he only received two telegrams from the Red Cross. On April 28, 1945, no family member was able to attend his taking of the Habit. Pierre took his First Vows on September 8, 1946.

From 1947 to 1953, he spent six excellent years teaching at the Minor Seminary of Conflans, at the confluence of the rivers Oise and Seine. For him, it had been a real opening onto the life of the Church in France and in the world because he could interact with many important persons there. In 1953, the Brothers left the Minor Seminary at the request of the Superiors of Saint-Gabriel.

From 1953 to 1973, apart from a stay in the Sanatorium for the Clergy, in Thorenc, he had a very active and demanding life in Bagneux: teacher, participation in religious activities, supervision of students outside their classrooms and in the dormitories, sports activities, camps.

From 1973 to 1988, in Saint-Blaise's Lower Secondary School, in Vertou, Pierre was no longer a teacher. He was the General Supervisor. He organized the classes, the teachers' timetables, supervised the students outside the classrooms, etc. He was also involved with first aid workers, the Mayor of Vertou awarded him the Town Medal.

One of his greatest successes in Saint-Blaise's was the organization of Catechesis. Pierre admitted, "I believe that at the best moments, we were from 70 to 80 people at the service of the youngsters."

From 1988 to 1993, a retiree at Saint-Joseph's Lower Secondary School in Parthenay, he welcomed the visitors. He gave a hand to the Secretariat, managed the catering service, helped parents and students for Catechesis. He participated in the parish liturgical teams and in the Secretariat of the CCFD (Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development).

From 1993 to 1999, he was transferred to La Hillière Infirmary at Thouaré-sur-Loire. Bro. Pierre confessed: "The proposal of being the Bursar of the Infirmary has been a great surprise for me. It meant management, accounting, catering, maintenance work, various purchases, an almost permanent presence..." He fulfilled his mission with great dedication!

From 1999 to 2005, at the Provincial House, 2, Côte Saint-Sébastien in Nantes, he welcomed visitors, went shopping... For 5 years, Bro. Pierre animated a group of MCR: (Movement of

Retired Christians) in the parish of Saint-Sébastien.

From 2005 to 2018, he was in Community at La Pamprie, not very far from Saint-Gabriel Rest Home. Bro. Pierre appreciated being in contact with Saint-Gabriel Home, he attended Mass there, daily.

In 2018, he was admitted definitively, in the Infirmary. The Brothers and the Staff were full of appreciation for him.

THANK YOU, LORD, for this beautiful life!

Bro. André TERRIEN

## TRIBUTES

Thank you for having informed me about Bro. Pierre's death. I am touched by the fact that you have thought of informing me. I have very vivid memories of Bro. Pierre. His stern face as the General Supervisor at Saint-Blaise's School, contrasted with his smiles in personal relationship, in turn distant and near. I have always enjoyed seeing him, from time to time, and I felt that this pleasure was shared. I will not be able to join you for the Religious Celebration, but I will be united to you, and I will celebrate a Mass for him. Very fraternally.

*Fr. François RENAUD, Vicar General, Diocese of Nantes.*

Bro. Pierre, as the Bursar of the Infirmary at La Hillière, was not a man to put himself forward. He was fulfilling his role to the best of his capacities. He had started using computers to keep track of household finances. Keeping the accounts in order, despite the complexity of the structure, was not a problem for him because he followed everything very carefully. There was no Secretary in those days. He was finding that all these responsibilities were very

demanding. He was aware that things would not be easier in the future, wisely, he requested to be relieved of a mission, which had become too heavy for his shoulders, considering his age.

In 1999, he joined the Community of the Provincial House where he was entrusted with the role of steward. It consisted of going shopping in consultation with the cook. It was quite new for Pierre, who until then hadn't had much opportunity to take care of housekeeping, to prepare the menus and buy what was needed, accordingly. He accepted the proposal because there was a need and a service to be rendered. His understanding with the cook was excellent because Pierre was calm and flexible. He never tried to complicate what was simple but rather to make simple what was a little complicated. Pierre was a man of service and the service had to be well done. This was his point of honour. With him, everything was always perfectly done.

Bro. Pierre was a man who did not make much noise. He spoke in a soft voice that made peace around him. He knew how to be patient. However, I have the impression that it was not natural for him because he was rather anxious by nature. Self-control, he knew what it meant, and he practiced it every day. In Community, he was a confrere whom it was easy to live with. Always present, whether at prayer or at Community meetings, he remained discreet and did not seek to appear. He was quite reserved in public which didn't prevent him from expressing his thoughts and convictions. His long experience in various environments and missions, had made a wise man of him, with sure and balanced judgment on people and things. In meetings, he gave his point of view, without ever wanting to impose his opinion. We felt in him a great depth of soul and thought that allowed him to live his Religious and Spiritual Life with coherence. His words had weight.

I met Bro. Pierre for the last time in July 2021. He was bedridden. He had become dependent. He, the man who had always served, now needed to be served. Even if he did not say anything about it, he must have suffered a lot, for sure. He suffered even more from the load he placed on others, but he was very courageous, trying to cope with his handicap as well as he could or at least accept it, and being careful not to disturb others too much. Always that great delicacy which was one of the traits of his character. He knew he was badly ill but didn't seem worried about the future.

His relative loneliness and inactivity gave him time to pray, to reflect and strengthen his faith in a good and merciful Father who would welcome him when time would come.

“Thy will be done and not mine” (Lk 22:42).

May the Lord God, Father of mercy and tenderness, grant our Brother Pierre, the eternal reward he has well deserved.

*Bro. Georges LE VERN*

Dear Uncle Pierre,

Thank you for what you have been! You were a righteous man and a humble soul that served your colleagues without any pretension.

You preferred to be second rather than first... You were a man with a great capacity for listening, attentive to others: you followed the path of life of all your dear and near ones: nephews and nieces... with great attention.

For your brothers and sisters, you were an elder brother. You had left our home of Ville-Bessac, too early. You came back home from the boarding school only during summer vacation. For some of them, you were a Godfather, a man of comfort, a confidant, tolerant, very open to difference...

You were generous with us: we remember these subscriptions to Fripounet, Formule 1 magazines..., beautiful and lasting gifts which wonderfully occupied our free time and which shaped our imagination and our culture, these beautiful and old school books that you offered us and which illustrated our history and geography notebooks.

You were a man of conviction, moderate, not exuberant, with these anecdotes about your professional life, reported during family meals and those bursts of laughter which still resonate in our memories. You were interested in many things, politics, of course, the Church, Education, but also sports, local life...

You were a man of prayer, sober, rooted, even more in recent months, bedridden, suffering, drawing our whole family on the beads of your rosary...

Today you have joined all these Brothers, your predecessors, whom you visited in the cemetery of La Hillière, giving us, with a little pride, their names and their functions...

It is perhaps no coincidence that we celebrate your departure on a Marian feast day...

Thank you, Pierre, thank you, Uncle Pierre, for what you have been. Do not forget to pray for us!

*Mr Yves GUIMARD (Bro. Pierre's nephew)*



*Statue of the Virgin  
Mary in the park  
of the community at  
the Pamprie.*

## **Brother Pierre at Saint-Blaise's Middle School in Vertou**

1973-1988: 15 years at Saint-Blaise's Middle School where the Brothers had been present since 1961. With the Board of Managers, Bro Pierre Guimard participated in the smooth running of the life of this large Institution (about one thousand students in the 1980s). One of his responsibilities was to organize the timetables of the staff.

At a time when computer software was not known, he devoted several weeks to it in July and August, so that at the start of the school year, each one of the 80 teachers and each one of the 40 classes could benefit from a weekly schedule, judiciously distributed, but with multiple constraints and data which had to be considered and which he mastered perfectly well. He was an expert in the field, not compromising on the best interests of the students in the decisions to be made regarding their schedule and their students' way of living.



Responsible for school life, the supervision of students, their support for studies or during the absences of teachers, he brought his skills and know-how so that everyone could have the best possible conditions. Applying for a post, in this context, I met Pierre for the first time in 1974. He was not fond of long speeches, and I quickly found myself in front of the students.

A former French teacher of the school, Gabrielle Bouchaud, testifies: *"Bro. Pierre was, for many years, a prominent figure at Saint-Blaise's and we have all kept the memory of his limitless dedication to the school. However, he did not have the easiest task: responsible for the discipline, it was up to him to organize the unforeseen: replacing the late or sick teacher; settle a dispute between students on the playground... He was always there where someone was needed but he always acted with discretion. If sometimes he seemed distant, not very talkative, he also knew how to be friendly, warm, benevolent... He was especially concerned with the well-being of the students and teachers. Thank you, Brother Pierre, for everything you have given us."*



Bro. Pierre Guimard - on the left - during a meeting of the Pastoral Team at Saint-Blaise's, Vertou (Photo Ouest France Newspaper - 2013)

If he was not talkative, he was a very organized teacher and a competent trainer for supervisors and especially for me who was called to replace him in these tasks; he transmitted the spirit of the Gabrielite Educational Tradition: the primacy of the student's personal service, a very strong commitment to one's mission as an

educator, the transmission of structuring educational standards. He had a vision of the Gabrielite Education.

Each year, as a Brother of St. Gabriel, he was keen to initiate Form 5 students to religious culture, in particular to the discovery of the Acts of the Apostles.

*The last few years at Saint-Blaise's, after having learnt using computers, he was associated with the bursary and the accounts for the catering service. His rigor and his concern for good management control have made it possible to never stray from the provisional budget allocated to this sector. Bro. Pierre was also involved in the Sports Association of the School as expressed by Mr. Jean-Yves Humeau, former teacher of Physical and Sports Training: "I have a very strong thought for Bro. Pierre and sweet memories of the time spent together, especially for Saint-Blaise's Sports Association of which he was the treasurer. He was our Pierre with two faces: serious in his role and smiling and relaxed otherwise... "*

He represented our School on the Municipal Boards for School and Sports Transportation of the students. He successfully defended the interests of the students of the Catholic Schools so that they could be on par with the ones of the Government Schools. Faithful to his commitment, he was appointed to another mission, but remained attached to Vertou. We have always been in contact for the last thirty years. We could share our sweet memories, once again, a few weeks back.

He leaves the memory of a demanding, very devoted educator, at the service of the students and their families, never calculating his time. A Religious that was very faithful to prayers and anxious to lead a very sober life following the Founder St. Louis-Marie

Grignion de Montfort, a citizen interested in politics, a man with a large culture thanks to his passion for reading on social issues.

*Farewell Bro. PIERRE!*

*Mr. Philippe DOUILlard,*

*former Manager in Education at Saint-Blaise's School, Vertou.*



*Community of the Pamprie at Thouaré-sur-Loire  
where Bro. Pierre lived from 2005 to 2018.*

## **Brother Pierre PENISSON**

**April 18, 1931 - October 14, 2021**



On July 3, 1996, Mgr. Bernard PANAFIEU, Archbishop of Marseilles addressed Brother Pierre in these terms: *"Brother Pierre, when I look at your life, I discover a double fidelity. The first is loyalty - I would even say passion – for the Congregation to which you belong and the second is for Catholic Education. In passion, there can be a little impatience..."*

*because in difficult times, with temper taking over, you break out a bit. To Parents, educators and pedagogues, today, is a wonderful task that you have accomplished with so much passion and so much talent."*

These words from the Archbishop of Marseilles aptly sum up the richness of the personality of the one who has just left us.

Pierre was born in Curzon, Vendée, on April 18, 1931, in a farmers' family. The eldest of 4 children, his two brothers and his sister have passed away. At the end of the war, he entered the Juniorate of La Tremblaie.

*"A painful but desired separation"* he wrote. In September 1948, he joined the Novitiate of Boistissandeau. When he took the habit, he received the religious name of *"Brother Christophe-Joseph"*. He took his First Vows on September 8, 1950.

After retaking his Baccalaureate exam, he was appointed assistant teacher to the Brothers' School at Les Essarts. Following his two-year military service at Rochefort-sur-Mer as a Staff Sergeant in

the Air Force, he taught successively at Aizenay (1956), then Brétignolles (1956-1958). He, then, took his Final on Assumption Day in 1958. He was appointed as a French and History Teacher to the Major Juniorate of Saint-Laurent. He was unilaterally transferred to Saint-Gabriel Boarding School, where he experienced failure because as he said later, "The level was too high for me, and I have struggled for a whole year".

In 1961, he continued his teaching career at Saint-Joseph's Lower Sec. Sch. at Tauves. He found there happiness and serenity in a rural and mountainous Auvergne which he had to leave unwillingly in 1969 **after serving as Headmaster for the last two years.**



*Saint-Joseph boarding school at Tauves / May 1964*

Looking back at Bro. Pierre's life, we can notice that from 1969, he was 38 years old, another very different stage began for him, that of Study Stage: Religious Sciences in Rome, Pedagogy at the Catholic Institute in Paris, studies at the University of La Sorbonne (Paris) and Aix. In 1974 he, finally, reached his full potential. He

became a librarian teacher and formator at the Pedagogical Training Centre (PTC), at Marseilles, a post he held for 22 years until 1996, working for the training of more than 650 students. Testifying to a certain erudition regarding the history of the Great Pedagogues, he organized several Seminars focused on the relations between Religion and Education. In her opening address, when Bro. Pierre left the Pedagogical Centre, the Director said: *"How many holy angers, Pierre, to defend your PTC? What humour! What hope! And what Faith! You have lived and transmitted the four objectives that are the basis of the training of teachers: knowledge, know-how, know-to-be, know-to-become..."*

After such an active life and having given oneself wholeheartedly, we understand that the retirement age has been a real shift for Pierre.



*Bro. Pierre during an encounter with the Montfortian Family*

In 1996, he joined the Community of Montreuil-Juigné near Angers. The Provincial Superior entrusted him with a new mission: To work on the Gabrielite Educational Charism for the benefit of the Tutelle, a Network of schools and Institutions sharing the spirit of the Brothers of St. Gabriel. His passion for the history of Fr. de Montfort and the educational tradition of the Congregation, the training received during International Montfortian encounters animated by Fr. PEROUAS, a Montfortian historian, had well equipped him for such a mission. Pierre was hardworking. He spent much time to transmit the Gabrielite Educational Charism to the laity, for example on the Family Spirit of the Brothers in the small rural schools. The closure of the Community of Montreuil-Juigné, in 2008, made him suffer a lot. He was transferred to the Community of Fours-à-Chaux (Angers) and confided: "*I remember these words of the poet Lamartine: ‘Can we never, on the ocean of ages, drop anchor for just one day?’ For me, the Community is a living home where I have my ties and my securities, my stability, and my little moments of happiness... So, when I must leave, I feel hurt. Hope in suffering is not easy.*"

In February 2018, his state of health deteriorating, he was admitted to St. Gabriel Rest Home, at La Hillière. On Thursday, October 14, during lunch, after having participated in the Mass with his Confreres, he passed away suddenly because of a disorder of swallowing.

In Bro. Pierre's life, the Religious and the teaching vocations have always been closely intertwined. Early, he became aware that teaching means competence to be built up in the long run. Pierre had a degree in modern literature from La Sorbonne University and a master's degree from the University of Aix-Marseille. His thesis was entitled: "*Suspense in the movies*". He had a taste for writing. His passion for History, for Christian Culture and Education added

to his literary talent had been noticed by a Professor of the Catholic University of Angers, who requested him to become a Member of the Scientific Committee that decided to embark on a somewhat crazy adventure of a French-Speaking Dictionary of the Christian Education. We can hardly imagine the amount of energy and time spent writing this monumental 850-page book of which Bro. Pierre was rightly proud.

In 1971, he also wrote a 90-page monograph recounting a century of existence of Saint-Joseph's Boarding School of Tauves in which he listed the 61 Brothers (including Rev. Bro. Martial, former Superior General) and the 17 priests recruited within this Institution.

A valued speaker in various meetings of the Montfortian Family, he also wrote an article in the Dictionary of Montfortian Spirituality: "*Jesus Living in Mary*".

During his retirement, Bro. Pierre liked to take his time to cook very good dishes for the greatest joy of his confreres and his own pleasure in tasting them. He was a good cook and a gourmet. To cheer up his Brothers' birthdays, he would happily compose a song that brightened up the end of the festive meal.

In 2000, during the national meeting of the Brothers, he wrote a hymn to Hope with this last verses:

*"A seed that dies becomes a plant.  
We will be the seeds of wheat  
By the life which grows anew,  
our granaries will be filled.*

*Hope is a mystery  
bearing much fruit  
Sing to God, the old Earth,  
Sing, today's world!"*

And, to conclude, let us remember what he wrote: "*'All is grace', such is the last word of the little country parish priest in one of Bernanos' novels, and it is also mine because the word 'Grace' is synonymous with 'Thank!'. All is grace. Deo gratias! and Magnificat!*"

Bro. Pierre, A-Dieu, see you soon in God. We know that you are now as close as possible to Him, and we are convinced that, from now on, the "*Paradise*" is even more beautiful!

*Brother Christian BIZON*

## **Testimonies**

Along the way, we can meet people whom we call: "*Nice people*", gifts that God has given us. They leave a mark of wonder, admiration, affection, deep within us. When you think of them, you automatically smile, your heart filled with happiness and so many fond memories. When you think of them... it makes you good!

Pierre was a wonderful gift. Pierre "is" a magnificent gift! I have so many sweet memories of him, especially at CFP (Pedagogical Formation Centre) in Marseilles, when I was a student there, when I was a speaker, when we met just on behalf of friendship. Always available, at any time. What a passion to teach us! What concern for each individual student! What memorable moments organized

to live out deep, sympathetic encounters, rich in discoveries of the places that you loved so much! What a deep love for the Lord that you really couldn't hide! And even when certain people made you moan a little, you quickly regained humour and tenderness that always gave you that face of infinite love for all of us.

Pierre, my bouquet of gratitude is immense: Yes, let me say THANK YOU, once again, and at the same time I address it to the Lord, because I know that you have always let Him pass first.

Therefore, let me tell you A-Dieu, see you in the Lord God, knowing that you are now as close as possible to Him, convinced that from now on "heaven" is even more beautiful.

*Mrs. Danielle Jovine-Sciaky*

I will only say a few words about our Brother Pierre. His long life has been that of an enthusiast who could not leave anyone indifferent. I will only point out a few aspects of his personality that were important to me.

His origins in Vendée: Curzon, "*Seaport of the Gulf of Picton*" says the geographer; "*Seat of an archpriest in the Middle Ages*" completes the historian! Pierre loved to go back there, see its marshes and salt meadows, its church, and its crypt, and immerse himself in the history of his family!

The "man of letters". Historian, informed reader, master of prosody, Pierre was not one of those who want to hide their talents! He knew to make good use of them for his own pleasure and others' as well, his Confrères in particular! His poetic productions were expected in many circumstances: birthdays, special feasts and religious celebrations... but not only! He was, on these occasions, a "living spectacle"! He did not hate that. We, sometimes, referred

to a famous author of our literary heritage, whom we study in schools and who said: "*For laughing is proper to the man*"!



*Bro. Michel Bernard and Bro. Pierre*

But he took his inspiration, also in the Olympus not of gods but of poets. And Charles Péguy - whom he admired so much! – was the first of them. Here is a good example: Pierre was a teacher at the Major Juniorate of Saint-Laurent-sur Sèvre. A pilgrimage, at night (!), partly on foot, during the Marian Year (1958) was organized on December 8, to the

shrine of Notre-Dame des Gardes, some twenty kilometres away from Saint-Laurent. Pierre could not think but of Péguy and his pilgrimage to Chartres and his '*Presentation of Beauce to Notre-Dame de Chartres*' which became: '*Presentation of the Juniorate to Notre-Dame des Gardes*'.

*Listen :*

*And here are our voices tonight on the roads*

*And our hearts gathered in the same prayer*

*And our common souls walking towards our Mother*

*And our weariness, and our common worries.*

*And:*

*We were born for you in the land of Vendée,*

*In the shadow of steeples full of pious Angelus.*

*The legacy of faith bequeathed by our ancestors*

*Marked the Marsh, the Hedged Farmland and the Plain.*

The world of Education was his privileged professional domain. Formator at PFC in Marseilles, in contact with the “day-to-day realities of the schools”, researcher in Sciences of Education, he was ideally right for participating in the design and writing of the “Dictionary of the History of the French-speaking Christian Education” under the direction of Professor Guy AVANZINI. The field of exploration was vast... Pierre remembered that I was in Haiti and that I was teaching French literature in one of the Lower Secondary Schools run by the Canadian Brothers. The history of Haiti is, as we know, part of the history of France. French language remains the language of education and culture. At Pierre's request, I could present, for the Dictionary, the work of a new Congregation, the "Little Sisters of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus" mainly oriented towards the rural world. After a few years, there will also be the “Little Brothers”. These nuns received from their founder, Father Farnese, a Haitian priest, the mission “to go to

remote places to evangelize, educate, work with the peasants, in order to enhance the work in the fields"; what he called "Fruitful Education"! These Communities and the Schools they open are aimed at giving its redemptive value to the work of the "earth" ... For this note which honours Haiti, thank you, Pierre.

The Montfortian Religious: Pierre was completely immersed in the Montfortian Family. His master – like for many others, it is true! - was Fr. PÉROUAS, smm. He spoke about him with veneration. He had attended almost all his "Montfortian Encounters", in France, Italy, Germany where we were together. On July 14, 1989, at this bicentenary (of the French Revolution) we played a few revolutionary skits, written by you! In one of them there were, of course, those heroes of Vendée. Those of Montfort!

Pierre, you loved life so much that you were able to extend it beyond the eighty years of the Psalm! However, the hour had come... and, suddenly, you left... There is nothing to regret: the life of a Brother of St. Gabriel, you knew how to live it at the full and share it with others. Rest in Peace and intercede for us!

*Bro. Michel BERNARD  
Community of Angers, rue Desjardins*

When Bro. Pierre Pénisson arrived in the Community of Marseilles, he was not supposed to get involved in Special Education. At the request of the Parish Priest of Bauduen (Var), Fr. DEMANGE, a Dominican, the Provincial Superior of the Province of Poitiers entrusted Pierre with a mission in this small village clinging to the hill, on the shores of the future lake of Sainte-Croix on the Verdon, at the edge of the Alps of Haute-Provence. Fr. Demange used to preach the annual retreat to the Brothers. He

informed the Provincial of his plan to open a Welcome Home for young people passing through or in recollection, in his parish of Haut-Var. Therefore, he was interested in having the help of a Brother. The project was daring, the site exceptional. This region had been disrupted by the construction of a dam which required the destruction of the neighbouring village of Salles sur Verdon (same parish) and the flooding of the entire valley at the exit of the gorges. The village had to be rebuilt higher in the valley. It was a heartbreak for the inhabitants who had to leave their ancestral homes and rebury their dead in a new cemetery. Pierre witnessed the anguish and drama of the moment. Deeply moved, he participated in the transfer of liturgical objects to the new church before the blasting of the old one, in the valley.

Events calmed down and life resumed. Pierre was happy to tell how the elders of the village, learning that he was from Vendée, greeted him with a vibrant: "Long live Clémenceau, sir". In fact, "The Vendean Tiger, Clémenceau" had been elected Member of the Parliament in the Var.

Pierre used to go to Bauduen every weekend. The Brothers of the Community were happy to accompany and help him in the restoration of the large building: interior fittings, painting, electricity, without forgetting the supply of wood...

Bro. Pierre gave this project a Montfortian dimension. He called on the Daughters of Wisdom who opened a Community in Les Salles and remained there for several years. One of them was a nurse, which made the joy of the local population, isolated from any Relief Centre. The Montfort Missionaries ensured, in summer, the service of the parish and its three annexes.

Groups came to stay. The Scouts of Bro. Paul LANDREAU came to improve the environment. The choir of young blind students, animated the Sunday masses, twice, and gave a concert. Deaf youngsters stayed there as well. Pierre brought his students there; the FISAF (Federation for the Formation of Deaf and Blind Teachers) formation team for the hearing-impaired organized



*Photo taken on July 3, 1996, when Bishop Panafieu thanked Bro. Pierre for his mission at the Pedagogical Training Centre of Marseilles.*

summer Seminars there... However, the time of trial came: Finance was probably no stranger to it. Those in charge slipped away, and the Centre had to close down. It was a blow for Pierre... The house became the public school of the village because the new school, by the lake, was suddenly “grazed”, in the middle of the night, by a boulder. The Sisters went on with their beautiful mission among the local population and finally had to leave too. The beautiful projects had lived ... Bauduen, Les Salles ... are now modern Leisure Centres. But you have to live.

As soon as he arrived in Marseilles, Bro. Pierre was keen to find a job. He "had some hard time"! He accepted a few hours of supervision at the Institute for the Blind-Dassy, in the evening, on returning from Aix. He had fond memories of this brief contact with the young visual-impaired and the alumni remember him positively too.

He willingly rendered service to the Community and got involved in Saint-Philippe Parish. Having got a master's degree with a thesis entitled "Suspense in the movies", he joined the Centre for Pedagogical Formation of Catholic Education of the Diocese of Marseilles. He devoted himself passionately to his mission and to his students.

Pierre was a genuine writer and a poet! In addition to his humorous songs, we owe him, among other things, the historical brochure: "Saint-Joseph's Boarding School" at Tauves (63) in which he lists the 61 Brothers (including Reverend Bro. Martial, former Superior General) and the 17 priests recruited at Tauves or former students of the school.

*Bro. Joël DUCHAMP*

Pierre, for the former students of what was then called the CFP (Training Centre for Teachers), was a unique and unforgettable character. Each one of these former students, according to me, could recall their own amused, loving, grateful and nostalgic memories. Pierre was a pioneer, one of those who believed, following Etienne Petit, in the adventure of initial training of Teachers, in the innovations of the 70s and 80s that he contributed so much to installing daily in educational practice: videos, photographs, (ah! the treasures of those boxes of slides!), computers, (with a touch of suspicion).

Documentation, in the sense of place as well as competence, he raised to the rank of Fine Arts. And enraging him by disturbing his organization was a sport that we all (formators as well as students), practiced with happiness.

Pierre was a scholar, being fascinated all his life, even after his departure from Saint Cassien, for what we then called the Great Educationalists. He participated in the work of Guy Avanzini's Group. Concerned about transmission, he had also co-authored a remarkable history of the CFP, intelligent, informed and... exact.

Pierre was modest, kind, and loyal. Beneath his grumpy, gruff, stubborn exterior (negotiating with him was part of the Vienna Congress and the Yalta Conference), angry, even tempestuous, (we sometimes provoked him voluntarily for the beauty of the scene), but soon we were able to find in him humanity, a deep, tolerant, and open faith.

His fidelity was an obvious fact: Fidelity to his Faith, to Catholic education, to his CFP and to CFPs in general, i. e. to a demanding and benevolent conception of the teachers' training. To his near and dear ones, to the Community of the Brothers of St. Gabriel, we express our grief and our friendship, as well as our grateful witness.

Pierre, from the kitchen of the Centre to the successive rooms dedicated to the Resource Centre, from the lecture rooms to the classrooms, you have sown abundantly and the harvest is not over yet!

*Mrs. Marie-Christine CALLERI  
Former Director of the CFP - Marseilles*

Brother Pierre, or Pierre as the students used to call him, without forgetting his religious commitment. How facetious we were! During the sketches that he asked us to produce from children's literature, in audio and slide montages, and the deadlines for returning the books to the Resource Centre... I admit, I still have a book stamped CFP with its card that I have never given back! When I look at the evolution of the initial training of the Primary School Teachers, I pay tribute to the pedagogical culture that Pierre transmitted to us. After his retirement, he was more than happy to be invited to the CFP Seminar in Montpellier and meet his fellow Formators. I still meet some students of our batch: when we rekindle our memories, Pierre is one of the formators who marked us and whose evocation is warm and joyful.

*Mrs Odile THUILIER,*

*Senior Lecturer at Aix-Marseilles University*

## **Token of Gratitude from the Family**

*Goodbye, Uncle Pierre,*



*We want to pay homage to you, Uncle Pierre. For us you are the Uncle of our family which is made up of three nieces and 6 grandchildren. In our family context, you have remained for us as a special example of the teacher of Christian schools.*

*You were the one we invited regularly, and you were never tired of telling us about your memories and the History of France, the 14-18 World War of which you*

*had extensive documentation. Every New Year you brought to each one of our children a book that you dedicated in your most beautiful handwriting. Lots of care and delicacy in this gift.*

*Our Arthur has inherited of the entire collection of the Kings of France. When you spoke of Joan of Arc or of the Lazy Kings you had a lot of stories to tell us.*

*Your teaching career has always been successful. You emphasized the importance of the training of teachers for which you devoted yourself totally. In your spare time, you were much interested in cinema, and you made a subject of research about it by writing a thesis on “Suspense in the movies”. Apart from the poems or songs that you composed; you devoted the first years of your retirement to working for the Historical Dictionary of French-speaking Christian Education published in 2001 with Guy Avanzini. This coordination and the work of certain articles is really a stream of the fundamental texts of the teaching of the Christian Schools throughout the world.*

*Pierre, you represent for us a man faithful to his commitments and very interested in our history. You will remain an example through your perseverance and dedication to education. We will continue to think of you and where you are, you will always be present by our side; we say goodbye to you, Uncle Pierre.*

*Mrs. Béatrice BRUNELLIÈRE, Bro. Pierre's niece*

I remember Christmas Holidays when, every year, you gave us a beautiful book and slipped a banknote inside as a Christmas Present. What a joy for us!

You were the Uncle who travelled a lot and sent us a nice postcards and brought back a souvenir from the countries you had visited.

You were the Uncle who always had lots of extraordinary things to say.

You were the learned Uncle who knew so much. You were Uncle, the teacher and I loved it.

You were the jovial Uncle who loved eating and drinking good wine. You loved life.

I still remember you, full of enthusiasm, showing me around the City of Marseilles that you loved so much.

Of course, you were Uncle Bro. Christophe who had chosen to dedicate his life to God and who never failed to pray for us.

You were a "character" and our own children loved you for that.

You will remain in our hearts, Uncle Pierre.

*Mrs Nathalie RUPPIN, Bro. Pierre's niece*

## **Farewell, Uncle Pierre**

*We often say when an old man dies,*

*That a library has burnt.*

*You started your life smoothly,*

*In Curzon where in the summer heat*

*Amid your brothers and sister*

*Sweating in the wheat fields,*

*With Carmen putting all your heart into it*

*But your way was not to be a farmer.*

*You took your Vows*

*Then went for Civil Service*

*Where you did your work without malice Starting in University*

*A less down to earth path*

*Pedagogy... your delight.*

*Then from Auvergne to Marseilles,*

*Montreuil-Juigné, Angers and Nantes,*

*Your welcoming Congregation*

*Was your family without equal.*

*We will no longer hear your stories,*

*During those Gargantuan meals,*

*When you told the Great History,*

*And its secrets like a poet.*

*You have gone to the stars*

*From where you send us your prayers*

*For your trip you made way under sail*

*Rest in peace dear Uncle Pierre!*

*Arthur, Bro. Pierre's grandnephew*



**Everything is grace**

**Because the word GRACE is synonymous with THANKS**

**Deo Gratias... Magnificat**

**Bro. Pierre PENISSON**

## **Brother George Joseph**

**November, 03, 1969 - September, 11, 2021**



Rev. Bro. Bala Showry - Provincial Superior of Hyderabad Province, Dear Rev. Father Bala Showry, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers from all our Provinces, Siblings and relations of Bro. George Joseph, esteemed members of Staff from far and near, especially those from St. Alphonsus High School, Montfort School, Nalgonda - all you friends and acquaintances of our deceased Brother, Montfortian Associates, My deepest condolences to One and All!!

### **A STAR VANISHED**

Unfortunate it is that! A shining light that dazzled in our Montfortian horizon has just eclipsed, leaving us all into a total state of shock and shambles. A luminous flame that brightened our paths someway or other has merged with eternity. His no more being with us is a reality we Montfortian, find so difficult to reconcile with! For us Brothers in the Pune province, Bro. George Joseph aged 52, was no longer deemed a promising star, but a shining STAR in the horizon of Montfortian Ministry and missionary dynamism. Today, you and I, all of us are caught agast grappling with this reality that this STAR has just vanished from our vicinity, leaving us to lurch in a state of despondency, in utter shock. We are today in a peculiar situation where we cannot bid adieu to the one we loved with the closeness we would have desired.

## **THE ROOT**

Bro. George was born on 03<sup>rd</sup> November, 1969 to Mrs Kathreena Joseph and Joseph V.T at Thodupudha. He has 7 siblings with 6 brothers and a sister.

## **RELIGIOUS JOURNEY**

After having come to know about the Brothers from Br. TV Joseph, recruited by Br. Jose Daniel, he joined the Juniorate in 1985 at St. Gabriel Juniorate to be guided by Br. Jose Kannunuza. Further he had the mentoring by Bro Thomas J. Kappan (1986- 88) while doing intermediate at Little Flower Junior College. After a year at SGTI Ramanthapur as a Pre-novice (88 - 89) under the guidance of Br. Thomas More, he had the community experience (89-90) at Montfort Bhavan with the then Provincial Superior Brother Varghese. The novice master Bro. CA James had an influence on him: not just for two years in the novitiate, but years to come after being professed as a Brother on 25th April 1992. He said no going back on the promise to God with the final commitment on 25th June 2000. He worked hard and proved to be an excellent student in the formative years in academics, co-curricular activities and lately, in counseling Psychology. A distinguished carrier spanning 29 years saw Brother George grow into a friendly teacher influencer, administrator and able animator taking his services to Snehanilayam, Suryapet, St. Alphonsus H.S Nalgonda, St. Josephs H.S, Goa, Montfort High School, Khammam, St. John's Higher Sec. School, Gannavaram, St. Joseph's High School, Kothagudem, Little Flower High School, Hyderabad, St. Gabriel's High School, Kazipet, Little Flower Jr. College, Uppal, Hyderabad, Montfort School Kadappa. The last assignment as Local Superior, correspondent and Principal began in June 2019 at St. Alphonsus

High School-Nalgonda. He was also the Correspondent of Montfort School, Nalgonda so him

winning many coveted awards as he guided the institutions to greater heights. He was also a Provincial Councilor making valuable suggestions and dutifully

and promptly preparing the minutes.

## **A DYNAMIC LEADER**

Bro. George Joseph's missionary work did reflect our founder Montfort's missionary zeal and dynamism. Like our Montfort, he chose to be an educator right from his early years. As an educator, he showed his mettle as a true leader, leading from the front. His very name meant innovation and creativity in all that he did, and he did leave a lasting impression wherever he worked as a dynamic Montfortian. He always maintained a very warm countenance, radiating positive energy of fellowship and solidarity, thus setting the world around him with a feel of fraternal love. Indeed, his life always reflected a high fund of energy, thus to enthuse the life of everyone around him. But, Alas! Today... We miss that warmth and fire amidst us. The void created by the sudden exit of our dear Brother is beyond our comprehension.... and our loss is just unfathomable.

## **TO ETERNAL REWARD**

After **being** diagnosed with COVID 19, Br. George was under the treatment of Dr. Osman with the support of his confreres at Little Flower community, Abids from the 2nd of September. He returned to St. Alphonsus on 9<sup>th</sup> saying he just needed some rest as he was fine. While still in isolation, he kept in touch with Brothers, friends and relatives virtually, telling everyone he was ok till the night of 10th September. Yet in the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> September, Brother

George was there on the bed motionless. On taking him to the hospital, doctors tried reviving him to no avail. The doctor said he had a cardiac arrest early in the morning. This is yet another reminder to us about the uncertainty of life. Death beckons us in unexpected ways. In spite of all our efforts, and aspirations, there will be a time, we will have to submit to His Will. Brother George fully committed himself to answer his call. He generously carried out his mission, living joyfully and cheering up those around him.

Having lived together for nine years in three different institutions, I have shared a deep Brotherly bond with Brother George. We learnt from each other, supporting each other without compromising on principles. We had our disagreements. He accepted my ‘nays’ with dignity knowing the reason behind them. I have seen his struggles and triumphs. The bond remained always and only two of us knew that. I got a WhatsApp message from my elder Brother today with the audience lifting hands to the query “How many of you want to go to heaven?” But to the question “Who will go first?” there was just silence. But in the silence of the night, Brother George lifted his soul. His movement to Nalgonda from Abids may have looked like a call of duty at St. Alphonsus. But it turned out to be a call of duty to heaven. The Word of GOD should both consoles us and enlightens us today, for Isaiah 57:1-2 says this: *The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous are taken away from calamity, and they enter into peace!!*

## **CONCLUSION**

In our deep sorrow, let us make an attempt to rejoice with this lone raised soul enjoying his bliss saying,

*o Kāvē done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me the victory prize of being put right with GOD which the lord, the righteous judge will give meō (Phil: 4:7-8).*

MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE!!

**Bro. Jaico Gervasis**

## **Brother Augustine M.**

**December 20, 1986 - November 11, 2021**



Dear Rev. Bro. Assistant General, Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel - Rome,

Dear Fathers and Sisters,

Dear parents, relatives, teachers, friends of Bro. Augustine,

Dear Montfortians from Trichy, Bengaluru, Yercaud and other Provinces.

Our prayerful and heartfelt condolences to you all.

Bro. Augustine was born on 20.12.1986 **of** Mr. Michael and Lourdumary **in** Susaiyappar Pattinam – Sivagangai District. He joined the Juniorate at Palakurichy in 2001. He took his First Vows on April 27, 2008, at Sitagarha. He did his college studies in St. Joseph's College - Trichy from 2009 to 2012. After one year in Ariyalur, he did his BRS (Bachelor's degree in Religious Science) in Vidya Deep College - Bengaluru. In 2016, he took his Perpetual Vows. In 2016-2018 he worked again in Ariyalur. From 2018 onwards, till yesterday, he was in Lourdu Annai School, Kanakkankuppam.

Bro. Augustine was a quite person, he loved to be alone, at times enjoyed the company of friends. He was a good teacher. He was coaching the handball team at Kanakkankuppam. End of October 2021, he was admitted in St. Joseph's Hospital at Tindivanam. In the investigation, it was found that he had been suffering from BP (Blood Pressure), high cholesterol and diabetics. The doctors advised him to be careful. Yesterday (30/11/2021) since he has not

turned up for lunch till 2 pm, Bro. Louis Alex knocked at his door. There was no answer. Through the window, the helper saw him lying in the restroom. Bro. Louis Alex informed me. Then I told them to break open the door. There, he was found without life.

Dear friends, God has His own plan. Let us ask for strength and courage to accept his plan. Dear Brother Augustine, we thank you for all that you have been to us as a Brother. In this short span of life, you have taught us to be a Brother to all and taught us to mend our way. May God grant you eternal Rest and Peace of mind and consolation to your parents, relatives, friends and to all of us.

May Bro. Augustine's Soul Rest in Peace.

## **Brother Benjamin Cherian**

**January, 23, 1939 – December, 09, 2021**



Your Grace Most. Rev. A.A.S. Duraraj, the Archbishop of Bhopal Archdiocese, Fr. Davis Parish Priest, of Poornodaya Parish and Rector of Samnavaya Seminary, Major Superiors, Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, relatives of Bro. Benjamin, Friends and sympathizers of our dear Brother Benjamin, good afternoon and deepest sympathies and condolences to one and all. We read in the Gospel of St. John 11:25-26, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, will live even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me, will never die. Yes, we believe that Bro. Benjamin has begun his new life in Christ at 4.15p.m on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021. He firmly believed and followed Jesus Christ throughout his life by being a Religious Brother of Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel. He put Jesus at the center of his life by seeking and fulfilling the will of God all through his life, by faithfully carrying out the God's mission till the last moment of his earthly life.

Dear friends, we are gathered here to bid final farewell to our dear Brother Benjamin, who peacefully slept in the Lord on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021, praying to Lord Jesus, Mary and Joseph. He completed his earthly existence as an embodiment of St. Paul's words: 'I have finished the race, I have kept the faith...'

Bro. Benjamin was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 1939 to Late Mr. V.T. Cherian and Late Mrs. Mariam Cherian at Ettumanoor East Kottayam. He has 5 brothers and 3 sisters as his siblings. God

blessed this family with two Religious Brothers of our congregation, Bros. Benjamin and Kurian of province of Hyderabad and a Religious Sister, Sr. Sebastina (SCJM). It is a special God's blessing for us today as all his brothers are present with us, expressing their love and support for one another.

Bro. Benjamin Joined the Congregation of the Brothers in 1956 and pronounced his first Vows in 1959, and final Vows in 1965 at Sardhana. Thereafter, he pursued his Bachelor in Education Studies from Osmania University, Hyderabad in 1965, and university studies from Meerut University in 1969 and earned Post Graduate Diploma from Longfield, London in 1979.

### **Bro. Benjamin: An Inspiring Teacher**

The teaching mission of Bro. Benjamin is a fulfillment of the words of Henry Ford, which says "My best teacher is the one who brings out the best in me". After his first Vows from 1959 onwards he started teaching. He had the privilege of working as teacher in St. Charles' inter college Sardhana from 1960 to 1968, with one year break for his Bachelor of Education studies in Hyderabad in 1965.

### **Bro. Benjamin Cherian – an Inspiring Educationalist**

In whatever role we knew him, from whatever vantage point, he stood apart as someone special. He had an outstanding missionary dynamism of a Montfort Brother as an educational leader. He had a gift of innovative thinking, a visionary spirit, and the tenacious patience required to successfully lead meaningful educational reform, and a faithful religious life.

He was passionate about enabling schools to become better places for students to learn and for teachers to work. He was a

transformational leader and change agent who had great dreams of what Montfortian Education could be. He inspired students to pursue passionate research but also taught to set high goals. Through both his scholarship and his total commitment, he made a significant contribution to our Montfortian Education mission. His much public recognition reveals that his distinguished contribution to the education mission had a massive impact and positive influence on all those who came in contact with him in one way or another. His contributions were powerful and his work ethic was remarkable and inspiring.

Bro Benjamin's education mission could be summarized in the words of Nelson Mandela, 'Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.' He fully believed and gave expression to the words of 1st century philosopher Confucius, 'Education breeds confidence, confidence breeds hope, Hope breeds peace.'

We do acknowledge that Bro. Benjamin's contribution to educational reform extended well beyond our own educational institutional environment! In addition to his devotion to his work and to the improvement of education locally and globally, Bro. Benjamin always found time for his colleagues, his friends, family members and his spiritual nourishment.

### **Bro Benjamin as an inspiring and able administrator/secretary**

He continued his God given Mission as the provincial secretary in 2000 and 2007 and Association of MP inter- diocesan Catholics Schools (AMPICS) secretary from 2000 to 2009 and bursar Montfort School Roorkee 2010 to 2012.

The religious Life of Bro. Benjamin was a life well lived! He was a determined, visionary, collaborative, goal-oriented and caring

person who loved his religious life and all that it offered. Positive Energy, commitment, integrity, selfless service, love for all, are words that very powerfully describe the religious life and mission of Bro. Benjamin. He will be missed by many, but never will he be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to have known him. Bro Benjamin was a Montfort Brother of a harmonious relationship with God the Father, Jesus our Brother, Mary our Mother, the shortest, surest and safest way to Jesus, St. Montfort Our founder, to himself, to others, and to the cosmos. He was a joyful Religious Brother, being a faithful listener and doer of the will of God, as a Montfortian disciple of Jesus and his gospel, lived a relational spirituality and accomplished fruitful missions for the kingdom of God.

From last 8 years onwards, Bro. Benjamin used to share that his life was full of challenges. He went through lots of ups and downs of life. In the last few years deterioration of health very especially his inability to move by himself was a great concern for him. Yet at the end of the day, he was grateful to the Almighty for the countless blessings he had received. Psalm 94:18-19 says "When I said, 'my foot is slipping,' "your unfailing love, Lord, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy." These words very powerfully and effectively explain how he underwent his physical suffering and age-related difficulties and challenges positively and gracefully as he surrendered himself to the will of God and from his personal relationship with God and his children.

I pray today for all of us, May the words from I Thessalonians 4:14 inspire all of us "For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus, those who have fallen asleep in him." So, we believe that Bro. Benjamin has moved from

his earthly life to his eternal life that is to affirm that Bro. Benjamin has begun his new life with Christ.

I thank the Lord for his presence and services in the Congregation of the Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel. May Bro. Benjamin enjoy the fullness of life, and intercede for us as we continue our commitment to the Montfortian mission.

Friends, let us now enter into the ultimate Sacrifice of praise and Thanksgiving and together offer our dear Bro. Benjamin and pray for his eternal bliss in heaven.

May the departed soul of Bro. Benjamin rest in PEACE!

Bro. James Ekka

Provincial Superior

Province of Delhi



**For if we live, we live to the Lord, and  
if we die, we die to the Lord. So then,  
whether we live or whether we die,  
we are the Lord's.**

**Romans 14:8**

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