

# CONSECRATED IN THE WORLD !



## *The Eddie-torial*

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The recent General Assembly was a "synodal" experience. We listened to the Holy Spirit, and we listened to each other. Above all, we walked together, aware that it was the future of the Sons of Notre Dame de Vie that we were humbly and poorly building through prayer, reflection, discussion and debate, and shared testimonies. Now it's time to implement the ordinances, but also to consolidate the habitual approaches we constantly cultivate: discernment, dialogue, spiritual conversation. We're doing this not in isolation in our sunny or misty little corner, but out in the open-that is, in the middle of the Church and the world-with the whole Notre Dame de Vie Institute and with all those we come into contact with in our daily lives.

Obviously, it's the Holy Spirit himself who must lead us... As Pope Francis said at the opening of the Synod of Bishops 2023:

*"The Holy Spirit is the protagonist of ecclesial life: the plan of salvation for mankind is accomplished by the grace of the Spirit. He is the protagonist. If we don't understand this, we will be like those in the Acts of the Apostles: "Have you received the Holy Spirit? - What is the Holy Spirit? We have not even heard of him" (cf. 19:1-2). We must understand that he is the protagonist of the Church's life, the one who moves it forward.*

*The Holy Spirit unleashes a deep and varied dynamism in the ecclesial community: the "tumult" of Pentecost. It's strange what happens at Pentecost: everything was in order, everything was clear... That morning, there's an uproar, every language is spoken, everyone understands... But it's a variety whose meaning we don't really understand... And after that, the great work of the Holy Spirit... (...)*

*The Church, a single harmony of voices, with many voices, brought about by the Holy Spirit: this is how we should understand the Church. Each Christian community, each person, has its particularity, but these particularities must be included in the symphony of the Church, and the right symphony is made by the Spirit; we cannot make it."*

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# Some news about the Sons of Notre-Dame de Vie<sup>v</sup>

## *Members on the move*

- Andrès C. has returned to Tuluca in Mexico and taken up a job in a notary's office.
- Baudoin T. is taking a year off work to train with the CNAM in training engineering.
- Frederick P. has been elected President of the Conference of Asian Secular Institutes.
- James V. has returned to the Philippines for a year, where he is resuming work as a guidance counsellor. He will be back next year to help with the initial formation of new members.
- Makoto C. has started a permanent contract in an accountancy firm in Paris.
- Philippe L and Vincent D. have started a year of solitude in Blangy, which will continue in the Philippines for the former and in Canada for the latter.

## *For your agendas*

- The FNDV reflection group resumed its meetings on 4 October. This year we will be discussing the Vatican 2 Constitution "Gaudium et spes" and its implications for us and our times. To join us, please contact Pierre : [langeron.pierre@wanadoo.fr](mailto:langeron.pierre@wanadoo.fr)
- Weekend of Friends of FNDV : Option to hold it in Blangy on 15 and 16 June 2024. Contact: [t.baudoin@hotmail.fr](mailto:t.baudoin@hotmail.fr)
- General meetings of the priestly branch (January 2024) and the women's branch (July 2024).
- Youth Festival from 13 to 16 July in Venasque





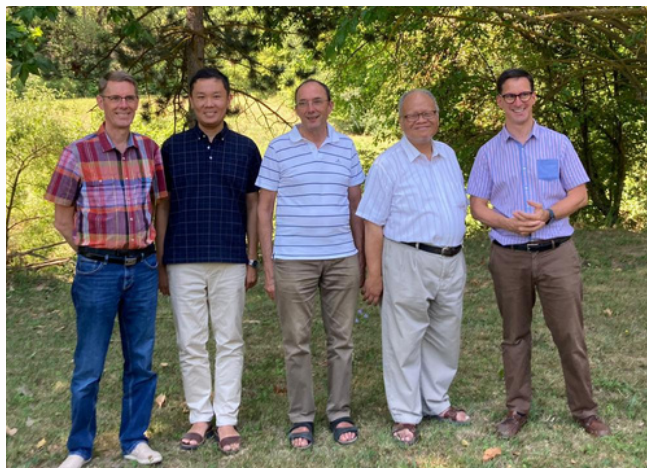
# Focus on the general assembly of the sons of NDV

## *A new Branch Council*

Two new councillors have joined the Men's Board.

Makoto C and Vincent D have been elected for an 8-year term, replacing Stéphane SM and Dominique G.

According to our Constitutions, "the role of the assistant and the councillors is to assist the general manager in the government of the Men's Branch, to cast votes and to give their opinion whenever they are asked to do so in the cases provided for by the Constitutions".



## *Decisions that commit us to the future*

The General Assembly votes on ordinances, the implementation of which is entrusted to the General Manager with the support of his Council. During this assembly, 5 ordinances were voted: on formation, on Escombas, on the Economic Council, on the General Bursar's Office, and on questions of FNDV witnessing and vocation. They set the general direction for the next 4 years.

## Testimony of a Young Profess

Meeting virtually online, discussing assigned topics to the group, and catching up with one another for the latest news, were the things we did for several months in preparation for the General Assembly of the Fils de Notre Dame de Vie in July 2023. Despite not being able to participate in the GA itself, our contribution as young profess matters and that's what made our return to France more fun and exciting.

While most French go on summer vacations, the FNDV, together with the members from other branches, stayed in the valley of "micocoulier" in Venasque for a month of "solitude". It's also a special time for the male branch since we will have our GA and the eligible members will elect two new members of the council to replace those who have finished their term.

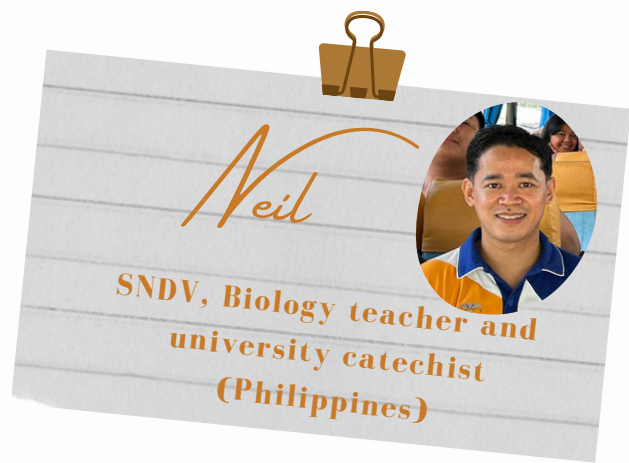
As for my experience, I can share three things that have made an impact on me during my stay at the "Source" during the GA and my month of solitude: being refreshed, being happy to serve, and enjoying one another's presence.

**Being refreshed.** Edgar and I are working in a university at the heart of a city. There's noise everywhere and our return to the "Source" for a month of solitude, praying and seeking God in silence has refreshed us. It has reinvigorated our souls and made us appreciate our charism – action and contemplation well-united.

**Being happy to serve.** Yes, it gave me profound joy to be of service to our brothers during this time while they were busy discussing things that are essential for the existence and the future of the branch. Aside from contributing the little penny that we could during the preparatory meetings, the young profess also helped to do the service during meals, offices, and masses. We also helped the members in formation for the manual work. I missed those things, particularly since Edgar and I were assigned to a faraway place.

**Enjoying one another's presence.** It's not that often that we are together as brothers, enjoying one another's physical presence. We grabbed this opportunity to be with them, sharing with them our joys and sorrows, our victories and defeats, and our experiences and hopes for the future of the branch and of the Institute as a whole. The young profess members also cherished the time together while the big ones were doing their work in the GA. We had lectio divina together, prepared and ate a good meal, watched a movie, and went swimming in a lake. It was a fun and awesome experience.

Our stay could have been brief, yet it was intense and memorable. We have felt the love of God and our brothers and sisters in Notre Dame de Vie





## ***Friends of FNDV's contribution to our General Meeting***

What does it mean to be a Son of Our Lady of Life? Between the ideal of being men fully surrendered to Mary and the Spirit, immersed in the challenges of the present world, and our concrete life, there will always be a road to travel alone and in Branch. To take the best path, it is precious to accept the help of those who have some experience of where we are. This was the purpose of the questionnaire sent to our friends to review our way of bearing witness.

We would like to thank all those who took the time to reply! The 16 responses we received were very rich, and some of them have common points. Here are some of the main conclusions:

Among the areas where we need to make progress, we highlighted our lack of joy and relaxation, our stiffness and difficulty in giving ourselves, and our disconnect with the "normal" lay world. On the other hand, our fidelity in the life of prayer, intercession, and our simple and humble presence to others were described as a more appealing witness to the outside world. Numerous suggestions (which it would take too long to list here) were made to us: they complemented our own reflections and fed into the work of our General Assembly.

It is through mutual service that each of us grows in our vocation, whether in the body of Christ or in the extended family of Notre-Dame de Vie. May we continue to serve each other in word and deed!

***Here are a few final photos of the atmosphere of prayer, work and fraternal life during the General Assembly***



## Apostles in the breath of the Spirit

### *An endowment fund created by the sons of Notre Dame de Vie*

Launched at the end of 2022, the Fils de Notre Dame de Vie endowment fund was able to support its first four projects in 2023 thanks to the first donations received at the very end of last year. You can read about them on the "Projects" page. 2023 is our first full financial year (12 months). We'd like it to enable us to reach a new milestone by supporting more projects from a variety of backgrounds.



Please do not hesitate to encourage those who need help to get in touch with us. As you can see, the fund can help a wide range of people, from young people in their studies and apprenticeships to the elderly.

We have a leaflet available in both digital and paper versions.

And, of course, we're also looking for donations to meet the requests we receive. Everything can be done online: it's quick and easy.

Everything can be found at

<https://www.fonds-fndv.org/welcome/>



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## ***Comments on the Friends of the Sons of NDV Weekend - 2-3 June 2023***

I was looking forward to the weekend of June 2 and 3, when friends of the Sons de Notre-Dame de Vie would be taking part in a workshop on the theme of beauty. I was excited by the prospect of returning to Venasque and contemplating the landscapes, scents and colors of Provence. It was also a chance to get away from the gloom of Paris.

I was greeted with a warm welcome when, during the evening meal, Philippe presented me with a holy image of one of his painted works, inscribed: "You are beautiful, like no other child of man; grace is poured upon your lips: yes, God will bless you forever". (Psalm 44:3)

The next day, Philippe showed and commented on a series of nature photos. How could we fail to marvel at a sunrise, the shape of a shell, or a rabbit frolicking in the grass. It was a revelation to learn that God seeks us out and shows us the way by delighting our eyes.

Then came Baudoin's talk. He developed his talk in such a way as to understand how God speaks to us of beauty in scripture and through messages from Pope Francis:

- "There are things with which my soul is enamored and which are beautiful before the Lord and before men: harmony between brothers, friendship, between relatives, a woman and a man in perfect harmony." (Ben Sirac the Wise, 25)

- "The universe unfolds in God, who fills it all. There is therefore a mystic in a leaf, in a path, in the dew, in the face of the poor". (Pope Francis, Laudato Si, no. 233)

Finally, on Sunday, Pierre asked us about beauty, which is sometimes opposed to ugliness or evil, and how it can lead to God. Then, through anecdotes such as travel stories and real-life experiences, he explained how he had encountered beauty, sometimes by surprise, where he had not expected it.

Over the course of the weekend, I was also given the opportunity to evoke my memories of the Abbaye de Sénanque. With a map and a few photos, I was able to describe the symbolism of the cloister, and its functional role in the architecture.

The atmosphere at the meeting was one of brotherhood and caring. We can only praise the talent of the organizers, who, in addition to the presentations, were able to set aside time for convivial meals, sharing and prayer.

So, beauty exists, I've encountered it, and it will save the world.



## *Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus in Poland* *August 13 to 29, 2023*

On the occasion of the double jubilee we celebrated in 2023, the 150th anniversary of the birth and the 100th anniversary of the beatification of Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, we brought to Poland the great reliquary of this great Saint - Patroness of France and Doctor of the Church.

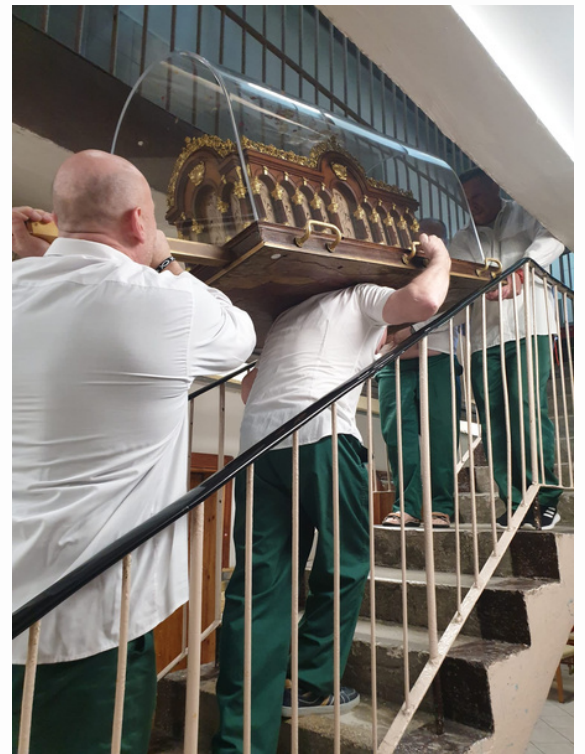


It was an extraordinary undertaking for us, not only logistically, but above all spiritually. In terms of logistics, it wasn't the easiest task. The reliquary with Thérèse's tibia, weighing over 130 kilograms, had to be brought back to Poland and then, after the pilgrimage, transported back to Lisieux. We began the process with the Sanctuary - the owner of the reliquary - almost a year and a half before the scheduled date of the pilgrimage. We had already paved the way and had a certain amount of experience, having taken the same steps for the WYD in Krakow 7 years prior. When all the formalities had been successfully completed and the time came (August 10), we set off for France by car. I was accompanied by Fr. Andrzej, a Polish priest and member of the NDV priests branch. We covered almost 4,000 kilometers together, half of them with Thérèse. It was a real retreat!

On Sunday August 13, we returned to Poland. Thérèse's first stop was a small town in southern Poland. What happened next? Over the course of 16 days, Teresa visited some twenty places, went as far as the Baltic Sea, visited Carmelites, the sick and prisoners. All welcomed her with joy. Extraordinary things happened, and you can feel the atmosphere in the photos below.











***"What pleases the Good Lord is to see me love my littleness and my poverty,  
it's the blind hope I have in his mercy... That's my only treasure"***  
**- Saint Therese of the Child Jesus**  
**May the little saint share her treasure with us more than ever in this year of  
Theresian jubilee!**