

"You Know That We're Not Supermen"



The New General Prior of the Carthusians

[Source](#)

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(kreuz.net) Dom François-Marie Velut O. Cart. has been the General Prior of the Carthusians since the 21st of September.

The cleric was born on the 30th of December 1948 as Michel Velut in Champagne in north east France.

He spent his childhood in this area as well -- in the small seminary of the 61,000 population city of Troyes.

Master's Degree in Paris

Then he studied in the Sorbonne and in the Paris 'Catholic Institute'.

There he earned a Master's Degree in Philosophy.

The subject of his work: "The Concept of Person in Christological Conflict of the 4th and 5th Centuries."

Entrance to the Carthusians

As Brother Micheal, he finished his 19th year with the Brothers of Charles Foucauld.

In 1989 he entered the Novitiate of the Grand Chartreuse at the age of 40.

There he made his solemn profession in 1996 as Dom François-Marie.

Relocation to Portes

On June 4th, 2001, Do François-Marie was relocated to the Charterhouse of Portes -- between Genf and Lyon.

On the 28th of September 2001, the monks there elected him Prior.

He then become a successor to Dom Étienne Descamps, who had held this office for 28 years.

After his election to Prior of Portes, he gave an interview to 'Voix de l' Ain':

How did you take your election to be Prior of Portes?

with a lot of fear -- but in the end there were enough signs to recognize the will of God. I only have to accept it.

As Procurator [General Secretary] of the Order, I already knew the house a bit. The canonical visitations which take place every two years, gave me a passing understanding about the expectations which exist in every Carthusian house.

In the Church there is a serious priest shortage. Isn't there some other way you would hae been more useful?

I sensed a powerful desire, to be useful to the Church and fellow man. I was also very drawn to the Apostolate.

In order to understand, it has to be taken at the level of faith, otherwise I'm only conscious that what I say, can only scandalize in view of the priest shortage.

We are all conscious of this: what was more awakening, is the radical step of total self-donation to God. This decision makes no sense unless it is looked at with the light of faith, if one believes in

the value of prayer and a life given by God.

We feel as members of a family, who are conscious of our place in the Church, that Christ operates through others, through those who have abandoned themselves to the apostolate or in contact with His suffering. Everyone in his role.

You Carthusians, who have turned your entire lives to Christ and consider his work: How can you not be troubled by the evil, suffering, wars, which tear the world apart and the terror attacks?

This question disturbs the whole world. We Christians ascribe them to human freedom.

It is not God, who will all of this. That is a part of our great plan of love, which human freedom is considered almost in a scandalous way.

Did He not allow his Son to be crucified? This concern for human freedom is the secret of the crazy love of God for men, a mystery, which excels us all.

We believe, that the eternal life of every person has more meaning for God than the earthly life and that the suffering, if it is the way of salvation, has a reason.

A great good can come from all the evil.

From a human perspective, what I'm saying here can excite indignation.

The evil and the suffering is also an opportunity for overcoming, love, generosity, devotion and universal brotherhood.

This answer to the evil through the good is a work of God's grace.

These acts are the purview of every human nature in his own frailty, his own responsibility.

You are preparing for the nine hundred year anniversary of the death of St. Bruno, your founder: What value do you see in this day?

We celebrate October 6th as the day of Bruno's birth into heaven, his entrance into eternal life.

That is an opportunity for us to find new strength and to deepen it, for which we are grateful to him - for the charism of our vocation in the arms of today's Church, this way of life, which he founded and has continued to live in the course of the centuries.

He is our father, our founder, our model, our teacher. He has given us an example of total resignation: to long for fruitfulness, he decided to give up the illusory joys and the passing riches of this fleeting world, in order to take up the search for God alone.

That is at the time that he refused to become Archbishop of Reims and instead became a hermit.

He gave us an example of heroic obedience, as he answered the Pope's call -- despite the danger of his brother's dispersing.

He gave us the example of a complete obedience to the Spirit, as he refused to become Archbishop of Reggio. His words and his example call to us during our daily life: They might be an encouragement and inspiration, in our way in the moments of trial, hesitation and temptation, in order to continue ever more radically in our devotion to the Lord.

They know that we're not supermen. We have shortcomings. We are only humble Christians.

The isolation and the time of test in the desert brings us closer to men.