

# **Pilgrimage of hope for the Canonisation of Blessed Brother Raphaël-Louis Rafiringa**

Among the many initiatives being taken in connection with the cause of canonisation of Blessed Brother Raphaël-Louis Rafiringa, this year, the Postulator General of the Institute, Brother Felicien Bora, has visited the District of Madagascar from 29 October to 6 November for various activities and meetings.

“It was a pilgrimage of hope,” says Brother Felicien, recalling those days marked by moments of prayer at the Shrine of Blessed Raphaël-Louis Rafiringa in Soavimbahoaka and at the Chapel of St John Baptist de La Salle.

The visit of the Brother Postulator General also included meetings with the Brother Vice-Postulator, the priest chaplain of the Shrine, the animation team of the Shrine and the leaders of various groups dedicated to Blessed Brother Raphaël-Louis Rafiringa

Likewise, Brother Felicien also had the opportunity to meet some Brothers from the District of Madagascar, the De La Salle Guadalupana Sisters and some Lasallian lay partners and members of Signum Fidei.

Lastly, the actions taken also included a visit to the Academy of Madagascar, of which Blessed Brother Raphaël-Louis Rafiringa was a member, and where there is a section dedicated to his literary works.

“In ecclesial communion, let us continue to pray assiduously with faith and devotion through the intercession of Blessed Brother Raphaël-Louis Rafiringa to obtain from the Lord the grace to raise this Blessed to the honours of the altars through his canonisation, which we all hope for”, concluded Brother Felicien Bora, after this journey which rekindles the hope that his name will be inscribed in the book of saints.

Who was Blessed Brother Raphaël-Louis Rafiringa? He was the first Brother of the Christian Schools on the island of Madagascar, born in Antananarivo on 1 May 1856. Recognised for his dedication to the educational mission and his

significant contribution in the composition of school texts, as well as in the translation into Malagasy of several French works, Brother Raphaël assumed the leadership of the Catholics in Madagascar in 1883, during the war, when all the foreign missionaries were expelled from the island.

His feature as a religious apostle, educator, intellectual, and his tireless work for peace earned him the appreciation and acknowledge of the civil authorities and his people. Indeed, on 2 May 1903, he was awarded the Medal for Civil Valour for his effective action to bring peace between France and Madagascar.

He died in Fianarantsoa on 19 May 1919. His cause for beatification began on 18 October 1979, at the request of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and on 7 June 2009 he was beatified by Benedict XVI.

**\* Photos: Br. Felicien Bora.**







