

In the Footsteps of St. Louis Marie de Montfort



A Guide for a Montfortian Pilgrimage

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In the Footsteps of Montfort

Introduction

This booklet has been prepared using notes drawn up by Fr. Emmanuel Guil, S.M.M., and Bro François Garat, S.G., with the addition of some directions to help visitors to France to find the various places of Montfortian interest.

Most of the places dealt with in this booklet are accessible from two main centres: Montfort-sur-Meu in the Northern area, and St Laurent-sur-Sèvre in the Southern area. It might be more convenient for some to stay in Pontchâteau to see the places around there and in the Nantes area. If you wish to include the Paris sites, you would have to stay there as well. Montfort-sur-Meu is about an hour and a half's drive North of Pontchâteau, which in turn is about an hour and a half's drive North of St Laurent-sur-Sèvre. Montfort-sur-Meu is roughly three hours' drive from Cherbourg, four hours from Paris. St Laurent-sur-Sèvre is about four hours' drive from Paris.

The places which can be visited easily from Montfort are: Montfort itself and the immediate area, Iffendic and the Bois Marquer, Mont Saint-Michel, Dinan, and the La Chèze area. You need at least one whole day to see Montfort and Iffendic and the surrounding areas. Mont Saint-Michel and Dinan can be visited in a day (a fairly full day!); while the La Chèze area needs at least a half day. If you want to see everything in the Northern area, therefore, you need to stay in Montfort for at least three days (four or more would be better). There is accommodation at the Maison Natale and the adjoining old Gendarmerie for medium sized groups and for individuals. Sometimes arrangements can be made to accommodate larger groups at the Abbaye St. Jacques.

The places which can be visited with reasonable ease from St Laurent-sur-Sèvre are: St Laurent itself; La Séguinière; Saint-Pompain, Mervent and Vouvant; La Rochelle; Poitiers; Notre Dame des Ardilliers (Saumur) and Fontevrault; Pontchâteau and Nantes. Pontchâteau deserves more than a short stop on the way from Montfort to St Laurent or vice-versa; ideally you should spend at least a day in Pontchâteau and the surrounding area (excluding Nantes). There is a small Hôtellerie belonging to the Montfortians at the

Calvary in Pontchâteau, which is available in the summer months. For the other places accessible from St Laurent, you need a whole day to visit Poitiers, another whole day to visit La Rochelle (you could, at a push, include Saint-Pompain, Mervent and Vouvant in that day, but it would be better to make a separate trip); and certainly a whole day to visit St Laurent itself, with perhaps another day to go to Saumur and Fontevault (you could take in one of the famous Loire châteaux that day, if you wish), and another for the area surrounding St Laurent (including La Séguinière, St Amand-sur-Sèvre, etc.). You should try to spend at least four or five days, therefore, in St Laurent, with another day added if you intend to visit Pontchâteau and Nantes from there. Accommodation is usually available for Montfortians (Fathers, Sisters, Brothers), either at the Saint-Esprit or at Béthanie (Daughters of Wisdom) or at Saint-Gabriel.

Maps

The following Michelin 1/200,000 maps (1 cm to 2 km, or roughly 3 miles to the inch) would be invaluable aids to finding your way around:

For the whole of the area centred on Montfort-sur-Meu: 59 or 230

For Pontchâteau: 63 or 230

For St Laurent, Poitiers, Saumur, Nantes, etc.: 67

For La Rochelle, Mervent, Saint-Pompain: 71

Addresses and Telephone numbers

If telephoning from Gt. Britain, dial 010 33, followed by these numbers.

Maison Natale, Montfort-sur-Meu:

15, Rue de la Saulnerie, 35160 Montfort-sur-Meu Tel: (2) 99 09 15 35

Saint-Esprit (SMM), St Laurent-sur-Sèvre:

2-4 Rue des Couvents, 85290 St Laurent/Sèvre Tel: (2) 51 67 81 41

Béthanie (FDLS), St Laurent-sur-Sèvre:

Béthanie, La Sagesse, Rue des Couvents, 85290 St Laurent/Sèvre
Tel: (2) 51 67 81 85

Hôtellerie, Pontchâteau: contact the Sisters:

La Sagesse, Le Calvaire, 44160 Pontchâteau Tel: (2) 40 88 24 79

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Northern Area (based on Montfort-sur-Meu)

Montfort-sur-Meu

(Birthplace of St Louis Marie)

The "Maison Natale"

St Louis-Marie was born at No 15, Rue de la Saulnerie. The house is owned today jointly by the three Montfortian congregations: the Montfort Missionaries, the Daughters of Wisdom and the Brothers of St Gabriel.

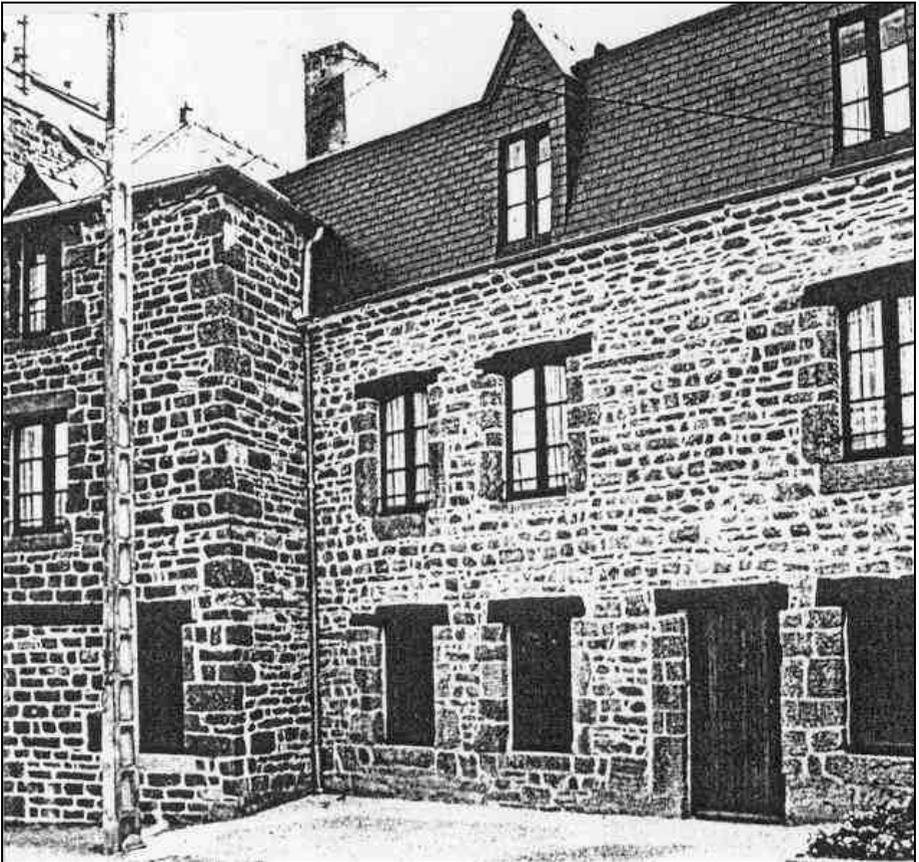


Figure 1: The "Maison Natale"

How to find the Maison Natale

If you are arriving from the direction of Rennes, on entering Montfort-sur-Meu, you will cross the railway line, with the station on your right. Follow the road leading to the "Centre-Ville". After about 200 yards, you come to a junction where the main road swings right, while ahead of you is an area which gives priority to pedestrians; enter this area (you can do so even in a car). After another 50 to 100 yards, the Rue de la Saulnerie opens on your right (there is a chemist's shop on the right-hand corner) - it is a one-way street at this point. The Maison Natale is a few yards up on the left-hand side. You can park there for a few moments only - to park for a longer period, drive further up the street and take the first turning on your left. This will bring you down a slight hill and round a left-hand bend to a parking area next to the River Meu, immediately behind the Maison Natale -you can then walk around the block to the front entrance of the house.

If you are coming from St. Malo, Mont St-Michel, etc., you will probably enter the town in the same way.

If you are coming from the South, e.g. from Plélan-le-Grand, you will come to a roundabout at the edge of the central area of the town. Drive more or less straight ahead, towards the "Centre-Ville". After a few yards you cross the river Meu, and enter a pedestrianised area (priority to pedestrians, but you can drive in). On your left at this point is the parking area mentioned above, immediately behind the Maison Natale. To reach the front of the house, drive a few yards further into the pedestrian area, and turn left into the Rue de la Saulnerie, with the chemist's shop on the far corner.

The Maison Natale saw the birth of four of the children of the Grignion family:

16 February 1672: Jean-Baptiste, who died aged five months;

31 January 1673: LOUIS, baptised the following day in St John's;

24 February 1674: Joseph-Pierre, who became a Dominican;

26 March 1675: Renée, the first of the girls.

The oldest part of the house is the front, which certainly existed before the date (1667) which can be seen high up on the chimney at the left hand side when standing in the road: Louis-Marie's grandfather, the advocate Maître Eustache Grignion, was already living here in 1653; his office was the room at the extreme left viewed from the road.

Louis Marie did not live here for very long, since almost immediately after his birth he was given into the care of the wet-nurse, Mère André, at La Bachelleraye; and since his parents bought the farm at Le Bois-Marquer on the 16th July 1675 and went to live there three months later, it is probable that Louis Marie went directly from La Bachelleraye to the Bois-Marquer.



Figure 2: Notre Dame dela
Sagesse

However, it is clear that Montfort meant much to St Louis-Marie, who preferred to be called simply "the priest from Montfort", probably because it was there that he was baptised. Baptism, for him, was perhaps the most important moment of life, being the moment when he was dedicated to God. In the Maison Natale, a beautiful ceramic by Fr. Leidi, Italian Montfortian, commemorates Louis Marie's baptism and the moment when he ratified this for himself in his personal consecration to Jesus through the hands of Mary.

In the oratory at the Maison Natale can be seen the statue, in painted wood, of Our Lady of Wisdom which is said to have been carved by St Louis Marie himself at St Lazare. It was taken to the Montfort hospital in 1797 by Sister St Maixent, and has been kept at the Maison Natale since 1977. The base of the altar is a piece of the ancient oak tree known as the "Chêne aux Vendeurs" (the Sellers' Oak), so called because it was the meeting place for travelling salesmen for many years. It was under this oak that the 12th century heretic Eon de l'Etoile sought to have himself recognised as someone sent by God. The figure of Christ on the wall and the tabernacle are the work of Fr Leidi.

Also in the house can be seen a block of stone, known as "Fr de Montfort's pillow", which was bought from Jean Leclerc by Sister St Patrice of the Montfort hospital for 5 francs in 1842.

In the garden, the granite altar table comes from the château de la Garaye near Dinan; almost certainly St Louis Marie said Mass there on this altar. The statue of St Louis Marie and the statue of Mary with the infant Jesus in the outdoor chapel (a copy of the statue of Our Lady, Queen of All Hearts, to be found at Montbernage in Poitiers), were originally in the Abbaye St Jacques just outside Montfort (see below), as was the group of statues representing Mary, Queen of All Hearts and St Louis Marie to be found in the garden of the old Gendarmerie next door to the Maison Natale. The open-air chapel in the garden of the Maison Natale recalls St Louis Marie's stay with several of the first brothers who accompanied him at St Lazare, just outside Montfort (see below), where it is said he placed an enormous Rosary, accompanied by the name of Jesus and a picture of a dove representing the Holy Spirit. This reminds us of the important part played by visual symbols in the teaching of St Louis Marie.

* * * * *

The town of Montfort-sur-Meu

On exiting from the front door of the *Maison natale*, turn left up the Rue de la Saulnerie, then turn right up the first little street. You will see the present parish church on the left, and the round Tour de la Motte on the right. Go round the back of the church into the square, the Place St Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort. You are now standing on the "**Butte de la Motte**", where the ancient feudal castle dungeon stood. The present church did not exist in St Louis Marie's day, but was built in 1850 to replace the three ancient parish churches of Montfort, those of St Jean, St Nicolas and Coulon. In September 1707, St Louis Marie came with M. Leuduger and a fairly large group of missionaries to preach a mission in Montfort. He wanted to build a large and imposing calvary on the Butte de la Motte; he had already bought the figures (of Christ and others) for this calvary in St Brieuc. However, the building of the calvary was forbidden; upon which he made the prediction that one day this very place would be a place of prayer. The statues he had bought were later to be erected on his Calvary at Pontchateau in 1710; the figure of Christ is now to be seen in the little chapel at the foot of the Pontchâteau calvary.

The statue of St Louis Marie in the tower of the existing parish church recalls the "sermon" on the Cross which he preached during the mission at Montfort: instead of preaching, he simply held up his crucifix, saying "Look what our sins have done to our Saviour"; then he presented the crucifix to each member of the congregation to venerate; it is said to have been one of the most moving moments of the whole mission.

Since his canonization in 1947, the parish church has been dedicated to St Louis Marie. The two windows in the Choir portray him, while the Stations of the Cross were given to the church in 1966 by the Montfortian Seminary at the Abbaye St Jacques upon its closure. The upper part of the retable of the right-hand side altar recalls the legend of the Duck of "Montfort-la-Cane".

From the church square, cross the main road, turn left, then right following the main road. Go past the large presbytery, and ahead you will see the **Chapel of St Joseph**. This chapel is built on the site of the ancient parish church of St Jean, where Louis Marie was baptised the day after his birth in 1673, and where he gave the famous sermon on the Cross in 1707. All that remains of the old parish church is the doorway, and the sacristy which can be seen behind the chapel of St Joseph if you go into the cemetery just beyond the chapel. In this sacristy, the register of Baptism would have been signed. The register is now kept in the **Mairie** (the Town Hall), which is on the opposite side of the road from the presbytery and the chapel of St Joseph, a little way back towards the church square. You can see the register with its entry of St Louis Marie's baptism, if you telephone the Mairie beforehand - the telephone number can be obtained at the Maison Natale. The Mairie itself is housed in the old buildings of the Ursuline Convent, built in 1639, where most of the Grignon daughters in the 18th century were boarders.

As you stand outside the presbytery facing the Mairie, the very old building just to the right of the Mairie is the **old presbytery of the church of St Jean**. It was here that, in 1707, when St Louis Marie was staying at St Lazare with the Brothers, he was summoned by the Bishop of Saint Malo to be told that he could not teach or preach in the diocese. As he was leaving, the rector of Bréal and Dean of Montfort, M. Pierre-Henry Hindré, arrived and immediately went to the defence of St Louis Marie, upon which the Bishop withdrew his prohibition.

* * * * *

La Bachelleraye

To reach **La Bachelleraye**, drive out of the town towards Rennes. Immediately after crossing the railway bridge (with the station on your left), turn left onto the road to Bédée. After perhaps a mile, you will see a fairly large electricity sub-station on the right. Turn right into the road immediately following this. After half a mile or so, you will come to a group of buildings straddling the road. This is "La Bachelleraye", a farm belonging to Louis Marie's father, where lived "Mère André", the wet-nurse to whom Louis Marie was confided after his birth. She probably lived in the furthest house on the right, which has recently been renovated, and St Louis Marie would therefore have passed his first two years or so in this house. On the left-hand side of the road, just at the start of the three or four buildings, is the old communal outdoor bread oven which would have probably been in use in Louis Marie's day. In 1679, so as to provide him with the necessary "clerical title", Louis Marie's parents bestowed on him the usufruct of this farm of La Bachelleraye, by which he became the "Sire de la Bachelleraye" and was incardinated at his ordination into the Diocese of Saint-Malo. When St Louis Marie returned to the Montfort district in 1707, Mère André had left La Bachelleraye and was living at Heurtebize (see below).

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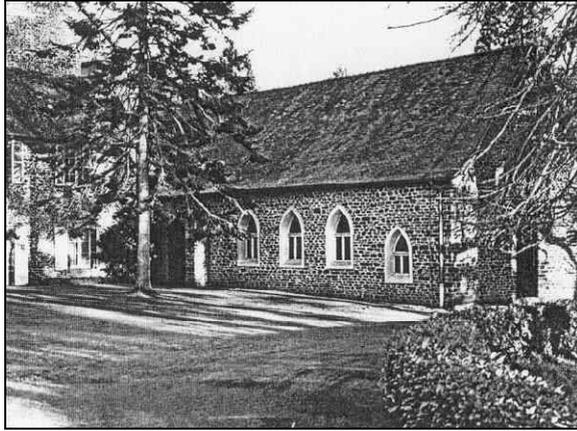
Heurtebize, La Massonaye, and Saint-Lazare

To reach Heurtebize, drive out of Montfort towards the south, taking (at the roundabout) the road towards Talensac - the third exit from the roundabout if you have come to it from the Rue de la Saulnerie - be careful here, as you have to cross the traffic which may be coming down to the roundabout from the direction of Plélan-le-Grand. Twenty yards or so up the road to Talensac, turn right into the road which is signposted "Saint-Lazare". Drive up the hill for about a mile, until you come to a road on the left which is signposted for Saint-Lazare, La Massonaye and Heurtebize. Drive straight along this road (about half a mile) as far as the buildings of Saint Lazare straight ahead of you. Follow the road round to the left, and drive on for a further two or three hundred yards. On the left you will see a cross with some wrought-iron railings; this is **Heurtebize**, the site of the house to which it is thought Mère André retired from La Bachelleraye to live with her son-in-law. The cross

which marks the site was blessed in 1873 by M. Delafosse, Vicar General of Rennes.

Although the story is a little uncertain, it appears that when St Louis Marie left M. Leuduger's mission team during the mission at Moncontour in 1707, he decided to come to rest at Saint-Lazare. Passing Mère André's house at Heurtebize, he asked for some food or a lodging, but Mère André did not recognise him and refused. He continued on the road towards Saint Lazare (back the way you have come to Heurtebize), and was again refused at the next house. But, coming to **La Massonaye**, he was received hospitably by Pierre Belin in the house on the left as you return towards Saint Lazare which is marked with a sign indicating it as Pierre Belin's house, where he spent the night. The next day, Mère André was told who her visitor of the night before had been, and she was immediately repentant. Louis Marie consented to take something to eat with her then, but made his lesson clear on leaving. One cannot enter Pierre Belin's house now, but formerly there was a small cross carved into one of the external walls in the yard, which was said to commemorate Louis Marie's visit.

Continuing back along the way you have come, on the left at the bend is the entrance to **Saint-Lazare**, between some farm buildings. Drive into the courtyard and park. This priory of Saint-Lazare, as its name implies, was founded in the Middle Ages to care for lepers. In the time of St Louis Marie, it had no prior, and served as lodging for the poor farmers of the area. Louis Marie's grandfather, Eustache Grignon, had been sénéchal of Saint-Lazare, and his father was responsible for the administration of the goods belonging to the priory. It was also used as a place of lodging for the poor pilgrims of "Monsieur St Méen". St Louis Marie therefore did not need, it seems, any special authorization to take up residence there between September 1707 and September 1708 with Brother Mathurin and Brother Jean.



The chapel at Saint-Lazare had been rebuilt in 1622, and probably needed only a good cleaning to make it fit for use. Two Masses per week were supposed to be said in the chapel, but there had been no chaplain for 18 years when Louis Marie arrived, the Masses probably having been said by the monks of the Abbaye St-Jacques in their chapel. In the chapel at Saint-Lazare today can be seen the crucifix carved by St Louis Marie himself. The altar is the same one on which he celebrated Mass in the year he spent there. Here in the chapel, St Louis Marie himself arranged things to recall his favourite devotions: he painted a dove above the altar to represent the Holy Spirit; below it was the name of Jesus in big letters; and below that was his statue of Our Lady of Wisdom which is to be found today in the oratory at the Maison Natale; there was also a prie-dieu with the big Rosary beads which could be used by several people at once (all this is recalled today by the arrangement of the open-air chapel in the garden of the Maison Natale).

St Louis Marie's room in the house to the left of the chapel may be seen on application to the Sisters who occupy the priory today. Outside, opposite the corner of the chapel is an old oak, known as "le chêne du Père de Montfort" - it is said that, beneath this oak, he often spoke to the people who came in increasing numbers to visit Saint-Lazare as it became known as a place of prayer. As well as these talks, he also went out from time to time to preach in the neighbouring parishes, for example at Bréal. The last ministry he performed was a retreat

Figure 3: Saint-Lazare Chapel

for the young ladies of the parish of St Jean in Montfort. Shortly afterwards, perhaps because he had been told in no uncertain terms that he was no longer welcome in the area, he left to go to Nantes.

Saint-Lazare, because of this year spent there in the company of his Brothers, is looked upon as one of the cradles of the Company of Mary.

* * * * *

Couascavre and the Abbaye St-Jacques

To get to Couascavre and the Abbaye St-Jacques from the Maison Natale, take the road out of the town which crosses the river Meu, behind the Maison Natale. At the roundabout, turn left (fourth exit from the roundabout, the Boulevard du Général de Gaulle or Boulevard Carnot). At the next junction, follow the road round to the right. Stay on this road for perhaps half a mile, until the Abbey buildings are ahead of you in the middle of a fork in the road. You can park either in the road which goes to the right, or, by taking the road to the left, in the parking area of the Abbey, which is now an agricultural college.

Couascavre or the "chêne Colas" was at the end of the little village of the Abbey on the road which forks left at the Abbey. Here were three little houses belonging to the Grignon family, of which it appears nothing remains today (though one can see the kind of houses they would have been on examining some of the other old houses in the village). Louis Marie's parents retired here in 1707, and here his father died in 1716, three months before his son, and was buried in the chapel of the Abbey (see below). It was probably here that the famous "banquet of the poor" took place: Louis Marie accepted an invitation to dine with his parents, provided he could bring some of his friends as well - by which he meant the poor. In 1710, a ten-year-old child called Bizette died "at the home of M. de la Bachelleraye"; it is possible that Louis Marie confided this child to his parents during the mission of 1707.

The **Abbaye St-Jacques** was founded in 1152 by William of Montfort, and was still inhabited by the Génovéfain monks at the time of Louis Marie. Later, it was occupied by the Ursuline Sisters. Between 1922 and 1966 it was the seminary of the Montfort Fathers of the French Province, and until 1940 the scholastics of the Province of Great Britain and Ireland also did their philosophical and theological studies there. The chapel was restored in the 13th and 14th centuries, but unfortunately was burnt out in a fire in 1976; its

most remarkable architectural feature, the doorway with its rare three-lobed arcade, can still be seen in the road which forks right at the Abbey corner. In this chapel are buried the remains of three of St Louis Marie's family:

His father, Jean-Baptiste Grignon (1647-1716), d. 21 January 1716;

His sister, Françoise-Marguerite (1679-1721);

His youngest sister, Jeanne-Marguerite (1691-1708), d. 25 February 1708, while Louis Marie was staying at Saint-Lazare.

Iffendic, Le Bois Marquer, Boucquidy

Iffendic

To get to Iffendic from the Maison Natale at Montfort, take the road out of the town centre which crosses the river Meu (as though going to Saint-Lazare or the Abbaye St-Jacques). At the roundabout, turn right (first exit from the roundabout, a new road), and follow this road round the town until you come to traffic lights at a crossroads. There you will see the sign pointing left to Iffendic.

When you arrive in Iffendic, you will see the Church on the right of the road. There is a small parking area at the side of the Church: turn right just before the church, and it is on your left.

In the **Parish Church** is the chapel (on the right hand side) where the Grignon family had their pew; it is marked with a plaque and a statue of the saint. Beneath it is a vault in which some of Louis Marie's brothers, sisters and cousins were buried. At the back of the church, in the baptistery, is the font in which ten of Louis Marie's brothers and sisters were baptised. On 17th September 1681, Louis Marie himself assisted at the baptism of his sister Françoise-Thérèse, and signed the register. This register is kept today in the Mairie, which is the old presbytery of Iffendic. The large stained-glass window in the choir dates from 1542 and portrays many of the events of the life of Jesus; the young Louis Marie would no doubt have learnt much from looking at it and asking questions. This church would also have been the place where he first received the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, and where he learnt the Good News of the Gospel, and where he prayed fervently.

Le Bois Marquer

To get to the Bois Marquer, take the road which turns off the main road at the East end of the church (if you have parked as suggested, you have already done this). In front of you is a Y-fork; take the right-hand fork (signposted for Bédée). Continue along this road for about one mile, until you come to a little lane on the left with a large direction panel, on which Le Bois Marquer is marked. Follow this lane for about half a mile (passing two or three farms on the way), until you come to the Bois Marquer, on the right hand side, set back

a little from the road, with a Cross at the corner of the entrance lane and a plaque commemorating Louis Marie's stay here.

The existing farmhouse is thought to be the same as that known by Louis Marie, though today it is not as grand; and tradition holds that the room on the first floor at the right was the boys' room, hence Louis Marie's; a small sign indicates this.

In the days of St Louis Marie, Le Bois Marquer was an ancient noble manor, which included two other farms, Le Plessix and La Chesnaye. It would have been much bigger than the present farmhouse, and had a tower and a dovecote, and was surrounded by gardens, an orchard and vineyards. Louis Marie's father bought it on 16th July 1675 for 7,900 livres; but, since he did not belong to the nobility, he also had to pay a special tax for twenty years, known as the "franc-fief". Jean-Baptiste Grignion did not become a farmer, but continued to act as a notary in Montfort. Louis Marie lived at the Bois Marquer from 1675 until 1684, when he was sent to the College in Rennes. In 1686, the whole family moved to Rennes, but continued to spend some part of the summer at the Bois Marquer; Louis's last holiday, in September 1692, before he left for Paris, was spent here with his family and his friends Jean-Baptiste Blain and Joseph de Saint-Méen. Many of the incidents of his childhood and adolescence related by Blain and Grandet, would have taken place here.

The Bois Marquer belonged to the Grignion family for over 100 years, being finally sold in 1782. Louis Marie's nephew, Louis-Constant Grignion, who had done some studies at the seminary of the Holy Spirit in Paris and was called, because of this, "l'abbé du Bois Marquer", did not want to leave after the sale, and had to be expelled by the courts.

Boucquidy

Return to the junction of the lane with the Bédée road and turn left. Perhaps half a mile further on, on the right, is a lane signposted Boucquidy. A hundred yards or so along, on the left, is the fine noble manor of Boucquidy, which gives some idea of how the Bois Marquer would have looked in the time of St Louis Marie. This manor belonged to the Hindré family, who were related to the Grignions. One of this family, Pierre Hindré, was the rector of the church of St Jean in Montfort when Louis Marie was born, and it was he

who baptised Louis Marie. His nephew, Pierre-Henry Hindré, rector of Bréal and dean of Montfort, was the one who came to Louis Marie's defence before the Bishop of Saint-Malo in Montfort in 1707, and invited him to give a mission at Bréal. There, it was the rector himself who was the first "converted" by the mission: he was reconciled with his brothers and sisters from whom he had been estranged.

Rennes and the Pont de Cesson

Rennes

St Louis marie lived in Rennes between 1684 and 1692, while studying at the Jesuit College of St Thomas. His family moved to Rennes in 1686. He also visited Rennes in October 1706 after his pilgrimage to Mont Saint-Michel, when he took a meal with his family, preached a sermon to the Sisters of Calvary, and also at the Grand Séminaire. He visited Rennes again in 1714, when he met M. d'Orville and the Marquis of Magnane and made a retreat at the Jesuits' house.

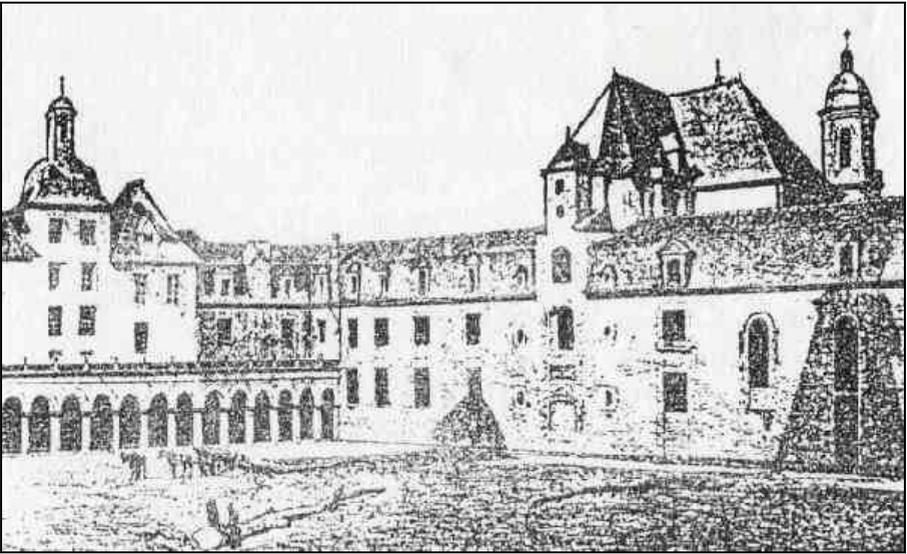


Figure 4: The old Jesuit College of St. Thomas Becket

All the sites associated with St Louis Marie in Rennes can be visited easily on foot. There is a car park in the centre of the town, built over the River Villaine, between the Quai Duguay-Trouin and the Quai Lammenais. If you park there, you are within easy reach of the sites, all of which are on the North side of the river except the Church of Toussaints (St Thomas' College). It is suggested you start with this church. There is a "Syndicat d'Initiative"

(Tourist) centre at the East end of this car-park, where you can probably obtain a plan of Rennes. The following is a suggested itinerary.

Leave the car park on the South side, turn left and walk along the Quai Lammenais as far as the P.T.T. (Post Office) and Palais du Commerce, then on to the Rue du Maréchal Joffre. Turn right and walk down the Rue du Maréchal Joffre to the Rue du Pré-Botté (one block). Turn left and walk along the Pré-Botté to the Rue Capitaine Dreyfus. Looking right down this street, you will see on the other side the facade of the Church of Toussaints.

St Thomas College - Church of Toussaints

The College no longer exists: its site has been taken by the Lycée Emile Zola. All that remains of the College are the cloisters and the chapel, which is now the Church of Toussaints. A chart in the church recalls, among others, the passage of St Louis Marie through the College. Certainly he must have prayed here often. Nearby is the Rue des Carmes, where the Carmelite Monastery was, containing the shrine of Notre Dame de la Paix, which Louis Marie visited often.

On coming out of Toussaints church, turn right and right again to walk along the Rue Toullier. Passing the side and back of the Church, you may glimpse the ancient cloisters. When you come to the Avenue Jean Janvier, turn left and cross the river by the Pont Pasteur, continuing straight on through the Place Pasteur to the Rue des Francs Bourgeois on the left. Walk along here to the Place Saint Germain. There you will see the **Church of Saint-Germain**, where Louis Marie was godfather at the age of 16 to his brother Jean-Baptiste. Also here, on the right hand side near the sanctuary, is a plaque commemorating Claude Poullart des Places, Louis Marie's friend at St Thomas' College, and founder of the Holy Ghost Fathers and the Seminary of the Holy Spirit in Paris.

Leaving Saint-Germain church, turn right and walk along the Vau-St-Germain and the Rue Coetquen, cross the Place de la Mairie, keeping straight on and along the Rue F. Buisson, until you come to the **Place du Calvaire** (or des Calvairiennes). It was here that the Convent of the Sisters of Calvary was, where St Louis Marie said, on arriving to preach during his visit to Rennes in 1706: "I am not going to preach; I am simply going to make my meditation, as I would make it if I were alone in my room."

At the far left corner of the Place du Calvaire, you will see the Rue Saint-Yves. Walk down it. On the left hand side, towards the end, is the ancient chapel of the **Hôpital Général Saint-Yves**. It was here that Louis Marie first experienced caring for the poor, under the guidance of M. Julien Bellier, while he was a student at St Thomas' College. His own mother, visiting a friend there one day, was told by her, "It was your son, Madame, who obtained a place for me here and had me carried here in a chair." The chapel was built in 1494, and has recently been undergoing restoration.

Cross the street from the Rue Saint-Yves into the Rue des Dames (some very ancient houses here), and walk up it until you come to the **Cathedral** (Saint-Pierre). This is a 19th century building, but is built on the same site as the one Louis Marie knew, which was demolished in 1757. A number of Montfort Fathers of the French Province and of the Province of Great Britain and Ireland, were ordained here.

On coming out of the Cathedral, turn right and walk along the Rue de la Monnaie until you come to the junction with the Rue Clisson and Rue Rallier du Baty. Turn right down the Rue Clisson and walk down to the Place Saint-Sauveur.

Church of Saint-Sauveur and Shrine of N.D. des Miracles

It was here that Louis Marie's uncle, Alain Robert, was a priest and the sacristan. Louis Marie lodged with him (probably somewhere close by) for the first two years of his studies at St Thomas' College. Here also is the statue of Our Lady of Miracles and Virtues, at whose shrine Louis Marie came frequently to pray. The original wooden statue is not normally on display in the shrine; but if you telephone beforehand to the Parish Priest, explaining that you are Montfortian pilgrims, he will almost certainly arrange with the sacristan for you to see and venerate the ancient statue which Louis Marie knew (you can obtain the telephone number at the Maison Natale in Montfort). On the left-hand side of the Church there is a stained-glass window with St Louis Marie, St John Eudes and other devotees of Mary. There is also a



**Figure 5: N.D. des Miracles et Vertus
Statue of the
13th/14th Centuries,
St-Sauveur,
Rennes**

plaque commemorating the fire of 1720, thought by some to have been prophesied by Louis Marie in his Canticle No 150.

On coming out of Saint-Sauveur, turn left and walk back up the Rue Clisson, then continue straight on along the Rue Rallier du Baty, across the Place Saint-Michel, and up the Rue Saint-Michel into the Place Sainte-Anne. On the left-hand corner of the street on the opposite side of the square is the old **Couvent des Jacobins**, the house of the Dominicans. It was here that St Louis Marie often went to venerate and pray before the shrine of Notre Dame de Bonne Nouvelle. The image of Our Lady is no longer here, but in the church of Saint-Aubin in the square. The street between the Dominican Convent and Saint-Aubin is the **Rue Saint-Malo**, which in St Louis Marie's day was the Rue Haute. It was in this street that, in October 1714, following the advice of St Louis Marie, M. d'Orville placed a statue of Our Lady over his doorway and knelt in the street to say the Rosary, to put an end to scandalous behaviour in the street. Today there is an old statue of Our Lady on an ancient house at No 30; it may be that this is the site of the incident.

The street which runs West from the corner of the Dominican Convent is the Rue d'Echange. If you walk along here to the Rue de Dinan, and (?) turn right here, you will find the **Vieux St-Etienne church**. Louis Marie's mother, who died in 1718, was buried in this church.

To get back to the car-park, walk back to the Place Saint-Anne, then back down the Rue St-Michel, the Rue Rallier du Baty, and the Rue Clisson. Opposite Saint-Sauveur, take the Rue du Guesclin, then turn right down the Rue de l'Horloge and the Rue de Rohan. This will bring you back to the river, with the Quay Duguay-Trouin on your right.

Pont de Cesson

To get to Cesson, which is five kilometres (3 miles) from the centre of Rennes towards the East, drive East along the Quai Lammenais, through the Place de la République, and along the Quai Emile Zola and the Quai Richemont, then follow the signs towards Chateaubourg, Vitre and Paris, avoiding Motorway routes. As you reach Cesson-Sévigny, a park has been created on the river banks on your left, and there is a car park which is reached by turning left off the main road at traffic lights. You then walk across two small bridges over branches of the river to the main bridge of Cesson.

When Louis Marie set out for Paris at the end of 1692, he was accompanied as far as the Pont de Cesson by his uncle Alain Robert, his brother Joseph and possibly Jean-Baptiste Blain. They would have come to the river from the North side, following the old Paris road, which crossed the river at this point. A horse was offered to Louis Marie to ride at least half of the 300 km to Paris, but he refused it, and said good-bye to everyone. Having crossed the bridge, and when his relations and friends had disappeared, he promptly gave away all his money (10 écus), exchanged his clothes with those of a beggar, and knelt down to make a vow never to possess anything from then on. It was a moment of total abandonment to Providence, which he lived for the rest of his life.

Bécherel, Mont Saint-Michel and Dinan

Bécherel

Bécherel is about 20 km North of Montfort-sur-Meu. Leave Montfort by the Bédée road (left after crossing the railway bridge), passing through Bédée and across the main N12 road.

In 1705, a retreat house had been founded in Bécherel by four ladies of the area, where closed retreats were held (a novelty at the time) for men and women, the preachers being designated by the Bishop of Saint-Malo. St Louis Marie was one of those chosen towards the end of 1706 to preach. According to Grandet, there were more than two hundred Franciscan and Dominican tertiaries who attended this retreat in the house in the Rue Faubourg Berthault, which today is a home for the aged. The chapel where St Louis Marie celebrated Mass and preached, still exists.

* * * * *

Mont Saint-Michel

If you are continuing on from Bécherel to Mont Saint-Michel, it is suggested you take the road to Tinténiac and Combourg (the château here was the home of the writer Châteaubriand), then by way of Trémeheuc, Trans and Pleine-Fougères (not Fougères) to Pontorson, where you will pick up clear signs to Mont Saint-Michel.

The Abbey of Mont Saint-Michel was founded in 966, and was occupied by Benedictine monks until the French Revolution. Later, it served as a prison for many years. A small group of Benedictine monks returned in 1966 (the Millenary), and celebrate the office there every day except during the month of November - the Mass is at 12-15.

We do not know exactly where Louis Marie, accompanied by Brother Mathurin, stayed in Mont Saint-Michel. They arrived on the eve of the feast of St Michael, 28th September, 1706, after his return from Rome, and Louis Marie made a retreat there. The biographies relate the incident of the penance which he inflicted on himself for the blasphemies uttered by some men in the next room. No doubt he celebrated Mass in the parish church of St-Pierre, halfway up the street leading to the Abbey.

Note: the village street and the entrance to the Abbey provide a very steep climb! Anyone suffering from a bad heart might be well-advised not to attempt the visit to the Abbey.

Dinan

The easiest way to get from Mont Saint-Michel to Dinan is to return to Pontorson, then simply follow the signs to Dinan - very straight-forward.

If you are approaching Dinan from Mont Saint-Michel, Rennes or Montfort, you will almost certainly enter the town by way of the viaduct over the Rance. At the far end of the viaduct, follow the main road round to the left and under the walls into the town centre. Except on market-day, there is plenty of parking in the Place du Guesclin or its continuation in the Place du Champ-Clos; from there it is easy to walk to all the Montfortian sites in the town.

After his retreat at Mont Saint-Michel, Louis Marie visited Rennes, then set out to find M. Leuduger in Dinan, perhaps passing through Montfort on the way. On his arrival in Dinan, he lodged with the missionaries who were then preparing a mission in the town. It is thought that they were lodged at **Nos 7-9 Rue de la Croix**. To get there from the parking place in the Place du Guesclin, continue on down the main road until you come to the Hôtel de Ville (which used to be the Hôpital). Cross over the Grande Rue which joins here on the right, and continue on for a few yards; the narrow Rue de la Croix opens on the right-hand side. If this was indeed the lodging place of the missionaries, then it is probably the site of the famous incident of "Ouvrez à Jésus-Christ" (Open up for Jesus Christ): Louis Marie, having found a leper lying in the street, carried him on his shoulders to the house of the missionaries, where, finding the door locked, he hammered on the door crying several times, "Ouvrez à Jésus Christ!"

Return to the main road, and turn left, following the Grande Rue up to the church of **Saint-Malo** on the left. Inside, on the right-hand side, is a beautiful stained-glass window depicting St Louis Marie encouraging the Comte and Comtesse de la Garaye in their work for the poor (see below).

At the East end of the church of St Malo, on the left, is the **Rue de la Garaye**, where you will find the Clinique de la Sagesse, with a certain number of memories of Louis Marie and the Comte and Comtesse de la Garaye: it was the Comte who later asked for a foundation of the Daughters of Wisdom in Dinan, which was founded at his château and later moved to this street. It is thought that this is also the site of the "soupe populaire" (soup-kitchen for the poor) started by St Louis Marie and perhaps the Comte and Comtesse.

Continuing on along the Grande Rue, past the Place des Cordeliers, you will come to the top end of the **Rue du Jerzual**, a beautiful mediaeval street which leads down to the Porte du Jerzual and the old bridge over the Rance. Louis Marie would probably have entered Dinan by this way.

Turning right at the top of the Rue du Jerzual, you pass by the ancient streets of old Dinan, to the Tour de l'Horloge. Turn left here to visit the **Basilica of Saint-Sauveur**, where there is a window on the left which commemorates, among others, St Louis Marie. If you go past the Basilica into the Jardin Anglais, you will have a good view down into the valley of the Rance, with the old bridge on the left.

Return to the Tour de l'Horloge, and turn left. A little further along, on the left-hand side, immediately after the Tourist Office (Syndicat d'Initiative), is the **Théâtre des Jacobins**. This is the old Dominican convent and Church where Louis Marie's brother Joseph-Pierre was a member of the community when he arrived in Dinan. He was the priest in charge of the sacristy. When Louis Marie went to visit him, Joseph-Pierre did not recognise his brother, who asked him, "My dear brother, please give me some Mass vestments; I would like to celebrate Mass at the altar of Blessed Alain de la Roche." Joseph-Pierre was angry at being called "Brother" instead of "Father". It was Brother Mathurin who at length enlightened him as to the identity of this priest, who, on being taken to task for his failure to make himself known, replied, smiling, "What are you complaining about? Didn't I call you my dear brother?"

To return to the car-park in the Place du Guesclin, take the street almost opposite the Théâtre des Jacobins.

Château de la Garaye

The Château de la Garaye is just outside Dinan on the road to Ploubalay (i.e. towards the North West). Coming out of the car-park in the Place du Guesclin, turn right, and follow the main road to the big roundabout in the Place Duclos, shortly after the Hôtel de Ville. Here there should be signs for Ploubalay - you turn right at the roundabout, then left shortly after: keep following the signs, until you find yourself obviously on the way out of Dinan. After a couple of kilometres, the N176 passes over the road you are on; immediately after this bridge, there is a little lane on the right-hand side,

with a sign indicating the Château de la Garaye. Drive right up this lane to the farm at the top; there you will see the ruins of the old château.

The Château de la Garaye was the home of the Comte and Comtesse de la Garaye, a young married couple who had lived a relatively free-and-easy life until, not long before the arrival of Louis Marie in 1706, a series of misfortunes had led to their conversion. They had already begun to welcome the poor into certain buildings belonging to the château. Encouraged by Louis Marie, they converted their stables into a hospital, and there took care of the poor with their own skills: he was a celebrated chemist, and she a well-known oculist. In 1751, they invited the Daughters of Wisdom to come to take charge of this hospital, and this beginning was the origin of the Clinique de la Sagesse in Dinan. Today one can see the ruins of the old château and the stables which became the hospital.

The La Chèze Region

You can approach this area in two different ways from Montfort-sur-Meu.

1. Take the road for Bédée (through the town to the Station and the railway bridge, then turn left). At Bédée, turn left onto the main N12 road, and follow this past Montauban. Two kilometres further on, take the slip road right onto the N164 (the Brest road, probably signposted for St Méen-le-Grand and Merdrignac). Continue on the N164, through St Méen-le-Grand, to Merdrignac. Leave the main road here, to go through Merdrignac to find the D793 to Ménéac and La Trinité-Porhoët. (This is probably the easiest and fastest route).

2. Take the road to Iffendic (see directions above), and there continue on through the village towards Muel and Gaël (the D30). On arriving in Gaël, watch for signs to Mauron and Ploërmel. These will bring you, just outside Gaël, to a junction with a fairly major road (the D166), signposted left to Mauron and Ploërmel, and right to St Méen-le-Grand. Ahead of you should be a road signposted for St Brieuc-de-Mauron. Take this road, and when you arrive in St Brieuc-de-Mauron, watch for the signs to La Trinité-Porhoët (the D2).

In 1707, the mission team of M. Leuduger, including St Louis Marie, came to La Chèze to preach a mission, almost three centuries after St Vincent Ferrier, seeing the ruins of the little chapel of Notre Dame de Pitié, had prophesied that a man sent by God, a man unknown and contradicted, would rebuild the chapel. During the mission of La Chèze, St Louis Marie declared that he was that man, and set about rallying the people of the area to help him in this great enterprise. The work continued when the mission team moved on to the next parish at Plumieux. Statues were ordered from Nantes and delivered to La Trinité-Porhoët. At the end of the mission of Plumieux, all was ready, and a great procession, with participants from twenty or thirty surrounding parishes, escorted the statues the ten kilometres from La Trinité-Porhoët, through Plumieux, to Notre Dame de Pitié at La Chèze. St Louis Marie returned to La Chèze twice more during that year, at the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost, and the devotion he had aroused in the people of the area continued for many years afterwards.

La Trinité-Porhoët

It is not sure that St Louis Marie preached a mission here, but it is known that the statues for La Chèze were delivered here and carried in procession to La Chèze. Also about this time, Louis Marie was passing through La Trinité-Porhoët one evening with Brother Mathurin, when he found a group of parishioners singing the Litany of Our Lady before the ancient statue of Notre Dame de la Clarté in the church porch. When they had finished, he encouraged them to continue their daily devotions to Mary, and the practice continued for many years afterwards. Today the old statue is kept inside the church, at the left hand side of the sanctuary arch. In the church there is also, as a reredos, a magnificent "Tree of Jesse", and, in the left-hand wall of the nave, a stained-glass window representing Louis Marie's meeting with the parishioners in the porch.

Plumieux

Take the road out of La Trinité-Porhoët towards Plumieux and La Chèze. The missionaries lodged in Plumieux at the Inn of the Four Winds (l'Auberge des Quatre Vents), which has since disappeared, but stood where the "self-service" (take-away shop) now stands near the church. The church itself has been replaced since the time of St Louis Marie.

La Chèze - Chapel of Notre Dame de Pitié

Continue on the road through Plumieux, a further 7 kilometres, to La Chèze. At the entrance to the town, at a little roundabout, on the right-hand side, stands the Chapel of Notre Dame de Pitié, restored by St Louis Marie during the course of the missions in La Chèze and Plumieux in 1707. Behind the altar, at the foot of the crucifix, is the statue of Our Lady of Pity, with the dead Christ in her lap, which was presented to the chapel by St Louis Marie;



Figure 7: Notre Dame de la Clarté

the other statues, it seems, have since disappeared. On the right-hand side of the sanctuary hangs a painting of Mary sheltering the sick and the lame, with St Louis Marie himself kneeling at the left-hand side. It is said that this painting was made by Louis Marie himself. If you can find the parish priest, he will be very happy to talk to you about the chapel, and he has some leaflets describing it further.



Figure 8: Chapel of N.D. de Pitié, La Chèze

Drive into the town and up the main street. Immediately after crossing the river, the main road bends right. There is a road straight ahead, which you should now take. After a couple of hundred yards, turn right along a little lane which may be signposted "La Grange". Do a couple of left turns within a few yards, and you will see an old building, looking like a farm, on the right (you are pointing back towards the road you left a few moments ago). There is a sort of lane parallel with the little road you are on, separated from it by a hedge, which passes under an archway. This is the former hunting lodge of the Duc de Rohan, and it was here that Louis Marie stayed while he was in La Chèze. Park, and go in under the archway, where there is a little wooden door

set into the right-hand wall. Enter and go up the spiral staircase (mind your head!) to the room above the archway, Louis Marie's room, converted into a small chapel by Father Thomas de la Penthière.

Drive back through the town to Notre Dame de Pitié, and take the road that leads back to La Trinité-Porhoët (there is a left turn to make just a little way after the chapel). In about another kilometre, turn left on the road to La Ferrière.

La Ferrière

An interesting old church (15th and 16th centuries), with old wooden Breton statues. Also an ancient Breton Calvary opposite the church.

Continue on towards Plémet, until you come to the main N164 road. Turn right to return by the most direct route to Bédée, and hence to Montfort-sur-Meu.

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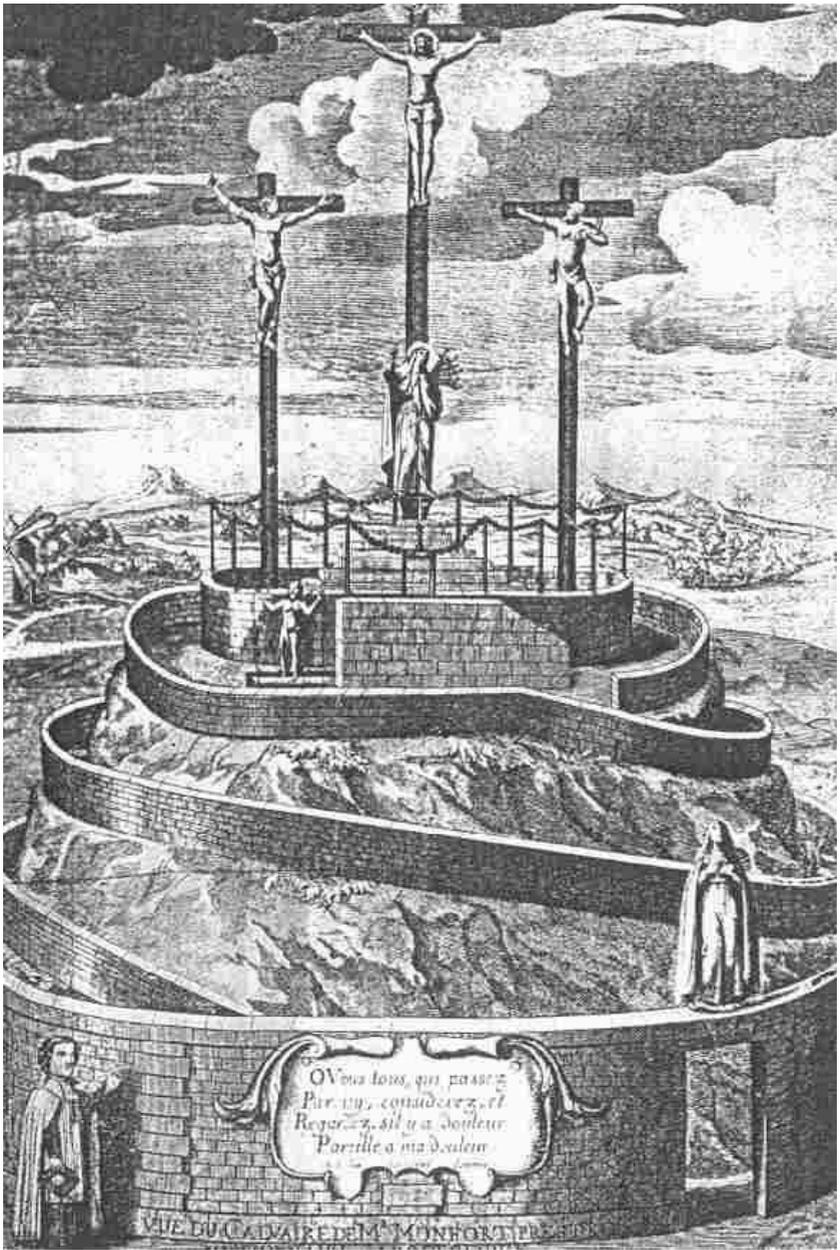


Figure 9: The Calvary at Pontchâteau
(from a contemporary engraving by Huraud)

Pontchâteau and Nantes Area

Pontchâteau

St Louis Marie's calvary is at Le Calvaire, four kilometres to the West of Pontchâteau. The easiest way to reach it, whether you are coming from Montfort-sur-Meu or from the South, is to use the by-pass road (the N165) which runs round the North side of Pontchâteau.

If you are coming from Montfort-sur-Meu, head first of all for Redon (which, incidentally is twinned with Andover in Hampshire), then take the road for St Nazaire, passing through St Gildas-des-Bois (the mother house of the Sisters of St Gildas, founded by Fr Deshayes) and Drefféac. Four kilometres after Drefféac (2.5 miles), turn right onto the N165 (signposted for Vannes), then leave it again by the next exit (slip road to the right - signposted Beaulieu, Herbignac, etc). You drive 100 metres or so on the slip road before coming to the bridge over the main road (Avia garage on the far corner); turn left to cross over the main road. At the cross-roads at the other side, you will see the sign indicating Le Calvaire straight ahead. Half a mile down this road, turn right at the T-junction. The Calvary is on your right. The first building after this is the Missionary Museum. Opposite is a little road leading to the Hôtellerie and parking areas.

If, by any chance, you should miss the turning onto the N165 (it is a bit difficult to see, for example, in the dark), continue on towards the centre of Pontchâteau. When you come to a cross-roads with traffic lights, turn right (it is signposted Le Calvaire, among other things), follow this road round a right-hand bend, then, after another hundred and fifty yards or so, turn left towards Le Calvaire and Herbignac. When you come to the 60 km/hr zone, you have reached Le Calvaire. Drive on until you see the Calvary itself on your right.

If you are coming from the South (e.g. Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre), you need to take the road for Vannes from Nantes (the N165). If you have taken the new high Cheviré Bridge to cross the Loire and avoid Nantes centre, watch for the directions to Vannes - you will eventually join the N165. You have a dual-carriageway for quite a long way, then the road narrows to three lanes (after the turn-off for St Nazaire - keep heading for Vannes). After another 10 km or so, the first turn-off for Pontchâteau appears (ignore it) then the road becomes dual-carriageway again. The exit for Le Calvaire is two exits after this (do not take the Pontchâteau exits), signposted for Beaulieu and Herbignac. Then follow the directions above.

Le Calvaire de Pontchâteau

Le Calvaire is much more than the Calvary, though that is clearly the centre-piece. The first Calvary was built in 1709-10 by the people of this area, following the preaching of St Louis Marie during the mission of Pontchâteau. Some of his enemies persuaded King Louis XIV that, at that time of war, the hill which had been raised could be used as a fortified encampment by English sailors in case of an invasion. The King ordered the destruction of the Calvary (for the details see, for example, Le Crom). It was rebuilt in 1821, by the Abbé Gouray, parish priest of Pontchâteau, whose tomb can be seen at the side of the chapel at the foot of the Calvary, and modified again some 40 years later. Thirty or so sites or monuments were erected at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, largely through the zeal of Fr. Barré, whose tomb can be found on the site. [For a fuller history of the Calvary, see the Appendix, page 83]

Today the site is probably much more ambitious than even St Louis Marie had imagined it, but very much in his spirit, combining popular but solid devotion with a cat echesis which involves much visual display (frescoes, dramatic reconstructions, displays of scripture texts, etc.). All the mysteries of the Rosary are represented, as well as the Way of the Cross.

A leaflet in English can be obtained, either from the little information centre next to the chapel at the foot of the Calvary, or (if that is closed), from the Montfortian Community house opposite the big Pilgrimage Chapel, the Museum, or the Sisters' house. It contains a plan of the site and a suggested route taking in all the different sites and monuments.

Perhaps the most precious material souvenir of St Louis Marie here (apart from the Calvary itself), is the **figure of Christ on the Cross** in the chapel at the foot of the Calvary. It is the figure Louis Marie had bought, in the first place, for his proposed Calvary at Montfort-sur-Meu (see above). Along with the other figures for the Calvary, it was kept for the Pontchâteau Calvary. When that was demolished, all the statues were taken to the Hospital for Incurables in Nantes (the Cour Catuit), and the figure of Christ eventually found its way back to Pontchâteau. The cross on which it is mounted recalls the Mission Cross which was erected in Montbernage in 1705, on which were hung many of the "little hearts" of those who had renewed their Baptismal

vows during the mission. The frescoes in this chapel represent scenes from the life of St Louis Marie; an English text explaining them is to be found in the chapel. The chapel itself appears to have been here even before St Louis Marie's day, perhaps in ruins, since the Bishop of Nantes of the day said that he had ordered its re-establishment. It was spared when the Calvary was condemned, and was soon afterwards completed. It was restored in 1747 by Fr Audubon.

In the immediate vicinity of Le Calvaire are two of the little hamlets which are mentioned as having provided food for the poorer of the volunteers working on the building of the Calvary. Walk down the road opposite the Museum, past the Hôtellerie, to the Route du Père de Montfort, and there turn right, then walk down the road past the Sisters' house (on the left, at the end of a short lane, is the *Fontaine du Père de Montfort*, said to be the spring where the workers obtained water during the building of the Calvary). About a quarter of a mile further on you will come to *Les Métairies*; this is where the farmer is said to have hidden so as not to have to give his last crust to the workers, but was then discovered by Louis Marie. Returning towards the Calvary, on the right at the crossroads is the Route de la Madeleine. A little way down here, the houses set back a distance from the road form *La Viauderie*; here the widow Jeanne Guigan is said to have seen Louis Marie talking to a lady in white while he was on his way to take a meal with her. When he arrived, she was surprised to find him alone, and on questioning him about the lady in white, was told by him that it had been the Blessed Virgin.

A little further along the Route de la Madeleine, in the field on the left-hand side, can be seen the large standing stone, the *menhir* known as the Madeleine, which can also be seen from the back of the Scala Sancta. Its presence, and the fact that the whole of this area on which the Calvary is built was known as La Lande de la Madeleine, could provide another explanation, apart from the fact that this is the highest point in the area, and apart from the legend of the doves at Sainte Reine de Bretagne (see below), as to why St Louis Marie chose this spot to build his Calvary. Often the name "Madeleine" applied to a place indicated the presence of practices in the area which were in some way reprehensible, perhaps going back to pagan customs. The menhir of the Madeleine would indicate ancient pagan rituals in the area. Did St Louis Marie have it in mind to "cleanse" this area by making it a place of Christian devotion?

In the Temple of Jerusalem at Le Calvaire, in the large roofed hall, can be seen a relic of St Louis Marie's mission at Crossac, which probably was given just before the mission at Pontchâteau; it is the pulpit in which he preached in the old church at Crossac. When the new church was built, the pulpit was given to St Guillaume, and was brought to Le Calvaire in 1987. The support of the table with the statue of Our Lady in this hall is the sounding-board which was above the pulpit, while the front of the altar holds the underside of this.

Before the mission in Pontchâteau in 1709, and during the building of the Calvary, St Louis Marie preached in many places in the area. If you have time, you might like to visit some of these places.

Campbon

The mission at Campbon, 10 km from Pontchâteau, took place in Lent 1709. It was here that St Louis Marie incurred the wrath of the Sénéchal of the Ducs de Coislin, Guischard de la Chauvelière, by having all the tombstones removed from the church and the arms of the Ducs de Coislin painted over. M. de la Chauvelière arrested Louis Marie at the time but could not get the consent of his master to proceed against him in law; he bided his time, however, and it was he who engineered the royal edict ordering the destruction of the Calvary in 1710. It was in the hamlet of Montmignac, just outside Campbon on the Pontchâteau side, that a group of men lay in wait for Louis Marie and M. des Bastières, who were due to go from Campbon to Pontchâteau. M. des Bastières heard of the plot, and, with difficulty, persuaded St Louis Marie to delay the journey. But somehow the news reached Nantes that the two priests had been killed, and some good people had already asked for Masses to be said for the repose of their souls!

Crossac

The mission in Crossac, 6 or 7 km from Pontchâteau, took place after the mission in Campbon. Once again, the church was cleared of its tombstones, but this time St Louis Marie took the precaution of having a notary witness an agreement made by the parishioners that they would no longer demand their right to be buried in the church. As mentioned above, the pulpit in which St Louis Marie preached in the church at Crossac is now at Le Calvaire.

Sainte Reine de Bretagne

According to one tradition, it was here (4 km down the road from Le Calvaire in the direction of Herbignac) that Louis Marie first began the building of the Calvary. The story of the two doves which kept carrying off the soil and depositing it at the present site, is perhaps legendary, but there is still, according to Le Crom, a little hillock recalling the memory of the work begun here (is this the site of the present calvary of Sainte Reine?). There is a fine statue of St Louis Marie in a little park near the church.

Besné, La Chapelle-de-Marais, Missillac, Herbignac, Camoël and Assérac, according to Le Crom, were all places where Louis Marie preached. Most could be visited in a round trip of three hours or so. The same circuit should include St Molf, the last place where he preached in the diocese of Nantes.

St Molf

On the Sunday following the day on which the Calvary was to be blessed, still not knowing that the King had ordered its destruction, knowing only that the Bishop would not allow it to be blessed, St Louis Marie began a mission at St Molf, 27 km from Pontchâteau, near Guérande. However, within a week, M. Olivier, the priest with whom he had been working for some time, but whom he did not want to work with in this mission, arrived with a note from the Bishop, forbidding him to preach or hear confessions in his diocese from that moment on, and appointing M. Olivier himself to finish the mission at St Molf. On reading the note, St Louis Marie is said to have wept. He left immediately, hoping to get the Bishop to relent, and it was only then that he learnt of the order to destroy the Calvary. He was not, however, forbidden to say Mass; so he took up residence in the Rue des Hauts-Pavés in Nantes (see below), where he stayed for some months, perhaps waiting for a sign from God, and in the meantime occupying himself with work for the Hospital for Incurables, with writing and with prayer; until, about the beginning of Lent 1711, he left for Luçon and La Rochelle.

Nantes

Parking in Nantes is not always easy. There is a fairly large parking area in the Cours St André, entrance in the Place Maréchal Foch, near the Cathedral, which is fairly central for the various Montfortian sites; or you may be able to find a parking place in the streets to the East of here; or, perhaps as a last resort, you could ask to park in the grounds of the La Sagesse convent, next to the Jardin des Plantes in the Rue Frédéric Cailliaud. Nantes also has a fairly extensive one-way street system, so be careful. The area in the town centre, especially to the West of the Cours des 50 Otages, is largely pedestrianised (i.e. with priority to pedestrians, though you can drive through), and so tends to become very congested for motor traffic - it is best to avoid these areas in a car, if possible.

St Clément

St Louis Marie stayed here, in the community of M. René Lévêque, from Autumn 1700 until the end of August 1701, apart from the time he was away in Fontevault and Poitiers, and when he gave missions in Grandchamp and Le Pellerin. His letters of the time, nos 5 to 9, show that he was not happy there.

The building which housed the community of St Clément is now the Fire Station (Pompiers) in the Rue Maréchal Joffre, which runs up North West from the Place Maréchal Foch. The church of St Clément is reached just before this, a 19th century building with, in the apse, a 16th century Madonna, Notre Dame de Toute Grâce.

Convent of the Visitation

Walking from St Clément church, SW down the Rue Guib. De Luzinais, or the Rue Lorette de la Refoulais, you come to the Rue Gambetta. Here the cloisters of this convent can be seen. Louis Marie was the Spiritual Director to several of the Sisters here.

La Grande Providence

At the Place Sophie Trébuchet, on the left-hand side as you are facing away from the city centre, the Rue Gaston Turpin joins the Rue Gambetta. The

Sisters of Providence run a Maison de Retraite here at No. 87. At the entrance is a statue of St Louis Marie with a poor man.

St Donatien

Continuing up the Rue Gaston Turpin as far as the Rue des Coulmiers, then turning left, brings you back to the Rue Maréchal Joffre. Turn right and take the next street on the left, the Rue Evêque Emilien. Here is the church of St Donatien, where St Louis Marie preached a mission in June 1710, during which he had some banners made. In the church, on the left near the choir, is a picture representing great devotees of the Rosary, among them St Louis Marie. In the cemetery near the church is the chapel of St Stephen, which is very ancient. Louis Marie put a statue here of Our Lady, Queen of all Hearts. On 21st June 1710, he also blessed a bell here, called Anne-Marie, of which he was the "godfather".

The next sites to be visited are at the other side of the city centre, so you may wish to park a little closer (it is about 2.5 km from St Donatien, about half that from the parking area in Cours St André). There is parking, if you can get a space, in the Place Viarme, which is central for both sites.

St Similien

From the Place Viarme, walk SW down the Rue Sarrazin to the Place St Similien. Here is the church of St Similien, where St Louis Marie preached a mission in 1708, during which he established an association of the Friends of the Cross. In the present church, which is built on the site of the old one, is a statue of St Louis Marie behind the choir, and a window showing him in prayer, above Our Lady of Mercy.

La Cour Catuit (Hospital for Incurables)



Figure 10: The Hospital for Incurables, Nantes

Walk back to the Place Viarme, then up the right side of the Place, to the Rue des Hauts Pavés (which, incidentally, is the road to Vannes, therefore the road you would take to drive from here to Pontchâteau). It was here, at nos 19-21, in the Cour Catuit, that St Louis Marie normally stayed, in "La Providence", when he was in Nantes, notably after the interdiction of the Calvary in Pontchâteau, and where he founded the Hospital for Incurables. The old buildings have completely disappeared, but there is a plaque which commemorates St Louis Marie's presence here.

Two other sites might be of interest.

Place du Sanitat

This square is near the North bank of the river, close to the Place Cdt. J. L'Herminier, just West of the Pont Anne de Bretagne. It is in front of the church of St Louis (or N.D. du Bon Port). The hospital (Sanitat) was to the right of the church. It was used as a prison during the French Revolution, and a number of Daughters of Wisdom were imprisoned there. The Brothers mentioned in St Louis Marie's will are said to have taught there.

Rue Grande Biesse and Petite Biesse

These are to be found on the Ile de Nantes, just at the other side of the Pont Gal. Audibert over the Madeleine arm of the river, to the west of the Boulevard des Martyrs Nantais. It was here that Louis Marie went to the aid of the inhabitants during the flooding of January 1711.

The Nantes Region

South of the Loire is a region where St Louis Marie was very active in preaching missions in 1708, as well as the one in Bouguenais in 1710. If you wish to visit these places, the order in which you take them will probably depend on where you are coming from, and on whether you want to see them all, or concentrate on a few. The descriptions below are in the order in which the missions occurred. A schematic map is provided to help you locate the places, but the Michelin 1/200,000 map no. 67 or 232 would be invaluable for anyone wishing to visit.

St Julien-de-Concelles

No mission was preached here, but in the Lady Chapel, on the right-hand wall, is the text of St Louis Marie's renunciation in 1700 of the chaplaincy of St Julien-de-Concelles, which had been given him in 1695 by Mme. de Mortemart, thus enabling him to attend the Petit Saint Sulpice. In the choir is a window representing St Louis Marie.

Vallet

St Louis Marie preached a mission here in September/October 1708, accompanied by Brother Mathurin, who summoned the people to the mission by ringing his bell and singing "Alerte, alerte, alerte, la mission est ouverte". The "Providence" (residence of the missionaries) was at No 10 Rue François Luneau; the old presbytery at nos 17-19. On the heights of Fromenteau, M. Barrin (Vicar General of Nantes) gave a piece of land where the Mission Cross was erected at the close of the mission.

St Christophe-la-Couperie, La Boissière-du-Doré, and La Remaudière

St Louis Marie preached a mission in these three parishes towards the end of 1708, after the mission at Vallet, principally in the church at La Boissière.

Landemont

The mission here took place towards the end of 1708, after the one at La Boissière-du-Doré. There were two religious centres here in Louis Marie's day: Notre-Dame and Saint Sauveur. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him

La Chevrolière

St Louis Marie preached the mission here, accompanied by M. des Bastières, in November 1708. The parish priest, who had not himself asked for the mission, and who was in conflict with a number of noble families of the region who were favourable to Louis Marie, made a lot of difficulties for the missionaries. St Louis Marie sought strength by praying often in the chapel of Notre-Dame des Ombres, which still exists on the property of Les Huguetières. There is a statue of Louis Marie on the left-hand side of the facade of the present-day church in La Chevrolière; and the house where he stayed during the mission is at the end of the Impasse Montfort.

Vertou

The mission here followed that at La Chevrolière, therefore towards the end of 1708. The welcome given St Louis Marie by the parishioners was so warm, and everything seemed to be going so well, that he said to M. des Bastières, "It is bad for us here!". M. des Bastières, surprised, replied, "Not at all. Where would we find a better place?" "The problem is," Louis Marie replied, "that we are too much at ease here. The mission will be fruitless. No cross, what a cross!" M. des Bastières had great difficulty in persuading him to stay. In fact, the mission was a great success. Brother Pierre, who was with them during this mission, was cured suddenly when Louis Marie laid hands on him. The mission ended with a great bonfire.

St Fiacre - Châteauthébaud

This mission took place in December 1708, when the terrible winter of 1708-9 had already set in. St Louis Marie lodged during the mission at Châteauthébaud, in the house of the missionaries of St Clément, at La Chauvinière; the chapel where he said Mass can still be seen. In the present-day church at St Fiacre, the fresco in the vault of the choir shows St Louis Marie kneeling, leaning on the cross.

Bouguenais

St Louis Marie preached the mission here in 1710, and inaugurated the banners which had been made at St Donatien. In the present church, there is a stained-glass window which recalls the saving of St Louis Marie's donkey: while preaching one day, he suddenly stopped and cried out, "Two men are

needed to go and save my donkey, which is drowning at the bottom of the village!" Some men went and found it exactly as he had said.

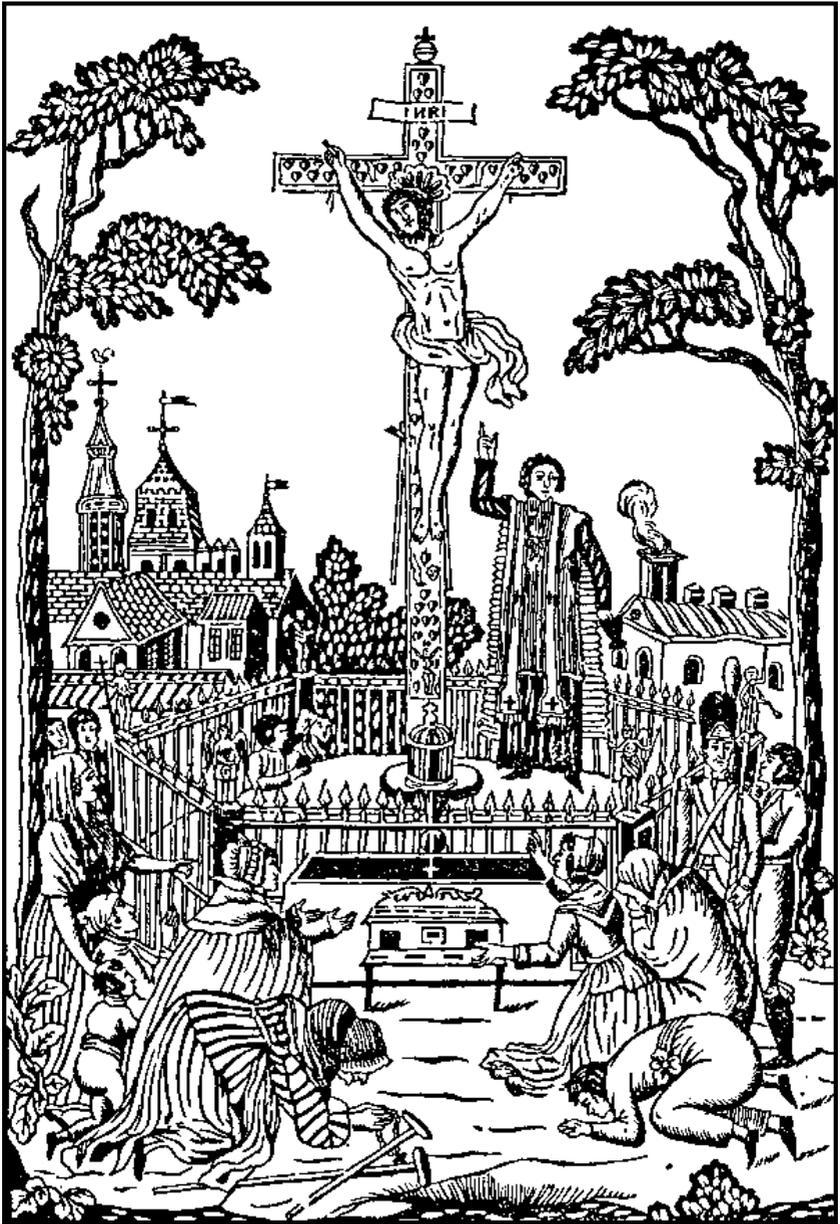


Figure 42: A mission preached by Fr. de Montfort
(from an old engraving)

Southern Area (based on St Laurent-sur-Sèvre)

Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre (Tomb of St. Louis Marie)

To reach St Laurent (which may not be marked on small-scale maps), from Montfort-sur-Meu or Pontchâteau, you make for Nantes, either by-passing it almost completely by the new Cheviré Bridge to the West of the city, or skirting the northern and eastern outskirts, following the Poitiers road. Leaving Nantes, you follow the Poitiers directions, and then have a choice of the route via Cholet or Clisson and Mortagne-sur-Sèvre. The Cholet route is a relatively new road, but is not necessarily faster than the other, which many may find more interesting. If you choose to take the Cholet road (the N249), when you get to the vicinity of Cholet, you continue to follow the directions for Poitiers (you pass quite close to La Séguinière, which you might wish to visit on the way if you have time - see below); as the new route is completed, you will probably by-pass Cholet altogether, or at most skirt its western side, and will be led in the direction of Mortagne-sur-Sèvre, where the Poitiers road leaves that for Les Herbiers and La Roche-sur-Yon. The other route (the N149) passes through Clisson; it leaves the Nantes-Cholet road several kilometres after clearing Nantes, and takes you eventually through Mortagne-sur-Sèvre; just keep following the directions for Poitiers. Four or five km after Mortagne-sur-Sèvre, you come to La Trique, where there are traffic lights at the junction with the road into Saint Laurent; turn right here, drive down the hill until you see the right-hand turn over the bridge into the town centre. On your right is St Gabriel Institute. In front of its main entrance, a little square, on the left, with the street leading to the Basilica. In front of the Basilica, turn right for the Saint-Esprit (SMM) and La Sagesse. Saint-Esprit is on the right-hand side, La Sagesse on the left.

St Louis Marie's St Laurent

St Louis Marie died here during the mission which he was preaching in April 1716. According to the tradition, he died in what is now the Chambre Mortuaire in La Sagesse (just inside the main door, not the archway leading to the Chêne Vert). It was here that he dictated his will on 27th April, and where he died at 8 o'clock in the evening on 28th April. The "châsse" (the glass case containing the wax effigy of St Louis Marie) is of interest, in that from the front and from the back, the face seems to take on a different expression: from

the back, in agony; from the front, joyful. The crucifix in his hand is that which he had blessed by Pope Clement XI during his pilgrimage to Rome in 1706.

St Louis Marie was buried the day after his death in the parish church of St Laurent in front of the altar of Our Lady. His tomb in the present-day Basilica is on the same spot; when the old parish church was demolished to make way for the Basilica, the orientation of the church was changed by approximately 90 degrees. In front of the

tomb of St Louis Marie, surrounded by a railing is that of Mother Marie-Louise of Jesus (Marie-Louise Trichet), co-founder with him of the Daughters of Wisdom, who died, also on 28th April and also towards 8 o'clock in the evening, in 1759. In front of these two is the tomb of the Marquis de Magnanne, whom St Louis Marie met in Rennes in 1714 and who became a great friend and benefactor of the Daughters of Wisdom and the nascent Company of Mary. On the wall behind St Louis Marie's tomb is an earlier tombstone bearing one of three epitaphs supplied for his tomb. Another, written by M. Barrin, Vicar-General of Nantes, may be seen in the Maison Longue (see below). The present one on the tomb may have been written by the Marquis de Magnanne.

On the wall to the right of St Louis Marie's tomb in the Basilica is the original mission cross which was erected the day of his burial, following his own

Traveller, What do you see?

A light quenched
A man consumed by the fire of Charity
Who became all things to all men
Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort
If you ask what was his life:
There was none more holy;
His penance: none more austere;
His zeal: none more ardent;
His devotion to Mary: none more like St Bernard.
A priest of Christ, he showed forth
Christ in his actions, and preached
Him everywhere in his words.
Indefatigable, he rested only in the grave.
Father of the poor,
Protector of orphans,
Reconciler of sinners.
His glorious death was the image of his life;
As he had lived, so he died.
Ripe for God he passed to heaven
April 28th 1716
Aged 43 years

custom, on the site of the present-day monument to the dead at the top end of the town.

The St Laurent of the first Montfortians

In 1720, Mother Marie-Louise of Jesus came with a group of her sisters to take up residence in St Laurent, in the **Maison Longue**, now part of the SMM residence. Today it is an interesting museum devoted to the life and works of St Louis Marie and the way of life of the first Daughters of Wisdom. Brother Nicolas will be glad to show you over it.

In 1722, Mother Marie-Louise persuaded Father Mulot and his few companions, who had taken up residence in Saint-Pompain after the death of St Louis Marie, to come to St Laurent. They occupied the **Chêne Vert**, in the grounds of La Sagesse, until in 1723, because of the increasing numbers of Sisters, they exchanged residences with the Daughters of Wisdom, going to live in the Maison Longue, while the Sisters moved to the Chêne Vert.

In 1835, Fr Deshayes, Superior of the missionaries of the Saint-Esprit, installed 33 brothers in the **Maison Supiot**. This group of Brothers was later to develop into the Congregation of the Brothers of St Gabriel. The Maison Supiot was the first part of what is today the very large Institut Saint Gabriel.

Other things of interest in St Laurent

In the Saint-Esprit, the SMM residence: the "**old St-Esprit**", built just before the French Revolution. The revolutionaries tried to burn it down; burnt beams may be seen in the reception room to the left of the front door. Here also is kept the statue reputed to have been carved by St Louis Marie and found at Landemont. In the garden at the back is a **monument to three Brothers** murdered in the grounds at the time of the Revolution. The **chapel** at the Saint-Esprit is a beautiful Romanesque church on a small scale.

In La Sagesse: the **Chapel** of the Daughters of Wisdom, built in the 19th century; the **exhibition of souvenirs** of St Louis Marie and his first followers; the **cemetery**; the **tomb of Fr Gabriel Deshayes** in the fourteenth Station of the Way of the Cross.

At St-Gabriel: the **exhibition** relating the origins of the Brothers of St Gabriel.

The neighbourhood of St Laurent

La Séguinière



Figure 5: N.D. de Toute Patience

La Séguinière is close to Cholet on the West side. To reach it from St Laurent, take the road towards Cholet. When you reach the outskirts of Cholet, follow the signs for Nantes: you will turn left onto the Cholet by-pass road, follow it round the SW corner of the town, then turn left on the road for Nantes. After a couple of kilometres, the main Nantes road crosses the road you are on; instead of turning right for Nantes, drive straight ahead. Soon you are in La Séguinière; take the road for the Centre-Ville on the right. After a short distance, you should turn left to get to the church, Post Office etc. There is a small parking space opposite the church, next to the Post Office.

Towards the end of May 1713, St Louis Marie arrived in La Séguinière to preach a mission. The parish priest here was an Irishman, called in the biographies Kentin (his

name was, in fact, Keating), whom Louis Marie called "the priest after my own heart", and whom he had met in 1712 when this good priest was chaplain at the hospital in La Rochelle. During the mission, St Louis Marie restored a

small chapel in the village, which he dedicated to Notre-Dame de Toute Patience.

In the church today is a beautiful series of stained-glass windows, depicting alternately scenes from St Louis Marie's life and events of the Vendéen uprising during the Revolution.

On leaving the church, turn left and take the lane at the far right hand corner of the little square. A few yards along, on the left at the corner of a small street, is "Fr. de Montfort's fountain". A little further along on the right, just beyond the cemetery gates, is the Chapel of Notre-Dame de Toute Patience. Inside, in the sanctuary, is the small statue of Notre-Dame de Toute Patience, which is attributed to him.

Walk back to the square by the church, and take the road running between the church and the Post Office, keeping to the right. The first turn right brings you to the old bridge over the river where Fr Keating is said to have come to meet St Louis Marie when he arrived for the mission (the scene is recorded in one of the windows in the church).

Cantique no. 145 (Cantique nouveau en l'honneur de N.D. de toute patience) was probably written by St Louis Marie during this mission.

Roussay

Roussay, where St Louis Marie preached a mission in May 1714, while on his way to Rouen to see Jean-Baptiste Blain, is a little further back towards Nantes from La Séguinière. If you go back to the road from Cholet which passes through the outskirts of La Séguinière, and follow it West (away from Cholet), you come to La Romagne. Here you should turn right to reach Roussay, about 5 km distance.

It was here at Roussay that St Louis Marie drove the drinkers from the tavern because of the noise which was going on during his sermon. Here also he restored an old chapel of Our Lady, which became a centre of pilgrimage. And during the erection of the Mission Cross at the close of the mission, the cross fell on the crowd, but miraculously only one person was slightly injured. This cross was destroyed during the Revolution, but was later replaced by the chapel of the "petit Arceau" in the Rue Montfort.

The "Providence" where St Louis Marie lodged during the mission is still to be seen, and at the presbytery is a statue of the Blessed Virgin sculpted by him, and a soup-pot known as "Fr de Montfort's soup-pot".

Saint Amand-sur-Sèvre

Here St Louis Marie began a mission on Good Friday, April 19th 1715, which lasted probably until the end of May. To reach St Amand-sur-Sèvre from Saint Laurent, take the road towards Mauléon and Poitiers, and watch for the signs indicating St Amand on the right. It is about 15 km.

Fr Vatel accompanied Louis Marie for the first time during this mission; but, along with two other missionaries, was required only to hear confessions; St Louis Marie did all the preaching. It is said many physical cures were obtained during this mission, and the superstition which had plagued the parish was banished completely.

In the church is a window on the right which shows the appearance of Our Lady to St Louis Marie which is supposed to have taken place here. In the presbytery is a statue attributed to him. Also to be seen are the "Providence", the chapels of La Brangerie and of La Miséricorde, which are relics of two of the three mission crosses erected by St Louis Marie; and, not far from the river, the stone on which he stood to preach outdoors because of the enormous crowds who came.

* * * * *

Poitiers

As you approach Poitiers, coming from Saint-Laurent, take the road towards the Centre Ville. You will find yourself descending a hill into a valley, where the railway will appear on your right. After a short distance running along the side of the railway, you come to a big junction, where you have to turn right, then continue straight on, following the signs for Lussac, Chauvigny, etc. This road bends right, with the river Clain on your left; just before the bend, on the right, is the Rue M. Gabillet, which continues after a short distance as the Rue Grignon de Montfort; it is here that you will find the Hôpital Général. However, you may wish to visit first Montbernage; in this case do not turn at the Rue M. Gabillet, but continue on the main road. A park is now between the road and the River Clain, and after a short distance, you pass under a fly-over. When the River again comes close to the road, watch for the next bridge over the river, where there are traffic lights. This is the Pont Joubert, and to reach Montbernage, you need to cross the Pont Joubert (turning left to do so - careful, it is quite narrow), then turn left again at the other side of the bridge. After driving a little way along this street, you will see the fly-over again ahead of you. The road bends fairly sharply right, and right on that bend, to your right, is the entrance to the chapel at Montbernage (opposite the Mission Cross on the left).

Poitiers is an old city, with narrow streets, so parking is often a problem. You should be able to park at Montbernage, but it is a bit of a walk back to the city and the other sites from there. The best thing, after you have visited Montbernage, or before if you want to leave that till later, is to continue along the main road you were on (if you have been to Montbernage, cross back over the Pont Joubert and turn left at the other side) until you come to the next major junction (traffic lights). Here turn right, then try to find somewhere to park close by. You are near the Cathedral and the Baptistery of St Jean and the church of Sainte Radegonde, etc., and it is relatively easy to walk from here into the centre and to the other Montfortian sites (though it is bit of a climb up into the city centre). Alternatively, you could try to find a parking place near the Hôpital Général, and walk from there. It would help you greatly to obtain a small plan of the centre of Poitiers; they are available at many paper-shops or tobacconists, or you may pick one up free at a tourist centre or Syndicat d'Initiative.

The various places of Montfortian interest are described below in roughly chronological order, but to visit them it may be best to plan an itinerary for yourself.

The Hôpital Général

St Louis Marie first came to the Hôpital Général (much more like the English "workhouse" than a hospital in the modern sense) during his brief visit to Poitiers in May 1701 to see the Bishop at the suggestion of Mme. de Montespan. He took up residence there at the end of November that year, after nearly two months waiting at the seminary, and stayed until Easter 1703 (apart from a brief visit to Paris to help his sister, Louise-Guyonne). He returned about Easter 1704, and stayed this time for about a year, before finally breaking his ties with the Hôpital.



Figure 6: The Hôpital Général, Poitiers

The Hôpital has now been converted into offices and flats, but the main building still preserves more or less the external form it had in St Louis Marie's day. It lies between the Rue Grignon de Montfort and the Rue Jean Macé. Today its facade is best seen

from the Rue Grignon de Montfort; you can then pass into the courtyard, under the central archway. From the courtyard, as you face the old building, on the left was the men's courtyard, and the women's on the right. Louis Marie's room is thought to have been just over the archway. At the extreme right-hand corner of the courtyard, on the ground floor was "La Sagesse", where Marie-Louise Trichet and Catherine Brunet spent 10 years before being called by St Louis Marie to go to La Rochelle, and where he placed the famous Poitiers Cross.

Near by is the **Eglise Montierneuf**. It was in the Montierneuf neighbourhood that Marie-Louise Trichet's mother's family lived.

Saint Porchaire

During his time of waiting to go to the Hôpital Général, and perhaps afterwards also, St Louis Marie heard confessions in the church of Saint Porchaire, as well as in others. His confessional was much in demand. It was perhaps here that he first came into contact with Marie-Louise Trichet in 1701: "Who sent you to me?" "It was my sister." "No, my child, it was the Blessed Virgin."

Saint Porchaire is to be found in the centre of the old city, in the Rue St Porchaire, at its junction with the Rue Gambetta.

At the other end of the Rue Gambetta, on the right in the square, is the **Palais de Justice**, where Marie-Louise Trichet's father and brother worked. It was also here that Joan of Arc's voices were recognised as authentic.

Not far away from here is the beautiful Romanesque church of **Notre-Dame la Grande**, where no doubt St Louis Marie came often to pray. Inside is a famous statue of the Virgin, N.D. des Clefs. At the East end of this church is a square where the Trichet family lived for seven years. The church of **St Etienne**, where Marie-Louise was baptised, was nearby, but little remains of it today.



Figure 7: The "Wisdom Cross" of Poitiers

Maison des Pénitentes, 89 rue des Feuillants

About June 1705, St Louis Marie finally left the Hôpital Général and offered his services to the Bishop to preach and restore churches. The Bishop initially placed him in the Maison des Pénitentes, a house of refuge for "repentant girls", as director. One can still see the doorway, on which there are hearts surrounded with nail-heads, dating from the 18th century. In the chapel here, St Louis Marie met for the first time Mathurin Rangeard; "Follow me!", said Louis Marie; and Mathurin did so for the rest of the saint's life.

The Baptistery of St. Jean

About July 1705, Louis Marie set about "restoring" this building, which at the time was known as "Le Temple Saint-Jean" and was thought to have been an ancient Roman temple. Louis Marie restored it as a chapel, not knowing that it was indeed the remains of the oldest existing Christian building in France, the ancient Baptistery, with a font for baptism by immersion.

Nearby is the Cathedral, where no doubt Louis Marie came to pray, but which has no particular Montfortian souvenirs.

Sainte Radegonde

Behind the Cathedral, reached by the little streets running down towards the River Clain, is the church of Sainte Radegonde. Shortly after leaving the Hôpital Général, St Louis Marie undertook a mission in one of the more distant parts of this parish, Montbernage. In the church today, at the far East end, behind the choir, is the statue of N.D. Reine des Anges which used to be in the little chapel on the Pont Joubert (see below).

The Pont Joubert

One crosses the Pont Joubert to reach Montbernage from Ste Radegonde. On one of the piers of this bridge, there used to be a small chapel dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Angels; it was first built in the 13th century and restored in the 16th, but in St Louis Marie's day it was in ruins. He restored it, and had carved on its facade: "If the love of Mary is in your heart, do not forget to say an Ave as you pass by." The chapel no longer exists, but the statue of Our Lady, as noted above, is to be found in the church of Sainte Radegonde.

In 1715, Marie-Louise Trichet was having a great deal of trouble obtaining her mother's permission to leave Poitiers and go to La Rochelle. A poor blind girl, very pious and patient, used to stay all day at the chapel of Our Lady Queen of Angels on the Pont Joubert. Marie-Louise asked her to offer many prayers to the Virgin for her, and ever afterwards attributed the happy outcome to these prayers: one day Mme. Trichet came and said simply, "I can no longer keep you here; the Holy Spirit is urging me to tell you to go."

Montbernage

This was one of the poorer areas of the parish of Sainte Radegonde, and, because of its distance from the parish church, was also very poor in a spiritual sense. It was here that St Louis Marie chose to give his first mission. First of all, he wanted to supply a chapel for the people. There was an old barn, known as the "Grange de la Bergerie", which was the venue of dances for the young people. He begged enough money to buy the barn and converted it into a chapel. Here he placed a crucifix and 15 banners representing the 15 mysteries of the Rosary: the Cross and the Rosary were to be the symbol of all his teaching. At the close of the mission, he erected a mission cross opposite the new little shrine, on the spot where the Cross stands today. It was decorated with hearts, and so was known as "la croix des bons coeurs". He got the people to make a solemn renewal of their baptismal vows, and at the end of the mission entrusted his children to the Blessed Virgin, calling the new chapel "Notre Dame des Coeurs" (Our Lady, Queen of Hearts). He told the people: "If someone will agree to pray here and say the Rosary, every Sunday and feast-day, and to sing the Little Crown at midday, I will leave the statue of my good Mother here." A workman, Jacques Goudeau, offered to take on this duty, and St Louis Marie gave to the chapel the statue of Our Lady, Queen of Hearts, which has been venerated here ever since. Jacques Goudeau was faithful to his task for forty years. According to the Letter to the people of Montbernage, St Louis Marie also left "his heart", which probably refers to a little gilded heart which hung on the statue - according to one tradition, each person who renewed his or her baptismal vows during the mission, was given a small heart which was then hung either on the mission cross or around the statue of Our Lady; perhaps this was the one belonging to St Louis Marie.

The statue of Our Lady, Queen of Hearts at Montbernage has recently been restored to its original form, with a crown, a sceptre and a heart. The child which rested in her lap was not part of the original statue.

About August 1733, a community of the Daughters of Wisdom was founded at Montbernage. They came to be known as the "Dames des Coeurs". Their first residence was a kind of cave, very damp and unhealthy, at the back of the chapel, which you can see today; it has recently been refurbished as a little oratory.

On 2nd March 1734, the chapel of Our Lady, Queen of Hearts was solemnly blessed; on the record of the blessing, we find the signature also of Jacques Goudeau. This same man, in 1719, was perhaps instrumental in persuading Mother Marie-Louise Trichet to move to Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre: he met her and, according to Besnard, said, "Madame, you are troubled by the fact that you have left La Rochelle and that M. de Montfort's foundation there has not lasted... Well, I know there is a lady, Mme. de Bouillé, who lives near St Laurent where M. de Montfort was buried... She is in a position to help you in the accomplishment of your work..." Mother Marie-Louise made contact with Mme. de Bouillé, and in June 1720 arrived in Saint Laurent.



Figure 8: Our Lady Queen of All Hearts, Montbernage

Le Jardin des quatre figures

This place, in the parish of St Saturnin, so called because of the four statues which stood in it, was known locally as the "Goretterie", and had a very bad name. During the mission of St Saturnin, St Louis Marie prayed and took the discipline there to cleanse it, and preached in the open air, prophesying that

one day it would be a place of prayer served by religious. Visiting the place a few days later, he found a sick beggar there and left him in a rocky cleft to be cared for by a pious person. Others later joined this beggar there, and in 1748, the Hospital for Incurables (later run by the Daughters of Wisdom) was founded there. In 1794, during the Revolution, three of the Daughters of Wisdom of the Hospital for Incurables were pilloried for six hours under the inscription, "Fanatics, Receivers of Priests". Today, there is here a monument to Fr de Montfort, the chapel, and the inscription "Pavillon Grignon de Montfort".

* * * * *

La Rochelle

La Rochelle is between one and a half and two hours' drive from Saint Laurent. The most direct route is via Les Herbiers, Chantonnay, Ste Hermine and Marans; but if you wish to take in, say, Mervent on the way, you would probably go by way of Pouzauges, La Chataigneraie and Fontenay-le-Comte (Mervent is a little way off the road between La Chataigneraie and Fontenay). When you get to La Rochelle, the easiest thing is to go first to St. Éloi (see directions below), leave your vehicle there, and walk into the city centre (it is not very far). The address of St. Éloi is: 3 rue des Sauniers. Telephone: 46 27 12 21. You should certainly telephone the Sisters beforehand if you wish to celebrate Mass at St. Éloi.

To get to St. Éloi, coming from Nantes, when you get into the outskirts of La Rochelle, you will pass under a major road. From then on, watch for the sign for the station ("Gare") to the left (it is about the fifth traffic signal you encounter); turn left here, and follow this road to a traffic signal (perhaps the first or the second?) where there is an Esso filling station on the left. Turn left here up the Avenue de Rompsay. The Rue des Sauniers is then the first road right.

Saint Éloi

In the Saint-Éloi neighbourhood, a charitable person gave St Louis Marie the use of a little house situated between two gardens. This was his hermitage, where he loved to go to rest from his labours in solitude and recollection. It was probably here that he wrote his Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and his Rules. In the little oratory there is a small sculpture which was found on the site when it was being rebuilt, and which is thought to be his work. At the bottom of the garden is the gate (now bricked up, but marked with a wooden cross) by which he would have gone to Le Petit Plessis.



Figure 9: The Oratory at St-Éloi

Le Petit Plessis

This was a small farmstead used as a country house by the Jesuits. There was a chapel here which was probably open to the public, where Louis Marie would probably have gone to say his Mass. It was at the Petit Plessis that he met Marie-Louise Trichet and Catherine Brunet on 15th April 1715, two weeks or so after their arrival in La Rochelle from Poitiers (he was away giving a mission when they arrived). Le Petit Plessis was at the site of No. 89 Avenue de Rompsay.

Porte Royale

Take the Avenue de Rompsay back to the traffic lights; go straight ahead here, until you see the Porte Royale ahead of you at a fork in the road.

On 11th May 1711, St Louis Marie left Luçon to go to La Rochelle, where he arrived tired after the long journey on foot. The first inn he tried refused to open its doors; the second was more welcoming. But when he and Mathurin sat down to a frugal meal, Mathurin was overcome with scruples: "Who is going to pay for this, Father, because you have no money?" St Louis Marie replied, "Don't worry about it; God will provide." The next morning they had nothing to pay the bill of 12 sous. "I will pay you later," said Louis Marie; "In the meantime I will leave you my staff as a pledge." And without any more ado, he set off to the Hôpital St Louis to say Mass. After his thanksgiving he went to visit the sick, giving each one a word of encouragement. While he was doing this, Providence provided all that was needed. One of those present, a Mlle. Prévôt, spoke to her confessor, Fr Collusson, about the missionary. This Jesuit, a professor at the seminary, appreciated Louis Marie, and advised his penitent to welcome the missionary and his companion, and to help them with alms. Mlle. Prévôt paid the debt incurred at the inn, and recovered Louis Marie's staff. It was probably near the Porte Royale that this happened.

The Hôpital Saint-Louis

Take the left fork at the Porte Royale (the Rue Gambetta), until you come to the Rue St-Louis; here turn left. A little down the road, on the left is the Hôpital Saint-Louis.

As soon as he arrived in La Rochelle, Louis Marie was presented to the Bishop, Mgr. de Champflour, by Fr Collusson. The bishop gave him full faculties and sent him to preach a mission at Lhoumeau. But first Louis Marie gave a so rt of mission at the Hôpital Saint-Louis. The crowd was so great that he had to preach in the courtyard. This hospital became a truly holy place for the Montfortian family: St Louis Marie often preached here, and the first Montfort Fathers were often the chaplains here; Marie-Louise Trichet and Catherine Brunet, the first



Figure 10: The Hôpital St-Louis

Daughters of Wisdom lived here, and Catherine Brunet is buried in the chapel, as is Mgr. de Champflour. The Sisters at St-Éloi have a key to parts of the hospital, which had a community of La Sagesse until just a few years ago. You can go into the chapel, where Catherine Brunet (Sr de la Conception) and Mgr. de Champflour are buried beneath the step of the sanctuary; and, with the key, you can go up to see Marie-Louise's room which looks out on the courtyard where St Louis Marie preached (it is the one to the right of the chapel as you face it from the road).

The Port and Saint-Sauveur

On leaving the Hôpital Saint-Louis, turn left down the Rue St-Louis and walk down to the Quai Maubec; there turn right. After a little while you will see ahead of you the church of Saint-Sauveur. It was near here, at the lock bridge, that two Fathers of the Company of Mary, Frs. Dauche and Verger, along with four other priests, were murdered by the crowd in 1794, during the

Revolution, as they were, supposedly, being taken to be transported for refusing to swear the civil oath of the clergy. A plaque commemorating these priests is to be found in the Cathedral (see below).

In the Spring of 1712, Louis Marie wanted to embark at the Port of La Rochelle, to go to the Ile d'Yeu for the mission there, but, according to Le Crom, he heard of a plot to hand him over to Guernsey pirates; at Sables d'Olonne, the sailors refused to go for fear of pirates; he had to go to Saint Gilles, further up the coast, to get a boat, and even then was nearly captured by the pirates.

Rue de la Rochelle

Walk back along the side of Saint-Sauveur towards the Hôpital, and turn left up the little road at the back of Saint-Sauveur, then right into the Rue St Michel. On the right is the Protestant Temple, where, it is said, Louis Marie preached (in those days it was a Catholic church). Continuing past it, you enter a pedestrian area; turn right then immediately left and you are in the Rue des Dames. The first street on your left is the Rue de la Rochelle.

It is thought that this is the street where some men lay in wait to attack St Louis Marie. One day, he had castigated three men who had come to mock at the Word of God. In revenge, they hatched a sinister plot. Towards the end of the mission for the men of La Rochelle, Louis Marie had to go one evening to see a sculptor (called Adam) with whom he had placed some orders. The three plotters heard of his plans, and lay in wait for him in a narrow, dark, little frequented street. When St Louis Marie reached the street, with M. des Bastières and Brother Mathurin, he stopped, saying that he was absolutely unable to enter the street. None of them understood this phenomenon, but they had to make a long detour to get to the sculptor's house. Some years later, M. des Bastières, in an inn in Poiré-sur-Vie, in the Vendée, overheard a man telling of how he had lain in wait in vain, from 7 o'clock to 11 o'clock in the evening, for Fr. de Montfort to come along.

The Cathedral

Walk down the Rue de la Rochelle, and straight on, across the Rue des Merciers and the Rue Saint-Yon, until you come to the Rue Chaudrier, where the Cathedral is straight ahead of you on the other side of the road. Turn right

and cross the road to reach the facade of the Cathedral facing the Place de Verdun.

In the Cathedral, on the left is a chapel dedicated to St Louis Marie, with a window depicting the great mission of 1711. At the top of the window, in the oval panel, St Louis Marie is surrounded by crosses; this recalls the alleged miracle of the crosses in the air. At the end of the missions, two crosses were to be erected: one in stone at the Porte Dauphine, and one in wood at the Porte St Nicolas. A huge crowd had gathered for the erection of the crosses, when cries went up: "A miracle! A miracle! We can see crosses in the air!" Neither M. des Bastières nor St Louis Marie saw anything, but, according to Grandet, more than a hundred people saw these crosses.

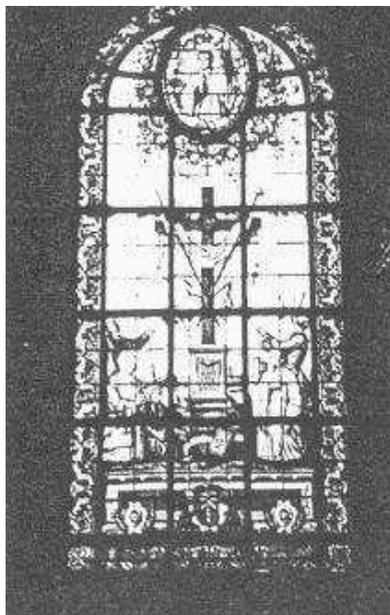
On the right-hand side of the Cathedral, on the archway of the second chapel from the back, is the plaque commemorating the martyrdom of Frs Dauche and Verger and four other priests, mentioned above.

Rue Gargoulleau - Évêché

When you come out of the Cathedral, the street leading off the Place de Verdun on the right, opposite the bus-stands, is the Rue Gargoulleau. A little way down here, on the left, is the municipal library, which was formerly the Bishop's Palace (a plaque announces this). It was here that St Louis Marie was presented to Mgr. de Champflour on his arrival in La Rochelle.

The Hôpital Auffrédy

As you stand in the Place de Verdun, to the right of the Cathedral is the Hôpital Auffrédy, so called from the name of its founder. It was run in the 18th century by the Brothers of St John of God. It was here that St Louis



**Figure 19: St. Louis Marie Window
in Cathedral**

Marie was taken and operated on, when he fell seriously ill at the end of the mission in Mauzé in 1713. The surgeon, the celebrated Pierre Seignette, was astonished to hear the missionary singing "Long live Jesus! Long live his Cross!" as he applied the scalpel. Louis Marie begged the doctors not to spare him, and promised them his prayers. He was ill for two months, but at the end of that time, was back on his feet to give two retreats in the parish of Courçon and at the Hôpital Saint-Louis.

This hospital was also the scene of the labours of Brother Pierre, who escaped the massacres in St Laurent in 1794, and spent the rest of his days working here before he died at the Hôpital Saint-Louis.

Rue Rambaud and Rue des Saintes Claires

Leaving the Cathedral, continue on up the Rue Chaudrier along the side of the Place de Verdun, into the Rue Albert Premier. The next street on the left is the Rue Rambaud, where, in July 1712, St Louis Marie agreed to give a retreat to the Hospitalières de St Augustin, on condition that, for the evening talk, the chapel should be open to the public. Among the great crowd which came was Mlle Bénigne Pagé, who had accepted a "dare" from her friends to come in all her finery to laugh openly at the missionary. Instead of castigating her, Louis Marie gave her a look of compassion and began his sermon. Along with everyone else there, Bénigne Pagé was moved to tears by his words, and afterwards had a long conversation with St Louis Marie, after which she resolved to "leave the world". She entered the Poor Clares shortly afterwards in the next street on the left as you continue up the Rue Albert Premier, the Rue des Saintes Claires. The event inspired Louis Marie to write *Cantique* 143: "Gloire au Seigneur! Le monde vous perd, ô ma Bénigne..."

Opposite the Rue des Saintes Claires is the Rue du Collège, where, between the College chapel and the Rue des Cordouans, was one of the "petites écoles" established by St Louis Marie in La Rochelle, this one for girls.

The chapel of the Sisters of Providence

Continuing on up the Rue Albert Premier, on the left as you approach the Place de la Porte Dauphine is the Ecole de la Providence. In the chapel here St Louis Marie first met M. Vatel, the first priest to join his Company of Mary, in February 1715. M. Vatel was from the Diocese of Coutances, and

had been trained for the priesthood at the Seminary of the Holy Spirit in Paris, where he had met Fr de Montfort in 1713. At that time he had even had thoughts of joining the missionary, but once ordained priest, he forgot about this, and decided to go to the foreign missions in the Antilles. Before leaving he had obtained all the faculties he could from the Archbishop of Paris and his own metropolitan, the Archbishop of Rouen. Then he set sail. The ship he was on had to put in at La Rochelle; in the meantime, M. Vatel had become worried whether the faculties he had obtained were of any validity in the Antilles, so he decided to consult Mgr. de Champflour, Bishop of La Rochelle, when the boat put in there. On landing, he heard that Fr de Montfort was in town preaching a retreat at the Chapel of the Sisters of Providence; he decided to go and consult him, and at the same time to ask for some of his canticles. He found St Louis Marie's sermon disappointing until, suddenly, the missionary stopped and announced, "There is someone here who is resisting me; I feel the Word of God coming back to me. But he will not escape me!" M. Vatel understood the saint was referring to him, and afterwards went to talk with Fr de Montfort. Louis Marie was just in the process of reading a letter telling him that a priest who had promised to help him could not do so. Seeing M. Vatel, he said, "Good, here is a priest who has let me down, but God has sent me another. You must come with me, Monsieur, and we will work together." "But that's impossible," replied M. Vatel; "I am going to the foreign missions; I have already made arrangements with the captain of a ship, who has lent me 100 écus to buy missals and Mass vestments." "You are in a mess!", replied Louis Marie; "Let's go and see Mgr de Champflour." On the way, Louis Marie confirmed that M. Vatel's faculties were invalid, an opinion seconded by the Bishop when they arrived. The Bishop gave him the 100 écus to pay off the captain of the ship, but the captain was furious at losing his chaplain; Louis Marie had to go aboard to calm him down. In the end Adrien Vatel joined St Louis Marie, and worked with him for the first time at St Amand-sur-Sèvre. He died in Rennes in 1748, after 33 years as a member of the Company of Mary.

It was also in this chapel that St Louis Marie received the vows (at first strictly private, but later to have a "religious" character) of the first Daughters of Wisdom, Marie-Louise Trichet and Catherine Brunet, and gave the La Sagesse habit to Marie Régnier and Marie Valleau on 22nd August 1715.

Church of the Dominicans - the Missions of La Rochelle

Leaving the Ecole de la Providence, looking left up the street, you may see the Porte Dauphine where one of the Mission crosses was erected in 1711; but turn right, back down the Rue Albert Premier to the Rue Alcide d'Orbigny on the left (first left?). Walk along here until you come to the Place Cacaud. In the far right-hand corner of the square is an old building, now a sort of warehouse, which was formerly the Church of the Jacobins (Dominicans). It was here that St Louis Marie preached the three missions of La Rochelle in 1711, the first for the men, the second for the women, and the third for the soldiers. He was helped in these missions by his brother, Fr Gabriel-François Grignon, M. des Bastières and several Dominican Fathers, including Fr Le Compte (Provincial) and Fr Doiteau, and perhaps by the Jesuit Fr Collusson. M. Claude Masse, an officer, has left us a drawing of the procession which took place at the end of the mission for the women on 16th August 1711 (see next page). This drawing is kept in the archives of La Rochelle. St Louis Marie is marked "T" in the drawing; his brother is "S"; while "F" (top right-hand corner) is Brother Mathurin, keeping order and directing the singing. A working model based on this drawing is to be seen in the Maison Longue at St Laurent-sur-Sèvre. The probable route of this procession was: the Eglise des Jacobins - the Jesuit chapel - the Governor's Palace - the Church of Notre Dame. This latter church is the one at the left-hand side of the square as you enter it from the Rue Alcide d'Orbigny.

Another of the "petites écoles" founded by St Louis Marie was close by, in the Rue du Bravo Rondeau, at the East end of the Eglise des Jacobins; this one was for boys.

To return to St-Éloi from here, go past the church of Notre Dame, cross over the Avenue des Cordeliers, walk along the side of the Place des Cordeliers to the Rue St François; turn left here and walk up the street to the Porte Royale, then continue on to the Avenue de Romsay and the Rue des Sauniers.

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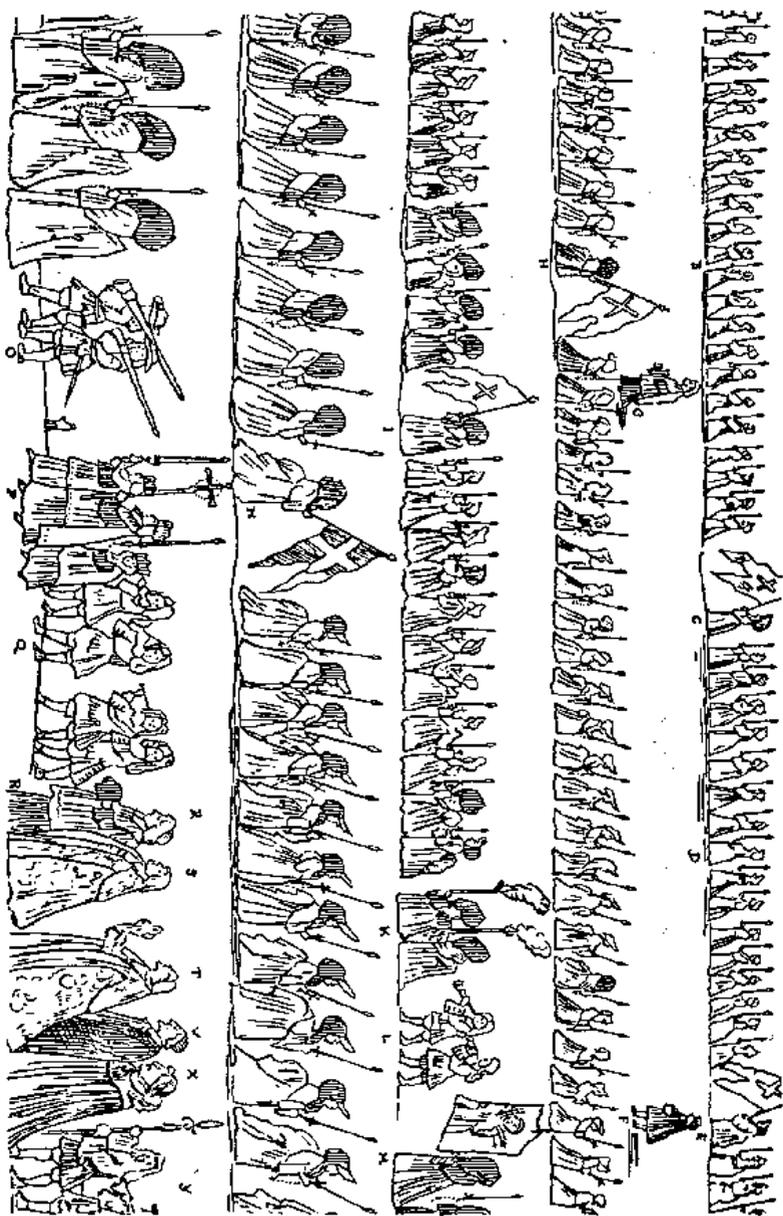


Figure 110: The Women's Procession, La Rochelle

Saint-Pompain, Mervent, Vouvant

How you approach this area depends on whether you wish to see the Grotto of Mervent first, or Saint-Pompain. If going to Mervent first, you could take the road for Pouzauges from St Laurent-sur-Sèvre, then from Pouzauges to La Chataigneraie, via Réaumur and Cheffois; alternatively, you could take the same route as for Saint-Pompain as far as La Forêt-sur-Sèvre (6 km after Cérizay), then turn right for La Chataigneraie. At La Chataigneraie, take the road to Fontenay-le-Comte. Approximately 10 km after La Chataigneraie, you turn left to visit Vouvant (if you wish); then return to the Fontenay road. Another 5 or 6 km along, you will see the turning on the left for Mervent (it may also indicate La Grotte du Père de Montfort, or La Pierre Brune). Then follow the signs for La Grotte. There is a roundabout at one point, but La Grotte is still indicated. At a certain point, you come to a small cross-road in the middle of the forest; the road right is indicated for the Pierre Brune; the road left has a no-entry sign; while the road ahead appears to peter out in a small clearing or car-park, in which there is a stone cross. This is where you park for Fr de Montfort's cave hermitage: you walk past the cross and down a fairly steep rocky path to the cave. When you leave, look for signs to Mervent village, then head for St Hilaire-des-Loges or Coulonges. At St Hilaire-des-Loges, you should pick up directions for Saint Pompain.

If you are going to Saint-Pompain first, take the road for Mauléon and Poitiers out of St Laurent. Just at the other side of Mauléon, at a roundabout, take the road right (the D744) for Niort, then continue towards Niort through Cérizay, Moncoutant and Absie. 18 km (just over 11 miles) the other side of Absie (still on the road to Niort), you come to Coulonges-sur-l'Autize. As you drive through, watch for the sign on the right to Saint-Pompain, which is another 5 km. To get to Mervent from Saint-Pompain, you take the road for St Hilaire-des-Loges, and then, as you leave St Hilaire, you see the right turn signed for Mervent. The easiest way then is probably to go through Mervent village and watch for signs to La Grotte (du P. de Montfort). If then, you wish to visit Vouvant on the way back, follow the signs to Fontenay and La Chataigneraie on leaving the Grotto, then take the La Chataigneraie direction.

Saint-Pompain

Saint-Pompain can certainly be seen as one of the "cradles" of the Company of Mary, since it was here that Frs Vatel and Mulot stayed for six years after the death of St Louis Marie, before being persuaded by Mother Marie-Louise to go to Saint-Laurent in 1722.

St Louis-Marie had no desire to go to Saint-Pompain, but Fr René Mulot, whose brother was the Prior of Saint-Pompain and who had himself retired there because of ill-health, was so insistent in his requests for Fr de Montfort to come and preach a mission there, that in the end, St Louis Marie said to him, "I agree to go to Saint-Pompain, on one condition: that you agree to follow me and to work with me for the rest of your life." "But you cannot be serious," replied Fr Mulot; "what would you do with such a missionary as me?" "It doesn't matter; follow me!" said St Louis Marie; "All your infirmities will disappear the moment you begin to work for the salvation of souls. If you agree, I will preach at Saint-Pompain." This encounter took place in Fontenay-le-Comte, where St Louis Marie had returned a few weeks after the mission there, to preach a retreat. Fr Mulot agreed, went with St Louis Marie to help him in the mission at Vouvant, which opened a week later; and after this mission they went together to Saint-Pompain, probably with M. des Bastières, to open the mission. It lasted two months; resulted in the "conversion" of the Prior (who was perhaps too concerned with his own success and somewhat worldly); and ended with a great procession to Villiers-en-Plaine for the start of the next mission there. For this procession, to show the Protestants of Villiers-en-Plaine, who were very numerous, that the Catholic Church also held the Bible in great reverence, St Louis Marie carried the Bible solemnly under the canopy usually reserved for processions of the Blessed Sacrament. Fr René Mulot had already begun to feel better, and he was true to his word, becoming the successor of Fr de Montfort and first superior of the nascent Company of Mary.

Two Confraternities were founded at Saint-Pompain during the mission: one for young girls, the "Society of Virgins", and the other for men, the "White Penitents", who numbered just 33 in honour of the years passed on earth by the Saviour. After the mission of Villiers-en-Plaine, St Louis Marie returned to Saint-Pompain about the beginning of March to preach a retreat to the White Penitents, and, at their request, he sent them on a pilgrimage from Saint-Pompain to Notre Dame des Ardilliers at Saumur, to pray for missionaries for the Company of Mary. Frs Vatel and Mulot accompanied the pilgrims, while St Louis Marie waited for their return before himself making

the pilgrimage to Saumur, and then repairing to St Laurent for what was to be his last mission. The pilgrimage from Saint-Pompain to Saumur has been revived by the Montfortian congregations in the last few years, taking place in Summer.

After the death of St Louis Marie at St Laurent just a few weeks later, the two priests, Frs Vatel and Mulot, were completely at a loss to know what to do. They retired to Saint-Pompain, where they spent two years helping in the parish before once again taking up missionary work. In a way, they were tricked into starting again: the parish priest of Les Loges (which you pass through going from Saint-Pompain to Mervent, close to St Hilaire-des-Loges) asked them in Lent 1718 to come to help him prepare his parishioners to make their Easter duties, but, without telling the two priests, he had announced that they were to preach a mission! Neither had preached missions before (when they worked with St Louis Marie, they were only required to hear confessions); so they contented themselves with giving some readings in the pulpit with a few short reflections; but this was a great success, and they were thus encouraged to start preaching missions, which from that time on they never ceased to do. They continued to live at Saint-Pompain, where they were joined by others: Cyrien Aumond, Hilaire Touton, Jacques le Valois, and a certain Fradet, whose names appear, along with those of Adrien Vatel and René Mulot, in the parish registers preserved at the Mairie in Saint-Pompain. There also appears six times the name of Mathurin Rangeard as godfather. He is the only Brother of whom there is certain trace at Saint-Pompain; probably he taught there, at least until 1722, when the "Mulotins" (as the followers of St Louis Marie were known there) moved to St Laurent at the insistence of Mother Marie-Louise of Jesus.

In the church today there is a statue of St Louis Marie fixed to the pillar where stood the pulpit from which he preached; the pulpit itself is now in St Laurent at La Sagesse. There are also two pieces of the Mission Cross erected at the end of the mission, one of them in the cross which hangs on the wall opposite the statue of St Louis Marie. Of the presbytery where the "Mulotins" stayed, almost nothing remains today. But the Montfortian presence persists, since the present parish-priest is a member of the Company of Mary.

Mervent - Fr de Montfort's Grotto

St Louis Marie preached a mission in Mervent about July, 1715, during which he restored the Church which had been in a very bad state. It was probably then that he found his cave, which he converted into a hermitage for himself with the help of many of the local people. This is how Besnard describes it:

"He found there a well-secluded place. On the two sides, two mountains, with the river running between, and a hidden rock with a deep cave. This place seemed to him entirely suitable for building a hermitage, and he resolved to work at it incessantly. He had no sooner begun than a crowd of people of the neighbourhood came to help him with the work; one day there were more than a hundred there. The materials were soon assembled. There was stone and water on site; lime, sand, tiles, bricks and wood (in a word all that was necessary and more, and all given freely) were brought up. The hermit apostle could pay only with his person and he did not stint himself. None worked with more energy than himself. He worked so hard that he dug out of the rock a space big enough to contain a little bed, a table and a chair. There was an excellent spring at the back of the cave, and he made all the arrangements for a fountain. He planned even to build a chapel and to erect a large cross; but his constant labours gave him no time for this; and the fruits he never ceased to produce show clearly that, even though he built himself places of solitude, he was not called to live a solitary life."



Figure 121: St. Louis Marie's Grotto, Mervent (old engraving)

Louis Marie had made a request for permission to the guardian of the royal forest, M. Fagon, and had obtained the approval of the Bishop of La Rochelle. However, to keep out the wind, he had undertaken some improvements: a wall about 18 metres long in front of the entrance to the cave, which required the removal of some chestnut stumps; and he planned to have a garden above the cave and to tap the spring a little lower down. These improvements were the cause of a court-case which was brought against him on 28th October, by the sub-delegate for Waters and Forests (Charles Moriceau) and the Royal Procurator (Jean de la Haye), for having, without authorization, "constructed a wall and taken the eighth part of one arpent" (an arpent was about 35 to 50 ares; an are is 100 sq. metres, the hundredth part of a hectare). There was no fine, but the wall had to be demolished, and St Louis Marie was forbidden access to the cave after this.

Mervent represents for us that fundamental and indestructible attitude which St Louis Marie had evinced in himself in his letter no. 5, of 6th December 1700: "I feel ... a secret love of retirement and the hidden life, to empty myself and fight against my corrupt nature which loves to be in the limelight." Note too the Prière Embrasée no. 25: the true missionaries dwell on the mountain..., and Cantique 157, almost certainly written about the cave at Mervent.

In the cave at Mervent today are a statue of Our Lady and one of St Louis Marie; this latter is said to have been made by a Daughter of Wisdom. In 1897, M. Biré, senator for the Vendée, had another statue of St Louis Marie placed on top of the rock containing the cave; made of stone, it was sculpted by M. Renaud-Bizet of Luçon. A granite altar was also placed in the cave in 1886. Down the steps leading from the cave into the valley, is a chapel which is open at certain times in the Summer, and beneath it, some basic accommodation for three or four people, which is available sometimes for Montfortians. The keys can be obtained either at St Laurent (the Saint-Esprit) or from the parish-priest at Saint-Pompain.

Vouvant

St Louis Marie preached a mission here towards the end of 1715, accompanied for the first time by René Mulot. Here he was given, it seems, two small pieces of land by "Madame la lieutenant", a house (but with very onerous conditions attached) by Mme de la Brûlerie, and a "little house" by a "good woman" (see St Louis Marie's Will). This "good woman" is identified by Fr Pierre Eyckeler, SMM, in his book "Le Testament d'un Saint" (1953), as Renée Arcelin. The house given by Madame de la Brûlerie is in the Rue Grande, just around the corner from the church, with its garden adjoining the church. The other was at the bottom of the little street which passes out under the Postern Gate (La Poterne); but it seems to have disappeared with the building of the dam which has widened the river here. It seems clear that at the time of the mission in Vouvant, St Louis Marie had the intention, or at least the idea, of establishing his Company of Mary here.

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Notre-Dame des Ardilliers and Fontevrault

Notre-Dame des Ardilliers

The shrine of Notre-Dame des Ardilliers at Saumur is just to the East of the city, on the South bank of the Loire, about 50 miles from St Laurent-sur-Sèvre. It was a favourite shrine of St Louis Marie, who visited it at least four times:

1700: Going from Paris to Nantes with M. René Lévêque, he stopped at Fontevrault to see his sister Sylvie, and then at Notre-Dame des Ardilliers.

1701: At the beginning of October, he went from Nantes to Fontevrault, then to Notre-Dame des Ardilliers. There, he made a novena of prayers, and gave away the money which M. Lévêque had given him to the many poor people who gathered at the shrine. Perhaps he also met Jeanne Delanoue then, the foundress of the Daughters of Providence.

1706: In September, on his return from his pilgrimage to Rome, and on his way to Mont Saint-Michel, he stopped at Fontevrault, but was not recognised by the Abbess and was refused admission. He went on to Notre-Dame des Ardilliers, where he had an important meeting with Jeanne Delanoue. This good lady had formed a group of charitable women who, on the 26th July 1704, were organised as a "Congregation" under the title of "The Sisters of St Anne of Providence of Saumur". The foundress practised certain extraordinary penances, and her sisters were a little unsure of such an example; so Jeanne Delanoue asked St Louis Marie for his advice. He told her he would reflect on the matter. Several times he gave exhortations to the community and, at one moment, he told Jeanne Delanoue that she could well be suffering from illusions. But he said he would offer Mass for her intentions and would give her his final advice after the Mass. Afterwards, he said to her, "Sister, you can continue to live as you have begun. Yes, it is the Spirit of God which inspires you in this penitential life. Don't be afraid, therefore, in the future, but follow your inspirations." St Louis Marie also, at this time, examined the draft of the constitutions which were to be presented, three years later, for the approval of the Bishop.

1716: At the end of March, after the return of the White Penitents to Saint-Pompain, Louis Marie came himself to Notre-Dame des Ardilliers with a few Brothers, and afterwards went to St Laurent to begin the mission during which he was to die.

The church housing the shrine of Notre-Dame des Ardilliers is a 17th century construction, but the shrine goes back much further than this. The miraculous image of Mary is quite small, representing Our Lady of Sorrows, with the dead Jesus in her lap. It was said to have been found in a field nearby, and immediately to have had miraculous effects.

The house which is closest to the church was the first house in France of the Oratory.

Jeanne Delanoue lived with her Sisters at 33 Rue Rabelais in Saumur.

Fontevrault

The ancient "royal" Abbey of Fontevrault was founded in the 11th century. It was the headquarters of an order which united both men and women under the authority of the Abbess, something quite unique in the Church. It is interesting that the Abbey of Romsey (an abbey of nuns only) was a branch of this same order. From the architectural point of view, Fontevrault is said to be quite rare: only two other Abbeys were built in this style, Alcobaça in Portugal and Glastonbury in England. Fontevrault has a place in English history, since it is the burial place of the Kings Henry II and Richard I, "Lion Heart", and of Henry's wife Eleanor of Aquitaine; as Dukes of Aquitaine, the English kings of that era were the lords of this part of France.

Fontevrault is reached from Saumur, by driving further up the River Loire, on the same side as Notre-Dame des Ardilliers, for 10 or 11 km, then turning right on the road signed to Fontevrault.

Louis Marie's sister Sylvie was a postulant in the Abbey of Fontevrault when Louis Marie first visited there in 1700, on his way from Paris to Nantes with René Lévêque. Another of his sisters, Françoise-Marguerite had also gone to Fontevrault, both of them having been taken under the care of Mme. de Montespan, whom Louis Marie first met in Paris between 1695 and 1697. Mme. de la Rochechouart, Mme. de Montespan's sister, was abbess at Fontevrault, and she received both girls with open arms. Françoise-Marguerite, however, had to return to her parents in Rennes because of an eye-disease (she was buried in the Abbaye St Jacques at Montfort when she

died in 1721). Sylvie received the habit at Fontevrault on 26th April 1701, for which, on the advice of Mme. de Montespan, she wrote asking Louis Marie to come. He went, though he arrived a day late, and there had the conversation with Mme. de Montespan which set him on the road for Poitiers. Sylvie was professed later as a nun of the Abbey, and died there in 1743.

Louis Marie visited Fontevrault on one other occasion: on his return from his pilgrimage to Rome, while on the way to Mont Saint-Michel. But, on this occasion, he was not recognised by the portress (he asked only for "charity, for the love of God," without giving his name), and the Abbess refused him entry. Only afterwards, in conversation about the stranger who had called, did Sylvie realise it was her brother; the Abbess then sent after St Louis Marie to ask him to return, but he refused, saying, "The Abbess would not give me charity for the love of God; now she offers it for love of me. I thank her, but no!"

The next time that he was close to Fontevrault was when he made his pilgrimage to Saumur after that of the White Penitents; but this time, he only sent two of the Brothers to greet his sister, without going himself.

Apart from the Abbey itself, the parish church of Fontevrault is worth a visit. Here is the altar which was in the Abbey church, and a remarkable figure of Christ.

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Paris

Saint-Sulpice

The **Rue Férou**, where M. de la Barmondière had his community which Louis Marie entered when he first went to Paris, still exists: as you face the facade of the church of St Sulpice, it is on the right.

The **Rue du Pot de Fer**, where St Louis Marie stayed "under the staircase" during his painful stay in Paris in 1703-4, is now part of the Rue Bonaparte, which runs across the other side of the Place Saint-Sulpice from the church. If you turn left up the Rue Bonaparte on going away from the church, on the other side, at the corner of the Rue Hon. Chevalier, you will see the old street sign indicating this as the Rue du Pot de Fer.

Running more or less parallel to the Rue Bonaparte, two streets further away from St Sulpice, is the **Rue Cassette**, where was located the Convent of the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament. During his brief visit to Paris in 1702 to try to help his sister Guyonne-Louise, he was offered a meal here each day ("la part du pauvre") and was eventually able to have his sister accepted as a postulant in this order. He seems to have accepted the same "poor man's share" at the convent during his stay in the Rue du Pot de Fer. He kept up a correspondence with certain Sisters of this community for a number of years.

Running between the Rue Bonaparte and the Rue Cassette, is the **Rue Mézières**, where, on the left-hand side as you come from the direction of the church, is (or was) the Jesuit novitiate where, during 1703-4, St Louis Marie was able to find a place for recollection, and to use the library.

The **Grand Séminaire** Saint-Sulpice was almost opposite the present church as you stand in the square. On the right, as you face the church, was the **Petit Séminaire**: the present building dates from later (1820-40), though it was still a seminary until 1906, and is now part of the Tax Administration.

The **Church of Saint-Sulpice** was being rebuilt (in fact replaced) in St Louis Marie's day, only the East end having been completed. It was there that he said his first Mass, about a week after his ordination, which took place on June 5th 1700. This first Mass was said at the Lady Altar, which thus is for Montfortians a precious souvenir. A statue of St Louis Marie close by the altar commemorates this event. If you can find the sacristan, he may be

willing to show you, in the basement, the place where St Louis Marie taught catechism with great success to some of the most difficult and most deprived children of the area.

Notre-Dame de Paris

To the right of Notre-Dame were the buildings of the old **Hôtel-Dieu**, which were replaced around 1800 by the little square dominated by the statue of Charlemagne. In 1694, St Louis Marie was admitted to the Hôtel-Dieu when he fell seriously ill in the community of M. Boucher. The Augustinian Sisters who ran the hospital put him in the room reserved for priests. He visited the Hôtel-Dieu again, it seems, when he arrived in Paris in 1702 to try to help his sister.

The old **Archbishopric** was closer to Notre-Dame. On June 5th 1700, there were a large number of ordinations in the large chapel of the Archbishopric; among them, St Louis Marie himself, ordained by Messire Jean Hervieu de Flamenville, bishop of Perpignan, delegated by Cardinal Noailles, Archbishop of Paris. Louis Marie had been his helper in the catechism classes at Saint-Sulpice.

Every Saturday, in company with many of his fellow-students, Louis Marie used to come to receive Communion at Notre-Dame. It was there that, some time before his ordination, with the permission of his spiritual director, he made the vow of chastity.

La Salpêtrière

Originally the site of the saltpetre works, the Salpêtrière was established by St Vincent de Paul, at the request of the Government, as the first "Hôpital Général". In Louis Marie's day it housed four to five thousand poor people (cf Letter 15). He came here after leaving Poitiers around Easter 1703, and worked among the poor for five months, until, in October, he found a note under his plate asking him to leave. He was offered some money as compensation, which he refused; but he accepted some clothes and a hat; the hat he promptly gave away because it was "too shiny". From here he went and found himself his hovel in the Rue du Pot de Fer.

Today the Salpêtrière is a vast hospital.

Mont Valérien

Mont Valérien lies to the West of Paris, the other side of the Bois de Boulogne, near La Défense. The monks of the Hermitage of Mont Valérien lived an austere life of perpetual silence; each had his own cell, but they came together for the Mass and the Divine Office. Canonically they were dependent on the Archbishop of Paris who appointed an ecclesiastical superior; within the community, they obeyed the oldest. After several years of peace, some kind of trouble broke out among them. The ecclesiastical superior of the time, M. Madot, later Bishop of Chalons-sur-Saône, was unable to restore order, so he asked Louis Marie to come. Simply by his example, he was able to restore peace and tranquillity to the community.

When he left, Louis Marie took with him the memory of three crosses erected there by Hubert Charpentier... One day, he would do the same, on his calvary at Pontchâteau. The three crosses which used to stand on Mont Valérien are now to be found in the churchyard at the back of St Pierre, Montmartre, just to the left hand side of the Basilica of the Sacré Coeur.

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Normandy

Villedieu-les-Poëles

The Parish Church

During his journey to Rouen in 1714, St Louis Marie arrived at Avranches on the eve of the feast of the Assumption, only to find, the following morning, that the mind of the Bishop had been poisoned against him: he was told that the greatest service he could do the Diocese was to leave immediately. As it was such a great feast of Mary, St Louis Marie was anxious to say Mass, so, apparently for the first time in his life, he hired a horse and rode to the first parish outside the diocese, at Villedieu-les-Poëles, where, after initial reluctance, the Curé allowed him to celebrate Mass. The Curé was impressed by the piety of St Louis Marie, and asked him to preach in his parish. Montfort agreed to preach one sermon.

The very beautiful Church still stands, but there seems to be no souvenir of Montfort's passing.

Le Mesnil-Herman

The Inn "La Croix à la main"

Leaving Villedieu-les-Poëles on 16 August 1714, Montfort and Brother Nicolas made their way towards Saint-Lô. As night fell, they were passing through Le Mesnil-Herman, where they asked for lodgings at the inn called "La Croix à la main" (The Cross in Hand). There was no room for them, so they tried to sleep on the steps which supported the inn-sign. According to Fr. Fradet, as sleep eluded him, St Louis Marie passed the time in writing a Canticle which begins "Everywhere I have the Cross in hand". This Canticle, however, is not included in those collected in the "Oeuvres Complètes".

The former Inn can still be seen, on the left on a bend on the road towards Saint-Lô. It is no longer an inn, but a hand holding a cross is attached to the wall.

The memorial chapel

A hundred yards or so back towards Villedieu-les-Poëles, on the right-hand side as you travel towards Saint-Lô, there is a small church or chapel set back on a side road. This contains some very beautiful stained-glass windows commemorating St Louis Marie's life, and in particular the incident of the "Croix à la main". The chapel is usually locked, but the mayor keeps the key, if you can find him/her.

APPENDIX

History of Montfort's Calvary subsequent to his death

After the prohibition of the Calvary and the order for its destruction, a force of militiamen was sent to Pontchâteau to supervise its demolition. Local men were rounded up to destroy it, but they were very unwilling to do so. They only removed the statues (including the figure of Christ on the Cross) after some soldiers had been ordered to cut down the cross, thus endangering the Christ. For three months they were kept at work, but did very little, and in the end the greater part of the earthworks were left standing. The chapel (according to Le Crom) was completed, after an appeal by Mgr. Bauveau, Bishop of Nantes, who wrote on 20th September 1710 to Father Le Teiller, the king's confessor, suggesting that it should be spared the destruction because of Masses which were attached to it¹. The Calvary statues were taken to the residence of a priest in Pontchâteau, M. de la Carrière, chaplain of Codrosy (Coët Rosic). It seems that St Louis Marie was ordered (by

¹ The history of the chapel which is to be seen today at the foot of the Calvary is somewhat uncertain. According to Fr. Henri Daniel (*Saint Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, Ce qu'il fut - ce qu'il fit*, Tequi, 1967), there was near the site of the Calvary the ruins of an old leper-house, with a chapel dedicated to St Mary Magdalen, to which were still attached a certain number of foundation Masses (pg.161). This would seem to be the chapel referred to in the letter addressed on September 20th, 1710, by Mgr. Bauveau, Bishop of Nantes, to Fr. Teiller, the King's confessor; this letter is cited by both Daniel and Le Crom. Le Crom seems to assume that this chapel was on the site of the Calvary; he says that it was spared at the time of the demolition of the Calvary, and completed, and adds in a footnote that it was restored in 1747 by Fr. Audubon (pgs 237-8). That there was a chapel of some sort at the Calvary in 1710, seems clear from the letter, cited by Daniel (pg. 172), of M. de Torcy to the Maréchal de Châteaurenault, in which M. de Torcy notes that "the King has been informed... that, outside the underground chamber, a chapel has been constructed whose walls have not yet been finished...". But is this chapel the same as the chapel of St. Mary Magdalen mentioned by the Bishop? Today there exists a site in the Forêt de la Madeleine, some distance away from the Calvary, which some say is the site of the old leper-house and the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalen. And in his notes on the Calvary (see sources), Fr. Tanguy says that in 1747 the chapel of St. Mary Magdalen was "transferred" to the foot of the Calvary; would this mean that the title of the old chapel and perhaps the masses attached to it were transferred to the chapel at the Calvary, which seems to have been rebuilt at that time? On the other hand, the "*Guide du Pèlerin*" of 1891 (see sources), says that in 1747, the Duc de Ponthièvre, Governor General of Brittany, whose consent had been obtained to proceed with a restoration of the Calvary, gave "a gift of 25 louis to begin the construction of the chapel which was to be erected near the Calvary" (pg. 47); which gives no indication that this construction was to be a rebuilding of a former chapel. It seem that Fr. Le Crom is mistaken in his assumption that the chapel of St. Mary Magdalen, which Bishop Bauveau recommends should be reestablished, is the chapel at the Calvary, even if, later on, this chapel received the title of St. Mary Magdalen.

whom?) to have them removed from Pontchâteau altogether, perhaps to prevent the possibility of his returning there himself. On 29 January 1711, he wrote to M. de la Carrière, asking for the statues to be given to the bearer of the letter and Brother Nicolas. For some reason, this request was not complied with, and the statues remained at Pontchâteau until 1714, when St Louis Marie himself went there and removed them, taking them to the Hospital for Incurables at Nantes, where they remained for 34 years.

In 1747 or 1748, Fr. René Mulo, the superior of the "Missionaries of Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre" came with a group of the missionaries to give another mission at Pontchâteau. At this time the plan for the Calvary was revived. The Bishop of Nantes of the day, Mgr de la Muzanchère, was very encouraging; and the approval of the governor general of Brittany, the Duc de Ponthièvre, was obtained - he even came himself to lay the first stone and gave 600 francs towards the chapel. At the end of the mission, Fr. Audubon, who would later be superior of the Company of Mary, was left to oversee the work; he resided for nearly two years at the Château du Deffay, between Le Calvaire and Ste. Reine de Bretagne. It seems that the Bishop also wanted the Company of Mary to establish a residence close to the Calvary. However, once again, there were complaints made to the authorities in Versailles, citing the same reasons for concern as in 1710. Eventually, Fr Audubon abandoned the project, merely placing a cross on the hill and giving a simple blessing, though the chapel seems to have been at least partially completed. The statues for the Calvary had already been brought from Nantes, and were now left in the chapel at the Calvary, except for the figure of Christ, which was taken to Saint-Laurent. The projected residence of the Company of Mary in the area came to nothing at that time, even though, it seems, a house was prepared for them at Indre, near Pontchâteau.

In 1783-4, yet another mission was given by the missionaries of the Company of Mary at Pontchâteau. At that time, the cross which had been placed on the Calvary by Fr Audubon had rotted, and was replaced by a new one.

In 1793, during "The Terror", the Republican forces sacked the Calvary, which had already become a very popular place of pilgrimage, and burnt the chapel, along with the statues which had been left there (the figure of Christ, as noted above, had been taken to Saint-Laurent, and survived the attempted burning of the Maison du Saint-Esprit there).

After the years of war and terror, by 1803, three "modest" crosses had been erected on the hill, but a complete restoration had to wait until 1821, when the

curé of Pontchâteau, M. l'abbé Gouray, began his great work of restoration, encouraged by the new Bishop of Nantes, Mgr. d'Audigné. Work was begun on January 5th, and progressed fairly rapidly, the Calvary being blessed by the Bishop on September 23rd, 1821, in the presence of an estimated 10,000

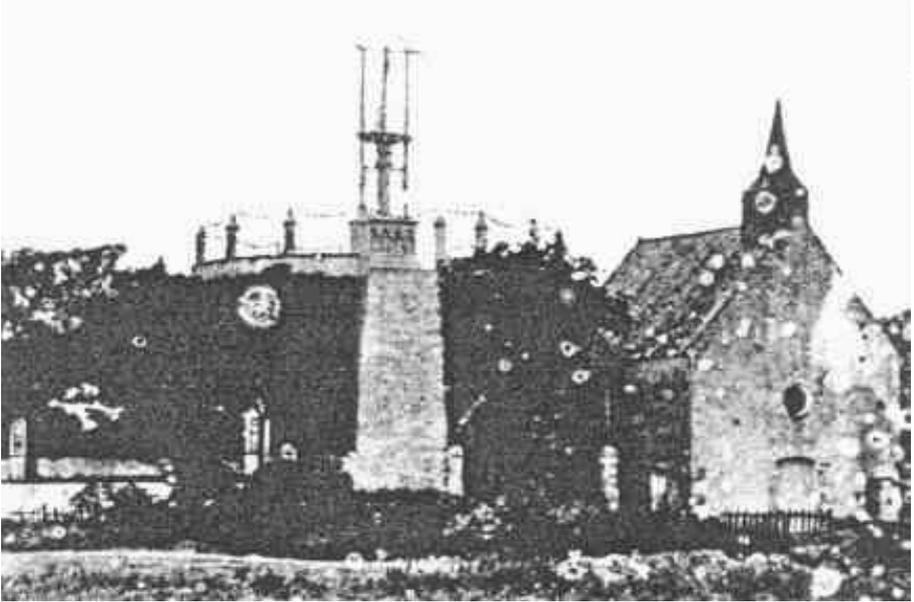


Figure 13: The Calvary after M. Gouray's restoration

people, including Fr Gabriel Deshayes. The figure of Christ which had been intended for the first Calvary, and which had been kept at Saint Laurent since 1748, was brought to the Calvary at this time. Not all the work was finished by that date; it would continue for three or four more years, and indeed would not achieve its final form until 1856. When the restoration of the Calvary was finished, it seems that it had two stone staircases of 50 to 60 steps, one on each side of the chapel (newly restored), leading to the platform at the top, which was encircled by 16 pillars, between which hung the fifteen decades of an iron rosary; a cast-iron plinth, on which stood the three crosses, and which was decorated with a representation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; a wall with a circumference of 200 metres supporting an earth terrace round the main mound, the wall containing little Stations of the Cross, blessed in

1822; and a moat, 300 metres in circumference, 9 metres wide and 4 deep, which completely surrounded the Calvary.

Once the mound itself and the main works had been completed, the embellishments were at first minor: a new Way of the Cross was blessed in 1838; and a statue of St. Louis Marie was erected in front of the chapel in 1841 (a rather unusual statue representing the saint with a shovel). Then in 1851, a Jubilee year, the then Bishop of Nantes, Mgr. Jaquemet, made a pilgrimage to the Calvary, at which time he expressed his desire that the Calvary become, as St Louis Marie himself had intended, "a living sermon", by representing the mysteries of the Rosary and the scenes of the Passion "in a way suited to every mind". For this purpose he ordered a special collection to be made throughout the diocese on January 11th 1852, to finance a new Way of the Cross and monuments representing the mysteries of the Rosary. Work was started in 1853, but the project was not then realised in its entirety: the stations of the Cross were not renewed and the 15 chapels of the mysteries of the Rosary, which had been intended to be built outside the moat, were not constructed. However it seems to have been then that the steps were built, and cast-iron crosses erected on the cast-iron plinth mentioned above. The Bishop presided a solemn blessing on September 14th, 1856, attended once again by thousands of the faithful. The following year, 1857, M. Gouray died, and was buried at the Calvary, behind the statue of St. Louis Marie in front of the chapel.

Several people, it seems, had expressed the desire that the missionaries of Saint-Laurent (the Company of Mary) should take up residence at the Calvary. Some say it was the Abbé Jean-Baptiste Verger, curé of Ste Reine de Bretagne (a nephew of the Montfortian Fr. Verger who was murdered in La Rochelle during the "Terror"), who made the suggestion to Mgr Jaquemet; the Abbé Gouray had certainly expressed the desire to have at least one priest at the Calvary to take charge of the pilgrimage, which was becoming increasingly popular; according to others, it was Mgr Jaquemet's own desire. In any case, an agreement was signed on October 1st 1863 between the Bishop and Fr. Denis, Superior General of the Company of Mary; the missionaries were to preach with the Jesuits and the Diocesan missionaries. A house was built for the missionaries (which later became the farm, and has since disappeared), and four Brothers arrived in the Spring of 1865. The first Superior, Fr Bignonet, arrived at the Calvary on 29th August 1865. The "Fabrique" (those in charge of the material goods of the parish) of

Pontchâteau were not very pleased, fearing that the direction of the Calvary would be taken out of their hands. They were particularly opposed to the construction of a new chapel to the West of the Calvary itself. They twice opposed an application to build it on land belonging to the Fabrique, and eventually it was built on land bought for the Bishopric by the Abbé Verger after 1852, and this chapel (the present "Pilgrimage chapel") was blessed in 1873 by Bishop Fournier, under the title "Notre Dame de Pitié", and consecrated on 13th October 1875 by Mgr Guilloux, Archbishop of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, assisted by Mgr Fournier and by Mgr. Bécale, Bishop of Vannes.

In the meantime, a new house was built by the missionaries (part of the present Foyer de la Madeleine) and blessed in 1868. In 1871, a request was made by Mgr. Guilloux, Archbishop of Port-au-Prince, to open a seminary at the Calvary for the training of secular clergy for the mission of Haiti. This "Grand Séminaire" of St Francis Xavier was duly opened at the end of 1872 and its direction confided, with the agreement of the Holy See, to the Missionaries of the Company of Mary. Two years or so later, the idea of an "Ecole Apostolique" was broached, and one or two boys were even given some lessons by the Professors of the Seminary, among these boys Fr. Guiot (later missionary and Bishop in Haiti?). It was not, however, until 1875 that the means were found to press forward with the plan. Then Mgr Guilloux, having found few recruits for his Seminary, suggested the attaching of an Ecole Apostolique (or Junior Seminary) to the "Grand Séminaire". This was opened at the beginning of 1876, and from the start was of a mixed nature, some of its students being destined for the secular clergy of Haiti, and some for the Company of Mary (to be educated at the expense of the congregation). At first it was lodged on the ground floor of the Major Seminary, with Fr Barré (then a Professor in the Seminary) as its director, but later in 1876 a new wing was built adjoining the chapel to house the Ecole Apostolique. Fr Maurille (later to be Superior General) then became its director, and among the other professors was Fr. Pondurand, who was later to go to England.

In 1878, the Daughters of Wisdom arrived at the Calvary, and were housed in a new building built for them opposite the new chapel (now the Fathers' community house).

The Bishops of Haiti decided in 1883 to abandon the idea of a Junior Seminary at the Calvary, though the Major Seminary continued to exist until 1894. Thus the Ecole Apostolique became a purely Company of Mary affair. Before that, however, the expulsion of certain religious from their houses in 1880 (all congregations which were not authorised, among them the Company of Mary) caused the Company of Mary to look elsewhere for a place to establish its novitiate (until then, where? ...perhaps at the Calvary...). Fr Fleurance, at the request of the Superior General of the day, Fr Guyot, went to Holland and found a place at Schimmert, and the novitiate was duly opened there in September 1881. At the end of the first novitiate year, a scholasticate was also started there. Shortly afterwards, a number of young boys having asked to join the Company of Mary, a new Ecole Apostolique was also founded there, known as Ste. Marie. Fr. Barré, who had already been named director of the Scholasticate, was also to be in charge of the Ecole Apostolique. He remained in Holland, it seems, until 1885, when he was appointed once again to Pontchâteau as a missionary.

It was Fr. Barré who was largely responsible for the further development of the pilgrimage site at the Calvary. Beginning with the Scala Sancta and the Praetorium in 1891, a complete Way of the Cross, and a series of monuments representing the different mysteries of the Rosary and of the lives of Jesus and Mary were built, with the help of crowds of volunteers, recalling the days of the building of the original Calvary. Fr Barré was appointed director of the Pilgrimage in 1894, when the Haitian Major Seminary (of which he had been the Superior from 1887 until that year) was transferred to St. Jacques de Laudrisson (?) (it was also the year that the Novitiate of the Company of Mary returned from Holland to Pontchâteau); and he remained the driving force behind the development until his departure to Saint-Laurent in 1913 (he died the following year, and his remains were transferred to the Calvary, to be re-interred in a tomb near the "Grotte de l'Agonie", in 1935). Some time before, or during 1895, the Calvary hill itself was completely remodelled (photographs of around 1895 show it almost as it is today): the two staircases were removed, to be replaced by a winding footpath; the height was raised, allowing "Adam's Cave" to be built, and leaving the cast iron plinth inside it (date on plinth: 1854); and the crosses were cut from the plinth and re-erected further apart (a curious detail: one can still see the arms of the former statue of Mary Magdalen, which had been cast as one piece with the cross of Christ, encircling the base of the cross).

The dates of the various monuments are as follows:

1891	The Praetorium and Scala Sancta
1892	The "Grotte de l'Agonie"
1894	The House of Nazareth
1895	The "Grotte d'Adam"
1899	The Way of the Cross
1900	The "old" Visitation
1902	The "Grotte de Bethléem"
1913	The Ascension
1933-35	The Temple of Jerusalem
1938	The cenacle
1939	The "new" Visitation

In 1901, new anti-Religious laws in France forced the community of missionaries to leave their posts as educators at the Calvary. This was the occasion of a new transfer of the Ecole Apostolique, first of all to Santbergen in Belgium, and in 1910 to Romsey in England. By the same laws the religious were forbidden to own any property, and what property they had was sold. M. de la Villeboisnet, of the Château du Deffay, bought much of the land and so became the legal owner of the Calvary, keeping it in trust until the laws were repealed later in the century. Fr. Barré stayed on at the Calvary as "owner-cultivator" and a priest of Nantes, until his departure for Saint-Laurent in 1913. By 1927, it was possible to reestablish the Ecole Apostolique at the Calvary, and it remained there until 1968 (?), when it was finally closed and the buildings sold. In the meantime, even during the German occupation between 1940 and 1944, various restoration works continued, bringing the Pilgrimage site to its present-day state.

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