

Asia-Oceania Continental Mission Year, 2022

«Rise and Shine, Montfort in Asia-Oceania»

From: The Superiors of the four Montfortian Entities in Asia and Oceania
To: all Montfortian Confreres and Montfortian Associates in Asia and Oceania
Contents: «Rise and Shine, Montfort in Asia-Oceania»

Dear Montfortian Confreres and Montfortian Associates,

«May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!»

As we know, the General Administration and the entire Congregation will set their sights here, on our continents of Asia and Oceania, during the entire year 2022. This is because Fr. Luiz Augusto Stefani, the Superior General, and his Council, determined, from their first meeting in September 2017 in Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre, to dedicate a year to a continent in their policy in animating our Congregation, of course without forgetting the entities on other continents. This policy is the General Administration's translation of the General Chapter directive in May 2017 on «leadership style» which emphasizes the importance of a presence in serving this Company.

The policy has been announced to the entire Congregation and has been in effect since 2019 (America), then 2020 (Europe) and 2021 (Africa-Madagascar). Next year, 2022, is thus our turn in Asia and Oceania. Then we will be in the same dynamic.

This movement of animation is not only coming from the General Administration to our entities in Asia and Oceania but also and especially a movement that is taking place within each entity and between entities in Asia and Oceania. Thus, in addition to us, the superiors in these Asian and Oceanian entities, directing our animation internally to our respective entities to confront our local or national realities, we will also ensure in this internal animation that members in our respective entities also set their sights on the other entities in Asia and Oceania: to get to know each other more and pray for each other more in the spirit of the Montfortian brotherhood. This movement will lead to an openness to the possibility of enhancing the cooperation that exists in our missionary work.

So, the year 2022 is called the Continental Year of «Asia and Oceania» not mainly because the General Council will visit our entities in «Asia and Oceania» but because we, in these two continents, are walking together in the spirit of this continental year. Even if for example the General Council, for one reason or another, is prevented from being physically present on our two continents, we will still carry out animations in our entity and on our two continents for the whole year 2022. We are not in a «waiting» position but active to «walk» together. We not only play a role in facilitating all the agenda for the visit of the General Council but also play an active role in implementing various agreed initiatives to animate our continental year. So, the key to the success of this continental year is not measured by the success of the members of the General Council in visiting our entities but the journey of everyone in these four entities in interiorizing and incarnating the spirit of this continental year.

What is the spirit of our continental year? It is revealed in the theme: «Rise and Shine, Montfort in Asia-Oceania». This theme is the result of the animation committee processing in their meeting on October 17, 2020 after exploring various possible themes that have previously been presented by all entity leaders in Asia and Oceania. This theme implicitly contains the challenges that exist in Asia and Oceania and at the same time the ideals of a «missionary way of being» of these entities which will be significantly sensitized during 2022. So, it is certain that 2022 for Asia and Oceania is a «strong year», moreover on 20 July 2022 we will celebrate 75 years of the canonization of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort. So, this is not a year to be lived superficially but deeply, why not within the framework of the «continuous conversion» announced by the General Chapter in May 2017, allowing us to «rise and shine»?

The question now is: how can the members of these entities «rise and shine» in the places where we work and live? In the following, we would like to share some ideas that could be useful in our search for the form of initiatives that will be implemented together during 2022.

First, by strengthening fraternal relations within each entity. This means that within each of these entities themselves there are brotherhood and peace, based on love which is the «queen and superior» of these entities. This is what Saint Montfort says in our Fundamental Rules while underlining that «unity is strength». Because of mutual acceptance of each other, the members of each of these entities embodies a solid Montfortian union, an expression of their love for their entity and the Congregation as a whole. The same missionary fraternal relationship applies also to the relationship of the Montfort Missionaries to the Montfortian Associates in each entity.

Therefore, differences in language, ethnicity, island, within an entity are never a reason to isolate each other. Egoistic and narrow views can be eliminated, the ability to manage differences needs to be reinforced. This needs to be realized because we who live in these two continents have a very rich diversity (religion, culture, values, ethnicity, language...) for which we are grateful.

So, in this continental year these entities need to carry out sensitization and training in this field of fraternity to prevent any seeds of disintegration and disunity. The ideals of «Fratelli Tutti» should be sought for implementation by all the Confreres in Asian and Oceanian entities.

Second, by establishing brotherly relations and cooperation between entities. This relationship can take many forms. Although there may be certain difficulties in relation to the physical presence of cross-border members, for example due to issues related to the politics of obtaining visas, the members of these four entities can contact each other virtually and can even create a collaborative project that does not have to be realized by a physical presence. Practical difficulties in the field of language should not be an obstacle either. In essence, in this field of cooperation a breakthrough will be needed.

For this reason, in this continental year, all members will have a document containing the list of members from each entity, accompanied by photos and addresses of members. This is so that all members can get to know each other, pray for each other, communicate with each other. Unfortunately, the list of members is not yet available for all members of the Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts in all our entities. However, in the same document there will also be a description of the figure of the Montfortian Associates in each entity.

An important moment in the incarnation of this borderless brotherhood is the «continental assembly». Many themes will be explored together during these meeting days. The goal is for the Montfort

Missionaries together with the Montfortian Associates to: «Rise And Shine» and be reliable witnesses to the Good News in these two continents.

Third, by walking together towards the root that unites all these entities. That is, by diving together into the depths to rediscover the unique source of our Montfortian missionary vocation. It has to do with Montfortian identity. Renewed contact with this source will refresh the apostolic energy of the Missionaries in these two continents (cf. Const. 2-3). The light we present, though small, is unique or distinctive. This particularity is the reason why this Company exists in the Church (cf. Const. 1).

This identity has something to do with Montfort. Therefore, during this continental year, in the hands of the members of these entities – as well as in the hands of our Montfortian Associates – there will be the book «EVERY DAY WITH MONTFORT». Daily reading of fragments of Montfort's writings will be very useful to get to know more about Montfort's spiritual-missionary views. This is only one way, because there are many other ways that each entity should find and creatively launch.

So, this continental year will be an invitation to go deep, to the roots, to the essence. This year is a time of transformation in all dimensions of the lives of Missionaries and their Associates in the region. This year should bear real fruits that can be picked this year as well and the years after. In this regard, various follow-up activities after 2022 really need attention in the animations in our entities.

Fourth, by living and carrying out the work of evangelization. These missionary embers are also fueled by the «theme song» of our continental year. Evangelization is not about preaching or talking but about living. It is life that speaks. Life bears witness. Therefore, Montfort wrote in the Rules about a Montfort Missionary that «his intention must be holy and centered on God alone. God's glory must be his sole pre-occupation and he must first practice what he preaches. "Jesus began by doing and then teaching" (Acts 1:1) » (RM 62).

In these two continents where people are hospitable, there are indications of the continued blooming of spirituality in its various manifestations. So, it is natural that missionary life in this area is in contact with inter-religious and inter-Church dialogue. It is a field of evangelization to introduce Christ, the fullness of divinity and the meaning of our lives!

With regards to evangelization, it can be said that the Montfort Missionaries should have an intense dialogue with the context in which they are found. This is very important for an inculturation (Const. 51 and 52), so that the Good News can be accepted by the people in a language they can understand. This inculturation can be lived in the context of Saint Montfort's spirituality which places the mystery of the Incarnation as the center of contemplation.

In the prayer for this continental year, there is a mention of Jesus as «Wisdom incarnate». This is in correspondence with the statement of John Paul II in «ECCLESIA IN ASIA», no. 78: «Jesus could be presented as the Incarnate Wisdom of God whose grace brings to fruition the "seeds" of divine Wisdom already present in the lives, religions and peoples of Asia». The Wisdom spirituality of Saint Montfort is in dialogue with the wisdom of life that people in these two continents seek.

In these two continents which clearly show challenges in the field of economic justice, poverty is visible here and there, the attention of Missionaries to the poor and excluded from society is very important to underline. This is an undeniable harmony with the missionary identity of Saint Montfort.

All this missionary work should be carried out jointly by the Montfort Missionaries and the Montfortian Associates in this region. They work together because they are missionary partners. So, each entity needs to look for possible creative forms of collaboration.

Fifth, by promoting true devotion to Mary. This is strategic because in Asia and Oceania, the missionary and devotional spirit, especially to Mary, is felt very strong. The love of Christians in these two continents for Our Lady is recorded in «ECCLESIA IN ASIA», no. 51 which states that «Asian Christians have a great love and affection, revering her as their own Mother and the Mother of Christ. Throughout Asia there are hundreds of Marian sanctuaries and shrines where not only the Catholic faithful gather, but also believers of other religions too». The same is found in «ECCLESIA IN OCEANIA», no. 53, which states: «the faithful of Oceania have not ceased to show their great love for Mary. She has been a wondrous helper in all the Church's efforts to preach and teach the Gospel in the world of the Pacific».

So here there is fertile ground for the promotion of the «Consecration to Jesus through Mary»: true devotion to Mary is baptismal in nature, that is, it leads those who live it to a deep self-transformation in Christ, because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sixth, by intensifying cooperation with many other people, especially with the laity who are in some way inspired by St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, who is affiliated with many ecclesiastical movements or groups. It is worth mentioning here, the members of the **Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts**, with whom we share together the «Consecration to Jesus through Mary in the Holy Spirit».

These Montfortian Associates are the strength of the Montfort Missionaries in this continent to «rise and shine». Attention to their formation and missionary cooperation with them needs to be translated into real, creative projects. This can be done in the awareness that these credible laity will become reliable witnesses of the truth of the Gospel in various fields such as politics, economy, industry, education, media, science, technology, arts, and sports (cf. «ECCLESIA IN ASIA» no. 45) to spread the light of the gospel in these two continents.

It is natural to have cooperation with the Daughters of Wisdom and the Brothers of Saint Gabriel who are also present in Asia and Oceania. Missionary cooperation with them should be creatively contemplated and embodied by the leaders of the four Montfortian entities in these two continents.

Seventh, this whole intention to «rise and shine» find its foundation and expression in prayer. The prayer that is composed to accompany this continental year combines three things: the Asian-Oceanian context, the Montfortian consecrated life which is essentially missionary and the Montfortian spirituality which is also missionary. This prayer contains the whole meaning of this continental year.

The attention to the context of Asia and Oceania in this prayer underscores the fact that this continental year is the embodiment of the common awareness of the Montfort Missionaries and Montfortian Associates in these two continents of the various elements that unite them so that mutual communication and cooperation between them will be a logical consequence of it.

May God be pleased with this prayer laden with missionary embers that will be said in all communities and in every group of the «Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts» during this Asian and Oceanian Continental Year.

Various concrete activities to translate the spirit of this continental year we still have to discuss or find in our entities, in addition to various agendas related to the General Council's visits to our entities as well as during the Continental Assembly. Each of our communities and us at the entity leadership level will be looking for ways to reflect on and discuss this. The accent, of course, is not the number of activities that we will do, but the channeling of the spirit of this continental year through the activities that will be carried out.

An activity or several activities (what) to be carried out at a time which each entity will decide (when) and with certain modalities (how) will be submitted to the General Administration **no later than 17 December 2021**. Indeed, we want us to enter 2023 with a renewed vigor that we assimilate or deepen or strengthen throughout 2022 thanks to this continental year of ours.

An animated activity carried out in each entity will be shared by the superior of the entity throughout the Congregation through «**Echo Montfortain**», the official magazine of our Company, in the 2023 edition. Articles about it should be sent to Rome **by the end of October 2022**.

Dear Montfortian Confreres and Montfortian Associates, have a blessed year, in the usual companionship of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort and Blessed Marie-Louise of Jesus.

Yours in Christ Jesus,




Fr. Peter Mascarenhas, SMM



Fr. Antonius Tensi, SMM



Fr. Aloisius Banggur, SMM



Fr. Norwyn V. Baydo, SMM