

**Celebration for the Preparation of the 2017 Montfortian Chapter  
1st January 2017**

**OPENING HYMN \***

**While Shepherds Watched**

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around  
And glory shone around.  
"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled minds;  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind

2. "To you, in David's town, this day,  
Is born of David's line  
A Savior, who is Christ the Lord;

And this shall be the sign  
The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view displayed,  
All meanly wrapped in swaddling-clothes  
And in a manger laid."

3. Thus spake the seraph and forthwith  
Appeared a shining throng  
Of angels, praising God, and thus  
Addressed their joyful song:  
"All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace;  
Good will henceforth from Heaven to men  
begin and never cease."

**OPENING PRAYER**

"Eternal and incarnate Wisdom, most lovable and adorable Jesus, true God and true man, only Son of the eternal Father and of Mary always Virgin," (LEW 223)

- With the angels, I sing your coming among us. My hope is in you, because you are our Saviour and true joy.
- With the shepherds, I run up to you. In my poverty, may I find true wealth in you. In my ignorance, may I find true wisdom in you.
- United to Mary, I welcome you in my flesh and in my time. In her and through her, I want to give myself to you and follow you in each day of this New Year.
- Praise to you, O Jesus, in your human flesh and in your eternal glory. Amen

**THE WORD OF GOD – Psalm 90 (89)**

**Presentation**

*As we pass from the old to the new year, let us be conscious of our fragility. Compared to the history of the world, our life on earth is but a wink of the eye, a spark in the night. But let us remember that we are important for God, and that he calls us, during this brief time of our existence, to participate in his project of renewing this world.*

**Psalm 90 (89) (Read by all)**

Lord, you have been our refuge from age to age.  
Before the mountains were born, before the earth and the world came to birth,  
from eternity to eternity you are God.

You bring human beings to the dust, by saying,  
'Return, children of Adam.'

A thousand years are to you like a yesterday which has passed,  
like a watch of the night.

The span of our life is seventy years – eighty for those who are strong –  
but their whole extent is anxiety and trouble,  
they are over in a moment and we are gone.

Teach us to count up the days that are ours,  
and we shall come to the heart of wisdom.  
Come back, Yahweh! How long must we wait?  
Take pity on your servants.

Each morning fill us with your faithful love,  
we shall sing and be happy all our days.  
Show your servants the deeds you do.  
May the sweetness of the Lord be upon us,  
to confirm the work we have done!

#### **MONTFORT SPEAKS TO US** (*Love of Eternal Wisdom*, 51)

A thousand times happy is the man into whose soul Wisdom has entered to have his abode!  
No matter what battles he has to wage, he will emerge victorious. No matter what dangers threaten him, he will escape unharmed. No matter what sorrows afflict him, he will find joy and consolation. No matter what humiliations are heaped upon him, he will be exalted and glorified in time and throughout eternity.

#### **UNIVERSAL PRAYER**

During this year, we will live the event of the General Chapter which will orientate the life of the congregation for the coming years. Let us pray to our God, that he help us in living positively this new year so that the General Chapter can bear fruit in our lives.

– Lord, we pray you for our young confreres who are preparing to engage themselves in Montfortian life. That they may discover in Montfort a model of Christian life and missionary commitment, we pray to you.

**God our Father, remember your congregation.**

– Lord, we pray you for those confreres who are engaged in full ministry. That they may, like Montfort, manage periods of respite to nourish their relation to your Son, we pray to you.

**God our Father, remember your congregation.**

– Lord, we pray for our confreres whose health is compromised by old age or sickness. That our fraternal and prayerful presence help them in entering the mystery of the Cross, we pray to you.

**God our Father, remember your congregation.**

– Lord, we pray you for the confreres who will participate in the General Chapter. That they be responsive to the needs and challenges of our congregation to-day, and that your Spirit make them available to your call, we pray to you.

**God our Father, remember your congregation.**

## **PRAYER OF THE STAINED-GLASS** for the New Year

### **Suggestions:**

- The stain glass is shown either by being printed or projected. Each one takes time to look at it. Afterwards, the following prayer can be said immediately. Or, a short time can be taken to share on the participants' impression and reaction to the stain glass.

### **Prayer** (*Gaston Leclair: Rythmes et spirales vers Dieu*)

Lord, you're offering me this New Year  
like a stained glass window to be put together  
with 365 pieces of all colours  
representing the days of my life.

In it, I will put the red of my love and enthusiasm,  
the purple of my sorrows and mourning,  
the green of my hopes and the pink of my dreams,  
the blue or the grey of my commitments and struggles,  
the yellow and gold of my harvests...

The white will be my ordinary days  
and the black for those from which you are absent.  
I will cement this with my faith  
and my trust in you.

Lord, all I ask you is that, by the light of your presence and the Holy Spirit,  
this stained glass of my life be illuminated from within.  
Then, through transparency, those I will meet during this year  
will discover the face of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **CONCLUDING HYMN**

### **1. O Come All Ye Faithful**

Joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold Him,  
Born the King of Angels;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

### **2. O Sing, choirs of angels,**

Sing in exultation,  
Sing all that hear in heaven God's holy word.  
Give to our Father glory in the Highest;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

**3.** All Hail! Lord, we greet Thee,  
Born this happy morning,  
O Jesus! for evermore be Thy name adored.  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

\* To help you in realizing this celebration, the following elements can be found on the website:  
[www.montfortian.info/chapitre-2017.html](http://www.montfortian.info/chapitre-2017.html)  
- 1. While Shepherds Watched (mp3)  
- 2. Picture of stained-glass window (jpg)  
- 3. O Come all ye faithful (mp3)

