



38th General Chapter, SMM, 1 – 21 May, 2023, Rome

Let us dare to protect the patrimony of the Montfortian Places: Heritage of all, heritage for all

*“What, then, am I asking for? Liberos: men as free as the clouds that sail high above the earth, filled with the dew of heaven, and moving, without let or hindrance, according to the inspiration of the Spirit....”
(PM 9).*

Dear Confreres,

This year we celebrate the 350th Anniversary of the birth of Saint Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort – a man in whom the life and spirit of God burned so much that they have inflamed the hearts of Christian people literally around the world. But our holy founder had roots, personal and missionary experiences deeply rooted, incarnated, in specific places – the calls, the moments of grace and trials, the moments of growth lived by our holy founder are rooted and incarnated in specific places : villages and cities, places of contemplation, parishes and hospitals, in contact with the habitants of all these locales.

Montfort lived in openness and fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in an astonishing missionary creativity towards his brothers and sisters. He led them to undertake concrete commitments to the poor and to a profound holiness: the baptismal life lived in all its richness stimulated by the maternal influence of Mary.

Our Montfortian Family is blessed to still have at its disposition a spiritual, material, historical and cultural heritage constantly actualized, thanks to all those who went before us, having the heart to preserve them for us. Many people and groups from all over the world when they arrive in the places where Saint Louis Marie lived and worked have experienced wonderful moments of renewal, discovery, sharing and wonder! To gather and pray at the tombs of St. Louis Marie and Blessed Marie Louise of Jesus and their lay collaborator the Marquis de Magnanne, to walk in the footsteps of Montfort, is a source of inspiration and

renewal of our dynamism for so many laity and religious of the Montfortian Family.

This possibility to know closely the life and missionary journey of St. Louis Marie, to be immersed in it, can truly set afire and inflame the imagination, the heart, and the life of those already captivated by Montfort. It allows them to taste and let others taste the beauty and tenderness of a God who becomes incarnate in the fragility of his brothers and sisters.

Our Montfortian roots, our Montfortian heritage is a far other thing from a museum or a relic of the past. The Montfortian heritage in France has need of confreres there on the ground, who preserve, welcome, and share the marvels of the missionary life of Saint Louis Marie. They will succeed in doing this by working with ardor to be faithful to the Gospel, and to be creative in the mission of the Church today so that they will be able to raise up new vocations.

THE MONTFORTIAN PATRIMONY IN FRANCE: heritage of all and for all

There are indeed in France the buildings of the Montfortian Places: St. Louis Marie's birthplace in Montfort-sur-Meu; the Calvary of Pontchâteau; the Motherhouse and Basilica in Saint Laurent-sur-Sevre. All these Montfortian Places require animation which especially includes welcome, celebration and actualization of the mission à la Montfort, and diffusion of Montfortian spirituality. Montfortian associations with many members ask to be accompanied.

What heritage, what breath of the Spirit springs forth from these three places?

The Maison Natale in Montfort-sur-Meu enfolds the cradle, the beginning of the natural and spiritual life of Louis Marie Grignion; nearby is the chapel where he was baptized and his family's residence during his childhood. It is from here that he took the surname "de Montfort."

The Calvary of Pontchâteau : witnesses to Father de Montfort's genius to nourish the faith of thousands of Christians even to the point of building together a "holy mountain" on the plain of the Madeleine. Even today, the Calvary of Pontchâteau is a "shining pole of evangelization", with activities provided by an international presence of the whole Montfortian Family, composed of Daughters of Wisdom,

Brothers of St. Gabriel, Montfort Missionaries, many volunteers, and the presence of a home for the reception of fragile persons. In September 2021 the Parish was confided to the Montforts. The Calvary of Pontchâteau witnesses to the mature missionary spirit of Montfort, full of creativity, organization and zeal all under the standard of the Cross.

Saint Laurent-sur-Sevre, the unexpected place of the death of this great missionary, encompasses the Basilica, the Parish and the Spiritual Center. Saint Laurent has become another birthplace, a place of pilgrimage, the motherhouse, a source for deepening and radiating Montfort's spiritual heritage.

It is good to take into account all the other places where Father de Montfort lived and undertook his missions, such as Poitiers, La Rochelle, Mervent...

Very few French confreres remain in active ministry. To keep these buildings empty without people to animate these Montfortian Places would extinguish the life that they can bring us. We are all children or grandchildren of France. Thanks to the French missionaries, through their life witness and their apostolate, many people have tasted the fruitfulness of the Montfortian charism and spirituality everywhere. We are the fruits of their missionary audacity. We are the fruit of their missionary boldness. It is our turn to take up the relief with international teams. It is for us to work together so that it may always be possible for the confreres of every entity, for generations to come, and for the entire Church, to partake of this patrimony.

Resolutions

As Montfort Missionaries, participants in the 38th General Chapter, we ask each entity to consider these Montfortian Place as their very own heritage, in order to assure the missionary presence for today and the future.

It is urgent to send confreres to ensure our enduring missionary presence, with a specific preparation and a close accompaniment, while evaluating the experiences of each community.

It belongs to the General Administration to coordinate and discern the adequate collaboration, in dialogue with the entity of France and the other entities, in order to have living and missionary communities in our Montfortian Places. Therefore, the chapter gives mandate to the new general administration in the spirit of

dialogue to plan and to implement a short, medium and long terms strategy to sustain the material and spiritual heritage of France that belongs to all of us.

In our time, the witness of St. Louis-Marie can help us base our Christian existence on faith in the living God, on a warm relationship with God and on a solid ecclesial experience... (Letter St. John Paul II to Montfortian Religious Family)

The Capitulants of the General chapter 2023

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~~Je. M. P.~~

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