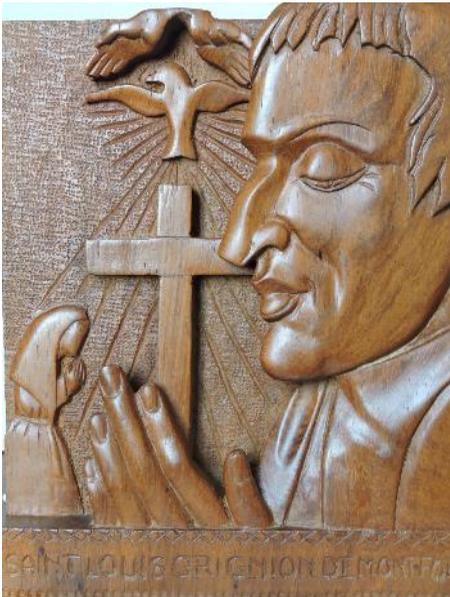




If you ask what was his life,
there was none more holy



Bassorilievo in legno.

TO KNOW HIM

« ... I believe that anyone who wants to fully and thoroughly understand the sanctity of Louis Marie Grignion should not start from social considerations; I say more, not even from the history of the religious sentiment of his time.

He was essentially a loner, a hermit. It's almost impossible to see brothers or relatives around him. A wandering hermit, a loner in the crowds: essentially solitary and hermit.

There are no words of him spoken to himself or to an intimate: all his words are words of God, preached *super tecta* (from the housetops). He lived, hidden within himself, but entirely for others. One needs to glean some of his secrets from his *Canticles*: but these too were words to be sung by many, in the serious circumstances of missions and religious celebrations.

He was not even a poet for himself. He was a poet, indeed; but he wrote verses as the multitudes could sing them. A writer, in his own way, but a writer he was. And even his writings are not confidential, they are torrential: they do not entertain discourses, but enrapture.

His own oratory had to be influenced by his temperament: that is, it had to be resolute and decisive, not persuasive and convincing, but overwhelming.

We know that in confessional he was very sweet: face to face, who knows what kind of man he became. His inner fire, flashing on the crowds, had secretly made his nature flexible and itself all fire, hence easy.

All the most painful contradictions of our Christian life seemed resolved in him: nature and Grace, penance and joy, action and contemplation, multitudes and solitude, rigor and ease, imperiousness and obedience, anxiety and intrepidity.

Who can tell us the life of this man, truly a man of God and a man for others? ».

(don Giuseppe De Luca, *Luigi Maria Grignion da Montfort, Saggio biografico [Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, Biographical essay]*, Roma², 1985)

THE GUIDING WORD



Let us listen to the Word of God from the letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians (4:4-13)

« Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near! Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength ».

LET US MEDITATE

From Psalm 37

Let us bless the Lord for his gifts!

³ Trust in the Lord and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

⁴ Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the Lord,
trust in him and he will do this;

⁶ he will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.

³⁰ The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,
and their tongues speak what is just.

³¹ The law of their God is in their hearts;
their feet do not slip.

¹⁶ Better the little that the righteous have
than the wealth of many wicked;

¹⁷ for the power of the wicked will be broken,
but the Lord upholds the righteous.

¹⁸ The blameless spend their days under the Lord's care,
and their inheritance will endure forever.

¹⁹ In times of disaster they will not wither;
in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.

²¹ The wicked borrow and do not repay,
but the righteous give generously.

²² Those the Lord blesses will inherit the land.

TODAY FOR ME

The epitaph presents us with the name of our saint: Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort. "Louis" is the name received on the day of his baptism, 1st February 1673, in the parish church of Saint John. Tradition tells us that "Marie" was added on the day of his Confirmation. Not all biographers agree. What is certain is that it is there with its charge of meaning, memory of a bond, an announcement. "Grignion" is the family surname. The history of each of us is inscribed in a family. In it we not only receive life, but faith, joy, particular characteristics. "Montfort" is the name of his town to which he remains connected and to which he will return. A place that he will often remember in his signatures.

We may mention other ways in which Saint Louis was called: the **good father** of Montfort; the father with the big rosary; the foolish man of Montfort; the **apostle of the cross and the Rosary**; the man who has come from the wind; the man for the last church...

At this point the author of the epitaph offers some reflections on the deceased: « **If you ask what was his life, there was none more holy** ».

I don't think that "more holy" translates exactly the Latin *integrior* (as it appears in the original script). I would rather translate, "life whole and full" in all its facets. From an **intellectual** point of view: a man of study, a very flourishing and versatile writer (just think of the over 20,000 verses he composed!), a theologian of great class. From an **artistic** point of view, he was a sculptor, architect and designer. As a **priest** he was a tireless preacher, confessor, organizer of celebrations and confrater-

nities, founder of congregations, attentive both to the needs of the Church and to the needs of his time. And to substantiate all these activities, a very intense life of prayer, meditation, contemplation, silence and solitude.

I believe that the litany, with which we entrust ourselves to his intercession, helps us greatly to discover the richness and variety of his gifts:

« **Worthy servant of God alone**; Faithful disciple of incarnate Wisdom; Heart docile to the Holy Spirit; Slave of Jesus living in Mary; **Announcer of the grace of the Cross**; **Missionary of the Gospel of salvation**; Animator of sincere conversion; Master of evangelical wisdom; Faithful son of the Servant of the Lord; **Preacher of the Mother of the Redeemer**; Friend of the poor and the least: Educator of the people of God; Guide to the profession of true faith; **Pastor concerned for the good of the Church**; Obedient collaborator of the Pastors of the Church ».

It is a mosaic made up of many pieces that cannot be separated, but show us a masterpiece. Thus, with the prayer of the church we can acclaim: « In the life of Saint Louis, we recognize the signs of your love for us; in his voice, your word; in his actions, your power ».

And again: « In the wonderful testimony of your saints you always make your Church fruitful and give us a sure sign of your love. Their great example and their fraternal intercession support us on the journey of life, so that your mystery of salvation may be fulfilled in us ».

16. My talents of mind and body,
Both inner and exterior
Are all your gifts, all your treasures.
Deo gratias...

17. I received strong inspirations,
Many holy, urgent graces,
All your gifts and all your presents.
Deo gratias...

18. From you, O My Lord, comes my
health,
All my wealth and prosperity,
All my wonderful happiness.
Deo gratias...

19. If I have been educated,
If I follow my vocation,
It is all through your protection.
Deo gratias...

21. What is this great joy and sweet-
ness
Savored at times within my heart?
It is the effect of your grace.
Deo gratias...

22. What can I offer for these gifts,
For many other hidden ones,
Except to chant forever:
Deo gratias...

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