



Father Joseph TELCIN
(1974 – 2013)

*Died 23 August 2013, in a car accident on his way from Abricots to Jérémie (Haiti)
aged 38, with 12 years of Religious Profession.*

Born in Bombardopolis in the North-West of Haiti (in the diocese of Port-de-Paix), on 11 October 1974, Joseph did his primary schooling in his native village. Beginning in Bombardopolis, his secondary education continued in Port-au-Prince. After a year's postulancy in Bassin Bleu, he entered the Montfortian novitiate in Lavaud/P-de-Px (1999-2000). After the scholasticate (Cazeau 2000-2002 and CIFOR 2002-2006), Father Joseph was ordained priest on 15 April 2007 in Gros Morne, in the diocese of Gonaïves. The same year he received his first obedience for the Montfortian community of St Louis du Nord, then, in 2008, for that of Gros Morne.

Of a jovial nature, Joseph had inherited the wisdom of the brave people of the back country who were used to the struggle for life. In the back country of the mountains and high plateaus of the North-West, you have to be strong to resist the rigours of cyclones as well as those of droughts bringing famine and misery. This is without doubt what explains the tough character of our confrere, and how he was able to be chosen to go and found a new Montfortian house in a remote district of the South of the country: the Bishop of the Diocese of Jérémie, Mgr. Gontrand Decoste, approached the Montfort Missionaries of Haiti with a view to entrusting them with the foundation of a new parish, whose centre would be Lassise in his diocese; this area, in fact, was placed under the patronage of St Louis Marie de Montfort.

After some dialogue and a visit to the area, a favourable response was given to the bishop, and it was Father Joseph Telcin, smm, who was chosen. He accepted with generosity and responded to the call. The experience commenced in April 2013. Father Jo dedicated himself to this foundation mission starting almost from nothing... Totally abandoned to Providence, in the manner of the pioneers who had come in days gone by to found the diocese of Port-de-Paix: those others had an advantage over him in that they were accompanied by a lay-brother, who was both a companion and an artisan builder... In his case, Father Joseph could count only on the grace of God and the warm welcome of his parishioners, who for the most part were as deprived as himself.

It needed audacity in the superiors of the Montfortian Province of Haiti to respond to the call of the Bishop of Jérémie! And it needed audacity in Father Joseph to respond to the call of his Provincial and dedicate himself to this difficult ministry. He did it without ever abandoning his simplicity and good-nature. Death dragged him suddenly and precociously from this beautiful Montfortian mission... A motor-cycle accident hurled him from a cliff-top, and he literally broke his neck! And we were left stupefied before the mystery, like the prophet Jeremiah before the distress of the people (Jer 14:18b): "even prophets and priests ... at their wits' end...!" Eternal Wisdom of God, your thoughts are not our thoughts... you

have accepted the sacrifice of Father Jo. You will know how to transform it into abundant fruit for the benefit of the parishioners of Lassise, and to raise up, at the right time, another shepherd like him, after your own heart!

The funeral of Father Joseph, celebrated in the parish centre of St Louis King of France, was grandiose and worthy of this valiant apostle who left to found a "Montfortian" parish in difficult circumstances. About sixty priests concelebrated with three bishops. A considerable crowd attended: the relations of Father Joe, his Montfortian family, many religious, male and female, seminarians, faithful from the diocese of Jérémie, where he was on mission, from the diocese of Port-de-Paix, where he was born, from the diocese of Gonaïves where he was on mission in Gros Morne before leaving for the South... Those in charge spared no expense to ensure a last homage that was well-deserved: return tickets for the Provincial and his Vicar to go to Jérémie for the funeral; many efforts by the Bursar to have his body repatriated from the department of La Grande Anse/Sud to Port-au-Prince, so many material preparations and contacts... the mobilisation, under the guidance of the parish-priest, of all the people of the parish centre of St Louis King of France for the reception and the carrying out of the funeral service. All the confreres of the Province were present, of whom some, on mission in foreign parts, were in the country for a short stay... The ceremony, warm, and crowning all the various conjoined efforts, represented a beautiful "à Dieu" in line with the apostolic commitment of God's servant. The burial took place in our family vault, beside our young confreres who were killed in the earthquake of January 2010, and some of our elder confreres, both foreign and native, who have gone before us to the house of the Father and rest in the peace of the Foyer de Charité Sainte Marie of Port-au-Prince.