



L'Écho Montfortain

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WORD FROM FATHER GENERAL

(The Extraordinary General Council met in Rome from 7-17 October 2003. In order to give you an idea of the spirit and the themes of the meeting, I include here the Closing Remarks.)

It is always a pleasure and a grace to meet new confreres, especially if they are trying to walk in the footsteps of Montfort with all their heart. I think this EGC 2003 gave all of us the opportunity to meet such new confreres: new and old members came to know one another. Problems and hopes could be shared in formal and informal conversations. We were able to pray together for the whole Congregation and for the Church and the world. Perhaps I am not alone in thanking God for the gift of the confreres who have accepted to serve as the new superiors in Holland, Africa, Philippines, India and Indonesia.

Your reflections and contributions to the project of the **new Ratio** are much appreciated. Added to the reactions of the various experts who have reviewed the proposed text, your reactions will help the Committee to do their best to present a document that can touch as many confreres as possible, and impact their lives in the footsteps of the poor apostles. We do not yet know the final form of this text, but what is certain is that growth, conversion and transformation in the confreres –their “formation” – is ultimately the responsibility of each individual and of the superior of the Province or Delegation. Only you and your council can really decide how to make the Ratio active and alive in your entity.

We drew your attention to the **Future of the Generalate**, and the variety of offices and functions that eventually need to be filled for the well-being of the Congregation. The job descriptions presented, the kinds of qualities needed, might already help your reflection and discernment for the next administration.

Father Battista Cortinovis visited us, as the newly appointed Delegate of the Superior General for the **Association Mary Queen of All Hearts**. It provided an opportunity to hear once again what is happening in the entities in regard to various groups of lay people, collaborators, and persons joined with the SMM through the Consecration to Jesus Wisdom. I hope this stimulates you to verify what is being done in your entity, and what you might actively do in the future to share and spread our Montfortian heritage with the widest number of persons.

We also tried to look to the future, considering our **Provincial Statutes**, to see if some relatively small changes now might pave the way for easier chapters and elections after 2005. I really do urge the Provinces and Vice-Provinces to review their Statutes with this in mind. At the same time, **younger delegations** who are growing more mature and numerous seek all the ways possible to share the most direct representation and autonomy possible. This is especially acute with the provincial delegations. The current Constitutions and Statutes seem to contain much flexibility and adaptation for particular circumstances, but there is always room to try to ameliorate them.

Nineteen months from now, the General Chapter will be nearly over; a new Superior General and Council will have been elected. This EGC has set us firmly on the road to the Chapter of 2005. We have agreed that **the renewal of our Montfortian mission, flowing from the renewal of our lives as consecrated Montfortian religious will be a major theme of this chapter.** We will not forget the gifts we have received over these past 20 years to renew our Montfortian spirituality and our apostolic communities. But working together with one another and with lay people, working together as Missionaries of the Company of Mary we want to move on. Working together and being together as confreres – brothers and priests – we want to discern and respond to the signs of the times with the same energy and creativity of our founder, St. Louis-Marie. The fact that we have chosen to prepare and celebrate this General Chapter in the context of **the 300th Anniversary of the vocation of Brother Mathurin Rangedard** – *the first step in the realisation of Montfort's dream* – shines even more light on our search for fraternal collaboration and creative, effective mission in the world of today. We will celebrate 300 years of Montfortian Mission (with all its lights and shadows), with remembrance and with gratitude; but we will also rededicate ourselves for the next hundred years of mission with all the challenges and surprises they will bring.

As movements for ecology and respect for creation show us that the resources of the earth are precious yet limited, so our sessions with Fr. Piet Goltstein (Administrator of the Montfort General Fund) and Fr. Francesco Agliardi (Bursar General) reminded us that **the finances of the Congregation** are not limitless. Thanks to the generosity and sharing of ALL the entities over the years, the IMA – International Montfortian Aid – has been able to distribute over 7 million dollars for formation, community needs and mission. Almost as much was returned in interest to the entities who put their money in the common fund. With the IMA, is essential to remember that it is not the generalate that “gives” this money; it is ALL the entities that SHARE this money. Even more, we must remember the mission actions and gifts of nearly all the provinces that still provide substantial help to our Montfortian missions around the world. There is need for prudence and a spirit of poverty in using these financial resources, because they are not limitless. There is a need to examine further ways of increasing the sharing, striving toward even more balance in the availability and use of financial resources across the Congregation. There is also need to honour and cherish the sacrifices of the thousands of good, ordinary Christians who are our benefactors, whose trust in the SMM made these funds possible. We also remember all the confreres who have worked tirelessly in the Provinces for decades to collect bit by bit some extra money for the missions.

These next months will see canonical visitations, centenary celebrations for the Provinces of Colombia and the United States, and the preparation for the General Chapter. And, of course, the life and ministry of each day goes on. Let me take this occasion to thank each one of you for having accepted to lead and to serve your confreres as Provincial or Delegation Superior. It is a task that touches you in the depth of your being, and that changes you. It is a task that calls on you to live your Consecration to Jesus Wisdom through the hands of Mary with new challenges each day, always with more faith, love and hope. I pray that these days spent together with your fellow superiors will give you comfort and courage in the work that awaits you at home. I pray that in these months of preparation for the General Chapter, the Holy Spirit will guide us all further in the footsteps of the poor apostles, in the desert, *“leaning on the Lord, trusting in his holy word”*... in the desert, but *“can't turn around now, we've come this far by faith.”*

*William Considine, s.m.m.
Superior General*

OFFICIAL NEWS ITEMS

PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS

On 27 August 2003, in Nairobi (Kenya): Ernest AKHONYA MUKAVANA.

On 5 October 2003, in Reggio Calabria (Italy): Bruno CUZZILLA.

On 25 October 2003, in Rome (Italy): Domenico PEDULLÀ.

GENERAL CHAPTER OF 2005

The Missionaries of the Company of Mary will celebrate their next General Chapter from **1-21 May 2005**. It will take place in Rome, at the Generalate of the Salesians. A **Preparatory Committee** has been named by the General Council and they will hold their first meeting in late November. The members are: Bishop Gérard Deschamps (Canada, and former bishop in Papua New Guinea), Fr. Peter Mascarenhas (India), Fr. Jaime Oved Cabrejo (Colombia), and Fr. Jean-Louis Courchesne (General Council).

At its meeting in October 2003, the Extraordinary General Council studied and recommended the inclusion of at least one major theme for the Chapter: **the renewal of our Montfortian Mission, flowing from the renewal of our Montfortian consecrated life**. Other important themes may also surface, and each confrere always has the right to submit topics or themes that he believes vitally touch the life of the whole Congregation.

The Preparatory Committee plans to have the Consultation Document in the hands of the confreres by January. Communities and individual confreres would have until August 31, 2004 to submit their reflections and suggestions to the Committee. After collating the consultation materials, the Committee will prepare dossiers for the consideration of the Provincial Chapters and Delegation Assemblies to be held at the turn of the year 2004-2005.

The Code of Canon Law says “the general chapter, which holds supreme authority in the institute according to the norm of the constitutions, is to be so formed that, representing the entire institute, it should be a true sign of its unity in love. Its foremost duty is this: to protect the patrimony of the institute (the intention of the founder, the nature, purpose and spirit of the institute); to promote suitable renewal in accord with this patrimony; to elect the supreme moderator (superior general); to treat major business matters and to publish norms which all are bound to obey.” (Can. 631.1)

Often some of the most stimulating and important work around a General Chapter is accomplished by the discussions and reflections of local communities or individuals. The time of preparation and the involvement of all the confreres is as important as the Chapter itself. Since the next Chapter will be celebrated during the 300th Anniversary of the Vocation of Brother Mathurin, the first step in the foundation of the Company of Mary, every confrere is called to thanksgiving and re-dedication.

TERCENTENARY OF OUR FOUNDATION 1705 – 2005

The “Foundation” of the Company of Mary does not admit of one single, specific date. Rather, in the view of the historian **P. Louis Pérouas, smm**, it is a long process that would stretch from 1700 till 1722.

In 1700 the newly ordained Louis-Marie Grignon wrote of his *“tremendous urge to make our Lord and his holy Mother loved, to go in a humble and simple way to teach catechism to the poor in country places and to arouse in sinners a devotion to our Blessed Lady.”* *“I cannot help pleading for a small and poor band of good priests...”* (Letter 5). In 1722, six years after his death, Fathers René Mulot and Adrian Vatel, with the invitation of Mother Marie-Louise of Jesus, leave St. Pompain for St. Laurent. In between were many other important events.

1705 does seem to have special significance, because in that year Montfort met the young Mathurin Rangedard in Poitiers. Mathurin followed Montfort and his successors till he died in 1760. True, Brother Mathurin was not a priest, but he was chosen by Louis-Marie to *“help the missionaries in their work”*. *“Follow me. Assuredly, it is your vocation,”* we read in Le Crom.

With the agreement of the ECG, the General Council believes that the vocation of Brother Mathurin marks **the first step in the realization of Montfort’s dream** for a small and poor band of good priests. **It represents the first concrete step in the foundation of the Company.** The Council believes that the year 2005, the 300th anniversary of his vocation, merits celebration and a re-dedication to the missionary dream of Montfort in the world and church of today.

The General Council believes strongly that any celebrations or activities marking this 300th anniversary ought to be done *“with modesty, attention and devotion”*. Why? Because already these years from 2000-2005 are quite filled with many anniversaries: the Foundation of the Daughters of Wisdom, the Centenary in Colombia and the United States, the Centenary of several St. Gabriel Provinces. There is a danger of a surfeit of anniversary celebrations. Also, precisely because our foundation was the fruit of a long process, 1705-2005 focuses on only the first step. In the spirit of Montfort, and also recognizing the actual state of health and age of many confreres, grandiose or triumphalistic celebrations seem out of place. Lastly, there is the fact that 2005 will also bring a General Chapter, and it is important that energies be focused on the Chapter.

However the General Council believes that 2005 could well be celebrated in the provinces and delegations, with the SMM and the Montfortian Family,

- As a Jubilee Year of thanksgiving and remembrance of what has been accomplished in the Congregation and the Entity;
- As a Jubilee Year of reconciliation and healing;
- As an occasion to collect and value the history of the entity, especially while aged confreres who embody much of that history are still alive.
- As an occasion to share the spirituality of St. Louis-Marie and let it bear fruit.
- As the guiding image or spirit for the General Chapter: 300 years of Montfortian mission, leading us to a renewal of the mission, **together in the footsteps of the poor apostles**, for the needs of the world and church of the Third Millennium.

The 300th Anniversary Year will begin on 1 May 2005, with the opening of the General Chapter, **and will conclude on Montfort’s Feast day, 28 April 2006**. More information and suggestions will follow, both from the General Administration and from your own entity.

COMINGS AND GOINGS AT THE GENERAL HOUSE

Two meetings take place at the General House in November: the Committee for the Renewal of Formation (17-23 November) and the Preparatory Committee for the General Chapter (26 November - 1 December). The Fall meeting of the Finance Committee will take place in Litchfield (USA) from 24 till 26 November.

The following are the principal travels foreseen by the members of the General Administration from now until the end of February 2004.

Father General will leave Rome on 15 December. After two weeks in the United States, he will go to Colombia where he will make the canonical visitation and preach the annual retreat for the confreres. These events coincide with the opening of the Centenary Year of the arrival of the Montfortians in the country. He will return to Rome on 15 February.

Father Ivo Libralato will make part of the canonical visitation in Italy (the North), from 6 to 31 December. He will continue the visit in January and February, as the activities at the General House will permit.

Father Hub Louis will be present in Rome until the end of February. Then he will undertake the visitations in Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, and Great Britain/Ireland.

Father Jean-Louis Courchesne will leave for the United States at the beginning of January to make the canonical visitation. After a moment in Canada, he will return to Rome on 15 February.

Father Miguel Patiño will leave at the start of December. First he will make the visitation to Nicaragua, then he will go to Haiti at the beginning of January to make the visitation and to preach the retreat for the confreres. He will also visit the community in Nassau, before heading to Guatemala to give conferences to Montfortian consecrated laypeople.

Father Francesco Agliardi, bursar general, will be in the United States at the end of November for the meeting of the Finance Committee. He will leave again on 20 January to offer his support to the bursars of Haiti and Colombia. He should be back in Rome for 11 February.

OUR DEPARTED BRETHREN

Father Carlo ROGGERO (1912-2003)

Died on 17 October 2003 at Redona di Bergamo, aged 91 with 71 years of Religious Profession. From boyhood he felt attracted to serve the Lord. He completed both minor seminary and noviciate at Redona, and made first profession there on 20 September 1932. Having studied theology both at Rome and then Loreto, he was ordained priest on 12 March 1938. Fr. Roggero spent a great part of his priestly ministry as a missionary preacher, moving across the length and breadth of Italy. He also spent time as chaplain to the Daughters of Wisdom and spiritual director in the Noviciate. He was appreciated by all for his devotion to Mary, his sure guidance during long years of apostolic work, his Marian preaching, the ministry of reconciliation and spiritual direction. When his health became uncertain, he moved to Villa Santa Maria, where he died after some years of illness. He leaves everyone with the remembrance of the goodness and gentleness that characterized his earthly pilgrimage.

Father Lambertus (Lambert) TERSTROET (1912-2003)

Died on 23 October 2003 at Valkenburg (The Netherlands), aged 91 with 68 years of Religious Profession. In 1934 he entered the congregation at Meerssen, where he made his first

vows in 1935; he was ordained priest during World War II in 1941. After higher theological studies in Leuven, he moved to the Holy Land Foundation in Nijmegen, and worked as a guide for the Montfortian Pilgrimages and also as editor of the magazine “Standard of Mary”. From 1968 he travelled all over the world, giving retreats, working as professor at the seminary in Uganda, and then in Australia. In 1982 he was sent to Iceland where he worked as chaplain to sisters and guide to his confreres. Fr. Terstroet was a passionate, active man; his teaching was lively and imaginative. Everywhere he went, he made quite an impression because he always had a warm interest in each person. Till the end of his life, at the home for the elderly confreres in Vroenhof, even as his memory nearly totally left him, he continued to be a charming person, who did not lose his decorum.

Brother Marcel GRAVEL (1923-2003)

Died on the 26 October 2003 at Trois Rivières (Canada), aged 80 with 62 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 9 September 1941. A man of multiple talents and capacities, he left his mark wherever he passed. First he was in charge of maintenance in many of the houses of the Canadian Province. Then he was director of the farm in Upper Melbourne and in charge of the novices and postulants for the brothers (1953-1965). He then left for Papua New Guinea, where he worked for 25 years as mechanic and carpenter. Returning to Canada in 1990, he worked at the Shrine of Mary Queen of All Hearts in Montreal, before retiring to Nicolet in 1999 for health reasons. Brother Marcel was a *bon vivant*, without twists or complications, a confrere who had nothing but friends, both in Canada and in Papua.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SAINT LOUIS-MARIE DE MONTFORT: *Sabiduria de Dios, Felicidad del Hombre, Obras Completas*, Ediciones Montfortianas, Centro Mariano, (Colombia), 2003, 1740 pages. A new and very beautiful Spanish edition of the Complete Works, for the first time with all the *Cantiques* which occupy 700 pages. The presentation – introductions to the whole and to each work – is in a spiritual and pastoral manner. The analytical index occupies 100 pages. The whole presentation makes for easy and pleasant reading.

SAINT LOUIS-MARIE DE MONTFORT: *Il Segreto Meraviglioso del Santo Rosario* and *The Secret of the Rosary*. These Italian and English editions of the Secret of the Rosary include the Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* of John Paul II, and present a contemplative manner of praying the Rosary. Ed. Shalom, Italy, 2003, 248 pages. Very beautiful popular editions supervised by Fr. Battista Cortinovis.

SAINT LOUIS-MARIE DE MONTFORT: Provisional translation of the *Secret of Mary* in Russian. Ed. LPJ Foundation, Inc, Philippines, 2003, 124 pages.

LOUIS LE CROM, S.M.M.: *Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort*, Ed. Clovis, Étampes (France), 2003, 635 pages. This is a re-edition of the biography of Montfort published on the occasion of his canonisation in 1947. Even if this re-edition makes no mention of the developments, researches and publications of the last half century about Montfort and his spirituality, it makes available again one of the most complete biographies, in a text that remains accessible to all.