



L'Écho Montfortain

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WORD FROM FATHER GENERAL

From October 5th to 13th, all 957 members of the Company of Mary – plus all the novices and aspirants – went on pilgrimage to the tombs of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort and Blessed Marie-Louise of Jesus. Of course, they were not all physically present! But during the Extraordinary General Council held this year in St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, the Provincial and Delegation Superiors carried in pilgrimage the needs and intentions of all their confreres. In a symbolic but real way the entire Company of Mary returned to its sources, retracing part of the footsteps of Father de Montfort, taking up again his Prayer for Missionaries, as we prepare to celebrate a General Chapter and also the 300th Anniversary of the vocation of Brother Mathurin.

The pilgrimage part of the E.G.C. included time for personal visits and prayer at the Basilica and chapels of St-Laurent, a very fraternal encounter with the confreres at our Motherhouse, a festive Sunday Eucharist with the parish community, and an evening Eucharist at the chapel of the Daughters of Wisdom. A whole day at the Calvary of Pontchâteau offered the time for a prayerful celebration gathered around the Cross of Father de Montfort in the old chapel, and a slow meditative walk through the woods and monuments of the Calvary to contemplate the mysteries of the Rosary. Once again, in the place that saw the summit of Montfort's missionary activity and also the training and sending forth of so many French missionaries, we prayed for the future of the Company of Mary and the renewal of its missionary fervour. The E.G.C. concluded with a moving celebration in the Basilica at St-Laurent. First we gathered down in the crypt chapel, around the second epitaph that covered the tomb of St. Louis-Marie, the one that begins, "*Traveller, what do you see?*" Since the new Project for Montfortian Formation or **Ratio** is largely based on the words and images of this epitaph, it was fitting for us to spend time returning to the sources of our Montfortian consecrated and missionary life. Then we moved upstairs to celebrate Eucharist on the tombs of Montfort and Marie-Louise. The superiors from all the entities joined to pray the Prayer for Missionaries, interspersed with the refrain: "*Liberos: hearts that are free, hearts that are free for your Mother; hearts that are free for the life of the world.*" The Eucharist was truly a gathering in of the whole Company of Mary – *past, present and future.*

The upcoming General Chapter of 2005 drew most of the attention of the E.G.C. in its business sessions. Thanks to the very fine response of the confreres to the Preparation Document, communities and individuals from around the world had sent in hundreds of pages of reflections and suggestions. Elsewhere in the *Echo* we offer a selection of the responses,

in order to give a flavour of the various points of view and aspirations in the different entities. The members of the E.G.C. had the chance to study the response of the confreres to certain questions in order to have a concrete sense of what people are thinking and hoping around the Congregation. In accord with the Constitutions the members of the E.G.C. also gave their opinion on how many delegates each province would send to the Chapter, and what delegations with growing numbers of local vocations would send an elected delegate. A favourable opinion was also given to efforts of the “Northern Provinces” – Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands – to move toward forming a single Province that could still respond to the legal and financial requirements of three distinct countries. At the same time the confreres working in Papua New Guinea (presently a provincial delegation of Canada) will seek to find a new status that better represents that fact that the young SMM working there come from Asian delegations. Last but not least, the manager of the Montfort General Fund in Belgium, Mr. Patrick de Villenfagne, spoke to the E.G.C. about the cumulative effects of the difficult world economic situation on the SMM Sharing Fund. His message was that we cannot continue the present high level of funding; serious changes will have to be made that give a deeper meaning to the understanding of “sharing” by all entities.

All in all, the E.G.C. afforded time to prepare for the General Chapter and time to return on pilgrimage to our sources. In the months to come you will be asked to pray each day for the success of the General Chapter; please also invite our friends and associates to join you in prayer. In December and January the Provincial Chapters and Delegations Assemblies will meet, to send their opinions to the General Chapter. We are going to celebrate 300 years of life as the Company of Mary. I invite you to look beyond your own ministry and province to dream, work and pray for what the Company might become in its next 100 years. To return to the words and image of the Latin epitaph of Montfort, it was clear what his contemporaries saw in St. Louis-Marie:

*“A light quenched,
a man consumed by the fire of charity...
his devotion to Mary, none more like St. Bernard.
A priest of Christ, he showed forth Christ in his action
and preached him everywhere in his words.
Indefatigable, he rested only in the grave.
Father of the poor, protector of orphans,
reconciler of sinners...
His glorious death was the image of his life;
As he lived, so he died.”*

After 300 years, what do our contemporaries find in us, the Montfortians of today and tomorrow? *“Traveller, what do you see?”*

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

OFFICIAL NEWS ITEMS

FIRST PROFESSIONS

On 29 June 2004, in Ruteng (Indonesia): Kosmas AMBO PATAN, Bonevasius DAMPUT, Melkior JELALU, Rofinus JEWARUT, Mikael JOFRI KELEN.

On 15 August 2004, in Mbarara (Uganda): Augustine AHUMENYESI LUNGADI, Mark ISOMELA ETOFETOFE, Paul Lonely MASHONGA, Amon MICHAEL DZONZI, Bernard OSOKO KISANGASANGA.

On 8 September 2004, in Antananarivo (Madagascar): Paul-Emile RAKOTONJANAHARY, Ernest RAMANANJANAHARY LALANANDRASANA, Achille RAMIANDRISOA LANTO TAHIANA, Lucien RAZAFINDRAMASY.

On 8 September 2004, in Litchfield (USA): Harry Antonio FLORES MORALES, Jorge Rafael ORTIZ TORRES.

On 29 September 2004, in Bonn (Germany): Henrik KOSTOW.

PERPETUAL PROFESSIONS

On 15 August 2004, in Bandung (Indonesia): Fransiskus (Frans) ARA, Stefanus (Leba) LEBA, Gregorius (Goris) PASI, Antonius (Suni) SUNIWARNO.

On 8 September 2004, in Port-au-Prince (Haiti): Gracia FÉRILUS, Jean-Lucien JANVIER, Joseph LAROSE, Zacharie SAINT JEAN.

On 14 September 2004, in Ozone Park (USA): Hugh GILLESPIE.

ORDINATIONS TO THE DEACONATE

On 16 August 2004, in Bandung (Indonesia): Stefanus (Leba) LEBA, Gregorius (Goris) PASI, Antonius (Suni) SUNIWARNO.

On 12 September 2004, in Port-au-Prince (Haiti): Gracia FÉRILUS, Jean-Lucien JANVIER, Joseph LAROSE.

RESIGNATION OF THE PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR OF CANADA

On 15 September 2004, the Superior General and his Council accepted the resignation, on health grounds, of Fr. Wilfrid Bergeron, the Provincial Superior of Canada. His place will be taken for the moment by Fr. Jean-Guy Richer, the Vicar Provincial.

NEW MONTFORTIAN LITURGICAL PROPER

On 26 June 2004, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments approved the Montfortian liturgical calendar and *proper* texts, in the Latin and French versions. Several texts are new, but the calendar remains roughly the same. The memorial of Our Lady of Loreto has been reintroduced, on 10 December. Also we are reminded to set aside a day devoted to our dead (confreres, relations and benefactors) during the month of November. We hope to publish the approved liturgical texts soon in French, along with a selection of Montfortian prayers. Translations into other languages will follow. We will send a Montfortian *Ordo* to each entity as in previous years.

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL HOUSE

Fr. Ivo Libralato is recovering well from the laryngectomy he underwent at the end of June. After some weeks in hospital, he returned to the General House and had to follow a course of radio-therapy for two months. As he cannot speak, he expresses himself by means of writing – by hand or on the computer; in the latter case, his writing is converted into a human voice... a female one! He has just started to learn to speak again. Despite this great trial, he remains very active in the house and on the Council. He wishes to thank the confreres for their prayers and encouragement.

Fr. Wim Peeters has been freed by the Indonesian Delegation to help with the preparation of the General Chapter. He has been in Rome since August. We are very grateful to our confrere and to his entity.

The members of the General Administration spent the first part of October in St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, where the Extraordinary General Council took place. All returned to Rome immediately after the meeting.

The Preparatory Committee for the General Chapter met in Rome from 23 to 27 October. There they made themselves aware of the responses of the confreres to the questionnaire which had been sent out. You will get some idea of these responses from the selection included in the present Echo. Starting with the reactions of the confreres from all over the world, the committee prepared the matter for reflection for the Provincial Chapters and Assemblies of Delegations, which will take place in December and January.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Father General will take part in a congress on the Religious Life, to be held in Rome from 23 to 27 November. On 18 December, he is due to take off for a tour of the world, during which he will first of all make the Canonical Visitation of Papua New Guinea (22 December – 2 January), and the Philippines (4 – 20 January). From there he will cross the Pacific for a taste of the Canadian Winter, where he will preside at the Chapter of Elections (24 – 27 January). After a brief period of rest in the USA, he is due to return to the General House for 8 February.

Fr. Hub Louis will make the canonical visitation of India from 12 January to 24 February.

Fr. Miguel Patiño will be absent from 17 November until 11 January. He will be making the canonical visitation in Peru and Brazil, then will spend some time in Colombia.

Fr. Jean-Louis Courchesne will be in Canada from 1 January until 5 February. He will be present for the Chapter of Elections with Father General.

Fr. Francesco Agliardi, the General Bursar, will take part in the meeting of the Finance Committee, to be held from 28 November until 2 December in Wolfsburg (Germany).

MADAGASCAR – HOMAGE TO A MONTFORT MISSIONARY

On 24 October last, there took place in Anivorano Est, the opening of the Centre for the Training of Catechists “Fr. Antonio Marchesi”, for the Prefecture of Brickaville. This event was, above all, a sign of the deep attachment of the population towards Fr. Antonio Marchesi (1921-1989), who was a missionary for 6 years in Malawi, then 32 years

in Madagascar. The Christians there wanted to keep him near them, having him buried between the Mission and the Parish Church. It was also a mark of recognition for the work of the Montfort Missionaries, who have been working with the Church in Madagascar for so many years. As well as the large community of Christians and Montfortians, some members of the family of Father Marchesi were present, and all enjoyed a splendid feast-day, including the tasting of a good dish of *zebu* meat, but also the reliving of great memories.

TOWARDS THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 2005. FROM THE RESPONSES OF THE CONFRERES TO THE PREPARATION DOCUMENT

*(From North and South, East and West, from individuals and communities:
a selection of the responses sent in to the Preparatory Committee)*

Examples where our work as missionaries deepened consecrated life:

- An experience of working among the people of Kibera slum in Nairobi: These people have nothing but they are happy and willing to share whatever they have; and their commitment to serve the Church and how they cope with challenges in life, and their trust in us as consecrated people. These aspects help us draw closer to Christ and to appreciate the power of faith and hope in Christ.

- Again, conversion in the people whom we meet in our apostolate challenges us to respond to the call for conversion and deepening our Christian and consecrated life.

- We live our commitment for consecrated life mainly in being together as retired persons, and in taking care for each other. At the moment when active life ends, prayer becomes important, and that's then our real contribution –to be near to others.

- Through ministering the sacrament of Penance, I perceive the quality of faith life and deep desire of people for perfection. This works as an example and stimulant. The voluntary work of many lay people edifies me and motivates me to give the best of myself. Welcoming the deprived keeps me alert and available to respond willingly *à la Montfort*.

What is your dream for the Montfortians of the future?

- Hopefully “ingenious” in finding new methods of evangelisation; people “crazy about God”.

- Praying tirelessly for vocations, following Montfort's example...

- Inculturated and attentive to the world to catch its beauty and its weaknesses, its sufferings and its hopes. More and more integrating the lay people; they are stimulating and challenging elements; collaborating with them will open us to different perspectives, to new sensitivities.

- I have no illusions: the future of the Montfortians will be what we ourselves decide to build. If we put our energy there, it will be something wonderful; if we continue to fear everything, it will be something mediocre. I am convinced it is a tremendous charism, and well worth all the efforts necessary, no matter the sacrifice.

- I dream of Montfortians caught up and carried by creativity, by imaginative capacity; faced with the risk of repetition, we need more creativity to let the charism bear fruit.

Evangelising the Poor

- Now we are living a situation of dying in the North...but we see greater life coming forth in the South, and in the fourth world of the impoverished, the drug addicts, the displaced persons, there can and ought to be born a Church of the poor, where we too have our place for evangelisation, for the diffusion of Marian spirituality.

- Our local religious community will renew the presence of Jesus among the poor, sharing with them the bread of the Word and the Eucharist, washing their feet, being instruments for reconciliation in the midst of a people torn apart by jealousies and vengeance, assassinations and hatred. With the strength of our sapiential and Marian spirituality we will find the means for a missionary response for the poor of today...

- Some confreres explain Montfort's preoccupation with the poor especially in the direction of the growing group of aged confreres who suffer all kinds of physical and psycho-geriatric problems. Others are involved with the immigrants in our society, particularly the so called "illegals". Further, we must not hide the fact that we ourselves are "a poor and small company" which puts its trust in Providence. Perhaps this acknowledgement –in a macho culture that swears by what is great and mighty –is of much greater importance than before...We, as a community of aging people, experience more than before that life not only has to be made, but it also must be received and supported. This art of living is not only important for the elderly, but for each generation. To be able to present this in some way, and to give witness to it, is a very important task, however we don't know yet how it has to be put in words and lived out.

Evangelisation and Community

- Evangelisation or new evangelisation as a programme of ongoing formation within our congregation, because in the course of the years, it is possible to lose the original savour of the Gospel. We need a new proclamation of the Gospel within our communities. To show our consecrated life as exclusively for the Reign and by the Reign, all our being and doing ought to be in function of announcing the Reign and implanting it in the world.

- We will be small, fraternal communities who keep alive the prayer of Jesus and Mary, and who love passionately the Word of God and the Church, and who will take advantage with renewed creativity every occasion to evangelise and catechise, making use of the social media at hand, with manifest interest in the Reign of God.

OUR DEPARTED BRETHREN

Brother JOACHIM (Marcel JOSSET) (1913 - 2004)

Died on 21 June 2004 in St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre (France), aged 91, with 68 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 19 March 1936. The life of Brother Joachim was characterised by a remarkable stability. In fact, from the time of his novitiate in 1935 (when he was 22), he remained in St-Laurent, apart from three years in Paris. At the Mother House, he was at the service of the confreres in the General Council for domestic tasks. After the departure of the general Curia for Rome in 1950, he was given the job of looking

after the sick, and he devoted all his attention and energy to them, despite a visual handicap which went from bad to worse, until he became blind in the last years of his life. He was a man of continual prayer, symbolised by the little statue of the Blessed Virgin which never left him and which, during the latter years, he held with love between his fingers. It was only right, therefore, that she should be placed in his coffin, still in his hands.

Father Arnold (Nol) SCHREURS (1927 - 2004)

Died on 22 June 2004 in Kortenberg (Belgium), aged 77, with 54 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1949, and was ordained priest on 20 March 1955. After gaining a degree in classical philology, he was sent to Montfort College in Rotselaar, first of all as a teacher, then as the director from 1965 until 1992. For a number of years, he was also superior of the community, and, twice, a provincial councillor. Nol, as he was called, was a man given to reflection, a philosopher who meditated on life, faith and the beyond. Before passing on truth to others, he himself had first to be convinced. During the last years of his life, on account of a terrible illness, he changed completely, becoming a different person, a stranger. But he died in peace, saying: "I know I am going to die, and I am ready."

Father Hendrikus (Henk) KALTER (1942 - 2004)

Died on 1 July 2004 in Aalten (Netherlands), aged 62, with 40 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1963, and was ordained priest on 18 March 1973. Having worked for three years in the Montfortians Junior Seminary in Voorschoten, he left for Indonesia in 1975, where he worked in Yogyakarta and in Benua Martinus in Borneo. In 1996, he returned to the Netherlands, where he became parish priest in Winterswijk and administrator of the parish of the Sacred Heart and St. George in Bredevoort. In spite of everything, Henk always belonged among the old missionaries of Borneo. It was there that he had spent the happiest years of his life, until he began to experience health problems. He was a priest without the "clerical" attitude: in the name of Jesus, he could not imagine anything other than a poor Church dedicated to service. Injustice made him rant like a prophet of the Old Testament. But his heart never became bitter, and, once he had had his say, he would beam with a great smile of freedom.

Father Andreas (André) LAURIER (1944 - 2004)

Died on 7 July 2004 in Berg en Dal (Netherlands), aged 59, with 24 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1979, and was ordained priest on 27 August 1989. Beginning in 1989, André worked for the Montfortian travel agency: Montfort-Tochten. He led many pilgrimages to Israel, Rome, Fatima, Lourdes and many other places. Apart from his pilgrimage work, he helped out in a number of parishes throughout the country, and each month he faithfully spent a whole weekend in Loosduinen, his birth-place. In 1997 he stood in for the superior of the community and, in 1999, became superior and bursar of the Montfortian community in Berg en Dal. A victim of the aid he offered, he was murdered by those he loved and helped. He died in a manner just as surprising as that in which he lived.

Father Johannes (Jan) van DOOREN (1926 - 2004)

Died on 12 July 2004 in Eindhoven (Netherlands), aged 77, with 55 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1948, and was ordained priest on 28 March 1954. Immediately after his ordination, he left for the continent of Africa, where he worked for 23 years as a missionary in a number of places in Malawi. On his return to the Netherlands in 1977, he was very soon appointed parish-priest of Bergeijk't Hof. In 1979, he was appointed to Gerwen, which he only left in 1994. He found a home for himself with the Brothers of St John of God in Neunen, where he was chaplain for a number of years. Jan loved to speak about his time in Malawi, and always remained a simple and happy man, cordial and sincere, looking on life with wonder.

Father Giovanni GHENO (1913 - 2004)

Died on 16 July 2004 in Ñaña (Peru), aged 90, with 71 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 20 September 1932, and was ordained priest on 12 March 1938. He spent the first part of his priestly and religious life principally in the houses of formation, in Redona, Loreto and Castiglione Torinese, as a teacher, spiritual director and Novice-Master. In 1961, the superior general of the day, Father Heiligers, asked the Italian Province to establish the Company of Mary in Peru. Father G. Gheno was among the first confreres to go there. In 1994, the President of the Italian Republic made him an Officer of the Order of Merit of the Republic. During the latter years, sickness prevented him from devoting himself to an active ministry, but he nevertheless wanted to stay in Peru, among his people, to give testimony of his attachment to the land which was the object of his labours for so many years. He often expressed the wish to die on a feast of the Blessed Virgin, and that is what happened: Our Lady of Mount Carmel heard his prayer and took him with her on her feast-day. His simplicity, his enthusiasm, his simple yet deep love for Mary, are the legacy he has left each of his confreres.

Father Louis PONCET (1922 - 2004)

Died on 4 August 2004 in Port-au-Prince (Haiti), aged 82, with 56 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1947, and was ordained priest on 15 October 1950. A "late" vocation, he joined the Company of Mary in the novitiate. Shortly after his ordination he left for Haiti. There he was good at putting up exemplary buildings and conducting a dynamic missionary apostolate in the various parishes he administered: the Cathedral of port-de-Paix, St-Louis-du-Nord, Chansolme. Among his commitments, always with and for the poor and the marginalised, were: the Church's social struggle, Catholic Working Youth, basic Christian communities, Justice and Peace, Caritas. Paralyzed down one side for the past ten years, he accompanied groups of young people, wrote reports for the administration, and, above all, was always available to welcome great numbers of penitents in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Father Lucien NOURRY (1918 - 2004)

Died on 5 August 2004 in Trois-Rivières (Canada), aged 86, with 65 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 22 August 1938, and was ordained priest on 4 March 1944. Father Nourry was a teacher for a number of years: in the Montfortian

Seminary in Papineauville from 1944 until 1948, and in the secondary school in Eastview (Ottawa) from 1951 to 1952. He was among the first Montfort Missionaries to be sent to the American Indians in Western Canada, in Tzouhalem (British Columbia), where he worked from 1952 to 1958. He was a curate in Jonquière for several years (1948-1951 and 1975-1977). But it was especially in French-speaking Ontario that he was active, first in the parish of St Vincent de Paul in North Bay, where he worked for 25 years, then for six years in the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Vanier (1968-1974). Wherever he went, his spirit of service, his great faith, his ineffaceable smile, and his care for the little ones and the sick, won him the affection of all. From 1991 until 2003, he exercised a precious ministry of support at the Shrine of Mary, Queen of All Hearts in Montreal. He retired to Nicolet, where he died on 5 August 2004. The whole life of our confrere can be described in two phrases: “smile” and “service of everyone”.

Father Henri CALVEZ (1921 - 2004)

Died on 11 August 2004 in St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre (France), aged 82, with 64 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1939, and was ordained priest on 18 February 1945. In 1947 he left for Madagascar, where he spent the whole of his missionary life. An accomplished linguist and construction engineer, in his role as religious superior for many years, he inculturated the Montfortian Mission in Madagascar. He knew the whole of the diocese of Tamatave very well, having lived in nearly all the mission posts. This is why all the young Brothers, Fathers, and the Malagasy people thank him for this good seed he sowed during more than 55 years over there. As well as his medal as a Knight of the Malagasy Order, he might well be awarded the Montfortian Cross of Merit. Returning to France owing to failing health, he spent the last two years of his life in Saint-Laurent.

Father Franciscus (Frans) DE BELDER (1932 - 2004)

Died on 7 September 2004 in Antwerp (Belgium), aged 72, with 51 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1953, and was ordained priest on 8 March 1959. After a short time of ministry in Belgium, he left for the Congo, where he worked for 42 years, until May last year, most of that time in Isangi, but also in Yabaondo and Yabwanza. He started out as an itinerant missionary, going by boat from one post to another. Later he was made responsible for the re-organisation of teaching, and later still was appointed bursar and procurator for the diocese of Isangi. He lived through the time of the rebellion, and in December 1964 was liberated in Yangambi. He was one of the few missionaries to return definitively to the Congo afterwards. Frans was a happy man, an optimist and with a sense of humour. Frans’s life might be summed up in three words: “a pure-blooded missionary”. It was in the Congo that he felt himself reviving; it was also there that he left his health. During his illness, he was faithful to what he recommended to his own people – he knew how to commit himself to God and his Blessed Mother in all confidence.