



L'Écho montfortain

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A Word from the Superior General



Dear Confreres,

In these days of the Easter Season, we all celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord who unites us in this great mission of being witnesses of the Risen One in the different countries where we work. It is this mission of building the Reign of Jesus through Mary which keeps us in communion despite the distances which separate us, the differences in age, and the plurality of cultures... Paradoxically, all these differences allow us to experience a diversity which becomes richness in the one Lord who has called us to fraternity.

On this occasion I address you all to announce a “technical” change in the edition of the Montfortian Echo which will have a time of experimentation this year in order to arrive later at a better service of information and sharing the richness of the life of our Congregation, of the participation of the Montfortian Associates in the heritage of Father de Montfort and of the “memory” of so many faces of the confreres of today as well as yesterday, who nourish the continual growth of the spirit of the Montfortian mission.

1. We have established a “**committee for communication**” composed of our confreres: Fr. Olivier Maire, Fr. Luiz Stefani, Fr. Paulin Ramanandraibe, together with Ms. Cristina Lazzarini, the secretary of the General House. Fr. Luiz Stefani will be the coordinator of the committee. Information or experiences which could be shared with the entire Congregation can be sent to Fr. Luiz personally or to the secretary.

2. The General House will publish the text of the Echo in two languages: **French and English**. So we invite the entities who need to translate it into another language to find the means to do this translation locally.

3. The Montfortian Echo will have an **annual number**, but it will be subdivided into **periodic fascicles** which will have the annual number and the indication of the respective months. At the end of each year, the content of all the fascicles will be printed in one unique volume destined for the different archives.

4. The periodic fascicles will be **sent via e-mail** to all the communities who have this possibility, and we ask the Superiors of the Entities to be responsible for seeing that these fascicles reach the communities and confreres who do not have access to this means of communication.

5. We are also asking that **in each Entity a “Reporter” be named** to submit information to publish in the Echo, and who could have a more direct communication with the committee in order to facilitate the sharing of news and experiences which will allow for better mutual knowledge, for highlighting the path of each Entity and for a reciprocal enrichment.

It is a new “technical” route which, little by little, has as its aim to improve the service of communication in view of a growing sense of belonging to the same religious family and in order to equally facilitate the path of internationality which our last General Chapter has placed as an overall course of action to give strength to the Montfortian mission and to formation for this same mission. We also invite the Montfortian associates and the older confreres to participate more actively in this sharing, so that the heritage we have received from Saint Louis Marie de Montfort can become a font of living water to quench the thirst which we all should have within us so that even today we can be missionaries after the heart of our Founder.

I send you fraternal greetings with the wish that the liturgical celebrations of the Feasts of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort and Blessed Marie Louise of Jesus may be occasions of profound illumination for our life consecrated to the service of the Kingdom to which all our people are called.

Fraternally,



S. M. M.

Fr. Santino BREMBILLA, S.M.M.
Superior General

MEETINGS:

July 7-14 in Lima (Peru): Meeting on Montfortian Spirituality for Lay Associates from Latin America. For further information: montfortperu@hotmail.com.

July 16 – August 13 in Lima (Peru): Montfortian Month ; the theme will be “Consecration and the Montfortian Mission.” For further information: montfortperu@hotmail.com.

August 7-11 in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre (France): Third International Meeting at Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre. The theme will be “Do Not Be Afraid to Take Mary into Your Home.” For further information: www.risl.net.

Official News Items



PERPETUAL PROFESSIONS

On 15 August 2006, in Bangalore (India): Johnson J. JAMES.

On 2 December 2006, in Villavicencio (Colombia):
John Ramiro QUINTERO CASTAÑEDA and Edinson Orlando
HERRERA BEDÓN.

On 8 December 2006, in Drummondville (Canada):
Louis-Paul SAINT-LAURENT.

On 8 December 2006, in Chontales (Nicaragua):
Alonso Antonio LAZO OROZCO.

On 2 February 2007, in Kisangani (RD Congo):
Frédéric BOLUMBU WANGELA MBOKOLO.

On 24 February 2007, in Rome (Italy): Francesco CASTRIA.

ORDINATIONS TO THE DEACONATE

On 16 August 2006, in Bangalore (India): Johnson J. JAMES.

On 3 December 2006, in Acacías (Colombia):
John Ramiro QUINTERO CASTAÑEDA.

On 15 December 2006, in Makati City (Philippines):
Francisco TACIO.

On 27 January 2007, in Montréal (Canada):
Louis-Paul SAINT-LAURENT.

On 24 March 2007, in Kisangani (RD Congo):
Frédéric BOLUMBU WANGELA MBOKOLO.

On 15 April 2007, in Rome (Italy): Francesco CASTRIA.

ORDINATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

On 30 July 2006, in Chadiza (Zambia): Felix PHIRI MABVUTO.

On 8 December 2006, in Machala (Ecuador): Manuel de Jesús
BAJAÑA VEGA.

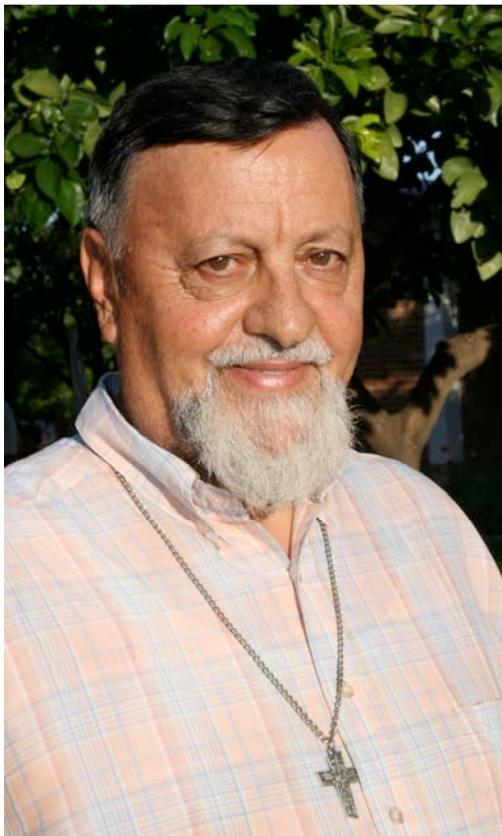
On 17 February 2007, in Kolar (India): Johnson J. JAMES.



Various Notices

New Administration of the Provincial Delegation of Malawi

On 1st March 2007, the Provincial Superior of Italy, with the accord of his Council, has appointed Father Mario BELOTTI, Superior Delegate of the Provincial Delegation of Malawi, for a mandate of three years. His Councillors are: Father Bruno EPIS, Father Luigi FRATUS and Father Piergiorgio GAMBA.



NEW BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF MANGOCHI IN MALAWI

On 3 April 2007

Fr. Alessandro PAGANI, S.M.M.

has been appointed bishop
of the Mangochi Diocese, in Malawi.
We assure our fraternal prayers
to accompany him in this new journey in the service
of the Church in Malawi.

The whole Montfortian Family received with joy the news on 3 April 2007 that the Holy Father Benedict XI named Father Alessandro Pagani, a Montfortian confrere from the Italian province, as Bishop of Mangochi (Malawi).

He succeeds two other Montfortians in the leadership of the Diocese of Mangochi, Bishop Alessandro Assolari (bishop from 1973 to 2004, who died in 2005) and Bishop Luciano Nervi (who died in March 2005, a few weeks after his episcopal ordination).

Bishop Pagani was born in Torre Bordone (BG) on January 3, 1937. He entered the Minor Seminary in Redona di Bergamo at an early age, where he did his middle school and secondary school studies. He pronounced his first vows on September 8, 1959 in Castiglione Torinese (TO). He studied philosophy in Loreto (AN) and theology in Rome. He was ordained priest on March 13, 1965 in the church of St. Louis de Montfort on the via Prenestina.

From the very beginning of his years of formation, Bishop Pagani nourished the desire to serve the Lord and his Gospel in mission lands, and he found a response to this desire in 1969, when he received an obedience for Malawi.

While waiting, he spent his first years of priesthood as a teacher in the Minor Seminary in Redona di Bergamo (1966-1968) and as a parochial vicar in the Church of the Rosary in Ginosa (TA).

As a missionary in Malawi, he was parochial vicar in Balaka (1969-1973), parish priest in Nankhuali (1973-1977), Mpiri (1977-1985) and Kankao (1985). In 1985 he was in Italy for a time of renewal in Spirituality, for which he received a diploma from the Gregorian University.

Then he returned to Africa, not to Malawi, but to the Diocese of Chipata in Zambia. He remained there from 1986 to 1998. He was parish priest in Kalichero (1986-1989 and 1991-1998) and in Vubwi (1989-1991), also holding the post of community superior at the same time.

After being named Delegation Superior, he returned to Malawi in 1998. From 2001, after his mandate, he carried out his ministry in the Welcome House in Mangochi, also having the positions of counsellor, vicar, and secretary of the Delegation from 2004 until February 2007.

A simple man, Bishop Pagani is an attentive missionary, whether in the area of inculturation, or doctrine or the liturgy. He has translated into the local language catechetical texts, documents of the magisterium, and liturgical and devotional books. He is a missionary who is "Montfortian," signified by a strong marian spirit, as evidenced by his profound energy in the accompaniment and spiritual formation of the Legion of Mary in the dioceses of Mangochi and Chipata.

The episcopal ordination will take place May 26, 2007 in the cathedral of Mangochi. For our Congregation, present in Malawi for over a century, this nomination is a further stimulus for missionary commitment and service to the local Church.

LETTERS OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL TO THE ENTITIES OF THE NORTH, TO AFRICA AND TO INDIA

Following the Extraordinary General Council of October 2006, the Entities of Africa, Madagascar and Asia, and the Entities of Latin America and the Caribbean had the chance to share about their specific situations and their particular problems in order to find together some pathways for the future. Father Santino and his Council have wondered if a meeting of superiors from the entities of the North and representatives from these entities (a “Forum for Entities of the North”) might not also be useful. The first letter below seeks to open a reflection on this project. Following visits in Africa (December 2006 – January 2007) and in India (March 2007), Father General wrote two letters to our confreres from these entities. In order to strengthen our family spirit, as desired by the last General Chapter, we thought it would be good to share these three documents with the entire Congregation.

FORUM FOR THE ENTITIES OF THE NORTH IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF MONTFORTIAN PRESENCE IN YOUR ENTITY

When considering the issues facing the entities of Europe and North America, several common threads become evident: for example, choices to be made about how to carry on the mission of the Congregation, care for older confreres, choices to be made about the continued promotion of Montfortian spirituality, the issue of initial formation for a small number of candidates.

In light of these common issues, Fr. Santino and the General Council are wondering if it would be helpful to have a gathering of entity superiors and representatives from these entities – a Forum for the Entities of the “North” – in order to learn from each others’ experience with these issues and to search for ways to imagine the future of Montfortian presence in the north.

In order to discern how to proceed, we are asking you to reflect on the following questions in consultation with your council and other members from your entity.

1 – THE NEED FOR A FORUM

1.1. As you reflect on the current reality and the probable future of your entity, **do you think such a forum would help us** in dealing with these issues?

1.2. Do you think that **developing a “vision of the whole,”** which confronts these issues from a perspective larger than the boundaries of your entity, will help us in making choices as we face the future?

2 – FOCUSING OUR MONTFORTIAN PRESENCE AND MISSION WITH A SMALLER NUMBER OF SMM:

In many of our entities, we are moving to a situation in which apostolates will be carried out by fewer confreres, as ageing confreres become unable to continue active ministry, and as the group of active confreres becomes smaller. This demands choices that have to be made about continuing certain apostolates, not continuing others, and/or choosing new ways to carry out the mission.

2.1. Have you **already made decisions** in this regard, i.e. in making choices about the apostolates in your entity? If so, **what process did you use** to make the decision? **What criteria** guided your choices?

2.2. When you **consider future ways of continuing a Montfortian presence** and continuing to carry out the mission in your entity, try to imagine as concretely as possible what this presence would look like. What approach to Montfortian presence and mission would you foresee?

2.2.1. Would these future approaches **involve collaboration with lay people**? If yes, give some examples of how this would work in the specific circumstances of your entity.

2.2.2. Would these future approaches involve **collaboration with other entities** in the Congregation? If yes, give some examples of how this would work in the specific circumstances of your entity.

2.2.3. Would these future approaches **involve the establishment of International Montfortian Communities in you entity**? If yes, give some examples of how this would work in the specific circumstances of your entity.

2.2.4. Would these future approaches **involve actively inviting new members to join** the congregation (vocation animation and initial formation)? If yes, give some examples of how this would work in the specific circumstances of your entity.

3 – CARE FOR AGEING CONFRERES: From your experience of caring for aging confreres, can you **identify the principle issues you have faced** and the ways you are approaching these issues? (For example: helping confreres develop a spirituality of ageing, dealing with an older confrere's resistance to necessary changes, intervening in a confrere's health care, the financial impact of a growing number of ageing confreres, maintaining connections between older confreres and younger confreres. Are these the issues you are dealing with, or are there others?)

4 – PROMOTING MONTFORTIAN SPIRITUALITY:

4.1. When you consider the ways to continue the promotion of Montfortian spirituality **what approaches will be most effective?** (cf. questions 2.2.1- 2.2.4 above)

4.2. Publications: Would a greater collaboration and coordination of published works help in the promotion of Montfortian Spirituality? What forms of coordination and collaboration?

5 – FORMATION:

5.1 Do you foresee the need for a regional formation program in which your entity could participate so that you will be able to accept new candidates?

5.2 Do you have specific suggestions for developing a system of formation for the north, in face of small numbers of candidates, small numbers of formators, and a variety of languages and cultures?

6 – STRUCTURES: Do you have suggestions for new administrative structures that will help the entities of the north as we face the future?

7 – OTHER CONCERNS: Are there other issues that have a bearing on the future of the entities in the “north” which we need to discuss together?

Please discuss these questions with your council and with others in your entity and send your responses to the Secretary General, Olivier Maire, at the General House by May 15, 2007.

Fr. Santino BREMBILLA, S.M.M.
Superior General

My Dear Confreres of the African General Delegation and of the Italian Delegation of Malawi,

I had the great opportunity to spend two months in your midst, first in Nairobi (Kenya) to take my first steps in the study of English, but also to be able to share the life of the scholasticate community; and then I visited Uganda, Zambia and Malawi. Previously, I had the joy of also visiting the confreres who work in the Democratic Republic of Congo last September. These visits have been a gift for me. They have allowed me to become closer, to get to know a little bit more and to open my heart to the confreres who work for the mission to the people of these countries plunged in social situations of great challenge, but full of hope and of life and who know how to celebrate their faith with joy.

The first great sensation I felt upon returning to Rome was the call to take in the heritage which so many of our missionaries, who have given their lives to the building up of the local Churches in these countries, have left us. The unexpected death of Father Gianni Maggioni reminds us of the memory of so many confreres who have preceded us. A little while ago, we celebrated the 100 years of the Montfortian presence in Malawi; next year we will celebrate the 75 years of the Montfortian presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a presence of pioneers, of true missionaries of the first hour who have announced the Gospel with great devotion. The nomination of Father Alessandro Pagani as Bishop of Mangochi confirms the care given to the formation of local Churches.

For several years, you have begun a path of discernment in order to give to our presence in the African countries a more specific characteristic in the Montfortian mission. It is a slow process, not always easy due to local needs which are always greater, as well as due to the change in vision which is required by our presence in the service of the building of the Reign of Jesus through Mary in light of the apostolic spirit which Father de Montfort has left us. I would like to invite all the confreres present in the different African countries to continue this discernment in order to reinforce our specific presence through the Montfortian charism.

The history of our presence has led to the creation of two Delegations, but, in looking to the future, we see the importance of a closer collaboration of the two Delegations in concrete situations which make working together possible in the mission. Some paths have already begun: Father Eugenio Cucchi has generously accepted to be present in the Democratic Republic of Congo with our Congolese confreres; Father Mario Belotti, the new Superior of the Italian Delegation, lives in and collaborates with the postulant community of ICS in Balaka, but we invite you all to reflect and discern still other possibilities for collaboration and exchange in order to reinforce the path of our presence in all these countries.

Another challenge which I see as important for the future of our presence is to place in close relationship the path of formation with the mission. I sense the importance for the young

people in formation to be constantly nourished by the spirit of the Montfortian mission. Preparation through studies should also provide opportunity for a time of progressive immersion in mission, in such a way that study becomes life and might be at the service of life. In order to do that, I invite the two Delegations to discern the possibilities, for the near future, of a specific missionary presence in Kenya and in Uganda, and to strengthen our presence in Zambia, in order to have near our houses of formation missionary presences which can give to the young people who frequent our communities an enthusiasm and the possibility of full growth.

Another point of discernment poses itself to our African Delegation: two presences have characterized our history until now: Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and their respective candidates have been sent to these two countries. However, there are already some candidates from Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia, and for the spirit of openness to internationality, it seems important to me that the path evolve towards a better and deeper integration of the confreres of the Delegation, in such a way as to be able to share the human resources where the mission requires them. This pathway is not easy because it urges an availability, efforts to learn a new language, to live in fraternity in the midst of diversity, to love with an evangelical heart the very concrete people to whom the Lord sends us... But that is the response of true sons of Montfort: "*Liberos*".

Dear confreres, meeting and getting acquainted opens to doors to love ... I feel strongly that your presence, together with that of the people with whom you share your life and your love, is an important presence for the entire Congregation. The challenges which Africa poses to the world are really great and are not only yours but also those of us all. For that reason we feel united in the duty to seek together the Lord's will in order to respond with love and solidarity to the universal call to the fraternity which comes from the One who gave his Life for all.

United with you all,
A fraternal greeting,

Fr. Santino BREMBILLA, S.M.M.
Superior General

My Dear Confreres of the Indian General Delegation,

Your presence in the Congregation has little by little become significant, with the perspectives of solidarity and sharing, so that we felt motivated to be present among you in order to get to know you better and to accompany better this growth in the mission as well as in the formation of young candidates for our Montfortian missionary life.

Accompanied by Fathers Olivier and Peter, I personally had the chance to visit your missionary communities, while Father Don visited the formation communities. At the end of these visits, we worked intensely with the Delegation Council as well as with the Assembly of all the Confreres.

Above all, I would like to publically express my **thanks to God** for your openness and **your willingness to share the human resources** of the Delegation with the needs of the Congregation. In a special way, I would like to emphasize your presence in the **mission of Papua, New Guinea**, a mission for which we desire the commitment of all the entities of Asia, Africa and Madagascar. We are confident that the Montfortian presence in the midst of the people of the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga, which the Church has entrusted to the Company of Mary, can be strengthened in the coming years, by the growth of missionary spirit in our young delegations, and to discern the possibility of an openness to welcome local vocations through the missionary witness that we bear.

But there are some challenges within your own country, so rich in traditions and cultures, to which you are called to give a worthy response in order to be a missionary presence which proclaims the truth of the Gospel message. The Christian presence in India is limited in quantity, but full of life at the level of the number of vocations as well as at the level of services rendered in the areas of education and health. But a **“missionary” action**, like that demanded by our charism, supposes **a discernment and a creativity** which brings us not to an attitude of proselytism or of service only to Christian communities, but to **a lived witness of Gospel values** which can illuminate the daily life of your people.

The reality of your country presents **a plurality of cultures, languages, religions, traditions**, and, in the Catholic Church, of a diversity of rites ... They are differences which can create walls and can divide people or groups from each other, and this can happen even in religious communities. But it is there that our missionary presence can present a real challenge by knowing how to **build real religious brotherhood where the differences become riches**, where all the walls are pulled down and where we place ourselves in a stance of listening to each other in truth, where the value of being a human person is recognized in each one, as a creature made “in the image and likeness of God,” where each one can have the experience of being loved, welcomed, valued and guided in the realization of his vocation. I invite you, Brothers, to work hard on these aspects which are some of the characteristics which the Montfortian mission must have in the midst of your People.

Your group is growing in numbers; you already have some “elder” confreres; and you have a certain quantity of vocations for which we give thanks to God. All this equally requires you to know how to live and respond with maturity to the **different phases of life**. The “older” confreres, due to their experience, should know how to share with the younger generations the fruit harvested from their life, in an attitude of service and with wisdom. The confreres of “middle age” must have a regard for the quality of their presence for themselves and for the others in such a way as to give life and sense to the mission in the entire community. The younger confreres must be capable of interiorizing the Lord’s call, to involve themselves in a clear and determined orientation of their own life and transmit their enthusiasm in the mission. All of life is always **a learning to love oneself, the Lord and the others in a reciprocal openness in the different phases of life** which makes us grow in deep communion, in esteem, in trust, and thus to be signs of this reciprocal openness and of this “working together” in service of the mission.

I noticed with pleasure that your communities bear names which come from the great spiritual tradition of India: Maria Bhavan, Guru Mandir, Montfort Nivas, Montfort Ashram, Montfort Sadan... It is a sign that you wanted to place yourselves in this tradition which is proper to you. But it is also a challenge for you and a richness which you bring to the entire Congregation, if you enter deeply into this spiritual tradition by enriching it and placing it in communion with our Montfortian spirituality. The Word of God, read, contemplated and lived in this context, and the itinerary of our holy Founder (who invites us to “follow the footsteps of the poor Apostles” in the light of “God Alone” and “Providence” in the “Company of Mary”) which encounters the itinerary of the Indian spiritual tradition, must be a pathway open for our mission in this great country. You have taken Father de Montfort as a Teacher of life, a true evangelical “Guru,” who teaches us the renunciation of all things in order to follow Christ Jesus on the road of our pilgrimage.

My dear confreres, I invite you to look ahead, to take seriously our missionary path, to see yourselves “rich” with the heritage which we have received in order to pass it on, but also to see yourselves “poor” because we are aware that we must still receive much in order to respond each day with a greater “creative fidelity” to the call which the Lord has made to us.

Fr. Santino BREMBILLA, S.M.M.
Superior General



Our Deseased Brethren

Father Harold McBRIDE (1919 – 2006)

Died in Islip (United States), on 17 December 2006,
aged 87 with 65 years of Religious Profession.

Father McBride was born in Ozone Park, New York on December 8, 1919. He made his first profession in Nicolet, Canada on August 15, 1941, and was ordained priest in Ozone Park on March 1, 1947 with the first class of Americans to be ordained in the States and not in Canada. Father McBride attended the Gregorian University in Rome, receiving his doctorate in systematic theology in 1951. He returned to St. Louis de Montfort Seminary, Litchfield, Connecticut as professor of dogmatic theology and Mariology. During his tenure as professor he also served as spiritual director and chaplain for the novices of the Daughters of Wisdom in nearby East Litchfield.

Parish pastoral work was a natural ministry because of his personable outgoing demeanor. He served as parochial assistant in two parishes directed at the time by the Montfort Missionaries --- Infant Jesus Parish, Port Jefferson, NY and Our Lady of Grace, Noblesville, Indiana. As a member of the Montfortian Community at Bay Shore, NY, Father Mc Bride's longest term of ministry was as hospital chaplain for 24 years at South Side Hospital in Bay Shore. He was beloved by all the patients and hospital staff.

During the last two years of his life, because of failing health, he was a resident at Our Lady of Consolation Residence, West Islip. Though confined to a wheel chair during this period, Father McBride continued to minister as spiritual director and confessor to all the older and ailing residents. After his death all 400 residents and staff celebrated a special Eucharist in the residents auditorium in thanksgiving for his presence among them.

He was a quiet and exceptionally patient person who could offer calming advice with mature understanding. Blessed with a wonderful sense of humor and great receptivity to new ideas and proposals, Father McBride would quietly puff his pipe, give the matter his own reflection, leaving decisions to whomever asked the question!

He was an avid reader of scriptural and theological reviews, and quietly shared his observations with community members. He lived gospel demands, especially with genuine humility and a deep sense of simplicity and poverty. His family often chided him for not wearing the clothes they had given him as gifts! He continued to wear older garments, cheerfully giving the newer one to anyone in need.

Scripture reading and the Rosary were very much a part of his life, especially during his last years. On visits to see him, he often could be found in the chapel reading and praying, or in the room of a resident offering some consolation or good cheer! Father McBride was a joyful presence in every community he served as a man with a peace-filled spirit. He was a joy to have as a member of the community.

Father Gilles JACQUES (1934 – 2007)

Died in Montréal (Canada), on 11 January 2007,
aged 72 with 49 years of Religious Profession.

Gilles Jacques was born into a large family (11 children) in Kénogami in the Saguenay district, on 23 November 1934. He was the third child of Paul Jacques and Étienne Labonté. He completed his humanities in the Chicoutimi Seminary before deciding to enter the Montfortian Novitiate in Nicolet, where he made his first vows on 15 August 1957. He was ordained priest in Chicoutimi by Mgr Marius Paré on 21 September 1963.

After four years as a teacher in the minor seminary in Papineauville and one year as assistant Novice Master, Father Jacques dedicated the most active years of his life at times to preaching parish missions (1969-1971, 1984-1988), and at other times to working with the team running the Shrine of Mary, Queen of All Hearts in Montreal (1971-1984, 1989-1994), of which he was the Director from 1988 until 1992.

Following a sabbatical year spent with the Jesuits in Quebec, he became a curate, and later priest-in-charge, of the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Louis Marie de Montfort in Ottawa (1995-2005). Then he returned to the Shrine in Montreal where he remained active right up to his hospitalisation.

Whether as a result of his often fragile state of health or through the effect of grace – probably both – Father Jacques had the gift of being deeply attentive to people. His welcome and his listening never disappointed. Even his voice – which enabled him to be an excellent choir-master – had something peace-inducing about it. Among the many qualities of Montfort himself that Father Jacques succeeded in reproducing in his own life, the most obvious was certainly that of gentleness. Without any fear of contradiction, we might apply to him what Montfort said of this in his hymns:

*The gentle have the benefit of living without ill-humour,
Without suspicion, without offence, without coldness toward their neighbour.
Never bad tempers, never impatience,
Even-tempered at all times even in suffering.*

*O heavenly Mary, give me gentleness,
It is my heart that begs you through your own heart.
Pour into it that sweet honey, that holy tenderness,
That wins for heaven a sinful soul.
(Hymn 9:22,29)*

Father Jean-Hugues BÈGUE (1921 – 2007)

Died in Saint Laurent S/Sèvres (France), on 21 January 2007,
aged 85 with 64 years of Religious Profession.

Father Jean-Hugues Bègue was born on the very last day of the year 1921, in Etueffont in the Territoire-de-Belfort department of France, into a modest but very Christian family. He received his secondary education in Pelousey for the first few years, then at the Calvary of Pontchâteau for a second period, which involved a sort of exile from the East of France to the West in those years between 1930 and 1940 when people were still scarcely used to going so far away, so young, from their birth place, where their relations and their habits were rooted.

But, like a certain number of others, Jean-Hugues was courageous and persevering. Along with his “year”, as it was known, he made his novitiate in Chézelles, where he made his first religious profession on 8 September 1942.

But then he was not yet 21 and it was wartime. He had to hide to avoid being enrolled in the German army for compulsory service. Then, instead of continuing his studies as usual in Montfort-sur-Meu, his superiors allowed him to go to Notre-Dame du Chêne for a year’s Philosophy, after which he became a teacher in Pelousey for two more years, until 1945.

Then came the enlightenment, the end of hostilities, and peace. Jean-Hugues, like so many others, took up the threads of a more normal journey towards the priesthood in the footsteps of Montfort, as he had begun nearly 15 years earlier. Given permission to anticipate it by

a year, like the former prisoners of war, he was almost 28 when he was ordained priest in Besançon on 29 June 1949.

But he had to continue his training for a further two years, and it was in 1951 that he was appointed to the Apostolic School in Pelousey, with, very soon afterwards, the difficult mission of making contact with young men and their families, and issuing a call and carrying out a first discernment with them, in the various dioceses of the East of France, in the name of that ministry, at once attractive and thankless, that was known as “recruiting”. He kept at it for 18 years, until 1969, with, at one and the same time, a tenacity and a gentleness that was both indefatigable and recognised.

Nevertheless, things began to undergo a deal of change, both in society and in the Church. The Council had taken place, and also the famous events of 1968, with the result that this ministry of “recruiting” was no longer in fashion.

As a result, for the next six years, Jean-Hugues launched out on a parish ministry based in Besançon, especially in the parishes of Saint-Jean and Saint-Pierre. Then, in 1975, he found himself again in Notre-Dame du Chêne, which he knew well. There he took on the responsibility for pilgrimages, and was leader of the Community for more than 12 years, giving of his best in organising and leading, on top of all that, many pilgrimages to Rome, Lourdes and other places. Certainly he was not a “superior for life”, but he kept up and developed, in Notre-Dame du Chêne and the surrounding parishes, an intense pastoral activity, at the heart of an extraordinary network of numerous and strong human relationships.

Nevertheless, around 1995 there began a period of greater fatigue and then of sickness involving serious surgical operations. For Jean-Hugues, the mystery of the Cross which he preached became more and more, as time passed, the mystery of the Cross to be carried. He was certainly not abandoned, neither by his community nor by his family, where he was very much loved. But the decision had to be taken in February 1998 to transfer him to our Infirmary Community in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre. There also, he was not abandoned, despite the initial sense of being uprooted, an understandable thing for someone with no roots in the Western side of France.

Apart from that, it was easy for our staff and for us, to surround him with attention and affection, for he himself was all delicacy and discreet simplicity.

He stayed like that, in our community in Saint-Laurent, for almost nine years, gradually failing, with now and then episodes that put us on alert and caused us to think that his end might be near. But no! He recovered... at least until last week. But on Sunday at noon his long struggle ended: he gave up and went to his Lord. May he live henceforth in fullness his new life in the happiness of God, our dear brother Jean-Hugues, beloved of all!

Father Paolo BERGAMINI (1933 – 2007)

who died in Redona - Bergamo (Italy), on 4 February 2007,
aged 73 with 53 years of Religious Profession.

Paolo Bergamini was born in Torre de' Roveri (Bg) on 12 December 1933. He entered the Apostolic School in Redona in 1944 and there completed the required studies. He went to the Novitiate in Castiglione Torinese in 1952, and made his religious profession there on 8 September 1953. In his request for admission to first vows, he wrote: “Under the protection of the Mother of Heaven, I am happy to have consecrated myself to God and to be on the road to the priesthood in the Company of Mary.” He did his philosophical and theological studies at the Scholasticate in Loreto (An), and was ordained a priest on 21 February 1959 in the Basilica of the Holy House with 8 other confreres. This was followed by two years of preparation for the ministry of preaching in Arona (No).

In 1961 the superiors appointed Fr. Paolo to be bursar in the Montfortian seminary in Reggio Calabria. In 1965 he moved on from Calabria to Pouilles, where he was parish-priest of the church of Madre de Ginosa (Ta), dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. These were years which were pastorally very rewarding. Fr. Paolo was known for his great interest in families, in the marginalised, and in work-related problems. From 1971 to 1977, he was also the religious superior of the local community. In 1980 he was sent to Redona, to the Villa Santa Maria as bursar. There he served also as a spiritual guide on pilgrimages to Medugorje. During this time his deep Marian devotion, which was always to be there in him, emerged and was deepened. He joined various groups in a spirit of simplicity and service.

In 1995, he returned to Reggio Calabria – Casa della Madonna, to see if it would be possible to revive the Montfortian Missionary Press and the pilgrimages. This was followed by a short stay in the community of the Mission Procure in Caravaggio in 1997. Then, in September 1998, Fr Paolo returned to the Villa Santa Maria. This was the second richest period of his missionary life. He collaborated in the distribution of the *Apostolo di Maria*, was available for preaching and confessions in the various parishes, and directed a great number of pilgrimages. One citizen of Ginosa describes him thus: “Fr. Paolo was the modest friend of everyone”... and a pilgrim says of him: “He listens to us and sees us from the heart; he fills his heart with our sufferings and our faults, and places them at the foot of the Cross of Christ.” Despite the limits we all have within ourselves, he was appreciated for his simplicity in his relationships, for his humanity and his warmth, and for his silent and discrete manner, which could become very warm on occasions.

His was a reserved life, made up of service and availability, and untiring work; but also of suffering hidden in the depths of his heart, of struggles and failures endured with a smile on his lips. In Autumn 2006, he was diagnosed as having an incurable illness. In the last months of his life, he showed an extraordinary attachment and a great attention to the community. His relations, especially his nephews, were very close to him during his sickness. He ended his earthly pilgrimage on Sunday 4 February 2007, the Day of Life, in the community of the Villa Santa Maria. He is buried in the cemetery of Pedrengo (Bg).

Father Daniel KEENAN (1956 – 2007)

Died in Belfast (Northern Ireland), on 7 February 2007,
aged 51 with 29 years of Religious Profession.

The focus of these words is not to be on Fr. Danny for he himself would not want this. Rather the central person in this little account is the Lord Jesus and in what He can do in a life that is yielded to him. In the book of Danny’s life we can turn over many pages in which we see the life and ministry of Jesus manifested in loving compassion for others. Danny’s life was Montfortian, Marian and Missionary.

Fr. Danny made First Profession as a member of The Company of Mary on the 19th September 1977 and was ordained on the 9th April 1983.

To prepare well for all that he had to do is a legacy from Fr. Danny to us. For example, he would take great pains to prepare for Mass. He prayed, read the Scriptures and when he had to preach did so with the utmost conviction. His books and notes showed the extent of his commitment to preparation.

He was at his best dealing with the weak and wounded. In this way he could live out his Montfortian dream: to serve the poor. Perhaps he realized he was a “Wounded Healer” himself.

At his funeral Mass he chose the Gospel of the poor widow putting her last coins into the Temple offerings. He could identify with her total dependence on God. He saw that only what you give away do you get to eternally keep.

He had more than ample opportunity to trust and to serve as he ministered as a missionary in a school for the blind in Uganda, Africa or as he acted as chaplain to the City Group of Hospitals here in Belfast. He looked up to people and gave them a sense of their own dignity. In Dublin he spent four years in the Noviciate House from where he acted as a Convent and college chaplain. In Uganda he had really bent his back to help those suffering and dying of the scourge of Aids.

He loved the sense of drama in the liturgy and sought every opportunity to use signs and symbols. Sometimes we did not appreciate his imagination and creativity.

He came back from Uganda in 1996 and joined the community in Monaghan, Ireland. He had spent about ten years in Africa. He now needed radiation treatment for a cancerous condition on his face. No word of complaint ever passed his lips.

When Montfort House in Monaghan sadly closed in the summer of 2002 Fr. Danny went to Belfast to stay with his mother, now deceased, but while with her and despite his own failing health got permission from the Provincial to take on hospital chaplaincy ministry. Danny realized that the quality of service to the neighbour flows from the extent to which one is willing to make sacrifices.

It was a big struggle for him to leave his family and country - and he loved both - at a very young age and go to Montfort College in Romsey near Southampton. Then the call to go to Malawi and then Uganda were real challenges. But undoubtedly the biggest challenge was to face illness.

Fr. Danny stayed at the home of his sister Carmel and brother-in law Michael in the last three months of his illness. He was sustained by the prayers of the Montfort Family, his large circle of family, relatives and friends, the Hospital Chaplaincy team, the Bishop and priests of the diocese of Down and Connor, the Sisters of the Adoration Convent, Falls Road, his colleagues in Africa and all who knew him.

If one word was to sum up Danny's life as a Montfortian, as a Missionary, as a Priest of God, it would be Passion. Passion for life, for wounded humanity, for Christ. His "Yes" to God, like that of the Blessed Mother to whom he was truly devoted, enabled him to say "No" to his own will and plans. He now experiences the truth of Christ's words in John 10:10: "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full".

Brother Stanley Joseph WILLIAMS (1926 – 2007)

Died in Liverpool (England), on 23 February 2007,
aged 80 with 44 years of Religious Profession.

Everyone who knew Brother Stan knew he could he speak for England. He talked with great pride and love of his mother and father and always had plenty of stories about them. He spoke with joy about his childhood in St. Francis de Sales parish, Walton, especially his involvement in the youth club and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. He was proud of Walton, Liverpool and even Everton (his favourite football club). He often talked about working on the docks. He was always so grateful for all that had been given to him.

But there was much more to Brother Stan than this. He was a truly dedicated religious, a great confrere and a friend. A few weeks ago he was looking back on his life when he said, 'I am very grateful to God for my vocation to the Montfort Missionaries. Our Lady called me into her Congregation. I am where Our Lady wants me to be. I feel very blessed.' This was in spite of all his suffering. He had a great love for Our Lady and a deep trust that she would lead him closer to Jesus.

His confidence in God was all consuming. He was very a religious person and very prayerful. The Mass and the Eucharist meant a lot to Brother Stan. He would try to come to daily Mass even when he was not well and could hardly make the stairs. If someone suggested doing a Holy Hour he wanted to join in. When he was really sick and unable to come to the chapel, we would say a rosary together with him. When he could not read we just said the Office and Stan listened. Recently we asked him how he had slept: he said that he found it very difficult but he had prayed all night. His prayers would have been powerful.

He loved to pray with others. He joined to the Marian Movement of Priests, the Pro-Life Movement (Our Lady of Guadalupe), the Divine Mercy and the Advent Healing Group. Brother Stan loved to go back to the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption to visit the Legion of Mary and the school. It was only after the children there had prayed with him and for him that he let his confreres pray about and mention his cancer publicly. He always wanted to spread devotion to Our Lady, handing out a special prayer to Mary. When he was in the car with us we did not have to worry about finding a parking space. He used to say 'Our Lady will find one for us'. It was true!

As Stan grew more and more sick, he had to have many things done for him. Many people do this when they are dealing with sick people especially relatives. It becomes a privilege. It had touched a cord with him because he really loved his nursing. We had watched him in Malawi deal so caringly and lovingly with the people who came to him for help. Caring for their wounds and taking them to the hospital. Jesus said 'Whatever you do to the least of my brethren you do unto me...' even when we are not conscious of it.

Stan was very grateful to all who nursed him and who cared for him. He would want to say 'thank you.' That is what he did himself, always saying 'thank you.'

We are so grateful to Brother Stan for all the love he had for his community and for his congregation - and we pray for Brother Stan and thank God for his life and the friendship he showed to all of us. We loved the man. I am sure he is still praying for us.

Father **Benoît TOURIGNY** (1915 – 2007)

Died in Nicolet (Canada), on 25 February 2007,
aged 91 with 71 years of Religious Profession.

Father Benoît Tourigny was born in Béancour in the diocese of Nicolet on 27 April 1915. He made his first vows on 22 August 1935 in the chapel of the Novitiate of Ste. Marie, Nicolet. On 8 March 1941, he was ordained a priest by the Archbishop of Ottawa, Mgr. Alexandre Vachon. He would therefore have been celebrating 71 years of Profession this year, and 66 years of priesthood.

After three years teaching the elements of Latin and French in our Montfortian seminary in Papineauville, our confrere was appointed to the Indian mission of Vancouver in Kuper Island, from 1943 to 1955, then in Tzouhalem-Duncan from 1955 to 1959.

After this he became one of the pioneers of the mission in Papua New Guinea, recently founded by the Canadian Province. He was to be a very inventive pioneer, working with very restricted means in this very difficult mission during those years from 1959 to 1965. He returned to Montreal to be a curate in the parish of Mary Queen of All Hearts for three years, while he regained his strength before returning for another long stay among the Papuans during the years 1968-1986.

For almost 25 years, Father Ben, as everyone called him, was a powerful and very active witness in the early development of the Daru-Kiunga diocese. He left us precious memories of this missionary epoch in his successful book (which sold out two editions), "The Memoirs of Father Ben".

He finally returned to Canada, to take up a post at the House of Mary Queen of All Hearts in Drummondville, for a stretch of almost fifteen years from 1986 to 2000.

From Drummondville he went to our residence in Nicolet, where he spent his last years in prayer, while rendering fraternal service to the confreres there. He also loved to share the wisdom of his missionary experience with visitors.

Our confrere leaves us the witness of a life which was "free" in Montfort's own way, "detached from everything... without worldly possessions to encumber or distract them... always ready to be on the move and to suffer with you and for you, just as the Apostles were... true servants of the Blessed Virgin... with the holy Gospel issuing from their mouths like a bright and burning flame, and the Rosary in their hands" (*Prayer for Missionaries*).

May Our Lady of Papua present him to the Risen Christ.

Brother Stanislas (Maurice RYBCZYNSKI) (1930 – 2007)

Died in Alès (Gard) (France), on 6 March 2007,
aged 76 with 57 years of Religious Profession.

If there is one representative of an openness to Europe in our French Province, he is to be found in Brother Stanislas. The fourth in a family of five children, he was born on 10 May 1930 in Raduecze in Poland. He very soon experienced an exodus beyond the frontiers of his native land. In 1942 we find him in Villeneuve in Lot & Garonne. It was then that, with his whole life before him, he dreamt, at the age of 17, of living his baptism in the light of a commitment in the religious life of a Montfort Missionary. Respecting his peasant roots and faithful to his baptism, he came knocking on the door of the Montfort Misssionaries in 1948. He made his first temporary profession at Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre on 19 March 1949, and, after a period of interior maturing and of reflection in freedom, he committed himself in a definitive way to Christ on 19 March 1954. His desire to serve was to have a privileged terrain for its application: the maintenance of the garden which gave various communities the opportunity to benefit by the produce of creation. While never refusing in any way material service, he was able, during a certain period of his life, from 1956 to 1958, to become the one who would accompany young men looking for discernment to become Montfort Missionaries.

Before his arrival in La Gardiolle in 1980, he was made welcome in a number of European capitals: Rome, Madrid, Zagreb... Apart from his agriculture, Stanislas was quite capable of informing himself and opening up to human realities... His memory, his astonishing fidelity and his practical intelligence and knowledge of life, made him capable of sustaining conversations on various topics. His facility for dialogue gave him the opportunity to be open to other mentalities in a respect for other cultures. His knowledge of Polish, French, Italian and Spanish made him the European man in search of an identity.

Finally, Stanislas was called, in the merciful gaze of our Father God, to enter the garden of the true Promised Land. By his discretion, his sense of service and his closeness to the members of his community of Our Lady of La Gardiolle, he goes before us to our encounter with Christ who says: “I was hungry and you gave me to eat”...

Brother Jean-Baptiste de la Salle – Joseph JÉZÉQUEL (1917 – 2007)

Died in Saint Laurent (France), on 19 March 2007,
aged 89 with 73 years of Religious Profession.

Born on 21 May 1917, the man we knew as Brother Jean-Baptiste was baptised under the patronage of St. Joseph. Hence the familiar and affectionate nickname, Jiji, by which he was known all his life. By one of those coincidences to which only God holds the secret, it was precisely on the feast of St Joseph that he went to the Father’s house.

The Jézéquel family is rich in vocations: Father Alain who died here two years ago, then Joseph whom we accompany today, and Brother Hervé who was able to be with him in those last days before his Passover, not to mention his brothers and sisters, committed as lay-people in the Montfortian Family in various ways.

Joseph was only 16 years old when he made his first profession in 1933, but the vicissitudes of the War meant that he did not make his perpetual vows until 14 years later, when he had just arrived in Madagascar.

Madagascar: that is where he lived the longest, 53 years in fact! He certainly merited the medal of “*Officer of the National Malagassy Order*” after all he accomplished in that country. An untiring builder of churches, religious houses and seminaries, he left behind, more than anything else, the memory of an agreeable confrere and a good religious whose witness certainly inspired vocations among the Malagassy Brothers. I leave it to others who lived with him in Madagascar to speak of this aspect of the religious and missionary life of our Jiji.

Returning to France in 2000, he was a member of the community of Le Calvaire in Pontchâteau. Little by little, his health declined and he was taken to Saint Laurent. After a week there, he departed quietly on the morning of the feast of St. Joseph, the patron of a happy death.

Father Giambattista MAGGIONI (1941 – 2007)

Died in Kankao (Malawi), on 21 March 2007,
aged 65 with 46 years of Religious Profession.

Giambattista Maggioni was born in Brembate di Sopra (Bg) April 15, 1941. He entered the Minor Seminary in Redona in 1951. In September 1959 he was in Castiglione Torinese for the novitiate year. His request to be admitted to vows reads: “I desire and wish to be a Montfortian religious, wanting to serve always the Company of Mary as a missionary priest, and to die within the congregation.” The novice master presented him with these words: “I believe he will succeed in being a good missionary.” He made his first profession on September 29, 1960, and then went to the scholasticate in Loreto for studies in philosophy and theology, which he finished in Rome, when the house of formation moved there. Father Gianni, as they called him in his family, was ordained a priest in the scholasticate church in Rome on March 5, 1966. His first assignment was to the Casa della Madonna in Reggio Calabria, as an educator and promoter. The missionary ideal which was with him since his youth became a reality

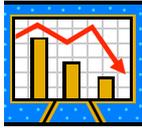
in 1969, when he left for Malawi. He first stayed for a time in Ulongwe to learn the basics of the language, and then he was in Mpiri, a strongly Moslem area, until 1977: it was a time of planting seeds. The mission of Utale II, above all the leprosarium, saw him hard at work from 1978 to 1996: it was the period of growth. The last field of his intense missionary work was spent in Kankao, from 1996 to 2007; it was the time of harvest. In this mission, at dawn on March 21, 2007, the Lord came to take him, as a mature fruit. While he was in church for Laudes, he had a heart attack. The first aid given to him was for naught. He ended his earthly pilgrimage in this bit of Africa, where he had dedicated more than 38 years of his life and ministry. Father Giambattista has a brother who is a Montfortian, Father Corrado, and a sister who is a religious. From Malawi, where they received the news of his death, they sent several notices and testimonies from the parish of Brembate. Among others, they said: "We knew that his heart belonged completely to Malawi. During the time he spent in Brembate, we saw that his heart was here." From his first return to Italy, he transmitted an evangelical passion to his parish, giving life to a missionary group, and to innumerable friends. There remains from Father Gianni a serenity, a generous daily commitment, the letters written in beautiful handwriting and capable of telling of Africa and involving so many people in care for the poor, for orphans, for those sick with leprosy and AIDS. In one letter is perhaps the synthesis of his life: "The work does not end, but I am so happy being on mission. When I accepted to come, I placed no limits on the work or the time available..." The funeral was celebrated in the parish of Balaka, with the Archbishop of Blantyre presiding, with seventy concelebrating priests and so many people. In expectation of the day of the resurrection, Father Gianni was laid to rest in Kankao, a few steps from his house, under two beautiful shade trees.

Brother Gérard CHAMPAGNE

Died in Nicolet (Canada), on 12 April 2007,
aged 88 with 69 years of Religious Profession.



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Statistics of the Company of Mary (31-12-2006)

Par "Entité Juridique / By Juridical Entity"				
	P.	F.	S.	Total
Adm. Générale	7	0	0	7
Allemagne	22	1	1	24
Argentine (France)	2	1	0	3
Belgique	33	6	0	39
Canada	37	14	1	52
Colombie	50	4	7	61
Comm.Gén. PNG	9	0	0	9
Dél.Gén. Afrique	23	2	9	34
Dél.Gén. Inde	34	0	34	68
Dél.Gén. Indonésie	28	5	49	82
Dél.Gén. Madagascar	19	7	6	32
Dél.Gén. Philippines	11	1	12	24
Dél.Gén. Portugal	15	1	0	16
Espagne-Équateur (France)	6	0	1	7
France	79	28	0	107
GB/I	18	5	0	23
Haïti	45	2	22	69
Italie	118	10	2	130
Malawi (Italie)	16	2	0	18
Nicaragua (USA)	2	0	3	5
Pays-Bas	58	15	0	73
Pérou-Bésil (Italie)	28	4	5	37
USA	21	2	0	23
	681	110	152	943

Par "Nationalité / By Nationality"				
	P.	F.	S.	Total
Allemagne	18	1	0	19
Angleterre	14	2	0	16
Belgique	21	5	0	26
Brésil	1	0	3	4
Canada	40	14	1	55
Colombie	48	4	7	59
Congo RD	6	1	5	12
Croatie	4	0	0	4
Danemark	0	0	1	1
Ecosse	4	0	0	4
Espagne	4	0	0	4
Équateur	1	0	1	2
États-Unis	24	2	0	26
France	90	29	0	119
Haïti	43	1	22	66
Inde	42	0	34	76
Indonésie	33	5	49	87
Irlande	3	2	0	5
Italie	150	14	2	166
Kenya	1	0	0	1
Madagascar	12	7	6	25
Malawi	6	1	4	11
Nicaragua	0	0	3	3
Ouganda	1	0	0	1
Pays de Galles	0	1	0	1
Pays-Bas	76	16	0	92
Pérou	12	2	2	16
Philippines	11	1	12	24
Pologne	0	1	0	1
Portugal	13	1	0	14
Suisse	2	0	0	2
Zambie	1	0	0	1
	681	110	152	943

Company of Mary

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