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Circular Letter of Father General

THE WISDOM, DEPTH AND POWER OF ALLOWING OURSELVES TO BE ACCOMPANIED

*“He appointed twelve that they might be with him
and he might send them forth to preach...” (Mk 3, 14.15)*

INTRODUCTION

I find myself in St. Laurent in front of the tomb of our founders, St. Louis Marie and Blessed Marie Louise. As I prepare to write this letter, I want to be inspired by the experience of their lives in the Lord Jesus, to be accompanied, guided and illuminated by these two people who are experienced in the path of faith and life. In the Gospel of Mark we read: *“he went up the mountain and summoned those whom he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach...”* (Mk 3, 13-15). Staying with the Master permitted each one who was called to enter into the depths of a relationship with Him; that became the foundation and source of the path of evangelization on the roads of humanity: *“and that he might send them forth to preach”*.

We live in a society characterized by the tendency toward individualism, a culture of performance, of “do-it-yourself,” of comfort and success which also allures us, until we place our security in these aspects. I would like to invite each of us to retrace the path of the desert to verify those things in which we place our hope, to free ourselves from however many idols we have constructed, and above all to recover the experience of “God Alone” as everything in our life as a Montfort Missionary.

Aware of our fragility and the many temptations to which we are exposed, we should rediscover with the apostles that, at every stage of life, we need someone who can remain at our side to incite us, to illuminate us, to reveal the false choices to which our weaknesses can bring us.

Montfort always had recourse to people of profound spirituality to verify the ways of God in his life (Leschassier, Pope Clement XI...). In turn, St. Louis Marie was a challenging but authentic guide, who helped Marie Louise to discover the plans of the Lord for her life. And Blessed Marie Louise, for her part, guided the “little remnant” which had recourse to the spiritual and missionary heritage of the Founder.

1. ACCOMPANIMENT IN THE STAGES OF DISCERNMENT: VOCATIONAL PROMOTION, ASPIRANCY, POSTULANCY.

“Jesus said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And leaving everything behind he got up and followed him.” (Lk 5, 28)

The crisis of accompanying young people

Especially today we speak of the crisis of vocations. In reality, it's not so much a crisis of vocations (without entering into the question of numbers), but rather a crisis of accompanying the young. Young people of today also have great abilities, talents, and possibilities, but in order to release all their energies they need someone who can help them to recognize them, to cultivate them, to bring them to fruit. The life of every young person depends to a great extent on the opportunities offered to them and on the people whom they meet. Above all, a real vocational accompaniment always requires a “master,” a “guide” who knows how to incite, sustain, and illuminate every young person willing to undergo a clear and in-depth path of discernment for their proper vocation.

“Starting Afresh from Christ”

The one who accompanies must be able to speak to the young person who has entrusted to him his own life. This is the first road to travel. Then come the suggestions, the questions, the clarifications... Vocational discernment should bring the young person to encounter, in a clear and unmistakable way, the living Christ of the Gospel, who reveals himself in his Word, in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, and in human relationships. The human and spiritual motivations which prompt a young person to orient himself to the consecrated and priestly life, through the service of accompaniment, should be purified and examined in the light of the radical Gospel, to avoid the risk of building upon false motivations through the years. Sooner or later these false motivations lead to a profound crisis of identity and of choices, and they cause fatigue and difficulties in living the consecrated life with coherence, even leading to the unfaithfulness which we often encounter.

Human maturity

The guide who accompanies the young person in his discernment should be very clear that the first process to attend to is that which is common to every person: “to humanize life”. The human quality of the person accompanying is the true strength of attraction, because it brings with it the “passion” for every person, the desire that each young person grow and become free, that is, able to love. Integral human maturity brings the person to a consciousness of his proper vocation to love, learning how to live well in his own reality, to accept people without prejudice or categorizing, to cultivate deeply the desire to live and to allow life to grow wherever and in any circumstance.

The community

The community in which the young person is going to be placed to live, to pray, to work, to study, to search, to create, always with the guidance of a teacher, is not of little importance for vocational discernment and its illumination. The community, whether it be a parish or a basic Christian community, whether it be in a postulancy house or in an apostolic religious community, is the place where freedom and method, dreaming and discipline, innovation and authority are integrated harmoniously. The young person should perceive that daily living involves being together, exchanging experiences, getting to know one another, creating something, sharing with others. And this gets illuminated by a “companion for the journey” who can bring him at length to a relationship with his own vocation to love, in an encounter with Christ, present in his own life and in the life of others.

2. ACCOMPANIMENT IN A SPECIFIC AND PARTICULAR STAGE: THE NOVITIATE

“Master, it is good that we are here ... then from the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my chosen Son; listen to him’.” (Lk 9, 33.35)

The novice master

After the stage of discernment is brought to maturity, the young person undertakes with enthusiasm and clarity a profound experience which aims to lead him to “consecrate” his life to the Lord in a particular charismatic community. On his journey he should encounter a “master” who “in company with the Spirit and in the Spirit” seeks to guide him to the joy of belonging to God and to the fullness of life which springs from that belonging, and which then will be a witness to the world. On this pathway, the “master” should transmit a “contagious enthusiasm” from his own life, with his secure and coherent guidance as a mediator, in order to lead the young person to recognize Christ as Master and Lord in an all-absorbing way, and to desire to have Christ’s very own sentiments.

Listening

Above all, the master places himself in a “listening mode,” and listening with all that he is: eyes, ears, heart, presence ... The young person must really feel that the master is there for him, that he is present for his person, and that he creates a profound bond with him. He works together with the young person, and shows him that his reality and his own story are unique and important. The young person can say that the master is with him if his soul, his heart, and his being are truly listening. This coming together to listen profoundly manifests the mercy of God, allows life to spring forth and heals wounds. It must evoke in the young person:

- **trust** which leads to confidence and friendship;
- **clarity** which leads to sharing in simplicity the truth which each person carries within him;
- **a meekness** like that of Jesus, which suggests through example rather than imposing by authority;
- **a pedagogical prudence** which leads to taking account of the personal conditions of each one in order to open him to a path which takes its start from his concrete reality;
- **an ongoing and regular personal encounter** which creates a deep relationship and allows the novice himself and his master to verify the growth and the integration of the experience as it unfolds.

The desert experience

In the process of the novitiate we often use the image of the desert. The master is called to lead the novice to undertake a journey which will allow him to have the experience of the people of Israel in the desert: to be alone with himself, to enter into the depths of his own heart and of his own life. The young person is accompanied in order to be taught how to put aside every human security in order to discover the unique security who is God Alone. The master must be like an artist who helps the young person remain enraptured by the beauty, the profundity, the goodness, the value, and the joy of this personal encounter with the Lord which gives meaning to life and to the consecration of his entire existence to Him Alone.

The desert should lead one to a falling in love, to a passion which leads to a self identification with Christ, God made human, to have his very own sentiments and to follow in his ways. On this pathway God is discovered as the highest value of life, and its fruits include a profound peace, a great security which comes from his presence in our life, a joy which needs to be shared, a burning desire to proclaim and announce this treasure to the world.

Consecrated like Mary and to Mary

During the accompaniment of the novitiate, the master should lead the young person to live the Marian consecration proposed by our holy founder, as an example of ongoing formation which will have to cast light on one's entire life. Mary is the model of what God can realize in a person who is always listening, completely available, open to pathways unknown. Mary is also present and active in the key moments of the life of her Son and of the first Christian community. Following the example of Mary, the master will help each young person to recognize his own poverty and to sing of the greatness of the Lord and of the marvels which he has done in his creatures. In the footsteps of Mary, the master teaches how to entrust oneself to God, placing in God's hands one's own life, body and spirit, heart, thoughts and feelings, past, present and future. The consecration to Jesus, Incarnate Wisdom, through the hands of Mary calls forth in us trust and availability, which is expressed in a humble and daily abandonment to God "*like clay in the hand of the Potter*" (Jer. 18, 6). The consecration as it is lived engenders day after day a strong and courageous faith, which allows us to proclaim: "Here I am!" It brings us to follow the Master in fidelity, echoing within us the words of Mary at Cana: "*do whatever he tells you*" (Jn. 2, 5). And we are made capable of remaining with courage, hope, and love at the foot of the Cross, and at the foot of every cross and near to the crucified people whom we find even today in the world and whom we encounter in our path as evangelizers.



3. Accompaniment on the path toward definitive commitment: the time of temporary vows

“Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart” (Mt 11, 29)

Objective

This stage involves beginning a path which will lead to the maturing of a definitive choice to commit oneself with joy and enthusiasm in the Montfortian community. It is important to clarify well the objective of this stage and the means of accompaniment which will help to achieve it, before starting or taking up again studies or a pastoral activity. During this time the young religious must experience in daily life the beauty of a life consecrated to God.

Ongoing conversion centered on God Alone; an experience of growth in fraternity within the concrete community in which God has placed me; studies carried out not in view of a title or for prestige, but to nourish the evangelical depth of one's own life and of the mission; an apostolate to help an evangelical passion to grow: these are the pathways on which Monfort must guide us with the heritage he has left us.

On this journey, then, the particular qualities of every instance involved in the service of accompaniment become important:

The Formator: a person committed to journey together with those in formation, building a personal relationship with each one, capable of learning always and from everyone, and someone who, by allowing himself to be guided by the understanding of the Spirit, lives the service of accompaniment as a gift which enables him to grow himself and to help the others to grow. In order to do this, it is important that he arrange regular and frequent opportunities for accompaniment, either by personal dialogue and verification with each one of the young professed or by meetings with the group.

The spiritual director: a person who at every turn knows how to bring God to persons and persons to God in the most intimate aspects of their being. The constant and frequent searching of this personal dialogue with the spiritual director will be the sign of the willingness of the religious to illuminate his life with the presence of God. The deepest truth and freedom are the conditions in which this osmosis is realized, which will allow one to say with St. Paul *“yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me”* (Gal 2, 20).

The community: the family in which I live my consecration, the first context in which I express the best of my life. The community accompanies personal maturation to the extent to which it is not only a living together but a true fraternity, with deep relationships and commitments, and where there is an experience of mutual help, fraternal correction, the sharing of each one's talents, support in moments of difficulty, a sharing of material goods, the strong breath of life through the presence of the Lord who unites hearts.

The mission: as disciples of Jesus, we are invited into the world to "make disciples of all nations." This is the mission which lasts throughout life: to be disciples always and to invite everyone to become disciples. This helps us understand how the mission is also a school of accompaniment. We are called to learn throughout our entire life and at every age, in every situation and human context, from every person and culture. The mission involves a giving and a receiving. It is a process of allowing ourselves to be formed by daily life and by the

realities of our brothers and sisters. It involves journeying and growing together as we build the Kingdom. *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations”* (Mt 28, 19).

The study of theology: the formator, the spiritual director and the community must accompany and keep watch over the study of theology. It is a path of developing in depth and in quality, and we must see that it does not become a path marked by prejudices, by personal projections, by abstract patterns, by rigid positions, and by ideology. The study of theology should be the source of a spiritual dynamism. We should not be afraid of inevitable tensions: if they are lived in peace, they are occasions for growth, contributing to the experience of evangelical mercy and fraternity. We need to create in the young students a spirit of freedom, able to remove rigidity which hardens the heart and creates hostilities. It is important to guide them to remain in a serenity of judgment, which does not exclude anyone and allows them to live with the mind of Jesus.

Prayer: prayer is accompaniment *par excellence*. The purpose of prayer, both personal and communal, of ‘lectio divina,’ an intense and fruitful encounter with the Scriptures, of the Eucharist, is to place us in a profound communion with the Lord. This personal relationship will create in us freedom, availability and joy which will allow us to be accompanied and guided by Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.



4. The "older brother" in the life of the young religious and priest

“while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them” (Lc 24, 15).

Often in our communities we live as if the young religious or priest who has finished the stages of initial formation is someone who has “arrived” and no longer has a need of accompaniment. By contrast, all the current reflection on ongoing formation insists on the importance of journeying “together” at every stage of life.

The older brother

From our youth we need above all to be accompanied by an older brother. Allow me a personal example here which has marked my religious and priestly life for the good and has allowed me to live the first years of priesthood as the years of a beautiful and profound formation, because they were accompanied by an older brother full of wisdom. The spirit of welcome, of frankness, of an open mind and heart, the paternal encouragement of this confrere, has given me the opportunity to feel confident, to have at my side someone who could enlighten me with his experience in opportune moments, to rejoice in his confidence, but also in his “paternal” correction and his wise and penetrating vigilance. The most significant moment of the presence of this older brother was when he “pushed me ahead” by trusting me with the pastoral responsibility of the parish and placing himself nearby to continue to accompany me, but placing me in a position of growing responsibility and confidence. I wish all young confreres would be able to meet with an older brother who could be a real “model” not because of his perfection, but because of his humanity, through his serious and serene accompaniment. Through his paternity ...

The spiritual guide

In every stage of life, then, we should not be without the accompaniment of a spiritual guide who keeps watch together with us over our interior journey, to help us “start afresh from Christ” every day, through an evangelical encounter, the star which should guide us to follow in the footsteps of the Son of God made human out of love for humanity. The spiritual guide provides the accompaniment which in daily situations and in new ones always connects God to us and us to God. The spiritual guide calls us back to the simplicity of the Gospel which helps us grow in our surrender to God, liberates us from our preoccupations with our own image or reputation and makes us true disciples and witnesses of Jesus.

The accompaniment of authority

The Instruction *Starting Afresh from Christ*, published May 16, 2002 by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, referring to the service of authority, says that “*It requires a constant presence which is able to animate and propose, to recall the raison d’être of consecrated life, and to help those entrusted to them to live in a constantly renewed fidelity to the call of the Spirit*” (n. 14). If the service of authority is necessary and right for every stage of life for the consecrated person, it is even more so in this phase of life for the young religious. The one responsible is called to create a community climate that is joyful and serene. Authority is the service that brings us to listen to the Spirit by knowing how to listen to one another. Immersed by now in the fullness of the apostolic mission, the young confrere will be helped if he is not distant from the daily path of fraternal life and from growing in dialogue and in discernment. It is necessary to live together valuable times of prayer, of community meetings, of planning, of relaxation ... in all the aspects of sharing the fatigue and the joy of the mission and of confronting it always with the presence of the Lord who illuminates and guides, in order to discover his plan and to live his will.

“While they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them”

All the human accompaniment of which we have spoken above is illustrated by the presence of the traveling companion who walked along with the disciples of Emmaus on the day of Easter. Without the clear, simple, strong light, central to the accompaniment of the

living Jesus and of his Gospel, we lose ourselves in a labyrinth without an exit, and soon we enter into a frustration which takes away the passion and the joy of living our consecration. The ongoing formation which remains at the foundation of the path of our entire life, in company with Jesus, should be transformed into an ongoing conversion which helps us each day to renew the choice of Christ Jesus as the center of everything, of our hearts, of our mind, of our spirit, of our feelings... by allowing ourselves to be accompanied by Him we should learn above all to speak with Him and not only to speak about Him. To rediscover every day our identity as consecrated persons, we are invited not to look simply to ourselves, to structures, to works, but to the Lord and to his Gospel. Many times in my journeys to visit Montfortian communities spread throughout the world, I am told: “we ought to return to the simplicity and the basics of the Gospel!” Often we live in a strongly religious context, but we lack faith. Jesus, our traveling companion, shows us the way: *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves”* (Mt 11, 29). Only with the attitude of humility, of simplicity, of compassion do we allow the Lord to draw near to us and to travel along with us. *“The truth will set you free”* (Jn. 8, 32): only a path of truth, of transparency, of coherence, which will bring us to the experience of the cross, will make of us joyful and credible witnesses. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son”* (Jn. 3, 16): only when the profound and total love of Jesus enters into our hearts will we be able to follow in his footsteps and tear down the walls which divide, the hostilities that separate, the ideologies and categories that prevent listening. Then are we capable of following the path of conversion together. When we walk accompanied by Jesus and by his Gospel, our hearts can not but be set on fire as were those of the disciples at Emmaus.

5. Accompaniment during the stage of maturity brings us to the reality of a life which grows, but also to the experience of our weaknesses

*“Peter said to him in reply, “You are the Messiah.” ...
“...but Jesus, turning around and looking at his disciples, reproved Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.” (Mk 8, 29.33).*

A spiritual guide to confront oneself in silence with God

If we live our daily life well, God acts in us and increases our experience and the depth of our consecration. This always supposes an attitude of ongoing formation and also the presence of a person, a spiritual guide, with whom from time to time we can look with fidelity at life, at our own experience of God and at the future. This spiritual guide should help us to see where God wants to lead us and to discover his will. Therefore it is necessary to balance our activities with times which allow us to remain in prayerful silence, in solitude, in order to be able to look every day at the depths within ourselves and to be questioned by God, by his Word, by his presence in the life of every person. Following Jesus, even our story and our mission should become the “story of salvation.” To do this, it is fundamental to know how to contemplate the presence of Jesus within us and others, placing that presence in the light and allowing it to grow. Spiritual guidance and contemplative silence should accompany our advancing in years and on mission. Let us remember the forest of Mervent, the hermitages of Saint-Eloi and of Saint-Lazare: they are three places dear to Monfort and to the Montfortian tradition. They remind us of the

missionary's need to alternate proclamation and action with listening and silence, to pause at the well of God which quenches our thirst in order to bring the water of life to our apostolic mission.

Accompaniment in crisis

At this stage the normal flow of life is often subject to a sudden blow. It is almost always something which little by little makes its way within us and then erupts into those crises which are part of our humanity. But we know the crisis can after all be an opportunity for "growth," a moment of grace, as long as we do not lack the help of a guide, the freedom to look within ourselves truthfully, the self emptying and the availability to allow ourselves to be led.

When we do not allow ourselves to be accompanied, we can fall into various temptations:

- **flight:** we may abandon everything. But to make decisions in a moment of crisis is fatal and does not bring us to mature choices.
- **accusations:** the fault of our crisis lies outside of us, in others, in structures, in the congregation. It is a subtle way of fleeing from ourselves.
- **immobility:** we may hide our dissatisfaction and we may no longer continue on the path. We may become impossible; habits and customs take on more importance than people; we may fall into a rigidity and close ourselves off from others; we may fall into laxity with ourselves.

If, however, we allow ourselves to be accompanied in order to enter into the crisis, we will realize that it is a new passageway with God; it is an opportunity for a new conversion, of a new path in the desert which leads to a fertile pruning (Jn. 15, 2). It is a time to grow in that generativity in human life which brings us to care for the lives of others more than our own, but with maturity, after having given a proper trust and solidity to this new life, after overcoming the crisis.

Accompaniment with human means

Often when we speak of crises we refer above all to those personal situations which explode in such a way that they make us put everything in doubt. But there are also crises that are more subtle, which can become the daily bread of many consecrated persons. And they are manifested in a resistance to growth, in living in a slothful way. They seek quiet; they become egocentric; they flee from responsibility; they run after easy gratifications; they allow themselves to be guided by aggressiveness or by pessimism; they fall into depression ... life becomes sad or mediocre. The causes can be diverse: difficult moments and situations, overwork, isolation, a lack of confidence in oneself, a sense of guilt, suffering, illusions which place celibacy in doubt, and even others ... We cannot ignore the support of human sciences which will offer useful and necessary means to know how to look within our life and shed light upon it. Other than ordinary and periodic activities which promote a path of ongoing formation, there are also extraordinary initiatives which reinforce and restore balance to the rhythm of our life. It is also good to foresee space and time for personal human enrichment through courses, sabbatical years, and processes which may help each one to shed light on his own being and activity and thus place order in one's own life. In addition to the help mentioned above, I would like to underline the importance of allowing ourselves to be accompanied by other human means which must become real companions for the journey. They are those means which help us to maintain a real balance

in life, a balance between giving ourselves to others and caring for ourselves, for our persons, for our energy, for our bodies... An imbalance between expending energies and restoring them leads to a crisis. I say this from my own personal experience: I had to reach almost 60 years before discovering the necessity of this balance in function of my personal well-being and of the quality of the mission to which the Lord calls us as consecrated persons. From this flows the necessity of having appropriate moments of relaxation and physical activity which eliminate mental fatigue, and allow the discharge of tensions and affective energy. It is a path of humanizing our life which will place us in the condition of being open to ourselves, to others and to God.

With all these means of accompaniment we will continue to feel like “poor men”, “sinners” like the publican, but forgiven and therefore happy because we have been able to undertake a path of purification, of renewed conversion, which allows us to entrust our life into the hands of God once again, to consecrate it to Him anew. Thus we will be able to say with Paul: *“What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? ... For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, ... nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom. 8, 35-39).

6. Senior years

“when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go ... and when Jesus had said this, he said to him, ‘Follow me’” (Jn 21, 18.19).

Allowing ourselves to be accompanied as the years pass

“Now that I am old and gray, do not forsake me, God, That I may proclaim your might to all generations yet to come, Your power and justice, God, to the highest heaven.” (Ps. 71, 18). Old age, if it is lived well and accompanied, also becomes a real time of grace. We must allow ourselves to be accompanied as the years add up and make their presence felt in different ways: reduced energy, less capacity for a general vision, a limited sensibility for the world of the young, sickness and fatigue which manifest themselves every day ... The first accompaniment, therefore, is being conscious of all this and integrating it positively in our being. At this point it is illuminating to be able to verify something: if the purpose of our life has been the work, the evangelization, the service to the poor or other ways in which we have expressed our consecration ..., then old age becomes difficult because we no longer have the power to continue to realize our objectives. But if the purpose of our consecrated life has been following Christ, and if everything we have done is only the means and opportunity to live this discipleship, then old age too is the new means offered to us to live this same discipleship. It is the advanced stage of life, accepted and lived with serenity, which becomes a witness and a sign for the young, because they may learn that the purpose of consecrated life is discipleship and not apostolic efficiency. To let ourselves be accompanied by the years and by life as it moves on is to know how to place everything, successes and failures, grace and sin, into the merciful hands of God and to be attentive to the coming of the Lord. To allow ourselves to be accompanied by the passing years brings us to the wisdom and to the freedom of making way for others, of not thinking about ourselves as indispensable and irreplaceable. On the contrary, it urges

us to encourage the one who takes our place, by helping, by giving counsel, by giving trust and esteem. How much has the wisdom of an aging father helped me personally when he has known how to keep me going, placing himself in a subordinate position, accompanying me with his humanity and his pastoral experience!

The accompaniment of the community

The second important accompaniment in this phase of life is that offered by the community. The senior confrere cannot be sustained, cared for, understood or supported alone. The aging or sick religious must continue to feel in their lives the vital breath of fraternal communion with those who are still directly involved in the apostolic mission. Every local community, not only those where the aging and sick confreres live, but every apostolic community, can have a role of significant accompaniment to keep an aging brother integrated in communion with his confreres. Visits, sharing, signs of affection, and requests for prayer are the accompaniment which the community can give to these brothers. Where it is possible, it is always wise to involve elder confreres in the many small and humble forms of service which are valuable for fraternal life. As in a family, the profound relationships with every member, from children to grandparents, are the conditions which involve everyone in the life of true fraternity.

Personal, physical, and spiritual accompaniment

The elder religious who accepts the passing years, learns little by little to accept also having to be dependent, allowing himself to be helped. But this physical accompaniment, which becomes more necessary and indispensable each day, should at the same time be connected with a personal spiritual accompaniment. The bonds of fraternity, of listening, of affective attention, of presence, are the expressions of the physical and spiritual accompaniment which allows the aging religious to live this stage of life as a moment of grace, as a time of total surrender into the hands of the Father in expectation of the Day of the Lord. *Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!*



CONCLUSION

I am finishing the first draft of this letter in Santo Tomas, Nicaragua, and tomorrow I will continue my journey to visit the communities of Ecuador and Argentina. These are our small and fragile presences in the Latin American continent – presences which also need to be accompanied, but which manifest at the same time signs of good hope and vitality. Insofar as we know how to allow ourselves to be accompanied by the Lord, who is present and who guides us, and as we will join hands to walk together, will they be really capable of growth, of maturing and of witnessing to the Reign of Life of the Gospel in the midst of this people who await with enthusiasm the presence of the Resurrected One.

Our General Chapter of 2005 invites us to enter upon a path of internationality: it is a path which can be organized and managed, but which will bear fruit only insofar as people who accept this challenge know how to be attentive day after day to the personal quality of their own lives and of the life of the community, in order to live the mission à la Montfort to which we have been called.

The weaknesses which we encounter in our communities are so many, but they are as much signs of life. If we will have the courage to see and accompany these signs of life in order to make them grow, then they will open before us new sources to quench the thirst of people today whom we are called to love as with a love for Christ. It is the wish that I make for each one of us to live with enthusiasm in the time and space which the Lord has given to us.



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Montfortian Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

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