



# L'Écho Montfortain

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N° 522 – English Edition – June 2005

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## COMMITMENT OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL

*During the closing celebration of the General Chapter, on 20 May 2005, Fr. Santino Brembilla, the new Superior General, and his assistants together articulated their commitment in the terms which follow. The confreres will recognize in them the principal lines of the chapter document which was unanimously approved by the capitulants. The final edition of the document will be published in the course of the following weeks.*

As an international team, coming from different countries, we commit ourselves to strengthen the bonds of our international communion for mission, to creatively animate the fraternal bonds of love among us, with care and attention for each entity.

We commit first ourselves to walk a path of ongoing formation, allowing ourselves to be formed by our Montfortian heritage and by the realities of the Company of Mary today. We will also call our confreres from around the congregation to walk this same path.

We commit ourselves to animate our confreres towards a new missionary thrust for the world of today, which will bring the insights and zeal of evangelization in Montfort's own way to those who long for Good News, especially to the poor.

We commit ourselves to coordinate the discovery of new and better ways of sharing - sharing our resources and our personnel, sharing our spirituality with others.

We commit ourselves to transparency, honesty and charity in our communication with you. We desire to maintain bonds of fraternity with the young, with the old, with the Daughters of Wisdom, the Brothers of Saint Gabriel and all the members of the Montfortian Family, and with all the lay people who share our mission.

Santino BREMBILLA, s.m.m., Superior General

Donald LASALLE, s.m.m.

Mathieu JENNISKENS, s.m.m.

Joseph PHILOR, s.m.m.

Olivier MAIRE, s.m.m.



## **OFFICIAL NEWS ITEMS**

### **NEW GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

As already announced via a communiqué, on 15 May 2005, Pentecost Sunday, the General Chapter elected Fr. Santino BREMBILLA as Superior General of the Company of Mary. Fr. BREMBILLA is Italian, a member of the Provincial Delegation of Peru-Brazil. The following day, 16 May, the four Assistants were elected: they are Frs. Mathieu JENNISKENS (Netherlands), Donald LASALLE (USA), Joseph PHILOR (Haiti) and Olivier MAIRE (France).

On 16 May, during the first meeting of the new Council, Fr. Donald LASALLE was appointed Vicar General. Fr. Francesco AGLIARDI was confirmed in the office of General Bursar.

### **PERPETUAL PROFESSIONS**

On 20 April 2005, in Bangalore (India): Maria Salath SUSAI MUTHU, Mohan Vincent SANJEEVAPPA, Sebastian Raj PETER RAJ.

### **ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD**

On 27 May 2005, in Paku (Indonesia): Gregorius PASI.

## **THE CHAPTER AND AFTER**

During the General Chapter, three Chronicles, with photographs, were sent by email to the secretariats of the Provinces and Delegations, as well as to all those confreres whose address we have. We hope that these communications reached you while the news was fresh.

The new General Council, with the help of confreres at all levels, will now have the responsibility of putting into practice the orientations of the Chapter document which will be sent to you in the coming months.

The members of the new General Administration are due to meet as a complete body at the General House in September. The departure of the members of the out-going administration will be spread over almost two months. We are attempting to classify properly what needs to be passed to the archives or the secretariat, and we are publishing this latest *Écho* which brings together the essential elements of what is ready for publication before our departure.

## A WORD FROM THOSE WHO ARE LEAVING...

For months now so many members of the Montfortian Family have been praying for the General Chapter: “Lord Jesus, be mindful of your Congregation. Give your Mother a company of good missionaries who will burn with the fire of your Spirit, men who are free with the freedom of your love...” The General Chapter of 2005 and the new General Council are the first fruits of the answer to those prayers. Now it remains for us to implement and incarnate the orientations of the Chapter in communities and entities on every continent, for us to really unite “with men and women from every nation” in order to renew the face of the earth and reform the Church.

By means of this *Écho*, I would like to thank each of you for your prayer, witness and collaboration over these 12 years. I am especially grateful to all those who said “yes” to serve as provincials, delegates and directors of various projects during our mandate – often at great personal cost. I am profoundly grateful and humbled by the prayer and sufferings offered for us each day by the brothers and sisters in our infirmaries and retirement communities. I also ask forgiveness of those whom I have offended or wounded by action or omission.

Perhaps the greatest privilege and grace for me during these 12 years has been to meet nearly all the SMM confreres as well as hundreds of Daughters of Wisdom and Brothers of Saint Gabriel – along with parishioners, laity and associates. Truly the spirituality of St. Louis-Marie is a school of holiness and apostolic mission. How many of you –and those who have gone before us in faith – have journeyed very far in that school... even to a union of love with Jesus in Mary!

With fraternal affection,

*Bill Considine, s.m.m.*

I have just finished living twelve years of ongoing formation, especially concerning internationality and solidarity. Getting to know so many people and confreres from different cultures, and my contacts with them, have made me appreciate and assimilate the wealth of such great variety; they have in particular confirmed for me, yet again, that both goodness and intolerance are born within the souls of people and do not issue either from a place nor from the colour of one’s skin. Internationality is the joyful meeting of those who burn with the same ideal and look in the same direction, joyfully witnessing together to the truth of the Kingdom.

What is more, for me the experience of these twelve years has finally become a school of solidarity and fraternity. In the difficult times, I have felt the closeness of a good number of people that I have met during my visits and my long journeys. It is as though the strong and affectionate beating of their hearts accompanied and strengthened mine, as though the smile on their faces also lit up my own. The fraternity and affection they showed me made clearer for me the loving presence of the Lord and the motherly goodness of Mary; they increased my joy in living within the Montfortian family.

*Ivo Libralato, s.m.m.*

"Instabilis sumus" this means we have to be available. I have enjoyed my stay and work in Rome, but my turn of office is over. I have to move. Although this is not the end of the world, it is always painful to pack your things and try to get used to a new environment.

I thank everyone who has put up with me during the past six years. I have learned a lot from you: your friendliness, your endurance in time of trouble, your cheerfulness, your openness and prayerfulness. Continue to accompany me with your prayers!

*Hub Louis, s.m.m.*

Our task as missionaries is a long-term one, subject to variable results. It teaches us to hope and to listen to life, which is born and grows in secret, often in suffering, pain and friction, like the wheat-grain of the Gospel. This is an important aspect of my experience of twelve years as a General Assistant. Now, we turn a new page. The past is the past, but when it has been punctuated with a daily *Totus tuus*, it retains its soul and is the bearer of a future. What I hold onto is what will continue. It is the fraternity, the friendship, the sharing, the working together, the creative fidelity of Montfortian apostolic community. It is the enthusiasm for the mission “in Montfort’s own way”, together and without frontiers, which burnt brightly during the Chapter. To serve the Congregation and its mission has been a great privilege, and that will not change: for me, to be a Montfortian is a privilege in itself, it is the grace of my life. Thank you to Bill and my confreres on the Council and in the General House. To those who will be fulfilling the mission of service in the General Council, I promise my prayers and my collaboration. Together let us bring to fruition the missionary project of Montfort. Under the protection of the Queen of the Company, *let us be strongly united in a union of hearts and minds!*

*Jean-Louis Courchesne, s.m.m.*

After twelve years as a General Assistant I want to thank the Lord, the Blessed Virgin and Montfort, as well as those closer confreres who allowed me to render this service and helped me to be wonderfully enriched in going beyond myself in many aspects: computer skills, appreciation of works of art, organisation, languages, visits, knowledge of the Congregation and its archives, the experience of God and of Montfort and Montfortian spirituality, in the deep conviction that my greatest challenge is to be one day truly a Missionary of the Company of Mary. I owe a great deal to this welcoming country that is Italy, privileged as it is in so many ways: art in all its forms, history and culture, and with the administrative centre of the Catholic Church.

I want to thank also two confreres in particular who have been the principal instruments of my growth, and who have brought about in me both stimulation and admiration: Father Bill, a brother of peace who listens, dialogues and resolves; and Fr. Pio Suarez (+), an indefatigable worker with whom we were able to bring to fruition, together with Fr. Aurelio Roza, two dreams: the Spanish editions of the Dictionary of Montfortian Spirituality, and the Complete Works of St. Louis Marie, along with all his hymns.

I offer my apologies and ask pardon of those confreres that I may have upset by my silence or my being distant, my anger or my disagreements, the fruit often enough of misunderstandings and lack of time to dialogue or to rest, or of my lack of humility and faith. *Arrivederci Roma!*

For the members of the new General Administration, I wish: grace, courage, the ability to listen to one another, and that they may always find a meaning in their work, and that they may be effective.

*Miguel Patiño H., s.m.m.*

## **OUR DECEASED BRETHREN**

### **Monsignor Luciano NERVI Bishop of Mangochi (Malawi) (1938 – 2005)**

Died on 8 March 2005, in Blantyre (Malawi), aged 67, with 49 years of Religious Profession, 44 years of priesthood and 38 days as a Bishop. He devoted the first years of his ministry principally to the minor seminary in Redona, until 1970. Then he was sent to Malawi as a missionary; there he was superior of the delegation and vicar general of the diocese. In 1987, he was asked to go back to Italy, to the community in Redona, where first of all he was the superior and then director of the missionary magazine *L'Apostolo di Maria*. He was also involved in pilgrimages and lent a hand in parishes.

After seventeen years in this ministry, he took up again his missionary commitment as bishop of the diocese where he had taken his first steps as a missionary. In fact, on 20 November last, the Holy Father appointed him bishop of Mangochi, where he succeeded Mgr. Alessandro Assolari, s.m.m. He arrived there a few days before his episcopal consecration on 29 January 2005. This celebration gave occasion for great manifestations of joy among his people of the diocese, who quickly adopted him. He was their pastor for just 38 days! He had undertaken his office of pastor with the energy and the professionalism which had always been seen in him. He worked very hard, wishing, among other things, to visit as many parishes as possible. He had already begun to make his mark. But he was struck down by cerebral malaria which quickly carried him off, just as it seemed he would recover. He died in the ambulance as he was being transferred to another hospital.

The new surprise of his death sowed consternation everywhere! Those who had celebrated in joy a few weeks before now returned to share their pain. The number of bishops, priests, dignitaries, and thousands of people present at his funeral bore witness to the fact that in little more than a month among them, our confrere-bishop had already left an inestimable legacy. Buried in Mangochi, he has become among them an African for ever.

### **Monsignor Alessandro ASSOLARI Bishop emeritus of Mangochi (Malawi) (1928 – 2005)**

Died on 13 April 2005, in Bergamo (Italy), aged 76, with 56 years of Religious Profession, 51 years of priesthood, and 31 years as a bishop. The news of the unexpected death of Mgr. Alessandro Assolari spread consternation among the communities of the Italian Province and in the diocese of Mangochi, whose pastor he had been for 32 years. He had come back from Malawi only a short time before for a period of rest, having lived through the events of the handing over to his successor, Mgr. Luciano Nervi, then the truly unforeseeable death of the latter.

This second sudden death hit the Montfortian family in Italy hard, and left the Christians in Mangochi and our confreres who work in that diocese in disarray. We want to experience these events with them, and we call on the power of the Spirit to keep them strong and united in the faith, in the certainty that the Father never abandons those who put their trust in him.

In 1956, two years after his ordination, he left for Madagascar. There he stayed until 1961. Then, after a break for study in Italy, he left for Malawi in 1963. There he set out on a new missionary adventure which would last for the rest of his life. He worked in a number of mission posts in the region of Fort Johnson, the future diocese of Mangochi. In 1969, the Holy See appointed him Prefect Apostolic, and on

19 October 1973, bishop of the new diocese of Mangochi. He received his episcopal consecration on 8 December 1973 in the Cathedral of Bergamo.

The missionary zeal which always animated him had led him, even when he was young, to make the decision to give his life in the service of the Lord's vineyard. Sustained by his missionary ideal, his true devotion to Mary and his desire to give flesh to the missionary inspiration of Montfort, he devoted all his energies to the proclamation of the Gospel.

The confreres can bear witness that, even from his years of preparation for the priesthood, in Redona, then in Loreto, meeting with missionaries on leave filled him with enthusiasm and led him to communicate this enthusiasm for working in distant countries to his companions. So it was natural that, immediately after his ordination, he should have asked his superiors to send him out to the missions. In the course of his long years of activity in Malawi, he was able to realise his dream, especially when he was chosen to put the new diocese of Mangochi on its feet. His unceasing commitment in favour of the Christians, to give a solid foundation to the Church in a place marked by a strong Muslim and animist presence, led him to provide various mission centres: he had schools built, dispensaries, churches; he organised social action, and later had both a minor and a major seminary built.

He used his energies in the service of the poor, and for the spread of the Kingdom of God. Despite many difficulties, and often a lack of understanding, he accomplished his duty as Pastor and guide of souls and of the local clergy which was put in place over the years. He leaves an indelible mark as the first bishop of Mangochi, and from heaven he continues to intercede, asking of the Father blessings and consolations for the Church in Africa, and in particular that in Malawi.

### **Brother Alfonso (Francesco BONANOMI) (1916 – 2005)**

Died on 12 March 2005 in Redona di Bergamo (Italy), aged 89, with 70 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 15 May 1934. First of all he did various jobs in the junior seminary in Redona, including that of baker. From 1953 until 1996, apart from two breaks in Italy, he worked in the United States. With other Brothers he built the Lourdes Grotto in Litchfield, which was to become a well-known place of pilgrimage which probably would never have existed without his presence. The he oversaw the maintenance and the improvement of the grounds, until his return to Italy for health reasons. Throughout his life he was an example of faith, prayer and fidelity. He was much appreciated for his judgement, his discretion, his sensitivity and his devotion to Mary.

### **Father Adrianus (Arie) VAN DER HULST (1931 – 2005)**

Died on 15 March 2005 in Hazerswoude (Netherlands), aged 74, with 51 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1953 and was ordained priest on 8 March 1959. In 1960 he left for Africa. He worked first of all in Malawi, as secretary to the Archbishop of Blantyre and chaplain to the sick and the prisoners. After a break for studies, he became Novice-Master in Uganda. Then he was a General Assistant in the Congregation from 1987 to 1993. The following year, he accepted with a big heart to give a strong helping hand to the young delegation in the Philippines, where he worked until the very beginning of 2005. There he was superior of the scholasticate, bursar and superior of the delegation, as well as being very active in the communication of our spirituality to the laity. Arie never accepted any compromise. He was a true missionary, and had the courage, the energy and the optimism of one. He showed this in accepting a change of continent so as to be present where they needed him. His unexpected death has left a great emptiness among our confreres in the Philippines who looked upon him as their guide and elder brother.

### **Father Alain JÉZÉQUEL (1914 – 2005)**

Died on 22 March 2005 in St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre (France), aged 90, with 70 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1934 and was ordained priest on 21 February 1943. His life was characterised by the itinerant mission. As the one in charge of various mission teams, he often

devoted himself also to other services: for example for the children and the poor in Angoulême. In Paris, he also took on responsibility for the Montfortian Pilgrimage and the *Hospitalité Montfortaine*. In Brest he was chaplain to the Crusade of the Blind. He had a missionary fervour and enthusiasm. Right up to the end, as a member of the community of Pontchâteau, he was acknowledged to be a very agreeable confrere, enlivening the community, taking on all kinds of service, bringing to the task his qualities as an artist in the embellishment of the Pilgrimage grounds. As he died, he asked the person who was watching with him to trace the two arms of a cross and write: “The one who takes this way goes to heaven.”

### **Father Maurice LANDRY (1914 – 2005)**

Died on 24 March 2005 in West Islip (USA), aged 90 with 69 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 22 August 1935 and was ordained priest on 8 March 1941. He was a teacher in the junior seminary for 18 years, then in the scholasticate for 8 years. After this, he was chaplain to the Daughters of Wisdom and parish-priest of a number of Montfortian parishes. He spent the last 20 years at the Montfortian Spiritual Centre in Bay Shore. Right up to the age of 90, he looked after the plants and the flowers in the vast grounds attached to the house. He was an unpretentious man, gentle and peace-giving by nature, a positive element in community life. He was an enthusiast who appreciated beauty in all its forms. He will be remembered as a man of faith who always manifested a great devotion to Mary.

### **Father Cornelis (Cees) KLIJS (1917 – 2005)**

Died on 2 May 2005 in Genk (Belgium), aged 87, with 63 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 15 September 1941 and was ordained priest on 16 March 1947. He worked in the Netherlands, but most of all in Belgium. He was a teacher and Prefect of Discipline in the apostolic school in Rotselaar. He helped in the Marian apostolate, and was at various times an itinerant missionary, a chaplain to Sisters and chaplain to a clinic, before taking a well-deserved retirement. He always fulfilled his tasks with devotion and ardour. He helped with the Montfortian magazine *Midelares en Koningin* right up to his sudden death. Being a keen musician, he composed several Masses and songs that choirs were always keen to sing. In these could be seen his intimate union with our Lord and the Blessed Virgin.

### **Father Jean MARTIN (1920 – 2005)**

Died on 19 May 2005 in St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre (France), aged 85, with 58 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 September 1946 and was ordained priest on 19 February 1950. He left immediately for Colombia, where he worked for 46 years (1950-1996). There he built churches, schools, boarding establishments, dispensaries – all in poor areas. He was very happy to spend a number of years in the most difficult region of the Vichada, with his great friend, Mgr. Émilien Pied, who was then Prefect Apostolic. On his return to France, he lived in Pontchâteau, then in Le Marillais. Having developed cancer, he came to St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre in April 2002. Hearing the bells of Saint-Laurent, he confided: “I am entering into the mystery. The way of the Cross may perhaps be more difficult. The important thing is to abandon oneself to the hands of God, and to belong to Jesus through Mary.”

### **Brother Pierre CLOUTIER (1908 – 2005)**

Died on 2 June 2005 in Nicolet (Canada), aged 96, with 78 years of Religious Profession. He made his first vows on 8 May 1927. For 45 years, he was the very competent manager of the farm at the minor seminary in Papineauville. Then, after doing the same work for three years in Nicolet, he joined the community at Drummondville. For 24 years there, he looked after the general maintenance, and took care of the trees, plants and flowers. He retired to Nicolet in 1999. But above all, he was very attentive to people. All the Montfort Missionaries in the history of the Canadian Province knew and appreciated him. He remains a model for all of them by his humble and joyful life despite the sufferings caused by total deafness which struck him when he was very young, but which did not prevent him being in constant touch with everything that was going on around him and in the world. He was and still is a point of reference by his fidelity and his love for Mary and the Congregation.

## Bibliography

*God Alone II – The Hymns of St. Louis Marie de Montfort*, Montfort Publications, Bay Shore, NY, 2005, 639 pages. We owe this first complete translation of the Hymns of Montfort into English to Fr. Patrick Gaffney, s.m.m., and his sister, Sr. Rosemary Gaffney, D.W., who also wrote the introduction. This second volume of *God Alone* is offered in an attractive format, just like the first volume.

*Spiritualità Montfortana 5*, Centre International Montfortain, Rome, 2005, 159 pages. With an introduction by Battista CORTINOVIS, this 5<sup>th</sup> volume of the series is published in Italian. It comprises articles by various authors: François-Marie LÉTHEL, The Teaching of St. Louis Marie de Montfort in the Light of Vatican II; Étienne RICHER, An Education in Holiness according to Louis-Marie de Montfort; Pierre-Marie DESSUS DE CÉROU, I have espoused the Wisdom of the Cross; Françoise BRAYNAERT, The Tree of Life, Symbol of the Incarnation and of Easter; Battista CORTINOVIS, Formulae of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin. These formulae of 17<sup>th</sup> Century authors are published in their original language: Latin, French, Italian or Spanish. The book ends with a bibliography.

THELAGATHOTI, Raja Rao, s.m.m., *The Mystical Experience and Doctrine of St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort*, Gregorian University, Spirituality Collection – 10, Rome, 2005, 384 pages. This is the doctoral thesis in theology of our confrere, written in English. The Gregorian University decided to publish this thesis itself, considering it one of the best theses presented to its faculty of theology.

*Walking together... in the footsteps of the poor apostles – Formation in Montfortian life, Volume I, Inspirational principles, the spirit of Montfortian formation*, Company of Mary, Rome, 2005, 144 pages. This is the first part of the project of Montfortian formation, published just in time for the General Chapter, in French, English, Spanish and Italian. The second part, which will lay down norms and directives for formation, is in the process of being written.