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Jesus Living in Mary



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PSALM 118 (119):1-2,4-5,17-18,33-34

They are happy whose life is blameless,
who follow God's law!

They are happy who do his will,
seeking him with all their hearts.

They are happy who follow God's law!

You have laid down your precepts
to be obeyed with care.

May my footsteps be firm
to obey your statutes.

They are happy who follow God's law!

Bless your servant and I shall live
and obey your word.

Open my eyes that I may see
the wonders of your law.

They are happy who follow God's law!

Teach me the demands of your statutes
and I will keep them to the end.

Train me to observe your law,
to keep it with my heart.

They are happy who follow God's law!



Psalm 118 is offered to us by the liturgy on the 6th Sunday of Ordinary Time (February 16, 2020).

This psalm of which we have only a very small part is the longest of the Psalter since it has 22 stanzas as many as letters in the Hebrew Alphabet and each line of a stanza begins with the same letter in order of the alphabet.

This psalm is a Psalm of Alliance, it is the song of a "lover" of God who never ceases to proclaim in all tones his love of the law of the Lord and his desire to live and be there loyal.



For this he uses a vocabulary around the word "law": your requirements, your precepts, your judgments, your commandments, your decisions ... because the Law is inseparable from the Covenant, this covenant that God offers to his people. The law is a gift, the gift of revelation, it has nothing of a legal code but it teaches the way to go to God, that is why it is the cause of joy and object of love. It's a rule of life: « See, I have today set before you life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I am giving you today, loving the LORD, your God, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and ordinances, you will live » (Deut. 30.15-16).

This Psalm begins with a beatitude: "happy", yes God offers us a way of happiness, Jesus will do the same with the Sermon on the Mountain. It is because I love that I listen, that I obey wholeheartedly. Jesus, too, will link obedience and love: « if you love me, you will keep my commandments » (Jn. 14.15).

Open my eyes that I may see the wonders of Your Law.

The term "wonder" evokes light, in the will of God there is expressed a luminous intention: his ardent desire for communion. When our eyes open they see light points coming on, so many signals that attract us and make us discover that what God asks is good and beautiful because it is a path of life and happiness.

Teach me the demands of Your Statutes and I will keep them to the end.

What the psalmist expresses is an unconditional availability to God's orders. The precepts, the Will of God are so much the expression of His love that being able to keep them is already in itself a happiness; to conform one's life to it is to live this communion of love with God.

Train me to observe Your Law, to keep it with my heart.

God must give us the intelligence of the heart because it is not a legalistic attitude but an attitude of love, the attitude full of humility of the one who seeks to please the loved one and that fills him.

« Jesus is my love
Jesus is my wealth
And night and day
I keep repeating:
Love »

(Hymn 54 of St. Louis Marie
Grignion de Montfort. ■



A Solid Pyramid: Wisdom in Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort

by Marcel Chapeleau, Brother of St. Gabriel



This Testimony has three parts:

1. The Originality of Montfort is to be a man with Spirituality rooted in the Charism of Wisdom.
2. A Definition and a Representation of the Montfortian Charism.
3. The Foundation of the Institute of the Brothers of Saint Gabriel in creative fidelity to the Charism of the Origins.

1. THE ORIGINALITY OF MONTFORT: A MAN WITH SPIRITUALITY ROOTED IN THE CHARISM OF WISDOM.

How did I know Montfort, this missionary ordained priest in 1700 and who lived in the Western part of France? It was from the age of 18 that I wanted to deepen the Montfort Spirituality during my formation at the Novitiate. I decided to get to know his life and his writings better when I heard members of the Focolare Movement quoted him several times in a meeting in 1964. I said to myself: "How can Chiara Lubich and laypeople give her so much importance? "

And in 1998, one beautiful day, 14 years after my arrival in Mauritius, Mgr Maurice E. Piat, Bishop of Port-Louis asked me to write a book on the "Preparation for Consecration to Jesus Christ through the hands of Mary according to Grignion de Montfort". He wanted an Introduction that presented Montfort's message and the meaning of "Consecration to Jesus through Mary". As he was a Spiritan (Congregation of the Holy Spirit), he knew Montfort.



The bishop wanted to inaugurate the First Edition before the Representatives of all the Religious Congregations. It was the day of a solar eclipse in Europe (August 11). I remember saying this: "The moon can eclipse the sun, but Mary when she is near the Sun who is Christ, she does not eclipse Him, she shows Him."

And Montfort even uses an image to say that Mary is the "Paradise of God", that contains the "Sun", Light of the world.

A former Superior General of my Congregation, Bro. Jean Bulteau, told me that the Montfort Charism is two-fold, one part being spiritual and the other being institutional and practical. And I find the same thing in Don Bosco, so evident in these two Founders.

Montfort is at the origin of three Congregations: the Daughters of Wisdom, the Missionaries of the Company of Mary (Montfort Fathers and Brothers), part of which become precisely the Brothers of Saint-Gabriel in 1835 in St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre in Vendée. And more and more, lay partners are attracted by the Montfort Charism that he himself called his "Associates".

Groups and Movements are inspired by his charism. Among these groups or communities, we can mention: the Foyers de Charité (in France), the Legion of Mary (in Ireland), the Neocatechumenal Way and the Schönstatt Work (in Germany).

As for the Focolari, the founder, Chiara Lubich, says that "Grignion de Montfort made me discover the central place of the Cross" and cited him above all in her interventions on the thought of the saints on Mary : « When the Holy Spirit... finds Mary in a soul, he hastens there and enters fully into it » (TD 36. Cf. p. 208, in "Thought and Spirituality", Chiara Lubich, Nouvelle Cité, 2003).

The dynamics that go from 'Love of Eternal Wisdom' to 'Treatise on True Devotion': In the book "Preparation for Consecration to Jesus Christ through the Hands of Mary" published in 1999, I wrote that the "Treatise on the Love of Eternal Wisdom" was a key book by Montfort. Besides, Father H. Huré, s.m.m., says that "The Love of Eternal Wisdom" is a capital book because it gives "a more exact and more comprehensive idea of devotion to Mary".

Father François-Marie Léthel, OCD, for his part, shows the dynamics of Montfort's work which culminates in the "Treatise on True Devotion". He writes:





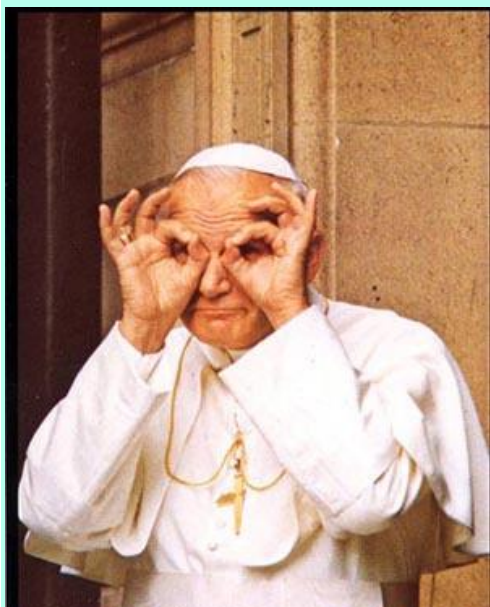
Lay Associates around the world.

"Masterpiece of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, the *Treatise on True Devotion* is the final synthesis of his previous works, especially his first treatise on the *Love of Eternal Wisdom*. (...) The final point being the Consecration to Jesus through Mary."

"This same reality, lived, taught and deepened by its author, is synthesized in a whole new way in his *Treatise on True Devotion*. Through Mary, with Mary, and especially in Mary, it is the whole Mystery of Christ and of the Church which is contemplated in its fundamental Trinitarian dimension, in the great perspectives of creation and the history of salvation. 'Jesus living and reigning in Mary' is the Incarnate Word, Head of the Mystical Body, He is the 'Redeemer of Mankind, center of the Cosmos and of History' ... (cf. the first words of the Letter *Redemptor Hominis* of John Paul II in 1979) ... In her smallness of simple creature in her soul and in her body, Mary really welcomed and contained 'the One that the heavens cannot contain'" (in *Le Père de Montfort, folie et sagesse*. p. 79. Médiaspaul, 2017).

Father Léthel worked for Pope John Paul II during his lifetime and for the file of his beatification. In colorful language, he said: the two saints who inspired John Paul II every day were first Montfort, and then Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus, declared doctor of the Church, the only one declared, during his pontificate.

The "Treatise on True Devotion to Mary", composed in 1712, is translated into thirty languages. The book was discovered in 1842. As Montfort had announced, its manuscript remained hidden " in the darkness and silence of a chest" (TD 114). Saints sometimes treat advertising and forecasts with humor! A book that appears 130 years after being written. Incredible but true ! John Paul II once spoke to André Frossard of the "Treatise on True Devotion to Mary". **Here is this exceptional testimony that comes from the personal experience of this Pope:**



"The reading of that book has marked a decisive turning point in my life. I said turning point, although it is a long inner journey that coincided with my clandestine preparation for the priesthood. At that very moment I kept in my hands this very singular treatise, one of those books that are not enough to read. I remember having brought it with me for a long time, even in the soda factory, so much that its pretty cover was stained with lime. I kept coming back over and over on certain passages. I quickly realized that this was something fundamental. Whereas before, I feared that Marian devotion would mask Christ instead of giving way to him. I understood from the Treatise of Grignon de Montfort that it was really quite different. Our inner relationship to the Mother of God is organically the result of our connection to the mystery of Christ. So there is no question that one prevents us from seeing the other. On the contrary: "true devotion" to the Blessed Virgin is revealed more and more precisely to those who advance in the mystery of Christ, the Incarnate Word, and in the Trinitarian mystery of salvation which has this mystery as its center ... true knowledge and the confident abandonment in the hands of Mary grow with our knowledge of Christ and our confident abandonment in his person. The more my inner life was centered on the reality of Redemption, the more abandonment to Mary, in the spirit of Saint Louis Grignon de Montfort, appeared to me as the best way to participate with fruit and efficiency in this reality for draw from it and share with others the inexpressible riches" (*N'ayez pas peur*. p. 184-186).

The originality of Montfort. The man with spirituality rooted in the charism of Wisdom. I would like to express how I better discovered his originality. As I do not write to establish a thesis, I will simplify as much as possible because my intention is to present my progressive discovery of the charism of Montfort. The word that brings together all the richness of his charisma is WISDOM. Wisdom not seen as a doctrine but as a Word that creates Life, by being Light and Gift coming from above to return there.

Montfort looked for what should be his own mission. Aged 30, he went to Rome on foot in June 1706 to meet the Pope, who confirmed him in his mission in France by naming him "Apostolic Missionary".

Having been called to the priesthood, **Montfort did not keep for himself his own discoveries of his journey.**

He transmitted the values contained in the faith by renewing its fervour in a popular way. He knew how to be eloquent in his preaching by attracting crowds. Montfort had a missionary charism adapted to his time.

During his missions, he recalled the most important of faith. He carried out processions in which the Holy Sacrament and the Bible were carried. He was renewing the promises of baptism. He had composed multiple hymns which he sang. He had crosses planted at the end of the mission, restored statues and churches. He spoke of the practices of devotion to Jesus through Mary. He had obvious inspiration.

His motto '**GOD ALONE**' roots his spirituality in God. Educating with Wisdom, he did so in his work "The Love of Eternal Wisdom" and through the testimony of his life. And since he received this Wisdom, I still admire some of his formulas; I will only quote one: "Wisdom is for humanity, and humanity is for Wisdom" (LEW 64).

The charism of Montfort has, as central value, the Wisdom contained in Jesus, in the Incarnation, in his life, in the revelation of his Word, in the Cross for the glory of God. **The METHOD he offered, he has summarized in four ways to obtain Divine Wisdom.** Devotion to Mary is the 4th means proposed by him. The first three are desire, prayer and mortification. Above all, he recognizes that his method stems from his love and zeal for making known Eternal Wisdom (cf. LEW 2).

Life is a journey. In this journey, the faithful are invited to let themselves be guided by God. Montfort gives importance to devotion to Mary by explaining her maternal role in the line of "Do whatever He tells you". It is acting for God that matters; and by compressing the formulas given by Montfort, this is: to act through, with, in and for Mary, in order to act more perfectly through, with, in and for Jesus. (cf. TD 257).

And we see in her a model, because in the journey of life, she is an example of faith. Throughout her earthly life, Mary "accomplished her pilgrimage in faith". Vatican II insisted on this aspect. "Mary shines as a sign of true hope and comfort for the pilgrim people of God" (LG 58 and 68).

2. A Definition and a Representation of the Montfortian Charism.

→ March 2020 Edition ■

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The word that brings together all the richness of his charisma is WISDOM. Wisdom not seen as a doctrine but as a Word that creates Life, by being Light and Gift coming from above to return there.





Interview:

**"I DO SIMPLE THINGS
BUT WITH A GREAT LOVE
IN MY HEART"**

**INTERVIEW WITH
BROTHER DÉsirÉ, SMM**



Brother Désiré (52) is the oldest member of the General House Community in Rome! He knows three different Father Generals here: Father Bill, Father Santino and now Father Luizinho. For the moment, he is still there. His life is like the manifestation of availability, joy, generosity and speed. To know him is to know the dynamic expression of a missionary brother dedicated to the mission, understood above all as witnessing the Good News!

In reading the interview with him, it would be good to think about what "**Montfortian Today**" says about the missionary brothers: "Nothing can take the place of the contribution made by our brothers to the missionary endeavour. The witness of their evangelical life, their professional skills, and participation in more direct pastoral ministry are a most effective contribution to the material and spiritual building up of the local Churches. The missionaries should be very careful to promote and support religious and priestly vocations" (Constitution. 66, Statutes 12).

Q. Could you tell me about your family, remembering your full name, place and date of your birth, when you made the first vows and the perpetual vows?

A. Thank you, Father. I am **Brother Désiré**. My full name is **Rakotonandrasana Jean Désiré**. I was born in Madagascar in the region of **Betsileo Ambositra**, the first of 12 children. It was my father, who died in 2016, who wanted to give me this name. **Rakotonandrasana** is the combination of two names. **Rakoto** indicates that I am a boy, **Nandrasana** because my parents **wanted** the first child to be a boy. And since I was born well, they added **Jean Désire** to my name to complete the story.

In 1984, I entered the Diocesan Seminary of **Fianarantsoa**. But after three years of training, I returned to my family because I felt that my vocation was not to become a priest but to be a religious brother. In 1993, after training at the seminary for adult vocations, I joined the Congregation of the **Montfort Missionaries**. I made my first vows in 1998, with 3 confreres candidates for the priesthood and 2, including myself, for religious life as a brother. My first mission was to take care of manual labor in the Formation House. In 2003, I made my Perpetual profession **with a Daughter of Wisdom and a Brother of Saint Gabriel** on the occasion of the celebration of the Third Centenary of the foundation of the Daughters of Wisdom.



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When my father finished this nice speech, I shouted: VIVE LES FRÈRES!!, meaning LONG LIVE THE BROTHERS !!

Q. How long have you been working here at the Generalate? How did you feel when you knew to be the first Malagasy Brother sent on a mission abroad?

A. I arrived at the Generalate on February 28, 2004. A few months after Perpetual Profession, I received the Obedience from Father General at the time, Father Bill Considine. It gave me time to reflect and prepare for the VISA. And here I am in Rome. My family did not show any difficulties with my separation, much better they gave me the blessing. I was very encouraged by the words of my father who said: "I read the history of your Congregation and I discovered that the first collaborator of the Founder was a brother named Mathurin and again the first Malagasy Montfortian was a brother named Jean RALAISOLO. I am happy that my son is the first Malagasy missionary brother to leave his own homeland. And maybe the first saint after the founder will also be a brother ". When my father finished this nice speech, I shouted: VIVE LES FRÈRES!!, meaning LONG LIVE THE BROTHERS !!



Q. What is your job or your mission at the Generalate?

A. My job is not well defined. But I'm here for a service that I really like: cooking, shopping for food, accompanying and picking up Confreres at Fiumicino Airport, accompanying our guests to visit the city of Rome and others, garden care ... A profession for which no particular intelligence is necessary, but only the heart with love.

Q. What has encouraged you to continue to this day?

A. The thing that has encouraged me so far has been the beauty of our community life. I also see that my presence as a brother is very useful to others.

Q. You are the President of the Malagasy Priests and Religious in Rome. Why did these people choose you? How long will this mission last? What is your job as president? Do you have a team that collaborates with you in the animation of the group? How many people from Madagascar are there in Rome...how many Religious Men and Women, Diocesan Priests, Lay people ... What are the activities of the Malagasy Community here? Where do you meet? What are your challenges in accomplishing this task?

A. The Malagasy Priests and Religious in Rome chose me as President, but it is a special thing for me. They have wanted me to assume this responsibility for a long time, but I have always found a way to escape it. But this time, they "trapped" me and I couldn't say no, in agreement with my community. I still don't understand why they chose me, but it made me think about my vocation: why the Lord chose me ... I only understood then that they had elected me because they needed me for 2 years. There are 4 of us: I am the President, an Ursuline Sister is Treasurer, an OMI Father is Vice-President and a Marist Brother is Secretary. We work together to form a real communion to organize and unite Religious and Laity. It is not easy because we are scattered across different Communities. We, Religious, offer our collaboration with the laity and bear witness to them every Second Sunday of the month, offering ourselves for liturgical animation.



Q. Who are the Brothers you know or with whom you have worked or do you work in this Generalate and what have you learned from a particular Brother?

A. During my mission here, I met 6 brothers who were all like me: Brother Hervé Jezequel, French; Brother Philip Abranches, Canadian; Brother Nikolaus (Niko), Indonesian, Brother Gilles Paquette, Canadian; Brother Rey Silverio, Filipino and Brother Albino (Family name?), Italian. All of them taught me a lot, because everyone had their values and abilities. Above all, I learned to do the job in a short time, and we were good together. Brother HERVÉ lived 27 years in this house. Currently Brother Albino, Italian, is with me and I learn a lot from him how to live the simplicity and the brotherhood among us.



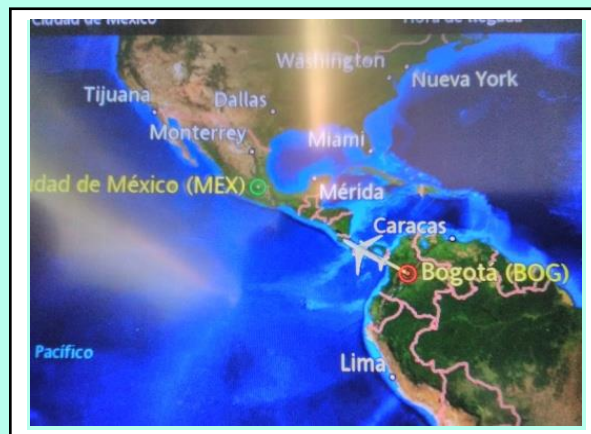
Q. You told me once that you had been interviewed by a radio station. What was it exactly and when? How many times have you had the experience of being interviewed by the same radio or other radio stations?

A. During the trip of Pope Francis to Madagascar, we, the Malagasy community of Rome and the periphery, were invited by TV 2000, by RAI UNO, by VATICAN RADIO, here in Rome ; and by RDB (Radio Don Bosco) in Madagascar. We divided into 3 groups and I went alone to RDB in the Malagasy language. Our emotion as Religious Missionaries outside our country was very great, in connection with the people of Madagascar, during the Pope's visit. My interview lasted about 20 minutes and I was very happy.

Q. You once gave a Conference on the Mission in the Malagasy Community in Rome. What is your opinion on this mission in Europe? As for you, I would like to ask: what is the missionary value of your mission at the Generalate?

A. Yes, in November 2018, the Union of Malagasy Religious and Priests in Rome asked me to hold a Conference on the Mission and to share my missionary life in Rome. It was a great honor for me and I think I got away with it successfully. Before, I did not want to accept because I doubted my weak capacities.

But when I felt that they really needed me, I agreed to do it. Regarding the mission in Europe, I see the need for a missionary change on our part. The First Missionaries preached for us, and now we are to bear witness to life. And that is for me the fundamental value of my mission here in the Generalate.



Q. In 2018, if I'm not mistaken, you learned Spanish in Colombia, then you went to Mexico, etc. Can you tell us what is the purpose of this trip? And is there a follow up?

A. It is true, in January until the end of May 2018, I went to Colombia for 2 months to learn Spanish and facilitate a MEXICO discovery experience with 2 Fathers from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC - Latin American and the Caribbean), because the Congregation dreams of founding and developing a mission in Mexico. Our part of the work is finished and now it's up to the Extraordinary General Council (CGE) to decide how to take the next step and if it should be done.

Q. In your bedroom you have a nice collection of hats. Here: why and for what? Where do they come from ? Which do you prefer and why?

A. Hi, hi, hi! It makes me laugh about this question. It is true that I have a varied collection of hats in my little room. There are 12 of them, in different shapes, and most of them are Indonesian hats. At the beginning, I had a very nice hat from Indonesia, offered by Father Don LaSalle. But I wanted to have some more and other Confreres brought them to me. I like to wear extravagant clothes or other things because I'm extravagant myself, right? Isn't it ?





Q. You are able to dance with a bottle on your head and the bottle does not fall, how can you do it?

A. Dancing with a bottle on my head is a habit for me because when I was a child, I used to carry water on my head to help my mother, after having been looking for it in the valley. I really like to see that people are happy with this dance.



Q. What is your opinion or suggestion to enhance the vocation of the Brothers in SMM?

A. The vocation of the Brothers of the Congregation is important to me. It is sad to see the decrease in the number of Brothers. Seeing other Brothers still working, I see the importance and the great value of our life in the Community. We are not intelligent but we are capable in many manual works and useful for the Community ... We feel like Montfortians of serie A. Hi, hi, hi!... I like this interview.

Q. One of the challenges of the Montfortian Formation and mission is Internationality, that is to say, we are all trained to be missionaries without borders. Here in this Community, you mingle with many Confreres of various nationalities to support the mission of the General Curia of our Congregation. What is your reflection or your opinion on this dimension of our missionary life? Are there concrete experiences you can share? What is your advice on the international missionary collaboration in this Community?

A. It is true that my mission is a particular mission, because I am a Brother and, before being a Montfortian Brother, I studied catechesis. This study helped me to deepen my spiritual life and especially to bear witness to my faith. Living Internationality is a great value for me. And it is a joy to see the Confreres or the people smiling when they enter the General House. I still remember the words of my father who said: Do not let people come to you if you do not want to give them joy and make them happy. And I always thank Father Santino (former Superior General) who gave me the opportunity to follow the formation at IFHIM in Canada for a year. It was human training that helped me a lot to understand myself and the other confreres, because living internationality is really a challenge.

Q. You were trained at IFHIM (Institut de Formation Humaine Intégrale de Montréal) for almost a year. What did you learn there, which you still remember so far and which in some way influenced or confirmed your life values, shaped your way of seeing reality, the way you behave, the way you feel?

A. At IFHIM, I stayed exactly 8 months, that is to say from September 8, 2012 to May 8, 2013. I could not stay until the end, that is, May 31, because of the visa for Italy which was about to expire. But for me, these 8 months have already been a great benefit.

Q. BROTHER DESIRE, ONE LAST QUESTION ... I HAVE HEARD THAT YOU ARE VERY GENEROUS AT THE GENERAL HOUSE. LIKE NEVER?

A. YES, FATHER, FOR ME GENEROSITY DOESN'T DEPEND ON WEALTH OR OWN A LOT OF THINGS ... I AM HAPPY WITH THIS CRITICAL BECAUSE SOME MAY NOT BE UNDERSTOOD THAT I MAKE SIMPLE THINGS BUT WITH A GREAT LOVE IN MY HEART, AND THESE THINGS ALWAYS BECOME GREAT THINGS FOR OTHERS ... ISN'T IT TRUE, FATHER? ■



Montfort, Ecumenism, Inter-religious Dialogue and Universal Call to Holiness

By Arnold SUHARDI, SMM



Father de Montfort is relevant to the Church today. This is due in part to the fact that his teachings are in harmony with the spirit of Vatican Council II.

There are two major principles which are inseparable and which inspire all the documents of the Second Vatican Council, namely the spirit of return to the source and the spirit of openness to the world. The first spirit aims to find the roots of the identity of revelation, the sources of the existence and the call of the Church; while the second spirit aims to reaffirm the Church's call to be significantly involved in the construction of the world and to establish relationships in the spirit of "universal brotherhood" (NA 5) with all of humanity: with all the other religious communities and with all the Churches.

Louis-Marie de Montfort lived in the atmosphere of the counter-reform (following the Council of Trent: 1545-1563), in a country, at that time, predominantly Catholic, but which still suffered the bitter impact of Islam in Europe. In the 17th century, the "wounds of faith" by the acquisition of the Holy Land by Islam were still gaping.

This is why it is impossible to expect a long speech from Father de Montfort's pen on ecumenism and on dialogue with other religious communities (cf. Patrick Gaffney, "Ecumenism", in *Handbook ...*, pp. 323-332).



However, Montfort appropriately captures the basic spirit or the call of the Church, which is to unite and become LOVE like Christ. Resemblance to Christ signifies holiness. The whole Church is called to live her dignity as saint, because the "Saint" lives there. The Second Vatican Council, by its dogmatic constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, addressed this call to holiness for the whole Church, which will be lived in different ways according to each person's "gifts and duties" (chapter V).

On the basis of the fundamental aspirations of this Christian life, Father de Montfort began his little work, *The Secret of Mary*, which would have been addressed to a laywoman who became his collaborator in Nantes, with an affirmation which has become the soul of all his preaching, « Chosen soul, living image of God and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God wants you to become holy like him in this life, and glorious like him in the next. It is certain that growth in the holiness of God is your vocation.... What a marvelous transformation is possible! » (SM 3). Holiness or likeness to Christ is the only goal of the "consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary" taught by Saint Montfort. « Jesus, our Saviour, true God and true man must be the ultimate end of all our other devotions; otherwise they would be false and misleading... As all perfection consists in our being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus it naturally follows that the most perfect of all devotions is that which conforms, unites, and consecrates us most completely to Jesus » (TD 61, 120).



The practice of "consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary", as a means of achieving and maintaining this holiness, is presented by Montfort to all, including the laity (TD 110), who according to *Lumen Gentium* are at the front-guard of social, political struggles, etc. (cf. LG 31, 36). Louis-Marie aspires to form Christians committed to the world, who draws all their source and their strength from their fidelity to the Christian faith and to the Church.

Given the objectives to be achieved, it is certain that Louis-Marie indirectly participated in the formation of an ecumenical and dialogical Christianity with other Churches and other religions. For "the soul of the whole ecumenical movement" (UR 8) is holiness of life or renewal of the Church, the desire to be more Christian, the conversion of the heart and unity in prayer (UR 6-8).

Then in dialogue with other religions, "consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary" taught by Father de Montfort helps us to grow in maturity as Christians, so that we can "bear witness to our faith and our Christian life» in dialogue and collaboration «with wisdom and love » with the followers of other religions (cf. NA 2).

"Universal peace", based on true love, must be the goal to be attained in the missionary proclamation to make present "the reign of Jesus Christ through Mary in the Holy Spirit". Does Montfort not compare to the « burning fire » those who live this devotion as "ministers of the Lord who will set fire to divine love everywhere" (TD 56)?

Then, the era of the Church, a special period of the work of the Holy Spirit, was seen by Father de Montfort as a time of incarnation of a universal "civilization of love", among other things thanks to the missionary contributions of the "apostles of the latter times" who are the "great saints" whom the Holy Spirit arouses in the Church for human civilization. Montfort prays to the Holy Spirit: « When will it happen, this fiery deluge of pure love with which you are to set the whole world ablaze and which is to come, so gently yet so forcefully... : let this divine fire which Jesus Christ came to bring on earth be enkindled before the all-consuming fire of your anger comes down and reduces the whole world to ashes. Emitte Spiritum tuum et creabuntur et renovabis faciem terrae: when you breathe your Spirit into them, they are restored and the face of the earth is renewed. Send this all-consuming Spirit upon the earth to create priests who burn with this same fire and whose ministry will renew the face of the earth and reform your Church » (PM 17)

(Extract from the article written by Arnold Suhardi, *St. Montfort, outstanding theologian*, in "Sedes Sapientiae" n° 1, Montfort Seminary - "Demeure de la Sagesse", January 2005). ■

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A Talk about Peace by Sheikh Ahmad

By Bro. Patrisius Epin Du



MALANG, Indonesia - On Sunday, December 1, 2019, Montfort Seminary "Pondok Kebijaksanaan" (Abode of Wisdom) at Malang was visited by Sheikh Dr. Ahmad AT Toukhi, a teacher of Arabic and Qur'anic Sciences (hereinafter referred to as Sheikh Ahmad; 'sheikh' in Arabic means elder, tribal leader or Islamic scholar). He was accompanied by several people teaching at AL-UMM Islamic Boarding School (Yayasan Bina Al-Mujtama, Malang), neighboring our seminary.

Their visit surprised Father Gregorius Pasi, SMM and made him feel confused, because this was the first time people from AL-UMM Islamic Boarding School came to visit us. Previously Fr. Wim and several brothers had been visiting our neighbors at AL-UMM and once the students of AL-UMM had even come to play soccer with our brothers. But that afternoon the teachers came to meet us. Father Goris told about it at dinner and it surprised all of us. He continued to say that the following Monday, Sheikh Ahmad would come to visit us.



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The next day, Monday December 2, 2019 at 6:15 pm they arrived at the Montfort Seminary. Sheikh Ahmad was accompanied by Mr. Abu Soli, Mr. Fahrad and Mr. Ahmad from AL-UMM Islamic School. The Montfort Fathers welcomed them at the entrance. Sheikh Ahmad and his companions were very friendly and several times Sheikh Ahmad embraced Father Goris.

In the recreation hall of Unit I, the Brothers had been waiting and at their arrival all members of our Seminary Community greeted them by applause and shaking hands. Sheikh Ahmad said that this welcoming was truly beyond his expectations and he expressed his gratefulness for it.

The Session was opened with a prayer by Father Goris.



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Sowing the Seed of Peace

In today's world many people are greedy for power while the message about peace and common good is set aside. People try to gain power in various ways. It is very obvious that many people use religion as a tool to preserve power. It is not uncommon that radicalism and religious fundamentalism emerge which lead to acts of violence by not seeing each other as brothers. This is very evident in Indonesia. Likewise, it is not uncommon for non-muslim Indonesian people to utter slanted comments about Indonesian Islam.

But that evening when we met with Sheikh Ahmad, we got a different view on Islam. Sheikh Ahmad's way of thinking was truly moderate and refreshing which made us feel happy to have this blessed opportunity.



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The discussion began with an important affirmation from Sheikh Ahmad. He asserted that humans have different beliefs. Islam also recognizes this reality, and accepts differences in beliefs, in Sheikh Ahmad's saying: 'that is your belief, this is our belief.' Thus also according to Islam, every human has the right to embrace their respective beliefs. So that there should be no acts that interfere with the rights of fellow human beings.

Sheikh Ahmad explained, "Likewise, Islam always urges us to respect one another. Likewise our presence here wants to preach the teachings of Islam to share goodness with others. We are experiencing now how you, too, have been welcoming us very well. This is an example which shows tonight, that there is mutual respect and cooperation. This is a most valuable and important thing to be achieved by humans."

He emphasized the importance of mutual respect for each other in human life. This meeting tonight provides an example of a life that respects one another. He further said, "Allow me to share with you, that a Muslim or any human being may be praying and fasting all day. But the most important thing in the sight of God, *Subhanahu Wa Taala* (most Holy and Most High), is to share kindness with fellow human beings, with an attitude of love. How beautiful it is when someone shares goodness with those who need that kindness, that is the most beautiful thing in human life today."



Visite des dirigeants du pensionnat islamique AL-UMM au Scolasticat Montfortain

Then Sheikh Ahmad told a parable about a seed. "Someone comes with a seed, it is planted, watered, bears fruit and is enjoyed by every human being. Tonight we bring this seed which is the seed of peace. We are here on earth to water it, then it grows, bears fruit. People come to ask what it is, and we can say that this will fill the face of the earth. They ask questions and we will say to them: this is peace given by God. All of us have the duty to practice it.

This is the main message for us to convey to the whole world. Therefore, allow me to make Islam a little bit more known to you. We know very much about Christianity, we are also called to love the Prophet Isa (Jesus)."



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A message of peace and kindness was the main feature of Sheikh Ahmad's visit that night to Montfort Seminary Community. This peace message began by saying how very happy he felt when he was given the opportunity to meeting with the seminarians. It was truly an honor to him. He said "Really we need to visit each other. We have the same goal in this world which is to create peace. Also Islam teaches us to esteem others."

Repeatedly he spoke about peace. Even though he spoke Arabic, we felt the warmth of his message which was translated by Mr. Abu Soli. He loudly and joyfully preached a message of peace.



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Islam basically does not allow to hurt others. Islam teaches to share peace with others. Likewise, every human being is called to bring peace to others, not to hurt and discomfort others. Mutual respect for each other is the most important thing to be achieved by humans.

Sheikh Ahmad further said that some people close to Muhammad were followers of Jesus Christ. Aisha, Prophet Muhammad's wife is not mentioned at all in the Koran, whereas the name Maryam, the mother of Jesus, is found many times. It means, that Islam greatly glorifies Jesus and Maryam.

Then he explained about the origins of Islam. In the beginning, Islam emerged in a society full of lies, deception and cheating. There lived a person whose name was Mohammed in the city of Mecca, now situated in Saudi Arabia. Mohammed was a man different from others who lived at that time. He was an honest person, trustworthy, helping others, spreading goodness, speaking words of goodness and peace.

So God chose him to be a prophet and an apostle like Ibrahim, Musa and Isa and all other prophets. God chose him to call for peace, honesty and goodness to all people in the world. So Muhammad proclaimed this message to the whole world. Then people came to him and asked him questions: "Who are you? What do you want?" Muhammad answered: "Behold, I have been sent to perfect morality on earth."

When reading this story an important question arises. Why Muhammad was called and chosen by God? What was Muhammad's task in the midst of such evil? Muhammad came and was chosen by God to prevent evil, falsehood, corruption and anything that did not please God to prevent the occurrence of murder, of tribulation, even to prevent cruelty to animals, moreover to humans. The coming of the prophet Muhammad spread goodness throughout the world and peace to all the ends of the world.

In relation to Christians, Sheikh Ahmad said that Islam loved Jesus, Mary besides Muhammad. Islam has great esteem for Jesus and Mary. He described this in a story about a meeting between Muslims and Christians. Just like Mohammed loved the Prophet Jesus and admired Mariam, so Muslims love Jesus and Mariam. A Muslim is not allowed to speak ill of Jesus and Mary. The message of Prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ is the same, namely about goodness and peace. Everything that is said about peace and goodness comes from God, while what is said about hatred and badness comes from Satan. So Satan may say this is Muslim, this is Christian, whereas Mohammed and Isa did not say things like that.

In addition, Sheikh Ahmad also presented some interesting stories about the relationship between Christians and Muslims in his country of origin. Then he recited verses from the Koran which speak about peace. That very evening the seed of peace was sown by Sheikh Ahmad to all members of our Seminary Community in this "Abode of Wisdom". Our next task will be to proclaim peace wherever we go.

That evening the seminarians were given the opportunity to ask questions. Sheikh Ahmad answered the questions of the Brothers honestly and kindly. His presence radiated sincerity when he was proclaiming the message of peace to everyone. We witnessed that several times he shook hands with Father Goris while pronouncing the word peace. The atmosphere was very relaxed and friendly. The encounter which lasted for two hours was felt passing by very quickly. The meeting was closed by reciting prayers in Arabic by Sheikh Ahmad. His chanting brought a feeling of peacefulness and tranquility to all of us. How beautiful it is to live in such an atmosphere of friendship as good neighbors. ■



Bâtiment du Scolasticat Montfortain – Demeure de la Sagesse, Malang, Indonésie, vu de la route

HYMN 17

Benefits of almsgiving

13th hymn

1.

I see a light coming down,
She approaches, she accosts.
Ah! really, it is charity,
It is mercy.
She yearns to espouse us,
O! how beneficial she is,
She must not be refused
For she is too charming.

2.

Although awesome in her greatness,
Although God be her throne,
Commonly for her sweetness
Almsgiving is her name.
She is a compassion
For some wretched,
A sweet profusion
Of a charitable hand.

3.

This queen seems to forget
Her divine birth.
We see her sacrificing herself
To the poor in his hardship,
Joyfully put in her bosom
The greatest miseries,
And gently put her hand
To the nastiest ulcers.

Taken from: Montfort Hymns (2020)
Translated in English from *Cantiques* 2016
By Sr Hélène LeMay, DW



4.

Miser, half-damned man,
You will not want to believe,
But, believe it, dear predestined,
For it concerns your glory.
Gently lend your ear
To everything I explain,
To believe it perfectly,
And put it into practice.

5.
Almsgiving is of necessity,
Faith assures us,
Everything proves this truth,
And even nature.
The neighbor having the pleasure
Of having the same father,
He must be helped with all one's heart
As one's own brother.

6.
Almsgiving is the commandment
Of Jesus, our Master,
It takes great blindness
To not recognize this:
Give and it will be given to you,
That is my commandment.
Otherwise you will be condemned
Without any dispensation.

7.
Make of iniquity
And perishable goods,
Treasures in eternity,
Genuine friends;
That no thieves will take
By force or by cunning,
That will never spoil
From rust or from ageing.

8.
Everything gives us alms for God,
Each in its own way,
The air, the sea, the earth and the fire
And the entire nature.
Look at all the animals,
One feeds, the other carries,
All relieve us in our troubles,
All lend us a strong hand.



9.
But, what expanded benefits
In the order of grace,
The Father gives us his Son
Despite our disgrace,
The Son gives himself totally to all
Even unto the Eucharist,
The Holy Spirit descends in us,
Oh! what infinite alms.

10.
When I see the Queen of Heaven,
Our only hope,
Place in the poor in these lowly places
All confidence,
Give all things to us out of charity,
And make herself our Mother,
I say: almsgiving, in truth,
Is great and necessary.

11.
Let us see these illustrious witnesses,
These irreproachable saints
Who had no other needs
Than those of the wretched,
Who pulled out with pleasure
The chunk from the mouth
In order to feed them.
This example touches me.

12.
To give alms to the neighbor
They were seen selling their possessions,
Without keeping anything for the morrow;
Their hearts were so tender
That they stripped themselves almost
naked,
For his own benefit,
And sometimes even sold
To remove slavery.

13.
Do you seek remission?
The Lord only grants it
To a heart filled with compassion
And mercy.
Your example will make him sweet
Or else inexorable,
He will settle everything on you,
Therefore be charitable.

14.
What is an indigent? It is written that
He is the vivid image,
The lieutenant of Jesus Christ,
His most beautiful legacy.
But, to say it again even better,
They are Jesus Christ Himself.
One helps or refuses in them
This supreme monarch.

15.
He suffers in one poverty,
In another, vermin,
In another, captivity,
In another, famine.
Finally, Jesus, suffering in them
Innumerable pains,
Seems to be the most needy
Of all the wretched.



16.

Do not take from the poor his due,
Says the Holy Scripture;
This great word is not heard,
Or one understands it without fear,
For in truth, one can not
Keep through greed
What is taken away from charity,
For this is an unjust.

17.

It is necessary to give the superfluity
Of an honest expense;
To do otherwise is an abuse
That cries to the Lord for vengeance.
It is the verdict of the great Saint Thomas
And even of the holy Fathers.
You who are rich, if you do not believe me,
I pronounce you accursed.

18.

Know that property that you retain,
When it is no longer needed,
Belongs to the poor; it is theirs,
As the Gospel tells us.
You owe them this ornate furniture,
These precious pearls,
These beautiful, glossy clothes,
These pompous adornments.

19.

The pauper has the right to claim
All property you do not need,
The rich person cannot keep it
Whatever he believes otherwise,
He is but a steward,
Says saint John Chrysostome,
After another holy doctor,
Who is the great saint Jerome.

20.

This lack of charity
Is very considerable.
That is, say the saints, cruelty
And real larceny,
It is even a very clever murder,
Told us a holy father,
That not to give bread
To the destitute in his misery.

21.

But let us see presently
That almsgiving is useful,
And that it is most assuredly
The most fertile field;
Its fruit is not really common,
It has no equal
Since it brings one hundredfold
To the charitable man.

22.

Almsgiving is a strong cabinet,
A very faithful chest,
Which preserves everything put in it
For eternal life.
This is where goods, gold and silver
Are preserved on earth
And from the thief and the sergeant
And the evils of war.

23.

It is the seed that is spread
And which multiplies itself,
It is an interest, but very great,
Of which God glorifies himself.
A source that flows
That never decreases,
A fire that communicates itself
Grows as far as the eye can see.

24.

It can be named without danger
The philosopher's stone,
That can change to good gold
The dirtiest metal.
It changes the earth into heaven,
The false into real,
The temporal in eternal.
O incomparable stone!

25.

Giving alms, you lose nothing.
As one experiences,
The more one does good by almsgiving,
And the more the good increases.
One falls into poverty
When one is hard and stingy,
But by doing charity,
One soon becomes rich.

26.

Everyone makes great honors
To charitable men;
They are named in the Lord
Fathers of the wretched.
They are the ones we come to approach
With much confidence,
They are the ones that are made to preside
In any conference.

27.

To give life and health
Is a wonderful thing:
It is what makes charity
Entirely miraculous.
Supporting the world in one's hand
Is not so great a thing
As to support the neighbor,
Giving what he requests.

28.

Almsgiving obtains contrition of the heart
And soul-felt sorrow,
It redeems all sin,
It extinguishes the flame.
Through it, all is forgiven,
It is a second baptism,
It marks a predestined.
It is the seal of God himself.

29.

Without this oil of charity
Which the foolish virgins lacked,
The lilies of all chastity
Are very false and frivolous.
Without it, no holiness,
Or it is not authentic;
Without it, no firmness,
Or it is not lasting.



30.

Nothing speaks as powerfully
As the poor and almsgiving,
This prayer in a moment
Flies to God on his throne,
Opens the hands, delights the heart
Of this charitable God
And makes him, from a just avenger,
Into a sincere friend.

31.

It is a spear, a shield,
A very powerful weapon
That confuses and bends
The devil who tempts us.
It prevents him from accusing
A soul in the other life
And forces him to let him
Go to his homeland.



32.

The death of all chaplains
Is a most holy death,
They die among the laurels,
Peacefully, without fear.
Their charities are their soldiers
To give them victory;
The poor are their advocates
To put them in glory.

33.

Almsgiving is a sacred trust
That God keeps to return;
He will return it as assured,
For He cannot refrain from doing so.
Almsgiving is a promissory note
Which God Himself guarantees;
The hundredfold is the interest.
Oh! the divine usury.

34.

Here is the third contract,
Keep it in mind:
Good alms is a purchase
From heaven and its glory;
It makes of a temporal good
And a piece of filth
In heaven an eternal good,
A happiness without measure.

35.

A miser is without charity,
Without faith, without hope,
Filled with all iniquity,
With all impenitence.
One day at death he will cry out,
God will have no ear.
In turn he will make fun of it,
Returning the favor.

36.

Whoever leaves the neighbor
Without any assistance,
Finds God without heart and hand,
Without any indulgence.
He loses what he refused
To the poor in his misery,
And often he is crushed
By the weight of his anger.

37.

At death he asks for pardon,
But without God granting it;
This hard heart dies in abandonment
And without mercy.
God judges him in all rigor,
Without fatherly goodness,
And condemns him to all misfortune
And eternal death.



38.

Give alms, good Christian,
Believe me, be wise,
This is the way to have good things
And all good without sharing.
The sins are redeemed,
The soul returned to grace,
All the goods of heaven bought,
Woe to whoever does without.

39.

In the great day of judgment,
God will only remember
That of almsgiving only,
So great is his glory.
He will publicly show
Almsgiving well accomplished,
And will give them sincerely
Perfect praise.

40.

Come, the Savior will say to you,
Blessed of my Father,
Possess my own happiness,
My entire glory.
For having helped me at other times,
For giving me alms,
Forever I make you kings
And put you on the throne.

41.

Give of your own goods;
This almsgiving is prudent,
Otherwise it is worth nothing
And is even revolting.
Pay Caesar, render to God,
Pay all your debts,
Give to the poorest locally
And of the borough where you are.

42.

See only God simply
In all the wretched,
Give them for him only
Your charitable assistance.
Whether they be good or bad,
It is to Jesus that you give.
It is enough that he is within them,
In his own person.

43.

Always do charity
And give alms in secret,
Avoid vanity
The proud trumpet.
Otherwise, alms are fruitless,
Alms of a hypocrit
Who makes great fanfare and great noise
And has no merit.



44.

Give alms with great care,
According to your means,
According to the needs of the beggar
Even though he bothers you.
But give it to him happily,
Without anything to make you bitter,
Without saying dryly:
Go away, God bless you.

45.

Give to the poor promptly,
Without selling your alms
By a very harsh delay
Of a poor man who preaches to you.
Treat with great honor
The poor man who cries to you:
This almsgiving has more value,
This almsgiving edifies.

46.

Exercise all charity,
For the body and for the soul,
Without excluding anyone
Either man or woman;
Give to one something to eat,
Give to the other to drink,
Receive this poor stranger
With honor and glory.

47.

Have clothes made for one
To hide his misery,
Visit the other who languishes
And who despairs,
Visit the other in his prison
In which he enrages,
Pay the ransom of another
To free him from slavery.

48.

Do not forget those who have died,
Almsgiving is salutary;
Try to bury their bodies
Or have them buried.
These works of charity
Are called corporal,
Here are others of same goodness,
But more spiritual.

49.

Teach the poor ignorant
And give him light,
Correct the failing man
Without trouble and without anger;
Give him advice as a friend,
Forgive all insult,
Pray God for your enemy,
This almsgiving is very pure.

50.

Comfort the poor afflicted
That sadness overwhelms,
He whose heart is gnawed
With an appalling scruple.
Pray to God for all the wicked
To obtain their forgiveness,
For the dead and for the living,
Without excepting anyone. ■



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