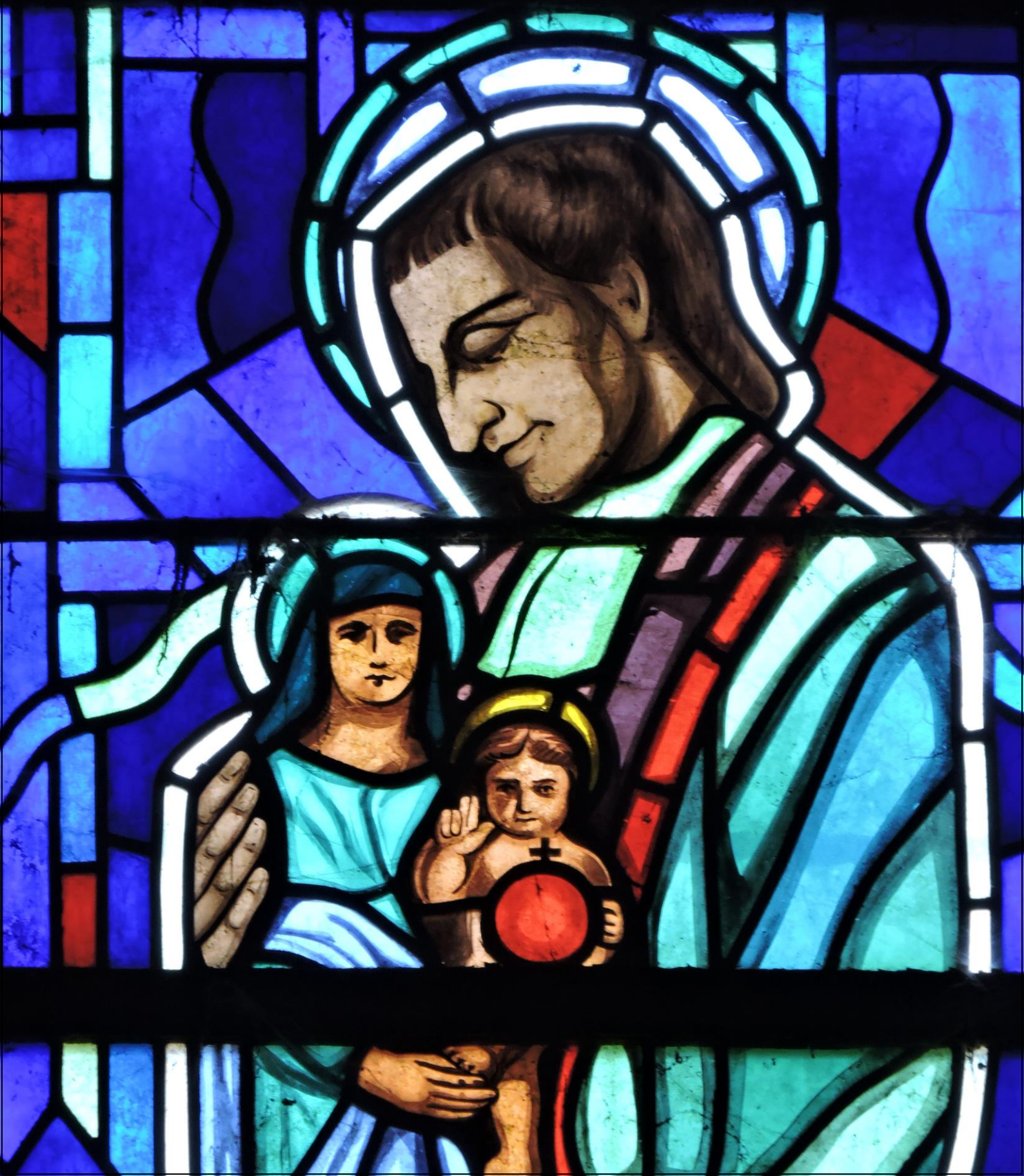


Jesus Living in Mary

Monthly Newsletter of Formation & Information - Nº 42, October 2021 - Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts



An Association Center

MOVEMENT OF MONTFORTIAN ASSOCIATES IN KENYA, EAST AFRICA

This sharing was received by the editor of the bulletin at the end of December 2020. It is the fruit of the collaboration of the confreres who are present and work in Kenya. The Montfortian scholastic community is now headed by Father Jacob Ombidi, SMM who is also a member of the Council of the General Delegation of Anglophone Africa.

By Fr. Jacob Ombidi, SMM



Brief History of the Association

Montfortian Associates Movement in Kenya is a lay movement in which its members live, share and promote the spirituality of total consecration to our Lord Jesus through the hands of our mother Mary as proposed by St. Louis Marie de Montfort.

In fact, it is a group of lay people working alongside the Montfortian Congregation in Kenya and in communion with all other Lay Montfortians worldwide.

The Lay associates have been in existence from 2006 but the growth has been slow until 2019 when seven members joined and this meant that the number of members increased.



Development of members Year-Year

Each year, with the exception of this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been new members (about 5-6) consecrating themselves to Jesus through Mary. However, this number has slowed down due to the effects of Covid-19 as there have been few individuals who have consecrated themselves and joined the group. Generally, there are 25 active members who regularly show up for group activities.

Formation activities provided to the Members

There has been a sharing given to the Lay Associates every fourth Saturday of the month at the Montfortian House by a Montfortian priest or brother. Additionally, a half day retreat or recollection is also conducted by a Montfortian priest at the same house twice a year. Usually, this has been at the beginning of Advent season and also Lenten season as well.

Current Coordinator's Name:

Mr. George Montfort Ndinika

Missionary or Apostolic activities executed by members

There have been times when members planned to visit boys' schools specifically to talk about vocation to priesthood to be given by Montfortian brothers and priests. Moreover, we do a pilgrimage to Marian Shrine once a year. Mostly, members have been to Subukia Marian Shrine as well as Komarock Marian Shrine. Members also Perform works of Mercy like visiting homes of the aged or orphanages. However, some of these programs have been suspended due to Covid-19 pandemic.

«Mary is wise: let us place everything in her hands. She knows how to dispose of us and all that we have for the greater glory of God» (LEW 222)

Schedule of regular activities

Monthly meetings at the Montfortian House where members pray and listen together to a reflection given by a Montfortian priest or brother. They discuss issues concerning the Association (in view of failures as well as some achievements made). Priests hear confessions followed by the Eucharistic celebration. Members have lunch and socialize. Some members participate in writing articles for the bi-annual Vagabond magazine published by the Montfort Missionaries-General Delegation of Anglophone Africa. Besides, members have also been participating firmly on feast days especially the ones highly appreciated by the Montfort family such as the Assumption of Mary and the feast day of St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort.



Challenges faced

The major challenge encountered from the onset of the group is that we have had members coming in every year, consecrating themselves to Jesus through the hands of Mary but members leave the group. In other words, the challenge is that of maintaining new members. Additionally, observation has been made that there is poor attendance of some members in our monthly meetings. Even though the group has more than 20 members, it has been observed that few individuals show up in some of the monthly meetings that are often organized. This has been the case with some old members who are not really active. It becomes therefore difficult to maintain some members who consecrate themselves for some opt just to do consecration but not necessarily joining the group.

In spite of the fact that Covid-19 pandemic has negatively affected a number of activities in this Lay Association group, we have still maintained our monthly meeting Via ZOOM. This has enabled us to be in touch with one another and strengthen each other in every possible way. ■

Teaching

Love of Montfort For the Poor



By Fr. Olivier Maire, SMM

This article is a small part of the article written by Fr. Olivier Maire entitled "THE POOR AND POVERTY IN THE LIFE OF LOUIS-MARIE DE MONTFORT" which was published in the journal "Spiritualità Monfortana", no. 3, in Rome.

Before reading this article, it is good that we have three people in front of us. First, Olivier Maire. Second, Louis-Marie de Montfort. Third, Jesus Christ. We put Olivier in the forefront because he is our contemporary, while Louis-Marie is his teacher who taught him his behavior towards the poor, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and finally Jesus Christ who is "common source" where Louis-Marie and Olivier Maire drank. Jesus Christ is the root that transmits life to Louis-Marie and Olivier, He is the main reason why Montfort and Olivier have a love for the poor.

Concerning Montfort, the spiritual master of Olivier Maire, our spiritual master to all of us, we heard what Brother Daniel Busnel said during the funeral mass of Father Olivier. Daniel said: "You were a disciple of Father de Montfort, you drew from our founder a dynamism to make charity your rule of life". This charity is something that animated Olivier in his decision that he made, with his community, to welcome pilgrims, the homeless and the poor, in our house in Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre.

Brother Daniel said that charity was the rule of life for a disciple of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, because it was written in the Rule left to the Missionaries by Montfort. This was also said by Father Luizinho, Superior General of the Montfort Missionaries, who quoted the writings of Montfort on how his missionaries should live their lives in relation to the poor. Here are the articles of the Rule written by Montfort.

«Their charity to one another will be full of attention and good will, and they will look for opportunities to do one another a good turn. It will be marked by mutual respect which brings them to give precedence to others and by patience which will enable them to bear with one another's faults.

This queen of all the virtues is the queen and superior who governs the Company with her golden sceptre. She is its life-blood, the bond which holds it together and its guardian; pride, self-conceit and self-seeking being banished from it. "Cross the threshold, life-giving love reigns within."....

Be it during the time of their missions or not, the poor are to be the especial objects of their care. They must never refuse to help them, materially when possible, and spiritually, even if they say only one Hail Mary.

After each catechetical instruction, they will provide a meal for all the poor of the parish who have attended the instruction and every morning and evening they will bring one of them in to eat at their table» (RM 44-49).

In view of what happened to Father Olivier, Brother Jean-Paul MBENGUE, Assistant General of the Brothers of Saint-Gabriel, in his message that he sent to me on August 10, 2021, wrote: "Father Olivier was consistent with himself. He taught Montfort a lot and his love for the poor. But he did not limit himself to words". Olivier taught a lot about Montfort and his love for the poor. Let us now see only one part of Father Olivier's article on this subject.

Arnold SUHARDI



1. The formation period of young Louis-Marie de Montfort

Already in the years 1688-1692, when Louis-Marie was a student at the Jesuit college in Rennes, the poor were part of his world, with something personal: study and commitment in the spiritual life.

«The time which the pious student did not spend in studying or praying he devoted to visiting the poor or to drawing or painting. Days off afforded him more time to be devoted to pious exercises and he sanctified them by visiting hospitals and calling on the more pious priests; his greatest joy even then was to talk about God or to listen to people talking of Him» (Blain 5).

Taking care of the poor, with visits to the hospice or elsewhere, was therefore part of the formation for a more authentic Christian life, in an association which brought together several young people under the direction of the priest Julien Bellier, the one who will exercise a great influence on the life of Louis-Marie. He testified to this himself in 1719, in a letter to Grandet:

«Louis Grignon was one of the foremost and most regular in his attendance, and in passing on to others the practice of Christian and clerical virtues taught there. This priest used to send them after the talks on days off, in twos and threes, to serve the poor in the General Hospital and the Hospital for Incurables, by reading to them some good book during their meal and teaching them the catechism afterwards. Louis never failed to carry out these exercises.

One day his mother, who had come to Rennes towards the end of his Physics year, was in the St. Yves Hospital to visit the sick, when she recognised a poor woman and asked her who had procured a place for her there. The woman replied, “It was your son, Madame, who obtained for me entrance to this place and had me transported here in a chair”».



«The poor were part of his world, with something personal: study and commitment in the spiritual life»

Piety and service to the poor are inseparable, because charity does not only concern the material aspect, but the life of the spirit (catechism, spiritual reading). Christian life thus conceived does not suffer from dualism (soul and body), but is divided into harmonious bipolarity. Service to the poor is not seen as an individual or private exercise, but as a collective work, carried out for a received mission, forming part of what today we call associative life.



2. To restore lost dignity

During this period of formation in Rennes, some essential features of Louis Marie's love for the poor appear.

«His great piety had so far been very inconspicuous but it became known after he had performed a charitable action of a very odd kind. One of his fellow-students was so poor and so shabbily dressed that he was the laughing-stock of the whole school and had to bear their mockery. In order to get him some decent clothes, M. Grignon turned beggar for his sake and was not ashamed to ask for alms from his fellow-students in order to supply the needs of his companion» (Blain 8).

By offering a tunic to his classmate, Louis-Marie restores a lost dignity. We know how much a new garment is par excellence the element of appearance, of fashion, and therefore of social approval in all its aspects; it not only hides the shame of nudity or lower class, but gives honor and dignity, and signals social belonging, with our relative reactions (cf. James 2: 2-4). The act of charity is seen as a manifestation of piety, going beyond an authentic spiritual life. Here appears the singularity of a gesture and a reaction that some may consider excessive, faced with an unacceptable

situation: poverty which arouses contempt and derision. Louis-Marie is pushed outside himself (ex-stasis of excess) by a love that is both emotional and effective for one of his "brothers". He accepts the humiliation and is not ashamed to share his shame. It is the expression of universal brotherhood and solidarity with the poor; a charity which is not only the altruism of the human horizon; it is deeply rooted in the dynamism of the incarnation. Like Jesus Christ, Louis-Marie was not ashamed to call the poor people whom he approached "brothers" (cf. Heb 2:11). Like Christ-Wisdom, Montfort is touched to the heart by the misfortune of the poor, he listens to their moaning voices and hears their cries, drowned in the mockery of others (cf. LEW 41). He cannot accept that the image of God is disfigured and torn, nor that his dignity is broken. Montfort's philanthropy goes to excess (cf. Sg 7, 23; LEW 45, 64), because dignity cannot be restored to the poor without sharing their humiliations. You have to feel chained to truly free the slave: «To break our chains, / He was bound himself / He took on our sufferings / To give us His pleasures and riches» (H 64, 5) .



«The act of charity is seen as a manifestation of piety, going beyond an authentic spiritual life»

Louis-Marie also tells us that we cannot help the poor alone: he asked for the charity of his other companions and that of the tailor, when he brought the poor student before him: «This is my brother and yours. I have collected as much money as I could from my classmates to get him a decent suit; if that is not enough it is for you to supply the rest» (Blain 4). Aid is a collective endeavor; charity begets charity. Love of the poor needs the courage to take responsibility for oneself and to overcome the fear aroused by refusals and by the looks of others. Montfort became a beggar to meet the needs of the poor: he shared his poverty and, in poverty, he gave the poor back their dignity. While, curiously, the rich, when they are generous, are in turn humiliated by those around them. This is when you have to know how to say, “It doesn't matter!”.

3. A beggar brother for the poor

It was in his own poverty that Louis-Marie found treasures for the poor, much more than if he had had a rich heritage. Blain also reports that, as a seminarian at St-Sulpice, Montfort asked the charitable ecclesiastics of the community for alms to help the poor, especially poor priests, and often did not reserve anything for himself (cf. Blain 31). What he received only passed through his hands: he was a mediator and channel of grace, giving to some what he received from others. «He could justifiably be called the mendicant of the poor, because he was a mendicant all his life. All that belonged to him belonged to the paupers. He kept the money and clothes he received only until some opportunity arose of giving them to the needy» (Blain 32); this expression in a way recalls the «Totus tuus ego sum, and omnia mea tua sunt» (I am all yours and all I have is yours – TD 233), the total surrendering to Jesus through Mary. He not only gave what he received, but he even gave what he needed, to the point of stripping himself for the benefit of the poor.

«It was in his own poverty that Louis-Marie found treasures for the poor, much more than if he had had a rich heritage»

The choice in favor of the poor is not ideological. It is a choice that comes from the heart, an inclination, an attraction, which has no other law than that of love, according to the Gospel. It is an imitation of the choice made by Jesus Christ: «Evangelizare pauperibus misit me Dominus» (He has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor - Lk 4:18: taken up by Montfort in the Rules for his missionaries, n. 7). A choice that has always guided the apostolate of Louis-Marie.

«Moreover, his sermons were not meant for fastidious people and he did not have to resort to a polished style and studied gestures to avoid offending the ears of refined critical listeners; all his ambition and his most fervent wish was to address the poorest and those who were least cared for. His zeal prompted him to care for those that were left aside; he tried to bring together such people as chimney sweeps, tramps and vagrants; after he had gathered them together, he gave them the bread of the word of God, being always careful to imitate his divine Model /252/ whose followers and listeners were mostly poor ordinary people» (Blain LVIII, 251-252).

This properly messianic option is the seal which authenticates the apostolic conduct of Montfort, the friend of the poor.

«He always had a tender spot in his heart for the poor and the underprivileged and they were also his favourites in his apostolic work; they were always the first object of his zeal; those among them who were the most unfortunate and the most repellent were those whom he loved best. He sought for the most encouraging words to comfort them. He was ready to do anything to help them. He who was poor also and as poor as any of them, taught them to love from necessity a condition which he loved from choice and charity. He taught them to endure it with patience if they were not virtuous enough to endure it with joy; he complemented these comforting, consoling instructions with an alms given to each of them to make sure that what he had told them would move their hearts» (Blain LXVII, 288-289).

The list of initiatives to come to the aid of the poor is long: common meal in Providence during missions, foundation of hospitals or their reform, creation of popular schools ... In a letter of 1718, the Jesuit Préfontaine wrote:

«The poor especially, and the country folk, were the ones among whom he worked most willingly. It was to them that he sometimes said he was sent, and for whose salvation he believed himself responsible. He also had a wonderful talent for winning them and inspiring in them all the sentiments he wanted. These good people were attached to him. They looked on him as a saint, and when he left one parish to go to another, they would follow him in droves, tears in their eyes, thinking that in losing him they had lost everything. Seeing Jesus Christ through the eyes of faith in the person of the poor, the lengths to which his charity would go in their regard is unimaginable. In all his missions they followed him in droves, and no matter how many they were, his charity would find ways to supply all their needs. He fed them and he clothed them. His tenderness towards them and his compassion communicated themselves to all those who approached him and inspired them with sentiments like his own. His example drew everyone, and each person would make it their pleasure and their duty to contribute to his works of mercy: some by their generous gifts, others by the work of their own hands. For Monsieur de Montfort had a special talent, on these occasions, for making all the different ways of doing good to the poor that an ingenious Christian charity can devise, count for something. If he exhorted everyone to love the poor, he was the first to give the good example. And I have seen him, more than once, go into a crowd of beggars to pick out the most dirty and disgusting, take him by the hand and lead him with him to sit down at table beside him in the highest place, serve him before everyone else with the best morsels, and then, at the end of the meal, embrace him and, taking him to the door himself, send him off with a considerable alms. This was his custom every day, and in all the missions I saw him give, whether in Nantes or elsewhere. Poor himself in his own person, he wore nothing that he had not obtained through charity » (Grandet 446-448).

«He always had a tender spot in his heart for the poor and the underprivileged and they were also his favourites in his apostolic work; they were always the first object of his zeal; those among them who were the most unfortunate and the most repellent were those whom he loved best».

4. Sacrament of Jesus Christ

Without excluding anyone from his apostolate (cf RM 7), Montfort the missionary makes a preferential choice for the poor and sees in them the real presence of Jesus Christ, an epiphany which is not considered as a simple metaphor or a vague symbol, meaningless.

«He was envious, in the way only saints can be, of the fate of the poor and of the afflicted; he honoured and revered them as God's favourites and the living images of Christ crucified. One day I saw him, hat in hand, ushering out a man who seemed to me a nobody, whose social status did not require such fuss; I expressed my surprise to M. Grignon and asked him why he was showing so much respect to a man who did not seem worth it. "He, is suffering," he replied, "and we ought to respect and honour all those who are lucky enough to be nailed to the cross» (Blain 52).

One can be surprised by a Montfort who envied the poor and the suffering, but also by a canon (an ecclesiastical dignitary) Blain who considered a poor person as "a nobody". In this "nobody" Louis-Marie saw Jesus himself who expresses himself in the Bible: "I am ignored as a forgotten dead person, as something that is thrown away" (Ps 30, 13), "without neither appearance nor beauty that catches our eyes, abandoned by men, man of sorrows, familiar with suffering, he was like the one before whom we veil our faces; and we have despised him, counted for nothing" (cf. Is 53: 2-3), "mocked by the people, rejected by the people" (cf. Ps 21: 7).

«Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me» (Mt 25:40).

Hat in hand, accompanying a poor person, says more than a speech, since it is the attitude that expresses respect for the divine presence in this poor person. A subversive gesture, which contemplates the presence of the Whole in the void. «Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me» (Mt 25:40). How can we forget here the episode of Dinan, where Montfort knocks on the door of the missionaries, carrying a poor man on his shoulders and crying: «Open the door to Jesus Christ!» (Cf. Besnard 114)? Or other episodes like the one evoked in Blain 17-18 (c. VIII), of a Louis-Marie who from an early age goes in search of a poor beggar, caresses him, throws himself at his feet to embrace them ... The saints have, like that, an excess of zeal, which comes from a heart "inflamed with the love of God which can no longer contain itself" (Ibid.).

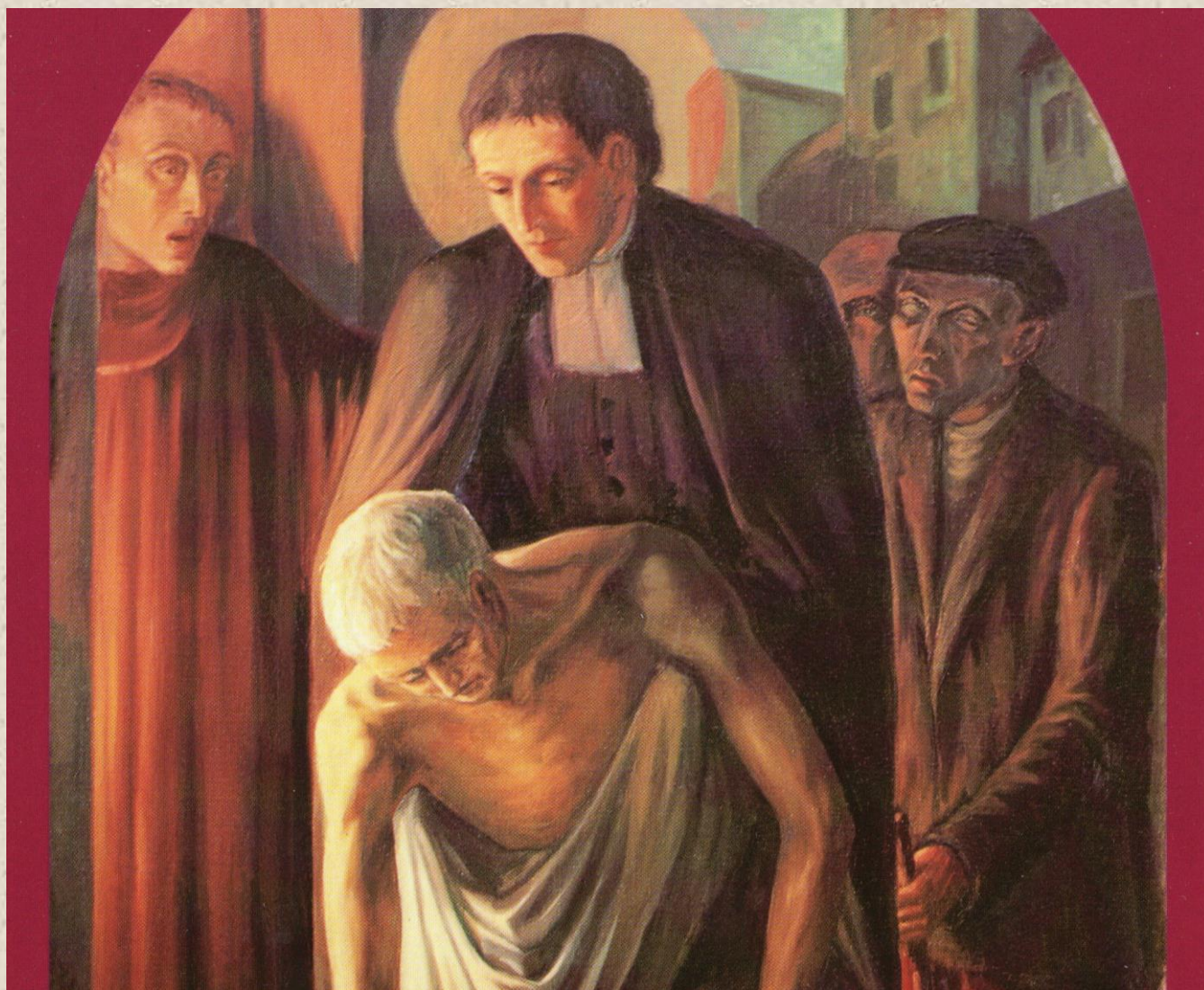


Blain further writes:

«It was about that time that the two of us went on a visit to a mutual friend (it's Father Joseph de Saint Méen) staying in the country. Later on this young man joined the Order of the Capuchins, and the other members of the Order regarded him as a paragon of virtue. This visit afforded me a chance of getting to know M. Grignon better and of becoming a more intimate friend. He kept talking about God and things connected with God: he was devoured by his zeal for the salvation of souls and his heart was already burning with such love of God that the only way in which he could gratify it was to show it in action through his charity for his neighbour; yet he would try to gratify his charitable longings as secretly as possible; thus he would steal away from us to go and show his affection in various ways for a simple-minded, very unattractive poor beggar, embracing him and making much of him: he would kneel at his feet and kiss them when he thought that nobody could see him; however, he did not act secretly enough because on several occasions I was able to see him giving way to his pious transports of charity».

Under these excesses which, in our weakness, we admire more than we imitate, hides the secret of a great faith.

«It was through faith that he had such a great love for the poor, in whose person he saw Jesus Christ. It was by faith that he preferred poverty to all the riches of the earth. It was by faith that he found all his happiness in carrying the cross of the Son of God, suffering insults, mistrust and humiliations» (Grandet V.I, p. 284-285). ■



Homily

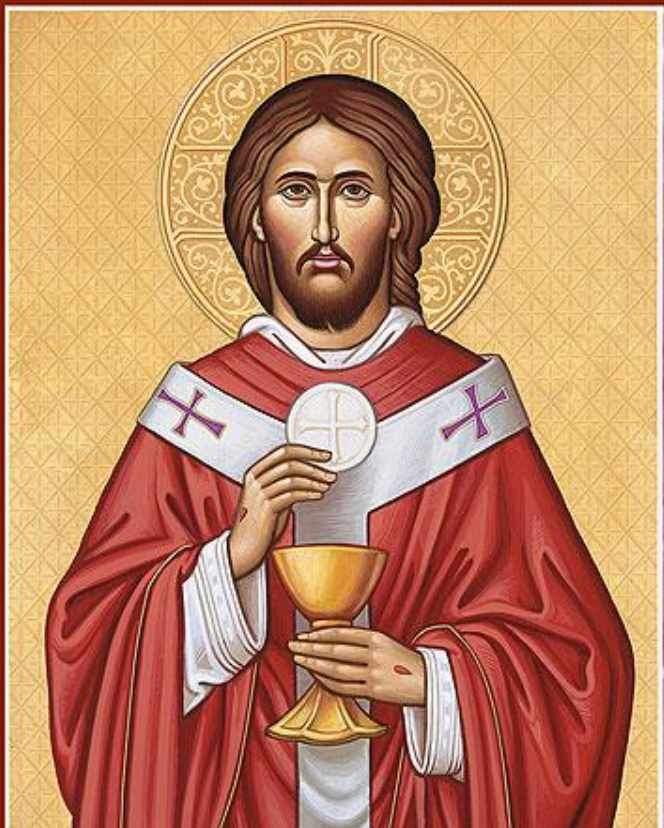
Eucharist

Father Olivier Maire's last homily
August 8, 2021 in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre

Witness of charity, Father Olivier Maire, 61, was assassinated on August 9, 2021 in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, putting into practice the spirituality of Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort that he preached in many retreats and conferences and throughout the world: strong devotion to the Virgin Mary, love of Wisdom, evangelization of popular and rural areas, service of the poor. Montfort Missionary since 1986, Priest since 1990, he was a rural animator, cooperator in Haiti, formator of novices in Uganda... Elected Provincial of France since 2011, organist, he remained simple and accessible.



By Fr. Olivier Maire, SMM



The first reading, of the first book of Kings, the story of the prophet Elijah, sheds new light on the mystery of the Eucharist.

Elijah, fleeing the wrath of Queen Jezebel, goes south to Mount Horeb. After a day on the road, he is resting under a bush. A jug of water and a pancake baked on stones.

Something that we can touch, that we can see, that contains something that we can actually see, a bread that we can actually eat and it is this bread, this food that is there for us, not just for the prophet Elijah, but for us as well.

The Eucharist is the bread of the Kingdom. We will no longer have the Eucharist in paradise, it is an essential truth to know. In paradise, there will be no more Eucharist. The Eucharist is this food that God gives us for the walk of this world.

It is concrete nourishment, the body and blood of Christ, which is there to remind us of our walk today, for the here and now. The first message that these readings today give us on the mystery of the Eucharist, the bread of the journey, the bread of our earthly pilgrimage.

And in the Gospel, Jesus continues this long homily which he gave in the synagogue of Capernaum. And when he says, in his homily, "I am the bread which came down from heaven," they begin to complain against him, to murmur against him, the text literally says. An expression that takes us directly to the book of Exodus, where the Hebrew people murmured, complained against Moses and Aaron and against God, because they had lacked food.



And Jesus said: "yes, I really am the bread that came from heaven" and the murmurs of the people of Capernaum will relate to something which is fundamental. They said, "We know his father, we know Joseph. He is Joseph's son and we know his father too". So since it is the homily that Jesus gives and that John reports to us, we have to pay attention to the details. It is a text from Jesus, a teaching from Jesus, each word is important. This is what the people of Capernaum said: "Is not this Jesus, son of Joseph?" We know his father and his mother". Don't you find this sentence a little curious? They could have said, "Oh well, isn't this one the son of Joseph and Mary - final pont -?" "But it is written: "Is not he Jesus, son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?". There is a small dropout in the text. You know, the texts of the word of God only seem to be smooth, but it's actually full of relief, the texts of the Bible and there you have a relief.

*«The Eucharist is this
food that God gives us
for the walk of this
world»*

Jesus, son of Joseph, that's what the people knew, what we all know here. Jesus is the son of Joseph the carpenter. But these people from Capernaum say: "We know his father and his mother". But no, they do not know his father or his mother. They know things about Jesus, but the mystery of Jesus as son of God, that they did not know. And even they couldn't know it. They thought they knew who the father really is and who the mother of Jesus really is. But of Jesus, they only knew that he is the son of Joseph. The mystery of the divinity, that Jesus be the Son of God, that they did not know. And not knowing that Jesus is the Son of God, they could not understand this sentence of Jesus: "I am the Bread which came out of heaven". For them, Jesus was only earthly, he came from this man: Joseph. They did not know the mystery of the Son: he is the Son of the Father, he really came down from heaven. And in this text, Saint John tells us: "To understand the mystery of the Eucharist, we must understand who the Son is.

The mystery of the person of Jesus, Son, is linked to the mystery of the Eucharist. The mystery of the Eucharist is linked to the mystery of the person of the Son. One of the first theologians of the Church, Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, said this: «If Jesus Christ was not born in true flesh, flesh of our flesh, then the bread which we share, the body of Christ is not his real body and if it is not really in the body of Christ that we share, we are not saved, we are lost. If the body of Christ is the body of someone who has not had the flesh of our flesh and the bones of our bones, then this body of Christ that we share on earth is only bread and if it is only bread, we are not saved. If it is only bread, there is no more resurrection of the flesh».

If the flesh is not regenerated by this bread which is really the body of Christ, if Jesus Christ is not really the body, then the bread that we share is only bread, it is no longer the body of Christ. And if this bread is no longer the body of Christ, then by communing with this bread we never receive eternal life. And all that Jesus says, all that Jesus said in the synagogue of Capernaum, it is all wind.

But no, Jesus Christ, he is truly the Son of the Virgin Mary, and truly Son of God. It is because he is true God and true man that the bread we share is truly his body and his body gives us eternal life.

The mystery of the Son and the mystery of the Eucharist are linked. To deny one is to deny the other. If the bread of the Eucharist is only bread, I cannot say that our joy springs from the divinity of the Son.

And Jesus tries to explain to his listeners the mystery of his divinity: the Father, no one has ever seen him. God, no one has ever seen him, except his Son who from all eternity contemplates the face of the Father. And it is this Son, Jesus Christ, who, Saint John tells us, came to reveal the Father. And «no one hears his teaching if he doesn't come to me». To come to the Son is to receive the teaching of the Father, it is to receive the word of God the Father. And what Jesus says is important: the mystery of the Eucharist, the mystery of Christ does not stop with Christ. Christ brings us to the Father. To go to Christ is to listen to this word that comes to us from the Father.

«The mystery of the Son and the mystery of the Eucharist are linked. To deny one is to deny the other».



How the mystery of the Eucharist always brings us to the Father. I don't know if you noticed, but most or all of the prayers in Mass are addressed to the Father, through the Son in the Spirit. Christ brings us to the Father. The great prayer of the Church, the great prayer of the Eucharist, also brings us through Christ to the Father. Eucharistic prayers are all addressed to God. This is the great movement of the liturgy, this is what Jesus says : «Whoever comes to me receives the teaching of the Father, receives the word of the Father».

Jesus always brings us to his Father. But coming to Jesus is never something that is our initiative. Whether we know it or not, if we go to Jesus, it is because the Father has drawn us to Him. If you are there, to Jesus, if you have come this evening, it is because the Father has drawn you, so that through the Son you can reach Him and He draw near.

It is also a mystery: why are there some people who believe and why there are others who do not believe? Why are some of the baptized who practice and others who do not? Why do some experience the Eucharist as something extraordinary and why do others participate in the Eucharist like that, without..., like that?

This is the mystery [way of doing] of God. God attracts. Some are attracted, others are not. This does not mean that those who are not attracted are rejected, but it is a way of God.

«God attracts. Some are attracted, others are not»

God, when he started his covenant with humanity, he did not choose all of humanity, he chose a people, a particular people. Christ opened this call to all nations but it is not all nations in their totality, they are small choices - Father de Montfort called it «predestination» - small choices of all nations. They are attracted. Not because others are rejected, but because this mystery is about God's way of doing, this mystery of election.

The scripture tells us, see, it's like the fruits or the harvest, we had to offer the first fruits. The whole harvest is not offered to God. If the whole crop were offered to God, what would be left to eat? But a little bit of the harvest is offered so that the whole harvest will be sanctified. Well in mankind God does the same. He attracts some so that all mankind may be sanctified. «No one comes to Me unless the Father attracts him».

And then Jesus continues his homily: «I am the living Bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, they will live forever. The bread that I will give is my flesh, given for the life of the world. Literally, the bread that I will give is my flesh, which is for the life of the world». The bread which is given is the flesh of the Son which is for the life of the world. It is the same thing, but Jesus distinguishes two realities to help us understand this mystery of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is this bread that we share, the host, which is truly given to us. When we receive the Host, it belongs to us. In the past, we used to say in kindergartens: to give is to give; to take back, is to steal. When God, when Jesus gives himself, he really gives himself.

The Eucharist, the bread from heaven that God gives us, he gives us this food. And it's so given that when we eat it, it's digested and it goes away. The gift that God makes of himself is a very real gift, and one that the Eucharist signifies in a very extraordinary way.

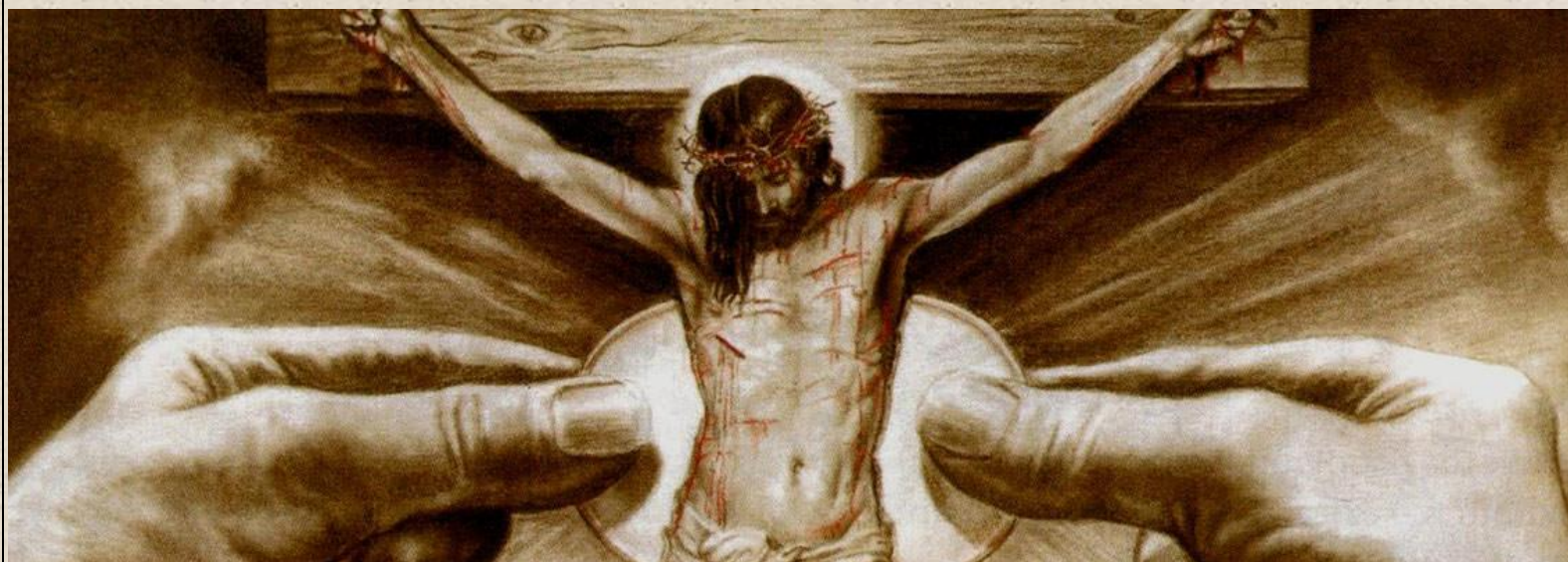
Even the Eucharist, when it is given, we can take it and do what we want with it. There are even people who receive the Eucharist and who will do all kinds of black magic or witchcraft with it, and desecrate it, because Jesus is there. And when someone desecrates a host, Jesus does not withdraw from that host, because he gave himself and since he gave himself, he does not take it back. Hence the firmly established faith in the Catholic Church, of the permanence of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Once the bread is consecrated, it is consecrated. Because when God gives himself, he gives himself in all reality. He does not recover. The gifts of God, which are numerous, are without return.

And then he said: «It is my flesh which is for the life of the world». And on the bread that is given to us, and we will do with it what we want, we receive it for the greater glory of God in holiness, but the body of Christ remains. And this body of Christ, his flesh, is something that Jesus says that is for the life of the world. Jesus Christ does not live for himself. Jesus Christ lives for us to have life. Jesus' whole life is a gift to us. His life no longer belongs to him. He died on the cross to give us life. «The bread that I give is my flesh which is for the life of the world». Jesus, he is for our life. He is not for his Father, he is for us. He was born and he died for us. And the Eucharist is for us. His flesh which is for the life of the world, this bread which is given.

«Once the bread is consecrated, it is consecrated. Because when God gives himself, he gives himself in all reality. He does not recover. The gifts of God, which are numerous, are without return»

But there is one thing which is not a detail and which Saint Paul reminds us of. Moreover, in Scripture, it is said: «When you are invited to a meal, take a good look at what is served on the table, because one day, you will have to give the same meal again». This applies to the Eucharistic table. **Christ invited us to this Eucharistic meal, where the Father has drawn us. So we have to take a good look at what is served on the table because when we receive communion, we commit ourselves to giving the same thing back.** Since on this table we receive the body of Christ who gives himself to us, whose life, the flesh, the body, is for the life of the world, we must do the same.

This is what Saint Paul says, this is the end of the second reading. Seek to imitate God, since you are his beloved children. Live in love, as Christ loved you. He gave himself up for you - it is the meal that is served to us, that will be served to us - offering himself as a sacrifice to God as a pleasantly smelling perfume. By receiving communion at the altar, we communicate, we receive the body of the one who has given himself concretely to us, whose life is not for himself but for us. By receiving his body, we commit ourselves to do the same, that our life also be given to Christ, for the life of the world, at our level and among ourselves. But we have to give the same meal back, we have to serve the same [menu]. Communicating in the body of Christ, he gives himself to us. We must also give ourselves to Christ. This is what Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort called consecration, since Jesus gave himself to us, we must give ourselves to him by becoming the body of Christ. Amen. ■

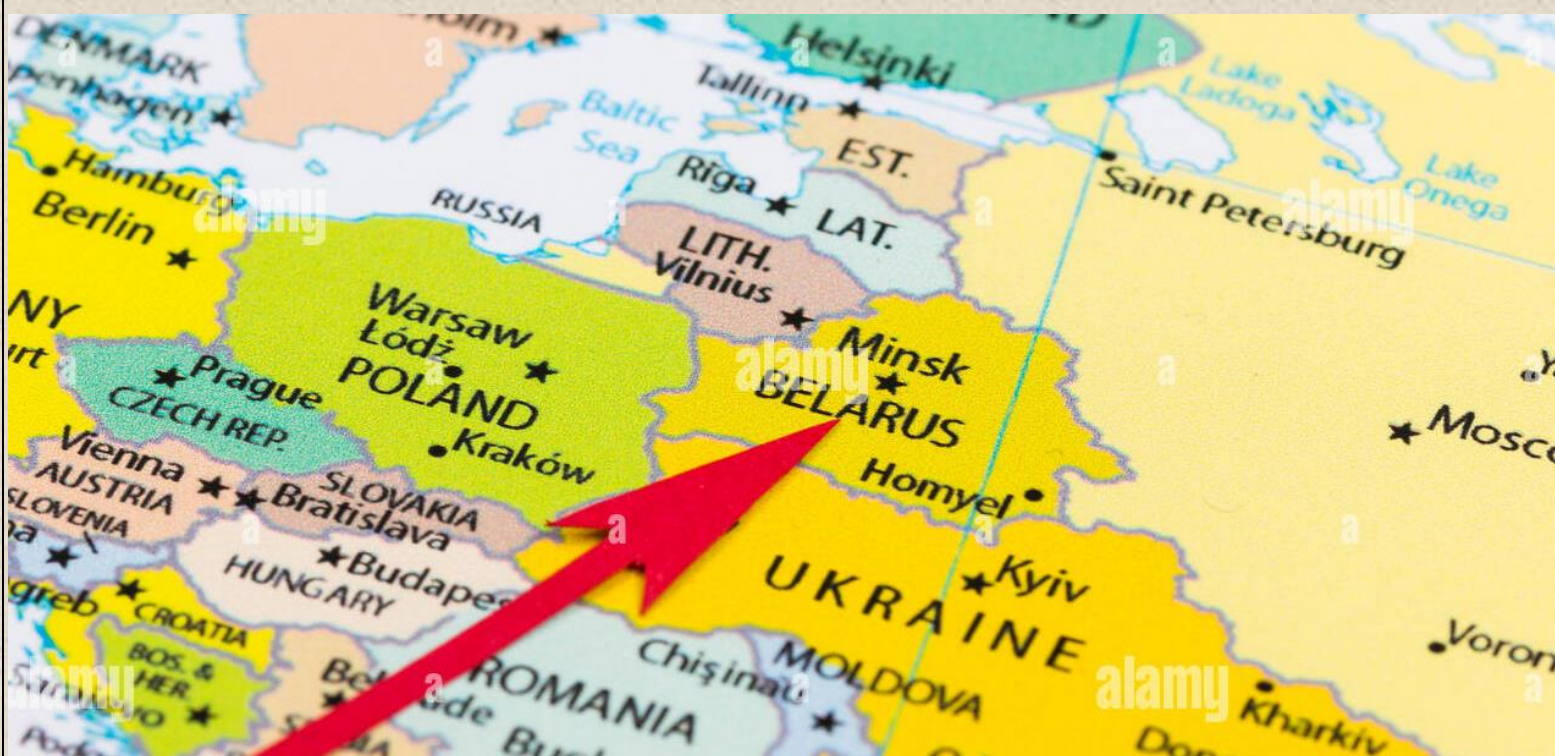


«Communicating in the body of Christ, he gives himself to us. We must also give ourselves to Christ. This is what Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort called consecration, since Jesus gave himself to us, we must give ourselves to him»

Consecration

Preparation for Consecration in Belarus

By Nathalie DOROCHKEVITCH



MINSK, Belarus - - From November 2020, Daria and myself, Nathalie, from Belarus have organized the fourth preparation for consecration to Jesus through Mary. We do this over the internet using the Viber app. It is not because of the COVID-19 epidemic that we are using this medium but because the medium allows us to bring together a large number of participants from different parts of the country. We do not have the money to print the 33-day booklet and deliver it to people. This is why I made the website <https://33-dni.blogspot.com> where I put the texts of the daily meditations. Daria gathers Viber participants. Each day, she puts the link there with a meditation that corresponds to the day of preparation.

On August 15 the group of 210 people completed the preparation and had the consecration. After the preparation and the day of consecration, Daria asked some of the participants to share a little feedback about how they are living out their Consecration. So we have these testimonies to share. Daria has a lot of enthusiasm. She believes that because of these testimonies, the face of this earth will change.

«Every day I felt that I was approaching this great day when I will feel myself the child of God. I have never felt such personal unity with God, with Jesus and with Mary. A very big thank you for this experience and the deepening of the faith to all those who have helped to take this path: to the translators, to the organizers, to all those who joined this great event. May God fill each of his gifts! I thank with all my heart!». **Tatsiana**

«Finally I managed to make the consecration! I felt that the priest's blessing had very great power! And I'm sure it was thanks to this blessing that I managed to get through the preparation until the end. Usually everything went well, but 3 days before the consecration began spiritual attacks from the evil spirit. But I was not afraid and went to Jesus through Mary. Yesterday after Communion I felt that Jesus and Mary took all my fears and worries, I felt their very great support and now I am not afraid of anything because Jesus and Mary are with me. It is truly a very great power to be a slave to Jesus in Mary. I sincerely thank the organizers for this preparation and for the translation of the Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin». **Volha**

«This preparation has helped me keep the peace at a very difficult time. Besides, I have understood in which direction I must go. Thank you !» **Guénadzi**

«A very big thank you to you, Daria, and to all the organizers of this preparation !!! I am with you for the second time. Once again I saw tremendous love and mercy from God and the Virgin Mary for me and for my family. God bless you !» **Vanda**

«Thank you, Daria, for organizing this preparation for consecration. I am with you for the second time. I see great importance in it. I see the Mother of God helping me a lot. These are general confessions, especially on the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary and a very great desire to pray the rosary. For me it is very important. May God bless you and the Mother of God keep you». **Raïça**

«Thank you very much for the opportunity to have this preparation. It has helped me to strengthen and deepen my faith, to grow spiritually». **Natalia**

«These preparations are very fruitful. I am very grateful to Daria». **Ianina**

«A very big thank you for this preparation, thank you with all my heart». **Irina**

«Dear Daria, a very big thank you. I have received tremendous spiritual help. Every day I was waiting for a new meditation. Each time I prayed from the heart. Today I lit a candle, I bought a white rose and I put it near a statue of the Blessed Virgin and with the permission of the priest I read the Act of consecration to Jesus Christ through the hands of Mary. Once again a very big thank you. May the Good Lord bless you». **Valentina**

«For me it was very important to have this preparation. It's like I'm looking at myself from the side. By the help of the Holy Spirit I learned the truth about myself. I highly value the position of people who have blind trust in Jesus Christ and his Mother. I can say that the Mother of God acted with me as with the most beloved child who takes his first steps. I thank Mary for her support, her wisdom and learning from True Mother». **Hanna**

Thank you for your desire to help. I didn't feel anything but I keep hoping because the love of God is stronger than all obstacles and sins». **Irena**

«But the most perfect and most profitable of all devotions to the Blessed Virgin consists in consecrating ourselves entirely to her, and to Jesus through her, as their slaves. It involves consecrating to her completely and for all eternity our body and soul, our possessions both spiritual and material, the atoning value and the merits of our good actions and our right to dispose of them. In short, it involves the offering of all we have acquired in the past, all we actually possess at the moment, and all we will acquire in the future» (LEW 219)

Mission

Brothers of Saint Gabriel in Burundi

The future of the Montfortian family
in Bujumbura, Burundi

By Arnaud KWIZERIMANA



BUJUMBURA, Burundi - In the outskirts of Bujumbura, Burundi, the Brothers of Saint-Gabriel are currently completing the construction of a school complex. All these buildings are supposed to accommodate schoolchildren of different levels before university.

It is Brother Marius who initiated the presence of the Brothers of Saint Gabriel in this city and who closely followed this project. For this, he is welcomed in one of the communities of the «Militants of the Blessed Virgin» (MSV) in Bujumbura. Every day, he goes to his project to work with the full moral and spiritual support of the Militants.

Currently, Brother Marius is following the process of obtaining a government operating permit for this school. Indeed, the hope is that this school can begin to operate from the new school year, in September 2021. A government committee, before granting a permit, will of course first visit this complex to assess its feasibility.

Clearly, although the buildings are physically nearing completion, there are still many other facilities that can be provided over time. The availability of teachers and students will of course also be assessed. And we hope that there will be no obstacles for the government to grant the necessary permits. After all, what these Brothers are doing is in fact a very important contribution to the future of this country by paying attention to the education of its young generation.

Now Brother Marius and two other brothers occupy a corner of this school complex and form a community there. This is of course temporary, that is to say before they have an independent house that will be built outside this school complex.

Let us hope that this educational community which is about to be born will be able to function well, and will implement the Montfortian-Gabrielist educational vision and mission which is generally appreciated by the less fortunate people in society. ■



Biblical Insights

«Giving His life as a ransom»

OCTOBER 17, 2021

Sunday, 29th Week in Ordinary Time - Year B

By Pierrette MAIGNÉ

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Mark (Mk 10, 42-45)

*At that time,
Jesus said to his disciples:
«You know that those who are recognized as
rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them,
and their great ones
make their authority over them felt.
But it shall not be so among you.
Rather,
whoever wishes to be great among you
will be your servant;
whoever wishes to be first among you
will be the slave of all.
For the Son of Man
did not come to be served but to serve
and to give his life as a ransom for many»*



Jesus has just announced his Passion for the third time. After each announcement of the Passion, Mark mentions a misunderstanding of the disciples.

Peter rebels and refuses the perspective of Jesus.

The disciples discuss among themselves who is the greatest.

And here would arise the surprising question of the sons of Zebedee.

Jesus speaks of his life he has given but they think about their future and still ask for a favor, a power that meant to sit on his right and on his left, in his glory. We see the gap!

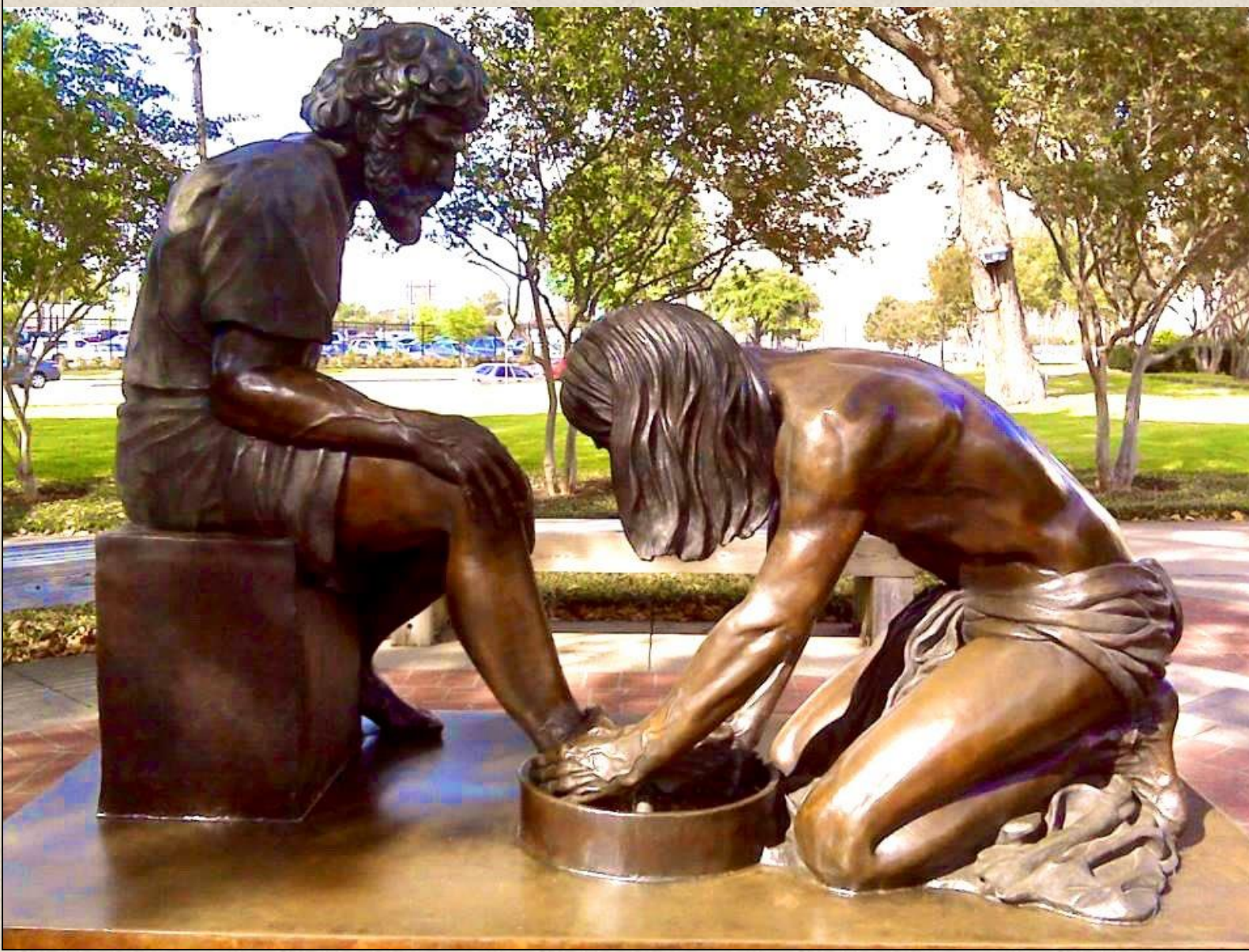
Did they understand what Jesus just announced to them ? Did they accept what he is trying to make them understand about what he will go through? Certainly not. Hence, Jesus' response: «You do not know what you are asking».

Jesus reveals the **"cup"** he is going to drink. In the Old Testament there are several references to the "cup". The cup is the symbol of communion with God.

There is also mention of the cup of salvation. During the rites of atonement, the blood of the victims was collected in cups and poured on the altar and the people. Thus was renewed the Covenant with God which the sin and infidelity of the people had broken. Rites that foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ and the Eternal Covenant with God through the blood of Christ: «This cup is the new Covenant in my blood shed for you» (Luke 22,20).

The prophets often use the image of the cup. This designates the destiny of man.

After evoking the cup Jesus speaks of the **baptism** in which he must be immersed, that is to be immersed in water is to be immersed in death. Since the resurrection of Christ, this plunge into death has also given rise to new life. Through baptism we will die to sin to be reborn with Christ.

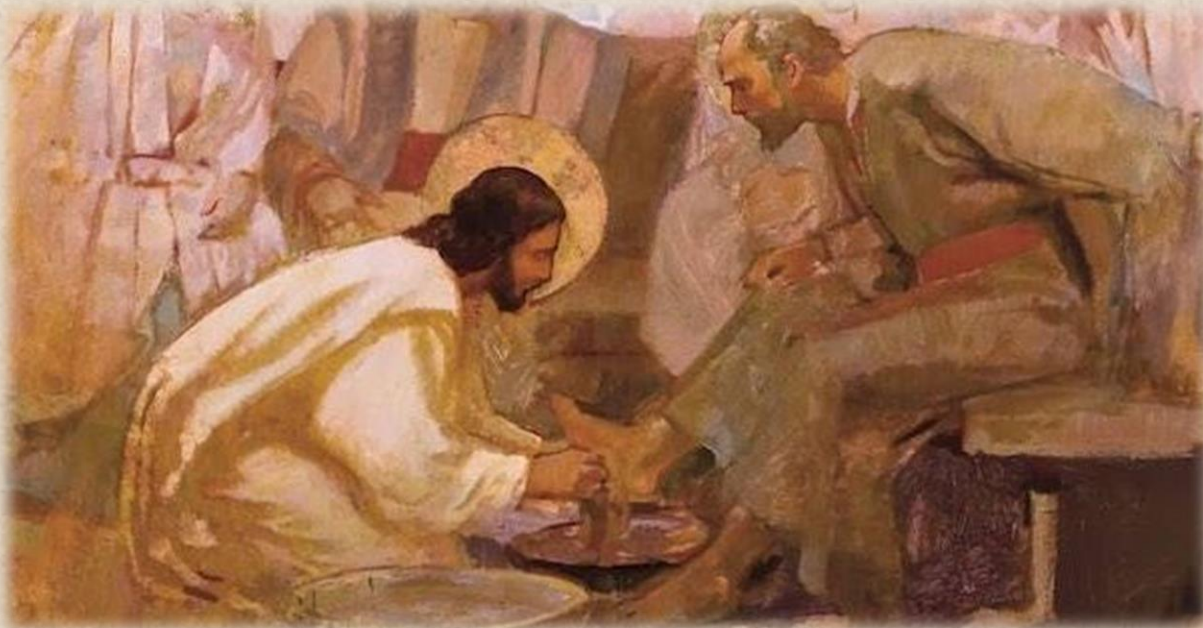


The Apostles will share the fate of Jesus since they will die martyrs.

The two brothers wanted to sit on the right of Jesus: a position of power, of domination. Jesus invites them to renounce this because God does not reign in the way of men. He is not someone who enslaves but someone who delivers and frees. He gives them the meaning of his life and of his mission: to serve and give his life; to be the servant of all and not the one who keeps them in slavery under his domination.

«**Giving his life as a ransom**» has been a lot of misinterpretation of this word. It derives from a verb which means to loosen, to detach, to deliver. This is what Jesus accomplished throughout his public life through the miracles the Gospels tell us. But God does not free us without our consent, without conversion on our part. Our refusals will cost him his life; life he agrees to give so that salvation reaches his people and all mankind.

How can we not give thanks for this salvation and this liberation that Jesus gives us ? That through his death and resurrection and as disciples of Christ, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we continue his work so that our brothers can still know today this freedom of the children of God and be free from all slavery and oppression. ■



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