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# Jesus Living in Mary



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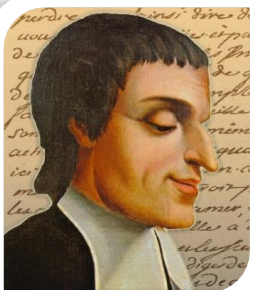
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Biblical insights:

**«Here I am, Lord; I come to  
do your will»**

by Pierrette MIGNÉ



**Responsorial PSALM 40:2, 4, 7-10**

**Response:**

***Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.***

I waited, I waited for the Lord  
and he stooped down to me;  
he heard my cry.  
He put a new song into my mouth,  
praise of our God. (R./)

You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings,  
but an open ear.  
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.  
Instead, here am I. (R./)

In the scroll of the book it stands written  
that I should do your will.  
My God, I delight in your law  
in the depth of my heart. (R./)

Your justice I have proclaimed  
in the great assembly.  
My lips I have not sealed;  
you know it, O Lord. (R./)

+++

This psalm is the psalm of the liturgy of the 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (January 19).

In this psalm God reveals himself as the one who is near, who looks upon the one who calls him, who hopes in him. How not to think of the Magnificat where Mary proclaims: "He has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness." It is therefore to an attitude of trust that we are invited because God is not insensitive to our calls and he manifests himself as a God who saves, who wrests us from misfortune, who turns us upright again; he is the rock, the one I can lean on: *He draws me up from the pit of destruction, out of the muddy clay, sets my feet upon rock, steadies my steps* (v.3).

It is because the Lord has acted that praise rises from my mouth. This is an invitation for us to recognize the wonders of God in our lives. God is faithful, it is by relying on what I have experienced from past actions of God in my life that I can hope in him and cry out to him when I am in distress.

The following stanza restates to us the right attitude before God, what God expects from us: not purely ritual acts but the offering of our life, of our whole life. To the Savior what to offer if not to offer oneself! Here is another invitation: to do the will of God in the very depths of our daily lives.

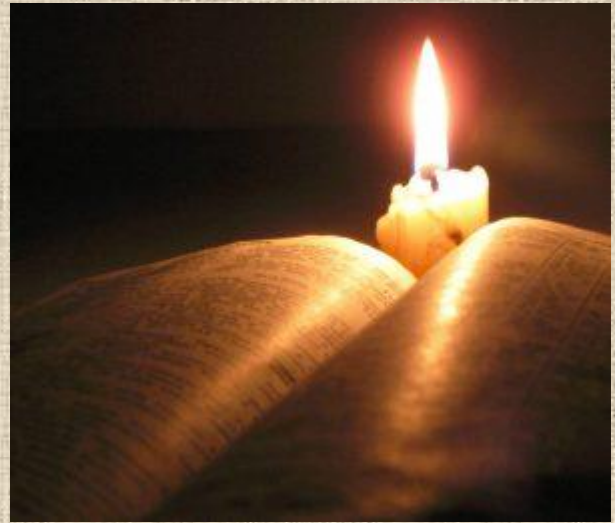
This is the lesson that the prophet Micah teaches us: "With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow before God most high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with myriad streams of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my crime, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Mi 6: 6-7).



You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings, but an open ear. Open ears to hear God and to obey and follow his invitations.

The letter to the Hebrews puts in the mouth of Christ these words: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;... Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, Behold, I come to do your will, O God'" (Heb. 10, 5.7).

**How not to think in echo of the «yes» of Mary, «yes» without condition: that everything happens to me according to your Word. This psalm invites us to this same attitude, to seek the will of God and to carry it out.**



So like Mary in the Magnificat we will not stop proclaiming the Love of God; how not to share such a treasure! This is our mission, and all our meetings will become a «visitation». ■

Montfortian Spirituality:

## **BE SENT**

by M.T. Eleine Magdalena Sengkey

As an "Apostolic Missionary" who renews the baptismal promises of the people in the hands of the Virgin Mary, Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort has two objectives but which are one: motivate people to grow in holiness and encourage them to become true lay apostles in society. All this is possible, thanks to the synergistic work between the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary in the Christians.

This article continues its objective: to deepen the theme of the «Extraordinary Missionary Month» of October 2019: **«Baptized and sent: the Church of Christ on mission in the world»**. It is still up to date. In the December 2019 edition, Ms. Eleine helps us explore what it means to be "baptized", while this January 2020 edition, she explains, through this article, what it means to "be sent".

If we look at the four gospels, the account of the baptism of Jesus is placed before his ministry. After his baptism, Jesus then appeared in Galilee to finally begin his public ministry.

The baptism of Jesus therefore preceded his ministry. Likewise, we, the baptized, accept the task of being servants of God ready to launch out to accomplish the will of our Father. We

receive baptism to serve others as companions of God's work, to expand his Kingdom. Being baptized is not the end of our journey as children of God, but the beginning of our relationship with God to respond to his call to love and serve him.

To serve is not always easy, nor pleasant, it often passes by a way which cuts in our egoism; that's why we have difficulties to start it. But we have mandates and duties from the Lord; he therefore gives us the grace to faithfully fulfill our task as witnesses while remaining faithful to our baptismal promises.

Are we ready to work for him and be with him? This is the key to responding to the call of God. We are not ready to respond to God's call if our hearts, minds and opinions have not been renewed.

It is only after being renewed in the Holy Spirit that we can turn to ourselves and to others, to embrace the life of our world, to contemplate God himself as he wants. We must be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit which enables us to advance in faith and respond to his call.

The world sees what gives pleasure to the flesh but God gives what cannot be thought by our failing faculties, nor seen by our physical eyes.

Why are many afraid to follow the call of God? Because we see the challenges looming. There are also those who are afraid because they feel incapable. Often, there are also people who are afraid of wasting time, energy, thoughts, material. Many people count profits and losses from serving; they calculate. They are afraid of losing their pleasure and their freedom.

Steps of faith are therefore necessary to respond to God's call through our decisions, our commitments, our actions and our life choices. Yes, there is a price to pay! Yes, there is a pleasure to discover when we free ourselves from what is useless to our spiritual growth. Like the person who sells all his goods

to buy very beautiful pearls (Mt 13:45), we must abandon the attachments to creation or its goods to be able to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our might (Mark 12:30).

Following God is a real challenge, but we have nothing to fear because God himself promises to be with us until the end of time. We have also seen all the difficulties of the journey of the life of Jesus to the cross.

The world does not accept this, the world cannot know it. Therefore, we who want to be faithful to Him, we face many challenges: not understood by others, rejected, underestimated ... it is a renunciation that keeps coming continuously. But God Himself teaches us to carry the cross until the death of the flesh and to be glorified by the Father himself.

### **IF GOD CALLS, HE ALSO ENABLES US**

When God calls and sends, he accompanies and enjoins his disciples, as he promised Jeremiah, not to fear enemies and adversaries, because He, the almighty is with him. It's God's promise. Do we doubt the promise, the faithfulness and the capacity of our Lord?



What did the Lord say to the prophet Jeremiah when he wondered if he was able to receive a call and a mission from God? The Lord

answered (Jeremiah 1: 7-8): "Do not say, 'I am too young.' To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you—oracle of the LORD.

Then the LORD extended his hand and touched my mouth, saying to me, See, I place my words in your mouth! Today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, To uproot and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant" (Jeremiah 1: 7-10).

Do not weigh our capacity to carry out the ministry or to respond to the call of God in our lives, but only turn our eyes and our hearts to God who gives us all the will and the faculty to accomplish his project (cf. Phil. 2, 13).

Our role is to remain faithful, to trust, to rely on him and to hold on to him. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, who often described herself as a weak and helpless child - when she realized her sins - threw herself into the arms of her benevolent Father. Certainly we are weak, but by trusting in the mercy of God, we will be able to please his heart and fulfill his will.



Perhaps one day we will be surprised to see how it is possible to do this or that, to speak with confidence and firmness, while we are imbued with our shyness. Just like Peter who was afraid and betrayed Jesus, but who finally had the courage and daring to defend Jesus before the religious tribunal of the Jews. **It is**

**the work of the Holy Spirit that turns fear into courage, weakness into strength and incapacity into daring; it's thanks to HIM and in HIM.**

If we are chosen and anointed by God, he will shape and equip us at all times. It takes a long time to train or form the *servant*, but God the Father is patient with us. We can count on Him to complete his work in us.

Our part is to know Jesus, his Son, deeply, personally and intimately, longing for his presence, wishing to hear his voice and experience his love and kindness. After that, the Holy Spirit will continue to add to the knowledge and skills we need at all times to lead and guide others.

As Paul said in Colossians 2, 6-7: «As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted in him and built upon him and established in the faith as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving». Let us remain firm and rooted in Christ until we grow and bear fruit to produce works that bring others to God.

Baptism and the gift of eternal life are among the talents that we must develop and never hide from our own eyes. We must share these gifts and multiply them so that more people know Jesus and are saved. Remember, we are baptized to be his witnesses. ■



Interview:

**Incarnation,  
Consecration to Jesus through Mary  
and "Evangelization of Culture"**

Interview with  
**Sister Maria Sponsa Amabilis Araújo Medeiros, SSVM**  
General Councilor



Below is an interview with **Sister Maria Sponsa Amabilis**, General Assistant of the **Institute Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará (SSVM)**. This Congregation is part of the Religious Family of the **Incarnate Word**. For the members of this Congregation, **Consecration** is one of the Vows, in addition to the Vows of Poverty, Obedience and Chastity, which animate their whole life and their missionary work.

To know this Congregation is to find a form of embodiment of the Church's missionary enthusiasm in today's world.



**Y**our religious family is composed by the male branch, the *Institute of the Incarnate Word (IVE)*, founded in 1984 and the female branch, the *Institute Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará (SSVM)*, founded in 1988. Is it true that the two Institutes have the same Charism and the same Constitutions? How many members make up the Religious Family of the Incarnate Word?

Our union in the same spirit is the fact of having the same founder, the Rev. Fr. Carlos Miguel Buela and the same charism which is the evangelization of culture, that is to say, the prolongation of the Incarnation of the Word in all manifestations of man.

In addition to having this specific charism in the Church, we have attached to it, some elements that we consider "non- negotiable".

Our constitutions are twin, however, the two Institutes are legally independent (Instituto del "Verbo Encarnado":

<http://institutodelverboencarnado.org/> e Instituto "Servidoras del Señor y de la Virgen de Matará": <https://www.servidoras.org/>).

The two Institutes have a contemplative branch and an apostolic branch.

Currently the religious of our Religious Family (more than 60 nations) have around 2,250 members, of which 390 are priests (Institute of the Incarnate Word: 850 members; Institute Servants of the Lord and of the Virgin of Matará: 1,400 members).

**What are the "non negotiable" elements attached to the Charism? What are they?**

These are secondary elements but we consider them the same as the charism, they are not negotiable. These are elements that mark our Spirituality and our Religious Identity.

1. The worthy celebration and participation in the Holy Mass.
2. A serious Spirituality (we are looking for the great masters of spiritual life, such as Saint John of the Cross, Saint Teresa of Jesus, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Saint Louis-Marie Grignon...).
3. Docility to the Ecclesiastical Magisterium at all times.

4. The clear intention to follow the Magisterium of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

5. Apostolic and Missionary Creativity.

6. Strong Community Life and an atmosphere of joy.

7. To "bite" Reality.

This "biting" of reality, which is an expression of our own, means wanting to concretely and effectively carry out the work of Evangelization.

The healthy philosophy and the light of faith for the sacred mysteries, especially the

Incarnation and the Redemption, illuminate the same human realities of man, things, events and problems with a rational, but above all supernatural vision and in this way transform

them according to the spirit of the Incarnate Word.

8. The Emblematic Missions (places of difficult missions, apparently without apostolic fruit, where no one wants to go).

9. Works of Mercy (especially with the poor and disabled).

10. The Providential Vision of all of life.

11. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Our congregation was born under the mantle of the Virgin and takes place under its mantle. The spirituality of Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort helps us to live this reality in a deeper way through our fourth Vow of Consecration in Slavery of Love.



***It's interesting to see how your Institute has spread. In fact, you are present in 40 countries and you have vocations that come from 60 nationalities. According to you, what is the secret of this growth?***

Currently we are present in 40 countries on five continents:

Argentina, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Paraguay, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, United States,

Canada, English Guiana, Surinam, Mexico, Italy, Albania, Greece, Spain, Portugal, France, Holland, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Jordan, Palestine (Bethlehem and Gaza Strip), Israel, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Tunisia, Iraq, Tanzania and Papua New Guinea.



It is a grace to be able to help the Church in the proclamation of the Gospel. We say in our Constitutions (SSVM Constitutions, 254) and in the formula of Profession of Vows, not to "shirk the missionary adventure", thus, we seek to engage all of our forces in it, trying to encourage other people who have the same impetus, "go offshore, willing to live the requirements of the Gospel" (Cfr. Directory of Spirituality, 216).

We are very grateful for the free gift of God to bless us with new vocations. Without them, we could not be present in so many missions. This growth represents a great responsibility for us, which can be summed up in one word: fidelity. Faithfulness to the Holy Spirit and to the gift of charism obtained.

Each vocation is a master work of God and for that, the center and secret of all vocational pastoral care, must first be prayer, prayer for vocations. It is God who calls by a free initiative of his love, but to call he uses people and for this the testimony of an authentic Christian life, of the joy of being consecrated, it is fundamental.

When we do vocational accompaniment with the candidates, we do not hide that for us it is essentially the "love of the Cross". From the cross, Christ continues to draw many souls to Him. (Jn 12:32).

On this subject, I would like to tell you about a very beautiful spiritual activity which is carried out with the mothers and families of our vocations and opened to all those who want to join it. This is the "40 hour project" (Web link where the 40 hour project is presented: <https://40horas.org/>).

Such a project is nothing more than following what the Gospel says: «The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the Master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest». For this, these mothers and families meet every month for 40 hours (in turn) praying for the growth, perseverance and holiness of priestly and religious vocations in the Church and for the Religious Family of the Incarnate Word. Currently we have 3,000 people registered from different parts of the world, who agree to pray on the scheduled days, for 40 hours, for this intention.



**Your religious Family is called "the Incarnate Word".**

**The French School of Spirituality, to which each Montfortian is particularly united, emphasizes the mystery of the Incarnation in its contemplation, for this I am particularly interested to know for what reason your founder, the Rev. Father Carlos Miguel Buela, chose this name, could you explain it to us?**

**Is it a coincidence that the Institute of the Incarnate Word was founded on March 25, 1984, the Solemnity of the Incarnation (Annunciation)?**

**Is not the Incarnation your Spirituality?**

The main reason why our founder wanted the Congregation to be called "Incarnate Word" was born precisely from the great event of the Incarnation, which is the "first and fundamental

mystery of Jesus Christ". Also at that time, when the Institute was going to be founded, we were approaching the bimennium of this event.

Our spirituality is anchored in the mystery of the Incarnation, I mean, flows from the Person of the Word and from his Mother, so that in the Holy Spirit we can unite with the Father. From this mystery of the Incarnate Word, spring all the principles of the spiritual life of our Institute.

It was a great sign of Providence that the Institute started on the solemnity of the Incarnation of the Word, exactly the same day and year when the Holy Father, Saint John Paul II, with the Bishops of the whole world, consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We could say that in this way we are born from the Immaculate Heart of the Most Holy Mary.



***In n° 17 of your Constitutions is mentioned Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, great follower of the spirituality of the Incarnation of the French school, in relation to the "Consecration to Jesus Christ through the hands of Mary" in the Holy Spirit, which you called "Marian slavery".***

***This Consecration is considered by you as a fourth vow, as well as that of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. You mention this Consecration in your Constitutions, n° 17, in the context of the development of your mission in the Church: "Prolong the Incarnation in all things".***

***Could you tell us that this "Slavery to Mary", deeply united to the Incarnation and to mission, touches the deepest identity of your Religious Family, or rather, the "proper end" (Charism) for which this Family exists in the Church and in the world?***

Yes, this Consecration to Jesus through Mary in a maternal slavery of love deeply affects our identity and charism. We say that we are essentially Missionaries and Marians.

Like Mary, we want to strive to prolong the Incarnation in all things, and so as she was docile to the Holy Spirit, by her example we want to submit to Jesus Christ all that is authentically human, even in situations the most difficult and under the most adverse conditions (cf. Constitutions SSVM 30-31).

In addition, with the Vow of Slavery of Love, we seek to do two things; first, to give to the Virgin Mary all that we are and all that we have; and, secondly, it is our desire and intention to 'Marianize' all of our life, that is, to do all things through Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary, and thus be able to do everything through Jesus, with Jesus, in Jesus and for Jesus.



***How can we put into practice the words of number 17 of the Constitutions at the stage of Formation before the Novitiate and during the Novitiate?***

With regard to the "Marian Formation" of the Sisters, since the beginning of the Novitiate and already since the Postulancy, we seek to encourage the candidates to a sincere and deep devotion to Mary. In the Novitiate, when the Novices receive the religious habit, they also receive a new name. The first name of all names is Mary (in different languages), the second, an invocation of the Blessed Virgin, and so we are Mary twice.

In relation to the Ratio of Formation, one of the subjects taught is "Marian Theology", which is basically based on the explanation of the

"Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary" and deals with other aspects of the introduction of Mariology (In addition to studying the Works of Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, we also read other works by authors such as Saint Alphonsus de Liguori ("The Glories of Mary") and Antoine Royo Marín ("The Virgin Mary").

The Novices also make the Vow of "Marian Slavery" by which they prepare themselves with the reading of the True Devotion to Mary. They make the Vow at the end of the Novitiate. It is not a public vow because the novice is not yet religious legally speaking, but will have its character of public vow when the novice professes it for the first time with the Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.



***Incarnation, Consecration to Jesus through Mary (Marian Slavery) and "Evangelization of Culture" are a unity. Could you explain to us how you concretely translate this into the missions of your Religious Family?***

Saint John Paul II said that "God has never been so close to man - and man never so close to God - as precisely at this moment: in the moment of the mystery of the Incarnation" (Constitutions SSVM, 40).

The Evangelization of Culture, which is nothing other than prolonging the Incarnation in all the authentically human manifestation, seeking «to sum up all things in Christ» (Eph 1:10), found in the practice of Marian Slavery, an effective means, because we are "sure that, through Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word, we must

go to Him, and that she must form "great saints" (cf. Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, *Treatise on True Devotion*, n° 47).

Concretely in our missions we work to transform with the force of the Gospel, the criteria of judgment, determining values, the lines of thought, among other aspects. This is expressed by prolonging Christ in families, in education, in the means of communication, in men of thought, in concrete charity through works of mercy, in the preaching of popular missions and spiritual exercises, etc.

Generally our apostolates are very varied, because we understand that any legitimate manifestation of the life of man can and must be evangelized.



***I know that your Religious Family also has a Secular Third Order. Who can participate in it? What is their formation and how do they participate in your mission to evangelize culture?***

Lay faithful (individually or associated), family members of our religious, friends, benefactors who want to live the same charism and spirituality of our Religious Family, are part of our Third Order. This necessarily establishes deep and intimate spiritual relationships

between the members of the three parties that conform it (priests, religious, lay people). The union is such that none of these parts can disregard the others, without jeopardizing the mission that each has within the Religious Family of the Incarnate Word.

In accordance with the realities of each mission, we seek to form our Tertiary members by promoting various activities such as formation talks, days for young people and families, courses for academics, preaching of spiritual exercises, preparation for Consecration in maternal slavery of love, etc.

The commitments that our tertiary members assume are diverse, as we have three levels of membership.

Some of them work with greater commitment in our apostolic tasks, in education, in our works of mercy, in parish activities and in the preparation of various activities. In their secular commitments, they seek to be bearers of the Word, others with their prayers and sacrifices support our missions and our missionaries. Ultimately, they are all called to be a new Incarnation of the Word in the specific areas of lay life.



*In the book that you published for the 30th anniversary of the founding of your Institute, entitled: "1988-2018, 30° Aniversario de Fundación, Servidoras", I noted that you have three patron saints in*

*your religious family: Saint Joseph, Our Lady of Luján and Saint John Paul II. Could you explain to us their relationships with your Religious Family?*

### **Saint Joseph:**

In the history of salvation and in the mystery of the Incarnate Word, Saint Joseph, according to the plan of God, exercises a very particular and fundamental role, the closest to the Incarnate Word after his very Holy Mother. In addition to this motif, our close relationship with this Patriarch is that we are providentially born as an Institute on his feast day, March 19, 1988.

From the beginnings of our foundation, our Founder, transmitted to us devotion to the amiable Saint Joseph, taught us to recommend ourselves to him for 30 days, according to an ancient prayer and devotion attributed to Saint Teresa of Jesus, asking for different needs, spiritual and material. And so as he provided everything necessary for the Holy Family, also we too, we are witnesses of his all-powerful intercession and protection, since the graces obtained by the Saint Patriarch, are innumerable.



### **The Virgin of Luján:**

As our Spirituality flows from the Person of the Word and from his Most Holy Mother, we profess a special veneration for our Heavenly Mother, not only because she is the patroness of Argentina, the country where we were born as a Religious Family, but also for the close relationship it has with our vocations and missions.

When our Founder was still a seminarian, he frequently prayed in the Basilica of the Virgin of

Luján, asking her to orient many holy priestly and religious vocations.

Another close relationship is that the Virgin of Luján has always accompanied us in our missions. The first Missionaries who left Argentina for other countries, always took a replica of the image and thus was born spontaneously the love we have for her, the fact of being together in such distant countries, in very diverse cultures, in order to accompany us, guide us, protect us and bless us.

### **Saint John Paul II:**

From the beginning, our Founder considered him as "Father of our Religious Family". Our close relationship with this great pontiff is valued by various facts that unite us to him. I quote some of them:

- We count in our own Rules a few thousand citations from his very vast and profound Magisterium;
  - He was the inspirer, with his magisterium, of many elements of the charism of our Institute, which we consider as "non-negotiable";
  - The maternal slavery of love to the Most Holy Mary unites us to him, he was formed by Mary, of whom he professes himself a slave since his youth, according to the teachings of Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, of whose spirit we want to live through our fourth religious vow;
  - He contributed with his example and his teaching to our missionary commitment.
- In addition, we owe a lot to John Paul the Great, not only because he was a great pontiff and enriched and confirmed us in the faith, thanks to his Petrine ministry, but for having been a great father for us.



***In summer 2020, you plan to make a pilgrimage to a few places that have a relationship with Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, in the west of France. Could you tell us something about it and for what purpose?***

The objective of this pilgrimage is to renew our Consecration to Jesus through Mary, in the deepest possible way. We will renew our vow of slavery and we will ask with the support of the words of Saint Louis-Marie when he said to God: "Remember your Congregation!", The grace of obtaining good missionaries from God and obtaining the gift of Wisdom to know, savor and practice virtue; in addition to having it practiced and savored by others.

This pious pilgrimage will take place, God willing, at the end of July 2020. All the members of the Religious Family who are able to unite (physically or at least spiritually) are invited. The joint activities will be in Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre and Pontchâteau. There will be the possibility, before or after, of making pilgrimages to other places where Saint Louis-Marie has been.

As preparation for this pilgrimage, we will work during this year to spread the reading of the works of Saint Louis-Marie. We have developed a small project, with the theme "May Jesus reign through Mary", to stimulate all of our communities, dispersed in different parts of the world, to carry out different "Marian Activities", whether spiritual, formative and cultural. Our desire is, for example, to make a musical concert using some hymns composed by Saint Louis-Marie.

We have prepared a website, [www.regeomaria.org](http://www.regeomaria.org). There we will publish various materials which will help us to better prepare the Pilgrimage and the Renewal of our Vows.

Another initiative that we have planned is to make, in May 2020, a "Preparatory" Marian Pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Loreto, since this sanctuary has a close relationship with the Incarnate Word and Saint Louis-Marie. In addition to all this, there are many other "Marian activities" that will be carried out in the various missions of our Institute around the world.





***I have heard that your Religious Family intends to translate the True Devotion to Mary in those languages in which your missions are present and in which such translation does not exist. It is truly a wonderful initiative! Could you tell us the reason that prompted you to start this beautiful project and when, indicatively, do you plan to start making it?***

We thought of translating the True Devotion to Mary in some places of mission where we are and in which this precious book is not translated. The translation would be done with the help of our missionaries in places like Papua New Guinea (in Pidgin), in Albania (in Albanian), in Tanzania (Swahili). We hope that our Missionaries can quickly start this great project, which has no other goal than to bring to a maximum of people the

kingdom of Jesus through Mary. We have no doubt that the method presented to us by Saint Louis-Marie is a safe, easy and perfect way to achieve this goal. ■



«We will renew our vow of slavery and we will ask with the support of the words of Saint Louis-Marie when he said to God: "Remember your Congregation!", The grace of obtaining good missionaries from God and obtaining the gift of Wisdom....»



Sharing:

## **Taking Mary Home: Living My Christian Life as a Consecrated Person**

*by Ana Marie Festin Fondevilla*



It is recorded in the life of Blessed Marie-Louise Trichet that when her sister Elizabeth came home exclaiming: “Marie-Louise, what a beautiful sermon I have heard, that priest must be a saint.” Right there and then, Marie-Louise decided she wanted to be guided by this priest from Montfort. When Marie-Louise knelt for confession with Fr. Louis Marie de Montfort, he asked her: “Who brought you to

me, my daughter?” “My sister, Father.” “No, my daughter,” Fr. De Montfort told her, “it was not your sister who you brought you to me, it was the Blessed Virgin Mary.” This meeting changed the course of her life.

I was 14, in 1974, when I was invited to the Legion of Mary, through my eldest sister, Emma. She was invited a few months earlier.

Two legionaries visited us to follow her up. They saw and invited me to join the junior praesidium (group). The weekly meetings, apostolate and activities helped me to know more about Jesus and Mary and developed my love for them. That was also how I came to know about St. Louis Marie de Montfort.



May I boldly say that if St. Louis Marie is to ask me the same question he asked Marie-Louise: "Who brought you to me, Ana Marie?" I would answer the same: "My sister, St. Louis Marie." I guess he would also say: "No, Ana Marie, it was not your sister who brought you to me; it was the Blessed Virgin Mary."

Indeed, there are people God has placed in our paths, family and friends, and we are thankful and grateful to them, but first and foremost it is Our Lord and Our Lady who chose us and called each one of us by name. In the Legion of Mary we have this saying: "It is not you who chose Mary, it is Mary who chose you."

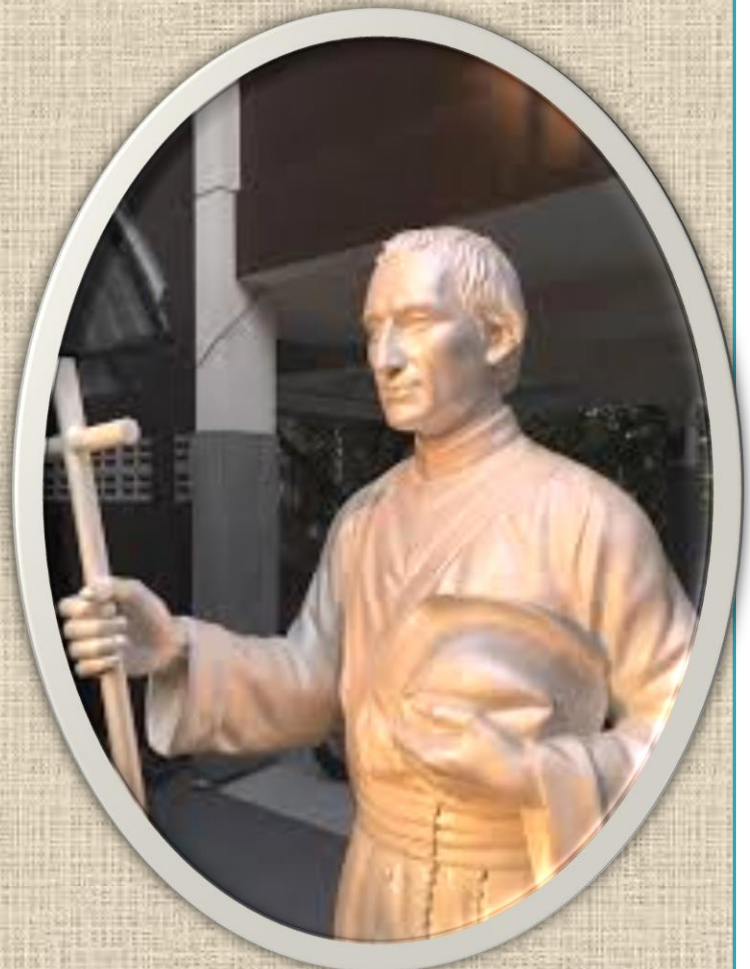
May 23-25, 1986, I attended the Legionary retreat conducted by Fr. Claude Sigouin, SMM. He and Fr Mario Belotti, SMM arrived in 1984 to start the SMM foundation in the Philippines. Though I had attended the April 1986 retreat given by a Jesuit priest, our Legion of Mary president and retreat organizer, Sister Carmen Zacarias (the one who recruited me in the Legion) prodded me to attend this May retreat.

Never did I know that it would change the course of my life. When I went for confession and consultation Fr. Claude lent me Montfort's

book "*The Love of Eternal Wisdom*". I know Montfort wrote the "*True Devotion to Mary*", "*Secret of Mary*" and the "*Secret of the Rosary*", but I didn't hear about this book. I was deeply touched by what he wrote in it. My first impression was that this little book is so simple yet so deep. It was a classic, a masterpiece and a treasure. I felt Montfort was sharing the deepest thoughts of his heart.

I savoured Montfort's words as I took notes from its 17 chapters most especially LEW #s: 64-66 (on friendship), 70-71 (on the Eucharist), 133-153 (on Jesus' Words & Maxims), 180 (on the Cross), 203 (on Mary).

When I returned the book before the retreat was over, Fr. Claude invited me to join the Totus Tuus Journey (TTJ). I asked if I can bring along legionary friends and he said yes. I brought two. One of them was Nancy David, who became the first Filipino Daughter of Wisdom in 1993.



It was May 31, 1986, feast of Mary's Visitation when the three of us attended our very first Totus Tuus Journey session. It was the first session on the Knowledge of Self with Fr. Mario Belotti, SMM.

We were graced to attend all the succeeding Saturday TTJ sessions until we made our Consecration on December 8, that year.



Montfort said: *The Consecration is a perfect renewal of our Baptismal Vows.* I had a surprise of my life - I found out one of those who made the Consecration with me was the sister of my godmother. Each Saturday we saw each other, yet it was only at that last moment that I came to know we are from the same province (Romblon).

She provided the link of my Baptism to my Consecration! I was born August 19, 1960 and was baptized 9 days after: August 28, feast of St. Augustine. On my Consecration Day, I thought of my mother and my father and felt their presence. I see it as a special gift from Jesus and Our Blessed Mother.

May 31 and December 8, both Marian feasts, will forever be etched in my heart and mind as Mary's special visitation and companionship with me leading to deeper communion and union of Heart and Will with hers.

According to Montfort, the heart, the essence of Consecration to Jesus Wisdom is summed

up in 4 words: **Through, With, In, For (TWIF).** It is doing everything **through, with, in, for Mary** – and the goal is that we may do everything **more perfectly through, with, in, for Jesus.**

Montfort noticed that there are only few who live these interior practices, and it is to increase their number that he has written down what he had been teaching with success in his mission for many years! (cf TD 110).

When we do all our actions through, with, in, for Mary – we are taking Mary home with us, into our hearts, into our inner being, into the totality of our person. We see this manifested in the life of Montfort, Marie-Louise, Frank Duff, Edel Quinn, St John Paul II and St Mother Teresa of Calcutta, to name a few.

### **1. How do I live my Consecration to Jesus THROUGH Mary?**

In True Devotion to Mary (TD 1) Montfort wrote: "It is through Mary that Jesus came into the world, it is also **through Mary** that he will reign in the world." God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit placed their trust and included Mary in the plan of salvation.



When I went to Papua New Guinea (PNG), with my co-legionary Nancy David, as a lay missionary with the Montfort Catholic Mission – I entrusted our mission to Mary’s care and protection.

For me it was a plunge into the unknown. Treading into an uncertain path, Mary became Our Star that guided our life and mission with our Papuan brothers and sisters.



We left the Philippines and arrived in PNG, May 31, 1987 – feast of Mary’s Visitation and the first anniversary of our Totus Tuus Journey. Riding on the plane with us was the Legion of Mary statue of our Blessed Mother, a gift of our Praesidium, Mary Queen of All Hearts, for the Legion of Mary that we will set up in PNG.

I consider our mission for two years there as Mary’s Visitation to her Papuan children. As we went about our pastoral and educational work, we set up 3 Legion of Mary praesidia at St Peter Parish, Boset, Western Province, PNG. ***Living the Consecration through Mary is growing in trust while being held in her hands.***

## **2. How do I live my Consecration to Jesus WITH Mary?**

Jesus spent thirty years of his life in Nazareth **with Mary**: few words recorded his hidden and simple life with her and St. Joseph. In Lk 2:40 we read: “He grew in size, and strength, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.”

With Mary I had made my important decisions in life. I sought her light and guidance as I treasured, pondered and acted upon the mysterious and surprising ways of God. One of these decisions was when I let go of a permanent teaching position at St. Theresa’s College to answer God’s call for the Papuan Mission. It was a leap of faith with Mary and it is with her courage that I went there. Montfort wrote to Marie Louise: “If you don’t take risks for God, you will never do anything worthwhile for Him.”



It is also with Mary that I carried the crosses of my life. Death in the family is one of them. Even at a young age I always felt Mary’s presence and protection. I was 7 years old, when my mother died at age 44 (1967), leaving behind 11 children, I am the 9<sup>th</sup>; I was 19 when my father died (1979). What is common is that they both died on the feasts of Mary: December 16, Our Lady of Salvation and December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe.



**“Taking Mary Home” (cf. John 19:27)**

My mother and father were very devoted to Our Blessed Mother. They chose October 7 (1943), feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, as their wedding day. It is a common belief that those who are close to Our Lady are taken from this life on her feast day. We were comforted by this thought. It is as if Mary is saying to us: "I am with you in your sorrow – do not worry about them; they are with me and I am with them as they are born to eternal life."

This event confirmed what Montfort wrote in the Secret of Mary: "The crosses of those who entrust themselves to Mary are rather like sweetmeats, i.e. 'sweetened' crosses rather than 'bitter ones'." (SM 22). In truth and in fact, Mary is the sweetness of my crosses. She journeys with me as I try to see the Wisdom in my big and little crosses. ***Living the Consecration with Mary is growing with the mind of Mary.***

### **3. How do I live my Consecration to Jesus IN Mary?**

Mary is the world of God. Montfort wrote: "God-made-man found freedom in imprisoning himself **in her womb**. He displayed power in allowing himself to be borne by this young maiden." (TD 18).

My mother's name is Mariana. My name, Ana Marie, is an inverted form of hers. She left us a rich legacy of her thoughts and Marian traits through her letters (1960-1967). I was born in 1960, when our eldest sister left home to study in Manila.

Letters were sent to and from Romblon. While I was in her womb, she wrote and invited my sister to join her in praying the Nine-Wednesday joint Petition and Thanksgiving to Our Mother of Perpetual Help that I may be safely born. In my mother's womb, I have already been entrusted to Mary. So for me to "live in the heart or in the womb of Mary" is to confirm what my mother prayed and desired as I was growing inside her.

Ever since I read the book "Secret of Mary" in 1981 as a legionary and more so after my Consecration in 1986, I have been praying the beautiful prayer of Fr Jean-Jacques Olier so loved and recommended by St Louis-Marie: "Jesus Living in Mary".

I pray it as I receive Jesus in Holy Communion. My favourite song says it also:

Jesus living in Mary,  
come and love in me;  
Jesus loving in Mary,  
come and love in me;  
Jesus giving in Mary,  
come and give in me.

***Living the Consecration in Mary is growing in the heart of Mary.***

### **4. How do I live my Consecration to Jesus FOR Mary?**

July of 1990 I joined the formation process of the Daughters of Wisdom. With pain in my heart yet at peace with my decision and after discernment process in prayer with my Novice Mistress and my Spiritual Director, I left the Novitiate October 1992. I went home to Romblon.

After six months of silence and solitude, and with the loving support of my brothers and sisters and Marian friends, I gradually got involved in my home parish.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit I revived the Legion of Mary in our parish of St Andrew and was elected parish treasurer. The Great Jubilee Year 2000 was extra special for us as we also celebrated the Silver Jubilee of our Parish and of our Diocese. October 2000 we had our First Diocesan Synod, fruit of a 3-year preparatory phase 1997-1999. A lot of meetings, seminars and formation sessions went with all of these. With Mary and FOR Mary I undertook all of these actions and projects.

Taking my Consecration as a way of life I cannot dissociate myself from Montfort's spirituality. Since October 1993, whenever I

am in Manila I was giving the Totus Tuus Journey with two other pioneer TTJ lay facilitators: Sister Paz Soriano and Lina Nonog.

In 2003, I became a member of the Friends of Wisdom (Associate of the Daughters of Wisdom) which was formally started when they celebrated their 300 years. I was asked to do the script of the 10 Minute Presentations on the Life of Marie Louise: "The Heart of Wisdom's 300 Years" in English and Filipino. I was chosen to be one of the Delegates to go to France, August 2003.

It was a grace and a gift to be in St Laurent-sur-Sevre and other important Montfortian places, almost on my 43<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Thank you Jesus, Mary, Montfort and Marie-Louise!

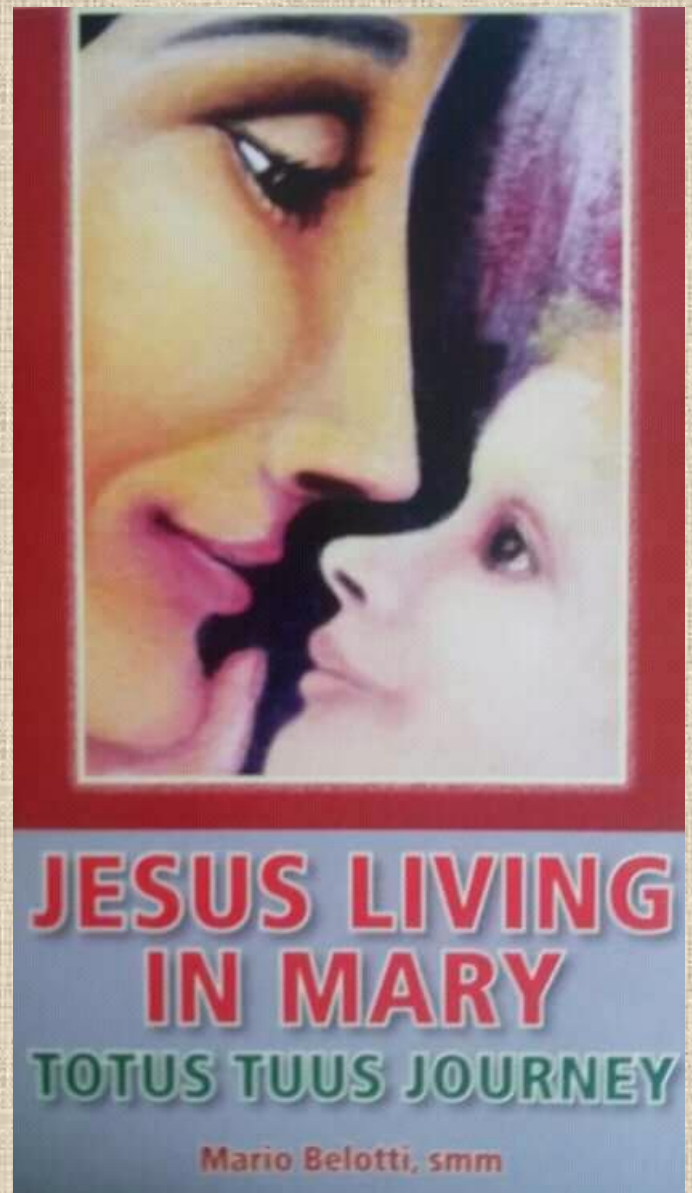
In 2005, while making the script for the 10 minute Presentation on the life of Montfort: "A Journey into the Heart of a Founder" for SMM's 300 Years, I was offered through Fr Richard Magararu, SMM to take Masteral Study in Theology.

Both Fr Paul Arnel Lucero, SMM my Thesis Adviser, and Fr Mario Belotti, SMM, my "remote" mentor in Malawi, gave valuable assistance and gentle proddings for me to finish my thesis. (cf. SMM News Archives NU-PHL-74, 2013).

In January 2016, Fr Mario Belotti, SMM, was inspired to write the new Totus Tuus Journey Book "Jesus Living In Mary" in celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Totus Tuus Journey in the Philippines. It was a joy and a blessing to undertake this Marian task of proofreading the contents of this new, timely and grace filled TTJ manual.

In May 2017, I was asked to give Wisdom Spirituality to the Staff and Teachers of the Montfort Bros. of St Gabriel in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah and to their Montfort Associates Movement (MAM) members in Singapore through Bro. Thomas Paul.

I went there with another Montfort Associate and TTJer, Fe Habijan. (The Bros of St Gabriel are present in my home province since 2009).



45 years have passed since I came to know of St Louis Marie de Montfort through the Legion of Mary, 33 years of those have been as a Totus Tuus Journeyer. Both events have been turning points in my life. It has lead me to who and where I am now, a Friend of Wisdom, an Associate of the Montfort Missionaries (AMM), a lay facilitator of the Totus Tuus Journey, a member of the Spirituality Team of the Association of Mary, Queen of All Hearts – Philippines since it was formally established in April 2018.



***Living the Consecration for Mary is making her known, loved and served so Jesus maybe more known, loved and served in our world of today.***

To conclude, I take Montfort's Prayer and Dream (cf TD 217) as my dream and prayer, too.

*“When will souls breathe Mary as the body breathe air? When will that happy time come, that age of Mary when many souls, chosen by Mary and given her by the Most High God, will hide themselves completely in the depths of her soul becoming living copies of Mary, loving*

*and glorifying Jesus. When that time comes, wonderful things will happen on earth. The Holy Spirit, with Mary, will produce wonders of grace. That day will dawn only when the devotion I teach is understood and put into practice. Lord, may your kingdom come! May the reign of Mary come!”*

Ana Marie Festin Fondevilla  
Quezon City, Philippines  
December 6, 2019 ■

**News:**

**CONSECRATION,  
THE CORE OF THE LIFE OF A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST**

**by Jimmy Carvallo**



**R**UTENG, Indonesia – The celebration of the Consecration of the new members of the Association Mary Queen of All Hearts (AMQAH) brought together hundreds of faithful and a number of Religious at the Chapel of the Montfort Missionaries in Ruteng, Manggarai, on Thursday, November 21, 2019, during a wonderful afternoon. Among the participants were the Daughters of Wisdom, the group of Friends of Wisdom, Montfortian Novices, members of the Montfort Youth, leaders of base communities and AMQAH members of each batch or promotion.

The celebration was presided by the Regional Director of the Association of Flores, Fr. Ariston Laurensius, SMM. It began with the declaration of each new member's promise of fidelity to the Word of God. Then the members renewed their Baptismal Promises and Vows. After that followed the recitation of the Consecration prayer with the Contract of Fidelity. We need to note that there were 23 members of AMQAH 2019 who made their first Consecration.



During his speech at the common reception in the novitiate room of the Montfort Missionaries, Fr. Lodovikus, SMM Master of Novices and Superior of the Community, said that the AMQAH is present to witness the Gospel through the way of life of its members. "We

must realize that the **AMQAH is not primarily a prayer group, but a group of witnesses to the truth of the Gospel, according to the state of life of its members. What is important, is that we can bear witness to the Gospel. Of course, we must also live**

personally if we want our witness to pass on to others in an authentic way," said Fr. Lodovikus.

This witness to the Gospel for each member of the AMQAH, continued Fr. Lodovikus, started from our own family: it is enough to see the love that manifests in family relationships (husband and wife, parents and children ). With and through this, the Gospel is truly lived in the families of AMQAH members and in the wider environment of their families.

**"This is what needs to be done. Besides being quantitative, we hope that AMQAH will also grow qualitatively, in the sense that the way of living our faith as disciples of Christ will be even better than before. If before and after the Consecration our way of life is still as routine, we must ask ourselves if we really deepened the spirit of Saint Louis-Marie de Monfort ",** declared Fr. Lodovikus.



*« The AMQAH is not primarily a prayer group, but a group of witnesses to the truth of the Gospel, according to the state of life of its members. »*

# SAINT LOUIS-MARIE DE MONTFORT

## HYMN 16 POWER OF FASTING 12° Hymn

1.  
Join fasting to prayer,  
Said an angel to Tobias,  
Nothing is so sweet, nor so good.  
I beg you, let us learn  
Three secrets to gain ourselves a crown  
And place ourselves upon the throne,  
To wit: prayer, fasting,  
And alms-giving.



2.  
Take care not to be caught off guard  
By a very common error.  
This is how I shall define  
What fasting is:  
One meal per day,  
Abstaining from meat,  
With a collation,  
But not a large one.

3.  
Fasting is, in the Lord's eyes,  
One of the beautiful sacrifices  
Which human beings make to his greatness;  
He takes delight in it.  
This was the first commandment

He gave to the first man,  
To abstain absolutely  
From eating an apple.

4.  
As soon as Adam, by misfortune,  
Transgressed this holy fast,  
He became a miserable sinner,  
And lost all his fortune.  
If fasting was necessary  
In that garden of delights,  
In truth it is even more so  
In this place of torture.

5.  
Without fasting you are merely flesh,  
Says our supreme God;  
I cannot triumph over it,  
I cannot even stay there;  
But if, by your sacred fast,  
You mortify yourself,  
Then you are consecrated to me,  
And I achieve my glory in you.

6.  
Great and long were the fasts  
Of the wise of yesteryear,  
The prophets and the conquerors  
And all those marked by greatness.  
Fasting gave them their fire,  
Filled them with grace,  
Allowed them to speak with God,  
Even face to face.

7.  
But what should surprise us most,  
And is worthy of our astonishment,  
Is that God himself was pleased to fast  
For forty days together,  
Without anything to eat or drink,  
In silence and in prayer,  
Without sparing himself or seeking relief  
In any way whatsoever.



8.  
He fasted so as to teach us  
To fast in this same way;  
He fasted to prepare himself  
For his divine baptism,  
To vanquish the proud devil,  
Puffed up with arrogance,  
And lastly to be able to go anywhere  
To preach penance.

9.  
Without fasting you cannot save  
A soul which is so carnal.  
Without fasting you cannot take captive  
The flesh which is so rebellious.  
A body deprived of fasting is as good as dead,  
It brings forth only misdeeds,  
It is a tyrant, cruel and strong,  
Which casts down to hell.

10.  
Had he fasted, Adam would have been able  
To retain his innocence;  
But without fasting, he was corrupted  
By his own intemperance.  
Without fasting you cannot bring forth  
The worthy fruits of penance,  
Worthy, that is, of Paradise  
And its rewards.

11.  
It is by prayer and fasting,  
Says the Savior of the world,

That the demon is conquered and chased  
away,  
Along with every unclean spirit.  
Without fasting, you will be so battered  
That you will no longer be invincible;  
You will in the end be destroyed  
By a terrible misfortune.

12.  
Without fasting, you succumb to sleep,  
Weighed down with sadness;  
By fasting you are strengthened  
And filled with joy.  
Fasting, and every austerity,  
Is like a lightweight wing  
Which can carry up to holiness  
The coarsest soul.

13.  
Meat veils our reason  
In a very dark cloud.  
Fasting makes for a good mind,  
Sharpens the memory,  
Dissipates all obscurity,  
Gets rid of every stain,  
And causes us to see all truth,  
Even the most obscure.

14.  
See what power fasting has,  
And how incisive its strength!  
It brings complete freedom  
To the soul that is held captive;  
It subjects the spirit to faith,  
And the heart to its flame;  
It subjects the whole person to the law,  
And the body to the soul.

15.  
Mark well that the body of the damned  
Is really fattened up,  
While that of the predestined  
Has the fat trimmed away.  
Fasting strips away from this animal,  
This cruel beast,  
The means of doing evil  
To our immortal soul.

16.  
A body which is thin and withered  
Has sinful moods no more,  
Which lead us all to sin,  
Without anyone else to tempt us.  
Fasting, in truth, draws us away  
From every odious pleasure,  
And clothes us in purity

Of body and of soul.

17.

More miserable people  
Have perished through gluttony  
Than fearful enemies put to death  
By the two-edged sword.  
Our ancient fathers, fasting often,  
Drove out sickness,  
While we who fast little nowadays  
Are shortening our lives.

18.

On the admission of any good doctor,  
Or of a good apothecary,  
There is no remedy so divine  
As a salutary fast.  
Have a good but sober dinner,  
And take little in the evening,  
And you will certainly live  
Just as long as our fathers.

19.

All who belong to Jesus Christ,  
Mortify themselves in all things,  
Fast in the body and in spirit,  
Always crucifying themselves;  
But the reprobate give in willingly  
To their inordinate desires:  
One will be drunk, another intoxicated;  
They love only their bellies.

20.

So fast, but in the right way;  
Fasting imprudently,  
Which is always displeasing to God,  
Gains no reward.  
The devil himself has his fasters,  
Hypocritical ones,  
Who, deceived themselves, are deceivers  
And completely without merit.

21.

Fast with severity,  
Observing without equivocation  
Both quantity and quality,  
Following the advice of a wise person,  
In accord with the commandments  
Of God and the Church,  
On Vigils and Ember-days,  
And through the whole of Lent.

22.

Fast in humility,  
Without appearing to do so;  
Guard yourselves from vanity,  
Do not fast to impress.

Conceal, as far as you can,

By washing your face,

All the fasts which you keep:

This fasting is filled with grace.



23.

Fast without self-will,  
For the Lord makes clear  
That, when your fast is spoilt by this,  
He hates and detests it;  
And that, however good it may appear  
In the eyes of creatures,  
It belongs to the devil  
And at bottom is nothing but filth.

24.

To fast well and with safety,  
Observe obedience;  
This is a great matter of holiness,  
As well as of prudence.  
A fast undertaken at the behest of another  
Has much more merit  
Than a thousand in which you follow  
Simply your own choice.

25.

For a fast to be meritorious,  
You must do it in God's grace,  
Otherwise it has little merit,

Or even no glory at all.  
Abstain from all sin:  
This kind of fast is essential,  
And no-one is incapable of this;  
We can and must do it.

26.  
Fasting and austerity  
Must be coupled with prayer,  
Not forgetting charity  
And alms-giving to our brother.  
Through this threefold assistance, you will  
obtain  
A renewal of grace,  
And then, at the end of your life,  
Eternal glory.



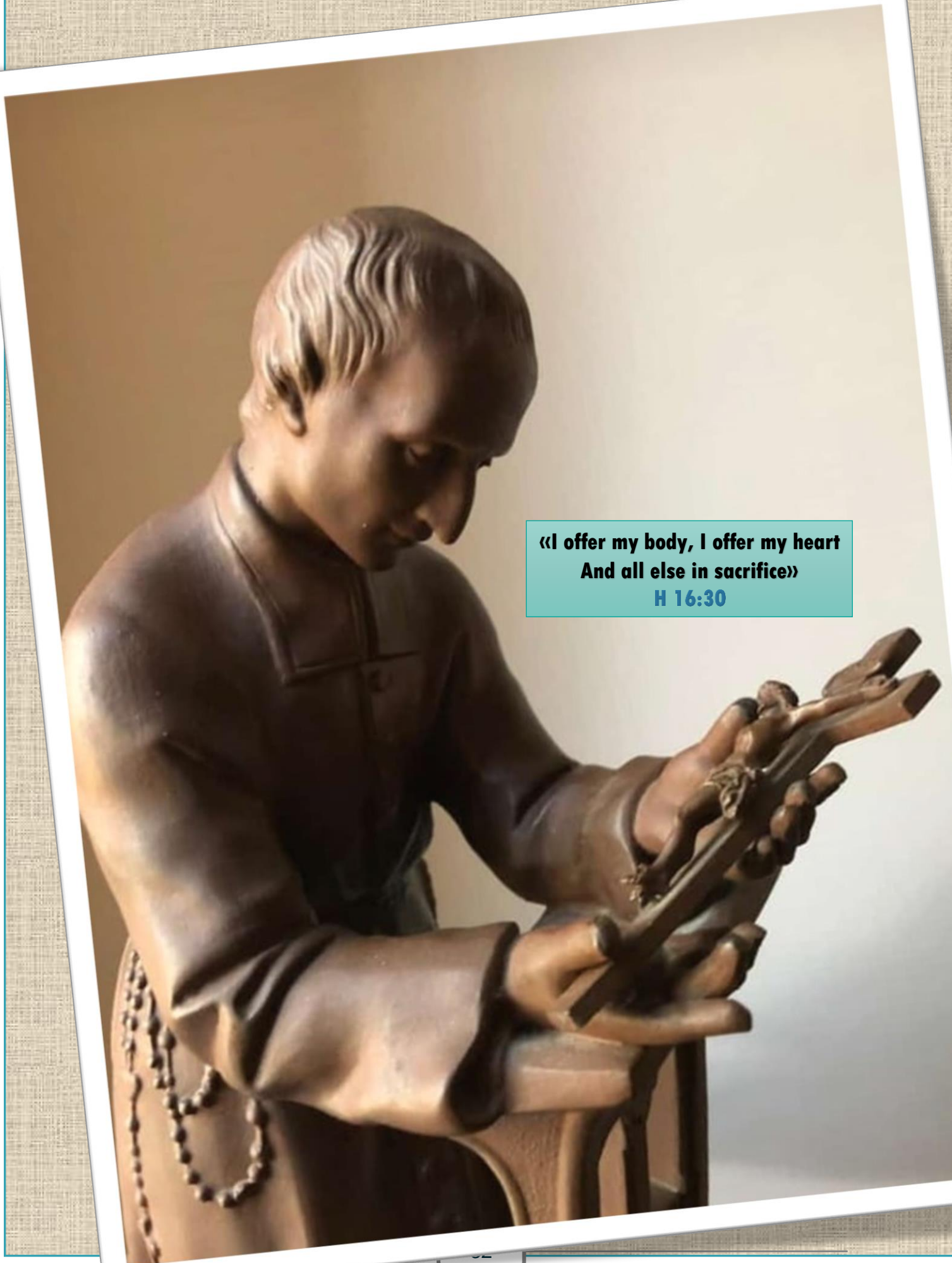
27.  
If through sickness or infirmity,  
Holy obedience,  
Or some other necessity,  
You are dispensed from fasting,  
To make up for it, you should perform  
Some other penance:  
Pray more, or give alms  
With greater generosity.

28.  
By fasting, here, I also mean  
The hair shirt and girdle,  
Keeping vigil and taking the discipline,  
And sleeping on a hard bed.  
This is what the saints did.  
Follow in their steps,  
And like them you will be perfect  
And will receive the graces they did.  
29.  
Either you break with God's spirit  
Or with your miserable flesh:  
Choose, beloved soul, there is no middle way,  
If you wish to be happy  
And have your God, eternal Wisdom,  
To dwell with you;  
Renounce yourself, lay down the law  
For this rebellious flesh.

30.  
Lord, I am thoroughly wicked  
And full of weakness,  
Sensual throughout,  
And full of delicacy.  
It is only right that a sinner  
Should avenge you and punish himself:  
I offer my body, I offer my heart  
And all else in sacrifice.



31  
I want to keep watch, to fast, to pray,  
For the rest of this my life,  
To offer you in sacrifice  
A divine host.  
Grant, Lord, your blessing  
On this living victim,  
Deign to uphold me everywhere  
With your all-powerful grace.  
GOD ALONE. ■



**«I offer my body, I offer my heart  
And all else in sacrifice»  
H 16:30**