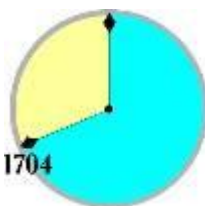


## 9. EVENT: Final editing of *The Love of Eternal Wisdom*



- **DATE** : 1704 according to the tradition
- **PLACE** : Rue du Pot de Fer, Paris
- **VALUE** : Experience of the love of Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom for me; my response to this love
- **THE STORY** :



After his painful experience in Poitiers, where he had seen his apostolic endeavours paralysed and rejected out of jealousy and the inertia of people who were upset by change and novelty, Montfort examined himself and retired to the Rue du Pot de Fer.

His prayer and reflection led him to put down on paper what was the basis of his faith, which was solidly established and would be the source of his life and message until the end of his days. What he wrote then was "*The Love of Eternal Wisdom*". This book, in which he brings together the themes he had developed in conferences at the Seminary of the Holy Spirit, was his response to the crisis which had been threatening to stifle him.

Wisdom, for him, is Jesus Christ himself, the Incarnate Son of God, who invites us to live with him the mystery of the Incarnation, which includes the mystery of the cross on the journey towards God. We recognise in this work by Montfort the portrait of Jesus Christ that he would proclaim in all his preaching.

The Jesus portrayed by Montfort is always gentle, humble, welcoming, affectionate, warm, loving; he is the friend of the poor, the friend of children, the friend of sinners. He is neither authoritarian nor doctrinaire, he does not condemn; on the contrary he seeks out his lost sheep. He does not quench the smouldering flax. He is always ready to welcome and to forgive... And he never ceases to remind us: "There is your Mother!"

For certain intellectuals, Montfort can sometimes seem to possess a disarming simplicity. But one needs to have had a deep encounter with the love and tenderness of God to be able to describe so simply the great mystery of our faith. Montfort is so much at ease with God that he can speak of him without using grand words, and he does this through his pen. It seems something natural for him. He has the heart of a child before God:

this gives him a simplicity of welcoming and a simplicity of word. He shares with us what he himself has received and meditated on, because he believes in it with a child's trust.

His words are full of tenderness when he speaks of Jesus coming to us. Basing himself on the Book of Wisdom, which he says is like "a letter written by a lover to win the affections of his loved one"—to win our friendship (LEW 65), he enables us to discover already in this Wisdom, which would become incarnate in Jesus, the love that was determined to give itself to the full.

This little book is a summary of all of Montfort's thought. He would later give explicit form in *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* to what is already very clear in chapter 17 of this book, which includes the formula of the Consecration to Jesus through Mary.

● **FROM MONTFORT'S WRITINGS:** (*The Love of Eternal Wisdom*, 64-65)

64. The bond of friendship between eternal Wisdom and man is so close as to be beyond our understanding. Wisdom is for man and man is for Wisdom. "He is an infinite treasure for man," (*Wisd.* 7:14) and not for angels or any other creatures.

Wisdom's friendship for man arises from man's place in creation, from his being an abridgement of eternal Wisdom's marvels, his small yet ever so great world, his living image and representative on earth (cf. Nos. 35-38). Since Wisdom, out of an excess of love, gave himself up to death to save man, he loves man as a brother, a friend, a disciple, a pupil, the price of his own blood and co-heir of his kingdom. For man to withhold his heart from Wisdom or to wrench it away from him would constitute an outrage.

65. This eternal beauty, ever supremely loving, is so intent on winning man's friendship that for this very purpose he has written a book in which he describes his own excellence and his desire for man's friendship. This book reads like a letter written by a lover to win the affections of his loved one, for in it he expresses such ardent desires for the heart of man, such tender longings for man's friendship, such loving invitations and promises, that you would say he could not possibly be the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth and at the same time need the friendship of man to be happy.

● **LIGHT FROM THE BIBLE:** (*Wisdom 6:12-22*)

Wisdom is brilliant, she never fades. By those who love her, she is readily seen, by those who seek her, she is readily found. She anticipates those

who desire her by making herself known first. Whoever gets up early to seek her will have no trouble but will find her sitting at the door. Meditating on her is understanding in its perfect form, and anyone keeping awake for her will soon be free from care. For she herself searches everywhere for those who are worthy of her, benevolently appearing to them on their ways, anticipating their every thought. For Wisdom begins with the sincere desire for instruction, care for instruction means loving her, loving her means keeping her laws, attention to her laws guarantees incorruptibility, and incorruptibility brings us near to God; the desire for Wisdom thus leads to sovereignty. If then thrones and sceptres delight you, monarchs of the nations, honour Wisdom, so that you may reign forever. What Wisdom is and how she was born, I shall now explain; I shall hide no mysteries from you, but shall follow her steps from the outset of her origin, setting out what we know of her in full light, without departing from the truth.

● **PERSONAL INTEGRATION/SHARING**

- How have I become aware of the love of Christ for me, personally?
- How have I felt the need to respond to this love, and how have I decided to do this?
- What is it that nourishes my relationship with Christ?
- What might damage my relationship with Christ?

● **PRAYER/CELEBRATION**

Let us enter into the ardent desire of Montfort; let us enter into his prayer full of confidence; and let us pray with his own words: “Wisdom, come then, through Mary’s faith.” (*Hymn 124:8*).

Wisdom, come then, through Mary’s faith.

- O Eternal Wisdom, present in the mystery of God, revelation of His Being,

Wisdom, come then, through Mary’s faith.

- O Eternal Wisdom, in whom God the Father finds his love and delight,

Wisdom, come then, through Mary’s faith.

- O incarnate Wisdom, forever united with our humanity and our fragility,

Wisdom, come then, through Mary’s faith.

- O Wisdom, friend of human beings, you who seek them out on the world’s roads,

Wisdom, come then, through Mary’s faith.

- O generous Wisdom, who set the table and pour the wine for us all,

Wisdom, come then, through Mary's faith.

- O Wisdom, who loves us with the folly of the Cross,  
Wisdom, come then, through Mary's faith.

- **SYMBOL:** A manuscript page from LEW

- **COMMITMENT:**

- Read the principal passages of *The Love of Eternal Wisdom* (chapters VI, VII, XIII, XV, XVI, XVII)

