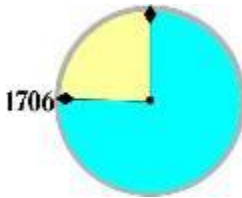
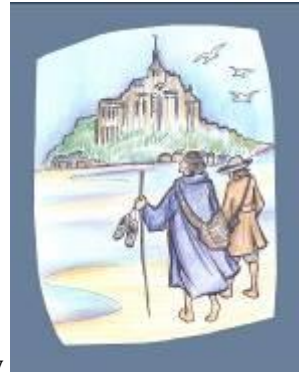


13. EVENT: Pilgrimage to Mont-St-Michel

- **DATE** : 1706: 29 September to 15 October approximately
- **PLACE** : Mont-St-Michel
- **VALUE** : Pilgrimage, spiritual journeying.
- **THE STORY** :



‘In this way, he travels, stage by stage, to the first destination of this pilgrimage he has mapped out for himself: Mont-Saint-Michel. It is the end of September, the Eve of the Feast of Saint Michael when Louis Grignon and Brother Mathurin arrive at the beach scrubbed clean by the incoming and outgoing tides of the sea. In a kind of battle-vigil, Louis kneels at the feet of the Archangel and asks, as Le Crom has put it, for that gentle valour which will be the inner force of his imminent campaign as a missionary. ‘Louis spends fifteen days in that fortified citadel which seems to hang between the sky and the ocean: fifteen days among the flights of the seagulls and the chanting of the monks, which soars to the vaults of the Abbey-Church. His eyes contemplate and his heart leaps upward, for the spectacle is marvellous: from its mighty foundation of rock, the whole citadel leaps upward in inspired vertical flight, reaching its apex at the spire and, almost lost in the clouds, the statue of the archangel carrying in its hand the reassuring weapon of the justice of God. Michael, the one who is “like God”, gentle, humble, and pure: the themes of good and evil, the struggles of asceticism, are peacefully contained in this inimitable symbol. ‘Fifteen days are spent at Mont-Saint-Michel by the silent priest, who celebrates the Eucharist in the little village church which is also dedicated to Michael. This battle-vigil is one of the highpoints of the life of this perpetual pilgrim who so loves sanctuaries along his way. Perhaps, the imagery and spirit of Mont-Saint-Michel express some of the characteristics of an apostle: an unyielding determination in combat which is, however, both gentle and strong, and a battle cry that rings out with passion for God.’ (*Papasogli*, pg. 298)

● **FROM MONTFORT'S WRITINGS:**

The Holy Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Saumur made by the Penitents to obtain from God good missionaries (1-4. 13)

1. You will make this pilgrimage for the following intentions: Firstly, to obtain from God through Mary's intercession good missionaries, who will follow the example of the apostles by complete abandonment to divine Providence and the practice of virtue under the protection of our Lady. Secondly, to obtain the gift of wisdom in order to know, love and practise the truths of our faith and to lead others to Christ.

2. You will have nothing in your dress to distinguish you from others, except your modest demeanour, your holy silence, and your continual prayer. You could, however, without making yourselves conspicuous, have a rosary in your hand and a crucifix around your neck to show that you are on a pilgrimage and not making an ordinary journey.

3. In the villages and towns you will walk two by two to edify, but in the country you will keep together and not separate into groups except through necessity or obedience. If through fatigue anyone falls behind, the others in their charity wait for him and, if necessary, put him on a horse, thus keeping each other as members of one body.

4. On the journey they will sing hymns, say the Rosary or engage in silent prayer. They will not speak to each other except for one hour in the morning about ten o'clock and again after dinner between one and two o'clock.

13. If they make the pilgrimage in this way, I am sure they will be a sight worthy of God, of angels and of men; and they will obtain from God through the intercession of his Blessed Mother great graces not only for themselves but for the whole Church of God.

● **LIGHT FROM THE BIBLE:** (*1 Kings 19:3-16*)

Tracked by Queen Jezebel who wanted to have him killed, Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He came to Beersheba, a town of Judah, where he left his servant. He himself went on into the desert, a day's journey, and sitting under a furze bush wished he were dead. 'Yahweh,' he said, 'I have had enough. Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down and went to sleep. Then all of a sudden an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked round, and there at his head was a scone baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. But the angel of Yahweh came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, or the journey will be too long for

you.' So he got up and ate and drank, and strengthened by that food he walked for forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, God's mountain.

There he went into the cave and spent the night there. Then the word of Yahweh came to him saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I am full of jealous zeal for Yahweh Sabaoth, because the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, have torn down your altars and put your prophets to the sword. I am the only one left, and now they want to kill me.' Then he was told, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before Yahweh, for Yahweh will pass by'. A mighty hurricane split the mountains and shattered the rocks before Yahweh. But Yahweh was not in the hurricane. And after the hurricane, an earthquake. But Yahweh was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, fire. But Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire, a light murmuring sound. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then a voice came to him, which said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I am full of jealous zeal for Yahweh, God Sabaoth. (...) Yahweh said, 'go back by the same way to the desert of Damascus. You must go and anoint Hazael as king of Aram. You must anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat, of Abel-Meholah, as prophet to succeed you.

● **PERSONAL INTEGRATION/SHARING**

- How may we say that our life is a kind of pilgrimage?
- If we look at the life of Montfort, we note that he spent almost as long on the road (pilgrimages to Chartres, Rome, Mont-St-Michel, Notre-Dame des Ardilliers, and long stays in St-Lazare, Mervent, with long walks between his missions, etc...) as he did preaching. Is pilgrimage for me an important form of prayer?
- What pilgrimage has most made its mark on me, and in what way?
- On pilgrimage, the journey is just as important as the destination. What does the act of walking teach me?

● **PRAYER/CELEBRATION**

The pilgrimage of the prophet Elijah to Mount Horeb (Sinai) is a pilgrimage that summarises his life. Let us ask the Lord that our lives might be a journey towards him.

- Lord, lead me along the pathways of life; keep me away from the ways of death.

You who are my light and my joy, guide my steps.

- Lord, you have given me company and companions on my way; grant that I may be for them a support and a strength.

You who are my light and my joy, guide my steps.

- Lord, when fog invades my way, come to chase away the doubt and fear it brings.

You who are my light and my joy, guide my steps.

- Lord, let every step I take bring me closer to my accomplishment in you.

You who are my light and my joy, guide my steps.

● **SYMBOL:** A walking stick

● **COMMITMENT:**

- Organise and take part in a little one day pilgrimage, either alone or in a team. On returning, share about the experience, or describe it in a pilgrim journal.

