

A Course in Montfortian Spirituality

During the General Chapter of 1993, a proposal was made (which did not become part of the official Acts of the Chapter) that a correspondence course in Montfortian spirituality should be produced, for the benefit of all those who express an interest in the spirituality of our founder. A committee was set up at what was known in those days as the CIM (Centre International Montfortain), which then had a semi-permanent base in Leuven, Belgium. The committee set about planning the course and asking various members of the Company of Mary who had a certain expertise in Montfortian spirituality to write the various lessons proposed. So, for example, Father Henri Derrien, Father Marcel Gendrot, Father Emmanuel Guil and Father Bernard Guitteny of the French Province; Father Claude Sigouin of the Canadian Province; Father Battista Cortinovis of the Italian Province; Father Paul Allerton of the Province of Great Britain and Ireland; and Father Hermann Josef Jünemann of the German Province, wrote various lessons. However, though ten of the 15 proposed lessons were completed, it proved difficult to find people to write the other 5 lessons, and the project was shelved for a period.

In 2013, the Vice-Province of Great Britain and Ireland decided to try to resurrect the idea, even if only in the English language, and to make it available on the Word-Wide Web, rather than as a correspondence course. Accordingly, members of the Vice-Province were approached to write the remaining 5 lessons of the course, and (after the long work of translation and composition) the result is now available on the website of the Vice-Province of Great Britain and Ireland at <http://www.montfort.org.uk>, more specifically at <http://www.montfort.org.uk/Course> (a link to the Course is provided on the home page of the website). There are two different ways of following the course, called on the website the “Auto-serve” method and the “Table” method: the Auto-serve method allows for the user to progress at their own rate, being offered each lesson in turn (it does require a ‘cookie’ to be stored on the user’s computer so as to keep track of which lesson they are up to); the Table method simply offers a table of the 15 lessons, from which the user can choose whichever lesson he or she likes at any particular point. There is (with both methods) the possibility of sending answers to various exercises to be evaluated at the end of each lesson.

As envisaged in the original plan, the course is in two parts: the first (comprising lessons 1-5) deals with the life and background of St Louis Marie, including a short survey of the theological and social influences on his thought, an overview of his writings, and an account of the Religious Family he left behind him; the second part (comprising lessons 6-15) examines the spiritual experience of St Louis Marie himself and the major themes of his teaching, flowing from that experience. The individual lessons are as follows:

1. St. Louis Marie de Montfort (1673-1716) - Biographical notes (by Father Henri Derrien)
2. Saint Louis Marie de Montfort in the Social and Religious Context of his day (by Father Bernard Guitteny)
3. The Early Biographies (by Father Marcel Gendrot)
4. The Writings of St. Louis Marie (by Father Paul Allerton)
5. The Montfortian Family (by Father Marcel Gendrot)
6. The Lived Gospel (by Father Paul Allerton)
7. The Experience of Jesus Christ (by Father James Murray)
8. The Experience of God the Father (by Father Paul Allerton)
9. The Experience of the Holy Spirit (by Father Paul Allerton)
10. Montfortian Prayer (by Father Emmanuel Guil and Father Hermann Josef Jünemann)
11. Obedience and Liberty (by Father Claude Sigouin)
12. Montfortian Poverty (by Father Claude Sigouin)

13. A Spirituality for the Apostolate (by Father Paul Allerton)
14. Church - Community (by Father Battista Cortinovis)
15. To Jesus through Mary (by Father Hermann Josef Jünemann)

An e-book in three different formats (PDF, epub and mobi), containing the complete course, has also been made available and can be downloaded from the website of the Vice-Province (on each page of the course itself, as well as on the Downloads page). The PDF format requires a PDF reader such as Adobe Reader, or Foxit PDF Reader. The epub format is suitable for many e-readers on the market, while the mobi format is suitable for all Kindle e-readers.

The Vice-Province of Great Britain and Ireland would like to thank those authors (a number of whom have already gone to their eternal reward) who wrote the original 10 lessons, for their efforts and their invaluable insights. It should be possible, if translations can be made of the various lessons (a number of which are already available in French, and one or two in German), to make the same course available in various other languages, perhaps on the Congregation's international website or the News website. If any of the confreres from other entities are interested in trying to implement this, they should initially contact Father Paul Allerton at allerton@montfort.org.uk.

11 December 2014