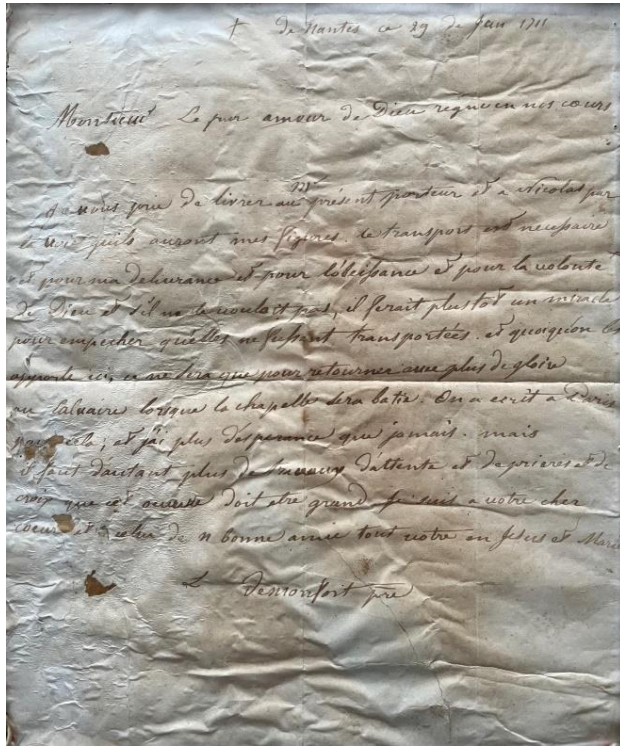


An autograph Letter from Father de Montfort in Pontchâteau?



PONTCHATEAU, France - In the parlor of the Montfortian house of the Calvary in Pontchâteau is the manuscript from Fr. de Montfort, framed and dated 29 January 1711. This letter, perhaps an autograph, was found among old papers in the attic when the house, requisitioned by the Germans in 1940, was evacuated. The following is the content of the letter:

“Nantes, 29 January 1711 - Sir, the pure love of God reigns in our hearts. I ask you to deliver my statues to the present bearer and to Nicolas by the means they have. The transport is necessary for my deliverance, for obedience and for the will of God and if He did not want it, he would rather perform a miracle to prevent them from being taken away. If they bring them here, they will only be returned with more glory to Calvary after the chapel is built. We wrote to Paris for

that, and I have more hope than ever. It takes more expectations, prayers and crosses for this work must be great. I am in your heart and that of our good friend. All yours in Jesus and Mary, L. de Mon(t)fort priest”

The magazine “*Ami de la Croix*” (Friend of the Cross), April 1906, at page 237 contains very valuable information regarding the history of this letter: “Mgr Jacquemet, Bishop of Nantes, having learned that this precious autograph was in the hands of Mr. Aupiais, the parish priest of Paimboeuf, asked him to sacrifice it in favor of the sons of Fr. de Montfort. Here is the attestation of Mr. Aupiais about this autograph:

*“On April 14, 1830, died in Paimboeuf, at the age of 90, Madame widow Blanchard. This widowed lady Blanchard was the daughter of Mr. Boudineau and Lady Françoise de La Carrière, his wife. Françoise de la Carrière Mother of Mrs. Blanchard was born in Pontchâteau on February 9, 1702. Her father, Pierre de la Carrière, sawyer of Tertre, notary or prosecutor of the Barony of Pont-château, was brother of the **Abbé de La Carrière** to whom the venerable Louis de Montfort wrote the letter in 1711. This letter has been carefully preserved in Mme Blanchard’s documents, which have been inherited from her mother, Françoise de la Carrière, the niece of Abbé de La Carrière, who lived in Pont-château in 1711. During her life, Mme Blanchard often spoke of this letter which she kept as a relic and to which she attached great value. I, the undersigned, parish priest of Paimboeuf, guarantee the details below and certify that I found the precious letter of the venerable Fr. de Montfort in the documents of Mrs. Blanchard, my parishioner whom I assisted during her last moment in 1830. I was accompanied by the little niece of Mrs. Blanchard, to whom her great aunt had spoken several times about this precious letter. Paimboeuf, 25 April 1842, Aupiais, parish priest”*

The recipient of this letter, the Abbé de La Carrière, son of the surgeon Pierre de La Carrière and Françoise Chotard, was baptized in the church of Pont-château on 9 April 1654. His godfather was the powerful Lord François du Cambout, Marquis of Pont-Château. He was ordained a priest in December 1680 and remained in his home-parish. As a devoted friend of Fr. de Montfort, he received the statues of Calvary in his home during the demolition of the Calvary in 1710 (end of quote)".

Although the authenticity of this letter has been doubted, it's well guaranteed by its calligraphy. Around 1861, an anonymous person who wrote the "*Article on Fr. de Montfort, apostolic missionary*" (Arch. gén. SMM), was the first to mention this letter: "*Mr. Gouray - he wrote - died in 1857, parish priest of Pontchâteau, treasured the letter that we are going to transcribe, and kept it as a relic of Fr. de Montfort*".

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