

Casa Generalizia
MISSIONARI MONFORTANI

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Dear Confrères,

Advent: time of waiting, time of hope! It is not just any hope, but a missionary hope, feet in the present and eyes turned toward the future, that Divine Providence is preparing for us. As a hymn of this liturgical season says: *“Behold, a child is announced. In Mary heaven is already with us. Time of hope and of joy. Let us hope that the Lord will come! The Liberator is already arriving”*.

It is in this context of Advent that we have the joy of launching the Montfortian Missionary Year 2020 for Europe, ***Montfort_EurHope20***.

As we know, the mission is our life; it is the life of the Company of Mary. If we choose a special year of mission, the aim is to renew our hope and together to seek, on the continental level, new paths, new perspectives.

My friends, if hope transforms us, it will also transform the world. What we are waiting for is more than the fruit of our imagination or our desires. What we are hoping for is the fulfilment of the promise of God, what he wants for humanity, what Jesus has summed up in the Beatitudes (Mt 5: 1-12; Lk 6: 20-38). Human cultures may say it in different ways, but all seek a way to be happy.

The hope of which we speak in Advent is the richness of the faith experience of the people of God contained in the Bible. Hope does not depend on a favorable circumstance, it does not depend on the age of our entity, nor on the age of our missionaries. Hope cannot be bound with our victories or our conquests, neither can it be a prisoner of the pessimism and fear that enters into the life of our Montfortian communities in a period called “secularism”. Hope is not the hostage of results, of our methodologies and our economic calculations. If that were the case, it would cease to be the hope that allows us to pray every day: *“May your kingdom come”*.

Hope is something which God has placed within us. It is humble, tenacious, suffers and is often rebellious, like the hope of the prophets. It is like the generosity of the earth, in some cultures called *Pacha Mama*, which in the midst of so many destructive acts, continues to emit a fragrance of flowers and produces food for all creatures, even for those which try to destroy her.

I invite all, brothers and sisters, friends and laity, to live this missionary year in Europe as a gift of the Holy Spirit. A time of renewed hope. Every encounter, every activity, every visit ought to be tied together by gestures of fraternity.

Let us transform our houses and our communities into a new “Bethany – House of the poor”, where the friends of Jesus used to live, like Martha, Mary and Lazarus (Jn 11:1), Simon the leper, where a woman anointed Jesus (Mt 26: 6-13). In Bethany, the house of the poor, there always exists a way to welcome, to nourish and to celebrate. The poor always celebrate and they invite us, because they have hope.

Let us pass over to practical matters

The continental year is a powerful moment when the whole SMM prays for the renewal of the Montfortian mission on the European continent, while following its activities throughout the year. To this end, we propose in five points useful information to involve the confrères and collaborators of your entity.

1. Calendar

The dates foreseen for the canonical visit and events in the entities of Europe have been fixed in a general calendar (enclosure_01). We underscore in particular the continental assembly which will take place in Poland from 4 to 7 May 2020.

2. Logo + Explanation

The logo for the year (enclosure_02), which has as its motto *Montfort_EurHope20*, is accompanied by an explanation (enclosure_03).

3. Prayer

Each mission is prepared by a time of prayer. The prayer proposed to the whole congregation (enclosure_04) is taken from the Exhortation "*Ecclesia in Europa*" of Saint John Paul II. This text is entrusted to each entity, with the encouragement to make use of it, adapting it to the various circumstances of the year. It can be integrated into a Marian celebration or shortened to a briefer text for daily use.

4. Launch of the Continental Mission

The year of the continental mission in Europe will be launched **31 January 2020** with two days at the general house which will include a celebration and a visit in the footsteps of Montfort in Rome. For these days, we have invited a **coadjutor brother** from each of the entities of Europe, together with the superiors of Europe (or one of his delegates). As the continent that has the greatest number of brothers, we would like to honor this specific vocation at the heart of the SMM, recognizing its importance for Montfortian history and mission.

5. Communication

Thank you for the involvement of each one of you. All your feedback during this year of mission will be welcome as a sign of the unity of the SMM and will contribute to encourage and renew the mission in Europe.

You can send your comments to the following email address: mm-sec@montfort.org
By sending your WhatsApp number, you can be added in the WhatsApp group: *Montfort_EurHope20* to receive documents and photographic and audio-visual material throughout the year. You can visit the web site: www.montfortian.info

Grateful for your support and your prayers, we wish you a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year. Warmest greetings.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Luiz Augusto Stefani", enclosed within a large, thin oval outline.

Fr. Luiz Augusto STEFANI, SMM
Superior General
and the General Council