

The Joy of the Gospel
at the School
of Pope Francis
and of
Montfort

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✚ Concluding prayer ✚

From the Gospel of John:

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (*John 19:25-27*)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

I take you into my home, O Mary, so that you be my Mother and bring me to the God of Life. Be my companion on the way of faith, sharing with me your hope when the road is too hard.



wellspring of happiness
for God's little ones,
pray for us.

Amen. Alleluia!

and mediatrix with Jesus Christ. They will see clearly that she is the safest, easiest, shortest and most perfect way to go to Jesus and they will surrender themselves to her, body and soul, without reserve in order to belong to Jesus in the same manner. **(TD 55)**

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

SOURCES

◆ **Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium***

of the HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

to the bishops, clergy, consecrated persons, and the lay faithful on the proclamation of the Gospel In today's world
Rome, 24 November 2013

◆ LOUIS-MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT:

- *God Alone, The Collected Writings of St. Louis Marie de Montfort*, Montfort Publications, New-York, 1987, 631 pages

- *God Alone II, The Hymns of St. Louis Marie de Montfort*, Montfort Publications, New-York, 2005, 639 pages

◆ BENEDETTA PAPÀSOGLI: *Montfort, A prophet for our Times*, Edizioni Monfortane, Rome, 1991; translated from the Italian by Ann Nielsen, D.W. 496 pages

◆ JEAN-BAPTISTE BLAIN (+1751): *Summary of the Life of L-M Grignon de Montfort*, Documents and Research III, Montfortian International Centre, Rome, 1977, 217 pages

ILLUSTRATIONS:

All illustrations are original works of Sr Claudette Danis, fdlis

Presentation

Last November, Pope Francis offered to the Church his first major document, the apostolic letter '*Evangelii Gaudium*'. By being deeply rooted in the mystery of the Incarnation and by its missionary impetus, this letter inevitably unites us with the thought, concerns, and life of our founder, Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort. Thus, as the animation project of our congregation for this year, we offer a tool which presents extracts from the Pope's letter in parallel with writings and events from Montfort's life. These can be read, reflected on and shared in group discussion.

The choice of the texts was made in the following manner. First we chose extracts from the letter of Pope Francis, selecting certain passages which seemed more relevant to Montfortian thought and mission. These texts were divided into fifteen sections. Then we looked in the writings and the biographies of Montfort to find elements that shed a distinctive Montfortian light on the pope's letter. There is of course a subjective factor working in such a process. We have therefore indicated in the table of contents from which section in '*Evangelii Gaudium*' the quotes were taken.

The processes proposed in 2012 and 2013 focussed more on our personal relationship with God and on the role of Mary in our spiritual life. This tool aims at putting us in touch with the passion for evangelization of Pope Francis and our founder. Thus, after having been drawn inside ourselves to make contact with the living source of our faith, we are now invited to go out, to share our spiritual experience and reveal Christ who enlightens our whole life.

friend who is ever concerned that wine not be lacking in our lives. (...)

There, in these many shrines, we can see how Mary brings together her children who with great effort come as pilgrims to see her and to be seen by her. Here they find strength from God to bear the weariness and the suffering in their lives.

Star of the new Evangelization

288. There is a Marian "style" to the Church's work of evangelization. Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong who need not treat others poorly in order to feel important themselves. (...)

*Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness
to communion, service,
ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes
of our world.*

Mother of the living Gospel,

12. O Jesus, our dear spouse,
Our God, our brother,
Come, come, be born in us
By your Holy Mother,
So that by you we can
Go to your Father. (*Hymn 87, in
Honour of Jesus Living in
Mary: 1. 5. 9-10. 12*)

Finally, God in these times wishes his Holy Mother to be more known, loved and honoured than she has ever been. This will certainly come about if the elect, by the grace and light of the Holy Spirit, adopt the interior and perfect practice of the devotion which I shall later unfold. Then they will clearly see, as much as faith allows, that beautiful Star of the Sea and will arrive safe, in spite of storms and pirates, under her guidance. They will perceive the splendours of this Queen and will consecrate themselves entirely to her service as her subjects and her slaves of love. They will experience her tenderness and her motherly kindness for her children. They will love her tenderly like her beloved children. They will experience how full of compassion she is and how much they stand in need of her help. In all circumstances they will have recourse to her as their advocate

15. In the faith and love of Mary, first missionary

Pope Francis



II. MARY, MOTHER OF EVANGELIZATION

Jesus' gift to his people

285. At the foot of the cross, at the supreme hour of the new creation, Christ led us to Mary. He brought us to her because he did not want us to journey without a mother, and our people read in this maternal image all the mysteries of the Gospel. The Lord did not want to leave the Church without this icon of womanhood. Mary, who brought him into the world with great faith, also accompanies “the rest of her offspring, those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus” (*Rev 12:17*).

286. Mary was able to turn a stable into a home for Jesus, with poor swaddling clothes and an abundance of love. She is the handmaid of the Father who sings his praises. She is the

Montfort



- 1.** Let us adore Jesus
Alive in Mary's womb.
Consider with amazement
The Almighty made tiny.
Adore a God become infant
To give us life.
- 5.** While totally attached
To her undivided heart,
Which the slightest sin
Has never sullied,
He paints there with no restraint
His true image.
- 9.** They both seem to merge.
How beautiful their union!
Mary is totally in Jesus,
Her most faithful lover,
Or better, she no longer is,
But only Jesus in her.
- 10.** Between these two hearts let
us go
To melt our coldness,
To share their ardour,
Their virtues and graces.
Let us go, they love sinners,
We shall find a place there.

We hope that this simple instrument will be help to all the confreres and lay associates in deepening and putting into practice the central proposition of the 2011 General Chapter:

“The passionate love of Montfort for Christ and His Mother dwells in us and carries us towards the world today. As missionaries of the Company of Mary, we want to renew the joy of baptism in Christians and proclaim the Good News of Christ, Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom to all.”

May the Virgin Mary be our companion on this journey. May she teach us how to welcome Christ in the depth of her faith and to present Him to the world with the strength of Her love.

Fr Santino Brembilla, s.m.m.
General Superior

Rome, 4th March 2014
Lenten Season

Prayer to Montfort

Holy Father de Montfort,
the joy of the Gospel
was enkindled in your heart on the day of your baptism.
Each day, it grew in you,
nourished by the presence of your Mother, the Virgin Mary,
and the creative breath of the Holy Spirit.
This joy was the passion of your life,
your strength in hard times,
the fire in your word,
the daring in your endeavours.

We pray to you:
at the call of our pastor,
Pope Francis,
make us true missionaries,
possessed by that joy,
pressed to go throughout the world
to bring to all
the Good News of Jesus Christ.
Amen



✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

✚ Concluding prayer ✚

From the Gospel of Luke:

On Easter evening, as two disciples were on the road to Emmaus, (...), Jesus himself came up and walked by their side (...) Starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself. When they drew near to the village (...); they pressed him to stay with them saying, 'It is nearly evening, and the day is almost over.' (...) Sitting at the table with them, Jesus took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?' They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions. (Luke 24:13-33)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

You join us on our journey, Lord Jesus. You feed us the bread of your Word and of your Presence. Come towards us again today; renew our strength, warm our hearts.

an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force.

280. It is true that this trust in the unseen can cause us to feel disoriented: it is like being plunged into the deep and not knowing what we will find. I myself have frequently experienced this. Yet there is no greater freedom than that of allowing oneself to be guided by the Holy Spirit, renouncing the attempt to plan and control everything to the last detail, and instead letting him enlighten, guide and direct us, leading us wherever he wills.

Liberos, priests who are free with the freedom that comes from you, detached from everything, without father, mother, brothers, sisters or relatives and friends as the world and the flesh understand them, without worldly possessions to encumber or distract them, and devoid of all self-interest.

Liberos: slaves of your love and your will; men after your own heart who, without taint or impediment of self-love, will carry out your will to the full (...)

Liberos: clouds that sail high above the earth, filled with the dew of heaven, and moving, without hindrance, on all sides, according to the breath of the Spirit.

Liberos: true children of Mary whom she has conceived and begotten by her love (...).

Liberos: true servants of the Blessed Virgin who, like so many saint Dominic, range far and wide, with the bright and burning flame of the holy Gospel in their mouths, and the Rosary in their hands, barking like watchdogs, burning like fire and enlightening the darkness of the world like so many suns. (*PM*, 7-9. 11-12)

Suggested procedure

These texts - both those of Pope Francis and of Montfort- can be used as a basis for personal reflection or for a time of retreat. But because of the questions raised, the problems addressed, and the options suggested, they are worth being read, shared, prayed and discussed in small teams. Therefore we suggest the following procedure for each of the fifteen modules.

1. PERSONAL READING

The week preceding the meeting, each participant reads the two series of texts in the module, underlining words, sentences, expressions that strike him. He tries to discover the links between the Pope's thought (left column) and the writings or behaviour of Montfort (right column). He can also write down other thoughts or acts of Montfort that come to mind, reflecting on the Apostolic Letter.

2. MEETING AND SHARING

1. Opening prayer

The meeting starts with a brief prayer, which can include a hymn and a prayer. One is suggested above, addressed to Montfort.

2. Open sharing

Each participant shares what struck him in the text: what appears to him to be the main message, what strikes him, what provokes questions in him.

3. Sharing on specific questions

Participants then share on the following questions:

These texts from the Pope and Montfort teach me what or remind me of what?

Concerning Christ?

Concerning Montfort?

Concerning the Church?

Concerning the Company of Mary?

Concerning myself?

These texts from the Pope and Montfort urge us to do what:

As a Church?

As a congregation?

As a local community?

And myself, as a baptized person, as a religious or lay associate?

3. FROM NOW TILL THE NEXT MEETING...

Thoughts to ponder...

The team chooses one phrase or expression taken from the texts. Each one writes it down, or it can be written on a small poster and taped in a common room.

To-do list...

Either each person or the team chooses a specific action to do, or an attitude to develop till the next meeting.

4. CONCLUDING PRAYER

It consists of a decade of the rosary, prayed according to the suggestions of Pope John-Paul II in his letter «*The Rosary of the Virgin Mary*» (2002), as described especially in numbers 19, 28-35.

Here are the main elements:

- proclamation of the Biblical text;
- brief moment of silence;
- the decade, which is a time of meditation on the biblical text;
- doxology;
- proclamation by all of the final invocation.

274. If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realize that every person is worthy of our giving. Not for their physical appearance, their abilities, their language, their way of thinking, or for any satisfaction that we might receive, but rather because they are God's handiwork, his creation. God created that person in his image, and he or she reflects something of God's glory. Every human being is the object of God's infinite tenderness, and he himself is present in their lives. Jesus offered his precious blood on the cross for that person. Appearances notwithstanding, every person is immensely holy and deserves our love. Consequently, if I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life. It is a wonderful thing to be God's faithful people. We achieve fulfilment when we break down walls and our heart is filled with faces and names!

The mysterious working of the risen Christ and his Spirit

276. Christ's resurrection is not

the church of Saint Saviour. All this time, the rejects of society have been living in a building very near the house of Louis Grignon.

The discovery of the poor is perhaps the most decisive event of Louis' adolescence, a turning point for his whole life. Any institution called a 'hospital' in the seventeenth century is really a catch-all for every type of human misery.

Beggars, vagrants, people covered with terribly pitiful wounds - all these Louis Grignon meets in his first visits to the hospital. But he also encounters suspicious types and men hardened in crime, for all these are subsumed in that one word - the poor. Painful as it is for a lad from a respectable middle-class family, Louis sets about helping them in a warm, caring way. Faced with a patient's heavy burden of sorrow, he learns to find just the right word of consolation. Sometimes his words are halting, sometimes awkward, but already they are full of admiration and respect for the mystery of each poor person, every one of them a "sacrament of God's presence" as Louis will say one day. (*Papàsogli, pages 28-29*)

What, then, am I asking for?

265. Our infinite sadness can only be cured by an infinite love.

266. A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks to him, breathes with him, works with him.

267. In union with Jesus, we seek what he seeks and we love what he loves.

The spiritual savour of being a people

268. Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people.

270. Sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length. Yet Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others. He hopes that we will stop looking for those personal or communal niches which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune.

272. A committed missionary knows the joy of being a spring which spills over and refreshes others. Only the person who feels happiness in seeking the good of others, in desiring their happiness, can be a missionary.

Charity: 40. 43. 45-47)

Julien Bellier, a young diocesan priest just beginning his ministry is the third clergyman who has a profound influence on Louis during his adolescent years. This young man does not speak to the students from a pulpit far above them, nor from behind a dark confessional grill. He takes them out with him onto the streets of Rennes, guides them across the threshold of the general hospital and commissions them to help the poor at mealtimes and to teach them basic catechism.

It is thanks to Julien Bellier that Louis experiences for the first time the misery of the human condition. He finds out that the pleasure-loving, wealthy city of Rennes has another side to it. He begins to touch with his own hands that cruel suffering which is the unconscious by-product of a society which is very proper outwardly, yet completely indifferent to the deeply wounded sector within it.

[The general hospital of] Saint Yves, a house of refuge for four hundred poor people, is a ramshackle building lining a single long street. Located in the heart of Rennes, it is not far from

1. The Joy of the Gospel: a gift, a call

Pope Francis



I. A JOY EVER NEW, A JOY WHICH IS SHARED

3. I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.

Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.

6. I realize of course that joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially at moments of great difficulty. Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved.

7. I can say that the most

Montfort



"From my youth I have loved and sought him and desired to take him for my inseparable companion."

Whoever wishes to find this precious treasure of Wisdom should, like Solomon, search for him (a) early and, if possible, while still young; (b) purely and spiritually as a chaste young man seeks a bride; (c) unceasingly, to the very end, until he has found him. It is certain that eternal Wisdom loves souls so much that he even espouses them, contracting with them a true, spiritual marriage which the world cannot understand. History furnishes us with examples of this. (*LEW, 54*)

"I have forever to be on the alert, treading warily as though on thorns or sharp stones. I am like a ball in a game of tennis; no sooner am I hurled to one side than I am sent back to the other,

beautiful and natural expressions of joy which I have seen in my life were in poor people who had little to hold on to.

8. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being.

II. THE DELIGHTFUL AND COMFORTING JOY OF EVANGELIZING

10. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others”.

Eternal newness

12. The real newness is the newness which God himself mysteriously brings about and inspires, provokes, guides and accompanies in a thousand ways.

III. THE NEW EVANGELIZATION FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF THE FAITH

14. All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to

and the players strike me hard. This is the fate of the poor sinner that I am and I have been like this without rest or respite all the thirteen years since leaving St. Sulpice. However, my dear sister, thank God for me for I am content and happy in all my troubles. I think there is nothing in the whole world so welcome as the most bitter cross, when it is steeped in the blood of Christ crucified and in the milk of his holy Mother.” (*Letter 26, to Guyonne-Jeanne, 1713*)

“My dear daughters in Jesus Christ (...), I know you are doing a great deal of good where you are, but you will do infinitely more away from home and we know that since the time of Abraham right up to the time of our Lord and even to our own day, God sends his greatest servants out of their own country. (...) I know you will have many difficulties to overcome but an enterprise which is going to do so much for the glory of God and the salvation of men will have its way strewn with thorns and crosses. If one doesn’t take risks for God, one does nothing great for Him.” (*Letter 27, to Marie-Louise and Catherine Brunet, 1715*)

14. Christ walks with us and transforms us into missionaries

Pope Francis



CHAPTER FIVE SPIRIT-FILLED EVANGELIZERS (259-288)

259. Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God’s presence

I. REASONS FOR A RENEWED MISSIONARY IMPULSE

264. The primary reason for evangelizing is the love of Jesus which we have received, the experience of salvation which urges us to ever greater love of him. What kind of love would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known? If we do not feel an intense desire to share this love, we need to pray insistently that he will once more touch our hearts.

Montfort



40. A thousand times my heart desires you,
Love divine, come to me:
To be without you is a martyrdom,
Come then, impart to me your law.

43. Forgive, O charity divine,
My defiance and my coolness.
That is past, I open my breast
To your charm and your ardour.

45. Divine Jesus, love supreme,
You alone I love on earth;
I love you and call accursed
Those who love you not.

46. Yes, dear love, I love you,
Not for fear of punishment,
Nor even for the reward,
But only for you alone.

47. Dear Bridegroom, I embrace you.
All I am I give to you,
It is right for me to do so,
For you were first to embrace me. (*Hymn 5, Excellence of*

✝ Concluding prayer ✝

From the Gospel of Matthew:

Jesus said to his disciples: 'In truth I tell you, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them.' Then Peter went up to him and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times. (...) If you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering.' (*Matthew 18:19-22; 5:23-24*)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Lord Jesus, what better offering can we present to you, but that of peace among us. We pray you that through our words and actions, we may always strive to build peace among us and mend it when it is broken.

impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but “by attraction”.

15. We “cannot passively and calmly wait in our church buildings”; we need to move “from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry.”

[Montfort] went on to observe that the persons whom I had proposed to him models of prudence were (...) men who remained hidden in their houses, which they governed in peace, because they had nothing new to establish, and nothing to do but to follow the footsteps and customs of those who had gone before them; but that it was not the same with missionaries and apostolic men. As they have always something new to take in hand, (...) it is impossible they should not attract attention, and meet with the approval of all; that in a word, if prudence consisted in doing nothing new for God, in undertaking nothing for His glory for fear of being spoken about, then the Apostles were wrong in leaving Jerusalem; they should have remained shut up in the Caenaculum. (*Blain, Summary of the Life of L-M Grignon de Montfort, # 336-337*)

✓ Thoughts to ponder:	✓ To-do list:
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engage in dialogue about fundamental issues of ethics, art and science, and about the search for transcendence”.

✚ Concluding prayer ✚

From the Gospel of Luke:

He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written: ‘The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.’ He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, saying: “Today, this text is being fulfilled for you who are listening.” (Luke 4:16-21)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Your word, O Jesus, sprang from a deep and endless spring: your eternal communion with the Father. Fill our word with your own power so that it may never be empty.

✓ Thoughts to ponder:	✓ To-do list:
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to shed on them the light of faith and the natural law so that they will remain respectful of the centrality and supreme value of the human person at every stage of life.

Ecumenical dialogue

246. If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us.

Social dialogue in a context of religious freedom

257. As believers, we also feel close to those who do not consider themselves part of any religious tradition, yet sincerely seek the truth, goodness and beauty which we believe have their highest expression and source in God. We consider them as precious allies in the commitment to defending human dignity, in building peaceful coexistence between peoples and in protecting creation. A special place of encounter is offered by new Areopagi such as the Court of the Gentiles, where “believers and non-believers are able to

Let us then live in the presence of God.

37. Lord, engrave in me your divine face,
So I may easily possess your presence everywhere,
With nothing ever effacing you,
No, not even death.

Let us then live in the presence of God.

38. Enter into your heart, my soul, leave the trifles;
All exterior goods, in your eyes, belong to others.

God calls to you in your heart,
All your good is in Him.

Let us then live in the presence of God. (*Hymn 24, The Holy Practice of the Presence of God*: 33-35, 37-38)

2. Going out to bring the Gospel

Pope Francis



Montfort



CHAPTER ONE THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY TRANSFORMATION (19-49)

I. A CHURCH WHICH GOES FORTH

20. All of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel.

22. God's word is unpredictable in its power. The Gospel speaks of a seed which, once sown, grows by itself, even as the farmer sleeps (Mk 4:26-29). The Church has to accept this unruly freedom of the word, which accomplishes what it wills in ways that surpass our calculations and ways of thinking.

23. The Church's closeness to Jesus is part of a common

The priests who enter must be called by God to preach missions in the steps of the Apostles (...) so as to feel free at all times to repeat after Jesus Christ: "The Lord has sent me to preach good news to the poor" (cf *Lk. 4:18*), or, as the Apostle said: "Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel" (*I Cor. 1:17*). The motto of the true missionary is one which enables him to say in all truth like St. Paul: "We are homeless" (*I Cor. 4:11*). (*Rule of Missionaries, 2*)

The words that divine Wisdom communicates are not just ordinary, natural, human words; they are divine. (...) They are powerful, touching, piercing words, "sharper than a two-edged sword" (*Heb. 4:12*), words that go from the heart of the one through whom he speaks straight to the heart of the listener. (*LEW 96*)

journey; “communion and mission are profoundly interconnected”.

Taking the first step, being involved and supportive, bearing fruit and rejoicing

24. An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the “smell of the sheep” and the sheep are willing to hear their voice.

II. PASTORAL ACTIVITY AND CONVERSION

An ecclesial renewal which cannot be deferred

28. The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. (...) It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach.

“I took it into my head however to go to the poorhouse [the general hospital] where I could serve the poor physically even if I could not serve them spiritually. I went into their little church to pray and the four hours I spent there waiting for the evening meal-time seemed all too short. However it seemed quite long to some of the poor, who seeing me kneeling there dressed in clothes very much like their own, went off to tell the others and they all agreed to take up a collection for me. (...) I was surprised to find out that they wanted to make me an offering. I blessed God that I had been taken for a poor man and that I could wear the glorious livery of the poor.” (*Lettre 6 to M. Leschassier, 1701*)

The profound significance of Louis' vocation is continually revealed in clearer outline: to spark the spiritual renewal of the Church in which he lives. Such was his very first ideal when leaving the seminary of Saint Sulpice. His unskilful efforts to reform the poorhouse [at Poitiers] have resulted in a surprising aftereffect: the creation of a community that contests the false values of

charity which make that word fruitful.

The whole is greater than the part

235. The whole is greater than the part, but it is also greater than the sum of its parts. There is no need, then, to be overly obsessed with limited and particular questions. We constantly have to broaden our horizons and see the greater good which will benefit us all. But this has to be done without evasion or uprooting. We need to sink our roots deeper into the fertile soil and history of our native place, which is a gift of God. We can work on a small scale, in our own neighbourhood, but with a larger perspective. Nor do people who wholeheartedly enter into the life of a community need to lose their individualism or hide their identity; instead, they receive new impulses to personal growth.

IV. SOCIAL DIALOGUE AS A CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE

Dialogue between faith, reason and science

242. “The light of reason and the light of faith both come from God” and cannot contradict each other. Evangelization is attentive to scientific advances and wishes

her living image and representative on earth. Since Wisdom, out of an excess of love, gave herself up to death to save man, she loves man as a brother, a friend, a disciple, a pupil, the price of her own blood and co-heir of her kingdom. Therefore, we inflict on her infinite violence when we withhold a human heart from Wisdom or wrench it away from her. (*LEW 64*)

33. I adore you here,
O Father of my fathers,
O almighty Lord, before whom
all things are nothing,
O Father of lights,
From whom all good proceeds.
Let us then live in the presence
of God.

34. Your divine Providence
feeds me,
You probe my mind and test
my heart,
Nothing ever escapes
Your knowledge, Lord.
Let us then live in the presence
of God.

35. To all, you give being,
movement and life,
Your immensity holds
everything, everywhere,
And the earth is full
Of your majesty.

chain of a new process. "Blessed are the peacemakers!" (*Mt 5:9*).

229. This principle, drawn from the Gospel, reminds us that Christ has made all things one in himself: heaven and earth, God and man, time and eternity, flesh and spirit, person and society. The sign of this unity and reconciliation of all things in him is peace. Christ "is our peace" (*Eph 2:14*).

Realities are more important than ideas

233. Realities are greater than ideas. This principle has to do with incarnation of the word and its being put into practice: "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is from God" (*1 Jn 4:2*). The principle of reality, of a word already made flesh and constantly striving to take flesh anew, is essential to evangelization. It helps us to see that the Church's history is a history of salvation, to be mindful of those saints who inculturated the Gospel in the life of our peoples. (...) At the same time, this principle impels us to put the word into practice, to perform works of justice and

might have done to cause you pain...". He feels he must, nevertheless, finish this mission, and, after this little calvary of humiliation, finally arrives at the day of departure.

Accompanied by Pierre des Bastières, Louis presents himself to the hostile parish priest, looks at him calmly and embraces him, "Forgive me if I have made you suffer... I assure you, Father, that I will pray for you for the rest of my life. I love you a great deal". All this is said in a sincere and affectionate tone. The poor priest throws up his hands in bewilderment: he will never understand anything about this Father de Montfort! (*Papàsogli, page 276*)

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. "She is an infinite treasure for man," (*Wisd. 7:14*) and not for angels or any other creatures.

Wisdom's friendship for man arises from his place in creation, from his being an abridgement of her marvels, her small yet ever so great world,

We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.

33. Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: "We have always done it this way". I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. A proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory

III. FROM THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

36. All revealed truths derive from the same divine source and are to be believed with the same faith, yet some of them are more important for giving direct expression to the heart of the Gospel. In this basic core, what shines forth is the beauty of the saving love of God made

society and remains humbly prophetic. Wherever Louis appears, with his silences or with his outspokenness, a ferment of crisis, breaks with tradition, and renewal appears. Nantes, Poitiers, Mount Valérien, Montbernage...

What other unifying thread need we seek in the meandering career of the young priest, if not this grace placed in his burning hands and heart: a passion for a Church that truly resembles Christ, and the unremitting service of his own holiness toward this end.

This man who has learned to obey at Saint Sulpice, without ever ridding himself of the stigma of his 'singularity', and who matures in the light of the Holy Spirit, must always test anew his personal charism against with the institutionalism of the Church, and the resulting tension is the painful price of their unity. (*Benedetta Papàsogli: Montfort, a Prophet for our Times, p. 271*)

manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead. In this sense, the Second Vatican Council explained, “in Catholic doctrine there exists an order or a ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith”.

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

13. Evangelizing is building bridges towards dialogue

Pope Francis



III. THE COMMON GOOD AND PEACE IN SOCIETY

219. A peace which is not the result of integral development will be doomed; it will always spawn new conflicts and various forms of violence.

Unity prevails over conflict

227. When conflict arises, some people simply look at it and go their way as if nothing happened; they wash their hands of it and get on with their lives. Others embrace it in such a way that they become its prisoners; they lose their bearings, project onto institutions their own confusion and dissatisfaction and thus make unity impossible. But there is also a third way, and it is the best way to deal with conflict. It is the willingness to face conflict head on, to resolve it and to make it a link in the

Montfort



The mission at la Chevrolière (...) turns out to be very painful for Father de Montfort, who feels the underhanded opposition of the pastor growing worse every day. The hatred of this frustrated priest comes out into the open in a very disagreeable way. He comes into the church to try to persuade his parishioners not to attend the mission; afterwards he lies in wait for Louis to berate him at leisure, using all the ammunition he can find from the reactions of some of his parishioners. This behaviour stretches out over several weeks. Louis' sufferings are unspeakable. “ I call on the just judge of the living and the dead to decide about all the things you have accused me of”, he answers, pale yet firm, hoping to disarm the aggressive pastor. “I ask pardon for anything I

✚ Concluding prayer ✚

From the Gospel of Matthew:

Jesus said: 'When the Son of man comes in his glory, (...) he will separate people one from another (...) Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the upright will say to him: "Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or in prison and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? (...) And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these who are my brothers, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:31-40)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

You allowed the suffering of others to touch you, O Jesus. You loved them and relieved their pain. May your deep compassion inhabit us, helping us in giving hands to your love

✚ Concluding prayer ✚

From the Gospel of Luke:

The Pharisees and scribes complained saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So Jesus told them this parable: 'Which one of you with a hundred sheep, if he lost one, would fail to leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep that was lost." In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine upright people who have no need of repentance. (Luke 15:2-7)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Lord Jesus, you left your relatives and your village, you went out on the road to heal the sick, to uplift those hurt by life, to proclaim the Good News. Give us the courage to leave our comfort and our routine.

3. The mission: a beautiful risk

Pope Francis



IV. A MISSION EMBODIED WITHIN HUMAN LIMITS

43. Saint Thomas Aquinas pointed out that the precepts which Christ and the apostles gave to the people of God “are very few”. The precepts subsequently enjoined by the Church should be insisted upon with moderation “so as not to burden the lives of the faithful” and make our religion a form of servitude, whereas “God’s mercy has willed that we should be free”. This warning, issued many centuries ago, is most timely today. It ought to be one of the criteria to be taken into account in considering a reform of the Church and her preaching which would enable it to reach everyone.

44. Consequently, without detracting from the evangelical ideal, one needs to accompany with mercy and patience the eventual stages of personal

Montfort



Love and gentleness - these are the surprise and the victory of Montfort's maturity. (...) He himself often said that he would prefer to suffer in purgatory for having been too lenient with people than for having been too hard on them. (...)

To arrive at the heart of Montfort's secret, do not examine the doctrines he teaches, nor search among his simple yet attractive teaching methods: explore instead the way the rough edges of an ‘unusual man’ are transformed into ‘a God-centred openness’ - very human and evangelically meek - towards souls. (*Papàsogli, page 327-328*)

They will share in the most tender inclinations of the heart of Jesus, their model who said: "The Lord sent me to

the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others. Migrants present a particular challenge (...). For this reason, I exhort all countries to a generous openness which, rather than fearing the loss of local identity, will prove capable of creating new forms of cultural synthesis.

211. How I wish that all of us would hear God’s cry: “Where is your brother?” (*Gen 4:9*). Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Where is the brother and sister whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in rings of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labour?

Even to my body, vigour
To help him in every way,
To lift him up from these depths
To the heights of heaven.
(*Hymn 14, Tenderness of Love of Neighbour: 5-6. 16. 26. 31. 54. 56-57*)

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

or, for that matter, to any problems. Inequality is the root of social ills.

204. We can no longer trust in the unseen forces and the invisible hand of the market. Growth in justice requires more than economic growth, while presupposing such growth: it requires decisions, programmes, mechanisms and processes specifically geared to a better distribution of income, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor

205. I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots – and not simply the appearances – of the evils in our world! Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good.

Concern for the vulnerable

210. It is essential to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognize the suffering Christ, even if this appears to bring us no tangible and immediate benefits. I think of

Let whatever affects him, affect you!

Friendship which is only in speech

Is a ridiculous decoration.

31. God gives to all, even to sinners,
His gentle rain and his light;
Let us then love our persecutors
In order to imitate this good Father,
Who, in his immense goodness,
Overcomes all iniquity.

54. I wish to keep for my neighbour
My goods, my body and my soul:
My goods so as to help him,
My heart to burn with his flame,
My eyes to let me be charmed by him,
All that I am so as to love him.

56. When an ass falls into a ditch,
We pull it out with haste.
My brother has fallen,
shattered,
And I see him there without any sadness.
My God, I want to lift him up;
Send me to save him.

57. Grant to my heart every fervour,
To my spirit all light,

growth as these progressively occur. (...) A small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties.

V. A MOTHER WITH AN OPEN HEART

47. The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open. (...) The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.⁵¹ These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness. (...) But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.

48. Today and always, “the poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel”, and the fact that it is freely preached to them is a sign of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish. We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor.

preach the good news to the poor” (cf *Lk. 4:18*). Consequently, they will, in general, prefer rural areas to the towns and the poor to the rich. (*Rule Missionaries, 7*)

It is evening. Dinan is at rest (...) Only Louis is still abroad in the streets. (...) Suddenly he glimpses in the shadows a human form sprawled out on the road; he hears a groan. A trembling of excitement seizes him as he bends over the poor man and sees a repulsive face eaten away by leprosy. (...) what can he do at this late hour? Louis picks up the leper and moves toward the missionary house, his steps resounding more slowly and more heavily on the pavestones. The doorkeeper is in a deep sleep. Repeated knocks on the door fail to awaken him. And then in the blackness of the night a trembling voice is lifted in a cry which reflects Louis' whole heart: “Open the door... open the door to Jesus Christ!” (...) Finally, the grinding sound of the bolt being drawn evokes a sigh of relief from Louis. That night the man so cruelly disfigured by his

May we never abandon them.

49. I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.

More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat" (*Mk 6:37*).

ravaging illness sleeps in the bed of Father de Montfort. (*Papàsogli, page 303-304*)

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

In union with God, we hear a plea

190. With due respect for the autonomy and culture of every nation, we must never forget that the planet belongs to all mankind and is meant for all mankind;

The special place of the poor in God's people

198. This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them.

199. True love is always contemplative, and permits us to serve the other not out of necessity or vanity, but rather because he or she is beautiful above and beyond mere appearances:

The economy and the distribution of income

202. As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved by rejecting the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation and by attacking the structural causes of inequality, no solution will be found for the world's problems

of his beauty and his perfection, the great vessel of his graces, the wonderful treasury of his wealth and in a unique way his representative on earth. (*LEW 33. 35*)

5. Every human being, says this great Lord,
Is my beautiful portrait, my true image;
You touch me to the quick, to the very heart,
Whenever you offend him.
I will avenge this insult
On the great day of my anger.

6. Charity contains within itself
The most perfect holiness;
It is the fulfilling of the law,
There is no law without it;
It is the only bond of virtues,
Without which they no longer exist.

16. How can we not love our neighbour?
He is the vivid portrait of God himself,
The masterpiece of his hand,
A friend whom his heart loves,
The brother of Jesus Christ,
The temple of the Holy Spirit.

26. Love with your heart and hand
And not simply with your mouth.
Pour your alms into his lap.

12. Giving hands and a heart to the Gospel

✚ Concluding prayer ✚

From the Gospel of Mark:

**Pope
Francis**



Montfort



CHAPTER FOUR THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF EVANGELIZATION (176-258)

I. COMMUNAL AND SOCIETAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE KERYGMA

*The Church's teaching on social
questions*

183. Who would claim to lock up in a church and silence the message of Saint Francis of Assisi or Blessed Teresa of Calcutta? They themselves would have found this unacceptable. An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it.

II. THE INCLUSION OF THE POOR IN SOCIETY

This mysterious game of divine Wisdom is clearly seen in the great variety of all he created. Apart from considering (...) the varied brightness of the stars and the different temperaments of men, we are filled with wonderment at the changes we see in the seasons and the weather, at the variety of instincts in animals, at the different species of plants, at the diversified beauty of the flowers and the different tastes of the fruits. Who is the one to whom Eternal Wisdom has communicated herself? That person alone will understand these mysteries of nature. If the power and gentleness of eternal Wisdom were so luminously evident in the creation, the beauty and order of the universe, they shone forth far more brilliantly in the creation of man. For man is his supreme masterpiece, the living image

As he stepped ashore, Jesus saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he set himself to teach them at some length. By now it was getting very late, and his disciples came up to him and said, 'This is a lonely place and it is getting very late, so send them away, and they can go to the farms and villages round about, to buy themselves something to eat.' He replied, 'Give them something to eat yourselves.' They answered, 'Are we to go and spend two hundred denarii on bread for them to eat?' He asked, 'How many loaves have you?.' (...) They checked and then told him: 'Five, and two fish.' (...) Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing; then he broke the loaves and began handing them to his disciples to distribute among the people. (...) They all ate and were satisfied. (Mark 6:34-42)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Lord Jesus, you took the risk of coming in a world wounded and marked by sin and injustice, hungry for peace and love. Open our hearts to all forms of poverty so we can feed them with bread for body and soul.

4. Saying no to the golden calf, saying yes to solidarity

✚ Concluding prayer ✚

From the Gospel of John:

**Pope
Francis**



Montfort



CHAPTER TWO AMID THE CRISIS OF COMMUNAL COMMITMENT (50-109)

I. SOME CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S WORLD

No to an economy of exclusion

53. Just as the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say “thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion.

Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This

When they go to give a mission, the Director or Bursar will, if possible, bring along a sum of money for alms-giving, to help repair the churches and feed the poor of the localities where they are going. (...)

Be it during the time of their missions or not, the poor are to be the especial objects of their care. They must never refuse to help them, materially when possible, and spiritually, even if they say only one Hail Mary.

After each catechetical instruction, they will provide a meal for all the poor of the parish who have attended the instruction and every morning and evening they will bring one of them in to eat at their table. (*Rule of Missionaries, 16. 47-48*)

1. You rich, wake up and hear
Our most pitiful sobs,

A man by the name of Nicodemus, (...) came to Jesus by night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one could perform the signs that you do unless God were with him.' Jesus answered: 'In all truth I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.' Nicodemus said, 'How can a man be born when he is old?' (...) Jesus replied: 'In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit; what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. (...) No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man; (...) And the Son of man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. (*John 3:1-15*)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Lord Jesus, you are my master, my guide, my way. My slowness does not discourage you. Teach me to be a good companion on the road with those who are searching for you.

essential that the revealed word radically enrich our catechesis and all our efforts to pass on the faith. (...) “God has already spoken, and there is nothing further that we need to know, which has not been revealed to us”. Let us receive the sublime treasure of the revealed word.

sententia’ or, as Jesus Christ says, ‘from the fullness of one's heart’ (cf *Matt. 12:34*) (**Rule of Missionaries, 60**)

Can we love someone we do not even know? Can we love deeply someone we know only vaguely? Why is Jesus, the adorable, eternal and incarnate Wisdom loved so little if not because he is either too little known or not known at all?

Hardly anyone studies the supreme science of Jesus, as did St. Paul (Eph. 3:19). And yet this is the most noble, the most consoling, the most useful and the most vital of all sciences and subjects in heaven and on earth. (**LEW, 8**)

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

is a case of inequality. Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape. Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a “throw away” culture which is now spreading.

No to the new idolatry of money

55. We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (cf. Ex 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose.

No to a financial system which rules rather than serves

57. I encourage financial experts and political leaders to ponder the words of one of the sages of antiquity: “Not to share one’s wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood. It

Alas! come to our aid,
For we are desolate.
All of us are Christians,
We are all your brothers,
Help us with your riches,
Answer then our prayers.

2. God made you important
But to be our fathers,
God made you powerful
To alleviate our woes.
Yet you enjoy yourselves
Always midst abundance
While leaving us aside,
Always in dire need.

3. You are so richly-clothed
And sleep on feather beds,
We are almost naked,
Consumed by lack of food.
Everyone blesses you,
Honours and accepts you,
While we are cursed by all,
Mistreated and despised.

(**GOD**)

7. O dear poor of heart,
I hear your just complaints
And deeply feel your sorrow,
I suffer the same blows

8. You are my elder sons,
My true and chosen friends,
My dear predestined souls,
My dwelling-places fair.
All the evil done to you
Is done also to me.
Anyone who helps you out
Is proof that person loves me.

is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs". (Saint John Chrysostom, Homily on Lazarus, II, 6)

58. The Pope loves everyone, rich and poor alike, but he is obliged in the name of Christ to remind all that the rich must help, respect and promote the poor. I exhort you to generous solidarity and to the return of economics and finance to an ethical approach which favours human beings.

(Hymn 18: Cries of the Poor, 1-3. 7-8)

"If I were a piece of cloth, I would give myself to the poor."
"Take good care of the poor."
(Marie-Louise de Jésus)

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

169. The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life.

171. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders. Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God’s love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives.

Centred on the word of God

174. The Church does not evangelize unless she constantly lets herself be evangelized. It is indispensable that the word of God “be ever more fully at the heart of every ecclesial activity”.

175. The study of the sacred Scriptures must be a door opened to every believer. It is

10. On the cross he summoned
The last of his strength
To gain forgiveness
For the poor sinner,
And for his own torturers
Full of rage and envy,
Who with untold suffering
Will make him lose his life.

26. Be gentle of mien,
Without moodiness, or gloom,
Let your tongue be gentle,
Without haughtiness or spite.
Behave gently
And without misgiving
Suffer peaceably
And without concern. (Hymn 9, Charms of Gentleness:7-10, 26)

The preaching of God's word is the most far-reaching, the most effective and also the most difficult ministry of all. The missionaries will, therefore, study and pray unceasingly that they may obtain from God the gift of wisdom so necessary to a true preacher for knowing and relishing the truth and getting others to relish it. It is the easiest thing in the world to be a fashionable preacher. It is a difficult but sublime thing to be able to preach with the inspiration of an apostle, to speak like the wise man, ‘ex

11. Evangelizing is joining, listening, accompanying

Pope Francis



IV. EVANGELIZATION AND THE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE KERYGMA

160. Evangelization aims at a process of growth which entails taking seriously each person and God's plan for his or her life. All of us need to grow in Christ. Evangelization should stimulate a desire for this growth, so that each of us can say wholeheartedly: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (*Gal 2:20*).

Kerygmatic and mystagogical catechesis

167. Every expression of true beauty can thus be acknowledged as a path leading to an encounter with the Lord Jesus.

Personal accompaniment in processes of growth

Montfort



7. How gentle his behaviour
Toward all sinners!

Far from chasing them,
He charms their hearts.
With what gentleness
Did he win over the
Magdalene,
And conquer the soul
Of the woman of Samaria.

8. See him as a father
Gently forgiving
An adulterous woman.
Wishing to save Judas,
He weeps, he humbles himself,
He bows low to the ground.
O unheard of gentleness!

9. On the smoking wick
He gently blows,
And then relights it
Without any anger.
Break a stick,
He takes it, joins it,
And makes it fit again.
O infinite gentleness!

✚ **Concluding prayer** ✚

From the Gospel of Luke:

One of the rulers put this question to Jesus: 'Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, (...) 'You know the commandments.' (...) He replied, 'I have kept all of them since my earliest days.' When Jesus heard this he said, 'There is still one thing you lack. Sell everything you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But when he heard this he was overcome with sadness, for he was very rich. Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to make their way into the kingdom of God! Yes, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of God.' Those who were listening said, 'In that case, who can be saved?' He replied, 'Things that are impossible by human resources, are possible for God.' (*Luke 18:18-27*)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Lord Jesus, free our hearts of what binds them and shuts them to others. Help us to have no other treasure but the love we receive from you and offer to others.

5. New cultures, new challenges

✚ Concluding prayer ✚
From the Gospel of Luke:

Pope Francis



No to the inequality which spawns violence

Some cultural challenges

67. In our world, especially in some countries, different forms of war and conflict are re-emerging, yet we Christians remain steadfast in our intention to respect others, to heal wounds, to build bridges, to strengthen relationships and to “bear one another’s burdens” (*Gal 6:2*).

Challenges to inculturating the faith

69. It is imperative to evangelize cultures in order to inculturate the Gospel. In countries of Catholic tradition, this means encouraging, fostering and reinforcing a richness which already exists. In countries of other religious traditions, or profoundly secularized countries, it will

Montfort



31. I am ready, Jesus, my Lord,
To turn up preaching anywhere,
Supported by your power.
Make me, Lord, your missionary;
Even though it has no income
But only insults and rebuffs,
I am content, content, dear Model.

4. O mighty God, give me your arms
To conquer the world with its charms
And all things against your law;
To convert souls, O Lord bestow
Your holiness into my soul,
The truth into my mind,
And pure fire, fire in my heart.

28. My Jesus, I want to be wise,
I want You alone for my lot,
For my possession and my worth.
My God, you alone and souls’
salvation!
No penny, then, of recompense.
What great wealth in my
vocation,
For with your fire, fire, my heart
is rich.

On Christmas night, an angel of the Lord stood before the shepherds (...) and said to them, (...) "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds (...) went with haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. (...) They made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. (*Luke 2:9-19*)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Virgin Mary, teach us the silence that can receive the Word of God and be nourished by it. Teach us to share this Word with the joy and the simplicity of the shepherds.

their signs and symbols, to answering the questions they ask". He needs to be able to link the message of a biblical text to a human situation, to an experience which cries out for the light of God's word.

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

mean sparking new processes for evangelizing culture, even though these will demand long-term planning. We must keep in mind, however, that we are constantly being called to grow. Each culture and social group needs purification and growth.

Challenges from urban cultures

71. The new Jerusalem, the holy city (cf. *Rev 21:2-4*), is the goal towards which all of humanity is moving. It is curious that God's revelation tells us that the fullness of humanity and of history is realized in a city. We need to look at our cities with a contemplative gaze, a gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their homes, in their streets and squares.

73. New cultures are constantly being born in these vast new expanses where Christians are no longer the customary interpreters or generators of meaning. Instead, they themselves take from these cultures new languages, symbols, messages and paradigms which propose new approaches to life, approaches often in contrast with the

29. Grant me Lord, I entreat you,
A very ingenious zeal;
Please instruct me in all truth;
Enkindle me with new flame,
Teach me heavenly secrets
So I may be more perfect,
More vigilant, vigilant, more faithful.

(Hymn 22, Resolutions of a Zealous Missionary: 31. 4. 28-29)

Young tramps, beggars, waifs and strays enjoyed special privileges in the exercise of his mission and of his charity. He held special meetings for them, taught them catechism (...), gave them advice suited for their age, their idle way of life as vagrants and tramps. His ingenious zeal inspired him with many pious devices with a view to bringing home to them the danger of their conditions. *(Blain, 291)*

Gospel of Jesus. (...) This challenges us to imagine innovative spaces and possibilities for prayer and communion which are more attractive and meaningful for city dwellers.

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

transformed by the Spirit. It is what we call *lectio divina*.

153. In the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to ask, for example: “Lord, what does this text say to me? What is it about my life that you want to change by this text?” (...) no one is more patient than God our Father, that no one is more understanding and willing to wait. He always invites us to take a step forward, but does not demand a full response if we are not yet ready. He simply asks that we sincerely look at our life and present ourselves honestly before him, and that we be willing to continue to grow.

An ear to the people

154. The preacher also needs to keep his ear to the people and to discover what it is that the faithful need to hear. A preacher has to contemplate the word, but he also has to contemplate his people. In this way he learns “of the aspirations, of riches and limitations, of ways of praying, of loving, of looking at life and the world, which distinguish this or that human gathering,” while paying attention “to actual people, to using their language,

eyes and a breath of your mouth. There is in you so much beauty and delight; you have shielded me from so many evils and showered on me so many favours, and you are moreover so little known and so much slighted. How can I remain silent? Not only justice and gratitude, but my own interests urge me to speak about you, even though it be so imperfectly. It is true, I can only lisp like a child, but then I am only a child, anxious to learn how to speak properly through my lisping, once I have attained the fullness of your age (cf. *Eph. 4:13*). (*LEW, 1*)

Personalizing the word

150. Before preparing what we will actually say when preaching, we need to let ourselves be penetrated by that word which will also penetrate others, for it is a living and active word, like a sword “which pierces to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12). This has great pastoral importance. Today too, people prefer to listen to witnesses: they “thirst for authenticity” and “call for evangelizers to speak of a God whom they themselves know and are familiar with, as if they were seeing him”

151. We are not asked to be flawless, but to keep growing and wanting to grow as we advance along the path of the Gospel; our arms must never grow slack. What is essential is that the preacher be certain that God loves him, that Jesus Christ has saved him and that his love always has the last word.

Spiritual reading

152. There is one particular way of listening to what the Lord wishes to tell us in his word and of letting ourselves be

ministry, for his sense of mission is part of his life-style as a whole. In the spring of 1708, Bishop Desmarets returns to visit the parish of Montfort. This time, his instructions are clear and precise: he forbids Louis to preach anywhere outside the parish churches - both the chapel and the hermitage fall under this interdiction. Louis' answer is to leave the Diocese of St. Malo completely. (*Papàsogli, page 272*)

Note that the enlightenment and knowledge given by eternal Wisdom at not dry, barren and unspiritual, but radiating splendour, unction, vigour and devotion. It moves and satisfies the heart at the same time as it enlightens the mind. (*LEW, 94*)

Prayer to Eternal Wisdom

O divine Wisdom, Lord of heaven and earth, humbly kneeling before you, I beg pardon for my audacity in attempting to speak of your perfections, ignorant and sinful as I am. I beg you not to consider the darkness of my mind or the uncleanness of my lips unless it be to take them away with a glance of your

✚ Concluding prayer ✚

From the Gospel of Matthew:

When he went into Capernaum a centurion came to Jesus, appealing to him and saying. 'Sir, my servant is lying at home paralysed and in great pain.' Jesus said to him, 'I will come myself and cure him.' The centurion replied, 'Sir, I am not worthy to have you under my roof; just give the word and my servant will be cured.' (...) When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those following him, 'In truth I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found faith as great as this. And I tell you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of Heaven.' (...) And to the centurion Jesus said, 'Go back, then; let this be done for you, as your faith demands.' And the servant was cured at that moment. (*Matthew 8:5-13*)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Praise to you Lord Jesus, eternal Wisdom, who created the rich and diverse cultures of the human race.. Transform the borders of the earth into places of encounter and not of exclusion.

6. Encountering is giving flesh to the Gospel

Pope Francis



Montfort



II. TEMPTATIONS FACED BY PASTORAL WORKERS

77. I am aware that we need to create spaces where pastoral workers can be helped and healed, “places where faith itself in the crucified and risen Jesus is renewed, where the most profound questions and daily concerns are shared”

Yes to the challenge of a missionary spirituality

No to selfishness and spiritual sloth

84. The joy of the Gospel is such that it cannot be taken away from us by anyone or anything (cf. *Jn 16:22*).

86. In the desert we rediscover the value of what is essential for living; thus in today’s world there are innumerable signs, often expressed implicitly or negatively, of the thirst for God, for the ultimate

At St. Lazare, where Montfort's utopian dream is first lived in all its purity, the Company of Mary comes into being in embryonic form. It is, symbolically, the Cenacle of the poor, united in pleading for graces from on high, together in handing on the Word; it is the little Church of the Acts of the Apostles, prayerful and mission-oriented. The three men [Montfort, Mathurin and Jean] experience the awakening of the forest when the dawn sparks off the singing of the birds. Their days are passed in prayer, manual work (for they restore and decorate the small crumbling chapel of the hermitage, and preaching to the people roundabout who begin to come to St. Lazare as to a place of pilgrimage. The three hermits live a life of utter simplicity, stripped of all but the most elementary necessities. (...) They live on the charity of people poor like themselves.

10. The Word of God: food to receive and share

Pope Francis



Montfort



II. THE HOMILY

136. Let us renew our confidence in preaching, based on the conviction that it is God who seeks to reach out to others through the preacher, and that he displays his power through human words.

A mother's conversation

141. The Lord truly enjoys talking with his people; the preacher should strive to communicate that same enjoyment to his listeners.

Words which set hearts on fire

143. The preacher has the wonderful but difficult task of joining loving hearts, the hearts of the Lord and his people. The dialogue between God and his people further strengthens the covenant between them and consolidates the bond of charity.

III. PREPARING TO PREACH

Saint Lazare becomes a new point of departure for Louis. After Brédal, the parishes of Breteil, Talensac, Landujan, and Romillé ask for and receive permission for his preaching. (...) When the old pastor, Hindré, expresses his astonishment with regard to the constant effectiveness of the missionary's words, Louis reveals one of the secrets of his career: “I have walked more than eight thousand kilometres as a pilgrim to ask God to give me the grace to touch hearts, and He has granted my request.”

During the periods between Parish missions, Louis joyfully continues his preaching under the shadow of an oak tree or somewhere along a road. It is very characteristic of him to let his activity exceed the bounds of rigidly structured parish

✚ **Concluding prayer** ✚
From the Gospel of Luke:

In those days, Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished.' And Mary said: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. (...) The Almighty has done great things for me. (Luke 1:39-49)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

In the same manner you lived in your Mother, the Virgin Mary, now you live in us, Lord Jesus. May we be like her, leaving in haste to share your presence and sing the great deeds God has done for us.

meaning of life. And in the desert people of faith are needed who, by the example of their own lives, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive”.

(...) In these situations we are called to be living sources of water from which others can drink.

Yes to the new relationships brought by Christ

87. Today, when the networks and means of human communication have made unprecedented advances, we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a “mystique” of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage.

88. For just as some people want a purely spiritual Christ, without flesh and without the cross, they also want their interpersonal relationships provided by sophisticated equipment, by screens and systems which can be turned on and off on command.

Saint Lazare where a priest and two laymen have only a stone for a pillow, achieves the one thing necessary: authentic communion. Perhaps this is why it is the best realisation so far of Louis' dream. It is a perfect embodiment of a life-style, free because it is unencumbered by material things, effective because its prayer and apostolic life are motivated by only one value: love.

(...) At one stroke, in this little corner of the earth where life is intense and human, simple and varied, Louis succeeds in achieving a synthesis of the time spent with God alone and that given over to a tender closeness to the people. Above the altar of the chapel a few refreshing images that more or less summarise Montfortian spirituality are to be found: a dove, representing the Holy Spirit, spreads its wings over the name of Jesus written in large letters, and also over a statue of Mary, Our Lady of Wisdom, holding her child in her arms; the child holds in its tiny hand a sphere representing the earth. (*Papàsogli, pp 316-317*)

“[Lord], remember your congregation” (cf *Ps 74:2*); it is to be a congregation, a gathering, a

Meanwhile, the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction.

90. Genuine forms of popular religiosity are incarnate, since they are born of the incarnation of Christian faith in popular culture. For this reason they entail a personal relationship, not with vague spiritual energies or powers, but with God, with Christ, with Mary, with the saints. These devotions are fleshy, they have a face.

92. There indeed we find true healing, since the way to relate to others which truly heals instead of debilitating us, is a mystical fraternity, a contemplative fraternity. It is a fraternal love capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbour, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others just as their heavenly Father

selection, a picked handful of predestined men to be chosen by you from among those who are in the world: "I have chosen you from amidst the world" (John 15:19).

You are to select from all these fierce wolves a flock of peaceful sheep; from all these ugly crows, a flight of pure doves and royal eagles; from all these buzzing hornets, a swarm of honey-bees; from all these slow-moving tortoises, a herd of nimble deer; from all these timid hares, a pride of bold lions.

"Lord, gather us in from all nations" (*Ps 106:47*). Bring us together and unite us and may all the glory be given to your holy and mighty name! (*PM, 18*)

I feel the obligation to recommend to those present and to those who are to come that they never stray from the original spirit of our holy founder, which is a spirit of humility, poverty, detachment, charity, and union of all. (*Testament of Marie-Louise de Jésus*)

Their charity to one another will be full of attention and good will, and they will look for opportunities to do one another a good turn. It will be marked by

our human calculations, we end up imposing a monolithic uniformity. This is not helpful for the Church's mission.

Culture, thought and education

133. The Church, in her commitment to evangelization, appreciates and encourages the charism of theologians and their scholarly efforts to advance dialogue with the world of cultures and sciences. I call on theologians to carry out this service as part of the Church's saving mission. In doing so, however, they must always remember that the Church and theology exist to evangelize, and not be content with a desk-bound theology.

communion to any penitent who has not first renewed his baptismal promises with the rest of the parishioners. Only those who have seen the results of this practice can appreciate its value. (*Rule of Missionaries, 54-56*)

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey.

128. In this preaching, which is always respectful and gentle, the first step is personal dialogue, when the other person speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes and concerns for loved ones, or so many other heartfelt needs. Only afterwards is it possible to bring up God's word, perhaps by reading a Bible verse or relating a story, but always keeping in mind the fundamental message: the personal love of God who became man, who gave himself up for us, who is living and who offers us his salvation and his friendship.

Charisms at the service of a communion which evangelizes

131. Diversity must always be reconciled by the help of the Holy Spirit; he alone can raise up diversity, plurality and multiplicity while at the same time bringing about unity. When we, for our part, aspire to diversity, we become self-enclosed, exclusive and divisive; similarly, whenever we attempt to create unity on the basis of

[The missionaries] will preach in the morning and evening on weekdays at times best suited to the people. (...)

This conference [of the afternoon] should be an informal instruction in question-and-answer form on the truths of our religion. The missionaries may choose a particular topic and, after a brief expository introduction, one of them may ask brief and serious questions of a practical nature on the topic under discussion. They may also allow the members of the congregation to bring up their own problems on this or any other subject, provided that the missionary who gives the conference is prepared to deal with any matter that may arise. This is the boldest method of all and the one which does the most good to the people.

The purpose of these missions is to renew the spirit of Christianity among the faithful. Therefore, the missionaries will see to it that, as the Pope has commanded, the baptismal vows are renewed with the greatest solemnity. They are not to give absolution or

does. Here and now, especially where we are a "little flock" (Lk 12:32), the Lord's disciples are called to live as a community which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Mt 5:13-16). We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel.⁷⁰ Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!

mutual respect which brings them to give precedence to others and by patience which will enable them to bear with one another's faults.

This queen of all the virtues is the queen and superior who governs the Company with her golden sceptre. She is its life-blood, the bond which holds it together and its guardian; pride, self-conceit and self-seeking being banished from it. (*Rule of Missionaries, 44-45*)

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

✚ **Concluding prayer** ✚
From the Gospel of John:

Tired by the journey, Jesus sat down by the well. A Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me something to drink.' (...) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew. How is it that you ask me, a Samaritan, for something to drink?' (...) Jesus replied to her: If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me something to drink,' you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.' 'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered, 'and the well is deep: how do you get this living water?' (...) Jesus replied: 'Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again; but no one who drinks the water that I shall give will ever be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will become a spring of water within, welling up for eternal life.' (*John 4:6-14*)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Lord, you are a God of infinite patience. Teach us to sit beside our neighbour, welcome his thirst, help the other discover the spring that never dries up.

9. Humble and numerous roads of the mission

Pope Francis



The evangelizing power of popular piety

124.“Journeying together to shrines and taking part in other manifestations of popular piety, also by taking one’s children or inviting others, is in itself an evangelizing gesture”. Let us not stifle or presume to control this missionary power!

125. I think of the steadfast faith of those mothers tending their sick children who, though perhaps barely familiar with the articles of the creed, cling to a rosary; or of all the hope poured into a candle lighted in a humble home with a prayer for help from Mary. (...) They are the manifestation of a theological life nourished by the working of the Holy Spirit who has been poured into our hearts (cf. *Rom 5:5*).

Person to person

127. Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring

Montfort



You will have no other end in this pilgrimage than the following:

Firstly, to obtain from God through Mary's intercession good missionaries, who walk in the footsteps of the apostles by complete abandonment to divine Providence and the practice of all virtues under the protection of our Lady.

Secondly, to obtain the gift of wisdom in order to know, love and practise virtue, and bring others to taste it and practise it.

If they make the pilgrimage in this way, I am sure they will be seen to be 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. (*The Holy Pilgrimage of Notre-Dame de Saumur, 3. 13*)

✚ Concluding prayer ✚

From the Gospel of Matthew:

[After the resurrection of Jesus], the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, but some doubted. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.' (Matthew 28:16-20)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Lord Jesus, you were sent by the Father, and now you send us into the world. May our baptism not be without fruit, but may it create in us a deep desire to share the joy of the Gospel.

7. The community is the living face of the Gospel

Pope Francis



No to spiritual worldliness

95. This insidious worldliness is evident in a number of attitudes which appear opposed, yet all have the same pretence of “taking over the space of the Church”. In some people we see an ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for doctrine and for the Church’s prestige, but without any concern that the Gospel have a real impact on God’s faithful people and the concrete needs of the present time. In this way, the life of the Church turns into a museum piece or something which is the property of a select few. (...) The mark of Christ, incarnate, crucified and risen, is not present; closed and elite groups are formed, and no effort is made to go forth and seek out those who are distant or the immense multitudes who thirst for Christ.

97. God save us from a worldly Church with superficial spiritual

Montfort



Out of a thousand preachers - I could say ten thousand without telling a lie - there is scarcely one who has this great gift of the Holy Spirit. The majority have only the tongue, mouth and wisdom of men. That is why, even though these preachers quote Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church, so few people are enlightened or moved and converted by their words. And this in spite of the fact that all they say is based on sound reasons, is clearly proved, well- arranged, beautifully delivered well listened to and applauded. (...) Their gestures are well- coordinated and their eloquence is stimulating. But alas! All this being purely human and natural produces only what is human and natural. A well-dissimulated complacency on the part of the preacher in his beautifully composed and elaborate sermon provides the dart with which the proud and cunning Lucifer blinds him. All the

and pastoral trappings! This stifling worldliness can only be healed by breathing in the pure air of the Holy Spirit who frees us from self-centeredness cloaked in an outward religiosity bereft of God. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the Gospel!

No to warring among ourselves

99. I especially ask Christians in communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion. Let everyone admire how you care for one another, and how you encourage and accompany one another: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35). This was Jesus’ heartfelt prayer to the Father: “That they may all be one... in us... so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21). Beware of the temptation of jealousy! We are all in the same boat and headed to the same port! Let us ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each, which belong to all.

101. We all have our likes and dislikes, and perhaps at this very moment we are angry with someone. At least let us say to the Lord: “Lord, I am angry with this person, with that person. I pray to

preacher gets for his trouble and efforts is popular admiration which alone occupies the mind of worldly people during the sermon and provides them with a subject of conversation when they meet socially after church. (*Rule of Missionaries, 60*)

2. With love, we can do everything,
Without love, we do nothing.
Love is the one thing necessary,
The summary of all good,
The divine imprint,
The essence of a Christian.
I must love, I must love, God
hidden in my neighbour.

15. Let us love, let us love then our brothers
After the example of the Saviour
Despite all their miseries
Despite their bad moods
And let us try by our prayers
To win their heart to God.
I must love, I must love, etc.

16. Let us comfort the afflicted,
Protect the orphans,
Convert the sinners,
Rebuke the evildoers,
Console the incurable,
And lend a hand to all.
I must love, I must love, etc.

6. Though my neighbour offends me
Or plays dirty tricks,
Although he shows no concern for me

testimony” (Jn 4:39). So too, Saint Paul, after his encounter with Jesus Christ, “immediately proclaimed Jesus” (Acts 9:20; cf. 22:6-21). So what are we waiting for?

121. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. Our falling short of perfection should be no excuse; on the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing.

they entail, say your Rosary every day either alone or in public and receive the sacraments at least once a month.” (**Letter to the People of Montbernage, 2**)

1. My choice is made! I’ll roam through the world,
Living just like a vagabond,
To rescue my poor neighbor.
Could I see my dear brother’s soul
Perishing everywhere through sin,
My heart not being touched?
No, No, Lord, no, no, his soul is too dear.

16. In the exercise of my zeal,
Make me always very faithful
To the duties of holiness;
May my spring gush forth night
and day,
Never leaving me depleted,
May I preach to transform hearts,
But by preaching, preaching, let
me be renewed. (**Hymn 22,
Resolutions and Prayers of a
(...) Missionary: 1. 16**)

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

We are all missionary disciples

120. In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus. (...) The Samaritan woman became a missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans come to believe in him "because of the woman's

14. Great God, make yourself the Master
Of my whole heart so I may love,
Of my mind so I may know,
Of my tongue so I may charm,
Of my senses and powers
So I may act and suffer,
Of my possessions, of my pains
And of all, so I may serve you.

15. Make a temple of my heart,
Of my tongue, an instrument
To speak to all by example,
To speak eloquently
Through Jesus and Mary,
Reign powerfully in me
So that I may then glorify God alone forever.

(Hymn 141, Invocation of the Holy Spirit: 1-2. 11. 14-15)

"Remember, then, my dear children, my joy, my glory and my crown (Phil 4.1), to have a great love for Jesus and to love him through Mary. Let your true devotion to your loving Mother Mary be manifest everywhere and to everyone, so that you may spread everywhere the fragrance of Jesus and, carrying your cross steadfastly after our good Master, gain the crown and kingdom which is waiting for you. So, do not fail to fulfil your baptismal promises and all that

you for him and for her". To pray for a person with whom I am irritated is a beautiful step forward in love, and an act of evangelization. Let us do it today! Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the ideal of fraternal love!

Other ecclesial challenges

103. I readily acknowledge that many women share pastoral responsibilities with priests, helping to guide people, families and groups and offering new contributions to theological reflection. But we need to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church.

107. Wherever there is life, fervour and a desire to bring Christ to others, genuine vocations will arise. Even in parishes where priests are not particularly committed or joyful, the fraternal life and fervour of the community can awaken in the young a desire to consecrate themselves completely to God and to the preaching of the Gospel.

108. Whenever we attempt to read the signs of the times it is helpful to listen to young people and the elderly. Both represent a source of hope for every people.

And never thanks me
I love him patiently,
I intensify my love.
I must love, I must love, etc.

19. Great God! Who can dispense himself
From the laws of charity,
Since it made you descend
Into our humanity?
From now on, I want to submit
To its gentle authority.
I must love, I must love God
hidden in my neighbour.
(Hymn 148, on Charity: 2. 15-16. 6. 19)

The religious experience of the seventeenth century created and affirmed a new social role for women (...). The lived experience of Marie Louise, with its three abortive attempts at cloistered life, created the basic premises for the action and presence of Daughters of Wisdom throughout the whole world. They were to be like servants whose grey habit symbolically linked them to the poverty of Christ. Following a supernatural logic, they were to insert themselves among those layers of the social structure in which the most desperate and most numerous needs were to be discovered. **(Papàsogli, pages 387-388)**

✓ Thoughts to ponder:

✓ To-do list:

✚ **Concluding prayer** ✚
From the Gospel of John:

[During the last supper], Jesus said to his disciples: 'I give you a new commandment: love one another; you must love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognise you as my disciples.' (...) After he had spoken these words, Jesus looked up to heaven and said: 'Father, I ask that they may all be one. As you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.' (John 13:34-35; 17:1. 21)

– *brief silence, decade*

– *final invocation:*

Lord Jesus, your words and deeds have revealed to us the face of our Father. Make of our Christian communities the living face of God's tenderness for the world.

8. Every baptized person is a missionary

Pope Francis



Montfort



CHAPTER THREE THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL (110-175)

I. THE ENTIRE PEOPLE OF GOD
PROCLAIMS THE GOSPEL.

A people of many faces

116. Whenever a community receives the message of salvation, the Holy Spirit enriches its culture with the transforming power of the Gospel. The history of the Church shows that Christianity (...) "will also reflect the different faces of the cultures and peoples in which it is received and takes root."

117. Evangelization joyfully acknowledges these varied treasures which the Holy Spirit pours out upon the Church. We would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous.

1. Come, Father of Lights,
Come, God of Love,
Fashion in me (us) my (our)
prayers.

Show me (us) the truth,
Send into my (our) soul(s)
An ember of your fire
To penetrate it with flame
And fill it with God.

2. Come, Holy Spirit, you create
Martyrs, confessors, Apostles,
prophets,
Great heroes, valiant hearts.
You are the only guide
My Saviour has followed;
So that I may imitate Him,
Lead me as you led Him.

11. Give me your wisdom,
This taste for truth,
This charity which impels
Without forcing the will,
This grace so fruitful,
This lure so ravishing,
This peace profound and blessed,
This aid all-powerful.