



350th Anniversary of the Birth of Saint Montfort in Colombia

PAIPA, Colombia - The retreat house of the Foyer de Charité in the municipality of Paipa, Boyacá, was the place chosen for the third Meeting of the Montfortian family with the Superior General of the Company of Mary, Montfortian Missionaries, during his visit to Colombia.

Present were representatives of the Marian Cenacles of the municipality of Sogamoso, members of the Legion of Mary of Tunja and Paipa, missionaries of Duitama, members of the small communities of the process of evangelization SINE, Mr. Gerardo Moreno of the the Colombian Vocational Animation team and other people close to Montfortian spirituality, accompanied by priests namely Benigno ZORRO SMM, Novice Master, Pablo GARCIA SMM, Novice Master Assistant and Father Jorge Enrique GONZÁLEZ SMM, the Provincial Superior. Father Gabriel RIVEROS, Director of the Marie Reine des Coeurs Spirituality Center, joined the afternoon session.

The initial prayer was led by Father Benigno with Lauds in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Our Lady of Lourdes. The various participating groups then made their presentations. It was moving to re-live these encounters of spirituality after a long time of disconnection due to the pandemic; gratitude to Father Adolfo BETANCOURT SMM, through whom many brothers could be contacted.

Mr. Gerardo MORENO, member of the Vocational Animation team of the Province of Colombia, informed us that last year 36 catechesis were prepared for work in youth ministry

and told us that this year has been declared the year of the consecration of young Montfortians. From the month of March, the preparation of young people for this consecration to Jesus through Mary will begin in the different parishes and pastoral areas of the country. The invitation is to start face-to-face meetings with young people from March and they have convened a national meeting of animators and youth advisers from June 25 to 30 in Cumaral.

Then, the Superior General, Father Luizinho, presented a summary of the introduction to the letter written by him in 2020, entitled "*The participation of the Lay Associates in the mission of the Church*" through a video published at the occasion of his visit to Peru. He closed his intervention by sharing images, music and dances that he gathered from the different places of the Montfortian mission during his journey on the 5 continents, in the company of the members of his general council. This makes us feel a universal Church, a communion of love in the midst of distances and differences in language, culture, liturgy, also pains, wars and problems that humanity experiences, in places where we are called to bring the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

At noon, Father BENIGNO SMM invited us to gather around the grotto of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and led the Marian moment there with the prayer of the small crown of praise to Mary, written by Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort and invited us to lunch.

In the afternoon, Father GABRIEL SMM presented a lecture on how to live true devotion from the Second Vatican Council (L.G. 67), in an effective and efficient way, emphasizing that for a baptized person, this practice does not is not optional, and that we Christians should give the reason for our devotion on biblical grounds and the magisterium of the Church. He also stressed the importance of knowing the life of Montfort to better understand his writings. The Provincial Superior, Father Jorge ENRIQUE SMM, concluded this session with a sincere and beautiful explanation of the purpose of the Mary Queen of Hearts Association, not as a path of uniformity, but, on the contrary, as an association that promotes communion of different vocations and charisms, as well as unity in the diversity of efforts to establish the Kingdom of God through Mary, living baptism with Mary and allowing her to form Jesus Christ in each one. Father BENIGNO SMM announced a formation open to all to know and taste these treasures of Montfortian spirituality.

The closing Eucharist of the meeting was presided over by Father Jorge, praying for all our sick brothers. There, in the light of the readings of the liturgy, he spoke to us of a page of hope, in which we are told the good news that we will not be defeated by sin, and the other a missionary page: God does not act without our intervention, that is, by inviting us to offer him everything we have, because we have already received much; by overcoming the fear that sometimes paralyzes us. At the end of the Eucharist through the gesture of the laying on of hands, the whole assembly made the missionary sending to Father Luizinho, thanking him for all he had done during these six years at the service of the Company of Mary.

We conclude by singing happy birthday to Father Jorge-Enrique who was born on February 8, also asking for him many blessings in his apostolate.

Angela Maria Hernandez

National Coordinator of the Montfortain Associates Colombia