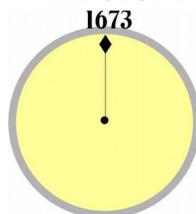


# 1. EVENT: Birth and Baptism at Montfort



- **DATE** : 1673, 31 January and 1 February
- **PLACE** : Montfort
- **VALUE** : the gift of life

- **THE STORY** :



Jean-Baptiste Grignon and Jeanne Robert, the parents of St Louis Marie, were married in 1671. In 1672 they had a first son, Jean-Baptiste, who died aged 5 months. Louis Marie, the predestined son, was born the following year, on 31 January 1673, in Montfort-la-Cane. Through the death of his brother, he became the eldest in a family that would number eighteen children : eight boys and ten girls. Several of the children died at an early age. Among those that survived, there were two religious Sisters and three priests. On 1 February, the day after his birth, Louis Marie was baptised in the church of Saint-Jean, his parish. Two centuries previously, in this same church, a saint, Vincent Ferrer, had prayed. While preaching one day in La Chèze, not far from Montfort, this great apostle had foretold the coming of a man of God, a “powerful missionary”: he was foretelling Father de Montfort.

We know the importance that Louis Marie placed on Baptism in his life and ministry. He took the name of the town of his birth, so as to be a living reminder of this. Let us recall the Contract of Covenant with God that he was to have signed at the end of his missions, and the consecration to Jesus through Mary, which he says is the renewal of Baptismal promises.

● **FROM MONTFORT’S WRITINGS:** (hymn 27, 2-4;10-11;21-22)

For the excess of your great love  
I possess no worthy return So I want to chant forever: Deo gratias,  
Deo gratias, Deo gratias, Deo gratias.

Great God, you made me from nothing,  
I received everything from you. You alone are my sole support. Deo  
gratias,

I am your image, O great King,  
And with lively faith I believe You have imprinted it in me. Deo gratias,

You anointed me with mildness,  
And adorned me with all splendour, You have filled me with your favours.  
Deo gratias,

You alone had me baptized,  
And then and there had me espouse you, And later had me catechized.  
Deo gratias,

What is this great joy and sweetness  
Savoured at times within my heart? It is the effect of your grace. Deo  
gratias,

What can I offer for these gifts,  
For many other hidden ones, Except to chant forever: Deo gratias,  
Deo gratias, Deo gratias, Deo gratias..

● **LIGHT FROM THE BIBLE:**

**Psalm 139 (138): 1. 13-18**

Yahweh, you examine me and know me,  
You created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother’s womb. For so  
many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders.  
You knew me through and through, my being held no secrets from you,  
when I was being formed in secret, textured in the depths of the earth. Your

eyes could see my embryo. In your book all my days were inscribed, every one that was fixed is there. How hard for me to grasp your thoughts, how many, God, there are! If I count them, they are more than the grains of sand; if I come to an end, I am still with you.

**Titus 3: 4-8a**

When the kindness and love of God our Saviour for humanity were revealed, it was not because of any upright actions we had done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own faithful love that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and renewal in the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our Saviour; so that, justified by his grace, we should become heirs in hope of eternal life. This is doctrine that you can rely on. I want you to be quite uncompromising in teaching all this.

● **PERSONAL INTEGRATION/SHARING**

- Going back over the texts: what links do I see between them? What do they teach me about Montfort? And about my relationship with God and with others?
- What are the most beautiful “gifts” that life has offered me?
- What are the ‘gifts’ of life that I might offer to others?
- Has there been some moment or some circumstance when I have felt particularly alive, profoundly connected with life?

● **PRAYER/CELEBRATION**

Conscious of the immense generosity of God, let us turn to him in prayer, saying: Praise to you, God of wonders!

For the gift of life, for our bodies, our intelligence, and all the resources you have created within us,

For the beauty of the world and the abundance of your good gifts,

For the gift of our Baptism, which has immersed us in the power of the Spirit,

For all we receive from others, and for all we are able to give,

For Father de Montfort who leads us back to the joy of our Baptism,

God our Father, you are the source of all gifts. accept our praise and our thanks: this is our offering for today and forever and ever. Amen.

- **SYMBOL:** Seed sown in the earth, or a small pot-plant.

- **COMMITMENT**

- How can I help life to grow - or to bring healing - around me? In my relations with others?

