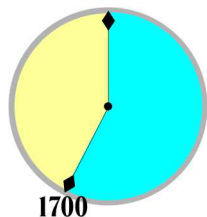


4. EVENT: ordination in Paris

- **DATE:** 1700, 5 June
- **PLACE:** Paris, in a church since demolished
- **VALUE:** priestly service
- **THE STORY:**



Louis Marie's immediate preparation for his priestly ordination was so perfect that M. Leschassier ordered him to make written notes

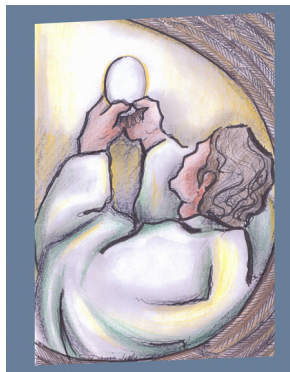
of the sentiments that divine grace inspired in him — a precious manuscript, for sure, but unfortunately it has not come down to us. But what a testimony this was in Montfort's favour, coming from the severe director.

"He was raised to the priesthood," writes Grandet, "on the Ember Saturday of Pentecost in the year 1700, by Messire Jean Hervieu Bazan de Flamanville, the Bishop of Perpignan, whom Messire Antoine de Noailles, the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, had delegated to carry out the ordinations in his diocese. M. Grignon was the more at ease with receiving the imposition of hands from this prelate in that he had had the honour to be, during several Lenten seasons, his clerk or assistant when the latter taught catechism at Saint-Sulpice."

A profound joy flooded the heart of the new priest: and after the ceremony, as his confreres congratulated him, '*Deo gratias!*' flowed from his lips not just once but thousands of time. His heart, full of gratitude, needed a long, indeed a very long time of thanksgiving: he obtained permission to spend the rest of the day before the Blessed Sacrament.

Following the custom of those days, he took a number of days to prepare himself for his first Mass: and he chose for its celebration the chapel of the Blessed Virgin behind the choir of the church of Saint-Sulpice. This was the altar of his "good Mother", this altar that he had tended with so much love during his years of study.

What a Mass under the gaze of Mary! Jean-Baptiste Blain assisted at it: he struggled to express the tender feelings of his friend's soul: he could find only one word, that reappears three times under his hand: and other witnesses who did not have the same empathy for the new priest, could find no other formula to express their feelings: He was like "an angel at the altar!"



Throughout his life, even in those times when he found himself bound by absurd censures, he would never fail to celebrate Mass every day; without it he would have felt deprived of the strength and motivation to work for his two great loves, Jesus and Mary.

● FROM MONTFORT'S WRITINGS

Prayer for Missionaries, 7-12

– What, then, am I asking for? *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 understand them, without worldly possessions and devoid of all self-interest.

– slaves to your love and your will; men after your own heart who, without impediment of self-love, carry out your will to the full and, like David of old, lay low all your enemies, with the Cross for their staff and the Rosary for their sling: in baculo Cruce et in virga Virgine.

. *Liberos*: men as free as the clouds that sail high above the earth, filled with the dew of heaven, and moving, without let or hindrance, according to the inspiration of the Spirit. They are included among those whom the prophet had in mind when he asked: qui sunt isti qui sicut nubes volant? Ubi erat impetus spiritus illuc gradiebantur, Who are these who move like clouds? Wherever the Spirit leads them, they go? (*Isaiah 60:8; Eze. 1, 12*)

Liberos: men always available, always ready to obey you when those in authority speak., like Samuel: ‘praesto sum, here I am’ (*1 Sam. 3:16*) always ready to be on the move and to suffer with you and for you, just as the Apostles were: ‘eamus et moriamur cum illo, let us go and die along with him’ (*John 11:16*)

Liberos: true children of Mary whom she has conceived and begotten by her love, nurtured and reared, upheld by her and enriched with her graces.

Liberos: true servants of the Blessed Virgin who, like a Dominic of old, will range far and wide, with the brilliant and burning flame of the Gospel in their mouth, and the Rosary in their hands, barking like watchdogs, burning like fire and dispelling the darkness of the world like the sun.

● LIGHT FROM THE BIBLE:

John 13:1-17

Before the festival of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, having loved those who were his in

the world, loved them to the end. They were at supper, and the devil had already put it into the mind of Judas Iscariot son of Simon, to betray him. Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, and he got up from table, removed his outer garments and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand.' 'Never!' said Peter. 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus replied, 'If I do not wash you, you can have no share with me.' Simon Peter said, 'Well then, Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!' Jesus said, 'No one who has had a bath needs washing, such a person is clean all over. (...) When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments again he went back to the table. 'Do you understand', he said, 'what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash each other's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. 'In all truth I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, no messenger is greater than the one who sent him. 'Now that you know this, blessed are you if you behave accordingly.

● 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?
- How did Jesus put himself at the service of others?
- How did Montfort put himself at the service of others?
- Who are the people that I have known who have been for me wonderful witnesses of the spirit of service?
- What difficulties have I met with in really serving others?
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● PRAYER/CELEBRATION

Jesus proclaimed: "I came to serve, not to be served." Let us ask him to share with us this desire to serve, saying: "Teach us, Lord, the joy of service."

Lord Jesus, you were "sent by the Father", wholly in the service of his plans. Teach us to serve joyfully Him who sends us to our brothers and

sisters. We pray to the Lord...

Lord Jesus, you put yourself at the service of the poor and the sick, feeding and healing them. Give us solidarity with the most deprived people in the world. We pray to the Lord...

Lord, you took the time to welcome and listen to Nicodemus when he came to you by night, and the Samaritan woman whom you met at the well. Make us attentive to those people you place on our route. We pray to the Lord...

Lord Jesus, you said: "The greatest among you must be your servant." Help us to see all received authority as an opportunity to serve better. We pray to the Lord...

Lord, was it not love and compassion that gave rise to all your actions? May these same sentiments animate us in our relationships with one another. Amen.

- **SYMBOL**

A towel and a basin of water.

- **COMMITMENT**

- What attitudes am I going to seek to acquire, that my way of serving may better resemble those of Jesus and Montfort?

