

Circular letter of December 8, 2022
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary

Dear brothers,

Receive my fraternal greetings from Papua New Guinea where we are currently on mission. The comings and goings during these days of mission, the long distances from one place to another, the various scheduled activities and the time lost in travelling, despite the efforts of our confreres on site to ensure that everything goes well, do not allow me to take all the time necessary to write a longer and more sophisticated letter. However, I do not want to miss this great opportunity of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary without reaching out to you in your different places of missions.

1. Mary: The Immaculate – All Beautiful – *Tota Pulchra*

In celebrating the Blessed Virgin Mary, we come to her with the words of the prayer that our people pray these days:

*“You are all beautiful, Mary,
and the original stain [spot] (of sin) is not in you.
You are the glory of Jerusalem,
you are the joy of Israel,
you give honor to our people.
You are an advocate of sinners.
O Mary,
Virgin most intelligent,
Mother most merciful.
Pray for us,
plead for us,
To the Lord Jesus Christ”.*

We proclaim, O Mary: *You are all beautiful because you have been clothed in the splendor of God. In you, God has prepared his dwelling place because he has lived in you for nine months, from the incarnation until his birth in Bethlehem. Contemplating your spiritual beauty, we fight with you against the seeds of sin. You are beautiful because you are holy.*

2. Context of each country, of each Entity and of the world

The novenas that are currently taking place in our mission places not only recall the marvels that God has done in and through Mary, but also raise supplications and prayers for the good of the people. In some places people pray for the sick, in others for the unemployed. In many countries they pray for peace and justice, the fair distribution of goods, an end to violence and crime. In other countries, they pray for the end of systems of exploitation and hunger so that fraternity and solidarity become a reality.

The whole world prays and implores the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin for the end of the war between Russia and Ukraine so that our beloved brothers in both countries can rebuild their lives.

The prayer of December 8 is for all of us, especially for the Montfortian Family, in every place and in every circumstance, a dialogue with our Mother, mixed with tears and hope, imploring, in the midst of our hindrances and our sufferings, her powerful intercession to his Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The Montfortian family and the preparation for the consecration to Jesus through Mary

Almost in all our Entities and also outside of our mission places, there are groups which are preparing, either face-to-face or online, for the total Consecration to Jesus through Mary, according to the method of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort. We witness with joy the increase in the number of lay leaders of the Association of Mary Queen of Hearts and other movements dedicated to Marian devotion who accompany individuals and groups in the process of renewing their baptismal promises.

We are glad to know that new "outer symbols" of the practice of True Devotion are emerging, not primarily in the concern of wearing shackles on the wrists or legs, but in concrete actions, for example, people actively involving in pastoral services and parish missions, or in movements to fight against hunger or to defend the immigrants, bringing food to those living on the streets or to families in need.

We remember here the following invitation of the prophet Isaiah: *“Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil, learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan’s plea, defend the widow. Come now, let us set things right says the LORD: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they may become white as wool”* (Isaiah 1,16-18). It is certainly the path that comes closest to the desires of the heart of the Immaculate Virgin.

4. The Company of Mary and the “synodal journey” towards the General Chapter of 2023

On this feast of the Immaculate Conception, we want to offer the fruits of the mission carried out by the General Administration over the past five years. With generosity, we have done our best to implement the Mandate that the General Chapter of 2017 entrusted to us. We have lived, somehow, those five years as missionaries full of love for the Company of Mary.

At the foot of the throne of Mary Immaculate, we place the activities currently taking place in our Entities in preparation for the General Chapter of 2023. Religious, laity, men and women, we work in a "synodal" way, uniting our efforts, to review the path traveled in recent years and, under the guidance of the Spirit, to embrace the future with hope.

Our missionary activities do not end yet. The mission continues. We simply close a stage of missionary service with visits to our mission places in Papua New Guinea, with the Assembly of the General Delegation of PNG and with the celebration of the closing of the Continental Mission Year in Asia and Oceania.

5. Conclusion

Dear brothers, convey our greetings to all the members of the Montfortian Family, religious and laity of your Entities. May the celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Virgin fill our hearts with joy and increase our hope. May every gesture of fraternity that we accomplish among us be the most beautiful offering to the Virgin Mary and the best example that we can give to the lay people and to so many young people who aspire to follow Jesus Christ inspired by the example of Saint Louis Marie de Montfort and who share the mission with us.

To all the young people who are in the different stages of formation and to their formators, may the Virgin Mary grant them strength and perseverance in their journey.

A special greeting to the elderly and sick confreres: We have not forgotten you. We know your great love for the Immaculate Virgin Mary. We pray for you, our elderly and sick confreres. We also count on your prayers.

United with the whole Church, we pray together: *“O Almighty God, who by the Holy Spirit have prepared the body and soul of Mary as a worthy dwelling place for your Son, grant us, who call upon him, to be free from all evil. Amen”*.

To all of you, I wish you a holy feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary.



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