

NU-FRA-946
2022-12-29



Meeting of the Montfortian Family

SAINT LAURENT-SUR-SÈVRE, France - On the initiative of the Montfortian Spirituality Committee, about thirty Brothers of St. Gabriel, Montfort Missionaries and Daughters of Wisdom met at St. Laurent sur Sèvre, from November 10 to 13 in order to:

- reflect on the theme: *“Daring to open up a future for the Montfortian Family, following Blessed Marie-Louise of Jesus and Father Gabriel Deshayes”*,
- live the fraternity,
- discuss our present time and future as the Montfortian Family,
- pray together,
- visit a charismatic place-source of our Montfortian Family: Pontchâteau.

Such was the dynamic of this beautiful weekend...

“WISDOM” SPIRITUAL CENTER. FROM YESTERDAY TO TODAY, A MEETING WITH OUR FOUNDERS.

Why did Sister Marie-Louise Trichet and Father Gabriel Deshayes come to St. Laurent, if not to continue the work of Father de Montfort and to open up a future for the Montfortian Family? They dared to “risk” in order to offer a future to the mission received from God and to the Montfortian Family. This is the meaning of the 2 presentations given by Sister Marie-Laure PAILLET and Brother Jean FRIANT.

In the first presentation, Sr. Marie-Laure showed that Marie-Louise is a woman of faith. Faith is a gift from God that engages our entire existence. Thus, Marie-Louise trusted God when she “left Poitiers for La Rochelle” and “Poitiers for Saint-Laurent”. She also trusted her collaborators.

Marie-Louise is a woman of hope. She opened and closed communities always in agreement with the Fathers of the Company of Mary. With hope, she was able to overcome the difficulties that arose during the birth of her Institute.

Marie-Louise is a woman of charity serving the poor. She said: “Do all your actions “with Love and for Love”. What a beautiful program of life led her to live with the poor and like the poor!...

All her life, Marie-Louise truly lived these three theological virtues.

In the second presentation on Gabriel Deshayes, with the theme: “Leaving Auray for Saint Laurent”, Bro. Jean was able to answer two questions that we sometimes ask ourselves: 1) How could a parish priest of Auray - in such a short time - become Superior General of the Montfortians? 2) Was Gabriel Deshayes faithful to the ideal of Montfort?

After re-reading life of Father Deshayes, Bro. Jean was able to answer these two questions. First of all, Gabriel Deshayes knew the Montfortian Family. Moreover, he was attracted by the work of the Montfort Missionaries. It was he who handed over the management of the *Chartreuse d'Auray* to the Daughters of Wisdom. He was a dynamic parish priest and the Montfortians were few in number. The Holy Spirit then did what was necessary. Moreover, he took care to return to the spirit of Montfort. He was active in increasing the number of missionaries and fixing them by vows. He started again the interrupted missions. He organized retreats for lay people.

He always cared about the poor. For him, the greatest misery was ignorance. We understand why he was concerned with training brother teachers for the parishes. These brothers will later form the Brothers of Saint Gabriel. A particularity of Gabriel Deshayes was to develop the teaching of the deaf. For this, he called on competent people to train the sisters and brothers in this specialized teaching.

He made a 6-month trip to Rome to ask for the beatification of Montfort; that is to say what Montfort represented for him. Marie-Louise and Gabriel Deshayes truly had an unwavering faith in Providence.

And today, what should we do?

“If we do not risk something for God, we do nothing great for Him”: expressed Montfort in his letter n° 27. Should we not welcome this letter as a prophecy that invites us to take risks for God and for humanity? The Montfortian mission and risk are inseparable. Never alone, our Founders have always worked to maintain the unity of the Montfortian Family, in partnership with many lay collaborators. This participation in the Work of God is not over; it is entrusted to us...

Our Founders were remarkable people of action. They were able to carry out their work, thanks to an intense life of prayer. In this spirit, the Marian prayer at the tomb of Gabriel Deshayes, the shared Eucharistic prayers strengthened the life and reflection of the participants...

PONTCHÂTEAU, TODAY AND YESTERDAY.

An international Montfortian project truly revitalizes activity at Le Calvaire.

From the start, the poorest were at the heart of life at Clavaire through the presence of the 'Village Saint Joseph'. This house, run by a couple, welcomes people in weakness around 3 pillars: 1) Live together in brotherhood; 2) Sharing around the Word of God; 3) Work.

The project that is being set up at *Le Calvaire* seeks to be built around 4 poles that their main actors have come to present to us: 1) 'Sharing of Montfortian Spirituality' Pole, by Fr. Santino, SMM. A possibility of a Spiritual Center to accommodate 'à la Montfort' is being studied. 2) 'Young people and children' Pole, by Sr. Christine, Bro. Michel and Fr. Willy. The importance of communication in order to meet young people. Prayers and Montfortian spirituality are essential to these meetings. 3) 'Parish and Calvary' Pole, by Sr. Chantal and Fr. Hervé. It is a question of coordinating the parish and the Calvary in order to revitalize the parish. 4) 'Laudato Si' Pole, by Br. Jean. The park is beautiful. How to open it to people from outside while respecting nature and the ideal of Montfort?

These projects are the fruit of this beautiful unity of the Montfortian Family! They are rooted in the boldness of transmitting Montfortian spirituality and charism. In partnership with the Bishop of Nantes and his collaborators, with many lay-volunteers, fruitful research is carried out so that Calvary becomes a center of evangelization in the diocese. This project is also supported by the originality of 'living-together', 'praying-together', fraternal sharing including re-reading, in the Inter-montfortian community.

They asked us to pray for all those involved in this Montfortian missionary project. This Saturday afternoon, a historian came to enrich us with his research on the history of Calvary since 1709.

At the "Wisdom" Spiritual Center, on Sunday morning, a time for personal and community review allowed: 1) to give thanks to the Wisdom that has brought us all together; 2) to seek avenues of commitment following our Founders.

From now on, let us pray that the Montfortian Family will always be faithful in seeking Wisdom and in relieving the poor.

Bro. Abel RORTAIS, SG and Sr. Marie-Laure PAILLET, DW