



Tribute to Fr. Olivier Maire at the Shrine “Notre Dame du Chêne”

FRANCE, ND du Chêne - "This is my Body, this is my Blood..." "Each time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you announce the death of the Lord, until he comes" (1Co 11:26). With these words, Saint Paul reminds the Christians of Corinth that the "Lord's Supper" is not only a convivial meeting, but also - and above all - the memorial of the ransom sacrifice of Christ. Redemptive sacrifice for love.

In this spirit of sacrifice, we cannot escape another sacrifice in the name of charity and love of neighbor: that of Fr. Olivier Maire, assassinated on August 9, 2021 by the same, rejected asylum seeker and author of offence, whom he had received, out of kindness, in the charity of Christ, in the Montfortian community of St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre and of which he was the provincial superior of France. From Saint Matthew: “What you did to the least of my brothers, you did it to me” or: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me”. Charity, hospitality, simplicity, and availability were among the virtues of Father Olivier.

Until the sacrifice of his life, he testified to an existence of rare density both in his initial formation and in his missionary journey.

His preparation to the priesthood passed through the sanctuary of “Notre Dame du Chêne” where he pronounced his perpetual profession on September 9, 1989. Also, on this June 11, feast of the Blessed Sacrament, we wished to bear witness to him for all that he brought us by dedicating this day of pilgrimage to him with a profoundly spiritual content.

On the initiative of the “Est-Notre Dame du Chêne” Centre of the Montfort Pilgrimage, with the enthusiastic collaboration of the Missionaries of La Salette, chaplains of the site and the very devoted "Friends of Notre Dame du Chêne", the day opened with the unveiling of a plaque on the Espace Sanctuaire followed by the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Father

Paulin, provincial superior of the Montfortians of France, in the presence of the parents and family of Father Olivier, surrounded by an assembly as numerous as it was moved and prayerful , including an impressive delegation from the East Notre-Dame du Chêne center of the AMPH (Association Montfortaine Pèlerinage-Hospitalité) and members of the Provincial Council.

In his homily, Father Paulin endeavored to refer to the reflections and conceptions of the Eucharist as felt and manifested by Father Olivier. Reflections of the Spirituality of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort.

Monsignor, Jean-Luc Bouilleret, archbishop of the diocese of Besançon, had expressed his desire to mark this event with his presence. Also, in the afternoon, after the recitation of the rosary, the greeting and blessing of the Blessed Sacrament, a presentation of the life and spirituality of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort and the Montfortian presence in the world, he was unveiling the “ex-voto” plaque located inside the chapel.

From the prayer to “ND di Chêne”, at the conclusion of this ceremony:

“Direct our steps towards the little ones, the poor, the unfortunate. Unite us in the service of our starving, hunted, persecuted brethren”.

“There is no greater love than to lay down your life for those you love.” (St John 15:13)

To Jesus through Mary.

Francois SIMON
Montfortian hospitality