



First Reception of the Acts of the General Chapter

MARILLAIS, France - A good start for the (pastoral) year that has just begun! The four international Montfortian communities of France met at Marillais, where, in 430, Our Lady appeared to the bishop Saint Maurille and who wanted the feast of her birth to be established and celebrated. There, these “true children of Mary” (PM 11) gathered together on October 30, 2023, to receive and reflect on the Acts of the 38th General Chapter. Thus, the place is more than symbolic.

Furthermore, “the gentleness of Angevin”, an expression for this type of mild climate in this region of Anjou, accompanied our day and undoubtedly made it fertile. After a time greetings, the meeting began with a brief report presented by Fr. Paulin RAMANANDRAIBE, SMM. He noted, among other things, the presence of the family of Father Olivier MAIRE, SMM at the audience with the Pope and the deposition of his breviary at the Basilica of Saint Barthélémy, dedicated to the martyrs of our time. The heart of the matter was tackled straight away: “the Acts of the General Chapter”. This day, it was a question of identity under the theme “Let us dare to let ourselves be formed like Christ in the school of Mary”. We dealt with numbers 6, 7 and 8. Father Santino BREMBILLA, SMM led the discussion around these few questions in connection with the text of the Chapter, that of the Constitution and that of the Prayer for Missionaries:

- In our communities, what means are already in place to enable working together?
- What are the suggestions for responding to the calls of the Church and the signs of the times in a spirit of synodality?
- What about our support for lay people, particularly the Montfortian Marian Fraternity?

In addition, the active participation of everyone made it possible to understand that the potential is there, both in Montfortian Spirituality, the source of which is inexhaustible, and currently in the multiple facets of the Montfortian mission in France, particularly through the sanctuaries and parishes. Fidelity, working together, proximity, signs of the times and creativity are the expressions most used today in exchanges. There is something to think about and, above all, something to put into practice. In any case, as the engine is on, it is up to each and every community to get started.

Afterwards, we placed ourselves, like “flock of peaceful lambs” (PM 18), in prayer assembly, before Our Lady around the celebration of the Eucharist during which we entrusted our mission and we asked for grace to dare to take risks for God and for humanity. The Mass was followed by a good moment of fraternity around a meal offered by the Marillais community. In the afternoon, we planned the agenda for the year and then shared news and information from each community as well as the Vice-Province.

In short, the four communities, like the four wheels of a car, were off to a good start, given the dynamism that everyone showed. See you at the next 3 meetings which will take place on February 6, 2024 in Saint-Laurent, May 21, 2024 in Pontchâteau and December 10, 2024 in Montfort-sur-Meu.

Fr. Olivier NANTENAINA, SMM