



Montfortian Marian Days

FATIMA, Portugal - On the 21st and 22nd of October 2023, the Montfortian Marian Days returned with the theme: *“With Mary on the path to the New Evangelization”*. Organized by the Montfort Missionaries, namely Fathers Carlos VIEIRA, SMM, Luís OLIVEIRA, SMM and Amílcar TAVARES, SMM, the event took place at the Concepcion’s Sisters of Fátima to know, share and live the Marian spirituality of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort.

In these two days, around 150 people from the country, as well as a group of 24 people from the island of Madeira, were able to not only deepen their knowledge of this spirituality, but also to pray in groups: in the auditorium, animated by the songs of the "friends of Saudade"; during the Eucharist on Saturday presided over by the Bishop Emeritus of Portalegre – Castelo Branco, Augusto CÉSAR; during the Rosary at the Chapel of the Apparitions; and during the Sunday Eucharist at the Sanctuary together with the other pilgrims. The organization promoted closeness, both in the reception and in interaction with the speakers.

In addition to the conferences, 4 guests shared their Montfortian consecration; songs performed by the “Cercal” choir accompanied by the declamation of writings of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort and ended with the celebration of the renewal of the Consecration to Jesus through Mary. Participants had the opportunity to establish a dialogue with the speakers.

The first reflection was shared by Sr. Verónica SOUSA, ASM: *“New Evangelization: Why? As?”*. She began by saying that evangelization is everyone's business. Primarily, it's because we are baptized and, in a certain way, we have all been evangelized. However, it is not a finished work. There are new challenges and there are always new events that demand from our responses which are consistent with the Gospel. We must evangelize ourselves so we can evangelize. "Why?" Because Jesus asks us to. If it feels good to be with Him, it's good to announce it. And this happens with the help of the Holy Spirit because our brothers need it. There are so many people on the outskirts that it

is impossible not to evangelize. Our Lady of Graces (with open hands) tells us that what she has, she cannot keep for herself. Mary is the example of service in the little things every day. Of natural things, make them supernatural. With positive attitudes such as availability and fidelity, there is no discouragement or illusion to do everything.

Father Carlos CABECINHAS, Rector of the Sanctuary of Fátima, presented the second reflection: *“Mary, the first evangelized”*. She is the first evangelized because, before welcoming Jesus into her bosom, she had already welcomed him into her heart. She is also the first to receive the Gospel and eventually, she is the first to be able to give it. Moreover, she is the first disciple at the Annunciation, and the first missionary at the Visitation. Hence, Mary is a model and an example for her “YES”. As a listening woman, she listened to God and welcomed him into her heart and not just her mind. A listening that is not passive but reveals an active attitude. Thus, we must contemplate Mary to imitate her.

Furthermore, a very interesting panel of testimonies followed about the importance of Consecration in their lives. The following had the floor: Marta FAUSTINO, psychologist; Filomena SANTOS, masseuse; André CARREIRA, mechanical engineering student and head of *COV Alcanena* during the last World Youth Days; and Manuela CARVALHO, artisan.

Likewise, Marco Daniel DUARTE, the Director of the Department of Studies of the Sanctuary of Fátima, where he directs the Archives and the Library and the Museum of the Sanctuary, and the Director of the Department of Cultural Heritage of the Diocese of Leiria-Fátima, presented the third reflection: *“Mary, the force of publicity”*. The force of Mary's announcement is the same as that of all the disciples of Jesus. The “Fiat” is the response of one who is already filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 1:26-38). Marco Daniel made the public aware through the projection of several paintings, that the announcement only exists because there was a Resurrection. Mary, the force of her announcement, can only be explained on the basis of the Paschal Mystery. Such force is of Praise, but also of Action. “Mary got up and left in haste.”

The second day began with the fourth and final reflection from Fr. Manuel VIEIRA, SMM: *“What contribution can the Montfortian consecration make to evangelization today”*. What is the Montfortian consecration? It is not about “winning” anything, but rather about “losing”. This consecration requires an attitude completely opposite to that of the rich young man of the Gospel (Mk 10:17-31): give everything to the poor and follow Jesus. For Montfort, this Consecration is not just a path, but the perfect path. The condition imposed by Jesus is not limited to the rich young man, but to all of us. And we all have the freedom to give an answer. Consecration is not a “commandment,” but an invitation. For Fr. Manuel, Mary is the “stick” of this path of conversion to God. After “ardent desire”, “continuous prayer” and “mortification”, it is the “4th mean” to attain Wisdom. She is the ideal way, who helped Jesus come into the world, and the perfect way to return to Him (TD 1). And the contribution that this consecration can make to the new evangelization is enormous. In such a dechristianized, materialist and complacent world, the Montfortian Consecration is proposed for the elevation of the human being. If Mary is “purified Eve”, every consecrated person contributes to the “purification” of the world. The consecrated are the opposite response of the rich young man.

After two days of sharing, the meeting ended with the renewal of the Montfortian Consecration of all participants that was presided over by Father Carlos VIEIRA, SMM. Finally, Father Amílcar TAVARES, SMM, the Superior of the Montfortian Delegation in Portugal, in addition to his gratitude to the speakers and to all the participants, announced the Days next year.

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