

Montfortian Hospitaliers Formation

Slide 1: Montfort added to his name in memory of his place of baptism (Montfort-la-Cane).

Slide 2: Reawaken our faith in the baptismal font

Montfortian enlightenment

Presentation: The renewal of the promises of baptism, Summit of the missions of Father of Montfort.

Sources

1. Articles from the dictionary of the Montfortian Spirituality

Baptism: p.119-135; **Consecration:** renewal of the promises of baptism, p. 292...; **Church:** baptism and consecration, p. 465; everybody called to sanctity, p. 469; **Love slavery:** liturgical foundation: baptism, p. 489; **Fidelity/perseverance:** baptismal promises, p. 565; **Grace and baptismal life,** p. 660...; **Freedom** resulting of the baptismal promises, p. 763; **Liturgy:** act of consecration to Jesus through the hands of Mary, p. 789; **Mission:** goals of mission, p. 938...

Introduction

1706 Louis Grignion is in Rome. He wishes to go to distant missions. Pope Clement XI sent him back to France and invited him to continue doing what he had already experienced in the parish missions. He recommends that he submit himself to the bishops and above all to teach Christian doctrine well, in order to awaken the spirit of Christianity through the renewal of baptismal promises. In other words, this is the program of all French missionaries in the kingdom. (Cf. B. Guitteny Grignion de Montfort, Missionary of the Poor, p. 242).

From then on, for ten years, until his death in the mission of Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre, Father of Montfort unceasingly deployed his missionary energy in several dioceses, including that of La Rochelle. Each mission (from three to five weeks) was lived as an apostolic enterprise that lasted several weeks, according to a specific pedagogy. (Cf. below, description by Grandet).

Slide 3

1- Ecclesial context in which Father of Montfort's missionary activity takes place

Father of Montfort's apostolic action is the direct continuation of a century marked in depth by a long pastoral effort to renew the Christian people in its faith and morals.

Slide 4

Some historical highlights

The 17th century was a turbulent period in the history of France.

Inside: Catholic-Protestant religious wars.

Outside: ruinous and terrible wars in the countryside and in the city.

At the same time, it was a fertile century in the fields of arts and culture. Also in the religious field. In spite of the deviations (Jansenism, Gallicanism, quietism...), it was still a great century for the Church of France. This century was marked by a powerful movement of spiritual renewal (which in fact began even before the Protestant Reformation) and especially with the great representatives of what is often called the "French School of Spirituality".

Father of Montfort was recognized as the last great of this spiritual school after Vincent de Paul, Berulle, Olier, John Eudes, etc..

When the decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), aimed at promoting a true "Catholic Reform" (Counter-Reformation), were finally adopted in France by the Assembly of the Clergy in 1615, the protagonists of the current renewal were the first to welcome them and the most zealous to implement their directives and guidelines. They also drew from it the impetus, the stimulus and the audacity for the works to be undertaken.

Among these works, first of all the formation of the clergy, seminaries were erected, new institutes were founded: Lazarist (St. Vincent de Paul); Oratory (Bérulle); etc.

Then, and this is the final goal of the reforms of the Council, the instruction of the Christian people, often ignorant in the things of faith.

Slide 5

2- A privileged means at the service of renewal: the parish missions

The formation of the faithful, according to the Council of Trent, should be done mainly through religious education. This will be done through the Catechism of the Council of Trent (or Roman Catechism), published by Pius V, which makes available to pastors, for Sunday preaching, the essentials of Catholic doctrine: truths to be believed, sacraments to be received, commandments to be observed. New attention is given to the catechism of children.

Among the pastoral means deployed to achieve these goals, parish missions will occupy a prominent place. The importance given to this form of pastoral action appears in the fact that it is adopted by the great religious orders: Jesuits, Dominicans, Capuchins, etc. as well as by the great reformers of the French School and the institutes they founded: Priests of the Mission (Lazarists); Oratorians, Sulpicians, Eudists, etc. as well as by the teams of secular priests of the dioceses.

Some names have remained famous in the West of France: Michel le Nobletz, Julien Maunoir (SJ) Dom Leuduger, with whom Father of Montfort will be associated for some time.

Slide 6

3- A spiritual renewal nourished in the baptismal fonts

One of the main characteristics of the Catholic Renewal induced by the Council of Trent, and which will be found in the practice of parish missions, is the place given to baptism.

The Roman Catechism (of the Council of Trent) repeatedly reminds pastors of their obligation to renew often among the believers the meaning of baptism and the seriousness of the commitments they have made to God

Slide 7

Father of Montfort clearly explains the foundations of this practice when he presents what he calls "perfect consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary" which, according to him, can very well be called "***a perfect renewal of the vows or promises of Baptism***" (cf. TD 126). He refers to the Council of Sens (*held in Paris in 829 at the time of Louis the Debonaire, cf. note OC p.568*), after the Council of Trent (TD 129), whose intentions are faithfully interpreted by the Catechism, which exhorts parish priests to do the same and to lead their people to remember and believe that they are bound and consecrated to N.S.J.C..

Father of Montfort continues TD 130: "***Now, if the councils, the Fathers and the experience itself show us that the best way to remedy the disorders of Christians is to make them remember the obligations of their baptism and have them renew the vows they made there, is it not reasonable that this should now be done in a perfect way by this devotion and consecration to Our Lord through his holy Mother?***"

The Catholic Reformation, therefore, will be based on the Tradition of the Fathers. Charles Borromeo, Bishop of Milan (+ in 1584) resumed the practice of the baptismal anniversary and introduced the practice of renewing baptismal promises or "vows".

Parish missions will integrate this public exercise of renewing baptismal promises which seems to have become a common practice since the mid-seventeenth century.

By popularizing this practice of renewing baptismal promises, missions and retreats contributed greatly to reawakening among the Christian people the awareness of the fundamental importance of baptism.

It is in line with this apostolic objective that Father of Montfort will work.

Slide 8

II -The baptismal praxis of Father of Montfort

Slide 9

2.1- From awakening to the decisive election

When the young Louis-Marie was formed in Rennes and then at the Seminary of Saint Sulpice in Paris, the reforms of the council began to bear fruit: clerics better trained in theology and spirituality, Christians better educated in the truths of the faith (catechism), associations and brotherhoods multiplied, etc.

Louis Grignion would become aware of his condition as a baptized person/Christian, (depth of his relationship with God, with the Virgin Mary, and consequently his commitment to the poor... cf. the experience of Rennes). One day in October 1702, this would be expressed in a significant gesture of breaking and overcoming. He changed his surname to a new name according to the place of his baptism "De Montfort, priest and slave of Jesus in Mary" (see the signature on a letter addressed to his sister Guyonne Jeanne); a signature he chose in many letters, including one addressed to his mother in 1704.

Louis Grignion thus became **Louis Grignion de Montfort** and then added the name of **Mary** as well: Louis-Marie de Montfort, priest (cf. L. 21, 22).

Another gesture signifying the importance he gave to baptism, 1702-1703, was in Poitiers where he restored with a group of students the fourth-century Baptistery of Saint John. And when he left Poitiers in 1706 to undertake his pilgrimage to Rome, he wrote to the inhabitants of Montbernage to whom he had given a mission in 1705: " ...do not fail to keep and faithfully practice your baptismal promises and practices...". (OC 809).

Slide 10

2.2 - 1706, Mandate of Pope Clement XI: "To renew the spirit of Christianity by renewing the promises of baptism".

On his return, the "apostolic missionary" would first work for two years in the missionary team of Dom Jean Leuduger, director of the diocesan missions of Saint-Brieuc.

Slide 11

2.3 Parish missions completed by Baptism and Baptismal Renewal

Then, from 1708 onwards, he went to the diocese of Nantes, then to the diocese of Luçon and finally to that of La Rochelle, where he devoted himself to giving his all with his personal touch.

For him, from then on, baptism and renewal were no longer simply an integral part of the mission, but became its main idea. "His whole presentation of Christian life was based on commitments, vows and baptismal consecration" (cf. Father Louis Perouas).

Slide 12 (1)

2.4- Renewal of public and solemn promises. Inventions and means used by Mr of Montfort to perpetuate the fruits of his missions.

Cf. Joseph Grandet, by Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, Documents and Research No. X, Montfort International Centre, 1994, pages 208-224.

Mr. of Montfort had learned from the Gospel that the Son of God, sending his apostles on mission throughout the world to convert sinners, recommended among other things that the fruit of their apostolic works would be stable and permanent, *ut eatis, et fructum afferatis, et fructus vester maneat* (*It is not you who have chosen me, but I have chosen you and appointed you to go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide*), John 15:16. Therefore he made use of all the industries that the Spirit of God suggested to him, so that the practices of piety and the great maxims of religion, which he had tried to teach the people in the course of his missions, would not soon fade from their minds and hearts, and that they would persevere in the fulfillment of God's law until their death.

For this purpose he used ten or twelve excellent practices, which we will now discuss.

(Descriptive)

	Practices
1	Establishment of Christian Schools
2	Brotherhood of Penitents and Virgins (cf. Rules of Procedure)
3	Singing of songs
4	To teach the catechism
5	The renewal of baptismal vows (cf. covenant contract with God...)
6	Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
7	The Brotherhood of the Rosary
8	Association of Friends of the Cross
9	The foundation of the Company of Mary or the Holy Spirit
10	The foundation of the Daughters of Wisdom
11	The ceremonies of general processions and the order he kept in them...

The ceremonies of the general processions and the order he maintained in them

Mr. Grignion used to make seven processions during each mission.

- The first, on the day of the general communion of women,
- the second, on the day of the communion of men,
- the third, the day of the children's communion,
- the fourth, the day of the memorial service for the deceased,
- the fifth, the day of the renewal of baptismal vows; this is general.
- the sixth, the day of the planting of the cross
- the seventh, the day of the distribution of the crosses and the names of Jesus.

This is the order he maintained in his general processions.

When the day of the procession arrived and the people gathered in the church, Mr. Grignion would go up to the pulpit and, after a brief exhortation, he would prescribe the order of march in this way: the cross and the banner were at the head of the procession. All the children in the catechism followed them; the girls preceded the boys, then the other girls and boys, all the women and men who were widowed; finally, the clergy and those who had the honor of carrying the Blessed Sacrament. Afterwards, the statue of the Blessed Virgin was carried on a stretcher, richly decorated, by girls who had taken a vow of chastity for one year, dressed in white and with white veils on their heads. They walked in the ranks of virgins. The girls who had taken this vow were called by that name.

A deacon, dressed in the vestments of his order, carried the holy gospel, walking at the head of the clergy, and holding two torches on either side. A large number of penitents walked among the rows, barefoot, carrying a

kind of alb on their ordinary clothes, many with a rope around their neck, others with an iron chain. These had their hands tied, and they had pieces of rope knotted in their hands, with which they struck themselves sharply. I saw some of them dragging large pieces of iron, tied to their feet. They all had a very light-coloured cloth covering their faces, so that they could not be recognized. They walked with such modesty and uplifting recollection that the onlookers were moved to tears.

Every state had a banner at the front. All kinds of instruments preceded the Blessed Sacrament. Four or five runners flitted continuously between the rows, warning people to stop or walk. Two chosen persons led the company of each state, and made them sing chants or psalms, hymns and the recitation of the rosary. When the procession was too large for the people to walk in twos, they were made to walk in fours. They were more than a quarter of a league away. The march was always three paces apart, the order was quite regular; and piety, devotion and modesty reigned universally. **No one was admitted to the procession unless he had a rosary, a cross and a covenant in his hand.** All those who did not have these marks of piety and who had not done their mission, that is, who had not gone to confession, or who were not from the parish, walked confusedly and without order after the Holy Sacrament.

When they arrived at the resting place, the deacon sang the Gospel of the day, and the cleric, one of the hymns of the Blessed Sacrament, and having said the prayer the officiant, Mr. Grignon preached. Then the procession continued as before, with the difference that the deacon walked immediately after the cross and the banner, and when he reached the great door of the church, he sat in an armchair, holding the Holy Gospel open in his lap. And all those who had gone in procession, and not the others, before entering the church, knelt down and kissed it, saying:

Slide 12 (2) (picture + 3) Text]: **I believe firmly in all the truths of the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ**

Then they entered the church and, passing by the baptismal font, a priest made them pronounce the vows of their baptism, making them kiss the font, and he said these words:

Slide 13: I wholeheartedly renew my baptismal vows, and renounce forever the devil, the world and myself.

Once this renewal was made, they went to an altar where Mr. Grignon was holding in his hands a small statue of the Blessed Virgin that he always carried with him, and he made them kiss its feet and say these words:

Slide 14: I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ through the hands of Mary, to carry my cross in his steps all the days of my life.

When these ceremonies were over and the priests were also performing them, they would go to the font and sing the great Creed that all the people sang, while Mr. Grignon would go up to the pulpit. He had not finished singing it when he started his sermon. Towards the end of his speech, he asked the deacon some questions. With the Gospel in his hands, he asked him, for example, if one could be saved in all religions; which was the best, if the Catholic religion was the only one in which one could be saved; if it was enough to make an external profession of the Catholic religion to be saved, etc.

The deacon, having answered all these questions, Mr. Grignon asked him what was the rule that every Christian must necessarily observe in order to deserve eternal happiness. **The deacon answered by showing the book of the Gospel to the people: "This is the rule," he said, "of all Christians. "Whoever does not observe all its precepts and those of the Church will never enter the kingdom of heaven."**

After a few more words, he took the book of the Gospel to the preacher, who took it in a kneeling position and, placing it on his breast after getting up, preached with such patience that all his listeners burst into tears.

After his sermons, he blessed all the rosaries, crosses and images of the people. Then he would give the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament. This was the conclusion of all the ceremonies of the general processions that Mr. Grignon made at the end of all his missions.

This is the way he made the people walk in a very beautiful and regular order. While he was in the pulpit and after giving his sermon, he called all the girls of the catechism, and ordered each of them to take a companion and to pass all of them, two by two, in front of the pulpit, and to follow the cross and the banner. Then he ordered the children and all the others, according to their rank and condition, to do the same. All this was done in the field, without interruption or disturbance, and he did it alone, without moving from his place, which twelve people would have found difficult to do, moving around a lot.

What must be especially stressed is the importance that Father of Montfort gives to the process of renewal, both personal and public, and by the solemnity with which it is enveloped, in particular, the signing of the "covenant contract" bearing the signature "L.M. de Montfort", to which must be added that of the believers themselves. For those who could not write, they adhered to it by putting an "X" in the place of the signature. (See Appendix)

Slide 15

2.5- A renewal "by the hands of Mary

Here we are faced with an innovation proper to Father of Montfort, namely, the introduction in the text of the renewal of the role of the Virgin Mary. The first part of the Treatise on True Devotion (TD 14-48) explains at length the place to be given to the Virgin Mary in this renewal of the promises of Baptism. The place given to the Virgin Mary, whose only objective is to dispose the baptized to live ever more truly their fidelity to Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

cf TD 61 "Jesus Christ our Savior, true God and true man, must be the ultimate goal of all our other devotions"

Slide 15

TD 62 "If, then, we establish the solid devotion of the Blessed Virgin, it is only to establish more perfectly that of Jesus Christ, it is only to provide an easy and safe way to find Jesus Christ. If devotion to the Blessed Virgin were to lead us away from Jesus Christ, it would have to be rejected as an illusion of the devil; but, on the contrary, as I have already shown and will show again later: this devotion is necessary for us only to meet Jesus Christ perfectly and to love him tenderly and serve him faithfully".

Slide 16

III- Some accents of Father of Montfort's teaching on baptism

Slide 17

3.1 The centrality of Jesus Christ "alpha and omega" (Christocentrism)

In this, Father of Montfort is in line with the French School of Spirituality with its reference to the contemplation of the Mysteries and states of life of Jesus Christ. The central place of the mystery of the Incarnation.

Every Christian life must lead to knowing Jesus Christ, to following him, to uniting oneself to him, to living his life. (place of the sacraments: Eucharist, confession...).

Infidelity to the baptismal promises is, in the first place, infidelity to Jesus Christ. The act of consecration has as its objective a greater and more perfect fidelity as a disciple of Christ (cf. LEW 225-227).

Slide 18

3.2- Baptism and Consecration

What seems to characterize Father of Montfort's teaching on baptism (and the renewal of baptismal promises) is his insistence on speaking of it as a "consecration to Jesus Christ". This is one of the key words of his spiritual theology, or what is now called "Montfortian spirituality". Consecration of the baptized united to the Consecrated One par excellence, who is Christ himself: ***"For their sake I consecrate myself, so that they also may be consecrated"*** (cf. *Jn 17:19*).

Through baptism, the baptized person becomes a full member of the Body of Christ. By this very fact he participates in the very life of Christ nourished by the word of God and the sacraments of the Church. Clothed in Christ, he is called to enter ever more deeply into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life. ***"Our whole perfection consists in being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus Christ"*** (TD 120).

Slide 19

3.3 Baptism and the "slavery of love"

To translate this relationship of belonging to and dependence on Jesus Christ, in a free way, Father of Montfort will express it with a term that surprises us today, that of "slave". In fact, he does not innovate. He simply wants to emphasize the radical change to which the baptized are called to renounce the slavery of "sin" in order to live a "slavery of love": "We must be for Jesus Christ and serve him [...] as slaves in love, who by an effect of great love, give themselves to serve him as slaves for the sole honor of belonging to him". Baptism has made us slaves of Jesus Christ" (TD 73; SM 34).

*cf. St. Paul to Romans 6:15ff "So what? Are we to sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Of course not! Do you not know that by offering yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience you become slaves of the master whom you obey, whether sin by death or obedience by justice? But thanks be to God; once slaves of sin, you have cordially submitted to the rule of the doctrine to which you have been entrusted, and, freed from sin, you have been slaves of righteousness [...] 20 But today, freed from sin and **enslaved to God, you bear fruit for holiness, and the end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

Slide 20

3.4- Baptism and renewal

Father of Montfort, therefore, has as an objective in his missions to call for the conversion of hearts, to revive in the baptized the awareness of the commitments/promises made at Baptism. He sees the reality of lukewarmness, of infidelity. He writes in the formula of renewal: ***"Unfortunately, ungrateful and unfaithful as I am, I have not fulfilled the vows and promises I so solemnly made to you at my baptism, I have not fulfilled my obligations, I do not deserve to be called your son or your slave"*** (LEW 223).

Therefore, he invites us to center our lives again on Jesus Christ.

He addresses the forgetfulness and ignorance of what the baptismal life entails, by teaching in depth. In this way he helps the baptized to become aware that by their baptism they are "bound/consecrated to Jesus Christ as slaves of their Redeemer and Lord" (cf. TD 129, 130,131).

If Father of Montfort gives this renewal of baptismal promises the title of "consecration", it is to signify a personal, conscious and voluntary renewal and ratification of the "covenant contract previously made with God by the godfather and godmother" (cf. TD 127).

Slide 21

3.5- Baptism and perfect renewal through Mary

Tending to perfection is our guaranteed vocation, Father of Montfort likes to repeat. And that is the objective he proposes to those who renew their baptismal promises. He is no less ambitious for them than for himself, nor less demanding. And to better assure their fidelity, despite their weaknesses and difficulties, he invites them to adopt the incomparable means of a true and perfect devotion to Mary.

"Now, if the Councils, the Fathers and experience itself show us that the best way to remedy the disorders of Christians is to make them remember the obligations of their baptism and have them renew the vows they made there, is it not reasonable that this should be done at present in a perfect way by this devotion and consecration to Our Lord through his holy Mother? I say perfectly, because to consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ they use the most perfect of means, which is the Blessed Virgin. "TD 130".

Cf. the fourth means proposed for acquiring Wisdom, Jesus Christ: *"Here, finally, is the greatest of the means and the most wonderful of all the secrets for acquiring and preserving divine Wisdom, namely, a tender and true devotion to the Blessed Virgin" (LEW 203).*

For Father of Montfort, strengthened by his own experience, he can assert: *"The more a soul is consecrated to Mary, the more it will be consecrated to Jesus Christ. That is why the perfect consecration to Jesus Christ is nothing other than a perfect and complete consecration of oneself to the Blessed Virgin, which is the devotion I teach; or else a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of Holy Baptism" (TD 120).*

He emphasizes that this perfect consecration of Baptism is necessarily Marian. The consecration of the world takes place in Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ and this because Mary has said yes. In Montfort's thought, there are no two consecrations. There is only one.

Slide 22

IV- From the renewal of the spirit of Christianity to the new evangelization

What is the present situation of Father of Montfort's missionary praxis in terms of the importance to be given to the commitments of baptism in daily life?

In the handwritten Rule of the Missionaries of the Company of Mary, in the chapter "Practices of their Missions" No. 7, the objective of the missions is clearly stated: *"The objective of their mission is to renew the spirit of Christianity in Christians. Therefore, they renew their promises, as the Pope commands, in the most solemn way, and they do not give absolution and communion to any penitent unless previously, with others, they have renewed the promises of their Baptism. It is necessary to have experienced the fruits of this practice to know its price".*

Slide 23

4.1 There is always a need to renew the spirit of Christianity among Christians

The dynamic of the "new evangelization" initiated by John Paul II reminds all Christians of the need for a profound renewal in the light of the Second Vatican Council and all the reflection and implementation that has resulted from it (cf. in particular the various synods that have been held).

The Second Vatican Council (in about twenty citations in five documents) clearly highlighted the importance and the doctrine of baptism as a sacrament of initiation and birth to a new life in Christ, the foundation of all Christian life.

As an example, here are two significant passages:

a) Baptism as the source of the universal call to holiness

"Called by God, not by their works, but by their gracious purpose, justified in Jesus our Lord, the followers of Christ became, by the baptism of faith, true children of God, partakers of the divine nature and, by the same token, truly holy. This sanctification which they have received must, therefore, with God's grace, be preserved and completed by their lives. "LG 40

b) *"From the side of Christ who died on the cross was born the wonderful sacrament of the whole Church".*

Therefore, just as Christ was sent by the Father, so he sent his apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, not only to proclaim the Gospel to every creature, to announce that the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, has freed us from the power of Satan and from death and transferred us to the Father's kingdom, but also to exercise that work of salvation which they proclaimed, through the sacrifice and the sacraments around which the whole of liturgical life revolves. In this way, through Baptism men are incorporated into the Paschal Mystery of Christ: dead with him, buried with him, risen with him; they receive the spirit of adoption as sons" in which we cry out: Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15), and thus become the true worshippers the Father seeks (Second Vatican Council, Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium 'The Sacred Liturgy', no. 5-6).

If it is the same Holy Spirit who is always at work within the Church, if it is the same Gospel, etc., the great difference with Father of Montfort's time is that the actors of this new evangelization are no longer only the clergy (bishops/priests/deacons) but the whole People of God with the imminent place of the laity.

"It is of the utmost importance that all Christians be aware of the extraordinary dignity given to them by Baptism" (The Lay Believers, John Paul II, no. 64).

Today, we benefit from a theology of baptism that has been profoundly renewed by rediscovering the riches of Tradition (biblical and historical research) and by benefiting from the contributions of the human sciences (pedagogy, the role of symbolic rites in all areas of social life).

(Following the reform called for by Vatican II (SC 66-70), today we benefit from a triple baptismal ritual for children, school-age children and adults, with a renewed course whose introductions and doctrinal, pastoral and liturgical notes are mines for the implementation of the riches of baptism) (cf. Note 16, Montfortian Spir. Dict. p. 136).

The new evangelization is evidently based on all the reflection carried out explicitly on this theme (cf. last synod of October 2012). Cf. also in particular in France, the reflection on "Proposing the faith in today's society" with all the research on the sacraments of initiation and catechesis.

On the other hand, the means of this new evangelization if they are always based on the witness of the baptized, of living communities, on the importance of interreligious dialogue and the spirituality of communion, etc. these means also integrate the new communication technologies (television, internet, smartphone, etc.).

Slide 24

All called to holiness... in the school of the Virgin Mary...

Chapter V of the Constitution Lumen Gentium strongly emphasizes that *"In the Church all, whether they belong to the hierarchy or are governed by it, are called to holiness according to the words of the Apostle: 'Yes, what God wants is your sanctification' (1 Thess 4:3; Eph 1:4), (Cf. LG No. 39).*

"Called by God, not by their works but by his gracious plan, justified in Jesus our Lord, the disciples of Christ have become, by the baptism of faith, true children of God, sharers in the divine nature and, by the same token, truly holy. This sanctification which they have received must, therefore, with God's grace, be preserved and completed by their lives. "(LG no. 40).

24 (continued) As a Montfortian family, this universal vocation to holiness, to become "true disciples of Jesus Christ" (TD 111), is a call to deepen and promote the privileged means, fruitfully experienced by Saint Louis Marie de Montfort, namely, perfect consecration to Jesus Christ, Wisdom incarnate by the hands of the Virgin Mary. (Cf. TD 118-125, 152, 171).

We know the recognized place of the Virgin Mary in the economy of salvation. The Council expressed it clearly in chapter 8 of L.G. "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and of the Church".

"Throughout its history, the People of God have experienced this gift given by Jesus on the cross: the gift of his Mother. The Virgin Mary is truly our Mother, who accompanies us on our pilgrimage of faith, hope and charity towards an ever more intense union with Christ, the one Savior and mediator of salvation (cf. Const. Lumen Gentium, 60 and 62).

As it is well known, in my episcopal coat of arms, which is a symbolic illustration of the Gospel text I have just quoted, the motto *Totus tuus* is inspired by the doctrine of St Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort (cf. *My Vocation, Gift and Mystery*, pg 42; *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 15). These two words express Mary's total belonging to Jesus: "*Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*," wrote St. Louis Marie, and translates: "I am all yours, and all that I have belongs to you, O my beloved Jesus, through Mary, your holy Mother". (*Treatise on True Devotion*, 233). The doctrine of this Saint has had a profound influence on the Marian devotion of many of the believers and on my own life. It is a lived doctrine of notable ascetic and mystical depth, expressed in a living and ardent style, which often makes use of images and symbols. However, since the time of Saint Louis Marie's life, Marian theology has developed greatly, thanks above all to the decisive contribution of the Second Vatican Council. Therefore, Montfortian doctrine must be read and interpreted today in the light of the Council, while retaining substantially the same value. (Excerpt from the Letter of John Paul II to the Montfortian Family, 2003).

Of such a spirituality, which is rooted in John's acceptance of Mary in his life as a "disciple" (Jn 19:27), Father of Montfort is a witness and a teacher in the Church.

"God wants his holy Mother to be now more known and loved, more honored than ever..." (TD 55; cf. also 47-50, 113) How can we not see in these "prophetic" words a need for our times, all the more so since LG underlines it in its own way?: "The Church professes without hesitation this subordinate role of Mary, does not cease to experience it, and recommends it to the hearts of the believers so that this maternal support and aid may help them to become more closely attached to the Mediator and Savior" (LG 62).

Slide 25

Conclusion

Let the last word go to Pope John Paul II.

"Marian spirituality, no less than the corresponding devotion, finds a very rich source in the historical experience of individuals and of the various Christian communities living among peoples and nations throughout the world. In this regard, I like to recall, among many witnesses and teachers of this spirituality, the figure of Saint Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort who proposed to Christians the consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary as an effective means of living faithfully the promises of Baptism. I am pleased to note that our present age is not lacking in new manifestations of this spirituality and devotion. Therefore, there are solid points of reference that we must keep in mind. ("Redemptoris Mater" No. 48).

Slide 26 Blessed John Paul II, Saint Louis Marie de Montfort; Blessed Marie-Louise de Jésus; Father Gabriel Deshayes

Slide 27 Pope Francis (photo)

Slide 28 Pope Francis, GENERAL PUBLIC, Place Saint-Peter Wednesday 8 January 2014

1. Baptism is the sacrament on which our faith is based and which incorporates us as living members in Christ and his Church. Together with the Eucharist and Confirmation, it forms what is called "Christian initiation", which constitutes a single great sacramental event that configures us to the Lord and makes us a living sign of his presence and love.

Slide 29 [...] We must awaken the memory of our baptism. On the other hand, we are called to live our baptism every day as the present reality of our existence. [...]

[...] It is through baptism that we are able to forgive and love also those who offend and hurt us; that we are able to recognize in the last ones and in the poor the face of the Lord who visits us and comes to us. Baptism helps us to recognize the face of Jesus in the faces of the needy, in those who suffer, including our neighbor. All this is made possible by the power of Baptism!

Appendix: The contract in the form of a diptych

1- ALLIANCE CONTRACT WITH GOD

Vows or baptismal promises

[1st Formula]

1. I firmly believe in all the truths of the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. I renounce forever the devil, the world, sin and myself.
3. I promise by the grace of God, which will not fail me, to keep faithfully all the commandments of God and of the Church, avoiding mortal sin and its occasions, even bad company.
4. I give myself entirely to JESUS CHRIST through the hands of MARY, to carry my cross after him all the days of my life.
5. I believe that if I faithfully keep these promises until death, I will be saved eternally, but if I do not keep them, I will be eternally condemned. In witness whereof, I do sign.

Done in front of the Church of the Parish of Pontchâteau this 4th day of May 1709.

L. m de monfort

2- Practices of those who have renewed their Baptismal Vows.

2. 1 At least the little Crown of the Blessed Virgin will be said every day, consisting of 3 Our Fathers and 12 Hail Marys.
- 2.2. Confessions shall be made at least every month.
- 2.3. They will flee like the plague from cabarets and public games, dance, comedies and other shows.
- 2.4. Every year on February 2nd, they will renew their baptismal vows, pray the Holy Rosary and adore the Blessed Sacrament.
- 2.5. They will keep with affection the cross which will be given to them in the renewal of their promises with this contract.
- 2.6. They will flee from vanity and luxury in their dress, etc.
7. They will pray daily 5 Our Fathers and 5 Hail Marys in honor of the 5 Names contained in the Cross that will be given to them, and the 5 Works of Jesus Christ crucified, who is their Leader and Model.

Grandet says that about this "Covenant Contract" "[...] he had printed a form of this renewal of the baptismal vows which he made those who knew how to write sign."

The missionary distributed it to all those who had participated in the mission, that is, to those who had attended the various services and were ready to perform the essential act of the mission: the renewal of their baptismal vows.