

# Mary, Anchor of Hope, according to Father de Montfort

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## Introduction

"*Mary, Anchor of Hope*" brings to mind the theme of the Jubilee Year: "*Pilgrim of Hope*," and its logo. Italian graphic designer Giacomo Travisani depicts four stylized figures in this logo, the fourth of which holds a cross with a lower part shaped like a two-pronged anchor. In the logo, the anchor prevents waves from spreading.

The world is currently going through difficult times. Many people are on the brink of despair due to the various crises affecting our world. And Pope Francis, in the Induction Bull for the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025, explains:

"The unpredictability of the future arouses sometimes contradictory feelings: from confidence to fear, from serenity to discouragement, from certainty to doubt." We often encounter discouraged people who look to the future with skepticism and pessimism, as if nothing could bring them happiness. However, hope is always present in the heart of every person as a desire and an expectation of a better future. Moreover, the Second Vatican Council reminds us that the Virgin Mary is a sign of hope for us<sup>1</sup>.

"The Virgin Mary shines before the people of God on their journey as a sign of certain hope and consolation" (*Lumen Gentium* 68).

Pope Francis affirms that:

"Hope finds in the Mother of God its greatest witness. In her, we see that hope is not vain optimism, but a gift of grace in the realism of life."<sup>2</sup>

"It is hope that keeps us alive," said Sylvie and Erick Pétard, parents of the victims of the Bataclan attack in Paris in 2015<sup>3</sup>. Faced with many trials throughout his missionary life, Father de Montfort sought help from the Virgin Mary, and thus he invited and encouraged others to invoke the Virgin Mary, anchor of hope<sup>4</sup>.

## First Step: Attempt at a Definition: "Anchor of Hope"

According to dictionaries, an anchor is a piece of steel suspended from a chain, which is thrown to the bottom of the water so that it becomes fixed and immobilizes a ship.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, Bull of Induction of the Ordinary Jubilee, *Spes non confundit* (Snc), May 9, 2024, No. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* No. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sylvie and Erick Pétard, *Bataclan Attacks: The Hope That Keeps Us Alive*, Artège, 2021. "We lost our daughters to terrorist bullets. After the nothingness of Marion and Anna, mown down by terrorist bullets on the night of horror of the Paris attacks, Sylvie and Erick are condemned to the perpetual pain of grief and injustice. They recount those terrible hours of Black Friday, November 13, 2021, and the days that followed. And yet, from the depths of their wounds, a source of Life and the Christian hope of one day finding their daughters again could spring forth.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Letter No. 9 to Mr. Leschassiers in 1702; Letter No. 16, to Marie Louise Trichet in October 1709: "You must therefore place your trust in God: be sure that you will obtain even more than you believe. Heaven and earth would sooner pass away than God should break his word by allowing a person who hoped in him with perseverance to be frustrated in his expectation."

It is a sign of stability and strength, attachment, and security, and promotes solid values such as family. We also expect the expression: "to be anchored" means to settle down, to establish oneself firmly somewhere.

In Scripture, the word "anchor" is used only once metaphorically to represent God and faith. It is the Letter to the Hebrews that uses this image of "a sure and solid anchor" to express Christian hope. "God has thus irrevocably committed Himself twice over, and it is impossible for God to have lied. This gives us great encouragement, as we have sought refuge in the hope set before us and grasped it. We hold this hope as a sure and steadfast anchor for the soul, which enters beyond the veil, into the sanctuary where Jesus, the forerunner, has entered for us" (Heb 6:17-20).

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews specifies that this anchor is "cast beyond the veil" (Heb 6:19), thus referring to the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem, where only the high priest could enter. This means that our hope is not based on earthly things, but on a heavenly reality: Jesus has already entered into glory and is drawing us with Him. Christian hope is not merely passive expectation, but active trust in God, who acts and prepares a place for us with Him.

Saint John Chrysostom explains that the anchor is cast in the sky, not in the sea, because Christian hope is not based on earthly but on heavenly realities:

"Ships' anchors sink into the sea, but our anchor, the anchor of our soul, is anchored in heaven." (Homily on Hebrews 6:19)

This means that our hope does not depend on worldly events, but on the risen Christ who has gone before us in glory. Even if we face trials, we remain firmly attached to Him.

Thus, the disciple of Christ, in order not to drift, also has a sure and solid anchor. It is not like anchors that rust eventually eats away; it is not stuck in sand that holds nothing; it will not break under the violence of storms. Instead of an anchor that descends into the sea, the Christian's anchor rises to heaven, where Jesus continually intercedes for us.

Pope Francis also explains this metaphor<sup>5</sup>:

"The image of the anchor evokes well the stability and security we possess in the midst of life's rough waters, if we entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus. The storms will never be able to carry it away because we are anchored in the hope of grace, which is capable of making us live in Christ, triumphing over sin, fear, and death."<sup>6</sup>

In fact, on a boat, the anchor prevents the ship from moving to be carried away by the winds and waves. In the same way, Christian hope keeps us firmly attached to God, even and especially when we go through times of trial, doubt, or suffering.

When everything seems uncertain, when trials shake us, we have one certainty: God is faithful, and his promises will not fail. It is this hope that prevents us from being swallowed up by discouragement or fear.

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<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, Bull of induction of the ordinary jubilee, *Spes non confundit* (Snc), May 9, 2024,

<sup>6</sup> *Idem* Snc. No. 25.

The anchor, with its characteristics of sureness and steadfastness, is a beautiful image of hope founded on Christ and Mary. It keeps us attached to the very dwelling place of God, to the rock of his immutable faithfulness.

"*Mary, anchor of hope*" can mean that she is a general source or symbol of hope. "*Mary, anchor of hope*" can be interpreted as Mary being the foundation of hope or the support of this theological virtue.

Certainly, everyone needs a solid and firm anchor, because trials spare no one and can overcome our weakness. This is why Father de Montfort proposes Mary to lead us to Jesus, our Hope.

## **2. Second step: "Mary, anchor of hope" in the writings of Father de Montfort**

Father de Montfort does not give this title to Mary; it is G. Barbera who uses this appellation: "Mary, anchor of hope."<sup>7</sup> It is important to note the difference between "Mary, anchor of hope" and "Mary, anchor of hope": the former refers to a general notion of hope, while the latter relates to the specific theological virtue of Christianity. Thus,

For Father de Montfort, Christ is the source of our hope, and hope is the fruit of the action of the Spirit in our lives (cf. Gal 5:22-23). The Virgin Mary is our hope after Christ. She is the sign of hope, "Ave Maris Stella."

However, Father de Montfort uses the expression "cleave to Mary as to a firm anchor" to express Mary's role in our spiritual life. Father de Montfort uses the term "anchor" eight times; and "as if to an anchor" three times; and as if to a firm anchor twice; therefore, an anchor of hope. We will examine the different meanings of this expression in Father de Montfort's writings.

The expression "anchor" is found first in *The Love of Eternal Wisdom* (LEW, no. 222), then in *The Treatise on True Devotion* (TD, no. 175), and finally in Hymn no. 7, concerning the firmness of hope. This term is used as a metaphor to express attachment to Jesus Christ, to the Virgin Mary; but this metaphor also clearly indicates the virtue of hope, consecration to Jesus through Mary, and the practice of true devotion to Mary.

### **2.1. In the Love of Eternal Wisdom (No. 222)**

This book, written between 1703 and 1704, is considered by Father de Montfort to be "a letter from a lover to her lover to win his affection" (LEW 65). Indeed, it is Wisdom who calls for and awaits the response of all humanity. In this writing, we find the synthesis of Montfortian spirituality, according to Father Henri Huré<sup>8</sup>. In the first part, Father de Montfort presents the necessity of loving Eternal Wisdom; and in the second part, he speaks of the four means of acquiring Wisdom. And in the fourth means, he speaks of the practice of true devotion to Mary, to whom one must cling "like to an anchor that cannot be detached" (cf. LEW 222).

This number 222 precedes the formula of consecration to Jesus through Mary (cf. LEW 223-227). Father de Montfort provides a summary of the reasons that lead us to attach ourselves to the Virgin Mary through "consecration to Jesus through Mary." Father de Montfort emphasizes that Mary is wise, charitable, generous, powerful, and faithful (cf. LEW 222). In the formula of the consecration, at no. 224, he affirms that Mary is a "sure refuge for sinners, whose mercy has failed no one" (LEW

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Barbera G. *Espérance*, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité montfortaine*, Novalis, 1994, pp. 499-502.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. In the foreword to the LEW Médiapaul 2018 p. 7, the three superiors general cited Father Henri Huré, superior general (1931-1935) who produced the standard edition of *The Secret of Mary* and *The Love of Eternal Wisdom*.

224), because she is wise, charitable, generous, powerful, and faithful; this is why we must attach ourselves to Mary to remain faithful to our baptism. Thus, Father de Montfort exhorts us:

"Mary is wise: let us place everything in her hands; she will know how to dispose of us and what belongs to us, to the greater glory of God. Mary is charitable: she loves us as her children and servants; let us offer everything to her, we will lose nothing by it [...] Let us therefore entrust all things to her fidelity." Let us cling to it as to a pillar that cannot be overturned, as to an anchor that cannot be loosed, or rather as to Mount Zion that cannot be shaken" (LEW 222).

In this same issue of LEW 222, Father de Montfort uses three metaphors: "as to a pillar," "as to an anchor," and "as to Mount Zion." These three metaphors have a common characteristic: stability and solidity. In fact, the pillar represents support and strength that serve as the foundation of a structure; while the anchor symbolizes attachment and firmness, preventing a ship from being swept away by the currents; and finally, Mount Zion, in biblical tradition, is a symbol of security and permanence, a sacred and unshakeable place.

But when we look closely at each metaphor, there is a literal meaning and a symbolic one. For the first metaphor, "like a pillar that cannot be overturned": literally, any physical pillar can be overturned with enough force or erosion; but symbolically, it refers to an immutable force, a person who remains steadfast despite trials. When speaking of the role of Mary, Father de Montfort chose the symbolic meaning because she is powerful, she is a sure refuge and a stable support.

Then, in the second metaphor, "like an anchor that cannot be loosed": in the literal sense, this can symbolize a ship's anchor that is stuck or blocked. And in the figurative sense, it symbolizes a strong attachment or dependency from which one cannot free oneself. For example, a person can be anchored in their past, a relationship, a habit, or a situation from which she cannot break free.

This metaphor can express an idea of absolute attachment or total immobility. Literally, an anchor, even if well anchored, can always be lifted or moved with sufficient effort or means; but an anchor cannot be loosened when it is stuck under a rock or welded to a large, immovable structure. Father de Montfort compares the Virgin Mary to an anchor that is stable and solid, on which one can rely to face the storms and trials of life.

And in the third metaphor, "as Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken," Father de Montfort refers to Psalm 124: "He who trusts in the Lord is like Mount Zion: it cannot be moved, it remains forever" (Ps 124:1). Mount Zion symbolizes something firm and immutable. For Father de Montfort, this comparison highlights the solidity and permanence of trust in Mary. And those who place their trust in her are assured of lasting protection and spiritual security.

In summary, since Mary is the faithful Virgin, we can attach ourselves to her as to a stable anchor. This anchor is constituted by the practices of true devotion to Mary, in particular Mary's consecration to Jesus. Indeed, attaching oneself to Mary means agreeing to learn from Mary, to allow oneself to be formed by Mary in order to grow and acquire the stature of Christ.

## **2.2. In the Treatise on True Devotion (No. 175)**

Discovered on April 22, 1842, by Father Rautureau, in the library of the Maison du Saint-Esprit, in Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre, the manuscript of the Treatise on True Devotion is Father de Montfort's masterpiece. This writing contains two parts: the necessity of devotion and what this devotion is. And in the second part, Father de Montfort explains what devotion to Mary consists of and the practices

of true devotion (cf. TD 115-273). He gives the ten motives (cf. TD 135-182) that motivate us to practice this devotion. And precisely, in the eighth motive, he speaks of attachment to the Virgin as to a firm anchor.

“The Most Holy Virgin is the faithful Virgin who, by her fidelity to God, repairs the losses suffered by the unfaithful Eve, by her infidelity, and who obtains fidelity to God and perseverance for those who cling to her. This is why a saint compares her to a firm anchor, which holds them and prevents them from being shipwrecked in the stormy sea of this world where so many people perish for lack of clinging to this firm anchor: We bind souls to your hope, he says, as to a firm anchor. It is to her that the saints who attain salvation have most attached themselves and have attached others, in order to persevere in virtue. Happy, then, and a thousand times happy, are the Christians who now faithfully and entirely cling to her as to a firm anchor. The effects of the storm of this world will not cause them to be overwhelmed, nor will they lose their heavenly treasures. Blessed are those who enter her as into Noah's ark! The waters of the flood of sins, which drown so many, will not harm them, for "those who are in me to work out their salvation will not sin," she says with Wisdom (TD 175).

Father de Montfort starts from the parallel drawn by the Fathers of the Church between Eve and the Virgin Mary. By her disobedience, Eve contributed to the fall of humanity, and Mary, by her obedience and her "yes" to God, made redemption possible by giving birth to Christ (cf. Luke 1:38). Saint Irenaeus of Lyon (3rd century) wrote:

"The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience. For what Eve had tied by unbelief, the Virgin Mary untied by her faith<sup>9</sup>." "Thus, the Virgin Mary became the advocate of the virgin Eve."<sup>10</sup>

It is because of her fidelity that Mary became a model and a sure refuge for all the faithful. It was John Damascene who applied the symbol of the anchor to Mary: "We bind souls to your hope as to a firm anchor."<sup>11</sup> Because the Virgin Mary has a firm hope in God, we can count on her hope.

But Father de Montfort goes even further, for it is not enough to rely on Mary's hope; we must also be anchored in trust in the love of Christ. This means that we are not alone in going through life's trials because Jesus and Mary are We must act and take responsibility. For we must cast this anchor and not leave it on land, otherwise it is useless.

According to Father de Montfort, when there is a firm anchor, the ship remains stable and safe even if the sea is rough or there are storms. On the contrary, the absence of an anchor endangers the ship, which risks being shipwrecked and swallowed up.

There are two possibilities, according to Father de Montfort: to cling to Mary as to a firm anchor, or to enter into Mary as into Noah's ark. It must be said that "clinging to Mary" still carries a risk because it means remaining outside her; we can fall or separate ourselves from her; whereas to enter into Mary is to remain in her, because she is the powerful virgin, she is our good mother. Therefore, each of us is free to choose one or the other, but what is important is to avoid all danger, to be safe, and to arrive safely.

Father de Montfort also emphasizes that we can attach ourselves to Mary as to a firm anchor, but we can also attach others to her. This means that we can invoke Mary to help us weather the storms of our lives, but we can also entrust to Mary our brothers and sisters who are going through difficult times.

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<sup>9</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 22, 4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 22, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. John Damascene, homily on the nativity and the Assumption, *Source chrétienne* n° 80, Paris, Cerf, 1961, p. 161: Hom in Dormitionem II. 15, 744 A.

In fact, attaching ourselves to the Virgin Mary as to a firm anchor means trusting in Mary's fidelity, in her intercession, and in her prayer. For she loves us not only with an emotional love, but with an effective and efficient love; she does not want us to be separated from Jesus, to be lost. It is this maternal love that leads us to attach ourselves to her. Moreover, it helps us say "yes" to God's will and remain faithful to our baptismal promises. It keeps us firm in hope against evil, the storm of this world, and the flood of sin.

### 2.3. In the Hymns

The 164 hymns composed by Montfort were created for the missions. Olivier Landron writes:

"These hymns are presented as a tool for popularization, dissemination, and assimilation. Through his hymns, his goal was to capture the imagination, to convince or convert."<sup>12</sup>

These are tools that Father de Montfort used to transmit the truths of the faith and the Gospel message, to extend the teaching, because the songs, set to popular tunes, are accessible to all. Indeed, the aim is to anchor the truths of the faith in the minds of the faithful.

Benedetta Papàsogli makes this observation about the symbols in Father de Montfort's hymns:

"The hymns reveal themselves to be an arsenal of symbols. We discover numerous metaphors which spring from the pen of Father de Montfort, marking his most beautiful pages with an original character [...] The Hymns are a bit like the meeting between the poet's dream and the concrete project of the craftsman, the builder."<sup>13</sup>

This means that the use of symbols is a way to convey profound messages to the faithful.

Father de Montfort published the first collection in 1711, in La Rochelle. He speaks of the Christian virtues: the theological virtues: charity (no. 5), faith (no. 6), and hope (no. 7). But we will only look at Hymn No. 7, The Firmness of Hope<sup>14</sup>.

This Hymn on "The Firmness of Hope" contains 41 stanzas. Father de Montfort speaks of the virtue of hope, which comes from God as a grace and a gift. And to describe the characteristic of this virtue, Father de Montfort uses the metaphor of an anchor. "I am the virtue of Hope [...] 2. I am that firm and stable anchor/ Which fixes instability,/ That unshakeable column/ Which supports all holiness./ 14. One casts the anchor in the storm/ So as not to be overwhelmed;/ I am the anchor of the wise man/ In the midst of the greatest danger."

First, in stanza 1, the virtue of hope praises itself; it speaks in the first person "I" who addresses the "you," and to "sinful man." It introduces itself: "I am that firm and stable anchor," it is God who speaks to man: "I am your God, I am your king" (cf. § 5).

Then, from stanza 7 onward, it addresses the Christian to remind us that "God is your Father,/ Hope in his love." Is a fool, who despairs/ Of his fatherly goodness" (§ 7). "Jesus is your faithful friend, / Your savior and your spouse. / It is I," he says, "I call you, / Fear nothing, trust" (§ 8). "Mary is your good mother. And the refuge of the sinner. / Hope everything from her prayer, / Expect everything

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<sup>12</sup> Landron O., *The Hymns of Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, a model for Catholic song in France in the 20th and 21st centuries*, in *Father de Montfort, madness and wisdom; spiritual and theological resources for an apostolic renewal. Proceedings of the Montfort conference, Angers, June 2-3, 2016*, p. 199. The impact is limited on the production of Catholic songs in France.

<sup>13</sup> Papàsogli B., *Symbolic*, in *Dictionary of Montfortian Spirituality*, Novalis, 1994, p.216-217.

from her favor” (§ 9). In fact, it is hope itself that calls the Christian to hope in God, Father, to trust in Jesus and to hope in Mary’s prayer.

The anchor, with its characteristics of sureness and firmness, is a beautiful image of Christian hope that keeps us attached to God, Father, to Jesus and to the Virgin Mary. Certainly, hope is a grace that comes from God and that must be welcomed with love, but it is also an anchor to be thrown into the water, a gesture to be accomplished with audacity, an action to be carried out with courage.

For Father de Montfort, hope in God, in Jesus Christ, and in Mary, because:

"God is my good Father/ And I cry to him: Abba Pater,/ Mary is my most sweet Mother,/ I will never go to hell." "When, through weakness or malice,/ You sin, you fall low,/ Pray to God that he may be propitious to you,/ And do not despair" (§31-32).

Finally, in stanza 34, Father de Montfort speaks of hope and invites us to imitate the Virgin Mary because she is Our Lady of Hope:

"Imitate the faithful Virgin,/ Occupy yourselves to serve her,/ Place your hope in her,/ And you cannot perish." (Hymn 7, §34).

According to Father de Montfort, Christians must imitate Mary, the faithful Virgin, who, through her role in the mystery of the Incarnation and her constant intercession, embodies this Christian hope. She teaches us to hope in God with complete confidence.

Certainly, Father de Montfort never ceases to place all his hope in Mary, through her intercession and under her protection because she is his firm support, his help, and his consolation.

In Hymn 114, §14, Father de Montfort declares:

"After Jesus, Holy Virgin Mary,/ I find in you a strong and firm support./ Without Mary, I would have already perished./ I have placed in you all my hope,/ My help and my consolation,/ Under your wings I am secure,/ Against the flesh, the world, and the devil."

For Father de Montfort, it is clear that asking for Mary's help is finding a secure support because she gives us confidence. With her, we are sure to overcome temptations and the devil; alone, we risk perishing.

And, in Hymn 145 § 7: A New Hymn in Honor of Our Lady of All Patience, Father de Montfort invites us to place ourselves under the gaze of Mary in order to be safe.

“What! Before your eyes/ I shall die in my poverty?/ What! Before your eyes/ I shall perish, Queen of Heaven?/ No, no, I have placed my hope/ In your abundant name./ What! Before your eyes?”

Similarly, in Hymn 155 § 17: In Honor of Our Lady of Shadows, Father de Montfort exhorts the faithful to hide under the shadow of Mary, Queen of Heaven, in order to be happy.

"My trust/ Is in you, Queen of Heaven,/ To live happily in your shadow,/ In the hope/ Of having God as my reward./ How sweet, how sweet!/ In his shadow, let us hide."

It should be noted that Father de Montfort has these verses sung to invite the faithful to live in hope and to trust in the intercession of Mary, who is attentive to our needs and intercedes for us before Jesus.

### **3. Third Step: "Mary, Anchor of Hope" in the Missionary Life of Father de Montfort**

The missionary crossing to the Isle of Yeu in early 1712 illustrates our theme very well. It was Bishop de Lescure of Luçon who asked Father de Montfort to evangelize the Isle of Yeu, because the inhabitants of this "parish" were neglected. But the crossing was not without peril. Father de Montfort was accompanied by M. des Bastières, Brother Mathurin, and Father Gabriel François. They had difficulty finding a boat for the crossing, so they went to Saint Gilles to reach the Isle of Yeu. M. des Bastières recounts the approach of the pirates at sea:

"All the sailors cried out: 'We are captured!' [...]"

Mr. de Montfort reassured them by saying: "Have no fear, and don't you remember that I promised you that our good Mother would prevent us from being captured?"

Saying this, he took out a figure of the Blessed Virgin, placed it on the edge of the boat, began to sing hymns in her honor, and invited all the others to do the same.

Fear is hardly a disposition to sing, even when the song is a prayer. No one responded.

He said to them: "Well then! dear friends, let us recite the Rosary together." They recited it with him, and one can imagine how fervent their prayer was. When the Rosary was finished, he said to them: "My dear friends, once again have no fear, our good Mother the Blessed Virgin has rescued us; we are out of danger."<sup>15</sup>

In this episode, there are significant gestures to remember: Father de Montfort invites us to trust in the Virgin Mary: "Do not fear!" This word reassures the travelers and his friends, for they need words of comfort and encouragement. Then, Father de Montfort takes a figure of the Blessed Virgin and places it on the edge of the boat. Looking at the Virgin Mary reminds us of her maternal presence and is a source of hope. Then, Father de Montfort began to sing hymns in honor of the Virgin. For hymns also help us to pray and overcome trials. And at the end, he invited his friends to recite the Rosary. Praying the Rosary helps us get through the difficult times of life. For the intercession of the Virgin Mary is effective with her Son. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

Certainly, their prayer was answered; they were soon out of danger thanks to the protection of the Virgin. So, through this experience, Father de Montfort and his friends were able to count on the protection of the Virgin Mary.

In short, Father de Montfort constantly maintained himself under the protection of the Virgin Mary; Our Lady of the Road and her rosary were always with him as he navigated his trials. So, what does Father de Montfort teach us?

### **4. Fourth Step: "Mary, Anchor of Hope" in Montfortian Spirituality**

Father de Montfort examines the role of the Virgin Mary in the mystery of the Incarnation and in the mystery of the Church, in the sanctification of the members of the Body of Christ; it is the descending and ascending movement. Indeed, Mary's role in the Incarnation determines her role in the Church. But it should be noted that, for Father de Montfort, Mary is a pure creature, entirely relative to God,

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<sup>15</sup> Besnard C., *La vie de M. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort*, Centre International Montfortain, 1981, p. 240.

of hypothetical necessity, but she plays the role of an elevator: bringing down what is above, and bringing up what is below; In other words, in Mary, it is to humanize the divine and to divinize the human.

#### **4.1. Mary, Mother, Our Good Mother**

At the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel said to Mary: "Behold, you will conceive and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). Being a mother means conceiving, giving birth, and raising a child. But, according to the Gospel, this is not limited to giving biological life; it is also a spiritual mission and a profound commitment to love, education, and the transmission of the faith.

Father de Montfort writes: "It is through the Most Holy Virgin Mary that Jesus Christ came into the world, and it is also through her that he must reign in the world" (TD 1). It is God who chose Mary and filled her with every grace to be the mother of his Son.

First, Father de Montfort emphasizes that Mary is the mother of Jesus, and Jesus is the Son of Mary. There is therefore a very strong bond between mother and child; they are inseparable. The child always hopes in his mother; and the mother hopes in her Child. Thus, Pope Francis affirms: "Children are hope."

Contemplating this mystery of Christmas, Charles Péguy says:

"What astonishes me," says God, "is Hope. And I can't believe it. Hope is a tiny little girl, who was completely insignificant. Who came into the world on Christmas Day last year. It is this tiny little girl, who was completely insignificant. She alone, carrying the others, who crossed the worlds."<sup>16</sup>

For hope can appear, but it can also disappear. It can also grow or diminish. To keep it stable and constant, we need to nurture it. It is Mary's role to encourage her children not to despair, to remain firm in hope.

Father de Montfort explains:

"As in natural and bodily generation there is a father and a mother, so in supernatural and spiritual generation there is a father who is God and a mother who is Mary. All true and predestined children of God have God for their father and Mary for their mother; and whoever does not have Mary as their mother does not have God for their father" (TD 30).

Father de Montfort means by this affirmation that, through baptism, we have become children of God, sisters and brothers of Jesus; children of Mary as well, and we can call God our Father (cf. Phil 4:6) and Mary our mother.

"The same mother does not give birth to the head or the head without the members, nor the members without the head; otherwise, it would be a monster of nature; likewise, in the order of grace, the head and the members are born of the same mother" (TD 31).

And on the cross, before his death, Jesus gives us to Mary: "Jesus, seeing his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son!'" Then to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' (Jn 19:25-27). It is Mary's spiritual motherhood that is announced, but it is also

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<sup>16</sup> Charles Péguy, *Le porche du Mystère de la deuxième vertu*, Nouvelle Revue française, 1916, p 251.

the reason for devotion to Mary. So, welcoming Mary into one's home means putting Jesus' words into practice, carrying out his last will.

Indeed, Mary is our mother, our good mother, because she behaves towards us like a loving and caring mother. She watches over the well-being of her children, surrounds them with affection, and listens to them. She ensures their safety and education. In fact, Mary helps us live hope, she encourages us to move forward, not to fall into discouragement.

This is why Father de Montfort proposes consecration to Jesus through the hands of Mary to maintain the virtues, especially to maintain hope. For we must carry our cross every day, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ. She helps us attain the stature of Christ, to transform ourselves into the image of Christ.

Thus, Pope Francis calls Mary "mother of hope" because she embodies the image of the Church, a mother who accompanies her children<sup>17</sup>. "Mary appears to us as one of the many mothers of our world, courageous to the extreme."<sup>18</sup>

## 4.2. Mary, Mediatrix

First, Mary is full of grace, and this grace is for us. Mary is first and foremost the mediatrix of all grace because she is the mother of Grace, the Lord Jesus. Second, it is in Mary that incarnate Grace took flesh. She is the mediatrix because of her consent, because she conforms in everything to the will of God. And Saint Paul says: "For there is one God, and there is also one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ" (1 Tim 2:5).

And for Father de Montfort, the explanation is as follows:

"All this is taken from Saint Bernard and Saint Bonaventure; so that, according to them, we have three steps to climb in order to reach God: the first, which is closest to us and most in accordance with our capacity, is Mary; the second is Jesus Christ; and the third is God the Father." To go to Jesus, we must go to Mary, she is our mediator of intercession; to go to the Eternal Father, we must go to Jesus, he is our mediator of redemption" (TD 86).

And Saint John Paul II explains the difference between the mediation of Jesus and that of Mary:

"Mary's maternal role towards men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ: on the contrary, it manifests its virtue."<sup>19</sup> It is a mediation in Christ.

In fact, Mary's mediation is a mediation of intercession. Therefore, we can invoke Mary because she intercedes for us with her Son, Jesus Christ, and her mediation is effective.

"Mother of God, who are also our Mother, our Advocate and Mediatrix, the Treasurer and Dispenser of God's graces, obtain for us speedily the forgiveness of our sins and our reconciliation with the divine Majesty" (SAR 58).

According to Montfort, Mary is a sure path that leads to Jesus Christ. By abandoning ourselves to her, we find solid support to advance in faith, hope, and charity.

"Then they will see clearly, as much as faith allows, this beautiful star of the sea, and they will arrive safely, despite storms and pirates, following her guidance; they will know the greatness of this

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Pape François, *La force de l'espérance. Paroles pour des temps d'épreuves*, Artège 2020, p. 103-106.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p.103.

<sup>19</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, March 27, 1987, n°38.

sovereign, and they will devote themselves entirely to her service, as her subjects and slaves of love; they will experience her maternal sweetness and kindness, and they will love her tenderly as her beloved children; they will know the mercies with which she is full and the need in which they find her help, and they will have recourse to her in all things as to their dear advocate and mediatrix with Jesus Christ." They will know that it is the surest, easiest, shortest, and most perfect way to come to Jesus Christ, and they will give themselves to it, body and soul, without sharing, to be Jesus Christ's as well" (TD 55).

This is how Father de Montfort exhorts us to come to Jesus Christ with and through Mary. She can only help us draw closer to Jesus.

"To come to Jesus Christ through Mary is truly to honor Jesus Christ, because it shows that we are not worthy to approach his infinite holiness directly on our own, because of our sins, and that we need Mary, his holy Mother, to be our advocate and mediatrix with him, who is our mediator..." (SM 36).

To draw attention, Father de Montfort uses figurative vocabulary: "channel, treasurer, storehouse..." Indeed, we need Mary to accompany us in our spiritual journeys; she guides us and defends us before the Lord. As she was attentive to the wedding at Cana, she sees our needs to experience the joy of the Gospel.

#### **4.3. Mary, Queen of Hearts**

United with Christ, Mary participates in a unique way in the kingship of her Son. For Father de Montfort, it is because Mary is the mother of all humans that she is queen of hearts (cf. TD 37). And Mary's kingship is exercised through maternal love. Whoever accepts Jesus Christ as King of the universe will reserve a throne for the mother beside him<sup>20</sup>. Through her person, as the mother of Jesus, Mary has a unique influence on souls. But her kingship depends on her Son.

Moreover, the Virgin Mary is queen of heaven and earth; she reigns alongside her Son, Jesus Christ. To practice devotion to Mary is to make her reign and honor her. Father de Montfort said: "The Rosary is therefore a large crown and the chaplet a small hat of flowers or a small crown of celestial roses that we place on the heads of Jesus and Mary" (SAR 25). In fact, when we pray the rosary, we recognize the royalty of Mary, we accept that she reigns in our lives.

"If, then, as is certain, the knowledge and reign of Jesus Christ come into the world, it will only be a necessary consequence of the knowledge and reign of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who brought him into the world the first time and will make him shine forth the second time" (TD 13).

According to Fr. Gaffney, "the reign of Mary implies total openness to her maternal and effective dominion as mother and queen, allowing us to be, like her, totally open to the flood of pure love through the Holy Spirit."<sup>21</sup> This means that we allow ourselves to be transformed and led by the Holy Spirit to imitate Mary.

"This devotion, faithfully practiced, produces an infinite number of effects in the soul. But the principal gift that souls possess is to establish here below the life of Mary in a soul, so that it is no longer the soul that lives, but Mary in it, or the soul of Mary becomes her soul, so to speak. Now, when, by an ineffable but true grace, the divine Mary is Queen in a soul, what marvels did she not perform there? As she is the worker of great wonders, especially within, she works there in secret, unbeknownst to even the soul, which, by knowing it, would destroy the beauty of her works...

As she is everywhere a fertile Virgin, she carries throughout the interior where she is purity of heart and body, purity in her intentions and designs, fruitfulness in good works. Do not believe, dear soul,

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Gaffney P., Marie, in Dictionary of Montfortian Spirituality, novalis 1994, p. 874-875.

<sup>21</sup> Gaffney P., Reign, in Dictionary of Montfortian Spirituality, novalis 1994, p. 1113.

that Mary, the most fruitful of all creatures, and who went so far as to produce a God, remains idle in a faithful soul. She will make it live unceasingly in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in her" (SM 55-56).

Father de Montfort describes Mary's action in souls and hearts. She purifies our gift of ourselves to be pleasing to the King, to the Lord, because we are sinners.

"She beautifies them, adorning them with her merits and virtues. As if a peasant, wanting to win the king's friendship and goodwill, were to go to the queen and present her with an apple, which is his entire income, so that the queen would present it to the king. The queen, having accepted the peasant's poor little gift, would place this apple in the middle of a large and beautiful gold platter, and thus present it to the king on the peasant's behalf; for then, the apple, although unworthy in itself to be presented to a king, would become a gift worthy of his Majesty, considering the gold platter on which it is placed and the person who presents it" (TD 147).

Indeed, Mary must play an intrinsic role willed by God in the extension of the kingdom of her Son Jesus Christ in our hearts. And where Mary is queen, Christ will truly be king. This means that Mary who will introduce the reign of Christ, then "Mary must be recognized and revealed by the Holy Spirit in order to make, through her, Jesus Christ known, loved and served" (TD 49).

## Conclusion

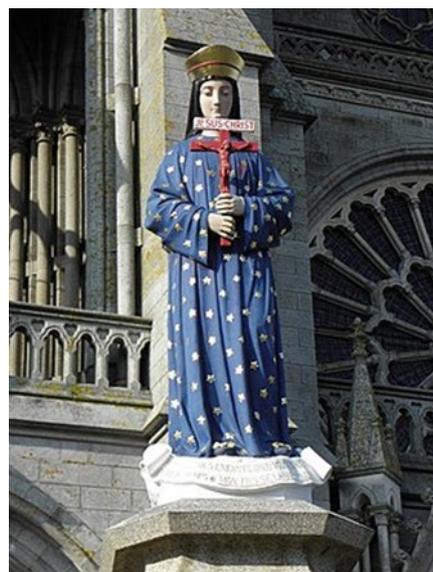
In summary, the Virgin Mary is a model of hope for us. Her journey of faith is marked by total trust in God, even in moments of uncertainty and trial. In all her trials, Mary remained steadfast, confident in God's faithfulness. After the Resurrection, Mary was with the disciples in the Upper Room to support them with her maternal presence (cf. Acts 1:14).

Even today, Mary walks with the Church; she encourages us to maintain faith, hope, and charity. In our doubts and sufferings, we can count on her, for her intercession is effective. She teaches us that hope does not disappoint (Rom 5:5) because she reigns with her Son Jesus. With her, we move forward with faith and trust toward the Easter of Jesus Christ.

In closing, I would like to conclude with Pope Francis: "Today, for various reasons, many seem to believe that a happy future is not possible. We must take these fears seriously, but they are not insurmountable<sup>22</sup>. This is why we must open our hearts to Jesus Christ and to Mary. "Let us enter into hope!"



STATUE DE NOTRE-DAME DE L'ESPÉRANCE.



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<sup>22</sup> Pope Francis, *Hope*, the autobiography, Albin Michel, 2025, p. 380.