

The Paths of our Mission

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Dear Confreres,

In this Paschal Season, we are illuminated by the Light of the Resurrection, a Light which makes us into witnesses to the Risen One. Like the holy women, we are told to leave the tombs – our tombs – and to go to Galilee... the Galilee of the nations where we are awaited. The mystery of the Resurrection is also a mystery of Mission: the Holy Spirit sends us out to all nations...

From January to September this year, the General Council is on “mission”, to the “Galilee” of the Congregation; they are going out to all nations...

Father General, after his visit to the Congo in January, went to Great Britain to perfect his use of the English language. We cannot give too much encouragement to the younger ones among us to spare nothing in the effort to learn other languages, a necessary condition for internationality... At the end of April, he will be in Haiti. During the Summer, he will be going for a long visit to Indonesia, though it will be short enough when we consider the size of this immense country and the number of confreres...

Father Don LaSalle has left for the United States, Canada, the Philippines and India; and he is making preparations to return to Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and Peru. His visits to four continents find him very attentive to the progress of our formation.

Fr. Matthew Jenniskens has gone to Haiti and India to seek for a way to manage better the temporal goods that Providence had placed in our hands. He will then be going to Uganda, Kenya and Malawi to accompany the confreres there in the new phase that our African entity is passing through.

Fr. Joseph Philor accompanied the Superior General on his visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to celebrate with the confreres there 75 years of Montfortian presence and to

open up with them new pathways for our mission. During Lent and Holy Week, he went to give some pastoral help to the confreres in Reggio Calabria in the South of Italy; which gave him the opportunity to perfect his knowledge of Italian. He will be going to Latin America in Summer: Argentina, Ecuador and Peru.

As for myself, after a long stay in Rome, I will be taking up again my preaching ministry: in India for the Scholastics and the young Priests, in the Congo for a retreat and a course for the confreres, and to visit our Montfortian Associates, and in Nigeria for a first visit to our Montfortian Associates there – they number nearly 7000! – then on to Great Britain.

All these miles travelled bring us closer to one another and consolidate our communion.

But before setting out on these mission itineraries, the General Council will be taking up the pilgrim's staff: in fact we will all be present at the *Montfortian Pilgrimage* in Lourdes, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary as well as the 150th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady to St Bernadette. We will carry all the intentions of the Congregation to the Blessed Virgin, so all your intentions...

After all these visits, it will be the turn of the Superiors of entities to come to Rome for the Extraordinary General Council which is due to take place from 6 to 16 October. May this Extraordinary General Council be a Cenacle where, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we may dispose ourselves to be sent out on the paths of our Montfortian Mission!

With the Blessed Virgin, let us pray for the coming of the Spirit... that we may be missionaries all on fire!

Fr. Olivier Maire, s.m.m.

Official News Items

New General Bursar

On the 2nd of April 2008, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council (Montfortian Today, 232), has named Father Luiz Augusto STEFANI as Bursar General.

We are grateful to Father Mathieu JENNISKENS, who, in addition to his function as assistant general, has been willing to provide this service for a period of transition following Father Francesco Agliardi.

Perpetual Profession

On 1st December 2007, in Cumaral (Colombia) : Leonardo de Jesús BERNAL VELÁSQUEZ.

Ordinations to the Diaconate

On 24 March 2007, in Huaycán - Lima (Peru) : Gabriel Arcángel ROMERO PÉREZ.

On 18 August 2007, in Malang (Indonesia) : Kristianus JUMI NGAMPU.

On 2 December 2007, in Acacías - Meta (Colombia) : Leonardo de Jesús BERNAL VELÁSQUEZ, Hedinson Orlando HERRERA BEDÓN, Armando NOVOA PIRAQUIVE.

On 31 January 2008, in Malang (Indonesia) : Leonardus BAYU CHANDRA KARTIKA, Yusup GUNARTO, Marselinus LOBI.

Ordinations to the Priesthood

On 8 December 2007, in Huaycán - Lima (Peru) : Gabriel Arcángel ROMERO PÉREZ.

On 12 January 2008, in Velpuru – Vijayawada (India) : Vijaya Anand Babu VALLE.

On 13 January 2008, in Port-au-Prince (Haiti) : Bénédict LAZAR, Jean Guérino MARSEILLE, Louis Marie Montfort Vladimir SOUFFRANT.

On 16 January 2008, in Gadenahalli (India) : Raja Ratna JOSEPH.

On 27 January 2008, in Manisha Nagar (India) : Joseph Vinod D'MELLO.

On 2 February 2008, in Bangalore (India) : Ruban Moses ABRAHAM.

On 3 February 2008, in Makati City (Philippines) : Melvin ORDAÑEZ.

New Administration of the Community of the Democratic Republic of Congo

On 24 January 2008, the Superior General appointed as Councillors of Father Eugenio CUCCHI, Superior of the Community, Father Jean de Dieu BOKUMU ALASO and Father Jean de Dieu EKANGA MBULA. Father Frédéric BOLUMBU WANGELA has been appointed as bursar. Their mandate is from 1st January 2008 to 31 December 2010.

Juniorate for Latin America and the Caribbean

From our Juniorate for Latin America and the Caribbean in Lima, Peru – fraternal greetings to all the Montfortian Family around the world: Fathers, Sisters, Brothers and consecrated Lay-people. Special greetings to the young people in formation in our various postulancies, novitiates and juniorates.

Many are already aware that this is a new experience which began on 2 February this year with 7 young men:

- Three Haitians: Milot FRÉDÉRIQUE, Pierre-Richard FRANCE, Emile TOUSSAINT
- Two Brazilians: Mauri Sebastião RODRIGUES, Anézio Lopes MARÇAL
- One Nicaraguan: Yasser A. ZAMORA
- One Peruvian: Roberto C. GRANADOS

Two Fathers are accompanying them: Adolfo León BETANCUR, from Colombia, and José Angel JUNLCAHUANCA, from Peru.

After a month and a half of adaptation to community life and acquaintance with the reality of life in Latin America and Peru, the young men began their theological studies at the ISET (Institut Supérieur des Études Théologiques – Higher Institute for Theological Studies). During Holy Week – Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week – they will take part in a Retreat, accompanied by Fr. Ugo Pacagnella, assistant to the Novice-Master of the International Novitiate in Paipa.

We recommend this new experience of international formation to your prayers.

Fr. Adolfo León. Betancur, s.m.m.

Second row :
Left to right :

Yasser A. ZAMORA
Émile TOUSSAINT
Anézio Lopes MARÇAL
Roberto C. GRANADOS
Fr. Adolfo León BETANCUR

First row :
Left to right :

Pierre-Richard FRANCE
Fr. José Angel JUNLCAHUANCA
Milot FRÉDÉRIQUE
Mauri Sebastião RODRIGUES

75th Anniversary of the Presence of the Montfort Missionaries in Congo (RD)

In January 2008, Fr. Santino, the Superior General, and Fr. Joseph Philor, General Assistant, went to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to visit the confreres. This was also the occasion to celebrate 75 years of Montfortian presence in the Congo. During the course of these celebrations, the following speech was given.

Speech by the Representative of the Lay People of Isangi

It is with great joy that the lay people of the parish of Mary Mediatrix in Isangi join in the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the presence of the Montfort Missionaries in the Diocese of Isangi.

Before it was raised to the status of an Apostolic Prefecture, the mission of Lomami was part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Lisala. Given the great distances involved, it was impossible for the Vicar Apostolic to pay regular visits to the missions, and that was why he looked for a Congregation to take over the area. So the Montfort Missionaries arrived in Isangi in 1933. The mission was raised to the status of Apostolic Prefecture in 1952, and the prefecture was made a diocese in 1962. So that makes 75 years that the Montfort Missionaries have been part of the Diocese of Isangi, where they placed themselves at the service of the people and remained faithful to their mission! Our sincere congratulations on this jubilee of the 75th anniversary of their arrival in the Diocese of Isangi.

A jubilee pays homage to the past and underlines all that has been achieved during a long period of activity: the initiatives taken by the Montfort Missionaries over these three quarters of a century were so many constructive responses to the challenges presented by the world of evangelisation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or the Belgian Congo as it was then, especially in the Diocese of Isangi. All these initiatives and achievements were, at the same time, responses to the calls of the Lord who invited them to work ceaselessly at the evangelisation of the people living in our national territory, and in particular that of the Diocese of Isangi.

Endowed with both material and human resources coming from abroad, the Montfort Missionaries engaged in effective action in the sphere of evangelisation at the diocesan level. In the space of just a few decades, there appeared in the diocesan lands flourishing Christian communities which grew and, little by little, took on the appearance of quasi-parishes filled with promise. Nevertheless, from the start of this evangelisation, the Montfortian missionary endeavours were able to count on the active collaboration of the local population. It is clear that the neophytes and catechumens, few in number in the early years, were not rich, but they placed at the service of the common effort, the strength of their arms. Today, the building up of the Church means the continuation of this effort.

It is the Lord that we must first of all thank for all the light and strength he was pleased to give to the Superiors of the Montfort Missionaries. We unite with them in giving thanks on the occasion of this commemorative event. But then the celebration of a jubilee, as well as totting up the balance sheet, opens new windows on the future and offers new directions to take. The Montfort Missionaries as a whole are certainly not lacking in plans nor in the willingness to achieve these in favour of that portion of the

Lord's Vineyard that is the Diocese of Isangi. They are surely attentive to the educational needs which have shown themselves over the years. In this regard we think spontaneously of the renewal of activity aimed at the cultural and spiritual development of the youth of our country. We cannot but rejoice at such a situation and express our best wishes for its fruitful evolution, as well as the numerical growth of the Montfortian presence in the diocese of Isangi, so as to bring to a successful conclusion certain aspects of their mission which have not yet been achieved.

This 75th Anniversary is an important moment in the life of the Montfort Missionaries. May the Spirit of the Lord guide them and permit them to pursue in the best way their beautiful apostolate. May he give his strength and light to all the Montfort Fathers and Montfortian Religious at the service of mankind!

While expressing our thanks for all the work done and assuring you of our encouragement for the future, we wish you a very happy seventy-fifth anniversary. We are with you with all our hearts, and we remain your devoted friends in Our Lord.

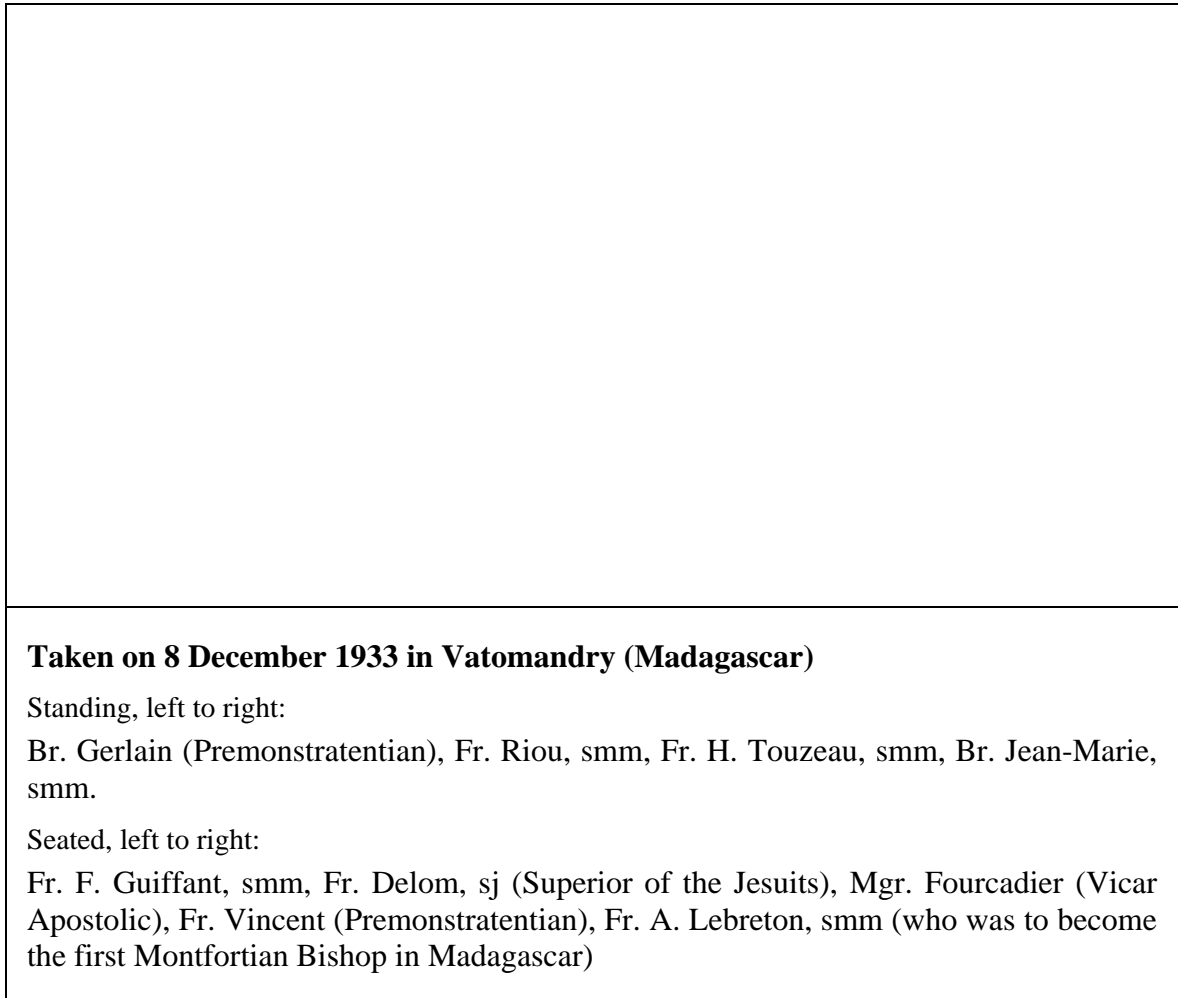
Jean Pierre LOMBO KATO,

Diocesan President of the Council
for the Apostolate of the Laity
in the Congo / Diocese of Isangi

75 years of the Presence of the Montfort Missionaries in Madagascar

With our confreres in Madagascar, we rejoice in, and give thanks to God for the 75 years of Montfortian presence there.

It was in May 1932 that the Congregation accepted the mission of Madagascar from *Propaganda Fide*. The first missionaries from France and Mozambique arrived in 1933, and the first residence was opened in Vatomandry on 8 December 1933.



50th Anniversary of the Grotto of Lourdes in Litchfield, United States

Until 1947 Canada and the United States formed one Montfortian province, with one Novitiate and Scholasticate in Canada, and confreres sharing in ministry in both countries. When the United States was erected as a Vice-Province, it was time to find separate formation houses, and Litchfield in the state of Connecticut became the Scholasticate for the new Vice-Province. It was an extraordinarily beautiful property of some 170 acres of fields, forests and hills. After some time, a local Christian layman (whose name was Considine, but no relation to me!) pressed the Fathers to consider building a Shrine to our Lady of Lourdes. The location was indeed very evocative of Lourdes in France, with a running stream, hills and a natural rocky grotto.

And so, with the creative and technical expertise of two of our Italian Montfort Brothers from Bergamo, Alfonso Bonanomi and Gabriele Rota Nodari, the construction of the Grotto began. Their only guide and plan was a postcard from the Grotto of Lourdes in France. They nailed it to a tree, and constructed their masterwork from that simple postcard, with all the faith and love in their hearts and all the immense talent and craft in their hands. They also constructed a Way of the Cross upon the hillside, totally reminiscent of the Calvary at Lourdes in France. With the help of the Scholastics and people from the area, the Shrine was dedicated in 1958, in time for the 100th Anniversary of the Apparitions at Lourdes in France. In its own way, our Shrine echoes the work of Montfort and all the people at the Calvary of Pontchâteau.

The stone Grotto of Lourdes in Litchfield is modeled after the place in France where, in 1858, a young peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, had an experience of the Mother of God appearing to her with a message of hope and encouragement. Through Bernadette, Mary called us to pray and to allow the grace of God to transform us. Over the years, Lourdes in France has developed into a place of prayer and pilgrimage. In a similar way, our Montfortian shrine of Lourdes in Litchfield has become a place where each year thousands come on pilgrimage.

In the context of contemporary American society, our Shrine plays a wonderful role in bringing together people of different cultures and languages, people who usually would not meet or pray together in the same place. On a Sunday it would be possible to have Chinese, Latino, Polish, Irish and Italian Americans all together, praying to the Mother of Jesus. Our Sunday afternoon rosary and benediction often proceeds in two or three languages! But the greatest grace of this Shrine is that of mercy, healing and peace. People, who are neither Catholic nor even Christian, come to savor the beauty and peace of the Shrine and its natural splendor. Those who have been away from the Church for decades, come slowly, visit by visit, to feel comfortable and to find the courage to be embraced by God again in the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. In the spirit of Lourdes in France, we welcome the sick and the handicapped everyday, and each month we celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

For people searching for healing, forgiveness and peace, for those seeking to return to the Church, this beautiful outdoors Shrine of our Lady of Lourdes offers a place

of welcome and new beginnings. For those who can participate each week in the prayer and liturgy, it becomes a Sanctuary of holiness and grace, to be shared with all their sisters and brothers, the pilgrims who come to our Lady's Shrine.

With much love, prayer and remembrances for you all,

Fr. Bill Considine, smm
Superior and Director

Lourdes in Litchfield Shrine (United States) : www.shrinct.org

VISIT SOME OF OUR MONTFORTIAN WEB SITES AROUND THE WORD:

From Brasil : www.monfortinos.kit.net

From Canada : Sanctuaire *Marie-Reine-des-Cœurs* de Montréal : www.smrhc.org

From Colombia : www.montfortianos.org

From United States : www.ourladyoftheisland.org

From Nicaragua : www.smmnicaragua.net

From Guatemala : a site of Marian and Montfortian spirituality created by lay people : http://regnummariae.org/regnum_mariae.htm

In solidarity with our Christian Brothers in Iraq

The tragic kidnapping of Mgr. Paulos Faraj Rahho, Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul, reminds us of the extremely difficult situation in which the Christians of Iraq live. A letter of solidarity has been sent, on behalf of the Congregation, to Mgr. Jean Benjamin Sleiman, OCD, the Latin Archbishop of Babylon, and to Cardinal Emmanuel III Delly, the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon. In his reply, Mgr. Jean Benjamin Sleiman said that he was touched and comforted by our message. He added that he often invokes Mgr. P.A. Coupperie, “of holy memory”.

In fact, our Congregation has, to a certain extent, links with the Church in Baghdad through Mgr. Pierre Alexandre Coupperie, the first Montfortian Bishop. He was born on 2 April 1770 in La Chapelle Palluau. He entered the Company of Mary in 1810; then in 1819, after offering his services to Pope Pius VII for the foreign missions (as Father de Montfort had done in 1706), he was appointed Latin Bishop of Babylon and Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Diocese of Ispahan. He lived in Baghdad in the grounds of the French hospital, where he died of plague on 25 April 1831 after going to the aid of the sick. He also worked for the hospice-hospital in Basra. He obtained the freedom of many Christians who had been taken into slavery, by paying ransoms for them. His apostolic zeal also led him to enter into fraternal dialogue with Christians of the Syrian, Nestorian and Jacobite Churches separated from Rome. He was the friend of the Patriarch Youhanan III Hormez, the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon, the predecessor of Cardinal Emmanuel III Delly.

Let us continue to remember in our prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Iraq.

The Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts in Slovakia

On 3 January 2008, Fr. Santino Brembilla, the Superior General, approved the setting up of a centre of the Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts in the Diocese of Bratislava-Trnava in Slovakia, at the request of Mgr. Ján Sokol, Archbishop of Bratislava-Trnava. The director of this new branch of the Association is Mgr. Stefan Vrablec, Emeritus Auxiliary Bishop.

The Montfortian Marian Movement in Congo (RD)

We have heard from our confreres in the Democratic Republic of the Congo of the existence around the diocese of Kisantu of a rather large group (numbering nearly a thousand) called “The Montfortian Marian Movement”.

Father de Montfort, whether in Slovakia or the Congo, is inviting us to leave our “Jerusalem” to go out on the mission roads, where Christians are thirsting to hear his spiritual message.

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Statistics of the Company of Mary on 31-12- 2007

Juridical Entity				
	Fr.	Br.	S.	Total
Argentina (France)	2	1	0	3
Belgium	31	6	0	37
Canada	34	13	1	48
Colombia	51	3	6	60
France	78	26	0	104
GB/I	17	4	0	21
Gen. Comm. PNG	8	1	0	9
Gen. Del. Africa	22	2	3	27
Gen. Del. India	36	0	32	68
Gen. Del. Indonesia	28	4	55	87
Gen. Del. Madagascar	20	6	8	34
Gen. Del. Philippines	12	1	13	26
Gen. Del. Portugal	16	1	0	17
<i>General Administration</i>	6	0	0	6
Germany	22	1	1	24
Haiti	47	2	23	72
Italy	115	7	1	123
Malawi (Italy)	16	2	0	18
Netherlands	54	13	0	67
Nicaragua (USA)	2	0	2	4
Peru-Brazil (Italy)	27	3	4	34
Spain-Ecuador (France)	7	0	1	8
USA	23	2	0	25
	674	98	150	922

Country of work				
	Fr.	Br.	S.	Total
Argentina	2	1	0	3
Bahamas	1	0	0	1
Belgium	29	5	0	34
Brazil	9	1	1	11
Canada	37	13	1	51
Colombia	50	3	7	60
Congo RD	8	1	0	9
Croatia	4	0	0	4
Ecuador	5	0	0	5
France	78	26	0	104
GB/I	18	4	0	22
Germany	26	1	1	28
Haiti	38	2	20	60
India	33	0	32	65
Indonesia	26	4	55	85
Italy	111	7	2	120
Kenya	1	1	2	4
Madagascar	19	5	8	32
Malawi	25	4	1	30
Netherlands	47	11	0	58
Nicaragua	2	0	0	2
Papua	6	1	0	7
Peru	23	3	7	33
Philippines	16	1	13	30
Portugal	15	1	0	16
<i>Rome - GH</i>	8	1	0	9
Spain	2	0	0	2
Uganda	2	0	0	2
USA	32	2	0	34
Zambia	1	0	0	1
	674	98	150	922

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