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EGC 2010 in Fatima

The 2010 Extraordinary General Chapter took place in Fatima, Portugal, May 12-23. Some confreres faced long delays during their journeys to the EGC, due to the volcanic ash from the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland. Despite these travel challenges, the provincials and delegation superiors succeeded to arrive in Lisbon, where we were warmly welcomed by our confreres from the General Delegation of Portugal. Fr. Manuel Peixoto and the Portuguese confreres dealt with the complexities of meeting people at the airport and bringing them to Fatima.



The CGE took place in the Domus Carmeli, a newly built conference centre run by the Discalced Carmelites, located just next to the Fatima Shrine, not far from the Montfort house in Fatima. After some introductory words of welcome from Fr. Santino, the members of the CGE had the opportunity to participate in the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Fatima on May 12 and 13. We were able to join other priests and religious who prayed vespers with Pope Benedict the evening of May 12 in the Church of the Holy Trinity at the Shrine. On May 13, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, we joined with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims for the papal Mass on the great esplanade of the Shrine.

After these festivities, we got down to work. The bulk of the agenda involved looking ahead to the next

General Chapter which will take place in May 2011. We looked at our recent lived experience of mission, to analyze the forces that bring us together in mission at the crossroads of three dimensions: 1) our current reality (who we are, with our talents and limits), 2) the needs of the Church and the world, and 3) our charism and spirituality which flow from our Montfortian heritage. George Madore presented a lively witness on living the Montfortian Mission today. We then reviewed recent experiments in international collaboration for mission and for formation, and we tried to look at new ways to organize the congregation in order to carry out our mission in the future. We reviewed a draft of the second volume of the Ratio for Formation, which deals with the stages of initial formation.

Other matters discussed at the CGE included proposals for the change in juridical status for several entities (Indonesia from a General Delegation to a Vice-Province, Canada from a Province to a Vice-Province, and Germany from a Vice-Province to a General Delegation). We tried to surface other themes to be treated at the General Chapter, including some possible changes to the Constitutions. Presentations on finances were presented by Fr. Luizhino Stefani, who is finishing his mandate as General Bursar, and Fr. Adriano Dalle Pezze, who will soon begin his mandate as General Bursar. Haitian Provincial Fr. Laurent Pierre gave an update on the situation of our confreres and the people of Haiti after the earthquake.

In the midst of the work, we managed to take a day for an excursion to see some of the nearby beauty of Portugal. Once again, Manuel Peixoto and the Portuguese confreres were exemplary hosts. They organized a visit to the splendid gothic church at the Monastery of Batalha, the Cistercian Monastery of Alcobaça, and the seaside town of Nazaré. The entire day was sponsored by the kind generosity of the Albino and Maria Celeste family, good friends of the Montfortians. We also had the opportunity to share a fraternal evening meal with the members of the Montfort community who live in Fatima.

One feature of the CGE that is always significant is the prayer that we celebrate together. This time, we prayed for all of the confreres and for each entity by inviting each superior to compose a prayer for his own entity, a kind of modern version of Fr. de Montfort's *Prayer for Missionaries*, addressing the situation of each entity. We started each plenary session with one of these prayers.

At the end of the EGC, the superiors noted that it was difficult to deal with large questions like mission and the future shape of the congregation without more specific guidance. They recommended that we find more defined and precise ways to deal with these questions in preparation for the General Chapter. But everyone was in agreement that Fatima was an excellent place for an international meeting. The confreres left Fatima singing the praises of Fr. Manuel Peixoto and our Portuguese confreres, and expressing gratitude to the Carmelite community and the staff of the Domus Carmeli.

Fr. Donald La Salle, s.m.m.

The new world of Interdependence

We have just celebrated from 12 to 23 May last, in Fatima, the Extraordinary General Council of the Congregation (EGC).

Provisionally, the first few days coincided with the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Fatima.

The buzz-word that would provide a good resumé and throw light on the discussions of this EGC, would be "interdependence".

Perhaps it was a happy chance that, during the times of waiting, here and there, on my return journey, I was reading in the magazine "Monde" an editorial entitled "The New World of Interdependence". Clearly the author was expressing a political point of view concerning different countries, and a financial point of view related to the phenomenon of globalisation and the planetary village.

The same paradigm applies to our Montfortian Congregation, especially in the area of formation at various levels, with regard to finance and international teams.

An interdependence which is not centralisation, but rather coordination on the part of the Generalate, an interdependence which is an ever greater development of solidarity between Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Delegations, an interdependence which brings a better working out in practice of our "Working together".



Each confrere is co-responsible, not only in his own juridical entity, but also at the level of the Congregation as a whole, as each one belongs, going beyond national bonds, to a Congregation. "*Lord, congrega nos de nationibus*, gather us in from every nation. Bring us together and unite us and may all the glory be given to your holy and mighty name!" (Montfort, *Prayer for Missionaries*, no. 18). It is together that we have to respond to the challenges of evangelisation, all over the world, always being available ("*instabiles sumus*"), and being true "*liberos*" in both senses of the word: free men and servants of Mary.

"*Memento Congregationis tuae. Tuae*: Be mindful of this, your Congregation, for it is you alone who must, by your grace, make it a living reality. If man is the first to put his hand to the work, nothing will come of it. If he contributes anything of his own to what you are doing, the entire undertaking will be warped and come down in ruins. *Tuae Congregationis*: your own Congregation. *Opus tuum fac*, it is your work, great God. Make your divine purpose a reality. Muster your chosen men from every corner of your dominions. Call them and gather them together. Mobilise them and make of them an army to fight against your enemies" (PM 26).

May the Virgin of Fatima make us ready for this great "Working together"!

Fr. Claude Sigouin, s.m.m.

Official News Items



First Professions

On 24 May 2010, in Ruteng (Indonesia) : Benedictus Viktor (Ben) FERNANDEZ, Nikodemus (Niko) HERMIAWAN, Marianus Rasmala (Rian) JANU, Yohanes (Yohan) JEHADUN, Timotius (Timo) SOMBANG, Yohanes De Brito (Roby) WIRAWAN.

On 31 May 2010, in Bangalore (India) : Jose Nashwin ARUL, Philip Pramod CHINNAPPA, Jaya Kumar DANIEL, Arun D'SOUZA, Gnana Prakash NATARAJ, Maria Das (Sreenu) NELAPATI, Bala Raju RAPHAEL, Jesu Doss RAYAPPAN, Ravi THAPPETA.

Perpetual Professions

On 20 July 2010, in Bangalore (India) : Philip Arockiaraj ANTHONY SAMY, Richard Dass AROKIASWAMY, Esak CHINNAPPA, John Kennedy GASPAS, Francis Xavier JOSEPH, Amalraj Madhivanan KULANDHAISAMY, Naga Vara Aswani Kumar MADDALA, John Lawrence MARIA SUSAI, Madalai Muthu SELVARAJ.

Ordinations to the Diaconate

On 21 July 2010, in Bangalore (India) : Philip Arockiaraj ANTHONY SAMY, Richard Dass AROKIASWAMY, Esak CHINNAPPA, John Kennedy GASPAS, Francis Xavier JOSEPH, Amalraj Madhivanan KULANDHAISAMY, Naga Vara Aswani Kumar MADDALA, John Lawrence MARIA SUSAI, Madalai Muthu SELVARAJ.

Ordinations to the Priesthood

On 1 May 2010, in Puerto Gaitán (Colombia) : Martín Emilio BAICUÉ NAVARRO.

On 3 May 2010, in St. Louis du Nord (Haiti) : Lanès PHANOR, Rébert BELDORIN, Claude CINÉ, Frégo ANTÉNOR.

On 15 July 2010, in Ruteng (Indonesia) : Marselinus NGEBU, Rafael Servianus LEPEN.

International Scholasticate in Nairobi, Kenya

On 28 May 2010, Fr. Santino BREMBILLA, Superior General, with the consent of his council, named Father Ernest AKHONYA MUKAVANA, Superior of the team of Formators in the International Scholasticate in Nairobi (Kenya), for a mandate of two years.

International Scholasticate in Rome, Italy

On 28 May 2010, Fr. Santino BREMBILLA, Superior General, with the consent of his council, named Father Arnoldus SUHARDI, Superior of the team of Formators in the International Scholasticate in Rome (Italy), for a mandate of three years.

International Noviciate in Bulacan, Philippines

On 28 May 2010, Fr. Santino BREMBILLA, Superior General, with the consent of his council, named Father Wim PEETERS, Superior and Master of Novices in the International Noviciate in Bulacan (Philippines), for a mandate of three years. Father Roy Sambulao MILLANO and Father Reny Joseph PUNNAPPANAL, are named « Socius », for a mandate of three years.

Province of Canada

On 31 May 2010, Fr. Santino BREMBILLA, Superior General, with the consent of his council, extended the mandate of Father Claude SIGOUIN, as Superior of the Province of Canada, up to the second session of the Provincial Chapter, that will take place after the General Chapter 2011.

The three Montfortian General Administrations on retreat in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, 31 May - 5 June 2010

An historic moment

This event could be described as "historic", because it was the first time for 10 years that the three general administrations of the Company of Mary, the Daughters of Wisdom and the Brothers of St. Gabriel, were able to synchronise their diaries to come together as a whole at St Laurent-sur-Sèvre (France) for a common retreat preached by Fr. Olivier Maire (SMM). The Spirituality Centre of Bethany, conducted by the Daughters of Wisdom, was an ideal setting for this time of silence, reflection and prayer.



The members of the 3 General Administrations and the French Provincial administrations gathered together at St Laurent-sur-Sèvre

The commemoration in 2010 of the third centenary of the building of the Calvary at Pontchâteau by Father de

Montfort, provided the opportunity to devote these days to a meditation on the mystery of suffering and the cross, so dear to St. Louis Marie.

How it unfolded

The main part of the retreat took place in Saint-Laurent itself.

To allow the group to be penetrated by the spirit of Montfort, that ardent preacher of popular missions, who strode across the West of France for 10 years, our preacher had no hesitation in proposing a number of visits: to the chapel of La Séguinière for a Marian prayer, and to the Calvary at Pontchâteau where the group spent a whole day. There we were welcomed very fraternally by the communities of the Daughters of Wisdom and the Company of Mary. A celebration of the Eucharist concluded the morning session. In the afternoon, after a short visit to the various sites, a Way of the Cross led the group up to the monumental Calvary itself, restored with taste. The pilgrims could gauge the colossal work carried out in 1710 by Montfort and hundreds of volunteers to build, with their bare hands, this Calvary and the full-scale representation of the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, on Magdalen Heath. A spirit of revenge, and fear of a plot, not to mention human wickedness, provided the reason for destruction of this monument, which had to be demolished on the orders of the highest authorities in the kingdom.

The group also went in procession to the tomb of Father Gabriel Deshayes, the man who renewed the Montfortian congregations as well as several others. This visit to the tomb of a man who proved providential, allowed us to be reinforced in the conviction that men and women, some known, some less well known, had an influence on the history of our congregations, and that, still today, we are indebted to them for their commitment to the service of the Church's mission. It is thanks to all our predecessors that we are today what we are. We owe them a profound debt of gratitude.



The Eucharist at the end of the morning, the Marian prayer in the evening, and a long period of silent adoration as night fell, gave us the opportunity to strengthen our sense of belonging to one big family, to make our own the teaching offered during the day, and to give thanks to God for having given us Montfort as our founder, and his charisma and spirituality as a source of inspiration for the spiritual life and the mission.

The themes offered

Illuminations thrown on history, on the relationships formed by Louis Marie in the course of his life, and on the charisma and spirituality of our founder, led the group to explore new paths beginning from familiar territory. *"The Love of Eternal Wisdom"*, the *"Treatise on True Devotion"*, the *"Letters"*, but above all the many *"Hymns"* which deal with the cross, enabled us to discover or deepen the real meaning of the mystery of suffering and the cross in Montfort's thought. For sure, *"The Cross is a mystery / Most secret here below, / Without abundant light / Its meaning is not known"* (Hymn 102). Explored at length, commented on, contemplated and prayed with, this way of the cross shows itself to be in truth a way of life. It is a question of a *"glorious"* and *"triumphant"* cross... Louis Marie does not choose suffering or setbacks for their own sake, but the better to imitate Jesus Christ, his sole model, and because it is this way that He Himself chose and willed in order to enter into glory. A difficult and demanding way, certainly, which is not for everyone, but with Mary, *"the very sweetness of the cross"* (TD 154), it can be transformed into *"a smooth, short, perfect and sure way of attaining union with our Lord," ...: "a path of roses and sweet delights."* (TD 152)



The Cross of Fr. de Montfort
The chapel at Pontchâteau

The experience we had at Pontchâteau was enlightening and particularly significant on this topic.

Creating a common soul

Living with the same rhythm, praying together, breathing the same dynamic breath: all this made for a reinforcement of the communion between those responsible for the three congregations. This communion was more strongly manifested at the moment of the final Eucharist celebrated at the tombs of the founders in the basilica, by the general administrations and the provincial administrations of France, who came together for the occasion. In his homily,

Fr. Olivier gave an excellent explanation of the sense of this celebration and our presence at the tombs. It was a question of drinking together from the same spring, the spirit of our founders, which fertilised these places at a certain moment in history and which today irrigates all five continents, thanks to the missionary commitment of the children, both yesterday and today, of Louis Marie and Marie Louise. Not forgetting the lay people, the Marquis de Magnanne, Mme de Bouillé and many others, who played a central role in guiding the first steps of our congregations in Saint-Laurent.



This return to the sources constitutes also, for each of the heirs of Montfort, a personal commitment to move forward, to promote the charism and spirituality of our founders, a way of holiness for today that goes beyond the frontiers of the Montfortian congregations. A return to the sources is very much a sending out on mission.

The Eucharist, at once thanksgiving and bread for the journey, is a source of communion, between those present but also with all those who have gone before us in the faith. All those who were gathered about the tombs of our founders were well aware of this, but the awareness also of being part of a wider Montfortian family was reinforced by this beautiful celebration.

The retreatants wish to offer their sincere thanks to all those who helped them by their service and supported them in their prayers, so that these days might be fruitful for the better service of the members of the big Montfortian family.



The restored Calvary at Pontchâteau

Comings and goings – General House

February – September 2010

11 Feb – 8 Mar	Visit to the General Delegation of Madagascar: Fr Olivier Maire
14 – 28 Feb	Visit to the Vice-Province of Germany: Fr Mathieu Jenniskens
28 Feb – 6 Mar	Visit to the Province of Haiti after the earthquake: Frs General and Joseph Philor
2 – 15 Mar	Meeting in the USA: Fr Donald LaSalle
24 – 30 Mar	Meeting in preparation for RISL (International Meeting in Saint-Laurent) in Saint-Laurent: Fr Olivier Maire & Bro Gilles Paquette
2 – 26 April	Accounting course in Rome: Fr Stefanus Wiwid Sukrisno Wiwodo, bursar of the Gen. Del. Of Indonesia, and Fr Francis Tacio, bursar of the Gen Del of the Philippines
10 – 19 April	Pilgrimage to Lourdes: Frs General, Olivier Maire, Joseph Philor and Bro. Gilles Paquette
12 – 22 April	Visit to the Vice-Province of Germany: Fr Mathieu Jenniskens. Visit to the Province of Holland: Frs Mathieu Jenniskens and Donald LaSalle
7 – 29 April	Canonical Visit of the Province of Canada and meeting in the USA: Fr Donald LaSalle
11 – 24 May	EGC 2010 in Fatima: Frs General, Donald LaSalle, Mathieu Jenniskens, Joseph Philor, Olivier Maire, Luiz Stefani, Adriano Dalle Pezze and Bro Gilles Paquette
30 May – 8 Jun	Retreat for the three General Councils at St-Laurent: Frs General, Donald LaSalle, Mathieu Jenniskens, Joseph Philor, Olivier Maire, Luiz Stefani
8 – 10 Jun	Meeting of the Superiors of the Province of Italy in Bergamo: Fr General
28 Jun – 24 Sep	Visit to Nicaragua and session at the Novitiate of Paipa, Colombia: Fr Joseph Philor
13 Jun – 11 Jul	Visit to the international community of PNG: Fr General
15 – 26 Jun	Pilgrimage: Fr Mathieu Jenniskens
30 Jun	Arrival at the General House of Fr Adriano Dalle Pezze, the new General Bursar
6 Jul – 2 Sep	Liturgy Course at University of Notre-Dame and various meetings: Fr Donald LaSalle
11- 16 July	Visit of Frs Luiz Stefani and Adriano Dalle Pezze to Paris and Brussels
3 – 8 Aug	RISL (International Meeting in St-Laurent): Frs General, Mathieu Jenniskens, Olivier Maire and Bros. Narimo Usodo & Gilles Paquette

5 – 12 Sep	Retreat and consultation in Germany: Fr Mathieu Jenniskens
11 Sep	Closure of the 300th Anniversary of Pontchâteau: Frs General, Donald LaSalle, Olivier Maire and Bro. Désiré Rakotonandrasana
2 – 12 Sep	Retreat preached by Fr Olivier Maire in Saint-Laurent for the scholastics of Rome and Bro Désiré Rakotonandrasana



May 2010 – Fatima (E.G.C.)

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