



Montfortian Mission For The Poor, Needy and The Disabled

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

The Objective of the paper is to study the mission done by St. Montfort and his followers spread all over and above all to do research in Montfortian mission for the poor, needy and the disabled. It also talks about the early life of St. Montfort which evidences the later missions of his own and of his fellow members.

Introduction

Louis was born at Montfort-la-cane, now Montfort-sur-meux, on January 31, 1673. He was baptized the following day in St. John's church. He was given the name Louis. Later on Marie was added to it. As a young boy, Louis learnt prayers from his mother and his father taught him the three R's (Reading, writing, Arithmetic). Not only did he do primary studies; he helped his father in teaching his younger brothers and sisters. Louis taught them religion and prayer. The parish priest helped Louis in his studies. Louis spent ten years of his childhood at Iffendic (1675-84), the parish church was 3 kms away and he used to frequent this and renew his baptismal vows at the baptismal font.

The church at Iffendic was dedicated to St. Eloi. When Louis became old enough, he was permitted to serve mass. From 1684-92, he was a student of St. Thomas Becket College. The college had about 3,000 students. It had a name and the students received a liberal but profoundly Christian education. From 1688-1690, he studied humanities under Fr. La Camus and rhetoric under Fr. Gilbert. Fr. Descartes was Louis' spiritual director. Through Fr. Cames, his first teacher, Louis became a member of the sodality of the blessed virgin. In spite of his activity among the sick to the poor, Louis stayed at the head of his class. He learned to write Latin verse. He was a serious student and stood first in his class. Among the students there was one, who was poor and other students made fun of him because of his torn clothes. Louis addressed the students, took a collection from them, the collection came up only to half of what was needed to have new clothes yet, he took that student to a tailor and said, "Here is my brothers and yours. I have made a Collection for him in my class and got as much as I could in order to have new clothes bought, did as he was requested. After this incident, the students began to treat Louis with great respect.

For the Poor and the Needy

Fr. Julian Bellier, the chaplain of the General Hospital, guided Louis in his service to the poor through this priest he came in contact with human misery. Louis met the poor in the General hospital helped them. The discovery of the poor was perhaps the most decisive event of his adolescence. Louis was much devoted to Mary and joined the sodality of our Lady. After joining the sodality, he learned to work with others in common project and found joy in friendship. While studying at Rennes, he had a deep experience of God and he spent much time in prayer and

penance. From 1690-92, Louis studied logic and philosophy and theology. Fr. Francois Boucher had a community for poor students near Montaigu College, the conditions to this community were very poor, and the food was atrocious. During the winter of 1694, Louis became dangerously ill and he was admitted with a hospital called "Hotel-Dieu"

His love for Mary was unique and extraordinary. No mean of his era was so openly, so completely, so ardently hers. During the summer of 1699, Louis and another seminarian were chosen to represent the sulpician community at the solemn annual pilgrimage to Dur Lay of Chartes. Before leaving Paris, Fr. Louis made another telling gesture he renounced the annual income attached to the chapel of St. Julian de concelle, which was his source of financial support during the last 5 years. Fr. Louis found himself to be a disappointed man. Hence on December 6, 1700, he wrote to Fr. Les chassier "my intention was, as yours was too, to prepare for mission work, especially for teaching catechism to the poor, since this is what attracts me most. But I am not doing that at all and I do not think that I shall ever do it here. Fr. Louis had clear goals and options He opted to serve the poor and his goal was to make Jesus and Mary known and loved. When Fr. Louis reached Poitiers, as the Bishop was out of station, he went to the Poor house there. I could serve the poor physically, even it I could not serve them spiritually.

Practicing Gospel Values

"We can express our love for our creator by caring for his creations in all possible way". In other words, 'worship of God is worship of Nature. St. Francis of Assisi had given us a good example how to integrate our spirituality with Nature. Authentic Montfortian – Gabrielite Leader. Leadership and Brotherhood are complementary to each other as the two sides of the same coin. As a community they continue to translate in our lives with joy, positive inquisitiveness and enthusiasm.

By and large, the people around us observe our communities as witnessing the Gospel values. However, there are lots of deficiencies where we are really challenged to improve the quality of our religious life, simples life-style, bearing joyful testimony to our vowed life, committed Montfortian dynamism, authentic men of prayer and spiritual depth, transparency in material and money management, unity is fraternal life, dedication to the cause of the

poor and less privileged. In sum, the message challenges each of us to lead a life of spiritual fecundity and apostolic dynamism.

Montfortian traits of our institutions

Our institutions are known specifically for cleanliness, creating conducive atmosphere for learning, organizing social awareness programmes we are taking efforts to keep the ecological balance by taking steps to produce green energy. However, in the spiritual domain, we have to take greater effort to make our institutions into centres of prayer and models of 'Christian Life'As a province, we are happy to note that there is a good balance in our mission projects, namely, those meant for the poor and those for the not so Poor. "The effectiveness of religious life depends on the quality of the fraternal life in common" – Pope John Paul II

It will be a distinctly Montfortian trait when we give these the best of our education efforts that will serve as a spring board for their emancipation and empowerment. Our institution should have a humane ambience so that the poor will not be over awed by the imposing establishment structures and procedures. In light of the foregoing accepted policy, the role of the 'Province Leadership' could be seen as that of encouraging, initiating, stimulating, sustain and monitoring, the progress, rather than itself directly running any such project. Remember, it is the poor who can rescue us from our mediocrity and help us regain apostolic dynamism as Montfortians.

Community/ Institution

Our institutions are expected to follow transparent ways in the matter of selection of staff and other employees. We are convinced that community dialogue is a good too at which all projects and plans of institutional development are discussed and due permissions obtained from competent authority.

"They may, and often should, present their reason for doing or not doing a certain action, but they should do so with calm and in difference They show great affability, can dour, respect and affection towards one another. They avoid that haughty, reserved or distant air.... They avoid all duplicity and their mutual relations are characterised by great candour and openness of hearty " - St. Montfort

"The world you are in heriting is a world which desperately needs a new sense of brotherhood and human solidarity. It is a world which needs to be touched and healed by the beauty and richness of God's Love.

It needs witness to that love, It needs you to be the salt of the earth and light of the world"

- Pope John Paul II

"O daughters of Wisdom,
Succor poor invalids
Those overwhelmed by sorrow,
The disabled, the out casts,
Those whom the world rejects ought to move you the most" (149, 1)

- (Montfort, Canticles)

XXIX General Chapter-2000

Justice should percolate to all levels of the institute

This General chapter was an important on in the process

of the growth of the congregation's commitment to justice, peace and integrity of creation. For the first time the congregation choose a clear social theme having a socio-economic and justice-impact in its life and mission. The theme was: "Montfortian missionary dynamism for a just society towards the kingdom"

The 29th General chapter once again reaffirmed our mission in education of the young and the poor, especially our "Solidarity with all those struggling for justice."

"Our institute is particularly devoted to the young. It must concentrate its mission efforts on actions aimed at protecting and defending the rights of we will do so, with the montfortian family other religious groups, lay people, people of other faith..." It moved on the work with a renewed dynamism in the areas of mission, partnership and networking, reviving structures, govt. and finance, finally the formation.

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