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ST. LOUIS DE MONTFORT: PRIEST OF JESUS CHRIST AND PREACHER OF TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY

Fr. Frederick L. Miller, STD

Introduction

When I first read St. Louis de Montfort's *True Devotion to Mary* over thirty years ago and made his Act of Consecration, my life as a priest was changed in many ways, and all for the better. Not only was my spiritual life deepened through the encounter with the Mother of God that the saint facilitates, but intuitions that I had experienced as a seminarian and young priest about Mary's role in the spiritual life were transformed into convictions at the level of faith. Stated simply, Montfort helped me understand and articulate in preaching what I had already experienced: Mary exercises a real motherhood in our lives in the order of Sanctifying Grace.

The attempt to appropriate Montfort's teaching in my own spiritual life and the desire, or I should more honestly say, the need to propagate this devotion through preaching, helped me to understand that St. Louis de Montfort was and remains fundamentally a preacher, an evangelist, an apostle deeply devoted to Mary. Montfort was a priest who preached

the Gospel indefatigably as an itinerant missionary in the spirit of the twelve Apostles and St. Paul. His special gift, his charism, was and is to lead men and women to Christ through an experience of Mary and to form them into Apostles.

In this paper, I shall focus on St. Louis de Montfort, the Priest, and on the Blessed Virgin Mary's role in his life and preaching. Montfort's incorporation of Mary into his preaching of the Gospel, in my estimation, is important for all seminarians and priests engaged in active ministry. St. Louis de Montfort is also the special patron of the Legion of Mary, which remains among the largest apostolic movements in the Church. Not only does his teaching provide the specific spirituality for the Legion of Mary, but his zeal as a missionary has molded members of the Legion into expert evangelists. It is not difficult to recognize that the Neo-Catechumenal Way, so powerful in this period of the Church's history, has much in common with the methods and content of the *Preacher from Montfort*. Needless to say, Montfort's teaching on Mary is a blessing for the whole Church—a blessing pointed out repeatedly by St. John Paul II, a spiritual son of Montfort.

Formative Aspects of de Montfort's Life

Not too long ago, I had the opportunity to visit the places in France sanctified by the presence and preaching of St. Louis Grignion de Montfort:

- The humble home of the Grignion family in the village of Montfort where the saint was born. Yes, St. Louis de Montfort's name was Louis Grignion. On the day of his confirmation, he added the name

Marie to his first name—a common custom in France those days.

- The chapel where he was baptized. So central was his baptism in his spiritual life that the saint dropped his family name intentionally and decided to be known only by the name of the place where he had become a son of God and a son of Mary: Louis-Marie de Montfort.
- The seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris where he prepared for the priesthood. Montfort studied in the great reform seminary of Saint-Sulpice. He was from the very beginning of his seminary career a strong-minded individual. On the day he left home, his moderately well-to-do parents gave him a brand new wardrobe of clothing. In that wardrobe, he found a new suit. As soon as he crossed over the bridge outside of the village of Montfort, Montfort met a beggar. He asked the man to change clothes with him. Montfort arrived at the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris dressed in beggar's rags. St. Louis de Montfort, sustaining his commitment to austerity of life in imitation of Christ and the Apostles throughout the course of his priestly life, always gave first place to the service of the poor. St. Louis devoted his seminary years to prayer and serious study of the word of God. He was particularly interested in what the Fathers of the Church had to say about Mary and her role in the life of Christ and the Church. His personal research led him to spend many hours every day in the library. He kept

extensive notes that he later used in preaching and writing.

- The great parish church of Saint-Sulpice. There the saint offered his first Mass on Our Lady's altar.
- A few of the many towns where he preached his parish missions. These events often brought hundreds of people back to the sacraments. During the sixteen years of his life as a priest, St. Louis de Montfort preached over two-hundred parish missions. It is said that wherever he preached the Catholic people remained faithful to the Church during the great apostasy of the French Revolution. Later, we will examine how he organized these highly successful parish missions.
- The Church of Saint-Laurent-sur-Sevre. Here the forty-two year old missionary, worn out by zeal for the Gospel and remarkable penances, collapsed and died. Significantly, Montfort is buried in that parish Church of Saint-Laurent-sur-Sevre, far from his native Diocese of Rennes and home town of Montfort. He died with his boots on, preaching the Gospel far from home and family.

In 1706, the young Fr. Louis de Montfort, ordained only five years, travelled on foot to Rome to present his method of conducting parish missions to Pope Clement XI. As far as I am aware, this was the one and only time the saint ever left France. In the course of preaching parish missions, he had clashed with several of the French bishops who had been influenced by the heresies of Jansenism and Gallicanism. Five or six bishops forbade him to preach or hear confessions

in their dioceses. Sensing that doors had been closed in his face in some of the dioceses of France, Montfort made a pilgrimage to Rome to ask the Holy Father if he was doing anything wrong or preaching any false doctrine to the people. It was indeed bold for a young priest to expect an extended audience with the Holy Father. However, after walking to Rome and praying all the way, Montfort somehow obtained an audience with the Pope. Discouraged that he was not free to preach in many places in his home country, Fr. de Montfort asked the Pope to send him as a missionary to the East or to North America. He had heard of mission posts in Canada and longed to go.

Let me pause for a moment to explain two terms that may be unfamiliar: the Jansenist heresy and the Gallicanist heresy. Each of these is an erroneous way of thinking about the Catholic faith. A heresy is an error regarding God's self-revelation in Christ. These particular errors were evident in many local churches during the lifetime of Montfort.

Jansenism was a form of Calvinist thinking in Catholic disguise that had weaseled its way into segments of the French Church. The Jansenists overemphasized the justice of God and underemphasized the mercy of God; they overemphasized the transcendence and majesty of God and underemphasized the closeness of God in the Incarnate Word. Jansenism gave the impression that the faithful had to earn the privilege of going to confession and receiving Holy Communion. The Jansenists were strict and rigoristic in their approach to almost every topic. They caused dangerous confusion on many topics, especially on predestination and grace. In Jansenist preaching, the Blessed Virgin was distant and hardly accessible to her children.

Going against these heretical tendencies, Montfort emphasized the mercy of God revealed in Christ. He stressed the mercy of God found in the heart of Christ's mother. He called people to frequent confession and Holy Communion. While upholding all of the teachings of the Church, he encouraged the people not to fear meeting God's mercy in the Sacrament of Penance. The humanity of Christ was at the very heart of his preaching. He preached that God ardently desires all men and women to be with Him in Heaven and offers every person grace sufficient to attain that goal. It is interesting to note that, practically speaking, the heresy of Jansenism would finally be defeated by devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Pure Heart of Mary.

Gallicanism was a tendency, long-present in the French Church, to resist any real exercise of authority by the Bishop of Rome. Gallicanists believed that an Ecumenical Council had more authority than the Pope and that, when a Council was in session, the Pope was just one of the boys, one bishop among many others.

Simply by packing his bag and walking to Rome to seek counsel from the Pope, Montfort was saying, I believe that the Bishop of Rome is the successor of the Apostle Peter and the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth. He is the Bishop of every Bishop, having full episcopal jurisdiction in every local church. He holds Primacy among the bishops—even to the extent of immunity from error when he teaches from the *cathedra* of Peter on matters of faith or morals. Montfort believed that Peter and those who succeeded him as bishops in the Church of Rome had been established by Christ as his Vicar on earth and as the center of unity in the Church. The French Revolution would eventually crush the heresy of

Gallicanism by driving the French bishops to seek refuge under the mantle of the Bishop of Rome.

Those French bishops tinged by Jansenism and Gallicanism found Montfort hard to swallow. They perceived everything the priest said and did as the antithesis of both of these dangerous tendencies.

Understanding the problems of the Church in France, the Pope surprised Fr. de Montfort. He said, in words similar to these: Go back to France and continue to preach the Gospel you have been preaching. Call people to the love of Christ through Mary. Emphasize the Lord's Sacred Humanity, Mary's gift to him. Preach about Jesus' infinite mercy, which is realized in a beautiful way in his gift of Mary to us from the cross. Preach this Gospel as my Apostolic Missionary.

Affirming the unity of the Church and respecting the authority of the bishops in their own dioceses, Pope Clement XI told Montfort to seek the permission of the local bishops to preach in their dioceses and always to obey them! In giving this advice to Montfort, the Holy Father presented him with an orthodox teaching on the unity of the Church. While the Pope understood the role of the bishops, many of the French bishops misunderstood the role of the Pope as the head of the college to which they belonged. Interestingly, after Montfort returned to France with his title of Apostolic Missionary conflicts ended and doors opened to his preaching.

In the mind of the young priest, this mandate from the Pope directly connected his priestly ministry to Christ who was sent on mission by the Father to preach the Gospel: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn. 20:21). This

mandate connected him to the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, and to the Apostolic College sent by Christ and the Spirit to bring all men and women into the embrace of the Father in Heaven. The Great Commission of St. Matthew's Gospel was at the core of St. Louis de Montfort's understanding of his path as a priest:

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Mt. 28:16-20)

St. Louis felt himself authorized by the Pope to do what he had wanted to do from the first day of his priesthood: to go on foot from town to town preaching as Jesus had preached, as the Apostles had preached. Fr. de Montfort would fulfill this mission during his lifetime by tireless preaching to the poor rural folk in the parishes of France and, after his death, through the popularization of his masterpiece, *True Devotion to Mary*.

When I visited the places where St. Louis de Montfort exercised his priestly ministry, I was immediately aware that Montfort was very much like another French Priest-Saint, St. Jean-Marie Vianney. Like Vianney, Montfort exercised his ministry as a diocesan, a secular, priest. Like Vianney, he was a man who lived a radically simple priestly life. Both were paupers who loved the poor. Like Vianney, Montfort was a man of deep prayer and asceticism. He was a priest who recognized the central role of preaching and teaching

catechism in pastoral ministry. Like Vianney, who visited every home in his parish frequently, Montfort felt compelled to go in search of souls. Like Vianney, Montfort saw the Holy Eucharist as the goal of all his pastoral endeavors. In other words, both wanted to bring as many people as possible to celebrate and receive the Holy Eucharist worthily and fruitfully. Everything they did as priests served that end. Like Vianney, Montfort heard confessions many hours each day.

What distinguishes these two holy priests is the simple fact that Vianney exercised his priestly ministry in one place: the backwater village of Ars. Montfort was a man on the move. He did everything that Vianney did but in many different parishes. He was a man driven from within by the Holy Spirit to revitalize the parishes in the same spirit of holiness that motivated the holy Cure d'Ars to sanctify his parishioners and those who came to him from afar to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Many of the artistic renderings of Montfort in France portray him walking with determination to his next mission post. If the confessional stole is the sign of St. John Vianney, the walking stick is the sign of Montfort, the missionary. Also interesting to note is that Vianney joined the Third Order of St. Francis, but Montfort joined the Third Order of St. Dominic. The latter recognized his affinity to the first Dominican Friars, itinerant preachers of the Gospel who depended on Providence for everything.

Throughout his life as a priest, Montfort desired to gather together a group of missionary priests and brothers who would be called the Company of Mary. It was his desire that they join him in conducting parish missions. Although a few

did join him over the years, Montfort's congregation of missionary preachers was not formally established during his lifetime. In his literary corpus, however, we find three texts that reveal his hopes for this band of apostolic missionaries: "Prayer for Missionaries" (also known as "The Fiery Prayer"), "The Rule of the Missionary Priests of the Company of Mary," and "Letter to the Members of the Company."

There are indications in these texts and in the *True Devotion* also that the saint envisioned the Company of Mary as serving in the latter times—that is, in the time of the anti-Christ. Montfort was convinced that just as Mary was the person most engaged in the first coming of Christ, so she would be most involved in preparing the world for his Second Coming at the end of time. She would accomplish this work primarily by forming bands of missionary preachers through her spiritual motherhood and sending them on a preaching mission to protect as many as possible from the final apostasy before the end of the world. This mission began to be realized as he took up the work of Parish Missions.

St. Louis de Montfort's Missions

St. Louis de Montfort was ordained a priest in the year 1700. Upon ordination, he decided that he would live among the poor as a poor man and spend his life serving the poor. When he died suddenly in 1716, he was still living as a poor man serving the poor in the rural areas of France. During these sixteen years, Montfort conducted more than two hundred parish missions. Although a number of the missions lasted for a week or two, many of them lasted a month to six weeks.

When I researched the nature of these missions, I was amazed to discover how closely they resemble the pattern of the catechumenate of the ancient Church and, in many ways, the Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.) presently in use in the Catholic Church. One might also recognize in the missions of St. Louis de Montfort many elements of the contemporary ecclesial movement, the Neo-Catechumenal Way.

The goal of the parish mission was twofold:

1. It was to provide a post-baptismal catechumenal experience for those who needed it. There were many unchurched men and women in France at the time of Montfort, people who were baptized as infants but never instructed in the truths of the faith and never formed in Christian discipleship.
2. The mission was also aimed at deepening the faith and the conversion of those who had had some instruction and who practiced the faith to some degree.

And so, we will attempt to envision the Montfort parish mission, realizing that Montfort himself varied the approach and the length of the missions over the years.

According to Montfort's "Rule for Missionaries," two missionary priests would arrive at a parish about two weeks before the formal beginning of the mission. These missionaries would announce the mission and prepare the ground, so to speak, for the coming of Christ in the person of the preacher who would sow the seed of the Word of God. These precursors of the mission preacher would evangelize on the streets, go door-to-door and invite everyone in town to the mission. They would also go into some unlikely

places: shops, workhouses, saloons and even houses of ill repute. In the words of Pope Francis, the missionaries would go to the “peripheries of society.” Montfort himself sometimes did this groundwork in preparation for the mission.

Two theological points are immediately evident: St. Louis de Montfort saw the parish mission as the continuation, the extension, of Christ’s mission from the Father. He also saw the mission as a special moment of salvation for the people to whom he was sent. In Montfort’s plan, each mission would last ideally for a month to five weeks. Lent was seen as the perfect liturgical season for the mission, since the missionary’s goal was to help the people renew the promises made on the day of their baptism.

Montfort’s program of parish missions included straightforward evangelization—not unlike the strategies of missionaries in his day who were sent to foreign countries. The home missionary, like his counterpart overseas, called everyone in the parish to conversion from sin through faith in Jesus Christ. Montfort’s program included what we call today a kerygmatic proclamation of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. In his “Rule for Missionaries” (RM), Montfort explained: The preaching of God’s Word is the most far-reaching, the most effective and the most difficult ministry of all (RM, 60). Montfort also intended that a group of trained catechists would participate in the work of the missionary preachers. His plan for the ideal mission included priests who would preach for approximately forty-five minutes twice a day and catechists, especially but not exclusively for the children of the parish, who would give instruction in the rudiments of the faith for a few hours each

day. The mission team envisioned by Montfort would include several priests and, perhaps, religious men and women, as well as laymen and laywomen, some of whom would be catechists.

Jesus Christ, Eternal Wisdom, was the central theme of Montfort's preaching. Whenever he preached on the Blessed Virgin, the missionary did so precisely because he understood from personal experience that the inclusion of Mary in preaching helped the faithful to believe more firmly in Christ and to desire authentic conversion of heart. St. Louis de Montfort states emphatically throughout the text of the *True Devotion to Mary* that our Blessed Mother can only lead the Christian to union with Christ. Over a century before the definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Montfort affirmed the teaching in a powerful way. The Immaculate Virgin, he taught, is so free from sin and every self-centered inclination, she has so perfectly given herself over to God in love, that she can do nothing but foster that surrender to God in others.

Montfort rightly believed that when the mission preacher proclaimed the death and resurrection of Christ or explained his teachings, the Lord himself preached his Gospel. Simultaneously, the Holy Spirit filled the minds and hearts of the hearers, prompting them to believe the Word proclaimed and to surrender themselves to the Word in loving obedience. Convinced of this truth, that preaching elicits the dynamic presence of the Word and the Spirit, Montfort also believed that Mary was mysteriously involved in helping the preacher to preach and in helping the hearers to hear and believe. Montfort understood that Mary, who first received the Good News from the lips of the Angel

Gabriel, encountered the presence of the Eternal Son in the Angel's words, believed them, and, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, surrendered to God in loving obedience. At that moment, the Eternal Word became flesh and began to dwell in her as man.

Because the Son of God became the Son of Mary through Mary's act of faith—her *fiat*, Montfort was convinced that Mary is somehow involved in every act of faith of all of her children. Consequently, preaching for Montfort is a strictly supernatural act. By the preacher's *fiat*, that is, through his ministry of preaching, the Word and the Spirit become present in a moment of Grace. Mary is also somehow present, helping her sons and daughters to respond to the Word as she did on the day of the Annunciation.

Interestingly, Montfort in his "Rule for Missionaries" pointed out the distinction between natural preaching, based on rhetorical cleverness, the desire of the preacher to entertain and please his congregation, the need of the preacher for popularity, fame, adulation, etc., and supernatural preaching, based solely on the transmission of the Gospel of Christ. In true supernatural preaching the minister's one desire is to be a conduit of that saving grace that is not his own (RM, 60 & 61).

This preaching of the Gospel of Christ elicits an act of the intellect—a *credo*, as well as a willingness to change one's life in obedience to Christ's word. The interior grace of the Spirit, the sanctifying light of grace, prompts and assists the hearer of the Word to make this free act of self-surrender to God.

In the words of St. Paul, saving faith comes through hearing the Word of God proclaimed:

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed?
And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard?
And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And
how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written,
“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not
all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has
believed our message?” So faith comes from what is heard, and what
is heard comes through the word of Christ. (Rom. 10:14-17)

In the experience of Montfort, the proclamation of the Apostolic Kerygma by the missionary preacher makes Christ truly present in the mystery of his death and resurrection. Evangelical preaching, however, not only effects the representation of the Lord’s Paschal Mystery in a quasi-sacramental way, but, in a manner analogous to the sacraments, effects what it signifies. The grace of the Word draws the hearer of the Word to Christ. In freely accepting the grace that flows from the Lord’s death, the Christian receives the strength to reject sin and cling to God in faith, hope, and love. He or she does this precisely through the power of Christ’s self-offering on the Cross—an oblation that Mary made possible through her *fiat* and in which she cooperated through her heroic faith, hope, and charity as she stood with the Lord on Mount Calvary.

Montfort spent most of his priestly life preaching to simple country folk; his approach was preeminently catechetical: The Christian must give all he is and all he has to Jesus through Mary. To be authentic, this self-oblation must include, first and foremost, a firm intention to be a friend of the cross of Christ, that is, a willingness freely to reject the pleasures of sin and all of the occasions of sin and to elect to live a life of loving obedience to God and His

commandments, a life of intimacy with Him, aided by the Holy Spirit and Mary, His Spouse.

The Christian, like Mary and with Mary, must give to Christ his past, present, and future; his body, his soul with its powers of intellect and will; all of his relationships; all material possessions; and even the spiritual value of all of his good works. By despoiling himself of everything and giving everything to God, the Christian receives Christ as his greatest good. The Holy Spirit empowers the Christian to make this oblation by restoring the grace of Baptism—a grace which flows from the Paschal Mystery of Christ and enfolds the believer in that mystery.

In preparing this paper I came to realize that I perhaps had a mistaken notion of St. Louis de Monfort's parish mission. Previously, I had envisioned the renewal of the baptismal promises at the very end of the mission. It would seem that in the month-long missions, the renewal of the baptismal promises took place closer to the beginning than to the end of the mission. After the initial catechesis on Christ and his Gospel precepts, the parishioners would be challenged to reject sin and to embrace a godly life with the assistance of Mary. If possible, this ceremony, which was fundamentally the renewal of the baptismal promises, took place at the baptismal font.

After making this public repudiation of Satan and the old way of life and the acceptance of an intimate relationship with the Trinity, the parishioner would prepare to make a heartfelt confession. In many, if not most, cases, the parishioner was encouraged to make a general confession of all of the sins of his or her life. Since the Christian had renewed the baptismal promises in Mary's hands and with

her assistance, he or she would now seek Mary's help in the examination of conscience and the confession of sins. Precisely in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the power of Christ's death and resurrection would be communicated to the repentant sinner for the renovation of his/her life in Christ. (Even if the mission culminated with the renewal of the baptismal promises, each parishioner was encouraged to make a general confession. The missionary spent most of his time during the mission hearing confessions and giving often intense spiritual direction.)

The parishioners making the mission would also be encouraged to receive Christ in Holy Communion. In the reception of the Lord's body and blood, each person would have personal communion with Christ in whom is found all of the treasures of wisdom, knowledge, grace, and holiness. Significantly, Montfort brings his *True Devotion to Mary* to a conclusion with a careful instruction on the Blessed Virgin's role in the reception of Holy Communion. He encourages all to receive Christ with, in, and through the Blessed Virgin. Consequently, the culmination of the mission was the solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist and the reception of Holy Communion by the persons who had been renewed in the Christian life through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

So powerful was the ministry of St. Louis de Montfort that many of the towns where he preached still are marked by the stone cross that commemorated the mission. It has been frequently noted that the Vendée region of France, where he preached most of his missions, remained remarkably loyal to the Church during the difficult years of the French Revolution.

Reflecting on his preaching and the structure of the missions, I was struck by the catechumenal structure of his priestly work. Missionaries came to town to seek out especially those who were most distant from Christ and his grace. Once the missionary arrived in town, he lived among the people and continued to search for those furthest from Christ. He evangelized in the pulpit of the parish church every day and was assisted in his work by a small cadre of catechists who instructed everyone in the truths of the catechism—especially the children. During all of his free time, he was available to journey into the consciences of the folk to whom he preached.

The missionary's daily exhortations from the first days of the mission prompted the people to renew their baptismal vows with the maternal help of Mary. This was, in a sense, the equivalent to the entry into the catechumenate—a request for a restoration or a deepening of the state of sanctifying grace. After more evangelization and catechesis, and personal spiritual direction, the grace of the sacraments of initiation would be renewed through the reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

The pattern of the parish missions was not invented by Montfort or his forebears in the seventeenth century, but rather emerged from the very matrix of divine revelation and supernatural grace. What Montfort did in the villages and hamlets of rural France was what Jesus and the Apostles did on the roads of Galilee, calling men and women to faith and conversion, what St. Hippolytus and St. Augustine did in their churches to form and prepare catechumens for Christian initiation. Today, this process for those already baptized and who desperately need a post-baptismal

catechesis is followed by the leaders of the Neo-Catechumenal Way—a movement very much, I think, like the evangelical movement of St. Louis de Montfort.

The gift of St. Louis de Montfort to the Church is his intuition of the unique role of Mary in the birth and formation of Christian disciples. She is ever-present in this sacred process, often hidden and unnoticed, but with the Holy Spirit and, absolutely dependent on Him, she draws all of her sons and daughters into her worship of the Trinity—on the day of the Annunciation, on Mount Calvary, in the Upper Room of Pentecost, and in the courts of Heaven. Montfort beckons the Church in our day to acknowledge and maximize the Blessed Virgin's gentle and saving presence in all of the works of the Church of Christ.

Based on his exemplary living of the evangelical virtues of chastity, obedience, personal poverty, and dependence on Providence as a secular priest, I opine that Montfort might be appropriately seen as a forerunner and a patron of the New Evangelization. The Saint's concern for the purity of doctrine in local churches that had been infected by the heresies of Jansenism and Gallicanism; his love for the poor, among whom he felt perfectly at home; his frequent excursions into the peripheries in search of those in despair; his tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin; and, above all, his desire to bring all to experience the merciful love of Christ might well draw the attention of Pope Francis to this humble man who lived the priestly life with an intensity of charity that ranks him with the Apostles, the martyrs and confessors of the faith, and the great missionary preachers of the ages. Montfort's unique contribution is his understanding of the

role of the Mother of God in the acquisition and distribution of the grace of the Redemption.

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