In the

Footsteps

of St. Louis Marie de Montfort

Spring 2003
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Tercentenary of the Daughters of Wisdom

February 2 saw the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Daughters of Wisdom. For it was on that day in 1703 that Marie-Louise Trichet received the grey habit from Father de Montfort that was to become the dress of the Daughters of Wisdom for nearly three hundred years. This date, therefore, is taken as the date of foundation of the female branch of the Montfortian Family. Indeed we may date the Montfortian Family itself from that day – the first member of the Company of Mary (Montfort Missionaries), Brother Mathurin Rangeard, did not join St. Louis Marie until two years later in 1705.

All over the world, this year, the Daughters of Wisdom will be celebrating this important anniversary in a variety of ways. In the British Isles, for example, among other events planned, there is to be a pilgrimage to Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre and other places associated with the life of Blessed Marie-Louise and St. Louis Marie, with an emphasis, of course, on her. In other parts of the world, similar events will be taking place.

The aim of all these celebrations and events is not just to commemorate the past, but to try to re-kindle or deepen the spirit which animated Blessed Marie-Louise in her daughters, but also in all those who, in one way or another, draw inspiration from her life. She was a woman of extraordinary courage and faith – the very fact of her having to wait a further ten years before she could make Religious Vows indicates this – and the Congregation she helped to found, and led with such wisdom and strength for many years, has, during its three-hundred-year history, tried to imitate that courage and faith. These would certainly be among the virtues that this year's celebrations would hope to strengthen in all of us.

In this issue of "Footsteps", you will find various articles on Blessed Marie-Louise and her legacy, which we hope all our Associates will find helpful in the coming months, as we rejoice and reflect on what we are called to be as friends and followers of Blessed Marie-Louise and St. Louis Marie.

In particular, we offer our congratulations to the Daughters of Wisdom, here and elsewhere, on this great anniversary, and we are certain we can assure them of the prayers of all readers of "Footsteps" during this year, that it may be a year truly filled with grace and a year to remember. Let us look forward to the next 100 years! ◘

See next page for details of the Pilgrimage to Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre in September

From the Provincial's Desk

I decided to look up in my old Latin dictionary the meaning of 'socius' (from which 'associate' is derived). I came up with the following:

Socius = companion, comrade, associate, partner, sharer.

And I thought "how very fitting!" I am delighted to be able to call you all my companions, sharing in all the joys and sorrows of the Company of Mary and the Daughters of Wisdom. When we tell you of those of our congregations who are suffering, or in hospital, or feeling their advancing age - and sometimes their frustration that they can no longer take a full part in the active apostolate - we can be sure that your prayers are there to support us: are you not our comrades?

In exactly the same way, when we learn of the illnesses, the difficulties our associates encounter, the religious of the Company of Mary and Daughters of Wisdom are quick to offer you whatever help we can, especially in prayer and often in a personal word of consolation and encouragement: must we not share our sorrows as well as our joys?

In this way we rely on each other.

However, there are even closer ways we can share in the spirituality and mission, which St. Louis Marie and Blessed Marie Louise have left as a legacy to their congregations. The Extraordinary General Council of the Company of Mary held a meeting in India last October. Those present agreed that our associates are not just useful in helping the religious to carry out the mission given to them by the Church, but that the active participation of these associates is essential if this mission is to be fruitful in today's world.

Already, in many of our houses and convents, there are non-religious who share in the daily prayers of the community and in the work and apostolate of the religious. Many of these religious would find it extremely difficult to function properly without this active sharing and, dare I say, partnership. You are essential to us and we trust, by offering a place in our mission, we are to you. The Company of Mary and the Daughters of Wisdom will be able to make the impact they must, only if you too see yourselves as sons and daughters of St Louis Marie and Blessed Marie Louise, seeking to convince today's Christians of the value of their baptism and the place of Divine Wisdom in their lives.

These are not just pious sentiments. I invite you to take a role in our mission that is as real and dynamic as you are able. Certainly, renew your intention to pray for us - but also find if there is any active way in which you share in what we do. Do not hold back, you have the talents that we may lack; you have the strengths that we can share. Together we can play our part in bringing closer the coming of the Kingdom of God.

F. W. Scragg smm, Provincial. ◘

Pilgrimage to Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre

To celebrate the Tercentenary of the Foundation of the Daughters of Wisdom

18th – 27th September 2003

With visits to Poitiers and La Rochelle

By coach from Lytham St Annes (Lancashire) or Romsey (Hampshire)

Price: £349 (including all travel and full board whilst in France)

(Not included in price: Insurance, Meals whilst travelling)

A few places remain available for Associates

Please send for a Booking Form to:
Bernard Glenholme
9, Chapel Lane
Longton
Preston PR4 5WA
Tel. 01772-616944

News From Here and There

Our Lady of Light, Clacton-on-Sea

In the Summer 2000 edition of "Footsteps", "An Item of Montfortian Interest" was mentioned. The item referred to the Parish Church of Our Lady of Light and St. Osyth in Clacton-on-Sea, Essex.

We make reference to it again. First of all to bring to the attention of our Associates that the Feast of Our Lady of Light is celebrated on the 27 May annually. Secondly this year 2003 is the Centenary of its opening. Building work on the Church started in 1902 and on 15 October 1903 it was opened with Solemn High Mass. The Lady Chapel is the same today as it was then. The present presbytery housed the old original Chapel – in fact it is the room on the left as one goes through the front door. The presbytery in those days was

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Celebrating the 300th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Daughters of Wisdom

Fr. Paul Allerton, S.M.M.

TOWARDS the very end of 1701 or the beginning of 1702, a young woman of 17 years of age presented herself to a priest in the confessional of one of the churches in Poitiers, France, and started to make her confession. She had not got very far when the priest interrupted her to ask: "Who sent you to me?" The young woman, who had been told of this priest by her sister, replied, "It was my sister, Father." "No," said the priest, " it was the Blessed Virgin!" This was the first meeting of two extraordinary souls who together would found the religious congregation known as the Daughters of Wisdom. The priest was St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, at that time just beginning his priestly ministry at the age of 28; and the young woman was Marie-Louise Trichet, known today as Blessed Marie-Louise of Jesus.

We might say that both of them, at that moment, were struggling to find their own vocation. Father de Montfort had reluctantly agreed to be chaplain of what was known as the "General Hospital" in Poitiers – though such General Hospitals were more like the equivalent of the Victorian Workhouse in 19th century Britain: a place where those too poor to have a place of their own were more or less imprisoned to prevent them being a nuisance as vagrants and beggars on the streets. Although he had a great love for the poor, and indeed identified himself very closely with them, Father de Montfort did not think that his vocation lay in "locking himself away" in such a place, but rather in going about from place to place, bringing the good news of God's love especially to those who were most neglected in the countryside. However, he had still not found an opening for this kind of work, and was acting in obedience to his spiritual directors in taking on this job, while still waiting for a sign from God of what he was really destined to do.

Marie-Louise Trichet also had her own sense of what she was called to be: she was convinced that she wanted to be a religious, though as yet she had not found the right congregation to enter. After that first prophetic meeting with Louis Marie de Montfort, she placed herself under his direction, but it would be another 11 years or more before she could finally make public vows as a religious. In the meantime, she would have the opportunity to show the extraordinary courage, patience and humility which would enable her to be God's instrument in the founding of the Daughters of Wisdom, and to guide the young congregation through its first difficult years.

She needed that patience, since it seemed that St. Louis Marie was prepared to help any young woman to become a religious except herself. As she kept on asking him, and even accusing him of ignoring her de-sires, he eventually said to her, "Very well, come and live in the hospital." She had already been helping him in the hospital since they first met, but this was a tall order: Marie-Louise was convinced that she was to be a religious, and there were no religious working in the hospital. However, after a couple of days of reflection, she applied to the Bishop to go and live in the hospital. After making enquiries, he told her there were no vacancies for any more staff there, whereupon, to the Bishop's immense surprise, she requested permission to be admitted "as one of the poor". This really was extraordinary, as Marie-Louise was from a respectable middle-class family, with a home which was far removed from the squalor prevailing in the hospital. But the bishop must have recognised, as did St. Louis Marie, that this was an extraordinary young woman who was genuinely in search of God's will for her, and he granted her request. And so it was that Marie-Louise Trichet began more than 10 years of living among the poorest of the poor, serving them with all the love of which she was capable.

Entering the General Hospital, Marie-Louise became part of an extraordinary community which had been established there by St. Louis Marie. It was not a religious community, but a group of inmates of the hospital, who worked, prayed, reflected and ate together, supporting one another in their search for God. It was largely made up of the most handicapped and deprived of those poor people, and the leader was a blind woman. This was one of those radical experiments which we find from time to time in the history of the Church, prophetic presences in the midst of mediocrity. The group met in a room of the hospital which St. Louis Marie had called "Wisdom", and there he placed a cross on which he had painted a programme for the acquisition of wisdom. But when we look at the programme, it becomes clear that the wisdom to which he is referring is not any form of human wisdom: it speaks of "denying oneself", "carrying one's cross", "loving the cross", "desiring crosses, contempt, abuse, insults, etc." This is certainly not worldly wisdom, which sees happiness precisely in the

absence of most of these things. In fact, the wisdom which is the object of this programme is what St. Louis Marie proclaims, along with St Paul, as the only true wisdom: God's wisdom, the wisdom of the crucified Christ. For him, as he said in his book *The Love of Eternal Wisdom*, "Wisdom is the Cross, and the Cross is Wisdom". Or rather, the crucified Christ is the Incarnate Wisdom of God; his most typical name for Jesus Christ is "the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom of God". And it was the acquisition of this Wisdom, to be found especially among the poor and under-privileged, which was to be the programme and the aim of the religious congregation of which Marie-Louise was to be the co-founder with him, and the first member – the Daughters of Wisdom.

But the flowering of that religious community lay still somewhat in the future. Marie-Louise was still not a religious, and the community of Wisdom in the General Hospital was not a religious congregation. More than ten years were to go by before she would be able to make the public vows of poverty, chastity and obedience which characterise a religious congregation – years of trial, of puzzlement, perhaps of doubt, but nevertheless years of training in the divine Wisdom which was to be the hallmark of this new congregation. But a major step in its creation was taken on 3 February 1703 (exactly 300 years ago today), when St. Louis Marie gave Marie-Louise Trichet the coarse grey habit, the dress of the poor peasant women of the day, as her religious habit. And so, we date the foundation of the Daughters of Wisdom to that day, three hundred years ago.

Marie-Louise wore this grey habit of the Daughters of Wisdom for the rest of her life. She continued to wear it despite the fierce opposition of her family and the majority of the respectable middle-class families of Poitiers, who saw in it, not a "proper" religious habit, but a degrading lowering of herself to the level of the poor. The fiercest opposition came from her own mother, who tried everything in her power, including trying to enlist the support of the Bishop, to make her leave it off and return to her family. There is no doubt that this opposition caused a great deal of suffering for Marie-Louise, but she was now convinced that the path she had taken was the right one, and nothing – no amount of suffering or opposition – would turn her away from this path.

This was not the only suffering to be borne, either by herself or by St Louis Marie. Both would have to bear many trials yet before the will of God was absolutely clear to them, but they were increasingly bound together in a spiritual friendship which was based in their common search for the true Wisdom. It is evident from the letters they wrote to one another over the next few years just how deep and spiritual that friendship was. And that deep bond would be even more necessary as St. Louis Marie had to leave Poitiers, at first just for a year, but later for ever, leaving Marie-Louise to face the opposition of her family and all the "respect-able" people alone. When he finally left, in early 1706, it was the start of nine years of separation, during which Marie-Louise's constancy was to be tested, but her resolve, and her grasp of the true Wisdom, strengthened. During that time, she was joined by another, older, woman, Catherine Brunet, who became Sister Conception, and whose bubbly nature must have been a source of great comfort and strength to her over the next few years.

Finally, at the beginning of 1715, a call came from Fr. de Montfort, who was now busy working in the diocese of La Rochelle, to come to La Rochelle to take charge of free schools established by himself and the Bishop for poor girls of the city. Marie-Louise and Catherine Brunet left Poitiers and made their way to La Rochelle, and it was there, in August 1715, that they made their first public profession of vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They were soon joined by a few other young women, and so the Congregation of the Daughters of Wisdom was finally set on a firm footing, with Sr. Marie-Louise of Jesus as its superior, and its programme of seeking and serving divine Wisdom, especially in the poor, enshrined in a new Rule specially written by St. Louis Marie and approved by the Bishop of La Rochelle. This Rule, together with the one writ-ten by St. Francis de Sales for the Visitandines and that written by St. Vincent de Paul for the Daughters of Charity, was something of a revolution in the history of religious orders of women – all three place the service of the poor and suffering over and above the rules for enclosure and cloister. A new era in religious life was born as well as a new Congregation.

St. Louis Marie de Montfort died just eight months later in the town of Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre in the Vendée region. Sr. Marie-Louise of Jesus was now deprived of his comforting presence and strength – but by now, she had already absorbed completely his spirit, and given it her own wise and gentle slant, and, in the years ahead, she was to be a tremendous source of encouragement for the newly-born Company of Mary, also founded by Fr. de Montfort. Under her guidance the Daughters of Wisdom grew and expanded until at her death, exactly forty-three years to the day after that of St. Louis Marie, there were 37 communities of the new congregation with 174 Sisters. But that, as they say, is another story… ◘

A Story from Uganda

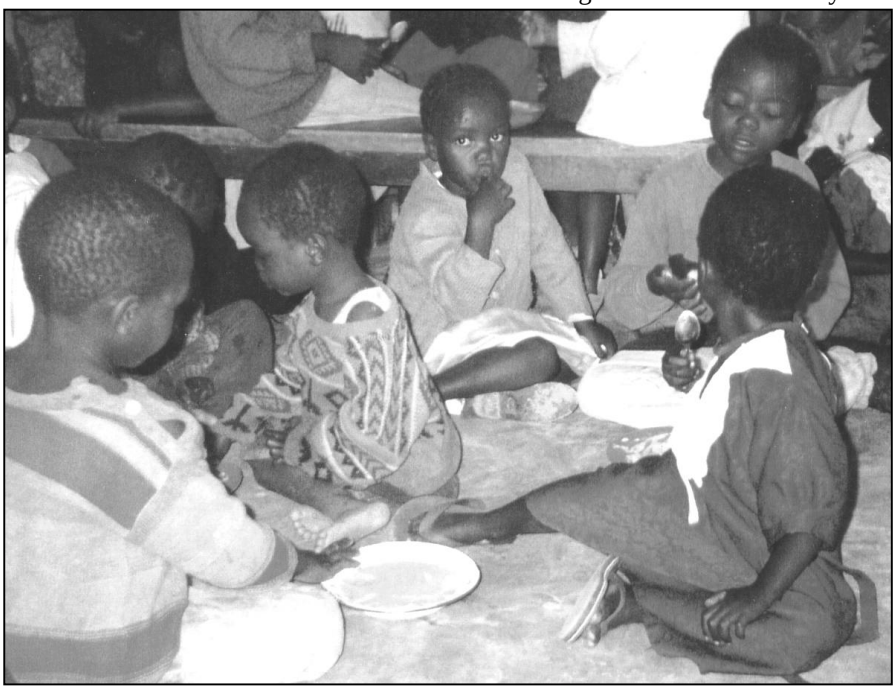
Fr. Charlie Beirne, S.M.M., one of the three remaining members of the Province of Gt. Britain and Ireland of the Company of Mary still working in the foreign missions, sends us this story from Mbarara, Uganda, where he is stationed.

A FAMOUS African proverb, "An elephant can never fail to carry its tusks", has been passed on from generation to generation. Often this happens during nights when children assemble by the hearth to be told stories about life.

However today when it comes to the question of parenting in Uganda the tusks have become too heavy for the elephant! For the unfortunate children, who lose their parents to AIDS, the mantle of parenting automatically passes on to them. On returning to Uganda from recent home leave I fulfilled a promise, which I had made to a young girl called Rita, who along with 85 other boys and girls has been receiving assistance from the Montfort community in Uganda to enable her to attend school (there is no free education in Uganda). She had often begged me to go and see her home but for one reason or another I had kept putting it off. Fresh from home leave I was determined to make the long journey to her home.

The girl had given me directions but inevitably I became lost. I waved down a man on a bicycle who offered to accompany me to my destination. However after an hour through stony winding paths, he said he could take me no further as we stood at the foot of a hill. The hill was steep prompting me to ask him whether we were in Nyakyinengo, to which he affirmed. However I could see no house nor could I hear any human voice. The cyclist urged me to walk uphill, turn right and then descend. On and on I walked, regretting why I had accepted to undertake the task.

It was hot and dusty but I trudged on for almost half an hour and was about to abandon the mission when I saw at a distance the girl and some other children. I quickly walked in the direction of the children. On arrival I saw two small huts surrounded by overgrown grass. On drawing closer I saw Rita together with her seven brothers and sisters, four of whom looked very emaciated. Seated on the grass was an old and frail woman. Crouching on a low stool, she leaned forward and greeted me warmly. She was Rita's grandmother.



"Where is your father?" I asked Rita, as the old lady seemed hard of hearing. "He is dead!" Rita said. "What about your mother?" "Mother is dead!" she answered pointing to their nearby graves. Then two of Rita's younger sisters came up and cried, "We are hungry, and we want food." I picked some sweets, which I had bought whilst in England, from my pocket, and gave some to them. They quickly unwrapped the sweets and put them in their mouths. They grinned with huge delight on tasting the sweets. The others, who were looking on, came running.

They stretched out their small and dirty hands, asking for sweets too. This reminded me of Oliver Twist's "some more please!" I checked my pockets but there was no sweets left as I had eaten a few on the way. Their disappointed faces were heartbreaking.

"What caused the death of your parents?" "Mother was bewitched with AIDS so was my father," Rita answered. "Where do you get food and water?" "We collect water from a well one mile away. There is some food in the garden. We roast cassava and sweet potatoes. I also catch some dry grasshoppers. We share all among ourselves including grandmother. We also eat mangoes and guavas." "Do you have neighbours?" "Yes but they are scattered and far."

Then I was suddenly startled by a loud cry of a baby, which made Rita burst into laughter. "It's only Anna," she said. Inside their hut, a naked baby lay on a foul-smelling tattered blanket on the floor. Rita dipped her forefingers in an old tin and put drops of water in Anna's open mouth, but she kept crying. Rita then got hold of a ripe mango. Biting deeply, she sucked the yellow juice and like a mother bird feeding its young, Rita stooped to feed the baby. The baby stopped crying and swallowed. Rita repeated the process until she finished the mango.

The manner of feeding the baby shocked me but Rita's creativity amazed me. Despite the adverse conditions, the

baby was surviving through the care of this child-mother and the grace of God.

Child-headed households are becoming all too common. The number of children orphaned by AIDS is skyrocketing in Uganda and the traditional African extended family is breaking down under the unprecedented burden of the pandemic. According to a U.N. report released last year AIDS in Uganda has orphaned nearly two million children, which is the highest figure in the world.

My visit to Rita's home drove home to me the challenge of following in the footsteps of St. Louis Marie de Montfort who was found among the most vulnerable members of society, the disadvantaged and suffering. To be faithful to the spirit and charism of our founder St. Louis Marie de Montfort, the Montfort Missionaries in Uganda are constantly called upon to go out to the poor and the suffering and be caring agents of Christ's compassion. How? By being with those who suffer and by sharing our resources of time, gentleness, food, money and whatever else we have so that Christ's compassion is manifest, which gives hope.

Footnote: A word of thanks to Andover Parish and other individual Montfortian Associates who have over this and former years sponsored the education of orphans in Uganda.

If anyone would like to sponsor a child (£30 per annum for primary education or £100 for secondary education) please contact either Fr. Ellwood or Fr. Allerton. ◘

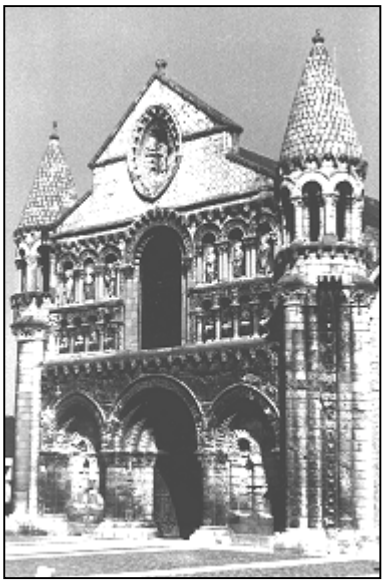
In the Footsteps of Blessed Marie-Louise of Jesus

Here we look at two of the places which are associated with the life of Blessed Marie-Louise, and which will be visited during the Pilgrimage to Saint-Laurent in September.

Poitiers

Marie-Louise Trichet was born in Poitiers on 7 May 1684. At the time her family were living in the parish of Saint-Étienne (St. Stephen), just to the East of the famous (and exquisitely beautiful) church of Notre-Dame-la-Grande in the centre of the town. She was probably baptised the same or the following day, following the custom of that time. Her baptism took place in the **parish church of Saint-Étienne**. Unfortunately nothing remains of this church today, except part of the doorway, which is incorporated into the wall of the buildings which now line the square. The family made many moves during the following years, some necessitated by the increase in the number of children: Marie-Louise was the fourth of eight children.

It is not absolutely sure where it was that the famous meeting between Marie-Louise Trichet and Father de Montfort took place, but Montfortian tradition tends to place it in the **church of Saint-Porchaire**. It is known that St. Louis Marie used to hear confessions here during his first years in Poitiers, so it is as likely a place as any other for the encounter: *"Who sent you here, my daughter?" "My sister, Father." "No, it was the Blessed Virgin who sent you!"* It would be nice to think that the old confessional that still stands in Saint-Porchaire is the same as that used by St. Louis Marie, but it is very unlikely…



Notre-Dame-la-Grande. Poitiers

Both Saint-Étienne and Saint-Porchaire are in the "better" part of town, the part that, even today, is that seen by tourists and visitors. But the **Hôpital Général**, the scene of the early labours of both St. Louis Marie and Blessed Marie-Louise, is down in the lower part of town, in an area seldom visited by tourists, and in their day it was a very poor area. The present building is largely the same one that they knew, though today it is given over to offices and apartments. Standing in the inner courtyard, facing the long stretch of the main wing, tradition places St. Louis Marie's room over the archway that leads to the road, while "La Sagesse", the room where the small community of handicapped women that Marie-Louise joined here in 1702, and where the famous "Wisdom Cross of Poitiers" hung, is over in the right hand corner on the ground floor. This corner is shaded by the beautiful old sycamore tree that certainly was there in their day. Marie-Louise and another two Daughters of Wisdom returned to the Hôpital from La Rochelle in January 1719, at the request of the Directors, to try to restore some order to a chaotic situation there. She had been promised that she could also establish a novitiate for the new Congregation in the Hôpital, but the contract that they were offered by the authorities was so restrictive regarding this that the idea was abandoned. After some months of doubt and difficulty, Marie-Louise and the other Daughters of Wisdom left to found what is now the "Mother-House" in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre.

Close by the Hôpital Général stands the magnificent **church of Montierneuf**. It is believed that this was the parish of Marie-Louise's maternal grandparents,

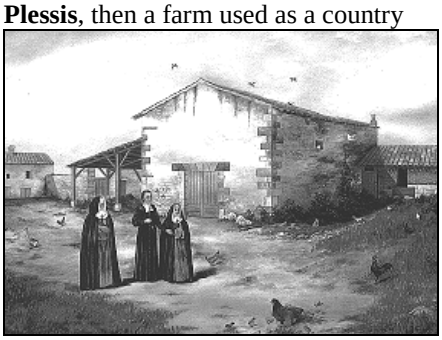
so quite possibly the church where her mother and father were married. Certainly, it would have been here that Marie-Louise and Catherine Brunet would have attended Mass during the years that they lived and worked in the Hôpital.

On the other side of the River Clain lies the suburb of Montbernage. To reach it, you have to cross the **Pont Joubert**. Here, in Marie-Louise's day, there was a small chapel dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Angels; it was first built in the 13th century and restored in the 16th, but in St Louis Marie's day it was in ruins. He restored it, and had carved on its facade: "If the love of Mary is in your heart, do not forget to say an Ave as you pass by." The chapel no longer exists, but the statue of Our Lady which graced this little shrine is to be found in the church of Sainte Radegonde. In 1715, Marie-Louise Trichet was having a great deal of trouble obtaining her mother's permission to leave Poitiers and go to La Rochelle. A poor blind girl, very pious and patient, used to stay all day at the chapel of Our Lady Queen of Angels on the Pont Joubert. Marie-Louise asked her to offer many prayers to the Virgin for her, and ever afterwards attributed the happy outcome to these prayers: one day Mme. Trichet came and said simply, "I can no longer keep you here; the Holy Spirit is urging me to tell you to go."

Montbernage was the suburb chosen by St. Louis Marie as the focus of his efforts during the first mission he preached in the Diocese of Poitiers after leaving the Hôpital Général. It was there that he established the chapel of Our Lady, Queen of All Hearts, and placed the statue of the same name, which is still venerated there today. It was left in the care of a certain Jacques Goudeau, who was faithful to his charge for forty years. About August 1733, a community of the Daughters of Wisdom was founded at Montbernage. They came to be known as the "Dames des Coeurs". Their first residence was a kind of cave, very damp and unhealthy, at the back of the chapel, which you can see today; it has recently been refurbished as a little oratory. On 2nd March 1734, the chapel of Our Lady, Queen of Hearts was solemnly blessed; on the record of the blessing, we find the signature also of Jacques Goudeau. This same man, in 1719, was perhaps instrumental in persuading Mother Marie-Louise Trichet to move to Saint Laurent-sur-Sèvre: he met her and, according to Besnard, said, "Madame, you are troubled by the fact that you have left La Rochelle and that M. de Montfort's foundation there has not lasted... Well, I know there is a lady, Mme. de Bouillé, who lives near St Laurent where M. de Montfort was buried... She is in a position to help you in the accomplishment of your work..." Mother Marie-Louise made contact with Mme. de Bouillé, and in June 1720 arrived in Saint Laurent.

La Rochelle

Blessed Marie-Louise Trichet and her companion Catherine Brunet came to La Rochelle in 1715, at the request of St. Louis Marie, who by that time had been working in that diocese for three or four years. It was his intention that they should take charge of the free schools he was planning with the Bishop for the poor children of the city. When they arrived, St. Louis Marie was away preaching, but a short time later they went to meet him at **Le Petit Plessis**, then a farm used as a country



residence by the Jesuit Fathers. It was here that, according to the tradition of the Daughters of Wisdom, St. Louis Marie, after telling Marie-Louise that she was to be the leader of the Daughters of Wisdom, seeing a mother hen with her chicks, said to her: "Look, my daughter; see that hen with her chicks under her wings. See with what gentleness she tends to their needs. That is the way you must be with those daughters whose mother you are destined to become."

A short distance away is the hermitage of **Saint-Éloi**, lent to St. Louis Marie as a pied-à-terre in La Rochelle, where it is believed he wrote the definitive draft of the Rule of the Daughters of Wisdom, as well as the *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*. Although it was returned to its owners after the Saint's death, it was later bought by the Daughters of Wisdom, who have a small community there.

In the Rue Saint-Louis in La Rochelle stands the **Hôpital Général Saint-Louis**, to which St. Louis Marie sent Catherine Brunet (Sister Conception) to work shortly after their arrival in La Rochelle, and where she died and was buried under the sanctuary step in 1725. It was shortly before this that Marie-Louise herself spent eight months in La Rochelle, establishing the community of the Daughters of Wisdom in the Hôpital Saint-Louis. There is a room above the chapel which is said to have been hers at this time.

In the same street, Rue Saint-Louis, almost opposite the hospital, is the site of one of the free schools run by Blessed Marie-Louise, which was also for some time the residence of the fledgling community before the move back to Poitiers in 1719.

In the Rue Albert Premier is the **École de la Providence**, run by the Sisters of Providence. It is believed to have been in the chapel here that, on 22 August 1715, Marie-Louise Trichet and Catherine Brunet finally pronounced their religious vows in the presence of St. Louis Marie, who at the same time gave the grey habit of the Daughters of Wisdom to Marie Régnier and Marie Valleau. It was also here, according to Montfortian tradition, that Fr. Adrien Vatel, that same year, heard the sermon that convinced him to join St. Louis Marie to become the first priest-member of the Company of Mary. ◘

News from Here and There (cont.)

Continued from page 2

called "Montfort", because of the strong connection with St. Louis Marie de Montfort going back to the 18th century and the small town of La Trinité-Porhoët in France, where the Saint named the unnamed statue "Our Lady of Light", to which the people were ardently praying.

The other Montfortian Shrine is in Romsey in Hampshire. It is known as "the Miracle Room" and is particular to the Daughters of Wisdom or the La Sagesse Sisters. The Sisters are celebrating the 300th Anniversary of their Foundation. The first Sister was Blessed Marie Louise Trichet who received the religious habit from St.Louis Marie de Montfort on 2nd February 1703.

We congratulate both the parishioners in Clacton and the La Sagesse Sisters, now worldwide, and thank the Good Lord and, of course, His Blessed Mother for all graces and blessings received to date.

(For further information on the shrine of Our Lady of Light, please contact: The Presbytery, 1 Church Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 6AG)

Parish Missions

It has been mentioned that Parish Missions are rare these days. Well, maybe there is some truth in that, probably due in part to the shortage of priests, but one or two are taking place. Father Bob Douglas and Father Ronnie Mitchell have just completed three successful Missions in the last five months – in Christ the King, Walkden, Manchester in November 2002, in Glenties, Donegal, Ireland in March 2003 and St. Robert Bellarmine's, Househillwood, Glasgow at the end of March 2003.

Mission Appeals 2003

This year's appeals are in the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton, Lancaster and Wrexham. Once again we ask for your prayers for the success of the Appeals both spiritually and economically. Our Missions rely on both. Please make yourself known if we come to your parish – it is always pleasant to meet our Associates.

We ask you for your usual support and prayers that the appeals go well.

Our Dead Associates

We remember the following Associates and others who have died since the last issue:

Mary Peck (Sept.'02), Eileen Hair (3 Oct.'02), Olive Moon (Jan.'02), Anthony Shaw (Jun '02), Sister Agnes Marie, D.W. (19 Oct.'02), Patricia McIntyre (27 Oct.'02), Rita Foy (Oct.'02), Sister Monica O.S.A. (3 Nov.'02), George Cookson (28 Nov.'01), Geraldine Moorland (the niece of Fr. Ronnie Mitchell, s.m.m. 24 Nov.'02), Christopher Smith (29 Nov.'02), Sister Francis D.W. (Sister of Fr. Daniel Hogan, s.m.m., 2 Nov.'02), Andrew James Dobson (Dec.'02) Fr. Barney Blood s.m.m. (15 Jan.'03), Bob Ellett (the brother of Sister Joan D.W. 17 Feb.'03), Cliffe Gillies (17 Jan.'03), Kathleen Doran (23 Jan.'03), Sister Ines Maria Dell'Eucharistia D.W. (former Superior General of the Daughters of Wisdom, 2 Feb. '03), Rita Bretherton (Aunt of Fr. Charlie Beirne, s.m.m. 3 Feb.'03), Fr. John White (15 Feb.'03), Sister Mary Catherine McAuley D.W. (17 Feb.03), Elizabeth Shearman (20 Feb.'03), Thomas Flynn (the father of Fr. Kieran Flynn, s.m.m., 2 Mar.'03), Nellie Smith (4 Mar.'03), Marie Mannion (23 Mar.'03).

May they rest in Peace

Prayers requested for:

Marie Brooks, Michael Parry, Diane Delacey, Beryl, Fr. Trevor Cotter, Bob Lucas, Philomena Kelly, John Clifford, Gertrude Benham, Bro. Julien Rabiller, S.G., Canon Patrick Egan, Monica Hall, Bill Smith and Stanley Leach, Mai Garrod, Joan Fox, David Dilworth, Sister Shirley Martin, D.W., Maureen and Reg Pritchard, Marion Lydon and John Monaghan, Vincent Dunning, Mary Hanson, Peggy Kendrick, Philippa Fetherstone, Jean Maguire, Peggy Sherriff, Elizabeth Mary Hickey, Margaret Singleton, Margaret Crowley, Jerry Cullen, Vincent O'Donnell, Keith Roberts, Annnie Gosnold, Eva Matthews, Michael Magee, Angela McKenna, Patricia and Allan Kimmance, Sister Gráinne M.S.H.C., Mary Hanson, Joseph Kelly (Canada), Mary Goodenough, Mr. McAvoy, (the father of Fr. Danny McAvoy, s.m.m.), John Yates and his son, Ian, Cathy Walls, Edmund and Mary Smith, Fr.Kieran Flynn, s.m.m., Catherine Doyle, Pauline McKenna, Fr. Jim Cree, s.m.m., Terry McMullen, Teresa Beirne, Louis Warburton, Dennis Deakin, Jo Woods, Joseph Hilleard, the Hafford and Baguley families, Margaret Dawson, Samuel Slattery, Jim Miley, Mary Harkin, Pat and Len Postol, Anne Fitzgerald, Sylvia Chinque, Mrs Gertrude Benham, Teresa Beirne (the mother of Fr. Charlie Beirne, s.m.m.), John Whelan (the brother of Sister Sheila Mary D.W.) Jean Maguire (the sister of Fr. Andrew Maguire s.m.m. R.I.P.), Agnes O'Boy, Sarah & Michael Magee, a Special Intention, (the Regan Family), Imelda Doran and for any Associates, who may be sick or troubled at this time.

Thank You

We thank those who have donated monies towards the publication of this Newsletter. We are truly grateful. Please continue to support it. If you wish to make a donation by cheque, please make it payable to the Montfort Missionaries at the address on the front page.

Fr. Robert Ellwood, s.m.m. ◘

In the Footsteps of St. Louis Marie de Montfort

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