In the

Footsteps

of St. Louis Marie de Montfort

Winter 2005
Volume 9, Issue 2

Inside this Issue

1 300 Years of the Company of Mary

2 From the Provincial's Desk

2 Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre in English Literature

3 Reindeer Meat, Mosquitoes and Montfortian Spirituality!

4 Montfortian Commentary

5 Brother Mathurin

6 Preparation for Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary

7 News from Here and There

Published by the Montfort Missionary Society, Registered Charity no. 241963
Editor: Fr. Paul Allerton, smm

"Footsteps"
Montfort Missionaries
28 Burbo Bank Road
Blundellsands
LIVERPOOL
L23 6TH

300 Years of the Company of Mary

In 1705, a young man of 18 called **Mathurin Rangeard**, who came from a small town, Bouillé-Saint-Paul, in the Province of Poitou, was on his way to try his vocation among the Capuchin Friars, when he stopped in Poitiers and went into the chapel of the House of Penitents to pray. The chaplain in this house was Father Louis Marie Grignion (known to most as "the priest from Montfort"), who had just left the General Hospital of Poitiers to begin, with the encouragement of the Bishop, a series of parish missions in the town of Poitiers. He happened at that moment to be hearing confessions there, and he noticed the young man's piety; so, when confessions were over he went to speak to him, asking him about his plans. Mathurin told him he intended joining the Capuchin Friars, and said he had entered this chapel quite by chance. "No, not by chance," replied Father de Montfort, "but through the working of Providence. Wouldn't you like to help the missionaries in their work? Follow me: that is your certain vocation."

Mathurin Rangeard, like the Apostles in the Gospel, immediately took up this challenge, and began to help Father de Montfort in his missions. He remained faithful to this task for the rest of his life – 55 years – until his death on 22 July 1760. St. Louis Marie had been dreaming for some years of what he called "a small and poor band of good priests" to help him in teaching catechism to the poor and inspiring real devotion to Our Lady. Mathurin Rangeard never became a priest, although he did receive the "tonsure", making him officially a cleric, in 1722. He never even made the vows that St. Louis Marie asked the members of his "Company of Mary" to take, perhaps because he felt unworthy. But he was the first to answer the call to join the saint in his missionary work, and he continued to serve both St. Louis Marie and his successors for the rest of his days. No priests took up the invitation to join him, in a definitive way, until Fathers Adrien Vatel and René Mulot, ten years later in 1715.

So it is that, this year, 2005, the Company of Mary will be celebrating 300 years of existence, seeing Mathurin Rangeard as the first member of the religious congregation which developed from St. Louis Marie's dreams and the response of those first dedicated helpers. We invite all our Associates to join with us in this celebration.

Provincial and General Chapters

This year, 2005, is also a year when a General Chapter of the Company of Mary takes place. A General Chapter takes place every 6 years, and is the highest authority in the Congregation. It is this Chapter, drawn from various Superiors and other delegates from our 16 different entities (Provinces, Vice-Provinces and General Delegations) around the world, that elects the Superior General and his Council for the next 6 years, as well as considering important matters which affect the life and mission of the Company of Mary. So it is a very important event in the life of the Congregation. It has to be preceded by similar Chapters in each entity – our own Provincial Chapter will take place in Liverpool from 23 to 26 February, preceded by a General Assembly of the Province. We ask your prayers for God's blessings on both Provincial and General Chapters. ◘

From the Provincial's Desk

The feast of Our Lady of Loreto in early December set me thinking about all those occasions when the Blessed Virgin has appeared, to call us to follow her son Jesus Christ. A visit to any of her Shrines will always deepen our awareness of the faith and simple devotion of the pilgrims who are there with us. The joyful celebration of the Holy Mass; the awed silence before the actual grotto or place where Mary appeared; the enthusiasm we feel during the saying of the Rosary; all these combine to give witness to the very real atmosphere of prayer which is always present in such places of pilgrimage.

However, the impact of these appearances of the Holy Mother of God should reach more than those who have actually been able to make a visit to the shrine. We all need to hear her words and reflect on the message. We must listen to the call that all see the need for reconciliation. We must hear the invitation to each of us to play a part in bringing peace, justice, encouragement and support to all people on the earth.

I am sure that most of us will have a favourite among the shrines of Mary. The one that has made the most lasting impression on me is dedicated to *'Our Lady of the Poor'* in Banneux in Belgium. I found the peace which I felt there to be very special indeed. Mary did not say many words at Banneux, which perhaps shows us that rather than search for new 'messages' we should

The spring at Banneux – In the small chapel behind, is a statue of St. Louis Marie

meditate on the very simplicity of what the Mother of God has said:

"I am the Virgin of the poor."
"This spring is reserved for all the nations - to relieve the sick."
"I shall pray for you."
"I come to relieve suffering."
"Believe in me, I will believe in you. Pray much."
"My dear child, pray much."
"I am the Mother of the Saviour, Mother of God, Pray much. Adieu."

This Virgin of the Poor is inviting us to join with her and come to the aid of those who are poor, those who are suffering. What she offers is not only for the people of Banneux, nor even just for pilgrims to the shrine - but is "**reserved for all nations** – to relieve the sick". Mary is telling us that she believes in us, in what we can achieve, and her message is clear and simple: "Pray much."

If we seek to tread the path that 'The Virgin of the Poor' laid out for us, we have a clear, direct and simple road to follow as we enter a new year. Mary believes that we can make a difference to those who are suffering and to those who are poor. St. Louis-Marie de Montfort tells us in the True Devotion that "Mary will share her faith with you. … It is a courageous faith which inspires you to undertake and carry out without hesitation great things for God and for the salvation of souls." (TD. 214).

As associates of Mary's own Company we must find ways to justify Mary's belief in us. Surely we can succeed in those little ways of putting ourselves at the service of others which, with her help and her confidence in us, will become 'great things for God and for the salvation of souls.'

F. W. Scragg, S.M.M., (Provincial) ◘

New! **Montfort Press** **New!**

"Jesus Living in Mary – The Spirituality of St. Louis Marie de Montfort"

A 1¾ hr. DVD, priced at **£6.00**, presenting Montfort's spirituality as it is lived by various followers of his, from members of his Religious Congregations to lay-people from various walks of life. Complements the earlier VHS Video, **"Jesus Living in Mary – The Life of St. Louis Marie de Montfort"**, which is still available from Montfort Press.

"The Secret of Mary"

An audio CD, priced at **£3.00**, of the small book by St. Louis Marie de Montfort which outlines his teaching on Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary. Read by Fr. Paul Allerton, smm. Ideal for anyone with visual impairment.

For these and any other writings of St. Louis Marie, biographies, etc., contact:

Montfort Press, 28 Burbo Bank Road, Blundellsands, LIVERPOOL L23 6TH

Tel: (0151) 287 6862 – Fax: (0151) 287 0410

http://www.montfort.org.uk/montpress.htm

Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre in English Literature

ANTHONY TROLLOPE is deservedly ranked among the great novelists of English Literature, with his great series of Barchester novels, among others. One of his lesser known works is a relatively short novel describing the resistance of the people of the "Vendée" – that area around Cholet, Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre and Bressuire in which St. Louis Marie worked in the last few years of his life – to the

Continued on page 4

Reindeer Meat, Mosquitoes and Montfortian Spirituality!

Fr. Ronnie Mitchell, S.M.M. reflects on an unusual experience of evangelization.

Imagine the scene! I was preaching the Message of Christ in English. An Italian was interpreting into Finnish. The congregation at Mass was a mixture of Vietnamese, Iraqis, Mexicans, Sudanese, Polish, Dutch, etc. A Spanish guitar was leading the singing. How much more Catholic, Missionary and Alive can the Church be? Indeed, how much more challenged can a Montfortian be?

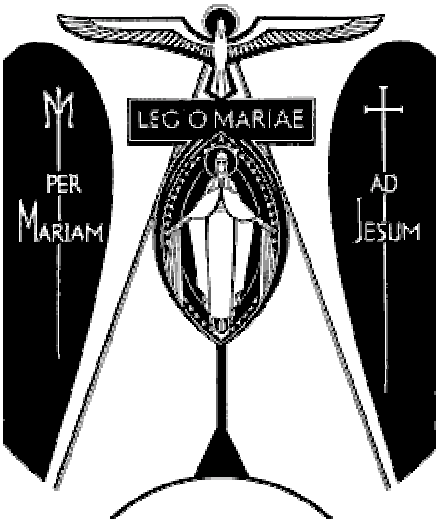
I had travelled on a Montfortian Mission from Liverpool to the Holy Family of Nazareth Catholic Church in Oulu. This city lies on the north-western coast of Finland. This is a country bounded by Russia, Lapland and on the west beyond the sea, by Sweden. Oulu has a population of 130, 000 with about 400 Catholics. It is the home of the Nokia mobile phone and has engineered instruments for those space satellites now prodding towards Mars.

The Legion of Mary had invited me to come to Finland to give teaching on the spirituality of St. Louis Marie de Montfort. They wished their members to be motivated by his inspiration for their work of evangelization so I was ministering there for part of the summer of 2004. I also went out with the Legionaries on their crowd contact work.

Montfort's spirituality is never lived on an abstract level but is always grounded by evangelism.

The Parish Priest, Fr. Paulo Berti, was keen on open air evangelism in the city. He had invited a team of Legion of Mary members from abroad to meet people in the streets, market places and parks of the city. "Talk to them about God", said Fr. Berti.

The Legion of Mary was born out of the spirituality of St. Louis Marie de Montfort. Montfort's inspiring doctrine is taken right out of the heart of Sacred Scripture. Quite simply he tells us how to come alive with Christ through the intercession of the Blessed Mother. The purpose of life, according to St. Louis Marie, is to allow Mary to mould us into the likeness or image of Christ. We then become more fully human and more fully alive.



This spirit of Montfort was very much alive in this group of legionaries... So I felt immediately at home with them. I was deeply touched by the discipline, unity and enthusiasm of these men and women. I could see that the discipline or rules of the Legion were there to foster unity and a common purpose.

Finland was Catholic at one time but the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century divided the Western Christian Church into Catholic and Protestant. The teachings of Martin Luther, e.g. justification by faith alone, quietly replaced Catholic doctrine and worship in Finland.

Confession, the Elevation at Mass, holy pictures and statues, important Feasts such as Corpus Christi, were allowed only if the true doctrines were not preached or taught. So the Catholic Faith began to die. We need emblems, symbols, and images. These visually and emotionally generate life.

Today Finland is eighty five per cent Lutheran. There are about 8,000 Catholics out of a population of five and a half million. There are sixteen priests, mostly Polish, ministering in Finland. Two of these are Finnish born. There is one seminarian.

The miracle is that we were able to approach people in the streets of Oulu and speak to them about our Catholic Faith. We shared with them about the Eucharist and Our Lady. I sensed that they were especially touched when we spoke to them about Our Blessed Mother in Heaven.

We prayed with the people and for them. St. Louis Marie again and again in his writings and especially by his life teaches us that God's blessing on our apostolate will be determined by our commitment to prayer.

All those whom we met were respectful and while a few excused themselves, the vast majority listened with attention. The language proved no barrier. Most people under forty years of age understood and spoke English quite well. Over twelve hundred people were contacted. Approximately one thousand miraculous medals were offered and were received with a mixture of surprise, awe and gratitude.

If I had any problem on this Mission it was to avoid eating reindeer meat which I was at pains to keep off my plate. Others seemed to enjoy it. The other difficulty was the darling mosquitoes that took a liking to me, and something by the impressive name of *Hydrocortison Leiras* was needed to put on "the bites".

But the evangelism as such was no problem. In fact one grew in confidence and boldness through meeting more and more people. The look on their faces registered the fact that they had never before been approached in this way. Fr. Berti was pleased as some people had said to him that approaching the Finns

on the streets could never be done. Montfort teaches us that with Mary nothing is impossible with God.

How did the ministry in Finland impact me? I became more convinced than ever that evangelism needs to be top of our priorities. Indeed, training schools need to be set up so that Catholics are taught how to hand on their precious faith.

Yet in saying this we also need inspiration to motivate us to share the faith. This is where Montfortian spirituality is so life giving. It fires us up with a love for God and a powerful desire to spread the Reign of Jesus through Mary.

You become an apostle of the Good News the moment you realize that apart from leading others to Christ nothing else matters very much in life. You begin to organize your life around the necessity of sharing the gift of eternal life with others.

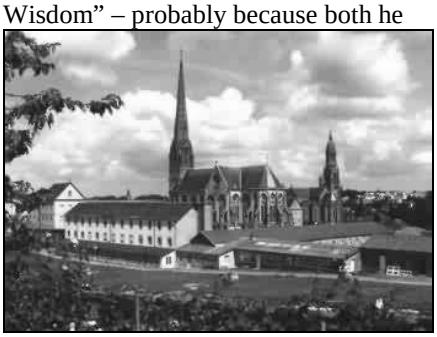
This is what I admire about living out the True Devotion to Mary as taught by St. Louis Marie. You are compelled to share this grace with others. You are inviting the Holy Spirit to empower you with zeal and courage.

The Church has to call its members, young and old, to heroism today. This is what the Holy Father is asking. It is about more than avoiding reindeer meat and dodging mosquitoes. It is about living a heroic lifestyle. It is about reaching out to others. It is about sharing the wonder and wisdom of Montfort's teaching with our brothers and sisters. ◘

Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre in English Literature

Continued from page 2

attempts of the French Revolution to change their religious practices and way of life. The book is called simply "La Vendée". It has often been claimed that the preaching of St. Louis Marie himself, some 75 or 80 years before, and of his successors, the members of the Company of Mary, after his death, was one of the strongest influences in inspiring this resistance of the people of the Vendée. Whatever we may think of that (and there are good reasons for hesitating to make too strong a claim), Trollope speaks highly, in his novel, of the part played by the Daughters of Wisdom of Saint-Laurent in caring for the injured and dying in the conflict. It is true that he speaks of "Sisters of Mercy", rather than "Daughters of Wisdom" – probably because both he



and his readers were already familiar with the Sisters of Mercy, but had probably never heard of the Daughters of Wisdom – but it is clear which Sisters he has in mind. He writes:

"A kind of hospital was immediately opened at a little town called St. Laurent sur Sèvre, about two leagues from Durbellière, at which a convent of sisters of mercy had long been established… the sisters of the establishment cheerfully gave their time, their skill, and tenderest attention to assuage the miseries of their suffering countrymen… (The wards) were seldom, or rather never, empty as long as the Vendeans kept their position in the country, the sick and the wounded were nursed with the tenderest care at St. Laurent. The sisters who had commenced the task never remitted their zeal… the hospital of St. Laurent might have rivalled the cleanliness, care, and comfort of the Hotel Dieu in its present perfection."

High praise indeed for our Sisters from an unexpected quarter! ◘

"It was through the Blessed Virgin Mary that Jesus came into the world, and it is also through her that he must reign in the world."

St. Louis Marie de Montfort (TD 1)

Montfortian Commentary

We hope that this section devoted to a short commentary on St. Louis Marie's writings will become a regular feature of "Footsteps"

Secret of Mary, No. 3

"Chosen soul, living image of God and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God wants you to become holy like him in this life, and glorious like him in the next.

"It is certain that growth in the holiness of God is your vocation. All your thoughts, words, actions, everything you suffer or undertake must lead you towards that end. Otherwise you are resisting God in not doing the work for which he created you and for which he is even now keeping you in being."

"Chosen soul, living image of God and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God wants you to become holy like him in this life, and glorious like him in the next."

Montfort makes us face what we are and what is the goal of our life: we come from God, who has made us into his "living image", and we are made to go to him so as to share in his happiness. God is so attached to us that, in order to save us, he did not hesitate to "buy us back" through the "precious blood of Jesus Christ"! That is how much God thinks of us, and what we are worth in his eyes.

And he wants for us what any Father worthy of the name would want for his children: our happiness. God wants to give us everything: he proposes for us nothing less that to live like him, imitating his "holiness" even in this life, in order to share in his "glory" in the next. How, in fact, could we hope to be happy with the happiness of God if we did not share his life?

So Montfort continues: *"It is certain that growth in the holiness of God is your vocation. All your thoughts, words, actions, everything you suffer or*

undertake must lead you towards that end. Otherwise you are resisting God in not doing the work for which he created you and for which he is even now keeping you in being" (SM 3).

These statements are not concerned only with certain privileged persons called by God to some exceptional holiness. Anyone who tries to take the Gospel seriously and to have confidence in Jesus should see them as addressed to himself. One would have to be Christ to dare say to all his followers: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect", that is, "Love as your Father knows how to love". "Growth in the holiness of God" is nothing else, in fact, than coming to love like him. Jesus tells us this in other words in "his" commandment: *"Love one another as I have loved you"* (Jn 15,12).

This call of Jesus is not an arbitrary prescription imposed on us from the outside: this law of love is written in the depths of our being. Experience is there to show us that only true love can make us happy. The ideal proposed by Christ, therefore, has value, and indeed an absolute value for us. Therefore each of us must try to tend towards it, according to his own means, in his own state of life, and in line with his particular vocation; otherwise, says Montfort, "you are resisting God"… and to resist God is to rush into failure.

Commentary by Fr. Alphonse Bossard, smm from "To Follow Jesus Christ with Mary"

Celebrations of the 300th Anniversary

Liverpool – 15th February

At St. Thomas's Church, Waterloo, with Consecration & Commissioning.

Barrhead – 3rd April (Feast of the Annunciation)

At Montfort House, Barrhead, with Mass and Consecration.

We welcome all of our Associates to either of these celebrations.

Brother Mathurin

As mentioned on the front page, this year we celebrate the 300th anniversary of the beginnings of the Company of Mary, taking as our starting point the call of Mathurin Rangeard by St. Louis Marie in early 1705. Here we include some further details of the life of Brother Mathurin.

The portrait of Brother Mathurin shown here is to be found in the parish church of the village where he was born – Bouillé-Saint-Paul. The parishioners are very proud of their illustrious fellow-townsman. In fact the portrait bears the legend, *Saint Mathurin*! It is thought that this was written at the time of the French Revolution, in the hope that a portrait of a saint would be less likely to be vandalised by the Revolutionary soldiers who were roaming this countryside, sowing destruction.

Mathurin Rangeard was born on 7 November 1687 in Bouillé-Laurent (or Bouillé-Saint-Paul), near the borders of Poitou and Anjou. As already related, at the age of 17 or 18, (i.e. in 1705), he was struck by a mission preached in his parish by the Capuchins, and went to Poitiers to try to become a Capuchin himself. While there, he was invited by St. Louis Marie to join him in his work, and he stayed with him for the rest of Montfort's life, and with his successors in the Company of Mary after the saint's death, until his own death on 22 July 1760. That is why he is considered to be the first Montfortian Brother, and indeed the first member of the Company of Mary.

Mathurin was of help to St. Louis Marie in many different ways. He used to take charge, for example, along with other "Brothers" who joined up with Montfort at various times, of the various pious objects which would be sold during the mission – Rosaries, holy pictures, etc. – and of the banners and flags which were used by the saint in the course of his missions. It appears also that he had a good voice – at the mission in Vallet in September/October 1708, it was Mathurin who summoned the people to the mission by ringing his bell and singing *"Alerte, alerte, alerte, la mission est ouverte"*. And in the famous picture of the great procession at the end of the La Rochelle missions in 1711, we see Mathurin indicated by the letter "F", keeping order and directing the singing. He seems also to have helped with the catechism classes during the missions, as we shall see. Perhaps also he acted as a schoolmaster in Saint-Pompain – we are not so sure of this, but in the chronicles of Saint Pompain, where Fathers Mulot and Vatel and Brother Mathurin stayed from 1716 until 1722, there is a commendation by the bishop on the occasion of a visitation, of the excellent work done by the "school-masters and mistresses who carry out their duties very well, yet are in no way funded and who live on what Providence supplies to them." Some historians see in this an indication that Brother Mathurin did some teaching, but the proof is very tenuous!

We know that Mathurin was with Montfort at Saint-Lazare (outside Montfort-sur-Meu) in 1707, and accompanied him in all his travels around the various dioceses of Saint Malo, Saint Brieuc, Nantes, La Rochelle and Luçon – the faithful companion, *par excellence*!

It is true that Mathurin never made vows in the Company of Mary. This seems to have been because he suffered from severe scruples, and was afraid that he was completely unworthy to do so. Montfort himself seems to have been very sensitive to this scrupulosity of Mathurin: in his will he speaks slightly differently of Mathurin (to who he leaves 10 crowns, "if he decides to

leave and not renew the vows of poverty and obedience") and of the other "brothers", Jacques and Jean (to who he also leaves 10 crowns if they decide to leave, but does not mention vows) – was he offering a last encouragement to Mathurin to make his vows? We are fairly sure that neither Jacques nor Jean ever made vows either. But, whatever the case, Mathurin certainly lived the spirit of poverty and obedience which were the object of the vows Montfort proposed for his missionaries, even if he never formally pronounced those vows.

It is mentioned on the first page that Mathurin received the tonsure. This was after Montfort's death, during the time when Fathers Mulot and Vatel and he were living at Saint-Pompain. It was during the mission given at Jaunay-Clan, in the diocese of Poitiers in June 1722. The auxiliary bishop of the Poitiers diocese, Mgr Foudras, tonsured Mathurin with the intention of giving *"more authority to the zeal of this good Brother who, since M. de Montfort called him to follow him, had always been concerned with exercising the office of catechist during the missions."* Receiving the tonsure made one a cleric, and was usually the prelude to going on to the deaconate and priesthood, but Mathurin certainly never received orders of any kind. This statement of the Bishop certainly shows that Mathurin was involved in giving catechism classes.

We know that Mathurin was staying in Saint-Pompain with Fathers Mulot and Vatel after St Louis Marie's death, because several times his signature appears in the parish records – he acted as godfather to several children there.

We know also that Mathurin went with Father Mulot and Father Vatel to Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre in 1722, to take up residence there in the *Chêne-Vert* initially, then later in the *Maison Longue*. It is probable that, as he had done with St Louis Marie himself, and with Fathers Mulot and Vatel when they were based in Saint-Pompain, he accompanied the Fathers on their missions in the various parishes, but we know little in detail of his life after 1722 – in fact the first biographers of St. Louis Marie (Blain and Grandet) do not mention Mathurin again after 1711 – but we do have other sources of knowledge regarding Mathurin.

As we have seen, Mathurin died, aged 73, in St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre on 22 July 1760 (the year after Blessed Marie-Louise's death there). He suffered a painful illness at the end, so perhaps he had not left St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre for some time previously. The author of the History of the Company of Mary, Father Michel Bertrand, has this to say of Mathurin: *"It would be difficult to recount the numberless conversions brought about by his pious exhortations. He had an attentive, courteous and amiable manner; which is why, apart from the scruples which tormented him, he was the most submissive person, and the most obedient to his superiors, and even to his inferiors…"* ◘

Preparation for Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary

In the 1950s, the late Fr. Wilfred Jukka, S.M.M. published three "True Devotion Leaflets". Recently we were asked if these were still available. Unfortunately they were no longer in print, but have now been made available on our web site: http://www.montfort.org.uk. *The second of these leaflets was entitled* "The Thirty Days' Preparation". *As some of our Associates will be renewing their Consecration on the Feast of the Annunciation (which this year falls on 3rd April), we give here a shortened version of Father Jukka's text.*

St. Louis Marie wanted to make sure that the Act of Consecration to Jesus and Mary, which is the basis of the True Devotion, should have a profound effect on the life of the one making it. And so he strongly urged that thirty days be spent in preparing for this important event. These days of preparation dispose the soul to receive God's special graces. They are a kind of prolonged prayer for help. And especially they mark the solemnity and importance of the Consecration. Consequently, while not essential, the preparation is much to be counselled before embracing this devotion to Our Lady. It can also be profitably renewed each year before the renewal of our Act of Consecration. It is important to note, right from the start, that the Preparation is not obligatory. However, the days spent in preparing for this important act of consecration can be very profitable, and are much to be counselled.

In his *Treatise on True Devotion*, St. Louis Marie advises us to spend twelve days in trying to rid ourselves of the spirit of the world, and then to pass the next three weeks in seeking to know ourselves, to know Our Lady and, in the last week, to know Our Lord.

Ridding Self of Worldliness

During this period we should try to recite each day the hymns, "Come, Holy Ghost" and "Hail, thou Star of Ocean." As a practice we could profitably avoid all worldly amusements for these twelve days.

Normally people find the greatest difficulty in the first twelve days of the Preparation. This is partly because the time allotted is double that of each of the other periods. But the main cause of difficulty is, we suspect, because the end in view is not clearly understood.

Ridding self of the spirit of the world does not mean blinding oneself to the beauty and the joys of this life. It does not mean that we must renounce for ever the cinema, dances, social events. The spirit of the world is that mentality which leads people to consider that this life is more important than eternity. It is that outlook which over-emphasises the importance of anything that brings

riches, comfort, pleasure in this world and which minimizes, if it does not altogether ignore, the importance of providing for our life in the next world.

Once we begin to examine ourselves on this point… we are going to… realise how little we do to provide for eternity, in comparison with how much we do for the things of this life. In other words we are going to discover how completely the spirit of the world dominates and grips us.

Hence, during these first twelve days, let us pray constantly for the grace of judging everything from the point of view of eternity, for the grace of thinking, speaking, behaving like people who *really do believe* that this life is only meant to be a preparation for our *real* life that is to come.

Knowing Self

In the second period of the Preparation, on each of the six days we should say the Litany of the Holy Ghost (or the hymn "Come Holy Ghost" if the Litany is not available), the hymn, "Hail, thou Star of Ocean" and the Litany of Loreto. As a practice of piety we could profitably spend a few minutes each day examining our conscience.

Self-knowledge is a most rare accomplishment. Even the wisest and holiest people live in a world of illusion about themselves. Because it is so much easier to know others than to know ourselves, a practical way of learning about ourselves is to reflect on what those who are in a position to know say about us. In spite of the excuses that vanity and self-love will suggest, there is probably a good deal of truth in the opinion that such people have formed about us. We might even be able to ask some trustworthy person to tell us frankly our chief faults and weaknesses. The operative word is *trustworthy*. Not everybody will do. An obvious choice would be our confessor if he knows us well.

On each of these six days we should employ the precious time of prayerful reflection in reminding ourselves that we are made by God and for God… Another salutary thought is to reflect on the goodness of God to us in the past… Or perhaps we might remind ourselves of our constant need of God's grace… If we pray much and reflect much during these six days we shall gradually begin to know ourselves. And knowing ourselves, we shall realise how much we need the help of Our Lady in order to imitate and love her Son.

Knowing Mary

During the next six days we should recite daily the same prayers as in the preceding week, adding as many extra decades of the Rosary that we conveniently can, saying them at all odd moments at our disposal. There is a beautiful prayer to Our Lady composed by St. Louis Marie near the end of The Secret of Mary. This, too, could be recited on each of the six days.

"Mary," says St. Louis Marie, "is the all-excelling masterpiece of the Most High, the knowledge and possession of which He has reserved for Himself." During these six days dedicated to acquiring knowledge of Our Lady we must ask God by insistent prayer to grant this knowledge to us… During the time of prayerful reflection we could perhaps meditate on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, trying to realise what happiness and glory each contains for God's Mother. Or we might reflect on that sad meeting of the Son and the Mother on the way to Calvary, and remind ourselves that just as Mary was the only one who recognised and adored the Divinity of Jesus at that moment, so He was the only one who saw in her all the dignity and greatness and love that God had put there. There is source for much fruitful meditation in that thought… There are many other subjects we might think about during this week. The important thing is that we should spend some time each day trying to reflect on something about Our Lady.

Knowing Christ

On each of the last six days before the Consecration we should say the same prayers as above, only substituting the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus for the Litany of Loreto, and in place of the prayer to Mary saying the prayer to Jesus, composed by St. Augustine as given in a footnote to No. 67 (The True Devotion).

As much as possible during this last week we should centre our prayers and our thoughts on Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament, telling ourselves that He is living in our town, in our parish… During the time of prayerful reflection we could meditate on the Sorrowful Mysteries or the Stations of the Cross, in order to understand something of that immense love that led God to suffer and die for us… Another source of fruitful reflection would be to think over the life of Christ on earth, in order to discover for ourselves the examples of willing, loving dependence on His Mother that He set for us.

Those who would like to read the whole text of this leaflet can find it on the web site. ◘

News from Here and There

The Montfortian Family of Prayer

As part of their ongoing mission apostolate, Fathers Bob Douglas and Ronnie Mitchell have been encouraging people all over the British Isles to pray with them and for them as they preach the Gospel in various places. Fr. Douglas wrote in the first issue of a Prayer Letter for the Montfortian Family of Prayer, as they call it:

"We have been asked how the idea of the 'Montfortian Family of Prayer' arose. Well, Fr. Scragg, our Provincial, asked us to form a Mission Team. When we started to go round preaching we kept coming across very difficult situations, where we felt a desperate need for prayer. At first we took to heart the passage in St. Matthew's gospel (10.41) where Jesus says, 'Whoever welcomes God's messenger because he is God's messenger, will share in his

reward.' Anyone who prays for us will share the reward of God's messengers wherever we may be sent. We were just so grateful for any prayers. This is the Gospel. The next problem we had was that we were meeting so many people who were asking us to pray for them. So the idea of the 'Family' of prayer arose. We should all be praying for one another…"

If you would like to be part of the Montfortian Family of Prayer, and to receive the occasional Prayer Letter, contact either Fr. Bob or Fr. Ronnie at Montfort House, Liverpool (address as for "Footsteps"), or on Fr. Bob's email address: smm4@montfort.org.uk.

Jubilees in 2004

Since the last issue of "Footsteps" (what a long time ago!), two members of the Province of Gt. Britain & Ireland of the Company of Mary (Montfort Missionaries) have celebrated important jubilees. **Father Louis Catterall, S.M.M.** celebrated 60 years of his Religious Profession (Diamond Jubilee) on 8 September 2004. On the same day, **Brother Shaun Hassan, S.M.M.** celebrated 50 years of his Religious Profession (Golden Jubilee). Thank you for all your prayers.

Forthcoming Jubilees

This year, 2005, we will be celebrating a number of important jubilees of members of the Province. On 24 May it will be the **Silver Jubilee of Ordination** (25 years) of **Fr. Owen O'Donnell, S.M.M.**, who is stationed in Namitembo, Malawi, on loan to the African Delegation of the Company of Mary. Two **Golden Jubilees of Religious Profession** (50 years) will be celebrated this year: on 8 September, that of **Fr. Frederick Scragg, S.M.M.**, our Provincial; and on 8 December, that of **Bro. Anthony Hanly, S.M.M.**, who is stationed at present in Ashurst. On 27 September will be the **Diamond Jubilee of Religious Profession** (60 years) of **Fr. Frederick Matthews, S.M.M.**, a former Provincial. We congratulate all these confreres, on behalf of you all, and we know that we can assure them of your prayers for them.

The Ugandan School Appeal

Donations from the Associates to this project last year totalled more than £1,875. With this money, Father Charlie Beirne, S.M.M. is able to pay for the education of children (often orphaned because of AIDS) in Uganda - £30 pays for primary education for one year for a child, £100 for secondary education). Father Beirne is delighted with the continuing response of Associates, and assures you all of his prayers and of those of the children. If you would like to contribute, drop a line to "Footsteps" at the address on the front page.

Our Dead Associates

Gerard Dunning (brother of Vincent Dunning, 27 January 2004); Doreen Cording (aunt of Jim Weldon, Fr. Bob Ellwood's brother-in-law, 24 March 2004); Agnes Keelan (7 April 2004); Brother Edward Chakwiya, S.M.M. (a Malawian scholastic, killed in a road accident in Malawi, 25 May 2004); Teresa Savage (long-standing Associate and friend of the Company of Mary, going back to Church Stretton days, early 2004); Anne Cawley (died in 2003); Jennifer Holburn (early 2004); Sr. Mary Kevin, O.S.A. (Superior of Park House, Waterloo, 9 July 2004); Sr. Marian of the Immaculate, D.W. (sister of the late Fr. Michael Rooney, S.M.M. and Fr. Hubert Rooney, 7 July 2004); Mary Poacher (July 2004); Mary Hanson (August 2004); Tracey Elverd (niece of Sr. Dorothy Baxter, D.W., 27 August 2004); Moyra Pacey (25 September 2004); Georgina Stirzaka (1 October 2004); Sr. Mary Dorothy, D.W. (who worked for many years in "Sandymount" with the late Fr. Joseph Wareing, S.M.M. and Sr. Mary Peter, D.W., 9 October 2004); Frank McVerry (28 October 2004); Eddie Green (29 October 2004); Madeleine Statham (sister of Bro. Louis Marie, S.M.M., 7 November 2004); Frank Gornall (brother of Sr. George Gornall, D.W., 19 November 2004); Michael Pearce (father of Mary Pearce of Clacton-on-Sea, 27 November 2004); Mary Walsh (who nursed a number of Montfort Fathers in Park House over the years, 21 December 2004); Helen O'Connor (sister of the late Fr. John Adamson, S.M.M., 8 January 2005).

May they rest in peace.

Your prayers are requested for:

Kate; Sheila Lavin; Debbie Tasker; Lilian Cowen (sister of the late Fr. Harold Cowen, S.M.M., who has now gone into a nursing-home); Winifred Pollard; Fr. James Cree, S.M.M. (chaplain to the Daughters of Wisdom in Lytham St. Annes); Patricia Gosling; Mrs Catherine Brady and family; Brian Wintersgill; Stephen Lydon and the Lydon family of Romsey; Patricia Hughes; Alice Cunningham; Eva Mary and Donald Vickers; Margo Mainey; Margery & Joseph Devereux; Joyce Lyons; Fr. Ivo Libralato, S.M.M. (one of our General Assistants in Rome, who has had a laryngectomy due to cancer of the throat); Jennifer Zemetgruber; Maureen Balwin; Mrs Ellen McGrath (mother of Sr. Mary McGrath, D.W.); Richard and Tricia Hughes; Christine Copping; Stephen Rimmer; Carmel O'Donovan (sister of Fr. Charlie Beirne, S.M.M.) and all her family; Mrs Teresa Beirne (mother of Fr. Charlie Beirne, S.M.M.); Mrs Ronnie Chatburn; Mrs Margaret Dawson; Christopher Hoy; Geraldine Sinclair (wife of Fr. Fred Scragg's nephew); Mrs Dorothy Patterson (mother of Sr. Dorothy Baxter, D.W.); Bridie Cullen; Mary Morgan; Betty Allerton (Fr. Paul Allerton's sister-n-law, recovering from major heart surgery in Canada); Fr. Arie van der Hulst, S.M.M. (former General Assistant); Fr. Joseph Kelly, S.M.M. (former superior of Montfort House, Liverpool, now in Nazareth House, Crosby).

Thank You:

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