

MA-SG

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Montfortian Associates - Singapore





Noel of Angels

Hymn 57:1-2

*The Most-High, the Incomprehensible,
The Eternal and Almighty
Has just been born.*

Is it possible?

*The Eternal is one day old, the Word is silent,
The Almighty has become an infant.*

Let us acknowledge,

Adore, praise,

Praise, love,

Let us acknowledge

Our God reduced to infancy.

*Since this good God is born for men
To make them happy,
We owe Him, just as they do,
All that we are.*

*Let us place at His feet our glorious crowns
Telling Him joyfully:*

Gentle child,

All that we have is yours,

Reign over us;

All that we have is yours,

From you alone comes our victory.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Zerah Goh, President of the Montfortian Associates Movement

Greetings of peace and goodwill to all Montfortian Associates and friends,

A most blessed Christmas to you and your loved ones and a happy new year!

Our hearts are full and we have much to be grateful for! This year 2021, we celebrated our 5th anniversary as Montfortian Associates and were most fortunate to be able to participate in the many formation, community building and outreach sessions organised by the respective subcommittees!

Two years have gone since the start of the pandemic in 2020 and we have come a long way. In fact, this whole pandemic has felt like an extended season of Advent. The world has been waiting with bated breaths (and with masks on), hoping that the situation will improve so that life can regain its normalcy of what was. Even a tinge of it would seem to suffice.

Perhaps we too, along with the world have been waiting for the "coming" of salvation in the form of omnicron-effective vaccines, more vaccinated-travel lanes and the return of what we have lost. There is of course nothing wrong in hoping for the best. However, we might just end up being obsessed with what should have been rather than what is as we experience Emmanuel; God's very presence with us here and now. I imagine how this could have been the case for Mary and Joseph when they found out - perhaps in their horror - that "there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). I am sure they, as parents, would have experienced anxiety especially

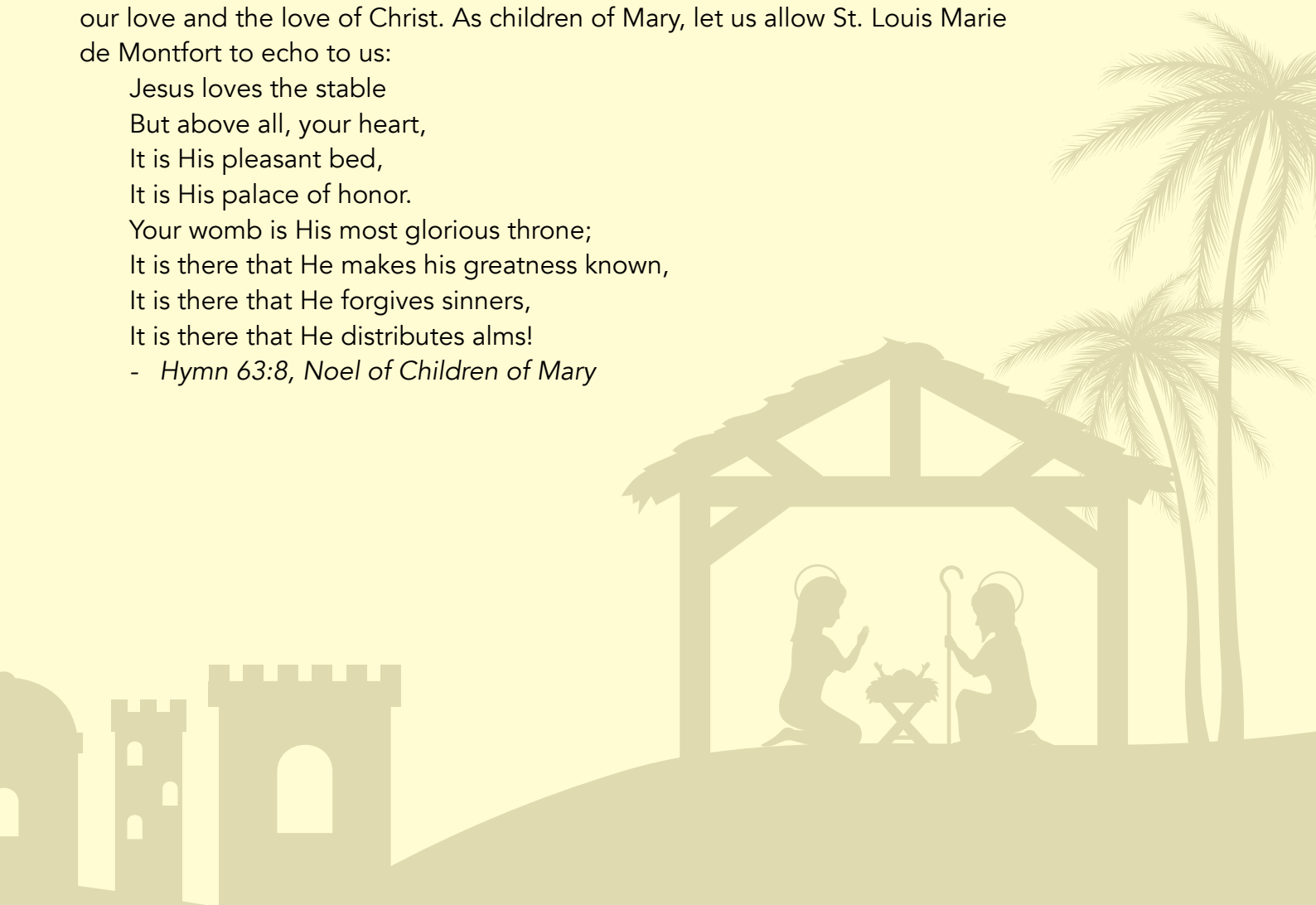


since they did not have online platforms to secure their accommodations booking back then! Some theologians even assert that this inn is not an equivalent of a motel or hotel as we might understand today, but the house of the family of Joseph who had many other relatives who arrived before him because of the Census! The paradox of it all was that Jesus was to be named Emmanuel which is "God is with us", which did not quite seem to be the case in the eyes of the worldly standard, because if God was truly with Mary and Joseph, should not there have been a place specially set aside for Mary to deliver Jesus?

Well, the church has traditionally depicted the Nativity scene along with an ox and a donkey and sometimes we forget that God's creation have shared their space – be it a stable or a cave – with Mary, Joseph and Jesus! Divine providence has prepared the place for the Holy Family and Joseph with his creative carpentry skills would have made the place suitable for Mary's delivery. This is why Pope Francis emphasised that "the beauty of Christmas shines in the sharing of small gestures of concrete love". And it is in this spirit of Christmas do we receive the new commandment which Jesus Christ offers to us: A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another (John 13:34).

As we celebrate Christmas and embrace the new year to come, let us remain in God's love and rend our hearts wide open to receive those around us who long for our love and the love of Christ. As children of Mary, let us allow St. Louis Marie de Montfort to echo to us:

Jesus loves the stable
 But above all, your heart,
 It is His pleasant bed,
 It is His palace of honor.
 Your womb is His most glorious throne;
 It is there that He makes his greatness known,
 It is there that He forgives sinners,
 It is there that He distributes alms!
 - *Hymn 63:8, Noel of Children of Mary*





Joseph, the Man Who Raised Jesus

By Bro John Albert Arul Devanesan fsg, Local Superior

Dear Friends,

I wish to share the **contemplative prayer** of St Joseph while holding the Infant Jesus. **How could it be this baby in my arms, sleeping now so peacefully?** The Son of God the angel said. How could it be?

Lord, I know he's not my own, not of my flesh, not of my bones. Still Father, let this baby be, the son of my love. **Father show me where I fit into this plan of yours. How can a man be a father to the Son of God?**

Lord, for all my life I've been a simple carpenter. How can I raise a King? You look so small, his face and hands so small. And when he cries the sun just seems to disappear. But when he laughs, it shines again. How could it be?

St Joseph is a Man after God's Own Heart. One who looks deeply through the eyes, ears and heart of love. God is Love, and from the Eternal Love flows gifts and graces of love. A man after God's Own Heart holds these gifts and graces very reverently.

A contemplative heart senses the manifested mysteries. It cast its net of faith into the things, and events unfolding before its very own eyes and ears. A totally integrated Self yields to the decrees of the Lord and bows to His control.

The gentle whispers and nudging or touches of God is welcomed and discerned. Struck by the divine grace, consumed by the illumination, a Man after God's Own Heart cannot but dialogue with the voice and divine will.

The home God wanted for Jesus and his mother could only be provided by a true 'son of David' (Matthew 1:20). Joseph was naturally unaware of his part in God's plan of salvation; he was dealing with great things he did not understand, "things too wonderful" to know (Job 42:3) Thus the angel of God was sent to open Joseph's ears to the truth of how the child came to be conceived in Mary.

For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while they slumber on their beds, then he opens the ears of men. (Job 33:14-16)

The angel of the Lord reassured Joseph that his home was the right place for the one who would "save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Rather than question how any of this could be, on waking Joseph "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife" into his home (Matthew 1:24).



The Lord saw fit to have Mary and her unborn child welcomed into a home in which affection were rightly ordered. The quiet laborer to whom Mary was betrothed was no passive bystander to the events foretold by angel Gabriel. This humble carpenter provided for and protected Mary and the child in that immaculate grace that had already spilled into his life.

The simple home in Nazareth was a place of reverence for the Law, simplicity of life and respect for human labor. The months of Mary's pregnancy were also sort of gestation period for St Joseph. The grace flowing from Mary and her child daily strengthened and expanded the natural virtues that made Joseph the right man to stand in place of the Father and raise his Son. Joseph earnestly attended to Mary's needs each day, and together they awaited the birth of Jesus.

I wish also to share the **contemplative cry** of St Joseph. A family hiding from the storm, found no place at the keeper's door. It was this a Child was born, to save a world so cold and hollow. The sleeping town (Bethlehem), they did not know that lying in the manger now, a Savior King who had no home, has come to heal our sorrows. **Is there room in your hearts for God to write His story?**

Shepherds counting sheep at night, "Do not fear the glory light", you are precious in His sight. God has come to raise the lowly. Is there room in your heart for God to write His Story. You can come just you are, but it may set you apart, when you make room in your heart.

And trade your dreams for His glory. Make room in your heart, Mother holds the promised tight, every wrong will be made right. The road is straight, the burden's light. For in His hands, He holds tomorrow.

During this Year dedicated to St Joseph many thoughts and reflections about his Heart, Virtues, Role and Responsibilities has been reflected upon. Some important take is the truth that St Joseph is Man after God's Own Heart. And he responded trustingly, to the actions of Grace.

We can continue to learn and emulate the spiritual dispositions St Joseph. May the grace of the Year Dedicated to St Joseph, continue to provide and protect us all. Like him, we say: **"ALL FOR JESUS. ALL FOR MARY"**.

Thank you

Blessed Christmas and Grace-Filled New Year 2022.

Bro John Albert Arul Devanesan fsg



THE HEART OF LIVING

Thy Will be Done

By Edward Chu, Montfortian Associate

On a Saturday afternoon, 2 October 2021, more than 90 people gathered online via Zoom to attend “The Heart of Living”. This seminar is organised annually by the Montfortian Associates, and has been ongoing for the past three years. The seminar touches on spiritual guide for healthy living based on St Louis Marie de Montfort’s spiritual path. There is a specific theme for each seminar and this year’s theme was “Thy Will be Done”.

Br Dominic Yeo-Koh was the main speaker for the seminar. He reflected on Mary giving her consent for God’s will to be done and invited the participants to consider whether they have given their ‘yes’ to God. He noted that it is always easier to give excuses instead of saying ‘yes’ to God.

Three Montfortian Associates members: Angela Tjandrasari, Edward Chu, and Audrey Yong shared their personal experiences of saying ‘yes’ to God’s invitations in their lives. After hearing to their stories, the participants were divided into breakout groups to further share their own personal experiences with one another.

The recording of the seminar is available on <https://youtu.be/U6OHyMTC8ew>



Edward Chu’s reflection after attending “The Heart of Living”

Mary’s fiat and her resolute response to God in “thy will be done” is so powerful that it makes me ponder on my own response to my daily life situations. I wonder if I have been truly living my life according to God’s will.

While I pray this verse almost daily in the “Our Father”, I realize I do not always necessarily mean it. I feel that it is often me who is asking the Father to answer “My Will”, especially when I turn to Him in times of my distress.

Mary’s willing submission to the will of the Father, acts as a reminder for me every time I pray the first joyful mystery of the Holy Rosary, The Annunciation. It gives me the strength and courage



to say 'yes' to the Father's invitation amidst uncertainty and fear of not being good enough to live up to the commitment.

When I was approached to be a Facilitator for the Preparation for Total Consecration to Jesus Through Mary programme (TCM), I had many reasons why I should not reject this invitation. One of which was not being able to commit 4 hours each week due to my hectic business operations hours. This lack of complete trust and faith in Jesus almost led me to say "No".

Instead of saying 'yes', we tend to give excuses. I prayed about the calling to be a facilitator. It might be a small role, but I could feel Jesus asking me to stop giving excuses and to just trust him. In our colloquy, he seemed to be reminding me that in the past situations and difficulties in my life, he had always found a way out for me. It was reassuring. Through my prayers, the Holy Spirit gave me the courage to just say 'yes' and not to worry too much about the challenges of time commitment or whether I am a good fit for this role. Mary's saying 'yes' to the Father in the Annunciation certainly inspires me to embrace Mother Mary's virtues and to follow in her footsteps.

Having witnessed fellow Catholics who have committed their lives to Jesus, I realised that though their lives are not free from troubles, they are free from anxiety because they have truly entrusted their lives to 'His will'. That is why they can accept all the challenges, consequences, and even sufferings, while embracing them with a willing heart.

At present, my own fears do hold me back from totally submitting to the Father's will every day and in every aspect of my life. I do recognize this is only human as surrendering means letting go and letting God. This is where faith comes in and as Pope Francis once tweeted "to live by faith means to put our lives in the hands of God, especially in our most difficult moments".

From the session presented by Br Dominic Yeo-Koh, I am inspired to give of myself daily to Mother Mary, to Jesus, to the Holy Spirit and to our Father.

Finding Joy and Hope in Giving to the Elderly

By Livia Soetedjo in collaboration with Ambrose Chua, Montfortian Associates

Recently I participated in one of the outreach programs of the Montfortian Associates to visit the elderly. The initiative was inspired by Yvonne, a Montfortian Associates member, who has encouraged others to spend time with the elderly. Yvonne has been very active in this ministry, together with her husband, Harold. They have been visiting Uncle S, who lives in Woodlands, on a regular basis.

On a Saturday morning, arrangements were made to visit Uncle S. I teamed up with Ambrose and Yvonne for the visit. On the way there, I learnt more about Uncle S as I wanted to be sure I knew what to do. Before going up to Uncle S's flat, we went to a supermarket nearby to buy him some fruits, drinks and a big packet of Murtabak for lunch. I understand Uncle S will divide this into smaller portions over a few meals.

Uncle S is 82 years old and since his wife died 21 years ago, he has been living alone. He has no children of his own but has a godson who lives in Tampines. His flat is really clean and tidy. He had the walls repainted recently.

I introduced myself and it was very easy to strike a conversation with him. I could tell he was very happy that I had come to visit and he remained friendly and welcoming throughout my visit. He was informed beforehand that I had come to Singapore from Indonesia, and he gladly practiced his Bahasa with me.

I was really surprised listening to his life experiences as a former police officer in the crime department, how he was moved by the Holy Spirit to discover his faith in Christ and to become an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at the Church of St Mary of the Angels. He has also been active in the RCIA program, sharing his gift of faith and sponsoring others through the program.

It was heartwarming to learnt how Yvonne helped Uncle S look after himself, making sure that he take his medication regularly and go for his doctor's appointments. She even helped to change and wash big items like bedsheets.

With the ongoing lock down, his mobility issues and lack of familiarity with the internet, Uncle S was unable to attend mass in person or online for an extended period. With help from Yvonne, Harold, Ambrose and Yvonne's neighbor, Philip, from the Neighborhood Christian Community, Uncle S was finally able to attend mass in person in August this year and to receive Christ in the Eucharist. He has also overcome his fear of the internet



and is able to attend mass online today and join in the devotional prayers. Philip helped to set up an internet connection and taught him how to use the various apps on his mobile phone.

Growing old is never easy, the legs get weaker, and the toilet breaks become more frequent and inconvenient. Old age, poor health and being homebound can isolate the elderly from society. I give thanks to God for all those helping hands that strive to ease their loneliness and support their care.

I personally learnt the importance of social participation, especially for the elderly, the importance of having access to friends and remaining connected and not being left out as a member of society. Our presence and engagement help them to stay motivated and to know that it is worthwhile taking care of themselves.

It brought to my mind how St Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort worked and transformed the poorhouse of Poitiers. His zeal and devotion inspired so many people in Poitiers. Scores of people, formerly indifferent to the plight of the poor, began to see what they could do to help. Let us recall St Montfort's quote, "Those whom the world rejects must move you the most".

The visit lasted longer than usual, and it was a wonderful experience for me too. I hope that I can do something in a small way and to continue visiting Uncle S in the near future.



TOTAL CONSECRATION

to Jesus through Mary

ACCORDING TO ST. LOUIS MARIE DE MONTFORT



7-9 October 2022
Total Consecration
Retreat

22 January 2022
First Session

May those
who wish to
consecrate
themselves to
Jesus Christ
by means of
Mary submit
themselves to
the direction of
the Holy Spirit.



MONTFORTIAN EXPERIENCE 2022

MAR 7, 10, 14, 17, 19	Companions of Jesus	BLENDED
MAY 9, 12, 16, 19, 21	Thy Will Be Done	BLENDED
JUN 3, 4, 5	Gentleness of Wisdom	CLASSIC
JUL 29, 30, 31	A Heart That Forgives	CLASSIC
SEP 16, 17, 18	Laudato Si: Praised Be to You	CLASSIC
OCT 21, 22, 23	Via Maria: The Spiritual Way to Jesus	CLASSIC

BLENDED 4 NIGHTS (ONLINE) + 1 DAY (FACE-TO-FACE)

CLASSIC 3 DAYS 2 NIGHTS (FACE-TO-FACE)

