



*“Fraternal Living and the Communitarian
Dimension of the Montfortian Mission”*

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FOREWORD TO THE ACTS OF THE 32ND GENERAL CHAPTER



Dear Brothers,

We were privileged to have the 32nd General Chapter during the Easter tide, beginning the Chapter with the celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation on 9th April, and concluding it with the Feast of St. Louis Marie de Montfort. The Chapter with 50 delegates coming from 14 countries of the 5 continents was indeed an intense and profound experience of fraternity. On a daily basis, our exchanges and encounters challenged us to move beyond the diversity of culture and perspectives toward unity, reaffirming the international character of our Congregation. As the 32nd General Chapter took place, closely following the Tercentenary celebrations, it was an opportunity to recall the memorable footprints of God's intervention during the long journey of 300 years, and at the same time remind ourselves of the sound counsel given by Pope St. John Paul II: "You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things" (VC 110).

The theme of the 32nd General Chapter "Fraternal Living and the Communitarian Dimension of the Montfortian Mission" was the result of the frank evaluation and fraternal reflections the participants of the 17th Council of the Institute had in January 2017. As it was stated in the Working Document, the theme chosen has a close co-relation with the theme of the 31st General Chapter, "Authentic Leaders for a Greater

Brotherhood”, and is an attempt to strengthen and intensify our efforts in translating into action the bold statements we had made in its Message and Orientations: “...to be rooted in Christ and to live a life of authenticity... to make our communities places of living the evangelical brotherhood and a point of reference to our students, youth and adults... to reaffirm our Montfortian Gabrielite vocation and mission as educators... to give serious attention to the discernment of vocation and to initial and ongoing formation... to practice the principle of good governance in our life and mission, and to strengthen partnership with the Laity in carrying out our Montfortian mission”. The motto “Love with your heart and hands” calls us to build our fraternity with our Brothers and all those who share our Montfortian Gabrielite Mission with love, compassion and joy, and to express our love and compassion by concrete actions in our mission.

Br. Jean-Claude Lavigne, OP, the Facilitator for our 32nd General Chapter, had been insisting from the beginning of the importance of an active participation of all the members of the Congregation at all levels and throughout the entire process of the capitular journey. The Reports received from the Provinces are indicative of the fact that there was an active participation by all the Brothers in the preparatory process of the Chapter through the personal, community and Province level reflections, and through continued prayers, thanks to the efforts of the Central Administration, the Facilitator and the Chapter Preparatory Committee. Undoubtedly, the success of the 32nd General Chapter gives major credit to this high level of participation. Throughout the Chapter, all the delegates kept their focus on looking at the signs of the times and directing all their discussions and deliberations on common good of the Congregation for the future.

The Acts of the 32nd General Chapter you have in hand, is not simply a record of the events that took place during the days of the General Chapter, but a fraternal invitation to all the Brothers to begin the “Chapter of daily life” and to make it our priority during the coming 6 years. Based on the reflections on the Capitular Document in the Working Groups and in the General Assembly, the General Chapter chose the following 5 priorities which needed immediate attention on the part of the whole Congregation, following the triple criteria of discernment that were spelt out at the beginning of the Chapter: the greater glory of God, the good of the Church and the good of our society:

1. Sacred Fire
2. Formation
3. Mission Together
4. Fraternal Life
5. Education Mission

In the first place, the General Chapter affirmed that as Montfortian Gabrielities we are convinced that we are inheritors of the inner fire experienced by Montfort, as expressed in his ardent love for Jesus, the Incarnate Wisdom, tender and true devotion to Mary and passionate love of the Cross (cf. § 1.3). Therefore it is our primary duty to kindle this Sacred Fire within, by our faithfulness to personal and community spiritual exercises and dialogue (cf. § 1.1.1).

Continuing the reflections made during the 31st General Chapter and subsequently by the International Commission for Vocation and Formation, the 32nd General Chapter reaffirmed that the Formation of the Formators consistent with the Montfortian Gabrielite spirituality

and mission today is an important priority in the Congregation (cf. § 2.4). The International Team in-charge of Formation is to ensure that the future Formators are suitably trained for spiritual accompaniment and formation (cf. § 2.4.1).

We live today in a world which is increasingly characterized by partnership, collaboration and networking, and therefore the General Chapter is absolutely convinced of the necessity to work in communion with other members of the Church, the Montfortian Family, Associates and Collaborators, people inspired by the Montfortian spirituality and with all people of good will (cf. § 3.5). It is only common knowledge that Religious Life by definition is a life lived in Communities and therefore a sense of belongingness, when sustained by an attitude of fraternal acceptance, appreciation and encouragement, can help us to transcend our human frailties to celebrate and be enriched by our ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences (§ 4.4).

The 32nd General Chapter is convinced that the Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel are a global reality committed to promote holistic education for all, and as such we should be open to the universal goals of education and their realization (cf. § 5.5). The Chapter reiterated the fact that renewed efforts are to be made to progressively develop the Montfortian Education Charter to make it a comprehensive framework of Montfortian Gabrielite Education (cf. § 5.1.1.2). It is also the need of the hour to make inclusive education, technical education and promotion of Child Rights and the protection of minors become essential elements of the Montfortian Gabrielite Education in the 21st century (cf. 5.3.1.4).

As we read, reflect and pray with the Acts of the 32nd General Chapter, it should inspire and motivate us to live the present moment of our

life as Religious Brothers with greater dynamism and renewed hope, as envisaged in the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*: “Institutes of Consecrated Life are thus invited courageously to propose anew the enterprising initiative, creativity and holiness of their Founders and Foundresses, in response to the signs of the times emerging in today’s world” (VC 37).

Fraternally yours,

Bro. John Kallarackal
Superior General





GENERAL PREAMBLE TO THE ACTS OF THE CHAPTER

From the contributions of the Provinces, a theme had emerged as a priority for our 32nd General Chapter: “Fraternal Living and the Communitarian Dimension of the Montfortian Mission”. This theme was worked on by everyone, a slogan was adopted, “Love with your heart and hands”, and a logo was chosen to illustrate our Congregation’s work. All of us had the desire to live a renewal of Gabrielite religious life so as to be able to face the challenges of the contemporary world. All of us wanted to act and be concrete. All of us felt called to a strengthened apostolic dynamism.

The reflections that we received were shared during this General Chapter, which helped us identify the five priorities that we are now proposing to the whole Congregation. The Holy Spirit and our spiritual tradition helped us to make these choices from among all the issues facing us, the Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel. We have grouped these priorities into five sub-themes:

- Sacred Fire
- Formation
- Mission together
- Fraternal Life
- Education Mission

Other aspects were also highlighted and they constitute the elements of the road map that the Central Administration will keep in mind during the coming six years.

These priorities and other aspects do not fully express all that is lived in our Congregation, but they are some indicators where we need to put more energy in our fraternal communities. They also indicate where the communitarian dimension of our mission is leading us to.

These priorities, founded on strong common convictions, are intended to be concrete and operational. They cannot merely remain on paper. They require our commitment and active participation for implementation.

We know that Mary, our Mother, St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, Blessed Marie-Louise of Jesus and Father Gabriel Deshayes are with us as we continue our journey, and we seek their intercession to help us transform our priorities into action.



5 EDUCATION MISSION



Preamble

Montfortian Gabrielite Education is a gift of God in the Church for the world. It is ever attentive to the promptings of the Spirit to welcome the new and the holistic, so that the face of Jesus the Educator never fails to be reflected in full splendour. It is a mission together by its very nature and its objective is to build Communities of men and women, and to be at the service of God's Kingdom.

5.1 Conviction 1: MGE Helps Students to be Holistic Persons in Society

Montfortian Gabrielite Education will help students to arrive at the threshold of learning skills and be equipped with a sense of scientific enquiry and innovation, making them life-long learners and holistic persons in society.

5.1.1 Action 1:

We will strive to create an education Community focused on Learning Skills and on Skills for Life that help youth to become holistic, inquisitive, transformational, altruistic, and socially conscious leaders, contributing to their personal wellbeing and to that of society.

5.1.1.1 Strategy 1-a:

We will educate, train and orient all stakeholders, particularly the Brothers, Parents, Collaborators and the Alumni in Learning and in Life Skills to be imparted to students (MEC, Ch. 7, no. III-IV, p. 25-27).

5.1.1.2 Strategy 1-b:

We will progressively develop the Montfortian Education Charter to make it a comprehensive framework of Montfortian Gabrielite Education.

5.1.1.3 Strategy 1-c:

Faith Formation for Catholic students and value education for all will form an integral part of our education process.

5.1.1.4 Strategy 1-d:

Through their witnessing presence and authentic testimony, the Brothers will contribute to the students' character formation.

5.1.1.5 Strategy 1-e:

Guidance and counselling services aimed at the holistic development of students will form an integral element of Montfortian Gabrielite Education.

5.2 Conviction 2: MGE's Vision, a Powerful Tool for Transformation

"If you don't take risk for God, you won't give anything worthwhile" (Montfort, Letter no. 27). Rooted in the values of the Gospel, the Montfortian Gabrielite vision of Education is a powerful tool for personal and societal transformation. Innovation to meet the exigencies of this vision in different contexts is a present-day priority.

5.2.1 Action 2:

We will create Montfortian Education Hubs in every Sector of the Congregation to meet the challenges of our times.

5.2.1.1 Strategy 2-a:

We will create the needed conditions, including infrastructure and mentoring, so that innovations in Montfortian Gabrielite Education may flourish.

5.2.1.2 Strategy 2-b:

We will document, communicate and promote existing and new innovations in Montfortian Gabrielite Education.

5.3 Conviction 3: A Prophetic Edge Necessary in Montfortian Education Mission:

"All those by the world rejected, on your love have greater claim" (Montfort Canticle No. 149). Montfortian Education mission will possess the prophetic edge necessary to embrace the marginalized, critique the dehumanizing elements of the dominant cultures, counter gender discrimination, and offer alternative paradigms.

5.3.1 Action 3:

Every Entity in the Congregation will take necessary steps to realize the Montfortian preferential option for the poor, through well considered plans, programs and resources.

5.3.1.1 Strategy 3-a:

We will evaluate and strengthen existing initiatives for the marginalized and, during the current Mandate (2018-24), promote at least one new Community/initiative to reflect this option in every Entity.

5.3.1.2 Strategy 3-b:

We will integrate inclusive education, particularly that of the hearing and visually impaired, in all our educational institutions.

5.3.1.3 Strategy 3-c:

We will re-visualise and strengthen our Technical Education Mission to provide skills and employment opportunities to vulnerable youth.

5.3.1.4 Strategy 3-d:

Gender Equality, Human Rights Education (HRE), Sustainable Development Education (SDE), Peace Education (PE), and Child Rights and Protection of Minors are essential elements in Montfortian Gabrielite Education.

5.4 Conviction 4: ICT and Social Media Tools Realities of our Times

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Media Tools are realities of our times. We will embrace them in our Montfortian Gabrielite educational processes. We will use them with discernment to create new opportunities, and to promote values of the centrality of the human person, universal love, and interiority, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

5.4.1 Action 4:

Montfortian Gabrielite Education will use the possibilities and opportunities offered by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Media.

5.4.1.1 Strategy 4-a:

We will analyse Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

(SWOC) in the current use of ICT and Social Media in Montfortian Gabrielite Mission, and formulate policies and programs accordingly.

5.4.1.2 Strategy 4-b:

We will educate and equip students and other stakeholders to use ICT and Social Media with due prudence (MEC, no. IV, pp. 14-15).

5.5 Conviction 5: MBSGs are Open to the United Nations' Universal Goals

Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel are a global reality committed to promote holistic education for all and, as such, they are open to the United Nations' universal goals and willing to work for their realization.

5.5.1 Action 5:

Together with the whole Church and other stakeholders in our education mission, we will engage with the global goals for Sustainable Development. We will draw inspiration from the life example of St. Francis of Assisi and from the Social Teachings of the Church, particularly from the Encyclical *Laudato Si*.

5.5.1.1 Strategy 5-a:

We will educate ourselves on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), document their implementation in our mission, and promote them further. The International Gabrielite Education Secretariat, along with other Secretariats, will facilitate the same through a Gabrielite Institute for Sustainable Development Goals.

5.5.1.2 Strategy 5-b:

We will study and engage with *Laudato Si* in our education mission.

5.6 Conviction 6: MG Charism is a Gift of God to the Church

Montfortian Gabrielite Charism is a Gift of God to the Church. It impels us to share the same with our Collaborators and equip them to participate

in responsibilities at all levels for mutual enrichment.

5.6.1 Action 6:

The Brothers will provide the necessary formation to Lay Collaborators in Montfortian Gabrielite Charism and traditions, together with responsibilities in mission.

5.6.1.1 Strategy 6-a:

We will prepare a curriculum of Montfortian Gabrielite formation for Collaborators with specific timelines for realizing them.

5.6.1.2 Strategy 6-b:

We will organize Training of Formators for Collaborators and their Leaders.

5.6.1.3 Strategy 6-c:

Brothers will share with, and empower Collaborators for appropriate responsibilities in our mission.

5.6.1.4 Strategy 6-d:

The Education Secretariats in different Sectors will facilitate the analysis and formulation of specific Plan of Action suitable to each context.

5.6.1.5 Strategy 6-e:

We will strengthen the GSGP Secretariat and institutions such as Montfort Social Institute to promote JPIC issues in the Congregation. We will create new ones in Sectors where they do not already exist.



PRAYER FOR THE 32nd GENERAL CHAPTER

God our Father,
we entrust our 32nd General Chapter
to your infinite goodness and mercy.
Send us your Spirit of light and wisdom,
and grant that we may discern your will
for the good of your people
and the glory of your Name.

Lord Jesus,
be our guide on our journey.
Inspire us and give us courage.
Grant us to be attentive to your Word,
to our Brothers,
and to the realities of today's world.
Teach us to "love with our heart and hands".

Holy Mary, our dearest Mother,
help us to be like you,
open and docile to the inspirations of the Spirit.
Help us live in communion with our Brothers,
and with all those who share our spirituality and mission.

St. Louis-Marie de Montfort,
Blessed Marie-Louise of Jesus,
Father Gabriel Deshayes,
and you, Brothers,
who preceded us in the Father's House,
intercede for us.

We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

AMEN