



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER  
TO THE PARTICIPANTS  
IN THE 8th MARIOLOGICAL COLLOQUIUM**

*Friday, 13 October 2000*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters!*

1. I am pleased to welcome you today during the Eighth International Mariological Colloquium on the theme: "*St Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort: Trinitarian Spirituality in Communion with Mary*". An affectionate greeting to you all: the organizers, moderators and participants. I extend special thanks to Bishop François Garnier of Luçon for his cordial words expressing the sentiments you all share.

Today's meeting recalls the one held here in Rome in 1706 between my venerable predecessor Clement XI and the Breton missionary, Grignion de Montfort, who had come to ask the Successor of Peter for light and strength in the apostolate he had undertaken. I also remember with gratitude the pilgrimage to the tomb of this great saint in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, which Providence allowed me to make on 19 September 1996.

For me, St Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort is a significant person of reference who has enlightened me at important moments in life. When I was working as a clandestine seminarian at the Solvay factory in Kraków, my spiritual director advised me to meditate on the *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*. Many times and with great spiritual profit I read and reread this precious little ascetical book with the blue, soda-stained cover. By relating the Mother of Christ to the Trinitarian mystery, Montfort helped me to understand that *the Virgin belongs to the plan of salvation, by the Father's will, as the Mother of the incarnate Word, who was conceived by her through the power of the Holy Spirit*. Mary's every intervention in the work of the regeneration of the faithful is not in competition with Christ, but derives *from him* and is *at his service*. Mary's action in the plan of salvation is always Christocentric, that is, it is directly related to a mediation that takes place in Christ. I then realized that I could not exclude the Mother of the Lord from my life without disregarding the will of God-the-Trinity, who wanted to "begin and complete" the great mysteries of salvation history with the responsible and faithful collaboration of the humble Handmaid of Nazareth.

Now I also thank the Lord for enabling me to experience what you too have had the opportunity to study at this colloquium, i.e., that when the believer accepts Mary into his life in Christ and the Spirit, he is brought into the very heart of the Trinitarian mystery.

2. Dear brothers and sisters, during your symposium you have reflected on Trinitarian spirituality in communion with Mary: an aspect which is characteristic of Montfort's teaching.

He does not, in fact, offer a theology without influence on practical life, nor a Christianity "by proxy" without the personal acceptance of the commitments stemming from Baptism. On the contrary, he invites us to an intensely lived spirituality; he encourages us to make a free and conscious gift of ourselves to Christ and, through him, to the Holy Spirit and to the Father. In this light, we understand how reference to Mary makes the renewal of our baptismal promises perfect, since Mary is indeed the creature "most conformed to Jesus Christ" (*True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, n. 120).

Yes, the whole Christocentric and Marian spirituality taught by Montfort flows from the Trinity and leads back to it. In this connection, we are struck by his insistence on the action of the three divine Persons in Mary's regard. God the Father "gave his Only-begotten Son to the world only through Mary" and "wishes to have children through Mary until the end of the world" (*ibid.*, nn. 16, 29). God the Son "became man for our salvation but only in Mary and through Mary" and "wishes to form himself and, so to speak, incarnate himself every day in his members through his dear Mother" (*ibid.*, nn. 16, 31). God the Holy Spirit "has communicated his unspeakable gifts to Mary, his faithful Spouse" and "wishes to form elect for himself in her and through her" (*ibid.*, nn. 25, 34).

3. Mary therefore appears as the place of the love and action of the Persons of the Trinity, and Montfort presents her in a relational perspective: "Mary is entirely relative to God. Indeed, I might well call her the relation to God. She exists only with reference to God" (*ibid.*, n. 225). For this reason, the All-Holy One leads us to the Trinity. By repeating "*Totus tuus*" to her every day and living in harmony with her, we can attain an experience of the Father in confidence and boundless love (cf. *ibid.*, nn. 169, 215), docility to the Spirit (cf. *ibid.*, n. 258) and transformation of self into the likeness of Christ (cf. *ibid.*, nn. 218-221).

It sometimes happens that in catechesis and exercises of piety "the Trinitarian and Christological note that is intrinsic and essential to them" remains implicit (Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus*, n. 25). In Grignion de Montfort's vision, however, Trinitarian faith totally pervades his prayers to Mary: "Hail Mary, well-beloved daughter of the eternal Father, admirable Mother of the Son, most faithful spouse of the Holy Spirit, glorious temple of the Blessed Trinity" (*Methods for Saying the Rosary*, n. 15). Similarly, in the *Prayer for Missionaries*, addressed to the three divine Persons and focused on the last times of the Church, Mary is contemplated as "the mountain of God" (n. 25), the place of holiness that lifts us up to God and transforms us in Christ.

May every Christian make his own the doxology that Montfort puts on Mary's lips in the *Magnificat*: "May our one true God / be adored and blessed! / May the universe resound / and everyone sing: / Glory to the eternal Father, / glory to the adorable Word! / The same glory to the Holy Spirit / who unites them with his love in an unspeakable bond" (*Canticles*, 85, 6).

As I implore for each of you the constant help of the Blessed Virgin, so that you can live your vocation in communion with her, our Mother and model, I cordially give you a special Apostolic Blessing.

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