

ST. LOUIS MARIE GRIGNION DE MONTFORT

*A Homily Delivered by Our Holy Father Pope Pius XII
During the Canonization Ceremonies
Twentieth of July, Nineteen Hundred and Forty Seven*

Venerable Brothers, Beloved Sons,

When Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, whom we, under the inspiration of Divine Grace, recently decorated with the honors of sainthood, visited this motherly city to piously venerate the sepulchre of St. Peter, he was instructed by Our Predecessor Clement XI, then happily reigning, not to take up the preaching of the evangelical truth to foreign nations—as he wished—but rather to successfully restore Christian virtues in his own country.

Wherefore most willingly complying with this exhortation, he returned to France, and during the whole course of his life he left nothing undone in order that he might respond effectively and eagerly to the invitation and counsel received from the Sovereign Pontiff. He travelled through all sections of his country several times, often on foot; the apostolic traveler visited cities, towns, hamlets, and even solitary villages; and wherever this messenger of divine truth and most zealous inciter to virtue passed, there a most favorable restoration of christian life was observed; discords were settled, dissensions reconciled, hatreds extinguished; faith awakened lived again, and charity produced plentiful and salutary fruits.

Errors that were stealthily spreading, very often disguised in the garment of truth, found him a strong and indefatigable opponent; he battled bitterly against a form of false piety which deviated from the precepts of the Church and was alien to the standards and example of holy men; therefore he strove with all his strength that the integrity of Catholic doctrine be preserved unharmed, and the Catholic religion not only shine forth in minds, but also that it might be a salutary influence in private and public life.

The manner of christian perfection which he had taken upon himself and which he followed until the end of his life, he left as a sacred heritage to the two religious societies which he founded. If these societies diligently strive to follow his footsteps—as they are doing—if they emulate his outstanding charity toward God and neighbor, if they cultivate an ardent piety to the Virgin Mother of God as

he did, and imitate his humility of soul, his love of evangelical poverty, and his vehement desire of preaching, then without a doubt like their lawgiving father and founder they can very well lead others to salvation by their counsel.

On this happy occasion we deem it superfluous to urge his children to accomplish this; for deeds speak for themselves. It pleases us rather to declare summarily and briefly how he was able to lead back to the Divine Redeemer so great a number of men, how never tiring, to undertake so many journeys, how, always victorious, to overcome hardships rising from circumstances and people, and above all how he could call back to penance for their sins and to virtuous lives souls hardened in vice.

All these things, Venerable Brethren and beloved children, are easily understood if one considers his burning love towards Christ and his warm, solid, and true devotion toward the Mother of God. God was his all; wherefore he held nothing more desirable, nothing sweeter and dearer than to discover Him in all things, to know Him and love Him in all things; he desired to dedicate himself entirely to carrying out God's will and to increase His glory. When he preached to the people, that charity which burned within him so shone forth in the clarity of his expression and the brilliance of his imagery that he forcefully drew all to himself; and these souls thus won over to himself he would call back and almost compel to turn from error to truth, from vice to penitence, from indifference and distaste of heavenly things to a wholesome zeal and vehement desire to practice virtue.

Wherefore not only those who are members of the religious societies founded by him but all Christians have much which they can learn and imitate in him, especially in these days when Catholic faith is languishing, morality is declining or being destroyed, and when with grave common ruin discords are gradually increasing; nor does authority—as it should do—restrain or control these discords, nor does charity temper, reconcile or moderate them.

O that the delightful and brilliant image of this saint of heaven may return before the eyes and to the minds of all, and once again teach men that they are born not for earth but for heaven; and so excite them to obey christian precepts, to embrace fraternal harmony, and finally to possess that virtue, adorned with which they may some day with the inspiration and assistance of divine grace enjoy eternal beatitude in heaven. Amen.