

Covenant with God

Introduction

According to Grandet, Montfort's aim in his missions was "to revive the Christian spirit through the renewal of the baptismal promises," and to this Grandet adds, "and to help them (Christians) remember their undertakings, he had a formula of renewal printed and those who could write were required to sign it," and he goes on to describe at some length the ceremony into which this act of renewal was inserted.

Four printed copies have been preserved. They are mementos of missions at Pontchâteau (1709), Crossac (1709), Fontenay (1715), and Vouvant (1715). These four copies indicate that there were at least two different versions and, although they are substantially the same, the variations are interesting and so the two versions are given.

1st Formula

Vows or Promises of Holy Baptism

1 1 I firmly believe all the truths of the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2 I renounce forever Satan, the world, sin and myself.

3 With the help of God's grace, which will never be wanting to me, I promise to keep faithfully all the commandments of God and of the Church, and avoid mortal sin and its occasions, especially bad company.

4 I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ by the hands of Mary to carry my cross after him all the days of my life.

5 I believe that if I keep these promises faithfully until death, I shall be eternally saved, but that if I do not keep them, I will be eternally damned.

In testimony of this I affix my signature.

Signed in the presence of the Church in the parish of Pontchâteau, on this 4th day of May in the year 1709.

L. M. de Montfort¹

Practices to be adopted by those who have renewed their baptismal vows.

2 1 They will say at least once a day the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin, which comprises three Our Fathers and twelve Hail Marys.

2 They will go to Confession at least once a month.

3 They will avoid like the plague drinking-houses, gambling-places, dances, theatres, and other worldly spectacles.

4 Every year on the 2nd of February, they will renew the vows they made in baptism, recite the holy Rosary and make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

5 They will treasure with affection the cross given to them when renewing their promises in this contract.

6 They will shun vanity and extravagance in their clothes.

7 They will say every day 5 Our Fathers and 5 Hail Marys in honour of the 5 Names enclosed in the Cross² given to them, and in honour of the 5 wounds of Jesus crucified, their head and their model.

2nd Formula

Vows and Promises of Holy Baptism

3 1 I firmly believe all the truths contained in the holy Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2 I renounce forever the devil, the world, sin and myself.

3 With the help of God's grace, which will never be wanting, I promise to keep faithfully all the commandments of God and of the Church, and to avoid mortal sin and the occasions of mortal sin, especially bad company.

4 I give myself entirely to Jesus through the hands of Mary, to carry my cross after him all the days of my life.

5 I believe that those who break these vows without any repentance will be condemned, and that those who keep them up to death will be saved.

In testimony of this I have signed hereunder.

Written in the presence of the Church, in the parish of Vouvant, on this third day of December 1715.

L. M. de Montfort

Practices of Christian living for those who have renewed the Promises of Baptism.

4 1 I shall avoid dances, theatres, and other public spectacles, games of chance, luxurious living, vanity, bad books and songs.

2 I will never frequent, except when necessary, drinking houses and other such places of temptation.

3 I will go to Confession once a month, and even oftener as guided by a good director.

4 Every year on the 4th of July, I will renew privately the vows of my Baptism. I will say the Rosary, I will visit the Blessed Sacrament for half-an-hour, and endeavour to go to Communion on that day.

5 I will say every day the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin, and five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys in honour of the Holy Name of JESUS, a habit I will faithfully adhere to as long as I live.

¹ There is reason to doubt the authenticity of this signature. Was it really written by St. Louis Marie? On the Crossac copy the signature of the missionary is preceded by that of Guillaume Guigan.

² Grandet writes (p. 101): "The pope granted him permission to bless little crosses of paper and cloth bearing the names of Jesus and Mary, which he distributed at the end of each mission to those who had assisted at thirty three sermons." None of these crosses have survived.