

Contribution of Marial *Formatio* According to St. Louis Marie De Montfort for the Life of Marial Devotion in Indonesia

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Abstract: This paper focuses on efforts to explore the contribution of *the Marial formatio* teachings of St. Louis Marie de Montfort to the life of Marial devotion in Indonesia. Marial devotion is an integral part of Catholic spirituality and its passion is very well developed in Indonesia. However, not a few people practice devotional practices without an understanding of the correct Marial reflection so that the consequence that may be acceptable is the lack of social involvement in the concrete reality of living together in Indonesia. St. Louis Marie de Montfort was one of the theologians and mystics who offered the teaching of *Marial formatio* as a path to correct reflection on Mary. *Formatio* Marial is a term that refers to spiritual formation or spiritual formation focused on the way Mary, the mother of Jesus, had faith in God. The literature method will be used in this study and the questioning status proposed is how the Marial *formatio* teachings contribute to the appreciation of Marial devotion in Indonesia. This research found that Marial *formatio* teachings help in providing a foundation for devotion to Mary, providing spiritual-spiritual education for devotional believers, and spurring social involvement of Marial devotion practitioners in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Being holy is a fundamental vocation of Christians. The Old Testament testifies that God Himself speaks of the holiness that His people should attain. God once said: "I am the Lord your God, and you must sanctify yourselves, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44). In the subsequent course of the Israelites, prophets were actually sent to remind God's people of this and the culmination of the proclamation or testimony of the prophets found its fullness in Jesus Christ. God sent His Son to return sinful people to holy lives. The New Testament also testifies to the call to holiness when the evangelist Matthew said this: "Be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Thus, becoming holy can be interpreted as the journey and growth of the Christian life to become like Jesus. The call to be holy is always based on the grace of baptism that a follower of Christ has received (PSMM, 2021). Living in holiness was again affirmed in the Second Vatican Council through *Lumen Gentium* by saying that holiness can be attained by all believers in the experience of daily life.

The existence of written sources on the vocation to holiness never takes away from the fact that living holiness is quite a difficult endeavor. In today's context, advances in science and technology often make people forget God or move away from their basic vocation of being holy. Today's society, or better known as contemporary society, faces more challenges due to the rapid development of technology. The word contemporary itself refers to a culture or

lifestyle that has been influenced by technological advances. Progress that continues to offer many conveniences makes people prefer to take care of their personal interests. Career and the world of work seem to have become everything for humans living in this day and age. Behaviors trapped in the "hypnosis" of this cutting-edge technology often lead some people to attitudes and actions that do not reflect the depth of life. A materialist and consumerist lifestyle makes people often forget spiritual or spiritual things.

The problem even touches the concrete lives of Christians. Not a few Christians who, because of their own negligence, are dragged down by a lifestyle that worsens their own life of faith. In reality, many Christians who are no longer active in ecclesiastical activities are even further away from the practice of private prayer. Activities that bring him together with fellow believers are often ignored on the grounds of work or other interests. The Christian's life of faith will be increasingly neglected if in his busy life he never takes advantage of technological advances that are actually very familiar with his life. In the sense that the quality of a Christian's faith will be further degraded if the preaching of the gospel on social media and the internet is never accessed. In fact, the internet with all its positive effects can help Christians to explore their faith so that the quality of their faith increasingly shows positive development. However, if the internet alone is not realized as a medium for faith growth, then the quality of good faith of a Christian will be further from reality.

Moreover, the fact that the quality of faith drops or does not even develop can be observed when Christians do not bring what they believe into practice in their daily concrete lives. Everyday life should be the ground for Christians to grow in holiness. However, because of the lack of awareness of the basic vocation of life, Christians seem to abandon their commitment to holy living that they profess at baptism.

Faced with the above problems, a solution or at least a spiritual alternative is needed that allows the Christian to realize truly his vocation in life. To make this possible, Christians must go through a number of ways or processes that can bring them to the stage of maturity and perfection. The process of maturation can be carried out through the Eucharist and the reception of the sacraments, meditation and contemplation, devotions, deepening of the faith, etc. All these details always boil down to guidance to express what is believed into daily life.

In Indonesia, devotional practice is one of the choices for Catholics to grow in the vocation of holiness. Of the many devotional actions, devotion to Mary is among the most popular (Musi, 2021). This is evident when people's interest in the Rosary and visits to the many Marial pilgrimage sites is well developed. From this fact, it can be observed that the Church (Catholics) in Indonesia has a very good Marial devotion. Devotion to Mary is the entire devotion to St. Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the form of praise, admiration, respect, and love by imitating her way of life while asking for help interceding her prayers (Arsyadi, 2008). Devotion to Mary, hereinafter referred to as Marial devotion, developed quite well in Indonesia.

In relation to the vocation to holiness, devotional action and all forms of spiritual activities can be interpreted as part of the formation. All spiritual activities are carried out

always in order to bring people to holiness. Therefore, it can be said that spiritual formation is seen as a path that supports a continuous process of growth and self-formation. In formation/*formatio*, the thing that needs to be highlighted is how education that is sought works holistically in one's development. *The formatio* that is made embraces all aspects of life such as intellectual, emotional, social, cultural, and spiritual aspects of a person. The subject of *formation* is elaborated in much depth in the teachings of the saints and theologians of the Catholic Church. A guide or some kind of teaching for a better process of faith growth is sought with many reflections on the formation of Christians. It was about this formation that St. Louis Marie de Montfort talked about many things for the holiness of Christ's followers. He is a priest who is called holy by the Catholic Church for his teachings, proclamation, and deep devotion to Mary (Miller, 2014). The saint often known as St. Montfort was one of the figures who taught the concept of *formatio* as the path of holiness. Through his writings and teachings, he offered a method of Christian formation that certainly decomposed in the language and spirit peculiar to his time.

This paper attempts to formulate and repackaging the model of Christian formation that Montfort once lived, traversed, and taught. In his writings, Montfort spoke more often of formation as a verb than as a noun. He spoke explicitly and straightforwardly about Christian formation. For him, Christian formation is a process of growing a baptized person to the pinnacle of Christian maturity and perfection, that is, becoming conformed to Jesus Christ. Union with Jesus was regarded as a stage in which a person has attained complete holiness. For Montfort, one who entered into this process was none other than him who entered the school of Mary, in the womb of the virgin Mary and allowed himself to be educated and molded in it. The purpose of all these processes is for a new birth in which a person has become like Jesus Christ, the first fruit of his womb. In this school of Mary, God Himself in the person of the Holy Spirit becomes the pillar as well as the driving force and energy that allows the process of growth to occur. During that process Mary is present as the main teacher or guide, while Jesus Christ is the main subject contemplated with the teacher.

There are a number of earlier studies that also worked on the theme of the formation and teachings of St. Montfort. Alfius Areng Mutak (2018) researches formation by focusing on spiritual formation as a means to spiritual maturity. The study found that spiritual formation is done by means of scripture reading and study, prayer, fellowship, and ministry. The consistency of these processes allows a person to draw closer to God. Prawiromaruto and Stevanus (2022) also conducted research on similar themes. Research using this literature review method found that Christian education should emphasize education or spiritual formation. With spiritual formation one can be transformed and can joyfully experience union with Christ. The theme of St. Montfort's spirituality was also raised in research conducted by Kanelmut et al. (2022). The research focused on self-dedication which is a summary of the entirety of St. Montfort's spirituality. The study found that self-dedication is the perfect means of achieving union with Christ.

The peculiarity raised in this study is the meaning of Marial Montfort's formation teachings and what and how he contributed to the appreciation of Marial devotion in Indonesia. Seeing that Marial's devotion is very well developed in Indonesia, researchers feel it is important to interpret Montfort's teachings and discover what and how he contributed to devotional practice in Indonesia. This is based on the fact that Montfort spoke directly about Mary and guides good devotional practice. His solid and profound teachings are expected to help Catholics in Indonesia live their Marial devotion appropriately.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method. First of all, the author will first elaborate on the meaning of the theme of being holy. The meaning of this theme is important considering the ultimate goal of Montfort's teaching, which is to become holy. Then, the author will emphasize the meaning or deepening of literary sources and elaborate them in a number of narratives, then provide explanations in a description framework. Montfort's writings on the character of Mary and the theme of the cross and his biography became the primary sources of this research. The secondary sources used are drawn from a number of writings containing further commentary and reflection on Montfort's teachings. In addition, the author also reads other literature related to the topic of writing to help enrich the content of this paper. In connection with this, the author tries to dive into and capture what is the meaning and pattern of Montfort's thought while looking at the context or socio-economic-political background of his life. The meaning will focus on Christian formation in Montfort's perspective. The Christian *formatio* teaching characterized by Marial will be the main point of the author's meaning. The word "*Marial formation*" is used to explain that Montfort's Christian formation perspective has always been associated with Mary. After the explanation of the meaning of Montfort's teachings, the description will continue with a narrative of what and how Marial Montfort's *formatio* teachings contributed to the appreciation of Marial devotion in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Marial *formation* teaching handed down by Montfort is inseparable from the concept of *Christian formation*. Holiness is the goal Montfort aims to achieve when talking about formation. Therefore, before discussing Montfort's teaching, first describe the meaning of what and how the concept of holiness in Church doctrine is described.

Being holy is a central invitation to the Christian faith. Talking about the vocation to be holy may never be separated from the call of the Second Vatican Council through *Lumen Gentium* (LG). As a document that reinterprets the holy gospel, LG provides a profound insight into the fundamental vocation of every believer. That all people thanks to the grace of baptism are called to attain holiness (LG, 40). The emphasis shown in the above article is that all people are called to holiness. The grace of holiness is possessed not only by the clergy or religious, but also by all who acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Savior. The concept of holiness affirmed by the Second Vatican Council is not abstract. Holiness is closely related to the daily life of

those who have been baptized. The importance of living the vocation of holiness in daily life became one of the most revolutionary consciousnesses of the Second Vatican Council.

In this regard, Monfort became a reliable spiritual figure. Montfort was both a theologian and a mystic. He taught what he had done. The main source of his life and teachings is the scriptures. This French saint was a priest for 16 years and died at the age of 43. At such a young age, this poor priest has done many missions and produced various spiritual writings (Cancang, 2022). One of the ideas that often appears in his works is the concept of *formatio*. His teaching on formation is actually in unity with the idea of Christian *formatio*. However, the Marial style that he often brings up makes the expression Christian *formatio* a la St. Montfort referred to as *Marial formatio*. Actually, the phrase *formatio* Marial is not explicitly conveyed by St. Montfort in his writings. The phrase was born from the author's discovery that St. Montfort's talk of *the Christian formatio* was inseparable from his reflection on St. Virgin Mary. His views are still integrated with his teachings about Mary.

In his reflections, St. Montfort mentions that Christian formation is a pilgrimage of life. As a living pilgrimage, the formation always follows in the footsteps of the pilgrimage of Jesus Christ, the Wisdom incarnated into man in the mystery of the Incarnation. In other words, the main inspiration of formation as a pilgrimage is the event of incarnation (Wotan, 2008). The incarnation was a mystery that Montfort greatly admired because in it was clearly revealed the God who emptied Himself and depended on the fertility of Mary's womb. This dependence continued to be revealed by the Son until His death on the Cross.

The event of the incarnation became the source of St. Montfort's elaboration of his concept of *formatio*. In the mystery of the incarnation it is clearly revealed that Jesus Christ wanted to act with Mary, making a pilgrimage with her to the culmination of salvation at Calvary. It is in this context that Montfort expects all believers to make pilgrimages in the way of Mary and with Mary, following the path that the Son of God himself has pioneered and walked (PSMM, 2000). Montfort reasoned this way: "if the holy God alone used Mary's way to approach Man, why don't we use the same way? Why are we so presumptuous about wanting to approach the Divine without intermediaries?" (BS 152-159; PSMM, 2000). In other words, Montfort understood God's self-emptying in Mary's womb as an example that the faithful should follow. From this Montfort then concluded that Mary was the easiest, shortest, and safest path to Christ. In other words, formation as a pilgrimage of life is to follow in the footsteps of the Son, daring to step in the path of Mary in the spirit of kenosis (self-emptying) and humility.

By seeing *formatio* as a pilgrimage with Mary, *formatio* Marial is a process of "being". The term "to be" refers to the absence of an end or something that never ends with a period. That is, formation is also seen as a continuous process in this pilgrimage of life. Life pilgrimage is the process of seeking or stepping towards something happy (Banusu, 2020). Thus *the Marial formatio* according to Montfort is characterized by 'always on the go', something active and moving forward, as well as dynamic and without stopping. Therefore, Marial's *formatio* came to be understood as a struggle to grow in faithfulness and sacrifice. Because of this awareness,

Montfort offered four means: a tempestuous longing for Jesus, constant prayer, complete mortification, and true devotion to Mary (CKA 181-222; PSMM, 1995). The phrase "constantly" is often used by Montfort when speaking of these four means. With this phrase Montfort wants to affirm that the four means above are not disposable means, but are cultivated continuously until death. This process is also referred to as *on-going formation*, a term very familiar to Montfort's followers.

The term "holistic" was never alluded to by Montfort in his works. However, in his writings, especially "Tempestuous Prayer" (DM) and "Regula Imam Maria" (RIM), the holistic nuances of *formatio* are keenly felt. Holistic means that the formation encompasses the entire human dimension. For Montfort, formation must be directed at the process of rebirth of each person into a *liberos* self and fully devoted to God through Mary. A free person according to Montfort is a person who has reached human and spiritual maturity, a person who is entirely free both physically, mentally-emotionally, and spiritually. *First*, physically free are those who break away from all kinds of relational ties whether heredity, worldly friendship or from the bond of worldly goods. On this, Montfort says; "They are totally inattachment, without father, mother, without brothers, sisters, without relatives, without worldly friendships, without possessions, without burdens of trouble, and even without their own will" (DM 7). *Second*, mental-emotional (psychological) freedom are those who are free from various potentially disturbing psychological pressures, such as past burdens or trauma, anxiety about the future, and various types of human psychological diseases. On this Montfort said: "Servants of Thy love and servants of Thy will. They are people without problems and problems, even without their own will, not braked by self-love" (DM 8). *Third*, spiritually free are those who are completely possessed and moved by the Spirit of God, fully obedient and faithful to the guidance and workings of the Spirit. Montfort said: "Servants of Your love, servants of Your will, figures according to the desires of Your heart, ready to do Your will, ready to obey You, like clouds floating high they move and depart according to the breath of the Holy Spirit" (DM 9-10). This means that free people are those who achieve the freedom of God's children.

As a noun, *liberos* refers to those who grow in their identity as true children of Our Lady. Those who cloth Marial virtues such as humility, sincere obedience, firm faith, and deep purity of heart.

"Mary's true children conceived and born of her love, carried and boasted, carried and fed from her milk, reared by her nurturing efforts, exposed by her hands, enriched by her grace and performed true devotion to the most holy virgin, Mary's true servants." (Society of Maria Montfortan, 2020).

The above quotation is intended to affirm that free people are those who live and mature in Mary's upbringing, guidance, and upbringing. Identity as Mary's true child is made possible by several important points that will be described below.

The school in Montfort's idea is nothing but an imitation of the school model passed through by Jesus in the mystery of the incarnation (Suhardi, 2015). In the event of God's incarnation the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit chose Mary as the way to approach and

unite with man. Of this God-chosen means Montfort confidently exclaimed: "God willed to begin and accomplish His great work through the most holy virgin from the moment He created it, so we may calmly believe that God will never change His attitude" (BS, 15). Montfort further explains:

God the Father gave His only begotten Son to the world none other than through Mary. Quoting St. Augustine, he explained that the world did not deserve to receive the Son of God directly from the Father's hand and therefore the Father had given His Son to the world to receive it through Mary. God the Son became man for our salvation, but in and by Mary. The Son found his suitable and secure place in the womb of the virgin Mary and chose to depend entirely on Mary. God the Holy Spirit had formed Jesus Christ in Mary after first seeking this woman's approval through one of the archangels. The Holy Spirit was barren in God because he produced no other person, but through Mary whom he had taken as a bride, He became fertile, produced His art, God became man (BS, 16).

Through explanations such as these, Montfort convinces his audience that if God alone uses Mary's ways and means to approach people, why don't we use the same way to approach God (BS, 75)? People will have perfect happiness if they include themselves in this school. In this school, Mary herself became its primary institution and teacher, while the Holy Spirit was the divine Spirit, Energy, or Power who fully controlled the process of formation (creation) and re-creation (re-creation) of those who entered this school. Admission to the Marian School means enrolling, coming to Mary voluntarily, and with full trust in Mary's guidance and help. In short, attending Mary's School means building a personal and intimate relationship and closeness with Mary.

The relationship presupposes a radical surrender to Mary. That surrender includes the body and all its senses and members, the soul and all its abilities, external possessions, worldly possessions both present and future, and all spiritual possessions including merit, virtues, works of charity that have been, are, and will be done (BS, 121). Everything must be given to Mary including the advantages and virtues she has (Seeger, 2019). Giving everything will enable a person to arrive at the stage of being fully possessed by God (Trang, 2023). In this way, one will gain all the holiness and freedom of being a child of God.

In another of his writings, *Love of the Eternal Wisdom* (CKA), Montfort underlines that the essence of true filial piety or relationship lies in high reverence for Mary's majesty, great gratitude for her kindness, high zeal for her glory, constant invocation for her help, complete dependence on her power, and firm reliance and full trust in the goodness of her mother (CKA, 215). The characteristics of true filial piety, according to Montfort, include being mental. That is, filial piety comes from mind and heart, growing out of our respect for Mary; Tender filial piety means trusting in the most holy virgin, as a child is to her good mother; a holy devotion that leads people away from sin, and follows Mary's virtues especially her humility, her living faith and her blind obedience (BS, 106-108). So, attending Mary's School also means coming to Mary with a true devotional attitude, full of respect and trust, also driven

by a strong will to listen and obey Mary's care and guidance. Montfort assured his audience that God the Son himself had entered Mary's School and was completely obedient and dependent on Mary. Therefore, Christians are invited to fearlessly and hesitantly choose the same path to depend on Mary. For Montfort in this Marian School, a person will find all the things he needs for growth and formation into the likeness of Jesus.

As a primary educator, Mary will enrich believers with her personal knowledge and experience with God. Mary was the master of Jesus, for she was the only man who was most closely united and close to Him. Mary knew how to be a disciple of Jesus and the secret to remaining faithful to be His disciple. Who finds Mary, finds Jesus (BS, 50). For it was only the Spirit of Christ in Mary that she was in Mary and was in her duty to teach Christ and bring it to all people (BS, 75).

Listening is the attitude that allows Christians to experience Mary's upbringing. Those who study with her are expected to be able to listen to Mary, to hear her life stories and experiences encountering, loving, and serving the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus, one allowed Mary's knowledge and experience of God to be her experience as well. He let Mary's story be his story and Mary's words became his words as well. For example, listening to the words that often came out of Mary's mouth when she was confused at the words of the Angel, as she followed the way of the cross of her Son, "it was done, it was done to me according to Your will" (Luke 1:38). When she saw the crisis of the master of the wedding at Cana, Mary knew who to complain to, she also knew very well what the servants needed to do in such difficult situations, "do whatever He tells you." These words of Mary can be the words of anyone who decides to study with her when faced with crisis, confusion, and emptiness of life.

A person formed by and in Mary always does things through, with, in, and for Mary (BS, 260-265). Through Mary means, in all things one must obey the most holy Virgin and allow oneself to be guided by her spirit, which is none other than the Spirit of Jesus Himself. By Mary means, making Mary the perfect model. In every action, one could ask what Mary would say or do if she faced the same situation she is today. In Mary means, it is invited to truly know Mary as an incomparable beauty and privilege. This can be experienced if one contemplates Mary as God's paradise, the tree of life that bears the sweetest fruit of Jesus Christ, and all the titles that the Church fathers bestowed upon Mary. To Mary means, in every way that one does everything for Mary as a concretization of one's total surrender to serve her, without the slightest hesitation.

All the *formatio* passed through in Mary's school and the process of being educated and shaped by her always boils down to rebirth resembling Mary's firstborn, Jesus. At this point, the important thing to realize is that *the Marial formatio* in Montfort's perspective is not something Mariancentric. Montfort maintained that all Christian faith dynamics should always be Christ-centered (Christocentric). Mary is only a means to an intimate union with Jesus. Montfort himself emphatically said that Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man must be the ultimate goal of all filial piety, otherwise it is incorrect and misleading. Jesus Christ is the only

teacher to teach, the only God on whom we depend, the only head with whom we are united (BS, 61). Therefore, Montfort's Marial model of formation must answer everyone's desire to be united with Christ. Mary's school was merely a ground to prepare fertile ground for the union. By abiding in Mary, one is on the way to that new creation in Christ, where he or she is molded in Mary to resemble Christ. The cooperation between the Holy Spirit and Mary will transform a person into a new creation in Christ. Montfort follows the analogy of St. Augustine referring to Mary as 'the cast of God'. Whoever is poured into it and wants to be shaped by it will perfectly resemble the First Casting, Jesus Christ.

In Mary's womb, by the power of the Holy Spirit a person miraculously undergoes a transformation and is born again into a new person like Jesus Christ. The qualities that will emerge are *first*, being a *liberos* person, that is, a person who is entirely free, both physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Man is fully available to God alone.

Second, a man of strong faith, that is, a person whose faith in God is unshakable and never dry. The new birth was also the moment when one was rewarded with Mary's own faith that always exceeded the faith of patriarchs, prophets and any saints. All one's actions are ultimately driven by this pure and firm faith (BS, 214). Mary gladly magnifies a person's trust, that is, trust in God and in herself (BS, 216).

Third, a noble-hearted man, that is, a person wholly filled and moved by love. A person no longer acts out of fear of God, but out of love for Him (BS, 215). In addition, he will also be poured out by Mary in his own heart so that he is able to glorify God in all things. Mary replaced our Spirit to rejoice in God.

Fourth, to become the man Jesus Christ, that is, a person wholly imbued and moved by the Spirit of Jesus Himself (BS, 218). For Montfort, doing everything through, with, in, and for Mary was nothing but a moment in which one did everything through, with, in, and for Jesus Christ. This is clearly revealed in the formula of self-dedication that Montfort encouraged to pray for daily: "I am yours alone, and all my possessions I commend to you, O beloved Jesus, through Mary, your holy mother." A denser expression of this formula appears in the statement: "*Totus Tuus* Mary". What was offered to Jesus in Mary's hands was '*everything*'. This spirit of *Totus Tuus* is also echoed in Montfort's favorite motto, "Deo Soli" (for God alone) or in recent reflections on Montfort's life, work, spirituality, and teachings: "wholly or never." This kind of spirituality and slogan of life reaffirms the basic qualities that everyone should possess.

The Catholic Church in Indonesia is very Marial. The Marial dimension appears to be one of the contents of the tendency to build a mystical communion of the Church in Indonesia (Pasi, 2020). The concrete thing that can be observed from this Marial dimension is seen in the development of Marial devotional practices in various places. This reality will be easily observed when May and October arrive. During these two months devoted to Marial devotion, many people openly hold Marial-style activities, such as Marial pilgrimages, house-to-house Rosary prayers, procession of the statue of the Virgin Mary, etc. In addition to the devotion that develops among these people, the coral Marial Church in Indonesia is also seen in a number

of congregations that live the spirit of Marial. These details presumably support the assertion that the Church in Indonesia is Marial.

In his descriptions, Montfort often emphasized the Marial aspect of his teachings. This shows that Montfort never separated Mary from all forms of human effort to attain holiness. For Montfort, Mary was the mother who encouraged her son to come to faith in Jesus, his Son. It is for this reason that Montfort's teachings have direct relevance to the Church in Indonesia. Such is the Marial Church in Indonesia, perhaps Montfort's teachings can deepen and strengthen the Marial devotion that has actually developed among the people. In this regard, there are three things that should summarize the picture of the contribution of Marial Montfort's *formatio* teaching to the appreciation of Marial devotion in Indonesia.

In reality, Catholics in Indonesia perform various acts of Marial devotion. These devotional acts often invite questions for those who are only devoted to devotion or even non-Catholics. As a small flock in a country dominated by Muslims, Catholics are challenged to have a foundation to explain everything from what it practices. It was precisely at this point that Catholics were able to use Montfort's teaching as a basis for explaining devotional practices that he routinely practiced for a period of time. This statement is based on the fact that Montfort's teaching became one of the purported sources of Marial's teachings in line with the inspiration of the universal Church. With deep reflection on Mary, Montfort presents a teaching that allows one to correctly explain Mary's position in the Christian faith. In short, Montfort's teaching provides systematic and profound answers to questions concerning Our Lady.

This is especially related to the belief in Mary's intercession. Many people think that Catholics worship Mary as God. Of course, this is very contrary to the faith of the Church. To correct this misconception, Montfort's teaching on *Marial's formatio* provides a very solid and profound answer (Setzer, 1952). In short, Montfort says that Mary was only a mediator for Catholics to get them to Jesus. Mary was always placed in God's plan of salvation. (Bala, 2015). Marial devotion is always Christ-centered (Christocentric) in His union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. That is, elements of devotion must always prioritize trinitarian, christological, ecclesial, biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, and anthropological aspects (Ardijanto, 2015).

The above explanation becomes central to Montfort's teaching when the question arises about Mary's position in the faith of the Catholic Church. In accordance with the Indonesian context, Montfort's teachings helped Indonesian Catholics, especially Marial devotional believers, become more confident to live out their devotional practices. Marial Montfort's *formatio* teachings can thus help Marial devotionists to deepen their devotional action. They will be enabled to remain faithful despite challenges as religious and religious differences touch their lives. The fact that Marial's prayer places were rejected would not discourage him from remaining devoted to Mary. Thus, the positive impact of the Marial *formatio* which Montfort expounded so beautifully was also directly felt by Marial devotional practitioners in Indonesia. That is, even though they are often faced with challenges in faith, Marial devotion practitioners in Indonesia remain consistent with the spiritual attitude they have chosen.

Looking at the overall context of what Montfort taught, what can be said is that the phrases that arise are often related to the process of education. This is evident when Montfort used the term entry in Mary's school, educated and formed, until finally born again. What Montfort said is indicated as something related to the process of education. It is in this scheme that devotional practitioners in Indonesia understand their spiritual journey. As Montfort points out, Marial devotionists in Indonesia can understand themselves as people who are getting education from Maria herself. An understanding of Mary's involvement in salvation history, her virtues, and her role for the faithful are three broad lines of reflection that can be drawn from Montfort's teaching.

Marial Montfort's *formatio* teachings profoundly lead people to arrive at a proper reflection on Our Lady. For Montfort Mary was not only the mother present for Jesus, but she also became the mother of everyone who had faith in Jesus. The first reflection that Mary was the mother of Jesus may have been well understood by some parishioners. However, the second reflection, that of Mary as the mother of anyone who believes in Jesus, does not seem to receive enough attention. It is characterized by the development of devotional practices that are not accompanied by proper reflection on them.

Briefly, Montfort wants to say that Mary is the mother of all believers in the order of Grace (Miller, 2017). *Formatio* Marial helps devotional believers to experience Mary's unique role in her pilgrimage to salvation. This is an important basis, because Marial devotion does not stop at a series of rituals. Marial devotion is a means of truly exploring and realizing Mary's role in the salvation of Christ's followers. This realization led Marial devotion practitioners in Indonesia to a deep spiritual connection with Mary as the spiritual mother. Thus, Marial devotionists will be more consistent in their prayers and spiritual obedience for their sanctification as disciples of Christ.

In the midst of the reality of Indonesia's pluralism, the Church is called to be socially involved in building society. This involvement has a direct connection with Montfort's teaching that *Marial's formatio* always leads people to arrive at a holistic transformation of the self. Holistic transformation means that there is commitment and change that touches various aspects, such as spiritual, communal, and social aspects of the Church. In this regard, it appears that the social aspect is one of the determinants of a holistic change of a person. A person is only said to develop in his faith if he has a share in social life. It is not enough for a person to develop only in the spiritual aspect or to deal only with everything internal to the Church. What is believed should not only reach the area of personal motivation (*feel good spirituality*) (Hariandja, 2023). This is also what people who choose to practice Marial devotion should realize in their lives. Still in the same frame of meaning, people who are devoted to Mary must also be able to see themselves as meaningful to others. That is, he must not only arrive at routine devotional practices, but must also demonstrate his involvement concretely in building others. In this regard, the realization that must be possessed is that one's faith has no meaning in the least if he does not contribute to his social life (*cf.* Yak. 2:14—26). To have faith is to act on faith. As part of the Church, every believer must realize that the Church is also responsible for

developing itself in developing society as a whole, covering various parties and aspects (Poa, 2023). Therefore, social involvement is also one of the important criteria to review whether someone has good devotional practices or vice versa.

Montfort said that everyone should have *liberos* qualities in him. This quality enables a person to be truly free to carry out his mission. In his description, Montfort says that one of the attitudes that can be taken if a person is imbued with the spirit of *liberos* is that he is able to rid himself of his own bad thoughts. This is relevant to Indonesian Catholics who are trapped feeling doubtful and afraid of being judged badly. Not a few people feel awkward to carry out humanitarian actions for fear of being judged as an attempt at Christianization. According to Montfort's teachings, such an attitude can be judged as a prejudice that exists only in the mind. The thought of Christianization thus becomes something that prevents one from doing anything meaningful. It is precisely in this kind of experience that the qualities of *liberos* are needed by a person. *Liberos* makes a person to the stage of being free from his own bad thoughts.

In line with what Montfort taught, people devoted to Mary should still prioritize positive concrete actions rather than just getting stuck in thoughts. Doing something good is the fruit of the depths of one's faith. Doing something remains the first choice despite negative accusations, such as Christianization. In Montfort's perspective, such a reality is classified as one who is not mentally-emotionally free. For Montfort, people trapped in various kinds of psychic stress have the potential to disrupt the mission. In this case, people who feel fear because of alleged attempts at Christianization can reflect on Montfort's teachings. That one must be free from certain problems and problems so that his mission continues to run well (DM, 8). That is, people do not need to worry and fear that he is labeled negatively or that there may be other consequences that he will have to deal with later. Thus, the most important thing that is required of a person devoted to Mary is to be free from the influence of any accusations and to remain focused on the mission entrusted to her.

A person who dares to act without getting caught up in his own negative thoughts is referred to by Montfort as the true children of Our Lady. That is, he grew in his identity as a person who entered Mary's school, was educated and formed there, and was born again. Active involvement in social life is the fruit of all the devotional prayers he conducts. Her identity as Mary's true child will be affirmed when from prayers and other devotional activities, she has a commitment to always do something for the welfare of her neighbor. It is not wrong for someone who is doing something for others freely to be devoted to Mary. This statement is an affirmation of what was described above that Marial's *formatio* is always holistic.

Montfort also often emphasized Mary's simplicity and devotion to God. Simplicity and total devotion to God became the underlying qualities of such devotion. Marial devotionists can certainly adopt these two virtues to be able to live simply, but still strive to be kind to everyone, regardless of background. These two qualities became a central part of Montfort's teaching as well as motives that encouraged believers to engage in interfaith cooperation. Montfort's reflection that Mary is a true devotee of God can inspire devotional believers to view people of other faiths as neighbors to be valued and supported.

Thus, Monfort's *marial formatio* teachings can be said to be a spirituality that provides a deep and applicable understanding for Marial devotion practitioners in Indonesia. That is, the interpretation of the teachings of *formatio* marial not only enriches the spiritual life of a devotionist, but also raises a solid basis for the growth of devotional quality in the dynamics of plurality in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of the marial formatio of St. Louis Marie de Montfort was part of the further development of the spirituality of the formation of the Catholic faith. In particular, Montfort's reflections on *formatio* focus on Mary's position and role in the history of human salvation. The special talk of Mary led to the teaching of *formatio* developed by Montfort referred to by the author as *formatio* marial. In essence, *Montfort's marial formatio* focuses on the reflection that a Christian will easily and perfectly achieve union with Jesus if he involves Mary in his formation. Mary had a great hand in formatting a person in the process of attaining holiness.

The marial formatio expressed by Monfort also contributed to deepening the quality of devotion for marial devotion practitioners in Indonesia. This can be observed when Montfort's teaching gives the following three points. *First*, it provides a foundation for devotion to Mary. Montfort's teaching helps when the question arises of Mary being honored in acts of devotion. Marial devotionists can answer questions that Mary is only a means to arrive at Jesus easily and perfectly. Marial devotion must be christocentric, meaning that Christ remains the center and end of the end. *Second*, provide spiritual-spiritual education. The understanding of Mary gained from Montfort's teachings enabled the followers of marial devotion in Indonesia to be faithful precisely in accordance with the spirit of the teachings of the Catholic Church. *Third*, spur social involvement of devotional believers. True devotion for Montfort is one that leads people to concrete positive actions. In the Indonesian context, Montfort's teachings became an inspiration for devotional believers to be actively involved in living together. A deep understanding of Maria allows for an inner encouragement of devotional believers to see social engagement as the perfect form of devotional action in Indonesia.

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