

## PARADIGM IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLING FOR LIBERATION THROUGH THE MONTFORT IDEOLOGY IN THE THAI CONTEXT

**Anuwat Wipakthamrongkun<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** In order to fully develop all human dimensions and live a life with full dignity of humanity; To liberate themselves to achieve freedom on the basis of individual experience towards the social and cultural contexts (Brothers of Saint Gabriel 1986: 38); With a principle called "Means to acquire divine Wisdom". There are four principles of practice as follows: 1) Ardent desire 2) Contemplatives 3) Reflection 4) Self-Dedication (Brothers of Saint Gabriel, 1987: 100-110) to be able to access, understand the reality of life and create a new meaning to be a perfect holistic person who can live in a diverse society.

**Key Words:** Montfort Ideology, Catholic schooling, Liberation

### **Introduction**

The world is facing the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution Era, which is driven by technology and innovations. These will change people's way of life and how they work, which calls for human development or human resources improvement to be well prepared of the world transition to the current Globalization, which is dynamic with the elements of economic, political and scientific advancements and progress of information technology system which is the main stream to support and drive structural mechanism and every level of operation to meet the swift changes of the world. (Luterbach & Brown, 2011, p. 1)

At the same time another group of global citizens start to raise questions to the rhetoric of development and each theory leads people from the present trend and causes people to be aware of their positions, wealth or power which are not renewable or able to meet the value and dignity of human beings. All human beings are craving for their goals of life. All these depend on the organization of education in every level of any education institution so as to be able to produce people with all characteristics required by human society. This is a big challenge to leaders in the field of education which includes teachers who must learn the paradigm of schooling, ways of thinking out of the frame.

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<sup>1</sup> Doctorate candidate of Education (Development Education) Faculty of Education, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. Bsganuwat@gmail.com

The education organization of Thai society needs to integrate holistic and balanced development due to the fact that state and characteristic of global and Thai societies are dynamic with various factors of economic, political, scientific and technological progress towards digital society, which is the main stream that moves the structural and operative mechanisms of all levels to follow the global trends which changes very rapidly, which forces education system to develop and change in accordance with the changes of the world. In the study of Sumon Amornwiwat (2016, p. 21) it was found that recognition and self-existence have the dimension of value or universal ultimate leading to the freedom of restrictiveness or selfishness in the same way. Thus, education is the learning process for life development in all dimensions to get rid of bad things that enslave us and allows us to live freely and happily in the society.

The process of sustainable human development is a challenge of various transforms of Thai society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This leads to changes in various aspects such as the adaptation of identities from being Thai to global citizens, the change of focuses from self-development to meet economic, and paradigm-shift from trying to overcome nature to how to live peacefully with nature. Consequently, human will have to adapt themselves to fit the eras in accordance with the social mechanism and context, which drives global trends that enslave human in various forms of bonds that force human to compete with one another continually in a shaking and confusing manner.

Montfort ideology that is practiced by Catholic schooling as education philosophy and common vision of schools under the supervision of Saint Gabriel Foundation of Thailand emphasizes the significance of human development in all dimensions to the optimum to enable human to grow up with dignity of being human with self-esteem to enable them to attain ultimate freedom and liberty on the basis of individual experience to social context and culture. (Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1986, p. 38)

The author would like to present the Paradigm in the Catholic Schooling for Liberation through Montfort Ideology in the Thai Context in 4 various aspects as: 1. Origin, meaning of Montfort ideology in Catholic schooling for liberation. 2. Paradigm of Catholic schooling for liberation in the light of Montfort ideology. 3. Ways for application of the benefits of paradigm of schooling for liberation in the light of Montfort ideology. 4. Conclusion

### **1. Origin and meaning of Montfort ideology in Catholic schooling for liberation from A.D. 1716 – the Present**

The origin of Montfort ideology is St. Louise Marie Grignon de Montfort (A.D. 1673 – 1716, 43 years in all during which this saint worked in the field of social services, public welfare, and education of youths. All these experiences culminated in Montfort ideology which included collaborators of: 1. Fathers of the company of Mary A.D. 1705, with the mission of spreading the love of God and the Blessed Virgin Mary. 2. The Brothers of St. Gabriel A.D. 1705 whose main responsibility was children and youth education and 3. The Sisters of Wisdom A.D. 1707 who took care of the sick and the disabled and taught children and cared of the infirmed in the hospitals (Brothers of Saint Gabriel 1994: 759-774) 172 years after his death, the stories of his exemplary life and goodness led the Catholic Church under Pope Leo XIII as the head of the Church beatified Louise Marie as a Blessed on January 22, 1888 and 59 years later Pope Pius XII canonized him a saint on July 20, 1947 by declaring; “Let us imitate the examples of Saint Louise in his devout dedication in helping fellow human beings to be good, assisting the poor and pitiable who are less fortunate than us and offering every deed that we perform for God Alone to create peace in the world. This Saint is a holy person”

To perpetuate Montfort ideology in Catholic schooling, the Brothers of Saint Gabriel set up a charity school at La Rochelle, France in 1716 with the Brothers as supervisors. Later the school was officially recognized by the French authorities on March 3, 1853 with the Brothers of Saint Gabriel as Montfort ideology perpetuators through the continual of Catholic schooling with Montfort ideology of “God Alone” as inspiration, or driving, which means steadfastly doing everything for God (Brother of saint Gabriel 1987: 8) Louise Marie once said, “Schooling can be compared to cultivating faith and good ethics of the Church. Schools are as important as churches because they are places where children are educated so as to grow up to be worthwhile citizens in the future.” (Bauvineau, 1994, p. 341)

The Brothers of Saint Gabriel carried on Catholic schooling through Montfort ideology and were able to exist in the world history for 303 years (1716- 2019). The operated schools in Italy, Brazil, Canada, Spain, India, Malaysia, Africa, Thailand and Fiji in the Pacific region with the total of 1,194 members (data as of January 2, 2017) with every level of education institutions worldwide: 195 schools of basic education, 41 technical institutes, 15 schools for students with disabilities (the blind and deaf) and 8 universities with 99 institutes for charity and 69 hotels all together 427 premises. They educate 291,755 students as illustrated in the chart.(Brother of Saint Gabriel, 2010, p. 5)

### **1.1 Guideline of Montfort Ideology in Catholic Schooling for liberation in Thai Context**

Montfort ideology has adopted its guideline in schooling to develop absolute human beings since 1716. It was a Catholic guideline that moved in the opposite direction of the world trend of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. When the world developed and changed with time and Montfort ideology has been passed on through Catholic schooling until the international community recognizes children's rights of receiving education as being the priority in significance.

The primary goals of Catholic schooling are to develop children's potentials in every dimension to create holistically qualified citizens. Later, in 1977, the Ministry of the Holy See for education proclaimed the guideline for Catholic schooling for complete development of human beings by providing education and formation of human in every dimension as the main mission of service to mankind (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) Similarly, Roman Catholic Church in Thailand set up the policies for Catholic schooling as the field for education, rejuvenation of life to promote human dignity, create higher ethics and peace in the world society (Thai Catholic Bishops' Council, 2002, pp. 50-51)

Catholic schooling before the transformation of government system 1932 was like the starting point of education system in schools which had great impacts on the transformation of Thailand and played a part in expanding education opportunity to common people by various religious congregations (Supanee Kanjanutthiti, 1964, p. 110) These religious congregations which played important role in education development at that time were: the Brothers of Saint Gabriel 1901, the Sisters of Saint de Chart 1905, the Ursuline sisters 1924 and the Christian Brothers 1927

Religious congregations which played significant role in Catholic schooling during the education transformation 1886-1932 were: The Brothers of Saint Gabriel, who travelled to Thailand on October 20, 1901 through the invitation of Father Emil Colombe, a Catholic priest. They were 1. Brother Martin de Tours, 2. Brother Abel, 3. Brother August, 4. Brother Gabriel Ferati and 5. Brother Francoise Hilaire to supervise the Catholic schooling at Assumption College, Bangrak, which was established by Father Emil Colombe on February 16, 1885.

Later the Brothers of Saint Gabriel from France, Spain, India and Thailand tried to extend Catholic schooling by setting up schools in various regions of Thailand under the ideology of the government combined with existing political, economic, social and cultural factors of the era influencing in setting

up the role and direction of education organization in various eras through Montfort ideology of Catholic schooling of “God Alone” meaning constantly doing everything for the greater glory of God alone. (Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1987, p. 8)

The Brothers of Saint Gabriel firmly remain faithful to Montfort ideology resulting in adopting education philosophy, vision and commitment of Catholic schooling focusing on developing human beings from internal life to liberate themselves from every bonds and hindrances that prevent them from attaining the optimum human potentials (Brother of Saint Gabriel 1986:40) with three main purposes of: 1. Learning and understanding the Eternal Wisdom. 2. Understanding and transforming themselves in line with the Eternal Wisdom and 3. Devoting themselves to transform society with obedience to the Eternal Wisdom> Louise Marie said, “Schooling can be compared to cultivating faith and moral ethics of the Church. Therefore, schools are as important as churches because they are the places where children are educated to become worthy citizens of the future” (Bauvineau, 1994, p. 342)

The author would like to present some guideline of Montfort ideology in Catholic schooling for liberation that had been recorded in the compilation of Montfort’s writings of 1987 on Rules to be observed in the charity schools of the Daughters of Wisdom in 1715 no. 281-292 with 5 main principles of schooling

First Principle: Montfort ideology has the goal of searching for knowledge, promoting spiritual virtues of every child (Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1987, p. 469) with the following guideline, search for life eternal truth and develop awareness by emphasizing on the importance of moral formation, academic and science by integrating virtues and goodness based on education philosophy and religious teachings as principles in schooling for the development of learners in all dimensions of potentials to the optimum to live a life with maximum human dignity since 1901.(Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1986, pp. 80-81)

Second Principle Montfort ideology gives importance to child center for all dimension development of each individual child, which must be evaluated and recognized(Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1987, p. 470) The guideline is as follows: Montfort schooling emphasizes on the importance of learners of education organization process and the development of the potentials of each individual child. Cousin (1971, p. 47) wrote in his records that curriculum promoting activities at Both Assumption College and St. Gabriel were diverse such as

physical exercises, team sports like football, tennis and plays various musical instruments, science clubs, English club, Thai language club and various clubs based on personal religions.

Third principle: Montfort ideology is the type of schooling that is given free of charge so that every learner is given equal access to education (Brother of Saint Gabriel. 1987: 470). It was done in the following manners: free of charge service. Regardless of religions, social status as was recorded in Cousin (1971, p. 31) that in 1981, there were students of various nationalities such as Thai, Chinese, Myanmar, Indian, and Vietnamese of whom 2,600 were Buddhists, 543 Catholic, 80 Muslims, 21 Sikhs, 14 Protestants and 11 Hindus. These figures explained that the mixed environment of Catholic schooling that was well recognized with confidence, faith and cooperation which leads to transformation of people in the society to attain the desired goal of the government from 1868-1932.

While the government in 1869-1932 started a new program to organize schooling. They developed the way schooling that was carried out more likely in the similar manner as it was done in western countries so that every level of the citizens had the same opportunity of schooling, which like laying basic foundation in human development for better capabilities and qualities. Unfortunately, the study of Warunee Osatharom (1981, p. 94) found that the new perspectives of new education program at that time stressed more on nationalistic ideology and the culture of the country of the leaders of the Absolute Monarchy system that gave more importance to educating children of the Royal house hold and high position civilians, children of high social status for stronger support of leadership status. The study of Luckhana Punvichai (1990, p. 108) discovered that patriotic ideology and national culture of leading persons in the Absolute Monarchy had great significance on the stability of social structure that divided people into various hierarchical levels with the upper class were better educated, more intelligent and capable of keeping the citizens from various problems.

After the crises of World War II, Thai education develop in accordance with Economic and Social Development Plans 1 -7 from 1962 – 1996, which emphasize mainly on the economy and society as cores more than human resources. Until the National Economic and Social Development Plan VIII of 1997-2001, which was the important pivoting point that stressed more on the collaboration of every sector of the society that emphasized on human resources as the center of development and made of economy as a device to develop human beings to the well-being status until the National Economic and Social Development Plan XII from 2017-2021.

Fourth Principle: Montfort ideology laid importance on regulations, disciplines and inner life. (Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1987, p. 471). The promotion of regulations as main factors that the Brothers of St. Gabriel emphasized on giving moral lessons to every level of learners on a monthly basis as recorded in the memo of Brother Martin Komolmas, which stated as soon as the students heard the first chime of the bell, they prepared themselves to enter their respective classrooms and hurried to the toilets before entering their classrooms so that they did not have to ask for permission from their teachers during classes. Then they lined up in front of their respective classrooms while the class teachers would check for their preparedness. After hearing the second bell, all students must keep silence and paid respect to the National flag as it was being hoisted. Then they said their morning prayer and walked into their classroom in silence and unison.(Nitipoom Nauwarat, 2005, p. 157)

In the author's point of view, from Brother Pratheep Martin Komolmas it was found that the training of discipline mainly keeping silence helped learners' focus for better learning process. Simultaneously, Brothers and teachers also had time to reflect on what they were going to teach. It was also found that the virtues of discipline training allow learners more freedom to choose whether to do or not to do what was in their mind. This guideline also helped learners develop their morality which led to greater maturity. Therefore, if learners did not have an opportunity to choose what they wanted to do, they would not grow up in maturity. Therefore, when learners chose to go to the toilets and lined up in front of their respective classrooms after hearing the bell and got ready to walk into their classrooms was a process to develop learners for a life-long skill of developing spiritual and intellectual potentials on an individual basis.

Fifth Principle: Montfort ideology is a guideline of schooling to boost wisdom(Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1987, p. 471) resulting from a broad vision and firm clinging to their mission of the Brothers of St. Gabriel at that time with a strong determination to organize schooling with three purposes. 1. To know, understand and love God as the Eternal Wisdom. 2. To understand and transform oneself in accordance with the Eternal Wisdom and 3. To devote oneself to transform the world in obedience to the Eternal Wisdom. These are main goals and purposes of Montfort schooling.

The document which showed that Montfort ideology played an important role in Thai schooling was recorded in the report of Siam Mission which was sent to the Foreign Mission in Paris from 1873-1982 which stated "The Brothers of Saint Gabriel are recognized by foreigners because Assumption students

were taught foreign languages such as English and French despite not being Catholic. They were well educated and had acceptable conducts. They also knew the purpose of life that was to attain the Truth. This led them to high proficiency suitable for working in various organizations(Larque, 1982)

Costet (2002, p. 348) Assumption College, was the first school in Thailand that had French and English programs of learning, which were adapted to suit the education system of the government and qualified the students for the final examination conducted by the Ministry of Education of Thailand. Kantapong Jitkla (2010, pp. 182-183) reported similar finding in his study that the Brothers of Saint Gabriel, who operated Catholic schooling, played a part in reforming Thai society by way of education during the period of 1868-1910 and responded to the policies of the government. Leading class of people, civil servants and Chinese traders preferred to have their children educated by them. This opened door to every level of the society to get education and was an alternative for education to the need of Thai society in the matter of the knowledge of foreign languages and western sciences. This made it possible to develop quality human resources resulting in social and cultural transformation in such a short time.

The quantitative statistics that shows Montfort ideology dominated Catholic schooling for liberation and played a role for Thai education at various times by indicating the number of schools that kept increasing from 1901 onwards: with 4 schools from 1901–1932 and other 12 schools from 1957-2019 and one private international university, Assumption University. In 1969. These schools reflected clearly the education awareness of Thai society simultaneously they also indicated the success of the Brothers of Saint Gabriel through Montfort ideology in Catholic schooling for liberation in Thai context since 1901, which developed deep faith in the standard and teaching process quality.

The author would like to summarize Montfort ideology of God Alone because the Brothers of St. Gabriel cling firmly to Montfort ideology as life goal and commitment for Catholic schooling which emphasizes on education and human development from internal life to liberate students from every obstacle that hinder them from becoming holistically complete persons to enable them to get access to the understanding of actual life and create new goal of becoming absolute persons to lead a social of diverse significance that is to liberate them to freedom and liberty that leads to becoming the absolute persons. Consequently, this type of schooling will lead to sustainable education development in the present era.



## **2. Paradigm in the Catholic Schooling for Liberation through Montfort ideology**

The paradigm in Catholic schooling for liberation through Montfort ideology had been a formation process since 1716. This process emphasized on the development of human potentials in all dimensions to the optimum level to foster them to grow up and live with human dignity and self-esteem in the fullest measure also with freedom and liberty on the basis of individual experiences in the appropriate social and cultural context and get access to the truth of life and build up new meanings of being absolute persons who were able to live in diverse society in accordance with way of life which is called means to acquire divine Wisdom with the following guideline.

1. Principle of strong determination that is ardent desire to search and understand the ultimate goal of life within oneself toward the world vision and life to attain life goal of various stages of time resulting in appropriate conducts (Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1987: 100) like a desire to perform a good deed as the main reason for happiness, desire of possess spirit of working hard as a means to attain success. These are foundation that will lead human being to search for and attain eternal truth, which is the basic principle of developing oneself to attain the goal of life which in turn leads to learning on the foundation of real situations and experiences of practicality.
2. Principle of contemplation that is learning and understanding meanings of various things to change oneself by using contemplation or profound thinking. (Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1987, pp. 101-103) in the dimension of education giving importance to both procedure that combines with learning practice leading to problem-solving and interpretation resulting in understanding of diverse cultures and traditions, faiths of individual societies resulting in deep contemplation with awareness and decisiveness which were the foundations of self-adaptation with immunity, prudence to choose appropriate way to live in the society of diversities.
3. Principle of reflection is the process of exchanging ideas with reason and freedom leading to assessment on the basis value to create new meanings to life. (Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1987, pp. 104-105) The process of reflection of thoughts will raise a new meaning and way to life. It will also open door to accept new ideas with firm spirit based on deep faith of eternal truth that will allow human beings to preparedness to face actuality and be able to liberate oneself from all obstructing bonds.

4. Principle of self-dedication is learning and understanding individual qualities or societies based on Human rights, freedom and justice and respect of human dignity leading to self-dedication to service society of diversities with happiness (Brother of Saint Gabriel, 1987, pp. 106-110)

Paradigm of Catholic schooling through Montfort ideology for liberation is associated with the theology of liberation with different forms depending on times and social contexts, politics, faiths, cultures and education. It is the prototype of the guideline of theology for liberation of Gutierrez (1973, p. 33) which emphasizes the importance under the complexity of authorizes and inequalities of Latin American societies by reflecting together as a guideline of conducts to demand equality in the society of diversities. He defined reflection on the basis of Christian belief to reveal the truth to the world in the same manner as in the study of Luis (1976, p. 81) which discovered that the theology of liberation is related to religious and social beliefs with the goal of creating fair societies through Christian belief by real practice in actual life by reflecting thoughts and interpretation of the Bible leading to continuous changes in the levels of individual and society. Boff and Boff (1987, p. 3) found that liberation was the attainment of life truth that came from within by reflecting the readings from the Bible. True devotion will rise when faced unfairness that was often found in groups of people with inequalities.

Liberation the education perspective must be able to help human beings to understand life truth and is associated with the paradigm of Catholic schooling through Montfort ideology for liberation with clear cut principle of guideline called ‘means to acquire divine Wisdom with ardent desire, contemplation, reflection and dedication. This paradigm is the principle in developing conditions from within oneself to give rise to human potential development in all dimensions for life with complete human dignity, freedom and liberty on the basis of individual experience to social context and culture to attain the truth of life and create new meaning of becoming absolute persons who can live their lives happily in the society of diversities.

### **3. Guideline of the Application of Paradigm in Catholic Schooling through Montfort Ideology for Liberation**

After analyzing the paradigm in Catholic schooling through Montfort ideology for liberation, it was discovered that it could be applied to develop personnel both in business and education sectors. The author would propose the following application in schooling:

### **3.1. The Application of Paradigm of Montfort ideology in the Process of Learning**

The application of paradigm of Montfort ideology through integration of learning process is the paradigm that emphasizes the importance of individual student on the basis of individual experience in the social and cultural contexts resulting in students' ability to attain the truth of life and create a new meaning for becoming complete persons who can live in the diverse society through the means leading to the Eternal Wisdom as follows:

- 3.1.1. The principle of ardent desire that can be achieved through promoting students' motivation in the search for self-realization with goals of various stages of life causing the learning process on the basis of reality and practical experiences to culture positive characteristics leading to self-liberation from attachment and limitation with the education style of practical activities of learners which is the awareness, self-openness, observation, listening, touching, visualizing and acknowledging through various activities such as the process of deep meditation with special emphasis on physical and spiritual peace, contact with nature leading to self-realization and activities that lead to discovering self-potentials and interest that promotes such things as morality, ethics and human relationship.
- 3.1.2. The principle of ardent desire that promotes the process of analytical, critical thinking on the basis of self-experience towards social context which forms the foundation of self-adaptation with immunity that allows for the selection of way of life in diverse society through the process of schooling that allows learners to contemplate, and think freely which leads to contemplation with awareness and making decision through activities such as activities that promote contemplating thinking associated with problem solving.
- 3.1.3. The principle of contemplation that promotes schooling which emphasizes experience, exchange of thoughts, reflection of thoughts leading to learning and understanding world changes and understanding of the diversity of cultures, traditions and beliefs of the individual in the society. These factors form desirable qualities and virtues of a person that promote way of life which make one happy and be able to rid oneself of various bonds through schooling that promotion of practices such as awareness and acceptance of individual differences, exchange of

thoughts, facing and solving problems to the point of being able to choose happily through activities such as dialogue to give rise to exchanging of assessable opinions.

- 3.1.4. The principle of self-dedication that is the process which emphasizes integration through schooling through practicing activities. This principle enables learning for internal spiritual changes that promotes awareness of one's values in offering social services for the benefits of the public, creative thinking, public responsibilities to the environment with moral ethics to dedicate oneself for changes in the society such as volunteer camp and volunteer activities for the public.

Therefore the application of Catholic schooling through Montfort ideology reflects a guideline that teachers can apply all the four principles to teaching for liberation oneself that is learners can change themselves, develop learning and understanding the truth of life at various stages on the basis of each individual experiences in the social and cultural contexts leading to the truth of life and creating new meanings of being complete persons who can lead their lives in the society of diversity through the practice called 'means to acquire divine wisdom.

#### **4. Conclusion**

With the context conditions of Thai social and cultural society of diversities in the digital era, social media has penetrated into Thai ways of life forcing people to accept the new situations and characteristics of society. This leads to Thai schooling that has to develop its process to meet the goals of the National Social and Economic Development Plan I – XII and will have to continue to adapt to meet the suitability of times according to the dynamic social mechanism and context which drives the global trend. In the author's perspective point of view all these contexts have dominated human being with various bonds, forcing them to compete among themselves to move forward anxiously and confusingly.

However, the paradigm in Catholic schooling through Montfort ideology is the process that moves in the opposite direction of the current trend of globalization which emphasizes on the importance of internal life to develop human potentials in all dimensions to the optimum and help to lead a life with human dignity and self-esteem to attain liberty on the basis of each individual experience to social and cultural context to attain the truth of life and create new meaning of being complete persons in the diverse society through the practice called "means to acquire divine Wisdom.

The author would like to present apparent statistical data that can be assessed that the Catholic schooling through Montfort ideology is a new alternative for self- liberation resulting in internal individual transformation and sheds light on the truth and virtues of life which leads to self-dedication to the society in the writing of Francoise du Verner or Brother Hiliare with the following quotation: “Rise up and open your eyes to knowledge, listen to your words of your teachers and God be diligent and your life will be filled with current treasures but let’s not forget that heaven is much better.” (Hilaire, 1929) This short beautiful verse reflects that schooling is the process of life development that emphasizes the importance of the search for knowledge, understanding of life eternal wisdom that is associated with real life in this constantly changing world from the following words: “Rise up and open your eyes to knowledge, listen to your words of your teachers and God be diligent and your life will be filled with current treasures” however, the last words of: “but let’s not forget that heaven is much better.” Here the word ‘heaven’ in the author’s opinion refers to the truth and virtues of life which constitutes self-liberation from all bonds leading to self-dedication for public services.

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