



A man who did not reject the grace of God

## **News of Manuel García Morente at 75 years of his death**

In his last stage as a thinker, he quickly discovered the nuclear points of the St. Thomas's philosophy and exposed them in a model way.

Interview with the Spanish Professor Dr. Eudaldo Forment, Thomistic philosopher, who has studied and published on different aspects of Manuel García Morente's thought.

- What do you think, Dr. Forment, about the interest of the important intellectual contribution of Morente for today's man?

- I am very glad for you asking me this question on the 75th anniversary of D. Manuel Garcia Morente's death, a thinker who I admire and respect. It was an early death because the professor of ethics at Madrid's Central University was only fifty-six years old. It was the Immaculate Conception's Eve when he died. It was a whole signal. As the famous French Hispanist Alain Guy wrote, in his "Histoire de la philosophie Espagnole": "From the psychological and human point of view, as well as from the theological, the philosopher-priest is also a sui generis case to study closely", because he considered him of great actuality. I also allow myself to congratulate you because you have followed this indication of my remembered friend Alain Guy from studying in an objective and profound way his biography and his work. One of his results have been, for example, his book Manuel García Morente. Life and thought. I quote you because it is very true that, as the bishop Trassera said, this book of Montiu of Nuix is "a work of essential reference for the studies of Doctor Manuel García Morente's thought".

- Thank you very much. What do you think, of Dr. Forment's heart, of his moral and religious example? Which would be the highlights of his work?

- "I will sincerely tell you that I believe he was a man who did not reject the grace of God, who always acted throughout his life, despite his loss of faith in his childhood and his consequent religious indifference and his agnosticism towards God." In a very special way he is warned on the night of April 29, 1937, when Jesus

Christ appeared to him, in Paris, -where, recently initiated the Spanish Civil War, he had escaped, to save his life. He told this story in an extensive narrative, with an objective, phenomenological, and scientific analysis, in the way of an intellectual, that was known and valued internationally in a similar manner to his friend Ortega y Gasset. This letter of September 1940, directed to who would be the auxiliary bishop of Madrid, García de Lahiguera, tells this supernatural phenomenon, his conversion and his decision to become a priest. His wife had died and he no longer had to take care of his two daughters. He was ordained a priest at the end of that year, but two years and five months after his conversion, he received the definitive and inevitable call of the end of his days. This allowed him to repeat the spiritual experience of that night, in which he changed his temporal life and also his eternal one, but it was no longer momentary, but forever.

I do not need to recommend this story, which has been titled Extraordinary Fact. You have investigated it very conscientiously because it is a text of a philosophical, theological and religious value equally extraordinary. It's reading always impresses, not only the first time but in the repeated readings, which it deserves. I confess that it always does me a lot of good, even now that I am talking about it.

- Besides this miraculous phenomenon, what would you highlight as the most current of all his work?

- In his thoughts, expressed in various publications, five successive stages are distinguished, neo-Kantian, Bergsonian, phenomenological, Heideggerian or Norwegian and Thomistic. In all of them, he has left important works, from studies to translations of the European philosophers, who he knew well and explained them with great clarity. It is enough to remember that his **Introduction to Philosophy** has had more than twenty editions and has been used, until a few years ago, as a university handbook. It could be said that each of these stages is another step in his constant search for the truth. The last one, which was very brief because of his death, impresses, because he quickly discovered the nuclear points of the philosophy of Saint Thomas, and exposed them in a model way, as can be seen in his last articles. By the way, they show a model of what we might call "dialogue" of Thomism with contemporary philosophy, because, besides of recognizing its many erroneous contents, it incorporates several other points, which he considers true. He does it without altering it because the Thomistic synthesis already possesses them potentially.

His actuality is only philosophical?

- I also thank you for this question, because I forgot to highlight the importance, especially at the moment that Spain lives, of his work **Idea of Hispanic heritage**. Only comparable to what Jaime Balmes, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, and Ramiro de Maeztu wrote about this topic. It is a wise reflection on Spain and the nations evangelized by them, which reveals the essence of the Hispanic man. I highly recommend its reading.

Thank you very much for your answers. Would you like to add something else?

- Only one last thought, one of hope. After studying and thinking about the Mountain work and knowing the life of its author, I would not be surprised if he was soon beatified by the Church and become then known by the cult, that would then deserve this exemplary laic in every way.