
WEEK 1

Contempt for the World

NOTE:

Saint Louis Marie suggest starting the time of preparation with some Spiritual Exercises (examination of conscience, penance, fasting, prayer, purity of heart) in order to “**get rid of the spirit of the world, contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ.**” While a retreat might be the best way to accomplish this goal of purification, it is not strictly necessary. Instead, we recommend dedicating—*with joy and a great freedom of spirit*—about **ten minutes each day** to the reading and recollected meditation of a daily passage. The time of prayer can be undertaken immediately after reading the passage based on the True Devotion, but could take place later in the day as well.

For the next ten days, the meditation will conclude with the **Litany of Humility** (*humility* being the virtue that distinguishes the Christian from worldliness).

To maximize the fruits to be gained during this time of prayer, we suggest you adhere to the following steps:

- 1) **I will place myself in the presence of God.**
- 2) **Then I ask for the grace** of having a great desire to be pleasing in the eyes of the Lord, and to have eternal life as the only goal of my most important choices, without letting myself be seduced by the spirit of the world.
- 3) Finally, **read the text below** and then take time to **reflect** on it.
- 4) **Pray the Litany.** We will ask in the first ten days the **virtue of humility**, which distinguished the greatest saints. See Appendix on page 125.

Fourth Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary: [1-13]

Mary is a mystery. St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort begins by formulating a truth of Faith that will be the center and source of the whole *Treatise*: **“Through the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ came into the world, and through her He must reign in the world.”**

The saint himself confirms what was said with the authority of the Fathers of the Church, among whom St. Augustine said: **“The world was unworthy to receive the Son of God directly from the hands of the Father. He gave him to Mary so that the world would receive Him through her.”**

By a divine design, Mary is, for every man, a necessary means of salvation. And from this it follows that God has made her his best creature. God indeed grants the goods of grace necessary according to the responsibility he entrusts someone with. What goods had to be granted to Blessed Virgin Mary to be the Mother of God! Saint Eucherius said: “Do you want to know what the Mother is like? Look at how the Son is.” And St. Louis Marie, full of wonder in front of this truth, exclaims: “She is a **worthy Mother of God!** Here all tongues are silent!” Every tongue shall be silent because Mary is an inexhaustible mystery of grace, impossible to enclose in our limited minds. So greatly has God enriched her with His gifts that St. Louis says: *“Neither the eye saw, nor the ear heard (1 Cor. 2: 9), nor did the heart of man come to contemplate the beauties, greatness and privileges of Mary, the greatest miracle of grace, of nature and of glory!”*

“Mary is not sufficiently known.” This lament of St. Louis Marie is founded on the consideration of her mission as Mother of God. The gifts received to fulfill this mission are so high that there is no human mind capable of understanding them. “It is therefore just and due to repeat with the saints: *DE MARIA NUMQUAM SATIS* [there is never enough of Mary].” Mary has not been sufficiently praised, exalted, honored, loved and served. She deserves more praise, respect, love and service. It is also necessary to “repeat after the Holy Spirit: ‘All the glory of the daughter of the king is within’ (Ps 45:14) meaning that all the external glory, which is attributed to heaven and earth, would be nothing compared to that which she receives internally from the Creator and that is not known by the poor creatures, who cannot penetrate into the most intimate secret of the King.” (TD 11)

Mary has to be known better. Revealing the theological motive that led him to write the *Treatise*, St. Louis also reveals the need for every Catholic to renew the desire to embrace this devotion:

“My heart has dictated with special joy all that I have written to show that Mary has been unknown up till now, and this is one of the reasons why Jesus Christ is still not known as he should be. If then, as is certain, the knowledge and the kingdom of Jesus Christ must come into the world; it can only be as a necessary consequence of the knowledge and reign of the Blessed Virgin Mary, she who first gave him to the world will establish his kingdom in the world.”



Meditation

The spirit of world

(We will follow Antonio Royo Marín's, *Theology of the Christian Perfection*).

What is the world? It consists of the anti-Christian climate that forms between the people who live without thinking about God and who are dedicated only to the things of the earth. The world is therefore an atmosphere that involves people in a way of thinking, of wishing and worrying only about earthly goods, and consequently living a merely mundane life, without considering eternal life. Christ came to teach us the doctrine of his "True Life."

We read: *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins that he might rescue us from the present evil age in accord with the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever.* (Gal 1:3-5).

The worldly attitude is described still with greater accuracy by Our Lord himself: *There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, 'What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?' And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, "Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!"' But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?' Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God.* (Lk. 12:16-21).

Foolishness consists in dedicating oneself only to attaining worldly goods and not those for eternal life. Consider the example of Jesus on the cross. *cf. Litany of Humility pg. 125*

Litany of Humility

(By *Servant of God Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val*)

Lord have mercy	<i>Lord have mercy</i>
Christ have mercy	<i>Christ have mercy</i>
Lord have mercy	<i>Lord have mercy</i>
Jesus, meek and humble of heart	Hear me.

O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart,

Make my heart like unto Thine.

From the desire of being esteemed	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the desire of being loved	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the desire of being extolled	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the desire of being honored	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the desire of being praised	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the desire of being preferred to others	

Deliver me, O Jesus.

From the desire of being consulted	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the desire of being approved	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the fear of being humiliated	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the fear of being despised	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the fear of suffering rebukes	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the fear of being calumniated	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the fear of being forgotten	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the fear of being ridiculed	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the fear of being wronged	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>
From the fear of being suspected	<i>Deliver me, O Jesus.</i>

Jesus, grant me—*The knowledge and love of my nothingness*

Jesus, grant me—*The perpetual remembrance of my sins*

Jesus, grant me—*The awareness of the persuasion of my stinginess*

Jesus, grant me—*The aversion for all vanity*

Jesus, grant me—*The pure intention to serve God*

Jesus, grant me—*The perfect submission to the will of the Father*

Jesus, grant me—*The true spirit of compunction*

Jesus, grant me—*The decided obedience to my superiors*
Jesus, grant me—*The holy hatred of all envy and jealousy*
Jesus, grant me—*The promptness in the forgiveness of offenses*
Jesus, grant me—*The prudence in being quiet before the business of others*
Jesus, grant me—*Peace and charity with and for all*
Jesus, grant me—*The ardent desire for being disdained and for humiliations*
Jesus, grant me—*The want to be treated like You and the grace to know how to accept it in a saintly manner.*

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be loved more than I-
That others may be esteemed more than I-
That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease-
That others may be chosen and I set aside-
That others may be praised and I go unnoticed-
That others may be preferred to me in everything-
That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should—*Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

O Mary, Queen and Mother of the humble	<i>plead for me.</i>
Saint Joseph, protector and model of the humble	<i>plead for me.</i>
Saint Michael Archangel, who was the first to take down the proud	<i>plead for me.</i>
All the Saints, sanctified by the spirit of humility	<i>plead for me.</i>

Let us pray—Lord Jesus, who being God humbled yourself unto death and death by the cross, as to be a perennial example that confounds our pride and self-love, grant us the grace to imitate Your example so that, humbling ourselves as we should to our misery on earth, we may be exalted to enjoy You eternally in Heaven. *Amen*