
Twelfth Day

Treatise: of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [78-89]

Dying to ourselves in order to put on the New Man

Third truth. Because of original sin, our best actions are usually tainted and inclined to evil, as consequences of that first sin that corrupted our human nature. Therefore, when God grants us his graces, they are ordinarily tainted by the wound that sin left in our souls.

But it is Jesus Christ who teaches us to overcome our bad inclinations: *If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross every day and follow me.* (Lk 9:23). This means that in order to follow Jesus it is necessary to deny ourselves, emptying ourselves of what is bad in us. To achieve this, we must become aware that the original sin and the actual sins that we have committed (mortal or venial, although they have already been forgiven) have increased our concupiscence, weakness, inconstancy and corruption, pride and blindness in the spirit, hardening of the heart, the rebellion of the passions, the diseases of the body. This is why we should not be surprised that Jesus asks us to deny ourselves because it is for our greatest good. This denial also implies renouncing the bad inclinations of our intelligence, our will and our body. *If the grain of wheat does not fall to the ground and die, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.* (Jn 12:24).

St. Louis affirms: *“If we do not die to ourselves and if our devotions do not lead us to this necessary and fruitful death, we will not produce fruits that are worthy: our devotions will be useless; all our works of virtue will be tainted by selfishness and self-will; God will not accept the greatest sacrifices or the best actions we can do, if we do not do it out of love for Him, removing every little self-satisfaction that we can find in them.”*

We must choose devotion to the Blessed Virgin. **She will lead us most surely to the denial of ourselves and leading us to holiness.**

St. Louis reveals that the devotion proposed by him is a secret, unknown to many, and little practiced, but in reality it is a supernatural secret to do in a short time, with sweetness and ease—supernatural operations that lead to filling us with God and attaining perfection.

Mary's maternal role facilitates a personal encounter with Christ

Fourth truth. Since our human condition tends to evil, and if to reach God we rely only on our strength, all our works would not be as good as to unite us to Him. It is therefore perfect, because it is more humble to have an intermediary with Christ. For this reason God himself gave us some **mediators:**

The first is Jesus Christ, who is our Advocate; through him we must pray with the whole Church and through him we have access before the Divine Majesty. But, as Jesus Christ is God in everything equal to the Father, we need a mediator before the same Mediator.

The second mediator is Mary. If we fear to go directly to Jesus Christ who is God, because of his infinite greatness and of our smallness or sins, we implore with filial boldness the help and intercession of Mary, our Mother. She is so charitable that she does not reject any of those who implore her intercession, no matter how sinful we may be, as the saints say.

“It has never been known that someone has had recourse to her, steadfastly trusting in her, and has been rejected.”

She is so powerful that she does not need anything other than to present herself before the Son to pray to him and quickly He grants and welcomes her request because he always lets

himself be overcome lovingly by the prayers of his beloved Mother, who bore him and nourished him.

We carry the treasure of grace in earthen vessels

Fifth truth. It is very difficult, considering our weakness and frailty, to keep the graces and treasures we have received from God. We carry this treasure, which is worth more than heaven and earth, in fragile, earthen vessels, that is, in a corruptible body and in a weak and wavering soul. The evil spirits, cunning thieves that they are, want to surprise us suddenly and rob us of all we possess. They roam incessantly seeking to devour us and to snatch from us in one brief moment of sin all the grace and merit we have taken years to acquire. Their malice and their experience, their cunning and their numbers ought to make us fearful of such a misfortune happening to us. If we had entrusted our treasures to the powerful and faithful Virgin, she would have guarded them.

Together with the demons we also have another enemy: the **world**, which is so corrupt, that it is a kind of miracle to stand firm without being harmed. But the Blessed Virgin, who has never been defeated by anyone, will powerfully protect those who love her.



Meditation

- 1) **Place yourself in the presence of God.**
- 2) **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) **Read the text below** and then spend a brief period of time **reflecting** on it.

(From Antonio Royo Marín, *Theology of Christian Perfection*).

How to *Combat* the Worldly Environment

Fourth Resolution: Crush human respect. Paying attention to ‘what others will say’ diminishes our dignity as Christians and offends God. In order not to ‘displease’ men, who live in mortal sin, we do not respect God’s law and are ashamed to show ourselves as authentic disciples of Jesus Christ. The divine Master clearly warns us in the Gospel that he will not recognize before the Father who has denied him before men (cf. Mt 10:33). It is necessary to assume a firm and determined attitude before Jesus, because those who are not with him are against him (cf. Mt 12:30). St. Paul affirms that he would not be a disciple of Christ if he sought to please men (see Gal 1:10). The Christian who wants to achieve holiness does not have to take into consideration what the world will say or think. It is better to adopt from the beginning a clear and irreproachable conduct so that no one doubts our true intentions. *The world will hate you and persecute you*, the Divine Master has told us (Jn 15:18). For determined and immovable people, the demon will end up leaving them alone. He continually returns only to the cowards who he attacks to attract them to join his ranks. **The best way to overcome the world is not to yield even one step**, to set one’s will with strength, to renounce forever its maxims and its vanities.

We consider a text of St. John Mary Vianney (the holy Cure of Ars): “My children, I say to you with St. Bernard, from any perspective you look at, he who works out of human respect, which is the shame of fulfilling the duties of the religion because of the world, he shows: disdain for God, his graces, and blindness of the soul. First of all, my children, the shame of practicing good, for fear of the scorn and ridicule of ungodly wretches or ignorant people, is a great scorn that we perform in the presence of God, in front of whom we are always. Why, my children, do these bad Christians laugh at you and ridicule your devotion? Oh my children! I will tell

you the true cause: it is that, not having the virtue to do what you do, they look at you with antipathy, because your behavior awakens the remorse of their consciences; but be sure that their hearts, far from despising you, hold you in great esteem. If you need good advice or to obtain some grace from God, do not believe that they go to those who carry their same behavior, but to those who they scoffed, at least with their words. Are you ashamed, friend, to serve God, for fear of being despised? **See Him who has died on the cross**; ask Him if He was ashamed to see Himself despised and to die in the most humiliating way on that infamous scaffold. Oh, how ungrateful we are to God, who always finds his glory in proclaiming, from generation to generation, that he has chosen us to be his children! Oh my God! How blind and worthy of contempt is the man who fears a miserable ‘what will they say about me?’ And is not afraid of offending such a good God!”

4) **Conclude** the meditation with the **Litany of Humility**. Cf. *pg. 125*



MADONNA OF HUMILITY, FRA ANGELIC

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*