
Fifteenth Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [105-114]

True Devotion to Mary

After the saint has shown us false devotions to the Blessed Virgin, he gives us five characteristics to define true devotion: *interior, trustful, holy, constant* and *disinterested*.

a) Inner devotion: true devotion to Mary is *interior*; it is born of the mind and the heart; it derives from the esteem that we have of her and of the love that is nourished by her.

b) Tender devotion: true devotion to Mary is tender, that is, full of *trust* in the Blessed Virgin, that same confidence a child has in his own mother. She urges the soul to turn to her asking for help as a mother, at all times, in all places and in all things. We pray to her to be enlightened in our doubts, to be put back on the right path when we go astray, to be protected when we are tempted, to be strengthened when we are weakening, to be lifted up when we fall into sin, to be encouraged when we are losing heart, to be rid of our scruples, to be consoled in the trials, crosses and disappointments of life.

c) Holy Devotion: True devotion to Mary is holy, that is, it leads the **soul to avoid sin and to imitate the virtues of the Virgin Mary.**

d) Constant devotion: true devotion to the Virgin is constant. It strengthens the soul in the good and prevents her from giving up our devotional practices too easily. It makes her strong in opposing the maxims of the world, the discomforts and unruly inclinations of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil. When he has fallen, he stretches out his hand to his Blessed Mother and rises again. If he loses all taste and feeling for devotion, he is not at all upset because a good and faithful

servant of Mary is guided in his life by faith in Jesus and Mary, and not by feelings.

c) **Disinterested devotion:** a true devotee of Mary does not serve this illustrious Queen for her own temporal or eternal good, bodily or spiritual, but only because she deserves to be served, and God alone in her. He loves her and serves her faithfully, whether in coldness or in ardor, in sweetness and in sensitive fervor.

St. Louis, filled with confidence in this devotion, concludes this chapter by saying:

“If I thought that my sinful blood would serve to penetrate into your heart, dear reader, the truths that I write in honor of my beloved Mother and sovereign Lady, of whom I am the last of the children and slaves, I would use it instead of ink to write these words.”

†

Meditation

- 1) **Place yourself in the presence of God.**
- 2) **Ask for the grace** of a deep self-knowledge. “Lord, let me know myself.”
- 3) **Read the text below** and then spend a brief period of time **reflecting** on it.

Sin is contempt of God (Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, *Way of Salvation*)

*Behold, as God himself declares, and he expresses with lament: I have raised up children until they became men, and they rebelled against me (Is 1:2). I have raised my children, I have protected and fed them; but they with barbarous ingratitude have despised me. But who is this God, who is despised by these men? The Creator of heaven and earth; it is the infinite good, such a great Lord, **before whom all men and all angels are like drops of water and a grain of***

sand, like the light dust of scales. (Is 40:15). In short, all the creatures before the Infinite Greatness are so little things, as if they were nothing.

Oh God, what have I done! You, my Redeemer, have esteemed my soul so much that you have given up your blood so as not to see it lost, and I wanted to lose it for nothing, for a whim, for a burst of rage, for a miserable delight, **thus despising your grace and your love!**

Oh my God, who am I? Whom have I despised? A poor worm that can do nothing; and nothing I have, but what you gave me for your kindness. You have given me the soul, the body, the use of reason and so many goods on this earth; and I have served as an offender for everything, my benefactor. What else? At the same time that you have kept my life, so that I would not fall into the hell that I deserved, I continued to mistreat you. Oh my Savior, and how you have had patience with me! Miserable of me, how many nights I have slept in your misfortune.

Oh Mary, Refuge of Sinners, help this sinner, who is entrusted to you.

Pray the Litany of the Holy Spirit. cf. page 127

Sixteenth Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [115-119]

Principal Practices of Devotion to Mary

In this chapter, St. Louis presents various forms of devotion to Mary, divided into two main groups:

1) Interior Practices

Exhortation to Trust

by Saint Bernard

“Oh! You, whoever you are, who feel far from land, dragged by the waves of this world, in the midst of storms, if you do not want to capsize, do not take your eyes off the light of this Star.

If the wind of temptation rises, if the stumbling block of tribulations gets in your way, look at the Star, invoke Mary.

If you are unbalanced by the agitations of pride, of ambition, of murmuring, of envy, look at the Star, invoke Mary.

If anger, avarice, impure desires shake the fragile vessel of your soul, raise your eyes to Mary.

If, disturbed by the memory of the enormity of your crimes, confused before the awkwardness of your conscience, terrified by the fear of Judgment, you begin to let yourself be swept away by the whirlwind of sadness, to throw yourself into the abyss of despair, think of Mary.

In the dangers, in the anxieties, in the doubts, think of Mary, invoke Mary.

May her name never depart from your lips, never leave your heart; and to reach the relief of her intercession, do not neglect the examples of her life.

Following her, you will not get lost; praying, you will not despair; thinking about her, you will avoid all mistakes.

If she sustains you, you will not fall; if she protects you, you will have nothing to fear; if she leads you, you will not get tired; if she is favorable to you, you will reach the end. And so you will verify, from your own experience, how right it was said: *And the name of the Virgin was Mary.*”

(Saint Bernard, *Super missus*, 2nd homily, 17)

Litany of the Holy Spirit

Lord have mercy, *Lord have mercy*
Christ have mercy, *Christ have mercy*
Lord have mercy, *Lord have mercy*
Christ hear us, *Christ hear us*
Christ graciously hear us, *Christ graciously hear us.*

God the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*
God the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

(Repeat after each invocation: Have mercy on us)

Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, ***have mercy on us.***
Spirit of the Lord, who at the beginning of creation, breathed over the waters, made them fertile.
Spirit under whose inspiration God's saints spoke.
Spirit whose unction teaches us everything.
Spirit who gives testimony of Jesus Christ.
Spirit of truth who inspires everything.
Spirit who descended upon Mary.
Spirit of the Lord who fills all the earth.
Spirit of God who dwells in us.
Spirit of wisdom and understanding.
Spirit of counsel and fortitude.
Spirit of knowledge and piety.
Spirit of fear of the Lord.
Spirit of grace and mercy.
Spirit of virtue, esteem and sobriety.
Spirit of faith, hope, love and peace.
Spirit of humility and chastity.
Spirit of goodness and meekness.
Spirit of all the forms of grace.
Spirit who scrutinizes the divine depths.

Spirit who prays for us with inexpressible pleading.
Spirit who descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove.
Spirit by whom we receive new birth.
Spirit who fills hearts with charity.
Spirit of adoption of the sons of God.
Spirit who appeared over the Disciples in the form of tongues of fire.
Spirit with which the Apostles were filled.
Spirit who gives to each one according to His will.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,
spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,
graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Ave Maris Stella

1. Hail, bright star of ocean,
God's own Mother blest,
Ever sinless Virgin,
Gate of heavenly rest.

2. Taking that sweet Ave
Which from Gabriel came,
Peace confirm within us,
Changing Eva's name.

3. Break the captives' fetters,
Light on blindness pour,
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore.

4. Show thyself a Mother;
May the Word Divine,
Born for us thy Infant,

Hear our prayers through
thine.

5. Virgin all excelling,
Mildest of the mild,
Freed from guilt, preserve us,
Pure and undefiled.

6. Keep our life all spotless,
Make our way secure,
Till we find in Jesus,
Joy forevermore.

7. Through the highest heaven
To the Almighty Three,
Father, Son and Spirit,
One same glory be. Amen.