
Seventeenth Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [120-125]

PERFECT CONSECRATION TO *JESUS CHRIST*

Essential Elements of the Consecration

As all perfection consists in our being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus it naturally follows that the most perfect of all devotions is that which conforms, unites and consecrates us most completely to Jesus. Now of all God's creatures **Mary is the most conformed to Jesus**. It therefore follows that, of all devotions, devotion to her makes for the most effective consecration and conformity to him. The more one is consecrated to Mary, the more one is consecrated to Jesus.

Saint Louis states:

“Perfect consecration to Jesus Christ is nothing other than a perfect and total consecration of oneself to the Blessed Virgin. In other words, it consists in a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of Holy Baptism.”

Perfect and Total Consecration

This devotion consists in giving ourselves entirely to the Blessed Virgin in order to belong entirely to Jesus through her. It requires us to give: our body, our soul, our external goods (present and future) and our interior and spiritual possessions (our merits, virtues and our good works). This must be done without any reservation, not even a penny, a hair or the slightest good deed. And we give for all eternity and without waiting for any other reward than the honor of belonging to Jesus Christ through Mary and in Mary. Saint Louis stops to clarify two aspects of good works: in them there is a satisfactory value (it satisfies the punishment we

deserve for our sins) and a meritorious value (it makes us deserve the grace of eternal glory).

Now, in our consecration, *we give the Blessed Virgin all the satisfactory and meritorious value of our actions*. We give her our merits, graces and virtues, not so that she communicates them to other men, since grace and virtue are incommunicable and only Jesus Christ has been able to communicate his merits to us, but *to preserve them, increase them, and embellish them*. We give her our acts of atonement that she may apply them where she pleases for God's greater glory.

Finally, St. Louis Marie notes the following consequences:

- (1) With this form of devotion, we give to Jesus all we can possibly give him, and in the most perfect manner, that is, through Mary's hands.
- (2) Anyone who in this way consecrates and sacrifices himself voluntarily to Jesus through Mary may no longer dispose of the value of any of his good actions. All his sufferings, all his thoughts, words, and deeds belong to Mary. She can then dispose of them in accordance with the will of her Son and for his greater glory.
- (3) With this form of devotion we consecrate ourselves at one and the same time to the Blessed Virgin and to Jesus Christ. We give ourselves to Mary because Jesus chose her as the perfect means to unite himself to us and unite us to him. We give ourselves to Jesus because he is our last end. Since he is our Redeemer and our God we are indebted to him for all that we are.



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.

Man’s sin afflicts the heart of God. (From St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, *Way of Salvation*)

God cannot suffer pain. If he were capable, every sin of men would be enough to afflict him and make him lose peace.

St. Bernard explains that mortal sin is of such malice, that by itself it: *perimit Deum*, kills God. **If God could die, mortal sin would deprive him of life.** The reason is this: what causes infinite sadness could destroy God, who is infinite love.

Consider how sad it would be to be offended by someone we loved and cared for. Now, consider how God cared and loved man, to the point of giving his own blood and life for him. Then seeing how man turns his back and despises his grace for nothing, to get rid of anger, for a passing pleasure; **if God were capable of grief and anguish, he would die because of the bitterness he feels.**

My dear Jesus, I am the lost sheep. You are my good Shepherd. For your sheep you gave up your life, have mercy on me. Forgive me all the bitterness that I have caused you! I grieve having offended you, and I love you with all my soul. Mary, my hope! Have mercy on me.

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

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.