
Eighteenth Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [126-133]

A Perfect Renewal of Baptismal Promises

As we have seen above, St. Louis affirms that this form of devotion may rightly be called a perfect renewal of the promises of holy baptism. At baptism, every Christian has either personally or through his sponsors solemnly renounced Satan, his seductions and his works. He has chosen Jesus as his Master and sovereign Lord and undertaken to depend upon him as a slave of love.

This is what is done in the devotion St. Louis presents. We renounce the devil, the world, sin and self, and we give ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ through the hands of Mary. In holy baptism we do not give ourselves to Jesus explicitly through Mary, nor do we give him the value of our good actions. After baptism we remain entirely free either to apply that value to anyone we wish or keep it ourselves. But by this consecration we give ourselves explicitly to Jesus through Mary's hands and we include in our consecration the value of all our actions.

St. Thomas writes that in baptism a vow is made to renounce the devil and his seductions. The unfortunate reality is that few remain faithful to those promises, because they forget the commitments made in holy baptism. Many Councils have spoken on this problem. In particular, the Council of Trent considered this the main cause of so much corruption. It concluded that the cause was the ignorance in which Christians live with respect to their baptismal promises. They found no better way to solve such evils than to encourage Christians to renew the vows and promises of holy baptism and remind them that through this sacrament, they were consecrated to Jesus Christ, their Redeemer and Lord.

The Council and the Fathers of the Church have underlined the importance of renewing the baptismal promises. It is

reasonable, then, that it be perfectly fulfilled with a total consecration to Our Lord through his Holy Mother. We say in a perfect way, for in making this consecration to Jesus they are adopting the perfect means of giving themselves to him, which is the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Reply to Objections

Saint Louis de Montfort ends by answering some objections to this devotion.

(1) If anyone would object that this form of devotion is new, one can respond that this is not so. The Councils, Fathers and several ancient and modern authors speak of such consecration to our Lord or the renewal of the vows of Holy Baptism. If anyone said that this devotion is not important, we must answer that it is. The main source of all disorders of Christians comes from forgetfulness or indifference regarding this practice.

(2) Some may object that this devotion makes us powerless to help the souls of our relatives, friends and benefactors, since it requires us to give our Lord, through Mary, the value of our good works, prayers, penances, and almsgiving. The saint responds: "It is inconceivable that our friends, relatives and benefactors suffer any loss because we have dedicated and consecrated unconditionally to the service of the Lord and his Blessed Mother. To suppose this would be an insult to the power and goodness of Jesus and Mary, who know how to help our relatives, friends and benefactors better than ourselves. This devotion does not prevent us from praying for others, both the living and the dead, even though the application of our good works depends on the will of our Blessed Lady. On the contrary, it will lead us to **pray with greater confidence**. Imagine a rich man, who, wanting to show his esteem for a great prince, gives his entire fortune to him. Would not that man have greater confidence in asking the prince to help one of his friends who needed assistance? Indeed the prince would only be too happy to have such an opportunity of proving his gratitude to one who had sacrificed all that possessed to enrich him, thereby

impoverishing himself to do him honor. The same must be said of our Lord and our Lady. **Our Lord and the Virgin Mary will never be outdone in generosity.**”

(3) Some may say, perhaps, if I give our Lady the full value of my actions to apply it to whom she wills, I may have to suffer a long time in purgatory. St. Louis responds that this objection comes from self-love and ignorance regarding the generosity of God and Mary. It is not possible that a generous soul, who gives himself to God without reserve, will be punished. Our Lord and his Mother will prove most generous to such a soul in this life and in the next.



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.

God always looks at us, even when we sin. (From St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, *Way of Salvation*)

When a person wants to do something bad, he seeks to hide, so that his evil is not discovered; and when his sin is discovered he feels great shame. Sin is like slapping God, like spitting in His face. Who, in the presence of the prince, would have the arrogance to violate laws? But the sinner knows that God sees him, and in spite of this he does not stop sinning in the presence his God, making God a witness of his sin.

This is why the life of our Redeemer was so bitter and painful, because He, our beloved Redeemer, had our sins always before his eyes. This is why, especially in the Garden of Gethsemane, he sweated blood and suffered the agony of death, declaring that his sadness was so great that it was enough to take his

life. *Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem—My soul is sorrowful even unto death* (Mk 14:34). What makes him agonize in this way and sweat blood? The sight of our faults.

Ah, my dear Savior! Here is the fool who has despised your holy precepts to your face. Therefore, I am the lost sinner, who deserves hell; but you are my Savior, who has come to take away sins and save the lost.

Mary, my hope, have mercy on me!

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

Nineteenth Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [134-138]

REASONS FOR THIS DEVOTION

As we continue in this section on **Perfect Devotion to Our Lady**, St. Louis Marie de Montfort continues by explaining **eight motives** for the consecration. In order to meditatively consider each of these motives, we will consider them during the next week. We ponder these reasons since they show the excellence of the consecration to Jesus Christ through the hands of Mary. Today, we consider the **first motive** for this devotion.

First Motive: By it we give ourselves entirely to the service of God

St. Louis Marie affirms: “*We can conceive no higher calling than that of being in the service of God.*” By service of God, we understand the act of **working for his greater glory and for the good of souls**, in whatever state of life that God calls us. This is the ultimate and worthy goal of man, as Saint Ignatius of Loyola teaches in his *Spiritual Exercises*: “**Man is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.**” [23] Therefore this devotion helps us to reach the ultimate goal of our entire life.

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.