

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.

“Such is a faithful slave of Jesus’ love in Mary, totally dedicated to the service of the King of kings, by the hands of his Holy Mother, without keeping anything for himself. All the gold in the world and the beauties of the heavens could not recompense him for what he has done.”

St. Louis explains that there are many organizations, associations and very laudable movements in the Church that demand many specific obligations and commitments, leaving us free to dispose of the rest of our actions as well as our time. This devotion, on the other hand, **demands of us a “selfless surrender, to Jesus and Mary, all our thoughts, words, actions and sufferings and every moment of our lives without exception.”** Thus, whatever we do, whether we are awake or asleep, eating or drinking, performing important actions or the most ordinary, one can always say with truth that everything that is done—even if one does not think about it—for Jesus and Mary, by virtue of such an offering. How consoling this is!

Through this consecration we entrust to Mary not only all our external goods (health, material goods, family, friends, projects etc.) but also spiritual goods (the powers of the soul, progress in virtue, spiritual consolations etc.) including the merit value of all our actions. This consecration helps us to detach ourselves from the merit of our good deeds, placing them all in the hands of the Blessed Virgin:

“As I have said before, no other act of devotion enables us to rid ourselves so easily of the possessiveness which slips unnoticed even into our best actions. This is a remarkable grace which our dear Lord grants us in return for the heroic and selfless surrender to him through Mary of the entire value of our good works. If even in this life he gives a hundredfold reward to those who renounce all material temporal and perishable things out of love for him, how generously will he reward those who give up even interior and spiritual goods for his sake!”

God does not allow himself to be outdone in generosity. He will receive our offering from the hands of the Virgin Mary and fill us with infinitely greater goods. As St. Bernard says, “Jesus, our

dearest friend, gave himself to us without reserve, body and soul, with his virtues, graces and merits. He won me over entirely by giving himself entirely to me,” Does not simple justice as well as gratitude require that we give all we possibly can? He was generous with us first, so let us be generous to him in return. He will prove still more generous to us during life, at the hour of death, and throughout eternity. “He will be generous towards the generous.”



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.

Consideration of our own weakness.⁵

Oh Lord! *What is man so that you remember him, the son of Adam so that you care for him?* (Ps 8:4). Lord, I am nothing. Of myself, I have nothing good. On the contrary, there is failure in everything, always tending to nothingness. I am quicker to retreat than to advance.

I am utterly bowed down and prostrate (Ps 38:6). “In Your sight I am vanity and nothingness, a weak, unstable man. In what, therefore, can I glory, and how can I wish to be highly regarded? Is it because I am nothing? This, too, is utterly vain. Indeed, the greatest vanity is the evil plague of empty self-glory because it draws one away from true glory and robs one of heavenly grace. For when a man is pleased with himself, he displeases You, when he pants after human praise he is deprived of true virtue.” (*Imitation*, 1.40).

⁵ From St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, *Way of Salvation* and Thomas à Kempis’s *Imitation of Christ*

Remember, brother, you are dust and to dust you shall return. Now you see, you listen, you speak, and you walk. There will come a day when you will not see anymore, you will not feel, you will not speak, and you will not walk. When your soul separates from the body, the body will be left to be consumed by the worms and will return to dust. The soul will find itself in the eternity it deserved.

Ah, my Redeemer! You have given your life to gain Paradise for me. Seeing my littleness, you reach out to me with your help. You give me your own Mother. Lord, I love you, and I regret having offended you.

Mary, my hope. I am nothing, and I have nothing. I hope for everything from you. Have mercy on me. (*Way of Salvation*)

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.