



THE LAMENTATION, DETAIL, FRA ANGELICO

WEEK 3

Knowledge of Our Lady

NOTE:

For this third week, Saint Louis Marie says, “They should endeavor in all their prayers and works to acquire an **understanding of the Blessed Virgin and ask the Holy Spirit for this grace.** They may read and meditate upon what we have already said about her. They should recite the Litany of the Holy Spirit and the *Ave Maria Stella* [Hail, Star of the Sea]. In this week you can **also offer prayers that can be habitually done** (Morning Offering, praying three Hail Mary’s, the *Angelus* ...) and (as possible) reciting the Holy Rosary.”

- 1) Place yourself in the presence of God.
- 2) Ask the grace of the Holy Spirit to know the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- 3) Exhortation to Trust by Saint Bernard
- 4) The Litany of the Holy Spirit
- 5) Conclude praying the Ave Maris Stella

Prayers for week 3 begin on page 127.

Twentieth Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [139-143]

Second Motive: This consecration helps us imitate Christ and practice humility.

Jesus is the supreme model of our actions. He was a perfect slave of Mary's love; therefore we must also be if we want to imitate him. Saint Louis teaches:

“Our good Master stooped to enclose himself in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, a captive but loving slave, and to make himself subject to her for thirty years. As I said earlier, the human mind is bewildered when it reflects seriously upon this conduct of **Incarnate Wisdom**. **He did not choose to give himself in a direct manner to the human race though he could easily have done so. He chose to come through the Virgin Mary.** Thus he did not come into the world independently of others in the flower of his manhood, but he came as a frail little child dependent on the care and attention of his Mother. Consumed with the desire to give glory to God, his Father, and save the human race, he saw no better or shorter way to do so than by submitting completely to Mary. What immeasurable glory then do we give to God when, following the example of Jesus, we submit to Mary!”

“With such a convincing and well-known example before us, can we be so foolish as to believe that there is a better and shorter way of giving God glory than by submitting ourselves to Mary, as Jesus did?”

The Holy Trinity has always worked through Mary:

The Father gave and still gives his Son only through her. He raises children for himself only through her. He dispenses his graces to us only through her.

God the Son was prepared for mankind in general by her alone. Mary, in union with the Holy Spirit, still conceives him and brings him forth daily. It is through her alone that the Son distributes his merits and virtues.

The Holy Spirit formed Jesus only through her, and he forms the members of the Mystical Body and dispenses his gifts and his favors only through her.

“St. Bernard tell us that God, seeing that we are unworthy to receive his graces directly from him, gives them to Mary so that we might receive from her all that he decides to give us. His glory is achieved when he receives through Mary the gratitude, respect and love we owe him in return for the gifts to us.”

It is only right then that we should imitate his conduct, “in order,” as St. Bernard again says, “that grace might return to its author by the same channel through which it came to us.”

Moreover, this devotion is an expression of great humility. **It teaches us never to go alone directly to Our Lord, however gentle and merciful though he may be, but always to use Mary’s power of intercession.** Humility is a virtue which God loves above all others. A person who exalts himself debases God, and a person who humbles himself exalts God. *God opposes the proud, but gives his graces to the humble.* (James 4:6) If you humble yourself, convinced that you are unworthy to appear before him, or even to approach him, he condescends to come down to you. He is pleased to be with you and exalts you in spite of yourself. But, on the other hand, if you venture to go towards God boldly without a mediator, he vanishes and is nowhere to be found.

Therefore, this devotion teaches us not to approach Our Lord on our own, however sweet and merciful He may be, but to have recourse to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



Meditation

For this third week, Saint Louis Marie says, “They should endeavor in all their prayers and works to acquire an **understanding of the Blessed Virgin and ask the Holy Spirit for this grace.** They may read and meditate upon what we have already said about her. They should recite the Litany of the Holy Spirit and the *Ave Maria Stella* [Hail, Star of the Sea]. In this week you can **also offer prayers that can be habitually done** (Morning Offering, praying three Hail Mary’s, the *Angelus* ...) and (as possible) reciting the Holy Rosary.”

- 1) **Place yourself in the presence of God.**
- 2) **Ask the grace of the Holy Spirit to know the Blessed Virgin Mary.**
- 3) **Exhortation to Trust by Saint Bernard**
- 4) **The Litany of the Holy Spirit**
- 5) **Conclude praying the Ave Maris Stella**

Twenty First Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [144-151]

Third Motive: This consecration obtains Mary’s maternal assistance.

This total surrender of ourselves to the Virgin Mary implies for us, instead of supposing a loss, a very great gain. Seeing our consecration, Mary, a Mother as generous as her Son, gives us much more than we poorly possess and can offer him. St. Louis teaches: “since as consecrated souls you belong

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.