

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.*"

Twenty Second Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [152-163]

Fifth Motive: This consecration leads us to union with Christ.

This devotion is a **smooth, short, perfect** and **sure** way of attaining union with Our Lord, in which the perfection of the Christian consists.

(1) It is a **smooth way** to achieve union with God. The paths that lead to union with God are always marked by the cross (persecutions, misunderstandings, temptations, spiritual aridity, dark nights of the soul, etc.). "When we take the path of Mary, we walk more smoothly and more calmly." St. Louis raises an objection: Why does history show us that the deeply devout saints of Mary have also had to suffer much more than those who serve her less generously? He answers: Mary "becomes close and present to her faithful servants to enlighten them in their darkness and in their doubts, to assure them in their fears, to sustain them in their battles and

in their difficulties. Compared to other ways, this virginal path to find Jesus Christ is truly a path of roses and honey.” That is why the servants of Mary manage to carry even the greatest crosses with less difficulty, thanks to the special support they receive from the Virgin Mary.

(2) It is a **short way** to discover Jesus Christ, either because it is a road we do not wander from, or because, as we have just said, we walk along this road with greater ease and joy, and consequently with greater speed. **“We advance more in a brief period of submission to Mary and dependence on her than in whole years of self-will and self-reliance.”** Saint Louis adds: “with Mary’s help, support and guidance, he will go forward towards our Lord. Without falling, retreating and even without being delayed, he will advance with giant strides towards Jesus along the same road which, as is written, Jesus took to come to us with giant strides and in a short time.”

(3) It is a **perfect way** to reach Jesus Christ and unite to Him. “Mary is the most perfect and holy of all creatures, and Jesus Christ, who came to us in a most perfect way, chose no other road for his great and wonderful journey.”

(4) It is a **sure way** to go to Jesus Christ and acquire holiness through union with him. St. Louis affirms: “This devotion which I teach is not new. Its history does back so far that the time of its origin cannot be ascertained with any precision. St. Odilo, abbot of Cluny who died around the year 1040, was one of the first to practice it publicly. Blessed Marino became a slave of the Blessed Virgin in the presence of his spiritual director, and at the moment of his death he merited to be visited and consoled by his dear Queen and to hear from his lips the promise of Paradise as a reward for his service. Father Simon de Rojas spread this devotion throughout Spain and Germany; the Theatine Fathers taught it in Italy, Sicily and Savoy; Stanislaus Phalacius, of the Society of Jesus, promoted

it admirably in Poland; the Jesuits of Cologne studied it, deepened and spread this devotion; Cardinal de Bérulle was one of the most zealous in propagating it in France, despite the calumnies and persecution he suffered at the hands of critics and evil men.”

To further ensure the security of this devotion we can say that throughout the *Treatise*, St. Louis not only demonstrates his claims by arguing and quoting the Sacred Scripture, but also constantly refers to the Fathers and Doctors of the Church and the great saints and mystics whose doctrine has been recognized by the Church (St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, etc.)

This seriousness and richness of the *Treatise* guarantees that it is a privileged devotion. St. John Paul II himself confirmed and spread it: “Devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a privileged means to find Jesus Christ perfectly, to love him tenderly and serve him faithfully.” (On the occasion of the 160th anniversary of the publication of the *Treatise of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* by St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, January 13, 2004).



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 Third Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [152-163]

This devotion is a safe means of going to Jesus Christ

Some may object that “too much” devotion to Mary is an obstacle to true devotion to Jesus Christ. St. Louis shows that gazing on creatures, even saints, could certainly delay union with God, but this cannot happen with Mary. In the same way that it is inconceivable to think that Jesus is an obstacle to leading us to the Father, we cannot think that the Virgin Mary is an obstacle to reaching Jesus Christ. St. Louis gives us the reasons: “Is it possible that she who was so completely filled with grace to overflowing, so united to Christ and transformed in God that it became necessary for him to be made in flesh in her, should prevent a soul from being perfectly united to him?”

Therefore, he explains: “One reason why so few souls come to the fullness of the maturity of Jesus is that Mary who is still as much as ever his Mother and the fruitful spouse of the Holy Spirit is not formed well enough in their hearts.”

“Rest assured that **the more you turn to Mary in your prayers, meditations, actions and sufferings, seeing her, if not perhaps clearly and distinctly, at least in a general and indistinct way, the more surely will you discover Jesus.**”

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.

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(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.