

- 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.**”

There has never been and never will be a creature so ready to help us in achieving that union more effectively, for she will dispense to us all the graces to attain that end. A saint once remarked, “Only Mary knows how to fill our minds with the thought of God” (St. Germanus). All the graces that we receive come through her intercession.

“Where Mary is present, the evil one is absent. One of the unmistakable signs that a person is led by the spirit of God is the devotion he has to Mary, and his habit of thinking and speaking of her.”

Saint Germanus of Constantinople explains, “**Just as breathing is a proof that the body is not dead, so the habitual thought of Mary and loving converse with her is a proof that the soul is not spiritually dead in sin.**”

Whoever wishes to advance along the paths of holiness and be sure of encountering Jesus Christ, without fear of illusions which afflict many devout people, should take up with valiant heart and willing spirit this devotion to Mary which perhaps he had not previously heard about.

- a. It was the **way opened** by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom. He is our one and only Head, and we, his members, cannot go wrong in following him.
- b. It is a smooth **way made easy** by the fullness of the grace, the unction of the Holy Spirit. In our progress along this road, we do not weaken or turn back.
- c. It is a **quick way** and leads us to Jesus Christ in a short time.
- d. It is a **perfect path way** without mud or dust or any vileness of sin.
- e. It is a **reliable way**, for it is direct and sure, having no turnings to right or left but leading us straight to Jesus and to life eternal.

Let us enter then take this road and travel along it night and day until we arrive at the full of maturity of Jesus Christ.



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 Fourth Day

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [169-172]

Sixth Motive: This consecration makes us grow in the freedom of the children of God.

Being slaves of Mary makes us authentically free. It unites us intimately with God, the supreme Truth and great Good. This union makes us fully free. Saint Louis explains, “This devotion gives those who faithfully practice it a great inner freedom: the freedom of the children of God. By becoming the slave of Jesus Christ and consecrating ourselves to Him

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.