

**PREPARATION FOR TOTAL
CONSECRATION ACCORDING TO
SAINT LOUIS MARIE GRIGNION DE
MONFORT**

St. Louis De Montfort advises us to prepare for the consecration by exercises which certainly are not compulsory, but which assure its great efficacy because of the purity and other dispositions, which they tend to develop in our souls.

Two different periods are assigned for these exercises: a preliminary period of twelve days during which we endeavor "to free ourselves from the spirit of the world"; and a second period of three weeks: the first devoted to the knowledge of ourselves, the second to that of the Blessed Virgin and the third to that of Jesus Christ.

These periods mentioned by St. Louis De Montfort do not constitute a rigorous and unchangeable division. According to circumstances, they may be lengthened or shortened. The faithful often take but three days to prepare for the annual renewal of their consecration.

The object of this consecration is to cast off the spirit of the world, which is contrary to that of Jesus Christ, in order to acquire fully the spirit of Jesus Christ through the Blessed Virgin. Hence the practices suggested by St. Louis De Montfort: renouncement of the world, knowledge of self, of the Blessed Virgin and of Jesus Christ.

FIRST PART-TWELVE PRELIMINARY DAYS

Renouncement of the World

"The first part of the preparation should be employed in casting off the spirit of the world, which is contrary to that of Jesus Christ."

The spirit of the world consists essentially in the denial of the supreme dominion of God, a denial which is manifested in practice by sin and disobedience; thus it is principally opposed to the spirit of Christ, which is also that of Mary.

It manifests itself by the concupiscence of the flesh, by the concupiscence of the eyes and by the pride of life; by disobedience to God's laws and the abuse of created things. Its works are, first, sin in all its forms; and then all else by which the devil leads to sin; works which bring error and darkness to the mind, and seduction and corruption to the will. Its pomps are the splendor and the charms employed by the devil to render sin alluring in persons, places and things.

Prayers: Veni Creator, Magnificat and Ave Maris Stella

Veni Creator

Come, O Creator Spirit blest!
And in our souls take up thy rest;
Come with Thy grace and heavenly aid,
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

Great Paraclete! To Thee we cry,
O highest gift of God most high!
O font of life! O fire of love!
And sweet anointing from above.

Thou in Thy sevenfold gifts art known,
The finger of God's hand we own;
The promise of the Father, Thou!
Who dost the tongue with power endow.

Kindle our senses from above,
And make our hearts o'erflow with love;
With patience firm and virtue high
The weakness of our flesh supply.

Far from us drive the foe we dread,
And grant us Thy true peace instead;
So shall we not, with Thee for guide,
Turn from the path of life aside.

Oh, may Thy grace on us bestow
The Father and the Son to know,
And Thee through endless times confessed
Of both the eternal Spirit blest.

All glory while the ages run
Be to the Father and the Son
Who rose from death; the same to Thee,
O Holy Ghost, eternally. Amen.

Ave Maris Stella

Hail, bright star of ocean,
God's own Mother blest,
Ever sinless Virgin,
Gate of heavenly rest.

Taking that sweet Ave
Which from Gabriel came,
Peace confirm within us,
Changing Eva's name.

Break the captives' fetters,
Light on blindness pour,
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore.

Show thyself a Mother;
May the Word Divine,
Born for us thy Infant,
Hear our prayers through thine.

Virgin all excelling,
Mildest of the mild,
Freed from guilt, preserve us,

Pure and undefiled.

Keep our life all spotless,
 Make our way secure,
 Till we find in Jesus
 Joy forevermore.

Through the highest heaven
 To the Almighty Three,
 Father, Son and Spirit,
 One same glory be. Amen.

Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold,
 from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy
 is His name.

And His mercy is from generation to generations, to them that fear
 Him.

He hath showed might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in
 the conceit of their heart.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat; and hath exalted the
 humble.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath
 sent empty away.

He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy.

As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.
 Amen.

Day 1

Matthew 5:1-19 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you. ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. ¹⁷ "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who

does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above.

Day 2

Matthew 5:48 ⁴⁸ You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 6:1-15 Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ² "Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵ "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷ "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread; ¹² And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors; ¹³ And lead us

not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. ¹⁴ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

Day 3

Matthew 7:1-14 "Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. ³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. ⁶ "Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you. ⁷ "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! ¹² So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. ¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the

gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above.

Day 4

Man has no good in himself and can glory in nothing

LORD, what is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You visit him? What has man deserved that You should give him Your grace? What cause have I, Lord, to complain if You desert me, or what objection can I have if You do not do what I ask? This I may think and say in all truth: "Lord, I am nothing, of myself I have nothing that is good; I am lacking in all things, and I am ever tending toward nothing. And unless I have Your help and am inwardly strengthened by You, I become quite lukewarm and lax."

But You, Lord, are always the same. You remain forever, always good, just, and holy; doing all things rightly, justly, and holily, disposing them wisely. I, however, who am more ready to go backward than forward, do not remain always in one state, for I change with the seasons. Yet my condition quickly improves when it pleases You and when You reach forth Your helping hand. For You alone, without human aid, can help me and strengthen me so greatly that my heart shall no more change but be converted and rest solely in You. Hence, if I knew well how to cast aside all earthly consolation, either to attain devotion or because of the necessity which, in the absence of human solace, compels me to seek You alone, then I could deservedly hope for Your grace and rejoice in the gift of new consolation.

Thanks be to You from Whom all things come, whenever it is well with me. 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. But it is true glory and holy exultation to glory in You and not in self, to rejoice in Your name rather than in one's own virtue, and not to delight in any creature except for Your sake.

Let Your name, not mine, be praised. Let Your work, not mine, be magnified. Let Your holy name be blessed, but let no human praise be given to me. You are my glory. You are the joy of my heart. In You I will glory and rejoice all the day, and for myself I will glory in nothing but my infirmities.

Let the Jews seek the glory that comes from another. I will seek that which comes from God alone. All human glory, all temporal honor, all worldly position is truly vanity and foolishness compared to Your everlasting glory. O my Truth, my Mercy, my God, O Blessed Trinity, to You alone be praise and honor, power and glory, throughout all the endless ages of ages.

(Imitation Book III Chapter 40)

Grace must be hidden under the mantle of humility

The Voice of Christ: It is better and safer for you to conceal the grace of devotion, not to be elated by it, not to speak or think much of it, and instead to humble yourself and fear lest it is being given to one unworthy of it. Do not cling too closely to this affection, for it may quickly be changed to its opposite. When you are in grace,

think how miserable and needy you are without it. Your progress in spiritual life does not consist in having the grace of consolation, but in enduring its withdrawal with humility, resignation, and patience, so that you neither become listless in prayer nor neglect your other duties in the least; but on the contrary do what you can do as well as you know how, and do not neglect yourself completely because of your dryness or anxiety of mind.

There are many, indeed, who immediately become impatient and lazy when things do not go well with them. The way of man, however, does not always lie in his own power. It is God's prerogative to give grace and to console when He wishes, as much as He wishes, and whom He wishes, as it shall please Him and no more.

Some careless persons, misusing the grace of devotion, have destroyed themselves because they wished to do more than they were able. They failed to take account of their own weakness, and followed the desire of their heart rather than the judgment of their reason. Then, because they presumed to greater things than pleased God they quickly lost His grace. They who had built their homes in heaven became helpless, vile outcasts, humbled and impoverished, that they might learn not to fly with their own wings but to trust in Mine.

They who are still new and inexperienced in the way of the Lord may easily be deceived and overthrown unless they guide themselves by the advice of discreet persons. But if they wish to follow their own notions rather than to trust in others who are more experienced, they will be in danger of a sorry end, at least if they are unwilling to be drawn from their vanity. Seldom do they who are wise in their own conceits bear humbly the guidance of others. Yet a little knowledge humbly and meekly pursued is better than great treasures of learning sought in vain complacency. It is

better for you to have little than to have much which may become the source of pride.

He who gives himself up entirely to enjoyment acts very unwisely, for he forgets his former helplessness and that chastened fear of the Lord which dreads to lose a proffered grace. Nor is he very brave or wise who becomes too despondent in times of adversity and difficulty and thinks less confidently of Me than he should. He who wishes to be too secure in time of peace will often become too dejected and fearful in time of trial.

If you were wise enough to remain always humble and small in your own eyes, and to restrain and rule your spirit well, you would not fall so quickly into danger and offense.

When a spirit of fervor is enkindled within you, you may well meditate on how you will feel when the fervor leaves. Then, when this happens, remember that the light which I have withdrawn for a time as a warning to you and for My own glory may again return. Such trials are often more beneficial than if you had things always as you wish. For a man's merits are not measured by many visions or consolations, or by knowledge of the Scriptures, or by his being in a higher position than others, but by the truth of his humility, by his capacity for divine charity, by his constancy in seeking purely and entirely the honor of God, by his disregard and positive contempt of self, and more, by preferring to be despised and humiliated rather than honored by others.

(Im Bk 3 Ch 7)

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

Day 5

Thanks be to You from Whom all things come, whenever it is well with me. 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. But it is true glory and holy exultation to glory in You and not in self, to rejoice in Your name rather than in one's own virtue, and not to delight in any creature except for Your sake.

Let Your name, not mine, be praised. Let Your work, not mine, be magnified. Let Your holy name be blessed, but let no human praise be given to me. You are my glory. You are the joy of my heart. In You I will glory and rejoice all the day, and for myself I will glory in nothing but my infirmities.

Let the Jews seek the glory that comes from another. I will seek that which comes from God alone. All human glory, all temporal honor, all worldly position is truly vanity and foolishness compared to Your everlasting glory. O my Truth, my Mercy, my God, O Blessed Trinity, to You alone be praise and honor, power and glory, throughout all the endless ages of ages.

(Im Bk 3 Ch 40)

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

Day 6

The example set us by the Holy Fathers

CONSIDER the lively examples set us by the saints, who possessed the light of true perfection and religion, and you will see how little, how nearly nothing, we do. What, alas, is our life, compared with theirs? The saints and friends of Christ served the Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in work and fatigue, in vigils and fasts, in prayers and holy meditations, in persecutions and many afflictions. How many and severe were the trials they suffered -- the Apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the rest who willed to follow in the footsteps of Christ! They hated their lives on earth that they might have life in eternity.

How strict and detached were the lives the holy hermits led in the desert! What long and grave temptations they suffered! How often were they beset by the enemy! What frequent and ardent prayers they offered to God! What rigorous fasts they observed! How great their zeal and their love for spiritual perfection! How brave the fight they waged to master their evil habits! What pure and straightforward purpose they showed toward God! By day they labored and by night they spent themselves in long prayers. Even at work they did not cease from mental prayer. They used all their time profitably; every hour seemed too short for serving God, and in the great sweetness of contemplation, they forgot even their bodily needs.

They renounced all riches, dignities, honors, friends, and associates. They desired nothing of the world. They scarcely allowed themselves the necessities of life, and the service of the

body, even when necessary, was irksome to them. They were poor in earthly things but rich in grace and virtue. Outwardly destitute, inwardly they were full of grace and divine consolation. Strangers to the world, they were close and intimate friends of God. To themselves they seemed as nothing, and they were despised by the world, but in the eyes of God they were precious and beloved. They lived in true humility and simple obedience; they walked in charity and patience, making progress daily on the pathway of spiritual life and obtaining great favor with God.

(Im Bk 1 Ch 18)

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

Day 7

The example set us by the Holy Fathers

They were given as an example for all religious, and their power to stimulate us to perfection ought to be greater than that of the lukewarm to tempt us to laxity.

How great was the fervor of all religious in the beginning of their holy institution! How great their devotion in prayer and their rivalry for virtue! What splendid discipline flourished among them! What great reverence and obedience in all things under the rule of a superior! The footsteps they left behind still bear witness that they indeed were holy and perfect men who fought bravely and conquered the world.

Today, he who is not a transgressor and who can bear patiently the duties which he has taken upon himself is considered great. How lukewarm and negligent we are! We lose our original

fervor very quickly and we even become weary of life from laziness! Do not you, who have seen so many examples of the devout, fall asleep in the pursuit of virtue!

(Im Bk 1 Ch 18)

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

Day 8

Resisting Temptation

SO LONG as we live in this world we cannot escape suffering and temptation. Whence it is written in Job: "The life of man upon earth is a warfare."[\[3\]](#) Everyone, therefore, must guard against temptation and must watch in prayer lest the devil, who never sleeps but goes about seeking whom he may devour, find occasion to deceive him. No one is so perfect or so holy but he is sometimes tempted; man cannot be altogether free from temptation.

Yet temptations, though troublesome and severe, are often useful to a man, for in them he is humbled, purified, and instructed. The saints all passed through many temptations and trials to profit by them, while those who could not resist became reprobate and fell away. There is no state so holy, no place so secret that temptations and trials will not come. Man is never safe from them as long as he lives, for they come from within us -- in sin we were born. When one temptation or trial passes, another comes; we shall always have something to suffer because we have lost the state of original blessedness.

Many people try to escape temptations, only to fall more deeply. We cannot conquer simply by fleeing, but by patience and

true humility we become stronger than all our enemies. The man who only shuns temptations outwardly and does not uproot them will make little progress; indeed they will quickly return, more violent than before.

Little by little, in patience and long-suffering you will overcome them, by the help of God rather than by severity and your own rash ways. Often take counsel when tempted; and do not be harsh with others who are tempted, but console them as you yourself would wish to be consoled.

The beginning of all temptation lies in a wavering mind and little trust in God, for as a rudderless ship is driven hither and yon by waves, so a careless and irresolute man is tempted in many ways. Fire tempers iron and temptation steels the just. Often we do not know what we can stand, but temptation shows us what we are.
(Bk 1 Ch 13)

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

Day 9

Often we do not know what we can stand, but temptation shows us what we are.

Above all, we must be especially alert against the beginnings of temptation, for the enemy is more easily conquered if he is refused admittance to the mind and is met beyond the threshold when he knocks.

Someone has said very aptly: "Resist the beginnings; remedies come too late, when by long delay the evil has gained strength." First, a mere thought comes to mind, then strong imagination, followed by pleasure, evil delight, and consent. Thus, because he is

not resisted in the beginning, Satan gains full entry. And the longer a man delays in resisting, so much the weaker does he become each day, while the strength of the enemy grows against him.

Some suffer great temptations in the beginning of their conversion, others toward the end, while some are troubled almost constantly throughout their life. Others, again, are tempted but lightly according to the wisdom and justice of Divine Providence Who weighs the status and merit of each and prepares all for the salvation of His elect.

We should not despair, therefore, when we are tempted, but pray to God the more fervently that He may see fit to help us, for according to the word of Paul, He will make issue with temptation that we may be able to bear it. Let us humble our souls under the hand of God in every trial and temptation for He will save and exalt the humble in spirit.

In temptations and trials the progress of a man is measured; in them opportunity for merit and virtue is made more manifest. When a man is not troubled it is not hard for him to be fervent and devout, but if he bears up patiently in time of adversity, there is hope for great progress.

Some, guarded against great temptations, are frequently overcome by small ones in order that, humbled by their weakness in small trials, they may not presume on their own strength in great ones.

(Im Bk I Ch 13)

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

Day 10

To despise the world and to serve God is sweet to the disciple

NOW again I will speak, Lord, and will not be silent. I will speak to the hearing of my God, my Lord, and my King Who is in heaven. How great, O Lord, is the multitude of Your mercies which You have stored up for those who love You. But what are You to those who love You? What are You to those who serve You with their whole heart?

Truly beyond the power of words is the sweetness of contemplation You give to those who love You. To me You have shown the sweetness of Your charity, especially in having made me when I did not exist, in having brought me back to serve You when I had gone far astray from You, in having commanded me to love You.

O Fountain of unceasing love, what shall I say of You? How can I forget You, Who have been pleased to remember me even after I had wasted away and perished? You have shown mercy to Your servant beyond all hope, and have exhibited grace and friendship beyond his deserving.

What return shall I make to You for this grace? For it is not given every man to forsake all things, to renounce the world, and undertake the religious life. Is it anything great that I should serve You Whom every creature is bound to serve? It should not seem much to me; instead it should appear great and wonderful that You condescend to receive into Your service one who is so poor and unworthy. Behold, all things are Yours, even those which I have and by which I serve You. Behold, heaven and earth which You

created for the service of man, stand ready, and each day they do whatever You command. But even this is little, for You have appointed angels also to minister to man -- yea more than all this -- You Yourself have condescended to serve man and have promised to give him Yourself.

What return shall I make for all these thousands of benefits? Would that I could serve You all the days of my life! Would that for but one day I could serve You worthily! Truly You are worthy of all service, all honor, and everlasting praise. Truly You are my Lord, and I am Your poor servant, bound to serve You with all my powers, praising You without ever becoming weary. I wish to do this -- this is my desire. Do You supply whatever is wanting in me.

It is a great honor, a great glory to serve You and to despise all things for Your sake. They who give themselves gladly to Your most holy service will possess great grace. They who cast aside all carnal delights for Your love will find the most sweet consolation of the Holy Ghost. They who enter upon the narrow way for Your name and cast aside all worldly care will attain great freedom of mind.

O sweet and joyful service of God, which makes man truly free and holy! O sacred state of religious bondage which makes man equal to the angels, pleasing to God, terrible to the demons, and worthy of the commendation of all the faithful! O service to be embraced and always desired, in which the highest good is offered and joy is won which shall remain forever!

(Im Bk 3, Ch 10)

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

Day 11

One day when a certain man who wavered often and anxiously between hope and fear was struck with sadness, he knelt in humble prayer before the altar of a church. While meditating on these things, he said: "Oh if I but knew whether I should persevere to the end!" Instantly he heard within the divine answer: "If you knew this, what would you do? Do now what you would do then and you will be quite secure." Immediately consoled and comforted, he resigned himself to the divine will and the anxious uncertainty ceased. His curiosity no longer sought to know what the future held for him, and he tried instead to find the perfect, the acceptable will of God in the beginning and end of every good work.

"Trust thou in the Lord and do good," says the Prophet; "dwell in the land and thou shalt feed on its riches." [7]

There is one thing that keeps many from zealously improving their lives, that is, dread of the difficulty, the toil of battle. Certainly they who try bravely to overcome the most difficult and unpleasant obstacles far outstrip others in the pursuit of virtue. A man makes the most progress and merits the most grace precisely in those matters wherein he gains the greatest victories over self and most mortifies his will. True, each one has his own difficulties to meet and conquer, but a diligent and sincere man will make greater progress even though he have more passions than one who is more even-tempered but less concerned about virtue.

Two things particularly further improvement -- to withdraw oneself forcibly from those vices to which nature is viciously inclined, and to work fervently for those graces which are most needed.

Study also to guard against and to overcome the faults which in others very frequently displease you. Make the best of every opportunity, so that if you see or hear good example you may be moved to imitate it. On the other hand, take care lest you be guilty of those things which you consider reprehensible, or if you have ever been guilty of them, try to correct yourself as soon as possible. As you see others, so they see you.

(Im Bk 1 Ch 25)

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

Day 12

How pleasant and sweet to behold brethren fervent and devout, well mannered and disciplined! How sad and painful to see them wandering in dissolution, not practicing the things to which they are called! How hurtful it is to neglect the purpose of their vocation and to attend to what is not their business!

Remember the purpose you have undertaken, and keep in mind the image of the Crucified. Even though you may have walked for many years on the pathway to God, you may well be ashamed if, with the image of Christ before you, you do not try to make yourself still more like Him.

The religious who concerns himself intently and devoutly with our Lord's most holy life and passion will find there an abundance of all things useful and necessary for him. He need not seek for anything better than Jesus.

If the Crucified should come to our hearts, how quickly and abundantly we would learn!

A fervent religious accepts all the things that are commanded him and does them well, but a negligent and lukewarm religious has trial upon trial, and suffers anguish from every side because he has no consolation within and is forbidden to seek it from without. The religious who does not live up to his rule exposes himself to dreadful ruin, and he who wishes to be more free and untrammelled will always be in trouble, for something or other will always displease him.

How do so many other religious who are confined in cloistered discipline get along? They seldom go out, they live in contemplation, their food is poor, their clothing coarse, they work hard, they speak but little, keep long vigils, rise early, pray much, read frequently, and subject themselves to all sorts of discipline. Think of the Carthusians and the Cistercians, the monks and nuns of different orders, how every night they rise to sing praise to the Lord. It would be a shame if you should grow lazy in such holy service when so many religious have already begun to rejoice in God.

If there were nothing else to do but praise the Lord God with all your heart and voice, if you had never to eat, or drink, or sleep, but could praise God always and occupy yourself solely with spiritual pursuits, how much happier you would be than you are now, a slave to every necessity of the body! Would that there were no such needs, but only the spiritual refreshments of the soul which, sad to say, we taste too seldom!

When a man reaches a point where he seeks no solace from any creature, then he begins to relish God perfectly. Then also he will be content no matter what may happen to him. He will neither rejoice over great things nor grieve over small ones, but will place himself entirely and confidently in the hands of God, Who for him

is all in all, to Whom nothing ever perishes or dies, for Whom all things live, and Whom they serve as He desires.

Always remember your end and do not forget that lost time never returns. Without care and diligence you will never acquire virtue. When you begin to grow lukewarm, you are falling into the beginning of evil; but if you give yourself to fervor, you will find peace and will experience less hardship because of God's grace and the love of virtue.

A fervent and diligent man is ready for all things. It is greater work to resist vices and passions than to sweat in physical toil. He who does not overcome small faults, shall fall little by little into greater ones.

If you have spent the day profitably, you will always be happy at eventide. Watch over yourself, arouse yourself, warn yourself, and regardless of what becomes of others, do not neglect yourself. The more violence you do to yourself, the more progress you will make.

(Im Bk 1 Ch 25)

Prayers for the 12 preliminary days: Refer to the prayers above

SECOND PART

Knowledge of Self

"During the second part they should employ all their prayers and pious actions in asking for a knowledge of themselves and for contrition of their sins; and they should do this in a spirit of humility."

During this week, we shall consider not so much the opposition that exists between the spirit of Jesus and ours, as the miserable and humiliating state to which our sins have reduced us. Moreover, the True Devotion being an easy, short, sure and perfect way to arrive at that union with Our Lord which is Christian perfection, we shall enter seriously upon this way, strongly convinced of our misery and helplessness. But how attain this without a knowledge of ourselves?

***Prayers:** Litany of the Holy Ghost, Ave Maris Stella. Litany of the Blessed Virgin.*

Prayers for the Second part

Litany of the Holy Ghost (For private devotion only)

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Father, all powerful,

have mercy on us.

Jesus, Eternal Son of the Father, Redeemer of the world,

save us.

Spirit of the Father and the Son, boundless life of both,

sanctify us.

Holy Trinity, *hear us.*

Holy Ghost, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

enter our hearts.

Holy Ghost, Who art equal to the Father and the Son,

enter our hearts.

Promise of God the Father,

have mercy on us

Ray of heavenly light,
 Author of all good,
 Source of heavenly water,
 Consuming fire,
 Ardent charity,
 Spiritual unction,
 Spirit of love and truth,
 Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 Spirit of counsel and fortitude,
 Spirit of knowledge and piety,
 Spirit of the fear of the Lord,
 Spirit of grace and prayer,
 Spirit of peace and meekness,
 Spirit of modesty and innocence,
 Holy Ghost, the Comforter,
 Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier,
 Holy Ghost, Who governest the Church,
 Gift of God, the Most High,
 Spirit Who fillest the universe,
 Spirit of the adoption of the children of God,
 Holy Ghost, *inspire us with horror of sin.*
 Holy Ghost, *come and renew the face of the earth.*
 Holy Ghost, *shed Thy light in our souls.*
 Holy Ghost, *engrave Thy law in our hearts.*
 Holy Ghost, *in flame us with the flame of thy love.*
 Holy Ghost, *open to us the treasures of Thy graces.*
 Holy Ghost, *teach us to pray well.*
 Holy Ghost, *enlighten us with Thy heavenly*
inspirations.
 Holy Ghost, *lead us in the way of salvation.*

Holy Ghost, <i>knowledge</i>	<i>grant us the only necessary</i>
Holy Ghost,	<i>inspire in us the practice of good.</i>
Holy Ghost,	<i>grant us the merits of all virtues.</i>
Holy Ghost,	<i>make us persevere in justice.</i>
Holy Ghost,	<i>be Thou our everlasting reward.</i>

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,
send us Thy Holy Ghost.

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,
pour down into our souls the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us the Spirit of wisdom and piety.

V. Come, Holy Ghost! Fill the hearts of Thy faithful.

R. And enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Let us pray

Grant, O merciful Father, that Thy Divine Spirit enlighten, inflame and purify us, that He may penetrate us with His heavenly dew and make us fruitful in good works; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, liveth and reigneth forever and ever. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, 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 Ghost, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Mary, *pray for us.*
Holy Mother of God,
Holy Virgin of virgins,
Mother of Christ,
Mother of divine grace,
Mother most pure,
Mother most chaste,
Mother inviolate,
Mother undefiled,
Mother most amiable,
Mother most admirable,
Mother of good counsel,
Mother of our Creator,
Mother of our Savior,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most venerable,
Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,

Tower of David,
 Tower of ivory,
 House of gold,
 Ark of the covenant,
 Gate of heaven,
 Morning star,
 Health of the sick,
 Refuge of sinners,
 Comforter of the afflicted,
 Help of Christians,
 Queen of angels,
 Queen of patriarchs,
 Queen of prophets,
 Queen of Apostles,
 Queen of martyrs,
 Queen of confessors,
 Queen of virgins,
 Queen of all saints,
 Queen conceived without original sin,
 Queen assumed into heaven,
 Queen of the most holy Rosary,
 Queen of peace,

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R . That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

Grant unto us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, at all times to enjoy health of soul and body ; and by the glorious intercession of Blessed Mary, ever virgin, when freed from the sorrows of this present life, to enter into that joy which hath no end. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ave Maris Stella

Hail, bright star of ocean,
God's own Mother blest,
Ever sinless Virgin,
Gate of heavenly rest.

Taking that sweet Ave
Which from Gabriel came,
Peace confirm within us,
Changing Eva's name.

Break the captives' fetters,
Light on blindness pour,
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore.

Show thyself a Mother;
May the Word Divine,
Born for us thy Infant,
Hear our prayers through thine.

Virgin all excelling,
Mildest of the mild,
Freed from guilt, preserve us,
Pure and undefiled.

Keep our life all spotless,
Make our way secure,
Till we find in Jesus
joy forevermore.

Through the highest heaven
To the Almighty Three,
Father, Son and Spirit,
One same glory be. Amen.

Day 13

Luke 11:1-10 He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ² And he said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread; ⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation." ⁵ And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with

me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹ And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Prayers for the Second part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 14

The obedience of one humbly subject to the example of Jesus Christ

The Voice of Christ

MY CHILD, he who attempts to escape obeying withdraws himself from grace. Likewise he who seeks private benefits for himself loses those which are common to all. He who does not submit himself freely and willingly to his superior, shows that his flesh is not yet perfectly obedient but that it often rebels and murmurs against him.

Learn quickly, then, to submit yourself to your superior if you wish to conquer your own flesh. For the exterior enemy is more quickly overcome if the inner man is not laid waste. There is no more troublesome, no worse enemy of the soul than you yourself, if you are not in harmony with the spirit. It is absolutely necessary that you conceive a true contempt for yourself if you wish to be victorious over flesh and blood.

Because you still love yourself too inordinately, you are afraid to resign yourself wholly to the will of others. Is it such a great matter if you, who are but dust and nothingness, subject yourself to man for the sake of God, when I, the All-Powerful, the Most High, Who created all things out of nothing, humbly subjected Myself to man for your sake? I became the most humble and the lowest of all men that you might overcome your pride with My humility.

Learn to obey, you who are but dust! Learn to humble yourself, you who are but earth and clay, and bow down under the foot of every man! Learn to break your own will, to submit to all subjection! Be zealous against yourself! Allow no pride to dwell in you, but prove yourself so humble and lowly that all may walk over you and trample upon you as dust in the streets!

What have you, vain man, to complain of? What answer can you make, vile sinner, to those who accuse you, you who have so often offended God and so many times deserved hell? But My eye has spared you because your soul was precious in My sight, so that you might know My love and always be thankful for My benefits, so that you might give yourself continually to true subjection and humility, and might patiently endure contempt.

(Im Bk 3 Ch 13)

Prayers for the Second part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 15

Luke 13:1-5 There were some present at that very time who told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered thus? ³ I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

Secondly, in order to empty ourselves of self, we must die daily to ourselves. This involves our renouncing what the powers of the soul and the senses of the body incline us to do. We must see as if we did not see, hear as if we did not hear and use the things of this world as if we did not use them. This is what St. Paul calls "dying daily". Unless the grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain and does not bear any good fruit. If we do not die to self and if our holiest devotions do not lead us to this necessary and fruitful death, we shall not bear fruit of any worth and our devotions will cease to be profitable. All our good works will be tainted by self-love and self-will so that our greatest sacrifices and our best actions will be unacceptable to God. Consequently when we come to die we shall find ourselves devoid of virtue and merit and discover that we do not possess even one spark of that pure love which God shares only with those who have died to themselves and whose life is hidden with Jesus Christ in him.

Thirdly, we must choose among all the devotions to the Blessed Virgin the one which will lead us more surely to this dying to self. This devotion will be the best and the most sanctifying for us. For we must not believe that all that glitters is gold, all that is sweet is honey, or all that is easy to do and is done by the majority of people is the most sanctifying. Just as in nature there are secrets enabling us to do certain natural things quickly, easily and at little cost, so in the spiritual life there are secrets which enable us to perform works rapidly, smoothly and with facility. Such works are, for example, emptying ourselves of self-love, filling ourselves with God, and attaining perfection.

The devotion that I propose to explain is one of these secrets of grace, for it is unknown to most Christians. Only a few devout people know of it and it is practised and appreciated by fewer still. To begin the explanation of this devotion here is a fourth truth which is a consequence of the third.

(True Devotion nos. 81 - 82)

Prayers for the Second part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 16

During the first week they should offer up all their prayers and acts of devotion to acquire knowledge of themselves and sorrow for their sins.

Let them perform all their actions in a spirit of humility. With this end in view they may, if they wish, meditate on what I have said concerning our corrupted nature, and consider themselves during six days of the week as nothing but sails, slugs, toads, swine,

snakes and goats. Or else they may meditate on the following three considerations of St. Bernard: "Remember what you were - corrupted seed; what you are - a body destined for decay; what you will be - food for worms."

They will ask our Lord and the Holy Spirit to enlighten them saying, "Lord, that I may see," or "Lord, let me know myself," or the "Come, Holy Spirit". Every day they should say the Litany of the Holy Spirit, with the prayer that follows, as indicated in the first part of this work. They will turn to our Blessed Lady and beg her to obtain for them that great grace which is the foundation of all others, the grace of self-knowledge. For this intention they will say each day the Ave Maris Stella and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

(TD no 228)

Knowledge of Ourselves

WE MUST not rely too much upon ourselves, for grace and understanding are often lacking in us. We have but little inborn light, and this we quickly lose through negligence. Often we are not aware that we are so blind in heart. Meanwhile we do wrong, and then do worse in excusing it. At times we are moved by passion, and we think it zeal. We take others to task for small mistakes, and overlook greater ones in ourselves. We are quick enough to feel and brood over the things we suffer from others, but we think nothing of how much others suffer from us. If a man would weigh his own deeds fully and rightly, he would find little cause to pass severe judgment on others.

(Im Bk 2 Ch 5)

Prayers for the Second part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 17

Luke 16:1-8 He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a steward, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. ² And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' ³ And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I have decided what to do, so that people may receive me into their houses when I am put out of the stewardship.' ⁵ So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶ He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' ⁷ Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' ⁸ The master commended the dishonest steward for his shrewdness; for the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

IN ALL things consider the end; how you shall stand before the strict Judge from Whom nothing is hidden and Who will pronounce judgment in all justice, accepting neither bribes nor excuses. And you, miserable and wretched sinner, who fear even the countenance of an angry man, what answer will you make to the God Who knows all your sins? Why do you not provide for yourself against the day of judgment when no man can be excused or defended by another because each will have enough to do to answer for himself? In this life your work is profitable, your tears

acceptable, your sighs audible, your sorrow satisfying and purifying.

(Im Bk I Ch 24)

Prayers for the Second part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 18

Luke 17:1-10 And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they come! ² It would be better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. ³ Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." ⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ⁶ And the Lord said, "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. ⁷ "Will any one of you, who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep, say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down at table'? ⁸ Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and gird yourself and serve me, till I eat and drink; and afterward you shall eat and drink'? ⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

Every trial must be borne for the sake of eternal life

My Child, do not let the labors which you have taken up for My sake break you, and do not let troubles, from whatever source, cast you down; but in everything let My promise strengthen and console you. I am able to reward you beyond all means and measure.

You will not labor here long, nor will you always be oppressed by sorrows. Wait a little while and you will see a speedy end of evils. The hour will come when all labor and trouble shall be no more. All that passes away with time is trivial.

(Im Bk III Ch 47)

Prayers for the Second part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 19

Luke 18:15-30 Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁷ Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." ¹⁸ And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ²⁰ You know the commandments: `Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'" ²¹ And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth." ²² And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute

to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." ²³ But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. ²⁴ Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷ But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God." ²⁸ And Peter said, "Lo, we have left our homes and followed you." ²⁹ And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no man who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰ who will not receive manifold more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Prayers for the Second part: Refer to the prayers above

THIRD PART

Knowledge of the Blessed Virgin

They shall devote this week to the knowledge of the Blessed Virgin. We must unite ourselves to Jesus through Mary—this is the characteristic of our devotion; therefore Saint De Montfort asks that this week be employed in acquiring a knowledge of the Blessed Virgin.

Mary is our sovereign and our Mediatrix, our Mother and our Mistress. Let us then endeavor to know the effects of this royalty, of this mediation, and of this maternity, as well as the grandeurs and prerogatives which are the foundation or consequences thereof.

Our Mother is also a perfect mold wherein we are to be molded in order to make her intentions and dispositions ours. This we cannot achieve without studying the interior life of Mary; namely, her virtues, her sentiments, her actions, her participation in the mysteries of Christ and her union with Him.

Prayers for the Third part

Litany of the Holy Ghost (For private devotion only)

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Father, all powerful,

have mercy on us.

Jesus, Eternal Son of the Father, Redeemer of the world,

save us.

Spirit of the Father and the Son, boundless life of both,

sanctify us.

Holy Trinity,

hear us.

Holy Ghost, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

enter our hearts.

Holy Ghost, Who art equal to the Father and the Son,

enter our hearts.

Promise of God the Father,

have mercy on us

Ray of heavenly light,

Author of all good,

Source of heavenly water,

Consuming fire,

Ardent charity,

Spiritual unction,
Spirit of love and truth,
Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
Spirit of counsel and fortitude,
Spirit of knowledge and piety,
Spirit of the fear of the Lord,
Spirit of grace and prayer,
Spirit of peace and meekness,
Spirit of modesty and innocence,
Holy Ghost, the Comforter,
Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier,
Holy Ghost, Who governest the Church,
Gift of God, the Most High,
Spirit Who fillest the universe,
Spirit of the adoption of the children of God, Holy Ghost,
inspire us with horror of sin.

Holy Ghost,
come and renew the face of the earth.

Holy Ghost,
shed Thy light in our souls.

Holy Ghost,
engrave Thy law in our hearts.

Holy Ghost,
in flame us with the flame of thy love.

Holy Ghost,
open to us the treasures of Thy graces.

Holy Ghost,
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enlighten us with Thy heavenly inspirations.

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lead us in the way of salvation.

Holy Ghost,

grant us the only necessary knowledge

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inspire in us the practice of good.

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grant us the merits of all virtues.

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make us persevere in justice.

Holy Ghost,

be Thou our everlasting reward.

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, *send us Thy Holy Ghost.*

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, *pour down into our souls the gifts of the Holy Ghost.*

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, *grant us the Spirit of wisdom and piety.*

V. Come, Holy Ghost! Fill the hearts of Thy faithful.

R. And enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Let us pray

Grant, O merciful Father, that Thy Divine Spirit enlighten, inflame and purify us, that He may penetrate us with His heavenly dew and make us fruitful in good works; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, liveth and reigneth forever and ever. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin

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 Christ, have mercy on us.
 Lord, have mercy on us.
 Christ, hear us.
 Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
God the Holy Ghost,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
Holy Trinity, one God,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
Holy Mary,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Holy Mother of God,	
Holy Virgin of virgins,	
Mother of Christ,	
Mother of divine grace,	
Mother most pure,	
Mother most chaste,	
Mother inviolate,	
Mother undefiled,	
Mother most amiable,	
Mother most admirable,	
Mother of good counsel,	
Mother of our Creator,	
Mother of our Savior,	
Virgin most prudent,	
Virgin most venerable,	

Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,
Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of gold,
Ark of the covenant,
Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of angels,
Queen of patriarchs,
Queen of prophets,
Queen of Apostles,
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Queen of confessors,
Queen of virgins,
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Queen conceived without original sin,
Queen assumed into heaven,

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Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

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Ave Maris Stella

Hail, bright star of ocean,
God's own Mother blest,
Ever sinless Virgin,
Gate of heavenly rest.

Taking that sweet Ave
Which from Gabriel came,
Peace confirm within us,
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Break the captives' fetters,
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Show thyself a Mother;
May the Word Divine,
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Virgin all excelling,
Mildest of the mild,
Freed from guilt, preserve us,
Pure and undefiled.

Keep our life all spotless,
Make our way secure,
Till we find in Jesus
joy forevermore.

Through the highest heaven
To the Almighty Three,
Father, Son and Spirit,
One same glory be. Amen.

St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Mary

Hail Mary, beloved Daughter of the Eternal Father! Hail Mary, admirable Mother of the Son! Hail Mary, faithful Spouse of the Holy Ghost! Hail Mary, my dear Mother, my loving Mistress, my

powerful sovereign! Hail my joy, my glory, my heart and my soul! Thou art all mine by mercy, and I am all thine by justice. But I am not yet sufficiently thine. I now give myself wholly to thee without keeping anything back for myself or others. If thou still seest in me anything which does not belong to thee, I beseech thee to take it and to make thyself the absolute Mistress of all that is mine. Destroy in me all that may be displeasing to God, root it up and bring it to nought; place and cultivate in me everything that is pleasing to thee.

May the light of thy faith dispel the darkness of my mind; may thy profound humility take the place of my pride; may thy sublime contemplation check the distractions of my wandering imagination; may thy continuous sight of God fill my memory with His presence; may the burning love of thy heart inflame the lukewarmness of mine; may thy virtues take the place of my sins; may thy merits be my only adornment in the sight of God and make up for all that is wanting in me. Finally, dearly beloved Mother, grant, if it be possible, that I may have no other spirit but thine to know Jesus and His divine will; that I may have no other soul but thine to praise and glorify the Lord; that I may have no other heart but thine to love God with a love as pure and ardent as thine. I do not ask thee for visions, revelations, sensible devotion or spiritual pleasures. It is thy privilege to see God clearly; it is thy privilege to enjoy heavenly bliss; it is thy privilege to triumph gloriously in heaven at the right hand of thy Son and to hold absolute sway over angels, men and demons; it is thy privilege to dispose of all the gifts of God, just as thou wilt.

Such is, O heavenly Mary, the "best part" which the Lord has given thee and which shall never be taken away from thee—and this thought fills my heart with joy. As for my part here below, I wish for no other than that which was thine: to believe sincerely

without spiritual pleasures; to suffer joyfully without human consolation; to die continually to myself with-out respite; and to work zealously and unselfishly for thee until death as the humblest of thy servants. The only grace I beg thee to obtain for me is that every day and every moment of my life I may say: Amen—so be it, to all that thou didst do while on earth; Amen—so be it, to all that thou art now doing in heaven; Amen—so be it, to all that thou art doing in my soul, so that thou alone mayest fully glorify Jesus in me for time and eternity. Amen.

Day 20

Luke 2:16-21 And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. ²¹ And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Luke 2:42-52 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; ⁴³ and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴ but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; ⁴⁵ and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. ⁴⁶ After three days they

found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; ⁴⁷ and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." ⁴⁹ And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

Prayers for the Third part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 21

God the Father gathered all the waters together and called them the seas (maria). He gathered all his graces together and called them Mary (Maria). The great God has a treasury or storehouse full of riches in which he has enclosed all that is beautiful, resplendent, rare, and precious, even his own Son. This immense treasury is none other than Mary whom the saints call the "treasury of the Lord". From her fullness all men are made rich.

God the Son imparted to his mother all that he gained by his life and death, namely, his infinite merits and his eminent virtues. He made her the treasurer of all his Father had given him as heritage. Through her he applies his merits to his members and through her he transmits his virtues and distributes his graces. She

is his mystical channel, his aqueduct, through which he causes his mercies to flow gently and abundantly.

(TD nn 23-24)

Prayers for the Third part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 22

After having explained and condemned false devotions to the Blessed Virgin we shall now briefly describe what true devotion is. It is interior, trustful, holy, constant and disinterested.

First, true devotion to our Lady is interior, that is, it comes from within the mind and the heart and follows from the esteem in which we hold her, the high regard we have for her greatness, and the love we bear her.

Second, it is trustful, that is to say, it fills us with confidence in the Blessed Virgin, the confidence that a child has for its loving Mother. It prompts us to go to her in every need of body and soul with great simplicity, trust and affection. We implore our Mother's help always, everywhere, and for everything. We pray to her to be enlightened in our doubts, to be put back on the right path when we go astray, to be protected when we are tempted, to be strengthened when we are weakening, to be lifted up when we fall into sin, to be encouraged when we are losing heart, to be rid of our scruples, to be consoled in the trials, crosses and disappointments of life. Finally, in all our afflictions of body and soul, we naturally turn to Mary for help, with never a fear of importuning her or displeasing our Lord.

Third, true devotion to our Lady is holy, that is, it leads us to avoid sin and to imitate the virtues of Mary. Her ten principal

virtues are: deep humility, lively faith, blind obedience, unceasing prayer, constant self-denial, surpassing purity, ardent love, heroic patience, angelic kindness, and heavenly wisdom.

Fourth, true devotion to our Lady is constant. It strengthens us in our desire to do good and prevents us from giving up our devotional practices too easily. It gives us the courage to oppose the fashions and maxims of the world, the vexations and unruly inclinations of the flesh and the temptations of the devil. Thus a person truly devoted to our Blessed Lady is not changeable, fretful, scrupulous or timid. We do not say however that such a person never sins or that his sensible feelings of devotion never change. When he has fallen, he stretches out his hand to his Blessed Mother and rises again. If he loses all taste and feeling for devotion, he is not at all upset because a good and faithful servant of Mary is guided in his life by faith in Jesus and Mary, and not by feelings.

Fifth, true devotion to Mary is disinterested. It inspires us to seek God alone in his Blessed Mother and not ourselves. The true subject of Mary does not serve his illustrious Queen for selfish gain. He does not serve her for temporal or eternal well-being but simply and solely because she has the right to be served and God alone in her. He loves her not so much because she is good to him or because he expects something from her, but simply because she is lovable. That is why he loves and serves her just as faithfully in weariness and dryness of soul as in sweet and sensible fervour. He loves her as much on Calvary as at Cana. How pleasing and precious in the sight of God and his holy Mother must these servants of Mary be, who serve her without any self-seeking. How rare they are nowadays! It is to increase their number that I have taken up my pen to write down what I have been teaching with success both publicly and in private in my missions for many years.

(TD 105-110)

Prayers for the Third part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 23

As all perfection consists in our being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus it naturally follows that the most perfect of all devotions is that which conforms, unites, and consecrates us most completely to Jesus. Now of all God's creatures Mary is the most conformed to Jesus. It therefore follows that, of all devotions, devotion to her makes for the most effective consecration and conformity to him. The more one is consecrated to Mary, the more one is consecrated to Jesus.

That is why perfect consecration to Jesus is but a perfect and complete consecration of oneself to the Blessed Virgin, which is the devotion I teach; or in other words, it is the perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy baptism.

This devotion consists in giving oneself entirely to Mary in order to belong entirely to Jesus through her. It requires us to give:

(1) Our body with its senses and members;

(2) Our soul with its faculties;

(3) Our present material possessions and all we shall acquire in the future;

(4) Our interior and spiritual possessions, that is, our merits, virtues and good actions of the past, the present and the future.

In other words, we give her all that we possess both in our natural life and in our spiritual life as well as everything we shall acquire in the future in the order of nature, of grace, and of glory in heaven. This we do without any reservation, not even of a penny, a

hair, or the smallest good deed. And we give for all eternity without claiming or expecting, in return for our offering and our service, any other reward than the honour of belonging to our Lord through Mary and in Mary, even though our Mother were not - as in fact she always is - the most generous and appreciative of all God's creatures.

(TD 120 - 121)

Prayers for the Third part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 24

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

(a) This devotion is a smooth way. It is the path which Jesus Christ opened up in coming to us and in which there is no obstruction to prevent us reaching him. It is quite true that we can attain to divine union by other roads, but these involve many more crosses and exceptional setbacks and many difficulties that we cannot easily overcome. We would have to pass through spiritual darkness, engage in struggles for which we are not prepared, endure bitter agonies, scale precipitous mountains, tread upon painful thorns, and cross frightful deserts. But when we take the path of Mary, we walk smoothly and calmly.

It is true that on our way we have hard battles to fight and serious obstacles to overcome, but Mary, our Mother and Queen, stays close to her faithful servants. She is always at hand to brighten their darkness, clear away their doubts, strengthen them in their fears, sustain them in their combats and trials. Truly, in

comparison with other ways, this virgin road to Jesus is a path of roses and sweet delights. There have been some saints, not very many, such as St. Ephrem, St. John Damascene, St. Bernard, St. Bernardine, St. Bonaventure, and St. Francis de Sales, who have taken this smooth path to Jesus Christ, because the Holy Spirit, the faithful Spouse of Mary, made it known to them by a special grace. The other saints, who are the greater number, while having a devotion to Mary, either did not enter or did not go very far along this path. That is why they had to undergo harder and more dangerous trials.

Why is it then, a servant of Mary might ask, that devoted servants of this good Mother are called upon to suffer much more than those who serve her less generously? They are opposed, persecuted, slandered, and treated with intolerance. They may also have to walk in interior darkness and through spiritual deserts without being given from heaven a single drop of the dew of consolation. If this devotion to the Blessed Virgin makes the path to Jesus smoother, how can we explain why Mary's loyal servants are so ill-treated?

I reply that it is quite true that the most faithful servants of the Blessed Virgin, being her greatest favourites, receive from her the best graces and favours from heaven, which are crosses. But I maintain too that these servants of Mary bear their crosses with greater ease and gain more merit and glory. What could check another's progress a thousand times over, or possibly bring about his downfall, does not balk them at all, but even helps them on their way. For this good Mother, filled with the grace and unction of the Holy Spirit, dips all the crosses she prepares for them in the honey of her maternal sweetness and the unction of pure love. They then readily swallow them as they would sugared almonds, though the crosses may be very bitter. I believe that anyone who wishes to be

devout and live piously in Jesus will suffer persecution and will have a daily cross to carry. But he will never manage to carry a heavy cross, or carry it joyfully and perseveringly, without a trusting devotion to our Lady, who is the very sweetness of the cross. It is obvious that a person could not keep on eating without great effort unripe fruit which has not been sweetened.

(b) This devotion is a short way to discover Jesus, 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. A man who is obedient and submissive to Mary will sing of glorious victories over his enemies. It is true, his enemies will try to impede his progress, force him to retreat or try to make him fall. But 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 it is written, Jesus took to come to us with giant strides and in a short time.

Why do you think our Lord spent only a few years here on earth and nearly all of them in submission and obedience to his Mother? The reason is that "attaining perfection in a short time, he lived a long time", even longer than Adam, whose losses he had come to make good. Yet Adam lived more than nine hundred years!

Jesus lived a long time, because he lived in complete submission to his Mother and in union with her, which obedience to his Father required. The Holy Spirit tells us that the man who honours his mother is like a man who stores up a treasure. In other words, the man who honours Mary, his Mother, to the extent of subjecting himself to her and obeying her in all things will soon

become very rich, because he is amassing riches every day through Mary who has become his secret philosopher's stone.

There is another quotation from Holy Scripture, "My old age will be found in the mercy of the bosom". According to the mystical interpretation of these words it is in the bosom of Mary that people who are young grow mature in enlightenment, in holiness, in experience and in wisdom, and in a short time reach the fullness of the age of Christ. For it was Mary's womb which encompassed and produced a perfect man. That same womb held the one whom the whole universe can neither encompass nor contain.

(c) This devotion is a perfect way to reach our Lord and be united to him, for Mary is the most perfect and the most holy of all creatures, and Jesus, who came to us in a perfect manner, chose no other road for his great and wonderful journey. The Most High, the Incomprehensible One, the Inaccessible One, He who is, deigned to come down to us poor earthly creatures who are nothing at all. How was this done?

The Most High God came down to us in a perfect way through the humble Virgin Mary, without losing anything of his divinity or holiness. It is likewise through Mary that we poor creatures must ascend to almighty God in a perfect manner without having anything to fear.

God the Incomprehensible, allowed himself to be perfectly comprehended and contained by the humble Virgin Mary without losing anything of his immensity. So we must let ourselves be perfectly contained and led by the humble Virgin without any reserve on our part.

God, the Inaccessible, drew near to us and united himself closely, perfectly and even personally to our humanity through Mary without losing anything of his majesty. So it is also through

Mary that we must draw near to God and unite ourselves to him perfectly, intimately, and without fear of being rejected.

Lastly, He who is deigned to come down to us who are not and turned our nothingness into God, or He who is. He did this perfectly by giving and submitting himself entirely to the young Virgin Mary, without ceasing to be in time He who is from all eternity. Likewise it is through Mary that we, who are nothing, may become like God by grace and glory. We accomplish this by giving ourselves to her so perfectly and so completely as to remain nothing, as far as self is concerned, and to be everything in her, without any fear of illusion.

Show me a new road to our Lord, pave it with all the merits of the saints, adorn it with their heroic virtues, illuminate and enhance it with the splendour and beauty of the angels, have all the angels and saints there to guide and protect those who wish to follow it. Give me such a road and truly, truly, I boldly say - and I am telling the truth - that instead of this road, perfect though it be, I would still choose the immaculate way of Mary. It is a way, a road without stain or spot, without original sin or actual sin, without shadow or darkness,. When our loving Jesus comes in glory once again to reign upon earth - as he certainly will - he will choose no other way than the Blessed Virgin, by whom he came so surely and so perfectly the first time. The difference between his first and his second coming is that the first was secret and hidden, but the second will be glorious and resplendent. Both are perfect because both are through Mary. Alas, this is a mystery which we cannot understand, "Here let every tongue be silent."

(d) This devotion to our Lady is a sure way to go to Jesus and to acquire holiness through union with him.

(1) The devotion which I teach is not new. Its history goes back so far that the time of its origin cannot be ascertained with any

precision, as Fr. Boudon, who died a holy death a short time ago, states in a book which he wrote on this devotion. It is however certain that for more than seven hundred years we find traces of it in the Church.

St. Odilo, abbot of Cluny, who lived about the year 1040, was one of the first to practise it publicly in France as is told in his life.

Cardinal Peter Damian relates that in the year 1076 his brother, Blessed Marino, made himself the slave of the Blessed Virgin in the presence of his spiritual director in a most edifying manner. He placed a rope around his neck, scourged himself and placed on the altar a sum of money as a token of his devotion and consecration to our Lady. He remained so faithful to this consecration all his life that he merited to be visited and consoled on his death-bed by his dear Queen and hear from her lips the promise of paradise in reward for his service.

Caesarius Bollandus mentions a famous knight, Vautier de Birback, a close relative of the Dukes of Louvain, who about the year 1300 consecrated himself to the Blessed Virgin.

This devotion was also practised privately by many people up to the seventeenth century, when it became publicly known.

Father Simon de Rojas of the Order of the Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives, court preacher to Philip III, made this devotion popular throughout Spain and Germany. Through the intervention of Philip III, he obtained from Gregory XV valuable indulgences for those who practised it.

Father de los Rios, of the Order of St. Augustine, together with his intimate friend, Father de Roias, worked hard, propagating it throughout Spain and Germany by preaching and writing. He composed a large volume entitled "Hierarchia Mariana", where he treats of the antiquity, the excellence and the soundness of this devotion, with as much devotion as learning.

The Theatine Fathers in the seventeenth century established this devotion in Italy and Savoy.

Father Stanislaus Phalacius of the Society of Jesus spread this devotion widely in Poland.

Father de los Rios in the book quoted above mentions the names of princes and princesses, bishops and cardinals of different countries who embraced this devotion.

Father Cornelius a Lapide, noted both for holiness and profound learning, was commissioned by several bishops and theologians to examine it. The praise he gave it after mature examination, is a worthy tribute to his own holiness. Many other eminent men followed his example.

The Jesuit Fathers, ever zealous in the service of our Blessed Lady, presented on behalf of the sodalities of Cologne to Duke Ferdinand of Bavaria, the then archbishop of Cologne, a little treatise on the devotion, and he gave it his approval and granted permission to have it printed. He exhorted all priests and religious of his diocese to do their utmost to spread this solid devotion.

Cardinal de B,ulle, whose memory is venerated throughout France, was outstandingly zealous in furthering the devotion in France, despite the calumnies and persecutions he suffered at the hands of critics and evil men. They accused him of introducing novelty and superstition. They composed and published a libellous tract against him and they - rather the devil in them - used a thousand stratagems to prevent him from spreading the devotion in France. But this eminent and saintly man responded to their calumnies with calm patience. He wrote a little book in reply and forcefully refuted the objections contained in it. He pointed out that this devotion is founded on the example given by Jesus Christ, on the obligations we have towards him and on the promises we made in holy baptism. It was mainly this last reason which silenced

his enemies. He made clear to them that this consecration to the Blessed Virgin, and through her to Jesus, is nothing less than a perfect renewal of the promises and vows of baptism. He said many beautiful things concerning this devotion which can be read in his works.

In Fr. Boudon's book we read of different popes who gave their approval to this devotion, the theologians who examined it, the hostility it encountered and overcame, the thousands who made it their own without censure from any pope. Indeed it could not be condemned without overthrowing the foundations of Christianity. It is obvious then that this devotion is not new. If it is not commonly practised, the reason is that it is too sublime to be appreciated and undertaken by everyone.

(2) This devotion is a safe means of going to Jesus Christ, because it is Mary's role to lead us safely to her Son; just as it is the role of our Lord to lead us to the eternal Father. Those who are spiritually-minded should not fall into the error of thinking that Mary hinders our union with God. How could this possibly happen? How could Mary, who found grace with God for everyone in general and each one in particular, prevent a soul from obtaining the supreme grace of union with him? 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 flesh in her, should prevent a soul from being perfectly united to him?

It is quite true that the example of other people, no matter how holy, can sometimes impair union with God, but not so our Blessed Lady, as I have said and shall never weary of repeating. One reason why so few souls come to the fullness of the age 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. If we

desire a ripe and perfectly formed fruit, we must possess the tree that bears it. If we desire the fruit of life, Jesus Christ, we must possess the tree of life which is Mary. If we desire to have the Holy Spirit working within us, we must possess his faithful and inseparable spouse, Mary the divinely- favoured one whom, as I have said elsewhere, he can make fruitful.

(TD 152 - 164)

Prayers for the Third part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 25

My dear friend, be sure that if you remain faithful to the interior and exterior practices of this devotion which I will point out, the following effects will be produced in your soul:

1. Knowledge of our unworthiness

By the light which the Holy Spirit will give you through Mary, his faithful spouse, you will perceive the evil inclinations of your fallen nature and how incapable you are of any good apart from that which God produces in you as Author of nature and of grace. As a consequence of this knowledge you will despise yourself and think of yourself only as an object of repugnance. You will consider yourself as a snail that soils everything with its slime, as a toad that poisons everything with its venom, as a malevolent serpent seeking only to deceive. Finally, the humble Virgin Mary will share her humility with you so that, although you regard yourself with distaste and desire to be disregarded by others, you will not look down slightly upon anyone.

2. A share in Mary's faith

Mary will share her faith with you. Her faith on earth was stronger than that of all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and saints. Now that she is reigning in heaven she no

longer has this faith, since she sees everything clearly in God by the light of glory. However, with the consent of almighty God she did not lose it when entering heaven. She has preserved it for her faithful servants in the Church militant. Therefore the more you gain the friendship of this noble Queen and faithful Virgin the more you will be inspired by faith in your daily life. It will cause you to depend less upon sensible and extraordinary feelings. For it is a lively faith animated by love enabling you to do everything from no other motive than that of pure love. It is a firm faith, unshakable as a rock, prompting you to remain firm and steadfast in the midst of storms and tempests. It is an active and probing faith which like some mysterious pass-key admits you into the mysteries of Jesus Christ and of man's final destiny and into the very heart of God himself. It is a courageous faith which inspires you to undertake and carry out without hesitation great things for God and the salvation of souls. Lastly, this faith will be your flaming torch, your very life with God, your secret fund of divine Wisdom, and an all-powerful weapon for you to enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. It inflames those who are lukewarm and need the gold of fervent love. It restores life to those who are dead through sin. It moves and transforms hearts of marble and cedars of Lebanon by gentle and convincing argument. Finally, this faith will strengthen you to resist the devil and the other enemies of salvation.

3. The gift of pure love

The Mother of fair love will rid your heart of all scruples and inordinate servile fear. She will open and enlarge it to obey the commandments of her Son with alacrity and with the holy freedom

of the children of God. She will fill your heart with pure love of which she is the treasury. You will then cease to act as you did before, out of fear of the God who is love, but rather out of pure love. You will look upon him as a loving Father and endeavour to please him at all times. You will speak trustfully to him as a child does to its father. If you should have the misfortune to offend him you will abase yourself before him and humbly beg his pardon. You will offer your hand to him with simplicity and lovingly rise from your sin. Then, peaceful and relaxed and buoyed up with hope you will continue on your way to him.

4. Great confidence in God and in Mary

Our Blessed Lady will fill you with unbounded confidence in God and in herself:

1) Because you will no longer approach Jesus by yourself but always through Mary, your loving Mother.

2) Since you have given her all your merits, graces and satisfactions to dispose of as she pleases, she imparts to you her own virtues and clothes you in her own merits. So you will be able to say confidently to God: "Behold Mary, your handmaid, be it done unto me according to your word."

3) Since you have now given yourself completely to Mary, body and soul, she, who is generous to the generous, and more generous than even the kindest benefactor, will in return give herself to you in a marvellous but real manner. Indeed you may without hesitation say to her, "I am yours, O Blessed Virgin, obtain salvation for me," or with the beloved disciple, St. John, "I have taken you, Blessed Mother, for my all." Or again you may say with St. Bonaventure, "Dear Mother of saving grace, I will do everything with confidence and without fear because you are my strength and my boast in the Lord," or in another place, "I am all yours and all that I have is yours, O glorious Virgin, blessed above all created

things. Let me place you as a seal upon my heart, for your love is as strong as death." Or adopting the sentiments of the prophet, "Lord, my heart has no reason to be exalted nor should my looks be proud; I have not sought things of great moment nor wonders beyond my reach; nevertheless, I am still not humble. But I have roused my soul and taken courage. I am as a child, weaned from earthly pleasures and resting on its mother's breast. It is upon this breast that all good things come to me."

4) What will still further increase your confidence in her is that, after having given her in trust all that you possess to use or keep as she pleases, you will place less trust in yourself and much more in her whom you have made your treasury. How comforting and how consoling when a person can say, "The treasury of God, where he has placed all that he holds most precious, is also my treasury." "She is," says a saintly man, "the treasury of the Lord."

5. Communication of the spirit of Mary

The soul of Mary will be communicated to you to glorify the Lord. Her spirit will take the place of yours to rejoice in God, her Saviour, but only if you are faithful to the practices of this devotion. As St. Ambrose says, "May the soul of Mary be in each one of us to glorify the Lord! May the spirit of Mary be in each one of us to rejoice in God!" "When will that happy day come," asks a saintly man of our own day whose life was completely wrapped up in Mary, "when God's Mother is enthroned in men's hearts as Queen, subjecting them to the dominion of her great and princely Son? When will souls breathe Mary as the body breathes air?" When that time comes wonderful things will happen on earth. The Holy Spirit, finding his dear Spouse present again in souls, will come down into them with great power. He will fill them with his gifts, especially wisdom, by which they will produce wonders of grace. My dear friend, when will that happy time come, that age of Mary, when

many souls, chosen by Mary and given her by the most High God, will hide themselves completely in the depths of her soul, becoming living copies of her, loving and glorifying Jesus? That day will dawn only when the devotion I teach is understood and put into practice. *Ut adveniat regnum tuum, adveniat regnum Mariae:* "Lord, that your kingdom may come, may the reign of Mary come!"

6. Transformation into the likeness of Jesus

If Mary, the Tree of Life, is well cultivated in our soul by fidelity to this devotion, she will in due time bring forth her fruit which is none other than Jesus. I have seen many devout souls searching for Jesus in one way or another, and so often when they have worked hard throughout the night, all they can say is, "Despite our having worked all night, we have caught nothing." To them we can say, "You have worked hard and gained little; Jesus can only be recognised faintly in you." But if we follow the immaculate path of Mary, living the devotion that I teach, we will always work in daylight, we will work in a holy place, and we will work but little. There is no darkness in Mary, not even the slightest shadow since there was never any sin in her. She is a holy place, a holy of holies, in which saints are formed and moulded.

Please note that I say that saints are moulded in Mary. There is a vast difference between carving a statue by blows of hammer and chisel and making a statue by using a mould. Sculptors and statue-makers work hard and need plenty of time

to make statues by the first method. But the second method does not involve much work and takes very little time. St. Augustine speaking to our Blessed Lady says, "You are worthy to be called the mould of God." Mary is a mould capable of forming people into the image of the God-man. Anyone who is cast into this divine mould is quickly shaped and moulded into Jesus and Jesus into him. At little cost and in a short time he will become Christ-

like since he is cast into the very same mould that fashioned a God-man.

I think I can very well compare some spiritual directors and devout persons to sculptors who wish to produce Jesus in themselves and in others by methods other than this. Many of them rely on their own skill, ingenuity and art and chip away endlessly with mallet and chisel at hard stone or badly-prepared wood, in an effort to produce a likeness of our Lord. At times, they do not manage to produce a recognisable likeness either because they lack knowledge and experience of the person of Jesus or because a clumsy stroke has spoiled the whole work. But those who accept this little-known secret of grace which I offer them can rightly be compared to smelters and moulders who have discovered the beautiful mould of Mary where Jesus was so divinely and so naturally formed. They do not rely on their own skill but on the perfection of the mould. They cast and lose themselves in Mary where they become true models of her Son.

You may think this a beautiful and convincing comparison. But how many understand it? I would like you, my dear friend, to understand it. But remember that only molten and liquefied substances may be poured into a mould. That means that you must crush and melt down the old Adam in you if you wish to acquire the likeness of the new Adam in Mary.

7. The greater glory of Christ

If you live this devotion sincerely, you will give more glory to Jesus in a month than in many years of a more demanding devotion. Here are my reasons for saying this:

(1) Since you do everything through the Blessed Virgin as required by this devotion, you naturally lay aside your own intentions no matter how good they appear to you. You abandon yourself to our Lady's intentions even though you do not know

what they are. Thus you share in the high quality of her intentions, which are so pure that she gave more glory to God by the smallest of her actions, say, twirling her distaff, or making a stitch, than did St. Laurence suffering his cruel martyrdom on the grid-iron, and even more than all the saints together in all their most heroic deeds! Mary amassed such a multitude of merits and graces during her sojourn on earth that it would be easier to count the stars in heaven, the drops of water in the ocean or the sands of the sea-shore than count her merits and graces. She thus gave more glory to God than all the angels and saints have given or will ever give him. Mary, wonder of God, when souls abandon themselves to you, you cannot but work wonders in them!

(2) In this devotion we set no store on our own thoughts and actions but are content to rely on Mary's dispositions when approaching and even speaking to Jesus. We then act with far greater humility than others who imperceptibly rely on their own dispositions and are self-satisfied about them; and consequently we give greater glory to God, for perfect glory is given to him only by the lowly and humble of heart.

(3) Our Blessed Lady, in her immense love for us, is eager to receive into her virginal hands the gift of our actions, imparting to them a marvelous beauty and splendour, and presenting them herself to Jesus most willingly. More glory is given to our Lord in this way than when we make our offering with our own guilty hands.

(4) Lastly, you never think of Mary without Mary thinking of God for you. You never praise or honour Mary without Mary joining you in praising and honouring God. Mary is entirely relative to God. Indeed I would say that she was relative only to God, because she exists uniquely in reference to him.

She is an echo of God, speaking and repeating only God. If you say "Mary" she says "God". When St. Elizabeth praised Mary calling her blessed because she had believed, Mary, the faithful echo of God, responded with her canticle, "My soul glorifies the Lord." What Mary did on that day, she does every day. When we praise her, when we love and honour her, when we present anything to her, then God is praised, honoured and loved and receives our gift through Mary and in Mary.

(TD 213 - 225)

Prayers for the Third part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 26

Finally, we must say in the words of the apostle Paul, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has the heart of man understood" the beauty, the grandeur, the excellence of Mary, who is indeed a miracle of miracles of grace, nature and glory. "If you wish to understand the Mother," says a saint, "then understand the Son. She is a worthy Mother of God." *Hic taceat omnis lingua* : Here let every tongue be silent.

My heart has dictated with special joy all that I have written to show that Mary has been unknown up till now, and that that is one of the reasons why Jesus Christ is not known as he should be.

If then, as is certain, the knowledge and the kingdom of Jesus Christ must come into the world, it can only be as a necessary consequence of the knowledge and reign of Mary. She who first gave him to the world will establish his kingdom in the world.

Mary's part in the Incarnation

With the whole Church I acknowledge that Mary, being a mere creature fashioned by the hands of God is, compared to his infinite majesty, less than an atom, or rather is simply nothing, since he alone can say, "I am he who is". Consequently, this great Lord, who is ever independent and self-sufficient, never had and does not now have any absolute need of the Blessed Virgin for the accomplishment of his will and the manifestation of his glory. To do all things he has only to will them.

However, I declare that, considering things as they are, because God has decided to begin and accomplish his greatest works through the Blessed Virgin ever since he created her, we can safely believe that he will not change his plan in the time to come, for he is God and therefore does not change in his thoughts or his way of acting.

God the Father gave his only Son to the world only through Mary. Whatever desires the patriarchs may have cherished, whatever entreaties the prophets and saints of the Old Law may have had for 4,000 years to obtain that treasure, it was Mary alone who merited it and found grace before God by the power of her prayers and the perfection of her virtues. "The world being unworthy," said Saint Augustine, "to receive the Son of God directly from the hands of the Father, he gave his Son to Mary for the world to receive him from her."

The Son of God became man for our salvation but only in Mary and through Mary.

God the Holy Spirit formed Jesus Christ in Mary but only after having asked her consent through one of the chief ministers of his court.

God the Father imparted to Mary his fruitfulness as far as a mere creature was capable of receiving it, to enable her to bring forth his Son and all the members of his mystical body.

God the Son came into her virginal womb as a new Adam into his earthly paradise, to take his delight there and produce hidden wonders of grace.

God-made-man found freedom in imprisoning himself in her womb. He displayed power in allowing himself to be borne by this young maiden. He found his glory and that of his Father in hiding his splendours from all creatures here below and revealing them only to Mary. He glorified his independence and his majesty in depending upon this lovable virgin in his conception, his birth, his presentation in the temple, and in the thirty years of his hidden life. Even at his death she had to be present so that he might be united with her in one sacrifice and be immolated with her consent to the eternal Father, just as formerly Isaac was offered in sacrifice by Abraham when he accepted the will of God. It was Mary who nursed him, fed him, cared for him, reared him, and sacrificed him for us.

The Holy Spirit could not leave such wonderful and inconceivable dependence of God unmentioned in the Gospel, though he concealed almost all the wonderful things that Wisdom Incarnate did during his hidden life in order to bring home to us its infinite value and glory. Jesus gave more glory to God his Father by submitting to his Mother for thirty years than he would have given him had he converted the whole world by working the greatest miracles. How highly then do we glorify God when to please him we submit ourselves to Mary, taking Jesus as our sole model.

If we examine closely the remainder of the life of Jesus Christ, we see that he chose to begin his miracles through Mary. It was by her word that he sanctified Saint John the Baptist in the womb of

his mother, Saint Elizabeth; no sooner had Mary spoken than John was sanctified. This was his first and greatest miracle of grace. At the wedding in Cana he changed water into wine at her humble prayer, and this was his first miracle in the order of nature. He began and continued his miracles through Mary and he will continue them through her until the end of time.

God the Holy Spirit, who does not produce any divine person, became fruitful through Mary whom he espoused. It was with her, in her and of her that he produced his masterpiece, God-made-man, and that he produces every day until the end of the world the members of the body of this adorable Head. For this reason the more he finds Mary his dear and inseparable spouse in a soul the more powerful and effective he becomes in producing Jesus Christ in that soul and that soul in Jesus Christ.

This does not mean that the Blessed Virgin confers on the Holy Spirit a fruitfulness which he does not already possess. Being God, he has the ability to produce just like the Father and the Son, although he does not use this power and so does not produce another divine person. But it does mean that the Holy Spirit chose to make use of our Blessed Lady, although he had no absolute need of her, in order to become actively fruitful in producing Jesus Christ and his members in her and by her. This is a mystery of grace unknown even to many of the most learned and spiritual of Christians.

Mary's part in the sanctification of souls

The plan adopted by the three persons of the Blessed Trinity in the Incarnation, the first coming of Jesus Christ, is adhered to each day in an invisible manner throughout the Church and they will pursue it to the end of time until the last coming of Jesus Christ.

God the Father gathered all the waters together and called them the seas (maria). He gathered all his graces together and

called them Mary (Maria). The great God has a treasury or storehouse full of riches in which he has enclosed all that is beautiful, resplendent, rare, and precious, even his own Son. This immense treasury is none other than Mary whom the saints call the "treasury of the Lord". From her fullness all men are made rich.

God the Son imparted to his mother all that he gained by his life and death, namely, his infinite merits and his eminent virtues. He made her the treasurer of all his Father had given him as heritage. Through her he applies his merits to his members and through her he transmits his virtues and distributes his graces. She is his mystical channel, his aqueduct, through which he causes his mercies to flow gently and abundantly.

God the Holy Spirit entrusted his wondrous gifts to Mary, his faithful spouse, and chose her as the dispenser of all he possesses, so that she distributes all his gifts and graces to whom she wills, as much as she wills, how she wills and when she wills. No heavenly gift is given to men which does not pass through her virginal hands. Such indeed is the will of God, who has decreed that we should have all things through Mary, so that, making herself poor and lowly,, and hiding herself in the depths of nothingness during her whole life, she might be enriched, exalted and honoured by almighty God. Such are the views of the Church and the early Fathers.

Were I speaking to the so-called intellectuals of today, I would prove at great length by quoting Latin texts taken from Scripture and the Fathers of the Church all that I am now stating so simply. I could also instance solid proofs which can be read in full in Fr. Poir,'s book "The Triple Crown of the Blessed Virgin". But I am speaking mainly for the poor and simple who have more good will and faith than the common run of scholars. As they believe more simply and more meritoriously, let me merely state the truth to

them quite plainly without bothering to quote Latin passages which they would not understand. Nevertheless, I shall quote some texts as they occur to my mind as I go along.

Since grace enhances our human nature and glory adds a still greater perfection to grace, it is certain that our Lord remains in heaven just as much the Son of Mary as he was on earth. Consequently he has retained the submissiveness and obedience of the most perfect of all children towards the best of all mothers.

We must take care, however, not to consider this dependence as an abasement or imperfection in Jesus Christ. For Mary, infinitely inferior to her Son, who is God, does not command him in the same way as an earthly mother would command her child who is beneath her. Since she is completely transformed in God by that grace and glory which transforms all the saints in him, she does not ask or wish or do anything which is contrary to the eternal and changeless will of God. When therefore we read in the writings of Saint Bernard, Saint Bernardine, Saint Bonaventure, and others that all in heaven and on earth, even God himself, is subject to the Blessed Virgin, they mean that the authority which God was pleased to give her is so great that she seems to have the same power as God. Her prayers and requests are so powerful with him that he accepts them as commands in the sense that he never resists his dear mother's prayer because it is always humble and conformed to his will.

Moses by the power of his prayer curbed God's anger against the Israelites so effectively that the infinitely great and merciful Lord was unable to withstand him and asked Moses to let him be angry and punish that rebellious people. How much greater, then, will be the prayer of the humble Virgin Mary, worthy Mother of God, which is more powerful with the King of heaven than the

prayers and intercession of all the angels and saints in heaven and on earth.

Mary has authority over the angels and the blessed in heaven. As a reward for her great humility, God gave her the power and the mission of assigning to saints the thrones made vacant by the apostate angels who fell away through pride.

Such is the will of almighty God who exalts the humble, that the powers of heaven, earth and hell, willingly or unwillingly, must obey the commands of the humble Virgin Mary. For God has made her queen of heaven and earth, leader of his armies, keeper of his treasures, dispenser of his graces, worker of his wonders, restorer of the human race, mediatrix on behalf of men, destroyer of his enemies, and faithful associate in his great works and triumphs.

God the Father wishes Mary to be the mother of his children until the end of time and so he says to her, "Dwell in Jacob", that is to say, take up your abode permanently in my children, in my holy ones represented by Jacob, and not in the children of the devil and sinners represented by Esau.

Just as in natural and bodily generation there is a father and a mother, so in the supernatural and spiritual generation there is a father who is God and a mother who is Mary. All true children of God have God for their father and Mary for their mother; anyone who does not have Mary for his mother, does not have God for his father. This is why the reprobate, such as heretics and schismatics, who hate, despise or ignore the Blessed Virgin, do not have God for their father though they arrogantly claim they have, because they do not have Mary for their mother. Indeed if they had her for their mother they would love and honour her as good and true children naturally love and honour the mother who gave them life.

An infallible and unmistakable sign by which we can distinguish a heretic, a man of false doctrine, an enemy of God,

from one of God's true friends is that the heretic and the hardened sinner show nothing but contempt and indifference for our Lady. He endeavours by word and example, openly or insidiously - sometimes under specious pretexts - to belittle the love and veneration shown to her. God the Father has not told Mary to dwell in them because they are, alas, other Esaus.

God the Son wishes to form himself, and, in a manner of speaking, become incarnate every day in his members through his dear Mother. To her he said: "Take Israel for your inheritance." It is as if he said, God the Father has given me as heritage all the nations of the earth, all men good and evil, predestinate and reprobate. To the good I shall be father and advocate, to the bad a just avenger, but to all I shall be a judge. But you, my dear Mother, will have for your heritage and possession only the predestinate represented by Israel. As their loving mother, you will give them birth, feed them and rear them. As their queen, you will lead, govern and defend them.

"This one and that one were born in her." According to the explanation of some of the Fathers, the first man born of Mary is the God-man, Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ, the head of mankind, is born of her, the predestinate, who are members of this head, must also as a necessary consequence be born of her. One and the same mother does not give birth to the head without the members nor to the members without the head, for these would be monsters in the order of nature. In the order of grace likewise the head and the members are born of the same mother. If a member of the mystical body of Christ, that is, one of the predestinate, were born of a mother other than Mary who gave birth to the head, he would not be one of the predestinate, nor a member of Jesus Christ, but a monster in the order of grace.

Moreover, Jesus is still as much as ever the fruit of Mary, as heaven and earth repeat thousands of times a day: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." It is therefore certain that Jesus is the fruit and gift of Mary for every single man who possesses him, just as truly as he is for all mankind. Consequently, if any of the faithful have Jesus formed in their heart they can boldly say, "It is thanks to Mary that what I possess is Jesus her fruit, and without her I would not have him." We can attribute more truly to her what Saint Paul said of himself, "I am in labour again with all the children of God until Jesus Christ, my Son, is formed in them to the fullness of his age." Saint Augustine, surpassing himself as well as all that I have said so far, affirms that in order to be conformed to the image of the Son of God all the predestinate, while in the world, are hidden in the womb of the Blessed Virgin where they are protected, nourished, cared for and developed by this good Mother, until the day she brings them forth to a life of glory after death, which the Church calls the birthday of the just. This is indeed a mystery of grace unknown to the reprobate and little known even to the predestinate!

God the Holy Spirit wishes to fashion his chosen ones in and through Mary. He tells her, "My well-beloved, my spouse, let all your virtues take root in my chosen ones that they may grow from strength to strength and from grace to grace. When you were living on earth, practising the most sublime virtues, I was so pleased with you that I still desire to find you on earth without your ceasing to be in heaven. Reproduce yourself then in my chosen ones, so that I may have the joy of seeing in them the roots of your invincible faith, profound humility, total mortification, sublime prayer, ardent charity, your firm hope and all your virtues. You are always my spouse, as faithful, pure, and fruitful as ever. May your faith give

me believers; your purity, virgins; your fruitfulness, elect and living temples."

When Mary has taken root in a soul she produces in it wonders of grace which only she can produce; for she alone is the fruitful virgin who never had and never will have her equal in purity and fruitfulness. Together with the Holy Spirit Mary produced the greatest thing that ever was or ever will be: a God-man. She will consequently produce the marvels which will be seen in the latter times. The formation and the education of the great saints who will come at the end of the world are reserved to her, for only this singular and wondrous virgin can produce in union with the Holy Spirit singular and wondrous things.

When the Holy Spirit, her spouse, finds Mary in a soul, he hastens there and enters fully into it. He gives himself generously to that soul according to the place it has given to his spouse. One of the main reasons why the Holy Spirit does not work striking wonders in souls is that he fails to find in them a sufficiently close union with his faithful and inseparable spouse. I say "inseparable spouse", for from the moment the substantial love of the Father and the Son espoused Mary to form Jesus, the head of the elect, and Jesus in the elect, he has never disowned her, for she has always been faithful and fruitful.

Consequences

We must obviously conclude from what I have just said:

First, that Mary received from God a far-reaching dominion over the souls of the elect. Otherwise she could not make her dwelling-place in them as God the Father has ordered her to do, and she could not conceive them, nourish them, and bring them forth to eternal life as their mother. She could not have them for her inheritance and her possession and form them in Jesus and Jesus in them. She could not implant in their heart the roots of her

virtues, nor be the inseparable associate of the Holy Spirit in all these works of grace. None of these things, I repeat, could she do unless she had received from the Almighty rights and authority over their souls. For God, having given her power over his only-begotten and natural Son, also gave her power over his adopted children - not only in what concerns their body - which would be of little account - but also in what concerns their soul.

Mary is the Queen of heaven and earth by grace as Jesus is king by nature and by conquest. But as the kingdom of Jesus Christ exists primarily in the heart or interior of man, according to the words of the Gospel, "The kingdom of God is within you", so the kingdom of the Blessed Virgin is principally in the interior of man, that is, in his soul. It is principally in souls that she is glorified with her Son more than in any visible creature. So we may call her, as the saints do, Queen of our hearts.

(TD 12 - 38)

Prayers for the Third part: Refer to the prayers above

FOURTH PART

Knowledge of Jesus Christ

"During this week, they shall apply them-selves to the study of Jesus Christ. What is to be studied in Christ? First the Man-God, His grace and glory; then His rights to sovereign dominion over us ; since, after having renounced Satan and the world, we have taken Jesus Christ for our "Lord." What next shall be the object of our study? His exterior actions and also His interior life; namely,

the virtues and acts of His Sacred Heart; His association with Mary in the mysteries of the Annunciation and Incarnation, during His infancy and hidden life, at the feast of Cana and on Calvary.

Prayers for the Fourth part

Litany of the Holy Ghost (For private devotion only)

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Father, all powerful,

have

mercy on us.

Jesus, Eternal Son of the Father, Redeemer of the world,

save us.

Spirit of the Father and the Son, boundless life of both,

sanctify us.

Holy Trinity,

hear us.

Holy Ghost, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

enter our hearts.

Holy Ghost, Who art equal to the Father and the Son,

enter our hearts.

Promise of God the Father,

have mercy on us

Ray of heavenly light,

Author of all good,

Source of heavenly water, Consuming fire,

Ardent charity,

Spiritual unction,

Spirit of love and truth,

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, Spirit of counsel and fortitude,

Spirit of knowledge and piety,

Spirit of the fear of the Lord,

Spirit of grace and prayer,

Spirit of peace and meekness,

Spirit of modesty and innocence,

Holy Ghost, the Comforter,

Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier,

Holy Ghost, Who governest the Church,

Gift of God, the Most High,

Spirit Who fillest the universe,

Spirit of the adoption of the children of God,

Holy Ghost,

inspire us with horror of sin.

Holy Ghost,

come and renew the face of the earth.

Holy Ghost,

shed Thy light in our souls.

Holy Ghost,

engrave Thy law in our hearts.

Holy Ghost,

inflame us with the flame of thy love.

Holy Ghost,

open to us the treasures of Thy graces.

Holy Ghost,

teach us to pray well.

Holy Ghost,

enlighten us with Thy heavenly inspirations.

Holy Ghost,

lead us in the way of salvation.

Holy Ghost,

grant us the only necessary knowledge

Holy Ghost,

inspire in us the practice of good.

Holy Ghost,

grant us the merits of all virtues.

Holy Ghost,

make us persevere in justice.

Holy Ghost,

be Thou our everlasting reward.

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, *send us Thy Holy Ghost.*

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, *pour down into our souls the gifts of the Holy Ghost.*

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, *grant us the Spirit of wisdom and piety.*

V. Come, Holy Ghost! Fill the hearts of Thy faithful.

R. And enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Let us pray

Grant, O merciful Father, that Thy Divine Spirit enlighten, inflame and purify us, that He may penetrate us with His heavenly dew and make us fruitful in good works; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, liveth and reigneth forever and ever. Amen.

Ave Maris Stella

Hail, bright star of ocean,

God's own Mother blest,
Ever sinless Virgin,
Gate of heavenly rest.

Taking that sweet Ave
Which from Gabriel came,
Peace confirm within us,
Changing Eva's name.

Break the captives' fetters,
Light on blindness pour,
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore.

Show thyself a Mother;
May the Word Divine,
Born for us thy Infant,
Hear our prayers through thine.

Virgin all excelling,
Mildest of the mild,
Freed from guilt, preserve us,
Pure and undefiled.

Keep our life all spotless,
Make our way secure,
Till we find in Jesus
joy forevermore.

Through the highest heaven
To the Almighty Three,

Father, Son and Spirit,
One same glory be. Amen.

Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Jesus, hear us.

Jesus, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven, *have Mercy on us*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God the Holy Ghost,

Holy Trinity, one God,

Jesus, Son of the living God,

Jesus, splendor of the Father,

Jesus, brightness of eternal light,

Jesus, King of glory,

Jesus, sun of justice,

Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary,

Jesus, most amiable,

Jesus, most admirable,

Jesus, mighty God,

Jesus, Father of the world to come,

Jesus, angel of the great council,

Jesus, most powerful,

Jesus, most patient,

Jesus, most obedient,

Jesus, meek and humble of heart,

Jesus, lover of chastity,
Jesus, lover of us,
Jesus, God of peace,
Jesus, author of life,
Jesus, model of virtues,
Jesus, lover of souls,
Jesus, our God,
Jesus, our refuge,
Jesus, Father of the poor,
Jesus, treasure of the faithful
Jesus, Good Shepherd,
Jesus, true light,
Jesus, eternal wisdom,
Jesus, infinite goodness,
Jesus, our way and our life,
Jesus, joy of angels,
Jesus, King of patriarchs,
Jesus, master of Apostles,
Jesus, teacher of Evangelists,
Jesus, strength of martyrs,
Jesus, light of confessors,
Jesus, purity of virgins,
Jesus, crown of all saints,
Be merciful,
Be merciful,
From all evil,
From all sin,
From Thy wrath,
From the snares of the devil,
From the spirit of fornication,
From everlasting death,

spare us, O Jesus.
graciously hear us, O Jesus.
Jesus deliver us

From the neglect of Thine inspirations,
 Through the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation,
 Through Thy nativity,
 Through Thine infancy,
 Through Thy most divine life,
 Through Thy labors,
 Through Thine agony and Passion,
 Through Thy cross and dereliction,
 Through Thy sufferings,
 Through Thy death and burial,
 Through Thy Resurrection,
 Through Thine Ascension,
 Through Thine institution of the most Holy Eucharist,
 Through Thy joys,
 Through Thy glory,

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
spare us, O Jesus.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
graciously hear us, O Jesus.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Jesus hear us
Jesus, graciously hear us.

Let us pray

O Lord, Jesus Christ, Who hast said: Ask and ye shall receive;
 seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you;
 grant, we beseech Thee, to us who ask the gift of Thy divine love,

that we may ever love Thee with all our hearts, and in all our words and actions, and never cease praising Thee.

Give us, O Lord, a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy Name; for Thou never failest to govern those whom Thou dost solidly establish in Thy love. Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus

O most loving Jesus, deign to let me pour forth my gratitude before Thee, for the grace Thou hast bestowed upon me in giving me to Thy holy Mother through the devotion of Holy Bondage, that she may be my advocate in the presence of Thy majesty and my support in my extreme misery. Alas, O Lord! I am so wretched that without this dear Mother I should be certainly lost. Yes, Mary is necessary for me at Thy side and everywhere: that she may appease Thy just wrath, because I have so often offended Thee; that she may save me from the eternal punishment of Thy justice, which I deserve; that she may contemplate Thee, speak to Thee, pray to Thee, approach Thee and please Thee; that she may help me to save my soul and the souls of others ; in short, Mary is necessary for me that I may always do Thy holy will and seek Thy greater glory in all things. Ah, would that I could proclaim throughout the whole world the mercy that Thou hast shown to me! Would that everyone might know I should be already damned, were it not for Mary! Would that I might offer worthy thanksgiving for so great a blessing! Mary is in me. Oh, what a treasure! Oh, what a consolation! And shall I not be entirely hers? Oh, what ingratitude! My dear Savior, send me death rather than such a calamity, for I would rather die than live without belonging entirely to Mary. With St. John the Evangelist at the foot of the

cross, I have taken her a thousand times for my own and as many times have given myself to her; but if I have not yet done it as Thou, dear Jesus, dost wish, I now renew this offering as Thou dost desire me to renew it. And if Thou seest in my soul or my body anything that does not belong to this august princess, I pray Thee to take it and cast it far from me, for whatever in me does not belong to Mary is unworthy of Thee.

O Holy Spirit, grant me all these graces. Plant in my soul the Tree of true Life, which is Mary; cultivate it and tend it so that it may grow and blossom and bring forth the fruit of life in abundance. O Holy Spirit, give me great devotion to Mary, Thy faithful spouse; give me great confidence in her maternal heart and an abiding refuge in her mercy, so that by her Thou mayest truly form in me Jesus Christ, great and mighty, unto the fullness of His perfect age. Amen.

O Jesus Living in Mary

O Jesus living in Mary,
 Come and live in Thy servants,
 In the spirit of Thy holiness,
 In the fulness of Thy might,
 In the truth of Thy virtues,
 In the perfection of Thy ways,
 In the communion of Thy mysteries,
 Subdue every hostile power
 In Thy spirit, for the glory of the Father. Amen.

Day 27

First principle: Christ must be the ultimate end of all devotions

Jesus, our Saviour, true God and true man must be the ultimate end of all our other devotions; otherwise they would be false and misleading. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end of everything. "We labour," says St. Paul, "only to make all men perfect in Jesus Christ."

For in him alone dwells the entire fullness of the divinity and the complete fullness of grace, virtue and perfection. In him alone we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing; he is the only teacher from whom we must learn; the only Lord on whom we should depend; the only Head to whom we should be united and the only model that we should imitate. He is the only Physician that can heal us; the only Shepherd that can feed us; the only Way that can lead us; the only Truth that we can believe; the only Life that can animate us. He alone is everything to us and he alone can satisfy all our desires.

We are given no other name under heaven by which we can be saved. God has laid no other foundation for our salvation, perfection and glory than Jesus. Every edifice which is not built on that firm rock, is founded upon shifting sands and will certainly fall sooner or later. Every one of the faithful who is not united to him is like a branch broken from the stem of the vine. It falls and withers and is fit only to be burnt. If we live in Jesus and Jesus lives in us, we need not fear damnation. Neither angels in heaven nor men on earth, nor devils in hell, no creature whatever can harm us, for no creature can separate us from the love of God which is in

Christ Jesus. Through him, with him and in him, we can do all things and render all honour and glory to the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit; we can make ourselves perfect and be for our neighbour a fragrance of eternal life.

If then we are establishing sound devotion to our Blessed Lady, it is only in order to establish devotion to our Lord more perfectly, by providing a smooth but certain way of reaching Jesus Christ. If devotion to our Lady distracted us from our Lord, we would have to reject it as an illusion of the devil. But this is far from being the case. As I have already shown and will show again later on, this devotion is necessary, simply and solely because it is a way of reaching Jesus perfectly, loving him tenderly, and serving him faithfully.

(TD 61 - 62)

Prayers for the Fourth part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 28

Matthew 26:1-2 When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, ² "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified."

Matthew 26:26-29 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you I shall not drink again

of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Matthew 26:36-46 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go yonder and pray." ³⁷ And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." ³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." ⁴⁰ And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done." ⁴³ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

Prayers for the Fourth part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 29

Imitating Christ and despising all vanities on earth

HE WHO follows Me, walks not in darkness," says the Lord. By these words of Christ we are advised to imitate His life and habits, if we wish to be truly enlightened and free from all blindness of heart. Let our chief effort, therefore, be to study the life of Jesus Christ.

The teaching of Christ is more excellent than all the advice of the saints, and he who has His spirit will find in it a hidden manna. Now, there are many who hear the Gospel often but care little for it because they have not the spirit of Christ. Yet whoever wishes to understand fully the words of Christ must try to pattern his whole life on that of Christ.

What good does it do to speak learnedly about the Trinity if, lacking humility, you displease the Trinity? Indeed it is not learning that makes a man holy and just, but a virtuous life makes him pleasing to God. I would rather feel contrition than know how to define it. For what would it profit us to know the whole Bible by heart and the principles of all the philosophers if we live without grace and the love of God? Vanity of vanities and all is vanity, except to love God and serve Him alone.

(Im Bk I,1)

Prayers for the Fourth part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 30

Matthew 27:26-44 Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. ²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, ²⁹ and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him. ³² As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; ³⁶ then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." ³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. ³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ And the

robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

The royal road of the Holy Cross

TO MANY the saying, "Deny thyself, take up thy cross and follow Me," [19] seems hard, but it will be much harder to hear that final word: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." [20] Those who hear the word of the cross and follow it willingly now, need not fear that they will hear of eternal damnation on the day of judgment. This sign of the cross will be in the heavens when the Lord comes to judge. Then all the servants of the cross, who during life made themselves one with the Crucified, will draw near with great trust to Christ, the judge.

Why, then, do you fear to take up the cross when through it you can win a kingdom? In the cross is salvation, in the cross is life, in the cross is protection from enemies, in the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the cross is strength of mind, in the cross is joy of spirit, in the cross is highest virtue, in the cross is perfect holiness. There is no salvation of soul nor hope of everlasting life but in the cross.

Take up your cross, therefore, and follow Jesus, and you shall enter eternal life. He Himself opened the way before you in carrying His cross, and upon it He died for you, that you, too, might take up your cross and long to die upon it. If you die with Him, you shall also live with Him, and if you share His suffering, you shall also share His glory.

(Im Bk II, ch 12)

Prayers for the Fourth part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 31

God's great goodness and love is shown to man in this Sacrament

TRUSTING in Your goodness and great mercy, O Lord, I come as one sick to the Healer, as one hungry and thirsty to the Fountain of life, as one in need to the King of heaven, a servant to his Lord, a creature to his Creator, a soul in desolation to my gentle Comforter.

But whence is this to me, that You should come to me? Who am I that You should offer Yourself to me? How dares the sinner to appear in Your presence, and You, how do You condescend to come to the sinner? You know Your servant, and You know that he has nothing good in him that You should grant him this.

I confess, therefore, my unworthiness. I acknowledge Your goodness.

(Im Bk IV, ch 2)

Prayers for the Fourth part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 32

Loving Jesus Above All Things

BLESSED is he who appreciates what it is to love Jesus and who despises himself for the sake of Jesus. Give up all other love for His, since He wishes to be loved alone above all things.

Affection for creatures is deceitful and inconstant, but the love of Jesus is true and enduring. He who clings to a creature will fall with its frailty, but he who gives himself to Jesus will ever be strengthened.

Love Him, then; keep Him as a friend. He will not leave you as others do, or let you suffer lasting death. Sometime, whether you will or not, you will have to part with everything. Cling, therefore, to Jesus in life and death; trust yourself to the glory of Him who alone can help you when all others fail.

Your Beloved is such that He will not accept what belongs to another -- He wants your heart for Himself alone, to be enthroned therein as King in His own right. If you but knew how to free yourself entirely from all creatures, Jesus would gladly dwell within you.

(Im Bk II, Ch 7)

Special interior practices for those who wish to be perfect

The exterior practices of this devotion which I have just dealt with should be observed as far as one's circumstances and state of life permit. They should not be omitted through negligence or deliberate disregard. In addition to them, here are some very sanctifying interior practices for those souls who feel called by the Holy Spirit to a high degree of perfection. They may be expressed in four words, doing everything through Mary, with Mary, in Mary, and for Mary, in order to do it more perfectly through Jesus, with Jesus, in Jesus, and for Jesus.

Through Mary

We must do everything through Mary, that is, we must obey her always and be led in all things by her spirit, which is the Holy Spirit of God. "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God," says St. Paul. Those who are led by the spirit of Mary are

children of Mary, and, consequently children of God, as we have already shown. Among the many servants of Mary only those who are truly and faithfully devoted to her are led by her spirit.

I have said that the spirit of Mary is the spirit of God because she was never led by her own spirit, but always by the spirit of God, who made himself master of her to such an extent that he became her very spirit. That is why St. Ambrose says, "May the soul of Mary be in each one of us to glorify the Lord. May the spirit of Mary be in each one of us to rejoice in God." Happy is the man who follows the example of the good Jesuit Brother Rodriguez, who died a holy death, because he will be completely possessed and governed by the spirit of Mary, a spirit which is gentle yet strong, zealous yet prudent, humble yet courageous, pure yet fruitful.

The person who wishes to be led by this spirit of Mary:

1) Should renounce his own spirit, his own views and his own will before doing anything, for example, before making meditation, celebrating or attending Mass, before Communion. For the darkness of our own spirit and the evil tendencies of our own will and actions, good as they may seem to us, would hinder the holy spirit of Mary were we to follow them.

2) We should give ourselves up to the spirit of Mary to be moved and directed as she wishes. We should place and leave ourselves in her virginal hands, like a tool in the hands of a craftsman or a lute in the hands of a good musician. We should cast ourselves into her like a stone thrown into the sea. This is done easily and quickly by a mere thought, a slight movement of the will or just a few words as, "I renounce myself and give myself to you, my dear Mother." And even if we do not experience any emotional fervour in this spiritual encounter it is none the less real. It is just as if a person with equal sincerity were to say - which God forbid!

- "I give myself to the devil." Even though this were said without feeling any emotion, he would no less really belong to the devil.

3) From time to time during an action and after it, we should renew this same act of offering and of union. The more we do so, the quicker we shall grow in holiness and the sooner we shall reach union with Christ, which necessarily follows upon union with Mary, since the spirit of Mary is the spirit of Jesus.

With Mary

We must do everything with Mary, that is to say, in all our actions we must look upon Mary, although a simple human being, as the perfect model of every virtue and perfection, fashioned by the Holy Spirit for us to imitate, as far as our limited capacity allows. In every action then we should consider how Mary performed it or how she would perform it if she were in our place. For this reason, we must examine and meditate on the great virtues she practised during her life, especially:

1) Her lively faith, by which she believed the angel's word without the least hesitation, and believed faithfully and constantly even to the foot of the Cross on Calvary.

2) Her deep humility, which made her prefer seclusion, maintain silence, submit to every eventuality and put herself in the last place.

3) Her truly divine purity, which never had and never will have its equal on this side of heaven.

And so on for her other virtues.

Remember what I told you before, that Mary is the great, unique mould of God, designed to make living images of God at little expense and in a short time. Anyone who finds this mould and casts himself into it, is soon transformed into our Lord because it is the true likeness of him.

(TD 257 - 260)

Prayers for the Fourth part: Refer to the prayers above

Day 33

The Body of Christ and Sacred Scripture are most necessary to a faithful soul

O MOST sweet Lord Jesus, how great is the happiness of the devout soul that feasts upon You at Your banquet, where there is set before her to be eaten no other food but Yourself alone, her only Lover, most desired of all that her heart can desire!

To me it would be happiness, indeed, to shed tears in Your presence from the innermost depths of love, and like the pious Magdalen to wash Your feet with them. But where now is this devotion, this copious shedding of holy tears? Certainly in Your sight, before Your holy angels, my whole heart ought to be inflamed and weep for joy. For, hidden though You are beneath another form, I have You truly present in the Sacrament.

My eyes could not bear to behold You in Your own divine brightness, nor could the whole world stand in the splendor of the glory of Your majesty. In veiling Yourself in the Sacrament, therefore, You have regard for my weakness.

(Im Bk 4, Ch 12)

In Mary

We must do everything in Mary. To understand this we must realise that the Blessed Virgin is the true earthly paradise of the new Adam and that the ancient paradise was only a symbol of her.

There are in this earthly paradise untold riches, beauties, rarities and delights, which the new Adam, Jesus Christ, has left there. It is in this paradise that he "took his delights" for nine months, worked his wonders and displayed his riches with the magnificence of God himself. This most holy place consists of only virgin and immaculate soil from which the new Adam was formed with neither spot nor stain by the operation of the Holy Spirit who dwells there. In this earthly paradise grows the real Tree of Life which bore our Lord, the fruit of Life, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which bore the Light of the world.

In this divine place there are trees planted by the hand of God and watered by his divine unction which have borne and continue to bear fruit that is pleasing to him. There are flower-beds studded with a variety of beautiful flowers of virtue, diffusing a fragrance which delights even the angels. Here there are meadows verdant with hope, impregnable towers of fortitude, enchanting mansions of confidence and many other delights.

Only the Holy Spirit can teach us the truths that these material objects symbolise. In this place the air is perfectly pure. There is no night but only the brilliant day of the sacred humanity, the resplendent, spotless sun of the Divinity, the blazing furnace of love, melting all the base metal thrown into it and changing it into gold. There the river of humility gushes forth from the soil, divides into four branches and irrigates the whole of this enchanted place. These branches are the four cardinal virtues.

The Holy Spirit speaking through the Fathers of the Church, also calls our Lady the Eastern Gate, through which the High Priest, Jesus Christ, enters and goes out into the world. Through this gate he entered the world the first time and through this same gate he will come the second time.

The Holy Spirit also calls her the Sanctuary of the Divinity, the Resting-Place of the Holy Spirit, the Throne of God, the City of God, the Altar of God, the Temple of God, the World of God. All these titles and expressions of praise are very real when related to the different wonders the Almighty worked in her and the graces which he bestowed on her. What wealth and what glory! What a joy and a privilege for us to enter and dwell in Mary, in whom almighty God has set up the throne of his supreme glory!

But how difficult it is for us to have the freedom, the ability and the light to enter such an exalted and holy place. This place is guarded not by a cherub, like the first earthly paradise, but by the Holy Spirit himself who has become its absolute Master. Referring to her, he says: "You are an enclosed garden, my sister, my bride, an enclosed garden and a sealed fountain." Mary is enclosed. Mary is sealed. The unfortunate children of Adam and Eve driven from the earthly paradise, can enter this new paradise only by a special grace of the Holy Spirit which they have to merit.

When we have obtained this remarkable grace by our fidelity, we should be delighted to remain in Mary. We should rest there peacefully, rely on her confidently, hide ourselves there with safety, and abandon ourselves unconditionally to her, so that within her virginal bosom:

1) We may be nourished with the milk of her grace and her motherly compassion.

2) We may be delivered from all anxiety, fear and scruples.

3) We may be safeguarded from all our enemies, the devil, the world and sin which have never gained admittance there. That is why our Lady says that those who work in her will not sin, that is, those who dwell spiritually in our Lady will never commit serious sin.

4) We may be formed in our Lord and our Lord formed in us, because her womb is, as the early Fathers call it, the house of the divine secrets where Jesus and all the elect have been conceived. "This one and that one were born in her."

For Mary

Finally, we must do everything for Mary. Since we have given ourselves completely to her service, it is only right that we should do everything for her as if we were her personal servant and slave. This does not mean that we take her for the ultimate end of our service for Jesus alone is our ultimate end. But we take Mary for our proximate end, our mysterious intermediary and the easiest way of reaching him.

Like every good servant and slave we must not remain idle, but, relying on her protection, we should undertake and carry out great things for our noble Queen. We must defend her privileges when they are questioned and uphold her good name when it is under attack. We must attract everyone, if possible, to her service and to this true and sound devotion. We must speak up and denounce those who distort devotion to her by outraging her Son, and at the same time we must apply ourselves to spreading this true devotion. As a reward for these little services, we should expect nothing in return save the honour of belonging to such a lovable Queen and the joy of being united through her to Jesus, her Son, by a bond that is indissoluble in time and in eternity. Glory to Jesus in Mary! Glory to Mary in Jesus! Glory to God alone!

(TD no 261 -265)

Prayers for the Fourth part: Refer to the prayers above

HOW TO DO THE CONSECRATION

At the end of the three weeks," says St. Louis De Montfort, "they shall go to confession and to Communion, with the intention of giving themselves to Jesus Christ in the quality of slaves of love, by the hands of Mary. After Communion, which they should try to make according to the method given further on, they should recite the formula of their consecration, which they will also find further on. They ought to write it, or have it written, unless they have a printed copy of it; and they should sign it the same day they have made it. It would be well also that on that day they should pay some tribute to Jesus Christ and our Blessed Lady, either as a penance for their past unfaithfulness to the vows of their Baptism or as a testimony of their dependence on the dominion of Jesus and Mary. This tribute ought to be according to the devotion and ability of everyone; such as, a fast, mortification, an alms or a candle. If they had but a pin to give in homage, yet gave it with good heart, it would be enough for Jesus, Who looks only at one's good will. Once a year at least, on the same day, they should renew the same consecration, observing the same practices during the three weeks. They might also once a month, or even once a day, renew all they have done in these few words: 'I am all Thine and all that I have belongs to Thee, O my sweet Jesus, through Mary, Thy holy Mother.'

**CONSECRATION OF ONESELF TO JESUS CHRIST, WISDOM INCARNATE,
THROUGH THE HANDS OF MARY**

Eternal and incarnate Wisdom, most lovable and adorable Jesus, true God and true man, only Son of the eternal Father and of Mary always Virgin, I adore you profoundly, dwelling in the splendor of your Father from all eternity and in the virginal womb of Mary, your most worthy Mother, at the time of your Incarnation.

I thank you for having emptied yourself in assuming the condition of a slave to set me free from the cruel slavery of the evil one. I praise and glorify you for having willingly chosen to obey Mary, your holy Mother, in all things, so that through her I may be your faithful slave of love. But I must confess that I have not kept the vows and promises which I made to you so solemnly at my baptism. I have not fulfilled my obligations, and I do not deserve to be called your child or even your slave.

Since I cannot lay claim to anything except what merits your rejection and displeasure, I dare no longer approach the holiness of your majesty on my own. That is why I turn to the intercession and the mercy of your holy Mother, whom you yourself have given me to mediate with you. Through her I hope to obtain from you contrition and pardon for my sins, and that Wisdom whom I desire to dwell in me always.

I turn to you, then, Mary immaculate, living tabernacle of God, in whom eternal Wisdom willed to receive the adoration of both men and angels. I greet you as Queen of heaven and earth, for all that is under God has been made subject to your sovereignty. I call upon you, the unfailing refuge of sinners, confident in your mercy that has never forsaken anyone. Grant my desire for divine Wisdom and, in support of my petition, accept the promises and the offering of myself which I now make, conscious of my unworthiness.

I, an unfaithful sinner, renew and ratify today through you my baptismal promises. I renounce for ever Satan, his empty promises, and his evil designs, and I give myself completely to Jesus Christ, the incarnate Wisdom, to carry my cross after him for the rest of my life, and to be more faithful to him than I have been till now.

This day, with the whole court of heaven as witness, I choose you, Mary, as my Mother and Queen. I surrender and consecrate myself to you, body and soul, with all that I possess, both spiritual and material, even including the value of all my good actions, past, present, and to come. I give you the full right to dispose of me and all that belongs to me, without any reservations, in whatever way you please, for the greater glory of God in time and throughout eternity.

Accept, gracious Virgin, this little offering of my slavery to honor and imitate the obedience which eternal Wisdom willingly chose to have towards you, his Mother. I wish to acknowledge the authority which both of you have over this little worm and pitiful sinner. By it I wish also to thank God for the privileges bestowed on you by the Blessed Trinity. I declare that for the future I will try to honor and obey you in all things as your true slave of love.

O admirable Mother, present me to your dear Son as his slave now and for always, so that he who redeemed me through you, will now receive me through you. Mother of mercy, grant me the favor of obtaining the true Wisdom of God, and so make me one of those whom you love, teach and guide, whom you nourish and protect as your children and slaves.

Virgin most faithful, make me in everything so committed a disciple, imitator, and slave of Jesus, your Son, incarnate Wisdom, that I may become, through your intercession and example, fully mature with the fullness which Jesus possessed on earth, and with the fullness of his glory in heaven. Amen.