


Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort's

# TOTAL CONSECRATION TO

# JESUS THROUGH MARY

**Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort's**

# TOTAL CONSECRATION TO JESUS THROUGH MARY

## Overview of the Five Week Preparation for Consecration

St. Louis-Marie breaks the preparation into a twelve-day period and then three one-week periods, each part having its own prayers, and each particular day having its own brief readings with which to fill the mind for that day. We should not just read the readings, but we need to internalize them; we cannot just mouth the prayers, we need to truly pray them.

The first day of the 33-day preparation begins on November 5

## First Part:
## November 5-16

The First Part is 12 Days in which we seek to recognize and reject the spirit of the world, which Our Lord says is the spirit of Satan. We must first recognize that spirit, because we cannot and will not fight an enemy that we don't recognize as such. That recognition is not easy to attain, because we are tainted by the age in which we live, and we don't easily see the evil around us for what it is.

Once we have recognized the world's spirit for what it is, we want to develop in our hearts an intense revulsion for it, it being so contrary to the spirit of Our Lord and our Lady, to whom we wish to consecrate ourselves.

## Second Part:
## November 17-December 7

Having seen the spirit of the world in its true light, in the **first week of the second part** we want to see how we ourselves have been infected by that spirit, and the damage it has done to us. We turn our gaze, then, from the outside world to our own souls. We want to see ourselves as we really are, in other words, to see ourselves as God sees us. Most people do not know themselves very well. Pride is one reason – it tends to distort the picture. The habit of comparing self to others rather than to God is another reason.

True knowledge of self is indispensable to progress in the spiritual life, for if we don't see that we fall short, we will make no attempt to remedy the problem.

We cannot truly love Our Lady if we know but little about her, and we will not serve her well unless we have a great love for her. Therefore, we will spend the **second week of the second part** of preparation, getting to know Our Lady better. We want to see her beauty, her virtue, and the incredible role that she has as our mother.

To truly know Mary well is a great privilege and a tremendous grace, one that we must earnestly ask Our Lord Jesus Christ for. It is a grace He Loves to give.

If we love and wish to serve Our Lady, it is only on account of Our Lord. We love Our Lady only because she is the Mother of God and she served Him so perfectly. We wish to serve her by consecrating ourselves to her only because we know that she will show us the way to her Son. Our real goal, then, is to love Mary's Son, Jesus. But just as we said that we cannot love or serve Mary unless we know her well, so it is true of Our Lord. Thus, we will spend the **third week of the second part** of preparation getting to know Our Lord better.

The best way to know Our Lord is to reflect on Him in His Passion, and in the Holy Eucharist. There we will see most clearly the Heart of Jesus, His love for us, and His willingness to suffer for us.

**In the final days of preparation**, considering the offering we are about to make in the consecration, we want to ask ourselves: What does it mean, practically speaking, to "consecrate" oneself to Mary? The actual prayer of consecration tells much, so we can do no better than to read it and reread it, reflecting on its meaning.

It is important to now consider as well what we will do, practically speaking, to assure that we continue day by day our efforts to live the consecration once we have made it. To renew each morning our consecration is one way. But what else can we do to be sure that our hearts always belong entirely to Our Lady?

## Readings and Prayers for St. Louis-Marie de Montfort's Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary

# First Part of Preparation

**Days 1 – 12. After the daily reading, recite the *Ave Maris Stella* (pray for courage, generosity, love of God) – p. 51**

## FIRST DAY: November 5

We are all the children of our age. It is said that you cannot leave clothes in a smoky room, without them taking on the smell of smoke. Similarly, by living in an age whose spirit is radically opposed to that of Christ, it is only to be expected that most of us will become tainted by that spirit in one way or another, to a greater or lesser degree.

In this first period of preparation, we are encouraged to look around and see what exactly constitutes the Spirit of the World, so as to develop both an awareness and a revulsion for a Spirit so radically opposed to the Spirit of Christ. This Spirit is usually manifested through a desire of independence from God; and is visible by the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life. It disobeys the laws of God and all lawful authority; it abuses created things. Its works can be seen to flow from the Seven Capital Sins—Pride, Covetousness, Gluttony, Anger, Lust, Envy and Sloth as they darken our mind; seduce, weaken and corrupt our will.

Through this Spirit of the World, the devil makes sin look splendid, charming and alluring in persons, places and things. To overcome this Spirit, we must be able to recognize it in those selfsame persons, places and things; and we must pray and mortify ourselves to purify ourselves of its effects.

### Salt and Light

*You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing anymore but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men. You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Mt. 5:13-16)*

## SECOND DAY: November 6

### The Spirit of the World

This worldly wisdom consists in the exact compliance with the maxims and the fashions of the world, in a continuous trend toward greatness and esteem. It is a secret and unceasing pursuit of pleasures and personal interests, not in a gross and open manner, so as to cause scandal, but in a secret, deceitful and scheming fashion. Otherwise, it would not be what the world calls wisdom, but rank licentiousness.

Those who proceed according to the wisdom of the world, are those who know how to manage well their affairs and to arrange things to their temporal advantage, without appearing to do so;

- who know the art of deceiving and how to cleverly cheat without it being noticed, who say or do one thing and have another thing in mind;
- who are thoroughly acquainted with the way and the flattery of the world;
- who know how to please everybody, in order to reach their goal, not troubling much about the honor and interests of God;
- who make a secret, but deadly, fusion of truth with untruth; of the Gospel with the world; of virtue with vice; of Jesus Christ with Satan;
- who wish to pass for honest people, but not as religious men; who despise and corrupt; or readily condemn every religious practice which does not conform to their own.

### The Roads that Lead to Heaven and Hell

*Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in there at. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it! Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. (Mt. 7:10-20)*

### The Ten Commandments of the Worldly Man

1. Thou shalt be well acquainted with the world.
2. Thou shalt appear to be an honest man.
3. Thou shalt be successful in business.
4. Thou shalt keep what is thine.
5. Thou shalt get on in the world.
6. Thou shalt be popular.
7. Thou shalt fit in.
8. Thou shalt make merry.
9. Thou shalt not be a killjoy.
10. Thou shalt avoid singularity, dullness and an air of piety.

### Not Everyone that Says Lord, Lord, Shall Go to Heaven

*Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and done many miracles in thy name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity. Everyone therefore that heareth these my words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock, And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock. And everyone that heareth these my words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand, And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof. And it came to pass when Jesus had fully ended these words, the people were in admiration at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes and Pharisees. (Mt. 7:21-29)*

## THIRD DAY: November 7

### On Considering Man's Wretchedness

1. You are unhappy wherever you are and in whatever direction you turn, unless you turn to God. Why are you troubled that things do not turn out for you just as you wish and desire? Who is there who has everything according to his wish? Neither I, nor you, nor anyone on earth. There is no one on earth free from trouble or anguish, be he king or Pope. Who is he who has a better lot in life? Most certainly he who has the strength to suffer something for God.

2. Many foolish weaklings say: "Look, what a good life that man has, how rich, how great, how powerful and famous he is!" But give your attention to the good things of heaven, and you will see that all those temporal things are worth nothing, but are utterly uncertain and very burdensome, because they are never owned without anxiety and fear. Our happiness is not in having temporal things in abundance—moderation in those things is enough for us. It is truly misery to live upon earth. The more a soul desires to be spiritual, the more bitter the present life becomes to it, because it better understands and clearly sees the shortcomings of man's corruption. For to eat, to drink, to stay awake, to sleep, to rest, to labor and to submit to the other necessities of nature, is truly a source of misery and affliction to a devout soul, who would gladly be released from these things and freed from all sin.

3. For in this world, those who lead interior lives are greatly burdened by the demands of the body. And so, the Prophet devoutly asks for strength to be free from them, saying: "*The troubles of my heart are multiplied; deliver me from my necessities" (Ps. 4:17)*. But woe to them who do not recognize their wretchedness and even more woe to them who love this wretched and perishable life. For there are some who cling to this life so much that, even though they have to toil or beg for the bare necessities of life, they would, if it were only possible, prefer to live on earth forever, showing no interest for the kingdom of God.

4. O, senseless and faithless people, who lie buried so deep in earthly things, as to relish nothing other than the things of the flesh! Miserable wretches! In the end they will find, to their cost, how cheap and worthless was that which they loved. But the saints of God and all devoted friends of Christ, gave no thought to the things which pleased the flesh, nor to those things which flourished in this life, but their whole hope and intention aspired towards the good things of eternity. Their whole desire was borne upwards to the things eternal and invisible, lest the love of things visible should pull them down to things below.

5. Do not become discouraged with your lack of spiritual progress; you still have time and opportunity. Why do you wish to put off your progress till tomorrow? Arise, begin this very moment and say: "Now is the time for action, now is the time to fight, now is the proper time to amend my life." When you are troubled and afflicted, then is the time for merit. You must go through fire and water before finding refreshment. Unless you force yourself, you will never conquer vice. As long as we are in this frail body, we

cannot be without sin, nor live without weariness and sorrow. We would gladly have rest from all misery, but because, through sin, we have lost our innocence, we have also lost our true blessedness. And so we must be patient and await the mercy of God, until all iniquity pass away and this mortality be swallowed up by eternal life.

6. O, how great is human frailty, which is ever prone to vice! Today you confess your sins and, tomorrow, you again commit the sins you have confessed. At this very moment, you are resolved to be on your guard, yet, after an hour, you act as if you had never made any resolutions. Deservedly, then, can we humble ourselves and never hold any high opinion of ourselves, because we are so frail and unstable. What will yet become of us in the end, when we grow lukewarm so soon? Woe to us if we wish to turn aside, in order to rest, as if we had already arrived at peace and safety, but without there being any trace of true holiness in our words and actions (I Thess. 5:3).

## FOURTH DAY: November 8

### Pride

Pride is the root of all sin. Whenever we sin, our pride has paved the way. We too, have cried out: "I will not serve! I will not do this! I will not do that! You can't tell me what to do!" Pride is indeed an evil thing, but only when it goes to extremes. For there is a virtuous pride and an evil pride.

There is nothing wrong in being proud of the good that we do, and of the good that is in us—but this must always be in acknowledging the source or first principle of that good—which is God, not ourselves! It is when we deviate from this basic truth, that sinful pride rears its ugly head. It is when we think that we, ourselves, are the cause of all our goodness, our talents, our success and our achievements—it is then that we sin.

Neither is there anything wrong in letting others see the good that is in us, if the motive for this is God's glory: "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16). But if we are tempted to show off the good that is in us, for motives of self-glorification, then again pride rears its sinful, ugly head. For we fall into a species of idolatry by worshipping ourselves. Sometimes we recognize, in theory, that God exists and that we depend upon Him—but, very often, this truth is not apparent in the way we live our lives.

In theory, we need God, but, in practice, He is pushed aside, as we glory in whatever goods and talents that He may have given us: our intellect,

wit, dexterity, health, beauty, strength, etc. Look at the excessive amount of time people spend bathing and basking in these secondary qualities, while almost totally forgetting what really matters—God and their salvation.

Similarly, we tend to exaggerate our personalities, while ignoring our defects. We have the eye of an eagle, when it comes to our qualities, but are blind as bats, when it comes to our sins. Yet with regard to our neighbors, the reverse principle is true! We have an eagle eye for their faults but are blind to their virtues!

This pride is the source of many faults: through pride we are unyielding, even when in the wrong; we become caustic and sarcastic in speech; we get involved in harsh and heated discussions, which bring about dissension and discord; which then lead to bitter words, unjust words and actions against our rivals, in order to belittle them.

Hence, the bitter criticism of superiors and a refusal to obey their orders. Hence, too, the demi-god obstinacy and lack of humility in superiors, by never admitting a fault, or changing a course of action, when they realize that they are in the wrong. This is far from imitating and learning from Jesus, the Superior of all superiors, Who was "meek and humble of heart." This pride of life leads and keeps us within an atmosphere of anxiety and unhappiness, wherein we find no peace, nor any real lasting contentment, because we want to excel in all things and lord it over all others.

The remedy for pride is humility. We are nothing! We came from dust! We will return, as the Ash Wednesday liturgy says, into dust! Without God we can do nothing good! As St. Paul says: what have we to glory about, except our sins? What is it that we achieved when left totally to ourselves? Nothing but sin!

What can I do without the help of others? How much success would I have had, were it not for the help and talents of others? How much success would I have had, without the agreement and help of God's Providence? Nothing happens without God putting his signature to it! Absolutely nothing! Was I the source of my own existence? Did I survive without the care of parents? Did I teach myself? Did I create all the talents that I have? Will I avoid all illness and suffering? Will I escape death? Will I escape the final judgement? Will I create and build a heaven for myself in hell? No! Remember, man, that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return!

### Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican

*There were some who had confidence in themselves, thinking they had won acceptance with God, and despised the rest of the world; to them he addressed this other*

*parable: Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood upright, and made this prayer in his heart, I thank thee, God, that I am not like the rest of men, who steal and cheat and commit adultery, or like this publican here; for myself, I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican stood far off; he would not even lift up his eyes towards heaven; he only beat his breast, and said, God, be merciful to me; I am a sinner. I tell you, this man went back home higher in God's favor than the other; everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and the man who humbles himself shall be exalted. (Lk. 18:9-14)*

## FIFTH DAY: November 9

### Covetousness

Covetousness, avarice, greed—they all come down to the same thing: an inordinate desire and love of earthly goods. There has never been such an enormous store of earthly goods as there is today, in this over-materialistic twentieth century. The whole economy revolves around an ever-increasing creation and consumption of earthly goods. Much of family life revolves around the same thing. Even sacred feasts such as Christmas, have seen the spiritual aspect take a distant second place to the material aspect! Many of us fall into this sin of covetousness. If we cannot satisfy our greed, by actually possessing the thing we desire, then we at least encourage that greed, by avidly gorging everything with our eyes.

It is undeniable that we do require certain material goods to help us live in a way that will help, rather than hinder, our salvation. Yet this appetite, when uncontrolled, soon runs rampant. We start to pursue money, wealth and goods with great eagerness, using all kinds of means, regardless of the rights or needs of others, in order to get them. We risk our health and livelihood, or that of our employees, by overwork or taking too many financial risks. We become stingy and mean in spending our money, because we wish to accumulate more and more. We give little or nothing to charitable concerns or the poor, for the same reason.

It finally gets to the point where we idolize money or material goods, hoarding them beyond sane measure. This kind of attitude is sinful, because it makes a god of what is simply a means to salvation. It also refuses to rely upon Divine Providence.

*Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust, and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break*

*through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also . . . No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Mt. 6:19-24)*

*Therefore, I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat: and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? (Mt. 6:25-28).*

*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is today, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. (Mt. 6: 28-33)*

## SIXTH DAY: November 10

### Gluttony

Gluttony is akin to covetousness, in that it is greed for specific things—namely, food and drink. Gluttony is a disordered love of the pleasures of the table. It is an abuse of those legitimate pleasures that God has attached to eating and drinking, which are the necessary means of self-preservation. We violate this legitimate pleasure in any of the following ways:

1. By eating when there is no need; eating between meals and for no other reason than that of indulging our greed.
2. Seeking delicacies or daintily prepared food, for the sole reason of obtaining greater pleasure from it.
3. Going beyond either appetite or need, gorging ourselves with food or drink to the point where it endangers our health or prevents us from doing our duties.
4. Eating in a greedy, over-eager or animalistic manner.

What gluttony does: it makes us slaves of our bodies, it brutalizes us, it dulls and then weakens our intellectual and moral life, and gradually prepares the way for lust and impurity—because, through gluttony, we give in

to the craving of the body in the realm of food, which is but one step away from giving in to the craving of the body in the sexual domain.

Intemperance at table also leads to intemperance in speech. How many things have been said at table, that would have better been left unsaid? How many secrets and confidences have been betrayed over a meal or a bottle of wine? How many reputations tarnished, or even ruined? Perhaps, by doing so, we have even tarnished, or even ruined our own reputation!

The guiding principle, in our struggle against gluttony, must be one of mortification and penance. Remember Our Lord saying that certain kinds of devils are only cast out by prayer and fasting. We eat and drink to live, and not vice-versa! Too much food and drink weighs down the mind and will, then a certain laziness and sluggishness creeps in and this takes over both the physical and spiritual domains.

Mortify yourself in the realm of quantity—it is a good principle to always leave the table still feeling slightly hungry. Put less on your plate at the start of the meal. Take the smaller piece, rather than the larger. Do not be in a hurry to start eating. Eat and drink more slowly. Drink water instead of some favorite beverage. Avoid putting ice in your drink, if you prefer a cool drink. Perhaps over-salt, or over-spice your food a little, so as to take away some of the pleasurable taste; or take less seasoning if you have a liking for spicy food. Give your favorite dessert to another. Do not eat between meals. Do not buy the most extravagant or costly foods. Do not throw food away, but re-use it. Given a choice between two equally nourishing dishes, sometimes take the less tasty dish. These are just some of the many ways in which we can mortify ourselves with regard to food and drink.

*There was a rich man once, that was clothed in purple and lawn, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a beggar, called Lazarus, who lay at his gate, covered with sores, wishing that he could be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, but none was ready to give them to him; the very dogs came and licked his sores. Time went on; the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom; the rich man died too and found his grave in hell. And there, in his suffering, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he said, with a loud cry, Father Abraham, take pity on me; send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, My son, remember that thou didst receive thy good fortune in thy lifetime, and Lazarus, no less, his ill fortune; now he is in comfort, thou in torment. And, besides all this, there is a great gulf fixed between us and you, so that there is no passing from our side of it to you, no crossing over to us from yours. Whereupon he said, Then, Father, I*

*pray thee send him to my own father's house; for I have five brethren; let him give these a warning, so that they may not come, in their turn, into this place of suffering. Abraham said to him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them listen to these. They will not do that, Father Abraham, said he; but if a messenger comes to them from the dead, they will repent. But he answered him, If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will be unbelieving still, though one should rise from the dead. (Lk. 16:19-31)*

## SEVENTH DAY: November 11

### Anger

Anger is not always a sin. There is a lawful sentiment of anger, a just indignation, which is an ardent, but rational, desire to punish a guilty party with some form of just retribution. As an example of this, we see Our Lord, with a whip, angrily cast out the moneychangers from the Temple. Whereas, on the other hand, we see the high-priest Heli, severely rebuked *for not showing enough anger* in correcting his sons.

Thus, for anger to be legitimate, it must be:

a. Just—by punishing only those that deserve punishment;

b. Tempered—by moderation in the degree of the punishment that is given; by giving a punishment that fits the crime and not exceeding that;

c. Charitable—not vented out of a spirit of hatred, revenge or animosity, but out of a sincere desire of helping the wrongdoer.

Anger is sinful when it is unjust, immoderate or uncharitable. Sometimes, we have a violent and inordinate desire to punish someone, regardless of the conditions we have mentioned above.

Our anger is accompanied by hatred, which does not merely seek to correct, but seeks to exact some form of revenge. There are several degrees of intensity within anger, which are worth remembering:

a. Interior Anger of the Mind:

Firstly, we become increasingly impatient with others, whereby the least annoying thing, or the smallest degree of failure, causes dissatisfaction.

This is followed by agitation, producing an unnecessary irritation, which we manifest outwardly in some way—facial expressions, agitation, etc.

Then, by brooding upon the facts, this anger or irritation can become so deep rooted, that it engenders sentiments of varying degrees that pass from resentment, to bitterness, hatred and eventually a desire for revenge.

b. Exterior Anger

The interior anger manifests itself outwardly, beginning with exterior signs of impatience. The earlier anger manifests itself, the weaker it shows the person to be. This exterior anger can, if uncontrolled, easily develop into violence, which in turn can lead to an insane rage, wherein we no longer know what we are saying or doing.

c. Sinfulness of anger

When anger is impulsive and spontaneous, it is usually a venial sin. If it is so intense that self-control is lost and grave insult is shown to neighbor, then it would be mortal, but this is often not the case. Anger that goes as far as hatred and rancor, when it is deliberate and willful, is, of itself, a mortal sin.

## EIGHTH DAY: November 12

### Lust

Our Lady of Fatima said that, in this age, more souls are condemned to hell through sins of lust than any other sin. In itself, there is nothing wrong with the sexual appetite. Just as God has attached pleasurable sensations to the act of eating and drinking in order to help self-preservation, so, too, has He attached pleasurable feelings to the act of procreation in order to guarantee the propagation of the human race.

Yet, this pleasure is only allowed within the scope of marriage—whose prime purpose is the procreation of children. Outside of marriage, all such pleasure is forbidden. Not only are extra-marital sexual actions forbidden, but so too is the interior desire for those very things. Did not Our Lord say: "But I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman, to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt. 5:28).

From the point of view of perfection, next to pride, there is no greater obstacle to spiritual growth than the vice of impurity. It can very easily make slaves of us and, through lust, we lose any desire for the spiritual. We pray little, or not at all. We become very selfish. True love dies and is replaced by a carnal love. The lustful desires become an obsession. The right balance of our faculties is destroyed. Lust takes command over reason. The will also becomes a slave of this shameful passion. The mind becomes dull and weak. Taste for any serious study or work is lost. The imagination dwells on earthly things. The person increasingly needs base things to satisfy itself. Finally, salvation itself is greatly risked.

To withstand and fight such a dangerous passion, we need a true appreciation of our bodies as being temples of the Holy Ghost. We should behave, in our body, as we do in church. We should also avoid the occasions of sin. This, first and foremost, means keeping a guard over our eyes—which are the windows and doors of our soul. It only takes a few seconds to absorb an image, but it can take weeks, months or years to cleanse our mind or imagination of that selfsame image!

We must also avoid certain friends—charming, witty, intelligent, alluring though they may be—but who may, like the proverbial Pied Piper, lead us a merry dance to hell! Finally, there are certain places or things that also need to be avoided. One of the most dangerous ones that comes to mind is the TV, with its frequent temptations to impurity. The same can be said for certain types of music, whose lyrics glorify or encourage the impure. Similarly, many magazines and books sow the seed of lust in the mind and must be avoided at all costs.

To the above we must also add sincere prayer and mortification. Do not pamper your body, whether it be in the domain of food and drink, or in the realm of fashion, or in the trappings of the home. Undue comfort makes us soft and weakens our will. Also, mortify your imagination by refusing to dwell upon past pleasures. All these things, if seriously undertaken, will greatly fortify us against this vicious and dangerous vice.

*For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting. (Gal. 6:8)*

*They allure by the desires of fleshly riotousness, . . . promising liberty, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption. For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also he is the slave. (II Peter 2:18-19)*

## NINTH DAY: November 13

### Envy

This vice proceeds from pride—which can bear neither rival nor superior. As a result, we are saddened by another person's qualities, possessions or achievements, as though they constituted an affront to our own "superiority" or standing. Often it leads us to the desire of seeing that person lose that quality or possession, and a wish that they experience failure. Because of our pride, we are convinced of our own imagined superiority and, consequently, we feel offended, or threatened, when we encounter someone

better gifted, or more successful than ourselves. We know that we are prey to and, perhaps, even guilty of this vice, when it pains us to hear others acknowledged, praised, congratulated, honored, etc. We can be sure that we are guilty of this vice, if we then indulge in a needless and unjust criticism of the person thus honored!

The effects of envy can be very serious. It can stir up a hatred towards the person whom we envy and can, as a result, lead us to speaking ill of them, sowing discord, blackening their character, sowing suspicion and, eventually, wishing some evil to befall them—if not actually carrying out that very evil ourselves! It can destroy family life, community life, civic life and even religious life! We need only recall the story of Joseph and his many brothers, who became so envious of him, that they sought to kill him—eventually settling for the option of selling him into slavery. Similarly, we see the envy that the religious leaders had for Jesus—their own countryman. The little seed of envy can grow into an evil tree bringing forth much bad fruit. It is better weeded out before it can exert a stranglehold grip upon our souls.

Some of the ways in which we can weed it out are by remembering that the more God gives to someone, then the more He expects in return. God is the perfect economist and entrepreneur—He wastes nothing and He expects a full return on His investments! Think of the parable of the talents! Therefore, the person whom you envy so much, will be all the more strictly judged upon his use or misuse of what he has been given. Being given more, he must do all the more with it! With the little that you have, you also have less to worry about. Thank God for the little you have and pray for the persons who have much. For to whom more is given, more is also expected.

Another way to avoid envy, is to try and imitate the person whom you are tempted to envy. This prompts us, with the help of God's grace, to a holy envy, whereby we seek to imitate and even surpass our neighbor in virtuous things—all for the glory of God and not out of pride. Thus, no sin is committed and, on the contrary, a greater good can result. To do so, is to enter into the spirit of the Church, who proposes so many saints for our emulation.

## TENTH DAY: November 14

### Sloth

Sloth is connected to sensuality, because, due to an inordinate attachment to pleasure, it makes us fear and avoid effort and hardship—both of which seem to be opposed to our notion of pleasure. There is, in all of us, a tendency to follow the line of least resistance, or to adhere to the law of the minimum. We want the maximum results for the minimum effort. Much of our economy is based upon that pernicious law—produce at the lowest possible cost and sell it for the highest possible price that you can get away with!

There are various degrees of laziness. Firstly, we take up our duties reluctantly and perform them indifferently, without zeal and attention, with the result that the work is invariably done poorly. The next stage is one of, not outright refusal, but of procrastination—seeking to put off the accepted task. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak and, consequently, a prolonged procrastination leads to the task being put-off indefinitely. Finally, we have the truly lazy man, who does not want to work, who refuses to work and who deliberately seeks ways of avoiding having to work. He lies and seeks excuses so as to avoid doing his duty.

This laziness is seen in the workplace, whereby we are busy only when a supervisor or boss is present. Yet once he leaves, we drop down a gear or two in our effort. In doing so, do we really give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay?

This laziness can also be seen in the home life, where parents have neither studied how to raise children, nor have they been successful in raising children that are a credit to themselves, the Church and society. We then later see their laziness reproduced in their children, who will imitate them perfectly!

That same laziness is even seen in their duties towards God and His Church. Some are slow to pray, lazy about coming to Mass, neglectful of their spiritual duties. They forget the wise proverb: *The Devil makes work for idle hands!* If they fail to find work for themselves, the devil will most certainly find some for them, but the wages will not be heavenly!

God has put us here to work out our salvation. He even said to Adam: *Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken (Gen. 3:17-19).*

We shall reap what we sow. Therefore, it is important that we cultivate, in our children, from their earliest days, an appreciation and a love of work, but they will only have that if they see the virtue of diligence and industry working in their parents.

## ELEVENTH DAY: November 15

### On the Examples of the Holy Fathers

1. Consider the living examples of the holy fathers—in whom shone real perfection and religion—and you will see how little, or virtually nothing, is that which we do. Alas, what is our life if it be compared to theirs? Saints and friends of Christ, they served the Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in toil and weariness, in watchings and fastings, in prayers and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproaches (Heb. 11:37).

2. O, how many and grievous tribulations did the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins and others suffer, in their desire to follow the steps of Christ! They hated their lives in this world, so as to possess them for eternity. O, what a strict and renounced life did the holy fathers in the desert live! What long and grievous temptations they endured! So often were they attacked by the enemy! What frequent and fervent prayers did they offer up to God! What a rigorous abstinence did they undergo! What great zeal and fervor they had for their spiritual progress. What strong wars they waged against the tyranny of their vices! With what pure and upright effort did they reach for God! By day they labored and at night they gave themselves to long prayers, though, while they labored, they ceased not at all from mental prayer.

3. They spent all their time profitably, every hour seemed short to spend with God; and in the great sweetness of divine contemplation, they even forgot their need of bodily refreshment. They renounced all riches, dignities, honors, friends and relations; they desired to have nothing from the world; they scarcely took the bare necessities of life; they were grieved to serve the body, even in necessity. Therefore, they were poor in earthly things, but most rich in grace and virtues. Outwardly they were in need, but inwardly they were refreshed with God's graces and consolation.

4. To the world they were strangers, but to God they were neighbors and familiar friends. To themselves they seemed as nothing, and despised by this world; but in the eyes of God, they were precious and beloved. They

stood in true humility, they lived in simple obedience, they walked in love and patience; and so, day by day, they advanced in spirit and obtained great favor with God. They are an example to all men…and should inspire us to make good progress, more than the number of the lukewarm calls us to careless living.

5. O, how great was the fervor of all religious at the start of their holy institution! O, what devoutness of prayer! What rivalry of virtue! How great a discipline flourished! What reverence and obedience flourished under the rule of their superiors! The traces remaining bear witness that they were truly holy and mature men, who, waging war so stoutly, trod the world underfoot. Yet, today, a man is thought great if he merely avoids sin and if he can patiently endure what he has undertaken.

6. O, the lukewarmness and negligence of our state, wherein we so quickly fall away from our former fervor and have become weary of life through sloth and lukewarmness! May progress in the virtues be not entirely asleep in you, who have so often witnessed the example of such devoted men.

## TWELFTH DAY: November 16

### The Christian Spirit

*And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set down, his disciples came unto him. And opening his mouth, he taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you. (Mt. 5:1-12)*

### Ask, Seek and Knock

*Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will*

*he reach him a serpent? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him? All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them. For this is the law and the prophets. (Mt. 7:7-11)*

# Second Part of the Preparation

## First Week of Second Part

**Days 13 - 19. After the daily reading, recite the *Veni Creator* (pray to see clearly, to see as God sees), p. 50**

## THIRTEENTH DAY: November 17

### Knowledge of Self is the Foundation of Sanctity

Chosen soul, living image of God and redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, God wants you to become holy like Him in this life, and glorious like Him in the next…It is certain that growth in the holiness of God is your vocation. All your thoughts, words, actions, everything you suffer or undertake, must lead you towards that end. Otherwise, you are resisting God, in not doing the work for which He created you and for which He is even now keeping you in being (*Secret of Mary,* §3).

This is nothing other than what Our Lord meant, when He said: *Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect (Mt. 5:48)*. We therefore belong entirely to Him; and it is our duty to fulfill His desire that we become perfect—for, after all, it is only saints that go to Heaven. That sanctity is achieved here below, or in the fires of Purgatory. Ask yourself candidly: "Have I always looked upon myself in that light?" When you have performed any seemingly great act of self-sacrifice, etc., have you regarded it as a small thing and nothing more than your duty? If this is how you approach the things you do for God, well and good. It is the right light in which to view what you do, because it is a truthful light.

This self-knowledge will go on increasing until the day of your death. Nevertheless, if you earnestly strive to spend this week in the endeavor to know yourself you will have made a great step in laying the foundation-stone of all sanctity, which is self-knowledge, the lowly sentiment of yourself as a creature, or in other words, the virtue of humility. Perhaps, until now, you have not been aware how much you needed this virtue.

### Knowing Oneself

Interior persons prefer to look after themselves before worrying about other matters; and he that diligently attends to himself, is easily silent with regard to others. You will never be an interior and devout person, unless you pass over the concerns of others in silence, so as to better look after yourself. If you pay attention to your own way of life and to God, then you will hardly be concerned and agitated at what goes on around you.

If you wish to have true peace of soul and union with God, then you must set everything else aside and turn your gaze upon yourself, not others. Then, being free of all temporal care, curiosity and anxiety, you will make great progress. But if you attach yourself to temporal things and concerns, then you will fail greatly.

## FOURTEENTH DAY: November 18

### Catholic Sinners are Worse than Pagan Sinners

Many sinners in the world may have never been baptized; never taught the Faith; never received the extra graces and inspirations of God as we have; never had the many helps and structures that the Church gives us and surrounds us with. Yet we are temples of the Holy Ghost, temples of an all-pure and all-holy God! We were consecrated to the service of God at our baptism and we have desecrated that temple by sin! We have committed a sacrilege of sorts! I doubt if there are very many Catholics who have sufficiently considered this truth. Very few Catholics have considered their sins to be more serious than those of non-Catholics—people who have never been taught the Faith, nor received the sacraments and their graces.

Think of this truth and while you consider it, forget not to return thanks to the remarkable providence of God, that so guarded you from the evils and temptations which would have been too strong for you. While you are considering what you are in the sight of God, be sure to thank Him for Our Lady, who turned out to be the only created person never to offend Him by the ingratitude of sin. Thank Him for bringing you, by His grace, to this special moment in your life, whereby this spotless and powerful masterpiece of God's, will take you under her protection and guidance.

### Leave the Past and Yourself Behind

Finally, since we are seeking knowledge of ourselves, it would be well to consider the greatness of our dignity before the fall of our first parents into

Original Sin. Despite Original Sin and our own actual sins, we were, nevertheless, made a "little lower than the angels"—we are, so to speak, their younger brethren. In Adam, we were all created potentially immaculate. Had Adam and Eve not sinned, their children could have been born in the state of sanctifying grace. They would all have had the same chance as their parents of not-dying, providing they avoided sin! Yet it was sin that brought death and tragedy into the world. Through the sin of one man, death entered the world.

Think of the union between God and yourself, first entered into at Baptism, when you became a temple of the Holy Ghost. Think of the intimate union achieved at your first Holy Communion. Yet, how have we treated God since that day? Let us now, at least for the future, resolve to do better than we have in the past. The purpose of looking so deeply into our past, is to make us so horrified of what we have done, so that we really seek to leave its sinfulness and horror behind us, as we turn towards a new and better life of serving Him within the ranks of His Heavenly Mother's army.

## FIFTEENTH DAY: November 19

### *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis: Book 1, Chapter 25
### On the Fervent Amendment of our Whole Life

When a certain anxious person, who often times wavered between hope and fear, once overcome with sadness, threw himself upon the ground in prayer, before one of the altars in the Church and thinking these things in his mind, said "Oh, if I only knew how to persevere," that very instant he heard within him, this heavenly answer: "And if thou didst know this, what would thou do? Do now what you would do, and thou shall be perfectly secure." And immediately being consoled, and comforted, he committed himself to the Divine Will, and his anxious thoughts ceased. He no longer wished for curious things; searching to find out what would happen to him but studied rather to learn what was the acceptable and perfect will of God for the beginning and the perfection of every good work.

"Hope in the Lord," said the Prophet, "And do all good, and inhabit the land, and thou shall be fed of the riches thereof." There is one thing that keeps many back from spiritual progress, and from fervor in amendment namely: the labor that is necessary for the struggle. And assuredly they especially advance beyond others in virtues, who strive the most manfully to overcome the very things which are the hardest and most contrary to them.

For there a man does profit more and merit more abundant grace, when he does most to overcome himself and mortify his spirit. All have not, indeed, equal difficulties to overcome and mortify, but a diligent and zealous person will make a greater progress though he has more passions than another, who is well regulated but less fervent in the pursuit of virtues.

## SIXTEENTH DAY: November 20

### Based on Fr. Eugene Boylan's book, *This Tremendous Lover*, Chapter 9

### Hope and Confidence in God

Sometimes, the sight of our many sins can induce despondency, or even despair. That is not the work of God, but of the devil. God loves the sinner but hates the sin. If you can arrive at that same hatred of sin, then there is nothing to worry about—no matter how great or frequent those sins may have been! Our Lord Himself said: "*I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance."(Lk. 5:32)*. Remember, there is no sin that cannot be forgiven. "*If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."(Is 1:18)*. All God wants is repentance and sorrow for past sin.

### Rise to a New Life

The Sacrament of Confession casts away our transgressions and gives us a new heart and a new spirit. It is a spiritual resurrection.

### Perfect Contrition

The Sacrament of Confession was instituted for the remission of all sins committed after Baptism. Mortal sins must be remitted, either through a perfect sorrow (contrition) which arises out of the love of God, not a love of ourselves or our own interests, nor from a servile fear of God and His punishments, or, in the normal way, through the Sacrament of Penance.

### Attrition

Mortal sins are more usually remitted in the confessional, where an imperfect sorrow called "attrition" suffices; such a sorrow, rather than being based on a profound love of God, would merely have as its root an imperfect motive of sorrow such as the fear of losing heaven, or the fear of hell.

### Sorrow and Feelings

Since sorrow is an act of the will, it will not always be felt. It is exceptional to find those who sincerely shed tears over their sins, or who feel the loss of God so much, that it is a greater pain than any other pain. Yet that does not lessen the value of their sorrow for sin. Feelings have nothing to do with it. The real measure and test of the depth of sorrow is the will and decision to avoid sin in the future.

## SEVENTEENTH DAY: November 21

### The Mercies of God Are Above all His Works

It is of capital importance that we never ever let our past sins— no matter how great or filthy they may have been—come between God and ourselves, or make us in any way doubt God's love, friendship and mercy. As the Psalmist says: "*The Lord is gracious and merciful: patient and plenteous in mercy.*" (Ps. 144:8). God does not do things by halves. When He forgives sins, He forgives completely. Their guilt is blotted out entirely and He will not reproach us with them again.

Yet, His generosity goes even further. When a soul falls into mortal sin, all the merits from its past life are lost. If, however, the soul repents and obtains pardon, these merits revive again. Such is God's generosity and love.

God loves to bring good out of evil. He did so with St. Paul, with Mary Magdalen, with St. Augustine, with St. John of God, with St. Matthew Talbot and many, many more. It is our lack of confidence that places obstacles in the way. Remember, we can be more pleasing to God by a life of ardent love after our sin, than the lukewarm life of our previous innocence. Truly God can bring good out of evil!

### Pay Now, or Pay Later

When a sinner has made a good confession, his mortal sins are forgiven; the eternal punishment they earned is remitted. Yet this does not mean that the temporal punishment is automatically remitted in the bargain. God forgives and restores us to His friend- ship, but the damage of sin requires satisfaction. We either satisfy in this life, or in Purgatory.

### Satisfaction for Sin

The "penance" that the priest imposes on us, in confession, has a very special efficacy for making satisfaction for our sins. However, whatever pen-

ance he may impose, does not necessarily pay the entire debt of temporal punishment that we have incurred. In most cases, it should be only looked upon as a "down-payment" on the temporal debt that we still owe. All our good works and all that we willingly suffer, can be used to make satisfaction for our sins and we can even invoke the merits of Christ, those of His Mother and all the saints, on our behalf. It is important to realize that there is a great difference between making satisfaction for our sins in Purgatory and doing so here on earth. In Purgatory the sufferings are much greater and we cannot gain any merit from them. Here on earth, we make satisfaction with far less suffering, and every act we perform, for that end, can be meritorious.

## EIGHTEENTH DAY: November 22

### Luke 13:1-5
### Examples inviting Repentance

*And there were present, at that very time, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answering, said to them: Think you that these Galileans were sinners above all the men of Galilee, because they suffered such things? No, I say to you: but unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower fell in Siloe, and slew them: think you, that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem? No, I say to you; but except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.*

### *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Nos. 81 & 82 – We Need Mary in order to Die to Ourselves

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.

## NINETEENTH DAY: November 23

### From *Three Ages of the Interior Life* by Rev. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. Introduction and Chapter 2

The interior life is an elevated form of intimate conversation which everyone has with themselves as soon as they are alone, even amongst the noise of a great city. From the moment a man ceases to converse with others, he begins to converse interiorly with himself about what preoccupies him the most.

As soon as a man seriously seeks truth and goodness, this intimate conversation with himself tends to become conversation with God. He converses with himself about what he should do to live a good life; he recognizes and feels his weakness and the need for placing his confidence, not in himself, but in God. Little by little, instead of seeking himself in everything, instead of tending more or less consciously to make himself a center, man tends to seek God in everything and, as a substitute for his own egoism, he focuses more on God and neighbor.

While still in a state of mortal sin, this man may have Christian faith and hope, which remain in us even after the loss of charity, as long as we have not sinned mortally by disbelief, despair or presumption. When this is so, this man's intimate interior conversation with himself is occasionally illumined by the supernatural light of faith; now and then he thinks of eternal life and desires it, although this desire remains weak. He is sometimes led by a special inspiration to enter a church to pray.

Finally, if this man has attrition for his sins, confesses them and receives absolution for them, he receives the state of grace and charity, the love of God and neighbor. Thenceforth, when he is alone, his intimate interior conversation with himself changes. He begins to love himself in a holy manner, not for himself, but for God, and to love his neighbor for God's sake. He begins to understand that he must pardon his enemies and love them, and to wish eternal life for them as he does for himself.

In a man's hours of solitude, this intimate conversation begins again, in spite of everything, as if to prove to him that it cannot stop. He would like to interrupt it and end it, but he cannot do so. The center of the soul has an unrestrainable need which demands satisfaction. In reality, God alone can

answer this need and the only solution is to immediately take the road leading to Him. The soul must converse with someone other than itself. Why? Because it is not its own last end; because its end is the living God, and it cannot rest entirely except in Him. As St. Augustine puts it: "Our heart is restless, until it reposes in Thee."

## Second Week of the Second Part

**Days 20 - 26. After the daily reading, recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary p. 51-53**

## TWENTIETH DAY: November 24

### Getting to Know Mary

This week is devoted to meditating upon Mary and humbly asking God to grant us the grace to know Mary better. If we wish to know Mary, then we must earnestly beg Him for this grace and privilege and, besides praying for it, we should also offer up some little acts of mortification, denial of our own will, our desires and tastes, etc.

### Mary Our Mother

This will be the first thought in our minds that Mary, though a virgin, is also a Mother—the Mother of God and our Mother too. We will imprint upon our minds the fact that Mary loves us more, far more, than our natural mothers could possibly love us—even more than we could love ourselves. Since she became the Mother of Men, she has never stopped showing herself a Mother to all who have gone to her for help. He who is mighty has done great things to her; and she in turn, who is mighty through the power of her divine motherhood, has done great things for those who have sought her intercession. She has been and will continue to be the cause of our joy until the end of time.

### Devotion Takes Time to Gro w

True Devotion must grow through several stages—just like a seed, once planted, must go through different stages of growth until it finally matures and brings forth much fruit. Do not imagine that the moment you make the True Devotion Consecration, you will become a saint! Devotion to Mary implicitly requires this total consecration of ourselves to her, and through

her to God. To do this, we must imitate the interior life of Mary…her virtues…her actions…her supernatural way of seeing things…her participation in the salvation of souls…her union with God. Always remembering that "*Where Mary is, there also is God!*" However, before we can imitate anyone, we must first carefully observe and study that person. Consequently, we will study the Blessed Mother in order to imitate her virtues and absorb the spirit that animates her.

## TWENTY-FIRST DAY: November 25

Acts of love, pious affection for the Blessed Virgin, imitation of her virtues, especially her profound humility, her lively faith, her blind obedience, her continual mental prayer, her mortification in all things, her surpassing purity, her ardent charity, her heroic patience, her angelic sweetness, and her divine wisdom: "there being," as St. Louis De Montfort says, "the ten principal virtues of the Blessed Virgin."

We must unite ourselves to Jesus through Mary - this is the characteristic of our devotion; therefore, Saint Louis De Montfort asks that we employ ourselves 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.

**Luke 2:16-21, 45-52**

*And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all that heard, wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. And after eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised, his name was called JESUS, which was called by the angel, before he was conceived in the womb…*

## TWENTY-SECOND DAY: November 26

### Jesus Chooses to Work Through Mary

God wishes to reveal and make known Mary, the masterpiece of His hands, in these latter times:

1. Because she hid herself in this world and put herself lower than the dust by her profound humility.

2. Because, as she is the masterpiece of the hands of God, He wishes to be glorified and praised in her by those who are living upon the earth.

3. As she is the dawn which precedes and reveals Jesus Christ, she must be seen and recognized in order that He may also be.

4. Being the way by which Jesus came to us the first time, she will also be the way by which He will come the second time, though not in the same manner.

5. Being the sure means and the straight way to go to Jesus Christ and to find Him perfectly, it is by her that the souls, who are to shine forth especially in sanctity, have to find Our Lord.

*He who shall find Mary shall find life (Prov. 8:35), that is, Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. (Jn. 14:6). But no one can find Mary who does not seek her; and no one can seek her who does not know her; for we cannot seek or desire an unknown object. It is necessary, then, for the greater knowledge and glory of the Most Holy Trinity, that Mary should be more than ever known.*

6. Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, in might and in grace, in these latter times: in mercy, to bring back and lovingly receive the poor strayed sinners; in might, against the enemies of God who shall rise in terrible revolt against

God, to seduce all those who shall oppose them and to make them fall by promises and threats; and finally, she must shine forth in grace, in order to animate and sustain the valiant soldiers and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, who shall battle for His interests.

7. Lastly, Mary must be terrible to the devil and his crew, as an army arrayed in battle, principally in these latter times, be- cause the devil, knowing that he has but little time to destroy souls, will every day redouble his efforts and his combats.

## TWENTY-THIRD DAY: November 27

### Mary and the Struggle Against Satan

What Lucifer has lost by pride; Mary has gained by humility. What Eve has damned and lost by disobedience; Mary has saved by obedience. Eve, in obeying the serpent, has destroyed all her children together with herself, and has delivered them to him; Mary, in being perfectly faithful to God, has saved all her children and servants together with herself, and has consecrated them to His Majesty.

God has not only set an enmity, but enmities, not simply between Mary and the devil, but between the race of the holy Virgin and the race of the devil; that is to say, God has set enmities, antipathies and secret hatreds between the true children and servants of Mary and the children and slaves of the devil. They have no love or sympathy for each other. The children of Belial, the slaves of Satan, the friends of the world (for it is the same thing), have always, up to this time, persecuted those who belong to Our Blessed Lady and will, in the future, persecute them more than ever.

But the humble Mary will always have the victory over that proud spirit, and so great a victory that she will go so far as to crush his head, where his pride dwells. She will always discover the malice of the serpent. She will always lay bare his infernal plots and dissipate his diabolical councils, and even to the end of time will guard her faithful servants from his cruel claw.

But the power of Mary over all the devils will especially shine forth in the latter times, when Satan will lay his snares against her heel: that is to say, her humble slaves and her poor children, whom she will raise up to make war against him. They shall be little and poor in the world's esteem, and abased before all like the heel, trodden underfoot and persecuted, as the heel is by the other members of the body. But in return for this they shall be rich in the grace of God, which Mary shall distribute to them abundantly. They shall be great and exalted before God in sanctity, superior to all other creatures by their lively zeal, and so well sustained with God's assistance that, with the humility of their heel, in union with Mary, they shall crush the head of the devil and cause Jesus Christ to triumph.

## TWENTY-FOURTH DAY: November 28

### The Most Holy Rosary

Many great things have been said of the Holy Rosary by saints, popes, theologians and even devils. Padre Pio used to call the Rosary "the weapon." Pope Pius IX said: "I could conquer the world if I had an army to say the Rosary." Pope Pius XI adds: "The Rosary is a powerful weapon to put the demons to flight and to keep oneself from sin. It serves admirably to overcome the enemies of

God and of religion….If you desire peace in your hearts, in your homes, and in your country, assemble each evening to recite the Rosary. Let not even one day pass without saying it, no matter how burdened you may be with many cares and labors." Pope Pius IX testifies that: "Among all the devotions approved by the Church, none has been so favored by so many miracles as the Rosary."

St. Louis de Montfort speaks of the "true disciples of Jesus Christ, walking according to the holy Gospel and not according to the maxims of the world. They shall carry on their shoulders the bloody standard of the Cross, the Crucifix in their right hand and the Rosary in their left, the sacred Names of Jesus and Mary in their hearts." (*True Devotion*, §59). That is why Our Lady, in this Age of Mary, has insisted upon the Rosary so much.

### The Fifteen Mysteries

St. Dominic has divided up the lives of Our Lord and Our Lady into fifteen mysteries which stand for their virtues and their most important actions. These are the fifteen pictures whose every detail must rule and inspire our lives. They are fifteen shining mirrors which help us to know Jesus and Mary and to know ourselves as well. They will also help light the fire of their love in our hearts.

Our Lady taught St. Dominic this excellent method of praying and ordered him to preach it far and wide, so as to reawaken the fervor of Christians and to revive in their hearts a love for Our Blessed Lord. She also taught it to Blessed Alan de la Roche and said to him in a vision: "When people say one hundred and fifty Angelic Salutations this prayer is very helpful to them and is a very pleasing tribute to me. But they will do better still and will please me even more if they say these salutations while meditating on the life, death and passion of Jesus Christ for this meditation is the soul of this prayer." In reality, the Rosary said without meditating on the sacred

mysteries of our salvation would be almost like a body without a soul: excellent matter but without the form which is meditation—this latter being that which sets it apart from all other devotions.

## TWENTY-FIFTH DAY: November 29

### Spiritual Significance of the of the Brown Scapular

In His dealings with us, God shows a preference for the simple things of life. What could be simpler than the manger of rough straw in which His life here below began! That same simplicity went with Him to the grave. He instituted a sacramental system, in which seven simple elements became the efficient signs of divine grace, e.g. since the natural function of water is to wash, He chose it to show us what His grace does for the soul stained by Original Sin.

The spiritual significance of a simple garment is perhaps as old as human society itself. A garment has always signified something more important than itself, e.g. after the Fall, God clothed our first parents and the garments He gave them were the sign of His forgiveness.

The Scapular is a sign of our special adoption by the Mother of God. The first and the greatest privilege it brings is that it envelops us in the special love of our Blessed Mother and it makes us "hers" in a very special way. A mother's love is the most practical thing in existence. It is never satisfied with words but is always pouring itself out on someone. Love of a mother is capable of the greatest sacrifices. When we see Our Lady with the sword of Simeon plunged deeply into her heart, how can we ever doubt that her love for mankind is as practical as that of her Divine Son?

### Mary's Protection

Through the Scapular, Our Lady has called us the "sons of her choice," that our souls may live for her sake. The dazzling splendor of her holiness makes her the terror of demons and She is "terrible as an army in battle array" against all the forces of evil that would molest us or attempt to snatch us from under the mantle of her maternal protection. As the Queen of Angels, she can summon legions of heavenly hosts to our defense.

As long as we live our lives and finish our course under the sweet protection of her mantle, we have nothing to fear. Our path to heaven is made easy by her who crushed the serpent's head and shared the glorious victory of her risen Son. The ever-vigilant eye of our Blessed Mother is always upon

those who wear her Habit. The might of her love follows us and whithersoever we go and wherever we dwell it is about us.

## TWENTY-SIXTH DAY: November 30

### Reflecting Mary – The Image of Christ

Pope Pius XII wrote: "May they all see in this Scapular a mirror of humility and purity; may they read in the very simplicity of the Garment a concise lesson in modesty and simplicity."

Mary is the living image of Christ, the deepest and most beautiful revelation of Him to the poor banished children of Eve. She is the first fruit of the Redemption, the first and greatest of the Redeemed in whom one finds God's original design for human living in all the splendor of original justice. She is the prototype of the perfect Christian and of the Church.

### Immaculate Purity

Mary's spotless purity made her soul the living image of the holiness of God and of the Church, the Spouse of Christ. Souls that follow her example reflect this heavenly splendor and prepare themselves for union with God. They see God even in this life and will see Him face to face in the next.

The Scapular should be a constant reminder of the absolute purity of Mary and of our duty to imitate her. It should separate us from all that is not holy and inspire us to greater and greater purification of our lives. Blessed, indeed, are the clean of heart for they shall see God.

### All for God and God Alone

The burning desire of Mary's soul is to form her Son in us, whom grace has made His brothers. How easy it should be to find Him in her. The way to become all God wants us to be, is Mary's way. Virtue can grow from no seed that is not the word of God planted in our souls, covered with the warm love of our hearts and watered by the living water of divine grace. Here again she is the model of total surrender to God. It is not enough to keep our hearts clean: they must be given to God that He may possess them. We die to self, so that we may live to Him, and the life that is lived in His Will is bound to become holy. The Scapular has no other meaning than this. When it is received, we are reminded that it is a symbol of the yoke of Christ and of the burden that is light when carried with Mary's help. It makes us Mary's and the command she gives us is "whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." We cast aside the world and the desires of the flesh and live to clothe ourselves

with the new man, who was created according to God in justice and holiness of life. The Scapular is the life that we live, day in and day out, that glorifies God and our love for Him should be so great, that it cannot be expressed any other way. If we offer our life, as it is, to God, to do as He wills, then His holiness is sure to invade it, influence it and change it.

## Third Week of Second Part

**Days 27 - 31. After the daily reading recite the Litany of Sacred Heart p. 53-54**

## TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY: December 1

### Knowing Jesus

Here on earth, two of the principal ways in which we can come to know and love Jesus are the Cross and Communion. If we were to try and simplify it still further, then the Sacrifice of the Mass would say it all. For the Mass is both a Sacrifice (the Cross) and a Sacrament (Communion). If we want to find Jesus, then we will find Him in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We arrive at an ever-deeper knowledge and understanding of Christ by entering more and more into the spirit of the Mass, which is none other than the spirit of Jesus. It is through the Mass that we accomplish our principal duties towards God—adoration, propitiation, petition and thanksgiving. In the Mass, through the Gospel readings, we continually dwell upon the life and spirit of Jesus; His spirit is also handed down to us through the writings of His immediate disciples; the Mass imparts to us the sacrificial spirit of Christ that led Him to work tirelessly for the salvation of sinners. It is in the Mass, during Holy Communion, that we enter into a most intimate union with Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by a fruitful reception of that Sacrament, that we are sanctified and transformed into other "Christs" and receive the graces and the strength to continue Christ's salvific work, as His instruments, in the world around us.

If the Head of the Mystical Body passed by the way of the cross, then it would be spiritual suicide for the Mystical Body to go in an opposite direction to Its Head. In the Cross is salvation; in the Cross is satisfaction for sin; in the Cross is peace; in the Cross is the power of conversion; in the Cross is our merit and our glory.

However, Our Lord is not only found in the Cross, He is also present—Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity—in the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist is both a Sacrifice (of the Cross) and a Sacrament that communicates Our Lord and His graces to us. The Eucharist strengthens us and makes light the burden of the Cross.

Our Lord could and would do so much more for us, if we would only enter into that intimate union that can be ours in Holy Communion. By a much more fervent participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass and a more fruitful reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, our understanding and appreciation of the Cross of Jesus will greatly increase, not to mention our growth in the true spirit of Christ, whereby we will be able to say with St. Paul: "*…with Christ I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I: but Christ liveth in me*" (Gal. 2:19-20).

**Matthew 11:29-30**

*Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light!*

## TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY: December 2

### From St. Louis de Montfort's *True Devotion to Mary*, §60
### Jesus Christ—the Beginning and End of All Things

Jesus Christ our Savior, true God and true Man, ought to be the last end of all our other devotions, else they are false and delusive. Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, of all things. It is in Him alone that we have been blessed with all spiritual benediction; and He is our only Master, Who has to teach us; our only Lord on Whom we ought to depend; our only Head to Whom we must be united; our only Model to Whom we should conform ourselves; our only Physician Who can heal us; our only Shepherd Who can feed us; our only Way Who can lead us; our only Truth Whom we must believe; our only Life Who can animate us; and our only All in all things Who can satisfy us.

There has been no other name given under heaven, except the name of Jesus, by which we can be saved. God has laid no other foundation of our salvation, our perfection or our glory, than Jesus Christ. Outside of Him there exists nothing but error, falsehood, iniquity, futility, death and dam-

nation. But if we are in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is in us, we have no condemnation to fear.

### From St. Louis de Montfort's *True Devotion to Mary*, §68 ff. Through Mary, We Belong to Jesus

We must conclude that we do not belong to ourselves but are entirely His, as His members and His slaves, whom He has bought at an infinitely dear price, the price of all His Blood. Before Baptism we belonged to the devil, as his slaves; but Baptism has made us true slaves of Jesus Christ, who have no right to live, to work or to die, except to bring forth fruit for that God-Man (Rom. 7:4); to glorify Him in our bodies and to let Him reign in our souls, because we are His conquest, His acquired people and His inheritance.

I say that we ought to belong to Jesus Christ, and to serve Him not only as mercenary servants, but as loving slaves who, as a result of their great love, give themselves up to serve Him in the quality of slaves simply for the honor of belonging to Him. Christians must needs be either the slaves of the devil or the slaves of Jesus Christ.

### From St. Louis de Montfort's *True Devotion to Mary*, §84 To Jesus Through Mary

Our Lord is our advocate and Mediator of redemption with God the Father. It is through Him that we ought to pray, in union with the whole Church, Triumphant and Militant. It is through Him that we have access to the Majesty of the Father, before Whom we ought never to appear except sustained and clothed with the merits of His Son. But St. Bernard tells us that we have need of a mediator with the Mediator Himself, and that it is the divine Mary who is the most capable of filling that charitable office. It was through her that Jesus Christ came to us, and it is through her that we must go to Him.

### *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis: Book 1, Chapter 1 Of the Imitation of Christ, and Contempt of all the Vanities of the World

*He that follows Me, walketh not in darkness (John 8:12)*, saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are admonished, how we ought to imitate His life and manners, if we would truly be enlightened, and delivered from all blindness of heart. Let therefore our greatest endeavor be, to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of Christ exceeds all the doctrine of holy men; and he that hath the Spirit will find therein the hidden manna (Apocalypse. 2:17). But it falls out that many who often hear the Gospel of Christ, feel little desire for it, because they have not the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9). But Whosoever will fully and with relish understand the words of Christ, must endeavor to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ.

What does it avail you to discourse profoundly of the Trinity, if you be void of humility, and art thereby displeasing to the Trinity? Surely profound words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life makes him dear to God. I would rather feel contrition, than know the definition thereof. If you knew the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would all that profit you without the love of God (1 Cor. 13:2), and without His grace?

*Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity (Eccles. 1:2)*, except to love God, and to serve Him only. This is the highest wisdom, by contempt of the world to press forward towards heavenly kingdoms.

## TWENTY-NINTH DAY: December 3

### From St. Louis de Montfort's *Friends of the Cross,* §13 ff. The Obligation of Self-Denial and Imitating Christ By the Way of the Cross

Christian perfection consists:

In willing to be a saint: "If any man will come after Me";
In self-denial: "Let him deny himself";
In suffering: "Let him take up his cross";
In doing: "Let him follow Me."

### The Desire to Become a Saint

If anyone *wills*: if a person has a real and definite determination and is prompted not by natural feelings, habit, self-love, personal interest or human respect but by an all-masterful grace of the Holy Ghost which is not communicated indiscriminately. The man who climbs up to Calvary and lets himself be nailed on the Cross with Jesus must be a brave and resolute man. He must be resolved to relinquish all things, to undertake anything and to suffer everything for Jesus.

## From St. Louis de Montfort's *Friends of the Cross*, §17 ff. Self-Denial

Therefore, if anyone wants to come after Me, annihilated and crucified, he must glory as I did only in the poverty, humiliation and suffering of My Cross: "*let him deny himself*" (Mt.16:24).

Far be from the Company of the Friends of the Cross those who pride themselves in suffering, the worldly-wise elated geniuses and self-conceited individuals who are stubborn and puffed-up with their lights and talents. Far be they from us, those endless talkers who make plenty of noise, but bring forth no other fruit than vainglory. Far from us those high-browed devotees everywhere displaying the self-sufficient pride of Lucifer: "I am not like the rest!" (Lk.18:11). Far be from us those who must always justify themselves when blamed, resist when attacked and exalt themselves when humbled.

### Matthew 27:36-44

*And they sat and watched him. And they put over his head his cause written: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were crucified with him two thieves: one on the right hand, and one on the left. And they that passed by, blasphemed him, wagging their heads, And saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it: save thy own self: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests, with the scribes and ancients, mocking, said: He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him now deliver him if he will have him; for he said: I am the Son of God. And the selfsame thing the thieves also, that were crucified with him, reproached him with.*

## *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis: Book 2, Chapter 12 Of the King's High Way of the Holy Cross

Unto many this seemeth a hard saying, "*Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow Jesus" (Matt. 16:24)*. But much harder will it be to hear that last word, "*Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matt. 25:41)*. For they who now willingly hear and follow the word of the Cross, shall not then fear (Psalm 112:7) to hear the sentence of everlasting damnation. This sign of the Cross shall be in the heaven, when the Lord shall come to judgment (Matt. 24:30). Then all the servants of the Cross, who in their lifetime conformed themselves unto Christ crucified, shall draw near unto Christ the Judge with great confidence.

Why therefore fearest thou to take up the Cross which leadeth thee to a kingdom? In the Cross is salvation, in the Cross is life, in the Cross is protection against our enemies, in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the Cross is strength of mind, in the Cross joy of spirit, in the Cross the height of virtue, in the Cross the perfection of holiness.

Take up therefore thy Cross and follow Jesus (Luke 14:27), and thou shalt go into life everlasting.

## THIRTIETH DAY: December 4

### *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis: Book 4, Chapter 2
### That the Great Goodness and Love of God Is Exhibited to Man in This Sacrament

In confidence of Thy goodness and great mercy, O Lord, I draw near, sick to the Healer, hungry and thirsty to the Fountain of life, needy to the King of Heaven, a servant to his Lord, a creature to the Creator, desolate to my own tender Comforter. "*But whence is this to me that Thou comest unto me" (Luke 1:43)?* What am I, that Thou shouldest grant me Thine own self? how dare a sinner appear before Thee?

And how is it that Thou dost vouchsafe to come unto a sinner? Thou knowest Thy servant, and art well aware that he hath in him no good thing, for which Thou shouldest grant him this. I confess therefore mine own vileness, I acknowledge Thy goodness, I praise Thy tender mercy, and give Thee thanks for Thy transcendent love.

### *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis: Book 4, Chapter 11
### That the Blood of Christ is Most Necessary unto a Faithful Soul

O most sweet Lord Jesus, how great is the pleasure of the devout soul that feasteth with Thee in Thy banquet; where there is set for her no other food to be eaten but Thyself, her only Beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart! To me also it would be indeed sweet, in Thy presence to pour forth tears from the very bottom of my heart, and with the grateful Magdalene to wash Thy feet with tears (Luke 7:38). But where is that devotion? Where that bountiful flowing of holy tears? Surely in the sight of Thee and Thy holy Angels, my whole heart ought to burn, and to weep for joy. For in this Sacrament I have Thee mystically present, hidden under another shape. For to look upon Thee in Thine own Divine brightness, mine eyes would not be able to endure; nor could even the whole world stand in

the splendor of the glory of Thy majesty. Herein then Thou hast regard to my weakness, that Thou dost hide Thyself under this Sacrament.

## THIRTY-FIRST DAY: December 5

### *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis: Book 2, Chapter 7
### Of the Love of Jesus above All Things

Blessed is he that understandeth (Psalm 119:1,2) what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himself for Jesus' sake. Thou oughtest to leave thy beloved, for thy beloved (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37; Cant. 2:16); for that Jesus will be loved alone above all things.

The love of things created is deceitful and inconstant; the love of Jesus is faithful and persevering. He that cleaveth unto a creature, shall fall with that which is subject to fall; he that embraceth Jesus shall be made strong forever.

Love Him, and keep Him for thy friend, who, when all go away, will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end. Some time or other thou must be separated from all, whether thou wilt or no. Keep close to Jesus both in life and in death, and commit thyself unto His faithfulness, who, when all fail, can alone help thee.

Thy Beloved is of that nature, that He will admit of no rival; but will have thy heart alone and sit on His throne as King. If thou couldest empty thyself perfectly from all creatures, Jesus would willingly dwell with thee.

### John 21:15-19

*When therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He said to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he had said to him the third time: Lovest thou me? And he said to him: Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. He said to him: Feed my sheep. Amen, amen I say to thee, when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had said this, he saith to him: Follow me.*

## Instructions for Final Preparation

### Write out by hand the prayer of consecration on nice paper

We now enter the final stage of our preparation for our True Devotion Consecration to Mary—or more strictly speaking, our Consecration to Jesus through Mary. We may feel unworthy in proceeding with this Consecration, perhaps due to some negligence during the last four weeks of preparation. It is rare and unlikely that anyone will have made an entirely perfect and truly acceptable preparation, but that is not a sufficient reason for not making the Consecration. I remind you of the fact that "the just man sins seven times a day" and so it would be surprising if you did not fail in some way or another in your preparations. Nothing would please the devil more, than to make you miss the Consecration through feelings of inadequacy or guilt. And nothing would please Our Lord and Our Lady more than a humble admission of your inadequacy as you proceed on your way. Just as children are largely inadequate when they start a coaching session, only to improve with each successive session, so too should each annual renewal show an improvement in our preparation.

In the first week we uncovered the Spirit of the World and then in the second week we examined ourselves to how that spirit had affected us or contaminated us—with the intention of leaving that worldly, fleshly, devilish spirit behind us, in our ascent towards God. However, nature abhors a vacuum, and so we had to replace the spirit of the world by another spirit. This was the spirit of Jesus and Mary. Thus, in order to acquire that spirit, the third week saw us grow in a knowledge, appreciation and imitation of Our Blessed Lady; whereas last week we studied Our Blessed Lord in order to imitate Him and acquire His spirit.

To finish our 5-week long preparation we will have a brief look at the consequences of our Consecration by examining some of the devotional practices that St. Louis recommends for our "Life after the Consecration."

We would like to remind those making the Consecration for the first time, *that they are simply planting the seeds of True Devotion for the first time.* They should not expect to see a fully grown "*Tree of Life*"— which Mary is—the next day! Just as in nature, this "*Tree of Life*" will gently grow day by day, year by year, until one day you will be able to say: "I*t is no longer I that live, but Mary that lives in me!*"

**Days 32 and 33. After the daily reading, recite the prayer O Jesus Living in Mary p. 55**

## THIRTY-SECOND DAY: December 6

### Performing All Our Actions with Mary

We must do all our actions with Mary; that is to say, we must in all our actions regard Mary as an accomplished model of every virtue and perfection which the Holy Ghost has formed in a pure creature for us to imitate according to our little measure. We must therefore in every action consider how Mary has done it, or how she would have done it, had she been in our place. For that end we must examine and meditate on the great virtues which she practiced during her life, and particularly, first of all, her lively faith, by which she believed without hesitation the angel's word, and believed faithfully and constantly up to the foot of the cross; secondly, her profound humility, which made her hide herself, hold her peace, submit to everything, and put herself the last of all; and, thirdly, her altogether divine purity, which never has had, and never can have, its equal under heaven; and so on with all of her other virtues. Let us remember, I repeat, that Mary is the great and exclusive mold of God, proper to making living images of God at small cost and in a little time; and that a soul which has found that mold, and has lost itself in it, is presently changed into Jesus Christ, Whom that mold represents to the life (*True Devotion* §260).

### Performing All Our Actions in Mary

We must do our actions in Mary. To thoroughly understand this practice, we must first know that our Blessed Lady is the true terrestrial paradise of the New Adam, and that the ancient paradise was but a figure of her. There are, then, in this earthly paradise, riches, beauties, rarities and inexplicable sweetness which Jesus Christ, the New Adam, has left there; it was in this paradise that He took His complacence for nine months, worked His wonders and displayed His riches with the magnificence of a God (*True Devotion* §261).

This most holy place is composed only of a virginal and immaculate earth, of which the New Adam was formed, and on which He was nourished, without any spot or stain, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who dwelt there. It is in this earthly paradise that there is the true tree of life, which has borne Jesus Christ, the Fruit of Life, and the tree of the knowl-

edge of good and evil, which has given light unto the world (*True Devotion* §261).

There are in this divine place trees planted by the hand of God, and watered by His divine unction, which have borne and daily bear fruits of a divine taste. There are flower beds adorned with beautiful and varied blossoms of virtues diffusing odors which delight the very angels (*True Devotion* §261).

There are meadows green with hope, impregnable towers of strength, and the most charming houses of confidence. It is only the Holy Ghost who can make us know the hidden truth of these figures of material things (*True Devotion* §261).

There is in this place an air of perfect purity; a fair sun, without shadow, of the Divinity; a fair day, without night, of the Sacred Humanity; a continual burning furnace of love, where all the iron that is cast into it is changed, by excessive heat, to gold (*True Devotion* §261).

There is a river of humility which springs from the earth, and which, dividing itself into four branches, waters all that enchanted place; and these are the four cardinal virtues (*True Devotion* §261).

### Performing All Our Actions <u>for Mary</u>

Finally, we must do all our actions for Mary. As we have given ourselves up entirely to her service, it is but just to do everything for her as servants and slaves. It is not that we take her for the last end of our services, for that is Jesus Christ alone; but we take her for our proximate end, our mysterious means and our easy way to go to Him. Like good servants and slaves, we must not remain idle, but, supported by her protection, we must undertake and achieve great things for this august sovereign (*True Devotion* §265).

We must defend her privileges when they are disputed; we must stand up for her glory when it is attacked; we must draw all the world, if we can, to her service, and to this true and solid devotion; we must speak and cry out against those who abuse her devotion to outrage her Son, and we must at the same time establish this veritable devotion; we must pretend to no recompense for our little services, except the honor of belonging to so sweet a Queen, and the happiness of being united through her to Jesus her Son by an indissoluble tie, in time and in eternity. Glory to Jesus in Mary! Glory to Mary in Jesus! Glory to God alone! (*True Devotion* §265).

## THIRTY-THIRD DAY: December 7

### Devotion to the *Hail Mary*

Those who adopt this slavery ought also to have a great devotion to saying the *Hail Mary* (the Angelical Salutation). Few Christians, however enlightened, know the real value, merit, excellence, and necessity of the *Hail Mary*. It was necessary for the Blessed Virgin to appear several times to great and enlightened saints to show them the merit of it. She did so to St. Dominic, St. John Capistran and Blessed Alan de la Roche (*True Devotion* §249).

They have composed entire works on the wonders and efficacy of that prayer for converting souls. They have loudly proclaimed and openly preached that, salvation having begun with the *Hail Mary*, the salvation of each one of us in particular is attached to that prayer. They tell us that it is that prayer which made the dry and barren earth bring forth the fruit of life; and that it is that prayer well said which makes the word of God germinate in our souls, and bring forth Jesus Christ, the Fruit of Life (*True Devotion* §249).

They tell us that the *Hail Mary* is a heavenly dew for watering the earth, which is the soul, to make it bring forth its fruit in season; and that a soul which is not watered by that prayer bears no fruit, and brings forth only thorns and brambles, and is ready to be cursed (Heb. 6:8) (*True Devotion* §249).

Let us remember the divine origins of this beautiful prayer. God the Father sent the Angel Gabriel with those opening words: "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou among women!" While God the Holy Ghost spoke through the mouth of St. Elizabeth, saying: Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb!" These words, carefully chosen by God Himself, should be engraved with love and reverence upon our hearts. I recommend that you read parts of St. Louis De Montfort's book, *The Secret of the Rosary*, in order to have a greater understanding and love of this beautiful Angelic Salutation.

### Going to Holy Communion with Mary

Manner of practicing this devotion when we go to Holy Communion

1. You must humble yourself most profoundly before God.
2. You must renounce your corrupt interior and your dispositions, however good your self-love may make them look.

3. You must renew your consecration by saying: "I am all thine, my dear Mistress, with all that I have."

4. You must implore that good Mother to lend you her heart, that you may receive her Son there with the same dispositions as her own (*True Devotion* §266).

You will tell her confidently that all you have given her of your goods is little enough to honor her; but that by Holy Communion you wish to make her the same present as the Eternal Father gave her, and that you will honor her more by that than if you gave her all the goods in the world and finally, that Jesus, who loves her in a most special manner, still desires to take His pleasure and repose in her, even in your soul, though it be far filthier and poorer than the stable where He did not hesitate to come, simply because she was there. (*True Devotion* §266).

After the Our Father, just before receiving Jesus Christ, you say three times: "Lord, I am not worthy." Say the first one to the Eternal Father, telling Him you are not worthy, because of your evil thoughts and ingratitude toward so good a Father, to receive His only Son. (*True Devotion* §267).

You will say to the Son: "Lord, I am not worthy"; telling Him that you are not worthy to receive Him because of your idle and evil words and your infidelity to His service; but that nevertheless you pray Him to have pity on you, because you are about to bring Him into the house of His own Mother and yours, and that you will not let Him go without His coming to lodge with her. (*True Devotion* §268).

You will say to the Holy Ghost: "Lord, I am not worthy"; telling Him that you are not worthy to receive this masterpiece of His charity, because of the lukewarmness and iniquity of your actions, and because of your resistance to His inspirations; but that all your confidence is in Mary, His faithful spouse. You will say, with St. Bernard: "She is my greatest security; she is the source of all my hope." (*True Devotion* §269).

After Holy Communion, inwardly recollected and holding your eyes shut, you will introduce Jesus into the heart of Mary. You will give Him to His Mother, who will receive Him lovingly, will place Him honorably, will adore Him profoundly, will love Him perfectly, will embrace Him closely, and will render to Him, in spirit and in truth, many homages which are unknown to us in our thick darkness (*True Devotion* §270).

Or else you will keep yourself profoundly humbled in your heart, in the presence of Jesus residing in Mary and go in spirit to heaven and over all the

earth, praying all creatures to thank, adore and love Jesus and Mary in your place. (*True Devotion* §271).

Or else you will yourself ask of Jesus, in union with Mary, the coming of His kingdom on earth, through His holy Mother, or for divine love, or for the pardon of your sins, or for some other grace; but always by Mary and in Mary; saying, while you look aside at yourself: "Lord, look not at my sins, but let Your eyes look at nothing in me but the virtues and merits of Mary." (*True Devotion* §272).

Always remember that the more you allow Mary to act in your Communion, the more Jesus will be glorified; and you will allow Mary to act for Jesus and Jesus to act in Mary in the measure that you humble yourself and listen to them in peace and in silence, without troubling yourself about seeing, tasting or feeling; for the just man lives throughout on faith, and particularly in Holy Communion, which is an action of faith: "*My just man liveth by faith"(Heb. 10:38).* (*True Devotion* §273).

## December 8th - Day of Consecration

On the day before the consecration, either fast, give alms, or offer a votive candle for the good of another (or all of the above); do some spiritual penance and approach consecration in the spirit of mortification.

Now go to Confession (or, if that is not possible, go during the 8 days prior) and then receive Communion with the intention of giving yourself to Jesus, as a slave of love, by the hands of Mary. Try to receive Communion per the method spoken of in yesterday's reading.

Following the instructions of the priest read the words of the consecration (kneeling and before the opened tabernacle) which you have copied and sign your copy of the Act of Consecration in the sacristy before the priest.

The words of consecration are:

**O Eternal and incarnate Wisdom! O sweetest and most adorable Jesus! True God and true man, only Son of the Eternal Father, and of Mary, always virgin! I adore Thee profoundly in the bosom and splendors of Thy Father during eternity; and I adore Thee also in the virginal bosom of Mary, Thy most worthy Mother, in the time of Thine incarnation.**

**I give Thee thanks for that Thou hast annihilated Thyself, taking the form of a slave in order to rescue me from the cruel slavery of the devil. I praise and glorify Thee for that Thou hast**

**been pleased to submit Thyself to Mary, Thy holy Mother, in all things, in order to make me Thy faithful slave through her. But, alas! Ungrateful and faithless as I have been, I have not kept the promises which I made so solemnly to Thee in my Baptism; I have not fulfilled my obligations; I do not deserve to be called Thy child, nor yet Thy slave; and as there is nothing in me which does not merit Thine anger and Thy repulse, I dare not come by myself before Thy most holy and august Majesty. It is on this account that I have recourse to the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, whom Thou hast given me for a mediatrix with Thee. It is through Her that I hope to obtain of Thee contrition, the pardon of my sins, and the acquisition and preservation of wisdom.**

**Hail, then, O Immaculate Mary, living tabernacle of the Divinity, where the Eternal Wisdom willed to be hidden and to be adored by angels and by men! Hail, O Queen of Heaven and earth, to whose empire everything is subject which is under God. Hail, O sure refuge of sinners, whose mercy fails no one. Hear the desires which I have of the Divine Wisdom; and for that end receive the vows and offerings which in my lowliness I present to thee.**

**I, N. , a faithless sinner, renew and ratify today in thy hands the vows of my Baptism; I renounce forever Satan, his pomps and works; and I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, to carry my cross after Him all the days of my life, and to be more faithful to Him than I have ever been before. In the presence of all the heavenly court I choose thee this day for my Mother and Mistress. I deliver and consecrate to thee, as thy slave, my body and soul, my goods, both interior and exterior, and even the value of all my good actions, past, present and future; leaving to thee the entire and full right of disposing of me, and all that belongs to me, without exception, according to thy good pleasure, for the greater glory of God in time and in eternity.**

**Receive, O benignant Virgin, this little offering of my slavery, in honor of, and in union with, that subjection which the Eternal Wisdom deigned to have to thy maternity; in homage to the power which both of you have over this poor sinner, and in thanksgiving for the privileges with which the Holy Trinity has favored thee. I declare that I wish henceforth, as thy true slave, to seek thy honor and to obey thee in all things.**

**O admirable Mother, present me to thy dear Son as His eternal slave, so that as He has redeemed me by thee, by thee He may receive me! O Mother of mercy, grant me the grace to obtain the true Wisdom of God; and for that end receive me among those whom thou lovest and teachest, whom thou leadest, nourishest and protectest as thy children and thy slaves.**

**O faithful Virgin, make me in all things so perfect a disciple, imitator and slave of the Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ thy Son, that I may attain, by thine intercession and by thine example, to the fullness of His age on earth and of His glory in Heaven. Amen.**

Sign your name here after making the Consecration

_____

Date _____

## After Consecration

Once you have consecrated yourself to Jesus through Mary, live that consecration. St. Louis-Marie de Montfort recommended the following:

- Keep praying to develop a "great contempt" for the spirit of this world
- Maintain a special devotion to the Mystery of the Incarnation (e.g., through meditation; spiritual reading; focusing on Feasts centering around the Incarnation, such as the Annunciation and the Nativity, etc.)
- Frequently recite the Ave, Rosary, and the Magnificat
- Do everything through, with, in and for Mary for the sake of Jesus, with the prayer, "I am all thine Immaculate One, with all that I have: in time and in eternity" in your heart and on your lips
- Associate yourself with Mary in a special way before, during, and after Communion
- Renew the consecration once a year, and by following the same five-week period of exercises. If desired, also renew the consecration monthly with the prayer, "I am all thine and all I have is thine, O dear Jesus, through Mary, Thy holy Mother."

## Prayers Recited Throughout the Consecration Preparation

### Veni Creator

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator blest,
and in our souls take up Thy rest;
come with Thy grace and heavenly aid
to fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

O comforter, to Thee we cry,
O heavenly gift of God Most High,
O fount of life and fire of love,
and sweet anointing from above.

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

Kindle our sense 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 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.

Now to the Father and the Son,
Who rose from death, be glory given,
with Thou, O Holy Comforter,
henceforth by all in earth and heaven. Amen.

## Ave Maris Stella

Hail, O Star of the ocean,
God's own Mother blest,
ever sinless Virgin,
gate of heav'nly rest.

Taking that sweet Ave,
which from Gabriel came,
peace confirm within us,
changing Eve's name.

Break the sinners' fetters,
make our blindness day,
Chase all evils from us,
for all blessings pray.

Show thyself a Mother,
may the Word divine
born for us thine Infant
hear our prayers through thine.

Virgin all excelling,
mildest of the mild,
free from guilt preserve us
meek and undefiled.

Keep our life all spotless,
make our way secure
till we find in Jesus,
joy for evermore.

Praise to God the Father,
honor to the Son,
in the Holy Spirit,
be the glory one. Amen.

## Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Litany of Loreto)

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, *pray for us*.
Holy Virgin of virgins, *pray for us*.
Mother of Christ, *pray for us*.
Mother of divine grace, *pray for us*.
Mother most pure, *pray for us*.
Mother most chaste, *pray for us*.
Mother inviolate, *pray for us*.
Mother undefiled, *pray for us*.
Mother most amiable, *pray for us*.
Mother most admirable, *pray for us*.

Mother of good counsel, *pray for us*.
Mother of our Creator, *pray for us*.
Mother of our Savior, *pray for us*.
Mother of the Church, *pray for us*.
Virgin most prudent, *pray for us*.
Virgin most venerable, *pray for us*.
Virgin most renowned, *pray for us*.
Virgin most powerful, *pray for us*.
Virgin most merciful, *pray for us*.
Virgin most faithful, *pray for us*.
Mirror of justice, *pray for us*.
Seat of wisdom, *pray for us*.
Cause of our joy, *pray for us*.
Vessel of honor, *pray for us*.
Singular vessel of devotion, *pray for us*.
Mystical rose, *pray for us*.
Tower of David, *pray for us*.
Tower of ivory, *pray for us*.
House of gold, *pray for us*.
Ark of the covenant, *pray for us*.
Gate of Heaven, *pray for us*.
Morning star, *pray for us*.
Health of the sick, *pray for us*.
Refuge of sinners, *pray for us*.
Comforter of the afflicted, *pray for us*.
Help of Christians, *pray for us*.
Queen of angels, *pray for us*.
Queen of patriarchs, *pray for us*.
Queen of prophets, *pray for us*.
Queen of Apostles, *pray for us*.
Queen of martyrs, *pray for us*.
Queen of confessors, *pray for us*.
Queen of virgins, *pray for us*.
Queen of all saints, *pray for us*.
Queen conceived without Original Sin, *pray for us*.
Queen assumed into Heaven, *pray for us*.
Queen of the most holy Rosary, *pray for us*.
Queen of peace, *pray for us*.

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, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, unto us Thy servants, that we may rejoice in continual health of mind and body, and by the glorious intercession of Blessed Mary, ever virgin, may be delivered from present sadness, and enter into the joy of Thine eternal gladness. Through Christ Our Lord.
R. Amen

## Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

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.*
Heart of Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Ghost in the Womb of the Virgin Mother, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, substantially united to the Word of God, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, of Infinite Majesty, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, Holy Temple of God, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, Tabernacle of the Most High, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, House of God and Gate of Heaven, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of Charity, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, abode of Justice and Love, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, full of Goodness and Love, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, abyss of all virtues, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, most worthy of all praise, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, King and Center of all hearts, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, *have mercy on us.*

Heart of Jesus, in Whom dwells the fullness of Divinity, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, in Whom the Father was well pleased, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, of Whose fullness we have all received, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, desire of the everlasting hills, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, patient and most merciful, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, enriching all who invoke Thee, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, propitiation for our sins, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, loaded down with reproaches, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, bruised for our offenses, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, obedient unto death, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, Victim for sin, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who trust in Thee, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in Thee, *have mercy on us.*
Heart of Jesus, delight of all the Saints, *have mercy on us.*
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. Jesus, meek and humble of heart.
R. Make our heart like unto Thine

Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, consider the Heart of Thy well-beloved Son and the praises and satisfaction He offers Thee in the name of sinners; appeased by worthy homage, pardon those who implore Thy mercy, in the name of the same Jesus Christ Thy Son, who lives and reigns with Thee, world without end. R. 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 fullness 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.