

THE REIGN OF JESUS
THROUGH MARY

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Mary Queen of All Hearts

*The Reign of Jesus
Through Mary*

by

Gabriel Denis, S.M.M.

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Revised Edition

THE MONTFORT FATHERS
BAY SHORE, NEW YORK

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FOREWORD

Blessed De Montfort was born in France in 1673 and died in 1716 at the early age of forty-three. A man of incredible zeal and vigor, he crowded a staggering amount of preaching and writing into the sixteen years of his priestly life. He is rightly considered one of the greatest home missionaries of all time.

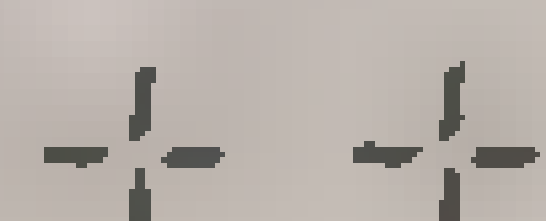
A true apostle of Mary, he preached a special form of devotion to her which he embodied in the book *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* and the pamphlet *The Secret of Mary*.

Some people feel the need of a book to help apply to everyday life the doctrine contained in these two works. *The Reign of Jesus Through Mary* was written to fill that need.

This is the first American edition, thoroughly revised and somewhat enlarged. The first part is the complete text of *The Secret of Mary*, the second part contains the practical application of Blessed De Montfort's doctrine to everyday life, and in the third part will be found spiritual exercises and prayers.



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Part I

DOCTRINE OF THE
HOLY SLAVERY

THE SECRET OF MARY

THE SECRET OF MARY

A Secret of Sanctity

INTRODUCTION

Conditions

1. Predestinate soul, here is a secret the Most High has taught me, which I have not been able to find in any book old or new.¹ I confide it to you, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, on condition:

1° That you communicate it only to those who deserve it by their prayers, their alms-deeds and mortifications, by the persecutions they suffer, by their detachment from the world, and their zeal for the salvation of souls.²

¹ The holy slavery of Jesus in Mary was known, no doubt, before Blessed De Montfort's time; yet he rightly calls this devotion *a secret*: first, because there lies in it, as in all things supernatural, a hidden treasure which grace alone can help us to find and utilize; secondly, because there are but few souls that enter into the spirit of this devotion and go beyond its exterior practices. Again, as no one had as yet thoroughly explained this devotion nor shaped it into a definite method of spiritual life, Blessed De Montfort could say of a truth, "I have not been able to find this secret in any book old or new."

² These words show how highly Blessed De Montfort esteemed this devotion. As there are professional secrets committed only to men who know how to appreciate and exploit them, so this secret of

2° That you make use of it for your personal sanctification and salvation; for this secret works its effect in a soul only in proportion to the use made of it. Beware, then, of remaining inactive while possessing my secret; it would turn into a poison and be your condemnation.

3° That you thank God all the days of your life, for the grace He has given you to know a secret you do not deserve to know.

As you go on making use of this secret in the ordinary actions of your life, you will comprehend its value and its excellence which at first you will not fully understand because of your many and grievous sins and because of your secret attachment to self.¹

2. Before you read any further, lest you should be carried away by a too eager and natural desire to know this truth, kneel down and say devoutly the *Ave Maris Stella* and the *Veni*

sanctity must be entrusted only to such souls as truly concern themselves with their perfection; and following the recommendation of Our Lord not to profane holy things (Matt. vii, 6), Montfort preserves this secret with a holy jealousy that denotes respect for divine things.

¹ These words contain three important counsels: 1° This devotion must be practiced in the ordinary course of life as well as in the most important actions. 2° Only when we steadily persevere in it, and not merely try it for a few weeks, shall we be able to judge of its excellence and know its fruit. 3° It is necessary to remove all hindrances to this devotion, namely, sin and secret affection for that which is sinful.

Creator in order to understand and appreciate this divine mystery.¹

As I have not much time for writing, nor you for reading, I shall say everything as briefly as possible.

¹ Let us not make light of this recommendation. It is an important one. If many persons do not become acquainted with the secret of this devotion, it is because they forget that in order to be allowed to enter this "Garden Enclosed," as Mary is called, they must entreat the Holy Ghost, "who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. ii, 10), to grant them that favor. (See *The Tree of Life*; also *Prayer to Jesus*.)

OUR SANCTIFICATION

NECESSITY OF SANCTIFYING OURSELVES

The Will of God

3. Faithful soul, living image of God, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, it is the will of God that you be holy like Him in this life and glorious like Him in the next. Your sure vocation is the acquisition of the holiness of God; and unless all your thoughts and words and actions, all the sufferings and events of your life tend to that end, you are resisting God by not doing that for which He has created you and is now preserving you.¹ Oh, what an admirable work! To change that which is dust into light, to make pure that which is unclean, holy that which is sinful, to make the creature like its Creator, man like God! Admirable work, I repeat, but difficult in itself, and impossible to mere nature; only God by His grace, by His

¹ Those who begin this devotion are here reminded of the recommendation of the masters of the spiritual life, namely, that the interior life must be their chief concern. They must be determined to obtain good results bought with the price of sacrifice. Compare these words with Blessed De Montfort's advice on cultivating *The Tree of Life*, page 42.

abundant and extraordinary grace, can accomplish it. Even the creation of the whole world is not so great a masterpiece as this.

Means of Sanctification

4. Predestinate soul, how are you to do it? What means will you choose to reach the height to which God calls you? The means of salvation and sanctification are known to all; they are laid down in the Gospel, explained by the masters of the spiritual life, practiced by the saints, and necessary to all who wish to be saved and to attain perfection. They are: humility of heart, continual prayer, mortification in all things, abandonment to Divine Providence and conformity to the will of God.

5. To practice all these means of salvation and sanctification the grace of God is absolutely necessary. No one can doubt that God gives His grace to all, in a more or less abundant measure. I say in a more or less abundant measure, for God, although infinitely good, does not give equal grace to all, yet to each soul He gives sufficient grace. The faithful soul will, with great grace, perform a great action, and with less grace a less action. It is the value and the excellence of the grace bestowed by God and corresponded to by the soul, that gives to our actions their value and their excellence. These principles are certain.

An Easy Means

6. It all comes to this, then: that you should find an easy means for obtaining from God the grace necessary to make you holy; and this means I wish to make known to you. Now, I say that to find this grace of God, *we must find Mary.*¹

¹ This is characteristic of Blessed De Montfort's devotion and makes it a special method of spiritual life.

II

OUR SANCTIFICATION THROUGH MARY¹

A NECESSARY MEANS

Mary Alone Has Found Grace with God

7. 1° Mary alone has found grace with God, both for herself and for every man in particular. The patriarchs and prophets and all the saints of the Old Law were not able to find that grace.

Mother of Grace

8. 2° Mary gave being and life to the Author of all grace and that is why she is called the Mother of Grace.

Mary Has Received the Plenitude of Grace

9. 3° God the Father from Whom every perfect gift and all grace come, as from its essential source, has given all graces to Mary by giving her His Son: so that, as St. Bernard says, «With His Son and in Him, God has given His will to Mary.»

¹ The reasons given here to prove that Mary is the most perfect means for finding Jesus are a condensed treatise on Mariology. If the faithful meditate on these points, they will come to understand the function assigned to Our Lady, by virtue of her divine maternity, in the mystery of the Incarnation and now in the whole Church.

Universal Treasurer of God's Graces

10. 4° God has entrusted Mary with the keeping, the administration and distribution of all His graces, so that all His graces and gifts pass through her hands; and (according to the power she has received over them), as St. Bernardine teaches, Mary gives to whom she wills, the way she wills, when she wills and as much as she wills, the graces of the Eternal Father, the virtues of Jesus Christ and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Mother of God's Children

11. 5° As in the order of nature, a child must have a father and a mother, so likewise in the order of grace, a true child of the Church must have God for his Father and Mary for his Mother; and if any one should glory in having God for his Father and yet has not the love of a true child for Mary, he is a deceiver and the only father he has is the devil.

Mary Forms the Members of Jesus

12. 6° Since Mary has formed Jesus Christ, the Head of the elect, it is also her office to form the members of that Head, that is to say, all true Christians; for a mother does not form the head without the members, nor the members without the head. Whoever, therefore, wishes to be a member of Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, must be formed in Mary by means of the grace

of Jesus Christ, which she possesses in its fullness, in order to communicate it fully to her children, the true members of Jesus Christ.¹

Through Her the Holy Ghost Produces the Elect

13. 7° As the Holy Ghost has espoused Mary, and has produced in her, by her and from her, His masterpiece, Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, and has never repudiated His spouse, so He now continues to produce the elect, in her and by her, in a mysterious but real manner.

Mary Nourishes Souls and Gives Them Growth
in God

14. 8° Mary has received a special office and power over our souls in order to nourish them and give them growth in God. St. Augustine even says that during their present life all the elect are hidden in Mary's womb and that they are not truly born until the Blessed Mother brings them forth to life eternal. Consequently, just as the child draws all its nourishment from the mother, who gives it in proportion to the child's weakness, in like manner do the elect draw all

¹ Conclude from this, that we call Mary our Mother not because of mere feelings of piety and gratitude awakened in us by the conviction that she loves and protects us, but because she is our Mother in the spiritual order as truly as she is the Mother of Christ in the natural order. The spiritual motherhood of Mary, a consequence of her divine motherhood, is one of the truths on which the True Devotion of Blessed De Montfort is founded.

their spiritual nourishment and strength from Mary.

Mary Dwells in the Elect

15. 9° It is to Mary that God the Father said: «My daughter, let thy dwelling be in Jacob,» that is, in my elect, prefigured by Jacob. It is to Mary that God the Son said: «My dear Mother, in Israel is thine inheritance,» that is, in the elect. And it is to Mary that the Holy Ghost said: «Take root, my faithful spouse, in my elect.» Whoever, then, is elect and predestinate has the Blessed Virgin with him, dwelling in his soul,¹ and he will allow her to plant there the roots of profound humility, of ardent charity, and of every virtue.

¹ This abode of Mary in our soul may be explained in the following manner: Her presence in us cannot be compared to that of God living in our soul by sanctifying grace and thus making us partakers of His divine life. Neither must we believe that Mary is bodily present in our soul. Some have wrongfully charged Blessed De Montfort with inferring the omnipresence of Mary. But let us bear in mind Mary's privilege of being truly the Mother of God (which privilege is hers personally and exclusively). As a consequence of that privilege, Mary beholds our souls in a universal manner and more excellently than the saints and angels do in their heavenly glory, and she is with us really, individually, intimately. Thus, we are morally present to her and she is morally present to us, because by her prayers, her attention, and her influence she cooperates with the Holy Ghost in forming Jesus in our souls. By way of comparison, we might say, that Mary is present in our souls as the sun is present in a room by its light and warmth even though it is not there itself.

Mary Forms Jesus in Us

A Living Mold of God

16. St. Augustine calls Mary the living «mold of God», and that indeed she is; for it was in her alone that God was made a true man without losing any feature of the Godhead, and it is also in her alone that man can be truly formed into God, in so far as that is possible for human nature, by the grace of Jesus Christ.

A sculptor has two ways of making a lifelike statue or figure: he may carve the figure out of some hard, shapeless material, using for this purpose his professional skill and knowledge, his strength and the necessary instruments, or he may cast it in a mold. The first manner is long and difficult, and subject to many mishaps; a single blow of the hammer or the chisel, awkwardly given, may spoil the whole work. The second is short, easy and smooth; it requires but little work and slight expense, provided the mold be perfect and made to reproduce the figure exactly; provided, moreover, the material used offer no resistance to the hand of the artist.¹

¹ Therefore great docility is required on our part, if we would be “formed quickly, easily and gently.” This comparison of the mold explains very well the interior practice of this devotion. The devotion consists essentially in one single act which under various forms and conditions we apply to our whole life, both interior and exterior. Such is the simplicity of Blessed De Montfort’s method.

A Perfect Mold

17. Mary is the great mold of God, made by the Holy Ghost, to form a true God-Man by the Hypostatic Union, and to form also a man-God by grace. In that mold none of the features of the Godhead is wanting. Whoever is cast in it and allows himself to be molded, receives all the features of Jesus Christ, true God. The work is done gently, in a manner proportioned to human weakness, without much pain or labor; in a sure manner, free from all illusion, for where Mary is the devil has never had, and never will have, access; finally, it is done in a holy and spotless manner, without a shadow of the least stain of sin.

Well Molten Souls

18. Oh, what a difference between a soul which has been formed in Christ by the ordinary ways of those, who, like the sculptor, trust in their own skill and ingenuity, and a soul, thoroughly tractable, entirely detached and well molten, which, without trusting to its own skill, casts itself into Mary, there to be molded by the Holy Ghost. How many stains and defects and illusions, how much darkness and how much human nature is there in the former, and oh, how pure, how heavenly and how Christlike is the latter!

Paradise and World of God

19. There does not exist and never will exist a creature in whom God, either within or without Himself, is so highly exalted as He is in the most Blessed Virgin Mary, not excepting the saints or the cherubim or the highest seraphim in Paradise. Mary is the paradise of God and His unspeakable world, into which the Son of God has come to work His wonders, to watch over it and take His delight in it. God has made a world for wayfaring man, which is that world in which we dwell; He has made one for man in his glorified state, which is Heaven; and He has made one for Himself, which He has called Mary. It is a world unknown to most mortals here below and incomprehensible even to the angels and blessed in Heaven above, who, seeing God so highly exalted above them all and so deeply hidden in Mary, His world, are filled with admiration and unceasingly exclaim: «Holy, Holy, Holy.»

God Alone in Her

20. Happy, a thousand times happy, is the soul here below to which the Holy Ghost reveals the Secret of Mary in order that it may come to know her; to which He opens the «Garden Enclosed» that it may enter into it; to which He gives access to that «Fountain Sealed» that it may draw from it and drink deep draughts of the living waters of grace! That soul will find God alone in His most amiable creature. It will

find God infinitely holy and exalted, yet at the same time adapting Himself to its own weakness. Since God is present everywhere, He may be found everywhere, even in hell, but nowhere do we creatures find Him nearer to us and more adapted to our weakness than in Mary, since it was for that end that He came and dwelt in her. Everywhere else He is the Bread of the strong, the Bread of the angels, but in Mary He is the Bread of children.¹

No Hindrance to Our Union with God

21. Let us not imagine, then, as some do who are misled by erroneous teachings, that Mary, being a creature, is a hindrance to our union with the Creator. It is no longer Mary who lives, it is Jesus Christ, it is God alone Who lives in her. Her transformation into God surpasses that of St. Paul and of the other saints more than the heavens surpass the earth by their height. Mary is made for God alone, and far from ever detain-

¹ This beautiful expression interprets the invitation of Divine Wisdom: "Come, eat the bread and drink the wine which I have mingled for you" (Prov. ix, 5). It also accounts for the unexpected graces which this devotion draws upon those who persevere in its practice. Note that this method of spiritual formation is practically the same as the education given by a mother to her child. In ourselves we experience the infirmities and the wants of infancy, in Mary we find the strong and never wearied love of a mother. All that we have to do is to abandon ourselves to Mary and to remain dependent on her in all things just like children.

ing a soul in herself, she casts the soul upon God and unites it with Him so much the more perfectly as the soul is more perfectly united to her. Mary is the admirable echo of God. When we say, «Mary,» she answers, «God.» When, with St. Elizabeth, we call her, «Blessed,» she glorifies God. If the falsely enlightened, whom the devil has so miserably illusioned, even in prayer, had known how to find Mary, and through her to find Jesus, and through Jesus, God the Father, they would not have had such terrible falls. The saints tell us that when we have once found Mary, and through Mary, Jesus, and through Jesus, God the Father, we have found all good. He who says all, excepts nothing: all grace and all friendship with God, all safety from God's enemies, all truth to crush falsehoods, all facility to overcome difficulties in the way of salvation, all comfort and all joy amidst the bitterness of life.

She Imparts the Grace to Carry Crosses

22. This does not mean that he who has found Mary by a true devotion will be exempt from crosses and sufferings.¹ Far from it; he is more

¹ Blessed De Montfort has explained that his true devotion is an easy means of sanctification, yet he wishes to guard us against the common illusion that his method exempts us from spiritual labor and sufferings. He is himself a striking example of the manly education which Mary, the valiant woman, gives to her children, as well as of the love of Jesus crucified which she enkindles in their hearts.

besieged by them than others are, because Mary, the Mother of the living, gives to all her children portions of the Tree of Life, which is the Cross of Jesus. But along with their crosses she also imparts the grace to carry them patiently and even cheerfully; and thus it is that the crosses which she lays upon those who belong to her are rather steeped in sweetness than filled with bitterness. If for a while her children feel the bitterness of the cup which one must needs drink in order to be the friend of God, the consolation and joy which this good Mother sends after the trial encourage them exceedingly to carry still heavier and more painful crosses.

Conclusion

23. The difficulty, then, is to find really and truly the most Blessed Virgin Mary in order to find all abundant grace. God, being the absolute Master, can confer directly by Himself that which He usually grants only through Mary. It would even be rash to deny that sometimes He does so. Nevertheless, St. Thomas teaches that in the order of grace, established by Divine Wisdom, God ordinarily communicates Himself to men only through Mary. Therefore, if we would go up to Him and be united with Him, we must use the same means He used to come down to us, to be made man and to impart His graces to us. That means is a true devotion to our Blessed Lady.

III

OUR SANCTIFICATION BY THE PERFECT DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

OR

THE HOLY SLAVERY OF LOVE

A PERFECT MEANS

Devotions to Mary

24. There are several true devotions to Our Lady: here I do not speak of those that are false.

1. Devotion without Special Practices

25. The first consists in fulfilling our Christian duties, avoiding mortal sin, acting more out of love than fear, praying to Our Lady now and then, honoring her as the Mother of God, yet without having any special devotion to her.

2. Devotion with Special Practices

26. The second consists in entertaining for Our Lady more perfect feelings of esteem and love, of confidence and veneration. It leads us to join the Confraternities of the Holy Rosary and of the Scapular, to recite the five decades or the fifteen decades of the Rosary, to honor Mary's

images and altars, to publish her praises and to enroll ourselves in her sodalities.¹ This devotion is good, holy and praiseworthy if we keep ourselves free from sin; but it is not so perfect as the next, nor so efficient in severing our soul from creatures or in detaching us from ourselves, in order to be united with Jesus Christ.

3. The Perfect Devotion: The Holy Slavery of Love

27. The third devotion to Our Lady, known and practiced by very few persons, is the one I am now about to disclose to you, predestinate soul.

A. NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE HOLY SLAVERY OF LOVE

Nature

28. *It consists in giving oneself entirely and as a slave to Mary, and to Jesus through Mary; and after that to do all that we do, through Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary.*² I shall now explain these words.

¹ All such devotions, remarks Blessed De Montfort elsewhere, include but a limited number of devout practices and take up but a part of our daily life, while the one he proposes embraces our whole life and divests us of all things.

² We must, therefore, note two things in this devotion: first, an *act* of total consecration to Jesus through Mary; and secondly, a *state* of being consecrated. That state consists in the permanent disposi-

Scope: Total Surrender

29. We should choose a special feast-day on which we give, consecrate and sacrifice to Mary voluntarily, lovingly and without constraint, entirely and without reserve: our body and soul, our exterior property, such as house, family and income; and also our interior and spiritual possessions; namely, our merits, graces, virtues, and satisfactions.¹

It should be observed here, that by this devotion the soul sacrifices to Jesus, through Mary, all that it holds most dear, things of which even no religious Order would require the sacrifice; namely, the right to dispose of ourselves, of the value of our prayers and alms, of our mortifications and satisfactions. The soul leaves everything to be freely disposed of by Our Lady so that she may apply it all according to her own will for the greater glory of God, which she alone knows perfectly.

tion of living and acting habitually in dependence on Mary; and that is called the spirit or the interior part of this consecration. This practice, although it embraces our entire life, appears so small and trifling at first glance, that Blessed De Montfort has justly compared it to the mustard seed. But one comes to realize its vital energy and its wonderful effects when it has grown strong by persistent exercise.

¹ These words show us the far-reaching effect of this consecration, which Blessed De Montfort calls a perfect renewal of the baptismal vows, and indeed, in making it we give ourselves anew to Jesus Christ, Our Lord, through the hands of Mary.

Surrender of the Value of Our Good Works

30. We leave to her disposal all the satisfactory and impetratory value of our good works, so that after we have made the sacrifice of them—although not by vow—we are no longer the masters of any good works we may do; but Our Lady may apply them, sometimes for the relief or the deliverance of a soul in Purgatory, sometimes for the conversion of a poor sinner, etc.¹

31. By this devotion we also place our merits in the hands of Our Lady, but only that she may preserve, augment and embellish them, because

¹ It may not be amiss to give here a short explanation of the Heroic Act of Charity, and to point out in what it differs from this act of consecration.

According to a definition of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences (December, 1885), the Heroic Act of Charity consists in this, that a member of the Church Militant offers to God for the souls in Purgatory, all the satisfactory works which he will perform during his lifetime and also all the suffrages which may accrue to him after his death.

By the act of consecration to Jesus through Mary as taught by Blessed De Montfort, we give to Our Lady not only the satisfactory works of our life, but all else, nothing excepted (see the Act of Consecration, p. 240). The use to be made of our good works and satisfactions is not determined by us, as it is in the Heroic Act, but it is left to Mary's intention and will. In his act of consecration Blessed De Montfort does not seem to comprise directly the suffrages which may accrue to us in Purgatory, but indirectly they are implied: "I leave to thee . . . all that belongs to me . . . in time and in eternity."

Neither the Heroic Act nor our act of consecration implies a vow, yet both may be made with a vow, if discretion and sound judgment are not lacking in making such a solemn promise to God.

we cannot communicate to one another either the merits of sanctifying grace or those of glory. However, we give her all our prayers and good works inasmuch as they have an impetratory and satisfactory value, that she may distribute and apply them to whom she pleases. If, after having thus consecrated ourselves to Our Lady, we desire to relieve a soul in Purgatory, to save a sinner, or to assist a friend by our prayers, our alms-deeds, our mortifications and sacrifices, we must humbly ask it of Our Lady, abiding, however, by her decision, which remains unknown to us; and we must be fully persuaded that the value of our actions, being dispensed by the same hand which God Himself makes use of to distribute to us His graces and gifts, cannot fail to be applied for His greater glory.

Three Kinds of Slavery

32. I have said that this devotion consists in giving ourselves to Mary as slaves.¹ But notice

¹ These words show us the true nature of this consecration. By making it we place ourselves in a state in which we are owned by Jesus and Mary and are totally dependent on their will. Now that is the nature and the condition of a slave. But to remove the idea of there being any degradation or tyrannical violence in this noble servitude, Blessed De Montfort explains that it is a voluntary slavery, full of honor and of love, giving us the liberty of the true children of God.

There is then no reason for being scared or repelled by the words "slave" and "slavery". Consider the *state*, not the *word* which expresses the state of total, of lasting and disinterested subjection and de-

that there are three kinds of slavery. The first is the slavery of nature; in this sense all men, good and bad alike, are slaves of God. The second is the slavery of constraint; the devils and the damned are slaves of God in this second sense. The third is the slavery of love and of free will; and this is the one by which we must consecrate ourselves to God through Mary. It is the most perfect way for us human creatures to give ourselves to God our Creator.

Servant and Slave

33. Notice again, that there is a great difference between a servant and a slave. A servant claims wages for his services; a slave has a right to none. A servant is free to leave his master when he likes—he serves him only for a time; a slave belongs to his master for life and has no right to leave him. A servant does not give to his master the right of life and death over him; a slave gives himself up entirely, so that his master can put him to death, without being molested by the law. It is easily seen, then, that he who is a slave by constraint is rigorously dependent on his master. Strictly speaking, a man must be dependent in that sense only on his Creator. Hence we do not find that kind of slavery among Christians, but only among pagans.

pendence on the Master through the Mother. One may ask why not use other words? It is because there are none to express adequately this special state of consecration.

Happiness of the Slave of Love

34. But happy and a thousand times happy is the generous soul that consecrates itself entirely to Jesus through Mary as a slave of love after it has shaken off by Baptism the tyrannical slavery of the devil!

B. EXCELLENCE OF THE HOLY SLAVERY OF LOVE

I should require much supernatural light to describe perfectly the excellence of this practice. I shall content myself with these few remarks.

Imitation of the Trinity

35. 1° To give ourselves to Jesus through Mary is to imitate God the Father, Who has given us His Son only through Mary, and Who communicates to us His grace only through Mary. It is to imitate God the Son, Who has come to us only through Mary, and Who, «by giving us an example, that as He has done, so we do also» (John xiii, 15), has urged us to go to Him by the same means by which He has come to us—that is, through Mary. It is to imitate the Holy Ghost, Who bestows His graces and gifts upon us only through Mary. «Is it not fitting,» asks St. Bernard, «that grace should return to its Author by the same channel which conveyed it to us?»

It Honors Jesus

36. 2° To go to Jesus through Mary is truly to honor Jesus Christ, for it denotes that we do not esteem ourselves worthy of approaching His infinite holiness directly and by ourselves because of our sins; that we need Mary, His holy Mother, to be our advocate and Mediatrix with Him, our Mediator. It is to approach Jesus as our Mediator and Brother, and at the same time to humble ourselves before Him, as before our God and our Judge. In a word, it is to practice humility, which is always exceedingly pleasing to the heart of God.

It Purifies and Embellishes Our Good Works

37. 3° To consecrate ourselves thus to Jesus through Mary is to place in Mary's hands our good actions, which, although they may appear to us to be good, are often very imperfect and unworthy of the sight and the acceptance of God, before whom even the stars are not pure. Ah! Let us pray, then, to our dear Mother and Queen, that having received our poor present, she may purify it, sanctify it, embellish it, and thus render it worthy of God. All that our soul possesses is of less value before God, the heavenly Householder, when it comes to winning His friendship and favor, than a worm-eaten apple presented to the king by a poor farmer in payment of the rent of his farm. But what would such a farmer do if he were wise, and if he were

well liked by the queen? Would he not give his apple to the queen? And would she not out of kindness to the poor man, as also out of respect for the king, remove from the apple all that is worm-eaten or spoiled, and then place it in a gold dish and surround it with flowers? Would the king refuse to accept the apple then? Or would he not rather receive it with joy from the hands of the queen who favors that poor man? «If you wish to present something to God, no matter how small it may be,» says St. Bernard, «place it in Mary's hands, if you do not wish to be refused.»

38. Great God! How insignificant everything that we do really is! But let us place all in Mary's hands by this devotion. When we have given ourselves to Mary to the very utmost of our power, by despoiling ourselves completely in her honor, she will far outdo us in generosity and will repay us a hundredfold. She will communicate herself to us, with her merits and virtues; she will place our presents on the golden plate of her charity; she will clothe us, as Rebecca clothed Jacob, with the beautiful garments of her elder and only Son, Jesus Christ—that is, with His merits, which she has at her disposal; and thus, after we have despoiled ourselves of everything in her honor, we shall be «clothed in double garments»; that is, the garments, the ornaments, the perfumes, the merits and the virtues of Jesus and Mary clothe the soul of their slave, who has

despoiled himself and who perseveres in his despoliation.¹

Charity in the Highest Degree

39. 4° Moreover, to give ourselves thus to Our Lady is to practice charity towards our neighbor in the highest possible degree, because we give her all that we hold most dear, and let her dispose of it at her will in favor of the living and the dead.

It Increases the Grace of God in Us

40. 5° By this devotion we place our graces, merits and virtues in safety, for we make Mary the depository of them all, saying to her: «See, my dear Mother, here are the good works that I have been able to do through the grace of thy dear Son; I am not able to keep them on account of my own weakness and inconstancy, and also because of the many wicked enemies who attack me day and night. Alas! One may see every day the cedars of Lebanon fall into the mire, and the eagles, which had raised themselves to the sun, become birds of night; and so do a thousand of the just fall on my left hand and ten thousand on my right. But thou, my most powerful prin-

¹ This charming comment on the words of St. Bernard will console and encourage certain souls who grow weary and sad when they become conscious of their unworthiness and their insufficiency. As Blessed De Montfort loves to say, and his saying is very true, Mary will be "their supplement" with God.

cess, sustain me lest I fall; keep all my possessions for fear I may be robbed of them. All I have I entrust to thee. I know well who thou art, therefore I entrust myself entirely to thee; thou art faithful to God and to men; thou wilt not allow anything to perish that I entrust to thee; thou art powerful and nothing can hurt thee nor rob thee of anything thou holdest in thy hands.»¹ «When you follow Mary, you will not go astray; when you pray to her, you will not despair; when you think of her, you will not err; when she sustains you, you will not fall; when she protects you, you will not fear; when she leads you, you will not become tired; when she favors you, you will arrive safely.»² And again: «She keeps her Son from striking us; she keeps the devil from hurting us; she keeps our virtues from escaping us; she keeps our merits from being destroyed; she keeps our graces from being lost.» These are the words of St. Bernard. They express in substance all I have said. Were there but this one motive to incite in me a desire for this devotion—namely, that it is a sure means of keeping me in the grace of God and even of increasing that grace

¹ These words ought to be considered by all who are concerned about their perseverance in grace and their interior perfection. Many there are who hesitate even to begin and many who draw back soon after starting, because they apprehend a possible failure or lack of perseverance.

² St. Bernard, *Inter flores*, cap. 135, *de Maria Virgine*.

in me, my heart ought to burn with longing for it.

It Renders the Soul Free

41. 6° This devotion truly frees the soul with the liberty of the children of God. Since for love of Mary we reduce ourselves freely to slavery, she, out of gratitude, will dilate our heart, intensify our love, and cause us to walk with giant steps in the way of God's commandments. She delivers the soul from weariness, sadness, and scruples. It was this devotion which Our Lord taught to Mother Agnes of Jesus,¹ as a sure means of delivering her from the severe sufferings and perplexities which troubled her. «Make thyself,» He said, «my Mother's slave.» She did so, and in a moment her troubles ceased.

Obedience to the Counsels of the Church

42. To show that this devotion is rightfully authorized it would be necessary to mention the bulls of the Popes and the pastoral letters of the bishops, speaking in its favor; the indulgences granted to it; the confraternities established in its honor; the examples of the many saints and illustrious persons who have practiced it. But all that I shall leave out.

¹ A Dominican nun who died in the odor of sanctity in the year 1634 at the convent of Langeac in Auvergne, France.

C. INTERIOR PRACTICES OF THE HOLY SLAVERY OF LOVE

Its Guiding Formula

43. I have said that this devotion consists in doing all our actions, with Mary, in Mary, through Mary, and for Mary.

Scope of This Formula

44. It is not enough to have given ourselves once as slaves to Jesus through Mary, nor is it enough to renew that act of consecration every month or every week. That alone would not make it a permanent devotion, nor could it bring the soul to that degree of perfection to which it is capable of raising it. It is not very difficult to enroll ourselves in a confraternity, nor to practice this devotion in as far as it prescribes a few vocal prayers every day; but the great difficulty is to enter into its spirit. Now its spirit consists in this, that we be interiorly dependent on Mary; that we be slaves of Mary, and, through her, of Jesus.

I have found many people who, with admirable zeal, have adopted the exterior practices of this holy slavery of Jesus and Mary, but I have found only a few who have accepted its interior spirit, and still fewer who have persevered in it.

Meaning and Explanation of This Formula
 Act *with* Mary

45. 1° The essential practice of this devotion is to do all our actions *with* Mary. This means that we must take Our Lady as the perfect model of all that we do.

46. Before undertaking anything we must renounce ourselves and our own views.¹ We must place ourselves as mere nothings before God, unable of ourselves to do anything that is supernaturally good or profitable to our salvation. We must have recourse to Our Lady, uniting ourselves to her and to her intentions, although they are not known to us; and through Mary we must unite ourselves to the intentions of Jesus Christ. In other words, we must place ourselves as instruments in the hands of Mary that she may act in us and do with us and for us whatever she pleases, for the greater glory of her

¹ From these indications, however abstract, we may learn that the act of union with Mary, as understood by Blessed De Montfort, requires two things in the work of our sanctification: 1° the removal of all obstacles (sin and its occasions), by renouncing ourselves 2° the union of our will with the will of God, and of our actions with the impulse of divine grace. Without that self-renunciation in all things, our union with Mary would be very imperfect, our dependence on her would be an illusion (see 3, 4, and 5, *The Tree of Life*). Note also, that by telling us to renounce our own views and intentions, however good they be, in order to adopt those of Mary, Montfort counsels the practice of that which is most perfect.

Son, and through the Son, for the glory of the Father; so that the whole work of our interior life and of our spiritual perfection is accomplished only by dependence on Mary.

Act *in* Mary

47. 2° We must do all things *in* Mary; ¹ that is to say, we must become accustomed little by little to recollect ourselves interiorly and thus try to form within us some idea or spiritual image of Mary.² She will be, as it were, the oratory of our soul, in which we offer up all our prayers to God, without fear of not being heard; she will be to us a Tower of David, in which we take refuge from all our enemies; a burning lamp to enlighten our interior and to inflame us with divine love; a sacred altar upon which we con-

¹ *In* indicates an indwelling, an intimate union which produces unity. As Blessed De Montfort expresses it, we must "enter into Mary's interior and stay there adopting her views and feelings." Mary must become, as it were, the place and the atmosphere in which we live, her influence must penetrate us. As soon as this disposition of our soul has become habitual, we can say that we dwell in Mary, and having thus become as one moral person with her, we abide in her and she dwells in us, in the sense explained above (see note 1, p. 12).

² St. Theresa gives similar advice to beginners for keeping recollected and united with Our Lord when at prayer. She recommends the use of images and in this she is of the same mind as Blessed De Montfort, who had recourse to images and banners, to the erection of calvaries and other exterior displays that appeal to the senses and elevate the soul to God.

template God in Mary and with her. In short, Mary will be the only means used by our soul in dealing with God; she will be our universal refuge. If we pray, we will pray in Mary; if we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we will place Him in Mary, so that He may take His delight in her; if we do anything at all, we will act in Mary; everywhere and in all things we will renounce ourselves.

Act through Mary

48. 3° We must never go to Our Lord except *through* Mary, through her intercession and her influence with Him. We must never be without Mary when we pray to Jesus.

Act for Mary

49. 4° Lastly, we must do all our actions *for* Mary. This means that as slaves of this august princess, we must work only for her, for her interests and her glory—making this the immediate end of all our actions—and for the glory of God, which must be their final end. In everything we do we must renounce our self-love, because very often self-love sets itself up in an imperceptible manner as the end of our actions. We should often repeat, from the bottom of our heart: «O my dear Mother! It is for thee that I go here or there; for thee, that I do this or that; for thee, that I suffer this pain or wrong.»

PRACTICAL COUNSELS CONCERNING THE
SPIRIT OF THE HOLY SLAVERY

Not More Perfect to Go Straight to Jesus
without Mary

50. Beware, predestinate soul, of believing that it is more perfect to go straight to Jesus, straight to God. Without Mary, your action and your intention will be of little value; but if you go to God through Mary, your work will be Mary's work, and consequently it will be sublime and most worthy of God.¹

Not Necessary to Feel and Enjoy What You
Say and Do

51. Moreover, do not try to feel and enjoy what you say and do, but say and do everything with that pure faith which Mary had on earth and which she will communicate to you in due time. Poor little slave, leave to your Sovereign Queen the clear sight of God, the raptures, the joys, the satisfactions and the riches of Heaven, and content yourself with pure faith, although

¹ This does not mean that we may not approach Our Lord directly to speak to Him in prayer or contemplation: nor does it mean that in every action of ours we must think of Mary actually and distinctly: a virtual intention is sufficient. Blessed De Montfort, indeed, says that our offering or act of consecration if renewed but once a month or once a week (we might add, once a day), does not establish us in the spirit of this devotion, which is a state or a habit; yet he remarks that our interior look towards Mary, though it be but a general and hasty look, is sufficient to renew our offering.

full of repugnance, distractions, weariness and dryness, and say: «Amen, so be it,» to whatever Mary, your Mother, does in Heaven. That is the best you can do for the time being.¹

Not Necessary to Enjoy Immediately the
Presence of Mary

52. Take great care also not to torment yourself, should you not enjoy immediately the sweet presence of the Blessed Virgin in your soul, for this is a grace not given to all; and even when God, out of His great mercy, has thus favored a soul, it is always very easy to lose this grace, unless by frequent recollection the soul remains alive to that interior presence of Mary. Should this misfortune befall you, return calmly to your Sovereign Queen and make amends to her.²

¹ Useful advice to those who are but beginning and who might think that they do nothing good because they do not see or feel. Blessed De Montfort reminds them of the truth that our union with God consists in an act of the will. In his *True Devotion* he says that that act may be either mental or expressed in words, it can be made in the twinkling of an eye. In his prayer to Mary (found further on), he makes us ask for detachment of the senses in our devotion.

² This interior presence of Mary is a favor Blessed De Montfort enjoyed in an exceptional degree, as we may see by reading his life. He says: "It is a grace not given to all." Yet he exhorts us all to practice his true devotion, and promises to all without exception "that Mary's soul will be in them." It is true, he always insists upon the condition of perseverance in practicing this devotion. As there are, however, but few souls who remain faithful to its spirit even in a lower degree, we must say that this presence of Mary is not given to all.

WONDERFUL EFFECTS OF THIS INTERIOR PRACTICE

53. Experience will teach you much more about this devotion than I can tell you; and if you remain faithful to the little I have taught you, you will find so many rich fruits of grace in this practice, that you will be surprised and filled with joy.

54. Let us set to work then, dear soul, and by the faithful practice of this devotion let us obtain the grace «that Mary's soul may be in us to glorify the Lord, that her spirit may be in us to rejoice in God,» as St. Ambrose says. «Do not think that there was more glory and happiness in dwelling in Abraham's bosom, which was called Paradise, than in the bosom of Mary, in which God has placed His throne,» as the learned Abbot Gueric says.

It Establishes Mary's Life in the Soul

55. This devotion, faithfully practiced, produces many happy effects in the soul. The most important of them all is that it establishes, even here below, Mary's life in the soul, so that it is no longer the soul that lives, but Mary living in it; for Mary's life becomes its life. And when, by an unspeakable yet real grace, the Blessed Virgin is Queen in a soul, what wonders does she not work there! She is the worker of great wonders, particularly in our soul, but she works them

in secret, in a way unknown to the soul itself, for were it to know, it might destroy the beauty of her works.

Mary Causes Jesus to Live in That Soul

56. As Mary is the fruitful Virgin everywhere, she produces in the soul wherein she dwells, purity of heart and body, purity of intention and of purpose and fruitfulness in good works. Do not think, dear soul, that Mary, the most fruitful of all pure creatures, who has brought forth even a God, remains idle in a faithful soul. She will cause Jesus Christ to live in that soul, and the soul to live in constant union with Jesus Christ. «My dear children, with whom I am in labor again until Christ is formed in you» (Gal. iv, 19). If Jesus Christ is the fruit of Mary in each individual soul as well as in all souls in general, He is, however, her fruit and her masterpiece more particularly in a soul in which she dwells.

Mary Becomes Everything to That Soul

57. In fine, Mary becomes everything to that soul in the service of Jesus Christ. The mind will be enlightened by Mary's pure faith. The heart will be deepened by Mary's humility. It will be dilated and inflamed by Mary's charity; made clean by Mary's purity; noble and great by her motherly care. But why dwell any longer on this? Only experience can teach the wonders wrought by Mary, wonders so great that neither the wise

nor the proud, nor even many of the devout can believe them.

SPECIAL FUNCTION OF THE HOLY SLAVERY IN THE LATTER TIMES

Through Mary Jesus Will Reign

58. As it is through Mary that God came into the world the first time, in a state of humiliation and annihilation, may we not say that it is through Mary also that He will come the second time, as the whole Church expects Him to come, to rule everywhere and to judge the living and the dead? Who knows how and when that will be accomplished? I do know that God, Whose thoughts are as far removed from ours as Heaven is distant from the earth, will come in a time and a manner that men expect the least, even those who are most learned and most versed in Holy Scripture, which is very obscure on this subject.

59. We ought also to believe that towards the end of time, and perhaps sooner than we think, God will raise up great men full of the Holy Ghost and imbued with the spirit of Mary, through whom this powerful Sovereign will work great wonders in the world, so as to destroy sin and to establish the kingdom of Jesus Christ, her Son, upon the ruins of the kingdom of this corrupt world; and these holy men will succeed

by means of this devotion of which I do but give here the outline, and which my deficiency only impairs.

D. EXTERIOR PRACTICES OF THE HOLY SLAVERY OF LOVE

60. Besides the interior practice of this devotion, of which we have just spoken, there are also certain exterior practices, which we must neither omit nor neglect.

Consecration and Renewal

61. The first one is to choose a special feast-day on which to consecrate ourselves to Jesus through the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose slaves we make ourselves. On the same day we should receive Holy Communion for that intention, and spend the day in prayer. At least once a year on the same day, we should renew our act of consecration.

A Token of Our Servitude

62. The second one is to pay to Our Lady, every year on that same day, some little tribute, as a token of our servitude and dependence; such has always been the homage paid by slaves to their masters. That tribute may consist of an act of mortification, an alms, a pilgrimage, or some prayers. Blessed Marino, we are told by his brother, St. Peter Damian, was wont to take

the discipline in public every year on the same day before the altar of Our Lady. Such zeal is not required, nor do we counsel it; but if we give but little to Mary, let us at least offer it with a humble and grateful heart.

Celebration of the *Annunciation*

63. The third practice is to celebrate every year, with special devotion, the feast of the *Annunciation*, which is the patronal feast of this devotion and was established to honor and imitate the dependence in which the Eternal Word placed Himself on that day out of love for us.

Recitation of the *Little Crown* and the *Magnificat*

64. The fourth external practice is to say every day (not, however, under pain of sin, in case of omission) the *Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin*, which is composed of three *Our Fathers* and twelve *Hail Marys*; also often to recite the *Magnificat*, which is the only hymn composed by Mary that we possess, to thank God for His graces in the past and to beg of Him fresh blessings for the present. Above all, we ought not to fail to say this hymn in thanksgiving after Holy Communion. The learned Gerson tells us that Our Lady herself was wont to recite it after Communion.

THE TREE OF LIFE

Its Culture and Its Growth

OR

How to Make Mary Live and Reign
in Our Souls

Predestinate soul, have you understood, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, what I have tried to explain to you in the preceding pages? If so, be thankful to God, for it is a secret known and understood by only a few. If you have found the treasure hidden in the field of Mary, the precious pearl of the Gospel, sell all that you have in order to buy it. You must make the sacrifice of yourself to the Blessed Mother, you must disappear in her, so that you may find God alone.

If the Holy Ghost has planted in your soul the true Tree of Life, which is the devotion that I have just explained to you, you must do all you can to cultivate it, in order that it may yield its fruit in due season. This devotion is like the mustard-seed of the Gospel, «which is the least indeed of all seeds, but when it is grown up, is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air (i.e., the predestinate) come and dwell in the branches thereof,» and rest in its shade from the heat of the sun and hide there in safety from the beasts of prey.

This is the way, predestinate soul, to cultivate it:

No Human Support

1° This Tree, once planted in a faithful heart, requires the open air and freedom from all human support. Being heavenly, it must be kept clear from any creatures that might prevent it from lifting itself to God in Whom its origin lies. Hence you must not rely on your own skill or your natural talents, on your own repute or the protection of men. You must have recourse to Mary and rely on her help alone.

Constant Concern of the Soul

2° The one in whose soul this Tree is planted must, like a good gardener, constantly watch over it and tend it, for it is a Tree that has life, and is capable of yielding the fruit of life. Therefore, it must be cultivated and raised by the steady care and application of the soul; and the soul that would become perfect will make this its chief aim and occupation.

Violence to Oneself

3° Whatever is likely to choke the Tree or in the course of time prevent its yielding its fruit, such as thorns and thistles, must be cut away and rooted out. This means that by mortification and doing violence to ourselves, we must suppress and renounce all useless pleasures and

vain intercourse with creatures. In other words, we must crucify the flesh, keep recollected and mortify our senses.

No Self-Love

4° You must also keep watch on insects, which might do harm to the Tree. These insects are self-love or love of comfort. They eat away the foliage of the Tree and destroy the fair hopes it gives of yielding fruit, for self-love is opposed to the love of Mary.

Horror of Sin

5° You must not allow destructive animals to approach the Tree of Life. By these animals are meant all sins. They may kill the Tree of Life by their touch alone. Even their breath must be kept away from it, namely, venial sins, for they are most dangerous if committed without regret.

Fidelity to Religious Practices

6° It is also necessary to water this heavenly Tree often with the fervor of piety in our religious practices, in our confessions and Communions, in all our prayers both public and private; otherwise it will stop yielding fruit.

Peace in Trials

7° Do not become alarmed when the Tree is moved and shaken by the wind, for it is neces-

sary that the storms of temptation should threaten to uproot it, that snow and ice should cover it, so as, if possible, to destroy it. This means that this devotion will of necessity be attacked and contradicted, but provided we persevere in cultivating it in our souls, we need not fear.

Its Fruit: Our Lord

Predestinate soul, if you thus cultivate the Tree of Life, freshly planted in your soul by the Holy Ghost, I assure you that in a short time it will grow so tall that the birds of Heaven will come to dwell in it. It will be a good tree, yielding fruit of honor and grace in due season, namely, the sweet and adorable Jesus, Who always has been, and always will be, the only fruit of Mary.

Happy the soul, in which Mary, the Tree of Life, is planted; happier the soul in which she has acquired growth and bloom; still happier the soul in which she yields her fruit; but most happy of all the soul which relishes and preserves Mary's fruit until death, and for ever and ever. Amen.

«He who holdeth (this), let him hold (it).»

GOD ALONE

Part II

APPLICATION OF THE
HOLY SLAVERY

1. *TO THE INTERIOR LIFE*
2. *TO THE EXTERIOR LIFE*

I

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

INTRODUCTION

«I shall not rest, until I have found Mary,» said St. John Berchmans. Child of Mary, has not your heart sent forth that same interior cry a thousand times, while you were reading the beautiful pages of Blessed De Montfort on the life of Mary in the Christian soul? And to be more sure of winning the good graces of this exalted Queen, have you not already consecrated yourself to her? Or at least, are you not determined to do so very soon, giving yourself to her perfectly and entirely, leaving to her all that you possess, even the value of all your good works?

What joy you will thus give to the Heart of Jesus! What charity you will practice towards your neighbor and what blessings you will draw down upon yourself by choosing Mary as your supplement and your all with God!

But you must understand that the essential part of this perfect devotion consists in trying, to the best of your power and at every moment of your life, to do all your actions through Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary, as has been explained in *The Secret of Mary*. In order to

help you to practice this devotion I shall give you some considerations on the pious practices of certain saints who have distinguished themselves by their love for the Queen of Heaven. May they contribute to establish more and more the reign of Mary in your soul and enable you to enjoy its interior consolations.

Chapter I

MORNING PRAYER

The Church applies to Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, these words attributed by the Holy Ghost to Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom: «She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first showeth herself to them. He that awaketh early to seek her, shall not labor, for he shall find her sitting at his door.» (Wisd. vi, 14).

Let that saying inflame your heart on your awakening every morning. Respond to the love of this dear Mother by rising punctually and promptly, for she is there near you wanting to gather the first fruit of your heart. Do as the Child Jesus did; greet Our Lady as soon as you awake, and offer yourself to God through her. As a token of your love and dependence, kiss your crucifix, your scapular, or your medal and say: «I am all thine, my dear Mother, and all that I have is thine.» Follow the example of the saints and humbly beg Mary to bless you. Interior joy will be the reward of this pious practice. Blessed Angela of Foligno was wont to ask Our Lady's blessing every morning. One day she received the following answer: «Be thou blessed, my daughter, by my Son and by me,» and her soul was overfilled with heavenly consolation.

If you are already a slave of Mary, it will be better for you to remember at this moment that

by your perfect consecration you have given yourself entirely to Mary, and that she, in return for that gift of yourself, has agreed to be your supplement and your all with God. Therefore, after having greeted her lovingly, unite yourself to her Immaculate Heart, enter into her disposition and say with St. Alphonsus Rodriguez: «O most Blessed Trinity, I offer unto Thee Mary's acts of humility, adoration, thanksgiving and praise.» Or if you have adopted another method, keep it, but render it more perfect by confiding it to the Heart of Mary Immaculate.

Then, while you are dressing with all necessary modesty, take heed lest you should allow these precious moments to become a loss to your soul. Occupy your mind with holy thoughts; let your heart send forth some pious aspirations. The very best you can do during these moments is to think over quietly and without effort the subject of your meditation, which you should have prepared the previous evening. But remember that you are not yet a perfect child of Mary, and, therefore, follow the advice of Blessed De Montfort. Humble yourself and repeatedly call upon the Virgin most faithful to obtain for you the grace that you may be interiorly recollected during your prayer and meditation. Happy, indeed, might you consider yourself, if you were to be favored like Blessed Henry Suso. When one morning he greeted the Queen of his heart more affectionately than usual, he was allowed to enjoy

for a moment her visible presence, and to hear her say to him: «The more thy soul shall have been attached to me by a pure and spiritual love during life, the more closely shalt thou be united to my heart during eternity.»

When the moment to say your morning prayer has come, bear in mind that you must offer it to God through Mary and that you must adopt her feelings. Try to make your soul, as it were, an oratory of Our Lady. Oh, who can tell us the admirable dispositions of Mary's heart, when, prostrated before the divine majesty, she offered her morning praises to God! What humility! What recollection! What faith! What confidence! What fervor! Always offer your vocal prayers to God by the hands of Mary; not only your morning prayers, but all other prayers said during the day. What graces you will obtain, if you remain united to Mary! «God readily hears our prayers,» says St. Anselm, «when we pray through Mary, for He refuses her nothing.»

Chapter II

MEDITATION

I. PREPARATION

«I am the Mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and of the truth; in me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me, all ye that desire me: and be filled with my fruits» (Ecclus. xxiv, 24, 25, 26). Such are the words spoken to you by Our Lady in order to awaken in your heart a desire to pray and to give you confidence in prayer, especially mental prayer, called meditation.

Meditation! How necessary an exercise for you, faithful servant of Mary, if you would obtain the special graces you need in the midst of the many dangers which surround you, under the numberless temptations which are brought upon you by the enemies of your soul! Do you wish to win the favor of your heavenly Mother? Love to meditate as she did. St. Jerome tells us that from her tenderest years, she devoted much of her time to mental prayer. If possible, give at least a quarter of an hour every day to this pious exercise. And if you would learn to meditate well, go to her who is rightly called the «teacher of the science of God and the counselor of His work.»

Blessed Eleazar, on being asked one day who had taught him to meditate so well, answered: «Our Lady did. I first consider,» said he, «my own worthlessness and wretchedness. I then turn towards my sweet Mother, and ask her to place in my heart and on my lips whatever is pleasing to her and to her Son; and I say a *Hail Mary*. After that I always have enough matter for meditation.» Do likewise. Humble yourself profoundly; consider for a few moments that your faults are many, your virtues but few, and that you are still far from being as perfect as a slave of Mary ought to be. Then turn to Our Lady and, full of confidence, say to her: «My dear Mother, I deliver unto thee the three faculties of my soul. Be thou in me during this meditation. Be in my memory, that I may think only of Jesus; be in my understanding, that I may know Him alone; be in my will, that I may have no other will but His.»

II. BODY OF THE MEDITATION

In the body of the meditation there are two important acts which the Blessed Virgin would like you to perform. The first one consists in making a well-determined resolution concerning a point of your daily life; as, for example, to correct your predominant fault, to shun an occasion of sin, to imitate such and such a virtue practiced by your Blessed Mother and more particularly

her interior recollection. Speaking of meditation, St. Teresa says: «The soul does not profit so much by merely thinking of God often, as by loving Him generously, and the love of God is acquired by the determination to work for Him.» And she concludes: «For my part, I wish for no other method of meditation but that which will cause me to advance in virtue.»

The second act consists in imploring divine help and protection. To recommend yourself to Our Lord and to Our Lady is the most precious part of your meditation; and more than that, it is the essential part of that prayer called *prayer of petition*. It was by this kind of prayer that the Fathers of the Desert sanctified themselves. Cassian relates that they continually repeated the words by which the Church begins each of her canonical hours: «O God, come to my assistance.»

Now then, do not say any longer: «I cannot meditate.» Consider attentively the subject which you have chosen and prepared as well as possible the previous evening. If by yourself you are not able to converse interiorly with Our Lady, you may make use of a book; or else you may place yourself at the feet of your Queen, like a poor slave who has nothing of himself but expects to receive everything from her. You will certainly touch her merciful heart if you tell her, one by one, your many wants, if you trust in her goodness and rely on her power, if you offer

her the merits of her Divine Son and remind her of her promises. Fully conscious of your own nothingness, say to her: «What dost thou lose, my dear Mother, in granting me what I ask? To me it is a priceless gift; but it will cost thee—the Treasury of God and the Distributor of His graces—it will cost thee nothing. It is of thy goodness, O Mother, of thy heart always kindly and mercifully disposed towards thy children, that I implore this favor. Canst thou refuse me?» To move her still more with compassion for you, act like a poor beggar who displays his rags and his infirmities when asking for an alms: «O Mary,» you ought to say, «behold this imperfection of my soul, cast thine eyes upon my proud mind, upon my heart full of vanity. Help me to correct myself.»

At other times unite yourself with Our Lady in order to win the heart of God. In union with her, offer to God the merits of Jesus, your Divine Savior. Ask Him confidently for all the graces you need, even for the heroic practice of virtue, and say like St. Bernard: «It is true, O Lord, I have nothing of myself, but the sufferings of Jesus are my merits. If for love of Thee I had shed the blood which Thy Divine Son has poured out, wouldst Thou not be merciful unto me? With how much more reason, then, may I hope for pardon because of the Passion and Death which Jesus has suffered for me.»

Plead in this manner, or in another if you

wish, but always at Mary's feet and in union with her, and rest assured that such a meditation will be the easiest, the most fruitful and the most important of all. If you are not able to do anything else, just say over and over again those ejaculations you like the most. If you did nothing else but say: «O Mother, have pity on thy poor child,» you ought to believe that your pleading will touch the merciful heart of Our Lady.

«The king is honored even by the statues in the palace,» says St. Francis de Sales. Be then like an intelligent statue. Raise your eyes now and then towards Mary and you will not be without merit. You will glorify Jesus and your heavenly Queen.

III. CONCLUSION OF THE MEDITATION

Toward the end of meditation make your act of thanksgiving and give yourself to Mary, the most faithful Virgin, that she may preserve in you the fruit of your meditation and help you to keep the good resolutions which you have made. As you are not yet very far advanced in the practical life of union with Our Lady, it will be of great profit to your soul if you make a resolution to live more constantly in union with her and thus enter more and more upon that easy and sure way of perfection.

Finish your meditation by pouring out your soul before Our Lady, saying to her: «O my

Queen, would that I could be at thy feet all day long, to bless thee, to sing thy praises, to beg of thee all the graces I need! I wish at least to be with thee in spirit. Therefore I unite with all the pious souls who this day, in this vale of tears, will find their happiness in blessing thee and serving thee most zealously. I wish I could be in all the sanctuaries of the world, in which any virtue or privilege of thine is honored in a special manner. Moreover I unite with all the saints in Heaven, above all with those who have loved thee most here below, to offer to thee their praises, their homage and their love.

«But as the offering most pleasing to thee is Jesus, thy Son, I unite with His Sacred Heart to praise, to bless, and to love thee as He Himself did when on earth, and as He still does now in Heaven. Pray, dear Mother, give me thy blessing and bless likewise those who are dear to me, all thy true children.»

«Mary kept all these things in her heart,» says St. Luke. After the example of your heavenly Mother, recall frequently to mind during the day the considerations of your morning meditation, and by an interior glance see now and then (for example, when the clock strikes the hour), whether you are keeping the resolution you have made.

Chapter III

REFLECTIONS ON THE LITTLE CROWN OF MARY

The *Little Crown*¹ in honor of the privileges and virtues of Mary is a charming prayer. In his *True Devotion* (N° 234), Blessed De Montfort recommends that it be said every day. Its origin is as follows:

One day, St. John, the beloved disciple of Jesus and Mary, saw a great wonder in the heavens, as he relates in chapter XII of the Apocalypse: «A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.» The interpreters of Holy Scripture tell us that this vision typifies Mary together with her virtues and privileges, and in particular, her divine maternity. From that explanation has originated *Mary's Little Crown of Twelve Stars*. It has been favored with many wonders of heavenly grace, and it has been the delight of such saints as St. Joseph Calasanctius, St. John Berchmans and others.

In the eighteenth century, Blessed De Montfort, wishing to render this prayer more attrac-

¹ The *Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin* has been placed after the chapter on "Meditation" because many pious souls and even religious Congregations have adopted it as a part of their morning prayer. It may thus serve as morning meditation. See page 261.

tive, added to each of the twelve *Hail Marys* that compose the *Little Crown*, some of his beautiful praises in honor of Our Lady, with the invocation: «Rejoice, O Virgin Mary. Rejoice a thousand times.» Oh! Who will give to our souls the feelings with which he was animated, when he presented this *Little Crown* to her whom he so affectionately called his «good Mother»! He would fain have given a tongue to every living creature to repeat those beautiful praises with him. He has made it a rule for the members of the two religious Congregations founded by him that this *Little Crown* shall be their form of morning prayer and, so to say, their first greeting and first mark of affection for their dear Mother.

Pious soul, love to strew the roses of this beautiful crown at the feet of your heavenly Queen every day, or at least as often as possible. Your heart shall be filled with sweet consolation and your soul with heavenly grace every time you say this prayer with attention. Love to meditate in particular upon the concluding prayer: «*Hail, Mary, Daughter of God the Father,*» which is a short summary of the teaching of Blessed De Montfort on true devotion to Mary. A few considerations will help you to realize the beauty of this prayer.

At the beginning of this prayer think of Our Lady as seated upon a throne of splendor and glory in Heaven, receiving the homage of all

creatures, angels and men. Humbly greet her as «*the Daughter of God the Father, the Mother of God the Son, the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and the Temple of the most Holy Trinity.*» Greet her as that «*World of God,*» as Blessed De Montfort calls her, in which Jesus is still hidden, infinitely holy and exalted and infinitely condescending to our weakness. Then pour forth the feelings of your soul at the feet of your exalted Queen, whose heart is inflamed with the most tender love for you.

Now say to her: «*Hail, Mary, my mistress, my treasure, my Mother!*» What an honor for you to serve the Mother of Jesus, the heavenly Queen, who holds the sceptre of mercy and gently wields it over her guilty children. Who is so wretched as not to obtain divine mercy through Mary's powerful intercession? Realize her tender love for you and the honor of serving such a kind sovereign, and exclaim with St. Bonaventure: «*O gentle Queen, I will henceforth live under thy banner, I will submit entirely to thy power, I will be led and ruled by thee.*» Yet as my wretchedness is great and as my sins are like so many sore and fetid wounds in thy sight, how can I expect thee, the purest of all creatures, to be my guide and ruler? But, my heavenly Mother, thou art the Queen of mercy. Thy subjects are principally those who, like me, are miserable sinners and stand in need of thy compassion. Yes, thou art the Queen of mercy and

I am the most wretched of thy children. Shall I not obtain thy compassion? No one has ever made himself thy subject without presently obtaining thy mercy, however wretched and hopeless he may have been. Henceforth then I will not fear; thou rulest me; I shall not want for anything.

Thou art also *«my loving Mother.»* Who can tell the extent and the depth of the love thou bearest me? Who can understand what thou hast done for me? For the salvation of my soul thou didst sacrifice thy Son, Whom thou didst love so much. *«My loving Mother!»* How those words enrapture my heart! If there is so much tenderness, so much zeal and devotedness in the heart of every mother on earth, what then must be thy love, O most perfect, most tender and most compassionate of all creatures!

«A mother never forgets her child.» I will ever remember those words, O holy Virgin, and nothing will shake the hope I place in thee. If the love of all mothers were bestowed upon one child, even that would not be sufficient to give me a true idea of the love thou hast for me. I will repeat then, in all my anxieties and fears, the words of one of thy devoted children: *«She is my Mother,»*—and that saying will comfort me when I am troubled; it will fill my heart with joy and ardent love.

«Queen of my heart, my life, my sweetness, my dearest hope.»

O gentle Queen, reign in my heart by thy charms and thy beauty. Reign in me, thou who art true life, by whom we have recovered what we had lost, thou who every day obtainest for us the life of grace and givest to those who love thee the assurance of a glorious and eternal life. But if thou art my life, why shouldst thou not always be in me and pervade my soul with thy spirit? O my sweetness and my hope, I will not cease to hope in thee, for thou art the hope even of the hopeless. No! My hope in thee shall not be in vain, for he who trusts in thee, however wretched he be, shall never be abandoned.

Thou art «*the Queen of my heart.*» O gracious Queen, thy beauty is a charm to my eyes, thy gracefulness a delight to my heart, the mere thought of thee is a balm to my soul. Thou who dost captivate the hearts of men, what hast thou done with my heart? Hast thou united it so closely to thy heart that I may now exclaim with Blessed De Montfort, «*Thou art my heart and my soul*»?

But what am I saying? Sweet Jesus, can it be that in giving me Mary as my Mother, Thou hast willed that she should be united to me as my heart and my soul? Yes, so it is. In giving me Thy Mother as my own, Thou hast given me her heart to be my supplement and my all with Thee.

O Lord Jesus, what a great gift Thou hast bestowed upon me! How can I thank Thee

worthily for it? Make me understand the value of this great gift that I may use it rightly and ever be grateful for it.

«*Mary, my heart and my soul!*» O heart most pure and most holy, thou art the sanctuary of Jesus, the temple of God. A heart most meek and full of compassion for my innumerable wants! O admirable heart! The delight of all Heaven, too little have I known thee! But for the future I am determined to love God and to fulfill all my duties towards my neighbor. I will draw from thy heart all treasures of grace for those who are dear unto me. I will disappear in Mary like a drop of water in the ocean. If I should become frightened on realizing my spiritual want or find myself sinking into despair, I will cheerfully contemplate the treasures of thy heart, and offer them to God—its humility to hide my pride, its immaculate purity to cover my numberless sins, and full of joy I will repeat: «*Mary, my heart and my soul!*»

But as Our Lady has given herself to you to be your surety, your supplement, your all before God, is it not meet and just that you should be entirely hers? Therefore you now say: «*I am all thine and all that I have is thine.*»

Loving child of Mary, have you earnestly considered the extent of your glorious consecration to Our Lady and the sublime vocation to which you are called? In virtue of your total offering of yourself you can no longer claim as yours the

value of a good work you do or of a suffering you undergo. But see what merit and glory will be yours, if you are faithful to your consecration. All your thoughts, words and actions are as so many precious stones to be set in Mary's crown.

You follow the example of Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom, Who was dependent on Mary in all things and by His total submission to her gave perfect glory to His Father.

By placing the value of all your actions in the hands of Mary your Mother, you share her sublime intentions, and you can say with assurance that the value of your thoughts, words and actions goes for the greater glory of God. Is there anything more consoling? Can you give a better proof of your love for Mary? Can there be a more abundant source of joy for your soul? Recall to mind what you have read in *The Secret of Mary* about the advantages and the fruits of your consecration.

But alas, you do not yet belong entirely to Mary. How many thoughts, affections and actions of your daily life do not yet belong to her!

Therefore renew your consecration and say: «*I am all thine and all I have is thine!*» But, my loving Queen, this donation of myself is not sufficient to honor thy sovereignty worthily nor to satisfy my own wishes. I beseech thee then, do thou have that dominion over me, which I cannot give thee because I know not how. Make me all thine in the manner thou knowest, but

which I do not know. Yes, I beseech thee to exercise thy rights and privileges over me so that I may be entirely thine, and that thus I may honor thee not only by my works and sufferings, but also by a vocation and a new condition of life which thou alone knowest.

In order that you may thus belong to your good Mother you will need her help, and that is why you now add: «*Let thy soul be in me to glorify the Lord, let thy spirit be in me to rejoice in God!*» When we seek Mary diligently (as you have read in the first pages of *The Secret*), we come to a state in which, so to say, it is no longer the soul that lives, but Mary living in the soul. Mary's soul becomes, as it were, our soul. God has said to her: «Let thy dwelling be in Jacob; in Israel is thine inheritance; take root in my elect.» Moreover, has she not dominion over all that is subject to God? Is she not the Queen of all hearts? Mary living in us! Blessed De Montfort was favored with that unspeakable gift and he sings of it in one of his beautiful hymns:

Who is he that will believe it?

Mary lives within my heart,
Graven there in rays of glory

Though my faith knows but in part.

But, devout child of Mary, how easy it is to lose that sweet presence of your heavenly Mother! Therefore, beware of your want of perseverance, condemn your cowardice in the service of God and pray again to Our Lady that she

may place herself as a seal upon your heart, which is cold and void of true zeal for the glory of your heavenly Father, and say to her with the most lively confidence:

«*O faithful Virgin, set thyself as a seal upon my heart that in thee and through thee I may be found faithful to God.*» For if thou dost not powerfully assist me, I shall be the same as I have always been. Am I not guilty enough by my abuse of so many graces? How many times, by despising good thoughts and holy inspirations, have I not trodden under foot the Precious Blood of Jesus through Whom those graces were obtained for me? How often, by my ingratitude, have I not deserved to be despised by God? Dearest Mother, do not permit that the same misfortune should befall me again; do not allow me to live in the same blindness any longer. «*O faithful Virgin, set thyself as a seal upon my heart.*» Is that not what thou wishest to do? Is it not thy wish to establish thy kingdom in my heart? And now that I implore thee, why shouldst thou not hear me? Why dost thou delay? Arise, O my Queen, and come to my help.

Thou art my Mother, a Mother full of kindness. Is it not the mother who gives life and strength to the child, who guides his steps and keeps him from danger? A mother never forgets her child, however ungrateful and wretched the child may be. What then can cause thee to turn away from me thine eyes so meek and so merci-

ful? Is it my sins, my numberless infidelities? But they should rather draw thy compassion upon me and urge thee to succor me. Or is it my enemies? If there were nothing else to move thee, is not the presence of the enemy, who is ready to snatch away thy child, more than sufficient reason to hasten to my assistance? Yes, O my powerful sovereign, make haste to hear my prayer.

«Receive me, O gracious Virgin, this very day, among those whom thou lovest and teachest, whom thou leadest, nourishest and protectest as thy children.» To-morrow it may be too late, for I may die to-day. How shall I appear before the tribunal of thy Son, if my soul is stained with sin? What will become of me if He finds me not according to His heart? Ah! Couldst thou suffer to see the child condemned to be eternally separated from the Mother? Thou seest then, dear Mother, it is time for thee to act and to hear my prayer.

«Grant, then, that for love of thee, I may despise all earthly consolations and ever cling to those of Heaven.»

Grant, O sweet Mother, that I may love thee, for to love thee is to love God perfectly; to love thee is the sure and perfect means of finding Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom. But how can I not love thee, O most amiable princess, when all reasonable creatures turn to thee: the afflicted, to find consolation; sinners, to obtain mercy; the

just, to be strengthened; the blessed, to be filled with happiness. Who cannot long for thee who restorest all things, who art brighter than the sun, sweeter than honey? Thou art the Seat of Wisdom, the source of kindness, a ray of the Sun of Justice shining upon all! Finding in thee so much beauty and so many attractions, I long for thee and do not cease to sigh: O how long my exile is! When, O dearest Mother, shall I see thee, no longer in figure but in reality?

Grant, then, that I may love thee more and more, O my sovereign, who fillest with admiration every soul on earth contemplating thee, all the angels of Heaven beholding thee and even the heart of God loving thee. As by thy ardent supplications thou hast brought to us in this vale of tears Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom, so by thy kindness, by thy virtues and merits bring me to thee, so that *«through the Holy Ghost, thy faithful Spouse, Jesus Christ thy Son may be formed in me, for the glory of the Father. Amen.»*

Chapter IV

THE EUCHARISTIC CHRIST) AND OUR LADY

The Holy Eucharist! What wonders of love do those words reveal to my heart! In the Holy Eucharist Jesus is my gentle prisoner. There He atones unceasingly for my sins, He lavishes upon me His choicest favors, He unites Himself most intimately with me. In the Holy Eucharist, moreover, I find all that is necessary to foster my love for her who is justly called «the monstrance and the tabernacle of Jesus, the Mother who nourishes the children of God.»

«Jesus is the fruit of Mary everywhere,» says Blessed De Montfort, «in Heaven and on earth, in the tabernacle and in our hearts.» These words are fraught with light. They teach me the intimate relations which exist between the Holy Eucharist and Our Lady. At the same time they tell me what share I must give to Mary in the homage I render to the Blessed Sacrament. «Consider well,» says St. Peter Damian, «the gratitude you owe to the Mother of God, for in the tabernacle we possess the same body of Jesus Christ which the Blessed Virgin conceived, bore in her womb, wrapped up in swaddling clothes and nursed most affectionately.»

It is, therefore, Mary's Son we receive in the

Holy Eucharist—her Son, Whom she gave first to the world as a Savior and Whom she now gives to her devoted children as spiritual food and as a means of sanctification for their souls.

While giving us Jesus upon the altar, Mary also teaches us what homage we must render Him in the Blessed Sacrament. It is to her then that we should have recourse, and from her that we should learn the interior dispositions required of us when we attend Mass, when we approach Holy Communion, and when we make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

In the first place let us learn from Mary how we should attend Holy Mass.

Chapter V

HOLY MASS

Do you wish to understand the greatness of the Holy Sacrifice which you attend so frequently and perhaps in a lukewarm manner? Place yourself in spirit on Mount Calvary. What do you see there? Jesus, the Incarnate Wisdom of the Father, the Savior of your soul, in the depth of humiliation and contempt, covered with horrible wounds, sacrificing Himself and dying for love of you.

Who is this valiant woman standing at the foot of the cross, fastened, as it were, to the holy rood, the altar of the Divine Victim? She is the Mother of Jesus and your Mother. While you are sympathizing with her on seeing her soul pierced with a sword of sorrow, ask yourself what she is doing there. She offers a sacrifice. She immolates a Victim. It is the sacrifice of her Divine Son, for Whom she would give her own life a thousand times if she could. The Victim is the God-Man, «the Flesh of her flesh, the Blood of her blood.» It is truly here that we may apply to Mary the words of St. Epiphanius: «O holy Virgin, thou offerest a most pure and most holy sacrifice, yet at the same time a sacrifice that is most grievous to thy motherly heart. Thy heart bears the impression of all the wounds inflicted

upon the body of Jesus, and upon the altar of thy heart thou offerest the Divine Victim for our salvation. With Jesus thou offerest thyself for us, in the midst of unutterable sorrow, but with untold generosity and love.»

Now gaze at the altar upon which the priest is about to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. What does your faith tell you? That the Sacrifice of the Altar is not merely the representation but the real continuation of the Sacrifice of Calvary. In both, the Priest and the Victim are the same. When you think of this, can you forget Mary, the Mother of Sorrows, standing at the foot of the cross, offering herself with her Son? Does not everything remind you of her? Is she not the perfect model which you should strive to follow in order to imitate Jesus more perfectly?

After the Ascension of Our Lord, Mary attended almost every day the Holy Sacrifice celebrated by St. John. What must have been her feelings while doing so? Even now that she is in Heaven above, does she not participate in the mystical immolation of her Son upon our altars? «Holy Virgin,» exclaims the pious Gerson, «may we not say that thou art really present in the sanctuary? Yes, thou art with us, if not in body, at least by the spiritual influence which in thy mercy thou dost have upon those who love thee, and by the gracious looks which thou dost cast upon us.»

Whenever, therefore, you attend the Holy Sac-

rifice, try to adopt the admirable dispositions of our Blessed Lady, who is your model and your supplement. The more you endeavor to humble yourself because of your sins and the more fervently you invoke your heavenly Mother, the more will she enlighten you and help you to understand the intimate relations which exist between her and Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Everything during Mass will remind you of Our Lady.

The prayers of the Mass, if you search into their meaning, will recall the most touching circumstances of Mary's life and also the mysteries in which she has taken such an active part. The *Introit* and the *Kyrie* will remind you of Mary's ardent supplications which hastened the coming of the Savior; the *Gloria*, of the hymn of the angels at Bethlehem, where Mary adored the Holy Child and lovingly contemplated Him; the *Epistle* and *Gospel* will relate the wonderful things which Mary witnessed and which she kept in her heart, in order to make them known later on to the world; the *Offertory* will recall the mystery of the Presentation in the Temple, where for the first time Mary made to God the Father the public offering of this Divine Victim Which we offer to-day by the hands of the priest. The *Consecration* will remind you of the immolation of Jesus on Calvary and at the same time of Mary's love, for she still gives her consent to the mystical death of her Son upon the altar. Finally,

when you have come to the *Communion*, you will be burning with love and gratitude when you think that here again it is Mary who gives you Jesus in a most loving manner, and that out of the most pure blood of her heart was formed the Sacred Body you are going to receive. Oh, you who desire to live in union with your heavenly Mother, realize more and more how intimately you are united with her by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!

There are several manners of hearing Mass with devotion. But there is one more pleasing to Our Lord, as we may gather from a revelation made to a saintly soul. It is that of St. Leonard of Port Maurice, and it has been drawn up in the spirit of union with Mary. It teaches us how to satisfy the four great duties which we owe to God; namely: 1° to adore and praise His infinite majesty; 2° to satisfy His justice for the sins we have committed; 3° to thank Him for all the favors He has bestowed upon us; 4° to petition Him as the Author and the Giver of all that we need. This method gives us a good idea of the excellence and fruits of the Mass and it reminds us of the interior dispositions of Our Lady, who in union with the Divine Victim renders acts of adoration, of expiation and thanksgiving to God the Father, and offers unto Him her ardent supplications for the salvation of the world.

Be zealous in following this method. Do not fail to attend the adorable Sacrifice of our altars

every day if you can, and offer it to God for Mary's intentions, although they are unknown to you. What a source of joy and blessings you will find in it if you are faithful, and what a happy change will soon take place in your soul!

Chapter VI

MANNER OF HEARING HOLY MASS IN UNION WITH MARY

When the Mass is about to start, say with profound respect: «Now I am on Calvary.» Recollect yourself inwardly and enter into Mary's dispositions. While the priest, at the foot of the altar, recites the Confiteor, think of the Agony of Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom, in the Garden of Olives. Make a short examination of conscience, and in order to conceive a more lively sorrow for your sins, lift up your heart to Our Lady. She will teach you how to immolate yourself with her Divine Son during Mass.

I. FROM THE INTROIT TO THE GOSPEL

Praise and adore the infinite majesty of God.

From the beginning of Mass to the Gospel try to render to God the homage which is His due. But how can you do it? Do you not know that the praise and the adoration of the angels and saints, that even the homage which Mary herself unceasingly presents to the most Holy Trinity, are like nothing before God, Who is infinitely great? Jesus, the Incarnate Wisdom, alone can give to God perfect worship, and this He does by His abasement in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In union with Our Lady offer this humiliation of Jesus to His heavenly Father while you humble yourself profoundly. Renounce your own dispositions and in union with Mary say confidently and lovingly:

O my God, I adore Thee and acknowledge Thee as my Lord and supreme Master. I confess that all I have and all I am, I hold from Thy bounti-

ful hand. But because Thy sovereign majesty deserves infinite honor and praise, and not being able in my utter destitution to pay what I owe Thee, I offer unto Thee the humiliations of my Savior; I offer unto Thee for myself and for all men the homage which Jesus offers to Thee upon this altar. Look down, O Lord, upon Jesus, Thy Incarnate Wisdom, in Whom Thou art well pleased. What Jesus does, I wish to do with Him. With Him I bow down and humble myself before Thy supreme majesty. I adore Thee in union with His adoration and divine intentions, and to do this more perfectly I do it with Mary and through her.

O Mary, my Mother, assist me to render unto God a homage worthy of Him, and therefore be thou wholly in me. Offer with me and for me the feelings of thy heart and, above all, the great joy given to thy heart, because of the infinite honor which God receives by the offering of this Mass.

Continue these interior acts without troubling yourself about expressing them in words. The more you enter into Mary's interior dispositions, the more will she suggest to you feelings of true humility and of profound renunciation of self. Oh, what joy you will thus give to the most Holy Trinity!

II. FROM THE GOSPEL TO THE ELEVATION

Offer satisfaction to God for the sins of which you are guilty.

Cast a glance at your sins and see the debt you have contracted towards God. One single mortal sin weighs more heavily in the balance of divine justice than all the good works of the saints and even more than the innumerable merits which Our Lady was able to acquire. Nothing less than the Precious Blood of Christ, shed upon Calvary, can satisfy the justice of God. While the priest is offering the most Precious Blood for you at the altar, think of the tears which Our Lady shed for you on Calvary, and also when, after the Ascension, she passed along the Sorrowful Way at Jerusalem, or attended the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered by St. John. With that thought in your mind mingle your tears with hers and say with a truly contrite heart:

Behold me, O my God, at Thy feet. My soul has been ungrateful to Thee and many times I have offended Thee, but now I heartily detest my numberless sins. What is there that I can offer Thee in expiation that is more pleasing in Thy sight than the humiliations by which the Eternal Wisdom, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, made satisfaction for me and which now He offers to Thy divine justice on this altar?

Accept then, O Lord, the tears of Mary and all the merits of Jesus, His Precious Blood and His Sacred Body. Accept Thy Eternal Son, Who in the state of a Victim deigns to renew His Sacrifice in my favor. And since Jesus upon this altar is my Mediator and my Advocate, since by His Precious Blood He is asking pardon for me, I unite my voice with His to beg Thy pardon for the numberless sins which I have committed and for those of the whole world. The Blood of Jesus cries to Thee for mercy, and my heart,

filled with repentance, asks it of Thee with Him. My God! If Thou art not touched by my tears, be moved at least by the sighs of Thy Son and by the prayers of Mary. If upon the cross Jesus obtained pardon for the whole human race, why should He not obtain it for me upon this altar? Yes, by virtue of this Precious Blood and for the love of Mary, Thy well-beloved Daughter, I hope that Thou wilt pardon me all my sins. I will shed tears for them until death. To all sinners in the world also, grant, O Lord, repentance and pardon.

O Mary, my Mother, thou who knowest my grief, obtain for me the tears of St. Peter, the grief of Magdalen and the sorrow of so many other saints who from sinners have become true penitents, that I also, through the merits of this Holy Sacrifice, may receive the entire forgiveness of all my sins.

Renew these acts of sincere and profound contrition which Mary will present for you to her Divine Son, and you may rest assured that you will thus pay the debt which you owe to God for your many infidelities.

III. FROM THE ELEVATION TO THE COMMUNION

Thank God for all the benefits He has bestowed upon you.

Recall to mind the many favors God has lavished upon you up to this very day. Child of Mary,

like your dear Mother you have reason to say often with feelings of gratitude: «He that is mighty hath done great things to me.» And this God of goodness is willing to do much more for you in the future. Remember that the only way to thank Him worthily is through the Sacred Heart of Jesus Who for this purpose has now come down upon the altar. Lovingly contemplate your sweet Savior Who is thanking His Father for you. Unite with the holy angels and the blessed, above all with Our Lady, and full of holy joy, say to God:

O my God! Thou hast so tenderly loved me! Here I am before Thee, laden with all the benefits Thou hast bestowed upon me in the past and even with those Thou art willing to grant me in time to come and in eternity. I confess that Thy mercies in my regard are infinite, but I am ready to pay Thee my debt of gratitude. Receive, O Lord, in thanksgiving for so many favors, this pure, holy and spotless Host, which I offer Thee in union with Mary, by the hands of the priest. This offering, I know, is pleasing to Thee. It is sufficient to repay Thee for all the gifts Thou hast lavished upon me. It is of infinite value. Of itself, it is worth all the benefits which I have received from Thee in the past, and those I still hope to receive in the future.

Angels of the Lord, all ye saints of Heaven, and thou especially, O holy Virgin, my Mother, join with me in thanking my God. Offer unto Him, in thanksgiving for His favors, all the Masses which are to be celebrated to-day in the whole world. Beseech Him that He may deign to regard the longings of my heart and the acts of

thanksgiving which Jesus Christ is now lovingly offering for me upon the altar.

Do not content yourself with expressing those sentiments once only; repeat them and unite them with those of Mary's heart. Who can tell how acceptable this loving expression of gratitude must be to the God of all goodness?

IV. FROM THE COMMUNION TO THE END OF MASS

Ask for all graces you need.

If during this fourth part of the Mass you do not receive sacramental Communion, at least do not fail to make a spiritual Communion. Imagine, as some saints were wont to do, that Our Lady gives you the Divine Child Who has been born anew upon the altar. Let your heart rejoice, for it is the Son of God Who now prays and petitions for you. If Mary were to assure you that she takes your petitions to God and intercedes with Him for you, what sweet confidence would you not have of soon being heard? But it is Jesus Himself, Mary's well-beloved Son, Who is your Advocate, while offering His Precious Blood to His Father on your behalf. Do not content yourself, then, with asking but a few favors. Ask for great graces for yourself and for the whole world. Say, therefore, in union with your heavenly Mother, and with the deepest feelings of humility:

God of my heart, I own that I am unworthy of Thy gifts. I confess that because of my innumerable sins I do not deserve that Thou shouldst hear me. But look upon the face of Thy Christ. Jesus, the Incarnate Wisdom, Whom Thou hast deigned to send upon earth for me, is offering unto Thee His Blood and His life upon this altar.

With His all-powerful intercession He is entreating Thee on my behalf. Deign to hear Him, O Lord, and in consideration of His merits, grant me all the graces Thou knowest I need to work out my eternal salvation. Mary, Mother of God, thou knowest my utter poverty, and I know that thou canst obtain all things from the Heart of thy Son. I beg thee, therefore, to obtain for me the pardon of my sins, knowledge of myself and a close union with thee and with Jesus. Obtain for me, O heavenly Queen, the faithful practice of all virtues and all that is necessary to become holy. Moreover, obtain for my neighbor all the graces which charity commands me to solicit for him. Obtain the exaltation of the Holy Church, the conversion of infidels and of sinners, particularly of those who are near and dear to me, and finally the deliverance of all the souls now detained in Purgatory.

Ask for all these favors with confidence and without fear of impoverishing Him Who loves so much to give. Ask for yourself and for others, for the Church and her Head. Pray with the most lively confidence and rest assured that your prayers, united with those of Jesus and of Mary, will not be left unheard.

It is said of St. Monica, that after Mass she left her heart upon the altar. Do likewise; leave your heart in adoration and during the day remember that it is there close to Jesus. This thought will keep you interiorly recollected; it will help you to conquer your predominant fault and cause you to live in closer union with Our Lady.

Chapter VII

HOLY COMMUNION

Who is this prisoner of love who, from the depth of His tabernacle, invites us so kindly, and entreats us so earnestly, to unite ourselves to Him? It is Jesus, the King of the angels, the Splendor and the Wisdom of the Eternal Father, the purest Light of God Almighty. Faithful servant of Mary, what greatness, what majesty, what incomprehensible perfections are hidden behind the eucharistic veil! When you seriously think of it, does not a certain fear seize upon your soul? Are you not ready to exclaim with St. Peter: «Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man»? Fear not, however, for it is your heavenly Mother who with Jesus has prepared this spiritual banquet for you. She offers to you this heavenly Manna, saying: «Come and eat the Bread which I have prepared for you.» In order to strengthen your confidence in Jesus and Mary and to increase your love for them in the Holy Eucharist, meditate on the following considerations:

Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is the gift of Mary. Indeed, He, the Eternal Wisdom, came down upon earth only after He had asked for Mary's consent. It was through her that Jesus was given to the world. The will of God was that

His Son should be immolated for us, and knowing the divine will, Mary conformed herself most lovingly to it. With God the Father she gave us Jesus and sacrificed Him for us; and that gift, which cost her so much, was renewed by her every moment of her life. The unspeakable affection with which she made and renewed her sacrifice is the testimony of her love for us. «Mary has loved us so much,» says St. Bonaventure, «that she has given us her Son.»

But Jesus is not satisfied with having given Himself to all mankind in the Incarnation. He wishes to become united with each of us in a most intimate manner by means of the Holy Eucharist, and by an unceasing act of love He gives Himself to us in each Consecration and in each Communion. Now, Mary's heart is always conformable to Our Lord's will, and having loved her sinful children so much as to sacrifice for them her only Son in His Passion, she loved them to the end by giving them the Holy Eucharist. This gift of Mary's heart entitles her to be called the Mother of the Holy Eucharist; and that title, so little known, tells us all the wonders of Mary's love for us.

Moreover, every day she renews her gift generously, efficaciously, maternally, because to each Sacrifice of the Son, the Mother gives her consent; each Consecration is a gift of Mary to us; each Communion is a mystery of Mary's love for us and a grace which she obtains and bestows

on us. What would not be our devotion, if every time we approach the Communion rail, we were to remember that it is our heavenly Mother who invites us with all the tenderness of her heart to come, and partake of her banquet: «Come to me, all ye that hunger and thirst (after union with me); come and taste the divine Fruit which I have borne; come and eat the Bread which I have prepared for you.»

«It is through Mary,» says St. Peter Damian, «that we are able to eat the Bread of Heaven every day; it is through her prayers that God inspires us to receive it and grants us the grace to receive it worthily. As Eve induced man to eat of the forbidden fruit which brought death upon us, so it is right that Mary should prompt us to eat the Bread which gives us life.» Say then to her, with St. Bernard: «O glorious Virgin, worthy of all praise! O admirable Mother, exalted above all creatures! Blessed be forever the fruit of thy womb!»

Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is the gift of Mary; for as we have said already, it was especially for the benefit and the consolation of His holy Mother that Our Lord instituted the Blessed Sacrament. «The Son of God,» says Father Salasar, «took such delight in the womb of Our Lady, that in order to procure for Himself the same joy, He has found the means of returning to her and of renewing in a manner the mystery of His Incarnation.» This wonder was

wrought each time that Mary received Holy Communion. Every time that Jesus gives Himself to us at the altar He wishes us to acknowledge that we owe His gift above all to the influence of His holy Mother. Mary's wish is that the Holy Eucharist should be a powerful means of linking together her heart and ours, as a living image of her love for us.

What shall we give Mary in return for this unspeakable favor? With a grateful heart let us say to her with St. Peter Damian: «Blessed be the chaste womb that has borne such fruit! Blessed be the Mother who gives such exquisite food to her children! Thou, O my sovereign, art truly the best of mothers. When thou didst bring us forth unto life, thou didst not have us nurtured by another, as many mothers do, but hast fed us thyself with the food of God's children. Thou hast surpassed all motherly goodness by giving us as nourishment the Flesh and Blood of thy own Son, in order that we may be more intimately united with thee, and that our soul may acquire the perfection of the saints by the communication of thy spirit and life, which are the spirit and the life of Jesus Christ. Who has ever heard of a mother loving her children to such an extent? O Mary, my sweetness, my love! Could we expect more lively, more impressive tokens of thy love?»

Chapter VIII

METHOD OF RECEIVING COMMUNION IN UNION WITH OUR LADY

I. BEFORE COMMUNION

1° Humble yourself profoundly before God. 2° Renounce your corrupt nature and your personal dispositions, however good they may appear to be in your own estimation. 3° Renew your consecration to Mary by saying: «I am all thine and all that I have is thine.» 4° Then beseech the Blessed Mother to lend you her own heart and dispositions, in order to receive her Divine Son. Tell her that it is for the glory of Jesus that He should not be received in a heart so sullied and inconstant as yours, which could only lessen and even destroy His glory; but if she will come and dwell within you (which she can do by the dominion she has over all hearts), her Son will be well received, without any danger of being offended or dishonored. Tell her confidently that all you have given her of your own is but little to honor her, but that by Holy Communion you wish to give her the same present as the Eternal Father has given her, and that by this gift she will be more honored than if you were to give her all the riches of the world. Again, tell her that

Jesus, Who loves her in a singular manner, still desires to take His pleasure and His repose in her, even though it be in your soul, which is emptier and poorer than the stable of Bethlehem, where He did not mind coming because she was there. Finally, ask her to lend you her heart, fondly saying to her: «I take thee for my all, O Mary, and pray thee, lend me thy heart.»

II. AT COMMUNION

When, after the *Our Father*, you are about to receive Jesus Christ, say three times: «Lord, I am not worthy.» Say to the Eternal Father that you are not worthy to receive His only Son, because of your distracted mind and your ingratitude towards so good a Father; but that He should behold Mary, His faithful handmaid, who prays and acts in you and for you, and who gives you great confidence when you are in the presence of His divine majesty.

Then say to God the Son: «Lord, I am not worthy.» Tell Him that you are not worthy to receive Him, because of your idle and vain words, and your faithlessness in His service, but that, nevertheless, you pray Him to have pity on you and that you will introduce Him into the house of His own Mother and yours, and that you will not allow Him to depart unless He come and dwell with you. Tell Him to rise and to come into the place of His repose and into the Ark of

His Sanctification. Tell Him also that you do not trust in your own merits, in your own strength or in your own preparation, as Esau did, but only in Mary, your dear Mother, as little Jacob trusted in Rebecca. Tell Him, that, sinner though you be, you dare to approach His sanctity, because you are supported and adorned with the virtues of Our Lady.

Say to God the Holy Ghost: «Lord, I am not worthy.» Tell Him that you are not worthy to receive the masterpiece of His love, Jesus Christ, because of your lack of fervor and piety and because of your resistance to His holy inspirations; but that all your confidence is in Mary, His faithful Spouse. Say as St. Bernard did: «In Mary is my chief confidence, in her the sole reason of my hope.» You may also ask the Holy Ghost to come again in Mary, whose heart is as pure and loving as ever. But insist, that unless He come to you, neither Jesus nor Mary will be formed in your soul, nor will they find a worthy dwelling in your heart.

III. AFTER COMMUNION

After Communion, while you keep your eyes closed and are inwardly recollected, introduce Jesus into the heart of Mary. There give Him to His Mother. She will receive Him lovingly, will enthrone Him honorably, will adore Him profoundly, will love Him perfectly, will embrace

Him tenderly and will render to Him in spirit and in truth many honors which we cannot render Him because of our ignorance.

Or else keep yourself profoundly humbled in your heart, in the presence of Jesus in Mary. Or you may sit like a slave at the gate of the King's palace, where He is speaking with the Queen; and while they talk to each other without any need of you, go in spirit up to Heaven and over all the earth, praying all creatures to adore, to love and thank Jesus and Mary in your stead.

Or else speak to Jesus yourself and ask of Him, in union with Mary, for the coming of His kingdom upon earth, through His holy Mother; or ask Him for the gift of divine wisdom, for divine love, for the pardon of your sins or some other grace, but always through Mary and in Mary, saying, while you think of yourself with contempt: «Lord, look not at my sins»; but let Thine eyes look at nothing in me except the virtues and merits of Mary. Then, remembering your sins, add: «I am Thy enemy; I have committed these sins.» Or you may say: «Deliver me from the evil man,» or else: «My Jesus, Thou must increase in my soul and I must decrease; Mary must increase in me, and I must be still less than I have been. O Jesus and Mary, increase in me and multiply yourselves in others around me.»

There are numberless other thoughts with

which the Holy Ghost will inspire you, if you are thoroughly recollected, mortified and faithful to the grand and sublime devotion which I have been teaching you. But always remember, that the more you leave Mary act in your Communion, the more Jesus will be glorified. Now, you will allow Mary to act for Jesus, and Jesus to act in Mary to the extent that you humble yourself profoundly and listen to them peacefully and attentively without troubling yourself about seeing, or tasting, or feeling; for the just man lives throughout on faith, but more particularly in Holy Communion, which is an act of faith.

Chapter IX

DEVELOPMENT OF THIS METHOD OF RECEIVING COMMUNION

Holy Communion is an extension of the mystery of the Incarnation. A child of Mary, then, should endeavor, when approaching Holy Communion, to acquire the dispositions and virtues of Our Lady on the day that she became the Mother of God. Nothing will enable us to imbibe this spirit more perfectly than the foregoing method of Blessed De Montfort, by which he obtained for himself so many spiritual favors. It is said that at the altar he looked like an angel, that during thanksgiving after Mass he was so rapt in the things of God that his mere countenance enkindled the fire of fervor and love in the hearts of those who beheld him; and the reason for this was that he practiced better than we the method which he has taught us of receiving fruitfully the Bread of the angels.

Be glad, therefore, to know this heavenly method which, as we have seen, consists in humbling yourself profoundly and in renouncing your own dispositions, however good they may appear to you, in order to borrow those of your heavenly Mother. Meditate seriously on each of the following points.

1° Humble yourself profoundly before God.

If at all times you should practice humility in order to merit God's graces, how much more then should you abase yourself when, before the majesty of God in Holy Communion, you realize your own nothingness and think of your many offenses! What does your faith tell you about Jesus Christ, Who is going to give Himself wholly to you? Is He not the unspotted Mirror of God's Majesty and the Image of His Goodness? Does He not surpass the sun and all the heavens in brightness and in lustre? Think of His humiliations and sufferings, of His omnipotent power, His unbounded love, and all His other perfections. Do they not require of you the most profound feelings of humility?

In order, then, to acquire the virtue of humility, consider Mary's perfect humility at the time when, by the great mercy of God, she became the Mother and the abode of Jesus. Humility was always her most cherished virtue. From the moment of her Immaculate Conception, she never ceased, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, to humble herself more and more before the majesty of God. Measure, if you can, the depth of her lowliness, when on the day of the Annunciation the angel came and revealed to her the wonderful mystery which was to be accomplished in her. But God alone can fathom the humility of His handmaid. «Compared with Mary's humility, not a soul in the world possesses

a single degree of this virtue,» says Venerable Paula of Foligno.

Understand, then, how much you ought to strive to be humble every time you intend to receive Holy Communion. You know the saying of St. Peter Damian: «It is as great a miracle to receive Jesus Christ at the altar rail, as it was to conceive Him.» If you place before your conscience the acts of ingratitude and the numberless sins of which you are guilty, and if, on the other hand, you consider the august majesty of your Lord and Savior, coming down to you so lowly and so lovingly, how can you not learn to humble yourself most profoundly?

2° Renounce your corrupt nature and your personal dispositions.

True humility gives us a better understanding of the goodness of God and the evil of sin, and thus it awakens in our soul a deeper sorrow and a more ardent love. Yet you must not trust too much to your natural feelings. The sins you have committed, although they be many in number and in kind, have not deadened in your soul the sting of self-love, which, unawares, poisons even the best of your actions. Hence the advice given by Blessed De Montfort, «to renounce your own dispositions, however good they may appear to you.» If you had the dispositions and the virtues of the saints and the angels, what would even they be in the presence of God's majesty?

While meditating on the virtues of Our Lady, you have seen how the saints were lost in admiration, when glorifying the wonders of grace which the Lord wrought in Mary from the moment of her Immaculate Conception. You have seen how she was enriched with incomparable gifts by Him Who chose her to be His Mother; how, in the Temple of Jerusalem, the flame of divine love set her heart on fire, when she prayed for the coming of the Messiah; and you know the saying of St. Bernardine of Sienna: «Won by Mary's love, the Son of God hastened the time of His Incarnation.» Yet the Church, always divinely inspired, places an infinite distance between Mary and her Son, when in an ecstasy of wonderment she exclaims: «When Thou didst take upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not disdain the Virgin's womb» (*Te Deum*). In Communion you receive the same Jesus. Alas, then, what are your dispositions and your preparation, however good they seem to be?

3° Renew your consecration by saying: «I am all thine and all that I have is thine.»

However, be not troubled. No doubt the fact of finding yourself so little and so imperfect before God's majesty might prompt you to withdraw from Jesus; but remember that Mary is your refuge and your help. Since you have given yourself entirely to her, has she not plighted herself to make up for all your deficiencies? Re-

new then your consecration to her by these words: «I am all thine, my dear Mother, and all that I have is thine.» Devout slave of Mary, how happy the soul that renounces its own feelings when approaching Jesus, Who is always meek and merciful! Oh! How He is ravished by such profound humility, for He always loves the humble. How eagerly Mary takes possession of that soul to cast it into the ocean of her graces, that there it may find true faith, purity and love, and be abundantly supplied with all it needs in the service of Jesus! When thus adorned with Mary's virtues, what reason has the soul to fear? What reason has it not to be filled with confidence? Enraptured at seeing that now it is made powerful, so to speak, even with God, that soul may exclaim with a devout servant of Mary: «O Mary, my princess! O Immaculate Mother of Jesus! Armed as I am, not with my own merits but with thine, I desire to wrestle with the God-Man.»

4° Beseech your good Mother to lend you her own heart and dispositions to receive her Divine Son.

If you faithfully practice this devotion, it will grant you profound peace even in the most dreary aridities of the spiritual life. Mary does not only impart her virtues to us, when our soul has become dear to her, but she places her own heart at our disposal, in order that her adorable

Jesus may receive and dwell again in that pure heart of hers. That accounts for the wonderful graces which those saints received who were the most devoted to her. With childlike confidence, then, beseech this tender Mother, at least by an interior supplication, to come to you in order to receive Jesus and to honor Him on your behalf, and soon you will learn much more by your own experience than by the teaching of others.

Besides your own spiritual interest, the honor and glory of Mary and her Divine Son are here concerned. Perhaps you are frightened when you think that, after so many Communions, you are still full of imperfections and possess none of the virtues which Mary loves to find in her true children. Alas! What use have you made thus far of the many treasures received? What have you done with Jesus Himself? Now what is the cause of such disappointing results? In spite of the burning fire close to your heart, it has not been inflamed, and perhaps is still as cold as the stable in which the Divine Child was born. Does the fault lie with Jesus, Who comes to you so lovingly, and wishes to bestow on you His heavenly riches?

Realize, dear child of Mary, that one of the causes of so much coldness on your part is that you forget your spiritual Mother too much. You do not bear her in mind sufficiently when you partake of the Holy Eucharist, that precious gift

of her heart. Recall to mind what happened at the marriage-feast of Cana to which Mary was invited, and in which she took part with her Son. There her tender heart was drawn by charity; she spoke in earnest supplication to Jesus and she obtained from Him the miracle of water being changed into wine. Do you not think that, if you entreat her, the love she has for you will induce her to do even greater things for your soul? What does a loving mother not contrive in order to enrich her child? Can there be a more propitious moment for Mary to do this for us than when Jesus is dwelling within us?

Moreover, Mary's interest as well as the glory of her Son require that you should not forget her here. As the Mother of the universal Church, how many favors has she not to solicit? Now, by giving her your Communion, you place in her hands the very treasures of Heaven. She herself has so many thanks to offer to the Blessed Trinity for all the graces which have been bestowed upon her. Where will she find more perfect homage than in the Heart of Jesus dwelling in you after Communion? Oh, blessed is the soul that calls upon Mary, and obtains her heart as a place where Jesus may take His repose in spirit and in truth. What a consolation for Him to find in every soul consecrated to Mary a true compensation for so much abuse and indifference on the part of others! One day Our Lord gave the following advice to St. Mechtilde: «My daughter,

if thou wouldst please Me, offer unto Me the purest of all hearts, the most humble and most loving of all hearts, the heart of my Mother.» The joy He finds in His Mother's heart is so great that He implores Mary to procure that joy for Him from those souls He has especially confided to her. Is that not the mystical sense of the words which we read in the Canticle of Canticles? «Arise, make haste, my beloved, and come! For the winter is now passed, the flowers have appeared in the land. Arise, my beautiful one, show me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet and thy face comely.»

Have you not found sufficient cause in what has been said for adopting eagerly this marvelous practice revealed to Blessed De Montfort, and which has become a fruitful source of grace to so many souls? Seek Our Lady more zealously than heretofore. Loving Mother that she is, she will make you the friend of Jesus, she will enrich you with her own dispositions when you receive Him. What peace and joy will be yours in going to Holy Communion, while you can repeat with the spouse of the Canticle: «Angels of the heavenly Jerusalem, when you consider my sins and imperfections, I am black, it is true; but I am beautiful in the apparel of the virtues and the dispositions of my Mother's heart.»

* * *

The following acts will help you to put this method into practice.

I. BEFORE COMMUNION

O wonder of love! At the word of the priest, Jesus, the innocent Lamb of God, the adorable Son of Mary, has left His throne in Heaven to come and give Himself to me! To my eyes enlightened by faith there appear thousands of angels prostrate in lowly adoration before His majesty. After a few moments they will turn towards me to adore Jesus within my heart.

Sweet Savior of my soul, how is it that Thou shouldst think of giving Thyself to such a low and miserable creature as I? Thou art all, I am nothing; Thou art rich, I am poor; Thou art holiness itself, I am a sinful soul; Thou art kind, meek and loving; I find in myself nothing but coldness, harshness and wickedness. What has my life been so far? What return have I made for Thy manifold gifts? Alas, I have repaid Thee only with indifference, if not with ingratitude. Sin has perverted me and has corrupted all that is in me.

O my God! What an abyss of misery and corruption my poor heart and my whole life are! How utterly unable I am to prepare my soul as a dwelling-place for Thee. Alas, I am not and I cannot be of myself as humble, as confident, as burning with holy desires, as full of gratitude and affection for Thee, as Thou hast a right to expect from me. My dispositions are so imperfect and

so unworthy of Thee that they can only keep Thee aloof from my soul.

I pray Thee, however, O most merciful Jesus, do not abandon me; for I now renounce myself and all the evil that is in me, and I fly to Mary, whom Thou lovest and shalt love forever. Thy own Mother, whom Thou hast given me as my Mother, is going to receive Thee in my heart, but in a manner worthy of Thee.

Holy Mary, Sovereign Queen of my heart, from the depth of my soul I renew the consecration of myself to thee, with all that I have and all that I am. Yes, I am all thine; and art thou not all mine? Has Jesus not told thee to be my Mother, and have I not chosen thee for my all? Behold me then, for I am going to be the sanctuary of Jesus. How little suited my soul is to be the abode of the King of Heaven. How can I take Him into my heart, sullied as it is, inconstant in its love for Him, capable of deserting Him, nay, even of robbing Him of His glory?

Thou, O most amiable Mother, must come to receive Jesus and be His abode, for in thee He takes His great delight. Wherever thou art, Jesus is well pleased, even though it be the stable of Bethlehem. Although my soul be even more wretched than that dark and lonely stable, He will be wonderfully pleased in it, if He be there in the company of His well-beloved Mother. Oh then, come to me, and substitute thy heart—pure, holy and burning with love—for my cold

and guilty heart. Adorn me with thy virtues and merits, so that Jesus may find in my soul the same perfect dispositions which He found in thy soul at the moment of the Incarnation and after the Ascension when thou didst receive Him in Holy Communion. What satisfaction it will be for Him to dwell again in thee, surrounded by the lilies of thy virginal purity! How worthily He will be honored and glorified by the humble adoration and sublime praise, which thou alone knowest how to render unto Him. Moreover, my dearest Mother, what an honor it will be for thy child to give thee Jesus, to present thee with the same gift which thou didst receive from God the Father on the day of the Incarnation. I have given thee all that I have and all that I am, yet that is but little. Would that I had all the hearts and souls of men to give unto thee! But I have much more. The King of Heaven and earth is mine. I will offer Him to thee. In Him and through Him, I can honor, praise and thank thee worthily for all the graces thou hast obtained for me and for all the mercies thou hast shown me. Come then to me, O Mother most sweet and full of compassion. Come into my heart, and Jesus, finding thee there, will gladly take His rest in it; He will love thee in me.

II. AT COMMUNION

While you keep recollected in Mary, with whose virtues you are now adorned, speak con-

fidently to the Three Persons of the adorable Trinity and say:

To God the Father.—Is it possible, O my God, that at this moment Thou shouldst be willing to work in me the same wonder which Thou hast wrought in Mary? Can it be that Thou dost permit Thy Divine Son, Who is equal to Thee in every perfection, to come and unite Himself most intimately with my soul? Who am I, my God, that I should dare to approach Thy well-beloved Son? I, so ungrateful for Thy benefits and often so deeply sunk in thoughts contrary to Thy love and glory. I will rise, however, and go unto Thee, my God, to receive my Jesus; for behold, Mary, Thy well-beloved Daughter, who has delighted Thee by her virtues, is willing to receive Him in me and to render unto Him the acts of thanksgiving and love of which I am incapable. I rely upon her humility, her purity, her love, upon all her virtues; she is all my hope with Thee. Do not look upon me then, O Lord, but cast Thine eyes upon her who still owns herself to be Thy most humble handmaid.

To God the Son.—Eternal Wisdom, Splendor of the Father, purest Light of His Light, Word of God through Whom all things have been made! Who am I, that Thou shouldst deign to come down into my soul! As I have so disregarded Thy love for me, I am ready to say with Peter, now that I am before Thy adorable majesty: «Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinner.»

But no, O my sweet Savior, do not go away; rather come to me, for behold, here is thy Mother. She has adorned my soul with her virtues and merits. Arise, O Lord, come and dwell in Thy house, in the heart of Mary, Thy Paradise of pleasure, the sacred Ark of sanctification for the souls of men. There, O Lord, I will place Thee; there I will contemplate Thee, my well-beloved Brother, in the arms of my Mother; there Thou shalt teach me, and I shall present unto Thee the wine of pure love and the flowers of the most sublime virtues.

To God the Holy Ghost.—O Holy Spirit, God of Love, Power of the Most High! I do not deserve to receive my Savior, the Masterpiece of Thy infinite charity, for whose sake Thou didst conceive Mary all pure and didst endow her with the most admirable virtues. Ah! If on the day Thou didst overshadow her, this holy Virgin did shine with the full lustre of sanctity, must I not fear and tremble when I approach the same Jesus, as I have so often resisted Thy holy grace, and as my life has been so indolent and so guilty? But behold Mary, Thy faithful spouse; in her and by her, Thou still wishest to form Jesus in our souls, and I have placed all my confidence in her. She is with me and she is going to receive the Masterpiece of Thy love. Holy Spirit, look not upon my sins, but upon the virtues of Mary. Thou, Spirit of love, who goest wherever Thou findest this heavenly Virgin, come, I implore Thee,

into the heart of thy celestial spouse. Her heart is still as pure, burning with love, and worthy of Thee, as it was on the day that Jesus, by Thy power, became man in her chaste womb. Come, O sanctifying Spirit, come to establish the kingdom of Mary in my soul, and through her, form Jesus in me.

III. AFTER COMMUNION

«After Communion while you are interiorly recollected, introduce Jesus into the heart of Mary. There give Him to His Mother. She will receive Him lovingly, will adore Him profoundly and will render to Him in spirit and in truth many honors which we cannot render Him because of our deep ignorance.» (Blessed De Montfort.)

What a wonderful sight does faith disclose to my eyes! Adoring angels are lying prostrate on the ground before me. I have become the tabernacle of the God Whom they adore. O Jesus, Incarnate Wisdom, my heart is now a throne where all Heaven comes to pay homage to Thee. But Thou knowest, O King of the angels, that my heart is utterly unworthy of Thee, because of its weakness, its indolence, its evil inclinations, its earthly affections. I should not dare ask Thee to enter into me, had I not a more suitable place to offer Thee. Behold, I present to Thee the heart of Mary which is always ready to receive

Thee, which is the golden throne of Thy love, the place of Thy true delight. Deign to enter, divine Jesus, for as Thou givest Thyself unto me, I will thus dispose of Thee. I give Thee to Mary for Thy own greater glory, but also to thank my good Mother for the favors she has lavished upon me, and to do her as much honor as I am able. Deign then, O good Master, to receive here the adorations of Mary and the homage of Thy saints and angels. For my part, I can now only humble myself at the thought of my infidelities and blush at my utter worthlessness.

* * *

1. THANKSGIVING OF CONTEMPLATION

«Keep yourself profoundly humbled in your heart, in the presence of Jesus in Mary.» (Blessed De Montfort.)

Escorted by the highest princes of her court, the Queen of Heaven comes to meet my Jesus. Inflamed with the fire of divine love, she embraces in unutterable ecstasy this Son Who is her God and Whom she adores. Her maternal heart opens itself, Jesus enters. There is His throne. What a heaven in the heart of Mary! A heaven of incomparable beauty and brightness, adorned with more virtues, enriched with more merits than all the martyrs and all the saints together have ever acquired. How lovely that

throne of Jesus! And how well pleased He is to be seated upon it.

But how many marvels of love remain hidden to me in this mysterious meeting! How many tokens of worship are offered to my Jesus, which I, in my blindness and ignorance, do not perceive!

Alas, what can I do? Nothing, but adore in silence and let Mary act as she sees fit. My feeble voice would only disturb this heavenly chorus inspired by divine love. My praise is to keep silent, to be thankful and to acknowledge my nothingness.

As I can do nothing, O my dear and blessed Mother, I leave everything in thy hands. I have given thee my Jesus, now hearken only to thy love for Him and for me. Thou knowest what I am and what I need. Thou art aware of all that I owe to thy Divine Son. Praise Him, adore and thank Him for me. Thou whom Jesus always hears, do thou ask for me all the graces I need in order to become thy true child. I also beseech thee to recommend to Him the needs of the Church and her visible head; the needs of my parents and of all the persons who are entitled to my gratitude, above all, of those who are most devoted to thee, O Mary; finally, lay before Him the needs of the souls in Purgatory and of all the persons who labor and suffer here below. I will say no more, my good Mother, but leave all things to thy tender care.

Resolution. In union with Mary call frequently to mind the happiness of this Communion; for example, each time you hear the clock strike the hour. Do not leave the church without reciting the *Magnificat*, page 218.

2. THANKSGIVING OF PRAISE

«Go in spirit up to Heaven and all over the earth praying all creatures to adore, to love and thank Jesus and Mary in your stead.» (Blessed De Montfort.)

Jesus and Mary are now conversing heart to heart in my soul, as they formerly conversed together in their humble home at Nazareth. They speak of the elect, of the hearts of men that are inflamed with the love of God, of the graces and gifts by which they are to sustain and to reward the souls that pass through the trials of this life. They speak of me also and of the needs of my soul.

But what am I doing here? What need have they of me? How can I praise, love and bless as I ought? Who will enable me to wing my flight to Heaven and to travel all over the earth? I will call together all the spirits and all the hearts of Heaven and earth to sing in chorus their praises and thanks. Heaven of heavens, ye exalted cherubim and seraphim, ye thrones, virtues, principalities, dominations and powers, ye faithful angels and bright archangels, come down! Behold

your King and your Queen! Make haste to come, and together let us fall down in adoration. O blessed spirits of Heaven and all ye elect of the earth, come and adore with us. Ye little children, who are still robed with innocence and purity, come, come, rejoice and sing with us the hymn of love and thanksgiving: «Come, let us exult in the Lord, let us rejoice in God.»

Ah! Could my voice but reach all souls that are capable of loving! Could I but inflame them with the fire of the seraphim and inspire them with the adoration and praise which I owe to my God! Would that it were given me to endow with reason all living creatures and to impart feeling to every lifeless thing, and I would call upon the whole creation to praise, adore, bless and thank for me the Savior of my soul and the Mother of fair love. All ye creatures of my God that owe your existence to an act of His infinite goodness as I do, come and praise Jesus and Mary, each in your own way. Let the whole creation chant in solemn chorus from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, for it is meet to praise and bless the Lord Who rules the nations and gives the heavens their lustre. Who is exalted like Him and yet who knows, as He does, how to look down from His infinite height upon the lowly and the poor so lovingly and sweetly as to raise them from the dust and to place them among the princes of His kingdom?

Resolution. Before leaving, offer in thanks-

giving for the graces received all the Masses that are to be celebrated to-day. During the course of the day, thank Jesus in Mary for all the favors which have been lavished upon you since your childhood, and accomplish all your actions as perfectly as possible. Say the *Magnificat*, page 218.

3. THANKSGIVING OF ZEAL

«God is not loved because He is not known. Ask of Jesus, in union with Mary, the coming of His kingdom upon earth, through His holy Mother.» (Blessed De Montfort.)

Why, O most loving Jesus, art Thou not better known? Why art Thou not adored and loved by all men? Alas, many peoples are still living in ignorance of Thy laws and of Thy love. My God, my God! Let Thy kingdom come! In order to hasten its coming, call unto Thyself more apostles. Enkindle in their heart the fire which Thou hast cast upon the earth. Give them an eloquence and wisdom which even the most obdurate hearts shall not be able to resist. Taken up by Thy Spirit, let them fly beyond the seas; let their voice be heard in every place that is inhabited. Let the light of Thy grace shine in the eyes of those who are still living in darkness. Awaken, O Lord, to the life of Thy love those souls that are slumbering in the shadow of death. Has Thy heavenly Father not given Thee all nations for Thine inheritance? Has He not given Thee power

over all the nations and all the kings of this world? Hast Thou not bought the whole world with Thy Precious Blood? Why then, O Lord, dost Thou delay the manifestation of Thy Name? I beg and beseech Thee, through Mary Thy Mother, establish Thy kingdom everywhere and over all!

And Thy holy Name, O Lord, how is it honored and hallowed even by those to whom it is known? Ah, I know that it is reviled and blasphemed. When wilt Thou put an end to these offences against Thee? When will Thy mercy appeal to all hearts? Is the infinite treasure of Thy grace exhausted? But I understand. Thou desirest that Thy brethren should send up to Thee more ardent and more persevering supplications, in order that all men may help to establish Thy kingdom.

Let me then, my divine Jesus, beseech Thee with Thy saints, to send forth the salutary fire which is to inflame so gently the hearts of all men: and as in these days Thy kingdom is to be extended principally through Mary, give to Thy children, above all to those who love Thee most, a more intimate and a more profound knowledge of Thy holy Mother and of the marvellous relations which exist between Thee and her. Allow me to say to Thee, O Lord, as Blessed De Montfort, one of Thy most zealous missionaries, said: «Ah, when will the happy time come when Thy holy Mother will be established the Queen of all

hearts, in order that she may subject them fully to Thine empire? When will the age of Mary come when all souls losing themselves in her interior will become living copies of this loving Queen and thus love and glorify Thee more perfectly?» Nothing is impossible to Thee, O Lord Jesus; hear then my prayer and grant that Thy holy Mother be better known and more loved henceforth.

Resolution. Recollect yourself when you hear the clock strike, or at least sometimes during the day, in order to adore, with Mary, Jesus living in your soul. Offer all your actions of the day to obtain the glorious reign of Mary in the hearts of men. For that intention perform an act of mortification. *Magnificat*, p. 218.

4. THANKSGIVING OF REPARATION

«Ask of Jesus, in union with Mary . . . the pardon of your sins.» (Blessed De Montfort.)

O my God, who art infinitely holy and Who canst not bear the sight of iniquity, but Who at the same time art infinitely good and always ready to grant pardon to repentant sinners, I adore Thee with Thine angels in the heart of Mary. Thy Apostle tells me «to go with confidence to Thy throne of grace, that I may obtain the mercy which I need.» Here then am I, a poor sinner, prostrate at Mary's feet. She is truly the throne of Thine infinite mercy, upon

which Thou art seated to reconcile God with man, to grant pardon to sinners, to draw all men to Thyself by the tenderness and kindness of this heavenly Mother.

Thou hast created me for Thee alone, O my God. In serving Thee I should find all my happiness, but I have rebelled against Thee. How many sins have I not committed by every faculty of my mind, by every sense of my body? How often have I not stifled my conscience, rejected Thy grace and been blind to Thine interior light? Have I not gone so far even as to receive Thy sacraments unworthily? O good Jesus, deliver me from myself; save me from my corrupted nature whose wicked solicitations give me no rest. O merciful God, remember no more those sad days of my life, the mere recollection of which I loathe; look no longer on the sins I have heaped up during those days, but behold only the precious merits of Mary in me. To her I have given and consecrated myself entirely, and she willingly unites with me to implore Thy divine mercy for me. In Mary and through her, I wish to make reparation to Thee for all my past life: for all the thoughts of my mind contrary to the infinite purity and the unlimited charity of Thy Divine Spirit; for all the affections of my heart opposed to the feelings of love, of submission and abandonment of Thy Divine Heart; for the weakness of my soul in making sacrifices and accepting humiliations, not-

withstanding the examples of generosity and courage which Thou hast given me. My God, my God! Change my heart. Grant me such lively contrition and ardent love as caused Thee to say of Mary Magdalen, «Many sins are forgiven her because she has loved much.» Create in me a new heart, willing to make all the sacrifices which the expiation of my numberless sins demands and Thy love requires. O my Savior, I feel that to-day Thou hast given me the grace to understand that even though I have had the great happiness of being Thy Mother's slave of love, I have been wanting in generosity in Thy service. Alas, how often have I spared myself! How often have I sought only self! But now I surrender to Thy justice. Cut and rend this heart which has been so often disloyal to Thee. Only grant me, O Lord, that I may love Thee, that through Mary I may possess Thee forever in Thy heavenly kingdom.

Resolution. Offer all the sufferings and good works of this day in reparation for the offences committed against Jesus and Mary. *Magnificat*, page 218.

Chapter X

VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Jesus in the tabernacle is the gift of Mary. When He shows us His Heart burning with love for us, He seems to say: «My delight is to be with you!» Shall it not be our delight, then, to be with Jesus? Can we refuse to go and spend a short time every day in His presence, if it be but a quarter of an hour, to beg of Him the graces we need and to receive from Him the joy He imparts? Were it but possible for us to dwell always at the foot of the altar! It is so delightful to be with Jesus, above all when Mary is at our side!

Let us not forget that here again Our Lady must be our supplement, our heart and our soul. However mercifully inclined towards us our dear Savior is, He wishes that we should always go to Him through Our Lady, who is His throne, His altar of repose, His temple. See what a beautiful model we have in our beloved Queen. Mary was the first to adore Jesus. Who can tell us what her devotion, her zeal and her piety were like when she adored the God-Man in her chaste womb, the first tabernacle in which Our Lord dwelt here on earth. Later on at Bethlehem, in Egypt, at Nazareth and in all the mysteries of

the life and death of her Divine Son, Mary's life was a continuous act of adoration.

After the Ascension Jesus still remained under the eucharistic veil. How Mary loved to contemplate her Divine Son in the Sacrament of the altar! Who can conceive the feelings this contemplation awakened in Mary's heart; the acts of reparation, of praise, of thanksgiving which went forth from her heart that is so pure, so loving, so generous?

When adoring Jesus in the name of the Church, Mary prayed for all the ages. She adored, thanked and petitioned Him for us, because all those who were redeemed by the Precious Blood of her Son were in her heart and their needs became the object of her most ardent supplications. «She implored God's mercy even for the greatest sinners and the most wicked souls,» says the renowned Gerson.

Gladly, then, unite your soul with the dispositions of Mary's Immaculate Heart and always remember that whatever honor you give to Jesus, you render also to Our Lady. What a source of blessings for your soul, if you will avail yourself of this precious treasure!

At the end of your visit to the Blessed Sacrament make a spiritual Communion. This is an act greatly recommended by the saints. Fancy to yourself that Our Lady grants you the same favor which she bestowed upon St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi and St. Stanislaus Kostka and she

herself gives you the Child Jesus. If you have time, recite an act of faith, of love, of contrition and desire, as before sacramental Communion. Or else say the prayer: *O Jesus, living in Mary*, page 239.

Before you leave the church, beg Jesus and Mary to give you their blessing: «O sweet Jesus, O dearest Mother, I will not go until you give me your blessing!»

Chapter XI

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

IMPORTANCE

«Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord?» asks the Prophet; that is to say, who shall come to a perfect union with her whom the Holy Ghost calls the «Mountain of God,» whereon Jesus always dwells and teaches the meaning of the eight Beatitudes; and the Prophet answers: «The innocent in hand and clean of heart.» Servant of Mary, it is especially for you that those words are written. Never will you truly imitate the virtues of your dear Mother, never will you draw her into your soul, wherein she wishes to rule as a Queen, unless you abhor sin and have a great desire to become perfect. In order to succeed in the work of perfection you must be faithful every day to the examination of conscience. The importance of this exercise is such that St. Ignatius does not hesitate to say that it is more necessary even than daily meditation, for it causes the soul to advance more rapidly in the service of God and consequently in its union with Mary.

St. Ephrem says, «Just as traders keep accounts every day of their gains and losses, and try to repair the latter by improving the former, so must we keep an account every day of what

we have gained or lost in the holy business of perfecting and saving our soul, in order to retrieve, at the first opportunity, the losses we may have sustained, lest they accumulate and absorb all our assets.»

GENERAL EXAMINATION

Before we speak of the particular examen, of which we are to treat further on, let us say a word concerning the general examination of conscience, which, as a rule, forms part of evening prayers. It consists, as you may know already, in examining ourselves every day in order to find out the sins which we have committed against God, our neighbor and ourselves, in thought, word, deed and omission. If you would please your heavenly Queen, resolve once for all to make this general examination seriously and be sure to renew this resolution during your monthly retreat.

To make it well, it is sufficient that in union with Our Lady you place yourself in the presence of God and while casting an interior glance over the actions of the day, you recall to mind the sins and imperfections of which you are guilty. Examine yourself more particularly on the manner in which you have performed your actions in union with Mary, according to the resolution you have made in regard to this point.

After this short review of your failings and sins, awaken sincere contrition in your heart.

Being the privileged servant of Mary, you ought to be more sorry for even the slightest faults than less fervent souls generally are for their more serious sins. Deplore bitterly your infidelities while you think of the sorrows of Jesus and Mary. Make an act of contrition and think that Jesus Christ blesses and absolves you through the hands of His most holy Mother. This thought will be a true comfort to your heart.

Chapter XII

THE PARTICULAR EXAMEN

If you have at heart the perfection of your soul, you will not be satisfied with a daily general examination of conscience, but, like the saints, you will resolve frequently to examine yourself in a particular manner, either on your predominant fault or on a virtue which you wish to acquire. As you ardently desire to establish the reign of Mary in your soul and have determined to do all your actions in union with her, it is highly important for you that you should often examine yourself on this point, so as to find out whether you are progressing in your life of union with your heavenly Mother.

We now wish to give you a method of particular examen on the ordinary actions of the day in the spirit of this life of union with Mary. Try as much as you are able to follow this method, especially on days that you have the time, and more particularly on the day of your monthly retreat. To practice this method more easily, take a few minutes every day, for example, at Mass, or during your visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or at the general examination, to see whether you have adopted the dispositions of Our Lady in performing the actions of the day. It will be well also to review from time to time

your good resolutions of the morning and to beg pardon for your failings. You may do this when you hear the clock strike.

Begin by penetrating yourself earnestly with the truth that you are in the presence of God. Think also of your heavenly Mother. See her seated in glory next to the resplendent throne of Jesus. Thank them both for the priceless favor which you have received in learning to know this true devotion to Our Lady and ask them for the interior light which you need to know your failings. Then examine yourself on your duties to God, to your neighbor and to yourself.

I. DUTIES TO GOD

1° When you awaken in the morning, do you think of greeting Our Lady and of renewing your consecration to her by saying: «I am all thine, my dear Mother, and all that I have is thine»? Do you endeavor to adopt the dispositions of her Immaculate Heart when she performed this first act of the day?

Do you rise promptly? While dressing, do you keep your mind busy with holy thoughts relating to the subject of your meditation? How negligently, perhaps, do you perform this first action of the day!

2° How do you generally say your prayers and make your meditation? Do you try to have such dispositions as Mary had when she prayed and

meditated? Have you prepared your meditation on the previous night? When you are at meditation, do you go to your heavenly Mother with the desire to obtain grace? What efforts do you make to avoid distractions? At the end of meditation, do you always make a good resolution, especially one that tends towards keeping you united with Our Lady during the day? Do you think of recalling to mind your resolution at the particular examen, at the general examination of conscience and during your visit to the Blessed Sacrament?

3° With what dispositions do you hear Mass? Do you think of Our Lady being present at the Sacrifice of Calvary? How many holy affections that thought would produce in your heart; what a horror for sin it would give you; how it would cause you to love Jesus crucified and to mortify yourself in order that, dying to self, you may live in God! After Mass, are you animated with the feelings that were so deeply graven on the Immaculate Heart of Mary?

4° When you have the happiness of going to Communion, do you think of it on the previous day? What a priceless gift is this Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist! It is Jesus Himself, the Eternal Wisdom, with all His glory, His riches, His love and His immense desire to possess you. What is your preparation for this most holy act of receiving Communion? Do you thirst for the

riches with which Our Lady wishes to load your soul by giving you her Divine Son? Do you earnestly try to make your own the dispositions which animated Mary on the day of the Annunciation, or when, after the Ascension of Our Lord, she received Him in Holy Communion from the hands of St. John. Oh, how far you still are from having the dispositions of your Mother's heart! Where is your humility, your purity, your love?

In your thanksgiving, do you not hinder the plans of Jesus' love by the obstacle of secret affections for creatures? Do you keep yourself in sentiments of humility and abjection, in order that Mary may act in your soul and that she may glorify Our Lord more perfectly?

5° How do you say the Rosary, by which so many graces are drawn upon the souls of those who love to seek Mary and to greet her?

Have you always said with attention the prayers that precede and follow your religious exercises and the taking of your meals?

Then there are the recitation of the *Little Office of the Blessed Virgin*, the *Angelus*, spiritual reading and the particular examen. What preparation do you make for each one of these devotional exercises in which Mary is lavish of her gifts to her true children? What thoughts habitually occupy your mind during these exercises, and what zeal do you evince for performing them in union with Mary?

II. DUTIES TO YOUR NEIGHBOR

With regard to your parents, your superiors, your neighbor in general, have you tried to practice the virtues which Mary practiced in each of her duties?

1° Do you obey your parents and superiors, after the example of the Virgin Mary, joyfully, promptly and in a spirit of faith?

2° With regard to your neighbor in general are you always gentle, considerate, kind and obliging? Have you been on your guard against irritability, detraction, calumny and abusive language? How much, perhaps, have you not to reproach yourself with failings on these different points? Do you hold in abhorrence all such company as may scandalize your neighbor, divide your heart and grieve your Mother in Heaven?

III. DUTIES OF YOUR STATE IN LIFE

How do you accomplish them? Do you not neglect them? Do you not evade them or lay them upon others? Do you fulfill them with the intention of pleasing Mary?

IV. CONCERN FOR YOUR PERFECTION

1° You are in duty bound to advance in perfection and to combat your predominant fault. What progress have you made? What efforts

have you made to acquire the virtues of purity, humility, obedience and charity? Are you combating the particular waywardness of your temperament?

2° Do you practice mortification in eating and drinking? When you are in company or at recreation, do you avoid irritating others by unkind words or rude manners? Do you observe the rules of Christian modesty?

3° Throughout your daily life, do you pay special attention to recollection and intimate union with Our Lord and His holy Mother? Do you carefully cultivate the Tree of Life which the Holy Ghost has planted in your soul and which is Mary? Do you unceasingly examine and protect this Tree which must produce in you the fruit of life? Do you endeavor to make this your principal occupation, as Blessed De Montfort counsels? That is the great means of perfection.

V. CONTRITION

In order to obtain the grace of contrition, consider the following points:

1° Think of all the spiritual losses you sustain by your want of zeal in conforming yourself to the dispositions of your heavenly Mother. Think of the wonderful effects of interior union with Mary: profound humility, lively faith, boundless confidence, ardent love for Jesus and His

holy Mother. See, then, what treasures your tepidity causes you to lose and what reason it gives you for shedding tears of sorrow!

2° To the very smallest degree of grace in this life, corresponds a degree of glory in the next so high and so enviable that the damned would gladly suffer the most cruel torments in order to possess it. Yet how little do you value the divine grace which is given you so abundantly! Do you realize that to neglect the grace of Jesus Christ is to despise His most Precious Blood?

3° What punishments do you not bring upon yourself in this life as well as in the next by your sinful carelessness? How many sorrows has your wonted coldness not brought upon Jesus and Mary?

If you were to take the habit of earnestly considering one or two of these motives for contrition, you would, no doubt, arouse in your heart feelings of sorrow for having been so lukewarm, and also a desire to do penance. Think of the penance the saints have done for their slightest failings.

VI. FIRM PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

Meditate earnestly on the following words, which ought to be deeply engraved on the heart of all who are called to lead a holy life: «According as our resolution is, will the progress of our

advancement be, and he hath need of much diligence who would advance much» (*Imit.*, Book I, chap. xix, 2). «There is one thing which keeps many back from spiritual progress and fervent amendment of life, and that is the apprehension of difficulty or the labor which they must go through in the conflict. And they indeed advance most in virtue, who strive manfully to overcome those things which they find more troublesome or contrary to them» (*Imit.*, Book I, chap. xxv, 3). «The greater violence thou offerest to thyself, the greater progress thou wilt make» (*Imit.*, Book I, chap. xxv, 11).

In all earnestness, therefore, study yourself and find out what is the hindrance to your advancement in your life of union with Mary. Be generous, yet do not give way to discouragement if you do not perceive any noticeable progress. Be not disheartened by the difficulties you meet, though great and numerous they be. Our Lady will help you to overcome them. Say, like St. John Berchmans, «I shall not rest, until I have found Mary,» and make the firm resolution to serve her more zealously.

To conclude your particular examen, say a prayer to Our Lady and ask her for her blessing. Oh, what a happy change will soon take place in you if you remain faithful to this exercise! What pure and holy joy will Mary pour into your heart! In spite of your relapses, you can repeat, full of confidence, the words of one of Mary's

most beloved children: «Having placed my confidence in thee, O my heavenly Mother, I shall be saved; living under thy protection, I shall fear nothing; made strong by thine assistance, I shall give battle to my enemies and put them to flight. Devotion to thee, O Mary, is an arm of salvation which God gives to those whom it is His will to save» (St. John Damascene).

Chapter XIII

CONFESSION

It is through Our Lady, who is called the “universal sacrament of grace,” that we receive all gifts of Heaven and consequently all the sacraments of the Church. «It is through thee, O Mary,» says St. Cyril of Alexandria, «that the faithful receive Baptism, and through thee that we are called to Penance.» Every time, then, that we prepare to go to confession, we must have recourse to Mary, who most generously distributes God’s grace.

It is true that Jesus Christ alone is the source of our spiritual life. He alone has redeemed us from hell and merited the forgiveness of our sins by His precious death. But Mary, by the will of God the Father, was associated with Christ as the Co-Redeemer of our souls and thus she has contributed to our spiritual regeneration. When she offered her Son for us on Calvary, she offered herself with Him as a victim for our salvation; and because of her own sorrows and humiliations, she is the restorer of the human race, the true Mother of the living. If it was necessary, in order to obtain the pardon of our sins, that Jesus Christ should know them all in detail, that He should confess and detest them all in the presence of His heavenly Father; if He had to surrender to divine justice, in order to suffer in His own

person the punishments due to us, Mary also, in order to conform herself to the feelings of Jesus' Heart, saw the sins of our whole life, and in her exceedingly great charity for us, she took them upon herself before God; she wept for them and detested them as if she had been so unfortunate as to commit them all, even the most shameful ones. Who will ever comprehend the full measure of the sorrow that overwhelmed Mary's heart? If some of the saints, in their burning love for God, have shed torrents of tears and practiced most austere mortifications as penance for trifling offences, how then could our mind form a true conception of the grief and sorrow which our sins have caused Mary, the purest and holiest of creatures, whose mind understood better the greatness of God and whose heart loved Him more than all the angels and saints? You, who until this day have grieved but little for your many offences, begin to realize that all the wicked sins of your life were laid upon the Immaculate Virgin, that she repented for them with that excessive grief which corresponds to the intensity of her incomparable love. Therefore, this sorrow of Mary was so acceptable to God and so efficacious, that by it this good Mother obtained for us inexhaustible treasures with which she enriches our soul. Every time that we receive the Sacrament of Penance, the priest applies to our soul not only the merits of Jesus Christ, but those also which the Blessed Virgin Mary ac-

quired for us. The purpose of that application is to obtain the pardon of our sins, to increase grace in our souls and to entitle us anew to the inheritance of Heaven. What thanks, then, do you not owe to the glorious Queen of All Hearts for the tender love she showed you when, with her Son, she sacrificed herself for you who were her enemy? The best token of gratitude you can give her is your faithful response to the great desire she has to save your soul, and moreover, to receive every week or two the salutary Sacrament of Penance.

Every time that you intend to approach the sacred tribunal of Penance, think of the unspeakable sorrows which the sight of your sins caused Mary's heart. Place yourself with her at the foot of the cross, and full of confidence, beg her to let you share her feelings of humility, of sorrow and of abandonment to divine justice, to which she surrendered herself for your sake.

PRAYER BEFORE CONFESSION

O most merciful Mother Mary, thou hast truly shared in the Passion of thy Divine Son, in order to save my soul; thou hast known all the sins of my life and hast wept for them all, even the most hidden and the most shameful, and by thine unutterable sorrow thou hast offered satisfaction to the divine justice for all my offences! My heart at this moment is filled with gratitude and with sorrow for my sins! I beseech

thee, O Mother, by the charity which caused thee to suffer so much for me, an unworthy and faithless creature, I beseech thee to cast thine eyes of mercy upon me and to let me share thy clear knowledge of my sins, and the horror thou didst have for them. Obtain for me the grace to confess them all with a humble and contrite heart at the feet of the priest. Place on the lips of my confessor words that may change my sinful heart.

O most powerful Mother of Jesus, through the sacred wounds inflicted upon the Body of thy Divine Son and through the sufferings which thou has endured for me, deliver me from all evil. Sin, alas, has done many grievous injuries to my soul, to my mind, my memory, my imagination, my will. Through the ministry of the priest, wash me in the Blood of my Jesus, so that I may be purer and more worthy of being united with thine Immaculate Heart, and that thus I may be more faithful in the service of thy Son.¹

PRAYER AFTER CONFESSION

O my soul (in union with thy heavenly Mother), bless the Lord, and let all that is within thee praise His holy Name.

¹ This calls for a careful examination of your conscience and compunction of heart. Our confession must be complete, wholly sincere and full of confidence in the mercy of the Virgin and her Divine Son.

To conceal or dissimulate, as well as to despair, is sinful and unworthy of a Christian. But for a child of Mary it is monstrous.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He hath done for thee.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thy diseases.

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion.

The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy.

He hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us.

As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him.

For He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust.

Bless the Lord, all ye His angels, ye ministers of His that do His will.

Bless the Lord, all His works, in every place of His dominion; O my soul, bless thou the Lord (*Psalm CII*).

O Mary, my heavenly Mother, thou art the hymn of the angels and the praise of the cherubim. Thou knowest how unable I am to bless God for the favor He has bestowed upon me in the tribunal of Penance. Help me to thank Him. Offer unto Him, in my name, all the praise of the saints, all the thanksgiving of thine Immaculate Heart.

Say your penance and then offer to God, through Mary, the following prayer of St. Gertrude:

O most holy Father, I offer unto Thee my confession and my penance in union with all the satisfactions which have ever been offered to the glory of Thy holy Name. I beseech Thee to accept this offering and to render it salutary to me, through the merits of the Passion of Thy beloved Son, and through the intercession of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, and of all Thy holy apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins.

Whatever has been wanting on my part in the way of earnest preparation and true contrition, of sincere and clear confession, I commend to the sweet hearts of Thine only Son and of His most holy Mother, the treasures of all mercy and grace, from whose abundance all debts to Thee are fully acquitted; so that through them I may atone for all my negligences and defects in the reception of this holy sacrament for Thine everlasting glory.

Deign Thou, O God, to absolve me in Heaven, even as Thy minister has, with Thine authority, absolved me here on earth; through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, world without end.

Amen.

Chapter XIV

SPIRITUAL READING

«To him who wishes to walk in the path of virtue,» says St. Athanasius, «nothing is more necessary than the reading of spiritual books.» «Spiritual reading,» adds St. Ambrose, «is the food of the soul, which renders it dauntless and strong against all temptations, which prompts it with holy thoughts and ardent desires for Heaven, which enlightens the mind, strengthens the will and gives comfort in all afflictions, which, in fine, procures that true and holy joy which is found in God alone.»

For how many sinners has not the reading of a good book been the beginning of conversion; witness the examples of St. Augustine and St. Ignatius. But on the other hand, how many souls, destined for the glory of Heaven, are doomed to the torments of hell because they have allowed themselves to be captivated by the reading of dangerous books, which are the scourge of our age? If you would establish the reign of Mary in your heart, shun as a deadly poison the reading of all salacious literature and novels, of which we can truly say with St. Francis de Sales, «The best of them are worthless.» «Spiritual books,» on the contrary, as St. Augustine remarks, «are like letters sent to us from Heaven, which bring

us into communication with the saints and with God Himself.» «When we pray,» says St. Ambrose, «we speak to God, but we hear Him speak to us when we read spiritual books.» Spiritual reading, if we take time to consider what we read, may be more profitable to our soul than even meditation.

«Take and read! Take and read!» Such were the words God made use of to bring St. Augustine's hesitation to an end. Giving ear to that voice which he believed to come from Heaven, Augustine opened, by chance, the Epistles of St. Paul and the terrible tempest of doubts which raged in his soul ceased immediately; the light of truth shone in his mind and brought peace and happiness to his heart. You also, loving servant of Mary, take up a good book and read! Many struggles which perhaps disturb your soul will give way to a happy and peaceful conscience. As much as possible, choose your reading matter and your subjects for meditation from books which treat of Our Lady and which will help you to know her virtues and to increase your love for her. That is what St. Stanislaus and St. John Berchmans were wont to do, and we know how wonderfully that reading benefited them.

Follow their example. Read and read again the writings of Blessed De Montfort: his *Secret of Mary* and his *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, of which Fr. Faber, in his preface to the English translation of the book, writes

these words which deserve to be quoted here: «Let a man but try it for himself, and his surprise at the graces it brings with it, and the transformations it causes in his soul, will soon convince him of its otherwise almost incredible efficacy as a means for the salvation of men and for the coming of the kingdom of Christ. Oh, if Mary were but known, there would be no coldness to Jesus then! Oh, if Mary were but known, how much more wonderful would be our faith, and how different would our Communions be! Oh, if Mary were but known, how much happier, how much holier, how much less worldly should we be and how much more should we be living images of our sole Lord and Savior, her dearest and most Blessed Son!»

Chapter XV

THE HOLY ROSARY

Devout child of Mary, among the devotions which are most pleasing to the heart of your Mother and at the same time very apt to help you to live in union with her is the pious recitation of the *Hail Mary* and especially of the Rosary. St. Mechtilde one day begged Our Lady to teach her how to praise her in a manner that would more easily win her favor, and this good Mother said to her: «My daughter, it would be an act of temerity on the part of a creature to presume to go higher than the Creator. Never shall you find a salutation like the one that was sent to me from Heaven. What is sweeter indeed than the words 'Hail Mary,' by which the Eternal Father gave me to understand that He had kept me entirely free from the curse of sin? What can be more agreeable to my ear than the name of *Mary*, which was given me by Him Who was to be my own Son and Who had predestined me to be a light in Heaven and on earth? When you add: 'full of grace,' nothing can be more charming to my heart than those words spoken to me by the Holy Ghost Who, when He spoke them, wrought in me what they signify. When you say: 'The Lord is with thee,' you bring back to my memory the exceedingly great joy that I ex-

perienced at the moment of the Incarnation of my Lord and Son. When you go on to say: 'Blessed art thou amongst women,' I recollect that merciful act of God by which He has raised me above all pure creatures. Finally, when you 'Bless the fruit of my womb,' all Heaven exults with me over the life and blessing with which my beloved Son has filled every creature.»

Let us give heed to these words of our Mother and let us delight in repeating the *Hail Mary*. With it the salvation of the world began, and through it countless blessings have come down upon men, upon even the greatest sinners, for more than nineteen centuries. Blessed De Montfort, whom the Church calls an «eminent preacher of the holy Rosary,» says, «The *Hail Mary* is the powerful weapon which puts the devils to flight, which crushes the enemies of the people of God and stamps out all heresies. The *Hail Mary* fills the soul with every grace, it gives joy to the blessed, pleasure to Mary and glory to the most Holy Trinity.» (*True Devotion*, N° 249–255.)

But if the saints speak so highly in praise of the *Hail Mary* which has come to us from Heaven, and if this prayer has the power to convert even the most obdurate sinners who are willing to say it, what then shall we say of the Rosary in which the *Hail Mary* is repeated so many times? Oh! What treasures of heavenly

blessings and merits must be laid up in this devotion, that Mary herself should have deigned to appear to some of her clients in order to unfold its wonders and riches, and bid them spread its practice everywhere! What wonders indeed have not been wrought through the Rosary, by such holy men as St. Dominic, Blessed Alan de la Roche and Blessed De Montfort?

You who desire to be the client of Mary, do you want a sure means of winning her heart? Join the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. If you are not already a member, become one this very day. The Sovereign Pontiffs have enriched this confraternity with precious indulgences, and through it you will be in communion of prayer and merit with numberless good and holy souls. Moreover, follow the advice of Blessed De Montfort: «Do not content yourself with saying a few *Hail Marys* every day in honor of Our Lady, but say five decades, and if you have time, even fifteen decades of the Rosary. At the hour of your death you will bless the day on which you began this holy practice.»

There are several methods of saying the Rosary with devotion. Sometimes, while saying it, you may feel the need of asking for such a virtue or such a grace; other times, loaded down with blessings, you may think only of singing Mary's praises, of celebrating her privileges, and you will invite all creatures to come and praise with

you their Sovereign Queen; or again you may say the Rosary devoutly by giving all your attention to the words you pronounce. What shall we say further? The more we take to heart the devotion of the Rosary, so much the more will the Holy Ghost disclose to us its excellence, its treasures and its beauties.

But if you would always derive great benefit from this holy practice of saying the Rosary, allow your mind to dwell during each decade upon the mystery which accompanies it, picturing to yourself the places, the persons and the principal circumstances of each mystery. Above all, each time you say the Rosary, keep in mind two chief thoughts, which although comforting to the heart and capable of leading us to amend our life, are not always borne in mind.

1° Jesus Christ, the Eternal Wisdom, has said, has done and has suffered for you in particular, whatever He has said, done and suffered for mankind in general. Like St. Paul who appropriated for himself, as it were, the merits of the Redemption, when he said: «Jesus Christ has loved me and has delivered Himself for me,» so must you say with a cheerful heart: the Son of God in His infinite goodness has thought of me and has loved me. For me, as if I were the only person to be saved, the Word of God was made flesh in Mary's womb, was born in a stable, was subject to the Blessed Virgin for thirty years and died upon the cross. For me, this dearly beloved

Jesus, the Wisdom of God, has hidden Himself in the Sacrament of the altar, in which I am reminded of all the mysteries of the Rosary. For me, every word of His was spoken, every drop of His Blood, every action and suffering of His life was offered, that I should obtain the graces for which I am now about to pray.

Shall not this thought, so full of truth, cause you to pray with more fervor and recollection, and to beg with more confidence for the graces you intend to ask for in each mystery? «O my heavenly Mother,» you should say to Our Lady, «it is for my eternal salvation that thy Divine Son accomplished all the great things of which I am reminded in this mystery; it is for me that He wept and suffered; wilt thou then refuse to obtain for me what I ask?» Yielding to this manifestation of confidence in her, the heavenly treasurer of God's riches will not content herself with applying abundantly to your soul the merits of Jesus Christ, she will also give you her own merits, which, as you know, she reserves for her most faithful servants.

2° The second thought which you must keep in mind is this: With God, time and space do not exist. His eternity absorbs all time, His immensity fills all space. For God there is no past, but only the present; nothing is without Him, all things are within Him. Therefore in your meditations on the different mysteries of the Rosary, it is not necessary that you should go back nine-

teen centuries in history—Bethlehem, Nazareth and Calvary are always before your eyes, Jesus is born and suffers for you to-day, at the very moment you say your Rosary.

At each decade then you should say: Jesus is born at Bethlehem, is presented in the Temple, suffers His agony, is nailed to the cross, at this very moment and here before my eyes, in order to teach me, to redeem me and to save my soul. There you have the chief thoughts which must occupy your mind while saying the Rosary: they will help you to say it with devotion and merit, they will make it an easy and delightful exercise.

Chapter XVI

REFLECTIONS ON BLESSED DE MONTFORT'S METHOD OF SAYING THE ROSARY

PREPARATORY PRAYER

«*I unite with all the saints.*» When you carefully consider the high dignity of the Queen of the Rosary, whom you are about to address, and when you think of the many wants of your soul, you will feel how necessary it is for you not to be alone when you pray to her. What can the human heart do all by itself? «A dishonest creditor,» says St. Ignatius, «wishing to pass counterfeit money, will take good care not to offer the coins separately, for fear that they might be noticed and would not be accepted; but he will put them with genuine coins, and being thus mixed with real money, they are passed and accepted. So also when you pray alone, your prayer will be worth only as much as you are worth—that is, but little; but if you unite in prayer with good and holy souls, your prayers will share their merit.»¹

«*I unite with all the saints in Heaven.*» What a motive for confidence! The saints are the

¹ Blessed De Montfort's method of reciting the Rosary will be found on page 266.

friends of God, they are His favorites. He always hears them. You will make their thoughts, their praise, and their love your own by uniting with them, and thus you will pray in chorus with the saints. Do you think of this, you who say the Rosary with so little fervor and confidence? Do you think of joining your prayers with those of such fervent servants of Mary as St. Dominic, St. Bernard, Blessed De Montfort, who were all enraptured when praying at the feet of Mary, their dear Mother? «What a dreadful offence,» exclaims St. Bonaventure, «that while our lips are singing the praises of Our Lady, our heart should be occupied with vain and futile affections and perhaps filled with sinful desires!» You unite with the angels of Heaven who take their delight in contemplating their glorious Queen. Have you tried to impress yourself with the feelings of reverence with which the archangel was filled, who was sent by God to greet Mary with the same salutation you repeat so often when you say the Rosary?

«*With all the just on earth and with all the faithful here present.*» The praise of those who are living in this vale of labor and suffering is very acceptable to God. It is not indeed as high and worthy as that of the saints, yet it has the great merit (which the saints might envy) of those that combat and suffer and increase daily in the love of God. In every place under the sun

there are devout souls, tortured with sufferings, but burning with the fire of love in the midst of their privations and trials. There are zealous hearts, ardently devoted to Mary, praying to her with love and confidence, saying her Rosary with lively feelings of joy. You may share their fervor and merits by uniting with them when you pray.

«I unite with Thee, my Jesus, in order to praise worthily Thy holy Mother.» Love is never satisfied. «The measure of love is to love beyond all measure,» says St. Augustine. How can we praise in a worthy manner this privileged creature who has been raised above the angels and the saints by her sublime dignity of being the Mother of God? Only Jesus can give to Mary the marks of honor and love which she deserves. Jesus, Who is always with us in the tabernacle, still desires to honor His Mother in us and by us. For this reason, then, do we unite with Him that we may praise and love Mary more perfectly. What will not be your fervor if you think of this? Are you not assured of winning Mary's favor when you ask for it in union with the Heart of her Divine Son, Whom she loves most dearly?

«And to praise Thee in her and through her.» There you have the object of our True Devotion; namely, to glorify Jesus more perfectly through Mary; to renew, by all our actions and affections, the acts and affections of Mary's Immaculate

Heart for Jesus. Yes, to glorify Jesus in Mary, as in His tabernacle and in His place of repose and delight, such is the great object of all our devotion to Mary and such is also its consoling result. For this end we have consecrated ourselves entirely to Mary that she, as a loving Mother, may take possession of our whole being and glorify Jesus in us, and that we may glorify Him in her.

«I renounce all the distractions I may have during this Rosary which I wish to say with modesty, attention and devotion, just as if it were to be the last of my life.» Because of the frailty and corruption of human nature, we are frequently carried away by distractions, in spite of our good will. By renouncing your distractions you render them harmless, and the efforts of the enemy of prayer will be in vain. Then the thought of death will rouse you from your indolence, and make you thirst after the graces for which you are about to pray.

After all that, why should you fear in the midst of your cares and anxieties? You are at the feet of a loving Mother who gladly listens to the prayer from the lisping lips of her children. You are before the throne of the Mother of mercy; she has no other desire but to hear your prayer. Who are the favorite children of this good Mother, if not those who are most needy and most unhappy? Pray then without any hesita-

tion, ask for yourself, for all sinners, for the souls in Purgatory and for the entire Church, and rest assured that you will be heard.

«We offer Thee, O most Holy Trinity, this Creed, etc.» While you recite the Apostles' Creed, behold Heaven opened, as it were, before you. Listen to the angels singing in unceasing chorus: «Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.» Think of her who is called the «august temple of the most Holy Trinity,» whom the saints hail, saying without end: «Holy, holy, holy Mary, Mother of God, and ever Virgin.»

Then say devoutly the *Our Father*, in union with Jesus Christ and in the spirit in which He said it when on earth, asking that God may be glorified and blessed, that the kingdom of His Church may come. You may say the other *Our Fathers* for the same intention.

At the first *Hail Mary*, greet Our Lady as the well-beloved Daughter of God the Father, and like St. Elizabeth, congratulate her for always having firmly believed the promises of God. Ask of her an abundant share in her faith, while in the spirit of joy you recall to mind the words of Blessed De Montfort to her faithful servants: «Our Blessed Lady will give you a portion of her faith which, on earth, was greater than the faith of all the patriarchs, prophets, Apostles and saints put together. With the consent of the Most

High, Mary did not lose her faith when entering into Heaven. She kept it in order that she may impart to her loving servants in the Church Militant a faith which, like a mysterious pass-key, will give them entrance into all the mysteries of Jesus, and into the heart of God Himself; a faith which will be their supernatural life, their hidden treasure of divine wisdom.»

At the second *Hail Mary*, greet Our Lady affectionately as the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Wisdom; and remembering that Mary is called the Mother of holy hope, ask of her that firm confidence which she always and certainly gives to those who, like you, have consecrated themselves to her entirely. If she is the hope even of those who have lost hope, what then must you not expect from her, for to you she is what you call her so frequently, a good Mother. Place your confidence in her merits, which are yours, and hope for all things from God, even against hope. Henceforth, say with St. Bonaventure: «O my heavenly Mother, I will live in sweetest hope and fear nothing, for thou art my strength and my praise in the Lord.»

Finally, by the third *Hail Mary*, honor Our Lady as the Spouse of the Holy Ghost and remember that she is the Mother of fair love. Ask her to cast upon your soul a spark of the holy fire of love with which her heart is all aflame, to strengthen your heart against all fear, and to grant you that pure love of God of which her

heart is the precious vessel, so that with the true liberty of the children of God you may run in the path of virtue.

At the *Glory be to the Father*, think of the great mysteries which lie hidden in these words of praise to the Blessed Trinity. It is like a summary of the praises which all creatures sing continuously to God, in their own language, from the tiniest blade of grass here below to the most loving seraph above. In Heaven, Mary sings that praise together with Jesus, but in strains so sweet and harmony so divine, that no one but God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost can comprehend it fully. Praise, then, the three Persons of the adorable Trinity in Mary's heart and rest assured that this good and heavenly Mother will obtain for you a lively faith, a firm hope and an ardent charity, which you have asked of God through her powerful mediation.

SHORT MEDITATIONS ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

The Joyful Mysteries

THE FIRST MYSTERY

The Annunciation.—*Grace of the Mystery:*

Humility

In union with Our Lady, consider the astounding humiliations suffered in atonement for your

pride by Him Who is «the brightness of eternal light, the unspotted mirror of God's majesty and the image of His goodness.»

Rejoice with Mary because of her high dignity, and think of her exceedingly deep humility, now that she has become the Mother of God.

How little you resemble her in your vanity and wishes for the esteem of the world! Put down your pride and make serious efforts to acquire the virtue of humility, which is so necessary and without which no other virtue can exist in a soul.

THE SECOND MYSTERY

The Visitation.—*Grace of the Mystery:* Charity towards Our Neighbor

Follow Our Lady on the way to St. Elizabeth's house, and while you meditate on the meaning of this mystery, adore Jesus in Mary's womb. Through her, He now begins to cast the fire of His love into the hearts of men. How great is His love for you even now! How great a desire your Divine Savior already has to see the day on which He will sacrifice Himself on Calvary for your salvation!

How do you practice charity? Do you not often offend against it? See, then, in what way Our Lady wishes you to correct yourself in regard to this virtue and beseech her to inflame your heart with true charity for your neighbor.

THE THIRD MYSTERY

The Nativity.—*Grace of the Mystery: Contempt of Riches and Love of Poverty*

What poverty in the stable of Bethlehem! A handful of straw; swaddling clothes, which give the Child but little protection against the cold; poor shepherds to form the retinue of the King.

Admire this state of destitution which marks but the beginning of all that Jesus is to suffer till He is entirely stripped on Calvary. Become more and more detached from earthly things and with a firm confidence ask of Mary to obtain for you the grace of being poor in spirit.

THE FOURTH MYSTERY

The Presentation of Jesus.—*Grace of the Mystery: Purity of Body and Soul*

In union with Mary adore Jesus in the arms of holy Simeon. From what you see in this mystery, learn that Jesus gives Himself in preference to a soul that is pure and detached from the world. «Eternal Wisdom is a vapor of the power of God and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God, and therefore no defiled thing cometh into her.»

Cultivate then in your heart a great love for purity, by which you are made like the angels and intimately united with God. But be ever convinced that you can acquire this virtue only by

keeping a constant watch over your bodily senses and by being truly devoted to Mary.

THE FIFTH MYSTERY

The Finding of Jesus in the Temple.—*Grace of the Mystery: True Wisdom*

While you condole with Our Lady in her sorrow, when she seeks the Divine Child for three days, look into your own heart, and in Mary's presence see what your desires are for possessing Jesus in your soul. Do you shed tears, or at least do you feel sad on realizing that you are still far from Him? Mary is the spiritual magnet that will attract Jesus into our soul. Take her as your guide in the ways of the interior life, and she will help you find Jesus in the temple of your heart wherein He dwells. She will teach you to treasure in your memory all the good and beautiful things His love has urged Him to do for you.

The Sorrowful Mysteries

THE SIXTH MYSTERY

The Agony of Jesus.—*Grace of the Mystery: Contrition*

Listen to the tender complaints of Jesus in the Garden of Olives: «My soul is sorrowful even unto death. My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.» Compassionate with your

sorrowful Mother while you offer this decade to her. She has so often shed tears of sorrow for your offenses and for those of all sinners. Ask her to touch your heart with the grace of sincere contrition, for until now you have grieved but little for your sins. Pray also for the conversion of some great sinner, but especially ask her to obtain the grace of true contrition for all those who depart this life to-day.

THE SEVENTH MYSTERY

The Scourging at the Pillar.—*Grace of the Mystery: Mortification of the Senses*

With what reproaches and infamies has your dear Savior been overwhelmed for love of you, from the moment of His agony till that of His scourging! The mere thought of them ought to instil in your heart the deepest feelings of horror for the slightest sins of sensuality, for which your innocent Jesus has suffered so painfully. Sympathize with Our Lady in the sorrows which this harrowing scene of the scourging causes to her heart and beg of her the grace to mortify your senses. Many sinners place their soul in danger of damnation for the sake of sensual pleasure! Pray for their conversion.

THE EIGHTH MYSTERY

The Crowning with Thorns.—*Grace of the Mystery: Contempt of the World*

Consider the pitiful state to which your pride has reduced your sweet Savior, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. Adore Him now that He is crowned with thorns, covered with a tattered cloak of purple, made a mock king by a lawless body of soldiers who load Him down with insults and all sorts of ill-treatment.

Unite with Mary and offer your acts of adoration, of compassion and of love in atonement for so many outrages. Beseech her to offer worthy thanks to Jesus on your behalf, and ask for the grace to know yourself better, in order to loathe and despise yourself.

THE NINTH MYSTERY

The Carrying of the Cross.—*Grace of the Mystery: Patience in Bearing Your Crosses*

See how lovingly Jesus embraces His cross and takes it upon His shoulders! He beholds in it the sign of your redemption, the powerful weapon that will crush your enemies. Express your gratitude to Jesus and at the same time offer your sympathy to Mary, whose heart is so cruelly rent when she meets her Divine Son. Admire her zeal in sharing the sufferings and humiliations of Jesus on Calvary.

How do you practice resignation to the will of God in the trials of life? How do you love your crosses? Repent of the many murmurings of which you are guilty and beseech Our Lady to make you see that it is profitable to your soul to be warned of your shortcomings and to undergo in this world the punishment of your sins and your pride.

THE TENTH MYSTERY

The Crucifixion.—*Grace of the Mystery: The Conversion of Sinners, the Relief of the Souls in Purgatory*

Consider at what cost Our Lady has brought forth your soul to the life of grace. «All the pains inflicted upon the bodies of the martyrs,» says St. Anselm, «are slight, or rather they are nothing, compared to the excessive sufferings endured by Mary.»

Honor the Queen of martyrs who has suffered so much for you. Sympathize with her in her deep sorrow and say to her with the Prophet: «To what shall I compare thy sorrow, O Virgin, Daughter of Sion, for it is great as the sea!»

After the example of Jesus and Mary, suffer willingly for the salvation of souls.

The Glorious Mysteries

THE ELEVENTH MYSTERY

The Resurrection.—*Grace of the Mystery:*
Love of God and Fervor

What heavenly splendor surrounds Jesus on the day of His Resurrection! How Mary's heart is filled with an overflowing abundance of love and joy when she sees her Son liberated from the bonds of death! Rejoice with her, for the glory of Jesus is her glory.

Consider the great kindness of your risen Savior, appearing to His disciples and to the holy women. With the same love He follows you and wishes to give Himself to you, but your soul is so indifferent!

Lay down your requests at the feet of Mary. This kind Mother is so exceedingly happy at the Resurrection of her Son that she can refuse you nothing.

THE TWELFTH MYSTERY

The Ascension.—*Grace of the Mystery:* An
Ardent Desire for Heaven

With Mary contemplate Jesus ascending gloriously into Heaven while He is surrounded by angels and by the souls He has delivered from Limbo. What a glorious triumph! What an honor and joy for all Heaven!

Rejoice with Our Lady on the glory of her Divine Son. Obtain access to her heart and ask her to make you share her interior feelings after the Ascension. «Mary's longing to be with God in Heaven was so intense,» says St. John Eudes, «that only by a continuous miracle could she keep alive.»

But what are your desires? You wish for Jesus. But is it an earnest wish? You hope for Heaven. But what are you doing to go to Heaven? Would that like Mary you had no thoughts but for Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom! Would that you had no longing but to possess Him and His heavenly riches! Oh, how much more generously would you serve Him and how zealously would you remove every hindrance to His union with you! Ask Mary to obtain that grace for you.

THE THIRTEENTH MYSTERY

The Descent of the Holy Ghost.—*Grace of the
Mystery: The Coming of the Holy
Ghost into Our Souls*

Meditate on this mystery attentively. Pay honor to your heavenly Mother, surrounded by the disciples in the Cenacle, where she receives the Holy Ghost. With what plenitude of grace is she enriched on this day! Rejoice with her and beg of her for yourself and for all her slaves of love, the grace of a closer union with her Immac-

ulate Heart. Recall to mind these words of Blessed De Montfort: «When the Holy Ghost has found Mary in a soul, He flies there; He enters there with the fullness of His gifts, especially the gift of wisdom, to work wonders of grace.»

THE FOURTEENTH MYSTERY

*The Assumption of Our Lady.—Grace of the
Mystery: Love for Mary*

In spirit let us contemplate the last moments of our Blessed Mother. What a peaceful death is hers! Having received the visit of Jesus, her Son, in Holy Communion, and being filled with an overflowing abundance of blessedness, she dies of love as she has lived. Ask her to obtain this grace for yourself and for all who are dear to you.

Some of the Apostles are present at the last moments of Our Lady. Their hearts are disconsolate at the loss they are going to suffer. Mary with soothing words consoles them in their grief, she blesses them and leaves them the assurance of her powerful mediation with Jesus Christ. Remember that she does the same for you, and that to gain your full confidence she says to you with loving tenderness: «Fear not, my child, I am your Mother. I go to Heaven to prepare a dwelling-place for you.»

My God, how consoling these words are! Mary, my Mother! How good a Mother! And how merciful! A Mother who knows all my trials

and miseries, who desires to give me relief and take me to Heaven with her!

THE FIFTEENTH MYSTERY

The Coronation of Mary.—*Grace of the Mystery:*
Perseverance in Grace; the Crown of Glory

Let us follow Our Lady as she is taken up to Heaven, leaning on her Well-Beloved, surrounded by a multitude of saints and angels. What a glorious retinue! What jubilation when this exalted Queen makes her entrance into Heaven! With what joy and glory is Mary overwhelmed when, seated upon a throne of magnificence, the most Holy Trinity crowns her as the well-beloved Daughter of the Father, as the admirable Mother of the Son, as the faithful Spouse of the Holy Ghost! If even the least of the saints is filled with heavenly bliss, what then must be the happiness of the Mother of Jesus! But what can we say of her happiness, we who are still exiled from our heavenly country? In silent admiration let us rejoice with our Mother, as well as all the blessed in Heaven, whose glory and bliss are increased on this day.

O holy City of God! O Virgin most high! How many perfections are there in thee to delight the blessed above! What splendor! What beauty! What admirable power! What wisdom! What light! Above all, what love for thy poor children here below! O merciful Mother, give me some

understanding of what thou art, and captivate my heart with thy charms, that I may loathe life and desire only to be with thee. Alas, dear Mother, what will become of me if thou wilt not have pity on me, exiled as I am, exposed to numberless dangers, carried away by a thousand evil inclinations, laid open to every attack of the enemy? Unhappy child that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? As the hart pants after the fountains of water, so my soul pants after thee, O Virgin most holy! How my soul desires to see thee! When shall I come and appear before thy face in the eternal light of God?

Chapter XVII

ROSARY AND HOLY COMMUNION

Occasionally on those days when you have the happy privilege of receiving Holy Communion, try to say part of the Rosary, either in preparation or in thanksgiving. Nothing is more pleasing to Our Lord, for He wishes that we always go to Him through His most holy Mother.

As it would take too long to consider each of the fifteen mysteries, we shall limit ourselves to the five Joyful Mysteries and show you how meditation on them can serve as a preparation before Communion. All the acts recommended by the masters of the spiritual life are included therein.

By saying the *Apostle's Creed*, if I pay attention to what I say, I enliven my faith; for the truths summed up in the *Creed* remind me of all the great mysteries by which Jesus Christ, the Eternal Wisdom, has redeemed me. «He was born of the Virgin Mary . . . suffered . . . died . . . ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God . . .» whence He shall come very soon into my soul.

If, during the recitation of the three *Hail Marys*, I call to mind that Our Lady is my heart and my soul, my supplement and my all with Jesus, and that the Holy Communion which I am

about to receive belongs to her, shall I not beseech her with childlike confidence to let me share her lively faith, her firm hope, her ardent charity?

The Incarnation.—Jesus is going to renew in me the mystery of the Incarnation, which He formerly accomplished in Mary's womb, for, as the Fathers of the Church tell us, Holy Communion is an extension of this touching mystery. But what greatness and perfection does faith reveal to me in the Lord Jesus, Who is coming to dwell in me! Is He not «the Splendor of the Eternal Light?» Do not the angels cover their faces with their wings before the brightness of His majesty? Oh, if my faith were more lively, with what feelings of humility would my soul bow down! The Church says every day: «Thou didst not abhor the womb of the Immaculate Virgin.» What shall I say to thee, sweet Jesus, faithless sinner that I am? O most holy Virgin, my Mother, who didst humble thyself so deeply when the mystery of God made man took place in thee, come to me, share with me the admirable dispositions of thy heart. Fill me with such feelings of humility as animated thee at that moment, and also every time when, after the Ascension, thou didst receive Holy Communion from the hands of St. John!

The Visitation.—My heart, open thyself and pour forth the liveliest sentiments of joy! It is

not my heavenly Mother alone who deigns to visit me, but with her comes Jesus, Who in the Blessed Sacrament is always Mary's gift. Why does He come? To work in my soul the same wonders He wrought in the house of St. Elizabeth, to overwhelm me with His blessings, above all to enkindle in me the fire of His love. What, then, must be my gratitude, my faith in God, my charity towards my neighbor!

O sweet Virgin, O my Mother! What thanks must I not render to thee? I am all thine. The Holy Communion which I am to receive is thine. Come, then, into my soul and adorn it with thy virtues, or rather, come thyself into me and receive Him Whom it pleases thee to give unto me. Offer unto Him the holy sentiments with which thy heart is still burning for Him.

The Nativity.—My interior is the place where the Divine Child will be born again. The angels are singing: «Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of good will.» Very soon they will say to me as they once said to the shepherds: «A Savior is born to you.» O Jesus, Eternal Wisdom, in Whom from all eternity God the Father is well pleased, Thou Who findest Thy sweet repose in the arms of Mary Thy Mother, hast resolved in Thy kind mercy to come and repose also in my heart. But alas, how cold is this heart of mine! How empty and destitute of everything!

I turn then to thee, O my heavenly Mother,

for thou art my treasure, my supplement, my all with Jesus! Since thou hast so kindly asked me to give hospitality to thy Divine Son, I will ask of thee to do in me the same holy work which thou didst do formerly in the stable of Bethlehem. Make ready my heart, adorn it with thy virtues, offer unto Jesus the same acts of worship which thou didst render to Him when coming out of thy heavenly ecstasy thou didst behold Him lying in the manger.

The Presentation.—O holy Virgin Mary, what gratitude thy goodness deserves! And what grace thou wishest to bestow upon me, unworthy though I be! Ah, I realize that thou art truly a good Mother. Not only wilt thou lay thy sweet Jesus in my arms as in those of holy Simeon, but thou wilt make my heart the temple in which thou wilt offer Him to His heavenly Father as a victim for my sins and for the iniquities of the whole world.

But is my heart pure and free from all affection for creatures, like Simeon's heart? Alas, the bonds of evil inclinations, the burden of so many sins cause my heart to droop and weigh down my soul.

O Virgin most pure, O Mother most dear, grant me a share in thy virtues and Jesus will be pleased to come into my heart, for «thy well-beloved feedeth among the lilies.» Adorn me with thy virginal purity; and having given me thy

Divine Son, offer Him to His heavenly Father, for thine own intentions, for me and for all those who are dear to me. Grant, moreover, that I may be worthy of being presented with Jesus, thy Divine Son, as a victim acceptable to God the Father.

The Finding of Jesus.—How greatly meditation on this mystery can intensify our desires to receive our loving Jesus, the unknown Wisdom of God! Remember, my soul, and be deeply impressed with the infinite love and desire with which the Incarnate Wisdom has come to you and now wishes to possess you! Think of the beauty of that Wisdom—all Heaven is ravished with it; of His greatness—that of all the nations of the earth is nothing compared to His; of His majesty—the brightness of the sun is a mere shadow before His splendor. Think of the heavenly treasures which the Divine Wisdom comes to give you: «He that shall find Me,» He says, «shall find life. In Me are all the treasures of knowledge. With Me are riches and glory, that I may enrich them that love Me, and may fill their treasures.» But above all, my soul, consider the unspeakable kindness of Jesus asking me for my heart that He may dwell therein: «My child, give Me thy heart.» What will you do in return for so much kindness? Shall you not long for Him as the hart panting after the fountains of water, as the child wishing to throw itself into the arms of its

mother, as the sick person waiting for the physician? But of how little value are all such desires! You ought to sigh, to shed tears and to be carried away by your love, like Mary in search of the Divine Child Whom she lost and found in the Temple only after three days. Ask your Mother for these things. She has a far greater desire to impart them to you than you have to receive them.

II

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF THE EXTERIOR LIFE

Chapter I

PURITY OF INTENTION

Faithful servant of Mary, you have understood that we ought to perform in union with Our Lady not only our exercises of piety but all our exterior works as well, in order to glorify God more perfectly and to increase the supernatural merit of our actions. Listen to the words which Jesus, the Son of Mary, spoke one day to St. Gertrude: «As a covetous usurer would not willingly miss the opportunity of making a single gain, much more unwillingly would I allow one thought or one movement of your little finger, made for My sake, to perish without My turning it to My own greater glory and to your eternal salvation.»

How grateful must we not be to Jesus and His holy Mother for having given us such an easy means of acquiring merit for Heaven at every moment of our life! Know well that our actions, even the most ordinary, when done in the state of grace and with a supernatural inten-

tion, are of an immense value in the sight of God. «Their merit,» says St. Thomas, «increases in proportion to the supernatural motive which animates us in doing them.» Place, therefore, your actions in Mary's hands at the beginning of every day. She will purify them; she will make you share her sublime intentions and she will make use of the value of your works for the greater glory of God. What a consolation for you, if you have the spirit of faith!

1° In the first place, Our Lady purifies the good works which we offer her. How strange the corruption of our human nature! How weak and how fickle we are at all times! How many imperfections, how much selfishness, how many sins, perhaps, in our daily life! «Even our best actions,» says a saint, «suffer from our corrupt nature.» «But if we take care to place them in the hands of Mary,» says Blessed De Montfort, «this good Mother purifies them of all stain of self-love and of that imperceptible attachment to created things which slips unnoticed into our best actions.»

2° Moreover, Our Lady embellishes our actions, adorning them with her virtues and merits, which at her death she bequeathed to all those who are faithfully devoted to her. What beauty and attraction then will our good works acquire in Mary's hands! How pleasing they will be to the heart of God! How worthy of being accepted

by Our Lord, Who kindly receives all that is offered Him by His most holy Mother!

3° But that which ought to fill the measure of our joy and at the same time stimulate our desire to do all our actions through Mary is the fact that by acting through her we abandon our own intentions and procedure, however good and determined they may be, in order to adopt unreservedly those of our heavenly Mother; and thus we enter by participation into the sublimity of her intentions, which were so pure that she gave more glory to God by the least of her actions than the greatest saints by their most heroic virtues. Ah, would that it were given to us to understand how Mary, even in her tenderest years, astonished the angels of Heaven because of her burning love for God.

4° Furthermore, if you faithfully place your actions in Mary's hands, you can boldly say that you are procuring the greater glory of God. Is not the whole life of Jesus a proof of this? He, the Eternal Wisdom of God, Who came down upon earth to glorify His heavenly Father by the redemption of mankind, found no means more perfect and more appropriate to His purpose than to be entirely dependent on Our Lady. «Ah, how greatly do we glorify God,» says Blessed De Montfort, «when in order to please Him, we follow the example of Jesus Christ and submit ourselves to Mary, His most holy Mother».

Imitate then this heavenly model. Love to be dependent on Mary in your work and your studies, in your hardships and your comforts, in all things whatsoever. Place everything in her hands.

During your occupations, renew from time to time your offering to Mary by a short and simple aspiration, and try to live habitually so disposed that if you were asked unexpectedly: «For whom are you doing this?» you could answer without a moment's hesitation: «For Mary.» What joy you will thus give to the angels! What glory to God! What blessings you will draw upon your neighbor, and at the same time, upon your own self!

Chapter II

STUDIES AND MANUAL OCCUPATIONS

STUDIES

«Mary,» says St. Andrew of Crete, «is the source of divine light.» In the Book of Ecclesiasticus (chap. xxiv, 6) she tells us herself: «I made that in the heavens there should rise light that never faileth.» Go then to Mary and receive instruction from her, if you would succeed in your studies and other tasks. «Tell my brother Joseph,» wrote Blessed De Montfort, whom we have so often quoted as one of the most perfect models of this devotion to Mary, «tell my brother Joseph, that he will be one of the best in his class, if he will confide his studies to the Blessed Virgin, his good Mother. Let him continue to be devoted to her and she will give him all that is necessary.» This very counsel, which Blessed De Montfort himself put so faithfully into practice from his very childhood, obtained for him such choice favors that we may well apply to him the words of Holy Scripture: «By the means of wisdom (which I have acquired by Mary), I shall be found of a quick conceit in judgment and shall be admired in the sight of the mighty; and the faces of princes shall wonder at me.» (*Wisdom*, viii, 11.)

Every time this zealous client of Mary gave

himself up to study, he, after the example of many other saints, would have in front of him a statue of Our Lady, which he would often look at and tenderly kiss. In some way or other imitate this true servant of Mary; for example, before you open your books, kneel down, if possible, and say a *Hail Mary*, and Our Lady will enlighten you. The renowned St. Albert the Great, the illustrious Abbot Rupert and several others who were not highly gifted by nature obtained through their devotion to the Queen of Heaven, such wonderful science as has drawn upon them the esteem and admiration of the world.

When you find the subject of your studies difficult to understand and to learn, look up to Mary. The sight of this gracious star will dispel the shadows of your mind and relieve the weariness of your heart. «When I look at the image of Mary,» says St. Edmund, «my understanding receives more light, and my bodily eyes are kept from tiring, so sweet it is to look from time to time upon my well-beloved Mother.»

Having finished your study, thank the Blessed Mother, place in her hands what you have learned, and ask her that she may help you to use it for the glory of her Son.

MANUAL OCCUPATIONS

Do you wish to see your work blessed by God and to find your own delight in doing it, even

when it is full of hardship? Take care, then, always to work under the eyes of Mary and with her dispositions of mind. Mary worked; and what glory she gave to God by her most ordinary occupations even from her tenderest years!

The learned theologian, Christopher de Vega, says that this most lovable child rendered more glory to God by her ordinary occupations than the greatest saints have glorified Him by their most heroic acts. She gave more honor to God while resting in her cradle than St. Lawrence on his gridiron; because in all her actions she was inflamed with more love for God than the highest seraphim, and because she always acted with more grace and sanctity than all the saints ever did or ever will act.

Oh, how well pleased God was with Mary in all things! To express the great joy which this holy Virgin in her early years gave to the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost says to her: «My spouse, thou hast wounded My heart with one of thine eyes and with one hair of thy neck.» By the eyes is meant the love of Mary's holy and Immaculate Heart, and the hair signifies the noble intentions which she had even in the most trifling actions.

If, then, you would procure great joy to God and His angels, place your work in Mary's hands, if it be but by a mere interior act of the will. We read of a saintly man who was in the habit of stopping for a while to recollect himself before

beginning any work whatsoever. On being asked one day why he did this, «I believe,» said he, «that our actions have no merit of themselves unless they are done with a pure intention, and, therefore, before I do anything, I direct my intention to God and purpose to do it for a good end.»

Do likewise at the beginning of each of your tasks. Recollect yourself for a moment and renounce your own views, your own judgment, your own will, however good they may appear to be, in order to give yourself up to Mary's will, and to be guided by her at her pleasure. Thus you will acquire much merit and give great glory to God.

Chapter III

OUR MEALS

In the life of a true slave of Mary all things must be sanctified, even the taking of one's meals. Fed as we are so frequently with the Bread of the angels, should we not feel humiliated on being obliged every day to take material food? The saints went to their meals sighing. St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, when sitting at table, would think only of the sufferings of the souls in Purgatory, and with tears he would beseech Our Lady to accept the mortifications which he purposed to practice during his meals. Blessed De Montfort sometimes shed tears, when sitting at table to eat.

If such were the feelings of the saints, what shall we say of those of Mary? Our Lady, who from her tenderest age was endowed with the use of reason and already instructed interiorly by the Holy Ghost, endeavored with admirable zeal to put into practice the lesson which St. Paul later on was to teach the faithful: «Whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God.» Here again we may say that she, although but a child, rendered more glory to God by taking her meals than the most virtuous souls by their austerities, because of the sanctity and love with which she did these actions.

Let it be said, that if St. Nicholas and some other saints received the grace of fasting several days in the week, even in their childhood, Our Lady received the same grace, for she obtained with greater abundance all the graces which were given to the saints and the angels. This truth was revealed to a holy hermit of the desert and it is corroborated by the testimony of St. Nicephorus and other ecclesiastical writers. St. Jerome, in a letter to Heliodorus, speaks of the different spiritual exercises of Our Lady in the Temple of Jerusalem, and among other things he says that this wonderful child took only towards evening the food which an angel was wont to bring her. What, then, must have been her spirit of mortification and penance, when later on she was living with her Divine Son!

In order to share the feelings of this heavenly Mother and to enter into her spirit, never forget to keep her in mind when you are taking your meals. St. John Berchmans was in the habit of adding a *Hail Mary* to the usual prayers of grace before and after meals. In so far as you are able, practice some slight act of mortification in honor of the privations of Jesus and Mary. «How often did it not happen,» says St. Bonaventure, «that the Mother of Jesus, during their stay in Egypt, had not even a piece of bread to give to her Divine Child?»

Chapter IV

OUR RECREATIONS AND DEALINGS WITH OUR NEIGHBOR

God, because He loves His children, is pleased to give them rest and refreshment after their work and toil; and withal diversions are necessary to relieve our mind and body. «The bow which is always bent will certainly break,» said that beloved son of Mary, St. John the Evangelist, one day to a hunter who seemed surprised at seeing the saint diverting himself by fondling a partridge.

But since we are so thoughtless and have not yet acquired the habit of keeping ourselves interiorly recollected, even lawful recreation may become dangerous to us. Dangers there may be in our games, our conversation, our outings, our visits and such like enjoyments. It is so easy, alas, to transgress the laws of God and to give offence to our neighbor; therefore, it is necessary that at all times we should keep the thought of our heavenly Mother present in our mind. Would that, like so many true servants of Mary, we never lost sight of the Queen of our heart! Had we but the feelings of such holy men as St. John Berchmans, St. Stanislaus Kostka, and Blessed De Montfort! It is said of them that they

were gay at their recreations, but their manners and their demeanor plainly showed that the love of God and Mary absorbed them much more than all the amusements in which they took part.

Since you have given all things to this sovereign princess and as you wish to honor her at all times and in all places, do not neglect, at the beginning of your recreation time, to invoke her protection, and, if possible, say a *Hail Mary* in order to draw her blessing upon your diversions, whatever they may be. When you are going on a visit or for a walk, ask your heavenly Mother, in all simplicity of heart, to accompany you and to sanctify your steps. When you were a little child, you did not like to go out unless hand in hand with your mother. Is it not true that in regard to Mary, you are always a little child? But, then, is she always guiding your steps? Does love for her fill your heart, does the thought of her fill your mind? On coming home, greet her with another *Hail Mary* to implore her pardon for the faults which you may have committed.

In your conversations and in all your dealings with your neighbor at home or elsewhere, imitate the humility, the reserve and the kindness of Our Lady. St. Jerome tells us that the countenances of both the Child Jesus and Mary, His Mother, were so charming that people flocked to Nazareth to behold them, and that the hearts of the sorrowing were greatly consoled by looking upon them. What charity, what reserve and meekness

Mary would show in all her relations with her neighbor! Conduct yourself in such a manner that the same may be said of you. In your conversations try to speak, when possible, of something concerning Our Lady. In this again follow the example of St. John Berchmans and St. Stanislaus Kostka. They never enjoyed a conversation so much as when they spoke of the greatness of Mary and published her praises.

Chapter V

EVENING PRAYER AND RETIRING

We now come to the last action of the day. As you have begun the day with Mary and through her, so you must end it with her. In union with Our Lady offer your evening prayer to the most Holy Trinity and, animated with Mary's feelings, recite devoutly acts of faith, hope, charity and thanksgiving. What comfort you will find in saying to God with special significance: «I love Thee with my whole heart, with Mary's whole heart.»

At the general examination of conscience, for which you may follow the rules given on page 121, you will humble yourself again for the negligences and the faults of the day, particularly for those which you may have committed in regard to your life of union with Mary. Then you will earnestly beseech the Queen of your heart to obtain pardon for you and to wash your soul in the Precious Blood of Jesus.

While saying the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, let your heart be one with your lips in reciting all those beautiful titles and invocations of Mary. Prepare the subject of your meditation seriously, always mindful of the importance attached to this exercise by all the masters of the spiritual life. At the end of your prayer ask humbly and

confidently for Our Lady's blessing: «O most holy Virgin Mary, bless us, thou and thy Divine Son!»

With Mary's blessing upon you, and, as it were, under her eyes, you will retire and take your night's rest. Another very excellent practice which I earnestly recommend to you is that of saying three *Hail Marys* by the side of your bed, in order to obtain through Mary's intercession the grace of a happy death, in accordance with a promise made by Our Lady to St. Mechtilde. «By the first *Hail Mary*,» said she, «you will ask me, in virtue of the supreme power which God the Father has given to me, to strengthen you in all your combats and to defend you against the power of the malignant enemy. By the second *Hail Mary* you will beseech me, through the admirable wisdom which I have received from my Son, to let the truth shine upon your soul and to banish from it the darkness of ignorance and error. By the third *Hail Mary* you will ask me, by the burning fire of love with which the Holy Ghost has inflamed me, to give you such ardent charity as will enable you to overcome the fear and the pangs of death.»

As soon as you are in bed, offer your sleep to Our Lady in honor of her peaceful sleep. What admirable dispositions and sublime sentiments does the Holy Ghost disclose in Mary's heart by these words of the Book of Canticles: «I sleep and my heart watcheth.» The sleep which our

heavenly Mother took did not interrupt her heart-to-heart colloquies with God. Ask her to let you share in her sentiments and recommend your soul to her as if you were about to die. Also invoke your patron saint and all the saints who have distinguished themselves by their love for Our Lady. Finally, say a *Hail Mary* in honor of your Guardian Angel, asking him to keep you from the illusions of the enemy and to offer that *Hail Mary* for you to your heavenly Mother at every hour of the night.

Should it happen that you awake during the night, let your first sigh be a yearning for Mary. A religious of the Friars Minor, Blessed Simon Garzia, was wont to greet her thus: «Hail, Daughter of the Father; Hail, Mother of the Son; Hail, Spouse of the Holy Ghost; Hail, august Temple of the most Holy Trinity!»

Such, then, is our life of union with Mary. How beautiful and precious a life when considered in the light of faith! It is not exempt, of course, from sufferings and struggles and all the trials which are inherent to our stay in this vale of tears; but as Our Lady embellishes all that we place in her pure and sacred hands, our actions and good works done in union with her will assume a special beauty and priceless merit for Heaven. How abundant then will be our harvest on the day of final recompense! What joy will be given to the angels, what glory to our heav-

only Queen and her Divine Son, by a soul that spends its life in conformity with the feelings and dispositions of Mary's heart! This life of union with Mary will be a foretaste of the joys of Heaven.

Embrace, then, with renewed zeal this devotion so sweet and salutary. But let your fervor be lasting; let it always be sustained by the goodness and the power of Mary, and it will not be weakened by either fear or weariness. Consider the lives of so many true servants of our glorious Mother. How detached from all things, how mortified in their senses, how generous they were in the service of their exalted Queen! What efforts have they not made, what hardships and persecutions have they not suffered!

Devout servant of Jesus in Mary, love your good Mother fervently, so that you may love Jesus better. Spare no efforts to make her known and loved. At the hour of your death you will bless the day on which you have resolutely entered upon this life of union with our most lovable Mother. It is related of one of her most faithful servants, St. Felix of Valois, that when he was about to breathe his last, he was comforted by the presence of his heavenly Mother. Shedding tears of happiness, he exclaimed: «Blessed day on which I gave up the world to devote myself to the service of Jesus and Mary! Blessed hours that I have spent singing the

praises of God! Happy tears that I have shed in penance for my sins! Happy austerities to which I have freely condemned myself! Happy life that I have devoted to the glory of the Mother of God! You have made ready for me this eternal happiness to which I am now so graciously invited!»

You, also, will be able to say at your last moments, when Our Lady is with you to fill your heart with joy and to assist you in your final fight for the faith: «Happy days that I have spent in the service of Mary! Happy toils and pains that I have borne! Happy life of union with Jesus and Mary! Happy eternity!»

Chapter VI

MONTHLY RETREAT

IMPORTANCE

«The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence,» says Jesus, the Son of Mary. That kingdom of Heaven is indeed the reign of God within us, during our present life, but it is also the reign of Mary in our soul. But alas, to how many of us apply the words of Blessed De Montfort in his *Secret of Mary* (N° 44): «I have found many people who with admirable zeal have adopted the exterior practices of this holy slavery of Jesus and Mary, but I have found only a few who have accepted its interior spirit, and still fewer who have persevered in it.»

Indeed, when we first begin to realize the wonders of grace and the spiritual treasures which this life of union with Mary is to bring to our soul, we are filled with holy enthusiasm for it, and ready to undertake at any cost the conquest of this interior kingdom, this wonderful life of Mary in us. But unless we exercise great vigilance over ourselves, our best resolutions will grow weak very soon, our first fervor will grow cold, and routine will find its way into our actions, so that we do them by mere force of habit, when we should do them always for Mary and in her spirit. Faithful servant of

Mary, in the first days of your consecration to your heavenly Queen you walked with generosity in her footsteps; but since then has not something stood in the way, perhaps, and prevented you from making further progress?

It is important that from time to time we should take thought and give a serious account to ourselves of the progress we are making. Nothing will serve this purpose so well as the exercise which is called the monthly retreat. This consists in choosing every month a special day to examine ourselves on our duties, to renew our good resolutions and especially to prepare ourselves for death.

If on that day you cannot leave off all your ordinary occupations, try at least to give part of the day to some exercises of piety. The main point, however, is to spend the day in interior recollection, so that you may speak freely to your heavenly Mother and listen to her voice more attentively.

We shall first give you a general method for the *monthly retreat* and then speak of the *preparation for death*.

METHOD OF MAKING THE MONTHLY RETREAT

On the eve of the day which you have chosen for your monthly retreat, begin preparing for this holy exercise by awaking in your heart lively

feelings of confidence in Mary. In spite of your numberless infidelities, this good Mother wishes to bestow her favors upon you once more. She is ready to receive you with open arms, and says to you: «Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits» (Ecclus. xxiv, 26). Thank her for this kind invitation and say a little prayer to recommend to her this day of retreat during which you are going to renew your fervor in her service. If possible, practice some slight mortification in your eating and drinking for the same intention. Also prepare carefully the subject of your meditation, which ought to be on one of the great truths of our religion, such as, the particular judgment, hell, resistance to divine grace, or lukewarmness.

As soon as you are awake the next morning, say: «I am on retreat.» With renewed fervor give yourself to Our Lady, repeating the words of your consecration: «I am all thine, my dear Mother, and all I have is thine.» While dressing, consider how glorious it is for you to be entirely dependent on this heavenly Queen. Remember the promise you made of ever serving her faithfully, and ask of her the grace that you may avail yourself of this day for the spiritual progress of your soul.

Then say your morning prayer and make your meditation with as much recollection as if this

day were to be the last of your life. If you were to foresee that during the day you might not have time at your disposal to make your preparation for death, you may do it during the meditation, by pondering on the considerations which you will find further on. In that case, put off until night only the *Act of Resignation* and the *Prayer for a Happy Death*.

Hear Mass with such dispositions as though you were certain of dying this day. In union with the feelings of Mary at the foot of the cross, offer yourself in sacrifice to God with Jesus Christ upon the altar. Beseech your heavenly Father, through the Precious Blood of His Son and the merits of Our Lady, to grant you pardon for your numberless sins and all the graces necessary that you may never more offend Him.

Receive Holy Communion as if it were for the last time in your life. Adopt the dispositions of the Immaculate Heart of your Mother, when, before dying, she received her Divine Son Whom she loved so much. Consider the feelings with which her beautiful soul must have been filled when the archangel, who had brought her the message that she was to be the Mother of God, came to tell her that her exile here below was ended. Oh, the humility, the gratitude, the ardent love of her heart at that moment! But we do not deserve to know all those wonders. Yet in order

to obtain a share in those admirable dispositions of Mary, offer your Communion to thank the Lord for the admirable death of Our Lady. During your thanksgiving, while you let Mary act freely in you, speak to Jesus about your retreat. Ask Him to give you the grace to correct your faults, to grow in holiness, and to spend this new month for His honor and glory. How clearly will Our Lady make known to you that all is but vanity in this life except to love God and to serve him faithfully.

Say the *Little Office of Our Lady*, five decades of the Rosary, or even fifteen decades if you can, with all the fervor of your soul, remembering that while doing so, you are united in prayer with many saintly souls and even with the angels in Heaven. It will be profitable to you if at each decade you examine your conscience for a few seconds to see whether you practice the virtues which you ask for in each mystery. Alas! What reason have you not for humiliating yourself, because you are so poor even with so many treasures in your hands! Give new life, then, to your zeal and confidently beseech your heavenly Mother, by her tears and her anguish, to obtain for you the grace of being her true and faithful slave of love.

Besides the exercises of piety on the day of the retreat, see that you perform also with renewed

zeal and in a more perfect union with Mary, all the other actions of the day, even the most ordinary.

In the afternoon, devote some time to the serious observation of the present state of your soul and then try to compare the result of your examination with that of your previous retreats.

To make this examination, place yourself in the presence of God, and having implored the light of the Holy Ghost, consider under the eyes of Mary, how you are at present disposed towards God, towards your neighbor and towards the practice of the principal virtues of your state in life.

But the chief point on which you ought to examine yourself is the zeal you evince in trying to do all your actions in union with Our Lady, for therein lies the short, perfect and easy way of possessing Jesus. Examine yourself, therefore, seriously and as long as possible, following the method of particular examen given on page 123.

During the day, if you have more time at your disposal, recall your resolutions; visit the Blessed Sacrament, repeating within your soul fervent acts of love, hope, self-offering, etc. (You would do well to use those found in the next chapter.)

Towards the end of the day, make your *preparation for death*, and conclude with a hymn of thanksgiving, for example, the *Magnificat*.

Rest assured that if every month you practice this salutary exercise faithfully, you will draw from it great profit for your soul. There are especially two principal advantages attached to it: 1° If you were not able to make these acts at the hour of your death, Our Lord would lay them to your account as if you had really made them at that moment. He assured St. Gertrude of this. 2° If you are able to make them at that supreme moment, you will certainly make them more easily and more perfectly, because you have formed the habit during life, and thus your merits will be more abundant. May Our Lady obtain this grace for you!

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

Kneel down before a crucifix and imagine that your last hour has struck or that your Guardian Angel has come to tell you, as formerly the prophet said to Ezechias: «Give charge concerning thy house, for thou shalt die and not live.» (4 Kings xx, 1.)

First Consideration

I shall die. My soul, search deeply into this weighty thought, which has caused many souls that were as frivolous as you to become detached from the things of the world and from themselves, and has made them generous souls. *I shall die.* That means I shall leave everything: my parents, my friends, my pleasures, my pos-

sessions and all that is most dear to me. A casket and six feet of earth will be left me—and this will happen very soon. How short, indeed, even the longest life is!

I shall die. My body will be food for worms. It will return into the dust whence it came. It will fall into universal oblivion. Such is the destiny of this body of mine which I now idolize. Ah! How this thought, far from frightening me, ought to cheer me, if I were a true child of Mary. Should I not long for that blessed moment?

But that which really ought to frighten me is not death, but rather the dreadful account which I must render before the tribunal of the Supreme Judge of my whole life, of all the works I have done, of all the religious exercises I have performed, of all the graces I have received, of all the good and all the evil that I have done or intended to do. Even the saints dreaded this terrible moment, yet I, frivolous and thoughtless that I am and guilty of having rejected so many graces, I tremble not! What will become of me?

Dwell for a while on these thoughts.

Second Consideration

When shall I die? I do not know. About 150,000 people die every day and appear before the tribunal of God. I may die today. Am I ready to die? I am living in a condition in which I should not wish to die, yet I know that death is always

near me. O my God, perhaps I have but a few days more to live, and I am so wanting in merits for Heaven! I could have enriched my soul with the works I have done, with my prayers and Holy Communions, and here I am with empty hands. Yet I am the child of her who is the treasurer of God's graces.

What reason have I not to feel ashamed? Is it not high time for me to change the fickle and tepid life I have been leading?

Third Consideration

How shall I die? Will it be unexpectedly and without having the use of my faculties, or shall I die after a prolonged illness which will allow me to make my confession and to receive the last sacraments? I do not know; I am, and I shall always be, in complete ignorance on this point. Yet that uncertainty matters little. The important thing with which I must engross myself and deeply impress my mind is that death is the echo of life. If I want to die well, I must live well. O my God, impress my mind with a holy fear of Thee. Let me live holily that I may die the death of the just. I entreat Thee to grant me this grace through the merits of the Blood of Thy Son and the tears of Mary.

Ponder on these weighty thoughts as long as possible, while you keep before your mind the peaceful death of the saints, especially the most peaceful death of your heavenly Mother. Make

such resolutions as this meditation will necessarily suggest to you; above all, the resolution of correcting your predominant fault and of doing faithfully all your works in union with Mary. Then, before your crucifix, recite attentively and devoutly the following act of resignation.

ACT OF RESIGNATION

O Supreme Master of life and death! My Lord and my God! As a punishment for sin Thou hast condemned all men to die. Behold me prostrate at Thy feet. I submit to Thy law, I adore Thy justice. Because of the numberless sins of my life I deserve to die a thousand times. I accept death from Thy loving hands as the just punishment due to my sins. Let Thy will be done in me, O my God, I am ready to obey Thee. Let me die since Thou dost will it. Let me die at the hour, in the place and the manner which Thou pleasest. But, O my God, I beseech Thee, through the agony of Jesus and the anguish of Mary, to have mercy on the soul of Thy child. Let me die the death of the elect, and let me breathe my last, whispering the holy names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

O Mary, my Sovereign Queen, thou art the refuge of sinners and the special advocate of the dying. I beseech thee, by the anguish which thou didst feel at the death of Jesus, graciously to

assist me with thy motherly care at the moment of my passing into eternity, and to protect me against the attacks of the devil, that I may remit my soul peacefully into thy hands. Pray for me now and at the hour of my death.

My loving protector, Saint Joseph, my Guardian Angel, my holy patron saints and all ye saints of Heaven who had the happiness here on earth to be so much loved by our dear Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and who know better than I how dangerous our passing from time into eternity is and how greatly we need assistance, ah, do not abandon me at that supreme moment, but help me to die a happy and holy death, that I may enjoy your protection throughout all eternity. Amen.

Chapter VII

SPIRITUAL COVENANT WITH MARY

PRACTICES OF LOVE

«How can I live without loving Mary! And if I love her, how shall I not think of her at every moment!» (St. Bernard.)

Devout servant of Mary, if you wish to think frequently of the beloved Queen of All Hearts, adopt the practice of ejaculatory prayers. In the opinion of the saints, ejaculations are a most appropriate means to lead us promptly to a life of intimate union with Our Lady and to establish her kingdom in our soul. Choose a few aspirations, whichever you prefer, as for example: «*I love thee . . . I praise thee . . . I offer thee*»; and make an agreement with your good Mother that every time you say these words, you intend to express them in their full extent, as given below.

We first give you here a general formula which you may renew from time to time, for example, once a month on the day of the monthly retreat.

SPIRITUAL COVENANT WITH MARY

Most holy Mother of God, my Queen and my Mother, if I were not hindered by my wretched

condition, I would ever remain prostrate at thy feet; never would I leave thee. But that is not possible. I wish, however, to be present before thee very frequently, and as thou knowest every impulse and desire of my heart, I want to make the following spiritual covenant with thee:

I Love Thee

Every time that I say: «My dear Mother, I love thee,» I wish to tell thee that, after Jesus, I love thee with my whole heart, that I love thee a thousand times more than myself, more than my life, my honor, and all that is dear to me in Heaven and on earth.

I Offer Thee

When I say to thee: «I offer thee,» I mean that I offer thee my heart with all its affections, as well as all the honor which is rendered to thee in Heaven and on earth; I offer thee the praises of all the saints, the love of thy holy Son and of the Blessed Trinity.

I Rejoice

When thou hearest me say: «I rejoice,» it will be because of thy greatness and thy glory; it will be because thou art the masterpiece of God's hands, the wonder of nature, of grace and of glory; because thy happiness is permanent, because thy power is unlimited in the kingdom of thy Son; because no creature will ever be equal

to thee in merit, however worthily it may serve thee.

I Wish I Could

When I say but these words: «O admirable Mother, I wish I could,» I pray thee consider all the desires of my heart, for I do wish that I alone could give thee as much honor as all men and angels together; I wish I had a heart capable of loving thee as thou truly deservest; I wish all the glory of the world were mine, that I could have the pleasure of sacrificing it to thee; I wish I could make myself nothing but love and praise for thee. I wish also that for the greater glory of Jesus, nothing could be done here on earth, except with thee, in thee, through thee and for thee, O glorious, O amiable, O most loving Mother of Jesus!

Thou Art

When I say: «O faithful Mother, thou art,» deign to add in my behalf: thou art the glory of heaven and earth; thou art the worthy Mother of God, the help of Christians, the comforter of the afflicted, the refuge of sinners; thou art my Mother, my strength, my hope, my life, my supplement, my heart, my soul, my all after Jesus.

I Am

And when, declaring that I am wholly submitted to thee, I say: «I am,» I mean that I am the most grateful and the most obedient of thy

children, the most humble and most zealous of thy servants; I am entirely thine, in order that thou mayest dispose of me as thou pleasest, without the least opposition on my part.

PRACTICES OF LOVE FOR MARY

The Blessing of Mary

«O most holy Virgin Mary, bless us, thou and thy Divine Son.»

St. Stanislaus Kostka, before beginning any of his daily actions, would turn towards one of the many shrines which Rome has erected in honor of the Queen of Heaven and lovingly implore the blessing of his good Mother. You also must not content yourself with asking Our Lady for her blessing in the morning and at night, before and after your exercises of piety, but following the example of the saints, implore her blessing frequently during the course of the day, and more particularly in time of temptation. «There can be no doubt,» says St. Bernard, «that he who receives Mary's blessing, is blessed also by God, and he must rest assured that on the day of Judgment he will be numbered among those that shall hear the peaceful and consoling words: Come ye blessed of my Father.»

The Name of Mary

Love to repeat this sweet name which the saints were wont to apply as a healing balm to

their heart. Mary! O sweet name which reminds me of my good Mother, of her who mercifully distributes the treasures of God! Name full of strength, of comfort, of life for my soul!

Adopt the habit of frequently repeating this name, and soon it will delight you with its charm. «O Mary, O Mary!» exclaims Blessed Suso, as in rapture. «What must thou be in person, if thy very name is so lovely and so sweet!»

Images of Mary

In imitation of Blessed De Montfort and many other devout servants of Our Lady, always show respect, by an exterior sign, to the images of Mary, for the honor given to Mary is rendered to Jesus. St. Leonard would never pass in front of a statue of Our Lady without greeting her and saying: «O Mary, thou art my well-beloved.» St. Bernard would do the same and say: «My heavenly Queen, how can I help but love thee! And if I love thee, how can I help but think of thee at every moment!» «O Jesus and Mary, you are my dearest love,» Alphonsus Rodriguez used to say frequently. «Let me suffer for you, let me die for you, let me belong entirely to you and be wholly detached from myself.»

At Each Hour

When you hear the clock strike the hour, say, if possible, a *Hail Mary*. Remember the words

of St. Alphonsus de Liguori: «A *Hail Mary* is worth more than the whole world.» At the same time renew your good resolutions, above all that of conforming to the dispositions of Mary's heart during the next hour.

Chapter VIII

SYNOPSIS OF OUR LIFE OF UNION WITH MARY

My motto: «All for Jesus through Mary,
Mediatrix of All Graces.»

“She is my sure reliance and the reason of
my hope.” (St. Bernard.)

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

I must perform all my actions *through* Mary,
with Mary, *in* Mary and *for* Mary. I am and
will always be her slave of love.

Mary is my Mother, I belong to her;

Mary is my Queen, I obey her;

Mary is my mistress, I serve her;

Mary is my teacher, I listen to her;

Mary is my model, I imitate her;

Mary is my star, I follow her;

Mary is my support, I rely on her;

Mary is my strength, I am strong with her;

Mary is my refuge, I seek shelter in her.

MARY IS MY ABODE

I live hidden within the impregnable fortress
of her Immaculate Heart!

There, I wish to love, suffer and die in order to live eternally with Jesus in glory!

«Lord, I am the servant of Thy servants» and I will always say with Mary: «Be it done to me according to Thy word.»

PRACTICAL SUMMARY

“May Mary’s soul be in each of us to magnify the Lord! May Mary’s spirit be in each of us to rejoice in God!” (*St. Ambrose.*)

1. *Habitual aspiration* in order to confide and consecrate myself to Mary without reserve: «I am all Thine, dear Mother, and all I have is Thine.»

2. *Every morning and night*: Devoutly kiss the medal of Our Lady and the chain, considering the latter as the sensible sign of the spiritual link binding you to Mary, and say, with all the fervor of your soul, the short act of consecration «I am all Thine and all I have is Thine, O most loving Jesus, through Mary, Thy holy Mother.” (Indulgence of 300 days.)

Then devoutly recite your prayer in union with Mary.

3. *In all your actions*, let the following thoughts be habitually in your mind:

«My dear Mother, act in me! Pray in me! Suffer in me! Speak in me! Work in me and with me for Jesus.»

And thus do all things calmly and peacefully, faithfully and with perseverance.

4. *Meditation* in the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

My good Mother, I must meditate; without meditation there follow lukewarmness and the dreaded peril of hell. My life will be no better than my meditation.

I confide to thee the three faculties of my soul: my memory, my understanding and my will.

Be present in my memory to erase every thought except the thought of Jesus and thee.

Be present in my understanding to banish all but the knowledge of Jesus and thee.

Be present in my will to uproot all but the desire of Jesus and thee.

My good Mother, let us consider the virtue most necessary for me and the example Jesus has given me.

Benefits of meditation: Profound and habitual recollection in Mary and Jesus.

Perfect submission to the influence of grace so as to be in a position to say at all times in union with Mary: «I am the Lord's slave. May He do to me as He will.»

5. *Holy Mass:* My good Mother, lead me to Calvary. Offer me with Jesus to His Father. Teach me to sacrifice Jesus with thee and to sacrifice myself as thou didst sacrifice thyself.

6. *Confession*: My good Mother, let me share thy profound sorrow and intense horror for sin, even venial sin. Let thy virginal purity and thy perfect fidelity destroy the slightest imperfection of my soul. Wash every stain of sin from my soul with thy Son's Precious Blood. Help me to confess all my sins without dissimulation and with true contrition for them. Strengthen my good resolutions. Help me to perform my penance.

Grant me thy sincerity in everything.

7. *Communion*: My good Mother, give me my Jesus often, even daily. I have such need of my Savior!

Lend me thy heart and receive Him in me.

Adore, love, beseech and glorify Him for me.

Make Him live, grow, rule, and work in me.

Extend also, O my good Mother, and strengthen His reign in the hearts of others. May He reign everywhere and for all time!

8. *Visit to the Blessed Sacrament*: Come with me into the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Help me speak to Him and listen to Him. Help me to understand His thoughts and wishes and to follow Him always and in all things, just as thou didst.

9. *Spiritual reading*: Thou dost ask me to read daily some holy book, so that I may come to

know Jesus and love Him. Thou dost want me to flee, as I would hell itself, all bad literature. It is thy will, it is God's will, it is mine also, O Mary my Mother!

10. *Behavior and conversations:* My good Mother, grant that my conduct may become like thine. Grant that it may be always upright and humble. Grant that I may not be an occasion of sin for anyone. Let my recreation be spent in thy presence, away from worldly and dangerous amusements.

11. *Particular examen:* With thy help, O Mary, I will try to uproot my predominant fault. Show me my defects just as thou seest them. I must correct and punish myself, if I wish to be saved.

12. *At all times:* Forget all else and see your good Mother alone, kindly watching over you, in order to unite you to Jesus, your King.

Strive gently but effectively, with her and like her, to do always what would be most pleasing to Our Lord. Diligently avoid anything which could displease Him.

Avoid especially attachment to self or to perishable goods.

Accept everything as coming through Mary's hands. Give nothing to God or man without confiding it to her virginal hands.

In a word, try to breathe Mary as much as the body breathes the air, in order to attain the highest degree of union with Jesus.

“THIS DO AND THOU SHALT LIVE”

Part III

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES
AND PRAYERS

IN THE SPIRIT OF HOLY SLAVERY

THE CONSECRATION

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

MARIAN PRAYERS

VARIOUS PRAYERS

I

CONSECRATION TO JESUS THROUGH MARY

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

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

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

The object of this consecration is to cast off the spirit of the world, which is contrary to that of Jesus Christ, in order to acquire fully the spirit of Jesus Christ through the Blessed Virgin. Hence the practices suggested by Blessed

De Montfort: renouncement of the world, knowledge of self, of the Blessed Virgin and of Jesus Christ.

FIRST PERIOD

Twelve Preliminary Days

Renouncement of the World

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

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

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

Prayers to be said every day: Veni, Creator and Ave, Maris Stella.

Suitable reading for the twelve days: Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapters 5, 6, 7.

Imitation of Christ, Book I, chapters 13, 18, 25; Book III, chapters 10, 40.

Spiritual Exercises: Examine your conscience, pray, practice renouncement, mortification, purity of heart; this purity is the indispensable condition for contemplating God in Heaven, to see Him on earth and to know Him by the light of faith.

Veni, Creator

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord.
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my
Savior.

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

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

And His mercy is from generation to gener-
ations, to them that fear Him.

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

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

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

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

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

Glory be to the Father, etc.

(Indulgence of three years. Plenary indulgence,
under the usual conditions, if recited daily for a
month.—*Preces et Pia Opera*, 291.)

Ave, Maris Stella

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

{Indulgence of three years. Plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, if recited daily for a month.—*Preces et Pia Opera*, 292.)

SECOND PERIOD

First Week

Knowledge of Self

«During the first week they should employ all their prayers and pious actions in asking for a knowledge of themselves and for contrition of their sins; and they should do this in a spirit of humility.»

During this week, we shall consider not so much the opposition that exists between the spirit of Jesus and ours, as the miserable and humiliating state to which our sins have reduced us. Moreover, the True Devotion being an easy,

short, sure and perfect way to arrive at that union with Our Lord which is Christian perfection, we shall enter seriously upon this way, strongly convinced of our misery and helplessness. But how attain this without a knowledge of ourselves?

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

Reading: Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapters 24, 25.

Gospel of St. Luke, chapters 11, 13, 16, 17, 18.

Imitation of Christ, Book I, chapter 24; Book II, chapter 5; Book III, chapters 7, 8, 13, 20, 30, 47.

Treatise on True Devotion, nos. 78–82, 227, 228.

Spiritual Exercises: Prayers, examens, reflection, acts of renouncement of our own will, of contrition for our sins, of contempt of self—all performed at the feet of Mary, for it is from her we hope for light to know ourselves, and it is near her that we shall be able to measure the abyss of our miseries without despairing.

Litany of the Holy Ghost
(*For private devotion only*)

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Father all powerful, *have mercy on us.*

Jesus, Eternal Son of the Father, Redeemer of the world, *save us.*

Spirit of the Father and the Son, boundless life of both, *sanctify us.*

Holy Trinity, *hear us.*

Holy Ghost, Who proceedest from the Father and the Son, *enter our hearts.*

Holy Ghost, Who art equal to the Father and the Son, *enter our hearts.*

Promise of God the Father,

Ray of heavenly light,

Author of all good,

Source of heavenly water,

Consuming fire,

Ardent charity,

Spiritual unction,

Spirit of love and truth,

Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

Spirit of counsel and fortitude,

Spirit of knowledge and piety,

Spirit of the fear of the Lord,

Spirit of grace and prayer,

Spirit of peace and meekness,

Spirit of modesty and innocence,

Holy Ghost, the Comforter,

Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier,

Holy Ghost, Who governest the Church,

Gift of God, the Most High,

Spirit Who fillest the universe,

Spirit of the adoption of the children of God,

Have mercy on us.

Holy Ghost, *inspire us with horror of sin.*

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

Holy Ghost, *shed Thy light in our souls.*

Holy Ghost, *engrave Thy law in our hearts.*

Holy Ghost, *inflame us with the flame of Thy love.*

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

Holy Ghost, *teach us to pray well.*

Holy Ghost, *enlighten us with Thy heavenly inspirations.*

Holy Ghost, *lead us in the way of salvation.*

Holy Ghost, *grant us the only necessary knowledge.*

Holy Ghost, *inspire in us the practice of good.*

Holy Ghost, *grant us the merits of all virtues.*

Holy Ghost, *make us persevere in justice.*

Holy Ghost, *be Thou our everlasting reward.*

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

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

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

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

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

Let us pray

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

Litany of the Blessed Virgin

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*

God the Holy Ghost, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, *pray for us.*

Holy Mother of God,

Holy Virgin of virgins,

Mother of Christ,

Mother of divine grace,

Mother most pure,

Mother most chaste,

Mother inviolate,

Mother undefiled,

Mother most amiable,

Mother most admirable,

Pray for us.

Mother of good counsel,
Mother of our Creator,
Mother of our Savior,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most venerable,
Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,
Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of gold,
Ark of the covenant,
Gate of Heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of angels,
Queen of patriarchs,
Queen of prophets,
Queen of Apostles,
Queen of martyrs,

Pray for us.

Queen of confessors,
 Queen of virgins,
 Queen of all saints,
 Queen conceived without original sin,
 Queen of the most holy Rosary,
 Queen of peace,
 Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the
 world, *spare us, O Lord.*
 Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the
 world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*
 Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the
 world, *have mercy on us.*
 Christ hear us,
Christ graciously hear us.
 V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
 R. That we may be made worthy of the prom-
 ises of Christ.

Pray for us.

Let us pray

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

(Indulgence of seven years. Plenary indulgence,
 under the usual conditions, if recited with the versicle
 and oration daily for a month.—*Preces et Pia Opera*,
 290.)

Second Week

Knowledge of the Blessed Virgin

«They shall devote the second week to the knowledge of the Blessed Virgin.»

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

Mary is our sovereign and our mediatrix, our Mother and our mistress. Let us then endeavor to know the effects of this royalty, of this mediation, and of this maternity, as well as the grandeurs and prerogatives which are the foundation or consequences thereof. Our Mother is also a perfect mold wherein we are to be molded in order to make her intentions and dispositions ours. This we cannot achieve without studying the interior life of Mary; namely, her virtues, her sentiments, her actions, her participation in the mysteries of Christ and her union with Him.

Prayers: Litany of the Holy Ghost. *Ave, Maris Stella.* Litany of the Blessed Virgin. Blessed De Montfort's Prayer to Mary. Recitation of the Rosary.

Reading: Gospel according to St. Luke, chapters 1, 2. Gospel according to St. John, chapter 2. *Treatise on True Devotion*, nos. 1-18, 90-93, 105-182, 213-225. *Secret of Mary*, nos. 23-34.

Spiritual Exercises: Acts of love, pious affections 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 ardent charity, her heroic patience, her angelic sweetness and her divine wisdom; «these being,» as Blessed De Montfort says, «the ten principal virtues of the Blessed Virgin.»

Litany of the Holy Ghost, page 221.

Ave, Maris Stella, page 219.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin, page 224.

Blessed De Montfort's Prayer to Mary

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

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

Such is, O heavenly Mary, the «best part» which the Lord has given thee and which shall never be taken away from thee,—and this thought fills my heart with joy. As for my part here below, I wish for no other than that which was thine: to believe sincerely without spiritual

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

Third Week

Knowledge of Jesus Christ

«During the third week, they shall apply themselves to the study of Jesus Christ.»

What is to be studied in Christ? First the Man-God, His grace and glory; then His rights to sovereign dominion over us; since, after having renounced Satan and the world, we have taken Jesus Christ for our «Lord.» What next shall be the object of our study? His exterior actions and also His interior life; namely, the virtues and acts of His Sacred Heart; His association with Mary in the mysteries of the Annunciation and Incarnation, during His infancy and hidden life, at the feast of Cana and on Calvary.

Prayers: Litany of the Holy Ghost. *Ave, Maris Stella.* Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus or of the Sacred Heart. Blessed De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus. The prayer: *O Jesus living in Mary.*

Reading: Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapters 26, 27.

Gospel according to St. John, chapters 13 et ff. *Imitation of Christ*, Book II, chapters 7, 11, 12. Book III, chapters 5, 6, 56; Book IV, chapters 1, 8, 13.

Treatise on True Devotion, nos. 60–67, 183, 212, 226–265.

Spiritual Exercises: Acts of love of God, thanksgiving for the blessings of Jesus, contrition and resolution.

Litany of the Holy Ghost, page 221.

Ave. Maris Stella, page 219.

Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Jesus, hear us.

Jesus, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven,

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God the Holy Ghost,

Holy Trinity, one God.

Jesus, Son of the living God.

Jesus, splendor of the Father,

Have mercy
on us.

Jesus, brightness of eternal light,
Jesus, King of glory,
Jesus, sun of justice,
Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary,
Jesus, most amiable,
Jesus, most admirable,
Jesus, mighty God,
Jesus, Father of the world to come,
Jesus, angel of the great council,
Jesus, most powerful,
Jesus, most patient,
Jesus, most obedient,
Jesus, meek and humble of heart,
Jesus, lover of chastity,
Jesus, lover of us,
Jesus, God of peace,
Jesus, author of life,
Jesus, model of virtues,
Jesus, lover of souls,
Jesus, our God,
Jesus, our refuge,
Jesus, Father of the poor,
Jesus, treasure of the faithful,
Jesus, Good Shepherd,
Jesus, true light,
Jesus, eternal wisdom,
Jesus, infinite goodness,
Jesus, our way and our life,
Jesus, joy of angels,
Jesus, King of patriarchs,
Jesus, master of Apostles,

Have mercy on us.

Jesus, teacher of Evangelists,
 Jesus, strength of martyrs,
 Jesus, light of confessors,
 Jesus, purity of virgins,
 Jesus, crown of all saints,
 Be merciful, *spare us, O Jesus.*
 Be merciful, *graciously hear us, O Jesus.*
 From all evil,
 From all sin,
 From Thy wrath,
 From the snares of the devil,
 From the spirit of fornication,
 From everlasting death,
 From the neglect of Thine inspirations,
 Through the mystery of Thy holy In-
 carnation,
 Through Thy nativity,
 Through Thine infancy,
 Through Thy most divine life,
 Through Thy labors,
 Through Thine agony and Passion,
 Through Thy cross and dereliction,
 Through Thy sufferings,
 Through Thy death and burial,
 Through Thy Resurrection,
 Through Thine Ascension,
 Through Thine institution of the most Holy
 Eucharist,
 Through Thy joys,
 Through Thy glory,

Have mercy
 on us.

Jesus, deliver us.

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

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

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

Jesus hear us,

Jesus, graciously hear us.

Let us pray

O Lord, Jesus Christ, Who hast said: Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you: grant, we beseech Thee, to us who ask the gift of Thy divine love, that we may ever love Thee with all our hearts, and in all our words and actions, and never cease praising Thee.

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

(Indulgence of seven years. Plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, if recited with the oration daily for a month.—*Preces et Pia Opera*, 89.)

Litany of the Sacred Heart

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,
 God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
 God the Holy Ghost,
 Holy Trinity, one God,
 Heart of Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father,
 Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Ghost
 in the womb of the Virgin Mother,
 Heart of Jesus, substantially united with the
 Word of God,
 Heart of Jesus, of infinite majesty,
 Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God,
 Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High,
 Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of
 Heaven,
 Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity,
 Heart of Jesus, abode of justice and love,
 Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love,
 Heart of Jesus, abyss of all virtues,
 Heart of Jesus, most worthy of all praise,
 Heart of Jesus, King and center of all hearts,
 Heart of Jesus, in whom are all the treasures
 of wisdom and knowledge,
 Heart of Jesus, in whom dwells all the ful-
 ness of divinity,
 Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father was well
 pleased,
 Heart of Jesus, of whose fulness we have all
 received,
 Heart of Jesus, desire of the everlasting hills,

Have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, patient and most merciful,
 Heart of Jesus, enriching all who invoke
 Thee,
 Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness,
 Heart of Jesus, propitiation for our sins,
 Heart of Jesus, loaded down with opprobrium,
 Heart of Jesus, bruised for our offenses,
 Heart of Jesus, obedient unto death,
 Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance,
 Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation,
 Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection,
 Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation,
 Heart of Jesus, victim for sin,
 Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who trust
 in Thee,
 Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in
 Thee,
 Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints,
 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 hearts like unto Thine.

Have mercy on us.

Let us pray

Almighty and everlasting God, graciously regard the Heart of Thy well-beloved Son and the acts of praise and satisfaction which He renders

Thee on behalf of us sinners, and through their merit grant pardon to us who implore Thy mercy, in the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ; Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. R̄.
Amen.

(Indulgence of seven years. Plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, if recited with the versicle and oration daily for a month.—*Preces et Pia Opera*, 213.)

Blessed De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus

O most loving Jesus, deign to let me pour forth my gratitude before Thee, for the grace Thou hast bestowed upon me in giving me to Thy holy Mother through the devotion of Holy Bondage, that she may be my advocate in the presence of Thy majesty and my support in my extreme misery. Alas, O Lord! I am so wretched that without this dear Mother I should be certainly lost. Yes, Mary is necessary for me at Thy side and everywhere: that she may appease Thy just wrath, because I have so often offended Thee; that she may save me from the eternal punishment of Thy justice, which I deserve; that she may contemplate Thee, speak to Thee, pray to Thee, approach Thee and please Thee; that she may help me to save my soul and the souls of others; in short, Mary is necessary for me that I may always do Thy holy will and seek Thy greater glory in all things. Ah, would that I could proclaim throughout the whole

world the mercy that Thou hast shown to me! Would that everyone might know I should be already damned, were it not for Mary! Would that I might offer worthy thanksgiving for so great a blessing! Mary is in me. Oh, what a treasure! Oh, what a consolation! And shall I not be entirely hers? Oh, what ingratitude! My dear Savior, send me death rather than such a calamity, for I would rather die than live without belonging entirely to Mary. With St. John the Evangelist at the foot of the cross, I have taken her a thousand times for my own and as many times have given myself to her; but if I have not yet done it as Thou, dear Jesus, dost wish, I now renew this offering as Thou dost desire me to renew it. And if Thou seest in my soul or my body anything that does not belong to this august princess, I pray Thee to take it and cast it far from me, for whatever in me does not belong to Mary is unworthy of Thee.

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

O Jesus Living in Mary

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

The Consecration

«At the end of the three weeks,» says Blessed De Montfort, «they shall go to confession and to Communion, with the intention of giving themselves to Jesus Christ in the quality of slaves of love, by the hands of Mary. After Communion, which they should try to make according to the method given further on, they should recite the formula of their consecration, which they will also find further on. They ought to write it, or have it written, unless they have a printed copy of it; and they should sign it the same day they have made it. It would be well also that on that day they should pay some tribute to Jesus Christ and our Blessed Lady, either as a penance for their past unfaithfulness to the vows of their Baptism or as a testimony of their dependence on the dominion of Jesus and Mary. This tribute ought to be according to the devotion and ability of everyone: such as, a fast, a mortification, an

alms or a candle. If they had but a pin to give in homage, yet gave it with good heart, it would be enough for Jesus, Who looks only at one's good will. Once a year at least, on the same day, they should renew the same consecration, observing the same practices during the three weeks. They might also once a month, or even once a day, renew all they have done in these few words: 'I am all Thine and all that I have belongs to Thee, O my sweet Jesus, through Mary, Thy holy Mother.' »¹

**Consecration to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom,
through the Blessed Virgin Mary**

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

¹ It is recommended that persons making the consecration register as members of the Confraternity of Mary, Queen of All Hearts.

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—I 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 fulness of His age on earth and of His glory in Heaven. Amen.

(A plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception and April 28.—*Preces et Pia Opera*, 75.)

II

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN UNION WITH MARY

The Way of the Cross is a devotion enriched with indulgences and at the same time most pleasing to Our Lady. What great treasures we find in it for our soul; what blessings we can draw from this devotion: graces of repentance and conversion for sinful souls, graces of relief and deliverance for the suffering souls in Purgatory! What joy we give to the angels by this devout exercise; what consolation to Jesus and to our blessed Mother! After the Ascension of her Divine Son, she would allay the affliction of her heart by visiting the places which Jesus had sprinkled with His blood; and thus she inaugurated this holy and consoling devotion of the Way of the Cross, which the first Christians loved to practice in imitation of Our Lady.

Faithful servant of Mary, while going from station to station, enter into the spirit of your sorrowful Mother and adopt her dispositions. But who can tell the feelings and sorrows of Mary's heart, the deep thoughts of her mind, her zeal for the salvation of souls, her love for Jesus, her ardent supplications for the extension of the rising Church? Facing the depth of the feelings stirred up in Mary's heart when she visited the scenes of Christ's Passion, the human mind is stunned and knows no longer how to give expression to its thoughts. It is here we can repeat the words of a saint: «If you would understand the Mother, you must understand the Son, for she is the worthy Mother of the Son.»

Make the Way of the Cross often, and always in union with Mary, for that is the best way to please Jesus, because thus you will approach Him with the dispositions of her who in all things complied with the wishes of His Divine Heart. There you have the best means also of pleasing your heavenly mistress, who has nothing so much at heart as to impress upon

our minds the thought of Jesus crucified. Moreover, is not the sorrow of the Son the sorrow of the Mother as well?

Every time that you perform this pious devotion, you renew in your heart the feelings of the Mother of Sorrows, and do not trouble much about the words you use. If you were but to repeat at each station these simple words: «O most loving Jesus, I offer Thee the acts of adoration, of praise and supplication which Thy holy Mother offered Thee at this station,» you would draw abundant fruit from this exercise. Mary herself will be your heavenly mistress to adore and thank Jesus in you and with you, and because of her being united with you, this devotion will yield its wonderful effects in your soul.¹

PREPARATORY PRAYER

My heavenly Mother Mary, in union with thee I am about to go along the Sorrowful Way where thou hast walked so many times. Is it possible that my heart should not be enkindled when I think of the tears which thou hast shed on remembering the sufferings of Jesus, and when I realize the ardent love that inflamed thy heart for God and for all thy children! O Mother of love, I give myself to thee that I may share the sentiments of thy heart.

Ah, suffer not that I should remain without feeling on seeing the many sufferings and in-

¹ In order to gain the indulgences attached to the Way of the Cross, it is necessary to go from station to station, if the space and the number of people will allow; or at least to kneel and stand up for each station, if one cannot walk around. No vocal prayers are required: it is sufficient to meditate on the Passion and Death of Christ.

sults borne for me! Change my heart, or rather give me thine, that with thee and through thee, I may have true compassion on Jesus suffering so much for me, that I may repent of my sins and henceforth love Him more generously. I beg thee, O Mother, to apply the indulgences which I wish to gain, to the souls of *N. N. . . .* and especially to the most forgotten souls.

<i>Sancta Mater, istud agas, Crucifixi fige plagas Cordi meo, valide.</i>		Holy Mother, pierce me through, In my heart each wound renew Of my Savior crucified.
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FIRST STATION

Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Try to penetrate into the anguished heart of your Mother when she stops before the courthouse of Pilate and remembers how the clamorous multitude demanded, with horrible shouts, the blood of her Divine Son. Who else but Jesus can understand the feelings of her heart?

O Mary, I unite with thine acts of reparation; offer them for me. Are they not my treasure before God? I detest my self-love, my frivolty and my lack of mortification, which are the cause of thy sufferings and of the humiliations of Jesus. I now mercilessly condemn my evil inclinations and more particularly my predominant fault. O tender Mother! Assist me with thy help and with the grace of thy Son. Impress upon my heart thy feelings of repent-

ance and of love, that before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge, I may hear the sentence of the elect.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

SECOND STATION

Jesus Receives His Cross

«I have a baptism [of blood] wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.» These words of Jesus show the intensity of the love with which He takes up and carries His cross. They also express the measure of Mary's love. Her heart, drawn by its love for Jesus, faithfully follows Him in His ardent desires and consents to His sacrifice. Do I not know that this worthy Mother, always conforming herself to the divine will, would have nailed her own Son to the cross with her own hands, had it been necessary for the salvation of my soul?

What shall I render to the Queen of my heart and to thee, O my Jesus, for that excess of love! Thou hast given me to understand that, in order to please Thee, I must conquer myself; I must renounce myself every day of my life; I must patiently bear with the shortcomings of my neighbor; I must practise the Christian virtues and fight the good fight. O Mary, I consecrate myself to thee at this moment, as fervently as if I did it for the first time in my life; give me thy love, give to all thy children such true love

as will enable them to shun no sacrifice in serving and pleasing thee.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

THIRD STATION

Jesus Falls the First Time

How heavily the cross weighs upon our meek Savior, now that He is weakened by so many sufferings! He totters under the blows and the rough treatment which are mercilessly dealt out to Him, and now He falls prostrate to the ground. The thorns of His crown enter deeper into His head. But why this first fall, which causes so much pain to the heart of Mary? It is to atone for your sins of pride, which have made you the slave of Satan. Make amends to the Mother of Sorrows and beg her to obtain pardon for you.

O Mary, by all the sufferings which thou hast endured, cure me of my pride, which steals into my best actions, which displeases thy Son so much and hinders the perfect union of my soul with thee.

By this first fall Jesus expiates the loss of my baptismal innocence. O Mother, how this thought ought to rend my heart with bitter remorse! But I have given myself wholly to thee, that in thee I may find the remedy for my misfortune; I trust in thy wisdom which knows how to cure me; I place my hope in thy goodness which will do it without fail, because I

ask Thee for it. O Lord Jesus, give children to Thy Mother; give her slaves of love more numerous than the stars in the heavens and as pure and innocent as the angels! Multiply them in her virginal heart.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

FOURTH STATION

Jesus Meets His Mother

Who will tell us the feelings of the Son and of the Mother in this painful meeting? Servant of Mary, ask yourself what must be the effect produced upon the loving heart of Our Lady by this look of Jesus which had pierced, so gently yet so mightily, the soul of Peter after his denial. Admire and exalt the exceeding love of these two hearts that tire not of suffering in order to save you.

My heavenly Mother, had I but the hearts of all the saints wherewith to console thee for all the anguish which thou hast felt for my salvation! To supply the deficiency of my cold heart, I offer thee the tender compassion which Jesus had on thee in this sad meeting, and I beg thee to present to Him in my behalf thy acts of reparation and of love.

Remember, dear Mother, that I also am thy child; come then to meet me and to strengthen me on the difficult and dangerous road of this life. Be always near me by that habitual presence with which thou favorest thy devoted ones.

Visit also at this moment the souls in Purgatory, especially those that are forgotten, and when my soul departs from this world, come to meet me and present me to Jesus.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

FIFTH STATION

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry the Cross

Jesus has borne the weight of your sins; He has paid all your debts; yet He has left you a share in this work of redeeming your soul, as well as in His sufferings. That is what He gives you to understand by calling the Cyrenean to help Him carry the cross.

Child of the Queen of martyrs, be convinced of this truth, that wherever you go, you will find trials and afflictions. Now is the time for you to suffer, and that is your only way to reach Heaven. But see how good your Savior is. He has given you His Mother, and to you who have consecrated yourself to her, she is more particularly a Mother who will be your stay and your consolation in this vale of tears. Who, indeed, carries his cross most easily and with most merit, if not the faithful servant of this sweet Mother?

O heavenly comforter of the children of God, be always my tender and merciful Cyrenean. Thou knowest my weakness; be my help in carrying my cross and my support in the trials and the cares of this life. Thou whose love ex-

tends to all creatures, be the help also of those who have charge of others, priests, magistrates, superiors and teachers; pour out upon them in abundance the spirit of zeal and devotedness in the discharge of their duties.

Sancta Mater . . . Holy Mother . . .

SIXTH STATION

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

A holy woman makes her way through the crowd and wipes the sacred face of our Redeemer. O love of Jesus, generous beyond all measure! He does not wait till the day of final recompense, but even in the midst of His sufferings and humiliations, He rewards the valor of this pious woman.

What a consolation for Mary to witness this act of charity rendered to her Divine Son! Do you wish to give her the same joy? You will do so, if you guard zealously the purity of your soul in which Jesus dwells by His grace. If you should unfortunately commit sin, lose no time in wiping away that stain from your soul by a sincere act of contrition, while you wait for the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance. But what grief you will cause your Blessed Mother, if, through lukewarmness and affection for sin, you allow your soul to remain more sullied than was the face of Jesus during His Passion.

O my Sovereign, let thy mercy triumph over

my rebellious and craven nature! Let thy tender hand wipe from my soul not only the stains of sin, but also its consequences, which would paralyze the effects of thy reign in my heart. Restore to the soul of thy children the image of Jesus in all its beauty. Obtain for us great purity of heart, of body and mind, that we may be made worthy to contemplate the face of God forever in Heaven.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

SEVENTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Second Time

The second fall of Jesus is far more painful than the first. The sight of the many sins which I have committed even in my early youth and of my numberless infidelities bears Him down and causes Him to fall again. Mary discerns this mystery more clearly than any other human creature, and therefore she feels more keenly the torments which rend the Heart of Jesus. Why is my heart not broken by these sad thoughts?

By this second fall, Jesus expiates more particularly the disordinate love of ourselves and of the seductions of the world, which are the cause of so many sins and of the eternal ruin of numberless souls.

O Mary, I beseech thee, by the tears and the sorrows of Jesus, to cure me of my disordinate love of creatures and to wean me from all the things which one day I must necessarily

leave behind. O wise and faithful Virgin, teach me to appraise the maxims of the world at their true value. O tender Mother, obtain for all the privileged children of thy love that the remembrance of thy sorrows may detach their heart from this world and themselves, and cause them to cling more affectionately to thy holy and Immaculate Heart.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

EIGHTH STATION

Jesus Consoles the Women of Jerusalem

Who shall give us to understand the kindness of the Heart of Jesus and His compassion on us in our sufferings? He forgets His own excruciating pains and speaks words of consolation to the holy women who follow Him. Always remember that Jesus is our comforter in all our afflictions, and whatever be the nature of our sufferings, we should go to Him, in company with Mary, and seek relief from His Sacred Heart. Where can we find a better friend than in Him Who laid down His life for love of us?

«Weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves.» Wretched creatures that we are! Why are we so hardened as to remain without feeling in the presence of so much suffering endured for us; as to remain deaf to that voice which tells us clearly that we must shed tears because of the many sins for which we have not done penance, because of the many dangers to our soul and the

many hardships on the way that leads to eternal life?

O Mary, who by the will of Jesus art my supplement to speak to Him, to petition Him, to praise Him on my behalf, shed but one tear upon my heart to soften its hardness, impress upon it the wounds of Jesus and give it a true desire for sincere penance. Let thy blessed and most powerful hand avert the chastisements which we deserve.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

NINTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Third Time

Jesus falls three times on the road to Calvary to expiate the great evils with which sin has wounded the human heart. In His last fall, our meek Savior atones for our love of pleasure. Consider the abyss of reproaches and sorrows in which He lies, as the executioners renew their blows and their insults, as they tread on this innocent Lamb and drag Him along.

O my heavenly Mother, whose heart was rent again and again, when after the Ascension thou didst stand motionless and overwhelmed with sorrow at this station, help me to atone for the many sensualities of which I have rendered myself guilty.

«If you would keep chaste,» says a saint, «you must obtain this grace by prayer and an ardent love for Our Lady, the Queen and model

of virgins.» O Virgin most chaste, who didst remain spotless as a lily among thorns, make me pure. Obtain for us who are dedicated to thee, a special love for this angelic virtue of purity, a holy love which will make us dread whatever may tarnish it in the least. Obtain for us that severe modesty which is the mark of thy true children.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

TENTH STATION

Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

Alas, we have allowed the devil to strip us of the robe of our innocence, and Jesus wishes to restore it to us at any cost. Behold your Redeemer in the dreadful torments which He now endures. They roughly tear off His garments, which have become encrusted in the wounds of His body; thus the sores are opened afresh and pieces of torn flesh adhere to the garments of our gentle Savior.

Ask yourself to what extent this inhuman treatment must have renewed the woes of Mary's Immaculate Heart. «Behold,» this Mother of Sorrows seems to say to you, «what Jesus has paid in atonement for your exaggerated love of fashions and luxuries, for your vanity and immodesty in dress.»

O Mother, I beg thy pardon for having so often made thee sad by my vanity. Make me love that exterior modesty and simplicity which

are so pleasing to thee. Help us who are the children of thy love to strip ourselves of our self-love, our self-will, our conceit, which destroy thy work in us and deprive our soul of its merits for Heaven. By thy tears and by the wounds of Jesus, clothe us with the double garments of thy virtues and riches, which thou reservest for thy true servants, that we may appear with confidence before the Judgment Seat of thy Son.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

What heartrending anguish for Mary to hear the repeated blows which are struck to nail the sacred body of Jesus to the cross! What martyrdom she undergoes! Every wound inflicted upon the body of the Son is impressed on the soul of the Mother. Her suffering is so great at this moment, thinks St. Bernardine of Sienna, that if it were divided among all creatures that are able to suffer, each and all would die at the very instant. How then is it that our exalted Queen does not expire with her Son? The love of the Son keeps the Mother for more suffering, so that the children may have life more abundantly.

With Mary, adore Jesus and renew your baptismal vows, together with your consecration to Our Lady. O good Jesus, nailed to the cross

for love of me, I renew at this moment the vows of my Baptism and the perfect consecration of myself to Thy holy Mother. By the nails which crush Thy bones and cut Thy veins, by all the sorrows of Thy Mother, fasten me inseparably to Thee, through this beautiful and perfect devotion to Mary; imbue with it my every thought, all my affections and all my works. Thou hast said: «If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to Myself.» Draw me to Thee more and more by an intimate union with Thy holy Mother; draw many souls to Thee; draw all Christians, all the peoples of the earth. O Jesus, let Mary reign perfectly in our hearts, that Thou mayest reign there Thyself in this life and in the next.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

TWELFTH STATION

Jesus Dies Upon the Cross

To approach our dying Savior in a worthy manner, let us go to Him in union with Mary. To understand His sufferings better, let us think of Mary's sorrow. Do we not know that Jesus loves to see us share in the pains of His Mother?

Child of Mary, contemplate the Queen of martyrs, who says to you while she shows you her most afflicted heart: «Attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to mine.» Answer her, weeping and heartbroken: «O Virgin, daughter

of Sion, great as the sea is thy sorrow and bitter as its billows.» Would that I could compensate thee worthily and render due homage to thine exceeding love for me! To supply my insufficiency, I offer thee the divine compassion which Jesus had on thee. He alone knows the weight and measure of thy sorrows.

O Jesus, hanging on the cross, speak to me Thy life-giving words: «Woman, behold thy child; child, behold thy Mother.» O Mary, I do not deserve to be called thy child, but Jesus has willed that it should be so. Show thyself my Mother. To compensate for my poverty, I offer thee the praises of the angels and of all thy devoted children; I offer thee the Heart of Jesus and the love of the Blessed Trinity. I place myself in thy hands and leave to thee the full right to dispose of me and of all that is mine, according to thy good pleasure and that of thy Divine Son.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

THIRTEENTH STATION

**Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross and
Laid in His Mother's Arms**

What grief is added to Our Lady's sorrows, when she sees that the executioners do not respect the body of her dear Son, even now that He is dead! How painfully is her own maternal heart pierced with the prophetic sword of Simeon, when the lance opens the Divine

Heart of Jesus, in which, according to the words of St. Bernard, she dwelt herself. What anguish she feels at this moment!

The body of Jesus is taken down and placed in Mary's arms. How her heart is rent again now that she has a close view of the horrible wounds! She now recalls the sweet caresses which she received from this loving Child when He rested upon her bosom; she gazes at the many grievous wounds inflicted by the executioners, and while she thus contemplates the lifeless body, her soul is pierced by a thousand swords.

Devout child of Mary, meditate profoundly on this mystery. Remember that Jesus consented to be covered with wounds in order to heal your sinful soul. Beg the Mother of Sorrows to obtain for you the grace that will cure you entirely.

O Virgin most holy, permit me, unworthy though I am, to place myself with Jesus in thine arms. By the bleeding wounds of His lifeless body, heal the sores of my soul; purify my body and its senses; cleanse my heart in the Blood of thy Son, and with thee unite me to the Sacred Heart of Jesus forever.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Laid in the Sepulchre

The sacrifice of Mary, like that of Jesus, must be complete. The adorable body, which she so lovingly pressed to her bosom, is laid in the

tomb and disappears from before her eyes. Ah! How willingly would she be buried with Jesus! But if she must separate herself from His body, she remains hidden in His sacred wounds.

It is said that when our Divine Savior had been laid in the sepulchre, Mary blessed the stone which covered the entrance, saying: «I bless thee, O stone, chosen by God to hide my Son from the eyes of men; mayest thou guard Him.» This heavenly Mother speaks likewise even now, when she sees her Eucharistic Son descend into our hearts in Holy Communion. She blesses our heart as the tomb of her Son; she remains there to adore Him and does not lose sight of Him.

Console your heavenly Mother once more, and with a loving heart say to her: O sweet Virgin, my Mother, I implore thee to engrave the wounds of my Savior upon my heart. Thy soul was another Calvary, which reflected all the sufferings of Jesus. May our souls be true copies of thine. Forget not all that thou hast suffered for our sake. May we, after thine example, be mindful until death of the sorrowful events of Calvary, and may their remembrance ever sustain us in our sufferings. Amen.

Sancta Mater . . .

Holy Mother . . .

III

MARIAN PRAYERS

THE LITTLE CROWN OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

St. John the Evangelist saw a woman crowned with twelve stars, clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. According to the commentators, this woman is the Blessed Virgin Mary, with her virtues and her privileges, especially that of her divine maternity. Thus originated the *Little Crown of the Twelve Stars of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, which St. Joseph Calasanctius, St. John Berchmans and many other saints made it a practice to recite frequently.

In order to make this prayer more attractive, Blessed De Montfort added to each *Hail Mary* one of the praises of the Blessed Virgin, with the invocation «Rejoice, O Virgin Mary; rejoice a thousand times.»

It is this prayer which Blessed De Montfort gave to his religious families (the Montfort Fathers and the Daughters of Wisdom) as their morning prayer. He also recommends it to all those who embrace the devotion of the holy and loving slavery of Jesus through Mary.

Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin Mary

I. Crown of Excellence

(To honor the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin, her ineffable virginity, her purity without stain and her innumerable virtues.)

1. *Our Father.*

Hail Mary.

Blessed art thou, O Virgin Mary, who didst bear the Lord, the Creator of the world; thou didst give birth to Him Who made thee and remainest a Virgin forever.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!

2. *Hail Mary.*

O holy and immaculate Virgin, I know not with what praise to extoll thee, since thou didst bear in thy womb the very One Whom the heavens cannot contain.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!

3. *Hail Mary.*

Thou art all fair, O Virgin Mary, and there is no stain in thee.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!

4. *Hail Mary.*

Thy virtues, O Virgin, surpass the stars in number.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!
Glory be to the Father.

II. *Crown of Power*

(To honor the royalty of the Blessed Virgin, her magnificence, her universal mediation and the strength of her rule.)

5. *Our Father.*

Hail Mary.

Glory be to thee, O empress of the world!
Bring us with thee to the joys of Heaven.
Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!

6. *Hail Mary.*

Glory be to thee, O treasure house of the
Lord's graces! Grant us a share in thy
riches.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!

7. *Hail Mary.*

Glory be to thee, O Mediatrix between God
and man! Through thee may the Almighty
be favorable to us.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!

8. *Hail Mary.*

Glory be to thee who destroyest heresies

and crushest demons! Be thou our loving guide.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!
Glory be to the Father.

III. Crown of Goodness

(To honor the mercy of the Blessed Virgin toward sinners, the poor, the just and the dying.)

9. *Our Father.*

Hail Mary.

Glory be to thee, O refuge of sinners! Intercede for us with God.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!

10. *Hail Mary.*

Glory be to thee, O Mother of orphans! Render the Almighty favorable to us.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!

11. *Hail Mary.*

Glory be to thee, O joy of the just! Lead us with thee to the joys of Heaven.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!

12. *Hail Mary.*

Glory be to thee who art ever ready to

assist us in life and in death! Lead us with thee to the kingdom of Heaven!

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary,
Rejoice a thousand times!
Glory be to the Father.

Let us pray

Hail, Mary, Daughter of God the Father; Hail, Mary, Mother of God the Son; Hail, Mary, Spouse of the Holy Ghost; Hail, Mary, Temple of the most Holy Trinity; Hail, Mary, my mistress, my treasure, my joy, Queen of my heart; my Mother, my life, my sweetness, my dearest hope, yea, my heart and my soul! I am all thine and all that I have is thine, O Virgin blessed above all things! Let thy soul be in me to magnify the Lord; let thy spirit be in me to rejoice in God. Set thyself, O faithful Virgin, as a seal upon my heart, that in thee and through thee I may be found faithful to God. Receive me, O gracious Virgin, among those whom thou lovest and teachest, whom thou ledest, nourishest and protectest as thy children. Grant that for love of thee I may despise all earthly consolations and ever cling to those of Heaven; until through the Holy Ghost, thy faithful Spouse, and through thee, His faithful Spouse, Jesus Christ thy Son be formed in me for the glory of the Father. Amen.

THE HOLY ROSARY

THE METHOD OF BLESSED DE MONTFORT

I unite with all the saints in Heaven, with all the just on earth and with all the faithful here present. I unite with Thee, O my Jesus, in order to praise worthily Thy holy Mother and to praise Thee in her and through her. I renounce all the distractions I may have during this rosary which I wish to say with modesty, attention and devotion, just as if it were to be the last of my life.

We offer Thee, O most Holy Trinity, this *Creed* in honor of all the mysteries of our Faith; this *Our Father* and these three *Hail Marys* in honor of the unity of Thy Essence and the Trinity of Thy Persons. We ask of Thee a lively faith, a firm hope and an ardent charity. Amen.

I believe in God, etc.

THE FIVE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

1. The Annunciation

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this first decade in honor of Thy Incarnation in Mary's womb, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through her intercession, a profound humility. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Annunciation come down into our souls. Amen.

2. The Visitation

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this second decade in honor of the Visitation of Thy holy Mother to her cousin St. Elizabeth and the sanctification of St. John the Baptist, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, charity towards our neighbor. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Visitation come down into our souls. Amen.

3. The Nativity

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this third decade in honor of Thy Nativity in the stable of Bethlehem, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, detachment from the things of the world, contempt of riches and love of poverty. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Nativity come down into our souls. Amen.

4. The Presentation in the Temple

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this fourth decade in honor of Thy Presentation in the Temple and the Purification of Mary, and we

ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, purity of body and soul. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Presentation in the Temple come down into our souls. Amen.

5. The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this fifth decade in honor of Mary's finding Thee in the Temple, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through her intercession, the gift of true wisdom. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Finding of Our Lord in the Temple come down into our souls. Amen.

THE FIVE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

1. The Agony in the Garden

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this sixth decade in honor of Thy Agony in the Garden of Olives, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, contrition for our sins. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Agony in the Garden come down into our souls. Amen.

2. The Scourging

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this seventh decade in honor of Thy bloody Scourging, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, the grace of mortifying our senses. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Scourging come down into our souls. Amen.

3. The Crowning with Thorns

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this eighth decade in honor of Thy being crowned with thorns, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, contempt of the world. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Crowning with Thorns come down into our souls. Amen.

4. The Carrying of the Cross

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this ninth decade in honor of Thy carrying of the Cross, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, patience in bearing our crosses. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Carrying of the Cross come down into our souls. Amen.

5. The Crucifixion

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this tenth decade in honor of Thy Crucifixion and ignominious death on Calvary; we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, the conversion of sinners, the perseverance of the just and the relief of the souls in Purgatory. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Crucifixion come down into our souls. Amen.

THE FIVE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

1. The Resurrection

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this eleventh decade in honor of Thy glorious Resurrection, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, love of God and fervor in Thy service. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Resurrection come down into our souls. Amen.

2. The Ascension

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this twelfth decade in honor of Thy triumphant Ascension, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, an ardent desire for Heaven, our true home. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Ascension come down into our souls. Amen.

3. The Descent of the Holy Ghost

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this thirteenth decade in honor of the Mystery of Pentecost, and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through the intercession of Thy holy Mother, the coming of the Holy Ghost into our souls. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of Pentecost come down into our souls. Amen.

4. The Assumption

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this fourteenth decade in honor of the resurrection and triumphant Assumption of Thy holy Mother into Heaven and we ask of Thee, through this Mystery and through her intercession, a tender devotion for so good a Mother. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Assumption come down into our souls. Amen.

5. The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this fifteenth decade in honor of the Coronation of Thy holy Mother, and we ask of Thee, through this Mys-

tery and through her intercession, perseverance in grace and a crown of glory hereafter. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

May the grace of the Mystery of the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin come down into our souls. Amen.

Hail Mary, beloved Daughter of the Eternal Father, admirable Mother of the Son, faithful Spouse of the Holy Ghost, august Temple of the most Holy Trinity! Hail, sovereign princess, to whom all owe subjection in Heaven and on earth! Hail, sure refuge of sinners, Our Lady of mercy, who hast never refused any request. All sinful though I am, I cast myself at thy feet and beseech thee to obtain from Jesus, thy beloved Son, contrition and pardon for all my sins, as well as the gift of divine wisdom. I consecrate myself entirely to thee with all that I have. I choose thee today for my Mother and mistress. Treat me, then, as the least of thy children and the most obedient of thy servants. Listen, my princess, listen to the sighs of a heart that desires to love and serve thee faithfully. Let it never be said that of all those who have had recourse to thee, I was the first to be abandoned. O my hope, O my life, O my faithful and Immaculate Virgin Mary, defend me, nourish me, hear me, teach me and save me. Amen.

ECCE ANCILLA DOMINI

I am in thy hands, O Mary! Mould and fashion this clay, which I am; give it a form and break it again; thou art its mistress, it may not complain. I am satisfied that it should serve thy purpose, and that nothing in me should be opposed to thy good pleasure.

Whether thou dost ask, command or forbid me, I am ready to obey. What wouldst thou have me do or not do? Whether I be exalted or humiliated, comforted or grieved, able to work for thee or incapable of anything, helpful to all around me or burdensome to everybody, I shall ever love thee and sacrifice my will to thine in all things, saying: «My soul is Mary's slave of love, let all things be done to me according to her good pleasure.»

MY QUEEN! MY MOTHER!

My Queen! My Mother! I give myself entirely to thee; and to show my devotion to thee, I consecrate to thee, this day, my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being without reserve. Wherefore, good Mother, as I am thine, keep me, guard me, as thy property and possession. *Hail Mary.*

Indulg. of fifty days; Plen. indulg., if recited daily for one month under ordinary conditions.—*S. Fœn. Ap.*, Nov. 21, 1936.

ANIMA MARIAE

Soul of Mary, sanctify me.

Heart of Mary, inflame me.

Hands of Mary, support me.

Feet of Mary, direct me.

Immaculate eyes of Mary, look upon me.

Lips of Mary, speak for me.

Sorrows of Mary, strengthen me.

O Mary, hear me.

In the wound of the Heart of Jesus, hide me.

Let me never be separated from thee.

From my enemy defend me.

At the hour of my death call me.

And bid me come to thine Immaculate Heart;

That thus I may come to the Heart of Jesus,

And there with the saints praise thee

For all eternity. Amen.

**PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN WHICH
OUR LADY TAUGHT TO ST. GERTRUDE**

O most chaste Virgin Mary, I beseech thee by that unspotted purity wherewith thou didst prepare for the Son of God a dwelling of delight in thy virginal womb, that by thine intercession I may be cleansed from every stain of sin.

O most humble Virgin Mary, I beseech thee by that most profound humility whereby thou didst merit to be raised high above all the

choirs of the angels and the saints, that by thine intercession all my negligences may be expiated.

O most loving Virgin Mary, I beseech thee, by that ineffable love which united thee so closely and so inseparably to God, that by thine intercession I may obtain an abundance of all merits. Amen.

HEAVENLY AVE MARIA

Hail, thou peerless offspring of the omnipotence of the Father, of the wisdom of the Son, of the enrapturing goodness of the Holy Ghost, Mary, who dost fill Heaven and earth with thy gentle light. Thou art full of grace, the Lord is with thee, even the only-begotten Son of the Father, and the one only Son of the love of thy virgin heart, thy sweetest Spouse and thy Beloved. Blessed art thou amongst women, for thou hast annulled the curse of Eve, and hast brought back an everlasting blessing. And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus Christ, the Lord and Creator of all things, Who doth evermore bless and sanctify, enrich and quicken all things. Amen.

GOLDEN AVE MARIA

Hail Mary, in union with that reverence wherewith God the Father greeted thee through the archangel and, by His omnipotence, delivered thee from the original stain and the

curse of sin. Hail Mary, in union with that love wherewith God the Son has endowed thee with His wisdom and has made thee a star whose light shines in Heaven and on earth. Hail Mary, in union with that sweet unction wherewith the Holy Ghost has pervaded thee and has made thee so full of grace, that every one who seeks grace, finds it in thee, and through thee obtains it.

While I thus greet thee, I pray thee to call to mind the divine operation wrought in thee by the most Holy Trinity, when, out of thy flesh, human substance was taken and so united to divine nature in one Person that God was made man and man became God; and when thy soul was suffused with such sweetness and gladness as the heart of man cannot conceive. Therefore every creature hails thee and proclaims thee blessed, and therefore thou art truly blessed and exalted above all creatures in Heaven and on earth, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, Who vivifies, sanctifies and blesses all things for ever. Amen.

AVE MARIA OF THE SEVEN SORROWS

Hail Mary, full of sorrow, Jesus crucified is with thee! Thou art deserving of pity amongst all women, and Jesus, the fruit of thy womb, is worthy of compassion.

Holy Mary, Mother of my suffering Jesus, obtain for us sinners, who have crucified thy

Divine Son, tears of repentance and love, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Filled, therefore, with confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother! To thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate! Despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

Indulg. of three years; Plen. indulg. if recited daily for one month under ordinary conditions.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, Sept. 8, 1935.

MEMORARE TO OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

Remember, O Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the unlimited power which thou possessest over the Heart of thine adorable Son. Full of confidence in thy merits, I come to implore thy protection. O sovereign mistress of the Heart of Jesus, of that Heart which is the inexhaustible source of all graces, and which thou canst open at thy pleasure, and cause all the treasures of love and mercy, of light and salvation which this Heart encloses, to descend upon men, grant me, I beseech thee, the favor which I solicit.

No, I cannot meet with a refusal, and because thou art my Mother, O Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, favorably receive my prayer and vouchsafe to hear me. Amen.

AN ACT OF TOTAL ABANDONMENT AND LOVING CONFIDENCE IN OUR LADY

Sweet Virgin Mary! My Queen and my mistress! My kind and loving Mother, in thee have I put my hope, I shall not be confounded.

Sweet Virgin Mary, I do firmly believe that from thy throne in Heaven thou ever watchest over me and over all who hope in thee; I am so thoroughly convinced that I shall never want for anything, if I expect all things from thee, that I am resolved to live in the future without the slightest uneasiness, relying entirely on thee.

Sweet Virgin Mary, thou hast obtained for me this unshakable confidence. I render thee a thousand thanks for so precious a grace. Henceforth I shall dwell in peace close to thy most pure heart, mindful of nothing but of loving and obeying thee, while thou wilt take care of me and of all that concerns me.

Sweet Virgin Mary, let the children of the world expect happiness from their riches or their talents; let others rely on the innocence of their life, on the rigor of their mortifications, on the fervor of their prayers, on the number of their good works; as for me, a poor sinner who has but the weak love of his heart, I place

my hope in thee alone, dear Mother, after God, and the foundation of my hope is my entire confidence in thy maternal goodness.

Sweet Virgin Mary, the wicked may take away my reputation and the little I possess; sickness may deprive me of my strength and of the power of working for thee. Alas, my tender Mother, I may even lose thy good graces by committing sin; but never, no never, shall I lose my loving confidence in thy motherly goodness. I shall preserve it unshaken until my last sigh, and all the efforts of hell will be powerless to rob me of it. I shall die, sweet Mother, repeating thy blessed name and placing all my confidence in thy Immaculate Heart.

What can be the reason of my being so certain that I shall never lose hope in thee, if not because thou, O sweet Virgin, hast taught me that thou art all mercy and nothing but mercy?

Yes, I am sure, my good and loving Mother, that I shall always call upon thee, because I know that thou wilt ever console me; I shall always thank thee because thou wilt ever relieve me; I shall always serve thee, because thou wilt ever help me; I shall always love thee, because thou wilt ever love me; I shall always obtain from thee all that I need, because thy munificent charity will ever exceed my hope.

Yes, it is from thee alone, O sweet Virgin, that, in spite of my unworthiness, I hope and

expect the only favor which I desire, to be with Jesus in time and in eternity. That grace can come from thee alone, because my Divine Savior has chosen thee to grant me all His favors and to conduct me safely to Him. It is thou, my Mother, who, having taught me to share the humiliations and sufferings of thy Divine Son, wilt open for me the gates of Heaven to praise and bless Him, near thee and with thee, for ever and ever. Thou art my confidence, thou art the only foundation of my hope.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY REPARATRIX

Immaculate Virgin, the refuge of sinners, thou who, to atone for the outrages committed against God and the evil inflicted on man by sin, didst resign thyself to the death of thy Divine Son, be ever propitious to us, and carry on thy work of zeal and love for us in Heaven, where thou reignest so gloriously. We wish to be thy children, do thou show thyself a Mother to us. Obtain from the divine restorer, Jesus, that by applying to our souls the fruits of His Passion and death He may free us from the bonds of our iniquities. May He be our light in darkness, our strength in weakness, our help in danger, so that after He has consoled us by His grace and love in time, He may permit us to see, possess and love Him in eternity. Amen.

PRAYER TO KNOW ONE'S VOCATION

O God, my Creator and my Father! I am Thine; from Thee only can I expect the grace I need to work out my salvation. I fully realize that it would be rashness on my part to reckon on Thy special grace, were I to choose a state of life against Thy will. Show me then, O my God, the way in which Thou wouldst have me walk. Give me that sincerity of purpose and that right intention which will assure me of Thy divine help and guidance. «Speak, O Lord, for Thy servant heareth.» In what state shall I serve Thee most faithfully? Where shall I work more zealously for Thy glory and for the salvation of my soul? Once Thy desire is known to me, nothing shall hinder me from accomplishing it, for it is right that the creature should obey the Creator, that the sheep should follow the Shepherd.

O Jesus, my Divine Savior, Who hast said: «My meat is to do the will of my heavenly Father,» grant me the grace to imitate Thee by a perfect fidelity to the will of that loving Father. Cause me to enter that state of life in which from all eternity God in His mercy purposed to save me. There shall I find in abundance the precious graces which Thou, by dying on the cross, hast obtained for me. O my Savior, I beseech Thee by the unspeakable love of Thy Divine Heart to grant my petition.

O Mary, thou hast delivered thyself to the

will of the Lord in a manner so pleasing to Him that He has given thee the highest vocation to which a creature can be called. I most earnestly appeal to thee, as to my Mother and protectress, to make known to me the will of God concerning my life. O tender Mother, to thee I commit my anxiety in regard to my vocation. I trust in thee and abandon myself entirely to thy maternal care. Thou knowest the ignorance of my mind, the unworthiness of my heart to receive God's grace. But do thou, O powerful Virgin, dispel my illusions, quell my inordinate desires and silence the alluring invitations of the world, so that my heart may hear only the voice of God. Relying on thy help, O Mary, I confidently offer myself to the will of my Creator, ready to answer Him even as thou didst: «Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word!»

PRAYER TO OUR LADY TO BE PRESENT AT OUR DEATH

O most holy Virgin Mary, in union with that most faithful love wherewith thy Son commended thee from His cross to the beloved disciple John, I commend to thee my body and soul, my thoughts, my words and my actions, my life and my death, and more especially that one last moment of my life on which eternity hangs. And as thou didst invite thy Son to thine

own blessed departure, so I invite thee now to mine, beseeching thee, by that love wherewith thou didst stand beneath the cross on which thy Son was dying, and by the bitter tears thou didst shed when thou sawest Him bow in death His sacred head, that thou be not absent from me then, but be there to succor me with a mother's tenderness, for without thee I cannot die in peace. Refuse not, O most tender Mother, this my request, which I make to thee with all the earnestness and devotion of my heart, for if I die without thee, I most justly fear lest I perish everlastingly. For how shall I, sinful and frail as I am, stand then amidst the manifold and most grievous assaults of my enemies, unless thou be near to succor me? How shall I appear in the dread day of Judgment, unless thou be my companion and my advocate? How give an account of my innumerable and grievous sins unless thou plead my cause with thy Son and obtain my pardon? Incline, then, thine ear to my supplication, O my blessed Mother, and by the love of thy Son, come unto me at my last moments, that by thine availing succor, I may be rescued from that appalling peril, and with thee, attain to everlasting bliss in Heaven. Amen.

ACT OF RESIGNATION

O Lord my God, I now at this moment readily and willingly accept at Thy hand whatever

kind of death it may please Thee to send me, with all its pains, penalties and sorrows.

All those who with a contrite heart accept from God the death it may please Him to send them may gain: an indulg. of seven years, plus a plenary indulg. to be acquired at the hour of death, providing they have made this act at least once in their lives, ordinary conditions.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, March 18, 1932.

IV

VARIOUS PRAYERS

PRAYER TO JESUS LIVING IN MARY

O Incarnate Wisdom! O sweetest and most loving Jesus! Thou Who lovest Thy holy Mother more than all angels and men; Who hast overwhelmed her with innumerable riches, honors and privileges; Who, when on earth, didst depend on her in all things and at all times; Thou Who dost so ardently desire to see Mary known and loved by all men on earth, and Who in Heaven art so intimately united to her that she is wholly transformed into Thee and is but one heart and one soul with Thee; I implore Thee, grant me without delay the grace for which I long so ardently, of a perfect union with Mary.

ANIMA CHRISTI

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Heart of Christ, enkindle me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water out of the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me.

Within Thy wounds hide me.

Let me not be separated from Thee.

From the malignant enemy defend me.
 At the hour of my death call me.
 And bid me come unto Thee;
 That with Thy saints I may praise Thee
 For all eternity. Amen.

Indulg. of three hundred days; Indulg. of seven years if recited after Holy Communion; Plen. indulg., if recited daily for one month under ordinary conditions.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, Jan. 9, 1854.

LITANY OF SAINT JOSEPH

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.*
 Saint Joseph,
 Illustrious son of David,
 Splendor of patriarchs,
 Spouse of the Mother of God,
 Chaste guardian of the Virgin,
 Foster-father of the Son of God,
 Watchful defender of Christ,
 Head of the Holy Family,
 Joseph most just,

Pray for us.

Joseph most pure,
 Joseph most prudent,
 Joseph most courageous,
 Joseph most obedient,
 Joseph most faithful,
 Mirror of patience,
 Lover of poverty,
 Model of all who labor,
 Glory of family life,
 Preserver of virgins,
 Mainstay of families,
 Solace of the afflicted,
 Hope of the sick,
 Patron of the dying,
 Terror of demons,
 Protector of Holy Church,
 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.*
 ✠. He hath made him master of his house.
 R. And ruler of all his possessions.

Pray for us.

Let us pray

O God, who in Thine ineffable providence didst vouchsafe to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Thy most holy Mother, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be worthy to have him for our intercessor in Heaven, whom on

earth we venerate as our protector: Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

Indulg. of five years; Plen. indulg., if recited daily for one month under ordinary conditions.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, March 21, 1935.

LITANY OF BLESSED DE MONTFORT

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.

Blessed De Montfort, pray for us.

Blessed De Montfort, faithful imitator of
Jesus Christ,

Blessed De Montfort, eloquent preacher of
the Cross,

Blessed De Montfort, singer of the praises
of the Sacred Heart,

Blessed De Montfort, devout slave of Jesus
in Mary,

Blessed De Montfort, apostle of the most
holy Rosary,

Blessed De Montfort, man of prayer,

Pray for us.

Blessed De Montfort, wonder of mortification,

Blessed De Montfort, impassionate lover of poverty,

Blessed De Montfort, fearless champion of truth.

Blessed De Montfort, ardent defender of the Catholic Faith,

Blessed De Montfort, zealous promoter of the glory of God and of the salvation of souls,

Blessed De Montfort, restorer of the houses of God,

Blessed De Montfort, father of the poor,

Blessed De Montfort, help of the infirm and the sick,

Blessed De Montfort, teacher of youth,

Blessed De Montfort, founder of religious congregations,

Blessed De Montfort, model of priests and missionaries,

Obtain for us true wisdom,

Obtain for us the spirit of Faith,

Obtain for us the spirit of prayer,

Obtain for us the spirit of humility,

Obtain for us love of the Cross,

Obtain for us true devotion to Mary,

Obtain for us love for the Church,

Obtain for us devotion to the vicar of

Jesus Christ,

Pray for us.

Blessed De Montfort.

Obtain for us childlike obedience to the
 infallible Head of the Church,
 Obtain for us courage in trials,
 Obtain for us love for the hidden life,
 Obtain for us zeal for the conversion of
 sinners,
 Obtain for us the grace of perseverance,
 Obtain for us the grace of a happy death,

Blessed De Montfort.

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, O Lord.*

℣. Blessed De Montfort.

℞. Intercede for us.

Let us pray

O God, Who hast made Blessed Louis Marie,
 Thy confessor, an extraordinary preacher of
 the mystery of the Cross and of the most holy
 Rosary, and through him hast enriched the
 Church with a new family: grant that, through
 his intercession, we may obtain the reward of
 eternal salvation through the life, death and
 Resurrection of Thy only-begotten Son, Who
 liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the
 Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

SHORT INVOCATIONS

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

Indulg. of fifty days; Plen. indulg., under ordinary conditions if recited daily for one month.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, Nov. 22, 1934.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Indulg. of three hundred days; Plen. indulg., under ordinary conditions if recited daily for one month.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, Jan. 13, 1922.

Sweet Heart of Jesus, be my love.

Indulg. of three hundred days.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, Jan. 13, 1920.

Sweet Heart of Jesus, be my salvation.

Indulg. of three hundred days; Plen. indulg., if recited daily for one month under ordinary conditions.—*S. C. Indulg.*, Sept. 3, 1852.

Blessed be the Holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

Indulg. of three hundred days; Plen. indulg., if recited daily for one month under ordinary conditions.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, Nov. 8, 1934.

By thine Immaculate Conception, O Mary, make my body pure and my soul holy.

Indulg. of three hundred days.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, March 27, 1935.

Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

Indulg. of three hundred days; Plen. indulg., under ordinary conditions, if recited daily for one month *S. Pœn. Ap.*, April 15, 1932.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph.

Indulg. of seven years; Plen. indulg., under ordinary conditions, if recited daily for one month.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, March 18, 1932.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, bless us now and in the agony of death.

Indulg. of three hundred days.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, March 25, 1933.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.

Indulg. of seven years for each of these invocations; Plen. indulg., under ordinary conditions, if any one of them is recited daily for one month.—*S. Pœn. Ap.*, Oct. 12, 1936.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I give myself to Thee through Mary.

Indulg. of three hundred days; Plen. indulg., if recited daily for one month, under ordinary conditions.

I am all thine and all I have I offer Thee, O most amiable Jesus, through Mary, Thy holy Mother.

300 days indulg.

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us.

Our Lady of the most Blessed Sacrament, pray for us.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

Our Lady of good studies, pray for us.

Blessed De Montfort, pray for us.

THE CONFRATERNITY OF MARY QUEEN OF ALL HEARTS

The Confraternity of Mary Queen of All Hearts was first established on March 25, 1899. Pius X erected it as an Archconfraternity in Rome on April 28, 1913.

Today there are eighty-eight branches of the Confraternity in various parts of the world: the United States, Canada, Haiti, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa. There are several hundred thousand members throughout the world.

OBJECT

The object of the Confraternity of Mary Queen of All Hearts is to establish within us the reign of Mary as a means of establishing more perfectly the reign of Jesus in our souls.

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

(1) Send in your name to be recorded in the official register by the Director, who will send you a membership leaflet.

(2) Prepare yourself to make the act of consecration to Jesus through Mary on a special day, preferably a feast of Our Lady.

(3) It is commendable to make a small offering or to do a good work in honor of Our

Lady on the day of consecration. «It would be well,» says Blessed De Montfort, «that on that day they should pay some tribute to Jesus Christ and our Blessed Lady. . . . This tribute ought to be according to the devotion and ability of each one, such as, a fast, a mortification, an alms or a candle.»

(4) Wear the medal of Our Lady Queen of All Hearts. This is not required of those who wear a crucifix in some ostensible manner.

(The Montfort Fathers cannot supply Confraternity medals during the present war emergency.)

Important: *Only those may become members who understand and practice the "Perfect Devotion" to the Blessed Virgin explained by Blessed De Montfort in the book, "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin," and the pamphlet, "The Secret of Mary."*

PRACTICES

Every morning the members renew their Consecration to Jesus through Mary, at least by using the short formula: «I am all Thine and all I have is Thine, O most loving Jesus, through Mary, Thy holy Mother.» (Indulgence of 300 days.)

After that, they apply themselves zealously to live always in dependence on Mary and to do all their actions in union with her. This is

the only obligation, and it will be easily fulfilled if during the day they renew from time to time the donation of themselves by repeating the short formula given above, or even by a mere interior act of the mind.

Other prayers most conformable to the spirit of the Confraternity, and therefore most highly recommended, are: the Rosary, the Angelus, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, the Magnificat and the Little Crown of Our Lady.

INDULGENCES

(1) Members may gain a plenary indulgence on the day of admission and the Feast of the Annunciation (Leo XIII, May 30, 1899); on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and Blessed De Montfort's Day, provided that the Act of Consecration be renewed (Pius X, December 24, 1907); on Christmas Day, the Feast of the Purification, both feasts of Our Lady of Sorrows: the Friday after Passion Sunday and September 15th, the Feast of the Visitation, the Feast of the Assumption, and at the hour of death (Pius X, December 18, 1913).

The following conditions are required for the indulgence at the hour of death: that the sick person make acts of contrition and charity; that he be resigned to the will of God and offer up his sufferings and death in atonement for his sins; and that he invoke the holy Name of Jesus, at least interiorly.

All the other plenary indulgences are applicable to the Souls in Purgatory, and may be gained on the usual conditions of Confession, Communion and one *Our Father*, *Hail Mary* and *Glory* for the intentions of the Holy Father.

(2) An indulgence of 300 days may be gained every time a member says the prayer: «I am all Thine and all I have is Thine, O most loving Jesus, through Mary, Thy holy Mother.»

(3) An indulgence of 100 days may be gained every time a member performs a good work in union with the Blessed Virgin.

* * *

Members of the Confraternity also share in the satisfactions, prayers and good works of the Fathers of the Company of Mary (the Montfort Fathers) and the Daughters of Wisdom, the two congregations founded by Blessed De Montfort.

FEASTS OF THE CONFRATERNITY

The Annunciation, March 25th, is the principal feast of the Confraternity, because that is the day on which Our Lord came to us through Mary and set us an example of complete dependence on her. The secondary feast is that of Blessed De Montfort, April 28th.

Other special feasts are: the Immaculate Conception, Christmas, the Visitation, the Purifica-

tion, the Assumption and the Feast of St. John the Evangelist.

* * *

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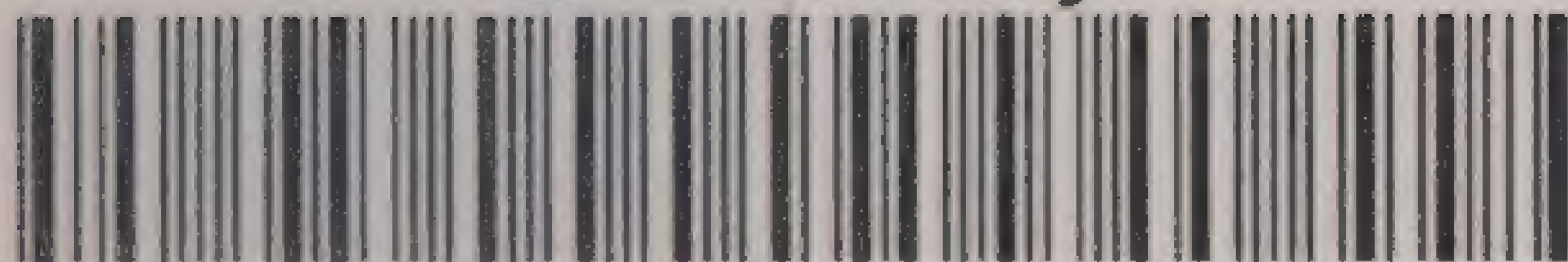
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