

TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY
St. Louis De Montfort

Comments and Questions for Part II, Chapter II, “Motives of This Perfect Consecration,”
Articles 1 & 2 (#184 – #212).

In this final part of the “Motives” section, St. Louis de Montfort includes the Old Testament story of Esau, Jacob and Rebecca as a way of explaining Mary’s great love for her children, especially those who have given themselves to her without reserve through total consecration.

St. Louis de Montfort’s interpretation of the story is broken down into three parts. First, in Article 1, he describes how Esau is a figure of the reprobate (those living in a state of mortal sin). Then, he shows how Jacob is a figure of the predestinate (those living in a state of grace, and particularly devoted to the Blessed Mother). In Article 2, he explains how Rebecca is a figure of the Blessed Mother. St. Louis de Montfort points out that Mary’s love is affectionate, efficacious, tender and active. She loves us as a Mother, but also with the maternal authority of a Queen. Of all the many services that Our Lady lovingly renders to us, St. Louis de Montfort focuses on the following: she loves us, she provides for all our needs, she teaches/guides us, she defends/protects us and she intercedes for us.

Keep in mind that this is not intended to be an in-depth Bible study and there will be some things that don’t fit in with Marian devotion (like the fact that Rebecca is deceitful and of course, Mary is not). As a matter of fact, Fr. Gaffney refers to this story as “The Great Swindle.” However, we must remember that flawed, sinful people in the Old Testament were also “figures” of Christ (Isaac, Joseph, Moses, David), so the comparison between Rebecca and Mary can still be made while overlooking Rebecca’s fallen nature. In those days and still today, God continues to accomplish His Plan of salvation using sinful humanity.

Finally, in the days of the Old Testament, since everything was passed on orally, a person’s word was of great significance. So, when Esau gave away his father’s “blessing” (which was Esau’s right as first-born) to Jacob in exchange for a plate of food, it was a done deal. Rebecca, one could argue, was simply helping to fulfill an agreement that had already taken place. Consider if Esau, knowing that he had already given away his Father’s blessing, had spoken up and revealed this to his Father Isaac? Again, our sinful, selfish humanity does not thwart God’s plan.

Questions for paragraphs #184 - #212.

1. In #185, St. Louis de Montfort mentions five characteristics of Esau. Then, in #186 - #190, he shows how these traits can be applied to those who have chosen to turn away from God. Fr. Gaffney says of our society today, "Esau is very much alive."

"The Conduct of Jacob" (#191 - #195) gives us an insight into the humble childhood of Jesus and the love He had for His Mother. One of the things that Jacob loved to do was stay at home with his mother. We've discussed what St. Louis de Montfort means when he says, "Mary is in me." She is not "out there" somewhere, but rather because of her intimate union with God, she is, in a sense, "within us" (but not in the same manner as the Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity). St. Louis de Montfort explains how we are to dwell "interiorly" with her in #196. It is so important that we take the time to do this daily to escape from the noise of the world. However, "noise" is not just a physical, exterior thing. What other kinds of "noises" are there from which we must escape?

2. By describing the conduct of the predestinate in #197 - #200, St. Louis de Montfort is explaining to us in greater detail how we are to "live out" our total consecration to Jesus through Mary. Are you ready to "avoid everything which can displease her?" Will you "call incessantly for her help?" Do you trust her intensely? Most importantly, will you be obedient to her promptings? St. Louis de Montfort left a rule for his religious orders which says that obedience must be "complete, prompt, joyful, blind and persevering." Fr. Gaffney says, "Patience. Total consecration is a way of life that is not achieved overnight." What does St. Louis de Montfort say will be the result if we have perfect obedience to Mary?

3. In #200, St. Louis de Montfort says that those who choose to imitate Mary's virtues will experience a three-fold happiness – in life, at death, and for all eternity. Fr. Gaffney says, "Happiness is the peace beyond all understanding which flows from being in harmony with God, ourselves, our brothers and sisters, with all creation. It is to know, even in the midst of turmoil, that we are infinitely loved by Love Itself."

Why do you think St. Louis de Montfort is so confident that Mary will be present at death?

4. St. Louis de Montfort describes five main ways that Our Lady helps her children who are consecrated to her as slaves of love. He begins in #201 by describing *why* Mary loves us. Then, in #202 - #207, he describes *how* she loves us. Comparing Mary to Rebecca, St. Louis de Montfort describes in #205 precisely what Mary will do for us when we totally consecrate ourselves to her. The wording is harsh for a reason - dying to self is not easy and can be painful at times. Mary will help you to give up some things that you "naturally" enjoy but are not necessarily leading to increased holiness. She does this by helping you to become less interested in the things of the world and more interested in holiness.

In #206, St. Louis de Montfort says that the children of Mary "have nothing to fear from the cold of Jesus Christ, who is white as snow – a cold which the reprobate, all naked and stripped of the merits of Jesus and Mary, cannot for one moment bear." What is he talking about – the "cold" of Jesus Christ?

5. What does St. Louis de Montfort say is the greatest service that Mary provides for her faithful children? What specific ways does she do this?