

TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY
St. Louis De Montfort

Comments and Questions for Part II, Chapter III, “Wonderful Effects of This Devotion” (#213 – #225).

We begin a very important chapter. In explaining the effects of total consecration, St. Louis de Montfort is actually showing us the progressive steps that we take on this Marian path to union with Jesus. It is along this perfect path that we will eventually obtain “full spiritual maturity in Christ” (Eph 4:13). We can expect to advance quickly in holiness, provided, as St. Louis de Montfort says, that we remain faithful to the interior and exterior practices of this devotion. These practices will be explained fully in the next couple of sections.

As our consecration day approaches, Fr. Gaffney says it’s a good idea to make sure that we are prepared to travel on this Marian path to Jesus. The first thing that we must have for this journey is a strong desire for union with Christ no matter what the cost. We must not be afraid of the Cross. We will find Jesus there. Ask the Lord to increase your desire for union with Him. All conversion begins with desire. Secondly, he says that we must have a deep and ardent prayer life. Do you pray for yourself as much as you pray for others? Your prayers are the interpreter of your desires. Do you wish to be a saint? Fr. Gaffney says that we need to *continually* seek, knock and ask for the gift of Divine Wisdom (Jesus). We should pray *daily* for an increase in the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity and for *all* of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. One suggestion is to pray 7 “Glory Be’s” each morning for the 7 Gifts of the Spirit. Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal told St. Catherine Laboure that God wishes to give us *many* graces, but we do not ask for them. We should have a novena going every day for ourselves. The greatest way we can help others is to become saints ourselves. Finally, Fr. Gaffney says that we must practice “universal mortification” if we wish to advance along the path of holiness. According to Fr. Thomas Dubay, the reason people do not advance in virtue and holiness is because they are not motivated to practice mortification. If this describes you, begin by asking Mary for the *desire* to practice mortification. St. Louis de Montfort defines universal mortification as: detachment from material possessions, avoiding indulgence, preferring silence to idle talk, and undertaking small penances (especially on Fridays). These are good reminders because although the path of Mary to Jesus is easy, short, perfect and secure, it is not an effortless way and we must do our part to renounce ourselves. Remember that our primary mortification is to do whatever it takes to fulfill the duties of our state in life well. All other mortification is secondary to this.

There is much to look forward to if you choose to totally consecrate yourself to Jesus through Mary! The effects that St. Louis de Montfort says will take place in your soul are so wonderful that you will think that they are too good to be true when you read this section. However, if you faithfully renew your consecration daily and persevere in this devotion by continuing to read and study this book annually, you will find that these effects *will* take place in your soul more and more each year. St. Louis de Montfort states that you can expect to experience seven effects - a profound knowledge of yourself, a share in Mary’s great faith, an increase in filial (childlike) love of God the Father, a deep trust in Mary and Divine Providence, a “taking on” of the soul and spirit of Mary, a “molding” into Christ by Mary and finally, an increase of honor and glory to God. These are spectacular promises!

Questions for paragraphs #213 - #225.

1. It is truly a great grace to be able to see yourself as you really are. Fr. Gaffney says, “A sincere, persevering confession of our nothingness so empties ourselves that we become more and more intensely a capacity for God... and the Lord, so eager to fill us with Himself, pours Himself into us *to the extent* that we make room for Him by living our own nothingness.” St. Louis de Montfort goes on, once again, to compare us to unflattering animals in #213. Remember that the saints were enlightened to see themselves in this way. Mary will gently guide you along the path of humility. In your preparation for consecration, during the week of “Knowledge of Self,” it might be helpful to read, “Overcoming One’s Root Sinful Tendency” at www.totustuus.com/overcome.htm. What is your root sin? There will be some overlap, but one sin should stand out. Consider working on the opposite virtue during your 33 days of prayer.

2. If you feel a joyful enthusiasm as you travel along this Marian path to Jesus, it is because Mary is sharing her faith with you. Fr. Gaffney says that the faith which Our Lady shares with us is so strong and so totally centered on Jesus that St. Louis de Montfort seems to be overpowered by its beauty. We read in #214 that Mary will inspire in us a pure faith, a lively faith animated by charity, a faith firm and unmovable as a rock, a faith active and piercing, a courageous faith, a faith so powerful as to convert sinners and a faith strong enough to resist the devil. Do you believe that you can have this kind of faith? What is meant by “pure” faith? What obstacles can keep us from possessing “pure” faith?

3. Fr. Gaffney says that the fifth effect is the specific “crux” of St. Louis de Montfort’s spiritual path of perfection. It is achieved only through the great gift of the Holy Spirit, Who alone gives entry into this “paradise of God” (see #5). Fr. Gaffney says, “Lived in its intensity, the fifth (effect) brings with it the mystical experience of Our Lady’s presence.” It is through her presence that you will receive an outpouring of the gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit. In #217, St. Louis de Montfort describes what it means for Mary to communicate her soul and spirit to you. How can this change the way you pray?
 4. In the sixth effect, what does St. Louis de Montfort say we need to do before Mary can mold us into the likeness of Christ?