

TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY
St. Louis De Montfort

Comments and Questions for Part II, Chapter IV, “Particular Practices of This Devotion,”
Article 2: **Interior Practices** (#257 – #273).

In this beautiful and final section of the book, St. Louis de Montfort describes how we can have an intimate relationship with the Blessed Mother through the interior practices of this devotion. Total consecration to Mary is about love. Fr. Nicholas Norman, former Director of the Confraternity of Mary, Queen of All Hearts, said, “Never let it be thought that true devotion... limits anything. It is as wide as love, for it is love, and delights in any and every expression of genuine affection for our Queen Mother. It rejoices in the light from any and all of the unnumbered facets of the Gem of God – Mary Most Holy, ever a Virgin,” (*Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, p. 25). Fr. Patrick Gaffney, SMM, said that when you experience this mystical closeness of the Blessed Mother, it is difficult to put it into words.

In an earlier section of the book, St. Louis de Montfort describes eight interior practices, or ways of showing our love to the Blessed Mother (see #115). He states that we should honor her above all the angels and saints; meditate on her life, virtues and privileges; frequently make acts of love and gratitude to her; invoke her joyfully; offer and unite ourselves to her; do everything with a desire to please her; and finally, as we shall discuss in this section, do all our actions by Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary. Of course, we do all of this in order to render a more perfect love, praise, adoration and thanksgiving to Her Dearly Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Finally, St. Louis de Montfort ends this great work by giving spiritual guidance on how to receive Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament with the Heart of Mary. It brings great peace and joy to know that Our Lord is lovingly received in our hearts by His Holy Mother. Only when we get to Heaven will we understand this awesome mystery. Happy is the soul who faithfully perseveres in this devotion!

Questions for paragraphs #257 - #273.

1. St. Louis de Montfort says in #258 that in order to do our actions *by* Mary, we must obey her in all things and allow ourselves to be conducted by her spirit. This means that we “take on” the spirit of Mary, which is foremost a spirit of joy, “My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” St. Louis de Montfort describes the intimate union of Mary and the Holy Spirit and states that Mary’s spirit *is* the Holy Spirit of God “because she was never led by her own spirit, but always by the Spirit of God, Who has rendered Himself so completely Master of her that He has become her own spirit.” So, the inspirations of Mary *are* the inspirations of the Holy Spirit! To be conducted by the spirit of Mary means that the Holy Spirit will dwell in you in a powerful way to make you “meek and strong, zealous and prudent, humble and courageous, pure and fruitful.” Describe the steps that St. Louis de Montfort says we should take in order to be lead by the spirit of Mary.

2. In #260, St. Louis de Montfort explains that the second interior practice of this devotion is to do everything *with* Mary. We must consider what Mary would think, what Mary would say and what Mary would do in every situation. St. Louis de Montfort tells us that the way we will know what Mary would do is by meditating on her merits and virtues, especially her lively faith, her profound humility and her divine purity. What are some concrete things we can do to imitate Mary's faith, humility and purity?

3. Paragraph #261 is undoubtedly the most beautiful paragraph in the book. In fact, it has to be one of the most beautiful and poetic paragraphs ever written! No wonder St. Louis de Montfort is being considered for Doctor of the Church. Here, he describes the third interior practice of this devotion, which is to do all things *in* Mary. As Fr. Gaffney stated, it really is difficult to describe what it is like to live *in* Mary. It is a place filled with love, comfort, peace and joy. She becomes your constant companion. In his book, *The Secret of Mary*, St. Louis de Montfort says, "Mary will be the only means used by your soul in dealing with God." Mary becomes the "place" in which you live and grow in holiness. We know that there can be no holier place since it was Our Lord who lived there before us and sanctified it.

We read in #263, however, that it is very difficult for sinners to enter into this holy place. The Holy Spirit decides who can enter there. Once again, how do we merit the grace to enter into that "true terrestrial paradise?" How will you know when you are there?

4. Finally, St. Louis de Montfort says in #265 that we should do all things *for* Mary. He says that we must not remain idle, but should aspire to do great things for her. It is always tempting to think that we can come up with grand ideas on our own, but as her slaves of love, we must first always seek her counsel and then listen for her inspirations. How do you know when a thought comes from you, God (or Mary) or the devil?

5. It is comforting and fitting that St. Louis de Montfort should end his wonderful work with a reflection on how we should receive Our Lord in Holy Communion with the heart of His Mother. What does he say our attitude should be before, during and after we receive Jesus in the Eucharist?