

TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY  
St. Louis De Montfort

Comments and Questions for Part I, Chapter II, “Fundamental Truths of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin” (#60 – #89).

In the first part of this book, St. Louis de Montfort describes the characteristics of “true” devotion to Mary, which can be applied to any form of authentic Marian devotion, whether it’s simply attending Mass on her Feast Days or wearing her Scapular and Miraculous Medal or praying the daily Rosary. In the next chapter, he will carefully distinguish between true and false (insincere, selfish) devotion to Mary in order to lay the groundwork for his “perfect” devotion to her (total consecration), which he presents in the second part of the book. With this in mind, having explained the *necessity* of devotion to Mary, St. Louis de Montfort now presents five fundamental “truths” inherent to true, authentic devotion to Mary.

First and foremost, true devotion to Mary should lead one to a deeper union with Jesus. To dispel the fears of many, that honoring Mary too much competes with our love and devotion to Jesus, one only has to read St. Louis de Montfort’s beautiful, spontaneous prayers to Our Lord in this section to be convinced of the efficacy of true Marian devotion, which is only to inflame our hearts with a deep and abiding love for God.

St. Louis de Montfort challenges us in this section to grow in the virtue of humility. By growing in humility, we begin to see ourselves as we really are – precious and loved, yet weak, sinful and *daily* in need of a Merciful Savior. Unfortunately, pride can blind us from truly seeing all of our faults and weaknesses. By understanding our human frailty, we can (hopefully) *begin* to depend less on ourselves and more on God’s grace each day. Our motto should become, “Except for the grace of God, there go I.” Eventually, with Mary’s help, we are able to repeat with St. Paul, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” (Phil 4:13). Though it can be a difficult journey from pride to humility, the Blessed Mother lovingly and gently takes us on this path so that we can experience the great joy and freedom that comes from total surrender to a Loving God.

When you read the second and especially the third “truth,” you may be shocked at some of the harsh language. Remember that St. Louis de Montfort is a poet and he often uses allegories and metaphors to make his point. Try not to let his wording offend you. Think of each animal as representing one of the 7 Capital Sins. Remember, too, that his audience at the time of this writing was the Jansenists, who believed that human nature is naturally bad. The Catholic Church teaches that with God’s grace, human nature, though fallen, is good.

Please note that this set of study questions covers two meetings - #6 and #7. Paragraphs #60 - #77 (questions 1 - 2) are discussed in the 6<sup>th</sup> video. Paragraphs #78 - #89 (questions 3 - 5) are discussed in the 7<sup>th</sup> video.

Questions for paragraphs #60 - #89.

1. All Marian devotion must be Christocentric. This is the first and most important “truth.” St. Louis de Montfort begins in #61 by paraphrasing the comforting Scriptural words of St. Paul. Then, in #63 - #66, he goes into what Montfort Father Patrick Gaffney calls, St. Louis de Montfort’s famous “Prayer of Lament.” Oh, to have just a fraction of this Saint’s love for Christ and His Mother! Although it was written in 1712, his words seem to apply to our society today.

In #63, St. Louis de Montfort uses beautiful language to describe the intimacy of Jesus and Mary. How should this knowledge affect the way you pray?

2. In the second “truth,” St. Louis de Montfort uses a term that carries a very negative connotation: slavery. Upon further examination, however, we see that he uses this term to describe our *total belonging* to Christ through Baptism. How do we reconcile what St. Louis de Montfort says about slavery and what Jesus says in John 15:15, “I no longer call you slaves, but friends?”
3. In #78 - #80, St. Louis de Montfort uses harsh language to help us understand our human weakness. He desires to convince us of how much we need to rid ourselves of our own selfish will in order to grow in sanctity. Jesus tells us, “The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life,” (John 12:25). What does it mean to “hate” yourself and your life in this world?

4. In #83, St. Louis de Montfort says that it is *more perfect* to have a mediator with THE Mediator, Jesus Christ. How is Mary's mediation different from Christ's Mediation?

5. The fifth "truth" is especially important. St. Louis de Montfort acknowledges that perseverance in grace is extremely difficult without the help of Our Lady. Have you ever considered that you can lose all the grace that God has given to you "in the twinkling of an eye?" We must not be so confident in ourselves as to think that we will never fall into grave sin. Fr. Gaffney says that the conviction that all we have to do to remain faithful to God is to "roll up our sleeves and do it" is a heresy called Pelagianism.

Have you had this attitude before, that all you have to do is try harder to do God's Will?  
Have you failed? Why is this? What is the remedy?