

TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY
St. Louis De Montfort

Comments and Questions for Part I, Chapter III, “Choice of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin,” Article 2, “True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin,” (#105 – #119).

In this final section of the first part of the book, St Louis de Montfort gives us five characteristics of *true* devotion to the Blessed Virgin after having described the different types of false devotions in the last section. Notice that he focuses less on what we do and more on the disposition of our hearts. This is the first secret of true devotion to Mary. It is interior. It does not consist of saying multiple daily prayers to Mary or of performing some external devotional exercises. However, St. Louis de Montfort does go on to explain which practices a person with true devotion to Mary might - and should - practice, not out of a sense of duty, but out of the deep love and affection one has for Our Lord and His Mother. This love increases when we learn more about Our Lady and come to understand how much she loves us. St. Louis de Montfort has presented her to us in a new light in the first part of the book. Hopefully, after reading this section, you will feel well prepared to finally learn this life-changing devotion.

St. Louis de Montfort states that true devotion to Mary should be interior, tender, holy, constant and disinterested. It is important to note that these five characteristics should apply to any form of true devotion to Mary, whether it is devotion to the Rosary, the Scapular, the First Five Saturdays or St. Louis de Montfort’s total consecration to Jesus through Mary.

Questions for paragraphs #105 - #119.

1. By stating in #106 that true devotion to Mary is interior, St. Louis de Montfort is not implying that this devotion should not manifest itself in an exterior way. Rather, he is stressing that it is the interior which must be the *source* of any external form of devotion. Notice that he says interior devotion flows from our knowledge of Mary (the mind) and from our love of Mary (the heart). The more we know her, the more we love her.

True devotion to Mary is tender and childlike, which means that it is full of trust. Paragraph #107 sums up how we are to *live* true devotion to Mary. It is obvious that St. Louis de Montfort did not read about this in a book somewhere. He is describing his personal relationship with Our Lady. Mary desires to have this special relationship with each of her children. Fr. Patrick Gaffney, SMM, says that this paragraph perfectly describes a “slave of love.” St. Louis de Montfort makes a very important point that we do not need to fear annoying Our Lady. Have you ever felt this way? Do you know of people who say that God has too many other things to worry about and that we should not bother Him with small, insignificant requests? This is a trick of the devil, of course. Why do so many people – even holy people – think this way?

2. In #108, St. Louis de Montfort tells us that true devotion to Mary is holy, leading us to avoid sin and imitate her virtues. Mary helps you to want to become a saint. She will share her virtues with you in a miraculous way. With her loving assistance, you will soon find that your devotion to her is constant (#109) and disinterested (#110). However, since we are weak, we will sometimes “abandon (our) spiritual exercises” and become “changeable, irritable, scrupulous (and) timid.” What does St. Louis de Montfort say we should do when this happens?

3. Louis de Montfort does something unusual in #111 - #114. He goes off on a tangent and seems to ask himself, “Why am I writing this book?” Fr. Gaffney says that these few paragraphs are called St. Louis de Montfort’s, “Prophetic Vision.” He had *you* in mind when he prayed that this book would “fall into the hands of a soul of good dispositions.” Although his prophecy is a little frightening to read, it is also very hopeful (“Be not afraid!” – St. Pope John Paul II).

St. Louis de Montfort ends this section with the description of eight interior practices and twelve exterior practices proper to true devotion to Mary. The list of exterior practices may seem overwhelming, but remember that the Holy Spirit inspires each person to perform particular practices of devotion according to his or her state in life. What other important exterior practices can we add to this list that have been introduced by the Church since the time of St. Louis de Montfort?

4. According to St. Louis de Montfort, what four things must we do in order for our exterior practices to sanctify our souls?

5. The last two paragraphs of this section, #118 - #119, are really an introduction to the second part of the book on total consecration. St. Louis de Montfort will prove and explain in great detail the awesome claims he makes in #118. However, in #119, he cautions us and explains that not everyone will be able to advance in his method of true devotion. Why is this? Are you determined to advance? What is needed?