

Behold Thy Mother

Missionary Sisters of the Holy Ghost
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Veni Sancte Spiritus per Mariam!

Dear Readers,

Many people, over the years, have asked us to explain the Holy Slavery of Love as taught by St. Louis Marie de Montfort. We have tried our best, however, we run in to a brick wall, so to speak, with a number of them, as Mary gives us great crosses to bear once we become her slave, and they do not want anything negative in their lives.

In the day and age we are living in, we find that the problem lies in the fact that people are steeped in behavioral psychology, which says that we should not have anything negative in our lives. "Think positive" they say, and "run from anything that will bring stress to your life." Well, the cross brings stress, but it is a loving stress that Mary knows will bring about a positive result, that of yours and my sanctification, which is what our end goal must be. In real life, we need negatives and positives to survive. Try a little test and you will see the result. Two positive ends of a magnet will repel one another, a positive and a negative will attract. So it is with God, the negative cross, brings positive sanctity.

People today will get involved in Yoga, which is the liturgy of the Hindu religion, whether in prayer form or exercise, to release stress, yet they refuse to turn to Mary, who is their life, their sweetness and their hope, who will bring a taste of heaven through the heaviest cross-filled days. She is our God-given "stress relief" and leaning on her, she makes the crosses easy to bear.

Holy Slavery is very misunderstood, and many people again say that slavery is such a negative word. Simply put, it is very positive, it is a renewal of our Baptismal promises to renounce Satan, his pomps and works, and to take Christ for our sovereign Master in all things. Once we understand this, there is nothing to fear, putting yourself in the hands of Mary is a very positive action with a peaceful result.

Many people say, "Well I cannot take Holy Slavery, as that would be leaving Jesus out of the picture." St. Louis very clearly explains that you are actually a slave of Jesus through the hands of Mary, so if it bothers anyone, just say you are a slave of Jesus and that is the same as a slave of Mary.

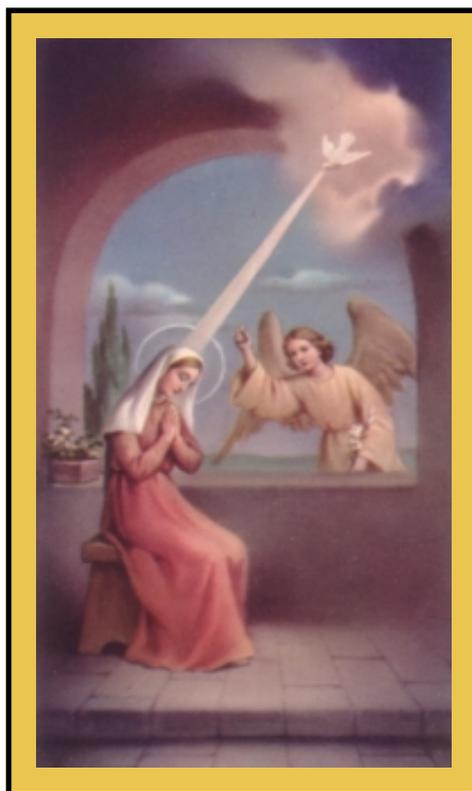
The final argument we have heard over and over is the fact that True Devotion to Mary was hidden, as St. Louis predicted, for many years. When it was found, doubters voiced abroad that they were not sure it was actually written by St. Louis etc., etc., etc. We hope by the time you finish reading this issue, that this doubt will be amply cleared up by the praises of the Holy Fathers, and you will run to the arms of your Mother.

My prayers and the prayers of our Sisters are with you. We thank you for your prayers and for your support.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Reverend Mother Marie de Montfort, c.m.s.s.

Behold Thy Mother is published three times a year. Subscription rates are \$14.00 per year within the United States. Foreign rates, \$20.00 per year.



O, Jesus Living In Mary

O Jesus living in Mary
 Come and live in
 Thy servants,
 In the spirit of
 Thy holiness,
 In the fulness of
 Thy might,
 In the truth of
 Thy virtues,
 In the perfection of
 Thy ways,
 In the communion of
 Thy mysteries,
 Subdue every
 hostile power
 In Thy spirit, for the glory
 of the Father. Amen.



Morning Offering

(In the spirit of Holy Slavery)

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in reparation for my sins, I offer Thee all my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day and of my entire life, for all the intentions of Thy Most Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass validly and licitly offered this day throughout the world, the infinite graces and merits thereof to be dispensed in accord with Thy Divine Will for the salvation of souls, the conversion of sinners, and the special intention recommended for this month:

Intentions for:

January: Sanctification of home and family, truly Catholic marriages.
February: The spread of the true Catholic Faith through the spread of devotion to Mary.
March: An increase in pious and holy religious vocations.
April: For all of the missionary endeavors throughout the world and unity among the members of the Church Militant.



No Room for Doubt...

Our Lady Wants Total Consecration

Confirmed by a
 Carmelite priest
 in the 1960's

Taken from the thoughts of
 Rev. Mother Marie de Montfort, CMSS

Growing up in the 1960's was an experience that only those who went through it could actually comprehend. This decade was one of total unrest. Vatican Council II was opened in 1962, the

entire Catholic Church was turned upside down, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, the Mass and Sacraments were changed between 1967 and 1969, our Baltimore Catechisms were taken away in 1967 and replaced, the next year, with books that contained beautiful 8x10 pictures of Senator Robert Kennedy, who was assassinated in 1968, and the civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr., who was assassinated that same year. The Sisters took off their habits in 1968, teenagers by the hundreds were going on drugs and running away from home, and the Vietnam War was going on right in the midst of all of this change and confusion. Darkness seemed to come over the Church and the famous song that chanted, "We're on the Eve of Destruction" was heard everywhere. Was there any hope?

Through all of this darkness and chaos, there came a flickering light that shone so bright that it lit the 60's on fire. It was the glow of the message of Our Lady of Fatima. Fatima was spoken

of everywhere, as Pope Pius XII stated in 1950 that the time for doubting this message was over and now was the time for action. Rosaries in her honor were prayed publicly, processions were formed and people began to follow what Our Lady asked for to bring about world peace: prayer, reparation, modesty, amendment of life and study of the faith.

Among Mary's Apostles during that time was a very fervent priest by the name of Fr. Bernard Kunkel. Fr. Kunkel worked very hard with his Marylike Crusade of Modesty throughout the 1960's, and brought about that much needed guide for women and girls, to fulfill the request of Our Lady. She told the children that fashions would be introduced that would gravely offend her Son. The Marylike Crusade was that beacon of light, to fulfill what she asked for to bring balm to the Heart of her Son.

Around the mid 1960's a movement swept across our state that seemed to light a fire of love in the hearts of many. I can remember going from house to house participating in the "Block Rosary."

I can remember going from city to city with my mother and attending lecture after lecture throughout the Detroit, Michigan area from 1965 through 1969. I heard men of all ages, both priest, religious and lay, speak of the wonderful message of peace, the "Peace Plan from Heaven", as they called it, the message of Our Lady of Fatima. None struck me so much though, as the one given by a Carmelite priest.

So many people were asking, "If Our Lady asked us to consecrate ourselves to her, and there are so many consecrations to Mary, which consecration was she referring to?" Very calmly, **yet emphatically**, this Carmelite priest said, "I was privileged to speak personally to Sr. Lucia, and I posed this exact question to her." Without hesitation she said, "**Father, Our Lady asked for the total consecration according to Louis Marie de Montfort.**" "There was no doubt," he said, "Our Lady had spoken, and I was convinced that True Devotion to Mary according to Louis Marie de Montfort, was the most pleasing way to go to the heart of God,

and to safeguard yourself in this day and age of utter turmoil."

I remember going home and asking my mother why Sr. Lucia did not refer to Louis de Montfort as a saint. My mother told me that he was not canonized when Our Lady was speaking to Lucia, and she was merely repeating Our Lady's words. That was the only question in my mind, as the other was totally cleared up. Our Lady wanted Slaves of Love, according to the method St. Louis Marie de Montfort set down in his outstanding book, "*True Devotion to Mary.*"



These were the same words of Pope Pius IX. He stated, years before, that *True Devotion*, according to Louis Marie de Montfort, was the "best" and "most acceptable" devotion to Mary. It was sealed in my mind forever. The Pope had spoken and God, Himself, through the voice of His mother, had set down the fact that this was the devotion most pleasing to Him. Why would a Catholic not choose it, and why would they look at any other means to consecrate themselves to Mary? If you know something is most pleasing to the Mother of God, why would you settle for something less acceptable? Why give your heavenly mother the silver of another consecration, when she asked for the gold of **total** consecration? Mary does not want half of our heart, she wants our entire heart, so she can present it to Almighty God as a worthy gift, fit for the King of Kings.

I can remember, during the question and answer session that followed this lecture, how many people thanked this Carmelite priest for clearing up the one doubt they had about Fatima. Father said, "Why look for

any other form of consecration, when the Mother of God, herself, recommended this one and clearly stated that it was the one God wanted. Peace can come to the world, if we consecrate ourselves to Mary and as her slaves, fight for the Kingdom of Christ, by being faithful to her message of prayer, reparation, modesty, amendment of life and study our faith, so we can grow to love and live it every single day of our lives.”

I have never forgotten this priest, even though it was over forty years ago when I heard this message. It was so striking to hear about the exact devotion Our Lady asked for, and to have all doubts cleared up.

I have always wanted to go back and have him confirm this in writing for all the doubters I have met over the years, but I have been unsuccessful. He is probably dead by now, yet he knows what he said, and I know in my heart what he said, God wanted devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary established through the world, and wanted people to consecrate themselves to her according to total consecra-

tion, as set down by the now, SAINT Louis Marie de Montfort. I have been a Slave of Mary for thirty-four years and have treasured every moment, knowing that I have chosen the golden path to the Heart of Jesus through Mary, all because a Carmelite priest asked Lucia to answer a simple question he had about Fatima. Thank you, Father, and my prayers of thanksgiving are with you, wherever you are. If I never get to see you on this earth again, may we meet in eternity as fellow Slaves of Love.

De Montfort's Classic
True Devotion to Mary,

a book inspired by the Holy Ghost to lay out the plan for people to find an easy, short and sure way to save their souls.



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A must for all those who are truly serious about their spiritual life.




Tributes to De Montfort's True Devotion to Mary
Popes, Cardinals, Theologians, Saints and pious Laymen sing the praises of True Devotion to Mary.

Taken from
The Catechism of True Devotion





POPES

Pope Pius IX declared that Saint Louis De Montfort's devotion to Mary is best and is the most acceptable to Our Lady.

Leo XIII granted a Plenary Indulgence to those who make Saint Louis De Montfort's Act of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. On his death bed he renewed the Act himself and invoked the aid of Saint Louis De Montfort whom he himself had beatified in 1888.

Pius X: "I heartily recommend *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, so admirably written by Blessed De Montfort, and to all who

read it, I grant the Apostolic Benediction."

In his famous Encyclical "Ad diem illum" where Pius X clearly sets forth the doctrine of the universal mediation of Mary, he not only uses the thoughts and words of Saint De Montfort, but in places even quotes him directly. Pius X himself confessed this to Father Lhoumeau, Superior General of the Company of Mary.

Benedict XV: "The Book on *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* is small in size, but of high authority and unction. We rejoice that it has been so widely spread... May it spread still more, and ever revive the Christian spirit in an ever-increasing

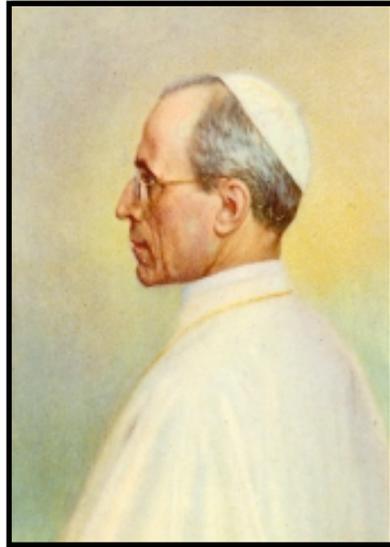
number of souls.”

Pius XI: “Not only am I acquainted with it (*True Devotion*) but I have practiced it since my youth.” On another occasion this same pontiff acknowledged to Cardinal Charost, late Archbishop of Rheims, that he knew its contents almost by heart.

Pope Pius XII: “The force and unction of the words of Mary’s servant (De Montfort), have not only touched, but have captivated and converted many souls.”

CARDINALS

Cardinal Vaughn: “I have recommended his ‘True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin’ to the clergy of this diocese as I recommended it some years ago to the clergy of the diocese of Salford: and I distributed copies of it to the priests who attended the first Synod which was held in Westminster. I should be glad to see it in the hand of every priest, as experience has taught me the power of this most persuasive treatise in propagating a solid devotion to the Blessed Mother of God... In our humble judgment no one can do better



than spread the knowledge of this golden treatise on devotion to our Blessed Mother.”

Cardinal Mercier: “Not only do I greatly esteem the *True Devotion* according to Blessed De Montfort, but for many years I have tried my best to put it into practice.” This same Cardinal addressed a pastoral letter to the clergy and laity of his archdiocese on the subject of Montfort’s *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* urging them to embrace it.

Cardinal O’Connell: “It is my happy privilege to recommend to everyone, following therein the example of our late Holy Father of blessed memory, Pius X,

True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin. I have known this form of devotion for many years and I never hesitated to recommend it to those whom the grace of God seemed to be at work, drawing them to a deeper and more intense spiritual life. As rector of the American college in Rome, I proposed and taught it to the seminarians as an excellent means of acquiring the holiness of the priestly ideal. It was with my encouragement that there was formed among them a Blessed De Montfort Society.”

Cardinal Lauri: “This book is a masterpiece.”

Cardinal De Berulle: Founder of the Oratory in France and whose memory is held in veneration throughout all France, was most zealous in spreading this devotion in that country.

THEOLOGIAN

Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.: “Any one who willingly allows himself to be conducted in his prayers and in all phases of his life by Mary Mediatrix will attain true humility which will draw upon him the grace of contemplation and of divine

union.” He then adds, quoting from De Montfort, Without a great love for her, a soul will attain union with God only with extreme difficulty.”

“One of the best means of spreading throughout the Christian people a devotion to Mary the universal Mediatrix, and of making the full important and the full compass of this title... is to broadcast the admirable doctrine of Blessed De Montfort... Those who propagate this devotion and those who love it have in their lives a sign of predestination.”

Tanquerey: “It is an act of holy abandonment, of self surrender excellent in itself and containing, moreover, acts of the highest virtues, religion, humility and confident love.

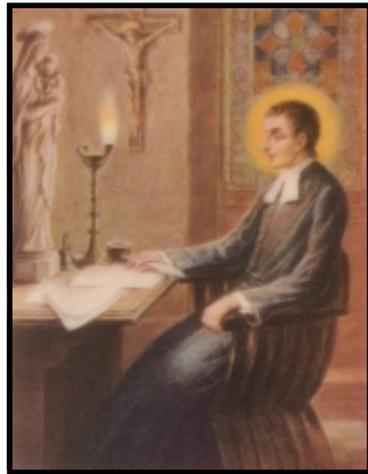
...By this act we glorify God and Mary in an unparalleled manner.... We therefore insure our individual sanctification and a third fruit of his Act of Consecration to Mary is the sanctification of his neighbor.... It may be said that this Act of Consecration, if rightly made and correctly renewed, is of even greater worth than the Heroic Act.”

Lemkuhl: “What can be truer than these principles of Blessed De Montfort? And if they be true what can be more desirable, in these our times, in which indifference for Christ and His Church has spread throughout the world, than to possess in this devotion to Mary so excellent a means to lead souls back again to Christ?”

The Examinee of the Holy Office whose duty it was to investigate De Montfort’s work to be sure that it contained nothing contrary to Faith, had this to say: “I must begin by confessing the impression made on me by reading the precious writing of this venerable servant of God. I have experienced an interior unction, a peace and a consolation which the writings of highly favored servants of God, of servants of God endowed with light and sanctity of an extraordinary kind are known to frequently produce.... This impression was profound and sweet to the highest degree.

SPIRITUAL WRITERS

Father Faber: “I cannot think of a higher work or a



broader vocation for anyone than the simple spreading of this devotion of Grignon De Montfort. Let a man try it for himself and his surprise at the graces it brings with it and the transformation it causes in his soul, will soon convince him of its otherwise almost incredible efficacy as a means for the salvation of men, and for the coming of the kingdom of Christ. Oh, if Mary were but known, there would be no coldness to Jesus then!... I would venture to warn the reader that one perusal will be very far from making him a master of it. If I may dare to say so, there is a growing feeling of something inspired and supernatural about it as we go on studying it; and with that we cannot help experiencing,

after repeated readings of it, that its novelty never seems to wear off, nor its fullness to be diminished nor the fresh fragrance and sensible fire of its unction to abate.”

Father Price (co-founder of Maryknoll): “I celebrate this day (25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood), by consecrating myself to you as Blessed De Montfort recommends.”

Dom Chautard (author of *The Soul of the Apostolate*): “Obliged to limit myself and still wishing to offer my confreres in the Apostolate a sort of summing up of the advice of St. Bernard to become true children of Mary, I think I cannot do better than to invite them to read carefully the solid and precious volume - *The Spiritual Life* according to the teaching of Blessed Grignon De Montfort.”

OUTSTANDING CATHOLIC LAYMEN

Frank Duff (founder of the Legion of Mary): “De Montfort’s book has a place of its own in the church. There is nothing else quite like it. In its doctrine it is eminently theological and

profound.... It is certain that everyone who studies *True Devotion* will fall beneath its spell, for the book has everything. It has style, it has fervor, it has intense conviction, solidity, soaring eloquence, the air of authority and inspiration... Nowadays, there is no competent writer on the subject of MARY who does not pay tribute to the *True Devotion* and its influence on Mariology.

SAINTS WHO HAVE PRACTICED TRUE DEVOTION

As True Devotion was known before the time of Saint De Montfort, we should not be surprised to find many of the great Saints of the Church finding Jesus through Mary by the slavery of love. A few can be mentioned: Saints Ephrem, Bonaventure, Anselm, Bernardine, Leonard of Port Maurice. After De Montfort the greatest slave of Jesus in Mary is Saint Alphonsus. But it is in the last century especially that we find true followers of De Montfort’s Devotion. Blessed Peter Eymard, the Apostle of the

Eucharist, knew no better way of adoring Jesus in the Eucharist than by becoming a slave of Mary. The Sainly *Cure of Ars* was a fervent advocate of True Devotion to our Lady. *Saint Gabriel* was a model for all seminarians in his love for Mary. By means of this slavery to Mary he reached the highest sanctity after five years in the Passionist seminary. Perhaps the most inspiring story of all the Saints of our Lady is the story of the *Little Flower* and *Blessed Theophane Venard*. Therese in her monastery and Theophane in his Mission were both slaves of our Lady and bound themselves together as brother and sister in the service of Mary. The results of both of their lives stand as a divine approval to this secret of grace that they found in *True Devotion to Our Lady*.



**On The
Total Consecration
To Mary**

Adapted From:
"The Holy Slavery of Love"
by Fr. Patrick J. Gaffney, S.M.M.

**Theological Foundations
of Total Consecration**

During most of his sixteen years of priesthood, St. Louis traveled throughout the countryside of Western France, preaching missions and retreats. He was not a professional theologian. The pulpit was his rostrum, the

crowded church his class. Although his writings are relatively numerous, we cannot expect to find a section devoted to a scholastic explanation of total consecration to Our Lady. However, even though he wrote particularly "for the poor and the simple," his books and pamphlets are founded on solid theological principles which a serious study of his works clearly brings to light.

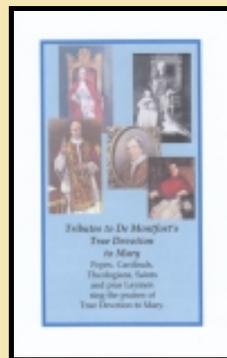
In a very general sense, it may be said that St. Louis de Montfort bases his "Holy Slavery" upon the role which Mary plays in the entire work of salvation. "That grand Lord, always independent and sufficient unto Himself, never had nor has now any absolute need of the Blessed Virgin. . . Nevertheless . . . having willed to commence and to complete His greatest works by the most Blessed Virgin ever since He created her, we may well think He will not change His conduct in the eternal ages." Our Lady is, therefore, "the inseparable companion of His life, of His death, of His glory, and of His power in heaven and upon earth."

However, what is the

**Tributes to De Montfort's
True Devotion to Mary**

Popes, Cardinals, Theologians, Saints and pious Laymen sing the praises of True Devotion to Mary.

It is the exact devotion that will lead us out of the crisis we are in today with the Church and the world. Mary gave a peace plan from heaven and asked for everyone to consecrate themselves to her. The popes have recommended this over and over, now is the time to listen.



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precise privilege, that aspect of her redemptive role upon which St. Louis builds his consecration? It appears to be her “complete spiritual maternity,” *i.e.*, her motherhood of men considered with its implicit consequence, her authority and dominion over the hearts of men. Since Mary’s spiritual maternity is, according to St. Louis de Montfort, deduced from her Motherhood of the Redeemer and her office as Co-Redemptrix, we will first consider these two privileges as the radical foundations of “Holy Slavery”; we can then consider the proximate foundation of total consecration, the “complete spiritual maternity.”

**The Radical Foundations
Of Total Consecration:
Mother of The Redeemer
and Co-Redemptrix**

Not only is the Divine Maternity the fundamental mystery of Mary in St. Louis’ teaching, but it is also the principal foundation of her spiritual maternity of men. “If Jesus Christ the Head of men is born in her, . . . the members of this Head must also be born in her by a

necessary consequence. . . the Head and Members are born of the same Mother.” Basing himself on the unity of Head and Members through Christ’s capital grace which existed at the very first moment of the Incarnation, St. Louis — and St. Pius X after him — declares that by conceiving Christ the Redeemer, Mary by that very fact spiritually conceives all those who with Him form but one Mystical Body.

However, Mary’s spiritual maternity is also based upon her co-redemptive action, which, therefore, forms a part of the foundation of St. Louis’ total consecration. Our Lady’s role in the redemption may be considered both at the Incarnation and at Calvary; St. Louis insists on the Blessed Mother’s cooperation in both these phases of the one act of redemption.

Our Lady’s part in the redemptive Incarnation is considered principally under two aspects by St. Louis: her merit of the Incarnation, and her consent to become the Mother of God. De Montfort explicitly teaches that the patriarchs were unable to merit the Incarnation, for

“their cries, their prayers and their sacrifices had not enough force to attract the Eternal Wisdom, yet Our Lady did merit this “grace of graces”: “there was found only Mary who by the sublimity of her virtues attained to the very throne of the Divinity and who has merited this infinite treasure.” Our Lady has therefore merited not only the acceleration of the coming of the God-Man — which the Patriarchs of the Old Testament could also do — but the Incarnation itself. Although not explained by St. Louis, we can well presume that he is referring to a “*de congruo*” merit, “*in ordine executionis*.”

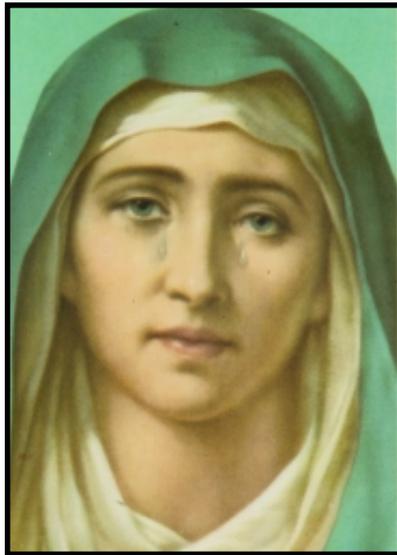
However, Mary is “Co-Redemptrix” in an even greater sense because her consent was necessary in God’s plan for the Incarnation to take place: “The Eternal Wisdom desired to become man in her, provided that she give her consent.” St. Louis therefore calls Our Lady a victim with Christ at the very moment of the Incarnation: “Their hearts, united by strong and close ties, are offered both

together to be two victims to hold back the chastisement which our crimes merit.” De Montfort can therefore conclude: “In this mystery [the Incarnation] the elect have received their birth. Mary, united with Jesus, chose them in advance, to have part in their riches, their glory, and their power.” Already at this first phase of the Redemption, Mary, the New Eve, “has turned God’s maledictions into a blessing” for us.

St. Louis de Montfort also insists on Mary’s cooperation in the very formal act of redemption, Christ’s death upon Calvary. We may distinguish in this final act of the redemption a double aspect: the suffering and death of Christ on the Cross which forms the material element, and the willing acceptance of His Passion and Death, His obedience to His Father even to the death of the Cross, which make up the formal and principal element. According to De Montfort, Our Lady cooperated in both these aspects. Our Blessed Mother’s participation in the material element of the Redemption is clearly explained by the saint

when speaking of the intense sufferings of Our Lady caused by the Passion of her Son and offered for the human race. Her role in the formal element is stated in the *True Devotion*: “He [Jesus] glorified His independence and His Majesty in depending on this admirable Virgin, in His conception, in His Birth and His presentation in the temple, in His hidden life of thirty years, up to His Death, where she had to assist, in order that He make with her but one and the same sacrifice and in order to be immolated by her consent to the Eternal Father, as Isaac of old was offered by Abraham’s consent to the will of God. It is she who has nursed Him, nourished Him, supported Him, raised and sacrificed Him for us.” So strong are these words that they appear to affirm the proximate and immediate cooperation of Our Lady in the objective redemption.

We, therefore, belong to Christ and to Mary as a result of the redemption. She has redeemed us with Christ and hence she, too, has acquired rights over the entire human race.



The Proximate Foundation of Total Consecration: The Complete Spiritual Maternity

Because Our Lady is the Mother of Christ the Redeemer, because she is the companion of Jesus in the work of redemption, she can be called, and truly is, the Mother of Men. St. Louis clearly deduces this privilege from Mary’s Maternity of the Head of the Mystical Body and also from her share in the redemption. It is upon this privilege of the spiritual maternity that St. Louis de Montfort has formally built his edifice of total consecration. Basing himself upon the role which Our Lady plays in the



sanctification of men, Montfort often considers Mary’s maternity of men as that of a woman with child: “all the predestinate . . . are in this world, hidden in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, where they are guarded, nourished, brought up, and made to grow by that good Mother until she has brought them forth to glory after their death, which is properly the day of their birth.”

Yet in this prerogative of Our Lady’s actual spiritual maternity is contained implicitly her dominion over the souls of men. For since she is the “true Mother” of men and the members of the Mystical Body are in this life “hidden in Mary’s womb,”

she has received a great authority over the souls of the elect in order to accomplish her task as spiritual mother: “For she cannot make her residence in them as God the Father ordered her to do, and as their mother, form, nourish, and bring them forth into eternal life . . . she cannot, I say, do all these things unless she has a right and a domination over their souls by a singular grace of the Most High.” Mary is

therefore the Mother of Men; yet, as De Montfort insists, a tender Mother with great authority, a Mother who is the Queen of the hearts of her children whom she is nourishing with grace. This “complete” maternity appears to be the very foundation of St. Louis’ “Holy Slavery of Love.” The consecration will be the formal recognition that we have a Mother, a Mother who has true authority over us in order to form us into Christ: “Mother and Mistress”; it will be the formal recognition that we are her children, yet so much her children that we depend completely upon her as a child yet unborn: children

and slaves.

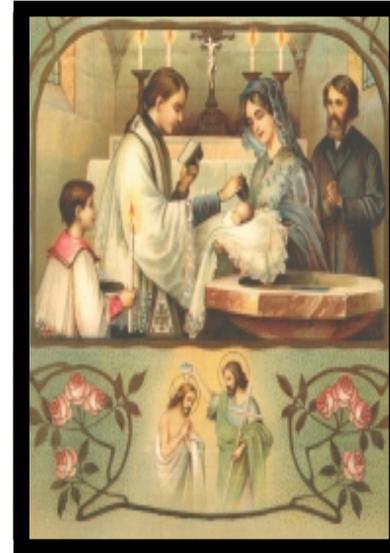
That this is truly the foundation of “Holy Slavery” can be seen from the first 37 numbers of the *True Devotion* where St. Louis summarizes Mary’s role in the subjective redemption as a Mother with child, a Mother with authority. Moreover, he sees in the story of Rebecca and Jacob the Biblical figure of this devotion, for Mary, as Rebecca, is a Mother who loves her children, nurtures, protects, and defends them. Although the example used is no longer a woman with child, nonetheless, her spiritual maternity with authority is clearly brought out. St. Louis’ Hymn, *The Devout Slave of Jesus in Mary*, constantly extols the “devout slave” as a “child at the breast” in total dependence on his mother, “in whom and through whom it does all things.” And in the very Act of Consecration, De Montfort declares: “I choose thee today for my Mother and Mistress,” and he calls the consecrated souls: “children and slaves,” again expressing Our Lady’s spiritual Maternity with the explicit reference to her authority over the hearts of

her children in order to carry out her task as Mother.

The solid theological foundation for St. Louis de Montfort’s “Holy Slavery of Love” is therefore, radically, the Divine Maternity and the Co-Redemption. He has, however, “formally based his Holy Slavery of Love . . . on the spiritual maternity of the Blessed Mother.”

The Consecration of St. Louis

St. Louis de Montfort’s total consecration is the adequate recognition of the “complete” maternity of Mary over the souls of men. The essential part of his formula of consecration clearly brings this out: “In the presence of all the heavenly court, I choose thee this day for my Mother and Mistress, I deliver and consecrate to thee, as thy slave, my body and soul, my goods, both interior and exterior and even the value of all my good actions, past, present and future, leaving to thee the entire and full right of disposing of me and all that belongs to me, without exception, according to thy good pleasure, for the greater glory of God in time



and in eternity.” St. Louis’ consecration embraces, therefore, “(1) our body, with all its senses and its members, (2) our soul, with all its powers, (3) our exterior goods of fortune, whether present or to come, (4) our interior and spiritual goods, which are our merits and our virtues and good works, past, present, and future . . . we give her all that we have in the order of nature and in the order of grace and all that may become ours in the future in the orders of nature, grace and glory; and this we do without reserve of so much as one farthing, one hair or one least good action; we do it also for all eternity.”

As H. Boudon before him,

St. Louis explains the meaning of consecrating our interior and spiritual goods: “In this consecration. . . we give her all the satisfactory, impetratory, and meritorious value of our good actions; in other words, the satisfactions and the merits of all our good works. We give her all our merits, graces, and virtues — not to communicate them to others, for our merits, graces, and virtues are, properly speaking, incommunicable, but we give them to her to keep them, augment them, and embellish them for us. . . Our satisfactions, however, we give her, to communicate to whom she likes, for the greatest glory of God.” St. Louis de Montfort himself concludes: “By this devotion, we give to Jesus Christ in the most perfect manner — inasmuch as it is by Mary’s hands — all that we can give Him.”

Following Cardinal de Bérulle, St. Louis insists that this consecration is “a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of Holy Baptism,” because in this consecration we reaffirm what was promised in Baptism: to renounce Satan,

his pomps and works, and to take Christ for our sovereign Master in all things. The consecration is, St. Louis points out, a perfect renewal, for it adds three modalities to the promises of Baptism: “. . . in Baptism we ordinarily speak through another . . . but in this devotion we do it ourselves, voluntarily, knowing what we are doing; . . . in holy Baptism, we do not give ourselves to Jesus through the hands of Mary, at least not in an explicit manner; and we do not give Him the value of our good actions. We remain entirely free after Baptism, either to apply them to whom we please or to keep them for ourselves. But by this devotion we give ourselves to Our Lord explicitly by the hands of Mary and we consecrate to Him the value of all our actions.”

However, St. Louis is not content with the mere recital of an act of consecration: “It is not enough to have given ourselves once as slaves to Jesus through Mary, . . . it is not very difficult to enroll in a confraternity nor to practice this devotion insofar as it prescribes a few vocal prayers every day; but the

great difficulty is to enter into its spirit. Now its spirit consists in this, that we be interiorly dependent upon Mary.” This interior spirit of total consecration to Mary, St. Louis sums up in the formula, “to do all our actions through Mary, with Mary, in Mary, and for Mary; so that we may do them all the more perfectly through Jesus, with Jesus, in Jesus, and for Jesus.” Although differing somewhat in his explanation of this formula in his *Secret of Mary* and *True Devotion*, these interior practices are paramount in the living of the Montfortian consecration.

To do all our actions “through Mary” implies renouncing our own dispositions and trying to do everything with the intentions of the Mother of God: we must “deliver ourselves to the spirit of Mary to be moved and influenced in the manner she chooses. We must put ourselves in her virginal hands, like a tool in the grasp of a workman, like a lute in the hands of a skillful player. We must lose ourselves and abandon ourselves to her, like a stone one throws into

the sea.”

“With Mary” means imitation, accomplishing our actions as Mary would, were she in our place: “We must in all our actions regard Mary as an accomplished Model of every virtue and perfection which the Holy Ghost has formed in a pure creature for us to imitate according to our little measure.”

The practice “in Mary” is founded upon St. Louis’ repeated statement that we are in this world “hidden in the womb of Mary.” We must, therefore, “become accustomed little by little to recollect ourselves interiorly and thus try to form within us some idea or spiritual image of Mary. She will be, as it were, the oratory of our soul in which we offer up all our prayers to God.”

“For Mary” does not mean “that we take her for the last end of our services, for that is Jesus Christ alone; but we take her for our proximate end, our mysterious means, and our easy way to go to Him . . . we must work for no recompense. . . except the honor of belonging to so sweet a Queen and the happiness of being united through her to Jesus her Son

by an indissoluble tie, in time and in eternity.”

Approvals of St. Louis’ Doctrine

Hidden in a trunk for many years, as St. Louis himself had prophesied, the *Treatise on True Devotion* was found only in 1842 at the Motherhouse of the Montfort Fathers, Vendée, France. Together with the other writings of Montfort, it was sent to Rome for careful scrutiny in view of his proposed beatification. The first reaction of the Promoter of the Faith was a stinging condemnation: “the devotion which the pious author proposes and upholds . . . could never be approved by the Church; . . . every sign of approbation or commendation of this writing must be avoided by all means.” However, other censors appointed by Rome clearly answered all objections against the *True Devotion*, and in 1853 it was officially declared to be free from all error and in no way an impediment to Montfort’s cause for beatification.

This approval of the Congregation of Rites has been re-echoed by bishops and theologians of the

Church, as Francis Parisi for St. Louis de Montfort and his works is well known. In the *De tuto* decree for Montfort's canonization, the saint's *True Devotion* is spoken of as a shorter path to perfection, and in the homily delivered on the day of the canonization, the Holy Father declared the saint's devotion to Our Lady to be "flagrans, solida, ac recta." On the following day, addressing the pilgrims who had come to Rome for the canonization, the Holy Father spoke of St. Louis as the guide "who leads you to Mary and from Mary to Jesus; . . . he is incontestably one of those who have worked the most ardently and the most efficaciously to make Mary loved and served." And addressing himself especially to the members of the communities Montfort founded, the Pope, alluding to the Marian doctrine of St. Louis, declared: "Remain faithful to the precious heritage which this great saint has left you in legacy! A magnificent heritage, worthy of being continued by you, and of devoting yourselves to it and sacrificing yourselves for it

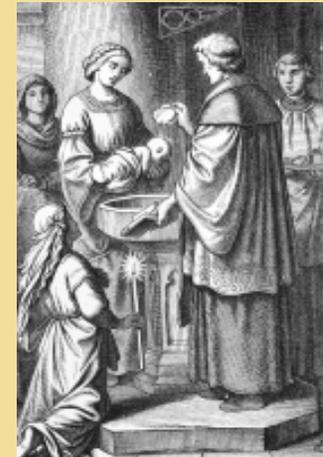


without ever counting your strength or your life."

Bishops and theologians alike have repeated these praises of the Sovereign Pontiffs. The first International Marian Congress, held at Fribourg in 1902, was eloquent in its praise of St. Louis de Montfort: "Considering that the devotion to the Blessed Mother according to Blessed de Montfort is a magnificent synthesis of the most developed Marian theology; that it is the most perfect form of cult to the Blessed Mother; that it harmonizes so well with the actual movement of Catholic piety and that it seconds it powerfully; that it answers the present-day needs and

offers in the present strife a special and providential help, the Congress defers to the desires expressed by a great number of cardinals, bishops, and theologians, and formulates the wish that this devotion be propagated among the faithful and principally among the clergy and religious institutes." The Marian Congress of Rome (1904) repeated similar praise for St. Louis, as did the Marian Congresses of Einsiedeln (1906), Trier (1912) and the special Marian-Montfortian Congress held at Barcelona in 1918.

Father Faber summed up the praises of the Church for the writings of St. Louis — and in particular for the *True Devotion* — when he wrote: "I would venture to warn the reader that one perusal will be very far from making him the master of it. If I may dare to say so, there is a growing feeling of something inspired and supernatural about it, as we go on studying it; and with that we cannot help experiencing that its novelty never seems to wear off, nor its fullness to be diminished, nor the fresh fragrance and sensible fire of its unction ever to abate."



St. Louis insists that this consecration is "a perfect renewal of the vows and promises of Holy Baptism," because in this consecration we reaffirm what was promised in Baptism: to renounce Satan, his pomps and works, and to take Christ for our sovereign Master in all things.



Leo XIII granted a Plenary Indulgence to those who make Saint Louis De Montfort's Act of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. On his death bed he renewed the Act himself and invoked the aid of Saint Louis de Montfort whom he himself had beatified in 1888.

True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

**Taken from:
Mary's Conferences
by Mother Mary Potter**

Some people, after they have read what has been written about this devotion, say they are still in a cloud about how to practice it. They would willingly adopt what so many saints and holy people recommend as so glorious to God, so beneficial to their neighbors, of such incalculable service to themselves. But what are they to do? They have made the offering, and yet perceive no difference in themselves. They feel not within them the grand effects described in the *True Devotion* of Saint Grignon de Montfort, *The Path of Mary*, and other works upon the devotion.

They need patience. The seed is sown when a soul has once given itself to Mary by the solemn act of consecration. It will gradually sprout and bring forth leaves, blossoms, and finally fruit, fruit which God Himself will delight in. What the soul has principally to do is to leave room for this seed to grow, not to plant over it; to water

it, to tend the little sprout when it appears, to use every natural means, and so, gradually, to cause to fructify the seed sown within it. As with the virtues, when we must perform acts in order to acquire the habit of virtue, so with this devotion. Let people first resolve, but not generally and vaguely, to perform all they do in union with Jesus and Mary. They must enter into particulars with themselves. They may resolve to make so many distinct acts before their midday examination, and again so many before the nightly examen.

We may, and shall probably, forget these little acts. They may be troublesome to make. It will be an effort to make them. Never mind when we find we have forgotten them. Let us commence again, and in course of time we shall more easily remember. They may indeed be changed into a habit. We may find it troublesome -- never mind. We must remember nothing ever really good is done without trouble. Let us but persevere in this constant habit of making little acts. We may have to continue



Mother Mary Potter
Foundress
of the Congregation of the
Little Company of Mary,
and author of
The Path of Mary
which perfectly explains
True Devotion to Mary.



them one year, or two, or three, or more, before that time comes when the soul really lives more in Jesus and Mary than in itself. That is the time when the soul uses (if I may so speak) the heart of Jesus more than its own, and when Mary has such possession of that soul that her loves are its loves, her wishes its wishes. Then Mary, having complete power over that soul, can make use of it to act, speak, write as she wishes.

It has been observed, in a work upon this devotion, that as the evil spirits can take possession of persons, influence them, and speak by them, so in a contrary way

can the sweet spirit of Mary (which is indeed the spirit of God) live in us, act in us, work by us. Mother, come dwell, take root within us. We should not be overanxious to see how we are progressing. Let us go steadily forward, making little daily acts, increasing them when we find we keep faithfully the resolution to perform so many in a day. Our angel guardian will help us if we ask him. He will remind us, and soon we shall not need reminding, for our union will have become so strong, so real, that our thoughts and desires will be the thoughts and desires of Mary.



Excerpts from
Father Faber's
Preface
to
True Devotion
to Mary

Feast of the Presentation
of Our Blessed Lady
November 21, 1862

It was in the year 1846 or 1847, at St. Wilfrid's that I first studied the life and spirit of the Venerable Grignon De Montfort; and now, after more than fifteen years, it may be allowable to say that those who take him for their master will hardly be able to name a saint or ascetical writer to whose grace

and spirit their mind will be more subject than to his.

There are few men in the eighteenth century who have more strongly upon them the marks of the man of Providence than this Elias-like missionary of the Holy Ghost and of Mary. His entire life was such an exhibition of the holy folly of the Cross that his biographers unite in always classing him with St. Simon Salo and St. Philip Neri. Clement XI made him a missionary apostolic in France, in order that he might spend his life in fighting against Jansenism, so far as it affected the salvation of souls. Since the Apostolic Epistles it would be hard to find words that burn so marvelously as the twelve pages of his prayer for the Missionaries of the Holy Ghost, to which I earnestly refer all those who find it hard to keep up under their numberless trials the first fires of the love of souls.

It was on the 12th of May, 1853, that the decree was pronounced at Rome declaring his writing to be exempt from all error which could be a bar to his canonization. In this very treatise on the veritable devotion to our Blessed Lady, he has recorded this prophecy: "I clearly foresee that raging brutes will come in fury to tear with their diabolical teeth this little writing and him whom the Holy Ghost has made use of to write it; or at least to envelop it in the silence of a coffer, in order that it may not appear." Never-

theless, he prophesies both its appearance and its success. All this was fulfilled to the letter. The author died in 1716, and the treatise was found by accident by one of the priests of his congregation of St. Laurent-sur-Sevre in 1842. The existing superior was able to attest the handwriting as being that of the venerable founder, and the autograph was sent to Rome to be examined in the process of canonization.

All those who are likely to read this book love God, and lament that they do not love Him more; all desire something for His glory -- the spread of some good work, the success of some devotion, the coming of some good time. One man has been striving for years to overcome a particular fault, and has not succeeded. Another mourns, and almost wonders while he mourns, that so few of his relations and friends have been converted to the Faith. One grieves that he has not devotion enough; another that he has a cross to carry which is a peculiarly impossible cross to him; while a third has domestic troubles and family unhappinesses which feel almost incompatible with his salvation; and for all these things prayer appears to bring so little remedy.

But what is the remedy that is wanted? What is the remedy indicated by God Himself? If we may rely on the disclosures of the saints, it is an immense increase of devotion to our Blessed Lady; but,

remember, nothing short of an immense one.

Jesus is obscured because Mary is kept in the background. Thousands of souls perish because Mary is withheld from them. It is the miserable, unworthy shadow which we call our devotion to the Blessed Virgin that is the cause of all these wants and blights, these evils and omissions and declines. Yet, if we are to believe the revelations of the saints, God is pressing for a greater, a wider, a stronger, quite another devotion to His Blessed Mother. I cannot think of a higher work or a broader vocation for anyone than the simple spreading of this peculiar devotion of the Venerable Grignon De Montfort. Let a man but try it for himself, and his surprise at the graces it brings with it, and the transformations it causes in his soul, will soon convince him of its otherwise almost incredible efficacy as a means for the salvation of men, and for the coming of the kingdom of Christ. Oh, if Mary were but known, there would be no coldness to Jesus then! Oh, if Mary were but known, how much more wonderful would be our faith, and how different would our Communion be! Oh, if Mary were but known, how much happier, how much holier, how much less worldly should we be, and how much more should we be living images of our sole Lord and Saviour, her dearest and most blessed Son!

The Act of Consecration

Consecration to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, through the Blessed Virgin Mary

O Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom! O sweetest and most adorable Jesus! True God and true man, only Son of the Eternal Father, and of Mary, always virgin! I adore Thee profoundly in the bosom and splendors of Thy Father during eternity; and I adore Thee also in the virginal bosom of Mary, Thy most worthy Mother, in the time of Thine Incarnation.

I give Thee thanks for that Thou hast annihilated Thyself, taking the form of a slave in order to rescue me from the cruel slavery of the devil. I praise and glorify Thee for that Thou has been pleased to submit Thyself to Mary, Thy holy Mother, in all things, in order to make me Thy faithful slave through her. But, alas! Ungrateful and faithless as I have been, I have not kept the promises which I made so solemnly to Thee in my Baptism; I have not fulfilled my obligations; I do not deserve to be called Thy child, nor yet Thy slave; and as there is nothing in me which does not merit Thine anger and Thy repulse, I dare not come by myself before Thy most holy and august Majesty. It is on this account that I have recourse to the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, whom Thou has given me for a mediatrix with Thee. It is through her that I hope to obtain of Thee contrition, the pardon of my sins, and the acquisition and preservation of wisdom.

Hail, then, O Immaculate Mary, living tabernacle of the Divinity, where the Eternal Wisdom willed to be hidden and to be adored by angels and by men! Hail, O Queen of heaven and earth, to whose empire everything is subject which is under God. Hail, O sure refuge of sinners whose mercy fails no one. Hear the desires which I have of the Divine Wisdom; and for that end receive the vows and offerings which in my lowliness I present to thee.

I, (Name), a faithless sinner, renew and ratify today in thy hands the vows of my Baptism; I renounce forever Satan, his pomps and works; and I give myself entirely to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, to carry my cross after Him all the days of my life, and to be more faithful to Him than I have ever been before.

In the presence of all the heavenly court I choose thee this day for my Mother and Mistress. I deliver and consecrate to thee, as thy slave, my body and soul, my goods, both interior and exterior, and even the value of all my good actions, past, present and future; leaving to thee the entire and full right of disposing of me, and all that belongs to me, without exception, according to thy good pleasure, for the greater glory of God, in time and in eternity.

Receive, O benignant Virgin, this little offering of my slavery, in honor of, and in union with, that subjection which the Eternal Wisdom deigned to have to thy maternity, in homage to the power which both of you have over this poor sinner, and in thanksgiving for the privileges with which the Holy Trinity has favored thee. I declare that I wish henceforth, as thy true slave, to seek thy honor and to obey thee in all things.

O admirable Mother, present me to thy dear Son as His eternal slave, so that as He has redeemed me by thee, by thee He may receive me! O Mother of Mercy, grant me the grace to obtain the true Wisdom of God; and for that end receive me among those whom thou lovest and teachest, whom thou ledest, nourishest and protectest as thy children and thy slaves.

O faithful Virgin, make me in all things so perfect a disciple, imitator and slave of the Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ thy Son, that I may attain, by thine intercession and by thine example, to the fullness of His age on earth and of His glory in Heaven. Amen.

St. Louis' Hymn, *The Devout Slave of Jesus in Mary*,
constantly extols the "devout slave" as
a "child at the breast"
in total dependence on his mother,
"in whom and through whom it does all things"

The consecration will be the formal recognition
that we have a Mother,
a Mother who has true authority over us
in order to form us into Christ:
"Mother and Mistress",
it will be the formal recognition
that we are her children,
yet so much her children
that we depend completely upon her
as a child yet unborn: children and slaves.

And in the very
Act of Consecration,
De Montfort declares:
"I choose thee today for my Mother and Mistress,"
and he calls the consecrated souls:
"children and slaves..."