

Twenty Five Day: May 22, 2020

Treatise of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary [173-182]

Eighth Motive: This devotion is a wonderful means of perseverance.

Perseverance in faith and in grace until death is such a great grace that, in order to obtain it, it is necessary to ask for it in prayer. This was stated by the Curé of Ars: “Prayer is absolutely necessary to persevere.”

Many times we meet people who have a conversion, but only stay firm for a few months. We fall back into sin instead of progressing in virtue; we seem to go backwards. We know that we are weak. We carry the faith “in earthen vessels.”

Saint Louis compares the Virgin Mary with an anchor which holds souls steadfast. She saves them from shipwreck in the raging seas of the world where so many people perish through lack of such a firm anchor. Mary resembles the Ark of Noah. The flood waters of sin which engulf so many will not harm them. She will not allow those who take refuge in her to be lost.

“By this devotion we entrust all we possess to Mary. We choose her as the guardian of all our possessions in the natural and supernatural sphere. Moved by pure love, this good Mother always accepts whatever is given her in trust, and, once she accepts something, she binds herself in justice by a contract of trusteeship to keep it safe.”

Saint Bonaventure affirms this when he writes: “The Blessed Virgin not only preserves the fullness enjoyed by the saints, but she maintains the saints in their fullness so that it does not diminish. She prevents their virtues from fading away, their merits from being wasted and their graces lost. She prevents the devils from doing them harm and she so influences them that her divine Son has no need to punish them when they sin.”

Saint Louis warns us of the dangers of entrusting our good works outside of the hands of Mary: *“Do not commit the gold of your charity, the silver of your purity to a threadbare sack or a battered old chest, or the waters of heavenly grace or the wines of your merits and virtues to a tainted and fetid cask, such as you are. Otherwise you will be robbed by thieving devils who are on the look-out day and night waiting for a favorable opportunity to plunder. If you do so, all those pure gifts from God will be spoiled by the unwholesome presence of self-love, inordinate self-reliance and, self-will.”* (TD 178)

This devotion is presented by Saint Louis as a hidden treasure that is offered to us and that assures us a very great good for our souls. “Here is the secret that I reveal to you, a secret unknown to almost all Christians, including the most devout.

“Pour into the bosom and heart of Mary all your precious possessions, all your graces and virtues. She is the spiritual vessel, a vessel of honor, a singular vessel of devotion. Ever since God personally hid himself with all his perfections in this vessel, it has become completely spiritual, and the spiritual abode of all spiritual souls.”

And the saint exclaims: “Blessed the man who has given everything to Mary, who at all times and in all things trusts in her, and loses himself to her. He belongs to Mary and Mary belongs to him. He can say ardently with our Lord Jesus Christ himself: *All I have is yours, and all you have is mine.* (*Totus tuus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*, John 17:10).



Meditation

For this third week, Saint Louis Marie says, “They should endeavor in all their prayers and works to acquire an **understanding of the Blessed Virgin and ask the Holy Spirit for this grace.** They may read and meditate upon what we have already said about her. They should recite the Litany of the Holy Spirit and the *Ave Maria Stella* [Hail, Star of the Sea]. In this week you can **also offer prayers that can be habitually done** (Morning Offering, praying three Hail Mary’s, the *Angelus* ...) and (as possible) reciting the Holy Rosary.”

1) Place yourself in the presence of God.

2) Ask for the grace of the Holy Spirit to know the Blessed Virgin Mary.

3) Exhortation to Trust by Saint Bernard

“Oh! You, whoever you are, who feel far from land, dragged by the waves of this world, in the midst of storms, if you do not want to capsize, do not take your eyes off the light of this Star.

If the wind of temptation rises, if the stumbling block of tribulations gets in your way, look at the Star, invoke Mary.

If you are unbalanced by the agitations of pride, of ambition, of murmuring, of envy, look at the Star, invoke Mary.

If anger, avarice, impure desires shake the fragile vessel of your soul, raise your eyes to Mary.

If, disturbed by the memory of the enormity of your crimes, confused before the awkwardness of your conscience, terrified by the fear of Judgment, you begin to let yourself be swept away by the whirlwind of sadness, to throw yourself into the abyss of despair, think of Mary.

In the dangers, in the anxieties, in the doubts, think of Mary, invoke Mary.

May her name never depart from your lips, never leave your heart; and to reach the relief of her intercession, do not neglect the examples of her life.

Following her, you will not get lost; praying, you will not despair; thinking about her, you will avoid all mistakes.

If she sustains you, you will not fall; if she protects you, you will have nothing to fear; if she leads you, you will not get tired; if she is favorable to you, you will reach the end. And so you will verify, from your own experience, how right it was said: *And the name of the Virgin was Mary.*”

Litany of the Holy Spirit

Lord have mercy, *Lord have mercy*

Christ have mercy, *Christ have mercy*
Lord have mercy, *Lord have mercy*
Christ hear us, *Christ bear us*
Christ graciously hear us, *Christ graciously bear us.*

God the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*
God the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

(Repeat after each invocation: Have mercy on us)

Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, ***have mercy on us.***
Spirit of the Lord, who at the beginning of creation, breathed over the waters, made them fertile.
Spirit under whose inspiration God's saints spoke.
Spirit whose unction teaches us everything.
Spirit who gives testimony of Jesus Christ.
Spirit of truth who inspires everything.
Spirit who descended upon Mary.
Spirit of the Lord who fills all the earth.
Spirit of God who dwells in us.
Spirit of wisdom and understanding.
Spirit of counsel and fortitude.
Spirit of knowledge and piety.
Spirit of fear of the Lord.
Spirit of grace and mercy.
Spirit of virtue, esteem and sobriety.
Spirit of faith, hope, love and peace.
Spirit of humility and chastity.
Spirit of goodness and meekness.
Spirit of all the forms of grace.
Spirit who scrutinizes the divine depths.
Spirit who prays for us with inexpressible pleading.
Spirit who descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove.
Spirit by whom we receive new birth.
Spirit who fills hearts with charity.
Spirit of adoption of the sons of God.
Spirit who appeared over the Disciples in the form of tongues of fire.
Spirit with which the Apostles were filled.
Spirit who gives to each one according to His will.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, ***spare us, O Lord.***
Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, ***graciously hear us, O Lord.***
Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, ***have mercy on us.***

Ave Maris Stella

Hail, bright star of ocean,
God's own Mother blest,

Ever sinless Virgin,
Gate of heavenly rest.

Taking that sweet Ave
Which from Gabriel came,
Peace confirm within us,
Changing Eva's name.

Break the captives' fetters,
Light on blindness pour,
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore.

Show thyself a Mother;
May the Word Divine,
Born for us thy Infant,
Hear our prayers through thine.

Virgin all excelling,
Mildest of the mild,
Freed from guilt, preserve us,
Pure and undefiled.

Keep our life all spotless,
Make our way secure,
Till we find in Jesus,
Joy forevermore.

Through the highest heaven
To the Almighty Three,
Father, Son and Spirit,
One same glory be. Amen.

May Jesus Christ reign through the Virgin Mary!

**Religious Family of the Incarnate Word
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