



Desirous of growing in the love of God, the Child of Mary consecrates himself fervently to Her and frequently renews his consecration in ejaculatory form: **"I AM ALL THINE, MY QUEEN, MY MOTHER, AND ALL THAT I HAVE IS THINE."** In this way, he tries to reduce the thought of Mary's ever-present influence in the soul to such methodical and vivid practice that the soul may, to quote St. Louis de Montfort, be said **"to breathe Mary as the body breathes air."** In the exercises of his devotional life, he endeavors to identify himself with Mary and through Her to meditate on all the Mysteries of Redemption. When he attends Mass or receives Holy Communion, while visiting the Blessed Sacrament or saying the Rosary, during the Stations of the Cross or other exercises of piety, he strives after Mary's faith, hope and love; he wishes his sentiments to be Her sentiments; his desires to be Hers; his words, Her words and so on.

In everything he does, he attempts to imitate Her; time and time again, he thanks Her for all She has done for him; when his soul is uplifted, he rejoices with Her; when his spirit is depressed, he sorrows with Her. He is never satisfied that he has studied Her sufficiently; never content that, in his prayer, he has penetrated to the farthest recess of Her perfect soul. No prayer or work of the spiritual life is bereft of some little thought of Her: All is done in the

spirit of dependence on Her. He is so filled with the idea and the spirit of Mary that complete union exists between his soul and Hers. They are, in practice, but one soul. He strives to lose himself in Mary; his ideal is to share in the greatest possible fashion in all the virtues of Her Immaculate Heart and, therefore, in the power of Her prayer. He tries to be another Mary, and because of that desire and his sincere efforts to render it effective, She swiftly transforms him into the likeness of Her Son. Moreover, in and through him who has become so replete with Her own spirit, Mary mothers souls. Not only does he see and serve Christ in them, but Mary herself does so with the same matchless love and tender care She bestowed on the actual body of Her Jesus long ago. To be a living copy of Mary - that is the aim and the ideal of every member. To strive after that ideal is his first and most sacred obligation to this great modern Army of the Mother of God. By being faithful to that first duty, he is at least doing his part towards making the whole Army capable of bringing Mary to the world that She may first give it light and eventually set it ablaze.

Because he works for Mary, the gift of himself and of his work is the choicest he can offer. His work is characterized by unique intensity and spirited zeal, by the utmost skill and holy strategy. He is not a mere instrument of Mary's action; he is a co-worker with Her for the sanctification of the souls for whom Her Son gave His Life. He gives what he can: his action, capacity, powers and all of himself; Mary gives what She can: Her purity, Her powers, all of Herself. If he does his share, Mary never fails him. Knowing this, he is convinced that the fate of any particular task may rightly be said to depend completely on him. Therefore, he brings to it everything he has to give: holiness, intelligence,

strength, method, perseverance and every other quality of the apostolate.

The Saints have said continually that one must pray as if all depended on that prayer and nothing on one's own efforts; and then, that one must strive as if absolutely everything depended on that striving. Results will be forthcoming only in so far as our work for souls is carried on with boundless faith and intense and methodical effort. Trust in Mary must never become an excuse for lack of exertion in work for souls. The issue hangs entirely on grace, and grace will be forfeited by one who offers Mary a bargaining, calculating spirit. Such a spirit, often expressed by a phrase such as **"How little need I do to acquit myself of this task?"** betokens lack of self-surrender and of a lack of capacity for grace. The only sure way to achieve anything great for God, whether in the spiritual life or the apostolate, is the way of limitless exertion. Whether the task be great or small, he must be prepared to throw supreme effort into it. He knows that he is not working for results; as far as he is concerned they do not matter. What is important is that he is Mary's slave, working for Her; what She wishes to do with his efforts does not concern him; he knows everything will be disposed of to the best advantage according to God's Will. Therefore, he gives Mary the best that is in him, even though it may seem ever so small. If he does that, he knows that he merits Mary's co-operation. If She sees that a miracle is needed, then a miracle will be performed. Even though his share may be utterly insignificant, so long as it is done with a heart full of willing love. Mary will endow that feeble motion with the result of a giant's strength. Not only faith but experience proves that if, when he has done everything possible in the circumstances and still success seems at a distance. Our Lady will span that distance thus

bringing their work together to the perfect ending.



No fragment of what is done for Mary is ever wasted. She uses everything to supply the many needs of the Mystical Body of Her Son. Just as once She cared for the home of Nazareth, using with wisdom and discretion the humble earnings of Her carpenter-spouse, so does She now care for the myriad needs of the Church of Her Son. Her design and purpose embrace all the vast horizons of the souls of men; everything given to Her She applies where it is needed most. On the other hand, if one who should be working with Her falls short in what he might reasonably be expected to give, Mary's desire to bestow graces with motherly largesse is frustrated. Reliance on Mary can obviously never justify insufficient exertion or slipshod methods.

The Child of Mary must give to the utmost of his capacity, only looking to Mary to supplement, purify, perfect, super-naturalize the natural, and enable weak human effort to achieve what is impossible to it. Mary cannot be expected to supply what the member refuses to give; trust in and dependence on Her do not dispense him from the effort, method, patience and thought which he can and ought to provide.