

By God's Will, Mary's power is without limit. Therefore, the apostolate's trust in Her is well-nigh infinite. God gave to Mary everything He could; She could not receive more than Himself. By working in complete union with Her, the Child of Mary puts himself in the very flood-tide of grace, for She is the channel of every grace merited by Her dying Son. Not alone does She communicate all graces to us, She obtains them for us, too. Everything there is in this world of hope, grace and salvation flows to men from Mary. To approach God more effectively and win grace more freely, he strives after perfect union with His Mother!

Moreover, the battle in which Mary's Army is always engaged is the conflict with sin. Mary alone, of all our race, is perfectly sinless. Therefore, he who would conquer sin either in himself or in others, keeps himself so closely united to the Immaculate Virgin that everywhere and in everything he acts as Mary's instrument. He endeavors to bring it about that, through his subjection to Mary, She acts in him, with him and by him to such an extent that it is really Her apostolate rather than his that is carried on. When such is the case, the apostolate is, in truth, the seed of Mary; between it and sin, enmity is complete.

Just as Christ gave Himself absolutely to Mary, so the Child of Mary is encouraged to surrender to Her everything: Every thought, every movement of his soul, his hidden riches, his inmost self. Everything up to and including his last breath is to be given to Her that She might expend it all for God. Even the earthly slave remains master of his thoughts and inner life; he is free in everything that really counts. Not so Mary's slave. He offers himself to a kind of martyrdom; through love, he sacrifices himself completely to God, and Mary is the altar of the sacrifice.



True Devotion is not merely an act; it is a state, a life. True, it is solemnly inaugurated by an act of consecration to Mary, but it consists principally in living afterwards in the spirit of that consecration. Mary must take possession of the whole of one's life; otherwise there is no real Montfortian Devotion. The act of consecration may be made; it may even be often repeated and, if the substance of True Devotion is not there, a tree has been planted, but it has failed to take root.

This does not mean that the Children of Mary are expected to do the impossible by keeping their minds ever fixed upon their consecration to Mary. It would be almost as reasonable to suggest that one should always remember the fact that the beating of the heart controls the life of the body. The heart continues to function even though its operations rarely become the definite objects of thought. Similarly with the True Devotion. It works ceaselessly in the life of the soul, even though it is not consciously adverted to. The thought of Mary's complete dominion should be made vivid now and again by deliberate

thought and prayer; if that is done, it is sufficient that the fact of one's dependence on Her remains immutably recognized, that it be always at least vaguely before the mind and that it be put into force in a general way in all the circumstances of life.

It is not necessary that the inauguration or subsequent practice of the True Devotion be accompanied by warmth or consolation. It does not depend on feelings or fervor or any kind of emotional experience. Its foundations are reason, faith and the loving resolve of the will, and these are completely independent of the feelings of the senses.

St. Louis de Montfort claimed that the devotion he taught is an authentic message from Heaven. This has undoubtedly been verified through the graces that have attended the practice of it and the position it has attained in the devotional life of the Church.

In the words of Cardinal Tedeschi on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of St. Louis de Montfort in St. Peter's, Rome:

**“He has constituted himself the herald of the coming of the reign of God through Mary, and the precursor of that longed-for salvation which in the fullness of time the Virgin Mother of God will bring to the world by Her Immaculate Heart.”**

There can be no questioning the fact that the practice of **TRUE DEVOTION** deepens the spiritual life, endowing it particularly with purity of intention and unselfishness. These things are of the very essence of the teaching of St. Louis de Montfort; one is called upon to practice them incessantly. It is a matter of experience that by such complete surrender and submission to Mary one advances more in a few

months than in many years of spiritual effort based more on reliance on self and one's own will.

The true servant of Mary finds himself comforted and strengthened by a strong and certain sense of guidance and protection. Mary seems to make herself so near and present to him that he is enlightened in his doubts, strengthened in his fears and sustained in his battles. It is this sense of being always directed and safeguarded by Mary that enables him to persevere in his quest for souls when so many others who begin apostolic work under other auspices fall by the wayside.

It is extremely difficult to think of any way of spirituality more designed to bring with it a certainty that one's life and everything in it are being employed to the best advantage. He who is faithful to his devotion to Mary has that certainty; he is consequently free from many worries and anxieties and at liberty to pursue unrestricted his own progress towards perfection and his apostolate of charity. By this interior liberty, scruples are banished and the heart is filled with burning love and limitless trust.

One cannot really surrender all to Mary without attaining a supernatural outlook. The constant attempt to live as Mary's slave of love implies a gentle but constant effort to acquire Her spirit and outlook. She, more than any other creature, was accustomed to judge of everything from the supernatural point of view; between Her and the world enmities were complete. Therefore, the soul surrendered to Mary and attempting to live always in the spirit of that surrender necessarily finds himself more and more inclined to evaluate all from the standpoint of the supernatural.