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THE SECRET
OF MARY

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THE
LIFE OF MARY

Unveiled to the Devout Soul

BY BLESSED

LOUIS-MARIE G. DE MONTFORT

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY THE LATE

REV. A. P. J. CRUIKSHANK, D.D.

Author of "The Life of Blessed Louis-Marie Grignon de
Montfort".

" Secretum meum mihi.

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The French edition of the Secret of Mary, from which this translation has been made, had the *Imprimatur* of the Bishop of Poitiers.

« I cannot think of a higher work or a broader vocation for any one 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 communions 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! »
— DR. FABER, *Preface to Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.*

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PREFACE.

THIS little work, of which mention is made in the Life of Blessed Grignon de Montfort, and of which only a few pages were given at the end of the French Editions, was published entire in a separate form only a few years ago by M. Oudin of Poitiers. More than twenty thousand copies were printed with the Imprimatur of Mgr Pie, the Bishop of Poitiers. Through the kindness of M. Oudin, and of the Daughters of Wisdom, of the Mother-house of Saint-Laurent-sus-Sèvre, the Translator is now enabled to place it before his English readers in its perfect form. He has however been requested to state, that to him alone has been granted the right of Translation in England.

The work, when discovered, bore upon it the following inscription : « Copy of a Manuscript written by the late M. de Montfort with his own hand, on the Slavery of the Blessed Virgin, and sent by him to a pious person of his acquaintance. » Those who have read his Treatise on the True Devotion to Our Lady, translated by Father

Faber, will recognise at once the style of the Servant of God, and in many places the very same expressions.

The « Secret of Mary » seems to have been written first, and afterwards to have been worked up into the Treatise on the True Devotion. It is praised by the Author of his Life for its rare exactness of doctrine. In clearness of arrangement, it seems superior to his other Treatise, and as on that account it is better adapted for general circulation, the Translator has thought it well to publish it in a separate form, together with a method of hearing Mass in union with Mary, the method of saying the Rosary as taught by de Montfort, and a few other Devotions, which have been added to the Poitiers edition.

The « Tree of Life » and the two Prayers to Jesus and Mary were also written by the Servant of God, and have never before been published.

THE SECRET OF MARY

UNVEILED TO

THE DEVOUT SOUL.

Predestinate soul, I have a secret for you, which the Most High has taught me, and which I have not been able to find in any book old or new. I confide it to you, by the Holy Ghost, on condition : 1. That you communicate it only to those persons who deserve it by their prayers, their alms, mortifications, persecutions, and detachment from the world. 2. That you make use of it to become holy and heavenly; for this secret only becomes great in proportion to the use made of it by the soul; beware, then, of remaining with your arms folded doing nothing : my secret would then become fatal to you, and would turn to your condemnation. 3. On condition that you thank God, all the days of your life, for the grace He has given you in teaching you a secret which you do not deserve to know.

According to the measure of your use of this secret in the ordinary actions of your life, will you understand its value and excellence, which at first you will but imperfectly understand, on account of the multitude and grievousness of your sins, and your secret attachment to yourself.

Before going any further, and in order to restrain for a moment any natural and too eager desire to know this truth, say devoutly the *Ave Maris Stella* and the *Veni Creator*, in order to ask of God the grace to understand and relish this divine mystery.

On account of the little time I have for writing, and you for reading, I will say everything as briefly as possible.

Soul, living image of God, and redeemed by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, the will of God concerning you, is that you should become holy like Him in this life, and glorious like Him in the next. The acquisition of the holiness of God is your sure vocation; and it is to this that all your thoughts, words, and actions, all your sufferings, and all the movements of your life must tend; or you will resist God by not doing that for

which He has created you and is now preserving you. Oh, what an admirable work! dust changed into light, dirt into purity, sin into holiness, the creature into its Creator, and man into God! Admirable work, I repeat, but very difficult in itself, and impossible to mere nature; it is only God who, by His grace, and His abundant and extraordinary grace, can bring it to pass; the creation of the whole universe is not so great a masterpiece as this.

Soul, how wilt thou act? What means wilt thou choose in order to mount up where God is calling thee? The means of salvation and holiness are known to all; they are marked in the Gospel, explained by the masters of the spiritual life, practised by the saints, and are necessary to all those who wish to be saved, and to arrive at perfection; such are : humility of heart, continual prayer, complete mortification, abandonment to the Providence of God, and conformity to the Will of God.

To practise these means of salvation and holiness, the grace of God is absolutely necessary, and this grace is given to all in greater or less measure; for God,

although infinitely good, does not give equally strong grace to all, although He gives sufficient to each. A soul faithful to God, with a great grace, will perform a great action, and with a weak grace, a small action; it is the value and excellence of the grace given by God, and corresponded to by the soul, which constitutes the value and excellence of our actions. These principles are incontestable. Everything, then, consists in finding an easy means of obtaining from God the necessary grace in order to become holy; and it is this which I wish to teach you. Now, I say, that to find this grace of God we must find Mary, because :

1. It is Mary alone who has found grace before God, both for herself and for every man in particular. The patriarchs, and prophets, and all the saints of the old Law could not find this grace.

2. It is Mary who has given being and life to the Author of all grace; and on this account she is called the Mother of grace, *Mater gratiæ*.

3. God the Father, from whom every good gift and perfect grace comes down as from its essential source, in giving her

His Son, has given her all His graces, so that as St Bernard says, the will of God has been given her in Him and with Him.

4. God has chosen her for the treasurer, steward, and dispenser of all His graces, so that all His graces and all His gifts pass through her hands; and, according to the power she has received over them, as St Bernardine teaches, she gives to whom she wills, as she likes, and as much as she likes, the graces of the Eternal Father, the virtues of Jesus Christ, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

5. As in the natural order, a child must have a father and mother, so in the order of grace, a true child of the Chrch must have God for his Father and Mary for his Mother; and if he glories in having God for his Father, without at the same time having a tender filial love for Mary, he is a deceiver, whose only father is the devil.

6. Since Mary has formed the head of the predestinate, who is Jesus Christ, it is also her office to form the members of this Head, that is to say, all true Christians, for a mother does not form the

head without the members, nor the members without the head. Whoever then wishes to be a member of Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, must be formed in Mary by means of the grace of Jesus Christ, who dwells in her in His fulness, in order to be communicated in fulness to the true members of Jesus Christ, and to her true children.

7. The Holy Ghost having espoused Mary, and having produced in her, and by her, and from her, Jesus Christ, that Masterpiece, the Word Incarnate, as He has never repudiated her, so He continues every day to produce in her, and by her, in a mysterious but true manner, His predestinate.

8. Mary has received from God a special dominion over souls, in order to nourish them and to make them grow up in God. St Augustine even says, that all the predestinate are in the womb of Mary, and that they are not born, until the good Mother brings them forth into life eternal. Consequently, as the child draws all its nourishment from its mother, who gives it to it in proportion to its weakness, so in like manner do the predestinate draw

all their spiritual nourishment and all their strength from Mary.

9. It is to Mary, that God the Father has said : *In Jacob inhabita* : My daughter, « let thy dwelling be in Jacob, » that is to say in my elect typified by Jacob. It is to Mary that God the Son has said, *In Israel hæreditare* : « My dear Mother, let thine inheritance be in Israel, » that is to say, in the predestinate. Lastly, it is to Mary that the Holy Spirit has said : *in electis meis mitte radices*, « Strike thy roots, my faithful spouse, in my elect. » Whoever then is elect and predestinate has the Holy Virgin dwelling in him, that is to say, in his soul; he allows her to strike her roots in profound humility, in ardent charity, and in all virtue.

10. Mary is called by St Augustine, and indeed is the living mould of God, *forma Dei*, that is to say, it is in her alone, that the God-Man was naturally formed without losing any feature, so to speak, of His Godhead; and it is also in her alone that man can be properly, and in a life-like way, formed into God, so far as human nature is capable of this by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Now, a sculptor may make a statue or likeness after nature in two ways : 1. out of some hard and shapeless material, by making use of his skill, his strength, his knowledge, and good instruments; 2. he may cast it in a mould. The first manner is long and difficult, and subject to many accidents : it often happens that a mere blow of the hammer or chisel, awkwardly given, is enough to spoil the whole work. The second manner is quick, easy, and gentle, without trouble or expense, provided the mould be perfect, and a good natural likeness, and the material used offer no resistance to the hand.

Mary is the great mould of God, made by the Holy Ghost, in order to form a God-Man by the Hypostatic Union, and a Man-God by grace. In this mould, no feature of the Godhead is wanting; whoever is cast in it, and allows himself to be freely handled, receives therein all the features of Jesus Christ, who is True God. And this is done in a gentle manner, and in proportion to his human weakness, without much agony or labour; in a sure manner, without fear of illusion, for the devil has never had, and never will have,

access to Mary; and lastly, in a holy and spotless manner, without the shadow of the least stain of sin. Oh! what a difference there is between a soul formed in Jesus Christ by the ordinary ways, that is to say, by trusting, like the sculptor, to mere natural skill and ingenuity, and a soul thoroughly tractable, really detached, and well molten, which, without in any way leaning upon itself, suffers itself to be cast in Mary, and to be handled by the Holy Ghost! How many stains, how many defects, how much darkness, how many illusions, how much of what is merely natural, and human, is there in the first soul; and how pure, how divine, and like to Jesus Christ, is the second!

There is not, nor will there ever be, a creature in which God is greater, outside Himself, than the divine Mary, not excepting either the saints, or the cherubim, or the highest seraphim, in Paradise itself. Mary is the Paradise of God, and His unspeakable world, into which the Son of God has gone to work His marvels, to keep it, and to take His pleasure therein. He has made a world for man in his

state of pilgrimage, which is that on which we dwell. He has made a world for man in a state of blessedness, which is heaven; but He has made another world for Himself, to which He has given the name of Mary; a world almost unknown to all mortals here below, and incomprehensible to all the angels and all the blessed, who, on high, in heaven, are so filled with admiration at seeing God so exalted, so withdrawn from all of them, so separated and hidden in His world, the divine Mary, that they cry out without ceasing, Holy, Holy, Holy.

Happy, and a thousand times happy, is the soul here below to which the Holy Ghost reveals, and makes known, the Secret of Mary; to which He opens this « garden enclosed, » by permitting it to enter it; to which He gives access to this « fountain sealed up, » by suffering it to draw from it, and to drink deep draughts of the living waters of grace! Such a soul will find God Alone without any creature, in this most sweet creature; but God at the same time infinitely holy and exalted, infinitely condescending and proportioned to its weakness. Since God is

everywhere, He may be found everywhere, even in hell; but there is no place in which the creature can find Him nearer to itself, and more proportioned to its weakness, than in Mary, for it was for this end that He came down into her bosom. Everywhere else He is the Bread of the Strong, the Bread of Angels, but in Mary He is the Bread of children.

Let no one imagine then, as some do who are deceived by false lights, that Mary being a creature, is a hindrance to union with the Creator; it is no longer Mary who lives, it is Jesus Christ; it is God Alone who lives in her. Her transformation into God surpasses that of St. Paul, and the other saints, as heaven is higher than the earth. Mary was made only for God; and far from her detaining a soul in herself which casts itself upon her bosom, she on the contrary, casts it immediately upon God, and unites it to Him with so much the more perfection, as the soul is more united to her. Mary is the marvellous echo of God, who answers only « God, » when we say « Mary; » who glorifies only God, when with St. Elizabeth, we call her Blessed. If the

falsely illuminated, who have been miserably led away by the devil even in prayer, had known how to find Mary, and by Mary, Jesus, they would never have had such terrible falls. When we have once found Mary, and by Mary, Jesus, and by Jesus, God the Father, we have found all good, is the language of holy souls : *Inventa, etc.* When they say all, they except nothing : all grace, and all friendship with God ; all safety against the enemies of God ; all truth as opposed to falsehood ; all facility and complete victory over the difficulties of salvation ; all sweetness and all joy amidst the bitterness of life.

Not that he who has found Mary, by true devotion, will be exempt from crosses, and sufferings : far from it, he is more assailed by them than any other, because Mary, being the mother of all living, gives to her children pieces of the Tree of Life, which is the Cross of Jesus ; but in cutting for them good crosses, she obtains for them the grace to carry them with patience, and even with joy, so that the crosses which she gives to those who belong to her are rather sweet than bitter

crosses. Or, if for awhile they feel the bitterness of the chalice which they must drink in order to be the friends of God, the consolation and joy which this good mother gives after this sorrow, encourages them exceedingly to carry still heavier and more bitter crosses.

The difficulty then is to know how truly to find the divine Mary, in order to find all abundant grace. God, being absolute Master, can communicate by Himself that which ordinarily He communicates only by Mary; we cannot even deny, without rashness, that sometimes He does so; nevertheless, according to the order established by Divine Wisdom, He communicates Himself ordinarily to men only through Mary in the order of grace, as St. Thomas teaches; we must therefore, in order to mount up, and unite ourselves to Him, make use of the same means, of which He made use to come down to us, to become man, and communicate to us His graces. The means then to find grace, and abundant grace, is a true devotion to Mary.

But it must be remarked, that there are several kinds of true devotion to the Most

Holy Virgin, for here I do not speak of false devotions.

The first consists in performing the duties of a Christian, by avoiding mortal sin, by acting more from love than from fear, and by praying from time to time to the Holy Virgin, honouring her as the Mother of God, without having any special devotion towards her.

The second consists in entertaining for the Blessed Virgin, feelings of most perfect esteem, love, confidence and veneration. It leads us to join her confraternities, to recite her chaplet and the Holy Rosary, to honour the images and altars of Mary, to publish her praises, and to enrol ourselves in her congregations. If in doing this, we abstain from sin, this devotion is good, holy, and praiseworthy; but it is not so perfect as the following, nor so capable of withdrawing souls from creatures, and of detaching them from themselves, in order to unite them with Jesus Christ.

The third devotion of the Holy Virgin, known and practised by very few, is that which I am about to unveil to you, predestinate souls. It consists in giving

ourselves up entirely to the Most Holy Virgin, in the quality of slaves, in order to belong wholly to Jesus Christ; and in the next place to do all our actions with Mary, in Mary, by Mary, for Mary, in order to do them more perfectly with Jesus, in Jesus, by Jesus, and for Jesus, our Last End.

I will explain these words.

In order to practise this excellent devotion, I observe in the first place, that we should choose some remarkable feast, on which to give, consecrate, and sacrifice ourselves to Jesus by Mary out of our own free will and out of love, without constraint; wholly, without any reservation; our body and our soul; our body with all its members and all its senses; our soul with all its powers; our exterior goods of fortune, such as house, family or revenues; our interior goods of soul; that is to say, our merits, our graces, our virtues, our good works, past, present, or to come; in a word, all that we have in the order of nature, and in the order of grace, and all that we may have in time to come, in the order of nature, of grace or of glory; and that without any reservation, even of

a farthing, a hair, or of the least good action, and that for all eternity; and that without looking for any other recompense for our offering but the honour of belonging to Jesus Christ by her and in her, even if this divine Queen were not, as she always is, the most generous, and the most grateful of creatures.

It must be here observed, that by this devotion, the soul sacrifices to Jesus, by the hand of Mary, all that it holds most dear, and of which not even any religious order would require the sacrifice; namely, the right which we have of disposing of the value of our prayers, our alms, and our mortifications, so as to leave the entire disposal of them to the Holy Virgin, to be applied, according to her will, to the greatest glory of God, which she alone perfectly knows.

We leave to her disposal all the value, satisfactory, and impetratory, of our good works; thus, after we have made the oblation, although without any vow, we are no longer masters of any of the good we do; the most Holy Virgin may apply it, at one time for the relief and deliverance of a

soul in Purgatory, at another for the conversion of some poor sinner.

We also place, by this devotion, our merits in the hands of the Most Holy Virgin; but for her to keep them, augment them, and embellish them, because we cannot communicate one to another the merits of sanctifying grace, still less those of glory; but we give her all our prayers, and good works, so far as they are impetratory and satisfactory, to distribute and apply them to whom she pleases; and if, after having thus consecrated ourselves to the Holy Virgin, we desire to relieve some soul in Purgatory, to save some sinner, to help some one of our friends by our prayers, our alms, our mortifications, or our sacrifices, we must ask it of her humbly, and leave everything to her good pleasure and determination, without knowing anything about it, being fully persuaded that the value of our actions, being dispensed by the same hand, of which God makes use to distribute to us His graces and gifts, it cannot fail to be applied to His greatest glory.

I have said, that this devotion consists in giving ourselves to Mary in the *quality*

of slaves. Now there are three kinds of slavery : the first is the slavery of nature; all men, good and bad, are the slaves of God in this sense. The second is the slavery of constraint; the devils and the damned are slaves of God in this second sense. The third is the slavery of love and of the will; and it is in this sense that we ought to consecrate ourselves to God, by Mary, as being the most perfect way in which a creature can possibly give itself to its Creator.

Remark, again, that there is a great difference between a servant and a slave; a servant expects wages for his service, a slave none. A servant is free to leave his master when he likes, he serves him only for a time; a slave cannot justly leave his master, he belongs to him his whole life long. A master has not the right of life and death over his servant, but he has over his slave, so that he can put him to death without being interfered with by justice. Christians do not make such slaves; only Turks and idolaters act in this way. Happy and a thousand times hoppy is that generous soul which consecrates itself entirely to Jesus by Mary as

a slave of love, after having shaken off by baptism the tyrannical slavery of the devil!

I should require much light from God, in order to describe perfectly the excellence of this practice : I will only say in passing,

1. That to give ourselves in this way to Jesus by the hands of Mary, is to imitate God the Father, Who has given us His Son only by Mary, and Who communicates His grace to us only by Mary; it is to imitate God the Son, Who has come to us only by Mary, and Who, having given us an example to act as He acted, has asked us to go to Him by the same means by which He has come to us, that is to say, by Mary; it is to imitate the Holy Ghost who communicates His graces and gifts to us, only by Mary. Is it not just, says St. Bernard, that grace should return to its Author, by the same channel which has transmitted it to us? (*ut eodem alveo ad largitorem gratiæ gratia redeat, quo fluxit.*)

2. To go in this way to Jesus by Mary, is truly to honour Jesus Christ, because it is to show that we are not worthy to approach His infinite Holiness directly

and by ourselves, on account of our sins, and that we have need of Mary, His Holy Mother, to be our advocate and mediatrix with Him Who is our Mediator. It is at the same time to approach Him as our Mediator and our Brother, and to humble ourselves before Him, as before our God and our Judge : in a word, it is to practise humility, which always is exceedingly pleasing to the Heart of God.

3. To consecrate ourselves in this way to Jesus by Mary, is to place in the hands of Mary, our good actions, which, however good they may appear, are very often soiled, and unworthy of the sight and acceptance of God, before Whom the stars are not pure. Ah! let us pray to our dear mother and mistress, that having received our poor present, she may purify it, sanctify it, and embellish it, so as to render it worthy of God. All the revenues of our soul are of less value before God, the Father of the family, to gain His friendship and grace, than a worm-eaten apple in the hands of some poor peasant who rents a farm of the king would be in the sight of His Majesty, to pay for his farm. What would this poor man do, if

he had any good sense, and if he had any interest with the queen? Would he not give her his apple, and would not the queen, out of kindness to the poor peasant and out of respect for the king, remove from the apple all that was worm-eaten or spoilt, and place it in a vessel of gold surrounded by flowers; and the king, could he refuse to accept it, even with joy, from the hands of the queen who favours this peasant? *Modicum quid offerre desideras, manibus Mariæ tradere cura, si non vis sustinere repulsam.* « If you wish to offer anything to God, » says St. Bernard, « place it in the hands of Mary, unless you wish to be refused. » Great God, even when we do all, how little it is! But let us place it in Mary's hands by this devotion. As we shall have given ourselves altogether to her, so far as we are able, by despoiling ourselves of everything in her honour, she will be infinitely more generous towards us, and will give us for an egg, an ox. She will communicate herself wholly to us, with her merits and virtues; she will place our presents on the golden plate of her charity; she will clothe us, as Rebecca clothed Jacob,

with the beautiful garments of her elder and only Son, Jesus Christ, that is to say, with His merits, of which she has the disposal; and thus, as her servants and her slaves, after having despoiled ourselves of everything in her honour, we shall be clad in double garments : *Omnes domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus* : the garments, ornaments, perfumes, merits and virtues of Jesus and of Mary.

4. To give ourselves thus to the Most Holy Virgin, is to practise charity to our neighbour in the highest possible degree, for it is to give to Mary all that we hold most dear, in order that she may dispose of it at her good pleasure in favour of the living and the dead.

5. By this devotion a soul can place its graces and merits in safety, by making Mary the depository of all its goods. The soul can say to her with confidence : « See, my dear mother, my kind mistress, here is the good, which by the grace of thy dear Son, I have been enabled to do; I am not able to keep it on account of my weakness and inconstancy, and on account of the great number and the malice of my enemies, who ceaselessly attack me.

Alas! I see every day the cedars of Lebanon fall down into the mud, and the eagles which had raised themselves to the Sun become birds of night; I see even a thousand of the just fall on my left hand, and ten thousand on my right. Ah! my powerful and most powerful princess, do thou hold me for fear I fall; do thou keep all my good, for fear I may be robbed of it; all I have I confide to thee, as a trust.

Depositum custodi. — Scio cui credidi. I know whom I have trusted, I know well who thou art, this is why I entrust myself entirely to thee; thou art faithful and true to God and to men, and thou wilt not suffer anything to perish of that which I entrust to thee; thou art powerful, and nothing can hurt thee, nor take from thee what thou holdest in thy hands. » *Ipsam sequens non devias, ipsam rogans non desperas, ipsam cogitans, non erras; ipsa tenente non corruis: ipsa protegente non metuis, ipsa duce, non fatigaris; ipsa propitia pervenis.* (S. Bernard, *Inter flores*. cap. 135, de Maria Virgine, p. 2150.)

— (« When you follow Mary, you will not go out of the way; when you pray to her, you will not despair; when you

think of her, you will make no mistake; when she holds you up, you will not fall; when she protects you, you need not fear; under her guidance you will not be tired; under her favour, you will arrive at your journey's end, and at the harbour of safety.») And again : « *Detinet Filium ne percutiat; detinet diabolum, ne noceat; detinet virtutes ne fugiant, detinet merita ne pereant; detinet gratias ne effluent.* » (She keeps her Son from striking us; she keeps the devil from hurting us; she keeps our virtues from escaping; she keeps our merits from being destroyed; she keeps our graces from being lost.) These are the words of St Bernard, and they express in substance all that I have been saying. Were there but this one motive to excite me to this devotion, namely, that it is a sure means of keeping me in the grace of God, and even of augmenting it in me, I ought to breathe nothing but fire and flames for its sake.

6. This devotion renders a soul truly free with the liberty of the children of God. Since for the love of Mary, we reduce ourselves of our own free will to slavery; this dear mistress, out of grati-

tude, enlarges and dilates our heart, and causes it to walk with giant steps in the way of God's commandments. Ordinarily she takes away from the soul, weariness, sadness, and scruples. It was this devotion which our Lord taught to Mother Agnes of Jesus,* as a sure means of deliverance from the severe sufferings and perplexities by which she was tried. « Make thyself, » He said, « my mother's slave : » she did so, and in a moment her troubles ceased.

Were we to give all the authorities for this devotion, we should have to make mention here of all the Bulls and Indulgences of Popes, and the pastoral letters of bishops in its favour, the confraternities established in its honour, the examples of many saints and illustrious persons who have practised it; but all this I pass over in silence.

I said, in the second place, that this devotion consists in doing all our actions with Mary, in Mary, by Mary, and for Mary. It is not enough to have given

* A nun of the Order of St. Dominic, who died in the odour of sanctity, in the year 1634, at the convent of Langeac in Auvergne.

ourselves once to Jesus, in the quality of slaves : it is not enough to do this every month, or every week ; this would be too transient a devotion, nor would it raise the soul to that perfection to which it is able to raise it. There is not much difficulty in enrolling ourselves in a confraternity, or even embracing outwardly the devotion of which I am speaking, in saying a few vocal prayers every day, as it prescribes ; but the great difficulty is to enter into the spirit of this devotion, which is to make a soul interiorly dependent upon, and a slave of the most Holy Virgin, and of Jesus by her. I have met with many persons, who, with admirable zeal, have entered into this holy slavery, outwardly ; but I have found but few who have acquired its spirit, and still fewer who have persevered in it.

1. The essential part of this devotion consists in doing all our actions *with Mary*, that is to say, to take the Holy Virgin for the perfect model of all we have to do. This is why, before undertaking anything, we must renounce ourselves, and our own views, however good they may be ; we must annihilate ourselves before God,

as being of ourselves incapable of any supernatural good, or even of any action profitable to salvation; we must have recourse to the most Holy Virgin, and unite ourselves with her and with her intentions; we must unite ourselves by Mary, with the intentions of Jesus Christ; that is to say, we must place ourselves as instruments in the hands of the Holy Virgin, in order that she may act in us, and for us, and that she may do with us what she likes, to the greater glory of her Son, and by her Son Jesus Christ, to the glory of the Father; so that we must not undertake any kind of interior life, or perform any spiritual action except in dependence upon her.

2. We must do all our actions *in Mary*, that is to say, we must accustom ourselves little by little to interior recollection, in order to form some little idea or spiritual image of the Holy Virgin: she will be to the soul an oratory in which she can offer up all her prayers to God, without fear of being repulsed; the Tower of David, to secure her from all her enemies; a lighted lamp to enlighten all her interior, and to inflame her with the love of God;

a sacred monstinance in which God can be seen in Mary, and with Mary. In a word, Mary will be to the soul her only all before God, and her universal refuge. If the soul pray, she will pray in Mary; if she receives Jesus in Holy Communion, she will place Him in Mary, so that He may take complacency in her. Mary will receive Him lovingly, will honourably enthrone Him, will adore Him profoundly, will love Him perfectly, will embrace Him closely, and will render Him in spirit and in truth many homages which are unknown to us in our thick darkness.* If she acts, (this soul) it will be in Mary; if she reposes, it will be in Mary; and everywhere and in all things she will make acts of self-renunciation.

3. Again, we must never go to our Lord, except *by Mary*, through her intercession and power with Him; we must never be alone when we pray to Him.

4. Lastly, we must do all our actions *for Mary*, that is to say, that being the slaves of this august Princess, it is just that we should do everything for her, that

* See Treatise on the True devotion to the Blessed Virgin, p. 188.

we should no longer work except for her, for her interests and glory; not that we take her for the last end of our services; for that can only be Jesus Christ, but for our proximate end, and as an easy means through which to go to Jesus. The soul, then, in everything she does, must renounce her own self-love, which sets itself up almost always as an end, in a way which cannot be perceived, and often repeat from the bottom of the heart, « O, my dear Mistress, it is for thee that I go here or there, that I do this or that; that I suffer this pain or that wrong! Beware, predestinate soul, of believing that it is more perfect to go straight to Jesus, straight to God in thy actions and intentions; if thou shalt go to Him without Mary, thy actions will be of little value; but when thou goest to Him by Mary, it is Mary who works in thee, and consequently thy actions will be highly exalted and very worthy of God.

More than this, beware of doing violence to thyself, in order to taste and feel what thou art doing; say and do everything in that pure faith, which Mary had on earth, and which she will communicate to thee

in good time; leave to thy sovereign, poor little slave, the clear sight of God, the transports, the joys, the pleasures, the riches of heaven, and take for thyself only pure faith, full of disgusts, distractions, weariness, and dryness; say, « *Amen*, whatever Mary, my mistress, does in heaven, so let it be! »

O! take great care, once more, not to torment thyself, shouldst thou not immediately enjoy the sweet presence of the Blessed Virgin in thy interior; this grace is not given to all; and when God favours a soul with this grace out of His great mercy, it is very easy for the soul to lose it, unless she be faithful in frequent self-denial; and should this misfortune happen to thee, then return quietly, and make honourable amends to thy Sovereign.

Experience will teach thee infinitely more than I can tell thee, and thou wilt find, if thou art faithful to the little which I have taught thee, so many rich graces in this practice, that thou wilt be surprised, and filled full of joy. Let us labour, then, dear soul, and let us act in such a way, that by the faithful practice of this devotion, the soul of Mary may

be in us to glorify our Lord, and that the spirit of Mary may be in us to rejoice in God our Saviour. These are the words of St. Ambrose : « *Sit in singulis anima Mariæ ut magnificet Dominum, sit in singulis spiritus Mariæ ut exultet in Deo.* » And let us not think that there was more glory and happiness in dwelling in Abraham's bosom, which was called Paradise, than in the bosom of Mary, in which God has placed His throne. These are the words of learned Abbot Gueric : « *Ne credideris majoris esse felicitatis habitare in sinu Abrahæ, qui Paradisus, quam in Sinu Mariæ in quo Dominus posuit thronum suum.* »

This devotion, faithfully practised, produces an infinite number of happy effects. When the life of Mary is well established in the soul, it is no longer in some sort the soul which lives, it is Mary who lives in it; the soul of Mary takes its place, so to speak. But when, by an unspeakable but real grace, the Divine Mary becomes Queen in a soul, what marvels does she not work! As she is the worker of great marvels, particularly in the interior, she works them in secret, without even the

knowledge of the soul, for were the soul to know, it would destroy the beauty of Mary's works.

As she is, wherever she is found, the fruitful Virgin, she brings with her into every interior where she is, purity of heart and body, purity in intention and design, and fruitfulness in good works. Do not think, dear soul, that Mary, the most fruitful of all pure creatures, and who went so far as to produce a God-Man, remains idle in a faithful soul. She will make it live without ceasing, to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in it. « *Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis.* » (Gal. iv. 19.) (« My little children, of whom I am in labour again, until Christ be formed in you. ») If Jesus Christ is as much the fruit of Mary in each soul in particular, as for the whole world in general, it is especially in the soul in which the Divine Virgin dwells, that Jesus Christ is her fruit and her masterpiece. Lastly, Mary becomes everything to this soul before Jesus Christ; she enlightens the mind by her pure faith; she deepens the heart by her humility, she enlarges and inflames it by her love,

she purifies it by her purity, she ennobles and enlarges it by her maternity. But where am I to stop? It is only experience that can teach the marvels of Mary, marvels past all belief to the wise and proud, and even to the generality of devout men and women.

As it is by Mary that God came into the world the first time, in humiliation and annihilation, may we not also say, that it is by Mary that God will come a second time, as the whole Church expects, to reign over all and to judge the living and the dead? How this will be done, and when it will be done, who can tell? But I know well, that God, whose thoughts are as far removed from our thoughts as heaven is above the earth, will come in a time and in a way, the least expected by men; even by those who are most learned and most versed in Holy Scripture, which is very obscure on this subject. We ought also to believe, that towards the end of time, and perhaps sooner than we think, God will raise up great men full of the Holy Ghost, and wholly devoted to the worship of Mary, by whom this divine Sovereign will work great marvels in the

world, in order to destroy sin, and establish the kingdom of Jesus Christ, her Son, upon the ruins of the kingdom of this corrupted world; and it is by means of this devotion to the most Holy Virgin, of which I do but give the outlines, and which I only lessen by my feebleness, that these holy men will bring everything about.

Besides the interior practice of this devotion, of which we have just been speaking, there are also certain external practices, which we must not either omit or neglect.

The first is, to give ourselves to Jesus Christ, on some remarkable feast, by the hands of Mary, whose slaves we make ourselves; to communicate with this intention, on that day, and to pass the day in prayer; to renew this consecration at least every year, on the same day.

The second is, to pay to the Blessed Virgin every year, on the same day, some little tribute, as a token of our servitude and dependence: such has always been the homage paid by slaves to their masters. Now, this tribute may be either some mortification, or some alms, or some

pilgrimage, or some prayers; the Blessed Marino, as we are told by his brother, St Peter Damian, took the discipline publicly every year on the same day, before an altar of the Blessed Virgin. We neither ask for nor counsel such fervour; but, if we do not give much to Mary, we ought, at least, to offer what we give her with humble and very grateful hearts.

The third is, to celebrate every year with more than ordinary devotion, the feast of the Annunciation, which is the chief feast of this devotion, and has been established in order that we may honour and imitate the dependence in which the Eternal Word placed Himself on that day for the love of us.

The fourth external practice is to say every day, without however thinking ourselves obliged to do so under pain of sin, *the little Crown of the Blessed Virgin*, composed of *three Paters* and *twelve Aves*; to often recite the *Magnificat*, which is the only hymn of Mary's which we have, in order to thank God for His benefits, and to obtain fresh benefits from Him; above all, we must not fail to say it in

thanksgiving after Holy Communion, as the learned Gerson tells us, that the Holy Virgin recited it very often herself, and particularly after Holy Communion.

The learned Benzoni, in his explanation of the *Magnificat*, relates several miracles worked through its power : he says that the devils tremble and fly away when they hear the words : « *Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.* »

The fifth practice is, to say with devotion the *Ave Maria*. The faithful slaves of Jesus in Mary, ought to love to recite often this prayer, the value and merit of which are not sufficiently known, nor its excellence and necessity. The *Ave Maria* is a heavenly dew which waters our soul, and renders it fruitful in all kinds of virtues ; a soul which is not watered with this prayer, brings forth no fruit, nothing but briars and thorns..... Predestinate souls, slaves of Jesus in Mary, know that the *Ave Maria* is the most beautiful of all prayers, after the Pater ; it is the most perfect compliment you can pay to Mary, because it is the compliment which the Most High Himself paid her by the arch-

angel, whom He sent to gain her heart.

The *Ave Maria*, well said, puts the devil to flight, it is the hammer which crushes him. The *Ave Maria* is the sanctification of the soul, the joy of angels, the melody of the predestinate, the song of the New Testament, the delight of Mary, the glory of the Most Holy Trinity; the *Ave Maria* is a loving kiss which we give to Mary; it is a vermilion rose which we present to her, it is a precious pearl which we offer her; it is a chalice of ambrosial and divine nectar which we hold to her lips. All these are comparisons of the saints.

I pray you then, most earnestly, for the love I bear you in Jesus and Mary, not to be content with saying the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin, but also to say a chaplet, and even, if you have time, the whole Rosary, every day, and you will bless, at the hour of your death, the day and hour when you believed what I am now telling you; and after having « sown in blessings, » the blessings of Jesus and Mary, you will reap eternal blessings in heaven : « *Qui seminat in benedictionibus, de benedictionibus et metet.* » (2 Cor. ix. 6.)

THE TREE OF LIFE,
ITS CULTURE AND GROWTH;

*Or, How to make Mary live and reign in
our Souls.*

Predestinate soul, have you understood, by the light of the Holy Ghost, what I have just said? If you have understood, thank God for it; it is a secret unknown by almost all the world. If you have found the treasure hidden in the field of Mary, the precious pearl of the Gospel, you must sell all that you have and buy it, you must make a sacrifice of yourself in the hands of Mary, that you may lose yourself happily in her, in order to find in her, God Alone.

If the Holy Ghost has planted in your soul the true Tree of Life, namely, the devotion which I have just explained, you must give your whole care to cultivate it, in order that it may yield its fruit in due season. This devotion is the mustard-seed, spoken of in the Gospel, which is

the « least indeed of all seeds, but when it is grown up, is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in its branches; » that is to say, the predestinate, who make their nests in its branches, repose in its shade from the heat of the sun, and hide there in safety from the beasts of prey.

Here is the way, predestinate soul, to cultivate it : —

1. This tree, when planted in a truly faithful heart, requires to be in the open air, without any human support; this tree, being divine, requires to be always free from any creature which might prevent it raising itself up to its principle, which is God. Thus the soul must not lean upon its own skill, or upon its natural talents, upon its good name, or upon the protection of men; it must have recourse to Mary, and count only on her aid.

2. The soul, in which this tree is planted, must be ceaselessly occupied, like a good gardener, in keeping it, and looking after it. For this tree, having life, and having to produce the fruit of life, requires continual cultivation and looking after, in order to grow; and it should be

the soul's aim, if it would become perfect, to think of it often, and even to make it its chief occupation.

3. The thorns and thistles, which with time, might choke this Tree of Life, and prevent it yielding fruit, must be cut off, and rooted up: that is to say, the soul must be faithful in cutting away and retrenching by mortification, all useless satisfactions; it must do violence to itself, in order to live no longer the life of sense; it must crucify the flesh, keep silence, and avoid all vain relations with creatures.

4. It must watch to see that the caterpillars do no harm to the Tree. The caterpillars are self-love, the love of ease, the love of its own purely natural satisfactions, which by eating the flowers and green leaves, destroy the fair hopes which the Tree had of yielding fruit; for love of self and love of Mary, agree in no way together.

5. It must not suffer the beasts of prey to approach it. These beasts are sins, which might bring death to the Tree of Life by their mere touch; even their breath must not be allowed to strike upon it; that is to say, venial sins, which are

always very dangerous, if no trouble is taken about them.

6. This divine Tree must be often watered by the soul with fervent exercises of piety, confessions, communions, and other prayers both in public and private, without which this Tree would cease to yield fruit.

7. The soul must not be troubled, if this Tree be violently shaken by the wind; for it is necessary, that the wind of temptation should shake it, and endeavour to throw it down, and that the snow and ice should surround it, in order, if possible, to destroy it; that is to say, that this devotion to the Most Holy Virgin should of necessity be attacked and contradicted; but the soul, provided that it persevere in the cultivation of this Tree, has nothing to fear.

Predestinate soul, if you thus cultivate the Tree of Life, newly planted in you by the Holy Ghost, I assure you, that in a little time it will grow so high, that the birds of heaven will dwell in it, and it will become so perfect, that at last it will yield its fruit of honour and grace in its season; that is to say, the sweet and adorable

Jesus, Who has always been, and always will be, the only fruit of Mary.

Happy the soul, in which Mary, the Tree of Life, is planted; happier the soul in which she has been able to grow and flower; very happy the soul in which she yields her fruit; but most happy of all is the soul which relishes and preserves her fruit until death, and for ever and ever. Amen.

Qui tenet teneat.

If you have the happiness to possess this Tree of Life, guard it as a precious thing, cultivate it with care.

PRAYER TO JESUS.

O most sweet Jesus, suffer me to pour forth my gratitude before Thee, for the grace Thou hast done me in giving me to Thy Holy Mother, as her slave, that she may be my advocate in the presence of Thy Majesty, and make up for all my defects in my very great misery. Alas! Lord, I am so wretched, that without this dear mother, I should be lost beyond all doubt. Yes! Mary is necessary for me before Thee in all things : necessary to calm Thy just wrath, since I have so often offended Thee, and offend Thee every day; necessary to arrest the eternal punishments of Thy justice which I deserve; necessary to look at Thee, to speak with Thee, to pray to Thee, to approach Thee, and to please Thee; necessary to save my soul, and the souls of others; necessary, in a word, that Thy holy will may be always done, and Thy greater glory may be procured in all things. Ah! that I could publish throughout all the world

this mercy which Thou hast shown to me! That all the world might know, that without Mary, I should be already damned! That I could offer worthy thanksgiving for such a benefit! Mary is in me, *hæc facta est mihi*, O, what a treasure! O! what consolation! And after this, shall I not be all hers? O! what ingratitude! My dear Saviour, send me rather death, than suffer this misfortune to happen to me : for I would rather die than live, unless I am altogether Mary's own. I have taken her, a thousand and a thousand times for my whole good, with St. John the Evangelist, at the foot of the cross, and as many times have I given myself to her; but I have not as yet done so as Thou wouldst wish, dear Jesus; I do so now, as Thou wouldst have me do it, and if Thou seest in my soul or in my body anything not belonging to this August Princess, I pray Thee to root it up, and to cast it far from me, for as it does not belong to Mary, it is unworthy of Thee.

Oh Holy Ghost! grant me all these graces; plant, water, and cultivate in my soul this sweet Mary, who is the Tree of

the only true Life, so that this Tree may grow, and flower, and bring forth the fruit of Life in abundance. O Holy Ghost, give me a great devotion and a great attraction towards Mary, Thy Divine Spouse, a great support in her maternal bosom, and an abiding refuge in her mercy, so that in her and by her, Thou mayest form in me Jesus Christ, in a life-like way, great and powerful, unto the fulness of His perfect age! Amen!

PRAYER TO MARY.

Hail, Mary, beloved daughter of the Eternal Father! Hail Mary, admirable mother of the Son! Hail Mary, most faithful Spouse of the Holy Ghost! Hail Mary, my dear mother, my sweet Mistress, and my powerful Sovereign! Hail my joy, my glory, my heart, and my soul! Thou art all mine by mercy, and I am all thine by justice; but I am not enough thine as yet : I give myself wholly to thee once again, as thy eternal slave, without keeping anything back for myself or for others. If thou seest still in me, something not belonging to thee, I pray thee to take it away this moment, and to make thyself absolute Mistress of the faculties of my soul; destroy in it, and root up, and bring to nothing all that may be displeasing to God; plant in it, and raise up, and work in it all that may seem good to thee. May the light of thy faith dispel the darkness of my mind; may thy deep

humility take the place of my pride; may thy sublime contemplation arrest the distraction of my wandering imagination; may thy continual sight of God fill my memory with His Presence; may the fire of the charity of thy heart inflame the lukewarmness and coldness of my own; may thy virtues take the place of my sins; may thy merits be my ornament, and make up for all that is wanting in me before God. Lastly, most dear and well-beloved mother, grant, if it may be, that I may have no other spirit but thy spirit, to know Jesus Christ, and His Divine and Blessed Will; that I may have no other soul, but thy soul, to praise and glorify the Lord; that I may have no other heart but thy heart, to love God with a pure and burning love like thine. I ask of thee neither visions, nor revelations, nor gusts, nor raptures, nor even spiritual pleasures; it is for thee to have full fruition without any bitterness; it is for thee gloriously to triumph at the right hand of thy Son in heaven, without any humiliation; it is for thee to have absolute power over the angels, over man, and demons, without their being able to resist thee, and

lastly, to dispose of all the good things of God, without reserve. This, O Divine Mary, is that good part, which our Lord hath given thee, and which shall never be taken from thee, and it is this which gives me joy. For my portion here below, I wish for no other but that which thou didst have, that is to say, to believe simply, without either tasting or seeing; to suffer joyously without consolation from creatures; to die continually to myself without a moment's pause; and to labour bravely for thee, even until death, without any interest of my own, as the vilest of thy slaves. The only grace that I ask of thee, out of pure mercy, is that every day, and every moment of my life, I may say three times *Amen : so be it*, to all that thou didst do on earth; *Amen, so be it*, to all that thou art doing now in heaven; *Amen, so be it*, to all that thou art doing in my soul, so that there may be none but thou, to glorify Jesus in me to the full, through time, and through eternity. Amen. So be it.

OFFERING OF OUR ACTIONS TO GOD.

*Which it is well to make every morning.**

O Eternal Wisdom, O sweet and gentle Jesus, humbly prostrate at Thy feet, I wish to offer Thee as perfectly as the Most Holy Virgin, my thoughts, my words, and my actions of this day. Like her and by her I wish to do all things for Thy love, and for Thy Glory; to serve Thee, to praise Thee, and to bless Thee, and to draw down upon my soul all the grace of which I stand in need. I desire to-day, with all the ardour of my Mother's Heart, to be enlightened in the mysteries of the Faith, to have part in Thy mercy, to satisfy Thy Divine justice, to make my salvation sure, and to obtain for all sinners the grace of true conversion, for the souls of purgatory deliverance and relief, for the just increase of virtue, and for the Religious Orders perseverance in their first fervour.

* This prayer is not by the Ven. de Montfort, but is taken from the Poitiers edition of the « Secret of Mary. » (Tr.)

Deign to accept, O God of goodness, this my intention which I would wish to be able to offer Thee every instant of my life, begging Thee, by the Most Holy Virgin, to bless me, and to grant me the grace not to commit to-day any mortal sin, or any deliberate venial sin.

I desire, at the same time, to be present in spirit at all the Masses which may be celebrated throughout the whole world, and I purpose to gain all Indulgences within my power, and I beg my most dear Mother, into whose hands I have abandoned all things, to apply them herself according to her will, and the order of my obligation. Amen.

MANNER OF HEARING HOLY MASS

*In union with Mary.**

Mary speaks to the soul.

« When the priest begins the Holy Sacrifice, say with devotion, « Behold I am on Calvary ». Recollect thyself inwardly so as to enter into My dispositions..... While the priest recites the Confiteor at the foot of the altar, think of the agony of thy Saviour Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom, in the Garden of Olives..... Make a short examination of thy sins, and in order to conceive a more lively sorrow, lift up thy heart to Me, and I will teach thee how to immolate thyself together with my Son. »

I. FROM THE INTROIT TO THE GOSPEL.

How to praise and honour the infinite Majesty of God.

« From the beginning of Mass to the Gospel, thou must busy thyself with rendering unto God the homage which is His due. But how

* Although this Method of hearing Mass is more or less that of St. Leonard of Port-Maurice, yet it has been drawn up in the spirit of Ven. de Montfort. St. Leonard of Port-Maurice earnestly recommended its use to all persons aiming at perfection.

canst thou do it? Knowest thou not that all the praises, the adoration of the angels and of the saints, even the praises and adoration which I myself ceaselessly offer to the Most Holy Trinity are as nothing before God, for He is infinitely great? Jesus alone, the Incarnate Wisdom, can give to the Eternal Father perfect worship, and this He does by His abasement in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Offer then to Me the humiliation of My Son, and, for this purpose, humble thyself profoundly, renounce thine own disposition, and full of confidence and love, say in union with Me: »

O my God, I adore Thee and I own Thee for my Lord and for the Master of my life. I confess that all I am and that all I have, I hold from Thy bountiful hand. But because Thy Sovereign Majesty deserves infinite honour and homage, and not being able by myself in my utter nakedness to render unto Thee that which I owe Thee, I offer Thee the humiliations of my Saviour; I offer Thee for myself and for all creatures the homage which Jesus offers Thee upon this altar..... Look down, O Lord, upon the face of Thy Christ, upon that beloved Son in Whom Thou art well pleased. That which Jesus does, I wish to do with Him; I bow myself down and humble myself together

with Him before Thy Supreme Majesty; I adore Thee by uniting myself with His adoration and sentiments. And in order to do this more perfectly, it is with Mary and by Mary that I wish to present Thee these humiliations.

Mother of God, help me to render unto God an homage worthy of Him, and for this purpose be wholly in me; offer in me the feelings of thy heart, and above all, the joy with which it is beating at the thought of the infinite honour which is offered to the Divine Majesty in this August Sacrifice.

Mary to the soul.

« Continue these interior acts without troubling thyself about putting them into words. The more thou shalt penetrate into My dispositions, the more perfect will be the sentiments of humility, the deeper those of annihilation which I will suggest to thee. Oh! what joy wilt thou give to the Most Holy Trinity and to Me. »

II. FROM THE GOSPEL TO THE ELEVATION.

How to make satisfaction to God for the sins of which thou art guilty.

Mary to the soul.

« Cast a glance at thy sins and see what a debt thou hast contracted. One single mortal sin weighs more in the balance of the justice of God than all the good works of the saints, and even than the innumerable merits which by His grace I have been able to acquire. Nothing less than the Blood of My Son shed upon Calvary can appease the anger of God. While the priest is offering for thee at the holy altar His most precious blood, call to mind the tears which I myself shed for thee on Calvary as well as those which many and many a time I shed after the Ascension of Jesus, whether while passing along the Via Dolorosa at Jerusalem, or while present at the Holy Sacrifice, when it was offered by John My adopted son. Think of this, and mingle thy tears with Mine, and say with a broken and contrite heart : »

Behold, O my God, this ungrateful soul which so many times has offended Thy Majesty, but which now heartily detests its numberless sins. What can I offer Thee in expiation more pleasing in Thy sight than the humiliations by which the Eternal Wisdom, Jesus Christ, Thy Son,

has satisfied for me Thy divine Justice, and which now he offers Thee on the altar?

Accept then, O Lord, with the tears of Mary, all the merits of Jesus, the Blood of Jesus, Jesus Himself, Thy Son from all eternity and Mary's Son in time, Who as the Great Victim deigns to renew His sacrifice in my favour. And since my Jesus has become upon this altar my Mediator and my Advocate, since by His precious Blood He is asking pardon for me, I unite my voice with that of His adorable Blood, and I ask of Thee pardon for all my numberless sins which I have committed, and for all the sins of the world. The Blood of Jesus cries to Thee for mercy, and my heart, penetrated with repentance, asks it of Thee with Him. O my God! if Thou art not touched by my tears, turn not away at least from the groans of Thy Son and the prayers of Mary. If upon the cross Jesus obtained pardon for the whole human race, why shall He not obtain it for me upon this altar? Yes, I hope, by virtue of His precious Blood and for the love of Mary Thy well-beloved daughter, that Thou wilt

pardon me all my sins for which I wish to weep even unto my last breath. Give also, O Lord, to all sinners in the world, repentance and pardon.

O Mother of God, thou seest my sorrow; obtain for me the tears of St Peter, the contrition of Magdalen and the sorrow of so many souls, who from sinners have become penitents, so that I may receive by the merits of the Holy Sacrifice, the absolute pardon of all my sins.

Mary to the soul.

« Renew these acts of lively and profound sorrow, and I will offer them myself to my Divine Son, and rest assured that thou wilt thus pay all the debts which thy infidelities have caused thee to contract towards God »

III. FROM THE ELEVATION TO THE COMMUNION.

*How to thank God for the benefits which
He has heaped upon thee.*

Go over in thy mind the favours which God has heaped upon thee, even unto this day. They are immense!..... Ah! like Me you may often say with tenderest devotion and gratitude : « *The Most High hath done great*

things forme ». And if He hath done so much for thee in the past, how much more will not this God of Goodness do for thee in the future! Call to mind that the only way to thank Him worthily is through the Heart of Jesus, which has come down now for this very purpose into the hands of the priest upon the Holy Altar. Contemplate with love this Saviour God, who is thanking His Father for thee; join with Holy Angels and the Saints; but above all remember that I am there with thee, and say unto God, all filled with holy joy : »

O my God, Who hast so tenderly loved me, Thou seest me before Thee, laden with all the benefits, which up to this day Thou hast deigned to lavish upon me, and with all those also, which it is Thy will to grant me in time and in eternity. I confess that Thy mercies in my regard are infinite; nevertheless I am ready to repay Thee what I owe Thee. Receive, O Lord, in thanksgiving for so many favours, this pure, and holy, and spotless Host, which I offer Thee in union with Mary by the hands of the priest. This offering which is so pleasing unto Thee, is sufficient I know to repay Thee for the gifts which Thou hast given me; being of infinite value, it is of itself equal to the good things which I have received at Thy

Hands, and which I hope to receive for the future.

Angels of the Lord! and all ye blessed inhabitants of heaven; and thou, above all, O Divine Virgin, my Mother, join with me in thanking my God, and deign to offer Him in thanksgiving for all these favours, all the Masses which shall to-day be celebrated throughout the whole world; beseech Him to accept the longings of my heart, and to have regard to the loving thanksgiving which Jesus Christ is offering for me now upon the altar.

Mary to the soul.

« Be not content with expressing these sentiments once only; join thy praises with those of My Heart. With what sweet complacency will not the God of Goodness receive the testimony of such affectionate gratitude. »

IV. TO THE COMMUNION OF THE PRIEST

*How to ask for all the graces of which
thou standest in need.*

« If thou hast not the happiness of approaching the Holy Table, fail not up to the end of Mass to make a spiritual Communion, which never

fails to produce in the soul a close union with Jesus Christ. * Imagine, as some of My servants have done, that I am giving thee the infant Jesus, who has just been born anew upon the Altar. Enlarge thy heart, for it is the Son of God who is making intercession for thee. Were I to assure thee that I myself would carry thy prayers to God, and would intercede for thee, what sweet confidence wouldst thou not have of soon being heard! But it is Jesus Himself, my well-beloved Son, Who is thine Advocate, and who is offering His own Precious Blood to the Father on thy behalf.

« Be not content to ask a few favours : imitate Me, ask great graces for thyself and for the whole world. Say then, all lost as it were in Me, and with sentiments of the deepest humility : »

God of my heart, I own myself unworthy of Thy gifts : yes, I confess by reason of my innumerable sins, I do not deserve that Thou shouldst hear me. But look upon the Face of Thy Christ; behold this Divine Victim, whom Thou hast deigned to send for me upon the earth, and who, upon this Altar, in offering Thee His Blood and His Life, offers Thee at the same time in my favour His all-powerful intercession.

* A method of Sacramental Communion will be found p. 68.

Deign to accept it, O Lord, and in consideration of the merits of Jesus, grant me all the graces which Thou knowest to be necessary for me, in order that I may accomplish the great business of my salvation. Mother of God! Thou seest my utter poverty, and Thou art omnipotent with the Heart of Thy Son : I dare then to ask of Thee to obtain for me the pardon of my sins, knowledge of myself, and a continual union with Thee and with my Sweet Saviour. Obtain for me, O Divine Sovereign Lady, all virtues in an eminent degree, and all that is necessary for me in order to become truly holy. Ask also for all graces for which I ought to ask for my neighbour, the exaltation of the Holy Church, the conversion of unbelievers, sinners, and particulary of those who are dear to me; and for the deliverance of all the souls at this moment detained in Purgatory.

Mary to the soul.

« Ask with confidence, without fear of impoverishing Him, who loves so much to give : ask for thyself, for thy relations, for thy benefactors, for the Church, and for its Head, the Holy

Roman Pontiff, ask with the most lively confidence, and be assured that thy prayers joined with those of Jesus and with mine, will undoubtedly be heard.

« When Mass is over, make a short thanksgiving..... Then leave the Church, as if thou wert going down from Calvary.

« Before going to her daily duties, St Monica left her heart upon the Altar..... Do thou the same, leave thy heart in adoration; and during the day, remember that it is there close to Jesus..... This thought will give fervour to thy soul, and make recollection easy. »

METHOD OF COMMUNICATING IN UNION WITH MARY.*

As recommended by Ven. de Montfort.

I. BEFORE COMMUNION.

1. You must humble yourself profoundly before God. 2. You must renounce your corrupt heart and disposition, however good your own self-love may make them look. 3. You must renew your consecration, and say : « *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt.* » « I am Thine, my dear Mistress, and all I have is Thine. » You must beseech your good Mother to lend you Her Heart, in order that therein you may receive Her Son with the same disposition as Her own. After this, you

* This method of communicating in union with Mary, and the « Consecration of ourselves to Jesus Christ by the hands of Mary, » which will be found at the end of this little work, have been previously translated by Father Faber. But as they also form part of the Poitiers Edition of the « Secret of Mary, » the right of translating which has been given exclusively to the present translator, it has been found necessary to re-translate them.

will represent to Her that Her Son's glory would be sullied, were He to be placed in a heart so full of stains and so inconstant as yours; and that His glory would be either lessened or destroyed; but that if She will come and dwell with you, in order to receive Her Son, (and indeed She can come by the dominion She has over all hearts,) then Her Son will be well received by Her, in a stainless soul, and without danger of being rejected or outraged. *Deus in medio ejus non commovebitur.* You will tell her confidently that all you have given Her of your good: can honour Her but little; but that by the Holy Communion, you wish to make Her the same present as the Eternal Father made Her, and that by this means She will be more honoured than if you were to give Her all the goods in the world; and lastly, that Jesus, who loves Her more than aught else besides, still desires to take His pleasure and His repose in Her, even in your soul, filthier and poorer though it be than the stable, where He made no difficulty to come, because She was there. You will ask Her for Her Heart in these

tender words; *Accipio te in mea omnia, præbe mihi cor tuum, O Maria? « I take Thee for all my wealth, lend me Thy Heart, O Mary! »*

II. BEFORE COMMUNION.

When about to receive Jesus Christ, after the *Pater Noster* you will say three times, *Domine non sum dignus*. The first time to the Eternal Father, telling Him, that you are not worthy, by reason of your evil thoughts and ingratitude towards so good a Father, to receive His only Son; but that you have Mary with you, His hand-maid, — *ecce ancilla Domini* — who takes your place, as it were, and who gives you a singular confidence and hope in the presence of His Majesty. *Quoniam, tu Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me.*

You will say to the Son : *Domine non sum dignus*; telling Him, that you are not worthy to receive Him by reason of your idle and evil words, and your faithlessness in His service, but that nevertheless you pray Him to have pity on you, that you may introduce Him into the house of His

Own Mother, and yours, and that you will not let Him go, unless He come to lodge with Her. *Tenui eum, nec dimittam, donec introducam illum in domum matris meæ, et in cubiculum Genetricis meæ.* (Cant. iii. 4.) You will pray Him to rise and to come into the place of His repose, and into the Ark of His Sanctification: *Surge, Domine in requiem tuam, tu et arcæ sanctificationis tuæ;* and then you will tell Him, that you place no confidence at all in your own merits, your own strength, or your own preparations, as Esau did; but that you trust only in Mary, your dear Mother, as little Jacob did in the cares of Rebecca. Tell Him too that, sinner and Esau though you are, you dare to approach His Sanctity, because you are supported and adorned with the virtues of His Holy Mother.

You will say to the Holy Ghost: *Domine non sum dignus;* telling Him, that you are not worthy to receive the master-piece of His charity, because of the lukewarmness and wickedness of your actions, and because of your resistance to His inspirations; but that all your confidence is in Mary, His faithful Spouse. Then say

with St Bernard : *Hæc mea maxima fiducia, hæc tota ratio spei meæ.* You can even pray Him to come Himself in Mary, His indissoluble Spouse, whose bosom is as pure, and whose Heart is as burning as at the first moment of His union with Her. Tell him, that unless He come down into your soul, neither Jesus nor Mary will be formed, nor worthily received.

III. AFTER COMMUNION.

After Holy Communion, while you are inwardly recollected, and with your eyes closed, you will introduce Jesus into the Heart of Mary. You will give Him to His Mother, who will receive Him lovingly, will enthrone Him honourably, will adore Him profoundly, will love Him perfectly, will embrace Him closely, and will render to Him in spirit and in truth, many homages of which we are ignorant. Or else, you will keep yourself profoundly humbled in your heart, in the presence of Jesus 'dwelling' in Mary. Or you will sit like a slave at the gate of the King's Palace, where He is speaking with the

Queen; and while they talk one to the other without having need of you, you will go in spirit to heaven and over all the earth, praying all creatures to thank, adore, and love Jesus and Mary in your stead : *Venite adoremus, Venite*. Or else, ask of Jesus yourself, in union with Mary, the coming of His Kingdom upon earth, through His Holy Mother; of you may ask for the gift of Divine Wisdom, or for Divine love, or for the pardon of your sins, or for some other grace, but always by Mary and in Mary, saying, while you look at yourself with contempt : *Ne respicias, Domine, peccata mea* : « Lord, look not at my sins ; » *Sed oculi tui videant æquitates Mariæ* : « But let Thine eyes look at nothing in me but the virtues and merits of Mary ; » — and then, remembering your sins, you will add : *Inimicus homo hoc fecit* : « It is I who have committed these sins ; » or you may say, *Ab homine iniquo et doloso erue me* ; or else, *Te oportet crescere, me autem minui* : « My Jesus, Thou must increase in my soul, and I must decrease ; Mary, Thou must increase within me, and I must grow still less than I have been. » *Crescite et multiplicamini* :

« O Jesus and Mary, increase in me, and multiply yourselves outside in others also. »

There are numberless other thoughts with which the Holy Ghost will inspire you, and which He will suggest to you if you are thoroughly interior, mortified, and faithful to this grand and sublime devotion, which I have been teaching you. But remember always, that the more you leave Mary to act in your Communion, the more Jesus will be glorified. The more you leave Mary to act for Jesus, and Jesus to act in Mary, the more profoundly you will humble yourself, and will listen to them in peace and silence, without troubling yourself about seeing, or tasting, or feeling; for the just man lives throughout on faith and particularly in the Holy Communion, which is an action of faith. *Justus meus ex fide, vivit.*

METHOD OF SAYING THE ROSARY WITH FRUIT.

As taught by Ven. de Montfort.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I unite with all the saints in heaven, and with all the just on earth, and with all faithful souls in this place. I unite with Thee, my Jesus, in order worthily to praise Thy Holy Mother, and to praise Thee in Her and by Her. I renounce beforehand all distractions which may come upon me during this Rosary, which I wish to say as modestly, attentively and devoutly, as if it were the last of my life.

We offer Thee, O Most Holy Trinity, the *Credo* we are about to recite in honour of all the mysteries of our faith; the *Pater Noster* and the three *Ave Maria* in honour of the Unity of Thy Essence, and of the Trinity of Thy Persons. We

ask of Thee, lively faith, firm hope, and burning charity.

Credo. Pater. 3 Ave Maria. Gloria Patri.

JOYFUL MYSTERIES.

1. *The Annunciation and Incarnation.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this first decade in honour of Thy Incarnation in Mary's womb; and we ask of Thee, by this mystery, and through Her intercession, profound humility. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Incarnation, come down into our souls. Amen.

2. *The Visitation.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this second decade in honour of the Visit of Thy Holy Mother to Her cousin, St Elizabeth, and of the sanctification of St John the Baptist; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of thy Holy Mother, charity towards our neighbour. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Visitation, come down into our souls. Amen.

3. *The Birth of Jesus.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this third decade in honour of Thy Nativity in the stable of Bethlehem; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Holy Mother, detachment from the things of the world, contempt of riches and love of poverty. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Birth of Jesus, come down into our souls. Amen.

4. *The Presentation in the Temple.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this fourth decade in honour of Thy Presentation in the Temple, and of the Purification of Mary; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through Her intercession, great purity of body and soul. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Purification, come down into our hearts. Amen.

5. *The Finding of the Child Jesus.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this fifth decade in honour of Thy Mother's, finding Thee in the temple, and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through Her intercession, the gift of true wisdom. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Finding of the Child Jesus, come down into our souls. Amen.

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES.

6. *The Agony in the Garden.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this sixth decade in honour of Thy Mortal Agony in the Garden of Olives; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Holy Mother, contrition for our sins. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Agony of Jesus, come down into our souls. Amen.

7. *The Scourging.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this seventh decade in honour of Thy bloody

scourging, and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Holy Mother, the grace of mortifying our senses. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Scourging of Jesus, come down into our souls. Amen.

8. *The Crowning with Thorns.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this eighth decade in honour of Thy being crowned with thorns; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Holy Mother, contempt of the world. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Crowning with Thorns, come down into our souls. Amen.

9. *Jesus carrying the Cross.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this ninth decade in honour of Thy carrying the Cross, and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Holy Mother, patience in all our crosses. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of Jesus carrying the Cross, come down into our souls. Amen.

10. *The Crucifixion.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this tenth decade in honour of Thy Crucifixion; and of Thy ignominious Death on Calvary; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Holy Mother, the conversion of sinners, perseverance for the just, and the relief of the souls in purgatory. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Crucifixion of Jesus, come down into our souls. Amen.

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES.

11. *The Resurrection.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this eleventh decade in honour of Thy glorious Resurrection, and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Holy Mother, love of God and fervour in Thy service. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Resurrection, come down into our souls. Amen.

12. *The Ascension.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this twelfth decade in honour of Thy glorious Ascension; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Holy Mother, a burning desire of heaven, our true country. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Ascension, come down into our souls. Amen.

13. *The Coming of the Holy Ghost.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this thirteenth decade in honour of the Mystery of Pentecost, and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through the intercession of Thy Mother, that the Holy Ghost may come down into our souls. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of Pentecost, come down into our souls. Amen.

14. *The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this fourteenth decade in honour of the Resurrection and glorious Assumption of Thy Holy Mother into heaven; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through Her intercession, a tender devotion towards so good a mother. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of the Assumption, come down into our souls. Amen.

15. *The Coronation of our Lady.*

We offer Thee, O Lord Jesus, this fifteenth and last decade, in honour of the Coronation of Thy Holy Mother; and we ask of Thee by this mystery, and through Her intercession, perseverance in grace, and a crown of glory hereafter. Amen.

Pater Noster. 10 Ave Maria. Gloria.

Grace of the Mystery of Mary's Coronation in glory, come down into our souls. Amen.

CONSECRATION OF OURSELVES
TO JESUS CHRIST,

THE INCARNATE WISDOM,
By the Hands of Mary.

O Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom! O sweetest and most adorable Jesus! Very God and Very Man, only Son of the Eternal Father, and of Mary ever Virgin! I adore Thee profoundly in the bosom and glory 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, in 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 hast 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 slave that I am, I have not kept the promises which I made so solemnly to Thee in my baptism; I have not fulfilled my obliga-

tions; I do not deserve to be called Thy son, nor even Thy slave : and, as there is nothing in me which does not merit Thine anger and Thy repulse, I dare no more come by myself into the presence of 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 hast given me for a mediatrix with Thee. It is by Her means that I hope to obtain of Thee, contrition and the pardon of my sins, the acquisition and preservation of Wisdom.

Hail, then, O Immaculate Mary, living Tabernacle of the Divinity, in which 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 to no one! Hear the desires which I have of the Divine Wisdom, and for that end receive the vows and offerings, which in my lowness I present to Thee.

I, N....., a faithless sinner, — I renew and ratify today in Thy hands, the vows of my baptism; I renounce for ever,

Satan, his pomps and his 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 in order that I may 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; and I leave to Thee the entire and full right of disposing of me, and of all that belongs to me, without exception, according to Thy good pleasure, to the greatest glory of God, in time and in eternity.

Receive, O gracious Virgin, this little offering of my slavery, in honour 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 little worm and miserable sinner, and in thanksgiving for the privileges with which the Holy Trinity hath favoured Thee. I protest, that henceforth I wish, as Thy true slave,

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