



CATECHESIS 5

Mary in the History of Salvation; Mary in the Mystery of the Church and the End Times; Theological Foundations of Marian Devotion; Marks of False Devotion to Mary

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St. Louis Marie intends to show us the mission of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the history of salvation so that we may understand that to consecrate ourselves to her is the best and most efficacious means of arriving at sanctity and a means especially suited to the end times.

MARY IN THE HISTORY OF SALVATION

This is the simple and diaphanous argument of St. Louis Marie: it is true that Mary is a fragile creature compared to God, yet is also true that, “because God has decided to begin and accomplish his greatest works through the Blessed Virgin ever since he created her, we can safely believe that he will not change his plan in the time to come...” (15). For this reason we must examine at this aspect of God’s will.

If we consider the procession of the Divine Persons, we see that “**God the Father imparted to Mary his fruitfulness...** to enable her to bring forth his Son and all the members of his mystical body” (17).

God the Son “found freedom in imprisoning himself in her womb. He displayed power in allowing himself to be borne by this young maiden” (18). This he wanted and this he chose.

This also should impress us: Jesus began his miracles through his mother. The greeting of Mary and the presence of Christ, whom she bore, sanctified John in the womb of St. Elizabeth. This was the first miracle of Christ in the order of grace. It was by the request of the Virgin at the Wedding of Cana that Christ turned water to wine. This was his first miracle in the order of nature and it was also through Mary. It appears that Jesus does not want to change this manner of conceding us his graces.

And the Holy Spirit? “None of the Divine Persons of the Trinity proceeds from Him, but He “became fruitful through Mary whom He espoused” (20). “It was with her, in her and of her that he produced his masterpiece, God-made-man...” (20).

MARY IN THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH



The manner through which the Trinity brought about the Incarnation will remain the same throughout history until the second coming of Christ.

The Father will pour out His graces through Mary. Beautifully St. Louis writes that God the Father, “gathered all the waters together and called them the seas. He gathered all his graces together and called them Mary” (23).

She is “his mystical channel, his aqueduct, through which he causes his mercies to flow gently and abundantly” (24). He never resists the prayers of his Mother, “because they are always humble and conformed to the divine will” (27).

She is mother of the Head and therefore must be mother of the members. St. Paul’s sentiments expressed by Mary would exclaim, “I am in labor again with all the children of God until Jesus Christ, my Son, is formed in them to the fullness of his age” (33).

God the Holy Spirit wants to form the souls of the elect in her and through her.

“**The formation and the education of the great saints** who will come at the end of the world are reserved to her...” (35). If this divine Spirit “does not work striking wonders in souls [it is because] **he fails to find in them a sufficiently close union with his faithful and inseparable spouse**” (36).

St. Louis makes this first conclusion: Mary is Queen of all hearts.

She has received a great dominion over the souls of the elect. The Father has entrusted them to her. She possesses them as a “personal inheritance;” she forms them in Christ and Christ in them (37).

For this reason, she is “Queen”. **She is Queen by grace, while Christ is King by nature and conquest.** Yet as the Kingdom of Christ is an interior one—“*the kingdom of God is among you*” (Luke 17:21)—“so the kingdom of the Blessed Virgin is principally in the interior of man, that is, in his soul” (38). Thus, St. Louis calls her **Queen of hearts.**



A second conclusion follows: Mary is necessary for humankind.

This is the disposition of God's will. Through her, He fulfilled the Incarnation.

Through her also must new incarnations come forth—so that Christ might be formed in souls. This is why devotion to Mary is not just another devotion amongst many.

Even Satan was forced to confess this through the mouths of the possessed, as occurred once when “St. Dominic was preaching the Rosary near Carcassonne” (42.) It was witnessed that some fifteen thousand demons, who had taken over an unfortunate heretic, were forced to confess the benefits of devotion to Mary.

These kinds of accounts brought St. John Damascene to exclaim, “Devotion to you, O Blessed Virgin, is a means of salvation which God gives to those whom he wishes to save” (41).

However, if we think not only of the salvation of souls, but also of **arriving at sanctity, Mary is yet more necessary.** “I do not believe that anyone can acquire intimate union with our Lord and perfect fidelity to the Holy Spirit without a very close union with the most Blessed Virgin and an absolute dependence on her aid” (43).

She alone found grace before God. “The Almighty made her the **sole custodian of his treasures and the sole dispenser of his graces.** She can now ennoble, exalt and enrich all she chooses” (44).

MARY IN THE END TIMES

The Blessed Virgin must be every moment more loved, “**she must be known and openly revealed by the Holy Spirit** so that Jesus may be known, loved and served through her” (49).



St. Louis Marie gives various reasons why God would want Mary to be more known in these latter times. **“She is his masterpiece;... she is the dawn which precedes and discloses the Sun of Justice Jesus Christ;... the way by which Jesus first came to us,** she will again be the way by which he will come to us the second time...” (50).

She will have a particular splendor, “Mary **must shine forth more than ever in mercy, power and grace; in mercy,** to bring back and welcome lovingly the poor sinners and wanderers who are to be converted and return to the Catholic Church; in power, to combat the enemies of God... finally, she must shine forth **in grace** to inspire and support the valiant soldiers and loyal servants of Jesus Christ who are fighting for his cause” (50).

Another reason for her increased recognition concerns her **combat with the devil:** “Mary must become as terrible as an army in battle array to the devil and his followers, especially in these latter times. For Satan, knowing that he has little time - even less now than ever – to destroy souls, intensifies his efforts and his onslaughts every day” (50).

The role of the Blessed Virgin is key in the final battle. That **perpetual enmity between the serpent and the New Eve, who is Mary, will intensify.** God inspired in the Blessed Virgin such a great hate for Satan, that She exposes unlike any other the deceits and plots of the devil.

It can even be said that Satan fears Mary more than God Himself:

1°, because he suffers infinitely more seeing himself conquered and punished by a simple servant of God, **“and the humility of the Virgin humiliates him more than power of God; ”** (52)

2°, because God gave to Mary **great power over evil spirits,** who “have often been forced unwillingly to admit through the lips of possessed persons, that they fear



one of her pleadings for a soul more than the prayers of all the saints, and one of her threats more than all their other torments”(52).

"What Lucifer lost by pride Mary won by humility. What Eve ruined and lost by disobedience Mary saved by obedience." (53)

Therefore, the devil will prey upon the children of Mary, but she “**will unmask his serpent's cunning and expose his wicked plots. She will scatter to the winds his devilish plans and to the end of time will keep her faithful servants safe from his cruel claws**” (54).

Mary and the apostles of the end times

St. Louis Marie asks what these apostles of Mary will be like. He passionately responds with beautiful biblical images: “They will be like **flaming fire**,¹” and they will “enkindle everywhere the fires of divine love. They will become, in Mary's powerful hands, **like sharp arrows**, with which she will transfix her enemies²” (56).

“They will be as the children of Levi, thoroughly purified by the fire of great tribulations and closely joined to God. They will carry the gold of love in their heart, the frankincense of prayer in their mind and the myrrh of mortification in their body.

They will bring to the poor and lowly everywhere **the sweet fragrance of Jesus**³ ...” (56).

St. Louis Marie emphasizes **the purity of heart** in these apostles of the end times. Those of St. John of the Cross, from the Ascent of Mount Carmel, “Only the honor and glory of God dwell on this mount.” The children of Mary will live in this way. They will have “the silver wings of the dove enabling them to go wherever the Holy Spirit calls them, filled as they are with the resolve to seek the glory of God and

¹ Cfr. Ps 104 [103]: 4 ; Heb 1:7

² Cfr. Ps. 137 [126]: 4

³ Cfr. 2 Cor 2: 15-16



the salvation of souls. Wherever they preach, they will leave behind them nothing but the gold of love, which is the fulfilment of the whole law⁴” (58).

It is here we find those animating words that more than once have incited us and have become an ideal for the whole of one’s life: “They **will have the two-edged sword of the word of God in their mouths; the blood-stained standard of the Cross on their shoulders; they will carry the crucifix in their right hand and the rosary in their left, and the holy names of Jesus and Mary on their heart. The simplicity and self-sacrifice of Jesus will be reflected in all their conduct**” (59).

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR MARIAN DEVOTION

We must understand the depths of devotion to Mary as St. Louis presents. There are no dangers of getting off track and there is nothing more powerful, according to Divine Providence, then going to God through the Virgin.

First Truth: Jesus Christ, the ultimate goal for Marian Devotion

If it were not like this, it would be a false and deceiving devotion. For only in him, *the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily* (Col 2:9). And, *there is no salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.* (Acts 4:12)

“If devotion to our Lady distracted us from our Lord, **we would have to reject it as an illusion of the devil**”. Nevertheless, everything happens on the contrary, because this devotion turns out as “a way of reaching Jesus perfectly, loving him tenderly, and serving him faithfully.” (62)

We are saddened by the men of the Church who fear that we exaggerate devotion to Mary, in this way hindering devotion to Jesus: “Dear Jesus, do these people possess your spirit?... Does devotion to your holy Mother hinder devotion to you? Is

⁴ Cfr. Rom 13:10



she a rival of yours? Is she a stranger having no kinship with you?.... Is love for her a lessening of our love for you?) (64).

Second Truth: We belong to Jesus and to Mary

We must say with St. Paul⁵, we no longer belong to ourselves. We are Christ's, "entirely to him as his members and his slaves, for he bought us at an infinite price - the shedding of his Precious Blood (1Pet 1:19)." (68)

It is in this moment when St. Louis Marie begins to instill **the image of a slave, to express the total belonging to Christ and to Mary.**

In this world, what indicates the maximum level of belonging to another is slavery. He applies it to the Christian life: "nothing makes a person belong more completely to Jesus and his holy Mother than voluntary slavery. Our Lord himself gave us the example of this when out of love for us he "took the form of a slave" (Phil 27). Our Lady gave us the same example when she called herself the handmaid or slave of the Lord (Lk 1:38)." (72)

For what we say of Christ, we can also say of His Mother. They both have the same will, they both have the same power, and "**they have also the same subjects, servants and slaves.**" (74).

There is no danger in Our Lady. She is not like other creatures, if we attach to them, they could separate us from God. "Mary's strongest inclination is to unite us to Jesus, her Son, and her Son's strongest wish is that we come to him through his Blessed Mother."

Recall St. Anselm's very important phrase: All things, including Mary herself, are subject to the power of God. **All things, God included, are subject to the Virgin's power"** (76). We freely want to subject ourselves to her, and become her slaves of love.

Third truth: We must clothe ourselves as the new man, Jesus Christ

⁵ Cfr. 1Cor 3:23; 6:19-20; 12:27



Our best actions are stained with evil inclination. This purification is necessary for total union with Christ. Here St. Louis Marie will offer a clear itinerary towards the mystical life.

In the first place, **to empty ourselves, we must know our evil inclination, our weaknesses.** Those of original sin, those of our sins their consequences. **That is why it is not surprising that our Lord said,** *“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”* (Mt 16:24).

Secondly, it is necessary to **renounce to our selfishness, to pleasures.** That is why Jesus said, *“unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”* (Jn 12:24).

Thirdly, **“we must choose among all the devotions to the Blessed Virgin the one which will lead us more surely to this dying to self.** This devotion will be **the best and the most sanctifying for us”** (82) **This is the secret that Montfort wants to reveal.**

Fourth truth: The maternal action of Mary assists a personal encounter with Christ

Coming closer to God through a mediator, is a sign of humility. This is why we go to the Father through Christ: “Our Lord is our Advocate and our Mediator of redemption with God the Father” (84). But we also need a **mediator before the Mediator.** According to St. Bernard, “the divinely-honored Mary is the one most able to fulfill this office of love. Through her, Jesus came to us; through her we should go to him.”

The Virgin, full of love, does not reject anyone who implores her, as sinful as they may be. The saints point out, “never has it been known since the world began that anyone had recourse to our Blessed Lady, with trust and perseverance, and was rejected. Her power is so great that her prayers are never refused” (85). Through her, we arrive to Christ and through Christ to the Father.



Fifth truth: we carry treasures in vessels of clay

Given our frailty, it is very difficult to preserve the graces we have received and to keep ourselves to the heights of our vocation. Truly, we are clay!

As clever as they are, this is the demons do. How many cedars of Lebanon have fallen! What is it that happened? “Not the lack of grace, for this is denied no one. **It was a lack of humility; they considered themselves stronger and more self-sufficient than they really were. They thought themselves well able to hold on to their treasures.**” (88).

Therefore, we must add another difficulty. It is difficult to preserve grace through the “**corrupting influence of the world**”, says St. Louis Marie.

Before such urgent and difficult situation, what can we do? The answer from heaven is Mary! “The singularly faithful Virgin over whom Satan had never any power, **who works this miracle for those who truly love her.**” (89)

MARKS OF FALSE DEVOTION TO MARY

Keeping in mind these five truths, it is fundamental to choose which devotion is most convenient. The devil, because he is a liar and deceiver, has sold false devotions. As deceiver, he fakes what matters, gold and silver. It is here that he seeks to fake devotion to Christ and to his Mother, gold and silver. This is why it is important to be attentive and to examine our devotion.

Montfort finds that there are seven false devotees:

1. Some are proud scholars, people of independent and self-satisfied minds.

However, they criticize nearly all those forms of devotion to her which simple and pious people. They question all miracles and stories, which testify to the mercy and power of the Blessed Virgin. These proud people are to be greatly feared. They do untold harm. This is why they are called, **critical devotees.**



2. Others are afraid that there are too many who kneel before an altar of Our Lady. In addition, they come up with a dialectic, which God does not want. They are scrupulous devotees.
3. There are people whose entire devotion to our Lady consists in exterior practices. They do not seek the solid, but the sensible. They are the superficial devotees.
4. However, there are others with wicked habits, with lukewarm consciences. Sometimes they appear ready to do anything to please our Lady. They cover self-selves up say that God is good, but they do not convert. It is a diabolic presumption. This why they are called **inconstant devotees**.
5. There are those who pretend their piety, they seek to appear as something they are not. They are the **hypocritical devotees**.
6. Finally, there are those who turn to Mary in some difficult situations, in a self-interested way, but only for these reason, they are the **self-interested devotees**. It is good for us to make a good examine of our devotion to Mary. However, it better for us to be saturated of the water of the wisdom of Montfort and to have the joy and certainty to have found the best way to God: consecrating ourselves freely to her and making of ourselves slaves for love.