

THE SECRET OF MARY

PART I

DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SLAVERY

“Mary is the admirable echo of God. When we say, ‘Mary,’ she answers, ‘God.’ When, with St. Elizabeth, we call her ‘Blessed,’ she glorifies God.”—St. Louis De Montfort

INTRODUCTION

A Secret of Sanctity

Conditions

1. Predestinate soul, here is a secret the Most High has taught me, which I have not been able to find in any book, old or new.¹ I confide it to you, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, on condition:

That you communicate it only to those who deserve it by their prayers, their alms-deeds and mortifications, by the persecutions they suffer, by their detachment from the world and their zeal for the salvation of souls.²

That you make use of it for your personal sanctification and salvation, for this secret works its effect in a soul only in proportion to the use made of it. beware, then, of remaining inactive while possessing my secret; it would turn into a poison and be your condemnation.³

That you thank God all the days of your life for the grace He has given you to know a secret you do not deserve to know. As you go on making use of this secret in the ordinary actions of your life, you will comprehend its value and its excellence, which at first you will not fully understand because of your many and grievous sins and because of your secret attachment to self.⁴

2. Before you read any further, lest you should be carried away by a too eager and natural desire to know this truth, kneel down and say

devoutly the Ave Maris Stella and the Veni Creator, in order to understand and appreciate this Divine mystery. (See appendix)

As I have not much time for writing, nor you for reading, I shall say everything as briefly as possible.

THE NECESSITY OF SANCTIFYING OURSELVES

The Will of God

3. Faithful soul, living image of God, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, it is the will of God that you be holy like Him in this life and glorious like Him in the next. Your sure vocation is the acquisition of the holiness of God, and unless all your thoughts and words and actions, all the sufferings and events of your life tend to that end, you are resisting God by not doing that for which He has created you and is now preserving you.⁸ Oh, what an admirable work! To change that which is dust into light, to make pure that which is unclean, holy that which is sinful, to make the creature like its Creator, man like God! Admirable work, I repeat, but difficult in itself, and impossible to mere nature; only God by His grace, by His abundant and extraordinary grace, can accomplish it. Even the creation of the whole world is not so great a masterpiece as this.

Means of Sanctification

4. Predestinate soul, how are you to do it? What means will you choose to reach the height to which God calls you? The means of salvation and sanctification are known to all; they are laid down in the Gospel, explained by the masters of the spiritual life, practiced by the Saints, and necessary to all who wish to be saved and to attain perfection. They are humility of heart, continual prayer, mortification in all things, abandonment to Divine Providence and conformity to the will of God.

5. To practice all these means of salvation and sanctification, the grace of God is absolutely necessary. No one can doubt that God gives His grace to all, in a more or less abundant measure. I say in a more or less abundant measure, for God, although infinitely good, does not give equal grace to all, yet to each soul He gives sufficient grace.

The faithful soul will, with great grace, perform a great action, and with less grace a lesser action. It is the value and the excellence of the grace bestowed by God and corresponded to by the soul that gives to our actions their value and their excellence. These principles are certain.

An Easy Means

6. It all comes to this, then: that you should find an easy means for obtaining from God the grace necessary to make you holy; and this means I wish to make known to you. Now, I say that to find this grace of God, *we must find Mary.*⁹

OUR SANCTIFICATION THROUGH MARY, A NECESSARY MEANS¹⁰

Mary Alone Has Found Grace with God

7. Mary alone has found grace with God, both for herself and for every man in particular. The patriarchs and prophets and all the Saints of the Old Law were not able to find that grace.

Mother of Grace

8. Mary gave being and life to the Author of all grace, and that is why she is called the Mother of Grace.

Mary Has Received the Plenitude of Grace

9. God the Father, from Whom every perfect gift and all grace come, as from its essential source, has given all graces to Mary by giving her His Son, so that, as St. Bernard says, "With His Son and in Him, God has given His Will to Mary."

Universal Treasurer of God's Graces

10. God has entrusted Mary with the keeping, the administration and distribution of all His graces, so that all His graces and gifts pass through her hands; and, as St. Bernardine teaches, Mary gives to whom she wills, the way she wills, when she wills and as much as she wills, the graces of the Eternal Father, the virtues of Jesus Christ and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Mother of God's Children

11. As in the order of nature a child must have a father and a mother, so likewise in the order of grace, a true child of the Church must have God for his Father and Mary for his Mother; and if anyone should glory in having God for his Father and yet has not the love of a true child for Mary, he is a deceiver, and the only father he has is the devil.

Mary Forms the Members of Jesus

12. Since Mary has formed Jesus Christ, the Head of the elect, it is also her office to form the members of that 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, therefore, 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, which she possesses in its fullness, in order to communicate it fully to her children, the true members of Jesus Christ.¹¹

Through Her the Holy Ghost Produces the Elect

13. As the Holy Ghost has espoused Mary and has produced in her, by her and from her, His masterpiece, Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, and has never repudiated His spouse, so He now continues to produce the elect, in her and by her, in a mysterious but real manner.

Mary Nourishes Souls and Gives Them Growth in God

14. Mary has received a special office and power over our souls in order to nourish them and give them growth in God. St. Augustine even says that, during their present life, all the elect are hidden in Mary's womb and that they are not truly born until the Blessed Mother brings them forth to life eternal. Consequently, just as the child draws all its nourishment from the mother, who gives it in proportion to the child's weakness, in like manner do the elect draw all their spiritual nourishment and strength from Mary.

Mary Dwells in the Elect

15. It is to Mary that God the Father said: "My daughter, let thy dwelling be in Jacob," that is, in My elect, prefigured by Jacob. It is to

Mary that God the Son said: “My dear Mother, in Israel is thine inheritance,” that is, in the elect. And it is to Mary that the Holy Ghost said: “Take root, My faithful spouse, in My elect.” Whoever, then, is elect and predestinate has the Blessed Virgin with him, dwelling in his soul,¹² and he will allow her to plant there the roots of profound humility, of ardent charity and of every virtue.

Mary Forms Jesus in Us A Living Mold of God

16. St. Augustine calls Mary the living “mold of God,” and that indeed she is; for it was in her alone that God was made a true man without losing any feature of the Godhead, and it is also in her alone that man can be truly formed Into God, in so far as that is possible for human nature, by the grace of Jesus Christ.

A sculptor has two ways of making a lifelike statue or figure: He may carve the figure out of some hard, shapeless material, using for this purpose his professional skill and knowledge, his strength and the necessary instruments, or he may cast it in a mold. The first manner is long and difficult and subject to many mishaps; a single blow of the hammer or the chisel, awkwardly given, may spoil the whole work. The second is short, easy and smooth; it requires but little work and slight expense, provided the mold be perfect and made to reproduce the figure exactly; provided, moreover, the material used offer no resistance to the hand of the artist.¹³

A Perfect Mold

17. Mary is the great mold of God, made by the Holy Ghost to form a true God-Man by the Hypostatic Union and to form also a man-God by grace. In that mold none of the features of the Godhead is wanting. Whoever is cast in it, and allows himself to be molded, receives all the features of Jesus Christ, true God. The work is done gently, in a manner proportioned to human weakness, without much pain or labor, in a sure manner, free from all illusion, for where Mary is the devil has never had and never will have access; finally, it is done in a holy and spotless manner, without a shadow of the least stain of sin.

Well-Molten Souls

18. Oh what a difference between a soul which has been formed in Christ by the ordinary ways of those who, like the sculptor, trust in their own skill and ingenuity, and a soul thoroughly tractable, entirely detached and well-molten, which, without trusting to its own skill, casts itself into Mary, there to be molded by the Holy Ghost. How many stains and defects and illusions, how much darkness and how much human nature is there in the former; and oh how pure, how Heavenly and how Christlike is the latter!

Paradise and World of God

19. There does not exist and never will exist a creature in whom God, either within or without Himself, is so highly exalted as He is in the most Blessed Virgin Mary, not excepting the Saints or the Cherubim or the highest Seraphim in Paradise. Mary is the paradise of God and His unspeakable world, into which the Son of God has come to work His wonders, to watch over it and to take His delight in it. God has made a world for wayfaring man, which is that world in which we dwell; He has made one for man in his glorified state, which is Heaven; and He has made one for Himself, which He has called Mary. It is a world unknown to most mortals here below and incomprehensible even to the Angels and Blessed in Heaven above, who, seeing God so highly exalted above them all and so deeply hidden in Mary, His world, are filled with admiration and unceasingly exclaim: "Holy, Holy, Holy."

God Alone in Her

20. Happy, a thousand times happy, is the soul here below to which the Holy Ghost reveals the Secret of Mary in order that it may come to know her; to which He opens the "Garden Enclosed", that it may enter into it; to which He gives access to that "Fountain Sealed," that it may draw from it and drink deep draughts of the living waters of grace! That soul will find God alone in His most amiable creature. It will find God infinitely holy and exalted, yet at the same time adapting Himself to its own weakness. Since God is present everywhere, He may be found everywhere, even in Hell, but nowhere do we creatures find Him nearer to us and more adapted to our weakness than in Mary, since it was for that end that He came and dwelt in her. Everywhere else He is

the Bread of the strong, the Bread of the Angels, but in Mary He is the Bread of children.¹⁴

No Hindrance to Our Union with God

21. Let us not imagine, then, as some do who are misled by erroneous teachings, that Mary, being a creature, is a hindrance to our 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 of the other Saints more than the heavens surpass the earth by their height. Mary is made for God alone, and far from ever detaining a soul in herself, she casts the soul upon God and unites it with Him so much the more perfectly as the soul is more perfectly united to her. Mary is the admirable echo of God. When we say, "Mary," she answers, "God." When, with St. Elizabeth, we call her "Blessed," she glorifies God. If the falsely enlightened, whom the devil has so miserably disillusioned, even in prayer, had known how to find Mary, and through her to find Jesus, and through Jesus, God the Father, they would not have had such terrible falls. The Saints tell us that when we have once found Mary, and through Mary, Jesus, and through Jesus, God the Father, we have found all good. He who says all excepts nothing: all grace and all friendship with God, all safety from God's enemies, all truth to crush falsehoods, all facility to overcome difficulties in the way of salvation, all comfort and all joy amidst the bitterness of life.

She Imparts the Grace to Carry Crosses

22. This does not mean that he who has found Mary by a true devotion will be exempt from crosses and sufferings.¹⁵ Far from it; he is more besieged by them than others are, because Mary, the Mother of the living, gives to all her children portions of the Tree of Life, which is the Cross of Jesus. But along with their crosses she also imparts the grace to carry them patiently and even cheerfully; and thus it is that the crosses which she lays upon those who belong to her are rather steeped in sweetness than filled with bitterness. If for a while her children feel the bitterness of the cup which one must needs drink in order to be the friend of God, the consolation and joy which this good

Mother sends after the trial encourage them exceedingly to carry still heavier and more painful crosses.

Conclusion

23. The difficulty, then, is to find really and truly the most Blessed Virgin Mary in order to find all abundant grace. God, being the absolute Master, can confer directly by Himself that which He usually grants only through Mary. It would even be rash to deny that sometimes He does so.

Nevertheless, St. Thomas teaches that in the order of grace, established by Divine Wisdom, God ordinarily communicates Himself to men only through Mary. Therefore, if we would go up to Him and be united with Him, we must use the same means He used to come down to us, to be made man and to impart His graces to us. That means is a true devotion to our Blessed Lady.

OUR SANCTIFICATION BY THE PERFECT DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SLAVERY OF LOVE

24. There are several true devotions to Our Lady: here I do not speak of those that are false.

1. Devotion without Special Practices

25. The first consists in fulfilling our Christian duties, avoiding mortal sin, acting more out of love than fear, praying to Our Lady now and then, honoring her as the Mother of God, yet without having any special devotion to her.

2. Devotion with Special Practices

26. The second consists in entertaining for Our Lady more perfect feelings of esteem and love, of confidence and veneration. It leads us to join the Confraternities of the Holy Rosary and of the Scapular, to recite the five decades or the fifteen decades of the Rosary, to honor Mary's images and altars, to publish her praises and to enroll ourselves in her sodalities.¹⁶ This devotion is good, holy and praiseworthy, if we keep ourselves free from sin; but it is not so perfect as the next, nor so

efficient in severing our soul from creatures or in detaching us from ourselves, in order to be united with Jesus Christ.

3. The Perfect Devotion: The Holy Slavery of Love

27. The third devotion to Our Lady, known and practiced by very few persons, is the one I am now about to disclose to you, predestinate soul.

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THIS DEVOTION

Nature

28. It consists in giving oneself entirely and as a slave to Mary, and to Jesus through Mary; and after that to do all that we do, with Mary, in Mary, through Mary and for Mary.¹⁷ I shall now explain these words.

Scope: Total Surrender

29. We should choose a special feast-day on which to give, consecrate and sacrifice to Mary voluntarily, lovingly and without constraint, entirely and without reserve: our body and soul, our exterior property, such as house, family and income; and also our interior and spiritual possessions; namely, our merits, graces, virtues and satisfactions.¹⁸

It should be observed here that by this devotion the soul sacrifices to Jesus, through Mary, all that it holds most dear, things of which even no religious order would require the sacrifice; namely, the right to dispose of ourselves, of the value of our prayers and alms, of our mortifications and satisfactions. The soul leaves everything to be freely disposed of by Our Lady so that she may apply it all according to her own will for the greater glory of God, which she alone knows perfectly.

Surrender of the Value of Our Good Works

30. We leave to her disposal all the satisfactory and impetratory value of our good works, so that after we have made the sacrifice of them—although not by vow—we are no longer the masters of any good works we may do; but Our Lady may apply them, sometimes for the relief or

the deliverance of a soul in Purgatory, sometimes for the conversion of a poor sinner, etc.¹⁹

31. By this devotion we also place our merits in the hands of Our Lady, but only that she may preserve, augment and embellish them, because we cannot communicate to one another either the merits of sanctifying grace or those of glory. However, we give her all our prayers and good works, inasmuch as they have an impetratory and satisfactory value, that she may distribute and apply them to whom she pleases. If, after having thus consecrated ourselves to Our Lady, we desire to relieve a Soul in Purgatory, to save a sinner, or to assist a friend by our prayers, our alms-deeds, our mortifications and sacrifices, we must humbly ask it of Our Lady, abiding, however, by her decision, which remains unknown to us; and we must be fully persuaded that the value of our actions, being dispensed by the same hand which God Himself makes use of to distribute to us His graces and gifts, cannot fail to be applied for His greater glory.

Three Kinds of Slavery

32. I have said that this devotion consists in giving ourselves to Mary as slaves.²⁰ But notice that there are three kinds of slavery. The first is the slavery of nature; in this sense all men, good and bad alike, are slaves of God. 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 free will; and this is the one by which we must consecrate ourselves to God through Mary. It is the most perfect way for us human creatures to give ourselves to God our Creator.

Servant and Slave

33. Notice again, that there is a great difference between a servant and a slave. A servant claims wages for his services; a slave has a right to none. A servant is free to leave his master when he likes—he serves him only for a time; a slave belongs to his master for life and has no right to leave him. A servant does not give to his master the right of life and death over him; a slave gives himself up entirely, so that his master can put him to death without being molested by the law. It is easily seen, then, that he who is a slave by constraint is rigorously dependent on his master. Strictly speaking, a man must be dependent in that

sense only on his Creator. Hence, we do not find that kind of slavery among Christians, but only among pagans.

Happiness of the Slave of Love

34. But happy and a thousand times happy is the generous soul that consecrates itself entirely to Jesus through Mary as a slave of love after it has shaken off by Baptism the tyrannical slavery of the devil!

EXCELLENCE OF THE HOLY SLAVERY OF LOVE

I should require much supernatural light to describe perfectly the excellence of this practice.

I shall content myself with these few remarks.

Imitation of the Trinity

35. To give ourselves to Jesus through Mary is to imitate God the Father, Who has given us His Son only through Mary, and Who communicates to us His grace only through Mary. It is to imitate God the Son, Who has come to us only through Mary, and Who, “by giving us an example, that as He has done, so we do also” , has urged us to go to Him by the same means by which He has come to us—that is, through Mary. It is to imitate the Holy Ghost, Who bestows His graces and gifts upon us only through Mary. “Is it not fitting,” asks St. Bernard, “that grace should return to its Author by the same channel which conveyed it to us?”

It Honors Jesus

36. To go to Jesus through Mary is truly to honor Jesus Christ, for it denotes that we do not esteem ourselves worthy of approaching His infinite holiness directly and by ourselves because of our sins; that we need Mary, His holy Mother, to be our advocate and Mediatrix with Him, our Mediator. It is to approach Jesus as our Mediator and Brother, and at the same time to humble ourselves before Him, as before our God and our Judge. In a word, it is to practice humility, which is always exceedingly pleasing to the heart of God.

It Purifies and Embellishes Our Good Works

37. To consecrate ourselves thus to Jesus through Mary is to place in Mary's hands our good actions, which although they may appear to us to be good, are often very imperfect and unworthy of the sight and the acceptance of God, before whom even the stars are not pure. Ah! Let us pray, then, to our dear Mother and Queen, that having received our poor present, she may purify it, sanctify it, embellish it and thus render it worthy of God. All that our soul possesses is of less value before God, the Heavenly Householder, when it comes to winning His friendship and favor, than a worm-eaten apple presented to the king by a poor farmer in payment of the rent of his farm. But what would such a farmer do if he were wise and if he were well liked by the queen? Would he not give his apple to the queen? And would she not out of kindness to the poor man, as also out of respect for the king, remove from the apple all that is worm-eaten or spoiled, and then place it in a gold dish and surround it with flowers? Would the king refuse to accept the apple then? Or would he not rather receive it with joy from the hands of the queen, who favors that poor man? "If you wish to present something to God, no matter how small it may be," says St. Bernard, "place it in Mary's hands, if you do not wish to be refused."

38. Great God, how insignificant everything that we do really is! But let us place all in Mary's hands by this devotion. When we have given ourselves to Mary to the very utmost of our power, by despoiling ourselves completely in her honor, she will far outdo us in generosity and will repay us a hundredfold. She will communicate herself 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, with His merits, which she has at her disposal; and thus, after we have despoiled ourselves of everything in her honor, we shall be "clothed in double garments"; that is, the garments, the ornaments, the perfumes, the merits and the virtues of Jesus and Mary clothe the soul of their slave, who has despoiled himself and who perseveres in his despoliation.²¹

Charity in the Highest Degree

39. Moreover, to give ourselves thus to Our Lady is to practice charity towards our neighbor in the highest possible degree, because we give

her all that we hold most dear and let her dispose of it at her will in favor of the living and the dead.

It Increases the Grace of God in Us

40. By this devotion we place our graces, merits and virtues in safety, for we make Mary the depository of them all, saying to her: “See, my dear Mother, here are the good works that I have been able to do through the grace of thy dear Son; I am not able to keep them on account of my own weakness and inconstancy, and also because of the many wicked enemies who attack me day and night. Alas! One may see every day the cedars of Lebanon fall into the mire and the eagles, which had raised themselves to the sun, become birds of night; and so do a thousand of the just fall on my left hand and ten thousand on my right. But thou, my most powerful princess, sustain me lest I fall; keep all my possessions for fear I may be robbed of them. All I have I entrust to thee. I know well who thou art; therefore, I entrust myself entirely to thee; thou art faithful to God and to men; thou wilt not allow anything to perish that I entrust to thee; thou art powerful, and nothing can hurt thee nor rob thee of anything thou holdest in thy hands.”²² “When you follow Mary, you will not go astray; when you pray to her, you will not despair; when you think of her, you will not err; when she sustains you, you will not fall; when she protects you, you will not fear; when she leads you, you will not become tired; when she favors you, you will arrive safely.”²³ And again: “She keeps her Son from striking us; she keeps the devil from hurting us; she keeps our virtues from escaping us; she keeps our merits from being destroyed; she keeps our graces from being lost.” These are the words of St. Bernard. They express in substance all I have said. Were there but this one motive to incite in me a desire for this devotion—namely, that it is a sure means of keeping me in the grace of God and even of increasing that grace in me, my heart ought to burn with longing for it.

It Renders the Soul Free

41. This devotion truly frees the soul with the liberty of the children of God. Since for love of Mary we reduce ourselves freely to slavery, she, out of gratitude, will dilate our heart, intensify our love and cause us to walk with giant steps in the way of God’s commandments. She

delivers the soul from weariness, sadness and scruples. It was this devotion which Our Lord taught to Mother Agnes of Jesus²⁴ as a sure means of delivering her from the severe sufferings and perplexities which troubled her. "Make thyself," He said, "My Mother's slave." She did so, and in a moment her troubles ceased.

Obedience to the Counsels of the Church

42. To show that this devotion is rightfully authorized it would be necessary to mention the bulls of the Popes and the pastoral letters of the bishops, speaking in its favor; the indulgences granted to it; the confraternities established in its honor; the examples of the many Saints and illustrious persons who have practiced it. But all that I shall leave out.

INTERIOR PRACTICE OF THE HOLY SLAVERY OF LOVE

Its Guiding Formula

43. I have said that this devotion consists in doing all our actions with Mary, in Mary, through Mary and for Mary.

Scope of This Formula

44. It is not enough to have given ourselves once as slaves to Jesus through Mary, nor is it enough to renew that act of consecration every month or every week. That alone would not make it a permanent devotion, nor could it bring the soul to that degree of perfection to which it is capable of raising it. It is not very difficult to enroll ourselves in a confraternity, nor to practice this devotion in as far as it prescribes a few vocal prayers every day; but the great difficulty is to enter into its spirit. Now its spirit consists in this, that we be interiorly dependent on Mary; that we be slaves of Mary, and through her, of Jesus.

I have found many people who, with admirable zeal, have adopted the exterior practices of this holy slavery of Jesus and Mary, but I have found only a few who have accepted its interior spirit, and still fewer who have persevered in it.

MEANING AND EXPLANATION OF THIS FORMULA

Act with Mary

45. The essential practice of this devotion is to do all our actions *with* Mary. This means that we must take Our Lady as the perfect model of all that we do.

46. Before undertaking anything, we must renounce ourselves and our own views.²⁵ We must place ourselves as mere nothings before God, unable of ourselves to do anything that is supernaturally good or profitable to our salvation. We must have recourse to Our Lady, uniting ourselves to her and to her intentions, although they are not known to us; and through Mary we must unite ourselves to the intentions of Jesus Christ. In other words, we must place ourselves as instruments in the hands of Mary, that she may act in us and do with us and for us whatever she pleases, for the greater glory of her Son, and through the Son, for the glory of the Father; so that the whole work of our interior life and of our spiritual perfection is accomplished only by dependence on Mary.

Act in Mary

47. We must do all things *in* Mary;²⁶ that is to say, we must become accustomed little by little to recollect ourselves interiorly and thus try to form within us some idea or spiritual image of Mary.²⁷ She will be, as it were, the oratory of our soul, in which we offer up all our prayers to God, without fear of not being heard; she will be to us a Tower of David, in which we take refuge from all our enemies; a burning lamp to enlighten our interior and to inflame us with Divine love; a sacred altar upon which we contemplate God in Mary and with her. In short, Mary will be the only means used by our soul in dealing with God; she will be our universal refuge. If we pray, we will pray in Mary; if we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we will place Him in Mary, so that He may take His delight in her; if we do anything at all, we will act in Mary; everywhere and in all things we will renounce ourselves.

Act through Mary

48. We must never go to Our Lord except *through* Mary, through her intercession and her influence with Him. We must never be without *Mary when we pray to Jesus.*

Act for Mary

49. 40 Lastly, we must do all our actions *for* Mary. This means that as slaves of this august princess, we must work only for her, for her interests and her glory—making this the immediate end of all our actions—and for the glory of God, which must be their final end. In everything we do, we must renounce our self-love, because very often self-love sets itself up in an imperceptible manner as the end of our actions. We should often repeat, from the bottom of our heart: “O my dear Mother! It is for thee that I go here or there; for thee that I do this or that; for thee that I suffer this pain or wrong.”

PRACTICAL COUNSELS CONCERNING THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLY SLAVERY

Not More Perfect to Go Straight to Jesus without Mary

50. Beware, predestinate soul, of believing that it is more perfect to go straight to Jesus, straight to God. Without Mary, your action and your intention will be of little value; but if you go to God through Mary, your work will be Mary’s work, and consequently it will be sublime and most worthy of God.²⁸

Not Necessary to Feel and Enjoy What You Say and Do

51. Moreover, do not try to feel and enjoy what you say and do, but say and do everything with that pure faith which Mary had on earth and which she will communicate to you in due time. Poor little slave, leave to your Sovereign Queen the clear sight of God, the raptures, the joys, the satisfactions and the riches of Heaven, and content yourself with pure faith, although full of repugnance, distractions, weariness and dryness, and say: “Amen, so be it,” to whatever Mary, your Mother, does in Heaven. That is the best you can do for the time being.²⁹

Not Necessary to Enjoy Immediately the Presence of Mary

52. Take great care also not to torment yourself should you not enjoy immediately the sweet presence of the Blessed Virgin in your soul, for this is a grace not given to all; and even when God, out of His great mercy, has thus favored a soul, it is always very easy to lose this grace, unless by frequent recollection the soul remains alive to that interior presence of Mary. Should this misfortune befall you, return calmly to your Sovereign Queen and make amends to her.³⁰

WONDERFUL EFFECTS OF THIS INTERIOR PRACTICE

53. Experience will teach you much more about this devotion than I can tell you; and if you remain faithful to the little I have taught you, you will find so many rich fruits of grace in this practice that you will be surprised and filled with joy.

54. Let us set to work then, dear soul, and by the faithful practice of this devotion let us obtain the grace “that Mary’s soul may be in us to glorify the Lord, that her spirit may be in us to rejoice in God,” as St. Ambrose says. “Do 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,” as the learned Abbot Guericc says.

It Establishes Mary’s Life in the Soul

55. This devotion, faithfully practiced, produces many happy effects in the soul. The most important of them all is that it establishes, even here below, Mary’s life in the soul, so that it is no longer the soul that lives, but Mary living in it; for Mary’s life becomes its life. And when, by an unspeakable yet real grace, the Blessed Virgin is Queen in a soul, what wonders does she not work there! She is the worker of great wonders, particularly in our soul, but she works them in secret, in a way unknown to the soul itself, for were it to know, it might destroy the beauty of her works.

Mary Causes Jesus to Live in That Soul

56. As Mary is the fruitful Virgin everywhere, she produces in the soul wherein she dwells purity of heart and body, purity of intention and of

purpose, and fruitfulness in good works. Do not think, dear soul, that Mary, the most fruitful of all pure creatures, who has brought forth even a God, remains idle in a faithful soul. She will cause Jesus Christ to live in that soul, and the soul to live in constant union with Jesus Christ. "My dear children, with whom I am in labor again until Christ is formed in you." . If Jesus Christ is the fruit of Mary in each individual soul, as well as in all souls in general, He is, however, her fruit and her masterpiece more particularly in a soul in which she dwells.

Mary Becomes Everything to That Soul

57. In fine, Mary becomes everything to that soul in the service of Jesus Christ. The mind will be enlightened by Mary's pure faith. The heart will be deepened by Mary's humility. It will be dilated and inflamed by Mary's charity; made clean by Mary's purity; noble and great by her motherly care. But why dwell any longer on this? Only experience can teach the wonders wrought by Mary, wonders so great that neither the wise nor the proud, nor even many of the devout can believe them.

SPECIAL FUNCTION OF THE HOLY SLAVERY

IN THE LATTER TIMES

Through Mary, Jesus Will Reign

58. As it is through Mary that God came into the world the first time, in a state of humiliation and annihilation, may we not say that it is through Mary also that He will come the second time, as the whole Church expects Him to come, to rule everywhere and to judge the living and the dead? Who knows how and when that will be accomplished? I do know that God, Whose thoughts are as far removed from ours as Heaven is distant from the earth, will come in a time and a manner that men expect the least, even those who are most learned and most versed in Holy Scripture, which is very obscure on this subject.

59. We ought also to believe that toward the End of Time, and perhaps sooner than we think, God will raise up great men full of the Holy Ghost and imbued with the spirit of Mary, through whom this powerful Sovereign will work great wonders in the world, so as to destroy sin

and to establish the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, her Son, upon the ruins of the kingdom of this corrupt world; and these holy men will succeed by means of this devotion, of which I do but give here the outline and which my deficiency only impairs.

EXTERIOR PRACTICES OF THE HOLY SLAVERY OF LOVE

60. Besides the interior practice of this devotion, of which we have just spoken, there are also certain exterior practices, which we must neither omit nor neglect.

Consecration and Renewal

61. The first one is to choose a special feast-day on which to consecrate ourselves to Jesus through the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose slaves we make ourselves. On the same day we should receive Holy Communion for that intention, and spend the day in prayer. At least once a year, on the same day, we should renew our act of consecration.

A Token of Our Servitude

62. The second one is to pay to Our Lady, every year on that 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. That tribute may consist of an act of mortification, an alms, a pilgrimage or some prayers. Bl. Marino, we are told by his brother, St. Peter Damian, was wont to take the discipline in public every year on the same day before the altar of Our Lady. Such zeal is not required, nor do we counsel it; but if we give but little to Mary, let us at least offer it with a humble and grateful heart.

Celebration of the Annunciation

63. The third practice is to celebrate every year, with special devotion, the feast of the Annunciation, which is the patronal feast of this devotion and was established to honor and imitate the dependence in which the Eternal Word placed Himself on that day out of love for us.

Recitation of the Little Crown and the Magnificat.

64. The fourth external practice is to say every day the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin, which is composed of three Our Fathers and twelve

Hail Marys; also, often to recite the Magnificat, which is the only hymn of Mary that we possess, to thank God for His graces in the past and to beg of Him fresh blessings for the present. Above all, we ought not to fail to say this hymn in thanksgiving after Holy Communion. The learned Gerson tells us that Our Lady herself was wont to recite it after Communion.

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 grace of the Holy Ghost, what I have tried to explain to you in the preceding pages? If so, be thankful to God, for it is a secret known and understood by only a few. If you have found the treasure hidden in the field of Mary, the precious pearl of the Gospel, sell all that you have in order to buy it. You must make the sacrifice of yourself to the Blessed Mother, you must disappear in her, so that you may find God alone.

If the Holy Ghost has planted in your soul the true Tree of Life, which is the devotion that I have just explained to you, you must do all you can to cultivate it, in order that it may yield its fruit in due season. This devotion is like the mustard seed of 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 the branches thereof,” and rest in its shade from the heat of the sun and hide there in safety from the beasts of prey.

This is the way, predestinate soul, to cultivate it:

No Human Support

This Tree, once planted in a faithful heart, requires the open air and freedom from all human support. Being Heavenly, it must be kept clear from any creatures that might prevent it from lifting itself to God, in Whom its origin lies. Hence, you must not rely on your own skill or your natural talents, on your own repute or the protection of men. You must have recourse to Mary and rely on her help alone.

Constant Concern of the Soul

The one in whose soul this Tree is planted must, like a good gardener, constantly watch over it and tend it, for it is a Tree that has life and is capable of yielding the fruit of life. Therefore, it must be cultivated and raised by the steady care and application of the soul; and the soul that would become perfect will make this its chief aim and occupation.

Violence to Oneself

Whatever is likely to choke the Tree or in the course of time prevent its yielding its fruit, such as thorns and thistles, must be cut away and rooted out. This means that by mortification and doing violence to ourselves, we must suppress and renounce all useless pleasures and vain traffic with creatures. In other words, we must crucify the flesh, keep recollected and mortify our senses.

No Self-Love

You must also keep watch on insects which might do harm to the Tree. These insects are self-love or love of comfort. They eat away the foliage of the Tree and destroy the fair hopes it gives of yielding fruit, for self-love is opposed to the love of Mary.

Horror of Sin

You must not allow destructive animals to approach the Tree of Life. By these animals are meant all sins. They may kill the Tree of Life by their touch alone. Even their breath must be kept away from it, namely, venial sins, for they are most dangerous if committed without regret.

Fidelity to Religious Practices

It is also necessary to water this Heavenly Tree often with the fervor of piety in our religious practices, in our Confessions and Communions, in all our prayers, both public and private; otherwise, it will stop yielding fruit.

Peace in Trials

Do not become alarmed when the Tree is moved and shaken by the wind, for it is necessary that the storms of temptation should threaten to uproot it, that snow and ice should cover it, so as, if possible, to destroy it. This means that this devotion will of necessity be attacked and contradicted, but provided we persevere in cultivating it in our souls, we need not fear.

Its Fruit: Our Lord

Predestinate soul, if you thus cultivate the Tree of Life, freshly planted in your soul by the Holy Ghost, I assure you that in a short time it will grow so tall that the birds of Heaven will come to dwell in it. It will be a good tree, yielding fruit of honor and grace in due season, namely, the sweet and adorable Jesus, who always has 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 acquired growth and bloom; still happier the soul in which she yields her fruit; but most happy of all: the soul which relishes and preserves Mary's fruit until death, and for ever and ever. Amen.

"He who holdeth , let him hold ."

GOD ALONE

PART II

CONSECRATION TO JESUS THROUGH MARY

MANNER OF PRACTISING THIS DEVOTION TO OUR LADY, WHEN WE GO TO HOLY COMMUNION

Before Communion

1. § 1. You must humble yourself most profoundly before God.

§ 2. You must renounce your corrupt interior, and your dispositions, however good your own self-love may make them look.

§ 3. You must renew your consecration by saying, *Tuus totus ego sum, et Omnia mea tua sunt*—I am all thine, my dear Mistress, with all I have.

§ 4. You must implore that good Mother to lend you her heart, that you may receive her Son there with the same dispositions as her own. You will represent to her that it touches her Son's glory, to be put into a heart so sullied and so inconstant as yours, which would not fail either to lessen His Glory or to destroy it. But if she will come and dwell with you, in order to receive her Son, she can do so by the dominion which she has over all hearts; and her Son will be well received by her, without stains, and without danger of being outraged or destroyed. *Deus in medio ejus, non commovebitur*. You will tell her confidently, that all you have given her of your good is a little matter to honour her; but that by the Holy Communion you wish to make her the same present as the Eternal Father gave her, and that you will honour her more by that than if you gave her all the goods in the world; and, finally, that Jesus, who loves her alone, still desires to take His pleasure and His repose in her, even in your soul, though it be filthier far and poorer than the stable where He made no difficulty to come, simply because she was there. You will ask her for her heart by these tender words: *Accipio te in mea omnia, prebe mihi cor tuum, O Maria!*—"I take you into all my things, turn to me thy heart, O Mary!"

At Communion

2. On the point of receiving Jesus Christ, after the Our Father, you say three times, *Domine non sum dignus*.—"Lord, I am not worthy." Say the first one to the Eternal Father, telling Him you are not worthy, because of your evil thoughts and ingratitude towards so good a Father, to receive His only Son; but that He is to behold Mary, His handmaid—*Ecce ancilla Domini*—who acts for us, and who gives us a singular confidence and hope with His Majesty: *Quoniam singulariter in spe constituisti me*.
3. You shall say to the Son, *Domine non sum dignus*—"Lord, I am not worthy."; telling Him that you are not worthy to receive Him, because of your idle and evil words, and your infidelity to His service; but that nevertheless you pray Him to have pity upon you, that you may introduce Him into the house of His Own Mother, and yours, and that you will not let Him go, without His coming to lodge with her. *Tenui eum, nec dimittam donec introducam illum in domum matris meae, et in cubiculum genitricis meae* (Cant. iii. 4). You will pray Him to rise, and come to the place of His repose, and into the ark of His Sanctification: *Surge, Domine, in requiem tuam, tu et arca sanctificationis tuae*. Tell Him you put no confidence at all in your own merits, your own strength, and your own preparations, as Esau did; but that you trust only in Mary, your dear Mother, as the little Jacob did in the cares of Rebecca. Tell Him that, sinner and Esau as you are, you dare to approach His Sanctity, supported and adorned, as you are, with the virtues of His holy Mother.
4. You shall say to the Holy Ghost, *Domine non sum dignus*—"Lord, I am not worthy"; telling Him that you are not worthy to receive this masterpiece of His charity, because of the lukewarmness and iniquity of your actions, and because of your resistances to His inspirations; but that all your confidence is in Mary, His faithful Spouse. You shall say with St. Bernard, *Haec mea maxima fiducia, haec tota ratio spei meae*. You can pray even Him to come Himself in Mary, His indissoluble Spouse, telling Him that her bosom is as pure, and

her heart as burning as ever; and that without His descent into your soul neither Jesus nor Mary will be formed, nor yet worthily lodged.

After Holy Communion

5. After Holy Communion, while you are inwardly recollected and holding your eyes shut, you will introduce Jesus into the heart of Mary. You will give Him to His Mother, who will receive Him lovingly, will place 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 which are unknown to us in our thick darkness.
6. Or else you will keep yourself profoundly humbled in your heart, in the presence of Jesus residing 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 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 place: *Venite, adoremus, venite*.
7. Or else you shall yourself ask of Jesus, in union with Mary, the coming of His kingdom on earth, through His holy Mother; or you shall sue for the 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 aside at yourself, *Ne respicias, Domine, peccata mea*—"Lord, look not at my sins;" *Sed oculi tui videant cequitates Marice*—"But let your eyes look at nothing in me but the virtues and merits of Mary:" and then, remembering your sins, you shall add, *Inimicus homo hoc fecit*—"It is I who have committed these sins;" or you shall say, *Ab homine iniquo et doloso erue me*; or else, *Te oportet crescere, me autem minui*—"My Jesus, you must increase in my soul, and I must decrease; Mary, you must increase within me, and I must be still less than I have been." *Crescite et multiplicamini*—"O Jesus and Mary, increase in me, and multiply yourselves outside in others also."

8. There are an infinity of other thoughts which the Holy Ghost furnishes, and will furnish you, if you are thoroughly interior, mortified, and faithful to this grand and sublime devotion which I have been teaching you. But always remember 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 will you humble yourself, and will listen to them in peace and silence, without putting yourself in trouble about seeing, tasting, or feeling; for the just man lives throughout on faith, and particularly in Holy Communion, which is an action of faith. *Justus meus ex fide vivit.*

APPENDIX

Veni Creator

Come, O Creator Spirit blest!
And in our souls take up Thy rest;
Come with Thy grace and heavenly aid,
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

Great Paraclete! To Thee we cry,
O highest gift of God most high!
O font of life! O fire of love!
And sweet anointing from above.

Thou in Thy sevenfold gifts art known,
The finger of God's hand we own;
The promise of the Father, Thou!
Who dost the tongue with power endow.

Kindle our senses from above,
And make our hearts overflow with love;
With patience firm and virtue high
The weakness of our flesh supply.

Far from us drive the foe we dread,
And grant us Thy true peace instead;
So shall we not, with Thee for guide,
Turn from the path of life aside.

Oh, may Thy grace on us bestow
The Father and the Son to know,
And Thee, through endless times confessed,
Of both, the eternal Spirit blest.

All glory while the ages run
Be to the Father and the Son
Who rose from death; the same to Thee,
O Holy Ghost, eternally. Amen.

Ave Maris Stella

Hail, bright star of ocean,
God's own Mother blest,
Ever sinless Virgin,
Gate of heavenly rest.

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

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

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

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

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

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