

TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY
St. Louis De Montfort

Comments and Questions for Part II, Chapter I, Articles 1 & 2, “A Perfect and Entire Consecration of Oneself to the Blessed Virgin” and “A Perfect Renewal of the Vows of Holy Baptism” (#120 – #134).

We finally come to the heart of St. Louis de Montfort’s spirituality - total consecration to Jesus through Mary. We examined in the first part of the book what it means, in a general sense, to have true (authentic) devotion to Mary. Now, St. Louis de Montfort focuses on the most perfect of all devotions to Mary, “The Perfect Consecration to Jesus Christ.” Keep in mind that St. Louis de Montfort does not use the word “devotion” the same way that we are used to thinking of it. He is not talking about a prayer or a novena to the Blessed Mother. He is talking about a new way of thinking, a new way of life. Also, he is not preaching two consecrations – one to Mary and one to Jesus. There is an inseparable and indissoluble bond between Christ and His Mother. There is no way that we can be *truly* devoted to Mary and *not* be irresistibly drawn to our final goal, Jesus Christ. There is only one consecration. ***The goal is Jesus and the means is Mary.***

In Article 1, St. Louis de Montfort describes exactly how we are to give ourselves entirely to Mary. The whole idea might seem overwhelming at first. Remember what we read at the end of Part I: Some people will only take the first step; some will go further and only a few will enter into its “inward spirit” and make this devotion a habitual state. So, you may find this to be easy or you might find it to be difficult. The main thing is that you give to Mary what you can through this devotion. She and Our Lord are always grateful and can never be outdone in generosity. Each time you sincerely renew your consecration, you will receive more grace to live it out. Over time, you will learn to trust Mary and abandon yourself to her. It is all about trust. Your relationship with Our Lady will deepen and it will bring you much comfort and joy in your life. You will find yourself letting go of fear and anxiety. You will find it easier to submit yourself to God’s Will even in difficult situations. You will come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of God’s Truth and best of all, you will experience a greater love and affection for Our Lord, the Bridegroom of your soul, in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Questions for paragraphs #120 - #134.

1. In #120, St. Louis de Montfort is assuming that you have read and accepted everything that he presented in the first part of the book. Based on the solid foundation that he laid for true devotion to the Mother of God, we should not be surprised when he states here that the more we are consecrated to Mary, the more we are consecrated to Jesus.

In #121, we finally come to understand what St. Louis de Monfort means by *total* consecration. When he says total, he means *everything*. He means all our thoughts, words, actions, joys, pains, possessions, prayers and sacrifices. We give it all to Mary to use as she wishes for the salvation of souls. This is how we truly become a “slave of love” of Jesus and Mary. By this surrender of self, Mary obtains for us the grace to become Marian saints. Since we give her everything, without exception, how does this affect the way we pray for ourselves and others?

2. In #122, St. Louis de Montfort goes into greater detail about what can be considered the greatest gift of all: our interior and spiritual possessions - our merits, virtues and good works. Did you know that all of your good works have a satisfactory value (what can be “given away”) and a meritorious value (what cannot be “given away”)? What are the meanings of the words “meritorious,” “satisfactory” and “impetratory” as used in #122?

3. St. Louis de Montfort draws three conclusions from his previous statements on total consecration. First, in #123, he states that we give to Jesus through Mary all we *can* give Him. This does not mean to say that we cannot give more in *quantity* (we certainly should seek to pray more often and make greater sacrifices), but it means that what we do have, we give it *completely* to Him through the hands of His Mother. Also, there is no time limit on total consecration. It is forever, unless it is voluntarily withdrawn.

The second consequence, stated in #124, is the most difficult for some. St. Louis de Montfort claims that a person who voluntarily consecrates himself totally to Jesus through Mary may “no longer dispose of the value of any of his good actions.” How can this be thought of in a positive way? Fr. Gaffney says that with total consecration, we must be careful to avoid the attitude of “Quietism.” What does he mean by this?”

4. The fundamental sacrament of Baptism, discussed in #126 - #130, is central to the spirituality of St. Louis de Montfort. Fr. Gaffney states, “At the core of his parish missions, during an elaborate ceremony, was the solemn renewal of the promises of Baptism... The constant concern of St. Louis de Montfort was to help the baptized to be aware of his or her absolute relationship with Christ and to grow in it.” St. Louis de Montfort refers to Baptism as our “Consecration to Jesus Christ.” St. Pope John Paul II said, “It is of extreme importance that all Christians appreciate the extraordinary dignity conferred on them in Baptism.” He recommended that we should celebrate the anniversary of our Baptism. Does your family do this? Do you know your Baptism date?

How will Mary help you to renew your Baptismal Promises more perfectly? Why is this so important? How has the lack of understanding of our Baptismal promises affected society?