



Cabrini Notes

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What is Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary?

First of all, the goal of all Christian life is holiness. Our final destination is heaven and to enter heaven we must be holy. The Book of Revelation tells us that nothing unclean can enter into heaven (Rev. 21:27) and Jesus tells us that we must be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Mt. 5:8).

Holiness is not a stifling and stuffy form of piety that one obtains by a life in isolation from others, but instead it's a style of life that is lived in the freedom of the children of God. Liberated from sin and selfishness, one is free to serve the Lord, and in doing so becomes one with God—thus, sanctity comes from prayer and worship of God, as well as from the loving gift of self in the service of others, those made in the image and likeness of God. Our tradition is filled with saints who lived the call to holiness, some by living within a convent or monastery, but also others who lived in service to the poor and needy. In a word, holiness is a matter of the two great commandments, to love God with all our heart, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as our self.

Since God has given us Jesus as the means to salvation, then union with Jesus is the most appropriate way to holiness. In the words of St. Louis de Montfort (1673-1716), those who understand total consecration to Jesus through Mary “will see clearly that she is the safest, easiest, shortest and most perfect way of approaching Jesus and will surrender themselves to her, body and soul, without reserve in order to belong entirely to Jesus.” The essence of his teaching is that Jesus came into the world through Mary and in order to grow closer to Jesus, closer than ever before, we should go through Mary back to him. As God used her for a portal for the Eternal Word to enter the world, so should the world return to God through the same portal. Mary always leads us to Jesus: “Do whatever he tells you” (John 2:5).

Certainly, as I mentioned in my letter last week, we are all aware of the great struggle and test our Church is going through. We all need to grow closer to Our Lord and Savior. Saint Louis proposed a course of preparation for Marian consecration that lasts 33 days, with the consecration occurring on the 34th day. It is traditional to make the consecration on a Marian feast day, with the preparation beginning 33 days prior to that date. Why should we do this? Consecration means to set aside for a sacred purpose. Mary's life was set aside for the sole purpose of serving Our Lord. By following her example, we can also completely give ourselves to Christ in a fundamental way that consecrates us to Him.

True, this happened in baptism, but here, there are a couple different elements. Firstly, for those of us baptized as infants, there is the fact that this is a voluntary self-offering—we are willfully engaged in the act. Secondly, there is the value-added Marian element. The role of Mary is in parallel with that of the wife of David, Bathsheba, who after David dies is treated in a very special way by Solomon her son. In those days, the kings had many wives, but, of course only one mother. The Queen Mother had the title of “Great Lady” and had a special place of honor at the right hand of the king and could intercede for the king's subjects (see, 1 Kings 2:19-20). St. Louis describes it as if we are bringing our intentions to Mary like fruit on a platter, and then she polishes it and arranges it in a beautiful way and presents these intentions to Jesus. “When you want to offer something to God, to be welcomed by him be sure to offer it through the worthy Mother of God, if you do not wish to see it rejected” (St. Bernard of Clairvaux).

Fr. Michael Gaitley, M.I.C. found de Montfort's theology beautiful but his method a bit confusing, and so he rearranged the preparation to be easier to follow and complete so that all who wish may benefit from the spiritual growth available in this devotion. We will follow this method. There's much more to be said, but we'll leave that for another time. Please sign up in church so that I may order enough materials for everyone.

Peace in Christ,
Fr. Mickey McGrath