

## ALLOCUTIO - OCTOBER 2015 – Fr. Justin Ford, Senatus Spiritual Director

We've been reflecting on what St Louis de Montfort calls, 'The Perfect Devotion to Our Lady' in which we give ourselves 'entirely to Mary in order to belong entirely to Jesus through her'. We recall that the Total Consecration 'requires us to give: (1) Our body with its senses and members; (2) our soul with its faculties; (3) Our present material possessions and all we shall acquire in the future; (4) Our interior and spiritual possessions, that is, our merits, virtues and good actions of the past, the present and the future.' (*True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, Part II, Ch. 3)



In Chapter Four, St Louis speaks about the *motives* that recommend this Total Consecration. He lists eight of these:

1. By it we give ourselves completely to God
2. It helps us to imitate Christ
3. It obtains many blessings from Our Lady
4. It is an excellent means of giving glory to God
5. It leads to union with our Lord
6. It gives liberty of spirit
7. It is of great benefit to our neighbour
8. It is a wonderful means of perseverance

Today we'll think about the first three of these. So firstly, by this devotion we give ourselves completely to God. This devotion, St Louis explains, 'makes us give Jesus and Mary all our thoughts, words, actions and sufferings and every moment of our lives without exception...Our offering always holds good, whether we think of it or not, unless we explicitly retract it.' And then he says that 'no other act of devotion enables us to rid ourselves so easily of the possessiveness which slips unnoticed even into our best actions.' It thus inspires total generosity of spirit, in response to what Jesus himself has already given us: 'Jesus, our dearest friend, gave himself to us without reserve...Does not simple justice as well as gratitude require that we give him all we possibly can? He was generous with us first, so let us be generous to him in return.'

Secondly, this devotion helps us to imitate Christ. God could have come to this world if he wished already as a fully grown man, without any human cooperation, but instead, Jesus chose to come to the human race through Mary. St Louis says, 'Consumed with the desire to give glory to God, his Father, and save the human race, he saw no better or shorter way to do so than by submitting completely to Mary.' And this was for thirty years of his life, the bulk of the years he spent on this earth.

St Louis adds that this devotion is an expression of great humility, because we feel our own need to come to our Lord, not simply relying on our own worthiness but feeling our need to have Mary always alongside us.

Thirdly, the total consecration obtains many blessings from Our Lady. 'The Blessed Virgin, mother of gentleness and mercy, never allows herself to be surpassed in love and generosity. When she sees someone giving himself entirely to her in order to honour and serve her, and depriving himself of what he prizes most in order to adorn her, she gives herself completely in a wondrous manner to him. She engulfs him in the ocean of her graces, adorns him with her merits, supports him with her power, enlightens him with her light, and fills him with her love. She shares her virtues with him...she makes up for his failings and becomes his representative with Jesus. Just as one who is consecrated belongs entirely to Mary, so Mary belongs entirely to him.'

'He no longer relies on his own dispositions, intentions, merits, virtues and good works, since he has sacrificed them completely to Jesus through his loving Mother...That is why he can now go to our Lord without any servile or scrupulous fear and pray to him with great confidence.'

And Mary purifies all the good works that we give to her of any taint of self-love, any blemish or imperfection. Mary's hands purify everything they touch. She enriches our good works by adorning them with her own merits and virtues, and then she presents our good works to Jesus. St Louis explains, 'She does not keep anything we offer for herself, as if she were our last end, but unfailingly gives everything to Jesus. So by the very fact we give anything to her, we are giving it to Jesus.'

‘At Mary’s request, Jesus accepts the gift of our good works, no matter how poor and insignificant they may be for one who is the King of Kings, the Holiest of the holy...He does not consider so much the present itself as the person who offers it. Thus Mary, who is never slighted by her Son but is always well received, prevails upon him to accept with pleasure everything she offers him, regardless of its value.’

Of course, when we read of Mary ‘prevailing’ upon Jesus, we interpret this recalling that this whole role of Mary is itself totally the plan of God and the gift of God and the infinite generosity of God.

St Louis concludes in the same light, ‘We have an advocate so powerful that she is never refused anything. She is so resourceful that she knows every secret way to win the heart of God. She is so good and kind that she never passes over anyone no matter how lowly and sinful.’

So if we totally consecrate ourselves to Mary, this is the source of the greatest confidence and peace in our journey to God.