

True Devotion to Jesus through Mary: A lifestyle of holiness

One of the reasons why I studied the “true devotion” of St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort and have consequently written about it and have spoken about it was basically for one primary reason: I wanted to find the secret to sanctity for my parishioners. As a pastor, a priest’s most important duty is to sanctify his parishioners; that is, to help them to become saints. The universal call to holiness is one of the chief tenets of the church’s mission. The sanctification of one’s parishioners is achieved not just through the administration of the sacraments, especially Mass and Confession, but also through a comprehensive vision for the parish. With a variety of “programs”, retreats and agendas, it can be overwhelming to find a unifying principle that leads everybody to a greater love for Jesus, for the glory of God the Father, using the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is also worth mentioning that not all “programs” and ideas are good; and in fact, some of them can be more in the line of pop psychology than Catholic spirituality.

So, this search for a unifying spiritual principle and tremendous sense of responsibility for the souls entrusted to my pastoral care led me to a small Catholic lay group who promoted de Montfort’s true devotion to Jesus through Mary. I became involved with a priests’ study group who met weekly to read and discuss the *Treatise on the True Devotion to Mary*. We spent about a year studying the material and discussing it with mixed effects. The “mix” was that, although we enjoyed what we were reading and were inspired by it, we didn’t always understand it very deeply. The language of the text was in a style somewhat different from modern English and many of de

Montfort's historical references were not immediately apparent to us, as they would have been to readers of his own time period.

I decided therefore that what was really needed was a commentary on de Montfort's work, and after some time, I eventually wrote one. It is called *The Echo of God*, and it's a commentary for beginners on St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort's *True Devotion to Mary*. It helps to explain some of the philosophical, theological and historical references he makes. But, I also told Our Lady that she would have to be my marketing agent for this book, since I did not have time as a very busy pastor to market and sell books. What I discovered was truly amazing; and that is, there is such a great hunger in the modern world for holiness. And, there is such a great hunger for Our Lady.

I also discovered what I had hoped for from the beginning; that, using Marian devotion as the unifying principle in a parish, the parishioners would grow in a greater love for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And so, Mass attendance improved, Confession attendance improved, healing services improved and the people were being formed into a parish family, but with a deeper love for God.

As Knights of Columbus, we, too, have a duty towards family (both in a parish and in one's own personal family) and a duty towards Our Queen, the Blessed Mother. I have encountered many men over the years who think that devotion to Mary is just for little old ladies reciting the Rosary (loudly) before Mass. That is not true. Devotion to Our Lady is a manly devotion and has formed great men saints—and continues to do so. Devotion to Our Lady is not an effeminate devotion, but one which requires courage, steadfastness, honor and duty. These are the characteristics typical of real

knights, just like the knights of centuries ago who defended the privileges of their Queen.

In following articles, I will comment upon the reasons to have a devotion to Jesus through Mary as well as the benefits and effects of that devotion. In the meantime, I would ask you to reflect upon your love for Our Lady and what you have been doing for her honor as her Knight. Do you have any devotion to her? Do you have a superficial devotion to her? Do you have a deep devotion to her? What have you done for her to make her better known in the world and to make her Son better known in the world? What would you be willing to undertake for her honor? Ask the Holy Spirit to enkindle in your heart a strong desire for holiness according to your own state in life. And, if you are a Knight of Columbus, ask what you are doing to serve your Queen.

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