

True Devotion to Jesus through Mary?

One of my early goals in preaching, teaching and writing about devotion to Our Lady was to find the most perfect means for my parishioners to become holy. With the myriad of spiritualities that have popped up over the centuries, both good and bad, I was introduced to St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort who was a priest, missionary, mystic and saint. It was he who helped to synthesize Marian devotion in the late 17th Century and defended it. He defended it from those who said it was too pious or that it drew too much attention away from devotion due to Jesus. However, his remarks are as timely today as they were four centuries ago, in that he presents very clearly that it was God Himself who chose Mary to be the means by which Jesus would come into the world. In addition, it was Jesus Christ Himself who continues that Marian primacy when he gives Mary to the Beloved Disciple, John, at the foot of the cross for him to take into his own home. This action represents the entrustment of the Blessed Mother to the Church. Mary is hardly a distraction to a life of union with God; quite to the contrary, Mary is the most perfect person to lead all of us to a deep, intimate union with God, because there is nobody who knows Him better than she.

At the beginning of de Montfort's famous work, *Treatise on the True Devotion*, St. Louis lays down some fundamental principles in his preliminary remarks. These fundamental principles establish an overarching vision for what he will later develop in his treatise. These remarks include the following: One) Mary has a significant role in salvation history. Not only did God the Father

choose her to be the mother of His Son, but she will also play a significant role in the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world. Two) In virtue of her Immaculate Conception which renders her “full of grace”, Mary has extraordinary gifts and charisms at her disposal for all of her children; in other words, for you and for me. Three) The angels in Heaven attend to her daily and await her commissions. She commands them to perform good works on earth for her children. Four) We must recognize that if we want to make Jesus better known on earth then we have to make Mary better known. The mother and the Son are inseparable by the very nature of motherhood; so that each one benefits from the other and shares in the joys and sorrows of the other. And, Five) St. Louis maintains that we have a lot more to do for Mary to honor her, and consequently honoring Jesus. For to honor one is to honor the other.

As Knights of Columbus then, we have to examine ourselves in light of these overarching principles of Marian devotion. We are we doing both personally and as a council in promoting honor to Mary. These activities may include defending the Church’s teachings against those who would say that we idolize Mary as a false god. There are books and CD’s we can consult to be able to better evangelize on that topic. Do we ask Our Lady to obtain for us gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit in order to become better husbands, fathers, grandfathers, single men, priests, etc? Do we regularly entrust our vocation as a married man, single man or priest to Our Lady? What have we built for her, painted for her, written for her or done for her in a very real and concrete way to make devotion to Our Lady visible and tangible, and not just merely theoretical

and abstract? Have we considered our own personal “end of the world”; that is, our own death and have we invoked Our Lady to be with us “now and at the hour of death”?

As knights of old have done in defending a Queen, so too, do we today have a queen to defend—the Blessed Virgin Mary. Let’s us give serious consideration during this month of Mary, dedicated to Our Lady’s honor, to be very concrete in our attachment to her, that she may not only lead us to Jesus, but make saints out of us.

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