

Preparation for Total Consecration

Part II: (1st Week)

Theme: Knowledge of Self

Prayers, exams, reflection, acts of renouncement of our own will, of contrition for our sins, of contempt of self, all performed at the feet of Mary, for it is from her that we hope for light to know ourselves. It is near her, that we shall be able to measure the abyss of our miseries without despairing. We should employ all our pious actions in asking for a knowledge of ourselves and contrition of our sins; and we should do this in a spirit of piety. During this period, we shall consider not so much the opposition that exists between the spirit of Jesus and ours, as the miserable and humiliating state to which our sins have reduced us. Moreover, the True Devotion being an easy, short, sure and perfect way to arrive at the union with our Lord, which is Christ like perfections, we shall enter seriously upon this way, strongly convinced of our misery and helplessness. But, how attain this without a knowledge of ourselves?

Daily Prayers: *Litany of the Holy Ghost, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, Ave Maris Stella*

Day 13

St. Luke: Chapter 11: 1-11

The Lord's prayer

Now once he was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "Say this when you pray:

Father, may your name be held holy,
your kingdom come;
give us each day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us."

The importunate friend

He also said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, 'My friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him,'" and the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children and I are in bed. I cannot get up to give it to you." I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it to him for friendship's sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants.

Effective prayer

So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you, search, and you will find, knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives, the one who searches always finds, the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him.

Pray Litany of the Holy Ghost, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and Ave Maris Stella

Day 14

Imitation of Christ: Book 3, Chapter 13

Of the obedience of a humble heart; after the example of Jesus Christ

Son, he who strives to withdraw himself from obedience, withdraws himself from grace, and he who seeks particular privileges loses such as are in common. He who does not freely and willingly submit himself to his superior shows that his flesh is not as yet perfectly obedient, but instead is often rebellious. Learn then to submit yourself readily to your superior, if you desire to subdue your own flesh. For sooner is the exterior enemy overcome, if the inward man be not laid waste, there is not a more troublesome or worrisome enemy to the soul than yourself when you are not agreeing with the spirit. You must in earnest conceive a true contempt of yourself, if you will prevail against flesh and blood, because as yet, you love yourself too inordinately; therefore do you fear to resign yourself entirely to the will of others. But what great matter is this, if you who are but dust and a mere nothing, submit yourself to man for God's sake, when I the Almighty, and Most high, Who created all things out of nothing for thy sake, humbly subjected Myself to man.

Imitation: Of the obedience of a humble heart; after the example of Jesus Christ

I became the most humble and the most abject of all men, that you might overcome your pride. Learn O dust, to obey; learn to humble yourself, and how to bow under the feet of all. Learn to break your own will, and yield yourself up to all subjection.

Pray Litany of the Holy Ghost, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and Ave Maris Stella

DAY 15

St. Luke: Chapter 13: 1-5

Examples inviting repentance

It was just about this time that some people arrived and told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to them, "Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you. No, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not, I tell you. No, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did."

True Devotion: No. 81, 82

We need Mary in order to die to ourselves.

In order to rid ourselves of self, we must die to ourselves daily. This is to say, we must renounce the operation of the powers of our soul, and the senses of our body. We must see as if we saw not, understand as if we understood not and make use of all the things of this world, as if we made no use of them at all. This is what St. Paul calls dying daily: "Unless the grain of wheat falling in the ground die, itself remains alone, and brings forth no good fruit." If we do not die to ourselves, and if the holiest devotions do not incline us to the necessary and useful death, we shall bring forth no fruit worth anything, and our devotion will become useless.

We must choose, therefore, among all the devotions to the Blessed Virgin, the one which draws us most toward this death to ourselves, inasmuch as it will be the best and most sanctifying.

Pray Litany of the Holy Ghost, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and Ave Maris Stella

DAY 16

True Devotion: No. 228

Preparatory Exercises

During the first week, we should offer up all our prayers and pious actions to ask for a knowledge of ourselves and contrition for our sins, and we should do this in a spirit of humility. For that end, we can, if we choose, meditate on our inward corruption, as explained before. We can look upon ourselves, during these days, as snails, crawling things, toads, swine, serpents, and unclean animals; or we can reflect on the three considerations of St. Bernard: the vileness of our origin, the dishonors of our present state, and our ending as food for worms. We should pray our Lord and the Holy Ghost to enlighten us, and for that we might use the ejaculation, “Lord, that I may see!” or “May I know myself” or “Come HOLY Ghost,” together with the Litany of the Holy Ghost. We should have recourse to the Blessed Virgin and ask her to grant this immense grace, which must be the foundation of all others, for this end, we should say daily: Ave Maris Stella and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Imitation: Book 2, Chapter 5

Of self-consideration

We may not trust too much to ourselves; for grace and understanding are often wanting in us; there is but little light and this we may soon lose by negligence. Oftentimes we are quite unconscious how blind we are. We often do amiss, and do worse in excusing ourselves. Sometimes we are moved by passion, and think it zeal. We blame little things in others and overlook great things in ourselves. We are quick enough in perceiving and weighing what we bear from others; but we think little of what others have to bear with us. He that should well and justly weigh his own doings would find little cause to judge harshly of another.

Pray Litany of the Holy Ghost, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and Ave Maris Stella

DAY 17

Imitation of Christ: Book 1, Chapter 24

Of judgment and punishment of sinners

In all things look to the end and how you will stand before the strict judge, from Whom there is nothing hid, Who takes no bribes, receives no excuses, but will judge that which is just. O miserable sinner, O foolish sinner, what will you answer to God Who knows all your evil deeds — you who are sometimes afraid of an angry man? Why don't you provide yourself against the day of judgment? When no man can be excused or defended by another, but each one will have enough to answer for himself?

St. Luke, Chapter 16: 1-8

The crafty steward

He also said to His disciples, “There was a rich man and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, ‘What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer.’ Then the steward said to himself, ‘Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes.’”

Then he called his master’s debtors one by one. To the first he said, “How much do you owe my master?” “One hundred measures of oil,” was the reply. The steward said, “Here, take your bond; sit down straight away and write fifty.” To another he said, “And you, sir, how much do you owe?” “One hundred measures of wheat” was the reply. The steward said, “Here, take your bond and write eighty.”

The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light.

Pray Litany of the Holy Ghost, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and Ave Maris Stella

DAY 18

St. Luke: Chapter 17: 1-10

On leading others astray

He said to his disciples, “Obstacles are sure to come, but alas for the one who provides them! It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone put round his neck than that he should lead astray a single one of these little ones. Watch yourselves!”

Brotherly correction

If your brother does something wrong, reprove him and, if he is sorry, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times a day and seven times comes back to you and says, “I am sorry,” you must forgive him.

The power of faith

The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” The Lord replied, “Were your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and placed in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

Humble service

Which of you, with a servant plowing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the field, “Come and have your meal immediately?” Would he not be more likely to say, “Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards?” Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: When you have done all you have been told to do, say, “We are merely servants: We have done no more than our duty.”

Imitation: Book 3, Chapter 47

That all grievous things are to be endured for life everlasting

Son, let not your labors which you have undertaken for My sake crush you, neither let tribulations, from whatever source, cast you down, but in every occurrence let My promise strengthen and console you. I am sufficient in recompense to you beyond all bounds and measures. It is not long you have to labor here, nor will you always be oppressed with sorrows. Wait a little while and you shall see a speedy end of suffering.

Pray Litany of the Holy Ghost, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and Ave Maris Stella

DAY 19

St. Luke: Chapter 18: 15-30

Jesus and the children

People even brought little children to Him, for Him to touch them; but when the disciples saw this they turned them away. But Jesus called the children to Him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

The rich aristocrat

A member of one of the leading families put this questions Him, “Good Master, what have I to do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You must not commit adultery; You must not kill; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; Honor your father and mother.” He replied, “I have kept all these from my earliest days until now.” And when Jesus heard this He said, “There is still one thing you lack. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” But when he heard this he was filled with sadness, for he was very rich.

The danger of riches

Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to make their way into the kingdom of God! Yes, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” “In that case,” said the listeners, “Who can be saved?” “Things that are impossible for men,” he replied, “are possible for God.”

The reward of renunciation

Then Peter said, “What about us? We left all we had to follow you.” He said to them, “I tell you solemnly, there is no one who has left house, wife, brothers, parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not be given repayment many times over in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life.”

Pray Litany of the Holy Ghost, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and Ave Maris Stella