

Preparation for Total Consecration

Part 1: Twelve Preliminary Days

Theme: Spirit of the World

Examine your conscience, pray, practice renouncement of your own will; mortification, purity of heart. This purity is the indispensable condition for contemplating God in heaven, to see Him on earth and to know Him by the light of faith.

The first part of the preparation should be employed in casting off the spirit of the world which is contrary to that of Jesus Christ. The spirit of the world consists essentially in the denial of the supreme dominion of God; a denial which is manifested in practice by sin and disobedience; thus it is principally opposed to the spirit of Christ, which is also that of Mary.

It manifests itself by the concupiscence of the flesh, by the concupiscence of the eyes and by the pride of life, by disobedience to God's laws and the abuse of created things. Its works are: sin in all forms, then all else by which the devil leads to sin; works which bring error and darkness to the mind, and seduction and corruption to the will. Its pomps are the splendor and the charms employed by the devil to render sin alluring in person, places and things.

Daily Prayers:

Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 1

St. Matthew: Chapter 5: 1-19

The Beatitudes

Seeing the crowds, he went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples.

Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.

Salt of the earth and light of the world

You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.

The fulfillment of the Law

Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 2

St. Matthew: Chapters 5: 48, 6: 1-15

Even the pagans do as much, do they not:
You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Almsgiving in secret (6: 1-15)

Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

Prayer in secret

And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites; they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

How to pray. The Lord's Prayer

In your prayers do not babble as the pagans do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. So you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.

And do not put us to the test, but save us from the evil one.

Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours;
but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 3

St. Matthew Chapter 7: 1-14

Do not judge

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; because the judgments you give are the judgments you will get, and the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the splinter in your own? How dare you say to your brother, "Let me take the splinter out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take the splinter out of your brother's eye.

Do not profane sacred things

Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs, or they may trample them and then turn on you and tear you to pieces.

Effective prayer

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 searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. Is there a man among you who would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or would hand him a snake when he asked for a fish: If you, then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

The golden rule

So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets.

The two ways

Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

Day 4

Imitation of Christ, by Thomas A Kempis: Book 3, Chapters 7, 40

That man has no good of himself, and that he cannot glory in anything.

Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that Thou visit him? What has man deserved that Thou should give him grace? Lord, what cause have I to complain, if Thou forsakest me, or what can I justly allege, if what I petition Thou shalt not grant? This most assuredly, I may truly think and say: Lord I am nothing, I can do nothing of myself, that is good, but I am in all things defective and ever tend to nothing. And unless I am assisted and interiorly instructed by Thee, I become wholly tepid and relaxed, but though, O Lord, art always the same, and endure unto eternity, ever good, just and holy, doing all things well, justly and holily and disposing them in wisdom.

But I who am more inclined to go back, than to go forward, continue not always in one state, for I am changed, seven different times. But it quickly becomes better when it pleases Thee, and Thou stretchest out Thy helping hand: for Thou alone, without man's aid can assist me and so strengthen me, that my countenance shall be more diversely changed: but my heart be converted and find its rest in Thee alone.

He who would be too secure in time of peace will often be found too much dejected in time of war. If you could always continue to be humble and little in your own eyes, and keep your spirit in due order and subjection, you would not fall so easily into danger and offense. It is good counsel that, when you have conceived the spirit of fervor, you should meditate how it will be when that light shall be withdraw.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 5

Imitation of Christ, continued: Book 3, Chapter 40

Wherefore, but I did know well, how to cast from me all human comfort, either for the sake of devotion, or through the necessity by which I am compelled to seek Thee, because there is no man that can comfort me. Then might I deservedly hope in Thy favor, and rejoice in the gift of a new consolation. Thanks be to Thee from Whom all things proceed, as often as it happens to me, I, indeed, am but vanity and nothing in Thy sight, an inconstant and weak man. Where, therefore, can I glory, or for what do I desire to be thought of highly?

Forsooth of my very nothingness; and this is most vain. Truly vainglory is an evil plague, because it draws away from true glory, and robs us of heavenly grace. For, while a man takes complacency in himself, he displeases Thee; while he looks for human applause, he is deprived of true virtues. But true, glory and holy exultation is to glory in Thee, and not in one's self; to rejoice in Thy Name, but not in one's own strength. To find pleasure in no creature, save only for Thy sake. Let Thy Name be praised, not mine; let Thy work be magnified, not mine; let Thy Holy Name be blessed, but let nothing be attributed to me of the praise of men. Thou art my glory; Thou art the exultation of my heart; in Thee, will I glory and rejoice all the day; but for myself, I will glory in nothing but in my infirmities.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 6

Imitation of Christ: Book 1, Chapter 18

On the examples of the Holy Fathers

Look upon the lively examples of the holy Fathers in whom shone real perfection and the religious life, and you will see how little it is, and almost nothing that we do. Alas, what is our life when we compare it with theirs? Saints and friends of Christ they served our Lord in hunger and in thirst, in cold, in nakedness, in labor and in weariness, in watching, in fasting, prayers and holy meditations, and in frequent persecutions and reproaches. Oh, how many grievous tribulations did the Apostles suffer and the Martyrs and Confessors and Virgins, and all the rest who resolved to follow the steps of Christ! For they hated their lives in this world, that they might keep them in life everlasting. Oh what a strict and self-renouncing life the holy fathers of the desert led! What long and grievous temptations did they bear!

How often were they harassed by the enemy, what frequent and fervent prayers did they offer up to God, what rigorous abstinence did they practice!

What a valiant contest waged they to subdue their imperfections! What purity and straight forwardness of purpose kept them towards God! By day they labored, and much of the night they spent in prayer; though while they labored, they were far from leaving off mental prayer. They spent all their time profitably. Every hour seemed short to spend with God; and even their necessary bodily refreshment was forgotten in the great sweetness of contemplation. They renounced all riches, dignities, honors and kindred; they hardly took what was necessary for life. It grieved them to serve the body even in its necessity. Accordingly, they were poor in earthly things, but very rich in grace and virtues.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 7

Imitation of Christ: Book 1, Chapter 18

Outwardly they suffered want, but within they were refreshed with grace and Divine consolation. They were aliens to the world; they seemed as nothing and the world despised them; but they were precious and beloved in the sight of God. They persevered in true humility, they lived in simple obedience, they walked in charity and patience, and so every day they advanced in spirit and gained great favor with God. They were given for example to all religious, and ought more to excite us to advance in good, than the number of lukewarm to induce us to grow remiss. Oh! how great was the fervor of all religious in the beginning of their holy institute! Oh, how great was their devotion in prayer, how great was their zeal for virtue! How vigorous the discipline that was kept up, what reverence and obedience, under the rule of their superior, flourished in all! Their traces that remain still bear witness, that they were truly holy and perfect men who did battle so stoutly, and trampled the world under their feet. Now, he is thought great who is not a transgressor and who can, with patience, endure what he has undertaken. Ah, the lukewarmness of and negligence of our state! that soon fall away from our first fervor, and are even now tired with life, from slothfulness and tepidity. Oh! that advancement in virtue be not quite asleep in thee, who hast so often seen the manifold examples of the devout!

Daily Prayers:

Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 8

Imitation of Christ: Book 1, Chapter 13

Of resisting temptations

As long as we live in this world, we cannot be without temptations and tribulations. Hence it is written in Job “man’s life on earth is a temptation.” Everyone therefore should be solicitous about his temptations and watch in prayer lest the devil find an opportunity to catch him: he who never sleeps, but goes about, seeking whom he can devour. No one is so perfect and holy as sometimes not to have temptations and we can never be wholly free from them. Nevertheless, temptations are very profitable to man, troublesome and grievous though they may be, for in them a man is humbled, purified and instructed. All the Saints passed through many tribulations and temptations and were purified by them. And they that could not support temptations became

reprobate and fell away.

Many seek to flee temptations, and fall worse into them. We cannot conquer by flight alone, but by patience and true humility we become stronger than all our enemies. He who only declines them outwardly, and does not pluck out their root, will profit little; nay, temptations will sooner return and he will find himself in a worse condition. By degrees and by patience you will, by God's grace, better overcome them than by harshness and your own importunity. Take counsel the oftener in temptation, and do not deal harshly with one who is tempted; but pour in consolation, as you would wish to be done unto yourself. Inconstancy of mind and little confidence in God is the beginning of all temptations. For as a ship without a helm is driven to and fro by the waves, so the man who neglects and gives up his resolutions is tempted in many ways.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 9

Imitation of Christ: Book 1, Chapter 13

Fire tries iron, and temptation a just man. We often know not what we are able to do, but temptations discover what we are. Still, we must watch, especially in the beginning of temptation; for then the enemy is more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the door of the mind, but is withstood upon the threshold the very moment he knocks. Whence a certain one has said, "Resist beginnings; all too late the cure." When ills have gathered strength, by long delay, first there comes from the mind a simple thought; then a strong imagination, afterwards delight, and the evil motion and consent and so, little by little the fiend does gain entrance, when he is not resisted in the beginning. The longer anyone has been slothful in resisting, so much the weaker he becomes daily in himself, and the enemy, so much the stronger in him. Some suffer grievous temptations in the beginning of their conversion, others in the end and others are troubled nearly their whole life. Some are very lightly tempted, according to the wisdom and the equity of the ordinance of God who weighs man's conditions and merits, and preordains all things for the salvation of His elect. We must not, therefore, despair when we are tempted, but the more fervently pray to God to help us in every tribulation: Who, of a truth, according to the sayings of St. Paul, will make such issue with the temptation, that we are able to sustain it.

Let us then humble our souls under the hand of God in every temptation and tribulation, for the humble in spirit, He will save and exalt. In temptation and tribulations, it is proved what progress man has made; and there also is great merit, and virtue is made more manifest.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 10

Imitation of Christ: Book 3, Chapter 10

That it is sweet to despise the world and to serve God

Now, will I speak again O Lord, and will not be silent. I will say in the hearing of my God and my King Who is on high: Oh, how great is the abundance of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for those who fear Thee! But who art Thou, for those who love Thee? Who, to those who serve Thee with

their whole heart? Unspeakable indeed is the sweetness of Thy contemplation, which Thou bestows on those who love Thee. In this most of all hast Thou shown me the sweetness of Thy love, that when I had no being, Thou did make me; and when I was straying far from Thee, Thou brought me back again, that I might serve Thee: and Thou has commanded me to serve Thee, O Fountain of everlasting love, what shall I say of Thee? How can I forget Thee, Who hast vouchsafed to remember me even after I was corrupted and lost? Beyond all hope Thou shows mercy to Thy servant; and beyond all desert, has Thou manifested Thy grace and friendship. What return shall I make to Thee for this favor? For it is granted to all who forsake these things, to renounce the world, and to assume the monastic life. Is it much that I should serve Thee, Whom the whole creation is bound to serve? It ought not to seem much to me to serve Thee; but this does rather appear great and wonderful to me, that Thou vouchsafes to receive one so wretched and unworthy as Thy servant.

It is a great honor, a great glory, to serve Thee, and to despise all things for Thee, for they who willingly subject themselves to Thy holy service, shall have great grace. They shall experience the most sweet consolation of the Holy Spirit, who for the love of Thee, have cast aside all carnal delight.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 11

Imitation of Christ: Book 1, Chapter 25

Of the Fervent Amendment of our whole life

When a certain anxious person, who oftentimes wavered between hope and fear, once overcome with sadness, threw himself upon the ground in prayer before one of the altars in the Church and thinking these things in his mind, said, "Oh, if I only knew how to persevere." That very instant he heard within him, this heavenly answer: "And if you did know this, what would you do? Do now what you would do, and you shall be perfectly secure." And immediately being consoled and comforted, he committed himself to the Divine Will, and his anxious thoughts ceased. He no longer wished for curious things, searching to find what would happen to him, but studied rather to learn what was the acceptable and perfect will of God for the beginning and the perfection of every good work.

"Hope in the Lord," said the Prophet, "And do all good, and inhabit the land, and you shall be fed of the riches thereof." There is one thing that keeps many back from spiritual progress, and from fervor in amendment, namely, the labor that is necessary for the struggle. And assuredly they especially advance beyond others in virtues, who strive the most manfully to overcome the very things which are the hardest and most contrary to them. For there a man does profit more and merit more abundant grace, when he does most to overcome himself and mortify his spirit. All have not, indeed, equal difficulties to overcome and mortify, but a diligent and zealous person will make a great progress though he have more passions than another, who is well regulated but less fervent in the pursuit of virtues.

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

DAY 12

Imitation of Christ: Book 1, Chapter 25

And, whatever you see that is worthy of blame, take care that you do not do yourself, or if you have ever done so, study to amend as soon as possible. As your eye observes others, so again, you are observed by others. How pleasant and sweet it is to see brethren fervent and devout, well-mannered and well-disciplined! How sad and afflicting to see them disorderly, and not practicing the things they are called to do. How mischievous it is to neglect that purpose of their vocations, and to turn their minds to what is not their business. Be mindful of the purpose you have undertaken, and place before you the image of the Crucified. Well may you be ashamed when looking into the Life of Jesus Christ, that as yet you have not studied more to conform yourself to Him, long as you have been in the way of God.

The religious who exercises himself earnestly and devoutly in the most holy life and Passion of our Lord shall find there abundantly all that is useful and necessary for him, nor need he seek out of Jesus, for anything better. Oh, if the Crucified Jesus should come into your heart, how quickly and sufficiently learned would you be. The fervent and diligent man is ready for all things. It is harder labor to withstand our vices and passions than to toil at bodily labors. He that shuns not small defects, little by little, falls into greater ones. You will always be glad in the evening if you spent the day profitably. Watch over yourself, stir up yourself, and whatever may become of others, neglect not yourself. In proportion as you do violence to yourself, the greater progress will you make. Amen.

End of Part 1

Pray Veni Creator, Ave Maris Stella and the Magnificat

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

Preparation for Total Consecration

Part III: (2nd Week)

Theme: Knowledge of Our Lady

Acts of love, pious affections for the Blessed Virgin, imitation of her virtues, especially her surpassing purity, her divine wisdom, her profound humility, her lively faith, her continual mental prayer, her blind obedience, her mortification in all things, her heroic patience, her ardent charity, and her angelic sweetness: “these being,” as Saint Louis De Montfort says, “the ten principal virtues of the Blessed Virgin.”

We must unite ourselves to Jesus through Mary — this is the characteristic of our devotion; therefore Saint Louis De Montfort asks that we employ ourselves in acquiring a knowledge of the Blessed Virgin. Mary is our sovereign and our mediatrix, our Mother and our Mistress. Let us then endeavor to know the effects of this royalty, of this mediation, of this maternity, as well as the grandeurs and prerogatives which are the foundation or consequences thereof. Our blessed Mother is also perfect — a mold wherein we are able to be molded in order to make her intentions and dispositions ours. This we cannot achieve without studying the interior life of Mary, namely her virtues, her sentiments, her actions, her participation in the mysteries of Christ and her union with Him.

Daily Prayers

Ave Maris Stella, Litany of the Holy Ghost, Litany of the Blessed Virgin, St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Mary, Recitation of the Rosary...

DAY 20

St. Luke: Chapter 2: 16-21, 42-52

So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about Him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

The circumcision of Jesus

When the eighth day came and child was to be circumcised, they gave him the name Jesus, the name the angel had given Him before His conception.

When He was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without His parents knowing it. They assumed He was with the caravan, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for Him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find Him they went

Preparation for Total Consecration

Part IV: (3rd week)

Theme: Knowledge of Christ

Acts of love of God, thanksgiving for the blessings of Jesus, contrition and resolution.

During this period we shall apply ourselves to the study of Jesus Christ. What is to be studied in Jesus Christ?

First: The Man-God, His grace and glory, then His rights to sovereign dominion over us; since, having renounced Satan and the world, we have taken Jesus Christ as our Lord.

Second: His interior life, namely, the virtues and the acts of His Sacred Heart; His association with Mary in the mysteries of the Annunciation and Incarnation; during His infancy and hidden life, at the Feast of Cana and on Calvary.

Daily Prayers:

Litany of the Holy Ghost, Ave Maris Stella, Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus

DAY 27

True Devotion : Nos. 61, 62

Christ our Last End

Jesus Christ our Savior, true God and true Man, ought to be the last end of all our devotions, else they are false and delusive. Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, of all things. We labor not, as the Apostle says, except to render every man perfect in Jesus Christ; because it is in Him alone that the whole plenitude of the Divinity dwells together with all the other plenitudes of graces, virtues and perfections. It is in Him alone that we have been blessed with all spiritual benediction; and He is our only Master, Who has to teach us; our only Lord on Whom we ought to depend; our only Head to Whom we must be united: our only Model to Whom we should conform ourselves; our only Physician Who can heal us; our only Shepherd Who can feed us; our only Way Who can lead us; our only Truth Whom we must believe; our only Life Who can animate us; and our only All in all things Who can satisfy us. There has been no other name given under heaven, except the name of Jesus, by which we can be saved. God has laid no other foundation of our salvation, our perfection or our glory, than Jesus Christ. Every building which is not built on that firm rock is founded upon the moving sand, and sooner or later infallibly will fall.

By Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ, in Jesus Christ, we can do all things; we can render all honor and glory to the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost; we can become perfect ourselves, and be to our neighbor a good odor of eternal life.

If, then, we establish solid devotion to our Blessed Lady, it is only to establish more perfect devotion to Jesus Christ, and to provide an easy and secure means for finding Jesus Christ. Devotion to our Lady is necessary for us, as I have already shown, and will show still further hereafter, as a means of finding Jesus Christ perfectly, of loving Him tenderly, of serving Him faithfully.

Pray: Litany of the Holy Ghost, Ave Maris Stella, Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus

DAY 28

St. Matthew: Chapter 26: 1, 26-29; 36-46

The conspiracy against Jesus

Jesus had now finished all he wanted to say, and he told his disciples, "It will be Passover, as you know, in two days' time, and the son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

The Institution of the Eucharist

Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples, "Take it and eat," he said, "This is my body." Then he took the cup, and when he had returned thanks, he gave it to them "Drink all of you from this," he said "for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father."

Gethsemane

Then Jesus came with them to a small estate called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Stay here while I go over there to pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And sadness came over him, and great distress. Then he said to them "My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me." And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. "My Father," he said, "if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it." He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, a second time, he went away and prayed: "My Father," he said, "if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done." And he came again back and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, "You can sleep on now and take your rest. Now the hour has come when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is already close at hand."

Pray: Litany of the Holy Ghost, Ave Maris Stella, Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus

DAY 29

Imitation: Book 1, Chapter 1

Of the imitation of Christ and indifference to earthly vanities

He who follows me does not walk in darkness. (John 8:12) Christ reminds you with these words that you must imitate His life, if you wish to be truly enlightened and freed from all blindness of heart. Your main task therefore, should be to study the life of Our Lord.

The teaching of Christ is greater than the advice of all the saints taken together. And if you study it with His frame of mind and heart, you will find in His teaching a hidden source of consolation and strength. Unfortunately, however, so many people care little or nothing about the Word of God, even though they have heard it time and time again, because they do not have the spirit of Christ. Yet, if you really want to understand the Words of Christ, you must try to pattern your whole life on His.

What good is it to be able to explain the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity if you displease the Blessed Trinity by your lack of humility? It is a good life that makes you pleasing to God, not high-sounding words and clever expressions. It is better to feel contrition for your sins than to know how to define it. What good is it to know the entire Bible by heart and to learn the sayings of all the philosophers if you live without grace and the Love of God?

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity unless you serve God and love Him with your whole heart. (Ecclesiastes 1:2) The greatest wisdom of all is to see the kingdom of heaven by despising the things of this world.

Pray: Litany of the Holy Ghost, Ave Maris Stella, Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus

DAY 30

St. Matthew: Chapter 27: 36-44

The crucifixion

...and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over Him. Above His head was placed the charge against Him; it read: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." At the same time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left.

The crucified Christ is mocked

The passers-by jeered at Him; they shook their heads and said, "So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!" The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way. "He saved others;" they said, "He cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the

cross now, and we will believe in him. He puts his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, "I am the Son of God." Even the robbers who were crucified with Him taunted Him in the same way.

Imitation: Book 2, Chapter 12

The Royal Road of the Cross

To many the saying, "Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me," seems hard. How much harder, however, will the words on the Day of Judgment be: Depart from Me, you accursed ones, into the everlasting fire. (Matthew 25:41) Those who follow the cross willingly now, will not fear the last judgment. When the Lord comes to judge, the Sign of the Cross will be in the heavens' then will those servants of the cross, who in their lifetime made themselves one with the Crucified, draw near with great trust to Christ, the judge.

Why are you afraid, then, to take up the cross when through it you can win an eternal kingdom? In the cross is salvation; in it is life; in it is protection from your enemies; in it is heavenly sweetness; in it is strength of mind; in it is joy of spirit; in it is the highest virtue; in the cross is perfect holiness.

Take up your cross and follow Jesus, and you will merit eternal life.

Pray: Litany of the Holy Ghost, Ave Maris Stella, Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus

DAY 31

Imitation: Book 4, Chapter 2

Of the Love God Shows You In The Blessed Sacrament

Trusting in Your great goodness and mercy, Lord, I come as one sick to the Physician, as one thirsty to the Fountain of Life, as one in need to the King of heaven; I come as a servant to my Master, as a creature to my Creator, as a dejected soul to my loving Comforter.

But why should You come to me? Who am I that You should give Yourself to me? How can a sinner dare show his face in Your presence? And why do You condescend to visit a sinner? You know Your servant: You know he has no good in him, and, therefore, You have no reason to grant him this great grace. Thus I confess my unworthiness; and I acknowledge Your goodness. I praise Your mercy, and I give thanks for Your boundless love.

True Devotion: Nos. 243-254

Those who undertake this holy slavery should have a special devotion to the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Word (25th of March). Indeed, the Incarnation is the mystery proper in this practice, inasmuch as it is a devotion inspired by the Holy Ghost; first to honor and imitate the ineffable dependence which God the Son was pleased to have on Mary, for His Father's glory—

and our salvation—which dependence particularly appears in this mystery where Jesus is a captive and a slave in the bosom of His Blessed Mother, and depends on her for all things. Secondly, to thank God for the incomparable graces He has given Mary and particularly for having chosen her to be His most holy Mother, which choice was made in this mystery. These are the two principal ends of the slavery of Jesus and Mary. Because we are living in an age of intellectual pride and there are around us numerous, puffed-up scholars, conceited with critical spirit who have plenty to say against the best established and most solid practices of piety, it is better for us not to give them any needless occasion of criticism, hence, it is better to say, we are slaves of Jesus in Mary and call ourselves slaves of Jesus Christ, rather than the slaves of Mary; taking the denomination of our devotion rather from its last end, which is Jesus Christ, than from the means to the end, which is Mary; we may use either term though. Another reason is that the principal mystery we celebrate and honor in this devotion is the mystery of the Incarnation wherein we can see Jesus only in Mary and incarnate in her bosom. Hence it is more to the purpose to speak of the slavery of Jesus in Mary, and of Jesus residing and reigning in Mary according to that beautiful prayer, O Jesus living in Mary. Come and live in Thy servants, In the spirit of Thy holiness, In the fullness of Thy might, In the truth of Thy virtues, In the perfection of Thy ways, In the communion of Thy mysteries, Subdue every hostile power. In Thy spirit, for the glory of the Father. Amen

Those who adopt this slavery ought to have a great devotion to saying the Hail Mary. Few Christians, however enlightened, know the real value, merit, excellence and necessity of the Hail Mary. It was necessary for the Blessed Virgin to appear several times to great and enlightened saints to show them the merit of it.

Pray: Litany of the Holy Ghost, Ave Maris Stella, Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus

DAY 32

Imitation: Book 2, Chapter 7

Of Loving Jesus Above All Things

Blessed is the man who knows what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himself for the sake of Jesus. You must give up all other love for His, since He wishes to be loved alone above all.

Love of creatures is receiving and constantly changing, but the love of Jesus is true and permanent. If you hold onto creatures, you will fall with them; if you hold onto Jesus, you will remain firmly planted forever.

Love Him then keep Him as a friend. He will not leave you as others do; nor will He permit you to suffer eternal death. Separate yourself a little from everything, then. Cling therefore to Jesus in life and death; trust yourself to Him alone who can help you when all others fail you.

The nature of Christ's love is such that it will not admit a rival; He wants you for Himself alone. He desires to sit on the throne of your heart as King; which is His right. If you only knew how to

free yourself of the love of creatures, how quickly would He come into your heart!

True Devotion; Nos. 257-260

There are also some very sanctifying interior practices for those whom the Holy Ghost calls to a high perfection. These may be expressed in four words: to do all our actions: *by Mary, with Mary, in Mary, and for Mary*, so that we may do them all the more perfectly *by Jesus, with Jesus, in Jesus and for Jesus*.

By Mary: We must obey her in all things, in all things conduct ourselves by her spirit which is the Holy Spirit of God “those who are led by the Spirit of God, are the children of God.” Those who are led by the spirit of Mary, are the children of Mary, and among clients of Mary, none are true or faithful but those who are led by her spirit. Jesus has rendered Himself, so completely the Master of Mary, that He has become her own spirit. A soul is happy indeed when it is all possessed and overruled by the spirit of Mary, a spirit meek and strong, zealous and prudent, humble and courageous, pure and fruitful.

We must do our actions *with Mary*. We must consider in every action how Mary has done it, she being in our place. For this end, we must meditate on the great virtues which she practiced during her life, first of all her lively faith, by which she believed, without hesitation, the angel’s word, and believed faithfully and constantly, up to the foot of the Cross; her profound humility which made her hide herself, hold her peace, submit to everything, and put herself last of all.

Pray: Litany of the Holy Ghost, Ave Maris Stella, Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, St. Louis De Montfort’s Prayer to Jesus

DAY 33

Imitation: Book 4, Chapter 11

Of the Necessity of Communion

O sweetest Lord Jesus, how happy is the devout man who feasts at Your banquet, at which there is no other food but Yourself, his only Lover, most desired of all that his heart can desire!

How deeply I long to pour out my heartfelt tears in Your presence, and like the pious Magdalen, to wash Your feet with them. But where is such devotion in me, such copious shedding of holy tears? Surely, in Your sight, and before Your holy angels, my whole heart ought to be inflamed and weep for joy: for I have You with me truly present in this Sacrament, though You are under another form. My eyes could not bear to see You in Your own divine brightness, nor could the whole world stand in sight of the splendor of Your majesty. In concealing Yourself in this Sacrament You have regard for my weakness.

True Devotion; Nos. 261-265

We must do our actions in Mary. Our Blessed Lady is the true terrestrial paradise for the New

Adam, and the ancient paradise was but a figure of her. In this earthly paradise we have riches, beauties, rarities and inexplicable sweetness, which Jesus Christ, the New Adam has left here; it was in this paradise that He took His complacency for nine months, worked His wonders and displayed His riches with the magnificence of a God. It is in this earthly paradise that there is the true tree of life, which has borne Jesus Christ, the Fruit of Life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which has given light unto the world. There are, in this divine place, trees planted by the hand of God, and watered by His Divine Unction, which have borne and daily bear fruit of divine taste. It is only the Holy Ghost, Who can make us know the hidden truth of these figures of material things. The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the Fathers, also styles the Blessed Virgin the Eastern Gate, by which the High-Priest, Jesus Christ, enters the world, and leaves it. By it, He came the first time. He will come the second, by it.

Finally, we must do all our actions for Mary, we must take her for our proximate end, our mysterious means, and our way to go to Jesus Christ. Supported by her protection we must undertake and achieve great things for Christ. We must defend her privileges, when they are disputed. We must stand up for her glory when it is attacked; we must draw all the world, if we can, to her service, and to this true and solid devotion. We must pretend to no recompense for our little service, except the honor of belonging to so sweet a Queen, and the happiness of being united through her to Jesus, her Son, by an indissoluble tie, in time and in eternity.

Pray: Litany of the Holy Ghost, Ave Maris Stella, Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, St. Louis De Montfort's Prayer to Jesus

How to Make Your Consecration

At the end of three weeks, we should go to Confession and Holy Communion with the intention of giving ourselves to Jesus Christ in the quality of slaves of love, by the hands of Mary. After Communion, we should recite the consecration prayer, we ought to write it, or have it written and sign it the same day the consecration is made. It would be well that on this day, we should pay some tribute to Jesus Christ and our Blessed Lady, either as a penance for our past unfaithfulness to the vows of Baptism, or as a testimony of dependence on the dominion of Jesus and Mary. This tribute should be one in accordance with your fervor, such as a fast, a mortification or an alms, or a candle. If but a pin is given in homage, and given with a good heart, it will be enough for Jesus Who loves only the good will.

Once a year at least, and on the same day we should renew this consecration, observing the same practices during the three weeks.