



SAINT LOUIS MONTFORT'S PERFECT CONSECRATION "TOTUS TUUS"

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The consecration to Mary, as taught by Saint Louis de Montfort, is a profound and transformative spiritual practice that has touched the lives of countless believers throughout the centuries. At the heart of Montfort's teaching is the understanding that Mary, as the Mother of Jesus and our spiritual mother, plays a vital role in our journey toward God. Through the act of consecration, we entrust ourselves entirely to Mary's care and guidance, acknowledging her as our advocate, intercessor, and protector. This act of consecration is not a mere formality but a profound commitment to live our lives in imitation of Mary's virtues, surrendering our will to hers and allowing her to lead us closer to her Son, Jesus Christ. By consecrating ourselves to Mary, we open ourselves to her powerful maternal love, inviting her to mold and shape us into instruments of God's grace, and to deepen our relationship with her Son. In essence, the consecration to Mary is an invitation to walk the path of holiness under her guidance, trusting in her maternal care as we strive to live authentic Christian lives.

In St. Louis Montfort's teaching, there exist two vital elements of the Totus Tuus consecration, namely: the nature of the consecration and the practices of the consecration. It has four fundamental characteristics that remarkably reflect the scriptural aspect of the consecration. There are also the so-called interior and exterior practices that provide people the knowledge of how to concretely bring the consecration to reality.

Keywords: *Consecration, Totus Tuus, interior and exterior practices, Marian*

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How to cite this article:

Thi Thu Trang, L. (2023). Saint Louis
Montfort's Perfect Consecration "Totus Tuus".
Scientia Vol 12 no. 2., 35–50. [https://doi.
org/10.57106/scientia.v12i2.162](https://doi.org/10.57106/scientia.v12i2.162)

Dates:

Received: July 19, 2023
Accepted: August 15, 2023
Published(Online): Sept. 30, 2023

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A. A BRIEF PROFILE OF SAINT LOUIS MARIE DE MONTFORT

Saint Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort was born at Montfort-sur-Meu, Brittany, France, in 1673 in a family of 18 children, in which ten of his siblings died at a young age after their baptisms. He was the oldest among the eight. Related to the name, Louis added “Marie” to express his great love for Our Lady and “Montfort” to identify himself by the place of his baptism instead of his family name, Grignion.¹

At a young age, Louis was attracted to the spiritual world. He treasured in his soul whatever he learned from Catechism or sermon and let it inspire his life. Whatever he heard concerning religion or piety lit his heart. He spent his time pursuing profitable things, but above all, what he favored most was time spent in prayer.² Louis Marie was educated by the Jesuits as a teen and later attended theological studies at St. Sulpice in Paris.

Montfort is renowned for having an exceptional love for Mary, particularly the Marian Consecration “*Totus Tuus*”, which is the best means for Christians to achieve their union with Christ. His two famous books, “*True Devotion to Mary*” and “*Secret of the Rosary*” are the main explanations for his Marian devotional practice. After being ordained priest in 1700, he took his mission as a preacher at Nantes, a French town, and Poitiers, where he established a hospital for the poor and founded the congregation of Daughters of Wisdom that prioritized care for the needy children and the sick. In 1705, Father Montfort founded another congregation called the Montfort Fathers to keep on his mission,

¹ Gabriel-Marie, s.g. *Grignion De Montfort The Gospel Pilgrim* (Boys' Town: Cum Permissu, 1979), 3-10. Cf. Logister, Wiel, SMM. 2013. *Touched by the Humility of God: Spirituality in the line of Louis-Marie De Montfort*. Tilburg: Dutch Provincial Office of the Montfortians.

² Gabriel-Marie, *Gospel Pilgrim*, 5.

especially to spread the consecration to Jesus through Mary. In 1706, since Pope Clement XI named him “Apostolic Missionary” for France, he preached parish missions for the rest of his life throughout western France.³

Father Louis-Marie de Montfort died in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre on April 28, 1716, at the age of 43. He was canonized in 1947 by Pope Pius XII.

B. THE PERFECT CONSECRATION “*TOTUS TUUS*” AS TAUGHT BY ST. LOUIS MARIE DE MONTFORT

1. NATURE OF THE MONTFORT’S PERFECT CONSECRATION “*TOTUS TUUS*”

St. Louis Marie de Montfort’s Perfect Consecration is popularly known as “*Totus Tuus*”. It is characterized by at least four main traits, namely: i) Trinitarian and Christocentric, ii) Total, iii) Marian, and iv) The Perfect Renewal and Practice of Baptism.

A. TRINITARIAN AND CHRISTOCENTRIC

The Trinity is not only the foundation but also the loftiness mystery of the Catholic faith because it reveals to us the “inner life of God”, which is the life full of love, running out to others, but still “containing in its deepest intimacy.”⁴ Saint Louis Marie’s spirituality and teaching were concentrated on the Trinity with the thought that in the Trinity, we can find the “deepest dimension of God’s love and of human beings as

³ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia, “Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 24 Apr. 2022, accessed August 16 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Louis-Marie-Grignion-de-Montfort>.

⁴ Louis Marie Montfort, *Jesus Living in Mary: Handbook of the Spirituality of St. Louis Marie de Montfort*, ed. Stefano De Fiore, Alphonse Bossard, & Patrick Gaffney (Bayshore, New York: Montfort Publications, 1994), 1177; henceforth JLM.





the Trinitarian images.”⁵ To describe the *Totus Tuus* consecration as Trinitarian/Christocentric, these three qualifications are highlighted.⁶

First, it is to glorify God greatly. Saint Louis Montfort demonstrated that God the Father gathered all of the graces and entrusted them to Mary. God the Son handed to His mother all that he gained while the Holy Spirit conveyed to her all of His wondrous gifts.⁷ Mary was created only for God. She totally belongs to God and keeps an essential role in God’s economy of salvation. Mary has never kept for herself any soul coming to her; on the contrary, she “leads each soul straight to God and to union with Him.”⁸ Being the wonderful echo of God, she re-echoes “God” when we say her name “Mary.”

Second, Jesus, the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom is the ultimate goal of the consecration. Saint Montfort advised us that we should never suspect the Christocentric criteria of this Marian devotion because it “consists in being conformed, united, and consecrated to Jesus.”⁹ Among God’s creatures, Mary is the most perfect reflection of God. Devotion to her brings “the most effective consecration and conformity to God.”¹⁰ If one is entirely consecrated to Mary, he or she is sure to be completely consecrated to Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate goal of the covenant renewal; therefore, if the *Totus Tuus* devotion separates us from our Lord Jesus, we should reject it at once as an illusion of the devil.¹¹ As the Mother of God, Mary is perfectly united to her Son Jesus since she received the greater graces through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through Mary, Christ is fully known and loved.¹²

Lastly, the *Totus Tuus* consecration draws the souls into the shadow of the Holy Spirit. The consecration to Jesus demands a surrender to the Spirit who brings us to the Trinitarian life and sends us forth as “other Christs.” In “*Totus Tuus Journey*”, Mario Belotti comments that it is necessary to have both the “shadow” of the Holy Spirit and the “yes” of the Virgin Mary to make God become Man. God’s plan cannot be carried out without the double presence of the Holy Spirit and Mary.¹³ Montfort’s words are so true, “When the Holy Spirit finds Mary in souls, he hastened there and entered fully into them. He gives himself entirely to them.”¹⁴ And “The more the Holy Spirit finds Mary in a soul, the more powerful and effective he becomes in producing Jesus Christ in that soul and that soul in Jesus Christ.”¹⁵

One of the ultimate purposes of the consecration is for the “transformation into the likeness of Christ.”¹⁶ It is time for Mary to “bring forth her fruit which is none other than Jesus”¹⁷ in the soul only if he or she keeps faithful to this consecration. Additionally, Mary is the perfect, holy place where saints are formed and molded.¹⁸ As she gave birth to the head, Jesus, she also gave birth to the members, Christians. That is to say, a mother cannot conceive a head without members, nor members without a head. And if the head is holy, we cannot refuse that of its members. In terms of transformation, according to Saint Louis Montfort’s teaching, Mario Belotti, SMM, in *The Quest for Wisdom*, used the term “*Wholistic Growth*” to concretize it. He defines,

⁵ E. Cousins, P. Gaffney, ed. “Trinity,” in *JLM*, 1177.

⁶ Jean-Pierre Prevost, ed. “Consecration,” in *JLM*, 209.

⁷ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 23 – 25, in *GA* 296.

⁸ Montfort, “Secret of Mary,” in *GA*, 268.

⁹ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 120, in *GA* 327.

¹⁰ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 120, in *GA* 327.

¹¹ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 62, in *GA*, 308.

¹² Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 18, in *GA*, 295.

¹³ Mario Belotti, SMM, *Jesus Living in Mary: Totus Tuus Journey* (Manila: Kadena Press-Asia Inc., 2016), 202.

¹⁴ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 16, in *GA*, 295.

¹⁵ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 20 in *GA*, 295.

¹⁶ Louis Marie De Montfort, *Love of Eternal Wisdom*, in *God Alone*: Montfort, Louis Marie De. 1987. *God Alone: The Collected Writing of St. Louis Marie De Montfort*. Edited by Rogert Charest. Bay Shore: Montfort Publications.

¹⁷ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 218, in *GA* 360.

¹⁸ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 219, in *GA* 361.





Growth is “wholistic” when it unfolds in the spirit of the Incarnation. When it involves every aspect of human development, and connects with the ultimate reality, God, through the totality of a person’s existence, including one’s relationship with others, work, and material world. In addition, the process is organized as a “wisdom activity” when it seeks and composes “human-spiritual meaning” through a significant relationship with Christ and through the most comprehensive dimensions of our experience.¹⁹

If one wishes to be transformed into Christ-like, he or she must be formed in Mary.²⁰ “Mary is the mold capable of forming people into Christ-like. Anyone who is cast into this divine mold is quickly shaped and formed into Jesus and Jesus into him at little cost, and in a short time, he will become Christ-like since he is cast into the very same mold that fashioned a God-man.”²¹ The Montfortian only get the best result of becoming Christ-like if they totally abandon themselves with their own skill, capability, plan, knowledge and so on, and put their trust in the perfection of Mary’s mold. Only if they cast and lose themselves in Mary, they would be transformed into true models of her Son, Jesus Christ. “In her alone, by the grace of Jesus Christ, man is made godlike as far as human nature is capable of it.”²²

Guiding people to the ultimate goal, Jesus, and to the glory of the Trinity, the consecration to Mary, as taught by Saint Louis Montfort, ensures us that as long as we walk in this Marian path, we will never miss the good path God has set for us.

B. TOTAL

St. Louis Marie mentioned two principles when explaining the concept of this total Consecration.

¹⁹ Belotti, *Quest for Wisdom*, 11-12.

²⁰ The process of transformation of one into Christ-like covers all the aspects of his/her life demanding for a “movement toward insight.” That is, there is a rational “shift” of new information, new perspective, new possibility, new idea, new invitation to transformation: all claiming to be translated into action. Belotti, *Quest for Wisdom*, 17.

²¹ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 219, in *GA* 361.

²² Montfort, Louis Marie De. 1987. *God Alone: The Collected Writing of St. Louis Marie De Montfort*. Edited by Rogert Charest. Bay Shore: Montfort Publications.

First, as human beings, we are connected to one another, related to each other, and reliant on each other. The meaning of life contains everything and everyone in light of God’s presence and solicitude.²³ Therefore, what we do or say, even in the smallest thing, will draw an effect on the other members of the Body of Christ. In other words, all of our good or bad deeds always have an impact on others, whether we are consecrated or not. However, in terms of the perfect consecration, the consecrated are willing to make “Thy will be done,” which is the proper means to bring value to our good deeds. As Montfort pointed out, this is the foundation for a deeper life in the Spirit.²⁴

Second, in the language of popular piety, Montfort speaks of “*give away*,” and “*surrendering*,” but he realizes that we are redeemed creatures who fully belong to Jesus. Giving everything freely and lovingly through the power of the almighty Spirit leads to a new depth of “belonging” to the Lord. The power of Redemption, the intensity of our union in Christ through Mary, is certainly expressed in our lives by perfect consecration. The “I” freely empties itself into the “thou” so that it can be its true self.²⁵ The act of consecration is not the proclamation of a formula but the declaration of oneself: a total and definitive love that “pours out” into the Holy One. In the Act of consecration, man finds his identity, not in the pride of being himself but in the practical humility of a loving relationship, living with the others.²⁶

Saint Louis Marie listed what we offer to God through the hands of Mary. We must give her all of our being, not only our body but our soul as well, not only our exterior goods but our interior

²³ Logister, Wiel, SMM. 2013. *Touched by the Humility of God: Spirituality in the line of Louis-Marie De Montfort*. Tilburg: Dutch Provincial Office of the Montfortians.

²⁴ Gaffney, ed. “Consecration” in *JLM*, 210.

²⁵ Gaffney, ed. “Consecration” in *JLM*, 215.

²⁶ Gaffney, ed. “Consecration” in *JLM*, 210.





and spiritual goods, together with our merits and virtues in the past, present, and future, in the order of nature and grace.²⁷ Notably then, Montfortian consecration is total in terms of content and in terms of time. In the formula for the Montfortian consecration, we read:

This day, with the whole court of heaven as witness, I choose you, Mary, as my Mother and Queen. I surrender and consecrate myself to you, body and soul, with all that I possess, both spiritual and material, even including the spiritual value of all my actions, past, present, and to come. I give you the full right to dispose of me and all that belongs to me, without any reservations, in whatever way you please, for the greater glory of God in time and throughout eternity.²⁸

Additionally, he implied not only the handing over of material things but entailed a deeper personal relationship with the Incarnate Wisdom through Mary. The Saint insisted that we consecrate ourselves completely.

Here, everything is consecrated to Him, even the right of disposing of our interior goods and the satisfactions we gain by our good works day after day. This is more than we do even in a religious order... We strip ourselves as far as a Christian can, of that which is dearest and most precious, namely, our merits and our satisfactions.²⁹

Of course, it is impossible to convey our grace, virtues, and merits to others, for they constitute who we are in the eyes of God. Therefore, Saint Louis Marie confirmed that we entrust them to the hands of Our Lady. We beg for her maternal care to persevere in the grace of God so that she may apply them, make use of our suffering, the good we do or say, think, and so on to whomever she wills and whenever she wants. This is one of the reasons that Saint Louis Marie calls this Consecration “perfect” precisely because it

includes this “impetratory” value of all our good works.

C. MARIAN

St. Louis Marie de Montfort’s consecration is Marian in nature because, for Montfort, this is the way of the Trinity. “God the Father gave his only Son to the world only through Mary... The Son of God became man for our salvation but only in Mary and through Mary. God the Holy Spirit formed Jesus Christ in Mary, but only after having asked her consent...”³⁰ God chooses Mary as a representative to welcome His only beloved Son to the world. “In her and through her, the definitive Consecration of the world becomes a reality.”³¹ *Lumen Gentium* states Mary’s role in the economy of salvation is prefigured in the Scriptures. On God’s command, the Virgin of Nazareth is greeted as “full of grace” by an angel messenger, and to the heavenly messenger, she replies, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” (Lk 1: 26–38). The Son of God chose the virginal womb of the Blessed Virgin as His paradise to stay there, to take His pleasure there, and secretly to turn it into the marvels of grace.³² Saint Louis explains that the reason for the incarnational consecration takes place in Mary is by her voluntary consent. “Her salvific fiat brings forth the consecration of this world, for her faith allows entry into the embrace of Eternal Wisdom. Therefore, the consecration to Jesus Christ must be Marian.”³³ In True Devotion No. 1, he also writes, “It was through the Blessed Virgin Mary that Jesus came into the world, and it is also through her that He must reign in the world.”³⁴

Montfort’s consecration is Marian because it is centered around devotion to the Virgin Mary as

²⁷ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 121, in *GA* 327.

²⁸ Montfort, “Love of Eternal Wisdom” 225, in *GA* 113.

²⁹ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 123, in *GA* 328.

³⁰ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 16, in *GA* 294.

³¹ Gaffney, ed. “Consecration”, in *JLM*, 204–5.

³² Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 18, in *GA* 295.

³³ Gaffney, “Consecration”, in *JLM*, 213.

³⁴ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 1, in *GA* 291.





the ultimate model of discipleship and spiritual mother of all Christians. Montfort believed that consecrating oneself to Mary was the most effective way to be conformed to Jesus Christ and to live a holy life. He writes:

As all perfection consists in our being conformed, united, and consecrated to Jesus, it naturally follows that the most perfect of all devotions is that which conforms, unites, and consecrates us most completely to Jesus. Now of all God's creatures, Mary is the most conformed to Jesus. It therefore follows that, of all devotions, devotion to her makes for the most effective consecration and conformity to him. The more one is consecrated to Mary, the more one is consecrated to Jesus.³⁵

D. THE PERFECT RENEWAL AND PRACTICE OF BAPTISM

In *Lumen Gentium*, the Council Fathers recall that through the Sacrament of Baptism, the Christians die for their sins and are consecrated to God.³⁶ It is through Baptism that Christians are baptized into the death and resurrection of the Consecrated One, Jesus Christ, and are privileged to enter into the holiness of God. Through Baptism, the Christian is set apart for God and anointed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The baptized no longer belong to themselves because now they take part in Christ's consecration, and are ordained to God's glory and the salvation of the world. They belong to the Lord, who shares with them his own life.³⁷ Saint Augustine says, "This vow is the greatest and the most indispensable of all vows."³⁸ Also, canonist J. Calvinus (1553) says the same thing, "The vow we make at baptism is the most important of all vows."³⁹

Saint Louis Marie emphasized the three reasons why the Consecration should be called the

"perfect" renewal of the vows of Baptism. First, in baptism, our godfather or godmother speaks on behalf of us, so through one another, we offer ourselves to Jesus, not on our own. But in this devotion, we voluntarily give ourselves up to God, being aware of what we are doing.⁴⁰ The perfect consecration is the occasion that helps to deepen the personal commitment to Jesus, a renewal of our faith's foundation. Second, in the Baptismal Sacrament, we still keep for ourselves the value of our good actions, unlike what we do in the *Totus Tuus* consecration.

...Mary, as my Mother and Queen, I surrender and consecrate myself to you, body and soul, as your slave, with all that I possess, both spiritual and material, even including the value of all my good actions, past, present, and to come. I give you the full right to dispose of me, and all that belong to me, without any reservations, in whatever way you please, for the greater glory of God in time and throughout eternity.⁴¹

Third, in Baptism "we do not give ourselves to Jesus by the hands of Mary, at least not in an explicit manner" as we do in the perfect Consecration.⁴² Since Baptism is our basic consecration to Jesus Christ, it is undeniable that the renewal of our Baptismal vows is the expression of our will to totally devote ourselves to Jesus Christ. Saint Montfort's *True Devotion to Mary* implies a profound knowledge of the importance and consequence of Baptism.⁴³

2. PRACTICES OF THE "TOTUS TUUS" CONSECRATION IN THE TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY

In the consecration taught by St. Louis Marie de Montfort, there are two sets of practices for living out of its spirit. They are the interior and exterior practices.

³⁵ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 120, in *GA*, 327.

³⁶ *Lumen Gentium* 44.

³⁷ Gaffney, ed. "Consecration", in *JLM*, 212.

³⁸ Cf. St. Augustine, Ep. 149 a Paulinum, No. 16.

³⁹ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary," in *GA*, 385 see footnote 202.

⁴⁰ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 126, in *GA*, 328.

⁴¹ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 225, in *GA*, 362.

⁴² Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 225, in *GA*, 362.

⁴³ Gaffney, ed. "Consecration," in *JLM*, 213.





A. INTERIOR PRACTICES

Montfort himself recognized that interior practices are central to the consecration life, which is expressed “in four words: to do all our actions *Through 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.”⁴⁴ He explained that, “This devotion consists in surrendering oneself in the manner of a slave to Mary, and to Jesus through her and then performing all our actions through Mary, with Mary, in Mary, and for Mary.”⁴⁵ And again, “I have already said that this devotion consists in performing all our actions through Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary.”⁴⁶ Still more, he said, “This devotion consists essentially in a state of soul.”⁴⁷

(1) THROUGH MARY (TD 258-259)

Saint Louis Montfort taught that doing things through Mary means “we obey her and be led by her Spirit, which is the Holy Spirit of God.”⁴⁸ St. Paul confirmed, “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.” (Rom 8:14). Those who are guided by the spirit of Mary are children of Mary, and consequently children of God.⁴⁹ When one is faithful to the practices of this devotion, Mary will be united to him to glorify the Lord. Mary’s spirit will take the place of his/her to rejoice in God.⁵⁰ Saint Ambrose says, “May the soul of Mary be in each one of us to glorify the Lord. May the spirit of Mary be in each one of us to rejoice in God.”⁵¹ To “lose oneself in Mary” is to become one with the spirit of Jesus, and through Jesus to be one with

the Holy Spirit for the glory of the Father.⁵² However, only those servants who are truly and faithfully devoted to her are guided by her spirit.

Saint Montfort suggested some attitudes that are needed by those who wish to be led by Mary’s spirit.⁵³ First, they should renounce their own spirit, views, and will before doing things such as before meditating, attending Mass, receiving communion, and so on. Second, they should offer themselves to the spirit of Mary so that she can direct themselves as she wishes. Wanted to be under Mary’s guidance, the consecrated people entrust themselves in her virginal hands like a tool in the hands of a craftsman. Lastly, they should repeat this same act of offering and of union to Mary during and after doing the action. Saint Louis Marie insisted, “The more we do so, the quicker we shall grow in holiness and the sooner we shall reach union with Christ.”⁵⁴

(2) WITH MARY (TD 260)

We must do everything with Mary, namely, “in all our actions, we must look upon Mary as the perfect model of every virtue and perfection, fashioned by the Holy Spirit for us to imitate, as far as our limited capacity allows.”⁵⁵ In every action, we should consider how Mary performed it or how she would perform it if she were in our place, especially if we imitate her great virtues practiced during her life. Saint Louis Montfort listed her ten principal virtues: “deep humility, lived faith, blind obedience, unceasing prayer, constant self-denial, surpassing purity, ardent love, heroic patience, angelic kindness, and heavenly wisdom.”⁵⁶ Pope Paul VI in his apostolic exhortation *“Marialis Cultus”* suggests five Marian attitudes that people in the

⁴⁴ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 257, in *GA*, 371.

⁴⁵ Montfort, “Secret of Mary” 28, in *GA*, 270.

⁴⁶ Montfort, “Secret of Mary” 28, in *GA*, 270.

⁴⁷ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 119, in *GA*, 326.

⁴⁸ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 28, in *GA*, 297.

⁴⁹ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 29-30, in *GA*, 297-98.

⁵⁰ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 217, in *GA*, 360.

⁵¹ St. Ambrose, Expos. In Luc. II, No. 26, in *GA*, 392.

⁵² Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 179, in *GA*, 346.

⁵³ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 258, in *GA*, 371.

⁵⁴ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 259, in *GA*, 372.

⁵⁵ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 259, in *GA*, 372.

⁵⁶ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 108, in *GA*, 322.





modern world can imitate Mary. The attitudes are participating actively and responsibly in the matters of family, church, and society, making brave choices according to God's will, standing on the side of the poor, bravely facing difficulties and trials, and living their individual characteristics of man and woman.⁵⁷

Mary is God's great, unique mold, designed to produce living images of God at a low cost and in a short time. Whoever finds this mold and puts himself/herself in it will soon be transformed into our Lord because it is His true likeness. There is no darkness in Mary, not even the slightest one, because there was never any sin in her. She is a holy place in which saints are conceived and molded. Saint Augustine praised our Mother, "She is worthy to be called the mold of God."⁵⁸ As for her, God-man was formed in his human nature without losing any of Godhead's traits. In her alone, by the grace of Jesus Christ, man is made like God as far as human nature can.

(3) IN MARY (TD 261-264)

Why should we do things in Mary? To clarify the concept, Saint Louis Marie provided the Montfortians with knowledge about the highest role of Mary in the plan of salvation. He said, "... The Blessed Virgin is the true earthly paradise of the new Adam...Jesus Christ..., It is in this paradise that he 'took his delights' for nine months, worked his wonders and displayed his riches with the magnificence of God himself."⁵⁹ In this most holy place, the Incarnate Wisdom came to be without any stain or spot by the Holy Spirit who dwells there. From this holy place, our Lord, the Tree, and Fruit of Life, the tree of knowledge of good and evil was born. The Saint

went further to affirm, in the love of the Holy Spirit, Mary is "the Sanctuary of the Divinity, the Resting-place of the Holy Trinity, the Throne of God, the City of God, the Altar of God, the Temple of God, the Word of God."⁶⁰ God the Trinity has bestowed on her "different wonders and graces" above all creatures and has "set up in her the throne of His supreme glory."⁶¹

To do everything *in Mary* means to "acquire the habit of recollecting ourselves interiorly and to form within us an idea or a spiritual image of Mary. She must be an Oratory for the soul where we offer up our prayers to God without fear of being ignored."⁶² It also means we "*live in Mary's heart*" in order to become "one in God."⁶³ It means in everything we do, we always do it in united with Mary by thought and love. Montfortians must be aware of "a special grace" they receive by the Holy Spirit when they do things in Mary that the Holy Spirit will come upon them, leading them to the transformation into Jesus in the fullness of his age on earth and of his glory in heaven.⁶⁴ It also means that we faithfully abolished ourselves in Mary's heart so that we can experience the true love in our relationship with Christ. As Jesus himself wants his disciple to "Live in me as I live in you" (Jn 15:4). And "If you remain in my love, you will bear many fruits" (Jn 15:5). Then we will use the language of the heart and live up to the attitudes of the heart.⁶⁵ Lastly, the inferior practice of living "in Mary" turns us to be servants of the Holy Spirit, zealous and enthusiastic missionaries.

⁶⁰ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 262, in *GA*, 373-74.

⁶¹ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 262, in *GA*, 373-74.

⁶² Montfort, *SM* 47, in *GA*, 275.

⁶³ Mario Belotti, SMM, *As Free as The Cloud: Montfort Spirituality in Action* (Balaka, Malawi: Montfort Media, 2003), 118.

⁶⁴ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 119, in *GA*, 326.

⁶⁵ The language of love is the language of metaphors and symbols which make people turn into "poets" and "artists" when they want to express their love. Cf. Mario Belotti, SMM, *As Free as The Cloud: Montfort Spirituality in Action* (Balaka, Malawi: Montfort Media, 2003), 119. The attitude of the heart is expressed in five effects: a "healthy nourishment for our life, a development of a wise attitude in life, freedom from sin, living in Christ and a sense of inner peace." Cf. Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" in *GA*, 264.

⁵⁷ Paul VI, *Marialis Cutus: Apostolic Exhortation on Marian Cult* (Vatican City, 1976).

⁵⁸ Montfort, "Secret of Mary" 17; Cf. "Devotion to Mary" 218.

⁵⁹ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 261, in *GA*, 373.





(4) FOR MARY (TD 265)

Lastly, the fourth interior practice calls us to do everything *for Mary*, which means that “we will work only for her, prompting her interests and her high renown and making this the first aim in all our acts, while the glory of God will always be our final end.”⁶⁶ While renouncing our self-love, we voluntarily do things for Mary because “we were her personal servant and slave”⁶⁷ and see her as “our mysterious intermediary and the easiest way of reaching Jesus”⁶⁸. For instance, we work for her, defend her privileges, speak well of her, responsibly fulfill our obligations or tasks or actions simply to please her, or expand this devotion to more people and defend her glory without expecting any rewards in return.⁶⁹ Particularly, we often repeat this reminding: “Dear Mother, it is to please you that I go here or there...do this or that...suffer of this or that injury.”⁷⁰ In other words, we pray and act with a pure faith which means we accept distractions, weariness, dryness in our prayer so that our noble Queen can enjoy God’s presence, delights, satisfactions of heaven.

B. EXTERIOR PRACTICES

As we recognize the important role of interior practices in the Montfortian consecration, we cannot not deny the role of exterior practices, which helps to enhance the interior ones. Although they simply do some actions outside, they cooperate much to remind us of what we should do in terms of authentically expressing our love to the consecration. Saint Louis Marie states, “These must be done but those not omitted.”⁷¹

⁶⁶ Montfort, “Secret of Mary” 49, in *GA*, 275.

⁶⁷ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 265, in *GA*, 374.

⁶⁸ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 265, in *GA*, 374..

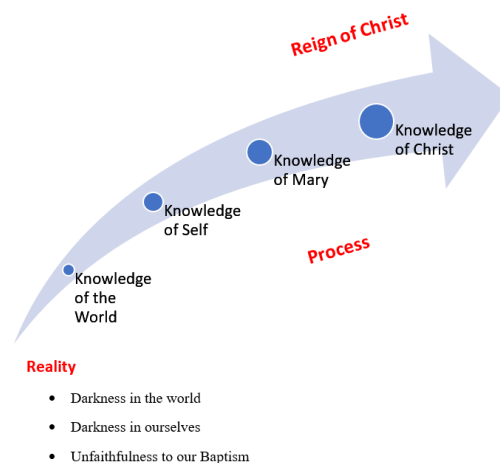
⁶⁹ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 265, in *GA*, 374.

⁷⁰ Montfort, “Secret of Mary” 49, in *GA*, 275.

⁷¹ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 226, in *GA*, 363.

(1) PREPARATION AND CONSECRATION (TD 227-233)

The Montfort spiritual preparation is called the 33-day Total Consecration to Jesus, which lasts for four weeks. They consist of First week on the Knowledge of the World (TD 227) - 12 days in emptying ourselves of the spirit of the world; Second Week on the Knowledge of the Self (TD 228) - seven days to acquire self-knowledge; Third Week on the Knowledge of Mary (TD 229) - seven days to acquire a deeper understanding of Mary and Fourth Week on the Knowledge of Jesus Christ (TD 230) - seven days of knowing Jesus better. This preparation led to the Act of Consecration (TD 231). Father Claude Sigouin and Father Mario Melotti in *Totus Tuus: A Marian Way to Christ-Wisdom* illustrated the process.⁷²



For the first week with twelve days, they might focus on the knowledge of recognizing the world, which is opposed to the spirit of God. For instance, the candidates learn and pray about their vocation, the creation of the world, the fall of Man and Woman, sin, God’s wisdom, and the like.⁷³

⁷² Claude Sigouin and Mario Belotti, *Totus Tuus: A Marian Way to Christ-Wisdom* (Quezon: Montfort Missionaries, 2003), 16.

⁷³ Sigouin and Mario Belotti, *Way to Christ-Wisdom*, 16.





For the next seven days, they might concentrate on self-recognizing with the sessions about who they are in the world, in relation to others, in their act, trials, and so on. They will pray to God and the Holy Spirit, saying “*Lord, that I may see*” or “*Lord, let me know myself*” or “*Come, Holy Spirit.*”⁷⁴ Saint Montfort suggests that they should say the Litany of the Holy Spirit every day; turn to Mary and beg her to gain for them the great grace of self-knowledge. Therefore, the *Ave Maris Stella* and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin are recited each day with the intentions above.⁷⁵ During the second week, they should give themselves committedly in the prayer to ask for the Holy Spirit’s grace and an understanding of the Blessed Virgin besides reading and contemplating on Mary’s greatness. Still, they should keep reciting the Litany of the Holy Spirit and *Ave Maris Stella* while adding five decades of the rosary to Mary.⁷⁶

For the third week, the Marian consecrators should “endeavor in all their prayers and works to acquire an understanding of the Blessed Virgin and ask the Holy Spirit for this grace.”⁷⁷ In particular, they learn to know more about the Blessed Virgin in the Old and New Testament, in the mystery of the Trinitarian, Christ, and the Holy Spirit as well as in the Church and Holiness.⁷⁸ During this week, reciting the Litany of the Holy Spirit and the *Ave Maris Stella* as the previous week is encouraged as well as at least five decades of the Rosary.⁷⁹

Lastly, on each day of the fourth week, they should seek a better knowledge of Jesus Christ in relation to the Incarnation, the Wisdom of the Cross, his dependence on Mary, or the perfect consecration to Him and the like.⁸⁰

Again, they should keep praying the *Litany of the Holy Spirit* and *Ave Maris Stella*, and the *Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus*. It is advisable that the consecrated people go to confession and Holy Communion at the end of this week.⁸¹ They then recite the prayer, which they officially consecrate themselves to Jesus through Mary together with some tribute to Jesus and His Mother such as an act of penance or a form of fasting or almsgiving, or an act of self-denial.

This act should be renewed at least every year or on some special occasions with the same exercises for four weeks. Or they can make use of the short prayer, “I am all yours and all I have is yours, O dear Jesus, through Mary, your holy Mother”⁸², in daily life to renew their consecration.

(2) THE LITTLE CROWN OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN (TD 234-235)

According to Saint Louis Marie, there is a way that helps the consecrated in keeping the practice of their consecration daily by reciting “the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin, which includes three Our Father and twelve Hail Mary in honor of the twelve glorious privileges of Mary.”⁸³ The prayer is with the Christians for a long time. It is rooted in the Scripture with St. John’s vision, “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (Apoc 12:1).

(3) THE WEARING OF LITTLE CHAINS (TD 236-242)

Saint Louis Marie encouraged those who made the consecration to wear a little chain, which is a token of their total consecration or slavery love for Jesus and Mary. It demonstrates their decisive will to shake off the slavery chains of the devil to

⁷⁴ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 226, in *GA*, 363.

⁷⁵ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 226, in *GA*, 363.

⁷⁶ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 226, in *GA*, 363.

⁷⁷ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 226, in *GA*, 364.

⁷⁸ Sigouin and Mario Belotti, *Way to Christ-Wisdom*, 10.

⁷⁹ Louis Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 229, in *GA*, 364.

⁸⁰ Sigouin and Mario Belotti, *Way to Christ-Wisdom*, 10.

⁸¹ Montfort, “Love of Eternal Wisdom” 223-227, in *GA*, 112-13.

⁸² Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 233, in *GA*, 364.

⁸³ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 233, in *GA*, 365.





take upon themselves the glorious slavery of Jesus Christ. Hence, they are bound to Jesus and Mary as children are to their parents, not by force but by charity and love. The Saint discussed some reasons why to wear the chains. First, it is a sign to remind Christians of the baptismal promises and the perfect renewal of their commitment, which is shown in their consecration.⁸⁴ Second, it is an illustration that they are proud of when they become servants and slaves of Jesus and for that they refuse the shameful bondage of the world, sin and devil. Third, it ensures protection for the candidates from the control of evil and sins.⁸⁵ Saint Montfort affirmed that the chains bring salvation to those who treasure and wear them.

(4) HONORING THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION (TD 243-248)

Understandably, the loving slaves of Jesus put their act of consecration in the great mystery of the Incarnation, March 25th, because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit according to Saint Louis Marie's teaching for these reasons. First, to honor and imitate the wondrous dependence Jesus had on Mary. The Son of God chose to depend on His Mother for everything when he "became a captive and slave"⁸⁶ in her womb for God's glory and man's redemption. And then, to thank God for the unparalleled graces He granted to Mary, especially that of choosing her to be his most worthy Mother. The Incarnation is the first mystery of Our Lord, which is hidden, but the most exalted. It was in this mystery that Jesus chose all those he wanted, the elect, and anticipated all mysteries that happened in his life. Lastly, this mystery is "a seat of mercy, liberality, and the glory of God."⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 239, in *GA*, 366.

⁸⁵ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 239, in *GA*, 367.

⁸⁶ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 243, in *GA*, 367.

⁸⁷ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 248, in *GA*, 368-69.

(5) SAYING THE HAIL MARY AND THE ROSARY (TD 249-254)

Saint Louis Marie gave the evidence of St. Dominic, St. John Capistrano, and Blessed Alan de Rupe praised the richness of the Hail Mary. The prayer has a great impact on converting sinners and is bound up with human salvation as the salvation of the world started with it. This prayer brought the Fruit of Life to an unfruitful world. It can cause the Word of God to take root in the soul if it is well said. Also, the prayer is compared to heavenly dew watering the earth of our souls to make it bear fruits.⁸⁸ From experience, it is clear that those who are closer to God are those who love this Rosary. And Saint Montfort affirms, the best way to recognize a person belongs to God is to see how he/she loves reciting the Hail Mary and the Rosary. And when the prayer is said with "attention, devotion, and humility"⁸⁹, it becomes the enemy of Satan, putting him to flight; it is the hammer that crushes him; it is the source of holiness for souls, a joy to the angels and a sweet melody of the devout.⁹⁰ Lastly, the Saint insists that the slaves of Jesus in Mary pray the Rosary every day so that at our last breaths, we will gain the eternal blessings of heaven.

(6) PRAYING THE MAGNIFICAT (TD 255)

Father Jose Cristo Paredes, CMF in *Mary and the Reign of God*, argued that to express faith, prayer is the most visible and unmistakable means in which people freely show their feelings and fundamental attitude. The Magnificat is an eschatological hymn of prayer that sums up Mary's faith and portrays God's face in whom she believed.⁹¹ To Saint Louis Marie, the canticle

⁸⁸ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 249, in *GA*, 369.

⁸⁹ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 253, in *GA*, 370.

⁹⁰ Montfort, "Devotion to Mary" 253, in *GA*, 370.

⁹¹ Jose Cristo Rey Garcia Paredes, CMF, *Mary and The Reign of God*, trans. Joseph, CMF Daries, & Josefina, MMB Martinez (Quezon: Claretian Publication, 2006), 99.





was composed by Jesus in Mary and spoken through her. The prayer highly indicates the “communion between the Virgin and her Son and of the theological aspect.”⁹² He recommends the prayer as the vital prayer that the consecrated people should say to thank God for the graces He has given to Our Lady. It is the humblest hymn of thanksgiving that God received. It is the most sublime and exalted because it contains hidden mysteries that even the angels do not understand. Also, it is the daily prayer that our Blessed Mother offers to God during her life on earth and now in heaven.⁹³

(7) CONTEMPT OF THE WORLD (TD 256)

Montfort writes, “Mary’s faithful servants despise this corrupted world. They should hate and shun its allurements, and follow the exercises of the contempt of the world which we have given in the first part of this treatise.”⁹⁴ When Montfort mentions “the first part of this treatise”, he means his book “The Love of Eternal Wisdom”. And on this topic of the “contempt of the world”, LEW Nos. 75-83 explain what he means by the things people need to show contempt, namely: the False Wisdom or the Wisdom of the World, Wisdom of the Flesh, and the Diabolic Wisdom.

First, *false wisdom* means love for things that belong to the world that worldly men desire to possess and try to be rich. Temporal possession is the sole aim that most of the time controls their thinking, speaking, and acting. As a result, what is related to their eternal salvation or how to save their souls, like Confession, Holy Communion, prayer, etc... become less important for them to receive.⁹⁵ Second, “The *wisdom of the flesh* is the love of pleasure. The worldly-wise wants and seeks only the satisfaction of the

senses,...having a good time of eating, drinking, playing, laughing, and enjoying life.”⁹⁶ Lastly, *diabolic wisdom* refers to the “love and esteem of honors.”⁹⁷ This worldly-wise place their wisdom in longing for “distinctions, honors, dignities, and high offices.”⁹⁸ In what they plan to do, they prioritize to be esteemed and praised by others, recognizing as great men and distinguished merit, having the high consideration.⁹⁹

When consecrated to Jesus, the consecrated people should deny and stay away from these three kinds of false wisdom so that they can freely reach the true one. They should keep in mind that half-hearted sacrifice or mortification never satisfies the Wisdom, but He requires the “total, continuous, courageous and prudent.”¹⁰⁰ Therefore, they must patiently practice self-denial, detach their hearts from material things, possess them with a free state of mind that neither yearn for more and retain them or are anxious to lose them.

In short, all of the interior and exterior practices are the means that bring the consecrated nearer to Mary so that they can come closer to God. In his writings, St. Louis Marie highlighted a very important insight about these practices saying:

As this devotion essentially consists in a state of soul, it will not be understood in the same way by everyone. Some - the great majority - will stop short at the threshold and go no further. Others - not many - will take but one step into its interior. Who will take a second step? Who will take a third? Finally, who will remain in it permanently? Only the one to whom the Spirit of Jesus reveals the secret. The Holy Spirit himself will lead this faithful soul from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from light to light, until

⁹² Valentini, ed. “Magnificat”, in *JLM*, 650.

⁹³ Valentini, ed. “Magnificat”, in *JLM*, 650.

⁹⁴ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 256, in *GA*, 371.

⁹⁵ Montfort, “Love of Eternal Wisdom” 80, in *GA*, 71-72.

⁹⁶ Montfort, “Love of Eternal Wisdom” 80, in *GA*, 71-72.

⁹⁷ Montfort, “Love of Eternal Wisdom” 80, in *GA*, 71-72.

⁹⁸ Montfort, “Love of Eternal Wisdom” 80, in *GA*, 71-72.

⁹⁹ Montfort, “Love of Eternal Wisdom” 82, in *GA*, 72.

¹⁰⁰ Montfort, “Love of Eternal Wisdom” 196, in *GA*, 105.





at length he attains transformation into Jesus in the fullness of his age on earth and of his glory in heaven.¹⁰¹

Moreover, in the Secret of Mary no. 44, the saint writes:

The chief difficulty is to enter into its spirit, which requires an interior dependence on Mary, and effectively becoming her slave and the slave of Jesus through her. I have met many people, who with admirable zeal, have set about practicing exteriorly this holy slavery of Jesus and Mary, but I have met only a few who have caught its interior spirit and fewer still who have persevered in it.¹⁰²

Briefly, the *Totus Tuus* consecration is one of the valuable spiritualities of which, by the help of Mary, the souls are led directly to God. Since its nature is Trinitarian/Christocentric, total, Marian, and a perfect renewal of Baptism, people are ensured to walk in this Marian path with much confidence that they can be united to God through Mary, with Mary, in Mary, and for Mary. Similarly, to all the sisters of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin, Mary Queen of the World (CMR), since *Totus Tuus* is part of their charism, which is “Becoming a little child of the Heavenly Father, through the Blessed Virgin Mary, following the model of the Infant Jesus,”¹⁰³ it is undeniable that they can only reach their ideal goal of religious life, by consecrating to Mary and by faithfully practicing this true devotion to Mary.

It is crucial to recognize that living the *Totus Tuus* cannot stop at the point of consecration alone. It is an ongoing process, one that requires deeper understanding, discussion, and commitment

where individuals can reflect on the practice and discern potential areas for growth and development. Additionally, the formation is ongoing until we die, which is why the sisters need to continue an attempt to reach a much deeper understanding of the congregation’s charism as impacted by Father Founder Bernardo Maria Bui Khai Hoan, CRM. When investing in the other practices of the religious life according to the guidance of the Mother Church, the CMR sisters should save a special place in their program for the practice of *Totus Tuus* consecration. By practicing *Totus Tuus* concretely and deepening their understanding of its meaning and significance, the sisters can more fully embody this central element of their charism and become better disciples of Jesus Christ until being transformed into Christ-like.

There is also a need to be creative in expressing the CMR charism today and be faithful to it in the context of Vietnam. Creative fidelity requires a willingness to adapt and be flexible while remaining true to the core values of the charism. The CMR sisters in Vietnam must seek an innovative way to live out their charism amid a complex and challenging environment instead of bounding in just some old ways and doing missions within the big cities. This includes finding new ways to practice the *Totus Tuus* consecration, proclaiming the Marian consecration to the faithful, and founding the pious group of those who want to practice this Marian devotion. Creative fidelity is a necessary component for the CMR sisters today. By doing so, the congregation can remain relevant and impactful, connect with people in authentic ways, and attract new members.

¹⁰¹ Montfort, “Devotion to Mary” 119, in *GA*, 326.

¹⁰² Montfort, “Secret of Mary” 44, in *GA*, 274.

¹⁰³ *Quy Luật Dòng Trinh Vương* (The Statutes of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin, Queen of the World) (Ho Chi Minh City: Unpublished, 2020), no. 2.





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