

A Secret Whose Name is Mary

“Mary must be known and openly revealed by the Holy Spirit so that Jesus may be known and loved through her.” St. Louis de Montfort

Fr. Gillespie says: “Knowledge of Mary is a gift so great that it is nothing less than a privileged grace that one receives from the hand of the Almighty himself. St. Louis de Montfort in *True Devotion* says: “Mary is the supreme masterpiece of Almighty God and he has reserved the knowledge and possession of her for himself...She is the sanctuary and resting place of the Blessed Trinity...No creature, however pure, may enter there without being specially privileged.” (#5) Mary is a secret treasure, a possession that is so greatly treasured, is something that one would only consider sharing with a truly intimate, and trusted, friend. The invitation to true knowledge, knowledge that is deeply personal, of Our Lady, is, therefore, nothing less than an invitation to an intimate sharing, a sign of a deep and privileged friendship, with the Lord of all glory, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.”¹

Only those who have already placed themselves entirely into Mary’s Maternal care can understand what I mean be this. That is why it is “secret” only those who have experienced a truly personal relationship with Mary will understand how she comes through in every part of our lives which we open up to her.

“It is vital that we recognize that this step forward in the preparation process is in itself the beginning of something truly great within our lives. It is now time to build upon the foundational grace of self knowledge, and what is to be built upon this foundation is something of infinite value, a vital deeply personal relationship with Mary. Knowledge of Mary is established upon the knowledge of oneself and it is the work of the same Holy Spirit, who illumines us and reveals to us the reality of ourselves, that allows us access to that marvelous secret of the Most High whose name is Mary.”² When I realize my own need for God, for help then I am ready to ask for that help.

“It is precisely what we have learned about ourselves by the light of the Holy Spirit that will be our point of contact for entering into a truly personal relationship with Our Lady. We have discovered that without the grace of God to aid us and to sustain us, we cannot make more than tentative, awkward and inconstant movements toward genuine spiritual growth. Mary is that one who is truly Full of Grace, not only for herself, but marvelously for us as well. Therefore we will begin this week by opening our need for grace to the kindness and generosity of Our Lady. We are sinners and our struggles against temptation are constant and often end badly. Therefore we will turn to Our Lady in the Flesh and blood of our struggle against all those things that would seduce us away from the path of life. We are weak and have difficulty in holding on to the blessings we have received. Our intentions are impure and even our best attempts at generosity are colored by a hidden and prideful selfishness. Our Lady is the Treasury of God himself and her intentions are always pure. Therefore we will learn how to place with great confidence, all that is best about our lives into her care, secure that its value will never be diminished and will, in fact, only be purified and increased through her stewardship. In doing all of this we will come to experience Mary as a Mother and a Queen who is intimately, directly, and effectively involved in our lives – a deeply personal knowledge. This personal knowledge of her does not rest upon our goodness, nor upon our purity, nor upon our worthiness, but upon our need for her and a humble willingness to turn to her in trust and upon the generosity of the Lord who grants us the grace of knowing her. And most marvelously, in turning to Our Lady and entrusting ourselves into her care we will find that we have

¹ Gillespie, Hugh, and Grignon de Montfort Louis-Marie. *Preparation for Total Consecration to Jesus Christ through Mary: According to St. Louis De Montfort*. Montfort Publications, 2013. Pp. 68-73.

² Ibid.

already begun to act according to the spirit of Jesus Christ, the first to have trusted himself into the care of Our Lady.”³

Mary is full of Grace – Mary alone found grace before God without the help of another. All those who have since found grace before God have found it only through her. God has made her the custodian and dispenser of his graces.

During the week there will be questions to ask ourselves For example on the first day after speaking of Mary Full of Grace we will be told to Ask yourself: Where do you experience the greatest need for the grace of God? Put this in the hands of Mary and ask her to obtain from her Son the grace you need.

Look at your life – give all that is good to Mary to keep it safe and make it grow, see where you struggle and allow Mary into your life to help you.

She is the Mother of Christ and she is our Mother. “As in the natural life a child must have a mother and a father, so in the life of supernatural grace a true child of the Church must have God for his Father and Mary for his Mother. What does it mean for you to have Mary as your Mother?”

St. Fulton Sheen describes in *The Worlds' First Love*: “The Marriage Feast of Cana also reveals how Mary makes up for our battered and weak wills; she does this by substituting herself for us. It is very hard for us to receive a Divine Favor unless we desire it. Until we love and serve God, we are inert and dead. It is impossible for most of us to ask for a soul-healing, for so few of us know that we are wounded. Mary comes into this crisis of life, to substitute for us in the same way that a mother substitutes for a sick child. The child cannot tell the mother its need. There may be a pin prick- ing it, it may be hungry, or it may be sick. The child may cry, but it is as vague a complaint as our own adult cries when we are unhappy and fearful, worried and frustrated. The mother in such a circumstance carries the child to the doctor. The mother thus puts herself in the place of the child who does not have the knowledge to know what is best for it, or cannot will to do anything to help itself. She "doubles," as it were, for the freedom of the child. Thus does the mother dispose the child to receive what is best for it. And as the mother knows the needs better than the babe, so the Blessed Mother understands our cries and worries, and knows them better than we know ourselves. As the baby needs the doctor, so the Blessed Mother knows we need her Divine Son. As Our Lord mediates between us and the Heavenly Father, so [119] the Blessed Mother mediates between us and Our Divine Lord. She fills our empty pots, she supplies the elixir of life, she prevents the joys of life from ebbing away. Mary is not our salvation - let us not be absurd on that. The mother is not the doctor, and neither is Mary the Saviour. But Mary brings us to the Saviour!”

Throughout this week mediating on Knowledge of Mary we will see the following themes, that will bring us to examine how Mary is part of our lives.

Mary is the powerful enemy of Satan Help in temptation

Mary is the perfect way of Christ himself – When we give ourselves into her care we experience union with Jesus

Mary is our treasury – let us store our merits and virtues in her heart

Mary communicates her spirit to us

Mary is the mold of God

EXAMPLE. GLORIES OF MARY by St. Alphonsus Liguori:.

³ Ibid

“In the celebrated history of St. Mary of Egypt, which we find in the first volume of the Lives of the Fathers, we read that, at twelve years of age she fled from her parents, and went to Alexandria, where she led an infamous life, and became the scandal of the city. After sixteen years spent in sin, she wandered off to Jerusalem; when, on the festival of the Holy Cross, she was led to enter the church, more from curiosity than devotion. On the threshold she was thrust back, as if by some invisible power; she attempted a second time to enter, and again was repelled, and a third and a fourth time the same thing happened. The wretched creature withdrew then into a corner of the portico, and there she was interiorly enlightened, and saw that God had refused her entrance into the church on account of her wicked life. By chance she raised her eyes, and saw a picture of Mary which was painted in the vestibule. She turned to it, weeping, and said: "Oh mother of God, have pity on this poor sinner! I know that, on account of my sins, I do not deserve that thou shouldst regard me; but thou art the refuge of sinners: for the love of Jesus, thy Son, help me. Obtain for me that I may enter the church, for I desire to change my life, and go and do penance wherever thou shalt direct." Then she heard an interior voice, as if the blessed Virgin answered her: "Come, since thou hast invoked me, and wishest to change thy life, enter the church, for the door will no longer be closed against thee." The sinner entered, adored the cross, and wept. She returned to the picture: "Oh Lady," she said, "I am ready; where shall I retire to do penance?" "Go," said the Virgin, "beyond the Jordan, and thou wilt find the place of thy repose." She made her confession, received holy communion, passed the river, reached the desert, and understood that there was her place of penance. During the first seventeen years that she lived in the desert, the evil spirits fiercely assailed her, to make her fall again. What did she then do? She recommended herself to Mary, and Mary obtained for her strength to resist for seventeen years, after which the conflict ceased. Finally, after fifty-seven years spent in the desert, in the eighty-seventh of her age, through Divine Providence, she was found by the abbot St. Zosimus. To him she related the story of her whole life, and begged him to return there the following year, and bring her holy communion. The holy abbot returned, and gave her communion. Then she implored him again to do the same thing. He returned the second time, and found her dead, her body surrounded with light, and at her head these words written in the sand: "Bury in this place the body of me, a miserable sinner, and pray God for me." A lion came and dug her grave, the abbot buried her, and, returning to the monastery, he related the wonders of divine mercy towards this happy penitent.

This week dedicated to the knowledge of Mary: consider how near to you Mary is in the concrete experiences of need, failure, blessing, joyfulness and grace that fill your life. Turn to her in thankful confidence, trusting that there will be fruits whenever we turn ourselves over to Mary in trustful surrender.

That is why I would like to echo the words of St. Bernard – who was himself devoted to Our Lady and an eloquent preacher. ...

“St. Bernard;* Oh man, whoever thou art, thou knowest that in this miserable life thou art rather tossing on the tempestuous waves, among dangers and tempests, than walking upon the earth; if thou wouldst not sink, keep thy eye fixed on this star, namely, Mary. Look at the star, invoke Mary. When in danger of sinning, when tormented by temptations, when doubts disturb thee, remember that Mary can aid thee, and instantly call upon her. May her powerful name never depart from the confidence of thy heart, nor from the invocation of thy lips. If thou wilt follow Mary, thou shalt never wander from the path of safety. Commend thyself always to her, and thou shalt not despair. If she upholds thee, thou shalt not fall. If she protects thee, thou need not fear ruin. If she guides thee, thou shalt be saved without difficulty. In a word, if Mary undertakes to defend thee, thou shalt certainly arrive at the kingdom of the blessed. Thus do, and thou shalt live.”