

**Knowledge of Mary**  
**By Fr. Thomas P. Steinke, IVE**

During the second week of the preparation for the consecration, St. Louis Marie de Montfort asks us to direct our intention and prayers to deepen our knowledge of Mary. Why a knowledge of Mary? Because she has a unique and indispensable role in the economy of salvation. The founder of the Legion of Mary, Servant of God Frank Duff rightly teaches that, “If you do not understand Our Lady, you do not understand Christianity, because Christianity puts her in a most extraordinary position.”<sup>1</sup> Venerable Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty (men zen see) says that “Veneration of Mary is the great genius which gives Christianity its power, courage, and victoriousness.”<sup>2</sup>

We are living in a time when evil has seemingly triumphed. It is as if the bad guys are leading 30-0 and it seems like time is running out on Christianity. After all, the powers to be in this state and in the world at large are making a concentrated effort to eliminate Christianity. The following passage from True Devotion is applicable to our times and especially to those who live out their consecration to Jesus through Mary. De Montfort says,

But the power of Mary over all the devils will especially break out . . . when Satan will lay his snares against her heel; that is to say, her humble slaves and her poor children, whom she will raise up to make war against him. They shall be little and poor in the world’s esteem . . . trodden underfoot and persecuted . . . But in return for this, they shall be rich in the grace of God, which Mary shall distribute to them abundantly. They shall be great and exalted before God in sanctity, superior to all other creatures by their animated zeal, and leaning so strongly on the divine succor, that, with the humility of their heel, in union with Mary, they shall crush the head of the devil, and cause Jesus Christ to triumph.<sup>3</sup>

Every year the culture of death seems to gain more control over the media, the military, our medical care, and big business; they have all the money and power and yet we know that in the end there will be a Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In other words, millions of souls will return to the practice of the true faith. And the Mother of God along with her Legion of consecrated souls have been divinely appointed to lead the charge against the diabolic powers controlling the world.

In this conference, I will focus on three things. First, why Mary has such great dignity and this exalted position in the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Secondly, I will talk about the qualities or attributes of Mary. Finally, I will explain the three ways that each one of us can deepen our knowledge of Mary.

**Mary is the Mother of God**

Why does Mary have this exalted position? Pope Pius IX in his apostolic constitution declaring the dogma of the Immaculate Conception teaches that, “Before time began, the eternal Father chose and prepared for his only-begotten Son a Mother in whom the Son of

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<sup>1</sup> Servant of God Frank Duff, “Everyone must pour himself into another soul,” (1956), as quoted at [www.catholicpamphlets.net](http://www.catholicpamphlets.net)

<sup>2</sup> Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, *The Face of the Heavenly Mother* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 85.

<sup>3</sup> de Montfort, Saint Louis (2012-05-15). *True Devotion to Mary: With Preparation for Total Consecration*, #54 (pp. 30-31). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

God would become incarnate.”<sup>4</sup> Fr. Donald Calloway in his conferences and books brilliantly emphasizes that God has decreed to become man through a woman and that woman is Mary. Hence, God creates His mother and, of course, He makes her His masterpiece. She is the most perfect creature ever created.

This is Catholic dogma, not open to debate. In Dr. Ludwig Ott’s *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, he has a section, which explains that Mary’s eminent sanctity and dignity are precisely because she is the Mother of God.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, in *A Manual of Catholic Theology* it says that by the fact that “She is, by Divine election, the Mother of the Savior . . . accounts for all her exceptional gifts and graces, and marks her unique position in the economy of salvation.”<sup>6</sup> St. Maximilian Kolbe says that, “In all boldness we can affirm that our highest ideal is the Immaculate. A man cannot rise any higher than this. The Immaculate is the highest degree of perfection and sanctity of a creature. No man will ever attain this celestial summit of grace, for the Mother of God is unique.”<sup>7</sup>

And St. John Paul affirms that, while she has a subordinate role to Christ, Mary’s motherly mediation “shares in the one unique source that is the mediation of Christ himself.” He says that:

This role is at the same time special and extraordinary. It flows from her divine motherhood and can be understood and lived in faith only on the basis of the full truth of this motherhood. Since by virtue of divine election Mary is the earthly Mother of the Father’s consubstantial Son and his “generous companion” in the work of redemption “she is a mother to us in the order of grace.” This role constitutes a real dimension of her presence in the saving mystery of Christ and the Church.<sup>8</sup>

### The Attributes of Mary The Sanctity of the Mother of God

For Mary to have such an eminent and singularly important role in the economy of salvation requires a unique level of sanctity among all created beings. Pope Pius IX in his Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* says that her holiness is so great that “none greater under God can be thought of, and no one but God can comprehend it”!<sup>9</sup> In fact, the probable opinion of theologians was that she was impeccable, i.e., incapable of committing a sin, precisely because she was so holy.<sup>10</sup>

**When the angel Gabriel, calls Mary that which is traditionally translated “Hail, full of grace,” (Luke 1:28) it gives us the Biblical basis for the eminent sanctity and dignity of Mary. The Greek word *chaire* translated as “Hail” is often used to indicate a title or an office when tied to a person, as in “Hail, Caesar”<sup>11</sup> Moreover, in the Hebrew way of**

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4 Pope Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9ineff.htm>

5 Dr. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, (Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1974), 197-198.

6 Scheeben, Matthias Joseph. *A MANUAL OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY: Based on Dogmatik* (Complete in Two Volumes). (Kindle Locations 11150-11151). Lex De Leon Publishing. Kindle Edition.

7 Kolbe, St. Maximilian (2013-05-28). *Let Yourself Be Led by the Immaculate* (Kindle Locations 125-128). Angelus Press. Kindle Edition.

8 Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, #11.

9 Pope Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9ineff.htm>

10 Fr. Kenneth Baker asserts: “Two special factors rendered Mary impeccable or unable to sin. The first was her constant awareness of God, living always in his presence, and the second was her reception of special and extraordinary graces. These special graces made it possible for Mary to maintain a perfect harmony in her mind, will and emotions and to recognize always what was the right thing to do and then to do it.” Fr. Kenneth Baker, *Fundamentals of Catholicism: God, Trinity, Creation, Christ, Mary*, Vol. 2, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 332.

11 (Andrew M. Greenwell, Esq, Hail Mary: Kecharitomene, A Unique Word for a Unique Lady); see this usage in Matthew 26:49; 27:29; Mark 15:18; John 19:3. The angel Gabriel does not use the common greeting *aspazou* (from *aspazomai* to salute, greet), but *chaire* (from *chairó* to rejoice, be glad, cognate with *charis* grace)..

thinking, the name identified the nature of a person. So if someone's name was Carpenter, they were a carpenter by trade. The phrase "Hail, full of grace" is a direct address to Mary. Hence, the Greek word that follows "Hail," viz., *Kecharitomene* is (Cake hairy toe me nay) is a description of her nature.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that it indicates a perfection of grace.<sup>12</sup> The root word *charis* means to grace, that is, endow with grace. The root verb (*χαριτόω* *charitoo*) belongs to a class of verbs ending in omicron omega (*όω*) that are causative, that is, they indicate an action, which effects something in the object.<sup>13</sup>

The Greek language employs nine different verb stems that change the meaning of the verb. Thus in the active sense *charitoo* means "to enrich with grace." In the passive sense, it means "to be enriched with grace." However, in the perfect passive participle, as used in Luke 1:28, it means, "to be enriched with grace in a permanent way." Therefore, Mary has been and continues to be in that perfected or completed state of grace since the Annunciation. This implies that Mary is endowed with grace in the most intense or perfect form of grace forever.<sup>14</sup> And to be in a perfected or complete state of grace forever denotes a fullness or plenitude of grace.<sup>15</sup> That is why Pope St. John Paul II says that "to render more exactly the nuance of the Greek word one should not say merely 'full of grace,' but 'made full of grace', or even 'filled with grace'"<sup>16</sup>

St. Maximilian Kolbe "believed there are two 'Immaculate Conceptions': Mary and the Holy Spirit. Mary is the created Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit is the uncreated Immaculate Conception."<sup>17</sup> This is not so far-fetched. Mary is always perfectly in union with God's will; The Holy Spirit is God's will.

This is why Our Lady's prayers are so powerful in aiding us. St. Thomas Aquinas says that the intercession of the saints is in proportion to their degree of glory in heaven or of their union with God.<sup>18</sup> He says that "the nearer a thing is to the principle, the greater the part which it has in the effect of that principle."<sup>19</sup> It is dogma that Mary has the highest degree of glory of all the saints. That is why we venerate her with hyperdulia, a form of veneration higher than all the angels and saints.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Mary is the Mediatrix of all graces meaning that all graces from God come through Mary. Dr. Ott says that Mary "participates in the distribution of grace by her maternal intercession which . . . surpasses far the intercessory prayer of all the other saints."<sup>21</sup> Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange says that, "It is clear therefore that Mary's intercession is much more powerful and efficacious than that of all the other saints—even taken all together—for the other saints obtain

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12 Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 491, citing Pius IX in *Ineffabilis Deus*, 1954: DS 2803.

13 Ignace de la Potterie, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, translated by Bertrand Buby (New York: Alba House, c. 1994), p. 17.

14 H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, c. 1968), pp. 108-109; *Manelli, All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed: Biblical Mariology*, p. 131; de la Potterie, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, pp. 17-20; Bertrand Buby, *Mary of Galilee*, (New York: Alba House, c. 1994) Vol. I, pp. 71-3.

15 Gresham Machen, *New Testament Greek for Beginners*, p. 187.

16 John Paul II, *BLESSED VIRGIN WAS FILLED WITH GOD'S GRACE*, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/jp2bvm19.htm>.

17 Gaitley, Michael E. (2013-06-20). *33 Days to Morning Glory: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat In Preparation for Marian Consecration* (Kindle Locations 671-681). Marian Press. Kindle Edition.

18 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 83, a. 11.

19 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 87, a. 5.

20 Dr. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, (Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1974), 214-215.

21 Dr. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, (Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1974), 213.

nothing without her.”<sup>22</sup> That is why there is a link between a true devotion to Mary is and a high degree of sanctity. St. Louis de Montfort says that, “The greatest saints, those richest in grace and virtue, will be the most assiduous in praying to the most Blessed Virgin, looking up to her as . . . a powerful helper to assist them.”<sup>23</sup>

### The Motherhood of Mary and Microchimerism

Scientists have discovered a process called fetal microchimerism whereby cells from a fetus cross the placenta and become part of the mother’s body.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, the fetal cells cluster around and seemingly treat the affected area when the mother is attack ill or injured.<sup>25</sup> Fetal cells sometimes generate new neurons in the brain of the mother and even heal her heart.<sup>26</sup> Overall, the presence of fetal cells in the mother’s body is associated with a significantly increased lifespan over those with no fetal cells.<sup>27</sup> We know that Jesus has no human father so His body is made up of cells formed in Mary’s body and some of those cells are still in Mary. This gives us new insight in to why Mary is called the Ark of the Covenant and why demons flee at the presence of Mary. The living cells of the God-man for part of the body the Blessed Virgin.

### Mary is the Terror of Demons

Pope St. John Paul II says that Mary as the Mother of the Redeemer takes part as a mother in the monumental struggle against the powers of darkness which continues throughout human history.<sup>28</sup> Mary is operating as a mother and protector of the mystical body of Christ against the assaults of demons. This past Monday I was with exorcist Fr. Winston Cabading from the Philippines and I watched many videos of exorcisms. He says and I saw that the demons always react when you mention Our Lady. I wrote down one quote from a rather loquacious demoniac: “That Woman!! That Woman!! I would have destroyed her from the beginning if only I knew that she would bear that Son. . . I would have been the most glorious . . . that place is for me.”

De Montfort says that, “Such is the will of almighty God who exalts the humble, that the powers of heaven, earth and hell, willingly or unwillingly, must obey the commands of the humble Virgin Mary.”<sup>29</sup> St. John Vianney says that, “If you invoke the Blessed Virgin when you are tempted, she will come at once to your help, and Satan will leave you.”<sup>30</sup> St. Bonaventure says, “The evil spirits lose all power in the presence of those souls who often call upon the name of Mary, and devoutly invoke her, and more than all, strive to imitate

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22 Garrigou-Lagrange O.P., *Reverend Reginald. Reverend Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange O.P. Collection, The Mother of the Savior, Part II, Chapter 3, Mary’s Universal Mediation in Heaven* [16 Books]. Aeterna Press. Kindle Edition.

23 St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (Bay Shore, N.Y.: Montfort Publications, 1980), 19.

24 Dawe, Gavin S et al. “Cell migration from baby to mother.” *Cell adhesion & migration* vol. 1,1 (2007): 19-27.

25 Kiarash Khosrotehrani, and Diana W. Bianchi, “Multi-lineage potential of fetal cells in maternal tissue: a legacy in reverse,” *Journal of Cell Science* 2005 118: 1559-1563; doi: 10.1242/jcs.02332.

26 Andy Coghlan, “Fetus donates stem cells to heal mother's heart,” *New Scientist*, November 21, 2011, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn21185-fetus-donates-stem-cells-to-heal-mothers-heart/#ixzz5zEeas13R>

27 Mads Kamper-Jørgensen, Henrik Hjalgrim, Anne-Marie Nybo Andersen, Vijayakrishna K Gadi, Anne Tjønneland, Male microchimerism and survival among women, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 43, Issue 1, February 2014, Pages 168–173, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyt230>

28 John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, #47.

29 St. Louis Marie de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, #28, (Bay Shore: Montfort Publications, 1980), 11.

30 Jill Haak Adels, *The Wisdom of the Saints: An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press,1987), 19.

her.”<sup>31</sup> Imitating her is another way of saying those who live out the consecration. St. Maximilian Kolbe says that, “The Immaculata alone has from God the promise of victory over Satan. She seeks souls that will consecrate themselves entirely to her, that will become in her hands forceful instruments for the defeat of Satan and the spread of God’s kingdom.”<sup>32</sup>

It was revealed to St. Bridget that God has given Mary such power over all evil spirits that whenever they attack any of her servants who implore her aid, at the slightest sign from her the demons flee in terror.<sup>33</sup> When St. Dominic was praying over a possessed man, the demons starting screaming, “The Mother of Jesus Christ is all-powerful and she can save servants from falling into hell . . . We have to say, however reluctantly, that not a single soul who has really persevered in her service has ever been damned with us; one single sigh that she offers to the Blessed Trinity is worth far more than all the prayers, desires and aspirations of all the Saints.”<sup>34</sup>

### Mary Will Lead You to the Truth

Demons try to pervert the truth. A true devotee of Our Lady will be devoted to the Truth. One will understand reality. De Montfort says that, “never will anyone who says his Rosary every day become a formal heretic or be led astray by the devil. This is a statement that I would gladly sign with my blood.”<sup>35</sup> That is a bold statement, but every priest who has come to know souls knows that those who are truly devoted to the Mother of God are also consecrated in the truth. St. Alphonsus Liguori says that, “through Mary is given the light of truth.”<sup>36</sup> Pope Benedict XVI says that “It is necessary to go back to Mary if we want to return to that ‘truth about Jesus Christ,’ ‘truth about the Church,’ and ‘truth about man.’”<sup>37</sup>

Conversely, De Montfort says that “An infallible and unmistakable sign by which we can distinguish a heretic, a man of false doctrine, an enemy of God, from one of God’s true friends is that the heretic and the hardened sinner show nothing but contempt and indifference for our Lady, and endeavor . . . to belittle the love and veneration shown to her.”<sup>38</sup> I cringe when I hear some Protestant belittling devotion to Our Lady. I think that poor guy is going to be in for a rude awakening when he dies. St. Alphonsus says, “Experience has shown faith in the divinity of Christ has been preserved in those countries which are marked by devotion to Mary. All the saints were devout to Jesus and Mary.”<sup>39</sup>

**Blessed Alan de la Roche had a vision of Mary in which she told him about how the world looks when the Rosary is prayed devotedly by the multitudes:**

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31 De Liguori, Saint Alphonsus. *The Glories of Mary* (p. 103). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

32 St. Maximilian Kolbe, as quoted in Jill Haak Adels, *The Wisdom of the Saints: An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 18.

33 De Liguori, Saint Alphonsus. *The Glories of Mary* (pp. 102-103). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

34 de Montfort, Saint Louis. *The Secret of the Rosary, Thirty-Third Rose* (p. 98). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

35 de Montfort, Saint Louis. *The Secret of the Rosary, Twenty-Fifth Rose* (p. 75). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

36 De Liguori, Saint Alphonsus. *The Glories of Mary* (p. 245). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

37 Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger) & Vittorio Messori. *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*. Trans. Salvator Attanasio & Graham Harrison. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 105.

38 St. Louis Marie de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, #30, (Bay Shore: Montfort Publications, 1980), 12.

39 Garrigou-Lagrange O.P., Reverend Reginald. Reverend Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange O.P. Collection, *The Mother of the Savior*, Part II, Chapter 6, True Devotion to Our Lady [16 Books]. Aeterna Press. Kindle Edition.

Even children performed unbelievable penances: devotion to my Son and to me spread so thoroughly that it almost seemed as though angels were living on earth. The Faith was gaining, and many Catholics longed to shed their blood for it and fight against the heretics. Thus, through the sermons of my very dear Dominic and through the power of the rosary, the heretics' lands were all brought under the Church. People used to give munificent alms; hospitals and churches were built. People led moral and law-abiding lives and worked wonders for the glory of God. Holiness and unworldliness flourished; the clergy were exemplary, princes were just, people lived at peace with each other and justice and equity reigned in the guilds and in the homes. I must not fail to mention the signs and wonders that I have wrought in different lands through the holy rosary: I have stopped pestilences and put an end to horrible wars as well as to bloody crimes, and through the rosary people have found the courage to flee temptation.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, Pope St. Pius X calls Mary the “destroyer of all heresies”<sup>41</sup> It is a mark of the fearless defenders of the faith to have a true devotion to the Mother of God. De Montfort says that those great souls who are exceptionally devoted to the Blessed Virgin will be “filled with grace and zeal [and] will be chosen to oppose the enemies of God who are raging on all sides. Illumined by her light, strengthened by her food, guided by her spirit . . . they will fight . . . they will give battle, overthrowing and crushing heretics . . . , schismatics . . . , idolaters. . .[and] sinners.”<sup>42</sup> Sr. Lucia said that last battle between God and Satan is against the traditional family. She says that if you try to defend the traditional family, you will be persecuted in every way. We have clearly reached this stage. The promotion of LGBTQ agenda is a direct attack on the traditional family and the persecution of those who defend traditional marriage has reached scary proportions. Cardinal Robert Sarah, while acting as the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments described gender ideology as “demonic.”<sup>43</sup> In other words, it is from the devil. It is part of the final battle. It’s crazy, they say that God did not create man male and female. This is the great heresy of our day.

### Mary will Help Deepen Your Union with God

From what’s already been said, we can infer that Mary will help you grow in holiness. Blessed James Alberione (Al Bear E oh knee) says that, “A devotee of Mary will be saved; a great devotee of Mary will become a saint.”<sup>44</sup> St. John Bosco says, “The history of the Church teaches us that the greatest saints are those who professed the greatest devotion to Mary.”<sup>45</sup> Experience proves this true. St. Maximilian Kolbe explains why Mary is such a powerful intercessor. He says that “The closer a soul is to God, the more pleasing she is to God, the more she loves Him and is loved by Him, then the more efficaciously she is able to help others also to obtain divine grace, the more easily and fully is her prayer heard.”<sup>46</sup>

De Montfort says that, “we advance more in a brief period of submission to Mary and dependence on her than in whole years of self-will and self-reliance.”<sup>47</sup> Kolbe concurs saying that “he who gives himself without limits to the Immaculate will in a short time attain a very high degree of perfection and procure for God a very great glory.” Blessed

<sup>40</sup> As quoted in St. Louis de Montfort, *The Secret of the Rosary*, 119. Our Lady’s Word to Blessed Alan de la Roche (Calloway, Appendix B).

<sup>41</sup> Pope Pius X, *Pascendi dominici gregis*, #58.

<sup>42</sup> St. Louis Marie de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, #48, (Bay Shore: Montfort Publications, 1980), 19.

<sup>43</sup> Father Paul Scalia, *The Devil, You Say?*, <https://newsforcatholics.wordpress.com/2016/06/30/the-devil-you-say/>

<sup>44</sup> Blessed James Alberione, *Glories and Virtues of Mary*, trans Hilda Calabro (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1982), 18.

<sup>45</sup> John Bosco, as quoted in Jill Haak Adels, *The Wisdom of the Saints: An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 4.

<sup>46</sup> Kolbe, St. Maximilian (2013-05-28). *Let Yourself Be Led by the Immaculate* (Kindle Locations 80-83). Angelus Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>47</sup> St. Louis Marie de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, #155, (Bay Shore: Montfort Publications, 1980), 76.

**Dina Belanger (Deena Be Lawn J) says “I wish I could consecrate all souls to her, for it is she who leads us to Jesus: . . . she is the safest, shortest, the most perfect way to lead us to . . . the Source of eternal bliss.”**<sup>48</sup> De Montfort gives two reasons for the rapid growth in holiness of those who live out this consecration: First, as previously mentioned, devotees of Mary will never wander off the path to heaven.<sup>49</sup>

Secondly, the growth will come “with greater ease and joy.”<sup>50</sup> The Mother of God is like a real mother, always consoling her children when they are in need of it. Kolbe says that, “Through the Immaculata we can become great saints, and what is more, in an easy way.”<sup>51</sup>

### Mary, the Mother of Mercy

This naturally leads to the next section, Mary as the Mother of Mercy. Mary spoke directly to St. Bridget about what her mercy means in practical terms. She said that I am the Queen of heaven and the Mother of Mercy. I am the joy of the just and the door through which sinners come to God. There are no sinners on earth so unfortunate as to be beyond my mercy. For even if they receive nothing else through my intercession, at least they receive the grace of being less tempted by the devils than they would otherwise be. Unless the last irrevocable sentence (of damnation) has been pronounced against them, there are no persons so abandoned by God that they will not return to Him and find mercy if they invoke my aid.<sup>52</sup>

As one theologian wrote, “Mary helps Christians understand with what tenderness they are embraced by God.”<sup>53</sup> This is important because the Catechism teaches that because of sin, we become afraid to approach God.<sup>54</sup> Mary helps us to trust in God’s mercy. Blessed Michael Sopocko (sah Posh Ko) said “God rules the world and distributes his mercy through secondary causes, the principal one of which is [Mary,] the Mother of Mercy.”<sup>55</sup> Recently, I was talking to other priests about the amazing number of major Marian conversions we see at Our Lady of Peace. People away from the church for many years, start praying the rosary and make it back to confession. This has happened, beginning with my own conversion, so often in the past twenty-four years that now when someone comes to confession after they had been away from the Church for several years, I always ask if they started praying the rosary recently or if they’ve always had some special devotion to the Mother of God. Normally, they say “yes.” It is a confirmation of what the Blessed Virgin told Blessed Alan de la Roche: “Through the rosary, hardened sinners of both sexes become converted and started to lead a holy life, bemoaning their past sins with genuine tears of contrition.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Blessed Dina Belanger, *The Autobiography of Dina Belanger*, Trans. by Mary St. Stephen, RJM (Canada: Religious of Jesus and Mary, 1997), 64-65.

<sup>49</sup> Kolbe, St. Maximilian (2013-05-28). *Let Yourself Be Led by the Immaculate* (Kindle Locations 125-128). Angelus Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>50</sup> St. Louis Marie de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, #155, (Bay Shore: Montfort Publications, 1980), 76.

<sup>51</sup> *Aim Higher!: Spiritual and Marian Reflections of St. Maximilian Kolby*, trans. Dominic Wisz, OFM Conv. (Libertyville, IL: Marytown Press, 2007), 15.

<sup>52</sup> St. Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*, (Liquori, MO: Liquori Publications, 2000), 23.

<sup>53</sup> André Feuillet, *Jesus and His Mother* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede’s Publication, 1984), 209.

<sup>54</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, #399.

<sup>55</sup> Blessed Michael Sopocko, *God is Mercy: Meditations on God’s Most Consoling Attribute* (Stockbridge, Mass.: Marian Fathers, 1965), 53.

<sup>56</sup> As quoted in St. Louis de Montfort, *The Secret of the Rosary*, 119. Our Lady’s Word to Blessed Alan de la Roche (Calloway, Appendix B).

From the wedding feast at Cana, we can see that Mary helps us in our needs. When the bride and groom ran out of wine, Mary interceded with Jesus and the problem was quickly resolved. We will have many trials in this valley of tears, and often when we try to resolve them ourselves, things only get worse. One of Mary's titles is *Undoer of Knots*. In this context, knots means problems. Fr. Cabading mentioned that they have the demoniacs pray before an image of Mary under this title. Our Lady wants to undo our knots. St. Alphonsus Liguori exclaims, "Oh, how ready is this good mother to aid him who invokes her!"<sup>57</sup> St. Bernardine says, "This great Lady is more desirous to confer favors upon us than we are to receive them."<sup>58</sup>

I like how tenderly she helped St. Juan Diego who was preoccupied with his beloved uncle, Juan Bernardino when he was deathly ill. The Blessed Virgin Mary's response was reassuring:

Listen and be sure, my dear son, that I will protect you; do not be frightened or grieved or let your heart be dismayed, however great the illness may be that you speak of. Am I not here, I who am your Mother, and is not my help a refuge? . . . Do not be concerned about your uncle's illness, for he is not going to die. Be assured, he is already well. Is there anything else that you need?

With these words, Juan Diego was confident that what she said would come true.<sup>59</sup> Everybody loves the Mother of God because when you really have problems, she is there for you. She is a real Mother in the order of grace always wanting to be there to console us. Deeply depressed and troubled people start praying the rosary every day and Our Lady leads them to her Son for the peace and joy that nobody can take away. St. Luigi Guanella (Lou E G Gah Nella) says that "We entrust ourselves to Mary because she dries our tears with compassion and with kindness comforts our hearts."<sup>60</sup> Hildegard von Bingen, the eleventh-century nun and a doctor of the Church says that, "no person can know the sweetness with which she sustains people, and spares them in inscrutable mercy."<sup>61</sup>

### Devotion to Mary as a Sign of Predestination

St. Alphonsus Liguori says, "that devotion towards Mary in a soul, is a sign that it is, or soon will be, in the state of grace."<sup>62</sup> Conversely, St. Maximilian Kolbe says that whoever does not take Mary as his or her Queen "and refuses to believe in her love, will perish."<sup>63</sup> St. Bonaventure calls Mary, "The salvation of those who invoke"<sup>64</sup> her.

De Montfort says that "devotion to the Blessed Lady is necessary to attain salvation . . . [whereas] lack of esteem for the Virgin Mary is an infallible sign of God's disapproval"<sup>65</sup> He then quotes St. John Damascene as saying "Devotion to you, O Blessed Virgin, is a means of salvation which God gives to those whom he wishes to save." This is the teaching

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<sup>57</sup> De Liguori, Saint Alphonsus. *The Glories of Mary* (p. 92). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>58</sup> De Liguori, Saint Alphonsus. *The Glories of Mary* (p. 93). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>59</sup> Odell, Catherine. *Those Who Saw Her: Apparitions of Mary*, Updated and Revised (p. 44). Our Sunday Visitor. Kindle Edition.

<sup>60</sup> St. Luigi Guanella, as quoted in *Magnificat* (Vol. 14, No. 3/May 2012), 44.

<sup>61</sup> Hildegard of Bingen's vision of the Feminine Divine, from *Scivias*, III, 4.15, translated by Mother Columba Hart, O.S.B. and Jane Bishop.

<sup>62</sup> De Liguori, Saint Alphonsus. *The Glories of Mary* (p. 495). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>63</sup> St. Maximilian Kolbe, as quoted in Fr. Stefano Manelli, FI, *Devotion to Mary: The Marian Life as Taught by the Saints* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2001), 53.

<sup>64</sup> De Liguori, Saint Alphonsus. *The Glories of Mary* (p. 93). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>65</sup> St. Louis Marie de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, #40, (Bay Shore: Montfort Publications, 1980), 16.

of the Fathers of the Church, he says, including St. Augustine, St. Ephrem, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure among many others.<sup>66</sup>

### **How Can we Deepen Our Knowledge of Mary? Knowledge of Mary through Prayer**

St. Louis Marie de Montfort says that “The practice which I am about to disclose is one of these secrets of grace, unknown by the greater number of Christians, known even to few of the devout, and practiced and relished by a far less number still.”<sup>67</sup> What does De Montfort mean by “secrets of grace?” To understand the importance of making the consecration to Jesus through Mary is a grace, i.e., God must reveal it to the soul. Once again, De Montfort says that. “Mary has to be made known and revealed by the Holy Ghost, in order that by her Jesus Christ may be known, loved, and served.”<sup>68</sup> In other words, you are here making your consecration and effectively living it out inasmuch as God has called you to do so and given you supernatural light and strength to carry it out. St. Maximilian Kolbe concurs saying,

Thank the Immaculate that she has given you the grace to understand practically her mystery, as Blessed Grignon says, and pray that she deign to concede this grace also to the others. In fact, it is not so much with our limited intelligence as by the grace of the Holy Ghost that the conviction of these sublime mysteries penetrates our hearts and develops there. . .<sup>69</sup>

[He says that] Human language must serve merely to make the soul approach her, because it will be she herself who will manifest herself more and more clearly to the soul . . . Approaching directly to her heart you will attain a greater knowledge of her and be inflamed by a greater love for her than all human words together could teach you.<sup>70</sup>

I distinctly remember praying to Our Lady to help me deepen my knowledge about her. That has happened in a way I never thought possible. Just prayerfully writing the conferences for the consecration the last five years has been a knowledge bonanza.

### **Knowing Mary through Spiritual Reading**

Scripture says that where your heart is; there also will be your treasure (Matthew 6:21). We see this in sports or in other hobbies and interests of people. Basketball fans love watching the NBA or March Madness. They will read about the lives of their favorite players. It is the same in the spiritual realm. When someone has a conversion, anything related to the faith becomes more interesting. Things that were formally boring, like the lives of the saints, now become fascinating. Through the grace that God infuses in our soul, He gives us a hunger for things of God. We enjoy good Catholic conferences, homilies, and spiritual reading. We learn about our Catholic faith in a similar way that we learn about anything else.

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<sup>66</sup> St. Louis Marie de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, #41, (Bay Shore: Montfort Publications, 1980), 16-17.

<sup>67</sup> de Montfort, Saint Louis. *True Devotion to Mary: With Preparation for Total Consecration*, #82 (p. 43). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>68</sup> de Montfort, Saint Louis. *True Devotion to Mary: With Preparation for Total Consecration*, #49. (p. 28). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>69</sup> Kolbe, St. Maximilian (2013-05-28). *Let Yourself Be Led by the Immaculate* (Kindle Locations 38-41). Angelus Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>70</sup> Kolbe, St. Maximilian (2013-05-28). *Let Yourself Be Led by the Immaculate* (Kindle Locations 62-65). Angelus Press. Kindle Edition.

St. Luke explains how Mary herself responded to the wonderful things that God was doing in and around her: “Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” If we love the Mother of God, and we should, we should desire to hear conferences about her, read books about her, and often have conversations with her. St. Maximilian Kolbe gives the following advice:

Read much about the most holy Mother, think about her often, [and] meditate about her often. But the foundation, as it were, is prayer, humble prayer. And not only read, but also pray before reading, and in the meditation ask her to enlighten us, because we are not worthy of the grace of knowing who she is.<sup>71</sup>

St. Louis de Montfort says that, “Our Mother is also a perfect mold wherein we are 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.”<sup>72</sup> St. Maximilian Kolbe says that when you do spiritual reading in union with Our Lady, “you are entering into contact with a living being who loves you . . . She herself will manifest herself through the intermediary of the thoughts you will read and will communicate thoughts, convictions, and sentiments that the author himself was utterly incapable of imagining.”<sup>73</sup>

### Knowledge of Mary through Imitation

De Montfort says that True Devotion leads the soul to imitate the ten principal virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary: her profound humility, her lively faith, her continual prayer, her universal mortification, her divine purity, her ardent charity, her heroic patience, her angelic sweetness and her divine wisdom.<sup>74</sup>

The best way to know what someone is like to experience the same mind and heart. For instance, there are many ways to understand the virtue of chastity. You can read a definition or characteristics about the virtue, but the best way to know what it is like is to possess the virtue. Then, you have experiential or intuitive knowledge of the virtue.<sup>75</sup> Let me give an analogy from eating. Someone can describe how a particular food tastes or you can read about it, but you will never fully understand what it tastes like until you have personally tried it.

In my own life, I remember wondering why anyone would want to enter religious life before my conversion. Now I believe that anyone who has a deep union with God would at least see it as attractive.

When you acquire the virtues of a person, you think like them. Shortly before she died, St. Therese said, “Never would I have believed it was possible to suffer so much! Never ! Never! I cannot explain this except by the ardent desires I have to save souls.”<sup>76</sup> She wanted to suffer intensely to save souls. She had the mindset of Jesus Christ. Fr. John Hardon says

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<sup>71</sup> Kolbe, St. Maximilian (2013-05-28). *Let Yourself Be Led by the Immaculate* (Kindle Locations 53-57). Angelus Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>72</sup> de Montfort, Saint Louis. *True Devotion to Mary: With Preparation for Total Consecration* (p. 149). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>73</sup> Kolbe, St. Maximilian (2013-05-28). *Let Yourself Be Led by the Immaculate* (Kindle Locations 59-62). Angelus Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>74</sup> de Montfort, Saint Louis. *True Devotion to Mary: With Preparation for Total Consecration*, #108 § 3, (p. 53). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.

Edition.

<sup>75</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

<sup>76</sup> St. Therese of Lisieux, *Her Last Conversations*, trans. John Clarke (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1977), 205.

**“the nearer a person’s soul is, to the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary . . . the more sinless, the holier that person becomes . . . growing in understanding and firmly accepting God's revealed truth. In other words, holiness determines clarity; . . . holiness determines certitude in the faith that we already possess. Our faith will grow in the measure of our holiness approximating, at any given point in time, the holiness of Christ's Mother.”<sup>77</sup> We will understand the person of Mary and our Catholic faith in proportion that we become like her, that we become a great saint.**

**St. Maximilian Kolbe sums up this three-fold way of knowing Our Lady. He says that “It is a very good thing to study Mariology, but let us always remember that we know the Immaculate more in humble prayer and in the loving experience of daily life than in learned definitions, distinctions, and arguments (although we may not neglect them).”<sup>78</sup>**

### **Fatima and the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart**

**Making the consecration to Mary is the central message of Fatima. Our Lady of Fatima told Jacinta to “Tell everybody that God gives graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Tell them to ask grace from her, and that the Heart of Jesus wishes to be venerated together with the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”<sup>79</sup> Pope St. John Paul II says that, “The message of Fatima . . . invites us to approach anew the Fountain of Mercy by an act of consecration. Mary wishes us to draw near to it: each one of us, each nation, and the whole world.”<sup>80</sup>**

**More specifically, Mary told St. Faustina, “You have to speak to the world about His great mercy and prepare the world for the Second Coming of Him who will come, not as a merciful Savior, but as a just Judge. Oh how terrible is that day! Determined is the day of justice, the day of divine wrath. The angels tremble before it. Speak to souls about this great mercy while it is still the time for granting mercy.”<sup>81</sup>**

**We are currently living in a time of great apostasy awaiting the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Prophesized at Fatima. Approved apparitions like Fatima and Akita warn of the destruction of nations and a time of great trial for the Church. A monumental chastisement is overdue. A great day of justice seems imminent. The two worst fire seasons in the history of California were 2017 and 2018; we are seeing earthquakes, floods, mass shootings, wars and rumors of wars. There is not a chance these will abate. The escalation of chastisements is happening now. It follows from the nature of sin. Every sin incurs a debt of punishment.**

**Pope St. John Paul II said, “We are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has gone through. I do not think that wide circles of American society or wide circles of the Christian community realize this fully. We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-**

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<sup>77</sup> Fr. John Hardon, Maximilian Kolbe, *Apostle of Mary*, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/MARY/kolbe.htm>

<sup>78</sup> Kolbe, St. Maximilian (2013-05-28). *Let Yourself Be Led by the Immaculate* (Kindle Locations 33-35). Angelus Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>79</sup> *Our Lady of Fatima's Peace Plan from Heaven* (Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1983), 9-10.

<sup>80</sup> Pope John-Paul II, as quoted in Arthur Collin, *Totus Tuus: John Paul's Program of Marian Consecration and Entrustment* (Libertyville: Academy of the Immaculate, 1992), 177.

<sup>81</sup> St. Faustina, *Diary: Divine Mercy in my Soul*, #635.

Gospel.”<sup>82</sup> This is very prophetic. There is great confusion in the Church that Jesus Christ founded. Cardinal Gerhard Müller, the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith until Pope Francis recently released him has called the Pachamama statues idols and that bringing them into the church was a crime against the law of God. Understand what is going on. The cardinal who until recently was the top doctrinal official in the Catholic Church is indirectly accusing the Pope of allowing idolatry and breaking the divine law.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the anti-Christian LGBTQ faction has made stunning progress in advancing their agenda. Christians are being forced to call a biological male a female or lose their job.

Accordingly, Catholics are renouncing the true faith in unprecedented numbers. About 1 in 10 Americans is an ex-Catholic. If they were a denomination, they would be bigger than Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans and Presbyterians.<sup>84</sup> Fr. John Hardon says that, “If we are to win the grace of conversion for lapsed Catholics into today’s paganized America, we must be ready to live lives of heroic virtue. This is nothing less than living the life of martyrs. . . The grace needed is, to coin a word, gigantic.”<sup>85</sup> De Montfort says that during these periods of great trial Mary will be present enlightening and strengthening her servants so that this path will be one of roses and honey as compared with those who do not have Mary to sustain them on their journey.<sup>86</sup> Everybody is going to die and perhaps never before in the history of the world has it been more difficult to die well. Those truly consecrated to Mary will assuredly die well and ultimately that is the only thing that matters in life. Then you will see the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart in your life.

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<sup>82</sup> Karol Cardinal Wojtyła, “Notable & Quotable,” in *The Wall Street Journal* (Nov. 9, 1978).

<sup>83</sup> Rod Dreher, “[The Pachamama Pope](https://catholicismpure.wordpress.com/2019/10/26/the-pachamama-pope/), Catholicism Pure and Simple, <https://catholicismpure.wordpress.com/2019/10/26/the-pachamama-pope/>.

<sup>84</sup> [https://www.reddit.com/r/excatholic/comments/va8xj/about\\_1\\_in\\_10\\_americans\\_is\\_an\\_excatholic\\_if\\_they/](https://www.reddit.com/r/excatholic/comments/va8xj/about_1_in_10_americans_is_an_excatholic_if_they/)

<sup>85</sup> Fr. John Hardon, “How to Win Lapsed Catholics Back to the Church,” <https://hardonsj.org/how-to-win-lapsed-catholics-back-to-the-church/>

<sup>86</sup> de Montfort, Saint Louis. *True Devotion to Mary: With Preparation for Total Consecration*, #152 (p. 73). Catholic Way Publishing. Kindle Edition.