



Timothy Ring

## ***Necessity of Devotion to***

We were born into the life of grace by the omnipotent intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and our supplications for spiritual progress and perseverance should be directed to Her.



**Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira**

**S**t. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort dedicates the first chapter of the *Treatise of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* to demonstrating the necessity of being a devotee of Our Lady. In what sense? Let us try to explain the Saint's thesis.

### ***Necessity of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary***

To understand St. Louis' goal, we must read the chapter with great care.

He begins with a preamble and then develops the demonstration. In the prologue, he establishes the scope of the word *necessity*: it is not to say that God absolutely needs Our Lady to save souls, because, being omnipotent and perfect, He needs no one. He is above all things and could have created a world in which Our Lady did not exist and souls would be saved without Her.

The necessity of Mary in the spiritual life is therefore of another kind. Seeing as God created Her by a free act of His will, giving Her certain perfections and attributes, including that of Universal Mediation, devotion to Her becomes necessary.

In other words, the Catholic Church does not maintain that God needs Our Lady, but states the following: The Lord wanted Her to be necessary for our salvation, and therefore made it so by a decree of His superior plan.

### ***Transcendental importance of the Incarnation***

The demonstration St. Louis de Montfort makes regarding the necessity of devotion to Our Lady is based on her role in the Incarnation. Therefore, before all else, let us lay some groundwork.

The first thesis that we must remember is the paramount importance of the Incarnation in the work of creation. There is one point in this regard that is debated among theologians. Some say that if man had not sinned, the Eternal Word would not have assumed our flesh; others claim that the Incarnation would have occurred even without original sin.

Hence the former conclude that, though it was an evil, Adam's sin did provide a benefit for humanity; thus the Liturgy sings on Holy Saturday: *O felix culpa...* – O happy fault, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!

# *the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Without the fall of our first parents, we would lack the happiness of having the Saviour.

Whatever the case may be, whichever thesis one adheres to, we must recognize that the Incarnation of the Word is not just one episode among others in the history of mankind, but is, like the Redemption, a culminating event.

As God is *He Who is*, there has never been anything – with the exception of the generation of the Word and the procession of the Holy Spirit – even close to the importance of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. It is a fact related to divine nature itself, and that which appertains to God is incomparably more important than that which refers to man. The Incarnation transcends everything in importance, and is intimately linked to the Redemption.

## *Role of Our Lady in the divine plan*

For this reason, the role of Our Lady in the Incarnation clearly establishes her importance in the whole of the divine plan, and does so concerning precisely what is most important and fundamental in it.

For example, it is admirable that Our Lord chose Constantine to take the Church out of the catacombs. But what is this beside Our Lady having been chosen from all eternity to bear the Saviour? Nothing at all. We truly admire Anchieta, because he evangelized Brazil. Now what is evangelizing a country compared to cooperating in the Incarnation of the Word? Nothing!

Let's speak in terms of saving the world from the present crisis and restoring Christ's Kingdom, and suppose that Our Lord were to choose one man for that task. We would consider this a formidable mission, and rightly so. But what would that be in light of Our Lady's mission? Nothing! It lies on a level beyond comparison with the historical role of any other person, including that of St. Peter, even though he was the first Pope.

Concerning Our Lady, one is always obliged to repeat the expression: "beyond comparison." It supersedes human vocabulary. There is such a disproportion between Her and all creatures that the only sure thing to say is "beyond comparison"...

Having recalled these concepts, we can only conclude that to study Our Lady's participation in the Incarnation is to analyse her role in the most important event of all time, together with the Redemption. And what exactly was this role?

St. Louis de Montfort responds by reflecting on the participation of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity in the Incarnation, and then on the cooperation of Our Lady with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

## *Cooperation with the Eternal Father*

As Scripture says, Jesus Christ was sent into the world by the Eternal Father to save men. The Old Testament, in one of its prophecies, states of Our Lord: "Lo, I come; in the roll of the book it is written of Me; I delight to do Thy will" (Ps 40: 7-8).



João S. Clá Dias



Thiago Tamura Nogueira

*The Church does not maintain that God needs Our Lady, but states the following: The Lord wanted Her to be necessary for our salvation*

Above, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira venerating a statue sculpted by St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre and Msgr. João Scognamiglio Clá Dias the statue of Mary Help of Christians in Tabor House, in Caieiras (SP); on previous page, Our Lady Seat of Wisdom - Bela Vista House, Mairiporã (SP)

Jesus Christ constantly speaks of His Heavenly Father as the One who sent Him, and He manifested Himself as His beloved Son. It was the Father He invoked when He gave up His soul, saying, “into Thy hands I commit My spirit” (Lk 23:46).

Now if the Eternal Father sent us Jesus Christ, what was the role of Our Lady in this act?

We must first consider that the world was not worthy to receive Our Lord Jesus Christ. If He was sent to us by the Eternal Father, it was because the Blessed Virgin implored His coming. And He gave Him to Mary as the only one worthy to receive Him.

From this perspective, the lamentation contained in the Gospel of St. John is better understood: “He came to His own, but His own received Him not” (Jn 1:11). His own would not receive Him, but Our Lady would receive Him in a sublime way. This is why He came: because He found Her in the world, otherwise He would not have come down from Heaven.

Christ’s appearance on earth is therefore the fruit of the presence and prayers of the Blessed Virgin. In this way, She collaborated with the act of the Eternal Father by which Jesus was sent into the world.

The fecundity of God the Father is infinite, to the point that the idea He formed of Himself begets a Divine Person. This fruitfulness was transmitted to Our Lady, so that She would bear Jesus and all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Our Lady is, therefore, Mother of the faithful, but not only in the allegorical and metaphorical sense of loving us: She is truly so in the order of grace. And if this Divine Maternity exists, it means that the Eternal Father has somehow communicated His own fecundity to Her.

#### *Applications to our spiritual life*

From the fact that Our Lady merited by her prayers the coming of the Messiah, as well as having received the Eternal Father’s fecundity, we can draw some lessons for our spiritual life. To do so, we must first analyse the zeal of the Blessed Virgin for God’s cause.

In her prayer, She undoubtedly noted the state of extreme misery into which the chosen people had

fallen and ardently desired that Israel would be restored to its former situation. She further considered the decadence of humanity, knowing better than anyone how many souls were being lost during that pagan era, and clearly seeing satan’s reign over the world.

The Blessed Virgin Mary thus played the role of St. Michael in Heaven; her prayer, asking that God come into the world, was equivalent to the Archangel’s “*Quis ut Deus?*”<sup>21</sup> It is She who rose up against this state of things; only her supplication was powerful enough to deal a blow that would transform everything.

Thus, the fullness of time is accomplished: Our Lord Jesus Christ is born and all of humanity is restored, regenerated, elevated, and sanctified. The salvation of a multitude of souls begins, the gates of Heaven are opened, hell is crushed, death is destroyed, and the Catholic Church flourishes upon the face of the earth; and all as a consequence of Our Lady’s prayer.



*The fecundity of God the Father was transmitted to Her so that She would bear Jesus and all the members of His Mystical Body*

Annunciation, by Fra Angelico - Prado Museum, Madrid

Is it not true that, also in this respect, She presents herself to us as a model? Should we not long for the victory of Our Lord in our days, as the Blessed Virgin Mary desired it in her time? Is there not an absolute analogy between the ardour with which She yearned for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth, and the fervour with which we should desire it? Is it not true that if her prayer was necessary for the fulfilment of the Incarnation, it is also indispensable for Jesus Christ's victory in the present world? When we are worn out in the struggle for God's triumph, do we remember to pray to Our Lady? When we pray to Her, do we remember to ask for this grace?

For example, would it not be a good prayer if, as we contemplated the Mystery of the Annunciation during the first decade of the Rosary, we had in mind Our Lady imploring the Saviour's coming, and we prayed to Her that Jesus Christ once again triumph in the world with the future victory of the Catholic Church? Is this not a good application of this mystery to our spiritual life? Is this not how our spiritual life ought to be seen, lived and conducted? Is this not much more solid than protracted pious murmuring?

Without a doubt, these truths nourish our piety and our entire spiritual life.

***Piety based on principles, not sentiments***

Let us ponder Our Lady hastening with her prayer the coming of the Messiah. Now if Our Lord also comes to us in Communion, we can



Fresco of the Mother of Good Counsel  
Genazzano (Italy)

*Should we not long for the victory of Our Lord in our days, as the Blessed Virgin Mary desired it in her time?*

and should ask the Virgin Mary, as we prepare to receive her Divine Son, for some of the same sentiments with which She welcomed Him at the time of the Incarnation.

And if we wish to obtain the grace of daily Communion for someone, would it not be worthwhile to ask Our Lady to obtain for that soul the daily reception of Our Lord, reminding Her of the efficacy of the prayer by which She obtained the coming of Jesus Christ into the world?

Let us consider, on the other hand, Our Lady's participation in the fruitfulness of the Eternal Father in begetting members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

When we pass a baptism, we should remember to say a prayer to the Blessed Virgin, beseeching Her to keep us faithful to the grace of Baptism until death. It was at a baptismal font that we entered into the bosom of the Catholic Church, were born into the supernatural life, and by Our Lady's prayers and the fecundity of the Lord our God we became members of the Mystical Body of Christ, of which Mary is the true Mother.

Furthermore, if we recall that we were born into the life of grace through the same omnipotent intercession of the Blessed Virgin, then we will have every reason to ask Her to keep us securely within the heavenly gifts of Baptism and to fill us with the virtue of a Catholic sense, crowning glory of this extremely intimate union with Christ.

Piety must consist of forming dispositions of spirit based on these principles taught by the Church and theology, not on mere feelings. Such teachings engender a very serious and well-grounded love for Our Lady. This is how true devotion to Mary is forged and an authentic spiritual life founded. ✧

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<sup>1</sup> From the Latin: "Who is like unto God?"