

# Queen of Militants

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————— 1944 —————

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## FOREWORD

Queen of Militants! Of what militants?

A militant is an apostle, especially a lay apostle, an apostle of Catholic Action. The term is here used in its widest sense. Therefore, it includes not only the members of Catholic Action properly so called, but also of its auxiliaries - hence, Sodalists, members of the Legion of Mary, of the Holy Name Society, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic Youth Organization, etc. As Pope Pius XII has recalled in his encyclical on the *Mystical Body of Christ*, every Christian should be an apostle.

During the past years, especially since the pressing appeals of Popes Pius XI and Pius XII in favor of Catholic Action, the number of Christian militants has multiplied in gigantic proportions.

Only yesterday the Church grieved over the millions of workers who fell away from her during the last century. But behold the immense hope that now makes her heart leap for joy. You, her militants, by becoming more and more numerous and more and more courageous and forward, give promise of aiding her in restoring the world to Christ.

Your task may appear desperately difficult. Your enemies are more numerous than you; they have at their command inexhaustible resources; they are organized with a cleverness that one is almost tempted to call satanic.

If it is of prime importance, then, that you do not "beat the air," that your every step and your every move contribute to victory. And it is necessary that this victory be as complete as possible, for it concerns the cause of Christ and of His Church; it involves the temporal and eternal welfare of numberless souls.

These pages will try to convince you that to make your apostolic activity yield the most fruit, to obtain this complete victory in the cause of Christ and of souls, you must fight under the orders of the Immaculate Virgin, "the victor in all the battles of God," as Pope Pius XII recently called her.

These pages will endeavor to show you that with the same amount of energy and the same exterior means, you will realize a hundred times more success, and success a hundred times more solid, by fighting "under the orders of Mary," *Maria duce*, than if you forget the Blessed Virgin. Try it! You will be convinced!

# PREFATORY LETTER

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from His Excellency, Archbishop Feltin of Bordeaux  
Archbishop's House

February 2, 1944  
Feast of the Purification of Mary

Dear Reverend Father,

If ever a young militant of Catholic Action has need of precise orientation, firm support, and appropriate counsels for valiantly and successfully carrying on his apostolic mission, he will welcome your work, for it will always shed light on his path if the way has become dark and will strengthen his will every time it begins to waver.

You have already published numerous works about the Blessed Virgin. From this one might be tempted to believe that you have exhausted the subject. But in each one of your books something new is found. Under your pen all the Marian aspects of theology are developed, precisely set forth with perfect clearness, and adapted to the times.

I have just read with real personal profit the pages of this new volume. Its descriptive title, *Queen of Militants*, fits it very well.

In the first part of your work you present a complete synthesis of Marian doctrine as applied to the life of a militant. By original insights and a happy association of ideas, you show that the Blessed Virgin is the Queen and Model of militants.

The title that you have given her is not forced. She merits it! You have shown this conclusively and all the more competently since you have such a perfect understanding of youth and their difficulties, whatever the social milieu to which they belong. Each page is an expression of this penetrating psychology! All the objections that may enter the mind of a Jocist, a Jacist, or a Jecist are clearly set forth,

and the answer which you offer is always convincing.

In the second part of the necessary qualities of the lay apostle, purity, charity, interior life, forgetfulness of self, courage, perseverance, are opportunely presented, while the third part, although less specifically Marian, offers judicious counsels for the youth who wishes to be a true militant.<sup>2</sup>

The direct style brings out the thought in striking contrast and lends its special vigor, which you embellish by interesting quotations and examples, drawn especially from the two great apostles of Mary, Blessed Grignon de Montfort and Father Chaminade.

Finally, the note of confidence with which these pages close does not fail to leave the reader with a reassuring impression.

I wish for your work all the success that it merits! Every youth who will read it, and especially everyone who will meditate on it, will learn not only to know and to love Mary better but also to understand himself better and thus better perfect himself with a view to a more fruitful apostolate.

In writing this book you have admirably served both the Blessed Virgin and Catholic Action. We thank you heartily, Reverend Father. Accept with all my felicitations the assurance of my very devoted sentiments in our Lord.

+ Maurice Feltin

Archbishop of Bordeaux

<sup>2</sup> The remark refers to the first French edition. In the text of the second edition, to which this translation conforms, the thought of Mary appears in every chapter.

## **PART 1**

# **MARY'S PLACE IN THE LIFE OF THE MILITANT**

## IS NOT DEVOTION TO MARY FOR CHILDREN?

True, a certain form of devotion to Mary is for children. But there is another, at least every bit as real, which is for adults, and in particular for militants.

Devotion to Mary is much like the love of a child for its mother, since, after all, every devotion to Mary is love for our heavenly Mother. There is a filial love which is expressed by caresses, childish outbursts, words of tenderness, things which are charming in children but offensive in grownups. There is also a more reserved but just as true filial love, a manly love, which shows itself especially by devotedness. In like manner, there is a child's devotion to our Blessed Mother and a *man's devotion*.

But perhaps my explanation doesn't satisfy you sufficiently. If you do not understand the necessity of devotion to Mary for you, as a militant, it may be that you understand only very imperfectly the essential nature of devotion to Mary in general.

In what, do you think, does it consist? In certain prayers, in songs, processions, candles and flowers, ribbons and medals? All these things are good in their place, but they are only accessories. The essential is something else.

Some years ago in a sanatorium at Leysin, Switzerland, in the middle of a conversation on religion, a young Protestant girl said, "I love my mother very much, and I am sure that Jesus loved His Mother very much more. We ought to do as Jesus did. That is why I love the Mother of Jesus very much." She understood devotion to Mary better than some Catholics.

Since you often meditate on the Gospel, you know that



for the Christian the imitation of Christ is everything. You love your companions, you love the unfortunate, you love the poor, you strive to love all men, even your enemies, because Christ loves them and as Christ loves them. But did not Christ love His Mother more than all men together? *Should you not love her because Christ loves her and as He loves her?* Why did he grant her more graces than all other creatures? Why did He will that she alone be immaculate in her conception, exempt from every disorder, preserved from all imperfections, honored at the same time as Virgin and Mother, and glorified in heaven even in her body as he Himself is? Why did He decide that she be associated with Him in the work of our redemption, that all His graces come to us through her, that she be the Queen of heaven and earth as He is the King? It is because He loved her and still loves her more than all men and all angels together. He told us, "I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you also should do" (John 13:15). Would you be a true disciple of Christ if you did not strive to imitate His filial love for His Mother?

But even this does not explain devotion to Mary sufficiently. Recall that marvelous doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ on which you have often meditated. The state of grace is Christ in us making us live His life. If we are pure, patient, and charitable, it is Christ who is pure, patient, and charitable in us. According to the magnificent words of St. Paul, "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). And so, *when I love Mary, it is no longer I who love her, but it is Christ who loves her in me.*

Christ wishes to make us live more and more fully His life. He wishes to instill in us all His dispositions as perfectly as possible. He desires that we grow therein "until we all attain," as St. Paul again says, "...to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). He wishes therefore to make us live His filial piety toward His Mother more and

more perfectly so that we may love Mary as He Himself loved her. We cannot cause Him a greater joy than by striving, as much as lies in our power, to be for this mother whom He so greatly loves, what He Himself was for her.

Do you begin to catch a glimpse of what devotion to Mary really is? You saw before scarcely more than the sentimentality of a child; yet it is Jesus in us who continues to love His Mother through us, and He wishes to love her and to make her loved more and more in us and through us. "It is so beautiful that one scarcely dares to believe it," said a Jocist Chaplain once he had well understood this truth.<sup>1</sup> Yes, there are so many beauties in the doctrine of our incorporation in Christ, and among these beauties the one most calculated to inspire us with enthusiasm is devotion to Mary considered as the participation, the prolongation in us, of the filial piety of Jesus for His mother.

Besides, there are some examples of servants of the Blessed Virgin who were mature men, men of merit and not mere children.

*The Head of a Government.* Philippe Etter, three times president of the Swiss Confederation, and the father of ten children, has preserved as head of the government the devotion to Mary he had as a young Sodalist. Each year on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Sodality of the College of Zoug, where he studied the humanities, sends to its former members a formula of consecration to Mary which they return signed. Instead of being content with putting his signature to the printed formula, President Etter each year writes in his own hand his act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin.

*A Soldier.* Field-Marshal Liautey of France. A friend of the Field-Marshal who knew him very well, saw a prayer book and a rosary on a table in his room. His friend's stare betrayed his surprise, and as nothing escaped the Field-Marshal, he said to him, "Don't make fun of me!...If you

get to be my age, you will see that you must hold on to something...I hold on to my Rosary, and I regret that I did not begin to hold on to it sooner."

*A Political Leader.* Daniel O'Connell, the great Catholic orator whose powerful speeches stirred up Ireland at the beginning of the nineteenth century and inaugurated the movement which climaxed in the independence of that country a century later, loved to confide in our Blessed Mother. He defended the rights of his oppressed country in the English Parliament. Before mounting the rostrum he could be seen with eyes lowered, saying the Rosary. When he stepped up to talk, his glowing countenance and soul-stirring speech so moved his Protestant adversaries that he wrung from them, in spite of themselves, concessions of freedom for his fellow-Catholics.

*A Scientist.* Andre-Marie Ampere, discoverer of the principles of electrical telegraphy and of the fundamental law of electro-dynamics, loved to pray to the Blessed Virgin with the simplicity of a child. One day the future founder of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, Frederic Ozanam, who was then a young man harassed by doubts, entered a church and to his surprise saw the great Ampere reciting his Rosary. This made such an impression on him that it settled his mind and helped him to decide his future.

*A Doctor.* Recamier, professor of the College of France, was the physician of several kings. He was known all over Europe. One day which he was showing Father Mallet his broken rosary, he said to him, "Certainly, I recite my Rosary! When I am uncertain about a patient, when I find medicine powerless, I take our Blessed Mother for intermediary with the One who knows how to cure all things. While making my rounds among my patients, I say one or two decades of the Rosary. The Rosary is my go-between with Mary."

*A Leader in Catholic Action.* On December 30, 1937,

in China, Lo Pa Hong died a victim of his political enemies. He was both a great man of action and a fervent Christian. In his automobile, with his eyes lowered behind large dark glasses, which he wore as an aid to his recollection, Lo Pa Hong conversed with the Blessed Virgin. Many were the Aves which he whispered with fervor and sowed at random along the roads of pagan China and which will flower forth in graces of conversion!

One day Lo Pa Hong was called, as was the custom in such cases, to the bedside of a dying man who absolutely refused to be baptized. Nothing could overcome the ill will of the patient. Falling on his knees in a corner of the apartment, Lo Pa Hong took his rosary and recited it devoutly. After the last Ave he rose. A wonderful thing happened! Grace had triumphed over the heart of the hardened sinner, and Lo Pa Hong had the consolation of administering Baptism to him *in extremis* and of sending one more soul into paradise.

In humble and ardent prayer to our lady this friend of the poor found the peace, the beautiful tranquillity of soul, which enabled him to be both an extraordinary worker and a beloved and enthusiastic leader of Catholic Action in China.

*A Militant Jocist.* Guy Sixois died at the age of twenty-four, offering his life for his dear J.O.C. We read in his biography:

"In his passionate search for Christ, Guy chose for guides our Blessed Mother and Saint Francis. During the Jocist pilgrimage to Rome, he wrote: 'We find Jesus through Mary. Hence I shall often have recourse to her. She is all-powerful, and she is also so good. She is my Mother.' He prepared himself for her feasts by novenas filled with the thought of her. Each day he said several decades of the Rosary. During his final illness he complained that he no longer had power enough to recite it. He had

the thoughtfulness to offer some of his Communions 'in thanksgiving for the gifts received from God through Mary.' On February 22, 1930, one of his remarks expressed his childlike regard for the Blessed Virgin. 'My director enrolled me in the scapular this evening. I am very happy; I am overjoyed at seeing myself placed entirely under the protection of the Blessed Virgin.'"<sup>2</sup>

*A Jocist Propagandist.* "On the propaganda tour I set for myself the objective of contacting men who were truly representative of the masses and of thus showing the militants of the section I was about to visit that it was possible to reach that kind of fellows. As I was not too convinced that my trip would be a success, I went up to visit a little shrine of the blessed Virgin, and, on the way, I recited the Rosary that I might be ready to speak to anyone I should meet and that I would lose no occasion to act. At eight o'clock I found myself before a theatre, and noticed a suspicious character with cap slanted over one eye. He looked at me. I approached, asked him for a match, and we began to discuss various topics. Work, the movies, wages, all entered into the conversation. A buddy of his joined us, shook hands, and began to chat with us; then, already in a quite friendly mood, we dropped into a café for a drink. The conversation rolled along, and all the while I was saying, 'Holy Virgin, do not forget me!' After some time the suspicious-looking character began to relate his life story. He told us everything, the things that bothered him, his troubles, his attitude at home, his failure to make his Easter duty and to attend Mass. He confided to us, 'I want to change my ways if you will help me. My companions drew me into evil; why should I not allow myself to be drawn to good? Tomorrow morning (it was Saturday night) I am going to confession and to Holy Communion, and tomorrow evening I will go to see my mother and find out what she wants me to do.' Sunday morning at seven o'clock he was at the Communion rail

after having stayed away for two years, and on Sunday evening we visited his mother. She told him just what she expected of him and what he must do to change his life. The whole family - there were also two younger sisters - was won over, and now the young man and his companions are militants of the section; and they mutually support one another."

<sup>1</sup> In order to understand it well it is necessary to study it seriously and to reflect on it leisurely in prayer. It is found explained in greater detail than is possible here in *My Ideal, Jesus, Son of Mary* (Maryhurst Press, Kirkwood, MO, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> *L'Ame d'un Militant*, Guy Sixois, by Fr. Stephane-Joseph Piat, O.F.M. Les Editions Ouvrieres, Paris 1933).

## IS NOT CHRIST SUFFICIENT?

Christ is our Head, our Model, our Strength, our Life, our God, our All; I believe this as well as you do. But are you really following Christ if you do not imitate his filial piety towards her who was so dear to Him?

Christ has introduced us into the family of God. He is our oldest Brother. His Father is our Father. He wishes that His Mother should also be our Mother. Does a child have nothing to do with his mother on the pretext that his father and his brother are sufficient for him?

I have already heard the objection, "Christ is sufficient for me." I have read it many times in certain writings - Protestant writings.

Here is what I have read in another writing, a kind of a circular letter sent to the four corners of the world by a well-known man, who desperately loved our Lord and who set out to "restore all things in Christ." To restore all things in Christ, that sums up your ambition, does it not? But his ambition was much greater than yours, for this man was Pope Pius X. Do you know that at the beginning of his pontificate he pointed out that a renewal in the world of devotion to Mary was the best means of restoring all things in Christ? Listen to some of his words of this subject:

"Can anyone fail to see that *there is no surer or more direct way than by Mary for uniting all mankind in Christ* and obtaining through Him the perfect adoption of sons...?"

"Since Divine Providence has been pleased that we should have the god-man through Mary...it only remains for us to receive Christ from the hands of Mary."

"No one ever knew Christ so profoundly as she did, and no one can ever be a more competent guide and teacher of the knowledge of Christ. Hence it follows...that

the Virgin is more powerful than all others as a means of uniting mankind with Christ."

And here he answers your objections more directly:

"Mary... is the surest help to the knowledge and love of Christ. They prove it only too truly by their deplorable manner of life who, by false teaching or the wiles of the devil fancy they can dispense with the aid of the Virgin Mother. Miserable and unhappy are they who neglect her on the pretence that thus they honor Christ. They forget that the Child is no found without Mary, His Mother."<sup>1</sup>

The saintly Pope Pius X was speaking from experience; and all the saints would have spoken as he did. Who loves Christ as much as do the saints, and who loves the Mother of Christ as much as they love her? All of them - whether they were parish priests like the Cure of Ars, or missionaries like Francis Xavier converting hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of pagans, or chaplains of galley-slaves and fathers of the poor like Vincent de Paul - all distinguished themselves by an exceptional love for our Blessed Mother.

Moreover, do not all fervent Christians love at the same time both Christ and His Blessed Mother? And not only Catholics. I spoke above of certain Protestant authors who reject the Mother in order to know only the Son. But there art Protestants who have other views. Listen to this one:

*"The Mother conducts us to the Son, and the Son reveals to us the splendor of the Father.*

"Where the Mother is no longer venerated, there is no longer respect for the Son. The more devotion to Mary is neglected, the more also does the adoration of the Son tend to disappear.

"The magi 'found the child with Mary His Mother.' All nations will come to adore the Child, but they will not find



Him alone, Mary is with Him... No one will find the Child without the Mother, because the Mother and the Son are inseparable, not only by their natures but still more by their functions.

“Cursed be the sacrilegious hand of him who comes to snatch the Child from the arms of His Mother. He will not be able to do it. The Mother will flee, but will take her Son with her.”

Almost the refrain of Pope Pius X, is it not? Who wrote these lines? The Protestant Pastor Lortzing of Gottingen.<sup>2</sup>

But you are a Catholic. Instead of objecting and of arguing, would it not be more in conformity with your faith to acknowledge that all the saints and all the truly faithful members of the Church must have good reasons for putting our Blessed mother next to Christ in their lives, and then to do as they have done? For there are some things which are understood only in practice.

Come now, be honest with yourself and answer frankly. *You love Christ. But to what degree?*

Even to the point of being killed for Him, if it were necessary.

Yes, you are sincere in saying this. You have felt this determination especially at those assemblies in which a comrade spoke with such ardor of the love of Christ that his ardor little by little enflamed all who heard him.

But Christ does not ask you to die for Him, either in words or in sentiment, but simply to do your ungrateful duty each day. Why, then, do you do it so badly?

Or again, after having been wrapped up in your ideal during an intimate conversation with the chaplain or an enthusiastic leader and after having promised, at any cost, to remake society according to the teachings of Christ, why already on the following day do you show yourself to

be so easily discouraged? Why do you begin to criticise everybody and everything? Why do you sometimes go as far as to ask yourself whether you should not give it all up?

At the moment of Holy Communion you tell Jesus that you wish to love Him with all your heart and to sacrifice yourself for Him. Why, then, do you permit yourself to offend Him so soon afterwards by your laziness, your greediness, your slanders, perhaps by faults of which you are ashamed? Did you lie to Him at Holy Communion?

If Christ is your Leader and your Model, you ought to think as he does. Have you the same thoughts as he has on the subject of the blessedness of poverty, on suffering and pleasure, on the necessity of carrying your cross each day, on the present and future life?

If Christ is your Leader and your Model, you ought to share His sentiments. Do you? If you do why do you fail to pardon those who have injured you or simply humiliated you? Why are you jealous of your companions who succeed better than you do? Why are you ill-humored when you do not get what you want?

If Christ is your Leader and your Model, you ought to act like Christ. Like Him, you should always forget yourself to think only of others; you should accept contradictions, reproaches, and even insults from them with a calm countenance and tranquil soul. Your time, your work, your goods, your strength, your very life if necessary should be theirs. Do you do all this?

If Christ is your leader and your Model, you must become ever more perfectly another Christ. Look well at yourself; what a fine Christ you are!

You say that such a change is not made in a day? That is true. But if you are sincere, are you not obliged to confess that you were more generous in His service at the

beginning of your life as a militant than you often are at present? Must you not acknowledge that more than once you have felt discouraged at the sight of your repeated falls, of the fruitlessness of your promises, of the strength of your bad habits and of the weakness of your will, and that sometimes you catch yourself saying, "I shall never get there"?

Then listen attentively to this: *these things would have happened differently if, instead of trying to go to Christ all by yourself, you had gone to Him with Mary.*

It was Mary who presided over the training of Christ. She wishes to take care of your supernatural training, too, by forming you to the likeness of her First-born Son.

With her, you will understand Christ much better. Too often He is a mere name which you salute with shouts of joy that may not even be sincere. Through her, He will become soul of your soul.

She will teach you to think like Christ, to feel like Christ, to will like Christ, to live like Christ, in short, to be another Christ.

You will still have temptations to laziness, greediness, discontent, impurity, or other sins; but with Mary you will conquer them.

You will still have difficulty in pardoning others and in sacrificing yourself; but with her you will succeed.

You will still have moments of sadness, but she will console you. You will have feelings of weariness, but she will quickly give you confidence and courage, for she will make you feel that with her help you will always succeed.

Others have said the same things as I have told you here. They, too, at first did not think of the Blessed Virgin any more frequently than you do, and were painfully trudging along quite discouraged. But once they had

discovered her, they were amazed to see that from that hour they advanced from one success to another.

Is this astonishing? The Pope has said: "there is no better teacher or better guide to make Jesus known...There is not a surer or a swifter way to unite men to Jesus and to make them saints than Mary."

Try it, and you will be happy to learn that what I have promised you is nothing in comparison with what you will discover for yourself.

On July 20, 1947, Pope Pius XII solemnly canonized a servant of God whose name you have, perhaps, already heard, Saint Grignon de Montfort. A stalwart apostle, he continually traveled about the towns and the country-places of France, preaching to immense multitudes, converting, it is said, hundreds of thousands of sinners and heretics. By his preaching, he so well anchored the faith in the people of the Vendee and of Brittany that, some eighty years after his death, they heroically defended their religion against the armies of the French Revolution. In order to thwart his apostolate, his enemies resorted to raillery, contradictions, and snares of all kinds, and even attempted to poison him. He triumphed over all these obstacles, even making of them a means of success, as he remarks in his ardent "Letter to the Friends of the Cross."

Now this apostolate, who was so enamored of the Passion of Jesus, and who burned to establish everywhere the reign of Christ, knew no better means to lead men to Christ than the Blessed Virgin. Unceasingly he preached the Rosary and total consecration to Mary. On this latter subject he composed a wonderful little book which every militant ought to have read, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*.<sup>3</sup>

"This devotion (total consecration)," he writes, "is an easy, short, perfect, and secure way of arriving at union with our Lord.

"It is an easy way. It is the way which Jesus Christ Himself trod in coming to us, and in which there is no obstacle in reaching Him."<sup>4</sup>

"This devotion to our blessed Lady is a short road to find Jesus Christ, both because it is a road from which we do not stray and because... it is a road we tread with joy and facility, and consequently with promptitude."<sup>5</sup>

"This devotion is a secure means of going to Jesus Christ, because it is the very characteristic of Our Blessed Lord to conduct us surely to the Eternal Father."<sup>6</sup>

"This practice of devotion to our Blessed Lady is also a perfect path by which to go and unite ourselves to Jesus; because the divine Mary is the most perfect and the most holy of creatures, and because Jesus, Who has come to us most perfectly, took no other road for His great and admirable journey."<sup>7</sup>

"Make for me, if you will, a new road to go to Jesus, and pave it with all the merits of the blessed, adorn it with all their heroic virtues, illuminate and embellish it with all the lights and beauties of the angels, and let all the angels and saints be there themselves to escort, defend and sustain those who are ready to walk there; and yet in truth, in simple truth, I say boldly, and I repeat that I say truly, I would prefer to this new, perfect path the immaculate way of Mary ... It is the way without stain or spot, without original or actual sin, without shadow or darkness. When my sweet Jesus in His glory comes a second time on earth in His glory, as it is most certain he will do, to reign there, he will choose no other way for His journey than the divine Mary, by whom he came the first time so surely and so perfectly. But there will be a difference between His first and His last coming. The first time He came secretly and hiddenly; the second time He will come gloriously and resplendently. But both times He will have come perfectly, because both times He will

have come by Mary. Alas! Here is a mystery which is not understood."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Encyclical *Ad diem illum*, February 2, 1904.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures spirituelles pour Noel*. Schoening, Paderborn

<sup>3</sup> *All quotations are taken from the Revised Edition (1941), published by Montfort Fathers, Bay Shore, NY*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123-4

## WHY MARY IN MY APOSTOLATE?

I understand that as a loyal Catholic I should honor the Blessed Virgin. Perhaps I should pray to her more frequently. I firmly believe that I ought to give her a more prominent place in my piety. I realize that with her help it would be easier for me to resist certain temptations. If I were more intimate with her, undoubtedly I should also be more intimate with Christ. I am ready to follow the directives of Pius X more faithfully and to seek the Son at the side of the Mother.

However, even though the Blessed Virgin ought to play a more active role in my prayer life, I do not see why I should give her a place in my life as a militant. My earthly Mother has devoted herself to me and still sacrifices herself for me without counting the cost. She shares my joys and consoles me in my sorrows. But she has little to do with my apostolate, except that she gives me a lot of advice which more often than not irritates me: "Do not tire yourself so much. You return too late from your meetings, and you do not get enough sleep. Avoid any squabble with the Reds... and with the police. It seems that some good Catholic people look unfavorably upon your movement. They say that you are playing the game of the socialists." My dear mother, I am not angry at you. But a woman can't understand the ideas and the dreams of young men. A mother's place is in the home, not on the field of battle. I think that the same is true for my Mother in Heaven. She will help me in my interior life, but what part could she play in my life as a militant? Christ loved His Mother with an immeasurable love; He must have spent many hours of infinitely sweet intimacy with her at Nazareth. But He did not associate her in His apostolate. He did not say to her: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son

and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28: 19-20).

No, He did not address this order to her. But He did associate her in His mission more than He associated James and John, and Philip and Andrew, and even Saint Peter and all the Apostles taken together. He has made her *a perfect Militant*, a Militant who influences all men without exception. He made her so great a Militant that all other militants merely participate in her mission, and without her would be absolutely powerless to achieve the least success. The apostolic action of this great Militant ought to be particularly evident in the times in which we are living, ever more and more extensively as times goes on. To her is reserved a great victory in our days, a victory which she will share with all those who combat under her orders. She is the *Queen of Militants*, to whom you must consecrate your life and your strength if you wish to be successful always and to be a one hundred percent militant.

This is a bold assertion, is it not? Up to now you have never really understood it, have you? I am going to show you that there is not the least exaggeration in my assertions. Only give me your attention and your good will, and ask Jesus to make you understand the mission which He has confided to His mother and the part He wishes you to play to help her in this mission.

But listen first to what happened to a great apostle of the nineteenth century. In the beginning he did not see any more clearly than you do why he should put our Blessed Mother in his apostolate, and he had to be compelled by Heaven to do so. I speak of the Venerable Libermann, who founded a society of missionaries dedicated to the conversion of the Negroes. At present his society numbers over three thousand, and they have converted and evangelized hundreds of thousands of Negroes in Africa



and in the New World.

The Venerable Founder had gone to Rome to submit the project of his work to the Holy See. While awaiting an answer, he drew up the Rule of his future Order.

"While engaged in this work," he relates, "a singular thing happened to me in which the good pleasure of the Most Holy Heart of our Good Mother was most manifest; and even now it is a cause of great consolation for me.

"Only Father Tisserand (one of his first two companions) was of the opinion that we ought to consecrate our work to the Most Holy Heart of Mary. Father Le Vavasseur and myself did not believe that an apostolic work should be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, although we had full confidence in this Most Holy Heart.

"I thought that the society should find in its consecration the essence of all its devotions and a perfect model of all the fundamental virtues of the apostolate. Why I did not also see that we would find these things perfectly in the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, I do not know.

"I decided, therefore, upon another scheme for this dedication. I devoted myself with great pains to sketch the plan in question, but I could think of nothing; I was very much discouraged. Consequently I made a visitation of the seven churches and went to visit several churches dedicated to the Most Holy Virgin. Then, without my being able to say why, I decided to consecrate the work to the Most Holy Heart of Mary. I returned to my house and immediately began to draw up the proposed plan. Now I saw things so clearly that at a single glance I comprehended the whole scheme and all of the developments with their details. This was for me a consolation and an inexpressible joy.

"In the course of the work, especially in the explanation of its details, now and then difficulties arose and I became

puzzled. I then hastened to make a visit to one of Mary's shrines (Saint Mary Major, Santa Maria in Trastevere, the Madonna del parto in the church of the Augustinians, and the Madonna della pace), and I knew that upon my return home I had only to take up my pen. Difficulties disappeared, and the uncertain details were clarified. This never failed me."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres spirituelles*, III, 362 ff.

## MARY, THE PERFECT MILITANT: COOPERATOR WITH THE REDEEMER

Christ is the Supreme Militant. Adam was vanquished by the devil and was the cause of perdition for all of us. Christ has conquered the demon and has redeemed us. For this reason St. Paul calls him the "New Adam."

At the side of Adam there was Eve. If Eve had sinned and Adam remained faithful, we would not have been lost: Adam is the cause of our ruin. Nevertheless it was Eve who tempted Adam; it was because of her that he lost original innocence and lost it for all of us. Holy Scripture says: "From the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die." (Ecclus. 25:33).

To repair the damage done by our first parents, divine Mercy devised a "plan of revenge" modeled so to speak, on the plan of our defeat. God willed that at the side of the New Adam there should be a "New Eve," Mary. Just as the fallen angel, disguised as a serpent, suggested disobedience to the first Eve, so the good angel, Gabriel, asked obedience of Mary.

Consider for a moment Gabriel's appearance to the Blessed Virgin. He salutes her and brings her the celestial message. Mary reflects. She asks herself what his salutation means. She wants to know what God desires of her.

The Angel waits for her answer. The Son of God awaits it. The Holy Trinity awaits it because depending on this answer we shall remain under the curse which the first Eve brought upon us, or we shall regain heaven.

Mary knows this. She answers, "Behold the handmade of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." (Luke 1:38) We are saved!

What militant, what missionary, what pope has ever done as much for mankind as this young maid of fifteen?

That is not all. Mary was not content to give bodily life to our Savior; the soul of the Virgin, even more than her body, was one with her Son. Her will was always that of Christ. She willed what He willed, that is, the salvation of the world.

Of effect this salvation it was necessary that Christ suffer and die. The sufferings of the Son would be the sufferings of the Mother. The Prophet Simeon told her this when she presented her little Infant in the Temple at Jerusalem: He would be a sign of contradiction; her heart would be pierced with a sword. All her life she would be the "Mother of Sorrows" as He was the "Man of Sorrows." But she united these sorrows with those of Her Son and offered both His sorrows and her owns to the Father for our redemption.

On Calvary Christ engaged in His great battle with Satan and destroyed his power. Mary also was there at the foot of the Cross. She renounced her maternal rights over Jesus; she offered her Son, and she offered herself to the Heavenly Father. The Father accepted her offering and pardoned us because of His Son and of her who was one with the Son.

Christ alone was able to save us. Without Him Mary would have been incapable of bringing us to life as Eve, without Adam, was incapable of losing it for us. But united to Jesus, Mary has truly contributed to our redemption. This is what we mean when we call her the "New Ever" or the Co-redemprix," that is, the Cooperator with the Redeemer.

Note well that this doctrine is not an innovatuion; it is the doctrine of the Church. Since the first centureis of christianity Mary ahs been called "the New Eve," and recent Popes have confirmed this tradition. Pope Pius

X declared: "From the communion of will and suffering between Christ and Mary She merited to become most worthily *the Reparatrix of the lost world*."<sup>1</sup> His successor, Benedict XV taught: "With her suffering and dying Son, Mary endured suffering and almost death. She gave up her maternal rights over her Son in order to procure the salvation of mankind; and to appease the divine justice as much as she could, she immolated her Son, so that one can truly affirm that *together with Christ she has redeemed the whole human race*."<sup>2</sup>

Reread what I have just explained to you. Meditate on it phrase by phrase. You will never penetrate it sufficiently. In the measure that one ignores or acknowledges Mary's role in the work of redemption, he gives to her only an occasional place in his spiritual and apostolic activity or he shares with her all that he does.

Because they have not understood this, many Christians, even pious Christians, and perhaps many militants, do not accomplish one fourth of the good that they would were they united to Mary.

You will object that all this shows Mary as a perfect Militant during her earthly life, but it does not prove that at present, while she is enjoying her triumph in heaven, she is still a militant.

Yes, she is always a militant. I will explain; follow attentively.

The work of Christ was not finished at the hour of His death. Since then, all men do not automatically go to heaven. Indeed, Jesus merited for all men the grace of salvation, but He wants to apply this grace to each man individually. It is like the case of a small town whose inhabitants are dying of famine. A rich benefactor sends an immense train of food. The people will still die of starvation if this food is not distributed to each of them individually, with they not?

In like manner, *the redemption requires an apostolate*, that is, the application of the grace of the redemption to each soul. Without the apostolate the redemption would not have its necessary completion; it would be useless, at least in great part.

Christ will continue to be the Supreme Militant until the end of time. In Heaven He intercedes for us with the Father. On earth He raises up other militants to aid Him; these He animates with His spirit. "Behold, I am with you," He said to His Apostles when sending them as militants into the world, "behold I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

All this you understand very easily. But remember that Christ has willed to redeem you in union with Mary. Mary's work, like Christ's, also calls for an apostolate. His work would not be achieved if at present the Blessed Virgin could not apply to each soul in particular this redemption which she has already merited for all in general.

I do not know whether you have ever read this strange text of St. Paul. He says that "*The gifts and the call of God are without repentance*" (Rom. 11:29). He meant that God does not act like a human master who, having chosen a certain servant for some function for which he later finds him unsuited, takes it away from him to confide to another more trustworthy. Men change instruments because they are ignorant and do not know from the outset which instrument is the most appropriate. But God knows all things; and so He chooses from the beginning men whom He finds qualified, or rather, men to whom He has given the necessary qualifications. Then He supports them in their vocation, unless by their sins they make themselves absolutely unworthy of His assistance, as was the case with Judas.

Therefore, since God chose Mary to cooperate in our redemption, He will sustain her in this function until the

end, that is, until each well-disposed soul is actually saved. Otherwise, He would be stopping His Mother before her task was half-accomplished; He would be calling her to start a work and then not permitting her to finish it, despite the fact that she always cooperated with Him perfectly.

Therefore, as Christ will always remain the Supreme Militant even to the end of the world, Mary too, will always remain a great Militant, in union with Christ. Like Him she is a Militant in heaven by interceding with Him for us, and on earth by raising up militants who will aid her and whom she will animate with her spirit. To these militants she gives a very special power.

Perhaps these statements astonish you because you have never reflected on the role of Mary. But did not God say already in the very first prophecy: "*I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head*"? (Gen. 3:15).<sup>3</sup>

To the end of time there will be enmities between Satan and his seed on the one hand and the Woman and her seed on the other. And to the end of the world, the Woman with her seed will crush his head. You have certainly seen many images or statues of the Immaculate Virgin with her foot placed on the head of the serpent. She crushed it in her Immaculate Conception and she continues to crush it as long as there are enmities between the demon and Christ.

The words of the Church echo this first prophecy when she sings: "Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, because you alone have destroyed all heresies in the entire world." In other words Mary has destroyed all perverse doctrines which lead men to their eternal ruin.

Quite recently Pope Pius XII recalled this same function of our Blessed Mother in the solemn act by which he consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Why this consecration? The Pope thereby expressed his confidence that the Blessed Virgin will bring back peace to the world, that she will convert pagans, the heretics, the schismatics, the bad Catholics, and that she will "hasten the triumph of the kingdom of God." He called her "the victor in all the battles of God."

Was I wrong in calling her the Perfect Militant?

Do you know the marvelous origin of the devotion to Our Lady of Victories? It shows that in our days, Mary is always the great Militant.

In the center of Paris, in the midst of the business quarter near the exchange, stands the ancient church of the Augustinians. Its corner-stone was laid by King Louis XIII in 1627, and it received the name of Our Lady of Victories. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, this church was practically deserted, and the pastor of the parish, Father Desgenettes, seeing that all his zealous efforts ere useless, was thinking of abandoning his post. Then on December 3, 1836, on two occasions an interior voice seemed to speak to him: "Consecrate your parish to the Immaculate Heart of Mary!" Struck with astonishment, Father Desgenettes drew up the statutes of an association in honor of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, and on Sunday morning, December 11, he announced to the few faithful souls who attended Holy Mass that in the evening a service would be held to implore the divine Mercy through the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin, in behalf of poor sinners. That evening, contrary to all expectations, the church as filled with people, and when they recited the invocation of the Litany: *Refugium peccatorum, ora pro nobis!*, Refuge of Sinners, Pray for us! all those present fell to their knees and repeated the invocation three times with intense emotion. The Archconfraternity of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion or sinners was founded. It soon shows a remarkable growth.



Today it counts millions of members in all countries of the world, and the sanctuary of Our Lady of Victories has become a center of incessant prayer, where conversions are multiplied, one could almost say, to infinity.

<sup>1</sup> Encyclical, *Ad diem illum*.

<sup>2</sup> *Acta Ap. Sed. X*, 182.

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew text says that it is the seed of the Woman who will crush the head of the serpent. It is of little importance. The text foretells the enmities between the Woman and her seed on the one hand, the serpent and his seed on the other. Besides, all Catholics know that it is only in union with and through her seed, Christ, that Mary crushes the head of the serpent.

## MARY, THE PERFECT MILITANT: DISTRIBUTOR OF ALL GRACES

Certainly, you have heard it said that “all graces come to us through Mary.”

Notice that we say *through* Mary, not *from* Mary. Grace comes to us from God; Mary only distributes it.

Consider, too, that it is said that all graces *come* to us through Mary, and not that graces are given to us only if we pray to Mary. The Blessed Virgin in her incomparable goodness obtains numerous graces also for those who do not pray to her, for those who do not know her, even for those who blaspheme her.

With this in mind, Catholic belief holds that, from the Assumption of Our lady until the end of time, all the grace that God gives to men are distributed by His Mother.

Why is this so? Because, as Co-redemptrix with her Son *she has done her part in meriting for us every grace that will ever be conferred*. Is it not just that she who has cooperated in the acquisition of all these spiritual riches should also cooperate in their distribution, since she has acquired them for the sole purpose of distributing them?

You may remember, perhaps, that at Joan of Arc’s trial one of the judges asked the accused why she carried her banner at the time of the crowning of the king at Rheims. “My banner had sustained adversity,” Joan replied, “and so it was fitting that it should likewise share in honor.” The Blessed Virgin, as the Sorrowful Mother, had also been subjected to suffering when she acquired these graces. Should she not be in a position of honor now when these graces are distributed?

The recent Popes, Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI, have emphasized this very point. To cite merely

two of their texts. Pope Pius X declared, "...associated by Christ in the work of redemption, she merits *de congruo* (in an inferior way), as the expression is, what Christ merits *de condigno* (in strict justice), and is the principal minister in the distribution of grace." ... "From this community of will and suffering between Christ and Mary she merited most worthily to become the Reparatrix of the lost world and Dispensatrix of all the gifts that our Saviour purchased for us by His death and by His blood."<sup>1</sup> His successor, Pope Benedict XV, affirmed: "Because of the union of the Blessed Virgin with Jesus in His redeeming Passion, graces of every kind, which we receive from the treasure of the redemption, are distributed to us, so to say, by the hand of the Mother of Sorrows."<sup>2</sup>

Have you ever considered that *your role as a militant is, on a small scale, the same as the role of the Distributor of all graces?*

In short, what do you propose to do? You want to re-Christianize your milieu, don't you?

And how do you go about re-Christianizing it? Suppose that you should speak with more ardor than the most eloquent orator, that you were more intelligent than the cleverest business-man, that you should work more spiritedly than the most active politician. Would you succeed by these means alone, in making those about you live more deeply the life of Christ, even in the least degree?

Re-Christianizing your milieu, casing men to live the life of Christ, is evidently a supernatural work. And with natural means we cannot produce supernatural effects, no more than we can produce intelligence from a block of wood. Supernatural results flow from supernatural means, and the supernatural is the work of grace.

Now, when you do the work of a militant, you want to bring those men who are living in the state of mortal sin to

live the life of grace. You want those, whose consciences are free from mortal sin but who nevertheless allow themselves to be guided by principles foreign to those of Christ, to live a more deeply spiritual life.

This is exactly what Mary desires. But she accomplishes this wish infinitely better than you do.

She obtains grace for men a thousand times *more easily* than you because she helped her Son in meriting this grace for them and because she is the Mother of the Author of Grace.

For every man she obtains *all the graces* that are necessary for him from the day he is born until the time he dies. She obtains all graces *for all men*, for the millions of human beings who have existed from the day of her Assumption until now and for those who will exist until the end of time, whereas you will obtain only a few graces for a handful of men.

Tell me, now, are the countless numbers of militant Jocists, Jacists, and Jecists, together with all other militants whether they are in Catholic Action organizations or not, equal to Mary, the unique Militant?

Are you acquainted with the "Miraculous Medal"?

Perhaps you look with some disdain upon a medal as an ornament for a young lady or a charm for a spinster. For some people it hardly means more than that. But for others it is a reminder that recalls the thought of our Savior, of the Blessed Virgin, or of some Saint, for the purpose of honoring and invoking them, and of remembering promises made to them. In such a practice there is no more superstition than in the use of the crucifix. We are not pure spirits; our souls are united to bodies. We need material things to remind us of spiritual realities.

But to get back to the Miraculous Medal. What is it? Where did it come from? Why is it so called?

The Miraculous Medal owes its origin to an apparition of the Blessed Virgin to a Sister of Charity, Saint Catherine Laboure, on November 27, 1830, in Paris. Sister Catherine was in the chapel at the time, making her meditation. Suddenly she heard, as it were, the rustling of the silken folds of a dress at the Epistle side of the altar. She raised her eyes and saw the Blessed Virgin Mary resplendent with light, garbed in a white robe and a cloak, the color of the dawn. Her feet rested on the globe of the world. In her hands she held another globe, which she offered to our Savior with an indescribable expression of supplication and love. Then suddenly this living tableau underwent a visible change and presented the scene which has since been represented on the Miraculous Medal. Mary's hands, weighted with graces, earth, but especially on one particular spot.

"While I was thus occupied in contemplating her," related the holy religious, "the Blessed Virgin lowered her eyes upon me and I heard a voice speak deep within my heart, 'The globe that you see represents the whole world, and particularly France, and each individual person.'

"I cannot here describe the beauty and splendor of the rays that I beheld.

"And the Blessed Virgin added, 'Behold the symbol of the graces that I shed upon the persons who ask them of me.'

"An oval-shaped tableau formed around the Holy Virgin, and on it could be read in letters of gold these words: O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

"Then I heard a voice that said to me: 'Have a medal struck on this model; whoever will carry it with piety will receive great graces, especially those who wear it about their neck. The graces will be abundant for those who have confidence.'"

The tableau turned about and the Sister saw the reverse side of the Medal. The letter M (Mary) appeared surmounted by a cross, and below the M two hearts, one crowned with thorns, the other pierced by a sword; around the edge was a crown of twelve stars.

Saint Catherine disclosed her vision to her confessor and told him of Mary's desire. He hesitated for a long time. Then in 1832, the Archbishop of Paris was consulted and he authorized that the medal be struck. The devotion spread with amazing rapidity. In ten years, about forty million medals were made in France alone, and soon it was spread throughout the world.

But still more remarkable are the numerous miracles which this medal has effected. There have been un hoped-for cures, inexplicable preservations from the dangers of death, and especially many conversions of obstinate sinners. The sold fact of wearing the medal sewn within their garments without their knowing about it, or of sleeping on a pillow under which it had been hidden, sufficed to bring back to God men whom all the efforts of their friends or of priests had done nothing more than estrange farther from religion. Hence the name "Miraculous Medal" was given to it by popular acclaim. The Church, after very careful inquiries, has approved a feast in honor of the Miraculous Medal.

<sup>1</sup> *Ad diem illum.*

<sup>2</sup> *Acta Ap. Sed. X*, 182.

## MARY THE PERFECT MILITANT: OUR MOTHER

You have known for a long time that Mary is our Mother. Already as a small child you learned that the Mother of Jesus was also our Mother.

But *how is Mary our Mother?* Is she the mother of the life of our body?

Evidently not!

Is she the mother of the natural life of our souls, that is, of our capacity to understand, to feel, to will, and to act?

Again no.

But how, then, is she our Mother?

She is the mother of our supernatural life, of that life which makes us live the life of God, which makes us members of Christ so that it is not we who live, but it is Christ who lives in us.

But how is Mary the mother of our supernatural life?

On the cross Jesus said to His Mother: "Woman, behold thy son," designating St. John. And to St. John: "Behold thy Mother" (John 19:27). And at that moment St. John represented all of us. but if she is our mother only because Jesus has confided us to her, she is merely a kind of second mother, a foster mother; she is not a real mother.

Still, she loves us much more than our earthly mothers do, and she also helps us much more.

That is true; yet a woman is not a mother by the fact that she loves and helps children, even if she loves them and helps them more than their true mothers.

What, then, makes a woman a true mother? The fact that she gives life to a human being and nourishes, sustains, and develops this life in him. Did Mary give us supernatural life? Yes, she gave it to us in giving us Christ in the Incarnation, for our life is Christ. She gave it to us in offering Christ upon Calvary that by His death we might live. She gave it to us by obtaining for us the grace of baptism, as well as all other graces, for it was at baptism that we began to live the life of God. She has given it back to us perhaps many times by obtaining for us the grace of absolution, if we have lost this life by mortal sin. Ad she sustains and nourishes it by all the graces of light, of love, and of strength which she unceasingly sends us. This is the function of our spiritual Mother.

And now, what is the function of a militant? To give Christ to those who do not know Him or do not serve Him; to give greater life to those who are in the state of grace but who do not always conduct themselves according to His teachings. Do you not see that *a militant does on a small scale the same work that our Heavenly Mother does?*

Of course, she does all of this infinitely better than any militant. Our Blessed mother really gave us Christ, while militants merely obtain for souls the Christ given to the world by Mary.

She is occupied *constantly* in making us live the life of Christ, in sending us graces without interruption, while ordinary militants buy themselves with works of zeal only from time to time and in their free moments.

She puts *much more zeal*, love, delicacy, skill, and strength into this apostolate than the most perfect militant you have ever seen.

She is concerned with giving Christ to all souls - the soul of the Chinese and the Negroes as well as the inhabitants of Europe and the Americas - while a militant



devotes himself to only some of these; and she is engaged in this work not for just a few years as we are, but from the Incarnation till the end of the world.

Was I wrong, then, in calling her the Perfect Militant?

The following is the story of an apostolic mother, St. Monica.

You have already heard the name of St. Augustine, who was her son. He was born at Tagaste, in Africa.

Following a reprehensible custom of the time, Monica wished to put off his baptism until he had grown up. Nevertheless, she reared him in the Catholic faith. As he grew out of childhood, Augustine felt temptations against purity arise within him, and soon he gave himself over to all the evil tendencies of his passion. His mother, becoming alarmed, corrected him. But, as he himself said of her corrections, "All this sounded to me womanish and I should have blushed to obey." Meanwhile, she prayed and wept without ceasing.

In order to continue his literary formation, he went to Carthage. This center of studies was also a center of licentious pleasures. Augustine fell in with corrupt companions. "Among companions of my own age," he tells us much later in his *Confessions*, "I was ashamed to be less vicious than they when I would hear them boast of their vileness and exalt themselves the more as they were the more shameful. And I enjoyed doing evil, not only out of a thirst for pleasure, but out of a thirst for glory...Out of fear of being scorned, I made myself appear more vicious than I was."

To the corruption of the heart he soon joined a more fatal corruption, that of the mind. Augustine allowed himself to be led astray by the doctrine of the Manicheans, heretics who acknowledged two gods, the one a principle of good having his dwelling in light, the other the principle

of evil who resided or dwelt in darkness. As long as her son had preserved his faith in Christ Monica could hope that this faith would triumph one day over his evil ways. But how could there be hope of conversion now that he had denied Christ and admitted the [principle of evil which permitted all his sins? The poor mother was in consternation over the apostasy of her unfortunate son. When during the following vacation he came home and talked to her of this new religion. Monica indignantly chased him from her home, declaring to him that she could not suffer him any longer at her table nor under her roof. Augustine hung his head and left. After his departure, Monica, true mother that she was, fell on her knees, allowed her tears to flow, and called God to her aid.

God granted her a vision in which He promised her that her son would return to the Catholic faith. She decided to recall him.

A short time afterwards, a venerable and wise bishop arrived at Carthage. Monica besought him to convert the poor misguided youth. But the saintly bishop, shaking his head, told her that the moment had not yet come. "Let him be," he added, "only pray much." When Monica melted into tears and urged him to see Augustine, the bishop said to her with emotion, "Go your way, it is impossible that the son of so many tears should perish."

Meanwhile, the years passed by, and Augustine continued to indulge his passions and to preach the errors of the Manicheans. And Monica continued to pray and to weep.

Augustine became a celebrated professor. Some friends encouraged him to go to Rome in order to acquire still more glory. Learning of his plan, Monica hastened to him and begged him to renounce this voyage, being persuaded that away from her he would be irredeemably lost. He promised her to say and invited her to spend the

night in an oratory beside the sea, while he went to see a friend. But while she was there asking God to prevent this voyage, Augustine sailed.

In the morning, seeing that she had been deceived, the mother was almost frantic with grief, and she complained to God that He had not listened to her. However, He had listened to her in a much better manner than she had asked, for this voyage was to bring about the conversion she so much desired.

Monica resolved to go to Rome in search of her son. Learning that he had already left for Milan, she went to join him there.

The Bishop of Milan was St. Ambrose, a very wise, a very eloquent, and a very good man. Monica went to tell him about her son. Ambrose received her with unfeigned joy. He encouraged her and told her to continue to pray but not to argue with her erring son. She obeyed.

Augustine had now begun to feel the workings of grace and he was filled with horror at his condition, but when pleasure returned to tempt him, he did not have the strength to renounce it. Monica, meanwhile, continued to beseech God in silence.

Finally after seventeen years of resistance, Augustine gave in. Monica could not contain herself for joy. She had obtained that which she had desired; indeed, she had obtained even more than she had prayed for. She had asked of God only that her son receive baptism, contract an honorable marriage, and put an end to his life of debauchery. But Augustine not only was baptized and renounced all his former ways but also vowed a life of perfect chastity, retired from the world, became a priest and later a bishop. Without doubt he was the greatest of the Fathers of the church and a very great saint.

This is what the love of an apostolic mother can

accomplish. What, then, will not Mary do for souls, she who is infinitely more a mother than Monica and all the mothers of the world and who understands infinitely better than all of them the value of faith and life eternal?

## MARY, QUEEN OF MILITANTS

The Blessed Virgin Mary is more than the Perfect Militant; she is QUEEN OF MILITANTS.

It is *Mary* who *sends all militants into combat*; it is she who helps them in the struggle; and it is *she who gives them the victory*.

I am going to explain this to you. Understand it well, for it is of capital importance in all your relations with Mary.

Recall the three reasons why she is the Perfect Militant.

First, *she is the Cooperator with Christ in the redemption*. With Him, she has redeemed all of us, and with Him she must continue this work by applying to each soul in particular the fruits of Calvary.

She, and she alone, has directly received this apostolic mission, because she alone assisted her Son in saving us. What is the work of an apostle? It is to carry out in his limited milieu the apostolic mission which God confided first of all and universally to Mary. Whether he knows it or not, he is only taking part in a work that is properly Mary's as Co-redeemer.

The Immaculate Virgin is the Woman who must crush the head of the serpent. To her God has entrusted the war against Satan and his seed. She is the commander-in-chief empowered with the strategy of the war. In this war, you are only a soldier. And whether the soldier knows his supreme commander or not, he but participates in his plans, fulfills his orders, and aids in his victories.

When you have succeeded in revealing Christ to a soul, you have simply helped Mary in her mission of giving Christ to the world. You have been able to aid her only because

she herself first of all helped you - exactly as the soldier who has helped his general to win the battle, first received from his general through the lower-ranking officers, the supplies and especially the commands that have made it possible for him to contribute towards the victory. Soldier of Mary, when you saved a soul, it was through her and for her that you snatched that soul from Satan - even though, perhaps, you were not aware of it.

Secondly, Mary is the Perfect Militant because she is the *Distributor of all graces*.

If grace comes to men only through her, and if an apostle cannot achieve anything except through grace, is it not evident at once that you depend on her, that all the apostles of the world depend on her, that it is from her that you receive your mission and your success?

When you felt the desire to become a militant, how else did this longing arise in you except by the grace of god? And how else did this grace come to you except through Mary? When you made your first timid attempts to talk to others to make them understand the thoughts of Christ, what inspired you to do this? Was it not grace? And who sent you this grace? Was it not Mary? When in spite of pitfalls and temptations you continued your task and persevered, where did you get the strength? From grace. And through whom did this grace come to you? Through Mary. When a companion that you wished to gain to your ideal consented to listen to you, how was that achieved:? Through grace, that is, through Mary. When you succeeded in actually enrolling your friend in the army of Christ, whence came this success? From grace, and therefore, from Mary. And if your friend, instead of turning back like so many others, perseveres, to what is this due? To grace; therefore, to Mary.

When a power plant cuts off the current, immediately throughout the system the lights go out, motors stop

turning, machines no longer function, sirens are quiet, and streetcars are stalled. Turn the current back on and the whole system comes to life. In the same way suppose that the distributor of all graces would cease for one moment to help apostolic souls. All the militants of the world, all the missionaries, all the priest, and all the bishops would be helpless to do the least good to even one soul. Let her but turn back to them again, and at once millions of souls can be converted and become saints.

Finally, Mary is the Perfect Militant because she is the *Mother of all men*.

She alone is their spiritual Mother, because she alone gave them and still gives them Christ, their life.

What, then, is your position with regard to this holy Mother? You are a guardian, a tutor to whom the Mother has entrusted her children that you may help to train them. She has given them life, not you; she is really charged with their spiritual development. You only give your assistance in order to ease the task. You but take part in an assignment that will forever remain primarily hers.

Because of her title as Mother of men, it is Mary who gives you your mission, whether you realize it or not. Hence you should exercise this mission only according to her directives. Your success will be due to her alone.

Do you begin to see now how strictly and necessarily you depend on Mary in your role as a militant? And yet you were asking what good she could do in your apostolate! Do you begin to see how important it is that you become as intimate as possible with Mary, that she may make of you a perfect militant?

The Gospel narrative will prove to you that Mary has always been the Queen of Militants.

The entire mission of the Church came from Christ.

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But on whom have we depended for Christ? On Mary.

Even before the preaching of Peter and Andrew<sup>2</sup> and James and John and the other apostles, Christ was already preached by an apostle who was in every way striking and outstanding, as apostle who, in view of his mission, was sanctified in the womb of his mother - John the Baptist. But how was John sanctified in the womb? Through Mary. The Gospel account tells us that scarcely had the Angel Gabriel withdrawn from Mary's presence, when "Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town of Juda. And she entered the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe in her womb leapt. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb! And how have I deserved that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, the moment that the sound of thy greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leapt for joy'" (Luke 1:39-44).

Again, as soon as Christ was born, He wished to show Himself to His people. Through an angel He called shepherds unto Himself. Where did these shepherds find Him? Close to His Mother in the stable of Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-20).

When He desired to console by His presence the last of the prophets of Israel, the aged Simeon, as also Anna, the widow, who placed Him in their trembling arms at the moment of the Presentation in the Temple? - It was Mary (Luke 2:22-38).

When He wanted to manifest Himself also to the Gentiles, since he was come for the whole world, He drew Magi to Himself by means of a star. And where did they find Him? The gospel tells us: "And entering the house, they found the child with Mary His mother.." (Matt. 2:11).

When the time came for Christ to begin His public



ministry, to preach and to work miracles in order to prove His mission, how did the first of His miracles take place? At the request of Mary, at Cana. And after having remarked that it was the first of Christ's miracles, the Evangelist significantly says: "And His disciples believed in Him" (John 2:1-12).

And when three years later, Jesus finished His work by dying for us on Calvary, again we find Mary there offering her Son and offering herself with Him for our redemption.

Saint John, too, is there at the foot of the cross representing all apostles of Christ. To whom does Jesus confide this apostle and through him all other apostles? - "He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold thy son.' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother'" (John 19:25-27).

The Apostles were together at Christ's Ascension; afterwards they returned to the upper room to await the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Spirit came down upon them in the form of tongues of fire. He entered into them and transformed them, and, full of courage and power, they went into every country to conquer the world for Christ. How did they prepare themselves to receive this power from the Holy Spirit? The Scripture says: "All these with one mind continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:13-14).

However, Mary's role as Queen of Apostles did not end with the coming of the Holy Ghost. As Pope Benedict XV reminded us: "It is not an empty flattery to bestow on Mary the title of queen of Apostles. Just as she assisted the Apostles, the teachers of the infant church, with the support and the advice of a mother, so we must affirm that at all times and in all ways she accords her assistance to all those who inherit the office of the Apostles."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Acta Ap. Sed.*, 1921, p. 173.

## QUEEN OF MILITANTS ESPECIALLY IN MODERN TIMES

From the very beginning of time our Blessed Mother has been the woman destined to crush the serpent's head. In our times she must be victorious over Satan in a still more striking way. I have not invented this. *Men of God have foretold it*; events have proved it.

It will suffice to cite two of these men of God. Saint Grignon de Montfort, whom I have already mentioned to you, will be quoted first. In his *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* he has written burning pages on the role of Mary "in these latter times." Here are some extracts: "It was through Mary that the salvation of the world was begun, and it is through Mary that it must be consummated. Mary hardly appeared at all in the first coming of Jesus Christ... but in the second coming of Jesus Christ, Mary has to be made known and revealed by the Holy Ghost, in order that, through her, Jesus Christ may be known, loved and served."<sup>1</sup>

"Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, in might and in grace, in these latter times: in mercy, to bring back and lovingly receive the poor strayed sinners who shall be converted and shall return to the Catholic church; in might, against the enemies of God, idolaters, schismatics, Mahometans, Jews and souls hardened in impiety, who shall rise in terrible revolt against God to seduce all those who shall be contrary to them, and to make them fall by promises and threats; and finally, she must shine forth in grace, in order to animate and sustain the valiant soldiers and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, who shall do battle for His interests.

"And lastly, Mary must be terrible to the devil and his crew, as an army ranged in battle, principally in these

latter times, because the devil, knowing that he has but little time, and now less than ever, to destroy souls, will every day redouble his efforts and his combats. He will presently raise up new persecutions, and will put terrible snares before the faithful servants and true children of Mary, whom it gives him more trouble to conquer than it does to conquer others.

"It is principally of these last and cruel persecutions of the devil, which shall go on increasing daily till the reign of Antichrist, that we ought to understand that first and celebrated prediction and curse of God, pronounced in the terrestrial paradise against the serpent... 'I will put enmities between thee and the Woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.'"<sup>2</sup>

Father Chaminade, another outstanding servant of Mary, the process of whose canonization is being carried on at Rome, made similar predictions. Without knowing of the writings of St. Grignon, he declared at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the rime for the reign of the Blessed Virgin had come. He repeated this conviction, which it seems he received from Mary herself, at least six times at solemn occasions in his life. Thus in 1817, when revealing to his first disciple that he had been called to found a religious society with new traits adapted to modern needs, he added: "Let us place everything under the protection of Mary Immaculate to whom her divine son has reserved the final victories over hell. 'and she shall crush thy head.'" After establishing the Society, he wrote to the Holy Father, "this Society has assumed the name of the august Mary. For I am thoroughly convince that our Saviour has reserved to His blessed Mother the honor of being the main support of the Church in these latter days." To the members of the new Society, he showed more at length the apostolic role of Mary in the Church, especially in modern times. "To her," he exclaimed, "is reserved a

great victory in our days; hers will be the glory of saving the faith from the shipwreck with which it is threatened among us."<sup>3</sup>

I admit that we are not obliged to believe the predictions made by saintly men, nor even those made by canonized saints. But *the facts confirm the above-mentioned predictions.*

Is not the age in which we are living in a particular way the age of Mary?

Call to mind the solemn definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854; the Blessed Virgin's apparitions in 1830 to Saint Catherine Laboure, in which she requested the spread of the Miraculous Medal; her apparitions at Lourdes in 1858, at Pontmain in 1871, at Fatima in 1917, at Banneaux, Belgium, in 1932, to cite only those on which the Church has made pronouncement. Think of the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world who go every year to invoke Mary at Lourdes, and, in the last few years, the even greater number who visit Fatima. Realize also that since the beginning of the nineteenth century, more religious societies in honor of Mary have been established and more books have been written to glorify her greatness than from the beginning of Christianity until then. Periodically, moreover, national and international congresses and conventions of theologians are held, which have for direct purpose to propagate the knowledge of the various privileges and offices of Mary and to spread devotion to her. Besides, it is not difficult to perceive that especially in these last years, the trend that carries the faithful towards our Blessed Mother has become more and more extensive and irresistible. Recall that only recently Pope Pius XII consecrated the world to the Immaculate heart of Mary on the occasion of the celebration at Fatima (October 31, 1942), and that several weeks later, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception,

he repeated the consecration in St. Peter's at Rome before a crowd of one hundred thousand of the faithful. Isn't this evident proof that these modern times are the age of Mary?

Perhaps you will say, "But Saint Grignon de Montfort announced that 'in the second coming of Jesus Christ, Mary is to be made known and revealed by the Holy Ghost, in order that by her Jesus Christ may be known, loved and served,' and Father Chaminade said that to Mary Immaculate 'God has reserved the final victories over hell.' How is Jesus Christ better known, loved and served? Where are these victories over hell? Isn't the world on the verge of returning to paganism?"

First of all, Jesus Christ certainly is better known, loved, and served by many of the faithful. It is in consequence of this renewal of devotion to Mary that devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has so quickly developed and that Pope Leo XIII consecrated the world to this divine Heart; that frequent and daily Communion was recommended by Pius X and has spread so rapidly in the Church; that the Kingship of Christ was proclaimed by Pius XI; that the doctrine of the Mystical Body was explained by Pius XII; that a deeply genuine, personal, and active love for Christ has secured the transformation of a great number of souls. Devotion to the Mystical Body of Christ, devotion to Christ the Youth, to Christ the Worker, to Christ our Brother, to Christ the Life of our life, this devotion which is being incessantly urged upon you and whose depths you see but indistinctly, - the beauty and efficacy of all this was practically unknown fifty years ago.

However, if the facts which I have related to you proved that God certainly wishes that His Mother be known, loved, and served more and more and that in reality devotion to Mary has made great advances in very many souls, yet in a great many others, particularly the young, this devotion is

practically unknown. Even you and your companions were unaware of it. did you realize on tenth of what I have just explained to you about the role of Mary in our redemption and in the apostolate, you who wondered just what part the Blessed Virgin could play in the life of a militant? Begin now to give her her rightful place in your own life; then try to persuade your companions to do the same. You will see that through her Christ will be incomparably better known, loved, and served, that "to her has been reserved a great victory in our days," that according to the words of Pope Pius XII she who is "the victor in all the battles of God...will hasten the triumph of the Kingdom of God."

This will not come about overnight. God, who is eternal, is not in such a hurry as are we who have only a few years to live and who would live to see the full corn in the ear the day after planting. But it will certainly happen, and more gloriously than we could ever hope or dream.

Here is a rapid resume of the extraordinary things the Immaculate Virgin did for Portugal in less than twenty-five years.

Portugal had been outstanding for centuries in its zeal for the propagation of the Christian faith. In the eighteenth century, the government was won over to anti-religious ideas, and from then on Freemasonry began to de-christianize the country. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the moral and religious conditions of Portugal was frightful. In 1910 an atheistic republic was established; in 1911 the separation of Church and State was decreed. The years from 1910 to 1913 were years of terror. Priests and bishops were imprisoned or banished; religious orders were suppressed; almost all the seminaries were closed or confiscated; missions were left languishing or abandoned. Freemasonry was all powerful. From 1919 to 1926 there were sixteen revolutions with forty changes of ministers.

On the thirteenth of may, 1917, a Lady clothed in light

appeared to three little shepherds at Fatima, near a town of Portugal. They were Jacinta, seven years old, Francisco, her brother, nine years old, and Lucia, their cousin, ten years old. The Lady instructed them to say the Rosary and to offer some acts of penance and then asked them to return on the thirteenth of the five following months. The children were faithful in keeping the appointments, except for the one in August, when the mayor, a Freemason, had them confined, threatening to throw them into a pot of boiling oil if they did not reveal the secret entrusted to them by the Lady.

At each new meeting the Lady revealed a little more of the designs of God; she told them of future misfortunes which they had to keep as secrets for the time being and which have been revealed only recently by the sole survivor, Lucia. These referred to a war which would be much more terrible than the one then in progress. She requested the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for God's help would come to men only through this Immaculate Heart. She foretold that at the last apparition, on October 13, a great miracle would be performed with everyone would see.

Curious people, whose number increased at each meeting, accompanied the little seers. There were from 25,000 to 30,000 present on the thirteenth of September; and between 50,000 and 70,000 on the thirteenth of October.

On the day when the great miracle promised by the Blessed Virgin was to take place, there was a downpour of rain all morning; the crowd was drenched to the skin. However, at midday the sky cleared. Mary showed herself to the three little shepherds and told them that she was the Queen of the Rosary, and that she wished people could be converted and would pray. Then in the sight of the 70,000 spectators the sun which had just come from behind the

clouds began to whirl and twirl. This happened three times, lasting three or four minutes each time, illuminating everything, trees, crowd, and earth, in all the colors of the rainbow. Then it zigzagged in the sky and came hurtling down as if it were to fall upon the crowd. The people threw themselves upon the ground and cried for mercy. Then the sun resumed its place, and all discovered that their clothes were perfectly dry.

This material miracle, however, was only the sign of another far greater miracle which Mary was to work - the conversion of Portugal.

Less than fifteen days after the last apparition, the first sign of a new attitude appeared when a well-known anti-Christian paper protested against a sacrilegious crime committed by some sectarians at Fatima. That was in October, 1917. In 1918 the bishops were recalled from exile and were able to hold a meeting at Lisbon. The military chaplaincy service was organized and diplomatic relations with the Holy See were resumed.

Masonic lodges assassinated the president of the Republic and sought to reintroduce the reign of anticlericalism. But their attempts failed.

In 1926, the first national council was held. In 1928 there came to power the famous Oliveira Salazar, a great Catholic and a great statesman, the providential man for the financial, civil, and political, and religious restoration of Portugal.

About 1936 a new peril threatened the country. Russian Bolsheviks had decided to establish communism in Spain and in Portugal so that they would be able to spread it more surely afterwards, east and west, throughout all of Christian Europe. We know how well they succeeded at first in Spain. It did not seem that Portugal would be able to resist their activity, organized, as it was, with satanic skill. To ward off the danger, the bishops saw salvation



only in recourse to the Blessed Virgin. They promised in 1936, by what they called an anti-communistic oath, to have the whole nation make a pilgrimage to Our lady of Fatima if Portugal were preserved from the communist peril. While on the Spanish side of the frontier, the "Reds" massacred, profaned, pillaged, and burned priests, religious, churches, and convents to extirpate every last trace of Christianity, Portugal enjoyed the greatest peace. Accordingly, in 1938 a very large pilgrimage of half million of the faithful made its way to Fatima to thank the Blessed Virgin for her miraculous protection.

In 1940, Portugal signed with the Holy See what was, from the Christian point of view, the most perfect concordat in these modern times. Throughout the country the faith was proudly professed, the sacraments were frequented, and Catholic Action flourished. Priestly vocations were numerous; in eight years the number of religious increased fourfold. Then came World War II, much more terrible than the first, as Our lady of Fatima had predicted it would be. Almost all the nations of the world were plunged into unspeakable misfortunes and sufferings, yet Portugal, under the protection of Mary, pursued its peaceful way.

What the Immaculate Virgin has done for Portugal, she will do for all the countries which will consent to consecrate themselves to her and to live according to that consecration. You and your companions can help to bring this about.

<sup>1</sup> De Montfort, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-9.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *La Doctrine Miriale de M. Chaminade*, by E. Neubert, pp. 28-32.

## LOGICAL CONCLUSION: CONSECRATE YOURSELF TO MARY

Undoubtedly you have already drawn the logical conclusion of what you have just read. If Mary is the Queen of Militants and your vocation and your success depend on her, and if God wants her apostolic action to be manifested especially at the present time, it is clear that you must place yourself entirely at the disposal of our Blessed Mother if you want to give to your life as a militant a real soldier-like efficiency.

That's quite correct. Mary is always the Woman destined to wage war against the serpent and to crush its head. Therefore if you would be victorious over the serpent and its seed, you must openly proclaim yourself to be of the seed of the Woman by taking your place at her side.

Mary is the generalissimo of the army of Christ which battles against the army of Satan. Therefore, just as the man who wants to defend his country against the invader will enroll himself in the army of the general-in-chief, so must you enroll yourself in the army of the Blessed Virgin.

It is true that a man can attempt to fight against the invader without belonging to the troops of the commanding general. Although by so doing he often brings more trouble upon his fellow citizens than he inflicts harm upon the enemy. *But without Mary no one can combat Satan victoriously*, because we can do nothing without grace and all grace comes to us through Mary.

It is also true that Mary gives her aid to all sincere militants, even to those who do not invoke her, even to those who do not know that she has any role to play in the apostolate. For she obtains graces in general for all

men, even for those who do not pray to her or who do not know her. *But will she not obtain many more graces for those who are more closely united to her?* And it is for this reason that while those not devoted to her frequently fall into sins, even grave sins, and arrive at only a mediocre degree of virtue, those faithful to Mary are able not only to keep themselves in the state of grace, but also to attain heroic sanctity. In the same way, then, those militants who do not know the Blessed Virgin report only ordinary or momentary success, while those who have enrolled themselves under her banner and who fight in her name tell of victory after victory despite all the opposition with the devil raises against them. Why should that be so astonishing, since they are united with her who is called by God to crush the serpent's head?

How does one enroll in the service of the Queen of Militants? By consecrating oneself to her entirely as her militant or her soldier.

We have already several times mentioned consecration to her by your mother at the moment of your birth, or by your parents on the occasion of your baptism. Perhaps on the day of your first Holy Communion or at the close of a parish mission you consecrated yourself to her with the other members of your group.

But there are various kinds of consecrations. There is a consecration which is simply a *request for protection*. You may have consecrated yourself to Mary - or others may have done it for you - in order to confide your person and your future, and especially your eternal future, to her maternal protection. That was most praiseworthy, but it was a consecration only in the broad sense of the word. There is another consecration which is the *total donation of yourself to the service of Mary*. This is consecration properly so called.

When the bishop consecrates a church, a chalice, or a

priest, he does not merely take them under his protection, but he destines them for the exclusive service of God. Henceforth, this edifice, this cup, this man, is set apart for the worship of god and can no longer be employed for a profane use. This is consecration in the strict sense.

For us, therefore, consecration to Mary properly speaking consists in giving ourselves totally to her with all that we are, all that we have, and all that we do, in order to carry out her plans for us. She wishes first of all to make us live perfectly the life of her divine Son, and secondly, to employ us as her soldiers or her ministers in the war against hell for the conquest of souls. This is the kind of consecration which the Blessed Virgin asks of her militants.

Others before us have reached this same conclusion, namely, that he who wishes to be a militant or a perfect apostle must consecrate himself to the Queen of Militants. I have told you before about two great servants of Mary who foretold the triumph of the Blessed Virgin in modern times - Saint Grignon de Montfort and Father Chaminade.

"But the power of Mary over all the devils will especially shine forth in the latter times, 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...They shall be great and exalted before God in sanctity, superior to all other creatures by their lively zeal, and so well sustained with God's assistance that with the humility of their heart, in union with Mary, they shall crush the head of the devil and cause Jesus Christ to triumph."<sup>1</sup>

"They shall be the true apostles of the latter times, to whom the Lord of Hosts shall give the word and might to work marvels, and to carry off with glory the spoils of His enemies."<sup>2</sup> "There are the great men who are to come; but Mary is the one who, by order of the Most High, shall

fashion them for the purpose of extending His empire over that of the impious, the idolaters and the Mahometans. But when and how shall this be? God alone knows.

“As for us, we have but to hold our tongues, to pray, to sigh, and to wait.”<sup>3</sup>

Father Chaminade understood from the message he received from the Blessed Virgin during his exile in Saragossa that the time had already come and that it was no longer necessary to wait. He also understood that she had chosen him to recruit for her an army of militants to help her in her struggle against hell.

As soon as he returned to France, he began to look for these soldiers for the Immaculate Virgin. He directed his efforts to a group of young men whom he brought together in a Marian sodality, but a new kind of sodality, - a sodality of apostles, of laymen participating in the apostolate of the hierarchy. Even though the name had not yet appeared, this was real Catholic Action, under the auspices of Mary.

Conservative minds reproached him as an innovator. He justified himself saying: <sup>4</sup> “In the old-time sodalities, there was scarcely any purpose in view other than to sustain pious Christians in the way of salvation by mutual edification. But in this age, an age of revival, Holy mother the Church demands something more of her children. She wishes the concerted action of all to second the zeal of her ministers, and to labor at her restoration. This is the spirit which the new sodalities inculcate. Each director is a persistent and active missionary, and each sodality a perpetual mission.”

Then, after having enumerated the different means by which these new sodalities realized their apostolic end, he added: “Finally, - and we ought to have begun with this point, for of all our means, it is the most potent and the one most dear to us - the new sodalities are not the only associations in honor of the Blessed Virgin, but they are a

holy militia that advances in the name of Mary, that knows how to battle with the infernal powers, under the guidance and obedience of her who is destined to crush the head of the serpent."

Soon after the foundation of the Sodality for young men, Father Chaminade established a Sodality for young women with the same apostolic spirit and then a Sodality for married men and another for married women. The Sodalities of Bordeaux numbered as many as seven hundred members. He also established similar groups in the principal towns of the southwest of France.

These soldiers of Mary were enrolled in her service by means of a solemn act of consecration to the Immaculate Virgin, who was represented as the Woman crushing the head of the serpent. Father Chaminade attached a very great importance to this consecration to Mary. This is easily understood since it was the very thing that made his militant the militants of the Blessed Virgin.

Several of his sodalists, desiring to bind themselves to Mary's service still more fully than by a solemn promise, formed two religious societies, one for men and the other for women, for the purpose of consecrating themselves to her by the religious profession. To signalize their total belonging to Mary still more, with the approval of the Holy See they added to the three ordinary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, a fourth vow, one of perpetual devotedness to Mary's service.

What results did this Sodality of Militants, this "Marian Catholic Action," produce? People began to notice in Bordeaux and in the south of France a great religious revival in the first half of the nineteenth century. Persons competent to judge, among them Cardinal Donnet, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, attributed this revival in large part to the influence of Father Chaminade's Sodality. On this general appreciation it is possible to add certain more

precise indications of the Sodality's effectiveness. When the major and minor seminaries of Bordeaux were reorganized, they found in the Sodality their outstanding pupils and professors. Every religious society in the city which was at this date in the process of foundation or of reestablishment received from the Sodality a large number of candidate; some received from it all their recruits. From the Sodality of Bordeaux came more than a hundred priests and men religious and as many women religious, six bishops, seven founders of religious societies, numberless missionaries, one of whom was a martyr, and four servants of God whose cause for canonization has been introduced at Rome. And this list is drawn only from the membership of the group at Bordeaux. About fifty such groups flourished under the influence of Father Chaminade in the southeast of France.

Will anyone be astonished that those who fight under the banner of the ever-triumphant Virgin gain such victories?

<sup>1</sup> De Montfort, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45

<sup>4</sup> Father Chaminade here refers not to all the Sodalities which existed before his time but to those in Bordeaux during the eighteenth century.

## LIVE YOUR CONSECRATION TO MARY

You are undoubtedly convinced of the importance of consecrating yourself to the Queen of Militants. Perhaps the prospect of marching from victory to victory under her standard even fills you with enthusiasm.

However, others have been filled with enthusiasm by this same anticipation. But when it came to actually living up to their consecration, especially in the hour of trial, they acted as if they had never given themselves to Mary. Saint Grignon de Montfort, speaking of those who have made the consecration which he teaches, expresses himself as follows: "As the essential of this devotion consists in the interior which it ought to form, it will not be equally understood by everybody. Some will stop at what is exterior in it, and will go no further, and these will be the greatest number. Some, in small number, will enter into its inward spirit; but they will only mount one step. Who will mount to the second step? Who will get as far as the third? Lastly, who will so advance as to make this devotion his habitual state?"<sup>1</sup>

Do you wish to be among those who enter into the inward spirit of their consecration to Mary? Then you must not be satisfied with merely consecrating yourself to Mary; you must also live this consecration.

*To live it is to act at each moment of your life as one belonging no longer to yourself but to our blessed Mother; to employ all that you are, all that you have, and all that you do, no longer for yourself, but for her.*

It means using all that you possess, not according to your own inclinations, but according to what you think to be the designs of Mary.

It means employing your body and its activities, not to procure for yourself the satisfactions of gluttony, or



laziness, or of worse faults, but to work, and if necessary, to suffer and to exhaust yourself in the mission of a militant of the Immaculate Virgin.

It means using your mind, not to entertain thoughts, images, and recollections which the Immaculate Virgin would reprove, but to discover the means of serving Christ and of gaining many disciples for Him.

It means using your heart, not to let it become inordinately attached to any creature, person, or thing; not to tolerate there any sentiment unworthy of a child of the Most Holy Virgin - jealousy, revenge, pride, avarice, etc., - but to love Christ with your whole souls, and all men and all created things for Christ and in Christ.

It means employing your will to wish only what Mary wishes and all that she wishes. This includes constant fidelity to monotonous duties of state, entire devotedness, and generous acceptance of all sacrifices, even to the complete sacrifice of yourself for the cause of Christ and for the cause of your brothers in Christ.

It means that in all your activity you must not seek your own interests and satisfaction, but the accomplishment of all the tasks which our Blessed Mother confides to you.

And all this you must do even when sentiment no longer upholds you, when you feel tired, when you are a prey to temptation, when you see others about you abandoning everything to think only of their own selfish interests.

Have confidence! If you ask our Blessed Mother, she will always give you the strength to keep to the very end the oath of fidelity which you have sworn to her.

In order to succeed in living your consecration perfectly, you must practice it unceasingly.

Form the habit of frequently renewing your consecration to Mary.

Renew it upon rising for the day's work. Renew it in the morning and in the afternoon before beginning your work. Renew it especially in time of trial and temptation.

Little by little you will succeed in acting always in the name of Mary, and then what marvels you will accomplish! Rather, what marvels she will accomplish through you!

In the early hours of the day following the Feast of Christ the King in 1935, there died at Basle, Switzerland a man, a chosen soul who had been an apostle of Christ since his youth, the Rev. Father Joseph Schellhorn, S.M. The doctor had given him up, for he was already in the last stages of consumption. He had been sick all his life and his very existence was a constant miracle. Notwithstanding this, he did more work than three healthy men, and undoubtedly more supernatural work than a hundred others. One never approached him without feeling happier and better. Those who saw him for the first time asked: "Who is the man? There is something about him which makes you think of a higher world." Those who knew him often repeated eagerly, "He is a saint."

Now, do you know what was the secret of his sanctity and of his apostolic influence? His fidelity in living at every moment his consecration to Mary.

He had consecrated himself to her service by a vow. This consecration he renewed not only each morning upon rising, but twenty times or more in the course of the day. The resolutions of his spiritual life during his last twenty years have been found. The principal resolution is invariably that of renewing unceasingly his consecration to the Blessed Virgin. Here, for example, are his notes of 1926-7:

"General resolution: to aim at living in as actual a manner as possible my entire consecration, my total belonging to Mary, throughout each detail of my daily life. To this end, to renew frequently, in the sight of Jesus on

the cross and with all the energy of my soul my entire consecration to Mary, my total belonging to her, my dependence at every instant upon her, my devotedness to her work even to the point of extinction. Then, through her, to unite myself with Jesus and to give myself entirely to my divine Leader.

To insist on this act:

1. In the morning, upon rising to begin the day's works;
2. At the beginning of each of my prayers;
3. At the beginning of each study;
4. Before going into the company of others;
5. While going to take my meals or my recreations;
6. When beginning and ending a letter, by a glance and a Hail Mary to recommend myself and my correspondent to Mary and through her to the heart of Jesus.
7. Upon returning to my room, each time to recommend to Mary the action or the actions in which I have just been engaged and the souls with whom I had business, to the end that this good Mother may deign to repair, supply, and render these actions fruitful by the effusion of the graces of Jesus. To do this especially in the evening at the foot of the bed for the day's work."

It is not astonishing, is it, that this man, acting uninterruptedly in union with the blessed Virgin, should have arrived to such a degree of virtue and of influence?

Our Blessed Mother does not ask you to do so much, especially in the beginning. It would wear you out and distract you from your work. But if you are faithful in frequently renewing your consecration to her, little by little you, too, will begin to act always in her name, at least through a union of love and of wills.

<sup>1</sup> De Montfort, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.



## **PART 2**

# **MARY FORMING HER MILITANTS**

Soldiers are not formed overnight. Without serious military training they would be inevitably doomed to defeat. This is particularly true in the war to conquer the world for Christ.

In the history of the Christian apostolate, how many holy enterprises have failed miserably! What ephemeral triumph there have been, followed by long periods of defeat! Millions of souls who once believed have been lost to the faith of Christ! How many enthusiastic militants have suddenly become irretrievably discouraged! How many defenders of the sacred cause have ended by combating one against another! How many soldiers of God have passed over to the camp of the enemy! There have been so many failures, so many ruined works! And all this happened because Christ's militants were not solidly formed for the combat; because they lacked the qualities indispensable for success.

Who will give them this solid formation? Who will help them to develop these needed qualities? Mary, the same one who calls them to the combat.

She is your Mother. She will concern herself with your formation as a militant, just as she busied herself with the formation of the Supreme Militant, Christ. For Jesus has wished to be like us "in all things except sin" (Heb. 4:15). Therefore, as man He willed to receive from Mary the care and the direction which a child receives from his mother. Mary reared Jesus with a view to His role as the Supreme Militant, for she knew to what role he was destined. She knew, too, that she would have to share in this role.

As a Christian, you are another Christ. As a militant, you continue the work of Christ. Imitate Christ, therefore, and let our Blessed Mother form you as she formed Christ.

If you have had a good Christian mother to take care of your formation, you know, or at least you can guess, all

that you owe to her and all that you would lack without her. If notwithstanding your faults, you are honest, upright, loyal, devoted, generous; if despite your failings, you love purity and nobleness of heart; if you possess a special knack for understanding others, for sympathizing with them, for making yourself acceptable to them, is this not due in great part to your mother who developed these qualities in you?

All that your earthly mother has done for you, your heavenly Mother will continue to do for you, but with a knowledge, a delicacy, and a perfection which incomparably surpasses all the attainments of your earthly mother.

But perhaps you have not known your mother, or perhaps she was forced to work and could not care for you as was necessary. Perhaps discord in the family rendered impossible every action beneficial to the children. Or perhaps she was badly trained herself and did not understand her task as a Christian mother. Then you know, poor child, that something irreplaceable is lacking in your formation.

However, even if there is something naturally irreplaceable, your supernatural Mother will replace it. In her you will find treasures of affection, of delicacy, of purity, of nobleness, of generosity, and of devotedness, such as no earthly mother could reveal to you. The only requirement is that you endeavor to live in even greater intimacy with the Mother of Jesus, as certain saints who were deprived of their mother early in life have done.

The Gospel says of Jesus that as a child and as a young man, he was subject to Mary and Joseph. Imitate Him! Go to your mother frequently to learn what she wants of you. Ask her to form you to the image of her first-born Son. And then, like Jesus, follow her directions faithfully; be submissive to her!

# MARY WILL KEEP YOU IN THE FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST

You understand that to be a true militant of Christ *you must be in the state of grace*. How can you fight for Christ when you are His enemy? How can you bring Him to souls when you yourself are far away from Him? How can one who is supernaturally dead give life to others?

And since you are a militant at all times, you ought to live constantly in the state of grace. It is not enough to be in the state of grace only on the days when you receive Holy Communion and for a few days afterwards, until the next strong temptation.

However, to remain always in the state of grace *is sometimes extremely difficult*. At the moment of a general confession or a fervent Communion, you are sincere in saying: "I will never again commit such a sin." Sometimes you feel so happy, you experience such a disgust for your past offenses, that you believe it certain that you will no longer take any pleasure in them, or, in any case, consent to them. Then, little by little, without your knowing how it comes about, these dispositions change. The temptation returns, so charming and so violent; and you find yourself so weak. You feel your imagination, your heart, your senses, your nervous system, your whole being so completely overpowered by the evil that the will believes itself almost forced to capitulate. At such times you ask yourself: "Are there not certain periods in life when it is impossible to remain pure?" - the answer is yes and no.

Yes, if you fight *alone*. The forces of evil will get the better of the forces of good in you. The devil who tempts you is more powerful than you are. It is impossible for a man who relies only on his won resources always to remain chaste.



No, if you put your reliance on God. With him you are all powerful. His strength shines forth in your weakness. No matter how terrible the temptation may be, His grace is sufficient for you.

*God wishes to give you the grace of purity, especially through His Mother.* He made her immaculate, the Virgin of virgins, the All-pure One. And He willed it should be, as it were, her specialty to preserve souls from sin or to restore to them the grace of purity.

You are weaker than Satan. When you are alone and he attacks you, you succumb. Is that so astonishing? But if all the legions of hell come to wage most furious assaults against you, and you have only Mary fighting with you, who do you think will prevail? Do you not know that the devils fear her more than all the angels and saints together, and that they experience, as it were, a special fear before her who must always crush their head? Will you be astonished to hear it repeated that union with Mary is an all-powerful means of remaining constantly in the state of grace and that souls devoted to Mary are the most pure?

First of all, if you live *in intimacy with your heavenly Mother, your love for purity will increase* and temptations will become weaker and less frequent. When you are close to a woman who is pious and pure - your mother, your sister, your fiancée - do you not feel the rebellion of the flesh subsiding? Would you not be ashamed to have in their presence any thoughts but those most pure? And close to Her who is infinitely more pure than the purest of angels, how much more calm should you feel your soul and your flesh become, and how much more should your heart be enamored with love of purity?

Moreover, when you have consecrated yourself entirely to Mary, you have also consecrated your body to her. You must respect it as you respect everything which belongs to our Blessed Mother. What a crime it would be

to profane this body which has become the property of Mary Immaculate!

*It is especially by her intercession that our Blessed Mother will assist you in the temptations against purity.* Do you not know that she has been called by the saints "suppliant omnipotence"? Do you not understand how intensely she desires to help you to avoid crucifying her divine Son anew by grave sin and to remain always a child worthy of her?

You must ask her for the grace of purity not only in time of temptation but at other times as well.

Each morning upon rising say the Hail Mary three times, with the invocation, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee," asking our Blessed Mother to keep you pure throughout the day. Do the same in the evening when you retire, so that she will preserve you from all sin during the night.

Carry her Miraculous Medal and her rosary with you, and each day say at least one decade of the beads, if you are not able to say all five.

In her honor make a promise of keeping yourself ever pure, and renew it each morning. Some even make a vow of remaining pure for a definite number of days, weeks, months, or years. This promise and this vow evidently include the obligation of avoiding everything that might be for you an occasion of sin; for he who exposes himself to danger will perish therein.

In time of temptation, if the temptation is not strong, content yourself with applying your attention to what you are doing. A person cannot give his attention to two things at once; attention to your occupation will distract you from the evil suggestion.

Sometimes this remedy is not sufficient; the temptation may become violent. Remain calm; do not

be troubled. Do not be like the disciples who, during the storm, awakened Jesus from slumber. Why should you be frightened, as is a man of little faith? What have you to fear if Christ is with you, even if He seems to be sleeping? Turn confidently to the Blessed Virgin and say to her, "My Mother, help me!" Then renew in her presence your promise or your vow of chastity.

A little child is playing in the sand along the road not far from his mother, who is knitting. A dog approaches, barking. The little one, frightened, cries, "Mother! Mother!" and comes running to his mother. She takes him in her arms and there the baby, with tears still in his eyes, mimics the barking of the dog. When the infernal dog comes snarling at you, throw yourself into the arms of your heavenly Mother and there make fun of the madness of the monster; he will bark, but he cannot bite.

But remain in her embrace all the time he is there. Do not imagine that when you have recited a Hail Mary, you are excusable if you afterwards expose yourself to the danger.

Follow these indications, and I promise you certain victory. Have you remained pure up to the present? With the Immaculate Virgin you can remain so until the end of your life. Have you fallen, perhaps frequently and seriously? Do you feel chained to bad habits, and despite your efforts to free yourself from them, do you find yourself more and more enslaved by them? Then, with the help of the Immaculate Virgin you will succeed in breaking all these chains and in regaining a purity stronger and more beautiful than that of others who have not passed through the same temptations as you have.

Some years ago, a director of young people published a book entitled *Mary and Youth* (Beauchesne, Paris), in which he cited a great number of experiences of young people with regard to their fight for purity under the

auspices of Mary.

First of all, here are two cases of *purity preserved in the midst of temptations*.

From a young man: "At school I suddenly found myself in the presence of lads who knew all the answers, and at one blow all my beautiful dreams were shattered. This troubled me much, and I didn't know what to do, but the Mother of God protected me. I told her all my griefs and difficulties; then I courageously set to work.

"If I remained pure in the midst of numberless dangers, I owe it only to the Mother of God. For at the age of twelve I had to fight constantly, sometimes to the point of despair.

"The Sistine Madonna was my aid. I put her image in my study room. What difficult and desolate hours I passed in prayer before it! This picture made more of an impression upon me than all the sermons I heard."

From another: "I fought and I struggled, but several times everything went wrong. I was in complete confusion; everything bothered me and gave me temptations. In this confusion I paged through my retreat notes and I stopped at the last sermon; it was on Mary. I reread it. Then I took my prayer book, which contained a beautiful picture of the Blessed Virgin, and I looked at it. Never did the nobility and purity of her countenance impress me so. Then, falling upon my knees, I asked Mary to help me. Since that day, I have escaped from the dangers which beset me and I feel stronger. I am not yet completely sure of myself, but if in the morning I renew my resolutions before her picture, it is then impossible for me to sin during the day. Blessed be the hour in which I came to know Mary."

Here are two experiences of *purity regained after lamentable falls*. The first is that of a young man who endeavored with Mary's help to free himself from his bad

habits and who, though he still fell occasionally, felt that he was approaching complete victory.

“When you told me one day that the fight would be hard, I believed you, of course, but I hardly realized what was going to happen. It was a struggle indeed, a fight at every moment. Wherever I was, no matter how I busied myself, there were always temptations - always struggle. And, unfortunately, I cannot add, and always a victory. Nevertheless, there was improvement. If I fell, I did not fall so grievously. I have not yet attained complete victory, but I am approaching it. I will succeed.

“If you had not placed in my path a Protectress such as the world does not possess; if you had not given me a picture to shine before my eyes in time of temptation; if I had not been able to fix my gaze on the Queen of Purity, on the Immaculate Mother of God, I do not know what I should be today. Her image is always present before me at the moment of combat, and without her I should be perpetually vanquished.”

Here is the experience of another young man who gained a complete victory.

“Whatever I am I owe to the powerful help of the Mother of God. When I was fifteen years old, I used to associate with bad companions and little by little I sank very low. I began to neglect my prayers, which a pious mother had taught me from my earliest infancy. Then came the shipwreck of my purity. Until then I scarcely knew what purity meant or what it was all about. With some uneasiness at first, I heard my corrupt companions making fun of what I believed to be most sacred in man. Most frequently I blushed with shame. But since they laughed at me, I came to look upon it as proper, and especially as manly, to take part in these conversations.

“I scarcely prayed at all. At most I recited each day a Hail Mary, to which my mother had long before accustomed

me. Forced by my parents, I continued to frequent the sacraments. How? - but that is another matter.

"I began to sin alone, habitually. And always more seriously. I seemed to be lost. Finally my conscience urged me to make a retreat. After much hesitation I obeyed the impulse. I devoted myself body and soul to the retreat. The preacher understood me and helped me to raise myself.

"Mary came to my assistance. Trusting in her I decided to live a new life, which I have done and wish to continue to do under her protection. In times of violent temptation I go into my room, and kneel before her image; she always hears my prayer."

## MARY WILL TEACH YOU TRUE LOVE FOR MEN

Sometimes you have beautiful dreams; you see yourself in the act of conquering multitudes for Christ. At the time of a congress, a public demonstration, or a rather brilliant success, you dream only of renewed devotedness and of new victories.

Consider your motives. Is it really Christ's interests and the interests of souls you are seeking, or your own?

Is not this consuming desire to spend yourself simply the need for exterior activity, natural at your age? Are you not engaging in the apostolate as others engage in sports or in politics?

Do you see in it the possibility of satisfying a secret ambition; such as the desire to occupy a higher position, perhaps to become the leader? Or the prospect of delivering eloquent discourses and of being applauded?

Or is your attraction for the apostolate simply an attraction for the company of pleasant companions?

If you desire to know whether you are seeking souls or yourself, think over what you do in moments of unexpected sacrifices, when there is lack of success or contradiction, and especially when you are reproached. Do you then feel vexed and tempted to abandon everything?

If you wish to learn how to serve men for their own sake, and for the sake of Christ, draw near to our Blessed Mother.

In each one of them she will show you the price of the blood of her Son. Oh! This blood must not have been shed in vain!

In each one of them she will show you her Son Himself,

who lives in them and wishes to live in them still more perfectly.

She will remind you that each of these men is one of her children, perhaps a straying child, but nevertheless a child for whom she has shed bitter tears, for whom she sacrificed her Jesus. She ardently desires to snatch this child from hell and to lead him to heaven,.

She will make you understand that Christ associates you in her mission, in order that you may help her to ransom the world; and that she has called you to be her militant in order that you may assist her in leading the world to Christ.

She will tell you how she is depending on you, how Christ depends on you, how the Church, how your innumerable brothers in Christ are relying on you.

She will take you to Calvary, close to the cross of Jesus, and there you will understand instinctively what true love for souls is.

The great apostle of the Blessed Virgin, Saint Grignon de Montfort, was also the greatest missionary in the west of France at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He was a man literally consumed with a burning zeal for the salvation of souls. He imbibed this zeal close to the Crucified Jesus and His Mother.

He devoted himself to the missions from the time of his priestly ordination. It had been his desire to go into infidel countries to convert the pagans, but Pope Clement XI, whom he consulted in the matter, told him: "You have a great enough field in France for the exercise of your zeal. Do not go elsewhere. God will give His blessing to your works." At the same time the Holy Father conferred upon him the title of Missionary Apostolic.

The Saint then returned from Rome to his own country, and, from then on, his life was but an uninterrupted series



of missions. He died while preaching a mission. He spoke with such eloquence and sincerity that sometimes all of his hearers were visibly moved to the very depths of their souls. Sometimes curiosity attracted men who had come only to laugh at him. After a few minutes, subdued and filled with consternation, they struck their breasts and wept with the others. Upon hearing him, bands of soldiers who had been the terror of the country became docile to all that he prescribed for them. No one could resist his eloquence. In this way he evangelized Plozevet, the Vendee, Brittany, and Normandy, stirring the crowds and converting sinners by the thousands wherever he passed.

But everywhere, too, he encountered contradictions, humiliations, and obstacles of all sorts. They came to him from wicked Christians who were irritated at seeing him so determined to put an end to their evil ways; from the Jansenists, a heretical sect, whose errors he combatted; from lax priests, who saw in his conduct a condemnation of their own. Certain of his companions were jealous of his success. The calumnies of his enemies succeeded in leaguering even pious souls against him. Certain bishops, forewarned against him, forbade him to preach and to say mass in their dioceses; others invited him to preach, and then influenced by his detractors, stopped him in the midst of his apostolic success.

Did he ever feel the temptations to abandon his course, since the very ones who should have helped him used every means to ruin his work? No, this thought did not even occur to him. He worked, not for his own pleasure or for the approval of men, but for Jesus, for Mary, and for souls. Christ Crucified and the Mother of Sorrows had deliberately willed their sacrifice in order to save us; he had learned from them that the cross is the most efficacious means of apostolate. He welcomed these humiliations which permitted him to gain so many souls for Christ.

## MARY WILL GIVE YOU THE SOUL OF THE APOSTOLATE

Some years ago, Dom Chautard, a Trappist Abbot of Sept-Fons, a fervent monk and also a zealous apostle, published a book which every militant ought to read and meditate on at least three times in his life: *The Soul of the Apostolate*. This book has been translated into various languages. By 1941, 210,000 copies of the French edition had been sold, evident proof that it contains instructions essential for every apostle.

*What is this "soul of the apostolate?" - It is the interior life.*

And what is the interior life?

You know what exterior life is: what the senses manifest, what we see, what we hear, what we touch, what we feel. It is the natural life of man.

But you know also that, if you are in the state of grace, you share in the life of God; that Christ lives in you.

Now, habitual attention to this divine life in you is the interior life.

It consists in entering frequently into yourself to find Our Lord within you to talk to Him about His interests, to learn from Him how to act according to His views and how little by little to adopt His thoughts, His sentiments, His desires.

Have you ever entered into a church or chapel sad, discouraged, perhaps upset, and come out completely at peace and filled with new life? Unfortunately, you cannot enter a chapel each time you have need of a chat with our Lord. But do you not know that if you are in the state of grace, you always carry your own little chapel

with you? It is your heart, where Jesus remains night and day to converse with you whenever you wish. Why do you never think of entering this chapel when you are weak, or discouraged, or troubled?

You ought to recognize the great advantages of a life thus led in union with Christ. Here are the titles of some of the instructions of Dom Chautard in this regard:

"The priority of the interior over the active life in the eyes of God - Good works should be nothing but an overflow from the inner life. - Active works must begin and end in the interior life, and , in it, find their means. - The active and interior lives are completely interdependent."

"Active works, a means of sanctification for interior souls, become, for others, a menace to their salvation;" -and the author cites on this point the testimony of some eminent men of action and gives also some examples of lamentable failures. This whole chapter is to be meditated upon, as are also the following chapter: "*The Active worker who has no Interior Life,*" and "*The Interior Life: basis of the holiness of the Apostolic Worker.*"

In the latter part of the book the zealous monk gives some principles and advice for maintaining the interior life. He says that "The apostle must have an ardent devotion to Mary Immaculate," and shows in particular how devotion to Mary helps to preserve the heart from attachments to creatures.

Is not our Blessed Mother *the most captivating model of the interior life?* Contemplate her in the Gospel. She was the great Silent Woman. She spoke but rarely and each time said only what was indispensable. Only once do we see her expressing herself at greater length, in her canticle of thanksgiving, the Magnificat; and this she sang to praise God and not to converse with men. On the other hand, she reflected on the life of her Son. Twice Saint Luke tells us that she kept in her heart and meditated on all

that she learned about Him. Contemplate her; admire her, imitate her. You will become a man of silence, a strong and zealous apostle.

Frequently, draw near to Mary. She is like a most secluded sanctuary where you feel penetrated by the spirit of recollection as soon as you enter. For in her presence you live no longer amid the agitation of earth but in the peace of heaven.

You will see that this Marian recollection will prepare you for the apostolate. It was by spending ten days in the retreat of the Cenacle close to Mary that the Apostles prepared themselves to receive the Holy Spirit, in order that they might then go forth to conquer the world.

When you leave this sanctuary to devote yourself to exterior activity, all sorts of human and selfish preoccupations will strive to ensnare you again in order to ruin your apostolate. But you will look at your Mother and she will look at you, and in her glance you will read: "For whom are you acting? How would Christ act in your place?" This will suffice to redirect your activity towards God.

I said that you would leave your Marian sanctuary in order to act. This will happen for some time. But if you become intimately united with Mary, you will never go away entirely. Even when speaking to men, you will remain close to her! You will have a feeling that will be like that which a supernatural priest has when he preaches from the altar! He thinks of those to whom he is preaching and at the same time he remains under the influence of Him who dwells in the tabernacle at his side.

After engaging in activity, return more completely to her. Sometimes you will be sad, perhaps discouraged. But tell her all that you have done and all that you have experienced, and peace and confidence will return immediately to your soul.

Oh! How efficacious will be your activity in behalf of souls, and how sanctifying for your won soul, once you remain habitually under the influence of her whose militant you are!

Father Chaminade was profoundly penetrated with the capital importance of the interior spirit in the life of every apostle; with his disciples he insisted on it in season and out of season. Here are some of his recommendations:

“The essential is the interior; as regards the rest, we shall do whatever God will indicate to us.”

“Now God, who has chosen us from among so many for the apostolate in these present times has likewise given to us, the Children of Mary, the spirit that is proper to our calling, namely, the interior spirit.”

The apostle “transforms his soul into a temple of the Lord; he there erects an altar, upon which he offers to God the sacrifice of his will; he never loses sight of the divine presence, but entertains himself sweetly and familiarly with God, who has established His resting place there. Furthermore, he consecrates his heart to Mary, as a sanctuary, whence arise most fervent prayers addressed to her.

“Whom shall we choose as our patron and model in acquiring this interior spirit? It is the august Mother of God, whose life was spent for God alone, and who constantly carried God about with her, with perfect submission to His divine will... The essential is, then, to form in ourselves the interior spirit.”

He insisted with his collaborators that they would not neglect the interior spirit under the pretext of apostolic work. To a very zealous militant he recommend: “May the activity of your mind, and the very ardor with which you serve your neighbor, not stifle within you the interior operation of grace... A certain moderation in the practice

of charity is often productive of more good that is accomplished by following its energetic activity."

He himself admirably practiced what he preached. "See," said a person who knew him well, "how Father Chaminade acts; he is always busy, yet he is always self-possessed; nevertheless, he does much work because grace does much in him."

He was overburdened with occupations which kept him busy all during the day and often throughout a good part of the night. Yet he always remained calm because he was untied to God. "I am scarcely able to think about business affairs," he said, "except when actually transacting them; but ordinarily I am without worry, peaceful in the presence of God."

He lived in constant union with God. He had received the special gift of being habitually conscious of the presence of Mary. Who will be surprised that he exercised such a tremendous influence?

## MARY WILL TEACH YOU TO FORGET YOURSELF

Have you ever considered *how important it is for a militant to be able to forget himself, and how difficult it is for him to do it?*

Certainly you have already discovered that *vanity can insinuate itself everywhere*, even into the holiest actions. But how can a man do the work of God while seeking his own interests? How can God bless a work undertaken to usurp His glory?

Suppose that you have labored unstintingly in order to make some work a success; you have spared yourself neither pain nor sacrifice. Success seems assured. Then a militant jealous of your influence satanically seeks to destroy what you have built up. You would be quite indignant, wouldn't you, and justly so? But don't you see that you just as effectively demolish your own work whenever you seek therein the satisfaction of your vanity?

There are *other ways of seeking yourself in your apostolate*, more disguised than vanity, but frequently more pernicious. I shall enumerate them for you. See whether you have not encountered some of them, perhaps even in yourself.

A militant devotes himself to a work with all his heart. Then he is criticized when he believes that he has merited praise, so he abandons everything. Was he working for Christ or for himself?

Another assists a fellow militant in an apostolic enterprise. He thinks that they ought to adopt a different plan, but his collaborator prefers to follow the original scheme. So he withdraws his assistance. Evidently, he became a militant to carry his own ideas into effect.

Another has worked and labored hard, and those whom he has been helping forget to thank him. So he complains, "What's the use of working for these people; they don't even know enough to say 'Thank you!'" Is he working for Christ or for the recognition of men?

Another militant secretly aspires to some position in his group. But someone else gets it. "What an injustice!" he cries out, and he walks out on them. It is personal ambition, therefore which animates him and not the ambition of extending the kingdom of our Lord.

Another criticizes others. He is jealous of those who have had more success than he has had; he is happy at their failures. He spreads evil reports which he has heard about them. In other words, he is jealous because Christ is glorified! He rejoices when Christ's cause fails! He is happy when Christ is offended by His militants!

Another discourages those who come to him to propose some new work. "It is not worth the effort; it will not succeed." And when to avoid his discouraging words, they make their plans without consulting him, he complains about their lack of good manners, if, indeed, he does not go so far as to hinder the work secretly because he has not started it himself. So much the worse for the cause of Christ if others must take away all the glory!

There is another form of *self-seeking, which hides itself under the appearance of devotedness to a good cause*. It consists in seeing only the work with which one is occupied and ignoring all others. Such a person belongs only to a little chapel, and not to the whole Church; he calls himself a Catholic, but he doesn't have the Catholic spirit.

All militants have heard of the teaching of Saint Paul on the Mystical body of Christ. They are happy and proud to know that they are members of Christ. But they seem never to have heard of the other doctrine of St. Paul on the diversity of functions confided by God to the members of



Christ. "For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, many as they are, form one body, so also is it with Christ... If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where would be the smelling? But as it is, God has set the members, each of them, in the body as he willed. Now if they were all one member, where would the body be? But as it is, there are indeed many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need thy help'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you' ... And if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it, or if one member glories, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, member for member" (I Cor. 12:12-28). Instead of helping the other organizations when the occasion presents itself, as the eye helps the hand and the hand helps the mouth, they envy their success, they rejoice at their failures, perhaps they hinder their actions, and draw away their best workers. It would almost seem that he is considered most zealous who is most bent upon sowing discord among the members of Christ so that His body will be incapable of living and of prospering.

How many flourishing works has vanity or jealousy rendered sterile! How many others they have caused to perish! Millions of souls, even thousands of millions in the course of the centuries, have been lost in Christian countries, and vast numbers have not been won over to the true faith in pagan regions because those who were called to the apostolate did not know how to forget themselves in order to think only of the interests of Christ and of souls!

If you wish to learn the difficult and indispensable art of forgetfulness of self *draw near to Mary*. She never thought of herself, and for this reason she became the cause of our salvation.

Consider her colloquy with the Angel. He announces

to her an inconceivable honor: she is to be the Mother of the Messiah, the Mother of god. She knows this. And she knows also, from the prophets, that if she consents to the divine proposal, she will have for Son the "Man of Sorrows" and that she herself will be the Mother of Sorrows. She does not exult; she is not frightened: she thinks neither of this nor of these sorrows but only of God and of us. her role is to serve. She answers: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to Thy word!"

Consider her in the presence of the shepherds and of the Magi, or Simeon and Anna, of the doctors of the Temple, of the guests at the marriage feast of Cana. Do you see her taking personal glory in the fact that her son is the object of such great honors and admiration? Not at all. She is concerned solely with giving Jesus to the world.

Look for her during the public life of Christ, when He is preaching, working miracles, and exciting the enthusiasm of the multitudes who wished to make him king and who sing to him triumphant "hosannahs." You will not find her. But you will see her several days later when He is attached to the infamous gibbet and when all those about Him are insulting and blaspheming Him.

You will find her again in the Cenacle with the Apostles who awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit. Does she preside over this assembly as the Queen of the apostles? No, Peter presides.

How beautiful she is in this constant forgetfulness of herself! Contemplate her, admire her, love her; then naturally, you will imitate her. Near her you will find how selfish it would be to think of yourself when Christ and souls are concerned. She will make you understand that all militants, even those who do not belong to your group, are her children of predilection although they may not realize it. They, too, are combatting for Christ in her name; therefore, you will love them because of your common

Mother. With her you will rejoice at their success, for it is the success of Christ, of Mary, and of the Church. You will be distressed at their failures, because Christ is not glorified and because souls are not saved. You will be ready to assist them even if they reap the glory. And if they succeed where you have failed, bless God and your mother! Provide Christ be better known and loved, what does your own reputation matter? "May Jesus be praised at any cost!"

As Father Chaminade was admirable for his interior spirit, so too we find in him complete forgetfulness of self. During the sixty-six years which he spent in the apostolate there cannot be found anywhere in his speech or in his very numerous letters a single word that reveals a thought of vanity or of self-complacency or that shows him vexed at being ignored or insulted. Instead one finds very frequent avowals of his weakness. It was said of him, "He effaced himself in his own works, leaving the apparent merit thereof to those whom he employed. His work in Bordeaux was not known by the people at large. It was suspected rather than known by the thoughtful."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, after his death the Archbishop of Bordeaux, Cardinal Donnet, was able to say: "When we trace back the origins of any of our good works in Bordeaux, the name of Father Chaminade in inscribed at the head of each of them."<sup>2</sup>

He refused all praise, knowing that all the glory of his success should go to God. "At times I smile," he wrote, "because certain persons ascribe certain operations to my mind and to my ability." He protested when he thought that such praise had gone beyond the bounds of strict truth and he exacted a retraction from his most zealous admirers. "Let us be before men," he said, "what we are before God; poor, indeed, as to our own resources; but let us not heap upon ourselves the glory of others."

He never spoke in order to claim any merit that was

coming to him, and he permitted others to pass as the founders of works which he had initiated.

The idea of letting the associations which he had founded encroach on the ground of other organizations never entered his mind, and when others spoke to him about it, he protested energetically: "The spirit of God," he wrote, "does not contradict itself. We shall never put our sickle into other people's crops... What I say about the schools I may repeat with regard to sodalities; never will there be a contest with the Jesuits, never any competition, never proceedings of mean jealousy." But when two other works tried to harm his, he said nothing.

On the other hand, he rejoiced at seeing other organizations doing much good where circumstances had not permitted him to realize success. The Society of Mary, which had been founded at Bordeaux, had opened in this city a school which circumstances forced to be transferred elsewhere. Later there was question of the arrival in Bordeaux of the members of another Society of Mary, founded at Lyons. Upon hearing this news Father Chaminade wrote to the Archbishop of Bordeaux: "Your Excellency, I have learned that the Society of Mary of Lyons is trying to establish itself in Bordeaux and in the diocese; I am perfectly delighted at the thought that it will realize the good which I have been unable to do. At the same time I have been informed that it intends to establish a boarding-school under the auspices of Your Excellency; that is another favor of Providence, which I acclaim with all my heart." Since closeness to Mary had taught him to think only of the interests of Jesus and of souls, how could he have acted otherwise?

<sup>1</sup> Simler, J., *Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade* (Parish: Lecoffre, 1901), p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

## MARY WILL TEACH YOU COURAGE

In their first fervor militants do not lack courage. And when there are brilliant successes, they have enough courage to brave the whole world.

But when they find themselves *alone among people of a different way of thinking, how swiftly fear paralyzes them!* If their principles have been attacked, they keep a prudent silence, or they plead attenuating circumstances. If Christian morality is outraged, they say nothing or they try to make believe, by pleasantries or smiles, that they have a heart just as totally corrupt as the others. Fine witnesses of Christ they are!

Moreover, *even among themselves they are frequently afraid to manifest their thoughts or their sentiments.* How many chaplains of the Jocists and the Jecists have made statements like this: "When I see them individually, before the meeting, each is convinced and resolute. But at the time of the meeting, they no longer dare to speak; and if one of them publicly expresses what all have affirmed privately, the others show an air of disapproval, by their silence, their smiles, or by shaking their heads, if, indeed, they do not contradict him openly."

Even for those who have succeeded in surmounting this first kind of human respect, *still what hours of cowardice!* At times the task is so hard and often so little attractive! They feel themselves so feeble before the immensity of the work to be done! They find themselves so ignorant in the face of the complexity of the problems, and often so awkward that they only bungle the job!

And then, sometimes it requires *sacrifices* that they had not foreseen at all. They must give up their time, their rest; sometimes they must renounce the sources of income or pleasant friendships. It is too hard!

If they had to consider only the task and themselves, it would be easier. But there are others to contend with. Opponents are numerous and clever, and they know how to make use of ridicule, falsehood, trickery, and violence. Sometimes the family does not understand, and criticizes and protests. Friends dissuade or blame them. Well-intentioned people are scandalized and create secret or open opposition. Those in authority who ought to encourage and protect do not seem to realize that the world is no longer as it was in the time of their youth and that new needs must have new remedies. They are irritated because the militants have dared to try something which did not spring from their initiative. Or perhaps they are simply discontented because their lethargy has been disturbed.

When militants are numerous or when they can rub elbows with their fellow apostles, perhaps they keep up their courage in the face of opposition. But how do they act when they find themselves alone before powerful adversaries from within and from without? Even little successes sustain their will; but what happens when they encounter rebuff after rebuff? The critics might censure some of their ideas; what are they to think when their conduct appears shocking to upright souls whom they esteem and love?

In certain circumstances how cowardly one feels! Sometimes heroic courage is needed in order not to be ashamed of the master.

Come near to your *heavenly Mother*. *She will teach you the courage* which makes militants for Christ.

Have you ever considered the divinely heroic courage which the sweet Virgin Mary had to manifest in so many circumstances of her life?

Gabriel announced to her that *God was calling her to become the Mother of His Son*. Perhaps you have thought

only of the honor and the joy which this dignity was to bring her. But think of the immense responsibility which it imposed upon her. The saints, fearing to be chosen as bishops or as popes, concealed themselves to escape from such a responsible office. The Blessed Virgin was called to an office incomparably greater than that of all the bishops and popes taken together; for upon her depended the salvation of the whole world, and even more than that, the realization of the eternal decrees of God and the accomplishment of the greatest mysteries after that of the Most Holy Trinity. But she did not recoil, she manifested no hesitation whatsoever in the face of such a great responsibility. Calmly she replied, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

We should readily understand her submission if the responsibility which she accepted so courageously had entailed only happy consequences. But Mary knew from the prophets and from the spirit of wisdom which had filled her souls from the moment of her Immaculate Conception that the Messiah would be "a man of sorrows," "a worm of the earth and no man" (Ps. 21:7), "his look as it were hidden and despised;" that He would be "despised, and the most abject of men," "afflicted," "wounded for our iniquities," charged by the Lord with our iniquities, covered with bruises that we might be healed (Isa. 53: 3-5). What woman would dare to agree to give birth to so unfortunate a Son? Mary had this courage. She was not enraptured at the thought of becoming the Mother of God; nor did she tremble at the thought of becoming the mother of a man treated more ignobly than the most abject of criminals. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word!"

Soon she came to see that the Mother of the "Man of sorrows" would also have to suffer. She conceived by a miracle of the Holy Spirit. After some time, *her relatives*

*and her betrothed perceived that she was with child.* No one knew how it had come about. Joseph himself, who had consented to respect her vow of virginity, did not know how she was with child and, without doubting the virtue of Mary, he passed through frightful anguish, finally resolving to put her away privately. Can you imagine a pure young girl in a similar situation who would have had the courage to keep such a secret to herself and who would not have hastened to explain her condition in order to put her honor above all suspicion? And what young girl has ever loved her virginity as much as the Virgin of virgins? But Mary knew that God, who had asked her consent in this mystery, had not told her to reveal it, and, confiding in Him, she wished only to do His will. Her reputation and all the consequences of this mystery would be taken care of by Him who had accomplished it.

Forty days after the birth of Jesus, she carried Him to the Temple of Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. The aged Simeon asked that he might take the little Messiah in his arms. He blessed God and added, turning to Mary, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Luke 2:34-5). Why did he have to recall the frightful sufferings which awaited Him, just at this moment when she came to present her Son to the Lord as a future victim? However, her soul, though already pierced with the sword at the prospect of these sufferings, did not falter. Courageously she went to offer her Jesus to the priest, to redeem Him, and to bring Him back with her in order to prepare the Victim for the accomplishment of these terrible predictions. But henceforth would there ever be for her a single day of unmingled joy? As she saw Jesus growing in wisdom, age, and grace, did not the word of the old man keep sounding in her ear to remind her that the days of anguish were approaching nearer and nearer? But she remained the



Valiant Woman.

There were other times in her life when a singular strength of soul was required of her. On the eve of the birth of Jesus, she undertook a journey of several days in order to go to Bethlehem. Then she did not find a house in the town of her ancestors where she could bring her Son into the world. She had to rise in the night and flee for eight days across the desert with her newborn Infant. Then she lost the child Jesus in the Temple. Later on, she had to separate herself from Him when he was about to begin His public mission and to be a sign of contradiction, as Simeon had foretold. One day, when he returned to Nazareth, she saw how His frenzied compatriots wished to cast Him from the height of the hill upon which their city was built. And, indeed, there were many other similar circumstances which are not related in the Gospel.

Let us pause only at the most tragic hour of her life. *Jesus was hanging on the cross between two criminals.* A fierce mob yelled and cried out against Him. The Pharisees and the chief priests mocked Him because He had called Himself the Son of God, and defied Him to come down from the cross. Where were His militants then? Where were the seventy whom He had sent to preach and to perform miracles in His name? Where were His leaders, the twelve Apostles who had sworn that they were ready to go with Him even unto death? Where was Peter, their head, who had protested that even if the others should abandon Him, he would never abandon Him?

Mary was there - not concealed in the midst of the crowd, nor collapsed on some distant rock, but standing at the foot of the cross.

At the sight of one so courageous in the midst of general weakness, do you not also feel more courageous? The Apostles hid themselves. Not all hid, however, for one of them, John, had dared to follow His Master to Calvary.

He had joined the Blessed Virgin, and close to Her, he, too, had felt the courage to brave the mob, the executioners, and the chief priests.

Do you wish to keep up your courage, even if all your enemies should confront you at one time? Like John, always keep yourself close to Mary. She will make you participate in her strength of soul and will enable you to understand whence true courage comes. You become a coward when you think only of yourself. But you will be bold and intrepid when you realize that you are fighting for one who is stronger than all the forces of the world and hell together. When you are tempted to yield, Mary will remind you that you must think not of your won interests but of the interests of Christ. She will show you that it would be dishonorable for you to be ashamed of Christ, your Master, but glorious for you alone to defend His interests against all. She will convince you that Christ is never vanquished and that you will never be vanquished either, so long as you combat for Him under the orders of His Mother.

Lucy worked in a paper mill where about fifty young girls were employed in the same room. Their conversation sickened her. She informed her spiritual guide, a very understanding and intensely supernatural young priest, who spoke to her frequently of our Blessed Mother. He encouraged her to use her influence to make her companions ashamed of their language. He told her that this was her duty as a Jocist. She protested that she couldn't do anything about it; she was young, timid, and she did not know what to say.

"I tried at first, but they make fun of me," she told him.

"Did you call upon the Blessed Virgin before speaking?" asked the priest.

After the installation of a gas pipe in the room, all complained of the bad odors which came from it. But no

one dared to speak to the foreman, for he was so brutal; nor to the superintendent, for he was so haughty to his young workers.

"There is a chance for you to do a good work for your companions, and perhaps to acquire some influence over them," the priest said to Lucy. "Go to see the superintendent and explain the case to him."

"Oh, Father, don't suggest that! I still don't know why, but the other day he called me all sorts of names and threatened to dismiss me."

The priest, however, kept the idea and spoke to the president and the chaplain of the Jocist group. Both were of the opinion that the young girl was too timid to make such an attempt. Two days later, Lucy showed him a prayer book which she had just received. Opposite the title page there was a picture of the Blessed Virgin. Under the picture were these words, "Who has ever invoked her in vain?"

"You see," said the young priest, "she always hears you. Would you be fore first it invoke her in vain? Say a decade of the beads, and she will give you the courage to go to explain the matter to the superintendent."

Lucy recited her decade, and after four days, she hazarded to ask an interview with the terrible superintendent. He received her immediately, and she explained the situation to him.

"I knew nothing about this," he answered. "It will be remedied. Thank you, Miss."

A quarter of an hour later, workers came to examine the defective pipes and to prevent the gas from escaping.

The girls could not get over their astonishment. "Is this the little girl who dared to complain to the superintendent? You certainly have courage, Lucy. Everyone is quite pleased

about it.”

Since that day the little despised Jocist has become almost a heroine. The foreman speaks to her with respect. And now with a word or a look, she is able sweetly but courageously to recall the others to their duty, and they do it. Often her presence alone is sufficient. It is because, ever since the remark of the priest, she has remembered that she must always begin with a prayer to Mary, who has never been invoked in vain.

## MARY WILL TEACH YOU PERSEVERANCE

*To be courageous is sometimes hard; but to persevere to the very end is a hundred times harder.*

How many have you not seen desert the cause of Christ who had once shared your ideas, your aspirations, your enthusiasm!

In their first fervor they had undoubtedly given themselves sincerely. Then another interest attracted them: good times with congenial companions, the love of a young girl, a more lucrative job, or a position which enabled them to get ahead in the world.

Or perhaps they grew impatient in the face of constant trial. Their courage was exhausted little by little until finally they abandoned everything.

Or very simply, they gradually lost their fervor. The monotony of their occupations and the few results obtained, joined to the weakening of their religious fervor - prayers poorly said or omitted, less frequent Communions without true union with Christ - all this almost imperceptibly caused them to lose the spirit of the movement. They still belonged to its body for some time, but they came less often to the meetings and finally they no longer came at all.

At times have you not experienced the temptation to do as the others are doing? This is so human, especially if the others are intimate friends; perhaps they are your leaders, or persons whom you have regarded as much better than you. Have you never said to yourself in moments of failure or of weakness: "Since so and so, who knows more about this than I do, is quitting, should I not do likewise?" And yet, in the depths of your soul, you felt that it would be cowardly to desert. But how can you hold on against every temptation, especially when you are alone?

You need never be alone. Are not Christ and His Mother always with you?

*Mary will teach you never to desert the service of Her Son.* She knows what it costs to persevere.

She had pronounced her *fiat*. She was ready to serve Him, who, as the Angel had foretold, would sit upon the throne of David forever, of whose kingdom there would be no end. But why should this Eternal King, called to sit upon the throne of David, take flight during the night before Herod, the usurper of His throne? Why was the infancy of Jesus so similar to that of other children? Why did he occupy Himself in the workshop of Joseph, making chairs, tables, and plows, when he should have been conquering His kingdom? Why this thirty hidden years when his mission was to enlighten all nations? Nevertheless, Mary believed and hoped as firmly as when, being congratulated by Elizabeth for having believed the word of the Angel, she sang her *Magnificat*.

Then her Son actually began to preach and to work miracles. Loving souls, groups of men, and immense multitudes followed Him everywhere He went, on the roads, in public places, along the shores of the sea, on the mountains, even in the desert. Now, certainly, the prophecy made by Gabriel would be realized. But suddenly his disciples began to leave Him and to go away. The Pharisees, the doctors of the law, and the chief priests, those who ought to have shown the greatest fervor for the coming of His kingdom, contradicted Him, harassed Him, and swore to put Him to death. There was reason for hesitation and fear. But then the crowds acclaimed Him anew upon His entry into Jerusalem. Five days later, this same crowd cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Who still dared to declare himself His follower? The Apostles themselves had sworn fidelity even unto death. But they also took flight and hid themselves. Their leader,

frightened by the words of a servant girl, declared with an oath and with curses that he did not know this man.

Mary alone remained completely faithful even to the end. She followed Him to Calvary, with John, who found courage close to her. However, how would this Crucified Son of hers ever come to sit on the throne of David? How would He whom she beheld dying amid unspeakable torments establish a kingdom without end? Was thy prophecy but a dream, O Gabriel? But Mary remained firm as a rock, even when her Son breathed His last sigh and when she had before her eyes only a corpse.

How was she able to persevere in this manner? It was because she never ceased to believe and to love. Perseverance is wanting only because faith and love are wanting.

*Close to her, you, too, will continue always to believe and to love. You will always believe in Christ and His Mother; and you will always love Christ and His Mother, and souls because of them. Those who have deserted the cause of Christ had faith in themselves and loved only themselves. But close to Mary, you will forget your own interests to think only of Christ, who is counting on you, and of the souls who await you. When temptations to infidelity assail you, she will induce you to say as did Peter: "To whom shall I go, Lord? Thou alone hast the words of everlasting life." And when you see others becoming unfaithful, she will make you repeat those other words of Peter, changing his presumptuous challenge into a cry of humble confidence: "O Christ, grant that, if all should abandon Thee, I may not abandon Thee!" And if you must go with Him even to the summit of Calvary, like John you will mount it with her, and like John you will hear the master say to you: "Behold thy Mother, I confide her very especially to you!" Always remain close to Mary and you will never desert the cause of Christ!*

Henry had just finished his compulsory training in a French military camp. The son of a wealthy landholder, he made his studies in a house conducted by religious, and he carried away strong Christian convictions together with an ardent apostolic spirit. In his last year at school, he had been president of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, and in his contacts with the fervent and completely supernatural soul of the chaplain, Father Paulin, he began to understand that, as the good priest put it, "to be a one hundred per cent apostle, you must be a one hundred per cent servant of Mary."

In the camp he made the acquaintance of certain Jacists, whose courageous Christianity attracted him. Their conversations impressed him deeply and made him understand the marvelous apostolate which the Jacist movement seems called to exercise.

Upon his return to his family, he had to follow certain science courses at the College, for he was to succeed his father; but he thought of organizing at the same time a small Jacist section among the younger elements of the personnel employed on the property.

The history of this Jacist section furnished the material for a book, although it is not yet three years old. Briefly, it is the history of incessant obstacles and of stubborn efforts to defeat them. We shall have to be content here with a bare enumeration of some of these difficulties.

Obstacles confronted Henry on all sides. Most of the youths thought only of having a good time. Even the best of them, to whom he appealed first, were very slow in comprehending anything of his explanations on the necessity of living the life of Christ and of making their companions live it. One or the other secretly destroyed all that he so laboriously worked to build up. And then, when he had almost succeeded in giving one of the youths the true Jacist spirit, the young man quit or was called



elsewhere for one reason or another.

As for the other members of the household, the older workers were not willing to agree that they should do otherwise than they had always done. The head of the workers, conscientious but narrow-minded, upon seeing that some of the young people showed more confidence in Henry than in him, was jealous and profited by every occasion to plague them. Sometimes Henry's father thought that his son did not keep a great enough distance between himself and the domestics, and that the meetings took time which he should be devoting to his studies.

The socialists in the neighborhood sought by pleasantries or by evil-minded insinuations to ridicule the efforts of the son of a rich employer, and they put the workers on guard against his ruses for inveigling the people into a reactionary movement.

Those directing a neighboring Jacist section would not forgive him for having more zeal and more success than they had. Discouraging words from the old Cure predicted certain failure, for he said that it was impossible to do anything with the youth of the parish.

Henry himself placed obstacles in the way by his inexperience, his awkwardness, his excessive confidence in some of the youths who abused it, his forgetting to consult, to visit, or to send an invitation to people who expected it.

All in all, friends and enemies endeavored to make him abandon his project. But he was obstinate. They no longer understood him. How could a young man, always so polite and formerly so deferential, even so timid, become so stubborn?

On the strength of his obstinacy, he went on in spite of all obstacles, always doing better. It was noticed that a new spirit animated several of the domestics; little by little

it won over the others and spread even to a certain number of the young men of the village. The foreman stated that the Jacists were the most docile and the hardest working men he had, and in order to make reparation for his former faults, he tried to bring pressure upon the others in order to make all of them enter into the section, a more which almost ruined everything. Henry's father was happy to have a son capable of exercising such influence. The Cure recognized that there was change among several of the young people, and when the Bishop, on his Confirmation tour, congratulated him upon the Christian revival which he noticed among the youth, the good priest was very proud of his Jacists.

Still they did not understand Henry. How was this timid and inexperienced young man able to bring about such quick results in the face of such great obstacles?

The secret of his obstinacy and the secret of his success were one and the same: his love for Christ, and for his brothers in Christ, and his confidence in Mary, Queen of Apostles.

How many times had he felt temptations to discouragement assail him especially in the beginning! Would he not do better to give it all up? On Saturday he would go to confession to Father Paulin and tell him of his efforts and of his disappointments, and he always came away determined to continue. The priest spoke to him of Christ, who was counting on him, and of the ever-victorious Virgin, who would guide and support him. Moreover, Henry began to acquire the habit of not undertaking anything without consulting Mary and without confiding the enterprise to her. And each time he did this his confidence was rewarded, no matter how difficult the work. On the contrary, when he had forgotten to have recourse to her because success appeared certain, only failures resulted.

The opposition which he encountered from those whom he revered and loved was particularly painful to him. But, close to Mary, who led him to Calvary, he soon understood that the cross is the price of all good that is done.

His own clumsiness and especially impulses of self-seeking and his partial complacency in the success which he had obtained were, more than all exterior obstacles, facts that discouraged him. Was he not destroying his own work? However, close to the Blessed Virgin he learned little by little to keep his confidence intact. She helped him to go in all simplicity to confess his failings to Jesus and to abandon himself to Him, and he asked his Mother to repair the evil which he had done and to accomplish the good which he had left undone.

And good *was* done. Henry no longer took pride in it. He knew that it was Christ and the Blessed Virgin who were doing it through him and in spite of him, and that there would have been still more good accomplished if he had not been so frequently an obstacle.

He expects new difficulties and new failures. But he preserves his confidence in ultimate success, even because of these difficulties, and these failures, for he is striving more and more to be simply the instrument of Christ and of His Mother.

## MARY WILL CONSOLE YOU

In vain does a man pretend to be brave and disdain sentimentality; in vain does he try to be truly and stubbornly courageous. There are times in his life when he needs consolation. Man is not made up solely of intellect and will - and happily so, for otherwise he would be a less complete being than he is. Man also has a heart. And at times, even frequently, that poor heart bleeds and suffers and seeks to open itself to another heart which can understand it and share its anguish. Did not Jesus Himself weep on certain occasions? Was He not sorrowful even unto death?

*How many sorrows are there in the life of a militant!*

Sorrows in your family. Parents are sick, worn out, without resources; perhaps they are separated; perhaps they are far from God; brothers are straying from the path of virtue; sisters are in peril.

Sorrows in your work. You have to deal with employers who are self-centered, unjust, who are corrupt and who corrupt others, who have no regard for the most delicate feelings of their employees, who never say a kind word to them, never take them into their confidence. You are considered a machine and not a man. And then there are the periods of unemployment.

Sorrows in your relations with your comrades. Everywhere you find egotism and immorality; none of your friends understand your ideas, shares your aspirations, sympathizes with your joys and difficulties. On every side you meet with abandonments, betrayals, jealousies, mockery, and, at times, open persecution.

Sorrows in your apostolate. Everywhere you encounter lack of understanding, criticism, calumnies, disapproval, personal affronts, lack of success, and disappointments of all sorts.

Sorrows within yourself. Sickness and feelings of depression hinder you. Your aspirations remain unfulfilled. Fears, a lessening of fervor, temptations, and sometimes falls, all handicap your apostolate.

And you know that this litany could be prolonged indefinitely. Poor heart that suffers so bitterly at times!

What should you do? Retire within yourself? That doesn't suppress sufferings, it only aggravates them. It permits the imagination and the feelings to exaggerate and to deform reality; it prepares the way for feelings of revolt and of incurable discouragement.

Give your sorrows a chance to escape by telling them to someone.

By telling them to whom? To any kind of a confidant. What is the usual outcome of this? Either you meet only self-centeredness or lack of understanding, which hurt you, or banal and insincere expressions of consolation, which do not console you. Or you receive words of consolation which only serve to harden your sorrowing heart against your leaders, your companions, and your family, against religion and God.

By telling them to a priest? Yes, if he is capable of understanding the anguish of a militant's heart. But all do not understand or haven't the time to concern themselves with such troubles. And then, even if they are capable of understanding them, how many causes of sorrow are beyond their power!

By telling them to your mother? No one understand and consoles the heart of a child as well as its mother. But when the child has become a young man, how many mothers no longer understand him, and above all are powerless to help him!

*But there is one Mother who always understands and who can always help you, your mother in Christ.*

She understands because she is the most perfect of mothers, and you are always her little child, whom she cares for night and day.

She understand because she is a Virgin Mother. Impurity makes one self-centered. A virginal heart loves with a purity and delicacy that is entirely its own; and your Mother is the Virgin of virgins.

She understands because she is the Mother of Sorrows. One must have suffered in order to understand a heart that is filled with grief. But what heart has suffered as much as the heart of the Immaculate Virgin?

She understands because she is your heavenly Mother. Close to God, she sees in the divine light all your sorrows and all your anguish infinitely better than you see them yourself.

And she can help you because she obtains from her divine Son all that she asks for her other sons. For that divine Son has made her your Mother precisely that she might help you.

At times she consoles you by taking away the cause of your sorrow: sickness, opposition, temptation, or a misfortune that is about to befall you. Sometimes she shows you that your sorrow is only the result of vanity, jealousy, or secret ambition, and she helps you to do away with these despicable sentiments. At times she makes you seek for the remedy until you find it. At all times she consoles you by making you understand that what is a misfortune in the eyes of men without faith, can become for you and perhaps for many others the cause of increased good fortune and of greater success on earth and in heaven.

She consoles you by leading you to Christ; for the Blessed Virgin exists, and wills to exist, only for Christ. And close to Christ and to this Mother, who has suffered

more than any human being has ever suffered, and who, therefore, has triumphed as no human being has ever triumphed; close to Christ and this Mother, who love you so much and who are counting on you, what suffering of your heart could remain inconsolable?

If only too often you come from confidences made to men dissatisfied, depressed, or filled with a spirit of revolt, you always come away from confidences made to your heavenly Mother soothed, consoled, strengthened, more pure, and more generous.

At the general meeting of the Young Swiss Workers held at Fribourg, August 6-8, 1943, twelve hundred militants, workingmen and working girls studied at length the various sufferings in the lives of young Christian workers. As night was falling on the evening of the seventh, they climbed up to the shrine of Our Lady of Bourguillon, an ancient sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin built on a hill overlooking the city, to make together their consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Before this consecration took place, a Jocist from each of the two groups knelt before the miraculous statue and read a prayer to the Blessed Virgin, inspired by the saddening discoveries made in the course of their discussions.

*Here is the prayer of the young workingman.*

"Permit me, O Holy Virgin Mary, to tell you very simply what my young worker's heart has felt during these days. A child of the working class as are all my comrades present, I have become aware of my profound aspirations, and of all the riches and powers of nature that God has placed in me. I have within me a great desire for justice, an ardent feeling for fraternity, for mutual aid, and for giving myself to help others. The aspiration of my entire being is to be recognized as a man. I feel the need to be someone.

"But you yourself are well aware, O Virgin Mary, how in every aspect of my life as a young worker little count is

taken of my personality. My soul is frequently injured and bruised; I have the impulse to revolt against this regime of work which hinders my development.

"The workingman's life has made me a coward. And so my entire existence is made up of apprehensions, of doubts, and of fears.

"You must come to my aid, O Holy Virgin. You who are the Mother of all men can understand me so well. Your entire life has been an example of love, of devotedness, of submission, and of acceptance of the will of God. A child is imploring his Mother; you cannot fail to answer him.

"Make my life beautiful; grant that all my aspirations may be realized. Give me the strength to fight, and to work for the accomplishment of the reign of your divine Son in the world, especially among the working class.

"I want to be an apostle; I want to give myself entirely to my fellow workers. Today I am filled with good intentions, but tomorrow the fight against my selfishness will begin again; I must be strong. I am counting on you, O Virgin Mary; I have confidence in you. I know well that a loving Mother cannot refuse to help her child.

"All my faults, all my weaknesses, all my defects are an obstacle for me in the accomplishment of what Christ demands of me each day. Make me valiant that I may conquer myself.

"You who worked the great miracle at Fatima are indeed able to protect me, too.

"I want to try to respond to your call, but I am well aware that this is not easy. It is up to you, O Holy Virgin, to guide me, to protect me. Amen."



*This is the prayer of the young working girl to the Blessed Virgin.*

“O Holy Virgin Mary, behold us, the young working girls of Switzerland, close to you tonight to renew our consecration to you, to tell you, our Mother, how much we love you. We have often heard you spoken of, but still we really know so little about you.

“As you know, we who are here desire to become up-to-date young women. We want to have a correct and a Christian attitude toward all the events of life. For that reason we have come to this general meeting. During these days of work together we have become aware of all the things that make up our life, of what our sentiments are, and above all of what we must yet do to take our place in the world. We have felt that often in our contacts with others we so seldom ring true, and yet as young girls we do possess great riches. God made us to understand others, to have feeling for the, and to love them, but we do not always do this.

“You well know, O Virgin Mary, that is not always our fault, if our life no longer corresponds to our profound aspirations. And, therefore, it is indeed difficult to be Christian working girls. No one works joyfully any more, trying to do her work as well as possible. No, we work as fast as possible, because that is necessary if we want to get our day’s pay. We work in surroundings where it is a question of everyone for himself, with leaders who look upon us girls only as means of increasing production, and in an atmosphere where there is a very false conception of love, of courtship, and of marriage.

“Nevertheless, we desire so much to be something, to be someone. We feel this in the depths of our heart. Help us, O Holy Virgin Mary, to become working girls who are simple, upright, and sincere like you, for you yourself were so sincere.

“We confide everything that each of us has in her heart this evening to you, while we ask you to take all your young daughters here present in your arms. Help us to make the efforts which are demanded of us for building up a working class that is beautiful, dignified, and strong, in the midst of which you may reign as Queen.”

## MARY WILL TRANSFORM YOU INTO ANOTHER CHRIST

Christ is the Apostle of apostles, the one Apostle from whom all others receive their apostolic mission. He was sent by the Father to save us. Before returning to the Father He said to the Twelve: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you (John 20:21). Go into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Those who at present are engaged in the apostolate - priests, religious, militants of every kind - receive from Him not only their apostolic mandate, but also grace for the apostolate, that grace without which all their efforts would be sterile. Every true militant is, therefore, a prolongation of Christ, another Christ, and the more perfectly he reproduced Christ, the more perfect a militant will he be.

You know from the doctrine of your incorporation into Christ that you are another Christ by the fact that you are in the state of grace. But you likewise know from experience that you are often far from resembling Christ. Nevertheless, you are an apostle only in the measure in which you reproduce Christ.

Look at the great apostles of Christ, those who converted the nations, the great militants of Christ; all of them were saints. And all the saints, even those who buried themselves in the silence of the cloister, like St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, were great militants for Christ.

If we only knew the secret of becoming another Christ easily and quickly, what marvelous militants we would then have!

Well, here is the secret. In order to become the Apostle of mankind, the Son of God willed to be born of the Virgin Mary and to be reared by her. You will recall the

words of the saintly Pope Pius X which I have already cited above: "*There is no surer or more direct road than Mary for uniting all mankind in Christ and obtaining through Him the perfect adoption of sons...No one ever knew Christ so profoundly as she did, and no one can ever be more competent as a guide and teacher of the knowledge of Christ. Hence it follows...that the Blessed Virgin is more powerful than all others as a means of uniting mankind with Christ.*"

Read the more detailed lives of any of the great saints. You will find that all of them without exception, especially those of the last centuries, were distinguished by a most singular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that no one has become a saint without an outstanding devotion to her.

Is this astonishing? Mary's mission was to give us Christ and to rear Him. It will always be her mission to give Christ to men and to rear Him, by forming her other children to the resemblance of her First-born. Evidently she will have better and more rapid success in this task with those who give themselves entirely to her.

Moreover, since great graces are needed to make sinners like us into other Christs, and since our Blessed Mother is the Distributor of all graces, it is evident that she will give the graces which make saints to her more devoted and more loving children.

Here, then, you have the secret of transforming yourself easily and rapidly into another Christ. Many have used it and they have found it infallible. Do as they have done, and you will succeed as they have.

In this regard, here are some quotations from the two great apostles of the Blessed Virgin of whom I have spoken many times. Saint Grignon de Montfort and Father Chaminade.

The former shows forcibly, as you will remember, that "this devotion is an *easy, short, and secure* way of arriving at union with our Savior." In order to explain how through Mary one comes quickly and easily to perfect resemblance to our Savior, he employs an ingenious comparison.

"There is a great difference," he writes, "between making a figure in relief by blows of hammer and chisel, and making a figure by casting it into a mold. Statuaries and sculptors labor much to make figures in the first manner; but to make them in the second manner, they work little, and do their work quickly. St. Augustine calls our Blessed Lady "the mold of God:" the mold fit to cast and mold gods. He who is cast in this mold is presently formed and molded in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in him. At a slight expense and in a short time he will become God, because he has been cast in the same mold which has formed a God.

"It seems to me that I can very aptly compare directors and devout persons, who wish to form Jesus Christ in themselves and others by different practices than this, to sculptors who trust in their own professional skill, ingenuity or art, and so give an infinity of hammerings and chiselings to a hard stone or a piece of badly polished wood, to make an image of Jesus Christ out of it. Sometimes they do not succeed in giving anything like the natural expression of Jesus, either from having no knowledge or experience of the Person of Jesus, or from some awkwardly given blow, which has spoiled the work. But those who embrace the secret of grace which I am revealing to them I may rightly compare to founders and casters who have discovered the beautiful mold of Mary, where Jesus was naturally and divinely formed; and without trusting in their own skill, but only in the goodness of the mold, they cast themselves and lose themselves in Mary to become the portraits of Jesus Christ after nature."<sup>1</sup>

Father Chaminade expressed the same truth, basing himself on the third article of the Creed: "Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

"It was in the womb of our Blessed Lady," he explains, "that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost and took on a nature resembling our own; in this virginal womb of Mary the elect also must be conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost and formed according to the image of Jesus Christ by her maternal care.

"Jesus is truly born of Mary; the elect also are born of her. Mary is the Mother of the natural body of Jesus Christ and also of His Mystical Body.

"Mary nurtured Jesus in His infancy and was associated in all the various stages of His life, in His death and in His Resurrection; the elect attain the fullness of age, as St. Paul terms it, only in so far as Mary becomes in their regard what she was for Jesus..."

"Whatever is carried in the womb of Mary can only be Jesus Christ Himself, or can live but the life of Jesus Christ... Mary unceasingly repeat to us the beautiful saying of St. Paul: 'My little children, how I am in labor until Christ be formed in you.'"

The Christian "truly devoted to the Blessed Virgin will not be long in her service without acquiring the spirit and way of Jesus Christ. Mary will give him his religious training. Did not Jesus submit all things to Mary?"

<sup>1</sup>De Montfort, *op. citl*, pp. 174-5.

**PART 3**

**COMBAT UNDER  
MARY'S BANNER**

## COMBAT BY PRAYER

Recall the story related in Holy Scripture of *Josue fighting on the plains while Moses prayed on the mountains*. It was shortly after the Israelites had left Egypt, when King Amalec attacked them. Moses told Josue, general of the Israelites: "go out and fight against Amalec. Tomorrow I will stand on the tope of the hill having the rod of God in my hand." Josue did so and while Moses held his arms raised in prayer to God, Israel had the advantage, but when he dropped his arms, Amalec was the stronger. At length, the arms of Moses became tired. But his brother Aaron and another companion stood on either side of Moses, sustaining his arms, not permitting them to drop until the sun had set. And Josue defeated Amalec and his people at the point of the sword (Exod. 17: 8-13).

That is a picture of the importance of prayer in the work of a militant.

Naturally, since you are a Christian, you pray in the morning and evening. But *do you pray because you are convinced that without prayer your activity as a militant would be sterile?*

There are thousands who imagine that success in their apostolate depends on their ability to speak, to pin down their opponents, to sell their magazine, to set up displays, to organize grand processions, or to hold enormous congresses. And why not, they ask? Aren't these the means socialists and communists and all our opponents use to draw souls away from Christ? Why don't these same means suffice to lead souls back to Him?

If you reason thus, you are surely mistaken. With a knife you can slash a marvelous picture, or you can take the life of a man. But can you, with the same instrument, restore a masterpiece or bring back the dead to life?



To pervert souls is a natural work in the worst sense of the word. To lead them back to Christ is a supernatural work, the most difficult of all. Can you achieve something supernatural with merely natural means?

If you gave a piece of lead to a jeweler to have him fashion a gold ring, or if you took a marble block to a sculptor and asked him to chisel a living person out of it, wouldn't they exclaim, "This man has lost his mind!?" For something of gold can be made only from gold; and a living being must come from a living source. Similarly, *a supernatural end can be achieved only by supernatural means.*

Notice how a priest proceeds in the sacraments, for example in baptism or the Holy Eucharist. He takes a material thing, water, bread, wine; and then, in the name of Christ, he pronounces over these material things divine words which bring down on them power from on high. Without these divine words, all the water of the five oceans could not wash the soul of an infant; and all the bread and wine produced on the five continents could not of themselves become even the slightest particle or the smallest drop of the Body and Blood of Christ.

In the same way, all the works in which so many militants - often their leaders, too, and sometimes even their chaplains - consume their time or perhaps their health, will never conquer a single soul for Christ if these activities are not accompanied with the divine word that gives power from on high.

This divine word is prayer.<sup>1</sup>

During the last three years of His life, *Christ* preached, discussed, and refuted His enemies; He performed miracles; he was the center of large gatherings and even of a triumphal march. But He *spent thirty years of His life in prayer*, and even during His active life, His heart was with his Father whenever His lips spoke and His hand

cured. Moreover, He spent entire nights in prayer.

Mary did not preach; she did not write; she did not found churches or apostolic works. She was content to *pray* and to *suffer*. But by her prayers and her sufferings she has contributed more to the salvation of men than Peter and Paul and all the other Apostles, and all the legions of Popes, bishops, and priests, diocesan and regular, who have announced the word of God to civilized nations and to barbarian peoples. She has done more than all the doctors who have composed numerous books in order to bring the divine truth within the reach of every mind, more than all the founders of churches and the inventors of new methods of apostolate to adapt the action of the Church to the changing needs of successive generations. And all that all the preachers, doctors, and founders of works and of new methods will do until the end of time will never contribute as much to the salvation and the sanctification of souls as the prayers and the sufferings of the humble virgin of Nazareth.

*Saint Joseph* also, whom the liturgy calls the "minister of our salvation," was content to pray and to suffer. And he has done more for the coming of the kingdom of Christ than the greatest apostolic men who won for themselves the admiration of the Church.

If you read the lives of the great convert-makers, you will see that they were all men of prayer. The saints who founded religious orders devoted to the apostolate have usually joined to the active order a contemplative branch, so that the prayers of one might sustain the works of the other. Thus along with the Dominicans are found the cloistered Dominican nuns; with the Franciscans, the Poor Clares; and alongside the Carmelite priests, the Carmelite sister. These orders have won innumerable souls for Christ in Europe and in all the pagan countries. On the other hand, other Christians driven by an ambition to convert

the world, have worked hard, spoken and written much, spent a great amount of money, inaugurated grandiose undertakings, and grouped crowds of enthusiastic disciples around themselves. But their marvelous works have crumbled noisily, dragging in their ruin their own fortunes, those of their helpers, and often more than that, their generosity, their zeal, and even their faith. All this happened just because their endeavors were not sustained by prayer.

Be careful! The more your zeal is, the more bitter will be your disappointment if you do not know how to pray.

Take care before it's too late! Pray! Pray! Undertake nothing without prayer!

*Do you not see how consoling this doctrine of apostolic prayer is?* Not everyone is capable of making fine discourses, or of refuting adversaries, or of starting great movements. But everybody can pray.

Even if you can do all these things, you cannot be certain of winning souls by your words, or of actually making your movement a success. But you can always be sure of benefitting souls by your prayer, in direct proportion to the value of your prayer.

Pope Pius I said, "Prayer is really the most effective, the most powerful, and at the same time the easiest form of apostolate. It is the best of means; by it, according to our Lord, we can obtain anything."

You might recall the miracles performed at the shrine of Our Lady of Victories and through the Miraculous Medal. In the Office for the Feast of the Miraculous Medal there is the story of a conversation which clearly shows how, where all natural means of persuasion had failed and even provoked a more hostile attitude, persevering prayer to the Immaculate Virgin obtained a miracle of which the whole world spoke. It was the conversion of Alphonse

Ratisbonne, a young Jewish banker of Strasbourg.

Alphonse was indifferent in religious practice, but he hated Catholicism; since his brother Theodore had renounced the Jewish religion to become a Catholic priest. At the Church of Our lady of Victories, this brother had become the subdirector of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners. For a year at his request, prayers had been recited by the members of the Archconfraternity for the conversion of Alphonse.

Alphonse had planned to make a voyage through the Orient, but he was delayed in Naples. From there, without really knowing why, he had gone to Rome, which was not on his itinerary. On the evening before he was to leave Rome, he visited the home of Theodore de Bussieres, the brother of an old schoolmate of his. De Bussieres had been converted from Protestantism to Catholicism and was very zealous. The Jew wanted simply to leave his visiting card, but through a misunderstanding, the Italian servant took him to the master of the house. In the course of the conversation that followed, Alphonse spoke contemptuously of the Catholic religion; a strange idea suddenly came to the host.

"Since you are of such an independent mind, and feel so sure of yourself," he said, "promise me that you will carry on your person this thing that I want to give you."

"Well, what is it?"

"Simply this little medal."

Then he showed him a medal of the Miraculous Virgin. The Jew drew back with mixed indignation and surprise.

"But," added de Bussieres coolly, "according to your way of looking at things, this should be perfectly indifferent to you, and it would give me a great pleasure."

"Oh, well, all right, then." answered Alphonse, breaking into laughter, "at least I can prove that you are wrong in accusing the Jews of obstinacy. Besides, this will furnish me with an excellent chapter for my notes and impressions of my travels." And so he went on ridiculing and blaspheming.

After de Bussieres had slipped the medal on Alphonse, he also gave him a copy of the text of the *Memorare* and insisted that Alphonse recite it every day. After much protesting, Ratisbonne gave in for the sake of peace. He postponed his departure from Rome until later.

During the following days he was just as violent and blasphemous in regard to the Church, but at the same time he went on repeating like a refrain one cannot get out of his mind, the words of the *Memorare*. At noon of the fourth day he was in one of Rome's cafes with a Protestant friend chatting about dancing and good times. At one o'clock, de Bussieres met him and invited him to accompany him on a walk. He had an arrangement to make with the sacristan of the Church of St. Andrew delle Fratte about the burial of a friend who had been praying much for the Jew's conversion, and so he asked Ratisbonne to wait a few minutes outside the church. He returned in ten minutes and found Alphonse kneeling in the chapel of St. Michael his face bathed in tears, unable to speak. De Bussieres led him to a priest. Ratisbonne drew out his medal, kissed it, showed it to the two men, and said with unrestrained emotion: "I have seen her! I have seen her!" And again, his emotion overcame him. Late, in a calmer mood, he told his story. "I was in the church hardly a minute when suddenly I felt inexpressibly troubled. I raised my eyes; the building had disappeared from my sight. All the light seemed to be concentrated in this one chapel, and, in the center of the brilliance, there appeared, over the altar, bright and full of majesty and sweetness, the Virgin Mary, just as she is on my medal. An irresistible force pushed me toward her.

The Blessed Virgin signaled for me to kneel. She seemed to say, 'That's fine.' She said nothing, but I understood everything."

He had understood so clearly that, without ever reading a Catholic book, he had an understanding of the truths of our religion; in particular, he had a vivid realization of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Instead of the long period of probation prescribed for new converts, he was baptized just eleven days after the apparition of the Immaculate Virgin. He became a priest and associated himself with his brother Theodore, founder of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion for the conversion of Jews. He spent the greater part of his life in Palestine and died a holy death in Jerusalem after a long and fruitful apostolate.

<sup>1</sup>However, it must be understood that prayer and the works they enrich do not produce their effects in the same way as a Sacrament.

## HOW TO PRAY FOR THE COMBAT

Not every prayer works a miracle. For there are militants who pray simply "to satisfy their conscience," since they have been told that they must pray. They do not really pray.

*To pray is, first of all, to be convinced that without our Lord we can do nothing supernatural; not just almost nothing, but nothing, absolutely nothing. To pray is to recognize that, despite natural talents, we are incapable of success in whatever we might be doing, unless prayer strengthens us. "Without me you can do nothing," He Himself told us.*

Perhaps repeated reverses have already taught you this truth. But that does not suffice. To the feeling of your *powerlessness without Christ* you must join the conviction of your *omnipotence with Christ*. After affirming that nothing could be done without Him, He added: "he who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit" (John 15:5). Like the Apostle Paul you should feel that you can do all things in Him Who strengthens you (Phil. 4:13).

Why shouldn't you be completely confident of success? Isn't Christ omnipotent? Hasn't he conquered the world and hell itself? And isn't it for Him that you fight and in His name? He has promised to give us anything that we ask of Him. In fighting for Christ and in the name of Christ we are invincible, provided we rely on Him and not on ourselves.

Sometimes, however, you have prayed and still you have not succeeded. And then, discouraged, you have abandoned the work, saying to yourself, "It's useless; I have achieved nothing."

O man of little faith! Why didn't you continue to pray? Jesus has certainly promised to hear us, but He has not

promised to hear us immediately. On the contrary, He has insisted on the necessity of asking, of knocking, of praying unceasingly, of importuning Him, so to speak. But how can we still hesitate after He has given us His world that He will help us? Heaven and earth will pass away, but His world will not. When he seems to turn a deaf ear, it is only because He wants to give us something more or something better than what we are asking of Him. Remember the example of St. Monica praying for the conversion of Augustine.

Let me teach you *a means of obtaining an unshakable faith, a faith that will work miracles.*

You know that the Blessed Virgin can obtain from her son everything that she asks, and that He has made her the Dispenser of all His graces.

You know likewise that Christ wanted His Mother to be the Queen of Militants. That is why He particularly wants to give us the grace of success in our apostolic works through her.

Finally, you also know that your activity as a militant is really a participation in Mary's apostolic mission and that the Blessed Virgin awaits your help in making Christ triumph in the world.

So, then, whenever you undertake any work whatsoever, entrust it to Mary and ask your heavenly mother to realize her intentions in this work. You will infallibly be heard.

You undertake your work for Christ. And you know that Mary is infinitely more desirous of Christ's triumph than you are. And surely you admit that she knows better than you do how to attain success through your efforts. Don't you see, then, that, if you ask her to accomplish her aims in your work, she will most certainly bring it to success, a much greater success than you would have dared to hope for? She will do this, even if a miracle



is necessary. It would not be her first miracle, no her hundred thousandth.

*Pray to the Blessed Virgin before starting any project.* If you foresee obstacles, you must pray to overcome them. If you foresee easy success, you must especially pray for fear that you will rely too much on yourself and then achieve nothing supernatural.

*Pray to the Blessed Virgin during your activity.* While battling like Josue, you must pray like Moses, if you do not want to be conquered.

*Pray to the Blessed Virgin after you have finished your work.* Ask her to assure the success of your labors. The sowing is completed; yet if god does not send the rain and the sun, your seed will lie sterile. How many beautiful discourses and inspiring demonstrations have languished without profit for souls! Bet her to correct your mistakes. Entreat her to change your failures into graces for those whom you wish to conquer.

Do not be content with your prayers alone. *Get all the fervent souls you can to pray for you:* your mother and father, your brothers and sisters, and all your friends who have faith in prayer.

When there is question of a more important work, beg from the contemplative religious - Carmelites, Poor Clares, Cistercians, Visitandines, etc. - support of their supplications and sacrifices. A certain bishop in a pagan country once said that he had more confidence in the prayers of ten Carmelite nuns that in the activity of twenty missionaries.

Ask prayers of the sick, for their voice has a special power with Christ.

Ask little children to pray for you; their innocence and naïve confidence will obtain miracles.

Among all the prayers to the Blessed Virgin, there is one that can be called *the apostolic prayer par excellence, namely, the Rosary.*

For many centuries, the recitation of the Rosary has been used as a conquering weapon against the enemies of Christ and His Church. At one time, it was used against the heretics and the Turks. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has been employed against the secret societies and organizations which have cropped up with increasing strength and which have sworn to extirpate even the thought of god. Pope Leo XIII dedicated twenty-two letters and decrees to this prayer, and he also instituted the public recitation of the Rosary before the Blessed Sacrament during the month of October, the month of the Rosary. Pius XI and Pius XII energetically exhorted the faithful to use the Rosary in order to prevent and then to terminate the worst war that ever afflicted humanity.

*A Few Facts and a Few Words about the Rosary.*

At Lourdes our Blessed Mother taught Bernadette to recite her Rosary piously.

At Fatima, in various apparitions, Mary insisted that the children recite the Rosary every day with devotion. During the sixth and last apparition, when the great solar miracle took place, Lucia, seeing our Blessed Mother, asked her the question which Mary had promised to answer on this day, "Lady, who are you and what do you desire of me?" The Blessed Virgin answered: "I am Our Lady of the Rosary. I wish to have a chapel erected here in my honor. You must recite the Rosary every day." Notice that she calls herself, not the Immaculate Virgin or the Mother of God, but Our Lady of the Rosary, in order to show how much she is attached to this prayer.

"My children," said Pius IX, "help me to combat the

evils of the Church and of Society, not with the sword, but with the Rosary."

Leo XIII wrote: "Sometimes we have seen the fervor of piety grow cold in certain countries and the practice of reciting the Rosary decline. But then an astonishing thing happens; either by reason of some great public danger or under the pressure of some necessity, the recitation of the Rosary has been reestablished more than all other prayers."

Pius XI, the great Pope of Catholic Action, recommend the recitation of the Rosary to the members of this great apostolic movement. "May the Rosary," he said, "serve for those who devote themselves to Catholic Action as a means of urging them on to greater fervor and zeal!" He himself preached by his example. Speaking to a bishop every day. If the Pope has not as yet said his Rosary, his day has not yet ended."

## A SOLDIER OF CHRIST AND OF MARY BY THE EXAMPLE OF YOUR LIFE

Of the Leader of all militants Scripture says, "He began to do and to teach." The life of Jesus was a greater lesson than all his words.

So, too, if you, as a disciple of Christ, want your word to be efficacious, you must *show the superiority of your teaching by the superiority of your life.*

The eloquent speeches of orators elicit applause; but it is the simple words of saints that convert and sanctify. The Cure of Ars, by explaining the catechism to the people who crowded into his little church, or by addressing one or two words to his penitents in the confessional, worked marvels to which the great preachers of Paris declared themselves unequal. The learned Cardinal du Perron used to say of Saint Francis de Sales, "If you want to refute heretics, bring them to me. If you want to convert them, take them to the Bishop of Geneva."

You do not have to be a saint in order to have the right to speak; still less do you have to look like one. But you do have to be a true disciple of Christ and *dare to be yourself.*

To begin with, a disciple of Christ is a man who practices the so-called natural virtues, that is, those which everyone wants to find in a man whom he respects and who respects himself. For Christ was perfect Man as well as perfect God.

Always be frank and truthful! Despise lying! Christ said, "Let your speech be, 'Yes, yes;' 'No, no'" (Matt. 5:37).

Be a model of honesty. Could you imagine Christ deceiving others in order to seek His own advantage?

Integrity, especially in our day, has become so rare that it very easily gains for a man the esteem and confidence of others.

Take care to do your work well even if others spoil or bungle theirs. How did Christ the Worker perform His work?

Force yourself to become an expert in your profession. The word of a skilled mechanic has more weight than that of a bungler, even if he doesn't talk about machines, but about religion or sociology.

Let your virtue be above all suspicion! You must be able to look at the whole world with an even and unruffled composure.

Be polite toward all, friends or adversaries. Be respectful in your language and in your manners, and others will respect you.

Be more than polite; be dignified! If you are young, do not take on the seriousness of an old man; but even a Christian youth ought to have an appreciation of his dignity as a witness and brother of Christ. *Noblesse oblige!*

Always be recollected! Think often of Christ who dwells within you. Then you will be able to radiate Him little by little. Even to unbelievers you will be able to give the impression of a mysterious Presence which will make them recognize in you the God they dare not name.

Be a Christian without fear and without reproach! A sincere Christian, without boasting, without human respect. Everyone-including the enemies of Christianity - esteems those who have the courage of their convictions and who dare to hold consistently to their principles. Recall the words of Christ, "For whoever is ashamed of me and my words... of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes with the holy angels in the glory of his Father." (Mark 8:38)

Always know how to keep your soul in peace, even in the midst of vexation, insults, or persecution. He who can control himself is able to control others.

For love of Christ be agreeable to all who come to you; not like a hawker who wants to sell his wares, but like a Christian who finds Christ again in each of his brothers, even in those of his brothers who are his enemies.

Practice charity toward everybody. Render all the services that you can, not only to your friends or to Catholics, but to others as well. Christian charity is universal. "For if you love those who love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans do that? And if you salute your brethren only, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do that?" (Matt. 5:46:47)

In obliging others, do it out of love for Christ, and not merely that you may have the right to give them, along with your help, a bit of advice or a sermon.

So conduct yourself with others that they feel happier for having been near you. How? Ask your Mother to teach you how to give pleasure to Jesus within them.

Thus you will always be Christ's witness even without mentioning His name. You may not convert anyone immediately. But your conduct will draw them closer to God, and when the moment comes, the impression you made on them will facilitate the reception of Divine grace.

It is not the seed that bursts forth immediately which produces the most fruit, but the one that takes longer to blossom.

You often page through the Gospel in order to discover the teaching of Christ about the different problems of life. Do you discover there the greatest teaching that He has given us, namely, the knowledge of Himself? *Contemplate* not only His words but *especially His life, for He has influenced* men more by His life than by His words.

But while contemplating, remember that Mary has made this contemplation before you, that she passed her life in meditating on all that she saw and heard concerning her Son, and do not forget that, according to the words of Pius X, "There is no more competent guide and teacher of knowledge of Christ than Mary." Ask her, at each scene in the sacred narrative, to help you to understand and to experience what she understood and experienced; and beseech her to give you the strength to put these lessons into practice in your own life.

The Son of Mary was as yet unknown when he came to be baptized in the Jordan. John the Baptist said to two of his disciples, Andrew and John, "Behold the Lamb of God." They did not understand, but they held a conversation with the young Stranger and He won them over. They left John the Baptist in order to attach themselves to Jesus. Andrew brought his brother, Simon, to Him. Jesus looked at him and said, "Thou art Simon, the son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas (which interpreted is Peter)." From that moment on Peter was the most enthusiastic of His disciples. The next day Jesus met Philip. Without explanation Jesus said to him, "Follow Me!" And Philip also was charmed by Him and joined the little group at once. He was prejudiced against the Nazarene and sought for proof. As soon as Jesus spoke to him, he very enthusiastically joined His followers (John 1: 35-51). Later, Jesus called seven others - those whom He wished - and they followed Him obediently. The Twelve left their business, their work, their homes, their fields, and even their wives and children to be near Jesus, to share His poverty, His privations, and soon His persecutions and danger of death.

These were His chosen friends, these Twelve. But the ordinary Israelites, too, fell under the charm of the young Prophet. When they learned that Jesus of Nazareth had just arrived in their town or village, they left their work and gathered about Him, listening to him for hours and following

Him everywhere, even into the desert. They lost all sense of time and all consciousness of their needs. They were with Him for several days at a time, forgetting even to eat, for they had not even remembered to provide themselves with food. They did not understand His teaching very well, but what fascinated them was not much His teaching but His Person.

No sincere soul resisted His sway. Simple and pious Israelites were present; but among them were also publicans and great sinners, even some fallen women who came close to Him to weep for their sins. One day servants sent by the priests came to take Jesus prisoner. They also fell under the spell of His Person, and when, upon returning to their masters, they were asked, "Why did you not bring Him," they replied, "Never has man spoken like this man." Even Pilate was overawed with respect in the presence of this Jew who had been brought before him as an evildoer and a public agitator. Although Jesus deigned to address only a few words to him, Pilate was filled with a religious fear in His presence. Stripped of His clothing and fastened to a cross between two thieves, Jesus endured unspeakable torments. But one of the thieves, after having insulted Him, felt remorse, and in his companion in punishment he recognized the sovereign Master of heaven. Even the centurion who watched Him cried at His death, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

What was it that gave Christ this remarkable ascendancy over souls? Without doubt, it was partly His Divinity. But not everything He did was miraculous. A large part of His influence was due to His natural dispositions and qualities, perfected by grace.

It was due also to His constant recollection in God, which was felt even by those who did not know Him.

It was due to His personal dignity, which was always perfectly maintained whether He was in the presence of



friends or enemies. This was especially evident during his Passion, when He stood before the soldiers, before the high priest, before Pilate, Herod, and His executioners.

It was due to the holiness of His life. He could fling this challenge at His enemies, "Which of you can convict me of sin?" (John 8:46)

It was due to His intrepid sincerity which led Him always to tell the truth, even when such truth would disconcert His friends, annoy His enemies, or bring upon His the sentence of death. "Master," said one of His enemies to Him one day, "We know that thou art truthful... for thou dost not regard the person of men" (Mark 12:14)

It was due to His courage, which caused Him to brave alone His numerous adversaries: the hucksters of the Temple and the priests who took up their defense; His townspeople of Nazareth who wished to hurl Him over a cliff; the scribes and the Pharisees; the chief priests and their followers; Pilate, the Roman Governor; Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee.

But what gained souls and hearts to Him more than anything else was His love.

His was an ardent love. All those who came near Him felt that He loved them with all the powers of His soul and that He wanted only to make them happy.

His was a devoted love. He preached, consoled, and worked miracles from morning until night, traversing towns and villages in search of souls, without waiting for them to come to him. He deprived Himself of rest and of sleep; He forgot to eat in order to give Himself entirely to those who needed Him.

His was a disinterested love. Never could anyone discover in Him the slightest inclination to seek Himself. He forgot Himself completely. In fact St. Paul was able to write of Him, "Christ did not please Himself" (Rom.

15:3).

His was a universal love. Everyone was welcome to come to Him. He worked miracles for many people who later on would turn against Him; He distributed miraculous bread to the five thousand men who would leave His company when He promised the Eucharistic Bread. He asked pardon for His enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34)

His was a tireless love. Indifference, misunderstandings, conflicts, hatred, far from rebuffing Him, seemed to inflame His love all the more. And at the moment when almost everyone abandoned Him through spite or indifference, He gave them the greatest proof of His love by dying for each of them.

His was a merciful love. Whoever suffered in body or soul had a special right to his preference. Sinners in particular were dear to Him. He declared that He had come for them; He defended them.

His was a tender love. All suffering moved Him. To assuage it He worked countless miracles. He wept over Lazarus and over guilty Jerusalem.

Yes, He was indeed a delicate love. How well He knew how to enhance the gift by the manner in which he gave it. One Sabbath evening, when he was worn out from having preached all day long, they brought all the sick of Capharnaum to Him. Instead of curing them with a general blessing, he chose to place His hands on each one individually. On another occasion some lepers asked Him to cure them of their repulsive sickness. No one dared to approach a leper. The unfortunate ones stricken with this disease had to keep away from other men. But Jesus stretched His hands toward them, touched them, and healed them.

His was a delicate love. How kind He could be toward

sinners, especially toward sinful women! He converted them with a word of love and without reproaching them.

His was an infinitely generous love. "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). He gave His life for His enemies.

Did you ever consider that *Jesus inherited these human qualities from His Mother?* For if as God He was like His Father, as Man He was like His Mother. From His Mother and from her alone, He derived His complete human nature. Without doubt, His natural qualities were perfected by the Divinity and by His soul which had been created directly by God. But He received the foundation of these qualities from Mary.

In particular, His inexpressible kindness, His tenderness, the delicacy of His love, he received in large part from His Mother. If the unfortunate, sinners, and the little children all felt instinctively drawn to Him, it was because of a Marian trait in His souls which exercised upon them a tender and irresistible attraction.

By your conduct and by your character, be another Christ, - Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary - and you, too, will conquer many souls.

## COMBAT BY WORD

As a Christian, you are a *witness of Christ; therefore, give testimony to Him!* Moreover, as a soldier, you must fight; and your weapon is the word.

If you have the ability to speak before a crowd, use this talent that God has given you. If you are unable to do this, at least you can speak to two or three companions, or to one alone.

There are some who, by this simple and discreet method, exercise a more profound and sometimes an even more extensive influence than others do by eloquent discourses. A remark, a question, or an exclamation can often be more efficacious than a beautiful sermon.

No one can excuse his sloth or his fear on the pretext that he was not born an orator.

Must you learn from the socialists, from the communists, and from the enemies of the Church the secret of spreading ideas? Many of them have had no more opportunity for study than you. But their love for the cause which they defend - the cause of Satan - makes them clever. Have you less love for the cause of Christ than they have for the cause of Satan?

*Study seriously the doctrine of the Church* on religious and social questions and be able to detect and refute the errors of the enemy. Otherwise you will hamper the cause of Christ and bring shame on your religion.

Do not say that there are no occasions to speak. If you love your master, your Mother, and your brothers in Christ, you will make occasions.

*Speak with courage.* Remember that you are the messenger of Christ. If you spoke in your own name, you would have reason to fear. But speaking in the name of

Him who has conquered the world and Satan, what have you to fear? Never speak without having first prayed, and by the power of Christ and the help of your Blessed Mother you will be filled with a divine courage.

*Speak with conviction.* You possess the infallible truth; how can you fail to feel profoundly convinced of what you are saying? A man who speaks with conviction and who practices what he preaches is always listened to, even by those who do not share his ideas.

*Speak with discernment.* Christ did not reveal everything to His disciples from the beginning because they were not capable of understanding it. You must know when to speak and when not so speak; you must know what to say and what not to say. Sometimes you must refrain from arguing and from triumphing over your opponents, lest you humiliate them and close their minds to the truth. Instead of forcing them to submit to an opponent, allow them to submit to the truth. Before speaking, consult Mary. She will help you to know whether you should speak or remain silent, and what you should say and what you should not say.

*Speak with intelligence.* Try to understand those whom you address. Understand their ideas, their prejudices, their inhibitions, their frame of mind. Find out on what truths you agree, so that from this common ground you can lead them to the truths they reject.

Understand not only their mind but also their heart. Their parents, their education, their environment, happy and unhappy experiences, their interests, successes and failures, their joys and sorrows - all these have influences on their manner of thinking, of loving, of hating, and of willing. It is the logic of the heart more than the logic of the mind which moves men. If you understand the heart of the one to whom you speak, how much easier it is to work upon his mind and his will! Intimacy with your

Mother will give you this capacity for understanding others and for sympathizing with them.

*Speak with fairness.* Don't presuppose bad faith; admit it only if it is evident. If you had gone through the same experiences as those with whom you are speaking, you would be less likely to question their sincerity. Jesus called the Pharisees "whited sepulchers," because He saw the depths of their hearts. Yet even among them he found some sincere souls whom He agreed to instruct in secret. And it was not His Apostles but two Pharisees who dared to take care of His burial.

*Speak with humility and gentleness.* Do not humiliate your opponents and do not become irritated with them; you will only close their hearts. Be zealous, not for your personal success but for the soul for whom Christ died. Imitate your Master, who said: "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29). Imitate your Mother, the humble, gentle Virgin Mary.

Despise no one. Is it their fault that they have not received the same training and the same graces as you? Is it any merit of yours that God has been more merciful toward you than toward them?

Rarely argue. By arguing you run the risk of humiliating others and discouraging questions. Besides, ordinarily, it is not the man who is right but the more glib talker who wins an argument. Explain the truth; it attracts by its own appeal. "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The Pharisees and the doctors of the law argued endlessly. Jesus set forth His message very simply, and for this reason the crowds felt that He spoke with authority, and even His enemies admitted that never had man spoken as this Man.

*Speak with love.* - for love of Christ, whose apostle you are and whose cause you defend; for love of Mary, who counts on your help in conquering the world for her

Son; for the love of your brothers in Christ, whom you wish to snatch from eternal damnation. *Love souls*, even the souls of your enemies, *as Christ and the Blessed Virgin love them*, and your love will make you irresistible.

Perhaps you can use *the written word* along with the spoken word. See with what skill our enemies make use of it! If you are capable, express your ideas, your reflections, and your experiences in book form, or in pamphlets or leaflets, or in magazine or newspaper articles. Do not too easily give your inability as an excuse; is it not your laziness or fear of criticism more than your inability which holds you back? With the flame of love of Christ and of your brothers in your heart, you will easily be able to find something interesting, instructive, and attractive to say.

Even if you are really unable to write, certainly you are not unable to spread the writings of others. The least gifted person can lend or recommend a book which has interested him and can pass on or circulate magazines, pamphlets, papers, and editorials. See how busy socialists and the communists are spreading their writings wherever they see souls to be snatched from Christ. Can you not inconvenience yourself a little in order to lead souls back to Christ?

Among Christ's first followers, no one knew how to wield the weapon of the word like St. Paul. He had not known Jesus personally; in fact at first he had been the most bitter enemy of the Name of Christ and had obtained letters from the high priests to throw the faithful, both men and women, into prison. But on the road to Damascus Christ revealed Himself to him in a vision and converted him.

Three days later he was baptized and immediately, even before receiving the sacerdotal character through the imposition of hands by the Apostles, he began preaching publicly to prove to the Jews that this Jesus whom he had

persecuted was truly the Messiah. And thus he continued to preach Christ until the end of his life. He knew that he had been chosen by God to carry the Name of Christ to all nations, for "Woe to me," he cried, "if I do not preach the Gospel" (I Cor. 9:16).

To preach Christ, he traversed the principal countries of the Orient and of Europe. He undertook five long voyages to implant Christianity in all the known world. He went to Rome and pushed on probably even to Spain. Everywhere he preached, everywhere he founded Christian communities.

Everywhere likewise he encountered enemies. So much the better! This was an occasion for him to explain more fully the message of Christ. When they drove him out, he departed only to continue his work in another town or another country, and thus the Name of Christ was spread everywhere.

Many times his enemies had him thrown into prison and brought before tribunals to have him condemned to death. Paul was not disturbed; his pleas of defense at his trial gave him an excellent chance to speak of the doctrine of Christ to those who had not yet heard his preaching. In Jerusalem the Jews rushed upon him to tear him to pieces. With difficulty the Roman soldiers snatched him from their hands. He profited by the moment of silence which followed to relate to all present how, as an enemy of Jesus, he had been forced by Him on the road to Damascus to recognize Him as the true Messiah of Israel.

They took him to Caesarea where he appeared before the Roman Governor Festus, and before King Agrippa. Paul, bound in chains, cleared himself of the accusations brought against him by the Jews and once more told the story of his conversion. He spoke with such fire of the doctrine of Christ that King Agrippa said to him: "In a short while thou wouldst persuade me to become a Christian."



And Paul answered, "I would to God that, whether it be long or short, not only thou but all who hear me today might become such as I am, except for these chains" (Acts 26: 28-29). Festus and Agrippa recognized him as innocent, but since he had appealed to Caesar, he was sent to Rome.

There he lived for two years in prison. But once more it was an occasion to preach Christ in a place where otherwise he would not have been able to make His name known. He wrote to the Philippians: "Now I wish you to know, brethren, that my experiences have turned out rather for the advancement of the gospel, so that the chains I bear for the sake of Christ have become manifest as such throughout the praetorium and in all other places. And the greater number of the brethren of the Lord, gaining courage from my chains, have dared to speak the word of God more freely and without fear" (Phil. 1: 12-14).

He was set at liberty, but only to be brought a second time to Rome, where he was beheaded. While awaiting his martyrdom, he continued to spread the knowledge of Christ, for even though he was bound by chains, "the word of God," he wrote, "is not bound" (2 Tim. 2:9).

He knew that his speech did not conform to the rules of worldly eloquence. His language was rough and sometimes incorrect. But his audience always listened attentively. They realized that they were in the presence of a man possessed by an irresistible passion, the passion to announce Christ and to make men happy by making known to them the salvation brought by Christ. Paul, however, did not soften truths for them. He would have considered it a crime to lessen the austerity of the Gospel. To the inhabitants of Corinth, the most dissolute city of the Roman Empire, he preached precisely the hardest doctrine, the "foolishness" of the cross (I Cor. 1:18 ff.) And by preaching the "foolishness" of the cross he converted

countless multitudes to Christ.

He preached without fear, even before the hostile Jews who in a short time would try to put him to death, or before the philosophers of Athens who derided his doctrine. He was aware that he was the ambassador of Christ; what had he to fear? Furthermore, he knew that among those who were attacking and laughing at him, there were upright souls whom he could gain for his master. His own glory, his repose, his interests did not count, provided that Christ was better known and loved.

The ardent Apostle was not satisfied with merely speaking; he became a writer. "If he were living today," someone has said, "he would be a journalist." He sent letters, sometimes very long ones, wherever he felt there was need of them. He sent them to prepare men's minds for his coming, to confirm his disciples in their dispositions, to explain, refute, threaten, encourage, and congratulate. The letters of Paul cover five times as many pages of the New Testament as do those of all the other Apostles put together.

What was the result of Paul's teaching? Since a supernatural action is involved, we cannot discern all of the factors that had a part in producing the result. Evidently the prayers and sufferings of other souls, in particular those of the blessed Virgin, made his activity fruitful. Living in Jerusalem with John, Mary must have heard many times of the marvels worked by the words of the fiery Apostle of Christ. Undoubtedly, she saw him and spoke to him when he came to Jerusalem to see Peter, James, and John. But, as far as we are able to judge exteriorly, Paul seems to have done more for the extension of the Gospel than all the Apostles together. To him is due, in great part, the conversion of the pagan world to Christianity, and therefore, our own conversion.

## REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING

Jesus prayed, preached, and gave us the example of how we should live. But is that all He did to save the world? No, He saved it primarily by *His Passion and Death*.

You wish to help Him to save your brothers in Christ. But do you understand that in order to save them *you must first of all suffer*.

Or do you think that Christ alone had to suffer and that you are dispensed. If your apostolate is merely a continuation of Christ's mission, how can you save souls except through Christ and the means which He Himself used.

The Church honors the Blessed Virgin as the Co-Redeemer, that is, the co-operator with Christ in the Redemption of the world, and yet she did not preach. But she did pray and suffer. She suffered more than all the saints, all the apostles, and all the martyrs combined. She suffered in union with Christ, in all His sufferings and for His intentions. Your mission as militant, remember, is only a participation in the mission of Mary. If Mary contributed to our redemption by suffering, how can you share in her mission except by suffering?

Like Christ and our Blessed Mother, all true apostles have understood the redemptive value of suffering. Each applied to himself the words of the Apostle Paul, "I fill up in my body what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the Church" (Col. 1:24). Not only were they not stopped by the crosses which came to them, but they rejoiced when they met with them, persuaded that the cross would help them in their apostolate. Moreover, they imposed on themselves all kinds of penances in order to give their activity its full efficacy.

Keep this truth in mind: *the militant who exercises*

*the most efficacious action on men* is not the one who can speak best or who can organize best, nor even the one who can pray best, *but the one who knows best how to suffer in union with Christ.*

But why did Christ have to suffer? *And why must every apostle suffer like Christ?* Because sin must be expiated, and sin consists in enjoying a forbidden pleasure - a pleasure of the spirit, by pride, or a pleasure of the flesh, by gluttony and, especially, by impurity. Expiation consists in accepting or in imposing sufferings upon oneself to counterbalance these offenses.

Moreover - and this is the principal reason - every sin is a failing against love. Compensation will be made by loving more. But on earth there is no better means of showing love than suffering, voluntarily undergone for the beloved. Our Lord said, "Greater love than this no one has that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Therefore, if you wish to conquer for Christ those who have sinned against love by seeking the forbidden satisfactions of the spirit or of the flesh, it is necessary that you, like Christ, offer your sufferings as acts of expiation and of love.

Suffering is a *hard word*, I know. Throughout the ages, the *cross* has been foolishness for the unbelievers and a stumbling-block for souls weak in their faith. The Apostles themselves were scandalized in the beginning. Perhaps you recall the episode recounted in the Gospel about St. Peter. Shortly before the Passion, our Lord asked His Apostles what men thought of Him; and hearing the various opinions of the Jews, He said to them, "And who do you say that I am?" Peter answered in the name of all, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus, overjoyed at his faith, said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven. And I say to thee, thou art Peter,

and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Note that Peter was highly praised for his faith, proclaimed head of the Church, and invested with a divine power. Then, a short time later, "Jesus began to show his disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and Scribes and chief priests, and be put to death and on the third day rise again." Peter, remembering his prerogatives, began to chide his Master saying, "Far be it from thee, O Lord; this will never happen to Thee." But Jesus, turning, said to Peter; "Get behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal to me; for thou dost not mind the things of God, but those of men" (Matt. 16: 13-23). Poor Peter, he did not as yet understand the mystery of the cross, not did his companions. When Jesus was crucified some week later, all of them were shocked and confused; they hid themselves and thought that all was lost.

They still did not understand the value of suffering. After the retreat at the Cenacle, where they spent ten days in prayer "with Mary, the Mother of Jesus," the Holy Spirit came to give them the mind of Christ. Then they understood, and thereafter they were happy to suffer for their Master and to pour out their blood for the spread of his doctrine.

You, too, should pray to Mary to obtain the Holy Spirit, that he may make you understand that *it is necessary to accept suffering with your master and your Mother* if you wish to be their militant.

Without doubt you have already heard of the Cure of Ars, the famous apostle of the nineteenth century. His example affords us a tangible experience of the efficacy of suffering in the apostolate.

The man of God had just been named pastor of the parish of Ars. He asked the mayor, "How do they pass the Sundays in my parish?"

"For many," answered the mayor, "it is work in the morning, the cabaret and dancing in the evening. The young men and the young girls have only games and amusements on their minds. It wouldn't be so bad if they would only limit the amusements to their own group! But our village has such a reputation that it has become the rendezvous for the dancers of the neighborhood. You will be a witness of this fine hubbub, Father. Think of it! They dance in the clearing in front of the church, close to the cemetery; your garden borders on that clearing. You will see the couples twirl alongside your quickset hedge. Then, at night, you will hear the coarse, drunken laughs, the ribald songs, and the blasphemies. And that will last until morning!"

"May God have mercy on us," said the poor Cure.

Several years later, that parish had become the most fervent of the entire country. How did the holy man do it?

One day, he committed his secret to some priests of the vicinity who complained of the uselessness of their efforts. "We have worked, we have preached, we have exhorted, we have prayed. We have done all that we could do. But it is simply labor lost."

The Cure of Ars answered, "you have worked, you have preached, you have prayed, you have done all that you were able to do? But have you fasted, have you scourged yourselves? Have you slept on the floor? As long as you have not done these things, you cannot say that you have done all that you could."

Fasting, scourging himself, and sleeping on the floor were precisely the means which the holy priest used until

he had obtained the conversion of his flock. Each day he went to the church before dawn. On his knees or prostrate before the altar, he would repeat, "My God, grant that my parish may be converted. I consent to suffer all that you wish, during my whole life, provided only that they are converted!" At noon he was still in church, if his pastoral work did not call him elsewhere, and there were some days, when, neglecting his poor body entirely, he did not leave the altar step where he had been kneeling until after the evening Angelus.

By a miracle of endurance, he lived sometimes two or three days without taking any nourishment. And when he did eat, the meal was almost invariably boiled potatoes - often entirely green with mold.

Toward nine o'clock in the evening, he went to his room and took off his cassock. Then, taking in his right hand a short iron chain with pieces of lead on the ends, he scourged his left shoulder in a frightful manner. Blood reddened his coarse linen shirt which was quickly torn; sometimes the discipline itself flew into pieces. On certain evenings he beat himself for more than an hour. He stopped, for an instant, exhausted by the pain, and then the unrelenting flogging resounded anew.

When that was done, he took an old blanket and stretched himself out on vine branches mingled with straw or on the flooring of the attic with the end of a beam as a pillow.

Then it happened that the inhabitants of Ars were converted one after another, all without exception, and the hamlet became the home of piety and purity; one would almost have called it a convent. From Ars the influence of the holy pastor spread to the surrounding villages, then over the whole region, then over all France. Finally his sanctity became known over all the world and from everywhere people came to confess to the saint in order to

amend their lives or to learn from him the will of God.

Evidently, it is out of the question for you to reproduce the frightful mortifications of the Cure of Ars. The life of an ordinary militant is of necessity entirely different from that of a priest burdened with the care of souls in a village that has turned pagan. But if the way of life of the cure of Ars is not to be imitated by the majority of men, the *spirit* of the holy priest ought to be reproduced by every true apostle.



## VARIOUS FORMS OF REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING

*What forms will redemptive suffering assume in the life of an apostle?*

1. There is, first of all, the suffering which is necessarily involved in the realization of any great project. The *apostle* of any ideal whatsoever, even if it be a false or perverted ideal, must be ready to become a *martyr*. Every apostle must be prepared to work for the cause and to renounce himself.

To work for the cause you will have to *give yourself without reserve*. You must not count the cost of your suffering; you must exhaust yourself, wear yourself out. As an apostle one day put it, it means "to run to the ends of the earth to save a soul and then to die."

Read the life of Jesus. He rose with the dawn, and He preached and healed the whole day, sometimes even during the night. When He wished to retire to a lonely place with His disciples to rest awhile, the crowds came to look for Him in His solitude, and He began to preach the Gospel to them. When the Apostles wished to push aside the mothers who came near the exhausted master so that He might bless their children, He rebuked His Apostles and gave Himself entirely to the innocent little children. Sometimes He allowed Himself to be so taken up with the crowds that He did not have time to eat, and prudent people said, "He is mad." Indeed one day His own relatives came to take Him away from the teeming crowd. But He refused to see His relatives and continued to preach.

To work for the cause you must be able to *renounce yourself*. You must be ready to sacrifice not only your rest and your time, but occasionally you will have to give up even the consolations of family life, the prospects of

an advantageous position, or your personal plans for the future.

When the hour for His public ministry had arrived, the Carpenter of Nazareth had to give up earning a livelihood for Himself and His Mother and live henceforth on alms. He had to renounce - and this renunciation was infinitely more painful - that life of ineffably sweet intimacy with her who understood Him best, loved Him most, and gave Him infinitely more consolation than all the rest of creation. The salvation of souls required it.

2. To these inescapable sufferings, you must add voluntary ones. You will never accept with true dispositions those sufferings which are inevitable, if you have not imposed voluntary sufferings on yourself. Now and then an especially high price is needed to obtain some particular success or the conversion of a certain soul. All true apostles have imposed voluntary sufferings on themselves, no matter how painful were the sufferings which resulted from their apostolic life.

There are all kinds of sufferings, and they vary according to the condition of each individual. Bodily privations can be practiced in the use of food and drink, or of tobacco, in denying yourself recreation or sleep. Some sacrifices of this kind do no harm; on the contrary, they intensify your energy. However, it is necessary to take all the nourishment and the rest necessary to fulfill properly your duties of state. In general, mortify yourself rather in the manner of performing these actions than by diminishing the quantity. While allowing yourself what is permitted, it is good never to take all that you could legitimately take. What you deny yourself will be for souls, or for some particular soul, or for some special work.

There are other sacrifices which occasion no danger to health at all. Such would be maintaining a dignified rather than a careless deportment at all times; holding in

check your curiosity which wishes to see everything and to hear everything; the willingness to take on extra work instead of leaving it for others; going with a certain less agreeable companion instead of another more pleasant.

Christ kept vigil; Christ fasted; Christ never looked for His own satisfaction; Christ was always modest; Christ was all to all.

3. There are other sufferings far more crucifying than those which you impose on yourself. They are those *which plague you in your apostolic activity*.

Sometimes sickness renders you powerless. Sometimes mishaps upset your plans. Sometimes you feel the absence or the loss of resources necessary for your enterprises.

There are even worse things. Some of these I have mentioned already, the calumnies and persecutions of your enemies, the lack of understanding of those near and dear to you, the censure of friends, the criticism of good people, the desertion of your companions, at times the jealousy of other militants and their secret machinations to ruin your projects, the indifference, even the disapproval of those who ought to thank you and aid you.

Is not all of this the reproduction in miniature of what Christ had to undergo? Those who at first had desired to make Him a king found His teaching too hard, and they no longer walked with Him. "He came unto his own and his own received him not" (John 1:11). The Pharisees, who were considered the holy ones of Israel, never missed an opportunity to contradict Him. The princes of this people whom He had come to save, who should have assisted Him and facilitated His mission, plotted His death.

4. But what is most difficult to bear is the *apparent uselessness of your many efforts, your many prayers, and your many sufferings*. You see the defeat, the final collapse,

of all that you had so generously and so painstakingly sought to build. You can endure all the difficulties and all the contradictions that come your way, provided that in the end there is success. But what if at the end there is defeat and total failure?

But was this not also the fate of Christ? Fatigue, lack of understanding, envious attacks, these were nothing so long as the crowds cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Matt. 21:9) But a few days later all was changed. The crowds shouted, "Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas!... Crucify Him!" (Luke 23:18-21). One of the Twelve betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver. Another, the leader, who had just taken an oath to follow Christ even to death, denied three different times that he even knew the man. All the rest ran away to cower in their hiding-places, convinced that all their hopes were ruined. He was nailed to a cross, and the chief priests insulted Him, "If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He wants Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God'" (Matt. 27:42-3). Finally, after He had uttered a loud cry, saying, "It is consummated" (John 19:30), they took Him down and laid Him, lifeless and disfigured, before His mother, and then placed Him in the tomb. His enemies sealed the stone of the sepulcher, satisfied with their triumph. Was there ever in the history of the world a defeat as tremendous, as distressing as His? Yet this defeat was the greatest triumph ever gained, for it was that failure which saved the world.

## THE SPIRIT OF REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING

On Calvary, three condemned men were fastened to three crosses. One cursed his lot and blasphemed God; his cross served to cast him deeper into hell. The second cursed and swore at first, then accepted his chastisement and repented; his cross brought him to paradise. The third willed His cross and offered His life for us; he saved the world.

Not all suffering has redemptive value. *Only the spirit in which suffering is endured gives it value.* A single sigh of the Blessed Virgin counted more before God for the salvation of souls than the most excruciating torments of the martyrs.

You should constantly keep in mind, not so much the necessity of suffering, as the dispositions with which you out to suffer.

To give your suffering redemptive value, you must first of all have *faith*. You readily believe that self-imposed sacrifices will serve to make your apostolate fruitful. But how difficult it is to have this faith in the value of suffering when there is question of unsought-for trials, of trials which seem to hinder your apostolate.

Without faith, you will see in the fatigues and renunciations which devotedness entails only an inevitable evil.

Without faith, without great faith, you will be impatient when confronted with physical obstacles; you will be irritable, and will burst out in recriminations against those who thwart your action by their foolishness, their wickedness, or their jealousy.

Without faith, without heroic faith, you will lose courage in the face of opposition.

But faith will show you in all these obstacles the great means of success. Faith will teach you that "the Christ had to suffer these things before entering into His glory"; and that you, as a disciple of Christ, must suffer in order to triumph with Him.

You must have *patience*, heroic patience, a divine patience to bear all these trials without ever retreating.

Above all, you must have *love*, a love without limits. For love alone "bears a burden without being weighted and renders sweet all that is bitter... Love often knows no limits but overflows all bounds. Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of troubles, attempts more than it is able, and does not plead impossibility, because it believes that it may and can do all things. For this reason, it is able to do all, performing and effecting much were he who does not love fails and falls."<sup>1</sup>

If you love souls, what sacrifice will seem too hard to you if by it you can keep a single soul, or perhaps a great number, from the eternal flames.

If you love your Mother, what trial will make you hesitate when she asks you to assist her in the battle against Satan, that she may save her children from him?

If you love Christ, what suffering can frighten you when you know that He is counting on you to win for Him the souls of your brothers for whom He has poured out His blood?

Do you wish to attain to this faith, this endurance, this love? As soon as a trial comes upon you, *turn to your Mother*; she will lead you to Jesus and without effort you will believe and you will love - and you will be grateful. You will thank Jesus and Mary for having judged you worthy to share their sufferings and their love; you will be grateful to them for having associated you in their redemptive passion and for having willed that for all eternity there will be more

souls in heaven because of you.

However, note this well: whatever you may have to suffer, *think neither of yourself nor of those who cause you suffering*. Suffering that you accept lovingly, considering only Jesus, Mary, and souls, has a hundred times more redemptive value than another trial undergone with bad grace. I beg you, my brother, not to render worthless ninety-nine per cent of your apostolic trials by seeing only these obstacles and their authors; when you can save a hundred souls, don't resign yourself to saving only one, just for the pleasure of pitying yourself in your sufferings and of becoming irritated with those who inflict them upon you! Simply say, "Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, my Mother! This is for souls!" And then, forward!

True apostles, having meditated on the mystery of the cross, have always been friends of the cross. They are on the lookout for trials; they embrace them and rejoice in them, because they see in these trials a portion of the cross upon which Jesus saved us.

Invariably, in each of his missions, Saint Grignon de Montfort met with obstacles which, it seemed, would ruin his undertaking. He was happy because of these obstacles, for he knew that the more crossed he had, the more victories he would carry away. One day, however, he began a mission which succeeded from the start. "Let's get away from here," he said to his companions. "We shall not do any good here."

"Why?" they asked. "You see how well everything is proceeding according to our plans."

"But we haven't had any cross," said the Saint. "No cross is the worst cross."

Similarly during his entire apostolic career, Father Chaminade had to battle against all sorts of obstacles. The last ten years of his life in particular were years of

extremely painful crosses, because of the opposition which he encountered on the part of those whom he loved and revered. But never did he lose courage, even when his work seemed doomed to failure. "Try to understand," he wrote to one of his most intimate friends, "that it enters into the designs of God that the founders and co-founders of God's great works should have very much to suffer, and that their tears are as the dew which makes the seed sprout up. 'Going, they go and weep, carrying seed for sowing: coming, they shall come with rejoicing, carrying their sheaves' (Ps. 125)."

However, both Saint Grignon de Montfort and Father Chaminade knew that they had more to suffer because they were the apostles of Mary. "The devil," wrote Saint Grignon de Montfort, "lays terrible snares for the faithful servants and true children of Mary, whom he has greater difficulty in overcoming than others." And he recalled the ancient prophecy which foretold the enmity not only between the demon and Mary, but also between the demon and the children of Mary, and described at length and with enthusiasm the combats and triumphs of the great apostles of the Blessed Virgin.

Father Chaminade, in his turn, speaking of the persecutions and calumnies which were directed against the work which he had founded, explained with invincible confidence: "If the demons unceasingly persecute the Church of Jesus Christ, how can those be spare who have joined together for the purpose of defending it, and who especially declare themselves to be the children of Mary and form a league directed precisely against the empire of Satan? Are we not powerful against the serpent: 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.?' " His confidence was not confounded.

<sup>1</sup> *Imitation of Christ*, Bk. III, Ch. 5.



## WITHOUT MARY YOU CANNOT SUCCEED, WITH MARY YOU CANNOT FAIL

Have you understood the role you ought to give to the Blessed Virgin in your activity as a *militant*? You answer, "Yes," and you are sincere. And yet, how many times you still expect success from your own efforts and your own ability, and you forget Mary; or, if you do invoke her, it is more from a desire to satisfy your conscience than from real conviction.

Therefore, let me insist once more on a thought which summarizes all the meditations we have made together and which I leave with you as a spiritual legacy: WITHOUT MARY YOU CANNOT SUCCEED, WITH MARY YOU CANNOT FAIL!

*Without Mary, you cannot succeed.*

Why not? Because you can do nothing without grace, and all grace comes to us through her.

Because she is the Queen of Apostles and you cannot be victorious without battling under her orders.

Because God wills that, in these modern times, it should be Mary who in a special way will lead us to Christ.

Because at the present time, ever since the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by our Holy Father Pope Pius XII, the whole Catholic world has understood that it must turn toward Mary, for to her Christ has reserved the victory over the powers of hell, the conversion of individuals and of nations, the return of heretics and schismatics to the one fold of Christ and the exaltation and triumph of the Church.

Because experience proves that the apostles who

forget the Blessed Virgin do not succeed, or achieve only superficial successes that are out of proportion to the immense number of works, hardships, and sacrifices of every kind which they have endured. When we consider the great number of souls in the world, the successes of these *militants* resemble those of detached troops of certain units which, during the invasion of a country, momentarily check a triumphant enemy, but in no way prevent the general downfall.

*With Mary, you cannot fail.*

Once more, why? Because God is all powerful, and Mary, by her intercession, shares in the omnipotence of God.

Because, though the demons are stronger than man, Mary is incomparably stronger than all the demons put together.

Because already in the garden of Eden, God predicted that there would be enmities between the serpent and his seed, and the Woman and her seed, and that the Woman with her seed would triumph.

Because, in making Mary the Queen of Apostles, her Son evidently predestined her for victory and not for defeat.

Because great servants of God and of Mary have foretold both the desperate battles which are taking place in our day between Satan and the apostles of the Blessed Virgin and the victories of these apostles.

Because just recently our Holy Father the Pope has declared that Mary has always been "victorious in all the battles of God," and he has invited the entire world to consecrate itself to her because "she alone can obtain for us the help we need in our distress."

Because experience points out more and more clearly what great triumphs are won in the name of Mary. Recall the miracle, incomparably more magnificent than the solar miracle of Fatima, that took place in the remarkably rapid conversion of Portugal.

By yourself, you are weakness personified. But, united to Mary, you share in her omnipotence. Sometimes, perhaps, you will seem to fail. But if you have truly done what you believed to be her will, if you have worked in her name and have relied on her, she will change your defeats into victories. It is possible that you may not see these victories during your lifetime. What does it matter that you fail like your Crucified Master, as long as you triumph with Him in His glorious Resurrection.

Militant of Christ, I repeat again with the deepest conviction, a conviction that I should like to see shared by all militants of Christ, "Without Mary, you cannot succeed; with Mary, you cannot fail."

I was just at the point of concluding these pages when one of my friends, a young priest, showed me the letter which is given below. It had been sent to him by an active Jocist whom he had tried for a long time - in vain, so it seemed - to convince of the necessity of giving our Blessed Mother her proper place in his work of conquest. I publish the letter with permission of the writer and of the recipient.

*"With Her, Forever!"*

June 19, 1943

Dear Father,

Your card demands a reply, of that there is no doubt. That is the reason why I take time today, *Saturday*, to answer you... I have work to do here, but when there is

question of something for the Blessed Virgin or for the working class, I take time out for that; and, besides, evidently I would take the time to answer *you*.

"I am coming to realize more and more the urgent necessity of spreading devotion to Mary among the people. The first reason is that my personal experience proves to me how the recitation of the Rosary is indispensable in our vocation as apostles of the working class. The second is that I am convinced that the people as a whole are capable of having a devotion to our Blessed Mother. For a long time I did not believe that; for a long time I imagined this devotion to be something reserved to "pious, young maidens"! I even reacted quite vigorously against these "pious practices of old maids."

"It is only recently that I have discovered this all-powerful Virgin, this valiant Woman, this good Mother, who is able to answer the hopeless and distressed pleas of her poor earthly children. I have realized the necessity of this devotion, because, more and more, my vocation demands of me that I attempt more than I can do each day. Then come genuine cries of distress which I send up to Mary while reciting my Rosary. I confide to her all my weakness, all my cowardice. I tell her that alone I am incapable of realizing all that her Son asks of me. I entrust everything into her hands and say to her: 'You straighten out this difficulty, and do with me whatever you wish.' I know well that a woman can understand a heart in distress better than anyone else; it is impossible for her to refuse her aid. With how much more reason is this true of the Woman who is the mother of God and of all men. I feel now that she is inspiring me to write these lines, and that my soul, at her touch, is on fire with a flame that dims the brilliance of the stars.

"How many times already has she not rescued me from fits of depression! My solution now, whenever I am about

to undertake anything at all, is the recitation of the Rosary. I have not as yet advanced to the point of meditating upon the mysteries, because I am not recollected enough, but that will come. I apologize, Father, for letting myself be carried away in such a manner. But this whole thing is stronger than I am. Our Blessed Mother meets some present need in me, and that is why I am so enthusiastic.

"All this leads me on to say that devotion to the Blessed Virgin appeals to young men in an entirely different manner than to young women. Naturally, since the latter have a much greater attraction for piety, it is understandable that they take to this devotion much more readily. But for us men, it must be presented as something, strong, powerful, and manly. And in my humble opinion, this will be realized only in so far as the young lads *feel* its necessity. This will come about at that time in their lives when they discover through experience their littleness and their weakness. As for the militants, to the extent that their action gets beyond their capabilities, they will cry out for help just as I did (perhaps less loudly, it is true)..."

Then, speaking of the ceremony of consecration of the Jocists to the Blessed Virgin, which he was in charge of arranging, he continues:

"Providence indeed willed that I should be put in charge of this public demonstration, for from it I have acquired the conviction that a worker like me and like all the rest can have a *true* and entire devotion to the Blessed Virgin. We want none of those pious little stories, but something that has inspiration, dynamism, something that appeals to the *worker*, something *Christian*.

"Entirely yours in Her who is and ever will be our Mother."

## PRAYERS AND DEVOTIONS TO MARY

### *Consecration to Mary, Queen of Militants*

O Mary, Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God and my own Mother, behold me at your feet in order to give myself entirely to you.

O Queen of angels and of men, I believe that you are in particular the Queen of Militants.

For you are the Woman destined to crush the head of the serpent and to fight, together with your seed, against the seed of the devil; of you the Church sings that you have always destroyed all heresies in the whole world.

As Cooperator with your Son in the work of our redemption, as Distributor of all graces, and as Mother of all men, you have received from God the mission that will last even to the end of time, namely, that of snatching souls from Satan in order to lead them to Christ. All of us militants but share in your mission.

But if, as the Pope has said, you have always been “the victor in all the battles of God,” your power and your goodness ought to shine forth especially at the present time, for it is only from you that we can receive the divine assistance.

It is, then, in order to obey the desires of Christ and to assure to my vocation as militant its full fruitfulness that I give and consecrate myself entirely to you.

I give you my body and my soul, all that I have, all that I am, all that I do and all that I am capable of doing.

I give myself unreservedly and irrevocably, for time and for eternity.

I give myself that I may be your child, your soldier, your militant. Dispose of me as you see fit, according to

your designs and those of your Son.

Take me, fashion me, transform me, in order to render me truly fit to fight your wars and the wars of Christ.

Keep me or make me pure in soul and in body, silent and recollected, humble and forgetful of self, courageous in the face of difficulty, strong in persevering even to the very end. Help me to seek in my activities as a militant only the interests of God and of souls. Make me another Christ, Savior of the world!

I consent to all the labors, all the renunciation, all the anguish which my vocation as militant will impose upon me.

I solemnly promise you that I shall do all in my power to help you save souls by prayer, by word, by example, and by suffering.

You know, my Mother, my inconstancy and my weakness. But I know your power and your goodness. Obtain for me the grace to rely on them always, and then I shall have nothing to fear. I shall fight under your orders and you will give the victory, and in your name I shall lead multitudes of my brothers to Christ. For I firmly believe that without you I cannot succeed, with you I cannot fail.

Amen.

### ***Short Consecration***

O Mary, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you to battle under your orders for the conquest of souls.

### ***Miraculous Prayer of Father Zucchi***

My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to thee. And to show my devotion to thee, I consecrate to thee this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole

being without reserve. Wherefore, good Mother, as I am thine own, keep me, guard me as thy property and thy possession.

### ***The Rosary***

The Rosary is composed of five decades of Hail Marys, each decade being preceded by an Our Father and followed by a Glory be to the Father. Before the first decade the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, and three Hail Marys are recited. Each decade is devoted to a mystery, an important event in the life of the Blessed Virgin or of Christ. It is very profitable, during the recitation of each decade, to think of the conduct of Jesus and of Mary in the corresponding mystery.

The Joyful mysteries are the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity of Jesus, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and the Finding of Jesus in the Temple. The Sorrowful mysteries are the Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives, the Scourging, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, and the Crucifixion. Finally, the Glorious mysteries are the Resurrection of Jesus, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Assumption, and the Coronation of Mary. The three sets of mysteries together form the complete Rosary.

### ***The Angelus***

This prayer recalls the mystery of the Incarnation and is recited in the morning, at noon, and in the evening.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived of the Holy Ghost.

*Hail Mary, full of grace... etc.*

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord,



R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.

*Hail Mary, etc.*

V. And the Word was made flesh,

R. And dwelt amongst us.

*Hail Mary, etc.*

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray,

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son by the message of an Angel, so by His Passion and Cross, we may be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

### ***The Devotion of the Three Hail Marys***

This devotion consists of saying three Hail Marys upon rising, in order to obtain, through the Blessed Virgin Mary, the grace of remaining pure during the day, and three Hail Marys upon retiring, in order to remain pure during the night.

Many join to each Hail Mary the invocation: "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

### ***Prayer for Filial Piety***

O Good Jesus, by the love with which Thou lovest Thy Mother, grant me, I beseech Thee, to love her truly as Thou lovest her and wishest her to be loved. (St. Anselm)

***The Memorare***

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

***We Fly To Thy Patronage***

We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.