

TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY
St. Louis De Montfort

Comments and Questions for Part I, Chapter III, “Choice of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin,” Article 1, “False Devotions to the Blessed Mother and False Devotees” (#90 – #104).

We have come to the final chapter of the first part of St. Louis de Montfort’s book on True Devotion to Mary. In this first part, St. Louis de Montfort has helped us to know and love Mary more deeply, to understand her relationship to the Blessed Trinity and to realize her important role in salvation history. It is his hope that, after reading this chapter, we will be ready to give our lives to Mary through total consecration in order to grow closer to her Divine Son. We will finally examine the details of St. Louis de Montfort’s “perfect” devotion to Mary in the second part of the book.

This last chapter of Part I is divided into two sections. In Article 1, St. Louis de Montfort describes what he considers to be seven types of “false” devotion to the Blessed Mother. Keep in mind that he wrote this in the 1700’s, when devotion to the Blessed Mother was “second nature” to most Catholics, unlike today. Our attitude, therefore, cannot be as harsh as St. Louis de Montfort’s when we read this section. Rather, we must do all we can to educate and encourage others in their devotion to Mary. Still, this section is important so that we can learn what “false” devotion to Mary looks like and instead make the choice of a solid, authentic and efficacious devotion to Mary.

Having described the false devotions in Article 1, St. Louis de Montfort will give us the five characteristics of *true* devotion to Mary in Article 2. He states that true devotion to Our Mother is interior, tender, holy, constant and disinterested. We will examine each of these terms in the next section.

Questions for paragraphs #90 - #104.

1. St. Louis de Montfort is talking about Catholics when he explains the false devotions. It is important that we are able to discern which Marian devotions are authentic and truly Christian. He makes an interesting point in #90 that the devil will only bother to counterfeit that which is most precious and holy. We can see this in our society today with all the attacks on human life, the institution of marriage, the family, modesty, purity, truthfulness, the value of suffering, and of course, the Catholic Church and the priesthood.

A certain Saint had a dream about the “gold and silver” of our Faith - the Eucharist and the Blessed Mother. Who was he, what was his dream and why is it so important?

2. It is very common for Christians today to be “Scrupulous Devotees” simply because they do not want to offend the Lord, Whom they love. They do not fully understand the Blessed Mother and her role in salvation. In order to “cure” scrupulous devotees, we must educate them. We cannot love what we do not know. The more we know Mary and love her, the more we become convinced that the ONLY thing she can do is lead us to Jesus.

In #96, St. Louis de Montfort complains about “External Devotees,” those who go through the motions, but don’t have their heart in it. You’ve probably done this from time to time, but an occasional distraction is not what St. Louis de Montfort is talking about. He is referring to those who are consistently shallow and superficial in their spiritual life; those who fail to convert their lives or grow in virtue. St. Louis de Montfort says that external devotees have to *feel* something when they pray or they give up. Doesn’t our society promote “feel good” devotion? What is the name of this ancient “religion?” What is it about *true* devotion that they hate the most?

3. St. Louis de Montfort spends the most time on “Presumptuous Devotees” in #97 - #100. Some people believe that Catholics are superstitious because of our belief in the Sacraments and sacramentals (Relics, Holy Water, etc). How can we tell the difference between presumption, superstition and trust?

4. Have you been an “Inconstant Devotee” of the Blessed Mother as described in #101? If so, this devotion will help you. As we will read in the next part of the book, perseverance is one of the effects of true devotion to Mary.

Is St. Louis de Montfort telling us to be careful about how many prayers we say each day? Ponder this quote from his book, *The Secret of the Rosary*, “It is not so much the length of a prayer as the fervor with which it is said which pleases God and touches His Heart. A single Hail Mary said properly is worth more than a hundred and fifty said badly.” Yet, St. Paul tells us to “pray without ceasing.” How do we reconcile this?