

FIRST PERIOD: Emptying Myself of Worldliness

“Those who desire to take up this devotion should spend at least twelve days emptying themselves of the spirit of the world, which is opposed to the spirit of Jesus.” (St. Louis de Montfort)

Practical tips before embarking on this preparation:

1. Before starting these meditations take the time to say this prayer as a way of disposing your soul to God’s work.

Invocation of the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful

And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Lord, send forth your Spirit.

And you will renew the face of the earth.

O God, who instructs the hearts of your faithful with the light of your Holy Spirit, make us responsive to his inspirations so that we may truly be wise and ever rejoice in his consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

2. Determine when and how you are going to carry out this preparation each day. Be concrete. Set aside 20 minutes each day. If you are a procrastinator, don’t wait until the end of the day. The sooner in the day the better.

How to carry out the preparation:

1. As mentioned above, you should set aside 20 minutes each day for this spiritual exercise.
2. Be recollected. Choose a place that is quiet and free of distractions. A Church or chapel is best, but if you can’t make to these each day, then make a small shrine to Mary in your own home or room.
3. Read through the meditation and pray about it. Take the questions to heart and be honest with your self and the Lord. Keep a prayer journal if it helps
4. Say the concluding prayer.
5. Check in with the accountability group through “GroupMe”

Day One: *Be not of the world*

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world (Jn 17:16).

Consecration to Jesus through Mary (*ad Jesum per Mariam*) is a path of genuine conversion.

“Genuine conversion,” says St. John Paul II, “is the renouncement of the worldly mentality that wounds and degrades human dignity.”

The spirit of the world is the first obstacle to our belonging completely to Christ through Mary. We need to be emptied of our worldly way of thinking. But let’s be honest, the idea of “emptiness” scares us. Why? Because we live in a world that idolizes “having”: having the perfect life, having the best job, having the most comfortable house, having the newest technology, having more money, having the picture-perfect face, etc. In a world enthralled with “having”, “emptying” is looked down upon as being outlandish. But when we really think about, when have Christ’s ways ever been mainstream?

The renouncement of the world that this consecration calls us to is not for the sake of emptiness itself, but for the sake of belonging totally to Christ. As St. John Paul II teaches, “conversion implies the adherence with total trust and courageous commitment to the liberating way of thinking and acting taught by the Gospel.” We cannot adhere and totally trust Christ through Mary, until we have detached our self, our mentality, and our way of living from the worldliness we still find ourselves in.

This “liberating way of thinking and acting” that genuine conversion leads us to is what Christ preached on the Mount of the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes themselves free us from thinking like worldly men and women so that we can live like Christ. The Beatitudes were Christ’s way of thinking and acting in the world, thus they should become our own.

Take a moment to read through the Beatitudes again.

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Mt 5:1-10, Second Catholic Edition RSV)

Consider your calling, brothers and sisters in the light of what you have just read. Is this the standard of life that you live by? Or are you following the voice of the world?

Happiness is your heart’s compass. Where you find your happiness is where your heart truly lies. Do you find your happiness in the new things you buy? Do you find it in getting more attention on your social media account? Do you find it taking that perfect picture of yourself and then getting “likes” for it? Do you find it in fleeting pleasures of food, drink, drugs or promiscuity? Do you find it in getting your way all the time? Do you find it in seeing others fail or in getting even with those who “get in your way” in life?

If you are seeking your ultimate happiness in these things, then in some way or another you belong to the world. Hearts that belong to the world cannot belong to Christ through His Mother. The world is calling you to “come and get”, but Christ invites to something more profound, more personal, more humanly satisfying. Christ says, “Come, and follow me.”

“Jesus does not merely speak the Beatitudes. He lives the Beatitudes. He is the Beatitudes. Looking at him you will see what it means to be poor in spirit, gentle and merciful, to mourn, to care for what is right, to be pure in heart, to make peace, to be persecuted. This is why he has the right to say, “Come, follow *me!*” He does not say simply, “Do what I say”. He says, “Come, follow *me!*”

Further question to consider: The Beatitudes “are a sort of *self-portrait of Christ?*” (St. John Paul II). What is the self-portrait of the life you are living now? Does it resemble this portrait of Christ? What needs to change?

-Today’s Prayer-

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, **Hear me.**
From the desire of being esteemed, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the desire of being loved...
From the desire of being extolled ...
From the desire of being honored ...

Come Holy Spirit, living in Mary. Give me the heart of Christ, my Lord.