

INTRODUCTION TO WEEK III: *Knowledge of Mary:*

The Grace we will earnestly seek this week is an intimate knowledge of Mary, our most tender Mother.

St. Louis De Montfort emphasizes, if we want to unite ourselves to Jesus through Mary, we must *employ ourselves* to acquire a knowledge of the Blessed Virgin. This implies a use of our will, that is, our human power which moves us to operation. To:

1. Ask for this grace
2. Seek to know Mary by means of our intellect
3. Choose to honor and imitate her

Since, “*Mary is our sovereign and our Mediatrix, our Mother and our Mistress,*” let us *in justice*, endeavor to discover her *royalty*, her *mediation*, and her *maternity*.

We shall no longer be timid or afraid to give ourselves totally to Mary. For “*our Blessed Mother is perfect—a mold wherein we are able to be molded in order to make her intentions and dispositions ours.*” So now with magnanimity (*a Big Soul*) we begin our “study of the interior life of Mary, namely, her virtues, her sentiments, her actions, her participation in the mysteries of Christ and her union with Him.

Week Three/Day One: *Why Mary?*

1. Place yourself in God’s presence
2. Ask Him for the grace you seek: *to acquire knowledge and esteem of Mary, my tender Mother*
3. Today’s Meditation:

“Hail Mary, full of Grace! The Lord is with you.” —Luke 1:30

The Angel Gabriel greets Mary with reverence pronouncing that she is *full of grace*. How can this be? On account of our first parents’ disobedience, we *all* share in their sin (*original sin*) and punishment (as we should have shared in their happiness if they had remained faithful). As Scripture reads, “*For by the disobedience of one man all men were made sinners*” (Romans 5:19). So then how is it possible that Mary is full of grace? Mary is the Immaculate Conception- she alone from “*the first instance of her conception was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race.*” *Ineffabilis Deus (Pius IX) 1854*

God could have saved the world in an instance, however He chose Mary to be His Mother. The whole world awaited her free and humble *fiat* (YES).

From a homily In Praise of the Virgin Mother by Saint Bernard, abbot

You have heard, O Virgin, that you will conceive and bear a son; you have heard that it will not be by man but by the Holy Spirit. The angel awaits an answer; it is time for him to return to God who sent him. We too are waiting, O Lady, for your word of compassion; the sentence of condemnation weighs heavily upon us. The price of our salvation is offered to you. We shall be set free at once if you consent. . . Tearful Adam with his sorrowing family begs this of you, O loving Virgin, in their exile from Paradise. Abraham begs it, David begs it. All the other holy patriarchs, your ancestors, ask it of you, as they dwell in the country of the shadow of death. This is what the whole earth waits for, prostrate at your feet. . . Answer quickly, O Virgin. Reply in haste to the angel, or rather through the angel to the Lord. Answer with a word, receive the Word of God. Speak your own word, conceive the divine Word. Breathe a passing word, embrace the eternal Word. . . Open your heart to faith, O blessed Virgin, your lips to praise, your womb to the Creator. See, the desired of all nations is at your door, knocking to enter. If he should pass by because of your delay, in sorrow you would begin to seek him afresh, the One whom your soul loves. Arise, hasten, open. Arise in faith, hasten in devotion, open in praise and thanksgiving.

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord, she says, be it done to me according to your word.”

Her soul unlike any other is conformed, united and magnifies the Lord. .

“My soul magnifies the greatness of the Lord!” —Luke 1:46

Because God did choose to use the Blessed Virgin Mary to accomplish His greatest work and since we know that God does not change either in His feelings or conduct, He will continue to use her until the end of time. *“Behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed. —Luke 1:48*

Reflection Questions: Do I understand the righteous honor that the Trinity and the Church gives to Mary? What significance do I give to the gift of Grace in my life? What is my practice for daily examining my conscience, regular confession and communion? Do I recognize the gravity of my yes to God’s daily call? Am I aware Christ has chosen me for a special task?

-Today’s Prayer-

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.