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Marian Mariology

CHAPTER 44



The veneration of Mary, when properly understood, permeates the entire life of the Church; it is a dimension of dogma and of piety, of Christology and of ecclesiology. This dimension needs to be made explicit today in connection with the problems of humanity. Mariology expresses something fundamental to the Christian life itself, to the Christian experience of the world.

Sound Mariology has always been understood in Christological terms. If the Gospel revealed nothing more than the fact that Jesus Christ, God and man, was born of Mary, this alone would be sufficient for the Church to love her and to draw theological conclusions from pondering this relationship of Mother and Son. We need no other revelations. Mary is a self-evident and essential *datum* and dimension of the Gospel.

Chapter one centers on Catechesis flowing from Byzantine Marian spirituality with commentary by Brother John M. Samaha, S.M. Chapter 2 discusses Mariology today with commentary by Rev. Professor Michael Lapierre, S.J. The remaining chapters are commentaries on various Marian topics by Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. (1914– 2000).

Chapter 44

Consecration to Our Lady

(Transcription)

by Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.

Father Hardon: I thought for the next half an hour or less, we would talk about the meaning of consecration to Mary. Our Lord could not have been clearer in insisting that we not only believe, but that we understand *what* we believe. My hope therefore, is to make a little more clear, first to myself, then to the three who are consecrating themselves to Our Lady, and to others too.

What does the Church mean when she encourages the faithful to consecrate themselves to the Mother of God? We might say that consecration to Our Lady began already on Calvary. Christ might have allowed Himself to be condemned to death and crucified, and not have planned, as He surely *did*, for His mother to be underneath the Cross. But she was there, and John representing all of us, was told by Jesus “Behold, your mother” and Mary was told, “Behold, your son”.

Before we go any further let’s make sure we understand the consecration is the carrying out of Christ’s, let’s say, command to Saint John, “Behold, your mother.” It is one thing to have a mother, which we all have; it is something else (and how much more important) for the children to recognize and appreciate and love and be devoted to their mother. That is where I would say the consecration that historically is brought into the Church by St. Louis de Montfort actually began on Calvary.

Mary, Mother of Jesus, Mother of God, Mary our mother, as we witness this consecration to you, first dear mother, grant those who are consecrating themselves today to your Immaculate Heart may follow your directives all the days of their life. May they always do what Jesus tells them to do. And help us dear Mother, help us to remain faithful to your Son so that by obeying Him and loving you we might possess Him and you in that everlasting consecration to Jesus through you for which we were made. Amen. In the name of the Father...

(Note: You can find the prayers for Total Consecration using Saint Louis de Montfort formula at: www.pamphletstoinpire.com/mary/totalconsecration)

End

Can we express in a single sentence what the consecration to the Blessed Virgin means? This is what I think—the heart of the consecration to Mary is the gift of oneself—then three words—entirely to Jesus through Mary. I believe the three essential words to keep in mind as we explain a little more in detail what the Church understands by consecration to Mary. It is to give oneself entirely, second to Jesus, third through Mary.

Whatever else consecration means, it is no mere devotion. It is not even merely dedication. Consecration adds to devotion, even to dedication, the idea of completeness. Completeness in what sense? Completeness in time, from the time of the consecration until (as we hope) Jesus, Mary and Joseph will call us into eternity. It is therefore a completeness of duration.

It is secondly, a completeness of everything that we do. First, that we do in our own minds, in our hearts, of everything that we do externally. What a difference! What a difference between doing whatever a person may be doing for *oneself*. I hesitate using the expression but it may help to bring out what I want to say. I think most people, without having made an “act”, are consecrated to *themselves*. They are thinking *about* themselves “What is in it for me?” They are thinking *for* themselves, “What am I getting out of this?” They are seeking especially to *please* themselves.

Consecration therefore, is first of all a giving of oneself entirely, and only we individually can do this giving. I will add one word to the “giving”. Consecration means *giving up*. Giving up oneself, giving up one’s time, one’s convenience, one’s preference; second to whom? To Jesus.

It is crucial to make clear that the consecration, though it is indeed made as we have just said through Mary, the consecration is made *to Jesus*. If there is one thing that Our Lady wants to make clear is that she is only the channel, the bridge to her Son. What do we mean when we say consecrating oneself entirely to Jesus? We believe that Jesus, the Son of Mary, is the Son of the Living God. The most important single declarative sentence that we can make, and everything else in our lives depends on this is: Jesus is God.

But it is one thing to say it, even to believe it, it is much more to *live* it.

Consecration therefore, is a giving of oneself *entirely*—body, soul, mind and will, emotions and feelings to Jesus—who we believe is the Son of Mary, but we believe that Mary is the Mother of God.

Finally, consecration is giving oneself entirely to Jesus, but *through* Mary. And this is what is so distinctive about the consecration of Saint Louis de Montfort. In an absolute sense, Mary being the Mother of God and her Son

being Jesus Christ, she being our mother, we may be sure that even though we do not make the consecration, Mary knows her motherly responsibility. It is not that we are instructing her and enlightening her on what she should do. It is rather to remind ourselves what we ought to do.

In consecrating ourselves to her Son, but through her, we mean (that is what Saint Louis de Montfort at length, went to such trouble to explain) according to Mary's will. You might say, "Well, I thought the consecration was to Jesus." Sure it is! But in this case, the will of the Son is the will of His mother.

There is only one command that Our Lady ever gave in the Gospels of which we have record. Remember at the wedding feast in Cana? That says it all. They ran out of wine. Others at the wedding feast might have said, "It serves them right, they should not have imbibed so much." Mary, with a mother's solicitude was concerned. Let's change the verb—*is* concerned. Not only about the necessities of our life, but what should I call them, the amenities of our life—the little things.

I thought to myself as I looked at the altar... What Our Lady told the servants at the wedding feast of Cana, she became aware not of a grave necessity, but of a convenience, and then she told her Son, "They have no wine." And it seems that Jesus, even seems, that He rebuked His Mother. Not really. He reminded her that His time had not yet arrived for working miracles. That did not matter to Mary. So what did she do? She went over and told the servants, "Do what ever He tells you." They did and Christ worked His first miracle. Never, in all the writings that we have in the New Testament is Mary's power with her Son made more clear than on two occasions. One of which we, shall I say "happened" to celebrate today on the Feast of the Visitation.

The moment, we are told by Saint Luke, the moment Mary's voice sounded in Elizabeth's ears the child that Elizabeth carried in her womb was immediately sanctified. Why? Because the child that Mary carried in *her* womb, the child was Mary's God.

When we speak of the consecration as giving ourselves entirely to Jesus through Mary, let's make sure we appreciate how powerful the Mother of God is, provided we completely entrust ourselves to her care. It was she who, when Elizabeth told her the moment the sound of your voice came to my ears the child in my womb leaped for joy, Mary began her mediation of grace before Christ was born. Whatever else I want to make clear, let's make sure that *through* Mary is much more powerful than any of us is liable to suspect.

Then, at Cana again, all Mary had to do, in both cases, she had to speak. She spoke to Elizabeth and John was sanctified in his mother's womb. She spoke to the servants in Cana and water became wine, or the poet has it "The water saw its maker and blushed". It is impossible for us to overestimate Mary's power with her Son.

Consequently, consecration to Our Lady through Mary according to Mary's will, through Mary, as *she* wants; through Mary, as she best knows what Jesus wants. Who knows the heart of a son or daughter better than the mother? All of this is locked up in the consecration to Jesus through Mary.

Before I close this, I guess you might call it a conference, I would like to pinpoint the single most practical effect of this consecration. What you three who are consecrating yourselves to Our Lady should expect is to obtain from her the habitual attitude of complete dependence on her in our whole life and in everything that we think and do.

What does it mean to be consecrated to Mary? It means, as Saint Louis de Montfort made plain—to give oneself to Mary as the one on whom we totally depend because she better than anyone else understands the mind and will of Jesus. It therefore means, Christ understands what good works we perform. He knows what reward we deserve. But one who consecrates him or herself to Mary without telling Christ what to do, tells His mother, "Mary I leave it up to you". Consecration to Mary means a life of complete dependence on Mary's providential care. Let me assure you, it is as a safe thing to do.

Mary, during her Son's visible stay on earth took care of Him from the moment she conceived Him until He left this earth to go to His Heavenly Father. In the deepest sense of the verb, Mary *cared* for Jesus.

What does consecration to Our Lady mean? It means that I entrust myself, listen, as completely as we may be sure Jesus entrusted Himself to her motherly care. And He could trust His mother. Let's be honest, so can we.

Finally, consecration to Mary means confiding in Mary. Sharing with Mary one's thoughts and desires, and I should add one's fears.

Consecration to Mary means (let me tell the three of you) it mean *talking* to Mary. Let me change the sentence. It means talking *with* Mary. You never talk to Mary—hear it—without her talking, shall I say, back to you.

Consecration to Mary means not only loving Mary, but telling her in the deepest sense in which these three monosyllables can be used; "I love you!" And in saying these words all that we are doing is what we are sure Jesus, many times, how many times, in plain simple Aramaic told his mother, *I love you*.

Lets close with a prayer: