

## Introduction

### 1. Quotes from Protestant Reformers

Martin Luther:

“[S]he is full of grace, proclaimed to be entirely without sin. . . . God's grace fills her with everything good and makes her devoid of all evil. . . . God is with her, meaning that all she did or left undone is divine and the action of God in her. Moreover, God guarded and protected her from all that might be hurtful to her” (Luther's Works, American edition, vol. 43, p. 40 , ed. H. Lehmann, Fortress, 1968).

“It is a sweet and pious belief that the infusion of Mary's soul was effected without original sin; so that in the very infusion of her soul she was also purified from original sin and adorned with God's gifts, receiving a pure soul infused by God; thus from the first moment she began to live she was free from all sin” (Sermon: “On the Day of the Conception of the Mother of God,” 1527).

“[She is rightly called not only the mother of the man, but also the Mother of God. . . . it is certain that Mary is the Mother of the real and true God” (Martin Luther, Weimar edition of Martin Luther's Works, English translation edited by J. Pelikan [Concordia: St. Louis], volume 24, 107).

“Christ our Savior was the real and natural fruit of Mary's virginal womb. . . . This was without the cooperation of a man, and she remained a virgin after that.” ( Ref: Sermon on John 14. 16. Luther's Works (St. Louis, ed. Jaroslav, Pelican, Concordia. vol. 24. p. 107)

“The veneration of Mary is inscribed in the very depths of the human heart.” (Sermon, September 1, 1522).

“Men have crowded all her glory into a single phrase: The Mother of God. No one can say anything greater of her, though he had as many tongues as there are leaves on the trees.” (On the Gospel of St. John: Luther's Works, vol. 22. p. 23, ed. Jaroslav Pelican, Concordia, 1957)

“One should honor Mary as she herself wished and as she expressed it in the Magnificat. She praised God for his deeds. How then can we praise her? The true honor of Mary is the honor of God, the praise of God's grace . . . Mary is nothing for the sake of herself, but for the sake of Christ . . . Mary does not wish that we come to her, but through her to God.” (Explanation of the Magnificat, 1521).

“[She is the] highest woman and the noblest gem in Christianity after Christ . . . She is nobility, wisdom, and holiness personified. We can never honor her enough. Still honor and praise must be given to her in such a way as to injure neither Christ nor the Scriptures” (Sermon, Christmas, 1531).

John Calvin:

“There have been certain folk who have wished to suggest from this passage [Matt 1:25] that the Virgin Mary had other children than the Son of God, and that Joseph had then dwelt with her later; but what folly is this! For the Gospel writer did not wish to record what happened afterwards; he simply wished to make clear Joseph's obedience and to show also that Joseph had been well and truly assured that it was God who had sent His angel to Mary. He had therefore never dwelt with her nor had he shared her company.... And besides this Our Lord Jesus Christ is called the first-born. This is not because there was a second or a third, but because the Gospel writer is paying regard to the precedence. Scripture speaks thus of naming the first-born whether or not there was any question of the second” (John Calvin, Sermon on Matthew 1:22-25, 1562).

“It cannot be denied that God in choosing and destining Mary to be the Mother of his Son, granted her the highest honor” ( John Calvin, Calvini Opera [Braunshweig-Berlin, 1863-1900], Volume 45, 348).

Ulrich Zwingli:

“I firmly believe that Mary, according to the words of the gospel as a pure Virgin brought forth for us the Son of God and in childbirth and after childbirth forever remained a pure, intact Virgin” (Ulrich Zwingli, Zwingli Opera, Corpus Reformatorum, Volume 1, 424).

“The more the honor and love of Christ increases among men, so much the esteem and honor given to Mary should grow” (Ulrich Zwingli, Zwingli Opera, Corpus Reformatorum, Volume 1, 427-428).

## 2. Patrick Madrid's throne room analogy

“Imagine you are visiting a king... being shown into his royal throne room... beautiful music lilting through the air... beauty of the palace: gorgeous tapestries hung from the walls, stunning works of art adorning the room, sumptuous carpet covering the floor... men and women dressed in splendid apparel, happiness, their countenances beautiful to behold

As you progress further into the room... grandeur in the room grows accordingly. Finally, you reach the foot of the throne, and you gaze upon the king himself. He is magnificent, far more glorious than anything or anyone in the room... overwhelmed by the regal beauty of his clothing, his crown, his scepter, his throne. But the king himself is the center, the focal point of all the glory that surrounds him. You can see that this king lavishes his wealth and love for beauty on everything that surrounds him.

Now imagine you're entering the throne room of a different king... first thing you notice is the absence of sound... no exquisite tapestries to catch your eye, no works of art, no jewel-studded carpet... no people here. In fact, there is literally nothing in the room that could conceivably distract your attention from the king, who sits in magnificent glory on his throne, at the far end of the room.

Why is this room bare? Because this king is jealous of his glory. He doesn't want you to become distracted by anything else - he wants you to see only himself.... Which king is more glorious? Obviously the first.

The first king, because he himself is glorious, lavishes glory on everyone and everything that surrounds him.... That you marvel at these glorious peripheral items in itself gives greater honor and glory to him.... It highlights the fact and pulls our attention always and inexorably to the focus of all: him.” (Where is That in the Bible, Patrick Madrid, P. 58-59.)

First king – Catholicism

Second king – many Protestants' views of Christianity

Stephen D. Quinn ([http://www.veritaschristi.org/articles/apologetics/2004/communion\\_of\\_saints.htm](http://www.veritaschristi.org/articles/apologetics/2004/communion_of_saints.htm)): “But does not all of this emphasis on Mary detract from the glory of God and Jesus? We already addressed the fact (earlier in the article) that her intercession establishes God's glory rather than detract from it.

Furthermore, Mary is like the moon and Jesus like the sun. The moon has no light of its own that it does not receive from the sun. However, the moon reflects and radiates the light of the sun and is seen as glorious, not to the exclusion of the sun, but because of it. And so it is with Mary. She reflects and radiates the glory of Jesus to the benefit of her offspring. This in no way makes her equal with Jesus; however, one can safely say that she holds a special place in heaven.”

## **Background Info on St. Louis de Montfort**

Born in Montfort-la-Canne, in Brittany, France, lived from 1673 to 1716

Ordained in 1700 at the age of 27

Wanted to become a missionary in Canada, but advised to remain in France

Traveled around western part of France, encountered opposition by local ecclesiastical authorities.

He wondered if he was doing God's will, so he walked to Rome (1000 miles) to speak with Pope Clement XI. The pope named him Missionary Apostolic (missionary sent by commission from the Pope), told him to continue his preaching, but cautioned him to ensure that he was always being obedient to local authorities.

Founded two religious orders: the Daughters of Wisdom in 1703 and the Missionaries of the Company of Mary (Montfort Fathers and Brothers) in 1715

Died at the age of 43 on April 28<sup>th</sup>, his feast day (which Pope John Paul II elevated to be on the liturgical calendar)

He was canonized in 1947

Three of his most famous books are True Devotion to Mary, The Secret of the Rosary, and The Secret of Mary

## **True Devotion to Mary**

Book begins with introductory material which sets the stage for the description of his true devotion, divided into numbered sections. Below, I've extracted a few important points from some of these sections.

1-13. She was humble and hidden during her earthly life. She was the “sealed fountain” of Canticles 4:12, is the “sanctuary and the repose of the Holy Trinity.”

She is the “terrestrial paradise of the New Adam.”

He depicts Mary as glorious queen of Heaven, to whom myriads of angels and archangels, including St. Michael, the prince of the Heavenly Host, honor endlessly with the Angelic Salutation and await joyously the opportunity to fly in aid to those for whom she prays.

14. At the start of Chapter 1, he makes it clear that God did not need Mary to accomplish his plans, that God in fact has no need of any creatures or indeed of anything, as He is perfect and unchanging. However, God, in His infinite knowledge, chose to work out our salvation through Mary.

19. Jesus worked his miracles at Mary's words.. first miracle of grace: sanctification of John the Baptist, happened at Mary's greeting of Elizabeth. First miracle of nature: changing of water into wine at Cana, happened at Mary's word.

21. The Holy Spirit had no absolute need of Mary, but He *chose* to make use of her to accomplish our redemption.

27. Many saints speak of God as being “subject to Mary”, and this, while not true in an absolute sense, ends up being true in practice because God never resists the prayers of His perfect and beloved Mother, because she is always perfectly conformed to His divine will.

32. If Jesus Christ (the Head of the Body of Christ) is born of Mary, then all the rest of the members of the Body ought also to be born of Mary. To restate, any member of the mystical body of Christ must also be born of Mary, since the Head of the body is already born of Her.

36. The Holy Spirit flies to all hearts who love Mary, his holy spouse.

40. Many saints say that devotion to Mary is *necessary* to salvation.

44. Mary is the tree bearing the Fruit of Life, Jesus.

49. Mary was made little known in the first coming of Jesus so that men wouldn't fly to her too abruptly, thereby fleeing from her Son due to lack of understanding/experience.

50. God has made a single enmity – between Mary and her children and Satan and his children (see Genesis and Revelation 12).

53. “What Lucifer has lost by pride, Mary has gained by humility. What Eve has damned and lost by disobedience, Mary has saved by obedience. Eve, in obeying the serpent, has destroyed all her children together with herself, and has delivered them to him; Mary, in being perfectly faithful to God, has saved all her children and servants together with herself, and has consecrated them to His Majesty.”

61. Jesus must be the end of all our other devotions, or else they are false.

62. The purpose of establishing devotion to Mary is to increase our devotion to Christ. If devotion to Mary removed us from Christ, we would have to reject it as an illusory trap of the devil.

63. Jesus lives more perfectly in Mary than in all the angels and the faithful.

75. Mary is the means that Jesus used to come to us. She is also the means we must make use of to come to him. Strongest inclination of Mary is to unite us to Jesus. Strongest inclination of Jesus is for us to come to Him through his Mother. It honors the king to love and become subject to his queen.

What is True Devotion?

Mary is the most conformed of creatures to Jesus, so the devotion which most perfectly conforms and consecrates the soul to Jesus Christ is devotion to Mary, and “the more a soul is consecrated to Mary, the more it is consecrated to Jesus.”

“True Devotion” does not refer to some complex series of extra prayers or actions, but rather to a solitary act of consecration which unifies all of one’s daily thoughts and actions towards Heaven by giving them all to Mary. By offering all freely and without reserve to our most holy Mother, we signal our utter reliance and total dependence on her and the graces from above that pass through her hands before raining down upon us. We give everything to Mary to dispose of as she wishes, keeping nothing to ourselves but rather trusting completely that She will handle things as best as possible.

Also can be considered as a perfect renewal of our vows of baptism.

Characteristics of “True Devotion”: Interior, Tender, Holy, Constant, Disinterested

First, he lays the groundwork for the devotion, then differentiates between true and false devotion, describes the devotion (it is simple and brief), gives the motivations for carrying it out, the effects of living it, and the particular practices we can carry out to live it (rosary, etc.)

Discuss his method of preparing for and receiving Holy Communion, along with his prep and formula for consecration

Who has practiced it? PJP II, many saints

Who has endorsed it? Nearly all popes since the publishing of the work, Mother Teresa

## **The Secret of the Rosary**

Made of two things: mental prayer and vocal prayer

Given to St. Dominic and the Church in 1214 from Mary to convert the Albigensians

Blessed Alan de la Roche revived the practice in 1460 following a message from Jesus

Called the Psalter of Jesus and Mary because it contains 150 Hail Mary’s (same as number of Psalms)

Psalter of David prefigured Psalter of Jesus and Mary

Rosary formed by the Holy Trinity and not by man as was David’s Psalter

The word rosary means “crown of roses”

St. Louis: If one condemns the rosary, he is “condemning all that is most holly in the Catholic Faith, such as the Lord’s Prayer, the Angelic Salutation and the mysteries of the life, death, and glory of Jesus Christ and of His Holy Mother.”

Don’t look for spiritual consolation in saying the rosary... don’t give up if your “mind is flooded with countless involuntary distractions or one experiences a strange distaste in the soul and an almost continual and oppressive fatigue in the body. Neither feeling, nor consolation, nor sighs, nor transports, nor the continual attention of the imagination are needed; faith and good intentions are quite enough.”

The Hail Mary: (1) concise summary of all that Catholic faith teaches about Mary, and (2) two parts: praise and petition.

First part given to us by the Holy Spirit speaking through the angel Gabriel and through Elizabeth.

Second part added in 430 at First Council of Ephesus by Pope Celestine when Nestorianism (heresy stating that Jesus was two persons – one human and the other divine – rather than living as a united person) was condemned.

When we honor Mary, we honor each person of the Holy Trinity – God the Father because we honor his most perfect creature, God the Son because we praise his Mother, and God the Holy Spirit because we honor His Spouse.

Also, when we honor her, she never keeps the praises but always passes them on rightly to the Trinity the same way that she did when Elizabeth praised her at the Visitation through the Magnificat. We echo these same words of Elizabeth every time we say the Hail Mary, so we can expect that Mary will respond in the same way. Through this episode of the Gospels, we see a foreshadowing of devotion and honoring of Mary, and also see how she directs our efforts fully and immediately to the Blessed Trinity.

Maybe controversial, but St. Louis believes strongly that the rosary has been shown to be “the infallible sign of eternal salvation” and its absence is “the sign of God’s eternal displeasure.” In addition, he says: “For never will anyone who says his rosary every day become a formal heretic or be led astray by the devil. This is a statement that I would gladly sign with my blood.”

Blessed Alan says that a nun who had always had great devotion to the Holy Rosary appeared after death to one of her sisters in religion and said to her: “If I were allowed to go back into my body, to have the chance of saying just one single Hail Mary – even if I said it quickly and without great fervor – I would gladly go through the sufferings that I had during my last illness all over again, in order to gain the merit of this prayer.”

Why do we meditate on the mysteries? We want to always have the life, death, and virtues of Christ before our eyes as He is our model. For uneducated, they are a simple means of learning and growing in love; For scholars, they are a bottomless source of profundity.

Many, many saints had great devotion to the rosary

Hard to say even one Hail Mary without involuntary distractions, but don’t give in.

Put yourself in the presence of God and Mary and imagine your guardian angel taking every well-said Hail Mary and using them to make crowns for Jesus and Mary, while the devil waits at your left side to snatch up every Hail Mary that is not well-said.

Saying the rosary is more prone to distraction than other, more varying prayers. Hence, it requires greater devotion to be faithful to the rosary than to be committed to saying these other prayers.

Best rosary is the one with the most merit, and there is more merit in praying when it is hard than when it is easy.

Say a decade here and there during the day if you can’t say a full 5 decades at once.

About the Hail Mary:

Some time ago I read an essay that describes the word “Jesus” as the poetic turn of the prayer which sums up the entire life of Jesus. The prayer starts with Mary being visited by Gabriel and ends with Mary glorified, and the central point, the beautiful picture being framed by Mary, is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Tips for meditating on the mysteries of the rosary:

Use Montfort’s interjections (add a few words after the word “Jesus” in each Hail Mary.. e.g., “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, carrying the cross.”)

Occasionally fall back onto the words of the Hail Mary if meditation is difficult (particularly appropriate for first three joyful mysteries and final two glorious mysteries).

Focus in on the mystery (pretend you’re present witnessing the event, either as a bystander or as one of the principle characters involved and imagine what they would be thinking).

Zoom out and see the mystery in the entire context of our faith.

Don’t get discouraged: there will be times that you’ll be unable to meditate due to distractions, etc. If this happens, just relax and focus on the words you’re saying. Even said with distractions, the Hail Mary is a meritorious and pleasing prayer.