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Life In and For Mary

by

Ven. Michael of St. Augustine, O.Carm.

Translated from the original Latin

and edited by

Rev. Venard F. Poslusney, O.Carm.

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CONTENTS

Michael of St. Augustine and the Marian Life -----	3
The "Marylike" Life -----	13
Living in God and Mary -----	14
Divine Love produces love for Mary -----	16
Live, act, suffer and die for God -----	17
Life and death for Mary -----	18
Marian Life, a higher perfection -----	19
The Object of the Marian Life -----	20
The Marian Life, not a hindrance -----	22
Excellence of the Marian Life -----	23
Souls drawn to the Marian Life -----	24
Acts of love toward Mary -----	26
Mary and the soul as one -----	27
Perfect mystical union -----	28
The Spirit of Mary -----	29
Prayers in honor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel -----	31

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✠ SAMUEL CARDINAL STRITCH
Archbishop of Chicago

Maria!

Introduction

Michael of St. Augustine and the Marian Life

THE READERS of this article are already familiar with the clear, forceful, and inspiring treatise of St. Louis Grignon De Montfort, entitled, "*True Devotion to Mary*." On reading it one feels that there is not much more to be said on the subject of living the Marian life.

Yet, there is a short treatise which, we may truly say, complements De Montfort's work. It is entitled "*The Mariform and Marian Life In Mary and For Mary*" by Father Michael of St. Augustine, a Carmelite of the Ancient Observance and a distinguished member of the Reform of Tournai. This reform was begun at Rennes in 1604 and rapidly spread

throughout the Order under the jurisdiction of the Prior General. Its purpose was to emphasize the spirit of prayer. How successful the reform was in achieving this purpose may be judged by the great number of saintly Carmelites who lived at this time, as well as from the solid and practical works on the spiritual life produced by its members. If the Venerable John of St. Samson is pre-eminent among his Carmelite brethren of this reform, Michael of St. Augustine, one of his faithful disciples, shares a place with him.

Michael of St. Augustine

Father Michael was born at Brussels on April 5, 1621. Already

in his early years he gave evidence of the solid and tender piety that was to carry him on to the mystical life after entering Carmel. Like Grignon De Montfort, he, too, possessed an indefatigable zeal in the service of God and of our Blessed Mother. He made his profession on October 14, 1640 in the Carmelite monastery at Brussels. During the years following his ordination, June 10, 1645, he fulfilled the duties of professor of philosophy and theology. Then he became Novice Master, Prior of the different monasteries of the Reform of Touraine, Definitor and assistant Provincial. Finally he was elected for three terms as Prior-Provincial of the Flandro-Belgian Province. On February 2, 1684 he died, full of good works and tried in all virtue; a superior of exceptional quality and a finished model of strict observance.

Marian Apostolate

Father Michael was indeed a Marian soul if ever there was one. One of his disciples writes of him: "After God the first aim of his love and the chief refuge in every necessity was his most loving Mother Mary whom he had begun to love most tenderly in his earliest years. When he was elected Provincial he adopted the following measure to merit Mary's favor. "...he issued an order to the assembled Chapter that the religious in all their writings should before everything else write the name of Mary and that this most august and pleasing name should be placed on the

doors of all cells, rooms, and halls. In this he imitated that apostolic man, St. Peter Thomas (*Carmelite Patriarch of Constantinople*), whose every delight was in this name." He himself was in the habit of drawing a flaming circle with the sweet name of Mary in its centre when signing his letters.

When writing or speaking he used the title of Mother by preference to honor Our Lady. It was he who ordered copies to be made of the celebrated painting of St. Luke and to be exposed for veneration in all the Carmelite Churches of the Province. He always carried a similar picture with him and frequently had it before his eyes, especially when obliged to remain for any length of time in one place. His biographer goes on to say: "If sometimes he had not experienced the usual operations of God while offering Holy Mass, He would immediately have recourse to his Mother as to the refuge of the wretched and the poor, and leaning his head on her image he would most sweetly converse with her and in spirit rest in her."

His Writings

From this we can see that Father Michael lived an intense, all embracing Marian life. By it too, he became an exalted mystic. The ascetical and mystical treatises written by him have an evident note of personal experience about them.

The work that is of most interest to us at present is the treatise entitled, "*The Mariform and*

Marian Life in Mary and for Mary." It is the fourth part of the "*Introduction to the Interior Life.*" Though it is small, having only fourteen chapters, it is a spiritual gem. The content consists of instructions on the ascetical and mystical form of the Marian life. Is this precious treatise the fruit of Father Michael's own experience? Facts from the life of this saintly Carmelite confirm this statement. But we have further evidence to show that there were other influences besides his personal experience.

Marie of St. Theresa

Fr. Michael was the spiritual director of the Venerable Marie of St. Theresa, nun of the Third Order of Carmel. This holy soul actually lived the Marian life in its most exalted form. Her Marian mystical life was written by her in the form of spiritual letters to her director, Father Michael of St. Augustine. Some years after her death, Father Michael edited these letters, but only after having carefully examined and retouched them with theological language where this seemed necessary to avoid ambiguity or misunderstanding. A comparison of these letters with his own treatise reveals a striking resemblance of ideas. Did Father Michael draw upon Sister Marie's letters in writing his Marian work?

His work was first printed in 1669 while Venerable Marie of St. Theresa's letters were edited in 1683. But these letters were written to her director over a long



period of time, probably from the time she came under his direction. We know that he was her director as early as 1657. Hence, this seems to confirm our conclusions in this regard.

Mother and Sister

In addition to this influence we are sure that there was another source from which our Marian Carmelite drank deeply. It is Carmel's own traditional devotion to her whom it calls "*Mother and Sister.*" The first historical documents that give evidence of Carmel's familiar and tender devotion to Mary date from the beginning of the thirteenth century. But these documents point to a tradition that is already old, going back far beyond the thirteenth century. As the doctrine of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces developed, Car-

mel came to understand this spiritual maternity in all its fullness.

Arnold Bostius

In 1479 Father Arnold Bostius wrote a work entitled, "*Maria Patrona*," into which he gathers all of Carmel's Marian heritage and from it draws further conclusions. After summarizing all that Mary is to Carmel, he goes on to point out what Carmel should be to Mary.

Bostius is speaking to his Carmelite Brothers. While exhorting them to imitate Mary, he desires them always to remain under her influence. "Invoke her with perseverance, approach her throne of grace with confidence, salute her again and again... Repeat to her the message of the Holy Trinity (the Hail Mary)... This will be an embrace for your loving Mother each time you say it." He ought to live continually in Mary's presence. "Let the loving remembrance of her accompany you day and night; during your walks, in your works, and your conversations; in the midst of your joys, sorrows and repose. Let her always occupy a first place in the vestibule of your memory." For a complete Marian life, all things must pass through Mary's hands to Jesus and to the Father. Whatever you desire to offer God, do not delay confiding it to her hands; she will expeditiously take over the affairs of her dear brother."

In all confidence then, let him turn to Mary when in need. "Show her your wounds and sores; in



your behalf, she will show your Judge, who is her Son, her bosom...; she will recommend you by her merits and with such insistence that Jesus will show the Father His pierced side and His wounds; you will not be repudiated when such proofs of love speak in your behalf."

Carmel's Marian Doctrine

In a learned article, the result of a thorough study of the history of Carmel's Marian life, Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen summarizes his conclusions on the Marian doctrine found in the "*Maria Patrona*" of Arnold Bostius.

"Bostius did not synthesize his doctrine on the practise of the Marian life in one formula. He did not say that we ought to live a "Marylike and Marian life in Mary and for Mary" as the Carmelite Michael of St. Augustine (the worthy precursor of Saint

Grignion De Montfort) will express it two centuries later. Nevertheless, it seems that no essential element of the devotion of the "Slavery of Love" is lacking to Bostius. He desires the child of Carmel to imitate Mary by keeping himself under the influence of her grace, invoking her continually, remembering her in every moment, having all things pass through her hands; this practice is based on the belief in Marian mediation. The "words" are not seen there; for Carmel prefers the more intimate name of Sister and Mother to those of Sovereign and Queen; as St. Therese of the Child Jesus will say later for Carmel: "Mary is more Mother than Queen." Bostius then does not speak of "Slavery of Love"; but there is no loss, for the "content" is there, and is surrounded by the atmosphere of intimacy proper to Carmel. The conclusion is self-evident; Bostius himself is a worthy predecessor of St. Louis Grignion De Montfort. And long before the devotion of complete consecration was spread among the Faithful, Carmel has lived it." Thus we see that Father Michael of St. Augustine is only reflecting the beautiful Marian heritage that has been passed on to the Brethren of Carmel for centuries. He is only following out the maxim that has been familiar to Carmelites from time immemorial: "Totus marianus est Carmelus," Carmel, is wholly Marian. It was during his time that the flower of Carmel's Marian devotion burst into

full bloom. Of this, Father Michael's treatise now being presented for the first time in English, is an excellent illustration. In this history of the Carmelite school of mysticism, Father Crisogono de Jesus Sacramentado, gives this treatise high praise.

"This is a very beautiful, original work, whose majestic doctrine touches the very soul of the children of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and gives us the greatest satisfaction... In all, it is a treatise of Marian mystical theology that fills a lacuna in our school. If he had written nothing else, by this work alone he deserves to live on eternally."

This treatise has since been translated into five languages.

Carmel's Influence

Here an interesting question presents itself. Did the school of Carmel have any influence on Saint Grignion De Montfort in the formation of his Marian doctrine? The question has not yet been solved. But we have the following facts. Father Michael's treatise was published in 1671, two years before the birth of Saint Grignion, and hence, must have been in circulation in De Montfort's lifetime. Then, too, Father Michael's doctrine could not have been unknown in Rennes since he was one of the glories of the Reform of Touraine to which this monastery belonged. Here the biographers of Saint Grignion point to a few facts that seem to show a close bond binding him to

the Order of Carmel. "Everyday, as he went to and from the college (the young student was then at Rennes) one would see him kneeling in the Carmelite Church, at the feet of the miraculous statue of Our Lady of Peace, sometimes even spending more than an hour there immovable and profoundly recollected." Picot de Cloriviere writes: "There is no doubt that this Mother of mercy rewarded her servant for the zeal he manifested for her glory and that she obtained very great graces for him. One of the most signal graces was that which he received from her in that church, as he made known to one of his traveling companions some years later; it was made known to him that God was calling him to the ecclesiastical state. It was a knowledge so clear, that he was not in the slightest doubt and had no further need to deliberate on it." Another writer holds that St. Grignion, while yet a student of philosophy, had already known "his method of preaching, which consisted in always going to Jesus through Mary." Thus, he may have been indirectly influenced by Father Michael through Carmelites who knew and preached his Marian doctrine at Rennes. However, there is no historical document to show that Saint Louis came under the influence of any of the religious of the monastery at Rennes.

Be this as it may, the similarity of doctrine is very striking, more so, since we have no definite proof

that Saint Grignion knew of Father Michael's treatise.

The first point of agreement is at once noticed in the use of the formula, "*in, with, by and for Mary*"

Life in Mary

In Mary: Father Michael writes, "We can live in . . . our beloved Mother Mary, by striving in all our sufferings and sorrows, trials, temptations, and afflictions to preserve and cherish within ourselves a childlike, tender and innocent turning of our soul to Mary, the Mother most beloved and most dear to us in God." While the words of Saint Grignion are: "... we must become accustomed little by little to recollect ourselves interiorly and thus try to form within us some idea or spiritual image of Mary . . . In short, Mary will be the only means used by our soul in dealing with God; she will be our universal refuge; . . . if we do anything at all, we will act in Mary, everywhere and in all things we will renounce ourselves."

According to Father Michael by an acquired habit or through the direct and spontaneous action of the Holy Spirit, "the soul has a constant, sweet remembrance of Mary and a consciousness of her in almost the same way as it keeps a loving and reverent remembrance of God in all its works."

Elsewhere he makes the following statement, which bears a close resemblance to a similar statement made by De Montfort.



“May the spirit of Mary be in us all, that we may live in that spirit; that her spirit dwelling in us may perform our works for us ... Therefore, she (Mary) says, ‘Those who work for me’ that is, with the grace acquired through me, ‘shall not sin.’” Saint De Montfort writes, “... Mary says that they who work in her shall not sin; that is to say, those who dwell in Mary in spirit shall fall into no considerable fault.”

Live by Mary

By Mary: Speaking of Mary as the “neck of the Church” through which all graces come from Christ to us, Father Michael adds: “From this it follows that not only does grace or the Spirit of God operate in and cause such souls to lead a divine life, but also the grace and spirit of Mary operates in and causes them to lead a Marian life. St. Ambrose desired that Mary’s spirit might thus live

in us when he said: ‘May the spirit of Mary dwell in all that it may magnify the Lord and rejoice in God, its Saviour.’ ... that her spirit dwelling in us may perform our works for us and that we may be thus able to live through her spirit.”

Here again, there is a close resemblance to De Montfort’s doctrine on this part of the formula: “On this account St. Ambrose says, ‘Let the soul of Mary be in each of us to magnify the Lord, and the spirit of Mary be in each of us to rejoice in God.’ ... we must be moved and influenced by it (the spirit of Mary) in the manner she chooses. We must put ourselves and leave ourselves in her virginal hands, like a tool in the grasp of a workman ...”

Life With Mary

With Mary: “When Mary deigns to fashion the souls of her favorite children,” writes Father

Michael, "she procures for them her spirit; that is, the Spirit of Jesus which forms in them her virtues, her character, her mode of action and her attractions." Again: "In all their actions and omissions they (Mary's devoted children) strive to keep their eyes fixed on God and His holy Mother, so that they may promptly and joyfully carry out what they know will please them and carefully avoid what they know will displease them." Here De Montfort is more definite: "We must... in every action consider how Mary has done it, or how she would have done it, had she been in our place... Mary is the great and exclusive mold of God...; and a soul that has found that mold, and has lost itself in it, is presently changed into Jesus Christ Whom that mold represents to the life."

Live for Mary

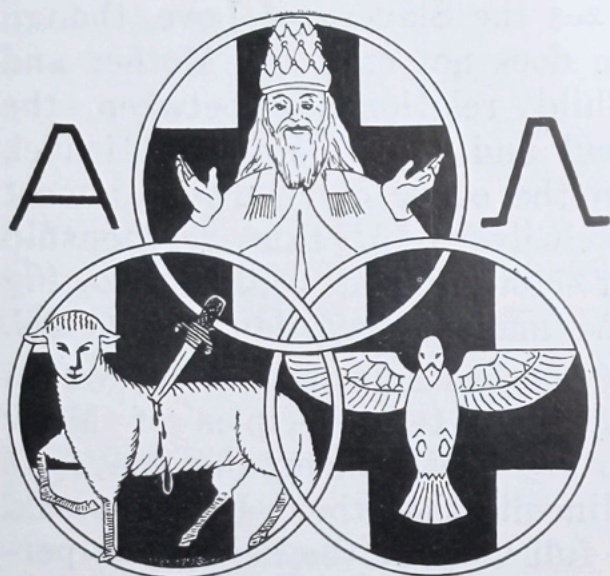
For Mary: This aspect of the formula is very clearly set forth by Michael of St. Augustine: "... the soul should... endeavor to live for the service, honor and love of Mary—that is, to employ and spend all its active and passive powers for Mary—that she, too, may be honored, glorified, and loved in all things, and her kingdom may be promoted, perfected, and extended in the kingdom of Jesus, her Son. In this way, just as we live, work, suffer and die for Jesus, we also live, suffer and die for Mary." In another place he says: "... we live and die in Mary that we may more perfectly live and die in God and for God..."

For the reign of Mary, far from being contradictory to the reign of Jesus, is wholly ordained for that purpose."

Finally, "It is to be noted here that living and dying for Mary... must ultimately be directed to and ordained for God." Louis De Montfort expresses himself in very much the same way. "It is not that we take her for the last end of our services, for that is Jesus Christ alone; but we take her for our approximate end, our mysterious means and our easy way to go to Him." In his short treatise on devotion to Mary he says the same thing in a more precise language: "... we must work only for her, for her interests and her glory—making this the immediate end of all our actions—and for the glory of God which must be their final end."

Jesus and Mary

We must not think that the formula as used by De Montfort, namely, *in, with, by and for Mary*, was unknown to Michael of St. Augustine. In his treatise we find the following statement: "Souls that love Mary sometimes find that this Marian life *in, for, and by Mary* and, at the same time, *in, for, and by God* can be practised with well nigh the same simplicity, intimacy, and abstraction of soul as with the simple Divinity alone." But he omits one part of it. However, the entire formula is found in the Letters of Venerable Marie of St. Theresa which were edited by our Carmelite. In them we meet with this expres-



sion: "By divine grace I further experienced that this life *in, for, with and by Mary* and at the same time *in, for, with and by God* can be practised with a simplicity, hiddenness, and a recollection almost as great as that life in God alone."

A thorough discussion on the various points of agreement and the differences between our two Marian authors demands a special work in itself. Here we shall only mention the more outstanding similarities and differences.

The Presence of Mary

Other similarities between these two apostles of Mary will be noticed in their doctrine on the union of Jesus with Mary; how the Spirit of Jesus and Mary is one and the same, and hence, true Marian life cannot be an obstacle to union with Jesus. Consequently, both agree that the Holy Spirit forms such souls through Mary's aid. Again, they are agreed that the reign of Jesus in the soul increases with the reign of Mary. of course, each bases his doctrine

on the belief in Mary as Mediatrix of all graces. Both promise to those who are faithful, the enjoyment of Mary's presence by a special grace. This presence of Mary enjoyed continually, may be acquired to some extent, as the presence of God; but, through a special grace obtained for them by her, this continual presence of Mary is enjoyed in a new and more spiritual manner.

The resemblances between Father Michael and Saint Grignon are so striking that one would think there was some common source from which both drew. Although they may not have used the same historical documents, both drew from their own experiences in living the Marian life, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Hence, we may say that their common source is the Holy Spirit Himself.

Differences

In addition to the above mentioned similarities, there are obvious differences; differences that do not oppose, so much as compliment each other. Thus St. Louis De Montfort is very systematic in his treatment of true devotion to Mary; it is clearly and logically presented. Father Michael is not quite as systematic in his treatise, nor as clear as De Montfort. This may be due in a large measure to his profound treatment of the Marian life.

His treatise deals to a great extent with the Marian mystical life, which of its very nature is obscure. While "*True Devotion*"

deals almost entirely with the Marian ascetical life and would consequently be easier to present and explain. In consequence of these two latter differences, Father Michael reveals more clearly than De Montfort the highest perfection of the Marian life. "When the faculties of the soul are so nobly and perfectly engaged in the remembrance, knowledge, and love of God and of Mary in God, there follows such a deep and firm adherence of the whole soul to God and Mary, that through a loving liquefaction or inflow of love into the soul, the soul seems to become one with God and Mary, as though God, Mary and the soul had blended into one. This state seems to be the last and the highest the soul can reach in the Marian life; it is the principal effect of this exercise and of the spirit of love for Mary."

Again Saint Grignon empha-

sizes the Slavery of Love, though he does not omit the Mother and Child relationship between the soul and Mary. Father Michael, on the other hand, dwells almost exclusively on this relationship of Mother and Child, following the ancient tradition of Carmel.

One has only to read the works of these two disciples of Mary to see how wonderfully one compliments the other. In this work, a full view of the heights of perfection to which Marian souls may be called is clearly set before them. May these generous souls be encouraged to aim higher in the Marian life. Doing what they can and trusting whole-heartedly in Mary, our Mother, souls consecrated to her will in some way experience the truth of what Father Michael and Saint Grignon describe as the fruit of the Marian life, namely, enjoyment of Mary's presence.

Venard F. Poslusney, O.Carm.

Feast of St. Simon Stock

May 16, 1953

Chapter 1

JUST AS WE ARE ABLE TO LIVE A GODLIKE AND DIVINE LIFE, SO ALSO ARE WE ABLE TO LIVE A "MARYLIKE" AND MARIAN LIFE, THAT IS, A LIFE LED ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF MARY AND IN HER SPIRIT.

BEFORE CLOSING the exposition which the divine mercy has deigned to suggest to my spirit on the subject of the Godlike and divine life in God, urged by filial love for Mary, I thought I could enhance the value of the present work by adding some instructions on Mary; and, in general, showing how we ought to conduct ourselves toward our loving Mother. As we have said elsewhere, just as it behooves us to make our lives Godlike, that is, conformed to the good pleasure of God and according to the demands of the Divine Will, so we ought to live "Marylike," that is, conformed to the good pleasure of Mary, the Mother of God. For this reason those who profess to be her most devoted children use the same eye of discretion to discern what is both the will of God and of His most loving Mother in regard to all they do or omit. In all their actions and omissions they strive to keep their eyes fixed on God and His most holy Mother, so that they may promptly and joyfully carry out what they know will please Them, and carefully avoid what they know will displease Them.

To lead a supernatural or divine life requires the aid of supernatural grace and of the Holy Spirit Who comes to the soul, arouses, assists, accompanies and pursues it; and it is only by a faithful cooperation with the Holy Spirit and His divine inspirations that the soul who loves God succeeds in living this supernatural and divine life. However, according to the Holy Fathers, since God has decreed to bestow no grace on mankind that has not passed through Mary's hands, they therefore call her the neck of the Church, through which all graces and all heavenly blessings must flow from Christ, the Head of the Church, to all its members, so that all the graces of God likewise become the graces and blessings of this most loving Mother. From this it follows that not only does grace or the Spirit of God operate in and cause such souls to lead a divine life, but also the grace and spirit of Mary operate in and cause them to lead a Marian life.

** Translated from the Latin by Rev. Venard Poslusney, O.Carm. From the Latin Edition DE VITA MARIE-FORMI ET MARIANA IN MARIA PROPTER MARIAM, edited by Rev. Gabriel Wessels, O.Carm., Rome, 1926.*

St. Ambrose desired that Mary's spirit might thus live in us when he said: "May the spirit of Mary dwell in all that it may magnify the Lord and rejoice in God, its Saviour." And I further add: May the spirit of Mary be in us all, that we may live in that spirit; that her spirit dwelling in us may perform our works for us and that we may be thus able to live through her spirit. Therefore, she says through the mouth of Holy Mother the Church, "My spirit is sweeter than honey"; (Ecclus. 24,27) and: "Those who work in me," that is, with the grace acquired through me, "shall not sin; he who finds me shall find life and shall draw salvation from the Lord," (Ecclus. 24,30; Prov. 8,35). Again: "In me is the grace of every way"; that is, for every state of the souls who love and seek God. "In me is every hope of life and of virtue"; (Ecclus. 24,25) so that one of whatever state or condition, may obtain any grace or be able to have any hope of a divine life or a Christian virtue except through the meditation of Mary, through her dispensation and distribution. In this sense the devout soul gradually accustoms itself to lead a life at once divine and Marian, in so far as it comes from both the spirit of God and the spirit of Mary, that is, from divine grace granted through the intercession of Mary and bestowed through her hands. It is in this sense and in this way that the soul, while seeking God, arrives at the sage when it constantly lives a Christian and divine life, and can say, "I live, now not I, but Christ and Mary live in me" (Gal. 2,20). Or, the *Spirit of Jesus and Mary, dwelling in me performs my works*. The spirit of Jesus and Mary, which performs all things in the soul, is *one and the same spirit*. In this sense it is also permissible to say that Mary has her kingdom in the soul and her throne beside the throne of Jesus, her Son, and that as the kingdom of Jesus increases and flourishes in the soul so also does the kingdom of Mary increase and flourish. Thus are verified in the soul these words of the Psalmist: "The Queen stood at thy right hand." If indeed the reign of Jesus and His Mother flourishes indivisibly in the soul, then Jesus and Mary rule there as one.

Chapter 2

JUST AS WE ARE ABLE TO LIVE IN GOD, SO ALSO WE ARE ABLE
TO LIVE IN MARY.

AS WE have shown in a previous work (Treatise on the Mystical Life) how we can live a Godlike and divine life in God, so we may also live the same life in Mary. To live in God, in all that we do, omit or suffer, or what ever we are called upon to suffer in body or soul, within or without, from men or from evil spirits, we must

bear all with a reverent and loving and sweet inclination of the soul to God, with a tranquil, as it were, breathing in of the divine Essence; just as our divine Saviour performed all His actions, along with the Father dwelling in Him, with a sweet, loving and reverent turning of His soul to His Heavenly Father. We can also live in the same manner in our beloved Mother, Mary, by striving in all our actions and omissions, in all our sufferings and sorrows, trials, temptations and afflictions to preserve and cherish within ourselves a childlike, tender and innocent turning of our soul to Mary, the Mother most beloved and most dear to us in God. It is evident that we must do this in such a way that our love for her will take its sweet course from her to God.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit seems to effect this in the soul by a great outpouring and an overflowing of divine love toward Mary and from her back again to God, as evidently happened to Mary Magdalen de Pazzi. In the exuberance of her love for God she was accustomed to turn in tenderest, filial love to the Mother of God as to her beloved Mother, and with the greatest tenderness and childlike simplicity, lovingly speak to her, even in her ecstasies. Similiar examples are found in the lives of various Saints, as St. Bernard, St. Peter Thomas, St. Joseph Hermann, etc.

In this attitude of love for our Blessed Mother which either the Spirit of Love directly and spontaneously produces in the soul or which is facilitated by an acquired habit of frequent, loving recourse to this most tender Mother, the soul has a constant, sweet remembrance of Mary and a consciousness of her in almost the same way as it keeps a loving and reverent remembrance of God in all its works. Just as the soul, through a steadfast exercise of faith and of unwavering love, has acquired the habit of always and everywhere being conscious of the presence of God and of pouring itself out in sincere affections of love for Him that it seemed impossible ever to forget Him, in the same manner the loving child of Mary, by the continual exercise of keeping her in mind as a loving Mother, acquires the habit of a filial and loving remembrance of her, so that all its thoughts and affections are directed to her and to God, and it seems unable to forget them.

St. Peter Thomas, the Carmelite Patriarch of Constantinople, had acquired such a habit. In all his works and in all functions of his sublime duties and apostolic missions he would cling to Mary with filial affection as to a most loving Mother; all his works were seasoned with love of her and were performed in her honor. She in turn consoled and comforted him, and, at all times, surrounded him with her maternal love and solicitude.

Chapter 3

HOW THE DIVINE LOVE IN THE SOUL EXTENDS ITSELF TO OUR BLESSED MOTHER AND CAUSES THE SOUL TO LIVE AT THE SAME TIME IN GOD AND MARY.

WHEN it is the Holy Spirit or Divine Love that produces in the devout soul this tender, filial and childlike love for our loving Mother, then all take place spontaneously, and even the character of the soul, for the time being, seems to be transformed into the innocence, tenderness, littleness and other traits and dispositions of a little child toward this dearest and most loving Mother. As such its conduct toward her is full of innocence. Due to "the charity of God which is diffused in its heart by the Holy Spirit Who has been given to it," (Rom. 5,5) the Holy Spirit then acts upon the soul, directs and vivifies it and is the principal agent in this game of love. Hence, this innocent relationship with its beloved Mother is nothing else than an overflow and an outpouring of divine love which acts in the soul and tenderly carries it to its most amiable Mother. It is done in such a way that the same time the soul overflows with a tender love for Mary, immediately, as though it were drawing her with it, it pours out its love for God, without any intermediary, obstacle or division of spirit. Thus the love of God and Mary seem to be one and the same, flowing together back and forth until the soul, together with its beloved Mother, lovingly repose in God; or rather it is "one and the same spirit" (Cor. 12,11) Who produces, when and as He wills, the same love for God and for Mary, wounding the soul and making it at one time, the tender spouse in the arms of its beloved, at another, the innocent child in the arms of this most sweet Mother.

Without this actual attraction and operation of the Holy Spirit or of Divine Love, the beloved son of Mary keeps a sweet remembrance of her and remains lovingly attached to her—not, however, with such simplicity or tenderness—but with a more reasoned, serious and adult love; and, even though he should desire it, he would not be able to conduct himself or act with such simplicity and tenderness. Such action would appear artificial and unnatural in him; whereas, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost it flows naturally and spontaneously from within, without any artificiality, for it proceeds from the Spirit of God dwelling in the soul, Who works in diverse ways according to His good pleasure, both when and how He wills. In such a soul one

would say that there are two different persons who in turn perform their parts naturally, without artificiality or affectation, as though, now one, now the other were in possession of its nature. So much so, that the soul is astonished to find in itself, in such a brief space of time, dispositions and inclinations so different from each other, as though it were not one and the same person. That the soul may not hinder this action of the Holy Spirit, let it always strive to attend to its interior and spontaneous attractions, following them with simplicity and without an interior violence.

Chapter 4

IT BEHOOVES US TO LIVE, ACT, SUFFER AND DIE FOR GOD.

FROM all that has been said, we can now see how the soul that loves God may also *live in Mary*. The question is now asked, is it proper and permissible for the soul to *live for Mary* as it lives for God? My reply is that the soul who loves God lives for God; it exercises and directs to the honor, good pleasure and love of God all the vital operations of its senses and of its active powers, and also all the sufferings of its passive powers. In such a manner the soul should also endeavor to live for the service, honor and love of Mary—that is, to employ and spend all its active and passive powers for Mary—that she too may be honored, glorified and loved in all things, and her kingdom may be promoted, perfected and extended in the kingdom of Jesus, her Son. In this way, just as we live, work, suffer and die for Jesus, we also live, work, suffer and die for Mary. As it is necessary for us to submit to the reign of Jesus within us, so also must we permit Mary to reign in us by having at her beck and call and service all our actions and sufferings that, with our cooperation she may come into full possession of her kingdom of which she possesses the title: Queen of Heaven and Earth, Queen of the Just and of all Saints. Such she could not be if she did have some dominion and rule over us or if we were not bound to subject our lives to her and to direct them according to her good pleasure as well as for her service and honor.

It is after this manner that St. Peter Thomas of the Carmelite Order made Mary queen of his soul and venerated her as such, while he consecrated his whole life and all his works to the honor and love of her. As a sign of her perfect reign in him he bore her most holy name engraved over his heart. Likewise St. Gerard, the Carmelite, as a sign that he acknowledged her as his Queen, recited daily the Office of her glorious Assumption into Heaven that he might have a constant reminder of her inauguration as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

He also induced St. Stephen, King of Hungary, to venerate Mary as Queen and to consecrate his whole kingdom to her under this title. The latter also ordered that all his subjects should call her their Lady and Queen. From these examples we learn that we, too, ought to consecrate our whole lives to Mary.

Finally, *since Mary is the Mother* of all the elect, it is indeed reasonable to show her a filial affection and a tender love in all that we do or omit, in our works and sufferings, in life and in death. Thus we make her the secondary object of our every aspiration and intention, our refuge for whom we live. Let us be convinced that whether we live or die, we live for this Queen, our Mother, and we die for her since we are sons of this Mother and Queen. For which reason I seem to hear her calling to us: "Although you have many nurses and foster-mothers, you have not many mothers, for 'I have begotten you in Christ Jesus.'"

Chapter 5

LIFE AND DEATH FOR MARY MUST ULTIMATELY BE DIRECTED TO GOD AND FOR GOD, WITHOUT ANY SELF-SEEKING. THE SAME HOLDS FOR THE CULT OF OTHER SAINTS.

IT IS to be noted here that living and dying for Mary (it is the same for devotion, love and veneration of the other saints) must be ultimately directed to and ordained for God. For, inasmuch as Mary is wholly conformed to the good pleasure of God and lives eternally for Him, for His love and glory, it follows that every life and death for Mary must ultimately serve and be directed toward God. Thus we do not live or die for Mary as our final end, nor do we adhere to our personal advantage or to anything outside of God; but rather, we live and die in Mary that we may more perfectly live and die in God and for God, for His sake and for love of Him. So that now the perfect reign of Mary in us exists together with the perfect reign of Jesus in our soul. For the reign of Mary, far from being contradictory to the reign of Jesus, is wholly ordained for that purpose.

Wherefore, one who loves God and professes to be a true son of this loving Mother watches over all his actions, so that the love of God, "which is poured out in his heart through the Holy Spirit Who is given to him," will overflow and extend to Mary. He will manifest his love by sweetly and lovingly taking refuge in her, by keeping his thoughts fixed in love upon her and by everywhere cherishing her

memory with a reverent attitude. However, it is necessary that this flow and extension of the love of God toward our beloved Mother should again return, flow back and terminate its course in God; it should be permitted or exercised for no other reason than for God.

This is perfectly done when the soul in this state is spontaneously moved and guided by the Holy Spirit from within. Then the soul understands by experience that this life for Mary is not a hindrance to life for God but rather a help and an incentive. Or rather, it is a union of the love of God through Mary and with Mary in God, with a final consummation of love and repose with this beloved Mother in God; or, in the love of both Mary and God, by finally finding repose in God as the ultimate end.

Chapter 6

THE MARIAN LIFE CONTAINS A HIGHER PERFECTION THAN THE STATE OF SIMPLE UNION WITH GOD, WHICH IS FOUND IN THE BLESSED. THIS IS A MARIAN-DIVINE LIFE IN GOD AND FOR GOD, AND AT THE SAME TIME, PURELY AND SIMPLY IN MARY AND FOR MARY.

THE SPIRIT seems further to instruct and to teach certain pious souls (without doubt Ven. Marie of St. Teresa and others) that the Marian life in Mary, established and united to the divine life in God, may be said to be and is a degree higher than the state of simple union with God, the *Summum Bonum*, or than the simple life in God. It is quite true, ordinarily speaking, that God is the sole and ultimate end of the soul, in so far as He is absolutely the sole and highest Good for which the soul was created. Our supreme happiness and beatitude in this life and in the next consist in the attainment, contemplation, possession and enjoyment of God; in this sense the soul can strive for nothing higher or attain to nothing more exalted. However, in another sense, one can mount higher.

In general, the Blessed in Heaven enjoy perfect glory, beatitude, joy and satiety in contemplating, loving and possessing God face to face, or in being illumined with the light of glory and filled with beatific love, in which they find their supreme happiness and beatitude. But it is known to everyone that besides this beatitude or essential glory, they also enjoy other glories and accidental joys, each according to his exigency and the measure of his merits, and according to the disposition of God who rewards; e.g., in the contemplation of the Most Sacred Humanity of Christ, of His Sacred Wounds, of the Holy Cross as the instrumental cause of their beatitude, of the most glorious Mother of God, of St. Joseph and of the other saints; likewise, in a clearer

knowledge of some of the mysteries of God, etc. Of these joys, however, one possesses more, another less, and it is in this sense also that one saint is higher in glory than another, because in one the beatific love is more intense than in another, and extends to more objects than in another. It is also in almost the same manner that certain accidental graces, gifts and favors are granted to some pious souls in this life, by which in a certain sense they are likened to the Blessed and are raised to a more perfect and sublime mode or degree of unitive love, and gradually attain to a more perfect life of love and enjoyment of God.

Understood in this sense, the Marian life united to the divine life is also more perfect and, in degree, higher than the ordinary contemplative and unitive life, for it is twofold, viz., Divine-Marian in God and Mary, by simple love and a certain enjoyment of God in Mary and of Mary in God. When the devout soul is constantly and at all times moved by the Holy Spirit dwelling within it, so that, in all that it does or omits, it is conscious of, contemplates, loves and longs for these two objects, God in Mary and Mary in God, then, it can be said to be leading the Divine-Marian life in Mary. Therefore, in all its works, words and thoughts, the soul continually has in view the greater love, devotion and honor of this double object, God and Mary, because it lives for God and for Mary.

Such a Divine-Marian life is more perfect than the simple divine life, because the Spirit of love, without any hindrance to the union of the soul with God, unites it also with Mary, keeping it occupied with both God and Mary. Thus the soul is at least extensively more perfect than if it were occupied only with God or in God, just as that life of the Blessed is extensively and accidentally more perfect which has its happiness in a greater number of objects than the one which, strictly speaking and other things being equal, finds its joy in God only.

Chapter 7

THE OBJECT OF THE MARIAN LIFE IS GOD AND MARY UNITED IN A CERTAIN EXALTED MANNER, OR, AS ONE, JUST AS THE OBJECT OF SOME CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE IS EITHER GOD ALONE OR GOD AND MAN AS PERSONALLY UNITED OR AS ONE BEING. THE KINDS OF OPERATION THAT TAKE PLACE IN THIS SOUL.

FOR the sake of greater clarity, let us state the following. Together with simple contemplation which has for its object the sole unformed Essence of God, or any other purely divine object, as the most Holy Trinity, or the divine ideas, attributes and perfections, there is another form of contemplation whose object is Christ, God and Man,

God in His assumed Humanity, and His Humanity as personally united to His Divinity. Besides this simple contemplation of God and of Christ as God and Man, there is another form of contemplation, namely, contemplation of God in Mary and of Mary in God. It is an undivided occupation with this double object, a loving flight to God and Mary as united together in a singular manner, not indeed personally as the Humanity of Christ is united to His Divinity, but, as it were, substantially according to grace and in a manner that surpasses the union of any other creature with God, namely, in the quality of Mother. As Mother, Mary, to a certain extent, is truly one with her Son, one with God whose Mother she is; and as such she cannot be esteemed, loved and honored without the Divinity.

It is in this manner that Mary is set before certain pious souls as one with God and in God without anything seeming to intervene. Whence it happens that such souls seem to be everywhere conscious of their loving Mother. They salute and embrace her in God with a wonderful tenderness and loving possession of her as well as an utter forgetfulness of self in her and in God. Then they are seemingly drawn to and enclosed in her most loving, pure and affectionate heart or are drawn to her maternal bosom, languishing there in the unutterable tenderness of their most innocent love for her and at the same time for God, pouring out their love for both. Or they remain in a sweet quietude, enraptured, languishing in their union with and in this one object of their love, so that this divine life is twofold and, at the same time, simple. Then these souls receive the life of the spirit in Mary, a repose in, a fruition of, and a certain loving liquefaction (melting) in Mary and a union of love with her.

All the foregoing takes place in the following manner. When the soul, in all possible simplicity, detachment and interior tranquillity, has recollected itself in the unformed Essence of God and has been intimately occupied in contemplating, loving and enjoying this most simple Essence, then it is gently drawn from within its own being to also contemplate, love and embrace its beloved Mother and lovingly cling to her in sweet enjoyment. In a word, the soul is most lovingly occupied with Mary as one with God and in a singular union with Him; in loving and possessing God it also loves and possesses His loving Mother as though she were one with God. For the soul thus united to one and to the other as to a single person, God and Mary seem to be one simple object of its love and its delight. Devout souls conduct themselves in well nigh the same manner toward the Sacred Humanity which they contemplate as united to the Divinity. Thus the soul considers the two natures united to the one person as one object. In like manner the soul contemplates and loves Jesus and

Mary, as Mother and Son, associated in the closest union, as one object, or, though distinct, as so correlated that one cannot be known or loved without the other.

Chapter 8

THE MARIAN LIFE IS NO HINDRANCE TO SIMPLE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE. HOW IT IS TO BE EXERCISED OUTSIDE OF THE SPECIAL ATTRACTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. HOW ST. PETER THOMAS AND THE OTHER SAINTS LIVED THIS LIFE.

FROM what has been said it is evident that the Marian life is a pure, perfect and excellent way of loving the Blessed Virgin, although it is known by experience to only a few. This is due to the fact that the Marian life *in and for Mary*, and at the same time, in and for God seems proper to and is bestowed by a special favor only on those who are singularly devoted to Mary and on her most dear children whom she has especially chosen for this purpose.

Although some persons striving for the highest perfection do not approve of the Marian life in and for Mary and look upon it as resting on no solid foundation, let them not despise or consider it as an imperfect form of spiritual life, fitted only for beginners or progressives, because it seems contrary to simplicity, annihilation, detachment from all creatures and, therefore, still far from perfection. Let them take notice that the Marian life can very well hold its own without hindering perfection. Moreover, as long as God thus deigns to work in the soul, the Marian life greatly helps and favors perfection.

However, all things must be done at their proper time. Before this action of the Holy Spirit has taken place and His actual attraction felt, it is inadvisable for the soul to force itself or strive in a clumsy way to imitate this action. It is sufficient for the soul to go to this loving Mother with an affectionate heart and to love her with less of that childlike simplicity until Mary deigns to impart to it the spirit of the Marian life. When souls united to God and drawn by Mary are led, as it were, by the hand to this higher sphere, then they learn by experience that all that had been written here concerning the Marian life in and for Mary is true.

It will then be no source of wonderment to them that St. Peter Thomas had so tender a love for this beloved Mother, so loving and trustful a recourse to her, so sweet a remembrance of and so constant an occupation with her that his heart and all his faculties seemed saturated with love and clear knowledge of her. It seemed impossible for him to be able to forget her. Whether he spoke, ate, drank or performed any other action, he seasoned all with the love of Mary

and her most sweet name which it is said he received imprinted upon his heart. This daily practice of lovingly bearing Mary in his heart and of bestowing his ardent affection upon her had united him to and, as it were, transformed him into Mary and, at the same time, into God. This transformation was undoubtedly produced by his consuming love for her. The same may be said of St. Bernard who seemed to draw life from the bosom of our most loving Mother. St. Joseph, the Norbertine, seems to have been nourished by Mary. It is certain that St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi and many other Saints led this Marian life without any obstacle to divine contemplation or to their union of love with God. To say that these Saints were imperfect through these loving exercises toward Mary and through these interior actions of the Holy Spirit seems contrary to right reason and to the reverence due to the Saints.

Chapter 9

THE MARIAN LIFE DRAWS ITS EXCELLENCE FROM THE MOST PERFECT UNION OF MARY WITH GOD; OTHERWISE IT WOULD BE IMPERFECT AND WOULD BE AN OBSTACLE BETWEEN THE SOUL AND GOD. MARY AS MOTHER OF GOD IS MORE CLOSELY UNITED TO HIM THAN ANY OTHER CREATURE AND ALSO MORE DEIFIED.

FROM what has been said, it can be gathered that the Marian life *in Mary and for Mary* draws all its dignity, excellence, sublimity and perfection from her own singular and most perfect union with God; it is also drawn from the superabundance of and participation in the divine gifts, graces, prerogatives and virtues showered upon her without number or measure, exceeding in an ineffable and incomprehensible manner that of all other creatures. Therefore, it is from the contemplation and love of Mary thus overshadowed, irradiated, imbued by the Divinity and so perfectly united to it that the Marian life draws its excellence and sublimity as from an inexhaustible abyss of all good. This is especially so when God is considered and loved as united to Mary and as one with her by a simple undivided contemplation.

On the other hand, without this simultaneous contemplation and love of Mary in God and of God in Mary after the manner of one object, the Marian life would indeed be rather crude and imperfect. To consider Mary, to love and embrace her and to have the most tender affection for her simply as a creature and not as united with and in God would necessarily result in a natural or sensible or at least a mixed love, and as such would draw the soul into multiplicity and become an obstacle between it and God. As the object is, so is the resultant love. If the object is natural and sensible, the love for it will be the same. When the object is supernatural and divine, the love for

it will be similar. Wherefore, the soul, in loving Mary should more and more attend to the purification of its love that it may direct the purest love to her who is so unspeakably lovable in God, and, *de facto* is loved by the Blessed, by Christ Himself and by God.

That this may be the more easily reduced to practice, it will be well to understand why this most lovable Mother is more intimately united to God and more completely a participant in the divine perfections and attributes than any of even the greatest saints or angelic spirits. It is because she has been ennobled by God so that she might receive into her virginal womb the Eternal Word of the Father Who, in reposing for nine months within her, so divinized her nature, body and soul, so deified, penetrated and united Himself to her as to transform her human nature into Himself by an indissoluble bond of reciprocal, unitive love. Hence the devout soul has no difficulty in regarding her as one with God and in God, as the one object of its loving contemplation. It is in this way that the soul lives "Marylike" in Mary and for Mary, and at the same time, divinely in God and for God.

The pious soul is greatly drawn and sweetly assisted in this, when God deigns to shed His light upon it, in order that, with the enlightened eye of faith, it may see and acknowledge the excellence, the ineffable sublimity, the power and authority with which God has honored His Mother and made her the dispensatrix of all His graces, divine gifts and mercies. Furthermore, it is readily apparent that He has clothed her in His divine perfections and so united her to His Essence that she appears as one with Him. Through this enlightened faith the soul sees that it was most fitting that there should exist some equality between the Mother and the Son. Therefore, let the devout soul not imagine that in this amiable Mother there is to be found only the simple union with God that is found in the other saints, but let it understand according to the light given it that she is united with God in a most singular and ineffable manner, that she is completely deified, so that, in a certain sense, she can be called and is a *goddess*, since she is by grace what God is by nature. In truth, if it can be said of the saints: "I have said you are gods and all of you sons of the most High," how much more fittingly can it be said of the Mother of God that she is a *goddess*!

Chapter 10

SOME SOULS ARE DRAWN TO THE MARIAN LIFE THROUGH INTERIOR LIGHTS CONCERNING MARY'S PERFECTIONS, GRACES, PREROGATIVES, ETC.; WHENCE A WONDERFUL LOVE FOR HER TAKES POSSESSION OF THEM.

SOME pious souls are still more drawn and urged to embrace the Marian life in Mary and for Mary, through further interior lights

concerning her greatness. The goodness of God deigns more and more to make known to them the greatness, sublimity, power and majesty of this most amiable Mother as well as His incomprehensible and ineffable love for her. In His love for her God drew from the depths of His Divine Heart and showered upon His Mother such a superabundance of countless graces and privileges and prerogatives that He could give her nothing further, nor make her greater, more beautiful, noble, excellent, or sublime than He has made her. And in this sense God in His omnipotence, wisdom and goodness could not create a more noble, perfect, elevated or purer creature than His own and our most loving Mother.

Then such souls begin to understand how God, seized by an unspeakable love for this beloved Mother, completely poured Himself out upon her and filled her with Himself and His divine perfections to the utmost capacity of a pure creature. They also understand how this most sweet Mother, through her unfailing fidelity in cooperating and corresponding with the divine graces infused into her soul from moment to moment, was never guilty of the slightest imperfection, but, enlightened with an exceedingly clear knowledge of divine things and inflamed with a most ardent love of God, she rose above all the angelic choirs in perfection. God sometimes reveals to such souls that His most loving Mother is more pleasing to Him and gives Him greater delight than all the other saints together, and that His love for her is greater than His love for all the other saints combined.

From these and similar interior lights on the perfections of Mary these souls find an ever increasing reverence and love for this dear Mother growing within themselves along with great steadfastness, simplicity and purity. They also find that their minds seem inseparably united to Mary, and their hearts filled with deepest love for her, so that they are raised on high by a certain power, and are absorbed in the excess of their love. Due to further revelations of the wonderful perfections of God hidden in Mary, of His unbounded and mysterious love for her, they are drawn to the deepest and most profound admiration of her. Thus, being on fire with love for Mary, they remain absorbed in contemplation of her, and yet are unable to understand the mysteries they behold in their dear Mother.

It happens sometimes that their love cannot contain itself but bursts forth from the depths of their heart and causes them to break forth in exclamations of praise and admiration. They are forced to even coin words to express the magnificence, excellence and dignity of this most loving Mother, and to praise, bless, magnify and extol her whom they love so ardently and so sweetly. They become like one beside himself with love, who knows not what to do or what to say, or what comparisons to make in order to praise, magnify and exalt this dear Mother.

Chapter 11

OTHER ACTS OF LOVE TOWARD MARY; THE JOY CAUSED IN THE SOUL BY THE PERFECTIONS AND MOST SWEET NAME OF MARY;; THE LIFE, BREATHING AND REPOSE OF THE SOUL IN MARY. IN WHAT SENSE THE SOUL LIVES IN MARY AND AT THE SAME TIME IN GOD; AND HOW IT LOSES ITSELF AND IS UNITED TO HER.

SUCH SOULS are unable to forget Mary even for a moment just as they are unable to forget God, Who is present everywhere. From time to time, through the tenderness of their love, they seem to lose themselves in this Mother and are melted and, as it were, absorbed in her. By their strong, sweet, ardent and intimate love they arrive at a profound forgetfulness of themselves and of all creatures.

Sometimes they experience so great a joy, delight and exultation of soul in considering the great power of this most sweet Mother—her great majesty, exaltation, and the unspeakable love of God for her—that they do not know what to do or say. They burst forth into expressions of praise both of God and of Mary. The praises and blessings they offer are proportioned to the interior lights and the ideas God grants them at the time. At other times, feeling that they are unable to give sufficient praise and love, they remain in silent and loving quietude, their intellects overpowered and captivated by the greatness of such mysteries and their wills occupied solely with love.

The soul that loves Mary, at times experiences the greatest sweetness in hearing, pronouncing, writing or thinking of the most sweet name of Mary. In its rejoicing and exultation such a soul then offers its heart to her maternal hands that it may there be cleansed of all that displeases God or her. Accompanying this offering there are innocent outpourings of love for her; and, as the saying is, “a soul dwells more completely where it loves than where it lives.” Such a soul seems to be more in Mary, as one with God, than where it naturally lives, since it so sincerely and tenderly loves Mary in God. Thus it lives lovingly in Mary and in God. It is in this sense that we must understand the fruition of Mary in the soul, the melting of the soul in Mary, the union of the soul with Mary, or even transformation into Mary. For love tends to make the soul like the object of its love. Experience teaches that even sense or carnal love has its operations in everything sensible and carnal.

Chapter 12

SINCE IT PROCEEDS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE MARIAN LIFE IN MARY AND FOR MARY, LIKE THE DIVINE LIFE IN GOD AND FOR GOD, CAN BE PRACTISED WITH GREAT SIMPLICITY AND ESPECIALLY IN THE DEEP RECOLLECTION OF PRAYER; THEN GOD, MARY AND THE SOUL SEEM TO BE ONE (A MATTER NOT WELL UNDERSTOOD BY SOME MYSTICS, BUT MANY SAINTS HAVE EXPERIENCED IT).

SOULS that Love Mary sometimes find that this Marian life *in, for and by Mary* and, at the same time, *in for and by God* can be practised with well nigh the same simplicity, intimacy and abstraction of soul as with the simple Divinity alone. When the Marian life reaches this degree of spirituality, the soul retains practically no sensible images of the person of Mary; but, in simplicity of spirit it beholds her so united to God that she and God blend into one and become one simple object of contemplation and love.

The memory, intellect and will are then so quietly, simply and spiritually occupied with Mary and God that the soul cannot say what kind of operations are taking place within it or how they take place. It knows well, however, and confusedly perceives, that the memory is occupied in a very simple remembrance of God and Mary; that the intellect is taken up with a clear and pure knowledge of God's presence in it and of Mary in God; and that the will is possessed of a most tranquil, deep, sweet, tender and spiritual love for God and for Mary in God, and a loving adherence to God and to Mary in God.

I say "with a spiritual love," for then especially does love seem to burst into flame and act in the superior part of the soul quite independently of the lower part or sense faculties and is therefore more prepared for an intimate fusion with and absorption in God and in Mary, and for union with them. For when the faculties of the soul are so nobly and perfectly engaged in the remembrance, knowledge and love of God and of Mary in God, there follows such a deep and firm adherence of the whole soul to God and Mary, that through a loving liquefaction or inflow of love into the soul, the soul seems to become one with God and Mary, as though God, Mary and the soul had blended into one. This state seems to be the last and the highest the soul can reach in the Marian life; it is the principal effect of this exercise and of the spirit of love for Mary.

The exercise of this devotion forms no impediment to the higher spiritual life, but it rather a help to it. Indeed, Mary becomes a means and a more perfect bond of union between the soul and God; she leads the soul on and assists it to embrace the contemplative, unitive and transformative life and to continue in it with more stability,

constancy and perfection. However, there are some mystics and contemplatives who do not assent to this doctrine but believe the Marian life in Mary to be an impediment to the most perfect union with God, to the mystical life, etc. They imagine it to be elementary, characterized by activity and multiplicity and do not perceive that it is practised in a most simple, direct and spiritual way, with a turning to God under the hidden action and direction of the Holy Spirit in the soul.

Although this contemplation of Mary and these tender affections and other acts of love for Mary often seem to involve the sense-faculties and their acts, nevertheless, when they are spontaneously elicited from within through the operation and direction of the Holy Spirit, they place no hindrance to the direct approach to and union with the *Summum Bonum*, the simple Essence of God. In fact, this contemplation of Mary enables the soul to be more readily attracted to God and more steadily occupied with Him. I add that, "All these things are wrought in the soul by one and the same Holy Spirit," Who is the Author of this Marian life which ultimately terminates in a perfectly mystical life.

All the foregoing will cause no wonder if we consider the lives of those Saints who excelled in the mystical life and who were carried away by a most tender love for this beloved Mother even in their raptures and ecstasies. Certainly, they knew how to exercise this love without any imperfection and to remain at the same time totally absorbed in their union with God. Such souls are moved and guided by the Holy Spirit; as, for example, were St. Bernard, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi and many others. The above mentioned mystics, who do not assent to this doctrine, should carefully weigh these facts before they pass judgment on the Marian life.

Chapter 13

JUST AS THE SPIRIT PRODUCES IN THE SOUL A LOVE FOR OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, SO ALSO DOES IT PRODUCE A LOVE FOR OUR BLESSED MOTHER, AS HE HAD HIMSELF. IT CAUSES THE SOUL TO LIVE DIVINELY IN GOD AND FOR GOD AND, AT THE SAME TIME, MARIANLY IN MARY AND FOR MARY WITHOUT ANY HINDRANCE TO PERFECT MYSTICAL UNION.

THE WORDS of the Apostle shed further light on this subject: "Because you are the sons of God, God sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying 'Abba, Father.'" By this we understand that the Spirit of Jesus remains in the sons of God, producing in them according to their capacity a tender love for God the Father. But the Spirit of Jesus that produces in Him a filial love for the Eternal Father, produces in Him also filial affections and tender embraces and

others acts of love for His dear Mother as it will do for all eternity. Should it, therefore, be a cause of wonder if the Spirit of Jesus who cries out in the hearts of the sons of God, "Abba, Father," and produces tender affections of love for the Father of Jesus, should also cry out in these same hearts, "Hail, Mother!," effecting in them a filial love, reverence and tenderness for their loving Mother, bringing them to converse with her and to manifest their love for her in a thousand ways? Such was its action in Jesus during life, and such it will be throughout eternity.

Therefore, it is permissible to say to souls that love Mary: "Because you are sons of Mary, God sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying 'Hail Mother!'" ; that is, the Spirit of the Son of God arouses in them filial affections, loving attractions, childlike approaches, innocent and tender embraces, and all other manifestations of love toward Mary as to the most loving and most exalted of Mothers. For, it is one and the same Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, that effects all things in these souls, namely, their Divine love and their Marian love, without either being a hindrance to the other. Consequently, just as such souls live a divine life through the love of God, so also, through the same love, they live a Marian life in Mary and for Mary. It is one and the same Spirit that brings about these like effects in the soul; it is the same Spirit of Jesus that causes them to love God the Father and the Virgin Mother, and to live in God and in Mary. Simply note how this was effected in Jesus without any detriment to His unspeakable perfection, and one will easily perceive how it can occur in the sons of Mary without any detriment to their contemplative life or their perfection.

This seems to be quite understandable. For, where the Spirit of Christ lives and dwells, should there be any wonder that He should cause divers operations in the souls, producing contemplation and love of God as well as contemplation and love of Mary, and many other acts? One and the same Spirit causes all this in the soul as He wills and according to the soul's capacity. Therefore, let no one be astonished, for these things have really taken place in certain souls.

Chapter 14

THE SPIRIT OF MARY TAKES POSSESSION OF CERTAIN SOULS, GUIDES, VIVIFIES AND ACTS IN THEM. SUCH SOULS THEN LIVE BY THE SPIRIT OF MARY; THEIR LIFE IS MARY'S, FOR THEY ARE ONE WITH MARY.

IT SEEMS that some children of Mary, either through the habit of constantly thinking of her as a loving Mother or through the frequent, loving operation and direction of the Spirit of Jesus in them

toward this most sweet Mother, gradually find themselves governed, fashioned, possessed and animated by her spirit, so that, like her most dear children, they seem to be trained to make her character their own, to put on her spirit. In this sense, we may say that they are transformed into Mary, that her spirit dwells in them and there effects all things.

All this may be explained thus. Without a doubt the Spirit of Jesus possessed and vivified the soul of Mary and worked in it in an unspeakably more perfect manner than in any other soul. It was the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in her that performed all her actions without encountering any lack of cooperation, so that the Spirit of Jesus by her most faithful cooperation became her spirit, of which she says, "My Spirit is sweeter than honey." This Spirit produced in her all forms of virtue and performed all things in her and with her.

When Mary deigns to fashion the souls of her favorite children, she procures for them her spirit; that is, the Spirit of Jesus which forms in them her virtues, her character, her mode of action and her attractions. Thus it happens that they seem to be transformed into Mary, and that the spirit of Mary lives in them, or rather, the Spirit of Jesus lives and works in them as it did in Mary. But why wonder that these beloved children should become one spirit with their amiable Mother and put on the traits of her character? This assimilation is natural for devoted children and is desired by every mother.

It is then that the life of Mary which is one with the life of Jesus, manifests itself in them. And just as the Apostle could say: "I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me," that is, the Spirit of Christ lives in me, so too, these souls can say, "I live, now not I, but Mary lives in me." All that is opposed to her spirit is blotted out in them, and all that is in harmony with it dwells within them. Moreover, the spirit of Mary, in the sense explained, seems to guide, possess and animate them, as though the spirit of Mary and the Spirit of Jesus, are one and the same Spirit of Jesus and Mary, wrought all their works in them, just as it animated and directed Mary and produced all her works in her. In this sense they no longer live, but Mary lives in them, acting upon their faculties, directing, guiding, and causing them to live in a new way in God. Thus, for them to live is to live for Mary whom they rightly salute, "Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope!"

Let this suffice to instruct pious souls in the Godlike and divine life in and for God, and, at the same time, the Marian life in and for Mary. May He Who, through the intercession of His most loving Mother, implanted the desire in our hearts, deign also to perfect in us this Marian life. Jesus blessed forever. Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. SIMON STOCK

Known as the FLOS CARMELI, the following prayer has for seven centuries been called a prayer to the Blessed Mother which has never been known to fail in obtaining her powerful help. In answer to it, on July 16, 1251, Our Lady appeared to St. Simon Stock giving him the Brown Scapular saying: "Whoever dies wearing this Scapular shall not suffer eternal fire."

Again, at Fatima on October 13, 1917, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel appeared to the children of Fatima holding the Scapular: she said nothing but Lucy later stated that she wants everyone to wear the Scapular as a perfect SIGN OF CONSECRATION TO HER IMMACULATE HEART.

PRAYER

O BEAUTIFUL FLOWER OF CARMEL, MOST FRUITFUL VINE, SPLENDOR OF HEAVEN, HOLY AND SINGULAR, WHO BROUGHT FORTH THE SON OF GOD, STILL EVER REMAINING A PURE VIRGIN, ASSIST ME IN THIS NECESSITY. O STAR OF THE SEA, HELP AND PROTECT ME! SHOW ME THAT THOU ART MY MOTHER.

O Mary, conceived without sin,

Pray for us who have recourse to thee!

Mother and Ornament of Carmel, Pray for us!

Virgin, Flower of Carmel, Pray for us!

Patroness of all who wear the Scapular, Pray for us!

Hope of all who die wearing the Scapular, Pray for us!

St. Joseph, Friend of the Sacred Heart, Pray for us!

St. Joseph, Chaste Spouse of Mary, Pray for us!

St. Joseph, Our Patron, Pray for us!

O Sweet Heart of Mary, Be our salvation!

ACT OF CONSECRATION TO OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

O Mary, Queen and Mother of Carmel, I come today to consecrate myself to Thee, for my whole life is but a small return for the many graces and blessings that have come from God to me through Thy hands. Since Thou regardest with an eye of special kindness those who wear Thy Scapular I implore Thee to strengthen my weakness with Thy power, to enlighten the darkness of my mind with Thy wisdom, to increase in me faith, hope and charity that I may render, day by day, my debt of humble homage to Thee.

May Thy Scapular keep Thine eyes of mercy turned towards me and bring me Thy special protection in the daily struggle to be faithful to Thy Divine Son and to Thee. May it separate me from all that is sinful in life and remind me constantly of my duty to behold Thee and clothe myself with Thy virtues. From henceforth I shall strive to live in the sweet companionship of Thy spirit, to offer all to Jesus through Thee and to make my life the mirror of Thy humility, charity, patience, meekness and prayerfulness.

O dearest Mother, support me, by Thy never-failing love that I, an unworthy sinner, may come one day to exchange Thy Scapular for the wedding Garment of heaven and dwell with Thee and the saints of Carmel in the kingdom of Thy Son. Amen.

300 days indulgence each time, plenary indulgence once a month, for those who wear the Scapular.