

Talk 3 Motives which Recommend this Devotion, self- knowledge

1. Movement from purifying your heart to Self knowledge,

Whole series purifying, self-knowledge, praying for Wisdom, to knowledge of Mary that leads one to knowledge of Jesus

2. Jacob and Esau in relation Rebecca

Esau was the symbol of those who are too ready to imagine that there is an alliance between God and the world, because they themselves are eager to enjoy, at one and the same time, the blessings of heaven and the blessings of the earth. Isaac was touched by Esau's cries and finally blessed him only with a blessing of the earth, and he subjected him to his brother. Because of this, Esau conceived such a venomous hatred for Jacob that he could hardly wait for his father's death to kill him. And Jacob would not have escaped death if his dear mother Rebecca had not saved him by her ingenuity and her good advice. #184

ESAU AS TYPE

Esau is the type of souls who are condemned. We have only to examine the actions and conduct of both in order to judge each one.

(1) Esau, the elder brother, was strong and robust, clever, and skillful with the bow and very successful at hunting.

(2) He seldom stayed at home and, relying only on his own strength and skill, worked out of doors.

(3) He never went out of his way to please his mother Rebecca, and did little or nothing for her. (4) He was such a glutton and so fond of eating that he sold his birthright for a dish of lentils.

(5) Like Cain, he was extremely jealous of his brother and persecuted him relentlessly.

186. This is the usual conduct of sinners:

(1) They rely upon their own strength and skill in temporal affairs. They are very energetic, clever and well-informed about things of this world but very dull and ignorant about things of heaven.

187. (2) And they are never or very seldom at home, in their own house, that is, in their own interior, the inner, essential abode that God has given to every man to dwell in, after his own example, for God always abides within himself. Sinners have no liking for solitude or the spiritual life or interior devotion. They consider those who live an interior life, secluded from the world, and who work more interiorly than exteriorly, as narrow-minded, bigoted and uncivilized.

188. (3) Sinners care little or nothing about devotion to Mary, the Mother of the elect. It is true that they do not really hate her. Indeed they even speak well of her sometimes. They say they love her and they practise some devotion in her honour. Nevertheless, they cannot bear to see anyone love her tenderly, for they do not have for her any of the affection of Jacob; they find fault with the honour which her good children and servants faithfully pay her to win her affection. They think this kind of devotion is not necessary for salvation, and as long as they do not go as far as hating her or openly ridiculing devotion to her they believe they have done all they need to win her good graces. Because they recite or mumble a few prayers to her without any affection and without even thinking of amending their lives, they consider they are our Lady's servants.

189. (4) Sinners sell their birthright, that is, the joys of paradise, for a dish of lentils, that is, the pleasures of this world. They laugh, they drink, they eat, they have a good time, they gamble, they dance and so forth, without taking any more trouble than Esau to make themselves worthy of their heavenly Father's blessing. Briefly, they think only of this world, love only the world, speak and act only for the world and its pleasures. For a passing moment of pleasure, for a fleeting wisp of honour, for a piece of hard earth, yellow or white, they barter away their baptismal grace, their robe of innocence and their heavenly inheritance.

190. (5) Finally, sinners continually hate and persecute the elect, openly and secretly. The elect are a burden to them. They despise them, criticise them, ridicule them, insult them, rob them, deceive them, impoverish them, hunt them down and

trample them into the dust; while they themselves are making fortunes, enjoying themselves, getting good positions for themselves, enriching themselves, rising to power and living in comfort.

Jacob as a type

Jacob, the younger son, was of a frail constitution, gentle and peaceable and usually stayed at home to please his mother, whom he loved so much...

192. He loved and honoured his mother...

193. He was submissive to his mother in all things. He obeyed her entirely in everything, promptly without delay and lovingly without complaint...

194. He had the utmost confidence in his mother. He did not rely on his own ability; he relied solely on his mother's care and protection. He went to her in all his needs and consulted her in all his doubts. ...

195. Finally, he adopted, as much as he could, the virtues he saw in his mother. It seems that one of the reasons why he spent so much time at home was to imitate his dear mother, who was so virtuous, and to keep away from evil companions - who might lead him into sin...

196. It is in a similar manner that God's chosen ones usually act. They stay at home with their mother - that is, they have an esteem for quietness, love the interior life, and are assiduous in prayer. They always remain in the company of the Blessed Virgin, their Mother and Model, whose glory is wholly interior and who during her whole life dearly loved seclusion and prayer. ...

No matter how great their accomplishments may appear to others, they attach far more importance to what they do within themselves in their interior life, in the company of the Blessed Virgin.

3. to pray for Wisdom,

Means to attain Wisdom

First Means

Children of men, how long will your hearts remain heavy and earthbound? How long will you go on loving vain things and seeking what is false?"O Why do you not turn your eyes and your hearts towards divine Wisdom who is supremely desirable and who, to attract our love, makes known his origin, shows his beauty, displays his riches, and testifies in a thousand ways how eager he is that we should desire him and seek him. "" "Be desirous, therefore, of hearing my words,""" he tells us. "Wisdom anticipates those who want her. "" The desire of Wisdom leads to the everlasting kingdom."

Second Means

The greater the gift of God, the more effort is required to obtain it. Much prayer and great effort, therefore, will be required to obtain the gift of Wisdom, which is the greatest of all God's gifts, Let us listen to the voice of Wisdom himself: "Seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you, ask and it shall be given you. ""² It is as if he said: If you wish to find me, you must seek me; if you wish to enter my palace, you must knock at my door; if you wish to receive me, you must ask for me. Nobody finds me unless he searches for me; nobody enters my house unless he knocks at my door; nobody possesses me unless he asks for me.

We can only do this by prayer. Prayer is the usual channel by which God conveys his gifts, especially his Wisdom. The world was asking for the incarnation of divine Wisdom for four thousand years. For fourteen years Mary prepared herself by prayer to receive

him in her womb." Solomon received Wisdom only after praying most fervently for a long time:

"I went to the Lord and besought him, and I said with all my heart;" " ... Give me that Wisdom that sits by your throne." "If any of you lacks wisdom let him ask God, and it shall be given him, for God gives his gifts to all men abundantly and ungrudgingly."

How?

First we should pray for this gift with a strong and lively faith, not wavering, because he who wavers in his faith must not expect to receive any gift from the Lord." 186

Secondly, we must pray for it with a pure faith, not counting on consolations, visions or special revelation....

Thirdly, we must pray perseveringly to obtain this Wisdom."

Third Means Universal Mortification

The Holy Spirit tells us that wisdom is not found in the hearts of those who live in comfort, "gratifying their passions and bodily desires, because "they who are of the flesh cannot please God," and "the Wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God." "My spirit will not remain in man, because he is flesh."

All those who belong to Christ, incarnate Wisdom, have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. They always bear about in their bodies the dying of Jesus. They continually do violence to themselves, carry their cross daily. They are dead and indeed buried... with Christ....

We must not follow the showy fashions of the world in our dress, our furniture, or our dwellings. Neither must we indulge in sumptuous meals or other worldly habits and ways of living. “Be not conformed to this world.” Putting this into practice is more necessary than is generally thought. We must not believe or follow the false maxims of the world or think, speak or act like people of the world. Their doctrine is as opposed to that of incarnate Wisdom as darkness is to light, and death to life. Look closely at their opinions and their words: they think and speak disparagingly of all the great truths of our religion.

True, they do not tell brazen lies, but they cover their falsehood with an appearance of truth; they do not think they are being untruthful, but they lie nonetheless. In general, they do not teach sin openly, but they speak of it as if it were virtuous, or blameless, or a matter of indifference and of little consequence....

If we would possess Wisdom we must mortify the body, not only by enduring patiently our bodily ailments, the inconveniences of the weather and the difficulties arising from other people’s actions, but also by deliberately undertaking some penances and mortifications, such as fasts, vigils and other austerities practiced by holy penitents.

Fourth Means: A Loving and Genuine Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

Mary is also mistress of divine Wisdom. Not that she is above him who is truly God, or even equal to him. To think or say such a thing would be blasphemous. But because the Son of God, Eternal Wisdom, by making himself entirely subject to her as his Mother, gave her a maternal and natural authority over himself which surpasses our understanding. He not only gave her this power while he lived on earth but still gives it now in heaven, because glory does not destroy nature but makes it more perfect. And so in heaven Jesus is as much as ever the Son of Mary, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

As his Mother, Mary has authority over Jesus, who because he wills it, remains in a sense subject to her. This means that Mary by her powerful prayers and because she is the Mother of God, obtains from Jesus all she wishes. It means that she gives him to whom she decides, and produces him every day in the souls of those she chooses.

Happy are those who have won Mary's favors! They can rest assured that they will soon possess divine Wisdom, for as she loves those who love her," she generously shares her blessings with them, including that infinite treasure which contains every good, Jesus, the fruit of her womb.

4. This devotion leads one to knowledge of Jesus through Mary

“We can conceive of no higher calling than that of being in the service of God and we believe that the least of God's servants is richer, stronger, and nobler than any earthly monarch who does not serve God.” #135

“But this devotion makes us give Jesus and Mary all our thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings and every moment of our lives without exception.” #136

Imitation of Christ

“Consumed with the desire to give glory to God, his Father, and save the human race, he saw no better or shorter way to do so than by submitting completely to Mary.

He did this not just for the first eight, ten or fifteen years of his life like other children, but for thirty years. He gave more glory to God, his Father, during all those years of submission and dependence than he would have given by spending them working miracles, preaching far and wide, and converting all mankind. Otherwise he would have done all these things.

What immeasurable glory then do we give to God when, following the example of Jesus, we submit to Mary! With such a convincing and well-known example before us, can we be so foolish as to believe that there is a better and shorter way of giving God glory than by submitting ourselves to Mary, as Jesus did?" #139

Humility

"Moreover, this devotion is an expression of great humility, a virtue which God loves above all others. A person who exalts himself debases God, and a person who humbles himself exalts God. "God opposes the proud, but gives his graces to the humble." #143

It obtains many blessings from Our Lady

"This produces in his soul, if he is persevering, a great distrust, contempt, and hatred of self, and a great confidence in Mary with complete self-abandonment to her. He no longer relies on his own dispositions, intentions, merits, virtues and good works, since he has sacrificed them completely to Jesus through his loving Mother. He has now only one treasury, where all his wealth is stored. That treasury is not within himself: it is Mary." #145

"Since by this devotion we give to our Lord, through the hands of his holy Mother, all our good works, she purifies them, making them beautiful and acceptable to her Son." #146

"She enriches our good works by adorning them with her own merits and virtues. It is as if a poor peasant, wishing to win the friendship and favour of the king, were to go the queen and give her an apple - his only possession - for her to offer it to the king. The queen, accepting the peasant's humble gift, puts it on a beautiful golden dish and presents it to the king on behalf of the peasant. The apple in itself would not be a gift worthy of a king, but presented by the queen in person on a dish of gold, it becomes fit for any king." # 147.

Brings us closer to Jesus

This devotion is a short way to discover Jesus, either because it is a road we do not wander from, or because, as we have just said, we walk along this road with greater ease and joy, and consequently with greater speed. We advance more in a brief period of submission to Mary and dependence on her than in whole years of self-will and self-reliance. A man who is obedient and submissive to Mary will sing of glorious victories over his enemies. It is true, his enemies will try to impede his progress, force him to retreat or try to make him fall. But with Mary's help, support and guidance, he will go forward towards our Lord. Without falling, retreating and even without being delayed, he will advance with giant strides towards Jesus along the same road which, as it is written, Jesus took to come to us with giant strides and in a short time. # 155.

Why do you think our Lord spent only a few years here on earth and nearly all of them in submission and obedience to his Mother? The reason is that "attaining perfection in a short time, he lived a long time", even longer than Adam, whose losses he had come to make good. Yet Adam lived more than nine hundred years!

Jesus lived a long time, because he lived in complete submission to his Mother and in union with her, which obedience to his Father required. # 156.

Should not worry about losing our merit

Blessed, indeed, are those Christians who bind themselves faithfully and completely to her as to a secure anchor! The violent storms of the world will not make them founder or carry away their heavenly riches. Blessed are those who enter into her as into another Noah's ark! #175

But nothing we entrust to the faithful Virgin will ever be lost through her negligence. Heaven and earth would pass away sooner than Mary would neglect or betray those who trusted in her. #176

Sure protection under Mary

So the faithful servants of the Blessed Virgin may confidently say with St. John Damascene, "If I confide in you, Mother of God, I shall be saved. Under your protection I shall fear nothing. With your help I shall rout all my enemies. For devotion to you is a weapon of salvation which God gives to those he wishes to save." #182