

## CHAPTER ONE

# Historical Forms

While it seems indisputable that Pope Saint John Paul II gave enormous impetus to the promotion of consecration or entrustment to Mary from the outset of his pontificate to its conclusion, it is equally clear that this practice is very ancient in the Church. Further on in this study, we will consider the Scriptural bases for this practice so deeply rooted in the Church; but for the moment, let us look at some of its principal expressions in the life of the Church.

### *The Patristic Period*

It does not seem presumptuous to see the first adumbrations of the tradition, which would come to be known as Marian consecration in the Church in the most ancient recorded prayer to the Mother of God, the *Sub tuum praesidium*.<sup>1</sup> Up until the early last century, this prayer, which was known to exist in all of the liturgical families in the Church, was thought to be medieval.

<sup>1</sup> Discovered in 1917, an Egyptian papyrus now kept in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England contains the text of this Marian prayer, which makes it the oldest invocation of the Mother of God which has thus far been found. Cf. Gerard S. Sloyan, "Marian Prayers," *Mariology* 3:64–68; I. Calabuig, O.S.M., "Liturgia," *NDM* 778–779; Théodore Koehler, S.M., "Maternité Spirituelle, Maternité Mystique," in *Maria* VI:571–574; Gabriele Gamberardini, O.F.M., *Il culto mariano in Egitto*, Vol. I: *Secoli I-VI* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1975) 69–97; Achille M. Triacca, "Sub tuum praesidium: nella lex orandi un'anticipata presenza della lex credendi. La teotologia precede la mariologia?" in *La mariologia nella catechesi dei Padri (età prenicena)*, ed. Sergio Felici (Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano "Biblioteca di Scienza Religiosa," no. 88, 1989) 183–205; R. Iacoangeli, "Sub tuum praesidium. La più antica preghiera mariana: filologia e fede," *ibid.* 207–40; Mother M. Francesca Perillo, F.I., "Sub Tuum Praesidium: Incomparable Marian Praeconium," in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross – IV: Acts of the Fourth International Symposium on Marian Coredeemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2004) 138–169.

Subsequently, it was discovered in Greek on an Egyptian papyrus dating from the third or fourth century. It is the filial prayer of Christians who know Mary's motherly mercy (*eusplangchnía* in the Greek text) and, therefore, do not hesitate to have recourse to her protection (*praesidium* in the Latin text). If it does not speak directly of belonging to Mary, it speaks of finding refuge under her protection.

The late redoubtable Marian researcher, Father Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp. (1911–2004), renders this ancient and venerable prayer according to the reconstruction of Father Gabriele Giamberardini, O.F.M.: “Under your mercy, we take refuge, Mother of God, do not reject our supplications in necessity. But deliver us from danger. [You] alone chaste, alone blessed.”<sup>2</sup> This Marian troparion, used in almost all the Rites of the Church and cited in the Marian chapter of *Lumen Gentium*,<sup>3</sup> is ordinarily rendered into English after the Latin version: “We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all danger, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin.”<sup>4</sup>

This ancient Marian invocation is of capital importance from many perspectives. First, it constitutes a remarkable witness to the fact that prayer was already explicitly addressed to Mary as *Theotókos* or “Mother of God” long before the Council of Ephesus, which vindicated the use of this title in 431. Secondly, it may well reflect an oral tradition even older than the third century, the era from which many scholars believe the Egyptian papyrus dates, going all the way back to the apostolic period. Thirdly, while this antiphon (called a “troparion” according to Byzantine liturgical usage) does not explicitly call Mary “our Mother,” it does so in equivalent and very expressive terms.

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<sup>2</sup> *Theotokos* 336.

<sup>3</sup> *LG* #6.

<sup>4</sup> *Theotokos* 336.

About this justly famous and most ancient of Marian prayers, Father Quéméneur makes this careful observation:

Here we do not yet have a consecration properly so called, but we already discern the fundamental elements that characterize Marian consecrations. The *Sub tuum* recognizes the patronage of the Mother of God; it is a spontaneous gesture of recourse to Mary. Originating in Egypt, the *Sub tuum*, with slight variations, will soon be taken up by the other churches; starting with the sixth century, it is inserted into the Byzantine, Ambrosian, and Roman liturgies. We can say that it is the root from which the formulas of other Marian prayers will arise.<sup>5</sup>

It is in the light of the biblical connotation of the Greek root, *euspla* – <sup>6</sup> that the late Father Jean-Marie Salgado, O.M.I. did not hesitate to translate the beginning of the *Sub tuum*: “We take refuge in your merciful heart” or “We have recourse to your merciful heart.” It seems highly significant that the living tradition of the Church testified to by its early liturgies in both East and West provides further support for rendering *euspla*[*gchnian*] as heart.<sup>7</sup> If such a rendition of this prayer can be justified—and I believe that the whole tradition seen in its remarkable continuity may well bear this out—then it would seem that the *Sub tuum* provides a foundation not only for consecration to Mary, but even more specifically for consecration to her Immaculate Heart.

Significantly, and very conscious that he was standing in the most ancient stream of the Church’s tradition, Saint John Paul II framed the first part of his great acts of entrustment in 1982

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<sup>5</sup> M. Quéméneur, S.M.M., “Towards a History of Marian Consecration,” trans. Bro. William Fackovec, S.M. *Marian Library Studies* 122 (March 1966) 4. (This excellent article originally appeared as “La consécration de soi à la Vierge à travers l’histoire,” *Cahiers Marials* no. 14 [1959] 119–28.)

<sup>6</sup> The remainder of the word is missing on the papyrus.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. K. Koester’s article “*splángchnon*, *splangchnízomai*, *’eúsplangchnos*” in Gerhard Friedrich (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971) 548–57; and Jean-Marie Salgado, O.M.I., “Aux Origines de la Découverte des Richesses du Cœur Immaculé de Marie: Du III<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> Siècle,” *Divinitas* 31 (1987) 187–188, 229–232.

and 1984 with the words of this antiphon: “We have recourse to your protection, holy Mother of God.”<sup>8</sup> Likewise for the Sixth International World Youth Day celebrated at Częstochowa on the Solemnity of the Assumption in 1991, he began the act of entrustment to Our Lady with the first Latin words of the *Sub tuum* and recited the entire Latin text in the course of the prayer.<sup>9</sup> Also on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in 1991, at the traditional ceremony in the Piazza di Spagna, he invoked Our Lady saying: “Under your protection we take refuge once again, at the end of this year, this century, this millennium.”<sup>10</sup>

He further alluded to or quoted this ancient prayer on numerous other occasions: in a Regina Caeli address in 1982,<sup>11</sup> in his Marian Encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*,<sup>12</sup> and quoted from it in the final paragraph of his Encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*.<sup>13</sup> He referred to it in his commentary on the doctrine of the *Theotokos* in the course of his Christological catecheses,<sup>14</sup> and made it his own prayer for various groups upon whom he had invoked Our Lady’s protection in 1988.<sup>15</sup> He quoted it in a meditation for the Italian Bishops, which he wrote from the Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome on 13 May 1994,<sup>16</sup> in his Angelus

<sup>8</sup> *Inseg* V/2 (1982) 1586, 1587 [ORE 735:5, 12]; *Inseg* VII/1 (1984) 774, 775. He also utilized the words “we take refuge under your protection” in the Act of Entrustment of Colombia to Mary on 3 July 1986, *Inseg* IX/2 (1986) 93 [ORE 948:5].

<sup>9</sup> *Inseg* XIV/2 (1991) 257–259 [ORE 1204:7].

<sup>10</sup> *Inseg* XIV/2 (1991) 1345 [ORE 1220:5]. On that occasion the Pope prayed: “*Sotto la Tua protezione ci rifugiamo ...*” which is almost exactly the same as the beginning of the ancient prayer in the standard Italian translation: “*Sotto la tua protezione cerchiamo rifugio...*”

<sup>11</sup> *Inseg* VI/1 (1983) 1057 [ORE 782:2].

<sup>12</sup> *Inseg* X/1 (1987) 717 [St. Paul edition 45].

<sup>13</sup> *Inseg* X/3 (1987) 1611–12 [ORE 1028:13].

<sup>14</sup> *Inseg* XI/1 (1988) 642 [ORE 1031:1].

<sup>15</sup> To a group of clergy from Novara on 11 March 1988, *Inseg* XI/1 (1988) 615 [ORE 1032:10]; to the youth of Bolivia in Cochabamba on 11 May 1988, *Inseg* XI/2 (1988) 1321 [ORE 1043:13]; on the occasion of the *Moleben* in honor of the Mother of God during the celebration of the Millennium of Christianity in Ukraine on 9 July 1988, *Inseg* XI/3 (1988) 64 [ORE 1051:4].

<sup>16</sup> *Inseg* XVII/1 (1994) 1063 [ORE 1343:4].

address of New Year's Day 1996,<sup>17</sup> in his Angelus address of 14 August 1996,<sup>18</sup> in his homily at Vespers on 7 November 1996;<sup>19</sup> and in his general audience address of 27 November 1996, he quoted this classic Marian prayer in the context of entrustment to the Mother of God:

Already in the third century, as can be deduced from an ancient written witness, the Christians of Egypt addressed this prayer to Mary: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God: despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all evil, O glorious and blessed Virgin" (from the *Liturgy of the Hours*).

Following the example of the ancient Christians of Egypt, let the faithful entrust themselves to her who, being the Mother of God, can obtain from her divine Son the grace of deliverance from evil and of eternal salvation.<sup>20</sup>

In 1997, he would explicitly cite the prayer twice in the course of his general audience catecheses on Our Lady: on 24 September 1997<sup>21</sup> and on 5 November of the same year.<sup>22</sup> In his address to Catholic Patriarchs of the East on 29 September 1998, he introduced this prayer as "an ancient Coptic hymn, which later became part of the devotion of the Byzantine and Latin Churches";<sup>23</sup> and in #14 of *Incarnationis Mysterium*, his Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee Year of 2000 on 29 November 1998, he made a clear allusion to it.<sup>24</sup> On 16 June 1999, in his hometown of Wadowice, he used the ancient prayer as a framework for his own as he had done at Częstochowa on the Solemnity of the Assumption in 1991:<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Inseg XIX/1* (1996) 6 [ORE 1423:3].

<sup>18</sup> *Inseg XIX/2* (1996) 172 [ORE 1454:2].

<sup>19</sup> *Inseg XIX/2* (1996) 654 ORE [1466:3].

<sup>20</sup> *Inseg XIX/2* (1996) 762, 764 [ORE 1469:11].

<sup>21</sup> *Inseg XX/2* (1997) 382–383 [ORE 1510:11].

<sup>22</sup> *Inseg XX/2* (1997) 737 [ORE 1516:11].

<sup>23</sup> *Inseg XXI/2* (1998) 593 [ORE 1561:4].

<sup>24</sup> *Inseg XXI/2* (1998) 1117 [ORE 1569:4].

<sup>25</sup> *Inseg XIV/2* (1991) 257–259 [ORE 1204:7].

*Sub tuum praesidium ...*

We fly to your protection, O Mary. To your protection we entrust the history of this town, of the Church of Kraków and the whole country. To your maternal love we entrust the lives of each individual, of our families and of society as a whole. *Despise not our petitions in our need, but deliver us always from every danger.* Mary, obtain for us the grace of faith, hope and love, so that following your example and guidance, we may carry into the new millennium our witness to the Father's love, to the redeeming Death and Resurrection of the Son and to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Be with us at all times! *O glorious and blessed Virgin, Our Lady, Our Advocate, Our Mediatrix, Our Consolatrix, Our Mother!* Amen.<sup>26</sup>

In his Jubilee pilgrimage to St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai on 26 February 2000, the Pope made mention of this ancient prayer, stating: "As early as the third century Egyptian Christians appealed to her with words of trust: We have recourse to your protection, O Holy Mother of God! *Sub tuum praesidium confugimus, sancta Dei Genetrix!*"<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, in his Jubilee Act of Entrustment united with the Bishops of the World, of whom a good number were present with him on 8 October 2000, he prayed:

Here, then, are your children, gathered before you at the dawn of the new millennium. The Church today, through the voice of the Successor Peter, in union with so many Pastors assembled here from every corner of the world, *seeks refuge in your motherly protection* and trustingly begs your intercession as she faces the challenges, which lie hidden in the future.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Inseg* XXII/1 (1999) 1395 [ORE 1599:8].

<sup>27</sup> *Inseg* XXIII/1 (2000) 269 [ORE 1632:2].

<sup>28</sup> *Inseg* XXIII/2 (2000) 564 [ORE 1663:7] (italics my own).

In his New Year's Day homily of 2001, he quoted the famous prayer again with this preface: "On this first day of 2001, we entrust to you the expectations and hopes of all humanity."<sup>29</sup>

John Paul II's last recorded reference to this prayer occurred on the liturgical memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes in 2004, the World Day of the Sick, which he himself had inaugurated. As one bent under extreme infirmity, he prayed:

"*Sub tuum praesidium ...*," as we prayed at the beginning of our meeting. "Under your protection we seek refuge," Immaculate Virgin of Lourdes, who present yourself to us as the perfect model of creation according to God's original plan. To you we entrust the sick, the elderly, the lonely: soothe their pain, dry their tears and obtain for each one the strength they need to do God's will.<sup>30</sup>

From all of these texts, it may be seen how Saint John Paul II had integrated this venerable Marian antiphon into his own spirituality and frequently employed it as a way of putting himself and others into the hands of the Mother of God.

If the *Sub tuum praesidium* testifies to the Christian's child-like tendency to take refuge under the protection of the *Theotókos*, history will illustrate this truth many times over in the course of the centuries. The first such recourse of which we are aware that involves an entrustment to the Mother of God was made by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius in 626, according to Saint Germanus of Constantinople. When the city on the Bosphorus was in imminent danger, the Emperor confided it to God and to the Virgin Mother, and it was spared.<sup>31</sup> This is

<sup>29</sup> *Inseg XXIV/1* (2001) 6-7 [ORE 1674:3].

<sup>30</sup> *Inseg XXVII/1* (2004) 175 [ORE 1831:11].

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Angelo Cardinal Mai (ed.), *Nova Patrum Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, *Pars Secunda* (Rome: Typis Sacri Consilii Propagando Christiano Nomini, 1853) 423-437 (esp. nos. 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 16); A. Wenger, "L'Intercession de Marie en Orient," *BSFEM* 23 (1966) 58; J. Marangos, S.J., "Le Culte Marial Populaire en Grèce," in *Maria* 4:810-811; Gabriele Roschini, O.S.M., *Maria Santissima nella Storia della Salvezza* Vol. IV: *Il Culto Mariano* (Isola del Liri: Tipografia Editrice M. Pisani, 1969) 84-85; Stefano De Fiore, *Maria, Nuovissimo Dizionario* 1 (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 2006) 361.

one of several incidents which would lead to the establishment of the Byzantine feast of the Protection of the Holy Mother of God (*Pokrov*) who stretches out her mantle over the peoples;<sup>32</sup> and Father Joseph de Sainte-Marie, O.C.D., did not hesitate to see in this the first known collective Marian consecration in history.<sup>33</sup>

Father O'Carroll informs us that his confrere, Father Henri Barré, C.S.Sp., had found evidence for the title, *servus Mariæ*, in African sermons from the fifth and sixth centuries which indicate a personal attitude of belonging to Mary.<sup>34</sup> Father Stefano De Fiores, S.M.M., also points to the use of this term in Saint Ephrem the Syrian (+ 373) and Pope John VII (+ 707), but indicates that these instances cannot compare to the consistent usage and fervor of Saint Ildephonsus of Toledo (+ 667).<sup>35</sup> Ildephonsus is usually considered the first major representative of the spirituality of "Marian slavery"<sup>36</sup> which eventually develops into what is now known as Marian consecration.<sup>37</sup>

Pope Saint John Paul II himself, in his homily in Saragossa on 6 November 1982, immediately prior to the Entrustment of Spain to Our Lady, reviewed what is for us the most relevant information about this Benedictine Abbot who became the Archbishop of Toledo:

Saint Ildephonsus of Toledo, the most ancient witness of that form of devotion that we call slavery to Mary, justifies our attitude of being slaves of Mary because of the singular

<sup>32</sup> Cf. S. Salaville, A.A., "Marie dans la Liturgie Byzantine ou Gréco-Slave," in *Maria* I:280; cf. also Quéméneur 4 and *Redemptoris Mater* # 33.

<sup>33</sup> *Teologia e Spiritualità della Consacrazione a Maria* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Spiritualità del Teresianum, dispensa, n.d.) I-13.

<sup>34</sup> *Theotokos* 107.

<sup>35</sup> "Cons" 400. Cf. also De Fiores, *Maria, Nuovissimo Dizionario* 1:361-363. In the case of Pope John VII one might profitably consult the testimony presented in Roschini, *Maria Santissima* IV:97-98.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the excellent article by Théodore Koehler, S.M., "Servitude (saint esclavage)" in *DSp* 14:730-745.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Patrick J. Gaffney, S.M.M., "The Holy Slavery of Love," in *Mariology* 3:143-146; Roschini, *Maria Santissima* IV:85-86.

relation she has with respect to Christ. “For this reason I am your slave, because your Son is my Lord. Therefore you are my Lady because you are the slave of my Lord. Therefore, I am the slave of the slave of my Lord, because you have been made the Mother of my Lord. Therefore I have been made a slave because you have been made the Mother of my Maker” [*De virginitate perpetua Sanctæ Mariæ*, 12: *PL* 96, 108].

As is obvious, because of these real and existing relationships between Christ and Mary, Marian devotion has Christ as its ultimate object. The same Saint Ildephonsus saw it with full clarity: “So in this way one refers to the Lord that which serves his slave. So, what is delivered up to the Mother redounds to the Son; thus passes to the King the honor that is rendered in the service of the Queen” [c. 12: *PL* 96, 108]. Then one understands the double employment of the desire expressed in the same blessed formula, speaking with the most Holy Virgin: “Grant that I may surrender myself to God and to you, to be the slave of your Son and of you, to serve your Lord and you” [c. 12: *PL* 96, 105].<sup>38</sup>

The next major witness to the development of the tradition is the great Doctor of the Church, Saint John Damascene (+ c. 750).<sup>39</sup> The last of the great Eastern Fathers of the Church interprets the name of Mary according to Syriac etymology to mean “lady” or “mistress.”<sup>40</sup> In his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* he says of Mary: “Truly she has become the Lady ruler of every creature since she is the Mother of the Creator.”<sup>41</sup> In

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<sup>38</sup> *Inseg* V/3 (1982) 1179–1180 (translation by Debra Duncan).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. De Fiores, *Maria*, *Nuovissimo Dizionario* 1:361.

<sup>40</sup> On the rich background of Syriac mariology of which St. John was the heir cf. Cuthbert Brogan, O.S.B., “Mary and the Eucharist in the Syriac Fathers,” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross – VI: Marian Coredeemption in the Eucharistic Mystery. Acts of the Sixth International Symposium on Marian Coredeemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2007) 95–113.

<sup>41</sup> Cited in Valentine Albert Mitchell, S.M., *The Mariology of Saint John Damascene* (Kirkwood, MO: Maryhurst Normal Press, 1930) 76, cf. also 214.

his first homily on the Dormition of the Mother of God, he consequently prays:

We are present before you, O Lady [*Despoina*], Lady I say and again Lady, binding our souls to our hope in you, and as to a most secure and firm anchor [cf. Heb. 6:9], *to you we consecrate [anathémemoi] our minds, our souls, our bodies* [cf. I Th. 5:23], *in a word, our very selves*, honoring you with psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles [cf. Eph. 5:19], insofar as we are able—even though it is impossible to do so worthily. If truly, as the sacred word has taught us, the honor paid to our fellow servants testifies to our good will towards our common Master, how could we neglect honoring you who have brought forth your Master? ... In this way we can better show our attachment to our Master.

Turn your gaze on us, noble Lady, Mother of the good Master, rule over and direct at your discretion all that concerns us; restrain the impulses of our shameful passions; guide us to the tranquil harbor of the divine will; make us worthy of future blessedness, of the beatific vision in the presence of the Word of God who was made flesh in you.<sup>42</sup>

One notes how, in language which is redolent with Scriptural overtones, Saint John makes the total gift to Our Lady of himself and of those who are joined with him—of all that they have and are. He deliberately used the Greek term *anathémemoi* in order to indicate that “consecration” means “setting aside for sacred use.” What is literally signified, according to the use of this word in Leviticus 27:28 and in other places in the Old Testament, is that this “giving of oneself to Mary” is so exclusive, absolute and permanent that one who would revoke the gift would be “cut off” (i.e., *anathema*) from God and his people. In analyzing this

<sup>42</sup> PG 96, 720C-D, 721A-B; SC 80, 118 (my translation made with reference to *Theotokos* 199 and Georges Gharib et al (ed.), *Testi Mariani del Primo Millennio* Vol. 2: *Padri e altri autori bizantini* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1989) 519–520) (italics mine). It is fascinating that Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort would quote the text on Our Lady as “a most secure and firm anchor” in his *Treatise on True Devotion* #175.

text, Father José María Canal, C.M.F., makes three major points: (1) Damascene's deliberate use of the term "consecration" which pertains to setting aside for sacred use; (2) the comprehensiveness of this act which excludes nothing; and (3) its basis in Mary's unique relationship to her Divine Son by virtue of the Divine Maternity.<sup>43</sup>

### *The Medieval Period*

In the feudal setting of the early Middle Ages we find the custom of "patronage" (*patrocinium*) becoming widespread. In order to protect their lives and possessions, freemen would vow themselves to the service of their overlords; in exchange for the assurance of protection and the necessities of life, the client would place himself completely at the disposal of his protector. Here is a description of a traditional ceremony by which a vassal would put himself under the patronage and at the service of a suzerain, by the well-known liturgical scholar, Josef Jungmann, S.J.:

He put his hands in the enfolding hands of the master, just as is done today by the newly ordained priest when he promises honour and obedience to his bishop at the end of the ordination Mass. The act is also called commendation: *se commendare, se tradere, in manus* or *manibus se commendare (tradere)*, and also *patricinio se commendare (tradere)*. From the side of the overlord there was the corresponding *suscipere, recipere, manus suscipere* and the like.<sup>44</sup>

Not surprisingly, in those ages of faith this relationship of vassalage would provide a way of describing one's relationship to Mary. If Jesus is one's Lord, as we have already seen Saint John Damascene reason, then it is only logical that Mary becomes

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<sup>43</sup> P. José María Canal, C.M.F., "La Consagración a la Virgen y a Su Corazon Inmaculado," *VI. XII*:234-235. Cf. also Joseph de Sainte-Marie I-14, I.T-2.

<sup>44</sup> J. A. Jungmann, S.J., *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962) 298.

one's Lady. Fulbert of Chartres (+ 1028)<sup>45</sup> provides us with a beautiful prayer in which he underscores that his consecration to Christ in Baptism also makes of him another "beloved disciple" (cf. Jn. 19:26–27) "committed" to Mary:

Remember, O Lady, that in Baptism I was consecrated to the Lord and professed the Christian name with my lips. Unfortunately I have not observed what I have promised. Nevertheless I have been handed over [*traditus*] to you and committed to your care [*commendatus*] by the Lord, the living and true God. Watch over the one who has been handed over to you [*traditum*]; keep safe the one who has been committed to your protection [*commendatum*].<sup>46</sup>

Likewise, a freeman who was in debt or otherwise not prospering in his affairs might present himself to an overlord "a rope around his neck, a sign that [he] was to become a serf, engaging his person, his family and his goods."<sup>47</sup> This, too, could be transferred into the spiritual realm and appropriated to one's relationship to Our Lady as we see in the case of St. Odilo, Abbot of Cluny (+1049)<sup>48</sup> who, as a young man, consecrated himself to Our Lady by going to a church dedicated to her and presenting himself at her altar with a rope around his neck and praying:

O most loving Virgin and Mother of the Savior of all ages, from this day and hereafter take me into your service and in all my affairs be ever at my side as a most merciful advocate. For after God I place nothing in any way before you and I give myself over to you for ever as your own slave

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Theotokos* 150–151.

<sup>46</sup> Henri Barré, C.S.Sp., *Prières Anciennes de L'Occident à la Mère du Sauveur: Des origènes à saint Anselme* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1963) 159 (my translation).

<sup>47</sup> Quéméneur 6.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Theotokos* 271–272. On the Marian spirituality of Cluny cf. Alfredo Simón, "La Presenza della Beata Vergine nel Rinnovamento Promosso da Cluny" in Enrico Dal Covolo, S.D.B. e Aristide Serra, O.S.M., (eds.) *Storia della mariologia*, Vol. 1: *dal modello biblico al modello letterario* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, Marianum, 2009) 593–617.

and bondsman [*tanquam proprium servum, tuo mancipatui trado*].<sup>49</sup>

In a very interesting and original piece of research, Father Mark Elvins argues on the basis of a fair amount of converging circumstantial evidence that Richard II solemnly consecrated England to Mary as “her Dowry” on the Saturday after Corpus Christi 1381. He argues that this is pictorially represented in the famous “Wilton Diptych” housed in London’s National Gallery of Art.<sup>50</sup> If this were so, it would represent a famous pictorial consecration of a kingdom to Our Lady.

Another beautiful image of the *patrocinium* of the Virgin is that of her “protective mantle” or *Schutzmantel* as it has come to be known in German. We have already seen this in the East in the feast and icon of the *Pokrov*. Here is Jungmann’s description of the Marian iconography, which would become classical in the medieval West:

The emblem of Cîteaux was the image of the Mother of God with the abbots and abbesses of the order kneeling under her mantle. Caesarius of Heisterbach (d. 1240) also knew this motif as he shows in his description of a Cistercian monk in heaven, looking about in vain for his brothers until Mary opens out her wide mantle and discloses a countless number of brothers and nuns. In the later Middle Ages especially, the motif of the protective mantle is wide-spread, commonly as an expression of protection being sought or hoped for, chiefly in connexion with the image of the Mother of God.<sup>51</sup>

This lovely and appealing image of the Virgin with her mantle extended over large numbers of the faithful of both sexes and every rank in society (always in minuscule of course!) was

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<sup>49</sup> Barré 147 (my translation).

<sup>50</sup> Mark Elvins, “The Origin of the Title ‘Dowry of Mary’ and the Shrines of Our Lady at Westminster,” a paper given to the London branch of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 18 May 1989.

<sup>51</sup> Jungmann 300; cf. also *Theotokos* 93–94; Georges Gharib, “La Madonna della Misericordia: ‘Sotto la tua protezione?’” *Madre di Dio* 59 (maggio 1991) 13–16.

frequently rendered by late Medieval and Renaissance artists. Such depictions were also referred to as “Our Lady of Mercy” since they illustrated that one could always find God’s mercy through Mary’s motherly intercession.<sup>52</sup> It could be said that this was a pictorial way of interpreting the *Sub tuum praesidium*: “We fly to thy patronage, O Holy Mother of God.” One of the most famous of these Schutzmantel or Mercy Madonnas is the wonderfully delicate and evocative *Vierge de la Miséricorde* [Virgin of Mercy] by Jean Mirailhet which is in the *Musée d’Art et d’Histoire* in Nice, France.<sup>53</sup>

Pope John Paul II also used this lovely image of the Virgin’s protection on numerous occasions; for instance, in an Angelus address on New Year’s Day of 1980,<sup>54</sup> in Brazil the same year,<sup>55</sup> in Belice, Sicily in 1982,<sup>56</sup> in Vienna in 1983,<sup>57</sup> in Liechtenstein in 1985,<sup>58</sup> and in supplication for the Armenians in 1987.<sup>59</sup> Among yet other instances,<sup>60</sup> he concluded an audience with pilgrims from Derry in Northern Ireland on 13 April 1989, praying: “May our Lady of Knock, Queen of Peace, spread her mantle of peace over the whole land.”<sup>61</sup> In a letter addressed to Discalced Carmelite Nuns and dated on the Feast of St. Thérèse, 1991, he wrote:

You [Nuns who follow the Constitutions approved respectively in both 1990 and 1991 as well as Carmelite

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Angelo Gila, “‘Maria Regina e Madre di Misericordia’: Un Tema Tipico dell’Epoca Medioevale” in *Maria Madre di Misericordia: Monstra Te Esse Matrem* a cura di Piergiorgio Di Domenico e Elio Peretto (Padua: Messaggero di Sant’Antonio Editrice, 2003) 186–217.

<sup>53</sup> This lovely image is reproduced on the cover of this book.

<sup>54</sup> *Inseg* III/1 (1980) 10 [ORE 614:4].

<sup>55</sup> *Inseg* III/2 (1980) 104 [Brazil 83].

<sup>56</sup> *Inseg* V/3 (1982) 1343 [ORE 761:2].

<sup>57</sup> *Inseg* VI/2 (1983) 527 [ORE 803:11].

<sup>58</sup> *Inseg* VIII/2 (1985) 639 [ORE 905:7].

<sup>59</sup> *Inseg* X/3 (1987) 1179 [ORE 1017:7].

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Inseg* XI/1 (1988) 757 [ORE 1035:10]; *Inseg* XI/3 (1988) 465; [ORE 1056:21]; *Inseg* XII/1 (1989) 1498 [ORE 1093:12].

<sup>61</sup> *Inseg* XII/1 (1989) 807 [ORE 1086:11].

Fathers and Brothers] all call upon Mary as your common Mother, whom the Order's imagery aptly depicts covering the sons and daughters of Carmel from one side to the other with her mantle.<sup>62</sup>

A number of times, in the course of his long pontificate, John Paul II would employ the image of Mary's mantle on New Year's Day. In his homily on 1 January 1994, he said:

Everyone looks to her: *her divine motherhood has become the great patrimony of humanity*. Under her maternal mantle are gathered in some way too the separated peoples, those who do not know the mystery of Jesus Christ. Many, although not knowing the Son of God, know of the Virgin Mary and this already draws them closer in some way to the great mystery of the Lord's birth.<sup>63</sup>

In entrusting the year 1996 to the Mother of God, he used the image of Mary's protective mantle in conjunction with the ancient prayer *Sub tuum praesidium*:

We are fast approaching the historic date of the Year 2000, an important stage in humanity's journey. May the Lord grant us to reach it renewed in spirit, ready to build a more welcoming world of solidarity. I invite you to pray for this as, together with you, I entrust 1996, which has just begun, to Mary, Mother of God and our Mother.

We present our good resolutions to you, Mary. We ask you to spread the mantle of your motherly protection over us and over every day of the New Year: "O holy Mother

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<sup>62</sup> *Inseg XIV/2* (1991) 706 [ORE 1211:2]. In his Letter of 1 May 1999 to Carmelite community at San Martino ai Monti in Rome on 700th Anniversary of Carmelite presence there he wrote: "May the Virgin Mary, Mother and Sister of Carmel clothe with her mantle your community, religious and parochial, in the same way she enfolds tenderly her Divine Son in the sixteenth century painting venerated in the Basilica" *Inseg XXII/1* (1999) 859 [*Carmel in the World XXXVII* (1999) 164]. Likewise in his Message of 25 March 2001 to the Prior General of Carmelites of the Ancient Observance and the Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites on the 750th Anniversary of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, he wrote of Mary as spreading "the protective mantle of her mercy over her children on their pilgrimage to the holy mountain of glory" *Inseg XXIV/1* (2001) 600 [ORE 1687:5].

<sup>63</sup> *Inseg XVII/1* (1994) 6 [ORE 1322:4].

of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin!”<sup>64</sup>

In his Angelus address on the Solemnity of the Mother of God in the Jubilee Year 2000, he made this exhortation:

The first day of the year is placed under the special protection of Mary. Let us begin the Year 2000 under the loving gaze of the Mother of God, who gives Christ, the Prince of Peace, to the world. May she spread the mantle of her motherhood over all of us, protect us from evil and free us from hatred and violence. May she accompany humanity on the ways of peace.<sup>65</sup>

In one beautiful evocative sentence in his Angelus address on 22 September 1996 in Reims, France, he prayed: “Mother most admirable, spread your mantle of tenderness over the families of this land so that they may know the happiness of loving and of transmitting life.”<sup>66</sup> In a much more developed, but no less evocative way, he wrote to the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, Portugal, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of our Our Lady’s final appearance at Fatima in this manner:

What did Christ do? After invoking the mercy of heaven with the words: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34), he entrusted humanity to Mary, his Mother: “Woman, behold, your son” (Jn. 19:26). A symbolic interpretation of this Gospel event enables us to see reflected in it the final scene of the well-known and common experience of the son who, feeling misunderstood, confused and rebellious, leaves his father’s house to wander into the night... And his mother’s mantle protects him from the cold during his sleep, helping him to overcome his despair and loneliness. Beneath the maternal mantle, which extends from Fatima over the whole world, humanity senses anew its longing for the Father’s house

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<sup>64</sup> *Inseg XIX/1* (1996) 6 [ORE 1423:3].

<sup>65</sup> *Inseg XXIII/1* (2000) 8 [ORE 1624:8].

<sup>66</sup> *Inseg XIX/2* (1996) 431 [ORE 1459:4].

and for his Bread (cf. Lk. 15:17). Dear pilgrims, as if it were possible to embrace all humanity, I ask you to say in its name and for its sake, “We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.”<sup>67</sup>

Let us note in this marvelous passage how the Holy Father wove Our Lady’s mantle into the parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11–32) in order to accentuate her role in the reconciliation of sinners and then asked all to recite the *Sub tuum praesidium* as a means of entrusting all humanity to her.

He would use the image of Mary’s mantle in his prayers of entrustment to her in many countries of the former Eastern Bloc: in Georgia,<sup>68</sup> Ukraine,<sup>69</sup> Kazakhstan,<sup>70</sup> Armenia,<sup>71</sup> and Bulgaria.<sup>72</sup> In a message to Hungarians celebrating the millennium of St. Stephen, he wrote:

*Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic hereditati tuae!* With this invocation, which the *Te Deum* also puts on our lips, we turn to the Lord to implore his help in the new millennium now beginning. We ask for it through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the *Magna Domina Hungarorum*, whose veneration has had so great a role in the precious heritage of King St. Stephen. He offered his crown to her as a pledge of his entrustment of the Hungarian people to her heavenly protection. How many images depicting this act are found in your churches! Following the holy king’s example, may you also put your future under the mantle of the One to whom God entrusted his Only-begotten Son!<sup>73</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Inseg* XX/2 (1997) 456–457 [ORE 1514:6].

<sup>68</sup> *Inseg* XXII/2 (1999) 852 [ORE 1617:5].

<sup>69</sup> *Inseg* XXIV/1 (2001) 1264 [ORE 1699:3].

<sup>70</sup> *Inseg* XXIV/2 (2001) 391–393 [ORE 1711:3].

<sup>71</sup> *Inseg* XXIV/2 (2001) 475 [ORE 1712:6].

<sup>72</sup> *Inseg* XXV/1 (2002) 862 [ORE 1745:6].

<sup>73</sup> *Inseg* XXIII/2 (2000) 196 [ORE 1656:5].

Here he gracefully made reference to the tradition of St. Stephen's entrustment of the Hungarian people to Our Lady<sup>74</sup>—perhaps the first such recorded act in history—while exhorting them to put their future under Our Lady's mantle.

John Paul's last reference to Our Lady's mantle seems to have occurred on 15 May 2004 in an audience given to the Little Work of Divine Providence on the vigil of the canonization of its founder, Saint Luigi Orione (1872–1940).<sup>75</sup> To their Act of Consecration to Our Lady, the Pope added the conclusion:

Mary, shining star of the morning, placed by God on the horizon of humanity, gently spread your mantle over us, pilgrims on the paths of time, amidst numerous risks and snares, and come to our aid now and at the hour of our death. Amen!<sup>76</sup>

From a specifically theological perspective Arnold Bostius (+1499),<sup>77</sup> a Flemish Carmelite, wrote about Mary's patronage and protection of his order in his major Marian work, *De Patronatu et Patrocinio Beatissimae Virginis Mariae in Dicitum sibi Carmeli Ordinem*. Although he did not use the word "consecration" to describe the Carmelite's relationship to Mary, because that meaning had not yet been appropriated to the word, he used all the equivalent Latin expressions such as *dicare, dedicare, devovere*,

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Louis Nagyfalusy, S.J., "Le Culte de la Sainte Vierge en Hongrie, 'Regnum Marianum,'" *Maria* 4:645–646, 649–650.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Matthew and Margaret Bunson, *John Paul II's Book of Saints* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2007) 99–101.

<sup>76</sup> *OR* 17–18 maggio 2004, p. 6 [*ORE* 1844:7].

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Nilo Geagea, O.C.D., *Maria, Madre e Decoro del Carmelo: La pietà mariana dei Carmelitani durante i primi tre secoli della loro storia* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Teresianum, 1988) 369–438; Luca Di Girolamo, "Teologia Devota: Da Jean Gerson (+ 1429) ad Arnoldo Bostio (+ 1499)," in Enrico Dal Covolo, S.D.B., e Aristide Serra, O.S.M. (eds.), *Storia della mariologia*, Vol. 1: *dal modello biblico al modello letterario* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, Marianum, 2009) 970–978; Luigi Gambero (ed.), *Testi Mariani del Secondo Millennio, 4: Autori medievali dell'Occidente sec. XIII–XV* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1996) 678–683; Emanuele Boaga, O.Carm., *Con Maria sulle vie di Dio: Antologia della marianità carmelitana* (Rome: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2000) 82–87.

*sub qua vivere, etc.*;<sup>78</sup> and he maintained, as the Venerable Pope Pius XII would in his Letter, *Neminem Profecto*, of 11 February 1950,<sup>79</sup> that the wearing of the Carmelite scapular was an explicit sign of the acceptance of Mary's patronage and protection, of the Carmelite's belonging to her.<sup>80</sup> All of this is magnificently synthesized in John Paul II's Message of 25 March 2001 to the Prior General of Carmelites of the Ancient Observance and the Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites on the 750th Anniversary of the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel:

This intense Marian life, which is expressed in trusting prayer, enthusiastic praise and diligent imitation, enables us to understand how the most genuine form of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, expressed by the humble sign of the Scapular, is consecration to her Immaculate Heart (cf. Pius XII, Letter *Neminem profecto latet* [11 February 1950: *AAS* 42, 1950, pp. 390–391]; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, n. 67). ...

The sign of the Scapular points to an effective synthesis of Marian spirituality, which nourishes the devotion of believers and makes them sensitive to the Virgin Mother's loving presence in their lives. The Scapular is essentially a "habit." Those who receive it are associated more or less closely with the Order of Carmel and dedicate themselves to the service of Our Lady for the good of the whole Church (cf. "Formula of Enrolment in the Scapular," in the *Rite of Blessing of and Enrolment in the Scapular*, approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 5 January 1996). Those who wear the Scapular are thus brought into the land of Carmel, so that they may "eat its fruits and its good things" (cf. Jer. 2:7), and experience the loving and motherly presence of Mary in their daily commitment to be clothed in Jesus

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<sup>78</sup> I. Bengoechea, O.C.D., "Un precursor de la consagración a María en el siglo XV: Arnaldo Bostio (1445–1499)," *Estudios Marianos* 51 (1986) 218; cf. also Redemptus M. Valabek, O. Carm., *Mary, Mother of Carmel: Our Lady and the Saints of Carmel*, I (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1987) 74.

<sup>79</sup> *AAS* 42 (1950) 390–391 [OL #452–54].

<sup>80</sup> Bengoechea 224–25; Valabek 76.

Christ and to manifest him in their life for the good of the Church and the whole of humanity (cf. “Formula of Enrolment in the Scapular,” cit.).

Therefore two truths are evoked by the sign of the Scapular: on the one hand, the constant protection of the Blessed Virgin, not only on life’s journey, but also at the moment of passing into the fullness of eternal glory; on the other, the awareness that devotion to her cannot be limited to prayers and tributes in her honour on certain occasions, but must become a “habit,” that is, a permanent orientation of one’s own Christian conduct, woven of prayer and interior life, through frequent reception of the sacraments and the concrete practice of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. In this way the Scapular becomes a sign of the “covenant” and reciprocal communion between Mary and the faithful: indeed it concretely translates the gift of his Mother, which Jesus gave on the Cross to John and, through him, to all of us, and the entrustment of the beloved Apostle and of us to her, who became our spiritual Mother.<sup>81</sup>

An interesting liturgical application of this imagery is found in the medieval ceremonial for the consecration of virgins. After the imposition of the veil, the bishop blessed the newly consecrated and exhorted them to live “without stain beneath the mantle of Holy Mary, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>82</sup> The language of the *patrocinium* is very well attested to with regard to Mary, as even a cursory glance at the index of Father Barré’s magisterial anthology of medieval Marian prayers will indicate.<sup>83</sup> Pope John Paul II continued to use the terminology of

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<sup>81</sup> *Inseg* XXIV/1 (2001) 600–602 [ORE 1687:5].

<sup>82</sup> R. Metz, “La Consécration des Vierges dans l’église Romaine,” in *Études d’histoire de la Liturgie* (P.U.F., 1954) 177 quoted in Quéménéur 7.

<sup>83</sup> Barré 330–41.

the *patrocinium* in expressions such as “commit,”<sup>84</sup> “commend,”<sup>85</sup> “place in the hands of Mary”<sup>86</sup> or “under the protection of the Holy Mother of God”<sup>87</sup> until the end of his pontificate.

### The Modern Period

This heritage of the *patrocinium* of Mary would find expression in the Marian Congregations (sodalities) established by the Belgian Jesuit, Jean Leunis, in 1563 for the students of the Collegio Romano.<sup>88</sup> The admission to the Congregation, which had as its aim the formation of militant Christians after the ideals of St. Ignatius Loyola and was placed under the patronage of Our Lady, soon became an act of oblation to the Virgin. The text of one of these early admission ceremonies by Father Franz Coster (+ 1619) was published in the *Libellus sodalitatis* in 1586 and is most likely the very formula which he first used to receive students into the Congregation, which he had founded at Cologne in 1576. In it, the sodalist chooses Mary as “Lady, Patroness and Advocate” and begs her to receive him as her *servum perpetuum*.<sup>89</sup> Father Quéméneur underscores the fact that the Marian Congregations introduce yet another perspective into the subject of Marian consecration inherited from the late Middle Ages: the corporate dimension.

<sup>84</sup> *Committere* continues to be the verb of choice in Latin papal texts which speak of “consecration” to Mary. Cf. *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 364 [*Talks* 165]; *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 860–61 [ORE 577:9]; *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1635 [ORE 589:2]; *Inseg* II/2 (1979) 1093 [ORE 608:9]; *Inseg* IV/2 (1981) 1045 [ORE 715:18].

<sup>85</sup> Cf. “commend,” *Inseg* I (1978) 73 [*Talks* 136]; “raccomando,” *Inseg* I (1978) 131 [*Talks* 212]; “commend,” *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1103; “commendamus,” *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 860–61 [ORE 577:9]; “raccomandiamo,” *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1066 [ORE 581:10]; “encomiendo,” *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1315 [ORE 586:10–11]; “recommende,” *Inseg* II/2 (1979) 141; “empfehle,” *Inseg* II/2 (1979) 184 [ORE 597:6].

<sup>86</sup> Cf. *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1391 [*Poland* 72]; *Inseg* III/1 (1980) 237–38 [ORE 619:4]; *Inseg* IV/2 (1981) 576, 579 [ORE 711:10].

<sup>87</sup> Cf. *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1029 [ORE 581:6–7]; *Inseg* II/2 (1979) 597 [U.S.A. 132]; *Inseg* II/2 (1979) 1356 [ORE 614:7–8]; *Inseg* II/2 (1979) 1429 [ORE 616:5]; *Inseg* III/1 (1980) 1322 [*Africa Ap* 362]; *Inseg* III/1 (1980) 1847 [ORE 640:7].

<sup>88</sup> Cf. E. Villaret, S.J., “Marie et la Compagnie de Jésus,” *Maria* II:962–968; “Cons” 402.

<sup>89</sup> Jungmann 303.

Since the Middle Ages there was a tendency for people prompted by sentiments of piety to group together, to form confraternities and various kinds of spiritual associations. There still existed such partly temporal and partly spiritual institutions as trade guilds and professional associations. In these, consecration corresponds to an oath; it is something like the “sacrament” of initiation, the formula for entrance.<sup>90</sup>

In 1622 the Marian Congregation admission formulae of the Italian Jesuit, Pietro Antonio Spinelli, as well as that of Father Coster were published in the book, *Hortulus Marianus* of Father de La Croix. The two formulae are described respectively as *modus consecrandi* and *modus vovendi* to the Blessed Virgin. Jungmann comments that this is the first appearance of the word *consecrare* (to consecrate) with the meaning of putting oneself under the *patrocinium* of Mary and it is taken as being synonymous with the word *devovere* which in classical Latin meant to devote oneself to a deity.<sup>91</sup> In effect, the understanding from the beginning of this usage has been that, by the act of consecration to Our Lady, the sodalist places himself at the service of Christ the King through her mediation and under her patronage.<sup>92</sup> The use of the term “consecration” with the meaning of giving oneself completely to Mary in order to belong more perfectly to Christ, enters into the common Catholic lexicon from this period, and Pope John Paul II continued to use it in this sense throughout his pontificate.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Quéméneur 8.

<sup>91</sup> Jungmann 304.

<sup>92</sup> Villaret 968.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1036 [ORE 580:3]; *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1412–19 [Poland 103–15]; *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1470–01 [Poland 189]; *Inseg* II/2 (1979) 177 [ORE 597:2]; *Inseg* II/2 (1979) 290 [ORE 599:9]; *Inseg* II/2 (1979) 468–70 [Ireland 88–92]; *Inseg* III/1 (1980) 1068–70 [Africa Ap 39–42]; *Inseg* III/1 (1980) 1253 [Africa Ap 280–282]; *Inseg* IV/1 (1981) 128; *Inseg* IV/2 (1981) 458–59 [ORE 708:5]; *Inseg* IV/2 (1981) 1219 [ORE 718:10] (In this instance the Italian text which the Pope read clearly says “avevo consacrato” whereas the English translation gives “dedicated” instead); *Inseg* IX/2 (1986) 91–94 [ORE 948:5]; *Inseg* X/1 (1987) 993 [ORE 985:2]; *Inseg* X/1 (1987) 1111 [ORE 987:4]; *Inseg* X/1 (1987) 1279 [ORE 989:13]; *Inseg* X/3 (1987) 1176 [ORE 1017:6–7]; *Inseg* X/3 (1987) 1186 [ORE 1016:12]; *Inseg* XI/1 (1988) 422 [ORE 1028:22]; *Inseg* XI/1 (1988) 571 [ORE 1030:12]; *Inseg* XI/3

During virtually the same period of time that the Jesuit Marian Congregations were being born, confraternities of the Holy Slavery of Mary were germinating in the soil of Spain. In fact, the earliest of these, founded under the inspiration of Sister Agnes of St. Paul at the convent of the Franciscan Conceptionists at Alcalá de Henares, dates from 2 August 1595<sup>94</sup> and thus antedates the foundation of the sodality movement. The first theologian of this “Marian slavery,” as it was practiced in Alcalá, was the Franciscan Melchior de Cetina, “who composed in 1618 what may be called the first ‘Handbook of Spirituality’ for the members of the confraternity.”<sup>95</sup>

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(1988) 1240 [ORE 1061:1]; *Inseg* XII/1 (1989) 102 [ORE 1073:1]; *Inseg* XII/1 (1989) 935 [ORE 1092:6]; *Inseg* XII/1 (1989) 1152 [ORE 1091:18]; *Inseg* XII/2 (1989) 1029 [ORE 1116:12]; *Inseg* XIII/1 (1990) 354 [ORE 1130:10]; *Inseg* XIII/1 (1990) 424 [ORE 1130:11]; *Inseg* XIII/2 (1990) 390 [ORE 1156:5]; *Inseg* XIII/2 (1990) 576 [ORE 1157:13]; *Inseg* XIV/1 (1991) 1218 [ORE 1191:5]; *Inseg* XIV/1 (1991) 1224–1225 [ORE 1191:8, 10]; *Inseg* XIV/2 (1991) 258 [ORE 1204:7]; *Inseg* XIV/2 (1991) 938 [ORE 1214:3]; *Inseg* XIV/2 (1991) 966 [ORE 1213:16]; *Inseg* XV/1 (1992) 475, 478 [ORE 1230:15]; *Inseg* XV/1 (1992) 479 [ORE 1230:15]; *Inseg* XV/1 (1992) 1272–1273 [ORE 1239:7–8]; *Inseg* XV/2 (1992) 141 [ORE 1260:4]; *Inseg* XV/2 (1992) 199–200 [ORE 1259:8]; *Inseg* XV/2 (1992) 309 [ORE 1262:2]; *Inseg* XV/2 (1992) 365 [ORE 1262:10]; *Inseg* XVI/2 (1993) 516 [ORE 1304:9]; *Inseg* XVI/2 (1993) 1088 [ORE 1314:9]; *Inseg* XVII/1 (1994) 544–545 [ORE 1332:10]; *Inseg* XVIII/1 (1995) 464 [ORE 1383:7]; *Inseg* XVIII/1 (1995) 1579 [ORE 1394:4]; *Inseg* XVIII/1 (1995) 1667 [ORE 1395:7]; *Inseg* XIX/1 (1996) 1294–1295 [ORE 1442:1]; *Inseg* XIX/2 (1996) 753 [ORE 1468:1]; *Inseg* XX/2 (1997) 46 [ORE 1500:2]; *Inseg* XX/2 (1997) 268 [ORE 1509:2]; *Inseg* XXI/2 (1998) 1005 [ORE 1569:6]; *Inseg* XXII/1 (1999) 1181 [ORE 1601:6]; *Inseg* XXII/1 (1999) 1440 [ORE 1598:11]; *Inseg* XXIII/1 (2000) 457 [ORE 1636:10]; *Inseg* XXIII/1 (2000) 1103, 1104 [ORE 1649:5]; *Inseg* XXIII/1 (2000) 1116 [ORE 1651:5]; *Inseg* XXIII/1 (2000) 1134–1135, 1136 [ORE 1652:7]; *Inseg* XXIII/2 (2000) 1055 [ORE 1672:3]; *Inseg* XXIV/1 (2001) 445 [ORE 1686:8]; *Inseg* XXIV/1 (2001) 600 [ORE 1687:5]; *Inseg* XXIV/1 (2001) 1128 [ORE 1696:2]; *Inseg* XXIV/2 (2001) 57 [ORE 1703:5]; *Inseg* XXIV/2 (2001) 341 [ORE 1713:12]; *Inseg* XXV/2 (2002) 498 [ORE 1765:III]; *Inseg* XXVI/2 (2003) 95–96 [ORE 1808:2]; *Inseg* XXVI/2 (2003) 920 [ORE 1829:3]; *Inseg* XXVII/2 (2004) 507 [ORE 1870:8]; *Inseg* XXVII/2 (2004) 698 [ORE 1874:2]; *Inseg* XXVIII (2005) 89–90 [ORE 1880:5].

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Gaffney 146; Canal 250 and especially J. Ordoñez Marquez, “La Cofradia de la Esclavitud en las Concepcionistas de Alcalá,” *Estudios Marianos* 51 (1986) 231–48.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Juan de los Angeles – Melchior de Cetina, *Esortazione alla devozione della Vergine Madre di Dio: Alle origini della “schiavitù mariana,”* introduzione, traduzione e note di Stefano M. Cecchin, O.F.M. (Vatican City: Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis, 2003); Gaffney 146; Canal 252–53; Gaspar Calvo Moralejo, O.F.M., “Fray Melchior de Cetina, O.F.M., el primer teólogo de la ‘Esclavitud Mariana’ (1618),” *Estudios Marianos* 51 (1986) 249–271.

As the seventeenth century progressed, the confraternities multiplied and papal approval followed. One of the great promoters and proponents of this spirituality was the Trinitarian, Simon de Rojas (1552–1624),<sup>96</sup> who was canonized by Pope John Paul II on 3 July 1988. Here is how the Holy Father characterized his Marian spirituality in the canonization homily:

One aspect of our Saint, which must be emphasized, is, without a doubt, his most unique and faithful love of Our Lady which he had shown since childhood. This intense Marian experience constantly increased within him ... One very typical way he had of living and broadcasting this devotion, was the “servitude” or filial surrender of himself to the Mother of God. ... In fact, the new Saint is a providential model for us of Marian life, which lies within our reach. He perfectly expressed his will to belong to Mary, in one of his favorite exclamations: “Our Lady, may I be completely yours, thus I shall have nothing to fear!”<sup>97</sup>

The Augustinian, Bartolomé de los Rios (1580–1652),<sup>98</sup> extended the work of his friend, de Rojas, into the Low Countries and propagated it by means of his writings, which were known and cited by Saint Louis de Montfort.<sup>99</sup> In his *Hierarchia Mariana*, he provides this formula of dedication:

I choose you today, O Holy Virgin, as my Lady, my Queen and my Empress and I recognize in myself what I truly am, your servant and slave, beseeching and begging by the majesty of your most sweet name ... that you admit me into your family to serve you with the humility of a slave and with the love of a son ... grant, O sovereign Virgin, that this ardent desire to serve you as my Queen and Lady of incomparable greatness until the last breath of my life may never depart from my will.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Juan Pujana, “Simon de Rojas,” *DSP* 14:877–884; Gaffney 147; Canal 253–254; *John Paul II’s Book of Saints* 143–144.

<sup>97</sup> *Inseg* XI/3 (1988) 23 [ORE 1049:2].

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Quirino Fernandez, “Los Rios y Alarcon, (Bartolomé de),” *DSP* 9:1013–1018.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. *Treatise on True Devotion* #160; Gaffney 148; Canal 255–259.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Canal 259, translated by Rodolfo Vargas y Rubio.

Perhaps the single most important figure to emerge thus far in our brief consideration of the forms of Marian consecration in the spiritual journey of the Church is Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629).<sup>101</sup> Founder of the Oratory of Jesus and promoter of the Teresian reform of Carmel in France,<sup>102</sup> his greatest glory in terms of the history of spirituality is probably one of which he was never conscious, that of being the “founder of the French School” of spirituality. His spiritual paternity would enrich the Church through Saint John Eudes and the Venerable Jean-Jacques Olier, Saints Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort and Jean-Baptiste de la Salle. His disciples of even the second and third generations would continue to develop his doctrine with their own refinements and emphases. The depth of thought and the ponderousness of his style rendered him somewhat inaccessible so that often his immediate followers such as Olier and Eudes presented the fruits of his contemplation in ways which were much more appealing to a wider public,<sup>103</sup> but there can be no doubt that he was “le chef d’école.”

Of specific interest to us is that, while visiting Spain in 1604, Bérulle, who had been a member of the Marian Congregation in his days in the Jesuit College of Clermont, came into contact with the confraternities of the Slaves of the Virgin and, in particular, with that of Alcalá de Henares where he went to see the General of the Carmelites.<sup>104</sup> This exposure evidently had a notable influence on the development of his own spirituality, for he would eventually formulate a “vow of servitude” to the Virgin Mary because of his conviction that, in the divine design, God

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<sup>101</sup> Cf. A. Molien, “Bérulle,” *DSp* 1:1539–1581; André Rayez, S.J., “La Dévotion Mariale chez Bérulle et ses Premiers Disciples” in *Maria* III.31–72; *Theotokos* 79–80. The French Oratory of Jesus and Editions du Cerf published 8 volumes of his *Œuvres Complètes* in a critical edition in 1995–1996.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Stéphane-Marie Morgain, O.C.D., *Pierre de Bérulle et les Carmélites de France* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1995).

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Raymond Deville, P.S.S., *L’école française de spiritualité*, n. 11 de la “Bibliothèque d’Histoire du Christianisme,” (Paris: Desclée, 1987) 29.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. A. Molien, “Bérulle,” *DSp* 1:1547.

wished to include in the vocation and predestination of Jesus Christ His divine filiation as well as the Divine Maternity, i.e., His being son of the Father and of Mary.<sup>105</sup> Hence Mary, the first to have made the vow of servitude to Jesus, “pure capacity for Jesus filled with Jesus,”<sup>106</sup> relates one perfectly to Jesus. Here are his words:

To the perpetual honor of the Mother and the Son, I wish to be in the state and quality of servitude with regard to her who has the state and quality of the Mother of my God ... I give myself to her in the quality of a slave in honor of the gift which the eternal Word made of himself to her in the quality of Son.<sup>107</sup>

He formulated a similar vow to Jesus Christ in honor of the state and “form of a servant”<sup>108</sup> which He took upon Himself at the Incarnation,<sup>109</sup> a vow of which Jesus

himself in his own person is the author and teacher, of which the Holy Virgin is the first and longest professed, and of which the apostles are the first and oldest superiors ... it is the vow and solemn profession of Christians at Baptism.<sup>110</sup>

The late Father Vincent Vasey, S.M., in his posthumously published paper on the Mariology of Bérulle, anticipates the question as to why the vow to Mary should precede the vow to Christ:

<sup>105</sup> *Opuscule de piété*, 93, 1103 quoted in Paul Cochois, *Bérulle et l'École française, n. 31 de "Maîtres Spirituels"* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963) 105. Cf. also William M. Thompson (ed.), *Bérulle and the French School: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989) 14–16; 41–50; Théodore Koehler, S.M., “Servitude (saint esclavage),” *DSp* 14:738–41. This insight of Bérulle is vindicated in *Ineffabilis Deus* [*Pii IX Acta* 1:599; *OL* #34]; *Munificentissimus Deus* [*AAS* 42 (1950) 768; *OL* #520]; and *Lumen Gentium* #61.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Cochois 105.

<sup>107</sup> M. Rigal, *Les Mystères de Marie*, in *Coll. Les Lettres Chrétiennes* (Paris, 1961) 204, translated in *Theotokos* 80.

<sup>108</sup> Phil. 2:7.

<sup>109</sup> Text given in Deville 43.

<sup>110</sup> *Narré de ce qui s'est passé sur les Élévations à Jésus et à la très sainte Vierge* 614. Quoted in Cochois 103 (my translation).

Logically, the vow of servitude to Mary should take place first; the vow to Jesus should come after. In fact, Bérulle introduced the two vows about the same time; the first consecration or vow of service was made to Mary and then a vow of service to Jesus, to respect the due hierarchy in accord with Dionysian categories.

Nothing strange—that Bérulle should consider the Virgin as his intermediary hierarch—for, he considered his own vocation as that of an hierarch with the duty of leading his subjects to a share in Mary's mystical graces and then, through the Virgin, to a participation in the mysteries of Christ, and, finally, through the mysteries of Christ to the life of the Trinity. To summarize his thought: *per Mariam ad Iesum; per Iesu mysteria ad Trinitatem*.<sup>111</sup>

The heritage of Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle would, in a certain sense, synthesize what had taken place before him and lay a solid foundation for his spiritual children.<sup>112</sup> Surely among them all, his most direct heir, who has been raised to the honors of the altar, is Saint John Eudes. A member of the Sodality at the Jesuit College in Caen from his youth, formed in the Oratory of Jesus by Bérulle and his immediate successor, Charles de Condren, Eudes was probably the greatest missionary and popularizer of the French School.<sup>113</sup> In his first book, *The Kingdom of Jesus*, a kind of handbook of Bérullian spirituality intended for a wide public, he offers this counsel about how a Christian should relate to Mary:

You must see and adore her Son in her, and see and adore Him alone. It is thus that she wishes to be honored, because

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<sup>111</sup> Vincent R. Vasey, S.M., "Mary in the Doctrine of Bérulle on the Mysteries of Christ," *Marian Studies* 36 (1985) 63; cf. Cochois 107–108. The reference to "Dionysian categories" refers to the categories in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (6th century).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. M.-Th. Poupon, O.P., *Le poème de la parfaite consécration à Marie* (Lyon: Librairie de Sacré-Cœur, 1947) 336–374.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *Theotokos* 201–202; L. Barbé, C.J.M., "La Vierge dans la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie," *Maria* III:163–179; Charles Lebrun, C.J.M., *The Spiritual Teaching of St. John Eudes*, trans. Basil Whelan, O.S.B. (London: Sands and Co., 1934) 260.

of herself and by herself she is nothing, but her Son Jesus is everything in her, her being, her life, her sanctity, her glory, her power and her greatness. You should thank Our Lord for the glory He has given to Himself through His admirable Mother. You must offer yourself to Him and ask Him to give you to her, causing all your life and all your acts to be consecrated to the honor of her life and her actions. You must pray that He will make you participate in her admirable love for Him and in her other virtues. You must ask Him to employ your life in her honor, or rather to honor Himself in her, in whatever way He pleases.

You must recognize and honor her first as the Mother of God, then as your own Mother and Queen. You must thank her for all the love, glory and perfect service she rendered to Her Son Jesus Christ our Lord. You must refer to her, after God, your being and your life, subjecting yourself entirely to her as her slave, imploring her to direct you in all your affairs and to assume full power over you, as over something belonging entirely to her, and to dispose of you as she pleases, for the greater glory of her Divine Son.<sup>114</sup>

In this carefully measured exhortation, the Norman Saint highlights the Christocentrism of Bérulle and synthesizes his vows of servitude to Jesus and Mary while retaining his emphasis on Mary's complete relativity to Christ. Also to be noted is his accent on "Jesus living in Mary," a characteristic of the French School given classic form in the well-known prayer of the Venerable Jean-Jacques Olier,<sup>115</sup> the founder of the Seminary

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<sup>114</sup> *Œuvres Complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, VI (Vannes: Imprimerie Lafoyle Frères, 1905–11) 189; Saint John Eudes, *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, trans. by a Trappist Father (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1946) 272.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. the analysis of this prayer by Irenée Noye, P.S.S., "O Jesus Living in Mary," trans. Roger M. Charest, S.M.M., *Queen of All Hearts* 32:5 (Jan.-Feb., 1982) 9. Pope Saint John Paul II commented briefly but appreciatively on this prayer at the close of his annual retreat with the Roman Curia on 27 February 1988; cf. *Inseg XI/1* (1988) 502 [ORE 1029:2].

and Company of Saint-Sulpice.<sup>116</sup> Probably Eudes' most mature expression of belonging to Mary is to be found in his "Contract of Holy Matrimony with the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God" which he wrote and signed in his own blood at Caen on 28 April 1668.<sup>117</sup> While the terminology may be initially jarring to modern sensibilities, it should be noted that Bérulle himself proposed to his sons in the Oratory that they should consider their relation to Jesus and Mary as a marriage (*alliance*).<sup>118</sup> An analysis of the text will indicate the delicacy, Christocentrism, theological precision and creativity of this document.

Not surprisingly, during this golden era of French spirituality, France itself would be consecrated to Mary in 1638 by Louis XIII under the influence of Cardinal Richelieu.<sup>119</sup> Many other nations followed suit, as Father Jungmann tells us:

At the command of King Philip IV of Spain, in 1643 the South American Spanish colonies were dedicated to Mary through a "solemn consecration." In 1664 the same thing was done for Portugal and all her colonies at the instigation of King John IV. ... Something similar happened in Austria in the following year at the order of Emperor Ferdinand III. ... At Mass on Easter day 1674 the missionary to the Indians, Jacques Marquette, S.J., solemnly consecrated the

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<sup>116</sup> Cf. *Theotokos* 272–273; Pierre Pourrat, P.S.S., "La Dévotion à Marie dans la Compagnie de Saint-Sulpice," *Maria* III:153–162. On the editing of Olier's manuscripts and the authenticity of the works attributed to him, cf. John O. Barres, *Jean-Jacques Olier's Priestly Spirituality: Mental Prayer and Virtue as the Foundation for the Direction of Souls* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Sanctae Crucis, Thesis ad Doctoratum in Theologia, 1999) 63–84, 225–226.

<sup>117</sup> Saint John Eudes, *Letters and Shorter Works*, trans. Ruth Hauser (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1948) 318–323.

<sup>118</sup> Vasey 61.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Maurice Vloberg, "Le Vœu de Louis XIII," *Maria* V:519–533; René Laurentin, *Le voeu de Louis XIII: Passé ou avenir de la France 1638–1988* (Paris: O.E.I.L., 1988). In his entrustment of France to Our Lady on 14 August 1983, the Pope would make explicit reference to the earlier consecration of France to Mary by Louis XIII, cf. *Inseg* VI/2 (1983) 206 [*ORE* 798:4].

new mission on the Mississippi along with his Indians to the Immaculata.<sup>120</sup>

## Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort

Into this French ecclesial context, characterized at its highest levels by ardent love for the Mother of God, was born Louis-Marie Grignion (1673–1716) at Montfort-la-Cane.<sup>121</sup> (Wishing to give no impression of self-importance, he would eventually identify himself by the name of Montfort, the town of his birth and Baptism, rather than by Grignion, his family name.) This Saint, described as “the last of the great Bérullians”<sup>122</sup> and the greatest proponent of Marian consecration produced by the “French School,” was first educated at the Jesuit College in Rennes where he was a member of the Marian Congregation<sup>123</sup> and then for eight years under the influence of the Sulpicians founded by Olier.<sup>124</sup>

If Bérulle had already indicated the link between Baptism and his “vow of servitude to Jesus,” de Montfort would associate Mary with one’s Baptismal commitment as well. What he

<sup>120</sup> Jungmann 305–06.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. *Theotokos* 250–251. An enormous body of literature has built up on de Montfort e.g., Stefano De Fiore (gen. ed.), *Jesus Living in Mary: Handbook of the Spirituality of St. Louis Marie de Montfort* (Bay Shore, NY: Montfort Publications, 1994). The Centre International Montfortain of Rome continues publishing scholarly studies on the Saint and updating the bibliography on him.

<sup>122</sup> Henri Bremond, *Histoire Littéraire du Sentiment Religieux en France depuis la Fin des Guerres de Religion jusqu’à Nos Jours*, Vol. IX: *La Vie Chrétienne sous l’Ancien Régime* (Paris: Librairie Bloud et Gay, 1932) 272. Cf. the excellent study by François-Marie Léthel, O.C.D., “La Maternité de Marie dans le Mystère de l’Incarnation et de notre Divinisation selon saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort et le Cardinal de Bérulle,” in François-Marie Léthel, O.C.D., *Théologie de l’Amour de Jésus: Écrits sur la théologie des saints* (Venasque: Editions du Carmel, 1996) 103–138.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Stefano De Fiore, S.M.M., *Itinerario spirituale di S. Luigi Maria di Montfort (1673–1716) nel periodo fino al sacerdozio (5 giugno 1700)*, University of Dayton: Marian Library Studies, new series 6 (1974) 59–81.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. De Fiore 142–65; 184–203. Another excellent study which considers the influence of the “French School” on de Montfort is Benedetta Papàsogli, *Montfort: A Prophet for Our Times*, trans. Ann Nielsen, D.W. (Rome: Edizioni Montfortane, 1991) esp. 103–13; 379–98.

proposes in his great masterpiece, *The Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, is the explicit renewal of one's Baptismal promises "through the hands of Mary":

In holy baptism we do not give ourselves to Jesus explicitly through Mary, nor do we give him the value of our good actions. After baptism we remain entirely free either to apply that value to anyone we wish or keep it for ourselves. But by this consecration we give ourselves explicitly to Jesus through Mary's hands and we include in our consecration the value of all our actions.<sup>125</sup>

If Saint Louis had written a special formula of consecration in conjunction with his *Treatise on True Devotion*, it was evidently lost with the first and last pages of his manuscript, which was only found in 1842.<sup>126</sup> The formula that he has left us in *The Love of Eternal Wisdom*, a work of his youth, clearly highlights the fact that Jesus is the goal of the act of consecration which he proposes, while Mary is its intermediary:

Eternal and incarnate Wisdom, most lovable and adorable Jesus, true God and true man, only Son of the eternal Father and of Mary always Virgin, ... I dare no longer approach the holiness of your majesty on my own. That is why I turn to the intercession and the mercy of your holy Mother, whom you yourself have given me to mediate with you. Through her I hope to obtain from you contrition and pardon for my sins, and that Wisdom whom I desire to dwell in me always. ...

O admirable Mother, present me to your dear Son as his slave now and for always, so that he who redeemed me through you, will now receive me through you.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> *Treatise on True Devotion* #126 [God Alone 329].

<sup>126</sup> Cf. *Treatise on True Devotion* #114 [God Alone 324] on the Saint's prophecy about this.

<sup>127</sup> *Love of Eternal Wisdom* #223, 226 [God Alone 112–113]. Another beautiful and explicitly Trinitarian form of Marian consecration is found in de Montfort's *Secret of Mary* #66–69 [God Alone 279–281], a work which is a kind of synthesis of the *Treatise on True Devotion* and written after the *Love of Eternal Wisdom*.

While de Montfort readily and very frequently speaks of “consecrating oneself to Mary,” this must always be understood as a shorthand form of “consecrating oneself to Jesus through the hands of Mary.”<sup>128</sup> It is precisely in these terms that Pope John Paul II presents him as a proponent of authentic Marian spirituality in *Redemptoris Mater*.<sup>129</sup>

Perhaps, in the final analysis, the greatest contribution of this Breton Saint to the theology of Marian consecration is precisely his insistence on Mary’s mediation as willed by God. This secondary and subordinate, but nonetheless real mediation of Mary described in *Lumen Gentium* #60 and 62, and presented with such conviction by Saint Louis, is well explained by one of his spiritual sons:

Objection has been raised against this principle of Montfort, primarily because his understanding of “mediatrix,” or “through Mary” has been sadly twisted. In the eyes of this missionary, no one is more approachable, more lovable, than the tender Jesus. His chapters on the tenderness, the humanness, the simplicity of Jesus in *The Love of the Eternal Wisdom*, in his *Cantiques* on Jesus—an antiochene element in his Christology—all bear this out. When he speaks of “mediators” or going *through* Mary, he is not setting up Our Lady as a barricade which must be pierced before reaching the Lord; he is not speaking of a hurdle which must be surmounted before arriving at the goal; he is not speaking of any chronological procedure. As he explains it, it is with Mary that we arrive at Jesus more quickly, love Him more tenderly, serve Him more faithfully. In Montfort’s eyes, the “through Mary” brings about a more intensely immediate union with the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom. She does not stand in the way. She is the “mysterious milieu,” the atmosphere, as Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote after reading Montfort, which

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *The Mother of The Saviour and Our Interior Life*, trans. Bernard J. Kelley, C.S.Sp. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957) 256, footnote #19.

<sup>129</sup> *Redemptoris Mater* #48.

only enhances, intensifies this union. To withdraw from this atmosphere, this milieu which God has given to us, to try to circumvent the quickening catalyst of Mary with which God has so kindly endowed us, is to ignore the role of Mary in salvation history; it is to show disrespect for God. At least implicitly, everyone comes to Jesus through the means He takes to come to us: through Mary. Again, for Montfort, this refers to the ineradicable characteristic of all salvation history: the necessary, representative, salvific, eternal consent of Mary. Far from denying the beauty of Jesus, Mary as Mediator “of intercession” with the “Mediator of redemption” affirms the uniqueness of “the one and only mediator between God and Man, the man Jesus Christ” (I Tim. 2:5) while also affirming our own weakness and the will of God in this present order of salvation.<sup>130</sup>

There is a sense in which the life and work of de Montfort may be seen as bringing to its culmination the concept of Marian “servitude” or “slavery” which we have traced from the Spanish confraternities and even earlier. He himself used the term frequently in his writings<sup>131</sup> while maintaining that “we can call ourselves, and become, the loving slaves of our Blessed Lady in order to become more perfect slaves of Jesus.”<sup>132</sup> Of course, the term “slavery” or “servitude” grates upon the ears of many in the highly democratized era in which we live. Pope Saint John Paul II, a committed disciple of de Montfort’s Marian thought,<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> J. Patrick Gaffney, S.M.M., “Saint Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort and the Marian Consecration,” *Marian Studies* 35 (1984) 142–144.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. *Treatise on True Devotion* #55–56, 75–76 [*God Alone* 305–306, 312–313]; *Love of Eternal Wisdom* #211, 219 [*God Alone* 109, 110–111]; *Secret of Mary* #34, 41, 61 [*God Alone* 271, 274, 278].

<sup>132</sup> *Treatise on True Devotion* #75 [*God Alone* 312–313].

<sup>133</sup> Cf. André Frossard, “*Be Not Afraid!*”: *Pope John Paul II Speaks Out on his Life, his Beliefs and his Inspiring Vision for Humanity*, trans. J. R. Foster (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1984) 125–127; *Pope John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, edited by Vittorio Messori and trans. Jenny and Martha McPhee (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994) 212–215; *ibid.*, *Gift and Mystery: On the 50th Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996) 41–43; *ibid.*,

didn't hesitate to defend de Montfort's usage of this terminology in his interview with André Frossard:

It is well known that the author of the treatise [*on True Devotion*] defines his devotion as a form of "slavery." The word may upset our contemporaries. Personally I do not see any difficulty in it. I think we are confronted here with the sort of paradox often to be noted in the Gospels, the words "holy slavery" signifying that we could not more fully exploit our freedom, the greatest of God's gifts to us. For freedom is measured by the love of which we are capable.<sup>134</sup>

He spoke similarly on 4 June 1979 in reviewing the modern history of Poland's consecration to Mary and supporting the use of the term "maternal slavery of love," which was incorporated into the great Act of Consecration made on 3 May 1966, on the occasion of the celebration of the Millennium of Christianity in Poland:

The act speaks of "servitude." It contains a paradox similar to the words of the Gospel according to which one must lose one's life to find it (cf. Mt. 10:39). For love constitutes the fulfillment of freedom, yet at the same time "belonging," and so not being free is part of its essence. However, this "not being free" in love is not felt as slavery but rather as an affirmation and fulfillment of freedom. The act of consecration in slavery indicates therefore a unique dependence and a limitless trust. In this sense slavery (non-freedom) expresses the fullness of freedom, in

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*Memory and Identity: Personal Reflections* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2005) 165–171.

<sup>134</sup> André Frossard, "Be Not Afraid!" 126. On the Gospel basis of the language of "slavery," cf. François-Marie Léthel, O.C.D., *L'Amour de Jésus en Marie: Le Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge, Le Secret de Marie* (Geneva: Éditions Ad Solem, 2000) 1:81–119; Roman Ginn, O.C.S.O., "Slave Talk in St. Paul and St. Louis de Montfort," *Queen of All Hearts* 39 (March-April 1989) 12–13; Donald MacDonald, "From the Slavery of Sin to the Total Consecration to Christ," *Queen of All Hearts* 40 (July-August 1989) 18–19.

the same way as the Gospel speaks of the need to lose one's life in order to find it in its fullness.<sup>135</sup>

In an address of 17 December 1987 to his brother Polish Bishops from the metropolitan province of Wrocław on the occasion of their "ad limina" visit, he continued to develop some of the implications of the "maternal slavery of love" which Poland had vowed to Mary, its Queen, on 3 May 1966. Once again, he chose to underscore the paradoxical nature of the language employed:

Here it is a question not only of verbal paradoxes, but of ontological ones as well. The most profound paradox is perhaps that of life and death, expressed, among other places, in the parable of the seed, which must die in order to produce new life. This paradox is definitely confirmed by the paschal mystery.<sup>136</sup>

Further, considering "maternal slavery" as the path of Saints Louis de Montfort and Maximilian Kolbe and the Polish Cardinal Primate Hlond and Wyszyński, he said that this "maternal slavery"

must reveal itself as the path towards victory, the price of freedom. For that matter, it is difficult to imagine any being less inclined to "enslave" than a mother, than the Mother of God. And if what we are speaking of is an "enslaving" through love, then from that perspective "slavery" constitutes precisely *the revelation of the fullness of freedom*. In fact, freedom attains its true meaning, that is, its own fullness, through a true good. Love is synonymous with that attainment.<sup>137</sup>

He would speak again of the intrinsic necessity of this paradoxical "maternal slavery" on 23 May 1990 during the "Jasna Góra cycle" which he continued for a year at his general

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<sup>135</sup> *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1414 [*Poland* 106]; cf. also his further remarks on his taking leave of Jasna Góra on 6 June, *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1470–1471 [*Poland* 189].

<sup>136</sup> *Inseg* X/3 (1987) 1436 [*ORE* 1022:11].

<sup>137</sup> *Inseg* X/3 (1987) 1436–1437 [*ORE* 1022:11].

audiences. The reference was clearly to the program of Marian consecration of Cardinal Wyszyński:

In such times those words were spoken by the Primate of the Millennium [Cardinal Wyszyński], and they went like this: “*We entrust ourselves to your motherly ‘slavery’ for the Church’s freedom in today’s world and in Poland.*”

Such words cannot be forgotten. Neither can we wipe out “the paradox”: “motherly slavery” as the price of freedom of conscience, the price of freedom of religion, for the Church, the individual and society.<sup>138</sup>

We have already noted above how John Paul emphasized the “Marian servitude” of Saint Simon de Rojas at the time of his canonization.<sup>139</sup> He did so again on 16 October 1988, when he described the Capuchin Blessed Honorat Koźmiński (1829–1916)<sup>140</sup> in the beatification homily thus:

He abandoned himself to Christ, Incarnate Wisdom, as his slave, according to the instructions of St. Louis Grignion de Montfort. He often repeated “*totus tuus.*” He asked that Mary would be for him “a protectress, a mediatrix, a helper, a guide of his sermons, a counselor for confessions, a guarantor of chastity, a consoler, a reparatrix.”<sup>141</sup>

In his Angelus address of 27 September 1992 after the beatification of twenty-one Servants of God, he commended the example of Blessed Nazaria Ignacia March Mesa (1889–1943),<sup>142</sup> “who was consecrated as a ‘slave’ to Mary according to the model of de Montfort.”<sup>143</sup> In his homily at the Mass for the beatification of

<sup>138</sup> *Inseg* XIII/1 (1990) 1385 [ORE 1142:4].

<sup>139</sup> Cf. above (footnote 97) 42.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Andreas Resch, C.Ss.R., *I Beati di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol. II: 1986–1990 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002) 161–164; *Sulle Orme dei Santi. Il Santorale Cappuccino: Santi, Beati, Venerabili, Servi di Dio* (Rome: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, Postulazione Generale, 2000) 255–262; *John Paul II’s Book of Saints* 306–307.

<sup>141</sup> *Inseg* XI/3 (1988) 1237 [ORE 1063:11].

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Andreas Resch, C.Ss.R., *I Beati di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol. III: 1991–1995 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003) 61–64.

<sup>143</sup> *Inseg* XV/2 (1992) 199 [ORE 1259:8].

four Servants of God on 25 October 1998, he stressed that one of them, the Franciscan Antônio de Sant'Anna Galvão (1739–1822),<sup>144</sup> considered himself the “son and everlasting slave” of Mary Immaculate.<sup>145</sup>

Nowhere is John Paul II's discipleship of de Montfort, his teaching on the “maternal slavery of love” and his insistence on the Christological basis and orientation of this teaching more powerfully illustrated than in his magisterial Letter to the Religious of the Montfort Families on the occasion of the 160th Anniversary of the Publication of *Treatise on True Devotion*, dated 8 December 2003:

In Montfort spirituality, the dynamism of charity is expressed in particular by the symbol of the *slavery of love to Jesus*, after the example and with the motherly help of Mary. It is a matter of full communion in the *kenosis* of Christ, communion lived with Mary, intimately present in the mysteries of the life of her Son. “There is nothing among Christians which makes us more absolutely belong to Jesus Christ and his holy Mother than the slavery of the will, according to the example of Jesus Christ himself, who took on the status of a servant for love of us—*formam servi accipiens*—and also according to the example of the holy Virgin who called herself the servant and handmaid of the Lord (Lk. 1:38). The Apostle refers to himself as ‘the slave of Christ’ (*servus Christi*) as though the title were an honor. Christians are often so called in the Holy Scriptures” (cf. *Treatise on True Devotion*, n. 72). Indeed, the Son of God, who came into the world out of obedience to the Father in the Incarnation (cf. Heb. 10:7), subsequently humbled himself by making himself obedient unto death, and death on the Cross (cf. Phil. 2:7–8). Mary responded to God's will with the total gift of herself, body and soul,

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<sup>144</sup> Cf. Andreas Resch, C.Ss.R., *I Beati di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol. IV: 1996–2000 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004) 209–212. He was subsequently canonized by Benedict XVI on 11 May 2007 at Campo de Marte, São Paulo, Brazil.

<sup>145</sup> *Inseg XXI/2* (1998) 832–833 [ORE 1564:3].

forever, from the Annunciation to the Cross and from the Cross to the Assumption. The obedience of Christ and the obedience of Mary are not, of course, symmetrical because of the *ontological difference* between the divine Person of the Son and the human person of Mary. This also explains the resulting exclusivity of the fundamental salvific efficacy of obedience to Christ, from whom his own Mother received the grace to be able to obey God totally and thus collaborate in the mission of her Son.

The *slavery of love* should therefore be interpreted in light of the wonderful exchange between God and humanity in the mystery of the incarnate Word. It is a true exchange of love between God and his creature in the reciprocity of total self-giving. The “spirit [of this devotion] consists in this: that we be interiorly dependent on Mary Most Holy; that we be slaves of Mary, and through her, of Jesus” (*The Secret of Mary*, n. 44). Paradoxically, this “bond of charity,” this “slavery of love,” endows the human being with full freedom, with that true freedom of the children of God (cf. *Treatise on True Devotion*, n. 169). It is a question of giving oneself to Jesus without reserve, responding to the Love with which he first loved us. Those who live in this love can say with St Paul: “*It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me*” (Gal. 2:20).<sup>146</sup>

In #15 of his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariæ* of 16 October 2002, John Paul again indicated how fundamental the doctrine of Montfort was in his life and how fundamental it could be for all the children of the Church:

The Rosary mystically transports us to Mary’s side as she is busy watching over the human growth of Christ in the home of Nazareth. This enables her to train us and to mold us with the same care, until Christ is “fully formed” in us (cf. Gal. 4:19). This role of Mary, totally grounded in that of Christ and radically subordinated to it, “in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power.” This is the luminous principle

<sup>146</sup> *Inseg XXVI/2* (2003) 922–923 [ORE 1829:4].

expressed by the Second Vatican Council which I have so powerfully experienced in my own life and have made the basis of my episcopal motto: *Totus Tuus*. The motto is of course inspired by the teaching of Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, who explained in the following words Mary's role in the process of our configuration to Christ: "*Our entire perfection consists in being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus Christ. Hence the most perfect of all devotions is undoubtedly that which conforms, unites and consecrates us most perfectly to Jesus Christ. Now, since Mary is of all creatures the one most conformed to Jesus Christ, it follows that among all devotions that which most consecrates and conforms a soul to our Lord is devotion to Mary, his Holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to her the more will it be consecrated to Jesus Christ*" (*Treatise on True Devotion*, n. 120).<sup>147</sup>

We note here, of course, the Pope's mention of his motto, *Totus Tuus*, which became a hallmark of his pontificate, and which he cited on innumerable occasions to the very end of his life and which, he tells us, was inspired by Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort. In fact, de Montfort quoted that expression three times in his masterwork, *The Treatise on True Devotion*. The first occurs in #216:3:

Since you have now given yourself completely to Mary, body and soul, she, who is generous to the generous, and more generous than even the kindest benefactor, will in return give herself to you in a marvellous but real manner. Indeed you may without hesitation say to her ... with St. Bonaventure, *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt, o Virgo gloriosa, super omnia benedicta*: "I am all yours and all that I have is yours, O glorious Virgin, blessed above all created things."<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> *Inseg* XXV/2 (2002) 497–498 [Vatican English edition 19–20].

<sup>148</sup> *Treatise on True Devotion* #216:3 [*God Alone* 359]. The English edition used here does not give the original Latin, which is found in the critical French edition, *Œuvres complètes de saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort* (Paris: Editions du

The second occurs in #233:

Every year at least, on the same date, they should renew the consecration following the same exercises for three weeks. They might also renew it every month or even every day by saying this short prayer: *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*: “I am all yours and all I have is yours, O dear Jesus, through Mary, your holy Mother.”<sup>149</sup>

The third instance is found in the supplement on practicing this devotion at Holy Communion #266:3 & 4:

Renew your consecration saying, *Tuus totus ego sum, et omnia mea tua sunt*: “I belong entirely to you, dear Mother, and all that I have is yours.” ... Beg her to lend you her heart, saying, *Accipio te in mea omnia. Præbe mihi cor tuum, o Maria*: “O Mary, I take you for my all; give me your heart.”<sup>150</sup>

Clearly, John Paul II had internalized this little book of de Montfort and adapted these passages, especially the third, so that they became his daily prayer.<sup>151</sup> According to authoritative testimony, in all of his manuscripts the words *Totus tuus ego sum* at the top of the page substituted for page 1; *et omnia mea tua sunt* for page 2; *Accipio te in mea omnia* for page 3; and *Præbe mihi cor tuum, o Maria* for page 4.<sup>152</sup> Listing all of his written quotations of *Totus tuus* would constitute a separate study in itself.

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Seuil, 1982) 633. This formula is taken from St. Bonaventure, *Psalt. Majus*, cant. Ad instar illius Moïsis, Ex. 15 (*Opera omnia*, Vivès, Parisiis 1868, t. 14, 221b).

<sup>149</sup> *Treatise on True Devotion* #233 [God Alone 364; *Œuvres complètes* 644]. Again this adaptation is taken from the works of St. Bonaventure as in the footnote above.

<sup>150</sup> *Treatise on True Devotion* #266: 3 & 4 [God Alone 375, 376; *Œuvres complètes* 666, 667]. The last quotation is a conflation of John 19 :27 and Proverbs 23 :26.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. *Gift and Mystery* 42–43 where the Pope informs his readers that *Totus tuus* “is an abbreviation of a more complete form of entrustment to the Mother of God which runs like this: *Totus tuus ego sum et omnia mea Tua sunt. Accipio Te in mea omnia. Præbe mihi cor Tuum, Maria!*”

<sup>152</sup> Cf. François-Marie Léthel, O.C.D., *La Luce di Cristo nel Cuore della Chiesa: Giovanni Paolo II e la Teologia dei Santi. Esercizi Spirituali con Benedetto XVI* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011) 39.

## Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

While it may be true to see de Montfort's teaching as the high point of the Marian consecration championed by the "French School," it would be unfair to consider the subsequent history of this phenomenon in the life of the Church simply in terms of denouement. The unfolding of this process continued even in that difficult period after the French Revolution with holy founders such as Blessed William Joseph Chaminade (1761–1850),<sup>153</sup> who incorporated total consecration to Mary into the Society of Mary (Marianists), which he founded, as the object of a special perpetual religious vow.<sup>154</sup> The various manuscripts that Father Chaminade left behind him are testimonies to his profound Marian doctrine, but they do not contain an organized treatise and, in fact, he evidently preferred to diffuse his Marian teaching viva voce. His spiritual sons have collected and published all of their founder's Marian writings.<sup>155</sup> The best-known interpreter of Father Chaminade is the late Father Émile Neubert, S.M. (1878–1967), who spent his life diffusing knowledge of the profoundly Marian spirituality of the founder.<sup>156</sup> His most famous work, *My Ideal: Jesus Son of Mary*,<sup>157</sup> has been translated into the principal languages of the world and has become a classic treatise on Marian spirituality

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<sup>153</sup> Cf. Resch, *I Beati di Giovanni Paolo II*, IV:333–336; *Theotokos* 99–100.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Henri Lebon, S.M., "Chaminade (Guillaume-Joseph)," *DSp* 2:454–459; Peter A. Resch, S.M., "Filial Piety," *Mariology* 3:165.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. J.-B. Armbruster, S.M., G.-J. Chaminade: *Ecrits Marials* Vols. 1 & 2 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Séminaire Marianiste, 1966); *William Joseph Chaminade: Marian Writings*, trans. Henry Bradley, S.M. & Joseph H. Roy, S.M. (Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission, 1980) Vols. 1 & 2; William J. Kiefer, S.M. (ed.) *Mary in Our Christ-Life* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1961).

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Jean-Louis Barré, S.M., *La Mission de la Vierge Marie d'après les Écrits d'Émile Neubert S.M. (1878–1967)* (Rome: Dissertationes ad Lauream in Pontificia Facultate Theologica "Marianum" 94, 2007); *Autobiography of Father Emile Neubert, Marianist*, trans. & ed. Thomas A. Stanley, S.M. (Dayton: North American Center for Marianist Studies, Monograph Series, no. 55, 2007); *Theotokos* 266.

<sup>157</sup> First published in French in 1933; most recent English edition by Tan Books and Publishers, Rockford, IL, 1988.

and consecration. For Father Neubert, as for Father Chaminade, Marian consecration has an implicit link with the Sacrament of Confirmation in that giving oneself to Mary allows her to be a guide for the Christian who has received the gift of the Holy Spirit in order to be a witness of Christ to the world.<sup>158</sup> Father Neubert drew out Mary's role in guiding the apostolate in many of his writings, especially in the fourth part of his *My Ideal: Jesus Son of Mary, Queen of Militants*<sup>159</sup> and *La Mission Apostolique de Marie et la Nôtre*.<sup>160</sup> His little classic was greatly appreciated by such Marian apostles as Saint Maximilian-Maria Kolbe<sup>161</sup> and the Servant of God, Frank Duff, founder of the Legion of Mary.<sup>162</sup>

Another notable figure who continued the great Marian tradition of the French School was the Venerable Francis Mary Paul Libermann (1802–1852),<sup>163</sup> Jewish convert and “second founder” of the Holy Ghost Fathers, who characterized his fledgling institute in these terms:

What distinguishes us from all other workers in the Lord's vineyard is a quite special consecration which we make of all our society, of each of its members, of all their works and enterprises to the most holy Heart of Mary, a heart eminently apostolic and all inflamed with desires for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Cf. CCC #1285.

<sup>159</sup> First French edition in 1944; English edition by Grail Publications, St. Meinrad, IN, 1947.

<sup>160</sup> (Paris: Alsatia, 1956). English translation: *Mary's Apostolic Mission and Ours*, trans. Joseph Stefanelli, S.M. (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2011).

<sup>161</sup> Cf. *Scritti di Massimiliano Kolbe*. Translated from the Polish by Cristoforo Zambelli, O.F.M. Conv., (Rome: Editrice Nazionale M.I., 1997) #631 (1163).

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Jean-Louis Barré 15.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. *Theotokos* 219; H. Barré, “Spiritualité Mariale du Vénérable Père Libermann,” *Maria* III:379–401.

<sup>164</sup> *Theotokos* 219; cf. Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp., *Veni Creator Spiritus: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Holy Spirit* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press “A Michael Glazier Book,” 1990) 136–38; Paul Sigris, “Libermann (François-Marie-Paul),” *DSp* 9:764–80.

It would take us beyond our immediate scope to detail all the modern congregations in the Church in which Marian consecration constitutes an integral part of their charism. Instead, we will simply note here the impetus for Marian consecration among the faithful which spread almost like wildfire from the courageous response of the Abbé Desgenettes to the interior words which he heard telling him to consecrate his parish to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on 3 December 1836. His moribund Parisian parish of Notre-Dame des Victoires became almost overnight a vibrant center of Christian faith and worship and, through the establishment of the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, a catalyst for thousands of conversions.<sup>165</sup> It is also fascinating to note that Saint John Mary Vianney (1786–1859), the holy Curé of Ars, had already consecrated his parish to “Mary conceived without sin” a few months earlier on 1 May 1836.<sup>166</sup>

In the ways of Providence, the happenings at the Church of Notre-Dame des Victoires would come to be known within nine years to Saint Anthony Mary Claret (1807–1870),<sup>167</sup> who already had a deep and tender filial devotion to Mary. So impressed was he with what he read in the *Annals* of the Archconfraternity that he renamed a secular institute which he had founded “Daughters of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary.”<sup>168</sup> Eventually, under the same inspiration, he would also

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<sup>165</sup> Jean Letourneur, “Dufriche-Desgenettes,” *DSP* 3:1757–59.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Francis Trochu, *The Curé of Ars: St. Jean-Marie-Baptiste Vianney* trans. Dom Ernest Graf, O.S.B. (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1977) 306, n. 4. This act was explicitly referred to in Pope Benedict XVI’s Letter Proclaiming a Year for Priests of 16 June 2009 and in Pope Saint John XXIII’s Encyclical, *Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia*, of 1 August 1959; cf. Frederick L. Miller, *The Grace of Ars* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010) 137, 201. Pope Saint John Paul II also made reference to this same act in his address to priests, deacons and seminarians at Ars on 6 October 1986; cf. *Inseg* IX/2 (1986) 904 [ORE 962:9].

<sup>167</sup> Cf. *Theotokos* 103; Naracisse García Garcés, C.M.F., “La Dévotion a la très Sainte Vierge dans la Congrégation des Missionnaires Fils du Cœur Immaculé de Marie,” *Maria* III:403–428.

<sup>168</sup> Juan Maria Lozano, C.M.F., *Mystic and Man of Action: Saint Anthony Mary Claret*, trans. Joseph Daries, C.M.F. (Chicago: Claretian Publications, 1977) 141; cf.

found a congregation of missionaries which he would call “Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary” and would give the name as well to a congregation for Christian doctrine that he founded in Cuba.<sup>169</sup> Early in his priestly life he had written: “I entrust myself totally to Mary, as her son and priest. ... Everything I do or suffer in my ministry will be done for her.”<sup>170</sup> Later he made the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary part of the ceremony of joining his missionary congregation.<sup>171</sup> For him, according to Father Lozano, being a Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary meant being an instrument of the Virgin in her struggle against Satan.<sup>172</sup> For him, consecration to Mary has a definitely apostolic thrust because

the mystery of Mary Immaculate, as he sees it, is not so much a mystery of beauty as it is of power. In his view, the Immaculate Virgin is the Lady of Victories, the Strong Woman who, because she was never bitten by the serpent, has kept all her forces intact to crush his head. The Saint moves, then, within a perspective drawn from the “protoevangelium” of Genesis 3:15 and the twelfth chapter of the *Apocalypse*.<sup>173</sup>

But just as the devil avails himself of his “seed,” the wicked, so the Blessed Virgin makes use of apostles whom she has chosen and formed especially to combat him. He demonstrated this historically in his very first sermon on the Heart of Mary, showing how, throughout the history of the church, the Blessed Virgin has answered each new

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Julio Aramendia, C.F.M., “Claret (Bienheureux Antoine-Marie),” *DSp* 2:932–37.

<sup>169</sup> Lozano 144.

<sup>170</sup> Lozano 141.

<sup>171</sup> Lozano 142.

<sup>172</sup> Lozano 140.

<sup>173</sup> This perspective is also notable in the thought of John Paul II. Three times in the course of his Encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, he links Genesis 3:15 to Revelation 12, speaking of Mary as “the woman” of the *Protoevangelium* and of the *Apocalypse* who symbolizes and “incarnates” in herself the struggle against evil and the victory over it. Cf. #11, 24, 47 [*Inseg X/1* (1987) 689–90; 706–07; 738]; cf. also the Prayer at the Piazza di Spagna on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 1991, *Inseg XIV/2* 1991) 1344–1345 [*ORE* 1220:5].

heresy with a special intervention of her own. The last such interventions, he remarks, were the manifestation of her Heart at the Church of Notre-Dame des Victoires, in Paris, and in the foundation of her Congregation.<sup>174</sup>

## Saint Maximilian-Maria Kolbe

The notion of Marian consecration as equipping one to be a soldier of Christ in the battle with the powers of darkness (cf. Eph. 6:12) became ever stronger in the twentieth century. We just heard it sounded above in Saint Anthony Mary Claret, and we know it had been prophesied by Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, that Mary would have a special role to play in the latter times [*les derniers temps*]<sup>175</sup> and that those especially consecrated to her would have a decisive role to play in the battle waged by the enemy.<sup>176</sup> A striking figure who incarnates these ideals is Saint Maximilian-Maria Kolbe (1894–1941),<sup>177</sup> the founder of the *Militia Immaculata*.

The Saint would later relate that, as a young minor seminarian, he felt so impelled to enter into battle in the service of Our Lady that

bowing his face to the floor before the altar of the Immaculata during Mass one day he promised her that he would fight for her. Although at that time he did not know how he was to do this, he thought of his “battle” as a material and bloody one. The military life and career, for which he had an obvious inclination, appeared to him to

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<sup>174</sup> Lozano 135.

<sup>175</sup> *Treatise on True Devotion* #49–59 [God Alone 303–307].

<sup>176</sup> *Treatise on True Devotion* #56–57 [God Alone 306]. Not inappropriately, John Paul II has been proposed as one of these. Cf. “Il Papa Giovanni Paolo II tra gli ‘apostoli degli ultimi tempi!’” *Spiritualità Montfortana* 6 (Rome: Centre International Montfortain, 2006) 9–19.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. *Theotokos* 214–215; Alessandro M. Apollonio, F.I., *Mariologia Francescana: Da san Francesco d’Assisi ai Francescani dell’Immacolata* (Rome: Dissertationes ad Lauream in Pontificia Facultate Theologica “Marianum,” 1997) 109–196.

be in perfect harmony with that of a knight devoted to his Lady.<sup>178</sup>

On 16 October 1917, three days after the final apparition of Our Lady in Fatima and a few months before his priestly ordination, Maximilian, together with six other Conventual Franciscan colleagues, founded the *Militia Immaculatæ*. It was in direct response to Masonic demonstrations which had been held in Saint Peter's Square where banners were carried depicting Saint Michael the Archangel being crushed by Lucifer bearing slogans such as, "The devil will govern in the Vatican and the Pope will act as Swiss Guard for him."<sup>179</sup> By this time, Maximilian had discovered how he would engage in the battle as Our Lady's "knight."

His ideal was chivalrous, but eminently practical: he and his companions would consecrate themselves totally to Our Lady in order to be instruments in her hands for the extension of the Kingdom of the Heart of Jesus. Here is how he explained the rationale for the *Militia* and its consecration to one of his confreres a few years after its foundation, distinguishing it from the Confraternity of the Miraculous Medal headquartered in Paris:

In regard to the confraternity from Paris, it limits itself to prayer alone, while the M.I., although it employs prayer as its main weapon, nevertheless immerses itself in action with all the means that circumstances permit ... Moreover, we consecrate ourselves to the Immaculate without reserve and that constitutes the essence of the M.I.; the Parisian Association doesn't have this. All our sufferings, deeds, thoughts, words, action, life, death, eternity and all of us are always the irrevocable possession (what a delight!) of the Immaculate Queen of heaven and earth. So even when we are not thinking of it (as we like to reflect on it)

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<sup>178</sup> Antonio Ricciardi, O.F.M. Conv., *St. Maximilian Kolbe: Apostle of Our Difficult Age*, trans. Daughters of St. Paul (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1982) 27.

<sup>179</sup> *Scritti* #1277 (2261–2262); #1278 (2265); #1328 (2340).

she directs every one of our actions, prearranges all the circumstances, repairs the damage from our falls and leads us lovingly toward heaven, and through us she is pleased to implant good ideas, sentiments and examples everywhere in order to save souls and lead them to the good Jesus. There is, therefore, a beautiful difference.<sup>180</sup>

Maximilian subsequently became familiar with de Montfort and saw the movement that he founded as a means of fulfilling his prophecy on the latter times,<sup>181</sup> and was also conscious of standing in the great tradition of Marian slavery. Although he did not employ the word with the frequency of de Montfort, he leaves no doubt about its implications in the following text:

You belong to her as her own property. Let her do with you what she wishes. Do not let her feel herself bound by any restrictions following from the obligations a mother has towards her own son. Be hers, her property; let her make free use of you and dispose of you without any limits, for whatever purpose she wishes.

Let her be your owner, your Lady and absolute Queen. A servant sells his labor; you, on the contrary, offer yours as a gift: your fatigue, your suffering, all that is yours. Beg her not to pay attention to your free will, but to act towards you always and in full liberty as she desires.

Be her son, her servant, her slave of love, in every way and under whatever formulation yet devised or which can be devised now or in the future. In a word, be all hers.

Be her soldier so that others may become ever more perfectly hers, like you yourself, and even more than you; so that all those who live and will live all over the world may work together with her in her struggle against the infernal serpent.

Belong to the Immaculate so that your conscience, becoming ever purer, may be purified still more, become

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<sup>180</sup> *Scritti* #56 (379) [trans. in Anselm W. Romb, O.F.M. Conv., *The Kolbe Reader* (Libertyville, Illinois: Franciscan Marytown Press, 1987) 15] emphasis my own.

<sup>181</sup> *Scritti* #1129 (1980) [Romb 36–39].

immaculate as she is for Jesus, so that you too may become a mother and conqueror of hearts for her.<sup>182</sup>

Standing in the great tradition, which we have been sketching, Maximilian brings a note of urgency about the battle, Mary's "struggle against the infernal serpent" (cf. Gen. 3:15) and, hence, the all-consuming goal of his life was to mobilize an army, a militia completely at her disposal. This is clearly illustrated in the official Act of Consecration for the Militia Immaculatæ:

If it pleases you, use all that I am and have without reserve, wholly to accomplish what was said of you: "She will crush your head," and, "You alone have destroyed all heresies in the whole world." Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands for introducing and increasing your glory to the maximum in all the many strayed and indifferent souls, and thus help extend as far as possible the blessed kingdom of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. For wherever you enter you obtain the grace of conversion and growth in holiness, since it is through your hands that all graces come to us from the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.<sup>183</sup>

In the doctrine and practice of Saint Maximilian, the practice of Marian consecration and the worship of the Eucharist were inseparable, as Father Peter Damian Fehlner rightly points out in his foreword in *For the Life of the World: Saint Maximilian and the Eucharist*:

Since there is so intimate and unbreakable a link between consecration to the Immaculate and sharing in the sacrificial consecration of Jesus as victim on the Cross, it is only logical that our progress in perfection and our growth in holiness should be facilitated by our conscious and deliberate affirmation of the consecration to His Mother our dying Savior made of the Church and of every believer

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<sup>182</sup> *Scritti* #1334 (2361) [Romb 194] emphasis my own.

<sup>183</sup> *Scritti* #37 (345-346); #1329 (2345-2346); #1331 (2351) [Romb 159-60] emphasis my own.

(cf. Jn. 19:25–27) and which the present Vicar of Christ repeats wherever he visits.

Love of the Word Incarnate, and therefore of the Eucharist, is not genuine if not sacrificial. Such a love had the Immaculate Virgin throughout her life, nowhere more so than at the foot of the Cross, for the conversion and salvation of souls. Hence the link between consecration to the Immaculate and participation in the mystery of the Cross—the sacrifice for the life of the world—in the struggle for souls between the Woman and her Seed on the one hand and serpent and his brood on the other.<sup>184</sup>

In the course of Father Domański's suggestive book, many of the interdependent dynamics of Saint Maximilian's Eucharistic and Marian spirituality are noted. While it is not possible to work out the implications here, it is fascinating to note that de Montfort's doctrine links Marian consecration to Baptism; Chaminade's doctrine links Marian consecration at least implicitly to Confirmation; and Kolbe's, in various ways, to the Eucharist. Thus, consecration to Our Lady—according to these three Marian Saints and many others—may be understood as the most profound way of living out the three Sacraments of Christian initiation. At every step in the Christian life, Mary is there to encourage, strengthen and guide with her motherly help the one who entrusts himself to her. We will continue to see how Saint John Paul II would draw out these realities.

It is particularly interesting to note how fully Saint John Paul II identified with the Marian spirituality and the Marian consecration of Saint Maximilian. In his homily on 4 June 1979 at Częstochowa preceding his entrustment of Poland on his first trip there after his election as Pope, he stated:

Everything *through Mary*. This is the authentic interpretation of the presence of the Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and of the Church, as is proclaimed by

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<sup>184</sup> Jerzy Domański, O.F.M. Conv., *For the Life of the World: Saint Maximilian and the Eucharist* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 1993) 11–12.

Chapter VIII of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*. This interpretation corresponds to the tradition of the saints, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Grignon de Montfort and Maximilian Kolbe.<sup>185</sup>

In his prayer at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in Paris on 31 May 1980, John Paul made a graceful reference to Maximilian's visit to that same Marian shrine before he began his mission in Japan exactly fifty years before.<sup>186</sup> Likewise his Prayer of Entrustment of the Church of Japan to Our Lady in the Conventual Franciscan Church of the Immaculate in Nagasaki, Japan, made very explicit references to the missionary zeal of Maximilian and his profound love of the Immaculate.<sup>187</sup> One of the great moments of his pontificate was the canonization of Saint Maximilian as a "martyr of charity" on 10 October 1982. In the homily on that occasion the Pope stated that "The inspiration of his [Maximilian's] whole life was *the Immaculate Virgin*, to whom he entrusted his love for Christ and his desire for martyrdom."<sup>188</sup> The next day, in his address to Polish pilgrims, he said: "See what the man who absolutely entrusted himself to Christ through the Immaculate is capable of!"<sup>189</sup>

Now let us pay particular attention to Saint John Paul's words about Saint Maximilian's consecration to the Immaculate. On 26 February 1994 he addressed these words to Conventual Franciscan student friars commemorating the 100th anniversary of Saint Maximilian's birth:

Fr. Maximilian Mary Kolbe, born on 8 January 1894 in Zdunska Wola, Poland, was a shining figure because of *the strong love with which he consecrated his life to the Immaculate Virgin and because of the heroic gift of his life*

<sup>185</sup> *Inseg* II/1 (1979) 1415 [*Poland* 107].

<sup>186</sup> *Inseg* III/1 (1980) 1545 [*France* 54].

<sup>187</sup> *Inseg* IV/1 (1981) 569–570 [*Far East* 321–322].

<sup>188</sup> *Inseg* V/3 (1982) 755 [*ORE* 755:1].

<sup>189</sup> *Inseg* V/3 (1982) 789 [*ORE* 756:12 alt.].

for his brothers, that sacrifice which led him to his terrible death in the bunker of Auschwitz. He remains with us as *a prophet and a sign of the new era, the era of the civilization of love.*

Even as a cleric at the Seraphicum College here in Rome, he tried to share with his fellow students the radical nature of consecration to the Immaculate Virgin, urging them to be soldiers of her who was given to us as the dawn which precedes the rising Sun that saves, Christ the Lord.<sup>190</sup>

On 15 June 2000, he addressed the Chapter of Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate in this way:

St. Maximilian Kolbe's entire life was inspired by the Immaculate. Your institute is dedicated to her and in addition to the three traditional religious vows, includes a "Marian" vow by which each religious consecrates herself totally to Mary for the coming of Christ's kingdom in the world. ...

Stand at the foot of the Cross with Mary, the Immaculate Virgin to whom your religious family is consecrated!<sup>191</sup>

Just a few days later, on 19 June 2000, the Pope addressed the General Assembly of Fr. Kolbe's Missionaries of the Immaculate with another strong exhortation to live the Kolbean Marian consecration to the full:

As I join in your thanksgiving to God for the road you have travelled so far, I hope that the General Assembly will be a favourable occasion for you to reflect ever more deeply on your spirituality of total consecration to the Immaculate, following the example of St. Maximilian Kolbe, the martyr of Auschwitz. ...

Your institute is distinguished by its *Marian charism* drawn from the teachings and example of St. Maximilian Kolbe, whose love for the Immaculate is well known. He sensed that the mystery of the Immaculate contains the

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<sup>190</sup> *Inseg XVII/1* (1994) 544–545 [ORE 1332:10].

<sup>191</sup> *Inseg XXIII/1* (2000) 1103, 1104 [ORE 1649:5].

profound synthesis of the misfortune of original sin, the tragic story which ensued for sinful humanity and the divine plan of salvation which culminated in the Word becoming incarnate in the Blessed Virgin's womb. Spurred by this inner certainty, Fr. Kolbe urged that the truth about the Immaculate be sown in the heart of every man and woman, so that the Blessed Virgin—as he said—would be able to establish the throne of her Son in everyone by bringing each person to a deeper knowledge and love of the Gospel. He also observed that when we consecrate ourselves to the Immaculate, we become instruments of divine mercy in her hands, as she herself was in God's hands. And he urged people to let Mary take them by the hand and lead them, walking “calmly and securely under her guidance.”<sup>192</sup>

Finally, on 18 September 2001, the Holy Father addressed a letter to Father Eugenio Galignano, O.F.M. Conv., on the occasion of the International Kolbe Congress at the Seraphicum, in which he stated

From his youth he [St. Maximilian] wanted to belong unreservedly to Mary, she whom God had thought of from all eternity, the Mother of the Son. The Blessed Virgin was the creature who knew better than anyone how to embrace the plan of redemption that the Most Blessed Trinity willed, in Christ, for all humanity. “How many mysteries about Jesus—wrote St. Maximilian—the Divine Spirit, living and working in you, must have revealed only and exclusively to your immaculate soul” (*SK*, 1236).

He strongly believed that the person who is close to Mary is docile to the breath of the Paraclete, knows how to receive his inspiration and can adhere fully to Christ. He seems to suggest that whoever wants to know and preach the Gospel should draw close to the Immaculata with confidence, because She intimately knew the mysteries of the Son of God. ...

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<sup>192</sup> *Inseg* XXIII/1 (2000) 1134–1135, 1136 [*ORE* 1652:7].

Fr. Kolbe has left this heritage to his confreres, the Friars Minor Conventual, and, through their efforts and their witness, to the whole Christian community. The Militia of the Immaculate, founded by him and recently recognized as a public and international Association of the faithful, has made this consecration to Mary its own in a special way, so that the Gospel may continue to be preached generously to all and be a light for all humanity.<sup>193</sup>

It should be noted that, in each of these texts, the Pope spoke or wrote unabashedly about Marian “consecration.” Even though, as we shall see, he used the term “entrustment” even more frequently to express “belonging entirely to the Mother of God,” he saw absolutely no difficulty in using the terminology of “consecration,” hallowed by five hundred years of use in the Church and utilized by Saint Maximilian-Marian Kolbe.

Standing also in this great spiritual tradition of Marian consecration as equipping one for active service in the Church Militant was the Servant of God Frank Duff (1889–1980).<sup>194</sup> In 1918, after being challenged to a rereading of de Montfort’s *Treatise on True Devotion*, which he had initially considered as “wildly extravagant,” Duff tells us

the sudden realization came to me that the book was true, a complete conviction that what I had been regarding as exaggerated and unreal was fully justified. The excesses, which I thought I found in the book were really deficiencies in myself, wide gaps of knowledge and comprehension.<sup>195</sup>

In the wake of a discussion on that book by a Dublin conference of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society four years later on 7 September 1921, the Legion of Mary was born,<sup>196</sup> and Duff insisted that “the starting of the Legion was divinely held up for several years

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<sup>193</sup> *Inseg* XXIV/2 (2001) 340, 341[*ORE* 1713:12].

<sup>194</sup> Cf. *Theotokos* 125; O’Carroll, *Veni Creator Spiritus* 73–74.

<sup>195</sup> Robert Bradshaw, *Frank Duff: Founder of the Legion of Mary* (Bay Shore, N.Y.: Montfort Publications, 1985) 55.

<sup>196</sup> Bradshaw 67–68.

until de Montfort had provided the soil or atmosphere in which the Legion could take life.<sup>197</sup> The apostolate of the Legion, which has been responsible for remarkable works of charity and evangelization since its foundation, is built on a promise addressed to the Holy Spirit in which the legionary declares himself to be the “soldier and child” of Mary and prays:

Let thy power overshadow me, and come into my soul with fire and love, And make it one with Mary’s love and Mary’s will to save the world; So that I may be pure in her who was made Immaculate by Thee; So that Christ my lord may likewise grow in me through Thee; So that I with her, His Mother, may bring Him to the world and to the souls who need Him; So that they and I, the battle won, may reign with her for ever in the glory of the Blessed Trinity.<sup>198</sup>

In this same spirit the 1961 edition of *The Official Handbook of the Legion of Mary* devotes an entire section to “the duty of legionaries towards Mary”<sup>199</sup> and commends in particular the consecration of Saint Louis de Montfort.<sup>200</sup>

These historical considerations, far from being exhaustive or constituting a definitive study of Marian consecration in the life of the Church, nonetheless illustrate a remarkable consistency and convergence in the practice of placing one’s life, one’s work and the apostolate itself in the hands of Mary.<sup>201</sup> Apart from the pontifical acts of consecration that we will study next, the

<sup>197</sup> Frank Duff, *The Woman of Genesis* (Dublin: Praedicanda Publications, 1976) 73; cf. also 75.

<sup>198</sup> *The Official Handbook of the Legion of Mary* (Dublin: Concilium Legionis Mariae, 1961) 52–53.

<sup>199</sup> 128–147.

<sup>200</sup> 142–147.

<sup>201</sup> Besides the articles on the subject in *Theotokos* and *NDM*, further helpful summaries of the history of Marian consecration may be found in J. Laurenceau, O.P., “Aperçus sur l’histoire de la consécration à Marie,” *Cahiers Marials* 137 (1 avril 1983) 66–84; W. G. Most, “Marian Consecration as Service: Historical, Theological and Spiritual Reflections,” *Miles Immaculatae* 24 (1988) 443–445 and Alessandro M. Apollonio, F.I., “La consacrazione a Maria,” *Immaculata Mediatrix* 1:3 (2001) 49–101.

Church's cumulative wisdom on Marian consecration in the spiritual journey of the Church might be seen as summarized in two magisterial texts. The first is the laconic but nonetheless lapidary statement made in the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity:

Everyone should have a genuine devotion to her [Mary] and entrust his life to her motherly care.<sup>202</sup>

The second is contained in Pope Saint John Paul II's Marian Year Encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, #48:

Marian *spirituality*, like its corresponding *devotion*, finds a very rich source in the historical experience of individuals and of the various Christian communities present among the different peoples and nations of the world. In this regard, I would like to recall, among the many witnesses and teachers of this spirituality, the figure of Saint Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, who proposes consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary, as an effective means for Christians to live faithfully their baptismal commitments. I am pleased to note that in our own time too new manifestations of this spirituality and devotion are not lacking.<sup>203</sup>

As one thoroughly formed in the tradition of this spirituality of Marian consecration, John Paul was ever deepening and developing its major lines, as we have seen here and as we will continue to see.

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<sup>202</sup> "Hanc devotissime colant omnes suamque vitam atque apostolatam eius maternelae curae commendent." AA #4.

<sup>203</sup> *Inseg* X/1 (1987) 739 [St. Paul edition 68].