

**Reflection for 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 On St Louis Marie de Monfort author of the book 'True Devotion to Mary**

April 28, is the feast of St. Louis Grignon de Montfort. He was born in France in 1673 and died only 43 years later in 1716. In that short time, St. Louis de Montfort became widely known for three things that ultimately led to his canonization: his holiness, his zeal, and his devotion to the Blessed Mother.

He was the eldest surviving child of eighteen born to Jean-Baptist and Jeanne Robert Grignon. At the age of 12 he entered the Jesuit College of St Thomas a Becket in Rennes, where his uncle was a parish priest. At the end of his schooling he began studies in philosophy and theology at St Thomas in Rennes. He was inspired to his love of Our Lady by his local priest, Abbe Julian Bellier, who encouraged a lifelong consecration and entrustment to Mary. He studied at the Sorbonne philosophy and theology and then worked at St Sulpice in Paris in the library.

As a seminarian in Paris, he was “known for the veneration he had towards the angels – ‘he urged his confreres to show marks of respect and tenderness to their guardian angels’”.

When he was just 19 years old, on a trip to Paris, Louis gave all his money to the poor and made a vow to only rely on charity thereafter. At the age of 27, he became a priest and carried out his mission of going from parish to parish zealously preaching consecration to Mary.

His work, “True Devotion to Mary”, teaches that devotion to Our Lady is the most efficacious means of attaining union with Christ. In this regard, his regime of Total Consecration to Mary requires a recognition of our desire to share in her faith, which entails acknowledgment of our unworthiness and need of her assistance in attaining our spiritual growth.

But what exactly is Marian consecration and why did St. Louis care so much about it? Ultimately, he would say that it is a sure way to Jesus through Mary.

St. Louis begins the book by acknowledging that Mary wouldn't be or have any greatness without God, but God has deigned for her to be conceived without sin, the mother of the Incarnate Word, and the mother of us all. Since Mary perfectly follows her son, we can never love her without having even greater love for the Lord.

But why not just devote ourselves directly to the Lord? Devotion to Mary doesn't exclude devotion to Jesus, it only helps to carry it out. It's like devoting yourself to the king by loyally following his faithful captain, in this case, his mother.

Moreover, holiness is ultimately dying to our own will and uniting it to God's. By humbly consecrating ourselves to Mary we start to do that, and in consecrating ourselves to her she joins us in our fight for sanctity.

She intercedes for us and with us. True, Jesus is always happy to answer our prayers, but how much more does he delight to answer them when they come from his blessed mother.

How fitting it is that St. Louis' feast day is just before May, the month of Mary. Let us renew our devotion to Mary so that through her we may come to love Jesus as she does!

*"We never give more honour to Jesus than when we honour his Mother, and we honour her simply and solely to honour him all the more perfectly. We go to her only as a way leading to the goal we seek - Jesus, her Son." - St. Louis de Montfort*