



PERIOD TWO – DAYS 13-19

KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

REFLECTIONS

Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary
2020

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PERIOD TWO – KNOWLEDGE OF SELF REFLECTION

OUR GIFTS TO JESUS THROUGH MARY THIS WEEK:

We offer our prayers for those whom the Holy Spirit brings to our minds, including the thousands of our companions on our Consecration Journey, for their spiritual safety, for their perseverance and for their faith. And we ask that our MERITS , dispensed through the loving hands of our Mother, from God, be shared among those whose names we offer in prayer and humility.

The Second Period of our Consecration Journey is all about KNOWLEDGE OF SELF.

St Louis de Montfort echoes many great saints whose teachings and spiritual guidance call us down a path into deeper self-knowledge: St Teresa of Avila; St Catherine of Siena; St Augustine; St Bonaventure to name only a few. To confirm the wisdom of their instruction, we look to the source.....Sacred Scripture:

Romans 12:3 ;
1 Timothy 4:16 ;
2 Corinthians 13:5 ;
Jeremiah 17:9;
Proverbs 20:5 and 14:8;
Matthew 7:1-5 and many more.

But two Scripture writings in particular guide us into the seeking of self-knowledge and in them we understand the urgency of this wisdom from our saints:

"LET US TEST AND EXAMINE OUR WAYS, AND RETURN TO THE LORD" Lamentations 3:40

"BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND" Romans 12:2.

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PERIOD TWO – KNOWLEDGE OF SELF REFLECTION

If we still need the assurance that self-knowledge is essential while we are being beckoned into Jesus through Mary, we hear the words of God Himself speaking to St Catherine of Siena. In these words, we hear God, the Spiritual Director Himself, addressing our souls...

"DO YOU KNOW...WHO YOU ARE AND WHO I AM?.....NEVER LEAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF SELF. THEN, PUT DOWN AS YOU ARE IN THE VALLEY OF HUMILITY, YOU WILL KNOW **ME** IN YOURSELF".

The words of St Teresa of Avila reveal the unchanging message of the Holy Spirit...."You cannot know God if you do not know yourself".

Knowing who and what we are are the starting points of spiritual progress. Knowing ourselves in our powerlessness, our nothingness allows us to glimpse the height and breadth and depths of God's great love and goodness and mercy towards us. When we know something of the depths of our sinfulness, we can begin to know something of the Lord's Redemptive Suffering for us.

Knowledge of self leads to knowledge of God and knowledge of God leads to an ever-deepening knowledge of self.

St Louis de Montfort's Consecration journey leads us to Jesus THROUGH MARY and his wisdom in that passage, going through Mary, is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

To be confronted by the depths of our sinfulness in this period of knowledge of self could result in our souls becoming deeply discouraged!

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But because we are going to Jesus through her, Our Mother will never permit us to be drawn into that tool of Satan....discouragement.

Instead, during this essential week and beyond, a much greater revelation is gifted to us..... as we grow in knowledge of self, of our sinfulness, we will grow too in knowledge of God and He will give us many graces to see more clearly the depths of the Loving Mercy of God. We will grow in the knowledge of the staggering price that our Savior Jesus wanted to pay to claim us back and give us to His Father, our Father and to give us a glorious reward, cost free:

His desire is to make us "partakers of the Divine Nature...the Son of God became man so that we might become God". (Catechism of the Catholic Church: Article 460)

As always we seek the source in Sacred Scripture of such an astounding promise... :
"Because I live, **you** also **will** live. On that day **you will** realize that I am in **my** Father, and **you** are in me, and I am in **you**. ... **My** Father **will** love **him**, and **we will** come to **him** and **make our home** with **him**. He who does not love me **will** not obey **my** teaching." (John 14:23)

"....that we might become God"

What could that actually mean in our days, our interactions, our aspirations, our prayer life, our fears? Do we subject all of these to God's Presence or do we keep control of them? Do we know ourselves well enough to see them through the Lens of God's Eye?

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We have all lived with ourselves for so long and each one of us is aware of the number of times we've sinned. We may fall into a sin that just seems to be endlessly victorious over our souls. We have many of us tried to confront those aspects of our fallen nature that just seem to keep crushing us and which endlessly block our movements to get closer to our self-lavishing God.

By now, we may even sometimes feel that we've tried so often but we're just not able to overcome those sins that keep snapping at us. In this Consecration Journey, we will hear the call of the Lord.....SURRENDER!

As long as we live the illusion that the sin we keep repeating in Confession is within our power to overcome, we will continue to fail over and over again.

..... SURRENDER!

Pope Benedict once described Original Sin as a fog. We can't see through its thickness and the deeper we sin, the deeper the thickness of the fog. Our nature, fallen in sin, causes the interior fog to thicken around our souls. When we are blessed with self-knowledge, shafts of light begin to pierce the fog and we begin to see that it's only through God's grace, God's courage, God's strength that HE will conquer the darkness of constant sin.

We can't do it alone.

We can't unglue ourselves from self.

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So, knowledge of self! How do we see ourselves? Do we have dusty corners that we prefer to keep dusty? areas of fear? hurts, even, from very many years ago that still shape our reactions? interior darkness caused by wounds?

And God replies that the Spirit of God "broods over the waters" (Genesis 1:3) of our darkness. Where the Spirit of God breathes, brooding over the waters of our soul, there is life. It is His desire to "brood over the waters" of our darkness to bring life, a resurrection, a re-creation.

"The Spirit broods over the face of the deep" (Genesis 1)

These depths are the caverns of our souls and the Spirit of God hovers, broods, waiting for our permission to bring life from our darkest depths.

We enter this coming week seeking knowledge of self and we come in prayer and trust. We may suddenly find ourselves scraped bare with a memory that shames us, or a fear that controls us or a sin that suffocates us. Thousands of us, from all across the world are making this Consecration Journey together.

We are praying for each and our prayer is that each one of us be given the humility through God's grace to say...

Lord, Help me. I want to Surrender.

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All of us will encounter interior difficulties as we go forward into this challenging part of our Consecration. Some may become so deeply disquieted, fearful of going forward into uncharted waters for our soul, that we want to abandon the whole idea. It may help us to know that many have battled in the same ways and have been victorious under the banner of our Holy Queen.

In a recent 33 Day Consecration journey, one man arrived to attend this week's reflections . He was extremely agitated, fearful, ashamed. He stood at the door of the Chapel and privately explained that he could not continue with the journey,. When asked why not, he explained that each night when he was trying to quiet his thoughts to pray the evening prayers, pornographic images flooded into his mind . In deep distress he explained he couldn't go on with the commitment. The solution was to separate the prayers and pray one in the morning, one at midday, one at night. This plan did not allow the devil any time to gather forces against this soul and instead allowed Our Lady to be honored throughout this man's day.

Our Heavenly Mother grasped this soul and he almost danced his way forward to stand, weeping with joy at the altar to make his 33 Day Consecration on her Feast day.

LORD, HELP ME. I WANT TO SURRENDER TO YOU

And we are led into surrender of self by the Lord Himself. On Day 14 reflections, Montfort reminds us that the Savior , the Almighty, the Most High, the One Who created all things out of nothing, humbly subjected Himself to all men so that we might overcome our pride and learn to break our will, yielding ourselves up to subjection.

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In this week of knowledge of self many of us may think....

"I'm a mess. My life, my past, my now is interior chaos because of my sins".

If we were to run to a trusted spiritual director to explain all the interior junk that God may gently reveal to us this week, and indeed during this Consecration Journey.

a very wise spiritual director would definitely NOT reply with...

"Listen, you're being too hard on yourself. Just relax. God loves you."

Yes, God loves us; but on this quest for a much deeper relationship with Him, for an encounter with the Living God Who embodies humility, we would treasure a different response from our director---

"Yes! you're right! You are a mess. but God wants to lift you out of your mess----that's why He's giving you the grace to see your interior mess".

The Spirit desires to give us the grace to surrender, and then to allow Him to lift us out of our mess because....

"WHERE GOD'S SPIRIT IS AT WORK, THIS IS NOT CHAOS.

IT IS TRANSFORMATION!!!

THE DARK NIGHT IS THE RE-FORMATION OF THE POORLY-FORMED SOUL."
(Impact of God)

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PERIOD TWO – KNOWLEDGE OF SELF REFLECTION

We are on our journey into transformation through re-formation. In the readings of the week ahead, specifically the meditation for Day 16, St. Louis De Montfort uses harsh language and some of us may react defensively: Montford asks us to liken ourselves to "snails, crawling things, serpents...."

Let's take a step back and try to understand why he would do this if we are made in the Image and Likeness of God.

OUR HUMAN NATURE FELL BECAUSE OF ORIGINAL SIN AND IT'S OUR FALLEN NATURE WHICH MONTFORT IS DESCRIBING SO HARSHLY. HE DOES THIS SO THAT THROUGH SELF-KNOWLEDGE, WE CAN SURRENDER MORE AND MORE OF OUR FALLEN NATURE TO GOD SO THAT WE MIGHT "PARTICIPATE IN THE DIVINE NATURE".

We are consecrating ourselves to Jesus for the rest of our lives. Jesus' Nature is both God and Man. Jesus' Nature was man's human nature, yours and mine but His was without sin. In every other way He shared our human nature.

Monfort's descriptions of our fallen nature---slimy things, crawling things, cannot be applied to the Lord's Nature. Yet during His Passion we see and hear Jesus associating himself in every sort of painful way with our fallen nature.

1) He was crowned with thorns----

There's a profound theological significance to that unwitting act of the soldiers.

In Genesis, after the fall of Adam and Eve, God says; "cursed is the ground because of you. thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you"

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The crown of thorns being placed on Jesus' head signifies that He was taking the curse of the sin placed on Adam and Eve by God. Christ paid that penalty.

In Christ, the Genesis curse was lifted so that we would no longer be pierced by the thorns of our sins. The soldiers took the thorns from the plants and Jesus wore them as a crown. The King's ransom for our curse.

2) "crawling things, in the dust"

Jesus fell into the dust on the way of the Cross. Once again this is a profound reference to the Fall in Genesis. Christ rose from our Fall.

3) On the cross, we hear Christ not just associating Himself with our fallen nature but actually absorbing it, enfleshing Himself with it.

Once again St. Louis De Montfort's words "snails, worms" find their source. In Jesus cry from the Cross, we hear Him reciting Psalm 22 verse 7.

In this Psalm, we hear His lament in these words...."but I am a worm, not a man, scorn of mankind, contempt of the people"

There's a world of meaning in the choice of His word,"I am a WORM".

In ancient biblical texts the Hebrew word for "worm" is "rimmah" which means maggot.

The Hebrew word that Jesus uses here for worm is "TOLA'ATH" which means crimson worm or scarlet worm. Scarlet and Crimson are the colors of blood---deep red.

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The Crimson worm is a very special worm. When it is time for the crimson worm to procreate, the worm finds the trunk of a tree. The TOLA'ATH then grafts its body to that wood and makes a hard crimson shell. The worm becomes so strongly and permanently attached to the wood that the shell can never be removed without the body being torn completely apart and the worm is killed. The eggs of the crimson worm are protected under the shell but after THREE days, the crimson worm dies and in death a scarlet crimson red dye oozes from the body and the eggs are given life from it.

AND THE SAVIOR CRIED, " I AM A WORM".

He did not cry, "I am LIKE a worm" , but "I AM A WORM". The TOLA'ATH that was Jesus allowed Himself to be grafted on to the wood so that His children may be washed with His crimson blood and in three days be given life through His willed death.

Is this why Montfort asks us to "meditate on our inward corruption...as...snails, crawling things, toads"?

Does our pride refuse to acknowledge our baseness?

If so, could we be denying ourselves the victory that Christ won for us on the Cross when He became TOLA'ATH? Is that self-description too base for us?

Jesus took every aspect of the worst of who we are in our fallen nature. What was the price of His suffering? What is the prize He showers on us if we empty ourselves, subject our will to Him in acts of humility? Be covered crimson by His Blood?

The prize?...we will "participate in the Divine Nature" and ...

"the whole wide world will remember and return to Yahweh." (Psalm 22:28)



PERIOD TWO – KNOWLEDGE OF SELF REFLECTION

In our quest for knowledge of self, the God of Mercy is ready to reveal the darkness of our nature to us for one reason only... so that we can surrender our sins fully into Christ to allow us then to become one in Him and He will present us with deep delight back to the Father.

This powerful week of allowing God to help us to know ourselves in our sinfulness is a core and vital communication from God as He draws us into His Love and Mercy.

We'll know that His Spirit is hard at work in our souls if we experience any or all of the following this week :

- * we may experience strong temptations. Temptations are an essential part of every living spiritual life.

"We often know not what we are able to do, but temptations discover what we are". (Imitation of Christ) We learn much about ourselves through our temptations.

SURRENDER.

- * we may feel like we want to give up on prayer. This is precious progress because God is speaking, revealing the weakness of our faith to us. He is

whispering to us that He wants to give us the Spirit's essential gift of perseverance.

- * we may feel dryness in prayer. This is excellent because yet again God is whispering that He wants our love for Himself not for feelings of sweetness in prayer.

(These are God's gifts of "consolations" and sometimes when they dry up, we think God has abandoned us. Quite the contrary. He's inviting us to grow up, spiritually.)

- * we may feel like our work and our efforts to serve Him are futile, not bringing the progress that we'd hoped.. Once again God is speaking to us , drawing us into His own humility by causing us to focus on "our" efforts to please Him, on the activities which we've chosen to "do" for Him. And rather painfully, we begin to realize that nothing pleases him more than the greatest gift we can give Him which is the gift of our sins. When He reveals them to us, we grow in knowledge of self, and knowledge of Jesus Christ Who purchased them with His Death.

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PERIOD TWO – KNOWLEDGE OF SELF REFLECTION

A pathway prayer into humility and deeper knowledge of self...

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE TIMES YOU HAVE SAID "NO". THEY HAVE HELPED ME TO DEPEND ON YOU SO MUCH MORE.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR UNANSWERED PRAYERS. IT REMINDS ME THAT YOU KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR ME. THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE THINGS YOU HAVE WITHHELD FROM ME. YOU HAVE PROTECTED ME FROM DANGERS UNSEEN.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE PHYSICAL PAIN YOU'VE ALLOWED IN MY LIFE. IT HAS HELPED ME TO MORE CLOSELY SUFFER WITH YOU.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE ALONE TIMES IN MY LIFE. THEY HAVE FORCED ME TO LEAN CLOSER INTO YOU.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE UNCERTAINTIES I'VE EXPERIENCED. THEY HAVE DEEPENED MY TRUST IN YOU.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE TIMES YOU RESCUED ME WHEN I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I NEEDED RESCUED.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE LOSSES I'VE EXPERIENCED. THEY HAVE REMINDED ME THAT YOU ARE MY GREATEST GAIN.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE TIMES WHEN I COULDN'T CONTROL MY CIRCUMSTANCES. THEY HAVE REMINDED ME THAT YOU ARE ON THE THRONE.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE UNCERTAINTIES I'VE EXPERIENCED. THEY HAVE DEEPENED MY TRUST IN YOU.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE TEARS I HAVE SHED. THEY HAVE KEPT MY HEART SOFT AND MOLDABLE.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR YOUR WAY OF TAKING MY LIFE'S "TRAGEDIES" AND TURNING THEM INTO TREASURED TIMES.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THOSE YOU HAVE CALLED HOME TO BE WITH YOU. THEIR ABSENCE FROM THIS EARTH REMIND ME TO KEEP MY EYES ON HEAVEN.

THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE GREATEST GIFT YOU HAVE EVER GIVEN ME : FORGIVENESS THROUGH YOUR SON'S DEATH ON THE CROSS FOR ME.

THANK YOU, LORD , NOT ONLY FOR MY ETERNAL SALVATION BUT ALSO FOR THE SALVATION YOU AFFORD ME EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE WHEN YOU SAVE ME

FROM MYSELF, MY FOOLISHNESS, MY LIMITED INSIGHTS, MY FRAILTIES, THE CONSEQUENCES OF MY SINNING. AND THANK YOU, LORD, ESPECIALLY THAT THROUGH JESUS I HAVE ACCESS TO

MY FATHER.

(Adapted from C

McMenamin)

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PERIOD TWO – KNOWLEDGE OF SELF REFLECTION

WE NOW RECITE OUR PRAYERS FOR PERIOD 2, REMEMBERING ALL WHO ARE WALKING WITH US INTO JESUS, THROUGH MARY.

AND WE REMEMBER TOO THAT WE DON'T COME ALONE.....OUR CHILDREN, OUR PARENTS, OUR FRIENDS LOST TO GOD.....ALL WILL BE TOUCHED BY THE POWER OF OUR OFFERING.

"ALL THAT I AM AND ALL THAT I HAVE IS YOURS, MOST LOVING JESUS, THROUGH MARY, YOUR MOST HOLY MOTHER". (ST. LOUIS de MONTFORT)

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