



CONSECRATION  
TO THE  
*Sacred Heart of Jesus*  
AND THE  
*Immaculate Heart of Mary*



**June 8, 2018**

**How to Grow Practically in Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

How can you and I grow in our relationship with Our Lady? We can grow as in any relationship.

Think about a special relationship you have with someone either living or deceased. As in any relationship, it takes time, effort and above all awareness of the love exuding from the other, which ignites us to reciprocate. My friendship must become a priority in my life.

**Awareness of Mary's Love for Me**

Are we even mindful of the Blessed Mother's love for us? A comparison: let us look at human mothers and infants. When we were infants, this one adult female (hopefully) was the world to us. I will never forget holding my one-month old niece while her mama went on an errand. I walked over to a picture bulletin board and pointed to her mother. My niece began wailing, exceedingly obvious that she wanted Mama, not aunt Sister!

Perhaps we can compare my niece to each one of us. Do we yearn for our Blessed Mother as an infant yearns for her Mama? At one time in our lives, we came to realize Mary loved us. We wanted contact with her, be it wearing her medal or scapular, carrying her Rosary or just looking up to a beautiful statue or picture of her. "What a joy to remember that she [Mary] is our Mother! Mothers are intuitive and are able to determine nuances of their children that others may overlook.

Therese of Lisieux, wonderful Saint and mystic, reminds us that Mary, as our spiritual mother, is able to do this concerning our sins, weaknesses, and failures. She is capable of reaching into our hearts to the most vulnerable of places, even the parts of us that we'd rather deny or rationalize. She meets us where we are with the kindness of an earthly mother: a kiss, an embrace, rest, and refreshment. Since she loves us and knows our weakness, what have we to fear?" -Saint Therese of Lisieux

### **What Do We See in Mary that Makes Us Want to Love Her?**

1. Protection: Mary protects us. Many exorcists concur with St. Bonaventure that Mary's holy name causes demons to flee instantly. If the devils fear Her, then we should run to Our Lady when the evil one attacks. Moreover, Mary fights all tendencies to evil. Through Her loving Heart, she exudes power against all her enemies. "Grant that I may praise you, O Most Holy Virgin Mary! Give me strength against my enemies."

Besides demons, Mary fights our own obstacles to our relationship with Her, obstacles such as

Mortal Sins: In the state of mortal sin, what does our Mother see? She views our icy burdens of sin, which She can melt by inspiring us to go to Confession. Read this true example from a former student in a letter received this week: (June 2018) This young man had just lost his father and lived without any relatives in far-away California; he had been out of the Church for a few years. "I must say that my biggest aid has been going to Church again, saying prayers daily. I feel like a burden has been lifted from my life and I am aware of the Holy Spirit's presence every day. PS I put the green scapular under my mattress.' The green scapular can be placed in a room of someone you want to revert to the Faith or convert. I then prayed to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for him. She, as always, came through!

Venial Sins: According to St. Maximilian Kolbe, "It is true that every venial sin is the most horrible misfortune, more horrible than all the misfortunes in the world." Gossiping, white lying, being late for Sunday Mass, that trouble I gave my spouse, that word I should not have said.... what, then, do we do with these

seemingly inveterate bad habits? Entrust them to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, show them to Her whose Heart, by God's Will, is Mercy. Trust ourselves in nothing, and confide in our Mother in everything, without limit, at every moment and in every occasion of sin.

As a teen, when I went out and came home late, my mother was waiting for me. Because God blessed me with a good relationship with my mother, who was also close to Mother Mary, I confided everything to my mom, who was strict yet understanding. I think my mother, together with our family rosary, kept me pure in a generation and a culture in southern California that at that time (and it has only grown!) reeked of impurity. So, too, when we fall into any kind of venial sin, we need to go immediately to our Mother and tell her everything, asking for strength. She will infallibly give us the power to overcome venial sin, if we are open to Her. The saints tell us that anyone who during a temptation prays to the Immaculate Heart will most surely not sin and who throughout his life runs to Her will not sin.

Lukewarmness, routine, mediocrity: How inimical these vices are to our Mother! We can compare lukewarmness to the seven-year itch in marriages today. Married people tell us that at about seven years many couples divorce. "I don't love (feel) for you anymore." "Our relationship has become sterile. Let's move on."

These couples fail to recognize the nature of love: love is not a mere emotion, which we share with our furry pets. Rather, love is of the will: "For better or worse, in sickness and in health," etc. True human love perdures when feelings, both emotional and physical, wane.

Lukewarmness in marriage compares to routine in our devotional life to Our Lady. If Mary becomes "cold" to me, (and when we look to Mary we immediately connect to Jesus .... they are one) it is not Her fault...it is mine. It is not my mother's faults if I become disrespectful just because I am imitating bad example in others.

The Remedy: How did this “coolness” happen? Just like in a marriage, it is the little things. A woman once told me she and her husband went on a vacation, alone, without the children. They were both individually pursuing careers and hardly had time to talk to each other. When they were with each other, they did not know what to say! However, with good will, slowly, the communication began again. They did love each other, but they had ignored the “little things” that experts tell us make communication flourish: a gift, a kind deed, a note, work done for the other.... by the end of their short trip, they were once more a couple and hopefully some things would change.

What destroys our relationship to Our Mother? According to St. Maximilian Kolbe, “One seeks oneself everywhere, avoids crosses, has no love for sacrifice.” Although God continues to send graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, if we do not profit from them, we become responsible even for unnoticed graces.

We develop a moroseness, a weariness and in sets a sense of despair. The devil continues to labor on such a person. He instills some of the grimmest thoughts, walking all over the soul, until the person says, “There is no hope for me.” This statement is one of the most damaging lies of Satan. The devil is sneaky: he allures one to sin and then leaves the poor human in gloom, with a belief that he cannot be forgiven.

What are the causes for these sins, anyway? According to Maximilian Kolbe, it is over-confidence in our own strength. The Immaculate Heart will guard us from falling if we confide in Her and never in ourselves, while doing on our part whatever we can do to cooperate with grace.

Falls serve a valuable purpose, for when we sin we are reminded of our weakness. Our Lord told St. Catherine of Siena, “You are nothing and I am Everything.” He reminded her this was a first principle of all supernatural life. St. Therese of Liseaux was glad she was, at least in her mind, an imperfect person. A fall is simply a reminder to go back to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and confide in her, peacefully. The reader may

be thinking, "Easier written than done!" The author replies, "I agree!" Nevertheless, both our Foundress, Mother Joanne, and my 2018 Retreat Director, Father Thomas Haake, OVM, reminds us, "God works slowly."

### **Levels of Devotional Practices to the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

Do you remember childhood days of swimming lessons? Beginners learned to float and kick; the intermediate began to do the crawl, and the advanced dived, practicing the back stroke. The most advanced did the butterfly as well as learning how to life guard. I forgot the level of diving off the high dive, but it was certainly not for beginners. My younger brother, when he first began in the shallow pool observed the high dive in the "deep pool," ran to it and jumped in as a beginner. Naturally, the lifeguards went to get the tyke and got a chuckle, as did my parents and me. Metaphorically, this is not safe to do in the spiritual life as it is inane to do in the lessons of swimming. I would like to label the devotions to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. St. Teresa has her mansions, St. John of the Cross his Mountain, and this author has her three levels of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

#### **Beginning Level**

God created us as humans, body and soul, composite persons. The human person needs harmony between his mind and body. Venerable Bishop Sheen teaches that the Rosary, a physical-spiritual prayer, has special value to the worried and intellectuals, simply because these two groups often lack harmony between the physical and spiritual. That is why we all need things to touch, to see, to hear, to smell, to taste.

Marian Sacramentals: Beginners in devotion to Mary could start by just carrying or wearing a Miraculous Medal, or any medal of Our Lady; a scapular, especially the Brown Scapular recommended by Our Lady of Fatima. It could be helpful to carry or wear something tangible: a Miraculous Medal or any Medal of Our Lady, a Scapular, especially the brown Carmelite one we all were once presumably enrolled with at first Holy Communion. Many carry rosaries or put them inside their car. Sometimes it helps just to squeeze the

rosary, especially when we are tense. Carry a holy card of the Immaculate Heart or set up a picture in your home

**Simple Prayers:** Basic prayers consist of Morning and Night Prayers. The Church usually recommends the Morning Offering: O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen. This prayer has numerous variations, but the main idea is to start your day giving to God, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, everything you may encounter during the upcoming day. (<https://www.ewtn.com/devotionals/prayers/morning2.htm>) Then, at night, after the Act of Contrition, say your favorite aspiration to Mary.

### **Intermediate Level: More Quality & Quantity without Overdoing It**

**Sacred Spaces in your Home:** Set up a sacred place, no matter how small, to honor the Immaculate Heart of Mary. If you don't have a place in your home, even a simple picture from the Internet will do, a picture placed in a frame from the dollar store, placed in the middle of your table. It makes a difference. First, to you, for pictures remind us of the persons we love, in this case, Our Lady. Second, if you have a family, to your children and your spouse. Mary seems to be keeping a watchful eye and images on young children and teens last for a lifetime. If you are single, you can recall that you are really never alone and your very solitude helps you commune with the persons of heaven.

**Prayers:** In this level, give all to Mary in your day, and at night give all your gifts back to Her, so She can present them in the most efficacious way to the Lord and others.

\*As you see fit, if you have children say a Hail Mary aloud and mention special intentions; let your children mention their intentions. You will be surprised at their depth and for whom they choose to pray.

When my sister asked her little four-year-old, "For whom shall we pray?" it was inevitably someone in the family out of the church. She did not know at least by reason they were not practicing their Faith! I have had little children pray for the end of abortion, for the conversion of abortionists, for our Holy Father.... where do they get these ideas? (In the latter case, probably from their good parents) Did not Our Lord say, "Let the little children come to me, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

\*Start praying a decade a day. Venerable Bishop Sheen said that the reason God gave us ten fingers was for each Hail Mary of the Rosary. A decade is not long and manageable for either yourself or you and your children.

\*Confide in the Immaculate Heart. Tell Our Mother what is really in our heart. We can let it all out, for she is always available and open. A good mother knows when her child is hurt either physically, emotionally, or spiritually. A child needs his mother most when he is wounded and most hurt. Why not cry out to Our Mother who can help us in the best possible way? She knows our pains, but wants us to confide them to Her. She will find a way to heal us, whatever the heartache is. Today's world, due to its fast pace, has its own unique stresses: insomnia, heartburn, anxiety, fear, nervous habits, etc. At the moment you acknowledge your source of stress, pray to Mary. "If you ever feel distressed during your day — call upon our Lady — just say this simple prayer: 'Mary, Mother of Jesus, please be a mother to me now.' I must admit — this prayer has never failed me." -Blessed Mother Teresa

\*Read books about Our Lady. Consecration makes up the essence of devotion to Mary, but some of those books are challenging reading. Father Michael Gaitley, MIC, wrote a book for his contemporary peers: *Thirty Days to Morning Glory*. Having made different consecrations under different books, I found this simple manual, like a breath of fresh air, refreshes, speaks to the heart of today's person, and includes such greats as St. Louis de Montfort, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Mother Teresa, and St. Pope John Paul II. Another religious

from the same order, Fr. Donald Galloway, MIC, received raving reviews from his book, *Under the Mantle*. A good book for children? Look up *Take It to the Queen: A tale of Hope*, by Josephine Nobisso.

\*Let Her be Your Traveling Companion. A song, *Santa Maria Del Camino*, meaning Our Lady of the Way, is popular in among Hispanics & Italians. Let Our Lady of the Way travel with us either on short or long journeys. Our Mother protects us from many dangers in our travels perils both physical and moral. How many accidents must Our Lady have prevented, both physical and moral?

### **Advanced Level of Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

Remember my six-year-old brother who at the time ran for the high dive and could have been killed? God works slowly and we must let Him guide us in our relationship with Our Lady. Just as there are no “instant saints” nor “instant deep friends,” so usually there is no “instant deep relationship with the IHM.”

In addition, our relationships with our Mother is not a marathon where we put forth all the effort. Rather, it is a cooperation with graces flowing upon us, a supernatural race where we follow Our Mother holding Her hand.

Talking to Her Frequently What child does not talk to its mother, whether to offer some flowers, to ask for help or some fun? Just observe little ones. They prattle away to Mama. Do we to our Mother? Recall, we may be in our nineties but we are still little children in Her eyes. St. Kolbe tells us, “To confide in her, speak to her from our hearts, love her and entrust all of our lives is most pleasing to her, as well as to her son Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” Our dearest of mothers, who loves us more than all the good mothers of the world past, present and future according to St. Louis de Montfort, yearns to frequently converse with us. What friends do not have frequent communication between them? Mary, our Mother, Confidant and Companion, want us to talk and to listen to Her, frequently.

\*Stopping Points: Many holy people have made themselves “stopping points” in the day, when they just need to have a little chat with Our Lady. Aspirations help. The very word “aspire” brings to mind “breathe.” These short darts of Love, such as “Immaculate Heart of Mary, be my salvation,” enkindle actual grace for whatever we will next face. Anyone can make them.

\*Say a Hail Mary before an event/meeting. When I was a teen, I belonged to the National Forensics Team. Because we had moved to an area where there was not a Catholic High School, I had to go to a public school in California, which I later found out was one of the most progressive and “liberal” in the southern California. Drugs and free love reigned. Teachers could knock any cherished tradition. However, Our Lady protected me by giving me as a speech coach a devout Catholic who whispered to me, knowing I was Catholic, “Say a Hail Mary before you speak.” Every time I followed her advice, I won. Every time I didn’t, I lost. Just say a Hail Mary if you are anxious about something you have to do or someone you need to meet. It works!

Placing Our Concerns in Her Heart: Do you ever get nervous? Anxious? Angry? Impatient? You can make up other adjectives describing yourself. Pause right now and give it to Our Lady’s Heart. “Mary, I place my anxiety in your Heart.” She is the ultimate anti-ruminator and anti-whatever defect you may be now experiencing. Truly, it works.

Upon reading the story of how St. John Marie Vianney wrote the names of his parishioners, most of whom were unfaithful, in Mary’s Heart, I thought I would write some intentions in a big heart on the white board of my classroom. Interestingly enough, students joined in, writing in her heart some painful events. After that first Heart, other students wanted to “draw the Heart.’ Not being an artist, I gladly allowed them. Many of our Sisters do this in their classrooms, too. However, you do not have to be an IHM. Do this in your home, on your bulletin board, on your refrigerator, and see how your family or just you yourself will come up with petitions!

## **Promote the Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

\*Pictures/Statues: Once I noted a beautiful young girl in my class staring at something. “What are you staring at?” She replied, “The Immaculate Heart of Mary ... she is so beautiful!” replied the teen. This student was from a very wealthy family, but she knew what best could fill her heart ... the heart of true Mother. Having pictures around to remind ourselves can also help others.

\*Miraculous Medals: As IHMs, we carry miraculous medals to give them away. If you are on the “advanced level,” this is a practice anyone can do. Please read the following contemporary description: “My father, a policeman, received a Miraculous Medal from my aunt, to help protect him while driving. At the request of my aunt he kept his medal on his key chain. One day, he was in a shootout while on duty. A bullet struck his keys and deflected him away from his femoral artery. He probably would have bled to death if the bullet had struck his artery. He ended up walking away from the shooting. He still has that Miraculous Medal. I add, “Wouldn’t you?”

\*Work for Our Lady of Fatima’s Peace Plan and Her Solution to the Errors of Russia. Labor for world peace, by becoming a peace-maker yourself. Become informed about what is going on about us. I was shocked to learn that most Catholic school students did not know about the tragedy of Alfie Evans, whom Pope Francis even tried to save from starvation and dehydration.

Due to socialized medicine of Great Britain, Alfie Evans, a baby, was not allowed to go home to be cared for by his own parents, because of some mysterious non-diagnosed disease. After twenty-three months, the Liverpool hospital turned off all life support. He lived for another nine hours, defying all odds. After almost two years of fighting the courts, the young parents had to see their little “gladiator” die from one of the most excruciating sufferings: starvation and dehydration.

This decision, writes Notre Dame ethicist O. Carter Snead, reflects a profound, indeed lethal intolerance of dependence and disability. But it is even worse than that. Just as in the Charlie Gard case, the courts here effectively terminated the rights of Alfie's parents, forbidding them to seek transfer to other facilities that wished to care for Alfie. According to hospital officials, letting Alfie die was in the child's best interest. However, Pope Francis tweeted the following message around the world: "I renew my appeal that the sufferings of his parents be heard and their desire to seek new forms of treatment be heard." In another tweet, the Holy Father also proclaimed that "the only holder of life is God and life, from the time of natural conception to death, every effort should be made to preserve life."

This is only one of the bleaker tragedies of today. We must passionately love the Immaculate Heart of Mary by promoting her in every way possible, because not only is our salvation dependent upon Her intercession, but our very world's.

#### **Closing: The Very Best Way to Show Mary Love**

Imitation is the highest compliment one can give to another. To bring Mary the utmost happiness, and us the highest glory, let us just follow what she did: "Do whatever He tells you."

This means simply following God's Will, whatever road that takes. Each moment brings us a chance to say with Mary "Fiat." This is very practical. How can I better live with a person I am destined to dwell? How can I better fulfill my work as a parent, laborer, priest, sister, child, teen?

I urge you to seriously reflect upon and resolve how you can deepen your relationship with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so through you, called from all eternity, can help Her Heart in the end Triumph....soon!