

# Modern Developments in the Devout Life

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## **PART V – MODERN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DEVOUT LIFE**

### **5.01 – SURPRISING NEW ACTIONS**

#### A History of Surprises

God never changes internally. However, the devout life faces new situations, and He always brings forth surprising new actions. His greatest surprise came in the fullness of time, when “God sent his Son, born of a woman” (Gal.4:4). After they killed the Son, God raised Jesus from the dead. Fifty days later came the great surprise of Pentecost, the new outpouring of the Spirit with speaking in tongues and signs and wonders.

Just as human history has moments of great crises and great opportunities, so does the history of God’s kingdom and the Church. All history is a clash of kingdoms, God’s and Satan’s.

#### Special Moments

In special moments, this spiritual clash erupts into extraordinary crises (like the two world wars). The forces of evil erupt and God’s forces respond. When the clash is over, a surrender takes place.

At this moment in history, we are bracing for the greatest battle since Jesus won his victory on the cross. For 2000 years, Satan has looked forward to this moment. He was defeated by the Resurrection, and can never erase that event. However, he can cover over that light, and plunge the human race into darkness. This is the clash of kingdoms, the behind-the-scenes struggle. Human persons are instruments (of God or Satan). Through them, the clash bursts forth into the events of our world.

These talks will focus on two of God’s surprising actions – Catholic Pentecostalism and the Marian apparitions.

*The saints say:*

1. *1. The Holy Spirit is writing a book that will only end with human history’s final moment. This book tells God’s plan for all mankind. (FjdeC)*
2. *2. God’s works are without limit. Who will ever recount his wonders? (STA)*
3. *3. Unfortunately, we are satisfied with little, when God plans great things. (BL)*

4. *4. I must be God's disciple, attending only his school. (FjdeC)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. How do you see modern times? Can you see the sources and effects of Satan's powers? Can you also see God's powers?*
2. *2. Where do you think that you fit in? Is God preparing you for some special role?*

## **5.02 – modern PENTECOSTALISM**

Pope John XXIII

A few centuries ago, in an amazing village in Czechoslovakia, a beautiful woman saved the people from starvation. Mary appeared on the mountain and taught the people to invoke the Holy Spirit. After that, the villagers manifested all the Pentecostal gifts (healings, miracles, prophecy and tongues), with each succeeding generation using those gifts. When someone was sick, all prayed for a healing. The village was totally devout – reading the Bible, attending Mass, living the gospels.

In the 1930's, God told the people that their village would be destroyed. The Nazi invasion in 1938 fulfilled that prophecy. Fortunately, one young girl, Anna Schmitt survived. Years later, she told the story of Bishop Angelo Roncalli (later Pope John XXIII) coming to the village in the 1930's and enjoying the charismatic manifestations. The Pope himself had the gift of tongues (according to a layman who worked with him). We now understand why Pope John asked the Church to pray for a New Pentecost.

In the 1970's, people in the Catholic Pentecostal Movement would say, "If only Pope John could see what happened when he had us pray for a New Pentecost". Really, the Pope had already seen a village filled with those Pentecostal gifts which would suddenly erupt within the Catholic Church in 1967.

Blessed Elena Guerra and Pope Leo XIII

Worldwide Pentecostalism began with the hopes of Blessed Elena Guerra (1835-1914), who founded the Oblate Sisters of the Holy Spirit and formed prayer groups which invoked the Holy Spirit. More important, she wrote twelve confidential letters to Pope Leo XIII, asking him to dedicate the twentieth century to the Holy Spirit.

At her urging, Pope Leo invoked the Spirit upon the world on December 31, 1900. At that exact moment, the Holy Spirit came upon a prayer cenacle in Topeka, Kansas where the members were laying hands to impart the Holy Spirit. One woman, Agnes Ozman began to pray in tongues. This was the beginning of all modern Pentecostalism. The little stream became a gigantic river, usually based in specifically Pentecostal Churches.

The Duquesne Experience (1966-1967)

In the 1960's, Pentecostalism entered a few Protestant churches. In 1967, the greatest Pentecostal explosion took place in the Catholic Church beginning at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. In 1966, some professors decided to investigate Pentecostalism. They attended a home prayer group of an Episcopalian woman, Elizabeth Dodge. Here they received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and charismatic gifts.

In February, 1967, at a weekend retreat for students, they spoke about the Holy Spirit. On Saturday night, the Pentecostal manifestations began spontaneously. The young students were baptized in the Spirit and prayed in tongues. Catholic papers reported these events and the seeds for the worldwide Catholic Pentecostal Renewal had been planted.

This stream flowed quickly to Catholic groups in South Bend, Indiana and Ann Arbor, Michigan, where leadership emerged and conferences were held. In June 1971, 7000 attended the Notre Dame Conference and Pentecostalism was named the top Catholic religious news story. In 1974, 25,000 attended. At the grassroots level, many prayer groups sprung up. The story was just beginning.

*The saints say:*

1. *1. Jesus Christ abandoned himself to the Holy Spirit. He did not even consult his own past to know what to do in the future. (FJdeC)*
2. *2. The Holy Spirit brings forth no other Divine Person. Now he brings forth members of Christ's Mystical Body, through Mary. (SLdeM)*
3. *3. My Spouse is very rich and I will use all his treasures. (STL)*
4. *4. Every soul should ask the Spirit to blow through its garden because this is so blissful. (SJC)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. Do you know much about the history of worldwide Pentecostalism? Of Catholic Pentecostalism? Have you ever participated in Catholic Pentecostal groups or events?*
2. *2. Has the Church experienced a New Pentecost or is that still to happen? How would a "New Pentecost" bless the Church?*

### **5.03 – A VISIT TO A PRAYER GROUP**

The Story of a Priest

In April 1970, a priest attended the Pentecostal prayer meeting that had just begun in Philadelphia at the inner city parish of St. Boniface. About forty Catholics, from the suburbs, were attending this charismatic Mass. The leader, Brother Pancratius, C.S.S.R., asked the priest to return because, at mass, he did not experience praying in tongues or any charismatic gift. Since nothing particularly touched the priest, he thought he would never return. However, God had planted his seeds.

A year later, the priest was experiencing great darkness in his ministry.

## The Great Gift

His sister-in-law told him about all she received from her charismatic prayer group. Suddenly, he was absorbed by an inner light and knew exactly what to do. He would go back to St. Boniface. For the next two weeks, he bought every book he could find on this Catholic Pentecostal Movement.

### Entering the Door

He called Brother Panky (his nickname) to find out the time for the meeting. Brother asked, "Weren't you here about a year ago?" The priest realized that it was one year to the day. (God was really working!)

That night, the priest stood before the doors of St. Boniface for the second time, filled with extraordinary light and saying within, "A year ago, I was right here and this meant nothing to me. Now, it means everything, "why I was born", "why I am a priest", "the purpose of my whole life", "my whole eternity is connected with what is behind that door". He was about to enter the door of Catholic Pentecostalism (April 16, 1971). May these talks bring you through the same door.

### *The saints say:*

1. *1. Devotion makes the person eager to join with others who share the same interests. (SFdeS)*
2. *2. Our heart has a secret instinct for happiness. We seek it, not knowing where to find it until faith reveals its presence. (SFdeS)*
3. *3. My heart was too small to hold the gift. I felt as if my soul had been reborn and some of its neglected strings had been restored. (STL)*
4. *4. I realize very clearly that happiness has nothing to do with material things which surround us. It dwells in the very depth of the soul. (STL)*

### *Group Discussion:*

1. *1. What moments in your life were very special? Did you seek God's help? Did he answer your plea? Who was there to help you?*
2. *2. Have you experienced moments of great darkness? Have you ever been filled with sudden light? What were the effects?*

## **5.04 – being prayed over**

### Early Experiences

Within that year, the prayer group had grown from 30 to 150 people. The priest attended the newcomer teaching with 20 others, listening to two laymen teach about the Baptism of the Spirit and praying in tongues. At the end of the night, the 150 people

entered church and Brother Panky invited them to praise God. Suddenly, the church was filled with the most beautiful six-part harmony of prayer tongues (his first experience!). It ended suddenly, as if a conductor had waved his baton.

The next week, he again heard the group singing and praying in tongues. Within him, grew a tremendous desire to do the same. By the third week, two feelings burned within. First, he had discovered unbelievable spiritual treasures (exactly what he needed for his priesthood). Secondly, he felt like he was a failure. All these people were praying in tongues, while he remained quiet.

### Seeking the Baptism of the Spirit

Knowing that prayer tongues came with the Baptism of the Spirit, he asked to be baptized in the Spirit. A large crowd gathered around, laid hands and prayed. It was a special moment. He pictured the stream of God's will carrying him along. He knew to surrender his whole life. Afterward, he began saying strange words (which he later found out were Greek).

### Praying in Tongues

The next night (May 1, 1971) in his own room, he was reading a book about praying in tongues. The teaching was the same as at St. Boniface. Open your mouth and God will supply the words. For 30 minutes, he walked around his room saying, "La, La, La" believing that God would bestow his gift. Then, he realized that his lips were saying unknown words. They were flowing from his lips without him forming them. He had yielded to tongues. He prostrated on the floor for 20 minutes, allowing the gift to flow freely.

He was doing exactly what the apostles had done 2000 years ago. Convinced that this was quite real, he slept soundly. In the morning, he began again and the words flowed quite freely. He was about to spend his first full day praising God in the Spirit's language. The door had opened. Now would come the other gifts. (All the powers of Pentecostalism are described in "A Key to Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church". - available at Amazon.)

### *The saints say:*

1. *The only gift you possess that is infinite is your desires. (SCS)*
2. *Souls must not rest until they find the object of their desires. (SFdeS)*
3. *We limit God's stream by having small desires. (BL)*
4. *Waters are given to those who thirst. (FJdeC)*

### *Group Discussion:*

1. *Do you know much about the laying on of hands? Has anyone or any group laid hands in prayer?*
2. *Are you familiar with praying in tongues? Do you experience the gift? Would you*

*want to enjoy the gift?*

## **5.05 – THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT**

The priest tried to fit these new powers into his knowledge of the devout life. What was this Baptism of the Spirit? The answer soon became very clear. The lay people in the prayer group told the priest about their own religious experiences, namely, what happened when they received this Baptism of the Spirit. Years before, the priest had received this religious experience as a seminarian, but did not know it had a name. Also, he knew nothing about the gift of tongues.

He saw God's method. He gave this religious experience to those who searched for it. Being a seminarian, he had searched and found. People in the prayer group also were searching, and knowing where to find, they received the beginning religious experiences.

Very Practical

Pentecostalism is practical, communicating religious experiences by a very simple process. When people join the group, they receive teachings on the Baptism of the Spirit (the beginning religious experience). They are encouraged to receive this Baptism. Having great faith in the Holy Spirit, the group lays hands and prays for the Baptism of the Spirit. Using these means, the Catholic prayer group fosters religious experiences in all its members.

The group also provided many helps for a devout life. They taught religious experiences. They provided a weekly meeting to sustain these beginning experiences. They formed a devout community (stressed so often in these teachings) which kept alive the flame of prayer. The whole process was simple and effective. From this small prayer group came forth a gigantic religious movement which filled Philadelphia's largest indoor arenas for decades.

*The saints say:*

1. *1. In spiritual matters, whoever is satisfied does not have enough. Spiritual graces always demand a desire for more. (SFdeS)*
2. *2. To possess God, we must seek him ardently. (SLdeM)*
3. *3. The soul does not lose her life. She is mingled with God and God lives within her. (SFdeS)*
4. *4. I often repeat, "Lord, what do I care about myself or about anything that is not you." (STA)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. Discuss your own religious experiences? Is there any experience you had which was life changing? How did it come about?*
2. *2. Do you participate in any Devout Community? Do you see the need to gather with others to sustain your devotion?*

## 5.06 – PRAYING IN TONGUES

Brother Pancratius gave excellent teachings on praying in tongues, and helped beginners to pray in tongues by a practice called “yielding to tongues”. As a result, everyone in the prayer groups (many thousands) prayed in tongues, just as Paul had urged, “I want all of you to pray in tongues” (1Cor.14:5).

Brother’s teaching went this way. “When a person speaks in English, he uses three faculties – his intellect, his will and his lips. When a person prays in tongues, he uses only his will and his lips. The person does not use his intellect because the Holy Spirit provides the words. St. Paul calls this “praying with the spirit” in contrast to “praying with the mind” (1Cor.14:15).

### How to Receive

Usually, to begin to pray in tongues requires three things. First, the person hears others praying in tongues and realizes the gift is available. Secondly, he receives some basic teaching on prayer tongues. Third, he desires the gift. At this point, he should receive the laying on of hands for the Baptism of the Spirit. After that prayer, as the leader prays in tongues, the newcomer looks at the leader’s lips, moves his lips and prays with him (leaving English aside). Soon, the newcomer is aware that prayer words are flowing out and that he is praying in tongues.

A week after praying in tongues, the priest attended a smaller prayer group and was asked to help a woman yield to tongues. After the prayer and the laying on of hands, the priest asked the woman to leave English aside and to pray in tongues. Since he was a priest, she had total confidence and began immediately to use prayer tongues. Since then, the priest has helped thousands to pray in tongues.

### A Permanent Gift

The person must continue to use the gift until they have a total confidence that they pray in tongues. The gift is permanent. After yielding to tongues the first time, the person can pray in tongues whenever he wishes (like learning to ride a bike). Praying in tongues is a special gift bringing about tremendous spiritual effects. It enriches mental prayer and opens the person to the Holy Spirit, who anoints the person with his spiritual gifts (the charisms) to help others.

A woman once asked, “Where do tongues fit into this devout life?” A good question. Prayer tongues is not a different road but moves the person more quickly along the road of devotion.

### Qualities of the Gift – Further Explanation

Praying in tongues enhances all the gifts of prayer which you have already received. Your mental prayer goes to a new level as you allow the Spirit to speak to you. Also, praying in tongues is easy, does not tire you out and can be used all day.

By praying in tongues you give the key to your heart to the Holy Spirit and He gives you the keys to his treasury of spiritual powers. When you pray in tongues, you and the Spirit pray together. You use your will and your lips. He provides the words.

### Personal Experiences

After yielding to tongues, the priest found prophetic words coming to mind (next chapter). He discovered new joys and ease in mental prayer. The divine presence seemed much closer.

One time, a couple asked to pray in tongues. They received the gift. The next week, however, they said, "We lost our gift". Really, no one loses the gift. The couple just did not get comfortable and confident. So, for the second time, they prayed in tongues. The next week they said "We didn't lose the gift this week."

*The saints say:*

1. *1. Because praying in tongues was not a widespread experience, there are no quotes available. They are a definite part of the Church's tradition and described by Father Tanquerey (#1515).*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. Is the teaching clear? Does anyone in your group experience the gift? What questions do you have? What do you not understand?*
2. *2. Where can you seek the gift? Are there any prayer groups in your area? What can you read?*

## **5.07 – THE HIDDEN PENTECOSTAL TREASURES**

The St. Boniface prayer meeting was held in a long, but narrow room with three rows of the chairs facing each other. As the priest arrived one night, only one seat in the first row was open. As the group prayed in tongues, he experienced the prophetic gift for the first time. Some words were going around in his head and he didn't know what they were or what to do. As the tongues ceased, the woman facing him gave her prophecy, "The Lord says that I have placed the words in your mind. Speak the words I have given you." The Lord's command was clear. For the first time, the priest spoke prophetic words in the Spirit.

A Leadership Group

Fortunately, Brother Panky began a smaller group to form leaders. Because these people were deeper in the Spirit, the prophetic gift came more powerfully. Brother stressed the charisms, saying, "Use the gifts and the meetings will grow. Stop using the gifts and nothing will happen." At these leaders meetings, all the gifts were flourishing.

The Hidden Treasure



At that time (1971), Philadelphia had only eight groups, but Brother had deep faith that people could come to St. Boniface, learn about Catholic Pentecostalism and begin their own parish group. In those early months, the growth was taking place because Pentecostalism was a treasure house of God's powers. This hidden treasure, if guided correctly, was a mustard seed that could grow into the largest of trees.

The people were learning quickly how to form new groups, how to bring people into the Baptism of the Spirit, how to hold conferences and how to nourish the prayer groups. Within five years,

Catholic Pentecostalism in Philadelphia grew to 160 groups and rented the largest indoor facilities that were available. Many young people in the movement became priests and religious.

### Telling Others

This powerful world of Catholic Pentecostalism branched out into many forms; a weekly priest prayer group, teaching conferences to train people, Men's Prayer Breakfasts, Women's Prayer Luncheons and a Young Adult Group. Each group had the same, clear focus. People gathered to praise God through the power of his charismatic gifts. As Brother said, "We used the gifts and the groups flourished."

*The saints say:*

1. *1. As God increases his favors, I fall more and more into debt. (STA)*
2. *2. Our love for God is never sufficient and we should not remain still in our sufficiency. (SFdeS)*
3. *3. Just as a river sweeps along all that it meets, so your love, Jesus, sweeps along my soul. (STL)*
4. *4. God wants you to be holy like Jesus in this life and glorious with him in the next. (SLdeM)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. Can you see the many divine powers hidden in Catholic Pentecostalism? Why do not people seek them? Why do you hesitate to ask for them?*
2. *2. Even if you do not understand, do you feel drawn to them? If you understood these gifts of service, would you not be a better instrument in helping others?*

## **5.08 – HEALING AND DELIVERANCE**

One night, Brother Panky called a group over and said, "We are going to pray for a healing". This was all still new for most of us. A religious sister sat in a chair and Brother took her feet into his hands. As we began to pray, I watched her right leg move. She was going to need an operation for her back and had a right shoe with a large instep. After the prayer, she took off her shoes and walked around the Church. She called off the operation. A year later, she witnessed to the complete healing of her back.

## Deliverance

The next week, a woman came to the meeting with a distorted face. (That is the best way to describe it.) Brother again pulled a group together. "We are going to pray deliverance". All of us went into a little chapel. Brother said, "I will ask her about each problem". As she answered the question, Brother would say, "In Jesus' name, I cast you out". The woman mentioned about five problems (fear, anxiety, etc.) that she experienced. After each one, Brother said his prayer. After these short prayers, she said, "I don't understand. You just say 'be cast out' and it goes". The woman's face was different. The distortions were gone. As she continued with the group, everyone could see that God had restored her beauty.

## Healing Ministries

Over these years, many people with powerful healing ministries have come as speakers to Philadelphia. One Catholic has raised people from the dead. Others have many stories of healings. We have all met people who have been healed of one thing or another. The secret is to hang around people who enjoy God's powers. All of these are quite ordinary people with one thing in common. Through Pentecostalism, they have learned about charismatic powers, which God gladly gives to ordinary people who believe in His actions.

How can we be certain that the Spirit will pour out his signs and wonders? The answer is this. Praying in tongues and powerful signs go together. All those with great healing ministries speak in tongues. If people want to be baptized in the Spirit and pray in tongues, then God can give them powers to prophesy, heal, deliver from evil spirits, etc. If a person refuses to accept the Baptism in the Spirit and praying in tongues, then God has difficulty in bringing the person into powerful, wide scale charismatic actions.

*The saints say:*

1. *1. I believe the devil was given physical power over me, but that he could not touch my soul or mind. (STL)*
2. *2. The combat between the Archangel Michael and Lucifer still continues on earth. (SLdeM)*
3. *3. God has declared an eternal war, fought relentlessly between Mary and the devil, between her children and his. (SLdeM)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. Do you understand this world of charismatic powers, such as prophesy and healing? Does it seem far away from your own experiences?*
2. *2. Do you know anyone with a powerful, charismatic ministry? Do you ever pray for someone to be healed? Has God ever given you a word to speak to others?*

## 5.09 – SPIRITUAL GIFTS (CHARISMS)

The two experiences of Baptism of the Holy Spirit and praying in tongues are for everyone. Their central purpose is your own holiness. Paul writes "Whoever speaks in tongues sanctifies himself" (1Cor.14:4). These two experiences open the door to spiritual gifts which sanctify others. Paul writes, "Whoever prophesies sanctifies the Church" (1Cor.14:4). Pentecostalism contains powers for personal holiness and for helping others. St. Paul lists nine such powers. (1Cor.12: 4-11)

### Researching the Nine Gifts

With Catholic Pentecostalism, the Church has two worlds. In 1971, a priest found himself in two worlds.

The parish life is normal (so to speak). Nothing extraordinary usually takes place. In Pentecostalism, many extraordinary happenings occur. Fortunately, these nine spiritual gifts are described in "The Spiritual Life" by Father Adolphe Tanquerey, S.S. (a French priest who taught in U.S. seminaries). This text is accepted by all Catholic scholars as an authoritative manual.

Father Tanquerey has an excellent section on charisms, but he classifies the nine charismatic gifts as extraordinary mystical phenomena. Since in Pentecostalism, ordinary people use these gifts all the time, they were obviously neither extraordinary nor mystical. Father Tanquerey thought they were extraordinary and mystical because the gifts had been absent from normal Church life for centuries and manifested only by saints.

Right now, the Spirit is pouring out the gift of praying in tongues. If the Spirit pours out this one manifestation, will he not pour out all of his spiritual gifts? The sad point is this. Many Catholics say, "That is for some people". This attitude deprives the Church of many spiritual gifts because tongues is the regular door to all the charisms.

This section is entitled "Modern Development in the Devout Life", not because charisms are modern, but because the widespread appearance of charisms is modern. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of Catholics know or use these charisms.

### What Should Be Done?

Members of Devout Communities can solve this problem. They are interested in holiness and in all the helps which God offers. In this "new development", God is pouring out His Spirit. People are praying in tongues and using charisms. Devout souls should study these. Paul says, "I do not want you ignorant of spiritual gifts" (1Cor.12:1.) Open your hearts and your groups. Allow the Spirit to bestow these powers. Pentecostal churches use these powers very effectively. This is the next talk.

### *The saints say:*

1. 1. *God did not withhold these favors but souls, by their own fault, were deprived of untold blessings. (FjdeC)*

2. 2. *God's gifts are given but they are hidden under different appearances. (FjdeC)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. 1. *Are you open to studying the charisms? Do you believe God will bestow them?*
2. 2. *Will you use them for the Church? Cannot God use you in wonderful ways to help his people?*

## **5.10 – PENTECOSTALISM OUTSIDE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Many priests working among the Spanish are frequently greeted by “Yo soy Penecostal” (I am Pentecostal), meaning “I am no longer a Catholic.” What power do these churches have? Anyone involved in Catholic Pentecostalism can provide the answer.

This is the picture. Outside of the Catholic Church, Pentecostalism grows and flourishes. It steals our members and evangelizes those who have never heard the gospel. If this is true, then why do we not learn from them? God placed Pentecostalism in the Church in 1967. In so many places, this seed came forth, flowered for a while, but then withered. Critics would say that it was a passing phenomenon. Really, its powers never found deep soil.

Pentecostalism is now the third force in Christianity (together with Catholicism and Protestantism). Pentecostalism is not a church. It is a spirituality, able to generate tremendous Church growth. The point of this chapter is that by using the Spirit's powers, Pentecostal Churches throughout the world enjoy explosive growth.

A View Forty Years Later

In Philadelphia, and in some other dioceses, Catholic Pentecostalism received proper pastoral guidance, and became a long-lasting movement.

People involved in Pentecostalism have read these Devout Life Teachings and said, “I wish I had these teachings when I was in Catholic Pentecostalism”. Pentecostalism is extremely practical. The Devout Life is very deep. The two need each other. Maybe we will get it right the second time around!

*Group Discussion:*

1. 1. *Have you had any contact with Pentecostal Churches? What struck you about their pastoral methods?*
2. 2. *Can we learn anything from them? How would the Catholic Church benefit? Can Pentecostal gifts be experienced by the average Catholic? ? Are you interested?*

## **5.11 – THE LAYING ON OF HANDS**

At the end of each prayer meeting, Brother Pancratius would invite anyone who needed prayers to go to the end of the pew. The experience was always similar. The leader would say a short prayer in English and then all would begin to pray in tongues. A deep

peace and renewed faith comes over the person. The experience always lifts up and this practice can be a regular part of the devout life. Let's examine this gift in scripture.

## New Testament

Vatican Council II highlighted the laying on of hands, but only in the administration of sacraments. That is far too limited. The New Testament shows a much more extensive use. James tells the presbyters to lay hands upon the sick person (5:14). Hebrews says that the "laying of hands" was basic Christian teaching (6:2). In the gospels, Jesus often laid hands, usually to heal. In the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples laid hands for various purposes – to heal, to bestow the Holy Spirit and to commission for missionary work. Acts 14:3 says that the Lord granted "signs and wonders to occur through their hands". Pentecostalism began when the little bible study group in Topeka, Kansas realized the power of the laying on of hands to impart the Holy Spirit.

## Early Years of Priesthood

There is this legitimate question, "What has happened to this ministry of 'laying on of hands?'" Most priests and people do not lay hands to pray for people. Yet, many experiences of very balanced people show the power of this action. Some special people have laid hands on thousands of people, with many blessings. Some people wanted the fire of devotion. Others wanted freedom from demonic affliction or healing of illnesses. Why do just some lay hands and most Catholics are ignorant of this gift? Parents should lay hands every night upon their children and people should pray over each other frequently. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Stir into flame the gift you received by the laying on of hands." In the Diary, Elizabeth encourages people in the cenacle to bless one another. Do that with great faith. Let us restore this gift. Without the laying on of hands, the fire of the Spirit is easily lost.

## Some Final Words

### Special Testimony

Father Michael Scanlon, T.O.R., the famous president of Franciscan University (Steubenville) has told many people his story. In the late 1960's, he was confessor to a contemplative nun whom he considered the holiest person he knew. One day, she surprised him, "Father, make sure you get involved in this Pentecostal Movement. It has helped me to grow in holiness". If Pentecostalism helped this holy nun, then Father Scanlon knew it would help him also.

Soon after this, Father James Ferry came to Father Scanlon's seminary at Loretto to speak about Pentecostalism. Afterward, he invited the seminarians to come forward to receive the Baptism of the Spirit. To his great surprise, the first one on his knees was the rector, Father Scanlon. At that moment, he entered a door that totally changed his

priesthood and led to his great work at Franciscan University. Hopefully, this special section will be like the contemplative nun's advice "Make sure you get involved in this Pentecostal Movement".

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. What special doors have opened for you? Do you desire to help others into devotion? Do you have a zeal to study, so you are prepared?*
2. *2. When, in your life, has anyone given you good advice? What blessings did you receive by following it?*
3. *Have you ever had anyone pray over you by laying hands? Did they use prayer tongues and charismatic gifts? Please describe your experience.*
4. *Do you lay hands in prayer? Or, do you know others who do? What blessings come from these prayers in faith?*

## **PART TWO – THE AGE OF MARY**

### **5.12 – THE MARIAN APPARITIONS**

Never in the Church's history have there been so many Marian apparitions. They signal the spiritual clashes that are taking place and reveal God's intention of exalting Mary's Immaculate Heart.

The Miraculous Medal

Mary's modern apparitions began in Paris on July 18, 1830 (the vigil of St. Vincent de Paul) when Mary appeared to St. Catherine Laboure (a novice in St. Vincent's Daughters of Charity). She appeared again on November 27, 1830. Mary told Catherine to have a medal made (called the Miraculous Medal), which contains the words, "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee". This medal and the miracles that followed brought about a great increase in devotion to Our Lady's Immaculate Conception and led Saint Pope Pius IX to declare the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (in 1854).

Lourdes

Four years later, February 11, 1858, Mary appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous. On March 25, 1858 (the Annunciation) Mary said, "I am the Immaculate Conception". Never having made her First Communion, Bernadette did not even understand what the words meant.

Besides these two apparitions, Mary has appeared on many other occasions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

1. 1. Bangy, France (1840) – Sister Justine Bisqueyburu

2. 2. LaSalette, France (1846) – Melanie Mathiev (15) and Maximum Giraud (11)
3. 3. Pontmain, France (1871) – Eugene (12) and Joseph (10), Françoise Richer (11); Jeanne-Marie Lebosse (9); Eugene Friteau (6) and a two year old girl. (The adult villagers saw only three bright stars).
4. 4. Pellevoison, France (1876) – Estelle Faguet
5. 5. Knock, Ireland (1879) – Mary McLoughlin, Mary Beirne, Patrick Hill and eleven others
6. 6. Troyes, France (1845) – Sister Apolline Andriveau, D.C. – to whom she revealed the red scapular
7. 7. Green Bay, WI (USA) 1858 – Adele Brisse (accepted by the bishop as truly supernatural in 2010).

All of these apparitions, prepared for the great apparitions of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. The focus will be upon the two great sites, Fatima and Medjugorje.

Note: Taken from the book, “A Woman Shall Conquer” by Don Sharkey (Bruce Publishing)

*The saints say:*

1. 1. *The Little Flower described her miraculous cure when she was ten years old. (1883) “Suddenly, the statue of the Blessed Virgin glowed with a beauty beyond anything I had ever seen. Her face was alive with kindness and an infinite tenderness, but it was her enchanting smile which really moved me to the depths. My pain vanished and two great tears of pure joy crept down my cheeks.” (STL)*
2. 2. *Even the most spiritual Christians do not understand the mystery of Mary. (SLdeM)*
3. 3. *Mary is the magnificence of God, filled with unimaginable beauty. (SLdM))*
4. 4. *In the highest heavens and in the lowest part of hell, all things proclaim Mary’s wonders. (SLdeM)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. 1. *Are you familiar with any of these apparition sites? Did you realize the fresh outpouring of Marian apparitions? What does this seem to mean?*
2. 2. *Recount your own devotion to Mary. How does Mary help you?*

### **5.13 – Fatima – the PREPARATORY VISIONS**

The Fatima story has three parts:

1. Apparitions of the Angel of Peace (1916)
2. The six apparitions of Our Lady (Mary 13, 1917 to October 13, 1917)
3. Later apparitions to Sister Lucy

The Three Visionaries

Before beginning, let us meet the three visionaries.

Lucia dos Santos was the youngest of six children, (born on March 22, 1907) and a cousin to Francisco and Jacinta. . Our Lady told her that she would remain on earth for many years and that she was to learn to read so she could spread the messages of Fatima. She died on February 13, 2005.

Francisco Marto was the sixth of seven children, (born on June 11, 1908). His mother and Lucia's mother were sisters. Our Lady told him that she would take him to heaven quickly. He died on April 4, 1919.

Jacinta Marto was the seventh and final child, (born on March 11, 1910). Mary also told her that she would be taken quickly to heaven. She died on February 20, 1920.

The Angel of Portugal (1915 – 1916)

To prepare for Mary's appearances, the Angel of Portugal came first to Lucy and then, later, to all three children.

In 1915, Lucy, and three companions (not Jacinta and Francisco), saw a figure above a tree "like a statue, made of snow, transparent by the sun's rays." This apparition happened two more times, with no words being spoken. Later, Lucy wrote, "This apparition made an impression but, little by little, it disappeared and I would have completely forgotten it."

A year later, Lucy, Francisco and Jacinta had the daily task of caring for their families' sheep. All three saw the angel. (The other two knew nothing of the previous appearances.) Lucy writes: "It was a young man, about 14 or 15 years old, whiter than snow, transparent as crystal when the sun shines through it, and of great beauty. " The Angel knelt and bent his head until it touched the ground. The children, led by a supernatural impulse, did the same.

The angel taught them a prayer. "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love you. I ask pardon of you for those who do not believe, do not hope and do not love you." Afterwards, the children found themselves in an intense spiritual atmosphere. The profound impression of the vision imposed a special silence. Because Francisco saw the angel but did not hear his words, the other two told him what was said. In all the apparitions, Francisco saw but did not hear.

Other Appearances

In the summer of 1916, they suddenly saw the Angel beside them. He said, "What are you doing? Pray. Pray very much! The Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High. Pray for your country. I am the Guardian Angel of Portugal."



In October, 1916, they saw the Angel again, who was holding a chalice in his left hand. The sacred host was suspended above it, while drops of blood fell from the host into the Chalice. The angel left the chalice and host suspended in midair, knelt beside the children and taught them this prayer. "Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I offer you the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the sacrileges, outrages and indifference by which He Himself is offended. Through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of you the conversion of poor sinners". (Ed note – This is similar to the prayer that Jesus taught St. Faustina two decades later).

The Angel then gave Lucy the Sacred Host and gave the chalice to Jacinta and Francesco saying, "Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Make reparation for their crimes and console your God." The effects of this mystical experience remained for days and left the children in a weakened condition. Later, Francisco asked what he had received. When Jacinta told him that it was Holy Communion, he replied, "I felt that God was within me, but I did not know how."

*The saints say:*

1. *1. I was subjected to serious illness and great pain. In Holy Communion God removed this pain in a flash and I was well. This often occurs. (STA)*
2. *2. I cannot put into words how vehement are my desires for Holy Communion. (STA)*
3. *3. It is hard to express how Our Lady prefers the Rosary over all other devotions. (SLdeM)*
4. *4. No one can understand the riches of holiness contained in the mysteries of the Rosary. (SLdeM)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. Are you closely acquainted with these three children? Were you aware that there were apparitions before Mary appeared? Notice the vision's effects upon the children.*
2. *2. Discuss how God always prepares us before giving a task. The children prepared by faithfulness to prayer.*

#### **5.14 – THE CENTRAL VISIONS (May 13, 1917 to October 13, 1917)**

On Sunday, May 13, 1917, at the now famous Cova da Iria, the three children saw a Lady all dressed in white, more brilliant than the sun. The Lady spoke "Do not be afraid. I will do you no harm".

Lucy: "Where does Your Grace come from?"

Lady: "I am of heaven."

Lucy: "What does Your Grace want of me?"

Lady: "I have come to ask you to come here for six months in succession, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day, at the same hour. Later on, I will tell you who I am and what I want. Afterwards, I will return here yet a seventh time."

Lucy asked about heaven, and Our Lady assured them that they all would come there but Francisco had to say many rosaries. After they accepted all the sufferings that were ahead, Our Lady said, "You are going to suffer much, but the grace of God will be your comfort".

A light came from Our Lady's hands and the children saw themselves in God. Our Lady spoke again: "Pray the rosary every day, in order to obtain peace for the world, and the end of the war."

Lucy: "Can you tell me if the war will go on a long time, or will it end soon?" (World War I)

Lady: "I cannot tell you yet, because I have not told you what I want".

Then Our Lady began to softly rise, going up towards the east, until she disappeared in space. Francisco said, "Oh, my dear Lady. I will say as many rosaries as you want".

#### Second Vision

On June 13, 1917, Our Lady repeated her directive to come each month on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Concerning taking the children to heaven, she replied to Lucy, "Yes, I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon. But you are to stay here some time longer. Jesus wishes to make use of you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world. To whomever embraces this devotion, I promise salvation. These souls shall be clean to God, as flowers placed by me to adorn his throne."

Our Lady's hands again gave forth a great light. Lucy writes, "We saw ourselves in this light, as it were, immersed in God. Jacinta and Francisco seemed to be in that part of the light which ascended to heaven. I was in that part which was poured out upon the earth."

#### Third Vision and the Great Secret

On July 13, 1917, Mary revealed the great secret that has three parts. Lucy described the first two parts in 1941. (The third part was partially revealed by the Vatican in 2000). The first part was a vision of hell. Lucy's description of this vision is contained in Part One of these Teachings. The second part of the secret concerned the Pope consecrating Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart. Our Lady promised that World War I would end but, "If people do not cease offending God", a greater war would begin under Pope Pius XI. A "night illumined by an unknown light" would be God's sign (such a light happened on January 25/26, 1938).

Our Lady also said “To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays”. (Later, Our Lord and Our Lady came to Lucy on June 13, 1929 and said that this consecration should take place.) Her promise was, “In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph”. These two secrets were revealed to the world in 1941.

### The Third Part of the Secret

In June 2000, the Vatican revealed some of the third part. It included a vision of an angel with a flaming sword crying out “Penance, penance, penance”, followed by a vision of a bishop dressed in white in a half ruined city, in procession with bishops, priests and others. All are martyred and an angel gathers up their blood. There is another aspect of this third secret which was not revealed. Our Lady also gave Lucy some words which are still not public.

### Fourth Vision

On August 13<sup>th</sup>, the communist government imprisoned the children. So, Our Lady appeared on August 19<sup>th</sup> (feast of St. John Eudes). She promised to work a miracle so that all the world would know that these visions were true. Our Lady told Lucy that the Fatima gift would have been greater if the government had not tried to destroy the revelations.

### Fifth Vision

On September 13, 1917, 30,000 people gathered. Our Lady promised the great signs in October.

### Sixth Vision

On October 13, 1917, 70,000 people gathered. Our Lady kept her promise. There was the miracle of the sun which pulsated in the sky (called “The Dance of the sun”). People watched this phenomena (which lasted about ten minutes). Then, the sun seemed to leave its orbit and come toward earth. People felt that this was the end of the world. Suddenly, the sun returned to its normal position in the sky. Rain had fallen all night and continued up until the time of the vision. Everyone had been soaked. Gigantic puddles were everywhere. After the miracle, all was dry, as on a hot summer day. Mary had given her great sign.

*The saints say:*

1. *1. Mary is a masterpiece. God alone sees her full beauty. (SLdeM)*
2. *2. When will the happy time come when Mary will be the queen of all hearts, making them subject to her Son? (SLdeM)*
3. *3. Instructed by the Spirit and encouraged by Mary, St. Dominic preached the Rosary for the rest of his life. (SLdeM)*
4. *4. If you wish to reach the heights of contemplation, say your Rosary every day. (SLdeM)*

### *Group Discussion:*

1. Review the six apparitions and comment on them. Can you see how Our Lady prepared the children?
2. What do you think of the two great apparitions, July 13 and October 13, 1917? What is the heart of the Fatima message? Why is it so important?

## **5.15 – LATER VISIONS AND LOCUTIONS TO LUCY**

### History

After these six visions, Our Lady quickly took Francisco (April 4, 1919) and Jacinta (February 20, 1920) to heaven. The new bishop of Fatima was very solicitous for Lucy and asked her to enter a boarding school. On June 17, 1921, she entered the convent school at Vilar de Porto. Her identity was known only by the Superior. When she finished her studies, she entered the Sisters of St. Dorothy (who staffed the school). The apparitions and locutions of this period took place at different convents where she was assigned. Later, to gain greater solitude, she entered the Order of Carmel, where she died on February 13, 2005 at almost 98 years of age.

Pontevedra, Portugal – December 10, 1925

On Thursday, December 10, 1925 Our Lady and the Child Jesus visited Lucy in her room. Our Lady explained the Five First Saturday devotions and revealed her promises of all the graces necessary for salvation. Later, Our Lord appeared two times, asking why publicizing this devotion was delayed.

### Visions at Tuy, Spain

Lucy finished her postulancy at Pontevedra, and on July 16, 1926 she entered the novitiate at Tuy, Spain, near the Spanish-Portuguese border. She received the habit on October 1, 1926 and pronounced first vows on October 3, 1928. The following visions occur there.

June 13, 1929

*(Ed. Note – This is considered a very important vision)*

Our Lord informed her that it was time to reveal to the whole Church the secret of his desire for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart and of his promise to convert Russia. This communication took place during Lucy's holy hour (11:00 pm to midnight) on Thursday evening, June 13, 1929. This request was accompanied by a vision of the Trinity, which Lucy described:

"I understood that it was the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity that was shown to me, and I received lights about this mystery which I am not permitted to reveal".

Our Lady also told Lucy, "The moment has come when God asks the Holy Father to make, in union with all the bishops of the world, the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, promising to save it by this means. So numerous are the souls which the justice of God condemns for sins committed against me, that I come to ask for reparation. Sacrifice yourself for this intention and pray."

Lucy told her confessor who ordered her to write down what the Lord wanted done.

Summer, 1931

Lucy: "Later on, by means of an interior communication, Our Lord said to me, complaining, 'They did not want to heed my request! Like the King of France, they will repent and do it, but it will be late.'" (Ed. Note: When Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary concerning the Sacred Heart devotions, he told her that he wanted the king of France to dedicate the country to the Sacred Heart. None of the kings complied and 100 years later, the French Revolution began.) "Russia will have already spread its errors throughout the world, provoking wars and persecutions against the Church. The Holy Father will have much to suffer."

January 25 – 26, 1938 – The Sign That World War II Would Begin

On July 13, 1917, Our Lady had prophesied that a greater war would break out if people did not cease from offending God. Our Lady said, "When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the sign given by God – that He would punish the world for its crimes, by means of wars, etc." This "night illumined by an unknown light" was January 25 – 26, 1938. (Tuesday – Wednesday). There is voluminous testimony to what scientists called an "aurora borealis". This aurora was witnessed in North Africa, Europe, Canada and the United States. This was undoubtedly the sign but was this an aurora borealis? The scientists at Lyon, France wrote, "The spectacle that we have just witnessed is very curious. It is an aurora borealis at high altitude, a very rare phenomenon for our latitudes, distinguished this time by rays of oxygen and nitrogen emission of a peculiar spectral composition. Usually a shadow passes over the sun and 48 hours later, the aurora borealis occurs. However, no shadow passed over the sun. Therefore, the causes of an aurora borealis do not exist."

Writing Down the Third Part

January 2, 1944 – Tuy, Spain

In December 1943, Lucy was commanded by her bishop to write down the third part of the secret. This caused her great problems of conscience because Our Lady had told her to keep it a secret. Now she was commanded by Church authority to write it down. To resolve this dilemma, Our Lady appeared and gave her permission. On January 3, 1944, Lucy wrote down the vision on a note tablet. On January 9, 1944, she wrote Our Lady's words on a sheet of paper. Both documents were sent to the Vatican in April, 1957.

May 13, 1948 – Lucy received the habit of Carmel and the name Sister Mary Lucy of the Immaculate Heart. She remained a Carmelite until her death.

There were many other divine visits. However, all of the above provides the reader with the central message of Fatima.

Now, on to Medjugorje.

*The saints say:*

1. *1. St. Francis deSales bound himself by oath to say the whole Rosary every day of his life. (SLdeM)*
2. *2. It is dangerous (if not fatal) to abandon the Rosary. (SLdeM)*
3. *3. When people asked me about the vision, I could only say, "The Blessed Virgin looked most lovely and I saw her smile at me". (STL)*
4. *4. I was like a child flinging itself into the arms of its mother, begging her to protect it. (STL)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. What parts of the Fatima visions did you already know? What aspects in this account are new to you? As you read these accounts, what are your own thoughts?*
2. *2. Do you say the Rosary daily? Have you fulfilled Our Lady's request for the Five First Saturdays? Do you see the urgency of the Fatima visions?*

## **5.16 – MEDJUGORJE – Mary as the Modern John the Baptist**

On June 24, 1982 (the feast of John the Baptist) Our Lady began to appear to six young people, promising to reveal ten secrets. By now, some visionaries have received all ten secrets. Other visionaries, who do not yet know all the secrets, will continue to see our Lady every day until they, also, know the secrets.

Revealing the Secrets

Mirjana, one of the visionaries who has received all the secrets, has publicly revealed that Our Lady has chosen her to reveal these secrets to the world. She has selected a priest to whom she will reveal each secret ten days before it occurs. The priest will pray and fast for one week, and then reveal each secret to the world three days before it happens. Mirjana said that she and the other visionaries do not communicate with each other about the secrets, but presume all have the same ten secrets.

It is overwhelming to realize that these visionaries know the great future events that will shape the world. These Medjugorje visions are extraordinary in two ways. First, Mary has appeared every day since 1981. Second, these ten secrets are given to six young people who will publicly announce them to the world before they happen.

Devotion of the Village

The validity of these apparitions is clear from so many aspects. Especially important is the great devotion of this village (both past and present).

In 1933 (the 1900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jesus' death) this Catholic village decided to place a large cross on the top of the mountain, (Medjugorje means "in the middle of the mountains"). There it stands today, a gigantic testimony to their faith, built in difficult economic times. Also, in instructing the visionaries, Mary asked for a daily Mass at 6:00 PM, preceded by a holy hour. This exceptional village has fully complied. For decades now, the people faithfully come to Church from 5:00 until 7:30 PM.

The public locutions of Medjugorje are printed in *Words From Heaven* (Published by Caritas, Birmingham).

*The saints say:*

1. *1. Without my heavenly Mother, I would be lost. (SLdeM)*
2. *2. Mary shelters her children as a hen does her young. She whispers to them and saves them from the vultures. (SLdeM)*
3. *3. Mary is filled with riches, beauties, delights and blessings left there by Jesus who lived in Mary for nine months. (SLdeM)*
4. *4. Mary is God's wonder and she works wonders in those who lose themselves in her. (SLdeM)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. Have you visited Medjugorje? Do you know the story? Have you read the messages?*
2. *2. What does the existence of these secrets say about the future of the world and about Mary's role in world history?*

## **5.17 – THE FINAL AGE OF MARY**

This very quick overview of Fatima and Medjugorje (even leaving aside the many other acknowledged places of Marian apparitions) lead to some very important conclusions.

Conclusions

1. *1. Mary's concern for the world is our greatest hope during this a time when earth is filled with atomic bombs and unsolvable crises.*
2. *2. The extent of Marian visions, the level of her prophetic warnings and the urgency of the messages are unequalled in Church history (excluding, of course, Jesus' resurrection appearances).*
3. *3. These revelations are not just "private". They involve the Pope's death and world-wide events.*
4. *4. Mary said that if people obeyed her word, World War I would have been shortened and World War II would have been avoided. Only God and the six visionaries know what events are involved in the Medjugorje secrets.*
5. *5. The ten secrets at Medjugorje go beyond all prior Marian revelations in so many*

aspects. First, so many Catholics know that there are secrets. Second, each secret will be publicly revealed three days before the event. (Lucy knew there would be some great sign on October 13, 1917.) .

6. 6. Concerning these ten secrets, the seventh secret will not happen, because people have prayed. One secret will definitely happen because it is too late to turn back God's justice. The implications are that many of these secrets are chastisements, but some can be lessened if the world just listens to Mary.
7. 7. The primary demand of all these visions is devotion (the central theme of this book), specifically devotion to the Immaculate Heart by prayer and fasting.

8. The world teeters on the brink of world-wide catastrophe. Our Lady tries valiantly to save us. She appears every single day. She is the new John the Baptist, preparing the world for Christ's Second Coming. All devotion must be plunged into Our Lady. The heavenly Father will save the world by devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart. From now until the end of time, we will be in the Age of Mary.

Now, let us study the great saint, Louis de Montfort, who prophesied this new Age of Mary and explained why it would happen.

*The saints say:*

1. 1. *When will men see this blessed time, this Age of Mary, when many chosen souls will lose themselves in her heart? (SLdeM)*
2. 2. *His Kingdom will come only after Mary is known and begins to reign. (SLdeM)*
3. 3. *Mary is God's treasurer, the distributor of his graces and the co-redemptrix of the human race. (SLdeM)*
4. 4. *When my mother died, Our Lady helped me and brought me to herself. (STL)*
5. 5. *God took pleasure in hiding Mary during her mortal life. (SLdeM)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. 1. *Discuss the world crisis and the many forces of evil? In what direction is the world headed? Can any human leaders solve these crises?*
2. 2. *Discuss the power of Mary. Her concern for the world. Her daily visits and messages. Does this strengthen your resolve to know, love and serve Mary?*

## **5.18 – TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY**

Two of God's special friends, Pope John Paul II and Mother Theresa, were consecrated to Mary according to Demontfort's teaching. So, those who follow this devotion are in good company.

St. Louis de Montfort

Ordained in 1700, Father deMontfort spent his sixteen years of priesthood preaching missions, highlighting True Devotion to Mary. He prophesied that Satan hated his book and would cause it to be lost. This happened. No one even knew he had written this



book. Over a hundred years later (in 1842) a Montfort priest found the handwritten text, yellow with age, at the bottom of an old chest (just as the saint had prophesied).

The basic teaching of "True Devotion" is the following:

1. 1. Jesus came the first time through Mary. His second coming will also be through her.
2. 2. God formed Mary as his "perfect mold" of holiness. She will mold all future saints.
3. 3. Her womb is the new Garden of Eden. Jesus lived there for nine months, leaving behind all his graces.
4. 4. Because Mary distributes all graces, she is Co-Redemptrix of the human race.
5. 5. Mary is the easy, secure and quick road to God. Following her, the soul will not get lost. (St. Bernard).
6. 6. The Final Age of history will be an age of Mary when the greatest saints will come forth.
7. 7. By True Devotion, the person consecrates everything to Mary (body, soul, exterior and interior goods and the value of all good actions). Mary, in turn, gives the fullness of her blessings.
8. 8. Devotion to her is a sign of being among the elect. The devil cannot overcome those who have true devotion.
9. 9. Mary is the new Rebecca. Her followers are Jacobs who get the blessing of Isaac.
10. 10. Those who despise her devotion are Esaus. Although the first born, they have chosen earthly blessings and have sold their heavenly inheritance

An Evaluation of True Devotion

1. 1. The manuscript was found at the right time (1842) because Mary had just appeared to St. Catherine LaBoure and the Age of Mary was beginning.
2. 2. The book prophesied this Final Age of Mary who will prepare the world for Jesus' Second Coming.
3. 3. From now until the end of the world (whenever it happens) we will be in the Age of Mary.
4. 4. This Age of Mary is evident from the multiplication of Marian apparitions (among which Fatima is the great watershed and Medjugorje is the great light).
5. 5. In the present gigantic struggle between light and darkness, the Church desperately needs Mary's intercession.
6. 6. Mary will raise up extraordinary saints in unbelievable numbers (as St. Louis de Montfort prophesied).
7. 7. Mary will give extraordinary signs to invite the world to believe in her Son. This is already happening.

We are in the Final Age of Mary and True devotion to Mary will be the door to great holiness and to the devout life.

*The saints say:*

1. *1. By True Devotion, you give more glory to God in a month than by years with any other devotion. (SLdeM)*
2. *2. The practice which I will reveal is unknown to most Christians, well known to a few devoted souls but is practiced by very few. (SLdeM)*
3. *3. Even the most spiritual Christians do not understand the mystery of Mary. (SLdeM)*
4. *4. I would even write this book in my own guilty blood if this would help men learn this True Devotion. (SLdeM)*

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*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. Have you read True Devotion?*
2. *2. What special value do you see in St. Louis' Marian teachings? Are they not unique? And consoling? How do they help you to love Mary?*
3. *3. Which of the conclusions meant the most to you? Does the evidence support these conclusions? Do you see the warfare taking place between Mary and Satan?*

## **5.19 – THE SECRET OF MARY**

Why does devotion to Mary succeed when other devotions fall short? The following devotional thoughts try to answer that question.

1. *1. The soul becomes holy when God comes closer. If, two thousand years ago, God came closer by choosing Mary, does he choose a different way now?*
2. *2. Mary has all God's treasures and wants to give them away.*
3. *3. Lacking everything, the soul needs Mary's abundance.*
4. *4. When Jesus sees the soul hidden in Mary, he accepts the soul because He always welcomes His mother.*
5. *5. In trials, the soul should invoke Mary at Cana, because it cannot wait for a delayed response. Sometimes, her answer even comes before ten Hail Marys are finished.*
6. *6. There are "false Christs", but there are no "false Marys". The real Christ is the Son of Mary. Find her and you will find the true Christ.*
7. *7. In the journey to God, souls will sometimes go down a wrong path (no matter how discerning). Mary will not allow mistaken judgments to destroy any soul.*
8. *8. Jesus is the way to the Father and Mary is the sure way to Jesus.*

Be clear about this. Souls do not have the time, the strength, the goodness, the conviction, the patience or anything else to become a saint, but God has changed everything in this Final Age of Mary. What would normally be totally out of reach can be yours, but only through Mary. "Following her, you shall not lose your way". (St. Bernard)

All of this is written in deep gratitude to Mary who has done everything. Words of thanks are totally inadequate.

*The saints say:*

1. *1. Mary covers her children with her own merits. (SLdeM)*
2. *2. Mary is the Redeemer's masterpiece, the first of all redemptions. (SfdeS)*
3. *3. From her throne, the Queen of Heaven watched over her little flower. (STL)*
4. *4. What a difference between a soul who resembles Christ by the work of a sculptor and a soul molded in Mary by the Holy Spirit. (SlideM)*

*Group Discussion:*

1. *1. Describe your own feelings toward Mary. Do you trust her? Confide in her? Feel her presence and help?*
2. *2. How does she make a difference in your devout life? What trials has she brought you through? What blessings has she gained for you?*