THE DAILY BREAD

The Fiat of the Beloved



A Woman's Marian Devotion

A FORMATION BOOK BY

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The Everyday Apostle

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A Woman's Marian Devotion

Living a Real Relationship With Mary

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INTRODUCTION

From Knowing to Loving

A woman may come to understand who Mary is, the mother given to her from the Cross, the New Eve, the model of everything she is called to be, and still not have a living relationship with her. Knowing about Mary is not the same as knowing Mary, and the truth of who she is becomes a living bond only when it is lived, when a woman takes up the actual practices through which a real relationship with her mother grows. The Church has given, over the centuries, a rich treasury of Marian devotions, the Rosary, the sacramentals, consecration, the feasts, simple daily prayers, all of them doorways into a genuine relationship with Mary, and a woman who takes them up finds that the figure she knew about becomes a mother she knows and loves.

This book is a practical guide into that relationship. It will show what Marian devotion truly is, a lived relationship and not mere sentiment; how to pray the Rosary, the great Marian prayer, and to pray it well; the meaning and use of Mary's signs, the Miraculous Medal and the Brown Scapular; what it means to consecrate oneself to Jesus through Mary; how to talk to Mary as a daughter talks to her mother in daily life; how to celebrate her feasts and live the year with her; and how, over time, a Marian devotion forms a woman into the likeness of her mother. The aim is not to add more obligations but to open the doors through which a woman passes from knowing about Mary to loving her and being loved by her as a true daughter.

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! — Luke 1:42

Elizabeth's greeting to Mary, blessed are you among women, has echoed in the prayers of Christians ever since, for to honor Mary and to draw near to her has always been part of the Christian life. This book will show a woman how: understanding devotion as a lived relationship; praying the Rosary; wearing and using Mary's signs; consecrating herself to Jesus through Mary; talking to her mother daily; celebrating her feasts through the year; and living as Mary's daughter. A woman who takes up these practices does not merely learn more about Mary but comes to know and love her as a mother, entering one of the most transformative relationships available to her. It is time to move from knowing about Mary to loving her.

CHAPTER ONE

Devotion, Not Sentiment

A Relationship Lived in Practice

Before taking up the particular Marian devotions, a woman should understand what Marian devotion truly is, for it is often misunderstood as mere sentiment, a warm feeling toward Mary, when in truth it is a real relationship lived out in concrete practices, grounded in the truth of who she is. Understanding Marian devotion as a lived relationship rather than a passing sentiment, a real bond expressed and deepened through actual practices, sets a woman on the right path into genuine devotion rather than fleeting feeling.

Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. — 1 John 3:18

More Than a Feeling

Marian devotion is not merely a feeling of warmth toward Mary but a real relationship, a genuine bond with a real mother that is lived out and not merely felt, so that true devotion goes deeper than sentiment. A woman might think of devotion to Mary as a matter of feeling, a fondness, a sentimental attachment, but this is not what devotion truly is, for Mary is a real person and a real mother, and devotion to her is a real relationship, a genuine bond of love that, like any real relationship, is more than a feeling and must be lived. This means a woman's devotion to Mary is not measured by how much she feels but by the reality of the relationship she lives, a bond with her mother that is genuine and deep whether or not it is always accompanied by strong feeling, so that devotion is relationship, not sentiment. The woman who understands that devotion is more than a feeling seeks a real relationship with Mary rather than a warm sentiment, a genuine bond to be lived. More than a feeling, Marian devotion is a real relationship with a real mother, a genuine bond lived out rather than merely felt, so that true devotion goes deeper than sentiment and is measured by the reality of the relationship rather than the strength of the feeling.

Love Lived in Deeds

Like all real love, devotion to Mary is lived in deeds, expressed and deepened through concrete practices, the prayers and devotions through which a woman actually relates to her mother, so that devotion takes the form of things done and not only felt. The Scripture teaches that love is shown not in word or feeling alone but in deed and truth, and this is true of devotion to Mary, which is lived in concrete practices, the praying of the Rosary, the wearing of her signs, the celebrating of her feasts, the daily talking to her, through which a woman actually relates to and loves her mother, so that devotion takes real and lived form. This means a woman grows in devotion to Mary not by trying to feel more but by doing the things that express and deepen the relationship, taking up the

practices through which love is lived, so that her devotion is real love shown in real deeds rather than a feeling she waits to have. The woman who lives her love for Mary in deeds grows in real devotion through the practices that express and deepen it, rather than waiting on feeling. Love lived in deeds is what Marian devotion is, expressed and deepened through concrete practices rather than feeling alone, so that a woman grows in devotion by taking up the prayers and devotions through which she actually relates to and loves her mother.

Grounded in Truth

True Marian devotion is grounded in the truth of who Mary is, so that it is not a sentimental invention but a response to the reality of her person and role, a devotion rooted in truth rather than in feeling or fancy. Genuine devotion to Mary rests on the truth of who she is, the mother given from the Cross, the one filled with grace, the model and intercessor, so that it is a response to reality and not a sentimental projection, grounded in the solid truth of her person rather than in a woman's own feelings or imaginings. This means a woman's devotion is as strong as its grounding in truth, for a devotion built on sentiment alone is fragile, rising and falling with feeling, while a devotion grounded in the truth of who Mary is stands firm, a real response to a real mother, lived in practices and rooted in truth. The woman whose devotion is grounded in truth has a firm and genuine relationship with Mary, rooted in who she really is rather than in passing feeling. Grounded in truth, Marian devotion is a response to the reality of who Mary is rather than a sentimental invention, so that it stands firm as a real relationship with a real mother, rooted in truth and lived in practice rather than rising and falling with feeling.

CHAPTER TWO

The Rosary

The Great Prayer of Mary

The chief of all Marian devotions is the Rosary, the great prayer that weaves together vocal prayer and meditation on the life of Christ through the eyes of His mother, and learning to pray it, and to pray it well, is at the heart of a woman's Marian devotion. Understanding what the Rosary is, how to pray it as meditation rather than mechanical repetition, and how to make it a living prayer, opens to a woman the richest and most beloved of the Church's Marian devotions.

His mother treasured up all these things in her heart. — Luke 2:51

What the Rosary Is

The Rosary is not mere repetition but a meditation on the central mysteries of Christ's life prayed in the company of His mother, a weaving together of vocal prayer and contemplation that walks through the Gospel with Mary. The Rosary combines the repeated prayers, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, with meditation on the mysteries of the life of Christ, the joyful, luminous, sorrowful, and glorious events of His life and His mother's, so that while the lips pray the words, the mind and heart contemplate the Gospel scenes, walking through the life of Christ in the company of Mary, who treasured these things in her heart. This means the Rosary is a Gospel prayer, a meditation on Christ's life through the eyes of His mother, not empty repetition but a contemplation carried on the rhythm of the prayers, so that in praying it a woman ponders the mysteries of salvation with Mary at her side. The woman who understands what the Rosary is prays it as a meditation on Christ's life with Mary, not as mere repetition. The Rosary is a meditation on the central mysteries of Christ's life prayed in Mary's company, weaving vocal prayer with contemplation of the Gospel, so that it is not mere repetition but a walking through the life of Christ through the eyes of His mother.

Praying the Mysteries

The heart of praying the Rosary well is entering the mysteries, letting the mind dwell on each Gospel scene while the prayers are said, so that the repeated words become the setting for a real meditation on the life of Christ. To pray the Rosary well, a woman does not merely recite the prayers but enters the mysteries, picturing each scene, pondering its meaning, placing herself within it, letting the Gospel event, the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, unfold in her mind and heart while the familiar prayers provide the gentle rhythm that carries the meditation. This means the repeated prayers are not the point but the setting, the steady background against which the real work of meditation on the mysteries takes place, so that praying the Rosary well is praying the mysteries, dwelling on the scenes of Christ's life with Mary, letting them form and move the heart. The woman who prays the mysteries enters each Gospel scene as she prays, making the Rosary a true meditation rather than a recitation. Praying the mysteries is the heart of the Rosary, entering each Gospel scene and dwelling on it while the prayers provide the rhythm, so that the repeated words become the setting for a real meditation on the life of Christ with Mary.

Keeping It From Going Mechanical

The great danger of the Rosary is that it becomes mechanical, the prayers rattled off without thought, and a woman keeps it alive by praying it slowly, entering the mysteries,

and praying the Rosary she is already saying rather than merely adding more. Because the Rosary uses repeated prayers, it can easily become mechanical, the words recited absently while the mind wanders far away, and a woman keeps it from this by praying slowly rather than rushing, by actually entering the mysteries rather than skipping them, by bringing her attention gently back when it drifts, so that the point is not to say more Rosaries but to pray the Rosary she is already saying. This means the remedy for a mechanical Rosary is not to abandon it but to pray it better, slowly and meditatively, entering the mysteries and returning her attention when it wanders, so that the Rosary becomes a living prayer rather than a mechanical duty. The woman who keeps the Rosary from going mechanical prays it slowly and meditatively, entering the mysteries and praying the Rosary she is already saying. Keeping it from going mechanical means praying the Rosary slowly and entering the mysteries rather than rattling off the words, so that the remedy is not to say more Rosaries but to pray the one she is saying, a living prayer rather than a mechanical duty.

CHAPTER THREE

Wearing Her Signs

The Medal and the Scapular

Among the Marian devotions are the sacramentals associated with Mary, especially the Miraculous Medal and the Brown Scapular, signs a woman can wear as marks of her devotion and her entrustment to Mary, each with its own origin, meaning, and promises. Understanding these signs of Mary, what they are, where they came from, and how to wear them rightly, gives a woman tangible expressions of her devotion and her belonging to her mother.

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm., Song of Solomon 8:6

The Miraculous Medal

The Miraculous Medal is a sign of Mary given through a nineteenth-century apparition, bearing images and a prayer that express her role and her intercession, worn as a sign of devotion and a means of her protection. The Miraculous Medal arose from an apparition in which Mary asked that a medal be struck bearing her image and the prayer, O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee, and this medal, worn by countless faithful since, is a sign of devotion to Mary, an expression of trust in her intercession, and a means through which many graces and protections have been sought and received. This means the Miraculous Medal is a tangible sign a woman can wear of

her devotion to Mary and her trust in the intercession, a small and simple sacramental that expresses her relationship with her mother and invokes her prayers and protection. The woman who wears the Miraculous Medal carries a sign of her devotion and trust in Mary, invoking her intercession and protection. The Miraculous Medal, given through an apparition and bearing Mary's image and prayer, is a sign of devotion worn as an expression of trust in her intercession and a means of her protection, a tangible mark of a woman's relationship with her mother.

The Brown Scapular

The Brown Scapular is a sign of consecration to Mary and of her maternal protection, worn as a small garment that expresses a woman's belonging to Mary and her entrustment to the mother's care. The Brown Scapular, associated with the Carmelite tradition and with a promise of Mary's protection, is a sacramental worn over the shoulders as a small cloth garment, signifying a woman's consecration to Mary, her clothing in Mary's protection, and her belonging to her as a child, so that to wear it is to be marked as Mary's own and entrusted to her care. This means the Brown Scapular is a sign of a woman's entrustment to Mary, a garment of belonging and protection that expresses her consecration to her mother and her confidence in Mary's maternal care, worn as a continual sign of the relationship. The woman who wears the Brown Scapular is clothed in a sign of her consecration to Mary and her trust in the mother's protection. The Brown Scapular is a sign of consecration to Mary and of her protection, a small garment worn to express a woman's belonging to her mother and her entrustment to Mary's maternal care.

Signs, Not Superstitions

The signs of Mary are sacramentals, not superstitions or charms, and a woman wears them rightly as expressions of real devotion and faith, not as magical objects, so that their power lies in the relationship and the grace they signify, not in the object itself. It is important that a woman understand the medals and scapular rightly, not as lucky charms or magical objects that work by themselves, but as sacramentals, signs of a real devotion and faith, worn as expressions of her relationship with Mary and her trust in God's grace through Mary's intercession, so that their worth lies not in the object but in the faith and devotion they express. This means a woman wears Mary's signs as genuine expressions of devotion, not as superstitions, understanding that the medal or scapular is a sign and aid of a real relationship and faith, through which God gives grace, rather than a charm that works mechanically. The woman who wears Mary's signs as sacramentals, not superstitions, uses them rightly as expressions of real devotion and faith. Signs, not superstitions, is how a woman wears the medal and scapular, as sacramentals expressing

real devotion and faith rather than magical charms, so that their power lies in the relationship and grace they signify, not in the object itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

Giving Yourself to Her

Consecration to Jesus Through Mary

The deepest form of Marian devotion is consecration, the deliberate giving of oneself to Jesus through Mary, entrusting one's whole self and life to Mary so that she may lead one more completely to her Son. Understanding what consecration to Mary is, that it is a total entrustment of oneself to Jesus through His mother, and how a woman makes and lives it, opens to her the fullest expression of a Marian devotion.

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
— 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What Consecration Means

Consecration to Mary is the giving of oneself entirely to Jesus through Mary, entrusting one's whole self, one's life, one's soul, to Mary so that she may form one and lead one to her Son, a total self-gift made through the mother. To consecrate oneself to Mary is not to worship her or to give her what belongs to God, but to entrust oneself entirely to Jesus through her, placing one's whole self and life into Mary's hands so that she, as mother, may care for one, form one, and lead one most surely and completely to her Son, so that consecration is a total self-gift to Jesus made through Mary. This means consecration is the giving of oneself to Christ by way of His mother, a complete entrustment of a woman's whole self to Mary so that she may bring her to Jesus, the fullest handing-over of oneself to God through the one who leads most surely to Him. The woman who understands what consecration means gives herself entirely to Jesus through Mary, entrusting her whole self to her mother's forming care. What consecration means is the giving of oneself entirely to Jesus through Mary, entrusting one's whole self and life to the mother so that she may form one and lead one to her Son, a total self-gift to Christ made through Mary.

Giving Her Everything

In consecration a woman gives Mary everything, her whole self and life, holding nothing back, so that Mary may use and dispose of all of it for the glory of God and the woman's

good, a total and holding-nothing-back self-gift. Consecration is a complete giving, a woman placing into Mary's hands her whole self, her body and soul, her past and future, her merits and prayers, her joys and sufferings, everything she is and has, holding nothing back, so that Mary may order it all to God, use it for His glory, and bring the woman most fully to her Son. This means consecration is radical and total, the giving of everything to Mary, a holding-nothing-back entrustment of a woman's whole self and life, recognizing that she is not her own but belongs to God, and giving herself wholly to Him through His mother. The woman who gives Mary everything makes a total consecration, holding nothing back but entrusting her whole self and life to her mother's care for God's glory. Giving her everything is the heart of consecration, a woman placing her whole self and life into Mary's hands holding nothing back, so that Mary may order all of it to God's glory and the woman's good, a total and radical self-gift.

Living the Consecration

Consecration is not a one-time act but a life to be lived, a daily renewal of the entrustment and a continual living from it, so that a woman who has consecrated herself to Mary lives each day as one who belongs to her and through her to Christ. Making a consecration to Mary is a beginning, not an end, for the consecration is meant to be lived, renewed daily, drawn upon continually, so that a woman who has given herself to Jesus through Mary lives from that gift, acting as one who belongs to her mother, renewing her entrustment each day, letting the consecration shape how she lives and prays and loves. This means living the consecration is the real substance of it, the daily living out of the total gift, so that a woman does not merely make the consecration once but lives it continually, belonging to Mary and through her to Christ in the whole of her daily life. The woman who lives her consecration renews it daily and acts from it continually, belonging to Mary and through her to Christ in all she does. Living the consecration is its real substance, a daily renewal of the entrustment and a continual living from it, so that a woman who has consecrated herself to Mary lives each day as one who belongs to her mother and through her to Christ.

CHAPTER FIVE

Talking to Your Mother

A Daily, Personal Relationship

Beyond the formal devotions, the heart of a Marian devotion is a daily, personal relationship with Mary, talking to her as a daughter talks to her mother, bringing her the

ordinary matter of life, confiding in her, asking her help, so that devotion becomes a living friendship. Understanding how to talk to Mary daily, to relate to her simply and personally as to a mother, turns Marian devotion from a set of practices into a living, daily relationship.

As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you. — Isaiah 66:13

A Mother to Talk To

Mary is a real mother a woman can talk to simply and personally, bringing her the matter of her days, her joys and worries and needs, so that devotion includes an ordinary, running conversation with her mother. Because Mary is a real and living mother, a woman can talk to her as to any mother, simply, personally, naturally, telling her about her day, sharing her joys and troubles, bringing her worries and needs, confiding in her as a daughter confides in a mother who loves her and listens, so that devotion includes a real conversation with Mary. This means a woman's relationship with Mary is not confined to formal prayers but includes an ordinary, personal talking to her mother, a running conversation carried through the day, so that Mary becomes a real presence a woman relates to naturally and often. The woman who has a mother to talk to relates to Mary personally and daily, confiding in her and bringing her the matter of her life. A mother to talk to is what Mary is, a real and living mother a woman can address simply and personally, bringing her the matter of her days, so that devotion includes an ordinary, running conversation with her mother rather than only formal prayers.

The Memorare and Simple Prayers

The Church gives simple Marian prayers a woman can make her own, such as the Memorare, through which she turns to Mary in need and expresses her trust, short prayers that carry her daily conversation with her mother. Among the treasury of Marian prayers are simple ones a woman can use and make her own, especially the Memorare, which turns to Mary in confident trust that she never fails those who seek her help, along with the Hail Mary, the Hail Holy Queen, and brief aspirations like Mary, my mother, help me, so that a woman has words to carry her turning to Mary in the moments of her day. This means a woman need not always find her own words but can use the simple prayers the Church provides to turn to Mary, especially in need, so that the Memorare and other short prayers become vehicles of her daily relationship with her mother. The woman who prays the Memorare and simple Marian prayers has ready words to turn to Mary in trust and need throughout her day. The Memorare and simple prayers give a woman ready words to turn to Mary, especially in need, expressing her trust that Mary

never fails those who seek her, so that these short prayers carry her daily conversation with her mother.

Bringing Her Your Needs

A woman brings Mary her needs and the needs of those she loves, asking her intercession with the confidence of a child asking a mother, so that the daily relationship includes a continual entrusting of her cares to Mary. Part of talking to Mary daily is bringing her one's needs, the worries and petitions a woman carries, the people she loves and their troubles, asking Mary to intercede, to pray for them and for her, with the confidence of a child who knows her mother cares, so that a woman continually entrusts her cares to Mary and seeks her powerful prayers. This means a woman's daily relationship with Mary includes a continual bringing of needs, her own and others', to her mother, confident that Mary hears, cares, and intercedes, so that she is never without a mother to turn to in every need. The woman who brings Mary her needs entrusts her cares and her loved ones to her mother daily, confident in her intercession. Bringing her your needs is part of a daily relationship with Mary, a woman entrusting her worries and her loved ones to her mother and asking her intercession with a child's confidence, so that she continually brings her cares to Mary, who hears and intercedes.

CHAPTER SIX

Living the Year With Her

Marian Feasts and Seasons

The Church's year is filled with feasts of Mary, celebrations of her life and privileges and her role in salvation, and living the year with Mary by keeping these feasts weaves her devotion into the rhythm of the whole year. Understanding the Marian feasts and how to celebrate them gives a woman a way to live the year in company with her mother, marking the seasons with devotion to Mary and deepening the relationship through the Church's calendar.

I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord. — Psalm 122:1

The Feasts of Mary

The Church's calendar holds many feasts of Mary, celebrating her great privileges and moments, the Immaculate Conception, her Nativity, the Annunciation, the Assumption, and her many titles and apparitions, so that the year is marked with occasions to honor

her. Throughout the year the Church celebrates numerous Marian feasts, each commemorating something of Mary's life, privileges, or role, the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Assumption, the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of the Rosary, and many more, so that the calendar is rich with days set apart to honor and celebrate Mary. This means a woman has, in the Church's year, many occasions to honor Mary and to deepen her devotion, feast days that mark the year with celebrations of her mother, inviting her to pause and honor Mary at these special points. The woman who knows the feasts of Mary finds the year marked with occasions to honor and celebrate her mother. The feasts of Mary fill the Church's calendar with celebrations of her privileges and moments, the Immaculate Conception, the Annunciation, the Assumption, and many more, so that the year is marked with occasions for a woman to honor and celebrate her mother.

Celebrating the Feasts

A woman celebrates the Marian feasts by marking them with special devotion, attending Mass where she can, praying particular prayers, and keeping the day with some observance, so that the feasts become real celebrations of her mother woven into her year. Celebrating a Marian feast need not be elaborate but involves marking the day with some special attention to Mary, perhaps attending Mass, praying the Rosary or a prayer proper to the feast, reading about the mystery it celebrates, keeping the day with a small festivity or observance, so that the feast is actually celebrated rather than passing unnoticed. This means a woman can weave devotion to Mary into her year by celebrating her feasts, marking each with some observance that honors her mother, so that the feasts become living celebrations that deepen the relationship and give the year a Marian rhythm. The woman who celebrates the feasts marks each Marian day with some devotion, honoring her mother and weaving her into the rhythm of the year. Celebrating the feasts means marking each Marian day with special devotion, Mass, particular prayers, or some observance, so that the feasts become real celebrations of a woman's mother woven into her year rather than days that pass unnoticed.

A Year Lived With Mary

Keeping the Marian feasts through the year gives a woman a year lived in company with her mother, her devotion woven into the whole rhythm of the calendar, so that Mary accompanies her through the seasons rather than being remembered only occasionally. When a woman keeps the Marian feasts, her devotion to Mary is not confined to occasional moments but woven through the whole year, so that she lives the year in company with her mother, honoring her at the feasts, deepening the relationship through the calendar, accompanied by Mary through all the seasons of the year. This means living

the year with Mary gives a woman's devotion a continual rhythm, her mother present through the whole year in its feasts and seasons, so that the relationship is sustained and deepened across the calendar rather than confined to scattered moments. The woman who lives the year with Mary keeps her present through all the seasons, her devotion woven into the rhythm of the whole year. A year lived with Mary comes from keeping her feasts through the calendar, so that a woman's devotion is woven into the whole year and her mother accompanies her through all the seasons rather than being remembered only occasionally.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Becoming Like Your Mother

How Devotion Forms a Woman

The deepest purpose of a Marian devotion is that it forms a woman over time into the likeness of her mother, so that living in relationship with Mary gradually makes a woman more like Mary, and through her more like Christ. Understanding how devotion to Mary forms a woman, drawing her into Mary's virtues and ultimately into the likeness of Christ whom Mary bore, reveals the transforming end of a whole life of Marian devotion.

My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you. — Galatians 4:19

Formed by the One You Love

A woman is formed by the one she loves and spends time with, and so devotion to Mary, a real and sustained relationship with her, gradually forms a woman into her mother's likeness, drawing her into Mary's own virtues. Love is formative, and the one a woman loves and spends time with shapes her, so that a sustained devotion to Mary, a real relationship lived over years, gradually forms a woman into Mary's likeness, drawing her into the virtues her mother embodies, the faith, the humility, the receptivity, the purity, the love that marked Mary's life. This means a woman's devotion to Mary is not only a comfort but a formation, for in loving and relating to Mary she is shaped by her, drawn into her virtues, made more like her mother over time, so that devotion forms as well as consoles. The woman who is formed by the one she loves grows into Mary's likeness through her devotion, shaped by the mother she loves and relates to. Formed by the one you love, a woman is shaped by Mary through a sustained devotion, so that loving and relating to her mother over years gradually forms her into Mary's likeness, drawing her into the virtues her mother embodies.

Mary Forms You for Christ

Mary forms a woman not for herself but for Christ, shaping her into His likeness, for Mary's whole purpose is to form Christ in her children, so that growing like Mary means growing like the Christ she bore and forms. Mary's formation of a woman is always directed to Christ, for Mary exists to bring forth Christ, first in her own womb and then in the souls of her children, so that as she forms a woman into her own likeness she is forming Christ in her, laboring, as the Scripture says, until Christ is formed in her children, shaping the woman into the image of the Son Mary bore. This means Mary forms a woman for Christ, drawing her into her own virtues precisely so as to form Christ in her, so that growing like Mary is growing like Christ, the mother forming her child into the likeness of the Son. The woman whom Mary forms for Christ grows through her mother into the likeness of the Son Mary bore and labors to form in her. Mary forms you for Christ, shaping a woman into His likeness rather than merely her own, for Mary's whole purpose is to form Christ in her children, so that growing like Mary means growing like the Christ she bore and labors to form.

A Lifelong Relationship

A Marian devotion is meant to be a lifelong relationship, growing and deepening over the whole of a woman's life, so that she walks with Mary through all her years, formed continually by her mother until she comes at last to her in heaven. Devotion to Mary is not a passing phase but a lifelong relationship, one that grows and deepens over the years, accompanying a woman through every season of her life, forming her continually, until at the end her mother is there to receive her, so that the relationship begun on earth continues and is perfected in heaven. This means a woman's Marian devotion is a relationship for her whole life and beyond, a mother to walk with through all her years, forming her continually and waiting to welcome her home, so that she is never without her mother and is being formed by her all the way to heaven. The woman who embraces a lifelong relationship with Mary walks with her mother through all her years, formed continually until she comes to her in heaven. A lifelong relationship is what a Marian devotion is meant to be, growing and deepening over a woman's whole life so that she walks with Mary through all her years, formed continually by her mother until she comes at last to her in heaven.

CONCLUSION

Live With Your Mother

The woman who knew about Mary but had no living relationship with her now holds the doorways into one. We have seen that Marian devotion is a lived relationship and not mere sentiment; that the Rosary is the great Marian prayer, to be prayed as meditation; that the Miraculous Medal and the Brown Scapular are signs of devotion and entrustment; that consecration gives oneself entirely to Jesus through Mary; that a woman can talk to Mary daily as a daughter to her mother; that the Marian feasts let her live the year with Mary; and that devotion forms her, over a lifetime, into the likeness of her mother and of Christ.

Through all of it runs a single invitation: live with your mother. Do not leave Mary a figure you merely know about, but take up the practices through which a real relationship with her grows, and live in daily, loving company with the mother Christ gave you. For Mary is not a distant devotion but a living mother, and the woman who lives with her, praying, entrusting, confiding, celebrating, finds the relationship becoming one of the great treasures of her life.

So live with your mother. Let your devotion be a real relationship, grounded in truth and lived in deeds. Pray the Rosary, and pray it as a meditation on the life of Christ with Mary. Wear her signs as expressions of your devotion and trust. Consecrate yourself to Jesus through her, and live that gift daily. Talk to her as a daughter talks to her mother, bringing her your days and your needs. Celebrate her feasts and live the year in her company. And let her form you, over a lifetime, into her own likeness and into the likeness of the Christ she bore. Mary has been given to you as a mother, and she is waiting to be known and loved. Take up these doorways, and live with your mother, who will walk with you all the way home.

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