

Inside the Legion of Mary – On Legionary Devotion

The Mass, True Devotion and the Legionary Promise

By Father Francis J. Peffley

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist there are four steps: The Presentation and offering of the Gifts, the Consecration, the reception of Holy Communion, and the Commissioning. Similar steps to these can also be found in *The True Devotion to Mary* and the Legionary Promise.

The Presentation of the Gifts

In the Presentation of the Gifts at Mass, the bread and wine – which represent the spiritual and temporal offerings of the congregation – are *presented* and then *offered* as the material for the sacrifice to Our Heavenly Father.

In the True Devotion persons *present* to Mary their total being – not a symbol but a living gift of the entire self – and *offer* to her sacrificially the gift of the body with all its senses, pleasures, health and illnesses; the type of death to be undergone; the soul with its degrees of sanctification; indulgences gained; personal prayers said and prayers said for them by others; the value of all spiritual and corporal works of mercy; vocation, life itself, past, present and future – all spiritual and material possessions – house, car, family, loved ones – *everything* is given to Our Blessed Mother. In return she gives them Christ, and gives them *to* Christ, the destiny of every soul.

In the Promise probationary legionaries *present* themselves to the Legion and *offer* to the Holy Spirit their gifts of effort, time and talents in sacrifice, as they live out their Legion membership.

The Consecration

At Mass, after the gifts are presented, the Consecration takes place. Through the power of Christ, the priest changes the bread and wine into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. The gift is *consecrated*, that is, made holy, “set aside for a holy purpose.” All Catholic churches, along with the altar and the chalice, are consecrated, set aside for the worship of God.

Upon presenting themselves for the practice of True Devotion, there is the *Act of Consecration*, whereby those who make it are also “set aside for a holy purpose.” De Montfort calls this the perfect renewal of the baptismal vows. He says that parents and godparents will take a baby to a priest to be baptized and speak on its behalf, accepting Christ and rejecting Satan. He says that all adult Christians

should renew their baptismal vows by making a consecration such as this, for in doing so they *personally* reject Satan, profess their faith in Christ, and promise to carry their cross after him all the days of their life. This is one reason why the promoting of the True Devotion Consecration is so important in legionary work.

In the Promise, the potential legionary *consecrates* his offering by “setting aside” his own will and preferences as he *declares entire dependence on Mary, ventures to promise a faithful service and submits fully to the discipline*, recalling the days of chivalry when the knight consecrated his sword and his being to his queen, vowing to live a chaste and courageous life fighting evil for his queen and his God.

Holy Communion

After the consecration comes the reception of *Holy Communion*, the physical and spiritual union with Our Lord – the state of being one with Christ. With the making of the consecration to Our Lady, there is the state of being *in communion with her*. St. Augustine said that true devotion to a particular saint means imitating and becoming one with the virtues of that saint, trying to live in imitation of that holy life with mind, heart, and soul. True Devotion to Mary, however, means a deeper union, whereby her devotee tries to see with Mary’s eyes, listen with Mary’s ears, speak with Mary’s words, think with Mary’s mind, and love with Mary’s heart. It includes trying to pray with Mary’s faith, to develop *her* humility, *her* courage, and *her* love for Christ. It is a closer union than that of the child in the womb with its mother. It is comparable to the union of the soul with Christ in Holy Communion.

As the legionaries live out the Promise day by day, week by week, year by year, the words read by them on that special first moment become an actual reality: *Her heart and mine are one, making the soul one with Mary’s love and Mary’s will to save the world.*

The Commissioning

After passing through the three steps of Holy Mass – the Presentation of the Gifts, the Consecration, and Holy Communion – there is the sending forth, the *commissioning* to proclaim the gospel, to take the Word of God and his grace back into everyday life. *Ite Missa Est, the Mass is ended; Go now in peace to love and serve the Lord.* The Faithful are commissioned, by the offering of their gifts and their union with Christ, to take him from the consecrated space of the church to sanctify and evangelize the secular world beyond.

It is the same with the de Montfort consecration. After the offering of themselves and giving over all they are and own into Our Lady’s care, the consecrated ones, living in union with her, are sent forth to do great things for God and the salvation of souls. It is no longer acceptable for them to live in this world in an average

way. The legionary, having made the Promise, will also recall that sacred commission: *Which binds him to his comrades, and shapes them to an army to operate miracles of grace which will renew the face of the earth and establish the reign of the Holy Spirit over all!*