

- Hopefully, yesterday many of you began your 33 days of preparation for consecrating yourselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is something I encourage you to do every year.
- And I encourage you to consecrate yourselves to Our Lady in this way because doing so, according to St. Louis de Montfort, is “the surest, easiest, shortest, and the most perfect means” to becoming a saint.
- Becoming a saint is not something impossible for any of us. Of course, it’s not at all easy – and yet it is something that all of us can and should strive for.
- This is precisely the encouragement we receive from good St. Paul in our epistle today. St. Paul tells us today that God has chosen us “to be holy and without blemish before Him. In love He destined us for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ.”
- Regardless of the particularities of our vocation in this life, all of us are called to a life of holiness, a life of faith, a life of becoming like Christ – of being loved and adopted by God as His sons and daughters.
- Holiness is God’s gift to us, and it’s something that He desires for each of us. While it is the Holy Spirit who works within us and makes us holy, we must seek Him out. Each of us must exert tremendous personal effort to become holy.
- You see, my brothers and sisters, while it is true that Christ has redeemed us by His blood, and that He offers us forgiveness for our sins, our blessed Lord wants more for us than simply redemption and forgiveness.
- God doesn’t want us just to “squeak” our way into Heaven after being purified in the fires of Purgatory. He wants us to go straight to Heaven when we die. But this requires that we be saints here on earth! It requires that we be holy.
- Furthermore, St. Paul tells us that: “we were also chosen . . . so that we might exist for the praise of His glory.” Think about that for a moment.
- Our lives should praise God, they should be a reflection of His glory. People should be able to look at us and see God working in our lives!
- So, our Lord wants us to be holy not simply so that we’ll go to Heaven, but “so that we might exist for the praise of His glory.” When we live holy lives, we are pleasing to our Lord, and our very lives give praise to God’s glory.
- It’s for this reason that we need our Blessed Mother Mary, for of all people who have ever walked this earth, no one’s life has given more praise to God’s glory than hers.
- When we consecrate ourselves to Mary, she takes charge of our life. She sets us on fire with God’s love – filling us with zeal for our Lord, for His Church, and for all mankind.
- Moreover, Mary brings us the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, for when we are more closely united to her, we are more closely united to the Holy Spirit, for she is His spouse.
- We say that Mary is the spouse of the Holy Spirit because she was perfectly united with the Spirit in a way that no other human ever has been. In fact, her union with the Spirit is deeper than what we typically understand by a spousal relationship (Gaitley, p.54).
- It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that Mary was conceived without any stain of sin in the womb of our patroness, St. Ann. And it was through the power of the Spirit that Mary conceived and brought forth from her own womb our Lord and Savior.

- By the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary always and in every way perfectly fulfilled God's will in every aspect of her earthly life. Indeed, she is united with God more perfectly than any other creature.
- And this is exactly why we should unite ourselves to her: Mary brings us closer to the Holy Spirit so that He can accomplish His work of holiness within us.
- St. Louis de Montfort teaches that "when the Holy Spirit, Mary's spouse, finds a soul united to Mary, 'He flies there. He enters there in His fullness; He communicates Himself to that soul abundantly, and to the full extent to which it makes room for His spouse'" (Gaitley, p. 108).
- Just as Mary conceived and brought the Christ Child to birth some 2000 years ago, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary continues to give birth to Christ within the souls of the faithful united to her (Gaitley, p. 109).
- As yesterday's terrible assassination attempt on former President Trump shows us once again, we live in a very dark and difficult time. So many in our world now live without any moral compass, without any faith, without any reference to God.
- With so many things to distract us and to demand our attention, it's becoming harder and harder for even those of us with faith to know God and to hear Him.
- I submit to you that the answer to our country's problems and divisions is not to be found in the political arena. The answer to what ails our country is for good men and women to become *holy* men and women.
- As St. Peter of Alcantara once wrote: "Truly, matters in the world are in a bad state; but if you and I begin in earnest to reform ourselves, a really good beginning will have been made."
- So, like Amos the prophet, and like the apostles, we must be willing to allow God to have His way with us, to point us in whatever direction He wills for us. We must make the act of the will to trust God and walk with Him in faith.
- We must be vigilant and constant with our prayer and our striving for virtue. We must be both dutiful and vigorous in the practice of our Catholic Faith. And as always, we must have recourse to the saints for help – especially Our Lady.
- And when God allows us to suffer, or when things don't go as we think they should, we must choose to believe that God will bring a greater good from our suffering – that He will use our suffering to make us holier people.
- There can be no surrender of our faith, no retreat from the crosses of life, and no quarter given to cynicism or despair.
- The French convert to Catholicism, Léon Bloy, once wrote that "any Christian who is not a hero is a pig." He also wrote (much more poetically, I might add) that, "The only real sadness, the only real failure, the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint."
- May this sadness be banished, may this failure be overcome, may this tragedy know not existence amongst any of us.
- Rather, with the sure help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may we each live lives of heroic virtue and one day be counted amongst that great multitude in Heaven from every nation, race, people and tongue.
- May each of our lives be a praise of God's glory so that God may be honored as He deserves, so that others can be edified and strengthened by our witness, and so that we may eternally share in God's own glory in Heaven.