

Mary in the Dominican Tradition

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IN THE ROMAN liturgical calendar, the feasts of the Dominican saints Louis Grignon de Montfort, Catherine of Siena, and Pope Pius V fall on consecutive days in springtide: 28 April, Louis, 29 April, Catherine, and 30 April, Pius.¹ To present chronologically these Dominican saints requires transposing the order: Catherine (1347–80) lives in the fourteenth century, Pius V (1504–72) in the sixteenth, and Louis De Montfort (1673–1716) in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. If we add a Dominican not found on the official list of saints, John Capreolus (c.1380–1444), the grouping also would include a representative of the fifteenth century. These priests and lay sister illustrate four outstanding witnesses of the Marian devotion that flourishes in the Order of St. Dominic. They also span four important centuries of Western Catholic life.

Catherine, Capreolus, Pius, and Louis mark the passage from the late medieval age to the modern period. These four figures in a sense introduce our present moment in the Dominican Marian tradition. Louis de Montfort dies during the early reign of Louis XV

¹ This essay stems from a lecture delivered at the 25th Meeting of the New England Region of the Mariological Society of America on 19 October 2002. I wish to express my gratitude to Father Matthew Morry, OP, under whose auspices the New England Region has met since 1977, for the invitation to speak during the Silver Jubilee Program.

of France (1715–74). His successor would be guillotined in 1793. Within a decade Jean-Baptiste Henri Lacordaire (1802–61) is born, again in France. His retrieval of Dominican life and tradition in the first half of the nineteenth century sustains, it may be argued, the worldwide Order for more than a century. The Lacordaire renewal enjoys a complex history, especially in the United States.² But it is still true to say that Dominicans all depend on Lacordaire in significant ways. When I arrived in 1962 as an undergraduate at Providence College, the Dominicans were living more or less the form of Dominican life that Lacordaire had restored. Only they were doing this on the top floor of the present-day administration building, Harkins Hall, not in European convents that had been retrieved from theretofore expropriating government agencies.

The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) mandated all religious institutes to hold a special chapter to render themselves “apt” for renewal.³ The Dominicans held theirs in Chicago in 1968. In the Eastern Dominican Province, to cite only one example, several friars made their first profession of vows on 4 August 1967. One may argue that these friars and Dominicans older in religion than they were formed in a Marian theology that enjoyed at least six hundred years of continuity.⁴ Two obvious reference points are the year 1368, the date of Catherine’s “mystical espousal” to Christ, and the year 1968, the date of the General Chapter held at River Forest outside of Chicago.⁵

² See my “Lacordaire and the United States,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 78 (1992): 197–206.

³ *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life, Perfectae caritatis* (28 October 1965), no. 3: “. . . documenta huius sacrae synodi aptentur.”

⁴ No judgment is rendered about developments after 1968, although there are concrete indications that Dominicans still take a special interest in the Blessed Virgin Mary, for example, the editorship of the monthly worship aid *Magnificat* is held by a Dominican priest.

⁵ *Catherine of Siena. The Dialogue*, trans. and introduction by Suzanne Noffke, OP (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 4. This moment marks a transition in Catherine’s spiritual development. She left her solitude, rejoined her father’s home, and began to give herself to the service of the poor and the sick with her sisters of the *Mantellate*. She also met the learned Bartolomeo de’ Dominici, her second confessor and lifelong friend.

In this brief essay, I can only support this claim by pointing out certain salient features of “Mary in the Dominican tradition” as Marian theology takes on a recognizable form at the end of the fourteenth century and continues to develop into the beginning of the eighteenth.⁶ I think that we discover a pattern that one may safely assume does not contradict the Marian spirit that Saint Dominic himself bequeathed to his Order. There are family traits that should abide in a religious institute. If I were asked to identify a foremost characteristic of Mary in the Dominican tradition it would be that Dominicans first of all embrace Mary, then they talk about her. Thus, “contemplata et aliis tradere . . .” To put it differently, Mary before Mariology.

I. Generation, Relationship, and Compassion

First, the young woman of Siena. The references to Mary in *The Dialogue* are incidental: a mention of Mary’s day or altar, of her established intercession, in particular, the cure of Blessed Reginald of Orleans. On the other hand, Catherine’s collected letters afford a clear glimpse into her peculiar love for Our Lady; in fact, she begins many letters by invoking her “sweet Jesus” and his “most sweet mother Mary.”⁷ “E di Maria dolce.”⁸ Above all, Mary represents the

⁶ It would make an interesting research project to identify those Dominicans who expounded the Order’s Marian theology in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries.

⁷ See I, Catherine. *Selected Writings of St. Catherine of Siena*, trans. and ed. Kenelm Foster and Mary John Ronayne (London: Collins, 1980), 53, note 1 [Hereafter, Foster]. The earliest English edition is Catherine of Siena, *Saint Catherine of Siena as Seen in Her Letters*, trans. and ed. Vida D. Scudder (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1927) [Hereafter, Scudder]. Sister Suzanne Noffke is editing a new and complete edition of the letters: *The Letters of St. Catherine of Siena*, Vol. 1, trans. with introduction and notes Suzanne Noffke, OP, (Birmingham, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1988) [Hereafter, Noffke, 1988]. New research resulted in a revision of the project: *The Letters of St. Catherine of Siena*, Vols. 1,2, trans. with introduction and notes by Suzanne Noffke, OP (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000, 2001) [Hereafter, Noffke, 2000, Noffke, 2001].

⁸ This is the Italian formula found in *Lettere di Santa Caterina*, ed. Centro Nazionale di Studi Cateriniani (Rome: Biblioteca Fides, 1973).

sweet mother of Catherine's beloved Jesus: "his sweet mother, Mary." Catherine refers to Christ as "this gentle son of Mary."⁹ At the same time, Catherine's Christology is what some today may describe as "high": "The Eternal Son was wounded in his body and so," Catherine asserts, "his mother, for that bodily flesh was from her."¹⁰ Catherine describes the Incarnation as a coming-to-be, "like [a] seed taking root in the field that is Mary"¹¹ Catherine rejoices in fecundity: "O happy and sweet Mary: you have given us the flower of sweet Jesus."¹² At another moment, she tells a correspondent: "Truly, truly, in this blessed and sweet field of Mary, the Word was inserted into his flesh. Like the grain of his Word in the field of Mary."¹³ Generation remains essential to Catherine's instruction about Mary. "Consider, consider," she begs the Queen of Naples, "the ineffable love of God and the sweetness of the delicious fruit of an immaculate heart . . . that was in Mary."¹⁴

Catherine insists that the mother of her sweet Jesus becomes our most sweet mother. She makes this point again and again. To Lady Paula of Fiesole, Catherine says that Mary works only for the honor of God and the salvation of souls."¹⁵ To Dona Lapa, her natural mother: "Stay close to the most sweet mother Mary, for she knows the sufferings of discipleship. If you would have asked the apostles, 'why are you suffering joyfully your taking leave of Mary?' They would have responded, 'Because we have denied ourselves and are now dedicated to the honor of God and to the salvation of souls.'"¹⁶ The apostles, Catherine several times assures us, stay close to Mary for the development of faith and their own consolation. But they are willing to leave her company in order to

⁹ Noffke, 1988, 176. The author is responsible for the translations. Since the various editions assign different numbers to Catherine's letters, reference is made to the page number of a volume where an English version of the citation may be found. When no reference is given, no English translation of the text is available.

¹⁰ Noffke, 1988, 38.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1988, 117–18.

¹² Noffke, 2001, 111.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Noffke, 1988, 135–6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁶ Noffke, 2001, 442.

enact the command of charity.¹⁷ Was Catherine of Siena also thinking about the new apostles of Saint Dominic? In any case, Catherine tells Pope Urban VI how happy she is that the most sweet mother Mary and sweet St. Peter (after all, he was the Pope!) will protect him.¹⁸ Relationship figures prominently in Catherine's instruction about Mary.

Catherine in fact urges all sorts of people to establish a relationship with Mary. To a married woman of Lucca: "In great tribulations stay close to Mary, who loves without measure."¹⁹ To the Prior and the Brothers of the Company of the Virgin Mary: "No one wants to be deprived of the affection of Mary."²⁰ To a prostitute, whom she wished to console: "Run to Mary for she is the mother of mercy and compassion." To her own dear mother while she remained stranded at a monastery in Montepulciano: "Live in the company of the most gracious mother Mary."²¹

Catherine finds special joy on Mary's feast days.²² Her practical advice to a burger of Siena and his sons: "Keep Saturdays for Mary!" To a recently widowed woman, whom she wished to comfort: "Take communion on feasts of Mary." To the wife of a Florentine tailor: "Fast on the days of Holy Mary, if you can."²³

Catherine tells soldiers who remain loyal to the Pope that Mary will strengthen and protect them in battle. She prayed "with Mary and St. Catherine [of Alexandria]" while awaiting the execution of a Sienese political prisoner, and then openly cried out "Maria" as a sign that she dearly wanted his conversion. And God granted the favor to Catherine. The dying man's last words, "Jesus, Catherine!"²⁴ After her own death, God also granted Catherine the grace of a Carthusian vocation for a brilliant young noble, Stefano Maconi, whom she had counseled "to hasten in your whole manhood, and respond to Mary who calls

¹⁷ Ibid., 181; Noffke, 2001, 249 and 389.

¹⁸ Foster, 245.

¹⁹ Noffke, 2001, 30.

²⁰ Ibid., 313.

²¹ Ibid., 442.

²² Scudder, 349.

²³ Ibid., 71.

²⁴ Noffke, 1988, 110.

you with greatest love.”²⁵ Compassion completes, indeed crowns, Catherine’s instruction about Mary.

We again discover generation, relationship, and compassion displayed in the way Catherine addresses her counselor and guide, the Dominican friar Raymond of Capua. Raymond is the son given to her by the Virgin Mary.²⁶ Later, after he becomes Master of the Order, she declares that “as a father and son (Raymond) was given to her by the sweet mother Mary.”²⁷ Generation. Catherine counsels Raymond: “Do not put the end, the *finis*, of your life in anything other than to delight and to repose in the cross with Christ crucified. When you act like this, you will be a son of Mary and a spouse of the Eternal Word.”²⁸ Again, she insists in an identifiably Dominican way, “Remember the doctrine of Mary and of the sweet and First Truth.”²⁹ “Maintain self-knowledge and the offering of humility and of continual prayer.”³⁰ Relationship. Catherine encourages right relations, relations to the end of human existence, to first Truth, to one’s own worth. When Raymond is troubled, she comforts him: “Have confidence that the Virgin Mary will fulfill my desire for you.”³¹ “In periods of spiritual turbulence,” says Catherine, “keep to your cell, in the presence of Mary and of the most holy cross.”³² Then, she tells Raymond, he “with most devout and humble prayer, with a candid knowledge of self, with an alive faith and the will to suffer” will be able to communicate her counsels to Pope Gregory XI.³³ Lastly, Catherine encourages Raymond by evoking the *pietà*: “Mary,” she says, “has been wounded by the arrow of love for our salvation.” Compassion.³⁴

²⁵ Scudder, 302–03.

²⁶ Noffke, 1988, 220.

²⁷ Foster, 269.

²⁸ Noffke, 2001, 656.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Scudder, 241. Catherine employs the striking image of a ladder to explain Mary’s conformity to the will of Christ: “[S]he would have made a ladder of her very self to put her Son on the cross if there had been no other way” (Noffke, 1988, 118).

³³ Scudder, 241.

³⁴ Noffke, 1988, 39.

II. “La spiritualité de combat”

In her book *Saint Pie V*, Nicole Lemaitre argues that the reform movement initiated under Catherine’s “father” and “son,” Raymond of Capua (whose mastership began in 1380 and lasted until the end of the fourteenth century, 1399), explains the flowering of Dominican intellectual life and other manifestations of Christian energies that took place in the following decades. Specifically, Lemaitre describes the Dominican spirituality of the fifteenth century as “une spiritualité de combat.”³⁵ This ethos manifests itself in Dominican piety, but also in Dominican learning.

John Capreolus (1380–1444), called “the Prince of the Thomists,” was born around the year that Catherine died and Raymond of Capua became Master of the Order. Capreolus illustrates in an extraordinary fashion the renewal of learning that can develop when Dominicans return with confidence to the texts of Saint Thomas Aquinas.³⁶ The death of Capreolus in 1444 occurs some thirty years before the establishment on 8 September 1475 of the first Rosary confraternity in Cologne, the same day on which the Breton Dominican Alain de la Roche died.³⁷ This ardent and apostolic priest lived during the middle years of the fifteenth century, and his enthusiasm and zeal launched one of the most successful enterprises that the Dominican Order has generated: the Rosary confraternities.³⁸ The Rosary confraternities afforded laity

³⁵ Nicole Lemaitre, *Saint Pie V* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 42–47 [Hereafter, Lemaitre].

³⁶ See my *John Capreolus (1380–1444): Treatise on the Virtues*, ed. and introduction with Kevin White (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). The claim about the perennial validity of Aquinas has been recently reaffirmed by Pope John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio*, nos. 43 and 44.

³⁷ Sister Mary Jean Dorcy’s *Saint Dominic’s Family* (Dubuque, IA: The Priory Press, 1964; reprint, Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1983) gives the year as 1479.

³⁸ Because the laity were joined in their daily labors to the spiritual suffrages of the Order, it is possible to recognize in the worldwide confederation of Rosary confraternities one expression of what has come to be known in our own day as the vocation of the laity. Any member of a sixteenth-century Rosary confraternity would have been surprised to hear that the laity occupied no real place in the Church.

the opportunity to sanctify their everyday labors. The practices encouraged by the confraternities helped Christians to meet the Lord in their daily lives. It is important to remember that the Rosary is a prayer that sanctifies the intelligence: "... grant that we who *meditate* on the mysteries of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may" ³⁹ Venerable Alain de la Roche prepared Catholics for Montaigne's (1522–92) world as reflected in the *Essais* (II, 37): "I have made it my whole business to frame my life: this has been my trade and my life."⁴⁰ It remains of course another and open question to evaluate the extent to which Catholic culture on the whole was prepared to encounter this foreshadowing of "radical enlightenment."⁴¹

John Capreolus's *Defensiones* comprise a defense of Saint Thomas' realism against various expressions of conceptualism that began to flourish in the fourteenth century: the extreme expressions are included usually under the heading of nominalism. Some accounts of the late medieval and early modern periods assume that the flight from metaphysics and the rise of the *devotio moderna* are causally correlative moments in the history of Western spirituality.⁴² Leave behind outworn and useless subtleties

³⁹ Pope John Paul II connects the sanctification of the intelligence with that of the whole person: "... it is worthwhile to note that the contemplation of the mysteries could better express their full spiritual fruitfulness if an effort were made to conclude each mystery with a prayer for the fruits specific to that particular mystery. In this way the Rosary would better express its connection with the Christian life. One fine liturgical prayer suggests as much, inviting us to pray that, by meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary, we may come to 'imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise' " (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, no. 35).

⁴⁰ Cited in Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity. An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 100 [Hereafter, Dupré].

⁴¹ To borrow the title of Jonathan I. Israel's book *Radical Enlightenment Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴² Heiko A. Oberman, "Headwaters of the Reformation," in *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era*, ed. Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 40–88, esp. 70, discovers only one person, the Dutch Brother of Common Life Wessel Gansfort, who clearly belonged to both camps—the humanist and the nominalist.

and discover fresh and productive experiences. Louis Dupré, however, cautions that the relation between nominalism and the humanist movement (of which *devotio moderna* is a religious expression) remains far from clear.⁴³ What should be observed and promoted is that the Dominican tradition keeps metaphysics and devotion together. In this alembic emerges a spirit that is at once dynamic, differentiated, and combative. John Capreolus (†1444) and Alain de la Roche (†1475) witness diversely to this spirit, which for Dominicans always evolves around a love for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Other Dominican saints exemplified the spirituality of combat, which is linked organically to the imitation of the suffering Christ, and thus to Mary.⁴⁴ If we jump ahead a century, the biography of Saint Catherine de Ricci evokes the image of a woman who at once bore the marks of the Passion, and at the same time involved herself in the Reform of the Church. Though she flourished in the mid-sixteenth century, Catherine de Ricci (1522–90) stands in continuity with a keenly metaphysical, fifteenth-century theologian like John Capreolus, whose distinctions, admittedly, even the most ardent admirer of the “gladium distinctionis” may find wearisome. Where do we find the common thread? Capreolus wrote about Mary. He defended her active role in preparing the matter of Christ’s body. Generation.⁴⁵ He defended Mary’s real relation to her Son without affirming a double “filiation.” Christ remains the only-begotten of the Father, and still is a true son of Mary. Relationship. Capreolus also advanced the arguments of the Thomist school against the Immaculate Conception, which sought to emphasize 1 Tim 4: 10: “we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men” When these arguments are properly understood, the

⁴³ Dupré, 267, n. 25.

⁴⁴ Recall Cajetan’s reaction to depictions of the Virgin Mary in a swoon at the crucifixion. These had become popular during the late medieval period, especially in Germany. Cajetan liked to distinguish between sorrow (*dolor*) and sadness (*tristia*). Our Lady was eminently sorrowful, but never sad.

⁴⁵ See Richard Schenk, “Capreolus” in *Marienlexikon*, ed. R. Bäumer and L. Scheffczyk, vol. 1 (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1988), 652.

honest theologian will recognize a theologically astute defense of Christian compassion.⁴⁶

The young Dominican Michael Ghislieri undoubtedly studied Capreolus, whereas later as Pope Pius V, he corresponded with his contemporary Catherine de Ricci. What I want to emphasize is that authentic developments within the Dominican tradition prepared Saint Pius V to occupy his moment in that same tradition, but from a privileged venue, that of the papacy. His Marian devotion does not exhibit a reactionary spirit exacerbated by the experience of ecclesiastical divisions and political calamities: for instance, the Protestant Reform and the military expansion of Islam. Instead, Saint Pius V arrives on the world scene as a carrier of “la spiritualité de combat.”

III. Mary, Help of Christians

It was during the night of the 21st to 22nd October when the news arrived in Rome that the largest naval battle of the sixteenth century had been won by the forces of the Holy League under the command of Don Juan of Austria (1545–78), the twenty-six year old, illegitimate son of the Emperor Charles V. Lepanto! “The victory was great, and we muchly thanked God, but our losses were not small We lost so many men of high standing and great value.” Thus said Sebastian Venier, captain of the Christian fleet.⁴⁷ The day of the victory, 7 October, coincided with the customary processions organized by the Rosary confraternities in Rome. Pius V thus proposed to his cardinals that the universal Church should commemorate the Blessed Virgin on each first Sunday of October, and, additionally, that the Roman church dedicated to our Lady under the name Santa Maria sopra Minerva should receive the new title of Our Lady of Victory.

The actual implementation of the Rosary feast was left to his successor, Gregory XIII. The inclusion of the title “Our Lady Help of Christians” in the Litany of Loretto probably came

⁴⁶ Dominicans opposed the Immaculate Conception as it was argued for in the early modern period because the most ardent proponents of this doctrine seemed to place Mary outside of the divine compassion, and so made her seem to constitute an exception to the salvific work of Christ.

⁴⁷ Lemaitre, 314.

about as a result of the practice started by Christian sailors who, as they returned home from debarkation along the Adriatic Sea, stopped to pray at the famous shrine. But the legends, including the one commemorated in the mosaic at Saint Pius V Church in Providence, Rhode Island, represent a truth about the effect on sixteenth-century Europe of the Lepanto victory. It is said that while Pius V was working with his treasurer, Bartolomeo Bussoti, the Pope suddenly jumped up from the table, opened a window facing the East, and cried out: "Enough of business, let us thank the Lord, for our army at this moment has gained victory over the Turks." Today historians enjoy increased access to the archives of the Ottoman Turks, and there exists a certain agreement that Lepanto did mark an end of the secular struggle between Christians and Islam, one that has lasted until our own day, or so we pray.

Lepanto occurred in 1571, at the end of Pius V's life and reign. He died the next year on 1 May. Without a doubt, Pius transposed "la spiritualité de combat" to the level of international affairs. For this reason, it would be possible to draw a direct line from Pius V to John Paul II, who on 29 September 2002 said: "It is more necessary than ever that from every part of the earth *prayer for peace* be made to Him. In this perspective, the Rosary turns out to be the form of prayer most needed."⁴⁸ The work of reform that marked Pius V's service to the Church makes sense only in the context of his Dominican devotion to Mary. We again encounter the themes of generation, relationship, and compassion. For Michael Gishlieri, generation meant seriousness about begetting the truth—take, for example, his publication in 1566 of the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*. Relationship meant strengthening right order—take, for instance, his Bull of 29 May 1566 that enforced the cloister for women religious. (Catherine de Ricci understood the implications of this reversal in the life of her nuns, and, as superior, undertook enforcement of the cloister as a kind of metaphysical perfectionation.) And compassion for Pope Pius V meant encouraging people to believe in the "living God, who is the Savior of all men"—take, for example, his establishment in 1569 of a determined living space for the Roman courtesans,

⁴⁸ Sunday Angelus, 29 September 2002 reported in *L'Osservatore Romano* 2 October 2002.

wherein they could hear special sermons. This measure the Dominican Pope approbated only after his earlier attempt in the summer of 1566 to expel these ladies from the Eternal City had proven unsuccessful. Both strategies reveal aspects of compassion, especially given the moral climate of Renaissance Rome.

IV. Ad Jesum, per Mariam

Four years before the death of Pius V, Giacomo de Vignola (1507–73) and Giacomo della Porta (1537–1602) began construction of the Gesù, the mother church in Rome of the Jesuits. Art historians tell us that the facade of the Gesù “is important as the model for the facades of Roman Baroque churches for two centuries, and its basic scheme is echoed and reechoed throughout Catholic countries, especially in Latin America.”⁴⁹ When Louis Marie Grignon was born into a French family of eighteen children at Montfort-la-Cane (today, Montfort-sur-Meu) in 1673, Charles II of England had already asked Christopher Wren to design a new Saint Paul’s Cathedral for London. Wren thought of the Gesù. The Baroque had reached England.

Scholars, even those antecedently sympathetic to the doctrine of Louis Marie de Montfort, draw attention to the influence on him exercised by theologians of the Baroque era. These include the *Oeuvres Complètes* of Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle.⁵⁰ What is important, however, remains the historical fact that it was Mary and her Rosary that brought Louis de Montfort into contact with the Dominicans. In 1706, at the Dominican convent of Dinan, where his priest brother Joseph-Pierre was chaplain, Louis de Montfort asked to celebrate Mass at the altar dedicated to Alain de la Roche.⁵¹ We find ourselves once again in Catholic Brittany.

Since their active promotion by Pope Pius V, the Rosary confraternities flourished under the auspices of the Dominicans. Through-

⁴⁹ Helen Gardner, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages*, rev. by Horst de la Croix and Richard G. Tansey, 5th ed. (NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970) 556.

⁵⁰ For example, P. Gaffney, “Mary” in *Jesus Living in Mary: Handbook of the Spirituality of St. Louis Marie de Montfort* (Bay Shore, NY: Montfort Publications, 1994), 693 [Hereafter, *Jesus Living in Mary*].

⁵¹ J.-C. Laurenceau, “Rosary” in *ibid.*, 1056–57.

out the seventeenth century, the Dominicans fought to keep the confraternities under their aegis.⁵² Louis Marie understandably came to the realization that his success as a preacher of the Rosary would require that he seek affiliation with the Dominicans. On 10 November 1710, he made his profession to follow the rule of what was then known as the Third Order to the Prior of the Convent of Nantes. Montfort now shared authoritatively in the apostolic spirit of Saint Dominic. Today, we would say that he became part of the Dominican Family. In May 1712, he wrote to the Master General to ask him “for permission to preach the Holy Rosary wherever the Lord calls me, and to enroll into the Rosary Confraternity with the usual indulgences as many people as I can.” He went on to explain, “I have already been doing this with the permission of the local Priors and Provincials.” Montfort received the permission that he sought from Father Antoninus Cloche, who served as Master of the Order for 34 years, from 1686–1720. The term of Master General Cloche brings us to the end of the Baroque period.

Cloche, himself a Frenchman, had been deeply involved in the Order’s struggles with Jansenism, which we vigorously opposed, with Gallicanism, which infected deeply the French provinces, and with the Chinese Rites controversy, which put us once more in open conflict with the Jesuits.⁵³ No wonder that Father Cloche found something both familiar and sympathetic in the spirit of Louis Marie de Montfort: “It is by the Most Blessed Virgin Mary that Jesus Christ has come into the world and it is also by her that He must reign in the world.” These introductory lines of De Montfort’s *True Devotion*, recapitulate Dominican Rosary devotion. There exists general agreement, moreover, that *True Devotion* was composed in the autumn of 1712, just after De Montfort had written to Father Cloche requesting the highest permission to enroll new members into the Rosary confraternities. Against Jansenist rigorism, De Montfort preached Mary’s compassion; in defiance of Gallican ecclesial self-absorption, De Montfort illustrated a right

⁵² For example, Master General Antonio de Monroy (1677–85) “encouraged the Rosary confraternities and worked to keep them under Dominican control.” See Benedict Ashley, *The Dominicans* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 150–51 [Hereafter, Ashley].

⁵³ Ashley, 151.

ecclesial relationship: he wrote to Rome, to Santa Sabina, for permission to preach the Rosary in France. Antoninus Cloche undoubtedly recognized in this French diocesan priest a man who understood the Dominican tradition of Mary's compassion.

Mary in the Dominican tradition. Generation, relationship, compassion. Once commentators began to speculate on the Second Vatican Council's decision to append to the Constitution on the Church a final chapter devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mariologists began to emphasize Our Lady's place among the redeemed. Thomists of course were happy with this development insofar as their objection to a certain presentation of the Immaculate Conception had been recognized, as it were. At the same time, other Marian mysteries received less attention. For example, we hear uttered less frequently today than prior to 1962, "Ad Jesum, per Mariam." It would exceed the scope of this essay to analyze in detail Louis De Montfort's *True Devotion*. Still, even a cursory glance reveals the themes of generation, relationship, and compassion woven warp and woof into the texture of his Marian theology.

Generation comes by way of consecration, a consecration which effectively comprises "the perfect renewal of the vows and promises of holy baptism."⁵⁴ Relationship flows from generation: "We belong to Jesus and Mary as their slaves."⁵⁵ This metaphor strikes contemporary ears as odd sounding, but the reality is simple, as one author explains:

Mary has dominion over us, exerts power over us, which is why we are dependent on her (*True Devotion* 37, 74–77), but we must realize that it is in the end a dominion or power that is based on

⁵⁴ *True Devotion*, no. 120. *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* no. 15 includes this excerpt from *True Devotion*: "Our entire perfection consists in being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus Christ. Hence the most perfect of all devotions is undoubtedly that which conforms, unites and consecrates us most perfectly to Jesus Christ. Now, since Mary is of all creatures the one most conformed to Jesus Christ, it follows that among all devotions that which most consecrates and conforms a soul to our Lord is devotion to Mary, his Holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to her the more will it be consecrated to Jesus Christ."

⁵⁵ *True Devotion*, nos. 68–77.

her divine maternity extending into spiritual maternity. Therefore, our dependence, our “slavery” must be characterized by filial love.⁵⁶

Filial love or filial fear suggests the theological virtue of hope.⁵⁷ Hope reveals the full dimensions of the divine compassion. We learn that God can save us and that He wants to save. In Thomist terms, the formal mediating object of theological hope points to the divine omnipotence and the divine *pietas*, the divine compassion for the human creature. It should come as no surprise to learn, then, that Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort first consecrated himself to Our Lady before an image of the *pietà*, at Saumur in the chapel of Our Lady of Ardilliers. First of all, this ardent apostle of Mary was drawn by beholding the preeminent symbol of her compassion.



Where did our saints learn about Mary? How did she emerge within the family tradition of Saint Dominic bearing the message of generation, relationship, and compassion? I suggest that Dominicans learned to do their Mariology by pondering the texts of Aquinas. It is well known that the *Summa Theologiae* enters into ordinary usage shortly after the period when John Capreolus flourished.⁵⁸ His *Defensiones* follow the *Scriptum on the Sentences*, not the *Summa*. But Saint Thomas’s major systematic works both treat generation, relationship, and compassion. We find these themes arguably representative of the structure of the *Summa*. The *prima pars* discusses natures created and uncreated. We learn about the eternal generation of the Son, the Trinitarian processions, and the world of identifiable natures that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together create. We learn, in other words, about *de processione creaturarum a Deo*.⁵⁹ Next, in the *secunda pars*, we discover the relationship

⁵⁶ A. Bossard, “True Devotion” in *Jesus Living in Mary*, 1223.

⁵⁷ See my “The Theological Virtue of Hope (IIa IIae qq. 17–22)” in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 232–43. See also my *Virtues, or the Examined Life* (New York: Continuum, 2002).

⁵⁸ See my *Le thomisme et les thomistes* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999), 80ff.

⁵⁹ *Summa Theologiae* Prologue to q. 44: “Post processionem divinarum Personarum, considerandum restat de processione creaturam a Deo.”

which the human creature enjoys with those perfective ends that form part of the teleology of Christian life. These ends are multiple and the relationships they specify are suited to both shared human nature and personal vocation in the Church. All the telic relationships conduce to happiness for man: “*ex fine enim oportet accipere rationes eorum quae ordinantur ad finem.*”⁶⁰ The supreme happiness, however, escapes all human efforts to embrace it. Beatific happiness or divine friendship had been lost by Adam’s sin. The *tertia pars* explains the divine compassion in the most personal of terms. “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary” (Lk 1: 26–27). “Quia salvator noster Dominus Jesus Christus, teste angelo, ‘populum suum salvum faciens a peccatis eorum,’ viam veritatis in seipse demonstravit, per quam ad beatitudinem immortalis”⁶¹ The rest of the story is well known to both Dominicans and students of Aquinas. Theologians who want to compose Mariology must first imitate the angel, and say in faith, “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you” (Lk 1: 28b). They, in other words, must embrace Mary. At least that is what we do in the Dominican tradition. We do it each time that we say the Rosary. Pope John Paul II, in *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, applies this intuition to objectives beyond those of scientific theology: “At times when Christianity itself seemed under threat, its deliverance was attributed to the power of this prayer, and Our Lady of the Rosary was acclaimed as the one whose intercession brought salvation.”⁶² If we consider Mary in the Dominican tradition, we recognize that John Paul II invites us to take up once more “*la spiritualité de combat.*” N·V

⁶⁰ ST Prologue to *pars prima-secundae*.

⁶¹ ST Prologue to the *tertia pars*.

⁶² *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, no. 39.