

for people in the world, a devotion; for preachers, a veneration; for those who suffer, a consolation; in all dangers, a protection.

Mary is, truly, very near to God: very dear to His Beloved Son, Jesus:

all powerful in her intercession in obtaining pardon and succour for the unfortunate sons of Adam.

In all the circumstances of life, she intervenes with her Son to obtain mercy for the culpable.

She, too, like Jesus Himself, is always heard, because of the honor which is due to her.

Thus, therefore, let every pious Christian hurry to seek refuge near Mary, if he wishes to escape from the shipwrecks of the world, and to arrive at the port of eternal salvation.

We may indeed expect much from her, because although placed above us all she loves to come to the least of us, happy to be called advocate of the unfortunate, and more happy still, mother of orphans.

III. Prayer:

O Mary, gentle Mother, beloved Mother above all, you are the star on the horizon of the sea, the star which smiles on the lost mariner, the star which leads to the haven of peace.

Let it rise to you, O Mary, my simple prayer.

May the flame of my desire arise toward you, my cherished Queen. Defend my cause at the tribunal of your Son, for no one is found innocent before Him.

(Sermon to the Novices, Chap. XXIII)

HOMILY

THE PROTECTION OF MARY

Dominion and power are interesting in the hands of a protector only if he exercises them in favor of the protected.

I. The intervention of Mary for us, poor sinners, is necessary in every state of life. But especially in the moment of temptations; then above all is her protection useful to us. Temptations do not come to us from without, they originate within us still more than around us.

II. What are they? Each one knows them and recognizes them. Therefore let us seek Mary at the moment of these intimate struggles, in order to beg help of her and in order to receive consolation in them. *Solamen et dictamen.*

III. The faithful ask the Mother for the light to recognize their way and to be able to follow it well. Let us go to Mary, as to a mother and as to a queen.

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THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER IN MARY

That which denotes the grandeur and the charm of maternity in a woman are grief and tenderness. Grief which rends the heart as it rends the body in order to give life. Tenderness which binds the child to the mother and the mother to the child in such a way as to form only one being, as they form only one flesh.

All these characteristics are found physically in the human maternity of Mary, in her relations with Jesus, and mystically in the spiritual maternity of Mary vis-a-vis all Christians but more especially Religious.

The poem of maternal love which each mother lives, often without knowing it, is found in Mary with more grandeur and glory. It is necessary to know how to understand it and to medi-

tate on it in order to feel it better and transfer it into life; this is the end of meditation.

Practice: Offer a sacrifice each day to Mary; however small it may be.

Thought: A mother is, in life, the bark and the star:
Stella et nacella.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREATNESS AND PRIVILEGES OF MARY

I.

In order to succeed in knowing, at least in part, the greatness and dignity of the Virgin Mary, note briefly the eminent graces with which God has clothed her, while exalting her above angels and saints in heaven and above all men on earth.

She is the holy virgin, she is the beloved mother, of whom is said in the Church and throughout the universe, "You are raised, Holy Mother of God, higher than the angels, raised to the throne of Heaven."

Review with care the deeds and acts of the ancient patriarchs.

It is from their root that Mary was born, virgin and mother equally, a rose without thorns amid the thickets.

Just as formerly Christ was prefigured in His birth, in His death, and in His life,

by patriarchs, prophets, and kings,
by judges, priests, and levites,
by doctors and finally by scribes,
in words, in symbols and in signs:

Likewise, as by a divine ordination,
the Blessed Virgin Mary was equally announced,
by celebrated virgins of past epochs,
by illustrious mothers,
by exemplary widows,
by all women living in sanctity.

II.

By testimony of the Holy Scripture Mary was from all time, and will be always,

the holiest virgin among all virgins,
the most beautiful woman among all women,
the sweetest mother among all mothers,

the purest daughter among all daughters,
 the gentlest mistress among all mistresses,
 the most illustrious queen among all queens.
 In her are found again assembled, dwelling and shining with
 an unequalled brilliance,
 all virginal beauty and all virtuous charm,
 all divine thought and all the love of the heart,
 every virtuous work and every fruit of sanctity.

Mary never had a predecessor,
 she has not today an equal,
 she will never have henceforth a peer.
 Just as formerly among the holy temples that of Solomon was
 the most adorned, the richest, the most renowned, the unique,
 so, the symbolic temple of Mary surpasses in excellence the
 temples of the saints. It alone merits more of love and glory.

III. Prayer:

O Mary, Star that shines in the sky, Virgin, Queen of Heaven,
 Sovereign of the World, no woman can be compared with you,
 no matter with whatever virtues heaven may have adorned
 her, because you are unique in the midst of the elect.
 God the Father sees you as you were before all ages, and created
 you upon earth, at the selected time, in order to make of
 you the Mother of His Son.

O Miracle ineffable, O joy unhopèd for! This Son of the Living
 God to save the universe becomes your Son, and you are
 His mother!

Thus you become our mediatrix, and the mediatrix of the entire
 world.

O Mary, the most beautiful of all women, let the whole world
 glorify you, honor you, sing to you, and love you!
 May every creature repeat your praises in heaven and on earth,
 now and forever.

(Sermons to the Novices, XXV)

HOMILY

THE EMINENT DIGNITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

I. In the suggestive language of poetry, when we compare
 God to the sun, we liken Mary to the moon, as the planet which
 comes immediately after the greatest.

Thus it is in reality: Mary is, after God, the most beautiful
 and the greatest marvel of the universe. The dignity and the
 grandeur of a being is due to its functions.

What grandeur more sublime, what dignity more striking
 than those of "Mother of God"? The Greeks had created pur-
 posefully in order to designate it, a word, which applies only to
 Mary: *Theotókos*, "she who has brought forth God."

II. In the enumeration of the privileges of Mary, the beauty,
 the sweetness, the power, the force, and the majesty, nothing
 equal is found here on earth. Just as the Temple of Solomon
 was unique in the world, thus Mary is unique in the order of
 creation. But if grandeur frightens ordinarily, here it attracts,
 for to the grandeur is attached tenderness: the tenderness of a
 mother.

III. Hence the author asks Mary, in the final prayer, for the
 help of her power and the protection of her love: *Tutamen et
 solomen*.

MEDITATION

GRANDEURS AND TENDERNESS OF MARY

The enumeration of the privileges of Mary is her most beauti-
 ful eulogy, says St. Germain. You are, O my Mother, the panegy-
 ric of all the ages and of all spheres. You are great and you are
 powerful, you are sovereign and you are mistress, you are queen
 and you are woman, you are she who is always named, and you
 are she who cannot be named at her worth. You are the mother
 and you are the ineffable.

Your tenderness is that of a virginal heart, inserted in the flesh
 of a mother. Just as the mother gives us both of her soul and of

her body in forming us within her womb, thus you give us of your heart and of your substance when we receive Jesus, your Son, in the Eucharist.

O inaccessible grandeur, O ineffable tenderness!

Practice: Recite often the litanies of the Holy Virgin which are a summary of her privileges.

Thought: O Mary, you surpass in greatness and sweetness all creatures: *Tu supergressa es universas, O Maria!*

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE BEAUTY AND LINEAGE OF MARY

I.

O Mary, illustrious Virgin,
engendered from the fruitful race of patriarchs,
nourished by the holy descendants of priests,
O Mary, honored with the dignity of pontiffs,
announced by the choir of prophets,
heiress of the grandeur of kings,
illustrious daughter of the house of David,
supreme heroine of the tribe of Juda.
Sacred heroine of the valiant people of Israel,
living symbol of a holy nation,
miraculous child of blessed parents,
you merit glory and praise,
you merit tenderness and love.

You are a treasure among all women,

You, who even before the beginning of time
had been chosen as the Mother of God.

The patriarchs desired your birth, O Mary,
the wise prophets announced you,
the just men and the kings bore witness to you,
the people of Israel sighed for you,
until the day when at last you appeared,
O Mary, for the salvation of this dying world.

II.

Your name is proclaimed in the whole universe,
O Mary! from the rising to the setting of the sun,
Among all nations, Jews and Gentiles,
Greeks and Latins, Romans and Scythians,
Everywhere your name is announced with the Gospel.
Everywhere, too, and everyday your name is preached
in churches and chapels,
in cloisters, in fields, in deserts.

It is repeated by the little and the great,
by priests and doctors and preachers,
who all equally seek to praise you.

Yes, O Mary, together the choir of the just
unites its harmonies and its voices,
in order to chant your attractions,
your grace and your holiness.

Its love is so great, its love is so gentle,
that it can without ever tiring, chant,
contemplate, meditate and fête your mysteries,
Mindful of the words of Wisdom:

Those who eat of me yet hunger for this bread,
those who drink of me still thirst for this wine.

III. Prayer:

Come then, O Mary, sweet Virgin whom I love!

Come then, my hope and my consolation!

Come, for when I am near you, when I hear your voice,
it seems that I already possess all good,
it seems that I am sheltered from all evil,
Recalling your sweet clemency.

I come to seek refuge under your aegis,

O Mary, you who know how to give

to the weak, strength,

to the captive, freedom,

be for me all merciful,

be by your love a mother to me.

Thus I shall know through having experienced it

how you console with charm,

and how you defend with assurance,

all those who are faithful in serving you.

(Soliloquy of the Soul, Chap. V)

HOMILY

THE SPLENDOR OF THE RACE IN MARY

I. Perfect beauty bears a new name; it is splendor. Splendor is itself a virtue. All virtue has, in effect, an active side and a passive side. It produces works which we see and it is produced by causes which we do not see. In Mary, the splendor and the illustriousness of her race operate these marvels which cause love and admiration to be born, which entice hearts and elevate souls. Let us be drawn to Mary: *Trahimur ad te*, chants the Liturgy.

II. This splendor in Mary arises from her race and her descent. She is the heir of a royal line which goes back to Joachim, to Solomon, to David, to Jesse, to Abraham, to Adam. Flowered stem, blessed branch which was to bear the divine fruit of the Eucharist: *Caro Christi, caro Mariæ*, said St. Augustine.

III. Also, let us ask Mary, with the pious author of the *Imitation*, for the hope which is a source of consolation, awaiting the realization of love in heaven where we shall see our Mother and our Queen in all her splendor.

MEDITATION

FEMININE BEAUTY

Beauty is not only a brilliance, it is also a harmony of the proportions which constitutes perfection. The man who would possess this harmony would be the perfect man. But there is in the beauty of a woman a more luminous and a more delicate grace which constitutes charm. Let her be queen or shepherdess, a great lady or a simple worker, a woman can always refine herself more than a man and arrive at this harmonious beauty of gestures if not of forms, which will make her particular charm.

Do not doubt that this be a virtue instead of coquetry, if it is used in the service of the good and in the perfection of the soul. All that requires effort, and an effort is always an act of virtue. Be careful, then, as St. Francis de Sales said, of your appearance

and cultivate your heart, so that the fire which leaps forth from this heart, illumines your face with heavenly splendor equal to that of our divine mother Mary, the most beautiful of all women.

Practice: To make an effort every day to be gracious to everyone.

Thought: You are all beautiful, O Mary: *Tota pulchra es Maria.*

CHAPTER IX

SYMBOLS OF MARY

I.

Honor, praise and glory to God on high, who gives to you, O Mary, a grace greater than that of all the women in this world,

and who gives to you in the other world a place of glory, near His throne in the highest heaven above all the choirs of angels and saints.

O glorious and admirable Virgin Mary,

Mother, as well as Daughter, of your God,
you merit all honor and glory.

You are the most great in your humility,
the most beautiful in your virginity,
the most ardent in your love,
the most resigned in your patience.

You are the most gentle in your mercy,
the most inflamed in your prayer,
the most profound in your meditation,
the most elevated in your contemplation,
the most sensitive in your compassion,
the most enlightened in your counsel,
the most powerful in your help.

II.

You are, O Mary, the dwelling place of God,
you are also, O Mary, the gate of heaven,
the garden of delights, the source of graces,
the glory of angels, the salvation of men.

You are the art of living, the splendor of virtue,
the light of day, the hope of the unhappy,
the health of the sick, the mother of orphans.

O Virgin of virgins, all beautiful and fragrant,
you have in yourself, O Mary,
the brilliance of the star, the charm of the rose,

the beauty of the dawn, the gentleness of the moon,
the depth of the pearl, the splendor of the sun.

III.

And in you too, O Virgin, so gentle,
pure in your life, like to a lamb,
simple in your heart, like a dove,
prudent in the fashion of a noble mistress,
submissive in the manner of a humble servant.

O Mary, holy tree, lofty and sublime cedar,
vine heavy with grapes, fig tree covered with fruit,
cypress tall and strong, palm tree full of glory,
in you are found gathered all good things,
through you are promised to us all delights.

We all hasten then to you, O Mary, as sons to a beloved mother,
as orphans to a mother whom they love.

Through your merits protect us from all evil. Through your
prayers deliver us from all peril.

IV. Prayer:

O Mary, golden rose, sweet and beautiful at once, may my
urgent prayers rise to you!

Here I stand, knocking at the door of your dwelling, assured
of obtaining your mercy, in the midst of my sorrows and
tribulations.

Indeed, you are the Mother of mercy, and you give to the sinner
hope of pardon.

Your tenderness, O Mary, and your goodness surpass all that
can be expressed here below.

You are elevated above the glory, above the honors, which the
saints possess, higher than the virtues, the benignity, the sweet-
ness and the charm of blessed spirits.

And if it were not thus, O Mary, how could you inundate the
unfortunate with so much sweetness, with so many consolations,
with such great hope, and such great contrition.

You will never be impoverished, for in you is conceived the
Source of all goodness,

You are the ornament of the heavens, and the joy of the Saints,
and you are the tabernacle of the Holy of Holies.

Our forefathers longed for you for aeons. You, the chosen
mother and the elected virgin, who were to grant all pardon on
earth and all fullness in heaven.

(Three Tabernacles, Chap. III)

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HOMILY

IMAGES AND RESEMBLANCES BETWEEN THE MOTHER AND THE CHILDREN

I. The images and the figures of Mary, in history and in life, are given to make us love and admire our Mother, but also to recall to us that we ought to resemble her. The resemblance, even physical, between the mother and the children, is a fact of adaptation as much as of race. We can by contemplation arrive at this resemblance which belongs to the children of the same mother.

II. If we do not achieve a perfect resemblance, we can at least, achieve a general reproduction of the model which makes an image of it. Scripture gives of Mary the sweetest and the most grandiose images. She is the dwelling of God, the garden of delights, the gate of heaven, the morning star, the health of the sick, the refuge of sinners. She is grace and sweetness; she is the dream and the realization of all tenderness.

III. This is the canticle of the heart; this is the cantilena of poetry which we repeat to her with the author of the Scripture, in greeting her as an admirable mother.

MEDITATION

THE MODEL AND THE IMITATOR

The model, in painting, is a subject contemplated and loved, which the artist tries to reproduce as exactly as he can, or at least, to imitate in its general outlines.

In like manner we ought to act in contemplating Mary. In order to form ourselves to her image, it is necessary to transform ourselves, for she is beauty and we are ugliness. She is formed from a particle of the divinity whereas we are fashioned from a clod of clay.

But the clay is malleable and the divine imprint puts in it a bit of light and of fire, when it permits itself to be penetrated. Therefore let us open our hearts, let us open our souls to the

influence of grace. It is so much the easier to do so since we are in the arms of a mother.

Practice: To meditate each day on a mystery of the Rosary:
Contemplare et mirare.

Thought: The more we resemble Mary the closer we are to God.

CHAPTER X

THE DIVINE MATERNITY OF MARY

I.

A new marvel appears in creation: by the power of God a woman encompasses the Creator in her flesh.

What is this marvel, O Lord Jesus, but your conception by the Holy Ghost and your nativity of the Virgin Mary?

It is the nativity not yet understood here below, it has not had a parallel, it will never have an equal.

O holy and truly blessed nativity which puts to flight the ancient sin, and which brings to the world a new sanctity.

Rise, new Mother; sing, O Mary, you are the woman spoken of by the prophet, you are she who by her maternity merits this ineffable glory, this indescribable glory, for you have borne within your womb, O Immaculate One, enclosed in your virginal flesh Him whom the whole world knows not how to contain:

You have thus become more than the whole universe.

For this Divine Child who made Himself your Son, directly from your womb already appears to us a man, if not by the grandeur of His created body at least by the virtue of His hidden divinity.

Yea, your Son, Jesus, O Blessed Mother, from the moment of His conception, was already replete with grace and truth.

II.

Speak then, O Lady, speak to your servant, for your servant listens!

You are my sovereign, Mary, and much more, I say it with confidence, you are my mother, and Jesus, your Son, has become my brother.

Truly, you have brought Him forth, not to keep Him for yourself alone, but to give Him to the world.

No longer do I wish to give the name of mother to any other but you, Mary, because you are the Mother of God and my mother.

There is not here below a woman equal to you in power, in grandeur, in beauty, in meekness, in charity, in sweetness, in compassion, in fidelity, nor in love.

III.

I desire, today, to choose you for my mother, and I desire, Mary, to confide myself entirely to you.

I would desire that this choice might be confirmed by you forever; for it suffices for me, Mary, to be able to be united to you for all time.

I shall then greatly rejoice in your name, and I shall magnify your praises for all eternity, O Mary.

(The Valley of Lilies, Chap. VII)

HOMILY

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE MOTHER

I. The role of the mother is not only to give life but to embellish it. A portion of her being is transmitted through the mother to the child. This is the marvel of creation which is renewed.

The spiritual filiation also has something of this creation. That is why the children of Mary bear within themselves a ray of heaven. As Jesus, who was formed from the flesh of Mary, we can be formed from her heart. Mary is truly the Mother of God: *Theotókos*, she who has brought forth God, as the Greek Church says. But she is also the Mother of men, *Mater viventium*, as the Latin Church calls her.

II. After having brought us forth to the life of grace, Mary helps us to perfect in ourselves this supernatural life. Perfection is composed of a harmonious whole; the smallest defect detracts from the model. Therefore it is necessary to resolve to make all imperfections disappear. Do we always think of that?

III. The author asks Mary to help him to attain this end and to realize this wish: to resemble his Mother.

MEDITATION

MATERNAL AND FILIAL TENDERNESS

The love of a father is an act of force, stirring and active; the love of a mother is an act of compassion, vibrant and passive which bears a special name, tenderness.

Tenderness is a love composed of inclination and attentions. It is all sweetness and grace, it is feminine.

If the heart of a mother is thus, the heart of a child is the same. Our love for a father differs from our love for a mother. Our love for a father is, most often, an act of reflection; our love for a mother is always an impulse of the heart.

So it is in the spiritual life. It is that which always makes devotion to Mary something gentle and sweet, something which comes from the heart. In other words, we live more by the heart than by the mind.

Practice: To keep and look at images and medals with faith.

Thought: One must think of a mother so as to overcome temptations.

PART TWO

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

CHAPTER XI

THE PIOUS PATRONAGE OF MARY

I.

Happy is he who knows how to accept in this life, both Jesus and Mary, and the angels and the saints, for guides on the way and counsellors in doubt, for masters at work and directors in repose, for companions at home and friends when abroad, for aids in combat and helpers in dangers, for patrons at death and judges at judgment, for intercessors with God and co-heirs to heaven.

You, who wish to leave the world and its attractions, let Jesus and Mary be your only loves:
 let God be your Father and Jesus your brother;
 let Mary, henceforth, be your only Mother.

Take the angels for your friends, the unfortunate for your brothers, the humble and the poor for your companions.

II.

There is the holy family and the fruitful race that God creates for you, and that He loves.
 It has faith for a foundation, hope for its strength, patience and charity for its ornaments.
 Tremble and sing, faithful soul, as Mary once sang before God, trembling on the day of her great joy when the Saviour, Jesus, was conceived in her.

Praise the Lord, praise Him lavishly and say to Mary: I find refuge today near you, my mother, and beg humbly your support.

III. Prayer:

If you are with us in the struggle, Mary, who then will dare to rise against us?

And if you give us your protection, who then will ever be able to repulse us?

Extend over me, extend your arms, Mary, because I wish to seek my refuge in your shadow.

Say to my soul: I am your advocate, fear nothing. As a mother consoles her son, thus I shall console you, my child.

How sweet are your words, Mary, and how your voice consoles me, Mother!

Allow my heart always to hear it.

(Devout Prayers, Prayer III)

HOMILY

THE INFLUENCE OF A WOMAN AND A MOTHER IN THE WORLD

I. The remembrance, like the presence of a mother, is the most powerful incentive to goodness in the world. The life of civilized peoples is entirely organized to please the woman. Poetry, art, style, all are made for her. One can also say that it is she who brings forth poetry and art, when she knows how to inspire them.

From this point of view the influence of Mary is found manifested in the most beautiful masterpieces of architecture and of painting in the world. Nothing is beautiful in life without the mother.

II. Woman possesses an additional charm when she is a mother. The history of peoples is full of heroic recitals and beautiful actions accomplished through maternal love. Neither the Greeks nor the Romans would have arrived at the degree of civilization and of beauty which we admire, without the cult of maternity.

The Christian religion is greater, more beautiful and more alluring in proportion as the cult of Mary, the mother and the ideal woman, is developed and inscribed in practice and in art.

MEDITATION

THE POWER OF A WOMAN

Instinctively, from her very nature itself, woman loves to protect and to embrace in order to defend and attract others to herself. The power of a woman is in her attraction and in her function; whereas the power of a man is in his strength only. The ancients had symbolized these functions by giving to kings a scepter of iron and to queens a scepter of flowers. The one dominates by his force, the other by her graciousness.

Nothing resists the power of graciousness; a smile can break or transform a life. Let the Christian woman use this power for

good. Piety, says St. Francis de Sales, ought to make a woman more gracious, for she ought to possess both supernatural grace and natural graciousness.

Practice: Try to reproduce, even exteriorly, the royal grace of Mary.

Thought: Mary is beauty and grace: *Speciosa et formosa*.

CHAPTER XII

THE DELIGHTS OF MARY

I.

No language on this earth will be able to express the delights and joys of the Virgin Mary.

No mind will ever be able to comprehend the abundance of her joys as virgin, the greatness of her consolations as mother:

For, the more abundant is the infusion of grace, the more numerous also are the gifts of happiness. In like manner, the more frequent are the visits of God, the more ardent, too, are desire and love.

Imitate, therefore, the Mother of the Saviour, so as to be numbered among her children.

Try attentively to walk in the steps of Mary on the road of virtue, in order to attain to glory with her.

II.

Have intense grief for your past lukewarmness, for your faults, alas! not yet overcome.

Pray that all creatures may glorify God and observe His laws.

Give thanks for the divine benefits granted through the Mother of God.

Render to her all honor and all reverence; for, if the natural law obliges children to love their mother according to the flesh, how much more ought we to testify affection and show tenderness to the Mother of grace?

It is a duty to love above all mothers Mary who is, at the same time, Mother of God, Mother of Holy Church, and our own Mother.

III. Prayer:

How shall I ever be sad of heart when you give your consolation, Mary?

How could one fear the enemy, one who can, at each moment, have recourse to you?

Incline, O Mother filled with tenderness, incline your ears to my humble prayers.

Incline, O Mother filled with tenderness, like Rebecca, toward your servant, and give him a few drops to drink.

Pour into me a part, however small it may be, of that grace and of that sweet consolation which is mysteriously hidden in you.

This grace is at all times desirable for all persons, it is always pleasant to receive; it is indispensable for me at this moment.

The smallest drop placed on lips by you, Mary, seems to me so powerful and so great in its excellence, that all other pleasures on earth seem vile, without value, and equal to nothing.

(The Devout Prayers, Prayer III)

HOMILY

JOYS AND CHRISTIAN PLEASURES

Joy is a sentiment which enlarges the heart and makes it beat more strongly. Joy dilates, exalts and magnifies. Sadness, on the contrary, contracts and diminishes life.

I. Mary who had in life so many causes of sadness and so many kinds of grief, is nevertheless called by Scripture: the Mother of holy happiness, *Mater pulchrae laetitiae*. Happiness is a virtue which breaks out into joy, to delight others. It is therefore an act of virtue which supposes an effort and a gift of one's self.

II. Mary, more than any other creature, possessed this gift and practised this virtue. Christian art, like religious history, shows us always the Virgin in the midst of flowers, beaming with light. It is a representation, but a representation full of serene reality.

III. We are attracted by this serenity and the heart is caught in the divine contemplation. Let us ask, as a grace, the joy and the happiness of the heart, so that we may pour them forth through christian joys which dilate the souls.

MEDITATION

A GOOD CHARACTER

The character is formed as any habit of virtue is formed. To have a good character is to be on the road of perfection.

A good character is first of all, *character*, that is to say, firm and stable and not changeable and variable. It is in the second place, *good*, which means, pleasing to others.

Only the people who breathe joy have a good character. The people who are glum in everything, as is said in current language, are never of an agreeable character. They are a burden to others and to themselves.

Form your character so that it may be stable. Refine it, so that it may be gentle. Conquer it so that it may be usable.

You will then be, like to Mary, exultant with joy and glorifying God in your life every day.

Practice: To form character, it is often necessary to know how to break it, by doing that which pleases the least.

Thought: *Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria*. Rejoice and be glad, O Mary!