

MY IDEAL

Jesus, Son of Mary

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By

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Marianist

According to the spirit of

Father William Joseph Chaminade

Founder of the Marianists

A Translation Completely Revised
under the Author's Supervision

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Maria Duce!

“Under Mary’s Leadership!”

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Preface

The Christian who aims at perfection endeavors to imitate Jesus Christ as completely as possible. Among all the traits of the Divine Model one of the most beautiful to imitate is His filial piety to Mary our Mother—His Mother and ours.

My Ideal has been found to be an efficient aid in this Marian program of life. It leads to a firm, virile, intimate devotion of consecration to the Blessed Mother. It is presently treasured by many priests, sisters, brothers and lay people, young and old, as a blueprint for a Christian way of life under the aegis of Mary Immaculate.

The present edition is an attempt at a wider propagation of this spiritual teaching of Father Chaminade on Mary's part in our soul-life. It is a practical manual for sodalities, Catholic Action groups, schools, novitiates, and seminaries. The chapters are suited for reading, study, and meditation on the days of May and October.

MY IDEAL

Jesus, Son of Mary

*“I have given you an example, that
as I have done, so you do also.”*

—cf. John 13:5

PART ONE

*Jesus Sets
Forth the Ideal*

I

“I have given you the example . . .”

JESUS:

My brother, you love My Blessed Mother and you are glad to love her. But your love for her is far from what I would like it to be.

You love her because it is natural to love what is pure and beautiful, and she is ideally pure and beautiful.

1. You love her because it is natural to love those who are good and helpful, and no one is better or more helpful than she.

You love her because you regard her as a Mother and because every child loves its mother.

You love her because you have felt the influence of her love and have found out that with her you succeed more easily in keeping your purity and fervor.

You love her because you have learned from books and sermons that devotion to her is the easiest way of assuring your salvation and the surest way of attaining perfection—and you wish above all to save and sanctify yourself.

2. All these motives of love are good, but there

is another much more excellent. These can serve as a foundation for a tender devotion to My Mother; they do not, however, lay the foundation for that devotion which I wish you to practice. Devotion to My Mother is something so important, so beneficial to you, so acceptable to her and to Me, that you cannot be satisfied with something mediocre, or good enough, or even very good, but solely with what is perfect.

3. Do you know the most perfect kind of devotion to Mary?

Search in books, consult theologians, ask the greatest servants of Mary that the earth has ever produced for the secret—and you will find nowhere a devotion more perfect than the one which I am going to teach you and which consists in *sharing in My own filial love for My Mother*.

Does not perfection for My disciples consist in being like their Master? Have I not given them the example, that, as I have done, they should also do? Did not My Apostle Paul repeat again and again that everything, for them, consists in imitating Christ, in clothing themselves with Christ, in taking on the dispositions of Christ, in living no longer their own life but the life of Christ?

Tell Me, can you imagine any more perfect dispositions toward My Mother than Mine?

THE FAITHFUL SOUL:

O Jesus, what a supremely charming prospect: to share in Your filial love for Your Mother! But, poor sinner that I am, how can I attain such an ideal? How can I even understand it?

II

I Am Mary's Son Because I Willed It!

JESUS:

My brother, to understand My filial love for My Mother, you must understand, first of all, that I am the Son of Mary because I deliberately chose that condition.

I did nothing by constraint, or by chance, or without a purpose.

When I decided to restore the glory of My Father and to save humanity, an infinite number of ways lay open before Me. To all others, however, I preferred the way of Mary.

I freely and deliberately created Mary to be My Mother, for she would not have been brought into existence had I not willed to confide this office to her: freely and deliberately I made her what she is, so that she might in turn make Me what I am.

In all truth I am her Child and I willed to be formed of My Mother's substance like every other

child. I wanted to be nursed by her; I wanted to be brought up and cared for by her; I wanted to be entirely subject to her.

I am her Child much more truly than you are your mother's child, for from her alone I willed to derive My whole humanity.

I am her Child entirely, God and Man, because the One to whom she gave birth forms a single, undivided Person.

Now, I want you to realize that in choosing to be her Child I was motivated by love: first of all, by love for My Heavenly Father, whom I could glorify more and whom men would understand and love more because of her; then, too, by love for My Mother, who was to give Me more joy than all angels and men together; and also, by love for men—in particular for you, My beloved brother.

III

Contemplate and Admire

JESUS:

Contemplate now what My filial love has inspired Me to do for My Mother.

1. From all eternity I thought of her and loved her, for from all eternity I saw in her My future Mother.

I thought of her when creating the heavens and the angels; I thought of her as I formed the earth and the human race.

I thought of her as I pronounced sentence against your first parents; I thought of her as I revealed Myself to the ancient patriarchs and prophets.

2. Out of love I heaped privileges upon her, each of which exceeds the greatest of My bounties toward all other creatures. I exempted her from laws to which the whole human race is subject: her alone did I make Immaculate in her Conception, free from all concupiscence, unsullied by any imperfection, more full of grace than all the angels and Saints, Mother of God and ever a Virgin, glorified in her body, even as I was, before the general Resurrection.

3. Although I came on earth to redeem the human race, I gave thirty years of My life to Mary alone and three years to the rest of humanity.

4. Nor was I content to have her share My privileges and live in intimacy with Me; I willed that she should also have a part in the very mission which My Father had entrusted to Me. I, the Redeemer, determined that she should be the Co-Redemptrix with Me, and that everything which I merited for the Salvation of the world because it was strictly due to Me, she should merit too because it was supremely fitting.

5. I also willed that she should be associated with me even in Heaven. I willed that, as I am an

advocate with the Father, she should likewise be an advocate with Me, in order to distribute all graces to men, because she cooperated with Me in gaining them. For, in Heaven even as on earth, I am her Son, and I am infinitely happy to reward her liberally for all that she formerly suffered and did in love for Me.

6. Listen further: I live in the Church; that is, in My Mystical Body directed by My Spirit. What the Church does is really done by Me; what the Church does for My Mother, is really being done for her by Me. Think of all the veneration and love the Church has shown her: the defense and proclamation of her privileges, the institution of feasts and devotions in her honor, the approval of confraternities and religious societies destined to serve her. Think over the piety of the Church's children: of the Saints, who were all so devoted to My Mother; of fervent souls, who are drawn more and more to honor her in a special way; of the ordinary faithful themselves, who are so watchful over her honor, so clear-minded in recognizing her privileges (sometimes even more so than learned men), so enthusiastic the moment there is question of giving her some special mark of affection. What is all that if not a grand and yet quite imperfect manifestation of My own incomparable filial love toward My Mother?

To all that the Church Militant has done and will

do for Mary down to the end of time, add what the Church Triumphant does for her throughout eternity; for I live even more in the Saints of Heaven than I do in the faithful on earth. Imagine the gratitude, respect and love which the blessed unceasingly manifest to their Queen and Mother, to whom they owe their eternal felicity. In them and by them, remember, it is always I who honor and love My Mother.

7. Pass in review these proofs of My filial love; delve into them, sound their depths, try to understand all you can about them, and notice that what you cannot understand surpasses infinitely anything you ever will understand of them. Then, say to yourself that it is this infinite filial love which I wish you to share.

THE FAITHFUL SOUL:

How wonderful it all is, O Jesus! But how shall I reproduce such filial love?

IV

My Mother, Your Mother

JESUS:

My brother, you cannot really reproduce My filial love toward Mary unless you are, as I am, her child. Do you know to what extent you are a child of Mary?

1. All the faithful think they know it, for they all call her their Mother. The greater number of them, however, have only a very imperfect idea of Mary's Motherhood in their regard.

Many love Mary *as if* she were their Mother: tell Me, what would your mother answer you, if you said to her, "I love you *as if* you were my mother?"

Many think that Mary is their Mother solely in virtue of the words I pronounced before I died, when, seeing My Mother standing at the foot of the Cross, and next to her My beloved disciple, I said to her, "Woman, behold thy son," and to John, "Behold thy Mother." My words could very well have confided a maternal mission to Mary and created dispositions in her resembling those of a mother. Yet, if her Motherhood had depended on these words alone, it would have been a mere adoptive Motherhood. Now, I want you to realize that Mary is your *true* Mother in the supernatural order, just as she who gave you birth is your *true* mother in the natural order.

2. A mother is one who gives life. Mary has given you life—the most real life.

She gave it to you at Nazareth, on Calvary, and in your Baptism.

At *Nazareth* she conceived you, in conceiving Me.

She knew that by answering the angel Gabriel "Yes" or "No," she would either give you life or leave

you in death. She said "Yes" in order that you might live. By consenting to give Me life, she also consented to give it to you. In becoming My Mother, she became yours. From that moment, in the designs of God and in her own designs—for she had some idea of the designs of God and adhered to them with her whole heart—you constituted a part of My Mystical Body. I was the Head and you were a member. Mary bore us both, though in different ways, in her maternal womb; for the members and the Head have not a separate existence.

3. On *Calvary*, she brought you forth when she offered Me as a sacrifice for you.

Your deliverance from sin and death was only consummated on Golgotha. It was there that I "destroyed him who had the empire of death," and by My death merited for you the grace of living My life. Now, it was in union with Mary that I accomplished this work. She had conceived Me as a Victim; she had nourished and brought Me up for the Sacrifice, and at the supreme moment, she offered Me to the Father for your salvation and renounced in your favor her maternal rights over Me. And she who, ever Virgin, experienced only joy in the birth of her Firstborn Son, gave birth to you and your brothers amid the most agonizing sorrow.

4. At that moment, her Motherhood in your regard was consummated. That is why I then wanted

to proclaim it by confiding John to Mary and Mary to John. My words did not create that motherhood; they attested, confirmed, and completed it at the most solemn hour of My life—the hour when My Mother, having become your Mother in the full sense of the word, was best able to understand her maternal mission.

5. At your *Baptism* Mary not only gave you the right to supernatural life as she did on Calvary, she actually brought you forth to it. As far as the supernatural world was concerned, your natural mother brought you forth a stillborn child. That you might come to life, Sanctifying Grace had to be infused into you at the baptismal font.

This Sanctifying Grace came to you through Mary, for, except through her no grace is ever given. When you were transformed from a child of wrath to a child of God, it was Mary who gave birth to you unto that life divine.

6. Do you understand now how Mary, by making you a participant of the life of God, is really your Mother in the supernatural order, just as the one who gave you human life is really your mother in the natural order?

Mary is even more truly your Mother.

She is more truly your Mother, first, because of the way in which she has given you life.

For your birth, she paid incomparably more than

your earthly mother. That she might bring you forth to life, she offered the Eternal Father the unutterable sufferings and the very life of One who was infinitely dearer to her than her own life.

She continues during the whole course of your existence to busy herself with you, whereas earthly mothers care for their children only until they are adults. You will always be her "little child whom she continues to bear until Christ be formed in you." And if, unhappily, you should lose your supernatural life, she is not like earthly mothers who helplessly grieve and weep over the corpse of their child. She can restore life to you each time you may happen to lose it.

She loves you—you, all imperfect and ungrateful as you are; she loves you with a love which surpasses in intensity and in purity the motherly love of all the mothers in the world.

7. Above all, she is more truly your Mother because of the nature of the life which she has given to you.

It is not a passing life like your terrestrial one, but a life without end; not a life full of imperfections and anguish like your present existence, but a life incomparably happy; not a created life, human or angelical, but—and understand it well—a participation in uncreated life, in the very life of God, in the life of the Most Blessed Trinity. And that is

why this life will be endless and incomparably happy, because it is a sharing in the eternity and in the beatitude of God. What human motherhood could compare with such a Motherhood?

Now, Mary is your true Mother, and so perfect a Mother, just because she is *My Mother*.

And you are *My brother*—*My infinitely dear brother*—because *My Father* is your Father and *My Mother* is your Mother.

THE FAITHFUL SOUL:

No, Jesus, I did not know to what extent Mary was my Mother. How much nearer You have just brought her to me! Thanks, O Jesus, for that gift of gifts.

V

You Love Mary; Now Not You,
But I Love Her in You

JESUS:

My brother, since *My life* is your life, and *My Mother* your Mother, it is easy for you to imitate *My filial love* toward her.

1. But you should not imitate Me only as a disciple imitates his master, or as a Christian on earth imitates his celestial patron. I am more than a model

placed before you, I am, for you, an interior principle of life.

2. You live by Me. My dispositions must become your dispositions.

I am the vine, you are a branch. The same sap circulates in the stock of the vine as in the branches.

I am the head, you are a member of My Mystical Body; the selfsame blood flows in the head and in the members.

When you are pure, it is I who am pure in you; when you are patient, it is I who am patient in you; when you practice charity, it is I who practice charity in you. You live; it is no longer you who live, it is I who live in you. You love My Mother; no, it is no longer you who love her, it is I who love her in you.

Do you understand now why you are so happy in loving Mary? It is I in you who am happy in loving her.

3. You participate in My life, but My life is far from being perfect in you. If it were perfect, you would think, you would feel, you would will, you would act in all things as I do.

There are too many obstacles to the free unfolding of My activity in your soul. Too often I live in your soul as a prisoner lives in his cell.

You must remove these obstacles; by generous efforts you must succeed in thinking My thoughts,

in willing as I will. You must fill up what is lacking of My life in you.

You share in My filial love toward My Mother, but My filial love toward her is far from being perfect in you.

You must remove the obstacles; by generous effort you must succeed in acquiring My thoughts, My sentiments, My desires, My will, My activity in regard to My Mother.

You must fill up what is lacking in you of My filial love toward My Mother.

4. Do you begin to catch a glimpse of what I am trying to reveal to you about your devotion to Mary?

You should love My Mother because I love her; you should love her in the way I love her; you should love her with the selfsame love as I do.

THE FAITHFUL SOUL:

O Jesu dulcis, O Jesu pie,

O Jesu, fili Mariae.

O sweet Jesus, O loving Jesus,

O Jesus, Son of Mary.