

not uncommon to meet with those who are apparently very devoted to her, who perhaps even recite several rosaries a day, but who think nothing of frequently, and sometimes seriously, violating the virtue of fraternal charity by their backbiting, gossiping, rash judging, or rude behavior with others. Without doubt, such people would honor Our Lady far more by biting their own tongues and reforming their un-Mary-like behavior than by reciting a whole mountain of prayer formulas. As Fr. Hubert Van Zeller wrote: "It is not much good having a devotion to Mary if her example means nothing to you. Unless you aim at thinking as she thinks, at doing what you feel pretty sure she would do, at avoiding the evils which you know must displease her, you are not really serving her at all. True devotion to Mary is not stuffing your prayer-books with pictures of her, putting Madonna statues in every room, clinking a rosary as you come into church, building grottoes and shrines in the garden. True devotion to Mary is trying to love God as she does, trying to do for the world what she is doing. Outward devotions can help, and they may well be true signs of the real thing inside, but imitation of Mary is far more pleasing to God and to her than a truckload of pious objects."

We must honor Mary not in words only, but in deed and in truth. It is not those who say "Mother, Mother," who love Our Lady the most, or who obtain from her the greatest graces, but those who do her will. True love does not consist in always thinking or speaking of someone, and certainly not merely in shedding tears and getting all sentimental, but rather in willing, and not willing, the very same things as the beloved. To love Mary, therefore, means far more than invoking and venerating her. It consists rather in showing her the greatest devotion and childlike reverence by willingly striving to do everything that is pleasing to her, and avoiding, to the best of ones ability, everything that is displeasing to her, even at the cost of personal sacrifice and inconvenience. And we know very well what is pleasing and displeasing to her, for it is the same as that which pleases and displeases her Divine Son. At Cana of Galilee she gave us her "commandment," when she said: "Whatsoever He (Jesus) shall say to you, do ye." And what does He say to us? "If you love Me, keep My commandments." If we truly love Jesus and Mary we will strive to avoid all mortal sin, and even the least venial sin, and courageously struggle to overcome our bad habits, and be faithful to the duties of our state in life. And we can be assured that if we offer Mary our struggles, placing our sanctification under her protection, she will not fail to obtain for us the grace and the strength to keep picking ourselves up each day, even after an unfortunate but repented fall. Our struggle for sanctity gives her the greatest honor, for we are thus becoming more and more like Jesus, her beloved Son. □