

Consecrations to the Holy Angels

A Theological and Historical Study

Part I

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta um estudo, em duas partes, sobre o significado e a possibilidade de uma “consagração” aos santos Anjos. Nesta parte teológica analisa-se a natureza da consagração. É Deus quem consagra o homem, como se pode verificar no Antigo e no Novo Testamento e continua a realizar-se na Igreja, principalmente através dos sacramentos do Batismo, da Confirmação e da Ordem. O homem responde a esta graça principalmente pela fé, mas também e duma forma mais perfeita, nos conselhos evangélicos e por atos de “devoção” (devotio), aos quais pertencem as consagrações.

Pode haver também consagrações a criaturas, isto é, aos “Santos de Deus”, pois, segundo S. Tomás de Aquino, uma tal consagração (devotio) não termina nas criaturas mas passa para Deus. Assim foi entendida, desde a Patrística até o Magistero atual, a consagração a Maria. O mesmo vale, analogamente, para uma consagração aos santos Anjos. A sua relação ao Batismo e aos conselhos evangélicos mostra o objetivo e a essência duma consagração aos santos Anjos: ela é uma aliança com eles, na qual o homem se compromete e se esforça por agir em tudo como e com os santos Anjos, cooperando pela vinda do reino de Deus, para ser mais perfeitamente unido a Cristo e tornar-se mais semelhante a Ele.

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I. On the Nature of a Consecration

Generally speaking, a consecration means a dedication of persons or things to the divine cult. That which is consecrated is withdrawn from profane use and set in the sphere of the sacred, that is, it is reserved for the service of God.¹ This sacred separation takes place either through the direct initiative of God or through a rite of blessing.

¹ The term, ‘consecration’, comes from the Latin ‘consecratio’, which literally meant

1. The Consecration of Man by God

Every consecration in the history of salvation comes from God. It is He who calls man into His service, into communion with Himself. Now since God intends a covenant of love, this consecration demands the free response on the part of the creature. This is why man's answer to God is also called a consecration. This mystery of consecration transects the entire history of salvation and was brought to its plenitude and consummation by Jesus Christ.

a) In the Old Covenant

In the Old Testament God chose the entire people of Israel for Himself and sanctified it, that is, He constituted it as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"² in His service. He established the covenant with the People of God for the glorification of His name.

From the midst of this priestly people God chose the tribe of Levi "and set it apart for liturgical service".³ Priests were "appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifice for sins" (Heb 5,1). The final end of consecration is the glorification of God. This, however, demands the sanctification of creatures, who are called to union with God.

to make something sacred by anointing. Currently, the English as well as the corresponding German term, 'Weihe', can translate the Latin words 'ordinatio', 'consecratio' and 'benedictio'. "In the strict sense, consecration signifies the total dedication of a person or thing to God and His service, and its consequent separation from ordinary human use. By the act of consecration a state or stable condition is inaugurated: what is consecrated thereafter belongs exclusively to God" (N. LOHKAMP, *Personal Consecration* in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia* IV (1967) 209). The German word 'Weihe' comes from the old high German term 'wih', which means 'holy', as is preserved in the terms 'Weihnachten' = 'Holy Night' = Christmas, and 'Weihrauch' = 'Holy Smoke' = Incense) (cf. Ch. JUST, Article *Weihe* in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* X (21965) 980-981). The pastoral introduction to the German Rituale ('*Benediktionale*') states: "Mit bestimmten Segnungen ist aber eine Wirkung bleibender Art ... verbunden, so daß Menschen ... für den besonderen Dienst vor Gott bestimmt oder Dinge ... für den gottesdienstlichen Gebrauch ausgesondert werden. In diesen Fällen spricht man zumeist von einer 'Weihe'" (*Benediktionale*. Studienausgabe für die katholischen Bistümer des deutschen Sprachgebietes, Freiburg 1981, p. 14, n. 11: "*Segnungen*" and "*Weihen*").

² Cf. Ex 19,6; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (=CCC), n. 1539.

³ *Ibidem*; cf. Num 1,48-53.

b) The New Covenant in Jesus Christ

Among all consecrations the original and principal consecration is that of the human nature of the Word of God made Flesh, from which and unto which all other consecrations – whether of persons or of things – are ordered.⁴ Christ is the one Mediator between God and man, the true High Priest and Head of the Church, from Whom all grace, divine life and strength proceed.⁵ The consecration, separation and sanctification of the People of God under the Old Covenant together with its entire cult and priesthood was a type, a ‘shadow’ of the New Covenant, which Christ in virtue of His sacrifice, His Self-consecration instituted: “I sanctify (consecrate) Myself for them, so that they be sanctified (consecrated) in the truth” (Jn 17,19).⁶ It is only in and through Jesus Christ that the consecration wrought by God produces an effective sealing in the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph 1,13).

c) The Sacraments of the Church

It is through the ministry of the Church and principally in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders that Christ effects the consecration of man⁷ by conferring on him a participation in His priest-

⁴ In addition to persons the Church has also consecrated objects (e.g., water, oil, candles, vessels) for the more worthy embellishment of the divine cult. This is especially true with respect to the liturgy of the sacraments.

⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas writes: Christus “plene habuit gratiam ... quia conferebatur ei gratia, tanquam cuidam universali principio in genere habentium gratiam” (*Summa Theologiae* (= *S.Th.*) III q.7, a.9; cf. q.8, a.1 and q.22, a.1, ad 1). “Christus, tanquam omnium caput, habet perfectionem omnium gratiarum: et ideo quantum ad alios pertinet, alius est legislator, et alius sacerdos, et alius rex: sed haec omnia concurrunt in Christo, tanquam in fonte omnium gratiarum” (*S.Th.* III q.22, a.1, ad 3).

⁶ The Greek word ἁγιάζειν, means both ‘to sanctify’ and ‘to consecrate’ (cf. O. PROCKSCH, Art. ἁγιάζω in: *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* I (1933) 112-113).

⁷ The Second Vatican Council speaks of ‘consecratio’ in conjunction with Baptism as the fundamental consecration: “Per baptismum quidem mortuus est peccato, et *Deo sacratus*” (*Lumen Gentium* (= *LG*) 44; cf. *Perfectae Caritatis* (= *PC*) 5; *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (= *PO*) 7). ‘Consecratio’ is also predicated of Baptism and Confirmation together: “In regale sacerdotium et gentem sanctam (cfr. 1Pt 2,4-10) *consecrantur*, ut per omnia opera spirituales offerant hostias et ubique terrarum Christo testimonium perhibeant” (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* 3). Pope John Paul II refers to the sacrament of Confirmation as the “*consecratio* chrismalis” (*Vita Consecrata* 30). With respect to

hood and a share in His own holiness. These sacraments communicate an ontological consecration. The sacramental character is an indelible, spiritual, covenantal sign⁸ of the Divine consecration and the foundation of the sanctity of the Church. The faithful receive both a *power* (participation in the priestly office of Christ) and a *dignity* (sanctifying grace). They are no longer of the world (cf. Jn 17,14); they are dedicated to the service of God.⁹

2. Man's Response to God as a Consecration

a) In the Sacraments

Since, in the case of the mentioned sacraments, it is a matter of a covenant between God and man, it follows that at their reception man must accept and receive this sacramental consecration in faith and subsequently, drawing upon this strength, lead a life of grace and virtue that corresponds to the commandments and the Kingdom of God.

The sacramental consecration, inasmuch as a share in the priesthood of Christ, raises one to the supernatural virtue of religion and to an active share in Christian cult. The first and principal act of the virtue of religion is devotion, taken in its original meaning: "Devotio dicitur a devovendo; unde devoti dicuntur qui seipsos quodammodo Deo devovent, uti se totaliter subdant".¹⁰ Devotion is therefore fittingly said to indicate a spirit of sacrifice, of dedication or consecration.¹¹ In terms of the universal call of the faithful to holiness, this means, first of all, a life corresponding to the

priests in the Church the Council teaches: "Iam quidem in *baptismi consecratione*, sicut omnes christifideles, signum et donum acceperunt tantae vocationes et gratiae, ut, vel in infirmitate humana, perfectionem prosequi possint et debeant ... Ad illam vero perfectionem acquirendam peculiari ratione tenentur sacerdotes, quippe qui, Deo in Ordinis receptione *novo modo consecrati*, Christi Aeterni Sacerdotis viva instrumenta efficiantur" (PO 12; cf. LG 21.22; *Christus Dominus* 15).

⁸ Man is marked by these sacraments: "Fideles, iam sacro baptisate et confirmatione *signati*, plene per receptionem Eucharistiae Corpori Christi inseruntur" (PO 5). St. Thomas writes: "Character sacramentalis est res respectu sacramenti exterioris, et est sacramentum respectu ultimi effectus" (*S.Th.* III q.63, a.3, ad 2). The ultimate effect or 'res simpliciter', of course, is sanctifying grace.

⁹ Cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 4; LG 34 and 44.

¹⁰ *S.Th.* II-II q.82, a.1.

¹¹ Cf. B. HÄRING, *Das Gesetz Christi*, Freiburg ⁸1967, II, 141.

consecration rooted in Baptism and Confirmation, that is to say, to the basic duties of Christians: to remain faithful to the life of grace by observation of the commandments and the participation in the sacred liturgy of the Church.¹²

b) In the Profession of the Evangelical Counsels

On the basis of the sacramental consecration, all Christians are required, as a minimal obligation, to observe the commandments. However, there is *a more perfect manner in which to live this consecration*.¹³ Whoever wants to be perfect, can give themselves to God under a new title; moved by the Holy Spirit, he can give himself, namely, through the renunciation of material goods, the bond of marriage and free self-determination so as to follow Christ more closely and in order to belong to Him entirely.¹⁴

Inde ab exordiis quidem Ecclesiae fuerunt viri ac mulieres, qui per praxim consiliorum evangelicorum Christum maiore cum libertate sequi pressiusque imitari intenderunt et suo quisque modo vitam Deo dicatam duxerunt.¹⁵

The Church in its authority defines this way of life by a rule of life¹⁶ and

¹²“Cunctis proinde perspicuum est, omnes christifideles cuiuscumque status vel ordinis ad vitae christianae plenitudinem et caritatis perfectionem vocari” (LG 40; cf. 34).

¹³ “Cuiusvis instituti sodales mente recolant imprimis se professione consiliorum evangelicorum vocationi divinae responsum dedisse, ita ut, non solum peccato mortui (cf. Rom 6,11), sed etiam mundo renuntiantes, soli Deo vivant. Totam enim vitam suam Eius famulatus mancipaverunt, quod quidem constituit peculiarem quamdam consecrationem, quae in baptismatis consecratione intime radicatur eamque plenius exprimit” (PC 5).

¹⁴ “Totam enim vitam suam Eius famulatus mancipaverunt, quod quidem constituit peculiarem quamdam consecrationem, quae in baptismatis consecratione intime radicatur eamque plenius exprimit” (PC 5; cf. LG 39 and 42). Pope John Paul II confirmed this distinction, stating: “Many of the baptized throughout history have been invited to live such a life ‘in the image of Christ’. But this is possible only on the basis of a special vocation and in virtue of a particular gift of the Spirit. *For in such a life baptismal consecration develops into a radical response in the following of Christ through acceptance of the evangelical counsels...* In the Gospel, many of Christ’s words and actions shed light on the meaning of this special vocation” (*Vita Consecrata* 14).

¹⁵ PC 1.

¹⁶ “Ipsa autem auctoritas Ecclesiae, duce Spiritu Sancto, ea (consilia evangelica) interpretari, eorum praxim moderari et etiam stabiles inde vivendi formas constituere curavit” (LG 43).

accepts the Consecration (the vows) in the name of God.¹⁷ In this way religious life becomes a state of life consecrated to God in the Church.¹⁸

Thus, we can see that there are two distinct forms of man's act of religion (devotion) in response to God: first, his response to God at the reception of the sacraments, and in a second way the response to God by the profession of the evangelical counsels. In each instance man is separated from the world in a specific manner and enabled to conduct a life pleasing to God.¹⁹

Since the covenant between God and man is established in mutual consent and acceptance, the same word, 'consecration', designates both the divine causality and man's response.

c) In Acts of Piety (devotion)

In the life of the Church, in addition to the sacramental consecrations and those of religious life, there are further acts of devotion or dedication. In these the faithful recommend themselves to the special protection of the Lord or oblige themselves to particular acts of devotion or to certain acts of charity, through which they aspire to special graces and benefits. In this context, one speaks of 'entrustments' or 'dedications', wherein the formal aspects of a consecration are also present.

Although such consecrations, according to their rank and nature, are subordinated to the religious vows, still they belong to the same virtue of

¹⁷ "Cum autem haec sui ipsius donatio ab Ecclesia suscepta sit, eius etiam servitio sese sciant addictos" (PC 5).

¹⁸ "Ecclesia autem professionem religiosam non tantum sua sanctione ad status canonici dignitatem erigit, sed eam ut *statum Deo consecratum* etiam actione sua liturgica exhibet. Ipsa enim Ecclesia, auctoritate sibi a Deo commissa, profitentium vota suscipit, prece sua publica eis auxilia et gratiam a Deo impetrat, eos Deo commendat eisque spirituale benedictionem impertitur, oblationem eorum sacrificio eucharistico ad-socians" (LG 45).

¹⁹ To both forms of devotion the definition of Fr. Joseph DE SAINTE-MARIE, OCD, may well be applied: "Devozione dunque, significa dedizione, impegno, o meglio ancora donazione o *consegna di se stesso a Dio* con un *impegno solenne* espresso in un *voto*. Ora questa definizione di voto corrisponde esattamente a ciò che intendiamo oggi per *consacrazione*, poiché per mezzo del voto, si pensi ai voti religiosi, l'uomo si consacra a Dio. Si noti pure che la parola 'voto' è nella radice di quella di 'devozione'" (*Teologia e spiritualità della consacrazione a Maria*, Theresianum, Rome 1979, ch. I, p. 2).

devotion.²⁰ The term ‘consecration’ (as in *consecrated* life) is predicated of vows, not simply when one commits oneself to the performance of a particular act of piety, but only when one surrenders oneself fully and totally to God according to an ecclesiastically approved form of life.²¹ Similarly, in the case of acts of piety one speaks of ‘consecration’ especially when they contain a long-term commitment in devotion that has been approved by the Church. The Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the classic example.

Pope Leo XIII explained the nature and supernatural efficacy of the Consecration to the Sacred Heart with the following words: “Verum ad istud potestatis dominationisque suae fundamentum duplex benigne ipse sinit ut accedat a nobis, si libet, *devotio voluntaria*”.²² On the basis of this *new* title of this voluntary and complete gift of self to Christ the real symbol of His redemptive love, His Sacred Heart, the Holy Father expected “glorious and permanent fruits”²³ from this consecration, which he recommended to all the faithful: “Qua ratione haec, quam [consecrationem]

²⁰ Along these lines the Catechism states: “*Votum est devotionis* actus quo christianus se ipsum devovet Deo vel opus bonum Ei promittit. Ipse igitur, suorum votorum adimpletione, Deo id reddit quod Ei promissum et consecratum est” (CCC n. 2102; accentuation in the original).

²¹ “Solemnitas voti attenditur secundum aliquid spirituale, quod ad Deum pertineat, idest secundum aliquam spiritualem benedictionem, vel consecrationem, quae ex institutione Apostolorum adhibetur in professione certae regulae, ... et huius ratio est, quia solemnitates non consueverunt adhiberi, nisi quando aliquis totaliter mancipatur alicui rei ... voti solemnitas adhibetur ... in professione certae regulae, quando per abrenuntiationem saeculi, et propriae voluntatis aliquis statum perfectionis assumit” (*S.Th.* II-II q.88, a.7). St. Thomas’ concern here is for the totality of the surrender in devotion (cf. q.88, a.7, ad 2) and the new state of life. Evidently he does not take into consideration the posterior distinction that came to be made between solemn and simple vows.

²² Encyclical *Annum Sacrum*, ASS 31 (1898-1899) 648.

²³ “Primum quidem nomini christiano, deinde societati hominum universae fructus insignes non sine causa expectamus eosdemque mansuros” (ibidem, 647). The pope designates the Sacred Heart of Jesus as the sign of hope for our times: “Cum Ecclesia per proxima originibus tempora caesareo iugo premeretur, inspecta sublime adolescenti imperatori crux, amplissimae victoriae, quae mox est consecuta, auspex simul atque effectrix. En alterum hodie oblatum oculis auspicatissimum divinissimumque signum: videlicet Cor Iesu sacratissimum, superimposita cruce, splendidissimo candore inter flammam elucens. In eo omnes collocandae spes: ex eo hominum petenda atque expectanda salus” (ibidem, 650-651).

cunctis suademus, cunctis est *profutura devotio*. Hoc enim factu, in quibus est Iesu Christi cognitio et amor, *ii facile sentient sibi fidem amoremque crescere*".²⁴

In his Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* **Pope Pius XI** wrote concerning the Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus:

At certe inter cetera illa, quae proprie ad Sacratissimi Cordis cultum pertinent, pia eminet ac memoranda est *consecratio*, qua, nos nostraque omnia aeternae Numinis caritati accepta referentes divino Jesu Cordi *devovemus*.²⁵

Later, in the same encyclical, he accentuates the essential traits of this act of consecration: "whereby we are devoted to God and are called holy to God, by that holiness and stability which, as the Angelic Doctor teaches, is proper to consecration".²⁶ The finality of this consecration, which the Pope considers to be the perfection of *devotio*, is union with Christ: "Consecration proclaims and confirms this union with Christ".²⁷

As a final witness of the Magisterium, let us adduce the doctrine of **Pope Pius XII**, which he proposed in his encyclical *Haurietis Aquas*. With respect to the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in general he writes:

²⁴ Ibidem, 649.

²⁵ Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, AAS 20 (1928) 167. At the institution of the Feast of Christ the King Pope Pius XI ordained the annual renewal of the Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, cf. Encyclical *Quas primas*, AAS 17 (1925) 593-610.

²⁶ AAS 20 (1928) 169. This statement is related to expiation, the theme of the Encyclical, which the Holy Father considers to be the perfection of the Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: "Verum officiis hisce omnibus, praesertim tam frugiferae consecrationi, per sacram Christi Regis sollemnitatem veluti confirmate, aliud accedat oportet ... honestae satisfactionis, inquit, seu reparationis, quam dicunt, officium Sacratissimo Cordi Iesu praestandum. Nam, si illud est in consecratione primum ac praecipuum ut amor Creatoris creaturae amor rependatur, alterum sponte hinc sequitur, ut eidem in-creato Amori, si quando aut oblivione neglectus, aut offensa violatus sit, illatae quoque modo iniuriae compensari debeant: quod quidem debitum reparationem vulgato nomine vocamus. ... *Consecrationi igitur, qua Deo devovemur et sancti Deo vocamur, ea sanctitate ac firmitate quae, ut docet Angelicus (S.Th. II-II q.81, a.8), consecrationis est propria*, addenda est expiatio, qua penitus peccata extinguantur" (ibidem).

²⁷ Ibidem, 172. This decisive statement on the nature and fruit of the Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus likewise stands in the context of expiation: "Quemadmodum igitur *unionem cum Christo proficitur ac firmat consecratio*, ita expiatio eandem unionem et, culpas detergendo, inchoat et, Christi passionibus participando, perficit et, victimas pro fratribus offerendo, consummat" (ibidem).

Quam ipsam ob causam tantum est cultui Sacratissimi Cordis tribuendum ut existimetur *absolutissima*, si usum et exercitationem spectes, *professio christianae religionis*. Haec enim est religio Iesu, quae tota posita est in Mediatore homine ac Deo; ita ut ad Cor Dei perveniri, nequeat nisi per Cor Christi ... Quae cum ita sint, facile colligimus cultum Sacratissimi Cordis Iesu, ad ipsam rei naturam quod attinet, esse cultum amoris, quo Deus per Iesum nos dilexit, ac simul nostri exercitationem amoris, quo in Deum et in ceteros ferimur homines.²⁸

With respect to the very consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Holy Father continues:

Re quidem vera ... omnibus profecto perspicuum est, heic non de communi pietatis forma agi, quam quilibet ad arbitrium liceat ceteris post habere aut parvipendere, sed de religionis obsequio, quod *ad christianam adipiscendam perfectionem quam maxime conducat*. Nam si “*devotio – secundum ipsam theologicam eamque communem notionem, quam Doctor Angelicus tradit (S.Th. II-II q.82, a.1) – nihil aliud esse videtur quam voluntas quaedam prompte tradendi se ad ea quae pertinent ad Dei famulatum*”, num Dei famulatus magis debitus ac necessarius esse potest, itemque nobilior ac suavior, quam qui amori valeat inservire? ... Summo igitur in honore habenda est ea religionis forma, cuius ope homo magis Deum colit ac diligit, *seseque facilius atque expeditius divinae devovet caritati*; et quam ipse Redemptor noster proponere christianoque populo commendare dignatus est, itemque Summi Pontifices memorandis editis documentis tutati sunt magnisque laudibus exornarunt.²⁹

Pope Pius XII further accentuates the fact:

Romani Pontifices ... non satis habuerunt festum in honorem augustissimi Redemptoris Cordis instituere et ad universam Ecclesiam pertinere, veram etiam auctores fuerunt qui *eidem Sacratissimo Cordi universum humanum genus sollemni ritu dicarent ac devoverent*.³⁰

When the doctrine of the popes on the devotion and consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is properly considered, one comes to understand why this consecration unites itself so well with the profession of the evangelical

²⁸ AAS 48 (1956) 344-345.

²⁹ Ibidem, 346.

³⁰ Ibidem, 348. The footnote refers to **LEO XIII** (Encyclical *Annum Sacrum* with the Decretum S. C. Rituum from June 28, 1899) and **PIUS XI** (Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* with the Decretum S. C. Rituum from January 29, 1929).

counsels: Whereas the religious vows remove the impediments to the perfect development of charity,³¹ the consecration to the Heart of Jesus unites one to His Heart afire with love, in order to love even more intimately and to glorify Him even more.

II. Consecrations to Creatures

The goal of ‘devotio’ is the glorification of God. The popes traced the roots for the consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus back to the virtue of ‘devotio’, adducing thereby the doctrine of St. Thomas as a very fitting explanation. To the question, as to whether saintly individuals may also be venerated, St. Thomas answers, ‘yes’, saying: “Devotio quae habetur ad sanctos Dei, mortuos vel vivos, *non terminatur ad ipsos, sed transit in Deum: in quantum scilicet in ministris Dei Deum veneramur.*”³² Thus, Aquinas uses the word ‘devotio’ in an analogous sense.

Various exercises of piety (‘devotiones’) have, in the course of the history of the Church, led to ‘consecrations’, which were addressed not exclusively to God, but which were also directed towards creatures, namely to Mary, to the holy angels and saints. Such consecrations present the complete development of the respective form of piety or veneration (devotio implies dedication, therefore, consecration).³³ Now if the veneration of a saint is legitimate, so too must be the fullest form of devotion, namely, a consecration to a saint.

³¹ Christifidelis “consiliorum evangeliorum professione in Ecclesia liberari intendit ab impedimentis, quae ipsum a caritatis fervore et divini cultus perfectione retrahere possent” (LG 44).

³² S.Th. II-II q.82, a.2, ad 3. In the objection the fact is noted: “Devotio etiam habetur ad homines: dicuntur enim aliqui esse devoti aliquibus sanctis viris.”

³³ Pope Leo XIII designated the consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as the perfection and crown of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: “Nunc vero luculentior quaedam obsequii forma observatur animo, quae scilicet honorum omnium, quotquot Sacratissimo Cordi haberi consueverunt, *velut absolutio perfectioque sit*” (*Annum Sacrum*, ASS 31 [1898-1899] 646).

Concerning the history of the consecration to Mary, J. de Sainte-Marie writes: “L’oggetto di tale sintesi sarebbe di rintracciare lo *sviluppo della devozione* alla Madonna dalle sue origini *fino alla consacrazione*, in modo da far vedere come questa ultima rappresenta lo *stato di pieno sviluppo* di ciò che era presente, anche se in forma soltanto

This applies most especially to the holiest creature, to the Mother of God.

1. *The Consecration to the Mother of God*

The historical roots of the consecration to Mary lie in the early history of Christianity. Already one of the oldest prayers to Mary, the *Sub tuum praesidium*, contains an act of devotion to the Mother of God, into whose protective care the faithful entrusted themselves.³⁴

Schon diese Form der Marienweihe — writes Leo Scheffczyk — macht deutlich, daß sie nicht nur (wie es häufig geschieht) im Sinne des Bittgebetes verstanden werden kann, sondern eine objektive und bleibende Wirkung entfaltet, die in einer besonderen Beziehung des ‘Objektes’ zu Maria im Sinne eines Segens- und Schutzverhältnisses besteht. Dieser Bezug gewinnt an Tiefe und Intensität, wenn die Weihe sich auf Personen und Personengruppen bezieht, die entweder sich selbst oder andere (Völker und Länder) Maria übergeben.³⁵

In the 7th Century the concept of the “servus Mariae” (the slave of Mary) developed, especially in the writings of **St. Ildefons of Toledo** († 667). Pope John Paul II, in an address given in Saragossa, points to this foundation stone in the theology of the Marian consecration:

San Ildefonso de Toledo, el más antiguo testigo de esa forma de devoción que se llama esclavitud mariana, *justifica nuestra actitud de esclavos de María por la singular relación que Ella tiene con respecto a Cristo.*³⁶

The epoch in which devotional consecrations came to flourish was the period after the Council of Trent: “Non è a caso che il XVI secolo, e più ancora il XVII, sono i secoli in cui appaiono le ‘consacrazioni’ moderne a Maria: sono *la risposta più adeguata del cristiano e della Chiesa al dramma luterano e umanistico.*”³⁷ While the protagonists of the Refor-

iniziale, quasi germinale, fin dai primi secoli della Chiesa” (*Teologia e spiritualità*, ch. I, p. 1).

³⁴ Cf. A. B. CALKINS, *Totus Tuus: John Paul II's Program of Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, Libertyville 1992, p. 41 (see the bibliography indicated there).

³⁵ Art. *Weihe* in: *Marienlexikon* VI (1994) 697.

³⁶ *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, V/ 3 (1982) 1179.

³⁷ J. DE SAINTE-MARIE, *Teologia e spiritualità*, ch. I, p. 19. The *Catechismus Romanus* emphatically drew the attention of pastors to the fact that a deeper education in the meaning of Baptism would bring forth great fruit for souls; cf. Pars II, Cap. II, 22 and 42.

mation, de facto, denied the efficacy of sacramental grace, the Counter-Reformation accentuated sanctified man's capacity to offer God, in the efficacy of grace, a worthy response in charity. In the 17th Century

wird zum erstenmal der Ausdruck ‚*consecrare*‘ im Zusammenhang mit der Marienweihe genannt. Zunächst wird er als gleichbedeutend mit dem klassischen *se offerre, tradere, commendare, devovere* empfunden. Insofern aber ist ein Wandel eingetreten, als neben das transitive Verständnis nunmehr dieses Verbum auch in reflexivem Sinn gebraucht wird. Man verwendet es als Stichwort für einen Akt besonderer religiöser Hingabe. Zum *opus operatum* der sakramentalen Konsekration tritt das *opus operantis* der Weihe.³⁸

According to **St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort** († 1716), “Cette dévotion”, whose perfect expression is to be found in the consecration, “consiste donc à se donner tout entier à la très sainte Vierge, pour être tout entier à Jésus-Christ par elle”.³⁹ The complete devotion or dedication of oneself to Mary implies the duty of *a complete renewal of one's baptismal vows*,⁴⁰ to which Mary reciprocates by giving herself with ineffable maternal tenderness.⁴¹ With sublime intuition St. Louis anchored the consecration to Mary in the *baptismal vows*, which he perceived to be a “*covenant*”,⁴² and upon the mediation of Mary before Jesus.⁴³ The ‘more’, in

³⁸ F. COURTH in: W. Beinert / H. Petri (eds.), *Handbuch der Marienkunde*, Regensburg 1984, p. 395. There he refers to a text by J. A. JUNGSMANN: *Vom Patrozinium zum Weiheakt* in: *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 4 (1954) 138f (footnote 190).

³⁹ *Traité de la Vraie Dévotion à la Sainte Vierge*, in: *Oeuvres complètes*, Paris 1966, n. 121: “Article I. Une parfaite et entière consécration de soi-même à la sainte Vierge”.

⁴⁰ “C’est pourquoi la parfaite consécration à Jésus-Christ n’est autre chose qu’une parfaite et entière consécration de soi-même à la très sainte Vierge, qui est la dévotion que j’enseigne; ou autrement une *parfaite rénovation des vœux et promesses du saint baptême*” (ibidem, n. 120; see also n. 126).

⁴¹ “La très Sainte Vierge, qui est *une mère de douceur et de miséricorde*, et qui *ne se laisse jamais vaincre en amour et en libéralité*, voyant qu’on se donne tout entier à elle pour l’honorer et la servir, en se dépouillant de ce qu’on a de plus cher pour l’ornement, se donne aussi tout entière et d’une manière ineffable à celui qui lui donne tout. Elle le fait s’engloutir dans l’abîme des ses grâces; elle l’orne des ses mérites ... Enfin, comme cette personne consacrée est toute à Marie, *Marie aussi est toute à elle*” (ibidem, n. 144).

⁴² “Presque personne ne ratifie par soi-même le *contrat d’alliance* qu’il a fait avec Dieu par ses parrains et ses marraines!” (ibidem, n. 127).

⁴³ Ibidem, nn. 139-143; cf. nn. 28 and 86.

terms of newly assumed obligations, consists in this: “C’est en quatre mots, de faire toutes ses actions *par Marie, avec Marie, en Marie et pour Marie*, afin de les faire *plus parfaitement par Jésus-Christ, avec Jésus-Christ, en Jésus et pour Jésus*”⁴⁴

In modern times the Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary has acquired a great deal of importance.⁴⁵ The highest expression in this development came with **Pope Pius XII**’s consecration of the world (first made in 1942), which he expressly related to the Consecration of the World to the Sacred Heart of Jesus undertaken by Pope Leo XIII:

A voi, al vostro Cuore immacolato, Noi, quale Padre commune della grande Famiglia cristiana, *come Vicario di colui al quale ‘fu dato ogni potere in Cielo e in terra’* (Mt 28,18), dal quale ricevemmo la cura di quante anime redente col suo sangue popolano l’universo mondo, *a voi, al vostro immacolato Cuore*, in quest’ora tragica della storia umana, *affidiamo, rimettiamo, consacriamo* non solo la santa Chiesa, corpo mistico del vostro Gesù, che soffre e sanguina in tante parti e in tanti modi tribolata, ma anche tutto il mondo straziato da feroci discordie, riarso in un incendio di odio, vittima delle proprie iniquità.

Finalmente, *siccome al Cuore del vostro Gesù furono consacrati* la Chiesa e tutto il genero humano, perchè, riponendo in lui ogni speranza, egli fosse per loro segno e pegno di vittoria e salvezza, *così parimenti da oggi siano essi in perpetuo consacrati anche a voi, al vostro Cuore immacolato*, o Madre nostra e Regina del mondo: affinché il vostro amore e patrocinio affrettino il trionfo del Regno di Dio.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibidem, n. 257.

⁴⁵ Historically this stands against the background of the theology of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which was already developed in a special way by St. John Eudes in the 17th Century. At the proclamation of his heroic virtues Pope Leo XIII called him “l’autore del culto liturgico dei SS. Cuori di Gesù e di Maria” (Art. *Giovanni Eudes* in: *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* VI [1965] 996). Similarly, both at his beatification by Pope Pius X and at his canonization by Pope Pius XI he was called the father, the doctor and the apostle of the devotion to the two hearts (cf. Apostolic Constitution for Canonization from April 25, 1925, AAS 17 [1925] 490).

⁴⁶ AAS 34 [1942] 324-325 (cf. 318-319). This consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary was first undertaken in a radio message to the pilgrims at Fátima on October 31, 1942 on the occasion of the 25th Jubilee of the apparitions, and was renewed on December 8, 1942 at St. Peter’s in Rome. The threefold formulation of the consecration (*affidiamo, rimettiamo, consacriamo*) is repeated again later in *Singulis annis* from April 15, 1943, in which the pope recalls his former act of consecration:

Pope Pius XII expressly requested that this consecration be prayed everywhere, both privately and publicly, and was confident that rich blessings and an abundance of heavenly gifts would follow.⁴⁷

The personal consecration to the Mother of God brings about, he explained, an *effective, eternal bond* to Mary:

La consacrazione alla Madre di Dio nella Congregazione mariana è un dono intero di sè, per tutta la vita e per la eternità; è un dono non di pura forma o di puro sentimento, ma effettivo, compiuto nella intensità della vita cristiana e mariana, nella vita apostolica, in cui esso fa del Congregato il ministro di Maria e, per così dire, le sue mani visibili sulla terra, col profluvio spontaneo di una vita interiore sovrabbondante, che si riversa in tutte le opere esteriori della solida devozione, del culto, della carità, dello zelo.⁴⁸

In the Holy Year, 1954, he established the feast of the Queenship of Mary and ordained that on the same day, the Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary should be renewed annually.⁴⁹

“Nos ... mysticum Iesu Christi Corpus, tot vulneribus sauciatum itemque universum terrarum orbem ... intaminato beatæ Virginis Cordi *devovimus, commisimus, sacravimus*; ac ... novimus eundem devotionis actum fere ubique ab episcopis, a sacrorum administris, et a christianæ plebis multitudine fuisse renovatum” (AAS 35 [1943] 103ss).

⁴⁷ “Ita enim futurum speramus, ut ex hac privata ac publica consecratione uberiora oriantur benefica ac caelestia munera” (Encyclical *Auspicia Quaedam*, AAS 40 [1948] 574).

⁴⁸ From the locution, *Con devoto pensiero*, addressed to the members of the Sodality of Mary on January 21, 1945, in: *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi* 6 (1945) 281. In the Apostolic Constitution *Bis saeculari* from September 27, 1948, the Holy Father confirmed the Statutes of the Marian Congregations, whose members give themselves “sui plenissima perennique in B. Virginis Deiparae clientelam deditio” (AAS 40 [1948] 394). He further declared that the members of the sodality, in virtue of this consecration, are joined to Mary by a perpetual bond.

⁴⁹ Encyclical *Ad Caeli Reginam*. On May 23, 1952 Pope Pius XII consecrated the youth of Germany to the Mother of God with these words: “*Wir weihen euch, katholische Jugend Deutschlands, euer ganzes Dasein, Leib und Seele, eure Gegenwart und Zukunft, euer Wollen und Streben, euer Kämpfen, Hoffen und Siegen, eure Treue zum heiligen Glauben und euer Wachsen in ihm bis zur Reife des vollkommenen Christen* (cf. Eph 4,13) *Maria, eurer Herrin und Mutter, daß sie euch unter ihren machtvollen Schutz nehme und eure Fürbitterin bei Gott sei. Wir erfliehen euch allen, daß ihr in überreichem Maß erfüllt werdet von der Erkenntnis wie von der Gnade, Liebe und Kraft Jesu Christi, ‘der da ist über allem, Gott, hochgelobt in Ewigkeit’* (Röm 9,5)” (*Discorsi e Radiomessaggi* 14 [1953] 541).

Pope Paul VI proclaimed Mary as the Mother of the Church at the end of the 3rd Session of the Second Vatican Council.⁵⁰ On that occasion he recalled the consecration undertaken by his predecessor on October 31, 1942. And in the *Adhortatio Apostolica*, *Signum magnum* from May 13, 1967, he returned to the theme:

Quoniamque hoc anno quinque volvuntur lustra ex quo Decessor Noster f. r. Pius XII ... Ecclesiam humanumque genus Deiparae Mariae eiusque Immaculato Cordi *sollemniter consecravit* - quod Nosmetipsi die XXI mensis Novembris anno MCMLXIV iteravimus – universos Ecclesiae filios hortamur, ut *singuli se ipsos Immaculato Matris Ecclesiae Cordi rursus consecrent*, utque clarissimam huiusmodi pietatis significationem in vitae actionem transferentes, magis atque magis divinae voluntati morigerentur, et caelestis suae Reginae exempla pie secuti ipsi filiorum more famulentur.⁵¹

Pope John Paul II has repeated on numerous occasions⁵² such a consecration of the world to the Mother of God. Particularly important was that consecration which he made in union with the Bishops of the entire world in 1984, in which he states:

Ecco, trovandoci davanti a te, Madre di Cristo, dinanzi al tuo cuore immacolato, desideriamo, insieme con tutta la Chiesa, unirci alla consacrazione che, per amore nostro, il Figlio tuo ha fatto di sé stesso al Padre: ‘Per loro – egli ha detto – io consacro me stesso, perché siano anch’essi consacrati nella verità’ (Gv 17,19). Vogliamo unirci al nostro Redentore in questa consacrazione per il mondo e per gli uomini, la quale, nel suo cuore divino, ha la potenza di ottenere il perdono e di procurare la ripara-

⁵⁰ AAS 56 (1964) 1007-1018, esp. 1017.

⁵¹ AAS 59 (1967) 475. In the *Adhortatio Apostolica* on the proper development and cultivation of Marian devotion from February 2, 1974 Pope Paul VI describes Mary as the instructor in piety: “Maria vero, cum sit totius Ecclesiae exemplar in divino cultu Deo tribuendo, est etiam, ut liquet, *pietatis magistra* singulis christianis ... At vero est Maria maximopere *illius cultus exemplar, per quem uniuscuiusque vita redditur oblatio, quae fit Deo*. Quam doctrinam, scilicet antiquam atque perennem, possunt omnes quidem ab Ecclesia audire, sed etiam aures praebendo Virgini, quae nuntio Dei respondit: ‘Ecce ancilla Domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum’ (Lc 1,38)” (*Marialis Cultus* 21).

⁵² The significance of this Consecration follows “ex frequente propositione eiusdem doctrinae” (*LG* 25). Calkins comments: “So frequent are the major and minor instances of entrustment to Mary on the part of the Pope that they ordinarily tend to occur in speeches, *Angelus* addresses, homilies, and prayers several times a week” (*Totus Tuus*, p. 268).

zione ... Affidandoti, o Madre, il mondo, tutti gli uomini e tutti i popoli, ti affidiamo anche la stessa consacrazione del mondo, mettendola nel tuo cuore materno.⁵³

The text of this consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother and Handmaid of the Lord, makes it clear, that in the final analysis, what is at issue is that through the help of Mary we come to a deeper, stronger and more secure *participation in the consecration of Jesus, our Divine Redeemer, to His Father (Jn 17,19) for the salvation of the world.*⁵⁴

In the Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* from March 25, 1987, on the occasion of the Marian Year, he accentuated the contribution of St. Louis Marie de Montfort to the Marian spirituality in the Church, in that he recommended the consecration to Jesus through the hands of Mary as an efficacious means for living up faithfully to one's baptismal vows: "qui christifidelibus proposuit consecrationem Christo, per manus Mariae praestandam, ut efficax subsidium ad vivendum fideliter secundum promissiones baptismales".⁵⁵

The consecration to Mary or to her Immaculate Heart, therefore, has Christ as its proper goal: "consecrarsi alla Madonna è inserirsi nel suo 'fiat', e per questa via, lasciarsi inserire nel Mistero di Cristo".⁵⁶ The *place*

⁵³ *Enchiridion Vaticanum IX*, n. 557-558.

⁵⁴ The special contribution of the Holy Father to the theology of the Marian consecration is to be found precisely in the tight link of this consecration to Jesus' own consecration of Self to the Father (cf. CALKINS, *Totus Tuus*, p. 263-265).

⁵⁵ *Redemptoris mater* 48. Shortly after the appearance of this Encyclical the Congregation for the Divine Liturgy issued a Circular, *Orientamenti e proposte per la celebrazione dell'anno Mariano (Notitiae 23* [April 3, 1987] 342-396), which treats of the earnestness of a consecration to Mary in the life of the faithful. There it is stated: "Il termine *consacrazione*, dalle profonde radici culturali, sottende, in riferimento alle persone, l'idea di *totalità* e di *perpetuità* nel dono di sé al Signore. Nella pastorale dei santuari esso è usato tuttavia con una certa larghezza e improprietà: si dice, per esempio, 'consacrare i bambini alla Madonna', quando in realtà si intende solo porre i piccoli sotto la protezione della Vergine e chiedere per essi la sua materna benedizione.

La consacrazione alla Vergine di famiglie, gruppi ecclesiali, parrocchie compiuta in occasione della visita a un santuario – talora proposta all'improvviso – non deve essere frutto di un'emozione passeggera, se pur sincera. Essa richiede un'adesione personale, libera e maturata in una riflessione che, partendo da una corretta valutazione della primaria e fondamentale consacrazione battesimale, giunga ad un'esatta comprensione del significato teologico della 'consacrazione a Maria'" (n. 86; *ibidem*, p. 391).

⁵⁶ J. DE SAINTE-MARIE, *Teologia e spiritualità*, Introduzione, p. 10.

or role of Mary in the *Mysterium Christi*, that is, her maternal mediation fully justifies this consecration.

Omnis enim salutaris Beatae Virginis influxus in homines non ex aliqua rei necessitate, sed ex beneplacito divino exoritur et ex superabundantia meritorum Christi profluit, Eius mediationi innititur, ab illa omnino dependet, ex eadem totam virtutem haurit; *unionem autem immediatam credentium cum Christo* nullo modo impedit sed fovet.⁵⁷

The consecration to Mary is a very earnest and concrete response to her place and role in the Economy of Salvation.⁵⁸

Concluding, we can say: Both tradition as well as the common magisterium of the popes of the 20th Century give witness not only to the possibility of a consecration to the Mother of God but also to its abundant blessings. The consecration to Mary attains to its fullest perfection when the individual together with Mary is not only a recipient of the redemptive grace of Christ, but when advancing in devotion with Mary the soul begins to participate in his own way in the redemptive work of Christ.

2. Consecrations to the Holy Angels

a) On the Significance of a Consecration to the Holy Angels

The possibility of a consecration to the holy angels similarly follows upon the very nature of *devotio*, which finds its complete development in an act of consecration. The liturgy of the Church itself recommends the veneration of the holy angels with the words: “Et in Archangelis Angelisque tuis tua praeconia non tacere, quia ad excellentiam tuam recurrit et gloriam quod angelica creatura tibi probabilis honoretur.”⁵⁹ The meaning of a *consecration* to the holy angels is articulated in an article by Archbishop Léon Gauthey, where he – in communion with all the French bishops – announced the consecration of his Archdiocese of Besançon to St. Michael the Archangel:

Pourquoi une consécration à saint Michel? Nous allons vous le dire. Vous savez bien qu’on se consacre à Dieu, à la sainte Vierge. Cela signifie qu’on entend se placer sous une plus étroite dépendance de Dieu et de la sainte

⁵⁷ LG 60.

⁵⁸ Cf. LG 55-59 and 61-65.

⁵⁹ *Missale Romanum*, Praefatio de Angelis.

Vierge. On s'engage à une fidélité plus grande à leur service; on promet d'être plus assidu à leur culte. On leur voue, en quelque sorte, son esprit, son coeur, sa volonté. Plus on met de vérité dans cette dépendance; plus on s'unit intimement à Dieu, à la sainte Vierge; plus on se rapproche d'eux, en cherchant à se conformer à leur ressemblance, plus la consécration est effective et donne de titres à des grâces abondantes, à une protection constante e efficace.

Or, après Dieu, après la Vierge Marie, nul n'a plus de droit à ce que nous nous mettions sous sa dépendance que le prince de la milice céleste, saint Michel. Le premier d'entre les créatures, il a su apprécier Dieu par-dessus tout. ... Il a donc été le premier champion des droits de Dieu: voilà pourquoi Dieu l'a préposé à la défense de son règne et en a fait l'exécutif de ses grandes oeuvres dans le gouvernement du monde. [...]

Saint Michel est encore le protecteur des familles ... Saint Michel est aussi l'ange sauveur dans les tentations ... Il n'abandonne pas les pécheurs, mais leur inspire le repentir ... Lorsque les chrétiens approchent de l'heure où ils vont rendre leur âme à Dieu, ils ont besoin urgent de secours; aussi bien la sainte Eglise fait invoquer pour eux l'archange. [...]

Voilà certes, nos très chers frères, beaucoup de motifs pour nous d'honorer saint Michel, de nous en faire un défenseur, un protecteur durant notre vie et un ami accueillant pour le moment de notre mort. C'est donc pour procurer vos plus chers intérêts, en même temps que ceux de notre cher diocèse, que nous vous invitons à vous consacrer au grand archange et que nous ferons nous-mêmes officiellement la consécration du diocèse de Besançon à saint Michel.⁶⁰

These arguments in favor of a consecration to St. Michael may, in a certain sense, be applied in favor of a consecration to the holy angels in general.

a) The Relation to the Baptismal Vows and the Consecrated Life

The holy angels, under the Headship of Christ their Lord, are ministering spirits, sent for the sake of our salvation (cf. Heb 1,14).⁶¹ They are our fellow-servants (cf. Apc 19,10; 22,9), even though they are already

⁶⁰ *Lettre Pastorale* du 18 avril 1912 in: V. KLEE, *La Consécration Nationale de la France à l'Archange Saint Michel: le 19 Mai 1912* (Archivum Angelicum) Taipei 1989, p. 69-73.

⁶¹ Pope John Paul II explained at the General Audience on July 30, 1986: "Il Nuovo Testamento mette in rilievo *i compiti* degli angeli in rapporto alla *missione di Cristo*

perfected with Christ in the state of glory. Fraternal love in the Church extends itself also to the holy angels,⁶² towards which St. Bernard of Clairvaux exhorts with the following words:

*Angelis suis mandavit de te, ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis (Ps 91,11). Quantam tibi debet hoc verbum inferre reverentiam, afferre devotionem, conferre fiduciam! Reverentiam pro praesentia, devotionem pro benevolentia, fiduciam pro custodia. ... Simus ergo devoti, simus grati, tantis custodibus: redamemus eos, honoremus eos quantum possumus, quantum debemus. Totus tamen ei reddatur et amor, et honor noster, a quo tam ipsis quam nobis est totum, unde honorare possumus vel amare, unde amari honorarive meremus.*⁶³

Like the consecration to the Mother of God, so too is a consecration to the holy angels a *covenant*, which is founded upon the consecration to Christ in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation and which, in a certain sense, renews the baptismal promises. At Baptism we renounce the fallen spirits and say 'Yes' to Christ. This 'Yes' to Christ and our union with Him brings about not only our communion with the other members of the

come Messia. ... Si può dunque dire che gli angeli, come puri spiriti, non solo partecipano nel modo che è loro proprio alla santità di Dio stesso, ma nei momenti-chiave circondano il Cristo e lo accompagnano nell'adempimento della sua missione salvifica nei riguardi degli uomini. Allo stesso modo anche tutta la Tradizione e il magistero ordinario della Chiesa hanno attribuito nei secoli agli angeli questo particolare carattere e questa funzione di ministero messianico" (nn. 3-4: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II IX/2 [1986] 303-304*). And in the *Catechism* one reads: "Christus mundi angelici centrum est. Illi sunt angeli Eius: 'Cum autem venerit Filius hominis in gloria sua, et omnes angeli cum Eo ...' (Mt 25,31). Eius sunt, quia *per* Eum et *in* Eum sunt creati ... Eius sunt adhuc magis, quia illos fecit nuntios Sui consilii salutis ..." (CCC n. 331).

⁶² "Sub nomine 'proximi' continetur homo et angelus" (THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Matth.* 22,39, Marietti, n. 1818). "Et ideo manifestum est quod amicitia etiam ad angelos se extendit" (*S.Th.* II-II q.25, a.10). In his commentary to this passage H. M. Christmann writes: "Wenn der Mensch auf Grund der von Gott geschenkten Gottesliebe mit Gott, dem absoluten Geist, zu dessen reiner Geistigkeit auch der höchste Engel noch in unendlichem Abstand steht, als Freund verkehren kann, dann ist nicht einzusehen, weshalb Gott es nicht soll ermöglichen können, durch ein ähnliches Geschenk an die Engel diese mit dem Menschen in intimen geistigen Verkehr zu bringen. Das ist auch das Argument des Artikels: Die Seligkeit der Engel und die Seligkeit des Menschen ist substantiell dieselbe, nämlich Teilnahme an der Seligkeit des gemeinsamen Schöpfers und Vaters. Deshalb ist es selbstverständliche Forderung der Liebe, daß wir die, mit denen wir unsere Seligkeit einst teilen sollen, schon jetzt in unsere übernatürliche Liebe einbeziehen" (*Die Deutsche Thomas Ausgabe: Summa theologica* 17A [1959] p. 485).

⁶³ *Sermo 12 in psalmum Qui habitat* (PL CLXXXIII, 862-863).

Church on earth, but also communion with the holy angels (cf. Heb 12,22f),⁶⁴ since Christ is the Head not only of man but of the holy angels as well (cf. Col 2,10).⁶⁵ “Vita christiana, iam hic in terris, societatem beatam angelorum et hominum in Deo unitorum participat in fide.”⁶⁶ Numerous fathers of the Church saw a direct relation between Baptism and the world of the holy angels.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ “For such is the city of God, having ‘the Church of the first-born, the spirits of the just, the general assembly of the angels, the blood of sprinkling’ (cf. Heb 12,22f), *whereby all are knit into one, and Heaven hath received the things of earth, and earth the things of Heaven, and that peace hath come which was of old longed for both by angels and by saints.*” (JOHN CHRYSOSTOMUS, *In Matth., hom. II 1*).

⁶⁵ “Apostolus dicit, *Coloss. II 10: ‘Qui est caput omnis principatus et potestatis’. Et eadem ratio est de angelis aliorum ordinum. Ergo Christus est caput angelorum*” (*S.Th. III q.8, a.4sc*).

⁶⁶ CCC n. 336. A witness from the liturgy can be found in the old Roman rite for the baptism of adults: “Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, Deus Jacob, Deus, qui Moysi famulo tuo in monte Sinai apparuisti, et filios Israel de terra Aegypti eduxisti, deputans eis angelum pietatis tuae, qui custodiret eos die ac nocte: te quaesumus, Domine; *ut mittere digneris sanctum angelum tuum de caelis, qui similiter custodiat et hunc famulum tuum N. et perducatur eum ad gratiam Baptismi tui. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen*” (*Rituale Romanum, Romae 1925: De Baptismo adultorum, n. 17*).

⁶⁷ The Church, appearing to **Hermas**, reminds the baptized that the conduct of their lives ought to be ordered towards a life in communion with the holy angels: “Stand steadfast, therefore, you who work righteousness, and doubt not that your passage may be with the holy angels [πάροδος μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων]” (*Vision II 2,7*). Later the Church appears as a tower that rises above the flood of the baptismal waters and into which the holy angels insert the baptized like so many individual, living stones: “Hear then why the tower is built upon the waters. It is because your life has been, and will be, saved through water. ... ‘These are the holy angels of God, who were first created, and to whom the Lord handed over His whole creation, that they might increase and build up and rule over the whole creation. By these will the building be finished.’ ... The building of the tower will be finished, and all will rejoice together around the tower, and they will glorify God, because the tower is finished.” (*Vision III 3,5; 4,2*).

According to **St. Ephraem the Syrian** we are bound to the angels through Baptism: “Descend, my brethren, put on from the waters of baptism the Holy Spirit; – be joined with the spirits that minister to the Godhead!” (*Hymni de Epiphania 5,1*). “The Seraphins who sing ‘Holy’ rejoice, – that they who are made holy have been increased. For lo! the angels rejoice – over one sinner if he repent: – how much more do they now rejoice – that in all churches and congregations, – lo! Baptism is bringing forth – the heavenly from the earthly” (ibidem, 6,7-8). In Baptism man is reborn in the likeness of the angels: “How much more shall Baptism sanctify – its conception and its bringing forth – of them that are pure and spiritual! – For there [in matrimony] is the conception of all men; – but here out of the water, – is the birth whereof the spiritual are worthy” (ibidem, 8,9;

Tradition, especially in the Christian East,⁶⁸ witnesses to the fact that the communion with the holy angels that is established in Baptism, is intensified through the profession of the evangelical counsels. The longing

cf. W. KRAMER, *Die Engelvorstellungen bei Ephraem dem Syrer*, Roma 1965, esp. pp. 93, 130, 155ff).

St. Cyrill of Jerusalem writes: "This is in truth a serious matter, brethren, and you must approach it with good heed. Each one of you is about to be presented to God before tens of thousands of the angelic hosts: the Holy Ghost is about to seal your souls: ye are to be enrolled in the army of the Great King." (*Catech.* III 3).

Similar thoughts are expressed by **St. John Chrysostomus**: "What then could be equal to these good tidings? God on earth, man in Heaven; and all became mingled together, *angels joined the choirs of men, men had fellowship with the angels, and with the other powers above*. And one might see the long war brought to an end, and reconciliation made between God and our nature, the devil brought to shame, demons in flight, death destroyed, Paradise opened, the curse blotted out, sin put out of the way, error driven off, truth returning, the word of godliness everywhere sown, and flourishing in its growth, the polity of those above planted on the earth, those powers in secure intercourse with us, *and on earth angels continually haunting* [archaic for 'frequenting'], *and hope abundant touching all things to come*." (*In Matth.*, hom. I 4). This intimate communion with the holy angels pertains, he says, to the principal goods of the spiritual life: "Yea, for there wilt thou see true wisdom abounding, and choirs of angels shining forth in a human body, and the commonwealth of heaven manifested here on earth. ... And the rewards in their commonwealth are not leaves of bay nor olive, nor an allowance of meat in the public hall, nor statues of brass, these cold and ordinary things, but a life which hath no end, and to become children of God, to join the angels' choir, and to stand by the royal throne, and to be always with Christ." (ibidem, I 12).

Pope Leo the Great describes the Christian confession and the grace of redemption through Christ as a *banner-oath*, which enlists us as *soldiers in the heavenly host*: "Thou who wast born of corruptible flesh, mayest be reborn by the Spirit of God, and obtain through grace what thou hadst not by nature, and, if thou acknowledge thyself the son of God by the spirit of adoption, dare to call God Father. Free from the accusing of a bad conscience, aspire to the kingdom of heaven, do God's will supported by the Divine help, *imitate the angels upon earth*, feed on the strength of immortal sustenance, fight fearlessly on the side of piety against hostile temptations, and if thou keep thy [*oath of*] *allegiance* in the heavenly warfare, doubt not that thou wilt be crowned for thy victory in the triumphant camp of the Eternal King" (*Sermo XXII* 5).

⁶⁸ "Hanc rationem Oriens christianus extollit cum monachos tamquam *Dei in terris angelos* iudicat a quibus mundi in Christo renovatio nuntiatur" (JOHN PAUL II, *Vita consecrata* 27). "El religioso sigue continuamente a Cristo. Por eso nada tiene de extraño que la expresión 'vida angélica', que incluye evidentemente el sentido de la perfección, se haya por último aplicado, en Oriente, a la vida monástica de modo tan exclusivo, que ambas expresiones han llegado a convertirse en sinónimos. 'Via allí a muchos Padres que llevaban vida angélica y caminaban a imitación de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo,'

for a life in communion with the holy angels is, however, by no means restricted to the state of the consecrated life.⁶⁹ Indeed, this longing has found manifold expression in a plethora of consecrations to the holy angels similar to the abundant array of consecrations to Mary, which range from a simple act of entrustment (affidamento)⁷⁰ to a complete dedication with body and soul.⁷¹

[*Paradisum Patrum*: PG 65, 444B] escribía ya un autor antiguo para dar una idea general de las observancias de los solitarios de Egipto” (G. M. COLOMBÁS, *Paraíso y Vida Angélica*, Abadía de Montserrat 1958, p. 95).

⁶⁹ “‘‘ Toda la antigüedad cristiana – se ha escrito – comprendió la vocación del hombre como una vocación a *participar de la vida angélica* en cuanto ésta se defina por la *visión de Dios*’ [L. BOUYER]. Según otro autor, cuando la tradición habla de vida angélica, considera sobre todo ‘*la función de alabanza que desempeñan*’ los espíritus celestes [J. LECLERCQ]. En realidad, como hemos visto, *la imitación* de la existencia angélica implica igualmente, en la tradición de los Padres, la *alabanza* y la *contemplación*, además del ascetismo, la *castidade* y *todas las virtudes que acercan el hombre a la pureza de los ángeles*. Pero ‘vida angélica’ no es sinónimo de ‘angelismo’. No se trata, en ella, de suprimir, olvidar o despreciar la carne como tal, sino de dominar y purificar una carne manchada y viciada por el pecado. El hombre no cambia de naturaleza; no se propone alcanzar la condición natural de los espíritus puros, sino *llegar al coronamiento de una salvación en que el hombre y el ángel son iguales antes Dios*. El hombre es conciudadano de los ángeles, tiene con ellos comunidad de vida; pero esto no pertenece al orden de las esencias, sino que expresa la nueva condición histórica de los elegidos. La salvación se nos comunica como *una participación en las funciones, la vida y la bienaventuranza de los espíritus celestes*. No es la naturaleza, sino la vocación de los ángeles, lo que se propone como ideal al cristiano: *una vocación de pureza, de santidad, de estar con Dios, de verle, de contemplarle, de servirle, de alabarle*” (COLOMBÁS, *Paraíso y Vida Angélica*, p. 302-303; accentuation added). Colombás quotes here L. BOUYER, *Le sens de la vie monastique*, Turnhout-Paris 1950, p. 43, and J. LECLERCQ, *L’amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu*, Paris 1957, p. 59.

⁷⁰ In this context a few examples from prayers to the Holy Guardian Angel which are more thoroughly documented in the appendix of prayers: “commendo me tibi hodie” (Jeremias Drexel, 1629; see Appendix, nr. 1); “dir empfehle ich ... sowohl meinen Leib, als meine Seele, daß du sie bewahrest und behütest vor jedem Übel” (1875, see Appendix, nr. 2); “a te affido la mia persona” (1994; see Appendix, nr. 3).

⁷¹ A few examples from consecrations to the holy angels: “Anges de Jésus, je me donne à vous” (St. John Eudes, Appendix, nr. 4); “Ich habe nichts anderes als meinen Leib und meine Seele, beide schenke ich dir [dem hl. Schutzengel], und übergebe mich dir ganz und gar zu eigen” (1799; Appendix, nr. 5); “mi consacro solennemente al vostro servizio” (ca. 1856, Appendix, nr. 6); “I consecrate to you [St. Michael] my soul and body ... and entrust the salvation of my soul to your care” (Appendix, nr. 7); “ich weihe mich dir [St. Gabriel] auf ewig” (1986, Appendix, nr. 8); “we consecrate to you

c) On the Essence of a Consecration to the Holy Angels

Just as in the case of a consecration to Mary, the Consecration to the holy angels is a *covenant*. The communion with the holy angels that was implicit in Baptism is now, by means of the consecration, consciously and formally affirmed. Man entrusts himself in fraternal love to the holy angels, to these his heavenly brothers and fellow-servants before God (cf. Apoc 19,10; 22,9), who are entirely holy and already irrevocably united to God. Doing so, he opens himself in a special way to their assisting ministry, which, of course, always has regard for our freedom of will. But here man obliges himself expressly to heed and follow their admonitions (cf. Ex 23,21), whose finality is always the glorification of God and the fulfillment of His will. Man obliges himself to an intimate collaboration with them for the extension and the defense of the Kingdom of God upon earth and to strive to lead a life of perfection as a living member of the Holy Church.

Like the Marian Consecration so too is the consecration to the holy angels ultimately rooted in the Baptismal promises. A consecration to the holy angels assents and consents to the place and mission the holy angels have in the Economy of Salvation in Christ and in relation to mankind.⁷² To consecrate oneself to the holy angels means to enter into a *voluntary bond to the holy angels* so that with their help and in the imitation of their virtues⁷³ one might more effectively strive after Christian perfection according to one's state in life,⁷⁴ and might collaborate with them in the apostolic mission of the Church for the salvation of souls.⁷⁵

[St. Gabriel] our bodies and souls that we may become one with Jesus" (End of 20th Century, Appendix, nr. 9).

⁷² Concerning the role of the holy angels in the economy of salvation, St. Thomas teaches: "Potestas hierarchica convenit quidem angelis, in quantum et ipsi sunt *medii inter Deum et hominem*" (*S.Th.* III q.22, a.1, ad 1).

⁷³ According to the doctrine of the Church the true devotion (*vera devotio*) to Mary and the saints consists not least of all in the imitation of their virtues (cf. *LG* 67 and 50). In what way the holy angels can effectively be imitated shall be discussed and documented in conjunction with the prayers of consecration in the historical part of this essay.

⁷⁴ Cf. *LG* 42. The call to perfection is commonly grounded in Baptism and Confirmation. This call is further specified by the sacraments which determine a state in life as also by the religious profession of the evangelical counsels.

⁷⁵ Cf. *LG* 65. The holy angels also have a share in the salvific mission of the Church,

Analogous to the Consecration to Mary, in which one performs all one's works *through, with and in* Maria so as to perform them even more perfectly *with Christ and in Christ*,⁷⁶ so can it be said of the Consecration to the holy angels that by this means man strives to perform all his actions *like* the holy angels and *with* them, so as to be more perfectly united with Christ and to be transformed into His likeness.

William Wagner ORC

Appendix of Prayers

1. Saluto te, ô Sancte Angele Dei, Princeps nobilis, custos meus fidelis, cui me gubernandum divina bonitas tradidit, quam multum secundum Deum tibi tuaeque caritati debeo, quod indigno mihi tot annis totque modis fideliter atque clementer assistis et animi corporisque mei salutem, procuras. **Commendo me tibi hodie**, ut adversus malignum hostem, te duce illaesus conserver, et in gratiam Dei, ad extremum usque halitum firmus et constans perseverem, et tecum in caelo Dominum nostrum laudem in aeternum.¹

2. Himmlischer, heiliger Engel! der du von der Stunde meiner Geburt an zum steten Begleiter, Schirmer, Schützer und Beistand auf dem Lebenswege mir gegeben worden bist: **dir empfehle ich beim Beginne dieses Tages sowohl meinen Leib, als meine Seele**, daß du sie bewahrest und behütest vor jedem Übel, und daß du in jeder Gefahr, die ihnen droht, unter deinen Fittichen und mit deiner himmlischen Macht und Liebe sie schüttest. **Dir gelobe ich auch Ehrfurcht und Gehorsam**; denn ich weiß, daß du der Zeuge und der Zuschauer mei-

for they are “sent” by God “for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation” (Heb 1,14). Angels and men accordingly serve the same salvific plan of God, Who “in a wonderful way guide[s] the work of angels and of men” (cf. Opening prayer for the Feast of the Holy Archangels and for the votive mass in honor of the holy angels in the *Missale Romanum*).

⁷⁶ Cf. *Traité de la vraie dévotion à Marie*, n. 257.

* * *

¹ Jeremias DREXEL SJ, *Orologium Auxiliaris Tutelariorum Angelorum*, Munich 1629, p.151.

nes ganzen Tuns und Lassens bist, und daß alle deine liebevollen Einsprechungen nur zum Heile meiner Seele sind. Ich will dich heute durch keine Sünde betrüben, im Gegenteile will ich recht eifrig im Guten und in Erfüllung aller meiner Pflichten sein, auf daß du erfreut werdest in dem Amte, das der Herr dir aufgetragen hat, mich Sein Geschöpf und Seinen Diener zu lenken und zu leiten auf den Wegen des Heiles und zu führen zur Seligkeit im Himmel. Amen.²

3. Dolcissimo mio angelo custode, mio amico, fratello invisibile. Dall'eternità, la paterna provvidenza di Dio uno e trino mi ha affidato a te, come custode e difensore della mia vita.

Ora, in piena consapevolezza e con amoroso consenso, ti scelgo come guida della mia vita. Scelgo di incamminarme con te sulla strada che porta al cielo. Custodiscimi con la grazia che Dio ti ha dato per me. Custodisci il mio corpo, sano e vigoroso, la mia anima, per cercare sempre la verità e il bene, la mia vita divina, per crescere nella conoscenza, nell'amore, nel servizio a Dio, con tutto il cuore, e ai fratelli. Tu rendimi conforme sempre più al Cristo Gesù, crocifisso e risorto per me, mio Signore, maestro e modello. Con le tue illuminazioni, fammi scoprire la presenza di Gesù: 'Io sono con voi' e fammi gustare quanto é buono il Signore e quanto é dolce lodarlo e contemplarlo. Con la tua forza, sostienimi quando, per i miei limiti e le mie debolezze, mi vedrai esposto alle attrazioni del piacere, del potere e del denaro, alle insidie dell'antico tentatore e alla mentalità di peccato, alla sfiducia e allo scoraggiamento.

Governa la mia esistenza. Cedo a te le redini della mia vita perchè tu, che godi la beata visione della santissima Trinità, da questa sorgente d'amore, faccia scendere su di me fiumi di luce e di energia vitale, perchè io accolga la divina Presenza, e il mio cuore diventi sua stabile dimora, secondo la promessa di Gesù: 'Se uno mi ama, osserva i miei comandamenti e anche il Padre mio lo amerà e verremo dentro di lui e vi porremo stabile dimora'.

A te affido la mia persona (la mia famiglia, perchè sia cenacolo de'amore / il mio bimbo ora battezzato). Voglio rendere grazia in eterno al Padre celeste che, per sua infinita bontà, mi ha affidato a te, per essere degno figlio suo e di Maria, regina degli angeli. Ringrazio te per le continue premure che riservi a me. **Prometto di non deluder-**

² M. Terklau (Hrsg.), *Zeit und Ewigkeit: ein Erbauungsbuch für katholische Christen*, Vienna⁶ (the edition is undated, but has a hand entry from 1875), pp. 17-18.

ti. Mi impegno a far scoprire ai miei fratelli la tua invisibile presenza reale, potente e la tua amorosa missione, per introdurli nel mondo meraviglioso del divino per il quale Dio ci ha creati.

Mano nella mano, occhi negli occhi, guardando avanti e in alto, con la forza dell'Alleluia, e con gioiosa sicurezza, **voglio camminare con te** sulle vie del mondo, per essere un giorno con te in paradiso. Amen. Alleluia, alleluia.³

4. O mon Jésus, pour amour de vous, je renonce de tout mon cœur au péché, à l'esprit malin, au monde, à moi-même, à toutes mes volontés, inclinations, et à tout ce qui est du vieil homme. Je me donne tout à vous, en l'honneur de tout ce que vous êtes. **Je vous donne et vous consacre mon cœur, en l'honneur de votre très aimable Cœur; mon corps avec tous ses membres et sentiments, en l'honneur de votre sacré corps et de tout ses membres et sentiments; mon âme avec toutes ses facultés; ma vie extérieure et intérieure avec toutes ses fonctions, en l'honneur et union de votre vie divine, intérieure et extérieure, et de toutes ses fonctions; toutes mes pensées, paroles, actions, travaux et souffrances, en l'honneur et action de grâces de toutes vos saintes pensées, paroles, actions, travaux et souffrances.**

O mon Jésus, possédez-moi tout, s'il vous plaît, pour me consacrer et sacrifier entièrement et continuellement avec vous à la gloire de votre Père.

O Mère de Jésus, je me donne à vous: donnez-moi, s'il vous plaît, à votre Fils.

Anges de Jésus, je me donne à vous: Saints et Saintes de Jésus, donnez-moi, s'il vous plaît, à mon Dieu pour jamais.⁴

5. [...] O mein lieber Schutzengel! Was soll, oder kann ich dir dafür vergelten? Ich habe nichts anderes als **meinen Leib und meine Seele, beide schenke ich dir, und übergebe mich dir ganz und gar zu eigen, mit [festem] Vorsatz, stets in deiner Gegenwart zu wandeln und deinen Einsprechungen in allem zu gehorsamen.** Du, o heiliger Engel, fahr unterdessen fort, über mich Sorge zu tragen, und mich vor allem Übel des Leibes und der Seele zu bewahren. Werde ich

³ M. Battista (editor), *In Cammino con gli Angeli*, Bologna 1994, p. 181-183 (with an accompanying word from Cardinal Anastasio Ballestrero).

⁴ St. Jean EUDES, *Le mémorial de la Vie Ecclésiastique* in: *Œuvres complètes*, Paris 1906, III, p. 49-50 (The prayer is recommended as a daily morning prayer).

betrübt, so tröste mich; werde ich verfolgt, so beschütze mich; bin ich in Gefahr, so errette mich; komme ich in die Not, so hilf mir. In der Unwissenheit lehre mich; in zweifelhaften Dingen unterweise mich; in meinen täglichen Geschäften leite mich, damit alles zur höchsten Ehre Gottes geschehe, und ich das erwünschte Ziel erreiche. [...] ⁵

6. Angeli del Cielo, vi scelgo oggi come miei protettori e **mi consacro solennemente al vostro servizio**, prometto in presenza di Dio, della Madonna e delle mie compagne di **esservi fedele** e di applicarmi ad **imitare le vostre virtù** e principalmente la vostra pietà, umiltà, obbedienza e modestia.

Supplico la SS. Vergine, vostra Regina, di benedire questa risoluzione che vi offro di vero cuore. Desidero di essere sempre degna del favore che Dio mi accorda in questo instante e perseverare nei sentimenti di una vera associata della Congregazione dei SS. Angeli, affinché dopo aver servito in terra abbia, o Angeli Santi, la felicità di essere unita alla vostra gloria nei Cieli. Così sia. ⁶

7. St. Michael the Archangel, invincible prince of the angelic hosts and glorious protector of the universal Church; I greet you and praise you for that splendor with which God has adorned you so richly. I thank God for the great graces He has bestowed upon you, especially to remain faithful when Lucifer and his followers rebelled, and to battle victoriously for the honor of God and the divinity of the Son of Man.

St. Michael, **I consecrate to you my soul and body. I choose you as my patron and protector and entrust the salvation of my soul to your care.** Be the guardian of my obligation as a child of God and the Catholic Church as **again I renounce Satan, his works and pomps.** Assist me by your powerful intercession in the fulfillment of these sacred promises, so that **imitating your courage and loyalty to God**, and trusting in your kind help and protection, I may be victorious over the enemies of my soul and be united with God in heaven. ⁷

⁵ A. WILLE SJ (edited by J. Stark), *Vollständiges Gebet- und Tugendbuch, oder: Lebensregeln und Übungen*, Augsburg (1st edition 1799) ⁹1822, p. 154-156.

⁶ *Manuale della Congregazione die SS. Angeli per le fanciulle cristiane*, Marino Laziale 1928, pp. 19-27. To this prayer was attached a blessing approved by Pope Pius IX (rescript from April 5, 1856).

⁷ L. LOVASIK, *St. Michael: The Strength of God*, Tarentum ¹⁸1995, p. 20 (with an Imprimatur from Eirie, Penn.).

8. Heiliger Gabriel, du seligster Engel, du bist ganz besonders von Gott erwählt worden, seine Befehle zu verkünden. Ich grüße dich mit demütiger Liebe im Namen Jesu und deiner himmlischen Königin. Du heiliger Patron der Priester, bitte für die Seelenhirten und für die Einheit der Kirche.

Du Abgesandter des Heiligen Geistes, du Diener Mariens, du Schutzengel des göttlichen Kindes und der heiligen Familie, führe mich liebevoll auf dem täglichen Kreuzweg. Tröste mich in allen schweren Stunden. Stärke meinen Eifer im Wächterdienste vor dem Tabernakel und empfehl mich der Heiligsten Dreifaltigkeit und der Heiligen Familie. Erwirke durch Maria, daß ich eine lebendige Monstranz werden darf. Gieße das kostbare Erlöserblut unablässig über Himmel, Erde und Fegfeuer aus. **Ich weihe mich dir auf ewig.** Zum Dank für deine ständige Obsorge schenke ich dir immerfort die heiligsten Herzen Jesu und Mariens zur Vermehrung deiner Seligkeit und Kraft. Verkünde mir in meiner Todesstunde, daß ich Gnade gefunden habe vor den Augen Gottes. Ich freue mich auf den Augenblick, wo ich im Himmel deine Vorzüge und deine Schönheit sehen werde. Amen.⁸

9. Blessed Archangel Gabriel, messenger of the Incarnation, you greeted Mary, "Full of grace" and foretold the greatness of her Son. You became the first adorer of the Body of Christ hidden in the tabernacle of the Immaculate Mother.

O holy guardian of the humanity of Jesus and servant of the Virgin Mary, **we consecrate to you our bodies and souls that we may become one with Jesus**, joyfully adoring Him with all our mind, heart and strength, and always ready to hear His word and act upon it. Help us become like Mary, living tabernacles of the Most High.

You who are called "strength of God", be our strength in time of temptation, and in all the difficulties which we must endure, help us to persevere. Angel of Consolation, comforter of Jesus in His agony, assist us in every agony of our lives on earth, and finally, when we are called to the throne of God, be present before us to announce to us that we too have found favor in the eyes of God, so that we may eternally adore Him with all the saints and angels in heaven. Amen.⁹

⁸ F. Holböck / M. Th. Isenegger (editors), *Der Schlüssel zu den Schätzen Gottes*, S. 332-333 (with an Imprimatur from the Archdiocese of Salzburg from February 20, 1985).

⁹ Taken from a recent (undated) brochure from a movement in honor of St. Maximilian Kolbe published in West Covina, California.

