

Ad Veritatem

Volume 9 Issue 5

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

MAY 2004

*“Why, asks More,
would any sane person
buy a momentary
pleasure for
an eternity of pain?”*

Thomas More:
A Portrait of Courage

MAY MEETING:

WEDNESDAY MAY 19, 2004 NOON

AUXILIARY BISHOP DOMINIC LUONG

“IS MARY A STUMBLING BLOCK TO ECUMENISM?”

DETAILS ON PAGE 3



“Ad Veritatem” is Latin for “Toward the truth.”



WHO WE ARE

In 1966, the movie *A Man For All Seasons* inspired the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to recognize this film as the Picture of the Year. This was one of the few occasions in the history of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences where the life of a religious figure won the hearts of the motion picture industry's elite. The central figure portrayed in *Man For All Seasons* was, of course, St. Thomas More, the great lawyer, statesman, apologist, husband, father and faithful Catholic. In 2000, St. Thomas was honored as the Lawyer of the Millennium by a secular panel of historians for the British Commonwealth. Shortly thereafter, John Paul II declared St. Thomas as the Patron Saint of Statesmen.

Inspired by a homily given by Bishop Norman McFarland at the 1995 Red Mass of Orange County, 5 "fearless" members of the Orange County bar met shortly thereafter at the law offices of Rutan and Tucker in Costa Mesa. These lawyers all shared the realization that the legal practice takes a severe toll on the personal and spiritual lives of those involved in it and that many in the legal profession had become too focused on the material life with the natural consequence being the de-emphasis on their spiritual life. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the formation of a new organization for lawyers and judges in the County of Orange with its mission being to publicly support and encourage the spiritual development of its members in their Catholic faith. The group chose as its patron St. Thomas More, the greatest lawyer of his time, who was a dedicated husband and father with a deep and profound commitment to his Catholic faith, his profession and his fellow man. Thus the St. Thomas More Society of Orange County was born.

Attendance at the monthly meetings in the early years was sporadic. Our spiritual director, Fr Hugh Barbour, wisely advised us not to worry about numbers because it was more important "to be than to do or say." He encouraged the virtues of patience and perseverance. His sage advice, together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and St. Thomas More, has led us to our current level of a fourteen member Board of Directors of lawyers and judges and a mailing list for the monthly newsletter of over 970.

The goal of the Society is to inspire and lift up the minds and hearts of the legal community of Orange County to follow the example of St. Thomas More by integrating God in every aspect of their professional and personal lives. The Society seeks to accomplish this goal through inspirational speakers at monthly meetings, this newsletter, the Red Mass, a website, an annual spiritual retreat and other events. The St. Thomas More Society also seeks to provide a haven where those who are committed to their Catholic faith as well as those who are seeking to learn more about the Church, can find fellowship and encouragement in the face of overwhelming media and cultural forces working against that pursuit.

St. Thomas More, please pray for us. ☩

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE at www.stthomasmore.net

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AD VERITATEM EDITORS

ANNE LANPHAR
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MAY
MEETING

BISHOP DOMINIC LUONG
“IS MARY A STUMBLING
BLOCK TO ECUMINISM?”



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Bishop Dominic M. Luong, appointed Titular Bishop of Cebarades and Auxiliary Bishop of Orange on April 25, 2003, was ordained on June 11, 2003 at St Columban Church, Garden Grove. His coat of arms is “You are strangers and aliens no longer” (Eph. 11:19). Bishop Luong was born in Vietnam on December 20, 1940. He attended French-Vietnamese Elementary School in Vietnam, Holy Family Seminary High School, Vietnam, diocesan seminary, Buffalo, New York, and St. Bernard Seminary, Rochester, New York, where he studied Philosophy and Theology. He pursued post-graduate studies at Canisius College in Buffalo, earning a Master’s Degree in Science. Bishop Luong was ordained a priest on May 21, 1966 in Buffalo, for the Diocese of Danang, Vietnam, but circumstances in that country prevented his returning there. Eventually he was incardinated in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Bishop Luong was a hospital chaplain in Buffalo, from 1966-1975; Associate Pastor of St. Louis Church, Buffalo, from 1975-1976; Director of the Vietnamese Apostolate, New Orleans, from 1976-1983. He was appointed pastor of Mary, Queen of Vietnamese Church, New Orleans in 1983, named Monsignor by Pope John-Paul II in 1986. He served as Director of the National Pastoral Center for the Vietnamese Apostolate, from 1989-2003, member of the New Orleans Archdiocesan Priests’ Council from 1987 to 2003, and dean of New Orleans East 2002-2003.

For more information, please contact either David Belz at (949) 347-0447 or email to dbelz@kuhnbelz.com, or Anne Lanphar at (714) 800-3225 or alanphar@firstam.com. EVERYONE IS WELCOME! †

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RED MASS

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6:30 PM MASS
RECEPTION FOLLOWING
RESERVE THE DATE!

CALENDAR
REMINDERS



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Father Hugh Barbour invites your questions about faith and morals. Please submit your question to Anne Lanphar at 1 First American Way, Santa Ana, CA 92707 or email to alanphar@firstam.com. The Editorial Staff reserves the right to select which question will be submitted to Fr Hugh.

IS MARIAN DOCTRINE IMPORTANT FOR SALVATION?

FR HUGH BAROUR, O. PRAEM, PH.D.

Our Chaplain

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

QUESTION: I had a discussion with an Evangelical friend on the virginity of Our Blessed Mother. I pointed out that Protestant reformers Luther, Calvin, Zwingli had taught the historic Christian doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity. He didn't care and said that our salvation doesn't depend on belief about Mary's virginity. All we have to do, he said, is believe that Jesus is our personal Lord and Savior and we will be saved. He also said Catholicism isn't "true" Christianity. What should I tell him?

ANSWER: The Reformers indeed taught the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity, but that usually doesn't impress modern-day Protestants like your friend. Protestants agree with the Catholic Church's teaching that faith in Christ is necessary for salvation. But faith in Christ includes faith in and assent to what He taught in His commandments and doctrines. Your friend's minimalist attitude toward what is necessary to salvation risks turning Christianity into a mechanical ideology: "*Say the 'sinner's prayer' and you're in, nothing else matters. Just don't become a Catholic.*" Point out that if there are no conditions for salvation other than faith in Christ as one's Savior, then not being a Catholic cannot be a condition for salvation. If he says you can't be a Catholic and be saved, then he's added a condition and is being inconsistent. This may help him see that there's more to salvation than mere faith in Christ.

Jesus reminded us that faith alone isn't sufficient: "*Why do you say to me, 'Lord, Lord,' but do not do the things I command?*" (Luke 6:46-47; cf. Matt, 7:21-23). This includes believing in all that He and the Apostles taught. And that includes the truth of Mary's perpetual virginity. You see, all of revelation is connected. One cannot say, for example, "*I'm willing to accept this doctrine but I won't accept that one.*" That's completely contrary to Christ's will.

Your friend's point of view is common among Protestants, who have a tendency to reduce "*faith in Christ*" to simply the belief that He is our Savior. But let's remember what "*Savior*" means. It means that Christ is saving us *from* something, He is saving us *for* something. His salvation comes to us in a certain way and under certain conditions (e.g. believe, repent, be baptized, etc.). This also tells us who He is: God Himself. You see what a wealth of doctrinal implications are contained in the word "*savior*": sin, death, and hell, the commandments, grace, heaven, sacrifice, merit, sacraments, the Church, the Trinity, the Incarnation, His death, Resurrection,



**THE CORONATION
OF THE VIRGIN**

Fra Angelico
(1430-35)

Marian Doctrine (Continued on page 18)

DEVOTION TO MARY: AN EARLY CHURCH TRADITION

BY DAVID BELZ, ESQ.

I recently had a discussion with a Christian friend about the teachings of the Catholic Church on Mary. My friend is a pastor for a local non-denominational Church which has a strong *Sola Scriptura* tradition: his faith derives only from the Bible, the written word of God.

My friend does not accept the Catholic Church's teachings on Mary and, therefore, does not appreciate the spiritual riches found in those teachings. For him if a Christian belief is not completely and totally stated in the Bible then it is not a part of revealed truth.

The teachings of the Catholic Church about Mary are widely misunderstood by Catholics and non-Catholics. Various misconceptions feed this confusion. Some have accused the Catholic Church of "worshipping" Mary confusing prayer to her as a form of worship as opposed to her role as intercessor. Others assert that the Mary "cult" did not develop until after the 4th century. Within the Church, devotions to Mary are ignored or treated with indifference.

As stated in documents of Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium* is the Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Church. Chapter VII, of *Lumen Gentium*, is devoted entirely to The Virgin Mary, Mother of God in the Mystery of Christ and the Church. This dogmatic statement as to the role of Mary in the life of the Church has been described as the most extensive statement on Mary found in the 2000 year history of the Church. Vatican II did not de-emphasize Mary's role in the life of the Church, but rather, re-emphasized it.

Some assert that this theological focus on Mary is a recent historical development in the Church. Is this correct, or did Mary have a special role in the life of the early Church? The answer can be found in Sacred Scripture and further supported in the writings of the early Church fathers.

The first references to Mary are found in the Old Testament. The great prophet, Isaiah, tells of the incarnation of Christ within the woman of His mother in Isaiah 7:14, "therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The **virgin** will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). [Note: "Immanuel" means "God with us."]

The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy is found in Luke 1:33-39:

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon

Devotion to Mary (Continued on page 6)



ASSUMPTION

Federico Barocci

(1592-96)

Some assert that this theological focus on Mary is a recent historical development in the Church.

Is this correct, or did Mary have a special role in the life of the early Church?

The answer can be found in Sacred Scripture and further supported in the writings of the early Church fathers.

(Continued from page 5) *Devotion to Mary*

you, and the power of⁹ the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.”

The early Church fathers devote little to the life of Mary in their scriptural commentaries. An old myth says that Mary appeared to the apostle Matthew in a vision as he was writing his Gospel account of Christ’s life and asked him to minimize the references to her personal life in his writings so as to focus more directly on the life and works of Jesus. This legend is only important in that its message is consistent with Mary’s role as a model of faith and obedience.

The catacombs of Rome provide abundant artistic evidence of devotion to Mary by early Christians. This Marian devotion is also reflected in frescos created by the early Christians showing an early form of catechesis. Since most people were illiterate, these paintings served as a visual form of teaching the faith. The Virgin Mother is present in these icons from the very beginning of the life of the Church.

A fresco in the catacombs of Priscilla is especially significant. The Annunciation of Mary is represented in a single completely isolated fresco. In this fresco, the artist gave Mary a prominent role reflecting love and admiration for the Mother of God.

The writings of the Early Church fathers also provide evidence of the devotion to Mary. Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, Syria, was known for his powerful faith and passionate devotion to Christ. In his letter to the Smyrneans in 107 A. D., Ignatius provides the earliest known reference to the name that the first Christians gave to the Church, the hierarchical structure and to the sacrament of the table of the Lord:

“Let no one do anything of concern to the Church without the Bishop. Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is celebrated by the Bishop or by one who he ordains. Wherever the Bishop appears, let the people be there, just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”

In this same letter to the Smyrneans, Ignatius also writes of the mystery of Mary’s virginal birth of Christ:

“The Lord is truly descending from David according to the flesh (Rom 1:3, 4) and the Son of God by the will and power of God; he was truly born of a virgin and baptized by John in order to fulfill every command (Mt 3:15).”

Another early Christian writer and saint from the Apostolic Era, Justin Martyr, was born between 100 and 110 A.D. Before becoming a convert and roaming Christian teacher, Justin studied philosophy. His ascendancy to influence in the early Church was a consequence of his ardent defense of the faith against the heresies of his time. Justin referred to Mary as the “new Eve,” a metaphorical and theological correlation to the Pauline reference to Jesus as the “new Adam” in 1 Cor. 15:21-22. In his Dialogue with Tryph, Justin wrote:

“The Son of God became man through a Virgin, so that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be destroyed in the same way it had begun. For Eve, who was virgin and undefiled, gave birth to disobedience and death after listening to the serpent’s words. But the Virgin Mary conceived faith and joy; for when the angel Gabriel brought her the glad tidings that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and that the power of the Most High would overshadow her, so that the Holy One born of her would be the Son of God, she answered, “let it be done to me according to your words” (Lk 1:38). Thus was born of her the child about whom so

Devotion to Mary (Continued on page 7)



THE PIETA
Michelangelo
(1499)

(Continued from page 6) *Devotion to Mary*

many Scriptures speak, as we have shown. Through him, God crushed the serpent, along with those angels and men who had become like the serpent.”

Most of the writings of Justin Martyr have been lost but his few surviving works evidence a strong Marian theology. Written to counter heretical teachings, Justin’s letters maintain a focus on the role of Mary in proper perspective to the mystery of the life of Christ.

Another ancient document that reveals intimate details of Mary’s personal life, her relationship with St. Joseph and the virgin birth was originally called *The Nativity of Mary* but is now more commonly known as *The Protoevangelium of James*. This document has been attributed to the Apostle James the Lesser and recounts Mary’s special favor in grace. Of special interest in the Protoevangelium is the story of the midwife Salome who is a witness to the birth of Christ. As a witness in the stable, Salome describes a powerful light that blinds everyone in the stable. When the light subsides, the infant’s birth is complete. Even after viewing this mystical event, Salome is said to doubt the virginal birth (similar to the apostle Thomas’ doubt of Jesus’ resurrection). The Protoevangelium then tells us Salome confirmed the virginal nature of Christ’s birth by confirming the intact virginal condition of Mary’s womb thus providing an eyewitness account of the virgin birth.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons is called the father of Catholic dogmatic theology. Born between 140 and 160 A.D. in Smyrna, Irenaeus knew St. Polycarp who was a student of St. John, the Apostle, thereby connecting him in a direct apostolic line to the teachings of Jesus. As a bishop, Irenaeus defended the faith against the heresies of his time, most notably Gnosticism, in his noted five volume manuscript, *Adversus haereses* (*Against Heresies*).

St. Irenaeus followed the “recapitulation” teaching of St. Paul which states that through the Incarnation and Resurrection the acts of the first creation are reconciled with God. Jesus, as the second Adam, re-established all that was lost by the sins of our first parents through His obedience to the will of the Father. All things were made new by the acts of the second Adam, who like the first Adam, was born without the deficits of sin.

As with St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenaeus recognizes Mary for her acts of humility and obedience. Irenaeus produces a more developed theological reflection on the importance of Mary’s role:

Even though Eve had Adam for a husband, she was still a virgin...By disobeying, she became the cause for death for herself and for the whole human race. In the same way, Mary, though she also had a husband, was still a virgin, and by obeying, she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race...the knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by Mary’s obedience. What Eve bound through her unbelief, Mary loosened by her faith.”

In *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, St. Irenaeus again stresses the rebirth of Adam in Christ even as Eve was reborn in Mary. Jesus became the antitype of Adam in the process of restoration and Mary becomes the antitype of Eve as a clear reflection of the passages of Genesis 3:15. In doing so, Irenaeus makes it clear that Mary’s role is connected and subservient to the actions of Jesus in a dependent way.

Irenaeus is also the first Church father to refer to Mary with the notable title of “*Advocate*”:

Devotion to Mary (Continued on page 18)



**THE PIETA
(DETAIL)**

**Michelangelo
(1499)**



SCRIPTURAL CORNER



**CRUCIFIX
WITH MARY,
MARY MAGDALEN
AND ST JOHN
THE EVANGELIST**

**Hans Burgkmair
(1519)**

**The Navarre Bible,
a renown edition of
Sacred Scripture
prepared by
members of the
Faculty of Theology
of Navarre University,
consisting of the New
Vulgate, the Revised
Standard Version
and commentaries.*

JOHN 19: 26-27

²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

²⁶⁻²⁷ “The spotless purity of John’s whole life makes him strong before the Cross. The other apostles fly from Golgotha: he, with the Mother of Christ, remains. Don’t forget that purity strengthens and invigorates the character.” (J. Escriva, *The Way*, 144).

Our Lord’s gesture in entrusting his Blessed Mother to the disciple’s care, has a dual meaning (see p. 19 above and pp. 35ff). For one thing it expresses his filial love for the Virgin Mary. St Augustine sees it as a lesson Jesus gives us on how to keep the fourth commandment: “Here is a lesson in morals. He is doing what he tells us to do and, like a good Teacher, he instructs his own by example, that it is the duty of good children to take care of their parents; as though the wood on which his dying members were fixed were also the chair of the teaching Master.” (St Augustine, *In Ioann. Evang.*, 119,2).

Our Lord’s words also declare that Mary is our Mother: “The Blessed Virgin also advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associating herself with his sacrifice in her mother’s heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim who was born of her. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to his disciple.” (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 58).

All Christians, who are represented in the person of John, are children of Mary. By giving us his Mother to be our Mother, Christ demonstrates his love for his own to the end (cf. Jn 13:1). Our Lady’s acceptance of John as her son shows her motherly care for us: “the Son of God, and your Son, from the Cross indicated a man to you, Mary, and said: ‘Behold, your son’ (Jn 19:26). And in that man he entrusted to you every person, he entrusted everyone to you. And you, who at the moment of the Annunciation, concentrated the whole program of your life in those simple words: ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’ (Lk 1:38): embrace everyone, draw close to everyone, seek everyone out with motherly care. Thus is accomplished what the last Council said about your presence in the mystery of Christ and the Church. In a wonderful way you are always found in the mystery of Christ, your only Son, because you are present wherever men and women, his brothers and sisters, are present, wherever the Church is present.” (John Paul II, *Homily in the Basilica of Guadalupe*, 27 January 1979).

John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, brought Mary into his home, into his life. Spiritual writers have seen these words of the Gospel as an invitation to all Christians to bring Mary into their lives. Mary certainly wants us to invoke her, to approach her confidently, to appeal to her as our mother, asking her to ‘show that you are our mother.’” (J. Escriva, *Christ is passing by*, 140).

John Paul II constantly treats our Lady as his Mother. In bidding farewell to the Virgin of Czestochowa he prayed in this way: “Our Lady of the Bright Mountain, Mother of the Church! Once more I consecrate myself to you ‘in your maternal slavery of love.’ *Totus tuus!* I am all yours! I consecrate to you the whole Church--everywhere and to the ends of the earth! I consecrate to you humanity; I consecrate to you all men and women, my brothers and sisters. All peoples and all nations. I consecrate to you Europe and all the continents. I consecrate to you Rome and Poland, united, through your servant, by a fresh bond of love. Mother, accept us! Mother, do not abandon us! Mother, be our guide!” (Farewell Address at Jasna Gora Shrine, 6 June 1979). †

DID THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY DIE?

BY MICHAEL SHONAFELT, ESQ.

“Tota pulchra es, O Maria, Et macula non est in te.” (“You are wholly beautiful, O Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in thee.”) -- from an Ancient Marian Hymn.

Death, the irreversible separation of body from soul, is the ultimate stumbling block of the human psyche. Deep within each of us is an unmistakable, visceral rebellion against the thought that our days here are numbered, that our earthly affairs will arrive at a final termination, and that each of us in a very real sense, is a *“terminal case.”* This reaction seems to be rooted in a vestigial memory of life before the Fall. In short, we were not made to die and *we know it*. Death came only as an unnatural and unintended consequence of sin:

Because God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living. For he fashioned all things that they might have being; and the creatures of the world are wholesome, And there is not a destructive drug among them nor any domain of the nether world on earth, For justice is undying. It was the wicked who with hands and words invited death, considered it a friend, and pined for it, and made a covenant with it, Because they deserve to be in its possession . . . (Wisdom 1:13-16)

Accordingly, whether you are for or against the death penalty, you -- and every child of Adam -- have received that sentence, for *“the wages of sin is death.”* (Romans 6:23.) That reality prompts the topic of this month’s Truth of Myth feature: if the Blessed Virgin Mary was “preserved from all stain of original sin,” why should she have been subject to that same sentence?

If one were to plot out the points of theology on this question, one could easily arrive at the conclusion that Mary did *not* die. It is a deduction born of a simple syllogism: (1) Death is a consequence of original sin. (2) Mary was exempted from original sin. (3) Therefore, Mary did not die. On the basis of the same reasoning, many theologians have maintained that the Blessed Virgin did not die and was immediately raised from earthly life to heavenly glory.

Yet, the writings of the early Church Fathers reveal an ancient and unquestioned acceptance of the idea that Mary experienced death. Saint John of Damascus, who died somewhere in the early Eighth Century, relates what, even at his time, was an ancient account of the Apostles bearing Mary to her tomb while signing hymns in her honor:

It was thou who didst break the force of death, paying its penalty, and making it gracious. Hence, when thy holy and sinless body was taken to the tomb, the choirs of angels bore it, and were all around, leaving nothing undone for the honor of our Lord's Mother, whilst apostles and all the assembly of the Church burst into prophetic song ... lifting the true ark of the Lord God on their shoulders, as the priests of old the typical ark, and placing thy body in the tomb, made it, as if another Jordan, the way to the true land of the gospel, the heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of all the faithful, God being its Lord and architect. (John of Damascus, Sermon I, On the Assumption (κοιμησις).)

In another sermon, St. John of Damascus asks, *“Why is it that she who in giving birth surpassed all the limits of nature should now bend to its laws, and her immaculate body be subjected to death?”* In reply, he notes:

To be clothed in immortality, it is of course necessary that the mortal part be shed, since even the master of nature did not refuse the experience of

TRUTH OR MYTH?



ASSUMPTION OF
THE VIRGIN MARY

Caravaggio

(1600-01)

Did Mary Die? (Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9) ***Did Mary Die?***

death. Indeed, he died according to the flesh and by dying destroyed death; on corruption he bestowed incorruption and made death the source of resurrection. (Panegyric on the Dormition of the Mother of God, n. 10: SC 80, 107).

The Church's only official pronouncement on the end of Mary's earthly affairs omits any explicit reference to her death: "*The Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over.*" (Lumen Gentium, n. 59; Catechism of the Catholic Church at ¶¶ 966, 974). Nevertheless, Pope John Paul II has not been silent on the matter. At a 1997 general audience address, he noted the apparent conflict between Mary's sinlessness and her death and -- as St. John Damascene some 1,200 years earlier -- found an answer rooted in the death of Christ:

It is true that in Revelation death is presented as a punishment for sin. However, the fact that the Church proclaims Mary free from original sin by a unique divine privilege does not lead to the conclusion that she also received physical immortality. The Mother is not superior to the Son who underwent death, giving it a new meaning and changing it into a means of salvation. Involved in Christ's redemptive work and associated in his saving sacrifice, Mary was able to share in his suffering and death for the sake of humanity's Redemption. What Severus of Antioch says about Christ also applies to her: "Without a preliminary death, how could the Resurrection have taken place?" To share in Christ's Resurrection, Mary had first to share in his death. (General Audience of Wednesday, 25 June, 1997.)

Put another way, the reality of Christ's death and resurrection has radically transformed death from the ultimate punishment for sin into an invitation to enter the Paschal mystery. Mary's death, or "dormition," reminds us that this world is radically different now that it has been trodden upon by the God-man. Now, *even death* is no longer an evil. God's life, death and resurrection have transformed the dross of our human existence into an unspeakably glorious occasion of grace. Christ, to borrow from the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, has seized upon the evil wrought by the sin of Adam as an opportunity to change our "mortal trash" into "immortal diamond." Because she has gone before us to experience every aspect of this great human mystery, we can more confidently pray, "*Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death.*" †



**ASSUMPTION OF
THE VIRGIN**
El Greco
(1577)

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

INTERCESSOR OF THE UNBORN



To help stop the anti-life push in the U.S., the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen encouraged the spiritual adoption of an unborn child. This is done by praying that one particular but unknown child's life be spared abortion and be allowed to continue to live.

To help accomplish this, he recommended that an individual say the following daily prayer for a period of one year.

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion."

During your earthly life this spiritually adopted child of yours will be known only to God but in the world to come it is hoped that you will meet the child whose life was spared by your prayers and spend eternal happiness with them. †

MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS PAUL JOHN II

*Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae in condensed form**

The rosary of the Virgin Mary, which gradually took form in the second millennium under the guidance of the Spirit of God, is a prayer loved by countless saints and encouraged by the magisterium. Simple yet profound, it still remains, at the dawn of this third millennium, a prayer of great significance, destined to bring forth a harvest of holiness.

It blends easily into the spiritual journey of the Christian life, which, after 2,000 years, has lost none of the freshness of its beginnings. The rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a Christ-centered prayer. It has all the depth of the gospel message in its entirety. It is an echo of the prayer of Mary, her perennial Magnificat for the work of the redemptive Incarnation which began in her virginal womb.

The rosary is my favorite prayer, marvelous in its simplicity and its depth. It can be said that the rosary is, in some sense, a prayer-commentary on the final chapter of the Vatican II Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, a chapter that discusses the wondrous presence of the Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and the Church.

AN AGE SEEKING PRAYER

The West is now experiencing a renewed demand for meditation, which at times leads to a keen interest in aspects of other religions. Some Christians, limited in their knowledge of the Christian contemplative tradition, are attracted by those forms of prayer.

The rosary is distinguished by its specifically Christian characteristics. This is a methodology, moreover, which corresponds to the inner logic of the Incarnation: In Jesus, God wanted to take on human features. It is through his bodily reality that we are led into contact with the mystery of his divinity.

Against the background of the words Hail Mary the principal events of the life of Jesus Christ pass before the eyes of the soul. They take shape in the complete series of the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries, and they put us in living communion with Jesus through—we might say—the heart of his Mother. At the same time our heart can embrace in the decades of the rosary all the events that make up the lives of individuals, families, nations, the Church, and all mankind; our personal concerns and those of our neighbor, especially those who are closest to us. Thus the simple prayer of the rosary marks the rhythm of human life.

NOT OUTDATED, NOT AGAINST VATICAN II

There are some who think that the centrality of the Liturgy, rightly stressed by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, necessarily entails giving less importance to the rosary.

Yet, as Pope Paul VI made clear, not only does this prayer not conflict with the liturgy, it sustains it, since it serves as an excellent introduction and a faithful echo of the liturgy, enabling people to participate fully and interiorly in it and to reap its fruits in their daily lives.

If properly revitalized, the rosary is an aid and certainly not a hindrance to ecumenism! But the most important reason for strongly encouraging the practice of the rosary is that it represents a most effective means of fostering among the faithful that commitment to the contemplation of the Christian mystery as a genuine “training in holiness.” It is more urgent than ever that our Christian communities should become “genuine schools of prayer.”

Meditation on the mysteries of Christ in the rosary is a method based on repetition. This applies above all to the Hail Mary, repeated 10 times in each mystery. If this repetition is considered superficially, there could be a temptation to see the rosary as a dry and boring exercise.

One thing is clear: Although the repeated Hail Mary is addressed directly to Mary, it is to Jesus that the act of love is ultimately directed, with her and through her. The repetition is nourished by the desire to be conformed ever more completely to Christ, the true program of the Christian life. St. Paul expressed this project with words of fire: “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil 1:21). And again: “It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). The rosary helps us to be conformed ever more closely to Christ until we attain true holiness.

The Rosary (Continued on page 12)



FROM
PETER'S
SUCCESSOR,
POPE
JOHN
PAUL
II



*Reprinted from
AmericanCatholic.org
January 2003

(Continued from page 11) **The Rosary**

THE ROSARY REMEMBERS JESUS

Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word: “She kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19; see 2:51). The memories of Jesus, impressed upon her heart, were always with her, leading her to reflect on the various moments of her life at her son’s side. In a way those memories were to be the “rosary” which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life.

Even now, Mary constantly sets before the faithful the “mysteries” of her Son, with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries will release all their saving power. In the recitation of the rosary, the Christian community enters into contact with the memories and the contemplative gaze of Mary. The rosary, precisely because it starts with Mary’s own experience, is an exquisitely contemplative prayer.

Mary’s contemplation is above all a remembering. We need to understand this word in the biblical sense of remembrance (*zakar*) as a making present of the works brought about by God in the history of salvation. The Bible is an account of saving events culminating in Christ himself. These events not only belong to “yesterday”; they are also part of the “today” of salvation. This making present comes about above all in the liturgy: What God accomplished centuries ago did not only affect the direct witnesses of those events; it continues to affect people in every age with its gift of grace.

Christians, while they are called to prayer in common, must also go to their own rooms to pray to their Father in secret (see Mt 6:6); indeed, according to the teaching of the Apostle they must pray without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17). The rosary, in its own particular way, is part of this varied panorama of “ceaseless” prayer. By immersing us in the mysteries of the Redeemer’s life, it ensures that what he has done and what the liturgy makes present are profoundly assimilated and shape our existence.



**MADONNA
AND CHILD
WITH A ROSARY**
Bartolome Murillo

(1650-55)

LEARNING CHRIST FROM MARY

Christ is the supreme Teacher, the revealer and the one revealed. It is not just a question of learning what he taught but of “learning him.” From the divine standpoint, the Spirit is the interior teacher who leads us to the full truth of Christ (see Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).

But among creatures no one knows Christ better than Mary; no one can introduce us to a profound knowledge of his mystery better than his Mother. Contemplating the scenes of the rosary in union with Mary is a means of learning from her to “read” Christ, to discover his secrets and to understand his message.

As we contemplate each mystery of her Son’s life, she invites us to do as she did at the Annunciation: to ask humbly the questions which open us to the light, in order to end with the obedience of faith: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

Never as in the rosary do the life of Jesus and that of Mary appear so deeply joined. Mary lives only in Christ and for Christ! If Jesus, the one Mediator, is the Way of our prayer, then Mary, his purest and most transparent reflection, shows us the Way.

The rosary is both meditation and supplication. Insistent prayer to the Mother of God is based on confidence that her maternal intercession can obtain all things from the heart of her Son. The rosary is also a path of proclamation and increasing knowledge, in which the mystery of Christ is presented again and again at different levels of the Christian experience.

‘COME UNTO ME...’

To pray the rosary is to hand over our burdens to the merciful hearts of Christ and his Mother. It is natural to bring to this encounter with the sacred humanity of the Redeemer all the problems, anxieties, labors and endeavors which go to make up our lives. “Cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you” (Ps 55:23).

I look to all of you, brothers and sisters of every state of life, to you, Christian families, to you, the sick and elderly, and to you, young people: Confidently take up the rosary once again. Rediscover the rosary in the light of Scripture, in harmony with the liturgy, and in the context of your daily lives. †

MARY, THE MOTHER OF LIFE*

BY THE MOST REVEREND THOMAS G. DORAN, D.D., J.C.D.
BISHOP OF ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

I. THE WAYS OF BEING MOTHER

In the long tradition of the Church, motherhood, maternity has always been shown the utmost respect and consideration. The mystery of mother and child is as profound as it is popular. The interaction of mother and child has been depicted countless times in art: paintings, sculpture, literature, etc. It is a topic on which one never tires of meditating.

The Church has understood maternity, motherhood, in more than one way. It is not the mere physical begetting of children – a factory does not a mother make; modern technology is definitely bearing this out. Rather, the qualities of *mother* possessed in a particular way by all women are what lead us back over and over to the simple joy that is exemplified in the manger scene in Bethlehem.

We all know what a mother should be; just as we all know what a saint *should* be. These two things often overlap. So, is it necessary to birth offspring to be a mother? No. The Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God, but she is our mother in the order of grace; she is truly our mother. So, too, by reflecting on the many women in the history of the Church, we see that there is a spiritual motherhood that is as real and profound as the motherhood of nature.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., notes, “The maternity proper to a creature endowed with reason is not the maternity according to flesh and blood which is found in the animal kingdom, but something which demands by its very nature a free consent given by the light of right reason to an act which is under the control of the will and is subject to the moral laws governing the married state: failing this, the maternity of a rational being is simply vicious.”¹

But spiritual motherhood is more than this because it is rooted in the supernatural and not merely the corporeal or the rational; it is in the order of grace. As Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange continues in reference to the Motherhood *par excellence*: “But the maternity of Mary was more than rational. It was divine. Hence her consent needed to be not free only, but supernatural and meritorious: and the intention of divine providence was that in default of this consent the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation would not have taken place – she gave her consent, St. Thomas says, in the name of mankind.” (IIIa, q. 30, a. 2). He continues:

“Hence the maternity we are discussing is not one which is merely of flesh and blood, but one which by its nature included a supernatural consent to the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation which was about to be realized, and to all the suffering it involved according to the messianic prophecies – especially those of Isaias – all of which Mary knew so well. There can, in consequence, be no question of any divine maternity for Mary except a worthy one: in the designs of God she was to be a worthy Mother of the Redeemer, united perfectly in will to her Son. Tradition supports this by saying that her conceiving was twofold, in body and soul: in body, for Jesus is flesh of her flesh, the flame of His human life having been lit in the womb of the Virgin by the most pure operation of the Holy Ghost: in soul, for Mary’s express consent was needed before the Word assumed our nature in her.”²

To be a mother pertains directly to *life*. To separate the notion of life from the term *mother* makes it unintelligible. Whereas life came to be without the agency of a mother,



THE ANNUNCIATION

*Philippe de
Champaigne*

(1644)

*Keynote Address given
at the 36th National
Wanderer Forum
September 26, 2003*

(Continued from page 13) *Mary, the Mother of Life*

life does not continue without the action of a mother. (Although there are those in the sciences who are trying to go against that.) This is so even in the order of grace where our Lord has crowned Mary, ever-virgin, as Queen – she is *the* Queen Mother (despite what the British contend).

As Eve was mother of the living, so Mary is the Mother of the Redeemed. Those who have *life* in Christ also have His mother as their own. The Blessed Virgin has a unique and singular role as Mother of Life, in that, she is the woman who, as the Second Eve united to her Son – the Second Adam – restores life to all mankind by her faithful obedience and intimate role in the redemption of mankind at the foot of the Cross. The Second Vatican Council taught:

“The Father of mercies willed that the incarnation should be preceded by the acceptance of her who was predestined to be the mother of His Son, so that just as a woman contributed to death, so also a woman should contribute to life. That is true in outstanding fashion of the mother of Jesus, who gave to the world Him who is Life itself and who renews all things, and who was enriched by God with the gifts which befit such a role.”³

II. WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING LIFE

Since the understanding of *mother* cannot be separated from the term *life*, we must at least take a brief look at what this term portends, especially if it is used in a title attributing honor to the Blessed Virgin. There are different ways of understanding the term *life* (Greek *zoe*; Latin *vita*; French *La vie*, German *Das Leben*; vital principle; Greek *psyche*; Latin *anima, vis vitalis*, German *leberzkraft*). Ultimately and most importantly it refers to everlasting life, that is to say, salvation. It is in this way that Mary is most the Mother of Life – she is our mother in the order of grace and it is by grace that we enter into and possess eternal life. At the Annunciation, Mary uttered her *fiat*, her “yes” to bearing new life. This new life is He who is life itself, that is, our salvation and through whom all things were made and in whom we live, move and have our being. The title “Mother of Life” pertains directly to exactly *who* and *what* her Son is. This is seen in the doctrine of the Assumption; St. Germanus said that, “the mother of life should share the dwelling place of Life.”⁴ It is because of her son that Mary gives life to the world. The Holy Father points out, “She is in fact the mother of the Life by which everyone lives.”⁵ The conciliar document *Lumen Gentium* (n. 53) states:

“The Virgin Mary, who at the message of the angel received the Word of God in her heart and in her body and gave Life to the world, is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and Mother of the Redeemer. Redeemed by reason of the merits of her Son and united to Him by a close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the high office and dignity of being the Mother of the Son of God, by which account she is also the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth. At the same time, however, because she belongs to the offspring of Adam she is one with all those who are to be saved. She is ‘the mother of the members of Christ...having cooperated by charity that faithful might be born in the Church, who are members of that Head.’ Wherefore she is hailed as a pre-eminent and singular member of the Church, and as its type and excellent exemplar in faith and charity. The Catholic Church, taught by the Holy Spirit, honors her with filial affection and piety as a most beloved mother.”⁶

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (n. 494) states:



THE PRESENTATION
OF JESUS IN
THE TEMPLE

Vittore Carpaccio

(1510)

Mary, the Mother of Life (Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14) **Mary, the Mother of Life**

“At the announcement that she would give birth to ‘the Son of the Most High’ without knowing man, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary responded with the obedience of faith, certain that ‘with God nothing will be impossible’: ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word.’ Thus, giving her consent to God’s word, Mary becomes the mother of Jesus. Espousing the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly, without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with Him and dependent on Him, by God’s grace: As St. Irenæus says, ‘Being obedient she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race.’ Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert...: ‘The knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by Mary’s obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith.’ Comparing her with Eve, they call Mary ‘the Mother of the living’ and frequently claim: ‘Death through Eve, life through Mary.’”⁷

And continues (n. 511):

“The Virgin Mary ‘cooperated through free faith and obedience in human salvation’ (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 56). She uttered her yes ‘in the name of all human nature’ (St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.* III, 30, 1). By her obedience she became the new Eve, mother of the living.”⁸

III. MARY AND THE EUCHARIST

The Holy Father made a very simple syllogism in a speech commemorating the World Day of Peace in 2002. He said that, “If Jesus is Life, Mary is the Mother of Life. If Jesus is Hope, Mary is the Mother of Hope. If Jesus is Peace, Mary is the Mother of Peace, Mother of the Prince of Peace.”⁹ In a similar way, we can see that there is an intimate tie between Mary and the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist.

Mary is the Mother of Jesus; and as St. John tells us, “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life’” (*John* 6:35, *Douay-Rheims*). In this we can see already the intimate connection our Lady has to the Eucharist. This is so because of what – or rather, who – the Eucharist is. The same Jesus who is eternally begotten of God the Father, the same Jesus who was born of the Virgin Mary in time is present throughout the world wherever the Holy Mass is celebrated validly and resides in all the tabernacles in the world. “Mary can guide us towards this most holy sacrament [of the Eucharist], because she herself has a profound relationship with it.”¹⁰

The reason Jesus came to us (and stays with us) in the Eucharist is given through St. John, “I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly.” (*John* 10:10b, *Douay-Rheims*). In his epistle, St. John says that, “He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life.” (*I John* 5:12, *Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*). Who more than Mary had life and had it in abundance? Not only in her physical body was the Lord present, but more profoundly in her Immaculate soul. This side of heaven, the greatest intimacy that the Blessed Virgin enjoyed with God was not during her pregnancy, but rather during her reception of Holy Communion at those early Masses which were celebrated by the apostles. Our Lord comes to us in the Eucharist just as He came to Mary. Our Lord speaks to us today as He did 2000 years ago, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (*John* 6:53-54, *Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*).

In his recent encyclical on the Eucharist the Holy Father speaks, as usual, with great affection and profundity about our Lady. The Pope points out:

Mary, the Mother of Life (Continued on page 16)



**THE MARRIAGE
AT CANA**

**MASTER of the
Catholic Kings**

(1495)

(Continued from page 15) Mary, the Mother of Life

“In addition to her sharing in the Eucharistic banquet, an indirect picture of Mary’s relationship with the Eucharist can be had, beginning with her interior disposition. *Mary is a ‘woman of the Eucharist’ in her whole life.* The Church, which looks to Mary as a model, is also called to imitate her in her relationship with this most holy mystery.”¹¹

He continues:

“In a certain sense Mary lived her *Eucharistic faith* even before the institution of the Eucharist, by the very fact that *she offered her virginal womb for the Incarnation of God’s Word.* The Eucharist, while commemorating the passion and resurrection, is also in continuity with the incarnation. At the Annunciation Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of His body and blood, thus anticipating within herself what to some degree happens sacramentally in every believer who receives, under the signs of bread and wine, the Lord’s body and blood. As a result, there is a profound analogy between the *fiat* which Mary said in reply to the angel, and the *Amen* which every believer says when receiving the body of the Lord. Mary was asked to believe that the One whom she conceived ‘through the Holy Spirit’ was ‘the Son of God’ (Luke 1:30-35). In continuity with the Virgin’s faith, in the Eucharistic mystery we are asked to believe that the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, becomes present in his full humanity and divinity under the signs of bread and wine.

“‘Blessed is she who believed’ (Luke 1:45). Mary also anticipated, in the mystery of the incarnation, the Church’s Eucharistic faith. When, at the Visitation, she bore in her womb the Word made flesh, she became in some way a ‘tabernacle’ – the first ‘tabernacle’ in history – in which the Son of God, still invisible to our human gaze, allowed Himself to be adored by Elizabeth, radiating His light as it were through the eyes and the voice of Mary. And is not the enraptured gaze of Mary as she contemplated the face of the newborn Christ and cradled Him in her arms that unparalleled model of love which should inspire us every time we receive Eucharistic communion?”¹²

Our faith in the Eucharist must imitate that all-encompassing faith of Mary, so that, like her, we may be in intimate communion with Life itself. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name (John 20:31, *Douay-Rheims*). We must learn from Mary and, like her, be committed to being conformed in the likeness of Christ.

If I may, for just a moment, remind you of a liturgical point. The *Sanctus* is placed in the Mass ushering us into the Eucharistic Prayer. Here we join our prayers to those of the saints in heaven. Mary, second only to God, is queen among them. As Pope John Paul II reminds us, “Mary is present, with the Church and as the Mother of the Church, at each of our celebrations of the Eucharist.”¹³ Never stray far from Mary, whether in heart, thought, or deed. This leads us to our interior life (and there is that word again: life). God is the God of life, the enemy is the father of lies, sin and death. Our relationship with God – our interior life – should be the center of our existence, of our life.

IV. PRAYER TO MARY, MOTHER OF LIFE

Our Lady is our Mother in the order of grace (that is in the order of eternal life), she bears life and she is united in a special way to that which is the source and summit of our faith – the Eucharist. She *must* have a place in our prayer life if it is to bear fruit and to enter through the narrow gate: “Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and straight is the way that leadeth to life: and few

Mary, the Mother of Life (Continued on page 17)



FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Bartolome Murrillo

(1655—60)

(Continued from page 16) *Mary, the Mother of Life*

there are that find it!" (*Matthew 7:13-14, Douay-Rheims*). As St. Jerome said against Jovinian, "Mary is the eastern gate of which Ezechiel speaks, always closed and luminous, whether concealing in itself or bringing forth from itself the Holy of holies. She is the gate through which the Sun of justice and our High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech goes in and out."¹⁴ We cannot have life without a mother; Mary is, in a certain sense, necessary for our salvation (if she weren't, Christ would not have given her to us to be our mother – just as all the sacraments were given to us because that are necessary (each in their own way) for salvation and our sanctification).

V. CONCLUSION

In the great discourse on the Eucharist from the *Gospel of St. John*, many of the followers of Jesus left him because they found the teaching difficult. Our Lord then asked if the apostles were abandoning him also. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (*John 6: 69, Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*).

Now recall those events when the Word came among men. "But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." (*Luke 2:19, Douay-Rheims*). She certainly has kept the Word in her heart and has eternal life. If we stay close to her, she will be an unfailing guide. As the Holy Father said:

"Her peaceful presence, especially in today's changed situations of social and economic well-being, is an invitation to believers to be ever worthy of her love and to profess their faith in Christ courageously. As the Mother of Life, Mary urges every member of the faithful to accept the gift of life with wonder and gratitude, from conception to its natural death. Mary also asks everyone to be compassionate to those who knock at the door of their home because they need forgiveness and reconciliation, support and fraternal solidarity."¹⁵

I would like to end with the prayer with which Pope John Paul II ended his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*, n. 105):

"Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life:

"Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of babies not allowed to be born, of the poor whose lives are made difficult, of men and women who are victims of brutal violence, of the elderly and the sick killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy. Grant that all who believe in your Son may proclaim the Gospel of life with honesty and love to the people of our time. Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new, the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives, and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely, in order to build, together with all people of good will, the civilization of truth and love, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life. Amen."

Endnotes

1. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., The Rev. Reginald, *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life*, TAN Books, Rockford, Illinois, 1993, p.19.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), n. 56.

4. cf. Pope John Paul II, General Audience of Wednesday., July 9, 1997: St. Germanus; Horn. 1 in *Dormitionem*, PG 98, 347.

5. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter: *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), n. 102.

6. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 53.

7. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (second edition), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997, n. 494.

8. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (second edition), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997, n. 511.

9. Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, "No Peace Without Justice, No Justice Without Forgiveness," January 1, 2002.

10. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter: *Ecclesia de eucharistia* (*On the Eucharist*), n. 53.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, n.55.

13. *Ibid.*, n.57.

14. Apologia to Pammachius for the Book against Jovinian, at the end, quoted from the Saturday Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary in *The Hours of the Divine Office in English and Latin*, volume 3, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1964.

15. Pope John Paul II, Message to Marco Cardinal Cé, Patriarch of Venice, for the centenary of the crowning of the image of Our Lady of Monte Berico August 22, 2000. †

(Continued from page 7) *Devotion to Mary*

“Adam had to be recapitulated in Christ, so that death might be swallowed up in immortality, and Eve [had to be recapitulated] in Mary, so that the Virgin, having become another virgin’s advocate, might destroy and abolish one virgin’s disobedience by the obedience of another virgin.”

This is the first reference in ancient Christian literature to Mary as advocate. As an advocate, she can intercede to her Son in response to prayer. Although the original Greek work has been lost, the Armenian version of this writing refers to Mary using the Greek word “parakletos” meaning defender, advocate, **intercessor**.

Early Church writings are replete with numerous references to Mary which support current Marian doctrine espoused by the Catholic Church. Two thousand years later these early writings revealed to us by God are still doctrine of the Church reflected in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC Sections 510-11):

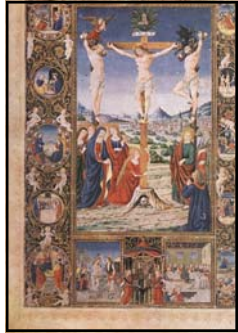
“By her complete adherence to the Father’s will, to his Son’s redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church’s model of faith and charity. Thus she is a “preeminent and . . . wholly unique member of the Church”; indeed, she is the “exemplary realization” (*typus*) of the Church.

Her role in relation to the Church and to all humanity goes still further.

“In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the Savior’s work of restoring supernatural life to souls.

For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace.”

While dying on the cross, Christ gave us His mother to St. John with the words: “Son, behold thy mother. Mother, behold thy son. From that moment the apostle took her into his home.” This gift of his mother to St John has long been interpreted as the symbolic gift of her to all of us as our mother. Requesting Mary to pray for us is not any different than asking our family or friends to pray for us. After all, who could be a greater advocate in heaven on our behalf than our own mother who is also the mother of Jesus? †



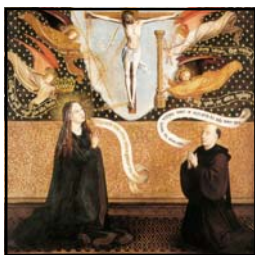
ATTAVATE DEGLI
ATTAVANTI

Missal
(1385-87)

(Continued from page 4) *Marian Doctrine*

and Second Coming. For those who know and love Christ, there is nothing about Him: His life, His friends, His teachings, that is not of interest or help to them. Christ came to “bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37) and to reveal many supernatural mysteries about God and the kingdom of God which we could never have known by the power of unaided human reason. Believing the truths about Christ contained in Sacred Scripture are part of having faith in Him. We can’t separate faith in the person of Christ from faith in His life and message, in the prophets who preceded Him, and the Apostles and their successors who followed after Him. These Apostles “the early Church magisterium” proclaimed the truth with the teaching authority Christ gave them: “He who hears you, hears Me.” (Luke 10:16; cf. Matt. 16:18, 18:18).

And remember what Christ commanded the magisterium of His Church to do: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20). Christ wants Christians to assent to and profess all the doctrines contained in the deposit of Faith, including the doctrine of Mary’s perpetual virginity. He reminds us that, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in Heaven.” (Matt. 7:21). †



CHRIST ON THE
CROSS WITH MARY
AS INTERCESSOR

Unknown
(1420-30)

Part 1—The Profession of Faith
Section Two—The Profession of the Christian Faith (the Creeds)
Chapter Two—“I believe in Jesus Christ”
Article 3—“He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary”

“...Born of the Virgin Mary...”

487 What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ.

Mary’s predestination

488 “God sent forth his Son,” but to prepare a body for him, he wanted the free cooperation of a creature. For this, from all eternity God chose for the mother of his Son a daughter of Israel, a young Jewish woman of Nazareth in Galilee, “a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.”

The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined mother, so that just as a woman had a share in the coming of death, so also should a woman contribute to the coming of life.

489 Throughout the Old Covenant the mission of many holy women prepared for that of Mary. At the very beginning there was Eve; despite her disobedience, she receives the promise of a posterity that will be victorious over the evil one, as well as the promise that she will be the mother of all the living. By virtue of this promise, Sarah conceives a son in spite of her old age. Against all human expectation God chooses those who were considered powerless and weak to show forth his faithfulness to his promises: Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Deborah; Ruth; Judith and Esther; and many other women. Mary “stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from him. After a long period of waiting the times are fulfilled in her, the exalted Daughter of Sion, and the new plan of salvation is established.”

The Immaculate Conception

490 To become the mother of the Savior, Mary “was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role.” The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as “full of grace.” In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God’s grace.

491 Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, “full of grace” through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854:

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.

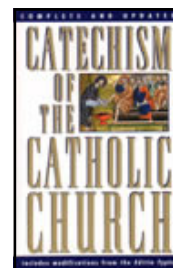
492 The “splendor of an entirely unique holiness” by which Mary is “enriched from the first instant of her conception” comes wholly from Christ: she is “redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son.” The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person “in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” and chose her “in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love.”

493 The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God “the All Holy” (Panagia) and celebrate her as “free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.” By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long.

“Let it be done to me according to your word. . .”

494 At the announcement that she would give birth to “the Son of the Most High” without knowing man, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary responded with the obedience of

Catholic Catechism (Continued on page 20)



**CATECHISM
CORNER**



**IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION
WITH SAINTS**

Pietro di Cosimo

(1505)

(Continued from page 19) *Catholic Catechism*

faith, certain that “with God nothing will be impossible”: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word.”

Thus, giving her consent to God's word, Mary becomes the mother of Jesus. Espousing the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly, without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him and dependent on him, by God's grace:

As St. Irenaeus says, “Being obedient she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race.” Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert . . . : “The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith. “Comparing her with Eve, they call Mary “the Mother of the living” and frequently claim: “Death through Eve, life through Mary.”

Mary's divine motherhood

495 Called in the Gospels “the mother of Jesus,” Mary is acclaimed by Elizabeth, at the prompting of the Spirit and even before the birth of her son, as “the mother of my Lord.” In fact, the One whom she conceived as man by the Holy Spirit, who truly became her Son according to the flesh, was none other than the Father's eternal Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity. Hence the Church confesses that Mary is truly “Mother of God” (Theotokos).

Mary's virginity

496 From the first formulations of her faith, the Church has confessed that Jesus was conceived solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, affirming also the corporeal aspect of this event: Jesus was conceived “by the Holy Spirit without human seed.” The Fathers see in the virginal conception the sign that it truly was the Son of God who came in a humanity like our own. Thus St. Ignatius of Antioch at the beginning of the second century says:

You are firmly convinced about our Lord, who is truly of the race of David according to the flesh, Son of God according to the will and power of God, truly born of a virgin, . . . he was truly nailed to a tree for us in his flesh under Pontius Pilate . . . he truly suffered, as he is also truly risen.

497 The gospel accounts understand the virginal conception of Jesus as a divine work that surpasses all human understanding and possibility: “That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit,” said the angel to Joseph about Mary his fiancée. The Church sees here the fulfillment of the divine promise given through the prophet Isaiah: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.”

498 People are sometimes troubled by the silence of St. Mark's Gospel and the New Testament Epistles about Jesus' virginal conception. Some might wonder if we were merely dealing with legends or theological constructs not claiming to be history. To this we must respond: Faith in the virginal conception of Jesus met with the lively opposition, mockery, or incomprehension of non-believers, Jews and pagans alike; so it could hardly have been motivated by pagan mythology or by some adaptation to the ideas of the age. The meaning of this event is accessible only to faith, which understands in it the “connection of these mysteries with one another” in the totality of Christ's mysteries, from his Incarnation to his Passover. St. Ignatius of Antioch already bears witness to this connection: “Mary's virginity and giving birth, and even the Lord's death escaped the notice of the prince of this world: these three mysteries worthy of proclamation were accomplished in God's silence.”

Mary — “ever-virgin”

499 The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary's real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made man. In fact, Christ's birth “did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it.” And so the liturgy of the Church celebrates Mary as *Aeiparthenos*, the “Ever-virgin.”

500 Against this doctrine the objection is sometimes raised that the Bible mentions brothers and sisters of Jesus. The Church has always understood these passages as not referring to other children of the Virgin Mary. In fact James and Joseph, “brothers of Jesus,” are the sons of another Mary, a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls “the other Mary.” They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression.

501 Jesus is Mary's only son, but her spiritual motherhood extends to all men whom indeed he came to save: “The Son whom she brought forth is he whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren, that is, the faithful

We all need prayers—at some times more than others. If you have a special need for prayer, please let us know so we can join in prayer for each other. Leave a message on Anne Lanphar's voicemail (714) 800-3225 or email your request to alanphar@firstam.com

- ◆ Lauri Becker Kalinowski (Young mother with serious illness)
- ◆ Mel Gibson & *Passion* Movie Staff.
 - ◆ Erving Law (serious illness).
 - ◆ Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR (serious injury).
 - ◆ John Thompson (employment).
- ◆ Mary Erickson (special intention).
 - ◆ St Thomas More Society of Jackson Mississippi
 - ◆ Duain Cruzat (serious disease).
- ◆ Baby Fiona Flagsted (brain tumor).
 - ◆ Keith Wilson (serious illness).
 - ◆ Evelyn Munoz (deceased).
- ◆ Milos & Edith Myrik (serious illness).
 - ◆ Scott Smith (illness).
- ◆ Ryan Ronk (serious injury).
- ◆ Massimo (child with serious illness).
 - ◆ Pope John Paul II.
 - ◆ John Flynn IV (life changes).
- ◆ All members of the US Armed Forces.
 - ◆ Kristin Burkett (serious illness).
 - ◆ Darren M (questioning the Faith).
 - ◆ Fr. Matt Munoz (special intention).
 - ◆ Ryan McEachon (special intention).
 - ◆ Selma Mann's family (2 medical problems).
 - ◆ Cindie Burnes (serious illness).
- ◆ Michael Shonafelt (special intention).
- ◆ John Flynn & his wife (serious illness).
 - ◆ Ron Gable (special intention).
- ◆ Anne Lanphar (special intention). †

THANK YOU!

Baby Thomas Council has been removed from the prayer list. The serious heart defects he was born with were corrected by a series of surgeries, and he is now a healthy and energetic one year old. His parents and extended family thank all who prayed for him. He valiantly fought to hold on before and after his first surgery, and we know it was the result of prayers that allowed him to survive long enough for the surgeons' hands to be guided well in the remaining surgeries. Praise God and thank you for all your prayers! †

**Heavenly Father,
I offer you this day
all that I shall think
or do or say, uniting it with
what was done by Jesus Christ,
your only Son. Amen**

PRAYER PETITIONS



FRANK ERNEST

THE SILVERSMITH



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

A group of women were studying the book of Malachi. While studying Chapter Three, they came across verse 3 which reads: “He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” Puzzled the women wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One woman offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study.

That week this woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn’t mention anything about the reason for her interest in silver beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest so as to burn away all the impurities.

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man said, “Yes, I not only have to sit here holding the silver, but I have to keep a close eye on it the entire time it’s in the fire because if I leave it in the flames even a moment too long, it will be destroyed.”

The woman was silent for a moment then asked the silversmith, “How do you know when the silver is fully refined?”

He smiled at her and answered, “Oh, that’s the easy part--when I see my image reflected in it.”

So when you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God will keep His hand on you and watch over you until He sees His image in you. †

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem* **Latin for “To turn truth into laughter”*



THE BEAR AND THE ATHEIST!

An atheist was taking a walk through the woods.

“What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!” he said to himself.

As he continued walking alongside the river he heard a rustling in the bushes. Turning to look, he saw a 7-foot grizzly charging towards him. He ran as fast as he could up the path. Looking over his shoulder he saw that the bear was closing in on him. His heart was pumping frantically and he tried to run even faster. He tripped and fell on the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up but saw the bear; raising his paw to take a swipe at him. At that instant the atheist cried out: “Oh my God!...”

Time stopped. The bear froze. The forest was silent. It was then that bright light shone upon the man and a voice came out of the sky saying, “You deny my existence for all of these years, teaching others I don’t exist and even credit the creation to a cosmic accident. Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?”

The atheist looked directly into the light, “It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask you to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps, could you make the BEAR a Christian?”

“Very well,” said the voice. The light went out. And the sounds of the forest resumed.

And then the bear lowered his paw, bowed his head and spoke, “Lord, bless this food which I am about to receive and for which I am truly thankful.” †



Comments or Suggestions?

If you have any suggestions or comments, please feel free to submit your letter or email to any editor:

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**LETTERS
TO THE
EDITOR**

The Editorial Staff reserves the right to select which letters or parts thereof are printed. †

MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to thy protection,
employed thy help
or sought thy intercession,
was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence,
I fly unto Thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my mother.
To Thee I come, before Thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions
but hear and answer them. Amen

**SPECIAL
PRAYER
TO
MARY**

*The "Memorare" is a sixteenth-century version of a fifteenth-century prayer that began "Ad sanctitatis tuae pedes, dulcissima Virgo Maria." Claude Bernard (1588-1641)
Later the popularized idea was that the "Memorare" was written by Saint Bernard †*

SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

"Those who are loved become kind, ready for service and quick to love others. The humble will then never be overcome by praise; they accept praise to return it to God. *Fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, et sanctum nomen ejus* 'He Who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name' (Luke 1: 49)." †

MORE ON TRUSTING GOD

THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE



Still moved by fear borne of daughterly affection, Meg objected that it would soon be too late for More to change his mind.

He replied, “Too late, daughter Margaret? I beseech our Lord that, if I ever make such a change, it may be too late indeed. For well I know the change cannot be good for my soul...And therefore I pray God that in this world I never approve of such change. For as much as I take harm here, I shall at least that much less therefore when I go from here...”

“Mistrust Him, Meg, will I not, even though I feel myself faint. Indeed, although I should feel my fear even to the point of overthrowing me, yet shall I remember how St. Peter, with a blast of wind, began to sink for his faint faith, and shall do as he did—call upon Christ and pray Him to help. And then I trust He shall set His holy hand unto me, and in the stormy seas, hold me up from drowning...”

“And finally, Margaret, this I know well, that without my fault He will not let me be lost...Therefore, my own good daughter, never trouble your mind over anything that ever shall happen to me in this world. Nothing can come but what God wills. And I make myself very sure that whatsoever that be, even if it seems ever so bad a sight, it shall indeed be the best...”

“Serve God and be merry and rejoice in Him. And if anything happens to me that you would not approve, pray to God for me, but trouble not yourself: as I shall full heartily pray for us all that we may meet together in heaven where we shall be merry forever...”

Thomas More Portrait of Courage Gerard B. Wegemer (Pg. 180-1) †

(Continued from page 20) *Catholic Catechism*

in whose generation and formulation she cooperates with a mother’s love.”

Mary’s virginal motherhood in God’s plan

502 The eyes of faith can discover in the context of the whole of Revelation the mysterious reasons why God in his saving plan wanted his Son to be born of a virgin. These reasons touch both on the person of Christ and his redemptive mission, and on the welcome Mary gave that mission on behalf of all men.

503 Mary’s virginity manifests God’s absolute initiative in the Incarnation. Jesus has only God as Father. “He was never estranged from the Father because of the human nature which he assumed . . . He is naturally Son of the Father as to his divinity and naturally son of his mother as to his humanity, but properly Son of the Father in both natures.”

504 Jesus is conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary’s womb because he is the New Adam, who inaugurates the new creation: “The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.” From his conception, Christ’s humanity is filled with the Holy Spirit, for God “gives him the Spirit without measure.” From “his fullness” as the head of redeemed humanity “we have all received, grace upon grace.”

505 By his virginal conception, Jesus, the New Adam, ushers in the new birth of children adopted in the Holy Spirit through faith. “How can this be?” Participation in the divine life arises “not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” The acceptance of this life is virginal because it is entirely the Spirit’s gift to man. The spousal character of the human vocation in relation to God is fulfilled perfectly in Mary’s virginal motherhood.

506 Mary is a virgin because her virginity is the sign of her faith “unadulterated by any doubt”, and of her undivided gift of herself to God’s will. It is her faith that enables her to become the mother of the Savior: “Mary is more blessed because she embraces faith in Christ than because she conceives the flesh of Christ.”

507 At once virgin and mother, Mary is the symbol and the most perfect realization of the Church: “the Church indeed. . . by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By preaching and Baptism she brings forth sons, who are conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life. She herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the faith she pledged to her spouse.” †

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THE WORLD'S FIRST LOVE

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

By: Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

**FROM
THE
LIBRARY**

With all his characteristic brilliance and eloquence, Fulton J. Sheen tells the story of the Blessed Virgin Mary and examines Marian beliefs ranging from the Immaculate Conception to the miracle of Fatima. Her whole life, from the moment the Angel appeared to her announcing she was to be the Mother of the Son of God, through the boyhood of the Child Christ, the beginning of His public life at the marriage at Cana, the Passion and death at Calvary, up to the time of her assumption into heaven, is lovingly and reverently portrayed.

While considering the different phases of the life of Mary, Archbishop Sheen discusses various problems common to mankind of all times and in his inimitable manner reveals clearly that every problem, however difficult, may be resolved. Mankind's need of the Mother of God and her burning love for all her children are repeatedly stressed by the Archbishop. The tremendous resurgence today of devotion to Mary is God's way of emphasizing the worth and dignity of mankind as against the false doctrines which have so confused the modern world.

Beneath the deep spirituality of the book there is a firm foundation of history, philosophy and theology, the truths of which are presented clearly and logically. As always, Archbishop Sheen presents the great, complicated theses of all times in a simple, lucid manner that all can understand.



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