

**RCIA
MARY
Session 6**

"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.

Catechism of the Catholic Church
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MARY

Biblical References

Book of Mark

3:21, 31-35 – *Jesus' family arrives, concerned, at Peter's house in Capernum. "Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you." He says to those gathered "who are my mother and my brothers?"*

6:1-6 The locals at Nazareth are astounded at Jesus' religious prominence: "Where did this fellow get all this wisdom? Isn't he a carpenter" "Isn't he the son of Mary...?"

Book of Matthew

1:18-25 *Joseph learns that Mary is pregnant though they are not yet living together. An angel appears in a dream telling Joseph of Mary's conception by the Holy Spirit.*

12: 46-50 Recounts the same story that was in Mark about the events in Peter's house in Capernum.

Book of Luke

1:26-27 Virgin of Nazareth is the principal figure in the infancy narrative.

1:30-33 The appearance of the angel Gabriel to Mary that she will be the mother of the Dividic Messiah.

1:24-35 Gabriel says "The Holy Spirit will come upon you; the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and so the child will be called holy, the Son of God."

1:41-44 Visit to her cousin Elizabeth. Elizabeth blesses her as the Mother of the Lord.

1:45 Elizabeth blesses Mary a second time for having believed.

1:45-55 All future generations will call Mary blessed. The Magnificat (powerful Marian prayer)

2:34-35 *Presentation of Jesus at the temple. Simeon prophesies figuratively in terms of a sword passing through her soul.*

2: 41-52 Finding of Jesus, age 12, in the Temple. It is Mary who asks "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety."

Book of John

2:1-2 At the wedding Mary tells Jesus the wine is gone. Despite his protestations, she tells the servants to do what he tells them.

19:25-27 at the foot of the cross Jesus tells his favorite disciple to care for his mother.

1 Corinthians 12: St. Paul teaches us that we are part of the mystical body of Christ. Through grace, we are spiritually united to Jesus. (*through Jesus being born of woman*)

Hebrews 2:11 Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers

Revelation 12:17 The woman has other children: those who keep God's commandments and give witness to Jesus.

Early Church Fathers:

St. Ignatius of Antioch (110) "For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary in

accord with God's plan...."

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (180-199): "The Virgin Mary, ... being obedient to His word,

would

Received from an angel the glad tidings that *she*

Bear God."

Protestant Reformers:

Martin Luther:
many

In this work whereby she was made the *Mother of God*, so

and such good things were given to her that no one can grasp them..... Not only was Mary the mother of Him who is born, but of Him who, before the world began, was eternally born of the Father, from a Mother in time and at the same time man and God.

John Calvin:
to be

It cannot be denied that God in choosing and destining Mary

the Mother of His Son, granted her the highest honor... Elizabeth calls Mary Mother of the Lord, because the unity of the person in the two natures of Christ was such that she could have said *that the mortal man engendered in the womb of Mary was at the same time the Eternal God.*

Ulrich Zwingli:

"It was given to her what belongs to no creature, that in the flesh *she should bring forth the Son of God.*

DEVOTION TO MARY

After Jesus, no one is as beloved by Catholics as Mary. Devotion to Mary is based on the prominent role she played in the life of Christ, being most closely associated with the acts of redemption. From early days, the Church has recognized the specialness of Mary. Shortly after the divinity of Christ was proclaimed, Mary was proclaimed as the Mother of God, in Ephesus 431.

Mary is great not only because of her divine maternity, but Mary also exemplifies the perfect human response to God. We can understand this if we reflect on the fact that God has two images of us: what we are and what we can be, our fullest potential. In most of us, these two realities are far apart. But in Mary, they were perfectly integrated. Mary was all that God expected her to be. She is rightfully called, "blessed among women."

Her perfect response and her challenges of faith are the basic keys to her greatness. Mary was truly human, and had to grapple with the reality of what her role was. She doubted, suffered, and struggled as she "pondered these things in her heart." (Luke 2:19) The spiritual privileges we believe she was gifted with result from her perfect, total living out of "Let it be done to me... (Luke 1:38)

Since Mary so perfectly embodied God's will and because of her being the mother of Jesus, it is proclaimed as dogma that she was "conceived without sin." This is what we call the Immaculate Conception. We also believe she gave birth without relinquishing her virginity (Virgin Birth). Mary was not subject to sin and,

therefore, it is proclaimed that she was not allowed to undergo bodily decay in the grave. She was assumed into heaven.

Catholics look up to Mary not so much for these spiritual privileges, but because she is an ideal woman of faith, one to whom we look for guidance. We honor her because she is so fully human, but not beyond or reach. Mary also receives honor because she is the perfect intercessor before the Lord on our behalf.

Over the years, devotion to Mary has assumed many forms. The Hail Mary, the most common and familiar of prayers, is basically Marian theology in summary. The first part of the prayer is from Luke's account of the annunciation, and the second part, in which we ask her to "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death," was added in the Middle Ages when devotion to Mary became popular.

The rosary, the prayer said on beads, popularized by Saint Dominic. In the twelfth century, piety turned to Mary. While the monks recited the psalms in choir, the laity recited the Hail Marys on the beads, meditating on the mysteries of faith. There are 150 psalms and 150 Hail Marys in the fifteen-decade rosary.

Other devotions to Mary also began in the Middle Ages. The Angelus bells, rung at six in the morning, at noon, and at six in the evening were a call to prayer for the monks. Later, it became a threefold summons, and prayers to Mary were recited.

Devotion to Mary in the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century became more pronounced through popular belief in her apparitions, especially at Lourdes and Fatima. These devotions fall into the category of private revelation and are not required to be believed as doctrines. However, one cannot ignore or dismiss such occurrences, especially in their role of keeping faith alive.

These devotions, though, ought not to overshadow the scriptural role of Mary in salvation history. There may seem to be a swindling of showy processions and lengthy novenas, but the Second Vatican Council has restored true devotion by calling Mary, "Mother of the Church." Our theology of Mary today needs to stress her link with salvation events and the ideal woman of faith, who lived the gospel response most perfectly. "Mary shines forth As a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim People of God."

Mary is so special because, in being the Mother of God, she established a unique relationship with all who are joined to Jesus through the Church. Mary, like all mothers, has concern for those with whom her Son is identified.

Definitions:

Apparition: An appearance by Jesus, Mary, saints or angels to individuals or groups; The Church thoroughly investigates claimed apparitions and approves a few of them that bear the marks of being authentic.

Angelus Bells: The ringing of the Church bells at 6 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. to call people to a special prayer in honor of Mary.

Hail Mary: A common prayer in praise of Mary asking for her intercession.

Marian Theology: Church teachings and traditions regarding Mary, the Mother of God.

Rosary: A devotion in honor of Mary and a string of beads used to count the prayers.

Virgin Birth: The Church dogma or belief that Jesus, the Son of God, was born of only one human parent, Mary; and that she did not lose her virginity.

Intercessor: Asking one who is known to be close to Jesus in heaven, to intercede on our behalf to Her son. (Like going to mom to ask dad for something we want or need.)

More points on The Blessed Virgin Mary

We Catholics cherish our Marian beliefs:

She is one of the most precious treasures within Catholicism.

She enriches our relationship with her Son, Jesus the Christ.

The privileges that God gave the Blessed Virgin Mary are gifts for the whole human race.

Beliefs are based solidly on public revelation.

The Church has a rich understanding of Our Lady of which all Catholics should become aware:

God has given Mary a major role in His plan of salvation, and in the important events of our time.

Mary's role in our salvation comes from three major sources:

1. Marian saints like St. Louis de Montfort, Alphonsus Liguori, and Maximilian Kolbe, as well as early church fathers.

2. The great Marian apparitions of our time, including Guadalupe, Rue de Bac, Lourdes, Fatima, and most recently Medjagori.

3. The teaching Magisterium

Bible, papal letters, encyclicals, documents of Vatican II

Ex cathedra definitions of Mary's Immaculate Conception and bodily Assumption into heaven.

"development of doctrine" helps us gain deeper insights into our beliefs, i.e. Trinity

Canon of the Bible.

THERE ARE FOUR DEFINED MARIAN DOCTRINES:

Divine Maternity: Mary Mother of God

Perpetual Virginity: Mary remained a virgin her entire life.

Bodily Assumption into Heaven

Immaculate Conception.

Mary's title "Mother of God" is her first and greatest privilege.

The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.

Persons and events in the OT prefigured, foreshadowed, anticipated, and symbolized persons and events in the NT.

Mary as the second Eve

Mary as the New Arc of the Covenant

Mary as the NT Queen Mother.

Mary has an extremely unique relationship with the triune God: she is daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Why do we honor the mother of our Savior?

God honored her above all creatures by making her the mother of His Son.

The Catholic Church follows the example of God Himself.

Her special privileges were give to her by God, not man.

Jesus has two natures, divine and human. Jesus is one Divine Person. Since this one person was born of Mary, she truly is the Mother of One Divine Person: When the eternal Son of God became a man, He assumed a human nature. Thus He could be born of a woman just as we are.

Mary is our Spiritual mother, thus we pray "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death"

This prayer is directed to God through the mediation of Mary. The Church is saying, "Because you are the Mother of God, and our Spiritual Mother, Pray

for

us."

**Mary in Christian Tradition
Feasts Honoring Mary, The Mother of God**

The Immaculate Conception of Mary (December 8)

Like the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, the feast of the Immaculate Conception celebrated during Advent, is related to the mystery of Jesus. To fulfill her unique role in the mission of Jesus, MARY was conceived free from original sin through the foreseen merits of her Son.

Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12)

Under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe Mary is honored as "the patroness of the Americas." The feast originated in the apparition of the Blessed Virgin to Jan Diego, a humble Mexican worker, in 1521.

The Solemnity of Mary, The Mother of God (January 1st)

This feast, closely connected to the feast of Christmas, is the most important and oldest of the major feasts of Mary. It is based on the source of her privileges; her motherhood. Jesus Christ, God's Son "born of a woman," (Galatians 4:4) came to deliver us from sin and make us children of God. He is also Mary's Son, and she, his mother, helps bring his blessings to the world. She is "Truly the Mother of God and of the Redeemer...not merely passively engaged by God, but freely cooperating in the work of our salvation through faith and obedience." (Lumen Gentium, 53-56)

Our Lady of Lourdes (February 11th)

Pope Pius X included the feast of our Lady of Lourdes in the Roman calendar in 1908, just 50 years after the report of Mary's apparitions at the grotto of Massabiella near Lourdes, in France. There Mary identified herself as the Immaculate Conception.

Visitation – When Mary visits Elizabeth (May 31st)

Celebrates the acknowledgements of Mary as mother of God by cousin Elizabeth, who has also been blessed in her later years by her conception of John, who will be the: "one to come before to announce the coming of the Messiah."

Immaculate Heart of Mary

Closely related to the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the optional memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was instituted in 1942. The feast honors Mary who treasured the mysteries of Jesus and "pondered them in her heart."

Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16th)

The feast, an optional celebration, was originally celebrated by the Carmelite order in Europe in the Middle Ages. It was first listed in the Roman calendar in 1726.

Dedication of St. Mary Major (August 5th)

This optional memorial celebrates the dedication of the great church of St. Mary Major, built in Rome after the Council of Ephesus in 431) A small chapel inside was built to resemble the grotto in Bethlehem; thus, the church has been called "Bethlehem in Rome." Still one of the main churches of the Eternal City, the church was built to honor Mary as the Mother of God and reflected the growing devotion to her among Christians everywhere. One of the great icons of Mary is revered in this ancient Roman Church. It has been carried through the city in solemn procession on occasions of plague and danger.

The Assumption of Mary (August 16th)

As the Feast of the Immaculate Conception proclaims the grace of Christ in Mary before he was born, so the Feast of the Assumption points to the fulfillment of that grace, when Mary was taken, body and soul, into heaven to share in the glory of her Son's Resurrection. The Church proclaimed this dogma in 1950.

The Queenship of Mary (August 22nd)

In the Old Testament, royal titles are commonly given to God and those specially anointed by God. Titles of royalty were given to Jesus and Mary from earliest times by Christians as signs of the special power they possessed. In prayers and hymns like

the Salve Regina and the Regina Coeli, Mary the Mother of Jesus is called Queen. Instituted in 1955, this feast follows the Feast of the Assumption as it points to Mary's privileged place in heaven. Mary "was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory when her earthly life was over, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things." (Vatican Council, Lumen Gentium 59)

The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary (September 8th)

Three important births are celebrated in the Roman calendar: the birth of Jesus, of Mary, and of John the Baptist. (June 24th) Mary's birth has been celebrated from ancient times, though her birthplace or time of birth are not mentioned in scripture. As far back as the 5th century a church was built on the traditional site of her birth in Jerusalem on the site of the pool of Bethesda, (John 5:1-9) near the Temple, and a feast in honor of Mary's birth was celebrated. By the 8th century the feast was celebrated in the Church of Rome.

Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15th)

Christian of the Middle Ages and later centuries developed a lively devotion to Mary in her sorrows, which were foretold by the old man, Simeon, when she brought the Child Jesus into the Temple (Luke 9:23). As the first disciple of her Son, she entered into his paschal mystery; her motherhood matured and took new form as she accepted her part of her cross.

Traditionally, seven sorrows are ascribed to her:

- 1. Mary hears the prophecy of sorrow from Simeon.***
- 2. Mary flees with the Child into Egypt***
- 3. Mary experiences the loss of the Child Jesus in Jerusalem.***
- 4. Mary meets her Son on the road to Calvary.***
- 5. Mary stands beneath the cross of Jesus.***
- 6. Mary receives the body of Jesus taken down from the cross.***
- 7. Mary sees her Son's body placed in the tomb.***

Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7th)

Originally this feast was celebrated in thanksgiving for Mary's intercession, after the defeat on October 7, 1571 of Turkish naval forces that threatened Europe. Today the feast is a special remembrance of the spiritual power of the Rosary.

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (November 21st)

The present memorial of Mary's presentation in the Temple as a child originated in Jerusalem at the church built there in her honor. It celebrates Mary's dedication to God. The feast became popular in the western church in religious communities, where members renewed their vows on this day, remembering the one who called herself "the maidservant of the Lord."

Other feasts and times dedicated to Mary

Besides the feasts of Mary in the Roman calendar, she is honored in the particular calendars of various rites, nations, regions and religious communities.

Since the 18th century, the calendar months of May and October have been devoted to Mary in the Roman Catholic Church. Originating in Spain and Italy, where Mary was honored with "May devotions", litanies, the rosary and other special prayers, the practice, spread worldwide.

POPULAR PRAYERS TO HONOR MARY

Magnificat – The Canticle of Mary

My soul magnifies the Lord,

And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden,

***For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.
 And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.
 He has shown strength with His arm:
 He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
 He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
 And exalted those of low degree.
 He has filled the hungry with good things;
 And the rich He has sent empty away.
 He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy;
 As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to His posterity forever.
 Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
 As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.***
Scripture text: Revised Standard Version – Catholic edition.

LITANY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

V. Lord, have mercy on us.
R. Christ, have mercy on us.
V. Lord, have mercy on us. Christ hear us.
R. Christ, Graciously hear us.

God, the Father of Heaven: Have mercy on us. (repeated at end of each phrase.)
God, the Son, Redeemer of the world: " "
God, the Holy Spirit "
Holy Trinity, One God "

<i>Holy Mary</i>	<i>Pray for us.</i>	(repeat at end of each phrase)
<i>Holy Mother of God</i>	"	
<i>Holy Virgin of Virgins</i>	"	
<i>Mother of Christ</i>	"	
<i>Mother of divine grace.</i>	"	
<i>Mother most pure</i>	"	
<i>Mother most chaste</i>	"	
<i>Mother inviolate</i>	"	
<i>Mother undefiled</i>	"	
<i>Mother most amiable</i>	"	
<i>Mother most admirable</i>	"	
<i>Mother of good counsel</i>	"	
<i>Mother of our Creator</i>	"	
<i>Mother of our Savior</i>	"	
<i>Virgin most prudent</i>	"	
<i>Virgin most renowned</i>	"	
<i>Virgin most powerful</i>	"	
<i>Virgin most merciful</i>	"	
<i>Virgin most faithful</i>	"	
<i>Mirror of Justice</i>	"	
<i>Seat of Wisdom</i>	"	
<i>Cause of our Joy</i>	"	
<i>Spiritual Vessel</i>	"	
<i>Vessel of honor</i>	"	
<i>Singular vessel of devotion</i>	"	
<i>Mystical Rose</i>	"	

Tower of David, Ivory, Gold "
Ark of the covenant "
Gate of Heaven "
Morning Star "
Health of the Sick "
Refuge of sinners "
Comforter of the afflicted "
Help of Christians "
Queen of angels "
Queen of Patriarchs "
Queen of prophets "
Queen of apostles "
Queen of martyrs "
Queen of confessors "
Queen of virgins "
Queen of all saints "
Queen conceived without original sin "
Queen assumed into heaven "
Queen of the most holy Rosary "
Queen of peace "

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world Spare us, O Lord
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world Graciously hear us O Lord
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world Have mercy on us.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

R. *That we may be made worth of the promises of Christ.*

Let us Pray: Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, unto us Thy servants, that we may rejoice in continual health of mind and body; and, by the glorious intercession of blessed Mary ever Virgin, may be delivered from present sadness, and enter into the joy of Thy eternal gladness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

HAIL MARY: GENTLE WOMAN

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the lord is with you. Bless_ed are you among women,
bless_ed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for
us sinners now, and at the hour of death, Amen.

Refrain: "Gentle woman, quiet light, morning star, so strong and bright, gentle Mother,
peaceful dove, teach us wisdom, teach us love."

Verse 1 You were chosen, by the Father, you were chosen for the Son. You were Chosen from all women and for woman shining one. Refrain

Verse 2 Bless_ed are you among women. Blest in turn all women, too. Bless_ed they with peaceful spirits. Bless_ed they with gentle hearts. Refrain

Sub Tuum Praesidium (250 AD)

(The following prayer shows how the early Church honored Mary and understood Mary to be our Spiritual Mother.)

*We fly to your patronage,
O Holy Mother of God,
Despise not our petitions
In our necessities,
But deliver us from all danger,
O ever glorious and blessed Virgin.*