

Mary's Role in God's Plan for Our Salvation (Redemption)

Read Luke 1:26-56.

The Five Doctrines on Mary

1. Mother of God

- Council of Ephesus, 431 AD, determined that Mary could be called the Mother of God (Theotokos in Greek) instead of just the Mother of Christ (Christotokos) as the theologian Nestorius contended
 - Mary is the Mother of Jesus
 - Jesus is God
 - Therefore, Mary is the Mother of God Incarnate
- Scripture Teaches that Mary is “Mother of God”
 - Luke 1:43: Elizabeth calls Mary “mother of my Lord.” In the NT, “Lord” refers only to God.
 - Matthew 1:23: “Behold the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name Him Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”
 - Luke 1:35: “the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”
 - Galatians 4:4: “when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman.”
- Early Church Fathers Confirm Mary's Divine Maternity
- Protestant Reformers Insist that Mary is the Mother of God
- Mary is Our Spiritual Mother
 - John 19:27; 1 Corinthians 12; Hebrews 2:11; Revelation 12)

2. The Immaculate Conception

- On December 8th, 1854, Pope Pius IX officially defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in these words:
“The Most Holy Virgin Mary was, in the first moment of her conception, by a unique gift of grace and privilege of Almighty God and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ the Redeemer of mankind, preserved free from all stain of original sin.”

- Three Key Points:
 - 1) Mary was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her existence. She was never, even for a brief instant, stained by original sin.
 - 2) The Immaculate Conception only deals with original sin. However, the Church also teaches the doctrine that Mary was never touched by personal sin.
 - 3) This privilege was given to Mary in view of Christ's merits. Jesus was Mary's Savior. She was redeemed by Jesus Christ just as we are, except that Mary's redemption was unique: it was a proactive redemption. The fruit of Christ's redemption was applied to preserve Mary from sin, as it is applied to us to remove sins contracted.
- Scriptural Evidence for Mary's Sinlessness
 - Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel."
 - The word "enmity" in this context means absolute opposition.
 - This enmity is total; the devil never ensnared Jesus in sin as he did Adam and Eve. Therefore, the woman, the mother of Jesus, would also never be ensnared by sin because she, too, is at total enmity with the serpent.
 - Luke 1:28: "Hail, full of grace"
 - Fullness of grace would be impossible if Mary were touched by any sin, because every sin diminishes grace.
 - The Angel Gabriel does not call her "Mary." He substitutes the title "full of grace" for her name to indicate how exceptional and unique Mary's fullness of grace is.
- Typology Teaches Mary's Sinlessness
 - The Ark of the Old Covenant prefigured Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant.
 - Mary spent three months in Zechariah and Elizabeth's house (Luke 1:26, 40), just like the Ark spent three months in the house of Obededom the Gittite (2 Samuel 6:11).

- Elizabeth asked Mary, “How does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1:43). This echoes King David’s question: “How can the ark of the Lord come to me?” (2 Samuel 6:9).
 - When Mary arrived, John the Baptist leaped for joy in Elizabeth’s womb (Luke 1:44), just as David leaped and danced before the Lord when the Ark arrived in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:14-16)
- The Church Fathers Teach Mary’s Sinlessness

3. Perpetual Virginity

- The Catholic Church teaches that Mary was a virgin before, during, and after the birth of Jesus
- The “brothers” of Jesus are never called “sons of Mary.” Jesus is often called the son of Mary, but never a son of Mary as if he had siblings.
- Some of these “brothers” advise and reprimand Jesus (John 7:3-4, Mark 3:21). In Jewish culture, younger brothers never admonish an elder brother.
- See John 19:26-27. If Jesus had younger siblings, as Protestants claim, His behavior makes no sense. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for dispensing people from the responsibility of caring for their parents (see Matthew 15 and John 19:27). Why would He dispense His own siblings from this important obligation?
- The Church Fathers Defended Mary’s Perpetual Virginity
- The Protestant Reformers Defended Mary as “Ever-Virgin”

4. The Assumption

- On November 1st, 1950, Pope Pius XII defined the dogma of Mary’s Assumption:
“Mary, the immaculate perpetually Virgin Mother of God, after the completion of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into the glory of heaven.”
- This doctrine does not say Mary died. However, the overwhelming tradition of the Church, including the Fathers, is that she did. After Mary completed her earthly life, she was taken into heaven, where both her body and soul were glorified. Mary’s body did not undergo corruption.

- We distinguish Christ's Ascension from Mary's Assumption. As God, Christ ascended into heaven by His own power. As a creature, Mary was assumed (drawn up) into heaven by God.
- The Church has always understood the reference to the "woman clothed with the sun" found in Scripture (Revelation 11:19, 12:1) as referring to Mary once she had been assumed body and soul into Heaven.
- There is scriptural precedent for this in the stories of Enoch (Genesis 5:23) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11).

5. Mother in the Order of Grace (Mother of the Church)

- The Church teaches that "this motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect" (CCC 969).
- Mary watched over and protects the human race through her powerful intercession in Heaven.
- Mary intercedes for our needs in the same way that she went to Jesus when the wine had run out at the wedding feast of Cana (John 2:1-11).
- Mary not only prays for us, but also leads us back to Christ. Mary's words to us are always the same: "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5).
- Mary is our mother in the order of grace because she is the mother of the Church.
- Mary is our mother in the order of grace because she uniquely participates in the mediation of Christ.

Apparitions (Private Revelation)

- **God has said everything in His Word**
 - “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)
 - Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father’s one, perfect, and unsurpassable Word. In him he has said everything; there will be no other word than this one. (CCC 65)
- **There will be no further Revelation**
 - No new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ (CCC 66)
- **Some “private” revelations have been recognized by the authority of the Church**
 - Guadalupe (December 9-12, 1531); Juan Diego
 - Rue de Bac (1830, Miraculous Medal); St. Catherine Labouré
 - Lourdes (1858, France); St. Bernadette
 - Fatima (1917, Portugal); Three shepherd children; Lucia Santos, Bl. Jacinta Marto, and Bl. Francisco Marto
- **“Private” revelations do not belong to the deposit of faith (they are not binding on the faithful)**
 - It is not their role to improve or complete Christ’s definitive Revelation
 - The magisterium knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church
 - Christian faith cannot accept “revelations” that claim to surpass or correct the Revelation of which Christ is the fulfillment (CCC 66)