

# Ad Veritatem

Volume 13 Issue 5

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

MAY 2008

*Unchecked fear and pride give rise  
to delusions that displace even  
knowledge we recognize as true.*

Thomas More:  
A Portrait of Courage

## MAY MEETING:

**WEDNESDAY MAY 21, 2008 NOON**

**SPEAKER: BISHOP PETER ESTERKA, BISHOP OF  
CZECH CATHOLICS IN THE U.S.**

**TOPIC: "MARY AND CRISIS"**

*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, five "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

Don Hunsberger at (714) 663-8000 or email to [dah@hunsbergerlaw.com](mailto:dah@hunsbergerlaw.com), or

Judy Patno at (714) 871-6655 or email to [jpatno@patnolaw.com](mailto:jpatno@patnolaw.com).

VISIT OUR WEBSITE at [www.stthomasmore.net](http://www.stthomasmore.net)

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**AD VERITATEM EDITOR**  
**ANNE LANPHAR**

## MAY MEETING

# BISHOP PETER ESTERKA

## “MARY AND CRISIS”



### WHEN:

NOON

Wed. May 21<sup>st</sup>

### WHERE:

First American  
Trust Bldg.  
5 First American  
Way, Santa Ana

### FOR DIRECTIONS

(714) 250-3000

### COST:

Lunch: \$15

Born in 1935 in Czechoslovakia, the front lines were near his home. A student at the Jesuit high school in 1948 when the Communists took over and outlawed the public practice of religion. In 1957, he escaped through the barbed wire into Austria. After living in a refugee camp, Peter moved to Rome where he attended the Pontifical Lateran University studying philosophy and theology. He was ordained in 1963 and his first assignment was in San Antonio, Texas. After three years, he returned to Rome to earn his doctorate degree in theology. For thirty years he was professor of moral theology and ecumenical studies at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota. He continued to be active in the parishes of the area and was also a chaplain (Lt. Col) in the Air Force Reserve Unit in Minneapolis. He began his work among Czech Catholic immigrants in 1978. In 1986 Fr. Esterka was named Vicar for Czech Catholic immigrants living in the United States and Canada. In 1994 that jurisdiction was extended to include Australia. He was named Monsignor in 1987, Prelate in 1992, and Bishop for Czech Catholics living in diaspora in 1999. From Orange, California, he continues this ministry of the Pastoral Center for Czech Catholics.

For more information, please contact either Don Hunsberger (714) 663-8000 or [dah@hunsbergerlaw.com](mailto:dah@hunsbergerlaw.com) or Anne Lanphar at (714) 250-8605 [alanphar@firstam.com](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com) †

### STM MONTHLY MTGS: 3RD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH:

JUNE 18  
JULY 16  
AUGUST 20  
SEPTEMBER 17  
OCTOBER 15 †

### RESERVE THE DATE! RED MASS

MONDAY OCTOBER 6, 2008  
HOLY FAMILY CATHEDRAL  
6:00 PM MASS

RECEPTION & DINNER FOLLOWING †

## CALENDAR REMINDERS



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## DOES SALVATION DEPEND ON BELIEVEING MARIAN DOCTRINE?

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

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN



ROSARY MOTHER  
OF GOD WITH  
STS DOMINIC AND  
FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*Nicola Grassi*

(Date Unknown)

**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, 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). †

## 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



THE MADONNA  
OF CHARITY

*El Greco*

(1594-1604)

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

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

***Mary, the Mother of Life*** (Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5) *Mary, the Mother of Life*

*mother* makes it unintelligible. Whereas life came to be without the agency of a mother, 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 *leberzskraft*). 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:

*Mary, the Mother of Life* (Continued on page 7)



THE  
ANNUNCIATION

*Federico Fiori*  
*Barocci*

(1592)

(Continued from page 6) *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



**THE  
BLESSED VIRGIN**  
*Bernardo Cavallino*  
(1650)

*Mary, the Mother of Life* (Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7) **Mary, the Mother of Life**

great affection and profundity about our Lady. The Pope points out:

"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 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).

**Mary, the Mother of Life** (Continued on page 9)



(Continued from page 8) *Mary, the Mother of Life*

## 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."

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## 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. †



## SCRIPTURAL CORNER



THE VISITATION

*Tintoretto*  
(1549)

\*The Navarre Bible, a renowned 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.

## LUKE 1: 30-33

*<sup>30</sup>And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

### Comment from the Navarre Bible:\*

The Annunciation is the moment when our Lady is given to know the vocation which God planned for her from eternity. When the archangel sets her mind at ease by saying "Do not be afraid, Mary," he is helping her to overcome that initial fear which a person normally experiences when God gives him or her a special calling. The fact that Mary felt this fear does not imply the least trace of imperfection in her: hers is a perfectly natural reaction in the face of the supernatural. Imperfection would arise if one did not overcome this fear or rejected the advice of those in a position to help---St Gabriel helped Mary.

The archangel Gabriel tells the Blessed Virgin that she is to be the Mother of God by reminding her of the words of Isaiah which announced that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, a prophecy which will find its fulfillment in Mary (cf. Mt 1:22-23; Is 7:14).

He reveals that the Child will be "great": his greatness comes from his being God, a greatness he does not lose when he takes on the lowliness of human nature. He also reveals that Jesus will be the king of the Davidic dynasty sent by God keeping with his promise of salvation; that his Kingdom will last forever, for his humanity will remain forever joined to his divinity; that "he will be called the Son of the Most High and will be publicly recognized as such, that is, the Child will be the Son of God.

The archangel's announcement evokes the ancient prophecies which foretold these prerogatives. Mary, who was well-versed in Sacred Scripture, clearly realized that she was to be the Mother of God. †

SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

**"God is more merciful to the men who mock Him than men are merciful to the gods they make. When David sinned, God gave him the choice of being punished either by Him or by man. David chose God - His Mercy is greater." †**

## TO THEE DO I COME

BY JANE CAVOLINA\*

When I try to pinpoint the beginning of the road that led me back to Mary, she is always one step ahead of me. When I'm sure it was the time I bought a medal of the Blessed Mother in an antique store, I remember my inadvertent visit to the site of one of her apparitions. When I'm satisfied that it was that occasion that brought her to my consciousness, I remember my *Memorare* bookmark.

I'm certain that there are other, earlier markers, which I think of now as petals dropped along my path, leading me on. But the bookmark is the first one I clearly recall. It was a curiosity, a piece of Catholic kitsch, given to me in 1983 by Maureen Kelly, one of the people with whom I wrote *Growing Up Catholic*. In the course of writing that book, I not only reclaimed a lifetime of Catholic memories, experiences, and beliefs, but I also found myself the owner of a wealth of Catholic "stuff." Statues. Medals. Photos. Certificates.

The bookmark sat, of all places, on the vanity in my bathroom for years before I really looked at it. Yet for all the time I owned it and saw it every day, I never thought to say the prayer inscribed on it. Praying was something I didn't do anymore. It hadn't been a conscious decision; I'd just forgotten about it. As my life moved into perilous and troubling waters, an anchor sat on my bathroom counter next to my hairbrush, unnoticed and untouched.

### LIKE LEAVES OF GRASS

A few years later I was in Ireland, driving from Sligo to Galway. I saw signs for Knock, and I remembered that Mary had appeared there. I was curious; it seemed too interesting to pass by. I went into the cathedral built on the site of the apparition and said a prayer, because that's what you do in churches.

I visited the Madeleine in Paris, a beautiful church devoted to Mary. It was filled with tapers (beautiful tall candles), and I lit one and said another prayer.

Then on a trip to Rye, England, I wandered around the pretty streets of the ancient town for hours, browsing in bookshops, buying needlework, stopping for tea. Before I headed back to the train station, I looked into a lovely old antique shop and found a Virgin painted on a small round piece of mother of pearl. I bought it and put it on.

Some time after the publication of *Growing Up Catholic*, I was asked to speak at a Rosary Society luncheon (another petal) at Our Lady of Victory (still another) in Floral Park, New York. I met a warm and welcoming audience of women. I thought how nice it would be to live in a parish like this, even though I had stopped thinking of the world in terms of parishes when I graduated high school. Their parting gift to me was a statue of the Blessed Mother, and I was moved to tears by it. These loving strangers had offered me the solution to a problem I didn't yet know I had. I put it on a bookshelf opposite the sofa in my living room, where I looked at it quizzically when I was sewing or knitting or watching TV. I wondered how I came to have a statue of the Virgin Mary in my house.

I know now that these occasions were, in Walt Whitman's words, like leaves of grass, "the handkerchief of the Lord," "a scented gift and remembrancer designedly



THE CORONATION OF  
THE VIRGIN

Diego Rodriquez de  
Silva y Velaquez

(1645)

Jane Cavolina is This  
Rock's copyeditor and the  
author of *Growing Up  
Catholic, More Growing  
Up Catholic, and (with  
Matthew Bunson) All  
Shall Be Well.*

*To Thee Do I Come* (Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11) **To Thee Do I Come**

dropt bearing the owner's name someway in the corners."

Mary was placing herself in my way until, by some act of grace, I would come to her.

### HEAR AND ANSWER ME

But none of these things consciously brought me any closer to devotion, to a feeling of religious ardor. But that changed for me the night I woke up on my bathroom floor in the middle of the night in pain. I remembered lying down on the cool tiles, too weak and nauseous to stand or walk. Then I must have fainted. I didn't know what had happened, what was wrong, or how much time had passed. I only knew that I was very sick. I could not have been more alone.

I finally pulled myself up and leaned against the vanity in despair. I had to pray; there was nothing else I could do to help myself. I took the bookmark in my hands and said the words of the *Memorare* out loud, not even remembering to bless myself:

*Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored 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 do I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.*

"Mary, please help me," I begged. "I don't know what to do."

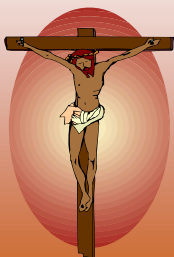
It was an old instinct that made me turn to her, an instinct I didn't know I had anymore. I didn't know what she would do; I didn't expect her to do anything. All I knew was that I couldn't face things on my own, and there was no one else. When after such a very long silence I finally called on Mary for strength and help, I immediately received her first gift: It was given to me to remember that I was not alone after all.

### MOTHER OF MERCY

The truth that came to me while I was praying to Mary has transformed and redeemed my life. I have gratefully joined the legion of Catholics who have turned to Mary in times of trouble and found comfort and fortitude, serenity and love. It is why we call her our Lady of perpetual help, our Lady of sorrows, refuge of sinners, help of the sick, comforter of the afflicted, Mother of mercy. We all come to Mary for different reasons and in different hours of need, but what we receive when we turn to her is the same for us all, in an unbroken chain going back thousands of years.

I have prayed to Mary and my prayers have been answered time and again. I magnify her holy name—that is, I tell everybody. I am telling you. In Walt Whitman's words, she stops somewhere waiting for you. †

## PRAYER PETITIONS



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

*If you have a special need for  
prayer, please let us know so by  
emailing your request to  
[alanphar@firstam.com](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com)*

- ◆ Bill Allard (special intention)
  - ◆ Carol Flynn (illness)
- ◆ Brandon Jackson (Iraq)
  - ◆ Carli Whittemore
  - ◆ Mike Quigley (illness)
  - ◆ Jean Howard
- ◆ Ryan McEachon (special intention)
- ◆ Heather Flynn USAFA (special intention)
- ◆ John Flynn IV USNA (special intention)
- ◆ Kathy Todd (cancer)
- ◆ Ellie Shonafelt & Her Children
  - ◆ David Macdonald (illness)
  - ◆ Eric & Marie Bessem
- ◆ Julia Nelson (serious illness)
  - ◆ Sean Nelson (illness)
  - ◆ Scott Smith (illness)
- ◆ Ron Gable (special intention)
- ◆ Anne Lanphar (special intention) †

## THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION: SATAN'S MIGHTY FOE

FATHER PAUL A. DUFFNER, O.P.\*

Our first parents were created by God, endowed with sanctifying grace, a supernatural gift of God enabling them to share in His own divine life. This gift of grace does not pertain to human nature, but perfects man's nature enabling him to attain the supernatural end for which he was created. Along with this sharing in God's own life there was an added gift that established perfect harmony within their whole being, so that all the powers, inclinations and dispositions of the body were perfectly submissive to the powers of the soul. Too, they were given special gifts which made them immune from suffering and death. These added gifts, like sanctifying grace, did not pertain to human nature and could be lost.

Whether or not Adam and Eve and their descendants would retain these added gifts would depend on the outcome of a trial to which our first parents were to be subjected. Without going into detail, we know the outcome of that trial. Because of their rebellion against the limitation that God placed on their freedom, Adam and Eve lost for themselves and their descendants the divine gift of grace by which they shared in God's own life, the immunity from suffering and death, and the harmony between body and soul, resulting in a rebellious tendency in their whole being to seek satisfactions in opposition to the control of reason and the will of God. In addition to this, heaven, for which they were created, was closed to mankind. All this came because the sin of Adam was not only a personal sin, but one in which the whole of humanity was on trial.

### GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION

We see, then, the tragic condition in which our first parents found themselves at the very dawn of the human race. Yet, God's plan was not frustrated. From all eternity He foresaw this outcome, and the manner in which He would restore to mankind the possibility of attaining eternal beatitude with Him in heaven. He would send His only-begotten Son who would become a member of the human race, being born of a virgin maiden who would be His mother in the strictest sense of the word. She alone, of all the descendants of Adam would be preserved immune through the merits of her Son, from the stain of original sin. This doctrine was defined as a dogma of our faith by Pope Pius IX in the Apostolic Constitution "*Ineffabilis Deus*," Dec. 8, 1854, as follows:

*"We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."*

### THE PROMISED REDEEMER

This doctrine is implicitly revealed in the book of Genesis where there is implied the promise of a Redeemer for fallen mankind, a member of the human race born of a woman. Prophecies of the Old Testament make it clear that this Redeemer would be God Himself (Is. 35:4), and that He would be born of a virgin (Is. 7:14). Shortly after the fall of our first parents, having been deceived by the devil, God said to the Evil One: "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed (offspring) and hers; she will crush your head while you strike at her heel.*" (Gen. 3:15)

After quoting the above from Genesis, the Holy Father elaborated on this text as

***The Immaculate Conception*** (Continued on page 14)



THE VIRGIN OF  
THE IMMACULATE  
CONCEPTION

*El Greco*

(1608)

\*A Fulbright Scholar, Christopher Kaczor is the Robert H. Taylor Chair in Philosophy at Loyola Marymount University and the author of *How to Stay Catholic in College*.

(Continued from page 13) *The Immaculate Conception* follows:

*"The Fathers and writers of the Church, well versed in the heavenly scriptures . . . taught that by this divine prophecy the merciful Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, was clearly foretold; that His most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was prophetically indicated; and, at the same time, the very enmity of both against the Evil One was significantly expressed. Hence, just as Christ, the Mediator between God and man, assumed human nature, erased the handwriting of the decree that stood against us, and fastened it triumphantly to the Cross, so the most holy Virgin, united with Him in a most intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with Him and through Him, eternally at enmity with the evil serpent, and most completely triumphed over him, and thus crushed his head with her immaculate foot."*

**NOTE:** The **GREEK** version of the Bible has the masculine pronoun (he), thus ascribing the victory to the Son of the woman referred to, expressing the messianic interpretation held by many of the Fathers. The **LATIN** version (Vulgate) has the feminine pronoun (she); and since in the messianic interpretation of this text, the Messiah and His Mother appear together, the pronoun has been taken to refer to Mary; this application has become current in the church (Jerusalem Bible, Gen. 3:15).

In both the Greek and Latin versions of this text, the meaning of the two is basically the same, for Mary is but God's instrument. It is the power of the Son that conquers Satan, associating Mary with Him in the conquest. So while Satan was victorious over the first Eve, the second Eve (Mary), endowed with the power of her divine Son, will be the instrument God uses in His conquest of Satan, making the defeat of the Evil One all the more humiliating. Pope Pius IX contrasts Eve and Mary as follows:

*"Eve listened to the serpent with lamentable consequences; she fell from original innocence and became his slave. The most blessed Virgin, on the contrary, ever increased her original gift, and not only never lent an ear to the serpent, but by divinely given power, utterly destroyed the force and dominion of the evil one."* (ibid.)

When we speak of Mary's foot crushing the head of Satan, that is, of course, symbolic language, for the devil is a spirit without a body. But he is a spirit intensely proud, confirmed in hatred of God and man. And nothing tortures his proud ego more than humiliation. The very humility of this virgin maiden - inferior to him by nature - but almost infinitely superior in grace and glory - to the glory that formerly was his, is a ceaseless torture for his proud being, causing the deepest envy of her power over him.

### **DIVINE PREPARATIONS**

While Mary was predestined from all eternity to be the Mother of God by the decree of Divine Providence which determined the Incarnation of the Word (Lumen Gentium 61), the proximate preparation for her divine maternity began the first moment of her life in the womb of her mother by that unique privilege of her Immaculate Conception.

**NOTE:** There is, at times, confusion on the part of some as to the term *Immaculate Conception*. It has nothing to do with the miraculous conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it refers to the conception of Mary in the womb of St. Anne.

The fullness of time was near. Since the Divine Word was to assume human nature becoming a member of the human race, this divine Person would dwell only in a temple worthy of Himself, in the most pure womb of an Immaculate Mother. There is a principle in theology which is expressed by St. Thomas in these words: *"Those whom God chooses for a particular purpose, He prepares and disposes so that they may be found suitable for the purpose for which they are chosen"* (III,27,4). In keeping with this principle, God granted to Our Lady not only freedom from the stain of original sin and its debilitating consequences on human nature, but endowed her with a superabundant measure of grace and supernatural gifts beyond our power to comprehend, as befitted one who was to be the Mother of God and a close associate with the Word Incarnate in the work of redemption.

Were it not revealed by God, we would never have imagined that a human person could be raised to the dignity of being the Mother of God, nor can we conceive the fullness of grace that enriched her soul. This is beautifully expressed by Pope Pius IX in the Apostolic Constitution *"Ineffabilis Deus"* in which he proclaimed the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception:

*The Immaculate Conception* (Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14) **The Immaculate Conception**

*"Before time began, the Eternal Father chose and prepared for His only-begotten Son a Mother in whom the Son of God would become incarnate, and from whom, in the fullness of time, He would be born into this world. . . . Wherefore, far and above all the angels and saints so wonderfully did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts, . . . that this Mother, entirely free from all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess a fullness of holy innocence and sanctity, than which under God, one cannot imagine anything greater, and which, outside of God, no mind can fully comprehend."*

### SATAN'S FRUSTRATION

With the victory of Satan over Adam the kingdom of Satan on earth was established. As a consequence every descendent of Adam comes into this world under his dominion (in a certain degree) until liberated by the waters of baptism. It must have been an extremely painful humiliation, therefore, that one human person - inferior to him by nature - would never for an instant come under his control. As Fr. Valentine Long, OFM expressed it, *"it shall remain his eternal frustration that the human soul he craved above all others to contaminate, escaped him."*

In the Apostolic Constitution quoted above, Pius IX stated that the Virgin Mary united with her divine Son *"most completely triumphed over Satan, and crushed his head."* That victory would not have been complete if Mary had not been preserved free from original sin, for then she would have come under the dominion of Satan. The enmity between Mary and the devil, between her seed (Christ) and the devil's seed (his followers) would not be complete, if for a single instant she came under his power. That Satan, whose angelic nature is far superior to human nature, would be powerless to influence, harm, or dominate a human person, is a painful humiliation. So Mary from the first moment of her earthly existence, even before her human powers of intellect and will could function, began to torture the evil one. Already the Redeemer-to-come was using her to crush his head. Thus it was that Divine Providence decreed that from the first instant of her existence in this world she came as Satan's foe.

It would be inconceivable that one heralded before her existence as the Mother of the divine Redeemer, should for an instant share the inclination to evil of our fallen nature, an inclination to rebel against the God whose Son she would one day give birth. And by the same token, it would be a dishonor to the incarnate Word - who would identify Himself as TRUTH itself - to be born of a woman who for an instant came under the dominion of the *"father of lies."* (Jn. 8:44)

### MARY REDEEMED BY CHRIST

The question might be asked: If Mary was conceived without sin, why did she need to be redeemed? Since Mary was a member of the human race, a child of Adam, born by human generation as are all human persons, she was in need of redemption. However, the redemption of Mary was different from all others, not only because of the plenitude of graces given her because of her special calling, but by the merits of Christ she was not **cleansed** from sin, but **preserved** from contracting sin. In other words, the redeeming merits of Christ in her were not **curative**, but **preventative**. And this, theologians stress, is a higher and more perfect redemption; for it is a greater saving grace that prevents one from contracting an illness, than to cure that illness once it is contracted.

Again the question might be asked: How could Mary be redeemed by Christ before He (the God-man) existed? We have to remember that we are dealing with the mystery of the Mystical Body of Christ which extends beyond space and time. If, at Mary's conception, the God-man did not exist, the Divine Person (the Word) who was to become incarnate did exist. And by reason of the redeeming graces that the Word incarnate would merit for mankind, the Blessed Trinity prepared a fitting dwelling for Him in the immaculate body and soul of Mary.

The whole of mankind, both those who lived and died **before** Christ and those who lived **after** Him, are saved only by the merits of Christ the Redeemer. For example, we who live after Christ are saved by living our faith in Him who came to redeem us; while those who lived before Christ were saved by living their faith in Him who **was to come**, that is, in the promised Redeemer. They were saved by the merits Christ would gain for them when He came. But they did not enter heaven until Christ was born, died and ascended into heaven. When Christ ascended into heaven He took with Him all the souls of the just who lived since the creation of the world.

**The Immaculate Conception** (Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15) *The Immaculate Conception*

### FURTHER REVELATIONS

While only Scripture and Tradition (which includes papal pronouncements) determine the content of our Faith, the following incidents are landmarks in the modern spread of this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

In **1830**, the Blessed Virgin asked St. Catherine Laboure, of the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul in Paris, that a medal be made in her honor on which would appear her image with outstretched arms, with the words: *“O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”*

In **1846**, at the sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore, the Bishops of this country issued a proclamation declaring the Mother of God, under the title of her Immaculate Conception, as Patroness of the Catholic Church in these United States of America.

In **1854**, in the Apostolic Constitution *“Ineffabilis Deus,”* Pope Pius IX declared the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary a dogma of the Catholic faith.

In **1858**, the Mother of God appeared to the child, Bernadette, in Lourdes identifying herself in the words: *“I am the Immaculate Conception.”*

Those words of Our Lady in Lourdes, identifying herself, are mysterious and profound. She did not say *“I am she who was immaculately conceived,”* but *“I am the Immaculate Conception.”* That was Our Lady's definition of herself. So much is implied in those words: *“I am she in whom this unique mystery took place . . . I am she who alone, among all human persons, was never under the power of Satan . . . I am the second Mother of mankind, chosen by God to have a unique role in undoing the evil caused by the first mother of mankind. . . . I am the one extolled in the inspired Canticle: ‘You are all-beautiful, my beloved, and there is no blemish in you.’”* (C of C 4:7) Just as Eve cooperated with Adam in causing the wounds of fallen human nature and closing heaven to mankind, so Mary cooperated with Jesus in winning healing and saving graces for the whole of mankind and opening again the gates of heaven.

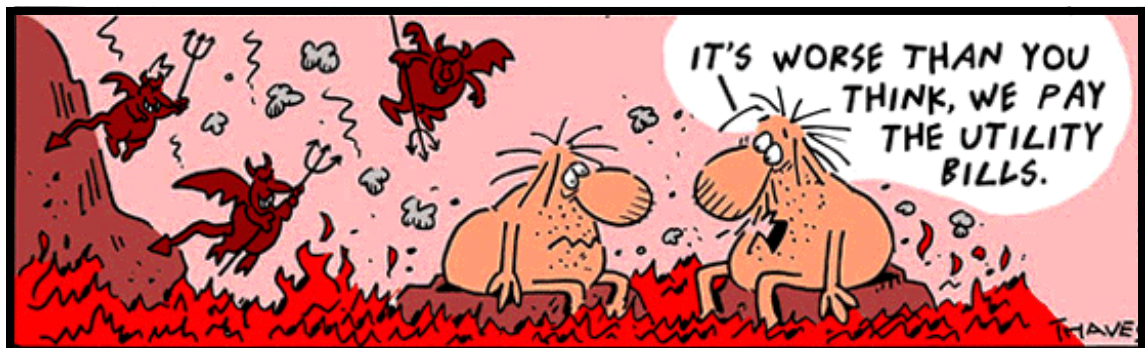
### A BRIEF REFLECTION

If the only-begotten Son of God required and prepared so perfect, so pure and so holy a temple in which to dwell in the Virgin Mary, in whose body He was to live for nine months, does that not tell us something about the temple He wants us to prepare for Him when we received Him in Holy Communion. We should ask our Immaculate Mother to help us prepare for His coming, not merely the few minutes before receiving Him, but throughout the day, or throughout the week for those who receive Him only weekly. If much that we do during the day could be seen in the light of that sacramental encounter, how much more fruitful it would be.

Remember too, that God not only endowed Mary with the necessary graces and dispositions to fulfill worthily the role of Mother of His Son, but also the role of the Mother of all mankind. Because of her fullness of grace, her maternal heart burns intensely to bring all followers of her Son—more closely to Him still; and those who have wandered astray, she seeks more than we can ever know, to bring them back into the fold.

*“O Mary conceived without sin,  
pray for us who have recourse to thee.”* †

**FRANK ERNEST**





## REFINING SILVER

There was a group of women in a Bible study on the book of Malachi. As they were studying Chapter Three, they came across Verse Three which says: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver". This verse puzzled the women and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women 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 silver smith, 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.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot then she thought again about the verse that says, "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver". 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 answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. For if the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed. The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silver smith, 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."

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



**THOUGHT  
FOR  
THE  
DAY**

**Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem\***



*\*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"*

## FORGIVING YOUR ENEMIES

Toward the end of Mass, the Pastor asked, "How many of you have forgiven your enemies?"

Eighty percent of those present raised their hands.

The Pastor then repeated his question.

All responded this time, except one small, elderly lady.

"Mrs. Neely, are you not willing to forgive your enemies?"

"I don't have any," she replied, smiling sweetly.

"Mrs. Neely, that is very unusual. How old are you?"

"Ninety-eight," she replied.

"Oh, Mrs. Neely, would you please come down in front & tell us all how a person can live ninety-eight years and not have an enemy in the world?"

The little sweetheart of a lady tottered down the aisle, faced the congregation, and said: "I outlived the old biddies..." †



## MORE ON CONSCIENCE



### THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE

More lived up to Bishop Tunstall's expectations, even when Tunstall himself would have preferred otherwise. Towards the end of More's life, for example, Tunstall and two other bishops lent him twenty pounds, asking him to accept the money for a gown and then to join them in attending Anne Boleyn's coronation. The response he gave them shows how forcefully and yet humorously he could express himself in an effort to get others to face the full truth of a situation. A brilliant piece of rhetoric, this response was designed to shock through its earthy directness while appealing to reason through its comic vividness. It runs as follows: "My lords, in the letters which you lately sent me, you asked two things of me. Since I am so well content to grant you the one, therefore I thought I might be the bolder to deny you the other. As for the first, because I took you for no beggars, and myself I knew to be no rich man, that one I thought I might fulfill. But the other reminded me of an emperor that had decreed a law that whoever committed a certain offense (which I now do not remember) should suffer the pains of death-unless the person were a virgin, since he had such a reverence for virginity. Now it so happened that the first offender was indeed a virgin. When the emperor heard this, he was greatly perplexed since he wanted an opportunity to have that law executed. When his council had sat and solemnly debated this case, suddenly there arose one of his council, a good plain man, who said, 'Why make so much ado, my lords, about so small a matter? Let her first be deflowered, and then after may she be devoured.'"

Lest the bishops miss the point of this little tale, More went on to draw out its meaning. "And so," he continued, "although your lordships have in the matter of the King's marriage so far kept yourselves pure virgins, yet take good heed, my lords, that you continue to keep your virginity. For some there are who, by first getting your lordships to be present at the coronation, will then get you to preach for its legitimacy, and finally will get you to write books to all the world in defense of it. These desire to deflower you, and when they have deflowered you, then will they not fail soon after to devour you. Now, my lords, it lies not in my power if they devour me, but God being my good Lord, I will provide that they shall never deflower me."

There are few better examples in all of More's writings than this one to show his courageous and artful way of expressing the truth as he saw it, of challenging others to confront issues before the tribunal of conscience.

**Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage**

**Gerard B. Wegemer (Pg. 52-53) †**

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

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COMMUNITY TO HELP SERVE BREAKFAST**

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**BREAKFAST 8:30-10:30 AM**

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Greg Weiler (949) 851-7238 or [gweiler@ptwww.com](mailto:gweiler@ptwww.com) or  
Leia or Dwight Smith (714) 558-7478

**MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI****Mary, Mother of God***January 1, 2008**Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

As in a mosaic, today's liturgy contemplates different events and messianic situations, but attention is especially focused on *Mary, Mother of God*. Eight days after Jesus' birth, we commemorate the Mother, the *Theotokos*, the one who gave birth to the Child who is King of Heaven and earth for ever (cf. *Entrance Antiphon; Sedulius*).

The liturgy today meditates on the Word made man and repeats that he is born of the Virgin. It reflects on the circumcision of Jesus as a rite of admission to the community and contemplates God who, by means of Mary, gave his Only-Begotten Son to lead the "new people". It recalls the name given to the Messiah and listens to it spoken with tender sweetness by his Mother. It invokes peace for the world, Christ's peace, and does so through Mary, Mediatrix and Cooperator of Christ (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 60-61).

We are beginning *a new solar year* which is a further period of time offered to us by divine Providence in the context of the salvation inaugurated by Christ. But did not the eternal Word enter time precisely through Mary? In the Second Reading we have just listened to, the Apostle Paul recalls this by saying that Jesus was born "of woman" (Gal 4: 4).

In today's liturgy *the figure of Mary*, true Mother of Jesus, God-man, *stands out*. Thus, today's Solemnity is not celebrating an abstract idea but a mystery and an historic event: Jesus Christ, a divine Person, is born of the Virgin Mary who is his Mother in the truest sense.

Today too, *Mary's virginity* is highlighted, in addition to her motherhood. These are two prerogatives that are always proclaimed together, inseparably, because they complement and qualify each other. Mary is Mother, but a Virgin Mother; Mary is a virgin, but a Mother Virgin. If either of these aspects is ignored, the mystery of Mary as the Gospels present her to us, cannot be properly understood.

As Mother of Christ, Mary is also *Mother of the Church*, which my venerable Predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI chose to proclaim on 21 November 1964 at the Second Vatican Council. Lastly, Mary is the *Spiritual Mother of all humanity*, because Jesus on the Cross shed his blood for all of us and from the Cross he entrusted us all to her maternal care.

Let us begin this new year, therefore, by looking at Mary whom we received from God's hands as a precious "talent" to be made fruitful, a providential opportunity to contribute to bringing about the Kingdom of God.

In this atmosphere of prayer and gratitude to the Lord for the gift of a new year, I am pleased to address my respectful thoughts to the distinguished Ambassadors of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See who have desired to take part in today's solemn Celebration.

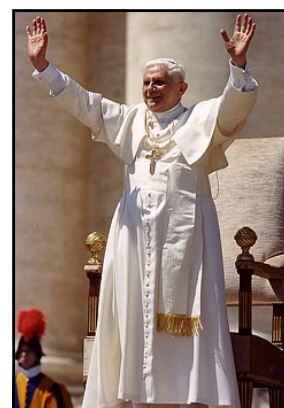
I cordially greet Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, my Secretary of State. I greet Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino and the members of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and express to them my deep gratitude for the commitment with which they daily promote these values, so fundamental to social life.

For this World Day of Peace, I addressed the customary Message to the Governors and Leaders of Nations, as well as to all men and women of good will. Its theme this year is: *The human person, the heart of peace*.

I am deeply convinced that "respect for the person promotes peace and that, in build-



**FROM  
PETER'S  
SUCCESSOR,  
POPE  
BENEDICT XVI**



(Continued from page 19) Papal Message

ing peace, the foundations are laid for an authentic integral humanism" (Message for World Peace Day, 1 January 2007, n. 1).

This commitment is especially incumbent on every Christian who is called "to be committed to tireless peace-making and strenuous defence of the dignity of the human person and his inalienable rights" (Message, n. 16). Precisely because he is created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gn 1: 27), every human individual without distinction of race, culture or religion, *as a person is clothed in God's same dignity*. For this reason he should be respected, nor can any reason ever justify an arbitrary use of him, as if he were an object.

In the face of the threats to peace that are unfortunately ever present, the situations of injustice and violence that persist in various areas of the earth and the continuing armed conflicts often overlooked by the majority of public opinion, as well as the danger of terrorism that clouds the serenity of peoples, it is becoming more necessary than ever *to work for peace together*. This, as I recalled in my Message, is "both gift and task" (n. 3): a gift to implore with prayer and a task to be carried out with courage, never tiring.

The Gospel narrative we have heard portrays the scene of the shepherds of Bethlehem, who after hearing the Angel's announcement go to the grotto to worship the Child (cf. Lk 2: 16). Should we not look again at the dramatic situation marking the very Land in which Jesus was born? How can we not entreat God with insistent prayers for the day of peace to arrive as soon as possible in that region too, the day on which the current conflict that has lasted far too long will be resolved?

If a peace agreement is to endure, it must be based on respect for the dignity and rights of every person. I express to the representatives of the nations present here my hope that the International Community will muster its forces so that a world may be built in God's Name in which the essential human rights are respected by all. For this to happen, people must recognize that these rights are not only based on human agreements but "on man's very nature and his inalienable dignity as a person created by God" (Message, n. 13).

Indeed, were the constitutive elements of human dignity entrusted to changeable human opinions, even solemnly proclaimed human rights would end by being weakened and variously interpreted. "Consequently, it is important for international agencies not to lose sight of the natural foundation of human rights. This would enable them to avoid the risk, unfortunately ever-present, of sliding towards a merely positivistic interpretation of those rights" (*ibid.*).

*"The Lord bless you and keep you... lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace"* (Nm 6: 24, 26). This is the formula of the Blessing we heard in the First Reading, taken from the Book of Numbers. The Lord's Name is repeated in it three times. This gives one an idea of the intensity and power of the Blessing, whose last word is "peace".

The biblical term *shalom*, which we translate as "peace", implies that accumulation of good things in which consists the "salvation" brought by Christ, the Messiah announced by the Prophets. We Christians therefore recognize him as the Prince of Peace. He became a man and was born in a grotto in Bethlehem to bring peace to people of good will, to all who welcome him with faith and love.

Thus, peace is truly the gift and commitment of Christmas: *the gift* that must be accepted with humble docility and constantly invoked with prayerful trust, *the task* that makes every person of good will a "channel of peace".

Let us ask Mary, Mother of God, to help us to welcome her Son and, in him, true peace. Let us ask her to sharpen our perception so that we may recognize in the face of every human person, the Face of Christ, the heart of peace! ✚



**THE VIRGIN  
OF HUMILITY**

*Fra Angelico*

(1435)

## IS MARY REALLY GOD'S MOTHER? *FAITH OF OUR FATHERS*

**IRENAEUS:** "The Virgin Mary, being obedient to his word, received from an angel the glad tidings that she would bear God" (*Against Heresies*, 5:19:1 [A.D. 180]).

**ALEXANDER OF ALEXANDRIA:** "We acknowledge the resurrection of the dead, of which Jesus Christ our Lord became the firstling; he bore a body not in appearance but in truth derived from Mary the Mother of God" (*Encyclical Letter to All Non-Egyptian Bishops* 12 [A.D.324]).

**EPHRAIM:** "Though still a virgin she carried a Child in her womb, and the handmaid and work of his wisdom became the Mother of God" (*Songs of Praise* 1:20 [A.D. 338-373]).

**ATHANASIUS:** "The Word begotten of the Father from on high, inexpressibly, inexplicably, incomprehensibly, and eternally is he that is born in time here below of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God" (*On the Incarnation of the Word of God* 8 [A.D. 365]).

**CYRIL OF JERUSALEM:** "The Father bears witness from heaven to his Son. The Holy Spirit bears witness, coming down bodily in the form of a dove. The Archangel Gabriel bears witness, bringing the good tidings to Mary. The Virgin Mother of God bears witness (*Catechetical Lectures* 10:19 [A.D.350]).

**GREGORY OF NAZIANZ:** "If anyone does not agree that Holy Mary is Mother of God, he is at odds with the Godhead. If anyone asserts that Christ passed through the Virgin as through a channel and was not shaped in her both divinely and humanly, divinely because without man and humanly because in accord with the law of gestation, he is likewise godless" (*Epistle to Cledonius the Priest* 101 [A.D. 382]).

**EPIPHANIUS:** "For this is the Holy Savior who came down from heaven, who deigned to fashion for our salvation in a virginal workshop . . . who did not change his nature when he took on humanity along with his divinity . . . who took on human flesh and soul. Being perfect at the side of the Father and incarnate among us, not in appearance but in truth, he reshaped man to perfection in himself from Mary the Mother of God through the Holy Spirit" (*The Man Well-Anchored* 75 [A.D. 374]).

**THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA:** "When, therefore, they ask, 'Is Mary mother of man or Mother of God?' we answer, 'Both!' The one by the very nature of what was done and the other by relation. Mother of man because it was a man who was in the womb of Mary and who came forth from there, and the Mother of God because God was in the man who was born, not in him in a circumscribable way according to nature, but existing in him by intention of will" (*On the Incarnation* 15 [A.D. 390]).

**JEROME:** "Do not marvel at the novelty of the thing, if a Virgin gives birth to God" (*Commentaries on Isaiah* 3:7:15 [A.D. 408-410]).

**JOHN CASSIAN:** "Now, you heretic, you say, whoever you are who deny that God was born of the Virgin, that Mary, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, cannot be called *Theotokos*, that is, the Mother of God, but *Christotokos*, that is, the Mother only of Christ [the man] and not of God. For no one, you say, gives birth to one older than herself. And of this utterly stupid argument, wherein you suppose that the birth of God [at the Incarnation] can be understood by a carnal intellect and believe that the mystery of his majesty can be resolved by human reasoning, we will, if God permits, offer a refutation later on. In the meantime, however, let us prove by divine testimonies both that Christ is God and that Mary is the Mother of God" (*On the Incarnation of Christ Against Nestorius* 2:2 [A.D.429]).

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA:** "I have been amazed that some are utterly in doubt as to whether or not the Holy Virgin is able to be called the Mother of God. For if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, how should the Holy Virgin who bore him not be the Mother of God?" (*Epistle to the Monks of Egypt* 1 [A.D. 423-431]).

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA:** "In accord with this understanding of the unconfused union [of Christ's divine and human natures] we confess that the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God" (*Epistle to John, Bishop of Antioch* 39 [A.D. 433]). ☩

## THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

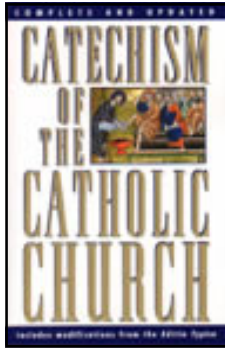
### PART FOUR: CHRISTIAN PRAYER

#### SECTION ONE: PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

#### CHAPTER ONE: THE REVELATION OF PRAYER

#### ARTICLE 2: IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

#### THE PRAYER OF THE VIRGIN MARY



### CATECHISM CORNER

**2617** Mary's prayer is revealed to us at the dawning of the fullness of time. Before the incarnation of the Son of God, and before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, her prayer cooperates in a unique way with the Father's plan of loving kindness: at the Annunciation, for Christ's conception; at Pentecost, for the formation of the Church, his Body. In the faith of his humble handmaid, the Gift of God found the acceptance he had awaited from the beginning of time. She whom the Almighty made "full of grace" responds by offering her whole being: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word." "Fiat": this is Christian prayer: to be wholly God's, because he is wholly ours.

**2618** The Gospel reveals to us how Mary prays and intercedes in faith. At Cana, the mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast - that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride. It is at the hour of the New Covenant, at the foot of the cross, that Mary is heard as the Woman, the new Eve, the true "Mother of all the living."

**2619** That is why the Canticle of Mary, the Magnificat (Latin) or Megalynei (Byzantine) is the song both of the Mother of God and of the Church; the song of the Daughter of Zion and of the new People of God; the song of thanksgiving for the fullness of graces poured out in the economy of salvation and the song of the "poor" whose hope is met by the fulfillment of the promises made to our ancestors, "to Abraham and to his posterity for ever." †



THE VIRGIN MARY

*El Greco*

(1594-1604)

#### THE MAGNIFICAT

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

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**HAIL, HOLY QUEEN:  
THE MOTHER OF GOD IN THE WORD OF GOD  
BY SCOTT HAHN**

A fresh and enlightening new perspective on Mary, Mother of God, and her central importance in the Christian faith, from the author of the highly successful **The Lamb's Supper**.

In **The Lamb's Supper**, Catholic scholar and apologist Scott Hahn explored the relationship between the Book of Revelation and the Roman Catholic Mass, deftly clarifying the most subtle of theological points with analogies and anecdotes from everyday life. In **Hail, Holy Queen**, he employs the same accessible, entertaining style to demonstrate Mary's essential role in Christianity's redemptive message.

Most Christians know that the life of Jesus is foreshadowed throughout the Old Testament. Through a close examination of the Bible, as well as the work of both Catholic and Protestant scholars and clergy, Hahn brings to light the small but significant details showing that just as Jesus is the "New Adam," so Mary is the "New Eve." He unveils the Marian mystery at the heart of the Book of Revelation and reveals how it is foretold in the very first pages of the Book of Genesis and in the story of King David's monarchy, which speaks of a privileged place for the mother of the king.

Building on these scriptural and historical foundations, Hahn presents a new look at the Marian doctrines: Her Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity, Assumption, and Coronation. As he guides modern-day readers through passages filled with mysteries and poetry, Hahn helps them rediscover the ancient art and science of reading the Scriptures and gain a more profound understanding of their truthfulness and relevance to faith and the practice of religion in the contemporary world.



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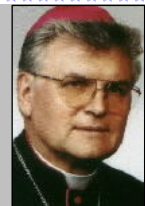


**OUR NEXT MEETING:**

**WHEN: WEDNESDAY MAY 21 @ NOON (LUNCH \$15)**

**SPEAKER: BISHOP PETER ESTERKA**

**TOPIC: *Mary and Crisis***



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