

# Ad Veritatem

Volume 14 Issue 10

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

OCTOBER 2009

*"St. Thomas More never confused learning and intellectual agility with virtue and character."*

Thomas More: Portrait of Courage

## OCTOBER MEETING:

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21, 2009 NOON

SPEAKER: BILL MAY, CATHOLICS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

TOPIC: "Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places"

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. †*

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**O. PRAEM, PH.D.**

*St. Michael's Abbey*

## OCTOBER MEETING

## BILL MAY, CATHOLICS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

### *"Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places"*

**WHEN:**  
NOON  
Wed. Oct. 21

**WHERE:**  
First American  
Trust Bldg.  
5 First American  
Way, Santa Ana

**FOR DIRECTIONS**  
(714) 250-3000

**COST:**  
\$15 lunch

Catholics for the Common Good Chairman, Bill May will discuss how marriage, family, and human sexuality are being re-defined, and how it is affecting children. At the request of the California Catholic Conference, Bill and Catholics for the Common Good led the lay Catholic part of the Prop 8 campaign to restore the definition of marriage. Catholics for the Common Good has launched a new effort to promote the centrality and integrity of marriage for children and society entitled *Stand with Children*. Bill is a frequent guest on EWTN Radio, Immaculate Heart Radio, and has appeared in interviews on *Good Morning America*, *The News Hour*, ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, BBC, Fox News Channel, and CNN.

Everyone is welcome!

For questions, call Don Hunsberger (714) 663-8000  
or Anne Lanphar at (714) 250-1453 †

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

NOVEMBER 18  
DECEMBER 16  
JANUARY 20  
FEBRUARY 17

### RED MASS

MONDAY NOVEMBER 9, 2009

HOLY FAMILY CATHEDRAL

6:00 PM MASS RECEPTION & DINNER

SEE PAGE 11 †

## CALENDAR REMINDERS



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**A  
MESSAGE  
FROM  
OUR  
CHAPLAIN**



**THE CORONATION  
OF THE VIRGIN**

**Diego Velazquez**

(1645)

## DOES SALVATION DEPEND ON BELIEVING MARIAN DOCTRINES?

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

**QUERY:** *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) †

**You have not chosen me. I have chosen you.**

**Go and bear fruit that will last.**

**(John 15:16)**



## LADY OF THE HOUSE

BISHOP NORMAN MCFARLAND

ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN MAY 1997

When change takes place in a strongly traditional institution like the Catholic Church, it is often enough misread and misrepresented by zealots in opposing camps: by those who are stubbornly opposed to change of any kind, and by those who would not only design, but violently achieve, an entirely new structure by the early part of next week.

Such highly emotional reactions are to be found in the sensitive area of Catholic devotion to Mary of Nazareth. Historically, Our Lady has been a theological storm center, especially so during the Protestant Reformation when, despite Martin Luther's belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary (among other Marian doctrines) and radicals like Zwingli called Mary the highest of creatures next to her Son, "reforming committees" in Switzerland and elsewhere systematically hacked-up, hammered and burned centuries of Marian-inspired art in their "wars against idols." The clash between pro-Marianists and anti-Marianists in times past was usually with no holds barred, each group assaulting with hoarse shouts of "heresy!" the doctrinal position of the other. The Church had not only to uphold and insist upon the solid and saving religious truths that center upon the mother of the world's Savior, but no less for the safeguarding of the true faith, had to curb exorbitance of devotion in the name of Mary—sticky sentimentality, elements of sensationalism, even a kind of superstition ("be sure to light one of the blue votive candles"—that sort of thing). Yes, there has been misguided devotion in the name of Mary as there have been tortures and burnings in the name of Christ.

In our post-Vatican II age and ecumenical climate, there is a marked revival of interest in Mary of Nazareth among scholars, giving rise to a vast body of Marian literature—not only devotional works, but serious theological and historical reflections on her place in salvation history and in our culture. (The Marian Library at the University of Dayton, Ohio, for example, contains 95,000 volumes on the Blessed Virgin, much of it written in our lifetime.) And what is very noteworthy in this revival is that it is shared by Protestant (as well as Islamic) scholars, providing a liaison with the Catholic world.

Of course, as might be expected, the renewed interest in Mary is not all of a piece. For every book like the recent (1996) *Mary, Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*, a highly recommended work by the renowned Lutheran scholar, Jaroslav Pelikan, one can encounter mine fields of radical feminist or neo-pagan polemics in other current Marian literature. And here is where and why pain and alarm are being felt by some in the household of the Catholic Faith. Mary of Nazareth through the centuries has been the Lady of the house. Is there danger now of untoward accommodation of cherished belief and practice in her regard in the interest of ecumenism?

Well, let worried Catholics be reassured that Holy Mother Church will never be alienated from Holy Mother Mary. The fact is that Mary of Nazareth, Mother of the Savior, Mother of God, Mother of the Church, does not represent a peripheral consideration, a theological afterthought, in the Church's vision of faith. As is clear from a study of the earliest heresies, the Mother of Christ is profoundly, intrinsically involved in the most essential Christian teachings. The Docetists of the first century, for example, who denied Our Lord's humanity, could only be refuted by insisting that Christ drew human flesh from a human mother and by inserting in the earliest creeds the words "born of the Virgin Mary." The second century Gnostics would have exalted Christ right out of His human nature if the Fathers of the Church had not repeated that Mary was no mere channel through which Christ passed, but His Mother who truly conceived Him. And in the glorious Fifth Century Councils, "Mother of God, God bearer" was the rallying cry of orthodoxy against all who would divide Christ. Thirteenth Century Manichaeism, which held the body to be evil, was defeated by the practical acceptance of God-created matter implied in fingering and meditating on her rosary. We look back a short space to those lands which were loudest in their sixteenth century denunciations of the Church for "putting Mary in the place of Christ" and note that today they have largely abandoned both Mary and Christ, while the Church, now as then, continues to find Christ, as did the Shepherds in Bethlehem, "with Mary, His mother." In a word you excise Mary from the Incarnation and there is no Incarnation.

### SIGNPOSTS

ON  
THE  
WAY

***Well, let worried Catholics be reassured that Holy Mother Church will never be alienated from Holy Mother Mary.... As is clear from a study of the earliest heresies, the Mother of Christ is profoundly, intrinsically involved in the most essential Christian teachings.***

(Continued from page 5) Lady of the House

And in Pope John Paul's three-year program of preparation for the Third Millennium—the Jubilee of God incarnate entering human history—the Blessed Virgin is assigned a central role. He would have us consider her as “the model of faith,” a theme which he expounded in his 1987 encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*. From her “let it be” at the Annunciation, and “in the dim light of faith, accepting fully and with a ready heart everything that is decreed in the Divine Plan,” until “at the foot of the cross, Mary shares through faith in the shocking mystery of this self-emptying,” we are shown how to live our lives of faith.

Virgin most faithful: she is the beau ideal of discipleship. Allow Saint Augustine to emphasize the point. “It was for her a greater thing to have been Christ's disciple than to have been His Mother, and she was more blessed in her discipleship than in her motherhood. Hers was the happiness of first bearing in her womb Him whom she would obey as her master...Mary heard God's word and kept it, and so she is blest. She kept God's truth in her mind, a nobler thing than carrying His body in her womb. The truth and the body were both Christ: He was kept in Mary's mind insofar as He is truth, He was carried in her womb insofar as He is man; but what is kept in the mind is of a higher order than what is carried in the womb.”

A striking insight indeed, and one which we do well to ponder as we seek Mary's constant intercession to help us become people of faith after her example. In any event, the Lord Christ is not about to become embarrassed by the presence and proximity of His mother. Neither will the true follower of Christ. “All generations will call me blessed,” she said. They shall. We shall. †

## 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*

- ◆ Hugh Breckenridge (illness)
- ◆ Patricia Goethels (illness)
- ◆ Judi McEachen (deceased)
- ◆ Dr. Douglas McKee (deceased)
  - ◆ Bill Allard (deceased)
  - ◆ Carol Flynn (illness)
  - ◆ Carli Whittemore
- ◆ Ryan McEachon (special intention)
- ◆ Heather Flynn USAF (special intention)
- ◆ John Flynn IV USNA (special intention)
  - ◆ Kathy Todd (cancer)
  - ◆ Julia Nelson (serious illness)
  - ◆ Sean Nelson (illness)
  - ◆ Scott Smith (illness)
  - ◆ Children in Juvenile Hall
- ◆ Homeless and Isaiah House †

## SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

**"Most of us know our neighbors better than we know ourselves. We can tell all their faults, enumerate all the scandals about them and even add a few for good measure, but we are hardly conscious of any single fault of our own. And yet the human being is the only creature in the universe who has the power of being able to look at himself in a mirror; to turn back on himself, judge his motives, see his faults and his good deeds, and thus either be pleased or angry with himself in the light of his conscience." †**

## 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 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 fas-*



IMMACULATE  
CONCEPTION

Peter Paul Rubens

(1628)

\*Reprinted with  
Permission from  
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(Continued from page 7) **Immaculate Conception**

*tened 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:

*"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."*



(Continued from page 8) *Immaculate Conception*

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 **pre-served** 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.

### 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

(Continued from page 9) Immaculate Conception

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.”* †

## WHY IS MARY PORTRAYED AS A “QUEEN”?

**WHY  
DO  
WE  
BELIEVE...**

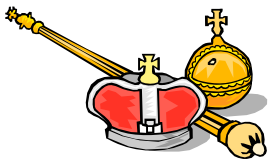
Is Mary portrayed as a queen anywhere in the Bible?

We normally associate the wife of the king as the queen. That is how it is in modern Europe. That is probably all we remember reading about in our studies of European history too. But, as strange as it might seem to us, that is not how it was in the Bible. In 1 Kings 2:19-20, the Bible shows that the Son of David, the King of Israel, makes his *mother* the queen. It says,

*[T]hen Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, and the king stood up to meet her and paid her homage. Then he sat down upon his throne, and a throne was provided for the king's mother, who sat at his right. "There is one small favor I would ask of you," she said. "Do not refuse me." "Ask it, my mother," the king said to her, "for I will not refuse you."*

From that moment on, in the Old Testament, the king's *mother* was always made the queen of the kingdom. This is something that Christ did not change.

In the Old Testament, Solomon was the Son of David, and the King of Israel. And what was his mother? She was the Queen of Israel. In the New Testament, who is the Son of David, and the King of Israel? Christ! And is Christ also the King of Heaven and Earth? Yes! Okay. Who was Christ's mother? Mary. Is it therefore correct to think of her as Queen of Heaven? That seems to be what the Bible points towards. †



**Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem\***



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

### ACTS 2:38



A woman had just returned to her home from an evening of Bible study, when she was startled by an intruder. She caught the man in the act of robbing her home of its valuables and yelled: "Stop! Acts 2:38!" (*"Repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven."*)

The burglar stopped in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done.

As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar: "Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a scripture at you."

"Scripture?" replied the burglar, "She said she had an ax and two 38s!" †



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The Red Mass is a Eucharistic celebration of the role of the law in God's plan. In 1245, the first Red Mass was celebrated in the La Sainte Chapelle, Paris honoring St Ives, the patron saint of lawyers. In 1310, the Red Mass was celebrated in England with the Bench and Bar in attendance at the opening of the Court term. The celebration is known as the Red Mass because the priest and judges wore red robes. The tradition has continued in the United States with members of the US Supreme Court joining the President and members of Congress each year at St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington. The Red Mass is also celebrated in numerous cities around the world.

For more information visit: [www.stthomasmore.net](http://www.stthomasmore.net)

## LUKE 1:28



### SCRIPTURAL CORNER

<sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you."

#### COMMENT FROM THE NAVARRE BIBLE:\*

"Hail, full of grace": literally the Greek text reads "Rejoice!" Obviously referring to a unique joy over the news which the angel is about to communicate.

"Full of grace": by this unusual form of greeting the archangel reveals Mary's special dignity and honor. The Fathers and Doctors of the Church "taught that this singular, solemn and unheard of greeting showed that all the divine graces reposed in the Mother of God and that she was adorned with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit," which meant that she "was never subject to the curse," that is, was preserved from all sin. These words of the archangel in this text constitute one of the sources which reveal the dogma of Mary's immaculate conception (cf. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*; Paul VI, *Creed of the People of God*).

"The Lord is with you!": these words are not simply a greeting ("the Lord be with you"), but an affirmation ("the Lord is with you), and they are closely connected with the Incarnation. St. Augustine comments by putting these words on the archangel's lips: "He is more with you than he is with me: he is in your heart, he takes shape within you, he fills your soul, he is in your womb." (*Sermo de Nativitate Domini*, 4)

Some important Greek manuscripts and early translations add at the end of the verse: "Blessed are you among women!" meaning that God will exalt Mary over all women. She is more excellent than Sarah, Hannah, Deborah, Rachel, Judith, etc., for only she has the supreme honor of being chosen to be the Mother of God.

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

### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



### THINGS TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

The mess to clean after a party because it means I have been surrounded by friends.

The taxes I pay because it means that I'm employed.

The clothes that fit a little too snug because it means I have enough to eat.

My shadow who watches me work because it means I am out in the sunshine.

A lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning and gutters that need fixing because it means I have a home.

All the complaining I hear about our government because it means we have freedom of speech.

The space I find at the far end of the parking lot because it means I am capable of walking.

My huge heating bill because it means I am warm.

The lady behind me in church who sings off key because it means that I can hear.

The piles of laundry and ironing because it means I have clothes to wear.

Weariness & aching muscles at the end of the day because it means I have been productive.

The alarm that goes off in the early morning hours because it means that I'm alive.

Getting too much email bogs me down

but at least I know I have friends who are thinking of me. †



# Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary\*

Monday December 8, 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

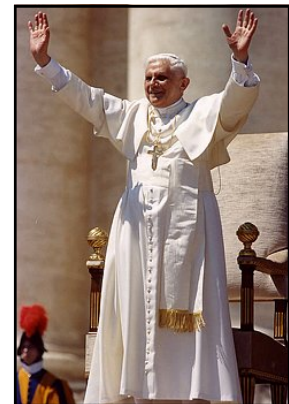
The mystery of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which we are solemnly celebrating today, reminds us of two fundamental truths of our faith: original sin first of all, and then the victory over it through Christ's grace, a victory that shines in a sublime way in Mary Most Holy. The existence of what the Church calls "original sin" is unfortunately glaringly obvious, if we merely look around us and first of all within ourselves. The experience of evil is in fact so consistent that it imposes itself and raises in us the question: where does it come from? Especially for a believer, this question is even more profound: if God, who is absolute Goodness, created all things, where does evil come from? The first pages of the Bible (Gn 1-3) respond precisely to this fundamental question which challenges every human generation with the narrative of Creation and of the fall of our first parents: God created all things so that they might exist and in particular he created the human being in his own image; he did not make death but death entered the world through the envy of the devil (cf. Wis 1: 13-14; 2: 23-24) who, rebelling against God, deceived men and women and induced them to rebel as well. This is the drama of the freedom which God accepts to the very end for love, but promises that a woman's son will crush the head of the ancient serpent (Gn 3: 15).

From the very beginning, therefore the "Eternal Design" as Dante would say, has a "fixed goal" (*Paradise*, XXXIII, 3): the Woman predestined to become Mother of the Redeemer, Mother of the One who humbled himself unto death to restore us to our original dignity. In God's eyes, this woman has always had a face and a name: "full of grace" (Lk 1: 28), as the Angel addressed her when he visited her at Nazareth. She is the new Eve, the Bride of the new Adam, destined to be Mother of all the redeemed. This is what St Andrew of Crete wrote: "The *Theotokos*, Mary, the common refuge of all Christians, was the first to be liberated from the primitive fall of our first parents" (cf. *Homily IV on the Nativity*, PG 97, 880 A). And today's liturgy says that God "prepared the Virgin Mary to be the worthy mother of his Son... and kept her sinless from the first moment of her being ... to let her share beforehand in the salvation Christ would bring by his death" (cf. *Opening Prayer for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception*).

Dear friends, in Mary Immaculate we contemplate the reflection of the Beauty that saves the world: the beauty of God resplendent on the Face of Christ. In Mary this beauty is totally pure, humble, free from all pride and presumption. Thus the Virgin showed herself to St Bernadette, 150 years ago, in Lourdes, and thus she is venerated at numerous shrines. This afternoon, in accordance with the tradition, I too will pay homage to her at the monument dedicated to her in the square near the Spanish Steps. Let us invoke the Immaculate Virgin confidently, repeating with the Angelus the words of the Gospel that today's liturgy proposes for our meditation. †



FROM  
PETER'S  
SUCCESSOR,  
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BENEDICT XVI



\* *Angelus*—  
St Peter's Square

## MORE ON HUMOR

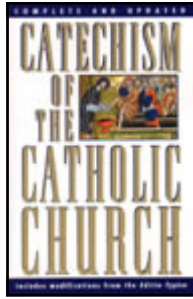


More considered a well-trained wit to be one of the greatest helps available in this world. Nevertheless, he saw clearly that it cannot ensure the preservation of virtue. Lucifer, after all, became so enamored with the power and beauty of his brilliant wit that he failed to remain loyal to his first love. Similarly, Adam and Eve became so caught up in the attractive power of their own "*fond fantasies*" that they neglected to attend to the true demands of life. Such is the drama of freedom, More would say. And the best defense of that freedom is vigilance in virtue, aided by the best mother wit one can fashion.

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage

Gerard B. Wegemer (Pg. 91) †

THE  
WRITINGS  
OF  
THOMAS  
MORE



## CATECHISM CORNER



### THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Giuseppe Angeli

(1765)

## THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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

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

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

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

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

*"Let it be done to me according to your word. . ."*

**494** At the announcement that she would give birth to "the Son of the Most High" without knowing man, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary responded with the obedience of faith, certain that "with God nothing will be impossible": "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word." Thus, giving her consent to God's word, Mary becomes the mother of Jesus. Espousing the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly, without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him and dependent on him, by God's grace:

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

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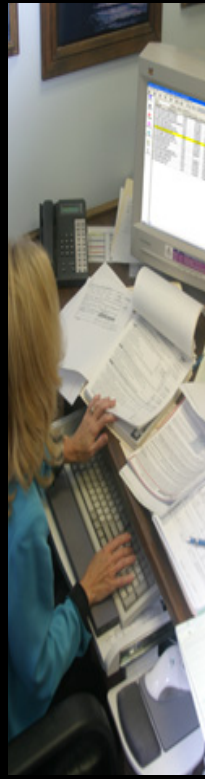


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