

Mariology - Official Roman Catholic Position On The Person And Work Of The Virgin Mary



Introduction:

Although for hundreds of years the Roman Catholic Church has given honor and adoration to Mary that the Scriptures do not, during the past fifty years, one of the most important trends in the Catholic Church has been an even greater emphasis upon the place of Mary. She is readily referred to as “holy,” the “Mother of God” (official Catholic dogma in 431 A.D.), with prayers to her proclaimed in 600 A.D, and has been dubbed the “Co-Redemtrix,” thereby making her an object of idolatrous worship (e.g., the rosary has ten prayers to Mary for each one directed to God). In 1923, Pope Pius XI sanctioned Pope Benedict XV’s (1914-1922) pronouncement that Mary suffered with Christ, and that with Him, she redeemed the human race. And Pope Pius XII officially designated Mary the “Queen of Heaven” and “Queen of the World.”

Catholic Claims About Mary:

Catholics claim not only that Mary was perfectly sinless from conception, even as Jesus was (doctrine of the “Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary,” proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854-“Let all the children of the Catholic Church ... Proceed to **worship**, invoke, and pray to **the most blessed Virgin Mary**, mother of God, conceived without original sin”), but that the reason she never sinned at any time during her life was because she was **unable to sin** (cf. Lk. 1:46,47; Rom. 3:10,23; 5:12; Heb. 4:15; 1 Jn. 1:8,10). Catholics also believe that Mary was a perpetual virgin (cf. Ps. 69:8; Matt. 1:24,25; 13:54-56; Mk. 6:3; Jn. 7:5), and that she was assumed, body and soul, into heaven, without ever dying (doctrine of the “Assumption of the Virgin Mary,” declared by Pope Pius XII in 1950). Finally, she was given the title “Mother of the Church” in 1965. The consequence of all this veneration of Mary, in effect, establishes her authority above Christ’s! Rome says, “He came to us through Mary and we must go to Him through her.” All this is so obviously idolatrous, one wonders why Catholics take offense when their religious affections are called cultic.

Mary Proclaimed Co-Redeemer (Co-redemptrix) With Christ:

There are some Roman Catholic observers that continue to believe that Mary has still not **officially** been proclaimed "Co-redemptrix with Christ." In fact, the premier issue of the Roman Catholic publication *Catholic Heritage* displayed a front page with the title: "Mary, Mother of the Church." In a Question and Answer column the question is asked, "At the foot of the cross, Mary shared in the mystery of the passion. True or False. Answer: True. Mary united her sorrows to those of her Son. The sorrowful and immaculate heart of Mary bled with her Son for all of mankind. For this reason, we invoke her **under the title of Co-redemptrix.**" (Emphasis added.)

During the past forty years, each pope has done his part to increase Mary's influence in the Roman Catholic Church, based completely on tradition rather than upon the Bible. In the 8/25/75 issue of the official Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, **Pope Paul VI**, speaking of the ceremony celebrated the day before in honor of the Madonna at the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, said, "Her venerate image, known as 'Salus Populi Romani,' was carried in procession from St. Mary Major's as part of the Holy Year ceremonies, so that the overflow crowd of pilgrims, coming from all parts of the world, could see it and thus increase their devotion to her. In this way we should all be reminded of the meaning and practice of the cult of Mary, inseparable from the unique and central cult of Christ ... **Let us pray to her** with humble, trusting and childlike faith." (Emphasis added.)

Papal Preoccupation With Mary:

The present pope, John Paul II, has dedicated himself completely to Mary. During his visit to Vancouver, B.C. in 1985, the special souvenir edition of B.C. Catholic carried a full page color photo of the pope under the caption of Totus Tuus, which, in Latin, means "all yours." The following explanation was then given:

"When Karol Wojtyla [John Paul II] was consecrated bishop of Cracow by Pius XII in 1958 he took, 'Totus Tuus' (all yours) as his motto, thus presenting himself to Mary. In his first Urbi et Orbi message immediately after being elected pope he said, 'At this difficult hour, full of fear, we must turn our thoughts with filial devotion to the Virgin Mary who always lives in the midst of Christ and exists as his mother. We must repeat the words, *Totus Tuus* which 20 years ago were inscribed into our heart and soul.'"

Pope John Paul II has visited many of the major Shrines to Mary. He attributed his escape from death at the hands of a would-be assassin and the overthrow of communism in Eastern Europe to the intervention of Mary. In 10/95, he said, "Mary is recognized and venerated as the true Mother of God and the Redeemer ... she contributed effectively to our spiritual birth and to the development of the life of grace within us." In his 12/18/96 general

audience, he stated: "Mary intensely and mysteriously unites her life with Christ's sorrowful mission: She was to become her Son's faithful coworker for the salvation of the human race" (2/17/97, *Christian News*). In his general audience on 6/19/96, he proclaimed that Mary was sinless throughout her life:

"At today's general audience, Pope John Paul continued his catechesis on Mary, recalling that the Church holds, in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, that she was preserved from original sin at the first moment of her existence and, as well, that 'Mary was free from personal sin and moral imperfection throughout her life.' The Holy Father went on to say that 'the possibility of sinning does not spare even a Christian who is transformed or renewed by grace ... unless, as the Council of Trent stated, a special privilege assures such immunity from sin. This is what happened to Mary.' The council, stating that the Church 'firmly holds this (privilege of Mary), ... confirms its solid doctrinal character'" (6/19/96, Vatican Information Service, Vatican City).#

The pope is not alone in his veneration of Mary:

(a) A Roman Catholic priest, in the Summer 1991 issue of the *Fatima Crusader*, said that Mary came to Fatima to save our souls and that Mary herself said that "I will save the world, with my Rosary and My scapular." The priest also said that if a Catholic says the Rosary every day, and always wears the scapular of Mary, then she is bound to save you from hell, a guarantee for salvation!! (Reported in the 9/15/91, *Calvary Contender*).

(b) Millions of Catholics are making pilgrimages to the various Marian shrines, seeking and often claiming miracles of healing and answers to their prayers to Mary. New apparitions of Mary and special messages from her are being claimed in various parts of the world [even on the outside glass walls of a Savings & Loan building in Florida in 1996!]. On 6/20/96, more than 1,000 Catholic priests gathered in Fatima, Portugal, for the First International Meeting of Priests. The Vatican Information Service said that the priests gathered at the foot of the statue of Mary and "consecrated themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary." (Reported in a 6/28/96 FBNS report)

(c) The Winter '94 *Fatima Crusader* (published by Roman Catholics) had the following quotes: "Madonna has a share in the royalty of God ... One rightly calls her Jesus' Queen-Mother, and ... She now takes her place in glory at Her Son's right hand. ... Yes, O Mary, Mother of God, Sovereign Virgin, God's most glorious creature, we want to follow You as our Queen of love, who art all-powerful ... The Holy Mother of God revealed ...: 'I am She who is in the Divine Trinity ... Submit yourself to the authority of the Pope ...' The Madonna brings Jesus to us and takes us to Jesus. That is why we call her Mediatrix. ... Mary came to Fatima to save souls from Hell. ... Mary said, 'Through the Rosary and Scapular I will save the world.'"

Catholic Quotes About Mary:

The following *random* quotes from the book *Ten Series of Meditations on the Mystery of the Rosary*, by John Ferraro, is intended to give an overview of Roman Catholic dogma concerning the Virgin Mary. Ferraro's book was given the **Nihil Obstat** and the **Imprimatur**, which is an official statement by the Roman Catholic Church that the book "is free of doctrinal or moral error." Therefore, we **can take these quotes as official Roman Catholic doctrine**:

(a) She [Mary] is co-Redemtrix of the human race.

(b) The church and the saints greet her thus: "You, O Mary, together with Jesus Christ, redeemed us."

(c) God has ordained that no grace will be granted to us except through Mary. It is a doctrine preached by all the saints that no grace will come to us from heaven without passing through Mary's hands. No one will be saved nor obtain mercy except through You, O' heavenly lady. Remember this well, no one will enter heaven without passing through Mary as one would pass through a door. O' Mary, our salvation is in your hands.

(d) During His passion, Mary suffered in her heart all the pains that Jesus suffered in His body. For this reason, God exalted her so greatly.

(e) Mary is our co-Redemtrix because she gave us Jesus pledge of our salvation. Furthermore, she is co-Redemtrix of the human race, because with Christ she ransomed mankind from the power of Satan.

(f) Jesus redeemed us with the blood of His body, Mary with the agonies of her heart.

(g) We were condemned through the fault of one woman; we are saved through the merits of another woman. Just as Eve was the root of death for everyone, so Mary was the source of life for everyone.

(h) Mary is our co-Redemtrix because she suffered in her heart whatever was **lacking** in the passion of Christ. Are we obligated to Jesus for His passions?—so we are indebted to Mary for her participation in His passions. She gave birth to Jesus with joy; she gave birth to us, brothers of Jesus, in anguish and sorrow. (Emphasis added)

(i) Mary, Queen of the Apostles: She is queen of apostles because she **formed** them and **directed** them in their preaching. Mary is Queen of Apostles because by herself she routed all the heresies. Mary is Queen of Apostles because she is mother of grace and channel of mercy. She is Queen of Apostles because in her every hope is life and virtue. She is Queen of Apostles because she is conqueror of the Infernal Dragon. (Emphasis added)

(j) If we spread devotion to Mary, we will gain heaven-“Who explains me will have life everlasting.”

(k) God shared His power with her [Mary]. “My mother, ask, for I must not turn away your face.” Christ speaking to Mary: “Without your command, no one shall move hand or foot in the whole land.”

(l) All grace is passed from God to Jesus, from Jesus to Mary, and from Mary to us. The grace of God, cure for our ills, comes to us through Mary like water through an aqueduct.

(m) Mary is the compliment of the Holy Spirit. Before God she asks not-she commands!

(n) No true devotee of Mary will be damned because she is the terrible conqueror of the devil.

(o) Because she believed in Christ’s mission of salvation, she became the co-Redemtrix of the whole human race.

(p) Mary is holier than the saints, loftier than the heavens, more glorious than the cherubim, more venerable than any other creature.

(q) No one can acquire an intimate union with Jesus and a perfect fidelity to the Holy Spirit without being greatly united with Mary.

(r) It is necessary for us to have a mediator **besides** Jesus as mediator, and we will never find one more qualified than Mary. (Emphasis added)

(s) It was never written of anyone that he became a saint without having a special devotion to Mary.

(t) When God deeply loves a soul, and finds it stained with sin, He covers it with a beautiful mantle that makes it precious to Him-that mantle is Mary.

(u) Mary is the ark of salvation built by God on the deluge of our faults so that whoever desires may enter and be saved.

(v) Whoever is enamored of Mary, attaches his soul to a steadfast anchor that will draw him to the port of happiness.

(w) It is important to be devoted to Mary as it is to enter heaven, because no one can enter Paradise who is not devoted to Mary.

(x) In reward for humility, God gave to Mary the power of filling with blessed souls the thrones left empty by the rebellious angels.

(y) Mary is secretary of the King of Heaven. It is she who writes in the Book of Life the names of the predestined, and signs them with the emblem of God.

She herself is the Book of Life from which God will read the names of the elect on the day of judgment.

(z) To be devoted to you, O' Mary, is a weapon of salvation which God gave to those whom He positively wants to save.

Summary:

There is absolutely no Scriptural foundation for any of these beliefs or practices. Mary was indeed a virgin in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy that Christ would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7: 14). She was a godly woman, but not sinless. As with all true believers in Christ, when Mary died, her soul and spirit went to heaven, but her body awaits the resurrection. She did not bodily ascend to heaven as did Jesus Christ. Nothing in Scripture indicates that prayers were ever offered to Mary nor that she was worshipped by anyone. Most of Roman Catholic teaching concerning Mary is based entirely on human tradition and contradicts God's Word.

* Much of the material in this report (unless otherwise noted) has been excerpted and/or adapted from an article titled, "The Truth About Roman Catholicism," September-October 1996, Foundation magazine, pp. 5-16.

— *John Beardsley - Biblical Discernment Ministries - 4/1997*

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