

## The Blessed Virgin Mary



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### Mary in Sacred Scripture:

1. **Luke 1:26-38 & Matthew 1:18-25** (The Annunciation) "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!"
2. **Luke 1:39-56** (The Visitation) "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"
3. **Luke 2:16-19 & Matthew 2:10-11** (The Birth of Christ)
4. **Luke 2:34-35** (The Presentation of Christ in the Temple)
5. **John 2:1-11** (Wedding at Cana) "Do whatever he tells you."
6. **John 19:25-27** "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

## The Blessed Virgin Mary

### First Things First!

1. Mary is not God, nor should she be worshipped.
2. Mary is the first Christian and an archetype (or model) of the Church.
3. She summarizes in her life what it means to accept Jesus Christ.
4. Mary is our spiritual mother.
5. Mary is an intercessor with all the Saints.
6. Like Mary, the Church is called to hear, accept, ponder, and be obedient to the Word of God made flesh, Jesus Christ.

## The Blessed Virgin Mary

### Mariology- Various things regarding Mary

1. Mary, the Mother of the Church
2. Mary the Mother of God
3. The Immaculate Conception
4. The Assumption of Mary
5. Mary's Perpetual Virginity
6. Marian Apparitions

# The Blessed Virgin Mary

## Mary, the Mother of the Church

- If Mary is the mother of Jesus, and through Him we have been made "children of God," then Mary is our spiritual mother (1 John 3:1).
  - This means that Mary has a vocation of intercession for the children of God.
  - As with all mothers, Mary also provides an example of living for her children.

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## Mary, the Mother of God (Theotokos)

- The 5<sup>th</sup> Century brought a big theological question to the Church: Can we legitimately call Mary "*Theotokos*," or "God-bearer" or "Mother of God"?
  - Some of the leaders of the Church did not want people to become confused about Mary's humanity by essentially calling her the "Mother of God," while others thought that the title would safeguard the unity of Jesus' human and divine nature.
  - The discussion came to an end at the Council of Ephesus, in 431 A.D., when the Church declared that Mary could rightly be called the "Mother of God," not because she contributed to the divine nature of Jesus, but because she is the mother of his human nature. This was essentially just a reaffirmation of a long-standing tradition in prayer of referring to Mary as the Mother of God.

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### Mary, the Mother of God (Theotokos)

- As with all “Marian Theology,” the discussion of Mary’s title Theotokos shows that, in the end, Marian Theology has very little to do with Mary and much more to do with Christology— our understanding of Who Christ is.

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### The Immaculate Conception

- The Church teaches that in order for Mary to become the mother of our Savior, Jesus Christ, she must have been “enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role” (Vatican Council II, LG 56).
- The Angel Gabriel greeted Mary as “full of grace” (Luke 1:28).

## The Blessed Virgin Mary

- Pope Pius IX officially proclaimed the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1854 after consultation with the world's bishops. He wrote:

"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."  
*(Ineffabilis Deus).*

## The Blessed Virgin Mary

- In the words of an early Christian, Saint Gregory Nazianzen (4<sup>th</sup> c.):  
"[Christ] was conceived by the Virgin Mary, who had been first prepared in soul and body by the Spirit; his coming to birth had to be treated with honor."
- The Immaculate Conception does not mean that Mary was conceived virginally, like Jesus, but rather, that God spiritually prepared Mary to be a pure and holy vessel for His Son.

# The Blessed Virgin Mary

## The Assumption of Mary

- Several people in the Old Testament were reported to have been "taken up into heaven" because of their holiness.
  - Enoch was taken into heaven without dying (Gen 5:24 [Hebrews 11:5]).
  - Elijah was assumed into heaven in a fiery chariot (2 Kings 2:11).
  - "Many saints who had fallen asleep were raised" (Matt. 27:52).
- The Tradition of the Church states that Mary, because of the instrumental role she played (and continues to play) in the history of salvation, was assumed into heaven by the power of God.
- The Church has held that Mary was assumed into heaven after she died, and two cities— Ephesus and Jerusalem— hold claim to her tomb.

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## The Assumption of Mary

- November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1950, Pope Pius XII declared infallibly that the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was a teaching of the Catholic Faith.
- Likewise, the Second Vatican Council taught in the Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium that "the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over" (n. 59).
- The Church remembers and celebrates this event on August 15<sup>th</sup> each year. The date was not set based on the day Mary is believed to have died, since this is not known.

# The Blessed Virgin Mary

## Mary's Perpetual Virginity

Q- "Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?"

A- "No."

# The Blessed Virgin Mary

- The Church's teaching is supported by four basic observations:
  1. On several occasions Jesus is called the son of Mary, but none of the other "brethren" are.
  2. There are two people, James and Joseph, who *are* mentioned as "sons of Mary" (Mt 27:56), but this is a different Mary as shown in Mark 15:40.
  3. Jesus would have never entrusted his mother to John (Jn. 19:26-27) if Mary had other sons to take care of her.
  4. The Greek word for "brethren," *αδελφος*, has a much broader meaning than just "brother." Since ancient Hebrew had no word for cousin, the Greek Old Testament translation used the word "brethren." Following the Old Testaments lead, the New Testament also used the word *αδελφος* to describe other familial relationships other than an actual brother. Similarly, Saint Paul used this word to describe Christians as the "family" of Christ. All of these Scriptural observations, along with the longstanding Tradition of the Church, point towards Jesus not having any siblings by his mother, Mary.

# The Blessed Virgin Mary

## Marian Apparitions:

1. Guadalupe, Mexico (1531)
2. Lourdes, France (1858)
3. Fatima, Portugal (1917)
4. Medjugorje, Yugoslavia (1981-present)

# The Blessed Virgin Mary

## Guadalupe, Mexico (1531)

- The first apparition is reported to have taken place between December 9 and 12 of 1531 in Tepeyac, a poor area just outside of Mexico City.
- Mary appeared to a peasant, Juan Diego, then to his dying uncle Juan Bernadino (who was healed).
- The Aztecs of Mexico demanded human sacrifice as part of their religion. The missionaries from Spain were struggling trying to convert the Aztecs and to stop the sacrifices. The conflict was rising and so was the death toll.
- Mary appeared to Juan Diego and asked him to go to the bishop and request that a chapel be built at Tepeyac. When Juan Diego spoke with the bishop, he was dismissed and the bishop told him he would need to bring proof of Mary's desire for a chapel. Juan Diego returned to the site where Mary had appeared and again she spoke to him and told him to take some roses to the bishop as proof. The roses were Castilian roses and were growing out of the frozen earth. He folded the roses in his tilma and returned to the bishop. When he unfolded his tilma and the roses fell to the ground, an image of Mary was left on his garment. The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe brought about the conversion of millions (about nine million to be exact) and unified the war-torn country of Mexico.

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## Lourdes, France (1858)

- Lourdes is a town in Southwest France where Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous eighteen times at the grotto of Massabielle.
- On February 24, Bernadette was instructed to bathe and drink from a spring that began to flow on the following day. Since then, the bath at Lourdes has been associated with thousands of miraculous healings.
- On March 24, Bernadette was instructed to have a chapel built in honor of Mary, and on the following day, Mary identified herself as the Immaculate Conception.
  - After extensive review, the bishop of Tarbes proclaimed the legitimacy of the apparitions. Bernadette became a nun, joining the Sisters of Charity in 1865 and died in 1879
  - The events surrounding Lourdes remain private revelation and, therefore, Catholics are not required to give assent to the apparitions themselves or to the healings associated with Lourdes.

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## Fatima, Portugal (1917)

- In 1917, Mary reportedly appeared to three children in Fatima, Portugal.
- Mary's message to the children included the prediction of the end of WWI and the future difficulties with Russia.
- Mary's message at Fatima was confusing at the time, since Russia was not a political power, but very weak due to civil wars.
- Mary request was nothing more than the Gospel message—repentance, faith in Jesus, and living the Christian faith with integrity. She specifically asked that the Rosary be prayed every day, with special attention given to the Word of God, Sacred Scripture, that this prayer contains, and that individuals and nations (esp. Russia) be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart.

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### Medjugorje, Yugoslavia (1981-present)

- While there have been many reported apparitions of Mary throughout the history of the Church, these three— Guadalupe, Fatima, and Lourdes— are officially accepted by the Church after years of rigorous investigation.
- The apparitions in Medjugorje, which have become very well known, have not yet been “accepted” by the Church, but continue to be investigated.

## The Blessed Virgin Mary

### Why is Mary appearing?

- Mary brought Jesus into the world the first time. Now she helps to bring about his Second Coming.
- In her role of intercession, Mary continues to echo the last words she spoke in the Bible, “Do whatever he (Jesus) tells you.” She always points us toward her Son and asks us to be obedient to him.

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