

Mary and the Church

- Mentioned in the bible around 23 times – Peter mentioned 191 times – holds a uniquely important place
- Infancy narratives (Matthew, Luke)
- Jesus' first miracle, and at the Crucifixion (Gospel of John)
- Pentecost (Acts)

- CCC on Mary
- In her we contemplate what the Church already is in her mystery on her own "pilgrimage of faith," and what she will be in the homeland at the end of her journey. There, "in the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity," "in the communion of all the saints," the Church is awaited by the one she venerates as Mother of her Lord and as her own mother.

- Four Marian dogmas
- Perpetual virginity
- Mother of God
- Immaculate Conception
- Assumption

- The role of Mariology...
- Mary tells us about Jesus – how it developed
- Mother of God – Christ's two natures
- Immaculate conception – Christ's saving work
- Wider salvation history

- “The maternal duty of Mary toward men in no wise obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows His power. For all the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. In no way does it impede, but rather does it foster the immediate union of the faithful with Christ.” (LG60)

- Mary tells us about anthropology
- “Post-conciliar Mariology has given renewed attention to anthropology. ... In the convergence of the data of faith and the data of the anthropological sciences, when these turn their attention to Mary of Nazareth, one understands more clearly that the Virgin is both the highest historical realization of the Gospel, and the woman who, through her self-control, her sense of responsibility, her openness to others and to the spirit of service, her strength and her love, is the most completely realized on the human level.”
(Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Virgin Mary in Intellectual and Spiritual Formation*)

- Mary telling us about the Church
- Analogy with the woman in Revelation who seems to image the Church.
- In bringing Christ into the world (and as a temple of the Holy Spirit, LG53) she embodies the ecclesial mission.
- Priestly element



- Vatican II: own document or within the document on the church?
- One of the closest votes
- Final part of Lumen Gentium

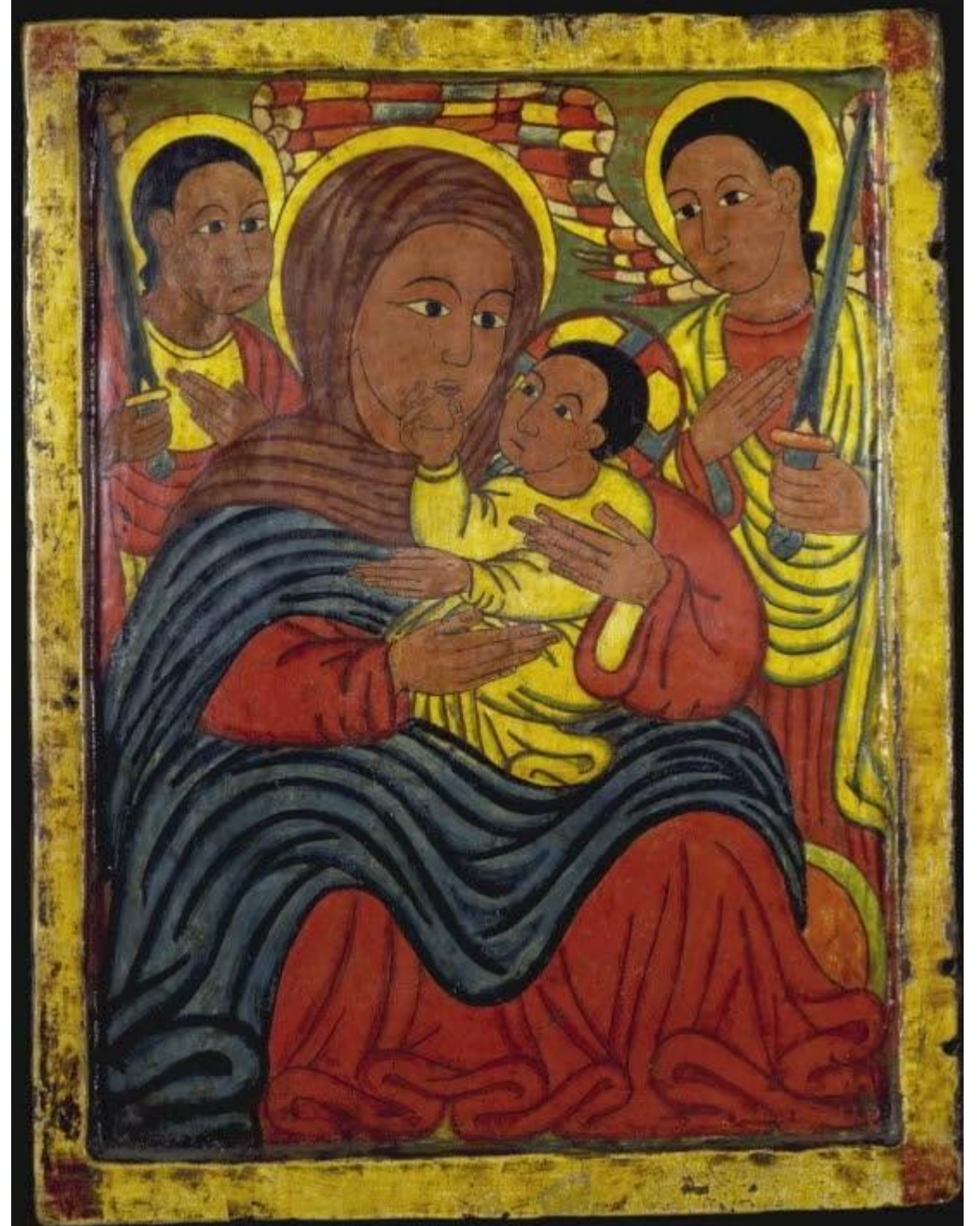
By reason of the gift and role of divine maternity, by which she is united with her Son, the Redeemer, and with His singular graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united with the Church. As St. Ambrose taught, the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ. For in the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother. By her belief and obedience, not knowing man but overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, as the new Eve she brought forth on earth the very Son of the Father, showing an undefiled faith, not in the word of the ancient serpent, but in that of God's messenger. The Son whom she brought forth is He whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren, namely the faithful, in whose birth and education she cooperates with a maternal love. (LG63)

Piously meditating on her and contemplating her in the light of the Word made man, the Church with reverence enters more intimately into the great mystery of the Incarnation and becomes more and more like her Spouse. For Mary, who since her entry into salvation history unites in herself and re-echoes the greatest teachings of the faith as she is proclaimed and venerated, calls the faithful to her Son and His sacrifice and to the love of the Father. Seeking after the glory of Christ, the Church becomes more like her exalted Type, and continually progresses in faith, hope and charity, seeking and doing the will of God in all things. Hence the Church, in her apostolic work also, justly looks to her, who, conceived of the Holy Spirit, brought forth Christ, who was born of the Virgin that through the Church He may be born and may increase in the hearts of the faithful also. The Virgin in her own life lived an example of that maternal love, by which it behooves that all should be animated who cooperate in the apostolic mission of the Church for the regeneration of men. (LG65)

- Mary and inculturation

When the Church considers the long history of Marian devotion, she rejoices at the continuity of the element of cult which it shows, but she does not bind herself to any particular expression of an individual cultural epoch or to the particular, anthropological ideas underlying such expressions. The Church understands that certain outward religious expressions, while perfectly valid in themselves, may be less suitable to men and women of different ages and cultures. *Marialis Cultus* 36

- In apparitions, Mary is usually seen as a member of the community the visionary is part of.
- This is carried over also into iconography



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- Dogmatic Mariology is not ultimately about Mary.
- Not primarily for her own sake.
- But how do we know when Marian theology goes too far?

- Paul VI:

every care should be taken to avoid any exaggeration which could mislead other Christian brethren about the true doctrine of the Catholic Church. Similarly, the Church desires that any manifestation of cult which is opposed to correct Catholic practice should be eliminated.

Another deviation is sterile and ephemeral sentimentality, so alien to the spirit of the Gospel that demands persevering and practical action. We reaffirm the Council's reprobation of such attitudes and practices. They are not in harmony with the Catholic Faith and therefore they must have no place in Catholic worship. Careful defence against these errors and deviations will render devotion to the Blessed Virgin more vigorous and more authentic... It will ensure that this devotion matches its doctrinal content-hence the necessity of avoiding a one-sided presentation of the figure of Mary, which by overstressing one element compromises the overall picture given by the Gospel. It will make this devotion clear in its motivation; hence every unworthy self-interest is to be carefully banned from the area of what is sacred.

- Latria = adoration, inner worship, reverence given to God alone
- Dulia = veneration, 'honour given to all who excel in dignity' (Aquinas)
- Mary = hyperdulia. Greater in degree, but same in type (different from latria)

- But when does hyperdulia become latria? What is the limits of veneration?
- “There is none”
- “Holy, Holy, Holy”
- “Quasi-fourth member of the Trinity”
- “Mary and the Eucharist”

- This is a problem... rather than pointing beyond, replaces the others.
- Replaces Christ...
- Replaces humanity...
- Replaces the church...

- With regards to the church...
- Too strict an association with the woman in Revelation, for example.
- Separate from the church – as though not really a member (reservations around ‘mother of the church’).
- More Marian dogmas?

- Kallistos Ware, 'No New Dogmas, Please':

“dogmas, like other entities, should not be multiplied without reason. Let us keep obligatory definitions to a minimum, whether concerning the Virgin Mary or anything else. When in 1950 Pope Pius XII issued a formal definition concerning the bodily assumption of the Mother of God, the response of almost all Orthodox Christians was immediate and unambiguous. “This is something that we have long believed”, they said. “It is plainly affirmed in our private devotion and our liturgical worship. But we see no need for any definition.”

- Co-redeemer:

“Is it true? Yes, it is, if understood in terms of Colossians 1:24 [as Co-Redeemer par excellence, so long as we never forget that she and we share the same vocation]. But is... it ecumenically helpful? Alas! Any definition concerning Mary as Co-Redeemer and Mediator, however carefully hedged about by theological qualifications, will inevitably give rise to misunderstanding”

- Rather than protecting some element of Christology, it could precisely obscure it. Large reason why it has not been added.

- If we have an appropriate foundation, we can allow Mary to fully play the role in ecclesial life that she can
- One Mariologist describe himself as an ‘enthusiastic minimalist’
- Mary shows us that an active receptivity to grace is the foundation of the entire Christian life.

- That holiness is more important than ecclesiastical office
- Marian dimension more fundamental than the Petrine dimension
- It is Mary who is at the center of Pentecost

Reading

Raniero 'You Will Conceive and Bear a Son'