

# The Blessed Virgin Mary: Doctrine and Devotion/Session 1

*Introductory remarks followed by short video and group discussion.*

## **COURSE OUTLINE Mary's Marvelous Mission**

Principal Guide: Faith + Doctrine = True Devotion of Mary

### I. THE MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine 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.

### II. INTRODUCTION : AN OVERVIEW OF GOD'S PLAN FOR MARY

#### A. Mary: Marian Profile

- i. Mother of the Redeemer, Mother of the Redeemed
- ii. Member of the Church  
"The Second Vatican Council reminds us that Mary is a member of the Church who "occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and also closest to us." She is the first and the greatest of all the Disciples of Christ..." (*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, p. 143)
- iii. Model
- iv. Messenger (Apparitions)

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Sr. Sheila described the four "M's" of the Marian Profile.

What image of the Marian Profile was most familiar to you? Why? Which was the least familiar to you?

#### B. Mary: Ecclesial Role (post Vatican II: Hans Urs von Balthasar)

- i. Paul: The Church of Evangelization
- ii. John: The Church of Contemplative Prayer
- iii. Peter: The Church as Institution
- iv. Mary: The Church as Disciple/ Marian Profile

### III. THE BIBLICAL PORTRAIT OF MARY: FIRST & GREATEST OF DISCIPLES

#### A. BLESSED Virgin Mary: The descriptive "Blessed"/interpretive key in light of the Marian Biblical profile

#### B. BLESSEDNESS: Jesus' Definition/ Luke 11

"Blessed are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."

- i. Blest vs. Blessed
- ii. Blest (Barak/Benedictus): ask for God's favor or bestow a blessing
- iii. Blessed (Ashre, Makairos, Beatus): state of being/geography of the heart joy & peace (Beatitudes)

#### C. BIBLICAL EVIDENCE of MARY'S BLESSEDNESS

*Scriptural texts consistently portray Mary as a "Blessed" one or disciple*

- i. Model of Discipleship
- ii. Luke(1): "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord Let it be done to me according to your word."  
-FIAT: Mary's faith/ humility/ obedience of a disciple
- iii. Luke (Elizabeth as witness): "Blessed is she who believed the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled."
- iv. Luke (Mary's Magnificat): All generations will call me blessed.
- v. Luke (Presentation of Jesus): Mary as model disciple of perseverance of faith and determination of hope "a sword would pierce her heart." (Luke 2)
- vi. John: (Cana) "Do whatever he tells you." (John 2)

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- vii. Acts of the Apostles: “All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.” (Acts 1)

## BREAK & DISCUSSION:

Discuss the biblical sense of “makarios.” How does this understanding of “blessed” differ from the word “happy,” especially as it relates to translations of the Beatitudes?

## IV. THE CHURCH’S TEACHING: LUMEN GENTIUM CHAPTER 8

(The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Mystery of Christ and the Church)

“...true devotion consists neither in fruitless and passing emotion, nor in a certain vain credulity, rather, it proceeds from true faith by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God and are moved to filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues ...”

### A. “Marialis Cultus” (Paul VI)

- i. Mary: an *example to the faithful* for the way in which in her own particular life
- ii. Mary: fully and responsibly accepted the will of God, because she *heard the word of God and acted on it*; charity and spirit of service were the driving force of her actions.
- iii. Mary is worthy of imitation because *she was the first and most perfect of Christ’s disciples.* (#35)
- iv. *(She) offers them the perfect model of the disciple of the Lord: the disciple who builds up the earthly and temporal city while being a diligent pilgrim towards the heavenly and eternal city, the disciple who works for that justice which sets free the oppressed and for that charity which assists the needy. But above all, the disciple who is the active witness of that love which builds up Christ in people’s hearts.* (#37)

### B. CONSEQUENCE: Mary is FIRST and most perfect DISCIPLE

- i. Quintessential role model (CCC 494, 970, 2030)
- ii. luminous witness
- iii. shows us how Christians must be open to God’s call and respond as she did: (Cf. USCCA, p. 104)

## DISCUSSION:

Discuss the differences between a high, middle and low Mariology.

-How would you describe your own devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in light of these terms?

## V. OLD TESTAMENT TYPOLOGY (hints/clues)

### A. Mary is the New Eve (Mother of the Church)

- i. “Thus the knot of Eve’s disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. What the virgin Eve had bound in unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed through faith. (St. Irenaeus, “Adversus Haereses”/189AD)
- ii. Just as Jesus is the New Adam (I Cor 15:45) Mary is the New Eve (whose name means “mother of the living”) The New Adam (Jesus) has a corresponding figure: the New Eve, whose “Yes” to God

### B. Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant

- i. Tablets of Moses/ the Decalogue:: Mary bears the New Moses/ New Law
- ii. Aaron’s Staff :: Mary bears Jesus: The Good Shepherd
- iii. The Manna :: Mary bears Jesus: The Bread of Life

### C. Mary is Queen

## SESSION II ASSIGNMENT:

-Bring Session II handout to class posted at: <http://phillyocf.org/blessed-virgin-mary-doctrine-devotion/>