

The Blessed Virgin Mary: Doctrine and Devotion/Session 2

COURSE OUTLINE: Blessed are You Among Women (Dogma)

Principal Guide: Faith + Doctrine = True Devotion of Mary

DVD

I. HAIL HOLY QUEEN

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy! Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.

II. Theology: Faith seeking understanding.

III. Dogma: A truth proclaimed infallibly by the Church's Magisterium as being contained in the Deposit of Revelation (roots in Scripture and Tradition.)

IV. Marian dogmas: related to Christ and the Church

- i. Mary, Mother of God (Theotokos) linked to Incarnation of Christ
- ii. Mary, Ever-virgin linked to Incarnation of Christ
- iii. Immaculate Conception of Mary linked to Redemption of Christ
- iv. Assumption of Mary linked to Eschatology (death, heaven, hell, purgatory)

DISCUSSION:

Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illuminate and make it secure." (Catechism of the Catholic Church)

-How do dogmas help to keep a "balanced" understanding of Mary?

-Why do many Protestants find Catholic dogmas about Mary troubling?

V. Mother of God (Greek word: Theotokos)

- i. Early Church: Struggle in the understanding of Jesus
 - Jesus: Was Jesus divine? Human? Divine and human (two natures)
 - Theological articulation: struggle due to much debate
 - Heresies: Two major heresies develop
 - + Arianism denied divine nature
 - + Docetism denied human nature
- ii. 431- Council of Ephesus: Theotokos/Mother of God
 - Defines two natures of Jesus:
 - + Truly God/divine (conceived by the Holy Spirit)
 - + Truly Man/human (born of a woman)
- iii. Feast: Mother of God/January 1/World Day of Peace

VI. EVER-VIRGIN (no formal declaration)

- i. From earliest tradition, Christians thought of Mary as ever-virgin. However, this was not a question which concerned early New Testament writers
- ii. Mary's virginity makes it clear that salvation began as God's initiative, not ours.

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- iii. Scripture: Evangelists use Greek word, Adelfhos
- Translates as “brothers and sisters of Jesus”
 - Apocryphal Writings: Protoevangelium of James/Infancy Narratives of Gospel of Thomas
 - + Joseph is an older man who is a widower with children who marries Mary
 - + Joseph’s children become step-brothers and sisters of Jesus.
 - Three meanings of Adelfhos:
 - + Blood [Most Protestants- blood brothers and sisters]
 - + Kinship, relative
 - Original understanding up to the Reformation
 - Catholics = cousins (Jerome’s translation into Latin)
 - Anglicans = Joseph’s children/step brothers and sisters
 - + Spiritual, extended sense

BREAK AND DISCUSSION:

Review the three Christian perspectives regarding the translation of the word, “adelphos,” as it relates to Jesus in the Scriptures. Discuss why some Catholics may be confused regarding the Church’s understanding of “brothers and sisters of Jesus.”

- VII. Immaculate Conception: Dogma proclaimed on 1854 December 8
- “Through the centuries the Church became ever more aware that Mary, ‘full of grace’ thought God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 491); celebration of what God did for Mary (positive)
 - “Full of [sanctifying] grace”/“Radically redeemed” (Karl Rahner)
 - Biblical Foundations
 - Genesis 3: 15 - “Woman” refers to Mary
 - Song of Songs - “without a blemish”
 - Luke - “Hail, full of grace”—God’s new name for Mary (identity and mission) ~ “kecharitomene” (gift, favor, grace)
 - Theological Articulation: Long, slow development of the doctrine
 - Early Church - Tradition about Mary
 - “From the earliest times, Christians have sought Mary’s prayers and help. There has been a basic sense on the part of the Church that Mary continues in heaven to be concerned for the growth of all members of the Church into holiness and an intimate relationship with her Son.” (USCCA, p. 147)
 - Middle Ages:
 - + Thomas Aquinas: “God prepares and disposes those whom He has chosen for a special purpose in such a way as to make them capable of performing that for which He selected them...”
 - + John Duns Scotus; Mary was “preserved” in right relationship with God (free from sin); “a singular grace,” “at the first moment of her existence”
 - “In anticipation that she was to bear the Son of God, Mary was preserved from the time of her conception from Original Sin.” (USCCA, p. 143)
 - Apparitions:
 - 1830—Mary appears to St. Catherine Laboure and asks that a Medallion which included the words: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”
 - 1858—Mary identifies herself to Bernadette: “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

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DISCUSSION:

Sister Sheila reminds us that Baptism celebrates what God has done for us; we become “full of grace;” we experienced a “kecharitomene” moment!

-Discuss your understanding of these Marian notions as they relate to your faith life and mission.

VIII. Assumption (Dogma) proclaimed on November 1, 1950.

i. Document: “Most Bountiful God”

- “The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.”
- Historical Context (Post World War II and end of Church’s Marian Era)
 - + The intellectual assault on the dignity of the human person bore abundant fruit in the twentieth century
 - + Be defining this dogma the Church hoped that the faithful would recognize more clearly the value of human life and our eternal destiny (resurrection)
 - + Destiny of Body and Soul...Assumption reaffirms the importance of the human person as an embodied person/value of the flesh
- Tradition
 - + Early Celebration of the Church
 - + By the 4th century: Feast of the Falling Asleep of Mary; the Dormition (Later named Assumption)
 - + Middle Ages: Rosary /Glorious Mysteries
 - Assumption
 - Mary crowned Queen of Heaven
 - Hail Holy Queen (Queenship/maternal intercession)

SESSION III ASSIGNMENT:

There are two documents for Session III posted at:

<http://phillyocf.org/blessed-virgin-mary-doctrine-devotion/>

-Bring Session III handout to class.

-Read “required reading” prior to class. It is not necessary to bring this document to class

Bring in your favorite Marian picture, statue, card, activity, etc.. that you would like to share with the class