COURSE OUTLINE

Mary's Marvelous Mission

Principal Guide: Faith + Doctrine = True Devotion of Mary

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What words come to mind when you think of Mary?

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.

LECTURE 1: AN OVERVIEW OF GOD'S PLAN FOR MARY

A. THE MARIAN PROFILE

a. ***Mother*** of the Redeemer, Mother of the Redeemed
b. ***Member*** of the Church – preeminent and singular, but also one of us
    i. "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)
c. ***Model*** of discipleship, model of holiness, she characterizes what it means to be a member of the Church.
d. ***Messenger*** (Apparitions) – Mary calls us back to being authentic Christians when we stray.

B. IMAGES OF THE CHURCH

a. Paul: Images the Church of Evangelization -
b. John: Images the Church of Contemplative Prayer
c. Peter: Images the Church as Institution
d. Mary: Images the Church as Disciple/Marian Profile
    i. Mary provides a profile of what the Church is, of how the people of God should live, and what the destiny of is for those who are redeemed.
    ii. The Institutional Church and Church of Discipleship complement each other, but the Marian profile is preeminent because authority in the Church serves discipleship! The power of the keys serves sanctity (i.e., holiness).

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Which "M" of the Marian Profile do you relate to the most, which do you relate to the least, and why?

LECTURE 2: MARY'S ECCLESIAL ROLE AS A MEMBER AND MODEL OF THE CHURCH

A. 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 found in Luke 11 – "Blessed are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."
c. Blest vs. Blessed
    i. Blest (Barak/Benedictus): to ask for God's favor or bestow a blessing (external in nature)
    ii. Blessed (Ashre, Makairos, Beatus): a state of being/geography of the heart joy & peace (Internal in nature)

B. BIBLICAL EVIDENCE of MARY'S BLESSEDNESS

a. Scriptural texts consistently attest to Mary as a "Blessed" one or disciple
b. Luke 11:27-28 – Jesus affirms Mary's blessedness as a model of discipleship; Mary heard the word of God and listened to/obeyed it. Those who do what she did are blessed too!
c. Luke 1:38 – "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord Let it be done to me according to your word." Mary's FIAT models the faith, humility, and obedience of a disciple
d. Luke 1:45 – (Elizabeth as witness): "Blessed is she who believed the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled." Mary's models the TRUST *(Total Reliance Upon Saving Truth)* necessary for discipleship.
e. Luke 1:48 – (Mary's Magnificat): All generations will call me blessed. Mary, in her humility, recognizes her role in God's plan for salvation and embraces it. She models how we are to respond to God's will in our lives.
f. Luke 2:35 – (Presentation of Jesus): Mary, as model disciple, displays the importance of faith, perseverance of faith, and determination of hope in the face of challenges and hardship ("a sword would pierce her heart")
g. John 2:5 – (Cana) "Do whatever he tells you." Mary has complete faith and trust in her Son and commands us as his disciples to "do whatever he tells" us.
h. Acts of the Apostle 1:14 – "All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers." Mary models what living as a disciple looks like.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discuss the biblical sense Blessed (Makairos) vs. Blest (Benedictus). How are they different?

In what ways has God blest you in your life and how does it make you feel to know God is active and interested in your life?

Mary is blessed because she hears God's word and put it into practice. In what ways do you hear God's word and put it into practice?

LECTURE 3: THE CHURCH'S TEACHING

A. The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Mystery of Christ and the Church (Lumen Gentium, Chapter 8)
   a. *"Let the faithful remember moreover that true devotion consists neither in sterile or transitory affection, nor in a certain vain credulity, but proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues."* (LG, #67)

B. Marialis Cultus (The Cult Of Mary – Paul Vi)
   a. Mary is held up as an ***example to the faithful*** for the way in which in her own particular life she ***fully and responsibly accepted the will of God***, because she ***heard the word of God and acted on it*** and because charity and spirit of service were the driving force of her actions. She is ***worthy of imitation*** because *she was* ***the first and most perfect of Christ's disciples.*** (#35)
   b. (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)

C. Mary shows us how Christians must be open to God's call and respond as she did. (Cf. Uscca, P. 104)

D. She is the FIRST and most perfect DISCIPLE and quintessential role model (CCC 494, 970, 2030)

DISCUSSION

What have you learned from Mary on what it means to be a disciple of Christ?

A popular saying is "To Jesus through Mary." What role does Mary currently have in your spiritual life and how might she help you to deepen your relationship with Jesus?

A. OLD TESTAMENT TYPOLOGY (hints or clues that prefigure something in the New Testament)

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")
   iii. 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. The Staff of Aaron, the First High Priest :: Mary bears Jesus, the New High Priest and Good Shepherd
   iii. The Manna :: Mary bears Jesus, The Bread of Life

c. Mary is Queen
   i. The queen was the mother of the King in the Old Testament.
   ii. She served as an intercessor for the people.

SESSION 1 ASSIGNMENT

- Prayer:
  - Take additional time to contemplate and pray more fully on the reflection questions from the Contemplation portion found on the Lectio Divina handout.
  - Complete the Living Word activity during the week.
- Action:
  - Write a brief paragraph or two on what touched your heart the most from this week's presentation and why it affected you as it did. Come prepared to share your response at the next session.
- Prepare:
  - Bring the handout and Lectio Divina for Session 2 to class. Use the QR code to access the material or go to: https://phillyocf.org/scf-course-materials/

CLOSING PRAYER

This is the oldest known prayer to Mary dating from the 2nd century in the Coptic Church

We turn to you for protection,
Holy Mother of God.
Listen to our prayers
and help us in our needs.
Save us from every danger,
O glorious and blessed Virgin.
Amen.

Participant Requirements and Protocols

The following protocol promotes a Christian atmosphere of mutual respect that is conducive to instruction. The Office for Catechetical Formation and the facilitators seek to provide a pleasant learning experience for students and facilitators.

- Attendance is mandatory for all sessions.
- All sessions are 2 hours and 50 minutes long.
- Absences are reported to the Office for Catechetical Formation.
- In the rare situation where an absence is due to extreme emergency or circumstance, contact the Office for Catechetical Formation.
  - Email: phillyocf@archphila.org
  - Phone: 215-587-3720
- Participants seeking religion certification credit are expected to adhere to the following requirements:
  - Be on time for class and remain in class until dismissed – ***Failure to comply may be recorded as an absence.***
  - ***Be prepared for class by doing pre-session assignments and having a copy of the participant handout for each session.***
  - Participate fully during the reflection and discussion segments.
  - Texting, emailing, or being occupied with outside projects during class time, such as marking papers or online shopping is prohibited.
- **For Virtual Courses:**
  - Log on 5 minutes prior to start time.
  - Turn off microphone unless speaking or called upon.
  - Your camera must always remain on and display proper name.
- **Course Credit:** Participants who fulfill the course requirements will have an updated course record sent electronically to them. You are responsible for giving a copy of the updated record to your principal or DRE.