

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION¹

“Hail Full of Grace”

- The Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Luke 1:28)



Fra Angelico – The Annunciation, 1442

As we begin this study on The Immaculate Conception, let's begin with a word of prayer.

The Angelic Salutation Prayer — The Hail Mary Prayer

Hail Mary, Full of grace the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The Veni Sancte Spiritus (“Come Holy Spirit” Prayer)

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful;

And enkindle in them the fire of Your love.

Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

And You shall renew the face of the earth.

LET US PRAY . . .

O God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant by the gift of the same Spirit we may always be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

¹ A special thanks to Dr. Scott Hahn who has provided many of the ideas here in this study.

Hail Mary Full Of Grace

“Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women . . .”

How often have we prayed the Angelic Salutation prayer (The Hail Mary Prayer) without stopping to think what the implications of the phrase “**full of grace**” means?

Do we at least occasionally meditate on this truth? Evidently, the early Christians did.

Christians have pondered this truth for the last 2000 years. Listen to the words of St. Theodotus of Ancyra (“an-cee-rah”) in **Galatia** (The region where St. Paul wrote his Letter to the **Galatians** - what is now called the country of “Turkey”).

St. Theodotus was martyred in 303 A.D. under the Roman Emperor Diocletian’s persecution.

ST. THEODOTUS OF ANCYRA “In place of the virgin Eve, mediatrix of death, a virgin **has been filled with God's grace** to be the minister of life; a virgin has been fashioned possessing the nature of a woman, but **without part in her fault (malice)**; a virgin, **innocent, without blemish, all immaculate, inviolate, spotless, holy in soul and body who has blossomed as a lily from among thorns**, unlearned in the evil ways of Eve. . . . When yet unborn she was consecrated to God, and when born was offered to God as a sign of gratitude. . . . **Clothed with divine grace** as with a garment, her soul filled with a wisdom divine, in heart wedded to God, she received God in her womb, [she who is] in fact the Mother of God. . . .” (emphasis mine)

— *St. Theodotus of Ancyra Homily 6, On Holy Mary, Mother of God, and on the Holy Nativity of Christ, 11 (PG, 77, 1427).*²

What is St. Theodotus of Ancyra talking about here in about 300 A.D.?

Why would he use such language?

Of course he is talking about the doctrine of the **Immaculate Conception**.

A doctrine we see in Sacred Scripture.

That’s WHY the archangel Gabriel refers to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Angelic Salutation (a prayer taken directly out of Sacred Scripture in large part) as “FULL of Grace”.

First Some Basic “Housekeeping” (“Keep in mind . . .”)

As we go on, keep in mind, our resources will include the Catechism of the Catholic Church (abbreviated in this study as CCC), the Bible (Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition [RSVCE], unless otherwise mentioned). We will also utilize various Church documents, historical statements and the Roman Catechism (RC), which is also called “The Catechism of the Council of Trent”

Since the RC has no paragraph numbering system, I may also include the TAN Edition page # since the TAN publication is the only edition currently in English print that I am aware of.

Jesus is Lord of all including being the Lord of history. We will therefore draw upon the wisdom of the Early Church Fathers and other Patristic sources for more insight into this Bible study and doctrinal review.

Any underlining, **bold highlighting**, or ALL CAPITALS, of any of these documents will be mine unless otherwise stated.

We will touch on various “Biblical objections” against the Church’s teaching concerning the Immaculate Conception and see that these objections don’t stand up to careful Scriptural and historical scrutiny.

² Source = “Mary in the Documents of the Church p.52

Concerning The Doctrine Of The Immaculate Conception The Church Teaches . . .

What does the Church teach about the Blessed Virgin Mary anyway, especially on this important question concerning The Immaculate Conception?

The Church teaches that the Blessed Mother Mary was conceived in a human womb.

History tells us that The Blessed Virgin Mary's parents were named Anne and Joachim, now known as St. Anne and St. Joachim. Although Mary's parent's names are not mentioned explicitly in the Bible, there is historical evidence of them and that's how we know these names.



**St. Joachim, St. Anne, & Their Little Immaculate Daughter
The Blessed Virgin Mary**

The Blessed Virgin Mary **during the moment of her human conception** within her mother St. Anne, and by the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ, Mary was preserved from the stain of original sin by a special intervention from God. **This is a singular privilege from God for humanity.**

This prevention from the stain of sin IS the grace/work of God Almighty, in the womb of a mother who is a sinner (St. Anne).

But this grace/work of God was done upon the Blessed Virgin Mary immediately as Mary was in her earliest aspect of her life ("the moment of Her conception").

The term for this grace of God at the very moment of embryonic conception concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary within the womb of St. Anne is termed . . . **The Immaculate Conception!**

Excerpt from the Official Church Document³ "Ineffabilis Deus", not inventing but DEFINING this doctrine that has been held for 2000 years . . .

³ Excerpt from: —"Ineffabilis Deus," Dec. 8, 1854 The Immaculate Conception Decree of Pope Pius IX on The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

(It was the year 1854 when this now ex-Cathedra doctrine was first formally DEFINED. But as is evident from Scripture and historical quotes, this doctrine has been TAUGHT for 2000 years. See the whole document on page 84 of this study if interested.)

. . . . in Our own **authority**,
that the doctrine which **holds the Blessed Virgin Mary** to have been,
from **the first moment of her conception**,
by a **singular** grace and privilege of Almighty God,
in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of mankind,
preserved free from all stain of original sin, was revealed by God,
and is, therefore, to be firmly and constantly believed
by all the faithful.

But there is more.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was, is, and will always maintain a TOTAL consecration to God, both in body and in soul, and thus was, is, and always will, remain sinless (through God's grace of course). She therefore **remains** Immaculate.

Just like Eve (and Adam), God did not take away Mother Mary's free will, but did render Her incredible graces (blessed beyond all women on earth).

Though Mary still had free will, Mary's free will, by God's grace, was (and is) always in perfect harmony with Jesus' will. Mary has submitted Her will entirely to God, just as Adam and Eve did *before* they sinned.

Unlike Eve (and Adam), who chose to sin, the Blessed Mother has **remained** Immaculate from sin.

Again, these gifts are a singular privilege (no one else has been given this degree of favor from God).

What The Doctrine Of The Immaculate Conception IS NOT . . .

The Immaculate Conception doesn't refer to Jesus' Conception in Mary's womb. That is called The Virginal Conception and Birth, or usually just **"The Virgin Birth."**

Just because Mary was immaculately conceived, doesn't mean she didn't need a Savior, The Blessed Virgin Mary did need a Savior.

Just because Mary was immaculately conceived, doesn't mean she's a "goddess" as some falsely accuse the Catholic Church of teaching. Mother Mary is NOT a goddess and the Church condemns any view that would say she is.

What The Immaculate Conception IS

Let's see how the Catechism of the Catholic Church describes some of this . . .

CCC 491 Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God,¹³⁴ was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854:

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.¹³⁵

CCC 492 The "splendor of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son".¹³⁶ The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" and chose her "in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love".¹³⁷

CCC 493 The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God "the All-Holy" (*Panagia*), and celebrate her as "free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature".¹³⁸ By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long.

Let's jump into the Bible's classical passage that teaches this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception that we have been alluding to—The Angelic Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

HAIL FULL OF GRACE

Let's look at the Angelic Salutation or The Angelic Greeting.

The Angelic Salutation is where in the Bible the Archangel Gabriel comes to the Blessed Virgin Mary and greets her with the news about God choosing her and asking her to be the Mother of God.

We then will see Mother Mary's "yes" or "fiat" in response to this heavenly message ("fiat" incidentally is merely Latin for "yes").

First let's look at four translations of the same passage (two Catholic and two Protestant). We'll begin with the RSVCE, then follow with only verses 26-28 in the other translations.

LUKE 1:26-38 (RSVCE, or Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition) — 26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the

house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, **Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!** 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" 35 And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. 36 And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

LUKE 1:26-28 (RSV, or Revised Standard Version, Protestant Edition¹)

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgins name was Mary.
28 And he came to her and said, **Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!**

1 A footnote in my RSV Protestant Bible admits and states: other ancient authorities add Blessed are you among women. (Underline mine)

Note here that a variation of the same Bible Translation, also the Revised Standard Version but this time "Protestant Edition" does not translate Luke 1:28 as "Full of Grace".

Why is this fact important to know?⁴ Compare the Revised Standard Versions Protestant translation with the Catholic translation if you have them both at hand.

St. Jerome translated the whole Bible into Latin in approximately 390 A.D. based on ancient Hebrew and ancient Greek manuscripts that existed then (but do not exist now). That translation is called the "Vulgate" meaning "common".

⁴ This is important to know because if you show a Protestant Mary as "Full of Grace" since they often DENY Her Immaculate Conception, they will merely counter by showing you their Bible translation and holding to that. If you are sharing this doctrine with someone like that, you need to be prepared to go deeper. This study prepares you to do this.

The Greek, Latin, and Hebrew speaking St Jerome was one of those “ancient authorities” that included “Blessed are you among women” as part of his complete text of the Angelic Salutation of St. Luke’s Gospel.

The Douay-Rheims Version (DRV) is a very old and sacred literal Catholic English translation of St. Jerome’s Latin Vulgate Bible.

The Vatican II documents hold the Vulgate Scripture translation extremely high (The Vatican II Document Dei Verbum Section 22 states: . . .

. . . she (the Church) has always given a place of honor to other Eastern translations and Latin ones especially the Latin translation known as the vulgate . . .

Now back to St. Luke’s Gospel.

LUKE 1:26-28 (DRV, or the Douay-Rheims Version) 26 And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And the angel being come in, said unto her: **Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.**

So you are prepared if this is ever brought up to you, let’s look at the Protestant translation, the King James Version (KJV). . .

LUKE 1:26-28 (KJV, or King James Version, a Protestant translation) 26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, **Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.**

What is the Better Translation?

OK. We see two very different translations of Luke 1:28. “Full of Grace” versus “Highly Favored”.

So WHICH translation is more accurate? “Full of Grace” or “Highly Favored”?

In order to answer that question, let’s look at some of the original Greek in Luke 1:28. Don’t worry. You do not need to become Koine’ Greek scholars. These concepts are pretty simple. Especially if you look at them in light of what the ancient Church Fathers

just matter-of-factly said about this doctrine. And later on in the study, we will do just that (look at the Fathers).

Chaire Kecharitomene

Chaire (Ki-ray) Kecharitomene (Kah-care-it-oh-men-ay)

A phrase we want to look at closer in Luke 1:28 is “Hail, full of Grace”.

The original Greek transliteration (English spelling of the Greek word) would be “Chaire, kecharitomene⁵” (Greek = χαίρε, κεχαριτωμένη = “Hail, Full of Grace”).

Chaire = “Hail” (χαίρε). (Sometimes transliterated as “Chairo” or “ki-ray”)

Kecharitomene¹ = “Full of grace” (κεχαριτωμένη).

If we just transliterated the part concerning “full of grace” the verse would look like this:

LUKE 1:28 Hail, **kecharitomene**, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

If we transliterated⁶ the portion concerning; “Hail. Full of grace” the verse would look like this:

LUKE 1:28 **Chaire, kecharitomene**, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

These few Greek words are important here and will be a foundation for the whole Bible study so it’s important to look at what might seem like “unnecessary minutiae” at first glance. Let’s go on.

The Greek root word “charis” or “**charitos**” literally means grace! This is a root word seen within the word “ke**charito**mene”.

The word “kecharitomene”, the way it is used in Luke 1:28 is in what is called the “perfect tense”. More on that shortly.

⁵ Kecharitomene is a new large foreign word to many. To help with pronunciation, just call it “**I care for many**” and everyone will know what you mean. That will be close enough for our study purposes. Or you are welcome to just call Kecharitomene “that Greek word” if it causes you pronunciation problems.

⁶ A transliterated word merely means a foreign word sounded out in your own language. In this case, English. Kecharitomene is an example of a transliterated word. Sometimes “kecharitomene” is seen spelled as “kecharitomenae”. Since it is an English transliteration of a Greek word, either way is acceptable. Realize English spellings of any transliterated foreign words are not standardized.

The **root** of **kecharitomene** “Charis” is listed in my Vine’s Expository Dictionary (a Protestant Greek-English literal interlinear text lexicon) as being defined as “highly favoureded” (p. 169-171, specifically on p. 171).

The word “favoureded” as we just saw used in some translations is past tense and this is correct but only partially correct. This translation correctly shows that this word denotes a past action, but **somewhat obscures the concept of “grace”**.

This translation (“highly favored”) also brings in ambiguity to the perfect tense of the word, kecharitomene.

“Highly favored” instead of “Full of Grace” obscures the degree and maybe even the fact that the Blessed Virgin has already been the recipient of this extreme gift of GRACE or “charitos” already present in the initial angelic greeting from St. Gabriel. Even before Mary says “yes” or “Be it done unto me according to Thy will”!

This “charitos” that Mary has already been the recipient of, is of course “grace” (charitos = grace).

Although “favored” is an inadequate translation of the word “kecharitomene”, the word “favoureded” does affirm the **past action** of God’s “charitos” (grace) which is good, but that is **only partly correct**. It falls short of the full meaning here.

Admittedly it is impossible to do perfect translations from language to language but since most modern-day Protestants deny the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception you can see why the translation given (“favored”), might be confusing and is certainly only partially complete.

It’s important to realize that “ke**charito**mene” in Luke 1:28, denotes “grace” but also is a Greek word in the **“perfect tense”**! That means a past action carried through to and including the present time, which remains.

From New Testament Greek.org⁷ (<http://www.ntgreek.org/>)

Perfect Tense

The basic thought of the perfect tense is that the progress of an action has been **completed** and the results of the action are continuing on, in full effect. In other words, the progress of the action has reached its culmination and the finished results are now in existence. Unlike the English perfect, which indicates a completed past action, the Greek perfect tense indicates the continuation and present state of a completed past action.

⁷ http://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#PERFECT

For example, Galatians 2:20 should be translated "I *am in a present state of having been crucified* with Christ," indicating that not only was I crucified with Christ in the past, but I am existing now in that present condition.

"...*having been rooted and grounded* in love," Eph 3:17

And remember! This perfect-tense proclamation isn't merely from a person IN TIME, but a heavenly Host who is **out of the realm of time** constraints!

This greeting from out of the realm of time (from St. Gabriel the Archangel) at least **suggests** the Blessed Mother's subsequent future sinlessness too.⁸

Yet the ultimate author of Scripture, The Holy Spirit and St. Gabriel the Archangel still are using perfect tense terminology here concerning the Blessed Mother (If they see The Blessed Mother from an out of the realm of time perspective, we would not expect them to use perfect tense if Mother Mary were to fall into sin when she was older).

Being out of the realm of time, God at least knows the Blessed Virgin Mary from and to all eternity. Yet the Holy Spirit still inspires St. Luke to use **perfect tense** concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary being FULL of grace!

So if the Blessed Virgin Mary HAS BEEN "filled with **Grace**" (or filled with "charitos") and this condition of being "filled with grace" **still REMAINS (even out of the realm of time)**, then what conclusion can you draw based on this information?

The conclusion is that you can begin to see the Immaculate Conception and the Blessed Virgin Mary's subsequent sinlessness that we just talked about catechetically.

Then you also see one of the reasons WHY the ancient Greek-speaking (and Latin-speaking) Fathers unanimously believed and taught the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and subsequent sinlessness of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is objected to by some today and we will look at those objections later in the study and see why they are not persuasive, especially in light of Christian history.

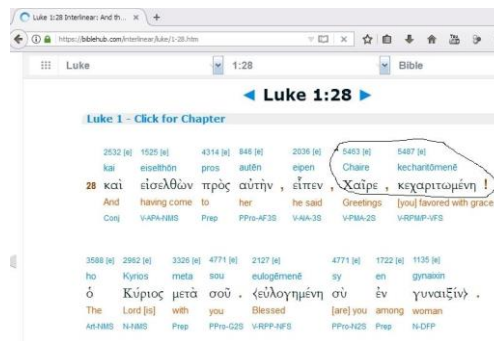
Interestingly the full word "kecharitomene" isn't listed anywhere in my Protestant Greek dictionary (Vine's) at all, nor is it listed in my other Protestant Greek lexicon, (Strong's) but it IS in my Protestant Greek interlinear Greek Bibles showing the word "kecharitomene" used in Luke 1:28.

"Kecharitomene" is on the main Protestant Internet Bible lexicon, *Bible Hub* too.⁹

⁸ Someone could argue and say: "But the Archangel comes INTO time so this could not point to subsequent sinlessness for Mary!"

My reply to that would be: First of all, that's WHY I used the word "suggests" instead of "proves".

But also remember, St. Gabriel is a "Messenger" (Angel) who is bringing this "message" **from Heaven** (which is out of the realm of time) into time. So at least in my opinion, this DOES at least suggest subsequent sinlessness.



So the word “kecharitomene” is right there in Scripture and they have it on Bible Hub (you can see it above) and others, **but they don’t define it** anywhere. They rather define the root cognate (“charitos”) of the word “kecharitomene” and leave it at that.

That might be acceptable for other words but this is not acceptable for the word “kecharitomene” in this instance. Why not?

Because not defining the full word allows you to **ignore the perfect tense of the word**. And the perfect tense is almost certainly WHY the ancient Church Fathers knew and taught what they did concerning Mary being “Full of Grace” (more on that later).

However, the Fathers believed and taught The Immaculate Conception for other reasons too (i.e. oral **Tradition** and **Liturgy, The Councils**), but since this is a **Bible** study, we will focus on the **Scriptural** aspects, of course not ignoring **history** etc. because it is important to know what the ancient Christians thought of these verses (after all, that is part of our Christian heritage).

That’s WHY I opened the study with a quote from one of the ancient **Greek-speaking** Saints/Fathers (St. St. Theodotus of Ancyra) discussing the Blessed Mother’s “**kecharitomene**” (**Greek word**) in doctrinal terms—to give us an early taste of this ancient teaching from a Greek-speaking perspective.

So in summary, the definition of the Protestant lexicon concerning “charitos” (the **ROOT** of kecharitomene) is not the actual whole of the word “kecharitomene” itself. And although Protestant translations usually admit some sort of a past action, the translation of “you who have been highly favored” or some such, doesn’t go far enough. But don’t worry. As Catholic Christians, we don’t limit ourselves to what Protestant dictionaries say.

Soon in this study we will see many more very early Greek-speaking Fathers who also had Greek as their native language, and what they had to say about this doctrine, the verse (Luke 1:28), and the Blessed Virgin Mary in general.

⁹ <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/luke/1-28.htm>

We already saw what the Greek-speaking St. Theodotus of Ancyra had to say concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary. These Fathers of course didn't have to go off to a Protestant seminary to learn to speak, read, and write Greek!

So we observe what the ancient Church Fathers say about doctrines, words, verses, etc. and draw our conclusions from that. Not Protestant dictionaries and lexicons.

What DID the ancient Church Fathers think of the word kecharitomene in this section of Luke's Gospel that we now refer to as Luke 1:28?

"Kecharitomene" is an utterly unique word, only being used in Luke 1:28 in Scripture pertaining to a person!¹⁰ It also follows the greeting or salutation. In this Angelic salutation, St. Gabriel is **greeting The Blessed Virgin Mary by Her Title**. Not Her name.

"Kecharitomene" denotes a very special type of gift of God's grace—**Full of grace**. Again, a past action carried through the present. In this case it means "You who HAVE BEEN AND REMAIN FILLED with God's grace."

For more details on the literal meaning of Kecharitomene, see Table 1; from the late Pope John Paul II's Wednesday audience statement from May 8, 1996 entitled "Filled With God's Grace" which deals directly with this issue.

Kecharitomene literally means: "You who have been filled with and are being filled with grace."

This is why the Greek speaking St. Jerome translated "kecharitomene" as "full of grace" in his Latin Vulgate translation which he did for Pope Damasus and all of the Church!

With this perfect tense, we get an idea why the Church Fathers translated kecharitomene to mean "full of grace", instead of merely "highly favored".

Martin Luther even translated "kecharitomene" in precisely the same way as St. Jerome, in Luther's Works, which he wrote **after** his excommunication.

Now you might point out that some modern day scholars argue among themselves if "being filled with and remaining full of grace" is the actual meaning of "kecharitomene". But without getting too technical, think of the Greeks (Greek is the language that most of the New Testament was originally written in).

¹⁰ Kecharitomene is used once in the Old Testament Septuagint prophetically referring to the Church too. Which is what we would expect as the Blessed Virgin is a type ("typus") of the Church. These are not the same because one is a person; the other is "The Church". That is part of WHY The Blessed Virgin Mary has this "singular" aspect.

Virtually every Christian in Greece is either Greek Orthodox or Catholic (both faiths of which are very devoted to The Blessed Mother, and both Faiths recite the Hail Mary prayer and have in some form for hundreds of years) . . . and they say “FULL OF GRACE”!

Now you have to ask yourself something here.

Do the modern Greeks themselves get their own language wrong?

Did the ancient Greeks themselves get their own language wrong?

Did the ancient Church Fathers (many of whom knew Greek) get the language wrong?

Is it a good thing that modern Protestant scholars (and some more modernist Catholic scholars too that seem to ignore history) are finally on the scene so we can help the Greeks with their own language?

And as Steve Wood points out, when the language is your native language such as Greek was to the Greeks, well you always know the little subtle essences and nuances of your own language, just like we Americans do with American English—Do “yall” know what I mean?¹¹

Let’s get back to the notion of “full of grace” though.

Concerning the concept “full of grace” and ancient Greek, someone might say, “modern Greek is different in some respects from ancient Greek”.

That’s true but all the historical evidence still shows the same position on kecharitomene being used as meaning full of grace with the ancient Greek (that we see in Luke’s Gospel).

The **Greek-speaking** St. Gregory of Nyssa (who died in the year 394 A.D.) rendered perhaps the earliest form of The Hail Mary in rudimentary form (cited from Fr. Laurentin’s book *The Hail Mary*) . . .

St. Gregory of Nyssa Let us cry out in **the words of the angel**:

Rejoice, O **full of grace**, the Lord is with you . . .

This recitation is ancient. St. Gregory obviously felt he was quoting Scripture back in the 300s. And there was no evidence of dissent.

¹¹ An American reading the above paragraph would KNOW you are talking about “Southerners” in America with “yall”. If you were from another country and reading the same paragraph, and were told this reference (“yall”) concerns “southerners”, you’d probably say: “the paragraph says nothing about “southerners. How in the world can you conclude an allusion to people from the south here?”

But you as Americans know implicitly this is referring to southerners don’t you?

Let's look at another historical statement from a Greek speaking early Church Father on the doctrine of The Immaculate Conception and The Blessed Mother's subsequent sinlessness at this point.

St. Athanasius You, O Lady, were **filled with grace**, so that you might be the way of our salvation and the means of ascent into the heavenly kingdom.

- St. Athanasius died in 373 A.D.

St. Athanasius takes this past action and sees its continuing fruition and fulfillment. The Blessed Mother's free-will fiat was a necessary step in salvation history.

The Latin Fathers taught and thought the same things

St. Hippolytus of Rome (Mary is) "the **tabernacle exempt from defilement and corruption**"

-St. Hippolytus. (St. Hippolytus died in 235 A.D.)

What do you think the Latin speaking St. Hippolytus or the Greek-speaking Sts. Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa thought concerning the state of being filled with and remaining filled with God's grace?

They thought back then, the same thing we think now concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary. Let's go back to the CCC for a moment.

CCC 490a To become the mother of the Savior, Mary "was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role."¹³² The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as "full of grace".¹³³ . . .

The Baltimore Catechism from the late 1800's taught the same thing. . . .

Q. 268. Was any one ever preserved from original sin?

A. The Blessed Virgin Mary, through the merits of her Divine Son, was preserved free from the guilt of original sin, and this privilege is called her Immaculate Conception.

Objection! Wasn't St. Stephen "Full of Grace" in Acts 6:8 Too?

Before answering that, first let's look at the Acts 6:8 verse in question (we have already looked at Luke 1:28 earlier).

ACTS 6:8 8 And Stephen, **full of grace** and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

The Greek phrase here is “**pleres charitos**” NOT “**kecharitomene**”. This makes the tenses different.¹²

As the Catholic Point states¹³

. . . . The word used in Acts 6:8 referring to Stephen is a different word from the one referring to Mary.

Here, Stephen is described as "*pleres charitos*" literally "filled up with grace" meaning *at that moment, he was full of grace*.

But the term used to Mary is "*kecharitomene*" perfect passive participle of "*charitoo*" [*charitoo* (verb) comes from the same Greek root of "*charis*" - which means "grace" and *charitoó* means *to fill or endow with grace*] or in other words: "*Hail, **one who has always been full of grace***"

To make it more clearer, "*kecharitomene*" is the perfect passive participle tense of the verb meaning "to fill with grace," Because it is in the perfect participle tense, it means that Mary was already filled with grace and there is no room for sin in her before the Annunciation, the implication being that she was the immaculate!

So in summary the answer to the question of:

Wasn't St. Stephen "full of grace" too?

The answer is **St. Stephen was NOT "kecharitomene"** from this verse (or any other verses)!

St. Stephen was "*pleres charitos*".

St. Stephen was **filled with grace (pleres charitos) for that time** entering into his martyrdom.

But St. Stephen was NOT filled with grace (**kecharitomene**) in a perfect tense sense. At least here. You would have to read elsewhere to understand St. Stephen was a sinner.¹⁴

¹² Let's look at the original Greek and SEE the difference, and then we can discuss the tense aspect and WHY this is so different than kecharitomene.

LUKE 1:28 Kai eiselthon pros auten eipen, "Caire, **kecharitomene!**, ho Kurios meta sou."

ACTS 6:8 Stephanos de **plērēs charitos** kai dynamēōs epoiei terata kai sēmeia megala en tō laō

¹³ <http://catholicpoint.blogspot.com/2012/09/kecharitomene.html>

¹⁴ Jesus is full of grace in this St. Stephen sense too but other verses make it clear Jesus is MORE, whereas other verses make it clear St. Stephen is not more.

JOHN 1:14 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

The Virgin Mary IS **kecharitomene in a perfect tense** and thus was/is not a sinner.

That filling of grace was a past action brought forth continuously to the present time, presented by a being outside of the realm of time (again via St. Gabriel the Archangel). And if wasn't meant for the future, WHY would it stop now when St. Gabriel is telling the Blessed Mother this? That would not make sense.

- **St. Stephen = Filled With Grace at that time. (Present Tense)**
- **The Blessed Virgin Mary = Filled With Grace Before and up Until That Time. (Perfect Tense)**

***Also Look Carefully At The Way St. Gabriel The Archangel
Treats The Blessed Virgin Mary!***

Angels are spiritual beings that have enormous power. Both the good angels and the fallen angels (demons) are superior to human beings in power and intellect.

When God allows these powerful beings to appear to humans it is quite terrifying.

Angels often must preface their appearance with **"Be Not Afraid!"** or some such because the people are so frightened.

LUKE 1:11-12 11 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, **and fear fell upon him.**

LUKE 2:7-14 7 And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. 8 And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And **an angel of the Lord appeared to them,** and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and **they were filled with fear.** 10 And **the angel said to them, "Be not afraid;** for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; 11 for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

Now observe what happens when the Archangel comes to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

HEBREWS 4:15 15 For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

LUKE 1:26-28 (RSVCE, or Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition) — 26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, **Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!**

Remember. St. Gabriel does NOT call Her by name.
St. Gabriel does NOT say: "Hail Mary"!

St. Gabriel calls Her by Her TITLE.
St. Gabriel calls Her "Full of Grace".
St. Gabriel says Hail Full of Grace!

"Hail" Is A Word Used When Humbling Yourself Usually Before A Superior

"Hail" is a Biblical word for a greeting of great respect and a humbling of oneself¹⁵!

That's WHY the soldiers beating and mocking our Lord Jesus said: "HAIL! King of the Jews."

They were PRETENDING they were respecting Jesus and humbling themselves.
They were mocking Jesus was a King (they were unbelieving that Jesus IS THE KING of Kings). That's WHY they greeted Jesus with "Hail".
And that's WHY they gave Jesus a "crown" (to scoff at Jesus' Kingship).
That's WHY they placed a (royal) purple robe on Jesus (again sarcastic rejecting Jesus' Kingship).

JOHN 18:33, 36a 33 Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" . . . 36 Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world . . .

JOHN 19:1-3 1 Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. 2 And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and **arrayed him in a purple robe**; 3 they came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. Judas pretend-greeted our Lord Jesus with "Hail" (as he betrayed Him). . .

¹⁵ The Risen Jesus greets the Apostles this humble way in Matthew 28:9.
And this makes sense too doesn't it? We see Jesus say this just a few short chapters earlier . . .

MATTHEW 20:26-28 26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; 28 even as **the Son of man came not to be served but to serve**, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

MATTHEW 26:48-49 48 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him." 49 And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "**Hail**, Master!" And he kissed him.

Claudias Lysias, a Roman soldier, likewise addresses his Governor (Felix) as "Hail" (unfortunately translated as "greeting" in the RSVCE) in writing to the Governor.

ACTS 23:25-26 (RSVCE) 25 And he wrote a letter to this effect: 26 "Claudius Lysias to his Excellency the governor Felix, greeting.

So the greeting "Hail" (Greek = Chi-ray or χαίρε¹⁶) has significance of respect and self-humbling service.

"Hail" ("Chi-ray") is how St. Gabriel the Archangel greets the Blessed Mother but NOT mocking Her.

LUKE 1:28 28 And he came to her and said, **Hail**, full of grace, the Lord is with you!

◀ Luke 1:28 ▶

46 [e]	2036 [e]	5463 [e]	5487 [e]
iutēn	eipen	Chaire	kecharitōmenē
χὺτῆν	, εἶπεν	, Χαῖρε	, κεχαριτωμένη !
ier	he said	Greetings	[you] favored with grace
'Pro-AF3S	V-AIA-3S	V-PMA-2S	V-RPMP-VFS

Contrast How An Angel of Heaven Treats The Blessed Virgin Mary vrs. How He Treats St. Peter

We don't strike priests or our other superiors. And we certainly don't hit Popes.

Even in society. Can you imagine what would happen if a police officer pulled you over for speeding and when he asked to see your license you struck him?

Keeping that in mind, let's contrast this to how an angel treats our first Pope, St. Peter (who would not be his "superior").

After Jesus died, Resurrected and Ascended into Heaven, St. Peter is in jail in the Book of Acts presumably for sedition and is going to be murdered.

¹⁶ <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/luke/1-28.htm>

St. Peter is in chains in prison. He was asleep on the jail floor between two soldiers.

How does the angel from Heaven treat our first Pope, St. Peter?

Acts 12 St. Peter imprisoned summary

- The angel comes to St. Peter and awakens him by **striking Peter!**
- It actually sounds like he KICKS him (as St. Peter was laying down)!
- **No greeting** whatsoever.
- **Ordering St. Peter around** like he is an inferior (Hint: He IS an “inferior” to the angel.)
- Get up!
- Get dressed!
- Follow me!
- Not even a “goodbye”.

Let’s look at this. . . .

ACTS 12:1-11 1 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. 2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword; 3 and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, **he proceeded to arrest Peter also**. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. 4 And when he had seized him, he **put him in prison**, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. 5 So **Peter was kept in prison**; but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. 6 The very night when Herod was about to bring him out, **Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison**; 7 and behold, **an angel** of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell; and **he struck Peter on the side and woke him**, saying, **"Get up quickly."** And the chains fell off his hands. 8 And the angel said to him, **"Dress yourself and put on your sandals."** And he did so. And he said to him, **"Wrap your mantle around you and follow me."** 9 And he went out and followed him; he did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened to them of its own accord, and they went out and passed on through one street; **and immediately the angel left him**. 11 And Peter came to himself, and said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

Now again go back to the way one of the top angels treats the Blessed Virgin Mary!

LUKE 1:28 28 And he came to her and said, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!

St. Gabriel the archangel KNOWS something about the Blessed Mother.

St. Gabriel KNOWS the Blessed Virgin Mary is God's HIGHEST mere creature (Jesus Christ is not a MERE creature).

And St. Gabriel's submissive and humble attitude gives it away! Admittedly this does not show "The Immaculate Conception" (it wasn't meant to), but it DOES show the profound respect St. Gabriel the Archangel treats the Blessed Mother with.

At this point we are going to have to deal with common objections to this doctrine.

Certainly this contrast of angelic behaviors does not prove The Immaculate Conception, but it sure is consistent with it.

Common Objections To The Doctrine Of The Immaculate Conception

1. Mary needed a Savior!
2. If Mary were sinless, then her parents would need to be sinless, and their parents before them, etc. etc.
3. Since Mary underwent the Rite of Purification after Christ's birth (Luke 2:22-24), Mary must have sinned.
4. Jesus Himself rebukes those who call Mary "Blessed".
5. All have sinned. The Bible explicitly says so!
6. The phrase 'Immaculate Conception' is used nowhere in Scripture!

Objection Number 1—Mary Needed A Savior, So The Catholic Invention Of The Immaculate Conception MUST BE False!

LUKE 1:46-48 46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; 49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Objection: It is only logical that Mary cannot be sinless. Sinful people need a Savior!

- Mary needed a savior.
- If Mary is sinless, she doesn't need a savior.
- Conclusion: Therefore Mary is not sinless.

Answer: Sinful people need a Savior to be sure.

But sinless people need a savior too.

Likewise the Blessed Virgin Mary needed a Savior as well. She is God's highest creature, but The Blessed Virgin Mary is still . . . "a created being".

The above objection syllogism has a false conclusion because the second premise ("If Mary is sinless, she doesn't need a savior") is false.

Objection: Wait a minute! There are no "sinless people"!

Answer: Sure there are. There are many sinless people (in the sense of "committed" sin).

Virtually all Bible Christians admit Adam and Eve were sinless for a time. Yet they could not save themselves.

Let's look closer . . .

Adam and Eve had no Original Sin.

Adam and Eve had Committed Sin.

Babies and profoundly mentally retarded people from birth are likewise sinless concerning the "committed" sin category.¹⁷

Babies and profoundly mentally handicapped from birth persons can't save themselves either.

Notice St. Paul tells us just matter of factly, there are people now in his day; there are people who do NOT sin like unto Adam.

Let's look at Romans 5:14 and see St. Paul reaffirm this thought (with St. Paul almost certainly referring to infants and profoundly retarded individuals from birth here).

ROMANS 5:14 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, **even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam**, who was a type of the one who was to come.

Now let's also review the Protestant translation of the New International Version (NIV) here and see this concept stated perhaps even better!

¹⁷ Infants DO possess original sin and that is passed down to them from their parents. But infants don't/can't **commit** sins[?], at least in the sense that they have transgressed a law of God like Adam and Eve did or we do.

ROMANS 5:14 (NIV) 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

Notice St. Paul just matter-of-factly teaches there are people that exist (that death reigns over), yet DID NOT SIN by breaking a command!

Some might object against St. Paul referring to infants and profoundly retarded people here, but even conceding this point to them, St. Paul is still obviously talking about *someone* who is sinless here. If they say this, just ask them . . .

“OK. Who else do you think St. Paul could be referring to who didn’t sin by breaking a command??”

But even these sinless people still need a savior!

You must have some rudimentary knowledge of sin in order to commit a sin.¹⁸

Jesus gives even the Pharisees this leeway (!) concerning the specific sin of rejecting Him (the same principle could be asserted for the people of the Old Testament times and those who through no fault of their own, do not know of Jesus).

JOHN 15:22 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Infants don’t commit sin. It is in this sense, that infants are an exception to the “ALL have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God” statement.

The Catholic Church agrees that not only did Mary need a savior but also the whole human race needed a savior!

Being sinless isn’t good enough to get someone to Heaven. We need GRACE! You cannot “earn” Heaven.

So to say “if she is sinless, she doesn’t need a savior” is a falsehood.

HOW Did Jesus Save The Blessed Virgin Mary?

The question now is “**HOW did Jesus save**” Mary? Not “IF” She needed a savior or not.

¹⁸ That’s the whole point of different punishments for differing servants who did not know better in Luke 12:37-48. See especially Luke 12:48 where it states to whom much is given much will be required.

LUKE 12:48 48 But **he who did not know**, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating. Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more.

Q: So HOW did Jesus save the Blessed Virgin Mary?

A: By completely safeguarding the Blessed Virgin from sin from the moment of Her conception inside of St. Anne as we saw earlier in the infallible statement.¹⁹

The early Church believed this but admittedly there was vigorous debate as to how or when God did save the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This is part of the reason WHY an infallible DEFINITION was eventually needed and appropriate back in the 1800's (With the Pope or Papal document: "Ineffabilis Deus" from Dec. 8, 1854).

The blessed John Duns Scotus (usually just referred to as "Duns Scotus") put forth a useful analogy in the 1200's to reflect the accurate teaching of the early Church.

He stated that Jesus saves us by pulling us out of the pit of sin.
But Jesus saved the **Blessed Virgin Mary** differently. Jesus saved Mother Mary from sin by **preserving** Her from falling in that pit of sin in the first place.

Jesus preserved the Blessed Virgin Mary from ALL stain of sin and that's WHY Mary could rightly be called by the heavenly archangel Gabriel as being "FULL of grace."

Let's repeat this principle from CCC 491 that we saw earlier.

CCC 491b . . . 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.¹³⁵ . . .

Let's listen to St. Fulgentius in the early Church from the 400's.

St. Fulgentius "In the wife of the first man, the wickedness of the devil depraved her seduced mind; in the mother of the Second Man,
the grace of God preserved both her mind inviolate and her flesh.
(inviolat = completely intact and without corruption)

¹⁹ By the way. Mary still had **temptation** to sin as we do despite this preservation from all sin. Jesus even had temptations. The Letter to the Hebrews (speaking of Jesus) states . . .

HEBREWS 4:15 15 For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect **has been tempted** as we are, yet without sin.

On her mind, it conferred the most firm faith; from her flesh it took away lust altogether. Since then man was in a miserable way condemned for sin, therefore without sin was in a marvelous way born the God-man."

- St. Fulgentius (468-533) Sermon 2, p. 124. De Dupl. Nativ.

The Church continues to teach what St. Fulgentius taught to this very day.

CCC 411b Mary benefited first of all and uniquely from Christ's victory over sin: she was **preserved** from all stain of original sin **and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.**³⁰⁶

But not just St. Fulgentius. Let's listen to St. Augustine . . .

- St. Augustine. (St. Augustine died in 430 A.D.):

. . . . **Except**, therefore, **the Holy Virgin Mary**, about whom on account of the honor of our Lord, **I will not allow the question (of sin) to be entertained**, when sins are under discussion, for how do we know what increase of grace was bestowed on her, to enable her to overcome sin in every way . . .

. . . **The divine influence, safeguarding her against all sin** . . .

. . . rested on the very singular and personal relation of Mary to God which makes her the bride and vesture of God. Because of this relation, God owed it to His Own dignity and holiness

to safeguard Mary against sin, lest her sin be imputed to Him,

or lest it should appear that He had a share in it.

Because of this relation also, **all graces necessary to preclude sin are virtually ensured** and guaranteed to Mary in and through the principle of this grace.

- St. Augustine from approximately 400 A.D.

Catholic Answers paraphrases Blessed Duns Scotus this way

Consider an analogy: Suppose a man falls into a deep pit, and someone reaches down to pull him out. The man has been "saved" from the pit. Now imagine a woman walking along, and she too is about to topple into the pit, but at the very moment that she is to fall in, someone holds her back and prevents her. She too has been saved from the pit, but in an even better way: She was not simply taken out of the pit, she was prevented from getting stained by the mud in the first place. This is the illustration Christians have used for a thousand years to explain how Mary was saved by Christ. By receiving Christ's grace at her conception, she had his grace applied to her before she was able to become mired in original sin and its stain.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that she was "redeemed in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son" (CCC 492). She has more

reason to call God her Savior than we do, because he saved her in an even more glorious manner!

Objection: Where is this “preservation” concept in the Bible?

Answer: Right in Jude 1:24-25²⁰. As Tim Staples has pointed out, Jesus picks us up after we fall into the pit of sin, but it is important to realize Jesus has the power to KEEP US FROM FALLING too.

In the case of the Blessed Virgin Mary, **Jesus exerted this power** “to keep you from falling”, to the fullest extent.

JUDE 1:24-25 24 Now to him **who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish** before the presence of his glory with rejoicing, 25 to the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen.

When Jesus did His part in making Mary, Jesus wouldn’t let Mary be conceived defiled and stained with sin, that’s why Mary is “kecharitomene” or “full of grace”.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the ONE purely human person where God fulfilled Jude 1:24-25 perfectly!

Mother Mary is the example to the FULLNESS of God **keeping “you from falling and to present you without blemish”**.

Objection: “Well if the Blessed Virgin Mary needed a Savior, what was she being ‘saved’ from?”

Answer: The question has a hidden false presupposition. It assumes being perfect gets you to being a child of God on your own. But that would be wrong. That’s part of the heresy of Pelagianism.

Being perfect in and of itself doesn’t accomplish this for Mary. Just as it didn’t accomplish this for the obedient and sinless angels (who God still put to some test and they still need God’s grace²¹).

²⁰ Usually just called Jude 24-25 instead of Jude 1:24-25 because **Jude has only one chapter** so it can be assumed “Jude 1” in any reference to the Letter of Jude. I put the “1” before it to minimize confusion.

²¹ When St. Michael fought Lucifer and expelled him, the most powerful angel (Lucifer) out of Heaven, St. Michael the Archangel’s own power wasn’t good enough was it? St. Michael even appealed to GRACE and called upon God (“Who is like unto God?!!”).

Mary needed a Savior to receive grace, to be saved from sin (via preservation), and to continue in this path as well as to be made a daughter of God in the family of God.

By the way. Remember the human race has been blessed “with every spiritual blessing”. Ephesians 1:3 says so (“**Blessed in Christ with Every Spiritual Blessing**”). Ephesians 1:3 just happens to be one of the Latin Rite Catholic liturgical readings on . . . **The Feast of the Immaculate Conception!**

Concerning the human race, the Church sees in the Blessed Virgin Mary, the fullest fulfillment of Ephesians 1:3 being reached.

EPHESIANS 1:3-4 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ **with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

NOT EPHESIANS 1:3-4 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with **every** spiritual blessing in Jesus **except He NEVER quite completely fulfilled Jude 1:24 in ANYONE despite it saying He is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish**. He is “able”, but Jesus just never seemed to get this done on a mere human person. Us being “holy and blameless” (eventually) is a great spiritual blessing. But “**every spiritual blessing**” would have Jesus **preventing** or “keeping someone in humanity from falling” in the fullest sense. Too bad He never quite got it done.

JUDE 1:24a 24 Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you **without blemish** . . .

The ultimate fulfillment of Jude 1:24 is to “keep you from falling” and “present you without blemish”. Just like the verse says.

Q: Can you think of ANYONE who this was fulfilled by Jesus to its fullest extent?

The only way God fulfills Jude 1:24 (to keep you from falling) AND Ephesians 1:3 (“with **every** spiritual blessing” . . . “holy and **blameless**”) in its ultimate sense is in the Immaculate Conception and subsequent sinlessness of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

The Church sees this “every spiritual blessing” (CCC 492) discussed in Ephesians 1, as pertaining to the Blessed Virgin Mary moreso or “more exalted fashion”, than any other created person!

CCC 492²² The "splendor of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a **more exalted fashion**, by reason of the merits of her Son".¹³⁶ **The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places"** and chose her "in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love".¹³⁷

Objection Number 2. Mary Being Sinless Is A Denial Of Adam And Eve's Sin!

Objection: Well if Mary needed to be conceived undefiled, then her parents, and the parents before her, etc., etc. would have needed this too.

Answer: This is false.

This falsely assumes St. Mary's sinlessness is a result of Her **NATURE**. (Basically Her nature from Sts. Anne and Joachim.)

The Blessed Mother's sinlessness comes from **GRACE**. Not from nature.

The Blessed Virgin Mary had this gift of being full of **grace** by the **gratuitousness of God** concerning the dignity of Christ. Not because She HAD TO or deserved it or inherited it from her parents (although Sts. Joachim and Anne were undoubtedly very holy people).

In another sense, it was appropriate and necessary for Mary to be full of grace to give the full and free assent of her will to God at the time of the Annunciation. Her parents Anne and Joachim didn't have this need.

CCC 490 To become the mother of the Savior, Mary "was enriched by God with gifts **appropriate** to such a role."¹³² The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as "full of grace".¹³³ In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was **necessary** that she be wholly borne **by God's grace**.

Let's go back to the Baltimore Catechism again for a moment and first see WHY the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from sin.

Q. 269. Why was the Blessed Virgin preserved from original sin?

²² CCC 492 tells us of the "splendor of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception". These graces and blessings have to do with "**Mary more than any other created person**". Footnote 137 of CCC 492 footnotes Ephesians 1:3-4 in seeing the Blessed Mother as that pinnacle recipient and cooperator of grace!

A. The Blessed Virgin was preserved from original sin because it would not be consistent with the dignity of the Son of God to have His Mother, even for an instant, in the power of the devil and an enemy of God.

Q. 270. How could the Blessed Virgin be preserved from sin by her Divine Son, before her Son was born?

A. The Blessed Virgin could be preserved from sin by her Divine Son before He was born as man, for He always existed as God and foresaw His own future merits and the dignity of His Mother. He therefore by His future merits provided for her privilege of exemption from original sin.

The CCC teaches us the same thing

CCC 722 The Holy Spirit *prepared* Mary by his grace. **It was fitting that the mother of him in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily"¹⁰² should herself be "full of grace."** She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty. It was quite correct for the angel Gabriel to greet her as the "Daughter of Zion": "Rejoice."¹⁰³ (see footnote²³) It is the thanksgiving of the whole People of God, and thus of the Church, which Mary in her canticle¹⁰⁴ lifts up to the Father in the Holy Spirit while carrying within her the eternal Son.

It was fitting that Mary be undefiled because the "whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (see Colossians 2:9) inside of Her!

When the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, She became the **living tabernacle** par excellence. The historical Christian Church has always seen this. St. Hippolytus back in the early 200's had this to say . . .

ST. HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME (Mary is) "the **tabernacle exempt from defilement and corruption**"

-St. Hippolytus. St. Hippolytus died in 235 A.D.

More on this concept of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the fulfillment of the "Tabernacle" and the fulfillment of the "Ark of the Covenant" later.

²³ Not explicitly in St. Luke's gospel but seen in prophecies in Zephaniah 3:14 and Zechariah 2:14 (2:10 in RSVCE numbering) concerning this angelic encounter.

Zephaniah 3:14 14 Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Zechariah 2:10 10 Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the LORD.

The Church teaches that God granted Mary this **gift**; and it was “unique” as we saw in CCC 411 and CCC 492.

In other words, Mary’s parents—Saints Joachim and Anne—did not have this same “unique” gift of being “full of grace”, they were sinners. CCC 492 once again.

CCC 492 The "splendor of an **entirely unique** holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes wholly from Christ: she is "**redeemed, in a more exalted fashion**, by reason of the merits of her Son".¹³⁶ The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" and chose her "in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love".¹³⁷

CCC 411b Mary benefited first of all and **uniquely** from Christ's victory over sin: she was preserved from all stain of original sin and by a **special grace** of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.³⁰⁶

As a matter-of-fact, the Church explicitly teaches that the Blessed Virgin Mary has descended from “descendants of Eve”! In other words, Mary’s parents (Saints Joachim and Anne) were born with original sin and were sinners. Despite this fact, God uniquely preserved Mary from the stain of original sin.

CCC 508 From **among the descendants of Eve**, God chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of his Son. "**Full of grace**", Mary is "the most excellent fruit of redemption" (SC 103): from the first instant of her conception, she was totally preserved from the stain of original sin and she remained pure from all personal sin throughout her life.

Objection Number 3— Mary Underwent The Rite Of Purification, Therefore Mary Must Be A Sinner

This is another objection that if they say this about Mary, they attack Jesus too.

As Tim Staples likes to say: **All Marian doctrines have Christologic implications!** All the Marian doctrines help us understand Mary better, but they also help us understand Jesus better too.

A common sweatshirt at Catholic Conferences says the same basic thing . . .

Know Mary. Know Jesus.
No Mary. No Jesus.

Objection: Since Mary underwent The Rite of Purification²⁴ in the Temple after Christ's birth, so Mary must have sinned.

Answer: False. Let's answer this objection by looking at the appropriate passage.

LUKE 2:21-24 21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22 And when the time came for **their purification** according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

The specific purification precept has to do with **ritual impurity concerning touching blood** just as with "menstruation" or as Ignatius Catholic Study Bible (New Testament) states: "Strictly speaking, these offerings cleanse women of legal impurity and have no connection with moral failures or guilt".

The act of touching blood in other people's childbirth (no bloody birth with Jesus and Mary as that was a miraculous birth²⁵ but others) necessitates this Rite of Purification. Under normal circumstances in childbirth mothers would be ritually impure due to blood exposure and were treated as Leviticus 15:19 outlines (again, Jesus and Mary were an exception too—no bloody birth—we'll cover that issue in our Perpetual Virginity of Mary Bible study.

This ritual "impurity" has to do with the blood exposure from birth (also the menstrual cycle outside of birth situations) not from committing sins. They wait an extra 33 days because the boy has ritual "impurity" too from not only birth but from his circumcision.

LEVITICUS 12:1-2a, 3-4, 6-8 1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Say to the people of Israel, **If a woman conceives, and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; . . .** 3 **And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised**²⁶. 4 **Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying; she shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed. . . .** 6 "And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she

²⁴ "The Rite of Purification" is also called "The Rite of Presentation".

²⁵ More on Jesus' miraculous birth in our Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary study.

²⁶ Remember the child is ritually impure from touching the blood at birth too. That's why the baby boy can't be clean and go into the Temple for Presentation until forty days (33 days from day 8 inclusive which is 33 + 7 = 40) because at day eight the baby boy gets exposed to blood again via his circumcision. So the boy instead of waiting 33 days for Presentation waits 40 days. Moms wait two 33 day periods with girls + 14 days as with menstruation. (I do not know why the 33-day wait is doubled for moms of baby girls over baby boys.)

shall bring to the priest at the door of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, 7 and he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her; then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. 8 And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."

Ritual impurity (even if it were to happen—it didn't but if it did) does not make the Blessed Virgin Mary a "sinner". Nor does ritual impurity point to Jesus being a sinner.

Luke 2:22 correctly states, "**their purification**". Mother and son. Both mother and son when a baby is delivered touch blood (unless of course the birth is miraculous).

LUKE 2:21-22 21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22 And when the time came for **their purification** according to **the law of Moses**,

This ritual need for purification of the persons in contact with blood is **assumed** in the usual case (again, Jesus and Mary are exceptions and would NOT have touched blood because of Jesus' miraculous delivery—again we will discuss why they are exceptions in our Perpetual Virginity of Mary Bible study—but they underwent this rite anyway undoubtedly **to fulfill all righteousness**).

This does not make Jesus a "sinner". Nor does it make Mary a "sinner" either.

It would be inappropriate to read all of Leviticus up to Leviticus 12 here, but if you look where this purification precept comes from, it is not merely for ritual impurity, or personal sin, but for **the sin of Israel too (presumably the Golden Calf)**. You can see that in context by reading Leviticus up to chapter 12 on your own.

In summary concerning The Blessed Virgin Mary and The Presentation:

- Touching Blood (No)
- Personal Moral Failings/Sin (No)
- Sin of Israel (Yes)
- Fulfilling "The Law" of Moses (Yes)

Q: WHY would Jesus be subject to this Purification merely to fulfill "The Law" (of Moses)?

A: Because that's part of the reason WHY Jesus came! He came in part to fulfill "The Law".

MATTHEW 5:17 17 "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them **but to fulfill them**. 18 For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

Jesus carried out this concept of fulfilling the Law of Moses (fulfilling all righteousness) with Himself too.

Recall John the Baptist's baptism was "a Baptism of **repentance**" (Luke 3:3, Acts 19:4). Yet we all know Jesus had nothing to "**repent**" of, despite Him receiving John's "Baptism of repentance".

Never-the-less, Jesus underwent this Baptism of Repentance to fulfill the Law (to "fulfill all righteousness" as Matthew 3:15 tells us).

MATTHEW 3:13-15 13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus **it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness**." Then he consented.

When Jesus undergoes these things associated with sinners He is FULFILLING the Old Testament. He is fulfilling "The Law" and "The Prophets".

Jesus is not "in need" of this due to "His sin" (He didn't have any sin).

The Blessed Virgin Mary likewise does not have sin in fulfilling these ritual prescriptions.

An unbeliever might insist that Jesus' reception of a "Baptism of repentance" assures us the recipient had something to repent of.

They might insist Jesus reception of this Baptism of repentance would "peg" Jesus as a sinner.

But you and I would say, you must look at other verses such as Hebrews 4:15 and conclude Jesus is an exception to this conclusion.

You must see ALL the verses in harmony and would determine Jesus was NOT a sinner.

Likewise with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Presentation—you have to look elsewhere to settle the issue **and we have looked elsewhere already**. We have looked at Luke 1:28 and conclude the Blessed Virgin Mary is full of grace.

Antipater of Bostrum (abbreviated in the Catena Aurea as “Titus Bost.”) stated it well this way . . .

TITUS BOST. Therefore the Evangelist has well observed, that the days of **her** purification were come according to the law, who since she had conceived of the Holy Spirit, **was free from all uncleanness**. It follows, They brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

- Antipater of Bostrum from the 400's A.D. and excerpted from St. Thomas Aquinas' Catena Aurea

Briefly Some Other Interesting Insights Concerning The Presentation (The Purification)

*** You may skip this section and go directly to Objection Number 4 on the next page if you wish, as this segment does not concern the Immaculate Conception per se but for me was too interesting to ignore.**

As long as we are on the subject of The Presentation, let's quickly look at a couple of other interesting aspects.

We see The Holy Family offer the poor family's offering suggesting they were indeed not wealthy.

LEVITICUS 12:8 8 And if she **cannot afford a lamb**, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."

LUKE 2:22, 24 22 And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord . . . 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "**a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.**"

What is the reason of the Holy Family's financial austerity? We don't know the whole reasons concerning the financial situation of the Holy Family.

St. Cyril of Alexandria offers this spiritual perception into the general prescriptions of the sacrifice as well and what they mean in the context of the Presentation . . .

ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA But let us see what these offerings mean. The turtle dove is the most vocal of birds, and the pigeon the gentlest. And such was the Savior made unto us; He was endowed with perfect meekness, and like the turtle dove entranced the world, filling His garden with His own melodies. There was

killed then either a turtle dove or a pigeon, that by a figure He might be shown forth to us as about to suffer in the flesh for the life of the world.

- St Cyril of Alexandria from about 400 A.D. excerpted from the Catena Aurea

Objection Number 4— Jesus Himself Rebukes Those Who Call Mary Blessed

Objection: Jesus Himself rebukes those who call Mary “blessed” in Luke 11.

Answer: Jesus does no such thing.

Let’s look at the salient verses for more insight into this situation.

In Luke 11, shortly after some of the people were blaspheming Jesus.

(Blaspheming is irreverence to God or of people especially beloved of God such as the Saints and good Angels, and blasphemy even extends to sacred objects [think Ark of the Covenant or sacred Temple Vessels]; for a good definition of blasphemy, see CCC 2148). A woman who was apparently not one of the blasphemers said this concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary:

LUKE 11:27b-28 27b . . . a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “**Blessed** is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!” 28 But he said, “**Blessed** rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Objection: “See. The woman is obviously talking about Mary and has some pretty flowery language (“**blessed**”) regarding Mary. Jesus diverts her away from Mary in effect rebuking the woman for this flowery language about Mary.”

Answer: First of all Jesus isn’t rebuking anybody here. Jesus tells us what true **blessedness** is.

Luke 11:27-28 actually at least implicitly **points to** the Immaculate Conception, not does away with it. Why?

Think about it. Again Jesus tells us what TRUE BLESSEDNESS is.

True **blessedness** is someone who hears the word of God AND keeps it.

Now can we think of someone who is “BLESSED” among all women?
Can we think of someone who hears the word of God AND keeps it?

Let’s look at that same Gospel of Luke 1 and see the one and the same Holy Spirit use the term “**blessed**” three times in the context of who?

The Blessed Virgin Mary (the inspired St. Luke who wrote this Luke 1 and who also wrote Luke 11).

We will see Elizabeth making two of these proclamations in the context of Mary while Elizabeth was being “FILLED with the Holy Spirit”!

LUKE 1:39-49 39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and **Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit** 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "**Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!** 43 And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And **blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.**" 46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, **henceforth all generations will call me blessed;** 49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Do we in this generation call the Blessed Virgin Mary “Blessed”? I hope so. Let’s continue.

Who Is “Blessed”?

Keep in mind what Jesus said. Recall the person who is “blessed” is the person who hears the word of God AND keeps it.

So **WHY** is Mary (?) . . .

- “Blessed (are you) among women”
- “blessed is she who believed”
- “all generations will call me blessed”

Because Mary hears the word of God and keeps it that’s WHY.

Mary hears the word of God and keeps it in a way that is different from all other individuals! **And that’s WHY Mary is (!)** . . .

- “Blessed (are you) among women”
- “blessed is she who believed”
- “all generations will call me blessed”

Jesus, in the context of Mary, is explaining WHY Mary is “blessed among women” on one hand.

Yes this is a GRACE! Nobody here denied that. But it still concerns the Blessed Virgin Mary. But this saying of Jesus has secondary meaning too concerning the rest of mankind.

It implicitly affirms Gentiles who do not have a direct blood relationship (Gentiles did not “nurse” from “Daughter Zion”) with Jesus will be coming into the New Covenant as well as Jews who do have a direct blood relationship with Jesus . . . IF . . . they “hear the word of God and keep it!”

LUKE 11:28 28 But he (Jesus) said, "**Blessed** rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Jesus teaches us something here we should know if we are familiar with the Gospels; that **the spiritual relationship with Jesus is even more important than the blood relationship.**

The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible puts it this way

Ignatius Catholic Study Bible It is better to belong to Jesus’ spiritual family than to his earthly family. **His mother Mary is blessed on both counts**, since she is Christ’s biological mother (Luke 1:42, 48) and the sterling example of one who hears and keeps the word of the Lord (Luke 1:38, 45). (Bold mine)

Let’s look at a statement by St. Bede the Venerable from approximately 700 A.D., then St. John Chrysostom from the late 300’s A.D., then another statement from the Venerable Bede (both Doctors of the Church [“Doctor” not in the sense of “physicians” but that they have writings that are highly esteemed by the Catholic Church]).

BEDE THE VENERABLE But the woman pronounces **blessed** not only her who was thought worthy to give birth from her body to the Word of God, but those also who have desired by the hearing of faith spiritually to conceive the same Word, and by diligence in good works, either in their own or the hearts of their neighbors, to bring it forth and nourish it; for it follows, But he said, Yes rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

- Bede the Venerable from about 700 A.D. excerpted from the Catena Aurea

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM In this answer He sought not to disown His mother, but to show that His birth would have profited her nothing, **had she not been really fruitful in works and faith.** But if it profited Mary nothing that Christ derived His birth from her, without the inward virtue of her heart, much less will

it avail us to have a virtuous father, brother, or son, while we ourselves are strangers to virtue.

- St John Chrysostom excerpted from the Catena Aurea

BEDE THE VENERABLE But she was the mother of God, and therefore indeed blessed, in that she was made the temporal minister of the Word becoming incarnate; yet therefore much more blessed that she remained the eternal keeper of the same ever to be beloved Word. But this expression startles the wise men of the Jews, who sought not to hear and keep the word of God, but to deny and blaspheme it.

- Bede the Venerable from about 700 A.D. excerpted from the Catena Aurea

Objection: In Luke 11:28 Jesus uses the word “rather” as contrast to deny Mary is “blessed”.

LUKE 11:28 28 But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Answer: Nonsense. **Jesus is NOT contradicting the Holy Spirit in Luke 1** where Mary was proclaimed as “**Blessed** are you among all women” by the Holy Spirit through Elizabeth as we just saw.

Tim Staples has an interesting observation concerning the word “rather” and the original Greek word for “rather” (Greek = “menoun” or οὐννε) in Luke 11:28 and seeing what he has to say will give us even more insight.

Tim Staples But the word translated as “rather” and viewed by many Fundamentalists to mean “no, rather” is *menoun*, which can mean “on the contrary” but can also mean, “**indeed, much more so.**” If Christ were truly correcting the unnamed woman’s assertion that Mary was blessed, then he contradicts Luke 1:42 and 48, where both Elizabeth and Mary herself declare Mary to be blessed indeed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

- From Tim Staples debate with Tetlow (available on Internet)

Jesus is NOT contradicting the Holy Spirit. That would not only be a dubious interpretation, but an impossible one.

LUKE 11:27b-28 27b . . . a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “**Blessed** is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!” 28 But he said, “**Blessed** rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Jesus is explaining to this woman WHY Mary is called “Blessed”.

LUKE 1:41b-42 Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "**Blessed** are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

Objection Number 5—None Is Righteous! (&) ALL Have Sinned And Fall Short Of The Glory Of God! Since ALL Have Sinned, It Is Impossible For Mary To Be Sinless!

None Is Righteous! No Not One!

Objection: None is righteous, NO NOT ONE!!! ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God! ALL ALL ALL have sinned. No exceptions! Why don't you Catholics just believe the Bible?

Answer: I do believe the Bible because the Bible itself says there are exceptions. But first let's look at the salient verses here and then address the objection.

ROMANS 3:10 **None** is righteous (Greek = dikaios²⁷), no, not one . . .

Answer continued. You must be careful when interpreting these verses. Remember. Jesus Christ is True God AND True Man.

Is Jesus "righteous"?

Objector: Yes of course. But Jesus is an exception!

Answer: I agree, but the verse says nothing about any "exceptions" does it?

NOT ROMANS 3:10 **None is righteous** no, not one **except Jesus.**

Objector: Well, you've got to go elsewhere in Scripture to see Jesus as an exception. You also have got to use common sense, after all Jesus is God.

Answer: That's correct and I agree with you and with your principles here on this point.

- Look elsewhere in Scripture to receive illumination concerning the possible exceptions or absence of exceptions.
- Use common sense.

Let's do that right now.

²⁷ https://biblehub.com/greek/dikaioi_1342.htm

And look. Is Jesus the ONLY exception concerning “None is righteous, no not one” for example?

The Bible tells us there are others who are “righteous” but we are not saying these others, are gods, or on par with Jesus.

We are just stating what the Bible itself tells us—that there are **exceptions**.

For example let’s look at Genesis 6:9, but before doing so, keep in mind that “**None** is righteous, no, not one”, and ask yourself two questions:

“Does the Bible itself teach that there are any exceptions to this verse?”
And also ask yourself: “Was Noah a righteous man?”

We can answer both questions by looking at one verse—Genesis 6:9.

GENESIS 6:9 9 These are the generations of Noah. **Noah was a righteous man**, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. (God repeats declaring Noah as “Righteous” in Genesis 7:1)

We find out there is at least ONE exception to “none is righteous, no not one”—Noah.

Objection: But that doesn’t mean Noah was sinless!

Answer: That’s correct. But it does mean **your tradition of a “NO EXCEPTIONS rule”** in Romans 3:10 (“None is righteous, no not one”) is already **invalidated**!

Especially when you say you must look at verses elsewhere to see if exceptions exist because we already saw Mary being addressed by a Heavenly Angel as . . . what . . . “Hail Mary?” No!

The Angel Gabriel does NOT call her by her name (“Hail Mary”) but rather by her title—Hail “FULL OF GRACE” as we’ve already seen.

LUKE 1:28 Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Or

LUKE 1:28 Hail, **kecharitomene**, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Which means as we have seen: “Hail, you who have been filled with and continue to be filled with grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”

Now we see Romans 3:10 teach us “None is righteous, no, not one” yet we also see Genesis 6:9 tell us “**Noah was a righteous** man, blameless in his generation”.

Which verse do you believe “None is righteous”? Or “Noah was a righteous man”?

Hopefully you believe BOTH, but you need their proper interpretation. (More on that in a moment.)

If you are Catholic you DO believe them both, but in order to believe both verses, you must have the proper interpretation.

Catholics don’t pit one verse of Sacred Scripture against the other. You must believe **both** sets of verses.

After all, God the Holy Spirit (working along with the humans) is the author of Sacred Scripture!

2nd TIMOTHY 3:16a 16 All scripture is inspired (Greek = breathed) by God . . .

The Holy Spirit will not author confusion.

But you must believe both passages in the way they are meant to be taken (this is yet another reason WHY we need an authority such as the Church to guide us in our interpretation of Scripture).

So we KNOW “**None is righteous**, no, not one” because the Bible tells us this.

But now we also KNOW that there must be some exceptions. Exceptions such as Noah.

And when we look further, there are more exceptions. Many more.

Look at Lot from the book of Genesis mentioned in 2nd Peter chapter 2.

2nd PETER 2:6-10 6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction and made them an example to those who were to be ungodly; 7 and if he rescued **righteous Lot**, greatly distressed by the licentiousness of the wicked 8 (for by what **that righteous (Greek = dikaios) man** saw and heard as he lived among them, he was vexed in **his righteous soul** day after day with their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of

judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.

St. Joseph was a “righteous (Greek = dikaios) man” too.

MATTHEW 1:19 (RSVCE) 19 and her husband Joseph, being a **just** (Greek = dikaios) **man** and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away.

MATTHEW 1:19 (International Standard Version²⁸) Her husband **Joseph, being a righteous** (Greek = dikaios) **man** and unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her secretly.

And many other Greek = dikaios and variants of dikaios some of which may include . . .

MATTHEW 13:16-17 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. 17 Truly, I say to you, **many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see**, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

MATTHEW 13:41-43a, 49-51a 41 The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, 42 and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. 43 Then **the righteous** will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. . . . 49 So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from **the righteous**, 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. 51 "Have you understood all this?"

John the Baptist was “righteous” according to the Bible.

MARK 6:20 20 for Herod feared **John**, knowing that he was a **righteous (Greek = “dikaion” which is simply a cognate of “dikaios”) and holy man**, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly.

MATTHEW 21:32 32 For **John** came to you **in the way of righteousness**, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him.

The Bible tells us Elizabeth and Zechariah was “righteous” as well.

LUKE 1:5-7a 5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a **priest named Zechariah**, of the division of Abijah; and **he had a wife** of the daughters of Aaron, and **her name was Elizabeth**. 6 And **they were both righteous before God**,

²⁸ <https://biblehub.com/matthew/1-19.htm>

walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren

The Prophet Simeon in the Temple when Jesus was Presented in the Temple likewise was “righteous”.

LUKE 2:25 25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was **Simeon**, and **this man was righteous and devout**, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

WE must be “righteous” as well!

MATTHEW 5:20 20 For I tell you, unless **your righteousness** exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

That Righteousness is a grace to be sure. Our “righteousness” is ADDED to us (from God of course). But humans CAN have righteousness.

MATTHEW 6:33 33 But seek first his kingdom and **his righteousness**, and all these things **shall be yours** as well.

If you do a word study on “righteous” people in the Bible you will find **many** of them. Psalm 1:5 for example refers to a “**congregation of righteous**”. They are not righteous ON THEIR OWN, but nobody here is saying they are righteous ON THEIR OWN. But they are “righteous”. The Bible says so!

There’s a lot of “righteous men” described in the Bible isn’t there?

So how do we harmonize that with “no one is righteous” also in the Bible?

By understanding the different senses of “none”²⁹. And we are going to do more of that right now.

All Have Sinned And Fall Short Of The Glory Of God

ROMANS 3:23 . . . **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

²⁹ In this case “none” is used in a collective, not distributive sense. In order to see and understand that you must go to the Old Testament Scriptures that Romans 3:10 is drawing upon. More on that in a bit here in the study but I want to do the same with Romans 3:23 first as Romans 3:23 is the verse most often used as the “Biblical” proof text of the two against the Immaculate Conception doctrine. But in the meantime it is obvious “None is righteous” cannot exclude everyone because so many people in Scripture itself are described as “righteous”.

Objection: ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Yet you Catholics try to take Mary as sinless.

Answer: All have indeed sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But what does the Greek word for “all” mean?

The Greek word for “all” here in Romans 3:23 is **pas** (or **πας**).

ROMANS 3:23 . . . **pas** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

The Greek word for “all” may have different uses. (The same concept for “no one”.) “All” here may mean three possible things (let’s look at the possibilities):

- The “approximative” or “**many**” sense (“all” is used merely to mean “many”, but not necessarily every single entity or group), in other words “all but with exceptions”. An approximation.
- Collective or every single solitary GROUP (“all” in **the collective sense**)
- Distributive or each and every single solitary one (“all” is used in **the distributive sense** this way)

Here they are again summarized.

“All” Meaning

- **Many (Approximately)**
- **All in the sense of All Groups (Collective)**
- **All in the sense of Each and Every Single Solitary Individual (Distributive)**

Approximations are obvious and I won’t go into any more detail here except to say “all” in Romans 3:23 is not in an approximation sense.

Collective. Collective such as “Groups”. If you are “collective bargaining”, you’re bargaining for a group. You’re not saying “Joe needs an extra 20% an hour over Abe.”

According to the online Glossary of Linguistic terms . . .

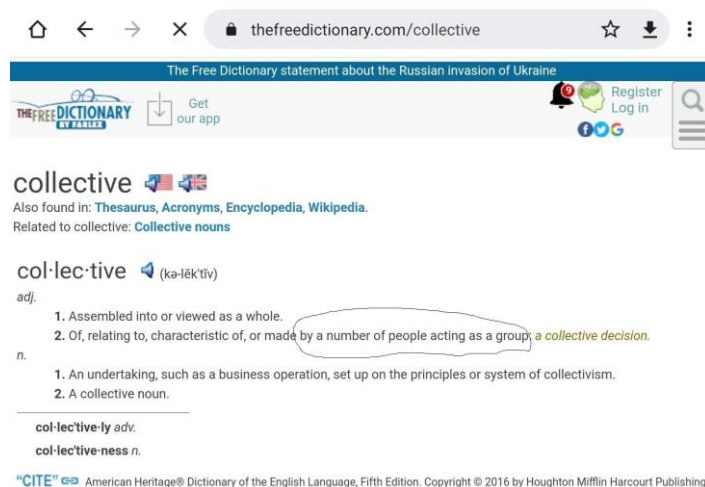
Collective³⁰: A collective noun is a noun that refers to a group of entities that may be considered either as individuals or as one larger entity.

The Free Dictionary” has this to say about the collective sense . . .

Collective³¹: **1.** Assembled into or viewed as a whole.

³⁰ <https://glossary.sil.org/term/collective-noun>

2. Of, relating to, characteristic of, or made by a number of people acting as a group:



Screenshot from The Free Dictionary³²

According to the online Glossary of Linguistic Terms³³ . . .

Distributive: Distributive aspect is an iterative aspect which expresses that an event is applied to **members** of a group **one after another**.

“The Free Dictionary³⁴” has this to say about the distributive sense . . .

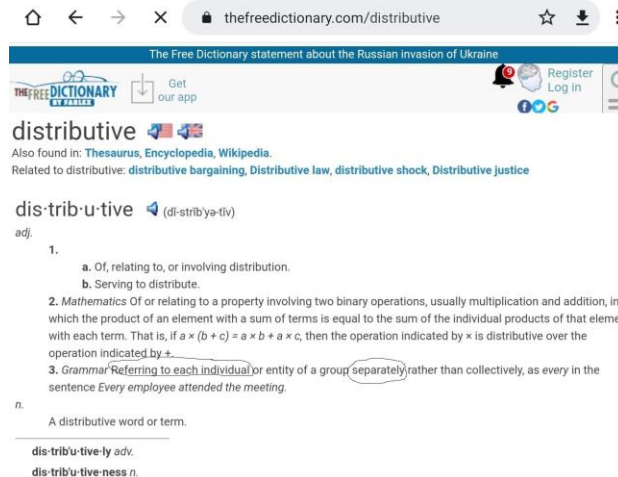
Distributive: 3. Grammar Referring to each individual or entity of a group separately rather than collectively,

³¹ <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/collective> (Bold and underline mine)

³² I edited out the advertisement and an unnecessary part of the page

³³ <https://glossary.sil.org/term/distributive-aspect>

³⁴ <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/distributive>



Screenshot from The Free Dictionary³⁵

How Can I Remember All These Relevant Grammar Variations!?

At this point you are probably thinking: “How am I ever going to remember all of this?” Naturally I have a mnemonic for these grammar word usages.

Not all people who make the argument of “Romans 3:23 does away with the Immaculate Conception!” are anti-Catholic. But some are. So let’s just use that loosely here (just for a mnemonic sake).

ACD = Approximative, Collective, Distributive (Anti-Catholic Diatribes against the Immaculate Conception)

In these anti-Catholic Diatribes the person opposing the Church has the wrong built-in presupposition that the word “all” in Romans 3:23 means “all” in a distributive sense.

ROMANS 3:23 . . . **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

They think it basically says “all” in a distributive sense. Such as this . . .

NOT ROMANS 3:23 . . . **all** in the sense of every single solitary person including Mary have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

Then you ask them if you are going to insist on “all” is a distributive sense, what about this?

NOT ROMANS 3:23 . . . **all** in the sense of **every single solitary person including Jesus and Mary** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

³⁵ I edited out the advertisement and an unnecessary part of the page

The objector needs to consider this because he can't ***selectively choose*** the context of his "all". That would be inappropriate exegesis³⁶. It would be eisegesis³⁷.

As soon as he says Romans 3:23 does not apply to Jesus, you can say Romans 3:23 also doesn't apply to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

More on this in a moment, but we got ahead of ourselves there concerning mnemonics. Let's go back to the mnemonic concept.

Hmmm. Let's see. Is it "collective" that means groups? Or is it "distributive" that concerns "groups"? Does "collective" concern every single solitary one? Or does "distributive" concern every single solitary one?

The Clark Gable Mnemonic

Here is what I call my "Clark Gable mnemonic" to help you remember.

"Collective" concerns "Groups".

C and G.

Clark and Gable. (If "C" concerns groups, then "D" for "Distributive Sense" MUST mean for each and every individual. That's all there is that remains.

If the late Clark Gable were here today, he would tell you to use his initials CG, to serve as a mnemonic for Collective = Groups.



Clark Gable (Wiki³⁸)

³⁶ "Exegesis" just means unpacking or interpretation of Sacred Scripture.

³⁷ "Eisegesis" is where you throw a doctrine into a passage. You come up with an "interpretation" and work backwards by jamming your "interpretation" INTO Scripture.

³⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clark_Gable

Also Wiki: "William Clark Gable was born on February 1, 1901, in Cadiz, Ohio, to William Henry "Will" Gable (1870–1948), an oil-well driller, and his wife Adeline (née Hershelman). His father was a Protestant and his mother a Catholic. Gable was named William after his father, but he

- C = G (in this sense)
- Collective = Groups (each group)
- Clark Gable

“All have sinned” is used in a Collective sense in Romans 3:23

“All have sinned” is used in a Group sense in Romans 3:23

Q: OK. But which “Groups” of people is St. Paul talking about if he is not talking about each and every individual?

A: Jews and Gentiles.

When St. Paul is saying, “All have sinned” he is saying, both Jews and Gentiles are sinners and need a savior.

ACD. Approximative, Collective, Distributive.

CG = Collective concerns Groups of people.

D = Concerns the Distributive sense of “all” and would deal with each and every single solitary person as an individual.

ROMANS 3:23 . . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

“All” cannot be being used here in a distributive sense because Jesus is a man. Not merely a man, but fully man.

Since Jesus Christ is fully God but ALSO FULLY MAN, St. Paul **cannot** be talking about “all” have sinned in a “Distributive” sense!

Why not?

Because that would accuse our Lord Jesus Christ (who is truly a man³⁹) of being a sinner. Or it would make Jesus something other than a TRUE MAN (Jesus is True God **AND** True man).

Docetism was an early heresy that DENIED Jesus as fully man. Christians are not Docetists! Just because Jesus is true God, does not give us authorization to DENY Jesus as fully man.

was almost always called Clark, . . . Gable was six months old when **he was baptized at a Roman Catholic church** in Dennison, Ohio. When he was ten months old, his mother died.[7] His father **refused to raise him in the Catholic faith . . .**”

³⁹ “Blessed be Jesus Christ, **True God and True man.**”—From the Divine Praises prayer.

Christians affirm Jesus Christ to be fully God **and** fully man (and admit it is above our reason to understand this. That's WHY Jesus as true God AND true man is called a "Mystery". It is ABOVE reason. Not contrary to reason.).

Since the Distributive sense is ruled out, you are only left with the "Approximative" sense of "all" or the "Collective"/"Group" sense of "all".

At this point you can take your pick, if all we were doing is rejecting "ALL have sinned" as contradicting The Immaculate Conception. But we want to go further than that.

We want to understand which sense is proper so we can have a deeper understanding of the passage. We want to be responsible handlers of Sacred Scripture.

Fortunately the context provides us with an easy answer.

Context of Romans 3:23

Ignoring the fact that Jesus is true man, and the Blessed Virgin Mary is "Full of Grace" and Babies cannot sin, Romans 3:23 if taken by itself then, could possibly have a distributive (no exceptions every single solitary) sense for humans.

But we don't have Romans 3:23 all by itself. We have other verses to give us contextual depth too.

In ancient Jewish parlance, various "groups" of men were frequently just two.
Jews and non-Jews.
(Jews and Gentiles.)

ROMANS 3:23 . . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

What St. Paul is saying here is all GROUPS of peoples—Jews and Gentiles ("Greeks")—alike have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

Let's look at the verses in even more detail. St. Paul is also teaching that "the law" (of Moses) will not save anyone.

"The law" for the Gentiles (called "the Greeks" or sometimes "the uncircumcised") was the law put on the hearts of all by God (Romans 2:15, 29).

And "the law" for the Israelites ("Jews" or "the circumcised") is the law put on the hearts of men also, but adds Mosaic precepts given directly by God through mediators to the Israelites (such as Moses) for the Israelites (Jews).

Precepts like needing to offer doves etc. in the Temple as a ritual prescription after touching blood after giving birth. We saw that already.

Circumcision is another ritual precept. (I am not saying these ritual prescriptions were unimportant. St. Paul (and I) are just saying they cannot “save” you.)

We see this in much more depth in our Justification Bible study and won’t detail this concept here.

But the important thing to note is that the context of Romans 3:10 and 3:23 is all peoples, **“All” Groups/categories of people** (Israelites AND Gentiles or as St. Paul says “Jews” and “Greeks” or “the circumcised” and “the uncircumcised”) have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

There is no distinction between Jews and Greeks, the circumcised and the uncircumcised with respects to them being sinners.

Both GROUPS (or CATEGORIES) of people, Jews AND Greeks are sinners!

That’s all that St. Paul is saying in Romans 3 (beginning even in Romans 2 and carrying over to Romans 3).

Let’s read more context focusing on the contrasting of Jews and Gentiles (Jews and Greeks) and see if this is not evident . . .

ROMANS 2:9-11, 26-29, 3:1, 9-11, 21-23, 26-30a 9 There will be tribulation and distress for **every human being** who does evil, **the Jew first** and **also the Greek**, 10 but glory and honor and peace for **every one** who does good, **the Jew first** and **also the Greek**. 11 For God shows **no partiality**. . . . 26 So, if **a man who is uncircumcised** keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. 28 For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. 29 He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal. His praise is not from men but from God. (Chapter 3) 1 Then **what advantage has the Jew?** Or what is the value of circumcision? . . . 9 **What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all; for I have already charged that all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin**, 10 as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands, no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong; no one does good, not even one.” . . . 19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and **the whole world**

may be held accountable to God. 20 For **no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law**, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. **For there is no distinction; 23 since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**
 . . . 28 For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law. 29 Or is God the **God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,** 30 since God is one . . .

Recall in order to have a fuller understanding of what St. Paul is saying in Romans 3:23, we need to:

- Read more verses (for more context) associated with Romans 3:23
- Understand the Old Testament passages that St. Paul is drawing upon here
- Consider Jesus cannot be a sinner
- Consider that the Blessed Virgin Mary is explicitly described as “Full of Grace!”
- Admit the obvious—that babies are not sinners.
- Affirm the good angels are not sinners

More Depth On This For Those That Want To Do So Individually⁴⁰

We want a fuller understanding of What St. Paul is teaching, not just what someone says he’s teaching.

So now let’s look at Romans 3:10 in the context of the Old Testament passages it draws upon and come to your own conclusions.

I think you will see St. Paul cannot be using these verses in a collective sense. He is rather using them in a “distributive sense” (“category sense”).

ROMANS 3:10 **None** is righteous, no, not one . .

This “none” likewise is being used in a collective sense. Let’s go to the two Old Testament passages that St. Paul is drawing upon when he puts forth Romans 3:10.

PSALM 14:3 3 They have all gone astray, they are all alike corrupt; **there is none that does good, no, not one.**

PSALM 53:1b 1b They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; **there is none that does good.**

⁴⁰ Go ahead to page 55 for our “collective” groups (ha ha). “In Summary”

The objector to the sinlessness of the Virgin Mary will look at these passages and say: "Well see. That includes every single solitary person".

But they are wrong.

St. Paul is drawing this type of language from the Old Testament.

God in the Psalms discusses people who say in their heart "there is no God" who refuse to "seek after God" **and contrasts them with another group**: "my people". That's all. Elsewhere you can find that this includes even Israelites among the wicked and Gentiles among the righteous (such as we saw with Lot earlier).

There are **two categories** (a collective usage) of people here too.

1. Those who seek God ("my people")
2. Those who reject God (the "fool" who does "abominable deeds")

PSALM 14:1-4 To the choirmaster. Of David. 1 **The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none that does good.** 2 The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any that act wisely, that seek after God. 3 They have all gone astray, they are all alike corrupt; there is none that does good, no, not one. 4 Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the LORD?

PSALM 53:1-6 To the choirmaster: according to Mahalath. A Maskil of David. 1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." **They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none that does good.** 2 God looks down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any that are wise, that seek after God. 3 **They have all fallen away; they are all alike depraved; there is none that does good, no, not one.** 4 Have those who work evil no understanding, who eat up **my people** as they eat bread, and do not call upon God? 5 There they are, in great terror, in terror such as has not been! For God will scatter the bones of the ungodly; they will be put to shame, for **God has rejected them.** 6 O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion! When God restores the fortunes of **his people**, Jacob will rejoice and Israel be glad.

Just as there are categories (the collective sense) of people in Psalm 14 and 53, there are categories of people in Romans 3:10 if, as we did above, you go back several verses and read the passage in context.

ROMANS 3:10 **None** is righteous, no, not one . . .

There are fallen or unrighteous people among Jews, and there are fallen or unrighteous people among Gentiles.

And we would add there are fallen people among Christians who later reject God (see Bible study on the issue of “Once Saved Always Saved” for more details on this).

This collective sense is the Old Testament context that this New Testament phrase concerns and St. Paul almost certainly assumes his readers know this, and that his readers will apply it in its proper context.

The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible in the footnotes concerning Romans 3:10-18 have some good insights as well . . .

Ignatius Catholic Study Bible on Romans 3:10-18 Six citations from the OT (Old Testament) confirm the charge that wickedness has flourished in Israel. The chain is made of links from Ps 14:3, Ps 5:9, Ps 140:3, Ps 10:7, Is 59:7-8 and Ps 36:1.

Many of these passages distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, suggesting that Paul is not condemning every single Israelite without exception. His point is that sin has taken hold of the covenant people as it has the rest of the world. He is likewise showing that sin, which has spread throughout the body of mankind, has also spread throughout the body of every man who is prone to use his members as instruments of wickedness (Romans 6:13). All but one of these passages highlights a part of the body in this way (**throat, tongues, lips**, in 3:13, **mouth** in 3:14, **feet** in 3:15, **eyes** in 3:18).

We affirm the word “all” CAN BE used in a distributive sense . . . meaning “every single solitary one”. It just isn’t here in Romans 3.

In the objection against the Immaculate Conception doctrine; “**ALL** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” assumes the word for “all” is being used in the **distributive sense**. But is it? Obviously NO.

More Depth: Let’s Look At “All” Used In The Approximative Sense (Meaning “Many”)

We know the Greek word for word “all” (*pas*) can have different meanings just like the word “all” can have different meanings in English.

For example “all people” in English can mean every single person or it can mean “many people”.

“All the town was there” is an illustration of using “all” in the sense that it means “many” of the townspeople in a contemporary English fashion.

Let’s look at a couple of obvious Biblical examples of “pas” or “all” being used in the approximative sense of meaning “many”.

MATTHEW 2:1-4 1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 2 "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." 3 **When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;** 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

Does this mean every single solitary person in Jerusalem was troubled by Jesus just as Herod was? No. It means many in Jerusalem took Herod’s view.

Let’s look at some of the sick that Jesus healed (Jesus of course healed other sick people later in the Gospels too).

MATTHEW 4:24 24 So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and **they brought him all the sick**, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, **and he healed them.**

Does this mean every single solitary sick person was brought to Jesus AND healed by Him? No. If that were the case, there likely wouldn’t be other sick people for Jesus to heal later in the Gospels.

“All” here that were healed merely means “many” of the sick were **brought** to Jesus and Jesus healed them.

This is another example of “pas” or “all” merely meaning “many”. Just like Protestant Greek dictionaries already affirm (and we do too).

The Church Even STILL Uses This Language This Way

The Church has always used this language of “all” in the context of sin, not excluding a possible exception and still uses it that way (the only exceptions are Jesus and Mary concerning any sin—original sin and committed sins).

CCC 402 **All men** are implicated in Adam's sin, as St. Paul affirms: "By one man's disobedience many (that is, all men) were made sinners": "sin came into the

world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned."²⁸⁹ The Apostle contrasts the universality of sin and death with the universality of salvation in Christ. "Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men."²⁹⁰

CCC 403 Following St. Paul, the Church has always taught that the overwhelming misery which oppresses men and their inclination towards evil and death cannot be understood apart from their connection with Adam's sin and the fact that he has transmitted to us a sin with which we are all born afflicted, a sin which is the "death of the soul".²⁹¹ Because of this certainty of faith, the Church baptizes for the remission of sins even tiny infants who have not committed personal sin.²⁹²

In Summary: Remember The Three Ways "All" Is Used In The Bible

Keep in mind the following possible ways to use the word "pas" or "all".

- Approximative or "many" sense ("About" this many)
- Collective sense (Every group)
- Distributive sense (EVERY SINGLE SOLITARY ONE)

"All" in Romans 3 is talking about "ALL" groups of people—Jews and Gentiles—are sinners.

The same holds for "no one is righteous" (that was even more obvious because the Bible itself calls many people "righteous" so "no one" is not used in a distributive sense either. (And for those who do the more depth section, they know that is drawn from the Old Testament to illustrate the collective nature of the passage in Romans 3.

Objection Number 6. The Phrase 'Immaculate Conception' Is Used Nowhere In Scripture

Someone might object at this point and state: "The Bible nowhere uses the phrase 'Immaculate Conception.'

This is perhaps the least persuasive objection to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Concerning the absence of the phrase "Immaculate Conception" in the Bible, we are not as concerned about the phrase as we are the concept or the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The Bible doesn't use the phrase "The Bible" either, but we don't reject the Bible on this (or any other) account.

The Bible doesn't use the phrase "Jesus is true God AND true man" but we affirm that as well.

Bible Does Not use The Words/Phrases

- **Bible**
- **Incarnation**
- **Trinity**
- **Jesus as True God and True Man**
- **The phrase** "If the phrase isn't found in Scripture you need to reject the doctrine" isn't in Scripture.
- **Many others**

There are many other words and phrases we could look at but you get the idea—we don't reject a doctrine based on titles of catechetical phrases/words. If we did, we would expect a verse that says something like "reject all doctrines that don't have the catechetical phrases and/or words associated with these doctrines."

Denying the Immaculate Conception (and subsequent sinlessness) of Mary merely because the phrase "Immaculate Conception" isn't found in Scripture would be a tradition of men that makes void the commandments of God.

In Conclusion To This Study Section

In conclusion to this study section, we saw how the Archangel Gabriel greeted the Blessed Virgin Mary—"full of grace" or you who have been filled with and remain full of God's grace.

The Church teaches that this gift is a singular privilege of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ.

We saw several historical statements asserting the Immaculate Conception. In our Immaculate Conception II Bible study we will look at many more of them. We also took a look at the common "Biblical objections" put forth against the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and saw why none of them can be used to refute this doctrine.

We saw especially in Romans 3 where people believe there are strong objections against the Immaculate Conception that these objections just don't fit if you look closely at the passages and the grammar.

In the next segment (**The Immaculate Conception II**), we will go into other verses that affirm the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, drawing upon prophecies of the Old Testament, and get into a concept called "typology" which the ancient Church Fathers used frequently to further enhance our understanding of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

This will include an in-depth analysis at the first Old Testament prophecy concerning the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Also in the next section we will also look at some statements of the Fathers that at least suggest The Immaculate Conception and subsequent sinlessness of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This is important because the Fathers would know if what they are saying is consistent with "Hail! Full of Grace!" or not.

Speaking of the Fathers, we will also look much more at what they had to say about the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and why the evidence suggests that St. Thomas Aquinas affirmed this doctrine as well (after initially apparently denying it) after losing a debate over this issue to the Blessed John Duns Scotus.

We give thanks to God for our spiritual mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Her Immaculate Conception, and Her subsequent sinlessness as this grace that She is filled with is not merely a past action, but a past action continued through the present time.

Hail, **kecharitomene**, the Lord is with thee . . .

Hail, you who have been filled with, and remain filled with God's grace, the Lord is with thee

"Hail Full of Grace"

- The Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Luke 1:28)

Let's close with a word of prayer:

Hail Mary, Full of grace the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Old Testament Teachings Concerning The Eventual Fulfillment Of The Immaculate Conception

How Is The Blessed Virgin Mary The New Eve?

In the Old Testament we saw man fall via Adam AND Eve.
Both were made sinless. AND BOTH fell.

When they had fallen, the result was so radical; their very nature had changed.

The best they can now do is pass on their nature to their offspring.
Since their nature is fallen, all of these “living” are only merely “living” in a natural sense and have this fallen nature passed on to them.⁴¹

So Eve is the mother of all the living but only in a **natural** sense.
Adam and Eve are “dead” **supernaturally** speaking, at least with regards to a Salvific nature to God. They possess no supernatural life in them.

Let’s go back to the Garden of Eden for a moment and explicitly see Eve as the “mother of all living” in this sense.

GENESIS 3:17-19 17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return." 20 **The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.**

So “The Fall” involved a **man and a woman**.
And that prefigurement woman is the mother of all the living (naturally speaking).

Q: So if The Fall involved a man AND a woman, to bring fulfillment here, what do you think “The Redemption” will involve?

A: A FULFILLED **man and a woman**⁴².

⁴¹ The Blessed Virgin Mary of course is an exception to this as She was PRESERVED from all stain of sin instantly at the time of Her conception inside of St. Anne. This preservation from this fallen sinful state was a gift of GRACE from Jesus by His own foreseen merits as we have seen. Jesus takes His human nature from the Blessed Virgin Mary. We recite that each week at Mass in the Creed. Jesus of course is sinless too.

Hmmm. What “woman” can we think of that has a unique role in redemption?

Eve had a role in The Fall.

The Blessed Virgin Mary contrariwise, had a role in redemption (again subordinate to Jesus) by Her “fiat” or “yes” or “Be it done unto me according to they word.”

God also took flesh of the Virgin Mary to make Jesus so by this Mary even contributed MORE than Her “fiat”.

Objection: How can Jesus take flesh of woman? Jesus is a MAN!

Answer: The same way Eve, a woman, can be made from Adam’s side (a man).

GENESIS 2:21-23 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; 22 and **the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman** and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

A miracle that’s how. They are miraculous events. In a way, this is even MORE implicit evidence of undoing the fall too.

By the way, the Bride of Christ (the Church) was formed from His side too! Another miracle.

CCC 766 The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the cross. **"The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus."**¹⁷¹ **"For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the 'wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.'"**¹⁷² **As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross.**¹⁷³

By the way. In the prefigurement Adam donated at least part of a bone—a rib.

In the fulfillment, Jesus has no bone broken (we will see the significance of this when we study the Passover as a prefigurement to the Holy Eucharist). Jesus contributes flesh and blood (that has significance too as Covenants are Sacred Family bonds that includes a blood sacrifice).

That was fascinating about Christ’s Bride, the Church, being brought forth from the side of the new Adam. (Hearkens us back to Adam’s bride (Eve) being brought forth from the side of Adam with GRACE.

But now let’s get back to Eve and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Prefigurement: Eve had no original sin but lost that sinless status by her own free will.

⁴² In this role of redemption (we will see more on this when we study Mary as Coredemptrix), yes the Blessed Virgin Mary is subordinate to Jesus Christ who is true God and true man. But that’s part of the point is the Blessed Mother needed to be filled with grace for Her role. That Grace comes from Christ by His “foreseen merits”.

Fulfillment: The Blessed Virgin Mary too had no original Sin and retained that sinless status by her own free will endowed with special GRACES.

Consider. Eve had no original sin.

If the Blessed Virgin had original sin and Eve didn't . . . (then what would we have?) . . .

. . . We would have a situation where Eve would be MORE BLESSED than Mary at least in that respect!

But Eve being more "Blessed" than Mary is NOT what Scripture teaches!

The Bible teaches us that the Blessed Virgin Mary is . . .

LUKE 1:41b-42, 45-46, 48b-49 Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "**Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!** . . . 45 And **blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.**" 46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, . . . For behold, **henceforth all generations will call me blessed;** 49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Mary is "Blessed" among women. Not "most women".

And what kind of a "fulfillment" would that be if mere Eve was sinless initially and not Mary?

LUKE 1:41b-42a, 45a Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and she exclaimed 45 And **blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.** . .

As stated earlier, Eve was the Mother of all the living in a natural sense.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of all the living in a spiritual sense.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is "The Woman" which should hearken us back to Eve being presented in Scripture as "The Woman".

This is what we mean when we see Mary as "The New Eve", the fulfillment of Eve.

So first let's look at the "New Adam", the fulfillment of Adam. Jesus.

Remember also. Fulfillments are always greater than the prefigurements or "types".

Jesus Is The Fulfillment Of The Law And The Prophets

Remember. **All Marian doctrines have Christologic implications⁴³.** So let's begin here by looking at Christ.

⁴³ **"All Marian doctrines have Christologic implications."** We are going to repeat this phrase often, as it is very relevant to good Mariology and good Christology.

Q: Who is the fulfillment of Adam or “**The New Adam**”?

A: That’s easy. Adam was a **type** of Jesus (by the way, that’s WHY we call this kind of Scripture Study: “**Typology**” – “**Types**” “Study of”).

Therefore it is Jesus Himself who is the fulfillment of Adam. St. Paul explicitly tells us that so we don’t have to think too hard about it. This one is pretty easy.

ROMANS 5:11b-15 11 . . . we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation. 12 Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned-- 13 sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of **Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come**. 15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in **the grace of that one man Jesus Christ** abounded for many.

And that makes sense. Jesus is the “New Adam”. He is the “New Moses”. Jesus is the “New David”. Jesus is the “New Solomon”. He fulfills not only these people, but also all the prophets such as Enoch⁴⁴, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, etc.

Let’s go to St. Luke’s Gospel for a moment as we learn how to think in terms of people being prefigurements and fulfillments in addition to their historical identities.

This passage is an easy “two-fer” (two-for one). We will see Jesus one, as the New Jonah and two, as the new Solomon also in this reading. Jesus implicitly identifies Himself here that way.

LUKE 11:29-32 29 When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. 30 For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be to this generation. 31 The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and **behold, something greater than Solomon is here**. 32 The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and **behold, something greater than Jonah is here**.

St. Paul tells us the same thing in 1st Corinthians albeit in a slightly more implicit manner . . .

1st CORINTHIANS 15:21-22 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For **as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive**.

⁴⁴ We know very little about Enoch from Scripture. Jude tells us Enoch was a prophet. St. Jude almost certainly knew that about him from oral Tradition and wrote about it in his letter.

OK. We have a pretty good handle on typology for our purposes here, in regards to Adam being a type of Jesus and Jesus being the fulfillment of Adam.
We can see this even though the phrase “The New Adam” is not being used explicitly.
We can see that Jesus is “The New Adam”.

The Blessed Virgin Mary As The New Eve

So if Jesus is the New Adam, WHO is the New Eve?

WHO would be the mother of **not** “all the living” on a mere natural level,
but rather who is the Mother of all the living in a supernatural sense?

Before we can answer that we have to see the Mother of all the living in a supernatural sense identified, at least briefly⁴⁵.

Fortunately the Book of Revelation tells us. It is the Mother of the One who rules the world with a rod of iron.

REVELATION 12:1 1 And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

Before we go further, this concerns the Blessed Mother. She has no birth pangs in delivering Jesus. The Blessed Mother has tremendous birth pangs in delivering “the Church” (remember. She is the “mother of all” the living, regarding those who live in a supernatural sense.

More on the “birth pangs issue” in our study on the Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary so I won’t attempt to defend this here. We will just assume it for now.

REVELATION 12:1, 5-6, 914, 17a 1 And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; . . . 5 she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, 6 and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. . . . 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world--he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. 12 Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" 13 And when the dragon

⁴⁵ We will study the Blessed Virgin Mary as Mother of all the living in a supernatural sense much more, when we do that study. But here, we at least have to present it in brief to help make sense of Mary as “The New Eve”.

saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child. 14 But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent . . . 17 **Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring . . .**

Q: Hold it! Just WHO is the “rest of her offspring” that this woman has? And if we see her as having as any old-joe for her offspring, it will suggest that she is not the “mother of all the living” in a spiritual sense!

A: Oh She is the Mother of all the living in a supernatural sense all right. We will study that more when we do our “Mary the Mother of God and Our Mother Too” Bible Study. But for now we will have to be content to look at Revelation 12:17.

NOT REVELATION 12:17a,b 17 Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on **the rest of her offspring**, the names of the rest of her offspring were Steve, and Richard, and Lucy.

Now let’s look at what Revelation 12:17 really says about who the REAL offspring of “The Woman” are.

REVELATION 12:17a,b 17 Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on **the rest of her offspring**, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.

The offspring of “The Woman” is EVERYONE who “keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus”!

Objection: In the Old Testament Eve was made from Adam’s side. In this New Testament situation, The Holy Spirit took flesh of the Virgin Mary to make Jesus. So this can’t be the fulfillment.

Answer: Sure it can. God fashioned Mary supernaturally with grace from the moment of Her conception.

But remember . . . Prefigurements to fulfillments are different. They have important aspects that are the same, and other aspects that are different.

That’s part of WHY they are mere prefigurements. By definition, they cannot be entirely the same.

And furthermore, just as the Bride of Adam (Eve) came from his side . . .
The Bride of Christ (The Church) comes from the New Adam’s (Jesus’) pierced side!

Objection: You’re making that up!

Answer: No I'm not. This is bedrock Catholic teaching. Let's go to the Catechism for a moment and see this (We already saw CCC 766 several pages ago. Let's go elsewhere in the CCC (1067) to see even more

CCC 1067 "The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He accomplished this work principally by the Paschal mystery of his blessed Passion, Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension, whereby 'dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life.' **For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth 'the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.'**"¹³ For this reason, the Church celebrates in the liturgy above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.

Objection: OK. But that doesn't show Mary as the "New Eve". The "New Eve" would in a sense, be the Church then.

Answer: That's a partial truth. This is not an "either/or" but a "yes/and" situation.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the "type" or (Latin) "typus" of the Church.

Yes She is unique and has the "singular privilege" of being saved in the most full way as a person, but the Blessed Virgin Mary is still a "type" of the Church.

Question: Do you have any evidence for that?

Answer: Yes. Let's go back to the Catechism and see that "**she is the . . . 'typus' of the Church**":

CCC 967 By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus she is a "preeminent and . . . wholly unique member of the Church"; indeed, **she is the "exemplary realization" (*typus*)⁵¹⁰ of the Church.**

Italics in CCC 967 original!

Also let's go to St. Ambrose back in the 300's A.D.

Well [does the Gospel say]: married but a virgin; because **she is the type of the Church**, which is **also** married but remains **immaculate**. The Virgin [**Church**] conceived us by the Holy Spirit and, as a virgin, gave birth to us without pain⁴⁶. And perhaps this is why holy Mary, married to one man [Joseph], is made fruitful by another [the Holy Spirit], to show that the individual churches are filled with the Spirit and with grace, even as they are united to the person of a temporal priest.⁴⁷—St. Ambrose (again, in the 300's A.D. By the way, St. Ambrose helped St. Augustine with his conversion.)

⁴⁶ "The Church" birthed us without pain at Pentecost.

⁴⁷ <http://shamelesspopery.com/early-church-fathers-on-mary-as-the-new-eve/> as my source of the St. Ambrose quote.

As Joe Heschmeyer⁴⁸ says . . .

Lumen Gentium picks up on these themes, showing the New Eve imagery to be a both/and, not an either/or, between Mary and the Church:

Then on to the salient Vatican II quote:

VATICAN II (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.(18*) 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. (19*) 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,(299) namely the faithful, in whose birth and education she cooperates with a maternal love.—Vatican II LG sec. 63

The Blessed Virgin Mary is a type of the Church.

Summary So Far

Let's summarize why we see the Blessed Virgin Mary as "The New Eve".

As we saw earlier, Eve was the "Mother of all the living" in a natural sense. The Blessed Mother is the "Mother of all the living ("those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus") in a supernatural sense by the grace of God.

This "New Eve" is almost certainly WHY Jesus refers to the Blessed Virgin as "Woman" at Cana and at the foot of the Cross. That word usage, should hearken us back to "the woman" of Genesis.

Who Else Sees Mary As The New Eve?

Question: Does anyone else see this "New Eve" stuff within Scripture?

Answer: Yes. Many have seen it. We already saw The Church in Vatican II above. Let's go to the Catechism as well.

CCC 2618 The Gospel reveals to us how Mary prays and intercedes in faith. At Cana,⁸⁹ the mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast - that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

the request of the Church, his Bride. It is at the hour of the New Covenant, **at the foot of the cross,⁹⁰ that Mary is heard as the Woman, the new Eve, the true "Mother of all the living."**

CCC 975 "We believe that the Holy Mother of God, **the new Eve**, Mother of the Church, continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role on behalf of the members of Christ" (Paul VI, *CPG* § 15).

CCC 2853 Victory over the "prince of this world"¹⁶⁹ was won once for all at the Hour when Jesus freely gave himself up to death to give us his life. This is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world is "cast out."¹⁷⁰ **"He pursued the woman"¹⁷¹ but had no hold on her: the new Eve, "full of grace" of the Holy Spirit, is preserved from sin and the corruption of death** (the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, Mary, ever virgin). "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make **war on the rest of her offspring.**"¹⁷² Therefore the Spirit and the Church pray: "Come, Lord Jesus,"¹⁷³ since his coming will **deliver us** from the Evil One.

If Jesus were the New Adam (and He is), then WHO would the "New Eve" be?
Mary is the New Eve (as has been stated).

Mary As The New Eve At Least Implicitly Taught For 2000 Years

This doctrine of Mary as the New Eve was at least implicitly taught by Christians in antiquity.

This teaching has faithfully been preserved and passed down by the Fathers of the Church.

Let's go way back to about 180 A.D. and listen to St. Irenaeus (**St. Irenaeus personally knew St. Polycarp personally as a child and St. Polycarp was DIRECTLY a disciple of the beloved disciple St. John the Evangelist!** So this goes WAAAY back).

You can see St. Irenaeus considers Mary the fulfillment of Eve or the New Eve with him contrasting the Blessed Virgin Mary and Eve. And keep in mind that "contrast" is in its fullest sense with Mary REMAINING sinless.

ST. IRENAEUS 10 For as by one man's disobedience sin entered, and death obtained a place through sin; so also by the obedience of one man, righteousness having been introduced, shall cause life to fructify in those persons who in times past were dead.

— St. Irenaeus. Against Heresies Chapter 21 (180 A.D.)

Q: OK. I get that. St. Irenaeus is referring to Jesus as the new Adam. But there's nothing about Mary here.

A: Hang on. We are getting to that. Again St. Irenaeus and this time he will be explicitly drawing comparisons between Eve and The Blessed Virgin:

ST. IRENAEUS "As Eve by the speech of an Angel was seduced⁴⁹,
 so as to flee God, transgressing His word,
 so also Mary received the good tidings by means of the Angel's speech,
 so as to bear God within her, being obedient to His word.
**And, though the one had disobeyed God,
 yet the other was drawn to obey God;
 that of the virgin Eve
 the Virgin Mary might become the advocate.**
**And, as by a virgin the human race had been bound to death,
 by a virgin it is saved,** the balance being preserved,
 a virgin's disobedience by a virgin's obedience."

—St. Irenaeus. Against Heresies. v. 19. St. Irenaeus Died in 202 A.D.

Now let's listen to St. Justin the Martyr in the 100's A.D. draw these same kind of contrasts comparing the Blessed Virgin Mary and Eve . . .

ST. JUSTIN THE MARTYR "We know that He, before all creatures, proceeded from the Father by His power and will . . .
 . . . and by means of the Virgin became man, that by what way the disobedience arising from the serpent had its beginning, by that way also it might have an undoing.
For Eve, being a virgin and undefiled, conceiving the word that was from the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death;
but the Virgin Mary, taking faith and joy, when the Angel told her the good tidings, that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her and the power of the Highest overshadow her, and therefore the Holy One that was born of her was Son of God, answered, 'Be it to me according to Thy word.'
 — St. Justin to Tryph. 100. St. Justin died in 165 A.D.

Origen likewise draws this contrast of Mary vrs. Eve as well.

ORIGEN . . . "worthy of God, immaculate of the immaculate, most complete sanctity, perfect justice, neither deceived by the persuasion of the serpent, nor infected with his poisonous breathings."
 - Origen. Origen died in 253 A.D.

⁴⁹ **1st Timothy 2:14 (DRV)** And Adam was not seduced; but the woman being **seduced**, was in the transgression.

Oftentimes the Greek word "exapatao" (Strong's Greek #1818 which means "to seduce wholly, deceive") is frequently merely translated as "deceived" or "beguiled" so it is easy to miss Biblically what St. Irenaeus is referring to regarding the seduction that Eve fell to here. The DRV here preserves that in its translation. Eve was a microcosm of Israel being seduced too. This is almost certainly the harlotry of the Old Testament Israel that the Prophets allude to.

You can see Origen comparing Mother Mary in the context of the Garden of Eden and implicitly Eve. More typology. The Garden was a prefigurement type of Mary too (elsewhere in Origen's thought).

Also concerning Origen he gives an *a fortiori* argument (a "How much more" type of argument) regarding the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in his testimony here comparing Mary to Eve . . .

ORIGEN "She (Mary) has not been tainted with the breath of the venomous serpent. For **why should the Blessed Virgin Mary have been deprived of this prerogative in her conception, with which not only the angels—even the bad—were adorned in their original creation, but which our first parents, whom God created upright and innocent, also possessed?**"

EVEN Tertullian (the heretic who doesn't affirm Mary's Perpetual Virginity) gets it right on Mary as the New Eve . . .

Listen to Tertullian who lived in the 200's A.D. . . .

TERTULLIAN "God recovered His image and likeness, which the devil had seized, by a rival operation.

For into Eve, as yet a virgin, had crept the word which was the framer of death.

Equally into a virgin was to be introduced the Word of God which was the builder-up of life;

that, what by that sex (gender) had gone into perdition,

by the same sex (gender) might be brought back to salvation.

Eve had believed the serpent;

Mary believed Gabriel;

the fault which the one committed by believing,

the other by believing has blotted out."

Tertullian. – On The Flesh of Christ 17. Tertullian Died in 240 A.D.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. Ephrem likewise contrast Mary and Eve.

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM (315-386 A.D.):

"Since through Eve, a virgin, came death,

it behooved (became necessary or proper),

that through a Virgin, or rather from a Virgin, should life appear; that,

as the Serpent had deceived the one,

so to the other Gabriel might bring good tidings."

— St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Cat. xii. 15.

ST. EPHREM . . . "Through Eve, the beautiful and desirable glory of men was extinguished; but it has revived through Mary."

— St. Ephrem Opp. Syr. ii.

ST. EPHREM . . . Mary and Eve, two people without guilt, two simple people, were

identical. Later, however, one became our the cause of our death,
the other the cause of our life. (4)
St. Ephrem. **St. Ephrem died in 373 A.D.** These are ancient teachings.

So you can see the contrasts set up here by the ancients.

An Interesting Observation Regarding Mary Fulfilling Eve

Also from Joe Heschmeyer⁵⁰ an interesting implicit insight of contrast between Eve and Mary . . .

Adam refers to Eve before The Fall and curse as “Woman”,
then after The Fall and curse, as “Mother”.

Jesus refers to Mary as “Woman” before the curse is taken upon Himself at Calvary,
and “Mother” as Our Lord Jesus is lifting the curse from mankind and taking it upon Himself.

Also in the process of this Jesus is giving Mary as Mother for mankind (again, more on this when
we study Mary’s motherhood).

GENESIS 2:23, 3:16-17, 20 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and
flesh of my flesh; **she shall be called Woman**, because she was taken out of Man." . . .
16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you
shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule
over you." 17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your
wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; . . .
. 20 **The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother** of all living.

JOHN 2:3-5, 19:26-27 3 When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They
have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "**O woman**, what have you to do with me? My
hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." .
..
26 When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said
to his mother, "**Woman**, behold, your son!" 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold,
your mother!"

Let’s also look at current Catholic Liturgical recognition of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the
“new Eve⁵¹”.

⁵⁰ <http://shamelesspopery.com/early-church-fathers-on-mary-as-the-new-eve/>

⁵¹ From: Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Volume 1 (Page 94)
https://books.google.com/books?id=U0jNIYrJ76wC&pg=PA36&dq=%22and+decreed+that+the+new+Eve%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj5n7vhl_L2AhVxjQIHZtPAf8Q6AF6BAglEAE#v=onepage&q=%22and%20decreed%20that%20the%20new%20Eve%22&f=false

https://www.amazon.com/Collection-Masses-Blessed-Virgin-Mary/dp/0814634869/ref=sr_1_3?keywords=9780814634868&linkCode=qs&qid=1648793405&s=books&sr=1-3

MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS II P 12

By a Gift of God's Love our Lady Shared in the Passion of Her Son

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

In your divine wisdom
you planned the redemption of the human race
and decreed that the new Eve
should stand by the Cross of the new Adam:
as she became his Mother
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
so, by a new gift of your love,
she was to be a partner in his Passion,
and she who had given him birth
without the pains of childbirth
was to endure the greatest of pains
in bringing forth to new life
the family of your Church.

Now, with Angels and Archangels,
and the whole company of heaven,
we sing the unending hymn of your praise:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .

Above from: Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Old Testament Prophecy Concerning The Immaculate Conception Of The Blessed Virgin Mary

It isn't far into the Old Testament that we hear about creation, especially the creation of a sinless Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis.

Not much further into Genesis after their creation, we see the first sin of Adam and Eve. This caused a radical change to the nature of humanity and is what is commonly called "The Fall".

But God had a remedy for this fall and it includes a prophecy concerning Jesus in Genesis 3. Jesus of course is true God and after taking flesh upon Himself, true man.

In addition to God telling us about Jesus though, God also tells us a prophecy concerning “the woman”.

Who could this “woman” in the future be that God is telling Adam and Eve about? Let’s go to Genesis 3 and find out some of the details for more insight.

Genesis 3 Prophecy About The Woman And Her Seed

Let’s begin by reading an old familiar teaching, that of the fall in Genesis 3.

First “The Fall”

GENESIS 3:1-13 1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." 11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate."

There have been books written about these verses (we will not do that here). But let’s look at CCC 412 for some excellent insight at this point.

CCC 412 But *why did God not prevent the first man from sinning?* St. Leo the Great responds, "Christ's inexpressible grace gave us blessings better than those the demon's envy had taken away."³⁰⁷ And St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, "There is nothing to prevent human nature's being raised up to something greater, even after sin; God permits evil in order to draw forth some greater good. Thus St. Paul says, 'Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more'; and the Exsultet sings, 'O happy fault,. . . which gained for us so great a Redeemer!'"³⁰⁸

Now that we have read "the fall", let's read on in Genesis 3 and see what the Lord God has to say both as a consequence to these sins of Adam and Eve's, and as a medication not just for Adam and Eve but a remedy for all of mankind.

The Curses And The Remedy For Those Curses In The Prophecy

GENESIS 3:14-24 14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 **I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**" 16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." 17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return." 20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them. 22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever"-- 23 therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

The Protoevangelium (The "First Gospel"—Jesus & Mary [& The Church⁵²])

Now let's go back and look at some of the verses to mine out more details concerning the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in "The Protoevangelium or "The First Gospel" ("proto" = the first; "evangelium" = Gospel). The First Gospel merely means Genesis 3:14-15⁵³ because the passage is (no pun intended) so "pregnant" with meaning concerning the Gospel.

And using our **prefigurement to fulfillment paradigm**, we see that the Protoevangelium is prefigurement (and for that matter prophecy), and Jesus and Mary in THE Gospels or the "Evangelium" are the fulfillment along with us in a secondary sense (as we will see later).

GENESIS 3:14-15 14 The LORD God said to the serpent,
"Because you have done this, **cursed** are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 **I will put enmity between you and the woman,**
and **between your seed** and her seed; he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

So as a consequence of this sin we see God tell Satan or "the serpent" that he is cursed (and we saw other curses too— including pain in childbearing, weeds in our labor for food, etc.).

But we also see how God is going to do definitive battle with Satan on account of the serpent's role in the fall.

GENESIS 3:15a 15 **I will put enmity**
between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;

Q: What is enmity?

A: Enmity is TOTAL OPPOSITION Complete antagonism, hostility.

And to help make it apparent that this "enmity" is even more extreme, the literal Hebrew word translated states "enmities" (plural) as if to highlight the fact that "enmity" isn't enough.

⁵² More on the Church in "Who Crushes The head of the Serpent?" Bible study.

⁵³ Liturgically know that the Protoevangelium is read on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception at Latin Rites Mass yearly along with Ephesians 1 and Luke 1 of the Angelic Salutation that we already studied!

GENESIS 3:15b (RSVCE) 15 he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

Let's go to the English translation of the Latin Vulgate, the Douay Rheims Version or DRV to see this language of "enmities" preserved.

GENESIS 3:14a-15 (DRV) 14 And the Lord God said to the serpent. . . .15 I will put **enmities** between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: **she** shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.

Q: Hey! What's this stuff about "she" shall crush thy head? We already saw it was "he" that crushes or bruises the head of the serpent.

A: We will get to that later.

Q: OK. Who could this "he" be that bruises or crushes the head of the serpent?

A: Jesus. (More on this later as the answer is even fuller.)

All right. I see that. Jesus bruises or crushes the head of the serpent.

Now let's go back to the prophecy again for a moment.

GENESIS 3:14a-15 14 The LORD God said to the serpent,
. . . 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and **between your seed and her seed**; he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

There are persons here that will be in absolute opposition to the serpent.

And those persons are "The Woman" and "Her Seed".

"The Woman" and Her "Seed" will be in TOTAL OPPOSITION to the serpent.

Q: How opposed to the serpent will "The Woman" AND Her "Seed" be?

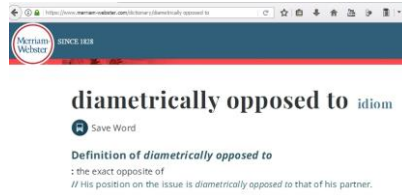
A: Total opposition. Remember? "Enmities".

They are diametrically⁵⁴ opposed to one another (in absolute and complete opposition to one another).

Diametrically opposed to⁵⁵:

⁵⁴ "Diametrically" merely means total opposition.

⁵⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diametrically%20opposed%20to>



The Woman (And “Her Seed”) And Their Enmities To One The serpent

satan wants you to sin. If you were in TOTAL opposition to this serpent (as “The Woman” and “Her Seed” ARE), and the GRACE of God backed it, you are not going to sin. You will oppose satan and he will oppose you . . .TOTALLY.

You and I being mere humans need grace to withstand this satanic attack.
You and I being mere humans get grace to withstand this satanic attack. But we are not “Full of Grace” in the sense of “kecharitomene”.

You and I are not “Full of Grace” in the perfect tense/sense. And thus we fall.
But the Blessed Virgin Mary is “Full of Grace” in the perfect tense/sense. We already saw that.

Q: Will these “enmities” be a mere attempt by “The Woman” like it is with us?

A: NO! Remember. God is the one putting these enmities between the serpent and “The Woman” AND Her “Seed”.

GENESIS 3:14a, 15a (DRV) 14 And **the Lord God said**15
I will put **enmities** between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed...

God is doing this action. That means God’s “grace”. If God is doing the action in a COMPLETE WAY (not really mere “enmity” but “enmities”), it points to “FULL of Grace”!

Here is Genesis 3:15 with some highlight additions to drive home this fact.

GENESIS 3:14a, 15a (no particular translation) 14 And **the Lord God said**15
I the Lord God will put **enmities** between
you satan
and **the woman,**
and likewise between **your satanic seed including the other fallen angels and any**
others going over to your side
and **her seed (Jesus)** . . .

GENESIS 3:14a, 15a (no translation) 14 And **the Lord God said**15

I the Lord God will put enmities between
you satan and the woman,

God is placing these “enmities” here. God doing this action is “Full of Grace”. Now would be a good time to review Luke 1:26-28.

LUKE 1:26-28 (RSVCE, or Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition) — 26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, **Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!**

Remember. God is saying He HIMSELF is the One who will put these enmities between this woman and Her seed.

Objection: Just because God says HE will put enmities between “The Woman” and the serpent doesn’t mean she will get the job done.

Answer: In the case of “Full of Grace” that’s exactly what it means. God does not give void commands. For example: When God says, “Let there be light” there is light.

ISAIAH 55:11 11 so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Objection: Well that’s just your opinion God frames this opposition TOTALLY.

Answer: Think about it. You have already admitted that “Her Seed” that is prophesied to come and crush the head of the serpent is Jesus.

Right. But so what?

Well this SAME God-originated opposition between Jesus and the serpent . . .
. . . is between The Woman and the serpent too! It is right there in the text.

GENESIS 3:14a-15 (DRV) 14 And the Lord God said to the serpent. . . .15
I will put enmities between thee **and the woman**,
and thy seed and her seed:
she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.

- **I (God) will put enmities between the serpent and The Woman**
- **I (God) will put enmities between the serpent and The Seed of The Woman**

NOT GENESIS 3:14a-15 (DRV) 14 And the Lord God said to the serpent. . . .15
I will not put enmities between thee **and the woman**,

Sure I will put SOME opposition there between you and Mary.
But I will ONLY put total opposition or enmities between Jesus, or Her Seed (Jesus), and you, you serpent.

WHO Are These People In Total Opposition To the serpent?

We know WHO among humans were victimized by this non-human serpent. Adam and Eve. And all of their (Adam and Eve) offspring too is a sense were human victims of the serpent.

But WHO among humans is in TOTAL opposition to the serpent?

Yes WE are in total opposition to satan but ONLY once we are in Heaven. Since we are sinners, that opposition has not been total in the same way it was with Jesus. So we don't meet the job description of being in total opposition to the serpent in the same way Jesus was in His humanity.

If these persons are at TOTAL enmities to satan, and They are, then the only POSSIBLE human beings who would be at TOTAL OPPOSITION in the same sense to satan just looking at Genesis 3:15 alone could only be:

- God Himself (who is always in total opposition to fallen Satan) become man
- Or a human being that would be Filled with God's grace
- Or both—one of each (one of the beings would be God [in fact it is Jesus], the other being would be a human—but a human in TOTAL OPPOSITION to satan. She is a human that is "Full of Grace" to withstand these attacks and this human is described as a . . . "woman". And if she wasn't full of grace, she would NOT fit the paradigm here.

But WHO could this "woman" be? To find out, let's look closer at the beings described here.

At this point I just want to put in "a commercial" regarding a future Marian Bible Study. In the Greek Old Testament the term used for Jesus here (Her seed) is literally "Her spermatos". Spermatos. That's an odd word to use for any woman much less THE Woman.

We study how Jesus took flesh from Her to make His own human nature and tie that in with church teachings, Liturgy and Galatians 4:4.

End of commercial for fun future upcoming Bible Study.

Again. WHO could this "woman" be? To find out, let's look closer at the beings described here.

The Easy Way

Well Jesus is OBVIOUSLY the “he” who crushes the head of the serpent.

And this is talking also about Jesus’ Mother. The one who He is “the seed” of.
That could ONLY be The Blessed Virgin Mary.

Genesis 3:15 is a prophecy concerning Jesus and Mary!⁵⁶

The Non-Easy Way

The prophecy is the seed of The Woman and The Woman
who will be at total opposition with . . .
. . . satan and the seed of satan.

The “Good Guys”

1. The Seed of the Woman.
2. The Woman

The “Bad Guys”

1. satan
2. The seed of satan (his minions)

The Persons Described In Genesis 3:15 Further Delineated

Let’s look at the persons discussed in Genesis 3:15 in more detail. There are partial fulfillments too concerning who is being described in Genesis 3:15 but in the interest of brevity we will not look at that in any detail but try to focus on the main characters in the fulfilled sense.

Recall the context. This is God talking to Satan.

GENESIS 3:15a 15 I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;

So there are at least five beings or sets of beings discussed here.

⁵⁶ For Catholic Christians this is easy. For non-Catholic Christians this conclusion of Jesus AND Mary is very difficult oftentimes.

“I will put enmity” . . . Who is that? Well the context is obviously God talking. So we have God (the Father) in the text so far.

- **God**

“I will put enmity between you and” . . . Who is God talking to here? The serpent (satan). So we have God and Satan mentioned here so far. That’s two of the five.

- **God**
- **The Serpent**

“I will put enmity between you and the woman” . . .
So now we have God, the Serpent, and “the woman” revealed here.

- **God**
- **The Serpent**
- **The Woman**

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and” . . .

We know God is addressing the serpent and so the description of “your seed” is the proverbial offspring or “seed” of satan.

Remember the context of Genesis. Satan is a fallen angel (we know this from elsewhere in Church teaching) so satan has no body.

So the offspring of satan is in a different sense than a human corporeal sense. satanic angelic minions are part of it, but they likewise have no body. Yet humans that follow satan are corporeal (they have bodies). So this group is a hybrid. Some fallen angels (demons) and some fallen people who choose to side with satan. People who knowingly reject Christ—such as antichrists.

1st JOHN 2:18-19 18 Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us.

Thus far, we have God, the Serpent, “the woman,” and the “seed of the serpent” (who is the devil and his minions-some fallen angels, some humans).

- **God**
- **The serpent**

- **The Woman**
- **The seed Of The serpent**

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed”
The seed of the woman is now brought into this Old Testament prophecy/teaching. So now we have mentioned here in Genesis 3:15

- **God**
- **The Serpent**
- **The Woman**
- **The Seed Of The Serpent**
- **The Seed Of The Woman**

GENESIS 3:15a 15 I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;

The question now is WHO are these beings?
God is obvious.
The Serpent is obvious.

So that leaves us to define who “the Woman”, “the seed of the serpent” and “the seed of the woman” are.

Since all Christians correctly affirm “the seed of the woman” in its ultimate fulfillment is Jesus, we won’t spend a lot of time defending that here and will also make this affirmation.

The seed of the woman in the ultimate sense is Jesus. Bible Christians get this too.

At this point, let’s do some more catechetical review.

CCC 410 After his fall, man was not abandoned by God. On the contrary, God calls him and in a mysterious way heralds the coming victory over evil and his restoration from his fall.³⁰⁴ **This passage in Genesis is called the *Protoevangelium* (“first gospel”): the first announcement of the Messiah and Redeemer, of a battle between the serpent and the Woman, and of the final victory of a descendant of hers.**

CCC 411 The Christian tradition sees in this passage an announcement of the "New Adam" who, because he "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross", makes amends superabundantly for the disobedience, of Adam.³⁰⁵ Furthermore many Fathers and Doctors of the Church have seen the woman announced in the *Protoevangelium* as Mary, the mother of Christ, the "new Eve". Mary benefited first of all and uniquely from Christ's victory over sin: she was preserved from all stain of original sin and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.³⁰⁶

So that leaves us with defining whom "the seed of the serpent" and "the woman" is.

Since this study concerns the Immaculate Conception, I won't dwell on who the seed of the serpent is other than to say it is the company of demons in league with Satan (the other fallen angels), and the people who are united with Satan.

Seed of the serpent = other fallen angels + people who are united with Satan

So that only leaves one Woman. She has to be Full of Grace since God is the one placing these enmities.

And She has to be Jesus' Mother. The one who contributes flesh or "spermatoz" or "seed" to Jesus for His humanity.

And if that flesh were tainted then Jesus would be taking sinful flesh unto Himself. He would be making His human nature from the stuff of sin. And in this respect Adam who was NOT tainted by sin when he was made, would be greater than Jesus in that respect.

Someone would object and say Jesus purified Mary's flesh as He took it upon Himself. But the point remains that He would still have to do that. Adam was made of pure non-fallen matter.

It is only fitting that Jesus be made from pure undefiled flesh, and thus be the fulfillment of Adam, the new Adam.

Likewise the Blessed Virgin Mary, the new Eve.

God bless you.

Let's close with a word of prayer:

Hail Mary, Full of grace the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

TABLE 2

Some Historical Statements For Reference On The Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary

John Henry Newman was a Protestant Church leader from England in the mid to late 1800s. He converted with agony to Catholicism and became a Cardinal and a Saint. He wrote on Mary being the second Eve.

Objection: So what. This concept of Mary as the new Eve must be a relatively new invention that began in the 1800's. That is just pious "pie in the sky" by Newman. A "New"man invention!

Not at all.

Listen to St. Ephrem who lived in the 300's A.D. . . .

-

Remember, the New Covenant fulfillment is always greater than the Old. That would only make sense with all the graces we receive with Jesus' work. If Jesus is the "New Adam," and He is, then Mary is the "New Eve."

If the first Eve was brought into the world sinless, but the New Eve is brought into the world in a sinful state, this would be a regression of the fulfillment of things to come, not a progression!

To see how the early Church interpreted these teachings let's look at some statements from the early Church Fathers. Somebody might say "Well your taking these early Church Father statements out of context."

I am not taking them out of context! Go and read the documents in total for yourself. They are easily available. You'll see that every one of these statements are in proper context. No preacher who denies the Immaculate Conception would say ANY of the following statements to his congregation under ANY context. Let's read on to see what the ancient Church Fathers had to say . . .

Listen to St. Justin the Martyr:

"We know that He, before all creatures, proceeded from the Father by His power and will . . .

. . . and by means of the Virgin became man, that by what way the disobedience arising from the serpent had its beginning, by that way also it might have an undoing.

For Eve, being a virgin and undefiled, conceiving the word that was from the serpent, **brought forth disobedience and death;**

but **the Virgin Mary**, taking faith and joy,

when the Angel told her the good tidings,

that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her

and the power of the Highest overshadow her,

and therefore the Holy One that was born of her

was Son of God, answered, 'Be it to me according to Thy word.'

- St. Justin to Tryph. 100. **St. Justin died in 165 A.D.**

The Blessed Mother is described in the Early Church by Origen as . . .

. . . "worthy of God, **immaculate of the immaculate**, most complete sanctity, perfect justice, **neither deceived by the persuasion of the serpent**, nor infected with his poisonous breathings."

- Origen. **Origen died in 253 A.D.**

You can see Origen comparing Mother Mary in the context of the garden of Eden. More typology. The Garden was a type of Mary in Origen's evaluation.

Listen to (even the heretic) Tertullian who lived in the 200's A.D. . . .

"God recovered His image and likeness, which the devil had seized, by a rival operation.

For into Eve, as yet a virgin, had crept the word which was the framer of death.

Equally into a virgin was to be introduced the Word of God which was the builder-up of life;

that, what by that sex (gender) had gone into perdition,

by the same sex (gender) might be brought back to salvation.
Eve had believed the serpent;
Mary believed Gabriel;
the fault which the one committed by believing,
the other by believing has blotted out."
Tertullian. -De Carn.Christ. 17. Tertullian Died in 240 A.D.

The Immaculate Conception and The Ancient Church Fathers

Listen to St. Irenaeus who studied under St. Polycarp who in turn
was a disciple of the Beloved Disciple, St. John (The same St. John who was given Mary as his Mother at
the foot of the Cross)!

St. Irenaeus (d. 202 A.D.):

"With a fitness, **Mary the Virgin is found obedient**, saying,
'Behold Thy handmaid, O Lord; be it to me according to Thy word.'
But Eve was disobedient; for she obeyed not, while she was yet a virgin.
As she, having indeed Adam for a husband, but as yet being a virgin . . .
. . . **becoming disobedient**, became the cause of death
both to herself and to the whole human race,
so also **Mary**, having the predestined man,
and being yet a Virgin, **being obedient**,
became both to herself and to the whole human race the cause of salvation* . . .
. . . And on account of this the Lord said,
that the first should be last and the last first.
And the Prophet signifies the same,
saying, 'Instead of fathers you have children.'
For, whereas the Lord, when born, was the first-begotten of the dead,
and received into His bosom the primitive fathers,
He regenerated them into the life of God,
He Himself becoming the beginning of the living,
since Adam became the beginning of the dying.
Therefore also Luke, commencing the line of generations **from the Lord** '
referred it **back** to Adam (Luke 3:23-38), signifying
that He regenerated the old fathers,
not they Him, into the Gospel of life.
And so the knot of Eve's disobedience received its unloosing
through the obedience of Mary;
for what Eve, a virgin, bound by incredulity,
that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by faith."
St. Irenaeus. -Adv. Baer. iii. 22. 34.

* When St. Irenaeus talks about Mary being the **cause of our salvation** he is referring to the instrumental cause, not the efficient cause.

When I pound in a nail,

the hammer is the instrumental cause of the nail being in the wood.

I am the efficient cause of the nail being in the wood.

God is the efficient cause of our salvation, but used the Blessed Virgin Mary in a special and instrumental way. That's undeniable.

God incidentally, would be the principal cause of the nail being pounded in the wood as well.

The Immaculate Conception and The Ancient Church Fathers

And again St. Irenaeus: -

"As Eve by the speech of an Angel was seduced,
so as to flee God, transgressing His word,
so also Mary received the good tidings by means of the Angel's speech,
so as to bear God within her, being obedient to His word.

And, though the one had disobeyed God,
yet the other was drawn to obey God;
that of the virgin Eve

the Virgin Mary might become the advocate.

And, as by a virgin **the human race** had been bound to death,

by a virgin it is saved, the balance being preserved,
a virgin's disobedience by a virgin's obedience."

St. Irenaeus. -Adv. Baer. v. 19. St. Irenaeus Died in 202 A.D.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386 A.D.):

"Since through Eve, a virgin, came death,
it behooved (became necessary or proper),
that through a Virgin, or rather from a Virgin, **should life appear**; that,
as the Serpent had deceived the one,
so to the other Gabriel might bring good tidings."

St. Cyril of Jerusalem. -Cat. xii. 15.

St. Ephrem (Ephrem Syrus) St. Ephrem died in 378 A.D.

Ephrem is a witness for the Syrians and the neighboring Orientals.

A native of Nisibis on the further side of the Euphrates,
he knew no language but Syriac as far as we know.

St. Ephrem:

"Through Eve, the beautiful and **desirable glory of men** was extinguished;
but **it has revived through Mary.**"

St. Ephrem -Opp. Syr. ii.

Again St. Ephrem (died in 378 A.D.):

"In the beginning, by the sin of our first parents, death passed upon all men;
today, through Mary we are translated from death unto life.

In the beginning, the serpent filled the ears of **Eve**,
and the poison spread thence over the whole body;

today, **Mary** from her ears received the champion of eternal happiness:

what, therefore, was an instrument of death, **was an instrument of life also.**"

St. Ephrem -Opp. Syr. - iii.

The Immaculate Conception and The Ancient Church Fathers

St. Epiphanius (320-403 A.D.)

"She it is, who is signified by Eve, enigmatically
receiving the appellation (designation or title) of the Mother of the living . . .

. . . It was a wonder that after the fall she had this great epithet (an epithet is a term used to describe what
a person does. A title.

An epithet for King Solomon would be "Wise one").

And, according to what is material, from that Eve

all the race of **man on earth** is generated.

But thus in truth from Mary the Life itself was born in the world,
that Mary might bear living things, and **become the Mother of living things**.
Therefore, enigmatically, Mary is called the Mother of living things . . .
. . . Also, there is another thing to consider as to these women,
and wonderful, as to Eve and Mary.
Eve became a cause of death to men ...
and **Mary a cause of life**; ... that life might be instead of death,
life excluding death which came from the woman, viz (viz = power, strength, life).
He who through the woman has become our life."
St. Epiphanius -Haer. 78. 18.

St. Jerome was the friend of Pope Damasus at Rome,
the pupil of St. Gregory Nazianzen at Constantinople,
and of Didymus in Alexandria, a native of Dalmatia,
yet an inhabitant, at different times of his life, of Gaul, Syria, and Palestine.

St. Jerome (331-420):
"Death by Eve, life by Mary."
St. Jerome (331-420). Ep. xxii. 21, ad Eustoch.

St. Augustine (354-430).
"By a woman death, by a woman life" (Opp. t. v. Sermon. 232);

Elsewhere St. Augustine enlarges on the idea of The Blessed Virgin Mary as the New Eve. In one place he quotes St. Irenaeus's words as cited above (adv. Julian i. n. 5).
In another he speaks as follows:

"It is a great sacrament that, whereas through woman death became our portion,
so **life was born to us by woman**; that, in the case of both sexes, male and female, the baffled devil should be tormented, when on the overthrow of both sexes he was rejoicing; whose punishment had been small, if both sexes had been liberated in us, without our being liberated through both."
--Opp. t. vi. De Agon. Christ. c.24.

The Immaculate Conception and The Ancient Church Fathers

But wait! There's more!

St. Peter Chrysologus (400-450 A.D.), Bishop of Ravenna -
"Blessed art thou among women; for among women,
on whose womb Eve, who was cursed, brought punishment,
Mary, being blest, rejoices, is honoured, and is looked up to.
And **woman now is truly made through grace the Mother of the living**,
who had been by nature the mother of the dying . . . Heaven feels awe of God, Angels tremble at Him,
the creature sustains Him not, nature sufficeth not; and yet
one maiden so takes, receives, entertains Him, as a guest within her breast, that,
for the very hire of her home, and as the price of her womb, she asks,
she obtains peace for the earth, glory for the heavens, salvation for the lost,
life for the dead, a heavenly parentage for the earthly,
the union of God Himself with human flesh."
St. Peter Chrysologus -Serm. 140.

St. Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe in Africa (468-533).

The Homily which contains the following passage, is placed by Ceillier (t. xvi. p. 127) among his genuine works.

I think it is quite obvious what the consensus was among the ancient Church Fathers. And I found absolutely nothing contradicting this material. And I found **nobody** rebuking these Fathers for “falsely” teaching and writing about Mary as Immaculate and the new Eve and either will you. Because there aren’t any such ancient Christian writings!

In the fullest sense the answer to this is clearly Jesus.

We can see in Romans 5 who the seed of the woman must be. Jesus.

ROMANS 5:12a, 17 12 Therefore as sin came into the world through one man (Adam) and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned 17 If, because of one man’s trespass (again Adam), death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness **reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.**

Old Testament Typology – The Concept Of Typology

Where does the Bible begin to show us the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception being taught?

A good place to start would be in the Old Testament where we could study Mary “typologically”.

But before we can study about Mary in Old Testament “types” and “typology”, we need to have a clear understanding of what the concept of typology even is.

What is “Old Testament Typology?” Let’s read on . . .

Old Testament Typology 101

There is a branch of studying the Old Testament called Old Testament Typology. This is a way to unpack Scripture by seeing in some of the Old Testament (actual) people and situations, a living prophesy about what and who is to come in the New Testament and New Covenant!

It is an important principle to remember that when using Old Testament typology, the New Testament FULFILLMENT of the Old Testament type is always GREATER than its Old Testament shadow or prefigurement or type.

The Risen Lord Jesus used Old Testament typology with two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus with regards to Himself.

LUKE 24:13-16, 25-27 13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. . . . 25 And he said to them, "O foolish men, and **slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!** 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And **beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.**

Although we don't know exactly the Old Testament types Jesus used, we can get a reasonable idea just from looking at the Old Testament itself in many cases.

Christians will virtually always use Old Testament typology in evangelizing Jews to Christianity showing that Jesus was the fulfillment of these Old Testament types.

St. Paul even uses explicit typology to teach that Jesus is the New Adam in Romans 5. St. Paul gives us the example of Adam (of Adam and Eve fame) as being a type of Jesus.

ROMANS 5:14 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was **a type of the one who was to come.**

Notice Adam was a "**type**" of Jesus. Jesus of course is the fulfillment of that type.

There are many types of many people in the Old Testament foreshadowing what and who would come in the New Covenant!

Other people in the New Testament had Old Testament foreshadowings too.

The Old Testament prophet Elijah was a type of John the Baptist. Jesus referred to John the Baptist as a fulfillment of Elijah (Matthew 11:13-15).

Not just people, but situations in the Old Testament were foreshadowings of what was to come as well.

St. Paul referred to the Exodus event as being a warning “for us” in his typological review in 1st Corinthians 10:1-12. St. Peter in 1st Peter 3:20-21, calls the saving of people in Noah’s Ark a foreshadowing of the saving waters of New Covenant Baptism. There are other examples of situational typology as well which we won’t get into here.

So we’ve seen not only Jesus had typological foreshadowing, but also other *people* such as John the Baptist, and even *situations* had typological foreshadowings.

But is this typology stuff really Catholic? Yes. As we have shown, St. Paul used typology in his writings. In the CCC (Catechism of the Catholic Church) number 129 quoting St. Augustine it states “. . .the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.”

CCC 130 Typology indicates the dynamic movement toward the fulfillment of the divine plan when "God [will] be everything to everyone." [108] Nor do the calling of the patriarchs and the exodus from Egypt, for example, lose their own value in God's plan, from the mere fact that they were intermediate stages.

O.K. So typology exists and it’s valid.
But what about typology and the Blessed Virgin Mary?

721 Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary.¹⁰¹ Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom."

In her, the "wonders of God" that the Spirit was to fulfill in Christ and the Church began to be manifested:

773 In the Church this communion of men with God, in the "love [that] never ends," is the purpose which governs everything in her that is a sacramental means, tied to this

passing world.¹⁹² "[The Church's] structure is totally ordered to the holiness of Christ's members. And holiness is measured according to the 'great mystery' in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom."¹⁹³ Mary goes before us all in the holiness that is the Church's mystery as "the bride without spot or wrinkle."¹⁹⁴ This is why the "Marian" dimension of the Church precedes the "Petrine."¹⁹⁵

Well there is so much that we could do a whole study on just that topic. The early Church Fathers unpacked many aspects of typology concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary. We may be surprised to find out there are WHOLE BOOKS filled with these Marian insights from the early Church Fathers. They talk of the Blessed Virgin as the New Eve, the Living Ark of the Covenant, etc. We will try to focus only on a sample of these teachings as they pertain to the Immaculate Conception as we go on in this study.

Old Testament Marian Typology 101

CCC 411 The Christian tradition sees in this passage an announcement of the "New Adam" who, because he "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross", makes amends superabundantly for the disobedience, of Adam.³⁰⁵ Furthermore many Fathers and Doctors of the Church have seen the woman announced in the *Protoevangelium* as Mary, the mother of Christ, the "new Eve". Mary benefited first of all and uniquely from Christ's victory over sin: she was

preserved from all stain of original sin and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.³⁰⁶

Objection: Can ANY mere person actually be sinless. Chesterton once said if there was one Christian doctrine that is so self-evident it doesn't need proving it's the doctrine of original sin.

Remember Adam and Eve. There was at least a time when they were sinless. Yes they sinned and fell, but remember, the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament foreshadow, is going to be GREATER than that Old Testament type. Jesus is greater than Adam.

Tim Staples Response

Sinless?

Having seen Mary to be “the New Eve” and “Ark of the Covenant,” one can readily see that she would have been most fittingly immaculately conceived. Tetlow, however, misapplies Luke 1:47 when Mary said, “My soul rejoices in God my savior.” Because Mary said God was her savior, Tetlow declares “only a sinner needs a savior”; thus, Mary had to have sinned. Tetlow fails to consider that Scripture reveals salvation to include not only being “saved” from sins already committed, but it also entails being “saved” by God's power *before* one sins. Jude 24 puts it this way:

Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory.

Thus, Mary was saved, but she was saved from sin by being “kept from falling,” which would have most certainly occurred were it not for the saving power of God.

Tetlow also uses Romans 3:23, which says “all have sinned.” Would that not prove Mary committed sins just like all of us? No. It is obvious that there are exceptions to the general biblical norm that “all have sinned”—and 1 John 1:8 could be added as well, which says, “If any man says he has no sin, he is a liar.” If we are going to take 1 John 1:8 and Romans 3:23 in a strict, literal sense, then Jesus would have to be included as a sinner!

A Protestant may respond, “But Jesus was an *exception* to Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:8. And the Bible tells us he was in Hebrews 4:15: Christ was ‘tempted on all points as we are, yet without sinning.’” Indeed, but there are actually *millions* of exceptions to 1 John 1:8 and Romans 3:23!

First of all, Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:8 speak of *personal sin* rather than original sin. Romans 5:12 deals with original sin. 1 John 1:8 obviously refers to personal sin because

in the very next verse John tells us, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” We don’t confess original sin because we didn’t do it! Confession is only for personal sins. The context of Romans 3:23 is similar:

None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands, no one seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave. They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.

Now we need to ask two simple questions: First, has a baby in the womb or a child of two ever committed a *personal* sin? No. Romans 9:11 flatly declares concerning Jacob and Esau before they were born, “though they were not yet born *and had done nothing either good or bad.*” Second, how about the severely retarded who do not have the use of their intellects and wills—have they committed personal sins? No. Right there you have millions of exceptions to Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:8.[\[7\]](#)

Indeed, Much More So

In Tetlow’s concluding paragraph, the text in question is Luke 11:27–28:

As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!” But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Tetlow claims this text eliminates the Catholic notion of devotion to Mary. On a superficial level, one can see Tetlow’s point. But the word translated as “rather” and viewed by many Fundamentalists to mean “no, rather” is *menoun*, which can mean “on the contrary”[\[8\]](#) but can also mean, “indeed, much more so.”[\[9\]](#) If Christ were truly correcting the unnamed woman’s assertion that Mary was blessed, then he contradicts Luke 1:42 and 48, where both Elizabeth and Mary herself declare Mary to be blessed indeed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus challenged this unnamed woman—as well as all of us today—to understand Mary’s blessedness on a deeper level than just the biological. It is in this context that we can discover the true meaning of the term—*blessed*—for Mary and for all believers. Mary’s greatness does not lie in her calling alone but in the fact that she responded to God’s grace and calling in her life; she “heard the word of God and kept it.”

Jesus kept the Jewish Law perfectly and that includes honoring His Mother.

To make her defiled would violate this commandment.

Jesus kept all the commandments perfectly!

We should imitate Jesus (1 Cor. 11:1) in everything, including honoring Mary too.

And realize our honor of her will ALWAYS be inferior to the perfect honor that **Jesus gave to Her**, by creating Her to be **His own Mother**. Never the less, we try to imitate Christ and honor the Virgin Mary too (and everything that Jesus does)!

The early Church Patriarchs understood Mary, to be the New Ark of the New Covenant. In the Old Covenant, The Ark of the (Old) Covenant, was sacred and holy (it contained Aaron's staff, manna from heaven, and the tablets of the ten commandments)! It had to be made **absolutely perfect**. Moses wrote out the instructions from God twice (when something is of life and death importance in the Jewish Old Testament setting they always repeated it in their culture).

How much more perfectly made and Holy and Sacred would **the living** Flesh and Blood **Ark** of the New Covenant that contained the living Flesh and Blood New Covenant (Jesus) be?

The Blessed Mother Mary is truly Blessed, and all generations thus will address Mary that way. She is God's masterpiece of a mere human being (Jesus was not merely a man but true man and true God and is obviously the ONLY being worthy of our worship). There are other implicit teachings in Sacred Scripture. There are also other historical references, some are quite explicit.

Let's listen to what a dialogue might sound like with a "Catholic" who is perhaps well-meaning but uninformed. Perhaps this "Catholic" is willing to deny his faith. (Incidentally, a Catholic who denies their faith is by definition a heretic - CCC 2089). For the sake of discussion, let's assume this person has well-meaning intentions. He denies the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception on the grounds of a false ecumenical zeal. He thinks that if we can just deny this "one little doctrine," many non-Catholics will find the Catholic Church palatable and become Catholic themselves, or perhaps "warm-up" somewhat to the Catholic faith.

In addition to the problem of him “becoming un-Catholic” himself, he’s forgetting that another problem with his reasoning is that the Immaculate Conception is . . . TRUE!

Dialogue on The Immaculate Conception

Well-meaning Catholic denier: We need to be more ecumenical Paul.

Paul (faithful informed Catholic responding): Only in its proper context.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: For instance, I think we need to chuck this Catholic belief in the Immaculate Conception for one thing.

Paul: We can’t just pick and choose truth. If $2+2 = 4$, your denials of this truth wouldn’t make it any less true. So it is with Catholic doctrinal truths.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: Couldn’t the Church just give us some leeway on this one. I think the Catholic faith would be a lot more palatable for non-Catholics who don’t believe in the Immaculate Conception.

Paul: On some items the Church HAS left things poorly defined. I guess you could call that “leeway”. The Church did this to a certain extent with the Immaculate Conception doctrine. She always taught and believed it (as we will see from quotes in this study), but it was quite a while before she gave us an in-depth definition of this doctrine. At one point St. Thomas Aquinas and Blessed Duns Scotus were quite at odds with what the Immaculate Conception meant and didn’t mean. But now that it has been further defined by the Church we are held to affirming ALL that the definition entails.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: Can’t we just change the teaching? The Church changes lots of things Paul. The age of first communion, the language of the Mass, etc. Why the opening song at Mass changes from week to week, parish to parish.

Paul: Yes many things in the Church can and do change, but not all things. Think of a boom box radio. Look on the controls and see “CD” and “FM.”

Well-meaning Catholic denier: O.K. Paul, but why?

Paul: As a mnemonic memory device. It will help you remember something else.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: What are you leading up to Paul?

Paul: Think of “CD” standing for

“Customs and Disciplines.” **These customs and disciplines can and do change.**

Everything that you mentioned above fits into “Customs and Disciplines.”

“FM” stands for “Faith and Morals.” **These never change.**

Unchangeable Faith and Morals, sometimes called *de fide doctrine*, are doctrinal truths given to us by The Lord Jesus Himself or His inspired Apostles. They can be defined, expounded upon, and probed deeper, but the teaching can’t change into something different or opposed to the original teaching. Usually it’s pretty easy to see what is unchangeable. The **Magisterium**, that is the Pope and the Bishops united to him (CCC 100), will help us sort out cases that are not so easy to see. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception IS one of these unchanging truths.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: Well if the Immaculate Conception is really Church doctrine that falls under faith and morals, I would expect to see at least something of the sort in Scripture. I would also expect to see something in history and in Church documents to back up this claim. But why not just chuck it to be in union with other Christians who don’t affirm this. I just don’t see this as a necessary belief Paul.

Paul: First of all, the Church doesn’t decide on what beliefs are necessary based on if YOU think it’s a necessary belief. And fortunately, the Church doesn’t ask ME either.

Second of all, Christ wants to glorify his Mother. All generations are to be blessed through Abraham (Gen 22:18) because of Abraham’s willingness to offer his son Isaac, and that was God’s will to bless and glorify the nations through Abraham, If THAT’S true, and it is, then how much MORE would all generations be blessed through The Blessed Virgin Mary! “All generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me.” (Luke 1:48-49)

Third, if you start to abandon true doctrine for a false unity, you will eventually have “unity” in **believing in nothing**.

Should we overlook our teachings on the indissolubility of marriage for “unity” with the Eastern “Orthodox”?

Should we desert beliefs in Marian teachings for “unity” with Protestants?

Should we abandon Jesus as true God and True Man for “unity” with the Unitarians?

Should we dump belief in the Trinity for “unity” with Moslems?

Should we chuck belief in God for “unity” with the Atheists?

No, on all these accounts. When you start to “shave off beliefs” to “bring people in” you end up with no belief at all and ironically, you would push people (true believers) out.

Also I think we can show that the Immaculate Conception IS taught in Scripture, History, and in Church documents.

The Immaculate Conception doctrine isn’t true merely because the Church proclaims it.

Rather the Church proclaims this as true because this doctrine IS true. It conforms to reality.

If we examine the facts, we'll see that the DENIAL of Mother Mary's Immaculate Conception is actually the new invention.

The **denial** of this doctrine is the new man-made religion, the "tradition of men".

Let's take a close look to see what was really handed down from Christ and the Apostles.

"Biblical Objections" Anyone?

Objection: I still don't think Mary is an exception to "All have sinned."
Just Jesus is an exception.

The ancient Church Fathers wholeheartedly thought that Mary IS an EXCEPTION!

Analysis of the objections: The verses in Romans 3 have to do with **committing sins**, and the verse in Romans 5 Paul has to do with **original sin**.

But does this do away with The Immaculate Conception AND the Blessed Virgin's subsequent sinlessness Paul?

Paul: Trics, you've stated so many partial truths I'm not sure where to begin. You said that "The Bible nowhere uses the phrase Immaculate Conception." But The Bible nowhere uses the phrase "The Bible," "The Trinity" or even "Original sin" that you just alluded to. The doctrines of the Trinity, The Bible, and Original sin ARE there in Scripture, I agree. But just because the "Immaculate Conception" isn't explicitly stated in Scripture doesn't do away with the doctrine. Just as because the "Holy Trinity" isn't explicitly stated in Scripture that doesn't do away with the doctrine of the Trinity. So your reasoning is only partial on the first point you made Trics.

I also agree that Romans 3 has to do with sins committed and Romans 5 has to do with the doctrine of Original sin. But I disagree that any of these verses would disqualify the Blessed Virgin Mary as being Immaculately conceived etc.

Trics: But Paul, Romans 5 states “sin came into the world through one man,” Adam of Adam and Eve fame! That’s original sin!

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Paul: Were Adam and Eve brought into the world with original sin? No! There is already an exception.

Trics: Well Romans 3 says “ALL have sinned. ALL have committed sins!”

Paul: Do newborn babies commit sins? No. Did JESUS sin?

Trics: Jesus didn’t sin Paul, and you and I agree on that.

Paul: That’s right, Jesus didn’t sin. But Trics, the verse says **ALL** have sinned! WHY do you think you and I believe Jesus DIDN’T sin Trics?

Trics: I know Jesus was an exception from taking the WHOLE BIBLE into account Paul. For example the book of Hebrews tells us Jesus was like us in all ways except sin! You have to take the WHOLE BIBLE into account Paul.

Paul: That’s right Trics! We know Jesus was an exception to these “**all** have sinned” verses by looking at the whole of Scripture. Also by oral tradition incidentally. Statements such as “ALL have sinned” in this case are called “qualified statements.” They have exceptions. Jesus is obviously an exception to “ALL have sinned.” If you had a party and came to work Monday morning and said “everyone was there” you and I would both know that “everyone” was a qualified “everyone.” We would both know that “everyone” wasn’t there. Just a lot of people. The Bible uses ALL in a qualified sense many times.

Trics: Well if you can show me that Mary is an exception to sinning,

and it shows this elsewhere in Scripture, I'd sure like to see it.
Go ahead Paul, use ALL of the BIBLE to show me this one other exception.

Paul: Let's dive deeper into Scripture and Tradition and examine the facts Trics.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Reference Page Only (Not part of this Bible Study Tonight but you MAY look at this further on your own if you wish.)

Jesus is one of three persons of the One God, The Blessed Trinity.
Jesus is a Divine Person.
Jesus has an eternal nature which is divine.
Jesus also had a human nature.
Jesus is a Divine Person with a Fully Divine Nature and a fully human nature.

The Church teaches that Jesus
was made **incarnate** by the Holy Spirit **from the Virgin Mary!**

Let's look at the Vatican II Document Lumen Gentium to
reemphasize what we just heard St. Paul tell us in Galatians 4:4.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Vatican Council II
LUMEN GENTIUM
Chapter VIII The Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of God in the Mystery of Christ and the Church
I. Introduction

CHAPTER VIII

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD IN THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

I. Introduction

52. Wishing in His supreme goodness and wisdom to effect the redemption of the world, "when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, ..that we might receive the adoption of sons".(283) "He for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and **was incarnate by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary.**"(1*) This divine mystery of salvation is revealed to us and continued in the Church, which the Lord established as His body. Joined to Christ the Head and in the unity of fellowship with all His saints, the faithful must in the first place reverence the memory "of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ".(2*)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Most holy Lady, Mother of God, alone most pure in soul and body, alone exceeding all perfection of purity.....alone made in thy entirety the home of all the graces of the Most Holy Spirit, and hence exceeding beyond all compare even the angelic virtues in purity and sanctity of soul and body.....my Lady most holy,
all-pure, all-immaculate,
all stainless, all-undefiled, all-incorrupt, all-inviolable....spotless robe of Him who clothes Himself with light as a garment.....flower unfading, purple woven by God, alone most immaculate. (1). St. Ephraim.

St. Ambrose described the Blessed Virgin Mary as . . . “a virgin immune through grace from every stain of sin.”

- St. Ambrose. St. Ambrose died in 397 A.D.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Church History (Cntd)

“She (Mary) . . . formed part of the human race, and was of the same essence as we, although **she was pure from all taint and immaculate**.

St. Severus, Bishop of Antioch. (3). St. Severus died in 538 A.D.

The Third canon of The Council of the Lateran called in 649 A.D. states.....

...If anyone does not profess according to the holy Fathers that in the proper and true sense **the holy**, ever-Virgin, **immaculate Mary** is the Mother of God, since in this last age not with human seed but of the Holy Spirit

she properly and truly conceived the divine Word, who was born of God the Father before all ages, and gave him birth without any detriment to her virginity, which remained inviolable even after his birth: let such a one be condemned. (5)

The feast of the Immaculate Conception was part of the official mass liturgy calendar in the 700s A.D., although we cant date it exactly. This would not be introduced in a hyperconservative faith without argument and debate (it was without argument or debate) if this doctrine was a new invention. See St. Joseph Daily Missal, Catholic Book Publishing, Copyright 1950, p. 649 for more details.

St. Andrew of Crete states of The Blessed Virgin Mary, that “the Redeemer chose.....

.....in all nature this **pure and entirely Immaculate** Virgin.”

- St. Andrew of Crete. (3) St. Andrew of Crete died in 740 A.D.

It was fitting indeed that she who from the beginning had been conceived by a sanctifying action.....

.....should also have a holy death.... holy, the beginning....

holy, the end, holy her whole existence.
- Theognastes of Constantinople (3) (c. 885 A.D.)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Church History (Cntd)

In the 1200s, a British Monk, Eadmer, tried to teach the Blessed Mother was free of sin on her own accord and not by a special grace of God. This was opposed by St. Thomas Aquinas and others i.e. St. Albert the Great and St. Bonaventure to name a few.

These great theologians and teachers did not oppose the Immaculate Conception as is sometimes declared by some people that have not fully studied the issue.

These Saints rather opposed the way Eadmer tried to teach the Immaculate Conception.

Eadmer erred in saying Mother Mary was sinless on Her own accord and not by the Grace of God. (4)

Dr. Ludvig Ott expounds on St. Thomas teaching on Mother Mary's sinlessness from the Summa Theologica by stating..... According to the teaching of St. Thomas, "the **fullness of grace which Mary received in the active conception implied confirmation in grace and therefore sinlessness.**" Ott quoting S. th. III 27, 5 ad 2.

Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) endowed the Feast of The Immaculate Conception with indulgences. Notice this liturgical feast already has a very special place in the Mass Calendar. (5)

The Council of Trent, called in 1545 A.D. , 6th session states.....

....If anyone says that a man once justified cannot sin again, and cannot lose grace, and that therefore the man who falls and sins was never truly justified; or, contrariwise, says that a man once justified **can avoid all sins, even venial sins**, throughout his entire life without a special privilege of God, **as the Church holds in regard to the Blessed Virgin**: let him be anathema. (5)

Whoever does not wish to have Mary **Immaculate** as his Mother will not have Christ as his Brother either; the Father will not send His Son to him; the Son will not descend into his soul; the Holy Spirit will not make him a member of the Mystical Body of Christ; for all these mysteries of grace take place in Mary **Full-of-Grace**, and in her alone.
- St. Maximilian Kolbe. St. Maximilian Kolbe was martyred in 1943 A.D.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

According to article 56 of the Vatican II Document, **DOGMATIC** Constitution on the Church promulgated on November 21, 1964, the Church teaches DOGMATICALLY.....
....The Father of mercies willed that the incarnation should be preceded by the acceptance of her who was predestined to be the mother of His Son, so that just as a woman contributed to death,(the reference here being to Eve, of Adam and Eve in Genesis) so also a woman should contribute to life.....It is no wonder therefore that the usage prevailed among the Fathers whereby they called the mother of God **entirely holy and free from all stain of sin**, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.
Adorned from the first instant of her conception with the radiance of an entirely unique holiness, the Virgin of Nazareth is greeted, on God's command, by an angel messenger as **full of grace**, and to the heavenly messenger she replies: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word.....Embracing Gods salvific will with a full heart and **impeded by no sin**, she devoted herself **totally** as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son,.....
The document then goes on to quote several early Church Fathers, all of course teaching the same doctrine. (7)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Let's look at the famous document that was put forth in an Ex-Cathedra manner.
An infallible definition of what the IMMACULATE Conception is.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
DECREE OF POPE PIUS IX ON
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

From the Bull "Ineffabilis Deus," Dec. 8, 1854

Since We have never ceased in humility and fasting to offer up Our prayers
and those of the Church
to God the Father through His Son, that He might deign to
direct and confirm Our mind by the power of the Holy Ghost,
after imploring the protection of the whole celestial court,
and after invoking on Our knees the Holy Ghost the Paraclete, under His inspiration
We pronounce, declare and define, unto the glory of the holy and indivisible Trinity,
the honour and ornament of the holy virgin, the Mother of God,
for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith
and the increase of the Christian religion by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ
and the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and in Our own authority,
that the doctrine which **holds the Blessed Virgin Mary** to have been,
from the first moment of her conception,
by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God,
in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of mankind,
preserved free from all stain of original sin, was revealed by God,
and is, therefore, to be firmly and constantly believed
by all the faithful.

Therefore, if some should presume to think in their hearts otherwise
than We have defined (which God forbid), they shall know and thoroughly understand that they are by their
own judgment condemned,

have made shipwreck concerning the Faith,
and fallen away
from the unity of the Church; and, moreover,
that they by this very act subject themselves to the penalties ordained by law,
if by word, or writing, or any other external means,
they dare to signify what they think in their hearts.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Objections to the Immaculate Conception (Cntd.)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

The Very Soul of The Blessed Virgin Mary Magnifies The Lord

Notice the Blessed Virgin Mary's very soul magnifies The Lord! It is not something she did on Her own for the Almighty has done great things for me!

Let's read Luke 1:41-49. This is often referred to as
The Magnificat because the Virgins soul magnifies the Lord!

LUKE 1:41-49 -----> 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit

42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry,

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

43 And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what

was spoken to her from the Lord. 46 And Mary said,

My soul magnifies the Lord,

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; 49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Notice The Virgin still has a savior (Jesus) despite her sinlessness. The Church teaches and always has taught that she still has need of a savior. But she was saved from sin from the moment of Her conception (The Immaculate Conception). St. Augustine who died in 430 A.D. used the analogy of us falling into the pit (of sin). Augustine then contrasted Jesus saving Her from falling into this pit (of sin).

Psalm 69:28 teaches that all the people in the Book of Life are “righteous.”

Is Roman 3:10 wrong? No, but it must be properly interpreted otherwise you have God contradicting Himself. This is of course unacceptable.

Every Christian believes Jesus is not a sinner. Remember, Jesus is true God but Jesus is also true Man. Because sin came into the world does it mean that sin came into our Lord Jesus too? No of course not.

So we have to ask ourselves WHY can we believe Noah is righteous, yet Romans 3:10 says, “None is righteous”.

We have to ask ourselves why we can think of Jesus as being sinless (and of course Jesus IS sinless, make no mistake about it) in the face of verses that if read superficially, seem to contradict that fact.

Before we start to look at these verses directly and in-depth, lets look at some of the Old Testament prophecies and see what we would expect with regards to the Blessed Virgin Mary’s sinless state.

Old Testament Marian Typology

GENESIS 3:14-15 14 The LORD God said to the serpent,
"Because you have done this, **cursed** are you above all cattle, and above all wild
animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and **between your seed** and her seed; he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

GENESIS 3:16 16 To **the woman he said**, "I will greatly multiply your pain
in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

GENESIS 3:17-19 17 And **to Adam he said**, "Because you have listened
to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,' **cursed** is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

In Genesis 3, we saw Adam and Eve sin. They partook of the forbidden fruit!
In Genesis 3:14 God cursed the Serpent.

In Genesis 3:15 God included **the serpent** and **the seed of the serpent** in His curse.
Remember, the serpent was a fallen angel. Since Angels by themselves cannot have
"seed" this isn't referring to future angels. This cursed seed is referring to future
HUMANS!

The Ancient Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) refers to "seed" as "spermatos."
The "seed" of the Serpent (Satan) is **people**.

1=This is the Faith. Francis J. Ripley
2= Apostolic Digest
3=Introduction to Mary. M. Miravalle
4=Ott
5=The Church Teaches
6= Catechism of The Catholic Church
7=Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Vatican II Document.

Misc. Brief Objections Concerning Mary

Why Do You Catholics Worship Mary?

*** II. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN**

971 *"All generations will call me blessed":* "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship."⁵¹⁵ The Church rightly honors "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. . . . This very special devotion . . . differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration."⁵¹⁶ The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.⁵¹⁷

Are you ever made to feel like a second-class citizen because you believe this truth? Does perhaps a cousin "bully" you about this Catholic teaching being a mere "tradition of men" and "popish invention" at family gatherings? Do you just try to avoid the topic of religion all together? You don't try to "baffle them with baloney" do you?

And what do you say to a non-Catholic friend who really wants to know about the Catholic Church, a friend who is maybe even secretly thinking . . .
. . . "I wonder if I should investigate the claims of the Catholic Church" when he/she asks you "We know from Scripture 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' as Paul's letter to the Romans tells us. Then how is it that you Catholics teach that Mary is sinless?"

What do you say in answer to these questions?

Do your family and friends deserve a good answer to these questions? Are you prepared for when these common issues and questions arise?

2853 Victory over the "prince of this world"¹⁶⁹ was won once for all at the Hour when Jesus freely gave himself up to death to give us his life. This is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world is "cast out."¹⁷⁰ "He pursued the woman"¹⁷¹ but had no hold on her: the new Eve, "full of grace" of the Holy Spirit, is preserved from sin and the corruption of death (the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, Mary, ever virgin). "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring."¹⁷² Therefore the Spirit and the Church pray: "Come, Lord Jesus,"¹⁷³ since his coming will deliver us from the Evil One.

867 The Church is holy: the Most Holy God is her author; Christ, her bridegroom, gave himself up to make her holy; the Spirit of holiness gives her life. Since she still includes sinners, she is "the sinless one made up of sinners." Her holiness shines in the saints; in Mary she is already all-holy.

64 Through the prophets, God forms his people in the hope of salvation, in the expectation of a new and everlasting Covenant intended for all, to be written on their hearts.²² The prophets proclaim a radical redemption of the People of God, purification from all their infidelities, a salvation which will include all the nations.²³ Above all, the poor and humble of the Lord will bear this hope. Such holy women as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Judith and Esther kept alive the hope of Israel's salvation. The purest figure among them is Mary.²⁴

144 To obey (from the Latin *ob-audire*, to "hear or listen to") in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself. Abraham is the model of such obedience offered us by Sacred Scripture. The Virgin Mary is its most perfect embodiment.

Son Jesus, "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith".¹¹

Mary - "Blessed is she who believed"

148 The Virgin Mary most perfectly embodies the obedience of faith. By faith Mary welcomes the tidings and promise brought by the angel Gabriel, believing that "with God nothing will be impossible" and so giving her assent: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word."¹² Elizabeth greeted her: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."¹³ It is for this faith that all generations have called Mary blessed.¹⁴

149 Throughout her life and until her last ordeal¹⁵ when Jesus her son died on the cross, Mary's faith never wavered. She never ceased to believe in the fulfillment of God's word. And so the Church venerates in Mary the purest realization of faith.

273 Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ's power.¹¹³ The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that "nothing will be impossible with God", and was able to magnify the Lord: "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."¹¹⁴

509 Mary is truly "Mother of God" since she is the mother of the eternal Son of God made man, who is God himself.

511 The Virgin Mary "cooperated through free faith and obedience in human salvation" (LG 56). She uttered her yes "in the name of all human nature" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 30, 1). By her obedience she became the new Eve, mother of the living.

697 *Cloud and light*. These two images occur together in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In the theophanies of the Old Testament, the cloud, now obscure, now luminous, reveals the living and saving God, while veiling the transcendence of his glory - with Moses on Mount Sinai,⁴³ at the tent of meeting,⁴⁴ and during the wandering in the desert,⁴⁵ and with Solomon at the dedication of the Temple.⁴⁶ In the Holy Spirit, Christ fulfills these figures. The Spirit comes upon the Virgin Mary and "overshadows" her, so that she might conceive and give birth to Jesus.⁴⁷ On the mountain of Transfiguration, the Spirit in the "cloud came and overshadowed" Jesus, Moses and Elijah, Peter, James and John, and "a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!'"⁴⁸ Finally, the cloud took Jesus out of the sight of the disciples on the day of his ascension and will reveal him as Son of man in glory on the day of his final coming.⁴⁹

"Rejoice, you who are full of grace"

721 Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read

the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary.¹⁰¹ Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom."

In her, the "wonders of God" that the Spirit was to fulfill in Christ and the Church began to be manifested:

722 The Holy Spirit *prepared* Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily"¹⁰² should herself be "full of grace." She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty. It was quite correct for the angel Gabriel to greet her as the "Daughter of Zion": "Rejoice."¹⁰³ It is the thanksgiving of the whole People of God, and thus of the Church, which Mary in her canticle¹⁰⁴ lifts up to the Father in the Holy Spirit while carrying within her the eternal Son.

723 In Mary, the Holy Spirit *fulfills* the plan of the Father's loving goodness. Through the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceives and gives birth to the Son of God. By the Holy Spirit's power and her faith, her virginity became uniquely fruitful.¹⁰⁵

724 In Mary, the Holy Spirit *manifests* the Son of the Father, now become the Son of the Virgin. She is the burning bush of the definitive theophany. Filled with the Holy Spirit she makes the Word visible in the humility of his flesh. It is to the poor and the first representatives of the gentiles that she makes him known.¹⁰⁶

725 Finally, through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men, the objects of God's merciful love,¹⁰⁷ *into communion* with Christ. And the humble are always the first to accept him: shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana, and the first disciples.

726 At the end of this mission of the Spirit, Mary became the Woman, the new Eve ("mother of the living"), the mother of the "whole Christ."¹⁰⁸ As such, she was present with the Twelve, who "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer,"¹⁰⁹ at the dawn of the "end time" which the Spirit was to inaugurate on the morning of Pentecost with the manifestation of the Church.

744 In the fullness of time the Holy Spirit completes in Mary all the preparations for Christ's coming among the People of God. By the action of the Holy Spirit in her, the Father gives the world Emmanuel "God-with-us" (*Mt* 1:23).

773 In the Church this communion of men with God, in the "love [that] never ends," is the purpose which governs everything in her that is a sacramental means, tied to this passing world.¹⁹² "[The Church's] structure is totally ordered to the holiness of Christ's members. And holiness is measured according to the 'great mystery' in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom."¹⁹³ Mary goes before us all in the holiness that is the Church's mystery as "the bride without spot or wrinkle."¹⁹⁴ This is why the "Marian" dimension of the Church precedes the "Petrine."¹⁹⁵

829 "But while in the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle, the faithful still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness. And so they turn their eyes to Mary":³⁰⁶ in her, the Church is already the "all-holy."

867 The Church is holy: the Most Holy God is her author; Christ, her bridegroom, gave himself up to make her holy; the Spirit of holiness gives her life. Since she still includes sinners, she is "the sinless one made up of sinners." Her holiness shines in the saints; in Mary she is already all-holy.

"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH"

Paragraph 6. Mary - Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church

963 Since the Virgin Mary's role in the mystery of Christ and the Spirit has been treated, it is fitting now to consider her place in the mystery of the Church. "The Virgin Mary . . . is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer. . . . She is 'clearly the mother of the members of Christ' . . . since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head."⁵⁰² "Mary, Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church."⁵⁰³

. . . she is our Mother in the order of grace

967 By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus she is a "preeminent and . . . wholly unique member of the Church"; indeed, she is the "exemplary realization" (*typus*)⁵¹⁰ of the Church.

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special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. . . . This very special devotion . . . differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration."⁵¹⁶ The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.⁵¹⁷

III. MARY - ESCHATOLOGICAL ICON OF THE CHURCH

972 After speaking of the Church, her origin, mission, and destiny, we can find no better way to conclude than by looking to 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,"⁵¹⁸ the Church is awaited by the one she venerates as Mother of her Lord and as her own mother.

In the meantime the Mother of Jesus, in the glory which she possesses in body and soul in heaven, is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. Likewise she shines forth on earth until the day of the Lord shall come, a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God.⁵¹⁹

IN BRIEF

973 By pronouncing her "fiat" at the Annunciation and giving her consent to the Incarnation, Mary was already collaborating with the whole work her Son was to accomplish. She is mother wherever he is Savior and head of the Mystical Body.

974 The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven, where she already shares in the glory of her Son's Resurrection, anticipating the resurrection of all members of his Body.

975 "We believe that the Holy Mother of God, the new Eve, Mother of the Church, continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role on behalf of the members of Christ" (Paul VI, *CPG* § 15).

CCC 2030 also Mary as "Typus" of the Church implicitly

ARTICLE 3

THE CHURCH, MOTHER AND TEACHER

2030 It is in the Church, in communion with all the baptized, that the Christian fulfills his vocation. From the Church he receives the Word of God containing the teachings of "the law of Christ."⁷² From the Church he receives the grace of the sacraments that sustains him on the "way." From the Church he learns the *example of holiness* and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary; he discerns it in the authentic witness of those who live it; he discovers it in the spiritual tradition and long history of the saints who have gone before him and whom the liturgy celebrates in the rhythms of the sanctoral cycle.

The prayer of the Virgin Mary

2617 Mary's prayer is revealed to us at the dawning of the fullness of time. Before the incarnation of the Son of God, and before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, her prayer cooperates in a unique way with the Father's plan of loving kindness: at the Annunciation, for Christ's conception; at Pentecost, for the formation of the Church, his Body.⁸⁸ In the faith of his humble handmaid, the Gift of God found the acceptance he had awaited from the beginning of time. She whom the Almighty made "full of grace" responds by offering her whole being: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word." "*Fiat*": this is Christian prayer: to be wholly God's, because he is wholly ours.

2618 The Gospel reveals to us how Mary prays and intercedes in faith. At Cana,⁸⁹ the mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast - that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride. It is at the hour of the New Covenant, at the foot of the cross,⁹⁰ that Mary is heard as the Woman, the new Eve, the true "Mother of all the living."

2619 That is why the Cantic of Mary,⁹¹ the *Magnificat* (Latin) or *Megalynei* (Byzantine) is the song both of the Mother of God and of the Church; the song of the Daughter of Zion and of the new People of God; the song of thanksgiving for the fullness of graces poured out in the economy of salvation and the song of the "poor" whose hope is met by the fulfillment of the promises made to our ancestors, "to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."

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In communion with the holy Mother of God

2673 In prayer the Holy Spirit unites us to the person of the only Son, in his glorified humanity, through which and in which our filial prayer unites us in the Church with the Mother of Jesus.²⁷

2674 Mary gave her consent in faith at the Annunciation and maintained it without hesitation at the foot of the Cross. Ever since, her motherhood has extended to the brothers and sisters of her Son "who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties."²⁸ Jesus, the only mediator, is the way of our prayer; Mary, his mother and ours, is wholly transparent to him: she "shows the way" (*hodigitria*), and is herself "the Sign" of the way, according to the traditional iconography of East and West.

2675 Beginning with Mary's unique cooperation with the working of the Holy Spirit, the Churches developed their prayer to the holy Mother of God, centering it on the person of

Christ manifested in his mysteries. In countless hymns and antiphons expressing this prayer, two movements usually alternate with one another: the first "magnifies" the Lord for the "great things" he did for his lowly servant and through her for all human beings²⁹ the second entrusts the supplications and praises of the children of God to the Mother of Jesus, because she now knows the humanity which, in her, the Son of God espoused.

2676 This twofold movement of prayer to Mary has found a privileged expression in the *Ave Maria*:

Hail Mary [or Rejoice, Mary]: the greeting of the angel Gabriel opens this prayer. It is God himself who, through his angel as intermediary, greets Mary. Our prayer dares to take up this greeting to Mary with the regard God had for the lowliness of his humble servant and to exult in the joy he finds in her.³⁰

Full of grace, the Lord is with thee: These two phrases of the angel's greeting shed light on one another. Mary is full of grace because the Lord is with her. The grace with which she is filled is the presence of him who is the source of all grace. "Rejoice . . . O Daughter of Jerusalem . . . the Lord your God is in your midst."³¹ Mary, in whom the Lord himself has just made his dwelling, is the daughter of Zion in person, the ark of the covenant, the place where the glory of the Lord dwells. She is "the dwelling of God . . . with men."³² Full of grace, Mary is wholly given over to him who has come to dwell in her and whom she is about to give to the world.

Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. After the angel's greeting, we make Elizabeth's greeting our own. "Filled with the Holy Spirit," Elizabeth is the first in the long succession of generations who have called Mary "blessed."³³ "Blessed is she who believed. . . ."³⁴ Mary is "blessed among women" because she believed in the fulfillment of the Lord's word. Abraham, because of his faith, became a blessing for all the nations of the earth.³⁵ Mary, because of her faith, became the mother of believers, through whom all nations of the earth receive him who is God's own blessing: Jesus, the "fruit of thy womb."

2677 *Holy Mary, Mother of God*: With Elizabeth we marvel, "And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"³⁶ Because she gives us Jesus, her son, Mary is Mother of God and our mother; we can entrust all our cares and petitions to her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself: "Let it be to me according to your word."³⁷ By entrusting ourselves to her prayer, we abandon ourselves to the will of God together with her: "Thy will be done."

Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death: By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the "Mother of Mercy," the All-Holy One. We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender "the hour of our death" wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son's death on the cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing³⁸ to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise.

2682 Because of Mary's singular cooperation with the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church loves to pray in communion with the Virgin Mary, to magnify with her the great things the Lord has done for her, and to entrust supplications and praises to her.

More typus

2674 Mary gave her consent in faith at the Annunciation and maintained it without hesitation at the foot of the Cross. Ever since, her motherhood has extended to the brothers and sisters of her Son "who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties."²⁸ Jesus, the only mediator, is the way of our prayer; Mary, his mother and ours, is wholly transparent to him: she "shows the way" (*hodigitria*), and is herself "the Sign" of the way, according to the traditional iconography of East and West.

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Table 1

(Mary - Immaculate Conception Bible Study)

Filled With God's Grace

Pope John Paul II's May 8, 1996, Wednesday Audience

1. In the account of the Annunciation, the first word of the angel's greeting, "Rejoice," is an invitation to joy which recalls the oracles of the Old Testament addressed to the "Daughter of Zion." We pointed this out in our previous catecheses and also explained the reasons for this invitation: God's presence among His people, the coming of the messianic King, and maternal fruitfulness. These reasons are fulfilled in Mary.

The Angel Gabriel, addressing the Virgin of Nazareth after the greeting, *chaire*, "rejoice," calls her *kecharitomene*, "full of grace." The words of the Greek text, *chaire* and *kecharitomene* are deeply interconnected: Mary is invited to rejoice because God loves her and has filled her with grace in view of her divine motherhood!

The Church's faith and the experience of the saints teach us that grace is a source of joy, and that true joy comes from God. In Mary, as in Christians, the divine gift produces deep joy.

2. *Kecharitomene*: this term addressed to Mary seems to be the proper way to describe the woman destined to become the mother of Jesus. *Lumen Gentium* appropriately recalls this when it affirms: "The Virgin of Nazareth is hailed by the heralding angel, by divine command, as 'full of grace'" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 56).

The fact that the heavenly messenger addresses her in this way enhances the value of the angelic greeting: it is a manifestation of God's mysterious saving plan in Mary's regard. As I wrote in the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*:

"The fullness of grace" indicates all the supernatural munificence from which Mary benefits by being chosen and destined to be the Mother of Christ. (no. 9)

"Full of grace" is the name Mary possesses in the eyes of God. Indeed, the angel, according to the Evangelist Luke's account, uses this expression even before he speaks the name "Mary," and thus emphasizes the predominant aspect which the Lord perceived in the Virgin of Nazareth's personality.

The expression "full of grace" is the translation of the Greek word *kecharitomene*, which is a passive participle. Therefore to render more exactly the nuance of the Greek word one should not say merely "full of grace," but "*made* full of grace," or even "*filled* with grace," which would clearly indicate that this was a gift given by God to the blessed Virgin. This term, in the form of a perfect participle, enhances the image of a perfect and lasting grace which implies fullness. The same verb, in the sense of "to bestow grace," is used in the Letter to the Ephesians to indicate the abundance of grace granted to us by the Father in His beloved Son (Eph. 1:6) and which Mary receives as the first fruits of Redemption (c.f. *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 10).

3. In the Virgin's case, God's action certainly seems surprising. Mary has no human claim to receiving the announcement of the Messiah's coming. She is not the high priest, official representative of the Hebrew religion, nor even a man, but a young woman without any influence in the society of her time. In addition, she is a native of Nazareth, a village which is never mentioned in the Old Testament. It must not have enjoyed a good reputation, as

Nathanael's question recorded in John's Gospel makes clear: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46).

The extraordinary and gratuitous nature of God's intervention becomes even clearer in comparison with Luke's text which recounts what happened to Zechariah. The latter's priestly status is highlighted as well as his exemplary life which make him and his wife Elizabeth models of Old Testament righteousness: they walked "blameless in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord" (Lk. 1:6).

But we are not informed of Mary's origins either: the expression "of the house of David" (Lk. 1:27) in fact refers only to Joseph. No mention is made then of Mary's behavior. With this literary choice, Luke stresses that everything in Mary derives from a sovereign grace. All that is granted to her is not due to any claim of merit, but only to God's free and gratuitous choice.

4. In so doing, the Evangelist does not of course intend to downplay the outstanding personal value of the blessed Virgin. Rather, he wishes to present Mary as the pure fruit of God's goodwill: He has so taken possession of her as to make her, according to the title used by the angel, "full of grace." The abundance of grace itself is the basis of Mary's hidden spiritual richness.

In the Old Testament, Yahweh expresses the superabundance of His love in many ways and on many occasions. At the dawn of the New Testament, the gratuitousness of God's mercy reaches the highest degree in Mary. In her, God's predilection, shown to the chosen people and in particular to the humble and the poor, reaches its culmination.

Nourished by the Word of the Lord and with the experience of the saints, the Church urges believers to keep their gaze fixed on the mother of the Redeemer and to consider themselves, like her, loved by God. She invites them to share our Lady's humility and poverty, so that, after her example and through her intercession, they may persevere in the grace of God Who sanctifies and transforms hearts.

English text published in *L'Osservatore Romano* May 15, 1996.

If you would like more information on the word "kecharitomene", I have a whole book by Father Rene Laurentin (a French Priest and language scholar). Fr. Laurentin explains the fine details of why this phrase "kecharitomene" points to the Immaculate Conception as well as The Blessed Virgin Mary's subsequent sinlessness. Karl Keating in his book "Catholicism and Fundamentalism" gives a nice brief overview of this too.

"He was the ark formed of incorruptible wood. For by this is signified that His tabernacle was exempt from putridity and corruption." *Hippolytus, Orations In illud, Dominus pascit me (ante A.D. 235).*

"This Virgin Mother of the Only-begotten of God, is called Mary, worthy of God, immaculate of the immaculate, one of the one." *Origen, Homily 1* (A.D. 244).

"Let woman praise Her, the pure Mary." *Ephraim, Hymns on the Nativity, 15:23* (A.D. 370).

"Thou alone and thy Mother are in all things fair, there is no flaw in thee and no stain in thy Mother." *Ephraem, Nisibene Hymns, 27:8* (A.D. 370).

"O noble Virgin, truly you are greater than any other greatness. For who is your equal in greatness, O dwelling place of God the Word? To whom among all creatures shall I compare you, O Virgin? You are greater than them all O Covenant, clothed with purity instead of gold! You are the Ark in which is found the golden vessel containing the true manna, that is, the flesh in which divinity resides." *Athanasius, Homily of the Papyrus of Turin, 71:216* (ante AD 373).

"Mary, a Virgin not only undefiled but a Virgin whom grace has made inviolate, free of every stain of sin." *Ambrose, Sermon 22:30* (A.D. 388).

"We must except the Holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom I wish to raise no question when it touches the subject of sins, out of honour to the Lord; for from Him we know what abundance of grace for overcoming sin in every particular was conferred upon her who had the merit to conceive and bear Him who undoubtedly had no sin." *Augustine, Nature and Grace, 4 2[36]* (A.D. 415).

"As he formed her without my stain of her own, so He proceeded from her contracting no stain." *Proclus of Constantinople, Homily 1* (ante A.D. 446).

"A virgin, innocent, spotless, free of all defect, untouched, unsullied, holy in soul and body, like a lily sprouting among thorns." *Theodotus of Ancrya, Homily VI:11* (ante A.D. 446).

"The angel took not the Virgin from Joseph, but gave her to Christ, to whom she was pledged from Joseph, but gave her to Christ, to whom she was pledged in the womb, when she was made." *Peter Chrysologus, Sermon 140* (A.D. 449).

"[T]he very fact that God has elected her proves that none was ever holier than Mary, if any stain had disfigured her soul, if any other virgin had been purer and holier, God would have selected her and rejected Mary." *Jacob of Sarug* (ante A.D. 521).

"She is born like the cherubim, she who is of a pure, immaculate clay." *Theotokos of Livias, Panegyric for the feast of the Assumption, 5:6* (ante A.D. 650).

"Today humanity, in all the radiance of her immaculate nobility, receives its ancient beauty. The shame of sin had darkened the splendour and attraction of human nature; but when the Mother of the Fair One par excellence is born, this nature regains in her person its ancient privileges and is fashioned according to a perfect model truly worthy of God.... The reform of our nature begins today and the aged world, subjected to a wholly divine transformation, receives the first fruits of the second creation." *Andrew of Crete, Sermon I, On the Birth of Mary* (A.D. 733).

"[T]ruly elect, and superior to all, not by the altitude of lofty structures, but as excelling all in the greatness and purity of sublime and divine virtues, and having no affinity with sin whatever." *Germanus of Constantinople, Marracci in S. Germani Mariali* (ante A.D. 733).

"O most blessed loins of Joachim from which came forth a spotless seed! O glorious womb of Anne in which a most holy offspring grew." *John of Damascus, Homily I (ante A.D. 749)*.

Only God is sinless quotes

Irenic - January 13, 2006 04:34 AM (GMT)

A Baptist friend of mine on PalTalk with an interest in the Early Fathers (I think you know who I'm talking about, StHil) ran this by me and I wanted to get some feedback on it.

He gave me the following quotes (taken from the "Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs" that we recommended):

"I know of no one among men who is perfect in all things, as long as he is still human. The only exception is He alone who clothed Himself with humanity for us." - Clement of Alexandria, 195 AD.

"God alone is without sin. And the only human without sin is Christ, since Christ is also God." - Tertullian, 210 AD.

And he asked: **How do Catholics reconcile these quotes with the idea of Mary's sinlessness?**

All I could offer at the time was that a couple of statements by Fathers (or, in the case of Tertullian, an early Christian writer who went on to become a heretic) don't a dogma make.

Any thoughts?

<http://forum.ancient-future.net/ar/t3.htm>

Dave Armstrong writes a good succinct review of the multiple meanings of "all" (*pas*) and how "all" can for example, mean "many" or "of every kind (a distributive sense) in Biblical usage and how even Protestant Lexicons themselves will readily admit this fact (<http://socrates58.blogspot.com/2007/03/all-have-sinned-mary.html>).

. . . I go now to linguistic reference works. Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Abridged Ed.) states:

Pas can have different meanings according to its different uses . . . in many verses, *pas* is used in the NT simply to denote a great number, e.g., "all Jerusalem" in Mt 2:3 and "all the sick" in 4:24. {pp.796-7}

See also Mt 3:5, 21:10, 27:25, Mk 2:13, 9:15, etc., etc., esp. in KJV.

Likewise, Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* gives "of every kind" as a possible meaning in some contexts {p.491, word #3956}. And Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* tells us it can mean "every kind or variety." {v.1, p.46, under "All"}.

ROMANS 5:14 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, **even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam**, who was a type of the one who was to come.

(Why does St. Paul use the word “sins” in a plural sense in Romans 5:14? Because St. Paul is talking about many people—from Adam to Moses and even beyond)

Catholics likewise affirm we could never be righteous apart from grace, but with saving grace (especially Mary who is FULL of grace) people can be and are righteous.

CCC 705 Disfigured by sin and death, man remains "in the image of God," in the image of the Son, but is deprived "of the glory of God,"⁶⁶ of his "likeness." The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that "image"⁶⁷ and restore it in the Father's "likeness" by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is "the giver of life."

1st John 1:5-10 states

1st JOHN 1:5-10 5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

They insist when St. John states “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” shows that in 1st John 1:8 there are no exceptions. But we already saw why in the last segment that conclusion cannot be true (there are exceptions) even aside from the most obvious exception—Jesus Himself.

We can use the same reasoning as the refutation of that interpretation of Romans 3:23 that we saw earlier (there must be exceptions—St. Paul explicitly says so for example).

Therefore 1st John 1:5-10 cannot mean what they think it means (that is; there are no possible exceptions and this must be used in an “every single solitary” sense or a “collective sense”).

Concerning 1st John 1:5-10, it is interesting that many of the same people that deny the Immaculate Conception will say we are justified by “faith alone” even though the Bible

never says that, and explicitly contradicts it. Yet we see in 1st John 1:9 (“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”) the importance of the Sacrament of Confession. They will deny this and say that John is merely talking about confessing your sins straight to God (no Priest). Although that is wrong (see Confession Bible study), granting them that point for a moment, even the need for confessing straight to God, would necessarily eliminate a doctrine of justification by faith ALONE. It now must AT LEAST become a doctrine of “justification by faith AND confessing your sins straight to God”—yet they deny this need in their doctrine of justification many times. For many more details on this concept see our “Justification” Bible study.

TABLE 2

Some Historical Statements For Reference On The Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary

John Henry Newman was a Protestant Church leader from England in the mid to late 1800s. He converted with agony to Catholicism and became a Cardinal and a Saint. He wrote on Mary being the second Eve.

Objection: So what. This concept of Mary as the new Eve must be a relatively new invention that began in the 1800’s. That is just pious “pie in the sky” by Newman. A “New”man invention!

Not at all.
Listen to St. Ephrem who lived in the 300’s A.D. . . .

-

Remember, the New Covenant fulfillment is always greater than the Old. That would only make sense with all the graces we receive with Jesus' work. If Jesus is the "New Adam," and He is, then Mary is the "New Eve."

If the first Eve was brought into the world sinless, but the New Eve is brought into the world in a sinful state, this would be a regression of the fulfillment of things to come, not a progression!

To see how the early Church interpreted these teachings let's look at some statements from the early Church Fathers. Somebody might say "Well your taking these early Church Father statements out of context."

I am not taking them out of context! Go and read the documents in total for yourself. They are easily available. You'll see that every one of these statements are in proper context. No preacher who denies the Immaculate Conception would say ANY of the following statements to his congregation under ANY context. Let's read on to see what the ancient Church Fathers had to say . . .

Listen to St. Justin the Martyr:

"We know that He, before all creatures, proceeded from the Father by His power and will . . .

. . . and by means of the Virgin became man, that by what way the disobedience arising from the serpent had its beginning, by that way also it might have an undoing.

For Eve, being a virgin and undefiled, conceiving the word that was from the serpent, **brought forth disobedience and death;**

but **the Virgin Mary**, taking faith and joy, when the Angel told her the good tidings, that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her and the power of the Highest overshadow her, and therefore the Holy One that was born of her was Son of God, answered, 'Be it to me according to Thy word.'

- St. Justin to Tryph. 100. **St. Justin died in 165 A.D.**

The Blessed Mother is described in the Early Church by Origen as . . .

. . . "worthy of God, **immaculate of the immaculate**, most complete sanctity, perfect justice, **neither deceived by the persuasion of the serpent**, nor infected with his poisonous breathings."

- Origen. **Origen died in 253 A.D.**

You can see Origen comparing Mother Mary in the context of the garden of Eden. More typology. The Garden was a type of Mary in Origen's evaluation.

Listen to (even the heretic) Tertullian who lived in the 200's A.D. . . .

"God recovered His image and likeness, which the devil had seized,
by a rival operation.
For into Eve, as yet a virgin, had crept the word which was the framer of death.
Equally into a virgin was to be introduced the Word of God which was
the builder-up of life;
that, what by that sex (gender) had gone into perdition,
by the same sex (gender) might be brought back to salvation.
Eve had believed the serpent;
Mary believed Gabriel;
the fault which the one committed by believing,
the other by believing has blotted out."
Tertullian. -De Carn.Christ. 17. Tertullian Died in 240 A.D.

The Immaculate Conception and The Ancient Church Fathers

Listen to St. Irenaeus who studied under St. Polycarp who in turn
was a disciple of the Beloved Disciple, St. John (The same St. John who was given Mary as his Mother at
the foot of the Cross)!

St. Irenaeus (d. 202 A.D.):

"With a fitness, **Mary the Virgin is found obedient**, saying,
'Behold Thy handmaid, O Lord; be it to me according to Thy word.'
But Eve was disobedient; for she obeyed not, while she was yet a virgin.
As she, having indeed Adam for a husband, but as yet being a virgin . . .
. . . **becoming disobedient**, became the cause of death
both to herself and to the whole human race,
so also **Mary**, having the predestined man,
and being yet a Virgin, **being obedient**,
became both to herself and to the whole human race the cause of salvation* . . .
. . . And on account of this the Lord said,
that the first should be last and the last first.
And the Prophet signifies the same,
saying, 'Instead of fathers you have children.'
For, whereas the Lord, when born, was the first-begotten of the dead,
and received into His bosom the primitive fathers,
He regenerated them into the life of God,
He Himself becoming the beginning of the living,
since Adam became the beginning of the dying.
Therefore also Luke, commencing the line of generations **from the Lord** '
referred it **back** to Adam (Luke 3:23-38), signifying
that He regenerated the old fathers,
not they Him, into the Gospel of life.
And so the knot of Eve's disobedience received its unloosing
through the obedience of Mary;

for what Eve, a virgin, bound by incredulity,
that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by faith."
St. Irenaeus. -Adv. Baer. iii. 22. 34.

* When St. Irenaeus talks about Mary being the **cause of our salvation** he is referring to the instrumental cause, not the efficient cause.

When I pound in a nail,

the hammer is the instrumental cause of the nail being in the wood.

I am the efficient cause of the nail being in the wood.

God is the efficient cause of our salvation, but used the Blessed Virgin Mary in a special and instrumental way. That's undeniable.

God incidentally, would be the principal cause of the nail being pounded in the wood as well.

The Immaculate Conception and The Ancient Church Fathers

And again St. Irenaeus: -

"As Eve by the speech of an Angel was seduced,
so as to flee God, transgressing His word,
so also Mary received the good tidings by means of the Angel's speech,
so as to bear God within her, being obedient to His word.

And, though the one had disobeyed God,
yet the other was drawn to obey God;

that of the virgin Eve

the Virgin Mary might become the advocate.

And, as by a virgin **the human race** had been bound to death,

by a virgin it is saved, the balance being preserved,
a virgin's disobedience by a virgin's obedience."

St. Irenaeus. -Adv. Baer. v. 19. St. Irenaeus Died in 202 A.D.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386 A.D.):

"Since through Eve, a virgin, came death,
it behooved (became necessary or proper),
that through a Virgin, or rather from a Virgin, **should life appear**; that,
as the Serpent had deceived the one,
so to the other Gabriel might bring good tidings."

St. Cyril of Jerusalem. -Cat. xii. 15.

St. Ephrem (Ephrem Syrus) St. Ephrem died in 378 A.D.

Ephrem is a witness for the Syrians and the neighboring Orientals.

A native of Nisibis on the further side of the Euphrates,
he knew no language but Syriac as far as we know.

St. Ephrem:

"Through Eve, the beautiful and **desirable glory of men** was extinguished;
but **it has revived through Mary**."

St. Ephrem -Opp. Syr. ii.

Again St. Ephrem (died in 378 A.D.):

"In the beginning, by the sin of our first parents, death passed upon all men;
today, through Mary we are translated from death unto life.

In the beginning, the serpent filled the ears of **Eve**,

and the poison spread thence over the whole body;
today, **Mary** from her ears received the champion of eternal happiness:
what, therefore, was an instrument of death, **was an instrument of life also.**"
St. Ephrem -Opp. Syr. - iii.

The Immaculate Conception and The Ancient Church Fathers

St. Epiphanius (320-403 A.D.)

"She it is, who is signified by Eve, enigmatically
receiving the appellation (designation or title) of the Mother of the living . . .
. . . It was a wonder that after the fall she had this great epithet (an epithet is a term used to describe what
a person does. A title.

An epithet for King Solomon would be "Wise one").

And, according to what is material, from that Eve
all the race of **man on earth** is generated.

But thus in truth from Mary the Life itself was born in the world,
that Mary might bear living things, and **become the Mother of living things.**

Therefore, enigmatically, Mary is called the Mother of living things . . .

. . . Also, there is another thing to consider as to these women,
and wonderful, as to Eve and Mary.

Eve became a cause of death to men ...

and **Mary a cause of life**; ... that life might be instead of death,
life excluding death which came from the woman, viz (viz = power, strength, life).

He who through the woman has become our life."

St. Epiphanius -Haer. 78. 18.

St. Jerome was the friend of Pope Damasus at Rome,
the pupil of St. Gregory Nazianzen at Constantinople,
and of Didymus in Alexandria, a native of Dalmatia,
yet an inhabitant, at different times of his life, of Gaul, Syria, and Palestine.

St. Jerome (331-420):

"Death by Eve, life by Mary."

St. Jerome (331-420). Ep. xxii. 21, ad Eustoch.

St. Augustine (354-430).

"By a woman death, by a woman life" (Opp. t. v. Serm. 232);

Elsewhere St. Augustine enlarges on the idea of The Blessed Virgin Mary as the New Eve. In one place he
quotes St. Irenaeus's words as cited above (adv. Julian i. n. 5).

In another he speaks as follows:

"It is a great sacrament that, whereas through woman death became our portion,
so **life was born to us by woman**; that, in the case of both sexes, male and female, the baffled devil should
be tormented, when on the overthrow of both sexes he was rejoicing; whose punishment had been small, if
both sexes had been liberated in us, without our being liberated through both."

--Opp. t. vi. De Agon. Christ. c.24.

The Immaculate Conception and The Ancient Church Fathers

But wait! There's more!

St. Peter Chrysologus (400-450 A.D.), Bishop of Ravenna -

"Blessed art thou among women; for among women,
on whose womb Eve, who was cursed, brought punishment,
Mary, being blest, rejoices, is honoured, and is looked up to.
And woman now is truly made through grace the Mother of the living,
who had been by nature the mother of the dying . . . Heaven feels awe of God, Angels tremble at Him,
the creature sustains Him not, nature sufficeth not; and yet
one maiden so takes, receives, entertains Him, as a guest within her breast, that,
for the very hire of her home, and as the price of her womb, she asks,
she obtains peace for the earth, glory for the heavens, salvation for the lost,
life for the dead, a heavenly parentage for the earthly,
the union of God Himself with human flesh."
St. Peter Chrysologus -Serm. 140.

St. Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe in Africa (468-533).
The Homily which contains the following passage, is placed by Ceillier (t. xvi. p. 127) among his genuine works.

I think it is quite obvious what the consensus was among the ancient Church Fathers.
And I found absolutely nothing contradicting this material. And I found nobody
rebuking these Fathers for "falsely" teaching and writing about Mary as Immaculate and
the new Eve and either will you. Because there aren't any such ancient Christian
writings!

In the fullest sense the answer to this is clearly Jesus.

We can see in Romans 5 who the seed of the woman must be. Jesus.

ROMANS 5:12a, 17 12 Therefore as sin came into the world
through one man (Adam) and death through sin,
and so death spread to all men because all men sinned . . .
. . . 17 If, because of one man's trespass (again Adam),
death reigned through that one man,
much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of
righteousness **reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.**

Old Testament Typology – The Concept Of Typology

Where does the Bible begin to show us the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception
being taught?

A good place to start would be in the Old Testament where we could study Mary “typologically”.

But before we can study about Mary in Old Testament “types” and “typology”, we need to have a clear understanding of what the concept of typology even is.

What is “Old Testament Typology?” Let’s read on . . .

Old Testament Typology 101

There is a branch of studying the Old Testament called Old Testament Typology. This is a way to unpack Scripture by seeing in some of the Old Testament (actual) people and situations, a living prophesy about what and who is to come in the New Testament and New Covenant!

It is an important principle to remember that when using Old Testament typology, the New Testament FULFILLMENT of the Old Testament type is always GREATER than its Old Testament shadow or prefigurement or type.

The Risen Lord Jesus used Old Testament typology with two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus with regards to Himself.

LUKE 24:13-16, 25-27 13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. . . . 25 And he said to them, "O foolish men, and **slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!** 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And **beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.**

Although we don’t know exactly the Old Testament types Jesus used, we can get a reasonable idea just from looking at the Old Testament itself in many cases.

Christians will virtually always use Old Testament typology in evangelizing Jews to Christianity showing that Jesus was the fulfillment of these Old Testament types.

St. Paul even uses explicit typology to teach that Jesus is the New Adam in Romans 5. St. Paul gives us the example of Adam (of Adam and Eve fame) as being a type of Jesus.

ROMANS 5:14 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

Notice Adam was a “**type**” of Jesus. Jesus of course is the fulfillment of that type.

There are many types of many people in the Old Testament foreshadowing what and who would come in the New Covenant!

Other people in the New Testament had Old Testament foreshadowings too.

The Old Testament prophet Elijah was a type of John the Baptist. Jesus referred to John the Baptist as a fulfillment of Elijah (Matthew 11:13-15).

Not just people, but situations in the Old Testament were foreshadowings of what was to come as well.

St. Paul referred to the Exodus event as being a warning “for us” in his typological review in 1st Corinthians 10:1-12. St. Peter in 1st Peter 3:20-21, calls the saving of people in Noah’s Ark a foreshadowing of the saving waters of New Covenant Baptism. There are other examples of situational typology as well which we won’t get into here.

So we’ve seen not only Jesus had typological foreshadowing, but also other *people* such as John the Baptist, and even *situations* had typological foreshadowings.

But is this typology stuff really Catholic? Yes. As we have shown, St. Paul used typology in his writings. In the CCC (Catechism of the Catholic Church) number 129 quoting St. Augustine it states “. . .the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.”

CCC 130 Typology indicates the dynamic movement toward the fulfillment of the divine plan when "God [will] be everything to everyone." [108] Nor do the calling of the patriarchs and the exodus from Egypt, for example, lose their own value in God's plan, from the mere fact that they were intermediate stages.

O.K. So typology exists and it’s valid.
But what about typology and the Blessed Virgin Mary?

721 Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation

and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary.¹⁰¹ Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom."

In her, the "wonders of God" that the Spirit was to fulfill in Christ and the Church began to be manifested:

773 In the Church this communion of men with God, in the "love [that] never ends," is the purpose which governs everything in her that is a sacramental means, tied to this passing world.¹⁹² "[The Church's] structure is totally ordered to the holiness of Christ's members. And holiness is measured according to the 'great mystery' in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom."¹⁹³ Mary goes before us all in the holiness that is the Church's mystery as "the bride without spot or wrinkle."¹⁹⁴ This is why the "Marian" dimension of the Church precedes the "Petrine."¹⁹⁵

Well there is so much that we could do a whole study on just that topic. The early Church Fathers unpacked many aspects of typology concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary. We may be surprised to find out there are WHOLE BOOKS filled with these Marian insights from the early Church Fathers. They talk of the Blessed Virgin as the New Eve, the Living Ark of the Covenant, etc. We will try to focus only on a sample of these teachings as they pertain to the Immaculate Conception as we go on in this study.

Old Testament Marian Typology 101

CCC 411 The Christian tradition sees in this passage an announcement of the "New Adam" who, because he "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross", makes amends superabundantly for the disobedience, of Adam.³⁰⁵ Furthermore many Fathers and Doctors of the Church have seen the woman announced in the *Protoevangelium* as Mary, the mother of Christ, the "new Eve". Mary benefited first of all and uniquely from Christ's victory over sin: she was preserved from all stain of original sin and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.³⁰⁶

Objection: Can ANY mere person actually be sinless. Chesterton once said if there was one Christian doctrine that is so self-evident it doesn't need proving it's the doctrine of original sin.

Remember Adam and Eve. There was at least a time when they were sinless. Yes they sinned and fell, but remember, the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament foreshadow, is going to be GREATER than that Old Testament type. Jesus is greater than Adam.

Tim Staples Response

Sinless?

Having seen Mary to be "the New Eve" and "Ark of the Covenant," one can readily see that she would have been most fittingly immaculately conceived. Tetlow, however, misapplies Luke 1:47 when Mary said, "My soul rejoices in God my savior." Because Mary said God was her savior, Tetlow declares "only a sinner needs a savior"; thus, Mary had to have sinned. Tetlow fails to consider that Scripture reveals salvation to include not only being "saved" from sins already committed, but it also entails being "saved" by God's power *before* one sins. Jude 24 puts it this way:

Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory.

Thus, Mary was saved, but she was saved from sin by being "kept from falling," which would have most certainly occurred were it not for the saving power of God.

Tetlow also uses Romans 3:23, which says “all have sinned.” Would that not prove Mary committed sins just like all of us? No. It is obvious that there are exceptions to the general biblical norm that “all have sinned”—and 1 John 1:8 could be added as well, which says, “If any man says he has no sin, he is a liar.” If we are going to take 1 John 1:8 and Romans 3:23 in a strict, literal sense, then Jesus would have to be included as a sinner!

A Protestant may respond, “But Jesus was an *exception* to Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:8. And the Bible tells us he was in Hebrews 4:15: Christ was ‘tempted on all points as we are, yet without sinning.’” Indeed, but there are actually *millions* of exceptions to 1 John 1:8 and Romans 3:23!

First of all, Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:8 speak of *personal sin* rather than original sin. Romans 5:12 deals with original sin. 1 John 1:8 obviously refers to personal sin because in the very next verse John tells us, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” We don’t confess original sin because we didn’t do it! Confession is only for personal sins. The context of Romans 3:23 is similar:

None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands, no one seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave. They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.

Now we need to ask two simple questions: First, has a baby in the womb or a child of two ever committed a *personal sin*? No. Romans 9:11 flatly declares concerning Jacob and Esau before they were born, “though they were not yet born *and had done nothing either good or bad.*” Second, how about the severely retarded who do not have the use of their intellects and wills—have they committed personal sins? No. Right there you have millions of exceptions to Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:8.[\[7\]](#)

Indeed, Much More So

In Tetlow’s concluding paragraph, the text in question is Luke 11:27–28:

As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!” But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Tetlow claims this text eliminates the Catholic notion of devotion to Mary. On a superficial level, one can see Tetlow’s point. But the word translated as “rather” and viewed by many Fundamentalists to mean “no, rather” is *menoun*, which can mean “on the contrary”[\[8\]](#) but can also mean, “indeed, much more so.”[\[9\]](#) If Christ were truly correcting the unnamed woman’s assertion that Mary was blessed, then he contradicts Luke 1:42 and 48, where both Elizabeth and Mary herself declare Mary to be blessed indeed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus challenged this unnamed woman—as well as all of us today—to understand Mary’s blessedness on a deeper level than just the biological. It is in this context that we can discover the true meaning of the term—*blessed*—for Mary and for all believers. Mary’s

greatness does not lie in her calling alone but in the fact that she responded to God's grace and calling in her life; she "heard the word of God and kept it."

Jesus kept the Jewish Law perfectly and that includes honoring His Mother.

To make her defiled would violate this commandment.

Jesus kept all the commandments perfectly!

We should imitate Jesus (1 Cor. 11:1) in everything, including honoring Mary too.

And realize our honor of her will ALWAYS be inferior to the perfect honor that **Jesus gave to Her**, by creating Her to be **His own Mother**. Never the less, we try to imitate Christ and honor the Virgin Mary too (and everything that Jesus does)!

The early Church Patriarchs understood Mary, to be the New Ark of the New Covenant. In the Old Covenant, The Ark of the (Old) Covenant, was sacred and holy (it contained Aaron's staff, manna from heaven, and the tablets of the ten commandments)! It had to be made **absolutely perfect**. Moses wrote out the instructions from God twice (when something is of life and death importance in the Jewish Old Testament setting they always repeated it in their culture).

How much more perfectly made and Holy and Sacred would **the living** Flesh and Blood **Ark** of the New Covenant that contained the living Flesh and Blood New Covenant (Jesus) be?

The Blessed Mother Mary is truly Blessed, and all generations thus will address Mary that way. She is God's masterpiece of a mere human being (Jesus was not merely a man but true man and true God and is obviously the ONLY being worthy of our worship). There are other implicit teachings in Sacred Scripture. There are also other historical references, some are quite explicit.

Let's listen to what a dialogue might sound like with a "Catholic" who is perhaps well-meaning but uninformed. Perhaps this "Catholic" is willing to deny his faith. (Incidentally, a Catholic who denies their faith is by definition a heretic - CCC 2089). For the sake of discussion, let's assume this person has well-meaning intentions. He denies the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception on the grounds of a false ecumenical zeal. He thinks that if we can just deny this "one little doctrine," many non-Catholics will find the Catholic Church palatable and become Catholic themselves, or perhaps "warm-up" somewhat to the Catholic faith. In addition to the problem of him "becoming un-Catholic" himself, he's forgetting that another problem with his reasoning is that the Immaculate Conception is . . . TRUE!

Dialogue on The Immaculate Conception

Well-meaning Catholic denier: We need to be more ecumenical Paul.

Paul (faithful informed Catholic responding): Only in its proper context.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: For instance, I think we need to chuck this Catholic belief in the Immaculate Conception for one thing.

Paul: We can't just pick and choose truth. If $2+2 = 4$, your denials of this truth wouldn't make it any less true. So it is with Catholic doctrinal truths.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: Couldn't the Church just give us some leeway on this one. I think the Catholic faith would be a lot more palatable for non-Catholics who don't believe in the Immaculate Conception.

Paul: On some items the Church HAS left things poorly defined. I guess you could call that "leeway". The Church did this to a certain extent with the Immaculate Conception doctrine. She always taught and believed it (as we will see from quotes in this study), but it was quite a while before she gave us an in-depth definition of this doctrine. At one point St. Thomas Aquinas and Blessed Duns Scotus were quite at odds with what the Immaculate Conception meant and didn't mean. But now that it has been further defined by the Church we are held to affirming ALL that the definition entails.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: Can't we just change the teaching? The Church changes lots of things Paul. The age of first communion, the language of the Mass, etc. Why the opening song at Mass changes from week to week, parish to parish.

Paul: Yes many things in the Church can and do change, but not all things. Think of a boom box radio. Look on the controls and see "CD" and "FM."

Well-meaning Catholic denier: O.K. Paul, but why?

Paul: As a mnemonic memory device. It will help you remember something else.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: What are you leading up to Paul?

Paul: Think of "CD" standing for

"Customs and Disciplines." These customs and disciplines can and do change.

Everything that you mentioned above fits into "Customs and Disciplines."

"FM" stands for "Faith and Morals." These never change.

Unchangeable Faith and Morals, sometimes called *de fide doctrine*, are doctrinal truths given to us by The Lord Jesus Himself or His inspired Apostles. They can be defined, expounded upon, and probed deeper, but the teaching can't change into something different or opposed to the original teaching. Usually it's pretty easy to see what is unchangeable. The **Magisterium**, that is the Pope and the Bishops united to him (CCC 100), will help us sort out cases that are not so easy to see. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception IS one of these unchanging truths.

Well-meaning Catholic denier: Well if the Immaculate Conception is really Church doctrine that falls under faith and morals, I would expect to see at least something of the sort in Scripture. I would also expect to see something in history and in Church documents to back up this claim. But why not just chuck it to be in union with other Christians who don't affirm this. I just don't see this as a necessary belief Paul.

Paul: First of all, the Church doesn't decide on what beliefs are necessary based on if YOU think it's a necessary belief. And fortunately, the Church doesn't ask ME either.

Second of all, Christ wants to glorify his Mother. All generations are to be blessed through Abraham (Gen 22:18) because of Abraham's willingness to offer his son Isaac, and that was God's will to bless and glorify the nations through Abraham, If THAT'S true, and it is, then how much MORE would all generations be blessed through The Blessed Virgin Mary! "All generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me." (Luke 1:48-49)

Third, if you start to abandon true doctrine for a **false** unity, you will eventually have "unity" in **believing in nothing**.

Should we overlook our teachings on the indissolubility of marriage for “unity” with the Eastern “Orthodox”?

Should we desert beliefs in Marian teachings for “unity” with Protestants?

Should we abandon Jesus as true God and True Man for “unity” with the Unitarians?

Should we dump belief in the Trinity for “unity” with Moslems?

Should we chuck belief in God for “unity” with the Atheists?

No, on all these accounts. When you start to “shave off beliefs” to “bring people in” you end up with no belief at all and ironically, you would push people (true believers) out.

Also I think we can show that the Immaculate Conception IS taught in Scripture, History, and in Church documents.

The Immaculate Conception doctrine isn’t true merely because the Church proclaims it. Rather the Church proclaims this as true because this doctrine IS true. It conforms to reality.

If we examine the facts, we’ll see that the DENIAL of Mother Mary’s Immaculate Conception is actually the new invention.

The **denial** of this doctrine is the new man-made religion, the “tradition of men”.

Let’s take a close look to see what was really handed down from Christ and the Apostles.

“Biblical Objections” Anyone?

Objection: I still don’t think Mary is an exception to “All have sinned.”

Just Jesus is an exception.

The ancient Church Fathers wholeheartedly thought that Mary IS an EXCEPTION!

Analysis of the objections: The verses in Romans 3 have to do with **committing sins**, and the verse in Romans 5 Paul has to do with **original sin**.

But does this do away with The Immaculate Conception AND the Blessed Virgin's subsequent sinlessness Paul?

Paul: Trics, you've stated so many partial truths I'm not sure where to begin. You said that "The Bible nowhere uses the phrase Immaculate Conception." But The Bible nowhere uses the phrase "The Bible," "The Trinity" or even "Original sin" that you just alluded to. The doctrines of the Trinity, The Bible, and Original sin ARE there in Scripture, I agree. But just because the "Immaculate Conception" isn't explicitly stated in Scripture doesn't do away with the doctrine. Just as because the "Holy Trinity" isn't explicitly stated in Scripture that doesn't do away with the doctrine of the Trinity. So your reasoning is only partial on the first point you made Trics.

I also agree that Romans 3 has to do with sins committed and Romans 5 has to do with the doctrine of Original sin. But I disagree that any of these verses would disqualify the Blessed Virgin Mary as being Immaculately conceived etc.

Trics: But Paul, Romans 5 states "sin came into the world through one man," Adam of Adam and Eve fame! That's original sin!

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Paul: Were Adam and Eve brought into the world with original sin? No! There is already an exception.

Trics: Well Romans 3 says "ALL have sinned. ALL have committed sins!"

Paul: Do newborn babies commit sins? No. Did JESUS sin?

Trics: Jesus didn't sin Paul, and you and I agree on that.

Paul: That's right, Jesus didn't sin. But Trics, the verse says **ALL** have sinned! WHY do you think you and I believe Jesus DIDN'T sin Trics?

Trics: I know Jesus was an **exception** from taking the WHOLE BIBLE into account Paul. For example the book of Hebrews tells us Jesus was like us in all ways **except sin!** You have to take the WHOLE BIBLE into account Paul.

Paul: That's right Trics! We know Jesus **was** an **exception** to these "**all** have sinned" verses by looking at the **whole of Scripture**. Also by oral tradition incidentally. Statements such as "ALL have sinned" in this case are called "qualified statements." They have exceptions. Jesus is obviously an exception to "ALL have sinned." If you had a party and came to work Monday morning and said "**everyone** was there" you and I would both know that "everyone" was a qualified "everyone." We would both know that "everyone" wasn't there. Just a lot of people. The Bible uses ALL in a qualified sense many times.

Trics: Well if you can show me that Mary is an exception to sinning, and it shows this elsewhere in Scripture, I'd sure like to see it. Go ahead Paul, use ALL of the BIBLE to show me this one other exception.

Paul: Let's dive deeper into Scripture and Tradition and examine the facts Trics.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Reference Page Only (Not part of this Bible Study Tonight but you MAY look at this further on your own if you wish.)

Jesus is one of three persons of the One God, The Blessed Trinity.
Jesus is a Divine Person.
Jesus has an eternal nature which is divine.

Jesus also had a human nature.

Jesus is a Divine Person with a Fully Divine Nature and a fully human nature.

The Church teaches that Jesus

was made **incarnate** by the Holy Spirit **from the Virgin Mary!**

Let's look at the Vatican II Document Lumen Gentium to

reemphasize what we just heard St. Paul tell us in Galatians 4:4.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church

Vatican Council II

LUMEN GENTIUM

Chapter VIII The Blessed Virgin Mary,

Mother of God in the Mystery of Christ and the Church

I. Introduction

CHAPTER VIII

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD IN

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

I. Introduction

52. Wishing in His supreme goodness and wisdom to effect the redemption of the world, "when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, ..that we might receive the adoption of sons".(283) "He for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and **was incarnate by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary.**"(1*)

This divine mystery of salvation is revealed to us and

continued in the Church, which the Lord established as His body.

Joined to Christ the Head and in the unity of fellowship with all His saints,

the faithful must in the first place reverence the memory "of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ".(2*)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Most holy Lady, Mother of God, alone most pure in soul and body, alone exceeding all perfection of purity.....alone made in thy entirety the home of all the graces of the Most Holy Spirit, and hence exceeding beyond all compare even the angelic virtues in purity and sanctity of soul and body.....my Lady most holy, all-pure, all-immaculate, all stainless, all-undefiled, all-incorrupt, all-inviolable....spotless robe of Him who clothes Himself with light as a garment.....flower unfading, purple woven by God, alone most immaculate. (1). St. Ephraim.

St. Ambrose described the Blessed Virgin Mary as . . . “a virgin immune through grace from every stain of sin.”

- St. Ambrose. St. Ambrose died in 397 A.D.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Church History (Cntd)

“She (Mary) . . . formed part of the human race, and was of the same essence as we, although **she was pure from all taint and immaculate**.

St. Severus, Bishop of Antioch. (3). St. Severus died in 538 A.D.

The Third canon of The Council of the Lateran called in 649 A.D. states.....

...If anyone does not profess according to the holy Fathers that in the proper and true sense **the holy**, ever-Virgin, **immaculate Mary** is the Mother of God, since in this last age not with human seed but of the Holy Spirit she properly and truly conceived the divine Word, who was born of God the Father before all ages, and gave him birth without any detriment to her virginity, which remained inviolable even after his birth: let such a one be condemned. (5)

The feast of the Immaculate Conception was part of the official mass liturgy calendar in the 700s A.D., although we can't date it exactly. This would not be introduced in a hyperconservative faith without argument and debate (it was without argument or debate) if this doctrine was a new invention. See St. Joseph Daily Missal, Catholic Book Publishing, Copyright 1950, p. 649 for more details.

St. Andrew of Crete states of The Blessed Virgin Mary,
that "the Redeemer chose.....
.....in all nature this **pure and entirely Immaculate** Virgin."
- St. Andrew of Crete. (3) St. Andrew of Crete died in 740 A.D.

It was fitting indeed that she who from the beginning had been
conceived by a sanctifying action.....
.....should also have a holy death.... holy, the beginning....
holy, the end, holy her whole existence.
- Theognastes of Constantinople (3) (c. 885 A.D.)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Church History (Cntd)

In the 1200s, a British Monk, Eadmer, tried to teach the Blessed Mother was free of sin on her own accord and not by a special grace of God. This was opposed by St. Thomas Aquinas and others i.e. St. Albert the Great and St. Bonaventure to name a few. These great theologians and teachers did not oppose the Immaculate Conception as is sometimes declared by some people that have not fully studied the issue. These Saints rather opposed the way Eadmer tried to teach the Immaculate Conception. **Eadmer erred** in saying Mother Mary was sinless **on Her own accord** and not by the Grace of God. (4)
Dr. Ludvig Ott expounds on St. Thomas teaching on Mother Mary's sinlessness from the Summa Theologica by stating..... According to the teaching of St. Thomas,

“the fullness of grace which Mary received in the active conception implied confirmation in grace and therefore sinlessness.” Ott quoting S. th. III 27, 5 ad 2.

Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) endowed the Feast of The Immaculate Conception with indulgences. Notice this liturgical feast already has a very special place in the Mass Calendar. (5)

The Council of Trent, called in 1545 A.D. , 6th session states.....

....If anyone says that a man once justified cannot sin again, and cannot lose grace, and that therefore the man who falls and sins was never truly justified; or, contrariwise, says that a man once justified **can avoid all sins, even venial sins**, throughout his entire life without a special privilege of God, **as the Church holds in regard to the Blessed Virgin**: let him be anathema. (5)

Whoever does not wish to have Mary **Immaculate** as his Mother will not have Christ as his Brother either; the Father will not send His Son to him; the Son will not descend into his soul; the Holy Spirit will not make him a member of the Mystical Body of Christ; for all these mysteries of grace take place in Mary **Full-of-Grace**, and in her alone.

- St. Maximilian Kolbe. St. Maximilian Kolbe was martyred in 1943 A.D.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

According to article 56 of the Vatican II Document,

DOGMATIC Constitution on the Church

promulgated on November 21, 1964, the Church teaches DOGMATICALLY.....

....The Father of mercies willed that the incarnation should be preceded by the acceptance of her who was predestined to be the mother of His Son, so that just as a woman contributed to death,(the reference here being to Eve, of Adam and Eve in Genesis) so also a woman should contribute to life.....It is no wonder therefore that the usage prevailed among the Fathers whereby they called the mother of God **entirely holy and free from all stain of sin**, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.

Adorned from the first instant of her conception with the radiance

of an entirely unique holiness, the Virgin of Nazareth is greeted, on God’s command, by an angel messenger as **full of grace**, and to the heavenly messenger she replies: Behold

the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word.....Embracing
Gods salvific will with a full heart and
impeded by no sin, she devoted herself **totally** as a handmaid of the Lord
to the person and work of her Son,.....
The document then goes on to quote several early Church Fathers, all of course teaching
the same doctrine. (7)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Let's look at the famous document that was put forth in an Ex-Cathedra manner.
An infallible definition of what the IMMACULATE Conception is.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
DECREE OF POPE PIUS IX ON
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

From the Bull "Ineffabilis Deus," Dec. 8, 1854

Since We have never ceased in humility and fasting to offer up Our prayers
and those of the Church
to God the Father through His Son, that He might deign to

direct and confirm Our mind by the power of the Holy Ghost,
 after imploring the protection of the whole celestial court,
 and after invoking on Our knees the Holy Ghost the Paraclete, under His inspiration
 We pronounce, declare and define, unto the glory of the holy and indivisible Trinity,
 the honour and ornament of the holy virgin, the Mother of God,
 for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith
 and the increase of the Christian religion by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ
 and the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and in Our own authority,
 that the doctrine which **holds the Blessed Virgin Mary** to have been,
 from the first moment of her conception,
 by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God,
 in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of mankind,
preserved free from all stain of original sin, was revealed by God,
 and is, therefore, to be firmly and constantly believed
 by all the faithful.
 Therefore, if some should presume to think in their hearts otherwise
 than We have defined (which God forbid), they shall know and thoroughly understand that they are by their
 own judgment condemned,
 have made shipwreck concerning the Faith,
 and fallen away
 from the unity of the Church; and, moreover,
 that they by this very act subject themselves to the penalties ordained by law,
 if by word, or writing, or any other external means,
 they dare to signify what they think in their hearts.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

Objections to the Immaculate Conception (Cntd.)

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Continued)

The Very Soul of The Blessed Virgin Mary Magnifies The Lord

Notice the Blessed Virgin Mary's very soul magnifies The Lord! It is not something she
 did on Her own for the Almighty has done great things for me!

Let's read Luke 1:41-49. This is often referred to as
The Magnificat because the Virgin's soul magnifies the Lord!

LUKE 1:41-49 -----> 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped
in her womb; and
Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit
42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry,
Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!
43 And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For
behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped
for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what
was spoken to her from the Lord. 46 And Mary said,
My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has regarded the low estate of his
handmaiden. For behold, henceforth
all generations will call me blessed;
49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Notice The Virgin still has a savior (Jesus) despite her sinlessness.
The Church teaches and always has taught that she still has need of a savior.
But she was saved from sin from the moment of Her conception (The Immaculate
Conception).
St. Augustine who died in 430 A.D. used the analogy of us falling into the pit (of sin).
Augustine then contrasted Jesus saving Her from falling into this pit (of sin).

Psalm 69:28 teaches that all the people in the Book of Life are "righteous."

Is Roman 3:10 wrong? No, but it must be properly interpreted otherwise you have God
contradicting Himself. This is of course unacceptable.

Every Christian believes Jesus is not a sinner. Remember, Jesus is true God but Jesus is also true Man. Because sin came into the world does it mean that sin came into our Lord Jesus too? No of course not.

So we have to ask ourselves WHY can we believe Noah is righteous, yet Romans 3:10 says, "None is righteous".

We have to ask ourselves why we can think of Jesus as being sinless (and of course Jesus IS sinless, make no mistake about it) in the face of verses that if read superficially, seem to contradict that fact.

Before we start to look at these verses directly and in-depth, lets look at some of the Old Testament prophecies and see what we would expect with regards to the Blessed Virgin Mary's sinless state.

Old Testament Marian Typology

GENESIS 3:14-15 14 The LORD **God said to the serpent**,
"Because you have done this, **cursed** are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and **between your seed** and her seed; he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

GENESIS 3:16 16 To **the woman he said**, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

GENESIS 3:17-19 17 And **to Adam he said**, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' **cursed** is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

In Genesis 3, we saw Adam and Eve sin. They partook of the forbidden fruit!
In Genesis 3:14 God cursed the Serpent.

In Genesis 3:15 God included **the serpent** and **the seed of the serpent** in His curse. Remember, the serpent was a fallen angel. Since Angels by themselves cannot have “seed” this isn’t referring to future angels. This cursed seed is referring to future HUMANS!

The Ancient Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) refers to “seed” as “spermatozōon.”
The “seed” of the Serpent (Satan) is **people**.

- 1=This is the Faith. Francis J. Ripley
- 2= Apostolic Digest
- 3=Introduction to Mary. M. Miravalle
- 4=Ott
- 5=The Church Teaches
- 6= Catechism of The Catholic Church
- 7=Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Vatican II Document.

Misc. Brief Objections Concerning Mary

Why Do You Catholics Worship Mary?

*** II. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN**

971 *"All generations will call me blessed":* "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship."⁵¹⁵ The Church rightly honors "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. . . . This very special devotion . . . differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration."⁵¹⁶ The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.⁵¹⁷

Are you ever made to feel like a second-class citizen because you believe this truth? Does perhaps a cousin “bully” you about this Catholic teaching being a mere “tradition of men” and “popish invention” at family gatherings? Do you just try to avoid the topic of religion all together? You don’t try to “baffle them with baloney” do you?

And what do you say to a non-Catholic friend who really wants to know about the Catholic Church, a friend who is maybe even secretly thinking . . .
. . . .“I wonder if I should investigate the claims of the Catholic Church” when he/she asks you “We know from Scripture ‘All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ as Paul’s letter to the Romans tells us. Then how is it that you Catholics teach that Mary is sinless?”

What do you say in answer to these questions?
Do your family and friends deserve a good answer to these questions? Are you prepared for when these common issues and questions arise?

2853 Victory over the "prince of this world"¹⁶⁹ was won once for all at the Hour when Jesus freely gave himself up to death to give us his life. This is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world is "cast out."¹⁷⁰ "He pursued the woman"¹⁷¹ but had no hold on her: the new Eve, "full of grace" of the Holy Spirit, is preserved from sin and the corruption of death (the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, Mary, ever virgin). "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring."¹⁷² Therefore the Spirit and the Church pray: "Come, Lord Jesus,"¹⁷³ since his coming will deliver us from the Evil One.

867 The Church is holy: the Most Holy God is her author; Christ, her bridegroom, gave himself up to make her holy; the Spirit of holiness gives her life. Since she still includes sinners, she is "the sinless one made up of sinners." Her holiness shines in the saints; in Mary she is already all-holy.

64 Through the prophets, God forms his people in the hope of salvation, in the expectation of a new and everlasting Covenant intended for all, to be written on their hearts.²² The prophets proclaim a radical redemption of the People of God, purification from all their infidelities, a salvation which will include all the nations.²³ Above all, the poor and humble of the Lord will bear this hope. Such holy women as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Judith and Esther kept alive the hope of Israel's salvation. The purest figure among them is Mary.²⁴

144 To obey (from the Latin *ob-audire*, to "hear or listen to") in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself. Abraham is the model of such obedience offered us by Sacred Scripture. The Virgin Mary is its most perfect embodiment.

Son Jesus, "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith".¹¹

Mary - "Blessed is she who believed"

148 The Virgin Mary most perfectly embodies the obedience of faith. By faith Mary welcomes the tidings and promise brought by the angel Gabriel, believing that "with God nothing will be impossible" and so giving her assent: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word."¹² Elizabeth greeted her: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."¹³ It is for this faith that all generations have called Mary blessed.¹⁴

149 Throughout her life and until her last ordeal¹⁵ when Jesus her son died on the cross, Mary's faith never wavered. She never ceased to believe in the fulfillment of God's word. And so the Church venerates in Mary the purest realization of faith.

273 Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ's power.¹¹³ The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that "nothing will be impossible with God", and was able to magnify the Lord: "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."¹¹⁴

509 Mary is truly "Mother of God" since she is the mother of the eternal Son of God made man, who is God himself.

511 The Virgin Mary "cooperated through free faith and obedience in human salvation" (LG 56). She uttered her yes "in the name of all human nature" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 30, 1). By her obedience she became the new Eve, mother of the living.

697 *Cloud and light*. These two images occur together in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In the theophanies of the Old Testament, the cloud, now obscure, now luminous, reveals the living and saving God, while veiling the transcendence of his glory - with Moses on Mount Sinai,⁴³ at the tent of meeting,⁴⁴ and during the wandering in the

desert,⁴⁵ and with Solomon at the dedication of the Temple.⁴⁶ In the Holy Spirit, Christ fulfills these figures. The Spirit comes upon the Virgin Mary and "overshadows" her, so that she might conceive and give birth to Jesus.⁴⁷ On the mountain of Transfiguration, the Spirit in the "cloud came and overshadowed" Jesus, Moses and Elijah, Peter, James and John, and "a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!'"⁴⁸ Finally, the cloud took Jesus out of the sight of the disciples on the day of his ascension and will reveal him as Son of man in glory on the day of his final coming.⁴⁹

"Rejoice, you who are full of grace"

721 Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary.¹⁰¹ Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom."

In her, the "wonders of God" that the Spirit was to fulfill in Christ and the Church began to be manifested:

722 The Holy Spirit *prepared* Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily"¹⁰² should herself be "full of grace." She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty. It was quite correct for the angel Gabriel to greet her as the "Daughter of Zion": "Rejoice."¹⁰³ It is the thanksgiving of the whole People of God, and thus of the Church, which Mary in her canticle¹⁰⁴ lifts up to the Father in the Holy Spirit while carrying within her the eternal Son.

723 In Mary, the Holy Spirit *fulfills* the plan of the Father's loving goodness. Through the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceives and gives birth to the Son of God. By the Holy Spirit's power and her faith, her virginity became uniquely fruitful.¹⁰⁵

724 In Mary, the Holy Spirit *manifests* the Son of the Father, now become the Son of the Virgin. She is the burning bush of the definitive theophany. Filled with the Holy Spirit she makes the Word visible in the humility of his flesh. It is to the poor and the first representatives of the gentiles that she makes him known.¹⁰⁶

725 Finally, through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men, the objects of God's merciful love,¹⁰⁷ *into communion* with Christ. And the humble are always the first to accept him: shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana, and the first disciples.

726 At the end of this mission of the Spirit, Mary became the Woman, the new Eve ("mother of the living"), the mother of the "whole Christ."¹⁰⁸ As such, she was present with the Twelve, who "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer,"¹⁰⁹ at the dawn of the "end time" which the Spirit was to inaugurate on the morning of Pentecost with the manifestation of the Church.

744 In the fullness of time the Holy Spirit completes in Mary all the preparations for Christ's coming among the People of God. By the action of the Holy Spirit in her, the Father gives the world Emmanuel "God-with-us" (*Mt* 1:23).

773 In the Church this communion of men with God, in the "love [that] never ends," is the purpose which governs everything in her that is a sacramental means, tied to this passing world.¹⁹² "[The Church's] structure is totally ordered to the holiness of Christ's members. And holiness is measured according to the 'great mystery' in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom."¹⁹³ Mary goes before us all in the holiness that is the Church's mystery as "the bride without spot or wrinkle."¹⁹⁴ This is why the "Marian" dimension of the Church precedes the "Petrine."¹⁹⁵

829 "But while in the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle, the faithful still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness. And so they turn their eyes to Mary":³⁰⁶ in her, the Church is already the "all-holy."

867 The Church is holy: the Most Holy God is her author; Christ, her bridegroom, gave himself up to make her holy; the Spirit of holiness gives her life. Since she still includes sinners, she is "the sinless one made up of sinners." Her holiness shines in the saints; in Mary she is already all-holy.

"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH"

Paragraph 6. Mary - Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church

963 Since the Virgin Mary's role in the mystery of Christ and the Spirit has been treated, it is fitting now to consider her place in the mystery of the Church. "The Virgin Mary . . . is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer. . . . She is 'clearly the mother of the members of Christ' . . . since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head."⁵⁰² "Mary, Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church."⁵⁰³

. . . she is our Mother in the order of grace

967 By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus she is a "preeminent and . . . wholly unique member of the Church"; indeed, she is the "exemplary realization" (*typus*)⁵¹⁰ of the Church.

*** II. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN**

971 "*All generations will call me blessed*": "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship."⁵¹⁵ The Church rightly honors "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. . . . This very special devotion . . . differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration."⁵¹⁶ The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.⁵¹⁷

III. MARY - ESCHATOLOGICAL ICON OF THE CHURCH

972 After speaking of the Church, her origin, mission, and destiny, we can find no better way to conclude than by looking to 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,"⁵¹⁸ the Church is awaited by the one she venerates as Mother of her Lord and as her own mother.

In the meantime the Mother of Jesus, in the glory which she possesses in body and soul in heaven, is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. Likewise she shines forth on earth until the day of the Lord shall come, a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God.⁵¹⁹

IN BRIEF

973 By pronouncing her "fiat" at the Annunciation and giving her consent to the Incarnation, Mary was already collaborating with the whole work her Son was to accomplish. She is mother wherever he is Savior and head of the Mystical Body.

974 The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven, where she already shares in the glory of her Son's Resurrection, anticipating the resurrection of all members of his Body.

975 "We believe that the Holy Mother of God, the new Eve, Mother of the Church, continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role on behalf of the members of Christ" (Paul VI, *CPG* § 15).

CCC 2030 also Mary as “Typus” of the Church implicitly

ARTICLE 3

THE CHURCH, MOTHER AND TEACHER

2030 It is in the Church, in communion with all the baptized, that the Christian fulfills his vocation. From the Church he receives the Word of God containing the teachings of "the law of Christ."⁷² From the Church he receives the grace of the sacraments that sustains him on the "way." From the Church he learns the *example of holiness* and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary; he discerns it in the authentic witness of those who live it; he discovers it in the spiritual tradition and long history of the saints who have gone before him and whom the liturgy celebrates in the rhythms of the sanctoral cycle.

The prayer of the Virgin Mary

2617 Mary's prayer is revealed to us at the dawning of the fullness of time. Before the incarnation of the Son of God, and before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, her prayer cooperates in a unique way with the Father's plan of loving kindness: at the Annunciation, for Christ's conception; at Pentecost, for the formation of the Church, his Body.⁸⁸ In the faith of his humble handmaid, the Gift of God found the acceptance he had awaited from the beginning of time. She whom the Almighty made "full of grace" responds by offering her whole being: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word." "*Fiat*": this is Christian prayer: to be wholly God's, because he is wholly ours.

2618 The Gospel reveals to us how Mary prays and intercedes in faith. At Cana,⁸⁹ the mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast - that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride. It is at the hour of the New Covenant, at the foot of the cross,⁹⁰ that Mary is heard as the Woman, the new Eve, the true "Mother of all the living."

2619 That is why the Canticle of Mary,⁹¹ the *Magnificat* (Latin) or *Megalynei* (Byzantine) is the song both of the Mother of God and of the Church; the song of the Daughter of Zion and of the new People of God; the song of thanksgiving for the fullness of graces poured out in the economy of salvation and the song of the "poor" whose hope is met by the fulfillment of the promises made to our ancestors, "to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."

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In communion with the holy Mother of God

2673 In prayer the Holy Spirit unites us to the person of the only Son, in his glorified humanity, through which and in which our filial prayer unites us in the Church with the Mother of Jesus.²⁷

2674 Mary gave her consent in faith at the Annunciation and maintained it without hesitation at the foot of the Cross. Ever since, her motherhood has extended to the brothers and sisters of her Son "who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties."²⁸ Jesus, the only mediator, is the way of our prayer; Mary, his mother and ours, is wholly transparent to him: she "shows the way" (*hodigitria*), and is herself "the Sign" of the way, according to the traditional iconography of East and West.

2675 Beginning with Mary's unique cooperation with the working of the Holy Spirit, the Churches developed their prayer to the holy Mother of God, centering it on the person of Christ manifested in his mysteries. In countless hymns and antiphons expressing this prayer, two movements usually alternate with one another: the first "magnifies" the Lord for the "great things" he did for his lowly servant and through her for all human beings²⁹ the second entrusts the supplications and praises of the children of God to the Mother of Jesus, because she now knows the humanity which, in her, the Son of God espoused.

2676 This twofold movement of prayer to Mary has found a privileged expression in the *Ave Maria*:

Hail Mary [or Rejoice, Mary]: the greeting of the angel Gabriel opens this prayer. It is God himself who, through his angel as intermediary, greets Mary. Our prayer dares to take up this greeting to Mary with the regard God had for the lowliness of his humble servant and to exult in the joy he finds in her.³⁰

Full of grace, the Lord is with thee: These two phrases of the angel's greeting shed light on one another. Mary is full of grace because the Lord is with her. The grace with which she is filled is the presence of him who is the source of all grace. "Rejoice . . . O Daughter of Jerusalem . . . the Lord your God is in your midst."³¹ Mary, in whom the Lord himself has just made his dwelling, is the daughter of Zion in person, the ark of the covenant, the place where the glory of the Lord dwells. She is "the dwelling of God . . . with men."³² Full of grace, Mary is wholly given over to him who has come to dwell in her and whom she is about to give to the world.

Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. After the angel's greeting, we make Elizabeth's greeting our own. "Filled with the Holy Spirit," Elizabeth is the first in the long succession of generations who have called Mary "blessed."³³ "Blessed is she who believed. . . ." ³⁴ Mary is "blessed among women" because she believed in the fulfillment of the Lord's word. Abraham, because of his faith, became a blessing for all the nations of the earth.³⁵ Mary, because of her faith, became the mother of believers, through whom all nations of the earth receive him who is God's own blessing: Jesus, the "fruit of thy womb."

2677 *Holy Mary, Mother of God:* With Elizabeth we marvel, "And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"³⁶ Because she gives us Jesus, her son, Mary is Mother of God and our mother; we can entrust all our cares and petitions to

her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself: "Let it be to me according to your word."³⁷ By entrusting ourselves to her prayer, we abandon ourselves to the will of God together with her: "Thy will be done."

Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death: By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the "Mother of Mercy," the All-Holy One. We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender "the hour of our death" wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son's death on the cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing³⁸ to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise.

2682 Because of Mary's singular cooperation with the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church loves to pray in communion with the Virgin Mary, to magnify with her the great things the Lord has done for her, and to entrust supplications and praises to her.

More typus

2674 Mary gave her consent in faith at the Annunciation and maintained it without hesitation at the foot of the Cross. Ever since, her motherhood has extended to the brothers and sisters of her Son "who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties."²⁸ Jesus, the only mediator, is the way of our prayer; Mary, his mother and ours, is wholly transparent to him: she "shows the way" (*hodigitria*), and is herself "the Sign" of the way, according to the traditional iconography of East and West.

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Table 1

(Mary - Immaculate Conception Bible Study)

Filled With God's Grace

Pope John Paul II's May 8, 1996, Wednesday Audience

1. In the account of the Annunciation, the first word of the angel's greeting, "Rejoice," is an invitation to joy which recalls the oracles of the Old Testament addressed to the "Daughter of Zion." We pointed this out in our previous catecheses and also explained the reasons for this invitation: God's presence among His people, the coming of the messianic King, and maternal fruitfulness. These reasons are fulfilled in Mary.

The Angel Gabriel, addressing the Virgin of Nazareth after the greeting, *chaire*, "rejoice," calls her *kecharitomene*, "full of grace." The words of the Greek text, *chaire* and *kecharitomene* are deeply interconnected: Mary is invited to rejoice because God loves her and has filled her with grace in view of her divine motherhood!

The Church's faith and the experience of the saints teach us that grace is a source of joy, and that true joy comes from God. In Mary, as in Christians, the divine gift produces deep joy.

2. *Kecharitomene*: this term addressed to Mary seems to be the proper way to describe the woman destined to become the mother of Jesus. *Lumen Gentium* appropriately recalls this when it affirms: "The Virgin of Nazareth is hailed by the heralding angel, by divine command, as 'full of grace'" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 56).

The fact that the heavenly messenger addresses her in this way enhances the value of the angelic greeting: it is a manifestation of God's mysterious saving plan in Mary's regard. As I wrote in the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*:

"The fullness of grace" indicates all the supernatural munificence from which Mary benefits by being chosen and destined to be the Mother of Christ. (no. 9)

"Full of grace" is the name Mary possesses in the eyes of God. Indeed, the angel, according to the Evangelist Luke's account, uses this expression even before he speaks the name "Mary," and thus emphasizes the predominant aspect which the Lord perceived in the Virgin of Nazareth's personality.

The expression "full of grace" is the translation of the Greek word *kecharitomene*, which is a passive participle. Therefore to render more exactly the nuance of the Greek word one should not say merely "full of grace," but "*made* full of grace," or even "*filled* with grace," which would clearly indicate that this was a gift given by God to the blessed Virgin. This term, in the form of a perfect participle, enhances the image of a perfect and lasting grace which implies fullness. The same verb, in the sense of "to bestow grace," is used in the Letter to the Ephesians to indicate the abundance of grace granted to us by the Father in His beloved Son (Eph. 1:6) and which Mary receives as the first fruits of Redemption (c.f. *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 10).

3. In the Virgin's case, God's action certainly seems surprising. Mary has no human claim to receiving the announcement of the Messiah's coming. She is not the high priest, official representative of the Hebrew religion, nor even a man, but a young woman without any influence in the society of her time. In addition, she is a native of Nazareth, a village which is never mentioned in the Old Testament. It must not have enjoyed a good reputation, as Nathanael's question recorded in John's Gospel makes clear: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46).

The extraordinary and gratuitous nature of God's intervention becomes even clearer in comparison with Luke's text which recounts what happened to Zechariah. The latter's priestly status is highlighted as well as his exemplary life which make him and his wife Elizabeth models of Old Testament righteousness: they walked "blameless in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord" (Lk. 1:6).

But we are not informed of Mary's origins either: the expression "of the house of David" (Lk. 1:27) in fact refers only to Joseph. No mention is made then of Mary's behavior. With this literary choice, Luke stresses that everything in Mary derives from a sovereign grace. All that is granted to her is not due to any claim of merit, but only to God's free and gratuitous choice.

4. In so doing, the Evangelist does not of course intend to downplay the outstanding personal value of the blessed Virgin. Rather, he wishes to present Mary as the pure fruit of God's goodwill: He has so taken possession of her as to make her, according to the title used by the angel, "full of grace." The abundance of grace itself is the basis of Mary's hidden spiritual richness.

In the Old Testament, Yahweh expresses the superabundance of His love in many ways and on many occasions. At the dawn of the New Testament, the gratuitousness of God's mercy reaches the highest degree in Mary. In her, God's predilection, shown to the chosen people and in particular to the humble and the poor, reaches its culmination.

Nourished by the Word of the Lord and with the experience of the saints, the Church urges believers to keep their gaze fixed on the mother of the Redeemer and to consider themselves, like her, loved by God. She invites them to share our Lady's humility and poverty, so that, after her example and through her intercession, they may persevere in the grace of God Who sanctifies and transforms hearts.

English text published in *L'Osservatore Romano* May 15, 1996.

If you would like more information on the word “kecharitomene”, I have a whole book by Father Rene Laurentin (a French Priest and language scholar). Fr. Laurentin explains the fine details of why this phrase “kecharitomene” points to the Immaculate Conception as well as The Blessed Virgin Mary’s subsequent sinlessness. Karl Keating in his book “Catholicism and Fundamentalism” gives a nice brief overview of this too.

"He was the ark formed of incorruptible wood. For by this is signified that His tabernacle was exempt from putridity and corruption." *Hippolytus, Orations In illud, Dominus pascit me (ante A.D. 235).*

"This Virgin Mother of the Only-begotten of God, is called Mary, worthy of God, immaculate of the immaculate, one of the one." *Origen, Homily 1(A.D. 244).*

"Let woman praise Her, the pure Mary." *Ephraim, Hymns on the Nativity, 15:23 (A.D. 370).*

"Thou alone and thy Mother are in all things fair, there is no flaw in thee and no stain in thy Mother." *Ephraem, Nisibene Hymns, 27:8 (A.D. 370).*

"O noble Virgin, truly you are greater than any other greatness. For who is your equal in greatness, O dwelling place of God the Word? To whom among all creatures shall I compare you, O Virgin? You are greater than them all O Covenant, clothed with purity instead of gold! You are the Ark in which is found the golden vessel containing the true manna, that is, the flesh in which divinity resides." *Athanasius, Homily of the Papyrus of Turin, 71:216 (ante AD 373).*

"Mary, a Virgin not only undefiled but a Virgin whom grace has made inviolate, free of every stain of sin." *Ambrose, Sermon 22:30 (A.D. 388).*

"We must except the Holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom I wish to raise no question when it touches the subject of sins, out of honour to the Lord; for from Him we know what abundance of grace for overcoming sin in every particular was conferred upon her who had the merit to conceive and bear Him who undoubtedly had no sin." *Augustine, Nature and Grace, 4 2[36] (A.D.415).*

"As he formed her without my stain of her own, so He proceeded from her contracting no stain." *Proclus of Constantinople, Homily 1 (ante A.D. 446).*

"A virgin, innocent, spotless, free of all defect, untouched, unsullied, holy in soul and body, like a lily sprouting among thorns." *Theodotus of Ancrya, Homily VI:11(ante A.D. 446).*

"The angel took not the Virgin from Joseph, but gave her to Christ, to whom she was pledged from Joseph, but gave her to Christ, to whom she was pledged in the womb, when she was made." *Peter Chrysologus, Sermon 140 (A.D. 449).*

"[T]he very fact that God has elected her proves that none was ever holier than Mary, if any stain had disfigured her soul, if any other virgin had been purer and holier, God would have selected her and rejected Mary." *Jacob of Sarug (ante A.D. 521).*

"She is born like the cherubim, she who is of a pure, immaculate clay." *Theotokos of Livias, Panegyric for the feast of the Assumption, 5:6 (ante A.D. 650).*

"Today humanity, in all the radiance of her immaculate nobility, receives its ancient beauty. The shame of sin had darkened the splendour and attraction of human nature; but when the Mother of the Fair One par excellence is born, this nature regains in her person its ancient privileges and is fashioned according to a perfect model truly worthy of God.... The reform of our nature begins today and the aged world, subjected to a wholly divine transformation, receives the first fruits of the second creation." *Andrew of Crete, Sermon I, On the Birth of Mary (A.D. 733).*

"[T]ruly elect, and superior to all, not by the altitude of lofty structures, but as excelling all in the greatness and purity of sublime and divine virtues, and having no affinity with sin whatever." *Germanus of Constantinople, Marracci in S. Germani Mariali (ante A.D. 733).*

"O most blessed loins of Joachim from which came forth a spotless seed! O glorious womb of Anne in which a most holy offspring grew." *John of Damascus, Homily I (ante A.D. 749).*

Only God is sinless quotes

Irenic - January 13, 2006 04:34 AM (GMT)

A Baptist friend of mine on PalTalk with an interest in the Early Fathers (I think you know who I'm talking about, StHil) ran this by me and I wanted to get some feedback on it.

He gave me the following quotes (taken from the "Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs" that we recommended):

"I know of no one among men who is perfect in all things, as long as he is still human. The only exception is He alone who clothed Himself with humanity for us." - Clement of Alexandria, 195 AD.

"God alone is without sin. And the only human without sin is Christ, since Christ is also God." - Tertullian, 210 AD.

And he asked: **How do Catholics reconcile these quotes with the idea of Mary's sinlessness?**

All I could offer at the time was that a couple of statements by Fathers (or, in the case of Tertullian, an early Christian writer who went on to become a heretic) don't a dogma make.

Any thoughts?

<http://forum.ancient-future.net/ar/t3.htm>

Dave Armstrong writes a good succinct review of the multiple meanings of "all" (pas) and how "all" can for example, mean "many" or "of every kind (a distributive sense) in Biblical usage and how even Protestant Lexicons themselves will readily admit this fact (<http://socrates58.blogspot.com/2007/03/all-have-sinned-mary.html>).

. . . I go now to linguistic reference works. Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Abridged Ed.) states:

Pas can have different meanings according to its different uses . . . in many verses, *pas* is used in the NT simply to denote a great number, e.g., "all Jerusalem" in Mt 2:3 and "all the sick" in 4:24. {pp.796-7}

See also Mt 3:5, 21:10, 27:25, Mk 2:13, 9:15, etc., etc., esp. in KJV.

Likewise, Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* gives "of every kind" as a possible meaning in some contexts {p.491, word #3956}. And Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* tells us it can mean "every kind or variety." {v.1, p.46, under "All"}.

ROMANS 5:14 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, **even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam**, who was a type of the one who was to come.

(Why does St. Paul use the word "sins" in a plural sense in Romans 5:14? Because St. Paul is talking about many people—from Adam to Moses and even beyond)

Catholics likewise affirm we could never be righteous apart from grace, but with saving grace (especially Mary who is FULL of grace) people can be and are righteous.

CCC 705 Disfigured by sin and death, man remains "in the image of God," in the image of the Son, but is deprived "of the glory of God,"⁶⁶ of his "likeness." The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that "image"⁶⁷ and restore it in the Father's "likeness" by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is "the giver of life."

1st John 1:5-10 states

1st JOHN 1:5-10 5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

They insist when St. John states “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” shows that in 1st John 1:8 there are no exceptions. But we already saw why in the last segment that conclusion cannot be true (there are exceptions) even aside from the most obvious exception—Jesus Himself.

We can use the same reasoning as the refutation of that interpretation of Romans 3:23 that we saw earlier (there must be exceptions—St. Paul explicitly says so for example).

Therefore 1st John 1:5-10 cannot mean what they think it means (that is; there are no possible exceptions and this must be used in an “every single solitary” sense or a “collective sense”).

Concerning 1st John 1:5-10, it is interesting that many of the same people that deny the Immaculate Conception will say we are justified by “faith alone” even though the Bible never says that, and explicitly contradicts it. Yet we see in 1st John 1:9 (“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”) the importance of the Sacrament of Confession.

They will deny this and say that John is merely talking about confessing your sins straight to God (no Priest). Although that is wrong (see Confession Bible study), granting them that point for a moment, even the need for confessing straight to God, would necessarily eliminate a doctrine of justification by faith ALONE.

It now must AT LEAST become a doctrine of “justification by faith AND confessing your sins straight to God”—yet they deny this need in their doctrine of justification many times. For many more details on this concept see our “Justification” Bible study.