



## Lenten Apologetics Bible Study Series



Steve Clifford

[stevec@transporter.com](mailto:stevec@transporter.com)

<http://www.transporter.com>



## Weekly Topics



- **March 7th**
  - "Why do I need the Church when I have the Bible?"
- **March 14th**
  - "Is the Papacy in the Bible?"
- **March 21st**
  - "Why do Catholics Pray to Mary and the Saints?"
- **March 28th**
  - "Is the Eucharist Truly the Body and Blood of Christ?"
- **April 4th**
  - "Is Purgatory in the Bible?"
- **April 11th**
  - "Why the Catholic Church?"



## Why do Catholics Pray to Mary and the Saints?



- Communion of Saints
- Intercessory Prayer to the Saints
- Repetitious Prayer
- Role of Mary in God's Plan for Our Salvation
  - Mother of God
  - Assumption
  - Immaculate Conception
  - Perpetual Virginity
- Mary and the Fathers of the Church

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## Communion of Saints



- Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed
- The term 'communion of saints' therefore has two closely linked meanings: communion 'in holy things (*sancta*)' and 'among holy persons (*sancti*)' (CCC 948)
- Christ is the head of the Church, which is His Body (Eph 1:22-23; 5:21-32; Col 1:18, 24)
- If one suffers, all suffer; if one is honored, all rejoice (1 Cor 12:12-27)

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## Communion of Saints (Cont.)



- We are one body in Christ, individual parts of one another (Rom 12:5)
- One body, one spirit, called to one hope (Eph 4:4)
- You were called in one body (Col 3:15)
- Death cannot separate us from Christ (Rom 8:35-39)
- Love one another with mutual affection (Rom 12:10)
- Encourage, build up one another (1 Thess 5:11)

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## Communion of Saints (Cont.)



- Bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2)
- Let us do good to all, especially those in the family of faith (Gal 6:10)
- As members of the Body of Christ, all Christians enjoy a communion in faith, fellowship, the sacraments, liturgies, and other spiritual goods
- All Christians enjoy a real communion with Christ and each other which extends across time and space, not severed by death

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## Intercessory Prayer to the Saints



- When Catholics pray to Mary and the other saints in Heaven they are not bypassing Christ, whom they acknowledge as the sole Mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5)
- Intercessory prayer is going to Jesus Christ through Mary and the other saints asking them to intercede for us before the throne of Christ in heaven
- Intercessory prayer is not giving worship to Mary or the saints - **Catholics worship God alone**

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## Intercessory Prayer (Cont.)



- Join me by your prayers to God on my behalf (Rom 15:30)
- Pray for us (Col 4:3; 1 Thess 5:25)
- We always pray for you (2 Thess 1:11)
- Finally, brothers, pray for us (2 Thess 3:1)
- Making supplication for all the saints and for me (Eph 6:18-19)
- Angel presents Tobit and Sarah's prayer to God (Tob 12:12)

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## Intercessory Prayer (Cont.)



- Angel offers prayers of the holy ones to God (Rev 5:8)
- Offer prayers, petitions for all men (1 Tim 2:1-7)
- We are fellow citizens with the saints in heaven and members of the one household of God (Eph 2:19)
- Death does not divide the family of God or separate us from the love of Christ (Rom 8:35-39)
- Saint means “holy one” in Hebrew (*qaddiysh*)

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## Repetitious Prayer



- Objection: “In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words.” (Mt 6:7)  
(eg. calling Baal for hours - 1 Kgs 18:25-29)
- Jesus prayed a third time, saying the same thing again (Mt 26:44)
- Collector kept beating breast & praying: be merciful (Lk 18:13)
- Repeat day & night, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord” (Rev 4:8)
- Pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17)

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## The Role of Mary in God's Plan for Our Salvation



- St. Paul teaches that “there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim 2:5)
- Mary’s participation in salvation history does not diminish the unique mediation of Christ
  - As the Mother of Christ and Mother of Christians she points us to Jesus
- Mary’s role can be summarized by the terms **Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate** (cf CCC 969)

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## The Role of Mary in God's Plan for Our Salvation (Cont.)



- God has chosen to associate Mary in a unique way with Christ’s one mediation
  - Human fathers participate in the one Fatherhood of God
  - Priests participate in the one priesthood of Christ
  - Husband and wife participate in the creative act of God
  - Mary participates in the mediation of Jesus
- Mary’s role in salvation history did not end with her giving birth to the Son of God – it continues to the present time

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## Do Catholics Worship Mary?



- No, we do not worship Mary! Catholics honor Mary as the most perfect reflection of God's goodness
- When we honor Mary, we are honoring God through her (Jesus obeyed IV Commandment)
- **Latria**: Worship due to God alone
- **Dulia**: Honor due to the angels and to the saints insofar as they reflect God's goodness
- **Hyperdulia**: Honor due to Mary as the most perfect reflection of God's goodness

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## Mary and Sacred Scripture



- Typology
  - OT persons and events are called “types” of the NT persons and events they prefigure
  - A type is a prophetic foreshadowing of its NT counterpart
    - Johah's three days in the whale -> Jesus's three days in the tomb (Mt 12:40)
    - Bronze serpent of Numbers 21:9 -> Crucifixion of Christ (Jn 3:14)
    - Noah and the flood -> Christian baptism (1 Pt 3:19-21)
    - Rock following Israelites in desert -> “Christ” (1 Cor 10:4)
    - Adam -> Christ (Rom 5:14)

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## Mary as the New Eve



### OT Type (Genesis 3)

### NT Counterpart (Luke 1)

**Fallen angel** elicits Eve's "no" to God

**Archangel** elicits Mary's "yes" to God

**Adam** loses grace for all mankind

**Jesus** restores grace for all mankind

**Eve** cooperates in Adam's sin

**Mary** cooperates in Jesus' redemption

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## Mary as New Ark of the Covenant



- OT Ark carried the stone tablets of the Law, the written Word of God (Ex 25)
  - Made of acacia wood (supposedly incorruptible)
  - Plated inside and outside with pure gold
  - Kept free from all impurity and profanation
- Uzzah struck dead because he dared to touch the Ark (2 Sam 6:6-7)
- NT Ark (Mary) carried the living Word of God
  - Helps us to understand the Biblical basis for the Immaculate Conception, the perpetual virginity of Mary, and the Assumption of Mary into heaven

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## Mary as the NT Queen Mother



- OT kings clearly prefigured Christ as the NT King of kings (Rev 19:16)
  - Jesus descended from King David, thus the kings of Judah especially prefigured Jesus' kingship
  - The queen was the king of Judah's *mother*, not his *wife*
- Mary is a queen wearing a crown of twelve stars (Rev 12:1)
- Mary is the mother of the followers of Jesus – she is the Mother of all Christians (Rev 12:17)

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## Four Infallibly Defined Marian Doctrines of the Catholic Church



- Divine Maternity
  - Mary is the Mother of God (Theotokos)
- Perpetual Virginity
  - Mary remained a virgin her entire life
- Bodily Assumption
  - Mary was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory
- Immaculate Conception
  - From the first moment of her conception, Mary – by the singular grace of God and by virtue of the merits of Christ – was preserved immune from original sin

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## Mary as Coredemptrix



- Jesus Christ is the redeemer of mankind
- Christ paid the price of his own sacrificial death on the cross to ransom us, to set us free from the slavery of sin, thus achieving our redemption
- Refers to Mary's unique and intimate cooperation with her divine Son in redeeming the human family
- Rooted in Genesis 3:15, where Mary is "prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent" (LG 55)

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## Mary as Coredemptrix (Cont.)



- Mary's unique participation in the Redemption was scripturally foreshadowed in the prophecy of Simeon at the Temple where he said to Mary: "a sword will pierce your own heart, too" (Lk 2:35)
- Mary accepted the invitation of the angel Gabriel to become the Mother of God (Lk 1:38)
- Eve gave the fruit to Adam as the instrument for the fall of humanity – Mary gave the body to Jesus as the instrument for the Redemption of humanity

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## Mary as Coredemptrix (Cont.)



- The body of Jesus Christ was the instrument for the Redemption of the human family (Heb 10:10)
- Jesus received his body from Mary
- Mary's participation in our redemption is completely and in every way secondary and dependent to the sacrifice of Jesus
- Mary's role in our redemption was prefigured in the Old Testament (Gen 3:15; Is 7:14-16; Mi 5:2-3)

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## Mediatrrix of All Graces



- Mediator is one who links or reconciles separate or opposing parties
- Jesus Christ is the "one mediator between God and the human race" (1 Tim 2:5)
- Through his sacrificial offering he has become high priest and unique mediator who has gained for us access to God's saving grace for humanity
- Mary is called Mediatrrix in virtue of her cooperation in the saving mission of Christ, who alone is the unique mediator

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## Mediatrix of All Graces (Cont.)



- From the moment she said “yes” to God (Lk 1:38) until Jesus died on the Cross (Lk 2:35; Jn 19:25) Mary’s faith never wavered
- St. Paul says that all Christians are mediators or “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor 5:18-20)
- Those who receive these ambassadors receive Christ: “he who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me” (Jn 13:20; Lk 10:16; Mt 10:40)

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## Mediatrix of All Graces (Cont.)



- Mary’s mediation at the wedding feast of Cana led to the first public miracle and the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry (Jn 2:1-12)
- Mary’s physical mediation brought the unborn Jesus to His unborn cousin, John the Baptist, who was sanctified in Elizabeth’s womb (Lk 1:41)
- Christ is brought to others through Mary’s mediation and her active participation with God’s grace

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## Mediatrix of All Graces (Cont.)



- Jesus is the “Son of Abraham, Son of David” (Mt 1:1)
- As Son of David, Jesus is the King of Israel
- All the kings in Jerusalem had a queen
  - Their mother was queen – not their wife
- The queen mother was shown devotion by all – even the king (1 Kings 2:19)
- “And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Lk 1:43)

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## Mediatrix of All Graces (Cont.)



- The queen mother sits in the king’s presence to make intercession for the people
- At the foot of the Cross Jesus gave Mary to John on behalf of all mankind: “Behold, your mother” (Jn 19:27)
- Since Mary is alive in Christ, she lives to intercede for her children

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## Mary, Our Advocate



- Part of Mary's mediating role in God's plan of salvation includes the providential task of being the Advocate for the People of God
- Mary is our mother - pleading with God on behalf of her children
- Mary mediates the graces of God to humanity
- As our Advocate she also mediates the petitions of the human family back to God
- Her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation

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## Mary, Mother of God



- **Theotokos** – Greek for “the God-bearer”
- Elizabeth calls Mary “mother of my Lord” (Lk 1:43) Lord = God
- Virgin bear a son, name him Emmanuel (Mt 1:23)  
Emmanuel = “God is with us” (Is 7:14)
- Child born will be called holy, the Son of God (Lk 1:35)
- God sent his Son, born of a woman (Gal 4:4)

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## Mary's Assumption into Heaven



- Enoch taken into heaven without dying (Gn 5:24; Hb 11:5)
- Elijah assumed into heaven in a fiery chariot (2 Kg 2:11)
- Many saints who had fallen asleep were raised (Mt 27:52)
- We who are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess 4:17)
- Ark in heaven = woman clothed with the sun (Rev 11:19-12:1)

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## Mary's Assumption (Cont.)



- We shall be instantly changed at the last trumpet (1 Cor 15:52)
- For the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23)
  - Wages of holiness is life
- Feast of the Assumption was already being celebrated in Palestine in the 400s (Ancient account of the life of St. Theodosius)
- Mary was assumed into heaven as a forerunner of the resurrection that all who belong to Christ will experience (see 1 Cor 15:12-23)

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## Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary



- Hail full of grace [highly favored one] the Lord is with you (Lk 1:28)  
[full of grace = absence of sin]
- You have found favor with God (Lk 1:30)
- For with God nothing shall be impossible (Lk 1:37)
- Complete enmity between woman [full of grace] and Satan [full of sin] (Gn 3:15)
- Ark is made of purest gold for God's word (Ex 25:11-21)  
[Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant]

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## Perpetual Virginity of Mary



- Protestant objections to Jesus as an only child:
  - Brothers James, Joseph, Simon & Jude (Mt 13:55-56)
  - Joseph knew her not until she bore first-born (Mt 1:25)
- Mary the mother of James & Joseph (Mt 27:56) is also Mary the wife of Clopas (Jn 19:25)
- "I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Mt 28:20)
- Until I arrive, attend to reading, teaching... (1 Tim 4:13)

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## Perpetual Virginity of Mary (Cont.)



- How can this be, since I do not know man (Lk 1:34)
- Age 12, Jesus evidently only son of Mary (Lk 2:41-51)
- Jesus is “the son of Mary” not “a son of Mary” (Mk 6:3)
- Jesus entrusted Mary to John, not a younger sibling (Jn 19:26)
- Cousins are called “brothers” (in Greek, *adelphoi*) because there is no word for “cousin” in Hebrew or Aramaic

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## Perpetual Virginity of Mary (Cont.)



- Jesus tells Peter to strengthen his brethren in reference to the other apostles, not all of whom were Peter’s biological brothers (see Lk 22:32)
- In the book of Acts, the gathering of Jesus’ brothers was about 120 (see Acts 1:12-15)
- Paul also uses “brethren” and “kinsmen” interchangeably (see Rom 9:3)
- Brethren can refer to those who are not related by blood, such as a friend or ally (Amos 1:9)

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## The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Fathers of the Church



- Mary is truly the Mother of God (*theotokos*)
- Mary conceived as a virgin (*virgo ante partum*)
- Mary was a virgin during the birth (*in partu*)
- Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Christ (*virgo post partum*)
- Mary is the New Eve, the co-operatrix in the mystery of the redemption
- Mary was conceived immaculate, i.e., without original sin

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## Mary and the Fathers of the Church (Cont.)



- “For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary in accord with God’s plan: of the seed of David, it is true, but also of the Holy Spirit.” (Letter to the Ephesians, St. Ignatius of Antioch, ca. 110 A.D.)
- “He was born of a holy Virgin without seed of man, and took flesh without defilement;” (Apology, Aristides of Athens, ca. 140 A.D.)
- “[H]aving become man, as we said, by a Virgin and by the will of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe in Him” (First Apology, St. Justin the Martyr, inter 148-155 A.D.)

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## Mary and the Fathers of the Church (Cont.)



- “It was a virgin who gave birth to Christ; and she would marry once only, after she brought Him forth. The reason for this was that both titles to sanctity might be exhibited in Christ’s parentage, born as He was of a Mother who was both a Virgin and a wife to one husband.” (Monogamy, Tertullian, post 213 A.D.)
- “For Eve, a virgin and undefiled, conceived the word of the serpent, and bore disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary received faith and joy..” (Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, St. Justin the Martyr, ca. 155 A.D.)

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## Summary



- It is clear in the records of primitive Christianity that the first Christians eagerly sought the intercession of Mary and the saints in heaven
- Wrote St. John Chrysostom in the fourth century: "When thou perceivest that God is chastening thee, fly not to His enemies, but to His friends, the martyrs, the saints, and those who were pleasing to Him, and who have great power."
- If the saints have such power with God, how much more his own Mother

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## Question and Answer



Steve Clifford

[stevec@transporter.com](mailto:stevec@transporter.com)

<http://www.transporter.com>

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