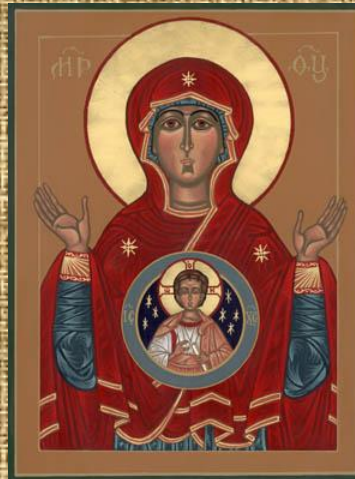


Mary . . . Mother of Jesus, Saint

Part VIIb: Marian Dogmas



First Dogma: Reality of Mary's Motherhood of God

A woman is a man's mother either if she carried him in her womb or if she was the woman contributing half of his genetic matter or both.

Mary was the mother of Jesus in both of these senses; because she not only carried Jesus in her womb but also supplied all of the genetic matter for his human body, since it was through her--not Joseph--that Jesus "was descended from David according to the flesh." (Romans 1:3)



Because Mary is Jesus' mother, it must be concluded that she is also the Mother of God: If Mary is the mother of Jesus, and if Jesus is God, then Mary is the Mother of God. There is no way out of this logical syllogism, the valid form of which has been recognized by classical logicians since before the time of Christ.

Mary is the mother of Jesus.

Jesus is God.

Therefore Mary is the mother of God.

Although Mary is the Mother of God, she is not his mother in the sense that she is older than God or the source of her Son's divinity, for she is neither. Rather, we say that she is the Mother of God in the sense that she carried in her womb a divine person--Jesus Christ, God "in the flesh" (2 John 7, cf. John 1:14)-and in the sense that she contributed the genetic matter to the human form God took in Jesus Christ.



Second Dogma: Mary, Virgin and Ever Virgin

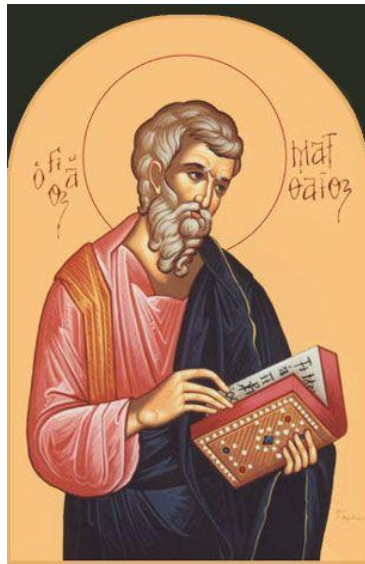
All Christians believe that Mary was a virgin before and at the time of the birth of her son Jesus.

Isaiah 7:14

The **virgin** shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Matthew 1:18-25

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but **before they lived together**, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.”~



For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Behold, **the virgin** shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. **He had no relations with her** until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

Luke 1:26-27

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to **a virgin** betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

Nicene Creed (325), Constantinopolitan Creed (381)

... Who for us men and because of our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and **the Virgin Mary** and became human.



Catholic Christians and many other Christians also believe that Mary remained a virgin for the rest of her life.



Constant faith of the Church

Great teachers of the Church from at least the fourth century spoke of Mary as having remained a virgin throughout her life:

- ✓ **Athanasius (Alexandria, 293 - 373)**
- ✓ **Epiphanius (Palestine, 315? - 403)**
- ✓ **Jerome (Stridon, present day Yugoslavia, 345? - 419)**
- ✓ **Augustine (Numidia, now Algeria, 354 - 430)**
- ✓ **Cyril (Alexandria, 376 - 444)**

and others.



Magisterium of the Church

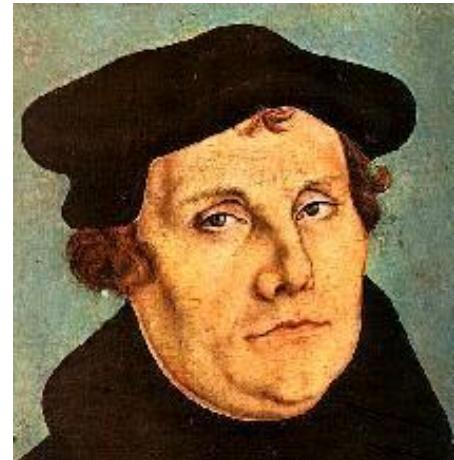
Council of Constantinople II (553 - 554) twice referred to Mary as “ever-virgin”.

Protestant Reformers

The great protestant reformers affirmed their belief in Mary's perpetual virginity:

German reformer **Martin Luther's** (1483-1546) writings often address the subject of Mary: On the Divine Motherhood of Mary, he wrote "In this work whereby she was made the Mother of God, so many and such great good things were given her that no one can grasp them. ... Not only was Mary the mother of him who is born [in Bethlehem], but of him who, before the world, was eternally born of the Father, from a Mother in time and at the same time man and God."

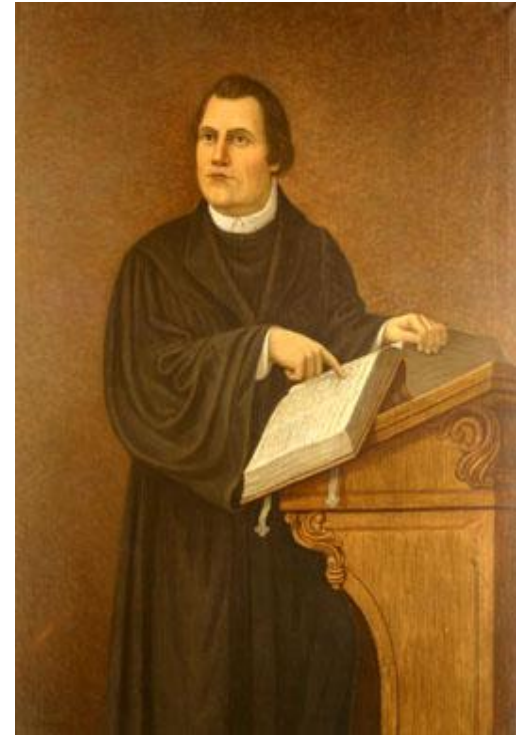
(Weimer's *The Works of Luther*, English translation by Pelikan, Concordia, St. Louis, v. 7, p. 572.)



Luther, true to Catholic tradition, wrote about the Virginity of Mary:

“It is an article of faith that Mary is Mother of the Lord and still a virgin. ... Christ, we believe, came forth from a womb left perfectly intact.”

(Weimer's *The Works of Luther*,
English translation
by Pelikan, Concordia, St. Louis,
v.11, pp. 319-320; v. 6.
p. 510.)



The French reformer **John Calvin** (1509-1564) also held that Mary was the Mother of God.

“It cannot be denied that God in choosing and destining Mary to be the Mother of his Son, granted her the highest honor. ... Elizabeth called Mary Mother of the Lord, because the unity of the person in the two natures of Christ was such that she could have said that the mortal man engendered in the womb of Mary was at the same time the eternal God.” (*Calvini Opera*, Corpus Reformationum, Braunschweig-Berlin, 1863-1900, v. 45, p. 348, 35.)

On the perpetual virginity of Mary, Calvin Routinely brushes aside the difficulties sometimes raised from “first born” and “brothers of the Lord.”

(O'Carroll, M., 1983, *Theotokos*, M Glazier, Inc.: Wilmington, DE, p. 94.)



The Swiss reformer, **Ulrich Zwingli** (1484-1531), wrote, on the divine motherhood of Mary:



“It was given to her what belongs to no creature, that in the flesh she should bring forth the Son of God.”

(*Zwingli Opera*, Corpus Reformatorum, Berlin, 1905, v. 6, I, p. 639.)

On the perpetual virginity of Mary, Zwingli wrote, “I firmly believe that Mary, according to the words of the gospel as a pure Virgin brought forth for us the Son of God and in childbirth and after childbirth forever remained a pure, intact Virgin.”

(*Zwingli Opera*, Corpus Reformatorum, Berlin, 1905, v. 1, p. 424.)

In another place Zwingli professed

“I esteem immensely the Mother of God, the ever chaste, immaculate Virgin Mary ...; Christ ... was born of a most undefiled Virgin.”

(Stakemeier, E. in *De Mariologia et Oecumenismo*, Balic, K., ed., Rome, 1962, p. 456.)

“The more the honor and love for Christ grows among men, the more esteem and honor for Mary grows, for she brought forth for us so great, but so compassionate a Lord and Redeemer.”

(*Zwingli Opera*, Corpus Reformationum, Berlin, 1905, v. 1, pp. 427-428.)

Objections to Continued Virginity

There are some very common objections to the belief that Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus.

The **first objection** considers the “brothers” of Jesus from the Gospels.

Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31; Luke 8:19

While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers (*adelphoi*) appeared outside, wishing to speak with him. (Someone told him, “Your mother and your brothers (*adelphoi*) are standing outside, asking to speak with you.”) But he said in reply to the one who told him, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers (*adelphoi*)?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers (*adelphoi*). For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother (*adelphos*), and sister (*adelpa*), and mother.”

Mark 6:3

Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother (*adelphos*) of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters (*adelphai*) here with us?

First it is important to note that the Bible does *not* say that these “brothers and sisters” of Jesus were children of Mary.

Second, the word for brother (or sister), *adelphos* (*adelpa*) in Greek, denotes a brother or sister, or near kinsman. Aramaic and other semitic languages could not distinguish between a blood brother or sister and a cousin, for example. Hence, John the Baptist, a cousin of Jesus (the son of Elizabeth, cousin of Mary) would be called “a brother (*adelphos*) of Jesus.” In the plural, the word means a community based on identity of origin or life.

Additionally, the word *adelphos* is used for

- ✓ (1) male children of the same parents (Mt 1:2);
- ✓ (2) male descendants of the same parents (Acts 7:23);
- ✓ (3) male children of the same mother (Gal 1:19);
- ✓ (4) people of the same nationality (Acts 3:17);
- ✓ (5) any man, a neighbor (Lk 10:29);
- ✓ (6) persons united by a common interest (Mt 5:47);
- ✓ (7) persons united by a common calling (Rev 22:9);
- ✓ (8) mankind (Mt 25:40);
- ✓ (9) the disciples (Mt 23:8); and
- ✓ (10) believers (Mt 23:8).

(From Vine's *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*,
Thomas Nelson, Publisher.)

A **second objection** to Mary's virginity arises from the use of the word, *heos*, in Matthew's gospel.

Matthew 1:25

He (Joseph) had no relations with her until (*heos*) she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

The Greek and the Semitic use of the word *heos* (until or before) does not imply anything about what happens after the time indicated. In this case, there is no necessary implication that Joseph and Mary had sexual contact or other children after Jesus.

A **third objection** to the perpetual virginity of Mary arises from the use of the word, *prototokos*, translated “first-born” in Luke's gospel.

Luke 2:7

(Mary) gave birth to her firstborn son (*prototokos*). She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger ...

The Greek word *prototokos* is used of Christ as born of Mary and of Christ's relationship to His Father (Col 1:25). As the word does not imply other children of God the Father, neither does it imply other children of Mary. The term “first-born” was a legal term under the Mosaic Law (Ex 6:14) referring to the first male child born to Jewish parents regardless of any other children following or not. Hence when Jesus is called the “first-born” of Mary it does not mean that there were second or third-born children.

Third Dogma: The Immaculate Conception of Mary

The Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is the belief that **God preserved Mary from any inclination to sin**, the inheritance of original sin passed on to all mankind from our first parents, Adam and Eve. The belief of the Immaculate Conception of Mary says nothing about Mary and personal sin (Rom 3:23). Christian belief holds that every human being through faith and through baptism is freed from sin - original sin and personal sin - through the grace of Jesus Christ. Catholic Christians simply claim that Mary was the first one to whom this was done.



The basis for the belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary can be found in the Biblical revelation of holiness and the opposite of that state, sinfulness.

God is revealed as perfect interior holiness.

Isaiah 6:3

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!” they (the Seraphim) cried one to the other.

No sin or anything tainted with sin can stand in the face of the holiness of God. “Enmity” is that **mutual hatred** between Mary and sin, between Christ and sin.

Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you (the serpent, Satan) and the woman (Mary), and between your offspring (minions of Satan) and hers (Jesus); He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.

The salutation of the Angel Gabriel indicates that Mary was exceptionally “highly favored with grace” (Gk.: *charitoo*, used twice in the New Testament; in

- (1) Luke 1:28 for Mary - **before Christ's redemption**; and
- (2) Ephesians 1:6 for Christ's grace to us – **after Christ's redemption**).

Luke 1:28

And coming to her (Mary), he (the angel Gabriel) said, “Hail, favored one (*kecharitomene*);”

Ephesians 1:4-6

(God) chose us in him (Jesus), before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace (*echaritosen*) that he granted us in the beloved.

The constant faith (*paradosis*) of the Church attests to the belief in the special preparation of the holiness of the person of Mary to bear in her body the most holy person of the Son of God.

Post-Apostolic

Implicitly found in the Fathers of the Church in the parallelism between Eve and Mary (Irenaeus, Lyons, 140? - 202?);

Found in the more general terms about Mary: “holy,” “innocent,” “most pure,” “intact,” “immaculate” (Irenaeus, Lyons, 140?-202?; Ephraem, Syria, 306-373; Ambrose, Milan, 373-397);

Explicit language: Mary - free from original sin (Augustine, Hippo, 395-430 to Anselm, Normandy, 1033-1109).



Celebrations

Eastern Church: celebrated a Feast of the Conception of Mary in the **8th to the 9th Century**;

Western Church: celebrated a Feast of the Conception of Mary in the **12th Century**;

A record of the feast in the **11th Century** in Great Britain;
in the **12th Century** in Normandy;

Record in many churches of a Feast of the Conception of Mary in France, Germany, Italy and Spain in the **12th Century** (Bernard, Clairvaux, 1090-1153).



14th Century

Was noted for the opposition to the Immaculate Conception from some of the great doctors of scholasticism. The celebration of the feast was not denied though. The difficulty arose from the meaning of the universal redemption through Christ.

15th Century

Franciscan theologians solved the difficulty. Christ, the most perfect mediator, preserved Mary from original sin by an equally perfect act of healing. Duns Scotus (Scotland, 1266-1308) explained that the Immaculate Conception came through God's application of the grace of Christ beforehand.



From 15th Century

The Feast was universally celebrated; and Christian piety introduced an oath to defend the belief in the Immaculate Conception to be taken not only by Religious, but also by non-Religious and at the Universities (e.g., Paris, 1497; Cologne, 1499; Vienna, 1501).



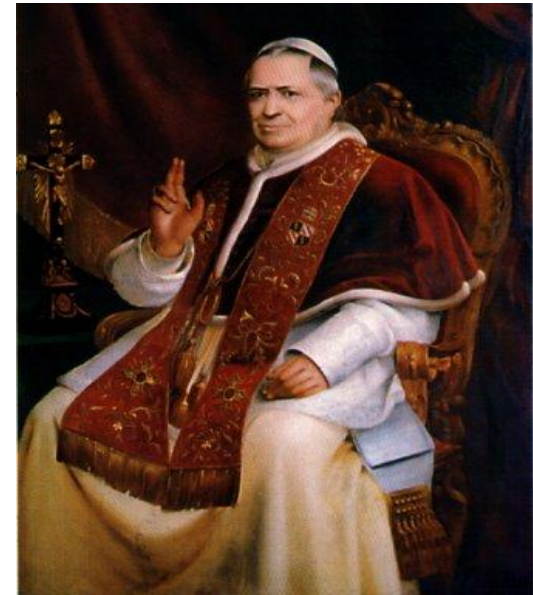
From the 17th Century

The clause “to the shedding of blood” was added to the oath taken to defend the belief in the Immaculate Conception.

1854

Pope Pius IX, infallibly defined, ex cathedra:

“The Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ, the savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.”



- Nonbelievers and enemies of Catholic Christianity often accuse the Church of creating the belief in Mary's freedom from original sin “the Immaculate Conception” in 1854 (as the Church named the belief of Mary's freedom from the wages of sin, death, “the Assumption” in 1950) when the truths were defined. Such an error is equivalent to saying that before Adam named the animals and birds of creation in Genesis 2:19-20 they did not exist.
- Or that before the early Church in her Ecumenical Councils named the belief of three persons in one God “the Trinity” and the belief that there are two natures, human and divine in the person of Jesus Christ “the Incarnation,” the truths did not exist. In naming the content of Divine Revelation after God has revealed it to us, the Church reflects a long Biblical tradition and practice.

Fourth Dogma: The Assumption of Mary



For Catholic Christians, the belief in the Assumption of Mary flows immediately from the belief in her Immaculate Conception. Catholic Christians believe that **if Mary was preserved from sin by the free gift of God, she would not be bound to experience the consequences of sin—death** --in the same way we do. Mary's assumption shows the result of this

freedom from sin--the immediate union of her whole being with her Son Jesus Christ with God at the end of her life.

Catholic Christians believe that the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the end of her earthly life, was assumed both body and soul into heavenly glory.

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all, inasmuch as all sinned ...

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

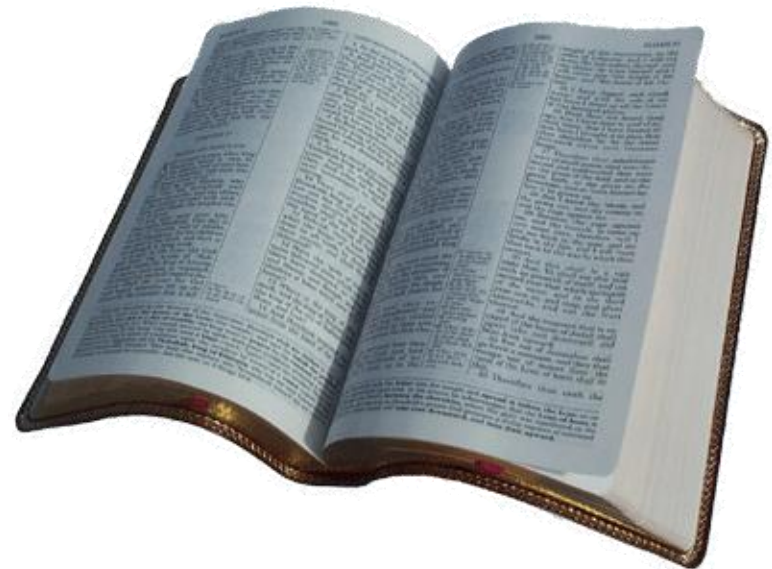
1 Corinthians 15:21-26

For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the first fruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Since sin and death are the fruits of Satan, the freedom of Mary from the original sin of Adam also frees her from the consequences of sin also. Then Mary best fulfills the scripture of Genesis.

Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you (the serpent, Satan) and the woman (Mary), and between your offspring (the minions of Satan) and hers (Christ); He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.



The constant faith (*paradosis*) of the Church affirms the belief in the Assumption of Mary.

From the 5th Century

The Feast of the Assumption of Mary was celebrated in Syria.

5th and 6th Century

The Apocryphal Books were testimony of a certain Christian sense of the abhorrence felt that the body of the Mother of God should lie in a sepulcher.

6th Century

The Feast of the Assumption was celebrated in Jerusalem (and perhaps even in Alexandria).

From the 7th Century

Clear and explicit testimony was given on the Assumption of Mary in the Eastern Church; The same testimony is clear also in the Western Church (Gregory, Tours, 538-594).

Gregory of Tours



9th Century

The Feast of the Assumption was celebrated in Spain.

From the 10th - 12th Century

No dispute whatsoever in the Western Church; there was dispute over the false epistles of Jerome on the subject.

12th Century

The Feast of the Assumption was celebrated in the city of Rome, and in France.

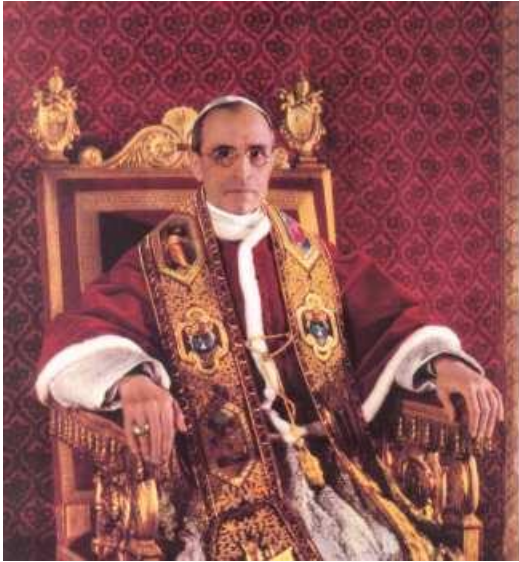
13th Century to the present

Certain and undisputed faith in the Assumption of Mary in the universal Church.



1950

Pope Pius XII, declared infallibly, *ex cathedra*:



Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul to heavenly glory.



(The Magisterium has stayed conspicuously silent regarding whether this process entailed Mary's physical death. The teaching merely states that Mary's body and soul were assumed at the completion of the course of Mary's life.)

End of
Marian Dogmas, Part VIIb

Go to
Mary's Prayer, Apparitions, Part VIIc