

DICTIONARY OF MARY

“Behold Your Mother”

REVISED EXPANDED EDITION

With Complete References to
The Catechism of the Catholic Church



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“It was fitting that she, who had seen her Son upon the Cross and who had thereby received into her heart the sword of sorrow that she had escaped in the act of giving birth to Him, should look upon Him as He sits with the Father. It was fitting that God’s Mother should possess what belongs to her Son, and that she should be honored by every creature as the Mother and as the handmaid of God.”

Hand in hand with this view of Mary comes the belief in her heavenly intercession—which had already been circulating and was exemplified by the prayer *Sub Tuum* (“Under Your Protection”). Mary thus receives the title of Mediatrix from the pen of Saint Andrew of Crete (d. 740).

Hence, with the end of the Patristic Age, so to speak, we find that the place of Mary in the theological, liturgical, and devotional life of the Church has become solidly established both in the East and in the West. The seeds have also been planted for a Mariology that will sprout and one day flourish into the theological science that it is today.

A. Buono

FATIMA (Portugal)

[67]

SEE *Apparitions*

Apparitions after Vatican II

THE famous apparitions of the Virgin Mary to the children of Fatima took place during the First World War, in the summer of 1917. The inhabitants of this tiny village in the diocese of Leiria (Portugal) were mostly poor people, many of them small farmers who went out by day to tend their fields and animals. Children traditionally were assigned the task of herding the sheep.

The three children who received the apparitions had been brought up in an atmosphere of genuine piety: Lucia dos Santos (ten years old) and her two younger cousins, Francisco and Jacinta. Together they tended the sheep and, with Lucy in charge, would often pray the Rosary kneeling in the open. In the summer of 1916 an Angel appeared to them several times and taught them a prayer to the Blessed Trinity.

On Sunday, May 13, 1917, toward noon, a flash of lightning drew the attention of the children, and they saw a brilliant figure appearing over the trees of the Cova da Iria. The “Lady” asked them to pray for the conversion of sinners and an end to the war, and to come back every month, on the 13th.

Further apparitions took place June 13 and July 13. On August 13 the children were prevented by local authorities from going to the Cova da Iria, but they saw the apparition on the 19th. On September 13 the Lady requested recitation of the Rosary for an end to the war. Finally, on October 13, the “Lady” identified herself as “*Our Lady of the Rosary*” and again called for prayer and penitence.

On that day a celestial phenomenon also took place: the sun seemed to tumble from the sky and crash toward earth. The children had been forewarned of it as early as May 13, the first apparition. The large crowd (estimated at 30,000 by reporters) that had gathered around the children saw the phenomenon and came away astounded.

Official recognition of the “visions” that the children had at the Cova da Iria came on October 13, 1930, when the Bishop of Leiria—after long inquiry—authorized the cult of Our Lady of the Rosary at the site. The two younger children had died: Francisco (who saw the apparition but did not hear the words) on April 4, 1919, and his sister Jacinta on February 20, 1920. Lucy, the sole survivor, is a professed nun.

1. The Message of Fatima

The public message of Fatima recalls that of Lourdes. Through the children Mary urges prayer for sinners, recitation of the Rosary, and works of penance. On October 13 she said: “*I have come to exhort the faithful to change their life, to avoid grieving Our Lord by sin, to pray the Rosary. I desire in this place a chapel in my honor. If people mend their ways, the war will soon be over.*”

But Mary also confided several “secrets” to the children, some of which Lucy subsequently transmitted. Presumably there was prediction of another war in the near future and a request for special veneration of the Immaculate Heart of

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

[491-492]

SEE *Feasts of Mary*“*Full of Grace*”**1. Mary, All Holy**

THE Mystery of the Incarnation gave rise, from earliest times, to the Church’s conviction of Mary’s holiness. Chosen by the Father to be the Mother of His Son, and accepting this mission by characterizing herself as the “*servant of the Lord*,” Mary could never have consented to an offense against God. According to an expression favored by Eastern Christians, she is the “all-holy,” *panagia*. The proclamation in the 5th century (Council of Ephesus, 431) of her title “Mother of God” reinforced this persuasion of her exceptional holiness.

The Church, as a consequence, sees in Mary one who never denied God the least sign of love.

Mary was the object of special attention on the part of God, Who prepared her to become the Mother of His Son. From birth she was filled with the Holy Spirit, which accounts for the wonderful display in her life of the theological virtues.

Her faith enabled her to consent without hesitation to the “word of God” sent through the Angel of the Annunciation; her faith was the source of the obedience by which throughout her life she kept in such accord with her Son’s mission as to be, by singular and unique title, His associate in the work of the Redemption. Her hope nothing could undermine, not even the death on Calvary. And her Divine charity, which is universal, embraced and still embraces us in the boundless love she has for her Son Who is her God. Mary was indeed “*full of grace*,” as Gabriel said in greeting her.

“From the first instant of her conception she was adorned with the radiance of an entirely unique holiness” (LG 56).

All holy, Mary obviously was exempt from sin, because sin always means denial that leads away from God, as in the case of the prodigal who strayed from the father’s house. Mary was never away from God. Like the servant of Psalm 123, she kept her eyes on her Lord to do His will at the least sign of it.

2. Immaculate from Conception

In the East the Feast of the Immaculate Conception was celebrated as early as the 7th century. In the West it was adopted several centuries later (Saint Thomas Aquinas attests to its existence in churches of his day: *Summa theologica*, III, q. 27, art. 2, ad 3). The Feast proclaims the total immunization from sin in the soul of the Virgin Mary and, consequently, the exceptional grace bestowed on her. To say that this grace goes back to the moment when Mary began to exist is to prove, as it were, her perfect impeccability, demanded by the holiness that the Church acclaims in the Mother of God.

Indeed, if at sixteen or eighteen this humble maid of Nazareth could declare herself “servant of the Lord” with such apparent confidence, it was because no sin ever touched her from the beginning of her life. In other words, God had filled her with grace in view of what He would one day ask of her.

When theologians of the Middle Ages were prompted by Saint Augustine’s theology to delve into the question of original sin—an hereditary trait transmitted at conception to descendants of Adam—they also pondered over the exact nature of the privilege accorded to Mary. For the Greeks, initiators of the Feast, the expression “Immaculate Conception” meant that Mary, from the first moment of her life, was preserved from sin. Did it also mean that she was spared even original sin?

Latin theology was firm on two things: (a) every human being is infected with original sin and bears its consequences; (b) this hereditary sin is remitted through the merits of Christ, Redeemer of the entire human race.

That Mary was preserved from personal sin, Latin theologians admitted without question, faithful in this to the thought of Saint Augustine: “The honor of Christ forbids the least hesitation on the subject of possible sin by His Mother” (*De natura et gratia*, cited by Saint Thomas, *Summa theologica*, III, q. 27, art. 4). But that Mary should have been the beneficiary of a preventive immunization posed a problem as to the universality of the grace of the Redeemer. Saint Thomas hesitated and, in the end, felt constrained to deny Mary a privilege that

Mysteries of the Rosary

The Five Joyful Mysteries

(For Mondays and Saturdays [except during Lent], and the Sundays from Advent to Lent)



1. The Annunciation
For the love of humility.



2. The Visitation
For love of neighbor.



4. The Presentation
For the virtue of obedience.



3. The Nativity
For the spirit of poverty.



5. The Finding in the Temple
For the virtue of piety.

This servant of Mary wanted to bear witness to his teaching in every way he could, death included. He had an ardent desire “to be ground to dust” for the Reign of the Divine Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate. God heard him to the letter. Maximilian was moved to volunteer to take the place of a father with a family who had been condemned to death by starvation in a bunker at Auschwitz. The offer was accepted, and he died dispatched by lethal injection, August 14, 1941, fifteen days after having been interned. His body was reduced to ashes the following day, the Feast of the Assumption. He was beatified October 17, 1971, by Pope Paul VI and was canonized October 10, 1982, by Pope John Paul II. His feast was assigned to August 14, the anniversary of his death.

H. M. Manteau-Bonamy

SHRINES (NATIONAL)

[971]

THE word shrine is usually applied to a place regarded as especially sacred. The sacred character may stem from many causes—for example, a tomb or relic, a statue or image, or the remembrance of some religious event that took place there. Hence, a shrine usually comes from some impetus of the people; it does not normally originate with the Church but is concerned with some facet of the Church—in the present case, the teaching on Mary.

The prayer expressed at a shrine is spontaneous, simple, in line with what are termed “devotions.” When the original charism wanes, the shrine remains the seat of some memorable event for the people. It becomes part of *their Christian tradition*. This type of tradition thus has great importance in the life of a shrine; its authority is enough to establish the most original and disparate beliefs and practices. Here the Church enters the picture to officiate at the official worship conducted at the shrine—but it is always the popular religiosity that maintains the operation and the life of the shrine.

Except in rare cases of deviations, manifestations of prayer occasioned by shrines provide a necessary complement