



ARCHDIOCESE
OF PORTLAND IN
OREGON



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A M M A R I A

An Advent Retreat Focusing on the Blessed Virgin Mary



SCHEDULE

- 10:00am - Talk I - Mary the Great Figure of Advent
- 10:45am - Break
- 11:00am - Talk II - Mary Model of Discipleship
- Noon - Lunch
- 12:30pm - Liturgical Questions & Answers



“To celebrate Advent means: to become Marian, to enter into that communion with Mary’s ‘Yes,’ which, ever anew, is room for God’s birth, for the ‘fullness of time,’”

- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.



The reason that the Church proposes Mary to us as Christmas nears is because she is the model of how we should be living our advent.



Mary is, in some sense, Advent personified. God the Father had prepared her from the first moment of her life to be a worthy mother of his Son.



Like a faithful daughter of Israel, she had prayed throughout her youth for the coming of the Messiah.



When she was a young girl, she discovered that she was part of God's answer to that prayer, but in a way that would far have exceeded any Hebrew maiden's prayers: not only would the Messiah be her son, but her son would also be God. Her "yes!" to the Archangel Gabriel launched the proximate preparation for the birth of Jesus the Messiah.



MARIALIS CULTUS

The Blessed Virgin in the Revised Roman Liturgy

The reform of the Roman liturgy presupposed a careful restoration of its General Calendar. This Calendar is arranged in such a way as to give fitting prominence to the celebration on appropriate days of the work of salvation. It distributes throughout the year the whole mastery of Christ, from the Incarnation to the expectation of His return in glory, and thus makes it possible in a more organic and closely-knit fashion to include the commemoration of Christ's Mother in the annual cycle of the mysteries of her Son.



MARIALIS CULTUS

The Blessed Virgin in the Revised Roman Liturgy

For example, during Advent there are many liturgical references to Mary besides the Solemnity of December 8, which is a joint celebration of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, of the basic preparation (cf. Is. 11:1, 10) for the coming of the Savior and of the happy beginning of the Church without spot or wrinkle. Such liturgical references are found especially on the days from December 17 to 24, and more particularly on the Sunday before Christmas, which recalls the ancient prophecies concerning the Virgin Mother and the Messiah and includes readings from the Gospel concerning the imminent birth of Christ and His precursor.



Forth Sunday of Lent

A. Joseph's Dream

B. Annunciation

C. Visitation



MARIALIS CULTUS

The Blessed Virgin in the Revised Roman Liturgy

In this way the faithful, living in the liturgy the spirit of Advent, by thinking about the inexpressible love with which the Virgin Mother awaited her Son, are invited to take her as a model and to prepare themselves to meet the Savior who is to come. They must be “vigilant in prayer and joyful in...praise.”



MARIALIS CULTUS

The Blessed Virgin in the Revised Roman Liturgy

We would also remark that the Advent liturgy, by linking the awaiting of the Messiah and the awaiting of the glorious return of Christ with the admirable commemoration of His Mother, presents a happy balance in worship. This balance can be taken as a norm for preventing any tendency (as has happened at times in certain forms of popular piety) to separate devotion to the Blessed Virgin from its necessary point of reference-Christ.



MARIALIS CULTUS

The Blessed Virgin in the Revised Roman Liturgy

It also ensures that this season, as liturgy experts have noted, should be considered as a time particularly suited to devotion to the Mother of the Lord. This is an orientation that we confirm and which we hope to see accepted and followed everywhere.



REDEMPTORIS MATER

It is a fact that when “the fullness of time” was definitively drawing near-the saving advent of Emmanuel- she who was from eternity destined to be his Mother already existed on earth. The fact that she “preceded” the coming of Christ is reflected every year in the liturgy of Advent.



REDEMPTORIS MATER

Therefore, if to that ancient historical expectation of the Savior we compare these years which are bringing us closer to the end of the second Millennium after Christ and to the beginning of the third, it becomes fully comprehensible that in this present period we wish to turn in a special way to her, the one who in the “night” of the Advent expectation began to shine like a true “Morning Star (*Stella Matutina*). For just as this star, together with the “dawn,” precedes the rising of the sun, so Mary from the time of her Immaculate Conception preceded the coming of the Savior, the rising of the “Sun of Justice” in the history of the human race.



DIRECTORY OF POPULAR PIETY

There can be no doubt that the feast of the pure and sinless Conception of the Virgin Mary, which is a fundamental preparation for the Lord's coming into the world, harmonizes perfectly with many of the salient themes of Advent.



DEVOUT IMITATION OF THE VIRTUES OF THE MOST HOLY MARY

1. True devotion to the Most Holy Mary reflects her virtues.
2. “Through Mary to Jesus.”
3. Mary, the new Eve, the dawn of the New Testament.
4. Marian message of invitation to prayer, penance and the fear of God.
5. Christ Himself indicates the Mother as the model of the Church.
6. The history of the Church is always illumined by the edifying presence of Mary.
7. The Mother of the Church, banner of unity, stimulus for perfect Brotherhood among all Christians.



THREE MARIAN ADVENT FEASTS

Immaculate Conception – December 8

Our Lady of Loreto – December 10

Our Lady of Guadalupe – December 12



Ave MARIA

Marian Devotion



SACRED SCRIPTURE

- Luke 1:26-38 Annunciation: (*fiat*: “Let it be done”)
- Luke 1:39-56 Visitation: *Magnificat*
- John 2:1-11 Wedding Feast of Cana (“Do whatever he tells you”)
- Matthew 12:47-50 Mary with “brothers of the Lord”
- John 19:25-27 Mary at the foot of the Cross
- Acts 1:14; 2:1-13 Pentecost
- Revelation 12



ALL MARIAN DOCTRINE IS CHRISTOCENTRIC

Mary is the supremely Christ-centered person, and following her example, staying close to her is the surest way for every person to be truly Christ-centered. Her whole existence is to bring Christ to the world and point us to her Son. For this she was created, for this she was graced from the moment of her conception – and to this mission she freely said yes.

“To go to Jesus through Mary, therefore, is to take the most direct route, the straightest and swiftest path.”



ALL MARIAN DOCTRINE IS CHRISTOCENTRIC

St. John Paul II said it this way:

“No one in the history of the world has been more Christocentric ... than she. And no one has been more like Him, not only with the natural likeness of mother and son, but with the likeness of the Spirit and holiness.”



“FULL OF GRACE” LUKE 1:28

Kecharitomene:

- This is the only biblical instance where an angel addresses someone by a title instead of a personal name.
- The word that Luke uses - κεχαριτωμένη, kecharitomene - is used nowhere else in the Scriptures or in secular Greek literature.
- It appears to have been crafted out of thin air, appearing into the Greek vocabulary as unexpectedly as the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary. It was a word created for that unique and unrepeatable moment in human history.
- What the Angel Gabriel wants to communicate to Mary and to us is in the word kecharitomene is that Mary has a unique name, a unique title, a unique role in sacred history, and so—though perfectly human—she is a unique being in the economy of salvation.



Hapax legomenon

a word or phrase that has only once recorded instance of usage



“FULL OF GRACE” LUKE 1:28

Kecharitomene:

- What the word actually means is grammatically complex - It indicates that God has already “graced” Mary previous to this point, and that she remains full of grace up to this point, so that she is a vessel who “has been” and “is now” filled with divine life, which is grace.
- Because of the unparalleled role that Mary accepts at this turning point in salvation history, the best translation is the most exalted one. For God endowed Mary with an abundance of grace to prepare her for the vocation of divine motherhood and to make her a sterling example of Christian holiness.



“FULL OF GRACE” LUKE 1:28

Kecharitomene:

The word Kecharitomene was like a grain of mustard seed, a tiny seed of Gospel truth, which was sown among the hearts of the faithful and grew into a tree so huge that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches and enjoy the cool of its shade.



MARY AS THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Revelation (11:19)

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm.



MARY AS THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Ark of the Covenant as depicted in the book of Exodus was built at the command of God, when the Lord gave very exact directions on Mount Sinai as to how exactly Moses was to construct the Ark.



MARY AS THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Thereafter, the gold-plated acacia chest was carried by the Levite priests in advance of the people when on the march or before the Israelite army, the host of fighting men.

When the Ark was borne by Levites into the bed of the Jordan River, the waters parted as God had parted the waters of the Red Sea, opening a pathway for the entire Jewish people to pass.



MARY AS THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

The walls of the city of Jericho were shaken to the ground with no more than a shout from the army after the Ark of the Covenant was paraded around them for seven days by Levites accompanied by seven priests sounding seven trumpets of rams' horns.

When carried, the Ark was always hidden under a large veil made of skins and blue cloth, always carefully concealed, even from the eyes of the priests and the Levites who carried it.



WHAT WAS IN THE ARK?

Deuteronomy 10:5 Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and placed the tablets in the ark I had made. There they have remained, as the LORD commanded me.

Hebrews 9:3-4 Behind the second veil was the tabernacle called the Holy of Holies, in which were the gold altar of incense and the ark of the covenant entirely covered with gold. In it were the gold jar containing the manna, the staff of Aaron that had sprouted, and the tablets of the covenant.



DON'T TOUCH THE ARK

2 Samuel 6:6-7 As they reached the threshing floor of Nodan, Uzzah stretched out his hand to the ark of God and steadied it, for the oxen were tipping it. Then the LORD became angry with Uzzah; God struck him on that spot, and he died there in God's presence.



DAVID AND ELIZABETH AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

- 2 Samuel 6:9 David became frightened of the LORD that day, and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?”
- Luke 1:43 And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
- 2 Samuel 6:14-15 Then David came dancing before the LORD with abandon, girt with a linen ephod. David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts of joy and sound of horn.
- Luke 1:41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit
- Linen Ephod is a priestly garment – just like John the Baptist was from a priestly family -
- The Ark was lost around the time of the Babylonian invasion and exile.



ST. AMBROSE

“The prophet David danced before the Ark. Now what else should we say the Ark was but holy Mary? The Ark bore within it the tables of the Testament, but Mary bore the Heir of the same Testament itself. The former contained in it the Law, the latter the Gospel. The one had the voice of God, the other His Word. The Ark, indeed, was radiant within and without with the glitter of gold, but holy Mary shone within and without with the splendor of virginity. The one was adorned with earthly gold, the other with heavenly”

(Serm. xlii. 6, Int. Opp., S. Ambrosii) (Blessed Virgin, p. 77).



FOUR MAJOR MARIAN DOGMAS

What is dogma? “Dogma is by definition nothing other than an interpretation of Scripture” Ratzinger

ITC – “In the dogma of the Church, one is thus concerned with the correct interpretation of the Scriptures.” Dogma then, is the Church’s infallible exegesis of Scripture.”



1. DIVINE MOTHERHOOD (431, COUNCIL OF EPHESUS)

Marian Doctrine is Christocentric – this is really a question about who Jesus is.

Christians from the very beginning had known Mary as the Mother of God. Historical references to the prayers and practice of Christians throughout the world.



2. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (1854 PIUS IX INEFFABILIS DEUS)

Not that Christ was immaculately conceived, nor that Mary was conceived by the Holy Spirit. – God preserved Mary free from all stain of original sin. From the first moment of her conception in the womb of her mother, then, she lived in a state of sanctifying grace won for her by the merits of her son, Jesus. Thus the angel’s greeting to Mary – “Hail, full of grace”.



2. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (1854 PIUS IX INEFFABILIS DEUS)

“I am Kecharitomene” becomes, through proper doctrinal development, “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

Christ takes his human nature from this woman.

Certainly doesn't mean that Mary doesn't need saving: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour”



2. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (1854 PIUS IX INEFFABILIS DEUS)

John Henry Newman: “Does that mean that she did not require the salvation provided by the death of her Son? “Just the contrary. We say that she of all mere children of Adam, is in the truest sense the fruit and purchase of his Passion. He has done for her more than for anyone else. To others he gives grace and regeneration at a point in their earthly existence; to her from the very beginning.”



PREVENIENT GRACE

This is where the word “prevenient” comes in. The Church, relying heavily on Franciscan theology, teaches that God, knowing of his Son’s Death, took its merits and applied its grace in an early, or prevenient way to Mary at the very moment of her conception.



PREVENIENT GRACE

And as the prayer of the solemnity's Mass declares: "...Grant that, as we profess her, on account of your prevenient grace, to be untouched by any stain of sin....," so the Church believes and prays that Mary received a pre-order of Calvary's grace.



PREVENIENT GRACE

Some attempts to clarify prevenient grace or make it more cohesive have included the argument that prevenient grace retains the truth that Mary belongs to a sinful race, and that all salvation comes through Jesus Christ. Later in her life, Mary will pray, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”



PREVENIENT GRACE

While the idea of surrendering the argument of prevenient grace to mystery might seem defeatism or misplaced piety, in summary it's a reflection of life itself. As the believer's own salvation can oftentimes be a mystery even to herself, it shouldn't be a surprise that the salvation of the Mother of God is covered by the same veil of mystery.



3. PERPETUAL VIRGINITY (COUNCIL OF THE LATERAN)

CCC 499 The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary's real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made man. In fact, Christ's birth "did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it." And so the liturgy of the Church celebrates Mary as Aeiparthenos, the "Ever-virgin".



3. PERPETUAL VIRGINITY (COUNCIL OF THE LATERAN)

Distinguish the phrase virgin birth from virginal conception:

- before: “Jesus was conceived solely by the power of the Holy Spirit.”
- during: “Mary’s real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth” - miraculous
- after: Mary remained “ever-virgin” even after the birth of Jesus - that is what our focus is on here.

In the words of St. Augustine: “A Virgin conceiving, a Virgin bearing, a Virgin pregnant, a Virgin bringing forth, a Virgin perpetual.”



3. PERPETUAL VIRGINITY (COUNCIL OF THE LATERAN)

For most of Christian history Mary Perpetual Virginity was a commonplace belief, even well into the Protestant reformation – Luther, Calvin and Zwingli – never questioned the perpetual virginity of Mary.



3. PERPETUAL VIRGINITY (COUNCIL OF THE LATERAN)

But in our hyper-sexualized culture people find it extremely difficult to contemplate the possibility of a life of virginity as anything but one of unbearable deprivation. So regardless of what the bible says, we have a great cultural hostility to virginity.



3. PERPETUAL VIRGINITY (COUNCIL OF THE LATERAN)

- Attitude toward truth – what does it matter, if you like it, then fine believe it, if you don't like it then don't believe it. But we say we believe it because we believe it is true, not because it fits into my belief system, but because my belief system corresponds to reality and objective truth.
- Same as – I don't like a universe in which Jesus said to take up your cross and follow me – in fact I wish he had said – be good to yourself – but he didn't – so I try to make my life correspond to the Truth.
- And the Truth is that Mary was perpetually a Virgin and that has consequences for the world and the way we live and think.
- God doesn't do pointless things – there is no “pointless doctrine” – in every action of the Economy of Salvation the Lord is doing important things.



3. PERPETUAL VIRGINITY (COUNCIL OF THE LATERAN)

Until

The Finding in the Temple

Brothers and Sisters of the Lord

Firstborn Son

Don't Touch the Ark

The Weight of Tradition



4. ASSUMPTION (1950, PAPAL ENCYCLICAL OF PIUS XII, MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS)

Definition: “The Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death.”



4. ASSUMPTION (1950, PAPAL ENCYCLICAL OF PIUS XII, MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS)

One of the difficulties that many people have with this dogma is the fact that nowhere in Sacred Scripture does it explicitly say anything about Mary being assumed into heaven.

So what is the source of the Church's understanding of Mary's glorification in heaven?

We can see images and prophecies of this event in, for example, the book of Revelation, the woman clothed with the sun, with a crown of stars and the moon at her feet.

This vision by St. John points to Mary already glorified in heaven.



4. ASSUMPTION (1950, PAPAL ENCYCLICAL OF PIUS XII, MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS)

Newman with deductive logic:

“If her body were not taken into heaven, where is it?
Why do we not hear of her tomb as being here or there?
Why are pilgrimages not made to it? Why are relics not
producibile of her, as of the saints in general?”



4. ASSUMPTION (1950, PAPAL ENCYCLICAL OF PIUS XII, MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS)

Importance of the Assumption – we were created for heaven – body and soul in heaven – and this ain't it.



4. ASSUMPTION (1950, PAPAL ENCYCLICAL OF PIUS XII, MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS)

Go through the 20th Century which horribly blasphemed the dignity of our destiny. Again and again and again the 20th Century screamed and blared that our final destiny was the oven, the mass graves, the concentration camp, the gas chamber, the muddy trench, the frozen Siberian waste, the anonymity of the cubicle, the facelessness of the production line, the dereliction of the nursery home, the dumpster behind the abortuary.



4. ASSUMPTION (1950, PAPAL ENCYCLICAL OF PIUS XII, MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS)

It taught us the people who can't produce should die; people with defective bodies or brains should die; people who did not look like us should die; children should die; all people should die; mud, blood and death, that we are made to be thrown away – not made in the image of God.



4. ASSUMPTION (1950, PAPAL ENCYCLICAL OF PIUS XII, MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS)

In the middle of this bombardment the Church held up for us the icon of our true destiny. Through Mary the Church made clear what we are made for, our true destiny not just of our spirit – but our bodies as well – they even have a dignity which will be glorified in eternity.



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