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ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR
LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Mary—Mother of God and Church part 1

The following article was written as a 2 part explanation of Marian devotions. The conclusion of this article will be in the next Liturgical Flame.

Whenever the issue of Mary comes up, our non-Catholic brothers and sisters get edgy. Often Catholics are accused of giving to Mary worship due God alone. Non-Catholics are disappointed when they hear the regular catholic defense of Mary based on the catechism. This article will look at the historical development of Marian theology and devotions. What is the implication of Marian feasts for all Christians, and the appropriate devotions in honor of Mary!

The Catholic Church does not worship Mary, but gives the honor due to her as the mother of God. Technically, no theology or doctrine can claim to be Catholic or complete without the Blessed Virgin Mary. Because of her unique place, one cannot celebrate any feast of the Lord without directly or indirectly celebrating Mary; and no one can claim to love Jesus and then reject His mother. Although Mary's name was not mentioned in the Old Testament, it has many references to her. For example, Isaiah talks about her, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

In the New Testament, Mary is found frequently. Mary is hailed by the Angel Gabriel as one favored by God (Luke 1:28-30), Elizabeth calls her "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43). In her own canticle the *Magnificat*, Mary acknowledges that the Mighty One has done great things for me." She was there with the Church when the church was born at Pentecost (Acts 1:14). She was the spokeswoman of the poor of Israel (John 19:25-27). Paul mentioned Mary only once in his letters, in Galatians 4:4; whereas John in Rev. 12:1-17.

Even though the second century of Christianity witnessed lessened interest in Mary, the focus was on the virginity of Mary which helped established the consecrated virginity as a vocation within the church. Mary was presented to the virgins as a model of all virtues. It was not until the fifth century that Marian theology, also known as Mariology began. It was promoted indirectly following the controversy of *Nestorianism*. Nestorius was a Bishop of Constantinople who publicly

denied to Mary the title of "the Mother of God" (*Theotokos*). According to him, Mary was only the "Mother of Christ" (*Christotokos*). This heresy was resolved when the third ecumenical council of the church held at Ephesus (431 AD) ruled that Mary is the Mother of God, and to deny this truth is to deny the divinity of Christ. This was meant not to safeguard the motherhood of Mary, but to safeguard the divinity of Christ. However this decision gave a major boost to Marian devotions in the church.

In the Middle Ages, the most popular Marian piety and devotion centered on the belief that Mary could appease the wrath of God, the stern judge. Mary was seen as one who redeems captives and as refuge of sinners. She was also seen as the Mother of Mercy, and the Star of the Sea who guides Christians safely into the port of heaven. Some theologians opposed Marian doctrines. The most influential ones were St Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas. Bernard called Mary, "the Aqueduct that leads the waters of divine grace down to earth." But despite his belief and devotion to Mary, Bernard and his followers opposed the doctrine of Immaculate Conception calling it a "superstition." Thomas Aquinas says that it would detract from the universality of Christ's redemptive work. St Bonaventure on the other hand disagreed. He ascribed to Mary some role in the redemptive work on the cross because she consented to the sacrifice of her son and paid the price of her compassion – leading to the view of Mary as *Co-Redemptrix* of the human race.

With this, Marian devotion spreads like a wild fire in the 12th century. Christians began to learn The *Hail Mary* along with the Apostles Creed and the Our Father. Saturday became dedicated to Mary as Sunday was to Jesus. Many Marian antiphons were composed. The *Alma Redemptoris Mater* (*Sweet Mother of the Redeemer*), *Regina Celi* (*Queen of heaven*), *Ave Regina Caelorum* (*Hail Queen of Heaven*), *Salve Regina Hail* (*Holy Queen*), *Angelus* and *Litanies* to Mary were among the prayers composed. The Rosary, which began as a substitute for the Psalter (a book of 150 psalms) became popularized as well.

Mary, Mother of God and Church Continued from page 1

Although there were Marian apparitions, visions and special revelations during the earliest centuries of the church, it increased rapidly during this time and became even more elaborate. In the thirteenth century, St Bridget of Sweden says that Mary herself confirmed the doctrine of Immaculate Conception. The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri sums up the Mariology of the Middle Ages by depicting Mary as having influence throughout the entire universe: earth, purgatory, heaven, and even hell, so that by the eve of the Reformation, the central and unique role of Christ as our Redeemer had become obscured. Although most of the protestant reformers were former Catholics, and shared some catholic spirituality, including looking up to Mary as an example of faith and God's goodness, they did not like the idea of asking her for help. In the beginning Protestants retained Marian Feasts, but over time they disappeared from their liturgical calendars.

Catholics who defended Marian devotion took this to the Council of Trent. Famous among them was St. Robert Bellarmine who encouraged Marian devotions and devotions to the Blessed Sacrament as marks of true Catholic identity. With the rise of nationalism in the eighteenth century, catholic theologians adopted a skeptical attitude when it came to Mary, leading mild skepticism to strong opposition. This resulted in the liturgy being stripped of most Marian Feasts. However, popular devotions were confined to Italy, Spain and a few other places that were not touched by the enlightenment.

In the nineteenth Century there was a new wave of enthusiasm for medieval practices and distaste for the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Marian piety increased due to reported apparitions of Mary. In 1846, Mary appeared to a young boy and girl at La Salette, in France. A Shrine was erected there and a missionary congregation of La Salette was founded. In English speaking countries Mary's devotion was popularized by Cardinal John Henry Newman as not just a devotion to the physical mother of Jesus, but also to the spiritual mother of all Christians, the Immaculate Conception. What really is Immaculate Conception? This teaching, which was declared a dogma by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854, means that with the exception of Mary, all human beings are born in a state of sin. Because of her call to be the mother of God and her role in redemption, God exempted her from this condition of alienation and was present to her from the beginning, hence the greeting of the angel, "Hail full of grace" (Lk 1:28). This means that more than anyone else, Mary was united in a most intimate way with God from the very beginning of her existence. God did this for Mary not by her own merit but by reason of divine love. This does not mean that Mary was exempt from the consequences of original sin: death, sickness, suffering and even death which is also part of the human condition.

After the definition of Immaculate Conception, many other Marian apparitions were reported near Lourdes, France where Mary appeared to 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous and identified herself as "the Immaculate Conception." She

ordered her to drink the water from a previously invisible fountain which sprang up as Bernadette scratched the ground. Several physical miracles and cures have been reported by those who have used the spring water. It is now a center of pilgrimage. Another famous apparition took place in 1917 in Fatima, a small Portuguese town, where the Blessed Mother appeared to three farm children. She revealed herself as "the Lady of the Rosary" and urged everyone to pray for world peace. A shrine was erected there and in 1931 an official permission for devotion to Our Lady of the Fatima was granted. There have been other major apparitions and shrines, for example *Guadalupe in Mexico*, *Czestochowa in Poland*, *Montserrat in Spain* and *Kibeho in Rwanda*.

Since we are in the season of advent, one may ask, how does the Church honor Mary during advent? First of all Immaculate Conception which always falls at the beginning of advent, reminds us of the basic preparation for the coming of our Savior, and the beginning of the church without blemish. In fact that is why the readings before Christmas contain prophecies concerning Mary. By thinking about the inexpressible love with which Mary awaited her son, we are invited to take Mary as our model while preparing ourselves to meet her son, the Savior who is to come. Advent is a season suited most for devotions to the Mother of the Lord. Christmas is also a prolonged commemoration of Mary as the Mother of God, for at Christmas the Church adores Jesus and venerates Mary, his glorious mother. At Epiphany, we contemplate Mary, the true Seat of Wisdom and Mother of the King who presents to the wise men their Redeemer. On the Feast of Holy Family, we celebrate Mary the nurturer of that family. On January 1, we celebrate her as the holy Mother of God – the part she played in the history of salvation. And we will continue to honor Mary and celebrate her until the Lord comes again, because she is both the Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

To Be Continued.... By: Father Chi Igboanus

Immaculate Conception Masses

Holy Day of Obligation

Tuesday December 7th:
6:30 p.m.

Wednesday December 8th:
6:30 a.m.; 8:15 a.m.; 12Noon; 5:30 p.m.

Liturgical Ministers Needed
Please sign up on Gathering Table



Feast of St. Nicholas—December 6th

Little is known about St. Nicholas. He lived during the fourth century and was Bishop of the City of Myra in Asia Minor.

The most frequently passed down story regarding St. Nicholas speaks of a poor man who could not feed or clothe his three daughters. Upon hearing of this man's dire situation, Saint Nicholas tossed three bags of gold through the man's window so that he could take care of his daughter's needs.

St. Nicholas had a reputation for secret gift giving and often put coins in shoes of those who left them out for him. Thus modern folklore about Santa Claus, Kris Kringle and Father Christmas are based on the stories of Saint Nicholas and his great love for and generosity

towards children.

Parents and Children, keep your eyes open at this weekend's upcoming masses. St. Nicholas will be making an appearance and will have kindness to share with each and everyone of you.



Shine Jesus Shine!!!!

Church Cleaning is fast approaching us for Advent 2010
Mark your calendars!! Break out your vacuums and rags...

Please come and help us prepare the church for the Advent and Christmas seasons:

December 10th from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

December 11th from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Families Welcome!!

Questions, contact Seri Letak at 895-9533

Scheduling Change—December 25th—5:00 p.m. mass

Father Jim received notice from Archbishop Lucas that there are to be NO Saturday evening vigil Masses on Christmas Day for the feast of the Holy Family.

This announcement came after the completion and mailing of the October through January Liturgical Schedule.

Individuals were scheduled for a Saturday evening 5:00 p.m. mass on December 25th. That mass has now been cancelled.

We hope you will enjoy your family Christmas celebrations.

We will have our normal Christmas morning Masses. The first Mass for the feast of the Holy Family will be on Sunday Morning, December 26th at 7:30 a.m.





St. Stephen the Martyr Parish Confession Schedule

Wednesday, December 22

11:00 am–12 Noon and 3:30 pm–5:00 pm

Thursday, December 23

*11:00 am–12 Noon, 4:00 pm–5:30 pm
and 7:00 pm–8:30 pm*

Christmas Mass Schedule

Friday, December 24

*4:30 pm (Church, Gym, & Dining Room)
6:00 pm and 12 Midnight*

Saturday, December 25

7:30 am, 9:00 am and 10:30 am

Feast of the Holy Family

Sunday, December 26

*No 5:00 pm Saturday Evening Mass
7:30 am, 9:00 am, 10:30 am, 12 Noon and 6:00 pm*

Daily Mass

*Monday, December 27–Friday, December 31
6:30 am only*

Solemnity of Mary

*Saturday, January 1, 2011
9:00 am*



Mark Your Calendar

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Holy Day of Obligation

December 7th: 6:30 p.m.

December 8th: 6:30 a.m.; 8:15 a.m.; 12Noon; 5:30 p.m.

Church cleaning for Advent/Christmas

December 10th: Friday from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

December 11th: Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Christmas Decorating

Tuesday, December 21st, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 22nd, 3:00 p.m.

Christmas Un-Decorating

Monday, January 10th, 2011: 7:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday—Beginning of Lent 2011

March 9th, 2011

Liturgical Schedule Requests

It is time again to send your vacation request for the upcoming liturgical scheduling cycle. The next schedule will be prepared in January for the weekends occurring from February 2011 through May 2011.

This is a very busy liturgical time of year with First Holy Communion, Lent, Easter, Confirmation and Graduations. Please be proactive in sending us your requests so that we can meet your personal family obligations as well.

Please email those requests to Karen Hardy at k.hardy@stephen.org or contact me at 861-4537.

Also, if you are no longer interested in performing your liturgical ministry obligation, this is an excellent opportunity to be removed from the schedule.

If your personal schedule has changed and you would like to request a different mass time, this again is an excellent time to let Karen know of those changes.

Watch for your schedule in the mail close to the end of January, 2011. Please contact k.hardy@stephen.org or 861-4537 for further information

CHRISTMAS DECORATING

It takes many people to turn our beautiful Worship Spaces into wonderful liturgical environments to celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ.

Please consider coming out as an entire family to help us with this need.

We can put all ages to work with the many tasks that we need to accomplish.

Tuesday, December 21st, 7:00 p.m. — Christmas Tree Placement and Lighting of Trees

Wednesday, December 22nd, 3:00 p.m. — Final Christmas Decorating, Poinsettia Placement, Gym and Dining Room Decorating.

Service Hours are available for Middle School and High School Students needing these opportunities.

Please contact Karen Hardy at 861-4537 or k.hardy@stephen.org with any questions.

Therefore, stay
awake!
For you do not know
on which day your
Lord will come.



Understanding the Revised Mass Texts

Beginning with Advent 2011 the Mass Texts are being revised to allow us as Catholics to have a firmer grasp of the meaning of the original texts. These revised translations will have more depth and allow us to hear the value of what we are saying.

The last two Liturgical Flame Newsletters have discussed the Revised Mass Texts. We have already covered the Penitential Rite and the Gloria. These articles can be located at the Stephen.org website under liturgy. Previous editions of the Liturgical Flame are there for your review.

This article will focus on the Nicene Creed, Our Profession of Faith. This is probably the area of the mass that will experience the most changes.

“I believe” changes from “We believe” allowing us as believers to assert our personal faith together with other believers. It is important that “we” as the faithful community say the words “I believe” together with the priest and not after he has begun the Creed.

“Of all things visible and invisible.” This reminds us that God is the maker of not only things that we can see visibly but of those that are in fact invisible, for example the saints and the angels, who are a part of our belief and worship.

“Only Begotten.” This reminds us that Jesus was intentionally begotten and his presence here on earth was part of God’s divine plan.

“Born of the Father before all ages.” This reminds us that Jesus dwelled with God the Father before time began.

“Consubstantial.” This describes the unique relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son. This word derives from the Latin word meaning ‘having the same substance’

“Incarnate” This professes our belief that the Word became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary. It reminds us that he was incarnate in the womb and in that event ‘became man’.

“Suffered death” This replaces the verbs in the current translation “suffered, died.” The new translation provides a better way to express what happened to Jesus.

“In accordance with the scriptures.” The new translation reminds us that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ proclaimed in the New Testament fulfills the Old Testament prophecies.

“Adored” replaces the word “worshipped” as it more closely resembles the Latin translation

“I confess” sounds stronger than ‘acknowledge’ because it involves the heart and not just the head of the believer.

“I look forward to the resurrection.” This allows us as believers to state with confidence the belief in God who gives us faith.

The table on page 7 compares the Current Translation of the Gloria with the New Translation that we will begin utilizing during Advent 2011.

The first two words of the Creed are your only chance to claim your beliefs as your own.



Consubstantial describes the relationship between Jesus and the Father.

Understanding the Revised Mass Texts

Current Translation	New Translation
<p>We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.</p> <p>We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, True God from true God, Begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.</p> <p>For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.</p> <p>We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come Amen.</p>	<p>I believe in one God, the Father almighty maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.</p> <p>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.</p> <p>For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day an accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.</p> <p>And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. And one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead And the life of the world to come. Amen.</p>

Ask the Liturgical Team?

Q: Where does the name “Christmas” come from?

A. The name “Christmas” comes from “the mass of Christ” and dates to an Old English phrase from 1038 “Christ’s Mass”. The gospel’s don’t state that Jesus is born at midnight, but a passage in Wisdom 18:14-15 does indicate midnight: “For when peaceful stillness compassed everything and the night its swift course was half spent, Your all-powerful word from heaven’s royal throne bounded” The first midnight Mass was celebrated in Bethlehem in 380.

Q: When does the Liturgical Christmas Season End?

A. The Liturgical Christmas Season begins on Christmas Eve and continues through the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord. This year the Christ-

mas Season will end on January 9th. As Catholics we don’t begin singing Christmas Carols until the Feast of Christmas.

We challenge you to keep your Christmas Trees up the entire season of Christmas and continue to sing those Christmas Carols all the way up to January 9th.

**ASK THE
LITURGICAL
TEAM?**

**PLEASE SEND
YOUR
QUESTIONS TO
K.HARDY@
STEPHEN.ORG**



St. Stephen the Martyr
Liturgy Office

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**CHECK OUT PAST
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UNDER THE
LITURGY SECTION**