



Lesson 6: The Queen Assumed Into Heaven

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past five sessions, we've undertaken a close study of the place of Mary in the Bible.

We've seen that although there are only a few direct mentions of Jesus' mother, the mentions that are made place her at the center of Christ's life and mission.

We've also seen that the New Testament connects Mary to persons, symbols and things from the Old Testament:

- The virgin Eve,
- Daughter Zion,
- the Ark of the Covenant, and
- Israel's queen mother.

According to the authors of the New Testament, Mary is the fulfillment of those Old Testament icons. **She is:**

- the New Eve,
- the true Daughter Zion,
- the Ark of the New Covenant, and
- Queen Mother to all God's people.

In the centuries since Christ's death and resurrection, the Church has continued to reflect on those images of Mary, in part using the New Testament authors' understanding of her as the basis for its official teachings about Jesus' mother.



Those teachings include: Mary's perpetual virginity, her role as Mother of God, and her Immaculate Conception.

They also include the doctrine of her Assumption and Coronation as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

II. QUEEN OF ALL THINGS

That doctrine will be the focus of the final portion of this study.

Let's start by talking about what the dogma of the Assumption does **not** teach us.

- It does not teach us whether Mary did or did not die before she was assumed into heaven.

The Church has not, and most likely will not, take a position on that question. The Church's greatest theologians have differed on the issue and good arguments can be made on either side.

- What the Church does teach with certainty is that at the end of her time on earth, Mary was taken up—body and soul—into heaven. There, she sits at her son's right hand, as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

Like the Immaculate Conception, Mary's Assumption is not explicitly recorded in Scripture. But, also like the Immaculate Conception, the foundation for the teaching is very much rooted in Scripture.



III. THE ARK RETURNS

- Specifically, the teaching is rooted in John's mysterious and apocalyptic vision recorded in Revelation 12.

Let's revisit that vision now, and see how it informs the Church's teachings about Mary's Assumption and Coronation.

We've already read this passage a couple of times, but just so it's fresh in our minds, let's read it once more.

WI Read Revelation 11:19-12:1

- As you'll recall from previous lessons, the Ark of the Covenant had been missing since around 586 B.C. Around that time, the Babylonians invaded Israel and destroyed the kingdom.

In an attempt to protect the Ark from the invaders, the prophet Jeremiah took it from the temple and hid it on Mt. Nebo (2 Macc. 2:4-8).

- At that time, Jeremiah foretold that the Ark would remain hidden until the time when "God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy."

The prophets believed this restoration would be a great ingathering of Israel's exiles. It would be a "new exodus" that would culminate in all the nations of the world worshipping in the temple of Jerusalem (See 2 Macc 2:18; Is 11:12, 15-16; Jer 31:8-10; Ezek 36:25; 37:21, 38:8-12)



- When prophesying about the return of the Ark, Jeremiah alluded to the first exodus, led by Moses.
- He also alluded to the kingdom and temple, promising that the “glory of the Lord” would be seen in a cloud.

The cloud signaled how God’s presence came to the tabernacle in the time of Moses and how it came to the temple in the time of Solomon (see Ex. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:11).

Read: 1 Kings 10-11

[10] And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD,

[11] so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

Indeed, the return of the Ark was to be a sign that God’s presence had returned to Israel. It would be a sign that he again dwelled with his people.

IV. JOHN’S VISION

In the Book of Revelation we discover that that time has finally come. All the images Jeremiah used are there, connecting the coming of Christ with the promised return of God to his people.

- More specifically, those images are in Revelation 11. There, John’s vision of the Ark deliberately evokes the “theophany” or appearance of God to Moses on Mt. Sinai.



WI Read Exodus 19:16-17

WI Read Revelation 11:15-19

- In Greek, the words from Revelation 11:19 translated as “flashes of lightning...peals of thunder” are the same as those translated as “thunder and lightning” in Exodus.
- Just as Moses heard a “very loud trumpet blast,” John too, hears trumpeting and loud voices in heaven almost immediately before the Ark appears.
- And the “violent hailstorm” John beholds in 11:19 also recalls the “very heavy hail” that God rained down upon Pharaoh in Exodus 9. (v. 18, 23)

V. JOHN’S VISION, CONT.

- The scene in which the Ark reappears also echoes the Old Testament story depicting the fall of Jericho. That episode marked Israel’s entrance into the Promised Land and the end of its years of wandering in the wilderness.
 - Bearing the Ark, the Israelites marched around Jericho for seven days, circling the city seven times on the seventh day, then blowing a trumpet that finally brought the city’s walls down. (see Josh 6:1-20)
 - In Revelation, the trumpets likewise sound like an “earthquake,” signaling the beginning of a new world—the everlasting Kingdom of Jesus (see Rev 11:15, 19)



What John shows us with this imagery is that the time for the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy—and the promise of a **new exodus for Israel**—has come.

- Christ is risen. The Kingdom has been restored. And the Ark can be revealed.

VI. THE ARK REVEALED

- And when the Ark is revealed, it’s revealed as a woman.

Remember, there were no chapter and verse breaks in the original text.

John announces in one sentence that the Ark has appeared in heaven. Then in the very next sentence, he describes what he sees. And what he sees is a woman.

But not just any ordinary woman. Her identity is multi-faceted.

- First, the woman of Revelation 12 is identified as Mary.
 - After all, she is the one “who brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron...[the one] caught up to God and his throne.” (Rev 12:5)

Note too, that John’s choice of words in Revelation 12:1-2, seem to deliberately evoke Isaiah’s prophecy of the Messiah’s birth.



W| Read Isaiah 7:10-11, 14

- So, in both Revelation and Isaiah we read of a sign high in the sky, and of a woman giving birth to a son.

Again, however, Revelation 12 does more than identify Mary as the Ark of the New Covenant. It also uses imagery that reveals her to be Daughter Zion, the Queen-Bride of Israel, and the Mother of the Church.

VII. DAUGHTER ZION

As we noted in Lesson 2, Israel was often portrayed in the Old Testament as a woman, a virgin daughter espoused to God in a covenant relationship likened to marriage.

- The prophets also depicted Daughter Zion, Israel, in travail—suffering in exile and awaiting the birth of her salvation (Micah 4:10; Is 26:17-19).
- Isaiah, even more specifically, said that Daughter Zion, amid roaring sounds from the temple, would give birth to a male child and more children. (Is 66:6-10)

All of this imagery is bound up in Revelation's depiction of the woman, both...

- ...crying out in “her pangs of birth, in anguish for her delivery”...
- And as the mother of the male child and other “offspring.” (12:17)



VIII. QUEEN-BRIDE

In Revelation, John not only uses Old Testament imagery to liken the woman to Daughter Zion, but also to the Queen Bride of Israel.

- He describes her as “clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet.”

That language echoes Isaiah, who, in foretelling Israel’s salvation, said that Israel would be arrayed like a radiant Queen Bride.

- WI Read Isaiah 60:19-20
- WI Read Isaiah 62:3-5
- Solomon’s bride in the Song of Songs is similarly described.
 - “Who is this that comes forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun...” (6:10).

IX. MOTHER CHURCH

John underlines the connection between this woman and Israel’s queen-bride when he tells us that the woman wears a crown of 12 stars.

- Those 12 stars are an obvious symbol of the 12 tribes of Israel.



- Throughout Revelation, however, the 12 tribes are reckoned as a sign of the 12 Apostles, the representatives of the new Israel, the new people of God.
 - That is to say, they are seen as a sign of the Church. (see Rev 7:4-8, 21:12-14)
- So, just as Daughter Zion was a symbol of the chosen people of God—Israel—the woman in Revelation is also a symbol of the Church.
 - St. Paul, in language similar to that of Revelation, called the Church “the Jerusalem above...our mother.” He also spoke of the Church as the Bride of Christ. (Gal 4:2; Eph 5:31-32)
 - Likewise, John referred to the Church as a “Lady.” (2 Jn 1:1, 5)

X. MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

- The woman of Revelation, however, is more than a symbol for the Church, she is also its mother.
- She does, after all, have “offspring” in addition to the one male child to whom she gives birth.
- And those children are described in Revelation as those who “keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus” (Rev 12:17).



XI. THE FIRST GOSPEL

By looking at all the allusions to the Old Testament in Revelation 12, we come to a fuller realization of who the woman “clothed with the sun” is.

But, in order to understand how Revelation 12 forms the basis for the Church’s teachings about the Assumption, there’s still one more aspect of the vision we need to flesh out: The great battle that follows the woman’s appearance.

- As we said in the last session, this battle is a dramatic portrayal of the fulfillment of God’s promise in the Garden of Eden—the so-called proto-evangelium or “first gospel.”
- Remember, in that “first gospel” we have a woman, a serpent, the promise of offspring, and the promise of enmity between both the woman and her offspring and the serpent and its offspring.
- We also have the promise that the woman’s offspring will defeat the serpent’s offspring.

XII. THE FIRST GOSPEL FULFILLED

Now, let’s examine the scene in Revelation.

WI Read Revelation 12:3-17

- Let’s first review our cast of characters in this scene.



- We have a woman...
- We have her son...
- And we have a dragon.

- The dragon John clearly identifies as the ancient serpent of Eden, the Devil who deceived the whole world.

The identity of the serpent clues us in to the identity of the woman.

- If he's the devil, then the woman must be the new Eve, foretold in Genesis...

- And the offspring must be the one who will crush the serpent.

So, all the characters foretold in Genesis 3:15 are there in the battle of Revelation 12

XIII. THE FIRST GOSPEL FULFILLED, CONT.

- Those are the characters. Now for the plot!
 - To start with, we have a serpent lying in wait beneath the woman, preparing to devour her offspring.

 - The action commences with the birth of her son—this becomes the occasion for mortal combat.

 - During the battle, the woman flees into the wilderness—to a place especially prepared for her by God.



- Later, after the devil's defeat, John sees the woman given eagle's wings to fly to a place in the wilderness where she would be nourished by God.

XIV. PREPARING A PLACE IN HEAVEN

John's language there recalls Jesus' words to his Apostles:

W| Read John 14:1-3

- The language of preparing a place is also often used in the New Testament to describe the destiny God has planned for his children:
 - He prepares a place for believers at Christ's right hand (Mt 20:23);
 - And prepares the Kingdom for those he has blessed. (Mt 25:34; 1 Pet 1:5; 1 Cor 2:9)

XV. GOD'S CARE FOR ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS

- John's words further evoke God's care for Israel in the wilderness, where...
 - He **bore his people on eagle's wings** in their trials...(see Ex 19:4; Deut 1:31-33, 32:10-12)
 - And where God's care included nourishing his people with bread from heaven. (Deut 8:2-3)



XVI. CONNECTING THE DOTS

By now, you should be starting to see what all this has to do with the Church's teaching about Mary's Assumption.

In Revelation 12, we learn that:

John has had a vision in which he has seen the Ark of the New Covenant **in heaven**.

In that vision, however, the Ark isn't a sacred chest made of wood and gold. **The Ark is a woman**, made of flesh and blood.

That woman, he tells us, is:

- Daughter Zion, who gives birth to the long-awaited savior, Jesus Christ.
- She is also the New Eve, the woman promised in Genesis 3:15 who would live in total enmity with Satan.
- And she is the Mother of the Church, the spiritual mother of all believers, whose place has been prepared for her by God in heaven. To that place she is taken up on eagle's wings.
- And in that place she is a Royal Queen, who wears a crown of 12 stars and is arrayed like Israel's queens of old.

The picture Revelation paints serves as the biblical outline for the Church's dogma of Mary's Assumption. According to that teaching:



- Mary is Daughter Zion, the woman who gave birth to the world's Savior.
- Because she is the New Eve, she is free from the shadow of sin and its consequences. This includes the long-term separation of soul and body that exists for the rest of us as we wait for the resurrection of the body at the end of time.
- Mary has been taken up into heaven by God to join her son in the place he prepared for her.
- And in that place, as Christ the King's mother, she sits at his right hand, wearing the crown of the Queen Mother.

XVII. OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Of course, we can't finish our discussion of the scriptural evidence of Mary's Assumption without mentioning that there are at least two examples of similar occurrences in the Old Testament.

- Genesis 5:24 tells us that Enoch "walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." The author of Hebrews is very explicit as to his fate. "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had taken him" (Heb 11:5).
- Another example is Elijah who was swept up in a chariot of fire and "went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kgs 2:11).

Many commentators hold that Moses, who appeared with Jesus and Elijah at the Transfiguration, was taken into heaven as well.



If God took these righteous servants right to heaven, is it hard to believe that the Mother of God shared the same fate?

XVIII. MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS

So, that's the biblical foundation for the dogma of Mary's Assumption.

The other piece of the puzzle, so to speak, is the oral witness of the Church. The writings of popes, bishops, theologians, and saints have long testified to her assumption and coronation.

- Now, like the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the dogma of the Assumption was officially declared relatively recently. It happened in 1950 when Pope Pius XII penned the apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus* ("The Most Bountiful God").
- But, also like the Immaculate Conception, the dogma of the Assumption is nothing new.

Since the earliest days of Christianity, the Church has taught that Mary was taken up into heaven at the end of her earthly life. And in his declaration of the dogma, Pius XII cited the ancient witnesses to that truth.



XIX. EARLY WITNESSES

- As far back as the fourth century, early Christians were writing about Mary's Assumption.
- And by the sixth century, not only was the doctrine accepted without question, but there was even a feast day established to commemorate the event.

Although most of the writings we have from the early Church record all the challenges made to the Christian faith, there is no writing contesting Mary's Assumption. This indicates that no one was challenging the doctrine.

- Even more notably, during the period of the Church Fathers, no church or city ever claimed to possess the bones of Jesus' mother.

To understand just how unusual that is, you have to know how passionately churches and cities in the first centuries after Christ vied with one another for possession of the bones of the great apostles and martyrs.

- If Mary's bones had remained on earth, they would have been the grand prize of early Christianity.
- Moreover, the search for her relics and their transfer from one city to another would have been well attested.

But again, the historical record shows not a hint of Marian reliquary (container for relics), aside from her empty tomb. And two cities lay claim to that (Jerusalem and Ephesus).



XX. EARLY WRITINGS

There are writings and homilies from the fourth century onward about the Assumption. Perhaps the best extant preaching on the doctrine, however, comes from the last official Father of the Church, St. John of Damascus, who died in the mid to late eighth century.

- In his homilies on the Assumption, St. John used the very readings that the Church uses today in the Mass for the feast of the Assumption.

He focused in particular on Mary as the Ark of the New Covenant. But he also connected Mary's Assumption to her role as the New Eve, noting how fitting it was that she should be taken up into heaven to be with her son.

In one of those homilies, he said:

- “This day the Eden of the New Adam welcomes its living Paradise, in whom our sentence has been repealed...Eve gave ear to the message of the serpent...and together with Adam was condemned to death and assigned to the world of darkness.
- ...But how could death swallow this truly blessed soul, who humbly gave ear to the Word of God?...How could corruption dare touch the body that had contained life? Such thoughts are abhorrent and totally repugnant in regard to the body and soul of the Mother of God.”



XXI. GIVING MARY HER DUE

In that passage, St. John of Damascus made an argument very similar to the argument made by Pope Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus*: That Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven because it was fitting. It was appropriate.

As we've seen in this study, there is biblical evidence for the belief. There is also ample historic evidence for the belief. And ultimately, **Mary's Assumption** just makes sense.

As Pope Pius XII wrote when declaring the dogma:

- “Hence the revered Mother of God, from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ...immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and...
- ...its consequences, finally obtained, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own son, having overcome death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven...”

XXII. FROM SCRIPTURE TO LITURGY: THE VIGIL

Like with the Immaculate Conception, no matter how new some of this may sound to you, it's really not. You've actually heard this interpretation of these biblical texts many times. In fact, you've heard it every time you've gone to Mass on August 15th or 14th, the Feast of the Assumption and the Vigil of the Assumption.



Presenters' Note: Again, the approved NAB translation for the liturgy is used for slides 21-22.

- The vigil for the feast begins with a Reading from the first Book of Chronicles. (1 Chron 15:3-4, 15-16; 16:1-2) In that passage, David brings "the ark of the Lord to the place which he had prepared for it."
- The Psalm for the vigil likewise celebrates this event: "Advance, O Lord, to your resting place, you and the ark of your majesty." (Ps 132:8)
- The Epistle gives thanks for the victory over death won for us by Christ. (1 Cor 15:54-57)
- And the Gospel celebrates Mary not only as the mother of Christ, but also as one who heard God's word and believed. (Lk 11:27-28)

XXIII. FROM SCRIPTURE TO LITURGY: THE FEAST

- The Mass for the actual feast begins with a reading from Revelation: The vision of the Ark in the heavenly temple. (Rev 11:19-12:1-6, 10)
- The Psalm depicts a queen standing at the king's right hand...(Ps 45)
- And the Epistle envisions Christ the King putting his enemies under his feet—the last enemy being death. (see 1 Cor 15:20-27)



- Finally, the Gospel for the feast is Mary's visit to Elizabeth. (Lk 1:39-56) That passage, as we explored in earlier lessons, depicts Mary as the Ark of the Covenant.

XXIV. QUEEN MOTHER'S ROLE

So the Scriptures, Tradition, and the Church's Liturgy all illuminate the truth about Mary's Assumption into heaven. But what do they tell us about her role as Queen of Heaven and Earth? What do they say she does as the Queen Mother of the Kingdom of God?

Basically, they tell us that as the Queen Mother, she has the same responsibilities that Israel's queen mother had.

- If you think back to Lesson Four, you'll recall that the queen mother was the chief intercessor of the people.

WI Read 1 Kings 2:19

That short passage speaks volumes about the role of the queen mother.

- First, it tells us why the queen mother has come to her son: She has come to place another's request before him.
- The passage also tells us that the king rises from his throne when his mother enters the room.



That's important because other than his mother, the king rises for no one. Everyone else rises when he enters the room. Not vice versa.

- But, not only does the king rise to his mother. He also bows to her.
- And then he seats her at his right hand.

XXV. QUEENLY INTERCESSION

What do those actions of Solomon's tell us about the queen mother?

- First, they tell us that his power and authority are in no way threatened by her.

He bows to her, but he remains the monarch. He sits her at his right hand; he doesn't sit at her right hand.

- It also shows us that he desires to answer her requests. He listens to her.

The same can be said of Jesus and Mary. Think back to the wedding at Cana.

- There, Mary approached her son to intercede for a couple in need.
- She counsels her son about the matter at hand, but she counsels others to obey him, not her, with the words, "Do whatever he tells you."



Although Jesus remains his mother's superior, he still defers to her request and turns water into wine.

XXVI. QUEENLY INTERCESSION, CONT.

What the Queen Mother did in Solomon's day and what Mary did at Cana is what Mary continues to do in heaven.

- She intercedes for her children on earth before her son in heaven.

That work of motherly intercession illuminates the passage in Revelation 12 that describes the woman in anguish. Even though she is in heaven, she is still in labor. Why?

Pope Pius XII answered that question this way:

- "What birth was it? Surely it was the birth of us, who, still in exile, are yet to be generated to the perfect charity of God, and to eternal happiness.
- ...And the birth pains show the love and desire with which the Virgin from heaven above watches over us, and strives with unwearying prayer to bring about the fulfillment of the number of elect."

XXVII. ALWAYS A MOTHER

Always a mother, Mary watches over us, prays for us, and leads us ever closer to her son, Jesus Christ.



- Because of that, you will sometimes hear her referred to as Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, or Advocate, titles that identify her unique role in salvation history.

Non-Catholics usually protest those titles, citing, for example, St. Paul's categorical assertion that Christ is the "one mediator between God and man." (1 Tm 2:5)

So, how do you reconcile those two claims—Christ as the one mediator and Mary's participatory role as well?

- St. Paul gives us some insight into that mystery when he states in 1 Corinthians 3:9 that, "We are God's fellow workers" or co-workers.

If Christ is the one mediator, why does he need co-workers? Well, he doesn't need them. He could get the job done all by himself if that's what he wanted. But he doesn't want that.

What he wants is to raise up mature sons and daughters. The way to do that is by making us his co-workers.

And what do we do as Christ's co-workers? The basics: We live according to his Word. We love others as we love him. And we accept our crosses.

- As St. Paul said in Colossians 1:24: "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church."

If you and I can be Christ's co-workers, helping him in his work of redemption by completing "what is lacking" in his afflictions, just think how much more Mary can help him.



- As his mother, Mary shared in his work in an unparalleled way.
 - From her “yes” to God when he asked her to bear his Son...
 - to all the love and care she showed for him in his lifetime...
 - and to her final acceptance of his self-offering on the cross, Mary partnered with God in the work of our salvation.

Essentially, God willed it so that his Son’s incarnation hinged on the consent of a woman. Could there be a more intimate co-worker than her?

- Likewise, could any human person have suffered more than Mary did at Calvary? Could anyone have made an offering more perfect than her acceptance of her perfect son’s suffering and death? No, of course not.

By accepting God’s plan from first to last, Mary was Christ’s co-worker par excellence. As his co-worker, she helps mediate grace and salvation to the world. And as our mother, she regularly intercedes for us in heaven.

This is why she can be called Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate without taking anything away from her son’s role



XXVIII. LOVING OUR MOTHER

Because Mary has done and continues to do so much for us, we honor and venerate her.

- We celebrate the great work of grace God has done in her life with feasts commemorating her
 - Immaculate Conception,
 - her birth,
 - the Annunciation,
 - her holy motherhood,
 - her Assumption, and more.
- We also praise her for her obedience and holiness through hymns, poems, and beautiful litanies such as the Litany of Our Lady of Loretto.
- We keep her in our minds and hearts as an example of faith, hope, and love by hanging pictures of her on our walls, placing statues of her in our parishes and homes, and wearing scapulars or miraculous medals around our necks.
- And we ask for her intercession by praying prayers such as the Memorare, the “Hail Holy Queen,” and, of course, the Rosary.

XXIX. 31. HAIL MARY

Of all the different ways Catholics love and honor Mary, praying the Rosary is perhaps both the most common and the most important.



Non-Catholics often dismiss the Rosary as a mindless, mechanical recitation of words. But nothing could be further from the truth, if the Rosary is prayed correctly.

First, there is nothing mindless about the Rosary.

- It is a meditation on the life and work of Christ that engages the whole person on at least three levels, with:
 - The sounds of the voice;
 - The feeling of the beads;
 - And the sight of devotional images.

In that way, all those senses can be brought into a spirit of prayer.

- Furthermore, the devotion itself is deeply scriptural. It includes:
 - Prayers such as the “Our Father,” which Christ taught us to pray in the Gospel of Matthew... (Mt 6:9-13)
 - And the “Hail Mary,” a prayer which originated in the words of the Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation—“Hail Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee”—and the words of Mary’s cousin Elizabeth at the Visitation—“Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.” (Lk 1:28, 42)



- The Rosary also requires us to meditate on 20 different mysteries of the Gospel—mysteries from both the life of Christ and the life of Mary.

When we pray the Rosary, we bring our whole selves and most of our senses into prayer. We say the words of Scripture—words of love, trust, devotion, and faith—and we reflect on the mysteries of salvation.

To pray the Rosary is to tell Christ and his mother over and over again how much we love them and how wholly we believe in the truths of the faith.

Praying the Rosary is an act of love, which is why it has been the most beloved devotion of Catholics for hundreds and hundreds of years.

XXX. OUR MOTHER, CONT.

Over the past six sessions, we've seen how different biblical images—including Daughter Zion, the Virgin Eve, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Queen Mother—help us understand who the Blessed Virgin Mary is and what her role in Salvation History has been.

We've also studied the scriptural and historical roots for the four Marian dogmas:

- the Motherhood of God,
- Mary's Perpetual Virginity,
- the Immaculate Conception, and
- Mary's Assumption into Heaven.



- Some non-Catholics would have you believe that those Marian dogmas add up to idol worship—that Catholics have given Mary honors and devotions that belong to God alone.

But that is simply not the case.

- We worship and adore only God.

There is no one above him or before him. He is the author of creation, the author of our beings, and the author of Mary's being as well.

- She is a creature, not a goddess and not our redeemer.
- We do, however, honor and venerate Mary with great love and devotion.

And by now, you should understand why.

- We honor her because she so clearly manifests the grace of God.

In her sinless nature, in her total obedience to God's will, and in her great love for her son, she shows us what is possible with God's grace.

- We also honor her because she reminds us of what we're all called to be—beloved sons and daughters of God perfectly conformed to his will.



- We honor her because of the great part she played in helping bring about Christ's saving work.
- We honor her because of the great part she continues to play in that work, praying and interceding for us in heaven.

XXXI. OUR MOTHER

- Above all, we honor her because she is our mother in faith, given to us by Christ as he hung upon the cross.

“When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home” (Jn 19:26-27).

This scene is but one more piece of evidence that Jesus had no biological brothers or sisters.

- After all, why would Mary go to live with John if she had other children to take care of her?

But on a deeper level, we need to recognize that we are all the beloved disciple. We are all commanded by Christ to take Mary into our homes. And we are all her children. Because of that, she loves us, prays for us, and does all she can to lead us closer to her son.

Her son Jesus obviously loves and honors her.



For us to fail to love and honor the one whom he loves,
would be to fail to love and honor him.

And there is no greater failing than that.

