

# Marian Bible Study



May 6

May 13

May 20

May 27

# Let's start with a prayer

## Sub Tuum Praesidium ("Beneath Your Protection")

We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God;  
Despise not our petitions in our necessities,  
but deliver us always from all dangers,  
O glorious and blessed Virgin.  
Amen.

The prayer is an early form of the *Memorare* that dates to the third century, before the Council of Ephesus declared Mary as the Mother of God.

# Topical Outline



In May, Deacon Doug and I will look at 4 Marian Dogmas:

Divine Motherhood  
Perpetual Virginitv  
Immaculate Conception  
The Assumption

# Doctrines of the Church



∞ What is a doctrine?

It is a body of religious principles of a church.

Doctrine (from Latin: doctrina, meaning "**teaching, instruction**") is teachings or instructions in a belief system. The word origin of instruction in Greek is "catechism".

Ideas developed by a faithful Catholic theologian may represent Catholic theology but that do not make them Catholic doctrines. An example: Limbo was a theological opinion of St. Augustine of Hippo, not an doctrine.

# Doctrines = Teachings



How do we know that a theological opinion is also a doctrine or an official teaching of the Church?

If the Magisterium of the Church affirms it to be an official teaching of the Church.

# What is the Magisterium?



The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the deposit of faith (Scripture and Tradition) has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone, that is, to the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, and to the bishops in communion with him. To this Magisterium, which in the service of the Word of God enjoys the certain charism of truth, belongs also the task of defining dogmas which are formulations of the truths contained in divine Revelation. This authority of the Magisterium also extends to those truths necessarily connected with Revelation.

(CCC 85 – 90, 100 or CCCC 16)

# Is Doctrines = Dogma?



Code of Canon Law 749 Paragraph 3 says that: No doctrine is understood as defined infallibly unless this is manifestly evident.

Doctrines are not necessarily infallible; not all doctrines are dogma.

However, we still have to follow all doctrines of the Church.

Canon Law 752: Although not an assent of faith, a religious submission of the intellect and will must be given to a doctrine which the Supreme Pontiff or the college of bishops declares concerning faith or morals when they exercise the authentic magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim it by definitive act; therefore, the Christian faithful are to take care to avoid those things which do not agree with it.

# How to Weigh Church Teachings



An example: The Church teaches that abortion or euthanasia is a grave sin. *Evangelium Vitae* states that “In the case of an intrinsically unjust law, such as a law permitting abortion or euthanasia, it is therefore never licit to obey it, or to 'take part in a propaganda campaign in favour of such a law or vote for it'”. (#73)

But not all moral issue has the same weight as abortion or euthanasia.



# How to Weigh Church Teachings



Evangelium Vitae also states that “This is the context in which to place the problem of the death penalty. On this matter there is a growing tendency, both in the Church and in civil society, to demand that it be applied in a very limited way or even that it be abolished completely. It is clear that, for these purposes to be achieved, the nature and extent of the punishment must be carefully evaluated and decided upon, and ought not go to the extreme of executing the offender except in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society. Today however, as a result of steady improvements in the organization of the penal system, such cases are very rare, if not practically non-existent. In any event, the principle set forth in the new Catechism of the Catholic Church remains valid: “If bloodless means are sufficient to defend human lives against an aggressor and to protect public order and the safety of persons, public authority must limit itself to such means.” (#56)

We see the difference in language between paragraph #73 and #56.

# How to Weigh Church Teachings



“Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia. For example, if a Catholic were to be at odds with the Holy Father on the application of capital punishment or on the decision to wage war, he would not for that reason be considered unworthy to present himself to receive Holy Communion. While the Church exhorts civil authorities to seek peace, not war, and to exercise discretion and mercy in imposing punishment on criminals, it may still be permissible to take up arms to repel an aggressor or to have recourse to capital punishment. There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not however with regard to abortion and euthanasia.”

Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion: General Principles  
(Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger)

# What is Dogma?



Dogma is doctrines or teaching of the Church that is infallible.

Dogma is a doctrine of the Church that is expressly declared in a document by the Magisterium as truth that is revealed by God, which the Magisterium declared as binding, now and forever.

# What is Dogma?



The Holy Father has to state that he intends to speak *ex cathedra* to invoke infallibility. It was first defined in 1870.

*“We teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman pontiff speaks ex cathedra ... he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals”*  
(Pastor Aeternus). First Vatican Council 1868 – 1870.

# What is Dogma?



The latest two proclamations of Dogmas also have a certain wording:

On Immaculate Conception: “By the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own: We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception ...”  
(Pope Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*)

# What is Dogma?



On Assumption of Mary: “By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God ...” (Pope Pius XII *Munificentissimus Deus*).

# Papal Infallibility



Can. 749 §1. By virtue of his office, the Supreme Pontiff possesses infallibility in teaching when as the supreme pastor and teacher of all the Christian faithful, who strengthens his brothers and sisters in the faith, he proclaims by definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held.

§2. The college of bishops also possesses infallibility in teaching when the bishops gathered together in an ecumenical council exercise the magisterium as teachers and judges of faith and morals who declare for the universal Church that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held definitively; or when dispersed throughout the world but preserving the bond of communion among themselves and with the successor of Peter and teaching authentically together with the Roman Pontiff matters of faith or morals, they agree that a particular proposition is to be held definitively.

# From Opinion to Dogma



- 1) A theologian or theological school proposes a way of understanding the revelation God has given the Church.
- 2) If it deems this a valuable and important contribution to the understanding of divine revelation, the Magisterium may begin to teach this authoritatively, raising it to the level of non-infallible doctrine.
- 3) Particularly if a controversy over the teaching arises at some point in Church history, the Magisterium may choose to settle the matter infallibly by defining the matter.
- 4) The Magisterium may infallibly define the matter with or without defining that it is a divinely revealed truth, but if it does the latter then then it elevates the matter to the level of dogma.



# Divine Motherhood



The dogma of Divine Motherhood was announced by the Church in the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (year 431 AD)

The Council of Ephesus was the third general council of the Church, the first 2 councils are:

1. The First General Council of Nicaea, 325 A.D.
2. The First General Council of Constantinople, 381 A.D.

# The Council of Nicea



Background on the Council of Ephesus.

By the year 325 AD, there are already theological opinions within the Church that are contradicting each other.

For example, a Bishop by the name of Arius believed that Jesus is not co-eternal (did not always exist) and therefore subordinate to the Father. Arianism held that God is not Trinity.

# The Council of Nicea



As a result, the Bishops declared a council were to be held at Nicea in 325 AD, to decide which theological opinions are to be held and which to abandon.

At the council, the Church Fathers (Bishops) declared that Arius theological opinion were to be abandoned or declared heretical.

The Nicene Creed is a product of the Council of Nicea.

# Nicene Creed



I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe 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.

# The Council of Constantinople



But Arianism survived and another general council in 381 AD was convened in Constantinople to reject it.

The goal of the councils of Nicene-Constantinople was the same, to reject Arian heresy.

# Nestorian Heresy



By 431 AD, the Church faced another heresy, the Nestorian heresy.

Nestorian Christology says that two natures (divine and human) in Jesus Christ is a prosopic union, rejecting the concept of a hypostatic union.

Prosopic (from *Prosopon* in Ancient Greek – means mask as was used in Greek theatre, where actors wore masks on stage, in order to reveal their character and emotional state to the audience.)

# Nestorian Heresy



The term 'mask' refers to an analogy of how like an actor, God wears the mask of a human being at the conception of Jesus.

Nestorian Christology believes that Christ are two separate persons, one human and one divine. Nestorianism regards the Word of God associated with itself at the Incarnation a complete, independently existing man. Nestorianism denies the reality of the Incarnation and represents Christ as a God-inspired man rather than as God-made-man.

# Nestorian Heresy



Nestorian Christology believes that Christ was a God bearing man, but not God the divine.

A remote control drone is a good modern analogy of the concept of Nestorius. It is as if God took over a human being (Christ) and remotely controlled him to do God's will.

A big implication on the meaning of Christ's suffering.



# Nestorian Heresy



As the result of Nestorius' Christology, Nestorius' Mariology must also reject the title Theotokos ("God-bearer") for Mary, because of the distinction between divine and human aspects of Christ.

The Nestorian claims that Mary did not give birth to the unified *person* of Jesus Christ attempts to separate Christ's human nature from his divine nature, creating two *separate and distinct* persons—one divine and one human—united in a loose affiliation.

Nestorius wrote to St. Cyril at the Council of Ephesus: "the holy virgin is more accurately termed mother of Christ than mother of God".

# Hypostatic Union



The Church teaches that in Christ's one person subsists in two natures, the Divine and the human.

St Cyril wrote to Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus: "The Incarnation is a two different natures come together to form a unity, and from both arose one Christ, one Son. It was not as though the distinctness of the natures was destroyed by the union, but divinity and humanity together made perfect for us one Lord and one Christ, together wonderfully and mysteriously combining to form a unity."

# The Council of Ephesus



The Council of Ephesus declared that Mary is the Mother of God as a dogma in the first of the 12 declarations of the Council.

1. If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is God in truth, and therefore that the holy virgin is the mother of God (for she bore in a fleshly way the Word of God become flesh, let him be **anathema**.

# The Council of Ephesus



Formula of Union of the Council:

“We confess, then, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect man, of a rational soul and a body, begotten before all ages from the Father in his Godhead, the same in the last days, for us and for our salvation, born of Mary the Virgin according to his humanity, one and the same consubstantial with the Father in Godhead and consubstantial with us in humanity, for a union of two natures took place. Therefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. According to this understanding of the unconfused union, we confess the holy Virgin to be the Mother of God because God the Word took flesh and became man and from his very conception united to himself the temple he took from her”.

# Why is calling Mary the Mother of God important?



Calling Mary “Mother of God” affirms a truth that must be declared in order to protect an essential truth about Christ.

Mary did not give Jesus his divine nature or his divine personhood—those He possessed from all eternity as the only begotten Son of the Father. But she also didn't just give Him His flesh: She gave birth to the whole person. She gave birth to Jesus Christ, both God and man. That is what we confess every time we say the Apostles or Nicene Creed.

Q&A

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# Regina Caeli / Queen of Heaven

V. Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

R. For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.

V. Has risen, as he said, alleluia.

R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

V. Let us pray.

O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Resources:

1. Catechism of the Catholic Church.  
([https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM))
2. Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.  
([https://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium\\_ccc/documents/archive\\_2005\\_compendium-ccc\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html))
3. Code of Canon Law. ([https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic\\_lib3-cann747-755\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib3-cann747-755_en.html))
4. Papal Encyclicals Online. (<https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils>)
5. National Catholic Register - What are Dogma, Doctrine and Theology.  
(<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/what-are-dogma-doctrine-and-theology>)
6. Catholic Answers - How to Weigh Church Teachings.  
(<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/how-to-weigh-church-teachings>)
7. Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion: General Principles  
(<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/worthiness-to-receive-holy-communion-general-principles-2153>)
8. Encyclopedia Britannica  
(<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nestorius>)
9. Why Do We Call Mary the Mother of God? (<https://stpaulcenter.com/why-do-we-call-mary-the-mother-of-god-2/>)