

Session 9



MARY AND THE SAINTS

Nil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

August 1, 2013

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Writers: Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers, Nicole Skorka, Jeffrey Wright

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of Symbolon:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

Formed.org

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9972037-0-7



MARY AND THE SAINTS: Our Spiritual Mother and the Communion of Saints

INTRODUCTION

For Catholics, Mary and the saints are important parts of daily life and devotion. Yet many outside the Church are confused as to what Catholics really believe. Do they worship Mary? Do they pray to the saints? And how does the saving action of Jesus fit into all of this?

Underlying everything the Church teaches about Mary and the saints is Jesus. The attention Catholics give to them does not distract from God, but enables us to draw into a more intimate communion with him, for just as fellowship with our Christian brothers and sisters on earth draws us closer to Jesus, so our communion with Mary and the saints draws us closer to him as well. Devotion to Mary and the saints is one way that Catholics come to know and love God and more deeply appreciate the great gift of salvation.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **The four basic dogmas the Church teaches about Mary**
- **How Jesus is at the heart of everything Catholics believe about Mary**
- **Why Catholics don't worship Mary and the saints, but honor them as models for all Christians**
- **What Catholics really mean when they say they "pray to" Mary and the saints**
- **Why Mary is the "Queen of Heaven"**
- **The mysteries of the rosary**
- **What role Mary should play in the life of every believer**

OPENING PRAYER

Hail Mary, full of grace.
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

*“Never be afraid of loving
the Blessed Virgin too
much. You can never love
her more than Jesus did.”
—St. Maximilian Kolbe*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do Catholics honor the saints?
Why are the saints' prayers for us so powerful?
2. What are the four Catholic dogmas about Mary?
What do they teach us about Jesus and the Father's plan of salvation?
3. How is Jesus's command to St. John to "Behold your mother" a challenge to us in our own prayer life and journey with Jesus?

CALL TO CONVERSION

After spending a few moments in prayer, write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

#1 Reflect on the following words from St. Louis Marie de Montfort:

“We never give more honor to Jesus than when we honor his Mother, and we honor her simply and solely to honor him all the more perfectly. We go to her only as a way leading to the goal we seek—Jesus, her Son.”

Consider the four dogmas you learned about Mary in this week’s lesson. How can accepting those teachings bring you to a deeper understanding of Jesus and his love for you?

#2 At the end of the video, the presenter talked about who Mary is and what it means to develop a relationship with her. Take a few minutes to ask yourself what your relationship with Mary is like, and what you would like it to be. Ask God in prayer what keeps you from developing a closer relationship with Mary.

#3 There are many prayers and devotions in the Church dedicated to Mary, with the most prominent one being the Rosary. Take some time this week either to pray a Rosary if you are familiar with the prayer, or to learn more about how to pray a Rosary. As you do, reflect on how each mystery of the Rosary points us to Christ through Mary.



CLOSING PRAYER

The Memorare

Remember,
O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help
or sought thy intercession,
was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence,
we fly unto thee,
O Virgin of virgins our Mother;
to thee do we come,
before thee we stand,
sinful and sorrowful;
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not our petitions,
but in thy mercy hear and answer us.
Amen.



SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Here is a verse from the Bible that you can memorize and reflect on this week to help you apply today's session to your daily life:



“My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.” —Luke 1:47-48

BEHOLD, YOUR MOTHER

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For Further Reading:

For more in-depth reading about Mary and the Saints, see the following *Catechism* passages:

- *Immaculate Conception: CCC 490–493*
- *Mother of God: CCC 495*
- *Perpetual Virginity: CCC 496–500*
- *Assumption: CCC 966*
- *Devotion to Mary: CCC 971*

Other Resources:

- *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 12*
- *Apostolic Letter on the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Rosarium Virginis Mariae by John Paul II*
- *The New Rosary in Scripture: Biblical Insights for Praying the 20 Mysteries by Edward Sri*
- *Butler's Lives of the Saints by Alban Butler*
- *Hail, Holy Queen: The Mother of God in the Word of God by Scott Hahn*
- *365 Saints by Woodeene Koenig-Bricker*