



# *Marian Doctrine and Devotion*

## Chapter 20



Marian devotions are those prayers and acts undertaken to honor Mary and with the intent of seeking her intercession with her Son, Jesus, and his Father. Devotion to the Virgin Mary does not, however, amount to worship - which is reserved for God alone. Catholics view Mary as subordinate to Christ, but uniquely so, in that she is seen as above all other creatures. In 787 the Second Council of Nicaea affirmed a three-level hierarchy of *latría*, *hyperdulía* and *dulía* that applies to God, the Virgin Mary and then to the other saints.

The Roman Catholic Church holds many teachings associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary. Four of these specific doctrines have been raised to the level of dogma, meaning in technical terms that they must be held by the faithful as essential to participation as Roman Catholics. The four Marian dogmas have been defined by the magisterium over the course of Christian history, using both Scripture and Sacred Tradition, the two elements of the one source of Revelation, as evidence for these proclamations. These four dogmas are: Mary the Mother of God, Perpetual Virginity of Mary, The Immaculate Conception, and The Assumption of Mary into Heaven. The twentieth-century has seen a significant drive to establish a fifth and final Dogma-Mary as Co-Redemptrix.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

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### Vatican II and Marian Devotion:

We saw at the start the reports of the media that the Council had voted to downgrade her. By now we see how far from the truth that was. Actually, the Council went farther theologically—immediate cooperation in the objective redemption—and wrote more extensively—all of chapter 8 of Lumen Gentium (LG)—than all previous councils combined. It would deserve then to be called the Marian Council.

We just saw the excellent theological base it built for a total Marian consecration. In addition, it made a broad recommendation (LG 67): "This most holy Synod deliberately teaches this Catholic doctrine [the previous parts of chapter 8, which we have seen] and it admonishes all the sons of the Church that they should generously cultivate devotion, especially liturgical devotion, towards the Blessed Virgin, and that they should consider of great importance the practices and exercises of piety toward her that were recommended by the Magisterium of the Church over the course of centuries."

This means, that in spite of all the talk, about updating everything in Marian devotion that the Church has ever recommended, it is still "of great importance." Of course that includes the Rosary, and Marian consecration, among other things.

Pope Paul VI, on the floor of the Council, at the close of the third session, publicly renewed the consecration of the Church and the world to her Immaculate Heart. He said that his thoughts turned to the whole world, "which our venerated predecessor Pius XII... not without inspiration from on high, solemnly consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary... .. O Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, to you we recommend the entire Church." (AAS 56, 1964. 1017). When he visited Fatima on May 13, 1967, the same Pope recalled this "consecration which we ourselves have renewed on November 21, 1964—we exhort all the sons of the Church to renew personally their consecration to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of the Church, and to bring alive this most noble act of veneration through a life ever more in accord with the divine will and in a spirit of filial service and of devout imitation of their heavenly Queen." (AAS 59. 475).

Paul VI also, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis cultus*, of Feb. 2, 1974, AAS 66 # 56 wrote : "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is an intrinsic element of Christian worship." Leo XIII said (*Augustissimae Virginis*, Sept 12, 1897. ASS 30. 133): "... so great is the favor she enjoys with God, that he who when in need of help would not run to her would want to fly without wings."

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Do Catholics worship her? Protestants often claim that. But let us examine the command of Our Lord (Mt 7:1): "Judge Not".

We distinguish two things:

a) The objective rating of an action, e.g. , murder is gravely sinful. We can say this independently of the interior dispositions of anyone who does it. If I see someone put a gun to another's head and pull the trigger, it is not "judging" to say I saw murder.

b) The interior dispositions of the sinner—here we must not judge, for at least in general, we cannot know much of anything of the interior. It is to this that the Gospel command applies.

Therefore: as to Marian devotion:

a) The forms it takes, asking her to intercede with her Son, lighting candles etc—these are not in themselves worship. What of the eternal flame at the grave of JFK?

b) The interior attitudes of Catholics: to insist they mean it to be worship, i. e, the kind of honor due to God alone—this is simply rash judgment, and is forbidden by "Judge not." So those who make the charge are guilty of objective sin, and of violating the Gospel. To insist they know our interior dispositions when we tell them otherwise, is not only rash judgment, but perversity.

Jesus obeyed the fourth commandment to honor Father and Mother, for He went down to Nazareth and was even subject to them. If He honored her, we can and should imitate Him. God Himself has honored her so greatly. For anyone to say: I reject her, will not honor her, would be an affront to His judgment.

End

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