



# *Marian Doctrine and Devotion*

## Chapter 3



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 *latria*, *hyperdulia* and *dulia* 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.

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## Chapter 3

### The Plan in Prophecy:

We notice that all the following prophecies involve Mary inasmuch as she is the Mother of the Promised One, inseparably joined with Him even in the eternal decrees.

**Genesis 3:15: The Protoevangelium: Revised Standard Version:** "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed: she shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise her heel."

**Targum Onkelos:** "And enmity I will put between you and the woman, and between your son and her son. He shall be recalling what you did to him in the beginning; and you shall be observing him in the end."

**Targum Pseudo-Jonathan:** "And I will place enmity between you and the woman, and between the offspring of your sons and the offspring of her sons. And it will happen:

before they were written down, but in either way she would have heard them. As to the question of taking Hebrew *almah* to mean virgin, as the Septuagint did—she would have no problem, for she was seeing it fulfilled in herself.

End

when the sons of the woman will observe the precepts of the Torah, they will aim to strike you on the head; and when they will forsake the precepts of the Torah, you will aim to bite them in the heel. But for them there will be a remedy; whereas for you there will be no remedy. And they will be ready to make a crushing with the heel in the days of King Messiah."

**Fragmentary Targum:** "And it shall be: when the sons of the woman observe the Torah and fulfill the commandments, they will aim to strike you on the head and kill you; and when the sons of the woman will forsake the precepts of the Torah and will not keep the commandments, you will aim to bite them in their heel and harm them. However there will be a remedy for the sons of the woman, but for you, O serpent, there will be no remedy. Still, behold, they will appease one another in the final end of days, in the days of the King Messiah."

**Targum Neofiti:** "And I will put enmities between you and the woman, and between your sons and her sons. And it will happen: when her sons keep the Law and put into practice the commandments, they will aim at you and smite you on the head and kill you; but when they forsake the commandments of the Law, you will aim at and wound him on his heel and make him ill. For her son, however, there will be a remedy, but for you, serpent, there will be no remedy. They will make peace in the future in the day of King Messiah."

**Pius IX: Ineffabilis Deus, 1854:** "The Fathers and ecclesiastical writers... in commenting on the words, 'I will put enmity between you and the woman, and your seed and her seed' have taught that by this utterance there was clearly and openly foretold [praemonstratum] the merciful Redeemer of the human race... and that His Most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was designated [designatam], and at the same time, that the enmity of both against the devil was remarkably expressed. Wherefore, just as Christ the Mediator of God and man, having assumed human nature, destroying the handwriting of the decree that was against us, in triumph affixed it to the cross, so the most holy Virgin, joined with him in a most close and indissoluble bond, together with Him and through Him exercising eternal enmity against the poisonous serpent, and most fully triumphing over him, crushed his head with her immaculate foot."

**Pius XII, Munificentissimus Deus, 1950:** "We must remember especially that since the 2nd century, the Virgin Mary has been presented by the holy Fathers as the New Eve, who, although subject to the New Adam, was most closely associated with Him in that struggle against the infernal enemy which, as foretold in the protoevangelium [Gen 3:15], was to result in that most complete victory over sin and death, which are always tied together in the writings of the Apostles of the Gentiles. Wherefore, just as the glorious resurrection of Christ was an essential part and final sign of this victory, so also that struggle which was common to the Blessed Virgin and

her Son, had to be concluded with the glorification of her virginal body... "

**Pius XII, Fulgens corona, 1953:** "... the foundation of this doctrine [Immaculate Conception ] is seen in the very Sacred Scripture in which God... after the wretched fall of Adam, addressed the... serpent in these words, which not a few of the Holy Fathers and Doctors and most approved interpreters refer to the Virgin Mother of God: 'I will put enmity... ' But if at any time, the Blessed Virgin Mary, defiled in her conception with the hereditary stain of sin, had been devoid of divine grace, then at least, even though for a very brief moment of time, there would not have been that eternal enmity between her and the serpent—of which early tradition makes mention up to the solemn definition of the Immaculate Conception—but instead there would have been a certain subjection."

**Vatican II, Lumen gentium §55:** "These primeval documents, as they are read in the Church, and are understood in the light of later and full revelation, gradually bring more clearly to light the figure of the woman, the Mother of the Redeemer. She, in this light, is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise, given to our first parents who had fallen into sin, of victory over the serpent (cf. Gen 3, 15)...."

**Vatican II, Dei Verbum §3:** "After their fall, by promising redemption, he lifted them into hope of salvation (cf. Gen 3, 15)... ."

**John Paul II, Mulieris dignitatem, Aug. 15, 1988:** §3 "It is significant that St. Paul does not call the Mother of Christ by her own name Mary, but calls her woman: This coincides with the words of the Protoevangelium in the Book of Genesis (cf. 3:15). She is that 'woman' who is present in the central salvific event which marks the 'fullness of time'. Ibid. #11: "At the same time it [Genesis] contains the first foretelling of victory over evil, over sin. This is proved by the words which we read in Genesis 3:15, usually called the Protoevangelium... . It is significant that the foretelling of the Redeemer contained in these words refers to 'the woman'... . From this vantage point the two female figures Eve and Mary are joined under the name of woman... . §30: It is also to be noted how the same woman who attains the position of a biblical 'exemplar' also appears within the eschatological perspective of the world and of humanity given in the Book of Revelation. She is 'a woman clothed with the sun, ' ... . Is not the Bible trying to tell us that it is precisely in the 'woman'—Eve—Mary—that history witnesses a dramatic struggle for every human being, the struggle for his or her fundamental yes or no to God and God's eternal plan for humanity." Cf. also John Paul II, Redemptoris mater §24: "It is significant that, as he speaks to his mother from the Cross, he calls her 'woman' and says to her: "Woman, behold your son! Moreover, he had addressed her by the same term at Cana too (cf. Jn 2:4)... . she... remains in that mystery as 'the woman' spoken of by the Book of Genesis (3:15) at the beginning and by the Apocalypse (12:1) at the end of the history of salvation." Cf. ibid §47.

comment on Zechariah 12. 10). He was to be the precursor of the Messiah son of David, the herald of the true Messianic Age. In addition, the Targum picture seems to reflect hopes for Bar Kokhba, leader of the final Jewish revolt against Rome, who was thought to be the Messiah. (Cf. Levey, pp. 66-67.)

**Zechariah 12, 10:** "They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son."

**Comment:** Most commentators are so disturbed by the shift from "me" to "him" that they emend the text. Thus RSV changes "me" to "him" St. John's Gospel in 19. 37 explicitly takes it to refer to Jesus: "And another Scripture says: They will look on him whom their have pierced." Similarly, Apocalypse 1. 7 understands the line to refer to Christ: "Behold he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, everyone who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him." In Mt. 26. 31 Jesus quotes Zech. 12. 7 to refer to himself: "I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed." On the cross, Jesus quoted Psalm 22,"My God, why have you forsaken me" not to express a belief the Father had left him (though the Father did will His death), but to show that that Psalm spoke of Him. In verse 17: "They have pierced my hands and my feet".

The problem is that "me" seems to be spoken by God Himself", while the "him" seems another person. David Baron, The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah, Kriegel, Grand Rapids, 1971, pp. 438-48 contends that the "me" does express Christ, as divine while the "him" indicates the difference of persons within God.

So these added texts from Zechariah, Apocalypse, and Psalm 22 do help to clarify the prophecy of the suffering Servant in Isaiah 53.

**Conclusion from the prophecies:** Our Lady is foretold at times directly, at times inasmuch as she is always sharing the lot of Jesus. She would have understood these things readily, for when the Archangel told her that her Son would reign over the house of Jacob forever, that clearly meant the Messiah. For a very common belief at the time held that the Messiah would do that, and no one else. Seeing that He would be the Messiah would at once open up the prophecies to her. The Targums, composed without seeing them fulfilled in Christ, and written before the period when interest in the Messiah disappeared (the period from after the fall of Jerusalem, until the completion of the Babylonian Talmud: cf. Jacob Neusner's study Messiah in Context, and pp. 7-8 above for data on the Targums in general. Now if the Jews, whom the OT so often calls stiff-necked could understand this much, she who was full of grace must have all the more easily seen the truth, even if she never heard a Targum. But she must have heard them in the synagogues. It is likely that there was a period of oral transmission



Further, both Is. 7. 14 and 9. 5-6 are part of the section on Immanuel, which runs from 6. 1 to 12. 6. Hence it is generally accepted that the child in 7. 14 is the same as the child in 9. 5-6. This means, of course, that since 9. 5-6 is marked by the Targum as messianic, so is 7. 14 implicitly messianic. It was only the actions of the Jews against Christians that caused them to stop saying 7. 14 was Messianic.

Who, then, is the child of 7. 14? Some of the characteristics of 9. 5-6 are too grand for Hezekiah. Further the use of the definite article before *almah* in 7. 14 seems to point to someone special, not just to the wife of Achaz. On the other hand, a sign to come seven centuries later would hardly be a sign for Achaz. We conclude: this is a case of multiple fulfillment of prophecy: it refers to both Hezekiah and Christ.

Still further, the Septuagint uses *parthenos* to render Hebrew *almah* (which means a young woman, of the right age for marriage, who at least should be a virgin. *Betulah* is the more precise word for virgin). Rabbi Laurentin (*The Truth of Christmas Beyond the Myths*, Petersham, 1986, p. 412), claims the Septuagint sometimes uses *parthenos* loosely. But this is not true. Actually, there are only two places in the OT where the Septuagint translates *almah* by *parthenos*. One is in Genesis 24. 43, where the context shows the girl is a virgin. The other is Is. 7. 14. There are several other places where *almah* is at least likely to be a virgin. But the Septuagint is so careful that it uses instead of *parthenos*, a more general word, *neanis* in those cases. Laurentin in the English version appeals also to Genesis 34. 3 (in the French he had appealed to 34. 4, which does not have the word *parthenos* at all). But the case is at least unclear, since 34. 3 is likely to be an instance of concentric ring narration, common in Hebrew. And as we have just said, in all clear instances the Septuagint is very precise in its use of *parthenos*, at times more precise than the Hebrew (as shown by the context).

**Isaiah 52. 13-53. 12:** The Hebrew OT here predicts a meek, suffering Servant. The Targum changes it to an arrogant conqueror. Here are some comparisons:

**Hebrew v. 3:** "He was despised and rejected by men." Targum: "Then the glory of all kingdoms will be despised and cease."

**Hebrew v. 5:** "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." Targum: "He will rebuild the sanctuary, polluted because of our sins, [and] handed over because of our iniquities."

**Hebrew v. 7:** He was "like a lamb being led to the slaughter". Targum: "He will hand over the mighty ones of the peoples, like a lamb to the slaughter."

**Comment:** Good Jewish scholars today admit that the Targum distorts the Hebrew. (Cf. H. J. Schoeps, Paul, Westminster, 1961, p. 129, and Jacob Neusner, *Messiah in Context*, p. 190, and Samson Levey, *op. cit.* p. 152, note 10). One reason was that a suffering and dying Messiah was unacceptable. The belief was widespread that the Messiah would live forever. Hence at times they even spoke of two Messiahs. In the Talmud, *Sukkah* 52a we read of a suffering and slain Messiah son of Joseph (in

**Comments:** 1. Three out of four of the Targums (ancient Aramaic versions, plus interpretations, of the Old Testament) show us that Genesis 3. 15 is in some way messianic, even though their interpretation is clouded by allegory. Yet they do speak of a victory, even though the same Hebrew verb *schuf* is used twice, for striking at head, and at heel. Some reject the evidence of Targums, saying we do not know the date of their composition. We reply (as to date of the messianic prophecy passages in the Targums): 1) These interpretations were written by ancient Jews without hindsight, i.e., without seeing them fulfilled in Christ, for they hated Him. 2) Jacob Neusner, a great Jewish scholar of today, from University of South Florida, in *Messiah in Context* reviewed every Jewish document from after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonian Talmud inclusive (completed 500—600 AD). Up to, but not including that Talmud, he found no interest in the Messiah. In the Talmud, interest returns, but the only major point they mention is that he was to be from the line of David. Now it is hardly conceivable that the Targum interpretations, so numerous, on so many points, could have been written in a period when there was no interest in the Messiah. (On the Targums, see also: Samson Levey, *The Messiah. An Aramaic Interpretation.*) Some scholars, e. g. R. Le Deaut (in: *The Message of the New Testament and the Aramaic Bible (Targum)*, Rome, Biblical Institute Press, 1982, pp. 4-5, put the beginning of the Targums in the occasion when Ezra read from the book, and translated, giving the sense: Nehemiah 8. 8.

2. Pius IX for the most part does not speak in his own name, he merely cites approved authors. But Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus* speaks without reservation about the struggle being foretold in the Protoevangelium, and he even uses the fact that this "struggle" was in "common" to Jesus and Mary as a part of the theological reasoning by which he finds the Assumption in the sources of revelation. Further, in *Fulgens corona* he says Genesis 3:15 is the foundation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception: therefore, it must be contained in that text in some way. Vatican II uses cf. before Gen. 3. 15, at the request of about a dozen Bishops. Cf. Charles M. Miller, "As it is Written". The use of Old Testament References in the Documents of Vatican Council II, (Marianist Center, St. Louis, 1973, pp. 49-60). But even so, that reserve seems to apply only to the understanding of the human author—we do not know how much he foresaw. But it does say that the Church now, with the help of later and full revelation, does see the figure of the woman gradually coming to light. Here Vatican II seems to use the notion that the chief Author, the Holy Spirit, could intend more than the human author saw. It is really obvious that He could do so. (This is true even though in *Dei Verbum* §12 where the Council had an opening to say explicitly that there could be such a fuller sense, yet it did not say so. On this cf. H. Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Herder & Herder, 1969, III, p. 220). Still further, John Paul II, without any reservation, speaks of the Protoevangelium many times as referring to Mary—sample quotes given above. We note that in

Mulieris dignitatem he speaks of the text as referring to both Eve and Mary. This is quite plausible, a case of multiple fulfillment of prophecy. On this latter pattern, cf. W. Most, *Free From All Error*, chapter 5.

The conclusion from all these sources is that it is quite clear that at least as understood in the light of later revelation, Gen 3. 15 is Marian/Messianic, probably in the typical sense, which is a true sense of Scripture: Eve is a type of Mary (for LG §55 uses the word "foreshadowed").

**Isaiah 9. 6:** RSV: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty-God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace,'"

**Targum Jonathan:** "A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and his name has been called from of old Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, He who lives forever, Messiah in whose day peace shall increase for us."

**Comment:** 1. The sense of the Targum is disputed. We have rendered it substantially as does J. F. Stenning (*The Targum of Isaiah*, Oxford, 1949. ) However Samson Levey (*The Messiah. An Aramaic Interpretation*, (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, 1974) turns the sentence structure around so as to read: "his name has been called Messiah... by the Mighty God." The difference hinges on the Aramaic words *min qedem* which can mean either "by" or "from of old". As to the words "Mighty God" which the New American Bible renders God-hero—that version is not defensible, for the Hebrew *El gibbor* in the Old Testament always means only Mighty God, never God-hero. Levey makes a similar change in sentence structure for the Hebrew: "the Mighty God... has called his name 'Prince of Peace'." That translation raises the question of which terms belong to whom.

2. Naturally, the ancient Jews, with their emphasis on monotheism, would have difficulty calling the Messiah God. Yet there are some other Old Testament passages that could indicate divinity of the Messiah.

**Psalm 80. 15-18:** God is asked to visit this vine "and the stock which your right hand has planted... Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, upon the son of man whom you have strengthened for yourself." Levey here,

**Comments:** "It would appear that the Targum takes the Messiah to be the son of God, which is much too anthropomorphic and Christological to be acceptable in Jewish exegesis." He notes that neither the earlier nor the later rabbis took up this interpretation by the Targum. Rather, he says that some of the later rabbis "carefully steer clear of any messianic interpretation" by the Targum here. (In passing: we note that here the Messiah is called Son of Man!)

**Psalm 45. 7-8:** "Your throne, O God, is ever and ever... God your God has anointed you with the oil of rejoicing." Even though some think the Psalm was occasioned by a royal marriage, the Targum saw it as messianic. Levey even remarks that the Hebrew word for King Melech in verses 2, 6, 12, 15, and 16 is understood as God.

**Ezekiel 34. 11:** God Himself said: "For thus says the Lord God: Behold I, I will search out my sheep and seek them out." We notice the repeated "I", which seems to stress the thought that God Himself would come. But in verse 23 of the same chapter: "I will set one shepherd over them, my servant David." The Targum Jonathan does treat the psalm as messianic. Of course this is far from clear, but there could be an implication that the Messiah, called here "my servant David" would be God Himself.

**Jeremiah 23. 3:** God said: "and I myself shall gather the remnant of the my sheep from all the lands to which I have driven them." But in verse 5: "I will raise up for David a righteous branch." That word "branch" is often taken by the Targums to indicate the Messiah. Hence Targum Jonathan on verse 5 does use "a righteous Messiah" instead of "branch". Then, surprisingly, in verse 6: "And this is the name which He shall call him: the Lord is our righteousness." In the later Midrash, *Lamentations Rabbah* 1. 51 we read: "What is the name of the King Messiah? Rabbi Abba B. Kahana said: "His name is 'the Lord'". In the Hebrew text of that passage, the word for Lord is Yahweh! It is astounding to find a later rabbi doing such a thing. (cf. Levey, op. cit, p. 70).

**Jeremiah 30. 11:** "For I am with you—oracle of Yahweh—to save you." The Targum clearly calls this passage Messianic. Levey notices this, and comments: "in v. 11 the apparent anthropomorphism of God being with Israel, in the physical sense is softened by the use of the word *Memra*"—a puzzling word in the Targums, which seems in general to refer to the complex interplay between God's constancy and the fickleness of His people—but at times, it seems to mean God Himself. (On *Memra* cf. Bruce Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum*, Glazier, 1987, p. lvi). Isaiah 7. 14: "Behold, the young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

The Targum does not identify this passage as messianic. However, Jacob Neusner, (*Messiah in Context* p. 173) quotes the great Hillel, one of the chief teachers at the time of Christ, as saying that Hezekiah, son of Achaz (to whom Isaiah spoke) had been the Messiah. So he considered the text messianic. But then Neusner adds (p. 190): "Since Christian critics of Judaism claimed that the prophetic promises... had all been kept in the times of ancient Israel, so that Israel now awaited nothing at all, it was important to reject the claim that Hezekiah had been the Messiah". Thus the Talmud, cited by Neusner, p. 173, quotes Rabbi Joseph as denying that Hezekiah had been the Messiah.