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## Our Mediator

Many people mistakenly believe the Catholic Church teaches Mary is on par with Jesus in the role of mediating between God and man. Some of this confusion comes when non-Catholics hear The Hail Mary prayer: *"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus, Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."*

The Catholic Catechism says, "Mary, ever associated with her Son, prays for us with Him. She is not alone in this. The whole community of the blessed in heaven imitate Christ in continuing their concern for us. As we pray for one another upon earth and for the souls in purgatory, so our brothers and sisters in heaven intercede for us. We are united with all of them by the intimate bonds of Christian love. But Mary, our spiritual mother, has an altogether exceptional role in this. Among those redeemed by her Son, her intercessory power is by far the most extensive and effective" (*The Teaching Of Christ*, pp. 228-229).

The Bible teaches there is "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). This passage not only rules out Mary as a mediator, but also all of the other Catholic "saints." You will also note the Bible never calls Mary our "spiritual mother" nor mentions a place known as purgatory.

## Assumed Into Heaven

The Catholic Church teaches that after Mary ended her earthly life, she was taken up into heaven in body as well as in soul. This doctrine was "defined" by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

You might wonder where the Bible teaches such a doctrine as this. Knowing that no verse in the Bible even hints at this doctrine, Keating, in his chapter on Marian Beliefs, says, "fundamentalists ask, where is the proof from Scripture? Strictly, there is none... The mere fact that the Church teaches the doctrine of the Assumption as something definitely true is a guarantee that it is true" (p. 275).

Keating is willing to reject the Bible and accept the word of the same people who brought us the Crusades and the Inquisition.

In Luke 11:27-28 we read, "a woman from the crowd called out, 'Blest is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!' 'Rather' He replied, 'blest are they who hear the word of God and keep it'" (New American Bible). This woman had the same idea that Catholics have today. The reply of Jesus cuts at the heart of Mariolatry. While not denying that Mary was blessed in being His mother, our Lord insists that more blessed are those who "hear the word of God and keep it." □

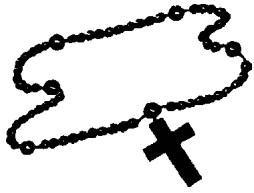
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"And having come in, the angel said to her, Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women" (Luke 1:28)

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# Myths About Mary





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What attitude should Christians have towards Mary, the mother of Jesus? Should we worship her? There is no question Mary was honored by being selected to bring the Son of God into this world. The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and said, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women" (Luke 1:28). In view of the confusion about Mary, I believe it would be good for us to explore a few of the *myths about Mary*.

## Immaculate Conception

Many people confuse the phrase "immaculate conception" with "virgin birth." These words do not refer to the same thing. Karl Keating, a Catholic apologist, explains it like this: "The Immaculate Conception means that Mary, whose conception was brought about the normal way, was conceived in the womb of her mother without the stain of original sin. The essence of original sin consists in the lack of sanctifying grace. Mary was preserved from this defect; from the first instant of her existence she was in the state of sanctifying grace" (*Catholicism And Fundamentalism*, p. 270).

In a booklet distributed by The Knights of Columbus there is a section on the fall of man. The book speaks of inherited sin and attempts to explain how the "defects" of Adam were "passed on to his children as a man may pass certain qualities by heredity. First of these

defects was, of course, the original sin. Adam's children (and we are all Adam's children) were born without grace. And all inherited other evils as well..." (*The Apostles' Creed*, page 10).

The Bible never speaks of "inherited sin." Instead, it teaches "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (Ezek. 18:20).

Mary did not inherit any sin from her parents. But, no one ever inherits the sins of others. Mary did commit sin. We know this because she needed a Savior. She said, "my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior" (Luke 1:47). You can not save that which is not lost!

## Perpetual Virginity

Catholics also insist that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life, even after her marriage to Joseph. Keating asserts that "A careful look at the New Testament shows Mary kept her vow and never had any children other than Jesus" (p. 284). This statement makes me wonder if Keating has ever read the Catholic Bible, for it says Mary did have other children! "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't Mary known to be his mother and James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas his brothers? Aren't his sisters our neighbors?" (Matt. 13:55, NAB).

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Keating also says, "It is traditional, at the conclusion of the (wedding) ceremony, for the bride to take a bouquet to a side altar and lay it at the feet of a statue of the Virgin, at the same time praying that she might emulate Mary as a wife and a mother" (p. 259). Not many men would want their wives to "emulate Mary as a wife," if the Catholic claim of her perpetual virginity is true.

The apostle Paul tells us, "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Corinthians 7:2-5).

"If Mary was married to Joseph and Joseph to Mary in *appearance* only, then they were recreant to each other and to the ordinance of God which made them one. How a Roman Catholic, to whom marriage is a sacrament, can entertain such a notion is an unfathomable mystery. The fact that Mary was miraculously the mother of the Messiah has nothing to do with the question of her privilege and obligation in the holiest of human relationships. Back of this unwholesome dogma are two utterly false ideas: that the marriage relationship is incompatible with holy living, and that Mary is not to be considered a human being under ordinary obligations of human life" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, p. 2003).

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