

**THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL AND
SUBSEQUENT PAPAL DOCUMENTS:
ANNOTATED QUOTATIONS**
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**THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE TEACHING OF VATICAN II
CHAPTER 8 OF *LUMEN GENTIUM*, ARTS. 52-69**

Historical Context

When Pope John XXIII convoked the Council (1959), he invited the bishops and theological faculties to submit topics for discussion. Many Council fathers were active in the Marian movement which reached its peak in the 1950's; 570 of them, plus three university faculties, asked for consideration of Marian topics, in particular, Mary's role as Mediatrix. The preparatory theological commission (1960) planned to develop four *schemata*. Marian doctrine was first placed in the *schema* on the deposit of faith and then moved to that on the Church. The initial text, composed by Charles Balic, OFM, went through five drafts before it was submitted to the Theological Commission (1962). That Commission voted to make the *schema* a separate document and expanded it to clarify the section on mediation. This revision, "Mary Mother of God and Mother of Men," was then submitted to the Central Commission. Some of its members had reservations about the title "Mediatrix," but none objected to the title "Mother of the Church" or to its presentation as an independent *schema*.

This text was presented to the Council fathers towards the end of the 1st session (1962), but they did not take it up for discussion at that time, choosing instead to hear comments on the *schema* on the Church. Written submissions on the text were made and a revised draft presented at the beginning of the 2nd session (1963). Seven Fathers asked that the *schema* be integrated into the text of *De Ecclesia*.¹ Others opposed this. It was decided that the reasons for and against an independent Marian document would be presented in the aula, by Cardinals Santos and König respectively.² On October 29, the fathers voted (1114 in favor, 1074 against) to integrate the *schema* into the Constitution on the Church. This narrow margin alerted them to the extreme delicacy of the questions involved.

¹ At this time, *De Ecclesia* had five chapters: the Mystery of the Church, People of God, Hierarchical Constitution, Laity, Call to Holiness. With the addition of chapter 7 on the Pilgrim Church (and the Communion of Saints), it became easier to envision incorporating Marian doctrine in this document.

² Cf. *Acta Synodalia*, Vol. II, Periodus II, Pars III [1972], 338-42; 42-45. Frederick Jelly presents careful summaries of each speech in *Marian Studies* XXXVII, pp. 51-59.

The speeches by Cardinals Santos and König reflected, among other things, two different approaches to Marian doctrine often characterized as “Christotypical” and “ecclesiotypical.” The first approach prefers to regard Mary as one drawn into the divine plan as the Mother of God who is uniquely associated with her Son’s work of salvation, even to the point of sharing in a certain way his functions (e.g., Mediatrix). The second approach prefers to view Mary as a fellow-believer, one of the redeemed, therefore a member of Christ’s Body, the Church. The former celebrates Mary’s uniqueness and closeness to Christ; the latter, her solidarity with ordinary Christians and her role as a type of the Church and example for the faithful. The former is “privilege-centered” and the latter “sharing-oriented.”³ In fact, the Christotypical approach was “in possession” among dogmatic theologians in the Roman schools, whereas the ecclesiotypical was just beginning to gain ground.⁴ Whereas the former was greatly influenced by recent papal encyclicals, the ecclesiotypical approach reflected the impact of the biblical, patristic, and liturgical renewals and represented the fruit of new ecclesiological, ecumenical, and salvation-history perspectives. In many respects, the work of the Council was to re-root the doctrine of the encyclicals in the sources and to recast it in their language.⁵

The redrafting was confided to a committee on which both views were represented; the committee then received texts from groups of bishops, individual fathers, and the experts. The Doctrinal Commission approved the new draft

After submitting it to close scrutiny so as to forestall further division on the Council floor in the 3rd session.

This is the only chapter of *Lumen gentium* to include sub-headings and the only comprehensive treatment of Marian doctrine in a conciliar text. It has a preface (arts. 52-54); three sections: The Role of the Blessed Virgin in the Economy of Salvation (arts. 55-59), The Blessed Virgin and the Church (arts. 60-65), and The Cult of the Blessed Virgin in the Church (arts. 66-67); and a conclusion, Mary, Sign of Sure Hope and Comfort for God’s Pilgrim People (arts. 68-69).

Debate focused on the second section (which contained most of the new material), and in particular on Mary’s mediation, membership in the Church, and motherhood of the Church. Those who came to the Council with the hope of proclaiming Mary “Mediatrix” were determined to include this title, while others wanted to remain silent for theological and ecumenical reasons. Some favored the view that Mary is a *member* of the Church who went before us on our pilgrimage of faith.⁶ Others, however, wished to insist that Mary is not only a *member* of the Church, but also, as Mother of the “Head,” in some fashion its “cause”—and thus “Mother of the Church.” The Pope had used this title of Mary on the Council floor, and many approved it. But many other

³ Ibid., 73.

⁴ According to Charles W. Neumann, this was developed among French Mariologists (Cf. *Marian Studies* XXXVII, p. 101) and represented on the drafting committee by Gerard Philips.

⁵ René Laurentin, *La Vierge au concile*, pp. 56-74.

⁶ In the end, this is mentioned only once (art. 53), and Mary is called “the pre-eminent and entirely singular member of the Church.”

fathers regarded the title as novel and highly ambiguous.⁷ Some fathers wanted to place the chapter after the first one, “the Mystery of the Church” in order to position Mary as an agent in the mystery of salvation, not only a beneficiary of God’s gifts. The principal changes⁸ in this edition were: (1) mention that Mary is regarded by the Church as a “most loving mother”; (2) an explanation of Mary’s motherhood of the faithful in the order of grace; and (3) the addition of the titles “Advocate,” “Helper,” and “Benefactress” to the affirmation that Mary is “invoked” in the Church as “Mediatrice”.

On October 29, 1964—exactly one year after the first vote had divided the assembly—the Council fathers approved the text by a large majority. Emendations were accepted, and the text as a whole was passed by a vote of 2096 to 23 on November 18, 1964. The biblical presentation of Mary’s vocation, with respect first to Christ and then to the Church, succeeded in reconciling the interests of both “parties.” The second section set forth in a new synthesis Mary’s effective influence (in the events of salvation and today) and her exemplary influence (icon of the Church as Mother and Virgin, and model of faith and charity for believers) in the life of the Church. The third section explained the foundations of the Marian cult, and established limits for piety, preaching, and theology.⁹

Notes on Sections and Articles Pertinent to the ARCIC Study

A. The Immaculate Conception

Article 53. “*Redeemed in a loftier way in view of the merits of her Son* and joined to Him by an intimate and unbreakable bond, [Mary] is endowed with the supreme role and dignity of being the Mother of God’s Son, and so the favorite daughter of the Father as well as the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit.”

The dogma is recalled only indirectly, but by opening with the word “redeemed,” the Council clearly states that Mary needed redemption, that it was accomplished in a singular way, and that God redeemed her not apart from the merits of Christ’s Cross but in view of them. The sentence, which specifies Mary’s relation to the three divine Persons, implies that this grace was bestowed on Mary in virtue of her unique role in the plan of salvation.

Article 56. The “Father of mercies willed that the consent of the predestined mother should precede the incarnation . . . [so it is not surprising that] among the holy Fathers, the usage prevailed according to which they called the Mother of God *completely holy and immune from all stain of sin*, as though fashioned and formed by the Holy Spirit into a new creature. (5) Enriched by the splendors of a totally singular sanctity *from the first*

⁷ The Council fathers chose not to adopt this title, but Paul VI awarded it to Mary in an address at the end of the 3rd session (AAS 1964, 37).

⁸ See Frederick Jelly, *Marian Studies* XXXVII, pp. 67-68.

⁹ Laurentin, *La Vierge*, pp. 78-81.

instant of her conception, the Virgin of Nazareth is, by the command of God, saluted by the Angel of the annunciation as ‘full of grace’...”

First, appeal is made to the ancient Eastern tradition of Mary’s “all-holiness” by reference to the Greek Fathers Germanus of Constantinople, Anastasius of Antioch, Andrew of Crete, and Sophronius of Jerusalem. The texts cited in note 5 praise Mary as “unspotted” or “spotless,” “lacking in all blame,” “immaculate,” and “holy.” Next, the Western tradition which specifies that she was “enriched” by this “singular sanctity” from the first instant of her conception is recalled. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception arose from the faithful’s conviction that God would and could establish and preserve Mary in his grace, and so equip her to respond to her vocation “with a full heart and *hindered by no sin*.”

B. The Immaculate Conception and The Glorious Assumption

Article 59. “Finally, the Immaculate Virgin, *preserved immune from all stain of original sin* (12), *having completed the course of earthly life, was assumed to heavenly glory in body and soul* (13), and was exalted by the Lord as Queen of the universe, so that she might be more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords (Cf. Apoc 19:16) and *victor over death and sin*. (14)”

This final article in the biblical presentation of Mary’s “pilgrimage of faith” (art. 58) recounts her presence in the apostolic community at Pentecost and then her assumption into heaven. Mary’s Assumption is affirmed, virtually word for word, from the dogmatic declaration of *Munificentissimus Deus* (n. 13). The original *schema* added a reference to her death, but the fathers of the Council refused to decide any questions traditionally left open.

The text links Mary’s Assumption to her Immaculate Conception, for she is called “the Immaculate Virgin,” and (n. 12) the exact words of *Ineffabilis Deus* regarding her preservation from “all stain of original sin” are quoted. Some father objected to this, lest it appear that the assumption is a consequence of the immaculate conception, but they were overruled on the grounds that this is an expression of the analogy of faith, not a proof. The Fathers (texts from John Damascene, Germanus of Constantinople, and Modestus of Jerusalem are cited) invoke an argument from fittingness: Mary’s virginal integrity and her virginal motherhood seem to demand that her body not suffer corruption, and that her Son—whom she had carried at the breast—take her to live in his divine mansions. But the reference to Christ as “victor over death and sin” seems to provide the chief rationale in this text, as it does in *Munificentissimus Deus* (art. 4). “These two privileges are most closely bound to one another,” it says, because by his Cross Christ overcame sin and death, and by baptism we share in his victory. Mary, however, being exempt from the general rule as regards sin, is not subject to the law of remaining in the grave (MD, art. 5). The connection is even more explicit when Christ’s victory is viewed in light of the *protoevangelium* (Gen 3:15). As the New Eve, Mary shares fully in the victory of her Son, the New Adam. (Cf. MD, art. 39)

Article 62. “Beginning with the consent which in faith she gave at the Annunciation and which without wavering she sustained beneath the cross, this motherhood of Mary in the

order of grace continues uninterruptedly until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. For *taken to heaven* she has not laid aside this saving role but by her manifold intercession continues to obtain for us gifts of eternal salvation.”

The reality of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s Assumption is the presupposition for her present exercise of maternal solicitude with respect to believers. Art. 61 sets out an explanation of Mary’s “motherhood in the order of grace.” The theme was introduced in art. 53 in the words of St. Augustine: “[Mary is] clearly the mother of [Christ’s] members, . . . because by her charity she cooperated in bringing about the birth of the faithful in the Church, who are the members of its Head.” Articles 60-62 express the belief that Mary’s motherhood is an enduring reality in the life of the church. Assumed into heaven, she continues to intercede for “the brethren of her Son who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties...” The Assumption is likewise the presupposition for the Church’s Marian cult, according to art. 66: “By God’s grace Mary has been exalted above all angels and men to a place after her Son, as the most holy Mother of God who was involved in the mysteries of Christ, and thus she is honored by the Church with a special cult.”

C. Additional Observations¹⁰

Use of Scripture. As the fathers and theologians worked on chapter 8 they were also engaged in the discussion of *Dei Verbum*, arts. 11-24, and they were acutely conscious of the need to overcome the practice of stating doctrine and then citing “proof texts” for it. They made a conscious effort to discover anew the sources of doctrine in the biblical text, and exercised caution in citing it. For example, they did not attempt to base Mary’s “motherhood of the faithful” exclusively on Jn 19: 25-27 lest it appear that the insight rests on one disputed text.¹¹ At the same time, they continued to use the whole Bible as testimony, freely ranging through both Testaments and combining material from different books to develop their narrative of Mary’s life and holiness.

Use of Tradition. The sources of the Tradition were employed to substantiate the fact that from early times the insights which eventually achieved dogmatic formulation were present in the Church’s consciousness. *Dei Verbum* makes special mention of the Church Fathers as witnesses to the apostolic faith and to the “practice of the Church, in her belief and in her prayer” (DV art. 8). The authors of chapter 8 used special care to retrieve Marian doctrine from Eastern as well as Western sources, and they did not avoid facing the difficult texts. While *Lumen gentium* does not make the point, the apostolic constitutions which propose the two dogmas in question explain at length how each arose from the Church’s prayer, in particular, from the celebration of the feasts of Mary’s Conception and her Dormition or Assumption. “*Lex orandi, lex credendi.*” The annual celebration of the feasts was the occasion of homilies which deepened the faithful’s reflection on the mysteries.

¹⁰ I rely here on the essays in *Marian Studies* XXXVII, *passim*..

¹¹ O’Connor, *Marian Studies*, pp. 89-92.

The *Sensus Fidelium* and the Development of Doctrine. Again, the authors of the conciliar text on Mary were simultaneously considering and debating the question of doctrinal development (e.g., as it related to the topics of ecumenism and religious freedom). The Marian dogmas are classic instances of the process by which the apostolic Tradition

makes progress in the Church, with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts (cf. Lk. 2:19 and 51). It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth. (*Dei Verbum*, art. 8)

PAUL VI, APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION *MARIALIS CULTUS* (1974)

The third section of *Lumen gentium*'s chapter 8, arts. 66-67, described "the duties of the redeemed human race towards the God-Bearer" (art. 54) in the matter of cult. The appearance of a papal document on the same topic so soon after the Council is explained by the fact that post-conciliar attention to liturgical renewal and the restoration of a more fully Christocentric focus in Catholic piety brought about an unanticipated decline in Marian devotion. The exhortation sets out to remove doubts about the Council's intentions and to foster correct Marian devotion.

Section I provides an extensive and detailed review of the place of the Blessed Virgin in the Revised Roman Liturgy. Devotion to Mary is traced through the calendar of her feasts, the prayers of the missal and the lectionary readings, the Liturgy of the Hours and other rites and official books of prayer. By this means, the Pope shows that Mary has not been "demoted" by the liturgical renewal!

Rather, Marian devotion is coordinated with the Christological orientation of the Church's public prayer.

Section II reflects on Mary as "a model of the spiritual attitudes with which the Church celebrates and lives the divine mysteries" (art. 16). She is the model for the whole Church, but also a "teacher of the spiritual life for individual Christians" (art. 21). Her cult, as expressed in the piety of the liturgical tradition, should be generously fostered in the Church.

Section III recommends that other forms of Marian devotion be promoted along with liturgical prayer, but that these be renewed and governed by right principles. First, the Trinitarian, Christological, and ecclesial aspects of Marian devotion are laid out as a guide to prudent renewal. Next, four guidelines—biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, and anthropological—are proposed and explained, and warnings issued to those who err either by exaggeration or neglect. Devotions which encourage "vain credulity," "sterile and ephemeral sentimentality," the search for "novelties or extraordinary phenomena" all come in for censure.

The final section promotes the recitation of the Angelus and the Rosary as pious practices which are readily harmonized with the liturgy and which lead to contemplation.

JOHN PAUL II, ENCYCLICAL, *REDEMPTORIS MATER* (1987)

This encyclical letter was written to encourage reflection on the Council's teaching in preparation for the millennium. It has three sections: Mary in the Mystery of Christ, the Mother of God at the Center of the Pilgrim Church, and Maternal Mediation. In each, certain themes of *Lumen gentium*, chapter 8, are explored and newly developed. The chief theme is Mary's "pilgrimage of faith" (art. 5).

The Pope highlights Mary's solidarity with us. He retraces her earthly life from this perspective, noting how, she was called to endure a kind of "night of faith" in following her vocation, sharing in her own way in the sacrifice of her Son. Mary is presented as Jesus' Mother who is also his disciple, even the "first" disciple of her Son. Her motherhood is the source of her "mediation" with respect to believers. Mary's maternal care does not obscure Christ's unique mediation, but shows its efficacy. (LG 60) Her motherly care for us, expressed by her intercession, is portrayed as an extension of her motherhood of Christ.

Mary is a living presence in the Church's journey of faith; she has gone before us as the first to believe and as an exceptional witness to the mystery of Christ. Believers share her faith and are supported by it, as Marian devotions testify. The path to Christian unity must include more profound study of both Mary and the Church. We who are on pilgrimage can learn from her "Magnificat" and make an "option for the poor."

A final section dwells further on Mary's "maternal mediation," a theme introduced at the Council but not developed. Mary, the handmaid of the Lord, was entrusted by God with his own Son. In her motherhood, she is completely open to the person of Christ and ready to collaborate in his mission by her actions and her sufferings. Assumed into heaven, and animated by burning charity for all those redeemed by her Son, she will continue to intercede for her children until the end of time. Mary is a figure and model of the Church "in the matter of faith, charity, and perfect union with Christ." As Virgin, Handmaid, and Mother, she is a type of the Church; as such, she is also a model for women. Mary provides the key to understanding the doctrine of Christ and of the Church.

Immaculate Conception. Mary's Immaculate Conception is considered at some length in arts. 7-11. The Pope reflects on the mystery by which God "chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:3) Mary's election "is wholly exceptional and unique" because of her place in the mystery of Christ. She is "full of grace," the gift of God who is love, because in her is accomplished the incarnation of the Word. "Mary receives life from him to whom she herself, in the order of earthly generation, gave life as a mother." She belongs to Christ, and "by reason of the redemptive merits of him who willed to become her Son, [she] was preserved from the inheritance of original sin" (art. 10).

Bibliography

Marian Studies XXXVII (1986): includes valuable analysis of *Lumen gentium*, ch. 8, with reference to the *Acta synodalia*:

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James T. O'Connor, "*Lumen Gentium*, Nos. 55 to 59," 74-95.

Charles W. Neumann, SM, "Mary and the Church: *Lumen Gentium*, Arts. 60 to 65," 96-142.

Appendices:

- I. Schema of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Mother of Men (1962: in Latin and English), 198-211.
- II. Textual Evolution of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*," 212-28.
- III. Full Latin Texts from Footnotes, Chapter VIII (*Lumen Gentium*), 229-38.
- IV. English Translation of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*," 239-57. [Includes text of footnotes]
- V. A Synopsis of the Chapters of *Lumen Gentium*, 258.
- VI. Summary and Analysis of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, 259-65.

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MARIAN DOCTRINE IN THE *CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH* 2nd edition (1997)

The *Catechism* follows the lead of the Council by integrating the Church's Marian doctrine with its exposition of the mystery of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the Church, and Christian prayer.

The doctrines of Mary's Motherhood and Virginity are taken up in the chapter on the Incarnation. The dogma of the **Immaculate Conception** also appears here (##490-93), for it explains how God prepared Mary for her unique role and office as *Theotokos*.

The dogma of Mary's **Assumption** is treated in Section 6 in the chapter on the Mystery of the Church (#966). This section follows discussion of the Communion of Saints, and identifies Mary as one whose union with Christ began with her motherhood of him and continues with her "motherhood" of his members, and thus of the Church, in the order of grace. The Assumption—a sign of her share in her Son's victory over death—is inserted within the topic of Mary's cooperation with the work of salvation and her continuing motherly intercession for the Church. It is under this rubric that Mary's association with Christ's saving work is located: Mary "did not lay aside [her] saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation." (#969) Mary's function in the mediation of grace, like that of the Church, is completely subordinate to Christ's unique mediation and "shows its power." (#970) Mary, who has completed her pilgrimage of faith, is the eschatological icon of the Church.

Elsewhere, Mary is presented as our forerunner in faith (##148-49) and our companion and teacher in prayer (##2617ff., 2673-82).

V. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

148-49	Mary as a believer
484-507	Mary and the Mystery of the Incarnation:
484-86	Trinitarian plan
487	Marian doctrine is based on faith in Christ
488	Mary's predestination (Eve-Mary)
489	Holy women of OT prepared way for Mary
490-94*	Mary's Immaculate Conception & All-holiness
495	Mary's Divine Motherhood: <i>Theotokos</i> (#466)
496-501	Mary's Virginity
502-507	The Virginal Conception
525-26.29	Mary's role in Jesus' Infancy
531-34	Mary's role in Jesus' Hidden Life
618	Mary's role in Jesus' Passion and Death
721-26	The Grace of the Holy Spirit in Mary
721	The Spirit made Mary God's dwelling-place
722	The Holy Spirit prepared Mary
723	The Holy Spirit made Mary fruitful
724	The Holy Spirit manifests the Son in Mary

725	The Holy Spirit brings believers into communion with Christ through Mary
726	Mary's place in the Church
773	Mary, Model of the Church-Bride
829	Mary and the Church's holiness
963-75	Mary and the Mystery of the Church
963	Mary as "Mother of the Church"
964	Mary's union with Christ in his saving work
965	Mary's intercession in the Church
966*	Mary's Assumption into heavenly glory
967-70	Mary's motherhood in the order of grace; her continuing presence and intercession
971	Devotion to the Blessed Virgin
972-75	Mary, Icon of the Church
1172	Marian Feasts in the liturgy
1370	Commemoration of Mary at the Eucharist
2617-19.22	Mary's Prayer as Model of Christian Prayer
2673-79.82	Prayer in Communion with Mary
2853	Mary and Christ's victory over evil