

## 21 Centuries of Catholic Doctrine: THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

*As taught in the Church's historical writings, from the time of the Apostles down to today*

—ca. 100 A.D., *Death of Saint John, the last of the Apostles*

**ca. 107—Saint Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, disciple of the Apostle John, *Letter to the Ephesians***

—*Virginity before birth*—

19:1 The virginity of Mary, her giving birth, and also the death of the Lord, were hidden from the prince of this world:—three mysteries loudly proclaimed, but wrought in the silence of God.

**ca. 125—Aristides of Athens, *Apology***

—*Virginity before birth; exceptional sanctity ("holy," "without defilement," Immaculate Conception)*—

15 He was born of a holy Virgin without seed of man, and took flesh without defilement.

**ca. 125—*Letter to Diognetus***

—*New Eve; exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); incorruptibility ("serpent cannot touch ... deceit cannot defile," Assumption); Virginity before birth*—

12:7-9 Let your heart be knowledge, and your life the true teaching that your heart contains. If you bear the tree of this teaching and pluck its fruit, you will always be gathering in the things that are desirable in the sight of God, things that the serpent cannot touch and deceit cannot defile. Then Eve is not seduced, but a Virgin is found trustworthy.

—ca. 150, *Fresco in the Catacomb of Saint Priscilla in Rome depicts the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child with the prophet Isaiah*

**ca. 155—Saint Justin the Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew***

—*New Eve; Co-Redemptrix; exceptional sanctity ("undefiled," Immaculate Conception); Virginity before birth*—

100 [Justin:] "[Jesus] became Man by the Virgin so that the course which was taken by disobedience in the beginning through the

agency of the serpent, might be also the very course by which it would be put down. For Eve, a virgin and undefiled, conceived the word of the serpent, and bore disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary received faith and joy when the angel Gabriel announced to her the glad tidings that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her and the power of the Most High would overshadow her, for which reason the Holy One being born of her is the Son of God. And she replied: 'Be it done unto me according to thy word' (Luke 1:38)."

**ca. 170—Saint Melito, Bishop of Sardis, *Easter Homily***

—*Virginity before birth*—

[H]e clothed himself in man's flesh in the womb of a Virgin from whom he came forth as a man ...

—*exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception)*—

[H]e is born of Mary, the fair ewe. ...

—*Virginity before birth*—

He it is who made heaven and earth, ... who became incarnate in a Virgin.

**ca. 185—Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, disciple of Saint Polycarp of Smyrna, *Against Heresies***

—*Virginity before birth; exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); New Eve; Co-Redemptrix ("cause of salvation," "loosed by the obedience of Mary")*—

3:22:4 Consequently, then, Mary the Virgin is found to be obedient, saying: "Behold, O Lord, your handmaid; be it done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Eve, however, was disobedient; and when yet a virgin, she did not obey. Just as she, who was then still a virgin although she had Adam for a husband,—for in Paradise they were both naked but were not ashamed (Gen. 2:25); for, having been created only a short time, they had no understanding

of the procreation of children and it was necessary that they first come to maturity before beginning to multiply,—having become disobedient, was made the cause of death for herself and for the whole human race; so also Mary, betrothed to a man but nevertheless still a virgin, being obedient, was made the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race. ... Thus, the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. What the virgin Eve had bound in unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed through faith.

**ca. 190—Saint Abercius Marcellus, Bishop of Hieropolis, *Epitaph***

—*Exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); Virginity before birth—*

Everywhere faith led the way  
and everywhere set food before me,—fish from the fountain  
Mighty and pure, which the chaste virgin caught.

—*ca. 190, Fresco in the Catacomb of Saint Priscilla in Rome depicts the Annunciation with Mary as the main figure*

**ca. 195—Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching***

—*Virginity during birth; freedom from pain in childbirth (Immaculate Conception/ Assumption)—*

54 [Isaiah] says, "Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and He, being God, is going to be with us" (Isa. 7:14). And whilst, as it were, astonished at this thing, he makes known what will come about, that God will be with us. And concerning His birth, the same prophet says in another place, "Before she who was in labour gave birth, and before the birthpains came on, she was delivered of a male [child]" (Isa. 66:7); [thus] he indicated the unexpected and extraordinary birth from the Virgin.

—*ca. 200, Inscription at the site of the Annunciation in Nazareth reads, "Hail, Mary"*

**ca. 200—Saint Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop of Pontus, disciple of Irenaeus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist***

—*Virginity before birth; exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception)—*

4 For whereas the Word of God was without flesh, He took upon Himself the holy flesh by the holy Virgin.

**ca. 200—Saint Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor of the Children***

—*Virginity during birth; exceptional sanctity ("undefiled," "full of love," Immaculate Conception)—*

1:6:42:1 When the loving and benevolent Father had rained down the Word, that Word then became the spiritual nourishment of those who have good sense. O mystic wonder! The Father of all is indeed one, one also is the universal Word, and the Holy Spirit is one and the same everywhere; and one is the Virgin Mother. I love to call her the Church. This Mother alone was without milk, because she alone did not become a wife. She is at once both Virgin and Mother: as a Virgin, undefiled; as a Mother full of love.

**ca. 205—Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis or Miscellanies***

—*Perpetual Virginity; freedom from pain in childbirth (Immaculate Conception/ Assumption)—*

7:16 But, as appears, many even down to our own time regard Mary, on account of the birth of her child, as having been in the puerperal state, although she was not. For some say that, after she brought forth, she was found, when examined, to be a virgin.

Now such to us are the Scriptures of the Lord, which gave birth to the truth and continue virgin, in the concealment of the mysteries of the truth. "And she brought forth, and yet brought not forth," says the Scripture (cf. Ezek. 44:2); as having conceived of herself, and not from conjunction. Wherefore the Scriptures have conceived to Gnostics; but the heresies, not having learned them, dismissed them as not having conceived.

**ca. 230—Hippolytus, *Commentary on Psalm 22 [23]***

—*Ark of the New Covenant (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); incorruptibility (Assumption); virginity before birth—*

The ark which was made of incorruptible timber (Ex. 25:10) was the Savior. The ark symbolized the tabernacle of His body, which was impervious to decay and engendered no sinful corruption. ... The Lord was sinless, because, in His humanity, He was fashioned out of incorruptible wood, that is, out of the Virgin and the Holy Ghost, lined within and without as with the purest gold of the Word of God (Theodoret of Cyr, *First Dialogue*).

**ca. 230—Hippolytus, *Discourse on the End of the World***

—*Co-Redemptrix ("His advent by"); sinlessness (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Mother of God*—

1 [The blessed prophets] preached of the advent of God in the flesh to the world, His advent by the spotless and God-bearing Mary.

**ca. 230—Origen, disciple of Clement of Alexandria, *Commentaries on John***

—*Perpetual Virginity*—

1:6 For if Mary, as those declare who with sound mind extol her, had no other son but Jesus, and yet Jesus says to His mother, "Woman, behold thy son" (John 19:26), and not "Behold you have this son also," then He virtually said to her, "Lo, this is Jesus, whom thou didst bear." Is it not the case that every one who is perfect lives himself no longer, but Christ lives in him; and if Christ lives in him, then it is said of him to Mary, "Behold thy son Christ." What a mind, then, must we have to enable us to interpret in a worthy manner this work, though it be committed to the earthly treasure-house of common speech, of writing which any passer-by can read, and which can be heard when read aloud by any one who lends to it his bodily ears?

**ca. 250—*Sub Tuum Praesidium***

—*Earliest extant prayer to the Virgin Mary; Mother of God; Co-Redemptrix ("deliver us"); exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception)*—

Under your mercy we take refuge, O Mother of God. Do not reject our supplications in necessity, but deliver us from danger, [O you] alone pure and alone blessed.

**300-325—Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea, *History of the Church***

—*Perpetual Virginity (brethren of the Lord)*—

3:11 After the martyrdom of James and the conquest of Jerusalem which immediately followed, it is said that those of the apostles and disciples of the Lord that were still living came together from all directions with those that were related to the Lord according to the flesh (for the majority of them also were still alive) to take counsel as to who was worthy to succeed James.

They all with one consent pronounced Symeon, the son of Clopas, of whom the Gospel also makes mention (cf. John 19:25); be worthy of the episcopal throne of that parish. He was a cousin, as they say, of the

Saviour. For Hegesippus records that Clopas was a brother of Joseph.

**ca. 310—Saint Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, *Fragment***

—*Exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); Mother of God; Perpetual Virginity*—

5:1:7 [O]ur Lord and God, Jesus Christ ... [was] born according to the flesh from our holy, glorious lady, Mother of God, and Ever-Virgin ... Mary.

—313, *The Edict of Milan: legalization of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire*

**350—Saint Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, Doctor of the Church, *Homily of the Papyrus of Turin***

—*Exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); (Mother of God); Perpetual Virginity ("O Virgin"); Ark of the New Covenant (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Mediatrix ("the flesh in which divinity resides")*—

O noble Virgin, truly you are greater than any other greatness. For who is your equal in greatness, O dwelling place of God the Word? To whom among all creatures shall I compare you, O Virgin? You are greater than them all. O [Ark of the New] Covenant, clothed with purity instead of gold! You are the Ark in which is found the golden vessel containing the true manna, that is, the flesh in which divinity resides.

**350—Saint Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, Doctor of the Church, *Catechetical Lectures***

—*New Eve; Mediatrix ("life should also come through a virgin"); incorruptibility (Assumption)*—

12:15 Death came through a virgin, Eve. It was necessary that life also should come through a virgin, so that, as the serpent deceived the former, so Gabriel might bring glad tidings to the latter.

**ca. 350—Pseudo-Melito of Sardis, *The Passing of the Holy Virgin***

—*Assumption (written pseudepigraphically to correct errors of an earlier apocryphal text); Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God*—

1 I remember that I have oft-times written concerning Leucius, who, after that with us he had been a companion of the apostles, with alienated sense and rash mind departed from the way of righteousness and put into his books many things concerning the acts of the apostles, and spake many and diverse things of

their mighty deeds, but concerning their teaching lied much, affirming that they taught otherwise, and establishing his own wicked position as if by their words. Nor did he account this sufficient, but also corrupted with so evil a pen the departure of the blessed Mary ever virgin, the mother of God, that it is unlawful not only to read but even to hear it in the church of God. We therefore at your petition have written simply those things which we heard from the apostle John, and have sent them unto your brotherhood: believing no alien doctrines which sprout out from the heretics, but that the Father is in the Son, the Son in the Father, the triune person of godhead and undivided essence abiding: and that not two natures of man were created, a good and a bad, but that one good nature was created by a good God, which by the fraud of the serpent was corrupted through sin, and restored by the grace of Christ.

2 When therefore the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for the life of the whole world hung on the tree of the cross pierced with nails, he saw standing beside the cross his mother and John the evangelist, whom he more especially loved beyond the other apostles because he alone of them was a virgin in body. Unto him therefore he committed the charge of the holy Mary, saying to him: Behold thy mother; and to her: Behold thy son (cf. John 19:26-27). From that hour the holy mother of God continued in the especial care of John so long as she endured the sojourn of this life. And when the apostles had taken the world by their lots for preaching, she abode in the house of his parents beside the Mount of Olivet. ...

18 And the Lord kissed her and departed, and delivered her to the angels to bear her into paradise. And he said to the apostles: Come near unto me; and when they had come near, he kissed them and said: Peace be unto you; as I have been always with you, so will I be even onto the end of the world.

And immediately when the Lord had so said he was lifted up in a cloud and received into heaven, and the angels with him, bearing the blessed Mary into the paradise of God.

- ca. 370—Ephraim the Syrian, *On the Annunciation of the Mother of God*  
—*New Eve; incorruptibility (Immaculate Conception); Mediatrix ("from her springs the Tree of Life")*—  
30 God's Eden is Mary, in her is no tree of knowledge [experience of good and evil], no

serpent that harms, no Eve that kills, but from her springs the Tree of Life that restores the exiles to Eden.

- ca. 370—Saint Ephraim the Syrian, *Doctor of the Church, Commentary on the Diatesseron (fragments)*

—*Mediatrix ("the dwelling and habitation"); sinlessness ("was revoked that original malediction," Immaculate Conception/Assumption); freedom from pain in childbirth (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Perpetual Virginity (brethren of the Lord)*—  
And yet how could it be that she who was the dwelling and habitation of the Spirit and whom the power of God overshadowed, should afterwards become the wife of a mortal man, and in conformity with the primeval curse bring forth in pain? For since Mary is blessed among women, through her was revoked that original malediction by which children are born in pain and accursed. But just as the Lord entered the Cenacle although the doors were closed, so in the same way did He come forth from the virginal womb. For this Virgin, without experiencing the pains of childbirth, really and truly gave birth. If, moreover, the fact that certain disciples were called the brothers of the Lord should lead some to believe that they were the sons of Mary, let them know that even Christ Himself was called the son of Joseph, and this not only by the Jews, but by His mother Mary herself.

- ca. 370—Ephraim the Syrian, *Hymns on Blessed Mary*

—*Perpetual Virginity; New Eve; sinlessness ("before its surface was torn," Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Mediatrix ("blossomed from her bosom")*—  
18:30 Since Mary was the Virgin inviolate—prefigured by the blest land of Eden before its surface was torn by furrows—there blossomed from her bosom the Tree of Life, the taste of which ... gives life to souls.

- ca. 370—Ephraim the Syrian, *The Nisibene Hymns*

—*Co-Redemptrix ("You alone and your Mother"); sinlessness ("nor any stains," Immaculate Conception/Assumption)*—  
27:8 You alone and your Mother are more beautiful than others; For there is no blemish in you, nor any stains upon your Mother. Who of my children can compare in beauty to these?

**374-377—Saint Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, Panáriorion or Panacea Against All Heresies**

—Assumption; sinlessness (Immaculate Conception)—

42:12 How will holy Mary not possess the kingdom of heaven with her flesh, since she was not unchaste, nor dissolute, nor did she ever commit adultery, and since she never did anything wrong as far as fleshly actions are concerned, but remained stainless? ...

—Assumption; Perpetual Virginity—

78:11 If anyone holds that we are mistaken, let him simply follow the indications of Scripture, in which is found no mention of Mary's death, whether she died or did not die, whether she was buried or was not buried. For when John was sent on his voyage to Asia, no one says that he had the holy Virgin with him as a companion. Scripture simply is silent, because of the greatness of the prodigy, in order not to strike the mind of man with excessive wonder.

As far as I am concerned, I dare not speak out, but I maintain a meditative silence. For you would find (in Scripture) hardly any news about this holy and blessed woman, of whom nothing is said concerning her death.

—Assumption; Woman in Revelation 12—

Simeon says of her: "And a sword shall pierce your soul, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare" (Luke 2:35). But elsewhere, in the Apocalypse of John, we read that the dragon hurled himself at the woman who had given birth to a male child; but the wings of an eagle were given to the woman, and she flew into the desert, where the dragon could not reach her (Rev. 12:13-14). This could have happened in Mary's case. ...

—Exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); New Eve; Mediatrix ("truly introduced life itself into the world")—

78:17 "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). This is she who was prefigured by Eve and who symbolically received the title of mother of the living (cf. Gen. 3:20). For Eve was called mother of the living after she had heard the words, "You are dust and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19), in other words, after the fall. It seems odd that she should receive such a grand title after having sinned. Looking at the matter from the outside, one notices that Eve is the one from whom the entire human race took its origin on this earth. Mary, on the contrary, truly introduced life itself into the world by giving birth to the Living One, so that Mary has become the Mother of the living. ...

—Mediatrix ("the cause of life")—

But we must consider another marvelous aspect of the comparison between Eve and Mary. Eve became for men the cause of death, because through her death entered the world. Mary, however, was the cause of life, because life has come to us through her. ...

—Ark of the New Covenant ("the holy vessel," Immaculate Conception/Assumption)—

78:21 Whoever honors the Lord also honors the holy [vessel]; who instead dishonors the holy vessel also dishonors his Master. Mary herself is that holy Virgin, that is, the holy vessel. ...

—Assumption; Perpetual Virginity; exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception)—

78:23 If the holy Virgin is dead and has been buried, surely her dormition happened with great honor; her end was most pure and crowned by virginity.

If she was slain, according to what is written: "A sword shall pierce your soul" (Luke 2:35), then she obtained glory together with the martyrs, and her holy body, from which light shone forth for all the world, dwells among those who enjoy the repose of the blessed.

Or she continued to live. For, to God, it is not impossible to do whatever he wills; on the other hand, no one knows exactly what her end was.

**ca. 383—Saint Jerome, Doctor of the Church, Against Helvidius: The Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

—Perpetual Virginity—

19 [21] We believe that God was born of a virgin, because we read it. We do not believe that Mary was married after she brought forth her Son, because we do not read it. Nor do we say this in order to condemn marriage: for virginity itself is the fruit of marriage. ... You say that Mary did not remain a virgin. As for myself, I claim that Joseph himself was a virgin, through Mary, so that a Virgin Son might be born of a virginal wedlock.

**ca. 388—Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Doctor of the Church, Commentary on Psalm 118**

—New Eve; sinlessness (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); virginity before birth—

22:30 Come, then, and search out Your sheep, not through Your servants or hired men, but do it Yourself. Lift me up bodily and in the flesh, which is fallen in Adam. Lift me up not from Sara but from Mary, a Virgin not only undefiled

but a Virgin whom grace had made inviolate, free of every stain of sin.

**396—Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Doctor of the Church, *Christian Combat***

—*Mediatrice* (“life is born to us through a woman”); *New Eve*—

22:24 Our Lord Jesus Christ, however, who came to liberate mankind, in which both males and females are destined to salvation, was not averse to males, for He took the form of a male, nor to females, for of a female He was born. Besides, there is a great mystery here: that just as death comes to us through a woman, Life is born to us through a woman; that the devil, defeated, would be tormented by each nature, feminine and masculine, as he had taken delight in the defecation of both.

—*ca. 400, The Feast of the Commemoration of Mary is celebrated in the Eastern Liturgy*

**ca. 400—Chrysippus of Jerusalem, *On Psalm 131 [132]***

—*Ark of the New Covenant (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God (“Theotokos”); Mediatrice (“received the treasure of all sanctification”)*—  
The truly royal Ark, the most precious Ark, was the ever-Virgin *Theotokos*; the Ark which received the treasure of all sanctification.

**ca. 400—Timothy of Jerusalem, *Homily on Simeon and Anna***

—*Assumption*—

Therefore the Virgin is immortal to this day, seeing that he who had dwelt in her transported her to the regions of her assumption.

**401—Augustine, *Holy Virginity***

—*Perpetual Virginity*—

4:4 In being born of a Virgin who chose to remain a Virgin even before she knew who was to be born of her, Christ wanted to approve virginity rather than to impose it. And He wanted virginity to be of free choice even in that woman in whom He took upon Himself the form of a slave. ...

—*Perpetual Virginity; sinlessness (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Co-Redemptrix (“cooperated”); (Mother of God)*—

6:6 That one woman is both Mother and Virgin, not in spirit only but even in body. In spirit she is Mother, not of our Head, who is our Savior Himself—of whom, rather, it was she who was born spiritually, since all who believe in Him, including even herself, all are rightly called children of the bridegroom—but plainly she is

[in spirit] Mother of us who are his members, because by love she has cooperated so that the faithful, who are members of that Head, might be born in the Church. In body, indeed, she is the Mother of that very Head.

**415—Augustine, *Nature and Grace***

—*Sinlessness (Immaculate*

*Conception/Assumption); Perpetual Virginity*—

36:42 Having excepted the holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom, on account of the honor of the Lord, I wish to have absolutely no question when treating of sins,—for how do we know what abundance of grace for the total overcoming of sin was conferred on her, who merited to conceive and bear him in whom there was no sin?—so, I say, with the exception of the Virgin, if we could have gathered together all those holy men and women [of the Old and New Testament], when they were living here, and had asked them whether they were without sin, what do we suppose would have been their answer? Would it be what [the heretic] Pelagius says, or would it be what the Apostle John says? I ask you, however excellent might their holiness have been when in the body, if they had been so questioned, would they not have declared in a single voice: “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us!” (1 John 1:8)?

**ca. 429—Saint Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Homily***

—*New Eve; sinlessness (Immaculate Conception/Assumption)*—

5:3 Thanks to her, all women are blessed. It is not possible that woman should remain under her curse; to the contrary, she now has a reason to surpass even the glory of the angels. Eve has been healed ...

—*Mediatrice; Ark of the New Covenant (Immaculate Conception/Assumption)*—

Today, a list of women is admired: Sarah is acclaimed as the fertile field of peoples; Rebekah is honored as the able conciliator of blessings; ... Elizabeth is called blessed for having carried the Forerunner, who leapt for joy in her womb, and for having given witness to grace; Mary is venerated, because she became the Mother, the cloud, the bridal chamber, and the ark of the Lord.

—*431, The Council of Ephesus defines the Divine Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

**432—Saint Theodotus, Bishop of Ancyra,*****Homily on Holy Mary, Mother of God, and on the Holy Nativity of Christ***

—*New Eve; Mediatrix* (“minister of life”); *sinlessness (Immaculate*

*Conception/Assumption); Mother of God—*

6:11 In place of the virgin Eve, mediatrix of death, a virgin has been filled with God’s grace to be the minister of life; a virgin has been fashioned possessing the nature of a woman, but without part in her fault (malice); a virgin, innocent, without blemish, all-immaculate, inviolate, spotless, holy in soul and body, who has blossomed as a lily from among thorns, unlearned in the evil ways of Eve. ... When yet unborn she was consecrated to God as a sign of gratitude. ... Clothed with divine grace as with a garment, her soul filled with a wisdom divine, in heart wedded to God, she received God in her womb, [she who is] in fact the Mother of God.

**ca. 437—Saint Quodvultdeus, Bishop of Carthage, disciple of Augustine, *The Third Homily on the Creed***

—*Woman in Revelation 12 (Assumption); exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); Perpetual Virginity—*

3:5-6 In the Apocalypse of the apostle John [12:1-4] it is written that the dragon stood in full view of the woman about to give birth, in order that when she gave birth, he would eat the child born [of her]. Let none of you ignore [the fact] that the dragon is the devil; know that the virgin signifies Mary, the chaste one, who gave birth to our chaste head. She also embodied in herself a figure of the holy church: namely, how, while bearing a son, she remained a virgin, so that the church throughout time bears her members, yet she does not lose her virginity.

**ca. 445—Saint Peter Chrysologus, Bishop of Ravenna, Doctor of the Church, *Sermon***

—*New Eve; Co-Redemptrix* (“restored the entire mass of our flesh”)—

99:5 The woman, who had received the leaven of perfidy from the devil, received the leaven of faith from God. He hid it in three measures of flour, that is to say, in three periods of human history; namely, from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Moses, and from Moses to Christ.

Thus the woman, who in Adam ruined the entire mass of the human race with the leaven of death, restored the entire mass of our flesh in Christ with the leaven of the Resurrection. Then the woman, who had baked the bread of

suffering and sweat, baked the bread of life and salvation. ...

Through Christ, she became the true Mother of all the living, who in Adam had become the mother of all the dead. Christ willed to be born in this way, so that, as death came to all through Eve, so life might return to all through Mary.

—*New Eve; Mediatrix* (“transfuses the heavenly man”)—

For Mary corresponds to the typology of the leaven, she bears its likeness, she authenticates the figure, since she receives the leaven of the Word from above and receives his human flesh into her virginal womb, and, in her virginal womb, she transfuses the heavenly man into the entire mass [of dough].

**ca. 450—Saint Hesychius of Jerusalem, *Homily on Holy Mary, Mother of God***

—*Ark of the New Covenant (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Mother of God* (“Theotokos”)—

The Ark of thy sanctification, the Virgin theotokos surely. If thou art the pearl then she must be the Ark.

**ca. 460—Pope Saint Leo the Great, Doctor of the Church, *Sermon on the Feast of the Nativity***

—*Perpetual Virginity; sinlessness (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Ark of the New Covenant (Immaculate Conception/Assumption)—*

22:2 If you inquire into the truth of His nature, you must acknowledge the matter to be human: if you search for the mode of His birth, you must confess the power to be of God. For the Lord Jesus Christ came to do away with not to endure our pollutions: not to succumb to our faults but to heal them. He came that he might cure every weakness of our corruptness and all the sores of our defiled souls: for which reason it behooved Him to be born by a new order, who brought to men’s bodies the new gift of unsullied purity. For the uncorrupt nature of Him that was born had to guard the primal virginity of the Mother, and the infused power of the Divine Spirit had to preserve the spotlessness and holiness of the sanctuary which He had chosen for Himself: that Spirit (I say) who had determined to raise the fallen, to restore the broken, and by overcoming the allurements of the flesh to bestow on us in abundant measure the power of chastity: in order that the virginity which in others cannot be retained in child-bearing, might be attained by them at their second birth [i.e., Baptism].

—ca. 500, *The Feast of the Falling Asleep of Mary is celebrated in Palestine, Antioch, Gaul, and elsewhere*

**ca. 530—Oecumenius, *Commentary on the Apocalypse***

—*Assumption: Woman in Revelation 12; sinlessness (Immaculate Conception)*—

Rightly does the vision [in *Revelation 12*] show her in heaven and not upon earth, as pure in soul and body, as equal to the angels, as a citizen of heaven, as having contained and given flesh to the God who reposes in heaven; for she has nothing in common with the earth and its evils, but is wholly sublime, wholly worthy of heaven, even though she shares our human nature and being.

**553—Second Council of Constantinople, fifth ecumenical council, *Canons***

—*Exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); Mother of God; Perpetual Virginity*—

2 If any one does not confess that [God the Word] ... was made flesh of the Holy and Glorious God-bearer and ever-virgin Mary, and was born of her, let him be anathema.

**ca. 555—Saint Romanos the Melodist, *Sacred Hymn on Christmas***

—*Mediatrice; sinlessness ("full of grace") (Immaculate Conception/Assumption)*—

2:10:11 [Mary:] Cease your laments; I will make myself your advocate in my Son's presence. Meanwhile, no more sadness, because I have brought joy to the world. For it is to destroy the kingdom of sorrow that I have come into the world: I, full of grace. ...

*Then curb your tears; accept me as your mediatrix in the presence of him who was born from me, because the author of joy is the God generated before all ages. Remain calm; be troubled no longer: I come from him, full of grace.*

**ca. 590—Saint Gregory of Tours, *Eight Books of Miracles***

—*Assumption*—

1:4 The course of this life having been completed by Blessed Mary, when now she would be called from the world, all the Apostles came together from their various regions to her house. ... And behold, again the Lord stood by them; the holy body having been received, He commanded that it be taken in a cloud into paradise: where now, rejoined to the soul, [Mary] rejoices with the Lord's chosen ones,

and is in the enjoyment of the good of an eternity that will never end. ...

—*Perpetual Virginity*—

1:8 But Mary, the glorious Mother of Christ, who is believed to be a virgin both before and after she bore Him, has, as we said above, been translated into paradise, amid the singing of the angelic choirs, whither the Lord preceded her.

—ca. 600, *The Feast of the Conception of Mary is celebrated in Palestine*

—ca. 600, *Emperor Maurice (reign. 582-602) officially establishes August 15 as the day on which the Feast of the Dormition shall be celebrated throughout the Byzantine Empire*

**ca. 600—Theoteknos, Bishop of Livias, *Sermon for the Feast of the Assumption***

—*Assumption; sinlessness (Immaculate Conception)*—

[Mary's body] was preserved incorrupt and undefiled and taken up into heaven with its pure and spotless soul by the holy archangels and powers and is above Enoch and Elijah and all the Prophets and Apostles and the heavens, except only God.

**626—*The Akathistos Hymn of the Byzantine Liturgy***

—*Mother of God; sinlessness (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); New Eve; Mediatrice ("through whom all things are all new made")*—

1 An angel chieftain was sent from Heaven to greet the Forth-bringer of God with Hail! Then seeing thee, O Lord, take flesh he is wonder-rapt, and standing crieth out with no lips of flesh to her:

... Hail! sinful Adam's recalling.

Hail! Eve's tears redeeming. ...

Hail! through whom things made are all new made.

Hail! through whom becomes a Babe their Maker.

Hail! through whom the Maker is adored.

**ca. 630—Modestus of Jerusalem, *Homily on the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary***

—*Assumption*—

14 As the most glorious Mother of Christ, our Savior and God and the giver of life and immortality, has been endowed with life by him, she has received an eternal incorruptibility of the body together with him who has raised her up from the tomb and has



taken her up to himself in a way known only to him (Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus* 22).

—636, *Death of Saint Isidore of Seville, end of the patristic period in the West*

—649, *The Lateran Council defines the Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

—ante 650, *The Feast of the Assumption is celebrated in the West on August 15*

**680—Pope Saint Agatho, 79<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, and the Roman Synod of 125 Bishops, *Letter of Instruction to the Legates Sent to Attend the Sixth Synod (Third Council of Constantinople)***

—*Immaculate (Conception); Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God*—

Moreover we confess that one of the same holy consubstantial Trinity, God the Word, who was begotten of the Father before the worlds, in the last days of the world for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost, and of our Lady, the holy, immaculate, ever-virgin and glorious Mary, truly and properly the Mother of God, that is to say according to the flesh which was born of her; and was truly made man, the same being very God and very man.

**ca. 730—Saint Bede the Venerable, Doctor of the Church, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke***

—*Sinlessness (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Mediatrix (“she through whom salvation was prepared”)*—

1:45 It is not surprising if the Lord, when he was about to redeem the world, began his work with his mother, so that she through whom salvation was prepared for all should also be the first to draw the fruit of salvation from her child.

**ca. 745—Saint John Damascene, Doctor of the Church, *Second Homily on the Dormition of Mary***

—*Perpetual Virginity; Assumption*—

14 It was necessary that the body of the one who preserved her virginity intact in giving birth should also be kept incorrupt after death. It was necessary that she, who carried the Creator in her womb when he was a baby, should dwell among the tabernacles of heaven.

...

—*Co-Redemptrix; freedom from pain in childbirth (Immaculate Conception/Assumption)*—

14 It was necessary that she who contemplated her own Son on the Cross, and who had been

pierced through the heart by the sword she had avoided while giving birth, should contemplate him reigning with the Father. ...

—*Mediatrix*—

16 Through her, the long warfare waged with the Creator has been ended. Through her, the reconciliation between us and him was ratified. Grace and peace were granted us, so that men and angels are united in the same choir, and we, who had been deserving of disdain, have become sons of God. From her we have harvested the grape of life; from her we have cultivated the seed of immortality. For our sake she became Mediatrix of all blessings; in her God became man, and man became God.

—ca. 749, *Death of Saint John Damascene, end of the patristic period in the East*

**787—Second Council of Nicea, seventh ecumenical council, *Letter to the Emperor and Empress***

—*Sinlessness (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Mother of God; Perpetual Virginity*—

The things which we have decreed, being thus well supported, it is confessedly and beyond all question acceptable and well-pleasing before God, that the images of our Lord Jesus Christ as man, and those of the undefiled Mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary, and of the honourable Angels and of all Saints, should be venerated and saluted.

**ca. 855—Paschasius Radbert, Abbot of Corbie, *The Birth of the Virgin***

—*Immaculate Conception; New Eve; Mediatrix*—

Because [the birth of Mary] is venerated by the authority of the whole Church, it is certain that she was immune from all original sin, for through her is not only the curse on our mother Eve dissolved, but also a blessing given to all men.

**866—Pope Saint Nicholas the Great, 105<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *The Responses to the Questions of the Bulgars***

—*Assumption; Mother of God; Perpetual Virginity*—

99:4 For, although it is fitting to pray and abstain at all times, one should nevertheless be even more of a slave to abstinence at times of fasting, ... [such as] at the fast before the assumption of the holy mother of God and the ever virgin Mary, our Lady.

ca. 920—**Peter, Bishop of Argos, *Sermon on the Feast of the Conception***

—*Immaculate Conception; Mediatrix* (“through a woman I am now blessed”)—

10 [Y]ou [God] have begun to remove from me [human nature] the thorns of damnation . . . . Now appears from me in the womb of Anne Mary, the rose; she frees me from the evil smell that came from corruption and, giving her own perfume, imparts to me divine joy. Through a woman I have been wretched until now; through a woman I am now blessed.

963—**Liutprand, Bishop of Cremona, *Report of His Mission to Constantinople***

—*Assumption; Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God*—

[O]n the day of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary the holy Mother of God, there came . . . envoys of the apostolic and universal Pope John [XII].

—1054, *Start of the Eastern Schism*

ca. 1025—**Fulbert of Chartres, *Sermon on the Nativity of Mary***

—*Assumption*—

5 . . . Christian piety believes that Christ, the Son of God, has gloriously resurrected his Mother and exalted her above the heavens.

ca. 1070—**Saint Peter Damian, Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, Doctor of the Church, *Sermon on the Nativity of Mary***

—*Sinlessness (Immaculate Conception/Assumption)*—

The flesh of the Virgin, taken from Adam, did not admit of the stain of Adam.

1080—**Pope Saint Gregory VII, 157<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Second Banning and Dethronement of Henry IV***

—*Exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); Perpetual Virginity*—

[I trust] in the judgment and mercy of God and of his most holy mother the ever-virgin Mary.

ca. 1120—**Eadmer of Canterbury, disciple of Saint Anselm, *The Conception of the Blessed Virgin***

—*Ark of the New Covenant; Immaculate Conception*—

9 She, who was created to be the palace of the Redeemer of sinners, was therefore free from the servitude of all sin . . . . Who dares to say that the unique propitiation of the whole world and the resting-place of the only Son of God was deprived of the grace and illumination of

the Holy Spirit in the beginning of her conception? . . .

—*Incorruptibility (Assumption)*—

10 If God gives the chestnut the possibility of being conceived, nourished and formed under thorns, but remote from them, could he not grant to the human body which he was preparing for himself to be a temple in which he would dwell bodily . . . that although she was conceived among the thorns of sin, she might be rendered completely immune from their pricks? He certainly could do it; if, therefore, he willed it, he did it.

1159—**Elisabeth of Schönau, *The Resurrection of the Blessed Virgin***

—*Assumption*—

When a year had rolled by and the feast of her Assumption was again at hand, I was languishing in illness for many days. Lying in bed at the time of the divine sacrifice [of the Mass], I came into a trance with a violent struggle. And I saw in a far-away place a tomb surrounded by great light, and what looked like the form of a woman in it, with a great multitude of angels standing around. After a little while, she was raised up from the tomb and, together with that multitude standing by, she was lifted up on high. While I was watching this, behold, a man—glorious beyond all reckoning—came from the height of the heavens to meet her. In His right hand, He carried a cross on which there was a banner. I understood that this was the Lord Savior, and there were countless thousands of angels with Him. Eagerly receiving her, they carried her with great acclamation to the heights of heaven. While I was watching this, after a short time, my Lady advanced to the door of light in which I usually saw her, and standing there she showed me her glory. . . .

In that same hour, the angel of the Lord, who had come to announce to me the tenth discourse of the aforementioned book, was standing by me, and I said to him, “My lord, what does this great vision that I saw mean?” He said, “This vision has shown you how our Lady was taken up into heaven in flesh as well as in spirit.” . . .

[My Lady] said, “These things have not been revealed to you so that they may be destroyed and cast into oblivion. Rather, they have been given to you so that my praise may be amplified among those who especially love me. You must make them known to my intimate servants. These things will be manifested to

those who manifest their hearts to me. They can then offer me special praise and receive special rewards from me. There are many who will receive this message with great exaltation and veneration.”

**1164—*Constitutions of Clarendon***

—*Perpetual Virginity*—

16 [A] record of the aforesaid royal customs and dignities has been made ... on the fourth day before the Purification of the blessed Mary the perpetual Virgin.

**ca. 1230—Saint Anthony of Padua, Doctor of the Church, *Sermones***

—*Perpetual Virginity; Immaculate Conception; Mediatrix* (“the light that ... dispelled the darkness”)—

The Blessed Mary is like a full moon, perfect in every way. A half-moon, with its spots and “horns,” is imperfect. The glorious Virgin Mary, however, was spotless in her birth, having been sanctified in her mother’s womb and protected by the angels. She never waned, never showed the “horns” of pride, but always shone full and perfect. This is the light that is said to have dispelled the darkness.

**ca. 1270—Saint Bonaventure, Bishop of Albano, Doctor of the Church, *First Sermon on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary***

—*Assumption*—

From [*Song of Solomon* 8:5: “Who is that coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?”] we can see that she is there [in Heaven] bodily ... her blessedness would not have been complete unless she were there as a person, but the soul, joined to the body, is a person. The soul is not a person. It is manifest that she is there in soul and body. Otherwise she would not possess the complete beatitude (*Munificentissimus* 32).

**1300-1306—Blessed John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio***

—*Immaculate Conception*—

A person is not in the highest degree indebted to the mediator, if he does not have from him the greatest good which he can have through this mediator. Now, this innocence, namely the preservation from a guilt contracted or still to be contracted, can be had through the mediator; hence no person is in the highest manner obliged to Christ as mediator, if he has preserved no one from original sin. ...

God could infuse into the soul of such a person in the first instant as great a grace as into another soul in circumcision or baptism. ...

If it does not contradict the authority of the Church or of Scripture, it seems probable that to Mary the more excellent thing should be attributed.

**ca. 1370—Saint Bridget of Sweden, *Prayer***

—*Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God*—

Blessed and revered may you be, my Lady, O Virgin Mary, most holy Mother of God.

**1390—Pope Boniface IX, 203<sup>rd</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Superni Benignitas***

—*Assumption; Woman in Revelation 12; Perpetual Virginity; Mediatrix*—

This is she of whom the Holy Scriptures sing: the woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and wearing a crown of twelve stars (Rev. 12:1). This is she who bore in her chaste womb the Creator of Heaven and Earth. She alone crushes all heresies. She stands before the King who reigns in light, pleading for the Christian people as their bold advocate and most vigilant intercessor.

**ca. 1440—Saint Bernardine of Siena, *First Sermon on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary***

—*Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God; Assumption*—

[W]hen the glorious Virgin Mother of God ascended to heaven, she augmented the joy of all its inhabitants (Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, *The Glories of Mary* 2:8).

**ca. 1470—Dionysius the Carthusian, *On the Praise and Dignity of Mary***

—*Mediatrix*—

[A] Man redeemed the world not without woman as an additional cause.

**1476—Pope Sixtus IV, 212<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Cum Praeexcelsa***

—*Immaculate Conception: observance of the feast of the Conception of Mary is decreed for the entire Latin Church; Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God*—

When, with that deep insight that comes to devout contemplation, we search and discover the sublime proofs of those merits which cause the Queen of heaven, the glorious Virgin Mother of God, raised upon her heavenly throne, to outshine like the morning star all other constellations ... we deem it fitting, and even our duty, to invite by means of indulgences and the remission of sins all the faithful of Christ to offer thanks and praise to God ... for the wondrous Conception of this same Immaculate Virgin, and to celebrate or to be present at Masses and at other divine

functions which have been instituted in the Church for this purpose. In this way, the faithful will, through the intercession and merits of the same Virgin, become more docile to divine grace.

**1483—Sixtus IV, *Grave Nimis***

—*Immaculate Conception; Perpetual Virginity*—

[T]he holy Roman Church publicly and solemnly celebrates the feast of the Conception of the inviolate and ever Virgin Mary.

—1517, *Start of the Protestant Revolt*

**1546—Council of Trent, 19<sup>th</sup> ecumenical council, *Decree on Original Sin***

—*Immaculate Conception; Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God*—

This same holy Synod declares that it is not its intention to include in this decree, where there is question of original sin, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Rather, the constitutions of [Pope Saint] Sixtus [IV, reign. 1471-1484] of happy memory are to be followed.

**1555—Pope Paul IV, 223<sup>rd</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Cum Quorundam***

—*Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God*—

In a spirit of paternal severity we are anxious to admonish each and everyone who has heretofore asserted, taught or believed ... that the same most Blessed Virgin Mary is not truly the Mother of God or that she did not always retain the integrity of her virginity, that is, before birth, during birth, and continuously after birth.

**1577—Saint Peter Canisius, Doctor of the Church, *On the Virgin Mary***

—*Co-Redemptrix*—

4:26:5 Truly great things were done to Mary by him who is mighty, so that she ... sacrificed Christ as real and living victim for the sin of the world.

**ca. 1595—Peter Canisius, *On the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary***

—*Assumption*—

This teaching has already been accepted for some centuries, it has been held as certain in the minds of the pious people, and it has been taught to the entire Church in such a way that those who deny that Mary's body has been assumed into heaven are not to be listened to patiently but are everywhere to be denounced as over-contentious or rash men, and as imbued with a spirit that is heretical rather than Catholic (*Munificentissimus* 36).

**ca. 1620—Saint Robert Bellarmine, Doctor of the Church, *On the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary***

—*Ark of the New Covenant (Immaculate Conception/Assumption); Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God; Assumption*—

And who, I ask, could believe that the ark of holiness, the dwelling place of the Word of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit, could be reduced to ruin? My soul is filled with horror at the thought that this virginal flesh which had begotten God, had brought him into the world, had nourished and carried him, could have been turned into ashes or given over to be food for worms (*Munificentissimus* 34).

**1621—Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, Doctor of the Church, *Sermon for the Feast of the Visitation***

—*Perpetual Virginity; Mediatrix*—

[N]otice that St. Elizabeth received the Holy Spirit by means of the Virgin. Certainly we must avail ourselves of her as a mediatrix with her Son in order to obtain this Divine Spirit; and although we can go directly to God and ask for His graces without employing the mediation of the saints for this purpose, nevertheless Divine Providence has not willed that it happen so; but It has formed still another union, for God is One, as I told you at the beginning, and so He loves what is unified. Therefore He has so united the Church Militant [i.e., the faithful on earth] with the Church Triumphant [i.e., the Saints in Heaven] that the two make only one, having only one Lord who rules, guides, governs and nourishes them, though in different ways.

**1661—Pope Alexander VII, 237<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum***

—*Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God; Immaculate Conception*—

Concerning the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, ancient indeed is that devotion of the faithful based on the belief that her soul, in the first instant of its creation and in the first instant of the soul's infusion into the body, was, by a special grace and privilege of God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, her Son and the Redeemer of the human race, preserved free from all stain of original sin. And in this sense have the faithful ever solemnized and celebrated the Feast of the Conception. ...

—*Immaculate Conception; Perpetual Virginity*—

We have in mind the fact that the Holy Roman Church solemnly celebrated the Feast of the

Conception of the undefiled and ever-Virgin Mary ... (Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*).

**ca. 1715—Saint Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary***

—*New Eve; exceptional sanctity (Immaculate Conception); Perpetual Virginity (“closed garden”)—*

16 [W]e must realize that Mary is the true paradise of the new Adam. The Eden from which the old Adam was expelled prefigured her. ...

This paradise is guarded not by a cherub, but by the Holy Ghost Himself. He wields absolute dominion over it. Mary is His closed garden.

“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up; a fountain sealed” (Song 4:12).

Mary is enclosed. Mary is sealed.

—1739, Pope Clement XII raises the Feast of the Conception of Mary to a holy day of obligation for the universal Church

**1750—Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, Bishop of Saint Agatha, Doctor of the Church, *The Glories of Mary***

—*Mediatrix—*

1:5 No one denies that Jesus Christ is our only mediator of justice, and that he by his merits has obtained our reconciliation with God. But, on the other hand, it is impious to assert that God is not pleased to grant graces at the intercession of his saints, and more especially of Mary his Mother, whom Jesus desires so much to see loved and honored by all. Who can pretend that the honor bestowed on a mother does not redound to the honor of the son? *The glory of children are their fathers* (Prov. 17:6). ... There can be no doubt that by the merits of Jesus, Mary was made the mediatrix of our salvation; not indeed a mediatrix of justice, but of grace and intercession. ...

—*Sinlessness (Immaculate Conception); incorruptibility (Assumption)—*

2:1 And as it was becoming that a most pure God should have a mother pure from all sin, he created her spotless. ... Here we may apply the words of the Apostle to the Hebrews: *For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest; holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners* (Heb. 7:26). A learned author observes that, according to St. Paul, it was fitting that our Blessed Redeemer should not only be separated from sin, but also from sinners; according to the explanation of St. Thomas,

who says, “that it was necessary that he, who came to take away sins, should be separated from sinners, as to the fault under which Adam lay” (*Summa Theologica* 3: Quest. 4: Art. 6). But how could Jesus Christ be said to be separated from sinners if he had a Mother who was a sinner? ...

2:7 Death being the punishment of sin, it would seem that the divine Mother—all holy, and exempt as she was from its slightest stain—should also have been exempt from death, and from encountering the misfortunes to which the children of Adam, infected by the poison of sin, are subject. But God was pleased that Mary should in all things resemble Jesus; and as the Son died, it was becoming that the mother should also die; because, moreover, he wished to give the just an example of the precious death prepared for them, he willed that even the most Blessed Virgin should die, but by a sweet and happy death. Let us, therefore, consider how precious was Mary’s death: first, on account of the special favors by which it was accompanied; secondly, on account of the manner in which it took place. ...

—*Assumption: Woman in Revelation 12—*

St. John saw Mary represented in that woman, clothed with the sun, who held the moon under her feet. *And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet* (Rev. 12:1) ...

—*Ark of the New Covenant (Assumption); Immaculate Conception—*

2:8 After Jesus Christ our Saviour had completed, by his death, the work of redemption, the angels ardently desired to possess him in their heavenly country; hence they were continually supplicating him in the words of David: *Arise, O Lord, into thy resting-place, Thou and the ark which Thou hast sanctified* (Ps. 131 [132]:8). Come, O Lord, come quickly, now that Thou hast redeemed men; come to Thy kingdom and dwell with us, and bring with Thee the living ark of Thy sanctification, Thy Mother, who was the ark which Thou didst sanctify by dwelling in her womb. Precisely thus does St. Bernardine make the angels say: “Let Mary Thy most holy Mother, sanctified by Thy conception, also ascend.” Our Lord was, therefore, at last pleased to satisfy the desire of these heavenly citizens by calling Mary to Paradise. But if it was his will that the ark of the old dispensation should be brought with great pomp into the city of David—*And David and all the house of*

*Israel brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord with joyful shouting, and with sound of trumpet* (2 Kgs. [Sam.] 6:15)—with how much greater and more glorious pomp did he ordain that his Mother should enter heaven! ...

Let us now consider how our Saviour went fourth from heaven to meet his Mother. On first meeting her, and to console her, he said: *Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come, for winter is now past and gone* (Song 2:10). Come, my own dear Mother, my pure and beautiful dove; leave that valley of tears, in which, for my love, thou hast suffered so much. *Come from Libanus, My Spouse, come from Libanus, come: thou shalt be crowned* (Song 4:8). Come in, soul and body, to enjoy the recompense of thy holy life.

**1846—Sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore, Pastoral Letter proposing Mary Immaculate as Patroness of the United States**

—*Mother of God; Immaculate Conception*—  
We take this occasion, brethren, to communicate to you the determination, unanimously adopted by us, to place ourselves and all entrusted to our care throughout the United States, under the special patronage of the Mother of God, whose Immaculate Conception is venerated by the piety of the faithful throughout the Catholic Church. ... To her then we commend you, in confidence that through the one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a redemption for all, she will obtain for us grace and salvation. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!

—1854, *The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is dogmatically defined by Venerable Pope Pius IX in the bull Ineffabilis Deus*

**1870—First Vatican Council, 20<sup>th</sup> ecumenical council, Profession of Faith**

—*Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God*—  
10 I resolutely assert that images of Christ and the ever virgin mother of God, and likewise those of the other saints, are to be kept and retained, and that due honour and reverence is to be shown to them.

**1894—Pope Leo XIII, 256<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, Jucunda Semper**

—*Assumption: Woman in Revelation 12*—  
We behold her taken up from this valley of tears into the heavenly Jerusalem, amid choirs of angels. And we honor her, glorified above all the saints, crowned with stars (cf. Rev. 12:1) by

her Divine Son, and seated at His side, the sovereign Queen of the universe.

—1950, *The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is dogmatically defined by Pope Pius XII in the bull Munificentissimus Deus*

**1965—Second Vatican Council, 21<sup>st</sup> ecumenical council, Lumen Gentium**

—*Immaculate Conception; Assumption*—  
59 Finally the Immaculate Virgin preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, that she might be the more full conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords (cf. Rev. 19:16), and conqueror of sin and death. ...

—*Assumption; Mediatrix; Perpetual Virginity*—  
62 This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and cults, until they are led into the happiness of their true home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5).

**1987—Pope John Paul the Great, 264<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, Redemptoris Mater**

—*Mediatrix*—  
22 It is important to note how the [Second Vatican] Council illustrates Mary's maternal role as it relates to the mediation of Christ. Thus we read: "Mary's maternal function towards mankind in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ but rather shows its efficacy," because, "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). This maternal role of Mary flows, according to God's good pleasure, "from the superabundance of the merits of Christ; it is founded on his mediation, absolutely depends on it and draws all its efficacy from it" (*Lumen Gentium* 60). It is precisely in this sense that the episode at Cana in Galilee offers us *a sort of first announcement of Mary's mediation*, wholly oriented towards

Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power.

**1989—John Paul the Great, *Redemptoris Custos***  
—*Perpetual Virginity*—

[W]hile it is important for the Church to profess *the virginal conception of Jesus*, it is no less important to uphold *Mary's marriage to Joseph*, because juridically Joseph's fatherhood depends on it. Thus one understands why the generations are listed according to the genealogy of Joseph: "Why," St. Augustine asks, "should they not be according to Joseph? Was he not Mary's husband? ... Scripture states, through the authority of an angel, that he was her husband. *Do not fear*, says the angel, *to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit*. Joseph was told to name the child, although not born from his seed. ... [H]e is not deprived of his fatherly authority from the moment that he is told to name the child" (*Sermon 51:10:16*). ...

—*New Eve; Mediatrix*—

"We see that at the beginning of the New Testament, as at the beginning of the Old, there is a married couple. But whereas Adam and Eve were the source of evil which was unleashed on the world, Joseph and Mary are the summit from which holiness spreads all over the earth. The Savior began the work of salvation by this virginal and holy union, wherein is manifested his all-powerful will to *purify and sanctify the family*—that sanctuary of love and cradle of life" (Pope Paul VI, *Discourse to the "Equipes Notre-Dame" Movement*, n. 7: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 62).

**2001—John Paul the Great, *Address to the Members of the Seventeenth General Assembly of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood***  
—*Assumption: Woman in Revelation 12; Perpetual Virginity*—

It was not by accident that St Gaspar del Bufalo established your Congregation on the Solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady. For he saw in the glory of the Virgin the wondrous fruit of the sacrifice of her Son on the Cross. Christ's Redemption marvellously restores humanity to the splendour which was the Creator's intention from the beginning; and that splendour must be the goal of every plan and project of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. That is why you must look always to the Woman "clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. 12:1).

**2001—Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *God Is Near Us***

—*Co-Redemptrix; Immaculate Conception; Perpetual Virginity*—

Without the freely given assent of Mary, God cannot become man. Certainly, this Yes Mary says is wholly by grace. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, whereby she was freed from original sin, has in fact just exactly this as its sole significance: that no human being can set in motion the process of salvation by his own powers alone, but that his Yes is wrapped around and supported within by that divine love which comes first and before all else and that already surrounds man before he is even born. "All is grace." Yet grace does not remove freedom; rather, it brings it into being. The entire mystery of redemption is present in this story and is summed up in the figure of the Virgin Mary: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

**2012—Pope Benedict XVI, 265<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Homily on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God***

—*Perpetual Virginity; Mother of God*—

The first to be swept up by this blessing was Mary the virgin, the spouse of Joseph, chosen by God from the first moment of her existence to be the mother of his incarnate Son. She is the "blessed among women" (Luke 1:42)—in the words of Saint Elizabeth's greeting. Her whole life was spent in the light of the Lord, within the radius of his name and of the face of God incarnate in Jesus, the "blessed fruit of her womb." This is how Luke's Gospel presents her to us: fully intent upon guarding and meditating in her heart upon everything concerning her son Jesus (cf. Luke 2:19, 51). The mystery of her divine motherhood that we celebrate today contains in superabundant measure the gift of grace that all human motherhood bears within it, so much so that the fruitfulness of the womb has always been associated with God's blessing. The Mother of God is the first of the blessed, and it is she who bears the blessing; she is the woman who received Jesus into herself and brought him forth for the whole human family. In the words of the liturgy: "without losing the glory of her virginity, [she] brought forth into the world the eternal light, Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Preface I of the Blessed Virgin Mary*).