

Mary in the Scriptures

Annunciation Luke 1:26-36



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The Angelus

P: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary
R: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

P: Behold the handmaid of the Lord
R: Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

P: And the Word was made Flesh
R: And dwelt among us.

P: Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God
R: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Together: Four forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord.


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Building a House

Firmly Grounded: basis for our beliefs about Mary (Sacred Scripture & Sacred Tradition)

Strong Foundation: Mary wills to root us more firmly in her Son, Jesus Christ

House Frame: Mary wills to help us build wisely (good materials) to weather the winds and rain (Matt. 7:25)



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Dei Verbum

- Two distinct modes of transmitting Revelation:
 - Sacred Scripture:** Speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit (DV 9).
 - Sacred Tradition:** Transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit (DV 9). Examples: liturgy (preeminent), creedal statements, writings of the Fathers, ecumenical councils, art, sacred music, Marian dogmas.
- Both flow from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal (DV 9).

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Dei Verbum

- Same source:** God!
- Come together:** In some sense form one thing
- Same goal:** Glorify God (reveal God's goodness) and unite us with God



Deposit of Faith = Sacred Tradition + Sacred Scriptures
Body of saving truth entrusted by Christ to the Apostles and handed on to them to be preserved and proclaimed.

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Dei Verbum

- How do Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture influence each other?
 - Sacred Scripture:** Guides Sacred Tradition like a road map as we journey towards Jesus Christ
 - Sacred Tradition:** Interprets Sacred Scripture – it gives them meaning (they are not self-interpreting); Sacred Scriptures flows out of Sacred Tradition
 - Magisterium:** Teaching office of the Church that authentically interprets the Word of God, whether in written (i.e., Sacred Scripture) or in the form of Tradition (DV 10).

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Dei Verbum

Deposit of Faith

Sacred Scripture

Sacred Tradition

Magisterium: Authentically interprets Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition

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Dei Verbum

Lake Itasca:
Paschal Mystery

Mississippi River:
Life of Christ via Sacred Tradition Sacred Scripture

Gulf of Mexico:
Eternal Life

Magisterium guarantees river remains clean

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Mary, our Model

- In contemplating Mary, praying to her and going on pilgrimage to her, the Church is contemplating and praying to its own ideal and pattern.
- This ideal in turn is nothing other than the open door which both points to Christ and the triune God. But since Christianity dislikes abstractions and prefers the concrete and personal, this door, too, should be an embodied person.
- This door is always open, and we are not obliged to think of Mary each time we pray to her Son. But it is meaningful nonetheless to learn afresh from this mother how we can best encounter her Son. (George Kirwin, O.M.I.)

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Preliminary Remarks

- Why study Mary?
- Mary plays a significant role in the plan of salvation. We will look at five important moments:
 - Annunciation
 - Wedding at Cana
 - Foot of the Cross
 - Pentecost
 - Book of Revelation

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Preliminary Remarks

- Along with being a significant part of God's plan of salvation, Mary illuminates the following:
 - **Christology:** The power of Christ's Redemption
 - **Ecclesiology:** The holiness of the Church
 - **Eschatology:** The "last things"
- Mary helps us understand what Jesus is capable of doing in us. In her, the Church is all holy (she is a member of the Church!). Mary is the "first fruits" of creation, which will be renewed in Christ.

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Preliminary Remarks

- **Christology:** In Mary, we can see the splendor of Christ's redemption, including what His redemption is capable of accomplishing in us. Mary is:
 - Perfectly redeemed – no sin!
 - Full of divine life
 - New Creation
- Mary is the most excellent fruit of Christ's redemptive work!

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Preliminary Remarks

- **Ecclesiology:** In Mary, we see one who is perfectly responsive to God:
 - **Handmaid of the Lord:** Devotes herself to the to her Son (i.e., she is radically open)
 - **Dwelling place of God:** Mary is God's "habitat"; the place where He dwells
 - **Mission of Grace:** Mary exists to bring Jesus to the world
 - **Glory:** In Mary, The Church sees its own end



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Preliminary Remarks

- **Eschatology:** Raised body and soul into heaven, Mary serves as the following for us:
 - **Image of the Church's destiny:** Church is holy, yet imperfect; In Mary, the Church is already perfected
 - **Hope and Comfort:** Regardless of our struggles, Mary reveals our end (i.e., glorified body & soul)
 - **All Creation:** Destined for freedom from slavery to corruption – Mary is the "first fruits" of the redeemed; in her, we see the New Creation

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Mona Lisa

- **Mona Lisa:** Acclaimed as the best known, the most visited, and the most written about work of art in the world.
- Mary is God's masterpiece of art – His "Mona Lisa" or His smile
- The Church loves and honors Mary because in doing so, she loves and honors God who created her!
- What God does in Mary, He wills to do in us!



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Luke Overview

- Whereas Joseph is the central character in Matthew's infancy narrative, Mary is central in Luke's infancy narrative.
- Luke provides us with a rich deposit of Marian information. For example, in the Annunciation, we learn:
 - **Her reaction to God's messenger:** She was greatly troubled
 - **Her difficulty:** "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"
 - **Her response:** "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord."

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Luke Overview

- Luke will present Mary as superior to the parents of John the Baptist – Zechariah doubts, Mary believes
- Elizabeth and Zechariah are presented as just, whereas Mary is filled with God's grace
- Zechariah is presented as a priest (learned and established), whereas Mary is presented as poor (*anawim*) and receptive
- Elizabeth and Zechariah are barren, whereas Mary is a virgin



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Virgin Betrothed

- **Virgin:** Greek *parthenos* is used in the LXX (Septuagint or Greek translation of the OT)
 - **Isaiah 7:14:** The young maiden shall conceive
- In general Greek usage, the term can refer to any unmarried woman without specific reference to sexual relations (Timothy Johnson, 36).
- **Betrothal:** Already a binding commitment, so that the term wife is appropriate for the woman (Timothy Johnson, 37).

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Annunciation Structure

- The Angel Gabriel is sent:
- Greeting:** Hail, highly favored one!
- Consternation:** She was greatly troubled
- Announcement:** Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God...
- Difficulty:** How can this be... since I have no relations with a man?
- Consent:** Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord
- The Angel Gabriel departs

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Chaire!

- What a greeting! It can mean:
 - Hello!**
 - Rejoice!** The Angel Gabriel invites Mary to rejoice!
 - Zeph. 3:14-15:** Shout for joy, daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, Israel! ... The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst, you have no further misfortune to fear.
 - Hail!** People normally reverence angels (spiritual in nature, familiar with God, participate in light of divine grace in very highest degree), but the angel reverences Mary because she excels in the fullness of grace. (St. Thomas, sermon)

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For Us

- Gabriel's greeting marks the beginning of the Gospel in the strict sense, its first word is "joy", the new joy that comes from God and breaks through the world's ancient and interminable sadness (Pope Benedict, *Credo*, 56)
- Imagine that the Angel Gabriel approached you today – what would his first words be? Would it be sadness, sinner, judgment? Do we still believe that Jesus is our joy?
- The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew (Pope Francis, 1).

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Kecharitōmenē

- Pronunciation: (keh-har-ee-TOE-men-ee) (used as title)
- Latin Vulgate:** *gratia plena*
- This has been and is translated in many different ways:
 - Full of grace
 - Favored one
 - Gifted Lady
- This is the only biblical instance where an angel addresses someone by a title instead of a personal name (Hahn & Mitch, 10)

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Kecharitōmenē

- It is a perfect passive participle of *charitoo* ('to fill or endow with grace'). Given that the term is perfect and passive, it means that Mary was graced in the past with continuing effects in the present.
 - Example:** Swimming pool having been filled (still full)
- While Mary has already been fully graced (given her state in life), she can still receive graces needed for changes which will come later in life (e.g., Incarnation and foot of the Cross).
- Thimble:** Mary's thimble is already full, but the thimble itself can grow larger through her later stages in life.



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Kecharitōmenē

- We can understand *kecharitōmenē* in three ways:
 - Received grace prior to the Annunciation (past)
 - Receives grace during the Annunciation (present)
 - Will receive grace subsequent the Annunciation (future)
- In common parlance, we could translate it this way, "Hail, you who **have been** graced; you who **are** graced; and you who **will be** graced."
- All three are signified by *kecharitōmenē*.



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Kecharītōmenē

- Notice that Gabriel does not use Mary's name when greeting her. Instead, by referring to her as "full of grace," it functions like a title or a new name.
- In the Sacred Scripture, when someone receives a new name, it says something about the essence of the person and the mission to which he or she is called (Sri, +1).
 - Abram – Abraham (father of a multitude)
 - Simon – Peter (rock)

Key: Mary is the "graced one" who receives grace and mediates or communicates grace (like all of us!).

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Immaculate Conception

- Gabriel's greeting to Mary serves as the foundation for the Church's belief that Mary was conceived without original sin. While it is not an explicit affirmation, there is an implicit affirmation given the threefold signification of *kecharītōmenē*.
- Gabriel's declaration points in the direction of Mary's Immaculate Conception (Hahn & Mitch, 19).

CCC 491: Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" by God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception.

Two-rivers: Scriptures indicates, Tradition supplies.


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Immaculate Conception

Pope Pius IX: The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin (*Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854).

God is Mary's savior in the most perfect way possible. He sanctified Mary in the first instance of her conception and preserved her entirely from sin and even from the inclination toward sin we experience (Hahn & Mitch, 19).

St. Bonaventure: God could have made a greater world and a greater heaven; but not a woman greater than his mother (Navarre, 98).



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Immaculate Conception

Eyes toward heaven: Mary looks to the Lord, who is source of her privilege

Hands together: Traditional posture of prayer

Clothed in white: Symbol of purity



Crescent moon: Symbol of purity, fertility, and transitory nature of things



Philippe de Champaigne - 1660

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Most Excellent Fruit

All of Us	Mary
	
Saved out the Hole	Nowhere near the Hole

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Fittingness

While Scripture is relatively silent about Mary's Immaculate Conception (implicit affirmation), one could argue it is "fitting" that Mary receives this grace so that she is made worthy to be the Mother of God.

	
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Which cup would you prefer to pour your favorite drink into?

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