

Mary in the Scriptures

Pentecost

Woman Clothed with the Sun

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1

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: Pour 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.

2

Short Review

- **Wedding:** The wedding at Cana contains rich symbolism. The bride and bridegroom are not mentioned by name, and remain in the background throughout the narrative. Jesus and Mary are the true bridegroom and bride.
- Jesus, as the bridegroom, takes upon Himself the role of bridegroom attributed to YHWH in the Old Testament:
 - **Is. 54:7:** For your husband is your Maker; the Lord of hosts is His name, Your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, called God of all the earth.
 - **Hos. 2:18:** On that day – oracle of the Lord – You shall call me “My husband,” and you shall never again call me “My baal.”

3

Short Review

- Mary, for her part, symbolizes the Church, the Bride of Christ. She represents the *anawim*, the materially and spiritually poor who seek God (e.g., widows, orphans, etc.).
- Additionally, the wedding at Cana not only looks back to the marriage of “one flesh” union of the original couple (Gen. 2:24), but also forward to the “marriage supper of the Lamb” in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 19:9).
- **Attendees:** As with all weddings, this wedding has a guest list. John the Baptist is the best man (Jn. 3:29); the Apostles are the groomsmen; Mary is the maid of honor; and consecrated virgins are the bridesmaids (Matt. 25:6).

4

Short Review

- **Wine:** Symbolic of the joy of the messianic era or the New Covenant. Symbolically, then, given that the old wine has run out (i.e., efficaciousness of the Old Covenant), Mary petitions for new wine (New Covenant).
- **Woman:** Jesus' address of “woman” draws our attention to Gen. 3:15 (*protoevangelium*), Jn. 19:6 (“Woman, behold your son”), and Rev. 12:1 (woman clothed with the sun).
 - In salvation history, just as a woman (Eve) cooperated in the fall of the human race, so a woman (Mary) cooperates in its redemption.
 - **St. Irenaeus:** The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience.

5

Short Review

- **Rebuke:** Jesus' response “What to me and to you?” indicates that He realizes on a symbolic level, Mary's request for wine is really a request to begin His mission toward His “hour.”
- Mary requests “new wine” or the new life that comes from Jesus on the Cross (Blood – Eucharist and Water – baptism).
- Additionally, Mary requests the “new wine” of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost (Acts 2:15: “They have had too much wine”).
- In her humility, Mary does not become bitter or upset at Jesus' response, but rather says, “Do whatever he tells you.”
- Her words are the norm of Christian life – doing Christ's will!

6

Short Review

- At the foot of the Cross, Mary actively offers her Son and all her suffering in union with her Son to the Father for His glory and for the salvation of the human race.
- Pope St. John Paul II:** Mary's "fiat" in the Annunciation finds its fullness in the silent "fiat" she repeats at the foot of the Cross.
- At Calvary, the promises in the Annunciation appear to be unfulfilled. While Mary does not fully understand, she continues to love and trust the Father and His plan of salvation. In our suffering, we can stand with Mary on Good Friday.
- At the foot of the Cross, Mary symbolizes perfect receptivity (human acceptance) to the total self-offering of Jesus. The covenant between God and humanity is perfectly realized.

7

Short Review

- Consummatum est:** Prior to His last breath, Jesus says, "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30).
- Symbolically, the marriage between God and humanity begun in the Incarnation, celebrated at Cana (wedding), is now brought to completion at Calvary (consummated).
 - The cross is the marriage-bed or the "one-flesh" union between Jesus, the bridegroom, and His Bride, the Church (symbolized by Mary).
 - The "fruit" of their love is the beloved disciple, who represents all Christian disciples who possess authentic faith.

8

Short Review

- Prior to His death, Jesus entrusts His mother to His beloved disciple, and His beloved disciple to His mother.
- In doing so, He fulfills the Old Testament themes of Mary as the New Eve (Gen. 4:1: "I have produced a male child with the help of the Lord") and Lady Zion (Is. 49:20-22: Mary gives birth to a new people in the messianic age).
- At the Cross, Jesus constitutes a new relationship between His mother and the beloved disciple (i.e., His new family).
- The beloved disciple's first mission is to accept Jesus' mother as *his* mother. He does so by taking her "into his home" or his own being. Consequently, his entire life is transformed.

9

Gathered Together

- Upper Room:** It is uncertain whether this is the same upper room as that used for the Last Supper. Regardless, an upper room is typically a place for gathering/prayer.
 - Acts 20:8:** Paul "breaks bread" and speaks to the disciples where they are gathered in a large upstairs room
- Peter and John and James:** Every apostle is mentioned by name. They will play a critical role in the origin of the Church.
 - Luke 6:13-16:** Luke's first apostolic list
- As Jesus worked through His apostles during His earthly ministry, so the Risen Jesus will work through His apostles in building His Church (and continues to do so!).

10

Devoted to Prayer

- Devoted themselves:** A more literal translation would be that they "were persisting with one accord in prayer" (Kurz, 38).
 - Persistent:** They persevere in prayer, regardless of opposition, obstacles, or discouragement.
 - One Accord:** The Greek *homothymadon* can be rendered as "unanimously with one mind" (Fitzmyer, 215).
- Notice that prayer is the *first* action of the infant Church! Prayer is an essential action of the Church.



11

Devoted to Prayer

- Some women:** Presumably the women followed Jesus from Galilee (Lk 8:1-3) who witnessed his death (23:49), his burial (23:54-56), and his Resurrection (24:1-10, 22). They now share the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:17) (Timothy Johnson, 34).
 - While they are not mentioned by name (unknown), God knows them. That is enough.
 - Man for All Seasons:** When Sir Thomas recommends that Richard becomes a teacher, he replies, "If I was, who would know it?" Sir Thomas replies, "You! Your pupils. Your friends. God. Not a bad public, that."
- Key:** God builds up His Church more by the "unknown" than by the "known."

12

Devoted to Prayer

- **Mary, the Mother of Jesus:** The inclusion of Mary cannot be accidental. This is Luke's first mention of her by name since the infancy narrative (Timothy Johnson, 34).
- As Mary has the Spirit overshadow her to give birth to the prophet-messiah (Lk 1:35), so she is present as the gift of the Spirit that gives birth to the Church, one of those "daughters of Israel" who have the spirit of prophecy (Acts 2:17) (Timothy Johnson, 34).
- Whereas Mary bears Christ the Head at Bethlehem, she bears Christ the Body (Church) at Pentecost. Mary is mother of *Christus totus* (whole Christ).

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Devoted to Prayer



Bethlehem
Birth of Christ



Pentecost
Birth of Church

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Devoted to Prayer

- **Mary, the Mother of Jesus:** Like the Apostles, Mary is mentioned by "name." Her presence is foundational for the Church, both in its origin and in every age.
- Mary is mentioned separately from the Apostles. In other words, there is something significantly unique about Mary's role in the Church.
- **Note:** This is the final time that Mary is mentioned in the New Testament. In other words, the last time Mary is mentioned by name, she is praying with the Church and for the Church.
- As at Cana, her prayers were very efficacious! At Pentecost, they are efficacious as well (new wine).

15

Fruit of Prayer

- Two significant events follow:
 - **Replacing of Judas:** The Apostles choose a replacement for Judas, who betrayed the Lord. The Apostles, then, must determine God's will in choosing a successor.
 - With the selection of Matthias, the eleven apostles become twelve, thereby representing the restored tribes of Israel (Hahn & Mitch, 19).
 - **Day of Pentecost:** Immense outpouring of the Holy Spirit such that they began to speak in other tongues. They are "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). The Holy Spirit animates the Church so that it can fulfill its mission.

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For Us

- The Apostles, with women and Mary, were persistent with one accord in prayer. In response, God works through them to choose a successor to Judas. In addition, He "fills" them with the Holy Spirit thereby enabling them to fulfill their mission.
- Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). He wills to pour out the same Spirit today upon disciples who
 - (1) persistently pray;
 - (2) remain united.
- While we cannot control the actions of others, we can pray, live at peace with others (Rom. 12:18), and build up the Church in unity.

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Pentecost



Jean II Restout (1732)

18

Jesus' Brothers

- **His brothers:** The kinship of Jesus is also mentioned in the synoptic gospels:
 - **Matt. 13:55:** Is he not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother named Mary and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? (cf. Mk 6:3).
- Eastern custom reckoned even remote degrees of kinship, while the Hebrew language had no special word to designate male or female cousins and therefore called them generically *brothers and sisters* (Riccioti, 52).
- **Gen. 13:8:** And Abram said to Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we are brethren (King James Version)

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Jesus' Brothers

- Two biblical passages serve as counter evidence to the impression that Mary had other children:
 - **Finding in the Temple:** The finding of Jesus in the Temple gives no hint that Joseph and Mary had other children. Jesus returned home with them and was obedient to them (Lk 2:51).
 - **Behold, your Son:** Jesus entrusts His mother not to a blood relative, but rather to his beloved disciple. The implication is that Mary had no other sons whom to confide her (Kurz, 40).



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Jesus' Brothers

- **C.K. Barrett:** Referring to "his brothers" in Acts 1:14, says, "The present passage can neither prove nor disprove any of the theories of the relationship of the *brothers* to Jesus..." (Acts of the Apostles: A Shorter Commentary)
- In the end, Scripture *alone* does not tell us whether Mary had other children. Biblical evidence can be argued both ways.
- Sacred Tradition, however, *does* tell us that Mary remained a virgin throughout her entire life. Church Fathers such as Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine, and Cyril of Alexandria spoke of Mary's perpetual virginity. The Council of Constantinople II (553-554) twice referred to Mary as "Ever-virgin." Finally, the Church's liturgy speaks of Mary as "Ever-virgin" (CCC 499).

21

Book of Revelation

- Revelation can be divided into two parts:
 - **Chapters 1-3:** Jesus, the Son of Man purifies the Church by His words.
 - Jesus speaks to the author and dictates letters to seven Churches in Asia. Seven symbolizes completeness. Thus, Jesus speaks to the whole Church (liturgy of the Word).
 - **Chapters 4-22:** Jesus, the Lamb is true salvation.
 - Speaks of the purifying process of the Bride (those united with Jesus) before she is forever united with Jesus, the Bridegroom, in the "marriage supper of the Lamb" (McIlraith, 3).

22

Ugh!

- The Book of Revelation can be frustrating because it is replete with many symbols, some of which appear quite bizarre to us.
 - Lamb with seven eyes and seven horns; beast from the sea, red dragon, Babylon, sun and stars, various numbers, etc.
- Consequently, we either throw our hands in the air and say, "It's all Greek to me!" or we ask a priest who then begins to sweat profusely.
- In short, the Book of Revelation does not reveal her secrets easily.



23

So Many Symbols!

Symbol	Meaning
Cosmic symbols (heaven, earth)	Transcendence & this world
Cosmic upheavals (sun darkened, stars falling, etc.)	God's intervention (bringing about a new creation)
Animal Symbols (four living creatures, eagles, locusts, etc.)	Forces beyond human control; central symbol is the Lamb
Anthropological or Human Symbols	Marriage image (the new covenant); cloths (good deeds)
Number symbols	7: completeness; 12: patriarchs or Apostles; 1,000: uncountable
Color symbols	Red: blood; black: death
Old Testament symbols	More than 800 references to OT

Donal McIlraith, *Everyone's Apocalypse*, 1995

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So Many Symbols!

- **Rev. 5:6:** John says that he saw a "lamb that seemed to have been slain. He had seven horns and seven eyes..."
- **Lamb:** Redemption (Ex. 12)
- **Seven:** Perfection (e.g., seven days of creation)
- **Horn:** Power
- **Eye:** Knowledge (to "see")
- Jesus, who was crucified, is all-powerful (omnipotent) and all-knowing (omniscient), has authority (scroll) over the cosmos and over history.

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Revelation 12

- Composed of **three parts:**
- **Verses 1-6:** Battle between a woman with child and a dragon. The woman gives birth to the child (destined to rule) and then flees from the dragon for a fixed amount of time.
- **Verses 7-13:** War between Michael and his angels against the dragon. Michael casts the dragon out of heaven, who then pursues the woman who had given birth to the child.
- **Verses 14-18:** Returns to the battle between the dragon (serpent) and the woman. In failing to defeat the woman, the dragon waged war against the woman's offspring.

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Woman & Red Dragon



Woman Clothed with the Sun
Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

27

Woman

- Who is the woman?
- Keep in mind that the power of a symbol is its ability to convey multiple meanings at once.
 - **Wedding ring:** Symbolizes marriage, which includes love (love is eternal), commitment, self-sacrifice, etc.
 - **Rev. 17:9:** The seven heads represent seven hills upon which the woman sits. They also represent seven kings.
- The power of presenting the woman as a symbol, then, is that she can convey multiple meanings at one time.

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Woman

- Possible interpretations of the woman (collectivity):
- **Faithful of Israel:** The woman represents the people of Israel. The birth pangs symbolize the sufferings of the people of Israel as they make their way toward the messianic age (cf. Is. 26:17, Mic. 4:9-10) (Bastero, 152).
 - **Gen. 37:9-10:** Joseph's dream of the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down to him.
- **Church:** The woman represents the spiritual Israel. The birth pangs symbolize the sufferings of giving birth to her children and remaining faithful to Jesus.

29

Woman

- Possible interpretation of the woman (singular):
- **Mary:** Symbolizes the "great daughter of Zion" (Old Israel), and as a model of faith, the most perfect embodiment of the Church (Bastero, 153). The birth pangs refer to her suffering at the Cross where in pain she brought forth the beloved disciple (i.e., all Christians).
- **Note:** While the Fathers of the Church tended to see the woman as the icon of the Church, the second millennium tended to see the woman as Mary, the mother of the Messiah.
- While the Marian interpretation is much later, it does have a number of reasons of support.



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Woman as Mary

- **Rev. 11:19:** Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of the covenant could be seen in the temple...
- **Note:** Original manuscripts did not contain chapter and verse divisions in the numbered form familiar to us today. Chapter divisions were added in the 12th century, while verse divisions were added in the 16th century.
- Consequently, notice that immediately after speaking about the ark of the covenant, John speaks about a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet...
- We are to see, then, a connection between the ark of the covenant and the woman (e.g., Mary - Ark of the Covenant).

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Woman as Mary

- **Woman:** The title "woman" connects salvation history from Gen. 3:15 (*protoevangelium*), Jn. 2:4 (Cana), Jn. 19:26 (Calvary), and Rev. 12:1 (Clothed with the sun).
- **Consistency:** Since the other two main characters in the passage are identified as individuals (the male child = Jesus; the dragon = Satan), it seems unlikely that the third major character, the woman, is not an individual at all, but *only* a symbol for a collective group.
- Rather, if the dragon and the child represent individuals, the woman is likely to represent an individual as well (Sri, 158).

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Woman as Mary

- Recent popes such as Pius X, Pius XII, Paul IV, Pope John Paul II, and Emeritus Benedict XVI have identified the woman as Mary.
- **Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI:** This Woman represents Mary, the Mother of the Redeemer, but at the same time she also represents the whole Church, the People of God of all times, the Church which in all ages, with great suffering, brings forth Christ ever anew. And she is always threatened by the dragon's power. She appears defenseless and weak (General Audience, August 23, 2006).
- **In short:** The woman of Revelation 12 is a multivalent symbol. She is both an individual person and a collective symbol (Hahn, 50).

33

Assumption of Mary

- **Pope Pius XII:** By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory (*Munificentissimus Deus*, 44).
- The declaration is given near the end of the document. Among the reasons listed as support, Pope Pius XII says that the scholastic Doctors recognized the Assumption of the Virgin Mother of God in that "woman clothed with the sun whom John contemplated on the Island of Patmos" (27).

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Assumption of Mary

Open hands with palms up:
Symbol of her humility

Eyes raised to heaven: Mary looks to source of this privilege

Angels support Mary: Psalm 91 states, "No evil shall befall you, no affliction come near your tent. For he has commanded his angels with regard to you, to guard you wherever you go."



Bartolomé Esteban Murillo - 1680

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Theological Basis

- **Ark of the Covenant:** John sees the ark of the covenant in God's temple in heaven (Rev. 11:19). Mary is the true ark of the covenant (she bore the living Word of God).
- **Full of grace:** Mary's assumption is the fulfillment of the most perfect grace granted to the Blessed Mother (*Munificentissimus Deus*, 27).
 - Mary is preserved from all stain of sin. Therefore, she does not experience the consequences of sin (i.e., corruption of death). She is the realization (i.e., first stage) of the new creation.
- **Mary follows the itinerary of Christ:** Mary shared in Jesus' self-emptying (kenosis), therefore she shares in His glorification (i.e., body and soul!). Mary shares in the victory of Christ.

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Theological Basis

- **Divine Motherhood:** If you had the power to raise your mother from the dead (body and soul), wouldn't you do it? How much more fitting, then, for Jesus to raise His mother.
- **Note:** Pope Pius XII and *Lumen Gentium* left the question of whether Mary died open (tradition leans heavily that she died)
 - **Mary did not die** (Immortalist view): Silence of the early centuries as to Mary's death; given that Mary was preserved from sin, she did not have to die.
 - **Mary died** (Mortalist View): There is the feast of dormition; configured to Christ, who suffered, died, and is Risen; Mary lost the preternatural (beyond nature) gift of immortality with Adam's sin, therefore Mary was subject to death (Bastero, 210).

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For Us

- Why Mary's Assumption is significant for us today:
 - **Most Excellent Fruit:** It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it (LG 60).
 - **Sign and hope:** Mary is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come (LG 68).
 - **Opposes Materialism:** Mary is "home" in heaven. Our homeland, too, is with the Trinity, all the angels, and saints.
 - **Reveals the dignity of the body:** As human persons, we are beings comprised of *body and soul* (CCC 362). Jesus Christ redeems the *whole person*, body and soul.

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The Woman and the Dragon

- Revelation 12 presents the enmity existing between the woman and the serpent (dragon).
 - **Gen. 3:15:** "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers."
- Initially, there is a standoff between the woman who gives birth to a male child, and the dragon who wishes to devour the child.
- After losing a battle with Michael and his angels, the dragon pursues the woman and her child. God, however, protects the woman and her child. Consequently, the dragon wages war against the rest of her offspring.

39

The Woman and the Dragon

- | <u>Woman</u> | <u>Dragon</u> |
|--|---|
| • Clothed with the sun: resplendent/protected | • Ancient Serpent: called the Devil and Satan (v. 9) |
| • Moon under her feet: moon is passing, woman is permanent | • Ten horns: symbol of strength |
| • Crown of twelve stars: twelve tribes of Israel/Apostles | • Seven diadems: symbol of ruling power (Hahn, 51). |
| • Wailed aloud in pain: pains of Israel (Mic. 4:10) or Mary at the Cross (Jn. 19:26-27) | • Third of the stars: fall of angels in creation (2 Pet. 2:4), great strength, but limited |

40

A Difficult Battle

- Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers (CCC 675).
- The same paragraph adds that the persecution will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering people an apparent solution to their problems at the price of the apostasy from the truth.
- The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh (CCC 675).
- **Key:** The Church must travel the same path as her Lord. There will be a final "unleashing of evil," which will cause Christ's bride to come down from heaven (CCC 677).

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For Us

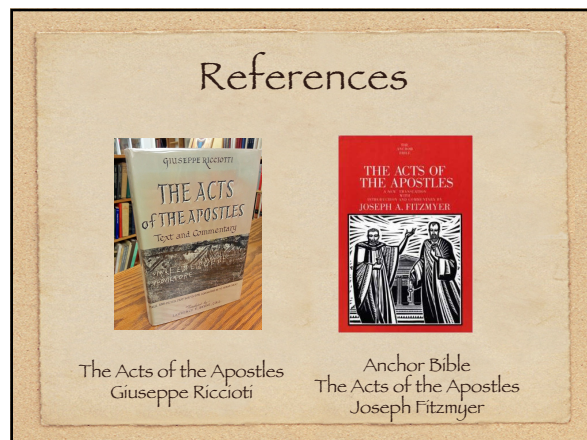
- The Church's difficult path ahead should not cause us to fear because the battle has *already* been won with the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ!
- Mary, for her part, in being perfectly configured to her Son in His suffering, *now* shares in His glory. Given that she is a member of the Church, the Church, too, already shares in Christ's victory over sin and death.
- As our Mother, Mary *prays* unceasingly that we, her children, will share fully in her Son's redemption, which she already enjoys.
- **Key:** Mary is the "cause of our joy" because in her, the battle has already been won!



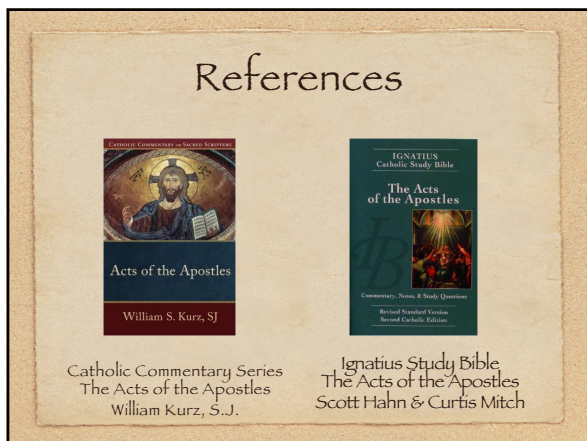
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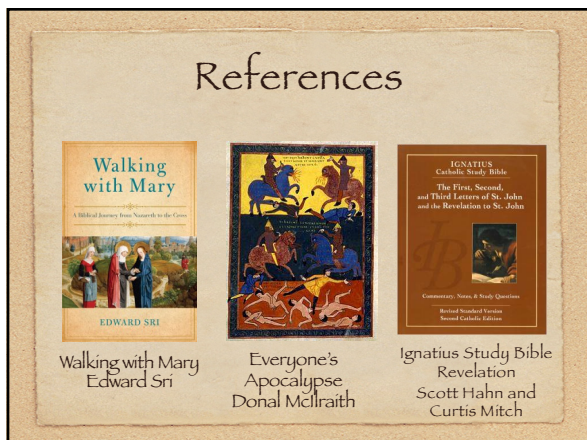
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