

BASIC CHRISTIANITY

Lecture Number 24

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

[http://www.stvincentscathedral.org/page/basic_christianity_course_document_files]

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TRADITION

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” [I Corinthians 12:27] That is *us* that St. Paul is talking about. *We* are his Body. *We* are his flesh and blood. *We* are his brethren.

He has a Mother also. And since we are his Body, his flesh and blood, his Mother is our Mother!

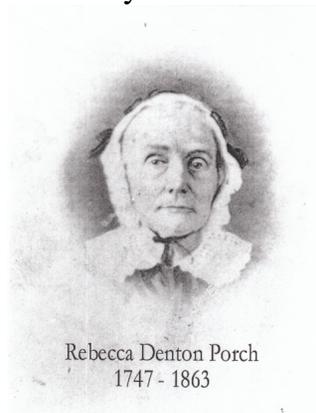
“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only son from the Father.” [John 1:14] The Incarnation of the Son of God is the entire life of Jesus and everything involved with it.

So the fact which we celebrate when we proclaim the Gospel is that God Himself has taken flesh from a particular woman in a particular place at a particular time. The Son of God not only took on human nature, he also took on a human family with kinfolks and family traditions, and, even more, he took his genetic makeup from his human Mother.

Families have memories, family traditions. My own family has a fascinating tradition. It is the story of my grandmother's great grandmother, Rebecca Denton Porch. She was born in 1747 and died in 1863. She lived 116 years! She was approaching middle age when the American Revolution was won. She lived through the War of 1812 and died during the Civil War.

When she was over a hundred she still hitched up her own buggy and drove it. When her son died in Somerset, Kentucky, she rode on a mattress in the back of a wagon from Whitley county to Pulaski County for his funeral.

When Rebecca died my grandmother was 7 years old. And I was 7 years old when she died. Grandmother knew an ancestor who was born in 1747, and she knew a descendant who lived until at least 2013. That is 266 years, over a quarter of a millenium. There were only two *millennii* from the time of our Lord until today!



During the first Christian quarter millenium, the Church was under more or less continuous persecution. It was a very close knit family and it treasured its traditions which were rich and widely known by members of the Christian family. During that time, it relied on its knowledge of the Tradition even more than it did on the written Gospel records. [Wenham, John, *Redating Matthew Mark & Luke*, p. 222]

In fact, St. Clement of Alexandria [AD 150-215] said, “Those teachers, however, who preserved intact the true tradition, as it stems directly from the holy apostles Peter and James, John and Paul, by ensuring that a son always received it from his father, came, by the help of God, to us as well, in order...to sow [in us] those apostolic seeds” [Hauke, Manfred, *Women in the Priesthood?*, p. 387].

So from the beginning, Christian tradition has remembered certain things about St. Mary as well as other members of the family of our Lord. One of them is that there is no tradition at all about the site of her tomb. Instead the traditional conviction was that she has been taken into heaven.

The 20th century Roman Catholic Dogma of the Assumption was formulated to express this conviction.

Another part of the ancient tradition is that she remained a virgin, not only before but after she gave birth to Our Lord. And there is one document from this period, the mid 2nd century, which has survived, which deals directly with the Blessed Virgin, *The Protoevangelium of James*. Its earlier name was *The Nativity of Mary*. And it bears dramatic witness to the perpetual virginity of Mary.

Although we have many Christian writings from this period, many more have been lost, and we know the titles of only some of them. The ones which survived had mostly to do with the refutation of various heretics and pagans. And during this time St. Mary was not an object of controversy.

Although it was never included in the canon of Holy Scripture and has minimal theological value, *The Protoevangelium of James* was very popular and widely circulated. “...it cast an undeniable spell over the Christian mentality of the first centuries and ...has profoundly conditioned Christian liturgy, preaching, popular devotion, and art...even the Fathers of the Church referred to it, especially when writing to the people” [Gambero, Luigi, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, p. 35].

The Council of Chalcedon in 451 when it promulgated the “Tome of Leo” [BCP p. 864, *Council of Chalcedon*] which defined the relation of the divine and human natures of Christ, included in its official “Definition of the Faith” a striking phrase by Leo: “Her virginity was as untouched in giving him birth as it was in conceiving him.”

Thus the perpetual virginity of Mary is part of the Faith of the undivided Church. And that idea is part of what we refer to when we recite the Nicene Creed on Sunday.

Another part of the ancient memory of St. Mary is that she was especially prepared by God to carry out her vocation, not only to give birth to the incarnate Son of God but to raise him to mature manhood. And she so thoroughly succeeded in doing that so perfectly that throughout his

life and death he was without sin, living only to do the will of Him who sent him!

The Church became convinced that, at least by the moment when the Angel Gabriel announced to her the purpose God had for her, she was by His grace as innocent as mother Eve had been before she succumbed to Satan's temptation. The 19th century Roman Catholic Dogma of the Immaculate Conception was formulated to express this basic conviction.

The first Eve had said, "Yes," to the word of the rebellious angel Lucifer [the "Light Bearer"] and sin and darkness entered the world. And Adam, mankind, was diverted from going on to the spiritual maturity which God had planned for them.

When the second Eve, Mary, said, "Yes," to the obedient angel Gabriel, she gave birth to the New Mankind, and the Light of Light came into the world. And he is the means by which all who are in him shall at last "attain...to true mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." [Ephesians 4:13]

The Eastern Church and the Western Church in time came to clarify and refine these basic convictions about St. Mary in different ways. But for 1500 years, from the first Christian centuries until the time of the Reformation, all Christians lived in an atmosphere of deep and frequently fervent devotion to Mary, the Mother of our Lord.

THE LEGACY OF THE REFORMATION

In the Church of the West, for a number of reasons, by the time of the Reformation, the main theological emphasis had shifted to the question of how we get saved, how we get to Heaven. And so we got doctrines such as the "Treasury of Merits" and Luther's "Justification by Faith."

Also among those whom we would call "intellectuals" today, there arose a widely held view that the Church was suffering from a great many serious abuses. They believed that many, if not most, of the devotional practices of the day were actually hindrances to salvation. So they advocated a drastic "pruning" of such practices as well as of the doctrines which justified them.

By this time, all the educated classes had been steeped in the philosophy of William of Occam called *nominalism*. Nominalism said that there were no such things as *universals* only *particulars*. For instance, there is no such thing as mankind, only individual men, and all they have in common is *nominal*, [Latin *nomen* means "name"] i.e. the name man. Hence the word nominalism.

This outlook tended to undermine such notions as the Church being the *Body of Christ* or the *Bride of Christ* or the *Mother* of every Christian, not to mention all understanding of the *Communion of Saints* as embracing all Christians on earth and in eternity.

For historical reasons, for some centuries, the Church had been experienced more and more as an oppressive bureaucracy instead of as a loving and nurturing family. The Church was not being experienced as our mother but as the earthly expression of a remote, judgmental, and stern God.

Christians also felt that the *Lord* Jesus Christ was unapproachable. They seemed to have lost

sight of the fact that he was precisely the way in which the Father had come to us in our need and had made the Father's *love and understanding* totally available to us.

That is to say, they had ceased to think, or feel, in terms of having access *through Jesus to the Father*.

So Christians turned more and more to the figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Devotion to her seemed to be the one way available for Christians to experience that proper divine maternal love—which should have come from the Church—and also the one way open to express their love in return.

Thus over the centuries, they had come to think and feel, almost exclusively, in terms of going *through Mary to Jesus*.

And because Christian piety of the day seemed to the reformers to be almost *exclusively* directed towards Mary, they considered it to be idolatrous. It seemed as though she was being treated like God.

Therefore, on the continent, wherever the reformers got the local prince to back them up, they set out to condemn and suppress all forms of Marian devotion along with all sorts of other things. Instead of dealing with the real root problem, it made things worse.

This violent reaction of the nominalist reformers dealt a final death blow to any sense of the Church as family. And it gave us instead the destructive individualism which is with us to this day.

However, properly understood, the Christian religion is a love affair between God and the Church, or to put it another way, between Christ and his Bride the Church. God is our lover, not our adversary. And by extension it is a love affair between the members of the Church — “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you...” [John 15:12-17]

But by the time of the Reformation western Christians had pretty much stopped thinking in terms of such a love affair. That was true just as much of the reformers as of everyone else. And that is why it only made things worse when the reformers suppressed the one remaining *institutional* expression of love in ordinary church life — the devotion to Our Lady.

The suppression of devotion to St. Mary included eliminating those feast days which celebrated the events in the Gospel in which she was involved, such as the Annunciation.

With all of its excesses, the devotion to St. Mary was the one thing which kept some of the “sweetness,” the nourishment of the heart, in the Christian life, as well as the much needed maternal and feminine dimension, which was totally lacking in protestantism.

Thus the continental reformers threw out the “baby with the bath water.”

The resulting reformation churches on the continent placed all of their emphasis on getting to heaven after we die. There was no sense of enjoying *fellowship* with our Lord right now *in this life* by virtue of being in the Body of Christ. Christianity was, for reformation Christians on the

continent, generally speaking, a joyless business.

THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

There was a similar reaction in England but it was not nearly as extreme as it was on the continent of Europe.

By 1600, when the dust had settled in the Church of England, the official liturgy, the Book of Common Prayer, provided for the recognition of Mary in a number of ways.

In the daily office of Evening Prayer the canticle following the First Lesson is the "Magnificat," the "Song of Mary," which she sang when Elizabeth had greeted her and called her blessed [Lk 1:46-55].

And the Book of Common Prayer provided for the observance, not only of Christmas, but also of such feasts of St. Mary as the Nativity of Mary, the Annunciation to her, the Purification of her following our Lord's birth, as well as the turning of the water into wine at the Wedding at Cana, on the third Sunday after Epiphany.

Since then other feasts of the Blessed Virgin have been restored to official Anglican public worship. We now celebrate in addition to Christmas: the Annunciation on March 25; the Visitation of St. Mary to St. Elizabeth on May 31; the Purification on Feb. 2; and the Assumption on August 15.

Although the Assumption is known in the Prayer Book simply as "St. Mary the Virgin," in the collect for that day we pray,

O God, *who hast taken to thyself* the blessed Virgin Mary, mother of thy incarnate Son: Grant that we, who have been redeemed by his blood, may share with her the glory of thine eternal kingdom; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Her Assumption is a foreshadowing of *our* entrance into glory, fulfilling the words of Jesus' in John's Gospel, (14:3) "I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

In the Eastern Church the Assumption is known as the "Dormition, i.e. the Falling Asleep, of the Virgin Mary."

There is one other feast of our Lady which has not yet been restored to our official liturgy: the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which falls on December 8. However, it is unofficially celebrated in many Anglican parishes.

St. Mary is also on the scene in a number of other events which are celebrated in our liturgy: the Circumcision of Jesus [a.k.a. The Holy Name] on January 1; the visit of the Wise Men [the Epiphany] on January 6; the flight into Egypt [2nd Sunday of Christmas]; Jesus found in the temple when he was 12 [2nd Sunday of Christmas]; the wedding at Cana; the Crucifixion; and Pentecost.

In spite of the important place in the public worship of the Church which St. Mary has always enjoyed among Anglicans, private devotions to St. Mary had nearly totally disappeared among us until the Oxford renewal which began in the early 1800s. Since that time they have steadily increased until now they are widespread.

OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM

This revived devotion to St. Mary among Anglicans centers around the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in England:

Even in the eleventh century, when this story begins, the village of Little Walsingham was a thriving place, located mid-way between Norwich (then England's second city) and the wealthy town of King's Lynn. Richeldis de Faverches was a Saxon noblewoman, married to the Lord of the Manor of Walsingham Parva. He died leaving her a young widow with a son, Geoffrey.

We know that Richeldis had a deep faith in God and devotion to Mary. We know too of her reputation for good works in care and generosity towards those around her.

At this time there was a great deal of interest in the Holy Land, and people undertook long and often dangerous pilgrimages there. Christian armies were soon to be engaged in a number of Crusades to liberate the holy sites from Muslim control, and it is believed that Geoffrey eventually joined one of those Crusades as an expression of his Christian faith.

For Richeldis, however, the life of prayer and good works was rewarded by a vision in the year 1061. In this vision she was taken by Mary to be shown the house in Nazareth where Gabriel had announced the news of the birth of Jesus.

Mary asked Richeldis to build an exact replica of that house in Walsingham. This is how Walsingham became known as England's Nazareth. The vision was repeated three times, according to legend, and retold through a fifteenth century ballad. The materials given by Richeldis were finally constructed miraculously one night into the Holy House, while she kept a vigil of prayer.

Although we cannot be certain that this story represents all the details of historical fact, we do know that in passing on his guardianship of the Holy House, Geoffrey de Faverches left instructions for the building of a Priory in Walsingham. The Priory passed into the care of Augustinian Canons somewhere between 1146 and 1174.

[from the Web site of the Shrine: <http://www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk/intro.htm>]

THE HAIL MARY

The most widespread form of that devotion is the Hail Mary, also known as "The Angelic Salutation," which is composed of quotations from the New Testament plus a request for the prayers of St. Mary.

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee [Luke 1:28].

Blessed art thou among women,

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. [Luke 1:42]

Holy Mary, Mother of God [*Theotokos*, BCP p. 864 *Council of Chalcedon*],
pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen

THE ANGELUS

A very common form of devotion which involves the Hail Mary is the Angelus. In many parishes the bell is rung three times a day, morning, noon, and evening, in memory of the Incarnation. At that signal the faithful say these prayers:

The Angel of the Lord announced unto Mary,
and she conceived by the Holy Ghost.
Hail Mary full of Grace...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord;
be it unto me according to thy word.
Hail Mary full of Grace...

And the Word was made Flesh
and dwelt among us.
Hail Mary full of Grace...

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

[Let us Pray.] We beseech thee, O Lord, pour
thy grace into our hearts: that as we have known
the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the
message of an angel, so by his cross and
passion we may be brought unto the glory of his
resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord.

During the fifty days of the Easter season, instead of the Angelus, the Regina Coeli is recited:

O queen of heaven, be joyful, alleluia;
Because he whom so meetly thou barest, alleluia,
Hath arisen, as he promised, alleluia.
Pray for us to the Father, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
R. For the Lord is risen indeed, alleluia.

[Let us Pray.] O God, who by the resurrection of thy
Son Jesus Christ, didst vouchsafe to give gladness unto
the world: grant, we beseech thee, that we, being
holpen by the Virgin Mary, his Mother, may attain
unto the joys of everlasting life. Through the same
Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE ROSARY

The Hail Mary also occupies the most prominent place in the form of meditation known as the Rosary.

As we said in the previous class, the Rosary gives us something to say and to hear and something to do with our fingers while we are meditating on the mysteries of God made flesh in Jesus Christ.

Those mysteries are usually divided into three groups which are referred to as the Joyful, the Sorrowful, and the Glorious Mysteries.

JOYFUL MYSTERIES	SORROWFUL MYSTERIES	GLORIOUS MYSTERIES
The Annunciation	The Agony in the Garden	The Resurrection
The Visitation	The Scourging	The Ascension
The Nativity	The Crowning with Thorns	Pentecost
The Presentation	The Bearing of the Cross	The Assumption of the BVM*
Jesus Found in the Temple	The Crucifixion	The Coronation of the BVM#

* St. Mary represents the Church as both Bride of Christ and our Mother. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is an old symbol of the Church's entry into heaven.

#The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a symbol of the Church's union with Christ the King in Glory.

The Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary are recited during meditation on the various mysteries in sequence.

A more detailed description of how to use the Rosary is found in *St. Augustine's Prayer Book* beginning on p. 257.

MARY'S STORY

The chronology of Mary's life depends completely on the chronology of the life of her Son, our lord Jesus. What we know of her life is derived from the New Testament. And everything about her life before the angel Gabriel's announcement to her comes from the tradition of the Church. And the earliest surviving written expression of that tradition is the *Protoevangelium of James*.

The Birth of Mary

23/20 BC Mary is born to the elderly and childless couple Joachim and Anne.

The Presentation of Mary in the Temple

20/17 BC When she is about three years old she is given into the care of the Temple priesthood.

The Youth of Mary

11/8 BC The priests raise her until she is approaching puberty, and then she is engaged to

an elderly and devout widower, St. Joseph (Mt 1:16; Lk 1:27)

The Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38)

7 BC About the time she is sixteen, the angel Gabriel is sent by God to tell her of the great purpose he has for her, to be the mother of God's Son. When she protests that she has never "known" [had sexual relations with] a man, Gabriel tells her that the Holy Spirit will overshadow her and bring it about.

She knows that an unmarried woman who becomes pregnant before she marries is likely to be stoned to death by the people. For her to say, "Yes," to the angel is for her to accept the serious risk of violent death.

Nevertheless she responds, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Lk 1:26-38)

The Visitation (Lk 1:39-56)

7/6 BC Gabriel has told her that her cousin [literally "kinswoman"], Elizabeth, is pregnant in her old age and is already six months along. Elizabeth lives in the hill country of Judah with her husband, a priest named Zechariah.

Mary at once leaves to go see her. And when Elizabeth hears her greeting as she approaches, her own baby "leaps in her womb." And the Holy Spirit moves her to greet Mary with the words, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Mary composes a song which is inspired apparently by the song which Hannah composed when her own son, the prophet Samuel, was "lent" to the Lord. We know that song, or prayer, as the "Magnificat" (Lk 1:46-55). Mary stays with Elizabeth for three months until about the time she gives birth to her son.

Mary found with child (Mt 1:18-25)

7/6 BC Then she returns to her home with Joseph who, of course, discovers to his shock that she is three months or so along in her pregnancy.

Although he did not yet know about the angel Gabriel's visit, Joseph did not want her to be stoned. The only thing he could think of to do was to divorce her quietly. Under Jewish law once a couple was formally engaged, the engagement could only be ended by a divorce.

At this point an angel appears to Joseph and tells him not to be afraid to take her to wife, because it was the Holy Spirit which had made her pregnant. The angel tells him that she would have a son and he was to name him Joshua [in English, "Jesus"], because he would save his people from their sins. In Hebrew the name Joshua means "God saves" or "the Salvation of God."

Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem (Lk 2:1-19)

7/6 BC In order to comply with a Roman decree they travel to Bethlehem, the home city of Joseph, in order to be counted in a census. When they arrive they can't find a place to stay until they are allowed to sleep in a cave/stable. In that stable Jesus is born.

Circumcision of Jesus at 8 days of age (Lk 2:21)

7/6 BC On the eighth day the child is circumcised and receives the name, Jesus

Purification of Mary after 40 days (Lk 2:22-24)

7/6 BC Jesus is presented in the Temple 40 days after his birth. They offer a sacrifice of two young pigeons to redeem him, since he is her firstborn. This also "purifies" Mary. That is it restores her to ceremonial purity after childbirth.

Prophecy of Simeon concerning Jesus and Mary (Lk 2:25-35)

7/6 BC The Holy Spirit had revealed to an elderly and devout man of Jerusalem, named Simeon, that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. The Spirit led him into the Temple on this occasion.

He took Jesus up in his arms and said what we know as the canticle *Nunc Dimittis*, or "Song of Simeon"— "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, etc."

Simeon tells Mary, "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword shall pierce through your own soul also,) that the thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed."

Prophetess Anna speaks of Jesus (Lk 2:36-38)

7/6 BC A prophetess named Anna who was 84 years old came up at that moment and prophesied to all those around them about Jesus and the redemption of Jerusalem.

Adoration of the Magi (Mt 2:1-11)

6/4 BC It is about this time that the Wise men from the east, probably Zoroastrian astrologers from Persia, come and bring gifts to the infant Jesus.

Flight into Egypt to save Jesus from Herod (Mt 2:13-14)

6/4 BC Herod gives orders that all the boy babies around Bethlehem, two years old or younger, are to be killed. But Joseph is warned by an angel in a dream to flee with Mary and the child across the southern border with Egypt.

Return to Nazareth after Herod's death (Mt 2:19-23) (Lk 2:39)

4-? BC After Herod dies in 4 BC an angel appears in a dream to Joseph telling him to return with the child and his mother to Israel, because Herod was dead. But since Herod's son was ruling Judea, being warned in another dream, Joseph took them to Nazareth in Galilee.

The Gospels are silent on the life of the Holy Family until Jesus reaches twelve years old, the age when a Jewish boy becomes a man.

Finding of Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem (Lk 2:41-50)

6 AD As Jesus is about 12, the family goes from Nazareth to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Passover.

When the feast is over, there is, apparently, confusion over whether Jesus is traveling with the men or with the women. When the men's party and women's and children's group meet for the first night on the trip home, they discover he is not with either party.

So Joseph and Mary go back to find him. There he is in the in the colonnade of the Temple courtyard, where the learned men gather to discuss the finer points of the Law, the *Torah*. He is listening and asking them questions. And Mary and Joseph are astonished.

Mary says, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously."

Jesus replies, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

They don't understand his answer, but they all go home together to Nazareth where he is obedient to them, and Mary keeps all these things in her heart.

There in Nazareth he continues to grow up "in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man."

Life of Mary and Joseph with Jesus at Nazareth (Lk 2:51)

6-? AD At some point in this period Joseph appears to have died.

Mary at the Marriage Feast of Cana (Jn 2:1-11)

27/28-30 The next time we see Mary is at a wedding in a village near Nazareth called Cana. There is an early tradition or speculation that it might have been the wedding of his cousin, John Zebedee, whose mother was Salome, the sister of Mary.

The custom is for Jewish weddings to last for a whole week during which the couple holds open house. Much food is eaten and much wine is drunk. At one point the wine begins to run out prematurely. Mary mentions this problem to Jesus

who responds that his “hour has not yet come.”

Nevertheless, Mary tells the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them to do.

So Jesus has them fill six large stone jugs with water and then dip some out and take it to the master of ceremonies. When they do, he exclaims to the groom, “Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.”

Mary with Jesus during His Public Life (Mt 12:46-50; Mk 3:31-35; Lk 8:19-21)

On one occasion when Jesus is speaking inside a building, he is told that his mother and brethren are outside. He replies to the effect that whoever does the will of his Father in heaven is his brother, and sister, and mother.

Mary at the Cross (Jn 19:25-27)

30 When Jesus is hanging on the cross, Mary and her sister [Salome], Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene are standing by the cross. Jesus sees Mary and John. He says to her, “Woman, behold your son.” And then he says to John, “Behold, your mother!”

And from that hour, John takes her to his own home.

Mary with the Apostles in the Cenacle after Jesus' Ascension (Acts 1:14)

30 After the Ascension of Jesus forty days after Easter, Mary joins the apostles in Jerusalem in prayer while they wait to be “endued with power from on high,” which happens on the tenth day, the Day of Pentecost.

Mary is assumed to heaven to rejoin her Son.

30+ The tradition is that she lives with John until he settles in Ephesus and it is while there that she falls asleep and is taken to heaven.

MARY’S RESPONSE TO OUR DEVOTION

Ever since the first century there has been a tradition of apparitions of the Blessed Virgin all over the Christian world. Among the Eastern Orthodox the apparitions have usually had to do with miraculous icons, but not exclusively. They have continued right down to this present day.

Generally speaking, God characteristically speaks to faith. Faith [or innocence] is necessary to be able to receive what he says. God speaks in terms which are meaningful to those hearing him.

Our ability to hear him is limited by certain factors:

- We are human beings, i.e. creatures of time and space, so we are limited by not knowing what has or will happen at all times and in all places. Thus we are culturally conditioned. We

can understand things/communications only in terms of what we know and have experienced.

- We are *fallen* human beings. Because of our fallenness our understanding is darkened. Thus we are unrealistic.

God speaks *miraculously* apparently when our need is especially great. Of course, this is a matter of great subjectivity as far as our judgement is concerned. When all has been said and done, God speaks when it suits his purposes which, by definition, are beyond our knowledge, unless, of course, he tells us about them.

The apparitions usually occur in desert or, at the least, remote places; usually occur in largely Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox countries or regions; and usually are seen first by children or by the innocent or naive.

Usually there are these ingredients in the apparitions: there is a bright light in connection with the apparition; St Mary appears young and beautiful; and she is dressed in white.

And frequently associated with many of the apparitions are very bad weather and springs, wells, or water in some form or other.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

AN INCOMPLETE LIST OF APPARITIONS

Those apparitions in italics involve icons.

@40	to St. James	Our Lady of the Pillar	Saragossa, Spain
@60	<i>St Luke painted a picture of the BVM while she told him of the early events of our Lord's life.¹</i>		
326	<i>St Luke's Icon was found by St Helena in Jerusalem and given to Constantine who built a shrine for it..</i>		
Later	<i>St Luke's Icon is credited with the defeat of the saracens.</i>		
352	to John of Rome & wife, Pope	St. Mary Major	Rome
@850	to Andrew the Fool for Christ's sake	Holy Virgin the Protector	Constantinople
@1050	<i>Credited with saving Ruthenia</i>	<i>St Luke's Icon</i>	
1061	to Lady Richeldis de F.	Our Lady of Walsingham	Walsingham, England
1155 [@450]	<i>Prince Andrew of Vyshgorod</i>	<i>Vladimirskaya Icon</i>	<i>Bank of the Klyazma River</i>
1208	to St. Dominic	Our Lady of the Rosary	Prouille, France
1251	to Simon Stock	Our Lady of Mt Carmel	Mt Carmel, Holy Land
1295	<i>to Bogolyub+</i>	<i>Icon of Znanemia</i>	<i>Kursk, etc</i>
[1382	<i>Prince Ladislaus</i>	<i>By now it is called the Black Madonna Icon & rests at Czestochowa, Poland¹</i>	
1430	<i>to Hussites, etc.</i>	<i>[Black Madonna Icon]</i>	<i>Czestochowa, Poland¹</i>
1531	to Juan Diego	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Tepayac, Mexico
1579	<i>to Matrona</i>	<i>Icon of Kazan</i>	<i>Kazan</i>
1655	<i>to monks, etc</i>	<i>[Black Madonna Icon]</i>	<i>Over the Vistula, Poland</i>
1798	worshippers	Our Lady of La'Vang	Central Vietnam
1830	to Catherine Laboure	Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal	Paris, France
1846	to Melanie, Maximin	Our Lady of Salette	Grenoble, France
1854	<i>pilgrims, etc.</i>	<i>Weeping Icon of Sokol</i>	<i>Romania [?]</i>
1858	to Bernadette Soubirous	Our Lady of Lourdes	French Pyrenees
1879	to Margaret Beirne	Our Lady of Knock	County Mayo, Ireland
1917	to Lucia, Francisco, Jacinta	Our Lady of Fatima	Fatima, Portugal
1920	<i>to Russian Troops</i>	<i>[Black Madonna Icon]</i>	<i>Over the Vistula, Poland</i>
1932	to Albert & Fernande Voisin “ “ “ Beauraing Andree & Gilbert Degeimbre		Beauraing, Belgium
1933	to Mariette Beco	Our Lady of Banneux	Banneux, Belgium
1960	<i>to a Greek Othodox family</i>	<i>weeping lithograph of Icon of the BVM</i>	<i>Long Island, New York</i>
	<i>to another Greek O. family</i>	<i>weeping lithograph of an Icon of BVM of Iveron</i>	<i>“same area,” New York</i>
1968	to multitudes	Our Lady of Zeitun	Cairo, Egypt
“ “		The BVM also appeared over Church of St Damian,	Terra Gulaki, Egypt
1981 -	to Ivan, Jakov, Marija, Mirjana, Vicka, Ivanka	the BVM	Medjugorje, Bosnia
1981	<i>to Jose</i>	<i>myrrh pouring copy of Icon of BVM of Iveron Mt Athos, Greece, etc.</i>	
1985	to worshippers	[Cathedral of Holy Virgin]	Lvov, Ukraine
1986	<i>to worshippers</i>	<i>weeping Icon of BVM on Altar Screen</i>	<i>Albanian O. Church, Chicago</i>

THE WESTERN CHURCH

Saragossa / Rome / Walsingham / Aylesford / Czestochowa / Guadalupe / Paris / Lourdes / Knock / La Salette / Fatima]
[Beauraing / Banneux

Mary's appearances began about 40 AD, probably before she died, to James the Apostle in Saragossa, Spain. She has been appearing to others at irregular intervals throughout the two thousand years since she gave birth to Jesus. The characteristics of her apparitions has remained fairly consistent. She usually appears in a globe of pure white light, dressed in a long dress and head cover which vary in color depending on the content of her messages. Her feet are usually surrounded by a mist or cloud and she occasionally is seen holding her Son in her arms. A number of her appearances are preceded by unusual phenomena such as observations of lightning and thunder from a clear sky, apparitions of angelic beings or clouds of unusual shapes and religious significance such as a cross or a doorway as well as other inexplicable events. The following is a brief overview of Mary's appearances throughout Christian history. It's meant to be representative of her apparitions and the events surrounding them but is not an all-inclusive listing:

OUR LADY OF THE PILLAR - Saragossa, Spain (ca. 40 AD)

After the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, his Apostles began to spread the message he left throughout Israel and shortly thereafter, through the Roman empire. One of these Apostles, James (the Greater), reportedly travelled as far west as Spain to the village of Saragossa in northeast Spain. While James was there, he became disheartened because of the failure of his mission. Tradition holds that while he was deep in prayer Jesus' Blessed Mother appeared to him and gave him a small wooden statue of herself and a column of jasper wood and instructed him to build a church in her honor: "This place is to be my house, and this image and column shall be the title and altar of the temple that you shall build." The jasper column and the wooden statue can still be seen on special occasions at a church that houses them. About a year after the apparition James arranged to build a small chapel in Mary's honor, the first Church ever dedicated to the honor of the Virgin Mary. After James returned to Jerusalem, he was executed by Herod Agrippa in about 44 AD, the first apostle to be martyred for his faith. Several of his disciples took his body and returned it for final burial in Spain. The local queen, observing several of the miracles performed by James' disciples, converted to Christianity and permitted James' body to be buried in a local field. Eight centuries later, a cathedral in honor of St. James was erected after his gravesite was rediscovered by a local hermit. The hermit found the burial site after noticing an unusual star formation. The site for the cathedral was called Compostella (starry field) and it is a major pilgrimage site to this day.

SAINT MARY MAJOR - Rome, Italy (ca. 352 AD)

With much of the Roman empire converted to Christianity, a number of pious Romans began to dedicate their wealth to honoring Mary and the Apostles by building shrines and churches dedicated to them. One such nobleman, John of Rome, and his wife decided to honor Mary in whatever way they could. In early August, John and his wife both had an unusual dream where Mary appeared to them and asked them to have a church built on one of Rome's seven hills - the Esquiline. John decided to tell the Pope, Liberius, about his dream and when he did the Pope told him that he, too, had a similar dream. On August 5th, they both went to Esquiline hill which they found covered with snow in a contour matching the outline of a church. Construction on a church conforming to the outline left by the snow was started immediately. The Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, one of the largest churches on earth, celebrates its birth to this day on August 5th.

OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM - Walsingham, England (ca. 1061)

Mary's presence in England began with three visions received by Lady Richeldis de Faverches, a widow who lived in a manor in Walsingham. In these visions, Mary showed Lady de Faverches the house in Nazareth where the angel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to the Son of the Most High. The Blessed Mother asked Lady de Faverches to build a replica of her house in Nazareth dedicated as a memorial to the Annunciation to Mary and the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary promised:

"Let all who are in any way distressed or in need seek me there in that small house that you maintain for me at Walsingham. To all that seek me there shall be given succor." In the Middle Ages, Walsingham became one of the greatest pilgrimage sites in all of Europe. A church was constructed around the house to protect it from the elements. Many English kings conducted pilgrimages to Walsingham. The last of these was Henry VIII, who made three pilgrimages to the site before breaking with the Catholic Church in 1534 and forming the Church of England. Henry ordered the destruction of all Catholic shrines and places of religious worship. The Walsingham church and house were destroyed in the rampage of destruction that occurred. The statue of Mary that resided in the house was burned several years later.

It was not until the 1920's that Walsingham' Holy House was rebuilt at the direction of Alfred Patten, an Anglican priest. The Slipper Chapel, named in honor of those who - in the Middle Ages - removed their shoes to walk barefoot to the Holy House, a small Catholic chapel located near the Holy House had managed to escape the destruction of the Reformation. This chapel became the Catholic Shrine of Our Lady in England. Both sites have become active pilgrimage sites once again.

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY - Prouille, France (1208)

Domingo de Guzman was a Spanish preacher who went to southern France to oppose the Albigensian heresy which was spreading rapidly. In 1208, while he was praying at a chapel in Prouille, Mary appeared to him and gave him the Rosary and urged him to preach the Rosary to all people as a remedy against heresy and sin. The factual basis for this series of events is questionable. Nonetheless, Domingo (Dominic) founded an order of preaching friars who went on to halt the Albigensian heresy and establish monasteries all over the world. The order is commonly referred to as the Dominicans.

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL - Aylesford, England (1251)

Mary's continuing influence on the development of Christianity in England becomes apparent again with her appearance to Simon Stock, who became a member of the religious order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel while on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In her appearance to Friar Stock, Mary entrusted him with the brown scapular (two pieces of brown woolen cloth, usually embroidered with an outline of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and tied together by string and worn over the shoulders) :

"My beloved son receive this scapular for your Order. It is the special sign of a privilege which I have obtained for you and for all God's children who honor me as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Those who die devotedly clothed with this scapular shall be preserved from eternal fire.

The brown scapular is a badge of salvation. The brown scapular is a shield in time of danger. The brown scapular is a pledge of peace and special protection, until the end of time."

After this apparition, Friar Stock went on to establish Carmelite communities near university towns in England, France and Italy. He became the Superior-General of his order several years after the apparition. Until very recently, the brown scapular was one of the most widely used religious symbols of personal dedication to the mission of Mary found in her last recorded words in the Bible (John 2:5). The promotion and use of all types of Marian devotional symbols has declined dramatically since the 1960's.

THE BLACK MADONNA - Czestochowa, Poland (1382)

The Black Madonna is a painting of the Madonna and Christ Child which legend states was painted by St. Luke the Evangelist. St. Luke is believed to have used a tabletop from a table built by the carpenter Jesus. It was while Luke was painting Mary that she told him about the events in the life of Jesus that he eventually incorporated in his gospel. The painting shows up again in 326 AD when St. Helen located it in Jerusalem while on a pilgrimage there. She gave the painting to her son, Constantine, who had a shrine built in Constantinople to house it. In a critical battle with the Saracens, the portrait was displayed from the walls of the city and the Saracens were subsequently routed. The portrait was credited with saving the city.

The painting was eventually owned by Charlemagne who subsequently presented it to Prince Leo of Ruthenia (northwest Hungary). It remained at the royal palace in Ruthenia until an invasion occurred in the eleventh century. The king prayed to Our Lady to aid his small army and as a result of his prayers a darkness descended on the enemy troops who, in their confusion, began attacking one another. Ruthenia was saved as a result of this intervention. In the fourteenth century, it was transferred to the Mount of Light (Jasna Gora) in Poland in response to a request made in a dream of Prince Ladislaus of Opola. This legendary history becomes better documented with the painting's ownership by Prince Ladislaus. In 1382 invading Tartars attacked the Prince's fortress at Belz. In this attack one of the Tartar arrows hit the painting and lodged in the throat of the Madonna. The Prince, fearing that he and the famous painting might fall to the Tartars, fled in the night finally stopping in the town of Czestochowa, where the painting was installed in a small church. The Prince subsequently had a Pauline monastery and church built to ensure the painting's safety. In 1430, the Hussites overran the monastery and attempted to take the portrait. One of the looters twice struck the painting with his sword but before he could strike another blow he fell to the floor writhing in agony and died. Both the sword cuts and the arrow wound are still visible in the painting. Later, in 1655, Poland was almost entirely overrun by the forces of Sweden's King Charles X. Only the area around the monastery remained unconquered. Somehow, the monks of the monastery successfully defended the portrait against a forty day siege and eventually all of Poland was able to drive out the invaders. After this remarkable turn of events, the Lady of Czestochowa became the symbol of Polish national unity and was crowned Queen of Poland. The King of Poland placed the country under the protection of the Blessed Mother. A more recent legend surrounding the painting involves the threat of a Russian invasion. In 1920, the Russian army was seen massing on the banks of the Vistula river, threatening Warsaw, when an image of the Virgin was seen in the clouds over the city. The Russian troops withdrew on seeing the image.

There have been reports for centuries of miraculous events such as spontaneous healings occurring to those who made a pilgrimage to the portrait. It is known as the "Black Madonna" because of the soot residue that discolours the painting. The soot is the result of centuries of votive lights and candles burning in front of the painting. With the decline of communism in Poland, pilgrimages to the Black Madonna have increased dramatically.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE - Guadalupe, Mexico (1531)

The opening of the New World brought with it both fortune-seekers and religious preachers desiring to convert the native populations to the Christian faith. One of the converts was a poor Aztec Indian named Juan Diego. On one of his trips to the chapel, Juan was walking through the Tepayac hill country in central Mexico. Near Tepayac Hill he encountered a beautiful woman surrounded by a ball of light as bright as the sun. Speaking in his native tongue, the beautiful lady identified

herself:

"My dear little son, I love you. I desire you to know who I am. I am the ever-virgin Mary, Mother of the true God who gives life and maintains its existence. He created all things. He is in all places. He is Lord of Heaven and Earth. I desire a church in this place where your people may experience my compassion. All those who sincerely ask my help in their work and in their sorrows will know my Mother's Heart in this place. Here I will see their tears; I will console them and they will be at peace. So run now to Tenochtitlan and tell the Bishop all that you have seen and heard."

Juan, age 57, and who had never been to Tenochtitlan, nonetheless immediately responded to Mary's request. He went to the palace of the Bishop-elect Fray Juan de Zumarraga and requested to meet immediately with the bishop. The bishop's servants, who were suspicious of the rural peasant, kept him waiting for hours. The bishop-elect told Juan that he would consider the request of the Lady and told him he could visit him again if he so desired. Juan was disappointed by the bishop's response and felt himself unworthy to persuade someone as important as a bishop. He returned to the hill where he had first met Mary and found her there waiting for him. Imploring her to send someone else, she responded:

"My little son, there are many I could send. But you are the one I have chosen." She then told him to return the next day to the bishop and repeat the request. On Sunday, after again waiting for hours, Juan met with the bishop who, on re-hearing his story, asked him to ask the Lady to provide a sign as a proof of who she was. Juan dutifully returned to the hill and told Mary, who was again waiting for him there, of the bishop's request. Mary responded:

"My little son, am I not your Mother? Do not fear. The Bishop shall have his sign. Come back to this place tomorrow. Only peace, my little son." Unfortunately, Juan was not able to return to the hill the next day. His uncle had become mortally ill and Juan stayed with him to care for him. After two days, with his uncle near death, Juan left his side to find a priest. Juan had to pass Tepayac Hill to get to the priest. As he was passing, he found Mary waiting for him. She spoke:

"Do not be distressed, my littlest son. Am I not here with you who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Your uncle will not die at this time. There is no reason for you to engage a priest, for his health is restored at this moment. He is quite well. Go to the top of the hill and cut the flowers that are growing there. Bring them then to me."

While it was freezing on the hillside, Juan obeyed Mary's instructions and went to the top of the hill where he found a full bloom of Castilian roses. Removing his tilma, a poncho-like cape made of cactus fiber, he cut the roses and carried them back to Mary. She rearranged the roses and told him:

"My little son, this is the sign I am sending to the Bishop. Tell him that with this sign I request his greatest efforts to complete the church I desire in this place. Show these flowers to no one else but the Bishop. You are my trusted ambassador. This time the Bishop will believe all you tell him."

At the palace, Juan once again came before the bishop and several of his advisors. He told the bishop his story and opened the tilma letting the flowers fall out. But it wasn't the beautiful roses that caused the bishop and his advisors to fall to their knees; for there, on the tilma, was a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary precisely as Juan had described her. The next day, after showing the Tilma at the Cathedral, Juan took the bishop to the spot where he first met Mary. He then returned to his village where he met his uncle who was completely cured. His uncle told him he had met a young woman, surrounded by a soft light, who told him that she had just sent his nephew to Tenochtitlan with a picture of herself. She told his uncle:

"Call me and call my image Santa Maria de Guadalupe".

It's believed that the word Guadalupe was actually a Spanish mistranslation of the local Aztec dialect. The word that Mary probably used was Coatllalope which means "one who treads on snakes"! Within six years of this apparition, six million Aztecs had converted to Catholicism. The tilma shows Mary as the God-bearer - she is pregnant with her Divine Son. Since the time the tilma was first impressed with a picture of the Mother of God, it has been subject to a variety of environmental hazards including smoke from fires and candles, water from floods and torrential downpours and, in 1921, a bomb which was planted by anti-clerical forces on an altar under it. There was also a cast-iron cross next to the tilma and when the bomb exploded, the cross was twisted out of shape, the marble altar rail was heavily damaged and the tilma was...untouched! Indeed, no one was injured in the Church despite the damage that occurred to a large part of the altar structure.

In 1977, the tilma was examined using infrared photography and digital enhancement techniques. Unlike any painting, the tilma shows no sketching or any sign of outline drawn to permit an artist to produce a painting. Further, the very method used to create the image is still unknown. The image is inexplicable in its longevity and method of production. It can be seen today in a large cathedral built to house up to ten thousand worshippers. It is, by far, the most popular religious pilgrimage site in the Western Hemisphere.

OUR LADY OF LAVANG - La'Vang, Vietnam (1798)

During much of the 18th century, the nation of Vietnam was embattled in various struggles for power and domination. The northern regions of the kingdom fell under the authority of the lords of the Trinh family, while in the southern realm the Nguyen lords took power. As the eighteenth century drew toward its close, both of their rules were shaken and threatened by peasant uprisings and emerging rebel forces.

The strongest among the many uprisings was led by the three brothers from Tay Son. In short order, they overthrew the Nguyen lords and defeated the Trinh lords to restore national unity for the first time since the decline of the Le dynasty. A Tay Son brother was enthroned to be King Quang Trung. In 1792 he passed away and left the throne to his son who became

King Canh Thinh. Meanwhile, Nguyen Anh continued his insurgency in trying to reclaim his throne. Earlier in his run from the Tay Son rebels in 1777, he found refuge on Phu Quoc Island, where Monsignor Pierre Pigneau de Behaine of the Society of Foreign Missions directed a seminary for youths from neighboring countries. The bishop persuaded him to seek help from King Louis XVI of France.

King Canh Thinh knew that Nguyen Anh received support from the French missionary and worried that the Vietnamese Catholics would also endorse his reign. He began to restrict the practice of Catholicism in the country. On August 17, 1798, King Canh Thinh issued an anti-Catholic edict and an order to destroy all Catholic churches and seminaries. A most grievous persecution of Vietnamese Catholics and missionaries began and lasted until 1886. Even after Nguyen Anh succeeded in reclaiming his throne as King Gia Long (1802-1820), his successors, King Minh Mang (1820-1840), King Thieu Tri (1841-1847) and King Tu Duc (1847-1884), the last Nguyen emperor, continued the vehement campaign against Catholics, ordering punishments that ranged from branding their faces to death by various cruel methods for Vietnamese Catholics and missionary priests.

It was amidst this great suffering that the Lady of Lavang came to the people of Vietnam. The name Lavang was believed to be originated in the name of the deep forest in the central region of Vietnam (now known as Quang Tri City) where there was an abundance of a kind of trees named La' Vang. It was also said that its name came from the Vietnamese meaning of the word "Crying Out" to denote the cries for help of people being persecuted.

The first apparition of the Lady of Lavang was noted in 1798, when the persecution of Vietnamese Catholics began. Many Catholics from the nearby town of Quang Tri sought refuge in the deep forest of Lavang. A great number of these people suffered from the bitter cold weather, lurking wild beasts, jungle sickness and starvation. At night, they often gathered in small groups to say the rosary and to pray. Unexpectedly, one night they were visited by an apparition of a beautiful Lady in a long cape, holding a child in her arms, with two angels at her sides. The people recognized the Lady as Our Blessed Mother.

Our Blessed Mother comforted them and told them to boil the leaves from the surrounding trees to use as medicine. She also told them that from that day on, all those who came to this place to pray, would get their prayers heard and answered. This took place on the grass area near the big ancient banyan tree where the refugees were praying. All those who were present witnessed this miracle. After this first apparition, the Blessed Mother continued to appear to the people in this same place many times throughout the period of nearly one hundred years of religious persecution. Among many groups of Vietnamese Catholics that were burnt alive because of their faith was a group of 30 people who were seized after they came out of their hiding place in the forest of Lavang. At their request, they were taken back to the little chapel of Lavang and were immolated there on its ground.

From the time the Lady of Lavang first appeared, the people who took refuge there erected a small and desolate chapel in her honor. During the following years, her name was spread among the people in the region to other places. Despite its isolated location in the high mountains, groups of people continued to find ways to penetrate the deep and dangerous jungle to pray to the Lady of Lavang. Gradually, the pilgrims that came with axes, spears, canes, and drums to scare away wild animals were replaced by those holding flying flags, flowers and rosaries. The pilgrimages went on every year despite the continuous persecution campaigns.

In 1886, after the persecution had officially ended, Bishop Gaspar ordered a church to be built in honor of the Lady of Lavang. Because of its precarious location and limited funding, it took 15 years for the completion of the church of Lavang. It was inaugurated by Bishop Gaspar in a solemn ceremony that participated by over 12,000 people and lasted from August 6th to 8th, 1901. The bishop proclaimed the Lady of Lavang as the Protectorate of the Catholics. In 1928, a larger church was built to accommodate the increasing number of pilgrims. This church was destroyed in the summer of 1972 during the Vietnam war.

The history of the Lady of Lavang continues to gain greater significance as more claims from people whose prayers were answered were validated. In April of 1961, the Council of Vietnamese Bishops selected the holy church of Lavang as the National Sacred Marian Center. In August of 1962, Pope John XXIII elevated the church of Lavang to The Basilica of Lavang. On June 19, 1988, Pope John Paul II in the canonizing ceremony of the 117 Vietnamese martyrs, publicly and repeatedly recognized the importance and significance of the Lady of Lavang and expressed a desire for the rebuilding of the Lavang Basilica to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the first apparition of the Lady of Lavang in August of 1998.

[Text provided courtesy of Kim-Oanh Nguyen-Lam]

OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL - Paris, France (1830)

In the summer of 1830, a 24 year old novice of the Sisters of Charity was awakened by a young child, about five years old, dressed in white who called to her:

"Catherine, Catherine, wake up. Come to the chapel; the Blessed Virgin is waiting for you."

Catherine Laboure, who had expressed a strong desire to meet the Blessed Virgin, decided to follow the child down to the chapel. The candles were burning as if at a midnight Mass. About a half-hour later, at midnight, she heard a noise that sounded like the rustle of a silk dress. When she looked up she saw a beautiful young woman surrounded by a blaze of white light sitting in the Father Director's chair. The child who brought her to the chapel told her: "Here is the Blessed Virgin!" Catherine fell to her knees and placed her hands on Mary's lap. Mary told her:

"My child, the good God wishes to charge you with a mission. You will have much to suffer, but you will rise above

these sufferings by reflecting that what you do is for the glory of God. You will know what the good God wants. You will be tormented until you have told him who is in charged with directing you. You will be contradicted, but do not fear, you will have grace. Tell with confidence all that passes within you. Tell it with simplicity. Have confidence. Do not be afraid."

During this discourse with the Blessed Mother, Catherine was warned of dire future occurrences. Mary told her:

"The times are very evil. Sorrows will befall France; the throne will be overturned. The whole world will be plunged into every kind of misery." After this apparition Catherine had written down "in forty years" when referring to this prophecy. Five months later, in November, Catherine experienced another apparition. In this event Mary appeared dressed entirely in white holding a ball topped with a little golden cross. The ball, she was told, represented the whole world, especially France, and each person in particular. Mary stood on a white globe with a green serpent under her feet on the globe. After a moment, an oval shape formed around the Blessed Virgin, and on it were written these words in gold: 'O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.' Upon seeing this vision, Catherine heard a voice say: "Have a medal struck after this model. Those who wear it will receive great graces; abundant graces will be given to those who have confidence." At this point, the oval seemed to turn and Catherine saw the reverse of the medal: the letter M surmounted by a cross, and below it two hearts, one crowned with a crown of thorns, and the other pierced by a sword.

After hearing all of her accounts of these apparitions, her spiritual director, Father Aladel, still had doubts as to their veracity. He met with the local archbishop and after due deliberation the archbishop authorized that the medals be struck since he found nothing contrary to the Faith in anything Catherine said or experienced. Within months there were a flood of reported cures and spiritual conversions attributed to the medal; so much so that it came to be called the Miraculous Medal. Catherine went back to a life of obscurity in the Sisters of Charity once the medal had been fashioned and died in 1876. By the time of her death there were millions of Miraculous Medals being worn by the devout all over the world.

LA SALETTE APPARITION - September 1846

Melanie and Maximin, the two children privileged to see Mary in 1846, came from the town of Corps near Grenoble, in a poor part of south-eastern France. Maximin Giraud was eleven years old at the time and Melanie Calvat fourteen. On Saturday 19 September, they were looking after their employer's cattle, high up on the pasture above La Salette, a village near Corps, when they saw a wonderful apparition of Mary.

A globe of light opened to reveal a resplendent woman seated on a stone with her head in her hands. The children later described her as very tall and beautiful, wearing a long, white, pearl studded, sleeved dress, and a white shawl, with some sort of tiara or crown on her head. Hanging from her neck was a large crucifix adorned with a small hammer and pincers, with a brilliantly shining figure of Christ on it. The whole effect was as if she was made of light. Speaking tearfully she told them that unless people repented she would be forced to let go the arm of her son because it had become so heavy. Mary went on to complain that she had to pray ceaselessly to her son for them, but the people still worked on Sundays and blasphemed. She also spoke of coming punishments for these sins, including crop blights and famine. She confided a secret to each of the children, which they were not to divulge, although eventually these secrets were made known to Pope Pius IX

Finally she asked the children to spread her message before disappearing. When the children returned home they told their story, an account of which was taken down in writing the next day. They faced much opposition in making known Mary's message, but they maintained their story with resolution. The local Bishop too faced quite a degree of opposition in investigating the apparition, and it was only after four years, and having set up two commissions of enquiry, that Mgr de Bruillard, as bishop of Grenoble, approved of devotion to Our Lady of Salette, in the following terms. "We declare that the apparition of the Blessed Virgin to two shepherds, on September 19, 1846, on a mountain in the Alps in the parish of La Salette, bears in itself all the marks of truth and that the faithful are justified in believing without question in its truth. And so, to mark our lively gratitude to God and the glorious Virgin Mary, we authorise the cult of Our Lady of La Salette."

OUR LADY OF LOURDES - Lourdes, France (1858)

Mary appeared to an impoverished, emaciated fourteen year old girl who lived in the Pyrenees at a time of turmoil in France. On Thursday, February 11th, Bernadette Soubirous, her sister Marie and another friend had gone to a nearby river to gather firewood. While Marie and her friend crossed the river to search the other side, Bernadette stayed on dry land. While searching for wood she heard a loud noise like the sound of a storm coming from a nearby grotto known as Massabielle. At the mouth of the grotto was a rosebush which was moving as if it were windy, which it was not. From the interior of the grotto she saw a golden-colored cloud, and soon after a Lady, young and beautiful who came and placed herself at the entrance of the opening above the rosebush. The Lady smiled at Bernadette and motioned for her to advance. Bernadette lost any fear she may have had and fell to her knees to pray the Rosary. After both she and the Lady completed these prayers (with the Lady only said the Lord's prayer and the Gloria), the Lady slowly withdrew to the interior of the grotto and disappeared.

Bernadette experienced eighteen visitations from Mary over a six month period never knowing who the Lady was until the last apparition. During the apparitions, Mary instructed Bernadette to dig a hole in the ground and drink and bathe in it. The hole later turned into a spring of water which Mary promised would be a healing spring for all who came to use its waters. Mary also asked Bernadette to tell the local pastor, Cure Peyramale to have a chapel built in honor of her appearances there. The Cure accused Bernadette of lying about the apparitions and told her to find out from the Lady just who she was and demanded from her that she perform a miracle by making the rosebush in the grotto bloom. On March 25th, the Feast of

the Annunciation, Mary answered the Cure's request when she told Bernadette, who had only received a rudimentary religious education, "Que soy era Immaculado Conception" (I am the Immaculate Conception). Mary, with these words, confirmed what the Pope had declared as official Catholic Church doctrine just four years earlier - a highly unlikely fact to be known by an uneducated fourteen year old in rural France. The apparitions were declared authentic in 1862 and Lourdes rapidly became one of the world's major pilgrimage sites. Thousands have been cured from a variety of illnesses, both physical and spiritual, and a clinic to support the millions of pilgrims who come to Lourdes operates to this day. Bernadette returned to a life of obscurity. She became one of the Sisters of Notre Dame in Nevers and died there in 1879 after a long and painful illness. She was declared a saint in 1933, not because of the apparitions, but because of her dedication to a life of simplicity and service.

OUR LADY OF KNOCK - Knock, Ireland (1879)

County Mayo was in the center of a region of Ireland that had suffered great distress in the 1870's. Various famines and economic dislocations produced by forced evictions had created yet another wave of Irish immigration. It was into this environment that the Lord again sent His Mother to visit with His oppressed children.

August 21st, 1879 was another rain-swept day in County Mayo. As evening arrived, Margaret Beirne, a resident of the village of Cnoc Mhuire, was sent by her brother to lock up the local church for the evening. After she had completed this task, as she was returning home she noticed a strange brightness covering the church. However, preoccupied with other thoughts, she mentioned this to no one else. At about this time, another member of the Beirne family, Mary, had just completed a visit with the church's housekeeper, Mary McLoughlin. As they were walking down the road they came to a location where they could clearly see the church and its gables, at which time Mary O'Beirne turned to her companion and said, "O look at the statues! Why didn't you tell me the priest had got new statues for the chapel?" Her companion responded that she had heard nothing about new statues but she decided to look more closely. As they approached the church, Mary Beirne remarked, "But they are not statues, they're moving. It's the Blessed Virgin."

What they and thirteen others saw in the still-bright day was a beautiful woman, clothed in white garments, wearing a large brilliant crown. Her hands were raised as if in prayer. This woman was understood by all who saw her to be Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Queen of the Angels.

On her right stood St. Joseph, his head inclined towards her. On her left stood St. John the Evangelist, dressed as a bishop. To the left of St. John was an altar on which stood a lamb and a cross surrounded by angels. All of this was seen on the gable wall of the church in a cloud of light and lasted for about two hours. Other villagers, who were not involved with the apparition, nonetheless reported seeing a very bright light illuminating the area around where the church was located. There were subsequent reports of inexplicable healings associated with visits to the church at Knock.

The Church response to this series of events was typically circumspect. A commission was formed to gather testimonies of those claiming to see the apparition and then a record of purported cures and devotional material was maintained until 1936. At that time, the head of the diocese of Tuam, Archbishop Gilmartin, authorized the publication of a pamphlet supporting devotion to the apparition at Knock.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA, October 13, 1917

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, appeared 6 times to 3 shepherd children; Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta; between May 13 and October 13, 1917. She came to the little village of Fatima which had remained faithful to the Catholic Church during the recent persecutions by the government. Our Lady came with a message from God to every man, woman, and child of our century. Our Lady of Fatima promised that the whole world would be in peace, and that many souls would go to Heaven if Her requests were listened to and obeyed. She told us that war is a punishment for sin; that God would punish the world for its sins in our time by means of war, hunger, persecution of the Church and persecution of the Holy Father, the Pope, unless we listened to and obeyed the command of God. At Fatima, Pope John Paul II said on May 13; " the message of Fatima is more relevant and more urgent " then when Our Lady first appeared. The message is an anguished appeal of our Heavenly Mother, Who sees us in great danger and Who comes to offer Her help and advice. Her message is also a prophesy, a clear indication of what was about to transpire in the 20th century, and what is still going to happen infallibly in the near future, depending on our response to Her requests.

The Miracle

As a great sign of the whole message truly coming from God, a marvelous miracle was worked in the sky above Fatima before 70,000 witnesses on October 13, 1917 at the time, date and place that Lucy and the other two children had prophesied in the name of Our Lady of Fatima. The children were told by Our Lady that God would perform a miracle so that people would believe in the apparitions. The date the children was October 13, 1917, in Fatima. On that date, 70,000 people came to see the phenomenon. The miracle occurred with the sun. All could stare perfectly at the sun without blinking, or even hurting their eyes. While all were watching the sun, it rotated, got large and small, got close to the people, and got far away from them. The sun " danced ". Every single person who was there testified to seeing the sun dance, even non-believers who immediately dropped onto their knees and begged for forgiveness. [See Orthodox interpretation below.]

OUR LADY OF BEAURAING, November 29, 1932

On the evening of November 29, 1932 in the small Belgium town of Beauraing, Albert and Fernande Voisin and Andree and Gilberte Degeimbre approached the convent door to call for Gilberte Voisin as they did every night. Albert ran ahead of the girls and rang the door to the convent. As he waited for a sister to come to the door, he turned around and looked toward the street and the railroad bridge.

Look! The Virgin, dressed in white, is walking above the bridge" he cried out. The girls did not believe him but when they turned around they saw the figure of a beautiful Lady in white walking above the bridge and the grotto by the convent with clouds covering her feet. The sister who came to door could not see the Blessed Virgin Mary, but Gilberte Voisin did.

This was the first of thirty-three apparitions of Our Lady to the children of Beauraing between November 29, 1932 and January 3, 1933. At first, neither their parents, nor the Mother Superior of the convent, nor most of the townsfolk believed their story. The pastor of the parish kept a prudent reserve. However, the five children always maintained the veracity of their story of the Virgin's appearances. From December 1, when the Virgin made her second appearance of that evening to the three oldest of the children, she always appeared under a large arched branch of the hawthorn tree in the grotto to the children. As soon as the Virgin would appear to the children, they would fall simultaneously with a thud to their knees, reciting Hail Marys in a loud, piercing, high-pitched voice, only stopping when the Virgin would speak to them.

Word got out and spread throughout Beauraing and then Belgium, and beyond. At first a small crowd gathered at the hawthorn tree in the grotto to pray the Rosary with children. But by January 3, 1933, a huge throng of over 30,000 came to the grotto for the Virgin's last apparition to the children.

Our Lady of Beauraing wore a white dress and veil, a crown, and, after people began to say the Most Holy Rosary at the grotto, she carried a rosary. It was not until Thursday, December 29 that Mary revealed her Heart of Gold to Fernande. Later the Virgin would reveal her Golden Heart to the other children.

Though she appeared numerous times to the children, Our Lady was reticent. The Virgin told the children to always be good. Our Lady also instructed that a chapel should be built. Mary identified herself: "I am the Immaculate Virgin." She indicated that pilgrimages were to be made to Beauraing.

Our Lady said "Yes" to the question: would she give proof that she was the Immaculate Virgin. She said, "Pray. Pray very much" and "Pray always." On the last day the Virgin appeared to the young seers, she said farewell and had a secret for each of them. Not one of the secrets has been or probably will ever be revealed.

To Gilberte Voisin she declared: "I will convert sinners. Good-bye."

To Andree she said: "I am the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven. Pray always. Good-bye."

To Fernande: "Do you love my Son?" ("Yes," replied Fernande.) "Do you love me?" ("Yes," she said again.) "Then sacrifice yourself for me. Good-bye."

The message of Beauraing is one of prayer (especially the Rosary), living an upright Christian life, sacrifice, and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Miracles have occurred at Beauraing: both physical healings and more importantly miraculous conversions.

[by John O'Connell]

OUR LADY OF BANNEUX, January 15, 1933

Banneux, a small town in Belgium, is merely 56 miles away from Beauraing, where Our Lady appeared to several children in the 1930's. Remarkably, only two weeks after Our Lady's apparitions in Beauraing ended, the Holy Virgin appeared to a little girl in Banneux.

At 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 15, 1933, Mariette Beco, age 11, was waiting for her brother to come home. As she looked out the window of her home, Mariette saw a beautiful Lady in the garden. She told her mother that she saw the Holy Virgin. Her mother dismissed her daughter's words. The Becos were far from being devout Catholics and had not attended church that Sunday. When Julien, Mariette's brother, came home he saw no one in the garden. Mariette began to pray the Rosary--with a rosary she had found in the road. Informed of the matter, the pastor of the parish church initially thought little of Mariette's claim.

The next day Mariette attended Mass for the first time in a long time. She also returned to school and for the first time knew her religious lessons. On that Wednesday evening, Our Lady appeared to Mariette who was kneeling in prayer in the garden. Our Lady beckoned to Mariette to follow her. The Virgin Mary showed her a spring and told her: "This spring is set aside for me." Then she vanished. When Mariette returned home the Abbe was waiting for her. Mariette described the Holy Virgin. The beautiful Lady wore a long white robe, with a blue sash around her waist, and light emanated from her head. Her right foot was bare, standing on a golden rose. Her arms were raised to her golden heart. A rosary hung from her right arm.

That Thursday, Mariette queries the Holy Virgin, "Who are you, my beautiful Lady?" Our Lady replied, "I am the Virgin of the Poor." "The spring is set apart for all countries, to help the sick."

On Friday, Mariette asks, "What is your wish, my beautiful Lady?" I would like a small chapel." Mary then blessed Mariette. Then on Saturday, February 11, Our Lady again led Mariette to the spring. Mary announced: "I have come to relieve suffering. Good-bye for now." On Wednesday, February 15, Mariette tells the Blessed Virgin Mary that the Abbe requests a sign from the beautiful Lady. Our Lady responds: "Trust me. I will trust you." She then confides a secret to Mariette. Mary then added: "Pray much. Good-bye for now."

On the following Monday, Our Lady again brought Mariette to the spring, telling her: "My dear child, pray much.

Good bye for now." Mary appeared to Mariette for the last time on Tuesday, March 2. Our Lady told her: "I am the Mother of the Savior, Mother of God. Pray much. Farewell." Mary then blessed Mariette before leaving.

Mary always appeared to Mariette at 7:00 p.m. in the garden outside the Beco's home.

A small chapel was built at the site of the apparitions, as Our Lady had requested. Later the diocese erected a large basilica to honor Our Lady of Banneux. The spring has brought forth many miracles that have occurred through the Virgin of the Poor's intercession.

[John O'Connell, Editor of *The Catholic Faith* magazine.]

MEDJUGORJE, 1981 until the present

See discussion below in the Eastern Orthodox section.

The above material is from the website

<http://members.aol.com/bjw1106/marian5.htm>

THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

[snip]

The Blessed Virgin Mary Fervent Defender of Christians
Bishop Alexander (Mileant)

CONTEMPORARY APPARITIONS OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

From the very first days after Her Dormition to the present time, the Most Holy Virgin has been giving succor to Christians. This belief is substantiated by accounts of Her appearances and especially by the multitude of miracles performed by Her icons. We shall mention here some of Her apparitions and miraculous icons.

Protection of the Holy Virgin.

This feast was established in remembrance of Her apparition during the siege of Constantinople [Istanbul] in the middle of the 9th century. The Slavs [Variags], at that time pagans surrounded the city of Constantinople by sea and land with a huge army. Christians inside the city rushed to their churches with prayers for divine help. A beggar in the city, Saint Andrew the Fool-for-Christ's-sake, was in the church of Vlahern praying all night with many other Christians. In the fourth hour of the night, the Saint saw a majestic Woman, the Virgin Mary, coming forth above the royal gates (in the middle of the sanctuary) accompanied by John the Baptist, John the Theologian, and many saints, some preceding and some following Her, singing hymns and praying. Saint Andrew approached his pupil Epiphanius and asked if he also saw the Queen of the world. "I see Her and tremble," answered the latter. And while they looked, She stood above of the sanctuary and prayed for a long time.

Then the Virgin Mary removed Her veil and spread it over the church and the city. Saint Andrew told the people about this apparition of the Holy Virgin. Encouraged, they made a procession along the walls of the city and submerged in the sea an icon of the Virgin Mary. A few hours afterward a great storm arose and destroyed most of the enemy ships. The Slavs who survived retreated, and the town was saved. From that time many Slavs started to convert to Christianity. Saint Andrew by birth was also a Slav. Perhaps explains why Russians so greatly honor this appearance of the Mother of God to him and dedicate to this miracle the feast of the Protection of the Holy Virgin, which is celebrated each year on October 1/14.

The information that follows regarding other appearances of the Mother of God is drawn from foreign publications. Our Church has not as yet voiced its opinion on these events, and we cite them here simply as supplemental information.

Fatima, Portugal.

On March 13, 1917, not long before the revolution in Russia, the Virgin Mary, surrounded by a radiance, appeared in Fatima, Portugal, to three shepherd children. For several months She continued to appear to the children, and at one of Her appearances five to eighteen thousand people convened from all parts of Portugal. An unforgettable miracle occurred when, after a torrential rain, unexpectedly there came an unusual light, and in an instant the people's soaked clothes became dry. The Virgin Mary was summoning the people to prayer and foretold the forthcoming conversion of Russia from godlessness to faith in God. The Roman Catholic Church later interpreted Her words as foretelling the conversion of Russia to Catholicism. However, this was not what the Virgin said. Now, as the Russian people turn back to God and to their Orthodox faith, we are witnessing the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Egypt.

For more than a year from **April 2, 1968**, the Virgin Mary appeared in Zeitun, a suburb of Cairo, above a church dedicated to Her name. Her appearances, which usually occurred between midnight and five in the morning, attracted a multitude of worshipers. The Mother of God was surrounded by radiance as bright as the sun, and around Her there hovered white doves. Soon all of Egypt heard of the appearances of the Mother of God, and the government became concerned that these public gatherings at the site of Her appearances should proceed in an orderly fashion. The local papers wrote in Arabic

about these apparitions of the Holy Virgin, and several press-conferences were held about them, during which people shared their impressions regarding what they had heard from Her. The Mother of God also visited individuals in the suburbs of Cairo, such as the Coptic patriarch who was skeptical of Her appearing to the people. During the appearances of the Mother of God there occurred many cures that were confirmed by local doctors.

The Washington Post on July 5th, 1968, wrote of additional appearances of the Theotokos over the Church of St. Damian, in the industrial area of Terra Gulaki, north of Cairo. The Virgin Mary was seen holding the infant Jesus in Her arms, and accompanying Her were several saints, among them St. Damian. As elsewhere, Her appearances were accompanied by many cures of incurable diseases: blindness, kidney and heart diseases and many others.

Medjugorje, Yugoslavia.

From June of 1981 the Virgin Mary started to appear on a hill in Medjugorje. At these appearances there sometimes congregated as many as ten thousand people. Many saw Her surrounded by unearthly radiance. Then the appearances to the public stopped, and the Blessed Virgin began to appear regularly to six young people, speaking to them. Italian and other newspapers described these events, and Medjugorje became a place of constant pilgrimage by the faithful from all parts of the world. Our Lady slowly disclosed to the young people 10 mysteries, which they must impart to church representatives in due course. The Holy Virgin promised that on the third day after revealing Her last mystery She will leave a visible "sign" for the faithful. Representatives of the medical world and other highly-respectable people testify that the young people who have been seeing the Blessed Virgin were absolutely normal, and that their outward reactions to these appearances were natural. Often, the Virgin Mary, while weeping, told the young people of the necessity to establish peace on the earth: "Peace, peace! The earth will not be saved until peace is established over it. It will happen only when people find God. The Lord means life. Those who have sound belief in Him will attain life and peace. Christians have forgotten prayer and fasting." It is interesting to note that in Medjugorje, where atheism had predominated and where there were a lot of communist party members, most of the Medjugorjians became believers and renounced communism. Also in conjunction with the apparitions of the Mother of God in Medjugorje, there occurred many miraculous cures.

Lvov, Ukraine.

At Easter 1985 in the town of Lvov, during the celebration of the Liturgy by the Metropolitan John at the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Mary, in view of a great throng of faithful there suddenly appeared through the window pane a cloud as bright as a ray of sunlight. It slowly took the shape of a human form, and all acknowledged it to be the Holy Virgin. In a spiritual impulse, the people started to pray aloud and call upon Her for help. People standing outside also saw in the window the image of the Holy Virgin Mary and tried to enter and prayed aloud. The throng kept increasing as news of the miracle spread with the speed of lightning. All efforts of the militia to disperse those praying were in vain. People started to come from Kiev, the Pochayevskaya Lavra, Moscow, Tlibisi and other towns. The governor of Lvov requested that Moscow send some experts to investigate what was going on. The scholars began to argue that there were no miracles so that the people should disperse. Suddenly the Blessed Virgin spoke: "Pray; repent from your sins, since there is little time left." After this She cured many cripples and sick. The vision of the Virgin Mary and the cures continued for three and a half weeks, and She spoke much on the salvation of mankind, as the people remained there day and night.

Some Miraculous Icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary

It is customary to name the miraculous icons of the Virgin Mary according to the towns in which they originated.

The **Vladimirskaya Icon** is one of the most ancient miraculous icons of the Mother of God. In the middle of the 5th century the Icon was transported from Jerusalem to Constantinople, and in the middle of the 12th century it was sent by the patriarch to Kiev, to the Grand Duke Yury Dolgoruky, and was placed in the Dievichy monastery in Vyshgorod. In 1155 Prince Andrew of Vyshgorod, when traveling to the North, took with him the miraculous Icon of the Blessed Virgin. On the way, there were held short divine services praising the Lord (Te Deums), and miracles occurred. On the banks of the Klyazma river the steeds carrying the Icon could not move. The prince called that place Bogolubov, that is, Beloved by God, and built there two stone churches, into one of which the Icon was placed. On September 21, 1160, the Icon was transferred into the church at Vladimir, and from then on it has been known as the "Vladimirskaya." Since 1395 the Icon has been located in the Uspensky Cathedral in Moscow, to the left of the royal gates. The Icon became famous due to many miracles performed. Before this Icon Russian tsars were anointed as rulers, and metropolitans were appointed. The feast day of the Icon is celebrated on August 26/September 8, as well as on May 21/June 3 in honor of the liberation of Moscow in 1521 from its bondage to the Crimean Khan.

The **Icon of Kazan**. In 1579, a nine-year-old girl by the name of Matrona, whose parents' house burned down during the 1579 fire in Kazan, saw in a dream the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary and heard a voice commanding her to retrieve a holy Icon hidden in the ashes of the burned house. The holy Icon was discovered wrapped in an old cloth under the stove, where it was buried, most likely during the rule of the Tartars when Christians were forced to conceal their faith. The holy Icon was triumphantly transported to the nearest church, the Church of St. Nicholas, and later to the Cathedral of the Annunciation, where it received renown for curing the blind. A copy was made of the Icon and sent to the tsar, Ivan the

Terrible. In honor of its arrival, a special feast day was established on the July 8/21.

The **Icon of Znamenia**, which means "The Sign," also known as the Icon of Kursk. It was found on September 8, 1295, by a hunter at the root of a tree on the bank of the Tuskor River in the province of Kursk. When he took the Icon in his hands, a spring of water came from under the tree. The hunter built a chapel near the tree and placed the Icon therein. From that time the Icon began to perform many miracles. In 1383 the Tartars of the Crimea, devastating the province, cut the Icon into two parts and threw them into opposite directions.

They took as prisoner the priest Bogolyub, who performed the services in the chapel. Having been redeemed by the envoys of the Grand Duke of Moscow, Bogolyub found the split pieces of the Icon, joined them, and miraculously they grew together. In 1597 the Icon was brought to Moscow by the will of Tsar Feodor Ioannovich. In view of the return of the holy relic, a monastery was founded which was given the name of the Root Hermitage. Since the time of Tsar Feodor Ioannovich, the Icon has been encased in a cypress board, with the portrayal of the Lord Sabaoth above and of Prophets on the sides.

In 1612 the Icon miraculously saved Kursk from being captured by the Poles. The grateful inhabitants built the monastery of Znamenie, into which the Icon was brought every year and stayed from the 12th of September until the Friday of the 9th week of Easter. The rest of the time it remained at the Hermitage. On March 7, 1898 the Icon remained unharmed during an attempt by revolutionaries to blow it up in the cathedral of the Znamensky monastery. After midnight a bomb placed under the Icon went off with a terrible noise. Everything around was torn apart and scattered. Only the Icon remained intact. During the revolution the Icon was also stolen in April of 1918, but was miraculously found in a well several months later. Finally the Icon was taken from Russia in 1920 by Bishop Theophan of Kursk and placed in Holy Trinity Church in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

This Holy Image rendered great assistance when Belgrade was bombarded during the Second World War. Bombs never fell on the houses visited by the Icon, although they destroyed the surrounding areas. Presently the Icon resides in the Znamenia Cathedral in New York City, though from time to time it is taken to different temples of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad for adoration. Every year numerous healings continue to flow from this Holy Icon.

The Weeping Icons.

During the past 100 to 150 years there have appeared several Icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary with flowing tears. These miraculous events most probably point to the grief the Virgin Mary feels toward mankind at the approach of the antichrist.

In **February of 1854**, in the **Romanian Orthodox monastery of Sokol**, one of the Icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary began to weep. This miracle coincided with the Crimean war in Russia and drew thousands of pilgrims daily. The weeping sometimes occurred every day, and sometimes at intervals of 2 to 3 days.

In **March of 1960**, a lithograph of the Icon of the Virgin Mary, known as that of the "Passion," that belonged to a Greek Orthodox family from Long Island, New York, began to weep. When the Icon was transported to the Cathedral of St. Paul, white doves hovered above the Icon. The paper on which the Icon was imprinted became wrinkled from the copious flow of the tears. At times the tears appeared bloody, and pious pilgrims pressed pieces of cotton to the Icon to take home and apply to the ill. Shortly afterward a lithograph of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Iveron that belonged to another Greek Orthodox family in that same area also began to flow tears. These two weeping Icons drew a great number of praying people, and both local and foreign papers have described the great number of miracles emanating from them. One of the Icons has been examined by scientists in order to determine the origin of this fountain of tears, and scholars at the University of British Columbia confirmed the fact that the tears did flow but could not explain this from a scientific point of view (Orthodox Life, 1960, n. 8, p. 8).

On **December 6, 1986**, the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the altar screen in the **Albanian Church of St. Nicholas the Complaisant**, in Chicago, began to weep. This miracle has been attracting up to five thousand people to the church who wished to see this miraculous Icon with their own eyes. The weeping Icon was painted 23 years ago by a Manhattan painter by the name of Constantine Yussis. A specially gathered committee confirmed that "there could be no explanation of this enigma."

The Myrrh-Pouring Icon. An Orthodox Chilean by the name of Joseph (Jose), who had been living on Mount Athos since 1981, saw in a monastery a copy of the Iveron Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary and wished to own it. At first he received a refusal; then unexpectedly the abbot handed the image over to him with the words: "Take it, this Icon must go with you!" Joseph brought the Icon to Montreal. On November 24, 1982, at 3 o'clock in the morning, Joseph's room was filled with a wondrous fragrance: on the surface of the Icon appeared drops of wondrously fragrant myrrh. The Archbishop Vitaly of Canada, now Metropolitan and Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, offered to bring the Icon to the Russian cathedral in Montreal. Since then the Icon has Russian Orthodox churches in several countries. Sometimes during services attended by multitudes, the myrrh appeared not only on the icon itself, but on the outer surface of the glass, before the eyes of those praying, and even starting to drip on the floor, filling the church with a wondrous fragrance. It is remarkable that each year during Passion Week the Holy myrrh would stop flowing from the Icon and then resume its flow after Easter. The Icon was responsible for many wondrous cures.

Tragically, on October 31, 1997 while in Athens, Greece, Joseph was murdered and the icon mysteriously disappeared. A copy of this icon resides in St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Washington, DC.

It is impossible to enumerate here all the miraculous icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary. After the revolution in Russia many ancient icons began to restore themselves (become shining, as if newly painted). On occasion, in front of a person's eyes, old and dark icons have lightened as if new. There are thousands of such self-restored icons. The faithful saw in these miracles signs of the forthcoming spiritual revival in Russia.

Miracles and apparitions do not occur without cause. Most likely the miraculous apparitions of the Virgin Mary are meant to awaken our faith in God and a sense of repentance. Unfortunately, many in our day have become deaf to spiritual subjects, are turning their back to God, and choose a pagan way of life. But we, Orthodox Christians, should always remember our Heavenly Mother, our Intercessor at the Lord's Altar, and ask Her guidance and protection. O most holy Theotokos, save us!

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THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON
A.D. 451

The sacred and great and universal synod by God's grace and by decree of your most religious and Christ-loving emperors Valentinian Augustus and Marcian Augustus assembled in Chalcedon, metropolis of the province of Bithynia, in the shrine of the saintly and triumphant martyr Euphemia, issues **the following decrees**.

[Snipped]

- Therefore **this sacred and great and universal synod**, now in session, in its desire to exclude all their tricks against the truth, and teaching what has been unshakeable in the proclamation from the beginning,
 - **decrees** that the creed of the 318 fathers is, above all else, to remain inviolate. And because of those who oppose the holy Spirit, it
 - **ratifies** the teaching about the being of the holy Spirit handed down by the 150 saintly fathers who met some time later in the imperial city
 - o -- the teaching they made known to all,
 - **not introducing anything** left out by their predecessors, **but clarifying** their ideas about the holy Spirit by the use of scriptural testimonies against those who were trying to do away with his sovereignty.

And because of those who are attempting to corrupt the mystery of the economy and are shamelessly and foolishly asserting that he who was born of the holy virgin Mary was a mere man, **it has accepted**

- **the synodical letters of the blessed Cyril**, [already accepted by the Council of Ephesus] pastor of the church in Alexandria, to Nestorius and to the Orientals, as being well-suited to refuting Nestorius's mad folly and to providing an interpretation for those who in their religious zeal might desire understanding of the saving creed.

- To these it has suitably added, against false believers and for the establishment of orthodox doctrines

- **the letter of the primate of greatest and older Rome,**

the most blessed and most saintly Archbishop *Leo*, written to the sainted Archbishop Flavian to put down Eutyches's evil-mindedness, because it is in agreement with great Peter's confession and represents a support we have in common. [See the next page]

It is opposed to those who attempt to tear apart the mystery of the economy into a duality of sons; and

- it *expels* from the assembly of the priests those who dare to say that the divinity of the Only-begotten is passible, and
- it *stands opposed* to those who imagine a mixture or confusion between the two natures of Christ; and
- it *expels* those who have the mad idea that the servant-form he took from us is of a heavenly or some other kind of being; and
- it *anathematizes* those who concoct two natures of the Lord before the union but imagine a single one after the union.

So, following the saintly fathers, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity; like us in all respects except for sin; begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and in the last days the same for us and for our salvation from Mary, the virgin God-bearer as regards his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being; he is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ, just as the prophets taught from the beginning about him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ himself instructed us, and as the creed of the fathers handed it down to us. [also quoted on p. 864 of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer]

The letter of Pope Leo to Flavian, bishop of Constantinople, about Eutyches

Surprised as we were at the late arrival of your charity's letter, we read it and examined the account of what the bishops had

done. We now see what scandal against the integrity of the faith had reared its head among you. What had previously been kept secret now became clearly revealed to us. **Eutyches**, who was considered a man of honour because he had the title of priest, is shown to be very rash and extremely ignorant. What the prophet said can be applied to him: He did not want to understand and do good: he plotted evil in his bed. What can be worse than to have an irreligious mind and to pay no heed to those who are wiser and more learned? The people who fall into this folly are those in whom knowledge of the truth is blocked by a kind of dimness. They do not refer to

- the sayings of the prophets, nor to
- the letters of the apostles, nor even to
- the authoritative words of the gospels,

but to themselves. By not being pupils of the truth, they turn out to be masters of error. A man who has not the most elementary understanding even of the creed itself can have learnt nothing from the sacred texts of the New and Old Testaments. This old man has not yet taken to heart what is pronounced by every baptismal candidate the world over!

He had no idea *how he ought to think about the incarnation* of the Word of God; and he had no desire to acquire the light of understanding by working through the length and breadth of the holy scriptures. So at least he should have listened carefully and accepted the common and undivided **creed** by which the whole body of the faithful confess that they believe *in*

God the Father almighty and in

Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord,

who was born of the holy Spirit and the virgin Mary.

These three statements wreck the tricks of nearly every heretic. When God is believed to be both almighty and Father, the Son is clearly proved to be co-eternal with him, in no way different from the Father, since he was born God from God, almighty from the Almighty, co-eternal from the Eternal, not later in time, not lower in power, not unlike in glory, not distinct in being. The same eternal, only-begotten of the eternal begetter was born of the holy Spirit and the virgin Mary. His birth in time in no way subtracts from or adds to that divine and eternal birth of his: **but its whole purpose is to restore humanity, who had been deceived, so that it might defeat death and, by its power, destroy the devil who held the power of death.** Overcoming the originator of sin and death would be beyond us, had not he whom sin could not defile, nor could death hold down, taken up our nature and made it his own. He was conceived from the holy Spirit inside the womb of the virgin mother. **Her virginity was as untouched in giving him birth as it was in conceiving him.**

But if it was beyond Eutyches to derive sound understanding from this, **the purest source of the christian faith**, because the brightness of manifest truth had been darkened by his own peculiar blindness, then he should have subjected himself to the teaching of the gospels. When Matthew says, The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham, Eutyches should have looked up the further *development* in the apostolic preaching. When he read in the letter to the Romans, Paul, the servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for God's gospel, which he had formerly promised through his prophets in the holy writings which refer to his Son, who was made for him of David's seed according to the flesh, he should have paid deep and devout attention to the prophetic texts. And when he discovered God making the promise to Abraham that in your seed shall all nations be blessed, he should have followed the apostle, in order to eliminate any doubt about the identity of this seed, when he says, The promises were spoken to Abraham and his seed. He does not say "to his seeds"--as if referring to a multiplicity--but to a single one, "and to thy seed" which is Christ. His inward ear should also have heard Isaiah preaching *Behold, a virgin will receive in the womb and will bear a son*, and they will call his name Emmanuel, which is translated "God is with us". With faith he should have read the same prophet's words, A child is born to us, a son is given to us. His power is on his shoulders. They will call his name "Angel of great counsel, mighty God, prince of peace, father of the world to come". Then he would not deceive people by saying that the Word was made flesh in the sense that he emerged from the virgin's womb having a human form but not having the *reality* of his mother's body.

Or was it perhaps that he thought that our lord Jesus Christ did not have our nature because the angel who was sent to the blessed Mary said, The holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most High will overshadow you, and so that which will be born holy out of you will be called Son of God, as if it was because the conception by the virgin was worked by God that the flesh of the one conceived did not share the nature of her who conceived it? But uniquely wondrous and wondrously unique as that act of generation was, it is not to be understood as though the proper character of its kind was taken away by the sheer novelty of its creation. It was the holy Spirit that made the virgin pregnant, but the *reality* of the body derived from body. As Wisdom built a house for herself, the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us: that is, in that flesh which he derived from human kind and which he animated with the spirit of a rational life.

So **the proper character of both natures was maintained and came together in a single person.** Lowliness was taken up by majesty, weakness by strength, mortality by eternity. *To pay off the debt of our state*, invulnerable nature was united to a nature that could suffer; so that in a way that corresponded to the remedies we needed, one and the same mediator between God and humanity the man Christ Jesus, could both on the one hand die and on the other be incapable of death. Thus was true God born in the undiminished and perfect nature of a true man, complete in what is his and complete in what is ours. By "ours" we mean what the Creator established in us from the beginning and what he took upon himself to restore. There was in the Saviour no trace of the things which the Deceiver brought upon us, and to which deceived humanity gave admittance. *His subjection to human weaknesses in common with us did not mean that he shared our sins.* He took on the form of a servant without the defilement of sin, thereby enhancing the human and not diminishing the divine. For that self-emptying whereby the Invisible rendered himself visible, and the Creator and Lord of all things chose to join the ranks of mortals, spelled no failure of power: it was an act of merciful favour. So the one who retained the form of God when he made humanity, was made man in the form of a servant. Each nature kept its proper character without loss; and just as the form of God does not take away the form of a servant, so the form of a servant does not detract from the form of God.

It was the devil's boast that humanity had been deceived by his trickery and so had lost the *gifts* God had given it; and that it had been stripped of the endowment of immortality and so was subject to the harsh sentence of death. He also boasted that, sunk as he was in evil, he himself derived some consolation from having a partner in crime; and that God had been forced by the principle of justice to alter his verdict on humanity, which he had created in such an honourable state. All this called for the realisation of a secret plan whereby the *unalterable* God, whose will is indistinguishable from his goodness, might bring the original realisation of his kindness towards us to completion by means of a more hidden mystery, and whereby humanity, which had been led into a state of sin by the craftiness of the devil, might be prevented from perishing contrary to the purpose of God.

So without leaving his Father's glory behind, the Son of God comes down from his heavenly throne and enters the depths of our world, born in an unprecedented order by an unprecedented kind of birth. In an unprecedented order, because one who is invisible at his own level was made visible at ours. The ungraspable willed to be grasped. Whilst remaining pre-existent, he begins to exist in time. The Lord of the universe veiled his measureless majesty and took on a servant's form. The God who knew no suffering did not despise becoming a suffering man, and, deathless as he is, to be subject to the laws of death. By an unprecedented kind of birth, because it was inviolable virginity which supplied the material flesh without experiencing *sexual desire*. What was taken from the mother of the Lord was the nature without the *guilt*. And the fact that the birth was miraculous does not imply that in the lord Jesus Christ, born from the virgin's womb, the nature is different from ours. The same one is true God and true man.

There is nothing unreal about this oneness, since both the lowliness of the man and the grandeur of the divinity are in mutual relation. As God is not changed by showing mercy, neither is humanity devoured by the dignity received. The activity of each form is what is proper to it in communion with the other: that is, the Word performs what belongs to the Word, and the flesh accomplishes what belongs to the flesh. One of these performs brilliant *miracles* the other sustains acts of *violence*. As the Word does not lose its glory which is equal to that of the Father, so neither does the flesh leave the nature of its kind behind. We must say this again and again: **one and the same is truly Son of God and truly son of man.** God, by the fact that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; man, by the fact that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. God, by the fact that all things were made through him, and nothing was made without him, *man*, by the fact that he was made of a woman, *made under the law*. The birth of flesh reveals human nature; birth from a virgin is a proof of divine power. A lowly cradle manifests the infancy of the child; angels' voices announce the greatness of the most High. Herod evilly strives to kill one who was like a human being at the earliest stage the Magi rejoice to adore on bended knee one who is the Lord of all. And when he came to be baptised by his precursor John, the Father's voice spoke thunder from heaven, to ensure that he did not go unnoticed because the divinity was concealed by the veil of flesh: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Accordingly, the same one whom the devil craftily tempts as a man, the angels dutifully wait on as God. Hunger, thirst, weariness, sleep are patently human. But to satisfy five thousand people with five loaves; to dispense living water to the Samaritan woman, a drink of which will stop her being thirsty ever again; to walk on the surface of the sea with feet that do not sink; to rebuke the storm and level the mounting waves; there can be no doubt these are divine.

So, if I may pass over many instances, it does not belong to the same nature to weep out of deep-felt pity for a dead friend, and to call him back to life again at the word of command, once the mound had been removed from the four-day-old grave; or to hang on the cross and, with day changed into night, to make the elements tremble; or to be pierced by nails and to open the gates of paradise for the believing thief. Likewise, it does not belong to the same nature to say I and the Father are one, and to say The Father is greater than I. For although there is in the Lord Jesus Christ a single person who is of God and of man, the insults shared by both have their source in one thing, and the glory that is shared in another. For it is from us that he gets a humanity which is less than the Father; it is from the Father that he gets a divinity which is equal to the Father.

So it is on account of this oneness of the person, which must be understood in both natures, that we both read that the son of

man came down from heaven, when the Son of God took flesh from the virgin from whom he was born, and again that the Son of God is said to have been crucified and buried, since he suffered these things not in the divinity itself whereby the Only-begotten is co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father, but in the weakness of the human nature. That is why in the creed, too, we all confess that the only-begotten Son of God was crucified and was buried, following what the apostle said, If they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of majesty. And when our Lord and Saviour himself was questioning his disciples and instructing their faith, he says, Who do people say I, the son of man, am? And when they had displayed a variety of other people's opinions, he says, Who do you say I am? --in other words, I who am the son of man and whom you behold in the form of a servant and in real flesh: Who do you say I am? Whereupon the blessed Peter, inspired by God and making a confession that would benefit all future peoples, says, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. He thoroughly deserved to be declared "blessed" by the Lord. He derived the stability of both his goodness and his name from the original Rock, for when the Father revealed it to him, he confessed that the same one is both the Son of God and also the Christ. *Accepting one of these truths without the other was no help to salvation; and to have believed that the Lord Jesus Christ was either only God and not man, or solely man and not God, was equally dangerous.*

After the Lord's resurrection--which was certainly the resurrection of a *real* body, since the one brought back to life is none other than the one who had been crucified and had died--the whole point of the forty-day delay was to make our faith completely sound and to cleanse it of all darkness. Hence he talked to his disciples and lived and ate with them, and let himself be touched attentively and carefully by those who were in the grip of doubt; he would go in among his disciples when the doors were locked, and impart the holy Spirit by breathing on them, and open up the secrets of the holy scriptures after enlightening their understanding; again, he would point out the wound in his side, the holes made by the nails, and all the signs of the suffering he had just recently undergone, saying, Look at my hands and feet--it is I. Feel and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. All this was so that it would be recognised that the proper character of the divine and of the human nature went on existing inseparable in him; and so that we would realise that the Word is not the same thing as the flesh, but in such a way that we would confess belief in the one Son of God as being both Word and flesh.

This Eutyches must be judged to be extremely destitute of this mystery of the faith. Neither the humility of the mortal life nor the glory of the resurrection has made him recognise our nature in the only-begotten of God. Nor has even the statement of the blessed apostle and evangelist John put fear into him: Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is from God, and every spirit which puts Jesus asunder is not from God, and this is *Antichrist*. But what does putting Jesus as under consist in if not in separating his human nature from him, and in voiding, through the most barefaced fictions, the one mystery by which we have been saved? Once in the dark about the nature of Christ's body, it follows that the same blindness leads him into raving folly about his suffering too. If he does not think that the Lord's cross was unreal and if he has no doubt that the suffering undergone for the world's salvation was real, then let him acknowledge the flesh of the one whose death he believes in. And let him not deny that a man whom he knows to have been subject to suffering had our kind of body, for to deny the reality of the flesh is also to deny the bodily suffering. So if he accepts the christian faith and does not turn a deaf ear to the preaching of the gospel, let him consider what nature it was that hung, pierced with nails, on the wood of the cross. With the side of the crucified one laid open by the soldier's spear, let him identify the source from which blood and water flowed, to bathe the church of God with both font and cup.

Let him heed what the blessed apostle Peter preaches, that sanctification by the Spirit is effected by the sprinkling of Christ's blood; and let him not skip over the same apostle's words, knowing that you have been redeemed from the empty way of life you inherited from your fathers, not with corruptible gold and silver but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without stain or spot. Nor should he withstand the testimony of blessed John the apostle: and the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, purifies us from every sin; and again, This is the victory which conquers the world, our faith. Who is there who conquers the world save one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? It is he, Jesus Christ who has come through water and blood, not in water only, but in water and blood. And because the Spirit is truth, it is the Spirit who testifies. For there are three who give testimony--Spirit and water and blood. And the three are one. In other words, the Spirit of sanctification and the blood of redemption and the water of baptism. These three are one and remain indivisible. None of them is separable from its link with the others. The reason is that *it is by this faith that the catholic church lives and grows*, by believing that neither the humanity is without true divinity nor the divinity without true humanity.

When you cross-examined Eutyches and he replied, "I confess that our Lord was of two natures before the union, but I confess one nature after the union", I am amazed that such an absurd and corrupt declaration of faith was not very severely censured by the judges; and that an extremely foolish statement was disregarded, as if nothing whatever offensive had been heard. It is just as wicked to say that the only-begotten Son of God was of two natures before the incarnation as it is abominable to claim that there was a single nature in him after the Word was made flesh. Eutyches must not suppose that what he said was either correct or tolerable just because no clear statement of yours refuted it. So we remind you, dearest brother, of *your charity's responsibility* to see to it that if through God's merciful inspiration the case is ever settled, the rash and ignorant fellow is also purged of what is blighting his mind. As the minutes have made clear, he made a good start at abandoning his opinion when, under pressure from your statement, he professed to say what he had not previously said, and to find satisfaction in the faith to which he had previously been a stranger. But when he had refused to be party to the

anathematising of his wicked doctrine, your fraternity would have realised that he was persisting in his false belief and that he deserved a verdict of condemnation. If he is honestly and suitably sorry about this, and acknowledges even at this late stage how rightly episcopal authority was set in motion, or if, to make full amends, he condemns every wrong thought he had by word of mouth and by his actual signature, then no amount of mercy towards one who has reformed is excessive. Our Lord, the true and good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep, and who came not to destroy but to save the souls of men and women, wants us to be imitators of his goodness, so that whilst justice represses sinners, mercy does not reject the converted. The defence of the true faith is never so productive as when false opinion is condemned even by its adherents.

In place of ourself, we have arranged for our brothers, Bishop Julius and the priest Renatus of the church of St Clement, and also my son, the deacon Hilary, to ensure a good and faithful conclusion to the whole case. To their company we have added our notary Dulcitus, of proven loyalty to us. We trust that with God's help he who has fallen into error might condemn the wickedness of his own mind and find salvation.

God keep you safe, dearest brother.

[Conclusion of the Decrees of the Council of Chalcedon]

It is opposed to those who attempt to tear apart the mystery of the economy into a duality of sons; and

- it *expels* from the assembly of the priests those who dare to say that the divinity of the Only-begotten is passible, and
- it *stands opposed* to those who imagine a mixture or confusion between the two natures of Christ; and
- it *expels* those who have the mad idea that the servant-form he took from us is of a heavenly or some other kind of being; and
- it *anathematizes* those who concoct two natures of the Lord before the union but imagine a single one after the union.

So, *following the saintly fathers*, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity; like us in all respects except for sin; begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and in the last days the same for us and for our salvation from Mary, the virgin God-bearer as regards his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being; he is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ, just as the prophets taught from the beginning about him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ himself instructed us, and as the creed of the fathers handed it down to us.

Since we have formulated these things with all possible accuracy and attention, the sacred and universal synod decreed that **no one is permitted to produce, or even to write down or compose, any other creed or to think or teach otherwise**. As for those who dare either to compose another creed or even to promulgate or teach or hand down another creed for those who wish to convert to a recognition of the truth from Hellenism or from Judaism, or from any kind of heresy at all: if they be bishops or clerics, the bishops are to be deposed from the episcopacy and the clerics from the clergy; if they be monks or layfolk, they are to be anathematised.