

The Woman: Take-Home 5

Session 5: Full of Grace

What We Found

The Immaculate Conception is about Mary's conception, not Jesus': at the first instant of her existence she was preserved from original sin 'by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ' (Ineffabilis Deus, 1854). Mary is not the exception to salvation by grace; she is its most extreme case, redeemed by her Son more perfectly than anyone, by prevention rather than rescue.

Gabriel greets her not by her name but as kecharitomene, 'graced one' (Luke 1:28), much as the angel greeted Gideon by an identity God was giving him, 'mighty man of valor,' while he hid in a winepress (Judges 6:12). The greeting names what grace has made her.

The doctrines we discovered earlier converge here: the New Eve begins where Eve began, without sin; the Ark was pure gold within and without (Exodus 25:11), a purity the Church's typology has read as fitting what it was made to carry; and God set total 'enmity' between the serpent and the woman (Genesis 3:15). Her calling God 'my Savior' (Luke 1:47) is the dogma's own heart: caught before the pit's edge, she owes the Rescuer everything.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. AUGUSTINE

Concerning the holy Virgin Mary, Augustine says in substance: for the honor of the Lord, I wish to raise no question at all when we treat of sins.

On Nature and Grace, ch. 36 (close paraphrase)

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: BL. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

Scotus teaches, in substance, that a perfect Redeemer redeems most perfectly, and preserving from sin is more perfect than cleansing it: Mary's preservation is redemption's masterpiece.

Ordinatio III, d. 3, q. 1 (summary)

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: BL. POPE PIUS IX

"...in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin."

Ineffabilis Deus (1854)

Live It This Week

- Go to Confession this week if you have not recently.
- Pray Luke 1:46–49 each morning as the song of someone being saved.
- When you catch yourself minimizing a sin this week, name it as a truce with the serpent, and break it.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"And he came to her and said, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!'"

Luke 1:28 (RSV2CE)

Before next session: Read Matthew 1:18–25.

Catechism references: CCC 490–493; 508