

# The Woman: Take-Home 1

## Session 1: Daughter Zion

### What We Found

Typology is the New Testament's own way of reading the Old: St. Paul calls Adam 'a type of the one who was to come' (Romans 5:14), and St. Peter calls the flood a type of baptism (1 Peter 3:21). When the Church reads Mary through Israel's story, she is imitating the apostles.

Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55) sings in the cadences of Hannah's song (1 Samuel 2:1–10). Mary places herself in the long line of Israel's mothers whose children came by God's promise and power.

The angel's greeting, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!' (Luke 1:28), where the Greek word for 'Hail' (chaire) literally means 'Rejoice,' echoes the prophets' summons to the Daughter of Zion: 'Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion... The LORD, your God, is in your midst' (Zephaniah 3:14, 17). What was promised to Israel as a whole gathers to a point in one daughter of Israel.

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. AUGUSTINE

"The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old is unveiled in the New."

*Questions on the Heptateuch, Book 2, q. 73*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

St. Thomas teaches, in substance, that God, the author of history, can make not only words but events and persons signify what is to come; typology rests on the literal sense and never replaces it.

*Summa Theologiae I, q. 1, a. 10 (summary)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

St. Irenaeus teaches, in substance, that Christ recapitulates the whole human story, passing back through what Adam and Israel lived and healing it from inside.

*Against Heresies III, 18, 1.7; III, 21, 10; cf. V, 21 (summary)*

#### MY GUESS: SEAL IT AND HOLD IT

At the wedding at Cana, Jesus addresses his mother with one surprising word: 'Woman' (John 2:4). Why do you think he calls her that? Write your best guess.

Write your guess below, fold this section over, and do not revisit it. We will open our guesses together later in the study.

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**Live It This Week**

- Pray the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55) aloud once a day this week; each day sit with a different line.
- Read one barren-mother story (Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, or Hannah) and note what it teaches Israel to expect from God.
- Write your sealed guess tonight, while the question is fresh.

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE**

"for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

*Luke 1:49 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* Read Romans 5:12–21 slowly, twice.

*Catechism references:* CCC 128–130; 116; 489

# The Woman: Take-Home 2

## Session 2: The New Eve

### What We Found

St. Paul frames all of salvation as a replay: Christ is the New Adam whose obedience undoes the first man's disobedience (Romans 5:18–19; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 45).

St. John's Gospel opens 'In the beginning' (John 1:1) and twice shows Jesus addressing his mother as 'Woman' (John 2:4; 19:26), pointing us back to Genesis 3:15, where God sets 'the woman' and her seed in enmity with the serpent, and her seed shall bruise his head.

The scene of the fall inverts in the Annunciation: a virgin, an angel's word, and free consent. Eve's distrust tied the knot; Mary's 'let it be to me according to your word' (Luke 1:38) begins its untying. This is the earliest developed Marian teaching we have outside the New Testament, taught by St. Justin Martyr around 155 and St. Irenaeus around 180.

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JUSTIN MARTYR

Justin teaches that as the virgin Eve conceived the serpent's word and brought forth disobedience and death, so the Virgin Mary received the angel's good news with faith and answered, be it done to me according to your word.

*Dialogue with Trypho, ch. 100 (paraphrase)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

"The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith."

*Against Heresies III, 22, 4 (as cited in CCC 494)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Newman argues, in substance, that because the earliest Fathers teach the New Eve independently across the whole ancient Church, it belongs to the primitive apostolic teaching rather than to later devotion.

*Letter to Pusey (1866), summary*

### Live It This Week

- Each morning, pray 'let it be to me according to your word' (Luke 1:38) over the first difficult thing on the day's calendar.
- Reread Genesis 3 slowly and write down one question it raises; bring it next week.
- Make one small deliberate act of obedience in an area where you have been negotiating with God.

#### SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

*Genesis 3:15 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* Read Luke 1:5–56 slowly, twice, and notice every detail of movement and place.

*Catechism references:* CCC 410–411; 494; 511; 726

# The Woman: Take-Home 3

## Session 3: The Ark of the New Covenant

### What We Found

The Ark of the Covenant was the dwelling of God's presence in Israel; when the tabernacle was completed, the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD filled it (Exodus 40:34–35). In the Greek Old Testament, the verb there is 'overshadowed' (epeskiazēn), the very word the angel uses for Mary: 'the power of the Most High will overshadow you' (Luke 1:35).

Luke tells the Visitation (Luke 1:39–56) in the shape of the Ark's journey to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6): the trip to the hill country of Judah, Elizabeth's awestruck question echoing David's, the leaping before the presence, and the three-month stay. Luke, as the Church has long read him, is showing us that Mary is what the Ark was: the place where the Lord dwells among his people (cf. CCC 2676).

The Ark's holiness was never its own; it came entirely from the Presence it carried. Everything the Church honors in Mary points beyond her to the One she carried, and what it says of her as God-bearer it says, in a lesser key, of every baptized soul: you also are now a temple of the same Presence (1 Corinthians 6:19).

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE LITANY OF LORETO

Among the titles the Church has prayed for centuries in this approved litany stands Foederis Arca: Ark of the Covenant. Before it was an argument, it was a prayer.

*Litany of Loreto*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN DAMASCENE

St. John Damascene teaches, in substance, that Mary is the living Ark: carrying not tablets of stone but the Lawgiver, not manna but the Bread of Life.

*Homilies on the Dormition (summary)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE SYRIAC TRADITION, ASSOCIATED WITH ST. EPHREM

The Syriac hymns sing of Mary as the dwelling and tabernacle of God: the small space that contained the One whom the heavens cannot contain.

*Hymns of the Syriac tradition (summary)*

### Live It This Week

- Arrive ten minutes early to Mass or adoration once this week and pray David's question: 'How can the Lord come to me?'
- Reread Luke 1:39–56 and mark every word of joy; count them.
- Each evening, name one way the Lord took up residence in your day that you nearly missed.

#### SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the

child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

*Luke 1:35 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* Read 1 Kings chapters 1 and 2, and pay attention to the two women in the story.

*Catechism references:* CCC 2676; 697

# The Woman: Take-Home 4

## Session 4: The Queen Mother

### What We Found

In the kingdom of Judah the most honored woman of the royal court was characteristically not the king's wife but his mother, the gebirah. Bathsheba bows before her husband David (1 Kings 1:16), but her son Solomon rises, bows to her, and seats her on a throne at his right hand (1 Kings 2:19). Psalm 45:9 shows a queen standing at the king's right hand; there she is the royal bride, though the position itself is the very one Solomon gives his mother in 1 Kings 2:19, and the Church has long applied this psalm to Mary; Jeremiah addresses 'the king and the queen mother' together (Jeremiah 13:18); the king goes into exile with his mother beside him (2 Kings 24:12).

Gabriel announces that Jesus receives 'the throne of his father David' and a kingdom without end (Luke 1:32–33). When Elizabeth greets Mary as 'the mother of my Lord' (Luke 1:43), her words echo the royal court language of the Old Testament, where the mother of 'my lord the king' was honored (cf. 1 Kings 1:11–31): she is, in effect, greeting the mother of her King.

Mary's queenship is entirely derived from her Son's kingship, and it never replaces direct access to him: we still 'draw near to the throne of grace with confidence' (Hebrews 4:16). The queen mother is the King's generosity, not his gatekeeper.

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: VEN. POPE PIUS XII

Pius XII teaches, in substance, that Mary is rightly hailed as Queen because she is the mother of the King whose kingdom has no end, her queenship wholly derived from and subordinate to her Son's royal dignity.

*Ad Caeli Reginam (1954), summary*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE CHURCH'S ANCIENT ANTIPHONS

For roughly a millennium the Church has ended her day singing to Mary as queen: *Salve Regina*, *Hail, holy Queen*, *Mother of mercy*; and in Eastertide, *Regina Caeli*.

*Salve Regina; Regina Caeli*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

St. Alphonsus teaches, in substance, that Mary's queenship is a queenship of mercy: her office is to receive petitions and carry them to the throne of her Son.

*The Glories of Mary (summary)*

### Live It This Week

- Pray the *Salve Regina* slowly once a day this week.
- Do one deliberate, visible act of honor toward your mother or father, living or deceased.
- Bring one intention each day to Christ the King through his mother's hands.

#### SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir."

*Psalm 45:9 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* Read Luke 1:26–38 again, slowly, twice.

Catechism references: CCC 966 (Mary exalted as Queen over all things); CCC 559 (Jesus acclaimed as the Davidic King).



# 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

# The Woman: Take-Home 6

## Session 6: The Virgin

### What We Found

Two claims, kept distinct: the virginal conception (Jesus conceived by the Holy Spirit without a human father; Matthew 1:18–25), confessed by nearly all Christians; and the perpetual virginity (Mary ever-virgin, Jesus her only child), confessed by the Church as *Aeiparthenos* and held by the ancient Church, the councils, and even Luther and Zwingli.

Matthew's 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive' quotes the Greek translation Jews made two centuries before Christ; and the sign offered to the house of David was to be 'deep as Sheol or high as heaven' (Isaiah 7:11), a depth only Emmanuel reaches.

The 'brothers of the Lord' are kinsmen in Scripture's wide sense: the first two named, James and Joseph, are the sons of another Mary, whom Matthew names among the women watching the crucifixion (Matthew 27:56) and later calls 'the other Mary' (Matthew 27:61). Tradition has often identified her with Mary the wife of Clopas, who stood by the Cross in John 19:25. 'Until' (Matthew 1:25) asserts nothing about afterward (compare 2 Samuel 6:23; Matthew 28:20), and 'first-born' was a legal title held from birth (Exodus 13:2). Powerfully: from the Cross, Jesus entrusted his mother to the beloved disciple (John 19:26–27), an act hard to explain if she had other living sons, and one the Church has always read as confirming that Jesus was her only child.

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JEROME

St. Jerome argues, in substance, that the Lord's 'brothers' are kinsmen, that 'until' and 'firstborn' assert nothing beyond the point they mark, and that the ancient writers of the Church bear united witness against Helvidius's novelty in defense of Mary's abiding virginity.

*Against Helvidius* (c. 383), summary

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. AMBROSE

St. Ambrose teaches, in substance, that Mary is the east gate of Ezekiel's vision: the gate by which the Lord entered the world, which remains shut; her consecrated virginity is a sign of undivided belonging to God.

*De institutione virginis* (c. 392), summary

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE LATERAN SYNOD OF 649

Under Pope St. Martin I, the Church confessed Mary 'ever-virgin and immaculate': conceiving without seed by the Holy Spirit, her virginity remaining undissolved after the birth.

*Lateran Synod of 649, canon 3* (summary)

### Live It This Week

- Consecrate one concrete thing wholly to God this week and do not borrow it back.
- Read John 19:25–27 once each day, standing in the beloved disciple's place.

- Pray daily for one specific Protestant friend or family member, with thanksgiving for their love of Scripture.

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE**

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel"

*Matthew 1:23 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* Read Galatians 4:4–7 and John 1:1–18.

*Catechism references:* CCC 496–501; 503–507

# The Woman: Take-Home 7

## Session 7: Theotokos

### What We Found

'Mother of God' is a claim about Jesus before it is a claim about Mary. The logic: Mary is truly the mother of Jesus ('God sent forth his Son, born of woman,' Galatians 4:4); Jesus is truly God, one divine person ('the Word was God... the Word became flesh,' John 1:1, 14); and mothers are mothers of persons, not natures. Therefore Mary is the mother of a person who is God.

Elizabeth, 'filled with the Holy Spirit,' already says it: 'the mother of my Lord' (Luke 1:43), in a passage where the same word Lord names the God of Israel and the child in the womb within three verses. Around the year 107, St. Ignatius of Antioch writes of 'our God, Jesus Christ... conceived by Mary.'

The Council of Ephesus (431) defended the title Theotokos against the proposal 'Christotokos' because the substitute quietly split Christ into two subjects. The title makes Mary's greatness derivative by definition: she is honored precisely and only because of who her Son is.

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

"For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary according to God's plan, of the seed of David and of the Holy Spirit."

*Letter to the Ephesians 18:2 (c. 107)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

St. Cyril teaches, in substance, that there are not two sons, one of God and one of Mary, but one and the same Son; refuse her the title Theotokos and you refuse him the Incarnation.

*Second Letter to Nestorius (summary)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS

The third ecumenical council (431) confessed the holy virgin as Theotokos, since she bore according to the flesh the Word of God made flesh.

*Council of Ephesus, 431 (summary)*

### Live It This Week

- Pray the first half of the Hail Mary daily and hold 'Mother of God' for ten seconds as a creed about Jesus.
- Read John 1:1–18 aloud once this week, on your feet.
- Put your Take-Home 1 where you cannot miss it.

#### SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

*Galatians 4:4–5 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* Read John 2:1–12, and BRING YOUR TAKE-HOME 1 with the sealed My Guess box.  
The guesses open next session.

*Catechism references:* CCC 495; 466; 509

# The Woman: Take-Home 8

## Session 8: Cana

### What We Found

The guesses opened, and the study's first great question resolved: Jesus calls his mother 'Woman' because John's Genesis-shaped Gospel ('In the beginning,' the counted days, the third-day wedding) presents her as the woman of Genesis 3:15, set in enmity with the serpent, mother of the conquering seed; and by tying her request to 'my hour,' Jesus links her, from his first sign, to the Cross where he will say the word again. One 'Woman' text still remains, and it stays sealed a little longer.

The queen mother's office finally worked as designed: where Bathsheba carried a corrupt request a shrewd king refused, Mary noticed a need no one voiced, stated it without dictating ('They have no wine'), trusted through an answer that sounded like refusal, and pointed everyone away from herself: 'Do whatever he tells you' (John 2:5), her last recorded words in Scripture.

The hundred-and-twenty-plus gallons, somewhere between 120 and 180, are the prophets uncorked: 'the mountains shall drip sweet wine' (Amos 9:13); 'a feast of wine on the lees... he will swallow up death for ever' (Isaiah 25:6–8). The first sign announces the messianic wedding feast, and it began at his mother's word.

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. AUGUSTINE

Augustine teaches, in substance, that Jesus' answer at Cana distinguishes his two births rather than repudiating his mother: the sign flows from the divinity he did not receive from her; the hour of the Cross belongs to the humanity he did.

*Tractates on the Gospel of John, on John 2 (summary)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

St. Bernard teaches, in substance, that God willed grace to reach us through Mary as through an aqueduct: not the source, but a channel the Source freely built.

*De aquaeductu (summary)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

St. John Paul II teaches, in substance, that at Cana Mary places herself between her Son and human need, presenting not demands but the fact of it; her intercession never points anywhere but at him.

*Redemptoris Mater 21–22 (summary)*

### Live It This Week

- Each day, bring to Christ one need you noticed that nobody voiced.
- Pray 'Do whatever he tells you' before each significant decision this week, and pause long enough for it to be dangerous.
- Write on the back of this sheet: what my guess got wrong, and what that taught me about reading Scripture.

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE**

"His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'"

*John 2:5 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* Read Matthew 2:13–23.

*Catechism references:* CCC 2618; 1613



# The Woman: Take-Home 9

## Session 9: The New Rachel

### What We Found

Matthew hears Rachel weeping when Bethlehem's sons are slaughtered (Matthew 2:16–18, quoting Jeremiah 31:15). We traced the voice to its grave: Rachel died on the Bethlehem road giving birth, naming her son Ben-oni, 'son of my sorrow,' whom his father renamed Benjamin, 'son of the right hand' (Genesis 35:16–20). Read typologically, the Messiah carries both names at once: the man of sorrows (Isaiah 53:3) enthroned at God's right hand (Psalm 110:1), and in that reading his mother's motherhood lives in the hyphen.

Jeremiah answers the weeping on the same page: 'there is hope for your future... your children shall come back' (Jeremiah 31:16–17), in the very chapter that promises the new covenant (31:31). Christian sorrow is real sorrow inside a promised reversal.

Simeon prophesied the sword over Mary on the fortieth day of her Son's life: 'a sword will pierce through your own soul also' (Luke 2:35). Her share in his Passion is participation, never substitution: Christ's one offering is fully sufficient (Hebrews 10:14; 1 Timothy 2:5), and her unrepeatable cooperation flows entirely from the superabundance of his merits. We ended standing where she stood: 'standing by the cross of Jesus... his mother' (John 19:25).

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

St. Bernard teaches, in substance, that Simeon's sword passed through Mary's soul at the Cross: she is more than martyr, suffering in the soul what the martyrs suffered in the body.

Sermon within the Octave of the Assumption (*Sermo infra octavam Assumptionis*), used in the Office of Readings for the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows, September 15 (summary)

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

"There she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, joining herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart..."

Lumen Gentium 58 (as quoted in CCC 964)

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE STABAT MATER

At the Cross her station keeping, stood the mournful Mother weeping, close to Jesus to the last. The hymn asks to share, not merely admire, her love: make me feel as thou hast felt.

*Stabat Mater* (13th-century liturgical hymn)

### Live It This Week

- Pray one decade of a Sorrowful Mystery this week for someone who is grieving.
- Read Jeremiah 31:15–17 and 31:31–34 together once: tears and covenant on one page.
- If you carry an unmourned grief, write down one concrete step toward mourning it well, and take it.

#### SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed."

*Luke 2:35 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* We finish the scene exactly where we stopped. Before next session, sit once more with John 19:25, and no further.

*Catechism references:* CCC 964; 618; 970

# The Woman: Take-Home 10

## Session 10: Behold Your Mother

### What We Found

We finished the scene: 'Woman, behold, your son!... Behold, your mother! And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home' (John 19:26–27). John places the entrustment immediately before 'all was now finished' (19:28): it belongs to the Cross's completed work, not to its margins.

The thread from Session 2 resolved: Eve was named 'mother of all living' (Genesis 3:20) as death entered; at the Cross, where death is defeated, the Church's tradition sees the New Eve receiving the motherhood that title foreshadowed. The beloved disciple, left unnamed, has long been read as standing for every disciple Jesus loves; what was given to him was given to us in him.

The hard sayings sharpen this rather than undoing it: Jesus relocates blessedness from biology to hearing and keeping God's word (Mark 3:33–35; Luke 11:27–28), and on exactly that criterion Luke presents Mary first and best: 'let it be to me according to your word' (1:38); 'blessed is she who believed' (1:45); pondering the word in her heart (2:19, 51); praying with the Church (Acts 1:14). Mother by nature, mother by discipleship, and, by his dying word, mother of us.

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ORIGEN

Origen teaches, in substance, that no one grasps this Gospel who has not leaned on Jesus' breast and received Mary from Jesus as his own mother also: the beloved disciple's place is offered to every reader.

*Commentary on John, Book 1 (paraphrase)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. AUGUSTINE

"She is clearly the mother of the members of Christ... since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head."

*On Holy Virginit 6, as quoted in CCC 963*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

St. John Paul II teaches, in substance, that the disciple takes Mary 'into his own,' into the interior space of his life of faith; Marian devotion is the beloved disciple's obedience to a dying command.

*Redemptoris Mater 45 (summary)*

### Live It This Week

- Each day, pray one Hail Mary as the beloved disciple: hear 'Behold, your mother' addressed to you first.
- Do one act of 'taking into your own' for a lonely or grieving person this week.
- If your relationship with a parent is wounded, bring it to the Cross once this week and ask for one next step.

#### SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!"

*John 19:26–27 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* Read Genesis 5:21–24 and 2 Kings 2:1–12. Next session, the sealed book opens; do not miss it.

*Catechism references:* CCC 963; 964; 501; 2679

# The Woman: Take-Home 11

## Session 11: The Woman Clothed with the Sun

### What We Found

The sealed book opened, and the study's oldest threads resolved at once. The Ark, hidden since Jeremiah 'until God gathers his people together again' (2 Maccabees 2:7), is seen again in only one place in Scripture: 'God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple' (Revelation 11:19). The chapter break that follows is medieval; John's text runs straight on: '...and a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun.' John announces the Ark, then describes what he sees: a woman.

Revelation 12 gathers the whole study: the dragon is 'that ancient serpent' of Genesis 3 by name (12:9); the woman's child rules the nations (12:5); and the serpent wars on 'the rest of her offspring... those who bear testimony to Jesus' (12:17), heaven's confirmation of 'Behold, your mother.' The woman is Israel, and the Church, and the mother of the Messiah: the layers belong together, because Mary is the Daughter of Zion in person.

The Assumption names what the vision shows: 'the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory' (Munificentissimus Deus, 1950). She who was preserved from sin was not left to sin's wages; the Ark of the new covenant was brought into the sanctuary; the first and best disciple is the first sheaf after the first fruits (1 Corinthians 15:20–23). And in her the Church sees its own future: she is 'the image and beginning' of what we shall be (CCC 972).

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN DAMASCENE

"It was fitting that she, who had kept her virginity intact in childbirth, should keep her own body free from all corruption even after death."

Second Homily on the Dormition, n. 14, as quoted in Munificentissimus Deus

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

"In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life... and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death."

*Troparion of the Dormition, as cited in CCC 966*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: VEN. POPE PIUS XII

"...the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

*Munificentissimus Deus (1950)*

### Live It This Week

- Pray one Glorious Mystery decade daily (Assumption or Coronation), ending: 'Where she is, I am called.'
- Read Revelation 12 once more alone and list every connection to this study; bring the list to the final session.

- Visit a cemetery this week if you can, and pray for the dead with the Assumption in view: these bodies are seeds (1 Corinthians 15:35-44).

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE**

"And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars"

*Revelation 12:1 (RSV2CE)*

*Before next session:* Read Luke 1:46–55 one more time, slowly. Our last session gathers everything and sends us out; bring a friend who has been asking questions.

*Catechism references:* CCC 966; 972

# The Woman: Take-Home 12

## Session 12: All Generations

### What We Found

The vocabulary that answers the kitchen-table question: latria (adoration, owed to God alone), dulia (veneration of his holy ones), hyperdulia (the highest veneration, for Mary alone, different in kind from worship). The decisive test is sacrifice: in twenty centuries the Church has never offered the Mass or any sacrifice to Mary; the Eucharist is offered to God, sometimes in her honor, never to her.

Scripture's own honor grammar: the God who forbade idols commanded the Ark's cherubim (Exodus 25:18–20); Israel bowed to the LORD and the king in one verse (1 Chronicles 29:20); Hezekiah destroyed the commanded bronze serpent the moment incense burned to it (2 Kings 18:4): keep the images, smash the idolatry. Asking the saints to pray is asking, not adoring: heaven refuses worship (Revelation 22:8–9) and carries the prayers of the saints (Revelation 5:8) on the same pages, all under the one Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). And the Rosary is Scripture on a string: Gabriel's words, Elizabeth's words, the Church's petition, and twenty mysteries of Christ's life, most drawn straight from the Gospel narratives, all centered on him; Jesus himself repeated the same prayer in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:44), so repetition is not vain when the heart is engaged.

We ended where we began, with new ears: 'henceforth all generations will call me blessed' (Luke 1:48). Scripture predicts the veneration this study grounded. The question the Magnificat leaves with each of us: will ours be one of the generations?

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. AUGUSTINE

Augustine teaches, in substance, that the Church offers sacrifice to no martyr and no saint but to God alone, even at the martyrs' shrines: the priest never says 'I offer to you, Peter,' but thanks God for Peter's victory.

*Against Faustus, Book 20 (summary)*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

"This very special devotion... differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration."

*Lumen Gentium 66, as cited in CCC 971*

#### VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. LOUIS DE MONTFORT

St. Louis teaches, in substance, that true devotion never terminates in Mary: she is the surest and shortest way to Jesus, and the second half of 'to Jesus through Mary' governs the first.

*True Devotion to Mary (summary)*

### Live It This Week

- Teach your chosen typology to your named person within thirty days; tell someone from the group how it went.
- Pray the full Rosary once this week, reading each mystery's Gospel text before its decade.

- Keep your chosen Marian practice (a daily decade, the Angelus, the evening Salve) for ordinary time, and write a thank-you to God at Luke 1:48 in your Bible.

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE**

"for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

*Luke 1:48–49 (RSV2CE)*

A closing word: The study is complete. 'My soul magnifies the Lord' (Luke 1:46).

*Catechism references: CCC 971; 2678–2679; 2708*