Mary from Ephesus to the High Middle Ages:

Mother of God to Nascent Divinity

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There are few figures in Medieval Christian devotion that have amassed such a following as the Virgin Mary. In the High Middle Ages, her role as a revered Christian saint was undeniably overshadowed by her position*,* in relation to Christ. While all saints were believed to act in an intercessory manner, the role of Mary in the High Middle Ages surpassed that of all other saints. Through a series of ecumenical councils in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages meant to define the nature of Christ, theologians began to realize that He could not be defined in a vacuum. In order to designate an orthodox interpretation of Christ’s unity with God, a standard definition of Mary would also need to be established. By deciding whether Mary gestated a Christ which was consubstantial with God, or a separate human facet of God, His nature could be solidified. I argue that the unprecedented level of veneration afforded to the Virgin Mary is due in large part to the decrees of these councils. These synods created the environment which allowed for the spread and acceptance of the extra biblical accounts of Mary’s life and death. Moreover, the chain of logic which accompanied each ecumenical decision, ultimately elevated Mary to somewhat of a nascent divinity in and of herself in the Middle Ages. While it was the intention of the early Christian councils to declare and support the consubstantiation of Christ with God, the very same concept inadvertently effected the Christian veneration of the “Bearer of God.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

In a topic as vast as Marian devotion, several approaches are possible. This particular investigation does not allow for an exploration into iconography, personal devotion, liturgy, or Mary’s veneration as a form of pagan inheritance, to name a few of the more popular topics. Moreover, other areas of Marian devotion are simply too abundant to incorporate into this examination. Instead, the goal of this paper is to examine the methodology of how such a transformation from a mortal biblical figure, to one with such a sanctified status which bordered upon divinity may have taken place.[[2]](#footnote-2) This investigation will be divided into three sections, each considering the major theological events of a specific time period. The first of which will examine early Christian theology, namely what was established at the council of Nicaea in 325 CE, as well as other ecumenical councils in the following centuries, and other theological considerations that were published outside of these Canons. The second section will survey the perceived virtues of Mary as they fit into western monasticism in the early and high Middle Ages, and how they fostered Marian devotion. The third section will end the investigation with Bernard of Clairvaux in the High Middle Ages, shortly after the introduction of the Cistercian order. He does not represent an end to Marian devotion, but rather his particular dedication to The Virgin is better appropriated to the emerging Cult of the Virgin in high and late medieval Europe.

This paper will take a largely theological approach in its investigation, but will incorporate the works of historians from different backgrounds in order to provide layers of perspective which are often missing in theological sources. The dialogue between history and theology concerning the Virgin Mary during the Middle Ages, gives a more accurate portrayal of the period, which cannot be done through any one single approach. These two methodologies working together, will best provide an understanding as to *how* the position of Mary evolved. In order to better understand how the relationship between history and theology provide a more complete understanding of the Mary, one must first recognize what a theological doctrine, or dogma is believed to be. According to the Catholic definition, dogma is thought to be a “revealed truth.”*[[3]](#footnote-3)* Such a “truth” would of course not be chosen arbitrarily, but would be considered after it has been widely accepted and believed. This process was used throughout the centuries in the creation of Marian Dogma, and through examining the theological and historical events of this period, it becomes clear that Christian *beliefs* about Mary, affected what became orthodox practice, and what was to become anathema.

**Section One: Early Christian Theology**

In late antiquity and early medieval Christianity, in reference to a united system of beliefs and practices, the Church was a burgeoning institution. The struggles against several heresies, chiefly Arianism which taught that Christ as a created being was not equal to God the Father, led early Christian theologians and patriarchs to establish an orthodox understanding of Christian faith in the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 CE.[[4]](#footnote-4) From this council, a statement, or definition of faith came to fruition:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man […][[5]](#footnote-5)

The intention of this statement to establish a single understanding of the Christian faith, was successful insofar that it created a foundation for orthodox practice concerning the equivalency of the Son and the Father. At the first council of Constantinople in 381, the Holy Spirit, the third part of the Trinity, was officially declared to be equal with the Father and the Son.[[6]](#footnote-6) Nevertheless, the nature of Christ’s humanity was not clearly defined at this point.

 *De Trinitate* by Augustine of Hippo,reiterated the belief that the Son and Father were comprised of the same substance: “So it is crystal clear that He through whom all things were made was not made himself. And if he is not made he is not a creature, and if he is not a creature he is of the same substance as the Father. For every substance that is not God is a creature, and that is not a creature is God.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Essentially, Augustine supported his argument through the definition of faith at Nicaea. Christ, in Augustine’s view, should be considered an equal facet of God, because he was begotten and not made, and that which was not made, was not a “creature,” and was therefore God.[[8]](#footnote-8) Despite the efforts of Nicaea in 325 CE, and Augustine of Hippo in the beginning of the fifth century, Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople, was not satisfied with the orthodox understanding of Christ’s humanity as being consubstantial with God the Father. [[9]](#footnote-9) He wrote to his theological adversary Cyril of Alexandria, “that divine choir of fathers never said that the consubstantial godhead was capable of suffering, or that the whole being that was coeternal with the Father was recently born, or that it rose again, seeing that it had itself been the cause of resurrection of the destroyed temple.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Nestorius’ opponents led by Cyril of Alexandria, convened at Ephesus in 431 CE in order to confront what they believed to be his *errant* conviction concerning Christ’s humanity.[[11]](#footnote-11)

 At the council of Ephesus, the nature of Christ was decided by defining the Virgin Mary. By appropriating Mary with the official title of the “Bearer of God,” or *Theotokos,* in lieu of “The Bearer of Christ,” or *Christotokos,* Christ’s divinity and consubstantiation with God would be implied.[[12]](#footnote-12) The argument which the entire council was called to resolve was fundamentally between which designation would be most prudent; *Theotokos,* or *Christotokos*.[[13]](#footnote-13) Since Mary was certainly the mother of Jesus, to define her as either the mother of God, or Christ, would be to explain the relationship between that of the Father and the Son insofar as their equality, or the status of the Son as somehow beneath the Father. Nestorius’ logic was defeated at Ephesus, and he along with his teachings were considered anathema, officially assigning the role of “Mother of God” to the Virgin Mary.[[14]](#footnote-14) Felix Nwatu, a modern seminarian at Bigard Memorial Seminary, who writes from the theological perspective, states that the proclamation of Mary’s official designation as the *Theotokos,* caused the “divine motherhood of Mary [to become] immediately implicit upon that fact.”[[15]](#footnote-15) In essence, it was her recognition as the mother of God that implied a certain level of divinity. At this point, Mary was formally accepted as the mother of God. Furthermore, this recognition planted the seeds of her extreme veneration, and inspired extra-biblical accounts which not only explained her ability to gestate God himself but used the reported events surrounding her death to separate her from the rest of humanity.

 This designation alone was not responsible for Mary’s extreme veneration, yet one cannot simply assume it had no impact whatsoever. As Daley notes in his introduction to *On the Dormition of Mary,* “Byzantine writers began to focus on Mary now [in the late fifth century,] not simply as the one who gave flesh to God’s Word, but as an object of veneration in her own right: as queen and patroness, and as a participant in the glory and heavenly mediatorship of her risen Son.”[[16]](#footnote-16) Around the fifth century, another testimony of the death of Mary, seems to have been written. This account describes Mary, after being told of her impending death by an angel. The Apostles gathered around Mary as she dies and “commits her soul into the hands of Jesus.”[[17]](#footnote-17) After her burial Christ appeared and her body was then carried to Heaven to reunite with her soul.[[18]](#footnote-18) Those familiar with the New Testament will note that the events surrounding her life and death are not to be found anywhere in Scripture.[[19]](#footnote-19) Yet in the centuries to follow the aforementioned ecumenical councils, this account was incorporated into homilies despite the objections of the Latin Church which eventually condemned the accounts of Mary’s life and death outside of the existing gospel as apocrypha in *Decretum Gelasianum* circa 500 CE.[[20]](#footnote-20)

 However, from the Syriac Church in the late fifth century, Jacob of Serug delivered a homily at the council of Nisibis in 489 CE, in which the holiness of the Virgin Mary was recognized by Christ himself.[[21]](#footnote-21) Unfortunately, there is little evidence which reports on who exactly his audience was, however, given the nature of ecumenical councils, it would be safe to conclude that it was delivered to members of the clergy. Such a prolific increase in the magnitude of Mary’s sanctity was likely only possible because of the decisions of the early Christian councils. Nestorius’ theological adversary’s’ interpretation of Christ’s divinity championed over his own, which made the praise afforded to Mary possible. Expanding on Mary’s holiness further, the audience of her burial seemed to signify her status above that of all other saints; not only were the apostles present, but Christ himself came to her burial: “All that company of the Apostles gathered together and stood by, while in truth, their Master (together) with them laid her in the grave.”[[22]](#footnote-22) According to Serug’s homily, immediately following the burial of Mary was a procession of “heavenly divisions,” and “Heaven and the air of glory were filled with celestials who journeyed and came down to the place of earth.”[[23]](#footnote-23) This was not what one would consider common for the heavenly court, complete with Christ himself, to be present at the funerals of any other Christian saint. Such an account begs the question of whether it was due only to her role as Christ’s mother, or if her position was somehow elevated because of her designation as the *Theotokos,* or the “Mother of God.”

**The Virtues of Mary Present in Monastic Life**

The holiness and prominence of Mary increased in Eastern Christianity in the Early Middle Ages as made evident above. Western Christianity began to foster its own devotion to the Virgin as well, though because of the *Decretum Gelasianum,* it was not done through the dissemination of extra-biblical accounts of her life and death as it was in the east, but through the admiration of her perceived virtues. While the aim of Western monasticism was to draw upon the virtues of the Apostles, poverty, celibacy and obedience, one could quite easily infer that the Virgin Mary possessed these same qualities. The highest among these is present in one of her many titles: celibacy. In the Early Middle Ages especially, the celibacy of Christian priest and bishops, in both Eastern and Latin Christianity was often lacking.[[24]](#footnote-24) Yet in the burgeoning monasticism throughout the west, celibacy was key to renouncing society, which was the focus of monastic life. The conscious decision to become, or remain celibate was to emulate the apostles, and indirectly the Virgin Mother. Augustine of Hippo likens virginity as being an “imitation of heavenly life in a mortal earthly body.”[[25]](#footnote-25) However, one must distinguish between its two varying degrees. Augustine makes the distinction between “virginity,” and “consecrated virginity,” specifically referring to the holiness of the latter term, and referencing the same virtue of Mary as a virgin consecrated to God.[[26]](#footnote-26) Since lifelong “consecrated virginity,” or the choice to never engage in sex all, may have been a bit much to ask of men who came into monastic life in their adult years, a celibate life, or one in which they will *no longer* have sex, from that point forward would certainly be the next best thing. Just as Mary’s virginity was consecrated to God, so too was their celibacy.[[27]](#footnote-27) Those who struggled with temptation could look to The Virgin for a source which they could emulate, and perhaps even strengthening their resolve, thus solidifying her prominence in monastic life.

 Monasticism in Western Europe was supposed to represent a life of poverty as well. While there are no direct biblical references to the wealth or lack thereof of the Virgin Mary and her Husband Joseph, it is generally accepted that they did not live any sort of extravagant life. According to Robert Maloney’s interpretation of “The Historical Mary,” she and her husband Joseph belonged to the peasant class.[[28]](#footnote-28) “Artisons [which Joseph’s occupation as a carpenter would fit into] had an even lower median of income than those who worked the land full time.”[[29]](#footnote-29) This notion is justified through two biblical passages, the first in Leviticus which details the offerings a Jewish family must make upon the birth of a son:

And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This *is* the law for her that hath born a male or a female. And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.[[30]](#footnote-30)

After the birth of Christ, Mary and Joseph proceeded to the temple in accordance with their law “to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons,” which illustrates their lack of wealth at the time of Christ’s presentation.[[31]](#footnote-31) The nativity of Christ notes that after His birth, gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh were given as gifts by the Magi.[[32]](#footnote-32) There is however, a discrepancy in the chronology of events concerning the birth of Christ, and the visitation by the Magi. The Book of Matthew places Christ up to two years old at the time of the Magi’s visit: “He [Herod] ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity *two years old* and under,” which would imply that He could be as old as two.[[33]](#footnote-33) Yet the Gospel according to Luke places Christ, Mary, and Joseph in Nazareth by the time Christ had reached such an age. In this account, Christ was taken away from Bethlehem immediately after his presentation at the temple, which according to Leviticus, would be only eight days after his birth.[[34]](#footnote-34) Yet this account does not mention the visitation of the Magi, nor their gifts.[[35]](#footnote-35) Because of the lack in distinct chronology, it is equally possible that the Magi made their offerings *after* the presentation at the temple, or even *before*. In the event of the latter, the lavish gifts from the Magi would have had to have been given away, or renounced in some way, as a woman of such piety would not likely have made the offering of a pair of turtledoves or pigeons when she possessed such wealth, and very well could have afforded a lamb.

 The third virtue of monastic life, obedience, is depicted quite interestingly in biblical and apocryphal sources. Mary’s obedience to God is present in the Gospel of Luke in her correspondence with the Angel Gabriel, “And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; *be it unto me according to thy word*. And the angel departed from her.”[[36]](#footnote-36) The Virgin’s words here were evidence of her obedience. She chose to identify herself as “handmaid,” even after the angel Gabriel greeted her as the “favored one.”[[37]](#footnote-37) Mary’s language signified more of a position of obedience than recognition of her own exaltation. She submits to Gabriel that it is the will of God that she bear His Son. Moreover, there is no biblical reference to Mary’s concern for how such a concept of a pregnant virgin would affect her socially, she accepted that it was the will of God and was compliant. Extra-biblical accounts of Mary’s childhood also displayed her supposed obedience to God. Mary’s obedience is presented and commented on by Shawn Carruth, who is himself a member of the Order of Saint Benedict, the same which founded western monasticism, and places the virtues of poverty, celibacy, and obedience in such high esteem. In his article, Carruth references *The Infancy Gospel of James;* in which, Mary’s presentation in the temple showed her supposed obedience in the same respect as one would have to exhibit upon entering a monastery. Mary’s Father Joachim “did not want her heart to be captivated by the things of the world,” much the same as the ideology behind monastic life.[[38]](#footnote-38) Though it is the child’s obedience without question that truly stands out in this account; “Joachim and Anna left their daughter in the temple, they returned home marveling and praising and glorifying God because *she did not look back at them*.”[[39]](#footnote-39) By stating that she “did not look back,” the virtue of obedience was shown to be present and great in Mary. Not only was Mary obedient to God’s will in the Annunciation, she was to her parents when they left her. Obedience such as this was asked of those entering the monastery. According to the Rule of St. Benedict, who created the rules for Western monasticism in the sixth century, the monastic lifestyle was to rid oneself of the “sloth of disobedience.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

 One could quite easily infer from the examples above, how monastic life drew upon some of the many virtues of Mary. Those leading a monastic life were attempting to emulate the Apostles through poverty, chastity and obedience. Yet similarities between the virtues of Mary and monastic life may not be a coincidence. As mentioned above, Shawn Carruth, a contemporary Benedictine monk noted the similarities between the virtues of Mary, and those required by his order. At the very least, Mary would have represented an ideal holy figure, whom they could emulate in their efforts to lead an apostolic life. Moreover, an abbot could look to Mary in order to assuage the potentially damaged emotional state of young boys and men who have perhaps been separated from their mother for the first time, while retaining those virtues which the orders held in such high esteem.

**Marian devotion in the High Middle Ages**

This particular level of Marian devotion was only made possible due to the Church’s attempts in earlier centuries to define the humanity and divinity of Christ. Western monasticism, and the lifestyle and virtues it encouraged, provided the vessel in which the concept of Marian devotion could emerge with such prominence. In the article “Mary at the Cross, East and West,” Shoemaker points to a dramatic shift in piety which occurred around the middle of the eleventh century and “centered on compassionate devotion to the suffering of Christ.”[[41]](#footnote-41) The origins of *compassion* as it relates to the suffering of Christ, began with Mary’s presence at the crucifixion; as Christ suffered on the cross, so too did Mary suffer at his feet. In the western view, Mary became the “Co-sufferer” through the emotional pain she endured while watching her son suffer, and “devotion to Christ in is suffering humanity depended not only on devotion to the Mother from whom he became incarnate; it also depended upon empathy with that Mother in both her sorrow and her joy.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

As Western monasticism grew in influence throughout the Early Middle Ages, it inadvertently promoted a shift in method of admiration afforded to the Virgin. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), one of the more popular figures pertaining to Marian devotion, was more ardent in his reverence of the Virgin than most monks before him. Bernard’s veneration is most likely due to his role as an abbot of [Cîteaux](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03792a.htm) in the high Middle Ages. He not only embodied the virtues of Mary as listed above, but utilized her role as the mother to Christ as that which he could emulate in order to provide for, and nurture those under his authority.[[43]](#footnote-43) Bernard utilized Mary’s role as a mother almost incessantly, and saw in her a role model for himself. He drew a similarity between the motherly duties of the Virgin, and the responsibilities of those in positions such as his to “feed the needy with the milk of doctrine.”[[44]](#footnote-44) Bernard’s choice of the phrase “milk of doctrine,” was certainly deliberate, as he saw his role of providing religious guidance as on par with a mother nursing, and nourishing a child. Caroline Walker Bynum wrote on Bernard as if his devotion to the Virgin was due not only to her as the Mother of God, but to her role as a Christian mother in general. Writing as a medieval historian, Bynum’s perspective allowed for a groundbreaking view of western monasticism and gender, and key figures in medieval theology. Moreover, she shed a new light on the importance of the female image within the Church. Bynum comments on Bernard’s choice of language and feminine imagery used to describe Jesus, and the role of the abbot in medieval monastic life. Indeed, she states that “[b]reasts, to Bernard, are a symbol of the pouring out towards others of affectivity or of instruction and almost invariably suggest to him a discussion of the duties of prelates or abbots.”[[45]](#footnote-45) Just as a mother would nourish and guide her children, Bernard saw himself as in a similar position; nourishing those beneath him with the “milk of doctrine,” and guiding them through instruction in their daily lives as somewhat of a parent figure.[[46]](#footnote-46) Though Bernard often drew upon the imagery of the Virgin Mother to emphasize his many roles as abbot, there was a degree of personal devotion which was evident in his sermons and homilies.

 In his *Homilies in Praise of the Virgin Mary,* which were written between 1130 and 1159, Bernard of Clairvaux delves into his personal devotion to the Virgin as he says, “How gracious is this union of virginity and humility! A soul in whom humility embellishes virginity and virginity ennobles humility finds no little favor with God.”[[47]](#footnote-47) One can see the beginning of a distinct level of veneration towards the Virgin Mary. In the same homily, Bernard reiterates a piece of scripture: “And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.”[[48]](#footnote-48) Moreover, he uses the concept of Christ’s obedience to his mother, in order to justify his devotion to her, reinforcing one of the virtues of monastic life with his devotion to Mary.

A woman outranks God-unparalleled sublimity. In praise of the virgins we sing that ‘they follow the Lamb wherever he goes’. Of what praise then do you consider her worthy who preceded him? Man, learn to obey! Earth, learn to be subject! Dust, I say, learn to submit yourself! The Evangelist tells you that your Creator was obedient to them- meaning to Mary and Joseph, of course. […] O man, if it is beneath your dignity to follow the example of a man, surely it will not be beneath you to follow your Creator.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Bernard’s devotion to the Virgin Mary was due to the ideals of western monasticism, as well as how he perceived his role as abbot within his order. Bernard would have clearly recognized the virtues of Mary as synonymous with those of the apostles which the western orders attempted to emulate. Moreover, he would have utilized her as a model through which he could better provide for those under him in the abbey. While its prime function was to live in line with the lives and teachings of the Apostles, Mary represented a safe female figure which monks could emulate. Moreover, she was an ideal mother figure which monks in a position of leadership could look to as a role model.

**Conclusion**

 As Western Christianity began to develop and grow distinct from its Eastern origins, certain parallels between the lives of Christ in scripture and the extra-biblical accounts of Mary began to emerge. Moreover, they were consistent with that which was used to support the duality between Christ’s human and divine natures in previous centuries. Just as theologians see that He was born free from original sin, the concept of Mary’s Immaculate Conception were just beginning to emerge, albeit not a belief sanctioned by the Church in the Middle Ages.[[50]](#footnote-50) Aside from both their lives as being obedient; to God and their parents, their obvious piety, and alleged celibacy, the concepts of Mary’s Co-suffering during the crucifixion and her assumption into heaven draw certain intriguing parallels with the life and death of Christ himself. She too was *crucified* as it were*,* in a metaphorical sense while watching her son suffer, and according to John of Thessalonica, was also resurrected three days after her own death.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Through the events which emerged after the Council of Ephesus in 431, one can see a logical consistency between the life and death of Christ and Mary alike. Only after Mary was proclaimed to be the “Mother of God” did the dissemination of some of the extra-biblical stories surrounding her life and death, which allude to her nature as being somehow more than human, became accepted broadly. Despite their prohibition in Latin Christianity, the influence of the texts which were decreed as *apocrypha* in the *Decretum Gelasianum* made their way into Western Europe during the rise of monasticism. Such beliefs were perhaps due to some need to justify how a woman could become the bearer of God. Creating a holier image of Mary, perhaps assuaged the guilt of appropriating such a sanctified title as “The Mother of God,” to a person. Moreover, the role of Mary, as it was defined at the council of Ephesus, began to transform throughout the Middle Ages into one which was almost detached from humanity, and more akin to her nascent divinity. By the high medieval period, the Virgin Mother was, for all intents and purposes, an entity which was inseparable from God. Beyond bearing Christ, who according to Christian faith was God incarnate, Mary was born free from sin. As her son was crucified, so too did she suffer through her *compassion*. Upon her death some time later, according to the homilies of Jacob of Serug and John of Thessalonica, she, like Christ, was buried, and after three days was ascended body and soul into heaven. The parallels between the technically unorthodox beliefs of Mary, and the orthodox teachings of Christ in the Nicene Creed are intriguing, and while there is no evidence to support these parallels with Christ to be intentional, it may indeed be possible.[[52]](#footnote-52)

**Epilogue**

 Marian devotion did not end at the time reflected in the termination of this paper. Indeed, it flourished across the high and late middle ages, and continued to grow into modern times. The practices and beliefs surrounding the Virgin Mary eventually became dogma, despite centuries of resistance by popes. In his article “The Immaculate Conception: A Model of the Development of Dogma,” Francis Connell outlines how certain Dogma, such as that of the Immaculate Conception is created:

First, there is the period of implicit but an uncontroverted acceptance, when the doctrine in question is believed by the faithful only in the sense that they are accustomed to perform some liturgical or devotional act [...] The second is the period of discussion and controversy [...] In the third stage the doctrine is held by the universal Church and taught unanimously by the authoritative magisterium, or even made the subject of a solemn definition.[[53]](#footnote-53)

While discussion of the concept of Mary’s Immaculate Conception first met discussion in the early twelfth century, it was not made official dogma until 1854 under Pope Pius IX.[[54]](#footnote-54) Similar chronology can be attributed to Mary’s Assumption, which is more or less the Latin version of her “Dormition” as written by John of Thessalonica. This particular Marian dogma was not officially recognized until 1950 under Pope Pius XII in the “apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus.”[[55]](#footnote-55)*

 There is perhaps a new Marian Dogma which could emerge in the foreseeable future. A recent movement within the Church calls to make the Mother of God Co-Redemptrix, which could possibly build upon her nascent divinity further. While there is no direct evidence which points to it, the movement to make Mary the Co-Redemptrix can be seen as another step in the direction of proclaiming her divine in and of herself.

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1. “Bearer of God,” or *Theotokos* in its original Greek, is the official title afforded to Mary in the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Christ himself counseled against Mary’s veneration in Luke 11:27. **“**And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” KJV. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Daniel Coghlan, "Dogma," ed. Kevin Knight, The Catholic Encyclopedia, last modified 2012, accessed February 24, 2016, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05089a.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Christine Caldwell Ames, *Medieval Heresies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Profession of Faith," vatican.va, accessed November 3, 2015, http://www.vatican.va/roman\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\_con\_cfaith\_doc\_1998\_professio-fidei\_en.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ames, *Medieval Heresies*, 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Augustine of Hippo, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle, vol. 5, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991), 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Nestorius, "Second Letter of Nestorius to Cyril," trans. Norman P. Tanner and Giuseppe Alberigo, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), 1:47-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid, 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ames, *Medieval Heresies*, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, trans. Giuseppe Alberigo and Norman P. Tanner (London: Sheen & Ward, 1990), 1:38. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Felix Nwatu, "The Immaculate Conception: A Model of the Development of Dogma," *Asia Journal of Theology* 23, no. 1 (April 2009): 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Brian E. Daley, introduction to *On the Dormition of Mary*, by Brian Daley (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Epiphanius, "Panarion 78.11," in *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies*, by Brian J. Daley, trans. Brian J. Daley (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Mary Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Brian E. Daley, introduction to *On the Dormition of Mary*, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Jacob of Serug, "Homily Concerning the Burial, that is to Say, the Death of the Holy Virgin Mother of God, Mary, and How she was Buried by the Apostles," in *On the Mother of God*, by Jacob, trans. Mary Hansbury (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid, 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Herbert B. Workman, *The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Agustine, "Holy Virginity," in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, by Augustine, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 9:70. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid, 69-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. In his work “Holy Virginity,” Augustine does not reference the celibacy of Christian monks. However, because he compares virginity to being an “imitation of heavenly life in a mortal earthly body,” and specifically refers to “consecrated virginity,” or that which is dedicated to God, as being especially holy, consecrated celibacy would most likely be the closest a non-virgin could get to consecrated virginity. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Robert P. Maloney, "The Historical Mary," *America* 193, no. 20 (December 19, 2005): 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Leviticus 12:6-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Luke 2:24 KJV [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Matthew 2:11. KJV [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Matthew 2:16, KJV emphasis added. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Leviticus 12:3 KJV [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Luke 2:22-39 KJV [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Luke 1:38 KJV. Emphasis added. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Luke 1:28 KJV [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Shawn Carruth, "Monastic Witness III: Distinctiveness," *American Benedictine Review* 62, no. 3 (September 1, 2011): 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid. Emphasis added [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Theodore Maynard, *Pillars of the Church* (Freepot, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Stephen J. Shoemaker, "Mary at the Cross, East and West: Maternal Compassion and Affective Piety in the Earliest Life of the Virgin and the High Middle Ages," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 62, no. 2 (October 2011): 570. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Rachel Fulton, *From Judgement to Passion* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Caroline Walker Bynum, "Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother," in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spiritulity of the High Midle Ages* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Sermon 41 on the Song of Songs, quoted in, Caroline Walker Bynum, "Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother," in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spiritulity of the High Midle Ages* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Bernard, "Homilies in Praise of the Virgin Mary," in *Magnificat*, by Bernard of Clairvaux and Amadeus of Lausanne, introduction by Chrysogonus Waddell, trans. Marie Bernard Said and Grace Perigo (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1979), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Luke 2:51 KJV. In Bernard, "Homilies in Praise of the Virgin Mary," in *Magnificat*, by Bernard of Clairvaux and Amadeus of Lausanne, introduction by Chrysogonus Waddell, trans. Marie Bernard Said and Grace Perigo (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1979), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Bernard, "Homilies in Praise of the Virgin," in *Magnificat*, 11-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Fulton, Rachel, *From Judgement to Passion*, 549, n. 72.

It is prudent to note that Rachel Fulton was a student of Caroline Walker Bynum, and has also used feminine imagery when writing about the Church. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. John of Thessalonica, "The Dormition of Our Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary," in *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies*, trans. Brian J. Daley (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 67.

The Nicene Creed stated both the crucifixion of Christ, and his resurrection three days later as part of the definition of the Christian faith. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. The beliefs of Mary’s Immaculate Conception and assumption were considered unorthodox in Medieval Latin Christianity. However in later centuries, they became Dogma. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Francis J. Connell, "Historical Development of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception" in *Studies in Praise of Our Blessed Mother*, ed., by Joseph Clifford Fenton and Edmund Darvil Bernard, Washington D. C: The Catholic University Press, 1952, p. 93. Quoted in Felix Nwatu, "The Immaculate Conception: A Model of the Development of Dogma," *Asia Journal of Theology* 23, no. 1 (April 2009): 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Felix Nwatu, "The Immaculate Conception: A Model of the Development of Dogma," *Asia Journal of Theology* 23, no. 1 (April 2009): 9,3. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Reinhard Hutter, "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven: Faith, Dogma, and Eschatology," *Nova et Vetera* 13, no. 2 (April 1, 2015): 402. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)