

Why Christians should *Never* Pray to the Virgin Mary

by Jeremy James

Should Christians pray to the Virgin Mary? The answer, based on incontestable evidence set out in the Bible, is a very emphatic NO! Any person who prays to the Virgin Mary, even if only occasionally, is not a Christian – as Christ intended – but someone whose prayers are not heard by the LORD.

This is a very strong statement and, in making it, I am keenly aware that many Catholics will find it offensive. But if Scripture supports it, then it must be said.

Please be patient with me as I try to present the evidence.

The paper will comprise three parts. In **Part One** we will look at the Biblical foundation of prayer and worship. This will help us to understand better what God expects of us – you may be greatly surprised by the full implications of His directive.

Part Two will show how the Babylonian religion (the religion established by Satan) has infiltrated the Catholic Church and destroyed the foundation of Christian prayer. This part will offer conclusive proof that Catholics who practice their religion as Rome intends are not Christian.

In **Part Three** we will examine the nature and role of Marian worship and the harm it does to anyone who sincerely tries to live as a true Christian. This too will likely be shocking to some readers.

PART ONE

True Christian Prayer

Should Christians pray to the Virgin Mary? This question ought to be of great interest and concern to Catholics everywhere since Marian worship constitutes a core tenet of their beliefs. In fact, Catholics are obliged by Rome to accept the principal Marian doctrines – belief is not optional. They are required to pray to her, even if their conscience tells them otherwise. However, if they are doing something very basic that conflicts with the Bible – the very word of God – then they are violating the gospel of Christ. Despite professing to be Christians, they are not. Instead they fall into the first category described by Christ in the following passage:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)

Anyone in this ‘broad way’ category is deceiving himself. Jesus warned several times that many who believe they are Christian are not. In other words, despite professing to be Christian, they are not recognised as such by Christ!

Please think carefully about this because it is immensely important. It is not a topic that people-pleasing clergy touch upon very often – for obvious reasons – but it is one of the fundamental truths that Jesus wanted us grasp. He warned us that a great many people will live their whole lives through, to death and beyond, convinced that they are Christian, and yet, when they stand before the LORD, He will reject them.

Here is how Jesus put it:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you**: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. (Matthew 7:21-27)

This is a profoundly important passage. Jesus is saying, in the strongest possible terms, that there are professing Christians whom he will deny before the LORD. Instead of bearing witness to them, he will say, "I never knew you." They may have heard "these sayings of mine" but they never actually lived by them. They picked the ones that appealed to them and ignored others. The worship of the Virgin Mary is very definitely in the latter category.

Rejected by Christ

Those who professed to be Christians in Matthew 7 were sure they were doing fine. The repeated words, "Lord, Lord," express their complete surprise, as do the two questions that follow. These supplicants never imagined for a moment that they were living contrary to the word of God or that Jesus would say, at this critical hour, "**I never knew you.**"

Let's take another example, the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins:

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25:11-13)

Again, Jesus says of professed Christians who expect him to testify on their behalf before the LORD, "**I know you not.**" How important this must be if Jesus warns us about it, not once but twice. What is more, his rejection is unequivocal.

The individuals concerned were "virgins," that is they sought to keep themselves pure, but their lamps, lacking oil, gave no light. Anyone who prays to the Father is full of light and enjoys the 'oil' of his blessing. ("For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." -1 Peter 3:12). These virgins (professed Christians) must have been doing something wrong if they lost their light. What was it? Simple – they were not praying to the LORD.

One way to be absolutely sure you are not praying to the LORD is to deliberately pray to someone other than the LORD.

In the following verses from the Gospel of Luke, we find an account of the same incident (apparently) as the one described in Matthew 7 (cited above). Here the supplicants are probably even more astonished to be rejected by Jesus. We know without doubt that they were self-professed Christians because they fully expected to join Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God:

And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, **I know you not whence ye**

are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, **I know you not whence ye are;** depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. (Luke 13:22-28)

True Worship

The next passage concerns the exchange that took place between the woman at the well at Sychar (Shechem of the Old Testament) in Samaria. Samaritans were not Jews, but the descendants of the colonising families brought to that region by the king of Assyria several hundred years earlier when he took the ten tribes into captivity.

The fact that this important exchange took place at the well of Sychar is significant. This is known as Jacob's Well, the well from which Jacob and his family (from which the twelve tribes of Israel descended), drew their water. For Jacob and his family, this well was the source, not just of their livelihood and prosperity, but of their survival::

The woman [of Samaria] saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain [Mount Gerezim in Samaria]; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (John 4:19-23)

Notice how Jesus leads this non-Jewish woman to a clear understanding of true worship. He first points out to her that, at present, "Ye worship ye know not what." He then says that true worship lies in worship of "the Father in spirit and in truth." Then he states a truth of which Catholics today, like Samaritans of old, are almost completely ignorant: "for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Jesus is saying that true worship is directed wholly and entirely at the Father. If you adopt any other approach, then "Ye worship ye know not what."

Could this be any clearer?

When his followers asked how they should pray, Jesus said we should address our prayer to "Our Father" who is in heaven (Matthew 6). Again, could this be any clearer?.

We should pray **ONLY** to the Father. We do this through his only begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

That's it, the whole substance and foundation of Christian prayer and worship. Anything else is a breach of the First Commandment – “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:2-3)

The Second Commandment

Anything else is also a breach of the Second Commandment (which Catholics omit entirely from their Catechism), namely:

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; (Exodus 20:4-5).

Throughout the Bible we are warned never to worship any other god or any created thing. We are also warned never to make an image of any created thing for a religious purpose. To emphasize this, our Creator has said, “for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God.” The penalty for violating these sacred precepts is very severe – separation from God.

In summary, the Old and the New Testaments proclaim with considerable force the need to worship the LORD Our God **only** and to ensure that this worship is not polluted in any way or form with worship of another kind.

If you are not completely convinced about this, then go back and re-read the above quotations from scripture. They are not ambivalent in the least. No flexibility or latitude is allowed. The Bible states categorically that we are to worship and pray to the LORD – and the LORD ONLY.

If you introduce any other element into your worship, by praying to a being created by God (either living or dead), you are violating the first two commandments. There is no point in pretending that you only intend this created being – a departed saint or the Virgin Mary – to intercede on your behalf before God. The Bible makes it perfectly clear that the ONLY one who can intercede on our behalf before the Father is his only begotten Son, Jesus, who is himself fully God.

If any other being could intercede on our behalf before God, then the birth, death and resurrection of Christ would be diminished, if not entirely meaningless.

Summary of Part One

In this part (Part One), we have seen that Jesus warned several times that many who presume to be Christian in their hearts and who profess to be Christian before the world will actually be rejected by him before the judgement seat of the LORD. This rejection will be based entirely on the fact that their worship and prayer were not directed exclusively to the Father through His only begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Violation of this commandment is defined by God as idolatry, and the consequences of idolatry are fatal.

PART TWO

The Babylonian Religion in Disguise

In light of our findings in Part One, what scriptural basis could there possibly be for Marian worship?

It may help to see how it evolved in an historical context. The worship of Baal and his consort, Ashtaroth, was a major problem throughout the Old Testament. All references to Baal worship should properly be construed as a references also to the goddess, Ashtaroth. Sometimes she is mentioned specifically, sometimes not. The term *Baal* refers not just to a specific god, but the Babylonian religious system.

The Babylonian religion

The battle against Baal, with its worship of a pagan god and goddess worship, is a constant theme in the annals of human Redemption, from the trials of Genesis and Exodus to the advent of Christ. At one stage, during the time of Elijah, when Baal worship was endemic throughout the land, only 7000 men in the whole of Israel and Judea remained faithful to the LORD. (“Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.” 1 Kings 19:18) [This remarkable fact is also referred to in Romans 11:4]

Just think, after all that the LORD had done for the twelve tribes of Israel, only 7000 men remained faithful to Him. Given that the population of Israel and Judea at that time was probably close to 2 million, this failure on their part shows just how seductive (and destructive) the Baal religion was for God’s chosen people and, by implication, how attractive it would prove to be to all followers of Christ who lacked a firm foundation in sound doctrine.

The Bible continually emphasized the dangers of the Baal religion because it was a lethal poison in Old Testament times and would continue to be dangerous to the end of time. When Jesus was being severely critical of the Scribes and Pharisees, he was referring not just to their legalism, their hunger for power and their pride, but to their secret practice of idolatry. Ezekiel, who lived about 500 years before Christ, had a powerful vision in which he was taken in spirit to the city of Jerusalem and shown what the priests were really doing behind the temple walls:

Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, the LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth. He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. (Ezekiel 8:12-14)

This evil practice among the priestcraft had gone on for centuries. This is why they were determined to destroy the Messiah when he arrived. In the public eye, they were observing Jews, but secretly they worshipped Baal.

The false trinity of Satan

A few words about Baal, the Babylonian religion. Their god was Nimrod, who married his mother, Semiramis. Nimrod was killed while still in his prime but reincarnated as his own son, Tammuz. This is the false trinity created by Satan to confuse mankind. It is probably better known in the west in its Egyptian form – Osiris, Isis and their son Horus. The death of Nimrod, who is also identified with Tammuz, is seen as an annual event, akin to the ‘death’ of the sun in winter. The death of Tammuz calls for forty days of mourning, at the end of which he is resurrected at the spring equinox. This marks the rebirth of the powers of the earth, the renewal of fertility and life in the soil.

All religions, cults and pagan beliefs trace their roots back to the Babylonian religion. It is THE system of religion developed by Satan to oppose Christianity. Its most complete expression today is found in Freemasonry, whose higher ranks worship Lucifer. You will notice that it even mocks and perverts the death and resurrection Christ before the Messiah was even born. Since Satan knew he was coming, and that this was how he would redeem mankind, he set his dark plan in motion well in advance.

When the women in the temple sat weeping for Tammuz, they were observing the forty days of mourning prior to his ‘resurrection’. Thus Ezekiel is telling us, beyond any shadow of doubt, that the abominations secretly practiced by the priestcraft in the temple at Jerusalem were those of Baal.

Please be very clear about this since it is of the utmost importance in understanding the history of Christianity and where we are today.

Today’s Scribes and Pharisees

The Bible highlights Baal and its dangers, again and again, because those dangers would remain until the end of time. The Scribes and the Pharisees would remain until the end of time. Their outer form may change, but the underlying system of false religion and elaborate deception would continue down the centuries, just as Satan had intended. Today’s Scribes and Pharisees, the leaders who appear to uphold the doctrine of Christianity but who in secret oppose it, are the Freemasons, the Knights of Malta (including the Knights of Columbus and Columbanus), and the Jesuit Order (who control the Vatican). There are others, but these are the main ones. The corresponding order among the Jews is that of the Cabalists.

At the top levels, all four organisations – Masons, Knights, Jesuits and Cabalists – are united. They are pursuing the same goals today that they did in the time of Christ, namely the destruction of God’s Plan of Redemption and the subtle imposition of a world religion in which Lucifer is worshipped as god.

In my experience, it is impossible to understand the history of Christianity unless you also understand what Satan is trying to achieve. His goal has never changed. Over a period of some 6000 years, since the fall of Adam, he has relentlessly pursued this goal. He wants to be worshipped as god and craves this with a psychopathic intensity. As prince of this world, he has the power to reward anyone who helps him achieve this objective. By working through lies and deception – his two great weapons – he has created a false religion (the Babylonian religion) and interwoven its false doctrines so closely with those of Christianity that, with only a few exceptions, hardly a trace of the pure Gospel of Christ may be found anywhere in the world today.

The Marian Cult

The Vatican itself describes the worship of Mary as the Marian Cult. All Catholics are members of this cult, to a greater or lesser degree, and participate in its perversions. As we saw in Part One, the LORD rejects anyone who worships and prays to any created thing. Such practices are an abomination in His eyes. So, what better way for Satan to neutralize the power of prayer than to induce Christians to pray to a created thing?

The power of prayer is ASTONISHING. To succeed in his objective, therefore, Satan must disarm Christians and remove the power of prayer. Among Catholics, he has achieved this primarily via the Marian Cult.

Around the world, millions of Catholics – utterly sincere in every way – are asking why God does not seem to hear their prayers. Why has the moral fabric of the world collapsed so catastrophically? The answer is simple: They do not pray to the LORD!

If you do not pray to the LORD, the LORD cannot answer your prayers.

Could anything be more obvious? And yet, countless millions of Catholics have been tricked into praying to a created thing. The Rosary cult is at the centre of this. It venerates Mary as Mediatrix and Co-Redeemer – which amounts to nothing less than a complete rejection of the unique role of Christ as our Redeemer.

Even if Catholics pray only occasionally to Mary, and direct most of their prayers to the Father, it makes no difference. Prayer at *any* time to *any* created thing is an abomination to the LORD.

How Satan deceived Catholics

How has the Catholic church got away with this? After all, the vast majority of Catholics are not complicit in this deception, but unwitting victims.

While a full analysis of the way the deception was carried out would likely take one or more volumes, it can be summarised as follows:

- (a) Firstly, convince the global Christian community that Jesus is represented here on earth by a specific human being. This is the Pope, the Bishop of the diocese of Rome, the self-proclaimed Vicar of Christ. The Catholic Catechism states this doctrine as follows:

882. The Pope, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, "is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful." "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered."

By proclaiming himself the Vicar of Christ, the Pope claims to be Christ's official representative on earth. As such, he presumes to exercise the authority of Christ, in much the same way that a legal representative can exercise power of attorney or an ambassador plenipotentiary can exercise full delegated authority in another jurisdiction. As such, the Pope presumes to act 'in place of' Christ. [This is actually the correct meaning of the term *Antichrist*, one who takes the place of Christ.]

- (b) Next, convince Christians everywhere that the Bible is not the sole and final authority on God's word. This was secured in the main through the Council of Trent, which met on and off between 1545 and 1563.

It decreed this in the following terms:

"...seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books and the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand, following the example of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates, with an equal affection of piety, all the books of the Old and New Testaments....and also the said traditions...preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession."

This clever edict enabled the Roman Church to introduce as many non-scriptural doctrines as suited her purpose under the broad and nebulous umbrella called 'tradition'. They even tried to assert that these 'traditions' originated "from the mouth of Christ Himself"! Should it ever prove difficult to convince the global Catholic community of the legitimacy of a particular doctrine, the power of infallibility could be conferred on the Pope when pronouncing officially on faith and morals. Such pronouncements were binding on all Catholics. (The divine power of infallibility was conferred on the Pope (by himself!) in 1870.)

- (c) After the first two steps, the rest was easy: Simply introduce a mechanism which enables the person at (a) to introduce new (non-Biblical) doctrines or to modify old ones.

With this strategy, virtually anything was possible. The key was to proceed slowly, introducing seemingly minor changes, one by one, over a long period of time. This way, the majority of people would not notice, and the few that did could be silenced – the butchery of dissidents has been another notable Catholic ‘tradition.’ This was particularly important as regards the three golden rules at (a) to (c) above. No one must ever be allowed to challenge them.

In this way, the old Babylonian religion was smuggled into Christian doctrine. A marvelous study of this sinister infiltration – *The Two Babylons* – was carried out by Reverend Alexander Hislop and published in 1858. Given that the Christian religion is now on the brink of destruction, a calamity wrought primarily through its systematic substitution of the Gospel with the old Babylonian religion, the power and accuracy of Hislop’s masterpiece is more evident today than ever before.

Twelve Core Elements of the Babylonian Religion

The Bible utterly rejects the core elements of Babylonian religion. These include

- (a) the goddess
- (b) the mother and her divine child
- (c) the annually resurrected god
- (d) communication with the dead
- (e) personal acts of propitiation
- (f) ritual sacrifice
- (g) the transformation of matter (alchemy)
- (h) a priestly elite
- (i) sacred objects
- (j) sacramental benedictions
- (k) sacred calendars
- (l) the deification of man.

Over a period of 1500 years or less, ALL of these became an integral part of the Roman Catholic religion. For this reason, the Roman church cannot be regarded as Christian in any sense whatever but a thinly disguised version of the Babylonian church.

Let’s see how this happened:

a. The goddess

The Babylonian goddess was introduced in the form of the Virgin Mary and the Marian Cult. She (or, more correctly, the supernatural entity wearing the mask of Mary) is given Mediatrix and Co-Redeemer status by the Roman church (We will discuss her nature in more detail in Part Three).

b. The mother and her divine child

The official description of Mary is the mother of God. This is completely in conflict with the Bible which makes it perfectly plain that Mary was only the mother of the humanity of Jesus. His divinity, his godhood, came from the Father. What is more, as the Alpha and Omega, the divinity of Jesus existed from the beginning. It was neither born nor created.

c. The annually resurrected god

The cult of the annually resurrected god was smuggled into the Roman Catholic church in two ways – (i) through the daily sacrifice of the Mass and (ii) through the formal celebration of the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus in the annual liturgical calendar. The dates of these celebrations are even the same as those associated with Nimrod, the Babylonian god, who was born 3 days after the winter solstice (December 25th) and who rose from the dead at the spring equinox (which determines the date of Easter). The Church of Rome also fixed Friday as the day of the Crucifixion to accord with Babylonian practice, when in reality Our Lord died on the Passover, Wednesday 25th April 31 AD – “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matthew 12:40).

d. Communication with the dead

Communication with the dead and interference in their destiny is endemic in the Catholic Church in the form of (a) prayers **to** the dead, such as deceased ‘saints,’ and (b) prayers **for** the dead, where the LORD is asked to lessen the time which the vast majority of souls spend in a place of temporary suffering known as ‘purgatory.’

Deuteronomy and the first book of Samuel utterly condemn communication with the dead – necromancy and mediumship – as an abomination in the eyes of the LORD. Nowhere in the New Testament are necromancy or mediumship permitted. All prayers are prayers for the living, never for the dead.

Catholic families throughout history have prayed obsessively both to and for deceased members and large sums of money have been spent on Catholic masses and other clerical services to alleviate their plight. The prophet Nahum (in Nahum 3:4) specifically condemns the Church of Rome for doing this: “Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts” (The Book of Revelation (17:9) also describes the Church of Rome as a harlot, namely the Whore of Babylon, the church built on seven hills or mountains – “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth”).

Such a scathing description – *whore, harlot, and mistress of witchcrafts*.

This obsession with the dead is now such that, especially in developing countries, virtually no distinction is made between the local practice of witchcraft and Catholic rites and rituals. Even in western countries, it has long been a common practice for Catholics to frequent psychics, mediums and card readers, and to use horoscopes. Why? Because it sits very comfortably with their existing religious beliefs.

In fact, the link between Catholic belief in the Virgin Mary and communication with the dead, on the one hand, and witchcraft on the other, is so strong that many practising witches in the US and Europe are reporting that it is far easier to induct new recruits and train them in witchcraft if they come from a Catholic background.

Catholics do not realise that in ALL cases the entity contacted by a medium is not a deceased family member but a familiar spirit. The LORD has so constructed the world that there is no communication whatever between the living and the dead. All such phenomena are produced by familiar spirits working in league with fallen angels.

e. Personal acts of propitiation

Satan will go to any lengths to secure the worship that rightfully belongs to God. Thus all pagan religions, being variants of the religion of Babylon, include rites and rituals designed to appease the gods. This ‘appeasing of the gods’ is univervally evident in the Catholic Church in the form of ‘good works.’ In essence, practitioners are required to believe that salvation and sanctification come only through the performance of good works, however small.

NOWHERE in the Bible does the LORD state that our good acts are pleasing to him. Rather it states that “without faith it is impossible to please him.” – Hebrew 11:6.

In God’s eyes, even our most wonderful acts are like filthy rags:

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (Isaiah 64:6)

The ONLY thing that is pleasing to God is our faith in the gift of salvation offered to all mankind through His only begotten Son. This is how we are made just in His eyes. As St Paul said:

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (Romans 3:28)

Good works are the fruit of salvation, NOT the cause. When one is truly filled with the faith of salvation, then good works abound as a natural outpouring of the grace that salvation brings:

In short, we can NEVER propitiate God for our sinfulness. Christ did this for us – in a single, never-to-be-repeated act which completely and utterly absolved each and every one us of all our sins in the eyes of the Father, *provided* we accept the gift. Our task, then, is simply to accept the gift.

Sadly, the Catholic Church dismisses, distorts or devalues this incredible gift at every turn.

f. Ritual sacrifice

One of the most serious and most egregious ways this gift is rejected is through the repeated sacrifice of the Mass.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that the sacrifice of Christ was a single event, never to be repeated.

...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.
(Hebrews 10:10-14)

By the 'holy sacrifice of the mass', Catholic priests are repeating the sacrifice of Jesus, continually turning bread into flesh and wine into blood. This is equivalent to the ritual sacrifice found in Babylonian religion. Oftentimes, the sacrifice is human, as it is in the Mass.

The Mass is a rejection of the sufficiency of the sacrifice made by Christ on the cross. The Bible makes it quite clear – one sacrifice, for all, forever. The continual reenactment of this act through the Mass, which according to Roman theology is identical with the sacrifice of Calvary, with supposed real flesh and supposed real blood, is a daily pronouncement that Jesus failed to do all that was required of him and that the self-appointed priestcraft must complete his work.

This is the religion of Babylon, not the Christian Bible.

g. The transformation of matter

Alchemy is a key element in the Cabala, the form of Babylonian religion practised by apostate Jews, among others. The concept embraces, not just physical transformation, but the transformation of mind and the lower nature of man into the higher. It also features strongly in Freemasonry and Theosophy, where it is sometimes denoted by the occult term, "As above, so below."

This principle of interchangeability is central to magic. It crops up everywhere in the occult. Only the highest Illuminati are meant to possess this 'miraculous' power. It is a distinguishing mark of the priestly caste since they alone have entered the elite group of 'high initiates' (though priestly ordination).

The power to effect the transformation of matter, to turn bread into flesh and wine into blood, is magic at its most impressive. Through this daily ritual, the priestly caste remain apart, superior in every respect from the 'laity,' the huge underclass that will never enter the higher levels of initiation.

If you have any doubt that the Catholic Church unequivocally defines the Mass as a “propitiary sacrifice” in its own right, and not just a commemoration of Calvary, here is what the Council of Trent declared:

If any one saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiary sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema.

– Council of Trent, Twenty-Second Session, 1562

[The term, “let him be anathema,” means the victim may be subjected to whatever penalty the Church deems appropriate.]

And if you have any doubts about the claims made by the Catholic priestcraft to transform matter at will, just read the word of acclaimed Doctor of the Church, Alphonsus Liguori:

The dignity of the priest is also estimated from the power that he has over the real and the mystic body of Jesus Christ. With regard to the power of priests over the real body of Jesus Christ, it is of faith that when they pronounce the words of consecration the Incarnate Word has obliged Himself to obey and to come into their hands under the Sacramental Species...we find that in obedience to the words of his priests – HOC EST CORPUS MEUM – God Himself descends on the altar, that He comes wherever they call Him, and as often as they call Him, and places Himself in their hands, even though they should be His enemies. And after having come, He remains, entirely at their disposal; they move Him as they please, from one place to another; they may, if they wish, shut Him up in the tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him outside the church; they may, if they choose, eat His flesh and give Him for the food of others.

[This quotation is taken from Liguori’s, *The Dignity and Duties of the Priest*, a classic work long employed in the training of Catholic clergy. The text from which this quotation was extracted is given in **Appendix A** below. Founder of the Redemptorist Order, Alphonus Liguori (1696-1787) was canonised in 1839 and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1871, one of only 33 theologians ever to possess this exalted title. In 1950 Pope Pius XII reinforced his standing by awarding him yet another title, *Patron Saint of Moral Theologians*. Thus he occupies a very high position as an expositor of official Catholic doctrine.]

Now look again at this extraordinary quotation. He is saying that the priest possesses real divine power, such that when he utters the four ‘magic’ words, God must obey, whether He wants to or not. This may seem an exaggeration, but read it again and try to put a less disturbing interpretation on his arrogant assertions. If still in doubt, go to **Appendix A** and survey the context in which these assertions were made. (We will examine this unsettling theme, the supernatural power of the Catholic priest, in our next section.)

Thus we see that the transformation of matter, a hallmark of Babylonian religion and occult practice for time immemorial, is central to the doctrines of the Catholic Church – but absent totally from the Bible. The breaking of bread in fellowship, enjoined upon Christians as a commemorative practice by Christ, has absolutely no such connotations.

h. A priestly elite

The New Testament defines all Christians as saints. There are numerous references to the saints and to the inclusion of all Christians in this holy congregation. For example:

Which thing I [Paul] also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. – Acts 26:10

But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. – Romans 15:25

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. – Corinthians 14:33

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus – Ephesians 1:1

The Old Testament is equally clear on this point. See, for example, Psalm 89:5 – “And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints” or Psalm 49:1 – “Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.”

No Christian is above another. All members of the Church of Christ are saints and all are priests, while Jesus is their High Priest. The only earthly stations identified in the New Testament, in the context of church administration, are bishop (equivalent to pastor or minister) and deacon. Neither of these positions impute a spiritual distinction of any kind between the saints. They are purely positions of service and responsibility. A minister is not even ‘first among equals.’ Jesus emphasized this again and again (“And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.” – Mark 9:35)

Now compare this with the Roman Catholic Church, with its elaborate hierarchy of priests, canons, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and pope, each and every one of which purports to possess a supernatural power and to stand, through rites of priestly ordination, in closer proximity to God than the laity. This conforms with the religion of Babylon, but not that of Christ.

For indisputable proof of this, look again at **Appendix A**, which sets out the official position of the Church, as defined by Alphonsus Liguori, Doctor of the Church and Patron Saint of Moral Theologians:

...the priest of God is exalted above all earthly sovereignties, and above all celestial heights – he is inferior only to God...the priest is placed between God and man; inferior to God, but superior to man. St. Denis calls the priest a Divine man....St. John Chrysostom says, that "he who honors a priest, honors Christ, and he who insults a priest, insults Christ." Through respect for the sacerdotal dignity, St. Mary of Oignies used to kiss the ground on which a priest had walked...Priests are chosen by God to manage on earth all his concerns and interests...As has been already said, all the lives of men and Angels are not capable of giving to God an infinite honour like that which a priest offers to Him by a single Mass...And God Himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of His priests, and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse or give absolution, provided the penitent is capable of it...Hence, St John Chrysostom thus concludes: The sovereign Master of the universe only follows the servant by confirming in Heaven all that the latter decides upon earth." Priests are the dispensers of the Divine graces and the companions of God."...But far greater is the power that the eternal Father has given to Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ has given to his priests, to rescue from Hell not only the bodies but also the souls of the faithful: "The Son," says St. John Chrysostom, "has put into the hands of the priests all judgment; for having been as it were transported into Heaven, they have received this Divine prerogative... When St. Michael comes to a dying Christian who invokes his aid, the holy Archangel can chase away the devils, but he cannot free his client from their chains till a priest comes to absolve him...The Saint assigns the reason of the superiority of the priesthood over Mary; she conceived Jesus Christ only once; but by consecrating the Eucharist, the priest, as it were, conceives Him as often as he wishes, so that if the person of the Redeemer had not as yet been in the world, the priest, by pronouncing the words of consecration, would produce this great person of a Man-God...

It is difficult to comment on a passage like this since it departs in so many ways from true Christianity that it defies belief. The Church of Rome is saying that Catholic priests

- are exalted above all celestial heights
- are chosen by God to manage on earth all his concerns and interests
- honour God more than all mankind and the angels by conducting a single Mass
- oblige God to abide by their judgements
- dispense divine grace
- have the power to rescue the souls of the faithful
- have been, as it were, transported into heaven
- are superior to Michael the archangel, at least in some respects
- produce by their words the person of Jesus.

This puts each and every one of them above Moses and Elijah! Not even Paul of Tarsus, who claimed none of these powers, could match them in stature.

Of course, this is Babylonian religion, where powers of this kind are found only among the illuminated elite. For example, when the magicians of Egypt took a stand against Moses, one of the powers they demonstrated was the ability to turn water into blood (Exodus 7).

Let's examine some more of Liguori's highly revealing testimony:

Hence priests are called the parents of Jesus Christ: such is the title that St. Bernard gives them, for they are the active cause by which He is made to exist really in the consecrated Host. Thus the priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator, since by saying the words of consecration, he creates, as it were, Jesus in the Sacrament, by giving Him a Sacramental existence, and produces Him as a victim to be offered to the eternal Father. As in creating the world it was sufficient for God to have said, Let it be made, and it was created – He spoke, and they were made – so it is sufficient for the priest to say, "Hoc est corpus meum," and behold the bread is no longer bread, but the body of Jesus Christ. "The power of the priest," says St. Bernardine of Sienna, "is the power of the Divine person; for the transubstantiation of the bread requires as much power as the creation of the world."

The hubris oozing from this passage is quite astonishing. It portrays the Roman priest as a kind of magus, someone imbued with profound supernatural power. He is described as the parent and creator of Christ, producing him "as a victim" to be offered to the eternal Father. Just as God by His word brought the world into existence, the priest has merely to say the magic words to compel Christ to incarnate in the communion bread. This power is supposedly equivalent in magnitude to the power that God used to create the universe.

The portrayal of Christ "as a victim" to be sacrificed again and again is a hallmark of Babylonian religion, where human sacrifice, both actual and symbolic, is viewed as the most potent means of obtaining supernatural power. By treating the Mass as an actual flesh and blood sacrifice in a symbolic setting, the Church seeks to achieve the same result.

Just when you think Liguori, the acclaimed Doctor of the Church, has uttered about as many blasphemies as any man could in a single chapter, he comes up with more:

...Priests are called Vicars of Jesus Christ, because they hold his place on earth. But what only God can do by His omnipotence, the priest can also do by saying "Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis;" for the forms of the Sacraments, or the words of the forms, produce what they signify.

Here, via more magical incantations, the priest exercises the power of Christ. As a vicar he carries plenipotentiary powers and is thus, within this earthly sphere, omnipotent. It should hardly be surprising, therefore, that Liguori follows St Clement in pronouncing "that the priest is, as it were, a God on earth." (See Appendix A)

As if this were not enough, Liguori goes further and states:

According to St. Ambrose, a priest, in absolving a sinner, performs the very office of the Holy Ghost in the sanctification of souls.

No man can "perform the very office of the Holy Ghost." This is utterly absurd and deeply blasphemous. Jesus could hardly have been stronger in his condemnation of men who claim to do this: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." (Mark 3:29)

I thought Liguori had exhausted all heresies until I reached the latter part of the chapter and read the following:

It was not necessary for the Redeemer to die in order to save the world; a drop of His Blood, a single tear, or prayer, was sufficient to procure salvation for all; for such a prayer, being of infinite value, should be sufficient to save not one but a thousand worlds. But to institute the priesthood, the death of Jesus Christ has been necessary.

This is anti-Christian heresy at its worst. How can anyone profess to be a Christian and make a statement of this nature? The entire Bible, from start to finish, is a profound and loving statement of God's plan of Redemption for all mankind. The Old Testament prepares the way for Christ the Redeemer, who by his death and resurrection atones for the sins of all and reconciles mankind with God. To allege that this could be done with just a prayer or a "single tear" is an appalling perversion of God's holy word.

To top it all, he goes further and states that Christ had to die "to institute the priesthood." I doubt if there are many statements in Catholic doctrine that match this for arrogance and human pride.

All of this is irrefutable proof, if further proof were needed, that the Catholic Church is actually a disguised form of the Babylonian religion.

i. Sacred objects

The Babylonian religion is replete with objects and artefacts which are meant to serve as conduits for a hidden power. These include obelisks, certain trees (such as the oak, ash and holly), mementi mori (artefacts associated with dead persons, especially those thought to have possessed significant magical power when living), shrines, groves, statues, amulets, talismans, arcane and esoteric symbols, holy wells, holy mountains, and a vast range of objects associated with temple rites and priestly office.

Virtually all of these have been imported into the Catholic church in one form or another – holy water, holy medals, scapulars, crucifixes, Marian shrines, statues of the ‘saints,’ blessed objects, relics of the ‘saints,’ candles, oils, vestments, pilgrim sites, and so forth. Again, this is Babylonian religion, not the religion of Christ.

j. Sacramental benedictions

The Babylonian religion has numerous rites and rituals which are designed to elevate its practitioners temporarily to a higher spiritual level. An infusion of supernatural power is meant to result from the careful observation of prescribed ritualistic steps, carried out by anointed individuals (priests). The most potent rituals are carried out on specific dates.

The Catholic Church has introduced numerous sacramental rituals to achieve the same purpose, none of which have any Biblical foundation. These include holy orders, confirmation, absolution, extreme unction (the ritual anointing of seriously ill persons), canonisation, benediction, and transubstantiation.

To the extent that these activities invoke a supernatural power, they are idolatrous. It is not possible to ‘invoke’ the power of the LORD. All one can do is ASK. If a righteous person does so in humility, the LORD will hear his or her prayer. Whether or not the prayer is answered in the manner we have asked is entirely a matter for the LORD. We cannot invoke this ‘power’! If a priest presumes to be able to do this, he is no different from a magus. The invocation of a supernatural power is witchcraft.

k. Sacred calendars

The Bible condemns the use of any system for selecting dates in order to increase the potency of a particular ceremony:

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Deuteronomy 18:10)

An observer of times is most often interpreted as an astrologer, but it is also encompasses anyone who ascribes greater potency to rites conducted on particular dates. For example, in witchcraft (which is based on the Babylonian religion), the date of which a rite is conducted or a spell cast is believed to have a decisive influence on the outcome. In much the same way, the Church of Rome has set up a detailed calendar of feast days, holy days, saints days, and days of special observance or obligation, as well as days for the conduct of particular ceremonies.

Many of these are identical with major dates in the Babylonian calendar, such as Christmas (Saturnalia or the birth of Nimrod), Easter (the feast of Ishtar or Astarte), All Saints Day (Halloween) and the forty-day Lenten period (when followers of the Babylonian religion grieved for Tammuz).

The New Testament condemns the observance of days and months and times and years (such as the Marian year 1954), yet many so-called Christians still allow themselves to fall back into this form of bondage, which has nothing whatever to do with the Gospel of Christ:

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain (Galatians 4:7-11)

I. The deification of man

We have already seen how an esteemed Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, Alphonsus Liguori, described an elite category of men, the Roman Catholic clergy, as beings who have transcended ordinary manhood. They are exalted above all celestial heights and have been, as it were, transported into heaven. They exercise the authority of God on earth and have the ability, merely by their word, to invoke a supernatural power. Such men are well on the way to a deified state, which status will be confirmed posthumously in certain cases through the rites of canonisation. They will then be recognised as exalted beings with divine powers, roaming heaven at will, and capable of bestowing their benedictions to supplicants here on earth, as and when they choose.

The pantheons of Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, Scandinavia and elsewhere are replicated in the celestial hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Just as the gods in these various pantheons have distinctive powers and roles, so too have the transcendental personalities in the Catholic pantheon of canonised saints. Some heal, some protect, some guide, some educate, some comfort, and some exercise their divine prerogative in a defined geographical area.

The truth is that the fallen angels, in particular the most rebellious ones, are like Lucifer. This means they *crave* worship. What better way to do this than to establish a celestial pantheon and, behind a thousand different masks, to soak up the misguided worship of a billion deceived individuals.

By daily breaking the first two commandments, man is heading down the same road, casting aside the gift of Salvation in the vain pursuit of his own deification.

Summary of Part Two

Satan knew he could make some progress toward his sinister goals by attacking Christianity from without, but better by far, he found, was an attack from within. The various pagan incarnations of the Babylonian religion – the religion of Satan – would always succeed in attracting a huge following. But there would still exist a significant number of the lost souls who would not be satisfied with this. So he grafted his own religious system onto the largest and most influential religious system in history. Many would believe they were following the gospel of Christ when, in reality, they were enslaved by a pale imitation. Century by century, he fostered fringe practices which grew to the point where they became a focal part of Catholic tradition – the curse of tradition! – and then pillars of doctrine binding on all members.

With the elevation of the Babylonian goddess to the rank of Co-Mediatrix and Redemptrix, his triumph is virtually complete. All that is needed is a Papal Bull to give the final seal of approval. At that point, the glaring apostasy of the Catholic Church ought to be apparent to even its most devoted members.

PART THREE

Why the earthly mother of Jesus is NOT the Virgin Mary

Christians should base their understanding of Mary on the Bible. If they have a perception of her which is not based on Scripture, or which actually conflicts with Scripture, then it is false. This ought to be obvious, but unfortunately Catholics the world over have for generations accepted a role for Mary which has no scriptural basis whatever.

Let's look at the evidence.

Understanding Mary, the mother of Jesus

Neither Jesus nor his Apostles accorded any special status to Mary whatever. For example, when Jesus was told on one occasion that his mother and his brethren (brothers) wished to speak with him, he made it quite clear that her relationship to him had no relevance to the Gospel of Salvation and that a true disciple was only concerned with doing the will of our Father in heaven:

While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. (Matthew 12:46-50)

When a woman tried to ascribe a blessed state to Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus, he gently rebuked her:

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. (Luke 11:27-28)

The Church of Rome also tries to portray Mary as a perpetual virgin, even though she had many other children! If Catholics studied the Bible as the LORD directed, they would surely have read the following and seen that Mary was plainly the mother of a large family, having given birth to at least seven children:

Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? (Matthew 13:55-56)

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)

The sanctity of Mary

The Church of Rome also tries to present Mary as a person whose essential nature raised her above the station of any other woman. To support this opinion, they like to cite the following verse:

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. (Luke 1:28)

Having been selected from the bloodline of David to bear the Messiah in bodily form is indeed a blessing, but the blessing comes through her selection, not through some sinless perfection. When the angel says she is “highly favoured,” he is referring to this. He also adds that she is blessed among women, not above them.

Many characters in the Bible are noted by the LORD for their sanctity. Enoch, Samuel, Elijah, Noah and several others were noted for their spiritual stature and sanctity in the eyes of the LORD. And yet NOT ONE of them is singled out as a mediator between man and God! Jesus even says of John the Baptist that no person ever exceeded him in spiritual greatness, and yet he is not identified in any respect whatever as a person to whom a special devotion should be rendered:

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist... (Matthew 11:11)

If God conspicuously refuses to grant a quasi-divine status to the greatest of His prophets, then we know that NO ONE was to have any such distinction. The First and Second Commandments forbid it.

Jesus never gave any special distinction to his earthly mother. For example, during the marriage feast at Cana, a very public setting, he addressed her by the plainest of titles, ‘Woman’ -

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. (John 2:1-5)

He did this again when he spoke to her from the cross of Calvary, where he placed her in the care of John:

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. (John 19:25-27)

It was hardly necessary for Jesus to place his mother under the care of John if she was due to ascend (or be assumed) into heaven! (The 'Assumption' of Mary into heaven was yet another Papal invention, without a shred of scriptural support.)

Furthermore, if the relationship between Jesus and his earthly mother had some divine significance, it could not have been transferred in this manner to John. In the last hours before his death Jesus is disowning his mother, as it were, and thus making it plain to all mankind that she had NO ROLE WHATEVER in the act of Redemption.

The message he was giving is very clear: DO NOT WORSHIP THIS WOMAN.

The Apostles and Mary

In his perceptive study of the Roman Catholic Church, Professor Loraine Boettner (1962) makes the following observation:

The apostles did not show her [*the mother of Jesus*] any special honour. Peter, Paul, John and James do not mention her name even once in the epistles which they wrote to the churches. John took care of her until she died, but he does not mention her in any of his three epistles or in the book of Revelation.

When the church was instituted at Pentecost there was only one name given among men whereby we must be saved, that of Jesus (Acts 4:12). Wherever the eyes of the church are directed to the abundance of grace, there is no mention of Mary. Surely this silence is a rebuke to those who would build a system of salvation around her. God has given us all the record we need concerning Mary, and that record does not indicate that worship or veneration in any form is to be given to her.

– *Roman Catholicism*, chapter 7

Who then was Mary and how should we regard her? The New Testament portrays her very humbly as the earthly mother of Jesus and one of his faithful disciples. Two of her other sons, James and Jude, were each the author of an epistle in the New Testament. And that is, in truth, the story of Mary. A true Christian should not worship her in any manner whatever, or accord her any special role in his or her spiritual life.

Biblical warnings against goddess worship

The Bible, the very word of God, has warned us many times that the worship of idols and false gods in any manner whatever poses a deadly threat to our salvation. Its destructiveness simply cannot be overstated. This theme runs right through the Bible, carrying with it a most dire and baleful depiction of the consequences for all who ignore the warning – whether through arrogance or foolishness.

Holy scripture warns specifically of the dangers of goddess worship:

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him. (Judges 10:6)

In this passage the Bible refers by name to the goddess Ashtaroth, the name by which the queen of heaven was known to the Canaanites. Strictly speaking, Ashtaroth is the Hebrew plural of Ashtoreth and refers to the various shrines erected to this fertility goddess throughout the land of Canaan.

Several warnings are also given in the First Book of Samuel, presumably because goddess worship was endemic among the Israelites at that time:

And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. (1 Samuel 7:3)

Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only. (1 Samuel 7:4)

And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. (1 Samuel 12:10)

And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan. (1 Samuel 31:10)

The queen of heaven is referred to mainly by the name of Ashtoreth in the Old Testament and by the name of Diana in the New Testament:

So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. (Acts 19:27-28)

But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. (Acts 19:34-37)

To the Babylonians she was Ishtar and to the Greeks Astarte. But she had many names and many modes of representation throughout history and across different religious traditions. She is known mainly as the goddess of fertility and goddess of the moon, the female consort of the male sun-god. Behind her countless names she smiles the same sweet smile, beguiling millions.

Technically she reigns as *queen of heaven*, a title which defines her role in the pantheon of the gods, but she is more than satisfied with the many names and titles given her by man: Isis, Semiramis, Aphrodite, Hera, Ceres, Hertha, Venus, Minerva, Lakshmi, Kali, Europa, Cybele, Rhea, and Nana, among others. To the Chinese she is Guanyin, goddess of mercy. To Catholics she is known as the Virgin Mary. The dark-path witches of Europe and America like to worship her in her most sinister form, where she is called Lilith or Hecate.

Some of her guises are specifically merciful, while some are wrathful. The Hindu goddess Kali is actually the wrathful aspect, while Lakshmi is the merciful and smiling side. While some witches invoke her as Lilith or Hecate, others (like the Wiccans) prefer to focus on the merciful side and invoke her as the Great Mother.

Adherents of the modern drive to unite science with the Babylonian religion refer to her as Gaia, the living earth. Thus people are induced to worship her in some form – for she craves worship. Members of the modern green movement, who might otherwise shun religion, are fully prepared to worship her in the form of ‘mother earth’ or the living planet.

The Great Deceiver learned long ago that many fear him in the guise of Satan or Moloch, but are more than happy to worship him in the guise of Lucifer, the Lightbearer, or the Goddess of Mercy. He doesn’t care in the least how this worship is performed or the guise in which his worshippers choose to represent him. All that matters to Satan is that mankind is prepared to worship him in some form.

No matter how carefully he packages his worship in the male form – through the Cabala, Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, etc – the majority of mankind has shown a marked preference for worship of the goddess, the female aspect. It is more than likely therefore that, when the masters of the New World Order impose their planned One World Religion, they will exploit goddess worship as the factor common to all religious traditions. Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems, Catholics, Eastern Orthodox – all will worship the One World goddess of mercy.

All of this is an abomination in the eyes of the LORD:

Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched. (Jeremiah 7:17-20)

As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men? Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him that answer, saying, The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it not into his mind? So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day. Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day. Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that are in the land of Egypt: Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows. (Jeremiah 44:16-25)

Please examine the above passages very carefully since they speak loudly to the times we are living in today. The worship of the goddess is a curse upon the land. No more do Catholics pray to the LORD. For centuries they have defiled their worship of the LORD with prayers directed to the queen of heaven, and so their prayers go unheard! No doubt there are still some among the Catholic religion today, a true remnant, who revere the LORD as God Almighty and pray only to Him, but they are few!

The vast majority of Catholics have had their eyes darkened by the vile deceptions practiced upon them by a corrupt leadership. Satan set up the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) to destroy the Reformation and annihilate all Protestants. Along the way, they elevated worship of the goddess to the highest pinnacle within the Church of Rome. In this way, they turned people from the LORD and induced them to pray to a dead human being, the earthly mother of Jesus.

Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus, is NOT the Virgin Mary revered by the Catholic Church. The latter is merely a guise that one of the fallen angels uses to beguile mankind. Once this dreadful deception took hold in the Catholic imagination, it received periodic boosts through widely reported Marian apparitions. Fatima, Lourdes, Medugorje, Guadalupe, La Salette – all are nothing more than supernatural deceptions, arranged by Satan to gull the unwary. They have NOTHING WHATEVER to do with the earthly mother of Jesus or with the gospel of Christ.

Many Names, Many Faces

Just as the queen of heaven has many names and faces in the various pagan religions, she also has a multiplicity of names and faces within the Catholic Church. The **table** on the following page gives just 60 chosen at random. Each is designed to celebrate and exalt a particular aspect of her divine nature. In order to further reinforce her standing and extend her influence throughout the annual liturgical calendar, she has been assigned no fewer than 17 feasts days in the course of the year (at least one for every month except April).

The Bible makes it perfectly clear that no living person can contact the dead. So was the Church of Rome taking a great risk by granting a quasi-divine status to the Virgin Mary? After all, there was a real possibility that a counter-movement could start within the Church, with concerned members pointing to the huge contradictions between scripture and Marian worship. The Jesuits got around by arranging for the Pope (Pius XII) to declare that Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus, had never died but was “assumed” bodily into heaven. This, of course, had NO scriptural foundation whatever, but it served their purpose well. Through it concerned Catholics would believe they were praying, not to a deceased person or a disembodied being, but to someone whose status was comparable to that of Jesus.

The Doctrine of the Assumption, which was introduced as recently as 1950, is a stark illustration of the power of tradition. A belief can be current in the Church for centuries, a speculative opinion as it were, until in due course it becomes accepted as a time-honoured tradition and then, with Papal authority, a doctrinal precept which all must accept.

Queen of the World	Morning Star
Our Lady of Fatima	Mother of Our Creator
Our Lady of La Salette	Mother of Our Redeemer
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour	Mystical Rose
Mother of the Savior	Queen of Angels
Our Lady of the Holy Rosary	Queen of Prophets
Madonna of Consolation	Queen of All Saints
Our Lady of Nazareth	Queen of the Most Holy Rosary
Our Lady of Cana	Queen of Peace
Star of the Sea	Spouse of the Holy Spirit
White Lily of the Trinity	Vessel of Honour
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	Virgin Most Powerful
Mother of God	Virgin Most Merciful
Mother of Reconciliation	Virgin Most Faithful
Virgin Mary	Mother of Divine Providence
Fountain of Light and Life	Mother of Consolation
Our Lady of the Cenacle	Daughter of the Father
Queen of Apostles	Mother of Fairest Love
Vermilion Rose of Heaven	Co-Redemptrix
The New Eve	Queen of Peace
Handmaid of the Lord	Gate of Heaven
Mother of Unity	Holy Virgin of Virgins
Mother of Mercy	Fountain of Salvation
Our Lady of Ransom	Our Lady of Grace
Immaculate Conception	Mother of Good Counsel
Temple of the Lord	Our Lady of Sorrows
Seat of Wisdom	Pillar of Faith
Lady of the Assumption	Mother of Divine Hope
Queen of all Creation	Mediatrix of Grace
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Refuge of Sinners

Considered simply as a popular belief, the assumption of the Virgin Mary was virtually unknown among Catholics until the sixteenth century. It was not even mentioned in the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) which issued thunderous proclamations on virtually every aspect of the Catholic religion. Then, through the careful guidance and characteristic cunning of the Jesuits, it began its slow but inexorable march to the forefront of Church doctrine, until finally it was presented as an indubitable truth which had always been known but had somehow been neglected.

The leading high church dignitary in line for canonisation is John Henry Newman. A few years after his conversion to Catholicism in 1845, the future Cardinal Newman published his *Discourses to Mixed Congregations* which included two classic studies on the Virgin Mary. Well regarded within the Church for their theological content, they confer a divine status on the Virgin, in accordance with the 'tradition' manufactured and promulgated by the Jesuits:

If we have faith to admit the Incarnation itself, we must admit it in its fulness; why then should we start at the gracious appointments which arise out of it, or are necessary to it, or are included in it? If the Creator comes on earth in the form of a servant and a creature, why may not His Mother, on the other hand, rise to be the Queen of heaven, and be clothed with the sun, and have the moon under her feet?

- Discourse 17: The Glories of Mary for the Sake of Her Son

Now, as you know, it has been held from the first, and defined from an early age, that Mary is the Mother of God. She is not merely the Mother of our Lord's manhood, or of our Lord's body, but she is to be considered the Mother of the Word Himself, the Word incarnate. God, in the person of the Word, the Second Person of the All-glorious Trinity, humbled Himself to become her Son.

- Discourse 18. On the Fitness of the Glories of Mary

Nothing is too high for her to whom God owes His human life; no exuberance of grace, no excess of glory, but is becoming, but is to be expected there, where God has lodged Himself, whence God has issued. Let her "be clad in the king's apparel," that is, let the fulness of the Godhead so flow into her that she may be a figure of the incommunicable sanctity, and beauty, and glory, of God Himself: that she may be the Mirror of Justice, the Mystical Rose, the Tower of Ivory, the House of Gold, the Morning Star.

- Discourse 18. On the Fitness of the Glories of Mary

Let her "receive the king's diadem upon her head," as the Queen of heaven, the Mother of all living...let angels and prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and all saints, kiss the hem of her garment and rejoice under the shadow of her throne. Thus is it that King Solomon [meaning Jesus] has risen up to meet his mother, and bowed himself unto her, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother, and she sits on his right hand.

- Discourse 18. On the Fitness of the Glories of Mary

He imbibed, He absorbed into His Divine Person, her blood and the substance of her flesh; by becoming man of her, He received her lineaments and features, as the appropriate character in which He was to manifest Himself to mankind. The child is like the parent, and we may well suppose that by His likeness to her was manifested her relationship to Him. Her sanctity comes, not only of her being His mother, but also of His being her son.

- Discourse 18. On the Fitness of the Glories of Mary

...St. John Baptist was sanctified by the Spirit before his birth; shall Mary be only equal to him? is it not fitting that her privilege should surpass his? ...Mary must surpass all the saints; the very fact that certain privileges are known to have been theirs persuades us, almost from the necessity of the case, that she had the same and higher. Her conception was immaculate, in order that she might surpass all saints in the date as well as the fulness of her sanctification.

- Discourse 18. On the Fitness of the Glories of Mary

...Who can conceive, my brethren, that God should so repay the debt, which He condescended to owe to His Mother, for the elements of His human body, as to allow the flesh and blood from which it was taken to moulder in the grave?

- Discourse 18. On the Fitness of the Glories of Mary

Pilgrims went to and fro; they sought for her relics, but they found them not; did she die at Ephesus? or did she die at Jerusalem? reports varied; but her tomb could not be pointed out, or if it was found, it was open; and instead of her pure and fragrant body, there was a growth of lilies from the earth which she had touched. So inquirers went home marvelling, and waiting for further light. And then it was said, how that when her dissolution was at hand, and her soul was to pass in triumph before the judgment-seat of her Son, the apostles were suddenly gathered together in the place, even in the Holy City, to bear part in the joyful ceremonial; how that they buried her with fitting rites; how that the third day, when they came to the tomb, they found it empty, and angelic choirs with their glad voices were heard singing day and night the glories of their risen Queen. But, however we feel towards the details of this history (nor is there anything in it which will be unwelcome or difficult to piety), so much cannot be doubted, from the consent of the whole Catholic world and the revelations made to holy souls, that, as is befitting, she is, soul and body, with her Son and God in heaven, and that we are enabled to celebrate, not only her death, but her Assumption

- Discourse 18. On the Fitness of the Glories of Mary

It is hardly necessary to comment on these strange, adulatory statements. They elevate an earthly woman, Mary, to the status of a goddess, risen from the grave, assumed into heaven, whose blood was shed on the cross through her Son, and who now sits on the right hand of God, interceding like Jesus for all mankind.

A more preposterous, non-Biblical scenario is impossible to imagine.

A short historical note may help at this point: The Virgin Mary was declared free of original sin in 1854. Known by Catholics as the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, it declares that Mary was conceived without sin in the womb of her own mother (Protestants sometimes confuse this doctrine with the miraculous conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary). Thus, born without sin – the only person in history, apart from her Son, to have received this honour – she is placed on the same plane as a divine personage.

The power of this doctrine was impressed on the global Catholic community through the doctrine of Papal Infallibility of 1870 and further reinforced by the doctrine of the Assumption in 1950. The latter declared simply that

By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory

[This formulation leaves open the possibility that Mary may have been assumed bodily into heaven without having died first.]

If you can see an evolutionary progression in all of this, you are correct. Pressure is now being applied by various Catholic lobby groups to have the Virgin Mary declared a Co-Redemptrix with Christ (Some 600 bishops and cardinals signed such a petition some years ago). Pope John Paul II acknowledged unofficially at a General Audience in September 1982 (and several times thereafter in the course of his ministry) that she had this status. The advent of the One World Church, predicted in the Book of Revelation, will likely witness a formal confirmation, via Papal Encyclical, of her Co-Redemptrix status.

The Book of Revelation (known to Catholics as the Book of the Apocalypse) is a profound warning by Christ of the coming end-time apostasies and the appalling worldwide carnage that will accompany it. It identifies the Church of Rome, the church built on seven mountains – the seven hills of Rome – as the Great Whore of Babylon. It even gives her the title (in capital letters), MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT (Revelation 17:5).

The mysteries of Babylon are, of course, the religion of Babylon, which we have been discussing. We are now entering the End Time when “the mistress of witchcrafts” will rise forth for a season and subjugate all nations.

Epilogue

Satan has never given up his plan to destroy Christianity and replace it with his own system of worship, the Religion of Babylon and its variants. Having failed to destroy the Jewish people before the advent of the Messiah (through, for example, Pharaoh’s plan for the murder at birth of all Jewish males, the Assyrian abduction of ten tribes, the Babylonian enslavement of the two that remained, and Haman’s genocidal scheme), he then did all he could to pervert the message of Christ.

The expansion of paganism, atheism and a host of occult organisations was the easy part. His greatest achievement was the infiltration of mainstream Christianity almost from the start. By undermining the clear scriptural admonition that scripture ALONE was the authority in all religious matters, he succeeded in creating a structure dominated by an elect group of men whose opinion was law. In this way Rome and its traditions replaced the authority of the Bible. Thus began a long, slow process by which the Gospel of Christ was cunningly transformed, step by step, into a thinly disguised version of the Babylonian religion.

Satan suffered a major setback in the 15th century when the Gospel of Christ, which had hitherto been taught by only isolated groups of Christians, was again professed (and defended) by a large number of people in central Europe. Rome struck back immediately with the Counter-Reformation, a violent assault which (unknown to many) continues to the present day. Orchestrated in the main by the Jesuit Order, it has done everything possible to undermine true Protestant Christianity in Europe – the appalling devastation of the Thirty Years War (which tore Protestant Germany apart), the ravages of Napoleon (which brought huge swathes of Protestant Europe under Roman control), and two vicious World Wars which were aimed at welding the whole of Europe into a single political framework akin to the Holy Roman Empire.

Along the way, Satan employed two major techniques to undermine Christianity – Freemasonry and the Marian Cult. The former ate away at Protestantism from within, luring innocent Christians into a secretive organisation which, at its higher levels, was nothing other than a system of Egyptian magic and Luciferian worship.

The Marian Cult, on the other hand, was aimed at sincere Catholics who still sought to follow the Gospel of Christ. They too were lured into beliefs and practices which in turn were nothing more than a disguised form of goddess worship, straight from Babylonian religion.

Both of these techniques yielded important additional benefits. Masonry became a way to infiltrate and control the main organisations of secular life, in particular those of government, the judiciary and banking. This in turn conferred incredible influence in deciding who should benefit from the proceeds of economic growth and technological innovation. These powers – political, judicial and financial – led in turn to overwhelming competitive advantages in the commercial sphere for well-connected individuals and enabled the ruling elite to secure control, both nationally and internationally, over virtually every major sector of modern business.

Much the same happened among the Catholic community. The Marian Cult became the backbone of secret, highly influential, Catholic organisations like the Knights of Malta and the Knights of Columbus/Columbanus. These secured control at the highest levels of state and federal government in all regions where the Masons were not sufficiently influential. Then, around 1963, a formal rapprochement between both sides – which had been co-operating informally for centuries in any event – was achieved. The administrative and strategic direction of these secret international fraternal organisations merged into a single entity at the highest levels.

The last significant stronghold of Protestantism on the planet is the United States. Despite the high levels of apostasy and doctrinal error that continue to weaken and undermine many areas of American Protestantism, there is still a sizeable body of believers in that once great nation, people who pray to the LORD and only to the LORD. These are the last remaining obstacle to Satan. This is why the Illuminati, the world ruling elite – who worship Lucifer, the Light-bearer – have been working long and hard to destroy the US from within.

Satan does not want anyone to pray to the LORD! This is not a purely egotistical concern. He knows that man is utterly powerless against him, but unfortunately (from his standpoint) man can call on the LORD – and THAT unnerves him!

Through prayer, man has a truly STAGGERING power at his disposal – at the will of the LORD. Thus Satan’s overriding objective is to induce man not to use the incredible power of prayer.

True Christian prayer is the only weapon that can stop Satan. Mary Queen of Scots summed it up very well when she said she feared the prayers of John Knox more than an army of 20,000 men.

Since Satan HATES true Christian prayer, he has gone to astonishing lengths to lead man away from it. Once the human race has been completely disarmed, the planned demonic invasion can begin in earnest.

This is why Satan is determined to destroy America. Once it is broken up and its freedoms obliterated, he can introduce his One World Government and his One World Church – where he plans to be revered and worshipped as a living god.

Using a combination of methods – false flag terrorist attacks, the extensive off-shoring of the industrial base, the unsustainable expansion of federal debt, genetically engineered diseases, uncontrolled immigration from Mexico, the limitless influx of drugs and pornography, rampant military imperialism, a flood of anti-Christian movies and TV series, the wanton murder of millions of unborn children, and the deliberate destruction of the banking system – the Illuminati have greatly weakened the American people. By exercising complete control over the media and the political system, they have eliminated constructive debate and silenced their critics. And in true fascist style, they have infiltrated the American churches, using a variety of statutory restrictions to make it next to impossible for pastors in state-registered churches to preach on political issues.

The whole fabric of American society is set to shatter completely, possibly on foot of a single cataclysmic event such as the explosion of a nuclear device in a large city, or even a series of such explosions.

When one considers that the largest religious community in the US is the Catholic Church, with some 70 million members, it is tragic to consider that virtually all of them have been tricked into addressing some, if not all, of their prayers to a goddess (a fallen angel in disguise). As the Bible clearly states, in doing so they are not living righteously and therefore the LORD does not hear a single thing they say. Thus, by failing to pray to the LORD they are unwittingly complicit in the coming devastation.

Satan and his angels – some of whom possess a dazzling and beguiling beauty – want control of this planet and its human inhabitants. They crave it more than a drowning man craves air. And they fear only one thing, namely that a sizeable body of people will wake up, see what is happening, repent of their sinful past and pray to the LORD!

So, dear reader, if you are praying to anyone – anyone! – other than the LORD God of the Bible, you have fallen into the most appalling trap imaginable.

The Satanic axe is about to fall and you have no protection!

Wake up, America, wake up!

“Seek righteousness, seek meekness. It may be ye shall
be hid in the day of the LORD’s anger.”
- Zephaniah 2:3

Jeremy James
Ireland
15 May 2009

**For more information about
Bible-based Christianity, the
Illuminati, and the New World Order
visit - www.zephaniah.eu**

**"The Dignity and Duties of the Priest" (excerpt)
by St. Alphonsus Liguori**

The Dignity of the Priesthood

I

Idea of the Priestly Dignity

In his epistle to the Christians of Smyrna, St. Ignatius, Martyr, says that the priesthood is the most sublime of all created dignities: "The apex of dignities is the priesthood." St. Ephrem calls it an infinite dignity: "The priesthood is an astounding miracle, great, immense, and infinite." St. John Chrysostom says, that though its functions are performed on earth, the priesthood should be numbered among the things of Heaven." According to Cassian, the priest of God is exalted above all earthly sovereignties, and above all celestial heights – he is inferior only to God. Innocent III says that the priest is placed between God and man; inferior to God, but superior to man. St. Denis calls the priest a Divine man. Hence he has called the priesthood a Divine dignity. In fine, St. Ephrem says that the gift of the sacerdotal dignity surpasses all understanding. For us it is enough to know, that Jesus Christ has said that we should treat his priests as we would his own person: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; he that despiseth you, despiseth Me." Hence St. John Chrysostom says, that "he who honors a priest, honors Christ, and he who insults a priest, insults Christ." Through respect for the sacerdotal dignity, St. Mary of Oignies used to kiss the ground on which a priest had walked.

II

Importance of the Priestly Office

The dignity of the priest is estimated from the exalted nature of his offices. Priests are chosen by God to manage on earth all his concerns and interests. " Divine," says St. Cyril of Alexandria, "are the offices confided to priests." St. Ambrose has called the priestly office a Divine profession. A priest is a minister destined by God to be a public ambassador of the whole Church, to honor Him, and to obtain His graces for all the faithful. The entire Church cannot give to God as much honor, nor obtain so many graces, as a single priest by celebrating a single Mass; for the greatest honor that the whole Church without priests could give to God would consist in offering to Him in sacrifice the lives of all men. But of what value are the lives of all men compared with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is a sacrifice of infinite value? What are all men before God but a little dust? As a drop of a bucket, as a little dust. They are but a mere nothing in His sight: All nations are before Him as if they had no being at all. Thus, by the celebration of a single Mass, in which he offers Jesus Christ in sacrifice, a priest gives greater honor to the Lord, than if all men

by dying for God offered to Him the sacrifice of their lives. By a single Mass, he gives greater honor to God than all the Angels and Saints, along with the Blessed Virgin Mary, have given or shall give to Him; for their worship cannot be of infinite value, like that which the priest celebrating on the altar offers to God. Moreover, in the holy Mass, the priest offers to God an adequate thanksgiving for all the graces bestowed even on the Blessed in Paradise; but such a thanksgiving all the Saints together are incapable of offering to Him. Hence it is, that on this account also the priestly dignity is superior even to all celestial dignities. Besides, the priest, says St. John Chrysostom, is an ambassador of the whole world, to intercede with God and to obtain graces for all creatures.. The priest, according to St. Ephrem, "treats familiarly with God." To priests every door is open. Jesus has died to institute the priesthood. It was not necessary for the Redeemer to die in order to save the world; a drop of His Blood, a single tear, or prayer, was sufficient to procure salvation for all; for such a prayer, being of infinite value, should be sufficient to save not one but a thousand worlds. But to institute the priesthood, the death of Jesus Christ has been necessary. Had he not died, where should we find the victim that the priests of the New Law now offer? a victim altogether holy and immaculate, capable of giving to God an honor worthy of God. As has been already said, all the lives of men and Angels are not capable of giving to God an infinite honor like that which a priest offers to Him by a single Mass.

III

Grandeur of the Priestly Power

The dignity of the priest is also estimated from the power that he has over the real and the mystic body of Jesus Christ. With regard to the power of priests over the real body of Jesus Christ, it is of faith that when they pronounce the words of consecration the Incarnate Word has obliged Himself to obey and to come into their hands under the Sacramental Species. We are struck with wonder when we hear that God obeyed the voice of Josue – The Lord obeying the voice of man – and made the sun stand when He said move not, O sun, towards Gabaon . . . and the sun stood still. But our wonder should be far greater when we find that in obedience to the words of his priests – HOC EST CORPUS MEUM – God Himself descends on the altar, that He comes wherever they call Him, and as often as they call Him, and places Himself in their hands, even though they should be His enemies. And after having come, He remains, entirely at their disposal; they move Him as they please, from one place to another; they may, if they wish, shut Him up in the tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him outside the church; they may, if they choose, eat His flesh and give Him for the food of others. "Oh, how very great is their power," says St. Laurence Justinian, speaking of priests. "A word falls from their lips and the body of Christ is there substantially formed from the matter of bread, and the Incarnate Word descended from Heaven, is found really present on the table of the altar! Never did Divine goodness give such power to the Angels. The Angels abide by the order of God, but the priests take Him in their hands, distribute Him to the faithful, and partake of Him as food for themselves."

With regard to the mystic body of Christ, that is, all the faithful, the priest has the power of the keys, or the power of delivering sinners from Hell, of making them worthy of Paradise, and of changing them from the slaves of Satan into the children of God. And God Himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of His priests, and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse or give absolution, provided the penitent is capable of it. "Such is," says St. Maximus of Turin, "this judiciary power ascribed to Peter that its decision carries with it the decision of God." The sentence of the priest precedes, and God subscribes to it, writes St. Peter Damian. Hence, St John Chrysostom thus concludes: The sovereign Master of the universe only follows the servant by confirming in Heaven all that the latter decides upon earth." Priests are the dispensers of the Divine graces and the companions of God." Consider the priests," says St. Ignatius, Martyr, "as the dispensers of Divine graces and the associates of God." "They are," says St. Prosper, "the glory and the immovable columns of the Church; they are the doors of the eternal city; through them all reach Christ; they are the vigilant guardians to whom the Lord has confided the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; they are the stewards of the king's house, to assign to each according to His good pleasure His place in the hierarchy."

Were the Redeemer to descend into a church, and sit in a confessional to administer the Sacrament of Penance, and a priest to sit in another confessional, Jesus would say over each penitent, "Ego te absolvo," the priest would likewise say over each of his penitents, "Ego te absolvo," and the penitents of each would be equally absolved. How great the honor that a king would confer on a subject whom he should empower to rescue from prison as many as he pleased! But far greater is the power that the eternal Father has given to Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ has given to his priests, to rescue from Hell not only the bodies but also the souls of the faithful: "The Son," says St. John Chrysostom, "has put into the hands of the priests all judgment; for having been as it were transported into Heaven, they have received this Divine prerogative. If a king gave to a mortal the power to release from prison all prisoners, all would pronounce such a one happy; but priests have received from God a far greater power, since the soul is more noble than the body."

IV

The Dignity of the Priest Surpasses all other Created Dignities

Thus the sacerdotal dignity is the most noble of all the dignities in this world." Nothing," says St. Ambrose, "is more excellent in this world." It transcends, says St. Bernard, "all the dignities of kings, of emperors, and of Angels." According to St. Ambrose, the dignity of the priest as far exceeds that of kings, as the value of gold surpasses that of lead. The reason is, because the power of kings extends only to temporal goods and to the bodies of men, but the power of the priest extends to spiritual goods and to the human soul. Hence, says St. Clement, "as much as the soul is more noble than the body, so much is the priesthood more excellent than royalty." "Princes," says St. John Chrysostom, "have the power of binding,

but they bind only the bodies, while the priest binds the souls." The kings of the earth glory in honoring priests: "It is a mark of a good prince," says pope St. Marcellinus, "to honor the priests of God." "They willingly," says Peter de Blois, "bend their knee before the priest of God; they kiss his hands, and with bowed down head receive his benediction." "The sacerdotal dignity," says St. Chrysostom, "effaces the royal dignity; hence the king inclines his head under the hand of the priest to receive his blessing."

Baronius relates that when the Empress Eusebia sent for Leontius, Bishop of Tripoli, he said that if she wished to see him, she should consent to two conditions: first, that on his arrival she should instantly descend from the throne, and bowing down her head, should ask his benediction; secondly, that he should be seated on the throne, and that she should not sit upon it without his permission: he added, that unless she submitted to these conditions he should never go to the palace. Being invited to the table of the Emperor Maximus, St. Martin, in taking a draught, first paid a mark of respect to his chaplain, and then to the emperor. In the Council of Nice, the Emperor Constantine wished to sit in the last place, after all the priests, and on a seat lower than that which they occupied; he would not even sit down without their permission. The holy king St. Boleslans had so great a veneration for priests, that he would not dare to sit in their presence. The sacerdotal dignity also surpasses the dignity of the Angels, who likewise show their veneration for the priesthood, says St. Gregory Nazianzen. All the Angels in Heaven cannot absolve from a single sin. The Angels guardian procure for the souls committed to their care grace to have recourse to a priest that he may absolve them: "Although," says St. Peter Damian, "Angels may be present, they yet wait for the priest to exercise his power, but no one of them has the power of the keys – of binding and of loosening."

When St. Michael comes to a dying Christian who invokes his aid, the holy Archangel can chase away the devils, but he cannot free his client from their chains till a priest comes to absolve him. After having given the order of priesthood to a holy ecclesiastic, St. Francis de Sales perceived, that in going out he stopped at the door as if to give precedence to another. Being asked by the Saint why he stopped, he answered that God favored him with the visible presence of his Angel guardian, who before he had received priesthood always remained at his right and preceded him, but afterwards walked on his left and refused to go before him. It was in a holy contest with the Angel that he stopped at the door. St. Francis of Assisi used to say, "If I saw an Angel and a priest, I would bend my knee first to the priest and then to the Angel." Besides, the power of the priest surpasses that of the Blessed Virgin Mary; for, although this Divine Mother can pray for us, and by her prayers obtain whatever she wishes, yet she cannot absolve a Christian from even the smallest sin. "The Blessed Virgin was eminently more perfect than the Apostles," says Innocent III. "It was, however, not to her, but only to the Apostles, that the Lord intrusted the keys of the kingdom of Heaven." St. Bernardine of Sienna has written: "Holy Virgin, excuse me, for I speak not against thee:

the Lord has raised the priesthood above thee." The Saint assigns the reason of the superiority of the priesthood over Mary; she conceived Jesus Christ only once; but by consecrating the Eucharist, the priest, as it were, conceives Him as often as he wishes, so that if the person of the Redeemer had not as yet been in the world, the priest, by pronouncing the words of consecration, would produce this great person of a Man-God. "O wonderful dignity of the priests," cries out St. Augustine; "in their hands, as in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, the Son of God becomes incarnate."

Hence priests are called the parents of Jesus Christ: such is the title that St. Bernard gives them, for they are the active cause by which He is made to exist really in the consecrated Host. Thus the priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator, since by saying the words of consecration, he creates, as it were, Jesus in the Sacrament, by giving Him a Sacramental existence, and produces Him as a victim to be offered to the eternal Father. As in creating the world it was sufficient for God to have said, Let it be made, and it was created – He spoke, and they were made – so it is sufficient for the priest to say, "Hoc est corpus meum," and behold the bread is no longer bread, but the body of Jesus Christ. "The power of the priest," says St. Bernardine of Sienna, "is the power of the Divine person; for the transubstantiation of the bread requires as much power as the creation of the world." And St. Augustine has written, "O venerable sanctity of the hands! O happy function of the priest! He that created [if I may say so] gave me the power to create Him; and He that created me without me is Himself created by me!" "As the Word of God created Heaven and earth, so," says St. Jerome, "the words of the priest create Jesus Christ." "At a sign from God there came forth from nothing both the sublime vault of the Heavens and the vast extent of the earth; but not less great is the power that manifests itself in the mysterious words of the priest." The dignity of the priest is so great, that he even blesses Jesus Christ on the altar as a victim to be offered to the eternal Father. In the sacrifice of the Mass, writes Father Mansi, Jesus Christ is the principal offerer and victim; as minister, He blesses the priest, but as victim, the priest blesses Him.

V

Elevation or the Post Occupied by the Priest

The greatness of the dignity of a priest is also estimated from the high place that he occupies. The priesthood is called, at the synod of Chartres, in 1550, the seat of the Saints. Priests are called Vicars of Jesus Christ, because they hold his place on earth. "You hold the place of Christ," says St. Augustine to them; "you are therefore His lieutenants." In the Council of Milan, St. Charles Borromeo called priests the representatives of the person of God on earth. And before him, the Apostle said: For Christ we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us. When He ascended into Heaven, Jesus Christ left His priests after Him to hold on earth His place of mediator between God and men, particularly on the altar. "Let the priest," says St. Laurence Justinian, "approach the altar as another Christ."

According to St. Cyprian, a priest at the altar performs the office of Christ. When, says St. Chrysostom, you have seen a priest offering sacrifice, consider that the hand of Christ is invisibly extended. The priest holds the place of the Savior Himself, when, by saying "Ego te absolvo," he absolves from sin. This great power, which Jesus Christ has received from His eternal Father, He has communicated to His priests. "Jesus," says Tertullian, "invests the priests with His own powers." To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God. "O God, Who chiefly manifestest Thy almighty power in pardoning and showing mercy," etc., says the holy Church in one of her prayers. Hence, when they heard that Jesus Christ pardoned the sins of the paralytic, the Jews justly said: Who can forgive sins but God alone. But what only God can do by His omnipotence, the priest can also do by saying "Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis;" for the forms of the Sacraments, or the words of the forms, produce what they signify. What the priest does what is wonderful, for by saying "Ego te absolvo" he changes the sinner from an enemy into the friend of God, and from the slave of Hell into an heir of Paradise. Cardinal Hugo represents the Lord addressing the following words to a priest who absolves a sinner: "I have created Heaven and earth, but I leave to you a better and nobler creation; make out of this soul that is in sin a new soul, that is, make out of the slave of Satan, that the soul is, a child of God. I have made the earth bring forth all kinds of fruit, but to thee I confide a more beautiful creation, namely, that the soul should bring forth fruits of salvation."

The soul without grace is a withered tree that can no longer produce fruit; but receiving the Divine grace, through the ministry of a priest, it brings forth fruits of eternal life, St. Augustine says, that to sanctify a sinner is a greater work than to create Heaven and earth. And hast thou, says Job, an arm like God, and canst thou thunder with a voice like Him? Who is it that has an arm like the arm of God, and thunders with a voice like the thundering voice of God? It is the priest, who, in giving absolution, exerts the arm and voice of God, by which he rescues souls from Hell. According to St. Ambrose, a priest, in absolving a sinner, performs the very office of the Holy Ghost in the sanctification of souls.

Hence, in giving priests the power of absolving from sin, the Redeemer breathed on them, and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. He gave them his own Spirit, that is, the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier of souls. and thus made them, according to the words of the Apostle, His own co-adjutors: We are God's co-adjutors. "On priests," says St. Gregory. "it is incumbent to give the final decision, for by the right that they have received from the Lord they now remit, now retain sins." St. Clement, then, had reason to say that the priest is, as it were, a God on earth. God, said David, stood in the congregation of the gods. These gods are, according to St. Augustine, the priests of God. Innocent III has written: "Indeed, it is not too much to say that in view of the sublimity of their offices the priests are so many gods." VI. Conclusion. How great, then, says St. Ambrose, the disorder to see in the same person

the highest dignity and a life of scandal, a Divine profession and wicked conduct! What, says Salvian, is a sublime dignity conferred on an unworthy person but a gem enchased in mire? Neither doth any man, says St. Paul, take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was. For Christ did not glorify Himself that He might be made a high priest, but He that said unto Him: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Let no one, he says, dare to ascend to the priesthood, without first receiving, as Aaron did, the Divine call; for even Jesus Christ would not of Himself assume the honor of the priesthood, but waited till His Father called Him to it.

From this we may infer the greatness of the sacerdotal dignity. But the greater its sublimity, the more it should be dreaded. "For," says St. Jerome, "great is the dignity of priests; but also, when they sin, great is their ruin. Let us rejoice at having been raised so high, but let us be afraid of falling."

Lamenting, St. Gregory cries out: "Purified by the hands of the priest the elect enter the Heavenly country, and alas! priests precipitate themselves into the fire of Hell!" The Saint compares priests to the Baptismal water which cleanses the Baptized from their sins, and sends them to Heaven, "and is afterwards thrown into the sink."

If you wish to verify the above text, please go to:

<http://www.catholictradition.org/Priests/priesthood1-2.htm>