

Come to Know Your Mother

St. Peter's Parish Marian Conference

7 May 2016

I. Introduction

40-year-old Jenny Thomas from Rochester, NY, knew she was adopted since the age of four with very little information about her birth mother. She would find herself looking into women's faces, wondering if any could be her mom.

After spending more than 15 years trying to track her down on the Internet, Thomas recently found her mom when she signed up for the TLC reality show "Long Lost Family." She not only found her birth mother, she also discovered they had been co-workers for two years.

Upon seeing her mother's picture, Thomas was taken by surprise. "I was just in shock," she said, "I had looked in so many faces for so many years, [thinking] 'Could that be her? Is she looking at me because she knows me?' All the while I had looked at the woman who once knew me as her daughter. She's very quiet, funny. I'm comical, so she would always laugh at my jokes. That was a plus. We never went past a working-professional relationship at all." Thomas said...

>imagine looking at your own mother in the face, perhaps every day, and never realizing who she was

>who is that woman (pointing)? Is she the Blessed Virgin Mary? Yes. Is she the daughter of God the Father? Yes. Is she the Queen of heaven and earth? Yes. She is all those things- and she is also our mother; my mother; your mother. Do we realize that?

II. Coming to Know our Mother

>"What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ." (CCC #487)

>it is imperative that we come to know our mother better by understanding who she is and what she is all about: HER SON!

>there are 4 Marian DOGMAS (binding in faith) which we hold about our Lady; our belief in them is not optional so our understanding is presumed

III. *Theotokos*- Mother of God (first dogma)

>Council of Ephesus (431)- Christological debate about the natures and person of Christ

>applied the name of 'Theotokos' (Mother of God) to Mary- saying more about Christ than her...

>Council of Chalcedon (451): "...begotten from the Father before the ages as regards his godhead, and in the last days, the same, because of us and because of our salvation begotten from the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, as regards his manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten..."

>no distinct proclamation of this dogma but embedded in the very dogma of Christ's divinity

IV. *Ever-Virgin*- Perpetual Virginity (second dogma)

>Mary conceived "...without any detriment to her virginity, which remained inviolate even after his birth" Lateran Council (649)

>well-accepted and scripturally revealed that Christ was conceived virginally, but Mary's virginity in perpetuity is logical

>"saving oneself for marriage"; before Joseph was the Holy Spirit (spouse of the Holy Spirit) who impregnated her with the very life of God; this level of intimacy cannot be repeated

>speaks to the dedication of her mission; exclusively devoted to Christ (first type of consecrated virgin)

>the "brothers of Christ" were certainly not biological (Jewish euphemism)

V. *Immaculata*- The Immaculate Conception (third dogma)

>solemnly declared infallible teaching, Pope Pius IX (8 December 1854) in Apostolic Constitution "Ineffabilis Deus"

>"that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege from Almighty God and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, was kept free of every stain of original sin."

>Christ reaches back in time from the Cross to preserve the solitary creature who had the solitary mission of one day giving Him and uncorrupted human nature and flesh (scene from *Interstellar*)

VI. *Heavenly Forerunner*- The Assumption into Heaven (fourth dogma)

>solemnly declared infallible teaching, Pope Pius XII (1 November 1854) in Encyclical Letter "Munificentissimus Deus"

>"Mary, Immaculate Mother of God ever Virgin, after finishing the course of her life on earth, was taken up in body and soul to heavenly glory."

>just as the perpetual virginity of Mary was a logical consequence of having become the Mother of God; so is the Assumption the logical consequence of having been immaculately conceived

>long-held and even liturgically celebrated belief of the faithful

>Distinction: between Ascension and Assumption. Jesus Christ, ascended into heaven as a sign of divine initiative (press the button in the elevator). Mary, on the contrary, was elevated or assumed into heaven by the power and grace of God (beam me up, Scotty).

>Did Mary die? Was she assumed into heaven without prior separation of soul and body? Open for discussion. However, the opinion that Mary passed through death as her Son did, has the stronger support in tradition. (JPII)- though Eastern tradition maintains the 'dormition'

>Glorified in body and soul, Mary is already in the state that will be ours after the resurrection of the dead.

VII. Dogmas and Scripture

>nowhere are any of these four dogmas clearly articulated in scripture

>we believe more than just what scripture tells us (Tradition formed Scripture...) faith and reason

>If Jesus is God and Mary is His Mother...

>MOTHER OF GOD

>Once Mary has mothered God, how do you mother another?

>PERPETUAL VIRGIN

>If Mary gives Jesus an incorrupt human nature...

>IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

>"The wages of sin is death..."

>ASSUMED INTO HEAVEN

VIII. Divine Praises

- >Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary Most Holy...
- >Blessed be her holy and immaculate conception...
- >Blessed by her glorious assumption...
- >Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother...