

The cult of Mary in the Catholic church

Its doctrines, their establishment by the Catholic church and their biblical basis

By Bartek Sylwestrzak

The cult of Mary has been present in the Catholic church for centuries. It currently constitutes one of the central elements of Roman Catholicism and it is a faithful representation of Catholic religiousness. An analysis of the main Marian doctrines, of the way they have been established by the Catholic church and their biblical basis, will consequently demonstrate the nature of Catholicism as a religious group. It will bring to the fore the origin of Catholic teachings and their relation to the Word of God, the source of inspired truth and foundation of the Christian faith. Analysis of every teaching of a given denomination is not necessary to obtain such an evaluation, but the study should be based on a comprehensive enough set of doctrines which reflect the character of the group in question and the Marian teachings certainly fulfil this criterion as being representative of Roman Catholicism.

The scope of this work goes beyond the four Marian dogmas (Mary's "Divine Motherhood", "Perpetual Virginity", "Immaculate Conception", "the Assumption") and includes also several other key Marian teachings which are directly linked to these dogmas and which contributed to their proclamation (Mary as "full of grace", Mary as sinless) or should be discussed because of their significance (Mary as "Co-Redemptrix" and "Mediatrix", prayer to Mary and for her intercession). Since they are for many Catholics an important foundation of their faith in the teachings of the Catholic church and since they played a major role in consolidating and promoting the cult of Mary, the apparitions of Mary have also been analysed in-depth.

A separate chapter has been committed to every subject above and although each chapter constitutes an independent entity, the teachings discussed in respective parts are connected to each other. Therefore, in order to avoid repeating the same arguments, the reader is referred to a place where a given question has already been discussed. Consequently, although going through chapters seriatim is not necessary, it is recommended here.

The analysis of the Catholic doctrines has been done by comparing them with the scripture and as a result numerous biblical teachings have been discussed in this work. For this reason it is my hope that it will be of some use not only to the members of the Catholic church who seek the truth, desire to found their faith on it and want to verify the truthfulness of Catholic teachings, but also to others, especially those interested in evangelisation and apologetics.

Time is short now.

In the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

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