

V. Mary's "assumption into heaven".

1. Teaching of the Catholic Church.

In the *Munificentissimus Deus* constitution Pope Pius XII proclaimed Mary's assumption into heaven as a dogma of faith.

For which reason, after we have poured forth prayers of supplication again and again to God, and have invoked the light of the Spirit of Truth, for the glory of Almighty God who has lavished his special affection upon the Virgin Mary, for the honor of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages and the Victor over sin and death, for the increase of the glory of that same august Mother, and for the joy and exultation of the entire Church; 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.

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §44

Every member of the Catholic Church is required to believe in this dogma.

Thus, from the universal agreement of the Church's ordinary teaching authority we have a certain and firm proof, demonstrating that the Blessed Virgin Mary's bodily Assumption into heaven – which surely no faculty of the human mind could know by its own natural powers, as far as the heavenly glorification of the virginal body of the loving Mother of God is concerned – is a truth that has been revealed by God and consequently something that must be firmly and faithfully believed by all children of the Church. For, as the Vatican Council asserts, "all those things are to be believed by divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the written Word of God or in Tradition, and which are proposed by the Church, either in solemn judgment or in its ordinary and universal teaching office, as divinely revealed truths which must be believed" (The Vatican Council, *Dei filius*, c. 4.)

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §12

It is also included in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

"Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death" (*Lumen Gentium*, 59; cf. Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus* (1950): DS 3903; cf. Revelation 19:16). The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians:

In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death (Byzantine Liturgy, *Troparion*, Feast of the Dormition, August 15th).

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §966

2. Teaching of the scripture.

The dogma of the assumption of Mary into heaven is devoid of any biblical foundation. The scripture says that Enoch was taken to heaven (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5) and so later was Elijah (2 Kings 2:1-12). We also know that our Lord ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9). The Bible, however, gives no account of the death of Mary, who is last mentioned in Acts 1:14.

14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 1:14 NASB

The “assumption of Mary” is not mentioned anywhere in the Word of God. As it is the case with other doctrines, so also here the lack of biblical basis did not prevent the Catholic Church from formulating a teaching and proclaiming it as a dogma of faith. And just as in the case of other doctrines, so also in this case the Catholic Church is attempting to find a justification for their teaching in the Bible, despite its origin having nothing to do with the God’s Word.

3. Justification of the dogma by pope Pius XII in the *Munificentissimus Deus* encyclical.

Despite the scripture saying nothing of Mary’s death and making no mention of her assumption to heaven, Pius XII proclaimed the teaching of the assumption of Mary into heaven as a dogma, presenting the justification for it in his encyclical *Munificentissimus Deus*.

An analysis of this justification will us allow to understand the method used by the Catholic Church in establishing their dogmas. Quoted below are fragments of the encyclical containing the main arguments of the pope which together make up 80% of the entire encyclical. They have been provided with comments referring the presented arguments to the teachings of the Word of God.

Paragraphs 3 and 4:

And, although the Church has always recognized this supreme generosity and the perfect harmony of graces and has daily studied them more and more throughout the course of the centuries, still it is in our own age that the privilege of the bodily Assumption into heaven of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, has certainly shone forth more clearly.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §3

That privilege has shone forth in new radiance since our predecessor of immortal memory, Pius IX, solemnly proclaimed the dogma of the loving Mother of God's Immaculate Conception. These two privileges are most closely bound to one another.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §4

Already at the beginning the critical mechanism can be seen which not only appears repeatedly throughout this encyclical, but is also present in nearly every doctrinal justification given by the Catholic Church – one false teaching becomes the basis for another. In this case the false dogma of the “immaculate conception” contributed to the proclamation of the dogma of the “assumption”. The error of the teaching of the “immaculate conception” has been demonstrated in chapter III.

Paragraphs 4 and 5:

Christ overcame sin and death by his own death, and one who through Baptism has been born again in a supernatural way has conquered sin and death through the same Christ. Yet, according to the general rule, God does not will to grant to the just the full effect of the victory over death until the end of time has come. And so it is that the bodies of even the just are corrupted after death, and only on the last day will they be joined, each to its own glorious soul.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §4

Now God has willed that the Blessed Virgin Mary should be exempted from this general rule. She, by an entirely unique privilege, completely overcame sin by her Immaculate Conception, and as a result she was not subject to the law of remaining in the corruption of the grave, and she did not have to wait until the end of time for the redemption of her body.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §5

The scripture provides no basis for stating that “God has willed that the Blessed Virgin Mary should be exempted from this general rule” and that “she was not subject to the law of remaining in the

corruption of the grave, and she did not have to wait until the end of time for the redemption of her body". Both of these statements are inventions by the Catholic Church fathers and the latter also directly contradicts the teaching of the scripture on the resurrection (see the analysis of paragraph 34). Mary was not sinless either (see chapter IV).

Paragraph 6:

Thus, when it was solemnly proclaimed that Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, was from the very beginning free from the taint of original sin, the minds of the faithful were filled with a stronger hope that the day might soon come when the dogma of the Virgin Mary's bodily Assumption into heaven would also be defined by the Church's supreme teaching authority. Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §6

As above – one false teaching leads to another. Faithful believers are those who learn the Word of God and live according to it and not those who follow their own hopes which have no basis in the scripture.

19 And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd. **20** And it was reported to Him, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You." **21** But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."
Luke 8:19-21 NASB

27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed." **28** But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."
Luke 11:27-28 NASB

46 "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"
Luke 6:46 NASB

Paragraphs 11 and 12:

And, since we were dealing with a matter of such great moment and of such importance, we considered it opportune to ask all our venerable brethren in the episcopate directly and authoritatively that each of them should make known to us his mind in a formal statement. Hence, on May 1, 1946, we gave them our letter *Deiparae Virginis Mariae*, a letter in which these words are contained: "Do you, venerable brethren, in your outstanding wisdom and prudence, judge that the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin can be proposed and defined as a dogma of faith? Do you, with your clergy and people, desire it?"
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §11

But those whom "the Holy Spirit has placed as bishops to rule the Church of God" (Acts 20:28) gave an almost unanimous affirmative response to both these questions. This "outstanding agreement of the Catholic prelates and the faithful" (The Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, in the Acta Pii IX, pars 1, Vol. 1, p. 615), affirming that the bodily Assumption of God's Mother into heaven can be defined as a dogma of faith, since it shows us the concordant teaching of the Church's ordinary doctrinal authority and the concordant faith of the Christian people which the same doctrinal authority sustains and directs, thus by itself and in an entirely certain and infallible way, manifests this privilege as a truth revealed by God and contained in that divine deposit which Christ has delivered to his Spouse to be guarded faithfully and to be taught infallibly (The Vatican Council, Constitution *Dei filius*, c. 4).
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §12

The argument that the majority of Catholic bishops voted for the proclamation of the dogma of the assumption and gave an affirmative response to pope's question "Do you, with your clergy and people, desire it?" de facto equates the opinion of fallible human beings with the Word of God. The Catholic Church defends its authority to establish dogmas of faith according to what a particular pope or the

majority of episcopates see as such based on the conviction that it is the Holy Spirit who guides the Catholic Church in its “doctrinal authority”.

Everyone, however, who has studied the history of the Catholic Church, knows its current state and is willing to face the truth and accept it, will realise that taking the Holy Spirit’s leadership in the actions of the Catholic Church for granted is a usurpation. Is it the Holy Spirit who led to the crusades, to the inquisition, to political scheming and pursuit of power and wealth in which the papacy has been engaged for centuries, to indulgence practices, to suppressing by the highest Catholic authorities such crimes as child abuse? And during the pontificate of Pius XII was it really the Holy Spirit who was guiding the Catholic Church to proclaim a dogma to which the Word of God provides absolutely no basis and the result of which is giving Mary the glory that belongs only to God and consequently breaking the fundamental command of the scripture to worship God alone (Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:8, 6:14; Jeremiah 25:6; cf. Jeremiah 35:15)?

The Holy Spirit is present in those who believe that salvation comes only through accepting by faith the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins and who have put their faith in Him as their Lord and Saviour (Romans 8:9-10). This excludes all those who follow the false teaching of the Catholic Church according to which works are necessary for salvation – baptism, eucharist, other sacraments, obedience towards the Catholic Church, etc. – since this teaching directly contradicts the teaching of the scripture. We are only saved by grace through faith.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; **9** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
Ephesians 2:8-9 NASB

The statement that since the bishops “gave an almost unanimous affirmative response to both these questions” then it means that Mary’s bodily assumption into heaven can “in an entirely certain and infallible way” be defined as a dogma of faith is a serious error. Both the history of Israel described in the scripture and the history of the Catholic Church itself show us that the argument of majority is devoid of any weight. Throughout the bulk of Israel’s history there have been many more false prophets than those truly sent by God who received His revelation (1 Kings 18, 22; Jeremiah 23:9-40; Ezekiel 13) and this was the case even despite the fact that Israel was God’s chosen people.

16 Thus says the Lord of hosts,
“Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you.
They are leading you into futility;
They speak a vision of their own imagination,
Not from the mouth of the Lord.
Jeremiah 23:16 NASB

1 Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, **2** “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy from their own inspiration, ‘Listen to the word of the Lord! **3** Thus says the Lord God, “Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing. **4** O Israel, your prophets have been like foxes among ruins. **5** You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall around the house of Israel to stand in the battle on the day of the Lord. **6** They see falsehood and lying divination who are saying, ‘The Lord declares,’ when the Lord has not sent them; yet they hope for the fulfillment of *their* word. **7** Did you not see a false vision and speak a lying divination when you said, ‘The Lord declares,’ but it is not I who have spoken?””
Ezekiel 13:1-7 NASB

During the time of Christ the main Jewish religious authority were the Pharisees, who were disobeying the Word of God and holding on to human traditions.

6 And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me.

7 'But in vain do they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'
8 Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."
9 He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition."
Mark 7:6-9 NASB

Not only were they opposing Jesus throughout His ministry, but they also played a key role in His crucifixion. The Pharisees falsely accused Him in what was a travesty of a judicial process, and then persuaded the crowd to ask Pilate to release Barabbas. Back then the majority also "voted" for crucifixion.

20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death. 21 But the governor said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." 22 Pilate *said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all *said, "Crucify Him!"
Matthew 27:20-22 NASB

In the history of the Catholic Church itself the majority was also wrong many times, often contributing to spectacular failures. One of many examples is the announcement of the Crusade by Urban II which was also affirmed unanimously. Urban announced the Crusade during the council at Clermont in November 1095 to rescue the Holy Land from the hands of Muslims, promising a complete remission of sins to those who would make the journey (!).¹ The people gathered outside of Clermont greeted the announcement of the Crusade with the shout "God wills it!". Urban promised the remission of sins as if he had God's authority required to do so (cf. Mark 2:5-7) and the people responded as if they knew what God willed. The consequences of this campaign – also devoid of any biblical basis and also accepted unanimously – were, as the history has shown, tragic.

The argument of majority is devoid of any weight, just as basing one's security when it comes to salvation on belonging to any institution (or nation, as it was the case with the Jews) is a delusion – as if so many people couldn't be wrong, as if an organisation with such a long history could not be in error. The above examples clearly show that such reasoning is baseless. The antiquity of a given denomination or view is equally meaningless which is testified by the fact that unbelief existed almost from the very beginning of humanity and the roots of many false ideologies and religions often go thousands of years back. The very lie itself is through Satan much older than humanity in any case.

Finally, we should notice that the procedure in which a religious leader proposes introduction of a doctrine and then the community of this religion decides for or against it, for example through voting, is – apart from all the problems discussed above – unprecedented in the doctrinal history of God's

1 It is worth mentioning at this point that the Catholic Church which in the middle ages attempted to conquer the Holy Land away from the Muslims with a sword, today teaches that "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day" (CCC, §841). This is a shocking teaching since we know that our salvation is based on Christ's sacrifice for all our sins on the cross and the Quran teaches that Jesus was never crucified rejecting God's work of paying for sin without which salvation is impossible.

157 And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.
Quran 4:157 Sahih International

This same church which was murdering the Muslims (for which the pope promised full remission of sins) teaches today that the plan of salvation also includes those who reject Christ's sacrifice.

plan. Both in the Old and the New Testament the truths of faith flowed directly from God's revelation – spoken and written – and it has always been clear which teachings come from God and are to be objects of faith and which are not. Designation and proclamation of doctrines of faith never demanded some democratic process or any other human intervention. We have here another example of a procedure in which human teachings, through human decisions become objects of faith in a process from which God has been entirely excluded.

Paragraph 14:

Christ's faithful, through the teaching and the leadership of their pastors, have learned from the sacred books that the Virgin Mary, throughout the course of her earthly pilgrimage, led a life troubled by cares, hardships, and sorrows, and that, moreover, what the holy old man Simeon had foretold actually came to pass, that is, that a terribly sharp sword pierced her heart as she stood under the cross of her divine Son, our Redeemer. In the same way, it was not difficult for them to admit that the great Mother of God, like her only begotten Son, had actually passed from this life. But this in no way prevented them from believing and from professing openly that her sacred body had never been subject to the corruption of the tomb, and that the august tabernacle of the Divine Word had never been reduced to dust and ashes. Actually, enlightened by divine grace and moved by affection for her, God's Mother and our own dearest Mother, they have contemplated in an ever clearer light the wonderful harmony and order of those privileges which the most provident God has lavished upon this loving associate of our Redeemer, privileges which reach such an exalted plane that, except for her, nothing created by God other than the human nature of Jesus Christ has ever reached this level.

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §14

We know little of Mary's life (see chapter XII, point 1 where all the passages where Mary is mentioned are listed). The statement that "it was not difficult for them to admit that the great Mother of God, like her only begotten Son, had actually passed from this life" is a worthless argument. In a decision as grave as the proclamation of a dogma, what someone may find "not difficult to admit" is meaningless – it is the biblical basis of a given teaching that is decisive and the assumption of Mary is totally devoid of it. Equally lacking any scriptural foundation is the notion that "her sacred body had never been subject to the corruption of the tomb".

Paragraph 15:

The innumerable temples which have been dedicated to the Virgin Mary assumed into heaven clearly attest this faith. So do those sacred images, exposed therein for the veneration of the faithful, which bring this unique triumph of the Blessed Virgin before the eyes of all men. Moreover, cities, dioceses, and individual regions have been placed under the special patronage and guardianship of the Virgin Mother of God assumed into heaven. In the same way, religious institutes, with the approval of the Church, have been founded and have taken their name from this privilege. Nor can we pass over in silence the fact that in the Rosary of Mary, the recitation of which this Apostolic See so urgently recommends, there is one mystery proposed for pious meditation which, as all know, deals with the Blessed Virgin's Assumption into heaven.

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §15

This paragraph depicts the fallacious logic of the Catholic Church well. In the eyes of the pope the legitimacy of the belief in the assumption of Mary is confirmed by:

1. "The innumerable temples which have been dedicated to the Virgin Mary assumed into heaven";
2. "sacred images, exposed therein for the veneration of the faithful, which bring this unique triumph of the Blessed Virgin before the eyes of all men";

3. the fact that “cities, dioceses, and individual regions have been placed under the special patronage and guardianship of the Virgin Mother of God assumed into heaven”;
4. the fact that “religious institutes, with the approval of the Church, have been founded and have taken their name from this privilege”;
5. the fact that “in the Rosary of Mary, the recitation of which this Apostolic See so urgently recommends, there is one mystery proposed for pious meditation which, as all know, deals with the Blessed Virgin's Assumption into heaven.”

All these arguments, however, are secondary and devoid of any value when it comes to establishing the basis for the dogma. They only confirm that the Catholics have believed in the assumption and that this faith has found various forms of expression. This obviously doesn't in any way establish the foundation of this faith as legitimate – just as the existence of the pantheon of Greek gods is not proven through the literature which describes them, paintings which depict them, or even temples devoted to them.

As it is often the case in the argumentation of the Catholic Church, instead of establishing the foundation based on which a given dogma can be proclaimed and only then expressing the faith in this dogma – so as to avoid baseless and false teachings – the Catholic Church proceeds in an opposite manner. In their eyes since the faith in a given teaching has been expressed, then it is the proof that the teaching is true. It is a clear logical error whose consequences can be tragic – and so they are in this case. Following this path of reasoning we can justify any sort of falsehood and idolatry, if they only become popular enough and find some outward expression.

Paragraph 16:

This belief of the sacred pastors and of Christ's faithful is universally manifested still more splendidly by the fact that, since ancient times, there have been both in the East and in the West solemn liturgical offices commemorating this privilege. The holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church have never failed to draw enlightenment from this fact since, as everyone knows, the sacred liturgy, “because it is the profession, subject to the supreme teaching authority within the Church, of heavenly truths, can supply proofs and testimonies of no small value for deciding a particular point of Christian doctrine” (The encyclical *Mediator Dei; Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 39, 541).

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §16

Another example of the same logical error. Since someone decided to perform liturgy commemorating the assumption of Mary and in the eyes of the Catholic Church liturgy is “the profession, subject to the supreme teaching authority within the Church, of heavenly truths” and as such “can supply proofs and testimonies of no small value for deciding a particular point of Christian doctrine”, then this means that the assumption must be true. Consequently regardless whether a given teaching is true and has biblical basis or originates from speculation and is pure invention, if a liturgy has been performed to commemorate it, then it must be true. In the eyes of the Church the liturgy settles the issue.

Paragraphs 17 and 18:

In the liturgical books which deal with the feast either of the dormition or of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin there are expressions that agree in testifying that, when the Virgin Mother of God passed from this earthly exile to heaven, what happened to her sacred body was, by the decree of divine Providence, in keeping with the dignity of the Mother of the Word Incarnate, and with the other privileges she had been accorded. Thus, to cite an illustrious example, this is set forth in that sacramentary which Adrian I, our predecessor of immortal memory, sent to the Emperor Charlemagne. These words are found in this volume: “Venerable to us, O Lord, is the festivity of this day on which the holy Mother of God suffered temporal death, but still could not be kept down by the bonds of death, who has begotten your Son our Lord incarnate from herself” (*Sacramentarium Gregorianum*).

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §17

What is here indicated in that sobriety characteristic of the Roman liturgy is presented more clearly and completely in other ancient liturgical books. To take one as an example, the Gallican sacramentary designates this privilege of Mary's as "an ineffable mystery all the more worthy of praise as the Virgin's Assumption is something unique among men". And, in the Byzantine liturgy, not only is the Virgin Mary's bodily Assumption connected time and time again with the dignity of the Mother of God, but also with the other privileges, and in particular with the virginal motherhood granted her by a singular decree of God's Providence. "God, the King of the universe, has granted you favors that surpass nature. As he kept you a virgin in childbirth, thus he has kept your body incorrupt in the tomb and has glorified it by his divine act of transferring it from the tomb" (*Menaei totius anni*).
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §18

The liturgical books are supposed to be another argument and we are here dealing with the same fallacious reasoning as above. A liturgical book, similarly as liturgy (paragraph 16) or other forms of expression in a given teaching (paragraph 15) is not in itself a proof of the truthfulness of a given teaching. It is exactly opposite the case – it should rather be written based on sound biblical foundation.

Paragraphs 21 and 22:

Thus St. John Damascene, an outstanding herald of this traditional truth, spoke out with powerful eloquence when he compared the bodily Assumption of the loving Mother of God with her other prerogatives and privileges. "It was fitting that she, who had kept her virginity intact in childbirth, should keep her own body free from all corruption even after death. It was fitting that she, who had carried the Creator as a child at her breast, should dwell in the divine tabernacles. It was fitting that the spouse, whom the Father had taken to himself, should live in the divine mansions. It was fitting that she, who had seen her Son upon the cross and who had thereby received into her heart the sword of sorrow which she had escaped in the act of giving birth to him, should look upon him as he sits with the Father. It was fitting that God's Mother should possess what belongs to her Son, and that she should be honored by every creature as the Mother and as the handmaid of God" (St. John Damascene, *Encomium in Dormitionem Dei Genetricis Semperque Virginis Mariae*, Hom. II, 14; cf. also *ibid*, n. 3).
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §21

These words of St. John Damascene agree perfectly with what others have taught on this same subject. Statements no less clear and accurate are to be found in sermons delivered by Fathers of an earlier time or of the same period, particularly on the occasion of this feast. And so, to cite some other examples, St. Germanus of Constantinople considered the fact that the body of Mary, the virgin Mother of God, was incorrupt and had been taken up into heaven to be in keeping, not only with her divine motherhood, but also with the special holiness of her virginal body. "You are she who, as it is written, appears in beauty, and your virginal body is all holy, all chaste, entirely the dwelling place of God, so that it is henceforth completely exempt from dissolution into dust. Though still human, it is changed into the heavenly life of incorruptibility, truly living and glorious, undamaged and sharing in perfect life" (St. Germanus of Constantinople, *In Sanctae Dei Genetricis Dormitionem*, Sermo I). And another very ancient writer asserts: "As the most glorious Mother of Christ, our Savior and God and the giver of life and immortality, has been endowed with life by him, she has received an eternal incorruptibility of the body together with him who has raised her up from the tomb and has taken her up to himself in a way known only to him" (*The Encomium in Dormitionem Sanctissimae Dominae Nostrate Deiparae Semperque Virginis Mariae*, attributed to St. Modestus of Jerusalem, n. 14).
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §22

Now the pope quotes the church fathers who are meant to testify to the truthfulness of the teaching of the assumption. The same logical error is made here which was demonstrated in the preceding paragraphs. In the eyes of the pope what John Damascene found as "fitting" is an argument providing

the basis for the dogma; similarly value is given to what St. Germanus “considered . . . in keeping, not only with her divine motherhood, but also with the special holiness of her virginal body” (the error of Mary’s “divine motherhood” has been discussed in chapter I and the error of her perpetual virginity is discussed in chapter VII); or to what a “very ancient writer” proclaimed as a fact – that “she has received an eternal incorruptibility of the body together with him who has raised her up from the tomb and has taken her up to himself in a way known only to him” – as if this writer was a prophet or had the authority of God’s oracle and could proclaim as facts teachings of which the Word of God makes no mention.

It should also be clarified at this place that John Damascene’s words that Mary is “the spouse, whom the Father had taken to himself” are an outright blasphemy and show how an unbiblical cult of man can lead to idolatry and heresy. Is Mary really God’s “spouse”? Does an eternal God, existing outside of time and space, need to “take to Himself” a spouse – a human and His own creation? We are seeing an obvious absurdity here, but this absurdity has eluded the attention of the Catholic Church throughout all these centuries and has become one of the foundations of a Marian dogma.

How did John Damascene know what was “fitting”? What is the basis of the statements of St. Germanus and the other “very ancient writer”, if the scripture does not provide any information of these things and warns against such speculations? Have the authors of these statements attained to such a perfect understanding of the entire scripture that all they can do is give themselves over to speculations and inventions regarding things about which the Word of God is silent? God has in His Word revealed to us everything that He wanted to reveal and had He desired to give us the knowledge of what happened with Mary after her death, then He would have given it to us. We are not to go beyond what is written.

6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.
1 Corinthians 4:6 NASB

The Catholic Church ascribes to these conjectures and inventions authority equal to the Word of God.

Analysis of the origins of these conjectures reveals further problems, however. Early accounts of the teaching of the assumption of Mary into heaven come from apocrypha belonging to the group *Transitus Mariae* (“the assumption of Mary”). Catholic theologian Ludwig Ott writes (Ott, 1974, pp.209-210):

The idea of the bodily assumption of Mary is first expressed in certain *transitus*-narratives of the fifth and sixth centuries. Even though these are apocryphal they bear witness to the faith of the generation in which they were written despite their legendary clothing. The first Church author to speak of the bodily ascension of Mary, in association with an apocryphal *transitus* B.M.V. [*Transitus Beatae Mariae Virginis* – “the assumption of the virgin Mary” - B.Syl.], is St. Gregory of Tours.

The first accounts of this teaching come from sources which are not only not inspired, however – since the scripture never mentions the assumption, only the apocrypha – but are considered untrustworthy even by the Catholic defendants of the cult of Mary. Juniper Carol, a Catholic mariologist, writes the following of the *Transitus Mariae* literature (Carol, 1957, p.145):

The account of Pseudo-Melito, like the rest of the *Transitus* literature, is admittedly valueless as history, as an historical report of Mary’s death and corporeal assumption; under that aspect the historian is justified in dismissing it with a critical distaste.²

2 As expected from literature whose authors, frequently pretending to be someone else, created fiction according to their desire, the works from the *Transitus* group are inconsistent and frequently contradict each other. In some the body of Mary is taken to the earthly paradise, where under the Tree of Life it is preserved as uncorrupted; others speak of the assumption; the assumption, depending on the particular account we are reading, takes place at the Mount of

The Catholic Church has never affirmed nor denied that the teaching of the assumption of Mary is based on apocryphal sources and the list of papal proofs for this dogma does not include the works belonging to the *Transitus* group. The pope, however, heavily relies on traditions and views of the church fathers – and these have originated from somewhere.

The first church father to teach the assumption is Gregory of Tours and according to many scholars, including the Catholic scholars, the basis of his teaching was the apocrypha *Transitus Beatae Mariae* by Pseudo-Melito.³ As is often the case with apocrypha, the author of this forgery attempts to give it credibility by falsely impersonating someone whose authority is established in the church, in this case Melito of Sardis. *Transitus Beatae Mariae* is dated by the scholars between the second half of the fifth and the sixth century and Melito died around 180 A.D. The first accounts of the assumption are hence forgeries and even the Catholics admit that “there is, clearly, no historical evidence whatever for it” (Duffy, 1989, p.17).

The testimony of Gregory of Tours is not only worthless since it is based on fiction, but the fact that it comes from the sixth century shows another problem – that the beginnings of the tradition of the assumption are late. Nobody in the church taught the assumption for six centuries and when this teaching appeared, it came as a result of accepting an apocryphal gospel which is itself dated between the second half of the fifth and the sixth century. John Damascene, whom the pope quotes and who, as the advocate of this false doctrine possessing considerable authority in the church, played a part in its dissemination, lived at the turn of the seventh and eighth century.

The accounts of the assumption in the first centuries of church tradition hence come from sources which are literary fiction (frequently also forgeries), or are based on them. The fact that this fiction was created is easy to explain. The death of Mary is not mentioned in the scripture and, due to her status as the mother of Christ, there was no shortage of those willing to fill this gap. It is this desire to fill such gaps and to write about matters about which the Word of God is silent and about which we could desire to know more – especially in the case of the more prominent persons and events mentioned there – that gave birth to the apocrypha.

The temptation was all the greater in those cases compared to disseminating common gossip – where the same human tendency is at work (many like to occupy themselves with the lives of celebrities and prominent people and speculate about matters of which they have no information whatsoever, despite their desire to possess such information) – that these inventions relate to a book considered to be incomparably more important than all others (although probably as few believed the Bible back then as is the case today, it was held in a much higher esteem as a book) and provided the author with an opportunity to become a part of an aged and commonly acknowledged tradition.

As evident in the dogma of the assumption and the argumentation presented by the pope in his encyclical, some have unfortunately succeeded in this. This would not have happened, however, if the Catholic Church put the truth of the Word of God above speculations and traditions of dubious origins and used it as a guide in establishing its teachings. It is this truth that we must believe and it is against this truth that we verify the legitimacy of every teaching (see especially the comment to paragraph 37).

Epiphanius did base his view on the testimony of the scripture when in 377 A.D. he wrote that nobody knows how Mary’s life ended. It is the first mention of the death of Mary and Epiphanius does not cite any traditions relating to this event (Epiphanius, *Panarion haer*, 78, 10-11; cited by Carol, 1957, pp.139-140):⁴

Olives, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, or in Gethsemane, etc.

- 3 According to Carol (1955), Gregory could have relied on another work from the *Transitus* family which came from Syria.
- 4 Citing traditions would not by itself be taken as a proof of their veracity – this would require a diligent study of their origins. It would mean, however, that in the early church there were in circulation some accounts of what happened with Mary, similarly as some secular sources suggest that Peter was martyred in Rome (although even these ought to be analysed with caution; with full confidence we can only trust the Word of God). It should be added that Epiphanius was from

But if some think us mistaken, let them search the Scriptures. They will not find Mary's death; they will not find whether she died or did not die; they will not find whether she was buried or was not buried . . . Scripture is absolutely silent [on the end of Mary] . . . For my own part, I do not dare to speak, but I keep my own thoughts and I practice silence . . . The fact is, Scripture has outstripped the human mind and left [this matter] uncertain.

Epiphanius later adds that "Did she die, we do not know ... Either the holy Virgin died and was buried ... Or she was killed ... Or she remained alive, since nothing is impossible with God and He can do whatever He desires; for her end no-one knows" (Epiphanius, *Panarion haer*, 78, 10-11; cited by Carol, 1957, p.140). It is quite incredible that Catholic scholars attempt to find evidence for their doctrine even in such a statement. Carol (1957, p.140) comments on these words in the following way:

Epiphanius' importance lies in this, that he has posed the problem and allowed us to glimpse the possible solutions.

And so the words of Epiphanius in which he clearly stated that nobody knows about the death of Mary and whether she died or was killed, or whether she was buried, etc., Carol takes as allowing "to glimpse the possible solutions" (!). It is obvious, however, that Epiphanius' purpose was not to allow us "to glimpse the possible solutions", but to state that the scripture says nothing of the death of Mary and that it is impossible to say what happened with her. Several potential versions of events are only mentioned by him to underline this fact.

A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities by Smith gives the following history of the doctrine (Venables, 1880, pp.1142-1143):

In the 3rd or 4th century there was composed a book, embodying the Gnostic and Collyridian traditions as to the death of Mary, called *De Transitu Virginis Mariae Liber*.⁵ This book exists still and may be found in the *Bibliotheca Patrum Maxima* (tom. ii. pt. ii. p. 212). The legend contained in it relates how St. Mary, after her Son's death, went and lived at Bethlehem for twenty-one years, after which time an angel appeared to her, and told her that her soul should be taken from her body. So she was wafted on a cloud to Jerusalem, and the apostles, who had been miraculously gathered together, carried her to Gethsemane, and there her soul was taken up into Paradise by Gabriel. Then the apostles bore her body to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and laid it in a new tomb; and suddenly by the side of the tomb appeared her son Christ, who raised up her body lest it should see corruption, and reuniting it with her soul, which Michael brought back from Paradise, had her conveyed by angels to heaven.

It will be seen that the *Liber de Transitu Mariae* contains already the whole of the story of the Assumption. But down to the end of the 5th century this story was regarded by the Church as a Gnostic or Collyridian fable, and the *Liber de Transitu* was condemned as heretical by the *Decretum de Libris Canonicis Ecclesiasticis et Apocryphis*, attributed to pope Gelasius, A.D. 494. How then did it pass across the borders and establish itself within the church, so as to have a festival appointed to commemorate it? In the following manner:

In the sixth century a great change passed over the sentiments and the theology of the church in reference to the *Θεοτόκος* [*Theotokos* – "God-bearer"]—an unintended but very noticeable result of the Nestorian controversies,⁶ which in maintaining the true doctrine of the

Palestine where he spent the majority of his life and had there been some commonly acknowledged tradition of Mary's death in the early church, it is highly probable that he would have known them.

- 5 [Collyridianism was a heretical cult in a pre-Islamic Arabia whose adherents worshiped Mary as a goddess whose status was equal to the Trinity and offered little cakes and bread rolls *to her* – *κολλυρίς* (*kollyris*). B.Syl.]
- 6 [Nestorianism is a heresy according to which there existed a division between the divine and human nature of Christ – He was not one person, but His divine person indwelled the human person. Christ, however, is God and man in one Person – His divine and human natures are united, which we call the hypostatic union. Christ is the God incarnate – simultaneously fully God and fully man (see chapter 1, point 2.1), not half-God and half-man or a divine person indwelling a human person, as Nestorianism teaches. Jesus Christ never lost His divine nature (Philippians

Incarnation incidentally gave strong impulse to what became the worship of Mary. In consequence of this change of sentiment, during the 6th and 7th centuries (or later), (1) the *Liber de Transitu*, though classed by Gelasius with the known productions of heretics came to be attributed by one („otiosus quispiam,” says Baronius) to Melito, an orthodox bishop of Sardis, in the 2nd century, and by another to St. John the Apostle; (2) a letter suggesting the possibility of the Assumption was written and attributed to St. Jerome (*ad Paulam et Eustochium de Assumptione B. Virginis*, *Op.* tom. v. p. 82, Paris, 1706); (3) a treatise to prove it not impossible was composed and attributed to St. Augustine (*Op.* tom. vi. p. 1142, ed. Migne); (4) two sermons supporting the belief were written and attributed to St. Athanasius (*Op.* tom. ii. pp. 393, 416, ed., Ben. Paris, 1698); (5) an insertion was made in Eusebius’s Chronicle that “in the year 48 Mary the Virgin was taken up into heaven, as some wrote that they had had it revealed to them.”

Thus the authority of the names of St. John, of Melito, of Athanasius, of Eusebius, of Augustine, of Jerome was obtained for the belief by a series of forgeries readily accepted because in accordance with the sentiment of the day, and the Gnostic legend was attributed to orthodox writers who did not entertain it. But this was not all, for there is the clearest evidence (1) that no one within the church taught it for six centuries, and (2) that those who did first teach it within the church borrowed it directly from the book condemned by pope Gelasius as heretical. For the *first* person within the church who held and taught it was Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem (if a homily attributed to John Damascene containing a quotation from ‘the Euthymiac history’ (*Op.* tom. ii. p. 880, Venice, 1748) be for the moment considered genuine), who (according to this statement) on Marcian and Pulcheria’s sending to him for information as to St. Mary’s sepulchre, replied to them by narrating a shortened version of the *de Transitu* legend as ‘a most ancient and true tradition.’ The *second* person within the church who taught it (or the *first*, if the homily attributed to John Damascene relating the above tale of Juvenal be spurious, as it almost certainly is) was Gregory of Tours, A.D. 590, who in his *De Gloria Martyrum* (lib. I. c. 4) writes as follows: “When Blessed Mary had finished the course of this life, and was now called away from the world, all the apostles were gathered together at her house from all parts of the world; and when they heard that she was to be taken away they watched with her, and behold! The Lord Jesus came with his angels, and taking her soul, gave it to Michael the Archangel, and went away. In the morning the apostles took up her body with the bed, and placed it in a monument, and watched it, waiting for the coming of the Lord. And behold! a second time the Lord appeared, and commanded her to be taken up and carried in a cloud to Paradise, where now, having resumed her soul, she enjoys the never-ending blessings of eternity, rejoicing with her elect.” The Abbé Migne points out in a note that “what Gregory here relates of the death of the Blessed Virgin and its attendant circumstances he undoubtedly drew (*procul dubio hausit*) from Pseudo-Melito’s *Liber de Transitu B. Mariae*, which is classed among apocryphal books by pope Gelasius.”

He adds that this account, with the circumstances related by Gregory, were soon afterwards introduced into the Gallican Liturgy. It is very seldom that we are able to trace a tale from its birth onwards so clearly and unmistakably as this. It is demonstrable that the Gnostic legend passed into the church through Gregory or Juvenal, and so became an accepted tradition within it. The next writers on the subject are Andrew of Crete, who is supposed to have lived about A.D. 635; Hildephonsus of Toledo, A.D. 657; and John of Damascus, who lived about A.D. 730, if writings attributed to any of them are genuine, which is quite doubtful. Pope Benedict XIV says naively that ‘the most ancient Fathers of the Primitive Church are silent as to the bodily assumption of the Blesseed Virgin, but the fathers of the middle and latest ages, both Greeks and Latins, relate it in the distinctest terms’ (*De Fest. Assumpt.* apud. Migne, *Theol. Curs. Compl.* tom. xxvi. p. 144, Paris, 1842). It was under the shadow of the names of Gregory of Tours and of these “fathers of the middle and latest ages, Greek and Latin,” that

2:5-8), but He also became a man. An unintended result of proclaiming Nestorianism as a heresy and accepting that the divine and human nature are united in the person of Christ was that Mary was by some proclaimed to be the “Mother of God” – as if she borne God. As God, however, Christ existed from eternity past and through Mary also became a man. Consequently, Mary is not *Theotokos* – the “God-bearer”, but the mother of Christ in His human nature (see chapter I).
B.Syl.]

the *De Transitu* legend became accepted as catholic tradition (see Alban Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, Aug. 15).

The history, therefore, of the belief which this festival was instituted to commemorate is as follows: - It was first taught in the 3rd or 4th century as part of the Gnostic legend of St. Mary's death, and it was regarded by the church as a Gnostic and Collyridian fable down to the end of the 5th century. It was brought into the church in the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries, partly by a series of successful forgeries, partly by the adoption of the Gnostic legend on part of the accredited teachers, writers, and liturgists. And a festival in commemoration of the event, thus came to be believed, was instituted in the East at the beginning of the 7th, in the West at the beginning of the 9th century.

The testimonies of the church fathers quoted by the pope provide thus absolutely no basis for the dogma. They are opinions and inventions having no authority of the Word of God – which the pope de facto ascribes to them. Not only do they have no foundation in the scripture, but their original sources are fictional fables and heretical speculations which were frequently forgeries as well. The pope does not quote the apocrypha belonging to the *Transitus* group in his argumentation (it would be an embarrassing argument, although for some Catholic scholars even those fables provide basis for further speculations), but he cites the testimonies of the fathers and they have relied on this very literature.

We can be certain that Mary died, as is the case with almost the entire humanity with literally a couple of exceptions. The burden of evidence lies on those who believe otherwise. The scripture gives no basis for speculations on this matter. The church fathers often quote her sinlessness and perpetual virginity as their arguments that she was not subject to physical death. Mary, however, was neither sinless (chapter IV) nor did she remain a virgin after Jesus birth (chapter VII) and neither would have in any case prevented her from physical death – as evident through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Pope John Paul II said during a general audience on the 2nd of July 1997:

Later, there was a long period of growing reflection on Mary's destiny in the next world. This gradually led the faithful to believe in the glorious raising of the Mother of Jesus, in body and soul, and to the institution in the East of the liturgical feasts of the Dormition and Assumption of Mary.

It is evident that “there was a long period of growing reflection on Mary's destiny in the next world” and that it is this “growing reflection” that led many “to believe in the glorious raising of the Mother of Jesus”. However, as Peter writes in his second epistle, no inspired prophecy came as a result of such a reflection, opinion, interpretation or invention of the one who uttered it. The Word of God which we are to believe and according to which we are to live came through the prophets and inspired authors led by the Holy Spirit.

20 pondering in your hearts this principle of prime importance: no single verse of prophetically inspired scripture has ever come into being as a result of personal reflection. **21**
For true prophecy has never occurred by human will, but only when holy men of God have spoken under the direction and agency of the Holy Spirit.
2 Peter 1:20-21 RL

It is to this Word that we must hold on. Human traditions are, as evident, a very dubious foundation for our faith.

Paragraphs 23-25:

When this liturgical feast was being celebrated ever more widely and with ever increasing devotion and piety, the bishops of the Church and its preachers in continually greater numbers considered it their duty openly and clearly to explain the mystery that the feast commemorates, and to explain how it is intimately connected with the other revealed truths. Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §23

Among the scholastic theologians there have not been lacking those who, wishing to inquire more profoundly into divinely revealed truths and desirous of showing the harmony that exists between what is termed the theological demonstration and the Catholic faith, have always considered it worthy of note that this privilege of the Virgin Mary's Assumption is in wonderful accord with those divine truths given us in Holy Scripture.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §24

When they go on to explain this point, they adduce various proofs to throw light on this privilege of Mary. As the first element of these demonstrations, they insist upon the fact that, out of filial love for his mother, Jesus Christ has willed that she be assumed into heaven. They base the strength of their proofs on the incomparable dignity of her divine motherhood and of all those prerogatives which follow from it. These include her exalted holiness, entirely surpassing the sanctity of all men and of the angels, the intimate union of Mary with her Son, and the affection of preeminent love which the Son has for his most worthy Mother.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §25

Paragraphs 23-25 are an introduction to the section of the encyclical which presents the biblical foundation of the dogma of the assumption. Already in this introduction, however, we encounter conclusions which have no basis in the scripture:

1. "As the first element of these demonstrations, they insist upon the fact that, out of filial love for his mother, Jesus Christ has willed that she be assumed into heaven" – the scripture never mentions Jesus willing that Mary be taken to heaven. Jesus' will was to fulfil the Father's will and He has fulfilled it perfectly. We are here dealing with the Catholic fathers baselessly attributing to Jesus what they themselves saw as appropriate. It is pure invention.
2. "They base the strength of their proofs on the incomparable dignity of her divine motherhood" - Mary's motherhood was not "divine". Mary gave Jesus His human body; as God, He existed from eternity past (see chapter I).
3. "These include her exalted holiness, entirely surpassing the sanctity of all men and of the angels" – scripture never mentions Mary's "holiness" and that this alleged holiness "surpassing the sanctity of all men and of the angels" - this is another fabrication of the Catholic authors. Mary was a sinner, as every other human being except Jesus (see chapter IV).
4. "the intimate union of Mary with her Son" - Jesus obviously had a relationship with Mary, since she was His mother. It was a relationship, however – not "union". The Catholic Church sees Mary as united with Jesus in His defeat of Satan (see chapter III, point 2.1.2) and in His work of paying for humanity's sin (see commentary to paragraphs 38 and 39). Both of these conclusions are serious errors in which divine prerogatives are ascribed to Mary.
5. „and the affection of preeminent love which the Son has for his most worthy Mother" - Jesus loved Mary as His mother, but the scripture never mentions that out of this love originated the desire that she be assumed to heaven. This argument, mentioned several times in this encyclical, is totally baseless.

In the following paragraphs the Pope presents biblical arguments which are to show that the dogma of the assumption has biblical basis. Similarly as it was the case with the Old Testament types which Pope Pius IX quoted when proclaiming the dogma of the "immaculate conception" (chapter III, point 2.1.4), so here also we will be dealing with a violation of all principles of biblical exegesis.

An in-depth analysis of this argumentation will show serious interpretive errors. These errors, stemming from the twisted approach of the Catholic Church (i.e., establishing a doctrine based on traditions and speculations and then seeking its justification in the scripture – instead of founding every teaching on the scripture), also apply to other Catholic teachings and will allow us to understand the methodology of the Catholic Church in establishing its doctrines.

Paragraph 26 – part one:

Often there are theologians and preachers who, following in the footsteps of the holy Fathers (Cf. St. John Damascene, *Encomium in Dormitionem Dei Genetricis Semperque Virginis Mariae*, Hom. II, n. 11; and also the *Encomium* attributed to St. Modestus), have been rather free in their use of events and expressions taken from Sacred Scripture to explain their belief in the Assumption. Thus, to mention only a few of the texts rather frequently cited in this fashion, some have employed the words of the psalmist: “Arise, O Lord, into your resting place: you and the ark, which you have sanctified” (Psalm 131:8);⁷ and have looked upon the Ark of the Covenant, built of incorruptible wood and placed in the Lord's temple, as a type of the most pure body of the Virgin Mary, preserved and exempt from all the corruption of the tomb and raised up to such glory in heaven.

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §26a

The pope quotes Psalm 132:8 because the Catholic church perceives the ark of the covenant as an Old Testament type of Mary. The ark, however, is not a type of Mary, but of Christ. Doctor Luginbill (n.d.) provides a clear and detailed description of the ark and its contents and explains their symbolism.

a. The Mercy Seat: The golden “mercy seat” or atonement cover [located on the cover of the ark - Exodus 25:18-22, 26:34 – B.Syl.], as it is also called, represents God's throne (see immediately below for the heavenly throne). Made completely of gold (befitting His deity), the mercy seat was flanked by two golden cherubs (just as the heavenly throne is attended by the actual cherubim). It was between these two golden cherubs that the Lord told Moses “there I will meet with you” (Exodus 25:22), so that the image given by the mercy seat of God's heavenly throne is beyond symbolic: within the tabernacle and temple, this is the place where the glory of God, the resident or Shechinah glory [this term comes from the Hebrew verb שָׁכַן – *shakhan* – “settle down, abide, dwell” and was used to describe the glory of God that filled and covered first the tabernacle and then the temple as a cloud – Exodus 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10], actually did dwell. Here, between the golden cherubim above the mercy seat, the Shechinah glory, a Christophany of the Son representing the Father's sovereign session in the heavenly Holy of Holies, actually did shine forth as the Light of the world (Hebrews 1:3a: “He [Jesus] is the shining forth of [the Father's] **glory**, the precise image of His essence”; cf. John 8:12; Revelation 21:23-24).⁸ It was also upon this mercy seat or atonement cover that the high priest sprinkled the blood of sacrifice only once a year on the Day of Atonement (Hebrews 9:7; cf. Leviticus 16:34), manifestly symbolizing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins “once and for all” (Romans 6:10; Hebrews 7:27; 9:12; 9:26; 9:28; 10:10; 1Pet.3:18), as the Father looks down with complete acceptance on His Son's “shed blood” (Hebrews 1:3b; 9:12; 10:12).⁹

7 Pius XII follows the Septuagint numbering of the Psalms, which is in this case lower by one compared to the Hebrew numbering, used also by Catholic translations today. Hence the pope gives reference to Psalm 131:8 in the encyclical, but according to the traditional Hebrew numbering it is Psalm 132:8 – as quoted.

8 In this imagery, moreover, the relationship of Moses to Christ on earth parallels that of Jesus and the Father in heaven: cf. Exodus 25:22: “there . . . I [Jesus representing the Father] will meet with you [Moses a type of Christ; cf. Deuteronomy 18:18; Hebrews 3:1-6]”; there are many points of typological symbolism between Moses and Christ in scripture.

9 Jesus, of course, offered up His life, not literally His blood, and in the book of Hebrews great care is taken to avoid giving this misleading impression (cf. Hebrews 8:3: “something to offer”). For “the blood of Christ” is a symbol of Jesus' sacrifice just as “the Lamb of God” is a title symbolic of His sacrifice. The analogy is of sacrificial animals as types of Jesus, and animal blood as types of His death on the cross. We are not to take Jesus' “blood” in this figure as literal anymore than we are to consider Him a literal “lamb” (i.e., animals *represent* Christ; animal blood *represents* Christ's spiritual death for us; cf. John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The aim of avoiding such heresy is one reason why John takes such great pains to show that Jesus did not bleed to death, but “gave up His spirit” while the blood was yet in His body (John 19:33-35; cf. Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30; 1 John 5:6-8). See also Peter's Epistles #9: “Salvation through Faith, and the Blood of Christ”.

b. The Ark: The “ark of the covenant” is the premier symbol within the tabernacle of our Lord Jesus Christ. For while the entire tabernacle along with its rituals and sacrifices speak of our Lord and His saving work (with the altar of incense, the table of the bread of presence, and the golden lampstand specifically representing clear types of Him as we have just seen above), in the ark we have a picture of Christ in resurrection, ascended to the Father, and seated intimately with Him (the sacrifice of the cross being an accomplished fact). This union can be clearly seen in the close and intimate association of the ark and the mercy seat, the latter representing the Father's throne, the former representing the Son in contiguous union with that throne (literally and figuratively: cf. Psalm 2:6-12; 110:1-6; and cf. Jeremiah 3:16-17 where the throne of the Lord replaces the ark in the millennial kingdom). Moreover, the ark and its mercy seat always appear together and are often described collectively as “the ark” (e.g., 1 Samuel 3:3-7:2). Thus, in a very real sense, the ark and mercy seat are “one” just as Jesus and the Father whom they symbolize are “One” (John 10:30). Finally, the particular picture given by the ark and mercy seat is that of the unity of the resurrected Christ with the Father, with the Messiah, human and divine (i.e., the ark is made of acacia wood covered with gold, so that now His divinity is in full view in contrast to the First Advent), now seated in victory at the Father's right hand (Psalm 110:1; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20-22; Philemon 2:9; Hebrews 1:3; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22).

As we are told in Hebrews 9:1-5, the ark originally contained 1) a jar of manna (Ex.16:33-34); 2) Aaron's rod that budded ([Num.17:10](#) [cf. Numbers 17:16-26 – B.Syl.]); 3) the tables of the Law (Deut.31:24-26; 1Ki.8:21). Each of these items speaks of God's provision and man's rejection of that provision (both originally with Adam, and subsequently, as illustrated by the behavior of Israel as typical of mankind in general). God provided perfect bodily sustenance for man (the trees of Eden for Adam, manna for the Israelites), but man rejected this gracious provision (Adam by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Israelites by “grumbling” [the jar of manna]: Genesis 3:6; Exodus 16:11-12; cf. Psalm 78:17-22). God provided perfect temporal protection for man (the security of the garden for Adam, the leadership of Aaron and Moses for the Israelites), but man rejected this gracious provision (Adam by failing to heed God's warning, the Israelites by challenging Moses and Aaron's right to lead [the rod that budded]: Genesis 2:17; Numbers [16:41](#) [cf. Numbers 16-18 – B.Syl]). God provided perfect spiritual provision for man (the tree of life for Adam, the Law for the Israelites), but man rejected this gracious provision (Adam by violating God's verbal warning, the Israelites by violating God's written law [the stone tablets]: Genesis 3:11; Exodus 32). The inclusion of a symbol of each of these three essential categories of human rejection of divine provision (physical, temporal [for freedom of choice], and spiritual) directly within the ark is a highly significant representation of Jesus “bearing our sin in His body” (1 Peter 2:24; cf. Matthew 26:26; Romans 7:4; 1 Corinthians 11:24; Hebrews 10:10).

For this reason it is not surprising that the ark is also described as the “ark of the covenant”, for it is the death of Jesus Christ which fulfills God's earlier covenant of anticipation [the Old Covenant which foreshadowed the coming of the Messiah and His payment for the sins of the world – B.Syl.] (for no such covenant/testament is valid apart from a death: Hebrews 9:15-18), while inaugurating a New Covenant of forgiveness through the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Lamb, our Savior (Matthew 26:28; 1Corinthians 11:25; cf. Isaiah 42:6). Christ bore the curse of the first covenant (Galatians 3:13), that He might abolish the barrier of sin and reconcile us to God through His body, sacrificed on our behalf (Colossians 1:22). And this symbolism is reflected by the contents of the ark, with the blood spilled upon the mercy seat which covers it, graphically and effectively representing His sacrifice for sin. In spite of man's rejection and rebellion, God would provide salvation (and subsequently has), a fitting testimony to His inimitable and unsearchable grace which this, the ark of the Testimony, so effectively teaches (cf. Exodus 25:16; 40:20-21). Through His sacrifice, moreover, Jesus has renewed all of these provisions in spite of man's initial rejection of them. For He is the Bread of Life (cf. the manna) in whom we shall never hunger again (John 6:25-58; Revelation 2:17); and He is the Branch (cf. the budding staff) whose perfect Kingdom shall never end wherein we shall dwell for all eternity (Isaiah 4:2-6; Revelation [3:21](#) [cf. Isaiah 11:1, 53:2; Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; Zechariah 3:8, 6:12-13 – B.Syl.]); and He is the Fulfiller of the Law and the Word

of God (cf. the tablets of the Law inscribed with the words of God) with whom we shall enjoy sweet fellowship forevermore (Romans 10:4; Revelation 3:12). Jesus sacrificed Himself for these and for all the sins of all mankind, that all mankind might be blessed with this eternal life through faith in Him – the most blessed of all promises, and clearly taught by the symbolism of the ark.

The ark has got nothing to do with Mary.

Paragraph 26 – part two:

Treating of this subject, they also describe her as the Queen entering triumphantly into the royal halls of heaven and sitting at the right hand of the divine Redeemer (Psalm 44:10-14ff.).¹⁰

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §26b

10 Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear:

Forget your people and your father's house;

11 Then the King will desire your beauty.

Because He is your Lord, bow down to Him.

12 The daughter of Tyre *will come* with a gift;
The rich among the people will seek your favor.

13 The King's daughter is all glorious within;
Her clothing is interwoven with gold.

14 She will be led to the King in embroidered work;
The virgins, her companions who follow her,
Will be brought to You.

15 They will be led forth with gladness and rejoicing;
They will enter into the King's palace.

16 In place of your fathers will be your sons;
You shall make them princes in all the earth.

17 I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations;
Therefore the peoples will give You thanks forever and ever.

Psalm 45:10-17 NASB

According to the church fathers the queen and the bride described in this Psalm is Mary. Mary, however, is not the queen and the bride and this Psalm has got nothing to do with her person. This is the first part of the Psalm:

For the choir director; according to the Shoshannim. A Maskil of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love.

1 My heart overflows with a good theme;

I address my verses to the King;

My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

2 You are fairer than the sons of men;

Grace is poured upon Your lips;

Therefore God has blessed You forever.

3 Gird Your sword on *Your* thigh, O Mighty One,
In Your splendor and Your majesty!

4 And in Your majesty ride on victoriously,
For the cause of truth and meekness *and* righteousness;
Let Your right hand teach You awesome things.

5 Your arrows are sharp;

The peoples fall under You;

Your arrows are in the heart of the King's enemies.

6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;

A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

¹⁰ See footnote 5 for the explanation of the discrepancy in Psalm numbering.

7 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of joy above Your fellows.
8 All Your garments are *fragrant with* myrrh and aloes *and* cassia;
Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made You glad.
Psalm 45:1-8 NASB

Verses 6-7 say the following about the bridegroom:

6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
7 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of joy above Your fellows.
Psalm 45:6-7 NASB

It is God who is the bridegroom – God-man (verse 2), anointed by God the Father (Hebrew verb מָשַׁח – *mashach* is used here, from which comes מָשִׁיחַ – *mashiach* – „the anointed one” – the Messiah) – it is thus our Lord, the God-man, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Taking Mary as the bride of Jesus Christ – a single human being as the bride of God and Creator (even metaphorically – however this was to make sense) is plainly absurd.¹¹ Christ is frequently described as the Bridegroom in the scriptures (cf. Matthew 25:1-13).

19 And Jesus said to them, “While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.
Mark 2:19-20 NASB

27 John answered and said, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent ahead of Him.’ 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.
John 3:27-29 NASB

Thanks to the New Testament teaching we now know that the bride of our Lord is the Church – the Church as the community of true believers in Jesus Christ and not any particular denomination, including the Catholic Church.

22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.
25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.
Ephesians 5:22-32 NASB

11 John Paul called Mary as the “bride of the Holy Spirit” in His audience from the 30th of May 1998 (John Paul II, *Speech of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II, Meeting with Ecclesiastical Movements and New Communities*, 9).

2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.
2 Corinthians 11:2 NASB

7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” **8** It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.
Revelation 19:7-8 NASB

The metaphor of the bride was in the same way used in the Old Testament where it represented the faithful part of Israel.

4 It will no longer be said to you, “Forsaken,”
Nor to your land will it any longer be said, “Desolate”;
But you will be called, “My delight is in her,”
And your land, “Married”;
For the Lord delights in you,
And *to Him* your land will be married.
5 For as a young man marries a virgin,
So your sons will marry you;
And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
So your God will rejoice over you.
Isaiah 62:4-5 NASB

2 “Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, “Thus says the Lord,
“I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth,
The love of your betrothals,
Your following after Me in the wilderness,
Through a land not sown.”
Jeremiah 2:2 NASB

14 “Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Bring her into the wilderness
And speak kindly to her.
15 “Then I will give her her vineyards from there,
And the valley of Achor as a door of hope.
And she will sing there as in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.
16 “It will come about in that day,” declares the Lord,
“That you will call Me Ishi
And will no longer call Me Baali.
17 “For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth,
So that they will be mentioned by their names no more.
18 “In that day I will also make a covenant for them
With the beasts of the field,
The birds of the sky
And the creeping things of the ground.
And I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land,
And will make them lie down in safety.
19 “I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice,
In lovingkindness and in compassion,
20 And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness.
Then you will know the Lord.”
Hosea 2:14-20 NASB

Paragraph 26 – part three:

Likewise they mention the Spouse of the Canticles “that goes up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense” to be crowned (Song of Songs 3:6; cf. 4:8; 6:9). These are proposed as depicting that heavenly Queen and heavenly Spouse who has been lifted up to the courts of heaven with the divine Bridegroom.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §26c

6 “What is this coming up from the wilderness
Like columns of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all scented powders of the merchant?”
Song of Solomon 3:6 NASB

8 “Come with me from Lebanon, *my* bride,
May you come with me from Lebanon.
Journey down from the summit of Amana,
From the summit of Senir and Hermon,
From the dens of lions,
From the mountains of leopards.
Song of Solomon 4:8 NASB

9 *But* my dove, my perfect one, is unique:
She is her mother’s only *daughter*;
She is the pure *child* of the one who bore her.
The maidens saw her and called her blessed,
The queens and the concubines *also*, and they praised her, *saying*,
Song of Solomon 6:9 NASB

In the interpretation given by the pope, according to which Mary is the bride in the Song of Songs, we are here dealing with the same error that was discussed in the analysis of Psalm 45 in the previous part of paragraph 26 above. The Catholic Church takes Mary to be the bride from the Song of Songs, but in fact the bride represents the community of believers – the true Church. The entire Song is a vibrant account of love between the spouses and an allegory of the relationship between Christ and His bride, the Church. The Song reminds us of how great the love of our Lord towards us is, through which He has paid for all our sins on the cross.

Attempting to find Mary’s assumption in the words “that goes up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense” to see her as “that heavenly Queen and heavenly Spouse who has been lifted up to the courts of heaven with the divine Bridegroom [her own Son!]” is not worthy of a comment (cf. the analysis of the second part of paragraph 26 above, where the metaphor of the Church being the spouse is explained, together with the passages that depict it).

Calling Mary the „Queen of heaven” is a serious error. The scripture never calls her that and gives no basis to do so. The title of the King of heaven and earth is in the Bible only ascribed to God (cf. Exodus 15:18; 1 Chronicles 16:31; Psalm 29:10, 45:6, 47:8, 103:9).

For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 O clap your hands, all peoples;
Shout to God with the voice of joy.

2 For the Lord Most High is to be feared,
A great King over all the earth.

Psalm 47:1-2 NASB

3 For the Lord is a great God
And a great King above all gods,
Psalm 95:3 NASB

19 The Lord has established His throne in the heavens,
And His sovereignty rules over all.
Psalm 103:19 NASB

5 Then I said,
“Woe is me, for I am ruined!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I live among a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”
Isaiah 6:5 NASB

17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.
1 Timothy 1:17 NASB

15 which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, **16** who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.
1 Timothy 6:15-16 NASB

And to Jesus Christ who rules in His name.

37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”
John 18:37 NASB

14 These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the* called and chosen and faithful.”
Revelation 17:14 NASB

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. **12** His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself. **13** *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. **14** And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. **15** From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. **16** And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”
Revelation 19:11-16 NASB

Putting Mary at the same level as God the Father and God the Son is not only a false teaching, but an outright idolatry in which the glory due only to the Creator is given to the creature.

It is remarkable that the title “queen of heaven” is in the scripture used only to describe the idolatrous practices in the book of Jeremiah.

17 Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? **18** The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and *they* pour out drink offerings to other gods in order to spite Me.
Jeremiah 7:17-18 NASB

15 Then all the men who were aware that their wives were burning sacrifices to other gods, along with all the women who were standing by, as a large assembly, including all the people who were living in Pathros in the land of Egypt, responded to Jeremiah, saying, **16** “As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we are not going to listen to you! **17** But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths, by burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for *then* we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no misfortune. **18** But since we stopped burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have met our end by the sword and by famine.” **19** “And,” *said the women*, “when we were burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and were pouring out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands that we made for her *sacrificial* cakes in her image and poured out drink offerings to her?”

20 Then Jeremiah said to all the people, to the men and women—even to all the people who were giving him *such* an answer—saying, **21** “As for the smoking sacrifices that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your forefathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember them and did not *all this* come into His mind? **22** So the Lord was no longer able to endure *it*, because of the evil of your deeds, because of the abominations which you have committed; thus your land has become a ruin, an object of horror and a curse, without an inhabitant, as *it is* this day. **23** Because you have burned sacrifices and have sinned against the Lord and not obeyed the voice of the Lord or walked in His law, His statutes or His testimonies, therefore this calamity has befallen you, as *it has* this day.”

24 Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including all the women, “Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah who are in the land of Egypt, **25** thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, as follows: ‘As for you and your wives, you have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled *it* with your hands, saying, “We will certainly perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her.” Go ahead and confirm your vows, and certainly perform your vows!’ **26** Nevertheless hear the word of the Lord, all Judah who are living in the land of Egypt, ‘Behold, I have sworn by My great name,’ says the Lord, ‘never shall My name be invoked again by the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, “As the Lord God lives.”’ **27** Behold, I am watching over them for harm and not for good, and all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt will meet their end by the sword and by famine until they are completely gone. **28** Those who escape the sword will return out of the land of Egypt to the land of Judah few in number. Then all the remnant of Judah who have gone to the land of Egypt to reside there will know whose word will stand, Mine or theirs. **29** This will be the sign to you,’ declares the Lord, ‘that I am going to punish you in this place, so that you may know that My words will surely stand against you for harm.’ **30** Thus says the Lord, ‘Behold, I am going to give over Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt to the hand of his enemies, to the hand of those who seek his life, just as I gave over Zedekiah king of Judah to the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, *who was* his enemy and was seeking his life.’”

Jeremiah 44:15-30 NASB

Back then the title probably referred to the Assyro-Babylonian goddess Ishtar (Astarte), although according to some scholars it could have been ascribed to the Egyptian goddess Neith.¹² It is a tragic

¹² It is difficult to make a definite judgment in this matter, especially given the syncretistic nature of pagan cults. It is worth noting, however, that in the Egyptian pantheon Neith was considered the

irony that today the Catholic Church with the pope at its head uses this title towards Mary within a cult as pagan as that from the days of Jeremiah.

Paragraph 27 – part one:

Moreover, the scholastic Doctors have recognized the Assumption of the Virgin Mother of God as something signified, not only in various figures of the Old Testament, but also in that woman clothed with the sun whom John the Apostle contemplated on the Island of Patmos (Revelation 12:1ff.).

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §27a

1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; **2** and she was with child; and she *cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads *were* seven diadems. **4** And his tail *swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

5 And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. **6** Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she *had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Revelation 12:1-6 NASB

Firstly, John begins his description stating that “a great sign appeared in heaven” which clearly indicates that we are here dealing with an allegory. Hence the woman we are seeing is a symbol. Quoted below is a fragment of the study “[The Coming Tribulation, A History of the Apocalypse: Part 4: The Great Tribulation, II. The Woman and the Dragon: Revelation 12:1-6](#)” by doctor Luginbill (n.d.), which exegetes this passage from the Revelation and provides an in-depth explanation of the symbolism given here.¹³

The Woman in the passage above symbolizes Israel, and these verses trace her history in synoptic form in a breathtakingly beautiful way from the patriarchs to the earliest days of the Great Tribulation [the Great Tribulation is the most difficult time in the history of humanity – with the rule of the Antichrist and the horrible judgments that God will send upon the world – that will precede the second coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ – Matthew 24:21, 24:29-31; Revelation 7:14 – B.Syl.], the period now under study. As the origin of both the written and the living Word of God [who is our Lord, Jesus Christ – John 1:1, 1:14 – B.Syl.], the Woman is clothed with the sun, the symbol of day and of light,¹⁴ while the moon, which rules the night and the darkness (the time and the realm of evil and evil one: [Luke 22:53](#); [1 Thessalonians](#)

mother of gods and she was thus called – “mother of god(s)”, as Mary in Catholicism (!). Similarities do not end there. Budge (1969) takes into account a possibility that the spread of Christianity in Egypt was influenced by the similarity of attributes of the mother of Christ – obviously attributes wrongly ascribed to her – and of goddesses such as Isis or Neith. He states that the authors of apocryphal gospels were ascribing myths associated with those goddesses to Mary in order to honour her. We observe a similar phenomenon in case of the Greek goddess Athena whose temple – Parthenon (the Greek word παρθένος – *parthenos* means “virgin” and it is from this word that παρθενών – *parthenōn* – originates) was converted to a temple dedicated to the “Virgin Mary” (see chapter VI, point 6.1).

13 Those interested in a detailed exegesis of the passages teaching about the Great Tribulation, including Antichrist’s rise to power over the world, are recommended to study the entire series of “The Coming Tribulation” – <http://ichthys.com/Coming-Tribulation-Home-Page.htm> and Curt Omo’s lessons with the exegesis of the book of Daniel, especially chapter 11 which there are some key and most detailed eschatological prophecies – <http://www.bibleacademyonline.com/omo/adult/old-testament/daniel-2/>.

14 [cf. Psalm 119:130; John 1:4, 1:9, 3:19, 8:12, 12:35-36, 12:46; Isaiah 42:6, 49:6; Matthew 4:16; Luke 2:32; Acts 26:23; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 4:6; por.Psalm 27:1; 1 John 1:5-9 – B.Syl.]

5:4-10), lies in submission at her feet. The twelve stars in the crown on her head symbolize the twelve sons of Israel and the eponymous tribes which spring from them ([Genesis 37:9](#); cf. [Genesis 15:5](#); [22:17](#); [26:4](#)). But by far Israel's most significant and glorious offspring is the Messiah Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ, whose human lineage is traced through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ([Romans 9:5](#); cf. [Romans 9:7](#)). Jesus is the Seed of the woman ([Genesis 3:15](#)), the true Seed of Abraham ([Galatians 3:16](#)), and the Son of David destined to rule all the nations with an iron scepter ([Psalm 2](#); [Romans 1:3](#); cf. [Isaiah 4:2](#); [11:1](#); [53:2](#); [Jeremiah 23:5](#); [33:15](#); [Zechariah 3:8](#); [6:12](#)). Thus the Messiah, the true Christ, is **the** Son of the Woman Israel, and all of the pangs, the pains, and the purpose of this archetypal Woman's history are focused upon, concentrated upon, and culminate in the birth of the archetypal Son, Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Son of Man, the One through whom alone salvation comes ([Genesis 3:16](#); [Micah 5:3-5](#) [cf. [Micah 5:1-2](#) – B.Syl.]; cf. [1 Timothy 2:15](#)).¹⁵

Directly opposed to the impending birth of the Messiah, the God-Man Jesus Christ, we next see another sign in the sky representing the chief fallen angel, Satan, depicted here symbolically as a great red dragon (Greek *drakōn*, δράκων). The term "dragon" in the original Greek refers to a serpent (cf. [Genesis 3:1-15](#)), albeit one of exceptional size, and the addition of the adjectives "great" and "red" bring home the monstrous nature of the sight.¹⁶ This particular dragon, moreover, has seven heads and ten crowns, and thus symbolically reflects the devil's world rule which the Messiah is destined to replace, with the seven heads and ten crowns specifically representing the revived empire of Rome which will be Satan's (and antichrist's) final stepping stone to the long sought after goal of total world domination which will finally be achieved during the Great Tribulation just heralded by the 7th trumpet (cf. [Revelation 13:1](#); [17:3-9](#)).¹⁷ As in the case of the Woman, the description given here of the dragon's actions is synoptic of the devil's history, beginning with Satan's original rebellion and his seduction of a third of the angels, the stars of heaven [[Revelation 12:4](#) – B.Syl.] (and anticipating the one third of believers who will fall away from God to follow the beast during the Great Apostasy),¹⁸ moving then immediately to his most direct opposition to God in his attempt to destroy the Messiah who embodies the plan of God in every way (cf. [Matthew 2:1-15](#); [4:1-11](#); [Luke 22:3](#); [John 13:27](#)). Following the failure of his attempt to thwart the plan of God by destroying the Messiah and after our Lord's subsequent ascension to heaven (where He waits at the Father's right hand until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet at His glorious return at the end of this final period of Great Tribulation: [Psalm 110:1](#); [Ephesians](#)

15 In their worship of Mary the Catholic Church goes as far as to perceive her as the mother of all believers, as written by Pius X in the *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum* encyclical:

The Apostle continues: „And, being with child, she cried travailing in birth, and was in pain to be delivered” ([Revelation 12:2](#)). John therefore saw the Most Holy Mother of God already in eternal happiness, yet travailing in a mysterious childbirth. What birth was it? Surely it was the birth of us who, still in exile, are yet to be generated to the perfect charity of God, and to eternal happiness. And the birth pains show the love and desire with which the Virgin from heaven above watches over us, and strives with unwearying prayer to bring about the fulfillment of the number of the elect.

Pius X, 1904, *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum*, 24

It is hard to even treat the words of Pius X as an interpretation of the biblical text. We are here dealing with sheer fantasising in which, as in the case of other Marian doctrines, the church fathers are attempting to find support for their false teachings in passages of scripture which have nothing to do with these teachings.

- 16 Red, the color of blood (cf. [Revelation 6:4](#) which also uses as in this passage the Greek adjective *pyrros*; cf. [Isaiah 63:2](#)), is suggestive here of the sin of bloody murder in particular ([Isaiah 1:15-21](#); cf. NIV [Study Bible](#) note in loc. [Isaiah 15:18](#)).
- 17 See [The Coming Tribulation: Part 3B: Antichrist and his Kingdom, section III, "The Kingdom of the Beast"](#).
- 18 For a discussion of the symbolism and a treatment of the stars in this passage as both apostate believers and fallen angels, see [The Coming Tribulation: Part 3A: From the Seventh Seal to the Two Witnesses, section II.1.a, "The Great Apostasy: Definition"](#). See also [part 4 of Satanic Rebellion: Satan's World System, section III.3, under "Titles of Rank: 2\) Elders"](#).

1:20-23; Hebrews 10:12-13; cf. 1Cor.15:25),¹⁹ the dragon will concentrate his efforts on attempting to destroy the Woman and all of her spiritual offspring “who obey God’s commandments and hold fast to the testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 12:17).

The beginning of the chapter thus presents in a synoptic way the key elements of God’s plan, culmination of which was the birth of Christ. Subsequently, starting with verse six until the end of the chapter, we have a description of events taking place already at the time of the Great Tribulation directly preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ – events in which Mary will obviously not take part.

After the description of the war in Heaven between the faithful angels led by Michael and Satan and his fallen angels in Revelation 12:7-12, the further history of the Woman is described in the last part of the chapter.²⁰

13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *child*. **14** But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she *was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. **15** And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. **16** But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. **17** So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 12:13-17 NASB

Revelation 12:13-17 speaks of the attack on believing Jews that Satan will undertake and of their miraculous deliverance by God which, as in the other parts of this allegory, is expressed metaphorically – “the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman”. The deliverance of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh, which is the Old Testament type of the events described here (just as Pharaoh is an Old Testament type of the Antichrist), was described using the same metaphor (cf. Deuteronomy 32:11).

4 “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.”
Exodus 19:4 NASB

Just as God has miraculously delivered Israel from the hand of Pharaoh, sustaining His chosen nation in the desert and guiding them to the promised land, so God will deliver the believing Israelites from the hand of the Antichrist, ensuring their survival and providing sustenance through the time of the Great Tribulation until the coming of the Messiah. Since this deliverance is described with the same metaphor, we can expect God to bring it about in a manner equally awesome and dramatic.

Mamy więc w dwunastym rozdziale Księgi Apokalipsy alegoryczny opis głównych wydarzeń Bożego planu, jak i usiłowań Szatana, by się temu planowi przeciwstawić (choć próby te tylko przyczyniają się do postępu tego planu). Począwszy od jego pierwotnego buntu wobec Boga, w którym zwiódł i pociągnął za sobą inne anioły, poprzez próbę unicestwienia Mesjasza, aż po ostatni okres Wielkiego Ucisku bezpośrednio poprzedzający drugie przyjście Jezusa Chrystusa, podczas którego podejmie on próbę zniszczenia wszystkich tych, którzy są mu wierni. Zarówno symbolicznie opisane atrybuty Niewiasty, z którymi Maryja nie ma nic wspólnego, jak i fakt, że Niewiasta uczestniczy w dziejach zbawienia od czasu poprzedzającego narodzenie Jezusa Chrystusa aż po Jego drugie przyjście, pokazują, że Niewiastą tą nie jest Maryja i potwierdzają interpretację, że jest nią Izrael.

19 [Satan failed to either kill Jesus (Matthew 2:1-15), or tempt Him to sin, which would invalidate His sacrifice, since it needed to be perfect (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13) and His betrayal by Judas only furthered God’s plan for Him to pay for all the sins of humanity on the cross – B.Syl.]

20 The exegesis of this passage which follows is based on doctor Luginbill’s study “[The Coming Tribulation, A History of the Apocalypse: Part 4: The Great Tribulation, IV. The Dragon's Persecution of Believing Israel: Revelation 12:13-17](#)”.

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation we thus have an allegorical description of the main events of God's plan and of Satan's efforts to oppose this plan (which in reality only serve to progress it). Beginning with his original rebellion against God and seduction of other angels, through the attempt to destroy the Messiah to the final period of the Great Tribulation which precedes the second coming of Jesus Christ and during which he will attempt to annihilate all those who are faithful to our Lord. Both the symbolically described attributes of the Woman which have nothing to do with Mary and the fact that the Woman participates in the history of salvation from the time preceding the birth of Christ until His second coming show that the Woman cannot be Mary and support the interpretation that the Woman stands for Israel.

Paragraph 27 – part two:

Similarly they have given special attention to these words of the New Testament: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women” (Luke 1:28), since they saw, in the mystery of the Assumption, the fulfillment of that most perfect grace granted to the Blessed Virgin and the special blessing that countered the curse of Eve.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §27b

28 And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”
Luke 1:28 NASB

This verse and its erroneous translation and interpretation by the Catholic Church have been discussed in depth in chapter II.

Paragraph 28:

Thus, during the earliest period of scholastic theology, that most pious man, Amadeus, Bishop of Lausarne, held that the Virgin Mary's flesh had remained incorrupt – for it is wrong to believe that her body has seen corruption – because it was really united again to her soul and, together with it, crowned with great glory in the heavenly courts. “For she was full of grace and blessed among women. She alone merited to conceive the true God of true God, whom as a virgin, she brought forth, to whom as a virgin she gave milk, fondling him in her lap, and in all things she waited upon him with loving care” (Amadeus of Lausanne, *De Beatae Virginis Obitu, Assumptione in Caelum Exaltatione ad Filii Dexteram*).
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §28

The pope supports one baseless statement – “for it is wrong to believe that her body has seen corruption” – with another - “because it was really united again to her soul and, together with it, crowned with great glory in the heavenly courts”. Reasoning in this way and supporting one unfounded conclusion with another we can justify any view; such a justification, however, is obviously worthless.

The fact that Mary was not “full of grace” is discussed in chapter II. Her being “blessed among women” in no way supports the doctrine of the assumption. The statement that “She alone merited to conceive the true God of true God” does not unequivocally confirm that Amadeus the bishop of Lausarne saw Mary as the “Mother of God” (although this is probable considering that he lived in the twelfth century when this erroneous view, sanctioned at the Council of Ephesus in 431, had long been widespread in the Catholic Church), but it should be recalled at this point that Mary was only the mother of Christ's human nature and was not the “Mother of God” (chapter I).

These words also directly contradict the angel's words about Mary having been granted grace. If Mary had been granted grace (meaning of the Greek passive participle *kecharitōmenē* in Luke 1:28) – and grace is an unmerited gift from God – then it is obvious that it cannot be stated that Mary “merited to conceive the true God of true God”. This could only have happened through God's grace – and so it happened. We are here dealing with another paradox in which the Catholic Church on the one hand

erroneously teaches that Mary was “full of grace”, and yet on the other – “that she merited” to bear Christ.

Paragraph 29:

Among the holy writers who at that time employed statements and various images and analogies of Sacred Scripture to illustrate and to confirm the doctrine of the Assumption, which was piously believed, the Evangelical Doctor, St. Anthony of Padua, holds a special place. On the feast day of the Assumption, while explaining the prophet's words: “I will glorify the place of my feet” (Isaiah 60:13), he stated it as certain that the divine Redeemer had bedecked with supreme glory his most beloved Mother from whom he had received human flesh. He asserts that “you have here a clear statement that the Blessed Virgin has been assumed in her body, where was the place of the Lord's feet. Hence it is that the holy Psalmist writes: ‘Arise, O Lord, into your resting place: you and the ark which you have sanctified’”. And he asserts that, just as Jesus Christ has risen from the death over which he triumphed and has ascended to the right hand of the Father, so likewise the ark of his sanctification “has risen up, since on this day the Virgin Mother has been taken up to her heavenly dwelling” (St. Anthony of Padua, *Sermones Dominicales et in Solemnitatibus, In Assumptione S. Mariae Virginis Sermo*).

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §29

Let's look at Isaiah 60:13 in its context (cf. the entire 60th chapter of Isaiah).

10 “Foreigners will build up your walls,
And their kings will minister to you;
For in My wrath I struck you,
And in My favor I have had compassion on you.
11 “Your gates will be open continually;
They will not be closed day or night,
So that *men* may bring to you the wealth of the nations,
With their kings led in procession.
12 “For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish,
And the nations will be utterly ruined.
13 “The glory of Lebanon will come to you,
The juniper, the box tree and the cypress together,
To beautify the place of My sanctuary;
And I shall make the place of My feet glorious.
14 “The sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you,
And all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet;
And they will call you the city of the Lord,
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
Isaiah 60:10-14 NASB

Chapter 60 of Isaiah has got nothing to do with Mary. It speaks of the eschatological glorification of Zion (as is obvious from the passage quoted above – “Foreigners will build up your walls”, “Your gates will be open continually”, etc.), which is Jerusalem – the place where God's temple is located. The temple, as the place of God's dwelling, is several times called God's footstool in the scriptures.

2 Then King David rose to his feet and said, “Listen to me, my brethren and my people; I *had* intended to build a permanent home for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and for the footstool of our God. So I had made preparations to build *it*”.

1 Chronicles 28:2 NASB

5 Exalt the Lord our God
And worship at His footstool;
Holy is He.

Psalms 99:5 NASB

7 Let us go into His dwelling place;
Let us worship at His footstool.
Psalm 132:7 NASB

1 How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion
With a cloud in His anger!
He has cast from heaven to earth
The glory of Israel,
And has not remembered His footstool
In the day of His anger.
Lamentations 2:1 NASB

4 And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east. 5 And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house.

6 Then I heard one speaking to me from the house, while a man was standing beside me. 7 He said to me, “Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings when they die, 8 by setting their threshold by My threshold and their door post beside My door post, with *only* the wall between Me and them. And they have defiled My holy name by their abominations which they have committed. So I have consumed them in My anger. 9 Now let them put away their harlotry and the corpses of their kings far from Me; and I will dwell among them forever.
Ezekiel 43:4-9 NASB

As evident through all the above passages, the temple of God in Jerusalem was the central point of God’s presence on the earth and the place where He was to be worshiped (and it will be the case again during the millennial Kingdom of Christ of which chapters 40-46 in Ezekiel teach us) and so the scripture calls it “the footstool” of His feet. The interpretation of Anthony of Padua is another example of breaking the fundamental principles of biblical exegesis by the fathers of the Catholic Church in their attempt to find justification for their false teachings in the scripture. The verse he quoted – Isaiah 60:13 – has been taken out of the context and all the parallel passages have been ignored.

The error of seeing the ark of the covenant as an Old Testament type of Mary has been discussed in the analysis of the first part of paragraph 26.

Paragraph 30:

When, during the Middle Ages, scholastic theology was especially flourishing, St. Albert the Great who, to establish this teaching, had gathered together many proofs from Sacred Scripture, from the statements of older writers, and finally from the liturgy and from what is known as theological reasoning, concluded in this way: “From these proofs and authorities and from many others, it is manifest that the most blessed Mother of God has been assumed above the choirs of angels. And this we believe in every way to be true” (St. Albert the Great, *Mariale sive quaestiones super Evang.* “Missus est”, q. 132). And, in a sermon which he delivered on the sacred day of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s annunciation, explained the words “Hail, full of grace” – words used by the angel who addressed her – the Universal Doctor, comparing the Blessed Virgin with Eve, stated clearly and incisively that she was exempted from the fourfold curse that had been laid upon Eve (St. Albert the Great, *Sermones de Sanctis, Sermo XV in Annuntiatione B. Mariae*; cf. also *Mariale*, q. 132).
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §30

In the first part of this paragraph the pope quotes the statement by St. Albert the Great which is supposed to be another argument supporting the dogma, but no evidence is given on which this statement is based.

The error of interpreting the angel's words from Luke 1:28 as meaning that Mary is "full of grace" has been discussed in chapter II. It is worth noting how frequently in the teaching of the Catholic Church one false teaching becomes the basis for another and how frequently the same erroneous conclusions are repeated.

The statement that "the Universal Doctor, comparing the Blessed Virgin with Eve, stated clearly and incisively that she was exempted from the fourfold curse that had been laid upon Eve" also shows how the Catholic interpretations contradict themselves – one the one hand the Catholic Church sees a reference to Mary in the words spoken by God to Eve in Genesis 3:15 (this error has been discussed in chapter III, point 2.1.2), but on the other hand – equally baselessly – teaches that Mary is exempted from the words of the Genesis curse spoken to Eve in Genesis 3:16. The words of this curse apply to every woman starting with Eve and the scripture gives no evidence for Mary to be exempted.

Paragraph 32:

Along with many others, the Seraphic Doctor held the same views. He considered it as entirely certain that, as God had preserved the most holy Virgin Mary from the violation of her virginal purity and integrity in conceiving and in childbirth, he would never have permitted her body to have been resolved into dust and ashes (St. Bonaventure, *De Nativitate B. Mariae Virginis*, Sermo V). Explaining these words of Sacred Scripture: "Who is this that comes up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" (Song of Songs 8:5) and applying them in a kind of accommodated sense to the Blessed Virgin, he reasons thus: "From this we can see that she is there bodily...her blessedness would not have been complete unless she were there as a person. The soul is not a person, but the soul, joined to the body, is a person. It is manifest that she is there in soul and in body. Otherwise she would not possess her complete beatitude" (St. Bonaventure, *De Assumptione B. Mariae Virginis*, Sermo 1). Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §32

The error of the teaching of perpetual virginity of Mary is discussed in depth in chapter VII. The second conclusion by St. Bonaventure is worth considering due to its absurdity. The pope writes:

1. Explaining these words of Sacred Scripture: "Who is this that comes up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" (Song of Songs 8:5);

As explained in the analysis of part three of paragraph 26, Mary is not the bride from the Song of Songs. Such an interpretation leads to absurd conclusions, making Mary the bride of Christ (cf. analysis of the second and third part of paragraph 26). Song of Songs is an allegory of the relationship between Christ and His bride who is the community of believers – the true Church.

It is important to note that Song of Songs 8:5 does not say that the bride is "flowing with delights". Instead of basing his interpretation on the original Hebrew text, St. Bonaventure quotes the Vulgate which without any textual basis adds this expression despite it not being a part of the Hebrew verse.

2. and applying them in a kind of accommodated sense to the Blessed Virgin, he reasons thus: "From this we can see that she is there bodily...her blessedness would not have been complete unless she were there as a person. The soul is not a person, but the soul, joined to the body, is a person".

St. Bonaventure has thus concluded based on Song of Songs 8:5 – "Who is this that comes up from the desert, [flowing with delights,] leaning upon her beloved?" – that Mary has been bodily assumed and the pope saw this conclusion as worthy of including in his argumentation. Not only has this verse got nothing to do with Mary, but how can the words "Who is this that comes up from the desert" be interpreted as referring to the assumption, as it is done by the Catholic Church? This interpretation is indefensible and deserves to be seen as absurd. Neither the quoted verse nor its context have anything to do with Mary or the assumption.

1 "Oh that you were like a brother to me
Who nursed at my mother's breasts.

If I found you outdoors, I would kiss you;
No one would despise me, either.

2 “I would lead you *and* bring you
Into the house of my mother, who used to instruct me;
I would give you spiced wine to drink from the juice of my pomegranates.

3 “Let his left hand be under my head
And his right hand embrace me.”

[It is hard to see how these words can be applied to Mary speaking to her beloved, who is her Son – Jesus Christ – B.Syl.]

4 “I want you to swear, O daughters of Jerusalem,
Do not arouse or awaken *my* love
Until she pleases.”

5 “Who is this coming up from the wilderness
Leaning on her beloved?”

“Beneath the apple tree I awakened you;
There your mother was in labor with you,
There she was in labor *and* gave you birth.

6 “Put me like a seal over your heart,
Like a seal on your arm.

For love is as strong as death,
Jealousy is as severe as Sheol;
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
The *very* flame of the Lord.

7 “Many waters cannot quench love,
Nor will rivers overflow it;
If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love,
It would be utterly despised.”

Song of Solomon 8:1-7 NASB

It is also hard to know to what “blessedness” St. Bonaventure is referring to in the words “From this we can see that she is there bodily...her blessedness would not have been complete unless she were there as a person”. Even if any sort of “blessedness” was mentioned in the verse – but it is not – then we would here have another instance of the twisted reasoning of the Catholic Church in which it is first baselessly assumed that since “blessedness” is mentioned (whatever blessedness it would be), it must be complete, and if it must be full, then Mary must have been assumed to heaven (!) – otherwise it would not have been complete (cf. chapter II, where the same fallacious logic has been discussed that led the Catholic Church to proclaiming Mary as sinless based on the words “full of grace” which are false rendering of Matthew 1:28). The truth, however, is that no “blessedness” is mentioned in the verse. If the words “flowing with delights” were taken as a basis for this conclusion, then they are not a part of this verse in any case.

3. It is manifest that she is there in soul and in body. Otherwise she would not possess her complete beatitude.

All the inferences leading to this conclusion are wrong, so the conclusion is wrong also. Song of Songs 8:5 has got nothing to do with Mary and the assumption; there is also no mention of any “blessedness” or “beatitude” which, for it to be full, demanded that Mary be assumed. So the pope’s “argument” is absurd.

Paragraph 33:

In the fifteenth century, during a later period of scholastic theology, St. Bernardine of Siena collected and diligently evaluated all that the medieval theologians had said and taught on this question. He was not content with setting down the principal considerations which these writers of an earlier day had already expressed, but he added others of his own. The likeness

between God's Mother and her divine Son, in the way of the nobility and dignity of body and of soul – a likeness that forbids us to think of the heavenly Queen as being separated from the heavenly King – makes it entirely imperative that Mary “should be only where Christ is” (St. Bernardine of Siena, *In Assumptione B. Mariae Virginis*, Sermo 2). Moreover, it is reasonable and fitting that not only the soul and body of a man, but also the soul and body of a woman should have obtained heavenly glory. Finally, since the Church has never looked for the bodily relics of the Blessed Virgin nor proposed them for the veneration of the people, we have a proof on the order of a sensible experience (Ibid.).

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §33

In their defence of the Marian doctrines the Church often quotes Mary's alleged “perfect union with Jesus' destiny” (John Paul II, general audience on the 2nd of July 1997). The error of the reasoning which led to this conclusion, based mainly on Genesis 3:15, has been discussed in chapter III, point 2.1.2. Here the pope quotes St. Bernardine who put forward the argument of the putative likeness between Mary and Jesus “in the way of the nobility and dignity of body and of soul – a likeness that forbids us to think of the heavenly Queen as being separated from the heavenly King – makes it entirely imperative that Mary ‘should be only where Christ is’ (St. Bernardine of Siena, *In Assumptione B. Mariae Virginis*, Sermo 2)”.

Firstly, any comparison of the spiritual status of Christ and Mary is outright blasphemy leading to idolatry. Christ was the God-man, the only human being ever to be free from the sin nature and the only one to go through His life without committing a sin. None of this can be said of Mary (see chapters III and IV). Mary was faithful to God and was for this reason given the grace and privilege to become the mother of Christ in His human nature – but she remains a sinful human being. Comparing a sinner to the sinless God-man and Saviour of the world is a serious error and one of those errors which eventually led to the worship of Mary.

The same error is even more evident when Pius XII calls Mary the “heavenly Queen” and states that the alleged likeness between them “forbids us to think of the heavenly Queen as being separated from the heavenly King”. As discussed in part three of chapter 26, Mary is not the “Queen of heaven”. The scripture never refers to her in this way and it is remarkable and ironic that this title is in the entire Bible only used to describe the pagan goddess whose cult was present in Israel during the days of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 7:17-18, 44:15-30). Placing Mary – also in this respect – at the same level as the God incarnate, our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the “Lord of Lords” and the “King of Kings” (Revelation 17:14, 19:16; cf. John 12:15, 18:37) is idolatry in which the glory due only to God is given to Mary. The argument that the alleged likeness between Mary and Jesus „makes it entirely imperative that Mary ‘should be only where Christ is’”, as St. Bernardine writes, is baseless and false.

The pope continues this erroneous reasoning writing that “it is reasonable and fitting that not only the soul and body of a man, but also the soul and body of a woman should have obtained heavenly glory”. We again encounter here the erroneous interpretation that since Jesus was the “last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45), Mary is the new Eve. The scripture does call Jesus “the last Adam” and teaches that just as through one man – Adam – sin came into the world, and through it death, so through one man – Jesus Christ – both the problem of sin and death were solved by God's grace (Romans 5:12-18). The problem of sin and death, however, was solved by Christ alone – not by Christ and Mary – and so although the Bible calls Christ “the last Adam” for this reason, it never calls Mary “the last/new/second Eve”. Since Adam and Eve were in a marital relationship with each other, this interpretation also leads to an absurdity in which the pattern of this relationship is applied to Mary and her own Son, an absurdity also observed in other Catholic interpretations (cf. Paragraph 26, part two and three). Also in this respect, Mary is thus baselessly placed at the same level as Christ. Although for the pope perceiving Mary in such a way “is reasonable and fitting”, it is totally opposed to the teaching of the Word of God.

The pope crosses the border of absurdity at the end of this paragraph stating that “since the Church has never looked for the bodily relics of the Blessed Virgin nor proposed them for the veneration of the people, we have a proof on the order of a sensible experience”. It is beyond the scope of this work to comment on the unbiblical cult of relics in the Catholic Church, but the statement that Mary must have been assumed “since the Church has never looked for the bodily relics of the Blessed Virgin nor proposed them for the veneration of the people” is hard to even take seriously. According to this

argument we could prove the assumption of a significant portion of humanity, since relatively few have left material possessions that can be with certainty ascribed to them and even should this be the case, very few of such items would remain in case of those who lived two thousand years ago. Following this path of reasoning, to provide “a proof on the order of a sensible experience” it would suffice not to look for such items nor “propose them for the veneration” (!).

Paragraph 34:

The above-mentioned teachings of the holy Fathers and of the Doctors have been in common use during more recent times. Gathering together the testimonies of the Christians of earlier days, St. Robert Bellarmine exclaimed: “And who, I ask, could believe that the ark of holiness, the dwelling place of the Word of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit, could be reduced to ruin? My soul is filled with horror at the thought that this virginal flesh which had begotten God, had brought him into the world, had nourished and carried him, could have been turned into ashes or given over to be food for worms” (St. Robert Bellarmine, *Conciones Habitaee Lovanii*, n. 40, *De Assumption B. Mariae Virginis*).
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §34

Firstly, we should take note of the pope’s statement that “the above-mentioned teachings of the holy Fathers and of the Doctors have been in common use during more recent times”, since it is a good depiction of the mechanism used by the Catholic Church to accumulate the evidence needed to proclaim a dogma. As it has been shown in the analysis of the arguments quoted by the pope, statements of the Catholic Church fathers are without exception baseless speculations and inventions which frequently directly contradict the scriptures. As time went on, however, these speculations and inventions were becoming accepted as a part of the Catholic tradition and would not only achieve the status of being equal to the Word of God, but of actually being superior to it – since, as is evident, they are frequently contradicting the Word of God and are accepted in its place. Eventually through this process they would be considered being “in common use” and used freely as doctrinal foundations.

In the Catholic Church a lie repeated long enough and accepted widely enough becomes a truth and a doctrinal foundation. This mechanism is effective among all those who don’t seek the truth through their lack of desire for it and it has proved itself as such in many religious, academic and political circles over the centuries. In the Catholic Church it has been a major influence in the establishment of doctrines. From this reasoning stem the statements aimed at showing the antiquity of a given tradition or view that we frequently encounter in encyclicals (“already father X stated”, “already in the x century it was believed that”, etc.) - as if such antiquity was a warrant of truthfulness. Antiquity is no warrant of truthfulness, however, as evident through numerous heresies that were appearing from the very beginning of the existence of Christianity. Falsehood remains falsehood, regardless of when and by whom it has been stated. A theological argument devoid of any biblical basis remains a theological argument devoid of any biblical basis – even if it is fifteen hundred years old and the Church proclaimed the author of this argument a saint, as if they had the supernatural knowledge of how this particular person was judged by God after death. A house of cards remains a house of cards.

Contrary to what St. Robert Bellarmine writes, Mary is neither the “the ark of holiness” (this error has been discussed in the analysis of the first part of paragraph 26), nor “the dwelling place of the Word of God” (only Christ is the Word of God incarnate – John 1:1-2, 1:14); nor do the scriptures ever call her “the temple of the Holy Spirit” – these are unbiblical inventions. Mary did not remain a virgin after Jesus’ birth either (this error is discussed in chapter VII).

With regard to the thought at which Bellarmine’s “soul is filled with horror” - that Mary’s “could have been turned into ashes or given over to be food for worms” - through which he saw it as necessary that she be assumed to heaven, we should firstly bear in mind that it is the Word of God that is our authority; what fills Bellarmine’s soul with horror is irrelevant, all the more given the doctrinal errors in his statement, some of which were listed above. Bellarmine’s reasoning caused by the thought which filled him with terror may be considered pious, but in reality it shows the lack of understanding of the resurrection. The Bible clearly says that our present body dies (1 Corinthians 15:36-37), since “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable” (1 Corinthians 15:50) and we receive new, resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:35-57). And so

regardless of how horrifying what happened with the body of Mary may seem to us (and of other prominent believers), ultimately it doesn't matter – it is not in this body that she will spend eternity, but in a resurrection body, as we will as well.

Lack of comprehension of the issue of resurrection is evident in many statements of the Catholic Church fathers and is present in the argumentation of the Catholics until today, as can be seen for example in the article “Immaculate Conception and Assumption” (n.d.), whose content has been officially approved by the authority of the Catholic Church:

All Christians believe that one day we will all be raised in a glorious form and then caught up and rendered immaculate to be with Jesus forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 21:27). As the first person to say “yes” to the good news of Jesus (Luke 1:38), Mary is in a sense the prototypical Christian, and received early the blessings we will all one day be given.

Firstly, Mary is not “the first person to say ‘yes’ to the good news of Jesus”. The entire scripture – from its first to the its last book – speaks of Jesus Christ who is the Word of God incarnate (John 1:14). The Old Testament prophesied His coming and the payment for the sins of humanity and the New Testament has described this coming, together with all its consequences. Already the Old Testament believers responded “yes” to the good news of Jesus Christ, who, although they didn't yet know His person as we know Him from the books of the New Testament, they would place their faith in the teaching and prophecies about the One who would be the Saviour and Redeemer. Salvation was from the beginning only possible by faith in the payment for sin which Christ has accomplished for us (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:21-26; por. Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3, 4:20-22; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23).

With regard to the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies and Christ's coming as a human being, the scripture does not say whether Mary really was the first person to accept this news or not and the reason undoubtedly is that this is meaningless. If God wanted us to know who was first, He would have communicated this in His Word. Furthermore, the argument that the result of this alleged precedence is the privilege that she be resurrected before anyone else is sheer speculation not only devoid of any scriptural evidence, but directly contradicting the teaching of the Word of God on the chronology of the resurrection, as described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4.

This chronology goes as follows.

1. Christ rose first.

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.
1 Corinthians 15:20 NASB

23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,
1 Corinthians 15:23 NASB

2. The next to rise will be the believers (1 Corinthians 15:23) – first those who died in Christ (those who have kept their faith until death), and then those who will be alive when Christ comes the second time (Paul adds this information in 1 Thessalonians 4:15).

23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming [here Paul writes that believers will rise when Christ comes back, without drawing a distinction between those who will be alive when Christ comes and those who will have died before this event – B.Syl.],
1 Corinthians 15:23 NASB

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep [here Paul gives us an additional information – those who will be alive at Christ's coming will not precede those who have died – and so the dead in Christ will be risen first – B.Syl.].

1 Thessalonians 4:15 NASB

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed [not all will die before they are resurrected – those alive at Christ's coming will be changed – they will receive their new, resurrection bodies without experiencing physical death – B.Syl.], **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

1 Corinthians 15:50-52 NASB

3. Before the final judgment and the commencement of eternity, everyone else will be resurrected (all unbelievers and believers who lived during the Millennium).

24 then *comes* the end [in the context of Paul's description of the chronology of the resurrection, "the end" refers to the end of the resurrection – its final phase – B.Syl.]

1 Corinthians 15:24a NASB

The scriptures not only say nothing of Mary's alleged earlier resurrection, but, as evident, this teaching directly contradicts the chronology of resurrection given by Paul.

Paragraph 35:

In like manner St. Francis de Sales, after asserting that it is wrong to doubt that Jesus Christ has himself observed, in the most perfect way, the divine commandment by which children are ordered to honor their parents, asks this question: "What son would not bring his mother back to life and would not bring her into paradise after her death if he could (Oeuvres de St. Francois De Sales, sermon for the Feast of the Assumption)"? And St. Alphonsus writes that "Jesus did not wish to have the body of Mary corrupted after death, since it would have redounded to his own dishonor to have her virginal flesh, from which he himself had assumed flesh, reduced to dust (St. Alphonsus Liguori, The Glories of Mary, Part 2, d. 1)".

The quoted arguments from both St. Francois and St. Alphonsus are speculations devoid of any biblical foundation. Christ perfectly fulfilled the will of the Father during His earthly life and went through it without committing a single sin which means He also perfectly fulfilled the commandment to honour His mother. The statement, however, that fulfilling this commandment would cause Him to bestow the gift of the assumption on Mary is pure invention.

Similarly St. Alphonsus in the quoted statement describes Christ's will as if he were supernaturally privy to the knowledge of matters about which the scriptures are silent and as if he exactly knew what Jesus wanted. Ascribing to oneself the authority to proclaim one's opinions as God's will is a very serious error. It is the same error that the false prophets in Israel were committing (Jeremiah 23:16; Ezekiel 13:1-7; cf. the commentary to paragraphs 11 and 12, 37). As it has already been mentioned in the commentary to paragraph 34, Mary's body was firstly not virginal (chapter VII), and secondly – its physical state after death is completely meaningless.

Paragraph 36:

Once the mystery which is commemorated in this feast had been placed in its proper light, there were not lacking teachers who, instead of dealing with the theological reasonings that show why it is fitting and right to believe the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven, chose to focus their mind and attention on the faith of the Church itself, which is the Mystical Body of Christ without stain or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27) and is called by the Apostle "the pillar and ground of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Relying on this common faith, they considered the teaching opposed to the doctrine of our Lady's Assumption as temerarious, if not heretical. Thus, like not a few others, St. Peter Canisius, after he had declared that the very word "assumption" signifies the glorification, not only of the soul but also of the body, and

that the Church has venerated and has solemnly celebrated this mystery of Mary's Assumption for many centuries, adds these words of warning: "This teaching has already been accepted for some centuries, it has been held as certain in the minds of the pious people, and it has been taught to the entire Church in such a way that those who deny that Mary's body has been assumed into heaven are not to be listened to patiently but are everywhere to be denounced as over-contentious or rash men, and as imbued with a spirit that is heretical rather than Catholic (St. Peter Canisius, *De Maria Virgine*)".

In the first part of this paragraph the pope again leans on the same fallacious logic as in nearly all previous arguments. It is hard to define what he means by "once the mystery which is commemorated in this feast had been placed in its proper light"; he quotes, however, teachers who "instead of dealing with the theological reasonings that show why it is fitting and right to believe the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven" (and in the development of this dogma there has certainly been a lack of those who base their teachings on the Word of God), saw it as a proof of the truthfulness of the dogma that the fact that the Catholic Church believes it. This statement is supported with two verse quotations – Ephesians 5:27 and 1 Timothy 3:15. According to the pope's argument if the Catholic Church expresses faith in a certain teaching, then this automatically makes the teaching true (cf. Paragraphs 15, 16, 17 and 18).

As it has been emphasised on numerous occasions in the comments on preceding paragraphs of this encyclical, the procedure should be exactly the opposite. First it is necessary to establish the agreement of a given doctrine with the scripture and only then can the teaching become an object of faith. The fact that someone believes a given teaching doesn't make it true. Otherwise we could proclaim as the truth any lie – if only it finds an (influential enough) advocate among the members of the Catholic Church.

The argument of the pope that this reasoning is justified by the authority of the Church which, as the Bride of Christ is "without stain or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27) and is "the pillar and ground of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15), is erroneous.

Firstly, to identify the Catholic Church with the Church of which Paul writes both in Ephesians and 1 Timothy is an error and a usurpation. In the New Testament the word "church" is always used in its original, biblical meaning – as the community of those who have genuine faith in Jesus Christ. God knows what we have in our hearts and whose faith is true and whose isn't (1 Samuel 16:7; Hebrews 4:13). The Lord knows those who are His (2 Timothy 2:19; cf. John 10:14; 1 Corinthians 8:3) – regardless of which earthly church they belong to – if they belong to any at all.

To belong to any denomination is meaningless²¹ – and especially to a denomination such as the Catholic Church whose history plainly demonstrates that it is certainly not "without stain or wrinkle" and a "pillar and ground of truth" (cf. Paragraphs 11 and 12). It is beyond the scope of this work to show the baselessness of the claim of the Catholic Church to be the successor of the apostles, but it is worth getting acquainted with the history of the Roman see from which the Catholic Church originated and the factors through which it rose to its position of dominance – these have nothing to do with the Word of God.

Secondly, membership in no institution provides immunity to falsehood and error in teaching. We know from the Old Testament that the Israelites were frequently led astray by false prophets – who often came from Israel themselves – and frequently followed the false gods of the neighbouring nations (Jeremiah 23:16; Ezekiel 13:1-7; 2 Kings 17:7-23, etc.) – and this took place despite them being the nation chosen by God who was leading and guiding them through leaders such as Moses, through prophets, kings, etc. We know from the New Testament that believers were under a constant attack from false teachers who were attempting to destroy the true Church from within, infiltrating into its ranks and spreading their false teachings, of which Christ also warned (Matthew 7:15-20). In his letters Paul often not only calls believers to spiritual alertness, but sometimes even rebukes some for allowing themselves to be led astray and for accepting a false teaching (cf. the letter to Galatians where Paul upbraids the Galatians for accepting the teaching of the Jewish legalists). Israel, God's

21 It is worth bearing in mind that today's denominations, including Catholicism, did not even come into existence until long after the New Testament was completed

chosen people whom God led directly with His Hand, did not ward off falsehood and errors; neither did the true believers of the New Testament times. And the Catholic Church, which baselessly identifies itself with the true Church as the community of believers – the true Church which had to be fighting off falsehood from the very beginning of its existence – is supposed to be totally immune to falsehood and doctrinal error?

It is correct that the true Church as the community of genuine believers in Christ is the pillar of truth as Paul writes in Timothy 3:15. As it has frequently been emphasised, however, this truth is the Word of God. This is the foundation of the Church and it is this Word of God that the Church must believe, teach and it is according to this Word that it must act. To give the authority of God's Word to the speculations and inventions of the fathers is a serious error.

With regard to Ephesians 5:27, through his conclusion the pope exposes his own lack of understanding of this verse.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, **26** so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.
Ephesians 5:25-27 NASB

In verses 25 and 26 Paul says that Christ sanctified and cleansed the Church by giving Himself up for her – it is thus clear that the cleansing of believers is in view through His sacrifice on the cross thanks to which every believer can stand on the judgment as unstained by sin and be allowed into eternity with God. Unstained not through his own righteousness and perfection – since we are all sinners – but unstained thanks to Christ's payment. These verses thus refer not to our sinlessness here on earth – where even the most faithful believers commit sins – but to our status in God's eyes which we achieve through accepting Christ's payment for our sins by faith.²² Faith in Christ sanctifies us positionally – it changes our status in the eyes of God, but as long as we are on this earth, we remain sinners. This sanctification is only fully realised after our death. Consequently, even if the pope was writing about the true Church – which he is not doing, as he is erroneously identifying the Catholic Church with the true Church as the community of believers – the words of Paul from Ephesians 5:27 could not be used to describe the state of this Church here on earth.

Finally it is disingenuous and ironic for the pope to quote the words of the scriptures to defend the authority of the Catholic Church, but totally ignore them when developing its doctrines – which he ratifies by this authority.

The opinion of the Catholic Church fathers who “considered the teaching opposed to the doctrine of our Lady's Assumption as temerarious, if not heretical” and the statement by Peter Canisius that “those who deny that Mary's body has been assumed into heaven are not to be listened to patiently but are everywhere to be denounced as over-contentious or rash men, and as imbued with a spirit that is heretical rather than Catholic” which the pope quotes are best left without a comment. The Catholic Church first created a false teaching and now proclaims those who don't profess it as heretics.

Paragraph 37:

At the same time the great Suarez was professing in the field of mariology the norm that “keeping in mind the standards of propriety, and when there is no contradiction or repugnance on the part of Scripture, the mysteries of grace which God has wrought in the Virgin must be measured, not by the ordinary laws, but by the divine omnipotence” (St.

²² This changed status of believers in God's eyes achieved by them through accepting Christ's sacrifice for their sins in faith is the reason why believers in the New Testament are called “saints” despite being sinners while still here on earth (Acts 9:13; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-12).

Robert Bellarmine, *Conciones Habitaee Lovanii*, n. 40, *De Assumption B. Mariae Virginis*). Supported by the common faith of the entire Church on the subject of the mystery of the Assumption, he could conclude that this mystery was to be believed with the same firmness of assent as that given to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. Thus he already held that such truths could be defined.

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §37

This paragraph is key in understanding the erroneous methodology of the Catholic Church in establishing its dogmas and explains the origin of so many unbiblical and false teachings in Catholicism.

P37.1. The official position of the Catholic Church – “sacred tradition” is the foundation of the Catholic doctrine.

The pope quotes Suarez who writes that “keeping in mind the standards of propriety, and when there is no contradiction or repugnance on the part of Scripture, the mysteries of grace which God has wrought in the Virgin must be measured, not by the ordinary laws, but by the divine omnipotence”. This view effectively means that a given teaching which is devoid of any basis in the scripture and originates from extra-biblical sources can be accepted as a doctrine of faith if only in the eyes of the Catholic authorities it doesn’t directly contradict the teaching of the scripture. These extra-biblical sources which serve as a foundation of the Catholic doctrines the Roman Church calls “the sacred tradition”.

According to the official position of the Catholic Church as given in the Catechism, “tradition” originates from the gospel being handed down orally and it is through this tradition that “the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes”.

In keeping with the Lord's command, the Gospel was handed on in two ways:
- orally “by the apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves had received - whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works, or whether they had learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 7);
- in writing “by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 7).

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §76

This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, “the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 8, #1). “The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 8, #3).

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §78

According to the Catholic Church “Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal”.

“Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 9). Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own “always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:20).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §80

The tradition is also given a role in the transmission of the Word of God.

“Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 9).

“and [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 9).

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §81

The above assumptions of the Catholic Church lead to the conclusion that the “sacred tradition” is equal to the Word of God in authority and “both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence”.

As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, “does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 9).

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §82

Finally the Catholic Church teaches that since “the first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament”, “the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition”.

The Tradition here in question comes from the apostles and hands on what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit. The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition.

Tradition is to be distinguished from the various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional traditions, born in the local churches over time. These are the particular forms, adapted to different places and times, in which the great Tradition is expressed. In the light of Tradition, these traditions can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church's Magisterium.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §83

Not only, however, does the Catholic Church state that “the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition”, but that the scripture itself teaches that it is not the sole source of doctrine for Christians and that they should hold on to “apostolic tradition” (“Apostolic Tradition”, n.d.).²³

Is Scripture the sole rule of faith for Christians? Not according to the Bible. While we must guard against merely human tradition, the Bible contains numerous references to the necessity of clinging to apostolic tradition.

Thus Paul tells the Corinthians, “I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you” (1 Corinthians 11:2), and he commands the Thessalonians, “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Thessalonians 2:15). He even goes so far as to order, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us” (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

In response to the position of the Catholic Church on the authoritative source of truth first considered will be the teaching of the scripture itself – of which we have certainty that it is inspired – and subsequently analysed will be the teaching of the pope and the quoted paragraphs of the catechism.

²³ This article comes from the catholic.com website and its content has been officially approved by the Catholic Church authority.

P37.2. The testimony of the scripture – the Word of God is the sole authority and source of truth for a believer.

The scripture has been inspired by God who directed its authors through the Holy Spirit (2 Samuel 23:2; Matthew 22:43; Acts 1:16; cf. Luke 1:67). It is the Word of God in which He has revealed His will to us.

1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, **2** in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.
Hebrews 1:1-2 NASB

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;
2 Timothy 3:16 NASB

20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. **21** For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
2 Peter 1:20-21 ESV

18 But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.
Acts 3:18 NASB

10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, **11** seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.
1 Peter 1:10-11 NASB

The Word of God is the truth we are to believe (Ephesians 1:13; James 1:18; 2 Timothy 2:15; Colossians 3:16; cf. Psalm 12:6, 19:7, 119:140; Hebrews 4:2).

17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
John 17:17 NASB

160 The sum of Your word is truth,
And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.
Psalm 119:160 NASB

The Word of God remains forever. Its testimony cannot be broken.

8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever.
Isaiah 40:8 NASB

89 Forever, O Lord,
Your word is settled in heaven.
Psalm 119:89 NASB

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.
Matthew 24:35 NASB

23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.
1 Peter 1:23 NASB

35 If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),
John 10:35 NASB

It is our life (Psalm 119).

3 He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.
Deuteronomy 8:3 NASB

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"
Matthew 4:4 NASB

45 When Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, **46** he said to them, "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, *even* all the words of this law.**47** For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."
Deuteronomy 32:45-47 NASB

It is to this Word that we must hold on and according to it are to live (cf. Revelation 3:8).

31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine";
John 8:31 NASB

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."
John 14:23 NASB

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.
James 1:22 NASB

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. **26** Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. **27** The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall."
Matthew 7:24-27 NASB

27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed." **28** But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."
Luke 11:27-28 NASB

Whatever we say is to be in accordance with the Word of God.

11 Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God;
1 Peter 4:11a NASB

The truthfulness of every teaching we receive, we verify by means of the Word of God.

10 The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. **11** Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the

Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so. **12** Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.
Acts 17:10-12 NASB

The scripture reveals God's will to us – through it God speaks to us. God's words directed to each one of us deserve our utmost reverence and attention. For this reason we must be careful how we deal with the Word of God and how we interpret it. We must not twist its meaning, distort it or use it to further worldly agendas which contradict it.²⁴

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.
2 Timothy 2:15 NASB

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, **2** but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
2 Corinthians 4:1-2 NASB

17 For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.
2 Corinthians 2:17 NASB

We must not add anything to it nor take anything away from it.

32 "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it."
Deuteronomy 12:32 NASB

5 Every word of God is tested;
He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

6 Do not add to His words
Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.
Proverbs 30:5-6 NASB

6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.
1 Corinthians 4:6 NASB

18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;**19** and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.
Revelation 22:18-19 NASB

The second to last group of verses (2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Corinthians 4:1-2; 2 Corinthians 2:17) warns against the procedure which we often encounter in the encyclical and which involves attempting to use the words of the scripture to support teachings which have nothing to do with it. In this procedure the Word of God is misinterpreted, often to the point of absurdity, Its meaning is perverted and twisted and passages are taken out of context (cf. the analysis of pope's biblical proofs in paragraphs 26, 27, 29 and 32). The Word of God is treated by the Catholic Church like mere raw material with which they can do what they want and mould in such a way as to make it usable to defend their teachings.

²⁴ The fact that someone quotes the scripture in their argument doesn't by itself prove the truthfulness of their teaching. Let's remember that Satan quoted the scripture when tempting Jesus (Matthew 4:1-10; Luke 4:1-13).

The last group of verses, however, shows that the scripture not only never mentions the procedure according to which the Catholic Church acts in making the objects of faith teachings which are not in the scripture, but clearly forbids it. Thus the view presented by the pope that a given a given teaching which is devoid of any scriptural basis can be accepted as a doctrine of faith if only in the eyes of the Catholic authorities it doesn't directly contradict the teaching of the scripture, although seemingly innocuous, in reality ironically contradicts the scriptures, ultimately opening the door to false doctrines.

We must not go beyond what is written and add to the Word of God. God gave us in His Word all that He wanted and saw as appropriate and all that we need to have a relationship with Him and to be able to act according to His will. If anything else was needed for this purpose, God would have provided that.

The testimony of the scripture can be summarised in the following way:

1. The scripture is the inspired Word of God. It is the truth we are to believe and according to which we are to live.
2. Since the scripture is the revealed will of God and His Word, we must be careful how we handle and interpret it. We must not twist Its meaning, distort it or use to further worldly agendas which contradict it.
3. The scripture not only does not point to any other source of God's truth, but warns that nothing be added to it. We are not to go beyond what is written.

P37.3. The position of the Catholic Church – analysis.

P37.3.1. *Munificentissimus Deus*, §37.

At the same time the great Suarez was professing in the field of mariology the norm that “keeping in mind the standards of propriety, and when there is no contradiction or repugnance on the part of Scripture, the mysteries of grace which God has wrought in the Virgin must be measured, not by the ordinary laws, but by the divine omnipotence” (St. Robert Bellarmine, *Conciones Habitaee Lovanii*, n. 40, *De Assumption B. Mariae Virginis*). Supported by the common faith of the entire Church on the subject of the mystery of the Assumption, he could conclude that this mystery was to be believed with the same firmness of assent as that given to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. Thus he already held that such truths could be defined.

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §37

Firstly, as it has been shown above, the procedure of the Catholic Church to make teachings which are not in the scripture the objects of faith, if only in the eyes of the Catholic authorities they don't contradict the teaching of the scripture, contradicts the Word of God itself.

It presents other problems too, however. Who, for example, decides whether a given doctrine contradicts the scripture or not? Both the arguments of Pius XII and the arguments of the fathers which he quotes in his encyclical show a lack of understanding of the Word of God and often directly oppose it – and it is these arguments which were used as a basis for the establishment of the dogma of the assumption (cf. especially paragraphs 26, 27, 29 and 32). The same problem applies to the Catholic doctrines which directly contributed to the proclamation of this dogma, such as the false teaching of the immaculate conception (cf. analysis of paragraph 4), whose error has been demonstrated in chapter III. Thus the basis for a dogma which allegedly does not contradict the scripture are arguments of the Catholic Church fathers and teachings which, indeed, do contradict it.

Ultimately the Catholic Church's method not only puts the inventions and opinions of the fathers and traditions which originate from pure fabrications and often forgeries (cf. analysis of paragraphs 21 and 22) at the same level as the Word of God; in fact, it puts them above the Word of God, since they often

contradict the Word of God and it is these speculations that the Catholic Church follows instead of the scripture.

P37.3.2. Catechism of the Catholic Church, §80.

“Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 9). Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own “always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:20).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §80

The Catholic Church assumes that a certain tradition exists, called here “sacred”, which has not been written in the Word of God, but which flows “out of the same divine well-spring” – and so whose authority is equal to the Word of God. We should thus first ask the key question about the provenance and authority of this tradition.

In most cases we know who the authors of the inspired books of the scripture are (and we in any case have at least the testimony of their inclusion in the Bible from the beginning) and we know that these books have the authority of the Word of God. But where do the “sacred traditions” of the Catholic Church come from and what is the authority of these traditions? The criterion of the provenance and authority of these traditions could be satisfied if we could ascertain that they come from Jesus Christ Himself, or Paul, Peter or Timothy, but this cannot be ascertained. An in-depth analysis of the sources of the Catholic teachings (cf. analysis of paragraphs 21 and 22) shows that frequently “traditions” on which they are based are late and their origins and authority are at best unknown and impossible to establish. In those cases where an investigation allows us to determine their foundation, it turns out to consist of human inventions and accounts coming from apocrypha and pseudepigrapha – which are patent forgeries. All these problems apply to the accounts of the assumption of Mary.

Thus the statement that “Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal” is erroneous. The Word of God has been inspired by God and comes from Him. God gave it to us for us to believe it and act according to it. The provenance and authority of the Catholic traditions, baselessly described as “sacred”, are, on the other hand, frequently unknown and in the cases where the origin can be established, this origin makes it evident that those traditions are devoid of any authority. Analysis of the content of these traditions also shows that not only do they not “come together” with the scripture and “move towards the same goal” with it, but frequently directly contradict its teaching. Our God is a God of truth and His Word and traditions which contradict it and draw away from it cannot both come from Him.

Claiming, in order to defend this error, thus such traditions ultimately go back to the words of Jesus Christ is totally baseless – as if the One who is the incarnate Word of God (John 1:1-2, 1:14) and who has been calling to faith and obedience to the written Word of God throughout His earthly ministry (Matthew 4:4, 7:24-27; Luke 11:27-28; John 8:31, 14:23, etc.) was present through traditions which have nothing to do with the scripture.

P37.3.3. Catechism of the Catholic Church, §81.

“Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 9).
“and [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 9).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §81

It is totally without basis to ascribe any role of transmission of the scripture to tradition, as if without it the scriptural truth could not be disseminated.

This is pure invention by the Catholic Church which is presented here as a doctrine of faith. Nowhere in His Word does God point to any mediating means whose role would be to transmit His truth and reach out to people with it – except those who believe this truth. The scripture is disseminated and taught by those who believe it (primarily by those whose role is to do so through their ministry) and it is obvious that this work of believers cannot be invested with the authority of the very scripture they teach.

The Catholic Church presents as a fact an erroneous thesis that it is not only the scripture that is inspired, but also the tradition which, in the eyes of the Catholic Church, transmits it – as if the original teaching coming from God and the form of its dissemination were of equal authority. Neither does the tradition play any role in transmitting the scripture, nor can the authority of the Word of God be ascribed to any other form of such transmission and dissemination of it.

P37.3.4. Catechism of the Catholic Church, §82.

As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, “does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 9).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §82

Finally, based on these erroneous premises a conclusion is presented that “tradition” is equal to the Word of God and “both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence”.

Erroneous are all the premises that led to this conclusion, erroneous is thus also the conclusion. The Catholic Church thus accepts extra-biblical sources in establishing their doctrines of faith contrary to the teaching of the scripture. Ultimately these sources only draw us away from the scripture.

P37.3.5. Catechism of the Catholic Church, §83.

The Tradition here in question comes from the apostles and hands on what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit. The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition. Tradition is to be distinguished from the various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional traditions, born in the local churches over time. These are the particular forms, adapted to different places and times, in which the great Tradition is expressed. In the light of Tradition, these traditions can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church's Magisterium.
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §83

Firstly, entirely without any foundation the Catholic teaches that the “tradition” referred to “comes from the apostles and hands on what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit”.

What is this statement based on? How do we know that the traditions taught by the Catholic Church come from the apostles and from the teaching of Jesus and the Holy Spirit? As discussed above, the origin of traditions is either impossible to establish or – where this origin can be determined – it makes evident their lack of authority and there is not a single case in which any of the Catholic teachings based on the “sacred apostolic tradition” can be attributed to any of the apostles.

Without any basis the Catholic Church thus claims the right to proclaim some teachings as belonging to the “sacred tradition” and having the authority of the scripture despite not being included in it. The

truth is that we don't know what teachings Jesus gave and what miracles He performed – except those that have been handed down to us in the Word of God. Unjustified acceptance of some extra-biblical traditions as having the authority of the scripture opens the door to proclaim sheer speculations and erroneous human accounts as doctrines of faith – as has been the case in the Catholic Church.

If God wanted to hand down to us any other teaching beyond those contained in the 24 books of the New Testament, He would have done that. In what way, however, would God give us His truth if not through His Word? Through oral accounts and traditions which, unless preserved in written form, could be distorted and twisted? God wants us to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4) and for this reason He chose such a medium for its transmission which allows its faithful preservation.

Then, based on the fact that “the first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament”, a conclusion is drawn that “the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition”. This statement is only apparently correct.

It is true that the first generation of Christians did not yet possess the entire written New Testament. God ensured, however, that until all the New Testament books are written and compiled His Word was available via different means and He was directly involved in the process of Its transmission – through the apostles who were eye witnesses of Jesus' teachings and through miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, like prophecy and tongues (Acts; 1 Corinthians 12:28-30; Ephesians 2:20, 3:5, 4:11, etc.).

Never did some vague and hard to define collection of accounts which the Catholic Church calls “the sacred tradition” play any role in the transmission of God's Word. First the Word of God was taught by the apostles – and both their apostolic office and truthfulness of their teaching were attested by miracles (Acts 3:1-10, 5:12-16, 9:32-42, 14:3, 14:8-18, 19:11-12, 28:8-9; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Hebrews 2:4, etc.) - and by those to whom God gave His revelation through miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit – prophets and those who were given the gift of tongues (cf. Acts 2). Thus even an oral transmission of the Word of God took place through means specifically assigned by God. After this first period, when all the New Testament books had been completed, the true Church was only to rely on these books and the Word of God contained therein.

The teaching of the Catholic Church creates a false picture of a situation where the key role of the source of God's truth is ascribed to unwritten tradition. It was in circulation at the time of the first Christians, from it originated the New Testament and now in this tradition – about which we don't really know what it is, where it comes from and how we can establish it as authentic – we are to seek the truths to found our faith on. As explained above, God made sure that His truth came to us and through His Spirit He directly participated in its transmission. God also chose such a medium for transmitting His truth as to protect against its distortion and would have never left us to a collection of some accounts, traditions, speculations and inventions among which we would have to seek His truth without knowing which of these sources could be trustworthy. Let's remember that the New Testament is not a human creation produced by compiling the traditions which were in circulation at that time, but is the work of the Holy Spirit who inspired the authors of the scripture and guided them.

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;
2 Timothy 3:16 NASB

20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. **21** For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
2 Peter 1:20-21 ESV

The first part of this paragraph of the Catechism contains thus the following errors:

The Tradition here in question comes from the apostles and hands down what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit.
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §83a

1. This statement is totally baseless. We don't know what the apostles received from Jesus and what the Holy Spirit taught them beyond what has been given to us in the Word of God.
2. Baseless acceptance of extra-biblical traditions as having the authority of the scripture opens the door to approving ordinary speculation and erroneous human accounts as doctrines of faith – which has also taken place.
3. If God wanted to give us any teaching beyond those contained in the books of the New Testament, He would have done that. God wants us to come to the knowledge of the truth and so chose such a medium for its transmission which allows its faithful preservation.

The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition.
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §83n

1. The first generation of Christians did not yet have the written New Testament, but God ensured that until all the New Testament books had been completed, His Word was available through different means and He was directly involved in the process of transmitting it – through the apostles who were the eye witnesses of Jesus' teaching and through the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy and tongues.
2. Never some vague and hard to define collection of accounts which the Catholic Church calls "the sacred tradition" played any part in the transmission of the Word of God.
3. The teaching of the Catholic Church creates a false picture of a situation where the key role of the source of God's truth is ascribed to unwritten tradition. It was in circulation at the time of the first Christians, from it originated the New Testament and now in this tradition – about which we don't really know what it is, where it comes from and how we can establish it as authentic – we are to seek the truths to found our faith on. As explained above, God made sure that His truth came to us and through His Spirit He directly participated in its transmission.

In the second part of the paragraph the Catholic Church makes a distinction between "Tradition" – as coming from the apostles – and "various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional traditions". This distinction, however, is completely baseless, since there is no proof that any of the "apostolic traditions" comes from the apostles – it is thus impossible to distinguish between "apostolic traditions" and other "traditions". The Catholic Church in an artificial (and crafty) manner attempts to elevate the status of the "apostolic tradition".

Relying on the "sacred tradition" by the Catholic Church in reality amounts to relying on sources which cannot even be determined and defined and whose provenance and authority are unknown (at best). What is the apostolic tradition not originating from the scripture? Is it the tradition that has not been written down? And if so, then how do we know what it is – since it has not been written down? Or is it tradition that has been written down at some point, but not in the Word of God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and so we should start relying on uninspired sources in matters of pertaining to truths we are to believe – as does the Catholic Church, founding their doctrines on apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, etc.? Erroneously and baselessly investing the tradition with the authority of the scripture the Catholic Church exposed itself to an influx of falsehood, which is evident in the dogma of Mary's assumption.

The Catholic Church tells us about the existence of some collection of oral traditions and teachings which were not included in the scripture and which were in circulation in the apostolic period. None of the teachings accepted as forming a part of the "apostolic tradition" – as the teaching about Mary's assumption – can be ascribed to any of the apostles since there is not a single piece of evidence for it. Thus describing the tradition as "apostolic", when we are not able to prove apostolic origin of any of these traditions, is simply a lie. In the case of Mary's assumption the first accounts, whose total lack of

credibility has been shown above (see analysis of paragraphs 21 and 22), are dated to the late fifth, early sixth century – and so about four hundred years after the death of the last apostle (!).

P37.3.6. Catechism of the Catholic Church, §84.

The apostles entrusted the “Sacred deposit” of the faith (*the depositum fidei*) (constitution *Dei verbum*, 10, #1; cf. 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:12-14 [Vulgate]), contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. “By adhering to [this heritage] the entire holy people, united to its pastors, remains always faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. So, in maintaining, practising and professing the faith that has been handed on, there should be a remarkable harmony between the bishops and the faithful” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 10, #1; cf. Acts 2:42 [Greek]; Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, 1 November 1950: AAS 42 (1950), 756, taken along with the words of St. Cyprian, Epist. 66, 8: CSEL 3/2, 733: “The Church is the people united to its Priests, the flock adhering to its Shepherd.”).

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §84

We have here the same errors as in the previous paragraphs of the Catechism.

The Catholic Church first proclaims the tradition as forming the “sacred deposit” of the faith” together with the scripture and then teaches that this “deposit” has been entrusted by the apostles to the Church. It has been repeatedly shown above that we have no evidence whatsoever to ascribe any of the teachings not originating from the scripture to any of the apostles. The Catechism again presents pure invention as a fact. Some of the apostles were authors of the books of the New Testament and in this way God’s truth has been given to us by them.

P37.3.7. Catechism of the Catholic Church, §85.

“The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ” (constitution *Dei verbum*, 10, #2). This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §85.

In paragraph 85 the Catechism again equates the unbiblical traditions with the Word of God, this time literally describing them as such (!).

There is, however, no such a thing as the Word of God which is unwritten, but “in the form of Tradition”. By calling unbiblical traditions “the Word of God . . . in the form of Tradition” the Catholic Church attempts to assign them the authority of the Word of God, but God made sure that the authentic, inspired Word of God was entirely written down and we have it in the 66 books of the Old and the New Testament. Never does God call anything “the Word of God” except the scripture – because it is this very scripture that is the Word of God. As it has been emphasised above, there is not a single piece of evidence that any of the Catholic traditions comes from God. Ascribing the authority of the Word of God to unbiblical traditions is a serious error.

In this paragraph the Catholic Church also totally baselessly usurps the monopoly for correct interpretation of the Word of God. This usurpation, considered in the light of such Catholic doctrines as salvation by works, indulgences – or the dogmas we are studying – is ludicrous.

P37.3.8. The alleged teaching of the scripture that it is not the only source of God’s truth for Christians.

Is Scripture the sole rule of faith for Christians? Not according to the Bible. While we must guard against merely human tradition, the Bible contains numerous references to the necessity of clinging to apostolic tradition.

Thus Paul tells the Corinthians, “I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you” (1 Corinthians 11:2), and he commands the Thessalonians, “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Thessalonians 2:15). He even goes so far as to order, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us” (2 Thessalonians 3:6). “Apostolic Tradition”, n.d.

Thus according to the Catholic Church the scripture itself teaches that it is not the only source of divine truth for Christians and points us to the “apostolic tradition”. Analysis of the passages based on which this conclusion has been drawn and others directly connected with this issue will show, however, that it is incorrect.

P37.3.8.1. 1 Corinthians 11:2.

2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.
1 Corinthians 11:2 NASB

In this verse Paul is not referring to some undefined collection of oral teachings which were in circulation at that time and which were passed on to the Corinthians by himself – and which the Catholic Church calls “the sacred apostolic tradition”. Paul is referring to specific teachings that he himself gave to the Corinthians and which were specifically meant for them, which is particularly evident in the Greek: καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε (*kathōs paredōka hymin tas paradoseis katechete*) – literally from Greek: “just as I taught, you hold on to the teachings”.²⁵ The direct object is often omitted in Greek, in this case “them” - “just as I taught (them) to you” – although implicitly it is still present. The correctness of this interpretation is further shown by the fact that Paul uses words which come from the same root – “as I taught you, you hold on to the teachings” (*kathōs paredōka hymin tas paradoseis katechete*).

It is also key to remember that among the teachings that Paul gave to the churches there were many which were directed to that specific congregation. It is clear from the content of particular epistles which differ significantly from each other and contain teachings, exhortations or even rebukes destined for specific addressees. Paul was not passing on to churches portions of some undefined collection of traditions which the Catholic Church calls “the sacred apostolic tradition”, but gave pertinent teachings to particular audiences (as it is also the case with letters to the Corinthians, which can be seen in every chapter of both books – see particularly 1 Corinthians 5, 6, 2 Corinthians 2, 8, etc.).

P37.3.8.2. 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.
2 Thessalonians 2:15 NASB

It should be first clarified that both “the word” and “letter” come from Paul (Greek pronoun ἡμῶν – *hēmōn* refers to both). He is thus referring to specific teachings that he gave to Thessalonians – during his time there and through the letters. The meaning of this verse is in this respect exactly the same in reference to the Thessalonians as the meaning of 1 Corinthians 11:2 in reference to the Corinthians – Paul calls the Thessalonians to faithfulness to the teachings that he passed on to them. These are specific teachings addressed specifically to them – this verse does not contain any notion of some body of “sacred tradition”.

25 Or “just as I transmitted, you hold on to the transmissions” – Greek verb παραδίδωμι (*paradidōmi*) - contains the notion of “handing over, giving (over), delivering, entrusting” (BDAG). There is no English equivalent which would allow to use the verb and the noun of the same stem here.

P37.3.8.3. 2 Thessalonians 3:6.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 NASB

We encounter here a situation identical to 1 Corinthians 11:2 and 2 Thessalonians 2:15 – Paul refers to specific teachings given to the Thessalonians. Just as the previous verses, 2 Thessalonians 3:6 does not speak about any broad “apostolic tradition”, nor does it suggest its existence.

None of the verses mentioned lends any support to the concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition”. The Catholic Church created this concept and now imposes it on the words of the scripture which have nothing to do with it – as if Paul were using the word παράδοσις (*paradosis*) which means “the content of instruction that has been handed down, tradition” (BDAG) in the sense of the “sacred apostolic tradition” which the Catholic Church has devised centuries later for its needs. If we don’t attempt to read into Paul’s words what is not in them and accept them at face value, it is clear that in no way do they refer to some “sacred apostolic tradition” but to specific teachings which Paul gave to particular churches – orally, when he visited these churches as an apostle, and in the written form of the letters.

The Catholic Church is again acting here according to the same twisted logic as in the case of their other arguments – first they created the concept of “sacred apostolic tradition” which is erroneous and devoid of any scriptural foundation and now they impose this concept on verses which have nothing to do with it. As if the fact that Paul uses a word which can be rendered as “tradition” was supposed to provide the evidence that this Catholic concept is present in the scripture and Paul had in mind the tradition as defined by Roman Church.

P37.3.8.4. The authenticity of apostolic teaching and warning against false teachings.

1. The necessity to confirm the apostolic origin and authority of teachings.

The key issue which confirms the obvious interpretation of Paul’s words and shows the falseness of the concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition” is the issue of the authorship of teachings and their authenticity.

The Catholic Church presupposes the existence of the “sacred apostolic tradition” about which we don’t know what it really is – if it refers to some oral accounts which have not been written down, then we don’t know where we could know about them from – since they’ve not been written down; if they have been written at some later point, then how do we know that they have been written down accurately if this had not been done by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and finally – how can we be certain that this “sacred tradition” is “apostolic”, as the Catholic Church states, since there is not a single piece of evidence that any of these traditions originated from any of the apostles? The question of authorship and authority, when studied in the light of the New Testament accounts, shows that the concept of oral “sacred apostolic tradition” is erroneous.

The concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition” assumes that in the apostolic period and later there were in circulation oral teachings originating from the apostles which were not included in the books of the New Testament and which were to be a source of divine truth for believers. The early Christians were thus to believe these oral accounts of the “sacred tradition” since they came from the apostles and their authority was equal to the Word of God. The question, however, is – how were the believers to recognise that a given “tradition” really came from an apostle?

The question of authenticity is key since from the beginning of its existence the true Church (the community of true believers in Jesus Christ) was under attack from false teachers and had to constantly ward off false doctrines.

15 “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.
Matthew 7:15 NASB

29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; **30** and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.
Acts 20:29-30 NASB

The problem of false teaching and opposition to the apostolic teaching (cf. 2 Timothy 4:14-15) is mentioned in almost every New Testament letter – legalism of the judaizers (cf. Galatians), incipient gnosticism (1 John), false doctrines on the end times and resurrection (1 and 2 Thessalonians), outright paganism and depravity which were common at that time (letters to Corinthians) – and every other sort of lie.

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; **7** which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. **8** But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!
Galatians 1:6-8 NASB

4 But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.
Galatians 2:4 NASB

10 I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.
Galatians 5:10 NASB

12 But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. **13** For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. **14** No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. **15** Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.
2 Corinthians 11:12-15 NASB

25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. **26** *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;
2 Corinthians 11:25-26 NASB

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ, **19** whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.
Philippians 3:18 NASB

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, **2** that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. **3** Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, **4** who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. **5** Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?
2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 NASB

3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, **4** nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than *furthering* the administration of God which is by faith. **5** But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. **6** For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, **7** wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

1 Timothy 1:3-7 NASB

1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

1 Timothy 4:1 NASB

3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, **4** he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, **5** and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

1 Timothy 6:3-5 NASB

20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly *and* empty chatter *and* the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—**21** which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.

Grace be with you.

1 Timothy 6:20-21 NASB

1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **2** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, **4** treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power: Avoid such men as these. **6** For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, **7** always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Timothy 3:1-7 NASB

1 I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: **2** preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. **3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, **4** and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:1-4 NASB

10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, **11** who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.

Titus 1:10-11 NASB

1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. **2** Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; **3** and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

2 Peter 2:1-3 NASB

1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, **2** that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles.
2 Peter 3:1-2 NASB

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.
1 John 2:18 NASB

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.
1 John 2:26 NASB

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
1 John 4:1 NASB

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.
2 John 1:7 NASB

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting; **11** for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.
2 John 1:9-11 NASB

4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.
Jude 1:4 NASB

The above verses clearly show that it was crucial for the authenticity of the teaching to be confirmed, since by asserting it the early Christians could guard themselves against any lie which, through false teachers attempting to infiltrate local congregations, was a constant threat to the early Church (and has remained such a threat until today).

At the time when falsehood was so ubiquitous, the medium on which the apostles relied when communicating the truth to believers with whom they were not present was writing. Paul tells the Thessalonians, for example, not to associate with the person who does not obey his instruction given in the letter. We should notice that Paul does not tell the members of this church to pass the message of his letter orally – the letter was meant to be read, in order for its teaching to be communicated with complete accuracy.

14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.
2 Thessalonians 3:14 NASB

Despite the medium of writing allowing for a better protection of apostolic teaching against distortion, in the letters we still encounter further evidence attesting their authenticity.

17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.
2 Thessalonians 3:17 NASB

21 The greeting is in my own hand – Paul.
1 Corinthians 16:21 NASB

18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.
Colossians 4:18 NASB

19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).
Philemon 1:19 NASB

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.
Galatians 6:11 NASB

Paul often included a confirmation of authorship in his letters and through it – of their authenticity. Why such a measure of caution – and in the case of written communication – if his addressees were allegedly supposed to trust in spoken accounts which were back then in circulation as “apostolic tradition”?

Even the authenticity of spoken teachings was confirmed, however. Proclaiming the gospel by the apostles was not just done through words – but in the power of the Holy Spirit which made itself evident in miracles.

4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, *His* choice of you; **5** for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.
1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 NASB

It was the miracles which were one of the attesting signs of authenticity of the apostolic teaching that the false teachers could not counterfeit (Acts 3:1-10, 9:32-42, 14:8-18, 28:8-9, etc.).

12 At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s portico. **13** But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. **14** And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to *their number*, **15** to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. **16** Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.
Acts 5:12-16 NASB

3 Therefore they [Paul and Barnabas] spent a long time *there* speaking boldly *with reliance* upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.
Acts 14:3 NASB

11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, **12** so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.
Acts 19:11-12 NASB

18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, **19** in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.
Romans 15:18-19 NASB

4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.
1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NASB

5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 NASB

3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, **4** God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Hebrews 2:3-4 NASB

Secondly, oral apostolic teachings were just this – oral teachings given by the apostles themselves.

13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 NASB

1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. **2** For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 NASB

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, **2** that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. **3** Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, **4** who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. **5** Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 NASB

The Thessalonians heard the Word of God directly from Paul – the teaching of the apostles came directly from the apostles. He also warned them not to accept the teaching from other sources.

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, **2** that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. **3** Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, **4** who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. **5** Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 NASB

The Catholic concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition” is devoid of any of the above marks of authenticity. There exists absolutely no evidence that it has got anything to do with the apostles – the Catholic Church is unable to prove the apostolic origin of any of its teachings which are not based on the scripture.

The apostles themselves called the members of the churches to believe in the teachings given directly by themselves since their authenticity was attested, but warned against trusting in teachings originating from other sources in order to guard the early Christians from numerous false doctrines which were in circulation at that time. Would Paul, Peter or John really allow them to accept teachings which allegedly come from the apostles but whose authenticity can in no way be proven? It is obvious that such an assent would have opened the door for the lie to permeate into Christian

congregations. Everyone could have said that they are communicating the “sacred apostolic tradition”. Only the apostles, however, could prove themselves as such.

Consequently, although the first Christian congregations were receiving the apostolic teaching also in spoken form, it took place directly through the apostles and only to such a teaching given by the apostles were they to trust and not to freely accept whatever came from other sources. As it has also been emphasised above, apostles directed specific teachings to specific churches. In the case of teachings which were addressed to a wider group of addressees, the medium used to share these teachings was for obvious reasons written communication and not a spoken account which could have easily been twisted.

16 When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea.
Colossians 4:16 NASB

Paul tells the Colossians to exchange his letters with the church in Laodicea – and not to pass on oral teachings to each other. The apostolic teaching was thus passed on either in spoken form primarily by the apostles themselves or in writing. The idea according to which the apostles were to rely on oral transmission of their teachings between the churches stands in direct contradiction to the way Paul acted as we know it from the scripture. Paul required that his letters be read within a given church (2 Thessalonians 3:14) and that they be exchanged between the churches (Colossians 4:16), not relying on oral transmission of his teachings. When it comes to oral teachings, members of these churches were to depend primarily on those given directly by Paul.

2. Teachings not coming directly from the apostles.

There were only twelve apostles, however (Judas was replaced by Paul), and God provided other means through which His truth was to be proclaimed among the nations – apostles’ co-workers in ministry, evangelists and leaders of the local churches – about whom the scripture teaches us that in the early Church they were delegated by the apostles – and miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy and tongues. None of these means, however, leaves any room for the “apostolic tradition”.

Contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church the fact that the apostles chose their co-workers in ministry or leaders of the local churches provides no basis to the idea of the “sacred apostolic tradition” either.²⁶

Firstly, the content of their teaching was the Word of God. This is evident in Stephen’s impressive speech in Acts 7 which shows remarkable knowledge of the scripture and includes numerous quotations from the Old Testament, in Philip’s preaching of the gospel and in Paul’s exhortations to those he appointed co-workers in his ministry.

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.
Acts 8:35 NASB

1 I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: **2** preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and

²⁶ It should also be noted at this point that the choice of co-workers in ministry and those who were to lead the local congregations gives no basis to the so called “apostolic succession” according to which the apostles passed to them “their own position of teaching authority (CCC, §77). There were twelve apostles and the last, John, died probably at the end of the first century. The apostles received their teaching directly from Jesus Christ, they were His eye witnesses (1 Corinthians 9:1), from Him they also received revelation (Acts 18:9-10); as a confirmation of their teaching authority in the incipient Church they received the power to perform miracles (Acts 3, 14:8-11, 19:11-12, etc.) and some of them (Paul, Peter, John) became the authors of the inspired books of the New Testament. It is obvious that those who succeeded them have no such authority, just as they have no power to transmit the Holy Spirit by the laying of hands.

instruction. **3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, **4** and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.
2 Timothy 4:1-4 NASB

It is the Word of God that was to be proclaimed and read in the congregations.

13 Until I come, give attention to the *public reading of Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching.
1 Timothy 4:13 NASB

Apart from the Word of God the delegates and church leaders nominated by the apostles were to deliver the teaching received directly from the apostles – whether written or spoken. It is the giving of this teaching and precise guidelines that was the purpose of the letters to them (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) – which are inspired scripture themselves.

1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, **3** *men* who forbid marriage *and advocate* abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. **4** For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; **5** for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. **7** But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; **8** for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come. **9** It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. **10** For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

11 Prescribe and teach these things.

1 Timothy 4:1-11 NASB

13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. **14** Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to *you*.

2 Timothy 1:13-14 NASB

The foundation of the teaching was the Word of God – the Old Testament and those New Testament books which had been written and to which a given church had access, including Paul's letters of which we know that they were inspired and which were quickly accepted as such in the early Church.

14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, **15** and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, **16** as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2 Peter 3:14-16 NASB

Finally, the authenticity of their teaching was in the early Church frequently attested in the same way as it was the case with the apostles – by miracles.

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

Acts 6:8 NASB

5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and *began* proclaiming Christ to them. **6** The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. **7** For *in the case of* many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of *them* shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. **8** So there was much rejoicing in that city.

9 Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; **10** and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, “This man is what is called the Great Power of God.” **11** And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. **12** But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. **13** Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.

Acts 8:5-13 NASB

Apart from the scripture those nominated by the apostles to leadership roles in the early Church were to rely on oral teaching received directly from the apostles. We thus see here the same principles as those described above in the case of oral teaching given to the congregations directly by the apostles.

It is clear, however, that even these oral transmissions do not constitute the “sacred apostolic tradition” as some significant body of teachings, the remains of which we now ought to seek. If certain teachings were doctrinally critical, they would not have been left to oral transmission which is liable to distortion, but would have been preserved in a much more secure written form (see above) – as it is the case with the gospels, Acts, epistles and the Book of Revelation.

It is the apostles themselves who warn us not to go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18-19, etc.) and command that all that we say be in agreement with the Word of God (1 Peter 4:11). To leave key teachings to oral transmissions without putting them in the scripture directly contradicts these commands. According to all the above principles after the death of the apostles – when God ceased to give revelation that was to be included in the inspired books and when the New Testament canon had been closed – the content of the teaching, also in spoken form, was to be solely the Word of God.

With regard to the prophecy and the gift of tongues, both were the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 12:28-30; Ephesians 2:20, 3:5, 4:11, etc.) – it is through the Holy Spirit that God superintended the process of the dissemination of His truth.

10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, **11** seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. **12** It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

1 Peter 1:10-12 NASB

The revelation that the prophet was to proclaim to the congregation he would receive directly from God and it was also the case with the person who had the gift of tongues – such a person had through the Holy Spirit the ability to proclaim the Word of God in a foreign language that they didn’t learn themselves (Acts 2). The message came directly from God and there is thus no room whatsoever for the “sacred apostolic tradition” in the communication of God’s Word through supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

3. All the teachings we need have been given to us by God in His Word.

Are we really supposed to believe that Jesus Christ taught the apostles doctrines such the purgatory, prayer for the dead, indulgences, the cult and intercession of the saints, etc. – and somehow none of these teachings has been preserved in any of the gospels? Or that He did give these teachings to the

apostles – and neither did they include any of them in any of their letters and only communicated them orally as “sacred apostolic tradition”, as it is allegedly the case with the assumption of Mary? In the eyes of the Catholic Church all these teachings originating from the “sacred tradition” constitute the “sacred deposit” (CCC, §84), despite none one of them even being mentioned by Christ or any of the apostles in the scripture (!). If these teachings – which play such a critical role in the Catholic doctrine – were really true, would Jesus and the Apostles never have mentioned them in any of the inspired book of the New Testament?

It is obvious that such a scenario is detached from reality. It was God’s will that all the most important teachings be preserved in the inspired books of the New Testament and that these books remain. If it was God’s will to preserve some truths for us in the form of “traditions”, then He had the power to do so. We should, however, ask the question – in what form would He have done that in order to ensure a faithful preservation of these traditions – if not in the written form of the scriptures.

As discussed above, the scripture only points to itself as the source of truth (point 37.2). We are commanded not to go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18-19, etc.) and to speak everything in accordance with the Word of God (1 Peter 4:11). The testimony of the scripture and these commands preclude the existence of doctrinal teachings which have not been put in the scripture and which we should now seek outside of it. To leave such teachings to oral transmissions directly contradicts the Word of God.

The oral teachings of the apostles – both those given directly to the churches and to the leaders they appointed in the early Church – were firstly in accordance with the Word of God, since the apostles received these teachings from Jesus and they were given revelation directly from God (from Christ – Acts 26:16 – and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – John 16:13). If thus a certain teaching does not appear anywhere in the scripture – as it is the case with the assumption of Mary – then we have absolutely no basis to think that it was present in spoken accounts. Secondly, as it has been described above, the apostles have put all the key teachings in writing as a far more secure medium of communication. Thirdly, we should also remember that even among the teachings included in the books of the New Testament we have numerous instructions addressed to particular people in particular churches which may not apply to us directly or even indirectly. It is thus all the more probable that this was the case with numerous oral teachings. If these teachings pertained to doctrinal issues of universal character, then they would have been included in the scripture; if, however, they are not there, then it means that they did not pertain to such doctrinal matters and God did not decree it in His plan for them to be preserved.

Consequently, when it comes to the content of the teachings that did not survive, the Catholic Church, devoid of any evidence, can only engage in pointless speculation as to what they could have referred to. Not only do such speculations open the path for lie and heresies to infect – and ultimately replace – true Christian doctrine, however, but ultimately the purpose of the concept of the “sacred tradition” is exactly the justification of those teachings which have nothing to do with the scripture, such as some of the ones mentioned above (purgatory, prayer for the dead, indulgences the cult and intercession of the saints, etc.) and as the doctrines of the Marian cult discussed here.

No proof in the matter of the “sacred tradition” is supplied by the testimonies of the fathers. They are in many cases hundreds of years older than the apostolic teaching, their apostolic origin can in no way be proven and they are often inconsistent and contradictory (and all these problems apply in the case of the testimonies of the teaching of Mary’s assumption; see the analysis of paragraphs 21 and 22). They obviously don’t bring us any closer to what the apostles taught beyond what we know from the scripture.

Ascribing the title of the “sacred apostolic tradition” to teachings whose first mention appears a few hundred years after the apostles and which are in no way related to the apostles is thus baseless and disingenuous. The Catholic Church again presents a baseless speculation as a fact and we are here dealing with the most serious type of error – since without any proof of an apostolic origin of any of its “traditional” teaching, the Catholic Church invests them with an authority equal to the scripture – “Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence” (CCC, §82).

Finally, the *modus operandi* of the Catholic Church depicts a sinful inclination of the human heart to ignore the inspired Word of God, which is there for us to be studied in-depth, and to occupy itself with speculations and matters about which the scriptures say nothing and whose investigation they never encourage. Quite the contrary – as the above quoted verses show, the scripture warns us not to go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). Have the Catholic Church fathers, its authorities and all the remaining members have really so completely learnt and understood all the inspired books of the Bible, Its every word, every teaching and every prophecy – that there is nothing left for them but to give themselves over to conjectures and speculations? Both the analysis of the encyclical in which the assumption has been proclaimed as a dogma and the analysis of the other Marian doctrines clearly show that the Catholic Church is occupied with conjectures and speculations which have nothing to do with the scripture, but shows no desire to study the truth of the Word of God in depth and to follow it. Many Catholic teachings in fact directly contradict this very truth.

There is thus no such a thing as the “sacred traditions”. Jesus on numerous occasions rebuked the Pharisees for following human traditions while disobeying the inspired Word of God – exactly as it is the case with the Catholic Church today. The traditions of the Pharisees also had no foundation in the scripture – and were also considered “sacred”.

1 Then some Pharisees and scribes *came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, **2** “Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.” **3** And He answered and said to them, “Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.’ 5 But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,” 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.’ And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:
8 ‘This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far away from Me.
9 ‘But in vain do they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’”
Matthew 15:4-9 NASB

1 The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, **2** and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. **3** (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, *thus* observing the traditions of the elders; **4** and *when they come* from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) **5** The Pharisees and the scribes *asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?” **6** And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:
‘This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far away from Me.
7 ‘But in vain do they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’
8 Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.”
9 He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death’; 11 but you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),’ 12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; 13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”
Mark 7:1-13 NASB

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.
Colossians 2:8 NASB

The Catholic Church created the concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition” in order to be able to justify their false teachings which have no basis in the scripture. This concept is false. It is Satan’s Trojan horse serving to introduce falsehood into Christian doctrine.

P37.4. Summary.

1. The testimony of the scripture – the Word of God is the sole authority and source of truth for a believer.

1. The scripture has been inspired by God who led Its authors through the Holy Spirit. It is the Word of God in which He has revealed His will to us. It is the truth we are to believe and according to which we are to live.
2. Since the scripture is God’s word, we must be careful how we handle and interpret it. We must not twist its meaning, distort it or use to further our own agendas which contradict it.
3. The scripture not only does not point to any other source of God’s truth, but warns that nothing be added to it and nothing be taken away from it. We must not go beyond what is written.
 1. The scripture not only never mentions the procedure according to which the Catholic Church acts in making the objects of faith teachings which are not in the scripture, but clearly forbids it.
 2. The view presented by the pope that a given teaching which is devoid of any scriptural basis can be accepted as a doctrine of faith if only in the eyes of the Catholic authorities it doesn’t directly contradict the teaching of the scripture, although seemingly innocuous, in reality ironically contradicts the scripture, ultimately opening the door to false doctrines.
4. God gave us in His Word all that He wanted and saw as appropriate and all that we need to have a relationship with Him and to be able to act according to His will. If anything else was needed for this purpose, God would have provided us that.

2. The official position of the Catholic Church and its analysis.

1. According to the Catholic Church teachings which are devoid of any scriptural basis and originate from extra-biblical sources can be accepted as doctrines of faith if only in the eyes of the Catholic authorities they do not directly contradict the teaching of the scripture (*Munificentissimus Deus*, §37).
 1. Firstly, as it has been shown above, this procedure of the Catholic Church contradicts the teaching of the Word of God itself.
 2. The arguments of Pius XII, the arguments of the fathers and the Catholic doctrines which he quotes in his encyclical (such as the false teaching of the immaculate conception) frequently contradict the Word of God – and it is these arguments which contributed to the proclamation of the dogma of the assumption. Thus the basis for a dogma which allegedly does not contradict the scripture are arguments of the Catholic Church fathers and teachings which do contradict it. No teaching built on false premises can itself be true.

2. The Catholic Church claims that Catholic doctrines lacking any biblical foundation originate from the “sacred apostolic tradition”.
 1. The origin of the “sacred apostolic tradition”.
 1. We know who the authors of the inspired books of the scripture are and we know that these books have the authority of the Word of God. An in-depth analysis of the sources of the Catholic teachings (cf. analysis of paragraphs 21 and 22) shows, however, that frequently “traditions” on which they are based are late and their origins and authority are at best unknown and impossible to establish. In those cases where an investigation allows to determine the foundation of these traditions, it turns out to consist of human inventions and accounts coming from apocrypha and pseudepigrapha – which are patent forgeries. All these problems apply to the accounts of the assumption of Mary.
 2. None of the teachings accepted as forming a part of the “apostolic tradition” – as the teaching about Mary’s assumption – can be ascribed to any of the apostles since there is not a single piece of evidence for it. Thus calling the tradition “apostolic”, when we are not able to prove apostolic origin of any of these traditions, is a lie.
 3. What is the apostolic tradition not originating from the scripture? Is it the tradition that has not been written down? And if so, then how do we know what it is – since it has not been written down? Or is it tradition that has been written down at some point, but not in the Word of God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and so we should start relying on uninspired sources in matters of pertaining to truths we are to believe – as does the Catholic Church, founding their doctrines on apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, etc.?
 2. The authority of the “sacred tradition”.
 1. Contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church, traditions cannot be invested with the authority of the Word of God (CCC, §80, 82, 85). The Word of God is inspired, but there is no proof for divine origin of any of the traditions.
 2. There is no such thing as the Word of God which is unwritten, but “in the form of Tradition” (CCC, §85). God made sure that the authentic, inspired Word of God was entirely written down and we have it in the 66 books of the Old and the New Testament. Never does God call anything “the Word of God” except the scripture – because it is this very scripture that is the Word of God.
 3. The alleged role of the „sacred tradition” in the transmission of the Word of God (cf. CCC, §81).
 1. Nowhere in His Word does God point to any mediating means whose role would be to transmit His truth and reach out to people with it – except those who believe this truth.
 2. The Catholic Church presents as a fact an erroneous thesis that it is not only the scripture that is inspired, but also the tradition which, in the eyes of the Catholic Church, transmits it – as if the original teaching coming from God and the form of its dissemination were of equal authority. Neither does the tradition play any role in transmitting the scripture, nor can the authority of the Word of God be ascribed to any other form of such transmission and dissemination of it.
 3. If God wanted to hand down to us any other teaching beyond those contained in the 24 books of the New Testament, He would have done that. In what way, however, would God give us His truth if not through His Word? Through oral accounts and traditions which, unless preserved in written form could be distorted and twisted? God wants us to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4) and for this

reason He chose such a medium for its transmission which allows its faithful preservation.

4. Although the first generation of Christians did not yet possess the entire written New Testament, God ensured that until all the New Testament books are written and compiled His Word is available via different means and He was directly involved in the process of Its transmission – first through the apostles who were eye witnesses of Jesus’ teachings, then through their co-workers in ministry, evangelists and the leaders of the early Church and through miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy and tongues.
 5. The teaching of the Catholic Church creates a false picture of a situation where the key role of the source of God’s truth is ascribed to unwritten tradition. Let’s remember that it is God who made sure that His truth came to us and that the New Testament is not a human creation produced by compiling the traditions which were in circulation at that time, but is the work of the Holy Spirit who inspired the authors of the scripture and guided them. Never did some vague and hard to define amalgamation of accounts which the Catholic Church calls “the sacred tradition” play any role in the transmission of God’s Word.
3. The alleged teaching of the scriptures that they are not the only source of God’s truth for Christians.
 1. None of the verses used to support this teaching – 1 Corinthians 11:2, 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6 – gives any basis for it. In none of these verses does Paul refer to some undefined collection of oral teachings which were in circulation at that time and which were passed on to the Corinthians by himself – and which the Catholic Church calls “the sacred apostolic tradition”.
 2. Paul is referring to specific teachings that he himself gave to these churches and which were specifically meant for them. Among the teachings that Paul gave to the churches there were many which were directed to that particular congregation. Paul was not passing on to churches portions of some undefined collection of traditions which the Catholic Church calls “the sacred apostolic tradition”, but gave particular teachings to particular audiences.
 3. None of the verses mentioned lends any support to the concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition”. The Catholic Church created this concept and now imposes it on the words of the scripture which have nothing to do with it – as if Paul were using the word παράδοσις (*paradosis*) which means “the content of instruction that has been handed down, tradition” (BDAG) in the sense of the “sacred apostolic tradition” which the Catholic Church has devised centuries later for its needs.
 4. If we don’t attempt to read into Paul’s words what is not in them and accept them at face value, it is clear that in no way do they refer to some “sacred apostolic tradition” but to specific teachings which Paul gave to particular churches – orally, when he visited these churches as an apostle, and in the written form of the letters.
 4. The authenticity of apostolic teaching and warning against false teachings.
 1. The necessity to confirm the apostolic origin and authority of teachings.
 1. The concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition” assumes that in the apostolic period and later there were in circulation oral teachings originating from the apostles which were not included in the books of the New Testament and which were to be a source of divine truth for believers. The early Christians were thus to believe these oral accounts of the “sacred tradition” since they came from the apostles and their authority was equal to the Word of God. The key question, however, is how were the believers to recognise that a given “tradition” really came from an apostle?

2. The question of authenticity is key since from the beginning of its existence the true Church (the community of true believers in Jesus Christ) was under attack from false teachers and had to constantly ward off false doctrines. The problem of false teaching and opposition to the apostolic teaching (cf. 2 Timothy 4:14-15) is mentioned in almost every New Testament letter.
 3. At the time when falsehood was so ubiquitous, the medium on which the apostles relied when communicating the truth to believers with whom they were not present, was writing. Despite the medium of writing allowing for a better protection of apostolic teaching against distortion, even in the letters we still encounter further evidence attesting their authenticity. Why such a measure of caution – and in the case of written communication – if their addressees were allegedly supposed to trust in spoken accounts which were back then in circulation as “apostolic tradition”?
 4. Even the authenticity of spoken teachings was confirmed. Proclaiming the gospel by the apostles was not just done through words – but in the power of the Holy Spirit which made itself evident in miracles.
 5. Oral apostolic teachings were just this – oral teachings given by the apostles themselves. The teaching of the apostles came directly from the apostles. The members of particular churches were also warned not to accept teachings from other sources.
 6. The apostles themselves called the members of the churches to believe in the teachings given directly by themselves since their authenticity was attested, but warned against trusting in teachings originating from other sources in order to guard the early Christians from numerous false doctrines which were in circulation at that time. Would Paul, Peter or John really allow them to accept teachings which allegedly come from the apostles but whose authenticity can in no way be proven? It is obvious that such an assent would open the door for the lie to permeate into Christian congregations. Everyone could have said that they are communicating the “sacred apostolic tradition”.
 7. In the case of teachings which were addressed to a wider group of addressees, the medium used to share these teachings was for obvious reasons written communication and not a spoken account which could have easily been twisted.
 8. The apostolic teaching was thus passed on either in spoken form by the apostles themselves or in writing. The idea according to which the apostles were to rely on oral transmission of their teachings between the churches stands in direct contradiction to the way Paul acted that we know from the scripture.
2. Teachings not coming directly from the apostles.
1. There were only twelve apostles, however (Judas was replaced by Paul), and God provided other means through which His truth was to be proclaimed among the nations – apostles’ co-workers in ministry, evangelists and leaders of the local churches – about whom the scripture teaches us that in the early Church they were delegated by the apostles – and miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy and tongues. None of these means, however, leaves any room for the “apostolic tradition”.
 2. Contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church the fact that the apostles chose their co-workers in ministry or leaders of the local churches provides no basis for the idea of the “sacred apostolic tradition” either
 1. Firstly, the content of their teaching was the Word of God. This is evident in Stephen’s impressive speech in Acts 7 which shows remarkable knowledge of the

scripture and includes numerous quotations from the Old Testament, in Philip's preaching of the gospel and in Paul's exhortations to those he appointed co-workers in his ministry. It is the Word of God that was to be proclaimed and read in the congregations.

2. Apart from the Word of God the delegates and local church leaders nominated by the apostles were to deliver the teaching received directly from the apostles – whether written or spoken. It is the giving of this teaching and precise guidelines that was the purpose of the letters to them (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) which are themselves inspired scripture.
 3. It is clear, however, that even these oral teachings do not constitute the “sacred apostolic tradition” as some significant body of teachings, the remains of which we now ought to seek. If some teachings were doctrinally critical, they would not have been left to oral transmission which is liable to distortion, but would have been preserved in a much more secure written form – as it is the case with the gospels, Acts, epistles and the Book of Revelation.
 4. It is the apostles themselves who warn us not to go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18-19, etc.) and command that all that we say be in agreement with the Word of God (1 Peter 4:11). To leave key teachings to oral transmissions without putting them in the scripture directly contradicts these commands.
 5. According to all the above principles after the death of the apostles – when God ceased to give revelation that was to be included in the inspired books and when the New Testament canon had been closed – the content of the teaching, also in spoken form, was to be solely the Word of God.
3. With regard to the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, the revelation that the prophet was to proclaim to the congregation he would receive directly from God and this was also the case with the person who had the gift of tongues – such a person had through the Holy Spirit an ability to proclaim the Word of God in a foreign language that they didn't learn themselves (Acts 2). The message came directly from God and there is thus no room whatsoever for the “sacred apostolic tradition” in the communication of God's Word through supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.
3. All the teachings we need have been given to us by God in His Word.
 1. Are we really supposed to believe that Jesus Christ taught the apostles doctrines such as purgatory, prayer for the dead, indulgences, the cult and intercession of the saints, etc. – and somehow none of these teachings has been preserved in any of the gospels? Or that He did give these teachings to the apostles – and neither did they include them in any of their letters and only communicated them orally as “sacred apostolic tradition”, as it is allegedly the case with the assumption of Mary? In the eyes of the Catholic Church all these teachings originating from the “sacred tradition” constitute the “sacred deposit” (CCC, §84), despite none of them even being mentioned by Christ or any of the apostles in the scripture (!). If these teachings – which play such a critical role in the Catholic doctrine – were really true, would Jesus and the Apostles never have mentioned them in any of the inspired books of the New Testament? It is obvious that such a scenario is detached from reality. It was God's will that all the most important teachings be preserved in the inspired books of the New Testament and that these books remain.
 2. The oral teachings of the apostles – both those given directly to the churches and to the leaders they appointed in the early Church – were firstly in accordance with the Word of God, since the apostles received these teachings from Jesus and they were given revelation directly from God (from Christ and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit). If thus a certain teaching does not appear anywhere in the scripture – as

it is the case with the assumption of Mary – then we have absolutely no basis to think that it was present in spoken accounts.

3. Even among the teachings included in the books of the New Testament we have numerous instructions addressed to particular people in particular churches which may not apply to us directly or even indirectly. It is thus all the more probable that this was the case with numerous oral teachings. If these teachings pertained to doctrinal issues of universal character, then they would have been included in the scripture; if, however, they are not there, then it means that they did not pertain to such doctrinal matters and God did not decree it in His plan for them to be preserved.
4. Consequently, when it comes to the content of the teachings that did not survive, the Catholic Church, devoid of any evidence, can only engage in pointless speculation what as to what they could have referred to. Not only do such speculations open the path for lie and heresies to infect – and ultimately replace – the true Christian doctrine, however, but ultimately the purpose of the concept of the “sacred tradition” is exactly the justification of those teachings which have nothing to do with the scripture, as some of the ones mentioned above (purgatory, prayer for the dead, indulgences the cult and intercession of the saints, etc.) and as the doctrines of the Marian cult discussed here.
5. No proof in the matter of the “sacred tradition” is supplied by the testimonies of the fathers. They are in many cases hundreds of years older than the apostolic teaching, their apostolic origin can in no way be proven and they are often inconsistent and contradictory. All these problems refer to the testimonies of the teaching of Mary’s assumption (see the analysis of paragraphs 21 and 22).
6. Finally, the *modus operandi* of the Catholic Church depicts a sinful inclination of the human heart to ignore the inspired Word of God which is there to be studied in-depth and to occupy itself with speculations and matters about which the scriptures say nothing and whose investigation they never encourage. Quite the contrary – as the above quoted verses show, the scripture warns us not to go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6).
4. There is thus no such a thing as the “sacred traditions”. Jesus on numerous occasions rebuked the Pharisees for following human traditions while disobeying the inspired Word of God – exactly as it is the case with the Catholic Church today. The traditions of the Pharisees also had no foundation in the scripture – and they were also considered “sacred”.
5. Ultimately the Catholic Church’s method not only puts the inventions and opinions of the fathers and traditions which originate from pure fabrications and often forgeries (cf. analysis of paragraphs 21 and 22) at the same level as the Word of God; in fact, it puts them above the Word of God, since they often contradict the Word of God and it is these speculations that the Catholic Church follows instead of the scripture.
6. The Catholic Church created the concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition” in order to be able to justify their false teachings which have no basis in the scripture. This concept is false.

Paragraphs 38 and 39:

All these proofs and considerations of the holy Fathers and the theologians are based upon the Sacred Writings as their ultimate foundation. These set the loving Mother of God as it were before our very eyes as most intimately joined to her divine Son and as always sharing his lot. Consequently it seems impossible to think of her, the one who conceived Christ, brought him forth, nursed him with her milk, held him in her arms, and clasped him to her breast, as being apart from him in body, even though not in soul, after this earthly life. Since our Redeemer is

the Son of Mary, he could not do otherwise, as the perfect observer of God's law, than to honor, not only his eternal Father, but also his most beloved Mother. And, since it was within his power to grant her this great honor, to preserve her from the corruption of the tomb, we must believe that he really acted in this way.

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §38

We must remember especially that, since the second century, the Virgin Mary has been designated by the holy Fathers as the new Eve, who, although subject to the new Adam, is most intimately associated with him in that struggle against the infernal foe which, as foretold in the protoevangelium (Genesis 3:15), would finally result in that most complete victory over the sin and death which are always mentioned together in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 5-6; 1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 54-57). Consequently, just as the glorious resurrection of Christ was an essential part and the final sign of this victory, so that struggle which was common to the Blessed Virgin and her divine Son should be brought to a close by the glorification of her virginal body, for the same Apostle says: "When this mortal thing hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §39

The pope first states that "All these proofs and considerations of the holy Fathers and the theologians are based upon the Sacred Writings as their ultimate foundation" (!) and this statement is best left without a comment.

Then in this last section of his encyclical he quotes his main, allegedly biblical argument which is to provide conclusive evidence for the dogma of the assumption – the argument of the joined fate of Jesus and Mary: "These ["proofs and considerations of the holy Fathers and the theologians" supposedly based on the scripture – B.Syl.] set the loving Mother of God as it were before our very eyes as most intimately joined to her divine Son and as always sharing his lot". The pope also writes that "since it was within his [Christ's – B.Syl.] power to grant her this great honor, to preserve her from the corruption of the tomb, we must believe that he really acted in this way", again presenting an unbiblical speculation as a doctrine of faith.

The scripture not only nowhere mentions the fates of Jesus and Mary being joined, but – quite contrary – the mission of Christ as God who became a man to pay for the sins of humanity is totally unique and only He could have fulfilled it. This false teaching based on the erroneous interpretation of Genesis 3:15 which Pius XII quotes here was discussed in depth in chapter III, point 2.1.2. Mary took part in Christ's mission as a mother of His human nature and the one who raised Him, but even here her lack of understanding of her Son and of God's plan is evident.

25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. **26** And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **27** And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, **28** then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace,
According to Your word;

30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

32 A Light of revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel."

33 And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

Luke 2:25-33 NASB

41 Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. **42** And when He became twelve, they went up *there* according to the custom of the Feast; **43** and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, **44** but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they *began* looking for Him among their relatives and

acquaintances. **45** When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. **46** Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. **47** And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. **48** When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.” **49** And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s *house*?” **50** But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.
 Luke 2:41-50 NASB

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; **2** and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. **3** When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus *said to Him, “They have no wine.” **4** And Jesus *said to her, “Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.”
 John 2:1-4 NASB

Both the Catholic translation of John 2:4 in the New Jerusalem Bible and the footnote for this verse in the Polish Catholic Translation (Biblia Tysiąclecia) also show the determination of the Catholic Church to seek support for their false doctrines in the words of the scripture which not only give no basis to them whatsoever, but in fact show their falseness.

Mary, aware of the embarrassment of the newlyweds as a result of the wine running out, says to Jesus: “They have no wine”. In His response Jesus addresses Mary’s lack of understanding of God’s plan in a direct manner. Firstly, He explains to His mother that the shortage of wine is not their problem. The Catholic translation – “Woman, what do you want from me?” (NJB; an equivalent rendering is given also in the Polish Catholic translation) – does not faithfully render its meaning. Jesus uses an idiomatic expression which should be rendered “What is it to you and me?, “What has it to do with us?”. Secondly, in the words “My hour has not yet come” Jesus explains that the time of His ministry has not yet begun. The purpose of Jesus’s miracles was to show that His teaching was true – the miracles attested the truthfulness of His words. During the wedding at Cana, however, Jesus was not yet proclaiming the gospel which He began to do after John the Baptist has been imprisoned (Matthew 4:12-17; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:14-15). Finally, He addresses His mother γύναι (*gynai*) – “woman”. Such a designation, although not impolite and customary at that time, shows the distance. Mary had to understand that Jesus is first and foremost the Saviour of the world who must perfectly fulfil His Father’s will and not primarily her Son and the member of her family. Catholic translators and exegetes, unwilling to accept both the content and the tone of Jesus’ answer to His mother, firstly unfaithfully render His direct question and then, in the Polish Catholic version, seek a reference to the first woman – Eve – in the word “woman” used by Christ (!):

Jesus used the word “Woman” in relation to His mother probably also because He wanted to emphasise Her new title towards the entire humanity, referring to the first woman-mother Eve. Cf. John 19:26; Genesis 3:15, 20.

Jesus firstly directly rebukes His mother, but ultimately, out of respect towards her, performs the miracle (John 2:7-9). From Christ’s perspective, this entire situation can be presented in the following way: “What is it to me and you, woman? My hour has not come yet – my ministry, during which I will perform miracles to attest the veracity of my teaching, hasn’t started yet. And this is the reason I will perform miracles – to show that my teaching is true – and not out of human motives such as the one you are presenting to me now. Out of respect to you, however, I will perform this miracle and give them the wine. Your request, however, flows not out of considering God’s plan for me, but out of preoccupation with human needs”.

Let’s also observe Mary’s behaviour in Mark 3:20-25.

20 And He *came home, and the crowd *gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal. **21** When His own people heard *of this*, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, “He has lost His senses.” **22** The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.” **23** And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, “How

can Satan cast out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. **26** If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished! **27** But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

28 "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; **29** but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" – **30** because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

31 Then His mother and His brothers *arrived, and standing outside they sent *word* to Him and called Him. **32** A crowd was sitting around Him, and they *said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You." **33** Answering them, He *said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?" **34** Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He *said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!" **35** For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."

Mark 3:20-35 NASB

Such a crowd gathered in Jesus' house that together with the apostles He couldn't even eat bread (verse 20) and His relatives (verse 21) – His mother and His brothers (verse 31) – thought that He had lost His senses and came to seize Him (verse 21). We thus see that together with His brothers Mary attempted to interrupt Jesus's teaching – through which He was perfectly fulfilling His Father's will. For this reason Jesus responded to their call in a direct and stern manner - "Who are My mother and My brothers?" No mother would find such words easy to hear, but for Jesus it was the truth and the will of God that were always the most important. We should notice that Jesus did not give glory to His mother and did not obey her call which stemmed from her lack of understanding of God's plan, but responded in a way that directed the attention of His audience to what really matters. Had Mary's and His brothers' motive been right, Jesus would have come out to them (Sylwestrowicz, 2000).

The argument of the alleged joined fate of Mary and Jesus which Pius XII quotes in his encyclical, has also been mentioned by John Paul II during his general audience from the 2nd of July 1997 when he also admitted that the teaching of the assumption is not found in the New Testament.

Although the New Testament does not explicitly affirm Mary's Assumption [the pope uses the expression "the New Testament does not explicitly affirm Mary's Assumption", but it would be honest and accurate to say that "the New Testament nowhere mentions the assumption" – B.Syl.], it offers a basis for it because it strongly emphasized the Blessed Virgin's perfect union with Jesus' destiny. This union, which is manifested, from the time of the Saviour's miraculous conception, in the Mother's participation in her Son's mission and especially in her association with his redemptive sacrifice, cannot fail to require a continuation after death. Perfectly united with the life and saving work of Jesus, Mary shares his heavenly destiny in body and soul.

John Paul II, general audience, July 2, 1997, §3

The Bull *Munificentissimus Deus* cited above refers to the participation of the woman of the Proto-gospel in the struggle against the serpent, recognizing Mary as the New Eve, and presents the Assumption as a consequence of Mary's union with Christ's saving work. In this regard it says: "Consequently, just as the glorious Resurrection of Christ was an essential part and the final sign of this victory, so that struggle which was common to the Blessed Virgin and her divine Son should be brought to a close by the glorification of her virginal body" (Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, AAS 42 (1950), 768).

The Assumption is therefore the culmination of the struggle which involved Mary's generous love in the redemption of humanity and is the fruit of her unique sharing in the victory of the Cross.

John Paul II, general audience, July 2, 1997, §4

The alleged union of Mary with the destiny of Jesus – including His saving work – which both Pius XII and John Paul II quote based on the Catholic interpretation of Genesis 3:15 is one of the main arguments of the Catholic Church, but it is a wrong argument to which Genesis 3:15 provides no basis (this error has been discussed above – chapter III, point 2.1.2). Since in their false interpretation the Catholic Church seeks in Genesis 3:15 the unification of the destiny of Mary and Jesus in the defeat of

Satan and based on it builds the teaching of her sinlessness, this verse is often used in the defence of other Marian doctrines. These doctrines are linked to each other in many places and one false teaching becomes the basis of another.

It should be emphasised here, however, that the quoted statement of the pope is a serious error and a false teaching regarding the most fundamental truth of the Christian faith – the payment for sin and salvation which we attain through it.

This union, which is manifested, from the time of the Saviour's miraculous conception, in the Mother's participation in her Son's mission and especially in her association with his redemptive sacrifice, cannot fail to require a continuation after death. Perfectly united with the life and saving work of Jesus, Mary shares his heavenly destiny in body and soul.
John Paul II, general audience, July 2, 1997, §3

The Assumption is therefore the culmination of the struggle which involved Mary's generous love in the redemption of humanity and is the fruit of her unique sharing in the victory of the Cross.
John Paul II, general audience, July 2, 1997, §4

Only the God-man, our Lord, Jesus Christ, could have paid for our sins – and He has accomplished that on the cross. No man, being a sinner himself, is able to pay for his own sin and much less for the sins of all humanity – and no man could have taken part in the redemptive mission of Christ and in His sacrifice and victory on the cross. Both in the Old and the New Testament there is no mention of anyone sharing in the redemption that Christ accomplished for us. To ascribe such participation to Mary – nowhere mentioned in the Word of God – is a serious violation of the teaching of the scripture. Since only God could have paid for the sins of the entire human race, it is also equivalent to giving Mary the glory due only to God – and in this the border of idolatry is crossed. The fact that Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ in His human nature does not make her a participant in the sacrifice of Christ – just as we cannot say that the one who passed the paintbrush to the painter created the painting.

The scripture also says nothing of “the glorification of her virginal body” – it is another invention of the pope. The pope's quotation of 1 Corinthians 15:54 to defend this statement is totally irrelevant. In chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians Paul writes about the resurrection and nowhere in the context of is there any mention of Mary.

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. **53** For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. **55** O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; **57** but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **58** Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.
1 Corinthians 15:50-58 NASB

Paragraph 40:

Hence the revered Mother of God, from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ in one and the same decree of predestination (the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, 599.), immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and its consequences, finally obtained, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own Son, having overcome death, she might be

taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages (1 Timothy 1:17).
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §40

This paragraph constitutes a concise summary of several false Marian doctrines. The pope describes Mary using the following designations:

1. “the revered Mother of God” – the error of perceiving Mary as the “Mother of God” has been discussed in chapter I;
2. “from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ in one and the same decree of predestination” – this error has been demonstrated in chapter III, point 2.1.2; see also the commentary to paragraphs 38 and 39 above;
3. “immaculate in her conception” – error demonstrated in chapter III;
4. “a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood” – “divine motherhood” – as in point 1 above; the error of Mary’s perpetual virginity is discussed in chapter VI;
5. “the noble associate of the divine Redeemer” – as in point 2 above;
6. “finally obtained, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own Son, having overcome death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven”;

1. This entire chapter is devoted to the false teaching of the assumption.
2. Only Christ overcame death by His sacrifice on the cross and resurrection – by paying for the sins of the entire humanity Christ broke the power of death and it will be finally destroyed before the commencement of the eternal state (Revelation 20:14). He had the power to raise the son of the widow from Nain (Luke 7:11-17), the daughter of Jairus (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:41-56) and Lazarus (John 11:1-46) from the dead, He is the first to rise from the dead and it is thanks to His sacrifice that we can be resurrected to eternal life. He is the Lord of life and death. Not a single verse in the scripture speaks either of Mary overcoming death in any way or her participation in Jesus’ victory.

8 He will swallow up death for all time,
And the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces,
And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth;
For the Lord has spoken.
Isaiah 25:8 NASB

9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, **10** but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.
2 Timothy 1:9-10 NASB

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,”
John 11:25 NASB

6 Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.
John 14:6 NASB

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, **9** knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

Romans 6:8-9 NASB

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. **21** For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. **23** But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, **24** then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. **25** For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. **26** The last enemy that will be abolished is death.
1 Corinthians 15:20-26 NASB

54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. **55** O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; **57** but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 NASB

17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. **18** He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Colossians 1:17-18 NASB

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Hebrews 2:14-15 NASB

17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, **18** and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Revelation 1:17-18 NASB

7. „taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages (1 Timothy 1:17)” – the error of regarding Mary as a “queen” or spouse of Christ the King has been discussed in the analysis of the second and third part of paragraph 26; ascribing to her the same royal status as Christ's is idolatry.

Paragraph 41:

Since the universal Church, within which dwells the Spirit of Truth who infallibly directs it toward an ever more perfect knowledge of the revealed truths, has expressed its own belief many times over the course of the centuries, and since the bishops of the entire world are almost unanimously petitioning that the truth of the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven should be defined as a dogma of divine and Catholic faith--this truth which is based on the Sacred Writings, which is thoroughly rooted in the minds of the faithful, which has been approved in ecclesiastical worship from the most remote times, which is completely in harmony with the other revealed truths, and which has been expounded and explained magnificently in the work, the science, and the wisdom of the theologians - we believe that the moment appointed in the plan of divine providence for the solemn proclamation of this outstanding privilege of the Virgin Mary has already arrived.

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §41

The pope attempts to give his proclamation the status of infallibility by referring to the Spirit of Truth which allegedly directs the Catholic Church “toward an ever more perfect knowledge of the revealed truths”. The baselessness and falsehood of the statement that it is the Holy Spirit who guides the Catholic Church in their teachings have been shown in the analysis of paragraphs 11 and 12. We should also remember that although the scripture is inerrant (paragraph 37, point P37.2), nowhere is inerrancy or infallibility ascribed to anyone who teaches the scripture – or who allegedly teaches it, as it is the case with the Roman Church – to any human office, authority or institution.

Based on the presented evidence the pope affirms that the proclamation of the dogma is warranted. The worthlessness of every argument referred to in this paragraph has been discussed above.

Paragraph 42:

We, who have placed our pontificate under the special patronage of the most holy Virgin, to whom we have had recourse so often in times of grave trouble, we who have consecrated the entire human race to her Immaculate Heart in public ceremonies, and who have time and time again experienced her powerful protection, are confident that this solemn proclamation and definition of the Assumption will contribute in no small way to the advantage of human society, since it redounds to the glory of the Most Blessed Trinity, to which the Blessed Mother of God is bound by such singular bonds. It is to be hoped that all the faithful will be stirred up to a stronger piety toward their heavenly Mother, and that the souls of all those who glory in the Christian name may be moved by the desire of sharing in the unity of Jesus Christ's Mystical Body and of increasing their love for her who shows her motherly heart to all the members of this august body. And so we may hope that those who meditate upon the glorious example Mary offers us may be more and more convinced of the value of a human life entirely devoted to carrying out the heavenly Father's will and to bringing good to others. Thus, while the illusory teachings of materialism and the corruption of morals that follows from these teachings threaten to extinguish the light of virtue and to ruin the lives of men by exciting discord among them, in this magnificent way all may see clearly to what a lofty goal our bodies and souls are destined. Finally it is our hope that belief in Mary's bodily Assumption into heaven will make our belief in our own resurrection stronger and render it more effective. Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §42

The pope's statement that the proclamation of the dogma of the assumption “redounds to the glory of the Most Blessed Trinity, to which the Blessed Mother of God is bound by such singular bonds” perfectly describes the state of affairs exactly opposite to reality. Pius XII attempts to create a pretence that the dogma of Mary's assumption glorifies the Triune God, but in reality it only contributed to the growth and expansion of the cult of Mary. Worshiping Mary in this cult not only does not lead to God, but is an objective in itself – and consequently only draws us away from God. This same false impression is created by pope Francis who said (2013) that Mary “constantly guides us to her son Jesus”, despite the worship given to Mary having lived its own life for centuries now and in many cases having replaced faith in Christ as the Saviour – or being equated with it.

Catholics are engaged in the cult of Mary, but don't know how we achieve salvation and don't understand that the only way to it is by accepting Christ's sacrifice on the cross through faith – which is the most fundamental truth of the Christian faith. The papacy thus gives its false teachings a facade of legitimacy while ignoring their real effect, which in this case is the worship of a creature instead of the Creator – which is idolatry. False teachings are often given an appearance of truth – let's remember that Satan, who himself masquerades as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), has been employing this method from the beginning (Genesis 3; Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44, etc.).

The proclamation of this dogma has not contributed to the glory of God. Nothing that is false can glorify the God of truth (John 3:33, 7:28, 17:3; 1 John 5:20; cf. Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18).

6 Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;”
Exodus 34:6 NASB

16 “Because he who is blessed in the earth
Will be blessed by the God of truth;
And he who swears in the earth
Will swear by the God of truth;
Because the former troubles are forgotten,
And because they are hidden from My sight!”
Isaiah 65:16 NASB

26 “I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true;
and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world.”
John 8:26 NASB

Paragraph 43:

We rejoice greatly that this solemn event falls, according to the design of God's providence, during this Holy Year, so that we are able, while the great Jubilee is being observed, to adorn the brow of God's Virgin Mother with this brilliant gem, and to leave a monument more enduring than bronze of our own most fervent love for the Mother of God.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §43

God is eternal and has no mother (chapter I). Using this title towards Mary has significantly contributed to giving her the glory due only to God and treating her as if she were de facto a goddess and equal to God.

Paragraph 44:

For which reason, after we have poured forth prayers of supplication again and again to God, and have invoked the light of the Spirit of Truth, for the glory of Almighty God who has lavished his special affection upon the Virgin Mary, for the honor of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages and the Victor over sin and death, for the increase of the glory of that same august Mother, and for the joy and exultation of the entire Church; 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.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §44

The dogma proclaimed.

Paragraph 45:

Hence if anyone, which God forbid, should dare willfully to deny or to call into doubt that which we have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith.
Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §45

From the Catholic faith – indeed. From the true faith based on the Word of God – quite contrary.

Paragraph 47:

It is forbidden to any man to change this, our declaration, pronouncement, and definition or, by rash attempt, to oppose and counter it. If any man should presume to make such an attempt, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Pius XII, 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*, §47

Seeking the truth requires courage, just as it requires courage to oppose a lie.

God wants us to seek the truth.

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

Matthew 7:7 NASB

And He wants us to come to the knowledge of the truth (cf. 2 Timothy 2:25).

3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **4** who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 NASB

This truth is His Word (paragraph 37, point P37.2). Only the Word of God contains the message of the only path to salvation – the gospel of Jesus Christ who as the God-man paid for all sins of humanity by His sacrifice on the cross. And only through the Word of God do we get to know the will of God so as to fulfil it in our life.

The wrath of God abides on those who reject this offer of salvation in Christ because they have not accepted the payment for their sins and God in His perfect righteousness cannot allow them to spend eternity with Him.²⁷

36 “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

John 3:36 NASB

Those, however, who oppose false human teachings do not act against God and so the pope’s threat in which he usurps the right to administer God’s wrath is baseless. We are only to fear God (Deuteronomy 6:24, 10:12; 1 Peter 1:17) and not those who, abiding in their erroneous conviction that through their position they have the right to do so, use His name in an attempt to invest their own false views with authority (cf. Matthew 10:28).

As for the wrath of “the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul”, it is an invention of the pope which contradicts the teaching of the scripture which clearly says that all sin is committed against God (cf. Genesis 39:9; Luke 15:18).

6 Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.

Genesis 20:6 NASB

4 As for me, I said, “O Lord, be gracious to me; Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.”

Psalms 41:4 NASB

13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.

2 Samuel 12:13 NASB

²⁷ We should bear in mind that using a word such as “wrath” in relation to God is an anthropopathism – ascribing human traits and emotions to God in order to present a particular truth in a way that we find easily comprehensible. God does not experience wrath, neither does He experience emotions, as we do. Unbelievers are condemned by God not because of His actual wrath, but because of His absolute righteousness through which accepting any evil is against His nature.

6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,
And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.
Psalm 51:6 NASB

Only He is the Judge (Psalm 96:11-13, 98:8-9; Jeremiah 11:20; Acts 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:8).

11 God is a righteous judge,
Psalm 7:11a NASB

8 And He will judge the world in righteousness;
He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity.
Psalm 9:8 NASB

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work,
conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*;
1 Peter 1:17 NASB

And only to Him belongs the right to give to each person what they deserve (Proverbs 24:12; Amos 2:4; Matthew 25:41; Romans 2:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

35 'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution,
In due time their foot will slip;
For the day of their calamity is near,
And the impending things are hastening upon them.'
Deuteronomy 32:35 NASB

12 And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord,
For You recompense a man according to his work.
Psalm 62:12 NASB

19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him;
He will also hear their cry and will save them.
Psalm 145:19 NASB

14 "I, the Lord, have spoken; it is coming and I will act. I will not relent, and I will not pity
and I will not be sorry; according to your ways and according to your deeds I will judge you,"
declares the Lord God.
Ezekiel 24:14 NASB

27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will
then repay every man according to his deeds.
Matthew 16:27 NASB

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and
heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. **12** And I saw the dead, the great and the
small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened,
which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the
books, according to their deeds. **13** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death
and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of*
them according to their deeds. **14** Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.
This is the second death, the lake of fire. **15** And if anyone's name was not found written in the
book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
Revelation 20:11-15 NASB

This is why in the context of judgment for sin, the scripture speaks only of God's wrath (Joshua 7:1;
Psalm 21:8-9, 78:56-64, 106:34-43; Jeremiah 30:23-24; Nahum 1:1-8; Zephaniah 1:14-15; Romans
2:5-6, 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Hebrews 10:30; Revelation 19:15; cf. Deuteronomy 1:26-40).

14 Then you will see *this*, and your heart will be glad,
And your bones will flourish like the new grass;
And the hand of the Lord will be made known to His servants,
But He will be indignant toward His enemies.

15 For behold, the Lord will come in fire
And His chariots like the whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For the Lord will execute judgment by fire
And by His sword on all flesh,
And those slain by the Lord will be many.
Isaiah 66:14-16 NASB

19 “Behold, the storm of the Lord has gone forth in wrath,
Even a whirling tempest;
It will swirl down on the head of the wicked.

20 “The anger of the Lord will not turn back
Until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart;
In the last days you will clearly understand it.
Jeremiah 23:19-20 NASB

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness
of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,
Romans 1:18 NASB

In relation to the judgment of sin the Word of God not only does not mention the wrath of man, but even warns against it.²⁸

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along
with all malice.
Ephesians 4:31 NASB

8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech
from your mouth.
Colossians 3:8 NASB

The Bible warns against taking revenge and repaying evil with evil (Proverbs 20:22, 24:29; 1
Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Peter 3:9).

39 But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek,
turn the other to him also.
Matthew 5:39 NASB

17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. **18** If
possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. **19** Never take your own
revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine,
I will repay,” says the Lord.
Romans 12:17-19 NASB

This command obviously applies all the more if a particular evil has not even been committed against
us, as it is the case here – since all sin is committed against God and not the apostles. We are all
sinners (Romans 3:23), including Peter and Paul²⁹ – and we are all saved by grace through faith

28 The wrath of man, contrary to the wrath of God, is not a result of perfect righteousness, but an
emotional reaction, the motives of which are usually wrong.

29 Both Peter and Paul had their serious failures. Before his conversion Paul persecuted Christians
(Acts 8:3, 9:1, 9:13, 9:21, 22:4, 22:19, 26:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6;
1 Timothy 1:13). Peter, already as a believer, three times denied Christ (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark
14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:25-27) despite earlier asserting that he would never do that

(Ephesians 2:8-9) and not by our own works. The wrath of a man in the context of judgment for sin would be a sign of hypocrisy.

Paragraphs 45 and 47 finally show how the pope ascribes inerrancy to the proclaimed doctrine and condemnation to everyone who does not accept it – conduct typical for cults. In the true Christian faith inerrancy is only ascribed to the inspired Word of God and it is only to this Word that absolute obedience is due. If infallibility is assigned to a person and the interpretation presented by this person and if absolute obedience is required to both the person and their interpretation – and under the pressure of excommunication – the border of cult has been crossed.

4. Summary.

1. The biblical basis for the dogma of the assumption of Mary.

1. The “assumption of Mary” is not mentioned anywhere in the Word of God.
2. As it is the case with other doctrines, so also with the dogma of the assumption the Catholic Church follows a procedure opposite to what they should. They first build a teaching based on speculations and extra-biblical traditions and then seek to find a justification for it in the scripture – despite its origin having nothing to do with the scripture.
3. No passage of scripture which the pope quotes in his argumentation provides any basis for the dogma of the assumption. In an attempt to find grounds for this false teaching in the Word of God the fathers of the Catholic Church break the fundamental principles of biblical exegesis – they take the verses out of their context, twist their meaning so as to make them fit their own inventions and speculations, ignore parallel passages, etc. (cf. Analysis of paragraphs 26, 27, 29, 32, 38 and 39).
4. The Word of God is treated by the Catholic Church like mere raw material with which they can do what they want and mould in such a way as to make it usable to defend their teachings. Every passage of scripture, however, has its meaning – the meaning which God has intended for it. It is this meaning – ordained by God Himself – that we must seek.
5. One of the main biblical arguments quoted by the pope is the alleged union of Mary with Jesus, based on the erroneous interpretation of Genesis 3:15. The error of this interpretation has been discussed in chapter III, point 2.1.2 Additional analysis of this interpretation in the context of the teaching of the assumption is given in the commentary to paragraphs 38 and 39. This false reasoning of the Catholic Church led to ascribing to Mary a status de facto equal to Christ (paragraph 33).
6. The pope’s argumentation contains contradictions (cf. paragraph 30) and shows lack of understanding of the teaching of the scripture on subjects such as the resurrection (cf. paragraph 34).

2. Extra biblical sources.

1. The position of the Catholic Church with regard to extra-biblical sources of doctrines.

(Matthew 26:33-35; Mark 14:29-31; Luke 22:33-34; John 13:37-38). Because of his fear of the Jews he also hypocritically distanced himself from Gentile believers (Galatians 2:11-14). Due to excessive reverence to Peter stemming from wrongly considering him as the first pope, whom he certainly was not – the papacy is an unbiblical office – the footnote for Galatians 2:14 in the Polish Catholic translation (Biblia Tysiąclecia) justifies his plainly wrong conduct, which Paul rightly condemns as hypocrisy in his inspired letter. The footnote, rendered to English, says that Peter “yielded to the zeal of the advocates of Judaism for tactical reasons, in order to avoid unrest” (!).

1. According to the official position of the Catholic Church teachings which lack scriptural basis and originate from extra-biblical sources can be accepted as doctrines of faith if only in the eyes of the Catholic authorities they do not directly contradict the teaching of the scripture.
2. This position contradicts the teaching of the Word of God and opens the door to false doctrines. The scripture not only never mentions the procedure according to which the Catholic Church acts, but clearly forbids it (paragraph 37). We must not go beyond what is written and add to the Word of God.
3. The arguments of Pius XII, the arguments of the fathers and the Catholic doctrines which which he quotes in his encyclical (such as the false teaching of the immaculate conception) frequently contradict the Word of God – and it is these arguments which contributed to the proclamation of the dogma of the assumption. Thus the basis for a dogma which allegedly does not contradict the scripture are arguments of the Catholic Church fathers and teachings which do contradict it. No teaching built on false premises can itself be true.
4. The Catholic Church claims that Catholic doctrines lacking any biblical foundation originate from the “sacred apostolic tradition”. The Catholic Church created the concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition” in order to be able to justify their false teachings which have no basis in the scripture. This concept is false (see paragraph 37).

2. Extra-biblical sources quoted in the encyclical.

1. In the encyclical the pope often uses other false Catholic teachings and interpretations as arguments for the assumption (for example he frequently quotes Mary’s immaculate conception, perpetual virginity, her being “full of grace”, etc.; cf. paragraph 3 and 4, 27, etc.). This shows one of the key mechanisms of the Catholic Church in the process of establishing a dogma in which one false teaching becomes the basis for another. False Catholic doctrines complement each other which creates an impression that they are consistent and built on a solid foundation. This impression is false, however, since none of them has any basis in the scripture. We are dealing with feet of clay.
2. The testimonies of the fathers of the Catholic Church constitute a considerable part of the pope’s argumentation and they are de facto given the authority of the Word of God. Not only do they have no foundation in the scripture, but their original sources are fictional fables and heretical speculations which were frequently forgeries as well (cf. Paragraphs 21 and 22). Frequently sheer speculations, inventions and opinions of the fathers are presented as proof (cf. paragraphs 21 i 22, 30, 32, 34, 35).
3. Apart from the views of the fathers, the truthfulness of the dogma of the assumption is meant to be confirmed by “the innumerable temples which have been dedicated to the Virgin Mary assumed into heaven”, “sacred images, exposed therein for the veneration of the faithful, which bring this unique triumph of the Blessed Virgin before the eyes of all men”, the fact that “cities, dioceses, and individual regions have been placed under the special patronage and guardianship of the Virgin Mother of God assumed into heaven”, that “religious institutes, with the approval of the Church, have been founded and have taken their name from this privilege”, that “in the Rosary of Mary, the recitation of which this Apostolic See so urgently recommends, there is one mystery proposed for pious meditation which, as all know, deals with the Blessed Virgin’s Assumption into heaven” (paragraph 15), that “since ancient times, there have been both in the East and in the West solemn liturgical offices commemorating this privilege” (paragraph 16).

4. The proclamation of the dogma is meant to be supported by the desires of the fathers and the members of the Catholic Church (cf. paragraphs 6, 11 and 12).

3. Errors of the extra-biblical argumentation.

1. The method of the Catholic Church not only puts the inventions and opinions of the fathers and traditions which originate from pure fabrications and often forgeries (cf. analysis of paragraphs 21 and 22) at the same level as the Word of God – it puts them in fact above the Word of God, since they often contradict the Word of God and it is these speculations that the Catholic Church follows instead of the scripture.
2. The fallacy which makes a significant part of the pope's argumentation worthless is its secondary character. In the eyes of the Catholic Church merely the fact that the faith in a given teaching has been expressed – in the case of the assumption for example through building temples dedicated to “the Virgin Mary assumed into heaven” or painting images depicting this event – makes this teaching true. Following this path of reasoning we can justify any sort of falsehood and idolatry, if they only become popular enough and find some outward expression. All the testimonies of the fathers and expressions of faith in the assumption which the pope enumerates only show that this belief was present among the Catholics, but they in no way establish the veracity of the event itself – just as the existence of the pantheon of Greek gods is not proven through the literature which describes them, paintings which depict them, or even temples devoted to them (cf. paragraphs 15, 16, 17, etc.).
3. Some arguments quoted by the pope are tautological – one groundless conclusion is based on another, still providing no evidence for the teaching of the assumption (cf. paragraph 28 – “for it is wrong to believe that her body has seen corruption” – baseless statement number 1 – “because it was really united again to her soul and, together with it, crowned with great glory in the heavenly courts” - baseless statement number 2; both statements are devoid of any biblical foundation or historical proof).
4. The pope attempts to give more weight to the above mentioned sources by emphasising their antiquity and for this reason extra-biblical arguments are often preceded with expressions such as “for many centuries”, “since ancient times”, etc.
 1. Firstly, the antiquity of a certain belief is no warrant of its truthfulness. There are many ancient proofs of polytheism and idolatry and heresies were appearing from the very beginning of the existence of Christianity. In the Catholic Church, however, a mechanism is at work according to which a statement by a father on a given teaching or an expression of faith therein – even if the teaching itself be completely baseless or even contradictory to the scripture – grows in legitimacy and comes into force until it becomes a part of the Catholic tradition and reaches the status of a view that is commonly accepted (paragraph 34). And thus in the Catholic Church falsehood can become true – if only its origins reach far enough into the past and if it is repeated for long enough. In the eyes of God, however, falsehood always remains falsehood.
 2. Secondly, despite the pope citing the antiquity of the quoted testimonies, in the case of Mary's assumption the first accounts, whose total lack of credibility has been shown above (see analysis of paragraphs 21 and 22), are dated to the late fifth, early sixth century – and so about four hundred years after the death of the last apostle (!).
5. In the encyclical there are also a few arguments where the border of absurdity is crossed. In the eyes of the pope “a proof on the order of a sensible experience” is supplied by the fact that the Catholic Church “never looked for the bodily relics of the Blessed Virgin nor proposed them for the veneration of the people” (paragraph 33).

4. In the eyes of the Catholic Church, its authority ultimately justifies and ratifies any Catholic teaching.

1. The ultimate argument on which the Catholic Church leans and which the pope quotes several times in his encyclical is the alleged infallibility of the Catholic Church stemming from its teaching authority and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This argument means that if the Catholic Church has accepted a particular teaching, then it means that it must be true (cf. paragraphs 11 and 12, 36). This argument, however, is false.
 1. The verses which the pope quotes to justify this position (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:15) have got nothing to do with the Catholic Church. It is beyond the scope of this work to show the baselessness of the claim of the Catholic Church to be the successors of the apostles (although it is worth getting acquainted with the history of the Roman see from which the Catholic Church originated and the factors through which it rose to its position of dominance and which have nothing to do with the Word of God), but the word “church” in the New Testament is always used in its fundamental meaning – as the community of those who are genuine believers in Christ. It does not refer to any denomination, including Roman Catholicism – none of the denominations of today even existed when the New Testament was being written.
 2. When it comes to the Catholic Church allegedly being guided by the Holy Spirit, it is enough to study the history of this institution to prove the falseness of this claim. The Holy Spirit would not lead to the crusades, to the inquisition, to indulgence practices, to sexual abuse and suppressing this crime by the highest Catholic authorities. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 16:13) and leads to the truth – He never leads to teachings which contradict the teaching of the Word of God, as it is the case here (cf. paragraphs 11 and 12).
 3. Although the scripture is infallible and inerrant (paragraph 37, point P37.2), nowhere is infallibility or inerrancy ascribed to anyone who teaches the scripture (or who allegedly teaches it, as it is the case with the Roman Church) – to any human office, authority or institution.
2. In order to give the proclamation of the dogma of the assumption an appearance of orthodoxy, Pius XII writes that it “redounds to the glory of the Most Blessed Trinity”, despite its actual result being exactly the opposite. This dogma only contributed to the growth and expansion of the cult of Mary who is given divine worship by Catholics (paragraph 42) and consequently only draws away from God. The papacy gives its false teachings a facade of legitimacy while ignoring their real effect, which in this case is the worship of a creature instead of the Creator. The danger of falsehood is that it is frequently given an appearance of truth. Satan, who himself masquerades as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), has been employing this method from the beginning (Genesis 3; Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44, etc.).
3. In order to ensure that no member of the Catholic Church dares to deny or call into doubt the dogma, the pope uses his authority to pronounce a threat according to which everyone who does not accept this new teaching “has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith” (paragraph 45) and “he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul” (paragraph 47). Earlier in the encyclical (paragraph 36) those who deny this unbiblical teaching are described as “imbued with a spirit that is heretical rather than Catholic” and who “are not to be listened to patiently but are everywhere to be denounced as over-contentious or rash men”. We encounter here a mechanism typical for cults where under the pressure of excommunication absolute obedience is demanded towards a person considered infallible and to the teachings advanced by them.

3. Conclusions.

1. The scripture is the sole authority and source of truth for a believer. It has been inspired by God who led Its authors through the Holy Spirit. It is the Word of God in which He has revealed His will to us.
2. The scripture not only does not point to any other source of God's truth, but warns that nothing be added to it and nothing be taken away from it. We must not go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6).
3. To leave key teachings to oral transmissions without putting them in the scripture directly contradicts these commands. If certain teachings were doctrinally critical, they would not have been left to oral transmission which is liable to distortion, but would have been preserved in a much more secure written form – as it is the case with the gospels, Acts, epistles and the Book of Revelation.
4. Are we really supposed to believe that Jesus Christ taught the apostles doctrines such as purgatory, prayer for the dead, indulgences, the cult and intercession of the saints, etc. – and somehow none of these teachings has been preserved in any of the gospels? Or that He did give these teachings to the apostles – and neither did they include any of them in any of their letters and only communicated them orally as “sacred apostolic tradition”, as it is allegedly the case with the assumption of Mary? If these teachings – which play such a critical role in the Catholic doctrine – were really true, would Jesus and the Apostles never have mentioned them in any of the inspired book of the New Testament?
5. God gave us in His Word all that He wanted and saw as appropriate and all that we need to have a relationship with Him and to be able to act according to His will. If anything else was needed for this purpose, God would have provided us that. It was God's will that all the most important teachings be preserved in the inspired books of the New Testament and that these books remain. According to all the above principles after the death of the apostles – when God ceased to give revelation that was to be included in the inspired books and when the New Testament canon had been closed – the content of the teaching, also in spoken form, was to be solely the Word of God.
6. The Catholic Church created the concept of the “sacred apostolic tradition” – according to which the authority of the Word of God is given to extra-biblical sources – in order to be able in this way to justify their false teachings which have no basis in the scripture. The Catholic Church puts “traditions” above the Word of God and follows them at the cost of the Word of God.
7. The concept of the “sacred tradition” is false. It is Satan's Trojan horse serving to introduce falsehood into Christian doctrine.
8. The teaching of the assumption of Mary which has been built on “traditions” is baseless and false.

References:

- Apostolic Tradition (b.d.). Retrieved from: <https://www.catholic.com/tract/apostolic-tradition>
- Budge, E. A. W. (1969). *The gods of the Egyptians: or, Studies in Egyptian mythology* (Vol. 1). Courier Corporation.
- Carol, J. B. (Ed.). (1955). *Mariology* (Vol. 1). Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishing Company.
- Carol, J. B. (Ed.). (1957). *Mariology* (Vol. 2). Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishing Company.
- Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., Arndt, W. F., Gingrich, F. W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Duffy, E. (1989). *What Catholics Believe About Mary*. London: Catholic Truth Society.
- Francis, P. (2013). Video message, 12 October. Retrieved from: <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2013/10/14/in-front-of-fatima-statue-pope-francis-entrusts-the-world-to-mary/>

- Immaculate Conception and Assumption. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://www.catholic.com/tract/immaculate-conception-and-assumption>.
- John Paul, II. (1994). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENGO015/_INDEX.HTM
- John Paul, II (1997). *Church believes in Mary's Assumption*, General audience, July 2. Retrieved from: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_02071997.html
- John Paul, II. (1998). *Meeting with Ecclesiastical Movements and New Communities*, Speech, May 30. Retrieved from: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19980530_riflessioni.html
- Luginbill, R. D. (b.d.). *The Coming Tribulation: A History of the Apocalypse, Part 2B: The Heavenly Prelude to the Tribulation, Revelation 4:1-7:17*. Retrieved from: <https://ichthys.com/Tribulation-Part2B.htm>
- Luginbill, R. D. (b.d.). *The Coming Tribulation: A History of the Apocalypse, Part 4: The Great Tribulation, Revelation 11:15-15:8*. Retrieved from: <http://ichthys.com/Tribulation-Part4.htm>
- Ott, L. (1974). *Fundamentals of Catholic dogma*. Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books.
- Pius, X. (1904). *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum*. Apostolic Constitutions. Retrieved from: http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_02021904_ad-diem-illum-laetissimum.html
- Pius, XII. (1950). *Munificentissimus Deus*. Apostolic Constitutions. Retrieved from: https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus.html
- Slick, M. (n.d.). *Roman Catholicism*. Retrieved from: <https://carm.org/cut-catholic>
- Sylwestrowicz, S. (2000). *Maria, matka Jezusa – studium postaci. Słowo i życie, 2*. Retrieved from: <http://slowoizycie.pl/00-2/mar.htm>
- Venables, E. (1880). *Mary the Virgin, Festivals of*. In W. Smith & S. Cheetham (Eds.), *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* (Vol. 2, pp. 1139-1155). London: Murray.

See also:

<https://carm.org/bodily-assumption-mary>

<https://christiantruth.com/articles/articles-roman-catholicism/assumption/>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Assumption-Mary.html>