

VIII. Prayer to Mary and for her intercession.

1. Teaching of the Catholic church.

1.1. Prayer to Mary.

Contrary to the view of many Catholics that Mary is only asked for intercession, the official position of the Catholic church says that we can address our prayers directly to her.

Mary is the perfect *Orans* (pray-er), a figure of the Church. When we pray to her, we are adhering with her to the plan of the Father, who sends his Son to save all men. Like the beloved disciple we welcome Jesus' mother into our homes (cf. John 19:27), for she has become the mother of all the living. We can pray with and to her. The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary and united with it in hope (*Lumen gentium*, 68-69).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2679

Beginning with Mary's unique cooperation with the working of the Holy Spirit, the Churches developed their prayer to the holy Mother of God, centering it on the person of Christ manifested in his mysteries. In countless hymns and antiphons expressing this prayer, two movements usually alternate with one another: the first "magnifies" the Lord for the "great things" he did for his lowly servant and through her for all human beings (cf. Luke 1:46-55) the second entrusts the supplications and praises of the children of God to the Mother of Jesus, because she now knows the humanity which, in her, the Son of God espoused.
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2675

1.2. Prayer for Mary's intercession.

Mary's intercession is an important doctrine in the Catholic church according to which believers can entrust their supplications to her and she prays for them. This doctrine is described in detail in the catechism in the context of the prayer "Hail Mary".

Holy Mary, Mother of God: With Elizabeth we marvel, "And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me (Luke 1:43)?" Because she gives us Jesus, her son, Mary is Mother of God and our mother; we can entrust all our cares and petitions to her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself: "Let it be to me according to your word (Luke 1:38)". By entrusting ourselves to her prayer, we abandon ourselves to the will of God together with her: "Thy will be done".

Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death: By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the "Mother of Mercy," the All-Holy One. We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender "the hour of our death" wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son's death on the cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing (cf. John 19:27) to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2677

The Catholic church also teaches that it is Mary who through her prayers "will deliver our souls from death".

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

The Catholic authorities, lead by the popes, have frequently emphasised the importance of the rosary and called to say this prayer.

As the various mysteries present themselves one after another in the formula of the Rosary, for the meditation and contemplation of men's minds, they also make clear what we owe to Mary for our reconciliation and salvation.

Leo XIII, 1896, *Fidentem Piumque Animum*, §3

Inasmuch as priests can be called by a very special title, sons of the Virgin Mary, they will never cease to love her with an ardent piety, invoke her with perfect confidence, and frequently implore her strong protection. So that every day, as the Church herself recommends (Cf. C.I.C., can. 125, 2), they will recite the holy rosary, which, by proposing for our meditation the mysteries of the Redeemer, leads us "to Jesus through Mary".

Pius XII, 1959, *Menti Nostrae*, §49

2. The teaching of the scripture.

2.1. Prayer is only to be directed to God.

The Word of God teaches only prayer that is directed to God. It is He who is our Creator (Genesis 1:26-27; Ecclesiastes 12:1; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16, etc.) and our Father (Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 63:16, 64:8; Malachi 2:10; Matthew 7:11; 23:9; Luke 12:32; Ephesians 3:14-15; 1 John 3:1, etc.). Only He hears our supplications (Psalm 65:2-3), only He in His perfect righteousness (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 11:7; Isaiah 61:8; Jeremiah 11:20; Revelation 16:5, etc.) and omniscience (Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 40:28; Romans 11:33, etc.) can judge the motives of these supplications and only He in His omnipotence (Genesis 17:1; Psalm 135:6; Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37; Revelation 1:8, etc.) can fulfil them. Only God is our refuge and help (Psalm 18:2, 46:1, etc.) and only to Him do we come to ask for mercy (Exodus 34:6; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:5, 103:8, 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Luke 6:36; Ephesians 1:7, 2:4; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3, etc.).

15 "Call upon Me in the day of trouble;
I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me."
Psalm 50:15 NASB

15 "He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him."
Psalm 91:15 NASB

6 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble;
He delivered them out of their distresses.
Psalm 107:6 NASB

When Jesus taught His apostles how to pray, He told them to pray to their Father:

5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. **6** But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. **8** So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

9 "Pray, then, in this way:
'Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

10 'Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

11 'Give us this day our daily bread.

12 ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
Matthew 6:5-13 NASB (also Luke 11:1-4)

37 Then He *said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.**38** Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”
Matthew 9:37-38 NASB

The prayer that Jesus taught His apostles in Matthew 6:9-13 shows another key fact in this matter – that prayer equates to worshiping God. Jesus tells His apostles how to pray and begins with the words “Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name” (Matthew 6:9). The teaching of Jesus is in accordance with the testimony of the entire scripture which clearly says that bringing our supplications to God means giving Him the worship that is His due. By coming to God in prayer we acknowledge that we rely completely on Him and in our needs put our trust in Him. It is also for this reason that the Word of God does not give a single example of a legitimate prayer addressed to anyone but God since this would amount to idolatry. In prayer we worship God, give our requests, thank Him for the gifts received, we confess our sins – only God can be the addressee of all these.¹

There is not a single instance of the scripture pointing to any other addressee of our supplications – whether a man, an angel or any other creature (Acts 8:22, 12:5; Romans 10:1, 15:3, etc.).

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
Philippians 4:6 NASB

7 Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved.
2 Corinthians 13:7 NASB

Prayer to anyone else is only mentioned in the context of idolatrous practices.

21 Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long *will* you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him a word. **22** Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men. **23** Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire *under it*; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire *under it*. **24** Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” And all the people said, “That is a good idea.” **25** So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*.” **26** Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, “O Baal, answer us.” But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made. **27** It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.” **28** So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. **29** When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.
1 Kings 18:21-29 NASB

¹ Although Jesus through His sacrifice has given us a direct access to God the Father, we can also address our prayers to Him as a divine Person.

14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.
John 14:14 NASB

Mary is a mere human being – a creature, not the Creator. She is not omniscient to be able to simultaneously hear the supplications of all the people from around the world (Slick, n.d.). Quite the contrary, the Bible does not give us any reason to think that she even hears these prayers at all. She is not perfectly righteous in order to judge the motives of these prayers and she is not omnipotent to fulfil them. The scripture not only gives no basis to put her as equal to God as an addressee of our prayers, but warns against doing so towards any creature, because such a practice amounts to idolatry.

25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
Romans 1:25 NASB

2.2. Prayer for Mary's intercession.

As it has been discussed in detail above (chapter VII, point 2.2), the only Mediator between God and man is Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Only He is the Way that leads to God (John 14:6) and only He intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:22-25). The teaching that Mary in some way mediates between us and God is false and directly contradicts the scripture.

2.2.1. Mary as the one who by her prayers “will deliver our souls from death”.

False and directly contradictory to the Word of God is also the teaching that Mary through her prayers “will deliver us from death”.

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

The Catholic church again erroneously ascribes to Mary a prerogative that belongs solely to God.

39 “See now that I, I am He,
And there is no god besides Me;
It is I who put to death and give life.
I have wounded and it is I who heal,
And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.”
Deuteronomy 32:39 NASB

18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him,
On those who hope for His lovingkindness,
19 To deliver their soul from death
And to keep them alive in famine.
Psalm 33:18-19 NASB

12 Your vows are *binding* upon me, O God;
I will render thank offerings to You.
13 For You have delivered my soul from death,
Indeed my feet from stumbling,
So that I may walk before God
In the light of the living.
Psalm 56:12-13 NASB

20 God is to us a God of deliverances;
And to God the Lord belong escapes from death.
Psalm 68:20 NASB

7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.
Hebrews 5:7 NASB

Only God can deliver from death – not only physical, but, above all, eternal – and this deliverance God the Father brings us through God the Son. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9) – only He gives us life eternal and only He delivers us from death.

16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
John 3:16 NASB

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

12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.
Acts 4:12 NASB

11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.
1 John 5:11-13 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

2.2.2. Involving Mary in a process which has got nothing to do with her.

Without any biblical basis the Catholic church attempts to involve Mary in a process which has nothing to do with her.

In prayer the Holy Spirit unites us to the person of the only Son, in his glorified humanity, through which and in which our filial prayer unites us in the Church with the Mother of Jesus (cf. Acts 1:14).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2673

The statement that “through which [“the person of the only Son, in his glorified humanity” – B.Syl.] and in which our filial prayer unites us in the Church with the Mother of Jesus” is an invention devoid of any biblical basis. The scripture nowhere teaches that through the humanity of Jesus our prayer unites us with the Mother of Jesus. Christ is the Way to the Father, not to Mary. The reference to Acts 1:14 also in no way justifies the invention of the Catholic church.

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

This verse only says that the apostles were devoting themselves to prayer together with women, Mary and Jesus’ brothers. We should also note that Mary is in no way exalted or revered. Quite the contrary – the first chapter of Acts begins with a description of Jesus’ ascension witnessed by His apostles and there is no reason to think that Mary was present with them on the Mount of Olives since she is not

even mentioned in the context of this event. The scripture says that Jesus gathered the apostles – not the apostles and His mother.

1 The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, **2** until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. **3** To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. **4** Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 1:1-5 NASB

The mention of Mary in verse 14 – which is also the last one in the scripture² – also appears after other women.

2.2.3. The prayer of the Catholic church “in communion” with Mary.

Because of Mary's singular cooperation with the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church loves to pray in communion with the Virgin Mary, to magnify with her the great things the Lord has done for her, and to entrust supplications and praises to her.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2682

We have here another example of baseless Catholic inventions. Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit, but beyond this the scripture nowhere says anything about her “singular cooperation with the action of the Holy Spirit” and not only gives no evidence of such “singular cooperation”, but in several places shows her lack of understanding of God's plan for Jesus (see chapter V, point 3, analysis of paragraphs 38 and 39).

Paragraph 2682 also says that the Catholic church “loves to pray in communion with the Virgin Mary, to magnify with her the great things the Lord has done for her, and to entrust supplications and praises to her”. We thus have a prayer of exaltation of “things the Lord has done for her”. In the scripture, however, the prayer to magnify, extol or exalt is directed only towards God, even in the context of the works He does for man (Psalm 34, 92, 111, etc.).

1 Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and said,
“I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted;

The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea.

2 “The Lord is my strength and song,

And He has become my salvation;

This is my God, and I will praise Him;

My father's God, and I will extol Him.

3 “The Lord is a warrior;

The Lord is His name.

4 “Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea;

And the choicest of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea.

5 “The deeps cover them;

They went down into the depths like a stone.

6 “Your right hand, O Lord, is majestic in power,

Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.

Exodus 15:1-6 NASB

A Psalm.

² There is thus no basis whatsoever in the scripture for teachings such as Mary's “assumption into heaven” (chapter V).

1 O sing to the Lord a new song,
For He has done wonderful things,
His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him.
Psalm 98:1 NASB

A Psalm of David.

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is within me, *bless His holy name.*
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget none of His benefits;
3 Who pardons all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases;
4 Who redeems your life from the pit,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;
5 Who satisfies your years with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.
Psalm 103:1-5 NASB

5 Praise the Lord in song, for He has done excellent things;
Let this be known throughout the earth.
Isaiah 12:5 NASB

It is ironic that for what God has accomplished in her, Mary herself extols God – the true Mary, not the false goddess that the Catholic church has created and now worships.

46 And Mary said:

“My soul exalts the Lord.

47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

48 “For He has had regard for the humble state of His bonds slave;
For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.”³

49 “For the Mighty One has done great things for me;
And holy is His name.

50 “And His mercy is upon generation after generation
Toward those who fear Him.

51 “He has done mighty deeds with His arm;
He has scattered *those who were* proud in the thoughts of their heart.

52 “He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones,
And has exalted those who were humble.

53 “He has filled the hungry with good things;
And sent away the rich empty-handed.

54 “He has given help to Israel His servant,
In remembrance of His mercy,

55 As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and his descendants forever.”

Luke 1:46-55 NASB

In the same way Hannah – whose song is the Old Testament type of the song of Mary – praised God when He removed the curse of infertility from her and she conceived Samuel.

1 Then Hannah prayed and said,

3 It is important to correctly understand the expression “will count me blessed” – μακαριοῦσίν με (*makarioûsin me*) since it gives no basis to worshiping Mary. The Greek word μακαρίζω (*makarizō*) means “to call or consider someone especially favored, call/consider blessed, happy, fortunate” (BDAG). Mary’s words thus mean that all generations will call/count/see/consider her as endowed with great favour from God – blessed (cf. chapter II). Some Catholic translations render this expression as “bless me” (Polish Biblia Tysiąclecia – “the Millennium Bible”) and so it is important to understand that the word “bless” in no way here means “to worship”, “to give glory”, but to “call/count someone blessed/favoured”.

“My heart exults in the Lord;
My horn is exalted in the Lord,
My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies,
Because I rejoice in Your salvation.
2 “There is no one holy like the Lord,
Indeed, there is no one besides You,
Nor is there any rock like our God.
3 “Boast no more so very proudly,
 Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth;
 For the Lord is a God of knowledge,
 And with Him actions are weighed.
4 “The bows of the mighty are shattered,
 But the feeble gird on strength.
5 “Those who were full hire themselves out for bread,
 But those who were hungry cease *to hunger*.
 Even the barren gives birth to seven,
 But she who has many children languishes.
6 “The Lord kills and makes alive;
 He brings down to Sheol and raises up.
7 “The Lord makes poor and rich;
 He brings low, He also exalts.
8 “He raises the poor from the dust,
 He lifts the needy from the ash heap
 To make them sit with nobles,
 And inherit a seat of honor;
 For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s,
 And He set the world on them.
9 “He keeps the feet of His godly ones,
 But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness;
 For not by might shall a man prevail.
10 “Those who contend with the Lord will be shattered;
 Against them He will thunder in the heavens,
 The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
 And He will give strength to His king,
 And will exalt the horn of His anointed.”
 1 Samuel 2:1-10 NASB

The teaching of the scripture is clear – only God is to be praised, extolled, exalted and magnified.

As in the case of other doctrines, so also when analysing the teachings of the Catholic church presented above (points 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3) we should remember that the scripture warns against adding anything to it. This process, which has been common in the Catholic church for centuries, consequently led to accepting and proclaiming teachings which contradict the Word of God, such as prayer directed to a human being or for a human being’s intercession (see chapter V, point 3, analysis of paragraph 37, especially point 37.2).

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

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

2.3. Intercession of the “saints”.

Apart from the intercession of Mary, the Catholic church also teaches the intercession of the “saints”. The key points of the Catholic argumentation are presented in the text “Intercession of the saints” (n.d.), the content of which has been officially approved by the Catholic church.

Fundamentalists often challenge the Catholic practice of asking saints and angels to pray on our behalf. But the Bible directs us to invoke those in heaven and ask them to pray with us.

Thus, in Psalm 103 we pray, “Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word! Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will!” (Psalm 103:20–21). And in the opening verses of Psalms 148 we pray, “Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his host!”

Not only do those in heaven pray with us, they also pray for us. In the book of Revelation, John sees that “the twenty-four elders [the leaders of the people of God in heaven] fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Revelation 5:8). Thus the saints in heaven offer to God the prayers of the saints on earth.

Angels do the same thing: “[An] angel came and stood at the altar [in heaven] with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God” (Revelation 8:3–4).

Jesus himself warned us not to offend small children, because their guardian angels have guaranteed intercessory access to the Father: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10).

Because he is the only God-man and the Mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus is the only mediator between man and God (1 Timothy 2:5), but this in no way means we cannot or should not ask our fellow Christians to pray with us and for us (1 Timothy 2:1–4). In particular, we should ask the intercession of those Christians in heaven, who have already had their sanctification completed, for “[t]he prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects” (James 5:16).

Most of the biblical references quoted above do not require a long comment.

In both quoted fragments of Psalms – Psalm 103:20-21 and Psalm 148:1-2 – the author only calls the angels to praise the Lord – there is no mention of angels praying for us. Neither of the passages provides any basis for the teaching of an intercessory prayer on part of the angels.

20 Bless the Lord, you His angels,
Mighty in strength, who perform His word,
Obeying the voice of His word!
21 Bless the Lord, all you His hosts,
You who serve Him, doing His will.
Psalm 103:20-21 NASB

1 Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
Praise Him in the heights!
2 Praise Him, all His angels;
Praise Him, all His hosts!
Psalm 148:1-2 NASB

When speaking of “intercessory access” of the angels to God the Father in Matthew 18:10 the Catholic church again distorts the meaning of the Word of God by imposing their own teachings to it. There is no mention of any intercession of angels in this verse.

10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.”
Matthew 18:10 NASB

The scripture teaches us that one of the tasks that God has entrusted to the angels who are faithful to Him is the protection and service of believers.⁴

12 Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. **13** But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. **14** Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet *future*.”
Daniel 10:12-14 NASB

20 Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. **21** However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these *forces* except Michael your prince.
Daniel 10:20-21 NASB

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?
Hebrews 1:14 NASB

We also know that unlike us (Exodus 33:20; 1 Timothy 6:16) the angels have access to stand before God (Job 1:6, 2:1; Revelation 4:6-11, etc.) and can see God’s face.

In Matthew 18:10 Jesus hence warns against despising the little ones since God through His angels guards and protects them and these angels have a direct access to Him. This means that even the

4 We know from the scripture that God has assigned different roles to different angels. Above all, they are engaged in an invisible combat with the forces of Satan (2 Kings 6:17; Revelation 12:7-9), but their tasks also include patrolling the earth (Zechariah 1:9-17) or executing judgments ordained by God which is described in detail in the Revelation.

smallest are important for God and He is actively engaged in their lives which should be a warning for everyone who would have an evil intent towards his neighbour. This verse nowhere mentions an intercessory prayer and there is no evidence in the scripture of the angels praying for us.

Similarly in the last paragraph we have the teaching of the intercession of the “saints” as deceased Christians (explanation of the biblical meaning of the word “saint” and the Catholic distortion of this term follows below – point 2.3.1.3) shrewdly interwoven with a few verses from the scripture despite none of these verses providing any basis for the conclusions made.

The scripture, indeed, frequently exhorts us to pray for one another. There is, however, not a single verse that would teach us to pray for intercession of deceased believers. Similarly as it has been discussed above in the case of Mary, we do not even have a reason to believe that they hear our prayers⁵ – obviously contrary to our living brothers and sisters in Christ whom we can ask for prayer. The Catholic church again exhorts us to acting in a way that is devoid of any biblical foundation, although this exhortation is presented in a way that is meant to create an appearance of scriptural legitimacy.

Thus the key verses which the Catholic church uses to defend this doctrine and which require a more in-depth analysis are Revelation 5:8 and 8:3-4.

2.3.1. Revelation 5:8.

8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.
Revelation 5:8 NASB

According to the Catholic church in Revelation 5:8 the “saints” in heaven offer prayers for the saints on the earth.

2.3.1.1. The nature of the “elders”.

The Catholic church interprets that the elders in Revelation 5:8 are human beings, but this interpretation is incorrect.

Firstly, we know that all believers will stand before the judgment of Christ and will be judged for their deeds.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB

The scripture teaches that this will occur after His second coming. Believers will first be resurrected (see chapter V, point 3, analysis of paragraph 34) and then they will be judged by Jesus Christ.⁶ The Bible mentions no exception from this order of events.

5 This fact also shows the absurdity of the way the Catholics are acting – instead of, according to the clear command of the scripture, coming directly to God of whom we certainly know that He hears those prayers and of whom we certainly know that He has the power to fulfil them, they choose praying to dead human beings who are almost certainly devoid of the former ability – and we should assume that unless proven otherwise by the Catholic church – and who are certainly devoid of the latter.

6 Or, if they are alive at Christ’s coming, their bodies will be transformed in the new resurrection bodies – 1 Corinthians 4:15 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-52.

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

12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”
Revelation 22:12 NASB

5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men’s* hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.
1 Corinthians 4:5 NASB

19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?
1 Thessalonians 2:19 NASB

13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.
1 Thessalonians 3:13 NASB

28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.
1 John 2:28 NASB

According to the chronology of events in Revelation, in the fifth chapter the time of the Tribulation which precedes the second coming of Christ has not begun yet and the second coming itself is not described until chapter nineteen (Revelation proceeds in a chronological order). Of the group of the twenty four elders we know, however, that they have already been crowned:

4 Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.
Revelation 4:4 NASB

The elders must have deserved their high position of being able to abide in closeness to God and their crowns with their merit, but the entire humanity and all believers have not been judged yet and their eternal rewards have not been distributed to them (Luginbill, n.d.-a).⁷ This indicates that the elders cannot be human beings – so they are angels.

Even the nomination of the twenty four elders from the human race at a time when the history of humanity is still in progress would mean that many believers would have to be omitted. Similarly, if the elders were to represent believers, then they also could not represent believers from the entire period of human history, because believers from the last part of this history could not be taken into consideration (Luginbill, n.d.-a).

Secondly, in the song which the elders sing together with the four living creatures they make a clear distinction between themselves and men:

6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. **7** And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. **8** When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. **9** And they *sang a new song, saying,

⁷ An in-depth exegesis of both the fourth and the fifth chapter of Revelation is available at <https://ichthys.com/Tribulation-Part2B.htm>.

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

10 “You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

Revelation 5:6-10 NASB

In verse 9 the elders say of the Lamb – our Lord, Jesus Christ – that “You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation”. In the Greek text of Revelation 5:9 the word “men” is not mentioned, the verse only says “You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood from every tribe and tongue and people and nation”. But it is exactly because it is Christ’s redemption that is spoken of that we know it is men to whom these words refer and the translations legitimately add words such as “men” (NASB), “persons” (NIV) or people (ESV) in their interpretive translations. Christ paid for the sins of men, not angels.

16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.

Hebrews 2:16 NASB

Then in verse 10 the elders continue their song and say of our Lord: “You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth”. The elders say “them”, not us. If elders were human beings, they wouldn’t be making this distinction. So we know that in verse 9 the four living creatures and the elders sing of men and then in verse 10 they distinguish themselves from men by saying that Christ made “them” to be “a kingdom and priests to our God”. It is consequently clear that the song quoted in verses 9 and 10 is sung by the angels. The elders are thus angels, not men.

2.3.1.2. The incense.

From the time of the Old Testament incense has been an important symbol of acceptability of believers’ approaching God and this is exactly how the Mosaic Law described its usage (Exodus 30:34-38; cf. Leviticus 10:1-2; 2 Chronicles 26:16-20; Luginbill, n.d.-b).⁸

41 As a soothing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations.

Ezekiel 20:41 NASB

12 He shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring *it* inside the veil.**13** He shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on *the ark of* the testimony, otherwise he will die.

Leviticus 16:12-13 NASB

The symbol of incense which in the Old Testament signified that our approach to God was made acceptable found its fulfilment in our Lord, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself up for us as a sacrifice, a fragrant aroma to God.

2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Ephesians 5:2 NASB

The incense, full bowls of which are held by the elders, represents the sacrifice of Christ as fully accepted by God the Father and satisfying His demand that every sin be punished which originates from His perfect righteousness. This sacrifice is the greatest act of God’s grace – and it is also the source of grace for us. The symbol of incense thus has another application – it represents the

8 A complete exegesis of the eighth chapter of Revelation is available at <https://www.ichthys.com/Tribulation-Part3A.htm>.

acceptance by God of what is done in the name of Jesus Christ and the supplications made in His name.⁹

13 Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
John 14:13 NASB

7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
John 15:7 NASB

16 You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.
John 15:16 NASB

23 In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. **24** Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.
John 16:23-24 NASB

2.3.1.3. “Prayers of the saints”.

In order to be able to interpret the expression “prayers of the saints” in Revelation 5:8, we must first correctly understand the designation “saint” – according to the teaching of the Word of God.

The Bible clearly teaches that all men are sinners (see chapter IV).

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
Romans 3:23 NASB

46 When they sin against You – for there is no man who does not sin –
1 Kings 8:46a NIV

3 If You, Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
Psalm 130:3 NASB

2 And do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no man living is righteous.
Psalm 143:2 NASB

9 Who can say, “I have cleansed my heart,
I am pure from my sin”?
Proverbs 20:9 NASB

20 Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins.
Ecclesiastes 7:20 NASB

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all

9 Since Revelation 8:3-4 distinguishes between the incense and the prayers, in Revelation 5:8 the incense is only a symbol representing prayers figuratively and should not be taken as literally meaning prayers. We have symbolic representations and rituals here and we can see that in these representations the incense has a double symbolism – it refers both to the acceptability of prayers and to the prayers themselves.

unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

1 John 1:8-10 NASB

2 For we all stumble in many *ways*.

James 3:2a NASB

Firstly then, no man can attain to complete sinlessness and be considered “saint” in this sense. The Word of God teaches that we become saints through faith in Christ. Not by our own righteousness, but because we are cleansed by faith in Christ as the One who paid for our sins and took the punishment we were due.

21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 NASB

By accepting His sacrifice for our sins through faith we become righteous in the eyes of God – we are sanctified.

30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

1 Corinthians 1:30 NASB

11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:11 NASB

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

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hebrews 10:10 NASB

12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Hebrews 13:12 NASB

It is in this sense that the word “saint” is used in the Bible. Everyone who has genuine faith in Jesus Christ is a saint in the eyes of God.

10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” **11** And the Lord *said* to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, **12** and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.” **13** But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem;

Acts 9:10-13 NASB

7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:7 NASB

1 Paul, called *as* an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their *Lord* and ours:

1 Corinthians 1:1-2 NASB

11 And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Ephesians 4:11-12 NASB

Without any biblical basis the Catholic church created its own definition of a saint. According to the this definition a “saint” is: 1) a deceased person who is in heaven and 2) a person who has been canonised.

Although it is true that all the saints – in the biblical meaning of the word – will be in heaven, the Bible does not define a saint in this way. We become saints when we put our faith in Christ and we do not have to die to attain to this status in the eyes of God.

It is, however, a serious error to create a new criterion according to which a person becomes a saint through canonisation which in turns allows for a cult of this person. The scripture gives no basis for the canonisation process and for a cult of a person. This process demands, for example, that the candidate distinguished himself with “heroic” and “cardinal” virtues, even though the scripture clearly teaches that it is only faith in Christ that sanctifies us – not “heroic” or “cardinal” virtues. We are saved and sanctified only through faith in Christ – not through our own works.

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

We have here one of many examples where above the most fundamental teaching of salvation – of cleansing from sin and sanctification which we only attain through faith – the Catholic church erroneously puts works. Another condition of “canonisation” is a life according to the Catholic doctrine, and this contains numerous and serious errors. This false procedure effectively formalises the personality cult. The Catholic church perverts the biblical meaning of the word “saint” and creates a new definition which directly contradicts the Word of God.

We should also remember that God is the only absolutely just judge and only He knows what a particular person has in their heart – whether they are saved by faith in Christ and whether they will be with Him for eternity – or not. The Catholic church usurps the right to make a judgment that as people we are simply often not able to make. Making this judgment is also only the prerogative of God, not ours.

Finally God forbids seeking contact with the dead. Necromancy is strictly forbidden as a magical practice.

10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, **11** or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. **12** For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you.

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 NASB

19 When they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?

Isaiah 8:19 NASB

In Revelation 5:8 there are no “saints” according to the Catholic definition. The elders are angels of a high rank and not “saints” and the “prayers of the saints” means prayers of believers, according to the biblical meaning of the word “saint”.

2.3.1.4. The role of the elders.

Finally it is key to define the role of the elders according to the information that Revelation 5:8 gives us. This verse only says that each one of the elders was “holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” and does not even mention what the elders do with these prayers. No intercession or prayers for us are mentioned here anywhere – it is an invention of the Catholic church to which this passage gives no basis.

We have here a symbolic ritual in which we see that angels were probably given a role in bringing the prayers of believers to God – this is all that the verse allows us to conclude. Although God, in His omniscience and omnipotence, does not need help in executing His will – just as He does not angels and men – in His love He created both and assigned tasks and ministries to both which they can fulfil, to His glory and to their joy coming from serving the true God. Angels are frequently described as His servants in the scripture:

13 But to which of the angels has He ever said,
“Sit at My right hand,
Until I make Your enemies
A footstool for Your feet”?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?
Hebrews 1:13-14 NASB

10 “A river of fire was flowing
And coming out from before Him;
Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,
And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him;
The court sat,
And the books were opened.
Daniel 7:10 NASB

Revelation 5:8 thus gives no basis to the teaching of intercession and prayer for us either on part of the “saints” or of the angels. Angels probably play some role in bringing our prayers to God, but even here the information that the scripture provides is very limited.

2.3.1.5. Revelation 5:8 and the teaching of intercession – summary.

1. The elders, as has been shown above, are not human beings. Consequently, they are also not “saints” who are allegedly interceding for us.
2. The elders, together with the four living creatures (cherubs – Ezekiel 1:5; Isaiah 6) fall down before the Lamb which represents our Lord, Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29, 1:36; 1 Peter 1:19). They hold golden bowls with incense which is a symbol of acceptability of the prayers of believers before God achieved through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
3. “Prayers of the saints” also have nothing to do with the Catholic “saints”, since the word “saint” is used in this verse – as in any other verse in the scripture – in its biblical meaning as referring to those who have been sanctified by faith in Christ.
4. Revelation 5:8 only says that the elders are holding “golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” – it doesn’t mention any prayer offered by the dead – who are not even present in this verse – or by the angels themselves. This verse gives no basis to the teaching of intercession. We have a description of a symbolic ritual performed by the angels.

5. Revelation 5:8 gives no basis to the teaching of the intercession of the “saints”.

2.3.2. Revelation 8:3-4.

3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. **4** And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand.
Revelation 8:3-4 NASB

According to the interpretation of the Catholic church, in Revelation 8:3-4, angels are offering intercessory prayers for believers.

2.3.2.1. Translation of the passage from Greek.

Firstly, it is important to correctly translate the Greek text. Although the Catholic New Jerusalem Bible gives an acceptable rendering of these verses, important errors are present in other Catholic translations – such as Douay-Rheims and Knox Bible.

3 And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. **4** And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel.
Revelation 8:3-4 Douay-Rheims

3 There was another angel that came and took his stand at the altar, with a censer of gold; and incense was given him in plenty, so that he could make an offering on the golden altar before the throne, out of the prayers said by all the saints. **4** So, from the angel’s hand, the smoke of the incense went up in God’s presence, kindled by the saints’ prayer.
Revelation 8:3-4 Knox Bible

The Greek expression καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ θυμιάματα πολλά, ἵνα δώσει ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων (*kai edothē autō thymiamata polla, hina dōsei tais proseuchais tōn hagiōn pantōn*) means “and much incense was given to him so that he might offer it for the prayers of the saints” (translation by dr Robert Luginbill – RL) or “and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints” (NASB) and not that “there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints” (Douay-Rheims) or that “incense was given him in plenty, so that he could make an offering on the golden altar before the throne, out of the prayers said by all the saints” (Knox Bible).

Firstly, there is no mention of the angel making any offering, as the Knox Bible wrongly translates. The Greek text only says ἵνα δώσει (*hina dōsei*) – “that he may give” – not “that he could make an offering”. According to this incorrect rendering the angel is making an offering which could be used as evidence for their intercession, but that is not present in the text. Douay-Rheims translation is ambiguous with the rendering “that he should offer” and we should understand that only giving is in view here.

Secondly, both translations wrongly translate the Greek dative in ταῖς προσευχαῖς (*tais proseuchais*). We have here a *Dativus commōdi* where this case means that something is done for something/someone. The preposition “for” (RL) accurately expresses its meaning, but “to” (NASB) can also be used – the translation should thus read “and much incense was given to him, so that he might add/offer it for/to the prayers of all the saints”. The verse says that the angel adds the incense to/for the prayers of the saints. Douay-Reims rendering “that he should offer of the prayers of all saints” completely mistranslates the dative as if it was genitive and creates a false impression that the incense and the prayers are one and the same whereas in fact they are importantly separate and discrete. Despite different wording, the same errors are present in the Knox Bible translation – “so

that he could make an offering on the golden altar before the throne, out of the prayers said by all the saints”.

It is important to correctly understand the Greek text here, as both errors discussed above misrepresent what the angel is doing and thus his role.¹⁰ Correctly translated, this passage goes as follows:

3 And another angel with a golden censer came and stood by the altar, and much incense was given to him so that he might offer it for the prayers of the saints on the golden altar in front of the throne. **4** And smoke from the incense went up from the hand of the angel before God for the prayers of the saints.
Revelation 8:3-4 RL

3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. **4** And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand.
Revelation 8:3-4 NASB

2.3.2.2. The role of the angel.

As it has been discussed above (point 2.3.1.2), the incense is a symbol of acceptability of our supplications in the eyes of God through the sacrifice of Christ and Revelation 8:3 says that it “was given to him”. Even if he took it himself, the acceptability of the prayers would still be the result of what the incense is – and not of who adds it to these prayers. The verse says, however, that the angel was given the incense and so it is clear that it is not the angels who cause our prayers to be heard by God, which is what the Catholic church erroneously teaches.

The angel then adds the incense to the prayers of believers which is a picture showing that the sacrifice of Christ makes these prayers acceptable (this correct meaning is impossible to deduce from the wrong translations of Douay-Rheims and Knox Bible). There is no mention of the angel hearing our prayers, interceding for us, etc. The verse clearly teaches that God listens to our prayers not because His angels or anyone else asks Him to, but because His Son has opened the way to Him (cf. Matthew 27:51).

19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
Hebrews 10:19-22 NASB

As it has been discussed in detail above (point 2.3.1.3), the word “saint” is used in the scripture to describe believers and has got nothing to do with the canonised Catholic “saints”.

2.3.2.3. Revelation 8:3-4 and the teaching of angel’s intercession – summary.

1. The angel is given the incense which he adds to the prayers/offers for the prayers of believers as a symbol of acceptability of these prayers in the eyes of God through the sacrifice of Christ.
2. This passage does not even mention the angel doing anything with the prayers themselves and only says that he adds incense to them.

¹⁰ Exactly these same two errors are also present in the Polish Catholic translation – Biblia Tysiąclecia (“the Millennium Bible”).

3. A correct translation of Revelation 8:3-4 and a correct interpretation of words used therein show that it doesn't say anything about the prayer of the angels or their intercession.

2.3.3. Revelation 5:8 and 8:3-4 – summary.

Revelation 5:8 and 8:3-4 contain descriptions of symbolic rituals in which angels take part. Based on Revelation 5:8 where the elders have the prayers of believers and Revelation 8:3-4 where the angel adds incense to the prayers of believers we can only deduce a possibility that angels may have some role in bringing our prayers to God, although even that is not explicitly mentioned.

Neither passage – nor any other verse in the scripture – mentions angels praying for us or interceding for us in any other way. Angels are God's servants whom God assigned some symbolic role in bringing our prayers – they are not mediators (Meyer, 1884).

Finally we should remember that God has made sure that all the key teachings be clearly spelled out in the scripture and that we know how to enter on His path and walk on it. If God wanted us to pray for intercession, He would have told us that in His word. The truth is, however, that the prayer for intercession is nowhere in the scripture. In the Catholic church it is a common practice, however, and if it is the case, then we should ask the question why the biblical support for this doctrine is limited to a couple of verses in which we have symbolic representations and which, when interpreted correctly, have nothing to do with intercessory prayer – as it has been shown above. If prayer for intercession were biblical, we would have numerous examples of it in the Old and New Testament, just as we have numerous examples of the legitimate prayer addressed directly to God – and we don't have a single such example.

The Catholic church again acts according to their twisted logic in which they do not build their doctrines on the scripture but on erroneous and superstitious traditions and then they seek support for these doctrines in the Bible. This time the justification for the false Catholic teaching is supposed to be provided by Revelation 5:8 and 8:3-4, but it is not.

2.4. The false teaching of the Catholic church about the alleged “intercession” of Mary and other “saints” ultimately leads many to idolatry.

Addressing Mary or other saints in prayer is often in the Catholic church justified as only a request for their intercession, but we must remember that firstly, the catechism clearly teaches prayer to Mary and secondly, that the prayer for intercession is also devoid of any biblical basis. Many Catholics, however, unaware of this Catholic theological sophistry, pray directly to Mary and other “saints” and consequently abide in an idolatry that is no different to the idolatry of the ancient pagans (e.g., Hermes was a god of travellers, merchants, shepherds, thieves; “saint” Christopher, on the other hand, is the “patron” of carriers, bargemen, runners, sailors, travellers, pilgrims, drivers; Catholics pray to “saint” Anthony when they lose or misplace something, etc.).

The idolatry of many Catholics shows that the result of introducing false teachings devoid of a biblical foundation is always the same, even if these teachings seemingly do not contradict the scripture and only add to it – seemingly, since adding to the scripture is always against the scripture (see chapter V, point 3, analysis of paragraph 37). This result is getting away from the truth and from Jesus Christ and in many cases – as here – outright idolatry. The error thus lies with the Catholic church, irrespective of their official position with regard to some of the idolatrous actions of its members who are unaware of the distinction between a prayer to a given “saint” and a prayer for a given “saint's” intercession. Both prayers contradict the teaching of the scripture.

3. Marian prayers.

3.1. “Hail Mary”.

The prayer “Hail Mary” can be divided into two parts. The first one combines two verses – Luke 1:28 and Luke 1:42, the second has been created by the Catholic church. The Catechism of the Catholic church presents an exposition of this prayer and it will be analysed.

3.1.1. Analysis of the Catholic exposition of the first part of the prayer “Hail Mary”.

This twofold movement of prayer to Mary [cf. paragraph §2675 – B.Syl.] has found a privileged expression in the *Ave Maria*:

Hail Mary [or Rejoice, Mary]: the greeting of the angel Gabriel opens this prayer. It is God himself who, through his angel as intermediary, greets Mary. Our prayer dares to take up this greeting to Mary with the regard God had for the lowliness of his humble servant and to exult in the joy he finds in her (Cf. Luke 1:48; Zephaniah 3:17b).

Full of grace, the Lord is with thee: These two phrases of the angel's greeting shed light on one another. Mary is full of grace because the Lord is with her. The grace with which she is filled is the presence of him who is the source of all grace. “Rejoice . . . O Daughter of Jerusalem . . . the Lord your God is in your midst” (Zephaniah 3:14, 17a). Mary, in whom the Lord himself has just made his dwelling, is the daughter of Zion in person, the ark of the covenant, the place where the glory of the Lord dwells. She is “the dwelling of God . . . with men” (Revelation 21:3). Full of grace, Mary is wholly given over to him who has come to dwell in her and whom she is about to give to the world.

Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. After the angel's greeting, we make Elizabeth's greeting our own. “Filled with the Holy Spirit”, Elizabeth is the first in the long succession of generations who have called Mary “blessed” (Luke 1:41, 48). “Blessed is she who believed. . . . (Luke 1:45) Mary is “blessed among women” because she believed in the fulfillment of the Lord's word. Abraham, because of his faith, became a blessing for all the nations of the earth cf. Genesis 12:3). Mary, because of her faith, became the mother of believers, through whom all nations of the earth receive him who is God's own blessing: Jesus, the “fruit of thy womb”.
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2676

3.1.1.1. Our prayer dares to take up this greeting to Mary with the regard God had for the lowliness of his humble servant and to exult in the joy he finds in her (Cf. Luke 1:48; Zephaniah 3:17b).

The fact that the angel greeted Mary is in no way equivalent to a command for us to greet her. And, above all, we should remember that we have here a greeting and nothing else. The angel does not worship Mary, glorify her, pray to her or for her intercession – he only greets her.

The words that “our prayer dares to take up this greeting to Mary with the regard God had for the lowliness of his humble servant” imperceptibly start to lead to more serious errors. The outwardly pious words of the catechism contain an error which can easily escape our notice. It is true that God saw Mary's faithfulness and chose her to be the mother of the human nature of His Son and we can metaphorically express it with the words that He “had regard for her”. But do we also “have regard” for Mary from the same perspective as God? Quite the contrary – we can say that He “regarded” her from above and “looked down” on Mary, but the words of the catechism call for a different “regard” – to look up to Mary as the one to whom “we can entrust all our cares and petitions”, to whose prayer we are “entrusting ourselves”, to whom “we give ourselves over” – as the next paragraph of the catechism explaining the second part of this prayer says (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2677).

Falsehood again creeps in in a subtle way and, as it is often the case in the teaching of the Catholic church, under the cover of the Word of God. Those who do not seek for the truth of the scripture often use its erroneous interpretations to justify their false doctrines. Let's remember that Satan also tempted Jesus by quoting the scripture (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-14).

Zephaniah 3:17b, given as a reference for the statement “our prayer dares to take up this greeting to Mary with the regard God had for the lowliness of his humble servant and to exult in the joy he finds in her” has got nothing to do with Mary.

14 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion!
Shout *in triumph*, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all *your* heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!
15 The Lord has taken away *His* judgments against you,
He has cleared away your enemies.
The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
You will fear disaster no more.
16 In that day it will be said to Jerusalem:
“Do not be afraid, O Zion;
Do not let your hands fall limp.
17 “The Lord your God is in your midst,
A victorious warrior.
He will exult over you with joy,
He will be quiet in His love,
He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.
18 “I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts—
They came from you, *O Zion*;
The reproach of *exile* is a burden on them.
19 “Behold, I am going to deal at that time
With all your oppressors,
I will save the lame
And gather the outcast,
And I will turn their shame into praise and renown
In all the earth.
20 “At that time I will bring you in,
Even at the time when I gather you together;
Indeed, I will give you renown and praise
Among all the peoples of the earth,
When I restore your fortunes before your eyes,”
Says the Lord.
Zephaniah 3:14-20 NASB

Zephaniah describes the joy of Jerusalem after its eschatological deliverance which follows the second coming of Christ. Jerusalem is called “the daughter of Zion” also by other prophets and nowhere in the Bible does this title refer to Mary.

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
He is just and endowed with salvation,
Humble, and mounted on a donkey,
Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
And the horse from Jerusalem;
And the bow of war will be cut off.
And He will speak peace to the nations;
And His dominion will be from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.
Zechariah 9:9-10 NASB

The only Old Testament reference to Mary is Isaiah 7:14.

14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.
Isaiah 7:14 NASB

All the other references which the Catholic church quotes in their teachings are erroneous interpretations in which the church fathers are attempting to find support for their doctrines where it is not present (see especially chapter V).

3.1.1.2. *Full of grace, the Lord is with thee:* These two phrases of the angel's greeting shed light on one another. Mary is full of grace because the Lord is with her. The grace with which she is filled is the presence of him who is the source of all grace. "Rejoice . . . O Daughter of Jerusalem . . . the Lord your God is in your midst" (Zephaniah 3:14, 17a).

Here we encounter a serious error on which several other Marian doctrines have been founded. As it has been discussed in depth in chapter II, the angel does not greet Mary with the words "full of grace" which is an expression based on an erroneous translation of Jerome. The Greek passive participle κεχαριτωμένη (*kecharitōmenē*) used in this verse should be translated "the one who has been graced", "the graced one", "the favoured one".

28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you." **29** But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. **30** The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God".
Luke 1:28-30 NASB

The Lord is with Mary, but not in any other way than He is with all those who believe in Him and are faithful to Him.

9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
Joshua 1:9 NASB

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
Psalm 23:4 NASB

9 And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent; **10** for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."
Acts 18:9-10 NASB

20 "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:20 NASB

As it has been explained above, the book of Zephaniah has got nothing to do with Mary and both references given – Zephaniah 3:14 and Zephaniah 17a – are wrong.

3.1.1.3. Mary, in whom the Lord himself has just made his dwelling, is the daughter of Zion in person, the ark of the covenant, the place where the glory of the Lord dwells. She is "the dwelling of God . . . with men" (Revelation 21:3). Full of grace, Mary is wholly given over to him who has come to dwell in her and whom she is about to give to the world.

When interpreting the scripture we should strive to comprehend what the inspired author communicates to us, the meaning of his words and the context in which they are used. The Catholic church ignores all the principles of biblical exegesis and seeks support for their doctrines in places where this support is not present. Mary is not "the daughter of Zion in person". In the Old Testament

this designation is only used towards Jerusalem (see point 1 above). She is also not the ark of the covenant and this error has been described in detail above (chapter V, point 3, analysis of the first part of paragraph 26).

Mary is also not “the dwelling of God . . . with men”. This interpretation is also erroneous and it is made clear when the quoted verse of Revelation 21:3 is read in its context.

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, **4** and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”
Revelation 21:1-4 NASB

The dwelling of God with men is the New Jerusalem in which believers will live when the eternal state comes which is described in chapter 21 of Revelation. John describes the New Jerusalem in verses 9-20 and then writes that there is no temple in this city, “for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple”, which explains the expression that “the dwelling of God is with men” – in the New Jerusalem we will dwell with God.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.
22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23** And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. **24** The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. **25** In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;
Revelation 21:21-25 NASB

3.1.1.4. *Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.* After the angel's greeting, we make Elizabeth's greeting our own. “Filled with the Holy Spirit”, Elizabeth is the first in the long succession of generations who have called Mary “blessed” (Luke 1:41, 48). “Blessed is she who believed. . . . (Luke 1:45) Mary is “blessed among women” because she believed in the fulfillment of the Lord's word. Abraham, because of his faith, became a blessing for all the nations of the earth cf. Genesis 12:3).

It is true that Mary was blessed. It is important, however, to correctly understand the word “blessed”. In Luke 1:42 the Greek word *Εὐλογημένη* (*Eulogēmenē*) is used which is a perfect passive participle from the verb *εὐλογέω* (*eulogeō*) “to bestow a favor, provide with benefits” (BDAG). *Eulogēmenē* thus means “the one who has been bestowed a favour”. Mary has received a special gift and grace from God – to be the mother of Jesus in His humanity. Elizabeth then explains the reason Mary is blessed – that she believed God would fulfil His promise despite the fact that conception by the Holy Spirit was an unprecedented miracle.

45 “And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.”
Luke 1:45 NASB

In Luke 1:45 the word *μακαρία* (*makaria*) is used which means “being especially favored, blessed, fortunate, happy, privileged” (BDAG).

Thus the verb “to bless” (whether *εὐλογέω* – *eulogeō* – or *μακαρίζω* – *makarizō*) does not mean “to worship” or “to give glory” and Elizabeth does not speak these words to glorify Mary and praise her. Both designations – *eulogēmenē* and *makaria* – refer to the grace and privilege which God has bestowed on her and it is this blessing that Elizabeth is referring to – that she will become the mother of the Messiah.

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. **42** And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb!" **43** And how has it *happened* to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me?
Luke 1:41-43 NASB

It is true that Mary received the blessing through her faithfulness to the Lord – faith and obedience. There is, however, a substantial difference between considering a person blessed who, while they remained a sinner, was faithful to the Lord and through it received a blessing, and worshiping a person and ascribing prerogatives and titles to them which do not belong to them, as the Catholic church does with Mary.

Finally, let's remember that being "blessed" is in no way unique to Mary – the scripture describes other faithful believers in this way.

24 "Most blessed of women is Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite;
Most blessed is she of women in the tent."
Judges 5:24 NASB

10 Then he said, "May you be blessed of the Lord, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich".
Ruth 3:10 NASB

24 Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson; and the child grew up and the Lord blessed him.
Judges 13:24 NASB

12 The Lord blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys.
Job 42:12 NASB

34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'."
Matthew 25:34 NASB

1. Mary, because of her faith, became the mother of believers, through whom all nations of the earth receive him who is God's own blessing: Jesus, the "fruit of thy womb".

To say that "Mary, because of her faith, became the mother of believers" is a serious error. The fact that Mary believed in no way makes her "the mother of believers" and the scripture never gives her this title. If the fact that someone believed makes them a "mother" or a "father" of believers, then every believer could be described in this way, which is absurd. The Catholic church again exalts Mary beyond what the scripture says. The Church in the biblical sense of this word – the community of true believers in Christ – has only one Head and that is Christ.

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.
Ephesians 5:22-24 NASB

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 1:18 NASB

Christ is the Head of the true Church and apart from Him as believers we have no other leader or mother. The scripture figuratively calls Abraham the father of those who believe (Romans 4:11, 4:16) of whom it was said that He was justified by believing the Lord (Genesis 15:6) and who through his absolute trust in Him became a symbol of faith (Genesis 22). God nowhere, however, calls us to exalt or worship Abraham for him being the archetype of faith. We should also notice that the Catholics do not pray to Abraham or for his intercession and do not glorify or worship him despite being metaphorically called the father of those who believe, but they do pray to and for the intercession of Mary and worship her, despite the scripture nowhere calling her a “mother of believers”, and they ascribe to her this title without any biblical basis.

If an argument was to be used here that Mary is the mother of Jesus in whom we are to believe and so through this she is the “mother of believers”, then the scripture gives no basis for such reasoning and it would be an unjustified leap of logic. Let’s remember that Mary is only the mother of the human nature of Christ (see chapter I).

Thus the statement that “through whom all nations of the earth receive him who is God’s own blessing: Jesus, the ‘fruit of thy womb’” is another subtle form of falsehood. We didn’t receive Jesus thanks to Mary. It is God the Father who in eternity past decreed through His infinite love to send His Son to pay for the sins of all humanity and in this way gave us the possibility of avoiding condemnation. God the Son freely accepted the role of the One through whom redemption was to be completed and although He existed as God with God the Father (John 1:1-2), He became a man for us (John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-8). Then God chose Mary as the one through whom Jesus was to receive His human nature and she conceived through Holy Spirit. We must remember that Jesus Christ is the greatest gift of God and we have Him as our Saviour thanks to God’s ineffable love and the perfect cooperation of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The role of Mary was only to give Christ His human body.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 6:23 NASB

15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!
2 Corinthians 9:15 NASB

The statement that it is through Mary that “all nations of the earth receive him who is God’s own blessing” is false.

3.1.2. Analysis of the Catholic exposition of the second part of the prayer “Hail Mary”.

Holy Mary, Mother of God: With Elizabeth we marvel, “And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me (Luke 1:43)?” Because she gives us Jesus, her son, Mary is Mother of God and our mother; we can entrust all our cares and petitions to her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself: “Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). By entrusting ourselves to her prayer, we abandon ourselves to the will of God together with her: “Thy will be done”.

Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death: By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the “Mother of Mercy”, the All-Holy One. We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender “the hour of our death” wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son’s death on the cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing (cf. John 19:27) to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2677

The second part of the prayer “Hail Mary” is not based on the scripture and contradicts its teaching.

1. *Holy Mary, Mother of God*: With Elizabeth we marvel, “And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me (Luke 1:43)?”

Firstly, the Word of God never describes Mary as “holy”. She was a sinful human being, as all of us are (see chapter IV). The Bible describes those as “saints” who through their faith in Christ have been cleansed from their sins (Acts 9:13; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2, etc.) and in this biblical sense of this word all of us who believe in Christ are saints – including Mary. It is clear, however, that the Catholic church uses the title “holy” in a totally different meaning – to describe Mary as sinless which contradicts the teaching of the scripture (see point 2.3.1.3 above and chapter IV).

Secondly, Mary is not the “Mother of God” (see chapter I). Mary is the mother of Jesus in His humanity. As God Christ existed from eternity past (John 1:1-3) and it is obvious that as God He needs no mother – He is eternal. He is the Creator (Colossians 1:16) and not a creature.

It is hard to know what the words “With Elizabeth we marvel, ‘And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me (Luke 1:43)’” are supposed to mean. It seems that the Catholic church teaches that Mary comes to each one of us as she came to Elizabeth. If this is so, then this reasoning is entirely without basis. When Mary came to Elizabeth, it was a particular visit paid at a particular time which was described in the gospel. Seeking some universal meaning to this visit is unfounded.

2. Because she gives us Jesus, her son, Mary is Mother of God and our mother; we can entrust all our cares and petitions to her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself: “Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). By entrusting ourselves to her prayer, we abandon ourselves to the will of God together with her: “Thy will be done”.

Firstly, as it has been discussed above (point 3.1.1, subpoint 5), it is God who gave us Jesus and it is Jesus who gave Himself for us. It has also been mentioned numerous times that Mary is not the “Mother of God” and the author of the plan of salvation in Christ, as the Catholic church falsely portrays her. Mary’s role in God’s plan was to give Jesus His human body. It is another example where the lie is introduced in a statement that contains a certain amount of truth in it.

Mary is also not “our mother”. The scripture nowhere describes her like this and gives no basis for doing so.

In the words which follow:

we can entrust all our cares and petitions to her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself:
“Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38)

The Catholic church introduces the false teaching to entrust all our petitions to Mary. As it has been discussed in point 2.2, the scripture nowhere teaches us to entrust “all our cares and petitions” to anyone but God. It is Him that we are to trust – as did Mary.

5 Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him, and He will do it.
Psalm 37:5 NASB

Therefore let all those who are suffering according to the will of God entrust their lives (while doing what is good) to a Creator who is faithful.
1 Peter 4:19 RL

11 Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion;
Declare among the peoples His deeds.
Psalm 9:11 NASB

According to the twisted Catholic logic Mary entrusted herself to God and we, instead of following her example, are in our prayer to entrust ourselves to Mary (!).

The prayer for Mary's intercession contradicts the teaching of the scripture which clearly teaches that there is only one Mediator between God and man – the God-man Jesus Christ (see chapter VII, point 2.2).

5 For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time.
1 Timothy 2:5-6 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

There is not a single passage in the scripture which would say that Mary – or any other deceased believer – prays for us (see point 2.3 above). The reference to Luke 1:38 is supposed to give this false teaching an appearance of scriptural legitimacy, but in this verse Mary only speaks of herself and there is no basis for the teaching that she uttered these words on anyone else's behalf.

Finally we submit to the will of God by our free will choice to believe in the Word of God and live according to it, and not by entrusting ourselves to Mary's prayer. It is only to God that we are to entrust ourselves. Reference to Jesus' words "Thy will be done" is another attempt to give the false Catholic teaching a pretence of scriptural legitimacy despite them having absolutely nothing to do with the doctrine they are now used by the Catholic church to defend.

3. *Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death*: By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the "Mother of Mercy", the All-Holy One. We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives.

The falsehood continues. It is before God that we are to acknowledge ourselves as sinners and it is only from Him that our mercy comes (Exodus 34:6; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:5, 103:8, 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Luke 6:36; Ephesians 1:7, 2:4; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3, etc.). Baselessly calling her the "Mother of Mercy" the Catholic church again ascribes to Mary a prerogative that is not hers.

Erroneous and devoid of any biblical basis is describing Mary as the "All-Holy one" (see point 1 above and chapter IV). We have here another element of an idolatrous personality cult. Man's sanctification comes only through faith in Christ. Absolutely holy, free from any sin – all holy – is God alone.

9 Exalt the Lord our God
And worship at His holy hill,
For holy is the Lord our God.
Psalm 99:9 NASB

1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. **2** Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. **3** And one called out to another and said,
"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts,
The whole earth is full of His glory."
Isaiah 6:1-3 NASB

15 "I am the Lord, your Holy One,
The Creator of Israel, your King."
Isaiah 43:15 NASB

8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,
"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."

Revelation 4:8 NASB

4. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender “the hour of our death” wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son’s death on the cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing (cf. John 19:27) to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise.

The presence of Mary “at the hour of our passing” – whatever this is to mean – is a teaching devoid of biblical foundation. If we die believing in Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we are saved. If we die without having believed in Christ, we are condemned. The presence of Mary – or anyone else – does not change anything.

Mary also does not welcome any of us after our death. The scripture nowhere mentions her or any other human being fulfilling this role.¹¹ The Catholic church uses John 19:27 as a reference to support this false teaching, but this verse only says that Mary was present at the cross together with other women.

25 Therefore the soldiers did these things.

But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. **26** When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He *said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” **27** Then He *said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” From that hour the disciple took her into his own *household*.

John 19:25-27 NASB

Mary leads us neither to Jesus nor to paradise. As it has been described in point 2.2, we come to Jesus without any mediators, including Mary. We are here dealing with pious sounding inventions of the Catholic church.

3.2. Rosary.

Firstly, the errors of the “Hail Mary” prayer which is the main constituent of the Rosary have been discussed in depth above. Secondly, for each repetition of the prayer “Our Father”, the prayer “Hail Mary” – directed to Mary – is repeated ten times. The Rosary contradicts the teaching of the scripture also for several other reasons.

3.2.1. Rosary and Matthew 6:6-8.

The rosary breaks Jesus’ command “not to use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do”.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

7 “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. **8** So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Matthew 6:6-8 NASB

Prayer should flow from the heart and not be a repetition of the same words or phrases which quickly becomes an empty and thoughtless ritual. Jesus warns us “not to use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do” and it is ironic that the rosary is a Catholic version of the repetitive prayer present in

11 Taking the deceased to heaven is a task of the angels (see also chapter IX, point 3.2.2.2).

22 Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.
Luke 16:22 NASB

other false religions where prayer beads are also used to mark a repetition – e.g., *subha* in Islam, *mala* in Sikhism, etc.

God looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7) and wants us to seek Him with our whole heart.

29 But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find *Him* if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.
Deuteronomy 4:29 NASB

13 “You will seek Me and find *Me* when you search for Me with all your heart. **14** I will be found by you,” declares the Lord
Jeremiah 29:13-14a NASB

It is the disposition of our heart that matters in prayer and not the amount of repetition – as if such repetitions made any difference to God impressed Him in any way. The Rosary directly contradicts the guidelines for prayer in the scripture and there is no prayer in the Bible that could be taken as its precursor.

3.2.2. The “Glorious Mysteries” of the rosary.

The “Glorious Mysteries” of the rosary contain erroneous Catholic doctrines. The fourth mystery is “the assumption of Mary”. As it has been discussed in depth in chapter V, the assumption of Mary is a false teaching devoid of any biblical basis. The argumentation of the Catholic church in support of the establishment of the dogma is based on extra-biblical sources and contains numerous errors.

The fifth mystery is “the Coronation of the Virgin”, but the scripture does not mention any coronation of Mary and never describes her as a “queen”. As it has been discussed above (chapter V, point 3 comment on the third part of paragraph 26 of the *Munificentissimus Deus* encyclical), the title of the king only belongs to God (Psalm 47:1-2, 95:3, 103:19; Isaiah 6:5; 1 Timothy 1:17, 6:15-16) and to Jesus Christ who rules in His name (John 18:37; Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:11-16). Putting Mary at the same level as God the Father and God the Son is another aspect of idolatry in which the glory due only to the Creator is given to the creature.

3.2.3. Rosary as an “epitome of the whole Gospel”.

The Catholic church goes as far as calling the rosary an “epitome of the whole Gospel”.

“*All generations will call me blessed*”: “The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship” (Luke 1:48; Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, 56). The Church rightly honors “the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of ‘Mother of God’, to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. . . . This very special devotion . . . differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration” (*Lumen gentium*, 66). The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an “epitome of the whole Gospel”, express this devotion to the Virgin Mary (Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, 42).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §971

The Catholic church calls the rosary an “epitome of the whole Gospel” despite it having absolutely nothing to do with the gospel and the message of the gospel – of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ – never even being mentioned throughout the prayer (!). This statement shows, however, that the Catholic church does not back away from labelling their teachings as biblical and establishing them as doctrines and dogmas even when they not only do not have any biblical basis, but directly contradict the scripture. The statement itself remains false and no references to papal encyclicals or adhortations, nor the fact that it is a part of the catechism, nor thousands of year of tradition will make it true. A lie remains a lie.

Finally contrary to the false teachings of Leon XIII according to which the mysteries of the rosary “make clear what we owe to Mary for our reconciliation and salvation” (1896, *Fidentem Piumque Animum*, §3), our salvation is only in Jesus Christ. As it has been discussed above (chapter VII, point 2), we owe our reconciliation and salvation only to Jesus Christ, not to Mary.

3.3. “Litany of Loreto”.

Since it has already been shown above that both prayer to Mary and for her intercession contradict the teaching of the scripture, an in-depth analysis of all Marian prayers said by the Catholics is not needed. However, in order to be aware how the Catholic church worships Mary contrary to the Word of God and how elevated her status is, we will analyse the “Litany of Loreto” as an exemplary Marian prayer, the respective parts of which have been provided with comments referring them to the teaching of the scripture.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy. Christ hear us.
Christ graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*
God the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, *pray for us* (refrain repeated after each exclamation).

The scripture never refers to Mary as “holy”. This error has been discussed above (point 2.3.1.3 and 3.1.2, subpoint 3).

Holy Mother of God,

Mary is not the “Mother of God” (see chapter I).

Holy Virgin of Virgins,

Mary remained a virgin until the birth of Christ, but afterwards had children with Joseph and the Catholic teaching of her perpetual virginity is false (chapter VI).

Mother of Christ,
Mother of the Church,

Here we encounter another serious error. The teaching of the scripture is clear – the only foundation of the true Church – the community of those who have genuine faith in Christ rather than any particular denomination – is Jesus Christ.

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.

Ephesians 5:22-24 NASB

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 1:18 NASB

The scripture never calls Mary the “Mother of the Church” for the obvious reason that she is not. The only foundation of the Church is Jesus Christ.

Mother of divine grace,

Mary is not the “Mother of divine grace” – grace was given to us by God through His Son, whom He sacrificed for our sins. Mary had a specific role to fulfil in God’s plan of redemption and it is God from whom all grace comes (see chapter VII, point 2.3).

Mother most pure,
Mother most chaste,

Mary is not “most pure” or “most chaste” – she was a sinful human being, like all of us (see chapter IV).

Mother inviolate,
Mother undefiled,

As above, Mary was neither a perpetual virgin (chapter VI) nor sinless (see chapter IV).

Mother most amiable,
Mother most admirable,
Mother of good Counsel,

Further unbiblical epithets are being enumerated to exalt Mary.

Mother of our Creator,

Mary is obviously not the “Mother of our Creator” and the scripture never calls her that. Jesus did, indeed, create the world (Colossians 1:16), but He did it as God (John 1:1), long before not only He took on a human body from Mary, but long before Mary herself was born. It is the same error as describing Mary the “Mother of God” (see chapter I).

Mother of our Savior,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most venerable,

The scripture never describes Mary as “most venerable” and clearly teaches that God should be the only object of our veneration (see chapter IX, point 3.2.2.3).

Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,

Mary was a sinful human-being and to describe her as “most powerful” is absurd – this epithet belongs only to God. This is outright idolatry whereby a prerogative of God is ascribed to a creature.

Mary not only is not omniscient to hear all the prayers addressed to her, but also has got no omnipotence to fulfil them (see also point 2.1 above).

Virgin most merciful,

As above – mercy, like grace, comes from God.

Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,
Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of gold,

Further examples of the creative fervour of the Catholic church in which they create teachings, prayers and titles devoid of any biblical basis, in this case directly contributing to an idolatrous cult.

Ark of the covenant,

The error of seeing the ark of the covenant as a type of Mary has been described in detail above (chapter V, point three, analysis of the third part of paragraph 26).

Gate of heaven,

Mary is not a “Gate of heaven”, neither is she a mediator leading to God or Christ. Only Jesus Christ is described in the scripture as the Gate and the Way.

9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.
John 10:9 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

Morning star,

Here we have another example of idolatrously ascribing to Mary a title that Jesus Christ uses of Himself.

16 “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”
Revelation 22:16 NASB

Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,

The scripture calls God alone our Refuge, since our refuge is only in Him.

1 God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Psalm 46:1 NASB

1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress,
My God, in whom I trust!”
Psalm 91:1-2 NASB

Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,

Only God is our Comforter and only He is our help. It is exactly in this way that Christ describes the Holy Spirit who came to comfort us and help us.

16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; **17** *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”
John 14:16-17 NASB

Queen of Angels,
Queen of Patriarchs,
Queen of Prophets,
Queen of Apostles,
Queen of Martyrs,
Queen of Confessors,
Queen of Virgins,
Queen of all Saints,

The scripture gives absolutely no basis to ascribe to Mary any of the above titles. Mary is none of the things listed. We see here an advanced form of false glorification.

Queen conceived without original sin,

The error of the teaching of the “immaculate conception” of Mary has been discussed in chapter III.

Queen assumed into heaven,

The error of the teaching of Mary’s alleged “assumption into heaven” has been discussed in chapter V.

Queen of the most holy Rosary,

As has been discussed above (point 3.2), the Rosary is not only not “most holy”, but it is a prayer which contradicts the teaching of the scripture.

Queen of families,
Queen of peace.

Mary is not a “Queen of peace” and again a divine title is idolatrously ascribed to her.

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6 NASB

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, that we thy servants may enjoy perpetual health of mind and body, and by the glorious intercession of blessed Mary, ever Virgin, may we be freed from present sorrow, and rejoice in eternal happiness. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The error of the teaching of the intercession of Mary and other “saints” has been shown above (point 2.2 and 2.3).

As evident, the content of the entire prayer is devoid of any biblical basis and the majority of exclamations directly contradict the teaching of the scripture. Mary is ascribed titles and prerogatives which only belong to God. In the Catholic church, Mary is given idolatrous worship.

4. Summary.

1. The official position of the Catholic church says that we can address our prayers directly to Mary (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2679) and ask for her intercession (§2677), entrusting our prayers to her. Both of these types of Marian prayer are common in the Catholic church.
2. Both these types of prayer contradict the scripture.
3. The Word of God teaches only prayer to God. It is He who is our Creator and our Father. Only He hears our supplications, only He in His perfect righteousness and omniscience can judge the motives of these supplications and only He in His omnipotence can fulfil them. Only God is our refuge and help and only to Him do we come to ask for mercy.
4. In the scripture prayer equates to worship of the one to whom it is addressed and that’s why it can only be directed to God. Bringing our supplications to God means giving Him the worship that is His due.
5. When Jesus taught His apostles how to pray, He told them to pray to their Father. There is not a single instance of the scripture pointing to any other addressee of our supplications – whether a man, an angel or any other creature. Prayer to anyone else is only mentioned in the context of idolatrous practices.
6. Mary is a mere human being – a creature, not the Creator. She is not omniscient to be able to simultaneously hear the supplications of all the people from around the world. Quite the contrary, the Bible does not give us any reason to think that she even hears these prayers at all. She is not perfectly righteous in order to judge the motives of these prayers and she is not omnipotent to fulfil them. The scripture not only gives no basis to put her as equal to God as

an addressee of our prayers, but warns against doing it towards any creature, because it amounts to idolatry.

7. As it has been discussed in detail above (chapter VII, point 2.2), the only Mediator between God and man is Jesus Christ. Only He is the Way that leads to God and only He intercedes for us. The teaching that Mary – or anyone else – in any way mediates between us and God and intercedes on our behalf is false and directly contradicts the scripture.
8. False and directly contradictory to the Word of God is also the teaching that Mary through her prayers “will deliver us from death”. The Catholic church again erroneously ascribes to Mary a prerogative that belongs solely to God. Only God can deliver from death – not only physical, but above all eternal – and this deliverance God the Father brings us through God the Son.
9. Apart from the intercession of Mary, the Catholic church also teaches the intercession of the “saints” and angels and uses several verses in support of this doctrine, relying mainly on Revelation 5:8 and 8:3-4. Neither passage has got anything to do with this doctrine, nor provides any support for it. Both fragments only allow us to conclude that the angels probably play some role in bringing our prayers to God. There is no verse in the scripture teaching that either deceased believers or angels pray or intercede for us in any way.
10. The Catholic church created their own, unbiblical definition of a “saint” and erroneously uses it in their exegesis of the scripture. According to the Word of God a “saint” is a believer who has been sanctified by faith in Christ.
11. Addressing Mary or other saints in prayer is often in the Catholic church justified as only a request for their intercession, but we must remember that firstly, the catechism clearly teaches prayer to Mary and secondly, that the prayer for intercession is also devoid of any biblical basis. Many Catholics, however, unaware of the Catholic theological sophistry, pray directly to Mary and other “saints” and consequently abide in an idolatry that is no different to the idolatry of the ancient pagans.
12. The prayer “Hail Mary” contradicts the scripture in numerous points. Mary was not “full of grace” (chapter II), she was also not “holy”, but a sinless human being as the rest of us (chapter IV). Mary is also not the “Mother of God” (chapter I).
13. In a similar vein, also the Rosary contradicts the teaching of the scripture on prayer and there is no prayer in the Bible that could be taken as its precursor.
 1. It’s main component is the “Hail Mary” prayer whose errors have been listed above. For each repetition of the prayer “Our Father”, the prayer “Hail Mary” – directed to Mary – is repeated ten times.
 2. The rosary breaks Jesus’ command “not to use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do” (Matthew 6:6-8). Prayer should flow from the heart and not be a repetition of the same words or phrases which quickly becomes an empty and thoughtless ritual. Jesus warns us “not to use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do” and it is ironic that the rosary is a Catholic version of the repetitive prayer present in other false religions where prayer beads are also used to mark a repetition – e.g., *subha* in Islam, *mala* in Sikhism, etc.
 3. The “Glorious Mysteries” of the rosary contain erroneous Catholic doctrines. The fourth mystery is “the assumption of Mary” which is a false teaching devoid of any biblical basis (chapter V). The fifth mystery is “the Coronation of the Virgin”, but the scripture does not mention any coronation of Mary and never describes her as a “queen”. The title of the king only belongs to God and to Jesus Christ who rules in His name.

14. Marian prayers, such as for example the “Loreto Litany” are devoid of any biblical basis and their content directly contradicts the scripture. Mary is ascribed titles and prerogatives which only belong to God.
15. In the Catholic church, Mary is given idolatrous worship.

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See also:

- <https://carm.org/litany-blessed-virgin-mary>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/prayer-saints-Mary.html>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/Hail-Mary.html>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/praying-rosary.html>