

The Communion of Saints & the Blessed Virgin Mary

Outline - Communion of Saints:

- Saint
 - A holy one (one who is in a state of grace)
 - A canonized saint is someone who the Church has declared to be in heaven
 - Canonized saints are not the only ones in heaven, but are the only ones the Church has declared to be so
 - Exemplary models of Christian faith and virtuous living. Their lives serve as inspirations for us to emulate
 - Each one of us is called to be holy (to be a saint)

- **CCC 946-948** The Communion of Saints
 - The Communion of saints is the Church.
 - “Since all the faithful form one body, the good of each is communicated to the others.... We must therefore believe that there exists a communion of goods in the Church. But the most important member is Christ, since he is the head.... Therefore, the riches of Christ are communicated to all the members, through the sacraments.” (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *The Catechetical Instructions – The Apostles’ Creed*, 10)

- **CCC 949-953** Communion In Spiritual Goods
 - Communion of Saints participate in...
 - a communion in the faith, which has been received from the Apostles.
 - a communion of the sacraments, because “they unite us to God.” (CCC 950)
 - a communion of charisms, in order to build up the Church.
 - a communion of the Lord’s goods.
 - a communion in charity. Every act of charity benefits the Church, every sin harms her.

- **CCC 954-959** The Communion of the Church of Heaven and Earth
 - Christ’s Church exists in 3 states:
 - Church Triumphant
 - Heaven
 - Those who are in Glory, contemplating in full light, God himself
 - They have run the race and since they are with God, they have great intercessory power
 - They pray for the Church Militant and Suffering
 - Good Angels are part of the Church Triumphant
 - Church Militant
 - Earth
 - Those who are pilgrims in this world and are still working out their salvation
 - Called to battle Satan in unity with other believers
 - Called to love God and neighbor and live holy lives
 - They pray and receive indulgences for those in the Church Suffering
 - They pray for those in the Church Militant
 - They request prayer from those in the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant

- Church Suffering
 - Purgatory
 - Those who are being purified
 - All in the Church Suffering will be in the Church Triumphant and are aware they will see God after their purification
 - All 3 states of the Church form one Body
 - Intercession of the saints
 - For those on earth (even our enemies)
 - For unity in the Church on earth
 - For those in Purgatory
 - We ask the saints in heaven to place our prayers before the throne of God
 - Prayer to God is an indispensable part of Christian life
 - Asking others to pray for (or with) you is both suitable and beneficial
 - Asking a righteous person to pray for (or with) you is even more beneficial ○ Cf. James 5:16 – “The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.”
 - How much more beneficial is it to ask those who are beholding God face to face and are not hindered by sin
 - Judas Maccabeus
 - Prays for those who had died as punishment for wearing tokens of the idols of Jamnia
 - He did this in view of the resurrection
 - He made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin
 - “For by reason of the fact that those in heaven are more closely united with Christ, they establish the whole Church more firmly in holiness, lend nobility to the worship which the Church offers to God here on earth and in many ways contribute to its greater edification. For after they have been received into their heavenly home and are present to the Lord, through Him and with Him and in Him they do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, showing forth the merits which they won on earth through the one Mediator between God and man, serving God in all things and filling up in their flesh those things which are lacking of the sufferings of Christ for His Body which is the Church. Thus by their brotherly interest our weakness is greatly strengthened.” (*Lumen gentium*, 49)
 - “We worship Christ as God’s Son; we love the martyrs as the Lord’s disciples and imitators, and rightly so because of their matchless devotion towards their king and master. May we also be their companions and fellow disciples!” (Martyrdom of Polycarp, 17)
- **CCC 2683-2684** A cloud of witnesses
 - The intercession of the saints is how they serve God’s plan.
 - We should therefore ask them to intercede for us.
 - “It is an extraordinary statement, but it is none the less true, that the Spirit is frequently spoken of as the *place* of them that are being sanctified...the Spirit is verily the place of the saints, and the saint is the proper place for the Spirit, offering himself as he does for the indwelling of God, and called God's Temple.” (Saint Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 62)
- **CCC 2012-2016** Christian Holiness
 - All Christians (not just the clergy) are called to holiness
 - **Matthew 5:48** “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
 - This is done by grace, received through the sacraments
 - Holiness is won through the way of the Cross and so includes suffering and mortification

- **CCC 2813** Call to Holiness
 - We can be holy because of the holiness of Jesus Christ communicated to us in the sacrament of Baptism and the other sacraments
 - For our sanctification we are called to glorify God in our daily lives so that we can persevere in what was begun in our Baptism

- Road to Sainthood
 1. Servant of God
 2. Venerable
 3. Blessed
 4. Saint

Outline - Blessed Virgin Mary:

- Mary, by her life, points us to her son; Mary, by her love, intercedes for us with her son
- We do not worship Mary; she is a creature of God like we are
- We do venerate (honor) her, she is the Mother of our Lord
- Typology
 - “the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New” – **CCC 129**
 - New Ark of the Covenant
 - The Ark of the Covenant in the OT
 - Was overshadowed by the Lord
 - Carried the Law (Covenant)
 - Aaron’s Rod (Priesthood)
 - Manna (Bread from Heaven)
 - Mary is the new Ark of the Covenant
 - Was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit
 - Jesus is the new Law/Covenant
 - Jesus is the eternal high priest
 - Jesus is the Bread of Life, the true Bread from Heaven
 - Queen of heaven and earth
 - Israel had a King
 - Jesus is descended from the Davidic Kings (He is King of Kings)
 - His Kingdom is the fulfillment of the Davidic Kingdom
 - Israel’s Queen was the mother of the King
 - Mary is the Queen Mother of the King of Kings
 - Jesus is the King of the universe and so Mary is the Queen of the universe
- Four Marian Doctrines
 - Mother of God
 - Mary is the mother of Jesus
 - Jesus is God
 - Therefore, Mary is the Mother of God
 - Mother’s give birth to persons not natures
 - Christ is a divine person

- Mother of all believers
 - Christ gives her as a gift to us while he is on the cross
 - Revelation 12:17 says the woman (Mary) has other children (Christians) who “keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.”
- Perpetual Virginity
 - Mary was a virgin before, during, and after the birth of Jesus
 - Brethren of the Lord
 - Brethren does not necessarily mean blood brothers (could mean step, cousin, kinsman, etc.)
 - See Attached Article – *The Perpetual Virginity of Mary: Brothers and Sisters of Christ?* for help understanding who those brothers and sisters were
 - Joseph knew Mary not *until* she had borne a son
 - Until does not imply a later change of condition
 - Firstborn
 - Jesus being described as the firstborn does not mean there were second, third, etc. born
 - Jesus entrusts Mary to John while he is on the cross
 - If Jesus had siblings, he would not have done this
- Immaculate Conception
 - Mary was preserved from original sin and any effects of original sin
 - Mary was still redeemed by Jesus
 - Her redemption preserved her from sin instead of cleansing her from sin
 - Illustration
 - If a man pulled you out of quicksand, you would say he saved you
 - How Jesus saves humanity in general
 - If a man stopped you from falling into the quicksand, you would say he saved you more perfectly
 - How Jesus saved his mother
 - Angel Gabriel says to her, “Hail, Full of Grace”
 - If she has the fullness of grace (God’s life) she could not have sin
- Bodily Assumption
 - Mary was assumed into heaven, body and soul, by God
 - Revelation 11:19-12:5
 - Immediately before the woman is mentioned Saint John describes the ark of the covenant
 - He describes it by saying, “Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple”, pointing to the fact that Mary as the New Ark is in heaven, body and soul