

RCIA, Session #16: Mary & the Saints (ANSWER KEY)

The University of St. Francis

1. Martin Luther (a prominent leader from the 1500s during the Protestant Reformation) once wrote that “There is but one Mediator, Propitiatory, High Priest and Intercessor, namely, Jesus Christ” (from *The Augsburg Confession*).¹ With this in mind, why should we even pray to Mary and the saints when we believe that Jesus Christ is the true mediator between mankind & God?

From the Glossary of the CCC: Showing devotion and respect to Mary, the Apostles, and the martyrs, who were viewed as faithful witnesses to faith in Jesus Christ. Later, veneration was given to those who led a life of prayer and self-denial in giving witness to Christ, whose virtues were recognized and publicly proclaimed in their canonization as saints (828). Such veneration is often extended to the relics or remains of those recognized as saints; indeed, to many sacred objects and images. Veneration must be clearly distinguished from adoration and worship, which are due to God alone (1154, 1674, 2132).

2. In the Nicene Creed (the Catholic Church’s Profession of Faith), we state our belief in “the communion of saints.” What is the communion of saints? Who comprises this list?

In general, the Catholic Church distinguishes two different types of saints:

¹ In actuality, it was one of Luther’s followers (Philip Melanchthon) who was the scribe of the Augsburg Confession, though the consensus among Reformation scholars holds that Luther provided the doctrinal background for this work.

1. *The Communion of Saints, which is comprised of “the holy people” of God, who are called “saints” in the context of the Church (CCC #823).*
2. *The Canonized Saint is the individual who, by living a life of “heroic virtue,” living “in fidelity to God’s Church,” and through whom miraculous events are attributed in his/her name, is recognized specifically in the Church’s martyrology. The process of recognizing a saint in this manner is call canonization (CCC #827).*
3. At various liturgical functions (Ordination Masses, the Easter Vigil, prayers for the dying), a minister might pray what is called “The Litany of the Saints.” What is the purpose of this particular prayer? How is this prayer comprised?

A Litany is a well-known and much appreciated form of responsive petition, used in public liturgical services, and in private devotions, for common necessities of the Church, or in calamities — to implore God’s aid or to appease His just wrath.

(Concerning the Litany of Saints...) It was used in the “Litania Septiformis” of St. Gregory the Great, and in the procession of St. Mamertus. In the Eastern Church, litanies with the invocation of saints were employed in the days of St. Basil (d. 379) and of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus (d. about 270). It is not known when or by whom the litany was composed, but the order in which the Apostles are given, corresponding with that of the Canon of the Mass, proves its antiquity.

4. What is the difference between adoration and veneration?

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Christ, whose virtues were recognized and publicly proclaimed in their canonization as saints (828). Such veneration is often extended to the relics or remains of those recognized as saints; indeed, to many sacred objects and images. Veneration must be clearly distinguished from Adoration and worship, which are due to God alone (1154, 1674, 2132).

5. What is the difference between a saint and an apostle? What is the difference between an apostle and what the Church calls “the twelve?” Which apostles are not included in the list of “the twelve?”

From the Glossary of the CCC: Apostle is a term meaning one who is sent as Jesus was sent by the Father, and as he sent his chosen disciples to preach the Gospel to the whole world. He called The Twelve to become his Apostles, chosen witnesses of his Resurrection and the foundation on which the Church is built (857).

In addition to “The Twelve” chosen by Christ, other apostles were recognized in the first century (Mary and Paul are the two obvious examples).

6. As Catholics, we pray to the saints and angels in heaven, especially on November 1st (All Saints’ Day). What is the difference between heaven, hell and purgatory? Does the Church believe in “limbo” (a place reserved for the unbaptized)?

From the Glossary of CCC:

HEAVEN: Eternal life with God; communion of life and love with the Trinity and all the blessed. Heaven is the state of supreme and definitive happiness, the goal of the deepest longings of humanity (1023).

HELL: The state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with

God and the blessed, reserved for those who refuse by their own free choice to believe and be converted from sin, even to the end of their lives (1033).

PURGATORY: A state of final purification after death and before entrance into heaven for those who died in God's friendship, but were only imperfectly purified; a final cleansing of human imperfection before one is able to enter the joy of heaven (1031; cf. 1472).

LIMBO was once considered a "place" reserved for those who were unbaptized. The concept of limbo was rejected at the Council of Trent in the mid-16th century.

7. The instructions concerning the liturgy clearly state that "The practice of placing under the altar to be dedicated relics of saints, even of non-martyrs, is to be maintained" (*General Instructions to the Roman Missal*, #302). What is a relic? Where is this relic located in the sanctuary of St. Joan of Arc Church?

The word RELIC comes from the Latin reliquiae (the counterpart of the Greek leipsana) which already before the propagation of Christianity was used in its modern sense, viz., of some object, notably part of the body or clothes, remaining as a memorial of a departed saint. At St. Joan of Arc Church, the reliquary is located under the altar of the church.

8. In our session on the Liturgical Year, we discussed the various

celebrations attributed to saints (Solemnities, Feasts, Memorials, etc.). Name one solemnity in the Liturgical Year attributed to the following saints:

The Virgin Mary	<i>The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Jan 1st) The Assumption of Mary (Aug 15th) The Immaculate Conception of Mary (Dec 8th)</i>
St. Peter	<i>June 29th</i>
St. Paul	<i>Joseph, Husband of Mary (Mar 20th)</i>
All Saints	<i>Nov 1st</i>

9. What is an angel? What is the difference between an angel and an archangel? Who are the three archangels that we celebrate on September 29th and what charism is associated with each of the archangels?

(Latin angelus; Greek aggelos; from the Hebrew for “one going” or “one sent”; messenger). The word Angel is used in Hebrew to denote indifferently either a divine or human messenger. An angel can know self without recourse to the world outside, but the act of knowing is different than being of angel. The difference between being and knowing is that self-knowledge is different from being. You can know self but not the act of self.

An Archangel is a superior or higher-ranking angel. On September 29th, the Catholic Church recognizes the three specific archangels who are mentioned in Sacred Scripture: Gabriel (“God’s strength,” who visited Daniel in the Old Testament and announced to Mary the annunciation of Lord in the New Testament), Michael (“who is like God,” who fought the devil and his angels in the Book of Revelation), and Raphael (“God’s remedy,” who cured Tobias of his blindness in the Old Testament).

10. Below is a list of some of the more commonly known saints in Catholic martyrology. Match the causes for which the saints below are

recognized as patrons and patronesses in the Church:

F	St. Andrew the Apostle
L	St. Augustine
M	St. Christopher
N	St. Raymond Nonnatus
D	St. Francis of Assisi
B	St. George
G	St. Gregory the Great
E	St. Isidore
I	St. John Vianney
O	St. Margaret the Barefooted
A	St. Matthew
C	St. Nicholas
J	St. Thomas Aquinas
H	Our Lady of Czestochowa
K	Our Lady of Guadalupe

A	Accountants
B	Boy Scouts, Soldiers
C	Children
D	Ecologists
E	Farmers
F	Fisherman
G	Musicians, Singers
H	Poland
I	Priests
J	Students, Schools
K	The Americas
L	Theologians
M	Travelers
N	Unborn Children
O	Young Brides

11. Catholic scholars often refer to Mary as the greatest of the saints. What text in Luke's Gospel is central to Mary's mission on earth? Why do we consider Mary as the greatest of all the saints?

Luke 1: 38 (Mary's fiat, or declaration to Gabriel, in response to hearing that she would conceive by the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Savior of the world): "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Because of Mary's fiat (or declaration of servant hood) in Luke's gospel, Mary is seen by the Church as the greatest saint and apostle who gave her life for the sake of the Lord.

12. During our Sunday Masses, we refer to Mary as an "ever-virgin." What does this mean? Did Mary conceive our Lord without pain? Did

Mary have children after Jesus' birth? Note: specifically in Mk 3:31-35, Lk 8:19-21 & Mt 12:46-50, the gospel readings refer to Jesus' "mother and brothers." How does the Catholic Church interpret this reference?

From the Glossary of CCC:

VIRGIN BIRTH: *The conception of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary solely by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church's confession of faith in the virgin birth affirms that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit without human seed (496).*

VIRGIN MARY: *The mother of Jesus, who is honored as "ever-virgin" for her perpetual virginity (499).*

Questions arise concerning the phrase "ever-virgin," specifically because this concept is not described in Sacred Scripture. The Catholic Church deems this concept as infallible and logical, explaining the "brothers" may refer to Joseph having children in another marriage or possibly the fact that the Greek does not provide a word for cousins in its language, resulting in the problem of translation.

13. One of the great prayers that we direct to Mary is the "Rosary" ("the garden of prayers"). Is the Rosary a liturgical prayer or a private devotion? What is the advantage in reciting such a repetitious set of prayers?

From the Glossary of CCC:

ROSARY: *A PRIVATE prayer in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which repeats the privileged Marian prayer Ave Maria, or Hail Mary, in "decades" of ten prayers, each preceded by the Pater Noster ("Our Father") and concluded by the Gloria Patri (Glory Be to the Father), accompanied by meditation on the mysteries of Christ's life. The rosary was developed by medieval piety in the Latin church as a popular substitute for the liturgical prayer of the Hours (2678, 2708;*

cf. 1674).

14. There is a tradition in the Catholic faith to name children after a prophet or saint or to choose a confirmation name after a prophet or saint. Why is this an important issue to that child's faith life?

First, it ties the child back to his/her Catholic roots and to the Catholic community. Some names, in fact, are so distinctly Catholic that other Catholics are likely to assume one's faith solely because of one's name (for example Faustina or Joachim). But, even with a name like Jerome, the child is tied back to a great saint that he can learn to admire.

Second, when one uses a Catholic name, one create interest in the child to learn more about the person they were "named" after. Each Saint offers specific qualities that one can encourage a child to emulate. In addition, one can celebrate the Saints feast day with the child, encouraging a special devotion to the Saint. In some countries it was common practice to name the child after the feast day on which he/she was born.