

Celebrating Vatican II

A Practical Guide for Reading and Reflecting on the Documents
Lumen Gentium Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Part II



DIocese of ROCKFORD

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DOGOMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH
LUMEN GENTIUM
SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS
POPE PAUL VI
ON NOVEMBER 21, 1964

Chapter VIII

The Blessed Virgin Mary,

Mother of God in the

Mystery of Christ and the Church

Topic 1

God's Gift of Sublime Grace to Mary

53. The Virgin Mary, who at the message of the angel received the Word of God in her heart and in her body and gave Life to the world, is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and Mother of the Redeemer. Redeemed by reason of the merits of her Son and united to Him by a close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the high office and dignity of being the Mother of the Son of God, by which account she is also the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Context

Luke 1: 46 - 49

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;

⁴⁷ my spirit rejoices in God my savior.

⁴⁸ For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;

behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.

⁴⁹ The Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name. (*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Lk 1:46–49). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

492 The “splendor of an entirely unique holiness” by which Mary is “enriched from the first instant of her conception” comes wholly from Christ: she is “redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son.” The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person “in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” and chose her “in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love.” (Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (124). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.)

Redemptoris Mater

10. According to the belief formulated in solemn documents of the Church, this “glory of grace” is manifested in the Mother of God through the fact that she has been “redeemed in a more sublime manner.” By virtue of the richness of the grace of the beloved Son, by reason of the redemptive merits of him who willed to become her Son, Mary was preserved from the inheritance of original sin. In this way, from the first moment of her conception—which is to say of her existence—she belonged to Christ, sharing in the salvific and sanctifying grace and in that love which has its beginning in the “Beloved,” the Son of the Eternal Father, who through the Incarnation became her own Son. (John Paul II. (1987). *Redemptoris Mater*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Question

How is Mary like us in needing to be saved? In what way does she surpass the rest of the human family?

Action

Make a commitment to pray the Rosary as a family at least once a week.

Topic 2 Daughter of Sion

55 The books of the Old Testament describe the history of salvation, by which the coming of Christ into the world was slowly prepared. These earliest documents, as they are read in the Church and are understood in the light of a further and full revelation, bring the figure of the woman, Mother of the Redeemer, into a gradually clearer light. When it is looked at in this way, she is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent which was given to our first parents after their fall into sin. Likewise she is the Virgin who shall conceive and bear a son, whose name will be called Emmanuel. She stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from Him. With her the exalted Daughter of Sion, and after a long expectation of the promise, the times are fulfilled and the new Economy established, when the Son of God took a human nature from her, that He might in the mysteries of His flesh free man from sin. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Context

Luke 1: 41 - 45

⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, ⁴² cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." (*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Lk 1:39–45). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

64 Through the prophets, God forms his people in the hope of salvation, in the expectation of a new and everlasting Covenant intended for all, to be written on their hearts. The prophets proclaim a radical redemption of the People of God, purification from all their infidelities, a salvation which will include all the nations.²³ Above all, the poor and humble of the Lord will bear this hope. Such holy women as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Judith, and Esther kept alive the hope of Israel's salvation. The purest figure among them is Mary. (711; 1965; 489) Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (22). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

Pope John Paul II

"With Mary, 'daughter of Zion' is not merely a collective subject, but a person who represents humanity and, at the moment of the Annunciation, she responds to the proposal of divine love with her own spousal love. Thus she welcomes in a quite special way the joy foretold by the prophecies, a joy which reaches its peak here in the fulfillment of God's plan." (Pope John Paul II, "Mary Responds to God with Spousal Love", *L'Osservatore Romano* Weekly Edition in English, May 8, 1996, page 11)

Question

What quality of Mary does the Holy Spirit teach Elizabeth to most appreciate? If Elizabeth met us, what quality in us do you think she would appreciate most?

Action

Identify the ways you can be a source of blessing for someone or some group. Decide on what action you can take to help them see how they are loved by God.

Topic 3 Mary Discovers She is Favored by God

60. There is but one Mediator as we know from the words of the apostle, “for there is one God and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all”. The maternal duty of Mary toward men in no wise obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows His power. For all the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. In no way does it impede, but rather does it foster the immediate union of the faithful with Christ. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Context

Luke 1: 26 – 31

²⁶In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And coming to her, he said, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,* and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, ³³and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?”* ³⁵And the angel said to her in reply, “The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived* a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; ³⁷for nothing will be impossible for God.” ³⁸Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her. (*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Lk 1:26–38). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

490 To become the mother of the Savior, Mary “was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role.” The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as “full of grace.”¹³³ In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God’s grace. (2676, 2853; 2001) (Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (123). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.)

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen

Question

The same Holy Spirit who favored Mary comes to us in grace in the sacraments. How responsive are we to God’s invitation in our own lives?

Action

Plan to make it a practice to attend Mass at least one more day besides Sunday during the week.

Topic 4

Mary's Journey a Way of the Cross

61 She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ. She presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana)

Context

Luke 2: 25 - 35

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. ²⁷ He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, ²⁸ he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

²⁹ “Now, Master, you may let your servant go

in peace, according to your word,

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you prepared in sight of all the peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,

and glory for your people Israel.”

(*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Lk 2:25–32). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

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529 The *presentation of Jesus in the temple* shows him to be the firstborn Son who belongs to the Lord. With Simeon and Anna, all Israel awaits its *encounter* with the Savior—the name given to this event in the Byzantine tradition. Jesus is recognized as the long-expected Messiah, the “light to the nations” and the “glory of Israel,” but also “a sign that is spoken against.” The sword of sorrow predicted for Mary announces Christ’s perfect and unique oblation on the cross that will impart the salvation God had “prepared in the presence of all peoples.” (Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (134). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.)

Redemptoris Mater

16. Simeon’s words seem like a second Annunciation to Mary, for they tell her of the actual historical situation in which the Son is to accomplish his mission, namely, in misunderstanding and sorrow. While this announcement on the one hand confirms her faith in the accomplishment of the divine promises of salvation, on the other hand it also reveals to her that she will have to live her obedience of faith in suffering, at the side of the suffering Savior, and that her motherhood will be mysterious and sorrowful. (John Paul II. (1987). *Redemptoris Mater*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana)

Question

In the Holy Spirit Simeon recognized the Messiah in the presence of a poor couple and child. How can we be open to the Spirit and recognize the presence of God in the poor and marginalized?

Action

Identify and act on ways you can help those who are suffering because of storms, war, or neglect on the part of society.

Topic 5 Mother of Mercy

62 This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and cultics, until they are led into the happiness of their true home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix.^{16*} This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Context

³³ The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; ³⁴ and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted ³⁵ (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. (*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Lk 2:33–35). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

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501 Jesus is Mary's only son, but her spiritual motherhood extends to all men whom indeed he came to save: "The Son whom she brought forth is he whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren, that is, the faithful in whose generation and formulation she cooperates with a mother's love."(Catholic Church. (2000).*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (127). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.)

Hail Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy,
hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To you we cry, the children of Eve;
to you we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this land of exile.
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us;
lead us home at last
and show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus:
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Question

What kind of comfort is it to know that in our pilgrimage in this world, Mary is traveling with us along the way?

Action

Identify and list those whom you know need the protection of Mary, the Mother of Marcy. Make a commitment to pray for them on a regular basis.

Topic 6

Mary Calls Us to Follow Jesus

65 Hence the Church, in her apostolic work also, justly looks to her, who, conceived of the Holy Spirit, brought forth Christ, who was born of the Virgin that through the Church He may be born and may increase in the hearts of the faithful also. The Virgin in her own life lived an example of that maternal love, by which it behooves that all should be animated who cooperate in the apostolic mission of the Church for the regeneration of men. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Context

Luke 1: 49 – 55

⁴⁹ The Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is from age to age

to those who fear him.

⁵¹ He has shown might with his arm,

dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.

⁵² He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones

but lifted up the lowly.

⁵³ The hungry he has filled with good things;

the rich he has sent away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped Israel his servant,

remembering his mercy,

⁵⁵ according to his promise to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

(*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Lk 1:49–55). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

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968 Her role in relation to the Church and to all humanity goes still further. “In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the Savior’s work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace.” (Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (252). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference)

Redemptoris Mater

3. The Virgin Mother is constantly present on this journey of faith of the People of God towards the light. This is shown in a special way by the canticle of the “Magnificat,” which, having welled up from the depths of Mary’s faith at the Visitation, ceaselessly re-echoes in the heart of the Church down the centuries. (John Paul II. (1987). *Redemptoris Mater*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Question

Where can we work most effectively with Mary for the “regeneration of men”?

Action

Visit the website for Catholic Charities <http://catholiccharities.rockforddiocese.org/> to see what the local needs are in the Diocese of Rockford.

Topic 7

Devotion to Mary

66. This cult, as it always existed, although it is altogether singular, differs essentially from the cult of adoration which is offered to the Incarnate Word, as well to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and it is most favorable to it. The various forms of piety toward the Mother of God, which the Church within the limits of sound and orthodox doctrine, according to the conditions of time and place, and the nature and ingenuity of the faithful has approved, bring it about that while the Mother is honored, the Son, through whom all things have their being and in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, is rightly known, loved and glorified and that all His commands are observed. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Context

Luke 1:48

⁴⁸For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;

behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. (*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Lk 1:48). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

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971 “*All generations will call me blessed*”: “The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.” 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.” 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. (Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (253). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.)

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Question

What are some of the needs we can bring to Mary for intercession today?

Action

Subscribe to Magnificat (www.magnificat.com) and begin to pray daily following the liturgical year as presented in each issue.

Topic 8

Jesus Tells Us Mary is our Mother

67. This most Holy Synod deliberately teaches this Catholic doctrine and at the same time admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered, and the practices and exercises of piety, recommended by the magisterium of the Church toward her in the course of centuries be made of great moment, and those decrees, which have been given in the early days regarding the cult of images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, be religiously observed. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Context

John 18: 21 – 27

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala.

²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son."

²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Jn 19:25–27). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

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966 "Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death." The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians: (491)

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. (Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (252). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.)

Queen of Heaven

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.

Has risen, as he said, alleluia.

Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

Question

What are some of the important ways we can practice the devotions to Mary that that Church calls us to?

Action

Explore the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, (for example at campus.udayton.edu/mary/prayers/LittleOfficeBVM.htm) to discern if this is a form of prayer suited to your needs.

Topic 9

Mary Tells us to Follow Jesus

67 Following the study of Sacred Scripture, the Holy Fathers, the doctors and liturgy of the Church, and under the guidance of the Church's magisterium, let them rightly illustrate the duties and privileges of the Blessed Virgin which always look to Christ, the source of all truth, sanctity and piety. Let them assiduously keep away from whatever, either by word or deed, could lead separated brethren or any other into error regarding the true doctrine of the Church. Let the faithful remember moreover that true devotion consists neither in sterile or transitory affection, nor in a certain vain credulity, but proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Context

John 2: 1 - 5

¹On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. ³When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴*[And] Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." (*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Jn 2:1-5). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

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975 We believe that the Holy Mother of God, the new Eve, Mother of the Church, continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role on behalf of the members of Christ. (Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (252). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference)

Redemptoris Mater

Another essential element of Mary's maternal task is found in her words to the servants: "Do whatever he tells you." The Mother of Christ presents herself as the spokeswoman of her Son's will, pointing out those things which must be done so that the salvific power of the Messiah may be manifested. At Cana, thanks to the intercession of Mary and the obedience of the servants, Jesus begins "his hour." At Cana Mary appears as believing in Jesus. Her faith evokes his first "sign" and helps to kindle the faith of the disciples. (John Paul II. (1987). *Redemptoris Mater*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Question

How can we best obey Mary's instruction that we do what Jesus tells us?

Action

Research the organizations dedicated to Mary in the Rockford Diocese (<http://www.rockforddiocese.org/>) to discern whether you are being called to participate in their activities.

Topic 10

Gathered with Mary in Heaven

The entire body of the faithful pours forth instant supplications to the Mother of God and Mother of men that she, who aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers, may now, exalted as she is above all the angels and saints, intercede before her Son in the fellowship of all the saints, until all families of people, whether they are honored with the title of Christian or whether they still do not know the Savior, may be happily gathered together in peace and harmony into one people of God, for the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity. (Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Context

Revelation 12: 1

¹A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. (*New American Bible*. 2011 (Revised Edition) (Re 12:1). Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

972 After speaking of the Church, her origin, mission, and destiny, we can find no better way to conclude than by looking to Mary. In her we contemplate what the Church already is in her mystery on her own “pilgrimage of faith,” and what she will be in the homeland at the end of her journey. There, “in the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity,” “in the communion of all the saints,” the Church is awaited by the one she venerates as Mother of her Lord and as her own mother. (773; 829; 2853)

In the meantime the Mother of Jesus, in the glory which she possesses in body and soul in heaven, is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. Likewise she shines forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come, a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God. (Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (253–254). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference)

Redemptoris Mater

47. Thanks to this special bond linking the Mother of Christ with the Church, there is further clarified the mystery of that “woman” who, from the first chapters of the Book of Genesis until the Book of Revelation, accompanies the revelation of God’s salvific plan for humanity. For Mary, present in the Church as the Mother of the Redeemer, takes part, as a mother, in that monumental struggle; against the powers of darkness” which continues throughout human history. And by her ecclesial identification as the “woman clothed with the sun” (Rev. 12:1), it can be said that “in the Most Holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle.” (John Paul II. (1987). *Redemptoris Mater*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.)

Question

What comfort does it give us that Mary awaits us in heaven union with the Trinity?

Action

Highlight on your personal calendar all the feasts of Mary that are celebrated during the liturgical year. Make a special effort to celebrate the Eucharist on those days.