

## **Symbolon Summary for Session 9- Mary and the Saints**

"Hail, holy Queen enthroned above, O Maria." Many of the words of songs and prayers honoring Mary are words that we have come to know and love by heart. However, to those outside of the faith, one may wonder why we have so much love, devotion, and admiration for Mary and the saints. Catholics honor Mary and the saints (However, we do not worship them, because that is reserved for God alone.) because we recognize them as models we can imitate. They give us the strength and hope to perseverance in the faith. Devotion to Mary and the saints is one way that Catholics come to know and love God more deeply and appreciate the great gift of salvation. Mary and the saint's prayers for us are so powerful because they are already in Heaven, close to God, and can help get our prayers to Him. Mary is our spiritual mother and is always bringing us closer to her son, Jesus. She is the first model disciple of Christ.

The Catholic Church holds four dogmas (truths that God revealed in Scripture or oral tradition) about Mary. These are special graces or privileges that God has bestowed on Mary. 1. Mary is the mother of God. This truth protects the union of God and man. Jesus gives dignity to humans through the nature in which He was born. 2. Immaculate Conception-Mary was born in a state of sanctified grace. This is one way that God was preparing her for her vocation. 3. Perpetual Virgin-Mary remained a virgin her entire life. This is stable proof that Jesus has no earthly father. It also shows Mary's total devotion to God through-out her entire life. 4. Assumption-Mary was assumed body and soul into Heaven. This represents our share in Jesus' Resurrection, and what God wants to accomplish in all of us at the end of time.

There are many prayers and devotions in the Church dedicated to Mary, with the most prominent one being the rosary. Take some time this week either to pray a rosary if you are familiar with the prayer, or to learn more about how to pray a rosary. As you do, reflect on how each mystery of the rosary points us to Christ through Mary. "Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did." -St. Maximilian Kolbe