

Catholic References Regarding “Motherhood” and the Church

Mary as “mother” of the Church:

“She is invoked as Mother of the Church and the teacher and Queen of the Apostles” wrote Pope Leo XIII (d. 1903) in his September 1895 encyclical, *Helper of the People (Adjutricem Populi)*. Pope John XXIII (d.1963) in an allocution in the Basilica of St. Mary Major on December 6, 1960 spoke of Mary as “Mother of the Church and our most loving Mother.” (AAS 53, 1961, 35)

The title, Mother of the Church (*Mater Ecclesiae*) was first used by Berengaud, bishop of Treves (d. 1125) in his writings. Later authors such as St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence (d.1458) and St. Lawrence Justiniani (d.1455) also invited the church to venerate Mary as her Mother.

On November 21, 1964, during the celebration of Mass at the conclusion of the third session of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI (d. 1978) stated, “For the glory of the Blessed Virgin and our own consolation, we proclaim the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of the Church, of the whole people of God, faithful and pastors, and we call her most loving Mother.” The Holy Father expressed the hope that this title of Mary, Mother of the church would “lead Christians to honor Mary even more and to call upon her with still greater confidence.” He decreed that “from now onward the whole Christian people should give even greater honor to the Mother of God under this most loving title.” (AAS 56, 1965, 1015)

Pope John Paul II has frequently used this title from the beginning of his pontificate in 1978 looking toward Mary in the Upper Room praying with the Apostles at

Pentecost. “In the birth of the Church, the one to whom we owe the birth of Christ participates in a particular way.” (*Oss. Rom.* June 19, 1979).

Jesus has given us Mary as our mother. She is the mother of Jesus, Who is the head of the Mystical body. We, the members of His Body, look to the Blessed Virgin Mary who cares for the pilgrim church with a mother's love and follows its progress homeward to the eternal splendor of heaven.

The Roman Catholic Church as the “Mother Church.”

CATHOLICISM IS ‘MOTHER’ CHURCH – ALL OTHERS ARE DEFECTIVE

03 Sep 2000 (AP) VATICAN CITY (*Associate Press*) – One of Pope John Paul II's closest aides [Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger] has written to bishops worldwide declaring that the Catholic church is the “mother” of other Christian churches, a move which could hurt Vatican efforts toward unity with other believers.

The Vatican Saturday had no comment on the document, which was reported on Friday by the Italian religious news agency Adista. In the document, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger told the bishops that it was incorrect to refer to Christian churches, ranging from Orthodox to Protestant, as “sister” churches of the Catholic church.”

VATICAN SAYS NO RELIGION EQUALS ROMAN CATHOLICISM

VATICAN CITY, Sept 5, 2000 (Reuters) (Condensed) – The Vatican on Tuesday rejected the concept that other religions could be equal to Roman Catholicism and ordered its theologians not to manipulate what it called the truth of the faith.

The Vatican's restatement of its position was outlined in a complex theological document, the English title of which was "Declaration The Lord Jesus – On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church."

The document repeated Church teachings that non-Christians were in a "gravely deficient situation" regarding salvation and that other Christian churches had "defects," partly because they did not recognise the primacy of the Pope.

At a news conference to present the document, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the Vatican's doctrinal head, said some theologians were "manipulating and going beyond the limits" of tolerance when they put all religions on the same plane.

"Therefore, there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him," it said.

"DEFECTS" OF OTHER CHURCHES

Some other Christian churches, while not in "perfect union," remained united to Catholics by close bonds, it [the statement] said. "The Church of Christ is present and operative also in these Churches, even though they lack full communion with the Catholic Church since they do not accept the Catholic doctrine of the primacy, which,

according to the will of God, (the Pope) objectively has and exercises over the entire Church," it said. While other Christian churches "suffer from defects," the document said they had not been deprived of what it called "significance and importance in the mystery of salvation."

But it was the Catholic Church which possessed and had been entrusted with "the fullness of grace and truth." "If it is true that followers of other religions can receive divine grace, it is also certain that objectively speaking they are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation."

THE HOLY ROMAN ... CHURCHES STUNNED BY POPE'S ATTACK ON "DEFECTS"

The Daily WORLD AFFAIRS REPORT ISSUE #294 September 5, 2000: The Church of England and all other Protestant churches are not "proper" churches because they suffer from "defects," according to the Roman Catholic Church. In a declaration approved by the Pope, the Vatican will also state that followers of all non-Christian religions are "gravely deficient" and their rituals constitute "an obstacle to salvation." The statements are contained in Declaration Dominus Iesus, to be published in Rome tomorrow. Although not in the name of the Pope, it was approved by him and "reflects his thinking."

The declaration, which has been received with "stunned horror" by bishops and Roman Catholic theologians throughout the world, threatens to undo decades of inter-faith bridge-building. The Church of England called it disappointing and negotiations have taken place between Catholic officials and Lambeth Palace, the London headquarters of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in an attempt to limit damage.

With the Pope and the Queen due to meet in Rome next month, the document will also threaten relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England, of which the Queen is the Supreme Governor.

Although written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican body formerly known as the Inquisition, the declaration has the authority of Pope John Paul II. It was ratified and confirmed by him "with sure knowledge and by his apostolic authority." The declaration is merciless in its cutting through of the diplomatic language of ecumenism and inter-faith relations of recent decades. It is also an attack on a number of priests and theologians, in particular in India and South-East Asia, as well as a warning to other Roman Catholics to stay in line.

Churches such as the Church of England, where the apostolic succession of bishops from the time of St Peter is disputed by Rome, and Churches without bishops, are not considered "proper" Churches. The declaration concedes that some Churches - this would include the Eastern Orthodox - are "true particular Churches" because they have preserved the "apostolic succession" of bishops from the time of the Apostles.

John Fitzsimmons, former Rector of the Scots College in Rome who currently chairs the faith and order commission of ACTS, the churches' ecumenical body in Scotland, said: "The tenor of this document gives me a sense of disappointment and dismay. It is a return to the idea that the Catholic Church is the embodiment of the truth and anything that falls short of the Catholic Church is not the fullness of the truth. It is terrible."

The Catholic Media Office in London said it was important to distinguish between the "theological" and "common" uses of terms

such as "proper Church." A spokesman said: "In common usage, of course the Church of England is a proper Church. But if you ask me whether the Church of England is a Church in the specific, theological sense, then we have to say 'no,' and that is nothing new. But we are not going to stop calling the Church of England the Church of England." (The London Times)

CAREY REBUKES VATICAN OVER 'IMPROPER' SLUR

BRITAIN September 5, 2000 – by Ruth Gledhill, Religious Correspondent: THE Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, rebuked the Roman Catholic Church yesterday over its assertion that the Church of England is not a "proper" Church.

Dr Carey said that the Vatican declaration, to be published in Rome today, failed to "fully reflect the deeper understanding that has been achieved through ecumenical dialogue and co-operation during the past 30 years."

The declaration, approved by the Pope, effectively **condemns all post-Reformation Churches**. It says: "Ecclesial communities that have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the **eucharistic mystery** are not Churches in the proper sense."

Dr Carey said: "Of course, the Church of England, and the worldwide Anglican Communion, does not for one moment accept that its orders of ministry and Eucharist are deficient in any way. It believes itself to be a part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ."

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, the Most Rev Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, insisted that no slight

had been intended against the Church of England. The document is particularly embarrassing for Archbishop Murphy-O'Connor, who has dedicated his life to ecumenism. He was previously a co-chairman of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC).

The Vatican document, Declaration ***Dominus Iesus***, also states that the followers of non-Christian religions are “gravely deficient” and their rituals “an obstacle to salvation.”

Archbishop Murphy-O'Connor said that the main purpose of the declaration was to give warning against a tendency to regard all religions as equivalent. He said that the declaration did not attempt to change the Catholic Church's teaching regarding ecumenism.¹

The declaration comes from the hardline, conservative-dominated Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, formerly the Inquisition. Although written by its then former Prefect, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, it had the specific authority of Pope John Paul II.²

ECUMENICAL WARNING

September 2000: In an article sent in by Steve S (“THE INQUISITION: A Study in Absolute Catholic Power” by Arthur Maricle), Maricle wrote: Because her basic doctrinal premises remain in place, Rome can yet again rise up against her spiritual enemies at some future date when she again wields exclusive ecclesiastical control of a region. In fact, the “Holy Office” of the Inquisition still exists within the Vatican (known today as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), awaiting the day in which it can stamp out “heresy.” ... **The**

Inquisition proved how Catholicism will react when it has possession of absolute power.³

As a point of interest, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has been headed for 18 years by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who was then a possible candidate for Pope. Ratzinger was the cardinal quoted in the September 9, 2000, National Catholic Reporter⁴ story as saying that the Catholic Church is not a “sister church” with other denominations, but their “mother.”

In the document *Dominus Iesus*, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger told the bishops that it was incorrect to refer to Christian churches, ranging from Orthodox to Protestant, as “sister” churches of the Catholic Church.

“It must be always clear that the one, holy, catholic and apostolic universal church is not the sister, but the mother of all the churches,” Ratzinger was quoted as saying.

The following information about the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is from the official Vatican website. Notice that “everything which in any way touches” the Catholic doctrine of faith and morals falls within the Congregation's competence to promote and safeguard:

Founded in 1542 by Pope Paul III with the Constitution “Licet ab initio,” the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was originally called the Sacred Congregation of the Universal Inquisition as its duty was to defend the Church from heresy. It is the oldest of the Curia's nine congregations. . . . Pope St. Pius X in 1908 changed the name to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office. It received its current name in 1965 with Pope Paul VI. Today, “according to Article 48 of the

¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/910612.stm

² http://religion.wikia.com/wiki/Dominus_Iesus

³ <http://www.mtc.org/inquis.html>

⁴ http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2000c/090800/090800d.htm

Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia, 'Pastor Bonus,' promulgated by the Holy Father John Paul II on June 28, 1988," "the duty proper to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is to promote and safeguard the doctrine on the faith and morals throughout the Catholic world: for this reason everything which in any way touches such matter falls within its competence."

[<http://www.ncinter.net/~ejt/>]

POPE JOHN PAUL II APPEALS TO THE "DAUGHTERS" THIS RAISES A GLIMMER OF HOPE AFTER DOMINUS IESUS

Geneva (Ecumenical News International) September 22, 2000. As protests continue about a Vatican document published this month asserting Roman Catholic superiority over all other churches, Pope John Paul II has insisted that the commitment of the Roman Catholic Church to ecumenical dialogue is "irrevocable." Pope John Paul made his statement to participants at a meeting of the joint commission on dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), which represents 75 million Christians in 215 Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed and United churches world-wide. [ENI-00-0360]

The Queen Pours Oil on Troubled Waters:

QUEEN ELISABETH IS INPIRED TO CROSS ECUMENICAL DIVIDE

LONDON (ENI) – SEPTEMBER 22, 2000. Queen Elizabeth II is among contributors to a fund to create a giant millennium cross, which will stand in front of Westminster Cathedral, London's principal Roman Catholic Church. Queen Elizabeth, who is supreme governor of the Church of England, read about the cross in The Times

and sent her donation the day the newspaper report appeared. The cross will be erected in the cathedral piazza – near Victoria Station, in central London – on 29 November. This will be followed by an ecumenical service at which a senior member of the royal family is expected to attend, along with Archbishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, leader of the 4 million Roman Catholics in England and Wales, and Richard Chartres, (Anglican) Bishop of London... [ENI-00-0352]

Over the years since *Dominus Iesus* was published, the sensitivity has all but been forgotten. Boldly, now, does Pope Francis talk about the Roman Catholic Church as the "mother!"

VATICAN: CHURCH "MOTHER NOT A BABYSITTER" SAYS POPE

(Update: April 17, 2013)



http://www.adnkronos.com/IGN/Aki/English/Religion/Vatican-Church-mother-not-a-babysitter-says-pope_3299196770.html

Vatican City, 17 April (AKI) - The Catholic Church has the job of a mother raising her children, not that of a babysitter who must see they go off to sleep, Pope Francis said on a homily on Wednesday.

"When we announce the coming of Jesus and give testimony to him with our lives and words, the Church becomes a mother who nurtures her children," Francis said as he celebrated mass at the Vatican's Santa Marta residence.

"But when we don't, the Church becomes a babysitter whose job it is to send children to sleep, rather than a mother."

At his general audience in St Peter's Square on Wednesday, Francis kissed a number of babies and children and swapped his white skullcap for a white cap

offered to him by pilgrims across the crowd barriers.

Francis's simple, direct and informal style has gained him popularity with Catholics and non-Catholics alike in Italy.

POPE FRANCIS REFLECTS ON THE CHURCH AS A MOTHER DURING GENERAL AUDIENCE

Over 50,000 Faithful Gather in St. Peters Square, Vatican City, September 11, 2013
(Zenit.org) [Junno Arocho Esteves](#) |

Pope Francis reflected on the theme of maternity during his weekly Angelus address. According to the Holy See, over 50,000 faithful packed St. Peter's Square to listen to the Holy Father's weekly catechesis on the Church during the Year of Faith.

The Pope began his catechesis explaining that the image of the Church as a mother "is for me one of the most beautiful images of the Church."

"What does a mother do?" he asked.

"First and foremost a mother gives life, she carries her child in the womb for nine months and then introduces him to life, she generates him." The Holy Father told the faithful that the Church does the same; the Church generates us in faith by the work of the Holy Spirit who renders her fruitful.

While acknowledging that faith is a personal experience, the Pope said that faith is received from others such as a family or community. "A Christian is not an island!" the Pope exclaimed.

"We do not become Christians alone and by our own efforts, but rather faith is a gift from God that is given in and through the Church. And the Church gives us life in Baptism: that is, the moment in which she

enables us to be born as children of God, the moment in which she gives us life in God, in which she generates us as a mother."

Unlike belonging to a society, a team or an organization, Pope Francis explained that belonging to the Church is a living bond, like one has with their own mother.

Referring to the date of one's baptism as the date of their birth to the Church, the Holy Father gave all present the task to look for their date of baptism, saying that it is good "to celebrate it, to thank the Lord for this gift."

"Do we love the Church as one loves one's mother, knowing even understanding her flaws? All mothers have flaws, we all do. But when we speak of the defects of the mother, we overlook them, we love them as they are. And the Church has her flaws, as well. Do love her this way, like a mother? Do we help her to be more beautiful, more authentic, according to the Lord? I leave these questions with you. But do not forget your homework? Look for the date of your baptism, to have it in your heart and celebrate it."

A Church that Nurtures

Pope Francis posed several questions, engaging the faithful to contemplate on their continuing relationship with the Church. The Pope asked whether they feel that their relationship is a formal one or vital one.

Drawing once again on the example of a mother, the Holy Father stated that mother does not limit herself to giving life but the care of her children.

"She gives them milk, she nurtures them, she shows them the path of life, she accompanies them," the Pope said. "She also knows how to correct them, to forgive,

to understand; she knows how to be close to them in times of illness and suffering. In short, a good mother helps her children to come out of themselves, not to stay comfortably tucked under the maternal wing.”

The Church, he went on to say, does the same with us by accompanying our growth in faith with the Word of God and nurturing us with the Sacraments. “She nourishes us with the Eucharist, she brings us God’s forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance, she supports us in times of sickness through the Anointing of the Sick. The Church accompanies us in all our life in faith, in all our Christian life,” the Pope said.

Concluding his address, the Holy Father said that while the Church ‘makes’ Christians, She is also ‘made up’ of Christians. Addressing those who state their belief in God while denying their belief in God, the Holy Father said that such a belief means “that you do not believe in yourself, which is a contradiction.”

“We are all the Church: from the recently baptised child to the bishops, to the Pope; we are all Church, and we are all equal in the eyes of God. We are all called to collaborate in the birth of faith in new Christians, we are all called upon to be educators in faith, to proclaim the Gospel. ... We all participate in the maternity of the Church we are all the Church so that the light of Christ may illuminate the furthest reaches of the Earth. Long live the Holy Mother Church!” the Pope concluded.
[September 11, 2013 – Innovative Media Inc.]

MOTHER CHURCH – CATHOLIC MASS – POPE FRANCIS



2013-04-24
Vatican Radio
(Vatican Radio) The Church is not a bureaucratic organization, but a love story. This was Pope Francis’ message

during Wednesday’s Mass in the Chapel of the Casa Santa Marta. Attending the Mass this morning were employees of the Institute for the Works of Religion, commonly called the Vatican bank. Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, concelebrated Mass with the Holy Father.

The day’s readings tell the story of the growth of the first Christian community. In his homily, the Pope warned against being tempted to make “deals” simply to get “more partners in this enterprise.”

Instead, he said, “the road that Jesus willed for His Church is otherwise: the way of difficulties, the way of the Cross, the way of persecution ... And this makes us wonder: what is this Church? Because it seems it is not a human enterprise.”

The Church, he said, is “something else.” The disciples do not make the Church – they are the messengers sent by Jesus. And Christ was sent by the Father: “The Church begins there,” he said, “in the heart of the Father, who had this idea . . . of love. So this love story began, a story that has gone on for so long, and is not yet ended. We, the women and men of the Church, we are in the middle of a love story: each of us is a link in this chain of love. And if we do not understand this, we have understood nothing of what the Church is.”

The temptation is to focus on the growth of the Church without taking the path of love: “But the Church does not grow by human strength. Some Christians have gone wrong for historical reasons, they have taken the wrong path, they have raised armies, they have waged wars of religion: that is another story, that is not the story of love. Yet we learn, with our mistakes, how the story of love goes. But how does it increase? Jesus said simply: like the mustard seed, it grows like yeast in the flour, without noise.”

A head of state once asked how big the Pope’s army was. The Church does not increase “through military might,” said Pope Francis, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is because the

Church is not just another organization: “she is Mother” he said. The Pope commented on the number of mothers present at the Mass. “How would you feel,” he asked, “if someone said: she’s a domestic administrator? ‘No, I am the mother!’ And the Church is Mother. And we are in the middle of a love story that continues thanks to the power of the Holy Spirit. All of us together are a family in the Church, who is our Mother.”

The Pope concluded his reflection with a prayer to Mary, asking that she might “give us the grace of the spiritual joy of participating in this love story.”

