

Catholics and Evangelicals: What's the Difference?

a twelve-session course designed to inspire dialogue,
mutual understanding, and love for Christ

Welcome

- ▶ In the last two sessions, we have considered the Catholic and Evangelical teachings on the liturgy. In the next two sessions we will turn to the topic of Mary, the mother of Jesus, first considering the Catholic teaching and then the Evangelical teaching. In this session we will draw on the final chapter of the Vatican II document entitled, *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* or in Latin, *Lumen Gentium*.

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- ▶ “Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth. But, being of the race of Adam, she is at the same time also united to all who are to be saved” (Section 52).

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- ▶ Mary's assent to bearing Christ preceded the incarnation of Christ, so that she is the counterpart to Eve.
- ▶ Mary was endowed with a unique holiness and is free from every stain of sin, and thus she bore Christ.
- ▶ The Catholic Church thus says, "death through Eve, life through Mary."

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- ▶ The union of Mary with Jesus in the work of salvation extends from his virginal conception to his death.
- ▶ After the resurrection, Mary was found persevering in prayer with the church and thus by her prayers implored the gift of the Spirit.
- ▶ When her earthly life was over, Mary was taken into heavenly glory free from all stain of original sin and is exalted as “Queen” over all things.

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- ▶ Mary's role in the plan of salvation does not obscure or diminish the unique role of Christ as mediator.
- ▶ She is invoked in the church as Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix, but these are understood as to not obscure or diminish the role of Christ.
- ▶ The Church does not hesitate to acknowledge the subordinate role of Mary and yet it calls upon her as one from whom the Church was born and in whom the Church is prefigured.

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“Mary has by grace been exalted above all angels and men to a place second only to her Son, as the most holy mother of God who was involved in the mysteries of Christ...[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 (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10), a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God” (Sections 66 and 68).

Discussion

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- ▶ For those who are Catholic:
 - ▶ What aspects of Catholic teaching on *Mary* inspire, encourage or challenge you most?
 - ▶ In what ways does this general teaching on *Mary* work out in your local church?
 - ▶ Are there aspects of Catholic teaching on *Mary* that you think Evangelicals tend to misunderstand?

Discussion

- ▶ For those who are Evangelical:
 - ▶ What aspects of Catholic teaching on Mary surprised or interested you most?
 - ▶ What aspects of the Catholic teaching on Mary do you need to investigate in more depth? How will you do so?
 - ▶ Do you have any questions about Mary that you would like to ask of your Catholic friends?