

Why we bow!

“... by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”
Nicene Creed – circa 381 AD

Last night I had a discussion with a young non-Catholic Christian man who had a problem with Catholicism and the way that Catholics “praise” and “worship” Mary. His opinion was that our faith is unbiblical and man made. I left the discussion a little unsettled for a number of reasons but mostly because the Catholics in his life weren’t able to clear up his misunderstandings about truths that are central to our faith, our human existence and God’s revelation of Himself to His people.

One thing that casual readers don’t understand is that the Bible wasn’t written in the style of the textbooks of today, yet that is the standard that people often expect. In place of a textbook bible, God gave us a Church that speaks with **His** own authority. So, we need to be aware that casual readers may be holding God to a standard of their own construct. God doesn’t reveal himself that way. That whole encounter made me think about this passage from the Creed that we recite every time we go to Mass; **“...by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”** Let’s take it apart and look at this passage in smaller pieces.

The Nicene Creed reminds us that the relationship of our Catholic faith, the Mass and the Bible is so close that you can’t separate them. Consider the following passages from the gospel of St Luke;

1:26 “In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth.” Luke, the gospel writer, was pretty generous with some important details here. He tells us who, what, where, when and why in this sentence to set up the events that are about to transpire. Follow along: the **when** is in the sixth month of the pregnancy of Mary’s cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was quite old and thought to be barren, so the miracle of the virgin pregnancy of Mary was preceded by the miracle of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. The **who** is an angel, but not just any angel. He has a name – Gabriel. The gospel writer felt that the story would be incomplete without that detail. And it would be. You have a name, I have a name and if you need to talk to someone you call them by their name and they answer when they hear their name called. The angel who visited Mary had a name because he is a real person. The writer also tells us that Gabriel was on a mission, the **why**, he was **“sent from God”**. The **where** is a **“town of Galilee called Nazareth”** for a rendezvous with the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of God. Those are extremely significant details.

1:35 “And 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.” – Luke 1:26 & 35

In verse 35 the angel calls the Holy Spirit by name and tells Mary that he will **“come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”**

Here the angel is using the language of the creation account of Genesis 1:2 where a **“mighty wind swept over the waters”**, or the re-creation account where Noah released a dove who **“flew over the waters”**, or the baptism story where Jesus stepped out from the river and the Spirit of God hovered **“over”** him. When the Holy Spirit **“came upon”** her and the **“power of the Most High overshadowed”** her, Mary conceived a child in her womb by the Holy Spirit. I don’t know how it happened, it’s an incredible mystery. At the moment of conception God became man and entered into human history. His arrival split time in half.

Another fascinating thing about this passage is that Luke was not a personal witness to the events that he wrote about. In fact, he wasn’t an apostle and I don’t think he knew Jesus personally. So, how did he get such detailed information about Zechariah and Elizabeth, about Mary’s conversation with the angel Gabriel and about the Holy Spirit overshadowing her? How did Luke know so much about Joseph and the flight into Egypt or the Magi, or the killing of the innocents? He must have spoken to someone who was there. He must have interviewed Mary to get the details. When my young uninformed friend said that Catholics pay too much attention to Mary, he pretty much threw out Christmas and a lot of the gospel of St. Luke. So, when we consider these passages from the

Creed and the Bible, each one amplifies the other and the Catholic position on Mary is upheld.

Jesus' conception by the power of the Holy Spirit and virgin birth marked the beginning of the long road to the cross and the assurance of our hope for salvation. At this line in the Creed, we bow our heads with great reverence.

Ed Ibarra



The October business meeting is on Tuesday October 4th at 7:00pm. Mass for the deceased Knights of this council is on Friday, October 14th at 5:45pm followed by adoration and confession. Let's all make a good confession this month and pray that God give politicians the grace to seek Him and do His will throughout the year. Pray for the intentions of the Pope. Pray that Catholics be drawn to the Cross and conversion of heart. Pray that Brother Knights seek God's peace.