

# Against John Chrysostom

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## Table of Contents

<b>CHRYSOSTOM’S HERESIES REGARDING THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Homily 21 on the Gospel of St. John.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Homily 44 on the Gospel of St. Matthew .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Homily 4 on the Gospel of St. Matthew .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Divine Liturgy of Chrysostom .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>No Church Father and probably no Anti-Church Father spoke that way about Mary .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Chrysostom’s teachings make Satan and Protestants proud of him .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>RJMI COMMENTARIES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>RJMI on Mary’s petition at the marriage in Cana .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>RJMI and St. Augustine on Who Is My Mother .....</i>	<i>10</i>

## Chrysostom’s Heresies Regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary

John Chrysostom was a heretic for his sacrilegious, blasphemous, irreverent, and disrespectful teachings regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary. He accused her of the sins of vanity, vainglory, pride, being power hungry for wanting total power over Jesus, selfishness, irreverence toward Jesus, not knowing anything great about Jesus, and having a weaker faith than St. Joseph. He also taught, by implication, the heresy that intercessory petitions and prayers are sinful. And he rashly taught that Jesus did no miracles until the miracle at Cana.

He teaches these heresies in three of his works: Homily 21 on the Gospel of St. John on the Miracle at Cana (Jn. 2); Homily 44 on the Gospel of St. Matthew regarding Jesus’ teaching on who is his mother and brethren (Mt. 12:46-50); and Homily 4 on the Gospel of St. Matthew.

### Homily 21 on the Gospel of St. John

Heretic John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, Homily 21: “1. ‘And when they wanted wine, his mother saith unto him, They have no wine.’ Here it is worthwhile to inquire whence it came into his mother’s mind to imagine anything great of her son: for he had as yet done no miracle, since the Evangelist saith: ‘This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.’ ”

He then rashly teaches that Jesus did no miracles before this. And in defending his opinion, he only speaks of public miracles and thus purposely leaves out private miracles, which I believe Jesus did for the Holy Family and others close to him before his public ministry:

Ibid.: “2. ...This...was the ‘beginning of his miracles.’ He did nothing [no miracles] while he was a child, save only that one thing to which Luke has testified (Luke ii. 46), that at the age of twelve years he sat hearing the doctors, and was thought admirable for his questioning.”

He then accused Mary of perhaps wanting to “gain credit from [Jesus’] miracles” and thus of being guilty of the sins of vainglory and pride:

Ibid.: “ ‘They have no wine.’ For she desired both to do them a favor and through her son to render herself more conspicuous; perhaps too she had some human feelings, like his brethren, when they said, ‘Show thyself to the world’ (c. xvii. 4), desiring to gain credit from his miracles. Therefore he answered somewhat vehemently, saying, ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.’ ”

This heresy opened the floodgate for more filth and heresies that spewed out of his mouth. He then went on to accuse Mary of the following:

- She was irreverent and disrespectful toward Jesus. He said that Mary “thought meanly of him [Jesus],” did not have a “becoming opinion” of him, “did not think rightly of him,” and thus did not “reverence” him.
- She was guilty of vainglory, pride, and being power hungry because she wanted to claim total power over Jesus.
- She was selfish for wanting Jesus all to herself and thus taking him away from others and his work.
- Her intercessory petition was sinful and thus by implication all intercessory petitions and prayers are sinful.
- She had not a “right frame of mind” regarding Jesus.
- She sinned in these things and thus Jesus needed to rebuke and correct her.

Beware of his left-handed compliments of Mary, few and weak as they are, while he sets out to ruin her reputation:

Ibid.: “To prove that he greatly respected his mother, hear Luke relate how he was ‘subject to’ his parents (Luke ii. 51) and our own Evangelist declare how he had forethought for her at the very season of the crucifixion. For where parents cause no impediment or hindrance in things belonging to God, it is our bounden duty to give way to them, and there is great danger in not doing so; but when they require anything unseasonably and cause hindrance in any spiritual matter, it is unsafe to obey.”

Hence he says that Mary’s request was a spiritual hindrance, unsafe, and thus a sin. Yet Jesus obeyed his mother and performed the miracle. Hence her petition could not have been a spiritual hindrance or unsafe and thus sinful:

Ibid.: “And therefore he answered thus in this place, and again elsewhere, ‘Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?’ (Matt. xii. 48) because they did not yet think rightly of him; and she, because she had borne him, claimed, according to the custom of other mothers, to direct him in all things, when she ought to have revered and worshipped him. This then was the reason why he answered as he did on that occasion. For consider what a thing it was that when all the people high and low were standing round him, when the multitude was intent on hearing him and his doctrine had begun to be set forth, she should come into the midst and take him away from the work of exhortation and converse with him apart and not even endure to come within but draw him outside merely to herself. This is why he said, ‘Who is my mother and my brethren?’ Not to insult her who had borne him (away with the thought!) but to procure her the greatest benefit, and not to let her think meanly of him. For if he cared for others, and used every means to implant in them a becoming opinion of himself, much more would he do so in the case of his mother. And since it was probable that if these words had been addressed to her by her son, she would not readily have chosen even then to be convinced, but would in all cases have claimed the superiority as being his mother...”

If Mary did not have a right mind regarding Jesus and thought meanly of him, then she was an apostate and denied the faith, the very miracles of the Incarnation and birth of Jesus and the attendant miracles and testimonies.

The heretic Chrysostom then goes on to make a stupid, irrational, and heretical argument for referring to intercessory petitions as something sinful. He says that neither Mary nor Jesus’ other

friends should have asked for the miracle but those who needed it because miracles become suspect and thus sinful by implication when friends ask for miracles for others in need:

Ibid.: “3. It was then from this motive that he said in this place: ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee?’ and also for another reason not less pressing. What was that? It was that his miracles might not be suspected. The request ought to have come from those who needed, not from his mother. And why so? Because what is done at the request of one’s friends, great though it be, often causes offense to the spectators. But when they make the request who have the need, the miracle is free from suspicion, the praise unmixed, the benefit great. So if some excellent physician should enter a house where there were many sick and be spoken to by none of the patients or their relations but be directed only by his own mother, he would be suspected and disliked by the sufferers, nor would any of the patients or their attendants deem him able to exhibit anything great or remarkable.”

Just because a patient does not ask for a doctor, or the doctor does not speak to him, does not mean that the patient thinks the doctor cannot help him, nor is the patient displeased when the doctor does help him by curing him. In fact, he would be greatly thankful! Hence Chrysostom teaches the heresy that intercessory petitions and thus also prayers from those not in need (such as from Mary and the angels and saints) to help those of us who are in need are suspect, offensive, and thus by implication sinful. A Protestant could not have said it any better. Or should I say any worse!

Now here is where Chrysostom makes it clear that Mary sinned because it was a matter of her salvation that Jesus rebuked her and that she had not a “right frame of mind”:

Ibid.: “And so this was a reason why he rebuked her on that occasion, saying: ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee?’ instructing her for the future not to do the like: because, though he was careful to honor his mother, yet he cared much more for the salvation of her soul, and for the doing good to the many, for which he took upon him the flesh. These then were the words, not of one speaking rudely to his mother, but belonging to a wise dispensation, which brought her into a right frame of mind, and provided that the miracles should be attended with that honor which was meet.”

Yet, Jesus did the miracle anyway! And thus, according to Chrysostom, Jesus was an accessory to Mary’s sins and his miracle was not honorable and meet.

#### **Homily 44 on the Gospel of St. Matthew**

“As he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And one said unto him: Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee. But he answering him that told him, said: Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.” (Mt. 12:46-50)

In his commentary on this passage, the heretic Chrysostom teaches the following heresies:

- Mary’s seeking Jesus was “superfluous vanity.”
- Mary was power hungry. She wanted to show her power over her son.
- Mary did not imagine anything great about her son at that time.
- Mary wanted to reap the glory of Jesus’ miracles.
- Mary was diseased because Jesus cast out her disease.

- Mary was an obstinate unrepentant sinner by implication.

I will give the full quote and then comment:

Heretic John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Homily 44: “1. And this is hence especially manifest. ‘For while he yet talked to the people,’ it is said, ‘one told him, Thy mother and thy brethren seek thee. But he saith, ‘Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?’ And this he said, not as being ashamed of his mother, nor denying her that bare him; for if he had been ashamed of her, he would not have passed through that womb; but as declaring that she hath no advantage from this, unless she do all that is required to be done. For in fact that which she had essayed to do was of superfluous vanity in that she wanted to show the people that she hath power and authority over her son, imagining not as yet anything great concerning him, whence also her unseasonable approach. See at all events both her self-confidence and theirs. Since when they ought to have gone in and listened with the multitude; or if they were not so minded, to have waited for his bringing his discourse to an end and then to have come near; they call him out, and do this before all, evincing a superfluous vanity and wishing to make it appear that with much authority they enjoin him. And this too the evangelist shows that he is blaming, for with this very allusion did he thus express himself. ‘While he yet talked to the people,’ as if he should say, ‘What? was there no other opportunity? Why, was it not possible to speak with him in private?’ And what was it they wished to say? For if it were touching the doctrines of the truth, they ought to have propounded these things publicly, and stated them before all, that the rest also might have the benefit; but if about other matters that concerned themselves, they ought not to have been so urgent. For if he suffered not the burial of a father lest the attendance on him should be interrupted, much less ought they to have stopped his discourse to the people for things that were of no importance. Whence it is clear that nothing but vainglory led them to do this, which John too declares by saying, ‘Neither did his brethren believe on him’; and some sayings too of theirs he reports, full of great folly, telling us that they were for dragging him to Jerusalem for no other purpose but that they themselves might reap glory from his miracles. ‘For if thou do these things,’ it is said, ‘show thyself to the world. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and seeketh himself to be manifest’; when also he himself rebuked them, attributing it to their carnal mind. That is, because the Jews were reproaching him and saying, ‘Is not this the carpenter’s son, whose father and mother we know? and his brethren, are not they with us?’ they, willing to throw off the disparagement caused by his birth, were calling him to the display of his miracles. For this cause he quite repels them, being minded to heal their infirmity... He doth so out of care for her and for his brethren. I mean, because their regard for him was as towards a mere man, and they were vainglorious. He casts out the disease, not insulting, but correcting them.”

Let us dissect his heresy that

“[Mary], imagining not as yet anything great concerning him [Jesus]...”

In spite of the fact that the Incarnation is the greatest miracle of all time, Chrysostom has the audacity to say that Mary did not know anything great about Jesus:

“And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever. And of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power

of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” (Lk. 1:30-35)

In spite of the fact that God told St. Joseph in a dream how great Mary’s child is, Chrysostom has the audacity to say that Mary and thus Joseph also did not know anything great about Jesus:

“But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name JESUS. For he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. And Joseph rising up from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife.” (Mt. 1:20-24)

In spite of the fact that during the Visitation St. Elizabeth declared how blessed and great Mary and her child are, and referred to her child as her Lord, Chrysostom has the audacity to say that Mary did not know anything great about Jesus:

“And Mary rising up in those days went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit: And she cried out with a loud voice and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Lk. 1:39-43)

In spite of the fact that Mary responded to St. Elizabeth (known as the Magnificat) in which, by the inspiration of God, Mary calls herself humble and blessed, Chrysostom has the audacity to say that Mary was vainglorious, selfish, power hungry, and irreverent:

“And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty, hath done great things to me; and holy is his name...” (Lk. 1:46-55)

In spite of the fact that miracles attended the birth of Jesus: Mary’s virginal barrier was not broken; angels told the shepherds that a Savior was born, Christ the Lord (Lk. 2:10-11); Simeon the Prophet and Anna the Prophetess testified that Mary’s child is Christ the Lord, the Redeemer (Lk. 2:25-38); and the Gentile Wise Men traveled a long distance to pay homage to the infant Jesus, whom they called King of the Jews and gave him gifts (Mt. 2:1-13), Chrysostom has the audacity to say that Mary did not know anything great about Jesus:

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, Lecture 12, 4th century: “32. But thou wonderest at the event: even she herself who bare him wondered at this. For she saith to Gabriel, How shall this be to me, since I know not a man? But he says, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy which is to be born shall be called the Son of God. Immaculate and undefiled was his generation; for where the Holy Spirit breathes, there all pollution is taken away; undefiled from the Virgin was the incarnate generation of the Only-begotten. And if the heretics gainsay the truth, the Holy Spirit shall convict them: that overshadowing power of the Highest shall wax wroth; Gabriel shall stand face to face against them in the day of judgment; the place of the manger, which received the Lord, shall put them to shame. The shepherds, who then received the good tidings, shall bear witness; and the host of the angels who sang praises and hymns and said, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of his good pleasure; the Temple into which he was then carried up on the

fortieth day; the pairs of turtle-doves, which were offered on his behalf; and Simeon, who then took him up in his arms, and Anna the prophetess who was present.”

And lastly, in spite of the fact that when Jesus said “Who is my mother” (as recorded in Matthew 12:48, which Chrysostom is commenting on) Jesus had already performed many public miracles, Chrysostom has the audacity to say that Mary did not know anything great about Jesus. In that same chapter, just before Jesus said “Who is my mother,” Jesus performed many miracles:

“Then he saith to the man: Stretch forth thy hand; and he stretched it forth, and it was restored to health even as the other... And many followed him, and he healed them all.” (Mt. 12:13-15)

“Then was offered to him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, so that he spoke and saw.” (Mt. 12:22)

“As he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And one said unto him: Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee. But he answering him that told him, said: Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brethren.” (Mt. 12:46-49)

Yet, in spite of all these miracles that Mary witnessed, the heretical, satanic bastard Chrysostom has the audacity to say,

“[Mary], imagining not as yet anything great concerning him [Jesus]...”

If that were true, then Mary would have been either a faithless apostate like the other Christ-denying Jews; or a retard without the use of reason; or blind, deaf, and dumb.

The heretic Chrysostom denounced Mary not only as a sinner in this passage but also as an unrepentant obstinate sinner by implication. Previous to this event, Chrysostom denounced Mary for committing the same sins at the marriage in Cana. And he said,

Heretic John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, Homily 21: “And so this was a reason why he rebuked her [at Cana] on that occasion, saying: ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee?’ instructing her for the future not to do the like: because, though he was careful to honor his mother, yet he cared much more for the salvation of her soul...”

Hence, according to Chrysostom, Mary did do the like in the future and thus committed the same sins when Jesus said “Who is my mother” and thus did not heed Jesus’ so-called rebuke at Cana. Hence he presents Mary as not only a sinner but an unrepentant obstinate sinner, having sinned at Cana (in his commentary on Jn. 2 in Homily 21) and at a later event when Jesus said “Who is my mother” (in his commentary on Mt. 12 in Homily 44).

#### **Homily 4 on the Gospel of St. Matthew**

In the following quote the heretic Chrysostom teaches that Mary’s faith was weaker than St. Joseph’s because she needed an angel to appear to her when she was awake to believe, whereas Joseph only needed the angel to appear to him in a dream to believe. And he looks down on simple peasants and by implication the Holy Family:

Heretic John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, c. 390-397, Homily 4: “10. The angel then comes when Joseph is troubled... ‘But while he is thinking on these things, the angel appeareth in a dream.’ And why not openly, as to the shepherds and to Zacharias and to the Virgin? The man was exceedingly full of faith and needed not this vision. Whereas the Virgin, as having declared to her very

exceeding good tidings, greater than to Zacharias, and this before the event, needed also a marvelous vision and the shepherds, as being by disposition peasants.”

Hence he explicitly teaches the heresy that Mary was not as full of faith as St. Joseph was. In spite of God’s great love and care for peasants, Chrysostom presents them as weak, stupid, unwise, less faithful and thus not as good as men who are rich, highly educated, and powerful. And by insulting the shepherds, he also insults the Holy Family because they were peasants. Joseph was a carpenter. Chrysostom, then, contradicts himself. How could Joseph be full of faith when he was a peasant like the shepherds!

### **The Divine Liturgy of Chrysostom**

One can say that Chrysostom’s teachings on Mary are contradictory because he denounced her as a sinner in some of his works yet praised her as most holy, pure, and blessed in the liturgy he revised, known as the Liturgy of John Chrysostom, which is the main Byzantine Liturgy used today. For example,

*The Divine Liturgy of John Chrysostom*: “Deacon: Commemorating our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the *Theotókos* and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God...”

Firstly, it is questionable if he composed this liturgy. Secondly, and most importantly, the praises to Mary were added after his death. He died in 407. Some say that they were added after the Council of Ephesus in 431, when Mary was solemnly declared the Mother of God (*Theotókos*), and some say they were added in the ninth century.

### **No Church Father and probably no Anti-Church Father spoke that way about Mary**

No Church Father and probably no Anti-Church Father ever spoke about Mary in the way that Chrysostom did. I searched their teachings and have not found anything even close to what Chrysostom taught about Mary in his above homilies. Hence the ordinary magisterium (the unanimous consensus of the Church Fathers from the Apostles onward) condemns Chrysostom as a sacrilegious, blasphemous, irreverent, and disrespectful heretic! Here is a sample of some of the Church Fathers’ teachings on Mary:

St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Carmina Nisibena*, 4th century: “Only you [Jesus] and your Mother are more beautiful than everything. For on you, O Lord, there is no mark; neither is there any stain in your Mother.”<sup>1</sup>

St. Augustine, *On the Nature of Grace*, 415: “We must except the holy Virgin Mary [from the saints], concerning whom I wish to raise no question when it touches the subject of sins, out of honour to the Lord. For from this only we might know that more abundant grace was conferred upon her that she should overcome sin on all sides, because she merited to conceive and bring forth him who it is clear had no sin.”<sup>2</sup>

St. Ambrose, *On Virginity*, 4th century: “7. The first thing which kindles ardour in learning is the greatness of the teacher. What is greater than the Mother of God? What more glorious than she whom Glory Itself chose? What more chaste than she who bore a body without contact with another body? For why should I speak of her other virtues? She was a virgin not only in body but also in mind, who did not stain the sincerity of its disposition by any guile, who was humble in heart, grave in speech, prudent in mind, sparing of words, studious in reading, resting her hope not

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<sup>1</sup> 27:8.

<sup>2</sup> c. 42 [36]; PL 44:267.

on uncertain riches but on the prayer of the poor, intent on work, modest in discourse, wont to seek not man but God as the judge of her thoughts, to injure no one, to have goodwill towards all, to rise up before her elders, not to envy her equals, to avoid boastfulness, to follow reason, to love virtue. When did she pain her parents even by a look? When did she disagree with her neighbours? When did she despise the lowly? When did she avoid the needy? Being wont only to go to such gatherings of men as mercy would not blush at, nor modesty pass by. There was nothing gloomy in her eyes, nothing forward in her words, nothing unseemly in her acts, there was not a silly movement, nor unrestrained step, nor was her voice petulant, that the very appearance of her outward being might be the image of her soul, the representation of what is approved. For a well-ordered house ought to be recognized on the very threshold, and should show at the very first entrance that no darkness is hidden within... 8. ...She...possesses the perfection of all virtues, for whatever she did is a lesson... 15. ...How many kinds of virtues shine forth in one Virgin! The secret of modesty, the banner of faith, the service of devotion, the Virgin within the house, the companion for the ministry, the mother at the temple.”<sup>3</sup>

St. Ambrose, *Exposition of the Holy Gospel According to Saint Luke*, 4th century: “9. ...This salutation was kept for Mary alone: for she alone is well said to be full of grace, she who alone obtained the grace which no other women had deserved, that she should be filled with the author of grace.”<sup>4</sup>

St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Homily 11*, 5th century: “Hail, Mary Theotókos, Virgin-Mother, lightbearer, uncorrupt vessel... Hail, Mary, you are the most precious creature in the whole world; hail, Mary, uncorrupt dove; hail, Mary, inextinguishable lamp; for from you was born the Sun of justice... Through you every faithful soul achieves salvation.”<sup>5</sup>

St. Proclus of Constantinople, *Homily 5*, 8th century: “O man, run through all creation with your thought and see if there exists anything comparable to or greater than the holy Virgin, Mother of God. Circle the whole world, explore all the oceans, survey the air, question the skies, consider all the unseen powers, and see if there exists any other similar wonder in the whole creation... Count, then, the portents and wonder at the superiority of the Virgin: she alone, in a way beyond words, received into her bridal chamber him before whom all creation kneels with fear and trembling.”<sup>6</sup>

Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Commentary on 1 Kings 1*, 6th century: “The most blessed and ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God, can be called by this name ‘mountain.’ Yes, she was a mountain, who by the dignity of her election has completely surpassed the height of every elect creature. Is Mary not the lofty mountain? For God, to achieve the conception of the eternal Word, raised the summit of her merits above the choirs of angels, up to the threshold of the Godhead.”<sup>7</sup>

St. Germanus of Constantinople, *Homily 1, On the Presentation*, 8th century: “Hail, Mary, full of grace, holier than the saints, higher than the heavens, more glorious than the cherubim, more honorable than the seraphim, more venerable and lofty than all creation.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> b. 2, c. 1.

<sup>4</sup> b. 2.

<sup>5</sup> At the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus; PG 77:1032 C-D.

<sup>6</sup> 2; PG 65:717 C, 720 A.

<sup>7</sup> 1:5; PL 79:25-26.

<sup>8</sup> 17-18; PG 98:308 A-C.



St. Andrew of Crete, *Homily 4, On Mary's Nativity*, 8th century: "This is Mary, the *Theotókos* [Mother of God], the common refuge of all Christians, the first to be liberated from the original fall of our parents."<sup>9</sup>

Pope St. Leo the Great, *Sermon 29*, 5th century: "By the Spirit, Christ is born from the body of his unsullied Mother; by the same Spirit, the Christian is reborn from the womb of holy Church."<sup>10</sup>

### **Chrysostom's teachings make Satan and Protestants proud of him**

Satan, no doubt, was the author of these heresies by Chrysostom, as he is the father of all heresies, especially those which attack the Blessed Virgin Mary. Satan, through his slave Chrysostom, accused Mary of the sins he committed that caused him to be thrown out of heaven: Satan is proud and vainglorious, wanting to take credit for the power God had given him. He was power hungry, wanting to be equal to or above God. And, even more so, he wanted to be above Mary, whom he was envious of. And he did not know how great God was in spite of the fact that God created him; that is, until he felt God's wrath!

Satan especially succeeded in seducing the Protestants with heresies against Mary, as they believe that she is no better than any other woman or, at least, do not acknowledge how great she is. Indeed, Protestants could use Chrysostom's teachings to defend their heresies that Mary was not blessed, holy, pure, and sinless. For example, the prominent Protestant writer Philip Schaff says this:

The Protestant Philip Schaff: "Chrysostom belonged to the Antiochian school of theology and exegesis... He was far from the idea of the sinless perfection and immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. He attributes her conduct at the wedding of Cana (John ii. 3, 4) to undue haste, a sort of unholy ambition for the premature display of the miraculous power of her Son; and in commenting on Matthew xii. 46-49, he charges her and his brethren with vanity and a carnal mind."<sup>11</sup>

## **RJMI Commentaries**

### **RJMI on Mary's petition at the marriage in Cana**

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. And the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited and his disciples to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye." (Jn. 2:1-5)

Firstly, Mary's petition was motivated by love and care for those attending the wedding whether or not Jesus did the miracle. Surely, there is no sin or harm in asking for a good thing with a good motive even if that good thing may not be obtained.

Secondly, Jesus calling his mother "woman" was not disrespectful or harsh, as he also called her woman when she was at the foot of the holy Cross when Jesus surely had no reason to be harsh with her:

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the

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<sup>9</sup> PG 97:880 C.

<sup>10</sup> 1; PL 54227.

<sup>11</sup> *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, by Philip Schaff; Series I, Volume 9, Prolegomena, Chapter XIII (His Theology and Exegesis).

disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son.”  
(Jn. 19:25-26)

Hence calling a mother “woman” is not always disrespectful or harsh but a term of fact or endearment. Also the tone of the voice, which we do not know, can indicate if a statement is harsh or not regardless if Jesus called her woman or mother. The main reason why we know that Jesus was not harsh or angry with Mary is because she is the most holy, pure, and sinless creature that God ever created. The fact of the Incarnation is proof enough of that! Hence the rest of Jesus’ reply to his mother also was not harsh or in anger but merely a statement of fact:

“Woman, what is that to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.”

During the marriage at Cana, Jesus did not want to perform his first public miracle and thus attract too much attention at that time. Obviously he wanted to perform his first public miracle at some other time in the future. Because Jesus is not just a man from Mary but also God from eternity, it was God’s will not to perform the miracle at that time. However, many times God condescends to men’s petitions and allows their will to prevail, as God respects freewill and gives men a real part in the governing and ordering of things. For example,

- It was God’s will that the Ninivites be destroyed. Yet when they repented and did penance after Jonas condemned them in the name of God, God forgave them and thus changed his will for them from death to life. (Jonas 3)
- God changed his will several times when Abraham was petitioning him to save Sodom if just men could be found in it—from fifty just men, to forty-five, to forty, to thirty, to twenty, and to ten. (Gen. 18:26-32)
- God willed that the Israelites should have a religious ruler and not a king, a theocracy not a monarchy. Yet God condescended and allowed the Israelites to have a king. (1 Ki. 8 and 12)
- God willed that King Ezechias should die. But when Ezechias repented and did penance, God extended his life by fifteen years. (4 Ki. 20:1-6)

This proves that it is part of God’s order to listen to men’s petitions and to either allow or reject them. God’s allowing or rejecting their petitions is either for good or for evil.

In great respect and love for his mother, Jesus honored her petition and changed his will and performed his first public miracle at Cana. Of course, Jesus, being God, knew before the world was created that all of this would happen; that is, he knew that his will would be not to do the miracle, his Mother’s petition that he do the miracle, and his condescension in doing the miracle; which, nevertheless, depended on Mary’s petition. For if she had not made the petition, Jesus would have performed his first public miracle at some other time in the future.

Mary’s petition also defends the opinion that Jesus performed private miracles for the Holy Family and other close friends well before his public ministry, as Jesus must have done similar miracles for them in private. But even if Jesus had not performed any miracles till then, Mary still would have believed that he could do miracles whenever he willed. In fact, the greatest of all miracles was the Incarnation!

### **RJMI and St. Augustine on Who Is My Mother**

“As he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And one said unto him: Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee. But he answering him that told him, said: Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do

the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.”  
(Mt. 12:46-50)

Surely, Jesus was not shunning or disrespecting his mother and brethren but used this opportunity to teach that faith comes before race and family, as he taught in Mt. 10:34-36. In fact, it was a great compliment to Mary because Jesus is saying that it was not Mary’s race nor the mere fact that she bore him that makes her so great but her perfect faith and obedience to God, which in turn merited her to become the Mother of God. Commenting on these verses, St. Augustine says,

St. Augustine, *On Holy Virginity*, 401: “3. It is written in the Gospel of the mother and brethren of Christ—that is, his kindred after the flesh—that when word had been brought to him and they were standing without because they could not come to him by reason of the crowd, he made answer, ‘Who is my mother? or who are my brethren? and stretching forth his hand over his disciples, he saith, These are my brethren: and whosoever shall have done the will of my Father, that man is to me brother, and mother, and sister.’ What else is he teaching us, than to prefer to kindred after the flesh our descent after the Spirit; and that men are not blessed for the reason that they are united by nearness of flesh unto just and holy men; but that by obeying and following, they cleave unto their doctrine and conduct. Therefore Mary is more blessed in receiving the faith of Christ than in conceiving the flesh of Christ. For to a certain one who said, ‘Blessed is the womb, which bare thee,’ he himself made answer, ‘Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God, and keep it.’ Lastly, to his brethren, that is, his kindred after the flesh, who believed not in him, what profit was there in that being of kin? Thus also her nearness as a mother would have been of no profit to Mary had she not borne Christ in her heart after a more blessed manner than in her flesh.”

St. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, Tractate 10 (Jn. 2:12-21), 416: “3. ...For in a certain place when he was informed that his mother and his brethren were standing without at the time he was speaking to his disciples, he said: ‘Who is my mother? or who are my brethren? And stretching out his hand over his disciples, he said, These are my brethren’; and, ‘Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, the same is my mother, and brother, and sister.’ Therefore also Mary because she did the will of the Father. What the Lord magnified in her was that she did the will of the Father, not that flesh gave birth to flesh. Give good heed, beloved. Moreover, when the Lord was regarded with admiration by the multitude while doing signs and wonders and showing forth what lay concealed under the flesh, certain admiring souls said: ‘Happy is the womb that bare thee; and he said, Yea, rather, happy are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.’ That is to say, even my mother whom ye have called happy is happy in that she keeps the word of God; not because in her the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, but because she keeps that same word of God by which she was made and which in her was made flesh. Let not men rejoice in temporal offspring, but let them exult if in spirit they are joined to God.”

*For the glory of God, the honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the angels and saints, and the salvation of men.*

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