

Lightning Apologetics



Hail Mary, **full of grace**, the Lord is with Thee.
Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, **Mother of God**, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

“Full of Grace” and “Mother of God.” What do the Church Fathers have to say?

Let's see what the “Fathers of the Church” have to say about these two phrases. Understanding the Fathers of the Church is very important. We spoke of apostolic succession in a previous article where the Apostles “laid hands” on their successors to become other bishops and priest. What did the successors to the Apostles teach? It's important because they were taught by the Apostles themselves. Therefore it is very important to understand what the early Church believed. We will delve into this for certain subjects. It's called “Patristics.” (The study of the Fathers of the Church).

We will begin with the angelic salutation to Mary, “Full of Grace.” What did the early Church teach about this? We begin with **St. Justin Martyr (105 A.D. – 165 A.D.)**. He is one of our first apologists. He sought to defend and explain what Christians really believed. He studied ancient prophets and fell in love with their writings. He found that what had previously been taught about Christianity was false and set out to right those errors. In Rome, he set up a school of Christian philosophy. He was charged with impiety toward the gods and was beheaded c. 165 A.D.

“He became man by the Virgin, in order that the disobedience which proceeded from the serpent might receive its destruction in the same manner in which it derived its origin. For Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary received faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and the power of the Highest would overshadow her: wherefore also the Holy One begotten of her is the Son of God; and she replied, “Be it done unto me according to thy word.”

St. Athanasius (c. 295 A.D. – 373 A.D.) Doctor of the Church

Doctor of the Church, born in Alexandria and was bishop there for almost half a century. Because he refused to tolerate the Arian heresy (which stated that Jesus was only human, not divine) he spent 17 of his 46 years of his episcopate in exile. He defended the divinity of Christ.

“And concerning the Word of the Father becoming Man for us, I hold as it is written, that, as John says, ‘the Word was made Flesh’, not in the sense of those most impious persons who say that He has undergone a change, but that He has become Man for us, being born of the Virgin Mary and of the Holy Spirit.”

St. Ambrose (340 A.D. – 397 A.D.) Doctor of the Church

He was named Bishop of Milan in 374 A.D. He was instrumental in the conversion and baptism of St. Augustine. He is best known for embodying the Western Church's attitude toward the state defining ‘what is Caesar's and what is God's.’ He insisted upon the Church's authority in sacred matters.

“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 stained the sincerity of its disposition by no guile, who was humble in heart, grave in speech, prudent in mind, sparing of words, studious in reading, resting her hope not 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 neighbors? When did she despise the lowly? When did she avoid the needy?

You can see how the early Church honored and esteemed the Blessed Virgin Mary. Remember, God could make his own Mother and He made her perfect. Mary Immaculate, pray for us! More next week God bless Phillip Bellini, DRE