

Virgo Virginum

- The most exalted ideal of virginity, however, is the Immaculata herself, the Virgin of virgins.
- The Hebraism “virgin of virgins” means that she is not only a virgin in a preeminent fashion, but is also the archetype, model and original pattern of all virginity. She is the source of the beauty of every virgin, the inner mainstay of her harmony and integrity. For when God created the world, “she was there” (cf. Proverbs 8:22 ff.).
- God as an architect first devises a perfect plan for constructing a building, so God has His masterpiece, the Virgin Mary, before His eyes as the primordial plan, as the flawless (*Immaculata*) original concept (*Conceptio*) of all that is created. Thus she becomes the root, the source, the archetype of all things.
- All the beauty of creation is like an echo of her beauty. Every perfection of a creature has its measure and pattern in her.



Virgin's beauty of Mary

- Mary is there in the overwhelming splendour of her radiant beauty and youth.
- She is so heavenly and untouchable that one hardly dares to look up at her. And on the other hand she is so attractive that one wants to draw as close to her as possible.
- That is the most profound mystery of her spotlessness, which appears here not only in its negative aspect as freedom from all stain of sin, but also as the completely positive privilege of imaging God, of being completely full of the inexhaustible light of the divine Spirit.



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The Immaculata Virgin of Virgins



Of all virgins thou art fairest,
Dearest Mary, heavenly Queen:
Of all creatures thou art purest,
Like to thee was never seen.

St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori

Semper Virgo

• When the Church prays to Mary or speaks about her, she usually uses the magnificent title: Beata Maria semper Virgo — the Blessed, ever-Virgin Mary. In doing so she emphasizes the timeless, constant and perpetual character of Mary's virginity.



• The word '*semper*', therefore, testifies that her virginity transcends the changing and passing of all earthly things and constitutes a permanent, eternal value. Thus Mary, as the **SEMPER VIRGO**, is privileged to represent in the created order the boundless virginal beauty and the pure, ardent and infinite love of God in a most sublime fashion.

• All virginal creatures participate in her perpetual virginity, and the Church teaches us that in eternal blessedness this participation is a special mark of distinction called the 'aureole' or halo: the Virgins, the Martyrs and the Doctors of the Church will receive a special reward in Heaven corresponding to the particularly glorious and outstanding victory that these Christians won here on earth in their fight for the heavenly crown.

• This very special honour will be bestowed on them because, as St. Thomas teaches, virginity must be won by a long, hard battle which is not inferior to bloody martyrdom.



In the well-known vision of St. Maximilian Kolbe, the Immaculata appeared to him when he was ten years old and told him to choose between two crowns: a white one, the symbol of the “martyrdom of virginity”, and a red one, the symbol of the “martyrdom of blood”.

• The '*semper*', the perpetual character of virginity, which is expressed so profoundly in this summons by Mary, leads us finally into the '*semper*', the perpetual character of God's limitless nature; He made creatures so that they might be an imitation, an echo and a reflected splendour of His own integrity and perfect harmony. If man was created to honour God and to reflect His glory, then this takes place most profoundly and most purely in the mystery of virginity.

Mary — the example for woman

• Mary — this perfect masterpiece of God — is a woman. Therefore, of all the creatures that He made, women, and especially virgins, have a special relationship to her.

• This, above all else, is the great duty of woman: to be an image, a living icon of the Immaculata. That is why it is so necessary for a woman, a virgin, to follow her prototype.

• Mary gives the example of the virginal life and vocation, and the perfection of feminine nature comes about through conformity to her: to the extent that a woman reflects HER in her life, she becomes precious, strong, pure and preternaturally beautiful.

• All the saints have cast themselves into her Heart like molten material into a mold, and in that way they were formed according to her example.

• She encompasses all sanctity within herself, she is the source of all the most varied forms of virginity, from the most obscure girl who, unknown to the world, performs her service with the utmost modesty, to the most exalted, extraordinary missions of those women who are meant to show the world the strength and power of virginal beauty, such as St. Catherine of Sienna or St. Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orléans, or St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

Thus the Immaculate Virgin is the source of all beauty and harmony that we find in the nature of the virgo.