

Chosen: A Theological Reflection of St. Augustine's Mariology

NANCY M. MCCARTHY

St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430), is regarded as one of the greatest theologians in the Western civilized world. He has been merited with the title of Doctor of Grace and was responsible for the early doctrinal understandings of original sin and the complexities of the Trinity. An emotional thinker with an apophatic appreciation of the God for whom he spent a lifetime searching and representing when found, he saw God as the creator of the cosmos who wished to cultivate a continued harmony, always remaining in relation to the creatures he loved. To that end, Augustine appreciated the tremendous gift God gave mankind by elevating one of its own, a humble, poor Jewish girl who would affect the greatest gift God could bestow on his creation: salvation through himself in the form of Perfect Man.

St. Augustine, with regard to Mary's purpose in redemption history, highlighted the concept of predestination, taken in its proper, divinely revealed understanding. He studied her role of Mother of God in which Mary's Immaculate Conception, her freedom from original sin, and sanctifying grace awarded her privilege even above the angels. Also, he detailed how her perpetual virginity reflects God's brilliance in advocating an entrance into humanity by accommodating the Word to flesh; and finally, Augustine detailed Mary as a type of the Church, as both virgin and mother, and her roles as Co-Redeemer with her Son, Mediatrix of all graces, and Advocate. All these Mary was graced with while embracing her responsibilities to serve God obediently but with a complete understanding of her free will within this plan.

Yet all things Mary for Augustine stem from all things Christ. St. Augustine, maturing into adulthood and leaving behind the entrapment of his spiritual endeavors in Manichaeism, sought God fervently but resisted the idea of baptism, until

he could no longer reject the obvious. For the God that Augustine hungered for was the one his mother, St. Monica, and his mentor St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, had been advocating; this was the true God that Augustine finally surrendered to as he says in his autobiography *Confessions*, “Our heart is restless until it rests in You.”¹

Totus Christus was the necessary centering element that pushed Augustine, now in his thirties, to the baptismal sacrament, entry into the Church, and in 391, the priesthood which was followed four years later by the legacy role as Bishop of Hippo. Mary was the instrumental, essential conduit necessary for God's intention that humanity would participate in its own salvation alongside Christ. For as Augustine once stated, “God created us without us, but he will not save us without us.”² Yet Augustine’s approach in culminating understanding was unique.

In the history of the Church, certain theologians, saints, and mystics instantly come to mind when one thinks of Mariology. While it is appropriate to state that all these faithful men and women, by first instinct, follow Christ (*Sequela Christi*), they are noted for their approach to Jesus through Mary; included are such persons as St. Louis de Montfort and Pope St. John Paul II, as well as St. Bernadette Soubirous, and the three visionary children of Fatima. Augustine of Hippo does not naturally surface from within that list. Indeed, he has a wealth of writing regarding the Blessed Mother, but that wealth stems from the treasure that is Triune.

Beginning with Christ is where Augustine built arguably the greatest doctrinal study on the Holy Trinity. It is from this root understanding that all other life springs forth bearing endless fruit. In his work, *De Trinitate*, he creates an exegesis

¹ St. Augustine. *Confessions*. Book 1.1.

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (New York: Doubleday, 1995) #1847, citing St. Augustine’s Sermon 169.

of New Testament scriptural passages where Christ or the Gospel writers addressed the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.³ From this perspective, Augustine also uses the genius of his mind as one in a lifelong relationship with words. Without a doubt, he was a talented, pithy rhetorician, and this practice created an avenue for him to naturally appreciate God. He attributes to God a triad of mind, knowledge, love (*mens, notitia, amor*) to imply the lover, the beloved, and love itself. The lover is the Father, who is the mind; from him comes all knowledge and this Wisdom is begotten in the Beloved, the Eternal Word, the Son; and from this union flows all love as inspired in the Holy Spirit.⁴

Therefore, it is the unwrapping of this immense spiritually generated epiphany for Augustine that all other knowledge of God, including those humans God had chosen to participate in his salvific history, is understood. Thus, Augustine's approach for Mary far surpasses any relationship he had with women in his own personal life. A strong-willed Christian mother and a concubine with whom he had relations for thirteen years would not be sufficient for his approach to not only understanding but cherishing the Blessed Mother without this mind-knowledge-love pathway. For Augustine, only by focusing on God's intent is Mary's purpose revealed, and from this mindset does the Bishop culminate the concepts of Mariology.

Predestination

The first concept of Augustine Mariology is predestination. Augustine, in his earliest writing, held to a strong Neo-Platonist perspective and thought that evil was not of God but simply a privation from God's goodness. Moreover, evil stems from the human will to deny God while seeking

³ Mt 3:13, 28:19; 1 Pet 1:2; 2 Cor 3:17; 2 Cor 13:14.

⁴ St. Augustine. *De Trinitate*. Book VIII, 14; Book IX, 2, 8, 18.

the consolation of the flesh, be that in self-gratification or in vice towards others. He matured in his writing and religious understanding, especially when battling the heresy of Pelagianism, promoted by the British theologian Pelagius, who denied God's saving grace, teaching instead that man could choose his destiny solely by his actions.

Augustine encountered that God's grace was salvation's protection and that is when he started using the word "predestination" to explain how God, omniscient and omnibenevolent, knew what man could not.⁵ Augustine was writing from personal experience regarding his understanding of God's grace, as he knew only by grace was he elevated and healed in divine friendship with the Trinity. This allowed Augustine, as chronicled in *Confessions* and later in his writing against Pelagius, an actual participation in God's divine nature.⁶

However, the divine grace God bestowed on Mary had a superior purpose: that of Mother of God, and from this stance, co-redeemer of humanity, for God willed her conjoined effort in his plan. Thus, it would be fitting to assume that her sanctity was higher than that of Adam and Eve, pre-fall. Augustine wrote, "Even before He was born of her, He knew his mother when He predestined her. He knew his mother before He, as God, created her, from whom He would be created as man."⁷

Yet Augustine's predestination doctrine never inferred that man was helpless in his reaching for God or this was a hopeless dream to be saved if not in God's plan, as was later

⁵ Brandon Petersen. "Augustine: Advocate of Free Will, Defender of Predestination." July 2014. <https://www.sites.nd.edu/ujournal/files/2014/07/Petersen-05-06>.

⁶ St. Augustine. *Selected Writings on Grace and Pelagianism*. (New York: New York City Press, 2011) 42.

⁷ Brian K. Reynolds. *Gateway to Heaven*. (New York: New City Press, 2012). Ch. 3, 116.

taught in the limiting reinterpretation of John Calvin during the Protestant Reformation. Rather, predestination is not at odds with free will. God, in Augustine's view, chooses for whom mercy is offered, writing, "He decides who are not to be offered mercy by the standard of equity which is most secret and far removed from human powers of understanding."⁸ In other words, since God only wills the good, he is not responsible for sinners who choose to be unredeemed. While God knows how man will choose to live his life, this does not mean God willfully predetermines how that life is led.⁹

It is from this mindset that all other points of theology of Augustine follow because Mary, too, was predestined by God to serve in carrying the Son of God yet she also, at any moment in her life, could have declined. However, the *kecharitomene*, the grace-filled Daughter of Zion, chose her destiny to be the handmaid of the Lord.¹⁰ This was the beginning of her conscious participation, although still in early days of her true growth in understanding the complex and vibrant intentions that God had for his divine salvific response. Her fiat to God's request would lead to thousands of moments that would grace the lowly handmaid as she moved in tandem with her only Son, who kept his mother close during his three-year temporal mission.

Found in the Gospel of John is the first public miracle at the Wedding Feast of Cana (Jn 2:1-4) when Mary suggests her Son's help with the issue of the wine. Jesus addresses her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Augustine writes, "... in predestination... He knew her

⁸ St. Augustine. *De Libero Arbitrio*. Cited in Gerald Bonner *God's Decree and Man's Destiny: Studies on the Thought of Augustine of Hippo*. (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987) 17.

⁹ Tom Nash. "Augustine Had It Right and Calvin Did Not." *Catholic Answers*.

<https://www.catholic.com/qa/augustine-had-it-right-and-calvin-did-not>.

¹⁰ Luke 1:38.

as His mother; but at a certain hour in a mystery He did not recognize her; and at a certain hour which had not yet come, again in mystery, He does recognize her. For then did He recognize her, when that to which she gave birth was a-dying.”¹¹

Thus, the first miracle proceeds, as if to start the clock ticking for when the hour would indeed come. Augustine is showing Mary's participation not only as Jesus's mother but also as his first disciple. Her loyalty and dedication could not be challenged, her trust in God is fathomless. Augustine points out that Jesus is the Lord of Mary and the Son of Mary, the creator of Mary and the created from Mary.¹² Augustine's writing also shows that as Divine Revelation dictates: all moments lead to Calvary.

Theotokos

The second concept of Augustine's Mariology is her title as Mother of God. “He chose the Mother He created; He created the Mother He had chosen.”¹³ Mary's entrance into Sacred Scripture appears in prophecy in Genesis immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve. Original justice had been shattered into original sin as Adam, head of the human race and solely responsible for all of human nature, had disobeyed God's command not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. He lost habitual sanctifying grace (the participation in the divine nature given to each person) and subordinating preternatural gifts of immortality, integrity, and impassibility, with his infused knowledge now muddled. Adam gave away obedience through his falling to temptation by the serpent, leading all his descendants including Mary, to destruction. And he did so with culpability.

¹¹ St. Augustine. “Tractate VIII of the Gospel of John.” Ch. 2, 1-4, pt. 9.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ St. Augustine. “Sermon 69,” 3.

<https://homeofthemothor.org/en/resources/virgen-mary/fathers/8477>.

At no time was any of this unknown to God, for he already had a plan in place to redeem the rational creatures he so deeply loved. Yet to atone to God was impossible for fallen man. Only one equal to God could possibly make reparations for such a dire situation, and therefore, the Son of God took upon himself perfected human nature, accompanied to his divinity. To do this required a human female but one who must be elevated above the now broken nature inherited. Thus, predestination unfolds its first reveal in Genesis 3:15 when God declares to the serpent that he will put enmity between him and the woman, between their offspring, between their intentions, prophesizing that Christ would destroy sin and death, knowing that he would do it with the help of a pregnant virgin.

Since the first five books of the Torah were established inerrantly, with God as the lead author and Moses as the instrumental author, its history teaches Eve's decline was Mary's ascent. The theologians in the Catholic Church from its apostolic era to the present have always compared these two women. Eve never fares well. However, the comparisons are obvious and necessary because God needs mankind to see that decisions matter. Mary is the pinnacle example of a person in total obedience, operating within the sanctifying grace granted her. She and the Messiah are so deeply connected both physically and spiritually as to allegorically share one heart between them. Therefore, her allegiance should be unquestionable.

From Genesis to Isaiah 7:14, the Old Testament echoes refrains of the virgin's pending role although the fullness of the prophecy is withheld until the right moment, or as Augustine famously put it: "The New Testament is the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed."¹⁴ Then in the

¹⁴ St. Augustine. *Quaest. In Hept.* 2,73. ("7 Questions Concerning the Heptateuch"); cf. *On the Spirit and the Letter*, Ch. 27. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1502.htm>.

New Testament, the Archangel Gabriel's visit in Luke 1:28 begins the awakening of promise. Augustine depends fully on Sacred Scripture to prove the mysterious claims set forth regarding the Incarnation, writing, "We believe that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary because it is written thus in the Gospels; we believe that He was crucified and died, because it is written thus in the Gospel; we believe that He was truly born and truly died because the Gospel is the truth."¹⁵

Also relevant to this point is from Mariologist Dr. Mark Miravalle, who addresses Augustine's understanding of how the virgin conceived a child not by desire but by faith, and that Mary's role in the Incarnation safeguards the true faith. The truth of her virginity protects the hypostatic union of Christ's dual natures, both divine and human. Mary's body gives the flesh to accommodate the Word. Her virginity is indispensable as a condition for orthodoxy.¹⁶

While Augustine believed that Mary was virginal at the Incarnation, he did not fully proclaim her own conception as immaculate but rather, infers her sinlessness is contrary to what he supposes on the rest of humanity due to concupiscence, where he believed original sin passed through procreation. However, his original speculations to this point, while shrouded somewhat in his unknowing, does offer light to future theologians who would take the suggestion of immaculate conception and interpret its full meaning. What the Bishop did know was that all was done in God's grace.

Augustine, in his wranglings against the heresy of Pelagianism, writes in his book *Nature and Grace* that the Virgin Mary had abundant grace conferred on her by God because she was to conceive and bear him "in whom there is

¹⁵ Brian K. Reynolds. *Gateway to Heaven*. [Augustine's Sermon 186] (New York: New City Press, 2012) 23.

¹⁶ Dr. Mark Miravalle. *Mary in the Modern World*. (Week 6, Video 3) Franciscan University of Steubenville.

no sin.”¹⁷ Augustine uses the understanding of grace in nature to promote Mary's fulfillment as the Mother of God and from this, her work in co-redemption, mediation, and advocacy. In his Sermon 72 regarding Mary's focus, Augustine writes, “Christ as truth was in Mary's mind, Christ as flesh in Mary's womb; that which is in the mind is greater than that is carried in the womb.”¹⁸ He speaks from the Gospel passage of Luke 11:27-28 regarding the woman who speaks to Jesus saying, blessed is the woman who bore you. So too is Mary blessed not only because she bore him but rather, she heard the Word of God and kept it. Keeping her thoughts in her mind totally integral to God was as critical as bringing him into life. She was the first to show true discipleship, beginning with her mind.

Virgo Concepit...

Virgo Perperit...post-partum, Virgo Permansit¹⁹

The third concept of Saint Augustine's Mariology is her virginity. Augustine in his *De Sancta Virginitate* wrote adamantly about Mary's perpetual virginity throughout her lifetime. He was one of the Patriarchal Fathers who agreed with the apocryphal stance of James the Lesser, who wrote from the oral tradition that Mary, as a very young child, pledged her life to God and this would include her virginity at some point.²⁰ Augustine speaks of Mary's identity, “A virgin conceives, yet remains a virgin: a virgin is heavy with child; a virgin brings forth her child, yet she is always a virgin. Why

¹⁷ St. Augustine. *Nature and Grace* (as cited in *Selected Writings on Grace and Pelagianism*, Boniface Ramsey ed., New York: New City Press, 2011) 36:45.

¹⁸ St. Augustine. “Sermon 72.”

https://www.vatican.va/spirit/documents/spirit_20001208_agostino_en.html.

¹⁹ St. Augustine. *Sermons for Christmas and Epiphany* [Christmas Sermon 9] (ed. and trans. J. Quasten, Island Road, NJ: Paulus Press, 1952).

²⁰ James the Lesser. *The Protoevangelium Jacobi*. c.150 A.D.

are you amazed at this, O man? It was fitting for God to be born thus when he deigned to become man.”²¹

The Archangel Gabriel comes to Mary as revealed in Luke's Gospel. After he explains God's desire for her to carry the promised savior, she asks simply, “How can this be since I know not man?” (1:34). This sentence, in the original Greek in which Luke wrote (*epei andra ou ginosko*) infers that Mary's virginity is in her own mind as not only in the present tense but is meant as a permanent fixture in her life.²² Augustine agrees, qualifying Mary's determination to have remained a virgin throughout her lifetime, married or not. For no betrothed woman would question what she knew: generation of children was the expected pathway. Mary would also have been well versed in the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, who speak both of a virgin conceiving, and the branch of the stump of Jesse.²³ Mary, in her humility, would know a virgin was prophesized but could never have anticipated that it was she who was selected. Therefore, her pondering is legitimate and respectful.

It also suggests that her alignment with Joseph was one secured in mutual understanding of a permanence of chastity. Augustine acknowledges that the norm among the Jews in her time did not consider virginity customary and so even in being betrothed to Joseph, Augustine writes, “she had chosen a just man who would not have used violence to take away what she had vowed to God... it was she herself who consecrated her virginity to God when she did not yet know whom she would conceive.”²⁴

²¹ St. Augustine. “Sermon 186.”
https://www.vatican.va/spirit/documents/spirit_20001222_agostino_en.html.

²² Brant Pitre. *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary*. (New York: Penguin Random House, 2018) 105-106.

²³ Isaiah 7:14, 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6.

²⁴ St. Augustine. *De Sancta Virginitate*, 4,4.

Mary's perpetual virginity has been challenged both in the Christian and secular worlds because many find it hard to comprehend firstly, how the woman can give birth in mystery without pain and rupture, and secondly, how she can remain a virgin afterwards in marriage, especially since Scripture seems to reference Jesus's brothers and sisters.²⁵ This, however, can be refuted with basic understanding of both Hebrew and Aramaic languages that do not use the conclusive word for “cousin” or similar relation.

Augustine addresses this issue when he states that her virginity is both pleasing and acceptable to God, who was conceived in her and therefore would have protected her from a spouse who would then violate her promise. Since Jesus, through his sacrifice on the Cross, merited grace beyond measure for humanity, he also would have pre-divinized Mary's own immaculate conception in her mother's womb and with her father's seed, that she would continue in a lifetime of this protection. Thus, Jesus knew the right husband for Mary because he also chose Joseph to be his own protective human parent. Augustine, re-echoing the theme of freedom that pervades all his theological doctrinal workings, writes, “Thus Christ being born of a virgin, who, before she knew Who was to be born of her, had determined to continue a virgin, chose rather to approve, than to command, only virginity. And thus, even in the female herself, in whom He took the form of a servant, He willed that virginity should be free.”²⁶

It is from this stance of free will conjoined in obedience to divine will that the historical legacy of the Church established formally from Tradition the acceptance of Mary's purity. The Catholic Church stands by the dogmatic papal bull of Pope Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, (1854) declaring Mary's Immaculate Conception. She was conceived free of original sin and would

²⁵ Mt 12:46; 13:55-56.

²⁶ St. Augustine. *De Sancta Virginitate*, 4.

not commit venial or mortal sin within her lifetime. Her intention as an adult to remain chaste was honored in her marriage to Joseph, and so the liturgy of the Church, as established in the Eastern Rite, refers to her as *Aeiparthenos* or ever-virgin. Therefore, “the deepening of the faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary's real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made man...Christ's birth did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it.”²⁷

The Church Reflects Mary as Virgin and Mother

The fourth concept of Augustine's Mariology is Mary as type for the Church. Regarding the hour and its fixed place in time at Calvary, Augustine writes that hour had now come, establishing the transition, the final gift Jesus can give before his death, that of awarding his mother to the universal Church. “He commends His Mother to the care of the disciple, commends His Mother, as about to die before her, and to rise again before her death.”²⁸ As all moments in Christ's mission led to Calvary, so also did the culmination of Mary's participation in the objective redemption given by Christ's death on the Cross, the Sacrificial Lamb atoning for all.

It was in his death that the Blessed Mother's second birthing was allowed: the first to birth her son painlessly, the second to suffer immensely in travail for the Church's reveal. Her anguish in every moment with Christ as co-redeemer afforded the graces poured upon her for the beginning of the infant Church. Augustine is also the first to refer to Mary as

²⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1995) #499; #154.

²⁸ St. Augustine. “Tractate VIII of the Gospel of John.” Ch. 2 1-4, pt.9.

the “co-operatrix” in the redemption as noted by Pope St. John Paul II.²⁹

It was at Calvary where Christ divinely merited beyond human understanding the graces willingly offered from his love to the Father and of creation. All these graces would be given to Mary to provide to the world in her new role as mediatrix. She, from her fiat at the Annunciation, to witnessing the lance thrown into her dead Son's side, releasing the last blood and water from his heart, would transpire the prophecy of St. Simeon, “and a sword will pierce your very soul” to reveal the knowledge of all mankind.³⁰ Mary as first disciple would continue her mission on earth with the remaining Apostles and received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to begin the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Vatican II Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, included a final chapter solely dedicated to Mary from her physical and spiritual capacity as virgin and mother, representing her as a typology for the Church. The Council stated, “By reason of the gift and role of divine maternity, by which she is united with her Son, the Redeemer, and with His singular graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united with the Church.”³¹ The document extends the teachings of St. Ambrose regarding how Mary is a type of the Church in her perfect union with her Son, in the order of faith and charity. It is through this mystery that the Church established by Christ and protected perpetually by the Holy Spirit, can be rightly identified as Mother and Virgin. The Blessed Virgin and Holy Mother Mary stands out as its perfect model.

²⁹ Dr. Mark Miravalle. *With Jesus, the Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix*. (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing, 2003) 71; cf. Augustine’s *De Sancta Virginitate*, 6; Pope John Paul II, General Audience, April 9, 1997.

³⁰ Luke 2:35.

³¹ Vatican II Council. *Lumen Gentium*. 63.

https://vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii-const_19641121_lumen_gentium.

Augustine surely influenced the Vatican II Council when he expounded on Mary's typology. He speaks of Mary as the mother of the Church not only in spirit but also in flesh—not of the head of the Church which is, of course, Christ himself, “but clearly the mother of His members, which we are: in that she wrought together by charity, the faithful ones should be born in the Church.”³²

The Bishop's sermon on how Mary is a disciple in Christ, also references her place in the Church in a manner somewhat contentious from the usual way Augustine defended her. He acknowledges that Mary is indeed holy and blessed but that the Church is collectively something more significant than she. He explains that Mary, while being a holy member—in fact, the holiest member—of the Church, is still simply a member of the whole body. Augustine argues that therefore it follows that the body must be something greater than any individual member. For he says that the Lord is the head, and the whole Christ is head and body.³³

It is from this position of faith that Augustine sees how the Trinity continues its harmonious effects, now through the created Church, still within the vibrant mind-knowledge-love mindset to use the Blessed Mother as a model for inspiration. In Book VIII of *De Trinitate* Augustine muses as to those who ponder what Mary looked like, or for that matter, Lazarus' rising from the dead or the tomb from which Christ himself was laid. Augustine speculates it does not matter. The 'how' is not relevant; the 'why' is the purpose because it is from this that faith begins to take hold.

He writes, “What a virgin is, and what being born is, and what a proper name is we do not believe, we just know. And so, without prejudice to faith, it is permissible to say ‘Perhaps she

³² St. Augustine. *De Sancta Virginitate*, 6.

³³ St. Augustine. “Sermon 72,” 7.

https://www.vatican.va/spirit/document/spirit_20001208_agostino_en.html

had a face like this, perhaps she did not.’ But nobody can say, ‘Perhaps Christ was born of a virgin’ without prejudice to his Christian faith...and since we must believe before we can understand, we must take care our faith is not fabricated.”³⁴

Therefore, faith is the position that the Church, as Mother, holds, relying on the Blessed Mother as the quintessential model of advocacy. Faith is also the position that the Church, as Virgin, rests under the continual protection of the Spirit and remains unviolated and pristine, regardless of the sinful nature still facing fallen man. To that end, the apparent purpose of Mary as both virgin and mother manifests a deeper understanding of her humility as the faithful servant of God; her obedience merits her role as Mediatrix of all graces equal to her position as loving advocate to her spiritual children.

It is from this understanding Augustine wrote, “Oh blessed Virgin Mary, who can worthily repay thee thy just dues of praise and thanksgiving, thou who by the wondrous ascent of thy will didst rescue a fallen world?...Be thou ever ready to assist us when we pray, and bring back to us the answers to our prayers. Make it thy continual care to pray for the people of God, thou who, blessed by God, didst merit to bear the Redeemer of the world, who liveth and reigneth, world without end.”³⁵

Therefore Augustine, through his consideration of the complexities of the Triune Godhead, was allowed by grace of genius to broaden mankind's understanding of the divinely mysterious. He took the path through the mind to comprehend God's knowledge and love. Beginning with Christ, he strove to seek the Trinity and from that, those

³⁴ St. Augustine. *De Trinitate*. Book VIII, 7-8.

³⁵ St. Augustine. “A Prayer of St. Augustine to the Blessed Virgin.” *ThoughtCo*. August 25, 2020.

<https://www.learnreligions.com/pray/a-prayer-of-st-augustine-to-the-blessed-virgin>.

persons so deeply graced by God as to participate in the redemptive salvation of man through Christ's Paschal Mystery. Mary was one such person. Through predestination, she was predetermined to be immaculately conceived, perpetually virgin, sinless, charitable, holy and a model for the true Church established by Christ. Through her own will, totally aligned with the Almighty, she proved her true discipleship in every decision professed towards God's designs.