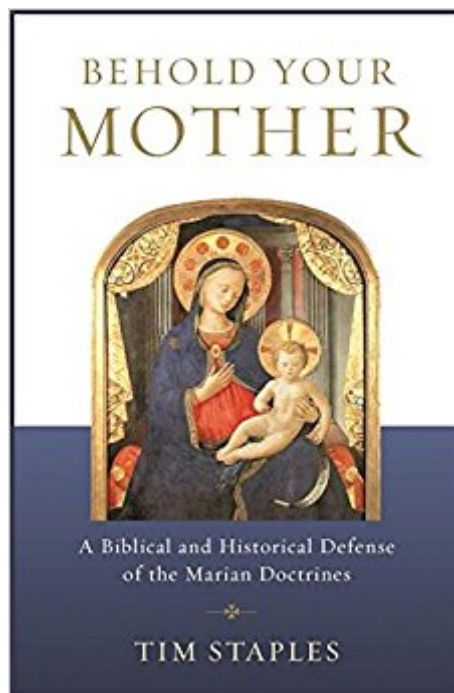




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Behold Your Mother: A Biblical And Historical Defense Of The Marian Doctrines



Synopsis

From the cross Jesus gave us his mother to be our mother, too: a singularly holy model, consoler, and intercessor for our spiritual journey. Yet most Protestants, and too many Catholics don't understand the role that God wants her to play in our lives. In *Behold Your Mother*, Tim Staples takes you through the Church's teachings about the Blessed Virgin Mary, showing their firm Scriptural and historical roots and dismantling the objections of those who mistakenly believe that Mary competes for the attention due Christ alone. Combining the best recent scholarship with a convert's in-depth knowledge of the arguments, Staples has assembled the most thorough and useful Marian apologetic you'll find anywhere. Relevant and essential -- Mary matters. Read *Behold Your Mother* and find out just how much.

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Customer Reviews

Tim Staples respectfully but clearly answers every conceivable Protestant objection to Mary, the Mother of God. With the street cred of one who has been there, Tim backs up his words with Scripture every time. His answers are exhaustive but not exhausting! An invaluable book for thoughtful, truth-seeking Christians. --Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J., EWTN host and author of *Mary: Virgin, Mother, and Queen*

The greatest doctrinal obstacle to my return to the Catholic Church was fear that Catholics had no basis for or boundaries on the Marian dogmas. If only Tim Staples had written *Behold Your Mother* then! His presentation is fearless, precise, biblically wise, historically rooted, and popular in expression. He addresses objections I haven't seen addressed elsewhere. I can't think of a more insightful, comprehensive single volume that persuades so thoroughly. Great, truly

great, piece of apologetics. --Al Kresta- Host of Kresta in the AfternoonTim Staples presents a remarkable defense of the six major Marian doctrines, including a veritable compendium of source material from the Bible, Fathers, and Church documents. He gives clear presentations of the controversial issues surrounding each doctrine, makes careful definitions and distinctions, and thinks his way through each issue as if he were having a conversation with the reader. Even well-informed readers will benefit from this engaging book. --Fr. Robert J. Spitzer, President, Magis Center of Reason and Faith

Tim Staples is Director of Apologetics and Evangelization here at Catholic Answers, but he was not always Catholic. Tim was raised a Southern Baptist. Although he fell away from the faith of his childhood, Tim came back to faith in Christ during his late teen years through the witness of Christian televangelists. Soon after, Tim joined the Marine Corps. During his four-year tour, he became involved in ministry with various Assemblies of God communities. Immediately after his tour of duty, Tim enrolled in Jimmy Swaggart Bible College and became a youth minister in an Assembly of God community. During his final year in the Marines, however, Tim met a Marine who really knew his faith and challenged Tim to study Catholicism from Catholic and historical sources. That encounter sparked a two-year search for the truth. Tim was determined to prove Catholicism wrong, but he ended up studying his way to the last place he thought he would ever end up: the Catholic Church! He converted to Catholicism in 1988 and spent the following six years in formation for the priesthood, earning a degree in philosophy from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Overbrook, Pennsylvania. He then studied theology on a graduate level at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, for two years. Realizing that his calling was not to the priesthood, Tim left the seminary in 1994 and has been working in Catholic apologetics and evangelization ever since.

Behold your mother is an excellent book on Marian doctrines, the Church's teachings about Mary are together with the mysteries of Christ. I believe Mary matters. Must buy

Excellent book! Tim Staples is so thorough in his evidence and so easy to read and understand!

Read it some time back. Bought a copy for my niece and she found it hard to follow the academic or rigorous explanations. This is a good read for Catholics and would-be Catholics. Staples is a Catholic "apologist" - one who explains Catholic teachings. The highlight (maybe I'm giving something away here) is how he explains that "Full of Grace" is apparently a name that the angel

gave Mary at the Annunciation, which is why she pondered the way the angel addressed her. He has the background in Greek to defend that and does so.

Awesome insights. I have always had love and devotion to our most blessed Mother of God ever since I can recall thanks to my earthly mother and more especially grandmother who introduced me and educated me about our most blessed Mother. And I never understood why protestants lacked the fervor due her as Mother of God when professing to love and honor and follow the teachings of Christ true God and true Man who is the WAY the TRUTH and LIFE. It's simple; if God commands us to honor our Father and our Mother and God is TRUE to his WORD (commandments) then why do many Christians not follow Christ when he unequivocally honors His Father and Mother?

This book contains very good arguments for defending the Catholic Church's doctrines about Mary. In fact most of the arguments come from the Bible.

I remember when I first started listening to Catholic Answers, I didn't really know who was who. Then one day, I heard someone who was just on fire for Our Lady. This guy had me fist pumping, not only at his biblical and compelling arguments, but at the clear personal love he clearly communicated for Our Lady. That man was of course Tim Staples, and I can think of no one more appropriate to write a Catholic apologetics book on Mary. If you enjoyed Karl Keating's "Catholicism and Fundamentalism," then this book is for you. It could have been titled "Mary and Fundamentalism" as, like Keating's book, it is written to defend Catholic doctrine (on Mary) by appealing in large part to the bible while also interacting with some of the strongest non-Catholic Christian objections. It is also extremely readable and easy to understand, as Keating's book is. Although Staples does not say it specifically, his use of scholastic metaphysical terminology combined with the copious quotes of St Thomas make the case that the abandonment of scholastic thought leads to bad metaphysics which leads to Christological errors. For example, Staples critiques Eric Svensen's claim that "Mary is the mother of some of Jesus." What in the world does "some of" Jesus mean? Presumably this refers to the "human nature part" of Jesus. But this puts us in the odd situation of claiming that Mary gave birth to a nature, not a person. Is the "whole" Jesus the human nature part combined with the divine nature part? This would then seem to deny the simplicity of God. It is unclear what "part" is referring to, and we are left to guess as to its precise metaphysical meaning. But this is unfortunately the result when one jettisons the careful metaphysical terminology and distinctions like essence, substance, and suppositum. I am not

claiming that Svensen and others have done this on purpose- careful metaphysics worked out by the scholastics are simply not part and parcel in Catholic culture anymore, let alone in Protestant culture. Part 1 defends the Mary's title Theotokos or "Mother of God." Here Staples interacts with the arguments of non-Catholic Christians Walter Martin and Eric Svensen. In my opinion, Svensen and more generally those associated with James White's Alpha and Omega Ministries (AOMIN) represent the best and most thoughtful critiques of specifically Catholic doctrine that divides Catholics and non-Catholic Christians. Hence we know that when Staples is critiquing their arguments, he is critiquing some of the best arguments against the claims of the Catholic Church available (and of course in my mind, doing it quite successfully). The second Part is devoted to defending the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Staples gives 8 arguments to demonstrate that the teaching is implicitly (if not explicitly) found in scripture. Much of this is based on the use of the phrase "Hail full of grace" in Luke 1:28. Staples argues convincingly that "full of grace" is a name given to Mary that signifies a reality within her. Like Abram to Abraham and Simon to Peter, the name change is more than simply a different title you call someone- it is an ontological reality. But there is one concern I have which is the translation of the Greek word *Kecharitomene*, which is what we translate as "full of grace." I foresee a Protestant being able to neutralize many of the arguments given by Staples simply by shedding doubt upon how exactly this phrase is translated. It seems reasonable for a Protestant to say "Look, I agree that many things about Mary you are claiming follow IF *Kecharitomene* is translated as "full of grace." But my bible translates it as "highly favored one" which is hardly a proper name. Furthermore, it seems that there are Greek scholars on both sides who claim that the phrase *Kecharitomene* is quite esoteric and difficult to translate. We just can't say for sure." This really seems to neutralize any argument a Catholic can make based on "full of grace" because it seems to kick the issue back to the level of scholarly understanding of Greek, which most apologists are not familiar with. Sure, I can do my quick google search to find a Greek scholar who agrees with me, but my Protestant interlocutor can do a google search to find a Greek scholar who is very skeptical about our ability to properly translate *Kecharitomene*. And the problem is that neither of us are qualified to evaluate the material that the other one gives us. So right now, I see a Protestant who is skeptical of how to properly translate *Kecharitomene* as being within his rights and thus, it seems to me difficult to make a case for the Immaculate Conception using Luke 1:28 as evidence. Clearly I would be extremely happy to be proven wrong about this, but in order to be fair and not hold a Protestant to a standard I would not hold myself to, I currently see this as being a slight weakness of this argument (as, unless I missed it, Staples never argued exactly why it is clear that *Kecharitomene* must be translated as "full of grace"). Now that being said, this second

Part also gives the best defense of Mary as the Ark of the New Covenant I have ever read. This is actually my personal favorite, and I have read Scott Hahn on this, but Staples is able to make some connections and insights with regard to this argument that I haven't even seen in Hahn. Quoting from Protestant theologian R.C. Sproul's excellent book "The Holiness of God," Staples illustrates how the Ark of the Covenant was so holy that one could not even touch it, lest they die. If the Ark of the Old Covenant is this holy, pristine, and sacred, how much more so the Ark of the New Covenant? This comparison is of course fleshed out in more detail. Staples also gives an argument for the Immaculate Conception based on Mary being "blessed." He makes the simple but profound insight that when St Elizabeth calls her blessed in Luke 1:42, that she calls both Mary and Jesus blessed. In other words, it isn't simply "the word" blessed that we are focusing on, but the use of the word to describe BOTH Mary and Jesus in the same breath. There is a parallel that is being drawn here, and Staples does an excellent job of explaining this. Staples also gives some excellent insights into the "Mary as new Eve" argument. In addition to the many parallels, he points out that while Eve received her human nature from only one person (Adam), so Jesus received his human nature from only one person (Mary) and that these are the only pairs of people in the history of the world for this to happen to. Yet, while in the former case the woman comes from the man, the latter case reverses this by having the man come from the woman. This is symbolic of Jesus and Mary reversing the curse of Adam and Eve. The beauty of these kinds of typological arguments is simply too astonishing to be mere coincidence or forcing some sort of parallel that isn't really there. Part II ends with Staples answering many common Protestant objections from scripture. In particular, he gives the best and most thorough counters to the "Mary gave the sin offering of two doves, thus she has committed sin" found in Luke 2:24 I have ever read. He points out that such a reading would necessitate a commitment to Jesus having sinned (which is of course absurd) as the sin offering is for both mother and child. He points out that this sin offering actually falls under the ritual and ceremonial laws of the Jewish people. This is primarily about ritual impurity, not sin. As we know, Jesus in the gospels reveals the true nature of the impurity laws, and that they point towards the inner dispositions of the heart, not the outward flowing of blood or whatever. Finally, Staples points out that just as Jesus fulfilled and was totally obedient to all the Jewish laws perfectly (e.g. circumcision) as well as being baptized because it was "fitting" (and NOT because he needed it), so too Mary was obedient to the law. Hence, there is simply no reason to think Luke 2:24 implies that Mary committed actual sin. Part III discusses Mary's virginity, both before, during, and after the birth of Our Lord. A good amount of positive evidence for this is given, including a careful study of "betrothal" in first century Judaism. In addition, there are arguments given to show that Joseph

would not have consummated his betrothal with Mary given that she was now the bride of the Holy Spirit. This is studied by observing that Joseph would have known his Jewish laws, which forbade a man to return to his wife after she has been with another e.g. the case of David and Absalom. It is an interesting argument and again, one deeply steeped in scripture and Jewish law. As is one of the themes of the book, Staples goes on to say why belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary matters. It restores a sense of the sacred; that is, things which are to be used for a sacred purpose must be treated as such. We have certainly lost such a sense in 21st century America, and the perpetual virginity of Mary is a good reminder of sacredness. All of the standard "brothers of Jesus" arguments are addressed. Staples shows that these supposed brothers cannot be uterine brothers by noting through other biblical evidence that some have a different mother and others a different father than Mary and Joseph, respectively. There is a fairly technical argument about the Greek word "until" found in Matthew 1:25, a verse many Protestants use to claim that Mary and Joseph had relations. Once again, Staples addresses an argument by Protestant Eric Svensen who claims that the Greek word for "until" necessarily implies the action the existence of the action it is modifying. Staples shows that this is patently mistaken. The doctrine of the Assumption is taken up in part IV. This is a shorter part with less time being spent arguing directly for this doctrine and more time spent answering objections. What makes this chapter unique is its careful look into the history of the doctrine. This is the one doctrine where all of a sudden, many Protestants become quite interested in whether or not such a teaching can be found in ancient antiquity and sure enough, since this one has a reputation as being "the latest Catholic doctrine found in history," Protestants are quick to note that it wasn't until at least 499 or so that we see any mention of it. Yet Staples shows reasons why this is false and why new evidence suggests that the doctrine was found much earlier (apart from biblical evidence, of course) than the 6th century. He also points out that this doctrine matters because of the hope it gives us in the promises of Christ; that is, Christ has actually fulfilled many of his promises through Mary and her bodily assumption into heaven. This was an interesting argument that is worth pondering. The last part discusses Mary as Mediatrix and co-redemptrix. What is interesting about this part is that it isn't focused so much on Mary per se, but rather on the Catholic doctrine of justification. This is because if one accepts and understands the Catholic doctrine of justification, Mary's role in salvation automatically follows. To that end, this part contains one of the best, clearest, and most succinct defenses of the Catholic doctrine of justification I have ever read. The careful distinctions are made as to what sense we use the terms like "merit" when discussing what we do and what Christ does. The distinctions between initial justification and graces merited after the initial justification is also made. These distinctions are quite

key, because it is the only way to reasonably make sense of all the varying biblical data that we have. As usual, the second half of this part is devoted to answering Protestant objections against the doctrine. The concluding chapter gives a nice discussion of King Solomon and his mother Bathsheba as found in scripture. In particular, Staples demonstrates that before Solomon was King, Bathsheba bows before him, yet after he becomes king, it is Solomon who bows before his mother. This and many other details are significant because it gives us a sense of what royalty was like back in Hebrew culture. We here in 21st century America have very little familiarity with what royalty is like. Yet given many of the biblical practices that we see Staples point out in this analysis, it is clear that the mother of the king is held in extremely high esteem. If Solomon, the fallen human so highly praised his own mother, how much more would the true King and perfect human Jesus praise his own mother? It follows that if we are to be imitators of Christ, we must also place his mother in such a high place of honor. There are several appendices in the book, most of them sharing quotes from early Church fathers concerning Mary. One appendix that I found very interesting was one defending Mary being free from any labor pains during birth. This was something I hadn't really thought much about before, but Staples shows why it is appropriate and how it is taught by the Church through tradition, the liturgy, and the bible. What is most fascinating about this is that Staples proves that if she was free from labor pains, then she must be free from original sin. This is of course because of the punishment given by Our Lord in Genesis. This book is simply a must own for any Catholic who wishes to defend the doctrines concerning Our Lady. It is saturated with biblical texts and analysis of those texts. Each part also looks at common Protestant objections. Very highly recommended.

Well written book about our Holy Mother.

An amazing book. Hard going but excellent. Contains everything you need from an historical and Biblical perspective to be fully equipped to understanding Marian Doctrine.

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