

## From the Summa Theologica by St. Thomas Aquinas

### **On the Virginitly of the Mother of God**

**Objection 6:** Further, it is written (Mat. 27:55,56): "*There were there*"---that is, by the cross of Christ---"*many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him; among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.*" Now this Mary who is called "*the mother of James and Joseph*" seems to have been also the Mother of Christ; for it is written (Jn. 19:25) that "*there stood by the cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*" Therefore it seems that Christ's Mother did not remain a virgin after His Birth.

On the contrary, It is written (Ezech. 44:2): "*This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it; because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it.*" Expounding these words, Augustine says in a sermon (De Annunt. Dom. iii): "What means this closed gate in the House of the Lord, except that Mary is to be ever inviolate? What does it mean that 'no man shall pass through it,' save that Joseph shall not know her? And what is this---'The Lord alone enters in and goeth out by it'---except that the Holy Ghost shall impregnate her, and that the Lord of angels shall be born of her? And what means this---'it shall be shut for evermore'---but that Mary is a virgin before His Birth, a virgin in His Birth, and a virgin after His Birth?"

I answer that, Without any hesitation we must abhor the error of Helvidius, who dared to assert that Christ's Mother, after His Birth, was carnally known by Joseph, and bore other children. For, in the first place, **this is derogatory to Christ's perfection:** for as He is in His Godhead the Only-Begotten of the Father, being thus His Son in every respect perfect, so it was becoming that He should be the Only-begotten son of His Mother, as being her perfect offspring.

**Secondly,** this error is **an insult to the Holy Ghost,** whose "shrine" was the virginal womb ["Sacrarium Spiritus Sancti" (Office of B. M. V., Ant. ad Benedictus, T. P.)], wherein He had formed the flesh of Christ: wherefore it was unbecoming that it should be desecrated by intercourse with man.

**Thirdly,** this is **derogatory to the dignity and holiness of God's Mother:** for thus she would seem to be most ungrateful, were she not content with such a Son; and were she, of her own accord, by carnal intercourse to forfeit that virginity which had been miraculously preserved in her.

**Fourthly,** it would be tantamount to an imputation of extreme presumption in Joseph, to assume that he attempted to violate her whom by the angel's revelation he knew to have conceived by the Holy Ghost.

We must therefore simply assert that the Mother of God, as she was a virgin in conceiving Him and a virgin in giving Him birth, did she remain a virgin ever afterwards.