

TH5/736 - Mary for Protestants

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Jason Byassee and Tim Perry

To attend to Mary of Nazareth is to attend to the whole of the Christian mystery. As St. John of Damascus said, “The name of the Theotokos expresses the whole mystery of God’s saving dispensation.” The medieval and early modern church fortified this claim with so many devotional practices that one can lose sight of her son. The Reformation rebelled against Marian theology and practice, so that Karl Barth could say “In the doctrine and worship of Mary there is disclosed the one heresy of the Roman Catholic Church which explains all the rest.” The ecumenical movement saw some movement back toward rapprochement between Protestants and Catholics, even as Rome promulgated such modern doctrines as her immaculate conception and bodily assumption into heaven.

In attending to Mary, we see the Christian faith in all its glory and in all its contentiousness. What do we make of Mary now, as Protestant thinkers and ministers? And how might this thought be expressed once again in liturgical and devotional practice?

This course introduces students to the biblical/exegetical and historical/theological place of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Christian thought and life. Particular attention is paid to Christological, ecclesiological, and eschatological elements and the close reading of primary texts.

### **Course competencies**

This course will equip students to

- (1) Enter sympathetically into moments in the history of Christian thought very different from the modern era. We will attend to the Christological, ecclesiological, and eschatological elements of Marian thought with close reading of primary texts.
- (2) Describe and practice Marian typological readings of the Old Testament and properly interpret key New Testament passages, as well as to trace major theological developments across patristic, medieval, Reformation, and modern eras.
- (3) Students will develop the ability to articulate the rationale for key moments in Marian doctrine, dogma, and practice in the history of the church and to adjudicate their applicability to today, perhaps even allowing ancient insight to criticize our contemporary.

### **Resources (Please pre-read before course begins)**

Sarah Jane Boss, *Mary: The Complete Resource* (New York: Continuum, 2007). *This book is unfortunately out of print and expensive to buy used. We will copy and post to Canvas the primary sources from the book and some 100 pages of essays.*

Jason Byassee, “What about Mary?: Protestants and Marian Devotion,” *Christian Century* (December 13, 2004), on canvas.

Tim Perry, “Behold the Handmaid of the Lord” Joseph Ratzinger on Mary,” in Tim Perry, ed., *The Theology of Benedict XVI: A Protestant Appreciation* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019), on canvas.

Joseph Ratzinger, *Daughter Zion: Meditations on the Church’s Marian Belief*, trans. John M McDermott, SJ (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1983). *Please purchase!*