

# Imprimatur

*Let it Be Printed*



## What's Up?

**Sundays** - Adult Faith Formation, starting at 5pm. Topics vary. 1/27 will be viewing "The Ratzinger Interview" with EWTN's Raymond Arroyo. This video was produced only months before Benedict became pope and covers many important issues facing the Church today. *A must see!*

**Wed/Thurs** - Living Your Catholic Faith, 7:30pm (Th) and 9:15am (Wed). Current topics on Catholic Social Teaching. Call Ted Meany for details on upcoming classes.

**Ash Wednesday** - I know, very strange that some of you still have Christmas lights on your house and Lent is starting next week, but alas: Wednesday, February 6th marks the beginning of Lent. It is a day of fasting and abstinence. While it isn't a Holy Day of Obligation, it is nonetheless a great day to find your "Ash" at Church.

**Parish Mission** - Week of March 2nd. Led by special guest, Fr. John Cihak. He received a doctorate in theology from the *Gregorianum* in Rome, is a Hans Urs von Balthasar scholar and adjunct professor at Mt. Angel Seminary. Call office for more information.

*Imprimatur* is a publication of St. Thomas and is Edited by Justin Nickelsen, Assistant for Religious Education.

## What is the *Imprimatur*?

Greetings! I was asked a few months ago if I would be interested in doing some part-time work here at the Parish in the realm of evangelization and education. I was honored with the request and hope to be able to offer the Parishioners here at St. Thomas classes in theology, Scripture, apologetics and more (all while running a small business and handling family needs).

But such work shouldn't and doesn't *just* take place in a class, and such a thought was the impetus for proposing the *Imprimatur* to Fr. Lappe. My hope is that the *Imprimatur* can be a regular means of education and Catholic information mingled with a bit of humor and sarcasm, including news from Rome, news from home, recommended books and more.

Many of you may be interested in the background of the title. Traditionally, theological writings received ecclesiastical approval—that is, approval from a bishop or church authority—before being published. A *nihil obstat* (Latin, "nothing stands in the way") was first provided, saying that there was nothing notably unorthodox in the book which would stand in the way of it being printed.

After this, an *imprimi potest* and/or *imprimatur* would be provided, that is, the formal permission for a book to be printed. So, *imprimatur* literally means "Let it Be Printed" (hence, the subtitle of this humble news letter).

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or submissions should be forwarded to me, Justin Nickelsen. My phone number and email address are below.

God Bless!

## The "Mother" of God?

For Catholics, January 1st was more than the mark of a "New Year". More importantly, it was the Feast of Mary, Mother of God—a Holy Day of Obligation. But it wasn't *just* a Feast to celebrate the Blessed Mother. Like all things "Mary", this Feast pointed to *Christ!*

When asked why we call Mary the Mother of God, many Catholics will offer the basic Logical Syllogism: A) Mary is the Mother of Jesus, B) Jesus is God, C) *Ergo*, Mary is the "Mother of God". While this answer has its strengths, we must remember two things. First, this is only the *beginning* of a "good answer". Second, the Syllogism has a tendency to say more about Mary and less about *Jesus*. These two points are important to remember when we are sharing our Catholic Faith with our Protestant brothers and sisters.

Non-Catholic Christians *rightly* place their emphasis on "Jesus", and *anything* that even *seems* to get in the way is seen as a distraction—something that takes the proper place of Christ in the life of the Christian. What we want to show them is that the title, "Mary,"

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## Pope Benedict, Hostile to Science

Last week Catholics around the world learned that the Pope—and the Church in general—is "hostile towards science". At least that was the claim of some professors and students at Europe's largest institution of higher learning: La Sapienza University. The University was at one time a Catholic school. Founded in 1303 by Pope Boniface VIII, control was transferred to the State (Italy) in 1870.

The University had asked the Holy Father to speak there this last week, but the Vatican cut off the engagement after 67 professors and some students

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## Holy Quotes

"My Soul is Restless, Until it Rests In Thee"

— Saint Augustine of Hippo

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## Pope, Continued from Previous Page...

signed a letter that objected to the visit stating that the Holy Father was “hostile to science”—a claim which is often made towards the Church and Catholics in general. They threatened to launch a stormy protest, disrupting the speech with loud music and heckling.

After the cancellation, Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the Pope’s vicar for Rome, invited virtually anyone and everyone to come together in solidarity at the Vatican—an event that the media titled “Pope Day”. Almost 200,000 people crammed St. Peter’s Square and tens of thousands more joined in via video links in Milan and Verona. Among the crowds were students of the La Sapienza and other universities, professors, Catholics and non-Catholics. Some who were not Catholic had come making their own protest: they were angered that an institution of higher learning, where civility and ideas are to be discussed and debated with an open mind, could silence the free speech of one individual with whom only a minority had a problem (there are over 4,500 professors and 130,000 students at the University, and only 67 of the professors had signed the document).

The Holy Father decided to deliver the speech that he was going to give to the crowds at the University. The fact that the gathering at the Vatican was substantially larger than those which were to be expected at the University isn’t the only thing ironic: “I am very much connected to the university environment, which was my world for many years, by my love for the search for truth, through debated, frank dialogue and respect for other’s positions. This is also the mission of the Church, charged with faithfully following Jesus, the Author of life, truth and love.”

I have often found it ironic that many of those who preach tolerance, free-speech, and love are often those who wish to silence the voice of Christians, especially Catholics. This seems especially prevalent here in the Northwest. How many people are sitting around Starbucks right now with a double-tall hazelnut Latte in hand discussing the various debated political issues of the day? Yet put a Catholic who loves his/her Faith around the same table and the tolerance level minimizes quickly.

The Church has never been “anti-Science”. Consider paragraph 159 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

“Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth. Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God. The humble and persevering investigator of the secrets of nature is being led, as it were, by the hand of God in spite of himself, for it is God, the conserver of all things, who made them what they are.”

Perhaps the protests at La Sapienza University (which, ironically, means “wisdom”) and the subsequent cancellation of the speech were providential: the Church was made to look good and the University looked like intolerant, intellectualist hypocrites. So much for the “free exchange of ideas” at a University.

## Mary, continued from previous page...

Mother of God” actually upholds the identity and dignity of Christ!

For the first few centuries of Christendom the Church was busy responding to Christ’s question: “who do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:15). Was Jesus just a “great man”? Was He “God”? Both? How do we understand the Trinity? The Church, endowed with Christ-given authority, was pretty busy responding to these questions and many of the theological distortions of various heresies that popped up during this time.

One of the heresies in the early Church is referred to as “Nestorianism”. Nestorius couldn’t philosophically or theologically reconcile how God could be born, suffer and die—it wasn’t “God like” for Him to do that. Yet he knew that in *some way* Jesus was both “God” and “man” and that He *was* born and *did* suffer and die. But saying, for instance, that “God died on the cross” didn’t seem right to him.

To reconcile this apparent discrepancy, Nestorius said that Jesus was *two persons* with *two natures*: a divine person with a divine nature and a human person with a human nature. Passages in Script-

-ture which have Jesus being born, suffering, dying, etc. were then to be attributed to the *human person*, Jesus Christ and not the Second Person of the Trinity

In 431AD the Council of Ephesus declared the Dogma of the *Theotokos*—The “God-Bearer”, or as we refer to it today, “Mary, Mother of God.” In doing so, the Church clearly and emphatically defended the orthodox identity of Christ—one held by virtually all Protestants today. If Mary is the “mother of God”, as the Church dogmatically declared, then Jesus *must* be a single *Divine Person*—i.e., “God”. Mary didn’t give birth to a “nature”, but a *person*; a *Divine Person*, Jesus Christ. While she didn’t supply Him with his divine nature, she *did* supply him with his human nature. Thus we say today that Jesus is a “one Divine Person with two natures: a human nature and a divine nature”.

What do we take away from this?

In discussing this aspect of our Catholic Faith to Protestants, we have to remember to let them know that if Mary *isn’t* the Mother of God, then Jesus isn’t God. When we say that Mary is the “Mother of God” we are *protecting and defending the identity of JESUS!*

On a side note, Nestorius was reconciled with the Church later in his life and we can rightly see a lesson in this: *he found it more important to be in line with the thought of the Church of Christ than to continue propagating his “own ideas”*. Do we have any “ideas” that are not in accord with the teachings of Christ or His Church? If so, perhaps Nestorius could teach us a lesson in humility.

## Book Shelf



Aidan Nichols,  
*Christendom  
Awake—On  
Reenergizing The  
Church in Culture*

An admirable defense of orthodox faith that transcends the argumentativeness of most contemporary apologetics material.

Nichols calls Catholics to reclaim the culture in science, art, philosophy, economics, etc. A must read!