There is an old story about a workman on scaffolding high above the nave of a cathedral who looked down and saw a woman praying before a statue of Mary. As a joke, the workman whispered, "Woman, this is Jesus." The woman ignored him. The workman whispered again, more loudly: "Woman, this is Jesus." Again, the woman ignored him. Finally, he said aloud, "Woman, don't you hear me? This is Jesus." At this point the woman looked up at the crucifix and said, "Be still now, Jesus, I'm talking to your mother."

Why do we Catholics treasure Marian devotions and doctrines that our non-Catholic brothers and sisters do not? It is because, I think, the Catholic Church is trying to tell the full story, to proclaim the full gospel.

But isn't the gospel all about Christ and what he did and taught? Yes and no. The gospel is about Christ in the same way that the story of the Fall is about Adam. "For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:22). That is why we call Christ the new
Adam. But as soon as we say that, we become aware of a missing link. The story of the Fall is not only the story of Adam but the story of Adam and Eve. If Jesus is the new Adam, who then is the new Eve? Mary is the new Eve. Just as the full story of our Fall cannot be told without Eve, so also the full story of our Redemption cannot be told without Mary. There are many revealing parallels between the old Adam and Eve on the one hand and the new Adam and Eve, Jesus and Mary, on the other. Here are some of them.

- In the old order, the woman (Eve) came from the body of the man (Adam), but in the new order the man (Jesus) comes from the body of the woman (Mary).
- In the old order, the woman (Eve) first disobeyed God and led the man (Adam) to do the same, in the new order the woman (Mary) first said "Yes" to God (Luke 1:38) and raised her son Jesus to do likewise.
- Adam and Eve had a good time together disobeying God, Jesus and Mary suffered together doing God's will. The sword of sorrow pierced their hearts equally (John 19:34; Luke 2:35b).

- In the old order Adam and Eve shared immediately in the resulting consequences and punishments of the Fall. In the new order, similarly, both Jesus and Mary share immediately in the resulting consequences and blessings of the Redemption, the fullness of life with God; Jesus through the Ascension and Mary through the Assumption.

The doctrine of the Assumption teaches that at the end of her earthly existence, the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken up (assumed), body and soul, into heaven. That means, therefore, that there are two human bodies we know to be in heaven with God at this time: the human body of Jesus and that of Mary. In this doctrine we see the collaboration of man and woman in the work of our salvation all the way from the Fall to the Redemption to sharing in the fruit of Redemption in heaven. Without
the Assumption to balance the Ascension, the man Jesus alone without the woman Mary would be enjoying the fullness of salvation with God and we would be telling only a part of the story. The Assumption is the ultimate proof of the equality of man and woman before God. It also shows the sacredness and eternal destiny of the human body, including the woman's body which today is sadly desecrated by pornography and the sex trade. The Assumption enables us to tell the full story, the full gospel that salvation is for all Men, male and female, and for the whole Man, body and soul.

Marian doctrine and devotion, properly understood and practiced, does not lead believers away from, but rather more deeply into, the mystery of Christ. The woman in prayer who thinks that Jesus should keep still because she is talking with his mother has lost sight of the perfect harmony of wills and hearts between Mary and Jesus which we see most clearly in the Wedding Feast at Cana where Mary commands us: "Do whatever he (Jesus) tells you" (John 2:5).