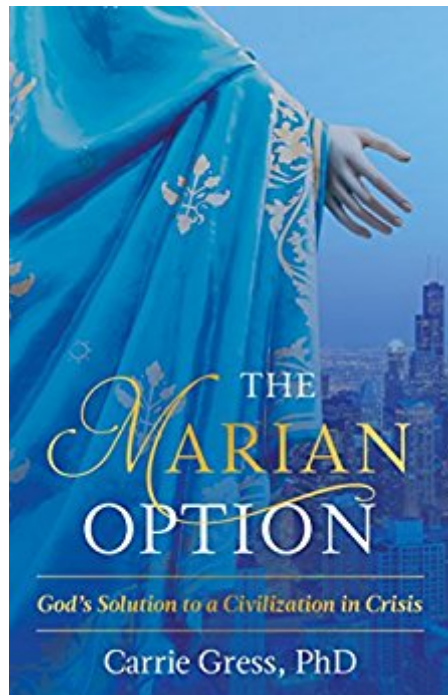




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# The Marian Option: God's™ Solution To A Civilization In Crisis



## Synopsis

How can we save civilization? is the question many people worry about today. As the world descends into chaos, Christians are thinking deeply about how to stem the tide. Many options and suggestions have been presented to deal with Christian persecution and cultural decadence, but none can hold a candle to *The Marian Option*. Dr. Carrie Gress provides a thoroughly researched bird's eye view of the significant cultural and military events mediated through Mary on behalf of her spiritual children. From miraculous victories to the soaring heights of culture, you have never seen Mary like this before. Until now, books on the Virgin Mary have generally focused upon one apparition or various theological elements of this mysterious woman. But the scope of *The Marian Option* is far greater. Drawing from a vast array of dogmas, Vatican approved apparitions, and writings of the saints, Dr. Gress has pulled together the remarkable story of Mary's overwhelming influence and intercession. Using history, sound theology, and a detective's eye, Gress brings to light the fascinating details of Mary's role in major geopolitical shifts. The reader will see how instrumental the Mother of God was in: Freeing Spain from Islamic occupation Igniting the largest mass conversion to Catholicism in history Leading an unassuming priest to bring down the world's most powerful empire without firing a shot Stomping out heresies and false teachings from the Church Beyond the battlefield, *The Marian Option* also highlights the link between Marian devotion and high culture, showing how creativity and the arts—painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and literature—all flourish when devotion to her is strong. This enthralling chronicle of Mary's intercession makes clear that Christ's mother is indeed the most powerful woman in the world, and the answer for how we can save the world and bring us back into her Son's heart. Not only is she keenly interested in assisting Christians, she has the ability to do so, even in the face of the gravest odds. We just have to ask. *The Marian Option* will leave you with a new perspective on the Blessed Mother and a renewed hope in the future of the Church and the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Reassuring book examining Our Lady's numerous appearances and intervention in human history. Reminds us that we are not alone and she is by our side. Very well written and worth knowing about this spiritual "option".... beautiful cover too!

A must read for everyone!

The title of course brings to mind Rod Dreher's "The Benedict Option." Gress is quick to explain that the Marian Option is not offered as a criticism of Dreher's thesis. Rather, what she terms the Marian Option is a fundamental orientation compatible with all schools of authentic Catholic spirituality and all of the so-called "options" for addressing our civilization's crises. Mary is, after all, the icon of the Church - the corporate body as well as each individual soul. What God has done in her and through her, he wishes to do in each of us...and that is how civilization will be renewed. This book is about intimacy with the Trinity, about serving Christ with the heart of His Mother. It is about holiness, and how Jesus entrusted our growth therein to His Mother. Dr. Gress argues - quite successfully in my opinion - that cultures thrive when the Blessed Mother is venerated. She deftly points out how as western culture's veneration of Mary deepened, so too did its esteem of womanhood - motherhood in particular. Men, instead of regarding women as trophies or objects of gratification, were instead led to ponder the mystery at the heart of every woman and to embrace men's God-given mission of laying down their lives in service to wife and children. Women, in turn, recognize the incredible dignity with which the Creator has endowed them - their unique genius for cooperating with God to

bring new life (both individual and cultural) into the world and nurture it to adulthood. When Mary's place in salvation history and our devotional lives is forgotten - or worse yet, rejected - then Christian culture begins a process of deformation: the exaltation of the "I" in place of the "we," marital breakdown, contraception, abortion, moral relativism, etc. We see the results all around us. The answer? We must accept Jesus' gift from the Cross, Mary, and allow her to mother us into a life of radical discipleship. Cultural change always begins small - look no further than Mary and Joseph in the cave of the Nativity...or Mary and the small cluster of disciples awaiting Pentecost...or Mary and Juan Diego and the conversion of the Americas...or Mary and Cardinal Wojtyla behind the Iron Curtain. Mary is always there, waiting to introduce us, as she has countless millions of other disciples, into deeper intimacy with her Son, greater receptivity to the stirrings of the Spirit, and heroic obedience to the Father. There is a great deal to love about this book but at the top of the list, at least for me, is the way Dr. Gress explains the theology of consecrating oneself to Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She pulls together insights from saints such as Bernadine of Siena, Louis Marie de Montfort, Maximilian Kolbe, and John Paul II, as well those of theologians like Andr   Feuillet and Johann Roten. (My "to read" list has grown as a result.) I especially appreciated her discussion of Mary's relationship to each Person of the Trinity; it is extremely well done. At just over 200 pages, this book is not so thick as to intimidate. As soon as one begins reflecting upon what he or she has read, however, the scope of the discussion and weighty insights give it the feel of a much longer work. The Rosary is a subject woven throughout, but Dr. Gress also discusses Marian apparitions, devotional items like the Miraculous Medal and Brown Scapular, as well as drawing a number of historical connections of which I was unaware. (Fulton J. Sheen fans likely know of the connection between Fatima and Islam, but who knew that the same was true of Lourdes? "The Marian Option" is filled with these kind of historical gems.) There is a great deal of buzz about this book and deservedly so. "The Marian Option: God's Solution to a Civilization in Crisis" is a gorgeous book, both inside and out. (Seriously, online images cannot do the cover justice!) I heartily recommend picking up a copy and allowing the Lord to renew the fire to live your vocation.

Dr. Gress has done a great service to the world by presenting Mary as the solution for our society's many ills--and backing up that proposal with irrefutable evidence from both history and the Bible. But this book does far more than that: it also serves as a friendly introduction for all readers (including those who are not Catholic) to the Virgin as a person. And the book is unique in that it is not aggressive or apologetical in its presentation; it is eminently approachable and not overtly

theological. That means that this book is for everyone, but those who have read *The Benedict Option* by Rod Dreher will find that this book also serves as a great sequel (a supplement, not an objection or answer) to Dreher's tome.

Rod Dreher's book *The Benedict Option* certainly touched a nerve. Christians started talking volubly about how to stem societal chaos. A number of new books came out in response, many with critiques and their own solutions. *The Marian Option* is also a response to Dreher's book, but not a refutation. It is part history lesson, part explanation of Mary's role in Catholicism and the world, and part suggestion for how to live the "Marian option." Carrie Gress suggests that turning to Mary simultaneously with any other "options" you may care to practice is a way to affect radical personal and societal transformation. Tracing Mary's intercession throughout history, Gress argues that venerating Mary makes cultures flourish. I enjoyed the book and found a couple of concepts that were eye opening. First of all, I was fascinated by Maximilian Kolbe's insights into Mary as the Immaculate Conception and what that meant about her relationship with the Holy Spirit. It's been a long time since I've come across a concept that I pondered the way I did this. Secondly, Gress's proposition that we are living in "anti-Mary" times was revelatory. I knew all the pieces she discussed but hadn't seen them through that particular focus. *The Marian Option* is well written and interesting. Although Gress is making a case for Marian devotion, you could certainly read it simply for the history and theological insights. Though you may, as I have, find yourself dusting off your rosary and leaning on Mary for her motherly intercession.

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