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49 Though Christians have sometimes gone to extremes in devotion to Mary, we should not miss out on what is biblical and spiritually healthful about her place in our faith. We could miss out on a central part of our faith, and we would miss out on the special gift that Mary's femininity brought to the world, and brings to us today. First, we need to see that God used a faithful woman in a uniquely feminine way in his plan. Making sure to recognize and ponder Mary's place in the story helps us to see God's work through both men and women, both made in his image, and to rejoice that we have a mother of our faith as well as the fathers of our faith. We see God in the Blessed Virgin, a window, an icon. Second, as we ponder her faithfulness, we pray that God will enable us to trust him fully and be found faithful in our day. Third, we see Mary continue following Jesus, remaining close to him even at the cross. She stayed with him not only because he was her son but also because she was faithful to the Lord her God. She had already learned that God was faithful, even when she didn't know exactly what he was doing. Finally, she served as an integral part of the Jerusalem church at Pentecost and in its early formation. She was truly faithful from the beginning to the end of her part of the story. She gave birth to Jesus and was there for the birth of the Church, the body of Christ. We give God thanks and praise, just as she did. As we celebrate this feast, it is good to call Mary blessed. It's good to praise "the fruit of her womb," Jesus. It is good to glorify God for her unique role as the Mother of God. It is good to love her and to see her as our mother in faith. Is it not good to give thanks to the Lord, for as Mary said, "his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation?" Since today is a Feast Day, many Christians "break the fast" of Lent. In some traditions, the pastor has to provide a "dispensation" for the people to be able to feast, instead of observing the fast. Anglicans don't have pastoral dispensations; for those who would like special pastoral advice, feast away! Photo of the Hagia Sophia by: Engin Akurt on Unsplash. As someone who grew up evangelical Protestant, I always viewed the doctrinal distinctives of the Church of Rome with suspicion. To me, one of the stranger elements of Roman piety and practice was devotion to the Virgin Mary. I always believed Mary was important and special. She miraculously conceived our Lord, after all! However, because... On August 15th, Christians worldwide celebrate the Feast of St. Mary the Virgin, Mother of Our Lord, honoring the remarkable life of the mother of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is a joyous occasion filled with reverence, thanksgiving, and reflection on Mary's profound role in the salvation story. The Life of St. Mary The life...