

Any study of Jesus and His Church is sure to find the Blessed Virgin Mary close by. The role of the Blessed Virgin Mary is central to both what Catholics believe and how they live their faith. Yet at the same time, she is often the most misunderstood and criticized aspect of Catholicism.

When the time had come for God to redeem the world, God sent His angel to tell Mary, that she would conceive the Son of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit. While not fully understanding how this could come about, the Blessed Virgin freely consented to God's will for her life to become the mother of God.¹ Through her yes to God's plan, Mary undid Eve's no to God's plan.

Through the incarnation, Mary became the mother of God. While she did not contribute anything to Jesus' divinity she did give flesh to the Son of God. Since Jesus' humanity and Divinity are perfectly united² and a division cannot be introduced between them, it must be the case that the one who gave Jesus flesh is the mother of both His humanity and Divinity.

To prepare Mary to be the Mother of God, she was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her conception in her mother's womb. This Immaculate Conception is hinted at by the Angel Gabriel when he comes to announce that Mary will be the mother of God. In calling Mary "full of grace"³ he suggests that Mary has a level of sanctity which would simply be impossible with original sin. After all anyone who has any stain of sin can not truly be called "full of grace." Since the Blessed Mother did not sin, and bodily decay is a consequence of sin, the Church teaches that Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven at the end of her life makes perfect sense.

Set aside from the foundation of the world to be the Mother of God, our Blessed Mother forwent the good of marital relations for a higher good and remained a virgin for her entire life. While the scriptures make mention of Jesus' brothers and sisters, the Greek word for brothers and sisters, *Adelphos*, has many meanings ranging from blood relatives to someone who shares a homeland and thus does not disprove Mary's virginity. In fact, when Jesus entered Mary's womb, her womb became sacred and it would be unfitting for anyone else to dwell in a place where God dwelled.

Mary was entrusted with the only Son of God, but her mission did not end with the passion, death, and resurrection of her son. While hanging on the cross, Jesus gave His mother to St. John and to each of us.⁴ Just as Eve was the mother of all the living, Mary is now the mother of all those who live as disciples of Christ and is venerated as the greatest among the saints.

Catholics do not worship Mary but do turn to her and ask her intercession, just as we ask our earthly friends to pray for us. This devotion to Mary is one of a child running to his mother. Just as we honor for our earthly mother,⁵ so we honor our heavenly mother and just as we turn to our earthly mothers for our earthly needs, we turn to our Blessed Mother.

Mary was given the unique role of being the Mother of God and the Mother of all Christians. As the mother of God, she provided for her Son, Jesus Christ, experiencing all of the events of Jesus' life and all the joys, sufferings and sorrows that came with His life. As our mother, she extends her motherly care to each of us and intercedes on our behalf to her Son and

¹ Luke 1:26-38

² See the section on Jesus Christ

³ Luke 1:28

⁴ John 19:26

⁵ The 4th Commandment

so Catholics should turn to her daily in prayer maintaining the mother-child relationship she has with every Christian.