

## Mary and Us

**What role does Mary the mother of Jesus play in your life today, if any? Who is she to you?**

Jesus, who gave us the eminent gift of his Mother even as he was dying on the cross: “Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother’” (John 19:27).

Saint John Paul II reminds us, “From the time when ‘the disciple took her to his own home,’ the mystery of the spiritual motherhood of Mary has been actualized boundlessly in history. Since Mary is *the mother of God she is also* the mother of us all, her care for the life of man is universal”.

We can all understand the universal care of our Mother in Heaven for us or, at the very least, the longing for that spiritual motherly care in our lives. The Blessed Mother’s love and care is especially healing for those whose own biological mothers were unwilling or unable to provide authentic self-giving love.

Mother Mary loves us all with a pure, selfless, and steadfast motherly love. She tirelessly calls to our hearts and souls. Her utmost aim is to bring us to her Son.

Mother Mary's care is rooted in the Holy Spirit. Saint John Paul II said, "The care of a mother embraces her child totally. Mary's motherhood has its beginning in her motherly care for Christ. In Christ, at the foot of the cross, she accepted John, and in John she accepted all of us totally. Mary embraces us all with special solicitude in the Holy Spirit. For as we profess in our Creed, he is 'the giver of life.' It is he who gives the fullness of life, open towards eternity".

In certain places, the Mother's presence is felt in a particularly vivid way. These places sometimes radiate their light over a great distance and draw people from afar. Their radiance may extend over a diocese, a whole nation, or at times over several countries and even continents. These places are the Marian sanctuaries or shrines.

In all these places, that unique testament of the Crucified Lord is wonderfully actualized: in them man feels that he is entrusted and confided to Mary; he goes there in order to be with her, as with his Mother, he opens his heart to her and speaks to her about everything: he "takes her to his own home," that is to say, he brings her into all his problems, which at times are difficult. His own problems and those of others. The problems of the family, of societies, of nations and of the whole of humanity.

These are wonderful and touching words to ponder in our hearts. We can certainly go to Mary with our own concerns. We can sit on her lap and

pour out our hearts to her like a child would sit on his or her mother's lap. She will listen. She's our Mother. We should take some time to meditate upon Mary's "dwelling places" in our lives. Is our heart her "dwelling place"? Can it be?

## MOTHER MARY IN OUR LIVES

Do we take time to think about the Blessed Mother? Life is busy. But we should carve a bit more time to learn more about her and ponder her life through Scripture, through prayer, and the writings of the saints. When we are in need of peace in our own life, do we call on the Blessed Mother, seeking her intercession?

A prayer from Mother Teresa says, "Mary, Mother of Jesus, be Mother to me now." We certainly need Mary now.

We might ask ourselves in what area of our lives is God asking us to trust Him now? Ask Mary to be Mother to you and lead you closer to the Sacred Heart of her Son! She will.

For many today, Mary is a source of disagreement, scandal, non-significant...

Let's look more closely at the role that Mary plays as the Mother of all Christians.

There is a fascinating aspect of Mary, the Mother of God (a title that the Catholic Church formally bestowed on Mary at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431, almost 1600 years ago), in light of her appearance in the Gospels. When the Archangel Gabriel greets Mary at the Annunciation (see Luke 1:26-38), his greeting of “Hail...” is the only instance in the entire Bible – between all of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament – in which an angel praises a human being.

This is no insignificant factor. In all of the other angelic interactions, there is a message delivered to someone, or some act is undertaken, but they are all devoid/~~wanting~~ of ~~laud~~/praise (none are praised in scripture in the way Mary was).

In other words, the scriptural implication is that Mary is someone of great significance: she is informed not once, but *twice*, that she has found “favor” with the Almighty. If Mary is celebrated in God’s eyes, it is probably safe for her to be celebrated in man’s eyes as well. As such, the role that Mary plays in salvation history is rhetorically unquestionable.

Honoring and admiring – are far removed from “worshipping” or “idolizing” – Mary for the inspirational role that she plays in the Christian life. After all, Mary was the only figure to remain unquestionably, undeniably, unwaveringly, fearlessly faithful to Jesus

Christ from the moment of his conception until the culmination of his earthly ministry.

Thus, her model discipleship has garnered her, the position as the Mother of all Christians, mother of us all. And Mother Mary wants nothing greater than to show us – and inherently draw us closer to her glorious Son and [her own] Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Mary's role in scripture**

We first meet Mary in the bible as a young woman set apart by God, visited by the angel Gabriel who announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Son of God, our Savior. Her role had, in fact, been foreshadowed in the Old Testament book of Genesis (Gen. 3:15). The prophet Isaiah referred to this momentous event and even prophesied his name to Emmanuel (Is. 7:14). Matthew recounts the nativity as fulfillment of this prophecy (Matt. 1:22-23).

Mary's initial role was then expanded to include caring for Jesus in all the ways that a mother cares. She nourished Him materially, seeing that He had enough to eat, that He washed his face and hands before eating, doing all the things that mothers do for their children.

## **Mary's Role as Intercessor**

When Jesus began His ministry, Mary's role was given a new dimension. At Cana as her Son was attending a wedding, she interceded for the celebrants in the matter of wine. And because of her quiet, simple faith in Him, Jesus heard and answered with His first miracle.

Certainly, Mary had a very special relationship with Jesus and this is what we Catholics rely on as we take our concerns and petitions to her. We do not pray to Mary as we do to God, rather we ask her to intercede for us with Jesus, believing that her special relationship with Jesus is effective in calling forth God's response to our needs.

We know that Jesus remains the one mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 1:15-16). He is the source of all God's grace and salvation. But we also learn in 1 Peter 2:9 that He calls the faithful to share in his priesthood, a fact which author Alan Schreck (Catholic and Christian) says allows and enables us to pray to God for each other. We share in this work.

Mary shares in this work. As she intercedes for us, she encourages us to look to Him, listen to Him, and obey Him. Even as she did at Cana, Mary directs our attention to her Son today as she appears to the faithful all over the world.

## **Mary as Our Mother**

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaimed to Mary in her greeting, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1:42-43)

The Holy Spirit inspired her to recognize that Mary was to be the mother of God. And with this inspired proclamation, Mary’s motherhood is presented to us in all its greatness.

But God was not just satisfied to put Mary apart from us as the mother of God. As Jesus, her Son, hung in agony on the cross, He gave Mary, His mother, as a mother to all the faithful, symbolized by John, “the disciple whom he loved.” (John 19:26-27) With this beautiful act of love, Mary became our spiritual mother.

We understand that nothing Mary does or can do in herself can give us salvation. But we recognize that because of her special relationship to Jesus and her “motherhood” to the faithful, we should respect and honor her. We also appreciate that part of Mary’s greatness lies in her insistence that we understand and draw nearer in love and obedience to her Son Jesus.

How hurt Jesus must be as He hears and sees people ignoring His mother, downgrading His mother from her God-given roles, even insulting His mother! How would we feel if someone did the same to our human mother, who loved and raised us, cared for us and comforted us?

Since we are unworthy to be in the Presence of God, Our Lady has been given the task of preparing us to encounter Him, She will do spiritually what any mother here would do physically to obtain the best for her child.

But our Lady is not an ordinary mother, She is the most perfect of mothers because She is the Mother of God, She is infinitely full of Grace, sufficient to help everyone who comes to her and accept Her as mother.

By the action of the Holy Spirit, Mary became the tree of Life. The fruit of this tree is first of all Our Lord Who is the bread of life. As we accept Christ into our lives and live a Christian life fulfilling the promises made in our Baptism, we become the children of God who by precedence have the same spiritual mother as His Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord

So we are the children of the new Eve, we have been conceived in the spiritual womb of Mary which is Her Immaculate Heart.

No wonder Our Lord said, you must be borne again: "You must become a child of Mary".



The Holy Spirit begets the children of God in Mary, He did that first with Our Lord, and we are also children of God, children of Mary.

So this great privilege of being the Mother of the children of God has been granted to Our Lady, and if we want to be part of this heavenly family, we have God as our Father and Mary as our Mother.

## Conclusion

**What role does Mary play in your life?** Mary can be an example of how to say “yes” to God, how to be a good mother and she can also be a spiritual mother to us all.

Christians need to find common ground before looking for differences.

The differences, the “lines in the sand,” are evident, but if unity is our goal, we must rely on the implications of John 17:21, “that [we] may all be one...”

Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of All Christians, pray for us to be steadily united as brothers and sisters of Christ your Son! Amen.