

Mary, Mediatrix of Grace

As Jesus hung upon the wood of the Cross, he gave us one of the most beautiful gifts in the Church - Mary as our Blessed Mother. From the Cross he said to her, "Woman, there is your son." He was talking about the Apostle John, who stood by the Cross with Mary. Then he said to John, "There is your mother"

Ref. : (Jn 19:26-27).

These words of Jesus were not meant for John alone, but for every one of his followers. The young apostle was the only disciple to be with Jesus until the end. He represents each one of us who could not be there in person.

Love for Mary has always been a sign of true Christianity. All of the saints have loved her more than anyone, except for God, of course. Why? Because she was so greatly loved by God, who chose her to be the Mother of his Son. Saint Gregory the Great, a Pope of the sixth century, revealed the early Church's devotion to Mary in these words: "If anyone does not love the Holy Mother of God, he is far from God."

Mary's Role in Our Salvation

Mary's birth was an event of great joy for the world because it meant that the Savior was soon to arrive! Every year, on September 8, the Church celebrates her birthday with this prayer: *Your birth, O Virgin Mother of God, proclaims joy to the world, for from you arose the glorious Sun of Justice, Christ Our Lord. (Liturgy of the Hours)*

These words remind us of Mary's role in our salvation. She was to make it possible for Jesus to come among us as a man. Through her cooperation with God's plan we were saved by the life, death, and Resurrection of her Son.

She conceived Jesus and gave birth to the Savior in Bethlehem. But that was not the end of her work for us. As Jesus grew and began preaching the Good News of salvation, Mary continued to devote herself to him. She listened to his teachings and put them into practice. She became the perfect disciple of Jesus and gave us an example to follow.

Mary looked after the needs of Jesus, and she does the same thing for us today, as she looks down upon us from Heaven. She prays for us and asks Jesus to give us all that we need. Sometimes the **Virgin Mary** is called the channel (or **Mediatrix**) **of all grace**. This is because she is the Mother of Jesus, and without Jesus we would have no grace. Since Jesus has come to us by being conceived and born of Mary, we can say that all grace comes through her. Pope Pius XI (d. 1939) summed up this teaching in a few simple words: *"Everything comes to us from Almighty God through the hands of Our Lady."*

When the sad events of Jesus' suffering and death occurred, faithful Mary refused to abandon him. She courageously stood near him as he hung upon the Cross, offering her sorrow to the Father. She united her heart with Jesus' in asking God to accept his death for the forgiveness of our sins.

After the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven, Mary stayed with the apostles as they prayed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. From then until she went to Heaven, Our Lady was a loving mother to the members of the Church. She reminded them about Jesus and told them stories from his childhood. Some of these are recorded for us in the Gospels of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke. We call Mary the ***Mother of the Church***. Just as she was the mother of Christ's human body, so now she is the Mother of his spiritual body, the Church.

Mary truly was full of grace. As a sign of God's special love for her he bestowed on her special privileges. Mary is the only human besides Jesus who was always free from original sin. Secondly, Mary's perpetual virginity is another privilege God bestowed on her. Only Mary can claim the title of Mother and Virgin. We celebrate the feast of the Assumption, another of Mary's privileges, in which she was taken up into Heaven body and soul. The Church maintains that since Mary was free from sin she would also be preserved from the consequences of sin. And, finally, Mary has been given the exalted title of Mother of God since she truly is the Mother of Jesus, who is God.

Let Mary Be Your Mother

Jesus never forced anyone to become Christian. He wanted people to choose freely to follow him. In the same way, Mary never forces us to live as her children. She wants us freely to ask her to take care of us.

There is a special way to ask Our Lady to our Mother. It is called Total Consecration to Mary. This means that we give ourselves - body and soul, all that we have and are - to her. We do this so that she can use these things to make us like Jesus. This consecration was used by many saints, especially Saint Louis De Montfort (18th century) and Saint Maximilian Kolbe (d. 1941). They said that it is the easiest way to become a good Christian and a saint. If you want Mary to be your Mother, consecrate yourself to her every day by using this simple prayer: *Accept me, O Mary, as your own child, and take charge of my salvation. (Saint Alphonsus Liguori, d. 1787)*

We believe that the Blessed Mother of God, the New Eve, Mother of the Church, continues in Heaven her maternal role with regard to Christ's members, cooperating with the birth and growth of divine life in the souls of the redeemed. *Credo of the People of God*

Words to know: Mediatrix of Grace; Mother of the Church.