

Mary of Nazareth: A Catholic Perspective

WHAT THE CATHOLIC FAITH BELIEVES ABOUT MARY IS BASED ON WHAT IT BELIEVES ABOUT CHRIST, AND WHAT IT TEACHES ABOUT MARY ILLUMINES IN TURN ITS FAITH IN CHRIST. —CCC 487

What is Mary's Place in God's Plan?

From all eternity God wanted to enlist the free cooperation of a creature to bring about the Incarnation of His son.

TRINITY

The Father chooses Mary, who gives the Son His human nature by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mary shared in the deepest communion of life with the Trinity possible for us on earth.

CHURCH

Christ gives Mary to the Church to be her mother in the order of grace. She intercedes for the Church and models the perfection for which the Church's members strive.



PASCHAL MYSTERY

Mary stands at the foot of the cross, offering her Son to the Father in the obedience of faith. Sharing his sacrifice, she also shares in His glorification, since she is assumed into heaven.

DIGNITY OF HUMAN PERSON

God made himself dependent on Mary's free response to His invitation. She becomes, by His descent, the Mother of God and is raised above the angels.

Does it detract from God's power that he often relies on a free response in faith from human beings? What does it show us about God's respect for his creation and the importance of our faith response?

Mary is Theotokos (Mother of God)

The one whom she conceived was the second person of the Trinity. Hence the church confesses that Mary is truly the "Mother of God." Theotokos (Counsel of Ephesus 431 AD)



Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant

Many scripture passages in the Old Testament describing the Ark of the Covenant, a central piece of the Jewish faith, foreshadow the same actions, words and mission of Mary in the New Testament.

Mary is the Immaculate Conception

The Church teaches that the Blessed Mother, was from the first moment of her conception preserved immune from the stain of original sin. This is not through any merit of her own but from the merits earned by her Son on the cross. This is a grace only given to Mary by God the Father.



Mary is "ever-virgin"

In Christian belief going back to at least the fourth century, the Blessed Virgin Mary is described as a virgin not only before the birth of Jesus, but perpetually thereafter. Mary's virginity is a sign of her total devotion and gift of self to God.

Mary is assumed into heaven

Sinless, she does not experience the chief consequence of sin: death. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians.



Why is Mary's assumption into heaven a source of hope for Christians?

Doctrines of Mary

Doctrines of Mary continued



Mary is Mother of the Faithful

As Eve, the mother of all the living, brought death into the world by her disobedience, Mary becomes the new Eve through her obedience and gives life to the world. Mary's motherhood of all the faithful was given to her by her Son on the Cross. She continues to bring us grace by her intercession for us in heaven.



Mary is honored by the Church

"All generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me."

Lk 1:48

Hyper-dulia is the highest honor that can be given to a human being. Latria is worship.

It is given to God alone. Dulia is honor, or the veneration given to the saints. This honor

*Isn't it the artist's great joy to see his masterpiece recognized?
How are we supposed to be if she is our mother in the order of grace?
How should we treat her if she is the permanent helpmate of Christ?*

She is at the center without being the center.

Fr. Joseph Kentenich

Mary was sinless, therefore so free that she was able to place herself totally at the disposal of God's will.

Isn't that each Christian's task in this journey of life? To place ourselves totally at God's disposal?

What holds us back? Sin, our holding on to worldly things.

Lord God,
we acknowledge your infinite glory
and the abundance of your gifts.
Before the foundation of the world,
you appointed Christ
the beginning and end of all things.
You chose the blessed Virgin Mary
as the Mother and companion of your Son,
the image and model of your Church,
the Mother and advocate of us all.
She is the new Eve
through whom you restored
what the first Eve had lost.

She is the daughter of Zion,
who echoed in her heart
the longings of the patriarchs
and the hopes of Israel.
She is the poor and lowly servant
who trusted solely in her Lord.
In the fullness of time
she was delivered of the Sun of justice,
the dayspring from on high,
Your Son, Jesus Christ.
In her flesh she was his Mother,
in her person, his disciple,
in her love, his servant.