

Who Are You, O Immaculate Mother?

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To appreciate fully who Mary truly is, we must view her, not from the opinions of humanity, but from the revelation of divinity.

How does the Holy Trinity view Mary?

We begin with God the Father. God the Father sees Mary as His human masterpiece, His highpoint of creation after the sacred humanity of His Son. Beyond the planetary bodies and the seven natural wonders of the world, Mary is the Father's created masterpiece, in virtue of her unparalleled Immaculate Conception. Here, a human creature experiences a "fullness of grace," the deepest, most sublime participation in the very life and love of the Trinity. God the Father looks upon His Immaculate daughter and sees the creature who most completely, in every way, conformed her free human will to His Divine will. It is first the relationship between the Father and Mary that prepares the way for the coming of the Redeemer. Truly, Mary is the most beloved daughter of God the Father.

Secondly, Mary is Mother of God the Son "made man." Liturgy speaks true when it refers to this "wonderment of nature" where a *creature gives birth to her Creator*. This will happen only once in human history –it will never be repeated. From the time Mary gives *fiat* to being Christ's mother until his birth, the unborn Jesus will be even further sanctifying his immaculate mother for nine uninterrupted months, similar as if we had our Eucharistic Jesus physically within us unceasingly for nine months!

What kind of intimacy, what mystical union of heart, exists between this mother and this Son? St. John Eudes is correct when he says it is as if there is only “one heart” between Jesus and Mary, since the Mother does all to please the Son, and the Son grants all the Mother requests. Do we not see this clearly at Cana? No one obeys the Fourth commandment to “honor thy mother” better than Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, Mary is the human “spouse” of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit overshadows Mary at the Annunciation (just as the Holy Cloud [*Shekinah*] overshadowed the Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament), the Word is conceived in her virginal womb and becomes flesh. Mary is now the new living, breathing Ark of the Covenant who bears the unborn Christ, and where the New Ark goes, the Holy Spirit goes. St. Maximilian Kolbe rightly states that the Holy Spirit *acts only through the Immaculata*, His human spouse— not by divine necessity, but by divine disposition: not because He has not, but because He wants to, since the first fruit of the union between the Holy Spirit and Mary brought us Jesus.

On February 17, 1941, a few hours before he would be taken by the Nazis and eventually martyred at Auschwitz, St. Maximilian Kolbe felt inspired to ask the Mariological question, “Who are you, O Immaculate Conception?” His answer constituted the most sublime insights regarding the intimate relationship between Mary, the “Immaculata” and the Holy Spirit ever written.

In our own times, we may well ask the question, “Who are you, O *Immaculate Mother*?” In an age when most every perennial truth has been seriously questioned or outright denied, the universal appreciation of motherhood remains. Thus, the greatest example of

motherhood in all human history rightly calls for renewed examination and appreciation.

Why do we call Mary *our Mother*?

The gift of Mary's spiritual motherhood, St. John Paul II tells us, is a personal gift given from the crucified Christ at Calvary to every single human being: "Behold, your Mother" (Jn. 19:27, *Redemptoris Mater*, n.45) It is not merely an invitation by Jesus, but rather a statement of fact and a new Christian obligation. All who seek to be "beloved disciples" in imitation of St. John are likewise called to take Mary "into our homes," that is, into our hearts, our inner selves, our spiritual lives. Mary is a spiritual Mother given to each and every human being in order to unite us to Jesus, child to Child, as only a common mother can.

Mary is the *Mother suffering*. As the New Eve with Christ, the New Adam, as human Co-redemptrix with Christ the divine Redeemer, Mary cooperated in the historic accomplishment of Redemption like no other human being. As Pope St. John Paul II teaches, Mary was "spiritually crucified" with her divine Son, and "her role as Co-redemptrix did not cease with the glorification of her Son" (Guayaquil, Ecuador, Jan. 31, 1985). Her weeping statues at places like the Church approved apparitions at Akita indicate her ongoing mystical sufferings as spiritual Mother of a suffering world.

Mary is truly the *Mother nourishing*. Vatican II tells us that she is "a mother to us in the order of grace" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 61), and as a maternal Mediatrix, she intercedes "to bring us the gifts of eternal life" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 62). In virtue of her role as Mediatrix of all graces, each and every redemptive grace we receive from Jesus comes to us through the intercession of his mother, just as Jesus himself

came to us through the intercession of his mother. St. Teresa of Calcutta put it succinctly: “No Mary, no Jesus.” St. John Paul II adds that the role of mediatrix is intrinsic to the word, “mother.” Hence the words of Jesus from Calvary likewise proclaim, “Behold, your Mediatrix.”

Mary is truly the *Mother pleading*. Her most ancient title, dating from the 2nd century, is that of *Advocate*. She is the universal mother who intercedes for the protection and defense of her earthly children. Third century Christians prayed for her protection during the times of the Roman persecution: “We fly to your patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, o ever glorious and blessed Virgin!” Today, we have ever-increasing dangers and difficulties as manifest in the family, in society, in the Church and in the world, arguably beyond precedent. Today, we need our Mother’s most powerful intercession like never before for the protection and the restoration of the family, for the protection of the unborn, for unity in the Church, for world peace.

Let us, therefore, embrace and cherish the gift of Jesus to every human heart in *the gift of his mother*.

Let us generously and wholeheartedly bring Mary into our spiritual lives, our inmost homes, to put things of the heart in order, for our ultimate holiness and happiness.

Let us proclaim to all we can, according to our vocations and states of life that, when our global situation seems to need one more than ever, that indeed *the world has a mother*.