

Mary Mother of God

January 1, 2026

St. Edward's Parish

Friends, eight days after Christmas the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

These two days are intimately connected; Christmas recalls when God became man and was born in time; Mary the Mother of God protects this mystery by declaring that Mary truly gave birth to God.

Mary's role as Mother of God was the first truth about Mary (dogma) to be officially defined by the Church. It was solemnly defined in the year 431, during a time when a lot of questions and false ideas arose about who Jesus was: for example, was He truly God? truly man? a creature like an angel? By declaring Mary to be Mother of God, the Church clarified that Mary's son, although fully man, was truly God. This teaching about Mary defends the great mystery that Jesus is one person, the divine Son of God, though He has two natures—a divine nature and a human nature. It is key to remember that everything the Church believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Jesus and what it teaches about Mary helps us to understand its faith in Jesus (CCC 487).

Catholics are often questioned about their devotion to Mary, especially from Christians of other denominations. For example, we may be asked why we pray for her help and not simply go to God directly. The basic scriptural insight is this: *God chose to come to us through Mary*. He could have come another way, for nothing is impossible to God. He could have taken a human nature from the dust of the earth or descended directly from heaven. But He *chose* to come through Mary and we honour Mary because of what God has done through her.

Our devotion to Mary, however, is not only because she is the Mother of God, but also because she is our Mother. At the foot of the Cross, Jesus looked to Mary and His beloved disciple and said to Mary, "Woman, behold your son"; and to the disciple, "Behold your mother". (Jn 19) From the earliest days of Christianity, this scripture has been understood to apply not only to the beloved disciple (whom most identify as John), but to all of us, who seek to be the disciples of Jesus. This has tremendous impact on our spiritual lives.

With a good earthly mother, a child goes to her with every need. If we are sick, need help, or need to know something, we turn to our mother. When I was in seminary, a spiritual director gave me an insight that I have always treasured. He said: “Whenever, I have a problem, I give it to Mary and she takes care of it.” I have done this over the years. It does not mean that every problem is instantly fixed in the way I want. It simply means that I entrust it to Our Lady with confidence that she, as a good mother, will look after it. I do the little I can, but I no longer worry about the big picture. It is in her hands. For myself, I entrust the parish to Our Lady, the vocations ministry, the tasks of each day, my spiritual life, my preaching, my family members, etc... I find that when I am troubled with something and I bring it to Our Lady, I always walk away with peace.

There is a long history of people recalling the help they have received from Our Lady. Over the years, I have also observed some dramatic effects. When I was living in the US, a young lady I knew had been instantly healed from terminal cancer by praying to Our Lady. I know a married couple whose marriage was saved by praying the Rosary. Over many years of hearing confessions, I have seen people break away from serious sin through praying the Rosary. I have also witnessed people led to the Catholic faith, or who had doubts clarified, by turning to Mary. That being said, there is no need to look for dramatic miracles; all we need to do is trust that Our Lady will take our troubles into her hands and address them in the way that she knows best (we may not see results in this life). Perhaps with the arrival of this new year, you might consider how to deepen your relationship to Mary, for example, by taking up the daily Rosary, making the Five First Saturdays devotion, or enrolling in our consecration to Mary program the next time it is offered at the parish.

Jesus Himself turned to Mary as His mother. If we want to follow His footsteps and become His disciples, we must do the same. Mary is our spiritual mother. We do not have to worry that our love for Mary may be too much. We could never love her as much as Jesus did. We are merely following His example.