

Full of Grace

Mary

What is so special about Mary?

God chose Mary to play an extremely important role in the salvation of the world. Speaking through the angel Gabriel, God called Mary “full of grace” and asked her to be the mother of Jesus. Mary freely said yes to God’s request, and Jesus was conceived in her womb through the Holy Spirit. As one saint said, “No Mary, no Jesus.”

Doesn’t Jesus want us to care about him alone?

Imagine a young man starting to consider marriage. Wouldn’t he want his girlfriend to meet his parents and develop affection for them? Surely he would not say, “Sweetheart, I don’t want you to pay any attention to my parents or get to know my friends. I only want you to care about me.” When someone loves us, we are happy that they also develop love for those whom we care about. In the same way, Jesus is happy for us to care for his mother and others he loves.

Do Catholics worship Mary?

No, Catholic Christians only worship God. Mary is a human being created by God, like all of us. We do not worship her, but we honor her as the mother of Jesus and the greatest of all the saints. She is the best example in Scripture of humility and obedience to God’s will.

What are Scriptural examples of giving honor to others?

Honoring someone means that we have respect and admiration for that person. Our highest respect and admiration goes to God, of course. But God also commands us to honor our parents (Exodus 20:12), church leaders (1 Tim 5:17), the emperor (1 Peter 2:17), and others in political authority (1 Tim 2:2). God foretold through Mary herself, “From this day, all generations will call me blessed.” (Luke 1:48) From the earliest centuries up to the present day, Christians have fulfilled this prophecy in our honor of Mary.

Why do Catholics ask Mary to pray for them?

Catholics pray directly to Jesus every day. He is our closest friend, and we come to him with our worries and needs. But as discussed in a previous message, we can also ask those in heaven to pray for us. The saints are not dead, but even more alive than we are, and closer to God. Scripture indicates that they are still aware of what is happening on earth and that they pray to God on our behalf. So we find it very natural to ask the saints to pray for us, and particularly Mary as the Lord’s mother.

How can Mary help in our walk with Jesus?

Just as affection for one’s mother-in-law does not weaken one’s relationship with one’s spouse, but strengthens it, so too an appropriate affection for Mary helps us to love Jesus even better. Mary always points us to her son, just as she did during the wedding at Cana: “Do whatever he tells you.” (John 2:5) One is not obliged as a Catholic to honor Mary, but countless Christians have discovered that Mary’s example and intercession have led them to experience an even deeper love of Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

