

another in honoring her whom God Himself had called “blessed,” and have given her as her principal titles, “The Blessed Virgin the Mother of God.” In her honor the Catholic Church has instituted feasts, erected churches and altars, made use of the finest productions of art in painting, sculpture, architecture, music; Mary is honored in the Divine Office, in numerous prayers and devotions, in her shrines, by pilgrimages, sermons, learned works, sodalities, the wearing of scapulars, medals, the recitation of the Angelus, of the Rosary, and other prayers; her name is invoked next to that of Jesus, with faith, confidence and love, in both spiritual and temporal wants, by the good, by sinners for the grace of conversion, by the sick, the afflicted, the dying, and all this with wonderful results, so that numerous are the beautiful titles given her in gratitude for favors received through her powerful intercession. And what is more, countless are those who strive to imitate her virtues and consecrate their virginity like her to God and devote their whole life to the service of the poor, the sick, the forsaken, to the relief of all the ills by which poor human nature is afflicted. And this does not derogate from the honor and love we owe to our Divine Savior; on the contrary, experience proves that they who love and honor Mary the most, are the very ones who also honor Jesus Christ the most. Moreover, however much we may honor Mary, we can never honor her as much as God Himself has honored her. Hence, of the honor we pay to Mary we may say, “This honor is she worthy of, whom the Lord of heaven and earth has deemed worthy to choose as the Mother of His Divine Son!”

Taken from *The Mother of My Lord*, by Rev. Ferreol Girardey, C.Ss.R, Second Edition, B. Herder Book Co. 1921, 00.48-54.

Prayer to “The Mother of my Lord”

O Mary, “the Mother of my Lord” and my Mother also, you, of all creatures you are the most noble, the most sublime, the most pure, the most beautiful, the most holy. Oh, that all men would know and love you as you deserve! But I am consoled in thinking that so many blessed souls in heaven and just ones on earth are enamored with your goodness and your glory. Above all, I rejoice that God Himself loves you alone more than all men and angels together. I also, a poor sinner, desire to love you next to God, and to confide in you with the affection of a devoted child, for Jesus, your Divine Son, by His last will made you my Mother and made me your child. You are all-powerful with God, for He can refuse nothing to His Mother. And you, the most loving of all mothers can refuse nothing to your child that is in need. Therefore, I now implore you to obtain for me a sincere and hearty sorrow for my sins, and also for the forgiveness of all my sins, a most ardent love for Jesus Christ, the grace of prayer, and perseverance in faithfully serving God until death. Help me with all your powerful prayers and protection at the hour of my death. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

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Pamphlet 662

"Theotokos" Holy Mary, Mother of God.

Rev. Ferreol Girardey, C.Ss.R



The Apostle Luke painting an icon of the Theotokos

Had it been given to you to choose your own mother, and to endow her from her very birth with all the gifts, good qualities and attainments you could think of, what would you have made her? You would most assuredly have made her what you would consider as the paragon of perfection. But Mary is the Mother of God, for the angel sent by God said to her: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (Luke 1:35); and St. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord (that is, of my God) should come to me?” (Luke 1:42). If God himself through His angel and through St. Elizabeth, called Mary “the Mother of God,” it is both *our right* and *our duty* to call and invoke her as “the Mother of God.” The psalmist represents God the Father saying to the Messiah, “You are my son, today I have begotten you” (Psalm 2:1). At

the baptism of Christ the heavens opened and the voice of the heavenly Father was heard saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22); and at Christ's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, the heavenly Father again said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17:5). But the same Jesus, whom the Father declares to be his "His only beloved Son," is also the Son of Mary. Hence, she can truly say of Him, "He whom the heavenly Father calls His own beloved Son, is also truly my Son, and I alone of all creatures can say to Him, 'Jesus, Thou art both my Son and my God.'" Mary is the nearest relative of Jesus, because she is His Mother and has given birth to Him. Hence, St. Peter Damian says, "The Son of God dwelt in Mary and therefore has an identity of substance with her." To Mary alone can the Son of God say, "Thou art Mother and I am thy Son." The Venerable Bede says, "The very Son of God, conceived in the Virgin's womb, drew His flesh from her flesh, for He could not be a man, unless He had a human origin." To become our Savior, the Son of God had to become man and have a human origin; and from all eternity, Mary had been destined to be His Mother. Therefore, Mary is truly the Mother of God and deserves this name by the right of maternity.

Mary, then, is exalted above all creatures. The dignity of Mother of God is the greatest, the most sublime dignity that can be conferred on a creature. "God," says St. Bonaventure, "can create millions of worlds greater and more perfect than this one; but He cannot create a dignity greater or more perfect than the Divine Maternity." "The Divine Maternity," says Pope Pius IX, "is the crown of all the wonders of God." But she whom God chose to be His own Mother, must have been made by Him such as to be worthy of His respect and love immeasurably above every other creature. The Mother of God

should, then, be more pure and more holy than any other creature, and, in fact, should be next to God Himself in purity and holiness, and should be such as to reflect honor on God Himself for having her as His Mother. But let us bear in mind the God, the infinite Wisdom, does not, as we do, regard or place stress on mere corporeal or physical beauty, earthly riches, fine garments, intellectual attainments, popularity, influence or high station in life, for all these things are but as vile dust in comparison with virtue, innocence, holiness and spiritual qualities, and these only count with God and draw His love and respect. Moreover, the Mother of God could not deserve the respect, love and veneration of angels and men required by her sublime dignity, were she stained with slight faults or failings or subject to any moral weakness. Therefore, it behooves that the Mother of God should be preserved from every stain of sin or fault even from the first moment of her life, and, besides, be confirmed in grace and free from all sin during her whole life, and, moreover, be endowed with the highest degree of grace, or, as the angel expressed it in his greeting, should always be "full of grace," according to her capacity. Were it otherwise, the contempt and astonishment resulting from any moral weakness or imperfection on her part, would redound to the injury and dishonor of God Himself, for not honoring His Mother, as her intimate relation to Himself required. From this it follows also that they who willfully belittle the Mother of God and refuse to give her the honor due to her dignity and intimate relation to God, the honor taught us by God's example, such persons necessarily displease and dishonor God Himself.

The Son of God, as the Son of Mary, was, without doubt, the best, the most dutiful of sons, for He was on earth our Model in all virtues. Therefore, no son ever honored or loved his mother as much and as perfectly as Jesus loved

His Mother Mary. A dutiful son is greatly pleased and rejoices to see his good mother universally respected and esteemed, for he considers her interests and welfare as his own, and does all he can to promote them, since the honor shown to his mother redounds to his own honor. In like manner, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of Mary is pleased to see all who believe in Him, revering, honoring and confiding in His Mother; and considers it all as done to Himself. Does He not say, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matt 25:40). Is not Mary incomparably more to Jesus, Her Son, than "the least" of His disciples? He surely not only is pleased to see His Mother honored as her sublime dignity requires, but expressly will us to give due honor to her. And since He considers the honor we give to her as given to Himself, and since He is our Model in all things, we should consider Him as prescribing the honor He Himself paid to her as the model of the honor we owe her. Hence, we may apply to Mary the question of King Ahasuerus, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" (Esther 6:6). "What honor should we pay to her whom the Son of God wishes to honor?"

The Protestant, as such replies, "No honor at all, for the honor due her would derogate from the honor due to God, and be a kind of idolatry!" But what answer does the Catholic Church give to this question? The Catholic Church answers it by fulfilling Mary's own prophecy, "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name" (Luke 1:48-49). The Popes, the bishops, the doctors, the saints and the faithful of the Church have ever since the day on which the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the form of fiery tongues, and enabled them to found the Church, vied with one