

# SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

Two thousand years ago, a young woman was told that she was to be the mother of a boy. That mother bore her son in desperate circumstances as she and her husband were forced to travel across country on foot for the sake of a census and to give birth to her son in a barn amidst cattle and sheep and donkeys. They were then forced into exile and to live far away from their home and their family. That boy would grow as all boys grow and would at times exacerbate His parents by running off and becoming lost in the Temple in Jerusalem, three days away from His family. He would confuse His parents and there would be a great deal of misunderstanding, but which His mother “pondered in her heart”, for nothing would separate her from the love of her son. As He grew He would be ridiculed, and later that boy and His mother would see His earthly father and her husband die. He would learn His father’s trade and use that trade to support Himself and His mother. Throughout, however, it would be His mother that would see in Him all the potential that he bore, as she did at a certain wedding feast. It would be His mother that would wait patiently in the background while He went out into the world. It would be His mother that would remain with Him when no one else would as He was accused of crimes He didn’t commit and would be sentenced to death. It would be His mother that would care for His friends after he was gone, and it would be around His mother that His friends would gather to remember who He was. His mother bookmarked His life. She was there at the beginning, before His conception, and she was there at the moment He died. She was the frame in which His life was pictured.

Today the Church celebrates the (vigil of) the Octave day of Christmas and we honour this day as the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. This

title, “Mother of God”, is the oldest title granted to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and is recorded as early as the year *A.D.* 180, when Mary was acclaimed *Theotokos*, the “Bearer of God”.

Mary is the holy Mother of God because Jesus Christ is both true man and true God, so the Blessed Virgin is the mother of a man and the mother of God.

This title is a reminder of just how precious human life is, for in the incarnation God became man: He who is divine humbled Himself to share in our humanity, so that we might share in His divinity. Mary is the Mother of God precisely because God was made man.

Today, at more than any other time in human history, the sanctity of human life is threatened. If human life does not matter or only matters in part, then why does it matter that God became man, why do we still bother to celebrate Christmas? The Church perseveres in celebrating the birth of Christ because she believes that it does matter. But not only the birth of Christ but everything before and after. That is why she celebrates His conception on the Feast of the Annunciation every March 25<sup>th</sup>, nine months before Christmas day. That is why she commemorates His death. That is why she celebrates His resurrection and His ascension into Heaven. She celebrates these things because she believes that all of human life matters; from the moment of conception to the moment of death. It matters to the Church because it matters to God, because God Himself chose to share in this human life of ours. At the Annunciation, Mary became the holy Mother of God. At the Crucifixion Mary became our Mother.

The greatest and most ancient title we give to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary is that of Holy Mother of God. How wonderful then for us that she who is the Mother of God is also our very own Mother.