

## Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

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Frazee/Callaway

You may remember this story. My mother was asked which of her eleven children is her favorite. She said, “The one who is in most need of my prayers.” She experiences her motherhood as both physical and spiritual. She might say that her physical motherhood is the easier. We were conceived in her womb and she brought us to term. She gave birth to us and tended to our every need. She taught us what we need and how to live with independence. She mentored us into adulthood. This was all a piece of cake compared to her spiritual motherhood. Her first goal for all of us has been heaven! A life on earth is only a prelude to the eternal family reunion called the Communion of Saints. So, who of us is her favorite? On whatever day it is, the one who needs her prayers the most. Put it another way...the one who is deterred from the narrow gate, the path to heaven.

Mary was entrusted with the physical motherhood of one person: Jesus Christ, true God and true man. “...her vocation as Mother does not end with Christ’s death. The Lord commands the world, ‘Behold, your Mother.’ The Resurrection begins for Mary – and for us – with these words. The Blessed Virgin’s womb remains forever fruitful. Mary leads us to Christ, but Christ lead us back to his Mother, for without Mary’s maternity, Jesus would become a mere abstraction to us.” (G.K. Chesterton)

I say it again: *without Mary’s maternity, Jesus would become a mere abstraction to us.* Jesus would be an idea. He would be like an imaginary friend. He would be a distant son of a distant deity. St. Paul teaches that God is not distant but near. In Jesus, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, we have redemption. We are not slaves to an abstraction, but children of God, carrying out “Abba, Father!” Abba. Imagine, we have permission to call God “Daddy.” If we are children of God, then we are also heirs of eternal life.

My mother’s favorite child is the one who needs prayers for eternal life. If you would ask Mary, “Who is your favorite child?” Physically she had only one. That answer is easy. Spiritually, she gives birth to the world. Her favorite children are those who have yet not come to faith, and those who have abandoned the faith. Mary leads us to Christ, and Christ leads us back to his Mother. He wants us to know what he experienced in his mother, “...a little child does not ‘consider’ whether it will reply with love or nonlove to its mother’s inviting smile, for just as the sun entices forth green growth, so does love awaken love.” (Hans Urs von Balthasar) Mary awakened love in Jesus. Jesus wants us to know the love that brought to life his love.

Hail Mary...