

One

Mary as Our Mother

The Catholic Church calls Mary “Mother Mary” for a reason that’s similar to the reason we call the First Person of the Trinity “Our Father.” It’s because Jesus has joined the human family, and by the incarnation and redemption has made it possible for us to join His family. When we unite ourselves to Christ, His Father becomes Our Father, and His Mother becomes Our Mother.

Mary’s motherhood towards us is shown in John 19 when Jesus gives Mary to the “beloved disciple” to be his mother. So too are we all called to be beloved disciples, and recognize Jesus’ mother as our mother.

It’s also expressed in Revelations 12, which tells of a woman clothed with the Sun, with a crown of stars, and the Moon under her feet. This woman gives birth to a male child, destined to rule all the earth. So obviously the woman is the mother of Jesus – who is Mary. But later, in the same chapter, it says that this woman has other children, namely, “All those who keep God’s commandments and bear witness to Jesus” (v. 17). And that’s us.

So it’s abundantly clear that we’re supposed to relate to Mary as Our Mother. But what does that mean in practice?

Two

How did Jesus relate to Mary?

When Jesus gave Mary to the beloved disciple to be his mother, it meant that the relationship Mary had to Jesus was now to extend to the rest of

the Christian family. In other words, we are supposed to relate to Our Lady the way Jesus related to Our Lady. And how was that? What were the marks of Christ's childhood in relation to Our Lady?

Because the Christian life is supposed to be an imitation of Christ. And the Lord has made it clear that we are to imitate Him also in His relationship with His mother. So how did Jesus relate to His Mother? And how can we imitate that?

Three

Dependence, Formation, Obedience

We can summarize three aspects of Jesus' relationship to Mary. When we understand these, we'll have a better understanding of how *we* should relate to Mary as Our Mother.

The first is **dependence**. Jesus and Mary's relationship began when He became her unborn child. An embryo's relationship to its mother is one of utter self-entrustment and dependence. The unborn child is wholly within its mother and depends on her for everything. And this is how Jesus depended on Mary.

The second is **being formed**. An unborn child is formed by its mother physically, and then the infant and the small child are formed by its mother in all the most fundamental ways. Children develop the human capacity for love, sympathy, humor, for verbal communication, primarily through engagement with the mother. And this is how Jesus was formed by Mary.

The third is **obedience**. Luke says that Jesus was obedient to his parents and Luke doesn't set any limit to that obedience. In fact, we know from

John's description of the wedding at Cana that Jesus' obedience to Mary continued into adulthood. So Jesus was obedient to Mary.

This is how Jesus related to Mary. This is how we should relate to her as well.

Four

Consecration

If we would imitate Jesus, and if we would follow His instructions to let Mary be a mother to us as she was a mother to him, then we should relate to Mary in these three ways.

We should place ourselves in total dependence on her. We should allow her to form us into images of Her Son Jesus. And we should obey her in everything.

This is essentially what is meant by "Consecration to Mary". It means giving ourselves to Mary the way Jesus did so that Mary can form us the way she formed Him.

The idea of consecration to Mary has been around since the early Church. In fact, St. John Damascene, one of the greatest Fathers of the Church, offered up this prayer to Our Lady, "We are present before you, O Lady, Lady, I say again Lady, binding our souls to our hope in you, and as to a most secure and firm anchor, *to you we consecrate our minds, our souls, our bodies, in a word, our very selves.*"

This is nothing other than an imitation of Christ, an acceptance of Mary's Motherhood, and a desire to become as much like Christ as possible.

God and Mary made Jesus Christ. God and Mary can make us like Jesus Christ.

We give ourselves utterly to God when we become Christians. Because God is the Father of Jesus. We should give ourselves utterly to Mary when we become Christians. Because Mary is the Mother of Jesus.

Five

The Height of Marian Devotion

Consecration is the most consistent, most thorough way to obey Christ's words, "Behold Your Mother."

That's why St. John Paul II took the phrase "totus tuus" as the official motto for his papal career. "Totus tuus" is Latin for "Entirely yours," and that phrase meant that He was giving himself entirely to Mary so that he could more perfectly imitate and approximate Jesus.

In fact, St. John Paul II said, called consecration to Mary a "perfect devotion," and said that it was "*indispensable to anyone who means to give himself without reserve to Christ and to the work of redemption.*"

Jesus gave Himself to Mary and went on to save the world.

John Paul II gave himself to Mary, and became the most celebrated saint of the twentieth century. Maximillian Kolbe gave himself to Mary and became perhaps the most iconically heroic saint of the twentieth century. Countless saints have given themselves to Mary, and have changed the world – all in imitation of Christ.

So give yourself to Mary and see what happens.