

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD JANUARY 1, 2026

Most women feel grateful for the chance to become a mother. Their children are usually what they're proudest of, even more than their careers or accomplishments. Being a mom really is a blessing.

And that's true for the Blessed Virgin Mary, too. We call her by many titles, but the one that must mean the most to her is "Mother of God." Nothing brings her more joy than being known as the mother of Jesus. That's why we come together today, just a week after Christmas, to honor Mary, the woman who gave birth to and raised Jesus, the Son of God.

We are used to calling Mary, "Mother of God", because we say it so often. However, it can be confusing and even shocking to people who aren't Catholic. Some hear it and think it means Mary is somehow greater than God, or that God needed Mary the way we need our mothers to exist. That's not at all what the Church means. Mary is a human being created by God, just like the rest of us. When we call her the "Mother of God," we're really saying more about Jesus than we are about Mary.

Jesus is the Son of God. Because He is God, He has existed for all eternity and is the Creator of everything. And this eternal Son of God is the one who took on human flesh and grew in Mary's womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. The baby born to Mary is fully God and fully human. And since Jesus is God, and Mary is His mother, it makes sense to call her the "Mother of God."

When we call Mary the "Mother of God," we're also making a statement about who we are as baptized followers of Jesus. At our baptism we became members of the Church and, through the Holy Spirit, were adopted as daughters and sons of God. That's exactly what Saint Paul says in today's second reading from Galatians: "...God sent his Son, born of a woman... so that we might receive adoption as sons."

If Jesus' death and resurrection have made us children of God, then it follows that Mary is our mother as well. God's plan for Mary didn't end the night she gave birth to Jesus. In His generosity, God chose her to be the Mother of the whole Church. So she is the Mother of all believers.

When Jesus was dying on the cross, He turned to His beloved disciple and said, "Behold your mother." From the beginning, Christians have understood that Jesus wasn't just handing His mother over to John's care. He was giving her to *all* of us. And from heaven, Mary never stops praying for us. Just as we turn to our own mothers when we need help, we can confidently turn to Mary. She listens, she cares, and she brings our prayers straight to her Son.

If Mary takes such joy in being the Mother of God, imagine how much it means to her when we call her *our* mother, too. Like our earthly mothers, she is happy to help us when we need her.

So today we profess our faith: Jesus is the eternal Son of the Father, and Mary is His mother.

And because the Holy Spirit has made us children of God, Mary is our mother too.

At the start of a new year, we usually set goals or make resolutions. It's beautiful that the Church gives this first day of the year to Mary, the Mother of God. With her example to guide us, our strongest resolution should be to seek God's will and put it into practice. As individuals and as a parish family, we should dedicate this new year to Mary, the Mother of God. Whatever we're hoping for, whatever we want to change, we can trust Mary to hold our prayers close to her heart and present them to Jesus for us. If our resolutions don't line up with God's will, we won't be successful in keeping them. But if we look to God's will, and let Mary pray with us and for us, then we can accomplish anything.

And so today, on the threshold of a new year, we renew our trust in the one who first said "yes" to God. We place our lives in the hands of Mary, the Mother of God, knowing that she always leads us to her Son.

May her faith strengthen our faith, her courage inspire our courage, and her love draw us closer to the heart of Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us now and throughout the coming year.