

May is one of two traditionally Marian months; the other being October. May has long been thought of in Western cultures as a month of life and motherhood. Long before anyone ever thought up the notion of “Mother’s Day” there was an innate desire to honour maternity during the spring months. With Christianization came a shift of this focus to the Mother of God. The Early Church held a significant feast to Mary on May 15 each year, and a practice of devoting 30 days to Mary called Tricesimum but not necessarily in May. It wasn't until the 19th century that the popularization of devoting May to Mary grew out of Rome.

Mary, The Mother of God

Elizabeth exclaimed in the Gospel of Luke that Mary is the Mother of the Lord when she greeted her:

"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 should come to me?"

If we exclude this early statement of Mary's relationship to God, the Church has called Mary "Mother of God" since the third century, and many writings and hymns from that period attest to this. Although challenged and tested throughout Christian history, this notion of Mary as the mother not just of the man Jesus, but the fullness of God in Him has persisted.

Ponder this: If Mary is only the Mother of Jesus, then He wasn't fully God his entire life. If Mary is the Mother of God, then God did an amazing thing in His Word emptying Himself and becoming like us in every way but sin. If we hold that Jesus is fully human and fully God, then we must accept that God was mothered by human hands when he was born into this world.

Mary, The Perpetual Virgin

From the 1st century AD, Mary has been considered perpetually a virgin by the Church. It is reflected in a number of non-biblical works dating from the 1st-century, and heavily in the 2nd. Even the founders of Protestantism, Martin Luther and John Calvin, held to the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God. The perpetual virginity of Mary means that the uniqueness of the Incarnation is the beginning of a New Creation in Christ. The Fall of Adam negated entirely by the Son of God being born of the virgin.

Although challenges come from various interpretations of Sacred Scripture, the Church has long held that the "brothers and sisters" of Jesus are cousins and other relatives, not children of Mary.

Mary, The Immaculate Conception

Following from the perpetual virginity of Mary, the Church has held since early times that Mary's whole life is unique, not just her agreement to be the Mother of Jesus. This grew in time to be, as was held by Early Church Fathers, that Mary was spared the sin of Adam by God and did not sin in her life. This means that her very flesh, the flesh from which the Son of God would incarnate, was sinless and pure. This dogma was clearly defined in 1854 by Pope Pius IX.

Mary, The Queen of Heaven

It is attested in Sacred Scripture that Enoch, Elijah, and Moses were assumed bodily into heaven. It was believed that the corruption of the grave would not touch these holy men. As early as the fifth century celebrations of the "dormition" or sleep of Mary began to appear. By the Middle Ages it was held that holy Mary, the Mother of God Himself, was spared the corruption of the grave for the same reason as the three mentioned in the Bible. This dogma of the assumption of Mary into heaven was formally defined in 1950 by Pope Pius XII. The Church points to the woman appearing the Book of Revelation as a sign of this reality of her assumption and her queenship in heaven with Jesus in the manner of King Solomon's mother being made queen and ruling with her son.

