

Catholics and Our Blessed Mother

By Father John Catoir, JCD 9/13/16

Of all the prerogatives of Mary, the divine motherhood is the one that takes hold of the consciousness of the average Catholic. We can easily imagine the indescribable intimacy that exists between a mother and son. For this reason there are a variety of ways in which Catholics apply this awareness to their own lives.

Here's one example. During the years I was hosting The Christophers TV Show, I interviewed Joe Garagiola, the baseball star who turned to broadcasting. In the middle of the conversation he said, "Father let's not talk about baseball anymore, let's talk about Jesus, Mary and Joseph." I was caught off guard, this had never happened before. "OK Joe, what do you say to non-Catholics who say that Catholics make too much of Mary?"

I'll never forget his reply, "I feel sorry for them. Look Father, I'm Italian, and we know that if you want to get to the Man, you get to the mother." We both laughed. It was funny, but it also had a wring of truth to it.

Catholics see Mary as the one who gives them easy access to her Son. They think of her as their spiritual mother in heaven. She offers love, consolation and mercy. Her many titles reflect this very level of faith: Our Lady of Good Counsel, Our Lady of Consolation, Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Our Blessed Mother is known for her visitations to various shrines around the world like Lourdes and Fatima, where she has performed many miracles. For well over 150 years the sick have travelled by the millions to these holy places leaving their crutches behind as a sign of Mary's healing presence.

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist put it best when she said, "*Of all women, Mary you are the most blessed; and blessed is the fruit of your womb,*" (Luke 1:42-45).

Mary was chosen for the most privileged position in human history: to be the mother of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Catholics continually ask Mary to pray for them. To understand why, let's turn to the Hebrew Bible to help us imagine how Jesus might relate to Mary in heaven.

We read that King Solomon had his mother sitting to the right of his throne. She often interceded on behalf of his subjects saying, “*I have a favor to ask of you....do not refuse me.*” Solomon would answer, “*My mother, make your request for I will not refuse you,*” (1 Kings 2:21).

When Catholics recite the Hail Mary: “Pray for us, now and at the hour of our death,” they do not think of Mary as a goddess with independent power. They know that all the power comes from her divine son. They simply ask her to intercede for them, knowing well that Jesus will honor her request.

St. Elizabeth is recorded in scripture as saying, “*Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.*” Mary believed and then surrendered herself to the Lord in perfect submission, “*Be it done unto me according to thy word,*” (Luke 1:38), and the miracle of the Incarnation took place in her womb. Jesus became flesh of her flesh, and bone of her bone.

The divine command to honor one's mother is found in Exodus 20:12. Jesus honors his mother, just as any good son would. His love for her flows through His children, as we honor the Holy Mother of God, in Him and with Him.