

1/1/17 **Mother of God:** I pray for a happy and blessed New Year to one and all. We once again honor the Mother of God who gave birth to our Savior. There is a story about this guy who says to a priest, "I don't understand why you Catholics make such a big deal about Mary. I don't see much difference between her and my mom." The priest replied, "Well, I don't know about the difference between the two mothers. But let me tell you, there is a big difference between the two sons!"

Actually, while there are many similarities between our Mom's and the Blessed Mother there are also some big differences. On a natural level, every Mom provides flesh and blood to her child. But it is God who infuses the rational soul at conception. This combination of flesh, blood, and soul; this co-working of the human and the divine creates a new human person. It cannot be done without a Mom. It cannot be done without God. In the case of the Blessed Mother, she likewise provided flesh and blood to her Son. Unlike the rest of humanity, it was the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word of Life, the Son of God who takes on the flesh and blood provided by Mary and assumes human nature. As consequence, she gave birth not to a human person but to a Divine Person with two natures, fully man and fully God. This does not make Mary a goddess. Rather, it is simply a logical deduction. Jesus is God. Mary is the Mother of Jesus. Ergo, Mary is Mother of God.

Another big difference, of course, is that our Mom's were sinners. As result of the Immaculate Conception, Mary is preserved from sin by the foreseen merits of Jesus on the Cross. She is also the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Can you imagine being perfectly in tune with the Spirit of God? What would it be like living in harmony with the gifts of wisdom and understanding, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord? What would life be like if we fully utilized the virtues of prudence and justice, fortitude and self-control? Can you imagine our lives bearing the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, and were able to suffer the greatest of sorrow with perfect trust and obedience to God? These are just a few ways our Blessed Mother is different from our Mom's. She was created singular, unique, and I dare say created by God as the Masterpiece of humanity.

Like the Blessed Mother, our Mom's suffered many unique sorrows in their lives. I doubt, however, that when our Mom's gave birth to you and me she road on the back of a donkey at full term for 80 miles and for 3-4 days ending in labor. I doubt our Mom's gave birth to us in a dirty, smelly stable heated only by the breath of animals. Poor Joseph. He must have felt so inadequate and I am sure our Blessed Mother consoled him. And I am sure he consoled her when Joseph discovers that King Herod wants to kill his child. Our Blessed Mother had to climb on a donkey again, this time with child in her arms, and make a treacherous 300 mile journey to Egypt – mostly traveling in darkness. Yes, like our Mom's, our Blessed Mother suffered many unique sorrows. She had to bury her husband and watch her most loved Son be tortured and die before her very eyes. With a sword of sorrow piecing her heart so that the thoughts of many be laid bare, Our Blessed Mother listened to Jesus last words as he hung upon the Cross. "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your Mother." She must have been overjoyed to see her Son at the Resurrection. And filled with joy when, at the end of her earthly life, assumed body and soul into heaven. Taking her place on the throne now vacated by Lucifer whose jealousy rages against her and whom she crushes by one glance of her love.

This is why we Catholics make such a big deal about Mary: Because we follow Jesus and honor her as the Mother of God, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, and our Blessed Mother too – as she works to bring peace to our world which only God can give. As we cross into this New Year, may we keep all these things, reflecting on them in our heart.