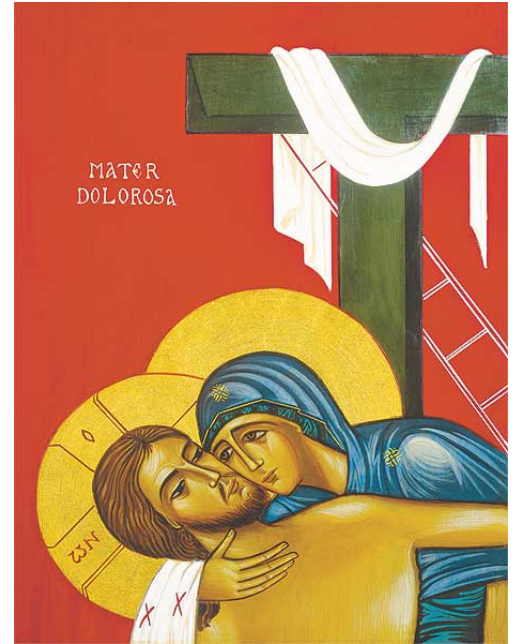


THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Feast Day: 15 August

Collect: O God, you have taken to yourself the blessed Virgin Mary, mother of your incarnate Son: Grant that we, who have been redeemed by his blood, may share with her the glory of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Facts:

- Mother of Jesus, conceived him as a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit, according to scripture and church teaching
- Figures most prominently in the Gospel of Luke of all the gospels
- Cousin of Elizabeth (mother of John the Baptist)—Mary went to stay with Elizabeth for a time during her pregnancy
- Was often with the other women who were disciples/followers of Jesus
- Kept watch at the Cross on Calvary
- After the resurrection, she was with the Twelve in the Upper Room, watching and praying until the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost
- Marian devotion has a much more prominent role in the Roman Catholic tradition than the Protestant—in fact, the Protestant reformers believed devotion had crossed into actual worship, and thus tried to distance their followers from what they called the “Cult of Mary”
- Additional Roman Catholic doctrines: the Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity, Assumption into Heaven
- Mary also has a prominent role in the Qur'an

Spiritual/Theological Teachings & Legacy

- The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) is the fullest expression of Mary's theology—remember this was hers, prior to any of Jesus' teaching
- The Magnificat in fact may have influenced Jesus in the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount
- Emphasizes themes of justice, upending the power structure, redistribution of resources away from the rich and to the poor, and humility and availability to God as primary traits of the faithful believer
- Also emphasizes this upheaval of society as a direct result of God's promises and faithfulness to Israel
- In the Gospel of John, Mary helps inaugurate Jesus' earthly ministry, pushing him to take action at the Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)

Questions Raised by Life & Work

- What is the significance of the Virgin Birth as a doctrine? Why did the church adopt it? What is your relationship to it? Is it meaningful to you? Why or why not? What changes about your understanding of Jesus and/or Mary if it is "true" or not?
- There is a range of relationships to Mary in the Christian traditions, from full Marian devotion in the Roman Catholic church to ranking Mary no better or more important than any other saint like Peter or Paul in the low church and broad church Protestant traditions. What is your relationship with Mary? How is it impacted by how you were taught about her as a child?
- What do you seek to emulate in Mary? What inspires you about her life, teaching, and witness?

My notes/observations/questions/prayer topics: