

- Jesus was walking around the streets of Heaven one day when someone who had been “less than saintly” on earth passed by Him.
- “How did he get in here?”, Jesus asked Himself. So He went to St. Peter at the pearly gates and said: “Peter, I don’t remember so-and-so being on the list to enter Heaven. You need to be more attentive in your duty watching the door.”
- But Peter replied: “Lord, I am! But when I close the door...your mother; she opens the windows!”
- Such is the love of Our Blessed Mother...our sweet Mother...and the tenderness of her Immaculate Heart.
- And on this octave day—the eight day—of Christmas, the Church blesses us with this feast of Mary, the Mother of God...and who is the mother of us all...for Jesus declares to His disciples in every time and place...represented in the person of St. John at the foot of the cross: “*Behold...thy mother.*”

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- With the Incarnation of the Son of God—the “fullness of time” which St. Paul speaks of in the second reading—men and women become no longer mere human beings, but rather share truly in the Divine life of God through baptism...for God has become one of them.
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 - We do not appreciate or truly grasp the great honor given to us through this coming of God to us in the flesh.
 - Before the Incarnation, He was hailed as Creator and God...for so He is...and Man gave God honor by duty and obligation.
 - But with the coming of Jesus on earth, God becomes one of us... and we, by that common humanity with Jesus, are empowered to become true sons & daughters of God...as St. John tells us in His Gospel: “...to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God...” (Joh 1:12 RSV)

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- Even the angels are not blessed with this tremendous privilege that we ourselves take so much for granted...for God did not become an angel; He became Man.
- As it says in the letter to the Hebrews: “...to what angel did God ever say, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you?’ Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? (Heb 1:5)
- Indeed...I sometimes wonder whether...if the angels could envy, would they not envy US at being given so great a privilege as to be brothers and sister of the Son...true children of the Father?
- And this tenderness the Father has for his faithful children is reflected in our second reading when Paul writes: “...because you are sons [or daughters], God sent the spirit of His Son into hearts, crying ‘Abba! Father’...no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, an heir...”
- By Christ we are given the unprecedented privilege and honor of calling God Himself...God the Creator of all...God the Almighty: “Abba! Papa!”

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- And the vehicle through whom all of this grace and privilege comes...is Mary.
 - Some Christians see no great importance in Mary’s role in salvation...but from all eternity her special and unique place was planned by God. She is the masterpiece of all God’s creation.
 - Yes, she was a simple human girl, and certainly not divine...but as gold and diamond comes from the earth, so is Mary amongst the soil of all humanity.
 - The poet William Wordsworth speaks of her: “...above all women glorified; Our tainted nature's solitary boast.”
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 - To whom else has an angel come and greeted with almost breathless awe and reverence: “Hail...full of grace”?

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- To whom else has one inspired by the Holy Spirit declared “*Blessed are you among women?*”
- To whom else has the Holy Spirit come as spouse to conceive a child in a virginal womb?
- And who else has God Himself obeyed and honored...as Jesus obeyed and honored Mary as His mother?
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- The Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament was simply a box... and yet it was the holiest of all things because it contained the tablets of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.
- How much more to be honored is Mary...who bore God Himself within her...nursed Him at her breast, held Him, rocked Him to sleep, watched over Him, traveled long dusty roads with Him... and, finally, embraced the cross upon which He hung...her tears mingling with His blood as they fell to the ground.
- How can such loyalty...how can such devotion...how can such love not be honored...not be esteemed and praised?
- And to think...the last act of our dying Jesus on the cross was to give this tender mother to His Church...to be the mother of all believers.
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- We get the merest glimpse of the honor that Mary deserves in those verses of 1 Kings, in which Solomon honored his own mother Bathsheba:
- *Bathsheba went to King Solomon...And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother; and she sat on his right [the position of highest honor]. Then she said, "I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me." And the king said to her, "Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you." (1Ki 2:19-20 RSV)*

- If a sinful Solomon—simply a weak foreshadowing of Jesus—honors his own sinful mother so...with how much more honor must Jesus respect and cherish His mother.
- And, if Jesus Himself loves, respects and cherishes her...how much more should we do so?
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- Mary knew Jesus far better than any other, and so the more we come to know and honor Him, the more we honor her as well.
- Because as our Mother, she guides us, she prays for us, she longs for us to do well...and most of all, she longs for our salvation.
- And how do please her and honor her in this?
- By following the one command she gives in the Gospel...perfect advice from the perfect mother: *“Do whatever He tells you.”*

Reading I

[Nm 6:22-27](#)

The LORD said to Moses:

“Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them:

This is how you shall bless the Israelites.

Say to them:

The LORD bless you and keep you!

The LORD let his face shine upon
you, and be gracious to you!

The LORD look upon you kindly and
give you peace!

So shall they invoke my name upon the Israelites,
and I will bless them.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8](#)

R. (2a) May God bless us in his mercy.

May God have pity on us and bless us;
may he let his face shine upon us.

So may your way be known upon earth;
among all nations, your salvation.

R. May God bless us in his mercy.

May the nations be glad and exult
because you rule the peoples in equity;
the nations on the earth you guide.

R. May God bless us in his mercy.

May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you!

May God bless us,

and may all the ends of the earth fear him!

R. May God bless us in his mercy.

Reading II

[Gal 4:4-7](#)

Brothers and sisters:

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son,
born of a woman, born under the law,

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
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to ransom those under the law,
so that we might receive adoption as sons.
As proof that you are sons,
God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,
crying out, "Abba, Father!"
So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir, through God.

Gospel

[Lk 2:16-21](#)

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph,
and the infant lying in the manger.
When they saw this,
they made known the message
that had been told them about this child.
All who heard it were amazed
by what had been told them by the shepherds.
And Mary kept all these things,
reflecting on them in her heart.
Then the shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen,
just as it had been told to them.

When eight days were completed for his circumcision,
he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel
before he was conceived in the womb.