

## Praying to Mary

*There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said 'Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water', and they filled them to the brim. 'Draw some out now' he told them 'and take it to the steward.' They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from – only the servants who had drawn the water knew – the steward called the bridegroom and said; 'People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink; but you have kept the best wine till now.' This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him. (John 2:1-11)*

- Despite the honour the Church pays to Mary, the Church has always and consistently taught that Mary is a mere human, like us, and is therefore not to be adored, since adoration is due to God alone.
- Mary is honoured and venerated, but not adored. Long ago, St. Ambrose said: "Mary was the temple of God, not the God of the temple."

- Many who are not familiar with Catholicism, however, see Catholic veneration of Mary as worship. Making the misperception worse is the fact that Catholics pray to Mary, seemingly therefore asking favours from a human even though we profess to believe that Jesus is the "one mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5).
- The Church teaches that there is an infinite difference between the human person of Mary and the divine person of her Son, Jesus.
- When Catholics pray to Mary, they are praying to one who is human like themselves, but who is nearer the Throne of God than any other created being.
- All the honour and veneration that is given to Mary has its source in her cooperation with the will of God in the Incarnation when through the Angel Gabriel God invited her to be mother of his only-begotten Son.
- The dogma of the Mother of God, declared by the Church at the Council of Ephesus in 431, emphatically highlights the unique and divinely-conceived relationship of Mary with Christ, the Son of God.
- The Incarnation (God becoming Man), clearly reveals the relationship that the Father himself created between the Holy Trinity and this specially-chosen human person—one of our own, but kept free from original sin (sin of our First Parents) because of the intended motherhood that God asked of her.

- Because God so honoured Mary and brought her into the most intimate possible relationship with the Holy Trinity, faithful Catholics throughout history responded by paying special honour to Mary.
- Gladly do Catholics request of her, as God himself did, favours and needs dear to our own hearts. In her wholehearted cooperation with the Father's plan of salvation, from Jesus' conception to his death on the cross, Mary is uniquely placed to accept and grant requests.
- Therefore, we her other children (see Rev. 12:17) approach her with a confidence born of our knowledge that her maternal heart will respond with the same tender compassion as it did at the marriage feast at Cana (see Jn. 2:1-5) and that Jesus, in turn, will grant her prayers to him on our behalf as he did on that same occasion (see Jn. 2:6-10).
- As he hung on the Cross, Jesus gave Mary to us as our heavenly mother, and gave us to her as her children (see Jn. 19:26-27). Praying to her as her children seems the natural thing to do.
- The wine that Mary's request brought forth from Jesus' hands at Cana will flow in an endless abundant stream until the end of time.

- (CCC 2673-2679)