

Inquiry Session: Mary

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA

Reflect on Your Experience

Everyone has someone who relates to them as “mother,” the one who nurtured them from birth in their family of origin, an adoptive mother, or someone else who functions in that special role. Mothers offer us unconditional love, affection, support, and encouragement. Very often they bring out our best.

For Reflection . . .

Who has mothered you, and what has been the result?

Hear the Good News About Mary

Mary is described in Scripture as “the mother of Jesus” (see John 2:1 and Matthew 13:55). Before she gave birth to Jesus, Mary visited Elizabeth, her cousin, who proclaimed her as “the mother of my Lord.”

In the Creed, we profess that for our Salvation the eternal Word of God came down from Heaven and by the power of the Holy Spirit was incarnate (became flesh) of the Virgin Mary. The Savior who became Mary’s son according to the flesh was Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. This is the reason why the Church at the Council of Ephesus (AD 431) accorded Mary with the title *Theotokos*, Greek for “Mother of God.”

While Jesus is Mary’s only son, her spiritual motherhood extends to all of us, all those whom Christ came to save. Mary cooperates with a mother’s love in the spiritual birth and formation of the faithful.

Read the Word of God

Luke 1:39-43

(Elizabeth greets Mary and the Savior Mary carries in her womb.)

John 19:25b-27

(Jesus entrusts his mother and the beloved disciple to each other.)

Romans 8:28-29

(Jesus is firstborn of a large family.)

Respond Through Action

Motherhood is part of every human culture. “A mother’s tender, loving care” is a phrase that applies to many mothers. If you can, talk to the one who mothered you and thank her. If you are unable to do this, write what you feel in your diary or in a journal.

For Reflection . . .

As you grow in faith, how do you relate to Mary, our spiritual Mother?

Witness to the Gospel

SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON
1774–1821

Elizabeth, born into a prominent non-Catholic family in New York, married William Magee Seton in 1794 and had five children. On a trip to Italy to restore his health, William died. Elizabeth was helped through this difficult period by friends. She returned home to America desiring to become a Catholic. As a result, some of her family and friends shunned her.

In 1805 Elizabeth was received into the Catholic Church. In 1808, at the invitation of Bishop John Carroll, she opened a school for girls, in collaboration with other like-minded women. Two years later these women became a religious order, the Sisters of Charity. Elected the first superior, Elizabeth was called Mother Seton.

Her order established many schools and orphanages and is credited with launching the parochial school system in the United States. Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton’s feast day is January 4.