

Msgr. Bill's Weekly Letter...

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Happy New Year — a time for optimism, resolutions, and sports. Often, however, the resolutions made with all the best of intentions fail to last. I have found one resolution which has served me well for the last few years. Each January 1, I have made the following promise: *I resolve not to make any resolution this year.* It works!!!

Mary has many titles (Undoer of Knots, Lady of the Snows, Mother of Perpetual Help, Lady of Lourdes, etc.) but perhaps the greatest title for her is, Mary, Mother of God!

For centuries upon centuries after the fall from the grace given to Adam and Eve, humanity waited for the



promised one. *Then the LORD God said to the snake: Because you have done this, cursed are you among all the animals, tame or wild; On your belly you shall crawl, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel* (Genesis 3: 14-15).

St. Paul writes of Mary only once in all his writings.

Today's selection from Galatians, while brief, is very important, *When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. 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 child, and if a child then also an heir, through God* (Gal. 4:4-7).

Within the early Church, there arose a debate about whether Mary was indeed the Mother of God. Some argued that Mary was the mother of the human Jesus, others the mother of the Christ, and others that she was the mother of God.

At the Council of Ephesus, the Church solemnly declared this issue. Our Catechism teaches, *Called in the Gospels "the mother of Jesus", Mary is acclaimed by Elizabeth, at the*

prompting of the Spirit and even before the birth of her son, as "the mother of my Lord". In fact, the One whom she conceived as man by the Holy Spirit, who truly became her Son according to the flesh, was none other than the Father's eternal Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity. Hence the Church confesses that Mary is truly "Mother of God" (Theotokos) (CCC 495). Theotokos is Greek for, God-bearer.

Jesus from the moment of his conception is one person with two natures, divine and human. Mary carried the person of Jesus who is a divine person **not** a human person who somehow acquired divinity at a later moment. Mary is the Mother of God.

Mary is our mother by adoption in Jesus, the Christ. Our Catechism has wonderful sections on the Hail Mary (CCC 2676 – 2679). Here is just one teaching — *Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death*: By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the "Mother of Mercy," the "All-Holy One". We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender "the hour of our death" wholly to her care. May she be there as she was at her son's death on the cross. May she welcome us as our mother at the hour of our passing to lead us to her son, Jesus, in paradise.

I strongly encourage you to read and meditate on this truth.

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Msgr. Bill