

*What about accusations of Mary Worship?*

We Catholics, of course, do not, and never did worship the Blessed Virgin Mary. Many non-Catholics, however, glancing at our prayer books, titles of Mary, hymns, statues and practices and drawing from their own ingrained prejudices and misunderstandings insist we do worship her. I heard a TV preacher say we make Mary a fourth member of the Trinity. Could we be that stupid? They also tell us that these Catholic teaching and devotions to Mary are not in the Bible. How can we answer them? How can we answer ourselves about this?

As Catholics we can answer our own wondering about such things simply by trusting the God-given teaching authority of our Holy Church. We accept Church doctrine first by faith and then we pray and study the reasons. This, of course, is not much of an answer for people outside our holy faith.

Our Holy Church was functioning with authority before the New Testament was written. The idea that everything in Christianity has to come from the Bible came along about 1500 years later. While the Bible is our most important book, the idea of Bible-Only is a false teaching. It was unheard of in our ancient Church. History shows that honoring Mary and prayer to saints was always part of Christianity. Even today all the ancient Eastern and African churches continue to honor our Blessed Mother Mary like we do.

We Catholics honor Mary as the highest saint among us and the first of the redeemed by Jesus. As the bearer of God-Jesus to us, she has a special place in the history and mystery of salvation. While she is the spouse of the Holy Spirit and the mother of Jesus, whose humanity cannot be separated from His divinity, she is still infinitely lower than God. Being the Mother of God in no way makes her the mother-god. Like the rest of us, any and all of her glory depends on the cross of Jesus. Her part was only obedience.

The Apostles Creed speaks of the Communion of Saints. All the saints with Mary are members of the Mystical Body of Christ along with us who are baptized. This unity is not broken by death. We honor the saints and ask their intercession for us; Mary especially. Let's ask Our Blessed Mother to pray to Jesus for unity in apostolic faith.