

## Devotions to Our Lady

### Overview

Other than Jesus - Mary the Mother of God is one of the most recognizable persons of the Catholic Church. For this reason devotions to her are many and varied.

### Who is Mary?

Mary was born in an obscure town in Israel - Nazareth. Her Jewish name was actually Miriam and she was born to Ann and Joachim. You will not find the names of her parents or much of the tradition about her in the bible - but in other writings.



### A woman of many titles

I once had an RCIA candidate ask if there was more than one Mary. Very early in the church devotions to Mary became popular. With a love and faith so perfect these devotions came about because she is so special. Mary has many faces or titles which are attempts to describe this Woman of God who He created as *“full of grace”*. Let’s look at a few of these.

### Our Lady

This simple but powerful title reflects the regal status that the church places with Mary – as the Queen of heaven and earth. Jesus is the King of Kings and Mary is the Queen.

### Mary – the Immaculate Conception

With the exception of Mary all of us carry the effects of original sin. The title also reflects her response to Saint Bernadette when she asked Mary in her apparition what her name was.

### Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

In 1830 when Mary appeared to Catherine Laboure asked her to sponsor a religious medal – which became known as the Miraculous Medal.

### Mary – Mother of God

In 431 AD the Council of Ephesus met to declare that Mary is the Mother of God – ***Theotokos*** - a Greek word meaning *“God Bearer”* in response to Nestorius (a monk from Antioch) who was preaching against this and the resulting controversy. Nestorius was also preaching the heresy that in the two persons of Jesus that Mary was only the mother of the human person and not the Mother of God. The council declared that Jesus has two distinguishable natures united in one person.

### Devotions to Our Lady

Devotions to Mary have taken many forms in the past 20 centuries. Let’s look at a just few of these.

### The Rosary

The Rosary is the most common of all devotions to Mary as they also reflect upon the life, death and resurrection of Jesus when we pray.

### Litanies

A litany is a collection of expressions about Our Lady followed by a common statement. There are many of these but a popular one is called *“Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary”*. It contains numerous titles such as *Mother most pure* or *Virgin most faithful* followed by the statement *“pray for us”*.

### Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Using the formulae developed by Saint Louis de Montfort the faithful embark on a 33 day journey of prayer – followed by a prayer of consecration to her Immaculate Heart.

### Sacred Images

Again, second to her Son, pictures and statues of Mary are of the most common sacramentals found in the Catholic Church.