

What Do We Believe About Mary?

The Eastern Catholic Church has always celebrated Mary. We believe that Mary points us to Jesus. We do not worship Mary. We pray to Mary. We venerate her and honour her. And we believe that Mary's prayers are very powerful. She is our intercessor.

Everything we believe leads us closer to Jesus.

What we believe about Mary can be summarized in 5 key teachings:

1. **Theotokos: Mary is the Mother of God.**
2. **Perpetual Virginity: Mary was a virgin before, during, and after the birth of Jesus.**
3. **Immaculate Conception: Mary was conceived without original sin.**
4. **Dormition: Mary was taken body and soul into heaven.**
5. **Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate: Mary plays a unique role in redemption.**



1. Theotokos-Mary, Mother of God: "Theotokos," literally means "God-bearer." If Mary is the mother of Jesus, and Jesus is God, then Mary is the Mother of God. Saying Mary isn't the Mother of God denies the divinity of Jesus. By affirming Mary is the Mother of God, we are affirming the most fundamental Christian truth: Jesus is God.

2. The Blessed Virgin Mary: God became man in Mary's womb. Mary fulfilled Old Testament prophecies by miraculously conceiving and giving birth to Jesus as a virgin, and she maintained her virginity throughout the rest of her time on earth. Her perpetual virginity celebrates that amazing moment when God became man.

"Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.'"

Luke 1:34-35

3. The Immaculate Conception: Since the earliest centuries the Eastern Churches have celebrated "[St. Anne's Conception of the Theotokos.](#)" Mary was different from the moment she was conceived in her mother's womb. While we inherited the sin and brokenness of Adam and Eve, Mary was saved from that original sin.

From the very first moment of her existence, Mary was miraculously preserved from all sin; she wasn't just preserved from sin but was graced with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the East we have always spoken of Mary's perfect holiness. How appropriate that the woman who carried God in her womb would be pure and sinless!

That does not mean Mary did not need redemption. She did. God saved her in an extraordinary way and gave her holiness that she could not achieve for herself. He did this for the sake of her mission, one that only she could fulfill.

God used the graces from the cross to save Mary at the moment of her conception. How is this possible? All is possible with God. God exists outside of time, so he can apply the graces of redemption at different times of history, as he did with Mary.

4. The (Dormition) Assumption of Mary: God granted Mary yet another gift. At the end of her life on earth, Mary was taken soul and **body** into heaven. Jesus chose to honor and give his mother this glory in heaven. [The Feast of the Dormition](#) is the sign, the guarantee, and the celebration that Mary's fate is the destiny of all whose lives are totally dedicated to hearing and keeping the Word of God. What happened to Mary will happen to all who imitate her holy life of humility, obedience, and love.

5. Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate: Mary suffered with Jesus. As co-redemptrix, we acknowledge her intimate cooperation with Jesus in the redemption of humanity, in his amazing sacrifice for us on the cross. She gave birth to him, raised him, supported him in his ministry, and accompanied him every step of the way to his passion and death.

Now in heaven, our mother loves us as mediatrix and advocate. Mary constantly brings our needs to her son and gives us his graces. Whatever problems we have or whatever our loved ones are struggling with, we can always turn to Mary.

To Jesus Through Mary...

Rejoice Virgin Mary, full of grace.
O Theotokos, the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women,
And blessed is the fruit of your womb.
For you have given birth
To the Saviour of our souls.

