

Mary, honored by both

The only woman named in the Qur'an. Catholics love her too.

In short. Muslims honor Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus.¹ The Church honors her as full of grace and ever-virgin, and calls her Mother of God because of who her son is.^{2,3,4}

Key points

- Both traditions tell of the angel and the virgin birth.²
- What Catholics believe about Mary rests on what they believe about Christ.⁵
- Catholics honor Mary but never worship her.⁶

Try this, this week

1. Read Surah Maryam 16–21 and Luke 1:26–38 side by side.
2. Visit a Catholic church and look for her image. Ask a Catholic what she means to them.

“The angel said to her, ‘Don’t be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and shall name him ‘Jesus.’ He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, seeing I am a virgin?’ The angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born from you will be called the Son of God.’”

Luke 1:30–35, World English Bible

Watch out: what this does not mean

- Catholics don’t worship Mary: the honor given her “differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit.”⁶

Common questions

Do Catholics worship Mary?

Video answer: Fr. Gregory Pine, OP on Pints with Aquinas, stoneandincense.com/en/questions/do-catholics-worship-mary/
No. Devotion to Mary differs essentially from the adoration given to God.⁶

Why “Mother of God”?

Video answer: Ascension Presents, stoneandincense.com/en/questions/why-mother-of-god/
Because the son she conceived is, Catholics believe, the Father’s eternal Son; the title is about Jesus.³

Remember: She belongs, in different ways, to both of us.

Sources

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| 1. Nostra Aetate 3 | 4. CCC 499 |
| 2. CCC 490 | 5. CCC 487 |
| 3. CCC 495 | 6. CCC 971 |

Quotation above: Luke 1:30–35, World English Bible. Catechism: official text on [vatican.va](https://www.vatican.va).

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