

Annunciation

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- [0 : 0 0] Therefore, also that Holy One who is born will be called the Son of God. Worship this evening's Gospel lesson in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
- Amen. What was the announcement the angel Gabriel declared to Mary? We just heard it. She was told the child she would give birth to would be the Son of God.
- We know this is true. For St. Luke 1, verse 19 states Gabriel received his message directly from the throne room of God. There could be no mistake.
- St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist, confirmed this truth. In St. Luke 2, verses 42 and 43, when she, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said to Mary, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.
- But why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord, that word is Kyrios in Greek, it is the name for God. Why does the mother of my God come to me?
- [1 : 0 8] Logically, the Church affirmed this at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. If the child of the Blessed Virgin Mary bore is the Son of God, then she is the mother of God.
- The etochus. This is truth. There could be no mistake. Yet many Christians make it all the time. They will say, Mary is the mother of the man Jesus, but not the mother of God.
- That is heresy. The heretic Nestorius made this same error. The truth is, from the moment of his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, Jesus was, and of course he remains, fully God and fully man.
- Jesus had two complete natures. The divine nature and the human nature in his one person. To separate them is to deny the incarnation itself.
- Why is it then that many Christians, some ignorantly, deny the dogma that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the mother of God? Generally, there are two reasons. First, some are so anti-Catholic, they refuse to accept anything that tends towards errors that have been perpetuated within the Roman Church, which are not shared by true Anglo-Catholics.
- [2 : 3 4] Or the Orthodox. Others, and this dovetails with the first reason, believe saying Mary is the mother of God is saying she is divine. And therefore, she is being worshipped.
- That cannot be any further from the truth. Anyone who worships the Blessed Virgin Mary breaks the first commandment and is in grave error. In the final verse of this evening's gospel, Mary herself said, Behold the handmaid, or the maidservant, of the Lord.
- In Greek, this word is doule. In English, it translates to bondmaiden. A woman who, though she is a free woman, chooses to remain in the service of her master.
- It's a statement of humility. This is the way Mary identified herself. She said, I am God's bondmaiden, not any sort of deity.
- And while there are some Roman Catholics whose piety towards the Blessed Virgin is misguided, that should not impede us from true piety.
- [3 : 4 2] Scripture teaches us exactly how the Blessed Virgin Mary is to be addressed. The Archangel Gabriel, again, bringing his message directly from the throne room of God, saluted Mary with these words.

Rejoice, highly favored one. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. Mary is highly favored. She is most blessed among women.

This is what God, in his word, teaches us. We should heed that word and venerate her as such. The church has two levels for venerating the saints.

Saints in general, like the apostles or those canonized by the church, are given *douleia*. It's another Greek word, and it means honor. So that's sort of that first level. The Blessed Virgin is to be given *hyperdulia*, which means high honor.

The purpose of this distinction is, Scripture makes it. We follow what Scripture says. Mary is highly favored, so she is given high honor.

[4 : 57] Neither form of honor should be confused with the veneration given to God alone, for neither form is worship. There is a separate level for venerating God, the Holy Trinity, or any other persons, the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.

And that is with *latria*, which means worship. *Latria* belongs to God alone. No saint, not even the highly honored Virgin Mary, should ever be worshiped.

So, my brothers and sisters, when we understand what Scripture teaches about the Virgin Mary, when we understand what the church teaches about her and why, then we become freed in our spirit to venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary the way we see Gabriel venerating her.

We will give her high honor. We will join our voices with the rest of the church and faithfully pray the Ave Maria. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

[6 : 14] Amen. We will realize the title of honor given to Mary, *Theotokos*, was first given to her by God and later affirmed by the church to safeguard the dogmas of the incarnation and the two natures of Christ.

It was not given to over-exalt the Blessed Virgin Mary as if we could. When we rightly identify Mary as the mother of God, we are defending the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, incarnate by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and made man, as we just professed in the Nicene Creed.

So understanding this, let us give the Blessed Virgin Mary the high honor she is due. For she who was chosen to be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God, is highly favored and blessed among women in the eyes of God.

in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen.