**Why to honor mother Mary?**

**T**he devotion to mother of God suffered greatly in the years following the Vatican II. Certainly there were many questions in the minds of people regarding the fundamental teachings of the church. One of which was the place of Mary in our lives. There were incidents reported after the council that some pulled down the statues of Mary, threw out the rosary beads and said good bye to novenas and other devotional practices. Even there was a movement propagated anti- Marian activities. Again the main question in the minds of people of the time was, why Mary?

Actually why do we honor Mary. In the first place itself, it is good to remember, we don’t worship Mary. The worship is only to God. But we do honor Mary, just as any people honor any distinguished person in the history, who has done outstanding services. We erect monuments in their memory. Also we visit the tombs and pay our homage to show our reverence to them. It is something a human custom. So just like this we also give honor to our mother, Mary.

But the supreme reason why we honor Mary is because, God did so. God willed the Incarnation of His only begotten son. And for this reason He chose Virgin Mary as the mother of the redeemer. As 2nd Vatican council says, “Mary conceived and became the mother of God and united to Christ by a close and unbreakable bond.” As the result the council continues,”She is the favorite daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit.”

And this is the fundamental reason why, Christ’s followers have the veneration to Mary all through the centuries. Mary a creature like all of us was exalted as the Mother of God and invited to cooperate in Christ’s redeeming plan in a unique way.

Again the second reason could be, Jesus our Lord loved and honored Mary. Jesus was fully man and fully God. And He is also the perfect son of Mary. Jesus took his human form from blessed Mother. The scripture is witness to the intimacy that existed between Jesus and his Mother. He depended on her, grew up under her care for 30 years. He was comforted by her presence at the time of crucifixion. Even after His death, His body was laid in her arms. St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians says, “Have this mind among you, which was in Christ Jesus.” Of cause he did not refer this writing to Mary. But having the mind of Jesus means also honoring our Blessed Virgin Mary.

The church honors Mary also under the title, ‘Immaculate conception.’ The specialty of God’s choice very much clear here.

Mary is the only woman who conceived according to will of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit, without the cooperation of a man. Something that science can’t prove and for the human minds find difficult to understand!

We must honor Mary for being a woman of faith. What the Angel asked of her was something beyond the human imagination. Yet she believed. And she never wavered in her faith to God.

Mary must be loved and honored because she is the true Christian, one who stays very close to Christ. She has a place in the church which is after the place of Christ.

Truly, Mary must be honored in the right way. Anyone who understands the scripture cannot live without loving Blessed Virgin Mary. Because she is the mother of God and the mother of all men.

 would like to conclude my speech with this prayer: God our Father, You willed that Mary, after Christ, should be the first in relationship with You and with the church. We thank you for specially choosing her and placing her in the salvation history of humankind. Help us all Father to love and honor mother Mary after the example of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.☺

 Br. Issac Joseph.