

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Cooperating with Mary in Prayer

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant."

Luke 1:46-48

Insight

Whom do you know who is seemingly larger than life, someone who enhances a gathering or an event?

His smile and laughter were infectious. He lit up the room whenever he entered it. He was always the life of the party. Big Al was the kind of person whom others gravitated toward. People loved his stories and the warm, easygoing way he had with people.

It wasn't that he was the center of attention. Actually, he would frequently draw attention to others, making *them* the focus at gatherings. Al was invitational in his approach. He was so subtle that you weren't aware of what he was doing until you reflected upon it later.

Big Al was this way no matter the situation, no matter the place. He was at his most engaging when he was hosting a party at his own home. He was the perfect host, making sure everyone was comfortable and had enough food and drink. He made sure everyone left feeling filled up and at home.

For Reflection . . .

Mary's spiritual motherhood extends to the entire human race, all men and women.

What qualities enable a woman to be motherly and what qualities enable a man to be fatherly?

Are there adults in your life who function as second mothers or fathers for you?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2673–2682

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 470–472

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 546–547, 562–563

Church Teaching

Magnify the Lord

Christians direct their prayers to God, who alone is worthy of worship. He is the recipient of our prayers of adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise.

Through Baptism we become God's adopted sons and daughters. Through the whole sacramental life, the Holy Spirit permeates our very being. The Spirit acts like an artisan, sculpting the living tradition of prayer. Our many voices are raised to God in prayer. As members of one great communion, the prayers of all the living and deceased members of the Church unite with Mary's voice and heart to "magnify" the Lord (see Luke 1:46).

We revere and honor Mary as our spiritual mother, the Mother of the Church. She cooperated with God's plan of Salvation. With her words, "My soul magnifies the Lord," Mary opened herself completely to God. She assented to the will of God. In prayer, we attempt to emulate her perfect obedience to God in faith. In other words, believers seek to cooperate with Mary in prayer—she who cooperated with God so completely. She is *the* model of discipleship, openness, and prayerful surrender. And like any good mother, she desires that all her children shine.

Mary, Our Intercessor

The Catholic tradition also honors Mary with her own prayer, the Hail Mary. Its phrases, taken from Sacred Scripture, echo the words of the angel Gabriel and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist (see Luke 1:48, 41, 45, 43). Like Gabriel and Elizabeth, we too implore Mary's intercession on our behalf.