

- Way back when the Emperor moved his court to Constantinople. With that came the Administration and all the powerful people of the Roman Empire. The Church in Constantinople became a powerful voice in the Christian world presided over by the Patriarch Nestorius. During a celebration of the Eucharist at the Cathedral a priest gave a homily in the presence of the Patriarch, Nestorius. During his homily he spoke about Mary as the Mother of God. He referred to Mary as the “Theotokos,” a Greek word meaning “the God bearer.” At the end of the homily the Patriarch walked up to the pulpit and embarrassed the preacher by correcting his homily. He said that it was incorrect to speak of Mary as the Mother of God. Instead we should call her the Mother of Christ. He went on to correct by saying that Mary was the mother of His human nature, not the mother of His divinity. After that learned theologians became very concerned.
- Among those was the powerful Patriarch, Cyril of Alexandria in Egypt. Having heard what Nestorius had to say he recognized that there was a problem with the Church’s teaching on the Incarnation, the teaching that Jesus took on a human nature. He argued that to say that Mary was the Mother of God would elevate Mary too high and also by saying that Jesus took on human nature was to lessen Jesus in the sight of God Almighty. The implication was to say that God was very particular about who He would associate with. That God was not really happy to fully embrace our humanity. That somehow the humanity of Jesus is sealed off from the divinity of Jesus and never the twain shall meet. That somehow human nature is distasteful to God.
- The Bishops met in a huge Council of the Church at a place called Ephesus in AD431. There, after much debate, they proclaimed that Mary should be rightfully called, “Theotokos,” the Mother of God. The Church proclaimed that from the moment of His conception, Jesus the Son of God truly became man. Jesus did not just come and borrow a human body, drive it around for a while and then discard it. Instead, at the moment of his conception God the Son united himself with human nature completely and forever. Humanity and Divinity bound themselves together. Everything done by the Son of Mary would be an act of God and also an act of Man.
- From the beginning we the faithful believers have held Mary in high regard. We don’t know a lot about her. She rarely speaks in the bible, but we understand that Mary is someone special for us. She is our Heavenly Mother. She is our protector. She is our advocate. Many times when I read the obituary of a parishioner I will read that they had a great devotion to Mary. Mary for the believer becomes a place of refuge. When we are afraid and we don’t know who to turn to we will often go to Mary because we instinctively believe that she will understand us. She is one of us. She is Mother and she will do all she can to ensure that I get an answer to my prayers. I am making that sound simple but I am saying it in a way that helps us understand.

- Protestant people don't understand how Catholic people love Mary so much. Of course we love God above all things. Of course we love Jesus above all things. Of course we are inspired by the Holy Spirit. But, Mary is one of our own. She knows what the challenges of humanity are like. If Jesus' gaze is always turned to His Father God in Heaven, Mary's gaze is always turned to Jesus. She is the Mother who wants to watch over and protect her Son.
- All of the women we call Mother bring particular gifts to the family. The maternal quality of women is something we cherish. Maternal has a healing quality. Maternal brings safety and comfort. When we think of Mother we experience warm feelings. Home is never the same when Mom isn't there. That is kind of how we feel about Mary. We may honor her as the Blessed Virgin Mary. We may give her a thousand other honorary titles. But to all of us who love her, she is Mother. The heavenly world feels just a little bit more approachable, just a little bit warmer because she is in it.