

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius
A sermon preached by Father Bradford on The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
January 1, 2016

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You need no one to tell you The Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God coincides with New Year's Day. January 1st has had all sorts of other names in both secular and sacred calendars. In recent years it is designated World Day of Peace. At various times in the Church calendar January 1st has been called The Octave Day of Christmas, The Circumcision of Christ, and The Holy Name. But honoring Our Lady on the eight day of Christmas is the oldest and most venerable custom.

Mary is part of the very fabric of the story of Christmas. An image of the stable at Bethlehem without her is unthinkable. And when with angels and shepherds we come to worship the Newborn King, the Son of God made man in the Child of Bethlehem, we are in fact acknowledging Blessed Mary as Mother of God. Because the Son of God is perfect God and perfect man, full, perfect, and entire in each nature, it follows Mary is *Mother of God*. Although Christ always was Son of God, Almighty God owes to Mary that He is truly son of man.

So there is this unique relationship between Almighty God and one of His creatures. In a way known fully only within the Holy Trinity (but revealed divinely to us) this girl Mary occupies the *closest possible relationship to Almighty God*. And all the honor and devotion the Church gives to Mary recognizes this fact. She had no angelic state. She is no super-creature. She is *Mother of God*. "Before her hath been seen none like her, nor shall be after." She is indeed as the poet William Wordsworth once penned, "our tainted nature's *solitary boast*."