



Catechetical Series:

What Catholics Believe & Why

THE HAIL MARY

Behold The Truth

Discovering the What & Why of the Catholic Faith
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Veneration of Mary

- ❖ Catholics do not *worship* Mary. Rather, we *honor* or *venerate* her because of her special role in salvation history.
- ❖ The truth is, drawing closer to Mary helps us to grow closer to Jesus.
- ❖ This is evident in the words of the *Hail Mary*, which come directly from the pages of Sacred Scripture.



The Annunciation

- ❖ In the *Gospel of Luke*, God sends the Archangel Gabriel to ask Mary to bear Christ His Son; and Mary gives her consent with great faith and humility, saying, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word.”
Luke 1:38

- ❖ Gabriel’s greeting of Mary forms the first part of the *Hail Mary*.



“Hail” Luke 1:28

- ❖ “Hail” is a word generally reserved for greeting people of nobility. That the Angel greets Mary in this way reveals her status. The Angel is not addressing an ordinary girl, but a queen.
- ❖ This fits with the royal overtones of Gabriel’s message that Mary’s Child will receive “the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”
Luke 1:32-33



“Full of Grace” Luke 1:28

- ❖ In greeting Mary, the Angel does not use her given name, but rather addresses her by the Greek word *kecharitomene* (or “full of grace”).
- ❖ It is significant that the Angel uses this word as Mary’s name.
- ❖ *Kecharitomene* indicates a permanent or complete state of grace.
- ❖ We refer to this state of grace as Mary’s *Immaculate Conception*, her sanctification from the moment of her conception in preparation for her role as Mother of the Redeemer.



“the Lord is with you!”

Luke 1:28

- ❖ The second part of Gabriel’s greeting, “the Lord is with you,” is not a wish (such as, “*May the Lord be with you!*”), but a statement of fact that shows Mary is already blessed.
- ❖ This also confirms that she was made holy prior to the visit and that her state of holiness is ongoing.



“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.” Luke 1:42

- ❖ These are the words which Elizabeth says to Mary at the Visitation. Elizabeth and her unborn child (John the Baptist) are filled with the Holy Spirit at the sound of Mary’s greeting.
- ❖ This event reveals the efficacy of Mary’s intercession for others.



“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.” Luke 1:42

- ❖ Elizabeth then exclaims, “Why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” Luke 1:43
- ❖ That she addresses her younger kinswoman as “the mother of my Lord,” and expresses her unworthiness to receive a visit from her, provides a biblical precedent for the veneration of Mary.



“Holy Mary, Mother of God”

- ❖ The Church’s title for Mary, “Mother of God,” by design says more about who Jesus is than who Mary is.
- ❖ For it affirms that the Child to whom she gave birth is God.



“Holy Mary, Mother of God”

- ❖ We believe that Jesus is both true God and true man; and Mary, being both Virgin and Mother, upholds this truth.
- ❖ Her virginity (that Jesus did not have a human father) verifies His divinity.
- ❖ Her motherhood (that He had a human mother) verifies His humanity.



**“pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour
of our death.”**

- ❖ Praying to Mary and the saints is not worship, but merely a way of asking our Mother and elder brothers and sisters in heaven to pray for us, just as we ask fellow believers on earth to do.
- ❖ Their prayers are far more powerful than ours, however, for they are beyond sin and death, and they see the Face of God or the *Beatific Vision*.



“Amen.”

- ❖ Ordinarily we end our prayers with “Amen,” a Hebrew word meaning “So be it.”
- ❖ It is especially fitting that we end the *Hail Mary* in this way, for it reminds us of Mary’s “Yes” to God at the Annunciation.



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