

JUNE 9 2025, FATHER PETER TURRONE

Today we celebrate the Memorial of Mary, Mother of the Church. This special day follows immediately after Pentecost—the birthday of the Church.

As I reflected on the beauty of today’s memorial, memories of my time studying theology in Rome came to mind. One of the great blessings was the opportunity to visit countless churches, basilicas, and cathedrals. In one church, a priest gave us a powerful insight that deeply struck me. He explained the connection between the baptistry—shaped like a womb—and today’s feast.

The Church is the Bride of Christ, but also the Mother of Christians. Through our baptism, we are born into new life and become adopted children of God. Seeing the baptistry in that shape helped me understand this spiritual reality in a deeper way.

In today’s Gospel, we stand at the foot of the Cross. Jesus, in unimaginable agony, still thinks not of Himself but of others. He sees His mother and the beloved disciple. To Mary, He says, “Woman, here is your son.” To the disciple, He says, “Here is your mother.”

Jesus had no biological siblings to care for Mary. She was a perpetual virgin, and He was her only Son. By entrusting Mary to John, He was entrusting her to us all. From that moment, Mary became the mother not only of John but of the whole Church.

Mary accompanied Jesus through His entire earthly life. From the moment of the Annunciation to Calvary, she was there. And after Jesus’ death, tradition holds that she lived with John, likely in Ephesus, where pilgrims today can still visit what is believed to be her home.

What does a mother do? She prays for her children. She protects them. She wants them to grow in wisdom and love for God. Mary, our spiritual mother, does this for each one of us.

We can look to three particular ways Mary helps us as disciples:

### Inner Life and Prayer

Mary teaches us how to grow in the inner life. At key moments—when the Magi came, when the shepherds visited, and when Jesus was found in the Temple—we're told that Mary "kept all these things in her heart." She meditated deeply. This inner silence and openness allowed her to hear God's voice clearly.

### Receptivity to God's Word

Mary listened to the Word of God at the synagogue and in her daily life. She models for us how to be receptive, to let the Word find fertile soil in our hearts. We ask her to help us put aside distractions and inner resistance so we can hear and receive God's Word more fully.

### Humility and Surrender

Mary shows us humility—not false humility, but the truth of who she is before God. She knew her dependence on Him. Her "yes" to God was total. She entrusted her whole life to His will, and she invites us to do the same.

As our mother, Mary continues to intercede for us before the throne of God. She prays that the Holy Spirit will form us into the image of her Son.

When I returned to the Church after many years away, a Montfortian priest introduced me to the idea of total consecration to Jesus through Mary. At first, I was unsure. Like St. John Paul II, I wondered if focusing on Mary would take attention away from Christ. But through

prayer and study, I came to understand that Mary always leads us to her Son.

Pope Benedict XVI once said that when we honour Mary, she immediately responds: “My soul glorifies the Lord.” Everything we entrust to her, she offers to Him.

Mary is our mother in the order of grace. Like John, may we take her into our homes—into our hearts—and allow her to guide us to Jesus. We ask the Holy Spirit, through Mary’s intercession, to renew and remake us in the likeness of Christ, her Son.